



## The Teen Parents Support Programme Summary of Work 2012

**Introduction** The Teen Parents Support Programme (TPSP) consists of eleven separate projects funded by the HSE and 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 2012 a total of 1,268 young parents, their children and families had access to support from the TPSP. This brings to 5,385 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 2012:

- **97** young parents (31% of all referrals) who presented to the TPSP for the first time had needs located at Hardiker Level 3 and
- **18** others (6% of all referrals) had needs located at Hardiker Level 4.

### Summary of Teen Births in Ireland 2002-2012

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

Year	Number of Births	Fertility Rate*
2002	2,978	19.4
2003	2,802	19.0
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

Sources: CSO Vital Statistics, Yearly Summary 2012

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

In 2012, the fertility rate for Irish teen parents was at its lowest since 1963 when it was also 12.2. 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 2012, when the births to teen mothers were registered, 484 (29%) of mothers were either married, in a civil partnership or living at the same address as the father of their child. This was higher at 33% for 18 year olds and 19 year olds, combined.

While 7% of teen births in 2012 were to mothers aged 16 years or under, 16 % of all referrals to the TPSP were in this age group.

#### Limerick City Slickers receiving their Certificates of Attendance for 2012



Limerick City Slickers Group with TPSP staff Martina Hogan (far left) and Sandra Burke (far right)

### Summary of contact in 2012 with young parents and their families

- 1268** The number of young parents, their children and other family members who were offered support in 2012.
- 377** The number of young parents who presented for support for the first time:  
327 mothers  
39 fathers  
11 other family members.
- 29** The number of young parents who had engaged with the service previously and re-presented for support in 2012:  
25 young mothers  
4 young fathers.
- 453** The number of young parents who were referred in earlier years and continued to receive support during 2012 and into 2013:  
398 mothers  
38 fathers  
17 other family members.
- 409** The number of young parents and other family members for whom support ended in 2012:  
362 mothers  
35 fathers  
12 other family members.

In addition, in 2012, as a result of the mother/father of their child engaging with the projects the TPSP had some contact with:

- 599** other young parents  
94 mothers  
505 fathers.

The Table below presents a profile of the 327 young mothers and 39 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 HSE 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.*

