



The Teen Parents Support Programme

Summary of Work 2014

Introduction The Teen Parents Support Programme (TPSP) consists of eleven separate projects funded by Tusla Child and Family Agency and the HSE and is located throughout the country in a range of statutory, community and voluntary organisations (see TPSP contact details at the end of this Summary).

Each project offers interventions that promote and enhance the well-being of pregnant and parenting teens and their children. As part of an interagency approach to family support, TPSP staff begin their engagement with the young people at a critical early point of pregnancy/parenthood. They then work with them to build their capacity both as young parents and as adolescents moving towards early adulthood.

During 2014 a total of 1,109 young parents, their children and families had access to support from the TPSP. This brings to 6,121 the number of young parents who, together with their children, partners and families, have received this service since the TPSP was established in 2000. One of the aspirations of the TPSP is that eventually all teen parents in Ireland will have access to this type of support.

The TPSP works with young people who become parents when they are aged 19 years or under and, where needed, supports them until their children are 2 years of age.

Support is offered in all areas of the young person's life – parenting, health, relationships, education, training, childcare, accommodation, social welfare entitlements, legal issues and anything else about which the young person is concerned.

Grandparents and other family members involved with the young parents may also be supported.

Young people may make contact directly with the TPSP. Referrals are also made by professionals and anyone interested in the welfare of the young parent and his/her child.

The main aim of the TPSP is to provide early interventions, which are needs-led and outcome focused, to enhance and support the wellbeing of all young parents and their children, empower young parents in their parenting role and ensure equality of opportunity for parent and child.

Young parents whose needs are located at Levels 3 and 4 on the Hardiker scale are also supported with specific additional interventions (such as support with parenting skills) as part of an interagency approach to family support.

In 2014:

35% of all referrals who presented to the TPSP for the first time had needs located at Hardiker Level 3 and

6% of all referrals had needs located at Hardiker Level 4.

Summary of Teen Births in Ireland 2004-2014

Number of Births and Fertility Rates* for Women under 20 Years of Age

Year	Number of Births	Fertility Rate*
2004	2,560	17.4
2005	2,427	16.8
2006	2,362	16.4
2007	2,464	17.5
2008	2,426	17.0
2009	2,223	16.3
2010	2,019	15.0
2011	1,720	12.5
2012	1,639	12.2
2013	1,381	10.4
2014	1,253	9.3

Sources: CSO Vital Statistics, Yearly Summary 2014

*Fertility rate is the number of live births per 1000 women aged between 15 and 20 years.

Over the past decade the number of births to mothers under 20 years of age in Ireland has almost halved. When compared to European counterparts, however, the birth rate to teens in Ireland remains 'high to middling' (HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme, National Strategy 2012-2016). The most recent comparative teenage birth data available for selected countries is from the UN Statistical Yearbook 2006. The country with the lowest teen birth rate in 2006 was the Netherlands (3.8 per 1000) and the highest was the UK (26.7 per 1000). The teen birth rate in Ireland in the same year was 16.4 per 1000 girls aged 15-19.

Source: <http://www.crisispregnancy.ie>

In 2014, when the births to teen mothers were registered, 393 (31%) mothers were either married, in a civil partnership or living at the same address as the father of their child. This was higher at 34% for 18 year olds and 19 year olds, combined.

While 8% of teen births in 2014 were to mothers aged 16 years or under, 21% of all referrals to the TPSP were in this age group. Compared to 2013, this represents a 4% increase in referrals to the TPSP of mothers in the youngest age groups.

Limerick City Slickers with Martina Hogan, TPSP Project Leader



Summary of contact in 2014 with young parents and their families

1,109 The number of young parents, their children and other family members who were offered support in 2014

344 The number who presented for support for the first time:

- 307 mothers
- 36 fathers
- 1 other family member

24 The number who had engaged with the service previously and re-presented for support in 2014:

- 22 young mothers
- 1 young father
- 1 other family member

307 The number who were referred in earlier years and continued to receive support during 2014 and into 2015:

- 271 mothers
- 29 fathers
- 7 other family members

434 The number of young parents and other family members for whom support ended in 2014:

- 380 mothers
- 42 fathers
- 12 other family members

In addition, in 2014, as a result of the mother/father of their child engaging with the projects the TPSP had some contact with **396** other young parents:

- 300 fathers
- 96 mothers

The Table on the next page presents a profile of the 307 young mothers and 36 fathers at the point when they first engaged with the TPSP.

For the purpose of this Summary 'social care history' refers to current or previous engagement with Tusla Family Support Services, including young people currently or previously in care.

