



The NHS Wales Women's Health Plan

2025 – 2035

Annual Report – One Year On



GIG
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WALES

Perfformiad
a Gwella
Performance
and Improvement

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*Women's health is everyone's health.
By improving the health of women in Wales,
we will improve the health of the nation.*

Dr Helen Munro, Clinical Lead, Strategic Network for Women's Health



Introduction and background

This annual report, produced by the National Strategic Clinical Network for Women's Health, reflects key activities and achievements from the first year of the 10-year NHS Wales Women's Health Plan.

We, in partnership with the NHS and Welsh Government, have made significant strides in its first year, laying the foundations for integrated, equitable and evidence-based women's health services across Wales. Through stakeholder engagement and a commitment to co-production and research, we are on track to deliver the ambitious vision set out in The NHS Wales Women's Health Plan.



Our purpose

We operate as a nationally coordinated network, dedicated to advancing the quality, safety and equity of women's healthcare.

Over the next decade, our goal is to close the gender health gap by delivering a comprehensive vision that focuses on:

- **Prevention** – promoting health and wellbeing at every stage of life
- **Workforce development** – ensuring skilled professionals across all services
- **Digital accessibility** – making information and care easier to access.

This approach will help ensure that women across Wales benefit from improved services and better health outcomes.

How we work

We meet monthly with the Clinical Reference Group, which brings together experienced clinicians from women's health specialties, royal colleges, academia, allied health professionals and patient advocacy organisations.

Alongside this, a Leadership Group provides strategic oversight and includes clinical leaders in women's health, education, data and digital, and women's health leadership from health boards (the organisations responsible for delivering NHS services) across Wales.

Supporting these groups are dedicated sub-groups focused on:

- Training
- Workforce planning
- Data
- Digital access
- Public Health

Together, these groups ensure a collaborative and integrated approach to advancing women's health in Wales.



Women's voices at the heart of the plan

The NHS Wales Women's Health Plan was shaped by the voices of over 4,000 women. Their lived experiences were central to its design, ensuring the plan reflects the realities of women living in Wales.

As we move from strategy to delivery, our commitment to co-production remains strong. This year, we worked with school children and young people across Wales to co-design new learning materials for 11–16-year-olds. These resources support health literacy on menstrual health, endometriosis, pelvic health and menopause, ensuring content is relevant, evidence-based and accessible to diverse learners.

We are applying the same principles to the development of the new NHS Wales Women's Health Website. Women from across Wales, including underrepresented groups, have helped shape its design, navigation and content. Their insights guide decisions on how information is structured, the types of media used and how the site feels on the devices women use most, particularly mobile phones. Engagement is ongoing, with real-time feedback continuing to shape improvements and keep the platform relevant over time.





Our vision is that in 10 years:



Women will experience better access to health services and information, with improved health outcomes, reduced inequalities in health and a focus on prevention.

Our workforce will be appropriately skilled and trained to deliver women's health in a variety of settings, providing for a range of complexity.

Health boards will prioritise women's health services across the life course and listen to and act upon the voices of women in the development of these services.

Data collection across Wales in every service, irrespective of specialism, will be disaggregated by gender and sex. This data will be used to better understand women's health needs, through research and innovation, to improve service provision and outcomes.



Statement from Dr Helen Munro

This year marked the successful implementation of the first phase of The NHS Wales Women's Health Plan. It has been both exciting and challenging, with collaboration driving progress across all eight priority areas.

A key achievement was working with health boards to design women's health hubs, supported by the passion of clinical leaders, the vision of senior responsible officers and meaningful engagement with those with lived experience.

Inclusivity remains central to the Plan, ensuring active engagement with diverse communities and amplifying women's voices in shaping their health services. We have also focused on raising awareness of conditions affecting women and identifying research opportunities to help close the gender health gap – always asking, “What does this mean for women?”

I am privileged to have led the Network through this first stage. There is much more to accomplish, and we look forward to building on this foundation of hard work and collaboration in the year ahead. Women's health is everyone's health.



Dr Helen Munro

Clinical Lead, National Strategic Clinical Network
for Women's Health



“Inclusivity remains central to the Plan, ensuring active engagement with diverse communities and amplifying women's voices in shaping their health services.”

A large, stylized number '2' graphic in a dark blue color, positioned on the right side of the slide. It has a thick, rounded stroke and a curved top that loops back down.

Progress against delivery commitments: ministerial priorities

2. Progress against delivery commitments: ministerial priorities

2.1. Women's Health Hubs

Women's Health Hubs are a new way of organising and delivering care for women across Wales. Rather than being a single building or centre, these hubs represent a coordinated approach by every health board to make it easier for women to access the care they need, at every stage of life. The aim is to ensure fair and easy access for everyone, regardless of where they live or their background.

During the first year, health boards have focused on understanding the needs of their local communities and developing 'pathfinder hubs'. These pathfinder hubs are early versions that help test and shape how the new approach will work in practice.

The main areas of focus are:



Menstrual health (helping with periods and related conditions)



Contraception (support for making choices about pregnancy)



Menopause (guidance and care for changes that happen later in life)





Key milestones in 2025 include:



- **Foundations established** – Recruitment of project managers and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) champions within the National Strategic Clinical Network for Women’s Health. Clinical leads and senior responsible officers (SROs) appointed within each NHS Wales organisation.
- **Funding from Welsh Government** – £3 million was made available by Welsh Government, with a target for each health board to open a pathfinder hub by March 2026.
- **Stakeholder engagement** – The inaugural All Wales Women’s Health Stakeholder Event in March shaped the hubs’ model and co-production framework.
- **Design and planning** – Health boards progressed from scoping and stakeholder engagement to plans for pathfinder hubs and the development of business cases to ensure sustainable funding models.
- **Co-production embedded** – Workshops and focus groups with citizens and wider stakeholders were held to ensure the services reflect women’s needs.
- **Research and innovation** – Investment in a Women’s Health Research Centre launched alongside second-phase funding bids.
- **Clinical implementation guide**: A practical guide was co-created with stakeholders from across Wales to help health boards plan and deliver their Hubs effectively.

By December 2025, all health boards were actively planning their Hubs, laying the groundwork for the first openings in early 2026 – a major step toward the Plan’s 10-year vision.



Women's Health Hubs in Wales



Graphic interpretation of workshop discussions for All Wales Women's Health Stakeholder Event that discussed 'What Could Women's Health Hubs Look Like in Wales?', held 30 September 2024 at Life Sciences Hub Wales.

Visual by EleanorBeer.com 2024

Visual by EleanorBeer.com 2024

2.2 NHS Wales Women's Health Website

Current provision

There is currently a women's health page, launched in 2025, which provides women with health information on the eight priority areas outlined in The NHS Wales Women's Health Plan. This page also includes useful links to resources offering further information and guidance on how to access service-specific care.

We are now working closely with NHS colleagues to expand the content into a website, ensuring it reflects the needs and voices of women across Wales.

What is the new NHS Wales Women's Health Website?

The NHS Wales Women's Health Website is being developed as a trusted, bilingual online resource to support women across Wales. The site is shaped through co-production, meaning it is informed by the experiences and feedback of women from all backgrounds, as well as health professionals and community groups. This ensures the information and support truly reflect what women need and want.

