Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Health Report on Bath and North East Somerset Council Sexual Health Services to the Health Select Committee

Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) Council has been advised of the report from the Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Health (FSRH) to the Health Select Committee Inquiry on Public health post-2013: Structures, Organisation, Funding and Delivery, stating:

"In North East Somerset, if patients are not a resident of the locality or registered with the local GP they cannot access Long Acting Reversible Contraception in community services. In addition, the locality’s implant clinic was cancelled as it was not included in the Contraceptive and Sexual Health (CASH) service contract. Both of these restrictions are leaving women at risk of unintended pregnancy"

We are not clear if the term "North East Somerset" actually means the local authority of Bath and North East Somerset Council, but since other local authorities are mentioned in the submission we assume it refers to our area. Any clarification would be helpful.

We can confirm that Bath and North East Somerset Council does not operate any restrictions on patients accessing community contraceptive services. That means that any person, if they are B&NES resident, registered with a B&NES GP or neither of the two, is welcome to access our contraceptive services.

We can also confirm that we have not cancelled any specialist contraceptive clinics with the exception of an outreach clinic run in Midsomer Norton. This clinic ran during 2013 and was cancelled in early 2014 due to exceptionally low take up. We also do not offer "implant clinics" within our contraceptive services; all clinics offer the full range of LARC in addition to other methods of contraception such as CoC, PoP and condoms and are not method-specific.

We would welcome dialogue with the representative who has shared this information with the Health Select Committee as it does not appear to be accurate in either of its assertions.

Along with all local authority Public Health departments, Bath and North East Somerset Council is facing the challenge of maintaining services in an environment of financial cuts. Despite this, we remain fully committed to providing open access contraceptive and sexual health services so it is very disappointing to here such inaccuracies reported by the FSRH to the Health Select Committee.