

Chapter 8

Fertility


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8 Fertility

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8 Fertility

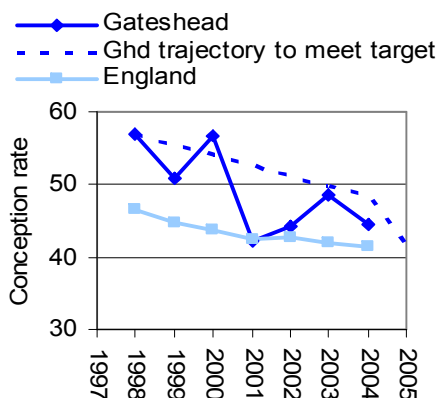
Introduction

Looking at the fertility statistics in this chapter, the story that leaps off the page is that the number of births in Gateshead is falling. In 1986 there were 2,600 live births in Gateshead. By 2004 the number had fallen to 2,100. However, the population of women of child-bearing age in Gateshead has also fallen over this period. Between 1993 and 2004 live births in Gateshead fell by 14% but the fall in the general fertility rate (births per 1,000 females 15-44) was only 8%. The decline in fertility in the local population across the 1990's mirrors a similar trend nationally, although the local trend is more pronounced.

The decline in fertility has two major implications. Most importantly, the trend will impact on the future economic prosperity of the local area. Today's births are tomorrow's workforce. It will also have implications for those planning education and health services. The trend in the number of live births in Gateshead flattened out in 2002 and 2003, and began to rise in 2004 after a long period of steady decline. It will be interesting to see if this recent rise continues in subsequent years.

Trends in age-specific fertility in Gateshead have mirrored national trends, with birth rates among older women increasing, and falling among younger women. However, it is among the older age bands (30 years and above) that local birth rates are significantly lower than national rates. There has been a long term trend among all maternal age groups for an increasing proportion of births to occur outside marriage but, like the number of live births, in 2004 this proportion fell for the first time since the 1980's.

Fig 1: Teenage (under 18) conception rate per 1,000 females 15-17, 1998 to 2004



The local teenage conception rate (conceptions among females under 18 years per 1,000 females aged 15-17) continues to fall and Gateshead recently exceeded the government's target of achieving a 15% reduction in the rate between 1998 and 2004 (Fig 1). This is in no small part due to the efforts of the local Teenage Pregnancy & Parenting Partnership, an inter-agency initiative developing sex and relationship education programmes and delivering young persons' contraception clinics. An article at the end of this Chapter explains the work of the Partnership in more detail.

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Acknowledgements

This chapter of the Gateshead Compendium of Health Related Statistics contains data from a range of partner agencies. Sources of data are detailed at the foot of each individual data item. Thanks are extended to the following organisations for providing and allowing use of their information:

Office for National Statistics
Teenage Pregnancy Unit

Thanks also go to the Gateshead Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Partnership for providing the article which outlines its work.

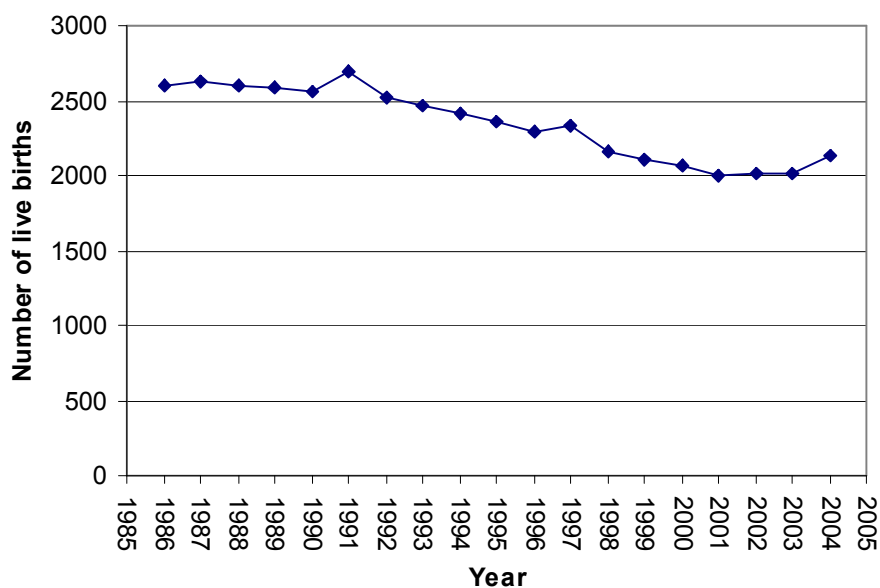


8.1 Number of live births in Gateshead

Year	Age band							
	All ages	11-16	17-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40+
1986	2594	27	257	841	877	420	152	20
1987	2621	20	266	774	980	450	109	22
1988	2601	36	259	773	899	471	139	24
1989	2581	37	248	759	884	477	155	21
1990	2566	32	253	725	876	500	147	33
1991	2690	32	279	720	939	554	139	27
1992	2514	31	217	672	915	516	135	28
1993	2463	24	224	599	869	539	179	29
1994	2415	23	182	609	813	567	190	31
1995	2359	32	189	586	744	571	212	25
1996	2300	46	179	533	764	563	180	35
1997	2327	38	186	520	719	614	219	31
1998	2162	33	190	457	667	553	224	38
1999	2109	24	191	436	619	572	228	39
	All ages	under 18	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40+
2000	2070	77	142	444	608	521	232	46
2001	1995	77	124	440	556	523	233	42
2002	2012	62	138	462	528	524	252	46
2003	2020	57	132	492	497	526	266	44
2004	2128	52	145	452	537	559	323	60

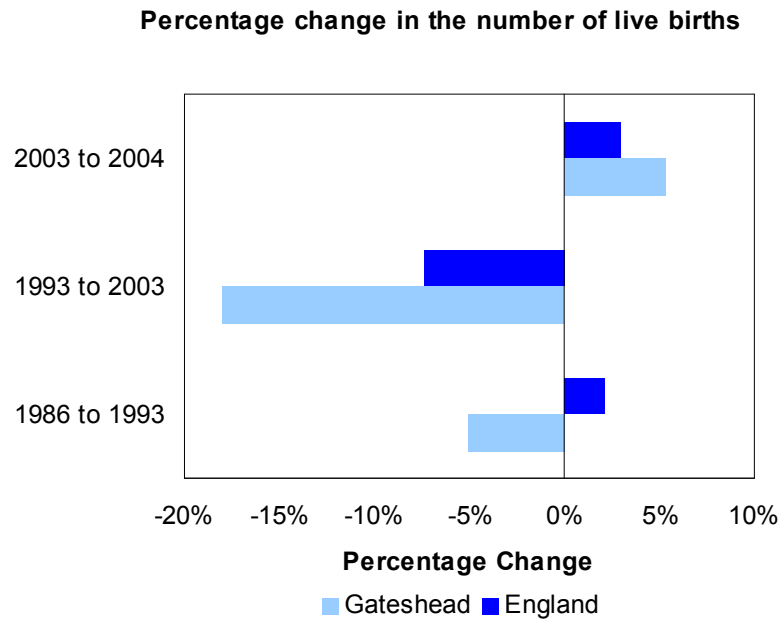
Source: Office for National Statistics VS1

Number of live births in Gateshead



Source: Office for National Statistics, VS1

8.1 *Number of live births in Gateshead (cont.)*



Source: Office for National Statistics, VS1

8.2 Average live birth rate

Average or crude live birth rate is the number of live births per 1,000 population of people all ages. It measures variations in live births in relation to changes in the total population.

