

**Teenage Pregnancy Scrutiny Briefing: August 2011**

**1. Structure of Strategy and Support in Merton.**

1.1 Strategy and support to reduce teenage pregnancy and support for teenage parents is led from within Youth Inclusion in the Children Schools and Families. Public Health in the PCT is commissioned through the use of the Early intervention grant to deliver this service in partnership with Youth Inclusion. Specific treatment prevention, such as Check it out and Abortion services are funded by the PCT. Through this partnership approach we have combined the roles of substance misuse prevention with teenage pregnancy prevention into one role and one strategy to support adolescent health.

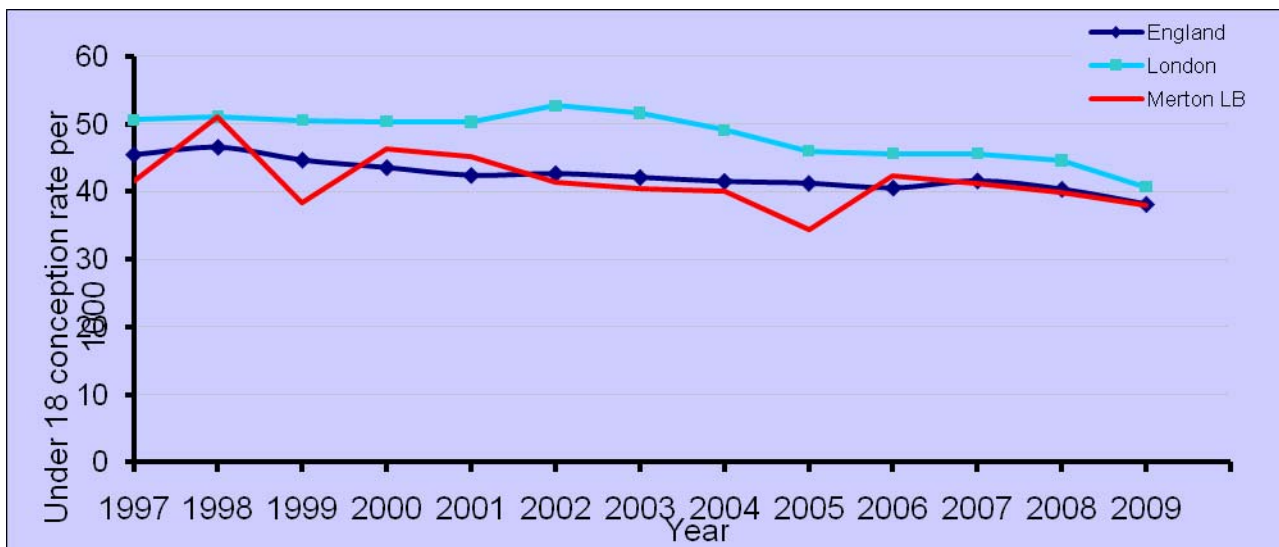
**2. Teenage conceptions in Merton**

2.1 Merton has seen a significant reduction in its under-18 conception rate from 51.0 per 1,000 females aged 15-17 year olds in 1998 to 37.9 in 2009. This 25.7% reduction has been the highest in outer London, and has led to a lower rate than both London and England. This shows Merton’s long term commitment and support to this area of work.

2.2. The table and graph below show Merton’s progress measured against the baseline year of 1998, as compared to London and England.

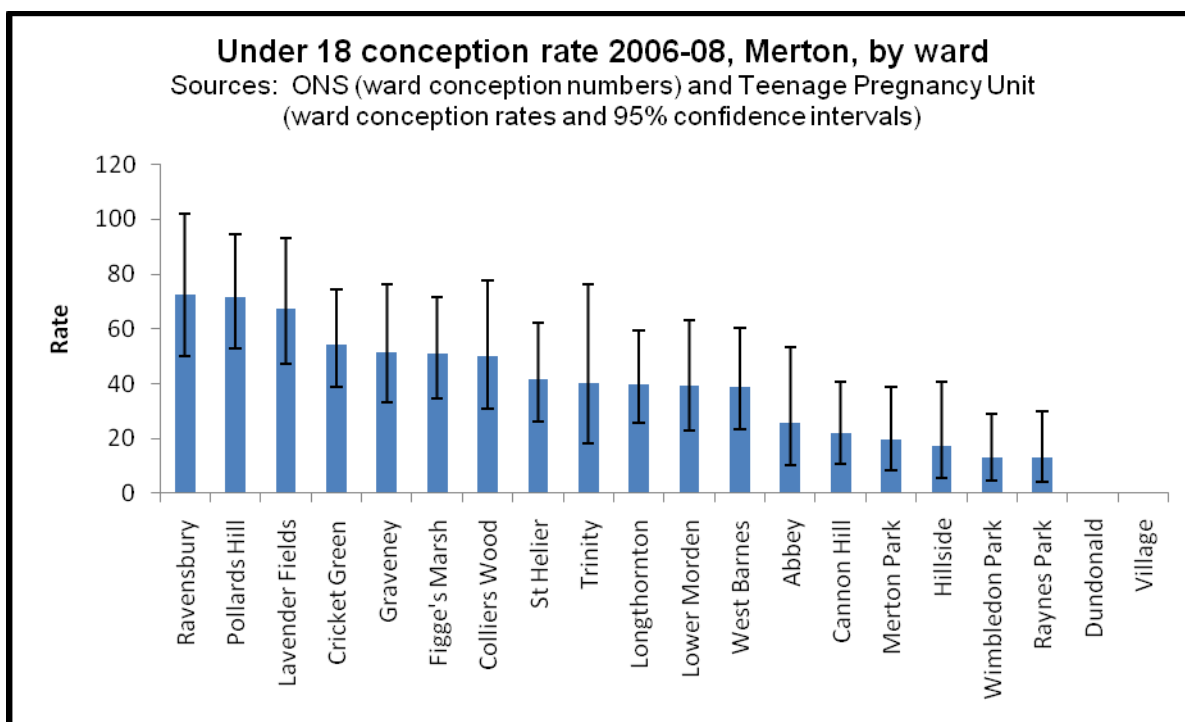
Note: Due to a time lag receiving data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) the 2009 data is the most recent available. 2010 data will be available in February 2012.

