women's HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

KEY SUMMARY

Why This Report:

This report looks at the overall health of women in Nottingham over the age of 16 and suggests what can be done to improve their health so that they can live longer, healthier and happier lives. The report looks at health across all ages. We now have a clear understanding of the key mental and physical health issues affecting local women. We've also identified the significant barriers women face in prioritising their own health, including long wait times, feeling dismissed by professionals, and juggling being a carer to children and family. Some women also experience violence, poverty and discrimination.

What We Found:

1 Women In Nottingham Are More Likely To Be In Poor Health

- Women in Nottingham don't live as long as those in other parts of England.
- Many suffer from long-term illnesses and poor mental health.
- Health problems start earlier in life for women in Nottingham compared to most of England.

2 Some Women Have It Even Harder

- Black women, Asian women, migrant women, LGBTQ+ women, disabled women, and those with low incomes face more obstacles to staying healthy.
- Women dealing with more than one difficulty – like mental health problems, learning disability, substance use, domestic abuse or homelessness – struggle even more to stay well and get the support they need.
- Many feel invisible in the healthcare system and don't feel heard.

3 Poverty And Social Struggles Make Health Worse

- About 56.3% of Nottingham women live in poorest areas of the city. Women from these areas are more likely to smoke, have poorer health, engage in substance use and are less likely to be active.
- They are also more likely to be admitted into hospital and frequently attend accident & emergency services.

4 Mental Health Is A Growing Problem

- Many young women and mothers experience anxiety, depression or trauma which is made worse if they also have caring responsibilities, or experience domestic violence or loneliness.
- Women's mental health is influenced and shaped by things like their age, life events and their cultural and social expectations.
- There is support available, but these are not always easy to access or suited to individual needs.

5 Women's Reproductive And Sexual Health Needs Are Overlooked

- Many women struggle to access contraception, abortion services and menopause support due to language barriers, social and cultural reasons and stigma.
- Women from poorer areas often miss NHS screening appointments like smear tests and breast screening.
- Many women's health conditions like menopause and endometriosis are poorly understood and often overlooked.

6 Pregnancy And Early Motherhood Can Lead To Poorer Health

- Pregnancy related deaths are more common in women from Black and Asian communities.
- Many services lack the ability to provide culturally and socially appropriate support to women with diverse needs.
- Women have also told us that they put their family's health before their own.

7 Violence and Abuse Are Hidden, Yet Common

- About 13% - 18% of women are survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence, and emotional abuse. These experiences cause serious long-term health issues including death.
- Services to help survivors are stretched and underfunded.
- However, survivors found the front-line services in the Nottingham city to be extremely helpful and supportive.

8 Women Want To Be Heard

- Many women feel their health concerns are not taken seriously or are dismissed. This may be because they are of a certain age, speak a different language, come from a different country, belong to a certain area or due to their personal situation (ethnicity, addiction, homelessness, gender identity).
- Women want to be involved in shaping services that affect their health and wellbeing. And expressed interest in wanting to be kept informed about the changes that they have helped shape.

What Could We Do To Improve The Health of Women in Nottingham?

1 Create Women-Centred Services

- Set up a Women's Health Hub with faster access to gynaecology, menopause, and sexual health care.
- Facilitate trauma informed care delivered by female practitioners.

2 Boost Menopause Support

- Provide dedicated community and workplace support so women don't face menopause alone.

3 Prioritise Mental Health

- Cut waiting times, expand trauma-informed care, and invest in community wellbeing spaces.

4 Strengthen Health Education

- Improve awareness of reproductive health, cancer screening, and healthy ageing through tailored education.

5 Make Nottingham Safer For Women

- Ensure safe public spaces are available so women can access services and stay active without fear.

