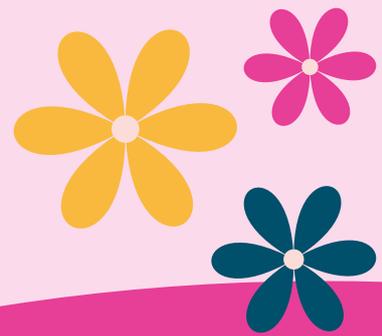


# Mental Health in Menopause

## Summary Report

February 2025



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# Background

Earlier last year, Healthwatch Cumberland attended the International Women's Day event on the 8th March 2024. This was hosted the local 'Woman Up' group in the form of an Open Mic Night at Carlisle Vineyard.

Healthwatch Cumberland decided to include a women's health project in line with the NHS including women's health in their 10-15 year plan.

We asked women in Cumberland to fill in a survey to discover what they would like us to focus on during our women's health project.



## 408 Survey Responses

**Menopause, perimenopause and Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)**

**Mental health (including depression and anxiety)**

**Periods (including painful periods, heavy periods, PMS, endometriosis, and adenomyosis)**

**ADHD (women and girls with ADHD are more likely to go undiagnosed)**

**Bone, joint and muscle health (including arthritis, osteoporosis, and fibromyalgia)**

**(Figure 1)** Top five topics that women in Cumberland wanted us to focus on within our women's health project.

After analysing the results from our survey, we were informed that there was a need for a focused project on menopause and mental health.

We chose to combine these topics as the theme of our women's health project which ran from September to December 2024.

On the 8th June 2024, Healthwatch Cumberland and local charity 'Woman Up' co-hosted the "Woman Up Health Event where we launched our 'Mental Health in Menopause' project. The event gave women a safe space to explore women's health related issues with workshop activities. There were also inspirational speakers present with a focus on topics such as menopause, menstruation and breast cancer awareness.



In September 2024, Healthwatch Cumberland also took part in a commissioned research project from the North East North Cumbria NHS. This involved promotion of 'The Big Conversation' survey and hosting a focus group with women from a seldom heard group. The aim of this regional project was to listen and act upon the experiences and views of women in relation to their health. This was to understand what was working well and what needed improvement.

Healthwatch Cumberland held their focus group with women with learning disabilities. Our Senior Engagement Officer Chloe created an interactive activity with a relevant theme involving baskets labelled with different health issues for participants to throw coloured balls into which signified their importance.

Following this, we reached out to menopause coach Lynsey Eland from [dandelioncoach.co.uk](http://dandelioncoach.co.uk).

As a Not-for-Profit social enterprise, Dandelion Coaching aims to support individuals and organisations. Lynsey Eland hosts menopause workshops and 1-2-1 coaching to guide and support individuals through this life change.

She kindly worked with us on this project featuring in Q&A videos, a HRTea party social event, Menopause workshop and assisted us with the development of our A-Z guide of menopause.



**Lynsey Eland**  
[Dandelioncoach.co.uk](http://Dandelioncoach.co.uk)



# Method

## Original survey to choose women's health topic

As mentioned within the background section previous, we developed a survey to decide on the focus topic for our women's health project.

The survey contained a multiple choice question featuring a large range of women's health topics. The full list is featured in our 'What we heard' section later in this report.

Following this, was an optional section to leave contact details. Finally, we asked if they consented to being added to the Healthwatch Newsletter mailing list. The other option allowed respondents to select to only be contacted for invites to community forums.



## Next stage: Mental Health in Menopause, what do women in Cumberland want to know?

Healthwatch Cumberland took a very different approach than past projects with this Mental Health in Menopause project.

Instead of asking people questions, we gave people the opportunity to ask Lynsey Eland (Menopause Expert) questions for her to respond to. This was carried out by creating post cards that women in Cumberland could write their questions on anonymously. The top five were selected and answered by Lynsey via [Q&A style videos](#) shared on social media.



