

# Kirklees Teenage Pregnancy Strategy

## Why have a teenage pregnancy strategy?

"Britain has the worst record on teenage pregnancies in Europe. It is not a record in which we can take any pride. Every year some 90,000 teenagers in England become pregnant. They include nearly 8000 who are under 16. Some of these teenagers, and some of their children, live happy and fulfilled lives. But far too many do not.

Teenage mothers are less likely to finish their education, less likely to find a good job, and more likely to end up both as single parents and bringing up their children in poverty. The children themselves run a much greater risk of poor health....."

**Tony Blair – Prime Minister**

This was the forward written by Tony Blair, to the 'Teenage Pregnancy Report' published by the Social Exclusion Unit in 1999.

**In response to the Teenage Pregnancy Report, the 'Teenage Pregnancy Unit' was set up. The unit sits within the Department of Education and Skills as part of the Directorate for Children and Families. Responsibility for the Strategy is held by the Minister of State for Children.**

**The Teenage Pregnancy Unit has set three main targets:-**

1. To reduce the rate of teenage conceptions for those under 18 by 50% by 2010.
2. To firmly establish a downward trend in the conception rate for under 16's by 2010.
3. To double the participation of teenage mothers into education, employment or training to 60% by 2010.

In order to ensure that these targets are reached, additional funding has been allocated to each Local Authority Area. Each area must also employ a local "Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator" to ensure that the same targets are reached at a local level.

## Our Local Strategy

**The Kirklees Teenage Pregnancy Strategy takes a holistic approach to reducing teenage pregnancies in Kirklees over the next 10 years. The key aspects of the strategy are:-**

- Consistent, coherent information for young people to make informed choices aligned with their cultural, religious and sexual beliefs and values
- Non-judgmental, confidential services providing contraception, information and advice
- Support to enable young people and young parents to develop life skills, self esteem and their own aspirations to ensure they realise their full potential

**These will be achieved through:-**

- Consultation and involvement of young people and young parents
- The integration and coordination of services aimed at young people
- The development of new services for those at high risk of teenage pregnancy
- Ensuring ease of access to services for all communities

Teenage pregnancy is a complex issue. It involves social, economic and cultural dimensions. It is therefore important that organisations and individuals with responsibility or an interest within these areas work closely together to achieve our local targets.

It is also important to listen to young people living in Kirklees to ensure that the strategy and action plans reflect the needs of local young people, and that any services or programmes of work are delivered in a way that young people find acceptable.

## Our local picture

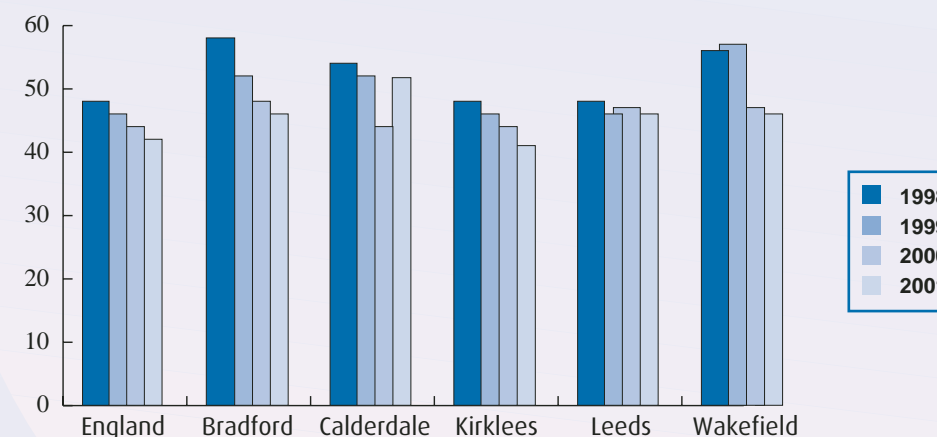
As the graph shows, we are already doing well within Kirklees. However, the ward map shows rates are not equal across the whole of the district. We cannot afford to be complacent.

Much of the work of the strategy is Kirklees-wide and will help to benefit all young people. However, the map clearly identifies a need to focus primarily in the areas with our highest teenage pregnancy rates.

