

## Cervical Screening is for everyone with a Cervix

Although cervical screening rates in many parts of Wessex are quite high, certain inequality groups have very much lower screening rates including ethnic minorities, LGBT+, learning disabilities and people with Serious Mental Illness.

**LGBT+** people face a number of barriers to cervical screening.

Trans men, non-binary and intersex people with a cervix may not realise that they need cervical screening.

If the person is registered as male on the GP record, they won't be automatically invited for cervical screening.

They may lack confidence about attending screening and health care professionals may also have some anxieties.

There are a number of really useful resources to promote cervical screening awareness amongst LGBT+ and also about coding GP records, recalls and education for health care professionals.

<https://eveappeal.org.uk/gynaecological-cancers/tnbiinfo/>

<https://www.jostrust.org.uk/professionals/health-professionals/nurse-gp/trans-non-binary>

<https://livethroughthis.co.uk/resources/>

**Learning Disability** - cervical screening rates in people with learning disabilities are very significantly below the 80% target right across Wessex with rates of only around 35% which puts these patients at higher risk of late diagnosis of cervical cancer. There are a number of reasons for low screening rates:

- Common misconceptions about sexual activity
- Lack of confidence amongst health care professionals to initiate conversations around cervical screening and to carry out screening
- Not fully appreciating that with time and the right approach many people with learning disability are able to understand and consent to cervical screening
- Not using opportunities to have a fully informed best interest meeting/decision to enable cervical screening to be considered if a general anaesthetic is being given for unrelated reasons

There are a number of really helpful resources to facilitate conversations and support people with learning disability to undergo cervical screening. Wessex Cancer Alliance has an

ongoing education programme to support primary care clinicians around cervical screening in learning disability patients. [Find out more about our training sessions and sign up here.](#)

**Ethnic Minorities** - uptake of cervical screening and HPV vaccination is lower in women from ethnic minorities potentially putting these women at increased risk of cervical cancer. Working with local communities to overcome cultural barriers to screening can help to improve screening rates.

**Serious Mental illness** - people with serious mental illness can find it difficult to access healthcare. Cervical screening rates are very often low in this group of patients. There is an opportunity to encourage and raise awareness of cervical screening at the annual health check.

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