



Alison Hadley

Director, Teenage Pregnancy Knowledge Exchange,
University of Bedfordshire

- I am Director of the Teenage Pregnancy Knowledge Exchange (TPKE) and was Teenage Pregnancy Advisor to Public Health England from 2013-2021.
- I established the TPKE after leading the previous Labour Government's successful ten-year Teenage Pregnancy Strategy (1999-2010).
- Originally a sexual health nurse, I was previously Head of Policy for Brook, the UK's leading sexual health charity for young people. I now Chair the Sex Education Forum, a collaboration of over 70 organisations advocating for high quality CSE for all children and young people.
- I have worked closely with the World Health Organisation to help replicate lessons of the teenage pregnancy strategy and am author of *Teenage Pregnancy and Young Parenthood: effective policy and practice*, written in collaboration with Dr Venkatraman Chandra-Mouli and Professor Roger Ingham, published by Routledge in 2018.

Successful national government-led large scale and sustained adolescent pregnancy/childbearing prevention programmes

England's Teenage Pregnancy Strategy – in brief!

22nd June 2022

Alison Hadley, Director of the Teenage Pregnancy Knowledge Exchange, University of Bedfordshire and Chair of the Sex Education Forum

Advocacy, national leadership and scale up



- **Historically high rates** of adolescent pregnancy with ‘health only’ initiatives having no impact. **Strong advocacy from NGOs** for Government leadership
- Positioned by incoming Labour government as **cause and consequence of social exclusion** and intergenerational inequality **requiring multi-sectoral action**. Ten year goal to **halve under-18 pregnancy rate** and **double proportion of young mothers in education**. Launched by **Prime Minister to signify priority**.
- **Scaled up from the start: a national government programme of CSE in schools and community settings** linked to *youth friendly contraceptive services, a communications campaign and dedicated support for young parents*, **delivered by local government multi-agency partnerships**

Managing scale up, building support and addressing opposition



Accurate data enabled **close monitoring of progress**. Mid-strategy review found **areas applying the strategy actions reduced rates**.

Direct **engagement of government ministers** in poor performing areas accelerated progress.

Evidence based **strategy strongly supported by NGOs** and medical/nursing organisations.

Independent Advisory Group of experts assisted ministers in **responding to challenges and negative media reporting...**

‘dangers’ of CSE, contraception to under 16s, and initial slow progress

‘Sex lesson for 5 year olds’

‘Teenage pregnancies: a real sex scandal’

‘The disappointing fall in teenage pregnancies is the result of a shocking failure of policy’. Daily Telegraph. 2008

The results?

England progress: 1998-2020



- ◆ **72% reduction** in under 18 conception rate – from 46.6/1000 (41,000) 15-17s in 1998 to 13.0/1000 (12,000) in 2020.
- ◆ **All local government areas now showing reductions**, including those with previous slow progress
- ◆ **Biggest reductions** in areas of higher deprivation
- ◆ Doubling in the proportion of **teenage mothers in education**
- ◆ **The Strategy saved money.** For every £1 spent an estimated £4 was saved on health, education, social care and welfare costs

