

Reproductive Health

Achieving and maintaining good reproductive health and wellbeing benefits both individuals and society. At any given time, over three quarters of women are either looking to prevent or achieve a pregnancy, making access to effective contraception, informed choice and preconception care central to reproductive health across the life course. Almost half of all pregnancies in the UK are unplanned, and although many will result in positive outcomes, some unplanned pregnancies can have adverse health impacts for both mother and baby, particularly for young parents and their children.

It is therefore essential for women to have choice and control over their reproductive health, including timely access to safe abortion services, to support good mental and psychosexual health. Improving awareness and uptake of the full range of contraceptive options, alongside equitable access to high-quality services including abortion care, can help reduce inequalities and enable women to achieve their reproductive intentions.

Bristol has a relatively young population compared to England. The city is ethnically diverse with areas of high deprivation and a relatively large lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBTQ+) community giving rise to greater needs around sexual health and wellbeing.

Summary points

- Teenage conception rates remain low but increased for the first time in over a decade in 2021 and remained at a similar level in 2022 with 93 conceptions in under 18s.
- LARC prescribing in Bristol remains higher than England but has declined since 2023 and remains below pre-pandemic levels. In 2024, there were 6,865 prescriptions of long-acting reversible contraception (coils and implants), with most provision delivered in primary care.
- Community pharmacies are playing an increasing role in reproductive health provision, including access to free emergency hormonal contraception for women of all ages since October 2025.
- Total abortion rates in Bristol have increased markedly, rising by approximately 30% between 2021 and 2023, having previously been stable. Despite the recent increase, the abortion rate in Bristol remains significantly lower than the national average.
- Most abortions in Bristol (88% in 2023) were performed at under 10 weeks gestation, which is similar to England (89%). Abortions carried out earlier in pregnancy are associated with a lower risk of complications.

Teenage pregnancies

The under 18s conception rate in Bristol had been falling since 2007 and in 2020 reached its lowest rate in 23 years. However, teenage conceptions increased in 2021 for the first time in over a decade and remained at a similar level in 2022 (the most recent data available). In 2022, there were 93 new conceptions, a rate of 13.1 conceptions per 1,000, which is similar to England with 13.9 per 1,000 (Figure 1). The under 18 total includes 19 conceptions among girls aged under 16 (aged 13-15).

In 2022 around half of the total under 18 conceptions resulted in abortion. In 2024/25, the percentage of births to mothers under 18 years was 0.3% (0.5% in England overall).

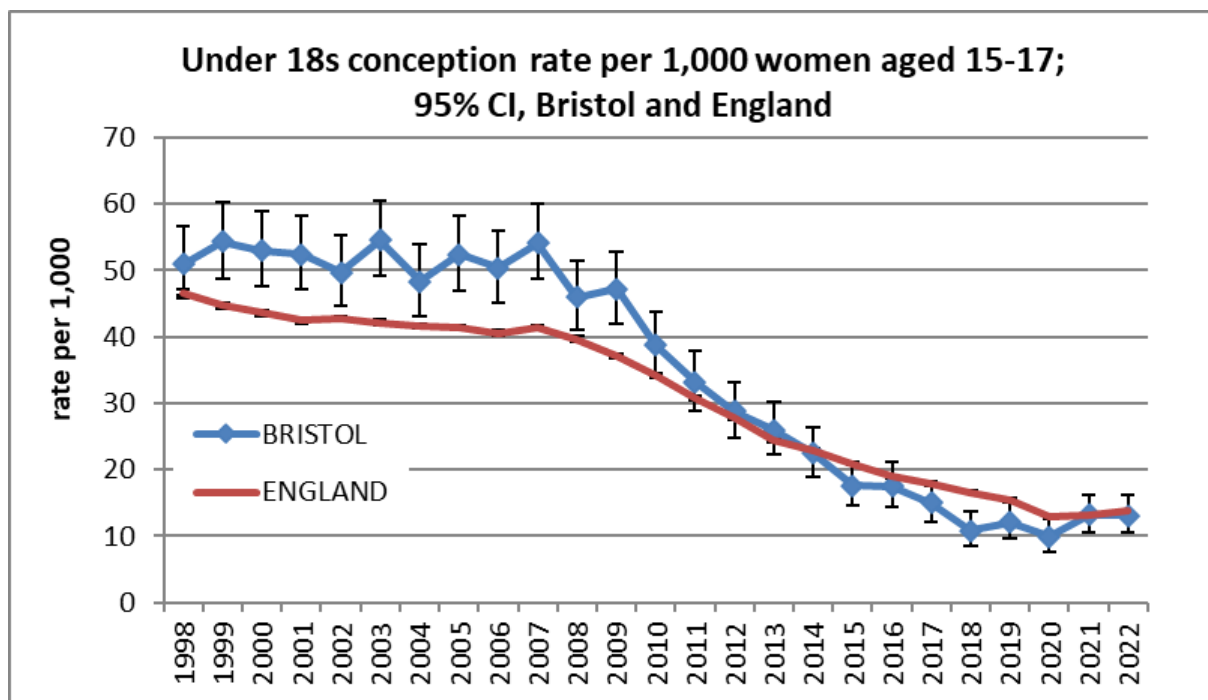


Figure 1: Under 18s conception, rate per 1,000 women (aged 15-17) with 95% confidence intervals, Bristol and England. Source: OHID Sexual and Reproductive Health Profiles and ONS Conception Statistics, England and Wales, 2022, July 2025.

