

FOI 1813

09/08/23

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST

Question 1:

From receipt, how long does it currently take to complete a routine cervical smear test and return the results to the GP?

Response 1:

The time frame at this point in time is 20 weeks.

Question 2:

Why does testing take longer then the six weeks currently indicated on the cervical screening invitation letter?

Response 2:

A reporting backlog has developed due to the lack of staffing capacity to screen samples under a microscope (cytology). This type of screening relies on qualified and experienced scientific staff. There is a shortage of people with these skills available and that has limited the amount of this screening that can be done.

Question 3:

Given cervical screening did not take place as normal during the pandemic, when will you stop using "catching up with the pandemic backlog" as an excuse for the current timelines?

Response 3:

This delay currently experienced in smear reporting is not caused by the COVID pandemic

Question 4:

What are the NICE guidelines for the length of time from a cervical smear test is taken until results are provided to the patient's GP?

Response 4:

At present the average waiting time is 12 weeks – see attached link
[Cervical screening | nidirect](#)

Question 5:

What is the date currently predicted for the result to be available of a smear test taken on 08 March 2023?

Response 5:

At present we are processing smears taken week beginning 27/2/23 with an average waiting time of 21 weeks.

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