

Participant Information Sheet

Listening to the voices of women in Northern Ireland

What is the purpose of the survey?

Queen's University Belfast, in collaboration with Derry Well Women is conducting a survey to explore and compare the experiences of women in Northern Ireland accessing and using women's health services.

The health benefits of strategic planning for women's health have been articulated internationally by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as well as by governments in many countries where women's health strategies exist. These benefits extend beyond women to include their families and wider communities. In March 2024 the Health Minister Robin Swann announced that the Department of Health was supporting a large-scale listening exercise on women's health in NI and that the exercise would be carried out by DWW in partnership with QUB. The Listening Exercise will take place alongside the development of an NI Women's Action Plan and will pave the way for a longer-term comprehensive Women's Health Strategy for NI. The Listening Exercise includes this survey, to hear the voices of as many women across NI, and future focus groups where we will physically listen to women.

Our aim is to explore:

- women's health services provision
- women's priorities for women's health
- barriers to accessing health services and how could things be better
- how women's voice is integrated into women's health care services

This survey will be complemented by findings from the recently completed Women's Health Survey undertaken by the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland's 'Nothing About Us Without Us' programme.

This is an important opportunity for women to independently and in confidence express their views on their experiences of health care and support. We hope to get a better understanding of what services are working well and where services could be improved

Why have I been invited to take part?

We are inviting all women aged 16 and over who live in Northern Ireland to take part in this survey.

What will happen if I take part?

If you agree to take part in this survey, you will be asked to complete an anonymous 15–20-minute online survey. You will be asked questions about your use of women's health services and how accessible you find them. If you are unable to access or complete the survey yourself, you can ask someone to help or complete it for you, on your behalf.

Do I have to take part?

No, you do not have to take part.

What are the possible benefits and disadvantages of taking part in the survey?

There are no direct benefits of taking part in the survey. You may find it beneficial discussing your experiences, sharing your views on current service provision and the health priorities for women and helping to shape further research. By being involved in this survey you are contributing to knowledge about women's health services and how they are accessed. This information will help shape planning for women's health across NI, inform the case for a long-term Women's Health Strategy and guide future research priorities. There are no risks expected for anyone who chooses to take part in this survey. However, sometimes when people talk about their experiences it may make them think about things that could upset them.

Will my taking part in this survey be kept confidential?

We will collect and monitor data for this survey using a password protection account on the secure survey management platform Qualtrics. Only the research team will have access to the information you provide us with. All data will be anonymised, and you will not be identifiable in the dissemination of the results. All data will be treated following the General Data Protection Regulation and will follow current data protection legislation.

How will we use information about you?

We will need to use anonymous information from you for this research project to understand your perspectives about women's health. This will also include details such as your postcode, your ethnic group, your educational attainment, and household income. This information is important to help us understand where there are differences in relation to women's health issues across Northern Ireland. We will keep all information about you safe and secure. Findings from this study will be distributed in several ways including published journal articles, reports, conferences, and seminars.

Where can you find out more about how your information is used?

You can find out more about how we use your information

- by asking one of the research team
- The QUB Privacy Notice for Research Participants ([Privacy Notice for Research Participants](#))
- by sending an email to info.compliance@qub.ac.uk

Can I withdraw from the study?

Yes, you can withdraw from the study and choose not to complete or submit the survey. If you are completing the survey online and choose to withdraw, any entered information will be retained. If you are completing the survey online or by hard copy, submitted information will be retained. As the information provided will be anonymous, this means that we won't be able to let you see, withdraw or change the data we hold about you.

Who has reviewed the content of this survey?

All research in Queen's University Belfast is looked at by an independent group of people, called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect your interests. This study has been reviewed and approved by the Medicine, Health and Life Sciences Faculty Ethics Committee at QUB.

What if I want more information or have concerns about the survey?

Given the nature of the survey, we think there is very little chance of harm occurring by taking part in this research and we will make every effort to ensure that you are supported and respected as a participant. In the unlikely event that you suffer any harm as a direct consequence of your participation or you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you can contact the Chief Investigator, Dr Jenny McNeill at: j.mcneill@qub.ac.uk or School of Nursing and Midwifery, Queen's University Belfast, 97 Lisburn Road, Belfast, BT9 7BL. If you have been upset by taking part in this survey, you may contact the following independent organisations who have agreed to provide support, if needed:

- [Derry Well Woman](#)
- [WAVE Trauma Centre](#)

If you are still unhappy and wish to make a formal complaint, you may do so by contacting the Research Governance Team at QUB on 028 9097 2529; email: researchgovernance@qub.ac.uk, who are independent from the research team.