	No. of births	Average birth rate	Average birth rate	Average birth rate
	Gateshead		North East*	England**
1986	2594	12.5	13.1	13.2
1987	2621	12.7	13.1	13.6
1988	2601	12.6	13.1	13.8
1989	2581	12.5	12.7	13.6
1990	2566	12.5	13.2	13.9
1991	2690	13.2	13.3	13.7
1992	2514	12.4	12.9	13.4
1993	2463	12.3	12.5	13.2
1994	2415	12.1	12.0	13.0
1995	2359	11.9	11.8	12.7
1996	2300	11.7	11.6	12.7
1997	2327	11.9	11.4	12.5
1998	2162	11.1	11.2	12.3
1999	2109	10.9	10.9	12.0
2000	2070	10.8	10.4	11.6
2001	1995	10.4	10.2	11.4
2002	2012	10.5	10.4	11.4
2003	2020	10.6	10.6	11.8
2004	2128	11.1	10.9	12.1

Sources:

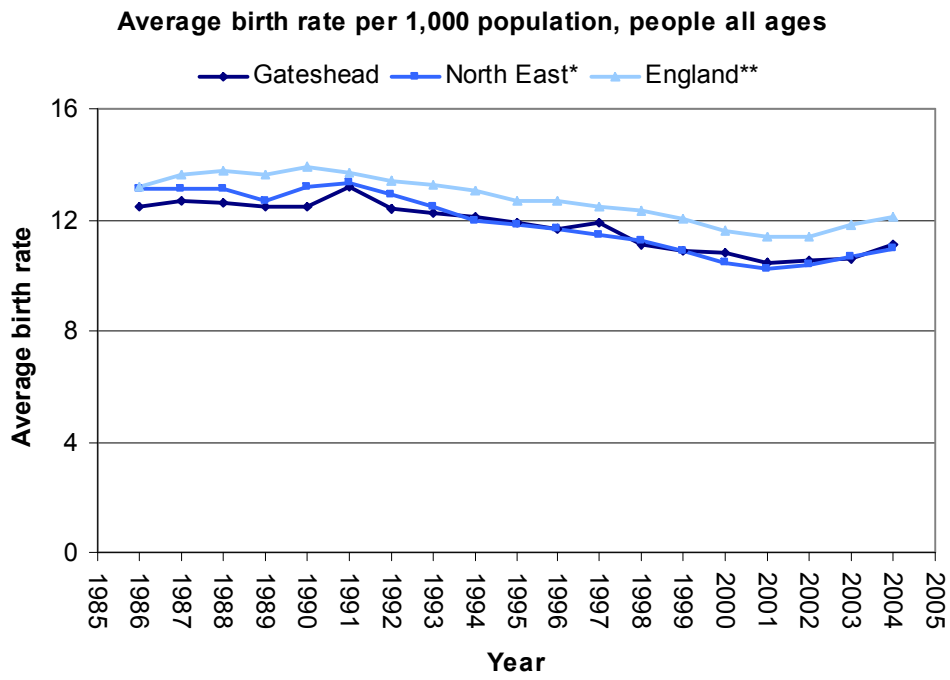
1986-1992, Population trends, ONS VS1

1993-2004, ONS mid-year population estimates based on 2001 Census population and numbers of births from ONS Vital Statistics VS1

* North East Government Office Region was created in 1996, replacing Northern Standard Statistical Region. Figures prior to 1996 are for Northern region

** Figures prior to 1993 are for England & Wales

8.2 Average live birth rate (cont.)



8.3 General fertility rate

The general fertility rate is calculated as the number of live births per 1,000 females ages 15-44 years.

Year	Gateshead		North East*	England**
	No. of births	General fertility rate	General fertility rate	General fertility rate
1986	2594	59.7	60.9	60.6
1987	2621	60.1	60.9	62.0
1988	2601	59.7	60.6	63.0
1989	2581	59.6	59.2	62.5
1990	2566	59.7	61.8	64.2
1991	2690	63.0	62.8	63.6
1992	2514	59.6	61.8	63.5
1993	2463	59.5	60.2	62.6
1994	2415	58.9	57.9	62.0
1995	2359	58.0	56.4	60.5
1996	2300	57.0	56.1	60.5
1997	2327	58.1	55.4	59.8
1998	2162	54.5	54.4	59.2
1999	2109	53.4	52.8	57.8
2000	2070	52.7	50.6	55.9
2001	1995	51.2	49.7	54.8
2002	2012	51.9	50.5	54.8
2003	2020	52.2	52.0	56.9
2004	2128	54.9	53.6	58.4

Sources:

1986-1992, Population trends, ONS VS1

1993-2004, ONS mid-year population estimates based on 2001 Census population and numbers of births from ONS Vital Statistics VS1

* North East Government Office Region was created in 1996, replacing Northern Standard Statistical Region. Figures prior to 1996 are for Northern region.

** Figures prior to 1993 are for England & Wales

Local neighbours at a glance

General fertility rate per 1,000 females 15-44 years, 2004

PCT

North Tyneside

Gateshead

Northumberland

South Tyneside

Sunderland

Newcastle

Rate

56.8

54.9

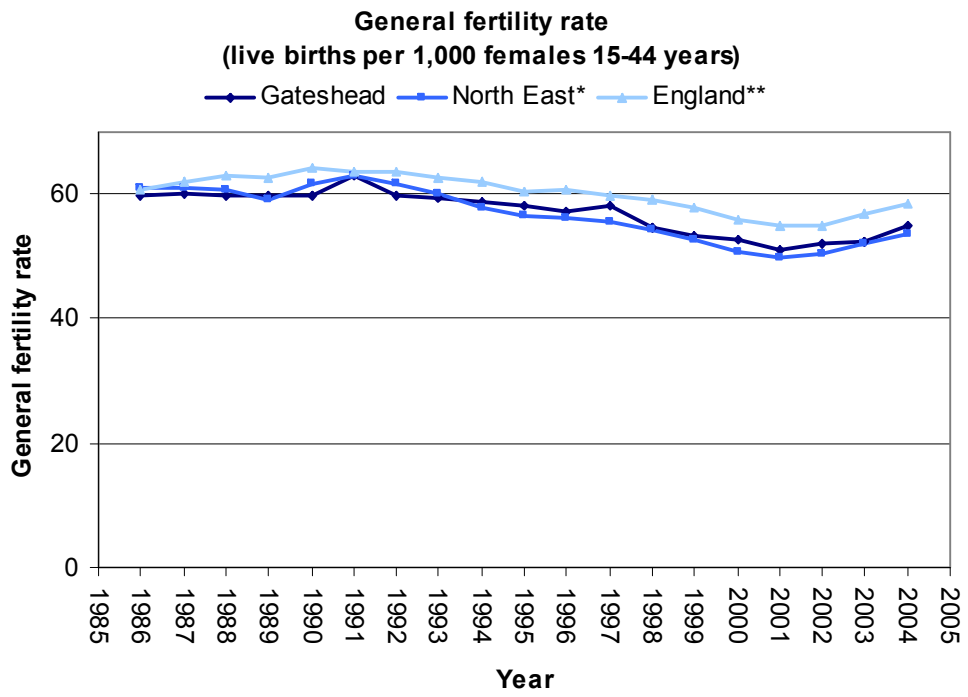
52.0

50.6

50.1

46.5

8.3 General fertility rate (cont.)



8.4 Indirectly age-standardised fertility ratio

A ratio of 100 indicates that the level of fertility in the study population e.g. Gateshead is the same as that across England & Wales. A ratio below 100 indicates that the level of fertility is lower, and a ratio above 100 indicates that it is higher.

