

To **Victoria Atkins** (Secretary of State for Health and Social Care), **Wes Streeting** (Shadow Secretary of State for Health and Social Care), **Daisy Cooper** (Lib Dem spokesperson for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care) and **Pallavi Devulapalli** (Green Party spokesperson for Health, Social Care and Public Health)

[One in three](#) women in the UK experience urinary incontinence three months after pregnancy and one in seven experience anal incontinence six months after birth. One in 12 women report symptoms of pelvic organ prolapse.

Women's pelvic health is in crisis.

Despite this, our survey\* suggests that only a third (33%) of women in the UK currently receive advice from a healthcare professional surrounding pelvic floor recovery in the fourth trimester. 1 in 4 (27%) mums did no pelvic floor exercises in the six months following the birth of their baby, whilst only 11% followed NHS guidance to do daily kegel exercises.

The Government's nationwide perinatal pelvic health service (PPHS) - run by specialist midwives and pelvic health physiotherapists - [promises](#) to spend £11m improving support for women during and after pregnancy. But that is nowhere near enough.

The Government's [own estimates](#) show that the cost of providing specialist pelvic health physiotherapy is £434.13 per woman annually. But 605,000\*\* women give birth in the UK every year so the current funding amounts to just £18 per woman.

Something doesn't add up and we're not the only ones who think so. Our survey\* of UK healthcare workers shows that the majority (73%) believe that the Government's measures 'won't be enough' to tackle the maternal pelvic health crisis.

Aside from insufficient funding, the programme has other flaws:

1. The roll-out of PPHS is already delayed. Pilots were promised across England by March 2024 but our Freedom Of Information (FOI) request\*\*\* shows they are only active across two thirds of the country (28 out of 42 sites)
2. It relies on self-referral meaning many women will miss out, especially if clinics are not local. In France everyone who has given birth is prescribed for 10 free physical therapy sessions, this 'opt-out' system is more likely to result in women getting the treatment they need
3. Education and further training for healthcare professionals is not included in the package and pelvic physiotherapists are [already overstretched](#).

Poor pelvic health has a detrimental impact on quality of life - with challenges ranging from anxiety/depression, chronic pain, and sexual dysfunction - but a pervasive feeling of embarrassment surrounding poor pelvic health means that these conditions remain largely hidden and are often left untreated.

This is a hidden health crisis, but it doesn't need to be. The condition is treatable for the vast majority of women, with early intervention and pelvic floor training.

Today we are urging the government to:

1. Increase the level of funding that is being made available to improve services
2. Speed up frontline service delivery and consider extra training from midwives and frontline staff
3. Offer a dedicated prescription for pelvic floor training and physiotherapy to every women that gives birth

Signed by...

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\*Elvie commissioned research with 1,201 NHS workers and 1,177 mothers. The survey was carried out by Find Out Now in February 2024.

\*\*ONS data shows there were 605,479 births in England and Wales in 2022.

\*\*\*An FOI request was made on 21st February 2024, feedback was received on March 12th 2024