# Visual stages of project

## Our project will involve:

1

### 3 Questions survey

Do you have a burning question about menopause? What do you know now that you wish you knew then? Help us to help others:

We're partnering up with a menopause expert to help answer any questions you have.

Remember, there's no such thing as a silly question!

2

### Mythbusters

Everyone experiences menopause differently, and we want to reduce confusion and stigma surrounding this season of life.

We will be creating a social media campaign revealing the facts behind the myths.

3

### HRTea Party - 18th October

A safe and empowering space to celebrate National menopause Awareness Day.

4

### A-Z of Menopause

In partnership with Lynsey from Dandelion Coaching, we are going to create an A-Z of menopause from all the findings of our survey, workshops and events.

We hope this will be used as a tool to educate and support those who have questions about menopause.

 0300 303 8567

 [www.healthwatchcumberland.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchcumberland.co.uk)

 [info@healthwatchcumberland.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchcumberland.co.uk)

Save the date!

### HRTea Party

18th October at  
People First

### Want Healthwatch to come to you?

If you would like a Healthwatch representative to visit your place of work or a group you facilitate, get in touch.

# HRTea Party



On Friday 18th October, it was World Menopause Awareness Day.

Healthwatch Cumberland celebrated by hosting a menopause-themed tea party in the People First Café.

Lynsey Eland joined us at the café as our menopause expert to answer attendee questions.

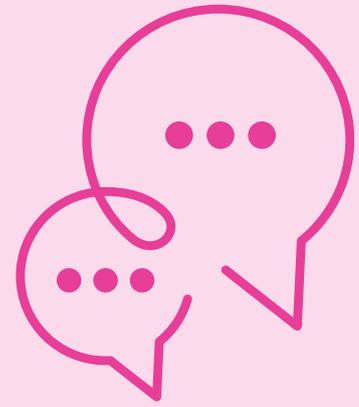
The event started off with an interactive menopause symptom game, where balls with symptoms on them were thrown into a basket to be chosen and explained by Lynsey.

The People First Café supplied a delicious spread of afternoon tea. Attendees and staff were able to create a safe space to discuss their personal experiences over scones, cakes and coffee etc.

There were resources available to all for support and copies of our postcards were on display. This showed attendees a glimpse of the questions to be answered through the roll out of [Q&A videos on social media](#).



# What we heard



The combination of our surveys, workshop and HRTea party allowed us to have an abundance of engagement time with the community gathering feelings, questions, opinions and signposting to support groups.

Our initial survey when choosing our women's health project highlighted how mental health and menopause are highly important to focus on at present.

*The whole list of response options is featured below in addition to the 'other' responses we received.*

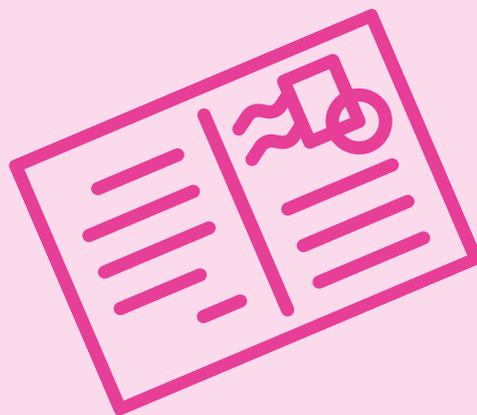
- ADHD (woman and girls with ADHD are more likely to go undiagnosed)
- Bladder and urinary (including UTIs, kidney infections and leaking pee)
- Body image
- Bone, joint and muscle health (including arthritis, osteoporosis, and fibromyalgia)
- Breast health (including breast pain, breast lumps and breast screening)
- Cancer (two of the most common cancers affecting woman are breast and cervical cancers)
- Infertility (including fertility problems and potential treatments)
- Menopause, perimenopause and Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)
- Mental health (including depression and anxiety)