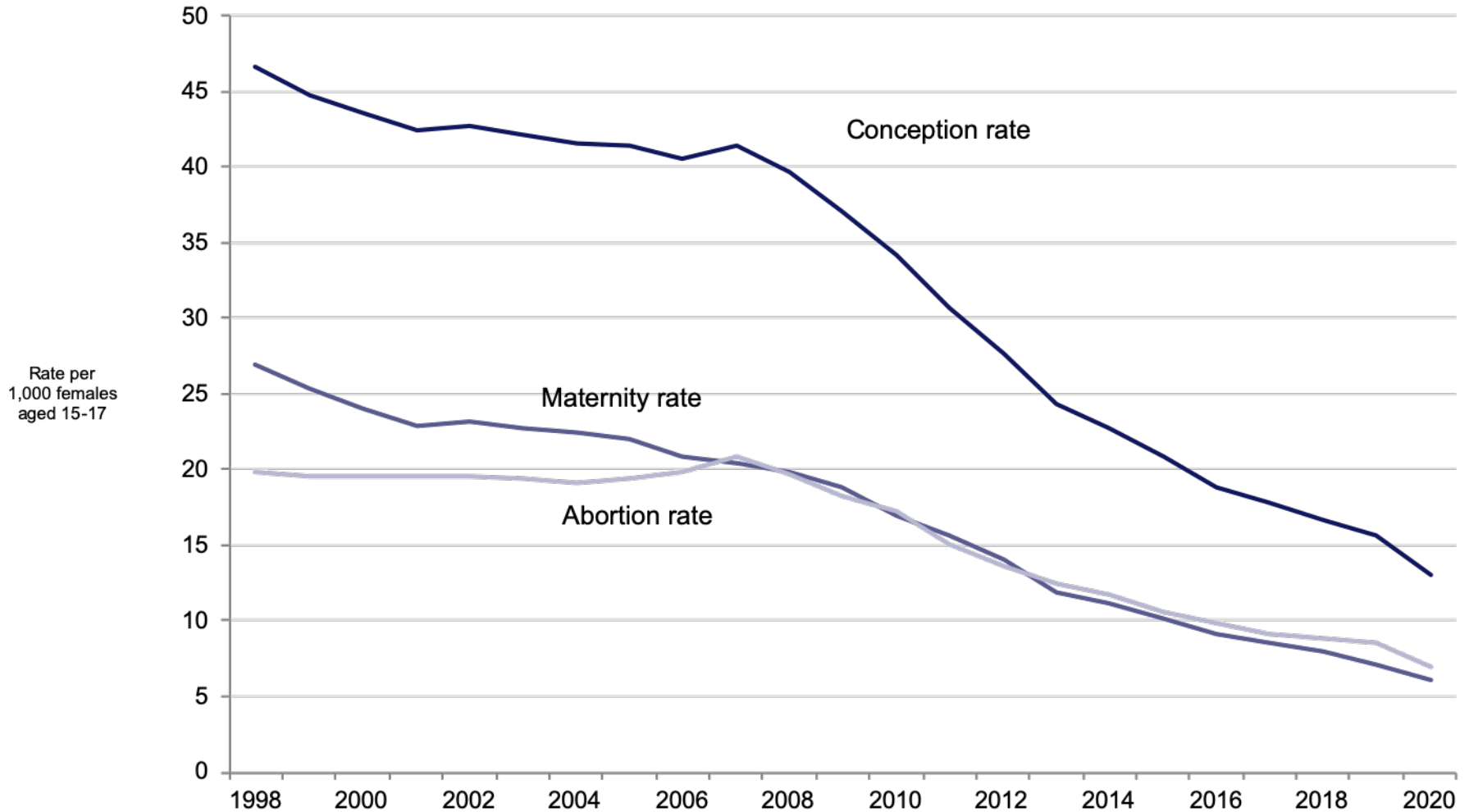
Key success factors



- **Repositioning teenage pregnancy as an issue of social exclusion and inter-generational inequality, requiring collective action**
- Establishing, resourcing and maintaining the **structures and support** for effective strategy implementation with **Independent Advisory Group holding government to account**
- Having a credible, **evidence based strategy, supported by NGOs, professional organisations, academia & the private sector**
- **A clear target** (national and local) with **good data to regularly review progress**
- Embedding the strategy in **wider government programmes** aimed at improving health, education and economic outcomes
- **Providing and maintaining, national leadership** throughout – and beyond the strategy...and allowing **sufficient time to bring about change**

Progress took a long time and needed sustaining beyond the end of the Strategy

Under-18 conception rate: 1998-2020



After the Strategy: new government guidance – although accompanied by significant funding cuts



10 key factors for an effective local programme



..and continued advocacy - finally resulting in making CSE compulsory in all English schools!

Decline continues, but still much to do!



- National rate continues to decline but **teenagers remain at highest risk of unplanned pregnancy** and experience **higher birth rates compared to Western Europe**
- **Significant inequalities persist.** There is a **6-fold difference in under-18 conception rate between local areas.** Young people in government care have **three times rate of parenthood by 18.**
- **Outcomes remain disproportionate poor** for young parents and their children – with smaller numbers but **increasingly complex needs**
- **The positive impact of compulsory statutory CSE** will only be realised with **effective implementation and investment in training of educators**

What next?

