

# BMUS TVUS guidance 18 months on

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THE BRITISH MEDICAL ULTRASOUND SOCIETY

BMUS 

Transvaginal Ultrasound  
Examinations – Guidance  
for Practitioners

Produced by the British Medical Ultrasound Society

October 2022

*‘Transvaginal ultrasound is the **primary** imaging modality for assessing the female pelvis due to its dynamic nature, acceptability, high resolution and absence of ionising radiation.’*

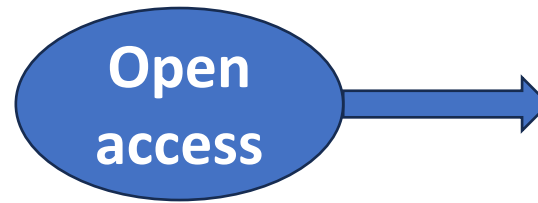


# Rationale for development of BMUS guidance

## Eligibility

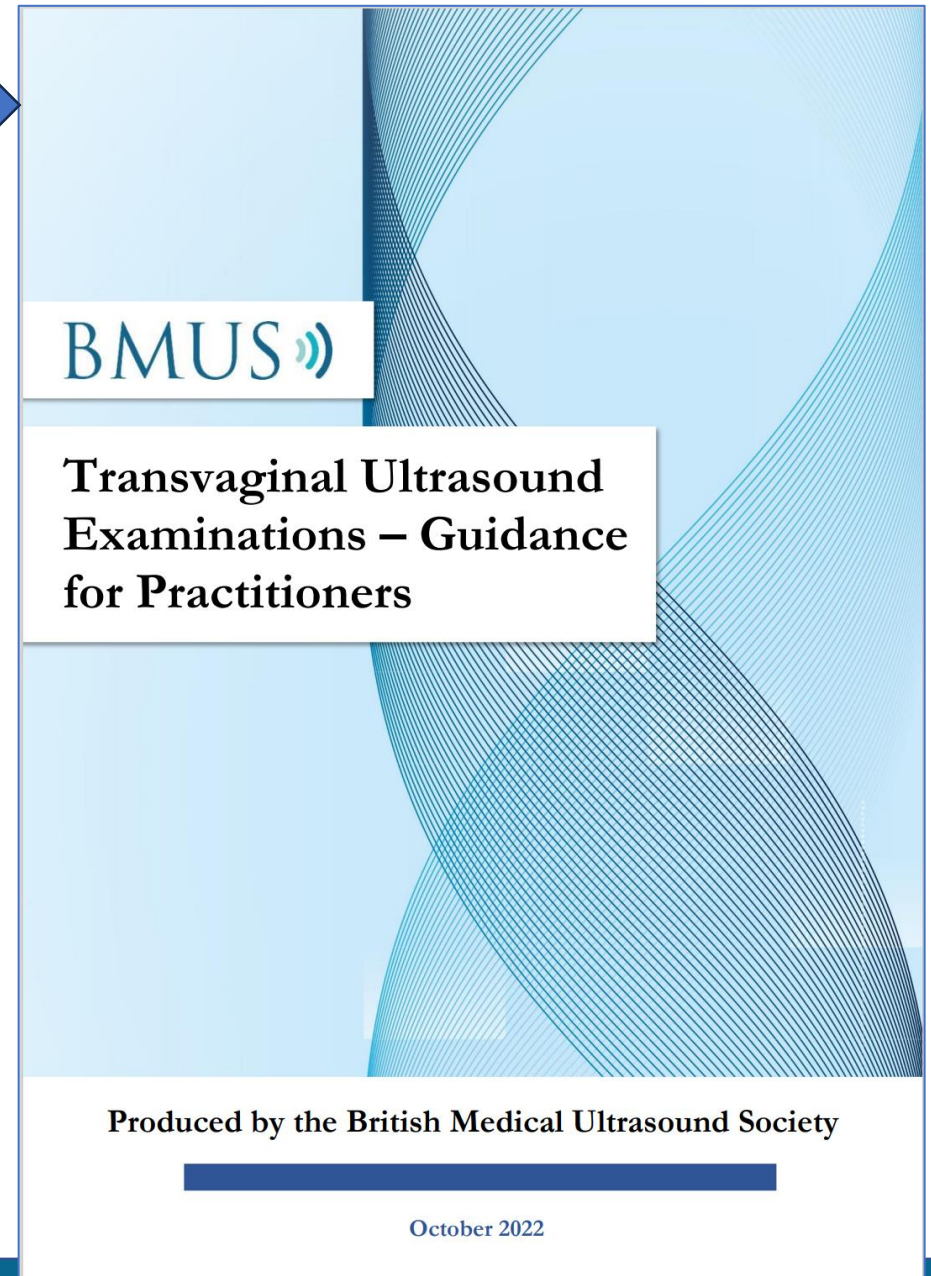
- Anecdotal information
- NHS clinical depts
- BPAS
- Literature search revealed a gap





