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22 June 2006

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

Dear Mr Barlow

Thank you for your letter of 6 June 2006, regarding Social inequalities reports and under 16 conception rates. This has been passed to me and I have endeavoured to answer your questions below.

With reference to your first question, the "Focus on social inequalities (2004)" publication was not written as an update of the "Social inequalities 2000 edition". Indeed, despite similar sounding names, the two reports were not part of the same series and their contents were determined independently from one another. The Focus on Social Inequalities (2004) was part of a broad "Focus on..." series (including "Focus on health, Focus on ethnicity and identity and Focus on older people) whereas the Social Inequalities (2000 edition) was a standalone publication.

The contents of each report in this series were determined by available data and demand from key user groups. Both reports contained new analyses as well as drawing on the most up to date and key analyses that had been carried out by experts in particular fields and that had appeared elsewhere.

The Social inequalities 2000 edition report contained the section on relative risk of teenage motherhood, by family circumstances to which you refer. The analysis was not carried out specifically for the report but had been done as part of another study, "Teenage mothers and the health of their children" by Botting et al. This had appeared earlier in Population Trends and was fully referenced. The analysis in this Population Trends article would have taken a considerable amount of time and resource and is not regularly repeated. Since no new work in this area was carried out between 2000 and 2004, it was not possible to include anything on this topic in the Focus on social inequalities report.

Please contact the Social Inequalities Branch with any further queries about either of these publications on Inequalities@ons.gov.uk.

With reference to your second query, conceptions data are estimated using maternity and abortions data. Abortions data is provided in confidence under the Abortion Act 1967. Similarly mother's date of birth used to calculate mother's age at conception, is collected in confidence at birth registration under the Population Statistics Acts 1938 and 1960 for statistical purposes only ie it is NOT recorded on the birth certificate. For these reasons ONS does not release figures on conceptions by age for local authority areas where the count is less than 3, to protect disclosure of information about individuals. The number of conceptions to girls aged under 16 for City of London in the period 1999-2003 was less than 3 and hence the precise figures cannot be

released. It may be of some help to you to know that the number of girls resident in City of London aged 13-15 was <100 in each year 1999-2003.

In order to enable ONS to release small number of events at local level it is standard practice to combine areas with small populations with their nearest neighbour. City and Hackney PCT commission healthcare services for residents of City of London and LB Hackney and as ONS figures are used by the PCT in monitoring the teenage pregnancies in their area figures are combined for these two areas.

Please contact the Child Health & Medical Research branch with any further queries regarding conceptions data on: CIM@ons.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

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