

# Patient-Centred Menopause Care: Co-Designing Pharmacist-Led Group Consultations Through Virtual Health Engagement

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## Overview

Menopause symptoms significantly affect quality of life and generate high demand for GP consultations. Women consistently report difficulty accessing timely, personalised care.

This project aimed to design, test and evaluate a pharmacist-led, group consultation model for menopause care in an NHS GP practice, ensuring the voice of women was embedded from the outset. A virtual health engagement session provided baseline education and gathered live patient feedback to co-design the service. Women then attended structured group consultations combining education, peer discussion, individualised advice, and appropriate HRT prescribing.

In addition to supporting women, the project served as a valuable learning opportunity for GPs within the practice. It also bridged medical and social prescribing by combining evidence-based menopause treatment with peer support, education, and lifestyle interventions empowering women to actively manage their health and wellbeing whilst utilising the valuable skills of pharmacists critical to a sustainable workforce.

## Methods

The project was delivered in two phases:

### Phase 1 – Virtual Health Engagement:

A 60-minute online session provided general menopause education while using an interactive live poll and feedback questionnaire to capture women's concerns and expectations. Feedback was analysed to identify key objectives for service design and the willingness to participate in a group consultation model.

### Phase 2 – Pharmacist-Led Group Consultations:

Women aged 35–65 were invited to attend either an evening face-to-face or online structured group consultation, led by a clinical pharmacist with menopause expertise, with 10 participants total. Sessions combined education, peer discussion, personalised advice and appropriate prescribing. Post-session questionnaires assessed changes in knowledge, ability to cope, satisfaction, and service use.