## What's in it?

- Who is eligible to be offered a TV scan
- Current best practice
  - patient choice
  - chaperones
  - When not to offer TVUS

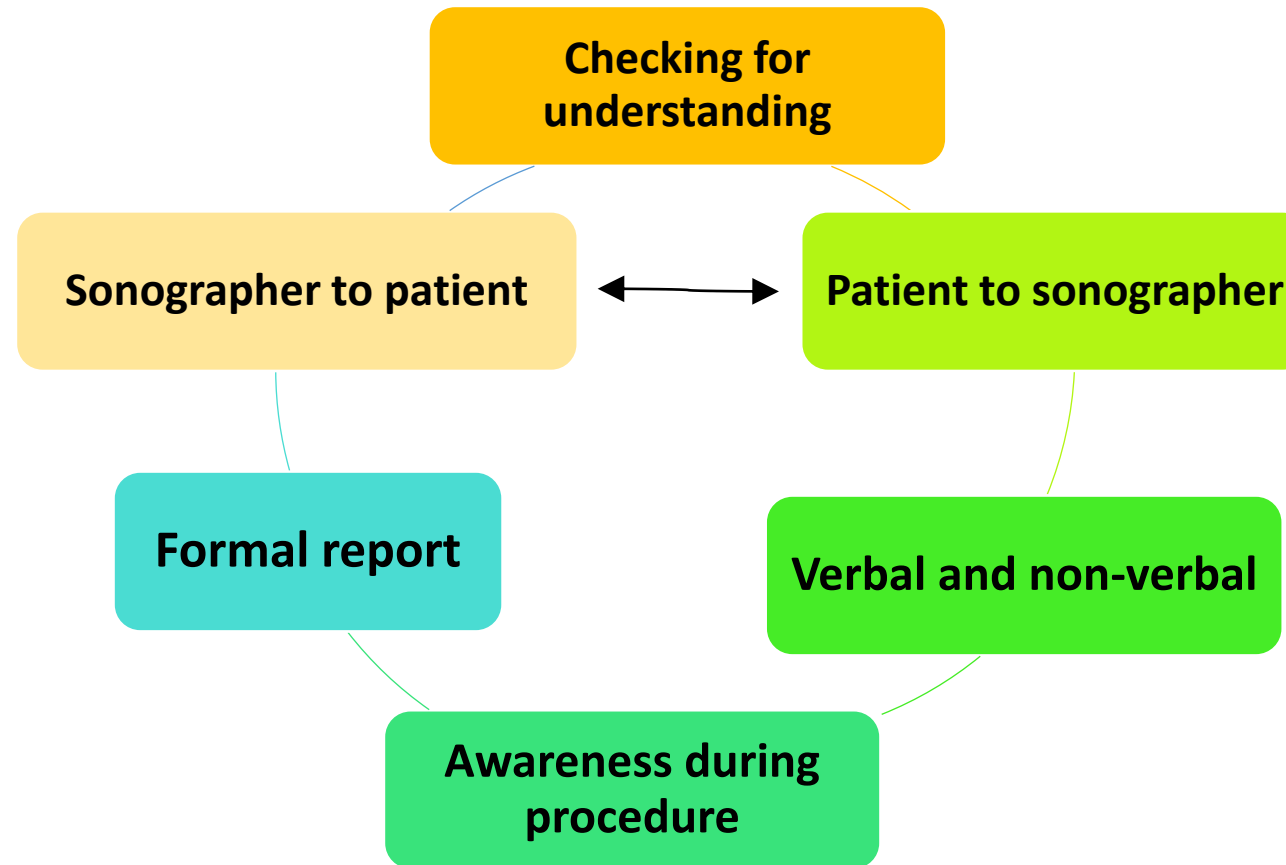


# Recipe for successful and safe TVUS

Good communication

Chaperone

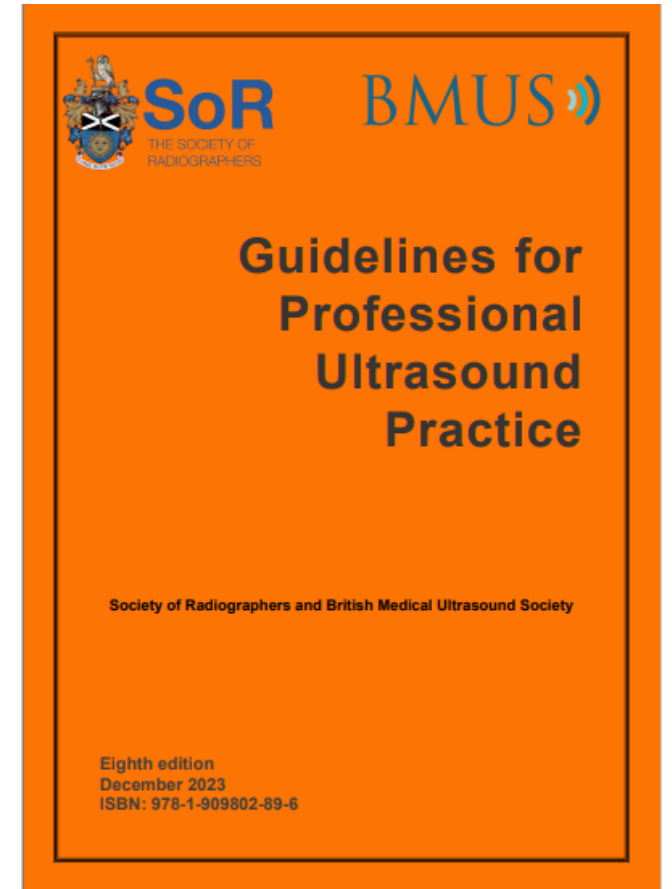
# Good communication



# Chaperone

- Member of clinical staff ***who observes procedure***
- Not clerical staff
- Not a student
- Not a friend/relative of patient (although they may be present too)

*\*Patient may decline a chaperone*



# Over £1.3m paid out to 39 victims of convicted sex offender Myles Bradbury by Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

- Paediatrician jailed in 2014 for abusing young patients
- Some abused behind a curtain while parents were in the room

*“He manipulated safety procedures to harm those in his care and broke the trust of his patients, their families and his colleagues in the NHS.”*

(CUH spokesperson)



But what if you want a chaperone but there's no one spare?

Cost of extra RDAs



Cost of investigation,  
potential litigation and  
stress to all involved

# Who is eligible to be offered TVUS? - age

- People 16 years or over

*\*not adult until 18 years*

*In UK law, young people aged 16 and over are presumed to have capacity. They can consent to, or refuse, treatment in their own right, including hospital admission.*