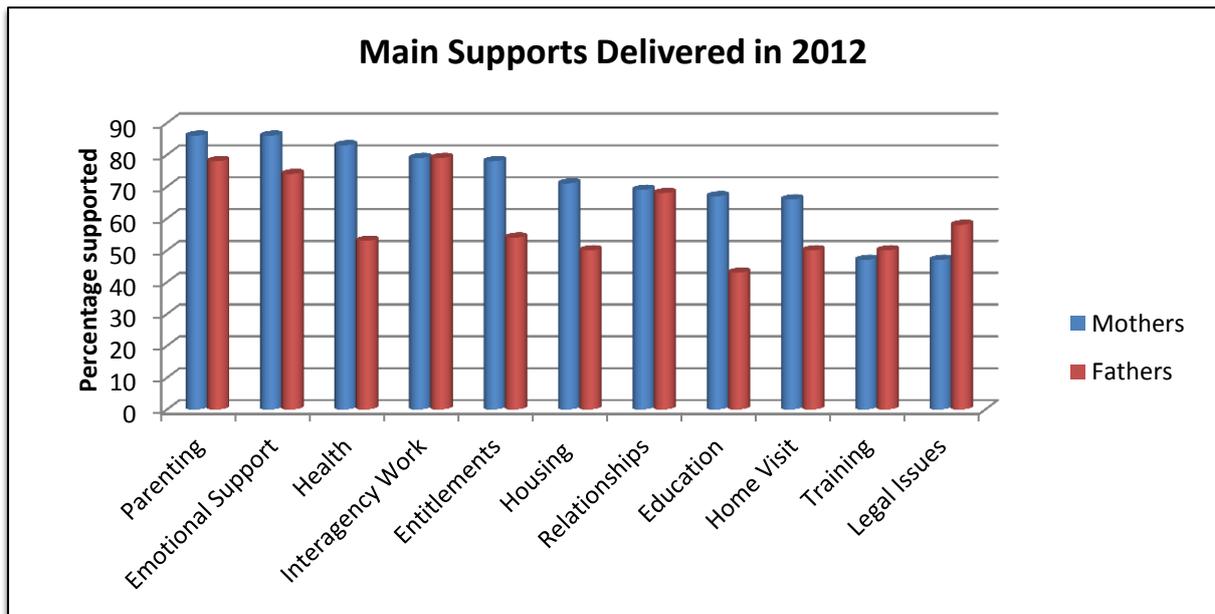


## Profile of young parents at time of referral to TPSP in 2012

Percentages are based on known data.

Characteristic	Category	Mothers (327)		Fathers (39)	
		No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Age	15 or under	7	2	0	0
	16	46	14	4	10
	17	53	16	5	13
	18	82	25	9	23
	19	85	26	6	15
	Over 19	54	17	15	39
Pregnancy Status	Antenatal 1 <sup>st</sup> Child	197	60	23	59
	Postnatal 1 <sup>st</sup> Child	113	35	13	33
	Repeat Pregnancy	10	3	2	5
	Other	7	2	1	3
Level of Need	Hardiker 2	199	63	31	79
	Hardiker 3	97	31	5	13
	Hardiker 4	18	6	3	8
	Not Known*	13*			
Social Care History**	Yes	99	35	11	48
	No	180	65	12	52
	Not Known*	48*		16	
Education/Training Status	In Education/Training	112	37	22	61
	Not in Education/Training	187	63	14	39
	Not Known*	28*		3	
Highest Educational Attainment	3 <sup>rd</sup> Level/PLC	11	4	0	0
	Leaving Certificate	129	46	5	20
	Junior Certificate only	114	40	17	65
	No Certification	21	8	0	0
	Other	7	2	4	15
	Not known*	45		13	
Accommodation Type	Living in family home	181	59	19	51
	Living with other family member	19	6	4	10
	Own home	6	2	1	3
	Private rented accommodation	70	23	10	27
	Temporary accommodation	10	3	1	3
	Supported accommodation	12	4	1	3
	In care	11	3	1	3
	Not known*	18		2	
Background	Irish	273	85	34	87
	Irish Traveller	11	3	1	3
	African	8	3	1	3
	Eastern European	15	5	1	3
	UK	11	3	2	5
	Other	2	1	0	0
	Not known*	7		0	
Location	Urban	237	72	27	69
	Rural	90	28	12	31

\*Not known when data was collected.



The Chart above refers to 831 pregnant or parenting teens (750 mothers and 81 fathers) who either:

- engaged for the first time in 2012
- had engaged previously and needed to re-establish contact with TPSP in 2012 or
- were referred in previous years and were receiving ongoing support in 2012.

The Chart shows, in percentage terms, the main supports received by these young parents in 2012.

While most support was delivered on a one-to-one basis, where opportunities arise 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 2012, the TPSP liaised with other services on behalf of 79% of service users. For young mothers, in order of frequency, most contact took place with the following: educational settings (2<sup>nd</sup> level and 3<sup>rd</sup> level institutions, combined), HSE social workers, Department of Social Protection representatives, maternity services, Local Authorities, public health nurses, training organisations and youth services.

For young fathers, in order of frequency, most contact took place with the following: HSE social workers, training organisations, secondary schools and youth services.

The above Chart includes 193 young parents (187 mothers and 6 fathers) from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, including 18 mothers and 1 father who are Irish Travellers. These 193 young parents 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.

