



## **The Teen Parents Support Programme Summary of Work 2009**

**Introduction** The Teen Parents Support Programme (TPSP) works with young people who become parents when they are aged 19 years or under and, in general, 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, child development, childcare, accommodation, social welfare entitlements, education, training, and anything else 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.

There are 11 TPSPs throughout the country each based in an employing organisation 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 provides a forum for information sharing and interagency collaboration.

The main aim of the Teen Parents Support Programme is to provide services to enhance and support the wellbeing of young parents and their children, empower young parents in their parenting role and ensure equality of opportunity.

**In 2009 the TPSP received €1,834,295  
in HSE funding.**

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*“TPSP staff are cited by parents and grandparents as being always available, always welcoming and always ready to listen and to provide information, find information or to refer families to a source of information or support”.*

***Quotes used in this Summary are taken from the Evaluation Report of the  
Carlow/Kilkenny TPSP***

## Teen Births 2000-2009

### 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

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

In 2009 the number of births to teen parents was at its lowest since the year 2000 having decreased by 8% compared to 2008. The majority of teenagers giving birth were aged 18 and 19 years (75%) while 2% of teen births were to mothers aged 15 years or under. , Of the 2,223 teen mothers who gave birth in 2009, 32% were married or living at the same address as the father at the time of registering the birth. This figure is slightly higher (35%) for 18 and 19 year olds combined.

*Sources: CSO Vital Statistics.*

## Referrals to TPSP

In 2009, 485 new service users engaged with the TPSP. These included:

- 441 young mothers, 8 of whom were supported as a unit with their partner and 13 of whom were supported jointly with their mother
- 35 young fathers supported separately from the mother of their child
- 7 maternal grandmothers who were also supported independently of the mother
- 2 others.

This does not take into account young fathers who had contact with the TPSP as a result of the mothers of their children being engaged with the Programme.

The above brings to 3,291 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.

The table, over, presents a profile of the 441 young mothers and 35 fathers at the point when they first engaged with the TPSP. For the purpose of this report 'social care history' refers to current or previous engagement with HSE Family Support Services including young people currently or previously in care.

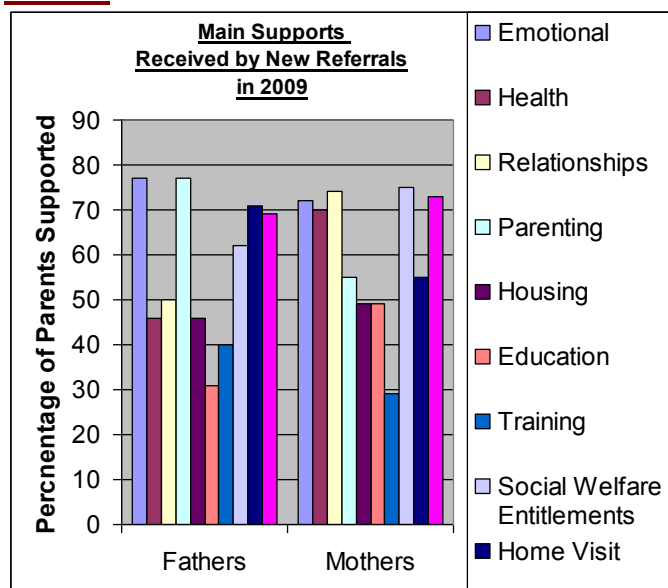
Care must be taken when interpreting the tables in this Summary due to the difference in the number of mothers and fathers who engaged with the TPSP.

## Profile of young parents at time of referral to TPSP in 2009

Characteristic	Category	Mothers (441)		Fathers (35)	
		No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Age	15 or under	17	4	3	9
	16	76	17	3	9
	17	103	23	6	17
	18	99	22	5	14
	19	95	21	7	20
	Over 19	43	10	10	28
	Not known*	8	2	1	3
Pregnancy Status	Antenatal 1 <sup>st</sup> Child	296	67	15	43
	Postnatal 1 <sup>st</sup> Child	131	30	16	46
	Repeat Pregnancy	14	3	3	9
	Other	0	0	1	2
Level of Need	High	155	35	9	26
	Medium	175	40	13	37
	Low	95	22	13	37
	Inactive	16	3	0	0
Social Care History	Yes	116	26	7	20
	No	227	52	21	60
	Not Known*	98	22	7	20
Education/Training Status	In Education/Training	166	38	16	46
	Not in Educ/Training	245	56	16	46
	Not Known*	30	6	3	8
Highest Educational Attainment	Leaving Certificate	100	23	4	11
	PLC	11	2	2	6
	Junior Certificate only	176	40	15	43
	No Certification	40	9	8	23
	Other	10	2	1	3
	Not known*	104	23	5	14
Accommodation Type	Family	303	69	28	80
	Own Home	7	2	0	0
	Private Rented	67	15	4	11
	Temporary	29	6	3	9
	In Care	11	2	0	0
	Other	11	2	0	0
	Not known*	13	3	0	0
Place of origin	Irish	352	80	29	83
	Irish Traveller	13	3	2	6
	African	16	4	0	0
	Eastern European	28	6	3	8
	Other European	9	2	1	3
	Other	13	3	0	0
	Not known*	10	2	0	0
Location	Rural	328	74	5	14
	Urban	113	26	30	86