	Gateshead		North East*	Eng. & Wales
	No. of births	Fertility ratio	Fertility ratio	Fertility ratio
1986	2594	98	100	100
1987	2621	96	98	100
1988	2601	94	96	100
1989	2581	94	95	100
1990	2566	92	96	100
1991	2690	99	100	100
1992	2514	94	98	100
1993	2463	94	98	100
1994	2415	93	95	100
1995	2359	93	95	100
1996	2300	91	95	100
1997	2327	93	97	100
1998	2162	88	97	100
1999	2109	89	97	100
2000	2070	91	97	100
2001	1995	91	98	100
2002	2012	96	95	100
2003	2020	94	94	100
2004	2128	96	95	100

Sources:

Office for National Statistics VS1

* North East Government Office Region was created in 1996, replacing Northern Standard Statistical Region. Figures prior to 1996 are for Northern region.

An indirectly age-standardised fertility ratio is a comparison of fertility in England & Wales (the reference population) with fertility in the study population, here Gateshead or the NE. It is calculated as a ratio of observed live births to expected live births. The expected number of live births is the number of births that would occur if Gateshead or the NE experienced the age specific fertility rates of England & Wales. A ratio of 100 indicates that the level of fertility in the study population e.g. Gateshead is the same as that across England & Wales. Fertility is standardised to the age structure of the study population. As Gateshead and the NE have different population structures the fertility ratios for each area are not comparable.

Elsewhere in this Compendium England has been used as the national comparator. England & Wales is used here as this area is used as the reference population for the calculation of the above fertility ratios.

8.5 Number of live births by Gateshead electoral ward

Electoral ward boundaries, and some electoral ward names, changed in Gateshead in June 2004.

Births by Gateshead electoral ward – boundaries in place prior to June 2004

Gateshead electoral ward	Year of Birth								
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Bede	150	113	130	117	100	96	90	107	94
Bensham	123	121	124	117	108	125	112	110	124
Birtley	83	91	88	88	71	68	57	74	70
Blaydon	125	164	136	118	112	124	105	82	100
Chopwell and Rowlands Gill	101	94	103	101	101	97	86	68	74
Chowdene	82	75	72	75	78	83	68	64	55
Crawcrook and Greenside	94	127	100	104	89	111	89	114	106
Deckham	121	110	101	99	84	73	121	97	96
Dunston	135	111	124	121	108	96	107	94	119
Felling	119	99	101	98	71	80	85	95	75
High Fell	79	75	82	100	91	90	93	82	95
Lamesley	91	85	105	78	77	84	70	83	86
Leam	151	119	141	118	112	129	98	126	102
Low Fell	105	88	94	88	107	106	103	84	84
Pelaw and Heworth	94	88	67	95	72	73	67	70	84
Ryton	80	96	114	77	104	91	90	90	88
Saltwell	119	146	119	115	142	143	109	106	124
Teams	135	140	136	108	122	92	113	123	103
Whickham North	98	103	109	94	115	92	88	100	88
Whickham South	80	87	97	88	92	80	77	75	93
Winlaton	63	57	59	62	46	58	58	50	55
Wrekendyke	130	110	126	100	108	78	109	118	105
TOTAL	2,358	2,299	2,328	2,161	2,110	2,069	1,995	2,012	2,020

Source: Office for National Statistics VS4 Births by Ward

8.5 *Number of live births by Gateshead electoral ward (cont.)*

Births by Gateshead electoral ward – boundaries in place from June 2004

Gateshead electoral ward	Year of Birth
	2004
Birtley	79
Blaydon	110
Bridges	99
Chopwell and Rowlands Gill	97
Chowdene	72
Crawcrook and Greenside	85
Deckham	121
Dunston and Teams	105
Dunston Hill and Whickham East	66
Felling	117
High Fell	107
Lamesley	105
Lobley Hill and Bensham	128
Low Fell	104
Pelaw and Heworth	74
Ryton, Crookhill and Stella	72
Saltwell	173
Wardley and Leam Lane	89
Whickham North	73
Whickham South and Sunnyside	80
Windy Nook and Whitehills	104
Winlaton and High Spen	68
TOTAL	2,128

Source: Office for National Statistics VS4 Births by Ward

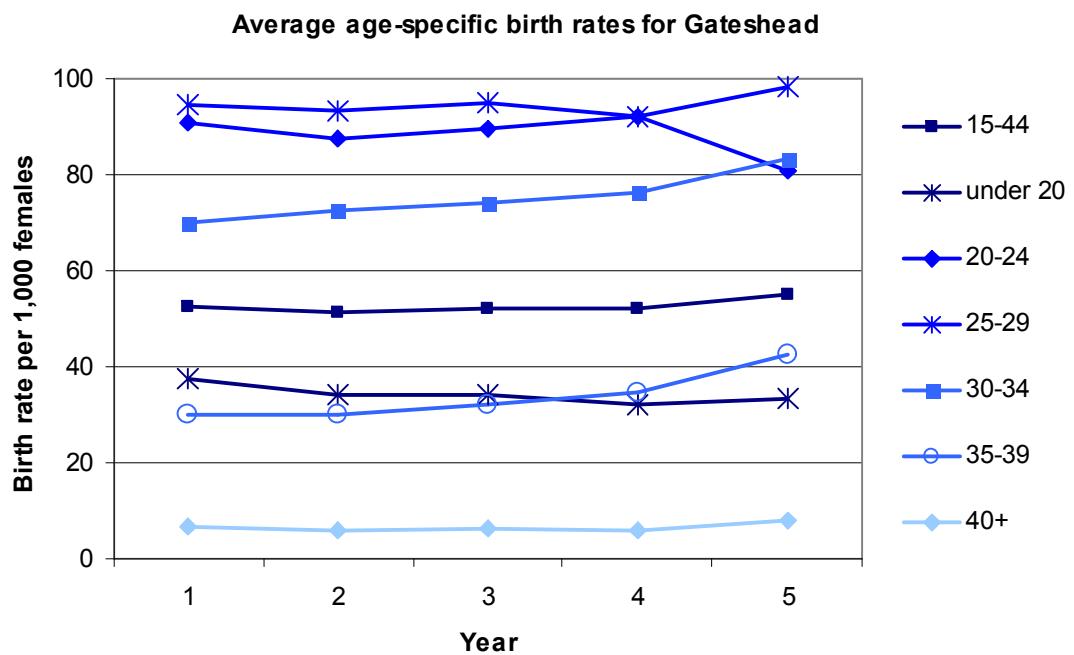
8.6 Average age-specific birth rates

Trends in Gateshead age-specific rates over time

Year	Average age-specific birth rate per 1,000 females						
	15-44	under 20	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40+
2000	52.7	37.6	90.9	94.4	69.9	30.0	6.6
2001	51.2	34.2	87.7	93.4	72.4	30.1	5.9
2002	51.9	34.0	89.5	95.0	74.2	32.1	6.3
2003	52.2	32.0	92.0	92.0	76.2	34.5	6.0
2004	54.9	33.2	80.8	98.3	83.3	42.7	8.0

