

FACULTY OF FORENSIC & LEGAL MEDICINE

of the Royal College of Physicians of London



Registered Charity No 1119599

The Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine Manifesto 2024

Introduction

A manifesto is a declaration of policy and/or aims, usually produced prior to an election, by a political party and/or their candidate.

- The Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine, (FFLM) was founded in 2005, to raise standards in forensic and legal medicine and protect vulnerable people, and to achieve the following objectives:
- To promote for the public benefit the advancement of education and knowledge in the field of forensic and legal medicine in all its classes
- To develop and maintain for the public benefit the good practice of forensic and legal medicine by ensuring the highest professional standards of competence and ethical integrity

And exercises its powers:

- To establish a training pathway in forensic and legal medicine and achieve specialist recognition of the specialty.
- To act as an authoritative body for the purpose of consultation in matters of educational or public interest concerning forensic and legal medicine

A manifesto or a prescription

The FFLM is not a political party but, in the time leading up to the election, it publishes its view on issues, which it believes the new Government, once in place, must address; these are not listed in order of priority as the FFLM believe all are important.

Rather than a manifesto, this might be viewed as a 'prescription', addressing the treatment of the various 'maladies', which the FFLM has identified.

The FFLM notes the importance of confidence and trust: the report [BSA 41: Damaged Politics? | National Centre for Social Research \(natcen.ac.uk\)](#), published by the National Centre for Social Research, on 12 June 2024, in relation to Government, found:

- *'Public trust and confidence has fallen now to record lows across a range of measures'*

Therefore, the FFLM believe the new Government must:

1. Ensure that all those who sit in Parliament, whatever their role or party and in whichever house they sit, commit and adhere to the Standards in Public Life, originally described as the 'Nolan Principles' in 1995 and reviewed in 2013.^{1,2}
2. Ensure the delays in the Criminal Courts, affecting victims/complainants, defendants and witnesses, are urgently addressed with the implementation of an action plan and the necessary resources to deliver it.

In doing so, the unacceptable level of overcrowding across the prison estate would be improved, with fewer individuals on remand for offences of which they have not been convicted and remove the need for such responses or 'operations' as 'Early Dawn' and 'Safeguard'.

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3. Ensure those held in all types of state detention have appropriate care, which includes, but is not limited to adequate numbers of appropriately trained staff to allow time out of cells, for work, education and exercise and sufficient provision to address detainees' physical and mental health concerns.
4. Increase the provision of services for those experiencing inter-personal violence, including sexual offences. Further, those delivering such services, particularly in relation to the provision of forensic medical examinations, are appropriately commissioned, to published standards, and staff are trained to provide the therapeutic and forensic care required and also give best evidence to the Courts. This includes those giving expert evidence, who must possess and demonstrate the necessary knowledge, experience and skill to do so.
5. Address the issues which have become apparent in relation to the provision of evidence to the Courts, where those involved appear to be unaware of, or ignore their obligations, resulting in miscarriages of justice.
6. Make amendments to Paragraph 7 of Schedule 5 the Coroners and Justice Act, 2009, and/or Regulations 28 and 29 of the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013. HM Coroners have a '*duty to make reports to a person, organisation, local authority or government department or agency*' where the coroner believes action should be taken to prevent future deaths. It is essential those in receipt of such reports are under a statutory duty to respond to ensure the potential public health benefits and organisational learning arising from them are made a reality.
7. Address accountability when and where problems are identified in any service providing healthcare within, or on behalf of the NHS, to ensure there are no 'cover-ups'. Ensuring such issues are appropriately investigated and explained, so that the 'Duty of Candour, as identified in Regulation 20 of the Health and Social Care Act, [The Health and Social Care Act 2008 \(Regulated Activities\) Regulations 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) is met, in full.

References

1. HM Government. (1995). The Seven Principles of Public Life Standards. [The Seven Principles of Public Life - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
2. HM Government. (2013). Standards Matter: a review of best practice in promoting good behaviour in public life. [Promoting standards in public life: best practice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Dr Bernadette Butler
President
27 June 2024