



teenparents
support programme

Young Parenthood - facts and challenges

An analysis of the users of the Teen Parents Support Programme 2005 – 2008

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FOREWARD

The Teen Parents Support Programme was established to offer a targeted, enabling and flexible resource to teenagers in the vulnerable position of pregnancy. Research and, indeed, common sense suggests the dimensions of that vulnerability and the types of support that are likely to be necessary and valuable.

Policy makers and programme managers can be vulnerable to assumptions and received wisdom that may not reflect reality. Hence the need for good information systems that capture the reality of the lives of those who access our services and analysis of data in ways that are meaningful and relevant. The value of this effort is clear from the wealth of information provided in this Report on those who used the services of the Teen Parents Support Programme between 2005 and 2008.

Margaret Morris, National Co-ordinator of the Teen Parents Support Programme, is careful to stress that these results are not necessarily representative of teen parents in Ireland as a whole. Nevertheless, they are extremely important findings which are significant not only for the TPSP but for all who are concerned about the health and well being of our young people. The results reveal the variety of factors and needs which impact on those who access our services, underlining the importance of the flexible and needs-led model that guides the TPSP. The capacity to offer flexible, personalized support - including support to the teenage fathers who present in their own right - is clearly vital in the light of the variety of circumstances captured by the analysis.

Equally important is the collaborative approach with other services and agencies, both as sources of referral and sources of support. At the same time, the results also remind us that the majority of the teen mothers have family and/or ongoing contact with the father of their baby and that enhancing the capacity of teen parents to maintain these personal resources is a necessary guiding principal for effective support services.

The Report reflects the sustained effort of the staff of the TPSP to collect, record and input the data. This is a most valuable contribution to our understanding and our capacity to plan and develop our services. Our thanks are also due to all who contributed to analysing the data and providing a clear statement of the results and their implications. Our gratitude is all the greater for the reminder provided by the Report of both the challenges and the potential reflected in the lives of the young parents whose stories are presented through these pages.

Rosemary Grant
Chairperson, National Advisory Committee, Teen Parents Support Programme

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Most of all I want to acknowledge the young parents who participated in the TPSP and allowed us to support them at what was often a very challenging point in their lives. We hope that this analysis of their circumstances and needs will enhance the services that the TPSP and other agencies offer in the future.

Margaret Morris
National Co-ordinator Teen Parents Support Programme



SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Teen Parents Support Programme

The Teen Parents Support Programme (TPSP) was established in July 1999 by the Department of Health and Children under the 'Children at Risk' strand of the National Childcare Investment Strategy (1998). Originally called the Teen Parents Support Initiative, it was developed in recognition of the vulnerability of families headed by teen parents and their need for additional practical advice and supports targeted specifically to their needs. The TPSP now consists of a National Co-ordinator and 11 Programmes throughout the country managed by a range of statutory and community organisations. Since 2007 the TPSP has been funded by the HSE.

The main objective 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. The Programme is based on a family support model and aims to be holistic, non-stigmatising and needs led. Throughout their engagement with them TPSP staff work to enhance the self esteem of the young parents, building on their existing skills and knowledge and encouraging them to meet their own needs and maintain their own social supports.

The Data

Since July 2005, the TPSP has collected data on every young parent who engaged with the Programme. This data was collected when the young parents first made contact and was followed up, where possible, at 6, 18 and 30 month intervals after that. A total of 1522 young parents engaged with the TPSP between July 2005 and December 2008. The analysis does not claim to be representative of all teen parents in Ireland.

This summary will present the findings in key areas of the lives of young mothers, young fathers and of four subgroups of mothers who have been identified as vulnerable by TPSP staff, namely mothers with a social care history, non-Irish

mothers, mothers from the Traveller community and mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy. Where possible, comparisons will be made between the different groups of young parents in relation to key characteristics.

It is important to note that due to the nature of the data collection process, follow-up data has not been collected on all parents with the same frequency and, therefore, where follow-up data is analysed, the sample size does not remain constant. A more detailed discussion of the limitations of this analysis can be found in Chapter 2 .

Young mothers

Between July 2005 and December 2008, 1449 young mothers engaged with the TPSP. Of these 85% were Irish, 19% were aged 16 or under, 28% had some form of social care history and 31% were described as having a high level of need at the time of referral. In addition, 60% of young mothers were antenatal when they first engaged with the TPSP and maternity services were the biggest source of referrals.

When they first engaged with the TPSP 46% of mothers were in some form of education/training, the majority of whom (65%) were in mainstream second level education. An analysis of those whose educational attainment was known shows that 29% were early school leavers i.e. had left school without their Leaving Certificate. This is more than twice the national rate of 11.7% for 2008 (CSO, 2008). The analysis also shows that 66% of early school leavers left school before their pregnancy, that they were less likely to be living with their family and more likely to have a social care history than those who had completed their Leaving Certificate. However data collected on 262 mothers who were early school leavers shows that 21% of them returned to education or training over a thirty month period of engagement with the TPSP.

Eight of the 11 TPSPs received funding from the School Completion Programme of the Department of Education & Skills. Financial assistance to complete their education was given to 22% of mothers who engaged with these TPSPs while 11% of

all mothers who were in second level education when they first engaged with the TPSP availed of the Home Tuition Scheme of the Department of Education & Skills.

With regards to accommodation 66% of young mothers were living with their family, 20% were living in private rented accommodation or their own home, 6% were living in temporary accommodation such as B&Bs, hostels or supported accommodation and 2% of mothers were living in care. Where information was available 18 months later, 32% of those living originally with their families had now moved to private rented accommodation and 32% of those originally in temporary accommodation were still in the same situation.

Information regarding their employment status was available for 1325 mothers of whom 12% were working. Working mothers were more likely to be older, have their Leaving Certificate and have a lower level of need than mothers who were not working. Overall, 45% of mothers were not in employment, education or training.

Of the 578 mothers who were postnatal when they first engaged with the TPSP, 71% were in receipt of One-Parent Family Payment (OFP), 19% were in receipt of another form of social welfare and 11% of mothers had no income support. Mothers without income support were more likely to be non-Irish and/or cohabiting with a partner.

When they first engaged with the TPSP, 46% of mothers who were postnatal stated that they had a childcare need and 38% of these had no access to childcare. The maternal grandmother was the most common provider of childcare (39%), followed by community crèches (27%), private crèches (12%) and home based non-family childcare (12%). Those whose childcare needs were unmet were less likely to be living in the family home, more likely to be unemployed and to be an early school leaver. When those with an unmet childcare need were followed up 18 months after they first engaged with the TPSP, 41% of those for whom this information was available still had no childcare.

When they first engaged with the TPSP 80% of mothers had some form of contact with the fathers of their children. Combining those who were cohabiting/married with those who had regular contact and/or shared parenting a total of 59% of parents had consistent contact. A further 19% had irregular contact and 2% had contact through a legal access arrangement. Eighteen months later data was collected on 402 of those who initially had some form of contact. Of these, 94% were still in contact with a large increase in the proportion who were now cohabiting/married.

Young fathers

Between 2005 and 2008, 73 fathers engaged with the TPSP separately from the mothers of their children. Of these young fathers 93% were Irish. When they first engaged with the TPSP 18% were aged 16 years or under, 32% had a high level of need and 58% of the mothers of their children were antenatal. This profile is broadly similar to that of young mothers. However, 45% of the mothers of their children had a social care history compared to 28% of all mothers who engaged with the TPSP. The majority of young fathers made contact with the TPSP either through self-referral or through a family member.

Young fathers who engaged with the TPSP had a lower level of educational attainment than young mothers and were less likely to be engaged in education or training. Of the 63 fathers for whom information on educational attainment was available 51% were early school leavers compared to 29% of mothers, 14% had completed their Leaving Certificate compared to 31% of young mothers and 37% of fathers were engaged in education or training compared to 46% of mothers.

When they first engaged with the TPSP 69% of fathers were living with their family and 16% were living in private rented accommodation. However, 11% were living in temporary accommodation or care compared to 8% of mothers.

Young fathers were more likely to be in employment than young mothers with 29% of fathers working compared to 12% of mothers. In total 40% of young fathers were not in any form of work, education or training compared to 45% of mothers.

Young parents and children with a social care history

For the purpose of this report ‘social care history’ refers to those who, when they first engaged with the TPSP, were then, or had been previously, in care or involved with HSE Family Support Services including social work services. This information was available for 1245 young mothers, 351 of whom had a social care history. Of these latter mothers, 7% were living in care, 48% were actively engaged with HSE Family Support Services and 45% had previously been in care or in contact with HSE Family Support Services.

Mothers with a social care history were more likely to be 16 years of age or younger, have a lower level of educational attainment and were more likely to be living in temporary accommodation than mothers without a social care history. With regard to their education, 47% of mothers with a social care history were early school leavers compared to 16% of other mothers. When they first engaged with the TPSP, 53% of these young mothers were classified as having a high level of need compared to 22% of other mothers.

Information regarding the social care history of their children was available for 583 young parents. This includes those who were postnatal with their first child and a small number who were antenatal with a repeat pregnancy. Of these 583 young parents, 109 of their children had a social care history, 89 of whom were then in care or involved with HSE Family Support Services. This shows that 15% of all new referrals to the TPSP had, at that time, children in care or in contact with HSE Family Support Services. The remaining 20 children had previously been in care or in contact with HSE Family Support Services.

An examination of the mothers of the 89 children, above, who were in care or involved with HSE Family Support Services shows that 88% of them also had a social care history themselves. The data also shows that 23% of mothers with a repeat pregnancy had a child who was in contact with HSE Family Support Services.

Non-Irish mothers

Between 2005 and 2008, 172 non-Irish mothers engaged with the TPSP, 24% of whom were aged 16 years and under compared to 19% of Irish mothers. With regard to levels of need, 39% of non-Irish mothers had a high level of need compared to 30% of Irish mothers and 31% had a social care history compared to 28% of Irish mothers. Unlike Irish mothers, the majority of this group first engaged with the TPSP when they were postnatal and a higher proportion (47%) of non-Irish mothers made contact through maternity services compared to 30% of Irish mothers.

Data on the educational attainment of 96 non-Irish mothers was unavailable. This may be due to the difficulty of making direct comparisons between Irish and other qualifications. The remaining 76 mothers appear to have a lower level of formal qualifications than their Irish counterparts with 82% having either Junior Certificate only or no formal qualification. Due to the difficulties mentioned above, however, care must be taken when interpreting these results. In total, 29% of non-Irish mothers were in education or training compared to 48 % of Irish mothers.

When they first engaged with the TPSP, 43% of non-Irish mothers were living in private rented accommodation or their own home compared to 19% of Irish mothers. Non-Irish mothers were less likely to be living in the family home with 38% living with their family of origin compared to 71% of Irish mothers. However, a higher proportion of non-Irish mothers were cohabiting or married.

A higher proportion (17%) of non-Irish mothers who were postnatal had no state income support compared to 11% of Irish mothers. However, as outlined above, a higher proportion of non-Irish mothers were cohabiting or married.

Information regarding the level of contact between non-Irish mothers and the fathers of their children was available in 146 cases. The pattern of contact differed to that of Irish mothers in that 34% of non-Irish mothers were either cohabiting or married compared to 12% of Irish mothers. Outside of marriage and cohabitation, non-Irish

mothers were less likely to have regular contact with the fathers of their children with 21% having contact at this level compared to 41% of Irish mothers. Finally, when they first engaged with the TPSP, 30% of non-Irish mothers had no contact of any kind with the fathers of their children compared to 20% of Irish mothers.

Traveller mothers

Between 2005 and 2008, 41 Traveller mothers engaged with the TPSP, 24% of whom were under 16 years of age compared to 18% of other mothers. With regard to level of need, 59% of Traveller mothers were classified as having a high level of need compared to 31% of other mothers and 49% of Traveller mothers had a social care history compared to 28% of other mothers. As with all mothers, maternity services were the most common sources of referral for mothers from the Traveller community.

Data regarding their education was available for 29 mothers from the Traveller community. An examination of the educational attainment of these mothers revealed that 59% had no qualifications compared to 13% of other mothers and 10% of Traveller mothers were in education/training compared to 47% of other mothers. No Traveller mother had her Leaving Certificate. The data also showed that 70% of Traveller mothers left education/training before pregnancy compared to 35% of non-Traveller mothers.

A profile of the accommodation status of Traveller mothers shows that 59% of them were living in the family home compared to 67% of other mothers and a similar proportion of both groups were living in private rented accommodation or their own home. No Traveller mother was living in care.

With regard to employment 3% of Traveller mothers were working compared to 12% of other mothers.

Information regarding the level of contact Traveller mothers had with the fathers of their children was available in 37 cases. This shows that when they first engaged with the TPSP 65% of Traveller mothers had some level of contact with the fathers of their

children compared to 80% of other mothers. A higher proportion (30%) of Traveller mothers were either cohabiting or married compared to 15% of other mothers.

Mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy

Of the 1449 mothers who engaged with the TPSP, 70 (5%) made contact for the first time when they were experiencing a repeat pregnancy. Of these mothers 64% were aged 19 years or older compared to 32% of first time mothers, 44% were classified as having a high level of need compared to 30% of first time mothers and 50% had a social care history compared to 27% of first time mothers. In addition, 25% of this group had children with a social care history compared to 7% of first time mothers. When they first engaged with the TPSP, the majority of those with a repeat pregnancy were already postnatal with their second/third child and maternity services were the most common source of referral to the TPSP. A high level of referrals for these mothers also came from family members and peers with 32% being referred in this way.

When they first engaged with the TPSP, 22% of mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy were in education/training compared to 48% of first time mothers and, despite their older age profile, 26% had completed their Leaving Certificate compared to 32% of other mothers. Finally, 49% of mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy were early school leavers.

With regard to accommodation, 10% of mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy were living in the family home compared to 69% of other mothers and 43% were living in temporary accommodation compared to 4% of first time mothers. No mother with a repeat pregnancy was living in care.

With regard to employment 17% of mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy, were working compared to 12% of first time mothers.

Mothers who were experiencing a repeat pregnancy were more likely to have some form of contact with the father of their most recent child compared to first time mothers with 88% having at least some level of contact compared to 79% of first time mothers. They were also more likely to be cohabiting or married compared to first time mothers.

TPSP supports and partnership with other agencies

With the exception of a small number (2%), the majority of mothers who engaged with the TPSP had their own support network consisting mainly of family and friends and/or the fathers of their children. In addition all parents accessed a wide range of needs-led supports from the TPSP. These included support in relation to emotional issues, health, relationships, parenting skills, education, training, childcare and accommodation.

With regard to the nature of support received from the TPSP, 80% of mothers received emotional support, 79% received support with health related issues (both antenatal and postnatal), 66% received support in relation to their education, 61% received support with parenting skills and 46% received support with relationships.

Young fathers were more likely to receive support with relationships, housing and training courses than young mothers with the exception of young mothers in temporary accommodation 70% of whom received support in relation to housing.

Mothers with a social care history and Traveller mothers were more likely to receive support in relation to parenting and housing and less likely to receive support in relation to education. Mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy were more likely to receive support with parenting with 69% receiving support in this way compared to 58% of first time mothers. Of the 172 non-Irish mothers who engaged with the TPSP, 73% received support with intercultural issues such as support with accessing services, understanding childbirth and parenting practices in Ireland and English language support.

Partnership with other agencies is a key part of the work of the TPSP. In 75% of cases there was some contact with at least one other agency on behalf of the young parents, mainly with education/training providers, health professionals and HSE Family Support Services. In addition, 32% of cases involved contact with agencies categorised as ‘other’ such as childcare providers, youth services and voluntary organisations like the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Conclusions

This analysis provides an insight into the profile and experiences of teen parents who engaged with the TPSP between 2005 and 2008. It makes no claim to be representative of all teen parents in Ireland. Nonetheless, given the numbers involved, it does offer an indication of what a representative study might find. What emerges from this analysis is a diverse group of young parents from a variety of backgrounds, with widely different life experiences before becoming parents and with varying levels of need.

Almost all mothers who engaged with the TPSP had their own pre-existing social networks consisting mainly of their families and/or the fathers of their children. At the same time almost all mothers received emotional support from the TPSP and almost half of them received support regarding their relationships. This highlights the need for these types of support at a time of crisis (such as a crisis pregnancy) to enable young people to maintain relationships which can then continue to be their primary source of support in the future.

Almost one third of all mothers presented with high levels of need. Among these mothers, TPSP staff had identified particular categories that are especially vulnerable and this is borne out by the analysis. Both non-Irish mothers and Traveller mothers were likely to be younger than other mothers. Together with mothers who had a repeat pregnancy and mothers with a social care history, they presented with particularly high levels of need, low educational attainment and high rates of living in temporary accommodation. In addition, mothers with a social care history were more

likely to experience repeat pregnancies and mothers with a repeat pregnancy were more likely to have children who were in care or in contact with HSE Family Support Services.

This analysis does not explore the situation of fathers who made contact with the TPSP as a result of the mothers of their children being involved with the Programme. Although only a small number of fathers engaged with the TPSP separately from the mothers of their children their numbers increased annually over the period when the data was collected. As a group, the 73 fathers in this analysis presented as very disadvantaged with their rates of early school leaving almost twice that of mothers and with accompanying very high rates of unemployment. In addition almost half of the mothers of their children had a social care history indicating that they also are very vulnerable. The high take-up by fathers of support with relationships and support in relation to parenting suggests that these young men need support in order to be involved in the lives of their children and to share parenting with the mothers of their children. Unlike young mothers, the majority of fathers made contact with the TPSP either directly or through family members. This suggests that there may be a need to raise awareness of the needs of young fathers among other potential sources of referral.

This analysis shows that, when they first engaged with the TPSP, the majority of young mothers had contact at some level with the fathers of their children. Analysis of those who were followed up indicates that most of them maintained contact at some level over an eighteen month period with a large increase in the number who were cohabiting or married. At the same time, the analysis shows that approximately one in five parents do not have any contact with each other and this is a cause of concern for the children involved.

