



## **FSRH Statement on the Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer – 11<sup>th</sup> December 2015**

The Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare (FSRH) warmly welcomes the Chief Medical Officer's recommendations published today designed to improve women's health across their life course.

As the largest membership body representing healthcare professionals working in sexual and reproductive healthcare (SRH) across the UK, the FSRH has long advocated for a 'woman-centred' approach to the design of healthcare - in particular care that aims to meet the SRH needs of women across their lives. In particular, the FSRH warmly welcomes:

- **The recognition in the report of the need for a more open debate about the health needs of women from the violence they face in relationships to the common 'disabling and taboo' conditions including menopausal symptoms.**
- **The recommendation that NHS England, Local Authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups ensure provision for a full range of contraception to women at all reproductive ages.** FSRH is concerned that recent cuts to the public health budget and a further 3.9% cuts over the next 5 years will further restrict women of all ages being able to access the full range of contraception. Therefore, it is vital that these organisations work together to avoid reduced access to contraception, increased health inequalities, unsustainable pressure on primary care and increased costs in health and social care as a result of unplanned pregnancies.
- **The recommendation that sex and relationship education is made a routine, potentially statutory, part of all children and young people's education.** It is the experience of FSRH members that the success of SRH care is based on the ability of patients to make an informed choice. Appropriate education from an early age helps to achieve this goal.
- **The focus in the report on the research needs and spend in the area of pregnancy.** FSRH believes that research should be carried out into how pre-conception interventions including contraception and effective family/pregnancy planning can improve maternal mental and physical health including by reducing unintended pregnancies and abortions. Similarly, we would welcome improved access to contraception for women after pregnancy
- **The recognition of the need guidelines for employers to ensure appropriate advice and support is provided to women experiencing disabling symptoms while going through the menopause.** The menopause can affect many aspects of women's lives. Better support for general practice to provide menopause care and increased access to community based specialist menopause services is required to support some women through the menopause.

FSRH members are reporting worrying trends in restrictions in access to contraceptive care by age or residence and the discontinuation of some family planning and SRH services. FSRH is committed to supporting improvements in women's health including through its recently published vision [http://www.fsrh.org/pages/FSRH\\_Vision.asp](http://www.fsrh.org/pages/FSRH_Vision.asp) for SRH care<sup>i</sup> in the UK. We call on system leaders, providers and commissioners to work with us to ensure that the Chief Medical Officer's recommendations are implemented.

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](http://www.fsrh.org)

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<sup>i</sup> Better care, a better future: a new vision for sexual and reproductive health care in the UK, FSRH November 2015