Purpose and features

The website will act as a central platform for clear, reliable information about women's health, making it easier for women to find answers and support at every stage of life. It is designed to help with prevention, early intervention and will guide women to the right care when they need it. The site will follow NHS Wales' standards for accessibility and information security, and will be available in both English and Welsh.

NHS 111 Wales NHS England NHS Scotland NHS Northern Ireland

Home About Us Staff Resources National Programmes and Services NHS Jobs in Wales

Women's Health

Welcome to Women's Health Resources for Wales

Across these pages you will find links to helpful information across the following key areas within women's health as set out in the Women's Health Plan for Wales:

- Menstrual Health
- Endometriosis and Adenomyosis
- Contraception, Post-Natal Contraception and Abortion Care
- Preconception Health
- Pelvic Health and Incontinence
- Menopause
- Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
- Ageing Well and Long-term Conditions Across the Life Course

We recognise that some individuals who need access to women's healthcare do not identify themselves as women or girls, and we are clear that all services must be appropriate and sensitive to individual needs.

We use the terms 'woman' and 'women's health' with the understanding that trans men and non-binary people recorded female at birth are included and may also require access to these services.

We are currently creating a new Women's Health website which will be developed with women in Wales for women in Wales, and these pages are an interim measure while this work is underway.

In the meantime, we hope you find this information useful. If you can't find what you're looking for please get in touch: nhswe_women's.health@wales.nhs.uk

You can also sign up for the Welsh Government Women's Health newsletter dedicated to sharing updates and progress on women's health policy and services across Wales. [Sign up today to stay informed.](#)

Women's Health Plan for Wales

The NHS Wales Women's Health Plan 2025-2035

A ten-year vision that outlines an NHS Wales approach to improving the health...

More

- Menstrual Health
- Endometriosis and Adenomyosis
- Contraception, Post-Natal Contraception and Abortion Care
- Pre-conception Health
- Pelvic Health and Incontinence
- Menopause
- Violence Against Women and Girls
- Ageing Well and Long Term Conditions Across the Life Course

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Built by Digital Health and Care Wales

Co-production in action

Throughout development, the project team are working with advocacy groups, health organisations and women from different communities to make sure the website is inclusive and accessible.

Workshops, conversations and feedback sessions have been held with a wide range of organisations and individuals, ensuring the website is friendly, easy to use and relevant to everyone. This approach helps build trust and ensures the site is shaped by real voices and experiences.

How the website fits with The NHS Wales Women's Health Plan

The NHS Wales Women's Health Plan sets out a commitment to improving access to trusted information, education and support for women. One of its main goals is to tackle inequalities by providing digital-first resources that meet the diverse health and wellbeing needs of women in Wales.

Ongoing development and co-production

Development is ongoing and will be carried out in two phases:

- **Phase 1:** Building the core website on the NHS Wales platform. The design, layout and overall look and feel are being developed by our partners at Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW).

- **Phase 2:** Co-producing content with women and stakeholders through workshops and user testing, ensuring the site reflects real needs and experiences.

What will you find on the website?

The website will be organised around the eight main priorities of The NHS Wales Women's Health Plan, which include:

- Support for periods and menstrual health
- Information about conditions like endometriosis
- Guidance on contraception and pregnancy
- Help with pelvic health and menopause
- Resources for those affected by sexual violence or abuse
- Advice for how we can live well as we age.

This brings together trusted information for women and their supporters at every stage of life, making it easier to find what matters most.

Next steps

The website is expected to launch in early spring 2026, helping women to feel informed and supported when making decisions about their health.



2.3 Improving health literacy in schools

In 2025, we launched bilingual, youth-friendly health learning materials for secondary schools across Wales. These resources were co-produced with young people, school nurses and education partners to ensure they are accessible, relevant and evidence-based.

Initial concept development began in summer 2025, with the Cardiff and Vale Youth Board highlighting the need for discreet information, such as QR codes and easy-to-search terms, that could be accessed privately to avoid embarrassment. Throughout the autumn, we worked closely with schools and students, gathering feedback through both online and face-to-face sessions. Engagement with Pentrehafod School helped refine the materials to meet the needs of diverse learners. School nurses praised the resources and played a key role in helping define what the materials should include, as well as shaped their practical rollout and distribution.

The final products include:

- Posters for discreet locations such as toilets
- Small business cards with QR codes that students can keep and look up information in private

- Leaflets with additional information that can be issued by school nurses.

The resources focus on four key areas of women's health:

- **Menstrual Health:** Understanding periods and when to seek help
- **Endometriosis:** Raising awareness of a condition that can cause pain and other symptoms
- **Pelvic Health:** Caring for bladder and bowel health
- **Menopause:** Navigating the changes that happen when periods stop.

All materials were made available in Welsh and English for the official launch event on 1 December. The launch was attended by the Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Sarah Murphy MS, marking a key milestone for the project.

Beth yw iechyd menywod?
What's women's health?

O fislif i iechyd y pelfis, mae iechyd menywod yn bwysig drwy gydol eu hoes.
Mae dysgu mwy am y corff a phroffadau menywod yn helpu i greu byd mwy cefnogol, gwybodus a chyfarfod bodau ohonon, ac yn rhoi'r offer i ll arys yn iach drwy gydol dy oes.

From periods to pelvic health, women's health matters throughout life.
Learning more about the body and the experiences of women helps to create a more supportive, informed, and equal world for us all, and gives you the tools to stay healthy throughout life.

Dysga fwy am iechyd menywod.
Sgania neu chwilia
Beth yw iechyd menywod Cymru?

Learn more about women's health.
Scan or search
What's women's health Wales?

Beth yw endometriosis?
What's endometriosis?

Mae gan tua 155,000 o fenywod yng Nghymru endometriosis.
Endometriosis yw pan geir meinwe debyg i leinin y groth mewn rhannau eraill o'r corff. I rai pobl, gall hyn achosi msilff poenus, poen pelfig, ac anawsterau beichiogi.

Around 155,000 women in Wales have endometriosis.
Endometriosis is when tissue similar to the lining of the womb, is found in other parts of the body. For some people, this may cause painful periods, pelvic pain, and difficulties getting pregnant.

Dysga fwy am beth yw e a sut mae'n cael ei drin.
Sgania neu chwilia
Beth yw iechyd menywod Cymru?

Learn more about what it is and how it is treated.
Scan or search
What's women's health Wales?



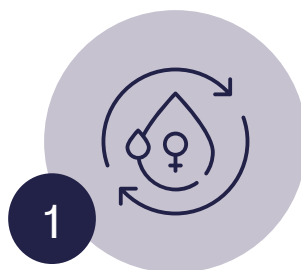
Progress against delivery commitments: priority areas

3. Progress Against Delivery Commitments: Priority Areas

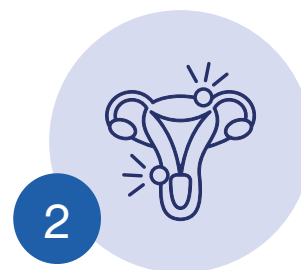
The NHS Wales Women's Health Plan – Year 1 highlights

Better health for women means stronger, healthier families and communities. This annual report shares some of the key deliverables from the first year of The NHS Wales Women's Health Plan.

