

Dear (**Member of Parliament**) / (**Chief Executive of Trust**)

**Re: Health Select Committee of the House of Commons Report on Sexual Health  
Published 11 June 2003**

*"The whole Committee has been frankly shocked and appalled by some of the evidence that we have received....Frankly, the whole sexual health services appears to be a shambles, would you agree?"* David Hinchliffe (HSC Chair to Hazel Blears, 23rd January 2003)

*"We have been appalled by the crisis in sexual health we have heard about and witnessed during our inquiry. We do not use the word 'crisis' lightly but in this case it is appropriate. This is a major public health issue and the problems identified in this Report must be addressed immediately."* (326: Last paragraph of Report.)

In summary, the report calls for the introduction of a National Service Framework for sexual health which crucially must include a maximum waiting time target of 48 hours for patients to be able to access genitourinary medicine services. Clinics, suffering from long-term underinvestment, are simply unable to cope. Staffing levels are inadequate to meet the demand. Clinics are often in dilapidated buildings and Trusts should give priority to improving them. The Report calls for an immediate introduction of a National Chlamydia Screening Programme, using the best chlamydia screening tests as opposed to the poor quality test that the clinics are forced to use.

Those of us working in the service know that easy access is a crucial part of a responsive and effective sexual health service. It is patently obvious that patients who have infections and want to be seen in a clinic, run the risk of infecting others if there are long waiting times. There is also the issue that complications can develop at any time - often requiring more expensive management.

The control of HIV needs easy access to provide rapid diagnosis and good management to prevent onward transmission. The Report also points out that the Government itself estimates that the monetary value of preventing a single onward transmission of HIV is between £0.5 and £1 million.

The Select Committee are recommending that an additional recurrent revenue commitment of £22-30million is made towards sexual health to improve staffing levels and facilities throughout England. We urge you to press upon the Secretary of State and Minister for Public Health, (Melanie Johnson) how important this report is and how crucial it is that a well-funded, constructive response is made.

As Consultant here in Genitourinary Medicine in (**insert clinic name**), I am worried that access to this clinic is still poor with waiting times of (**insert waiting time**) for males and (**insert waiting time**) for females 'phoning up for an appointment. (**Insert additional local data here as required**) We would be delighted to meet with you and discuss this further, and of course you are most welcome to visit the clinic at any time.

Yours sincerely,

Consultant in Genitourinary Medicine