



The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

3 June 2020

Dear Secretary of State,

Re: Ongoing closure of public toilets during the Covid-19 crisis

I write on behalf of the British Society of Urogynaecology (BSUG), an affiliate organisation of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG). One of our roles as an organisation is the management of female pelvic floor dysfunction including urinary incontinence. It is in this capacity that I wish to draw your attention to the ongoing closure of public toilets.

We are now into the 11th week of the lockdown and there has been a relaxation of the rules relating to exercise. Unfortunately, being able to exercise outside is still not an option for many women who suffer from pelvic floor dysfunction because of the lack of availability of basic toilet facilities in parks and public spaces.

Urinary incontinence affects the lives of millions women in the UK. After pregnancy 33% of women report urinary incontinence. Ten years later, 20% of all women who have been pregnant continue to suffer a degree of urinary incontinence.

Unsurprisingly given the numbers of women affected, we have heard from many members of the RCOG Women's Voices Involvement Panel who have described their frustration at being unable to resume exercise due the lack of these basic but essential facilities.

It is vital for women's physical and emotional wellbeing that they are able to exercise. Being able to do this outside is even more important in the current circumstances, where people are more at risk of isolation, stress and depression due to lockdown. The positive effects of being outside are well documented, and include reducing stress and boosting energy levels.

British Society of Urogynaecology
Registered charity no: 1143157
10-18 Union Street London. SE1 1SZ
Telephone: +44 (0) 20 7772 6211
Facsimile: +44 (0) 20 7772 6410
Email: bsug@rcog.org.uk
Website: www.bsug.org.uk

We therefore request that you consider the reopening of public toilets as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely

Swati Jha

Swati Jha MD FRCOG
Chair BSUG
Consultant Urogynaecologist
Jessop Wing
Sheffield

cc. Nadine Dorries MP
Minister, Department of Health and Social Care