

# JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 2025/26

## Teenage Pregnancy

### Summary points

- The rate of under 18 conceptions has declined significantly since 2007 and since the beginning of the teenage pregnancy strategy in 1998.
- Although there are fewer teenage mothers, many are vulnerable due to the risk factors they may have experienced, such as adverse childhood experiences, poverty, poor educational attainment, and experience of being in care.
- Under 18 conception data from the Office for National Statistics is not published until approximately 18 months after the end of the calendar year in which the conception occurred. This can mask real time changes in actual pregnancies and reduce the ability to plan timely service provision and health promotion initiatives.
- Under 18 conception data includes live births and abortions per 1000 15-17-year-old females. The measure for under 16s is based on live births and abortions per 1000 13-15-year-old females.

### Findings

The rate of teenage conceptions in Bristol has shown a steep decline since 2007. In terms of absolute numbers, teenage conceptions (to under 18s) in Bristol fell from 360 in 2007 to 66 in 2020. The rates and number of conceptions during 2020, when behaviour was significantly impacted by Covid-19 lockdowns, were the lowest since these statistics were routinely collected (10.2 conceptions per 1000 girls aged 15-17 and 66 conceptions). There has been an increase since 2020, in 2021 there were 90 conceptions to under 18s and 93 in 2022. In 2022 the Bristol rate was 13.1 conceptions per 1,000 female residents aged 15-17, statistically similar to the England average of 13.9 per 1,000 - Figure 1. It is too early to determine if the rise in 2021 is part of a longer-term upward trend, or if rates have begun to plateau.

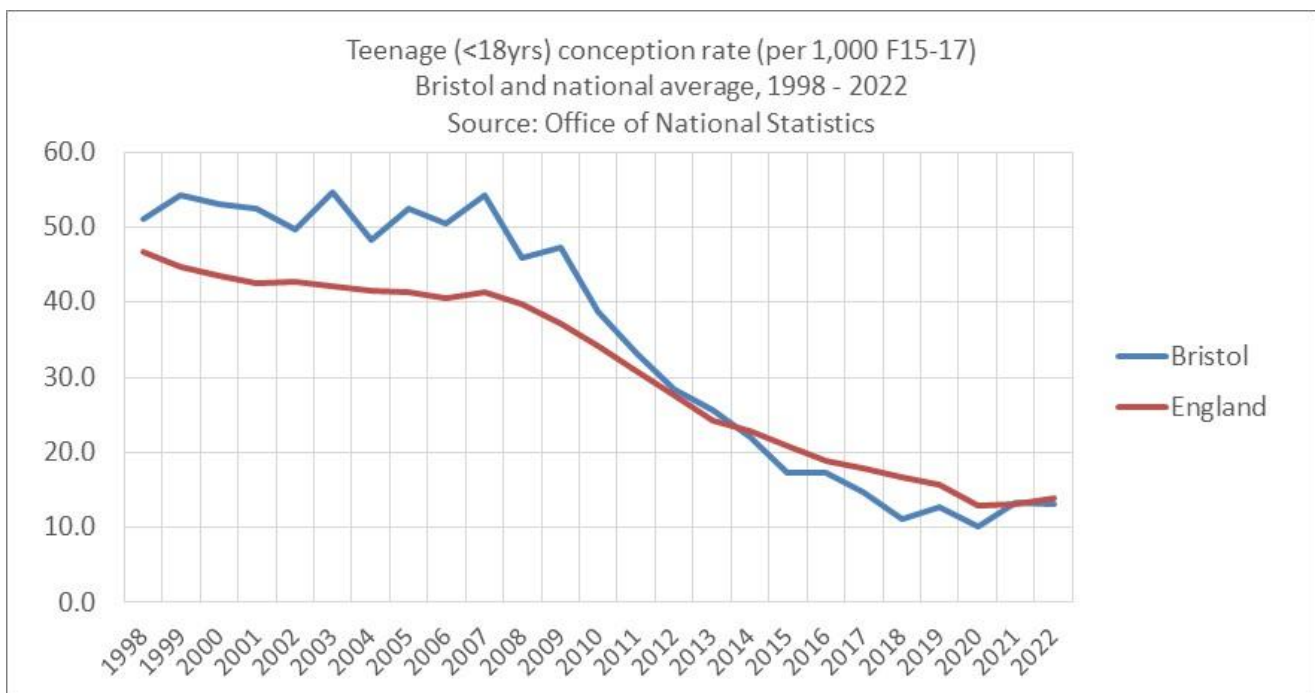


Figure 1: Trends in teenage (<18yrs) conceptions, Bristol and England average 1998 to 2022