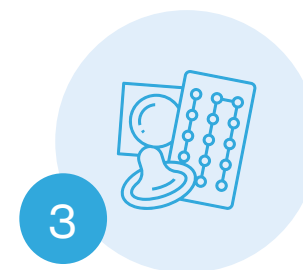
The Plan sets out 64 actions across eight priority areas, which include menstrual health, menopause, contraception, access to services, mental health, reproductive health, education and awareness, and workforce development. These actions are being delivered in phases, with a strong focus on short-term priorities for 2025–2027.



Menstrual Health



Endometriosis and Adenomyosis



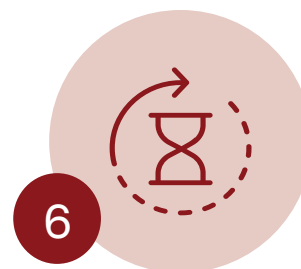
Contraception, Post-Natal Contraception and Abortion Care



Preconception Health



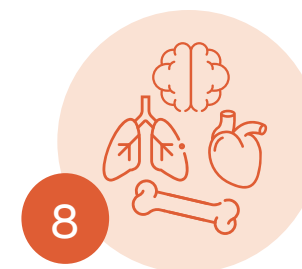
Pelvic Health and Incontinence



Menopause



Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence



Ageing Well and Long-term Conditions Across the Life Course

What's been delivered so far?

We've made strong progress in Year 1. Most of the 64 actions are underway, and momentum is building across all priority areas:

- Plans are in place for all 30 short-term actions (focused on 2025–2027).
- Twenty out of twenty-two medium-term actions (to be delivered within five years) are already in progress.
- Three out of twelve long-term actions (to be delivered over 10 years) have started.



Further key achievements from Year 1

This report expands on some of the key achievements of The NHS Wales Women's Health Plan and highlights important milestones reached during the first year:

- A prototype of the Period Dignity microsite is now available, supporting better access to products and information.
- All health boards have moved into the implementation phase of Women's Health Hubs, bringing services closer to communities.
- School learning materials were launched with the Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing of Wales on 1 December 2025, helping to improve awareness among young people.
- Work to develop a sustainable and equitable model for abortion care in Wales is underway.
- Collaboration is underway on patient experience surveys and pathways for conditions such as myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME)/chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), ensuring services reflect the needs of women.



Year 1 is just the beginning – together we're shaping a healthier future for women in Wales.

