

Evaluation of Women's Health Hubs

Information for the public

While we refer to women in the infographic, we recognise that women's health hubs may also serve people who are transgender, non-binary, or who have variations in sex characteristics (sometimes referred to as 'intersex').



Women's sexual and reproductive health needs (e.g. contraception, heavy periods, menopause) are provided by different services. These services are not always joined up and some women find it harder to access care.



To improve care, some NHS teams across the UK set up Women's Health Hubs (WHHs).



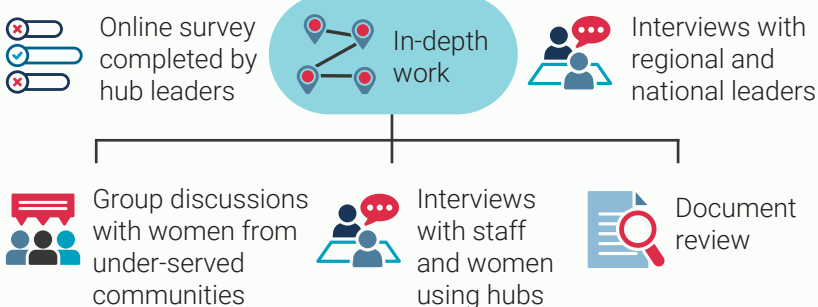
In 2022-2023 we investigated these WHHs, collecting information to help set up more WHHs across England as part of the national Women's Health Strategy.



Our evaluation questions

- What are WHHs and how many are there?
- Why have they been set up and what have they achieved?
- What are the experiences of staff, women who have used hub services, and women from under-served communities?

Methods



What did we find?



WHHs involve a group of health professionals working together to provide more joined-up women's health care.



We found 17 hubs and most were in England (some in Northern Ireland and none in Wales or Scotland).



Hubs may offer services out of one or more clinics/settings.



Hubs offered appointments (1-2-1 or in groups), tests, treatment and in some cases education (for women and staff) and usually women needed a GP referral to a hub.



Many different health professionals worked in hubs. GPs were the most common. Others included nurses, care assistants and specialist doctors.



We found that every hub is different, and there are different views about what hubs should look like and do. Hubs provided services such as coil fitting and help for heavy or painful periods, menopause and bladder issues. They didn't provide care for pregnancy, or general health issues such as mental health or blood pressure.



Most hubs were set up to improve women's healthcare access and experience, reduce unfair differences in women's health, and reduce GP and hospital pressures.

What were women's experiences?



Women using hubs reported a positive experience, finding services caring, convenient and effective.



Women often did not know that they were using a 'hub'.



There were examples where some aspects of care were unclear such as what to expect, who is responsible for their care and how they were followed up.



Women felt listened to and had time to talk, but hubs could not always provide everything needed in one visit for some women.



Women said it was important to them that hubs are accessible.



Parking, transport, choice and flexibility in appointment times and locations were important in helping women get to their appointments.



Key messages



- Hubs are an opportunity to improve women's healthcare.
- Hubs are being set up across the NHS, they vary a lot, and most areas do not have one yet.
- Women should be involved in the design of hubs to ensure their needs are met and there are not unfair differences in who can use them. More information is needed to understand the effect hubs are having on women's care.