A key aim of the TPSP is to support young parents to return to or remain in education if that is their choice. At their initial referral to the TPSP, almost half of all young parents were in education/training, the majority of whom were in second level education.

The analysis illustrates the importance of the School Completion Programme in helping young parents complete or return to education/training. At the same time, the educational attainment of young parents who were not in education indicates that early school leaving is an issue for this group. The rate of early school leaving for young mothers who engaged with the TPSP was over twice the national average and the majority of early school leavers had left school before their pregnancies. Two thirds of young mothers sought education related support indicating a strong desire to complete their education. Exceptions to this are non-Irish mothers, Traveller mothers and young mothers with a social care history who may require additional encouragement and support in this area.

For young parents who engaged with the TPSP the maternal grandmother was their main childminder. This is similar to the situation of all mothers of infants in Ireland. *The Infants and their Families*, the first report of the Growing Up In Ireland Study (National Longitudinal Study of Children), shows that the majority of child minding of infants in Ireland is 'home based' and that the majority of home-based childcare is provided by grandparents and 'in most cases the grandmother' (Williams, Greene, McNally, Murray and Quail, ESRI, Dublin, 2010). This analysis highlights the importance of childcare in enabling young parents to participate in education and employment. Young parents with an unmet childcare need were less likely to be in education, training or employment and more likely to be early school leavers. They were also less likely to be living in the family home. This suggests that while a large portion of young mothers who engage with the TPSP can call on family for support with childcare, there is a lack of affordable provision in the formal childcare sector.

This analysis illustrates the diverse needs of young parents. The majority accessed support with practical issues such as health, accommodation, education, childcare and information about their entitlements. In addition the analysis shows the need for emotional support and support with relationships and parenting. The high uptake of all supports is an indication of the responsiveness of TPSP staff to the needs of the young people with whom they work. For example, the high level of support received

by non-Irish mothers in relation to cultural issues demonstrates the capacity of the TPSP to cater to the complex and sometimes unique needs of their service users.

Working in partnership with external agencies is a key aspect of the work of the TPSP. The fact that, for three out of four young parents, TPSP staff liaised or worked closely with at least one other agency is an indication that TPSPs are an important part of Family Support Services in their areas.

The majority of young parents first made contact with the TPSP before the birth of their children. The ability of the TPSP to reach young vulnerable parents at this stage illustrates the importance of their referral systems, particularly maternity services and schools, and the importance of the Programme in terms of early intervention with these young people. At the same time this raises an issue for young fathers who do not generally engage with maternity services and are more likely to be outside the formal education system.

Recommendations

Targetting groups at greater risk of teen pregnancy

Evidence suggesting that some teens are particularly “at risk” of teen pregnancy, in particular early school leavers and teens with a social care history, is borne out by this analysis. Generally, relationship and sexual education is available only in formal school settings and, therefore, those not engaged with formal education (such as early school leavers) cannot access this. Youth or community based services that combine education, youth development and contraception service have been found to be effective, particularly with teens living in disadvantaged areas or who have a poor academic record.

Recommendations:

- Increase the availability of relationship and sex education at the informal community level, for example youth clubs etc.
- Introduce targeted relationship and sex education programmes towards early school leavers and young people living in care.

Expansion of the School Completion Programme

Currently eight of the eleven TPSPs have access to funding from the School Completion Programme with three TPSPs having minimum funding.

Recommendation:

- Extend the School Completion Programme to all TPSPs and provide them with sufficient funding to meet the needs of the young parents who wish to remain in or return to education.

Access to affordable childcare

This analysis highlights the importance of access to affordable childcare in enabling young parents to participate in education or training.

Recommendations:

- Introduce a childcare grant for all primary care givers who are in second level education such as the scheme that operates in Northern Ireland
or
- Expand the CETS scheme of the OMCYA to include primary care givers who are in second level education and extend it to include registered child minders.

Supporting young fathers in their parenting roles

This analysis shows that young fathers do not appear to have access to the sources that refer young mothers to the TPSP and that, in this regard, most fathers rely on their own initiative or on family members. It also shows that young fathers need a high level of support with the relationships in their lives and with parenting skills.

Recommendation:

That the TPSP be resourced to develop strategies to engage with young fathers and to deliver appropriate supports to them.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Background

The Teen Parents Support Programme (TPSP) was established in July 1999 by the Department of Health and Children under the ‘Children at Risk’ strand of the National Child Care Investment Strategy (1998). Originally called the Teen Parents Support Initiative, the Programme was developed in recognition of the vulnerability of families headed by teen parents and their need for additional practical advice and supports targeted specifically to their needs. Initially, the TPSP was piloted in Galway, Limerick and parts of South-West Dublin. Following successful evaluation (Riordan and Ryan, 2002) the Programme was mainstreamed and, over time, expanded to Coolock, Louth, Cork, Carlow/Kilkenny and parts of Donegal. Most recently, in 2007, additional TPSPs were established in Ballyfermot, Finglas and North Wexford. These 11 locations were chosen mainly due to the high incidence of teen pregnancy in each respective area. (Treoir, 2009). Locally, TPSPs are managed by a range of statutory and community organisations. (See Appendix A). The National Co-ordinator of the TPSP is located in Treoir. Since 2007 the TPSP has been funded by the HSE.

Objectives of the Teen Parents Support Programme

The objectives of the Teen Parents Support Programme are 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
- Identify the needs of the targeted young parents, the services available to them and any gaps in these services

- Encourage existing services to work collaboratively to enhance the capacity of community networks and local agencies to respond to the needs of this client group
- Collect, collate and disseminate information on the experience of targeted young parents
- Monitor and evaluate Programmes, disseminate findings and stimulate any necessary change at policy level (Treoir, 2009, p. 1).

Target group

The TPSP is a universal service for teen parents and engagement is voluntary. Within its catchment area, each TPSP targets all young parents (mothers and fathers) who were aged 19 or under at the time of the pregnancy and offers them support until their youngest child is 2 years of age. Referrals are accepted from anyone interested in the welfare of the young people such as maternity services, schools, youth services, training agencies, social workers, public health nurses, family members and young parents themselves (Treoir, 2009).

Model of support

The TPSP is based on a family support model and aims to be holistic, non-stigmatising and needs-led (Treoir, 2009). Throughout their interaction with the young parents TPSP staff endeavour to enhance the esteem of the young parents, build on their existing skills and knowledge and encourage them to meet their own needs and maintain their own social supports.

Initially, an assessment of need is carried out with each young parent and an individual support plan is agreed. The assessment of need covers all areas of the lives of the young parents including their personal development, relationships, health, housing, education, training and social welfare entitlements. TPSP staff respond to those needs through a combination of information, advice, advocacy and referral to other sources of support. The TPSP provides support on a one-to-one basis and through group activities. One-to-one support is delivered through home visits, office appointments,

‘drop-in’ facilities and meetings away from the TPSP site. Group activities include antenatal classes, parenting courses and parent and child groups.

Because the TPSP plays an important role in child welfare and protection, strong emphasis is placed on enabling young parents to develop good parenting skills and enjoy their role as parents. The role of fathers is emphasised and young fathers are actively encouraged and supported to have contact with their children.

The TPSP emphasises the importance of young parents completing their education and all young parents are supported to remain in or return to education if that is their choice.

Finally, the TPSP has a role in supporting grandparents and other family members to adjust to their new family situation thereby enabling them to better support the young parents.

Levels of need

Following initial assessment each young parent is classified as having high, medium or low needs based on predefined criteria. A case is classified as ‘high’, where the young parent is aged 16 years or younger, has a high level of social, accommodation, educational, and health needs and requires ongoing support. A case is classified as ‘medium’ when a young parent, regardless of age, has a significant level of health, emotional and social needs and requires support with life skills including support with parenting. Cases classed as ‘low’ include young parents who require a low level of intervention, such as support with living independently and who are engaged already in education or training. The initial classification may change during the young parents’ engagement with the TPSP. Often young parents move between levels of need depending on what is happening in their lives.

Evaluation of the TPSP

In 2002, the Department of Health & Children conducted an in-depth Evaluation of the TPSP pilot projects in Galway, Limerick and South-West Dublin. The Evaluation found that the Initiative had a predominately positive impact on the lives of young parents who engaged with it. One of the key findings of the report was that 78% (55)

of young parents who took part in the evaluation process felt that their life was “better” or “much better” since becoming involved with the TPSP. Young parents expressed the view that without the TPSP they would have had difficulty in accessing social and health services, education and training (Riordan and Ryan, 2002). Crucially, the research identified that young parents felt that the TPSP enabled ‘*a general feeling of happiness*’ in relation to parenthood (Riordan and Ryan, 2002, p. 100). The service delivered by the TPSP was found to be non-directive, personalised and catering to individuals needs. The following factors were found to underlie the success of the TPSP: responsiveness and appropriateness, the placing of parental knowledge and responsibility at the centre of parenting programmes, enabling and empowering parents, addressing children’s rights and recognising diversity and different life circumstances. (Riordan and Ryan, 2002, p. 160).

Teen parents in Ireland: Statistics

Table 1 displays the number of births and fertility rates from 2000 to 2008 for mothers under 20 years of age. It shows a decline in the number of teen pregnancies in both absolute terms and as a percentage of all births. In 2000, 5.7 % of all births were registered to mothers under 20 years of age and this fell to 3.2 % in 2008. This represents an overall decline of 22% in the number of teen parents between 2000 and 2008. Births to teenagers include both those who were married and unmarried. In 2008, 8% of teen births were registered to married parents. The fertility rate for adolescents has also fallen over this time. This rate refers to the number of live births per 1000 women aged 15 to 19 years. In 2000 the fertility rate for women in Ireland under 20 years of age was 19.3. This fell to 17.4 in 2008.

Table 1.1: Number of births and fertility rates for women in Ireland under 20 years of age

Year	Number of Births under 20 years of age	Percentage of all births	Fertility rate
2000	3135	5.7%	19.3
2001	3095	5.3%	19.6
2002	2978	4.9%	19.4
2003	2802	4.6%	19.0
2004	2560	4.1%	17.1
2005	2427	4.0%	16.8
2006	2362	3.7%	16.4
2007	2464	3.5%	17.5
2008	2426	3.2%	17.4

(Source: CSO Vital Statistics 2001-2009)

Between 2000 and 2007 Ireland had an average fertility rate of 17 for adolescents aged 15 to 19 years making it the 11th highest in the EU 27. This compares to Bulgaria which had the highest adolescent fertility rate at 38 and the Netherlands which had the lowest at 4. (See Appendix B).

CHAPTER TWO

ANALYSIS OF THE TPSP DATABASE

Background

Between June 2005 and December 2008, TPSP staff collected in-depth data on the 1559 service users who engaged with the TPSP during that period. This data was collected initially at the time of referral and, where the clients were still engaged with the TPSP, was updated at regular intervals of six, eighteen and thirty month periods. Of those 1559 service users, 37 were grandparents or siblings. Of the remaining 1522 young parents, data was collected on 1449 young mothers and on 73 young fathers who engaged separately from the mothers of their children. Of the 1449 young mothers, 129 were cases where the mother and father presented to the service together. In these instances data was collected only on the mothers.

This report presents the analysis of the data on these 1522 young parents.

Objectives of the analysis

The main objectives of this analysis are to

- Present a socio-demographic profile of the young parents involved in the Teen Parents Support Programme and outline how the TPSP has supported these young parents
- Where the data allows, show changes over time in areas such as the education, childcare and accommodation status of the young mothers and levels of contact between parents
- Profile teen parents who are viewed as particularly vulnerable including mothers with a social care history, non-Irish parents, mothers who are members of the Traveller community and those experiencing a repeat pregnancy.

- Based on the above, make recommendations for policy and practice in relation to supporting teen parents in Ireland.

Throughout this Report, references to ‘young mothers’ or ‘young fathers’ refer specifically to young mothers and fathers who engaged with the TPSP. When we refer to ‘children’ we mean children of young parents who engaged with the TPSP.

Some information on parents who had recently engaged with the TPSP was unknown at the point when the data was collected. In all tables in this report, percentages are calculated based on the valid number of responses i.e. a percentage of all cases where information was known. The raw number of unknown cases for each variable is also presented in the table.

Study limitations

There are limitations to this study that must be noted. Firstly, this report is not representative of teen parents nationally. The data presented here refers only to teen parents who are supported by the TPSP. Despite this limitation, it does offer an indication of the profile and experiences of teen parents in Ireland. Generally at national level, quantitative data on teen parents is limited (Riordan, 2002). The information presented here may help to reduce this current gap in information.

Secondly, the data was inputted by TPSP staff and not the service users themselves. TPSP staff engaged very closely with the young parents on a one-to-one basis and every effort was made to ensure that the information was accurate. Nonetheless the circumstances of young parents may be subject to interpretation by the project workers who input the data.

Thirdly, this data was collected at intervals of six months between 2005 and 2008 (See Table 2.1). Information at the point when they first engaged with the TPSP was collected for all 1552 young parents. However, due to the nature of the data collection process, not all young parents were available for follow up with the same frequency and therefore the follow-up sample size does not remain constant. For example, the possibility of being followed up 3 times was limited to those parents who were in the service prior to July 2006. (See Table 2.2).

No follow-up data is available for those who were referred to the TPSP in the latter half of 2008 (See Table 2.1) and changes over time cannot be measured for this group.

Table 2.1. Numbers of TPSP new referrals July 2005 to December 2008

<u>Data Collection Period</u>	<u>Mothers</u>	<u>Fathers</u>	<u>Other</u>	
<u>Total</u>				
July-December 2005	144	1	0	145
January –June 2006	178	2	1	181
July-December 2006	218	11	3	232
January-June 2007	203	7	5	215
July to December 2007	201	8	5	214
Jan to June 2008	264	26	15	305
July to December 2008	241	18	8	267
Total	1449	73	37	1559

In addition, natural attrition takes place within TPSP workloads. Although the TPSP is generally available to young parents until their child is two years old, engagement with the TPSP is voluntary and not all young parents avail of support for this duration.

Table 2.2: Number of parents on whom follow-up data was collected

Follow up intervals	Number of Parents on whom follow-up data was collected
6 months post referral	1188
18 months post referral	593
30 months post referral	126

Structure of the report

The purpose of this report is to present the main results from the analysis of the TPSP database of 1449 young mothers and 73 young fathers referred to the TPSP between 2005 and 2008. The report is divided into the following chapters

- A brief overview of the socio-demographic profile of young mothers who engaged with the TPSP (Chapter 3)
- Analysis of the education/training status of these young mothers and their progression over time (Chapter 4)
- An overview of employment status and income support for young mothers (Chapter 5)
- Analysis of the accommodation status of young mothers and how this changed over time (Chapter 6)
- An examination of childcare issues (Chapter 7)
- A summary of the supports given by the TPSP to young mothers (Chapter 8)
- An examination of the level of contact between young parents (Chapter 9)
- A profile of the 73 young fathers who engaged with the TPSP separately from the mothers of their children. (Chapter 10)
- A profile of young mothers with a social care history and children with a social care history (Chapter 11)
- A profile of young non-Irish mothers, young mothers who are members of the Traveller community and young mothers who are experiencing a repeat pregnancy (Chapter 12)
- A number of conclusions and recommendations are put forward in relation to current policy and practice of the TPSP, including supports for teenage parents at a national level (Chapter 13).

CHAPTER THREE

MOTHERS WHO ENGAGED WITH THE TPSP

Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the 1449 mothers who engaged with the TPSP between 2005 and 2008. It includes their socio-demographic profile and an analysis of referral sources. As stated earlier, percentages are calculated based on the valid number of responses i.e. a percentage of all cases where information was available. Throughout the report tables show the exact percentage while in the text percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.



Socio-demographic profile of young mothers

Table 3.1 Profile of young mothers when they first engaged with the TPSP

Characteristic	Category	Percent	Number
Location	Rural	31.6	(458)
	Urban	68.4	(991)
Place of origin	Irish	85	(1219)
	Irish Traveller	2.9	(41)
	African	3.5	(50)
	Eastern European	2.3	(32)
	Other European	3.7	(54)
	Other	2.6	(36)
	<i>Unknown</i>		(17)
Age	Under 15	1.0	(14)
	15	6.0	(87)
	16	11.7	(169)
	17	25.3	(366)
	18	22	(318)
	19	23	(332)
	20	8	(115)
	21	2.0	(29)
	Over 21	1.0	(14)
	<i>Unknown</i>		(5)
Highest Educational Attainment	Leaving Certificate	31.4	(364)
	Junior Certificate only	54.6	(633)
	No Qualifications	14.0	(162)
	<i>Unknown</i>		(290)
Education/Training Status	In Education/training	46.2	(623)
	Not in Education/training	53.8	(726)
	<i>Unknown</i>		(100)
Accommodation type	Family	66.3	(960)
	Own Home	2.0	(29)
	Private Rented	19.5	(282)
	Temporary	6.1	(89)
	In Care	1.6	(23)
	<i>Unknown/Other</i>	4.5	(66)
Social Care History	Yes	28.2	(351)
	No	71.8	(894)
	<i>Unknown</i>		(204)
Pregnancy status	Antenatal	59.6	(852)
	Postnatal	40.4	(578)
	<i>Unknown</i>		(19)
Level of Need	High	31.2	(406)
	Medium	39.4	(513)
	Low	29.4	(382)
	<i>Inactive</i>		(148)

Table 3.1 illustrates the socio-demographic profile of young mothers who engaged with the TPSP. Below is a synopsis of this profile with some additional information.

