

Teen pregnancy rate increases for first time since 2002

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Children & Young People Now
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The teen pregnancy rate in England and Wales has risen for the first time since 2002.

Figures published today by the Office for National Statistics show that conceptions per thousand women aged 15 to 17 increased by one per cent between 2006 and 2007. This equates to an extra 1,150 pregnancies.

The teen pregnancy rate in the London Borough of Southwark was the highest at 76.2 per thousand women.

The London Borough of Lambeth and Manchester followed closely behind.

Richmond upon Thames had the lowest pregnancy rate at 15.7 per thousand women. The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and Rutland had similarly low rates.

The rate of teen pregnancies that led to abortions also rose. Between 2002 and 2004, 46 per cent of teen pregnancies led to abortion. Between 2005 and 2007, this increased to 48 per cent.

The government has today confirmed that £20.5m will be spent on promoting contraception to young people this year.

This cash makes up part of the £27m for teenage pregnancy announced in the child health strategy earlier this month.

Children and young people's minister Beverley Hughes described the teenage pregnancy statistics as disappointing. She said: "The evidence suggests that more teenagers may have been engaging in risky behaviour and not using contraception, resulting in an increase in conceptions leading to abortion. Our strategy is to encourage teenagers to delay early sexual activity, but to use contraception when they do become sexually active."

But a spokeswoman for sexual health charity Brook, said that the government is failing to dedicate enough funds to local teenage pregnancy strategies.

She also claimed that sex and relationships education is insufficient. She said: "It's disappointing, but not surprising to see an increase."