



North East and  
North Cumbria

# Women's Health Programme

North East and North Cumbria ICB  
Tees Valley & Middlesbrough

# Health challenges for women in the UK in 2023

- Women's healthy life expectancy is less than men
- Contraception is difficult to access
  - 45% of pregnancies are unplanned or ambivalent
  - Abortion rates are rising in women over 22 years old, often because they are unable to access long acting reversible contraception
- Maternal mortality is 4x higher in black women and 2x higher in Asian women
- Suicide the leading cause of direct maternal death in the first postnatal year (UK and IE)
- Menopause symptoms last for an average duration of 7 years and around a quarter of women will suffer severe symptoms. Around 400,000 women in the UK enter the menopause each year. 1 in 5 of the NHS workforce are menopausal women
- 1 in 3 women over 60 years old experience urinary incontinence
- The symptoms for cardiovascular disease vary for women, and women often receive their diagnosis later than men
- Osteoporosis and frailty are major causes of morbidity + mortality



# Strategy

- First government led 10-year Women's Health strategy (2022):
  - Boost the health outcomes of women and girls and reduce disparities
  - Improve how the healthcare system listens to women

## Priority Areas identified:



Menstrual health and gynecological conditions



Fertility, pregnancy, pregnancy loss and post-natal support



Menopause



Mental health and wellbeing



Cancers



The health impacts of violence against women and girls



Healthy ageing and long-term conditions

# Regional Context

- The **gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived neighbourhoods has increased** for both males and females.
- However, **women live longer than men, but on average women live longer in poor health.**
- Women in our region are not looking after themselves e.g. breast screening uptake
- Wide inequalities in health e.g. HRT
- Around **28% of working age women** are economically inactive compared to 22% of men.
- **Nearly a third of girls and women** in the ICS live in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods across England
- Levels of access to LARCs have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels and are lower than for England. At a time that **our abortion rates including under 25s repeat abortions are on an upward trend.**
- The rate of **emergency hospital admissions for intentional self harm** is significantly higher in girls and women.
- Over a quarter of women (27%) across NENC have a diagnosis of anxiety.

# Work to Date - regional

- Established the **regional Women's Health Steering Group, Operational Group and Community of Practice**, with Tees Valley representation
- **NENC Women's Health Strategy conference** with the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities held in October 2023
- **Mapping progress of ongoing initiatives** regionally and liaising with Place leads for Women's Health
- **Understanding population need** – development of Insights, population health management data
- **Mapped existing commissioned services** against the aims of the Women's Health Strategy – *completed for all Tees Valley localities*
- Identified gaps, risks, issues and key areas of focus for the Tees Valley
- Identifying other service provision, i.e., VCSE
- Mapping progress of ongoing initiatives and service provision and liaising with Place leads for Women's Health
- ICB Places **invited to bid for investment opportunity** to develop at least one Women's Health Hub within the North East North Cumbria footprint.

# Work to date - Middlesbrough

- As part of wider Tees Valley stakeholder engagement we identified the following key areas:
  - *Improve Menopause/HRT offer*
  - *Improve access to contraception - Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) and Emergency Hormonal Contraception (EHC)*
  - *Pessary fitting/removal for prolapse*
  - *Increase uptake of cervical screening*
- **Mapped existing service provision** to identify gaps and how we can strengthen/develop services
- **Submitted a bid** to strengthen existing services and develop more pathways to expand service provision and reach more women/those who do not identify as women but who require these health services
- **Engagement with HealthWatch** – sought feedback from women on their experience of women's health services

# Implementation Plan Next Steps

**We are currently developing our North East and North Cumbria Women's Health Programme to take forward the implementation of the national strategy. Some of our next steps are:**

- *Following completion of current service provision mapping (end November 2023), consolidate and identify opportunities and gaps aligned to NENC local needs utilising Insight and Population Health Management data and Womens Health strategic aims to feed into development of the programme*
- Women's Health Collaborative development; using collective knowledge to spread and share. Action orientated network will focus on initial priorities and opportunities
- Comms, engagement & involvement strategy developed to align to the development and implementation of the programme
- Use feedback through HealthWatch to inform service improvement/development