# What we heard



- Pelvic health
  - Periods (including painful periods, heavy periods, PMS, endometriosis, and adenomyosis)
  - Pregnancy (including getting pregnant, keeping well in pregnancy, giving birth)
  - Sexual health (including contraception, STIs, and sexual health clinics)
  - Vagina and vulva health (including infections and conditions that affect)
  - Violence against women
  - Womb and ovary health (including ovarian cysts, polycystic ovary syndrome)
- 
- **Other: (Please Specify):**
  - Breastfeeding
  - Neurodiversity rather than just ADHD as there is a lot of overlap between neurodiverse conditions
  - Smear tests (training informed)
  - Thyroid problems (these are often neglected and are common in Cumbria).
  - Weight loss for health. Too many people going to Turkey for bariatric surgery. Cumbria has no offer other than 12 weeks at slimming world.
  - Post pregnancy health checks
  - Learning Disabilities

# Post Card Questions



We gave the public regardless of gender, the opportunity to ask three questions about menopause. There was also room for anyone to share knowledge they have on the topic, that may have come from experience etc.

We displayed some post cards during our HR Tea Party as this was also an opportunity to learn and spark conversations with each other.

When looking at the responses gathered, it was clear there was lacking knowledge on a variety of aspects relating to menopause. With the help of menopause expert Lynsey Eland, we selected a few common questions to respond to via Q&A style videos.



## Examples of questions received:

**Why do GPS not identify perimenopausal symptoms quicker and stop throwing antidepressants at women when it's clearly menopause?**

**Is there a genetic factor – will daughters have it as bad as their mothers?**

**What other conditions can menopausal symptoms be mistaken for?**

**Why do I feel like I'm going mad?**



# What we heard

## Mental Health in Menopause, what do women in Cumberland want to know?

Healthwatch Cumberland developed Q&A (Question and Answer) style videos with Lynsey Eland answering the most common questions we gathered from post card responses.

These have been published to the official [Healthwatch Cumberland YouTube](#) for anyone to access and share to anyone needing some advice.



### These are the questions that were answered:

**How to ease anxiety during menopause?**

**Do all women experience symptoms of menopause?**

**How can women prepare for menopause before peri-menopause starts?**

**How do I support someone going through menopause?**

**Benefits and risks of taking HRT to manage menopause symptoms**

**What things can women do to ease menopause symptoms?**

**Are there any positives to menopause?**

# What we heard

## HR Tea Party Feedback:



- Welcoming for me feeling anxious. Put at ease straight away. Lovely. Thank you.
- Very informative and engaging

- Good to bring people together and share experiences
- Great event, lovely tea, Great info, thank you.
- Not long enough! – Really enjoyed it
- Lovely to meet women going through the same thing.
- We need more of this.
- Great!
- Well organised 😊
- Best scones I've ever had!



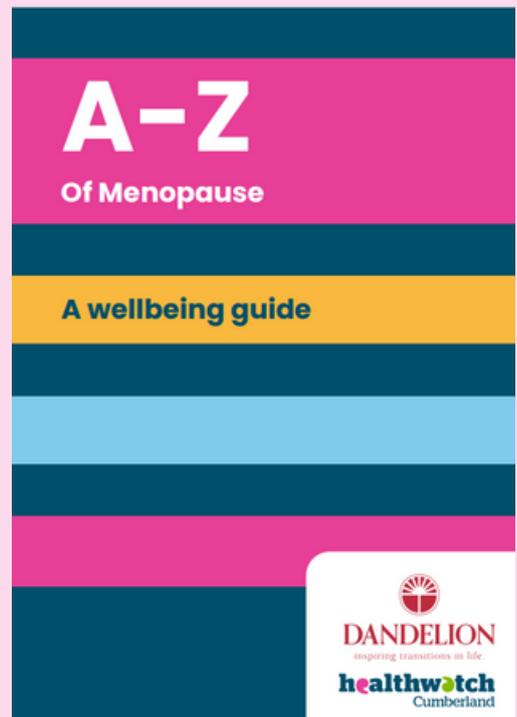
# Recommendations & Actions

## A-Z of Menopause

Healthwatch Cumberland in collaboration with Dandelion Coach Lynsey Eland developed our A-Z of Menopause booklet.