Merton		1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
	<b>Number</b>	135	103	125	126	118	119	121	104	129	124	118	110
	<b>Rate</b>	51.0	38.3	46.3	45.2	41.3	40.4	40.1	34.3	42.3	41.2	39.9	37.9
	<b>% change since 1998</b>		-25%	-9%	11%	-19%	-21%	-21%	-33%	-17%	-19%	-22%	-26%
London	<b>Rate</b>	51.1	50.5	50.4	50.3	52.7	51.6	49.1	46.0	45.6	45.6	44.6	40.7
England	<b>Rate</b>	46.6	44.8	43.6	42.5	42.7	42.2	41.6	41.3	40.6	41.7	40.4	38.2
	<b>% change since 1998</b>		-4%	-6%	-9%	-8%	10%	11%	11%	13%	11%	13%	18%



2.3 Under 18 conceptions are concentrated in relatively few wards, most of which are recognised as deprived in a range of indicators. Conception rates in these areas are similar to those in Inner London boroughs. As ward conception numbers are relatively small (even when aggregated for three years) rates may vary markedly from year to year and should be interpreted with some caution.

2.4 The chart below plots rates for Merton from highest to lowest and includes confidence intervals which are wide due to the small numbers of conceptions involved. As you will see the highest 'hotspots' are concentrated in the east of the borough.

