

4.1.05 Teenage Pregnancy and Sexual Health of Young People

Introduction: why is this important?

Through the Teenage Pregnancy and Young People's Sexual Health Strategy 1998-2010 the district achieved a 50% reduction in under 18 conceptions. Work continues to sustain this downward trend and to reduce the inequalities between wards across Bradford District. Although the Teenage Pregnancy Board has ceased, monitoring of teenage pregnancy and young people's sexual health is maintained through the Bradford District Sexual Health Network chaired by Public Health.

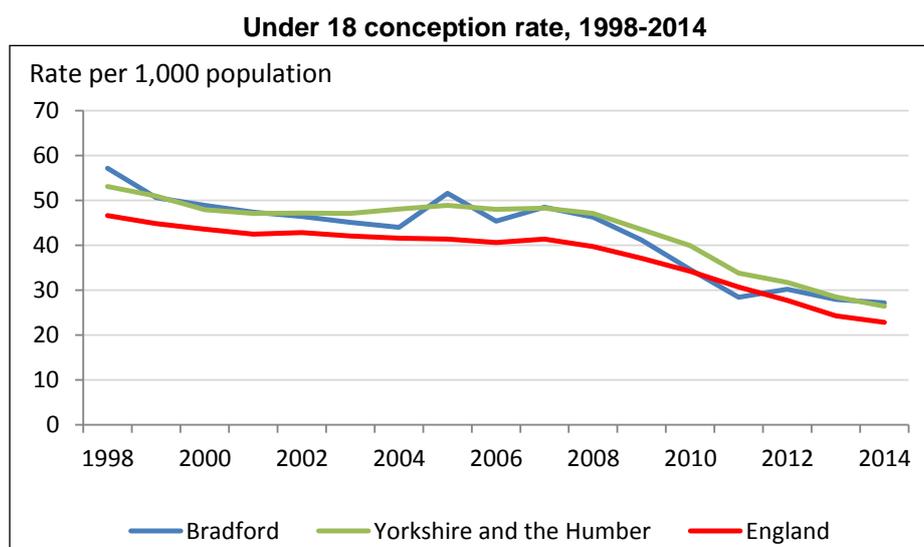
Outcomes for pregnant teenagers and young parents and their children include increased risk of poverty for mother and baby, lower rates of skills and learning for both parents, increased infant mortality rates, poorer birth outcomes (such as still birth and miscarriage and low birth weight), increased rates of maternal smoking, lower rates of breastfeeding and poor emotional health and wellbeing. Educational aspiration continues to be a protective factor against early parenthood. Increases in GCSE attainment for the district will support the continued reduction in under 18 conceptions.

Sexual health influences all aspects of a person's health and wellbeing. It requires a person to have specific knowledge regarding their relationships and their health and the consequences of their sexual choices. It also requires a person to have skills and confidence to apply this knowledge. Sexual health outcomes for the under 25 population are worse than the general population. Within this group those young people who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender (LGB&T) are even worse. HIV infections are rising in the under 25 men who have sex with men population. Bradford has the lowest rates of Chlamydia detection, diagnosis and positivity in region.

What do the facts and figures tell us?

Under 18 conceptions

Within Bradford District the total number of under 18 conceptions per year in Bradford has nearly halved from 572 in 1998 to 290 in 2014. Under 18 conception rates have gradually fallen over this time and reached below the average for England for the first time in 2011. However, although generally rates have continued to fall they are now above in average for England. In 2014 the under 18 conception rate was 27.2 per 1,000 population in Bradford compared to the regional average of 26.4 per 1,000 population and the England average of 22.8 per 1,000 population.

