



Ein cyf/Our ref MA-P-VG-5929-19

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Jenny Rathbone AM
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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CF99 1NA

12 December 2019

Dear Jenny,

During the Business Statement on 5 November you requested a statement on cervical screening, specifically the issue of self-sampling and improving uptake in the programme.

I issued a Written Statement on cervical screening on 11 April where I talked about the self-sampling trial study which was to be carried out in parts of London which are known to have poor cervical screening uptake: <https://gov.wales/written-statement-cervical-screening>. The trial aims to find the best way to offer HPV self-sampling to women who have not responded to their invite. The areas of North and East London selected for the trial have been chosen because their uptake of cervical screening is particularly low and the women invited to take part are at least 6 months overdue cervical screening.

The self-sampling trial study was only initiated in September and therefore will not conclude for some time. Self-sampling will not be rolled-out across the UK until there is adequate evidence that the approaches and tests are safe and effective, and it has been recommended by the UK National Screening Committee (UKNSC). It is likely that this will be a few years but in anticipation of any such recommendation, Public Health Wales (PHW) is scoping how this could be implemented in Wales. If recommended by the UKNSC, it is hoped that self-sampling would enable those who currently have difficulty accessing cervical screening take part in the screening programme. It is also hoped it would encourage those who are embarrassed to attend for screening to take part by enabling them to take the test in private and at a time of their choosing with no appointment or examination necessary. I will update Assembly Members on this matter when more information becomes available.

With regards to improving uptake, PHW is continuing to run a social media campaign to increase awareness and improve uptake of cervical screening. The #LoveYourCervix social marketing campaign has been running since March and aims to encourage uptake of cervical screening in women aged 25 to 30, and to increase understanding of the new HPV test. I am pleased to say that over 30,000 more women were screened by the cervical screening programme in Wales in 2018-19 compared to the previous year. However, there are still many women not taking up the offer of screening. I hope that now more accurate HPV testing is available in Wales that uptake of the screening test will increase.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and responding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Thank you for raising this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vaughan Gething".

Vaughan Gething AC/AM

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services