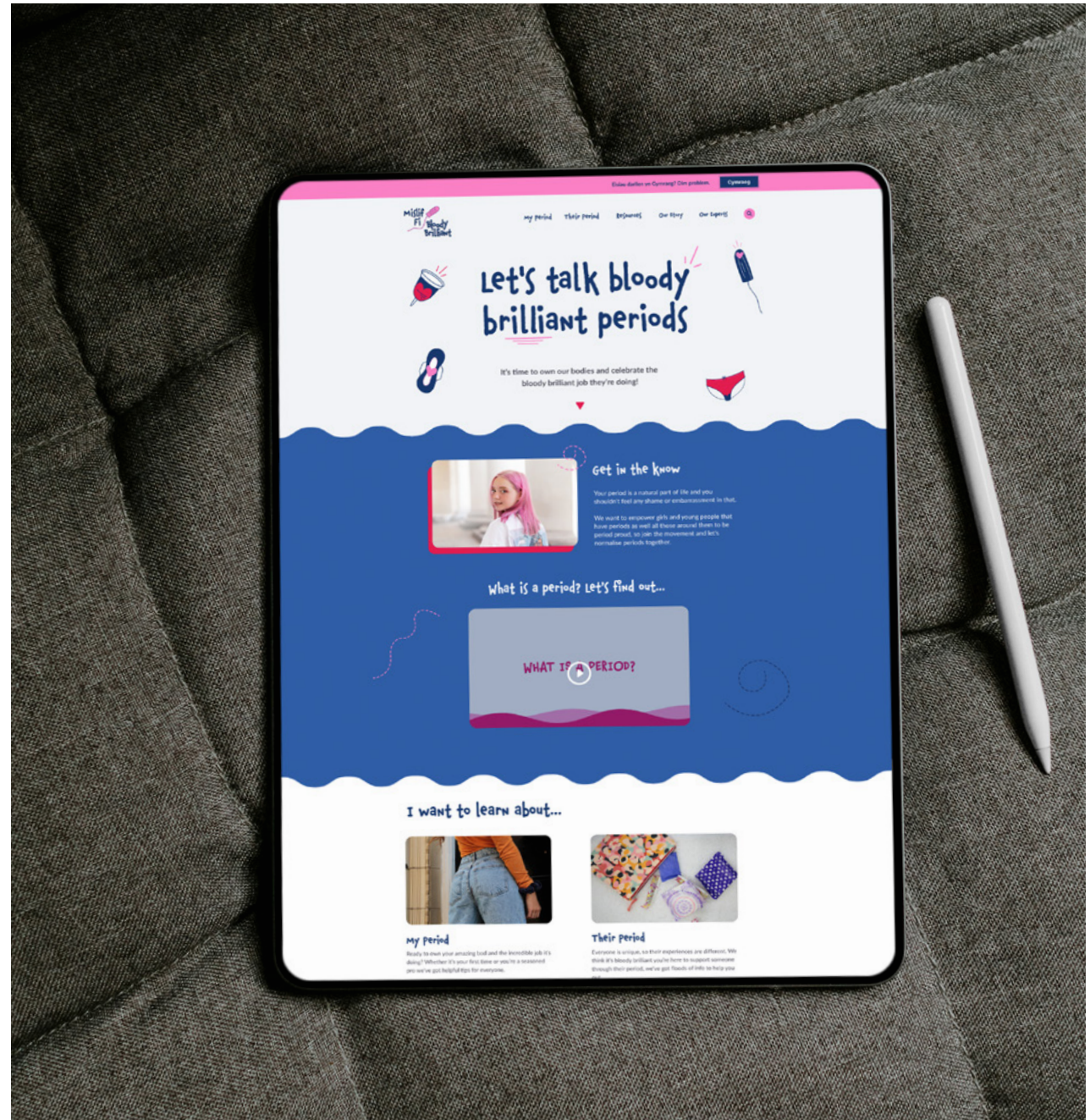


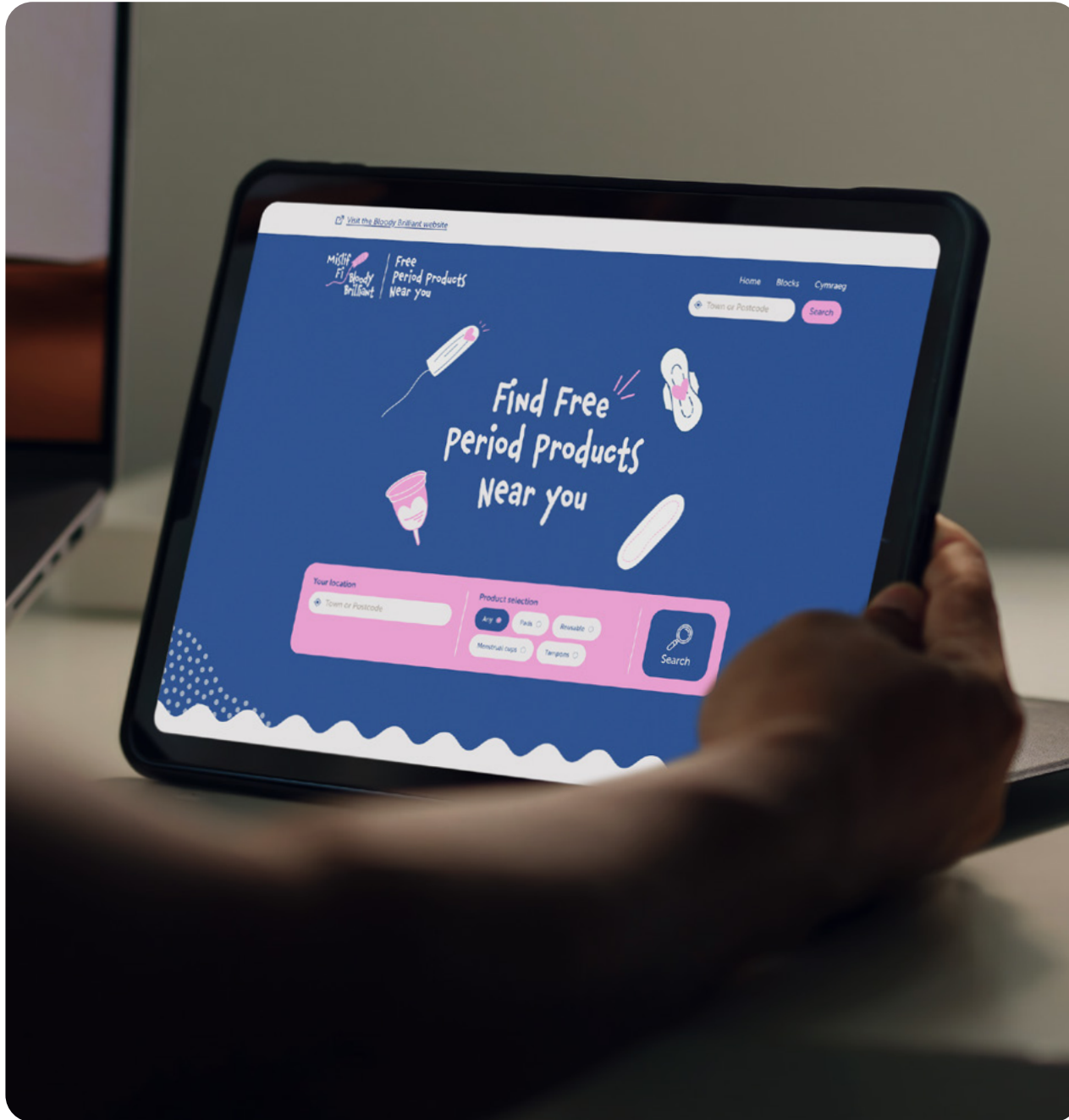
Menstrual Health

Bloody Brilliant

Bloody Brilliant is a dedicated website for menstrual health information in Wales. It provides clear, supportive advice about periods and related topics, aiming to reduce stigma and help people understand what's normal and when to seek help. In 2025, work focused on refreshing the brand to make the site more engaging and user-friendly. This includes a new layout, updated colours, fresh illustrations and interactive features designed to make information easier to access and understand.

By December 2025, a prototype of the new homepage was ready for review, marking an exciting step toward the full relaunch. These improvements will help ensure the website remains a supportive, accessible resource for girls and young people across Wales.





Period Dignity Map: free period products

Access to free period products is an important part of supporting dignity and wellbeing for women and girls. The Period Dignity Map is an online tool that helps people in Wales easily find free period products in their local area. In 2025, a dedicated microsite was launched, making it even easier to search for products when needed. Updates include new product categories, improved search filters and clear guidance to help visitors navigate the site confidently. These improvements ensure that free period products are accessible to everyone who needs them, supporting period dignity and wellbeing across Wales.



Endometriosis and Adenomyosis

Education and training to healthcare professionals

Improving understanding of conditions like endometriosis and adenomyosis is vital for timely diagnosis and better care. To support this, Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) has developed a new e-learning module targeted at all healthcare professionals, available to the NHS Wales workforce through the Y Ty Dysgu platform.

The module, approved by the Endometriosis Nurse Group and Clinical Reference Group, includes patient interviews to bring real experiences to life and deepen professional understanding. It is scheduled for release in February 2026 and will be promoted through social media and workforce communications.

Search site

f in

GIG NHS Addysg a Gwella Iechyd Cymru (a)GIG Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW)

Y Ty Dysgu HEIW education portal for health and care

Cymraeg Log in

Home Sign up guidance Learning Hubs

Welcome to Y Ty Dysgu

Y Ty Dysgu is your dedicated learning hub for all health and care staff across Wales. Explore a wide range of **educational resources**, join **live CPD events**, and access **on-demand recordings** — all designed to support your professional development and lifelong learning.

Sign Up Sign Up Guidance

Browse (Coming Soon) Learning Hubs



Contraception, Post-Natal Contraception and Abortion Care

Abortion care: improving access and equity

The NHS Wales Women's Health Plan recognises the importance of ensuring that all women can access safe, timely and compassionate care, including for more complex situations that may arise later in pregnancy. At present, services for these non-routine cases are delivered by an independent provider, which means some women may need to travel significant distances, sometimes outside of Wales, to receive appropriate care. This can create additional emotional, financial and health challenges.

Throughout 2026, we, alongside Welsh Government, the NHS Wales Joint Clinical Committee and wider partners, will work together to shape sustainable and equitable abortion services.

Priorities include:

- Reducing variation in routine services
- Creating a dedicated non-routine pathway
- Developing a sustainable workforce with specialist training

- Ensuring care is patient-centred and compliant with National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance.

This work will ensure women in Wales can access the care they need as close to home as possible, without unnecessary stress or delay.

Education and training: contraception and post-natal care

Supporting women's health and wellbeing means making sure everyone has access to the right information and care at every stage of life. Two important areas are contraception (methods to prevent pregnancy) and post-natal care, which is the support women receive after giving birth.

What's happening in Wales?

To help health professionals provide the best possible care, new online training courses are being developed.

These courses are designed for people working in the NHS in Wales, such as doctors, nurses and midwives, and will focus on:

- **Contraception** – providing staff with up-to-date knowledge and practical advice so they can support women in making choices that are right for them
- **Contraception after childbirth** (post-natal contraception) – helping professionals understand how to support women's needs during this important time.

These courses are being created with input from experts and people with lived experience, and will be available in both English and Welsh. The aim is to make sure all women in Wales receive consistent, high-quality care, no matter where they live.

How will this help?

By providing clear, evidence-based training, these resources will help health professionals across Wales deliver the right support at the right time. This means women can feel confident that their reproductive needs will be understood and met at every stage of life.



