



The Teen Parents Support Programme Summary of Work 2011

Introduction The Teen Parents Support Programme (TPSP) consists, nationally, of eleven separate projects funded by the HSE. They are located throughout the country in a variety of hospital and community based settings and managed by a range of statutory, community and voluntary organisations (See TPSP contact details). The TPSP was originally established in 2000 by the Department of Health and Children, in recognition of the fact that young parents and their children are a particularly vulnerable subgroup within families and benefit from additional supports targeted at their specific needs. During 2011 a total of 1,354 young parents, their children and families had access to support from the TPSP. This brings to 4,117 the number of young parents, who, together with their children, partners and families, have received a service from the TPSP since it was established in 2000. One of the aspirations of the TPSP is that eventually all teen parents in Ireland will have access to this service.

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 – health, relationships, parenting, education, training, child development, 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 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 2011, 104 young parents who presented to the TPSP for the first time had needs located at Hardiker Level 3 and 17 others had needs located at Hardiker Level 4. Two other family members closely involved with the young parents and with needs at Level 4 were also supported.

Teen Births 2001-2011

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

Year	Number of Births	Fertility Rate*
2001	3095	19.9
2002	2978	19.4
2003	2802	19.0
2004	2560	17.4
2005	2427	16.8
2006	2362	16.6
2007	2464	17.5
2008	2426	17.0
2009	2223	16.3
2010	2019	15.0
2011	1720	12.5

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

In 2011, the fertility rate for Irish teen parents was at its lowest since 1964 when it was 13.1. It is still relatively high, however, compared to the rest of western Europe, with the exception of the UK.

In 2011, the number of births decreased by 15% compared to 2010 with a decrease of 44% over the last decade. In 2011, the majority (77%) of teenagers giving birth were aged 18 and 19 years while 2% of teen births were to mothers aged 15 years or under. Of the 1,720 teen mothers who gave birth in 2011, 29% were married or living at the same address as the father at the time of registering the birth. This figure is slightly higher (32%) for 18 and 19 year olds combined. *Sources: CSO Vital Statistics.*

Referrals to TPSP

During 2011, a total of 1,354 young parents, their children and families had access to support from the TPSP. These include 425 new service users, 404 service users whose contact with the TPSP ended in 2011 and 525 others whose engagement with the TPSP started in previous years and continued into 2012.

During 2011, there were 455 new referrals to the TPSP. These consisted of 385 mothers, 45 fathers who engaged separately from the mother of their child, 18 grandmothers and 7 others. In December 2011, however, 30 of these new referrals were on a waiting list for service leaving 425 who had received support during the year i.e. 356 mothers, 44 fathers and 25 others. In addition, in 2011, the TPSP had some contact with 146 other young parents (including 114 fathers) as a result of the mother/father of their child engaging with the Programme. While 2% of teen births in 2011 were to mothers aged 15 years or under, 4 % of all referrals to the TPSP were in this age group.

The table, over, presents a profile of the 356 young mothers and 44 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 difference in the number of mothers and fathers who engaged with the TPSP.