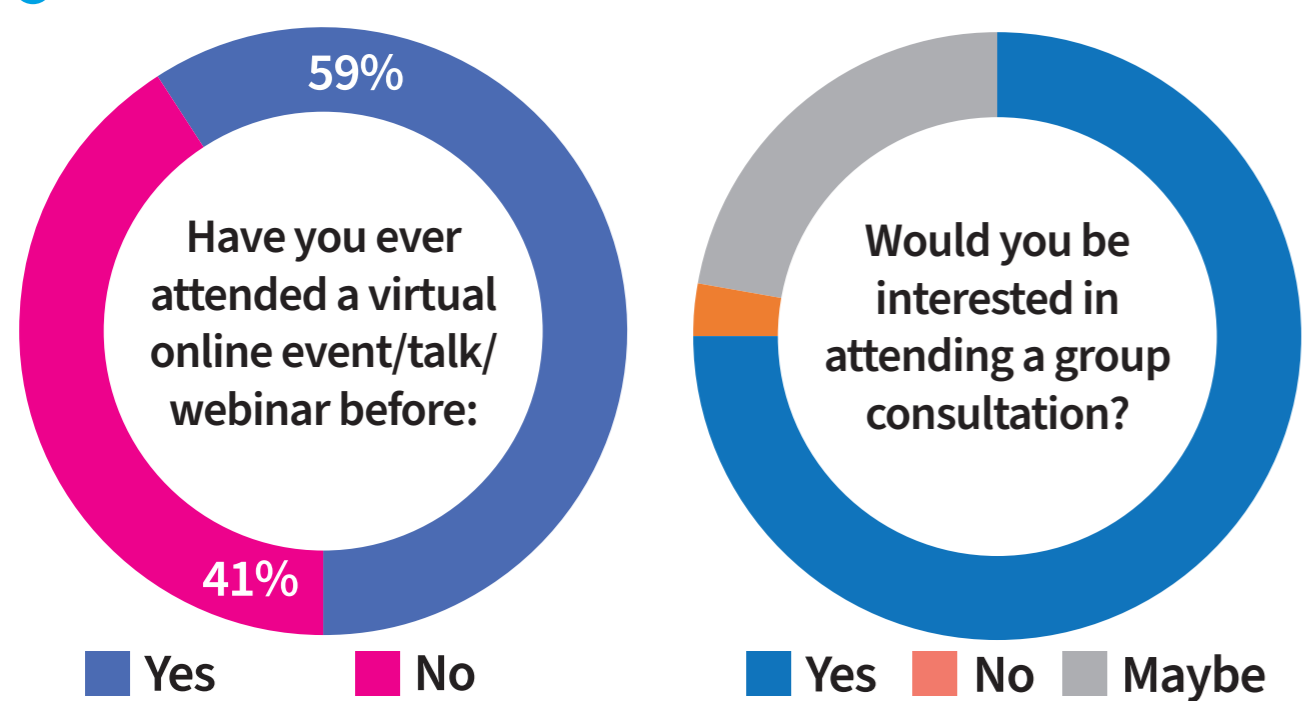
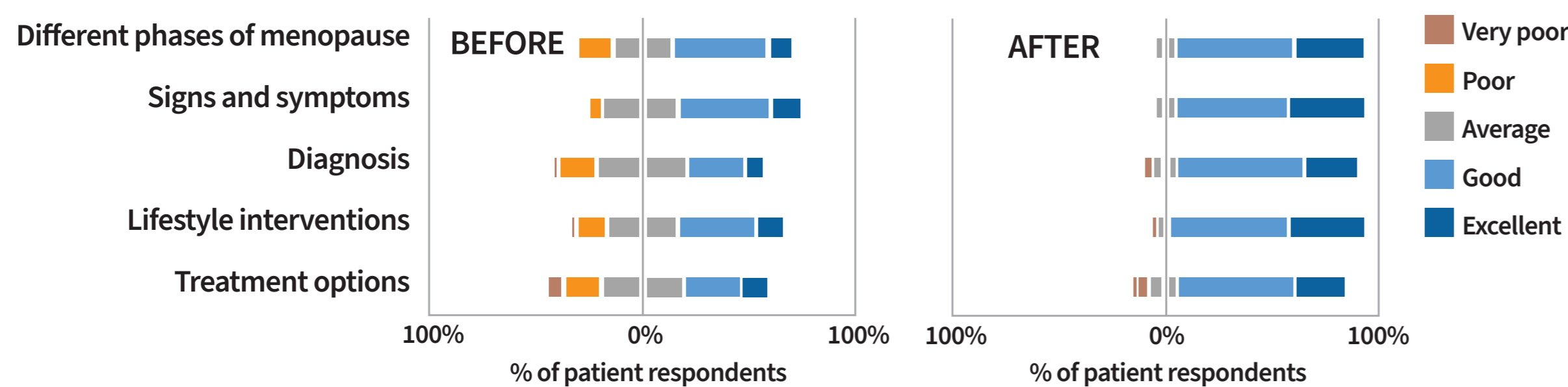
Method of Delivery	Participants Booked	Participants Attended	Reasons for non-attendance
Virtual Health Engagement Event	169	108	Not known
Group Consultation 1 (in-person)	10	8	1 person under specialist, 1 person ill on the night
Group Consultation 2 (in-person)	10	10	-
Group Consultation 3 (in-person)	10	10	-
Group Consultation 4 (virtual, NearMe)	10	7	1 person had technical issues, 2 persons did not return forms

Due to limited capacity in the pilot project, only those who engaged in the virtual health information session were contacted to sign up to group consultations. All spaces were filled within 5 hours of being released.

## Outcomes

**Engagement:** Virtual sessions increased baseline knowledge and confirmed strong patient interest in group consultations.

This chart shows how patients rated their understanding before and after the Virtual Health Engagement Session, highlighting improvements in knowledge:



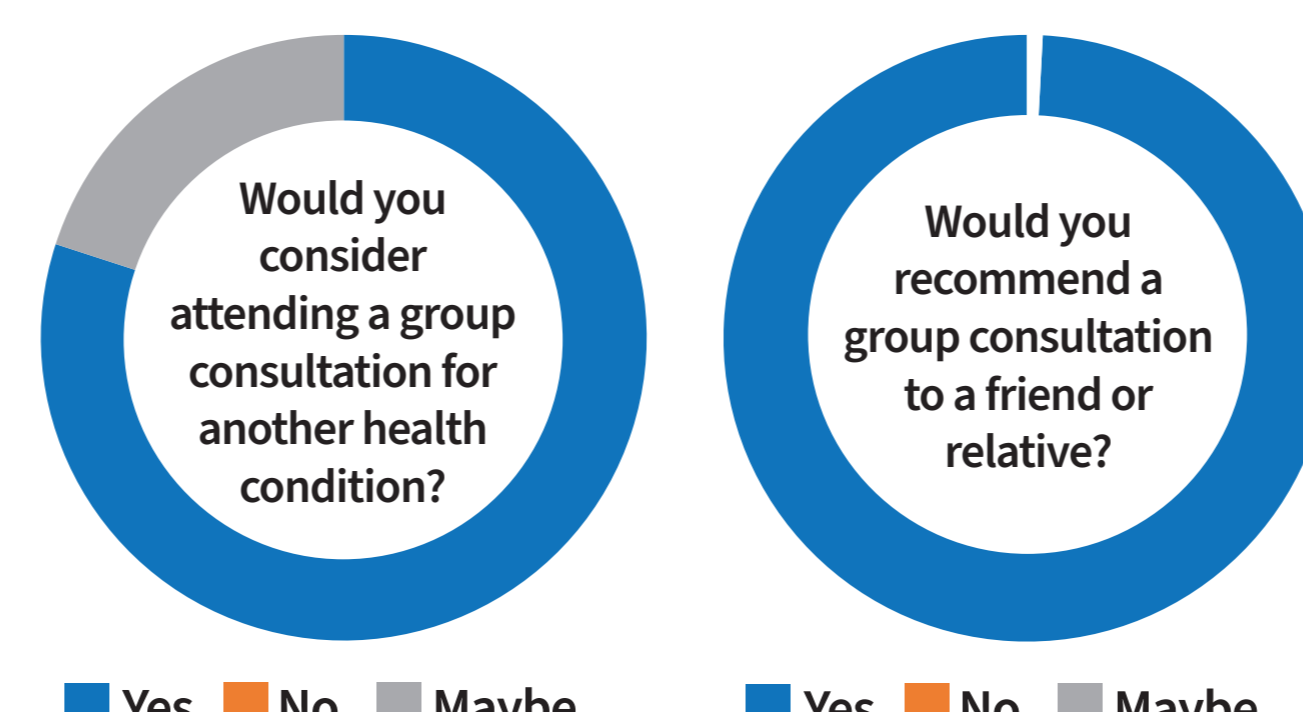
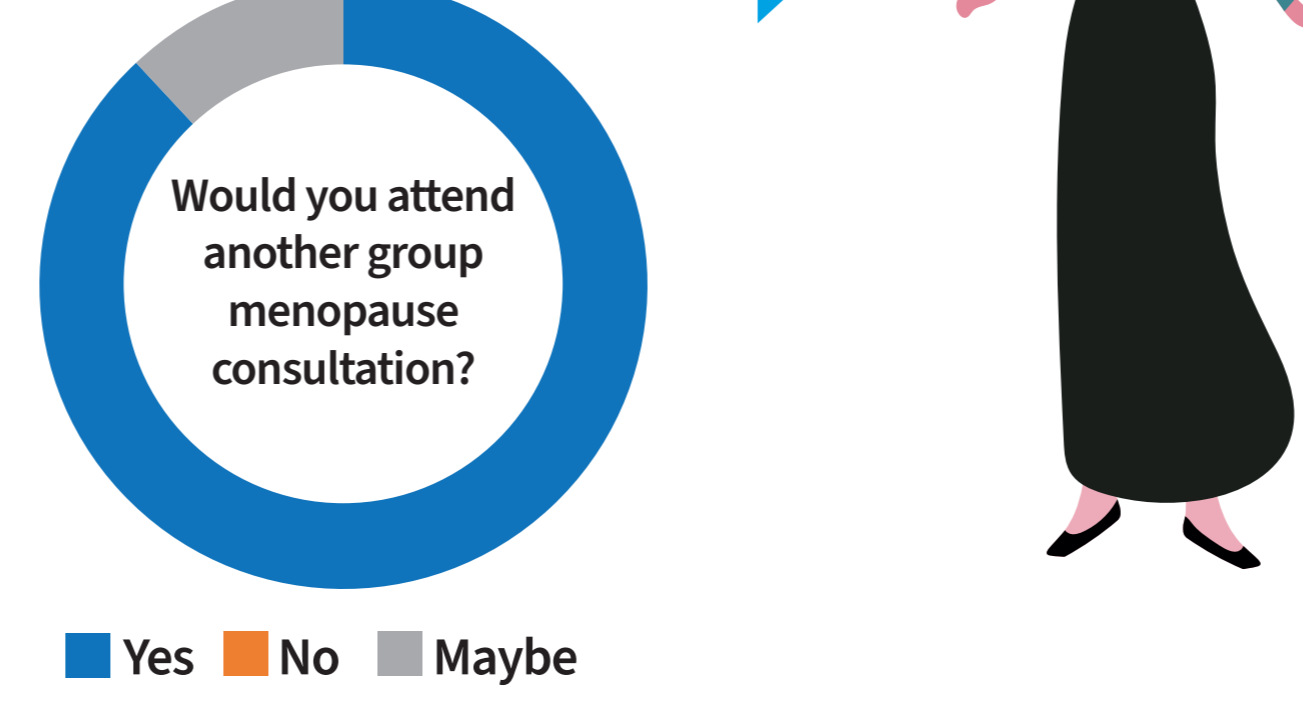
## Comments from women:

“Group consultation is really helpful as it gives opportunity to learn from real life experiences, share ideas and also encouraged me to feel confident in sharing my experiences.”

“Access to specialist pharmacist-very knowledgeable and great explanations.”

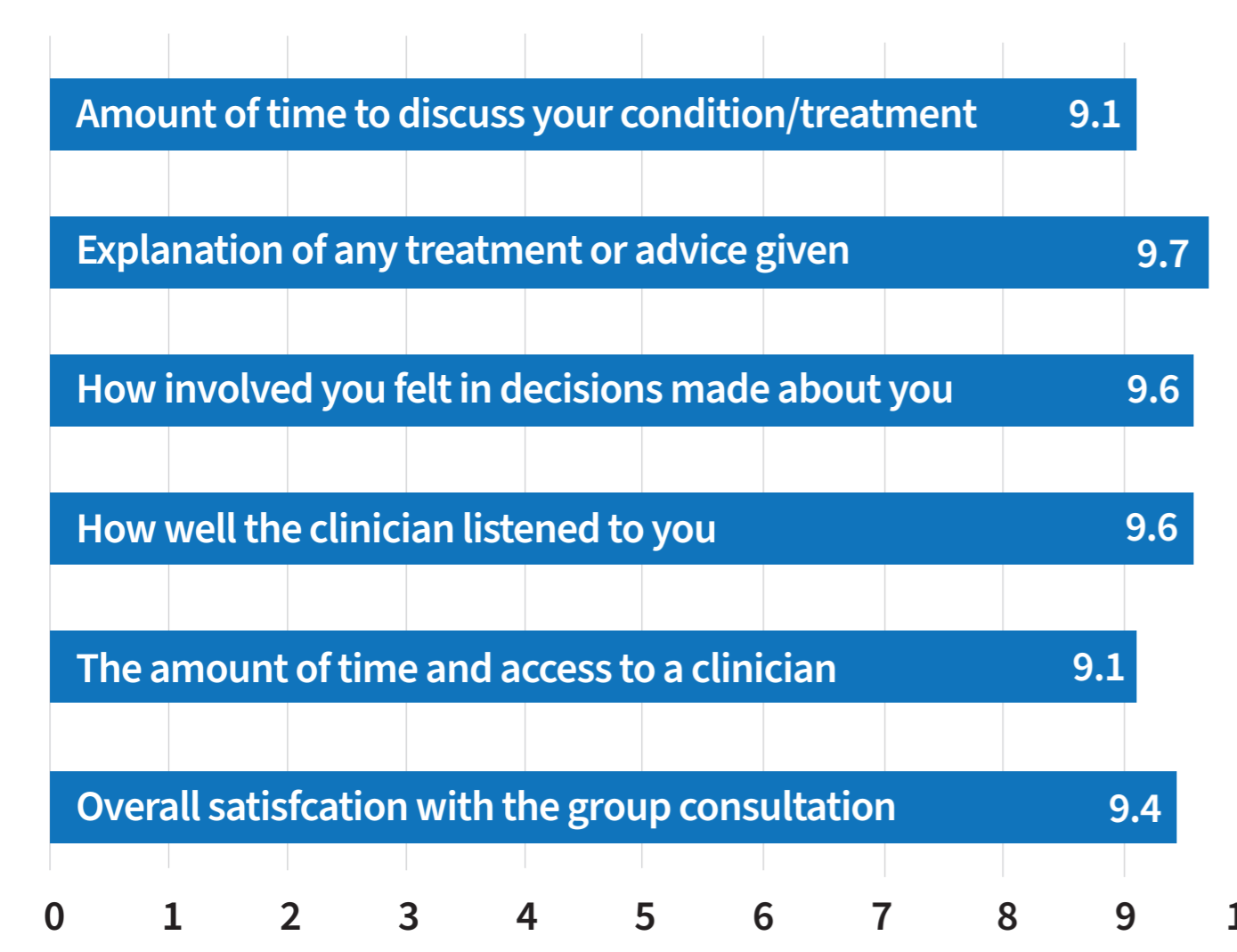
“Attending in the evening was great. Ability to get prescription – game changer.”