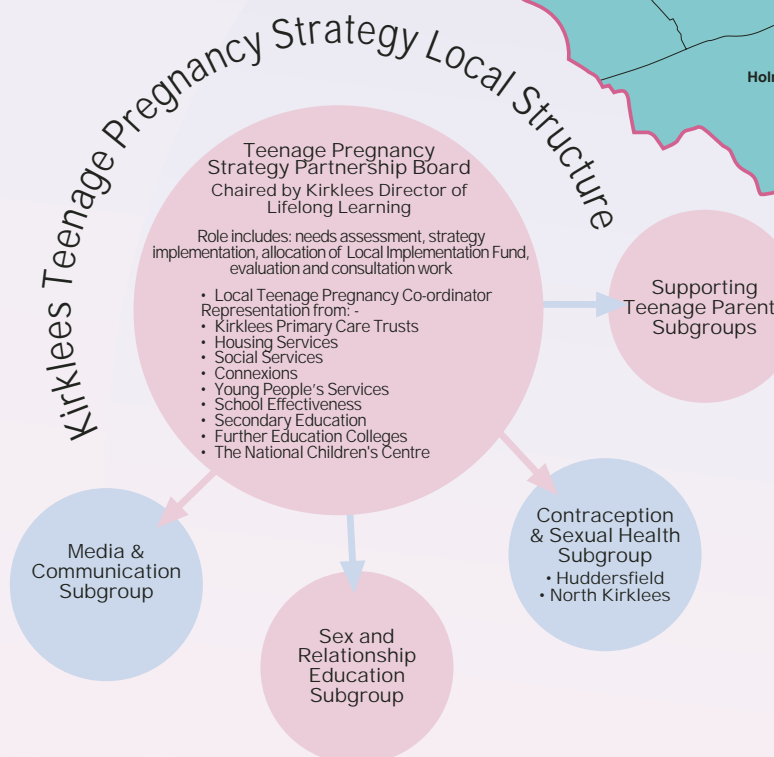
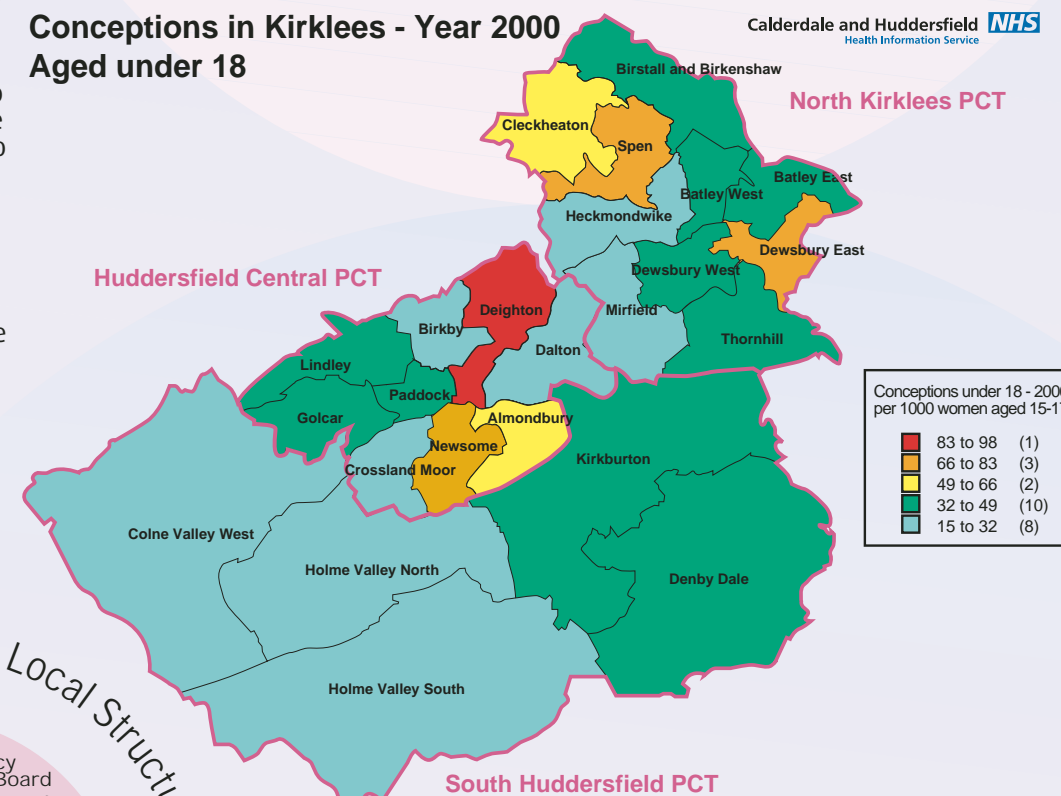
Recent feedback from the National Teenage Pregnancy Unit has told us that they are happy with much of the work completed so far, for example the work around improving the quality of Sex and Relationship Education within schools.

However, there is a lot of work to do to ensure that all young people have the knowledge and the confidence to make informed choices about their futures. This includes not only their sexual health, but also the choice to have a child when they feel that the time is right for them. In order to do this we need to develop greater awareness and access to contraceptive and sexual health services.

Conception rates per 1000 women under 18



Conceptions in Kirklees - Year 2000 Aged under 18



## Our local structure

Our local strategy is managed by a local co-ordinator, who is responsible to a multi-agency Partnership Board, which is chaired by Gavin Tonkin, Director of Lifelong Learning (Kirklees Council). Other people on the board include representatives from Kirklees Primary Care Trusts, Social Services, Housing Services, Connexions, Young People's Services, School Effectiveness, a Secondary Head Teacher, Further Education representation and the Chief Executive of the National Children's Centre.

The work of the strategy is then planned and delivered through four sub-groups; Media and Communications, Sex and Relationship Education, Contraception and Sexual Health Services, and Supporting Parents. Each of these groups is independently chaired and feeds into the Partnership Board.