

Inequality in health and education is a cause and consequence of teenage pregnancy for young parents and their children (UK Health Security Agency- UKHSA).

Teenage mothers are more likely to experience poor mental health than those who are older and are less likely to complete their education. Their children are at a higher risk of living in poverty and in housing of poor quality and have an increased likelihood of problems with their behaviour. (Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID)- Public health profiles)

Why is this important?



Teenage parents and their children often experience poorer outcomes. Under 18s conception rates are higher in more deprived areas

What is the local context?



Torbay's under 18s conception rate is on a generally decreasing trend with an uptick in the last couple of years of data (Fig 1)

What should we do?

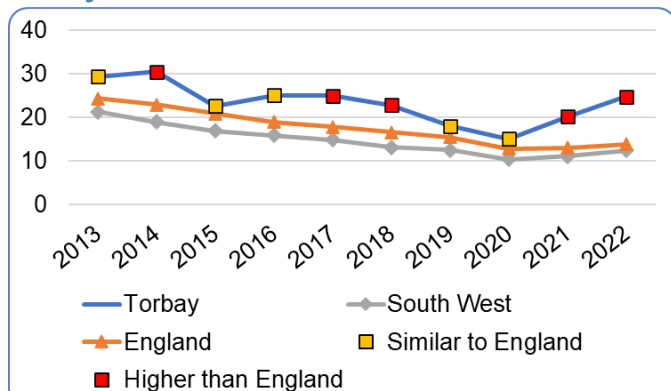


Provide high quality, comprehensive relationships and sex education, and accessible contraceptive services supportive to young people

Teenage pregnancy strategy: The cross-government strategy for reducing teenage pregnancy was published in 1999. In that year Torbay's rate of under 18s conceptions was 52.7 per 1,000 15 to 17 year olds, broadly similar to England's rate of 44.8. Torbay increased to a peak rate of 66.4 in 2008 before embarking on a decreasing trend. Torbay's rate has decreased by 53.0% between 1999 and 2022 whilst England's rate has decreased by 69.0%. (Data from OHID)

Under 18s conception rate: Torbay's rate is on a generally decreasing trend over the last 10 years, with an increase in the last 2 years of data to 24.8 per 1,000 in 2022 (Fig 1). Torbay is significantly higher than England in 2021 and 2022. England has slightly increased.

Fig 1: Under 18s conception rate per 1,000 15 to 17 year old females

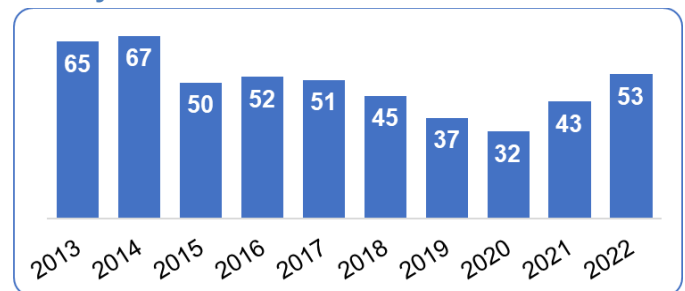


Source: OHID- Public health profiles

Under 18s conceptions are those that lead to 1 or more live or stillbirths or a legal abortion. All conceptions amongst under 18 year olds are included but the rate is per 1,000 15 to 17 year olds. OHID states that only about 5% of the conceptions are amongst girls aged 14 or under so to include this age group in the denominator population would give misleading results.

Number of conceptions: The actual number of conceptions each year that make up the rate are in Fig 2. In 2022, 12 of the 53 conceptions were amongst under 16 year olds (Data from OHID).

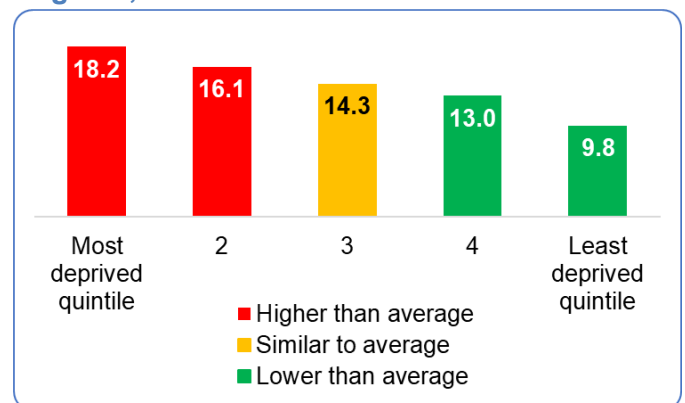
Fig 2: Number of under 18s conceptions, Torbay



Source: OHID- Public health profiles

Deprivation: Levels of under 18s conceptions in England are higher amongst those living in more deprived areas and lower in less deprived areas. Fig 3 splits the 2022 data into deprivation quintiles with a clear deprivation gradient shown- rates are above the England average in the 2 most deprived quintiles and below the England average in the 2 least deprived quintiles.

