



## **FSRH statement on Time to Act campaign by the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP)**

27<sup>th</sup> July 2017

The Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare (FSRH) officially endorsed a new report released today by the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) which highlights the complex and fragmented way that sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services are commissioned in England as well as the decreasing services available in the community as a result.

The report indicates that years of progress in SRH care, including a halving of teenage pregnancy rates over the last decade and steadily increasing uptake of long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs), is at risk due to the mounting pressures facing GPs and practice teams.

The findings reveal that vulnerable patients are being excluded from accessing the full range of contraceptive methods, and that health inequalities are being widened as a result. The report is part of RCGP's *Time to Act* campaign and is based on an extensive consultation with its 50,000-strong membership.

Dr Anne Connolly, GP, FSRH Vice President, said:

*"The healthcare system is undergoing a workforce crisis marked by a difficulty in training, recruiting and retaining staff. The consequence is that women are not receiving the contraceptive care they need, and the risk of unplanned pregnancies is increased. These changes and reduction in access are short-sighted and have happened due to funding cuts across the system.*

*The expectation that women should feel satisfied with decreased access to the full range of contraceptive options and SRH services is unacceptable. It also risks disempowering the most vulnerable, who may find more difficulty negotiating the barriers and navigating the system to find the SRH services they need.*

*For instance, one FSRH member has recently reported that self-referral to the local specialist service for LARCs, the most effective method 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, a reflection of poor communication across fragmented commissioning structures with no oversight over the entire system, and many are unable to pick up the slack."*

Dr Asha Kasliwal, FSRH President, said:

*"It is unreasonable to expect that primary care services which are already under considerable strain will have the skills, capacity and ability to assimilate additional service provision without extra funding, training and planning. Lack of clear, timely and consistent communication across the system is, moreover, a key challenge for the patient journey.*

*It is vital that GPs and other healthcare professionals in primary care are given advice, training and sustained support. FSRH will be working along with RCGP to develop resources to support GPs to deliver the SRH care our patients need."*

## 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 General Practitioners (RCGP) is a network of more than 52,000 family doctors working to improve care for patients. We work to encourage and maintain the highest standards of general medical practice and act as the voice of GPs on education, training, research and clinical standards.
- The full report is available [here](#)
- Join the discussion on Twitter by following [@FSRH\\_UK](#) and the *hashtag* #SRHTimeToAct

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