



Medilink Midlands Case Study: Transforming Cervical Screening in Femtech

AMBITION

LBN Innovation's journey began as a patient-driven mission. After enduring painful and inconsistent cervical screening experiences, founder, Louise recognised the urgent need for change. With 1.8 million women and people with a cervix per year in the UK currently avoiding cervical screening—despite its life-saving potential—Louise set out to develop a solution that prioritises comfort, dignity, and effectiveness. Drawing from her own experiences and extensive research, she envisioned a revolutionary medical device that could replace the speculum, reducing pain and embarrassment while increasing screening uptake.

INNOVATION

The innovation is a camera-assisted, minimally invasive cervical screening device designed to replace the traditional speculum, with a smaller, ergonomic, and patient-friendly design.

CHALLENGE

Bringing a disruptive medical innovation to market is fraught with obstacles, and Louise faced them all, with a lack of prior medical or engineering expertise, and significant funding hurdles. As a female founder in the medtech space, she encountered additional challenges in securing investment, with only 3% of global venture capital going to women-led businesses. Moreover, creating a device that meets stringent regulatory requirements while remaining user-friendly and sustainable required access to the right expertise, networks, and financial backing.

SUPPORT

Medilink Midlands, through the West Midlands Health Tech Innovation Accelerator, played a crucial role in supporting Louise's vision. Through their network, she received:

Strategic guidance: Medilink Midlands provided expert advice on navigating the complex medical device landscape, including regulatory considerations and product development pathways.

Funding assistance: They connected Louise to key funding opportunities, helping her secure essential grants to advance her innovation.

Industry connections: By facilitating introductions to supply chain partners, manufacturers, and patent specialists, Medilink Midlands accelerated her access to the expertise needed for further development.

Validation & feedback: Through Medilink's collaborative workshops and roundtable discussions, Louise was able to refine her innovation based on critical insights from engineers, clinicians, and commercial experts.

RESULTS

Thanks to the support from Medilink Midlands and its partners, Louise has successfully developed a working early-stage prototype of her device. The invasive screening tool has been further refined based on patient and practitioner feedback. The latest iteration is significantly smaller than existing speculums, aligning with the size of a tampon for increased comfort.

While funding remains the key barrier to full market entry, Louise has now secured over £300,000 in non-dilutive funding. With plans to further miniaturise and optimise the device for clinical trials, she remains on track to revolutionise cervical screening. As she continues to push boundaries in femtech, the foundational support from Medilink Midlands ensures she has the connections and resources to bring her innovation to market, ultimately transforming women's healthcare experiences for the better.

SUSTAINABILITY

The innovation is designed to use less plastic than existing speculums, aligning with the NHS circular economy goals while exploring biocompatible and sustainable materials to balance disposability with reduced environmental impact.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Looking ahead, Louise's primary goal is to build a minimum viable product suitable for clinical investigations, a crucial step toward obtaining regulatory approval and market entry. To achieve this, she needs:

- Further investment: Securing additional funding is essential to support product refinement, clinical trials, and manufacturing scale-up.
- Clinical partnerships: Collaborations with healthcare institutions and researchers will facilitate product validation and real-world testing.
- Supply chain development: Establishing relationships with manufacturers and distributors will ensure efficient production and delivery.

Louise remains dedicated to advancing her innovation and advocating for better healthcare solutions. With continued investment and strategic support, her groundbreaking device has the potential to transform the cervical screening experience, ensuring accessibility, comfort, and improved outcomes for millions of women worldwide.



Locally-led Innovation Accelerators delivered in partnership with DSIT, Innovate UK and City Regions



Innovate UK



West Midlands Combined Authority