

**From the President**  
**Professor Dame Anne Johnson DBE PMedSci**  
President@acmedsci.ac.uk  
020 3141 3200

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Professor Dame Lesley Regan DBE,  
Women's Health Ambassador, England  
Department of Health and Social Care

Dear Dame Lesley,

Congratulations on your appointment as Women's Health Ambassador for England. I look forward to working with you in your new role, and hope the Academy can support your work by helping to ensure the women's health and wellbeing agenda is supported by a robust evidence base. I would also like to thank you again for speaking on the panel during the symposium we held jointly with the Royal Society on 'women's health: a life course approach' ([summary](#) and [full report](#)) in October 2021.

The Academy recognises that health systems have been disproportionately disadvantaging women's health globally and we very much welcome your appointment as an opportunity to ensure the implementation of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)'s upcoming Women's Health Strategy for England has strong leadership. We believe that the Women's Health Strategy should look beyond healthcare systems, and consider how all government policy and practice affects the interplay between health and its social determinants throughout life. Hence, government policy should be based on robust sex- and gender- disaggregated data and evidence, to avoid default male bias.

In our [consultation response](#) to the Women's Health Strategy, we echoed many themes covered in your '*A women's health agenda: redressing the balance*' report for Public Policy Projects. These included education, awareness and provision of services for women's health issue throughout the life course, early disease prevention, and the opportunity provided by digital women's health R&D. We were delighted to see almost all the main points from our response being covered in the DHSC's Vision for its Women's Health Strategy. However, the importance of [embedding research](#) in the healthcare system was not included, which is essential to address the complexities underlying women's health. Such multidisciplinary approaches would also provide equitable access to the benefits of research.

Moreover, female incontinence, highlighted to us as an important but often overlooked issue for older women, has not featured in the Vision for the Strategy. This problem is highly restrictive for women, yet preventable with early intervention. We are looking forward to reading the full Strategy when it's published. I hope we can further build on our relationship to rise to the challenges and opportunities ahead during your post.

The Academy is committed to further support actions to improve women's health. We anticipate maternal health will be one focus of an upcoming policy working group project, beginning in the autumn, on the role and impact of child and parental health on lifelong health, wellbeing and economic productivity.

41 Portland Place  
London W1B 1QH

+44 (0)20 3141 3200  
info@acmedsci.ac.uk  
www.acmedsci.ac.uk

We are also organising a FORUM workshop on '*understanding pregnancy: baby steps to designing pregnancy-specific drugs*'. This will bring together experts from academia, industry and NHS to build on recommendations of Birmingham Health Partners' recent policy report, '*healthy mum, healthy baby, healthy future*'. By contributing to the evidence base, we aim to support the development of pregnancy-specific medicines. We hope there will be synergy between the Academy's work on women's health and your work delivering the Women's Health Strategy.

I, and the Academy of Medical Sciences, look forward to supporting you in your role, to drive the system-level changes across government which will close the gender health gap.

With kind regards,



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President of the Academy of Medical Sciences

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