Sources:

Population, Office for National Statistics mid-year population estimates, based on 2001 Census
 Births, Office for National Statistics VS1

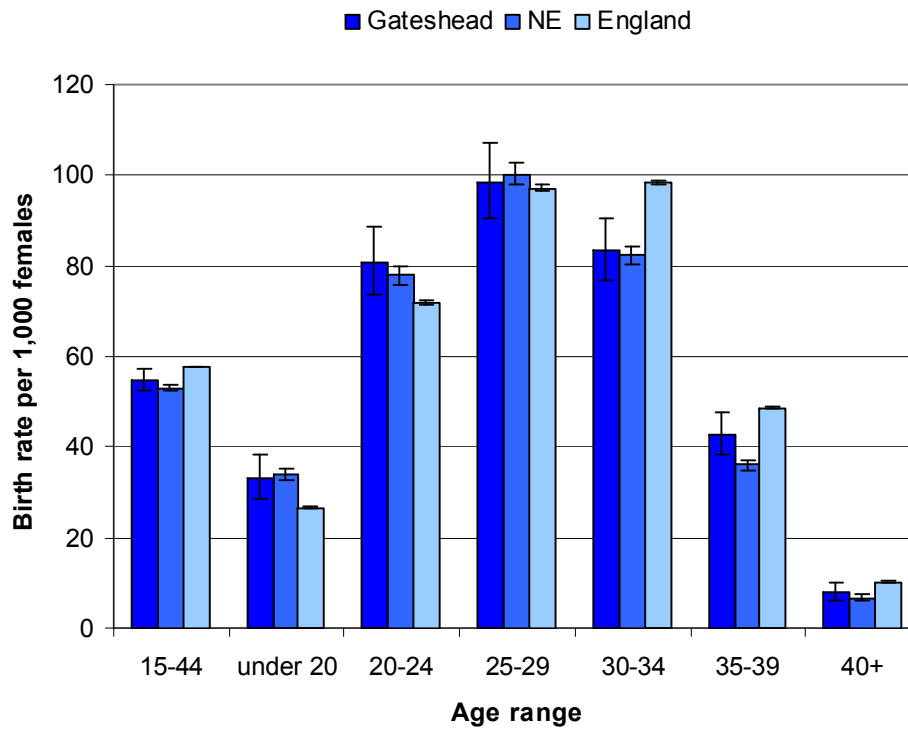


8.6 Average age-specific birth rates (cont.)

2004	Average age-specific birth rate per 1,000 females						
	15-44	under 20	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40+
Gateshead	54.9	33.2	80.8	98.3	83.3	42.7	8.0
NE	53.1	34.0	77.9	100.3	82.4	36.0	6.7
England	57.8	26.5	72.1	97.3	98.6	48.6	10.3

Sources: Population, Office for National Statistics mid-year population estimates based on 2001 Census population. Live births, Office for National Statistics VS2

Average age-specific birth rates in 2004 with 95% confidence intervals



8.7 Live births inside and outside marriage

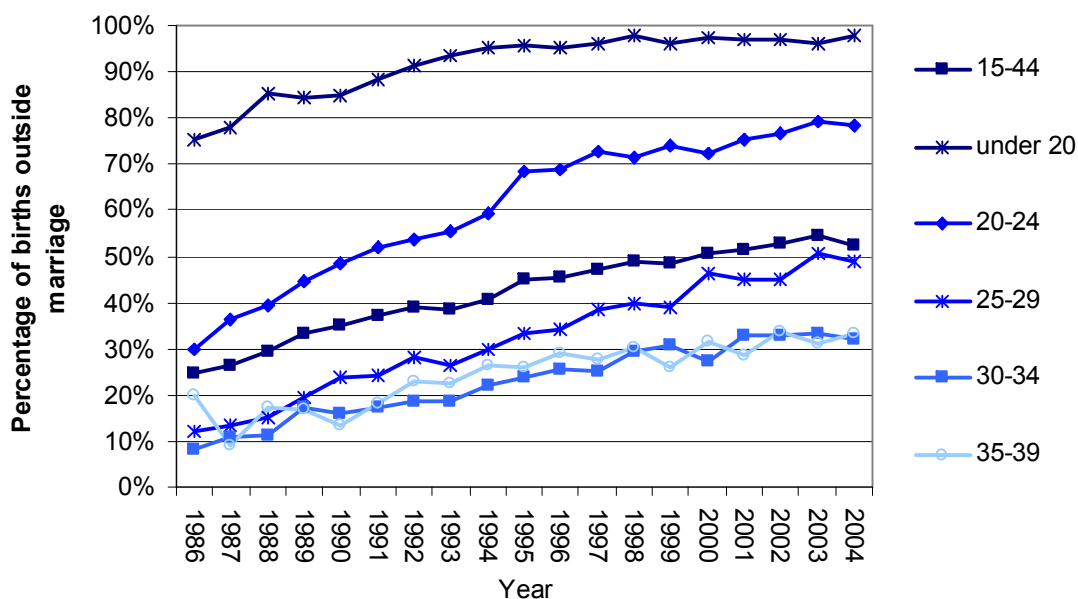
Gateshead

Year	Number of live births			% of live births outside marriage	% of live births outside marriage by age of mother					
	All ages	Within Marriage	Outside Marriage		under 20	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40+
1986	2594	1957	637	25%	75%	30%	12%	8%	20%	*
1987	2621	1927	694	26%	78%	36%	13%	11%	9%	*
1988	2601	1832	769	30%	85%	39%	15%	11%	17%	*
1989	2581	1720	861	33%	84%	45%	19%	17%	17%	*
1990	2566	1661	905	35%	85%	48%	24%	16%	14%	15%
1991	2690	1693	997	37%	88%	52%	24%	17%	18%	*
1992	2514	1537	977	39%	91%	54%	28%	18%	23%	*
1993	2463	1517	946	38%	94%	56%	26%	19%	22%	41%
1994	2415	1434	981	41%	95%	59%	30%	22%	26%	16%
1995	2359	1300	1059	45%	95%	68%	33%	24%	26%	32%
1996	2300	1256	1044	45%	95%	69%	34%	25%	29%	23%
1997	2327	1232	1095	47%	96%	73%	39%	25%	28%	32%
1998	2162	1108	1054	49%	98%	72%	40%	29%	30%	32%
1999	2109	1086	1023	49%	96%	74%	39%	31%	26%	41%
2000	2070	1025	1045	50%	97%	72%	46%	27%	31%	30%
2001	1995	967	1028	52%	97%	75%	45%	33%	29%	26%
2002	2012	951	1061	53%	97%	77%	45%	33%	34%	39%
2003	2020	919	1101	55%	96%	79%	51%	33%	31%	34%
2004	2128	1009	1119	53%	98%	79%	49%	32%	33%	37%