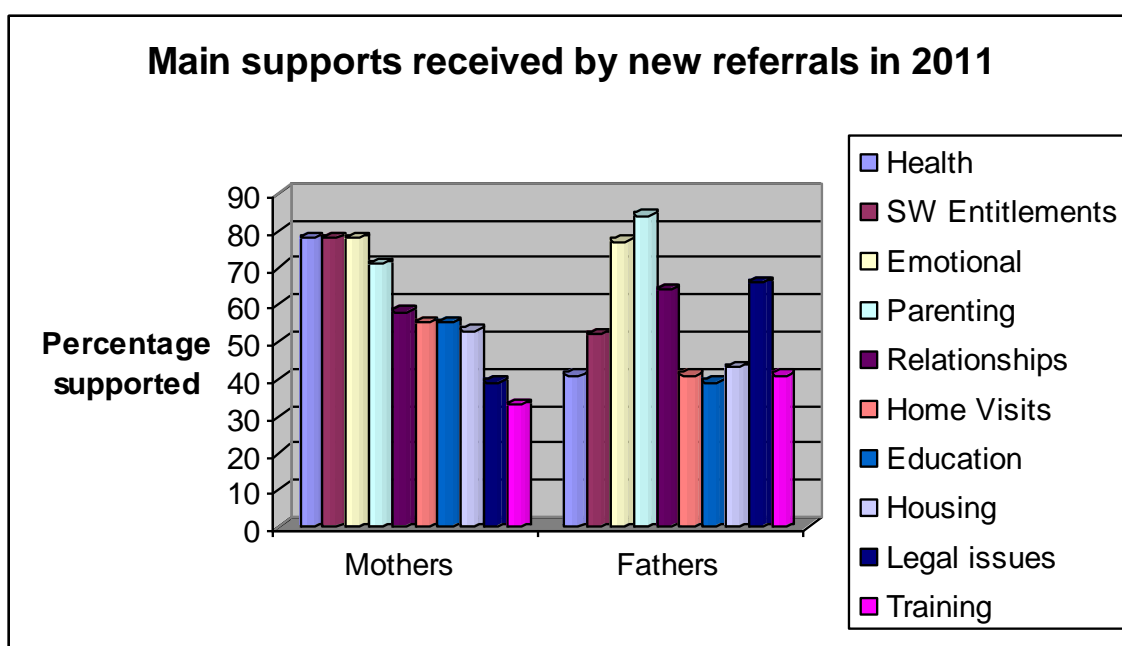
Profile of young parents at time of referral to TPSP in 2011

Percentages are based on known data.

Characteristic	Category	Mothers (356)		Fathers (44)	
		No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Age	15 or under	15	4	2	5
	16	41	12	4	9
	17	88	25	7	16
	18	87	24	9	20
	19	86	24	11	25
	Over 19	39	11	11	25
Pregnancy Status	Antenatal 1 st Child	261	74	26	59
	Postnatal 1 st Child	83	23	16	30
	Repeat Pregnancy	8	2	3	7
	Other	2	1	2	4
	Not Known*	2		0	
Level of Need	Hardiker 2	248	70	34	77
	Hardiker 3	89	25	9	21
	Hardiker 4	16	5	1	2
	Not Known*	3		0	
Social Care History	Yes	99	35	11	39
	No	182	65	17	61
	Not Known*	98		16	
Education/Training Status	In Education/Training	154	48	21	49
	Not in Educ/Training	170	52	22	51
	Not Known*	32		1	
Highest Educational Attainment	PLC	3	1	0	0
	Leaving Certificate	108	37	7	20
	Junior Certificate only	159	55	25	69
	No Certification	15	5	3	8
	Other	7	2	1	3
	Not known*	64		8	
Accommodation Type	Family Home	224	67	34	79
	Own Home	11	3	1	2
	Private Rented	53	15	5	12
	Temporary	33	10	3	7
	In Care	12	4	0	0
	Other	2	1	0	0
	Not known*	21		1	
Background	Irish	293	84	43	98
	Irish Traveller	17	5	0	6
	African	10	3	0	0
	Eastern European	22	6	0	
	Other European	3	1	1	2
	Other	5	1	0	0
	Not known*	6		0	
Location	Urban	258	73	34	77
	Rural	98	27	10	23

*Not known when data was collected.

Support to New Referrals in 2011



This Chart shows the main supports received by young mothers and fathers who engaged with the TPSP for the first time in 2011. While most support is delivered on a one-to-one basis, where opportunities arise, TPSP staff run 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 the 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 2011, the TPSP liaised with other services on behalf of 71% of the young mothers and 75% of young fathers who were referred to it.

For young mothers, in order of frequency, most contact took place with the following: HSE social workers, secondary schools, community welfare officers, maternity services, public health nurses, local authorities, training organisations and youth services.

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

During 2011, a total of 57 young parents from a variety of ethnic backgrounds (including 17 who are Irish Travellers) accessed TPSP support for the first time. This group 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).

