

NEL Cancer Alliance Primary Care Update August 2025

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1 Urgent Barts Health NHS Trust update for Non-Specific Symptom (NSS) referrals

As a reminder, please read the following urgent update from Barts Health which says the NSS service, currently provided from the Royal London Hospital, is closing by **30 September 2025**.

<https://primarycare.northeastlondon.icb.nhs.uk/news/barts-health-nhs-trust-for-non-specific-symptom-nss-referrals-2/>

2 HPV vaccine awareness campaign

Following the recent letter sent to you from NHS England, please be aware that North East London Cancer Alliance plans to deliver an HPV vaccine awareness campaign aimed at 16-25 year olds who didn't have the vaccine at school.

We plan to launch this campaign on 18 September as we will be attending the QMUL and UEL freshers fairs. We are also hoping to attend or promote at college events across north east London boroughs.

This work may drive a number of young people to book an HPV vaccine appointment at your practice. Please ensure you have vaccines available for this.

Please also let us know if you would be happy to display posters and leaflets in your practice. Contact sherriceweekes@nhs.net for more information.

3 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) Engagement project

The 13 health champions for the GRT communities in north east London have now been trained to Royal Society of Public Health level 1+2 and have attended workshops on breast, bowel, cervical, lung and urological cancer signs, symptoms and screening.

They are now supporting delivery of our cultural awareness webinars and feeding into health inequalities data. It is hoped they will be embedded into the north east London community voluntary service at a later date but are available to support any cancer-related initiatives and engagement work across north east London boroughs. Please contact nikki.poland@nhs.net for any queries.

4 Cultural awareness webinars

The dates for our cultural awareness webinar sessions are now live on the NEL Training Hub website and are **available to all GP staff and Social Prescribers** in north east London.

The sessions showcase the lived experiences of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and offer the opportunity to understand how to support them in breaking barriers to healthcare.

The sessions will be recorded and shared at a later date and a certificate will be provided for all attendees. The next available dates begin from September and will conclude in December.

Register here: <https://neltraininghub.org/events/list/?tribe-bar-search=gypsy+roma>

5 Community Games

North East London Cancer Alliance is hosting a series of Community Games - a free local initiative to support people living across north east London to live healthier, more active lives.

These games are free to attend for people in north east London of all ages and abilities to try out different activities, meet people, and gain practical health advice - all in a friendly, fun, and inclusive environment.

The next event takes place from 11 am to 3pm on 13 September at Barking Sporthouse, Mayesbrook Park, Lodge Avenue, Barking & Dagenham, RM8 2JR.

Please promote the event to your patients via text, email or during appointments - template copy is available if needed.

More information is available on our website:

<https://www.nelcanceralliance.nhs.uk/community-games> and the booking link is <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/ETJG>

6 Oesophageal Cancer Awareness Campaign

North East London Cancer Alliance, in partnership with BHRUT, went live on 31 July with the Oesophageal Cancer Awareness Campaign and self-referral for Cytosponge use. This is a targeted leaflet drop focusing initially on postcodes in Barking and Dagenham, and we look forward to seeing positive outcomes from this initiative.

7 Free Cancer Education Sessions

Free cancer education sessions are available to all healthcare professionals with an interest in cancer, or those working as nurses and AHPs in cancer at a minimum band 5/6. They take place online and last for an hour. Book your place here:

<https://bit.ly/3Jkl7vf>

8 Changes to cervical screening intervals

As a reminder, from 1 July 2025, routine cervical screening intervals will be extended from 3 to 5 years for participants aged 25-49 who test negative after attending cervical screening on or after this date.

The NHS Cervical Screening Programme saves thousands of lives every year by checking for high-risk Human Papilloma Virus (hrHPV) which causes almost all cervical cancers. In England, women and people with a cervix are currently invited every 3 years between the ages of 25-49 and every 5 years if aged 50-64 years.

In December 2019, HPV primary screening was fully implemented in England. This is a more sensitive and accurate test than the previous 'smear' test, which only looked for cervical cell changes. HPV testing is the best way to find out at an early stage who is at higher risk of developing the cervical cell changes that over time could potentially lead to cervical cancer if left untreated. This enables us to offer a more personalised approach to cervical cancer prevention based on an individual's risk.

