

## **FSRH and RCOG joint statement on the King's Fund analysis of local councils' planned cuts to Public Health in 2017/18 in England**

12<sup>th</sup> July 2017

The Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare (FSRH) and Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) are deeply concerned by the findings from an analysis carried out by the King's Fund regarding local councils' forecast expenditure on public health in 2017/18 in England. The analysis shows that the Government's cuts to the public health budget have forced councils to reduce spending on key public health services, including access to contraception. The King's Fund highlights that sexual and reproductive health services face the biggest loss in funding when it comes to changes in spending compared to last year, with a 5% cut that amounts to £30 million.

Based on data from the Department of Communities and Local Government, the analysis also shows that councils plan to cut £85 million from public health services in 2017/18 compared to the previous period. Overall, the King's Fund estimates that planned Public Health spending shows a decrease of more than 5% in 2017/18 compared to 2013/14 on a like-for-like basis once inflation is discounted.

The FSRH and RCOG believe that these findings are demonstrative of a health system that is running counter to the Government's promise to focus on a radical upgrade in prevention and public health services as set out in the Five Year Forward View in 2014 a case of short-sightedness in the decision-making process that might revert hard-won public health improvements.

Jane Hatfield, FSRH Chief Executive, said:

*"The release of this timely King's Fund analysis reveals what our membership already knows: one FSRH member has recently reported that self-referral to the local specialist service for long-acting reversible contraception (LARC), one of the most effective methods of contraception, has been stopped, with patients being turned away and told to see their GP. However, this policy has not been communicated to local general practices, and in many cases, the general practices are unable to pick up the slack. The consequence is that women are not receiving the contraceptive care they need, and the risk of unplanned pregnancies are increased.*

*"In a moment when the world witnesses our country's efforts to provide access to contraception to women all over the world in the framework of the Family Planning 2020 summit, this analysis should be considered as a wake-up call that access to contraceptive care is far from a certainty in England. Ultimately this will be seen as an expensive mistake leading to unnecessary ill health and unwanted pregnancies, which are entirely preventable. The FSRH urges local councils to revise planned cuts to SRH and the central government to re-energise its focus on prevention and Public Health."*

Professor Lesley Regan, RCOG President, said:

*“I am deeply troubled by the planned local cuts to sexual and reproductive health services. It is essential that all women and girls have the resources they need to take control of their health and fertility including protection against sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies – this is among one of the most important investments we can make as a society.*

*“Funding cuts will inevitably impact on the accessibility of a range of services, including access to family planning and contraception. I urge local authorities and the central government to protect public health budgets allocated to local authorities to ensure that all girls and women have access to high quality comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services.*

*“It is particularly distressing that this analysis of funding cuts comes one day after the highly successful Family Planning Summit (FP2020) in London where international leaders, including our own Secretary of State for International Development, promised to bolster efforts to improve access to family planning. Ministers for health at the Summit vowed to hold their own governments to account – we must and can do the same.”*

### **Ends**

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Notes to editors:

- The Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare (FSRH) is the largest UK professional membership organisation working at the heart of sexual and reproductive health (SRH), supporting healthcare professionals to deliver high quality care. It works with its 15,000 members, to shape sexual reproductive health for all. It produces evidence-based clinical guidance, standards, training, qualifications and research into SRH. It also delivers conferences and publishes The Journal of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Care. For more information please visit: [www.fsrh.org](http://www.fsrh.org)
- The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists is a medical charity that champions the provision of high quality women’s healthcare in the UK and beyond. It is dedicated to encouraging the study and advancing the science and practice of obstetrics and gynaecology. It does this through postgraduate medical education and training and the publication of clinical guidelines and reports on aspects of the specialty and service provision.
- The King’s Fund analysis can be accessed [here](#).
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