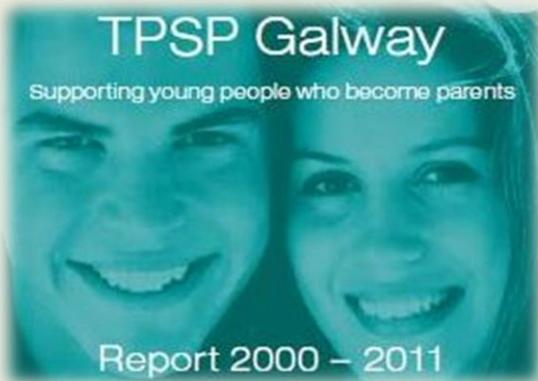
### Young parents whose contact with the TPSP ended in 2012

During 2012, a total of 409 service users ceased contact with the TPSP. These consisted of 362 young mothers, 35 fathers and 12 other family members. The following Table gives a short profile of the young mothers and fathers including their ages at time of referral, social care history at time of referral, levels of need at time of referral, levels of need when support ceased and the reasons why support ceased.

Characteristic	Category	Mothers (362)		Fathers (35)	
		No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Age at time of referral	15 years or under	24	7	3	8
	16 years	41	11	1	3
	17 years	96	27	6	17
	18 years	76	21	7	20
	19 years	85	23	9	26
	Over 19 years	40	11	9	26
Social Care History at time of referral	None	248	69	26	74
	Had HSE social worker	58	16	1	3
	Had HSE social worker previously	37	10	6	17
	Had other HSE family support	7	2	0	0
	In Care	9	2	0	0
	Previously in Care	2	0.06	2	6
	Had other social worker	1	0.03	0	0
Level of Need at time of referral	Hardiker 1	0	0	0	0
	Hardiker 2	194	54	22	63
	Hardiker 3	131	36	9	26
	Hardiker 4	37	10	4	11
Level of Need when support ceased	Hardiker 1	50	14	5	14
	Hardiker 2	214	59	24	69
	Hardiker 3	84	23	4	11
	Hardiker 4	10	3	2	1
Reasons support ceased	Needs were met	188	52	17	
	Child > 2 years of age	37	10	5	
	Referred to other support	23	6	1	
	Moved out of area	42	12	4	
	Parent ceased contact	64	18	5	
	Other	8	2	3	

#### Supporting former TPSP service users

In 2012 the TPSP staff working in Ballyfermot, Bluebell and Inchicore were in touch with a group of young mothers, who, although no longer actively involved with the TPSP, had maintained informal contact through the The Base Youth Centre in Ballyfermot where the TPSP is based. These young mothers were beginning to prepare their children for pre-school and primary school and said that they were struggling with this stage of parenting and would benefit from some support. TPSP staff approached the local HSE social work department and both parties agreed to jointly deliver *The Incredible Years* parenting programme with both former TPSP service users and other parents involved with HSE social work services. The parenting programme began with 14 participants, 12 of whom completed the programme. As part of feedback, all 12 participants said that the programme had a very positive impact on their role as mothers; that they felt more confident in their parenting role and more equipped to understand and manage challenging behaviour from their children. They all stated that they were spending more quality time with their child/ren and had also made some friendships for ongoing peer support.



In May 2012, TPSP Galway launched a Report entitled '*Supporting Young People who become Parents*' from 2000-2011. Staff from within both hospital and community services who worked with the TPSP Galway over the years attended the launch. Teenage parents who had availed of the service over the years also participated. The report highlighted the work of the Programme from the outset: its background, aims, philosophy, statistics, overall activities and interagency work. Since the Programme was set up, over 800 young

parents from Galway City and County have availed of the support provided by the programme. The Report is available at <http://www.tpsp.ie/galway>.

### **Supporting Young Fathers**

In late 2011, the TPSP in The Base in Ballyfermot researched the needs of young fathers in the Bluebell, Inchicore and Ballyfermot areas and what supports could be offered. One area identified was a need for a space for social support where young fathers could meet, share experiences and access support from TPSP services if required. They wanted a space where they could explore their identity and role as fathers while also understanding their needs as young men. A small 'Young Fathers Group' started in February 2012 in conjunction with Cherry Orchard Integrated Youth Service. The Group now has nine regular members and has a waiting list for 2013. Among its activities in 2012, the Group participated in weekly hill walks culminating in climbing Carrauntoohill. For 2013, they have identified the area of mental health as a theme to integrate into their programme.

