

PRESS RELEASE

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Teenage Pregnancy Rate is Falling, But Not Far Enough

LIFE welcomes today's announcement from the Office of National Statistics that the teenage conception rate in the UK has fallen to the lowest it's been since 1969. The charity warns, however, that while teenage pregnancy may be falling, the number of sexually transmitted diseases is increasing.

The ONS estimated the number of conceptions to women under 18 has fallen to 22,653 in 2014, compared with 24,306 in 2013, a decrease of 6.8%. The estimated number of conceptions to women aged 16 and under has also fallen by 11.4%.

LIFE Spokeswoman, Clara Watson, said "today's statistics cannot be looked at in isolation. Before we start celebrating a falling teenage pregnancy rate, it must be noted that there were also 440,000 new cases of sexually transmitted infections recorded in the same year, with a 33% increase in syphilis alone."

She continues, "The government's 'condom and consent' approach is little match for this post-tinder, pornography-soaked age, where young people have limited knowledge of the hallmarks of an authentic, committed, monogamous relationship. We know from experience that drowning children in contraception actually increases STI rates, resulting in teenagers engaging in sex more frequently, with more partners at a younger age. This is why sexually transmitted diseases have increased in Spain despite rates of youth condom use being amongst the highest in Europe.

At a time when more and more twelve-year-old children are presenting with STIs, we really must ask ourselves as a society, are we doing enough for our young people, to whom we owe a duty of care? The danger of today's figures is the temptation to gloss over the real cultural problem staring us in the face. Simply concentrating on preventing conception is treating a symptom rather than a cause."

LIFE Education gives relationship talks to thousands of teenage students every year, seeking to empower young people and teaching them how to navigate relationships with integrity, self-respect and courage.

END

For further media comment please call the LIFE Media Hotline on 07867 744502

LIFE is a pro-life charity that supports anyone facing a crisis pregnancy, pregnancy loss or after an abortion, and strives to engage, inspire and inform the next generation to value all human life from beginning to end