Where information was known:

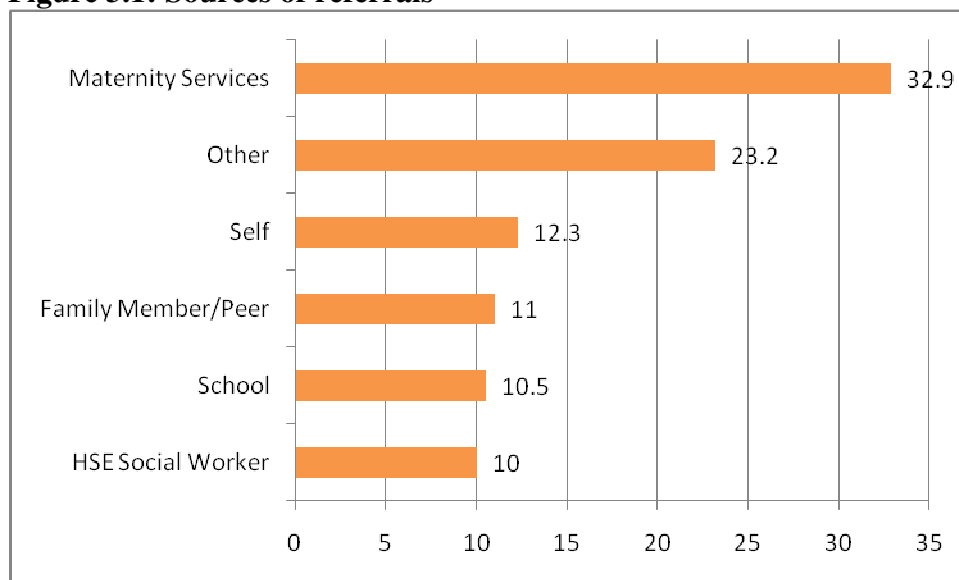
- 85% (1219) of mothers were described as Irish, 3% (41) were described as Irish Traveller and 12% (172) were described as non-Irish mothers. See Chapter 12 for a more detailed analysis.
- 19% (270) of mothers were aged 16 years or under i.e. under the age of consent.
- 46% (623) of mothers were in education/training at the time of referral. See Chapter 4 for a more detailed analysis.
- at the time of referral, 31% (364) had their Leaving Certificate, 55% (633) had Junior Certificate only and 14% (162) had no qualifications at this time. See Chapter 4 for a more detailed analysis.
- with regard to accommodation, 66% (960) were living in the family home and 20% (282) were living in private rented accommodation and 2% (29) of mothers owned their own home.
- 6% (89) were living in temporary accommodation such as B&Bs, direct provision, hostels, refuges, sleeping rough or living with friends. This highlights the vulnerability and lack of stability for some young mothers at the time of referral. See Chapter 6 for a more detailed analysis.
- 28% (351) of mothers had some form of social care history. This refers to those then or previously living in care and those then or previously in contact with other HSE family support services. At the time of referral 23 mothers were living in care and 103 mothers had a child with a social care history. See Chapter 11 for a more detailed analysis.
- 60% (852) of young mothers were antenatal when they were first referred to the Programme. In total, 5% (70) of all young mothers were antenatal or postnatal with their 2nd or 3rd child. See Chapter 12 for a more detailed analysis.
- at the time of referral, 31% (406) of mothers were classed as having a ‘high’ level of need.

Referral sources

The TPSP takes referrals from a wide variety of sources as shown in Figure 3.1. Of the 1449 young mothers who were referred to the TPSP

- 33% (477) were referred by maternity services such as a midwife or a medical social worker.
- 23% (337) of the referral sources were recorded as 'other'. This category includes referrals from a range of sources including G.P.s, Youth/Community Workers, Community Welfare Officers as well as staff in supported accommodation training agencies and other agencies.
- 12% (178) referred themselves.
- 11% (159) were referred by a family member or peer.
- 11% (153) were referred by their schools
- 10% (145) were referred by HSE social workers.

Figure 3.1: Sources of referrals



CHAPTER FOUR

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND YOUNG MOTHERS

Introduction

The link between educational disadvantage, early school leaving and teen pregnancy is widely acknowledged (Freeney and O’Connell, 2010; Riordan, 2002). Part of the work of the TPSP is to support young parents to complete their education, if that is their choice, without jeopardising their roles and responsibilities as parents (Treoir, 2009). This chapter presents an overview of the education and training status of the 1449 young mothers who engaged with the TPSP, including:

- the education and training status of the young mothers at the time of referral and eighteen months later
- early school leaving and mothers who engaged with the TPSP
- the relationship between pregnancy and early school leaving
- a comparison of early school leavers and mother still in education and
- an overview of education-related supports such as supports provided by the TPSP, the School Completion Programme and Home Tuition.

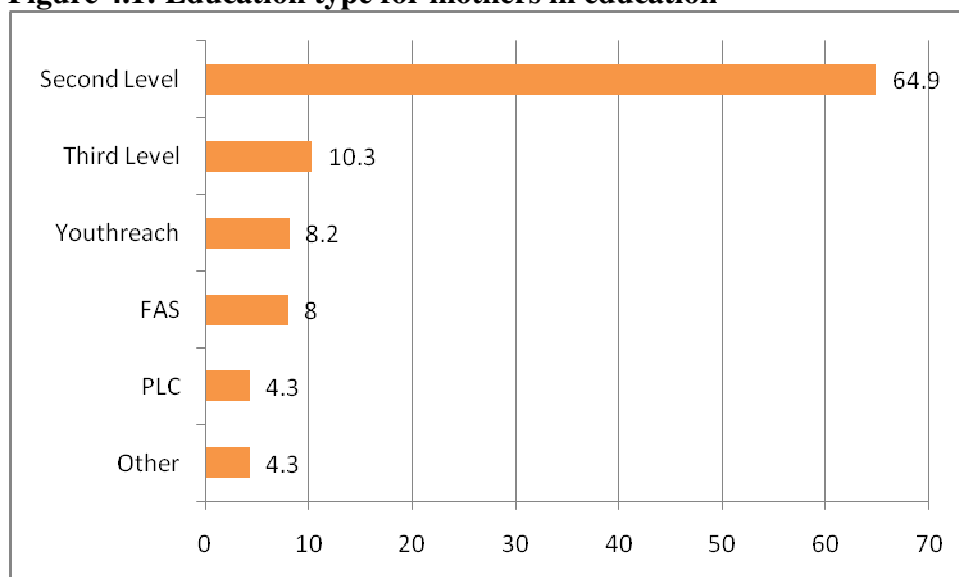
Young Mothers in education/training at the time of referral

At the time of referral, 46.2% (623) of young mothers were in education/training. Figure 4.1 illustrates the type of education they were engaged in. Of the young mothers still in education

- 65% (404) were in second level
- 10% (64) were in third level
- 8% (51) were in Youthreach
- 8% (50) were doing a FÁS course
- 4% (27) were completing a Post-Leaving Cert course
- 4% (27) were completing a course categorised as ‘other’ which includes Vocational Training Opportunity schemes (VTOS) or private courses.

This reflects the wide variety of educational providers with whom the young mothers are in contact. It also illustrates the number of educational providers with whom the TPSP liaises.

Figure 4.1: Education type for mothers in education



The educational attainment of 34 of the 623 young mothers, above, was unknown. Of the remaining 589 mothers who were still in education

- 23% (137) had completed their Leaving Certificate
- 67% (394) had completed their Junior Certificate only and
- 10% (58) had no qualifications.

Young mothers in education/training 18 months after initial referral

Of the 623 young mothers in education at initial referral, 78% (486) did not have their Leaving Certificate. Of these 486 young mothers, 201 were followed up 18 months after their initial referral. The educational attainment of 7 of these young mothers was unknown at this point. Of the 194 mothers for whom information was available 18 months after referral

- 71% (138) were still in education/training. Of these 38% (53) had completed their Leaving Certificate.

- 29% (56) were no longer in education/training. Of these 41% (23) had completed their Leaving Certificate and 59% (33) had left school early i.e. they left education/training without their Leaving Certificate.

Early school leaving and mothers who engage with the TPSP

The definition of ‘early school leaving’ used in this report takes into account the negative economic and social consequences of early school leaving (Kritros and Ching 2005). The definition encompasses:

- the failure to gain a qualification that is required for participation in further training or education and/or
- the failure to gain a qualification for access to a wide range of labour market opportunities to sustain life chances (Kritros and Ching, 2005).

In the Irish context, failure to gain the Leaving Certificate can significantly limit a young person’s life chances. Therefore early school leaving in this report refers to young parents who leave formal education before achieving their Leaving Certificate and who are not currently engaged in education or training. This definition is used by both the Economic and Social Research Institute (2007) and the Central Statistics Office (2008). The CSO specifically defines early school leaving as ‘*Persons aged 18-24 with, at most, lower secondary education and not in further education or training*’ (CSO 2008). Various studies have found that early school leavers are more likely to engage in high risk health/sexual behaviour; have difficulties in accessing information on sex, contraception and health promotion and have lower expectations, self esteem and education attainment all of which is linked to unprotected sexual activities (Sheerin, 1998; Layte, Fullerton and McGee, 2003).

At the time of referral to the TPSP, 54% (726) of young mothers were not in any form of education or training. The level of educational attainment for 164 of these young mothers was unknown. Of the remaining 562 mothers, 339 mothers had left school without completing their Leaving Certificate. Therefore, 29% of the 1159 mothers whose educational attainment was known were early school leavers. This is more than twice the national rate. Nationally, in 2008, 11.7 % of all those aged between 18

and 24 were early school leavers i.e. they had left education before their Leaving Certificate (CSO, 2008).

Of the 339 young mothers who were categorised as early school leavers at the time of referral, data was collected on 262 of them at least once over a 30 month period. During this time 21% (56) of the young mothers had returned to education/training.

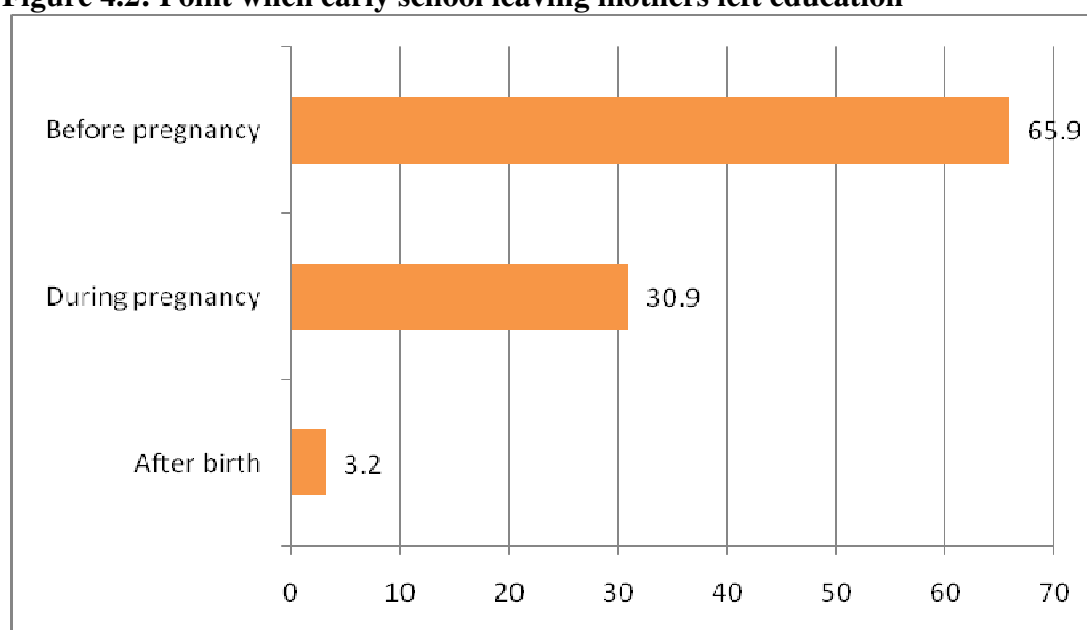
The relationship between pregnancy and early school leaving

As mentioned in the previous section, 339 young mothers who engaged with the TPSP were early school leavers. Information regarding when these mothers left school was unavailable in 22 cases. Of the 317 mothers for whom this information was available

- 66 % (209) had left before the pregnancy
- 31 % (98) had left during the pregnancy and
- 3% (10) left after the birth of their child.

This indicates that early school leaving could be both a cause and a consequence of teen pregnancy (Kiernan, 1995).

Figure 4.2: Point when early school leaving mothers left education



Comparison of early school leavers with mothers in education/training

The overall circumstances of young mothers who were in education/training at initial referral were more stable when compared to early school leavers. Notably:

- early school leavers were less likely to be living at home with their family with 56% (190) having this type of accommodation compared to 79% (490) of mothers in education/training and
- 49% (165) of early school leavers had a social care history compared to 19% (117) of young mothers who were in education/training.

TPSP support with education and training

The evaluation of the pilot phase of the TPSP identified the main barriers for young mothers engaging with the education system. These included a lack of quality and affordable childcare, financial constraints and barriers at school level - primarily a lack of understanding from school management (Riordan and Ryan, 2002). The evaluation also highlighted the strong desire of young mothers to return to education. Mothers who took part in the evaluation indicated that without the support of the TPSP returning to education would not have been possible (Riordan and Ryan, 2002, p. 98).

The TPSP provides a range of supports for young parents to enable them to continue in or return to education. This support includes information and advice, liaison with education and training bodies and acting as an advocate on behalf of the young parent. Of the 1449 mothers who engaged with the TPSP, information regarding the uptake of support with education was unknown for 8 mothers. Where this information was available, 56 % (814) of young mothers received support with education. The TPSP also provided support with training to 34% (498) of young mothers.

Information regarding the level of support received by the 726 young mothers who were not in any form of education or training when they first engaged with the TPSP was unknown in 5 cases. The remaining 721 mothers received support from TPSP staff in one or more of the following areas:

- 68% (488) received some form of support in relation to second level education
- 9% (65) received support in relation to third level education
- 34% (242) received no support with education and
- 44% (316) received support with training.

Of the 364 young mothers who had completed their Leaving Certificate:

- 59% (213) received some form of educational support (80% (178) of whom received support in relation to third level education) and
- 37% (136) received support with training.

The School Completion Programme

The School Completion Programme (SCP) is an initiative of the Department of Education and Skills to support those at risk of early school leaving. Eight of the 11 TPSPs receive varying amounts of funding from the SCP. During the period of this analysis, 22% (294) of young mothers, who engaged with those TPSPs that received support from the SCP, were given financial assistance to complete their education. This money was used to help young parents with additional costs such as childcare, tuition and the purchase of books.

Of 56 early school leavers who returned to education/training during their engagement with the TPSP, 34% (19) received support from the SCP. This highlights the importance of financial support for young parents who want to remain in or return to education/training.

Home Tuition

The Home Tuition Scheme is funded by the Department of Education and Skills and provides grants for out of school tuition where attendance at school is not practical. Home tuition is available to young mothers in second level education for up to nine hours a week, shortly before or after the birth of their child. Analysis shows that 11% (80) of young mothers, who had not completed their Leaving Certificate at initial referral, availed of Home Tuition over the 30 month period.

Summary

- 46% (623) of mothers for whom information was available on their education status, were in some form of education or training at the time of referral.
- 39% (76) of 201 mothers who presented to the service without their Leaving Certificate, and on whom data was available, had completed their Leaving Certificate 18 months later.
- 29% (339) of young mothers were classified as early school leavers at their initial referral i.e. had left school without their Leaving Certificate. This is more than twice the national average of 11.7% in 2008.
- Early school leavers were more likely to have a social care history than those who had completed their Leaving Certificate and were less likely to live with their family of origin.
- 31% (98) of early school leavers had left education during their pregnancy and 66% (209) had left before their pregnancy, indicating that early school leaving could be both a cause and a consequence of teen pregnancy.
- 21% (56) of the 262 young mothers who were early school leavers at the time of their referral, and on whom data was available, had returned to education or training at some point over a 30-month period.
- 8 of the 11 TPSPs received support from the School Completion Programme and 22% (294) of mothers who engaged with these TPSPs were given financial assistance to complete their education.
- 11% (80) of young mothers, who had not completed their Leaving Certificate at initial referral, availed of Home Tuition at some point during their engagement with the TPSP.
- 68% (488) of mothers who had not completed their Leaving Certificate received some form of support in relation to second level education.
- 59% (213) of mothers who had completed their Leaving Certificate received some form of support, such as information, advice or advocacy in relation to education and/or training.

CHAPTER FIVE

EMPLOYMENT, INCOME AND YOUNG MOTHERS

Introduction

This chapter explores the employment and income status of young mothers who engaged with the TPSP. It includes an analysis of those in receipt of social welfare payments.

Employment and education/training status at initial referral

Table 5.1 displays the employment and education/training status of young mothers at the time of referral. The unemployment and education/training status of 124 mothers was unknown. Of the 1325 young mothers for whom information was available, 12% overall (157) were employed and 3% (41) were working part time while taking part in education/training. Of the remaining 1168 mothers, 43% (574) were in education/training and 45% (594) were not in employment, education or training.