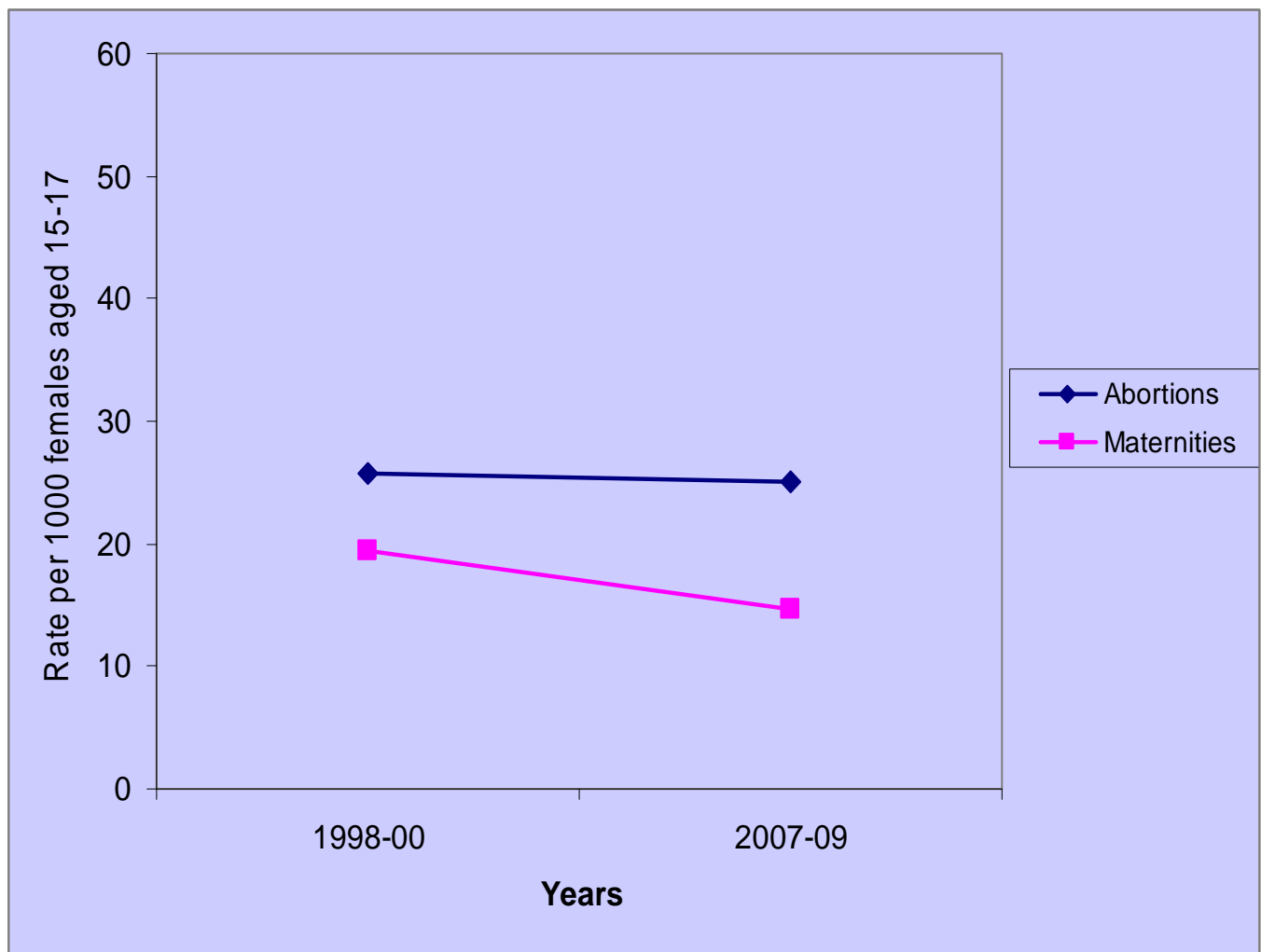


Note: Suppression - to prevent disclosure and protect confidentiality ONS have suppressed data for wards with fewer than five conceptions

2.5 Merton's reduction in its under-18 conception rate has resulted in a decrease in both abortions and maternities since 1998. This demonstrates that the strategy has shown real results and that the direction of travel is positive. In other areas there has been a fall in the maternity rate but an increase in abortions. The table and graph below show the outcomes of teenage conceptions since 1998.

	1998-2000	2007-09	% change 98-00 to 2007-09
Under 18 conceptions	45.2	39.7	-12%
Abortion rate*	26	25	-3%
Maternity rate	19	15	-24%

Note: \* Rate of abortions/births resulting from under-18 conceptions i.e. conception rate x proportion of conceptions resulting in abortion/maternity.



2.6 Although there has been significant progress in Merton, the borough is not on trajectory to meet the 2010 target of a 50% reduction, set by the previous government. A new local target is in the process of being agreed, alongside a strengthened local dataset so progress can be measured in a more timely fashion.

### **3. Evidence on “what works” to reduce teenage conceptions**

3.3 ‘Deep dive’ reviews carried out by the national Teenage Pregnancy Unit (TPU) found that there were several key factors which had the most significant impact on conception rates. These were: active engagement of all of the key stakeholders; a strong senior champion; a well publicised young people-centred contraceptive and sexual health advice service; comprehensive programmes of sex and relationships education (SRE) in all schools; targeted interventions with young people at greatest risk of teenage pregnancy, in particular with Looked After Children; SRE training for professionals; and a well resourced Youth Service.

3.4 **The Teenage Pregnancy and Substance Misuse Partnership Board** , a subgroup of the Children’s Trust meet bi-monthly, chaired by the Youth Inclusion Manager, to deliver the annual action plan, and monitor progress against the targets. There is continued commitment from all key partners including health, education, social services, police and the voluntary sector.

### **4. Services provided in Merton to prevent teenage pregnancy and support teenage parents**

#### **4.1 Sexual health & contraceptive advice and treatment**

- ‘Check it Out’ service - a targeted contraceptive advice and treatment service for under 19’s including ‘clinic in a box’ drop in sessions in schools and colleges
- Pan-London condom distribution scheme allowing under-25’s to access condoms from a range of settings across different boroughs.
- Free Emergency Hormonal Contraception (EHC) continues to be available from pharmacies across the borough.

#### **4.2 Media & publicity**

- ‘Getting it On’ website which advertises all sexual health services in South West London to young people aged 19 and under. Usage of the site continues to increase.
- Development and delivery of a Christmas campaign addressing the link between unprotected sex and alcohol with South West London partners.

#### **4.3 Sex and Relationships (SRE) Education**

- Working with schools and South Thames College to develop policy and guidance

- Secondary schools leading on joint work around reducing sexualised behaviour in schools, especially sexualised bullying.

#### 4.4 **Targeted intervention with vulnerable groups**

- Working with Youth workers and targeted staff to ensure plans and support are in place to prevent unintended pregnancy and poor sexual health and substance misuse, particularly with Looked after young people and care leavers.

#### 4.5 **Support for young parents**

- Continued one to one support for all young parents in the borough provided by the Teenage Parent Advisor and local midwifery teams.

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