* percentage suppressed as it is based on fewer than 5 observations

Source: Office for National Statistics VS2

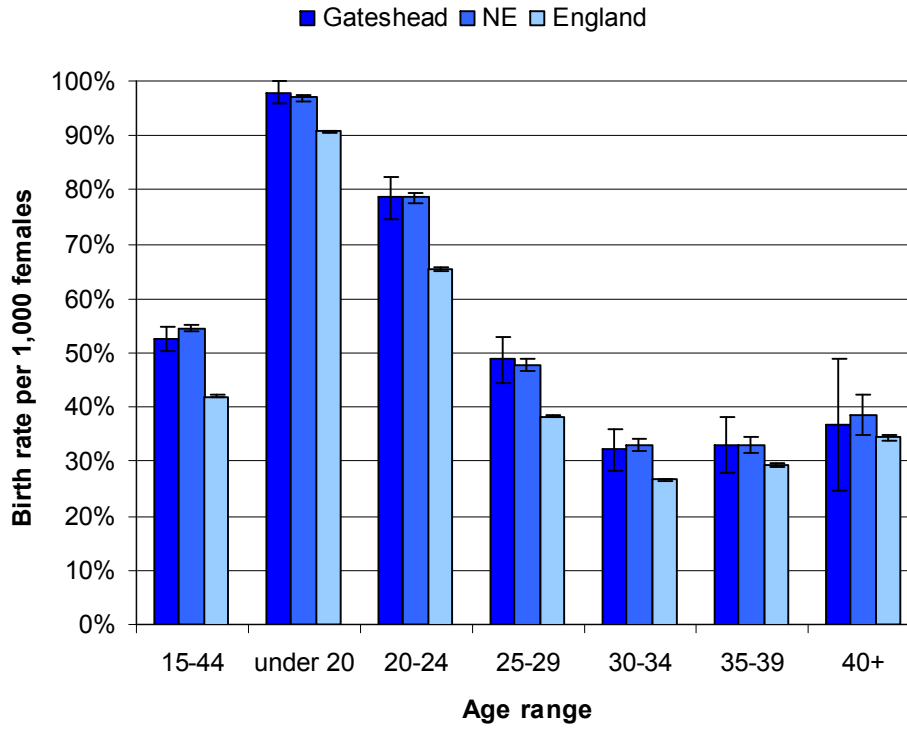
Proportion of births outside marriage in Gateshead by age band



Source: Office for National Statistics VS2

8.7 Live births inside and outside marriage (cont.)

Proportion of live births outside marriage in 2004 by age band with 95% confidence intervals



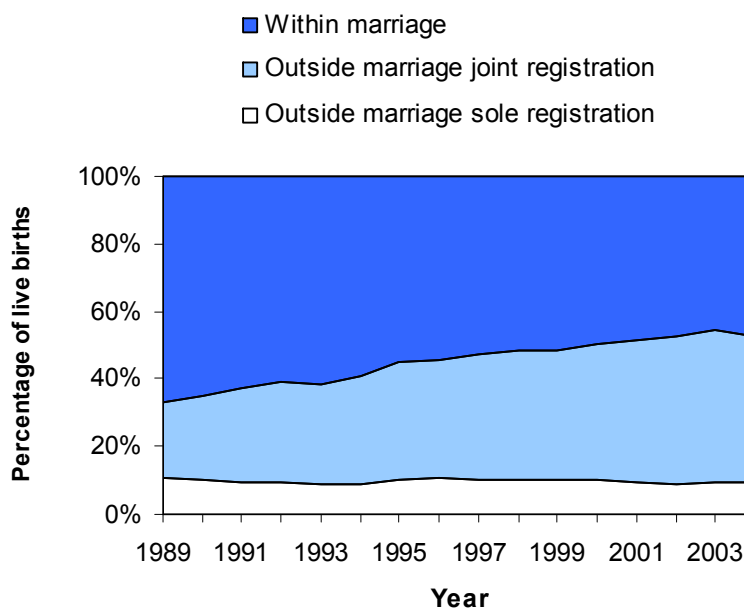
Source: Office for National Statistics VS2

Percentage of live births by type of registration						
	Within marriage	Outside marriage, joint registration, parents at same address	Outside marriage joint registration, parents at different addresses	Outside marriage, all joint registrations	Outside marriage, sole registration	Total outside marriage
Gateshead						
1989	67%	-	-	22%	11%	33%
2004	47%	-	-	43%	9%	53%
Eng. & Wales						
1989	73%	14%	5%	19%	8%	27%
2004	58%	27%	8%	35%	7%	42%

Source: Office for National Statistics VS2 and Birth Statistics FM1 no. 33

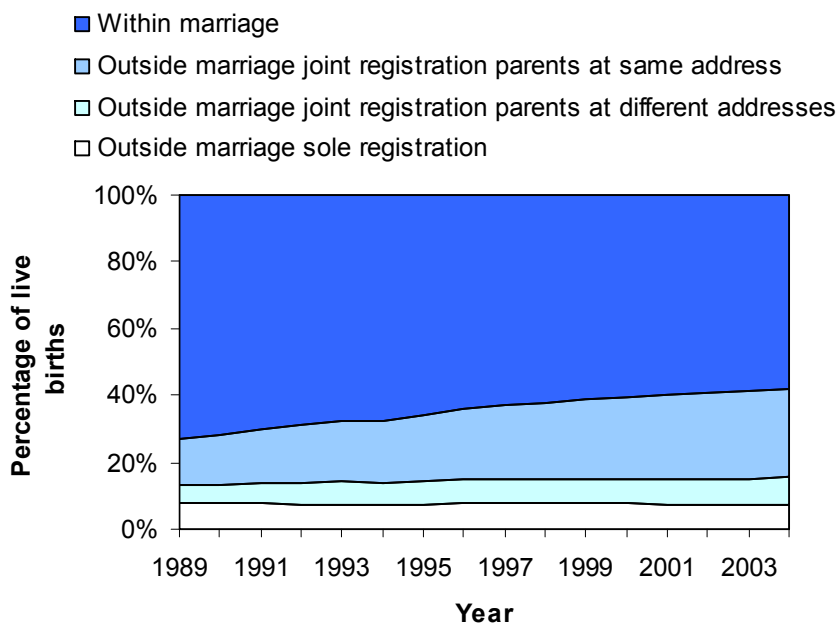
8.7 Live births inside and outside marriage (cont.)

