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## Chapter 4 –Providing a Smear-taking Service

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### Recall and Referral Process

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**Responsibilities of the smear taker following taking a smear**

The smear takers follow up responsibilities include:

- Checking that smear results have been received within 14 working days of the smear being taken
- Checking the laboratory recommendation against the smear history
- Ensuring women understand the process for receiving their result within 16 working days
- Recall and referral of women with abnormal results or clinical indications that referral is required
- Recalling women in accordance with the laboratory recommendations and clinical indications
- If the recall is not in accordance with the laboratory recommendation, notifying the NCSP and the laboratory of the change of recall
- Contacting women who require further investigation and fail to attend
- Monitoring the NCSP-Register reports, updating the information and returning to the NCSP Regional Service, and wherever necessary, making every attempt to contact women on the reports
- Ensuring continuity of service to women by informing the NCSP of changes in women's clinical status or demographic information.

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**Obtaining results from the laboratory**

There should be a mechanism within each practice to ensure that results are obtained from the laboratory in a timely manner. If the results are not received, the smear taker (or other practice staff) should communicate with the laboratory to ensure that the laboratory received the smear and that a report will be forthcoming.

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**Standard 410**

**Smear takers will have processes in place to ensure that results are obtained from the laboratory within 14 working days of sending the cervical cytology to the laboratory.**

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## Chapter 4 –Providing a Smear-taking Service

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### Recall and Referral Process, Continued

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**Recall  
mechanisms**

Smear takers need to ensure processes are in place to recall women and to ensure that women are appropriately followed up.

The process should include:

- if a woman is on a normal screening interval there should be a minimum of two attempts within six months of the recall date
- if a woman requires a recall within or at twelve months a minimum of three attempts within three months of the recall date.

These processes can include contacting the woman by letter or phone as appropriate to the woman. If still unable to contact the woman the NCSP Regional Service should be notified.

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### Recall and Referral Process, Continued

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**Standard 411**      **Smear takers will recall women in accordance with laboratory recommendations on smear results and clinical indications.**

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**Follow up of women not enrolled on the NCSP**      There is added responsibility on the smear taker for women who decline to enrol on the NCSP. Women should be made aware of the fact that they will not receive follow-up from the NCSP if they are not enrolled.

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**Referral to colposcopy service**      Colposcopy services referral recommendations for the NCSP are detailed in “Cervical Screening Guidelines for Management of Women with an Abnormal Smear” NCSP Ministry of Health 1999.

Referral of women with abnormal smears to colposcopy should occur promptly and a copy of the cytology result must accompany the referral letter.

Where there are female colposcopists available women should be informed of this and if desired the referral may request a female colposcopist.

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**Standard 412**      **Smear takers will have processes in place, which ensure all women with an abnormal smear result are appropriately followed up.**

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**Filing**      The smear taker should see all laboratory results, and initiate appropriate recall or referral prior to the results being filed.

All reports, results and letters which identify an individual woman must be held in accordance with the Health Information Privacy Code. Wherever possible a lockable cabinet or secure premises are to be utilised. Confidentiality of clients records are to be maintained at all times.

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**Transfer of women if a smear taker ceases to perform smear-taking.**      In the event that a smear taker ceases to perform smear taking, the smear taker must arrange for an appropriate smear taker to take over the client base and recall system.

The smear taker must ensure that a process is in place with the new smear taker that ensures women are informed of the change before or at the time of recall.

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