



17 November 2020

**Cancer Research UK, Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust and The Eve Appeal's joint statement in support of WHO's Global Strategy to Accelerate the Elimination of Cervical Cancer**

Globally, nearly 600,000 people are diagnosed each year with cervical cancer and approximately 300,000 people around the world die each year from this disease<sup>i</sup>, the majority of whom live in lower-resource countries. Here in the UK, each year there are around 3,200 cases of cervical cancer and around 850 people lose their lives<sup>ii</sup>. Yet, virtually all cervical cancer cases are preventable<sup>iii</sup>. Therefore, we welcome the official launch of the World Health Organization's Global Strategy to Accelerate the Elimination of Cervical Cancer as a public health problem. It calls for global collaboration to drive down cervical cancer incidence rates and improve treatment across the globe, with a focus on reducing inequalities between and within countries.

The UK has made good progress in reducing cervical cancer deaths through the cervical screening programme implemented in the late 1980s which saves at least 2,000 lives each year and the roll out of the HPV vaccine in 2008, which protects against the HPV types which cause more than 70% of cervical cancers. However, there is still more to be done to save more lives from this preventable disease. This includes supporting work to increase informed uptake for the vaccine and cervical screening, focusing on groups where uptake is especially low, for example in ethnic minorities and more deprived groups, to ensure equitable access to these life-saving prevention services.

In the coming months, Governments across the UK must protect cancer services through future peaks of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. This includes getting cervical screening services back on track and running a catchup programme for the HPV vaccine for the millions who missed out due to the pandemic<sup>iv</sup>. Ensuring those who are eligible feel safe to take up their invitation is essential.

To ensure more lives can be saved in the UK in the future, Governments and relevant organisations across the UK should commit to the ambitions set out in the WHO strategy. Specifically, we call for the development of plans to optimise HPV vaccination and cervical screening programmes. This should detail strategies for the swift adoption of new technologies and implementing initiatives targeted at increasing informed uptake and reducing inequalities.

If we get this right, it will mean that one day it will be possible to say that nobody should die from cervical cancer. Modelling suggests that globally, this could mean at least 2 million lives will be saved by 2040 and over 4 million by 2050<sup>v</sup>.

To reduce the impact of cervical cancer, we, as the three leading charities for cervical cancer in the UK, will:

- Keep advocating to ensure that the UK has one of the best HPV vaccination and cervical screening programmes in the world
- Commit to sharing our expertise and learnings by engaging in collaborative efforts globally

- Continue to provide accessible information based on the best available evidence to the public, patients and healthcare professionals about the importance of prevention, in addition to support following a diagnosis.

#### **About Cancer Research UK:**

Cancer Research UK (CRUK) is the world's largest cancer charity dedicated to saving lives through research. We support research into over 200 types of cancer, and our vision is to bring forward the day when all cancers are cured. In 2019/20, we committed £468 million to cancer research in institutes, hospitals and universities. Our long-term investment in state-of-the-art facilities has helped to create a thriving network of research at 90 laboratories and institutions in more than 40 towns and cities across the UK supporting the work of over 4,000 scientists, doctors and nurses. Our retail network of 600 shops is staffed by over 1,800 people.

#### **About The Eve Appeal:**

The Eve Appeal is the UK's leading national charity raising awareness and funding research in the five gynaecological cancers- womb, ovarian, cervical, vulval and vaginal. It was set up to save women's lives by funding ground-breaking research focused on developing effective methods of risk prediction, prevention and earlier detection the gynae cancers. The world-leading research that we fund is ambitious and challenging but our vision is simple; a future where fewer women develop and more women survive gynaecological cancers. [eveappeal.org.uk](http://eveappeal.org.uk) @eveappeal

#### **About Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust:**

Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust is the UK's leading cervical cancer charity. We provide information and support to anyone affected by cervical cancer or cell changes and campaign for excellence in treatment and prevention. Our vision is the day that cervical cancer is a thing of the past. Our free national Helpline is on 0808 802 8000. [jostrust.org.uk](http://jostrust.org.uk)

---

<sup>i</sup> The Lancet, [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X\(19\)30482-6/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(19)30482-6/fulltext), Accessed November 2020

<sup>ii</sup> Cancer Research UK, <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/health-professional/cancer-statistics/statistics-by-cancer-type/cervical-cancer> Accessed November 2020

<sup>iii</sup> International Agency for Research on Cancer. *IARC Monograph 100B: Biological Agents - Human Papillomaviruses.*; 2012 Accessed November 2020

<sup>iv</sup> Public Health England, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/927694/hpr1920\\_HPV-vc.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/927694/hpr1920_HPV-vc.pdf) Accessed November 2020

<sup>v</sup> WHO <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/cervical-cancer/cerv-cancer-elimn-strategy-16dec-12pm.pdf> Accessed November 2020