Percentage of live births by type of registration, Gateshead, 1989-2004



Source: Office for National Statistics VS2 and Birth Statistics FM1 no. 33

Percentage of live births by type of registration, England & Wales, 1989-2004



Source: Office for National Statistics VS2 and Birth Statistics FM1 no. 33

8.8 Maternities by place of confinement

Year	Place of Confinement					
	Total	NHS Hospitals	Non-NHS Hospitals	At Home	Elsewhere	% At Home
Gateshead						
1994	2404	2383	*	20	*	0.8%
1995	2348	2332	*	13	*	0.6%
1996	2281	2260	*	17	*	0.7%
1997	2306	2280	*	23	*	1.0%
1998	2149	2120	*	28	*	1.3%
1999	2084	2054	*	25	**	1.2%
2000	2045	2018	*	26	*	1.3%
2001	1979	1954	*	22	*	1.1%
2002	1989	1973	*	14	*	0.7%
2003	1999	1974	*	23	*	1.2%
2004	2113	2088	*	24	*	1.1%
North East						
1994						
1995						
1996						
1997						
1998						
1999						
2000						
2001	26003	25698	*	276	**	1.1%
2002	26003	25698	*	276	**	1.1%
2003	26764	26458	*	280	**	1.0%
2004	27559	27213	*	328	**	1.2%
Eng. & Wales						
1994	659126	642712	3903	11850	661	1.8%
1995	641997	626318	2583	12487	609	1.9%
1996	643448	626849	2519	13460	620	2.1%
1997	635640	617884	2743	14383	630	2.3%
1998	629572	612332	2806	13815	619	2.2%
1999	615694	598673	3071	13271	679	2.2%
2000	598247	581593	3243	12803	608	2.1%
2001	588596	572515	3257	12115	709	2.1%
2002	590248	573673	3016	12697	862	2.2%
2003	615787	598536	2877	13590	784	2.2%
2004	633431	615427	2631	14504	869	2.3%

* suppressed as number of observations is less than 5

** suppressed to avoid disclosure

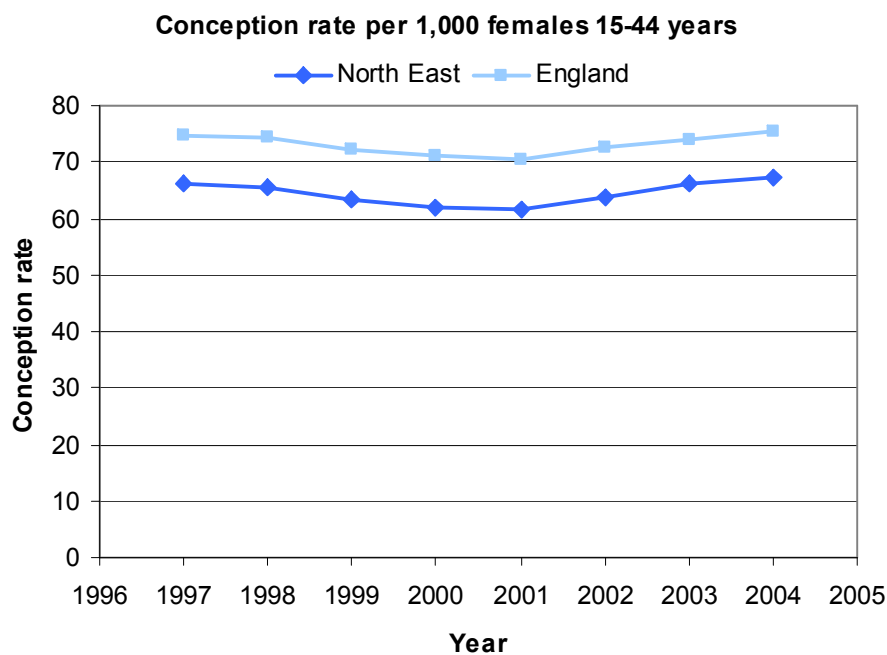
Source: Office for National Statistics VS2

8.9 Trends in conception data

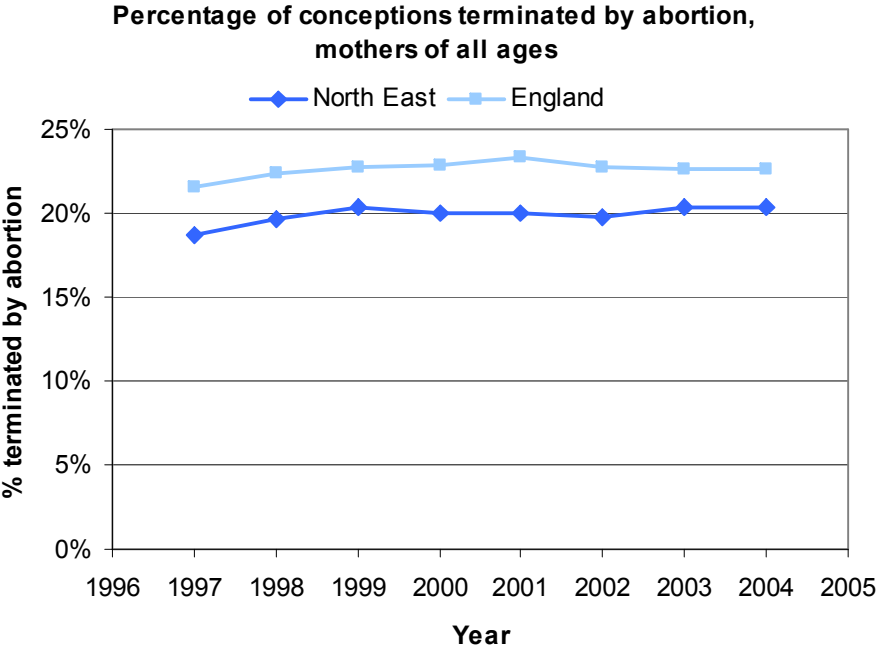
Year	Total number of conceptions	Conception rate (per 1,000 females 15-44)	% terminated by abortion	% outside marriage
North East				
1997	35200	66.3	18.7%	57.3%
1998	34600	65.5	19.7%	58.6%
1999	33200	63.2	20.4%	60.0%
2000	32500	62.1	20.0%	60.6%
2001	32100	61.5	20.0%	61.3%
2002	33200	63.8	19.8%	62.8%
2003	34300	66.1	20.3%	63.4%
2004	35000	67.4	20.3%	64.5%
England				
1997	759500	74.8	21.5%	49.6%
1998	757000	74.4	22.4%	50.9%
1999	735500	72.1	22.7%	51.4%
2000	729100	71.1	22.9%	51.9%
2001	726300	70.5	23.3%	52.6%
2002	748600	72.5	22.7%	53.2%
2003	767800	74.1	22.6%	54.2%
2004	785500	75.5	22.6%	54.6%

Source: Office for National Statistics, FM1

Previous editions of this publication included conceptions and terminations data for the old Gateshead & South Tyneside Health Authority area. Due to revisions of population estimates, the conception rate figures are no longer correct and so the data has been removed. Conceptions and terminations data are not published on an annual basis at Local Authority or PCT level.



