FSRH statement on the release of ONS quarterly conception rates for women under 18 in England and Wales: July - September 2016

06th December 2017

FSRH welcomes the publication of the Office for National Statistics’ (ONS) quarterly statistics (July to September 2016) on conceptions for women aged under 18 in England and Wales. The rates of pregnancies per 1000 women aged 15-17 in these nations continue to fall in comparison to the previous quarter, from 19.3 to 17.8. The last rolling year (September 2015-September 2016) for England and Wales shows a drop of 10% in teenage pregnancies, from 21.4 to 19.4.

However, significant regional differences persist, with the East and West Midlands, South East and North West showing a slower pace of change when compared to other regions. East Midlands is the area with the smallest decrease in rates, and Lincolnshire shows an actual increase from 20.9 to 21.5 compared to the previous quarter. The absence of SRH clinical leadership in areas such as Lincolnshire to ensure high quality service provision to teenagers is likely to be a contributing factor.

Jane Hatfield, FSRH Chief Executive, said:

“These figures show a welcome trend in declining rates in under-18 pregnancies in England and Wales. It is encouraging to see positive health outcomes being achieved consistently over time. However, we know that there is still much to be done to tackle unplanned teenage pregnancies in some areas in particular.

Qualified leadership is essential to the provision of safe, effective SRH care. SRH consultants do extensive training including in public health to ensure that services are focused on prevention of unplanned pregnancies and fit with wider attempts to promote good health and tackle inequalities among the population.

We are concerned that there is a significant SRH consultant workforce shortage despite it being an oversubscribed medical specialty programme, meaning it is difficult even to replace the consultants due to retire in the near future.

Future leaders in SRH are necessary to ensure the provision of high-quality services that can prevent future unplanned pregnancies and sustain positive public health outcomes for teenagers and other women”

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

- Office for National Statistics Quarterly Conceptions to Women Aged Under 18, England and Wales July - September 2016 data available here

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