



The Teen Parents Support Programme Summary of Work 2010

The Teen Parents Support Programme (TPSP) supports young people who become parents when they are aged 19 years or under and generally supports them until their child is 2 years of age. Support is offered in all areas of the young person's life – health, relationships, parenting, childcare, accommodation, social welfare entitlements, education, training and any other areas about which the young person is concerned. Grandparents and other family members involved with the young parents may also be supported. Support is provided on a one to one basis, through group activities and through referral to other services. Engagement with the TPSP is voluntary.

There are 11 TPSPs throughout the country based in employing organisations from either the statutory or voluntary sector. Nationally, the TPSP structure consists of a National Co-ordinator who is based in Treoir and a National Advisory Committee which consists of representatives from TPSP staff and employers, relevant government departments and the HSE.

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

In 2010 the TPSP received €1,782,204 in HSE funding.

A total of 3,692 young parents, together with their children, partners and families, have received a service from the TPSP since it was established in 2000.

During 2010 a total of 1,340 young parents, their children and families had access to support from the TPSP. This includes:

- 401 new service users (367 mothers, 32 fathers who engaged separately from the mother of their child and 2 others) (See Table 1, over).
- 18 young parents who re-engaged with the TPSP having ceased contact previously and
- 921 who engaged in previous years and had access to ongoing support during 2010.

In addition to the above, in 2010, the TPSP had some contact for the first time with 125 other young parents (including 100 fathers) as a result of the mother/father of their child engaging with the Programme.

During 2010, a total of 462 service users (397 mothers, 34 fathers and 31 others) ceased contact with the TPSP in 2010 for a variety of reasons. This includes 50 young parents who first made contact in 2010. (See Table 2, over).

“The kinds of difficulties in teenage parenting centre around two things happening at the same time. That is the teenager’s own development in adolescence combined with becoming a mother or father. They are the two things that are going on and the coping mechanisms for these are key”.

Professor Pat Dolan, Director of the Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway.

Quotes used in this Summary are taken from speakers at the TPSP 10th Anniversary Conference, December 2010

Table 1: Profile of young parents when they first engaged with the TPSP in 2010

Care must be taken when comparing percentages in Tables 1 and 2 in this Summary due to the difference in the number of mothers and fathers. Percentages in Tables are calculated on known data.

Characteristic	Category	Mothers (367)		Fathers (32)	
		No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Age	15 or under	24	7	1	3
	16	37	10	3	9
	17	91	25	9	28
	18	97	26	8	25
	19	87	24	4	13
	Over 19	31	8	7	22
Pregnancy Status	Antenatal 1 st Child	244	68	21	66
	Postnatal 1 st Child	110	30	9	28
	Repeat Pregnancy	8	2	1	3
	Other			1	3
	Not known*	3			
Level of Need	Hardiker 2	232	64	21	66
	Hardiker 3	109	30	7	22
	Hardiker 4	20	6	4	12
	Not known*	6		0	0
Social Care History**	Yes	101	32	9	37
	No	214	68	15	63
	Not Known	52		8	
Education/Training Status	In Education/Training	161	47	17	57
	Not in Educ/Training	179	53	13	43
	Not Known*	27		2	
Highest Educational Attainment	Leaving Certificate	101	35	6	24
	PLC	10	3	0	0
	Junior Certificate only	147	50	13	52
	No Certification	30	10	6	24
	Other	6	2	1	0
	Not known***	73			
Accommodation Type	Family Home	244	68	22	69
	Own Home	5	1	0	0
	Private Rented	51	14	5	16
	Temporary	27	8	4	12
	In Care	10	3	0	0
	Other	21	6	1	3
	Not known*	9		0	0
Place of Origin	Irish	301	82	29	91
	Irish Traveller	13	4	2	6
	African	21	6	0	0
	Eastern European	15	4	1	3
	Other European	7	2	0	0
	Other	7	2	0	0
	Not known***	3		0	
Location in Ireland	Rural	105	29	10	31
	Urban	262	71	22	69