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

- Postmenopausal/older women

*\*No upper age limit*

- Frailty may influence decision to proceed

- Good communication

- Vaginal atrophy
- Prolapse
- Pessaries

[uk\\_pessary\\_guideline\\_final\\_april21.pdf](http://uk_pessary_guideline_final_april21.pdf)  
([thepogp.co.uk](http://thepogp.co.uk))

# Eligibility

Those who've not had penetrative vaginal sex? Yes

- Traditional concept of virginity plays no part in clinical decision making
- May be born without a hymen
- Others tear theirs e.g. during exercise and sports activities
- Good counselling and informed consent
- Close monitoring during exam
- Accurate documentation

**Ref:** Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. 2021. [rcog-virginity-testing-hymenoplasty-position-statement-august-2021.pdf](https://www.rcog.org.uk/~/media/rcogmedia/documents/clinical%20practice/2021/210114-rcog-virginity-testing-hymenoplasty-position-statement-august-2021.pdf)

# Hundreds of women 'denied healthcare for being virgins'

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/wxn38m/women-virgins-ultrasounds-uk-healthcare>

*Source: VICE World News, 2023*

VICE World News claimed to have found more than 200 people who said they'd not had access to TVUS

“No woman should ever be denied access to healthcare on the grounds of virginity” (RCOG)