Studies have shown that if a person tests negative for hrHPV they are extremely unlikely to go on to develop cervical cancer within the next 10 years. A study in England, published by King's College London, showed that 5-year screening intervals are as safe as 3-year intervals; the same number of cancers will be prevented and less frequent cervical screening tests are needed.

The UK National Screening Committee (UKNSC) reviewed all the robust scientific evidence and recommended a change to a 5-year screening interval for participants aged 25-49 years who test negative for hrHPV at their routine screen. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has accepted this recommendation. Next test due dates will not be changed; individuals will be invited at the interval in which they were advised of at the time of their last test.

There will be no change to the clinical pathway for those testing positive for HPV. Where there are no cell changes, they will be invited for screening again in 1 year. If cell changes are found alongside a positive HPV test, they will be referred directly to a hospital clinic for a colposcopy to check the cervix more closely.

An individual will only move onto a 5 year screening interval after this when they meet the clinical criteria. For further details on how this will affect participants, and to support services to answer enquiries, please see the [accompanying FAQs](#).

Please ensure any patient-facing staff are aware of the changes so they can support individuals with any questions. Staff can reassure people that invitations will be sent automatically at the appropriate interval. Sample takers are asked to inform participants of the interval change during their appointments after 1 July 2025.

9 Opt in for electronic breast screening reports

The London Breast Screening Programme Administration Hub, hosted by Royal Free NHS Trust, are responsible for the issuing of GP outcome reports from the NHS Breast Screening Programme.

At present, these reports are generated by the National Breast Screening System and sent to GP Practices in printed and posted format. They are looking at changing this to Electronic PDF.

If any patients are called for screening, they plan to send GP Practices results by email PDF link attachment, rather than a posted paper result. The content/layout of the GP reports will remain unchanged.

The key benefits of this change will be faster, streamlined and secure delivery of results via NHS.net email. PDF links not accessed within 72 hours will revert to that particular batch being sent by the defaulted method of printed post.

In order to OPT IN for this change, they request that GP practices complete and return the following information to rf-tr.hubqppacks@nhs.net

- GP Practice Code and GP Practice Name**
- Confirmation of preferred NHS.net email for reports to be sent**

GP practice that have **not** opted in for electronic GP result reports will continue to be sent breast screening reports via printed and posted format. Should you have any questions or queries please contact: Danielle Macpherson-Smith (Service Manager). Tel: 020 7794 0500 (27366)

10 Cancer referrals update (GP Matrix for BHRUT)

A GP Matrix has been developed collaboratively by Primary Care and BHRUT colleagues. Please [download a copy](#) of the matrix.

Eight Cancer Rules

As well as using the GP Matrix, we'd ask you to follow these eight rules for all suspected cancer referrals.

1. Please inform patients that they are being referred on an urgent suspected cancer pathway and must attend all appointments (diagnostics and outpatient appointments).
2. Please ensure the patient has had recent blood tests (i.e. not more than 3 months) to avoid any delays in their diagnostics and treatment. Please find instructions for GPs to refer to community phlebotomists for urgent bloods:

urgentbloodappointment@nelft.nhs.uk

Patient phone number; Reason for test; Blood test requested:

Blood form to be attached to email

3. Please check "referrer alert" for any other essential information on DOS.
4. Please organise the necessary tests to be done prior to referral (as outlined on the GP Matrix).
5. Please include the most up to date contact detail for the patient (address, mobile/home, email) and ensure all referral information is completed on the Pan London form including whether interpreter is required.
6. Please print letter and give to patient even if you 'defer to provider'.
7. Please do not refer if you have been made aware that your patient will be going on holiday, please submit referral upon their return when they are available.
8. Please keep an eye on your worklist

11 Podcasts

Our latest podcasts on cancer diagnosis and treatment and are available here:

<https://www.nelcanceralliance.nhs.uk/taking-control-cancer>

12 For more information

Web: www.nelcanceralliance.nhs.uk
X: @CancerNel
Facebook: @NelCancerAlliance
Instagram: @CancerNEL
LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/north-east-london-cancer-alliance/>
YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@nelcanceralliance>