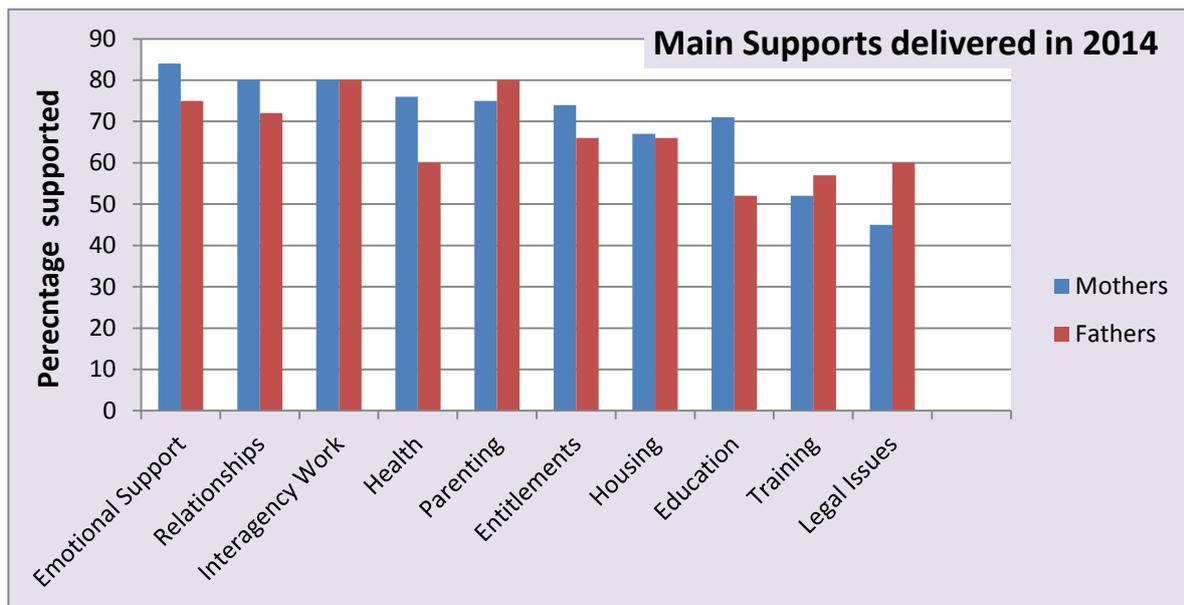
Care must be taken when interpreting Tables and Charts in this Summary due to the differences in the number of mothers and fathers involved.



Profile of young parents at time of referral to TPSP in 2014

Percentages are based on known data.

Characteristic	Category	Mothers (307)		Fathers (36)	
		No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Age	15 or under	24	8	0	0
	16	42	13	6	17
	17	50	16	5	14
	18	64	21	5	14
	19	82	27	7	19
	Over 19	45	15	13	36
Level of Need	Hardiker 2	179	59	21	58
	Hardiker 3	105	35	13	36
	Hardiker 4	14	6	2	6
	Not known when data was collected	4			
Social Care History	Yes	99	41	10	34
	No	145	59	19	66
	Not known when data was collected	63		7	
Education/Training Status	In Education/Training	109	41	22	65
	Not in Education/Training	156	59	12	35
	Not known when data was collected	42		2	
Highest Educational Attainment	3 rd Level/PLC	19	8	0	0
	Leaving Certificate	82	33	7	21
	Junior Certificate only	115	46	17	52
	No Certification	23	9	7	21
	Other	10	4	2	6
	Not known when data was collected	58		3	
Accommodation Type	Living in family home	182	66	25	68
	Living with other family member	20	7	2	6
	Own home	2	1	1	3
	Private rented accommodation	54	19	5	14
	Temporary accommodation	6	2	1	3
	Supported accommodation	3	1	1	3
	In care	7	3	0	0
	Other	4	1	1	3
	Not known when data was collected	29			
Background	Irish	237	82	32	88
	Irish Traveller	10	3	1	3
	African	8	3	0	0
	Eastern European	17	6	1	3
	UK	3	1	1	3
	Roma	12	4	1	3
	Other	4	1	0	
	Not known when data was collected	16			
Location	Urban	218	71	30	83
	Rural	89	29	6	27



The Chart above refers to 666 pregnant or parenting teens (600 mothers and 66 fathers) who either:

- engaged for the first time in 2014
- had engaged previously and needed to re-establish contact with TPSP in 2014 or
- were referred in previous years and were receiving ongoing support in 2014.

The Chart shows, in percentage terms, the main supports received by these young parents in 2014.

While most support was delivered on a one-to-one basis, where opportunities arose TPSP staff organised Groups and Programmes for young parents (fathers as well as mothers) either on an ongoing basis or in response to specific identified needs.