“Open honest discussion, real life experiences, lots of information.”

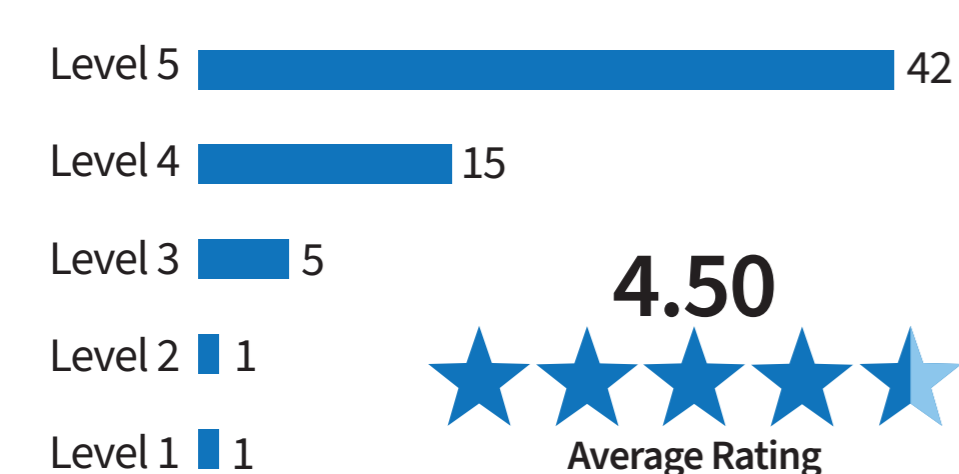


**Partnership approach:** Women valued shared learning and peer support alongside clinician input. Participants reported improved access and feeling heard, with an overall satisfaction score of 9.4/10.

**How would you rate the following elements of the group consultation (out of 10):**



**How would you rate your overall satisfaction with tonight's Virtual Health Information session:**



- Resource Utilisation:** Reduced repeat one-to-one GP appointments, streamlined care pathways for initiation and follow-up, and improved accessibility via evening sessions.
- Digital Innovation:** Developed a YouTube channel and recorded educational videos, strengthened social media engagement, and offered virtual consultations alongside in-person sessions.



## NearMe – 2 channels; Group Consultation and Information Session

- Prescribing Practice:** Patients received timely, appropriate HRT prescriptions tailored to their individual needs, along with lifestyle advice and, where appropriate, referral to the social prescribing link worker - ensuring a truly holistic approach to care.
- Demand and Acceptability:** Sessions were oversubscribed; patients described them as highly supportive, relevant, and transformative.
- Education and development:** Participants came away feeling more knowledgeable and empowered about their menopause journey. However, what we hadn't anticipated was that the sessions also served as an effective means of education and upskilling our GPs. This in turn has built workforce capacity by educating the wider primary care team with enhanced menopause expertise, supporting a more sustainable, resilient service.
- New Model of Care:** The service shifted the balance from a purely clinician-led model to a partnership approach, incorporating a peer-to-peer element that enhanced support and learning.

## Conclusion

A preparatory virtual health engagement session, followed by pharmacist-led group consultations, provided a patient-centred model for menopause care designed to accommodate working women and reduce access barriers. The approach improved patient confidence, satisfaction, and prescribing appropriateness, while reducing demand for multiple one-to-one GP appointments.

Embedding virtual engagement to co-design services ensures that new models of care are responsive to patient needs and offers a sustainable framework for wider adoption across NHS primary care.

Furthermore, we are now using virtual health information sessions to support and improve patient outcomes for cardiovascular disease, further utilising pharmacists' clinical expertise.

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