Contraception

Long-acting reversible contraception (LARC), such as coils and implants, is the most effective form of contraception. Bristol has had high rates of LARC which is prescribed predominantly within primary care, but like the rest of the country, saw very significant reductions in 2020 due to the pandemic.

In 2024, a total of 6,865 LARC devices (excluding injections) were prescribed in Bristol, equivalent to 53.5 per 1,000 women aged 15-44. This rate was significantly higher than the national rate of 40.0 per 1,000 in England (Figure 2) but lower than the previous year (57.7 per 1,000) and still below pre-pandemic levels.

The majority of LARC prescriptions in Bristol were delivered through primary care, which accounted for over 80% of LARC prescriptions in 2024 (45.5 per 1,000), significantly higher than the England rate of 23.7 per 1,000. In contrast, LARC prescribed by Sexual and Reproductive Health Services in Bristol was 8.0 per 1,000 in Bristol in 2024, half the national rate of 16.3 per 1,000.

Community pharmacies play an increasing role in improving timely access to both ongoing oral contraception and emergency contraception. The NHS Pharmacy Contraception Service expanded in October 2025 to include free emergency contraception to women of all ages.

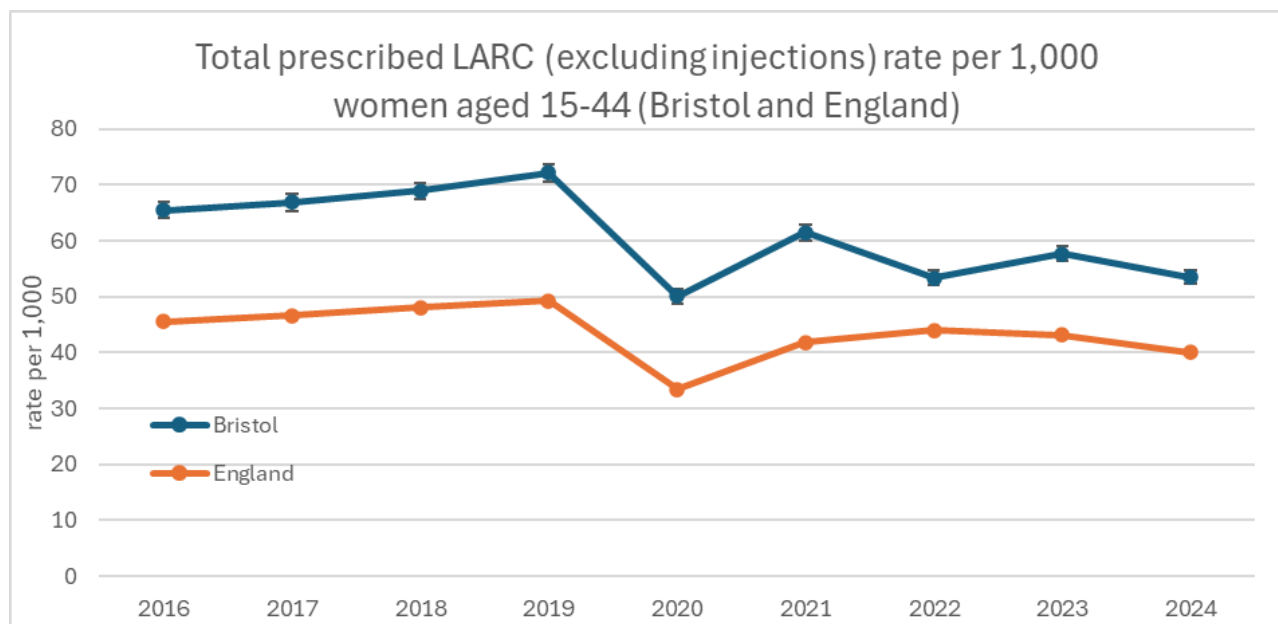


Figure 2: Total prescribed LARC (excluding injections), rate per 1,000 women aged 15-44 with 95% confidence intervals, Bristol and England. Source: OHID Sexual and Reproductive Health Profiles, April 2026

Abortion

Total abortion rates in Bristol were previously relatively static but have seen a marked increase between 2021 and 2023, reflecting a pattern also observed nationally. In Bristol the rate has increased from 14.9 per 1,000 in 2021, to 19.5 per 1,000 in 2023 (approximately a 30% increase), with more than 1 in 4 abortions in under 25s being repeat abortions within the same year. This corresponds to a rise in the total number of abortions from 1,698 in 2021 to 2,405 in 2023, an increase of just over 700 more abortions. Over the same period, abortion rates in England increased from 19.2 per 1,000 in 2021 to 23.4 per 1,000 in 2023. Despite the recent increase, the abortion rate in Bristol remains significantly lower than the national average (Figure 3).