For every letter, we have provided information on a symptom or related issue in regards to menopause. Lynsey's expertise allowed us to develop a factually accurate document to help those with worries around menopause.

This booklet was an action that Healthwatch Cumberland developed. This came from recommendations through research and conversations revealing a lack of de-medicalised resources for women to seek answers about menopause in an accessible format.



### Access our A-Z booklet:



Support resources are included within the A-Z booklet.



# Menopause Workshop

## Public event within the People First Conference Centre, facilitated by Lynsey Eland

On the 6th December, Healthwatch Cumberland and Lynsey Eland from Dandelion Coaching hosted a menopause workshop with the People First Conference Centre.

As part of our collaboration, Lynsey kindly facilitated this workshop and the Healthwatch Cumberland team share their gratitude. Lynsey's expertise was a great asset to this project and the engagements we held.



This event was open to all, including Lynsey's connections as facilitator of the workshop. There was a large presence from the International Women's group and the workshop created a safe space for women to connect.

This empowering event allowing women to ask questions and get explanations with an expert presence was a privilege that Healthwatch Cumberland are proud to have provided to our community.



# Recommendations

## Themes that arose from our survey and engagements:

### Availability of female practitioners

It was highlighted by women in Cumberland that the availability or accessibility of female practitioners in particular with female anatomy related medical issues is poor.

A practitioner of the same-sex provides a sense of safety and comfortability for the patient especially with women's health related concerns. We were asked 'how do you approach this subject with your GP'. Women are evidently still anxious about accessing help for menopause symptoms.



### Awareness of supplements and medication to manage menopausal symptoms

Our survey data showed that women are unclear on what they can do to manage their menopause symptoms. Some know of HRT, however don't know of the side effects.

Our A-Z of menopause and video series on YouTube provide some guidance but there needs to be more information from the healthcare system. This would reduce the anxieties around becoming peri-menopausal and developing symptoms.

## Menopause related stigma

*“People say women are ‘past their prime’/useless after menopause, is this true?”*

There is no reason as to why a woman would be “past their prime” after menopause. Fertility is not a measure of worth. For information about what happens during menopause, visit our website to read our A-Z booklet of menopause.

*“What do you say to someone going through it?”*

There is nothing you have to say to someone going through menopause, simply be accommodating to their needs in regards to their symptoms. It is important to be supportive and caring during this difficult transition.



## Awareness

Many responses from those engaged with and via questions through our postcards, we received lots of responses indicating a lack of awareness into the symptoms of menopause and associated conditions.

*“How does menopause affect perimenopause?”*

Pre-existing conditions may impact your personal menopause experience. This response is a great example of the lack of clinical awareness there is around menopause. For more information refer to our A-Z of Menopause on our website.

# Navigating Menopause

Many responses wished to learn about how to manage their menopause experience. We received some questions about employment and menopause.

*“Are there work based adjustment company’s are required (if needed) for women going through menopause?”*

*“Do you have any special rights at work if you are suffering with brain fog and it’s affecting your performance at work?”*

Furthermore, we had many questions about medication for menopause symptoms and how long menopause lasts. Both of these aspects are subjective to each individual as symptoms can vary. For further information on all the above, please visit our Mental Health in Menopause project section on our website.



**Healthwatch Cumberland would love to hear your feedback on our mental Health In Menopause Summary Report.**

If you would like to let us know your thoughts, please email:  
[info@healthwatchcumberland.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchcumberland.co.uk)  
with ‘Mental Health In Menopause Summary Report’ in the subject line.



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