Some TPSP Group Work during 2011



Some participants and their children from City Slickers Group run by the Limerick TPSP in 2011.

The Limerick TPSP continued to run **City Slickers Groups** during 2011. City Slickers is a personal development and parenting programme funded by the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme (CPP) and independently evaluated by Framework Research. This year, there were 23 participants in total starting with 8 young mothers who attended from October 2010 until February 2011. With further funding from the CPP, City Slickers re-commenced in October 2011 with 15 first time young mothers ranging in age from 16 to 20 years. For these 15 young people, this was the first experience of attending such a group.

TPSP staff constantly review the content of City Slickers. In 2011, there were inputs from Limerick Social Services' Parents Support Programme (Lifelong Parenting Information and Support), HSE West Health Promotion, St. Munchin's Maternity Hospital, HSE West Community Dietician and the HSE West Relationships and Sexual Health Programme. There were also workshops on Kindergym, Emotional Health and Intelligence and Music for Parents and Children. In 2011, new activities and topics delivered to this group included Play Therapy and Baby Massage as well as an input on Contraception and Sexual Health hosted by the Family Planning Clinic, Limerick.

During the summer of 2011 staff in Finglas TPSP met with the managers of the two Youth Services in the area (The Den CYC and FYRC) to explore the establishment of a **Young Fathers Group** in Finglas. The idea for this had come from young fathers themselves. They had been attending the TPSP Parent and Child Drop-In Service but wanted their own group similar to the TPSP's Yummy Mummies Group. There was no peer support group available to young fathers in the area. Both Youth Services agreed to collaborate to establish a 'pilot' Young Fathers Group. It was decided to start with facilitating the Father Focus Programme developed by Louth TPSP in order to establish the need for such a service and the level of engagement from fathers. Six young fathers took part in this Programme and engaged fully. The Programme began on November 10th and finished on December 15th with a small Christmas celebration where the fathers brought their children along.

Four of these young fathers were already linked to the TPSP and two were new referrals from The Den CYC. These latter two fathers had never engaged successfully in a group setting before and participated in all 6 weeks of this programme. The fathers have requested the continuation of this group so the 3 services (The Den CYC, FYRC and TPSP) will meet in early 2012 to discuss and plan this

In Galway a group of young mothers, who had attended the antenatal classes delivered by TPSP staff, identified a need for a peer support group following the births. This group of young parents lived mainly on the Westside area of Galway. A **Mother and Baby Group** was set up in response to this need. The group met weekly in a local hotel and various health professionals facilitated sessions on topics such as First Aid for babies, nutrition and weaning, reading for children, and dental health. These were well received and evaluated with very positive feedback from the young mothers. The group will continue to meet in 2012

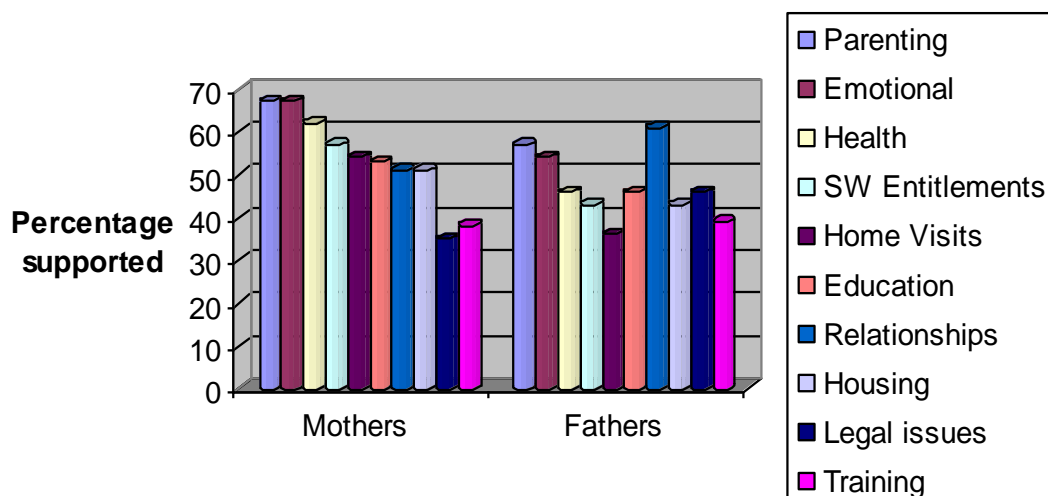
Young parents whose contact with the TPSP ended in 2011