The TPSP works in close partnership with all local institutions, agencies and services that are available to a young parent such as schools, family support services, housing agencies and relevant non-governmental agencies. This partnership takes the form of joint collaboration and mutual referral systems. In 2014, the TPSP liaised with other services on behalf of 80% of service users. For young mothers, in order of frequency, most contact took place with the following: educational settings (2nd level and 3rd level institutions, combined), Tusla Family Support Services (including social workers and aftercare workers), Department of Social Protection representatives, maternity services, Local Authorities, public health nurses, training organisations, childcare providers and youth services. There was also contact with counselling services, disability services, services for those who are homeless and services for those who are victims of domestic violence and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

For young fathers, in order of frequency, most contact took place with the following: Tusla Family Support Services (including social workers and aftercare workers), secondary schools, Local Authorities, youth services and training organisations. There was also contact with public health nurses, maternity services, counselling services, Department of Social Protection representatives and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

The above Chart includes 105 service users (98 mothers and 7 fathers) from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. These include 19 mothers and 2 fathers who are Irish Travellers and 13 young parents (12 mothers and 1 father) from the Roma community. Of these 105 young parents, 74% received additional support with accessing services, understanding Irish birth and parenting practices, resolving dual cultural issues (where parents are from different ethnic backgrounds) as well as support in relation to habitual residence requirements.

Outcomes for parents whose contact with the TPSP ended in 2014

During 2014, a total of 434 service users ceased contact with the TPSP. These consisted of 380 young mothers, 42 fathers and 12 other family members. The following Table gives a short profile of these young mothers and fathers including their ages at time of referral, levels of need at time of referral and when support ceased; accommodation at time of referral and when support ceased as well as the reasons why support ceased.

Information on the educational progression of TPSP service users is on page 10.

Percentages are based on known data.

Characteristic	Category	Mothers (380)		Fathers (42)	
		No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Age at time of referral	15 years or under	13	3	1	2
	16 years	55	14	5	12
	17 years	63	17	4	10
	18 years	73	19	10	24
	19 years	113	30	9	21
	Over 19 years	63	17	13	31
Level of Need at time of referral	Hardiker 1	0	0	0	0
	Hardiker 2	239	63	30	71
	Hardiker 3	120	31	10	24
	Hardiker 4	21	6	2	5
Level of Need when support ceased	Hardiker 1	23	7	0	0
	Hardiker 2	239	67	35	83
	Hardiker 3	75	21	5	12
	Hardiker 4	19	5	2	5
	Not known when data was collected	24			
Accommodation at time of referral	Living in family home	206	62	23	55
	Living with other family member	23	7	3	7
	Own home	11	3	0	0
	Private rented accommodation	68	20	12	29
	Direct Provision	4	1	0	0
	Other temporary accommodation	7	2	3	7
	Supported accommodation	5	2	0	0
	In care	7	2	0	0
	Other	3	1	1	2
	Not known when data was collected	46			
Accommodation when support ceased	Living in family home	160	47	21	50
	Living with other family member	21	6	2	5
	Own home	16	5	0	0
	Private rented accommodation	125	36	15	37
	Direct Provision	4	1	0	0
	Other temporary accommodation	7	2	0	0
	Supported accommodation	3	1	0	0
	In care	7	2	0	0
	Other	0	0	3	8
	Not known when data was collected	37		1	
Reasons support ceased	Needs were met	210	45	15	38
	Child > 2 years of age	36	8	1	2
	Referred to other support	16	3	1	2
	Moved out of area	35	8	5	12
	Did not avail of service	69	15	3	8
	Parent ceased contact	91	20	13	30
	Other	6	1	3	8

Collaboration with Galway City Community Training Centre

The successful collaboration between the Galway TPSP and the Galway City Community Training Centre continued in 2014. This year young parents undertook courses in IT and Cookery and received a Level 3 FETAC Employability Skills Certificate. These courses were managed by the Galway Roscommon Education Training Board. They were provided on a part-time basis and childcare was provided through the CETS scheme.



Some of the young mothers with their children, trainer Deirdre Whyte and TPSP staff at the presentation of certificates, July 2014.

Ballyfermot Young Fathers Group



The Ballyfermot Young Fathers Group is organised by Ballyfermot TPSP and run in collaboration with Cherry Orchard Integrated Youth Services. The main aim of the Group is to promote positive mental health and to encourage mutual support and solidarity for each other as fathers. Part of the programme involved weekly hill walks which provide the young men with headspace and time to bond as a group. As time went by the Group decided to challenge

themselves to climb Ben Nevis in Scotland. After 12 months of fundraising they achieved their aim in May 2014.