Preconception Health

Preconception health listening exercise

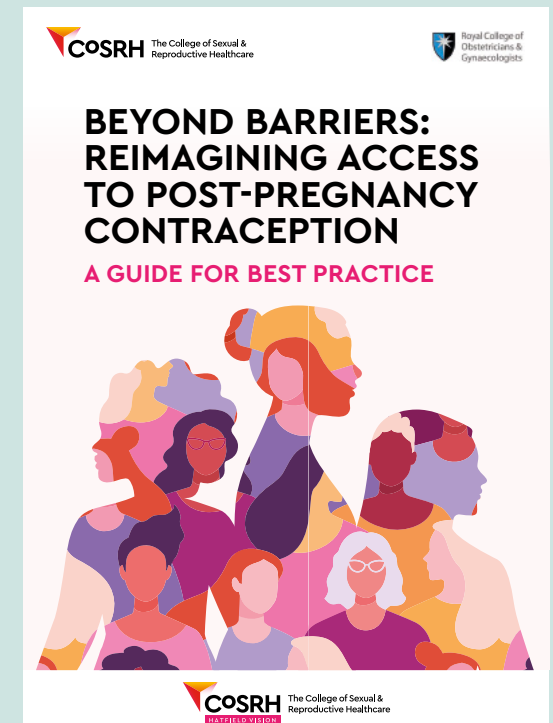
Supporting women before pregnancy is vital for improving health outcomes for both mothers and babies. Preconception care helps women make informed choices, manage existing health conditions and access advice that can reduce risks during pregnancy.

Research has been undertaken to understand what preconception care means to women in Wales, and findings will be published in 2026. These insights will form the basis for designing services that better meet women's needs and will guide the development of the preconception care section of the NHS Wales Women's Health Website.

Building on this research, we will work with partners such as the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) Wales and the Royal College of Nursing, to explore how midwives and community nurses can play a greater role in supporting preconception health. We will also work with Welsh Government and health boards to develop policy and guidance which underpins and supports the recommendations from this work.

Contribution to 'Beyond Barriers: Reimagining Access To Post-Pregnancy Contraception'

Postpartum contraception is essential for supporting women's health and wellbeing after pregnancy. It helps women make informed choices about family planning and reduces risks associated with closely spaced pregnancies. We contributed to a national report produced by the College of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare (CoSRH), providing a Welsh perspective on this important issue. The report highlights that access to postpartum contraception is currently inconsistent across the UK, creating what is often described as a 'postcode lottery'. The report advocates for system-wide change to integrate post-pregnancy contraception into maternity care, ensuring that every woman has equitable access to advice and services. While the focus is on the period following pregnancy, the report also considers health between pregnancies and pre-pregnancy care, recognising the importance of continuity throughout a woman's reproductive journey.





Pelvic Health and Incontinence

Pelvic health refers to the wellbeing of the pelvic floor muscles and the organs they support – including the bladder, bowel and reproductive system. When these muscles do not function properly, a range of conditions can occur, collectively known as pelvic floor dysfunction. The most common symptoms are urinary incontinence (bladder leakage), pelvic organ prolapse (when organs drop from their normal position) and faecal incontinence (bowel leakage). Other issues include difficulty emptying the bladder or bowel, sexual dysfunction and chronic pelvic pain. These conditions are common and can affect people at any stage of life, including during pregnancy, after childbirth and during menopause. Early assessment and simple interventions can often help, and specialist care is available for more complex cases.

Improving services in Wales

NHS Wales is committed to raising awareness and improving access to pelvic health and incontinence services.

Key initiatives include:

- **Dedicated area on the NHS Wales Women's Health Website:** This will provide clear, trusted information about pelvic health and incontinence, while normalising symptoms and encouraging people to seek help. Pelvic health services in Wales are organised locally by health boards, which means there can be differences in how services are delivered. The website will act as a starting point for information, while detailed service arrangements will remain at health-board level
- **Benchmarking against NICE standards:** We're working with health boards to compare local services to standards set by NICE. By benchmarking against these standards, we can identify gaps, ensure consistency and improve the quality of care for people experiencing pelvic health problems.

Our commitment

By improving awareness, benchmarking services and supporting collaboration, we aim to ensure that everyone experiencing pelvic health problems can access high-quality, compassionate care – no matter where they live.





Menopause

Menopause care

Enhancing menopause care is a core ambition of The NHS Wales Women's Health Plan. Many women still face delays in having their symptoms recognised, receive inconsistent advice or struggle to access the right support when they need it. Menopause can affect health, wellbeing, relationships and participation in work and daily life. Improving timely, equitable access to informed, compassionate care is therefore essential to closing the gender health gap and ensuring better health outcomes for women across Wales.

Training the NHS Wales workforce

Across Wales, all health boards are actively upskilling their workforce to strengthen menopause care within Women's Health Hubs. Training is being targeted at GPs, GPs with extended roles (GPwER), practice nurses, specialist nurses, midwives, allied health professionals and wider members of the multidisciplinary team. Through Welsh Government funding, health boards are investing staff time in training such as the BMS Management of the Menopause Certificate, alongside broader women's health training programmes (including contraception, long-acting reversible contraception

and general women's health updates) delivered through primary care training academies.

This multi-professional approach ensures clinical teams are confident in recognising menopause symptoms, providing first line management and delivering consistent, guideline-aligned care. The scale of training underway demonstrates a collective commitment across NHS Wales to grow local expertise and deliver menopause support closer to home.

Menopause care in Women's Health Hubs

Alongside workforce development, health boards are establishing a range of menopause services as part of the core offer within Women's Health Hubs. These include dedicated menopause clinics, GPwER-led assessment pathways, and holistic support models such as menopause cafés, social prescribing, psychological wellbeing services and pelvic health physiotherapy. Some health boards are developing physical menopause hubs, while others are introducing hybrid or virtual first models, with extended evening and weekend sessions, digital 'front doors' and self-referral options. These approaches ensure women can access timely menopause care in settings that feel

local, accessible and connected to wider support. Clear referral pathways to secondary care remain essential for complex cases, ensuring that women move smoothly between primary and specialist services when needed.





Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

All Wales Women's Health Stakeholder Event

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) refers to any act of gender-based violence that causes, or is likely to cause, physical, sexual or psychological harm to women, including threats, coercion or deprivation of liberty. These experiences have a profound impact on health and wellbeing, making it essential that healthcare services respond with compassion and consistency.

At the All Wales Women's Health Stakeholder Event in March 2025, experts highlighted the scale of the issue – around 3,000 cases occur daily in Wales, representing 20% of recorded crime, with one in twelve women affected and one in six murders linked to domestic abuse. Discussions focused on embedding trauma-informed care to reduce barriers to healthcare, prevent re-traumatisation, and ensure survivors have voice, choice and advocacy. Current initiatives include Ask and Act training that enables staff to recognise victims and

survivors of VAWDASV, and create a safe space for disclosure, appointing champions or advocates across all health boards to support training and data collection. There is also a commitment to work with Welsh Government to implement a sexual safety in healthcare organisational charter to align with both Scotland and England.

Looking ahead, priorities include making referral pathways more inclusive, supporting early intervention, improving workplace protections and building stronger links with survivor networks.

