FSRH Statement on release of Office for National Statistics Quarterly Conception Rates for Women under 18 data: April - June 2015

23rd August 2016

FSRH welcomes the publication of the Office for National Statistics’ quarterly conceptions for women under 18 statistics for England and Wales.

This data, taken from the second quarter of 2015, reveals a continued decrease in under 18 conceptions, with the rate falling from 23.3 conceptions per 1000 in the comparable quarter in 2014 to 21.8 per 1000 in 2015.

While this continued downward trend represents continued progress, these statistics reveal wide variations in conception rates among local authorities, with some areas showing significant increases. For example when compared with the previous quarter, Southampton’s rate has risen from 25.1 to 37.7 per 1000, and Wolverhampton has risen from 25.2 to 34.1 per 1000.

FSRH is concerned that such differences suggest a disparity in funding of, and access to, contraception – a disparity that is likely to be compounded if current Government proposals to remove public health funding protection in favour of funding from local business rates come into being.

In light of this, FSRH calls on the Government to protect the public health budget for the foreseeable future in the same way it has pledged to protect the NHS budget. The proposed alternative- of local authorities funding public health services through their areas’ business rates- risks exaggerating existing health inequalities through a postcode funding lottery based on the strength of business in any given area.

In addition to protecting funding for vital health services, FSRH calls on the Government to better empower young people with high-quality, up-to-date information about their sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing so that they are able to make informed choices when it comes to sex. For this to become a reality, the Government must listen to the compelling consensus that age-appropriate PSHE education should be made statutory in all schools, as outlined in the PSHE Association’s leading campaign.

Dr Asha Kasliwal, FSRH President said:

‘Access to high-quality, youth-friendly sexual and reproductive healthcare is paramount in reducing teenage conception rates. However, this alone will not ensure that the UK’s young people are equipped to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health. Statutory PSHE education- inclusive of Sex & Relationships Education- is essential to fully support young people in the UK and ensure continued decreases in under 18 conceptions.’

Ends

Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare, 27 Sussex Place, London NW1 4RG. Charity No. 1019969.
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


- The PSHE Association's campaign for PSHE education to be given the same status as other subjects has gained huge public, professional and political support including four Parliamentary select committees, the Children's Commissioner, the Chief Medical Officer, the Association for Directors of Public Health, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, the Association of Independent Local Safeguarding Children Boards Chairs, two royal societies, five leading unions, six medical royal colleges, over 100 expert bodies including the NSPCC, 85% of business leaders, 88% of teachers, 91% of parents and 92% of young people.

For more information please visit: https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/campaigns

- For further information please contact:
  Harry Walker
  Policy Manager
  Email: policymanager@fsrh.org
  Telephone: 020 3751 8077