# Eligibility: gender identity & sexuality

- Transmen
  - Transwomen
  - Intersex
  - Non-binary
  - Asexual
  - Bisexual
  - Lesbian
- Transgender issues: very much an evolving field in healthcare



# Eligibility - Survivors of sexual abuse/FGM

- Sexual and domestic abuse – all eligible to be offered TVUS
- Opportunity to discuss exam in advance of appointment
- If TVUS accepted, respect requests for specific staff gender

- FGM? Different types – all illegal - some not compatible with TVUS
- NHS Trusts must report cases to Home Office
- Since April 2015, 34,450 individuals had an NHS attendance where FGM was identified (Sept 2023)
- Estimated 20,000 children at risk of FGM and 66,000 people are living with its consequences in UK

*The beliefs of the ultrasound practitioner must not affect the patient's right to be offered a transvaginal scan*

- If the practitioner
  - is a man
  - has specific religious/cultural beliefs
  - deems TVUS as 'medical rape'
- ✓ OK if the practitioner deems TVUS unnecessary

# Who is *ineligible* to be offered TVUS?

- Minors\*
- Suspected PCO in people within 8 years of onset of menarche

Ref: NICE. [Investigations | Diagnosis | Polycystic ovary syndrome | CKS | NICE](#) February 2024

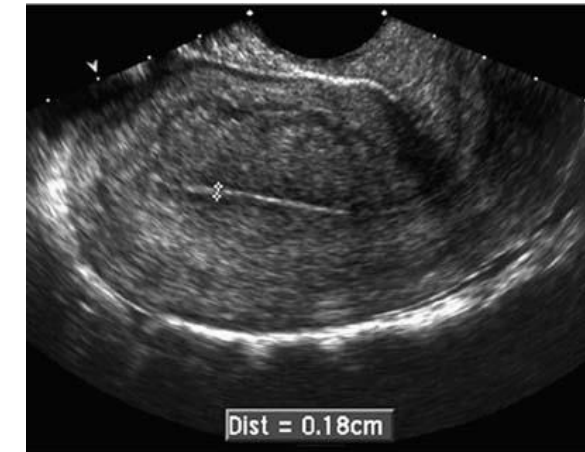
- Vaginal obstruction
- Premature rupture of membranes
- Placenta praevia with bleeding