During 2011, a total of 404 service users ceased contact with the TPSP. These consisted of 357 young mothers, 28 fathers, 15 grandmothers and 4 others. The following profile includes the reasons why contact ended. Percentages are based on known data.

Characteristic	Category	Mothers (357)		Fathers (28)	
		No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Reason contact ceased	Needs were met	114	32	6	21
	Child > 2 years of age	40	11	3	11
	Referred to other support	16	5	2	7
	Moved out of area	43	12	5	18
	Parents ceased contact	65	18	6	22
	Did not avail of service	69	19	4	14
	Other	10	3	2	7
Pregnancy Status	Antenatal 1 st Child	53	15	4	15
	Postnatal 1 st Child	251	71	17	63
	Repeat Pregnancy	43	12	4	15
	Other	7	2	2	7
	Not Known*	3		1	
Level of Need	Hardiker 1	13	13	2	7
	Hardiker 2	226	64	16	57
	Hardiker 3	86	25	6	21
	Hardiker 4	26	7	4	15
	Not Known*	6			
Social Care History	Yes	105	35	11	48
	No	193	65	12	52
	Not Known*	59		5	
Education/Training Status	In Education/Training	130	40	12	49
	Not in Educ/Training	192	60	13	51
	Not Known*	35		3	
Highest Educational Attainment	Completed 3 rd Level	4	2	0	0
	PLC	32	12	0	0
	Leaving Certificate	115	42	8	35
	Junior Certificate only	95	34	6	26
	No Certification	23	8	9	39
	Other	6	2	0	0
	Not known*	82		5	
Accommodation Type	Family Home	155	46	14	50
	Own Home	14	4	1	3
	Private Rented	127	38	8	29
	Temporary	29	9	2	7
	In Care	6	2	0	0
	Other	3	1	3	11
	Not known*	23			
Background	Irish	286	81	25	89
	Irish Traveller	11	3	1	4
	African	17	5	0	0
	Eastern European	22	6	2	7
	Other European	9	3	0	
	Other	7	2	0	
	Not known*	5			
Location	Urban	266	75	22	79
	Rural	91	25	6	21

* Not known when data was collected

Main supports received in 2011 by parents whose contact with the TPSP ceased.



Compared to new referrals, this chart shows that the need for support in some areas of their lives declined as parents came to the end of their involvement with the TPSP. Nonetheless, over 50% of mothers were still accessing support in relation to parenting as well as support in relation to their health, including their emotional health. Over 50% of fathers were also getting help in these areas. The main need of fathers at this time, however, appears to relate to managing the relationship with the mothers of their children with 60% getting support with relationships and over 40% getting support in relation to legal issues such as guardianship and access to their children. Overall, the chart suggests that many young parents need ongoing support which the TPSP does not have the resources to continue to provide.

As far as possible, TPSP staff endeavour to link young parents with other supports before contact with them ends.

In 2011, the TPSP liaised with other services on behalf of 66% of young mothers and 75% of young fathers whose contact with the TPSP ended during the year. The pattern of contact was similar to that for new referrals. For mothers, in order of frequency, most contact took place with the following: HSE social workers, community welfare officers, secondary schools, local authorities, maternity services and third level educational institutions.

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

During 2011 the TPSP ceased to have contact with 3 young fathers who are non-Irish nationals. During the year they had received support in relation to social isolation, accessing services and communicating through English.