The increase in abortion rates may reflect improved access to services following policy changes implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the introduction of home-based early medical abortion, alongside broader reproductive health trends such as changes in contraceptive use and increased hesitancy around hormonal contraception.

Abortions carried out earlier in pregnancy are associated with a lower risk of complications. In 2023, 88% (2085) of abortions in Bristol were performed at under 10 weeks gestation, which is similar to 89% in England. Early medical abortion is less invasive and carries lower risk than a surgical abortion. However, some women may choose to have a surgical abortion for personal or practical reasons. In Bristol, out of all abortions performed at under 10 weeks, 93.8% (1,955) were carried out using medical methods, which is lower than 95.2% in England.

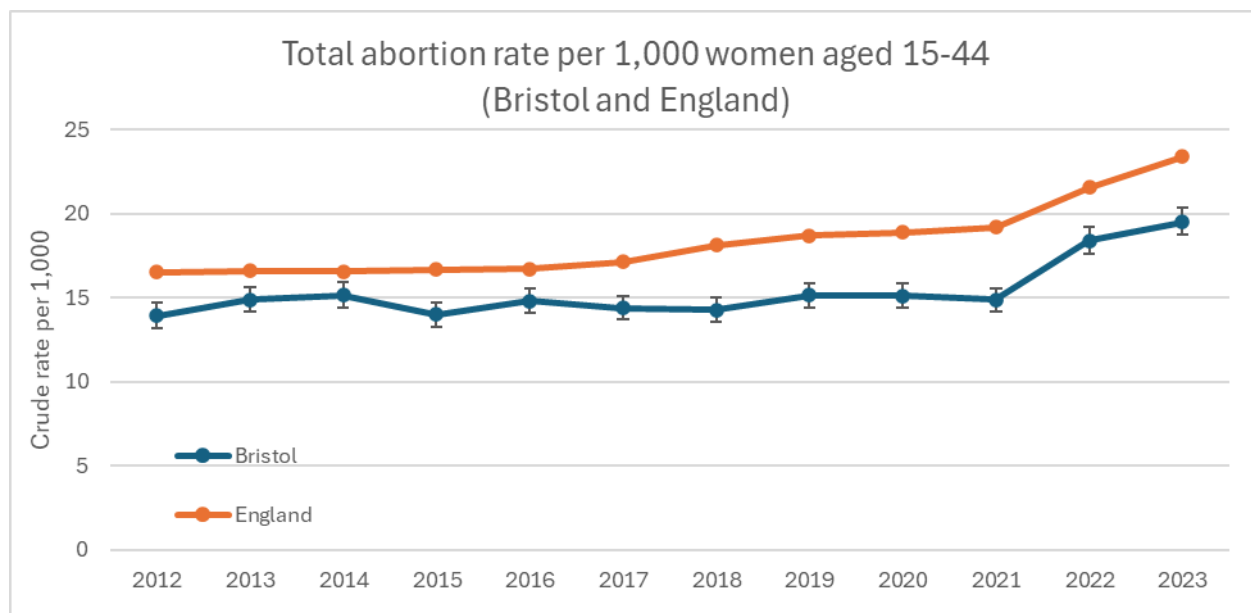


Figure 3: Total abortion rate per 1,000 women aged 15-44 with 95% confidence intervals, Bristol and England. OHID Source: Sexual and Reproductive Health Profiles, April 2026.

Equalities data

National data for 2023 shows a clear link between higher rates of abortion in more deprived areas and lower rates of abortion in the least deprived areas. The abortion rate is statistically significantly higher than the national average for those living in the most deprived quintile, whilst it is statistically significantly lower than the national average in the least deprived quintile. In 2023 the abortion rate in the least deprived decile was 18.7 per 1,000 (16,450) compared to 28.7 per 1,000 in the most deprived decile (34,860). Abortion data by deprivation is not published at local authority geography.

Further data / links / consultations:

- Office for Health Improvement and Disparities: [Sexual and Reproductive Health Profiles](#)
- Sexual and reproductive health in England: [local and national data](#)
- Teenage Pregnancy <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/teenage-pregnancy>
- Department of Health - ['Abortion statistics, England and Wales'](#)

Date updated: April 2026

Next update due: April 2027