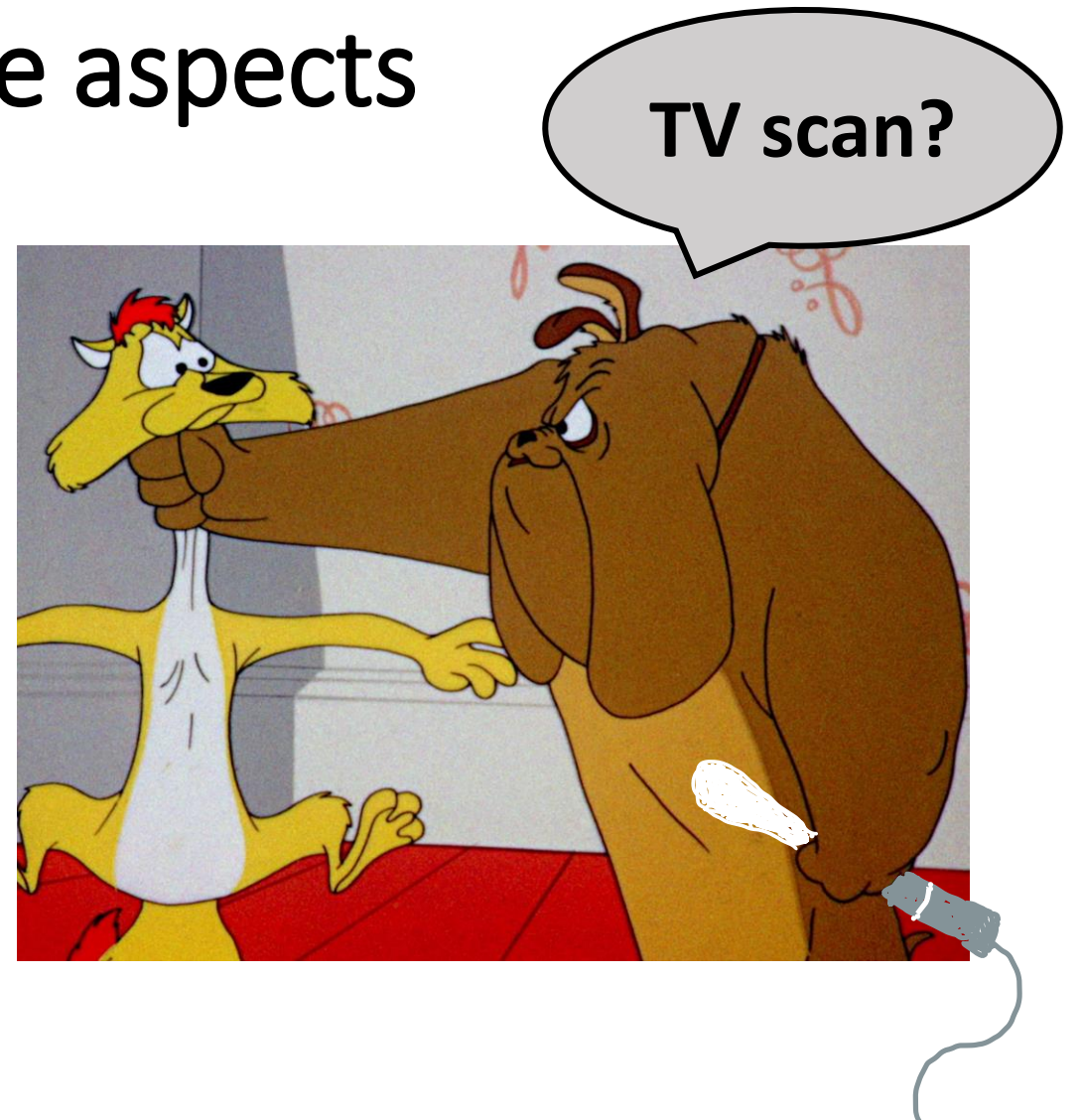
# Reported benefits

- Implemented into *\*local protocols* with no negative events reported to date
- Empowered staff – ‘it’s really helped with getting the right test done’
- Modernised the service
- Less discrimination
- Busted the myths on pessaries
- Result: more TVUS offered and performed



