

Eluned Morgan AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: WQ89396

Heledd Fychan MS
Senedd Regional Member for South Wales Central

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31 October 2023

Dear Heledd,

Thank you for your recent written question asking me if the Welsh Government have any plans to include at-home smear tests as part of the current cervical cancer screening program in Wales?

We are committed to continuing to improve cancer outcomes in Wales through a combination of prevention, early detection, and improved treatment. Wales was the first UK nation to implement testing for high-risk human papilloma virus (HPV) as the primary cervical screening test in 2018. This test is more specific than previous testing which means that a negative result is more accurate, and it will save more lives by determining the risk of cancer earlier.

The Welsh Government follows the expert advice of the UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) which is yet to make a recommendation on HPV self-sampling for cervical screening. This is a very promising development which, if recommended, may encourage more people to take up the offer of screening. However, there is a lot more work to do to ensure that this method is safe and effective at detecting HPV before it can be implemented as any reduction in the accuracy of this method of testing could outweigh the benefits of better access and put people at greater risk. Our approach is to wait for these findings and any subsequent UK NSC recommendation.

Yours sincerely

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Minister for Health and Social Services

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir 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 corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.