Throughout 2026, we will continue to work closely with partners to embed these principles across services, strengthen referral pathways and provide robust training for healthcare professionals. These actions aim to create a system where survivors feel safe, supported and empowered to access the care they need without fear or stigma.





Ageing Well and Long-term Conditions Across the Life Course

Culturally competent care

It is vital that healthcare professionals are aware and trained in providing care that respects cultural differences, values and beliefs so that services are inclusive and meet the needs of all women across Wales.

Culturally competent care means recognising that women from different ethnicities may experience health and healthcare in different ways. For example, some women may have specific preferences about who provides their care or may need information in another language to ensure informed choices are made.

To support this, HEIW is developing a General Awareness e-learning module for the NHS Wales workforce, which will be available via the Y Ty Dysgu training platform. The module includes a dedicated section on culturally competent care, with input from our equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) champions to ensure best practice.

The module is scheduled for release in early 2026 and will provide accessible, evidence-based learning to help all healthcare professionals deliver care that is informed, inclusive and sensitive to women's diverse experiences.

We continue to work closely with the other strategic clinical networks within NHS Wales ensuring that the question 'how does this affect women?' is asked at every opportunity. We are working with networks and our data and digital teams to make sure that any data that is being captured or collected within Wales is broken down by sex and gender. By doing this, we can find out whether women present differently, their follow-up is different and if their recovery and outcomes are different.

We have collaborated with the National Strategic Clinical Network for Diabetes on creating patient information for young people to better understand their choices around contraception and how they might affect their diabetes medications.

Contraception and Diabetes
What you need to know

If you or your partner have diabetes, it's important to understand your contraception options. Having diabetes does not prevent pregnancy. If you are sexually active and not planning to become pregnant, using contraception is essential.

Taking steps to avoid unplanned pregnancy helps you look after your own health and gives any future baby the best start in life.

There are many types of contraception available. A conversation with your healthcare team can help you find the option that's best for you. Remember, as you grow up, your needs may change, and it's okay to explore different ones as time goes on.

Most types of contraception are safe to use for people with diabetes, but some hormonal options may affect blood glucose levels. It is important to monitor this and ask for help if this is something that happens. Below are some of the options to consider.

Non-hormonal IUC (copper coil)
Duration: 5-10 years

- Benefits**
 - Typically fewer than 1 in 100 will get pregnant in one year
 - Good for those wanting long-term contraception without hormones
 - Fertility should return to expected levels after removal
- Considerations**
 - This IUC rarely affects blood glucose levels
 - Changes in menstrual patterns (periods)
 - Insertion and removal must be performed by a trained healthcare professional

Hormonal IUC (e.g. Levonorgestrel coil, coil)
Duration: 5-9 years

- Benefits**
 - Typically fewer than 1 in 100 will get pregnant in one year
 - Fertility should return to expected levels after removal
 - Can help with heavy periods - can make them lighter or stop them all together
 - Can be used for hormone therapy (HRT)
 - Helps with heavy periods, especially for people with endometriosis
- Considerations**
 - May make periods heavier
 - Insertion and removal must be performed by a trained healthcare professional
 - There may be an increased risk of pelvic infection
 - The hormones in this IUC may influence glucose levels, so it's a good idea to keep an eye on your levels, especially when starting a new treatment

Contraceptive Implant (coffin term - the rod)
Duration: up to 3 years

- Benefits**
 - Using the implant typically fewer than 1 in 100 will get pregnant in one year
 - Fertility should return to expected levels after removal
 - This is hidden under the skin, it will not affect the placement of other devices such as CGM/ Pump cannula on your body.
- Considerations**
 - Changes in menstrual patterns (periods) which may affect glucose levels
 - Insertion and removal must be performed by a trained healthcare professional
 - This is the most effective method of contraception

Data-driven decision-making

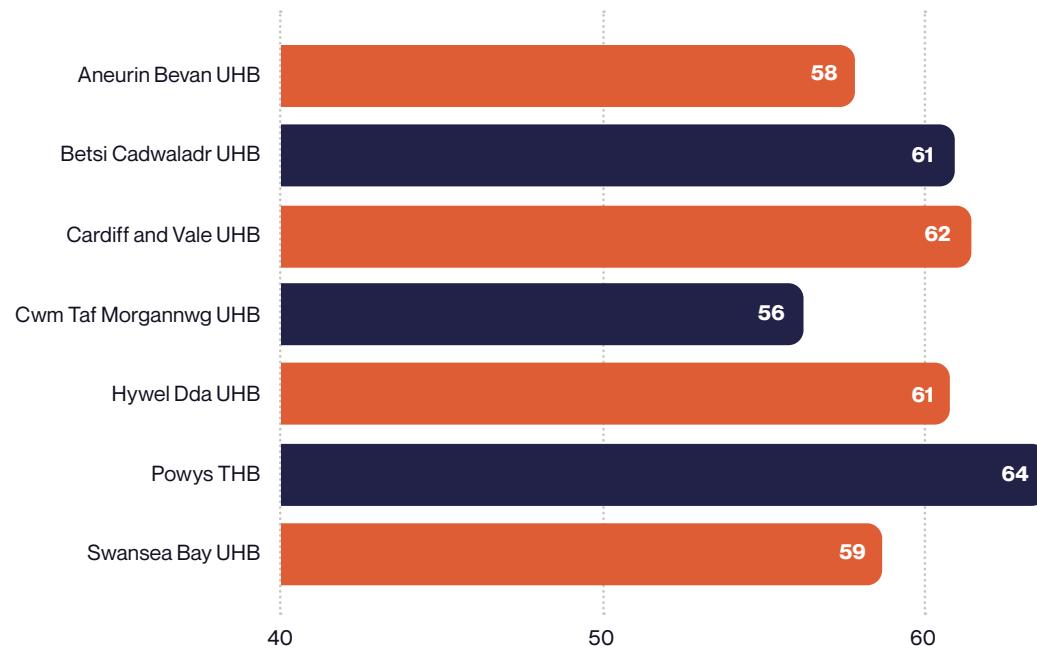
Knowing which health conditions most affect women is essential for planning services that truly meet their needs. To help with this, we are working with digital and data experts to create a national dashboard – a digital tool that brings together important health information in one place.

This dashboard will show patterns in women’s health across Wales, including:

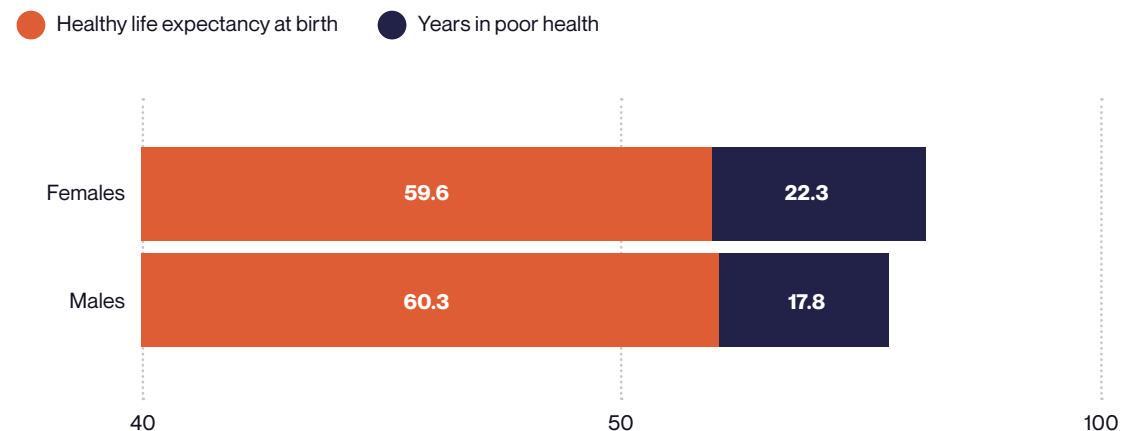
- Which conditions are most common, such as dementia, heart disease, chronic pain and neurological conditions
- Differences in health based on age, ethnicity, where people live and other factors
- Trends in care at the end of life.