Continued advocacy to ensure effective implementation of CSE with pathways to contraception: parliamentary engagement, professional support, NGO collaboration – **and monitoring young people’s experience**, coordinated by the Sex Education Forum

Tackling and monitoring inequalities: ensuring high quality CSE and easy access to contraception reaches **all children and young people**, and those who choose to be **young parents have dedicated support**

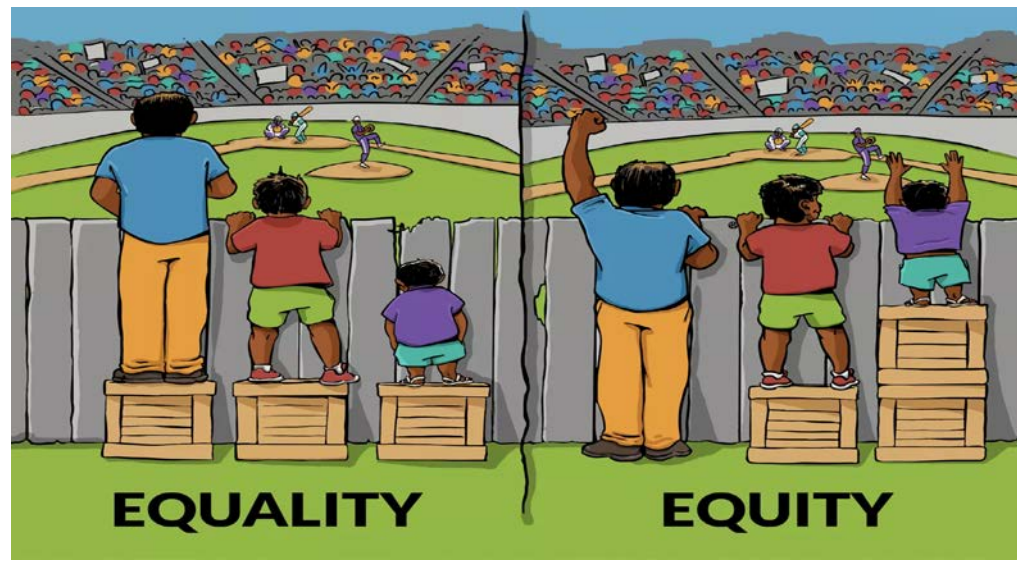
We want more RSE at school

“More time to develop an understanding of it all, instead of rushing the whole subject to get it over and done with.”

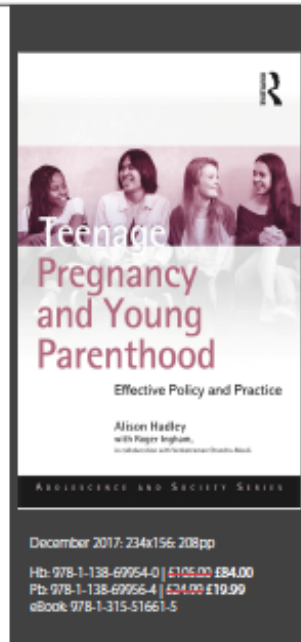


YOUNG PEOPLE'S RSE POLL 2021

18



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Teenage Pregnancy and Young Parenthood

Effective Policy and Practice

Alison Hadley, University of Bedfordshire, UK
with **Roger Ingham**, University of Southampton, UK
In collaboration with Venkatesan Chandu-Mood

Series: *Adolescence and Society*

Teenage Pregnancy and Young Parenthood provides a comprehensive, unparalleled insight into the UK Government's highly successful Teenage Pregnancy Strategy (TPS) for England which reduced the under-18 pregnancy rate by well over 50%, and considers how the lessons from this policy can be applied internationally.

This important book captures and shares the lessons from the TPS for future governments and policy makers, and documents the details of implementing a long-term strategy with its innovative approach to policy issues. The TPS is analysed against the World Health Organisation's key actions for effective scale-up of adolescent sexual and reproductive health programmes, to offer an important contribution to international understanding of this global public health challenge.

It is valuable reading for policy makers and practitioners dealing with young people's health, as well as undergraduate and postgraduate students in the fields of psychology, health studies, social work, youth work, education, social policy, sociology and related disciplines.

"England's Teenage Pregnancy Strategy: a hard-won success."
- Professor **Rachel Skinner**, University of Sydney in the Lancet Comment (6 August 2016)

"The drop in teenage pregnancies is the success story of our time."
- **Polly Toynbee** in the Guardian (13 December 2013)*

"This extraordinary book charts the development, implementation and evaluation of the UK Government's highly successful Teenage Pregnancy Strategy for England, which reduced the under-18 pregnancy rate by well over 50%. [...] A key resource and a compelling read. Strongly recommended to all who seek success in sexual and reproductive health."
- Professor **Peter Aggleton**, UNSW Sydney, Australia, and UCL, London

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Alison.Hadley@beds.ac.uk