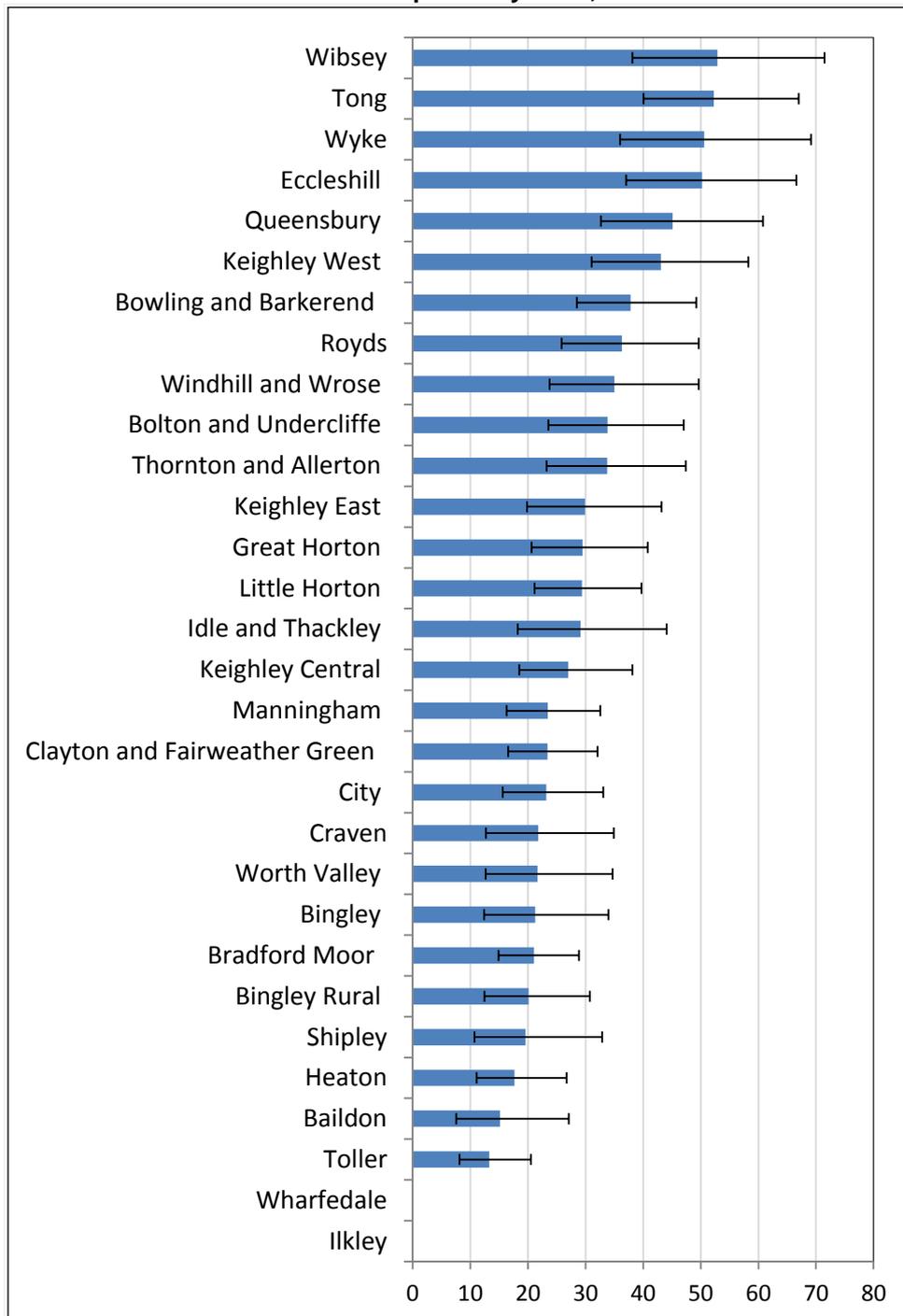


Source: Public Health Outcomes Framework

Although under 18 conception rates have improved for the district as a whole, within the district itself there is still great variation in under 18 conception rates, with high rates seen in wards including Wibsey,

Tong, Wyke and Eccleshill. Under 18 conception rates are low in wards including Ilkley, Wharfedale, Toller and Baildon

Under 18 conceptions by ward, 2011-13



Source: Office for National Statistics

Chlamydia detection

In 2014 1,563 people aged 15-24 yrs were found to have Chlamydia within Bradford District, with a detection rate is of 1,089 per 100,000 population. This is below both the regional average (2,244 per 100,000 population) and England average (2,012 per 100,000 population).

Detection rates are higher in females than in males. In 2014 the Chlamydia detection rate for females was 2,214 per 100,000 population compared to 927 per 100,000 population for males. This difference in detection rate is generally seen across the country.

What strategies, policies and best practice have been developed locally and nationally?

- Sexual Health Needs Assessment Bradford District 2012- refresh 2016
- The Challenge of Diversity BME LGB&T health and Wellbeing Needs Assessment Equity Partnership, November 2015
- It's not just about sex: A Health and Social Care Needs Assessment of Young Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People in Bradford District
- A framework for sexual health improvement in England, March 2013
- Improving outcomes and supporting transparency Part 1A: A public health outcomes framework for England, 2013-16
- Good progress but more to do: Teenage Pregnancy and Young Parents, January 2016
- Sexual health commissioning in local government[:building strong relationships, June 2015
- Making it work. A guide to whole system commissioning for sexual health, reproductive health and HIV, March 2015
- Health promotion for sexual and reproductive health and HIV. Strategic action plan 2016-19
- Early Help Strategy
- PHE action plan 2015-16 Promoting the health and wellbeing of gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men, January 2015
- Integrated Early Years Strategy 2015-18

What challenges have been identified in a local context?