*Not known when data was collected

** 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.

*** 'Not known' for highest educational attainment generally refers to non-Irish parents.

Teen Births 2000-2010

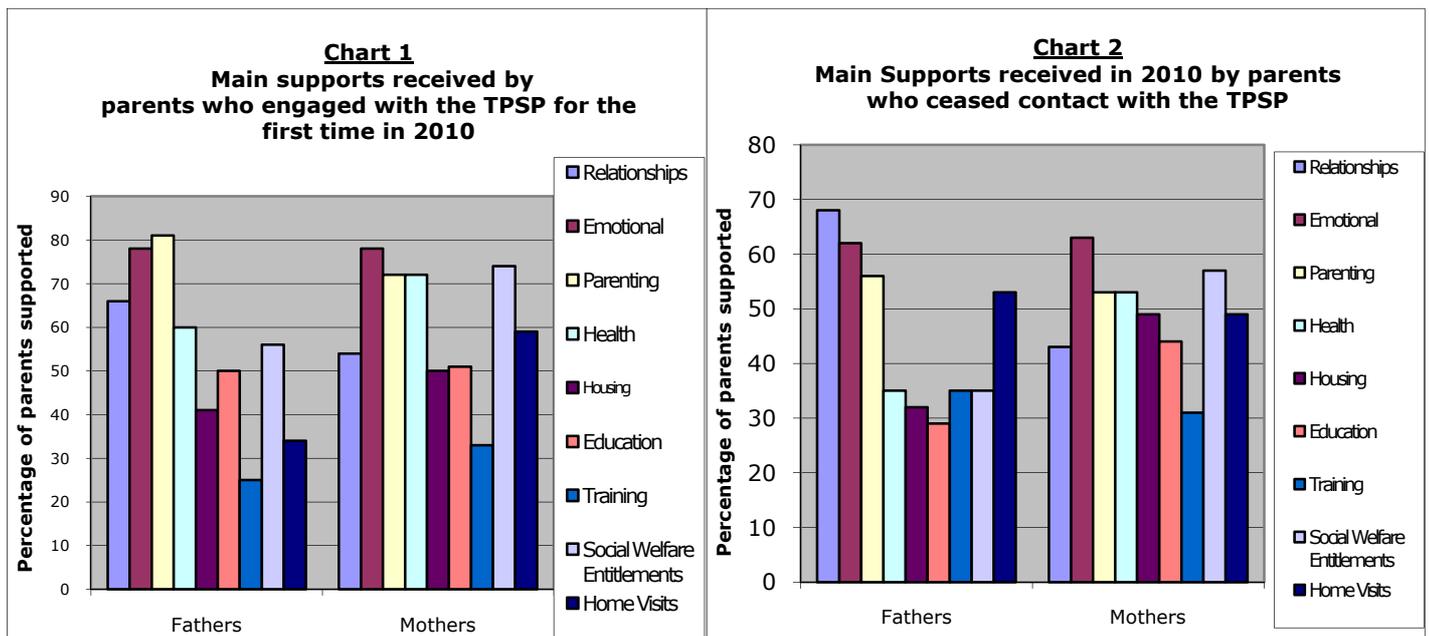
Number of Births and Fertility Rates for Women under 20 Years of Age

Year	Number of Births	Fertility Rate*
2000	3135	19.3
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

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

In 2010 the number of births to teen parents decreased by 9% compared to 2009. This represents a decrease of 35% in teen births over the past decade. In 2010 the majority of teenagers (76%) who gave birth were aged 18 and 19 years while 44 mothers (2%) were aged 15 years or under. Of these 44 young mothers, 24 of them were referred for support to the TPSP. CSO data shows that 28% of all teen mothers were married or living at the same address as the father of their child at the time of registering the birth. This figure is slightly higher (33%) for 18 and 19 year olds combined.

Source: CSO Vital Statistics Yearly Summary 2010.



In addition to the supports listed in Charts 1 and 2, during 2010 TPSP staff liaised with a wide variety of agencies on behalf of 74% of the young parents. Most contact took place with Community Welfare Officers, HSE social workers, secondary schools, maternity services and training organisations. In 2010, a total of 68 young parents from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. (including 13 Irish Travellers) accessed support for the first time and 63 (93%) of them received support with issues such as understanding Irish birth and parenting practices, support with the English language and support with dual cultural issues where the parents of the child are from different ethnic backgrounds.

Chart 2 shows that the level of support in some areas declined as parents came to the end of their involvement with the TPSP. It also suggests, however, that many young mothers and fathers need ongoing support which the TPSP is not in a position to continue to provide.

