

Improving access to post-abortion contraception through co-design of service models in Scotland

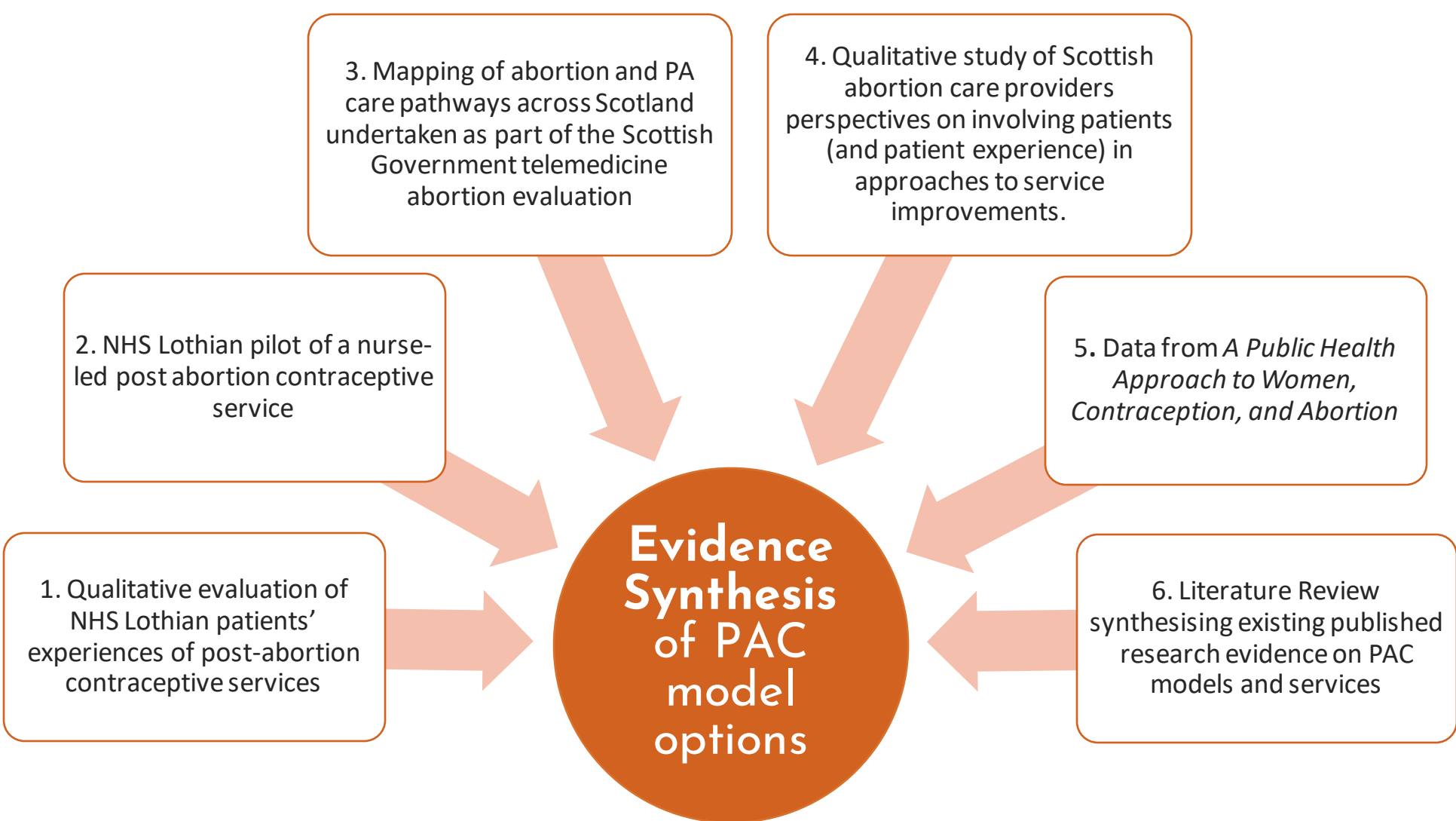


Why are we doing this study?

Access to safe, high-quality abortion and contraception care is an important aspect of the provision of sexual and reproductive health care. Access to contraception, including post-abortion contraception, was disrupted during the COVID-19 pandemic and challenges in access to post-abortion contraception persist.

We know from our past research with people with abortion experience and abortion care providers, that there are differences in the ways people access post-abortion contraception in different areas of Scotland. Our research shows that these things really matter to people’s experiences with this care.

We believe there is a need to work together with both people who have used (or in the future might use) abortion and contraceptive services and those that help provide them to develop and improve post-abortion contraceptive services in Scotland.



The project team

We are a team of social researchers and clinicians with experience in research on abortion and contraceptive care. The project is co-led by Nicola Boydell and Jeni Harden, with John Reynolds-Wright and Sharon Cameron. Marie Larsson, the SCOPE Research Fellow, is leading the project’s research and engagement activities.

Our research team is affiliated with two research centres in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine at the University of Edinburgh: The Usher Institute and the Centre for Reproductive Health. John Reynolds-Wright and Sharon Cameron are also based at Chalmers Sexual Health Centre in Edinburgh, where they are actively involved in providing abortion care.



What is SCOPE?

SCOPE is a Scottish Government funded 18-month service development project (2024-2025) focused on co-designing adaptable models for post-abortion contraceptive (PAC) services to improve access and choice across Scotland.

