

Abortions up in England, Wales in 2006

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The number of women having abortions in England and Wales was up almost 4 percent in 2006 from the previous year, the Health Department said Tuesday.

A total of 193,700 abortions were performed during the year, an increase of 3.9 percent, The Guardian reported.

England and Wales have one of the highest rates of abortion among teenagers. In 2006, there were 3.9 abortions for every 1,000 girls under 16, and 18.2 for every 1,000 under 18. The rate was highest among 19-year-olds, with 35 for every 1,000 young women.

Health Minister Caroline Flint said that the percentage of abortions performed early in pregnancy is up with almost two-thirds done before 10 weeks and few performed after 13 weeks. But she told The Guardian the National Health Service needs to do more to ensure access to contraception, preventing unwanted pregnancies.

An anti-abortion rights group, the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, said that the government's push for early abortions is putting pressure on young women.

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