8.9 Trends in conception data (cont.)



8.9 Trends in conception data (cont.)

England & Wales, conceptions and terminations by age band, 2003 and 2004

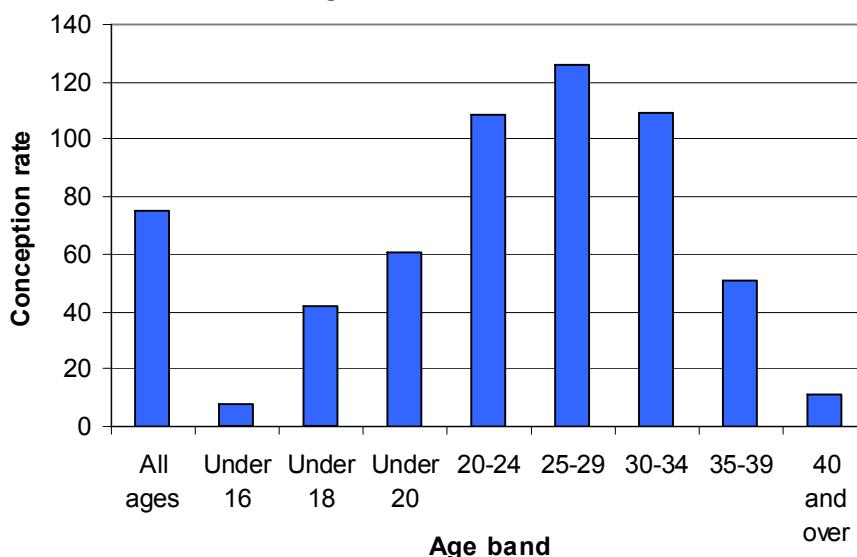
	Conceptions (000's)		Conception rate per 1,000 females		Percentage leading to legal abortion*	
	2003	2004	2003	2004	2003	2004
All ages	806.8	825.8	73.7	75.2	22.5%	22.4%
under 16	8.0	7.6	8.0	7.5	57.4%	57.1%
under 18	42.2	42.2	42.3	41.7	45.7%	45.6%
under 20	98.6	101.2	59.8	60.3	40.2%	40.1%
20-24	175.3	181.1	107.1	108.7	29.0%	28.9%
25-29	199.8	204.9	122.8	126.0	17.9%	18.2%
30-34	209.0	209.3	105.8	109.2	13.6%	13.2%
35-39	103.1	106.6	49.1	50.9	18.9%	18.4%
40 and over	20.9	22.7	10.7	11.3	34.8%	33.0%

Source: Health Statistics Quarterly, Spring 2006, no. 29

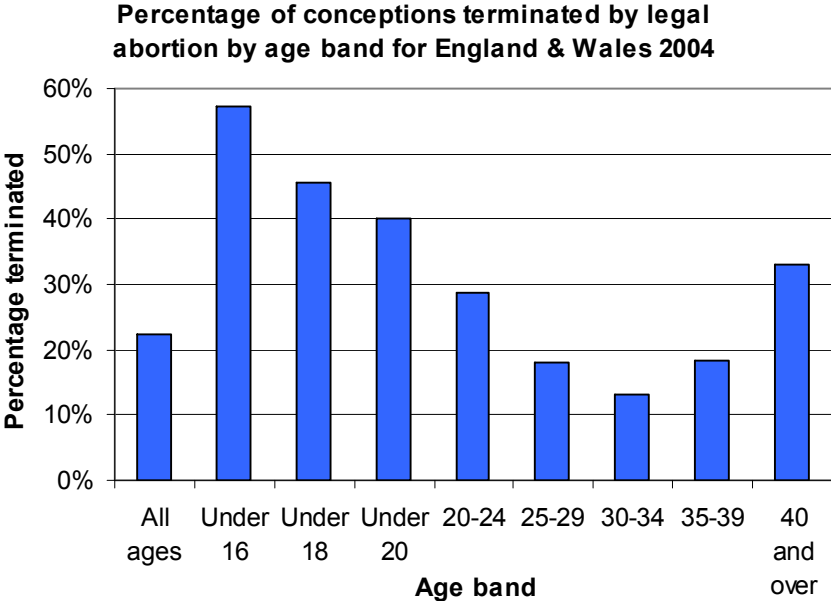
Previous editions of this publication included conceptions and terminations data for the old Northern & Yorkshire region and Gateshead & South tyneside Health Authority areas. Due to revisions of population estimates, these conception rate figures are no longer correct and so the data has been removed. Conceptions and terminations data by age band are not now published on an annual basis at regional or Local Authority level.

Elsewhere in this Compendium England is used as the national comparator. England & Wales is used here as data on terminations is only published for the England & Wales area.

Conception rate per 1,000 females by age band for England & Wales 2004



8.9 Trends in conception data (cont.)

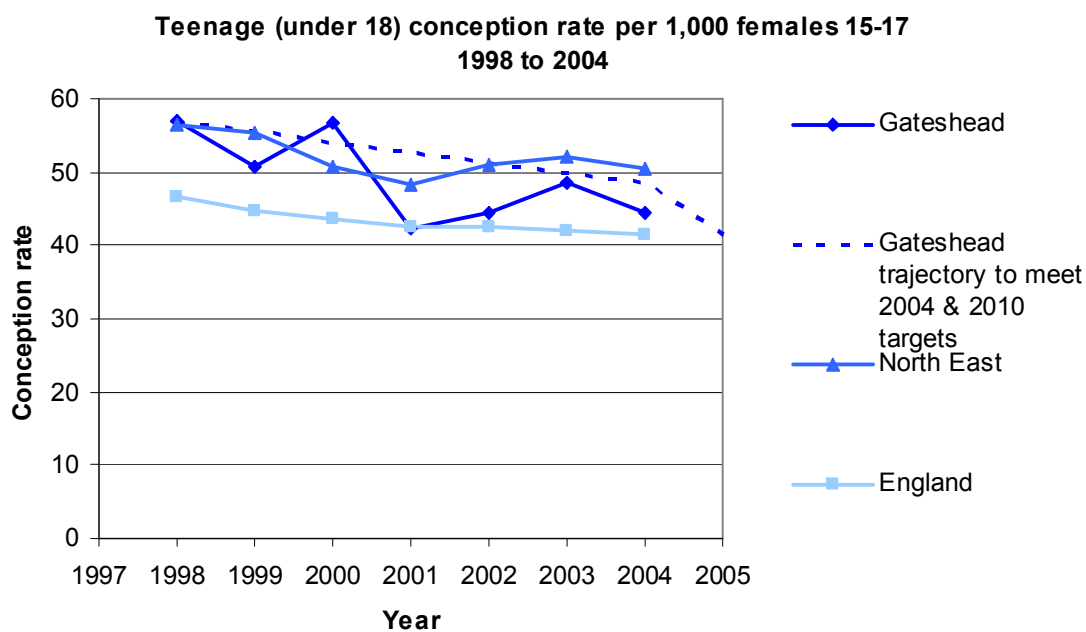


8.10 Conceptions under 18 years of age

Target: To reduce the teenage conception rate (conceptions under 18 per 1,000 females 15-17) by at least 15% by the year 2004 and by 50% by the year 2010

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	% change 98 to 04
Gateshead								
Number of conceptions	199	182	202	152	158	175	159	
Rate (per 1,000 females 15-17)	57.1	50.7	56.8	42.3	44.3	48.6	44.5	-22.0%
% terminated by legal abortion	38.2	34.6	38.6	30.3	37.3	44.6	46.5	
North East								
Number of conceptions	2731	2666	2478	2393	2554	2613	2511	
Rate (per 1,000 females 15-17)	56.5	55.3	50.8	48.3	51.0	52.1	50.5	-10.6%
% terminated by legal abortion	35.2	36.9	37.2	37.3	38.8	41.6	40.1	
England								
Number of conceptions	41089	39247	38699	38461	39350	39553	39545	
Rate (per 1,000 females 15-17)	46.6	44.8	43.6	42.5	42.6	42.1	41.5	-11.1%
% terminated by legal abortion	42.4	43.5	44.8	46.1	45.8	46.0	46.0	

Source: Teenage Pregnancy Unit



8.11 Terminations*

*legal abortions performed under the 1967 Abortions Act.