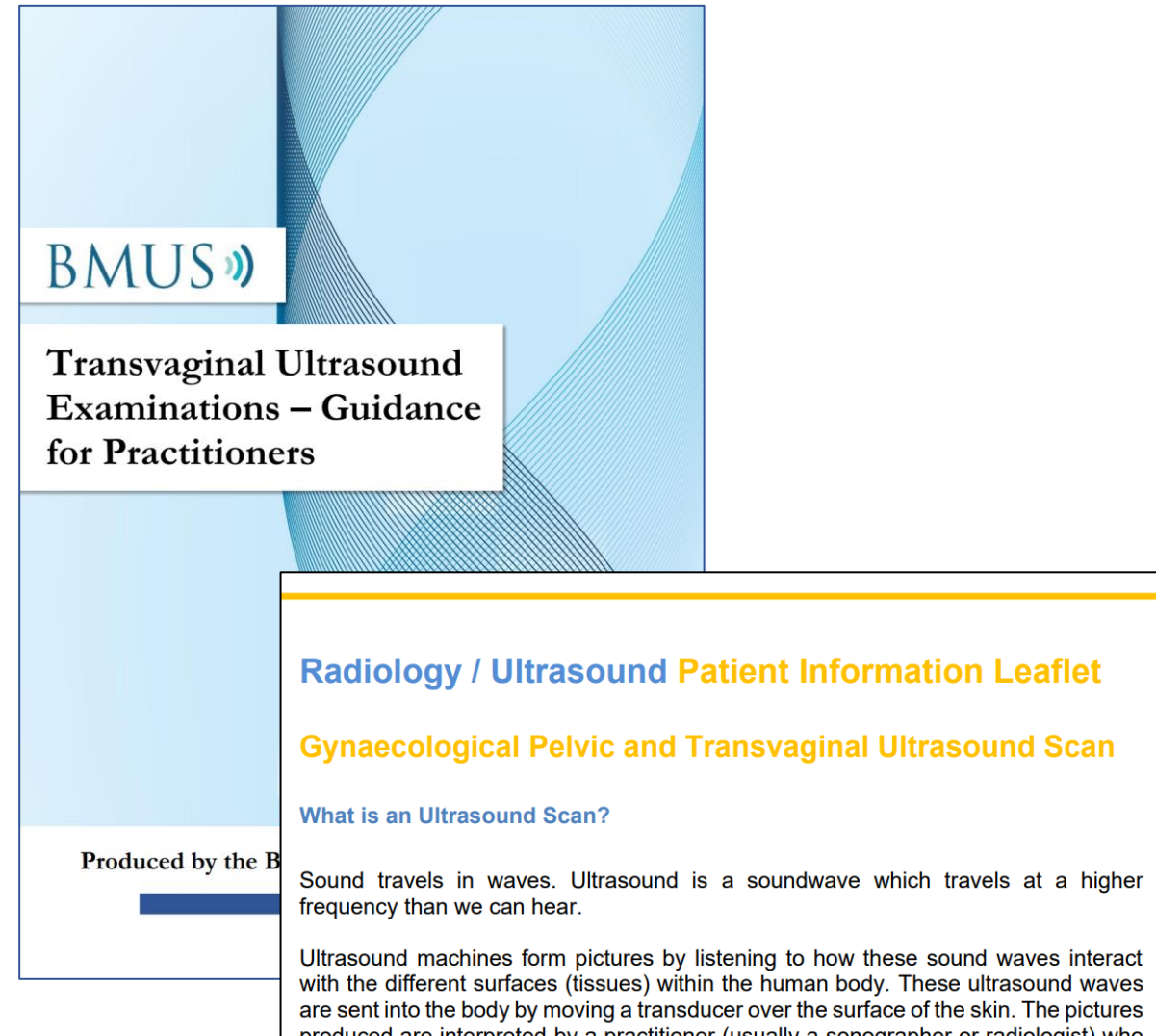
## Reported negative aspects

- Some staff feel they're expected to force people to have TVUS
- Some would like written consent
- Some depts know individual staff still enforce their views
- Some depts feel under pressure to supply chaperones



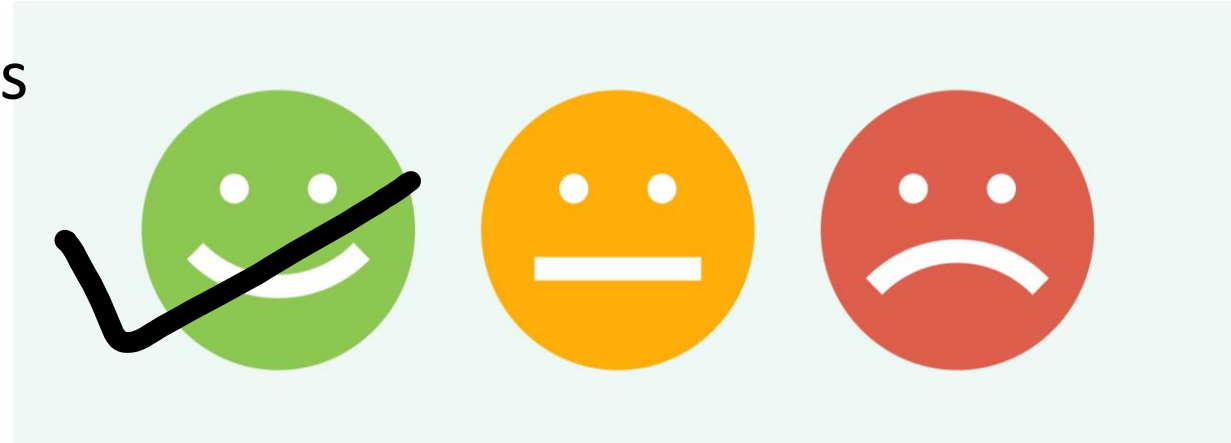
# Going forward

- Planning revision for Oct 2024
- Text and reference updates
- Already offer patient info leaflet
- May develop consent form to be used or adapted



## Conclusion

- BMUS TVUS Guidance: a positive impact on patients
- Consider aligning your local protocols to modernise your service and avoid discrimination
- Adhere to your local protocols
- Good communication
- Any patient may decline TVUS
- But very few are ineligible to be **offered** TVUS
- Document everything



***\*Patients deserve access to the right test***

Thank you

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