**For information: Training requirements for new cervical sample takers**

**1. Who can train to be sample taker?**

The following UK registered healthcare professionals are eligible to train to undertake the role of cervical sample taker:

* registered nurses
* registered nursing associates\*
* registered midwives
* physician associates who are registered on the Physician Associate Managed Voluntary Register (PAMVR)
* registered healthcare professionals working in integrated sexual health (ISH) clinics
* General Medical Council (GMC) registered medical doctors

\*Taking cervical samples is a delegated activity and the nursing associate works within the remits of their professional code.

Registered nurses, nursing associates, midwives and physician associates must complete a recognised theoretical course followed by a period of supervised training as described in this guidance [Education pathway - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cervical-screening-cervical-sample-taker-training/training-for-cervical-sample-takers-education-pathway)

It is recommended that qualified medical doctors undertake the cervical screening training also described in the above guidance to enhance their specialist training.

**2. What training is required for a new sample taker?**

All new sample takers are required to undertake an initial theoretic training course provided by an accredited cervical screening training provider.

Once the theory course has been passed then a period of supervision by an appropriate mentor is required prior to an interim assessment.

Once the trainee has satisfactorily completed the interim assessment and the mentor is confident the trainee can proceed safely, the trainee should arrange to take and document 20 samples without direct supervision. Easy access to an experienced sample taker is essential throughout this period.

The trainee must not take more than 25 cervical samples without further reviewing their progress with their mentor.

If the mentor and trainee identify a problem at 25 samples then the trainee must stop taking samples and notify their training provider, cervical screening laboratory and employer immediately.

**3. How long does the training take?**

The training period is a maximum of 9 months. Trainees who are unable to complete within this time must seek advice from the training provider.

**4. When are trainees classed as trained sample takers (signed off)?**

The trainee and assessor (provided by the training provider) plan and arrange a formal evaluation session which includes a final clinical assessment.

The training provider reviews the trainee’s completed portfolio and final clinical assessment report. The training provider checks the portfolio for completeness and accuracy and determines whether or not the trainee has achieved the required standard of knowledge and understanding**.**

The training provider issues the trainee with a certificate of completed training and competency to practice upon successful completion of the full training pathway.

**5. When can I get a sample taker code for my trainee?**

A trainee sample taker code will be issued on successful completion of the theoretical course provided by an accredited training provider.

On successful completion of the practical course (sign off) the training status will be removed.

**6. How do I get a sample taker code?**

Sample taker codes can be applied for via submitting a request on the cervical sample taker data base [CSTD | Berkshire & Surrey Pathology Services (asph.nhs.uk)](https://cstd.asph.nhs.uk/admin/index.php?openair=stm)

Or contact [asp-tr.bspssampletakers@nhs.net](mailto:asp-tr.bspssampletakers@nhs.net)

**7. Who can be a mentor?**

Mentors must be one of the following, a:

* registered nurse
* registered midwife
* registered physician associate
* GMC registered medical doctor

Mentors must be practising sample takers with at least 12 months continuous experience, having taken at least 50 cervical samples following completion of their own initial training. Mentors must have effective communication skills and ideally hold a relevant mentoring and, or teaching qualification.

The training provider makes sure the mentor understands the role, is sufficiently prepared to carry it out and supported for the duration of the training programme.

**8. I have a sample taker returning to practice after an extended period away, what do I need to do?**

On returning to practice, the healthcare professional trained in cervical screening (sample taker) should contact the cervical screening laboratory to check the status of their pin or code number at [asp-tr.bspssampletakers@nhs.net](mailto:asp-tr.bspssampletakers@nhs.net)

*For an absence of 12 months and less than 5 years*

The sample taker must:

* complete the [cervical screening update eLearning](https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/nhs-screening-programmes/) which provides information on the entire programme pathway including failsafe responsibilities and pathway changes
* complete [eLearning for health primary HPV screening for sample takers](https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/nhs-screening-programmes/)
* have 2 sample-taking sessions peer reviewed to confirm competency

*For an absence of 5 years or more*

The sample taker must:

* complete the [cervical screening update eLearning](https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/nhs-screening-programmes/) which provides information on the entire programme pathway including failsafe responsibilities and pathway changes
* complete [eLearning for health primary HPV screening for sample takers](https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/nhs-screening-programmes/)
* have 5 sample-taking sessions peer reviewed to confirm competency

An experienced sample taker who meets national standards and fulfils their professional obligations for CPD can undertake peer review. The sample taker’s employer should manage any concerns raised in connection with meeting competency requirements.

**9. What do my trained sample takers need to do to maintain competence?**

Sample takers must fulfil the competency requirements in accordance with their professional codes of conduct. They should:

* undertake continuous self-evaluation
* review and reflect on any rejected samples, including those inadequate for cytology, and abnormal test results

Sample takers must undertake a minimum of 3 hours update training every 3 years. The [national eLearning resource for sample takers](https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/nhs-screening-programmes/) meets the programme requirements for update training.

Sample takers must be eligible to undertake the update course, and have proof of their completed initial training

**10. A sample taker no longer works at my practice what do I do?**

If a sample taker no longer works at you practice then you need to update your practice information on the sample taker database to reflect this [CSTD | Berkshire & Surrey Pathology Services (asph.nhs.uk)](https://cstd.asph.nhs.uk/admin/index.php?openair=stm)

**Further information**

Sample taker training guidance: Education pathway - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

BSPS sample taker team: [asp-tr.bspssampletakers@nhs.net](mailto:asp-tr.bspssampletakers@nhs.net)

HIOW Screening and Immunisation Team: [england.hiow-sit@nhs.net](mailto:england.hiow-sit@nhs.net)

Kent and Medway Screening and Immunisation Team: [phst@nhs.net](mailto:phst@nhs.net)

Surrey and Sussex Screening and Immunisation Team: [PHE.Screening-ImmsSSAT@nhs.net](mailto:PHE.Screening-ImmsSSAT@nhs.net)

Thames Valley Screening and Immunisation Team: [england.tvatpublichealth@nhs.net](mailto:england.tvatpublichealth@nhs.net)