
Delivering compassionate and cost-effective care

General Election Manifesto 2015



Royal College of
Obstetricians &
Gynaecologists



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1. We call on the Government to invest in promoting healthy policies, communities and behaviours in the whole population, including women before they become pregnant, to prevent ill health in future generations. Practical policies that reduce inequalities and address the causes of poor health must be developed to enable women and their families to lead better lives.
2. We call on the Government to make best practice and age-appropriate sex and relationships education (SRE) compulsory in all schools and colleges, including academies and free schools. In Key Stage 3 and 4, this should include healthy relationships, sexuality, body image, violence against children and young people, safeguarding, fertility, contraception and fertility control, preventing unplanned/unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.
3. We call on the Government to provide better linkages between women's healthcare and women's mental health and social care services. The positive contribution of psychosexual medicine in women's health must be recognised. To reduce health inequalities, primary care providers and local authorities must consider a woman's physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing. This is especially critical in the case of vulnerable and socially-excluded women in the provision of compassionate care and in tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG). We welcome the progress made in preventing and ending the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) in the UK and call on the next Government to continue this important work.
4. We call on the Government to secure the reproductive rights of women of all ages by protecting their access to all methods of contraception through their GP and through open access and specialist sexual and reproductive health services. The sexual health needs of women in their post-reproductive years must be explicitly addressed by commissioners and service providers. We welcome the current Government's pledge to protect and increase NHS funding and urge the next Government to include protection of public health budgets allocated to local authorities.
5. We call on the Government to protect women's access to safe abortion care without fear of harassment and/or intimidation. The commissioning of services for women with complex medical needs at regional centres requires serious thought and implementation.

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6. We call on the Government to support the delivery of integrated community-based women's healthcare that starts with the needs of women. This should support integration of gynaecological and sexual health that is cost effective and minimises multiple appointments for women.
7. We call on the Government to develop food policies and public information programmes to counter the present obesity epidemic in the population. Government must lead on restricting the use of industrially-produced trans fatty acids in common foodstuffs and stronger regulation in the promotion and sale of foods high in salt, sugar and fat. The Government should introduce folic acid supplementation of flour as an evidence-based intervention to reduce the number of neural tube defects in babies.
8. We call on the Government to develop policies for active communities and fitness programmes with schools, community groups and local authorities to encourage individuals to achieve the recommended levels of exercise and physical activity each week.
9. We call on the Government to fast track plans to introduce the plain packaging of tobacco products to help reduce smoking in women and men. More research is needed into the effectiveness of e-cigarettes as a tobacco substitute and a precautionary approach should be taken in their promotion and acceptability in view of the potential for nicotine addiction.
10. We call on the Government to introduce a minimum unit price of 50p for alcohol to reduce the numbers of alcohol-related hospital admissions and deaths.

For more information about this document and the views expressed about women's public health please contact Gerald Chan, RCOG Director Health Policy gchan@rcog.org.uk or Jane Hatfield, FSRH Chief Executive ChiefExec@fsrh.org