**NHS England Vaccination and Screening Directorate: Identification and referral Service of women at Very High Risk (VHR) following radiotherapy Request for Information (RFI)**

The Vaccination and Screening directorate (V&S) forms part of NHS England and exists to protect and improve the nation’s health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities. This is achieved through world-leading science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships, and the delivery of specialist public health services. NHSE V&S leads the NHS Screening Programmes.

Screening is a process of identifying apparently healthy people who may be at increased risk of a disease or condition. People can then be offered information, further tests, and appropriate treatment to reduce their risk and/or any complications arising from the disease or condition.

This document is related to the NHS Breast Screening Programme and the overview of requirements for the future Identification and referral Service of women at Very High Risk (VHR) following radiotherapy.

**NHS Breast Screening Programme**

The UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) recommends screening for [breast cancer](https://view-health-screening-recommendations.service.gov.uk/breast-cancer/). In England, there are two elements to the NHS breast screening programme (NHSBSP). Screening aims to detect breast cancers at the earliest opportunity, maximise the success of treatment and reduce mortality from breast cancer.

* **routine breast screening** is offered to all women registered with a GP practice between the age of 50 up to their 71st birthday, every 3 years. A woman will receive her first invitation to breast screening sometime between her 50th and 53rd birthday. Women aged 71 and over may self-refer every 3 years by contacting their local breast screening service.
* **women identified as being at very high risk (VHR) of breast cancer** are invited for annual surveillance. Women at VHR are eligible to be screened from the age of 20 upwards with the majority reaching the appropriate level of risk from the age of 30 years according to the [VHR protocols](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/breast-screening-higher-risk-women-surveillance-protocols) devised by the NHSBSP. The NHSBSP delivers screening for women at very high risk of breast cancer (definition >40% lifetime risk) using annual MRI and/or mammography dependent on their age and breast density.

###### In 2011 the [national cancer strategy](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-national-cancer-strategy) clarified how health and care services should aim to improve results for all cancer patients and achieve the specific aim of improving cancer survival rates. The current NHSBSP VHR programme was incorporated into the NHSBSP in 2012. The VHR cohort of women are a subset of the high-risk group defined by the [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg164/ifp/chapter/Early-detection-of-breast-cancer-by-surveillance) Women at increased, but less than very high, risk are not currently screened within the NHSBSP.

Subsequently guidance was published by the NHS BSP to support service delivery. This guidance has been updated and revised over time.

###### The VHR cohort are currently identified and referred into the NHSBSP via clinical genetics services, clinical oncologists, and the service commissioned by NHS England from the Breast screening After Radiotherapy Dataset Group (BARD).

Patients cured of a first cancer at a young age are at an increased risk of developing a second primary breast cancer. This is demonstrated in female survivors of Hodgkin Lymphoma (HL) and Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma (NHL) who received radiotherapy to breast tissue under the age of 36 and whose subsequent risk of breast cancer is raised.

There will be a small number of women who have received radiotherapy to breast tissue as part of a treatment plan for diagnoses other than lymphoma. Current national guidelines recommend that screening should start 8 years after radiotherapy to breast tissue or at age 25 or 30 (depending on circumstances), whichever occurs later.

###### In [2022/23](https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/breast-screening-programme/england---2022-23/mainreport2223#section-7-women-at-very-high-risk-experimental-statistics-), 10,493 women were screened within the NHSBSP VHR pathway.

**Overview of Requirements**

There is currently a national confidential database of women in England who have received radiotherapy involving breast tissue before the age of 36. It was established to ensure all those at risk can be informed of screening options at the right time and be referred for breast screening through the NHSBSP VHR programme.

The national [**B**reast screening **A**fter **R**adiotherapy **D**ataset](https://digital.nhs.uk/ndrs/our-work/ncras-partnerships/breast-screening-after-radiotherapy-dataset-bard) (BARD) was established in collaboration with Public Health England to identify patients who received radiotherapy to breast tissue from 2009, treatment data is sought from the cancer registration systems by the [NHS National Disease Registration Service](https://digital.nhs.uk/ndrs/our-work/ncras-partnerships/breast-screening-after-radiotherapy-dataset-bard) (NDRS). The first referrals via the BARD service into the NHS very high-risk screening programme were made in October 2020.