Conceptions in young women under 16 have also fallen markedly during the last 10 years but there appears to have been a levelling out of this decline and a slight rise in the last couple of years. The rate of teenage conceptions per 1,000 females aged 13-15 years old was 2.4 per 1,000 between 2020-2022, very close to the rate from 2019 to 2021 (2.3) but an increase from 2018-2020 (1.8 per 1,000), and more in line with rates seen in 2015-17. The Bristol rate for 2020-2022 is statistically similar to the England average of 2.1 per 1,000. There were 53 conceptions within this age-group in Bristol between 2020 and 2022, compared to 37 between 2018 and 2020.

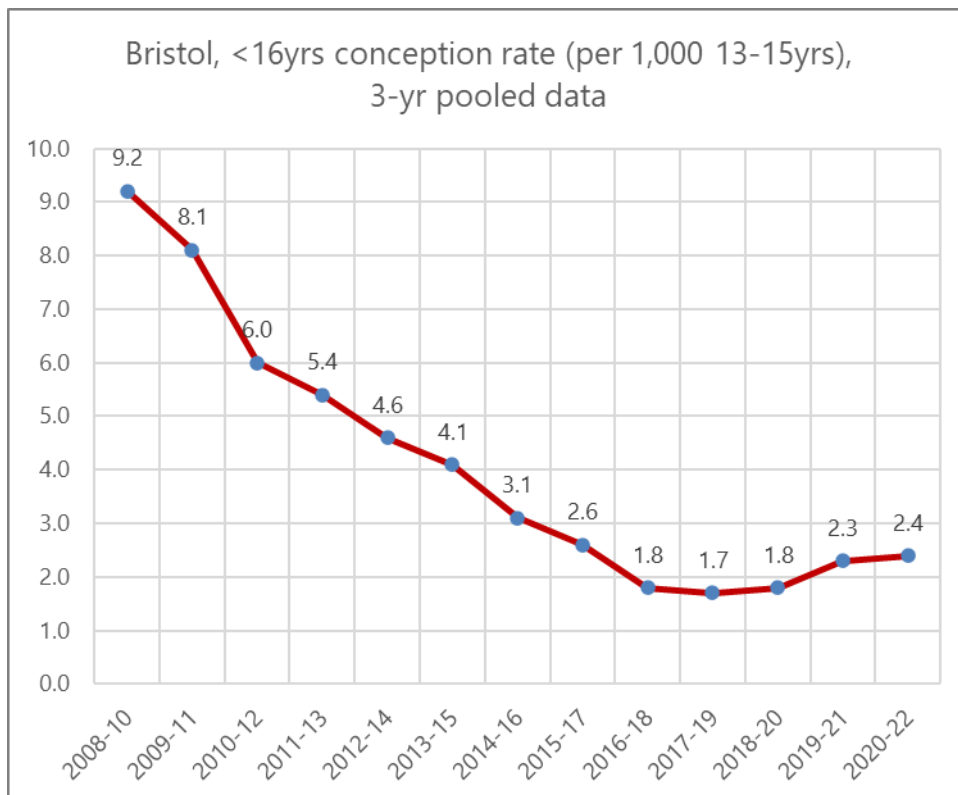


Figure 2: Trends in teenage (<16yrs) conceptions, Bristol, 3-yr averages, 2008-10 to 2020-2022

Just over half (52.7%) of all teenage conceptions in Bristol in 2022 ended in an abortion, a statistically similar proportion to, but a little higher than, the proportions recorded in 2021 (45.6%) and 2020 (45.5%). Bristol’s statistic for 2022 remains lower than the national average (58.2%). The rate for under 16s; in Bristol in 2020-2022 was 50.9%, lower than the 54.0%, recorded for 2019-2021, and also lower than the equivalent national average (60.9%).

Although the numbers of under 18 conceptions has fallen since 2007, just over 20% of these conceptions were to under 16 year olds in 2022. Previous research using data reported by specialist pregnancy and contraception staff working with young mothers in the city showed that it was likely that many of those teenagers conceiving have complex needs and require a high level of support. Higher rates of teenage conception continue to be found where deprivation is higher, and teenage conception remains both a cause and symptom of disadvantage, helping to embed and perpetuate poorer outcomes, generation to generation.

