Practice headed paper – This letter is for parents/carers of women with a learning disability who are considering cervical screening – 17/10/16

Dear parent/carer,

I am writing to you to share information on the importance of cervical screening and how we can support women with a learning disability to make a choice on participation.

The best way to reduce the risk of cervical cancer is for women to have regular screening. This is why there is a national cervical screening programme.

All women from age 25 – 64 are invited for cervical screening; it is the woman’s choice as to whether they accept the invitation.

For women with a learning disability it is important they have the support and information, to help them make that choice. For a woman who is not able to make a choice a best interest decision will be made for her.

As you are supporting a woman who has been invited to take part in cervical screening please remember;

* The decision to take part in cervical screening can only be made by the woman or through a best interest decision.
* The community learning disability team can support women and their family/carers to understand cervical screening. You can get in touch with them by contacting: East Cumbria 01228 603189, South Cumbria 01229 401100, West Cumbria 01900 705825.
* The woman’s GP or practice nurse can offer support and make reasonable adjustments to help with screening. (All public sector services have a legal duty to make ‘reasonable adjustments’ making their service as accessible and effective as they would be for people without disabilities.)
* Women who have never been sexually active (this includes penetrative sex or skin to skin touching of the genital area, with men or women) are still entitled to a cervical screen. They are still at risk of cervical cancer although this risk is reduced.
* Not everyone can manage or wants to participate in cervical screening. For these women it is advised they remain on the screening register, this enables regular information on signs and symptoms to be shared.

Additional information can be accessed at:

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/Cervical-screening-test/Pages/Introduction.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Cervical-screening-test/Pages/Introduction.aspx)

[www.jostrust.org.uk/about-cervical-cancer/cervical-screening-smear-test-and-abnormal-cells/women-learning-disabilities](http://www.jostrust.org.uk/about-cervical-cancer/cervical-screening-smear-test-and-abnormal-cells/women-learning-disabilities)

If you have any additional questions or would like to discuss further, please contact the surgery.

Yours sincerely

Individuals named GP