

Q&As – Women’s Reproductive Health Survey

What is the Women’s Reproductive Health Survey?

The Women’s Reproductive Health Survey is the largest survey of its kind to be undertaken in England to date.

The survey covers four broad areas: periods and menopause, preventing pregnancy and trying to get pregnant, pregnancy and birth experiences, and reproductive health conditions, such as endometriosis.

Its main aim is to understand recent experiences, services being accessed and support currently received for reproductive health in England, so that changes can be monitored over time.

Planned in-depth analysis of the data collected will help show who is most affected by poor reproductive health outcomes and how support can best be provided across different stages of people’s lives.

Who is eligible to take part?

The survey looks to capture the reproductive health experiences of women and people assigned as female at birth, aged between 16-55 years and resident in England.

Why is the survey important?

We know that poor reproductive health not only has a negative effect on health in general but can impact all aspects of women’s lives including mental health, relationships and finances.

Further research is needed to better understand inequalities across England so that women and people described as female at birth can make the choices they need for their own reproductive health and wellbeing.

Who led the research?

The project was led by Sexual and Reproductive Health Research specialists at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), including [Dr Rebecca French](#), who has worked in the area for 30 years, Dr [Ona McCarthy](#) and [Dr Melissa Palmer](#).

Who is funding the research?

The Women’s Reproductive Health Survey was funded and commissioned by the UK Government’s Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC).

Undertaking the survey was a commitment of the [Women’s Health Strategy for England](#) under the previous UK government.

Where can I find the latest information?

The latest version of the survey, the 2023 Women’s Reproductive Health survey, was launched on Thursday 7 September and ran for six weeks. Further information including a summary of the initial findings can be found [here](#).

A pilot survey also ran in 2021. A peer-reviewed paper of the methods can be found [here](#).

Work is ongoing to analyse the survey results.

How was the survey developed?

The pilot 2021 questionnaire was developed in consultation with focus groups including members of the public and health professionals.

The rerun of the survey in 2023 incorporated changes with the aim of improving its reach to under-represented groups and broadened to include additional topics around reproductive health.

How is the survey advertised?

The 2023 survey was advertised on social media platforms including Facebook and Instagram. We worked closely with voluntary partners [Birth Companions](#), [Brook](#), [LGBT Foundation](#) and [Race Equality Foundation](#) to increase awareness of the survey.

Why aren't those aged over 55 years of age eligible to take part?

The survey of those aged between 16-55 years was commissioned to capture recent examples (i.e. in the last year) of health issues, such as periods, pregnancy prevention and planning, pregnancy, and menopause, so that future surveys can help monitor changes over time.

The upper age limit was based on [current NHS advice](#) around menopause and the age in which women are typically affected (between 45 and 55 years). However, we acknowledge that there will be some people aged over 55 years who will experience menopause or menopause-related symptoms as well as other reproductive health conditions.

Reproductive health of those aged over 55 years is under-researched and we hope this can be addressed in any future iterations of the survey.

The reproductive health condition I have is not listed

In the survey, we listed the most common reproductive health conditions. For those not listed, a free-text box was available to allow us to collect additional information.

How will the survey data be used?

Future analyses of the data collected will help to understand who is most affected by reproductive health conditions, who is accessing and receiving care (or not) and how support can best be provided across different stages of people's lives.

The team hope that findings from the surveys will also help monitor how government policies and NHS programmes are working towards improving reproductive health and experiences.

Contact us

For media requests, please contact press@lshtm.ac.uk.

For other queries relating to the survey, please email Rebecca.french@lshtm.ac.uk.