

Regional Cervical Screening Programme (CSP) pHPV Testing and Cytology delivered by Belfast Health & Social Care Trust (BHSCT) (single-site)

(Business Case attached below)

[P73-2025 A - B Regional Cervical Screening Laboratory RBC up to 2m V1.5 VNov24.docx](#)

Background / Current Position

There were four cytology laboratories across the region providing services to the NICSP: these are situated in Belfast (covering BHSCT and SEHSCT areas), Antrim (NHSCT), Altnagelvin (WHSCT), and Craigavon (SHSCT). All four laboratories undertook cytology screening and two (Altnagelvin and Antrim) also provide HPV testing for the region for triage and test of clearance (ToC) purposes. Craigavon laboratory ceased providing a cervical cytology service from October 2023.

In line with UK National Screening Committee recommendations for the Cervical Screening Programmes (CSP) to adopt HPV testing as the primary screening test (pHPV), the plan was proposed to consolidate cytology and pHPV testing onto one site by establishing a new regional laboratory. This is in line with NHS England, Scotland, and Wales, who have worked towards centralising their pHPV screening services (Scotland has consolidated onto two sites, England have moved from 55 sites to just eight sites, and Wales have centralised to a single-site).

Following a successful expression of interest, Belfast Trust has been named the new regional laboratory for the delivery of the NICSP, and has been asked to submit a Business Case for the provision of this service. The laboratory should:

- Provide capacity for up to 140,000 HPV tests and 21,000 cytology tests per annum;
- Provide failsafe for the region;
- Ensure continued regional support of MDMs;
- Provide ongoing support to all trusts for the delivery of the audit of invasive cancer (to include completion of slide reviews, consultant input to MDM discussions, and consultant input to patient disclosure meetings, as required);
- Ensure that robust business continuity arrangements are in place;
- Ensure delivery of a sustainable and resilient service through robust succession planning to include provision of training.

Significant investment is required from the Public Health Agency (PHA) to enable Belfast Trust to deliver this service to the region, as the single-site laboratory.

Case for Change and Costs

The Belfast Trust Laboratories has vast experience of providing responsive regional services (e.g. virology, molecular diagnostics, with workload consistently prioritised by patient need). As the regional pHPV single-site, Belfast Trust will work to provide a timely response to each regional user of the service. The Belfast Trust major strengths lie in having high-capacity analysers in situ, co-location on the same site as the Regional Virology Service, and experience in providing a high throughput molecular testing service (including pHPV), with more than 200 cervical samples processed daily.

However, to effectively deliver a sustainable regional service that meets the demand, additional staffing and resources will be required. The service carried out a resource demand

study to determine the additional infrastructure required. The total FYE recurrent cost required to support the delivery of this service will be £2,709,046 of which £751,110 includes the existing base case / staff in post. An additional £1,957,936 is required to uplift the service to the staffing and resources required to support fully implementation of the Regional CSP.

Recommendation

Executive Team approval is being sought for the additional £1,957,936 to ensure additional resources are in place to support delivery of a fully regionalised NICSP.