



Women's Health in Dorset – adoption of new innovations to support the women of Dorset and the health workforce

The issue

Although women in the UK live longer on average than men, evidence shows they spend a greater proportion of their lives in ill health or disability compared with men. The government's Women's Health Strategy: Call for Evidence received nearly 100,000 responses from women in England and this, together with feedback from local systems, highlighted several issues with women's health services.

The Women's Health Strategy for England (Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), July 2022) [Women's Health Strategy for England - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/106441/Women's_Health_Strategy_for_England_-_GOV.UK.pdf) sets out 10-year ambitions for boosting the health and wellbeing of women and girls, and for improving how the health and care system listens to women.

In Dorset, a collaborative group came together to improve Women's health and consider evidence based proven innovations which could enable this. This group included the public, clinicians, managers, academics and researchers and experts in innovation adoption and implementation. This group included NHS Dorset, Health Innovation Wessex, University Hospitals Dorset, Dorset County Hospital, Dorset Women's Community Interest Company (CIC), Public Health Dorset and Bournemouth University (BU). This group agreed to identify and, if appropriate implement innovation to support both the workforce and the women of Dorset.

There is a lot of emerging innovation in the space of Women's health. This is leading to opportunities for both the public and health care providers to adopt innovations to enhance services in various ways and address the many challenges and barriers which women face when trying to access support, information, and services.

What we did

- Health Innovation Wessex provided specialist skills and capabilities to enable an innovation scan across four clinical areas (Menopause, Pelvic Health,

Young Women's Physical and Mental Health and Contraception) and then supported implementation of evidence based, proven innovations including new care pathways and digital applications. This support included helping with data protection assessments, contract discussions, pathway mapping and hands on implementation support.

- The project teams and steering group reviewed the innovations identified through the scan and decided on a short list of innovations which could be adopted into Dorset.
- Health Innovation Wessex then completed further reviews of these innovations prior to adoption into the Dorset system.

This activity led to the following innovations being adopted into Dorset:

- A new pathway of care for pelvic floor dysfunction was launched.
- An app for self-care and management for those with pelvic floor dysfunction (called the Squeezy app) was adopted.
- Development and launch of a new online women's health resource website Women's health – Our Dorset for education and information.
- Development of a new community based long-acting reversible contraception pathway.
- Four new menopause education and support apps were adopted.

What impact did it have?

- **1,100 women** have been funded by NHS Dorset to have **free access to the squeezy app** to support with pelvic floor dysfunction.
- The new website provides **consistent, reliable and relatable education and information** across Dorset. By accessing this resource, this will support women and will reduce the need to see a Health Care Professional.
- The **new community-based pathway** for long-acting reversible contraception will reduce waiting times for those needing simple coil fitting and thus **reduce pressure on secondary care**, provide cost savings, and improve women's care in terms of enabling swifter health outcomes, increase their wellbeing and overall experience.
- The **new menopause apps** will reduce the number of women feeling unsupported and will also **reduce attendances to primary care** and the menopause secondary care clinics.

We plan to collate further impact during 2025-26 to show the value and impact of these innovations within the system.

Contacts for further information:

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