Under 18 conception rates have reduced considerably and many services and programmes have been put into place to sustain this downward trend. The focus must now be on those teenagers who wish to become parents when they leave statutory education rather than continue on into further or higher education. This can be achieved by raising the educational aspiration of young women in the district.

Increasing testing for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), in particular Chlamydia, is an important aspect of the Outreach provision by the new sexual and reproductive health service provider Locala Community Interest Company. The new service is reaching out to young people through Outreach working in partnership with third sector organisations to increase accessibility to sexual and reproductive health services by young people. Free condoms are available for all under 25s through a range of health, community and other venues. The service is also looking to develop 'Clinic in a Box' in areas of high teenage conceptions.

Increasing Long Acting Reversible Contraceptive (LARC) methods of contraception amongst young people, which are more reliable than user dependent methods, including oral contraception and condoms, will support young women to have increased control over their reproductive health. This must also be coupled with media campaigns to promote condom use amongst young men in particular and encourage all young to take more responsibility for their own sexual health.

The district achieved successful reduction in under 18 conception rates because this was accepted as 'everybody's business'. No one agency can address the issues to reduce under 18 conceptions and improve young people's sexual health in isolation. This work included factors such as training for professionals and support for parents alongside young people friendly sexual and reproductive health services and dedicated support for young parents. However as the workforce who would deliver these training opportunities reduces we need to look to different delivery mechanisms to continue this work.

To sustain the downward trend and narrow the inequalities between wards work must continue to maintain and expand good quality Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) in all educational settings. Also essential is increasing the support and information available to parents and carers to support their children to make positive choices in relation to their sexual and reproductive health. It must also include information for those young people who face increased vulnerability because of their additional needs or because they identify as LGB&T.

What do our stakeholders tell us?

Changes to sexual and reproductive health service provider caused short term access issues but by increasing Outreach activity with local third sector partners this is being addressed. It also includes close working partnerships with Public Health Sexual Health team and Looked After Children's residential units in particular. Although the Chlamydia detection Rate and STI testing rates for Bradford are below that of the England average, Public Health England report that this could be as a result of low testing rates for all STIs across the population. This is particularly concerning for young people as they currently experience 52% of diagnoses of new STIs in Bradford compared to 46% in England. Work to increase awareness of the need to use barrier methods of contraception to prevent STIs is also being addressed through Outreach activity.

Work to reduce under 18 conceptions has previously focussed on increasing access to sexual and reproductive health services and increasing education and training for young people, their parents and the wider workforce. The rates have reduced to such a level that it is now important to address the motivation behind those young women who choose to become a parent rather than continue on into higher or further educational opportunities. Planned teenage conceptions have different motivating factors than unplanned and different approaches to reducing these, such as increasing educational aspiration, are required.

Information from stakeholders supporting LGB&T young people address their sexual health and sexuality tells us that there is a lack of general awareness about LGB&T sexual health needs from professionals/organisations and young people themselves. This is exacerbated even further by lack of knowledge for Lesbian and Bisexual women in particular. Information for young Trans people is even more hidden and hard to access and deliver due to the variety of gender identities and physical complexities within this community. Increased opportunities for young people and professionals to better understand the issues and, in particular the sexual health inequalities that can be experienced by LGB&T young people would contribute to a more equitable state of sexual and reproductive health.

Recommendations: What do we need to do? How do we ensure this remains a priority?

- Continued work to support the reduction of under 18 conceptions would sustain the downward trend and narrow inequalities between wards across the district
- Promote RSE across all educational settings to increase the opportunities for young people to make informed choices about their relationships and sexual and reproductive health
- Increase learning opportunities for parents to support their children with information and advice to help them make positive choices around their relationships and sexual and reproductive health
- Increase working with Looked After Children and Young People in recognition of their increased vulnerability they face with regard to their relationships and sexual health.
- Media campaigns that promote barrier methods of contraception for young men and women and LARC methods for young women will support reducing access to sexual health services for STIs and unwanted under 18 conceptions.

References

Department of Health (2012) Improving outcomes and supporting transparency Part 1A: A public health outcomes framework for England, 2013-2016. London, Department of Health.

Local Government Association (2016) Good progress but more to do: Teenage Pregnancy and Young Parents London, Public Health England & Local Government Association

City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council (2015) Integrated Early Years Strategy 2015-18

Public Health England (2015) Action plan 2015-16 Promoting the health and wellbeing of gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men. London, Department of Health