### **Peer Support**

In Galway a group of young mothers, who had attended antenatal classes delivered by the Galway TPSP, identified a need for peer support following the births of their babies. In the summer of 2012, a Mother and Baby Group was set up to meet this need. The Group was located in a community room within a pre-school based in Knocknacarra. The group met weekly with inputs on areas such as First Aid, Weaning/Nutrition, Reading, and Dental Health. A child development programme called Peep was also provided. Peep is funded through the Galway City and County Childcare Committee and stands for Peers Early Education Partnership. It focuses on how to make the most of learning opportunities in everyday life at home such as listening, talking, playing, singing and sharing books. These sessions were evaluated with very positive feedback from the young mothers. The Group was very beneficial for peer support and for developing skills with play and learning.



## 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 2011/12 academic year, 8 of the 11 TPSPs received funding from the School Completion

Programme (SCP) of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. With this funding the TPSP targeted 416 young parents (391 mothers and 25 fathers) with education-related supports that could increase their prospects of remaining in or returning to education. Of those supported, 232 were in education, 184 were out of school, 92 were under 17 years of age, 8 were Irish Traveller students and 43 students were non-Irish nationals. Of the 184 who were initially out of school, 76 were supported to return to education or training. 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 2012, TPSP support ceased for 362 young mothers and 35 young fathers. The following table compares their highest educational attainment when they first engaged with the TPSP and when contact ceased in 2012.

Highest Educational Attainment	When they first engaged with the TPSP		When support ceased in 2012	
	Mothers (362)	Fathers (35)	Mothers (362)	Fathers (35)
Completed third level education	0	0	4	1
Completed PLC Course	10	0	19	2
Completed Leaving Certificate	110	5	179	19
Completed Junior Certificate only	168	19	112	10
No second level qualification	30	8	14	0
Other	5	1	14	1
Not known	39	2	20	2

### Easter Revision Course

In 2012, the Donegal TPSP, which is based in Foróige, facilitated an Easter Revision Course using funding from the School Completion Programme. The Course was organised in response to a need identified by six young mothers who were studying for their Leaving Certificate. The young parents highlighted that existing revision courses were very expensive and beyond their reach financially. They identified what subject/subjects they needed most support in and TPSP staff sourced teachers for the four main subject areas identified i.e. Maths, Geography, Biology and Irish. The Revision Course took place over four days from 10.00am – 4.00pm and was followed up with Saturday morning revision groups in chosen subjects. Both the Course and the Saturday groups proved to be an economical way of providing intensive revision as well as guidance and support from teachers. Feedback from both the young parents and the teachers stated that the small group setting was very comfortable for the students and a very effective way of learning. Of the six young parents who engaged in the revision groups:

- 3 have taken a year out with plans to return to further education in 2013
- 1 is in a FÁS course
- 1 went on to study nursing
- 1 went on to study beauty therapy in a 3<sup>rd</sup> Level college.

# THE TPSP TOOLKIT

A RESOURCE FOR WORKING  
WITH PREGNANT AND  
PARENTING TEENAGERS

In 2012, the Teen Parents Support Programme (TPSP) received funding from the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme to develop a Toolkit for those working with pregnant and parenting teens in Ireland. Within TPSP projects, staff come from a wide variety of professional backgrounds and they had identified a need for a common resource that would combine their knowledge, skills and experience.

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.

Modules include areas such as caring for self and the baby, parenting skills, child development, managing changing relationships, sharing the family home, living independently and returning to education or training. The Toolkit will provide all TPSP staff with a common approach to service delivery based on best practice. In addition, following some training, it will be made available to staff in other agencies who have contact with teen parents either in the context of pregnancy or in other work-related contexts.

During 2012 development of the Toolkit involved extensive consultation with teen parents, their families and those working with them in various capacities as well as the development of draft content. For further information visit [www.tpsp.ie](http://www.tpsp.ie)



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