Through collaboration with patients and abortion care providers, we aim to: 1) identify core principles of feasible, equitable PAC services tailored to diverse needs, and 2) create a PAC framework that supports Scotland-wide implementation.

The three stages of the SCOPE project (18 months)

- Stage 1 Evidence synthesis to identify PAC service model options
- Stage 2 Co-design workshops with abortion patients and care providers to design PAC service principles and models
- Stage 3 Develop and disseminate ScotPAC framework and outputs

What we have achieved so far?

- As of the end of May 2025, we have completed:
- A literature review on post-abortion contraceptive (PAC) care and service model options
 - An evidence synthesis of service model options and core principles for PAC care in Scotland
 - Four co-design workshops with over 30 abortion care providers across eight health boards
 - Two co-design workshops with people with lived experience of abortion and contraception, in partnership with three community organisations supporting young women and women in recovery, and one workshop planned with an organisation working with women of African descent in Scotland
 - An academic paper, “Problem Representations’ in post-abortion contraception: a critical review of UK literature,” based on the literature review from stage 1 of the project

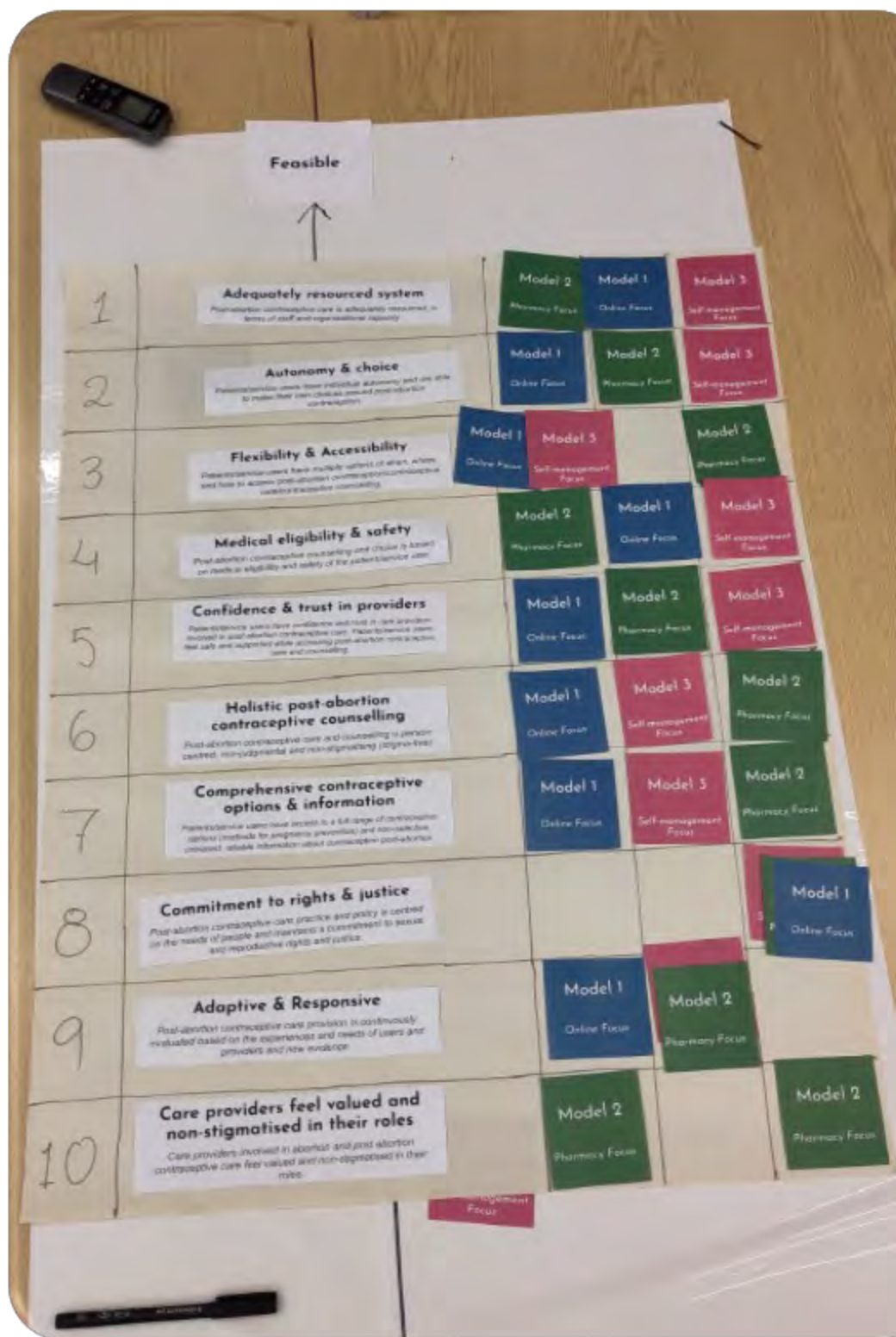


Photo from one co-design workshop

What is next?

Over the next few months we will complete another couple of co-design workshops, analyse workshop data, and prepare ScotPAC outputs including a stakeholder event in September.

If you want to share your reflections on post-abortion contraceptive care in Scotland, you can respond to our short online consultation. Scan the QR cod to the right and you will access the project SWAY including a link to the consultation.

If you are interested in hearing more about the project or have any questions - please do not hesitate to email us at:

SCOPE-Study@ed.ac.uk