\* Not known when data was collected

**Chart 1**



As well as the supports listed in Chart 1, all of the young parents who were postnatal and known to have a childcare need received information and support in relation to accessing childcare. TPSP staff also liaised with a wide variety of other agencies on behalf of 72% of the young parents.

*[The TPSP staff] “were easy to talk to. You’re not holding back. They’re brilliant”*

-Young Father

In addition to working with the 485 new parents and their families who engaged with the TPSP in 2009, TPSP staff continued to provide ongoing support to 946 others. These included:

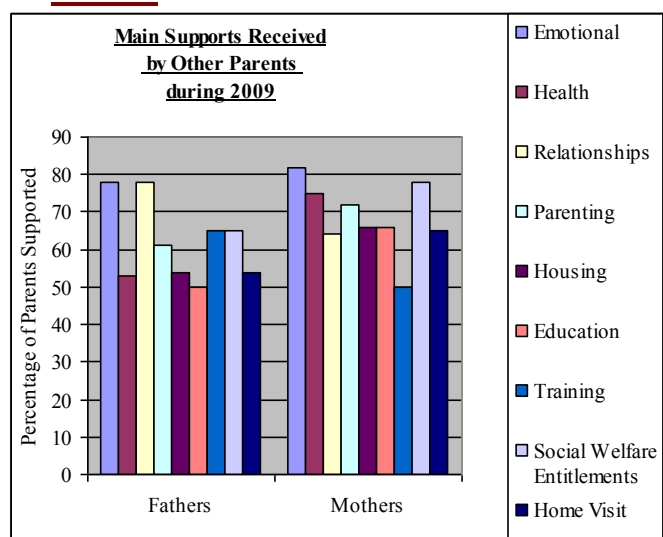
- 871 young mothers, 27 of whom were supported as a unit with their partner and 68 of whom were supported jointly with their mother
- 54 young fathers supported separately from the mother of their child
- 18 maternal grandmothers who were also supported independently of the mother
- 3 others.

Chart 2, refers to supports received by the 871 young mothers and 54 young fathers, above.

**Chart 2**

*“I owe a lot of my peace of mind to [TPSP staff], for their time, patience, work and above all the attention they gave to my daughter and her child”.*

- Grandmother



## Young Parents and Education / Training

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 2009/10 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 money was used to support 303 young mothers and 4 young fathers with education-related expenses such as childcare, grinds, books, transport and uniforms. Ninety six young parents received more than one form of support. A number of young mothers also participated in education-related group activities such as an Easter Revision Course organised by the TPSP. These 307 recipients represent 54% of all TPSP service users who were in education/training.

During 2009, the TPSP engaged with 348 service users who were postnatal and in education. Of these, 144 (41%) received a contribution towards childcare through the SCP. This funding, while insufficient, is indispensable in supporting young parents to remain in or return to education.

In 2009, forty nine mothers, who engaged with the TPSP, availed of the Home Tuition Scheme funded by the Department of Education & Skills.



*“When [Project Worker] called out to me she wasn’t watching what I was doing, didn’t tell me what to do.”*  
-Young Mother

Pictured at the Launch of the Louth TPSP’s *Father Focus Project* (L-R) Fiona Larthwell, Administration Manager, Crisis Pregnancy Agency, Colin Fowler, Men's Health Forum in Ireland, Fiona Kearney, Family Support & Child Welfare Services, HSE Louth Primary, Community and Continuing Care (PCCC), Joanne Murphy, Programme Leader, Teen Parents Support Programme and Jim McGuigan, Child Care Manager, HSE Louth PCCC.

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