Fig 3: Under 18s conception rate per 1,000 15 to 17 year old females, split by deprivation, England, 2022

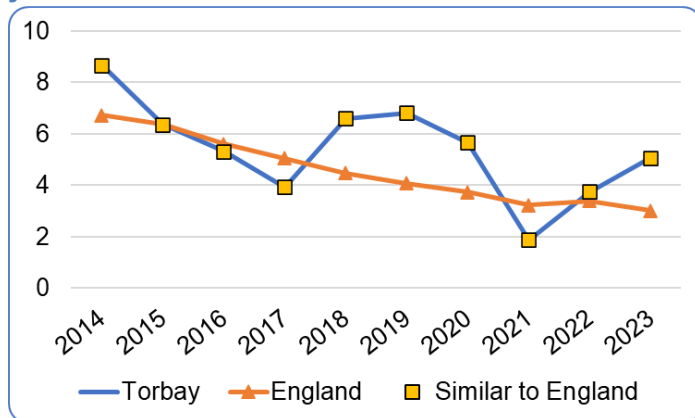


Source: OHID- Public health profiles

Under 16s conceptions: The Torbay rate has fluctuated over the last 10 years (2013 to 2022) to 5.6 per 1,000 13 to 15 year old females in 2022, significantly higher than England for the first time in over a decade- England's rate is 2.2. All under 16s conceptions are included but the denominator includes only the 13 to 15 year population- OHID says that few conceptions are amongst those who are younger. In the decade from 2013 to 2022, the annual number of under 16s conceptions varied between under 5 and 14. (Data from OHID)

Under 18s birth rate: Torbay's rate of live births amongst under 18 year olds has fluctuated over the years, remaining statistically similar to the England rate (Fig 4). Torbay's rate is 5.1 in 2023 compared to 3.0 in England.

Fig 4: Under 18s birth rate per 1,000 15 to 17 year old females



Source: OHID- Public health profiles

At England level, amongst under 18s living in more deprived areas, there are higher rates of births than there are amongst those living in least deprived areas. In 2023, the most deprived decile has a rate of under 18s births that is over 4 times that of the least deprived decile. (Data from OHID)

Leading to abortion: The percentage of under 18s conceptions that led to an abortion has fluctuated in the last 5 years for Torbay (Fig 5). OHID data shows it as statistically similar to the England percentage for the last 21 years.

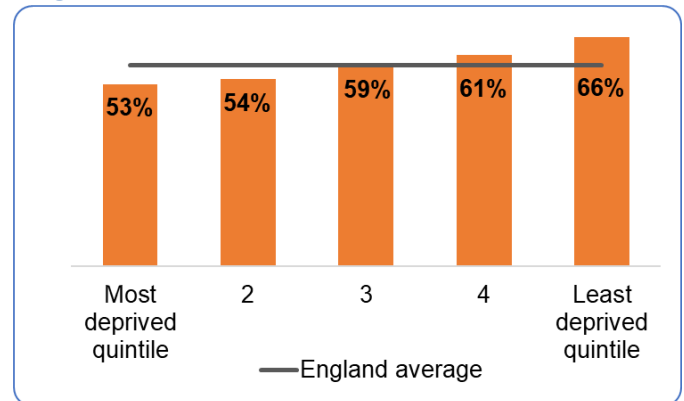
Fig 5: Under 18s conceptions leading to an abortion, Torbay

Year	Number	Percentage
2018	21	46.7%
2019	24	64.9%
2020	15	46.9%
2021	28	65.1%
2022	30	56.6%

Source: OHID- Public health profiles

Deprivation: Fig 6 shows that at England level the most deprived areas (quintiles) see lower percentages of under 18s conceptions that led to an abortion, whilst the least deprived areas see higher percentages that led to an abortion. A clear deprivation gradient can be seen.

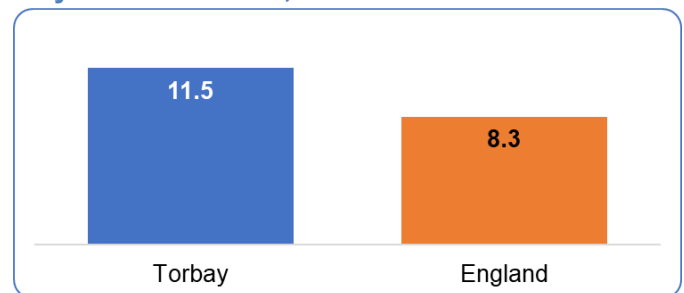
Fig 6: Percentage of under 18s conceptions leading to abortion, split by deprivation, England, 2022



Source: OHID- Public health profiles

Abortion rate: Torbay's abortion rate amongst under 18 year olds is higher than the England rate in the decade of 2014 to 2023 combined (Fig 7). Looking at the data further shows that Torbay's annual rate has not made any meaningful movement over this period. England's annual rate has reduced with an increase in the last 2 years- 2022 and 2023.

Fig 7: Under 18s abortion rate per 1,000 15 to 17 year old females, 2014 to 2023



Source: Department of Health and Social Care (2014 to 2020, 2023), OHID (2021,2022) Office for National Statistics mid-year population estimates

References

Department of Health and Social Care, and OHID: Abortion statistics for England and Wales
 OHID. Public health profiles. 2026. <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/> Accessed 15-17 Apr 2026
 Office for National Statistics mid-year population estimates- <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>
 UKHSA: [Summary profile of local authority sexual health- Torbay, March 2026](#)

All data was accessed in April 2026