Table 5.1: Employment and education/training status of young mothers

	Percentage	Number
In work	8.8	116
In education/training	43.3	574
In work and education/training	3.1	41
Not in work or education/training	44.8	594
Total	100	(1325)
Unknown		(124)

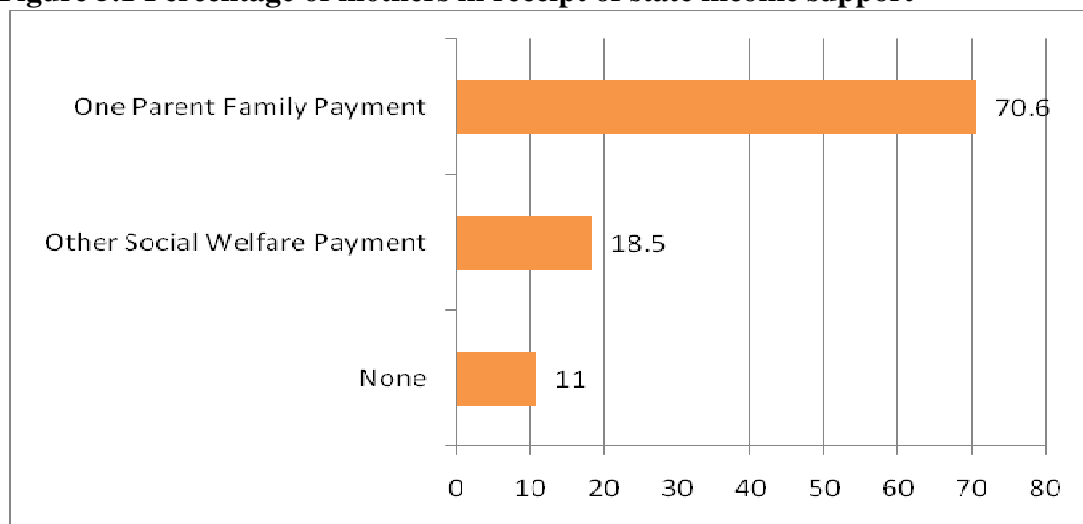
Young mothers and social welfare

It is interesting to note that, in 2008, 1,498 recipients of One-Parent Family Payment (OFP) were under 20 years (Department of Social and Family Affairs, 2008)

despite the fact that in both 2007 and 2008 there were over 2,400 birth per annum to teen mothers.

Figure 5.1 illustrates that 71% (409) of postnatal mothers were in receipt of the OFP when they first engaged with the TPSP, with a further 19% (109) in receipt of another form of social welfare such as Disability Allowance, Supplementary Welfare Allowance or Jobseekers Allowance. The 11% (60) who had no state income support may be explained by the number who were married or cohabiting (See Ch. 9).

Figure 5.1 Percentage of mothers in receipt of state income support



Summary

- 12% (157) of young mothers were working either full-time or part-time.
- 43% (574) of young mothers were in education/training.
- 45% (594) were not in any form of employment or education/training.
- 71% (409) of postnatal mothers were in receipt of the OFP when they first engaged with the TPSP while 11 % (60) had no income support.

CHAPTER SIX

YOUNG MOTHERS AND ACCOMMODATION

Introduction

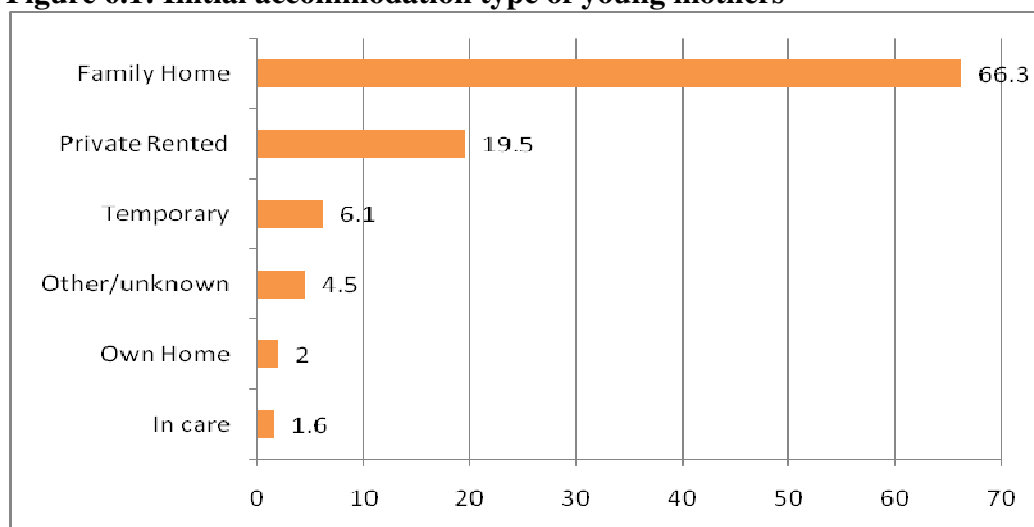
This chapter explores the accommodation situation of young mothers. This includes:

- their accommodation type when they first engaged with the TPSP, their level of satisfaction with it and the support they received and
- changes to accommodation type eighteen months later.

Accommodation type

When they first engaged with the TPSP, 66% (960) of young mothers were living with their family or origin, 20% (282) were in private rented accommodation and 2% (29) owned their own homes. A further, 6% (89) of young mothers were living in temporary accommodation (including B&Bs, hostels, direct provision, supported accommodation or with friends) and 2% (23) were living in care. In 5% (66) of cases this information was classified as “other” or “unknown”.

Figure 6.1: Initial accommodation type of young mothers



Analysis revealed that 55% (49) of the young mothers living in temporary accommodation were dissatisfied with their accommodation. This is in contrast to 25% (237) of young mothers who were dissatisfied living in the family home. With regard to support, young mothers living in temporary accommodation when they first engaged with the TPSP were more likely to receive support with housing with 70 % (64) supported in this way compared to 48% (462) of those living in the family home.

Changes in accommodation type

Eighteen months after they first engaged with the TPSP, data was collected on 399 young mothers who were originally living in the family home. Data on the accommodation status of 10 of these mothers was unavailable. Of the remaining 389 mothers, 32% (124) had moved into private rented accommodation and 3% (12) had either moved into temporary accommodation or were living in care.

Data was also collected on 34 young mothers who were living in temporary accommodation when they first engaged with the TPSP. Eighteen months later, 41% (14) of this group had moved to private rented accommodation, 27% (9) were living with family and 32% (11) were still living in temporary accommodation. None of the young mothers in question was living in care or owned her own home.

Summary

- 66% (960) of mothers were living with their family of origin when they first engaged with the TPSP.
- Eighteen months later, 32% (124) of mothers who were initially living with their family of origin, and on whom data was available, had moved to private rented accommodation while 3% (12) of them had moved to temporary accommodation or were living in care.
- when they first engaged with the TPSP 6% (89) of mothers were living in temporary accommodation, including B&Bs, hostels, direct provision, supported accommodation or with friends.

- Eighteen months later, 41% (14) of young mothers who were living in temporary accommodation initially, and on whom data was available, had moved to private rented accommodation, 26% (9) were now living with their family of origin and 32 % (11) were still living in temporary accommodation.
- 70 % (64) of mothers living in temporary accommodation initially received support with housing compared to 48% (462) of those living with their family of origin.



CHAPTER SEVEN

YOUNG MOTHERS AND CHILDCARE

Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the childcare needs of mothers who engaged with the TPSP. It includes a description of:

- childcare needs and type used
- a comparison of mothers whose childcare needs were met and those whose childcare needs were not met
- follow up of mothers with an unmet childcare need and
- TPSP support regarding childcare.

The evaluation of the pilot phase of the TPSP identified the main barriers for young mothers when accessing childcare. These included availability of childcare places, finding suitable childcare for very young infants and affordability (Riordan and Ryan, 2002). Childcare is therefore an important issue for young mothers.

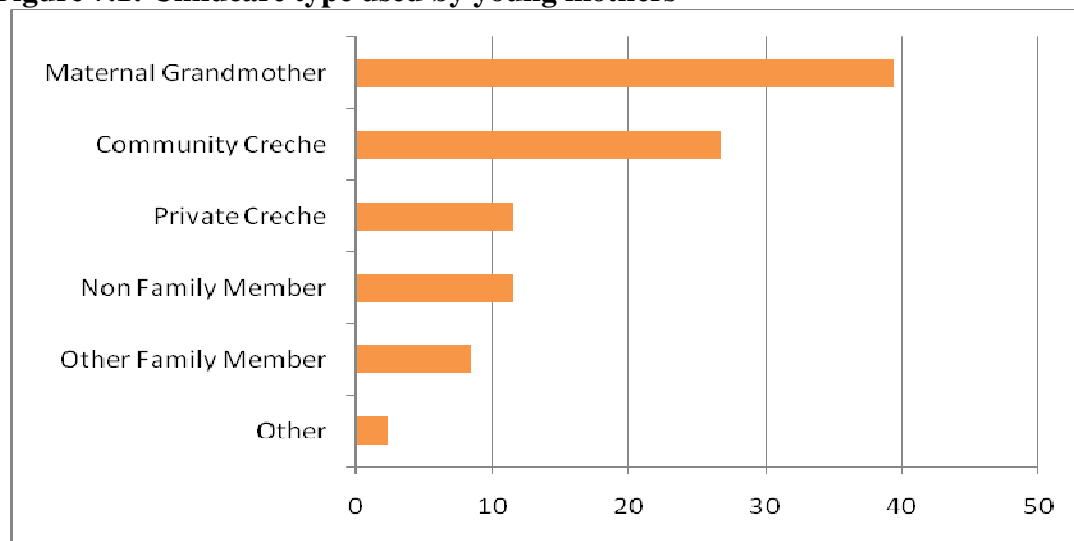
Childcare needs and type

When they first engaged with the TPSP, 46% (266) of mothers who were postnatal stated that they had a childcare need. Of these 266 mothers 38% (101) had no access to childcare.

Of the 165 mothers with childcare

- 39% (64) were using their child's maternal grandmother and 8% (13) were using another family member.
- 27% (44) were using a community crèche and 12% (19) were using a private crèche.
- 12% (19) were using a non-family member and 2% (4) stated that they were using another type of childcare.

Figure 7.1: Childcare type used by young mothers



Comparison of mothers whose childcare needs were met with those whose childcare needs were not met

As mentioned above, 101 mothers had an unmet childcare need when they first engaged with the TPSP. The following differences were identified between these 101 mothers and the 165 mothers whose childcare needs were met:

- 54% (54) of mothers without childcare were living in the family home compared to 67% (111) of those with childcare
- 22% (22) of those without childcare were engaged in education/training compared to 73% (120) of mothers with childcare
- 24% (24) of those without childcare had completed their Leaving Certificate compared to 34% (56) of mothers with childcare
- 9% (9) of those without childcare were in employment compared to 15% (25) of mothers with childcare.

The above suggests that mothers living outside the family home find it more difficult to access childcare. It could also suggest that lack of childcare may be acting as a barrier to employment, training or education/training. This reflects other research that has highlighted the lack of quality affordable childcare as a barrier to education, training and work (Murphy, Keilthy and Caffery, 2008; Riordan and Ryan, 2002).

Follow up of mothers with an unmet childcare need

At initial referral, 101 young mothers had an unmet childcare need. Eighteen months later, when data was collected on 39 of these mothers

- 44% (17) felt that their needs were met
- 41% (16) still felt that their needs were not met
- 10% (4) felt their needs were partially met and
- 5% (2) no longer needed childcare.

TPSP support with childcare

Between 2005 and 2008, 56% (820) of young mothers who were referred to the TPSP received support with childcare at some point during their engagement with the Programme. This support consisted of information and advice as well as advocacy and liaison with childcare funders and providers. It demonstrates that almost 60 % of young mothers who engaged with the TPSP during this period were using childcare services or considering using childcare services in the future.

Summary

- When they first engaged with the TPSP, 46% (266) of mothers who were postnatal stated that they had a childcare need.
- 47% (77) of the above, whose childcare needs were met, were using family members, in particular the child's maternal grandmother.
- 38% (101) of young mothers who had a childcare need at their initial referral had no access to childcare.
- Of those with an unmet childcare need, 78% (79) were not in education/training and 91% (92) were not in employment.
- Of the 39 mothers who initially had an unmet childcare need, 41% (16) still had no access to childcare eighteen months later.
- 56% (820) of mothers who were referred to the TPSP received some form of support in relation to childcare at some point during their engagement with the Programme.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ADDITIONAL TPSP SUPPORT AND PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER AGENCIES

Introduction

Earlier chapters referred to the support which the TPSP offered young mothers in areas such as education, accommodation and childcare. This chapter describes additional supports offered by the TPSP including assistance with:

- emotional issues
- health
- parenting and
- relationships in the life of the young mother.

It also gives a brief overview of how the TPSP liaises and collaborates with other agencies.

Table 8.1 summarises the extent to which these additional TPSP supports were availed of by 1449 young mothers around the time when they first engaged with the Programme.

Table 8.1: Additional TPSP supports accessed by mothers

Support		Percent	Number
Emotional	Yes	80.2	1162
	No	19.8	287
Health	Yes	79.2	1148
	No	20.8	301
Parenting	Yes	60.5	876
	No	39.5	573
Relationships	Yes	46	664
	No	54	785

Emotional support

Of the 1449 young mothers who engaged with the TPSP, 80% (1162) received support with emotional issues at initial referral. This type of support had the highest take up of all supports offered.

Support with health

In total, 79% (1148) of young mothers received support with their own and their children's health. This includes 11% (156) of mothers who received additional antenatal support as part of a group of young parents. In addition, TPSP staff made direct contact with health practitioners on behalf of 10% (150) of the mothers who engaged with the service.

Support with parenting

In total, 62% (896) of mothers received support with parent-craft and/or parenting skills during their early engagement with the TPSP. Of these 88% (789) of mothers received one-to-one support from TPSP staff and 6% (54) of mothers also attended a Young Parents Group or a Parenting Course.

Data was collected on 169 of the mothers who did *not* receive support with parent-craft or parenting skills. This shows that

- 12% (21) of these mothers had a social care history compared to 32% (285) of those mothers who received support and
- 10% (16) were classed as having 'high' needs when they first engaged with the TPSP compared to 32 % (285) of those mothers who received support with parenting.

The above suggests a lower level of need among mothers who did not receive support with parenting.

Support with relationships

With regard to support with relationships, 46% (664) of the young mothers who engaged with the TPSP received support in this area. The following is a breakdown of the support received:

- 47% (309) received support concerning their relationships with the fathers of their children.
- 46% (308) received support concerning their relationships with their own immediate families.

- 3% (22) received support concerning their relationships with the paternal families and 4% (25) received support with other relationships such as their relationships with their partners or with foster parents.

In 98% of cases mothers who engaged with the TPSP were also receiving other support mainly from their family and/or the fathers of their children.

Partnership with other agencies

One of the objectives of the TPSP is to *‘encourage existing services to work collaboratively to enhance the capacity of community networks and agencies to respond to the needs of this client group’* (See Chapter 1). In their evaluation of the TPSP pilot project, Riordan and Ryan found that *‘interagency collaboration is of critical importance to the success of interventions of Teen Parent Support Initiative pilots, where networking and collaboration was encouraged’* (Riordan and Ryan, 2002, p. 33).

A TPSP project worker may liaise with several agencies on behalf of any one client. However, the data collection system underlying this analysis only allows for the most frequently contacted to be recorded. Therefore, while Table 8.2 displays the different types of services with which the TPSP project staff liaise, it cannot capture the full extent of collaboration between the TPSP and other agencies on behalf of teen parents.

Table 8.2: Extent of partnership with other agencies

Agency	Percentage	Number
Education- Schools, Education /Training Bodies	20.2	292
Health Related Professionals	15.8	229
HSE Child Protection and Family Support	10	146
Other	31.7	459
None	22.3	323
Total	100	1449

Table 8.2 indicates that:

- 20% (292) of cases involved collaboration with schools and other education/training providers
- 16% of cases involved collaboration with health professionals
- 10% (146) of cases involved collaboration with HSE Family Support Services such as an aftercare team or a social worker
- In 32 % (459) of cases, TPSP staff liaised with other agencies such as crèches, youth services and voluntary organisations such as the Society of St. Vincent De Paul.

In the cases of 22% (323) of mothers there was no contact with other agencies. Further examination of the circumstances of these mothers revealed that 38 % (123) were living in rural areas compared to 29% (326) of young mothers for whom contact was made with other agencies. This may indicate that fewer support services exist in rural areas or that young mothers and TPSP project staff in rural areas have greater difficulties in accessing additional services. It may confirm anecdotal reporting from TPSP staff with regard to additional challenges faced by teen mothers in rural areas.

Summary

- When they first engaged with the TPSP, the majority of young mothers received support with emotional issues, health issues - both antenatal and postnatal - and support with parenting skills.
- 46% (664) received support with the relationships in their lives with 93% (617) of these receiving support in relation to their own families and/or the fathers of their children.
- In 78% (1,126) of cases, the TPSP contacted or liaised with other agencies on behalf of the young parents.
- 98% (1420) of parents had other support networks outside of the TPSP.

CHAPTER NINE

CONTACT BETWEEN PARENTS

Introduction

Supporting fathers to be involved in the lives of their children is a key aim of the TPSP (Riordan and Ryan, 2002; Treoir, 2009). This chapter presents the level of contact which mothers and fathers who engaged with the TPSP had with the other parent of their child. It includes the level of contact when the young parent first engaged with the TPSP and the level of contact eighteen months later.

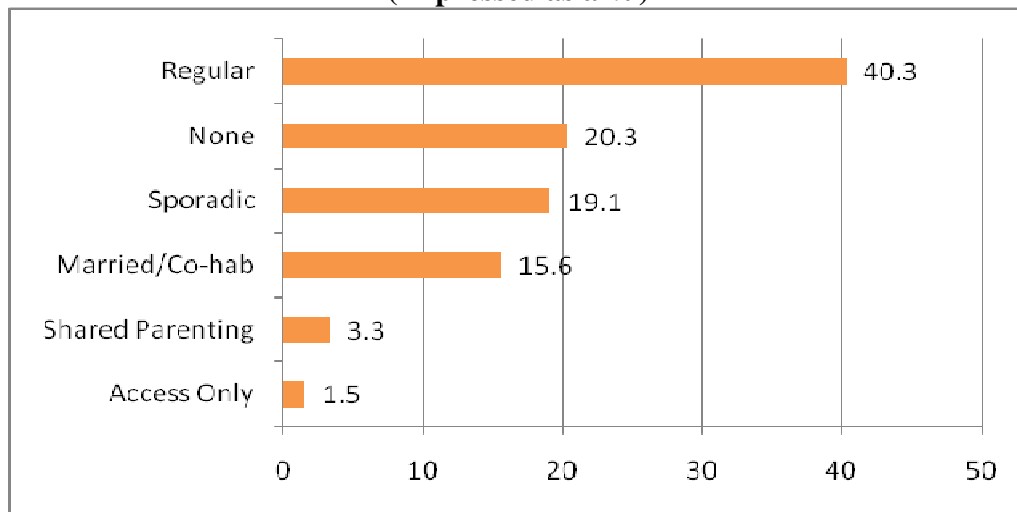
A total of 1522 parents engaged with the TPSP between 2005 and 2008. The level of contact between 243 parents and the other parent of their child was unknown. Of the remaining 1279 parents 14 responses were from young fathers. Therefore this analysis predominantly represents the views of mothers.

