



Cheshire and Merseyside 15 Steps of Gynaecology Toolkit



Executive Summary

The 15 Steps Challenge for Gynaecology Services is adapted from [NHS England's maternity toolkit](#) and is designed to assess and enhance service quality from the perspective of those who use it.

The toolkit provides a structured framework for exploring gynaecology environments by examining service users' first impressions within the first 15 steps of entering a service area.

It encourages collaboration among clinical staff, non-clinical teams, and service users, supporting national priorities such as elective recovery, waiting list reduction, and the Women's Health Strategy.

This toolkit identifies actionable insights to enhance service user experiences and promote continuous quality improvement through themed walkarounds, focused on the following themes:

- Welcoming and Informative
- Safe and Clean
- Friendly and Personal
- Organised and Calm

The implementation process engages service user representatives, staff, and system leaders in observations, feedback collection, and the identification of best practices across gynaecology settings in Cheshire and Merseyside.

This toolkit is not a performance management tool but a developmental, co-produced initiative and we welcome feedback.

The 15 Steps Challenge – Gynaecology Services Toolkit

1. Background of the 15 Steps for Gynaecology

The 15 Steps Challenge for Gynaecology is adapted from NHS England's successful maternity toolkit. It is designed to explore gynaecology settings from the perspective of service users, focusing on what patients and their families see, hear, and feel within the first 15 steps of entering a ward or department.

Originally inspired by a mother's observation that she could tell the quality of care her daughter would receive within 15 steps of entering a ward, the toolkit was developed to highlight the importance of first impressions in delivering excellent, respectful, and safe care.

This version aligns with strategic programmes such as elective recovery, ICB planning, waiting list management, and national women's health initiatives.

This toolkit supports collaborative working between clinical and non-clinical staff, service users, and improvement leads. It is not an audit or inspection tool, but a structured, observational guide that focuses on service user experience and service culture.



2. Getting Started with the 15 Steps for Gynaecology

Participants in the 15 Steps for Gynaecology should include:

- **Service users or user representatives.** Make sure your participants represent a cross section of society, and those who have been historically underserved by services.
- **Clinical staff.** This should include nurses, doctors, and all other relevant members of your local clinical teams.
- **Non-clinical staff.** This can include reception and front of house staff, patient experience staff.
- **Experience of care teams.**
- **A representative from commissioning or Trust leadership.**

Local Voluntary and Community, Faith and Social Enterprise

- **organisation representatives.** Those from organisations that support women and people accessing gynaecological services.

The Process:

- **Brief participants** on purpose, confidentiality, observation themes, and safety measures.
- **Form small, mixed-role teams** to observe gynaecology care environments.
- **Allocate areas** such as: colposcopy clinics, early pregnancy units, surgical wards, outpatient gynaecology, ambulatory, emergency gynaecology units, and procedural rooms.

Each team should spend 15–20 minutes in their assigned area, using all senses to form first impressions and noting areas of excellence or improvement.

3. Observation Themes and Guidance

Observations are structured around four key themes:

1. Welcoming and Informative

- Does the environment feel accessible and inclusive?
- Are reception staff welcoming and do signage and literature reflect diversity?
- Are key services, support offers, and rights clearly communicated?

2. Safe and Clean

- Are infection control standards evident?
- Are facilities appropriate for those with accessibility needs?
- Do service users feel physically and emotionally safe?

3. Friendly and Personal

- Are interactions respectful and patient-centred?
- Are dignity and privacy maintained?
- Is communication adapted to individual needs?

4. Organised and Calm

- Are spaces free of clutter and easy to navigate?
- Is there a clear structure to the care journey?
Is staff handover and coordination evident?

4. Positive Aspects and Action Plan Template

1. Welcoming and Informative			
Issues	Action needed	Who is responsible	By when
Good practice	Action needed Can this be shared and replicated elsewhere	Who is responsible	By when

4. Positive Aspects and Action Plan Template

2. Safe and Clean			
Issues	Action needed	Who is responsible	By when
Good practice	Action needed Can this be shared and replicated elsewhere	Who is responsible	By when

4. Positive Aspects and Action Plan Template

3. Friendly and Personable			
Issues	Action needed	Who is responsible	By when
Good practice	Action needed Can this be shared and replicated elsewhere	Who is responsible	By when

4. Positive Aspects and Action Plan Template

4. Organised and Calm			
Issues	Action needed	Who is responsible	By when
Good practice	Action needed Can this be shared and replicated elsewhere	Who is responsible	By when

5. Next steps

Feeding into the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Women's Health and Maternity Programme.

The NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Women's Health and Maternity Programme facilitates the Gynaecology Special Interest Groups and Cheshire and Merseyside [Women's Health Strategy](#).

The special interest groups are:

Endometriosis

Menopause

Paediatric and adolescent gynaecology

Cervical cytology

The purpose of these special interest groups, also known as 'SIGs', is to advance knowledge, improve patient care, and improve collaboration within each specific area of women's health.

The 15 Steps findings will be fed into the relevant SIG and outcomes monitored by the relevant reporting templates, such as the gynaecology dashboard.

For further support, guidance and information please contact the team at wham.engagement@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk.

Keep in touch

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- **Tag** us in your 15 Steps journey use the **hashtag #15StepsOfGynae**