By making this information easy to see and understand, the dashboard will help health leaders make better decisions, target resources where they are needed most and work to reduce health inequalities. Early versions are already being tested, and once finished, the dashboard will support a fairer and evidence-based approach to women’s health across Wales.

Healthy Life Expectancy by Health Board, Females, 2021-23



Healthy Life Expectancy at Birth and Years Lived in Poor Health, Wales, 2021-23



Cross-cutting themes and workstreams



4. Cross-cutting themes and workstreams

4.1 Women's health research

Research is essential for understanding and tackling the gender health gap. We are working with partners to understand what research is currently being undertaken in Wales to support women's health, and what the priorities are for the future population of Wales.

We have a close working relationship with colleagues in the newly established Women's Health Research Wales. Members of the centre sit on our Clinical Reference Groups to ensure the challenges from the frontline and the voices of women are fed directly into the research of the future. Equally, this close relationship ensures that results from the research can be fed directly into the hospitals and staff to inform clinical practice.

To build on this baseline understanding, in March 2026, a special event will bring together experts from universities and industry to find new solutions to urgent health challenges. This collaborative approach will help generate fresh ideas and speed up progress in women's health research across Wales.

We have been involved this year with Welsh Government in shaping the first Contracts for Innovation call with a focus on women's health. The women's health innovation sector in Wales, including technology and devices, has significant growth potential to improve women's health. To make sure innovations in health work for women, and address outcomes that matter to them, we need to ensure that academics, patients and industry (including women innovators) work in partnership. The Women's Health Challenge is supporting four companies that are working in collaboration with health boards. They are using innovative technologies that will support and care for all women and girls, leading to earlier, faster diagnosis, reduction in waiting times and improvements in effective treatments without compromising outcomes. This is an exciting opportunity which aligns directly with the vision of The NHS Wales Women's Health Plan.





4.2 Systems leadership training to reduce inequalities in Wales

Making decisions based on good data and evidence is key to improving women's health and reducing inequalities. 'Systems leadership' means bringing together leaders from different parts of the health and care system – including health services, social services, police and other partners – to work as a team, share information and make joined-up decisions that benefit women across Wales.

To support this, training is being developed for leaders in Wales. The training will help them build skills in using data, understanding evidence and working together with others, including women themselves, to plan and deliver better services. The programme is being shaped with input from directors of Public Health Wales and health boards and co-designed with healthcare practitioners to ensure the content is practical and relevant.

By building these skills, the training will help leaders create more joined-up, evidence-based approaches to improving women's health. This means services can be planned and delivered in ways that are fair, effective and truly meet the needs of women across Wales.

4.3 Health pathways in Wales

Part of the work that we are doing is making sure that women can access investigations and tests when appropriate and in a timely way. Within Wales, GPs can access support about who to refer for tests through a website called HealthPathways. There are over 250 different pathways to support GPs to make decisions, covering different conditions, management options, when to arrange investigations and when to refer. We are working with the team at HealthPathways to ensure that the needs of women are considered differently in these pathways, to ensure certain conditions are not missed and if they present differently in women compared to men for example.

We are also working to ensure that women's procedures such as a hysteroscopy (camera inside the womb via the vagina) or ultrasound happen for the right reasons, at the right time. We are making sure that we support these pathways with smooth referral systems, where women do not have to keep repeating their story, and are treated with compassion and respect.

4.4 Patient reported outcome measures (PROMs) and patient reported experience measures (PREMs)

Listening to women's experiences is essential for shaping services that truly meet their needs. PROMs capture how women feel about their health and quality of life after treatment, while PREMs focus on their experience of care. In November, the PROMs Task and Finish Group (part of the Clinical Reference Group) reviewed these tools to identify the most suitable options for evaluating the experiences of women in Wales when accessing services, especially the new Women's Health Hubs, which are due to open in March 2026.

The Patient Experience Survey (PES) was found to be effective, with additional questions proposed to reflect key themes from the Women's Health in Wales discovery report (published in 2022) – such as communication, access, consistency of information, involvement in decision-making, advocacy and a life-course approach. Feedback is now being gathered to finalise these questions, which will be added to the core set of PES questions. Practical steps are underway to integrate the tool within the feedback platform, Civica, across Wales. This work will ensure women's voices are central to evaluating and improving care.

4.5 Co-production and collaboration

Co-production has been central to our work since the launch of The NHS Wales Women's Health Plan in December 2024. By working in equal partnership with people who use services, alongside professionals and those with lived experience, we ensure women's voices shape every stage of planning, design and delivery.

A co-production framework was developed in partnership with Fair Treatment for the Women of Wales (FTWW) and Women's Health Research Wales, supported by the recruitment of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) champions. In 2025, this approach was embedded across major projects including the Women's Health Hubs and the new NHS Wales Women's Health Website. Highlights included the national All Women's Health Stakeholder Event at ICC Wales, supported by a wide range of engagement activities such as workshops, focus groups and user testing.

“From the outset, FTWW has worked closely with the National Strategic Clinical Network for Women's Health to shape Wales' first women's health plan. Co-production is essential if we're to overcome long-standing barriers to accessing care and reduce inequities.

Through our collaboration – particularly with colleagues in the design of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board's first Women's Health Hubs – we have helped ensure women's voices are heard, their needs understood and their experiences reflected in service development across Wales.

We look forward to contributing to evaluation and progress through our role on the national Women's Health Clinical Reference Group.”

