

24 September 2025

Ms Sonia Hayes
HM Area Coroner for Essex
Seax House
Victoria Road South
Chelmsford
Essex
CM1 1QH

Dear Ms Hayes

Re: Regulation 28 Prevention of Future Deaths Report (Quy Thi Pham)

I write in response to your regulation 28 report dated 11 August 2025 regarding the very sad death of Quy Thi Pham. I would like to express my sincere condolences to Quy's family.

The patient safety leads at NICE have carefully considered the content of your report and understand that your request relates to cervical screening post-partum.

Firstly, it may be helpful for me to clarify that the recommendation that cervical screening should be delayed for women who are less than 12 weeks post-partum does not come from guidance produced by NICE, but from Public Health England (PHE) guidelines, 'Ceasing and deferring women from the NHS Cervical Screening Programme [[PHE, 2019](#)]'. We believe that the issues raised within your report are therefore best addressed by NHS England's NHS Cervical Screening programme, and I note that your report has also been sent to them.

As background, this recommendation is referred to in the clinical knowledge summaries (CKS) section on [cervical screening](#) on the NICE website. CKS are developed by an external company called [Agilio Software](#) and are designed to summarise the evidence on the treatment of specific health conditions, however they do not constitute NICE guidance. We work with the publisher to make the CKS available on our website and, while they may refer to NICE guidance (if there is any that is relevant), they also use many other sources. They are written for health professionals working in primary care (usually GPs) however the guidance is freely available for anyone to access.

We will make Agilio aware of the concerns you raise so that they can check for any updates to the NHS Cervical Screening Programme when they next update this topic.

Although not directly mentioned in your report, it may be helpful for us to also highlight our guideline [Suspected cancer: recognition and referral \(NG12\)](#). Section 1.5 deals with

gynaecological cancers and discussed cervical cancer in recommendation 1.5.13 which recommends:

'Consider a suspected cancer pathway referral for women if, on examination, the appearance of their cervix is consistent with cervical cancer'.

The rationale for that recommendation is on page 169 of the [full guideline](#):

'The GDG noted that a cervix with an appearance consistent with cervical cancer is likely to be a symptom of cervical cancer. The GDG agreed, based on their clinical experience, that had this symptom been studied it would have had a positive predictive value of 3% or above. The GDG therefore agreed to recommend a suspected cancer pathway referral for this symptom. The GDG also discussed the likely PPVs for other symptoms, such as inter-menstrual bleeding, post-coital bleeding and vaginal discharge. However, the GDG agreed that these were likely to be extremely low as these symptoms are very common and cervical cancer is relatively rare. The GDG therefore decided not to make any further recommendations based on symptoms. Due to the lack of evidence and the fact that there is no other obvious test for a cervix with an appearance consistent with cervical cancer in primary care, the GDG were not able to recommend a particular test beyond visual inspection for the primary care investigation of cervical cancer.'

The recommendations in this guideline represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, professionals and practitioners are expected to take this guideline fully into account, alongside the individual needs, preferences and values of their patients or the people using their service. It is not mandatory for the NHS to apply the recommendations, and the guideline does not override the responsibility to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual, in consultation with them and their families and carers or guardian.

I hope that the information above is helpful and would like to reiterate my sincere condolences to Quay's family.

Yours sincerely,

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of the Chief Executive.

Chief executive