Table 2: Profile of young parents when they ceased contact with the TPSP in 2010

Characteristic	Category	Mothers (397)		Fathers (34)	
		No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Reason contact ceased	Needs were met	136	34	7	38
	Child >2 years of age	43	12	1	3
	Referred to other support	33	8	2	3
	Moved out of area	53	13	7	21
	Parent ceased contact	88	22	13	21
	Did not avail of service	41	10	1	8
	Other	3	1	3	6
Pregnancy Status	Antenatal 1 st Child	33	8	6	18
	Postnatal 1 st Child	313	79	26	76
	Repeat Pregnancy	46	12	2	6
	Other	5	1	0	0
Level of Need	Hardiker 1	23	5	4	12
	Hardiker 2	268	68	22	65
	Hardiker 3	76	20	8	23
	Hardiker 4	26	6	0	0
	Other and Not known*	4	1	0	0
Social Care History	Yes	125	38	6	23
	No	203	62	20	77
	Not Known*	69		8	
Education/Training Status	In Education/Training	258	71	12	43
	Not in Educ/Training	105	29	16	57
	Not Known*	34		6	0
Highest Educational Attainment	Completed 3 rd Level	6	2	0	0
	Leaving Certificate	116	35	7	22
	PLC	38	11	3	10
	Junior Certificate only	115	34	15	49
	No Certification	42	12	5	16
	Other	20	6	1	3
Accommodation Type	Family Home	134	35	18	55
	Own Home	19	5	0	0
	Private Rented	175	47	8	24
	Temporary	18	5	2	6
	In Care	11	3	0	0
	Other	19	5	6	15
	Not known*	21		1	
Place of Origin	Irish	336	85	30	88
	Irish Traveller	9	2	2	6
	African	23	6	0	0
	Eastern European	12	3	1	3
	Other European	10	3	1	3
	Other	4	1	0	0
	Not known*	3			
Location in Ireland	Rural	108	27	4	12
	Urban	289	73	30	88

*Not known when data was collected

** 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.

Young Parents, Education, Training and Childcare

As well as supporting them in their parenting role, the TPSP encourages young parents to complete their education, if that is their choice, so as to ensure quality of opportunity for themselves and their children in the future.

During the 2010/11 academic year, 8 of the 11 TPSPs received a total of €280,236 from the School Completion Programme (SCP) of the Department of Education and Skills. This funding was used to support young parents with education related expenses such as childcare, grinds, books, transport and uniforms.

Of the 161 parents who were known to be in education or training when they first engaged with the TPSP in 2010, 93 (58%) were in secondary school, 30 (19%) were in PLCs and Third Level Education and 38 (24%) were in various forms of training.

Availability to affordable childcare is crucial to having a choice regarding continuing education. An examination of those who were postnatal when they ceased contact with the TPSP in 2010 shows that 187 of them needed childcare and for 46 (28%) of them this need was not met. The type of childcare used was known for 139 mothers, 64 (46%) of whom had access to a community crèche, 48 (35%) used family members, mainly the child's maternal grandmother, 16 (12%) used a private crèche and the remainder had a variety of other childcare arrangements. The level of access to community crèches is likely to be related to the fact that children are older when their parents cease contact with the TPSP and parents can therefore access crèche places more easily.

On the other hand, 60% of mothers who first contacted the TPSP in 2010 and were postnatal at that time, reported an unmet childcare need and 58% of those who had childcare depended for it on the child's maternal grandmother.

TPSP 10th Anniversary Conference

The TPSP celebrated its 10th Anniversary in December 2010 with a Conference in NUI Galway entitled *Supporting Teen Parents and their Families: Learning from the experience of the TPSP*.

Speakers included Professor Pat Dolan, Director of the Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway, Alison Loughlin, Director, Parenting Forum, Northern Ireland and young parents who availed of the TPSP in the past. TPSP staff presented a variety of Workshops which enabled them to share their accumulated expertise with others who have contact with young parents.

The *Conference Proceedings* are available from Margaret Morris tpsp@treoir.ie or on the Young Parents section of www.treoir.ie



(L to R) Aileen Davies, Imelda Ryan and Monica Meaney, staff of the Galway TPSP at the TPSP 10th Anniversary Conference, December 2010

“We saw the potential that this Programme could offer for our daughter to realise her ambition to finish her college education and become self-reliant. We have seen our daughter become more confident as a person and we in turn gained confidence in her ability to manage her future”. Grandparent

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“Although I parent my daughter alone, I believed that it was extremely important for my daughter to have contact with both of her parents. The TPSP helped me to arrange access and although her father has minor involvement with the TPSP, I believe their support with the access helped them [father and daughter] to build a relationship together”.

Young Mother