Given the relatively small numbers of teenage conceptions for analytical purposes, and lack of access at present to detailed demographics for these young women, it is not possible at present to report on the precise variation within the population of the city based on deprivation or ethnicity. It is possible to estimate approximate rates for wards, as shown in Figure 3.

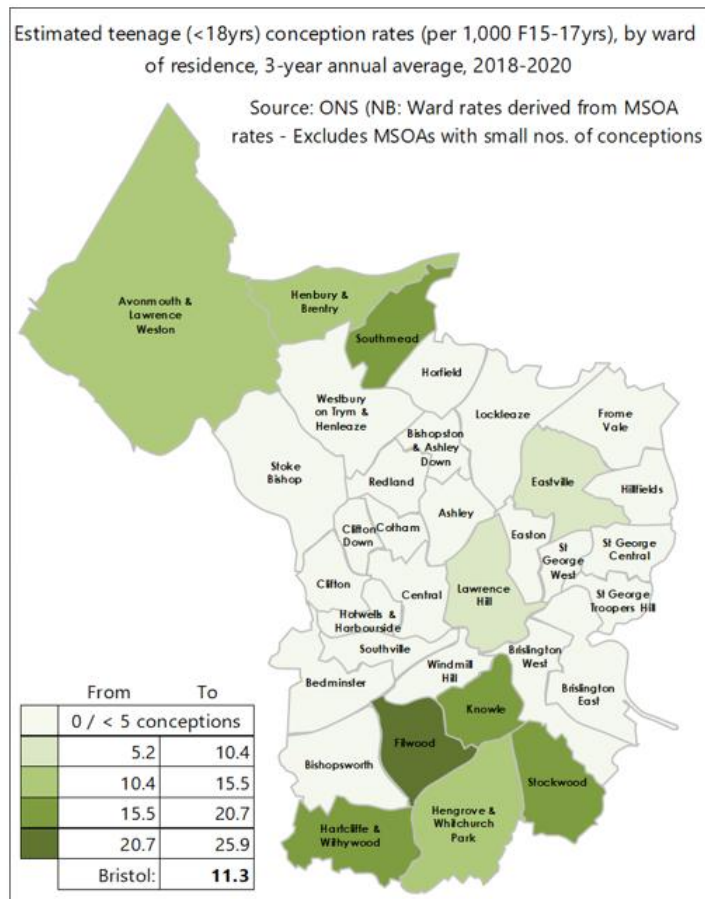


Figure 3: Ward map of approximate teenage conception rates (<18yrs) in Bristol

### Relationships and sex education

Bristol’s ‘Pupil Voice’ survey (2024) reports that most year 10 pupils found their lessons focused on contraception and pregnancy, and sex and relationships more broadly, to have been of at least some use to them:

- 46% of year 10 pupils found school lessons focused on contraception and pregnancy ‘quite’ or ‘very useful’, a further 32% found them to be of ‘some use’ but 11% of pupils found these lessons ‘not at all useful’, and another 11% could not recall the lessons at all.
- 41% of year 10 pupils found school lessons focused on sex and relationships ‘quite’ or ‘very useful’, a further 34% found them to be of ‘some use’ but 12% of pupils found these lessons ‘not at all useful’, and another 13% could not recall the lessons at all.
- 44% of Year 10 pupils said they know where they would go if they needed a contraception/sexual health service, slightly lower than the 47% reported in 2022 (54% in 2019).

- 25% of all year 10 pupils were aware of the local sexual health service provided for young people, which was similar to the 24% recorded in 2022 (41% in 2019), and only 13% were aware of the population-wide sexual health service for Bristol.

**Further data / links / consultations:**

- [SPLASH Bristol 2022-01-27 \(phe.org.uk\)](https://www.phe.org.uk)
- <https://www.local.gov.uk/good-progress-more-do-teenage-pregnancy-and-young-parents>
- <https://www.ons.gov.uk/quarterlyconceptionstowomenagedunder18englandandwales>
- [Teenage pregnancy prevention framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
- [Child and Maternal Health - PHE](https://www.phe.org.uk)

**Covid-19 impact:**

The rates of teenage conceptions fell nationally by almost a third during the first Covid-19 lockdown (April to June 2020). Because the numbers of teenage pregnancies in Bristol are low drawing any firm conclusions regarding the longer-term impact of the pandemic on local trends is difficult at this stage, more data is needed for the full picture to emerge.

**Date updated:** July 2025**Next update due:** July 2026