

Sexual and reproductive health services must be co-commissioned, say leading medical organisations

FSRH and RCOG respond to the Health and Social Care Select Committee report on potential changes to legislation proposed in the NHS Long-Term Plan

Sexual and reproductive healthcare services have been affected by a lack of accountability and ownership, which has led to variation across the country and a system where prevention is disincentivised.

Women have been disproportionately affected by the lack of joined up care, a major factor leading to cervical screening rates dropping to their lowest in 21 years; the decline in provision of Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives, the most effective methods of contraception; and increasing abortion rates.

This is further impacted by cuts to Public Health which jeopardise the ability of different commissioners to plan beyond the short-term. Without a reversal of this trend, sexual and reproductive healthcare services will remain vulnerable, resulting in further inequalities and expensive interventions downstream.

In response to the Health and Social Care Select Committee report on changes to legislation, the Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare (FSRH) and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) are calling for Government to mandate the co-commissioning of these services, to end existing fragmentation and provide better care for patients

Co-commissioning can improve the quality and availability of sexual and reproductive healthcare services, increase access and reduce inequalities, but only with clear lines of accountability.

The medical profession has realised this and alongside the RCOG and FSRH, the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) and the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AoMRC) have called for an end to the fragmentation of these services.

It is now the responsibility of Government to go beyond the legislative proposals and mandate the co-commissioning of sexual and reproductive healthcare services in order to provide better care for women and girls.

Clinical commissioning groups, NHS England and local authorities must work together and plan services based on patient and population need while embedding workforce planning in any service model.

ENDS

- The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists is a medical charity that champions the provision of high quality women's healthcare in the UK and beyond. It is dedicated to encouraging the study and advancing the science and practice of obstetrics and gynaecology. It does this through postgraduate medical education and training and the publication of clinical guidelines and reports on aspects of the specialty and service provision. www.rcog.org.uk
- The Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare (FSRH) is the largest UK professional membership organisation working at the heart of sexual and reproductive health (SRH),

supporting healthcare professionals to deliver high quality care. It works with its 15,000 members, to shape sexual reproductive health for all. It produces evidence-based clinical guidance, standards, training, qualifications and research into SRH. It also delivers conferences and publishes the journal BMJ Sexual & Reproductive Health in partnership with the BMJ. You can read more about FSRH here: <https://www.fsrh.org/home/>

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