'We battled wind, rain hailstones and snow but finally reached the summit supported by each other all the way.' Tracy Skerrett, TPSP Project Worker and Group Leader



Education and Training

The TPSP places particular emphasis on supporting young parents to complete their education, if that is their choice. Alongside support with parenting, this enables them to focus on their own development as young people and contributes to future equality of opportunity for parent and child. During the 2013/14 academic year, 8 of the 11 TPSPs received funding from the School Completion Programme (SCP) through

Tusla's Education Welfare Services. The aim of the SCP is to increase the numbers of young people staying in primary and second level school and in doing so improve the numbers of pupils who successfully complete the Senior Cycle, or the equivalent. <http://www.tusla.ie/services/educational-welfare-services>

Supports funded through the SCP included contributions towards childcare, grinds, books, transport and uniforms. TPSP staff also organised revision groups, peer support groups, personal development courses, pre-vocational taster programmes and guidance counselling. In addition, all of the young parents known to have a childcare need received information and support in relation to accessing childcare which would enable them to complete their education.

Educational outcomes for young parents who engaged with the TPSP

In 2014, TPSP support ceased for 380 young mothers and 42 young fathers. The following table compares their highest educational attainment when they were first referred to the TPSP and when contact ceased in 2014.

Highest Educational Attainment	When referred to the TPSP		When support ceased in 2014	
	Mothers (380)	Fathers (42)	Mothers (380)	Fathers (42)
Completed 3 rd Level Education	2	0	8	0
Completed PLC Course	19	0	32	0
Completed Leaving Certificate	102	10	123	14
Completed Junior Cert only	138	18	106	17
No 2nd Level Qualification	24	3	21	2
Other	10	3	17	2
Not known***	85	8	73	7

***refers to those who did not engage with the service or those whose non-Irish qualifications were unclear.

National Co-ordination of the TPSP

The national co-ordinator of the TPSP is based in Treoir and provides a central focal point for the promotion of the work of the TPSP and the enhancement of the lives of all young parents- including those living outside areas covered by a TPSP.

During 2014 this was achieved mainly through:

- regular contact with projects and meeting project staff and management when required
- keeping TPSP staff informed of changes in government policy and legislation in areas which affect young parents such as education, housing, social welfare, birth registration and guardianship
- maintaining contact with key staff in relevant government departments and agencies such as Education and Science, Department of Children and Youth Affairs, the Department of Social Protection, the National Education and Welfare Board and the Higher Education Authority
- collecting, collating and analysing detailed data from the TPSP database. This is used for the annual TPSP Summary of Work, to explore outcomes and to inform advocacy work undertaken by the national co-ordinator on behalf of young parents
- providing the Corporate Planning and Corporate Performance Section (CPCP) of Tusla with quarterly updates on the work of the TPSP
- Responding to queries from TPSP staff, professionals, young parents living outside areas covered by a TPSP and families involved with young parents.

To ensure that communication flows among all strands of the TPSP structure, in 2014 the co-ordinator organised 2 separate meetings of all TPSP staff, TPSP Host Organisations and the TPSP National Advisory Committee.

Among the issues raised at these meetings and followed up by the co-ordinator were:

- Childcare needs of mothers in education
- Repeat births among young mothers
- Support for young mothers reared in the care system
- Changes to Supplementary Welfare Allowance, the One-Parent Family Payment and the Rent Supplement Scheme
- Access to higher education
- Medical card eligibility and
- Housing.

TPSP Website

The TPSP website www.tpsp.ie is updated regularly with items of interest to young parents and those involved with them. In 2014, there were over 53,000 viewings of the website.

THE TPSP TOOLKIT

A RESOURCE FOR WORKING WITH PREGNANT AND PARENTING TEENAGERS

The TPSP Toolkit is a resource for those working with pregnant or parenting teenagers and was funded by the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme. The Toolkit aims to improve outcomes for teen parents (both mothers and fathers) by providing information, sample work sessions and activities that focus on the particular issues that arise in combining parenthood with their continuing development as young people.

In 2014 additional funding was secured from the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme to run 2 Workshops for non-TPSP professionals working with young parents and their families. This has proved to be a very efficient way of disseminating learning and good practice from the TPSP to areas where there are no specific support services for teen parents.

In total, 84 non-TPSP staff now have access to the TPSP Toolkit including youth workers, social workers, family support workers, aftercare workers, staff in family resource centres, crisis pregnancy counsellors and those working with marginalised groups such as young Traveller mothers.

During 2014 the TPSP Toolkit was also updated to take account of policy development and structural changes in the area of Family Support and the updated version made available to all those who had attended workshops during both 2013 and 2014.



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