The current service contract initiated in April 2022.

The current service delivers the following:

* identifies potentially eligible patients by receiving patient level data from the NDRS of women in England with a diagnosis of Hodgkin Lymphoma and Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma aged below 36 and have received radiotherapy. There is an honorary contact in place with the service and NDRS to support data transfer and information governance requirements.
* confirms eligibility by liaising with radiotherapy centres to determine whether the radiotherapy treatment involved breast tissue.
* runs checks within breast IT systems to assess if the women are registered on the NHSE breast IT: BS-Select (breast call: recall system) using their NHS number to see if they are already being offered breast screening. Results of these checks are then used to inform if a specific patient requires a referral
* completes NHSE referral forms for very high-risk screening and sends securely to the appropriate breast screening service.
* provides advice and support to health professionals, breast screening services and patients regarding eligibility of cases for referral into the breast screening programme, including women treated abroad.
* conducts an annual audit of BARD referrals to ensure all have been actioned by breast screening services.
* produces a newsletter which is cascaded to breast services and commissioners bi-annually to update on progress
* any duties as required to support the BARD-NHSE collaboration.
* attends contract management meetings with NHSE and provides activity data.

**Description of the Engagement**

NHS England is asking potential bidders to complete a market assessment questionnaire to help inform the future commissioning of the service.

The aim of the market engagement exercise is to inform potential providers of the opportunity and to collate feedback. The information will be used to assist NHS England V&S in deciding on the most appropriate approach for the future of the service.

Completed questionnaires must be submitted by 15:00 hours on the 04 December 2024 via the Atamis Tendering system. The RFI questions are provided on page 4,5 and 6 of this document.

Any procurement conducted as a result of this notice will be advertised separately and all suppliers interested will be required to respond to the procurement advertisement once published. This process is not in any way connected to the tendering and evaluation process of any subsequent procurement process and responses to this RFI will not be evaluated or scored or part of any selection process.

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| **Name of your Organisation:** |  |
| **Contact Name(s) and Role(s):** |  |
| **Please state the type of organisation e.g., Public limited Company, Limited Company, Charity, Social Enterprise, NHS organisation, other.** |  |
| **Address:** |  |
| **Telephone Number:** |  |
| **Email Address:** |  |

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| 1.Servicee model (Clinical and Programme management) |
| * 1. Do you currently provide a similar service?
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| 1.1.1 If yes, please provide details of the service and organisations involved. Please include the number of similar contracts you currently hold and organisations, locations, including annual activity levels if applicable  |
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| 1.2 What are your views on the current service and how do you think this could be improved / developed? |
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| 1.3 How do you envisage the service model working in relation to the clinical and wider programme aspects?  |
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| 1.4 Please explain how the requirements could be met in relation to:* clinical pathways and management
* communication and working relationships with NDRS and the wider NHS
* Annual audits
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| 2. Stakeholders |
| 2.1 Which key stakeholders do you think would be key to the delivery of a national database of NHSBSP eligible radiotherapy patients? |
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| Organisation Name |  |
| Role |  |
| Function in the delivery of a national database of NHSBSP eligible radiotherapy patients |  |

Please repeat as necessary  |

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| 3. Mobilisation  |
| 3.1 Please outline the timescales and elements required in mobilising the service. |
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| 3.2 What initial resources would need to be considered / required for taking on this this contract? |
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| 4. Service Standards and Key Performance Indicators (KPI’s) |
| 4.1 How do you envisage the screening standards, KPI’s and reporting requirements being met for the service?  |
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| 5. Challenges |
| 5.1 Are there any challenges you would foresee in the development / overall delivery of the service? For example; required timescales, required resource, IT development capability and patient data quality. |
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| 6. Pricing  |
| 6.1 Can you give an indicative range for pricing that would be acceptable to provide this service? Please provide pricing per year (year1&2) |
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| 6.2 Would you be interested in bidding for this service? Please provide any rationale for your response |
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| 7. Other  |
| 7.1 Please provide any feedback or observations you think we should consider as part of the service and future procurement |
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| 7.2 If required, would you be interested in attending a supplier meeting to further explore your response to this RFI? |
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