Contact at time of first engagement with the TPSP

Figure 9.1 provides a detailed breakdown of the level of contact between parents when they first engaged with the TPSP. The table indicates that

- 59% (757) of parents had regular contact. This includes those who were cohabiting or married and others who shared parenting.
- 2% (19) had contact through a formal child access arrangement
- 19% (244) had sporadic contact and
- 20% (259) of parents had no contact.

**Figure 9.1: Contact between parents when they first engaged with the TPSP
 (Expressed as a %)**

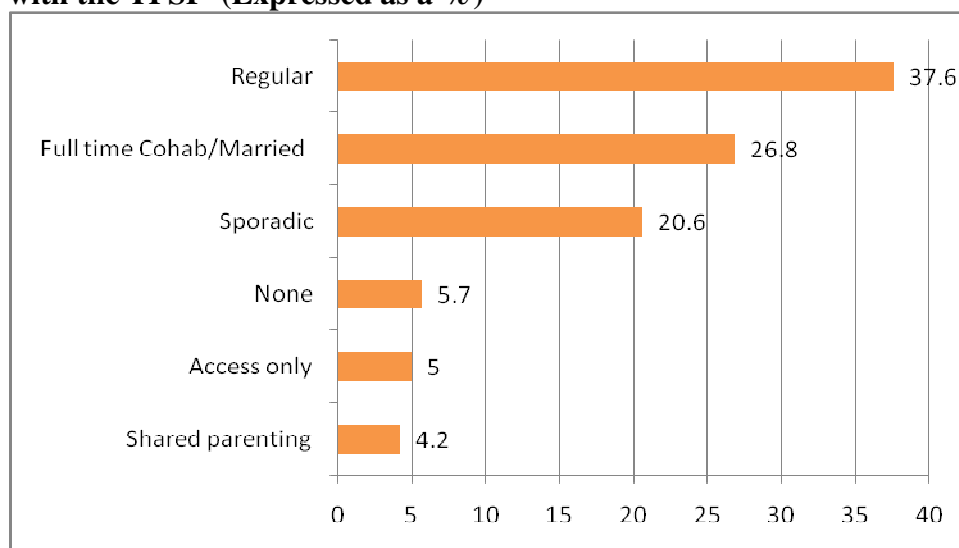


Follow up of parents who had contact when they first engaged with the TPSP

When they first engaged with the TPSP, 1020 TPSP service users had some degree of contact with the other parents of their children. Eighteen months later data was collected on 402 of these service users. This shows that

- 68% (274) of parents had regular contact (with a higher proportion married or cohabiting) compared to 59% (757) initially
- 5% (20) of fathers had a formal child access arrangement compared to 2% (19) initially
- 21% (84) of parents had sporadic contact compared to 19% (244) initially and
- 6% (24) of parents had no contact compared to 20% (259) initially.

Figure 9.2: Contact between parents 18 months after initial engagement with the TPSP (Expressed as a %)



There were 199 parents cohabiting full-time or married when they first engaged with the TPSP. Eighteen months later, when data was collected on 67 of these parents, 81% (54) were still living together.

There were 244 TPSP service users who, when they first engaged with the TPSP, had sporadic contact with the other parent of their child. Eighteen months later data was collected on 94 of these service users. This showed that:

- 55% (52) still had sporadic contact
- 20% (18) now had regular contact
- 6% (6) were married or cohabiting
- 6% (6) had a formal access arrangement and
- 13% (12) had no contact.

Summary

- When they first engaged with the TPSP, 80% (1020) of parents had some form of contact, 59% (757) of which was regular including those who shared parenting, were cohabiting or married.
- Eighteen months later data collected on 402 of the 1020 parents, above. This data showed that 68% (274) of these particular parents now had regular contact.

- 199 parents were married/cohabiting when they first engaged with the TPSP. Eighteen months later, when data was collected on 67 of these parents, 81% (54) were still living together.
- When they first engaged with the TPSP, 244 parents had sporadic contact. Eighteen months later, when data was collected on 94 of these parents, 19% (18) of them now had regular contact and 6% (6) were married or cohabiting.



CHAPTER TEN

FATHERS WHO ENGAGED WITH THE TPSP

Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of 73 fathers who engaged with the TPSP independently of the mother of their children (See Chapter 2). It includes:

- their socio-demographic profile
- their education and employment status
- the social care history of the mothers of their children
- a summary of TPSP support used by fathers and
- referral sources for fathers.

Where possible, this chapter includes comparisons with mothers who engaged with the TPSP. Care must be taken when interpreting these results because of the small number of young fathers involved.



Comparison of fathers and mothers who engaged with the TPSP

Table 10.1 displays the profile of fathers who engaged with the TPSP and provides a comparison with the socio-demographic profile of the mothers.

Table 10.1: Comparison of fathers and mothers who engaged with the TPSP

Characteristic	Category	Fathers (73)		Mothers (1449)	
		Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Location*	Rural	19.2	(14)	31.6	(458)
	Urban	80.8	(59)	68.4	(991)
Place of Origin*	Irish	93.1	(67)	87.9	(1260)
	Non-Irish nationals	6.9	(5)	12.1	(172)
	Unknown		(1)		(17)
Age	15 or under	8.2	(6)	7.0	(101)
	16	9.6	(7)	11.7	(169)
	17	20.5	(15)	25.3	(366)
	18	19.2	(14)	22	(318)
	19	20.6	(15)	23	(332)
	Over 19	21.9	(16)	11	(158)
	Unknown				(5)
Highest Educational Attainment*	Leaving Certificate	14.3	(9)	31.4	(364)
	Junior Certificate only	60.3	(38)	54.6	(633)
	No Qualifications	25.4	(16)	14.0	(162)
	Unknown		(10)		(290)
Education/Training Status*	In education/training	36.6	(26)	46.2	(623)
	Not in education/training	63.4	(45)	53.8	(726)
	Unknown		(2)		(100)
Accommodation Type	Family	69.9	(51)	66.3	(960)
	Own home/Private Rented	15.1	(11)	21.5	(311)
	Temporary	8.2	(6)	6.1	(89)
	In Care	2.7	(2)	1.6	(23)
	Other/unknown	4.1	(3)	4.5	66)
Pregnancy Status of Mother	Antenatal	57.4	(35)	59.6	(852)
	Postnatal	42.6	(26)	40.4	(578)
	Unknown		(12)		(19)
Level of Need	High	32.3	(21)	31.2	(406)
	Medium	38.5	(25)	39.4	(513)
	Low	29.2	(19)	29.4	(382)
	Unknown		(8)		(148)

*Statistically significant difference between the two groups, i.e. differences are not due to chance, $p \leq .05$

Table 10.1 demonstrates that the profile of mothers and fathers at initial referral was broadly similar in relation to their levels of need, age, accommodation and the pregnancy status of the mother. Statistically significant differences were identified for location and place of origin, specifically:

- 80% (59) of fathers were living in an urban area compared to 69% (991) of mothers
- 93% (67) of fathers were Irish compared to 88% (1260) of mothers
- no fathers were members of the Traveller community.

Fathers and education/training

Of the 73 fathers for whom data was collected when they first engaged with the TPSP, the education status of 10 fathers was unknown at that point. Of the 63 fathers for whom education status was available, 51% (32) were identified as early school leavers. This is compared to 29% of mothers and 11.7% of the national population in 2008 (See Chapter 4).

Statistically significant differences were identified when comparing the educational achievements of mothers and fathers, specifically:

- 14% (9) of fathers had completed their Leaving Certificate compared to 31% (364) of mothers
- 25 % (16) of fathers had no formal qualifications compared to 14% (162) of mothers
- 37% (26) of fathers were engaged in education or training at initial referral compared to 46% (623) of mothers.

Fathers and employment

Of the 73 fathers for whom data was collected when they first engaged with the TPSP, the employment status of 4 fathers was unknown at that point. Of the remaining 69 fathers for whom this information was available:

- 30% (21) were in education and training
- 7% (5) were working part time and in education/training
- 22 % (15) were in fulltime employment and

- 41% (28) were not in employment, education or training.

Social care history of mothers and children

Data was not collected on the social care history of fathers. However, data collected on the social care history of the mothers of their children revealed that:

- 50% (14) of the mothers were in contact with HSE Family Support Services or living in care compared to 28% (351) of all mothers who engaged with the TPSP
- 45% (28) of the mothers of their children had, themselves, a social care history and
- 9% (6) of fathers had a child with a social care history compared to 8% (109) of all mothers.

Supports received by fathers

Table 10.2 summarises the uptake of supports by young fathers who engaged with the TPSP. Fathers who engaged with the TPSP availed of a variety of supports including help with parenting, housing, education, training, health, childcare and emotional support.

Table 10.2: TPSP supports received by fathers

Type of Support		Number	Percentage
Parenting	Yes	49	67.1
	No	24	32.9
Housing*	Yes	42	57.5
	No	31	42.5
Education*	Yes	28	38.4
	No	45	61.6
Training*	Yes	35	47.9
	No	38	52.1
Emotional	Yes	59	80.8
	No	14	19.2
Childcare	Yes	16	21.9
	No	57	78.1
Health*	Yes	42	57.5
	None	31	42.5
Social Welfare Entitlements	Yes	42	72.4
	None	16	27.6
	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>15</i>	
Support with Relationships*	Yes	49	67.1
	None	24	32.9

*Statistically significant difference between mothers and fathers i.e. difference are not due to chance, $p \leq .05$

Both fathers and mothers received similar levels of support with regard to emotional issues, parenting and social welfare entitlements. Statistically significant differences were noted between fathers and mothers for the following supports:

- 58% (42) of fathers received support with health compared to 79% (1148) of mothers
- 38% (28) of fathers received some form of support with education compared to 56% (814) of mothers

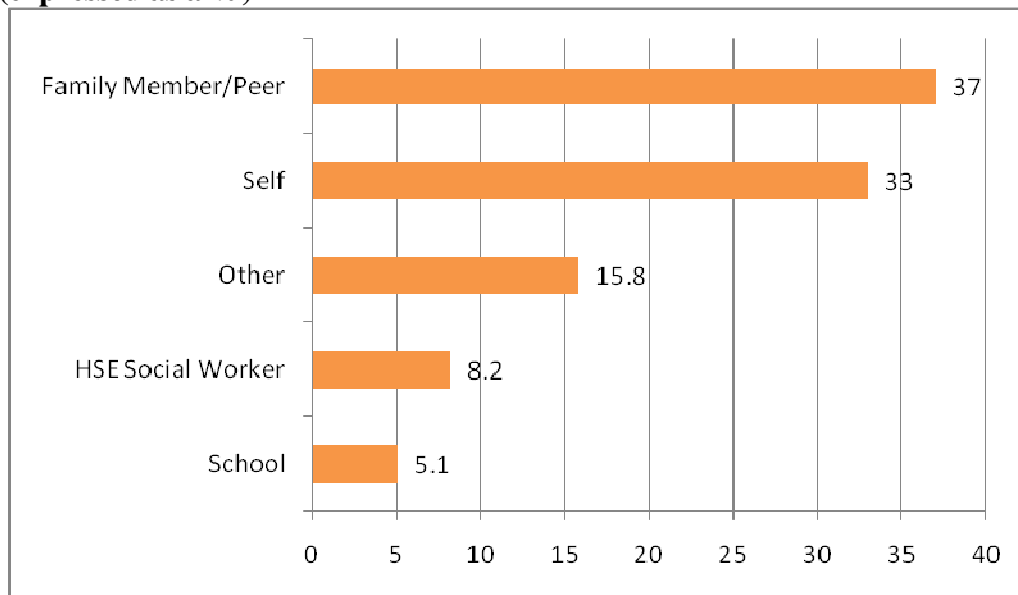
- 48% (35) of fathers received support with training courses compared to 35% (506) of mothers
- 58% (42) of fathers received support with housing compared to 51% (740) of mothers and
- 67% (49) of fathers received support with their relationships compared to 46% (664) of mothers.

Sources of referrals

A number of differences arose between referral sources for mothers and fathers with regard to self referral, referral by family members and the levels of referral from sources defined as 'other'. On the other hand, the levels of referral from social work services were broadly similar for fathers and mothers. The levels of referral from schools were also similar particularly when one takes into account that a smaller proportion of fathers were still in the school system. However:

- 37% (27) of fathers made contact with the TPSP through a family member or a peer compared to 11% (159) of mothers
- 33% (24) of fathers were self referrals themselves compared to 12% (178) of mothers and
- 16% (11) of the fathers' referral sources were categorised as 'other' compared to 28% of mothers. This includes youth and community workers, medical professionals and training agencies.

Figure 10.3: Sources of referrals for fathers
(expressed as a %)



Summary

- Between 2005 and 2008, a total of 73 young fathers engaged with the TPSP independently of the mothers of their children.
- 51% of fathers, on whom data was available, were early school leavers. This is over 4 times the national average for all school leavers in 2008.
- 22% (5) of fathers were in employment compared to 12% (157) of mothers.
- 36% (25) of fathers were in education/training compared to 46% (623) of mothers.
- 45% (28) of the mothers of their children had a social care history compared to 28% (351) of all mothers who engaged with the TPSP.
- 67% (49) of fathers received support with their relationships compared to 46% (664) of mothers and
- 37% (27) of fathers made contact with the TPSP through a family member or peer compared to 11% (159) of mothers.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

YOUNG MOTHERS WITH A SOCIAL CARE HISTORY AND CHILDREN OF YOUNG PARENTS WITH A SOCIAL CARE HISTORY

Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of mothers and children with a social care history. Information for both groups will be presented separately. Social care history means that, when they first engaged with the TPSP, these young mothers were living in care or had previously lived in care or were then or previously in contact with HSE Family Support Services.

The chapter includes

- A socio-demographic profile of mothers with a social care history
- Levels of contact between mothers with a social care history and the fathers of their children
- TPSP supports used by mothers with a social care history
- Referral sources for mothers with a social care history
- Analysis of parents whose children had a social care history and
- Follow up data on children with a social care history.

As far as possible comparisons are made with mothers without a social care history.

Mothers with a social care history

In 2008, according to the Department of Health and Children, there were 5450 children in care, either living in foster care (4852), residential care (400) or under “other” care arrangements (198) (Health Information and Quality Authority, 2009). This represents approximately 0.5% of all children in Ireland. Research indicates that teens living in residential or foster care are more likely to experience a teen pregnancy than their peers (Love, McIntosh, Rosst and Tertzakin, 2005). Evidence suggests that a longing for family ties and attachment, lack of sexual education due to poor relationships with parents or other adults and lower levels of educational attainment

are linked to higher teen pregnancy rates among teens living in care (Love et al., 2005).

Of the 1449 young mothers on whom this analysis is based, the social care history of 204 mothers was unknown. Of the remaining mothers, 28% (351) had a social care history when they first engaged with the TPSP as follows:

- 7% (23) of the young mothers were then living in care
- 48% (170) of the young mothers were then engaged with HSE Family Support Services
- 45% (158) of the young mothers had previously lived in care or had previously been in contact with HSE Family Support Services.



Comparison of mothers with and without a social care history

Table 11.1 Comparison of mothers with and without a social care history

Characteristic	Category	Mothers with a Social Care History (351)		Mothers without a Social Care History (894)	
		Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Location*	Rural	24.8	(87)	35.5	(317)
	Urban	75.2	(264)	64.5	(577)
Place of origin	Irish	81.8	(287)	87	(781)
	Irish Traveller	5.2	(18)	2.1	(19)
	European	3.3	(11)	3	(27)
	Eastern European	1.9	(7)	2.9	(26)
	African	5.9	(21)	3.8	(34)
	Other	1.9	(7)	1.1	(10)
Age*	Under 15	2.3	(8)	0.7	(6)
	15	9.4	(33)	5.1	(46)
	16	14.5	(51)	10.6	(95)
	17	27.1	(95)	26.1	(233)
	18	17.9	(63)	23.8	(213)
	19	19.4	(68)	23.2	(207)
	Over 19	9.4	(33)	10.5	(94)
Highest Educational Attainment*	Leaving Certificate	11.7	(35)	39.3	(304)
	Junior Certificate only	54.5	(163)	53.9	(417)
	No Qualifications	33.8	(101)	6.8	(53)
	<i>Unknown</i>		(52)		(120)
Education /Training Status*	In Education/training	34.6	(117)	53.5	(465)
	Not in Education/training	65.4	(221)	46.5	(404)
	<i>Unknown</i>		(13)		(25)
Accommodation Type*	Family	50.7	(178)	75.5	(675)
	Own Home	3.4	(12)	1.7	(15)
	Private Rented	21.1	(74)	18.5	(165)
	Temporary	15.4	(54)	3.0	(27)
	In Care	6.6	(23)	0	(0)
	Other	2.8	(10)	1.3	12
Pregnancy status	Antenatal	60.6	(211)	60.9	(540)
	Postnatal	39.4	(137)	39.1	(346)
	<i>Unknown</i>		(3)		(8)
Level of Need*	High	57.5	(185)	22.0	(183)
	Medium	29.2	(94)	43.7	(364)
	Low	13.3	(43)	34.3	(286)
	<i>Inactive</i>		(29)		(61)

*Statistically significant difference between those with a social care history and those without a social care history, i.e. differences are not due to chance, $p \leq .05$

Table 11.1 illustrates that their places of origin and the point at which they made contact with the TPSP were similar for all mothers. However, statistically significant differences were noted for the following characteristics:

- 25% (87) of mothers with a social care history were living in a rural area compared to 36% (317) of mothers without a social care history.
- 26 % (92) were aged 16 years and under compared to 16% (147) of mothers without a social care history.
- 12% (35) had completed their Leaving Certificate compared to 39% (304) of mothers without a social care history and 34% (101) had no qualifications compared to 7% (53) of young mothers without a social care history.
- 51% (178) of mothers with a social care history were living with their family compared to 76% (675) of mothers without a social care history.
- 15% (54) of mothers with a social care history were living in temporary accommodation compared to 3% (27) of mothers without a social care history.
- 58% (185) of mothers with a social care history were classified as having high needs at initial referral compared to 22% (183) of mothers without a social care history and
- 35% (117) of mothers with a social care history were in education/training compared to 54% (465) of mothers without a social care history.

