

Percuity

Research, data analysis, and commentary on abortion and declining birth rates.

Half of all Generation Z Pregnancies now end in Abortion.

Official data show an increasing year-on-year trend in young women and girls delaying their first childbirth. Whilst changes in sexual relationships and use of contraception are factors influencing this, we note that in 2022, half of all viable pregnancies for Generation Z ended in elective abortion.

This more recent post verifies that in 2022, for Gen Z women, 48% of all viable pregnancies ended in abortion.

In 2020, across England and Wales, the completed family size[i], CFS, was 1.92 children. Data published by the Office for National Statistics, ONS, show that CFS peaked at 2.42 forty years earlier, has been below the replacement rate of 2.08 for more than twenty-five years and has effectively flatlined for the last twenty years.

Over the last twenty-five years, the proportion of women who remain childless after age 45 has also flatlined at about 18%. However, as can be seen in the chart below, the proportion of women remaining childless at age 25 and at 30 has increased significantly in recent years.

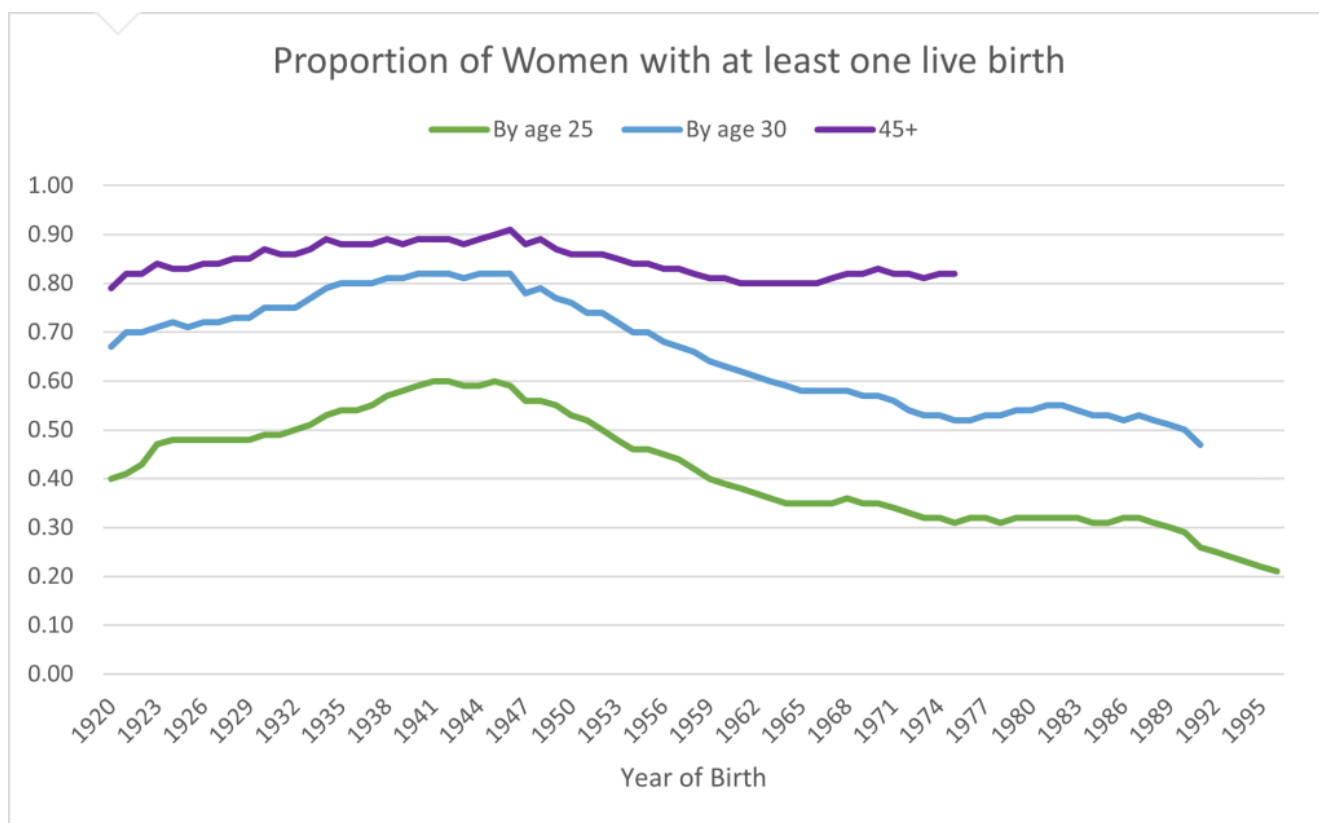


Figure 1: Data source ONS; analysis K Duffy.

Women born in 1990 are the first birth-cohort in which more than half remain childless by their 30th birthday. It seems that this may be a continuing trend when we consider the by-age-25 cohorts; of those born in 1990, 29% had at least one live-birth but this continues to decrease to just 21% for those born in 1996.

Given that CFS and the proportion of childlessness for women aged 45+ has not changed significantly over recent decades, what these data show is that women are delaying childbirth rather than not having children. Whilst there are many reasons why women are choosing to delay first childbirth, let's consider how they might be doing so.

Compared with previous generations, young women and girls, 15-24, may now be having less sex or they might be more inclined towards same-sex relationships. Those engaging in heterosexual relationships might be making more use of contraception, including more proactive use of emergency contraception after unprotected sex.

