

Helping to Stay Healthy

It is better for people and for the NHS if we keep people healthy in the first place, rather than just waiting until people develop illnesses and come for treatment. 40 per cent of NHS spending is on diseases that are preventable, so we need to do more to support people to lead more active and healthy lives and to help to improve the mental health and wellbeing. This is everybody's business – in our communities, places of work and education; the NHS, social care and public health can't do it alone.

Our understanding of what causes physical and mental ill health is evolving all of the time. It is clear there are strong links between illness and both environmental and social factors. We know that poor housing, unsafe streets, poor air quality, unhealthy diets and financial uncertainty can create the conditions for people to become both physically and mentally unwell.

We will:

- Publish a National Wellbeing Strategy, which puts better health and wellbeing for all at the heart of government. Ministers from all departments will be responsible for implementing the strategy.
- Pursue a Health in All Policies approach, as recommended by the World Health Organization. This means that national and local decision making, policies and interventions will only take place after the full impact on people's mental and physical health has been fully assessed.
- Keep public health within local government, where it is effectively joined-up with preventive community services. We will re-instate the funding that was cut from public health budgets by the Conservatives and join up services across public health and the NHS.
- Introduce a new statutory requirement for public health interventions evaluated as cost effective by NICE to be available to qualifying people, within three months of publication of guidance.
- Develop a strategy to tackle childhood obesity including restricting the marketing of junk food to children, and closing loopholes in the Soft Drinks Industry Levy. We will extend it to include juice- and milk-based drinks that are high in added sugar.
- Guarantee that every child who is eligible for free school meals has access to at least an hour a day of free activities to improve their health and wellbeing. Local authorities will be funded through the public health grant to deliver the 'Wellbeing Hour' according to local needs, for example through voluntary organisations or after-school clubs. We recognise the importance of active play to children and the need for this to be supported.
- Require labelling for food products, in a readable font size, and publication of information on calorie, fat, sugar and salt content in restaurants and takeaways.
- Restrict how products high in fat, salt and sugar are marketed and advertised by multiple retailers.
- Reduce smoking rates by introducing a new levy on tobacco companies to contribute to the costs of health care and smoking cessation services.

- Legislate for the right to unpolluted air, and take urgent action to reduce pollution especially from traffic.
- Introduce minimum unit pricing for alcohol, taking note of the impact of the policy in Scotland. We will also ensure universal access to addiction treatment.
- Fund public information campaigns to tackle stigmas within specific communities.
- Address the scandal of women with learning disabilities dying an average 20 years younger, setting a national target for reducing this gap. We will ensure people with learning disabilities can access screening, prevention, health and care services fairly.
- Review on the basis of evidence any unscientific and discriminatory practices aimed solely at LGBT+ people, such as around blood donations.
- Ensure Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV prevention is fully available to all who need it on the NHS.

The prohibitionist attitude to drug use of both Labour and Conservative Governments over decades has been driven by fear rather than evidence and has failed to tackle the social and medical problems that misuse of drugs can cause to individuals and their communities. Liberal Democrats will take a different approach, and reform access to cannabis through a regulated cannabis market in UK, with a robust approach to licensing, drawing on emerging evidence on models from the US and Canada. To combat the harm done by drugs, we will:

- Move the departmental lead on drugs policy to the Department of Health and Social Care, and, crucially, invest in more addiction services and support for drug users.
- Divert people arrested for possession of drugs for personal use into treatment, and imposing civil penalties rather than imprisonment.
- Help to break the grip of the criminal gangs by introducing a legal, regulated market for cannabis. We will introduce limits on the potency levels and permit cannabis to be sold through licensed outlets to adults over the age of 18.

Our approach will support and encourage more clinical trials of cannabis for medicinal use to establish a clear evidence base. In the meantime, we will allow those who feel that cannabis helps to manage their pain to do so without fear of criminal prosecution.

We believe that everyone has a right to make independent decisions over their reproductive health without interference by the state, and that access to reproductive healthcare is a human right. We will:

- Decriminalise abortion across the UK while retaining the existing 24-week limit and legislate for access to abortion facilities within Northern Ireland.
- Enforce safe zones around abortion clinics, make intimidation or harassment of abortion service users and staff outside clinics, or on common transport routes to these services, illegal.
- Fund abortion clinics to provide their services free of charge to service users regardless of nationality or residency.

We will act on the recommendations of the Public Inquiry into Infected Blood, ensuring a just settlement for victims and their families.