Additional information

Further analysis of the education/training, accommodation and employment status of mothers with a social care history, revealed that, for those whom this data was available:

- 72% (142) left education/training before their pregnancy, a further 25% (48) left during their pregnancy and 3% (5) left after the birth of their child
- 47% (165) were early school leavers compared to 16% (139) of mothers without a social care history. This suggests that early school leaving is a particular problem for young mothers with a social care history.

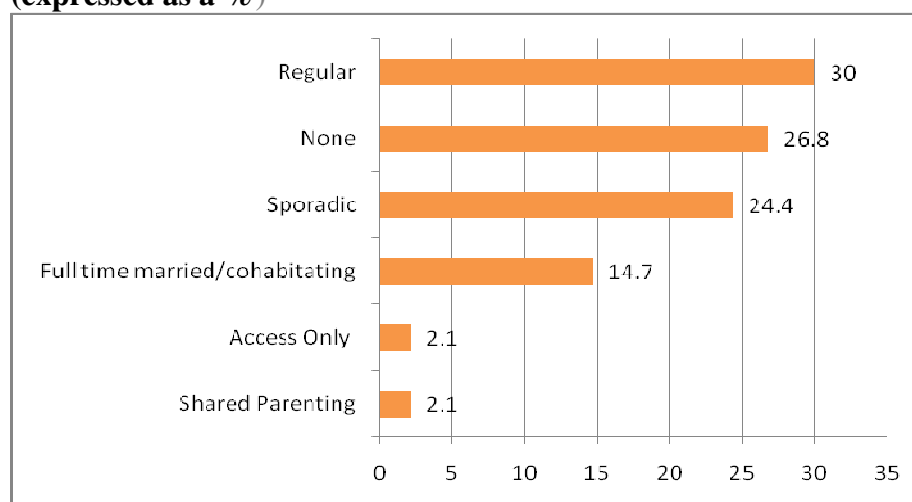
- 43% (195) of mothers with a social care history were dissatisfied with their accommodation compared to 25% (209) of mothers without a social care history and
- 6% (20) of mothers with a social care history were in employment at the time of referral compared to 14.7% (129) of mothers without a social care history.

Contact with fathers

Information regarding the level of contact between mothers with a social care history and the father of their child was unknown for 25 mothers. For the remainder, the proportion who were cohabiting or married, who shared parenting (but were not living together) or who had sporadic contact with the father of their child was broadly similar to that of mothers without a social care history. Outside of the above categories:

- 30% (98) of mothers with a social care history had regular contact with the fathers of their children compared to 44% (363) of mothers without a social care history for whom this data was available and
- 27% (87) of mothers with a social care history had no contact with the fathers of their children compared to 18% (148) of mothers without a social care history for whom this data was available.

Figure 11.1: Contact with fathers
(expressed as a %)



Supports used by mothers with a social care history

Table 11.2: Supports used by mothers with a social care history

Type of Support		Number	Percent
Emotional issues	Yes	310	88.3
	No	41	11.7
Health	Yes	289	82.4
	No	62	17.6
Parenting *	Yes	267	76.1
	No	84	23.9
Support with Relationships	Yes	228	63.9
	No	123	26.1
Housing *	Yes	217	61.9
	No	134	38.1
Education*	Yes	193	55
	No	158	45
Training	Yes	135	38.6
	No	216	61.4
Childcare	Yes	242	35.9
	No	109	64.1
Social Welfare Entitlements	Yes	185	84.9
	No	33	15.1
	<i>Data not available</i>	133	

*Statistically significant difference between those with a social care history and those without a social care history, i.e. differences are not due to chance, $p \leq .05$

Table 11.2 summarises the supports used by young mothers with a social care history. In relation to emotional issues, social welfare entitlements, health, childcare needs and support with relationships all mothers received levels of support. However, for

the following supports, statistically significant differences arose between mothers with a social care history and other mothers:

- 76% (267) of mothers with a social care history received support with parenting skills compared to 60% (536) of mothers without a social care history.
- 62% (217) of mothers with a social care history received support with housing compared to 51% (456) of other mothers and
- 55% (193) of mothers with a social care history received support with education/training compared to 63% (563) of other mothers.

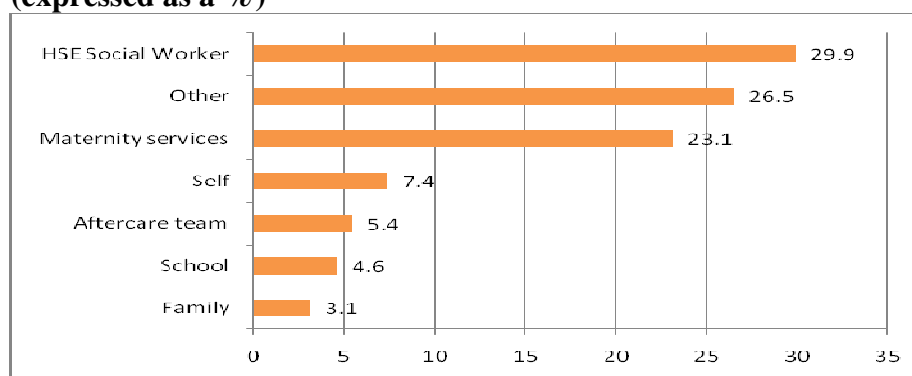
Sources of referrals

Figure 11.2 illustrates the following sources of referral for mothers with a social care history:

- 30% (105) made contact through a HSE social worker compared to 2% (21) of mothers without a social care history.
- 7% (26) self referred to the TPSP compared to 11% (96) of mothers without a social care history.
- 3% (11) heard of the TPSP through their family compared to 7% (64) of mothers without a social care history and
- 5% (19) made contact through a member of an aftercare team.

The referral sources categorised as ‘other’ refers to supported accommodation, training agencies and other voluntary organisations.

Figure 11.2: Sources of referrals for mothers with a social care history (expressed as a %)



Young parents whose children had a social care history

There were 583 young parents for whom information was available on the social care history of their children. Of these, 19% (109) had a child with a social care history, 89 of whom were then in care or involved with HSE Family Support Services when their parents first engaged with the TPSP. This shows that 15% of all new referrals to the TPSP had, at that time, children in care or involved with HSE Family Support Services. The remaining 20 children had been in care or in contact with HSE Family Support Services previously.

Further examination of the parents of the 89 children, above, showed that:

- 88% (78) of them had a social care history themselves and
- 23% (16) of the 70 mothers with a repeat pregnancy had a child who was in contact with HSE Family Support Services (See Chapter 12 for more details).

Follow up of parents of children in care or involved with HSE Family Support Services

Data was collected, six months later, on 70 of the 89 parents whose children were in care or in contact with HSE Family Support Services when the parents first engaged with the TPSP. At that point the status of 63 of these 70 children had not changed. One year later again when data was collected on 31 of the original 89 parents, 29 of their children were still in care or involved with HSE Family Support Services.

Follow up of children who did not have a social care history when their parents first engaged with the TPSP

Six months after they first engaged with the TPSP, 43 children, who presented to the service initially without a social care history, were now in contact with the HSE Family Support Services and 8 of these children were in care. Twelve months later, of those for whom data was available, an additional 13 additional children were in contact with HSE Family Support Services while 22 of the 43 children mentioned above were no longer involved with HSE Family Support Services.

Summary of mothers with a social care history

- When they first engaged with the TPSP, 28% (351) of all young mothers had a social care history of whom 48% (170) were actively engaged with HSE Family Support Services and an additional 7% (23) were living in care.
- 58% (185) of these young mothers were classified as having high needs compared to 22% (183) of mothers without a social care history.
- 26% (92) were aged 16 years and under compared to 16% (147) of mothers without a social care history.
- 12% (35) had completed their Leaving Certificate compared to 39% (304) of mothers without a social care history.
- 34% (101) had no qualifications compared to 7% (53) of young mothers without a social care history.
- 47% of were early school leavers compared to 16% of mothers without a social care history.
- With regard to accommodation 51% (178) of mothers with a social care history were living with their family compared to 76% (675) of other mothers and 16% (54) were living in temporary accommodation compared to 3% (27) of other mothers.
- 43 % (195) of young mothers with a social care history were dissatisfied with their accommodation compared to 25% (209) of other mothers.

Summary of children with a social care history

- When they first engaged with the TPSP, 109 parents had a child with a social care history, 89 of whom had a child who was then in care or involved with HSE Family Support Services. This shows that 15% of all new referrals to the TPSP had, at that time, children in care or involved with HSE Family Support Services.
- Six months later, when data was collected on 70 of the 89 parents, above, 7 of their children were no longer in contact with HSE Family Support Services.
- Of those who presented to the TPSP initially without a social care history, 43 children were involved with HSE Family Support Services six months later and 8 of these children were in care. One year after that, 22 of the 43 aforementioned children were no longer involved with HSE Family Support Services and an additional 13 children were now in contact with HSE Family Support Services.

CHAPTER TWELVE

NON-IRISH MOTHERS, TRAVELLER MOTHERS AND MOTHERS WITH REPEAT PREGNANCIES

Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the profile of three sub-groups of young parents who have been identified as vulnerable by TPSP project workers. These include young mothers who are non-Irish, mothers who are members of the Traveller community and mothers who presented to the TPSP for the first time when they were experiencing a repeat pregnancy. Comparisons will be made with the profile of Irish mothers, non Traveller mothers and mothers experiencing their first pregnancy.

This chapter includes the socio-demographic profiles of the subgroups as well as information on:

- contact with the fathers of their children
- supports used by the subgroups and
- sources of referral.

Non-Irish mothers

Between 2005 and 2008, 177 non-Irish parents (172 mothers and 5 fathers) engaged with the TPSP. This represents 11% of all referrals. This section refers to the 172 non-Irish mothers only. Comparisons are made with 1260 Irish mothers.

Comparison of non-Irish and Irish mothers when they first engaged with the TPSP

Table 12.1: Comparison of non-Irish and Irish mothers

Characteristic	Category	Non- Irish Mothers (172)		Irish Mothers (1260)	
		Percent	number	Percent	number
Location	Rural	29.1	(50)	32.1	(405)
	Urban	70.9	(122)	67.9	(855)
Age*	Under 15	3.5	(6)	.06	(8)
	15	8.8	(15)	5.0	(63)
	16	11.8	(20)	11.4	(144)
	17	20	(34)	25.6	(322)
	18	24.2	(41)	21.7	(273)
	19	21.2	(36)	23.2	(291)
	Over 19	10.5	(18)	12.5	(157)
	<i>Unknown</i>		(2)		(2)
Places of Origin	African	29.1	(50)		
	Eastern European	18.6	(32)		
	Other European	31.4	(54)		
	Other	20.9	(36)		
Highest Level of Education**	Leaving Certificate	18.5	(14)	32.4	(353)
	Junior Certificate only	59.2	(45)	54.4	(592)
	No Qualifications	22.3	(17)	13.2	(143)
	<i>Unknown</i>		(96)		(172)
Education/training Status*	In Education/training	29.2	(47)	48.2	(572)
	Not in Education/training	70.8	(114)	51.8	(615)
	<i>Unknown</i>		(11)		(73)
Accommodation*	Family	38.4	(66)	70.9	(893)
	Own Home/Private Rented	43.0	(74)	18.8	(237)
	Temporary	16.9	(29)	4.8	(60)
	In Care	0	(0)	1.7	(21)
	Other/Unknown	1.7	(3)	3.8	(49)
Social Care History (Mother)*	Yes	33.1	(46)	27.6	(305)
	No	66.9	(93)	72.4	(801)
	<i>Unknown</i>		(33)		(154)
Pregnancy status*	Antenatal	48.8	(82)	60.6	(744)
	Postnatal	51.2	(86)	39.4	(484)
	<i>Unknown</i>		(4)		(32)
Level of Need	High	38.9	(61)	30.4	(346)
	Medium	35	(55)	40	(456)
	Low	26.1	(41)	29.6	(337)
	<i>Inactive</i>		(15)		(121)

*Statistically significant difference between mothers who are non Irish and mothers who are Irish i.e. difference are not due to chance, $p \leq .05$

** Large number of unknowns for this characteristic.

Table 12.1 demonstrates that their location in Ireland and levels of need were similar for all mothers. Data on the educational attainment of 96 non-Irish mothers was unavailable. This may be due to the difficulty of making direct comparisons between Irish and other qualifications. The remaining mothers appear to have a lower level of formal qualifications than their Irish counterparts. However, due to the difficulties mentioned above, care must be taken when interpreting these results.

Statistically significant differences were noted for the following characteristics:

- 12% (21) of non-Irish mothers were aged 15 years and under compared to 6% (71) of Irish mothers.
- 17% (29) were living in temporary accommodation compared to 5% (60) of Irish mothers.
- 38% (66) were living with their family of origin compared to 71% (893) of Irish mothers.
- 33% (46) had a social care history compared to 28% (305) of Irish mothers.
- 51% (86) of non-Irish mothers were postnatal at initial referral compared to 39% (491) of Irish mothers and
- 29% (47) of non Irish mothers were in education or training compared to 48% (572) of Irish mothers.

Additional information

Of the 46 non Irish mothers with a social care history, 21 were from Africa, 11 were from Europe, 7 were from Eastern Europe and the remainder were from Asia or South America. Of the 29 who were living in temporary accommodation at their initial referral 5 of them were in Direct Provision. This profile, combined with anecdotal reporting from TPSP staff, suggests that some of this group may have been separated children and in contact with HSE Social Workers and other HSE supports for this reason.

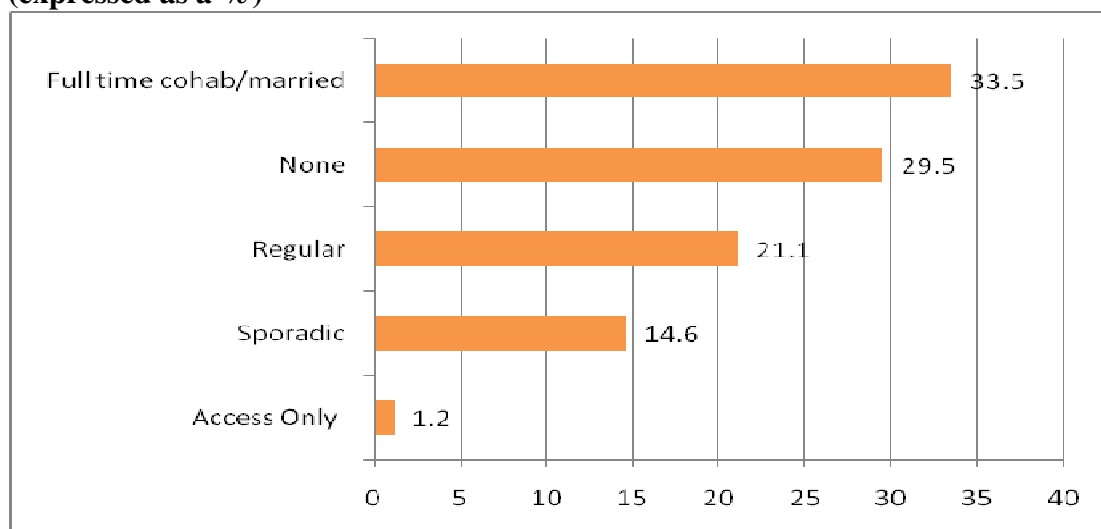
Contact with fathers

The contact arrangements between non-Irish mothers and the fathers of their children was unknown in 26 cases. For the 146 non-Irish mothers for whom this information was available, their level of contact with the fathers of their children differed from that of Irish mothers in the following ways:

- 34% (49) of non-Irish mothers were cohabiting full-time or married compared to 12% (145) of Irish mothers.
- In addition to the above, 21% (31) had regular contact compared to 41% (513) of Irish mothers and
- 30% (43) did not have any contact compared to 20% (247) of Irish mothers.

Overall, when one combines those who were cohabiting/married with those who otherwise had regular contact, both non-Irish mothers and Irish mothers were similar in this regard with 55% of non-Irish mothers having ongoing contact with the father of their children compared to 53% of Irish mothers.

Figure 12.1: Contact with fathers
(expressed as a %)



Supports for non-Irish mothers

Table 12.2 displays the range of support that young non-Irish mothers received on their initial referral to the TPSP.

Table 12.2: Supports to non-Irish mothers

Type of Support		Percent	Number
Emotional issues	Yes	88.4	(152)
	No	11.6	(20)
Health	Yes	80.2	(138)
	No	19.8	(34)
Parenting*	Yes	68	(117)
	No	32	(55)
Support with Relationships	Yes	46.5	(80)
	No	53.5	(92)
Housing	Yes	48.8	(84)
	No	51.2	(88)
Education*	Yes	52.3	(90)
	No	47.7	(82)
Training*	Yes	23.3	(40)
	No	76.7	(132)
Social Welfare Entitlements *	Yes	76.1	(131)
	No	23.9	(41)
Support with Intercultural Issues	Yes	73.3	(126)
	No	26.7	(46)

*Statistically significant difference between non Irish mothers and Irish mothers i.e. difference are not due to chance, $p \leq .05$

All mothers received similar support in relation to their emotional needs, health and housing. However, statistically significant differences arose between non-Irish mothers and Irish mothers for the following supports:

- 68% (117) of non-Irish mothers received some form of support with parenting at the initial referral, compared to 44% (554) of Irish mothers.
- 23% (40) of non-Irish mothers received support with training compared to 36% (458) of Irish mothers and
- 76% (131) of non-Irish mothers received support regarding their social welfare entitlement compared with 85% (1071) of Irish mothers.