Combining births and fertility data published by the ONS with abortion data from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), we find that year-on-year the total number of viable pregnancies[ii] for young women and girls aged 15-24 has been falling.

In 2011, this cohort had 171,000 live births and 89,000 abortions[iii], a total of 260,000 viable pregnancies. In 2021, this total was just 163,000. This represents a reduction of about 37% over ten years; in the same period the total population of this cohort reduced by just 5%, perhaps indicating the significant impact on fertility from the use of contraception and less frequent heterosexual sex.

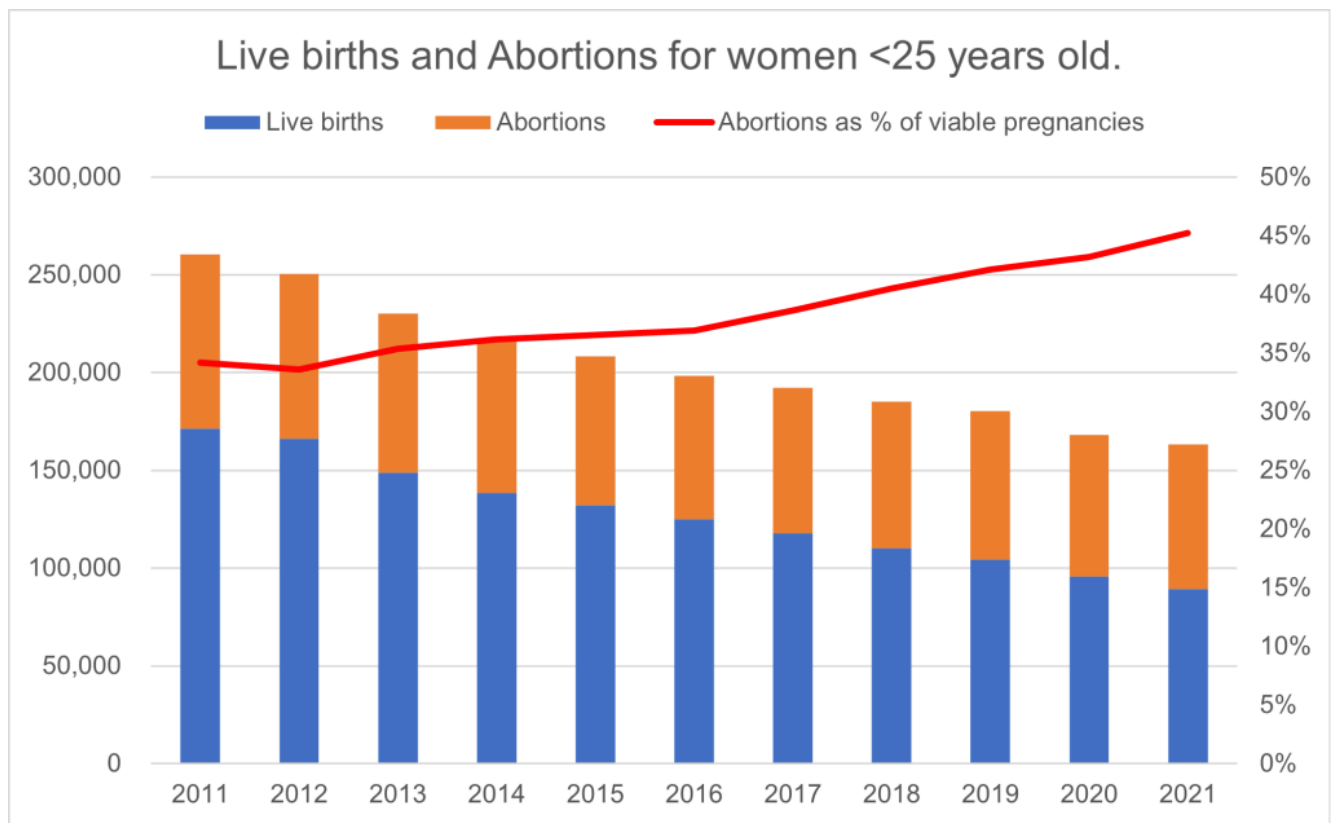


Figure 2: Data sources ONS and DHSC; analysis K Duffy.

It is worthy of note that the proportion of viable pregnancies ending in elective abortion has been rising year-on-year over these ten years. In 2012, 34% of viable pregnancies for this 15–24-year-old cohort ended in abortion; there has been a notable increasing year-on-year trend and by 2021 this proportion had risen to 45%.

The DHSC has only released abortion data for the first six months of 2022, but if we extrapolate that to a full year, we find that half of all pregnancies for young women and girls below the age of 25, Generation Z, ended in elective abortion (approx. 88,000 live births and 88,000 elective abortions).

[i] Completed Family Size is the average number of live-born children for women who have completed their childbearing years, usually from age 15 to 45 years old.

[ii] Viable pregnancies are those that either result in a live-birth or an abortion. Those resulting in either a natural miscarriage or in a stillbirth are not included.

[iii] Stated abortion numbers are for Ground C abortions; these are elective, on request of the woman, not because of rape or incest, or any indicated medical risk to the life of the woman, or serious fetal anomalies – Ground C total about 98% of all abortions.

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