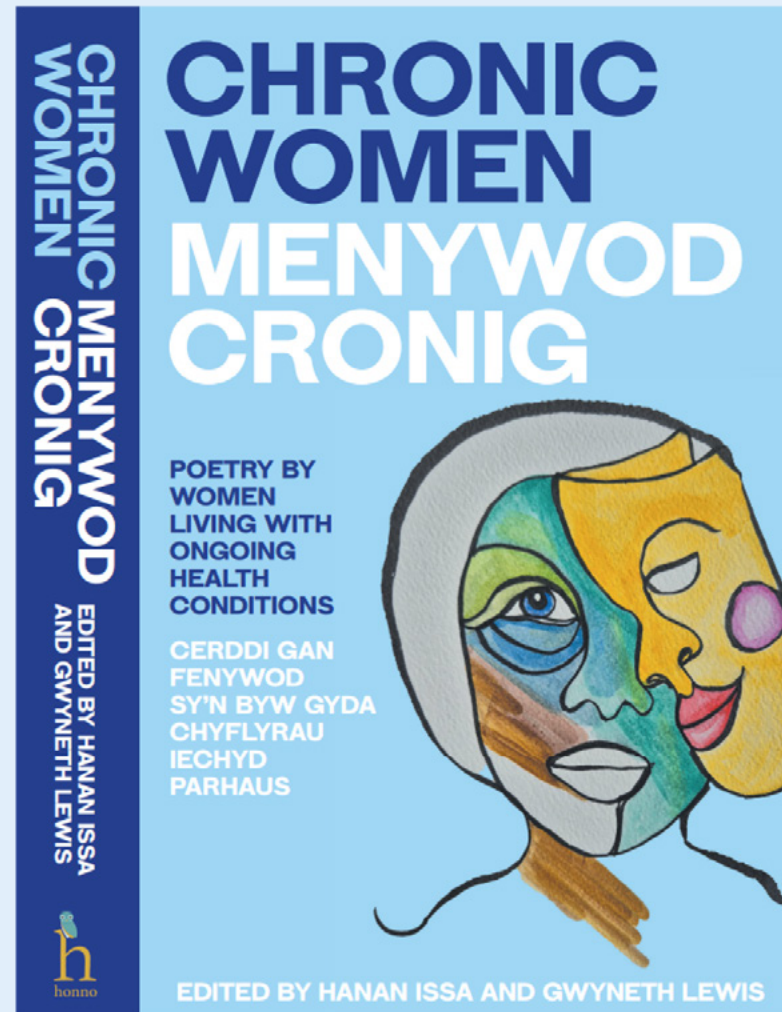
Fair Treatment for the Women of Wales



Celebrating lived experience through poetry

In 2025–2026, we supported the Chronic Women/ Menywod Cronig poetry project, which invited women living with illness, pain or chronic conditions to share their stories through poetry. These creative works have been shared at events and in workshops within health boards, helping to develop a greater understanding of what it means to live with chronic health conditions and the impact of them on women's day-to-day lives. Led by Literature Wales, the project will culminate in a bilingual anthology, amplifying these voices across Wales. Plans are in place to publish and distribute free copies to GP surgeries and healthcare settings across Wales.

Looking ahead, co-production with communities will remain central to implementation. We will also continue collaboration with charities and third sector organisations, Health and Care Research Wales (HCRW) and academic partners to support ongoing engagement and evaluation. This commitment ensures services reflect real needs and experiences of women living in Wales.



Looking ahead –
Year 2 (2026–2027)



5. Looking ahead – Year 2 (2026–2027)

Building on the foundations laid in Year 1, The NHS Wales Women's Health Plan will continue to focus on collaboration and embedding sustainable change across Wales.

Year 2 will mark a significant step forward in improving services, strengthening research and amplifying women's voices.

Expanding access: Women's Health Pathfinder Hubs

A key priority for Year 2 is the expansion of Women's Health Hubs across every health board beyond those opening in March 2026. The lessons learned will inform the full development and wider rollout, helping to ensure that every woman in Wales can access dedicated support for their health needs, no matter where they live.

Strengthening research and transparency

With the launch of Women's Health Research Wales, there are also opportunities to feed into priority research initiatives for women's health research, helping to build a stronger infrastructure

in Wales. Following the success of the Contracts for Innovation funding programme focusing on women's health projects, there are plans to seek further opportunities to engage and collaborate with industry partners, the third sector and academia to increase innovation in this area.

Engaging stakeholders

Women's voices and partnerships remain central to this work. Targeted engagement events are planned, including sessions on endometriosis and abortion (February 2026) and pelvic health (March 2026), to foster discussion and encourage collaboration across sectors.

Developing education and workforces

Programme development will include launching Health Education and Improvement Wales' e-learning modules and a women's health workforce analysis. Recommendations from this programme will feed into a workforce strategy review for women's health, which considers the population health needs of women in Wales over the next decade and beyond, with the professional workforce requirements to support this.



Supporting schools and communities

In Year 2, a comprehensive communications strategy will support the rollout of these resources, with ongoing engagement from school nurses and learners, who will play a key role in shaping and distributing the materials.

Benchmarking against best practice

In Year 2, we will begin systematically benchmarking women's health services in Wales to national standards and guidance. This process will focus on key areas such as contraception, heavy menstrual bleeding, pelvic floor dysfunction, urinary incontinence and menopause. By doing this, we aim to ensure that services across Wales meet the highest possible standards and that all women receive consistent, high-quality care.

To support this, we will finalise and introduce new patient experience survey questions in the Women's Health Hubs. Collecting and analysing this feedback will allow us to measure how well services are performing, identify areas for improvement and share best practice across health boards. This approach will help drive continuous improvement and ensure that women's voices are central to shaping care in Wales.

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Our commitment

The Duty of Quality mandates that NHS organisations and Welsh Ministers ensure safe, effective and person-centred health services, aiming for continuous improvement in quality received by women in Wales.

In Year 2 of the implementation of The NHS Wales Women's Health Plan, we will have 30 short-term actions embedded within the NHS organisations. But our ambition goes further: by building on the medium and longer-term actions, we are laying the foundations for lasting change. Together, we will drive forward the full delivery of The NHS Wales Women's Health Plan, ensuring that every woman in Wales has access to high-quality, equitable care. Through collaboration, innovation and a focus on reducing inequalities, we are shaping a future where women's health is at the heart of a fairer, more equal Wales.



Closing Statement

Collaborating with the National Strategic Clinical Network for Women's Health to deliver The NHS Wales Women's Health Plan has been both engaging and deeply rewarding. Year 1 has been about laying strong foundations, establishing Women's Health Hubs, embedding co-production, investing in our workforce, strengthening research and data, and, crucially, placing women's voices at the heart of everything we do. These early achievements demonstrate what is possible when partners work with shared purpose and ambition. This first year marks only the beginning of a 10-year journey. The progress made so far gives us confidence as we move into Year 2 and beyond, where our focus will shift from building foundations to scaling, embedding and sustaining change. The short-term actions already underway will continue to deliver tangible improvements in access, information and care, while our medium- and long-term goals will drive systemic change – tackling inequalities, improving outcomes across the life course and closing the gender health gap for future generations.

At its heart, this Plan is about women, their health, their experiences and their futures. By investing now in prevention, early intervention, education, research and a skilled workforce, we are creating the conditions for lasting improvement in women's health and wellbeing across Wales.

Over the next decade, this work will not only improve individual lives, but will strengthen families, communities and the health of our nation as a whole.

It's inspiring to be part of a team where every voice is valued, and collective action leads to real, positive change. I am grateful to everyone who has contributed to this first year, particularly the women who have shared their experiences so openly and generously.

With strong foundations in place and a clear long-term vision, I look ahead with confidence and determination as we continue to deliver meaningful, lasting change for women in Wales.



Helen Thomas

Chief Executive, Digital Health and Care Wales, and Chair of the National Strategic Clinical Network for Women's Health Leadership Group



“Over the next decade, this work will not only improve individual lives, but will strengthen families, communities and the health of our nation as a whole.”



February 2026

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