



Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare

Statement on the Chancellor's announcement of further cuts to public health

Today in his annual Spending Review, Chancellor George Osborne announced further cuts to the public health grant. This is on top of the recently confirmed 6.2% reduction in Local Authority public health budgets across the country.

It is not widely known that NHS services – including most contraception services – are funded from this dwindling pot.

FSRH is gravely concerned that additional cuts will further restrict access to contraceptive care, resulting in an increase in unplanned pregnancy. The announcement comes just a week after FPA calculated in its *Unprotected Nation 2015* report that over the next 5 years every £1 cut in expenditure on sexual and reproductive health services will incur £86 of health costs further down the line, meaning £77.750 billion in additional expenditure by 2020. This is on top of the wider personal and societal cost of unintended pregnancy, which is expected to be excess of an additional £5 billion.

Recent ComRes survey findings about access to contraceptive care suggest that now more than ever is the time for investment in these services. One third of British women aged 18-24 (32%) and a quarter of British women aged 18-49 (25%) agree that they find it difficult to get an appointment with their GP, nurse or clinician to talk about contraception. In addition, one in ten British women aged 18-49 (11%) agree that their preferred method of contraception is not always available from their GP, nurse or clinician.

Evidence from FSRH members – doctors and nurses delivering services in the community – suggests that the implementation of further cuts to contraceptive care will lead to far higher costs to the NHS in the short and longer term.

We want the government to recognise that NHS services are being directly cut through this spending review despite headlines suggesting increases to NHS funding overall. Do the Chancellor and his team recognise the importance of contraceptive care as efficient healthcare spend, but also as a fundamental right to England's 10 million women of reproductive age? Why is the 'unprecedented investment' in NHS Services excluding sexual and reproductive healthcare? Women should not be disadvantaged by the decision by the Coalition government to put contraception/SRH funding into Local Authority hands. It is time for SRH services to be put back into the NHS where they should sit at the heart of women and men's healthcare.

Notes to editors:

- The Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare is the largest professional membership body working in sexual and reproductive health in the UK. It supports healthcare professionals to deliver high quality care. Its vision is of a world where quality SRH is accessible to all. It grants diplomas, certificates, fellowships and equivalent recognition of specialist knowledge and skills in family planning and reproductive health care. It has over 15,500 members - doctors and nurses of whom over 10,000

are general practitioners. It promotes conferences and lectures, provides members with an advisory service and publishes *The Journal of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Care*. For more information please visit www.fsrh.org

- FPA (2015) *Unprotected Nation 2015: An Update on The Financial and Economic Impacts of Restricted Contraceptive and Sexual Health Services* Available at: <http://www.fpa.org.uk/sites/default/files/unprotected-nation-2015-full-report.pdf>
- ComRes interviewed 1108 British women of reproductive age (18-49 years) online between the 11th and 15th November 2015. Data were weighted by age, socio-economic grade and region to be representative of all GB women. ComRes is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. Full data tables are available at www.comres.co.uk