In 2011 the Finglas TPSP, in conjunction with local HSE Family Support Services, identified a need for a peer support group for young parents in Finglas, aged 25 years and under as well as a need for continued support for those young parents whose time with the TPSP was coming to an end. The HSE Family Support Team and TPSP staff worked together to establish a new **Moving On Group** for these older parents who had expressed an interest in continuing to get peer support. During 2011 the Moving On Group met in St. Helena's Family Resource Centre on Wednesday afternoons, 2-4pm and was facilitated by HSE Family Support staff. They combined with TPSP-led groups (such as the Yummy Mummies group) for family based activities such as family outings and parties. TPSP and HSE Family Support staff continue to collaborate regularly on these two groups, combining resources and expertise.

Young Parents and Education/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 to provide economic security for their families in the future.

During the 2010/11 academic year, 8 of the 11 TPSPs received various levels of funding, amounting to €280,236 in total, from the School Completion Programme (SCP) of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. With this funding the TPSP targeted 433 young parents (415 mothers and 18 fathers) with education-related supports that would increase their prospects of remaining in or returning to education. Of those supported, 211 were in education, 222 were out of school, 133 were under 17 years of age, 5 were Irish Traveller students and 66 were international students.

In addition all of the young parents who were postnatal and known to have a child care need received information and support in relation to accessing childcare which would enable them complete their education.

In 2011, the Donegal TPSP developed a **Peer Education Programme** in response to a need identified by young parents some of whom were in their Leaving Certificate year and others of whom were out of education for varying lengths of time. The Programme was funded by The Ireland Funds.

Initially, TPSP staff engaged with young parents who were currently in 3rd level education, professionals who were working mothers and business people who had experienced a teen pregnancy.

They also consulted with various educational institutions regarding college courses and supports and services for those wishing to return to education.

The Peer Education Programme began with team building activities in Gartan Outdoor Education Centre. This was followed by self-assessment workshops and career coaching on an individual basis.

Teen parents were matched up with a mentor who was currently in education participating in the course of their choice so that they could explore the reality of juggling college work and being a parent. Among other activities:

TPSP Project staff facilitated workshops on interview skills and applying for courses.

The Citizens Information Service delivered an information session for grandparents and teen parents on how to access funding and maintenance grants.

Joanne Sweeney Burke (TV3 The Apprentice 2011 Finalist) came in to share her experience of being a teen parent, going to college with a baby and establishing her own business.

Other professionals such as teachers, social workers and nurses offered their experiences of balancing careers, childcare and family life.

The Programme has been a huge success with 7 young parents who had been out of education long-term returning to complete their Leaving Certificate and another 8 teen parents completing their Leaving Certificate with the intention of going on to Further Education.

Niamh

Niamh was 16 years old and in 5th year at secondary school. She concealed her pregnancy to 30 week's gestation. Her parents brought her to their GP where a referral was made to the Maternity Department of University College Hospital Galway. Here she met with the Maternity Social Worker who carried out an underage assessment with Niamh. Niamh's parents were a significant support to their daughter and were determined that she would complete her second level education.

The Medical Social Worker referred Niamh to the TPSP for antenatal classes, information and advocacy. After Niamh delivered her baby, the TPSP arranged Home Tuition between her Secondary School and the Dept of Education and Science. This allowed Niamh to continue her education and not fall behind her peers academically.

Her parents supported her with childcare as she attended class. The following September she commenced her final year in secondary school. Her mother continued to provide childcare during school hours, allowing Niamh to finish her second level education. TPSP provided some financial support with childcare and advocated on Niamh's behalf with the school, social welfare claims and grinds for subjects she was struggling with. Niamh successfully completed her Leaving Certificate.

She didn't get her first choice on the CAO but by previously meeting with the TPSP and the school Career Guidance Counsellor she realized that there was an alternative route to reaching her academic goals.

Niamh has now finished first year in NUIG where she completed an Access course. Her son is now 3 years old. She has achieved what she set out to do academically, primarily with the support of her parents and secondly through the support of the TPSP and the TPSP's communication with other agencies.

(Name has been changed to preserve confidentiality)

Taken from TPSP Galway:

Supporting Young People who become Parents from 2000 –2011

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