Intercultural issues

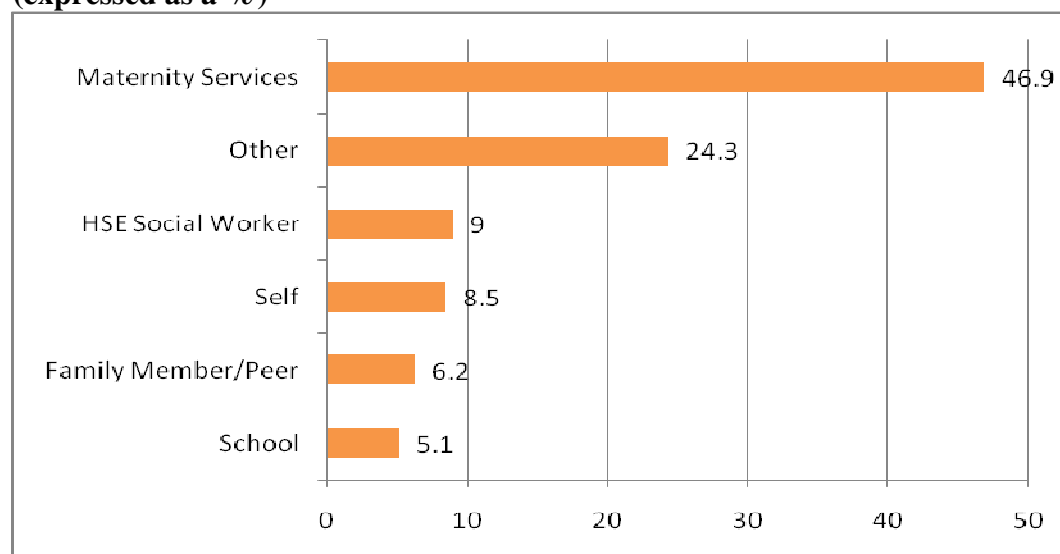
Intercultural issues refer to language barriers and/or lack of cultural understanding and how this may result in social isolation and/or impede access to social services, education and employment. Of the 172 non-Irish mothers who were referred to the TPSP, 73.2% (126) received support with intercultural issues, including:

- 35% (61) who received support with accessing services
- 6% (10) who received support in relation to childbirth and parenting practices in Ireland
- 10% (18) who received support regarding dual cultural issues i.e. where parents were from different cultural backgrounds
- 16% (27) who availed of English language support such as translation or interpretation and
- 6% (10) who received support with social isolation.

Referral sources for non-Irish mothers

Figure 12.2 shows that 47% (81) of non-Irish mothers made contact with the TPSP through maternity services, including 31% (53) who were referred by a medical social worker and 16% (27) who were referred by a midwife. This demonstrates the importance of the maternity services as a source of referral for non-Irish mothers particularly when compared to Irish mothers, of whom 30% (379) made contact in this way.

**Figure 12.2: Sources of referrals for non-Irish mothers
(expressed as a %)**



Summary for non-Irish mothers

- 172 non-Irish mothers engaged with the TPSP between 2005 and 2008.
- 12% (21) were aged 15 years and under compared to 6% (71) of Irish mothers.
- 33% (46) had a social care history compared to 28% (305) of Irish mothers.
- Non-Irish mothers appear to have lower educational attainments compared to Irish mothers but care must be taken in interpreting these results because of the difficulty of making direct comparisons between Irish and other qualifications
- 34% (49) were cohabiting or married compared to 12% (145) of Irish mothers.
- 73% (126) received support with coping in a new culture.
- 47% (81) were referred by maternity services compared to 30% (379) of Irish mothers.

Mothers from the Traveller Community

This section presents an overview of the 41 young mothers from the Traveller community who accounted for 3% of all mothers who were referred between 2005 and 2008.

Table 12.3: Comparison of Traveller and non-Traveller mothers when they both first engaged with the TPSP

Characteristic	Category	Traveller Mothers (41)		Non -Travellers (1391)	
		Percent	number	Percent	number
Location*	Rural	39	(16)	31.6	(440)
	Urban	61	(25)	68.4	(951)
Age*	Under 15	0	(0)	1.0	(14)
	15 or 16	24.4	(10)	17.4	(242)
	17	21.9	(9)	25.5	(354)
	18	29.3	(12)	21.8	(303)
	19	12.2	(5)	23.2	(322)
	Over 19	12.2	(5)	11.1	(153)
	Unknown				(3)
Education Attainment*	Leaving Certificate	0	(0)	32.2	(364)
	Junior Certificate only	41.4	(12)	55.0	(620)
	No Qualifications	58.6	(17)	12.8	(145)
	Unknown		(12)		(262)
Education/training Status*	In Education/training	10.0	(4)	47.3	(619)
	Not in Education/training	90.0	(36)	52.7	(690)
	Unknown		(1)		(82)
Accommodation	Family	58.5	(24)	67.3	(936)
	Own Home	9.8	(4)	1.8	(25)
	Private Rented	12.2	(5)	19.9	(277)
	Temporary/Other/Unknown	19.5	(8)	11.0	(153)
Social Care History*	Yes	48.6	(18)	27.6	(333)
	No	51.4	(19)	72.4	(874)
	Unknown		(4)		(184)
Pregnancy Status	Antenatal	62.5	(25)	59.0	(810)
	Postnatal	37.5	(15)	41.0	(563)
	Unknown		(1)		(18)
Level of Need*	High	59	(20)	30.5	(386)
	Medium	20.5	(7)	39.9	(506)
	Low	20.5	(7)	29.6	(375)
	Inactive		(7)		(124)

*Statistically significant difference between Travellers and non-Travellers i.e. difference are not due to chance, $p \leq .05$.

Table 12.3 shows that the profile of Traveller and non-Traveller mothers was broadly similar in relation to their pregnancy status at initial referral. However statistically significant differences arose between the two groups for the following characteristics:

- 39% (16) of Traveller mothers were living in rural areas compared to 32% (440) of non-Traveller mothers
- 24% (10) of Traveller mothers were under 16 years of age compared to 18% (256) of other mothers
- No Traveller mother was under 15 years of age
- The educational attainment of 12 Traveller mothers was unknown. Of the remaining 29, no Traveller mother had her Leaving Certificate compared to 32% (364) of other mothers
- 59% (17) had no qualifications compared to 13% (145) of other mothers
- 49% (18) of Traveller mothers had a social care history compared to 28% (333) of other mothers
- 59% (20) of Traveller mothers were classified as having a high level of need compared to 31% (386) of other mothers
- 10% (4) of Traveller mothers were in education/training compared to 47 % (619) of other mothers.

Additional information

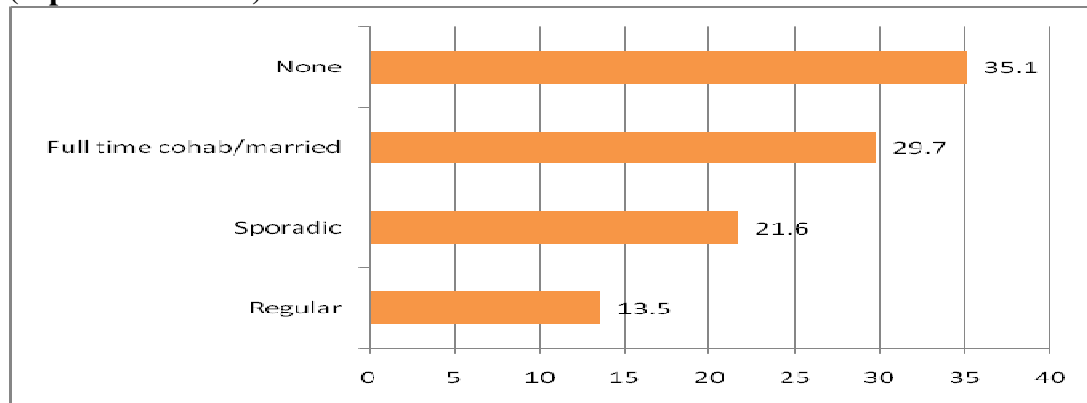
- One Traveller woman (3%) was in employment compared to 12% (159) of other mothers
- 70% (23) of Traveller mothers left education/training before their pregnancy compared to 35% (415) of non-Traveller mothers.

Contact with fathers

When they first engaged with the TPSP, the level of contact that Traveller mothers had with the fathers of their children was unknown in 4 cases. Of the 37 for whom this information was available, 30% (11) were either married or cohabiting compared to 15% (185) of other mothers. At the other end of the spectrum, 35% (13) had no contact with the fathers of their children compared to 20% of non-Traveller mothers.

Figure 12.3: Contact with fathers

(expressed as a %)



Supports received by Traveller mothers

Table 12.4: Supports received by Traveller mothers

Type of Support		Number	Percent
Emotional issues	Yes	34	82.9
	No	7	17.1
Health issues *	Yes	35	85.4
	No	6	14.6
Parenting*	Yes	29	70.7
	No	12	29.3
Support with Relationships	Yes	22	53.7
	No	19	46.3
Housing *	Yes	29	70.7
	No	12	29.3
Education*	Yes	13	31.7
	No	28	68.3
Training*	Yes	8	19.5
	No	33	80.5
Childcare Issues*	Yes	9	22
	No	32	78
Social Welfare Entitlements *	Yes	19	95
	No	1	5
	Data not available	(21)	
Support with Intercultural Issues*	Yes	18	43.9
	No	23	56.1

*Statistically significant difference between Traveller and non Traveller mothers
i.e. difference are not due to chance, $p \leq .05$

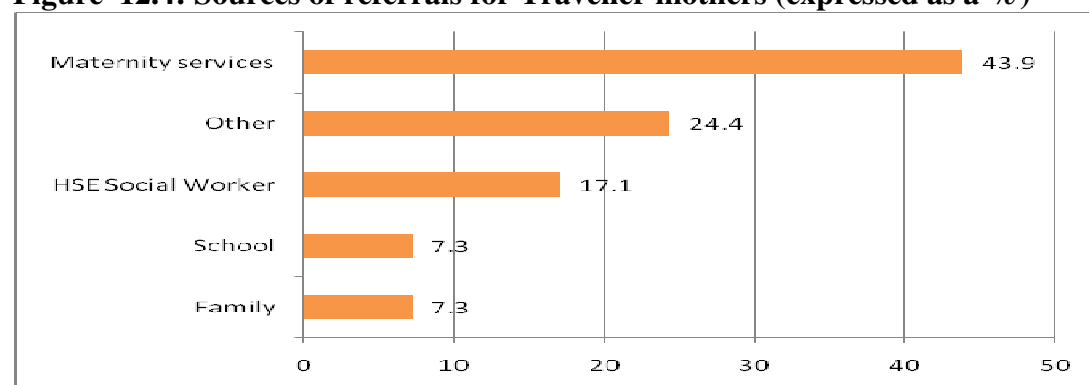
With the exception of support with emotional issues, young Traveller mothers received different patterns of support compared to other mothers. Statistically significant differences were identified in relation to the following supports:

- 22% (9) of Traveller mothers received support in relation to childcare compared to 43% (597) of other mothers.
- 32% (13) of Traveller mothers received support in relation to education compared to 57% (799) of other mothers.
- 95% (19) received support with accessing social welfare entitlements compared to 80% (1112) of other mothers.
- 70% (29) of Traveller mothers received support in relation to housing compared to 51% (709) of other mothers.
- 69% (28) of Traveller mothers received support with parenting compared to 47% (658) of other mothers.
- 85% (35) of Traveller mothers received support with health compared to 80% (1111) of other mothers and
- 44% (18) of Traveller mothers received support with intercultural issues. This includes issues which arose when the other parent was from the non-Traveller community.

Sources of referrals for Traveller mothers

Figure 12.4 shows that 44% (17) of Traveller mothers made contact with the TPSP through maternity services. This is similar to other mothers of whom 40% (561) made contact with the TPSP in this way.

Figure 12.4: Sources of referrals for Traveller mothers (expressed as a %)



Summary for mothers from the Traveller community

- In total, 41 young Traveller mothers engaged with the TPSP between 2005 and 2008.
- 49% (18) of Traveller mothers had a social care history compared to 28% (333) of non-Traveller mothers.
- 10% (4) of Traveller mothers were in education/training compared to 47% (619) of non-Traveller mothers.
- 30% (11) of Traveller mothers were either married or cohabiting compared to 15% (185) of other mothers.
- When they first engaged with the TPSP, 35% (13) of Traveller mothers reported no contact of any kind with the fathers of their children compared to 20% of other mothers.
- 70% (29) of Traveller mothers received support with housing compared to 51% (709) of other mothers.
- 69% (29) of Traveller mothers received support with parenting compared to 47% (658) of other mothers and
- 44% (18) of Traveller mothers received support with intercultural issues. This includes issues that arose when the other parents were from the settled community.

Mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy when they first engaged with the TPSP

In total, 5% (70) of all young mothers were pregnant with or had given birth to their second/third child when they first engaged with the TPSP.

Table 12.5: Comparison of Mothers with a repeat pregnancy and mothers with a first pregnancy when they both first engaged with the TPSP

Characteristic		2 nd /3 rd Child (70)		1 st Child (1379)	
		% (number)		% (number)	
Location*	Rural	24.3	(17)	32.0	(441)
	Urban	75.7	(53)	68.0	(938)
Age*	Under 15	0	(0)	1	(14)
	15	0	(0)	6.3	(87)
	16	2.9	(2)	12.2	(167)
	17	8.6	(6)	26.2	(360)
	18	24.3	(17)	21.9	(301)
	19	31.4	(22)	22.6	(310)
	Over 19	32.8	(23)	9.8	(135)
	<i>Unknown</i>				(5)
Highest Level of Education*	Leaving Certificate	25.9	(16)	31.6	(348)
	Junior Certificate only	53.4	(31)	54.8	(602)
	No Qualifications	20.7	(12)	13.6	(150)
	<i>Unknown</i>		(11)		(279)
Education/ training Status*	In Education/training	21.5	(15)	47.5	(608)
	Not in Education/training	78.5	(55)	52.5	(671)
	<i>Unknown</i>				(100)
Accommodation*	Family	10.0	(7)	69.1	(953)
	Own Home/Private Rented	40.0	(28)	20.5	(283)
	Temporary	42.9	(30)	4.3	(59)
	In care	0	0	1.7	23
	Other/Unknown	7.1	(5)	4.4	(61)
Social care history*	Yes	50.0	(30)	27.1	(321)
	No	50.0	(30)	72.9	(864)
	<i>Unknown</i>		(10)		(194)
Pregnancy status*	Antenatal	47.1	(33)	60.2	(819)
	Postnatal	52.9	(37)	39.8	(541)
	<i>Unknown</i>				(19)
Level of Need*	High	44.3	(31)	30.3	(375)
	Medium	24.3	(17)	40.1	(496)
	Low	22.9	(16)	29.6	(366)
	Inactive		(6)		(142)

*Statistically significant difference between mothers with a repeat pregnancy when they first engaged with the TPSP and mothers with a first pregnancy when they first engaged with the TPSP i.e. difference are not due to chance, $p \leq .05$

Table 12.5 demonstrates that, in all characteristics, there were statistically significant differences between mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy and first time mothers.

For example:

- 64% (45) of mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy were aged 19 years or older compared to 32% (445) of first time mothers.
- 26% (16) of mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy had completed their Leaving Certificate compared to 32% (348) of first time mothers. This is despite the older age profile of the mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy.
- 22% (15) of mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy were in education/training at initial referral compared to 48% (610) of first time mothers. This may relate in part to the older age profile of mothers with a repeat pregnancy.
- 40% (28) of mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy were living in private rented accommodation or owned their own home compared to 21% (283) of first time mothers.
- 43% (30) of mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy were living in temporary accommodation compared to 4.3% (59) of first time mothers. No mother with a repeat pregnancy was living in care.
- 50% (30) of mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy had a social care history compared to 27% (321) of first time mothers.
- 53% (37) of mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy presented to the TPSP postnatal compared to 40% (541) of first time mothers and
- 44% (31) of mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy were classified as having a high level of need compared to 30% (375) of first time mothers.

Additional information

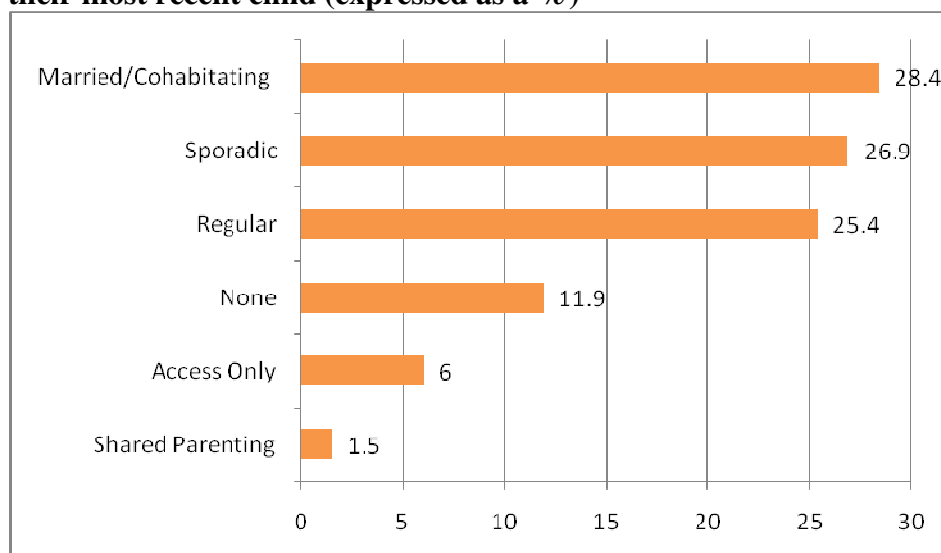
- No mother with a repeat pregnancy was living in care. This is compared to 23 first time mothers.
- When they first engaged with the TPSP 25% (16) of mothers with a repeat pregnancy had children with a social care history compared to 7% (87) of first time mothers.

