

CervicalCheck Steering Committee
Weekly report to the Minister
22 June 2018

1. First meeting of the CervicalCheck Steering Committee

The Committee met for the first time on Thursday 21 June. The meeting was co-chaired by the CMO, Dr Tony Holohan, and Ms Tracey Conroy, Assistant Secretary. Attendance is set out overleaf. While not all members of the Steering Committee are yet in place, it was considered important to schedule a first meeting to commence work. Two patient representatives and a consultant gynaecologist are to be identified to join the Committee.

2. Update on support package

Since the decision to establish the support package on 11th May, a team of specially designated Liaison Officers has been appointed to work with individuals and put in place the required supports. Liaison Officers have now contacted 204 individuals and held 155 face-to-face meetings to discuss their needs.

It is important to note that every individual's circumstances will be unique to them and thus the HSE has taken care to respect the wishes of the women and their families regarding the timing of contacts and subsequent meetings. Where meetings have not yet been held, this reflects the wishes of the individuals concerned either to meet at a future date that suits them or, in some instances not to take up the offer of support. With Liaison Officers engagement with women now established, it is not expected that numbers of meetings held will change significantly from week to week.

Delivery of supports

- The HSE has issued significant numbers of new medical cards to women and family members or next-of-kin. In addition, amendments have been made to the terms of existing medical cards or G.P visit cards to recategorise these as medical cards under the terms of the CervicalCheck support package. A very small number of registration requests are currently on hand and liaison officers are working with clients to complete these, while any outstanding registration requests will be processed as a matter of priority as soon as they are submitted.
- Alongside the provision of medical cards, primary care supports, including counselling, have been made available to those requesting them. This is very much a client-driven process and requests for supports will differ from individual to individual.
- A range of other health supports is being provided including in response to requests for physiotherapy, occupational therapy, dental, ophthalmic and nursing services among others. The numbers requesting these supports is relatively small but in all cases appointments have been given where requested (again some individuals have indicated a wish to wait before commencing with treatment).
- The Government decision of the 11th May provided that where women had been prescribed a medicine by their treating clinician, any out-of-pocket costs would be met. This includes medicines not officially approved for reimbursement and any other non-standard therapies, once prescribed for the patient by their doctor.
- Arrangements are in place to reimburse a range of costs that the women and their families incur from 11th May including travel costs, childcare costs and medical

appointment costs among others. These will be reimbursed upon receipt of claims from individuals.

4. Update on ex gratia payments as recommended by Dr Scally

Arrangements to make the ex-gratia payment of €2,000 to each of the women affected or, where a woman has died, to their next-of-kin are being coordinated through the Liaison Officers. Payment is underway, and subject to bank details being provided, the HSE aims to have all the payments processed by the end of June.

5. Release of records

A team including administrative staff and a number of solicitors is in place in CervicalCheck to ensure requests for records are responded to within required timelines, ie court deadlines in the case of legal requests and 30 days in the case of data access requests of which 109 have been received so far. The HSE has confirmed all deadlines are currently being met.

This is in line with the Minister's expressed expectation that all patient information, including documents, files and audits related to patients, will be made available to patients or their representatives without delay, and that the provision of information will be streamlined to the fullest extent possible to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy. This relates to patient information held by both CervicalCheck and by hospitals.

6. International Clinical Expert Panel Review

The International Clinical Expert Panel Review will be carried out under the auspices of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) with expertise also sourced through the British Society for Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology. The review will consider all cases of invasive cervical cancer in Ireland since CervicalCheck was established, to include the 1,482 cases notified to CervicalCheck since then and a further 1,630 cases registered by the National Cancer Registry of Ireland which had not been notified to CervicalCheck. Women who developed cancer and who were screened by CervicalCheck will be identified and their screening histories will be examined.

The Department of Health has been in ongoing contact with RCOG in relation to the details and complexities of the review over the past month. Daily engagement is continuing such that the contract is expected to be signed over the coming days.. In advance of formal signing, work is continuing to plan and progress the review. Terms of reference have been agreed, and resources are being identified and put in place by both the HSE and RCOG.

21 June 2018