

# #getcheckedearly Cervical Screening Awareness Week

Women in the Lothians are being urged to go for their smear test when invited as Cervical Screening Awareness Week gets underway.

☒ Sue Payne, Cervical Screening Co-ordinator, today backed the call as she encouraged women not to ignore their invite as a smear test can stop cervical cancer before it starts.

To mark the week, health professionals from across Scotland have spoken out about the five minute, potentially life-saving, test in a bid to reassure women who regularly ignore their screening invite due to fear or embarrassment.

Recent statistics highlight that 67.9 per cent of eligible women<sup>1</sup> in the NHS Lothian area have taken up the offer of their smear test.

By highlighting its benefits, the hope is that more women will take part in the Scottish Cervical Screening Programme, and more lives will be saved.

A smear test checks the cells of a woman's cervix – the neck of the womb – and is designed to pick up any changes so that they can be monitored or treated. Without treatment the changes can sometimes develop into cervical cancer.

Six women in Scotland are diagnosed with cervical cancer every week, however women are nine times more likely to survive when it's found at an early stage compared to a late stage<sup>2</sup>.

The test is routinely offered to all women in Scotland aged 25-49 every three years, with women aged 50 to 64 invited every five years – helping save around 5,000 lives every year in the UK.

Sue Payne, Cervical Screening Co-ordinator, NHS Lothian said:

“The message we want to get across this Cervical Screening Awareness Week is that that we’re here waiting to help protect you from cervical cancer.

“Our nurses have done thousands of smear tests and afterwards, most women – especially those that it’s their first time – are surprised by how quickly it’s all over.

“Of course, it can be a nervous time for some women but, remember, there’s no such thing as a silly question.

“So, don’t ignore your invite when it pops through your letterbox, or forget about it completely, it could save your life.”

For more information visit [www.getcheckedearly.org](http://www.getcheckedearly.org)