- 45% (32) of mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy were dissatisfied with their accommodation compared to 30% (367) of first time mothers.
- 17% (12) of mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy were in employment compared to 12% (149) first time mothers and
- 49% (34) of mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy were early school leavers compared to 29% of all mothers.

Contact with fathers

Overall, mothers who were experiencing a repeat pregnancy were more likely to have some form of contact with the fathers of their children compared to first time mothers. Combining those who were cohabiting/married with those who otherwise had regular contact or shared parenting, Figure 12.5 shows that 55% (39) had consistent contact with the father of their most recent child. Figure 12.5 also shows that 12% (8) of mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy had no contact with the fathers of their most recent children compared to 21% (252) of first time mothers.

Figure 12.5: Contact between mothers with a repeat pregnancy and the father of their most recent child (expressed as a %)



Supports used by mothers with a repeat pregnancy

Table 12.6 Supports used by mothers with a repeat pregnancy

Type of Support		Number	Percent
Emotional issues	Yes	61	87.1
	No	9	12.9
Health issues	Yes	57	81.4
	No	13	18.6
Parenting*	Yes	48	68.6
	No	22	31.4
Support with Relationships	Yes	41	58.6
	No	29	41.4
Housing	Yes	43	61.4
	No	27	38.6
Education*	Yes	24	34.3
	No	46	65.7
Training*	Yes	28	40.0
	No	42	60.0
Childcare	Yes	37	52.9
	No	33	47.1
Social Welfare Entitlements	Yes	40	85.1
	No	7	14.9
Unknown		(23)	

*Statistically significant difference between mothers with a repeat pregnancy and mothers with a first pregnancy i.e. difference are not due to chance, $p \leq .05$

The uptake of various TPSP supports by mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy followed a similar pattern to that of first time mothers. However, statistically significant differences were noted between the two groups in relation to the following supports:

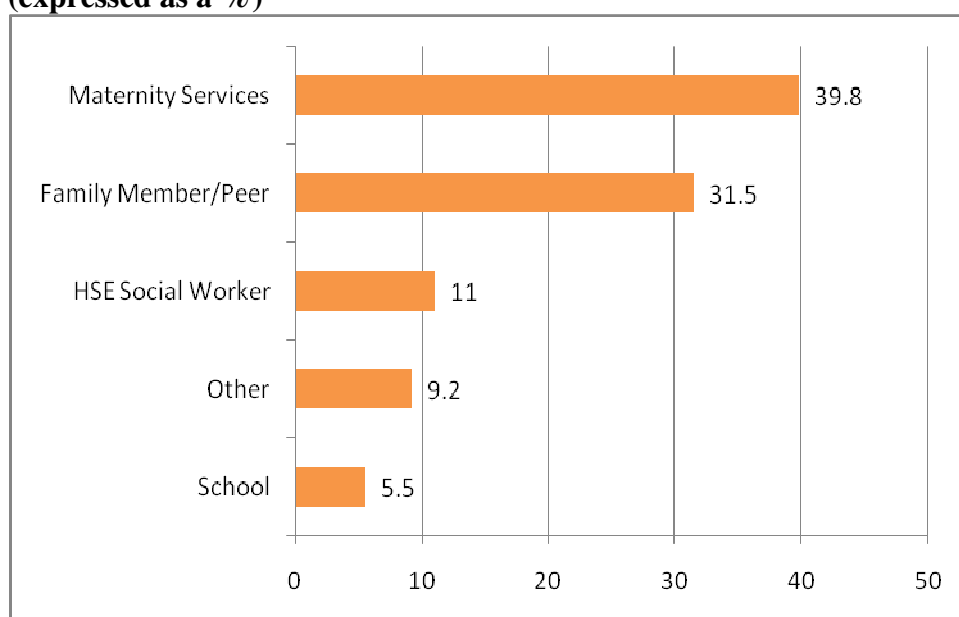
- 69% (46) of mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy received support with parenting compared to 58% (803) of first time mothers.
- 34% (24) of mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy received support with education compared to 57% of first time mothers and
- 41% (28) of mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy received support with training, compared to 35% (479) of first time mothers.

Sources of referrals

In common with all mothers the majority 40% (28) of young mothers with a repeat pregnancy made contact with the TPSP through maternity services. However they

differed from other mothers in that 32% (28) of mothers with a repeat pregnancy made initial contact through a family member or peer.

Figure 12.6: Sources of referrals for mothers with a repeat pregnancy (expressed as a %)



Summary for mothers with a repeat pregnancy

- In total, 70 young mothers were experiencing a repeat pregnancy when they first engaged with the TPSP.
- 44% (31) were classified as having a high level of need compared to 30% (375) of first time mothers.
- 64% (45) were aged 19 years or older compared to 32% (445) of other mothers.
- 50 % (30) had a social care history compared to 27% (321) of other mothers.
- 22% (15) were in education/training compared to 48% (610) of first time mothers. This may relate in part to the older age profile of mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy.
- 49% (34) were early school leavers.
- In general mothers experiencing a repeat pregnancy were more likely to have contact with the father of their child than were first time mothers.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This analysis provides an insight into the profile and experiences of teen parents who engaged with the TPSP between 2005 and 2008. It makes no claim to be representative of all teen parents in Ireland. Nonetheless, given the numbers involved, it does offer an indication of what a representative study might find. What emerges from this analysis is a diverse group of young parents from a variety of backgrounds, with widely different life experiences before becoming parents and with varying levels of need.

Almost all mothers who engaged with the TPSP had their own pre-existing social networks consisting mainly of their families and/or the fathers of their children. At the same time almost all mothers received emotional support from the TPSP and almost half of them received support regarding their relationships. This highlights the need for these types of support at a time of crisis (such as a crisis pregnancy) to enable young people to maintain relationships which can then continue to be their primary source of support in the future.

Almost one third of all mothers presented with high levels of need. Among these mothers, TPSP staff had identified particular categories that are especially vulnerable and this is borne out by the analysis. Both non-Irish mothers and Traveller mothers were likely to be younger than other mothers. Together with mothers who had a repeat pregnancy and mothers with a social care history, they presented with particularly high levels of need, low educational attainment and high rates of living in temporary accommodation. In addition, mothers with a social care history were more likely to experience repeat pregnancies and mothers with a repeat pregnancy were more likely to have children who were in care or in contact with HSE Family Support Services.

This analysis does not explore the situation of fathers who made contact with the TPSP as a result of the mothers of their children being involved with the Programme. Although only a small number of fathers engaged with the TPSP separately from the mothers of their children their numbers increased annually over the period when the data was collected. As a group, the 73 fathers in this analysis presented as very disadvantaged with their rates of early school leaving almost twice that of mothers and with accompanying very high rates of unemployment. In addition almost half of the mothers of their children had a social care history indicating that they also are very vulnerable. The high take-up by fathers of support with relationships and support in relation to parenting suggests that these young men need support in order to be involved in the lives of their children and to share parenting with the mothers of their children. Unlike young mothers, the majority of fathers made contact with the TPSP either directly or through family members. This suggests that there may be a need to raise awareness of the needs of young fathers among other potential sources of referral.

Very little is known generally of the level of contact between teen mothers and the fathers of their children and the extent to which contact is maintained over time. This analysis shows that, when they first engaged with the TPSP, the majority of young mothers had contact at some level with the fathers of their children. Analysis of those who were followed up indicates that most of them maintained contact at some level over an eighteen month period with a large increase in the number who were married or cohabiting. At the same time, the analysis shows that approximately one in five parents do not have any contact with each other and this is a cause of concern for the children involved.

A key aim of the TPSP is to support young parents to return to or remain in education if that is their choice. At their initial referral to the TPSP, almost half of all young parents were in education/training the majority of whom were in second level education. The analysis illustrates the importance of the School Completion Programme in helping young parents complete or return to education/training.

At the same time, the educational attainment of young parents who were not in education indicates that early school leaving is an issue for this group. The rate of early school leaving for young mothers who engaged with the TPSP was more than twice the national average and the majority of early school leavers had left school before their pregnancies. Two thirds of young mothers sought education related support indicating a strong desire to complete their education. Exceptions to this are non-Irish mothers, Traveller mothers and young mothers with a social care history who may require additional encouragement and support in this area.

With regards to childcare, for young parents who engaged with the TPSP the maternal grandmother was the main childminder. This is similar to the situation of all mothers of infants in Ireland. *The Infants and their Families*, the first report of the Growing Up In Ireland Study (National Longitudinal Study of Children), shows that the majority of child minding of infants in Ireland is ‘home based’ and that the majority of home-based childcare is provided by grandparents and ‘in most cases the grandmother’ (Williams, Greene, McNally, Murray and Quail, 2010). This analysis highlights the importance of childcare in enabling young parents to participate in education and employment. Young parents with an unmet childcare need were less likely to be in education, training or employment and more likely to be early school leavers. They were also less likely to be living in the family home. This suggests that while a large portion of young mothers who engage with the TPSP can call on family for support with childcare, there is a lack of affordable provision in the formal childcare sector.

This analysis illustrates the diverse needs of young parents. The majority accessed support with practical issues such as health, accommodation, education, childcare and information about their entitlements. In addition the analysis shows the need for emotional support and support with relationships and parenting. The high uptake of all supports is an indication of the responsiveness of TPSP staff to the needs of the young people with whom they work. For example, the high level of support received

by non-Irish mothers in relation to cultural issues demonstrates the capacity of the TPSP to cater to the complex and sometimes unique needs of their service users.

Working in partnership with external agencies is a key aspect of the work of the TPSP. The fact that, for three out of four young parents, TPSP staff liaised with or worked closely with at least one other agency is an indication that TPSPs are an important part of Family Support Services in their areas.

Finally, the majority of young parents first made contact with the TPSP before the birth of their children. The ability of the TPSP to reach young vulnerable parents at this stage illustrates the importance of their referral systems, particularly maternity services and schools, and the importance of the Programme in terms of early intervention with these young people. At the same time this raises an issue for young fathers who do not generally engage with maternity services and are more likely to be outside the formal education system.

Recommendations

Targeting groups at greater risk of teen pregnancy

Evidence suggesting that some teens are particularly “at risk” of teen pregnancy, in particular early school leavers and teens with a social care history (Fullerton 2004), is borne out by this analysis. Generally, relationship and sexual education is only available in formal school settings (Fullerton 2004, Mayock and Byrne 2004, Social Inclusion Unit, 1999) and, therefore, those not engaged with formal education (such as early school leavers) cannot access it. Youth or community based services that combine education, youth development and contraception service have been found to be effective, particularly with teens living in disadvantaged areas or who have a poor academic record (Fullerton 2004).

Recommendations:

- Increase the availability of relationship and sex education at the informal community level, for example youth clubs etc.

- Introduce targeted relationship and sex education programmes towards early school leavers and young people living in care

Expansion of the School Completion Programme

Currently eight of the eleven TPSPs have access to funding from the School Completion Programme with three TPSPs having minimum funding.

Recommendation:

- Extend the School Completion Programme to all TPSPs and provide them with sufficient funding to meet the needs of the young parents who wish to remain in or return to education.

Access to affordable childcare

This analysis highlights the importance of access to affordable childcare in enabling young parents to participate in education or training.

Recommendations:

- Introduce a childcare grant for all primary care givers who are in second level education such as the scheme that operates in Northern Ireland
- or**
- Expand the CETS scheme of the OMC to include primary care givers who are in second level education and extend it to include registered child minders.

Supporting young fathers in their parenting roles

This analysis shows that young fathers do not appear to have access to the sources that refer young mothers to the TPSP and that, in this regard, most fathers rely on their own initiative or on family members. It also shows that young fathers need a high level of support with the relationships in their lives and with parenting skills.

Recommendation:

- That the TPSP be resourced to develop strategies to engage with young fathers and to deliver appropriate supports to them.

Appendix A

TPSP Managing Organisations

Dublin

Ballyfermot, Bluebell & Inchicore

The Base Youth Centre
Ballyfermot
Dublin 10
Tel: 01-6546806

Dublin 5, 13 & 17
Parts of Dublin 3 & 9

Doras Buí
Coolock
Dublin 17
Tel: 01-8484811

Drimnagh, Crumlin,
Dublin 24
Parts of Dublin 8

Barnardos
10 Newlands Business Park
Dublin 22
Tel: 01-4032081

Finglas

Barnardos
Mater Christi Secondary School
Cappagh Road
Dublin 11
Tel: 01-8041765

Carlow /Kilkenny

St. Catherine's Community Service Centre
St. Joseph's Road
Carlow
Tel: 059-9138799

Cork

St. Anne's Day Nursery
34 Paul Street
Cork
Tel: 021-4222987

Donegal

Foróige
2 Cedar House
Main Street
Ballybofey
Co. Donegal
Tel: 074-9190141

Galway

HSE
Social Work Department
University College Hospital
Galway
Tel: 091 544960

Limerick

Limerick Social Services Council
Upper Henry Street
Limerick
Tel: 061 411643

Louth

HSE
Floor 3 Nurses Residence
Our Lady of Lourdes
Hospital Drogheda Co. Louth
Tel: 041 9875273

Wexford

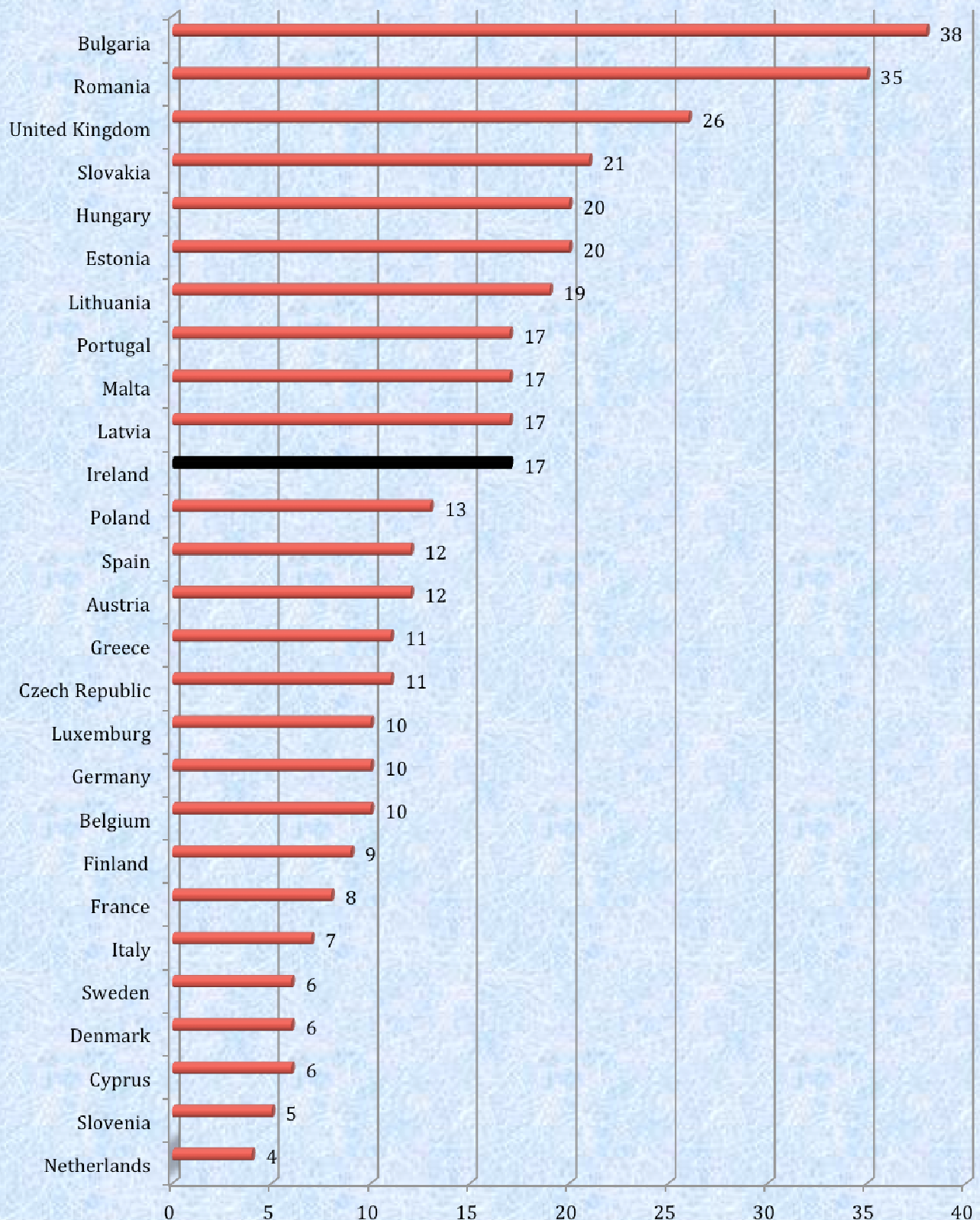
Barnardos
16 North Parade
Gorey
Co. Wexford
Tel: 053-9481014

***National
Co-ordinator***

Treoir
14 Gandon House
Custom House Square
IFSC
Dublin 1
Tel: 01-6700120

Appendix B

Adolescent Fertility Rate EU 27 2000 - 2007



http://www.who.int/whosis/whostat/EN_WHS10_Full.pdf
pages 158 - 165

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Young Parenthood - facts and challenges.
An analysis of the users of the Teen Parents Support Programme
2005 – 2008



teenparents
support programme

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