Trends in Gateshead age-specific rates over time

Year	Number of terminations							
	all ages	under 18	18-19	under 20	20-24	25-29	30-34	35+
2000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2001	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2002	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2003	375	68	49	117	96	60	50	52
2004	444	75	63	138	132	66	60	48

Year	Average age-specific termination rate per 1,000 females							
	all ages	under 18	18-19	under 20	20-24	25-29	30-34	35+
2000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2001	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2002	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2003	7.5	8.2	21.2	11.0	17.7	11.1	7.2	2.4
2004	8.9	9.2	26.7	13.1	23.6	12.1	8.9	2.2

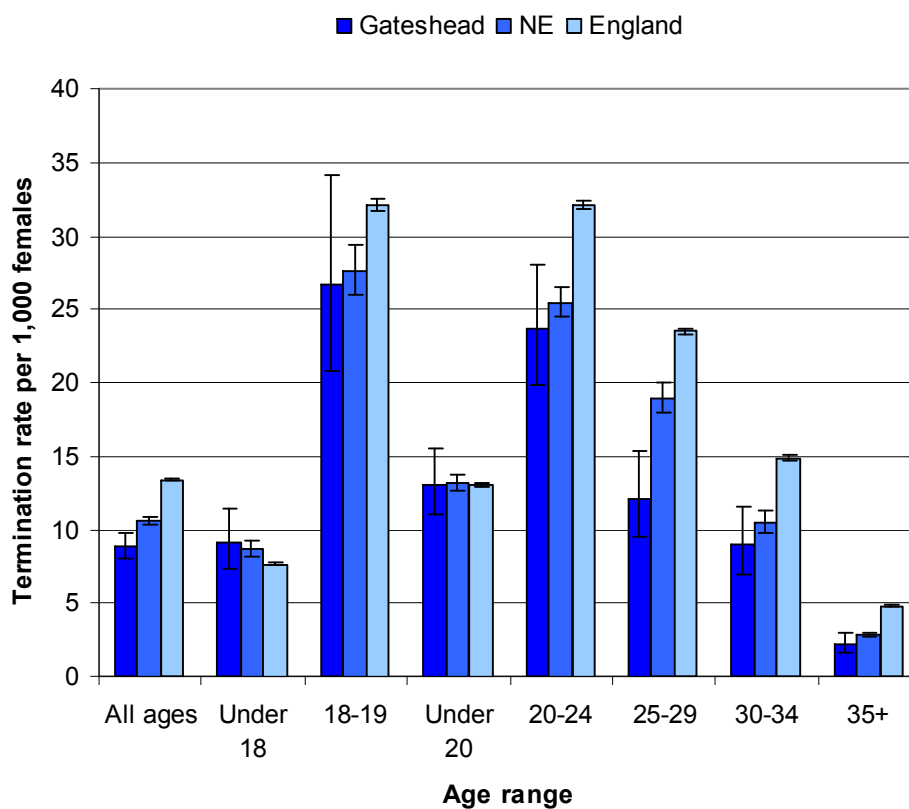
Sources: Population, Office for National Statistics mid-year population estimates based on 2001 Census population. Terminations, Office for National Statistics
 All ages rate is based on female population 11-49 years
 Under 18 rate is based on female population 11-17 years
 Under 20 rate is based on female population 11-19 years
 Rate for ages 35+ is based on female population 35-49 years

8.11 Terminations (cont.)

2004	Average maternal age-specific termination rate per 1,000 females							
	All ages	Under 18	18-19	Under 20	20-24	25-29	30-34	35+
Gateshead	8.9	9.2	26.7	13.1	23.6	12.1	8.9	2.2
NE	10.6	8.6	27.6	13.2	25.5	18.9	10.5	2.9
England	13.3	7.7	32.1	13.1	32.1	23.5	14.9	4.8

Sources: Population, Office for National Statistics mid-year population estimates based on 2001 Census population Terminations, Office for National Statistics
 All ages rate is based on female population 11-49 years
 Under 18 rate is based on female population 11-17 years
 Under 20 rate is based on female population 11-19 years
 Rate for ages 35+ is based on female population 35-49 years

**Average maternal age-specific termination rates in 2004
with 95% confidence intervals**



8.12 Gateshead Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Partnership

Gateshead Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Partnership is a broad multi-agency partnership in which there are representatives of the Council, Primary Care Trust, Voluntary sector and Connexions. The Partnership has an Executive, a Board, a Forum and various Task Groups. Gateshead has achieved a reduction in the teenage pregnancy rate of 22% between 1998 and 2004, exceeding the 2004 interim target of 15%. This success is attributable to strong partnership work at all levels and of committed staff who share the agenda to prevent unwanted conceptions and support young parents. Teenage pregnancy is both a cause and a consequence of social exclusion. For some it will be the core of their work while for others it will be one of many issues that need to be addressed.

This work covers many issues and needs to be delivered in the way which is most appropriate for young people, particularly the most vulnerable, who are most at risk of experiencing a teenage pregnancy. Sex and Relationship Education and access to clinics are very important if we are to have sexually healthy young people who are able to avoid sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unwanted pregnancies. This needs to be delivered using a whole environment approach if it is to be successful i.e. both in and out of school and in the home. In Gateshead programmes are delivered in schools, in youth settings and to parents and carers. Second pregnancies to teenage parents increase the risk of social exclusion. In Gateshead we have a domiciliary service so that young mothers can receive specialist help with contraception. We also acknowledge that there will always be teenage parents and that they need strong support networks to keep their education and training pathways open so that they can take advantage of employment opportunities and contribute to the local economy when they are ready.

It is worth noting that whilst the fertility rate in Gateshead increased in 2004, conceptions to under 18's decreased. Also, Gateshead has one of the highest fertility rates for Tyne and Wear but has the lowest teenage pregnancy rate.

Falling fertility rates in general may have implications for the future workforce. However, we know that a decrease in the fertility rate for Under 18's (the 'teenage conception rate') is beneficial because research clearly shows that health and wealth outcomes for teenage parents who are not supported are significantly worse than for their peers. This also extends to their children who have more admissions to hospital and achieve less well at school. It is this evidence that continues to drive the work of the Gateshead Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Partnership to reduce the rate of teenage pregnancy and support teenage parents.

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