



# ARCBITE

Brokering Innovation Through Evidence



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## Does Sunderland Women's Health Hub represent good value for money?

**Women across England face challenges accessing healthcare services for conditions such as menopause, heavy menstrual bleeding, and contraception.**

Long waiting times, fragmented services, and difficulty getting appointments can mean women experience symptoms for longer, impacting their quality of life, work, and wellbeing.

The Department of Health and Social Care has promoted Women's Health Hubs as a way to bring services together in one place, making it easier for women to access the care they need.

It is important to understand whether investing in Women's Health Hubs delivers value for money for the NHS and benefits for women.

### What was the aim of the project?

We aimed to understand the costs and benefits of Sunderland's Women's Health Hub at Pallion Health Centre and assess whether it represents good value for money.

### What did we do?

We conducted a cost-benefit analysis of the Sunderland Women's Health Hub over a 10-year period. We calculated the costs of setting up and running the hub, including staff, training, and equipment. We then estimated the value of benefits from three key services:

- Long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARC)
- Menopause advice and treatment
- Cervical screening

We used local data from the hub alongside national evidence to understand both costs and benefits, following the approach used by the Department of Health and Social Care in their national analysis.



Source: BBC News



## What did we learn?

The Sunderland Women's Health Hub represents good value for money. For every £1 invested, the hub generates £8 in benefits over 10 years.

**Costs:** Considering upfront costs to establish (training, equipment, project management) and running costs (primarily staff and equipment) we estimate total investment is £4.5 million over 10 years.

**Benefits:** The hub generates £37.6 million in benefits over 10 years, including:

**Quality of life improvements:** reduced waiting times and improved access to menopause and heavy menstrual bleeding treatment. Women can access care sooner, reducing the time they experience symptoms.

**Prevention of unwanted pregnancies:** increased provision of long-acting reversible contraceptives, reducing costs to the NHS and society.

**Reduced workplace absences:** better management of menopause symptoms, helping women stay in work.

**Secondary care cost savings:** providing LARC services in the community rather than in hospitals.

## Who are we?

The NIHR Applied Research Collaboration (ARC) North East and North Cumbria (NENC) is one of 15 NIHR ARCs in England.

We bring together six regional universities, health and social care providers, local authorities, the VCSE sector and public and community groups, to support 'better fairer health and care at all ages and in all places'.

## Earlier cervical cancer detection:

improved access to screening leading to earlier diagnosis and less costly treatment.

When testing worst-case assumptions, the hub still delivered good value for money with a benefit-cost ratio of 4:1.

There are many additional benefits we could not put a monetary value on, including **improved experience of care for women, improved staff training and morale and reduced pressure on GP appointments for repeat prescriptions.**

The Sunderland hub is also expanding services, including ultrasound scans, which will provide additional benefits in the future.

## What next?

This analysis provides evidence that the Sunderland Women's Health Hub delivers value for money. This project is part of a wider programme of research to explore equitable health and care services for women living in Sunderland. Other work packages are ongoing and explore patient experiences of the hub as well as understanding current barriers and enablers of access for women facing multiple forms of disadvantage.

## Who was involved in this work?

North East and North Cumbria ARC Newcastle University; University of Sunderland; Northumbria University

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