

The Teen Parents Support Programme

Summary of Work 2018



Introduction The Teen Parents Support Programme (TPSP) consists of eleven separate projects which are located throughout the country in a range of statutory, community and voluntary organisations (see TPSP contact details at the end of this Summary). These projects are funded by Tusla and the HSE.

Each project offers interventions that promote and enhance the well-being of pregnant and parenting teens and their children. As part of an interagency approach to family support, TPSP staff begin their engagement with the young people at a critical early point of pregnancy/parenthood. They then work with them to build their capacity both as young parents and as adolescents moving towards early adulthood.

During 2018 there were 282 new referrals to the TPSP. This brings to 7,435 the number of young parents who, together with their children, partners and families, have received this service since the TPSP was established in 2000. One of the aspirations of the TPSP is that eventually all teen parents in Ireland will have access to this model of support.

The TPSP works with young people who become parents when they are aged 19 years or under and, where needed, supports them until their children are 2 years of age.

Support is offered in all areas of the young person's life – parenting, health, relationships, education, training, childcare, housing, social welfare entitlements, legal issues and anything else about which the young person is concerned.

Grandparents and other family members involved with the young parents may also be supported.

Young people may make contact directly with the TPSP. Referrals are also made by professionals and anyone interested in the welfare of the young parent and his/her child.

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

Young parents with higher needs at Levels 3 and 4 on the Hardiker scale are also supported with specific additional interventions (such as support with parenting skills or independent living) as part of an interagency approach to family support.

In 2018, **37%** of all new referrals to the TPSP had needs located at Hardiker Level 3 compared to **30% in 2017** and **5%** of all new referrals had needs located at Hardiker Level 4 compared to **3%** in 2017.

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

Summary of Teen Births in Ireland 2008-2018

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

Year	Number of Births	Fertility Rate*
2008	2,426	17.0
2009	2,223	16.3
2010	2,019	15.0
2011	1,720	12.5
2012	1,639	12.2
2013	1,381	10.4
2014	1,253	9.3
2015	1,187	8.7
2016	1,098	7.8
2017	1041	6.9
2018	980	6.3

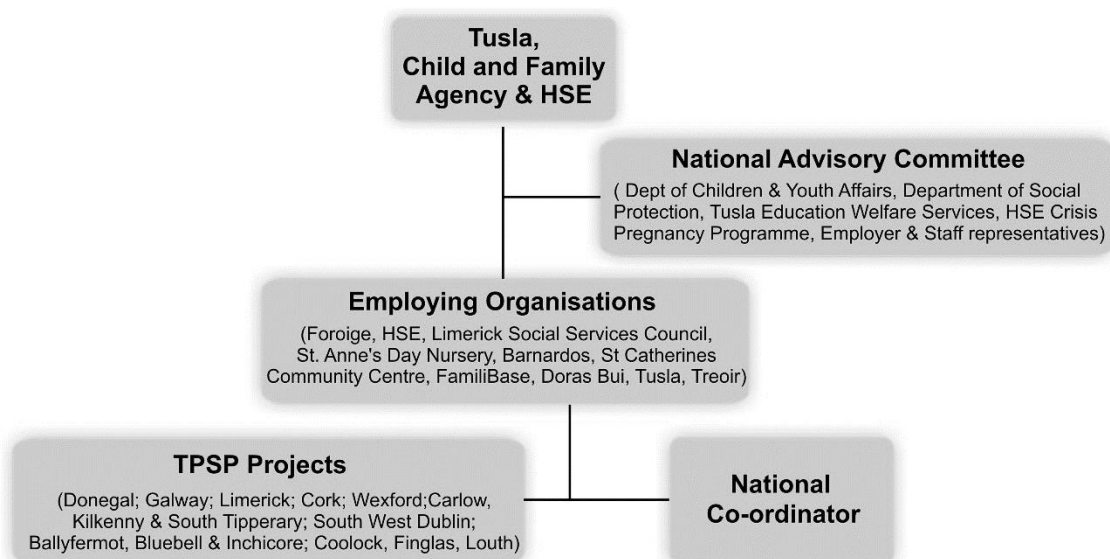
Sources: CSO Vital Statistics, Yearly Summary 2018

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

In 2018, when the births to teen mothers were registered, 141 mothers (14%) were described by the CSO as married or in a civil partnership and an additional 208 mothers (22%) were described as living at the same address as the father of their child.

In 2018, there were 22 births to mothers aged 15 years or under and 11 referrals to the TPSP of mothers in this age group. In 2018, there were 57 births to mothers aged 16 years and 26 referrals to the TPSP of mothers in this age group.

Structure of the Teen Parents Support Programme

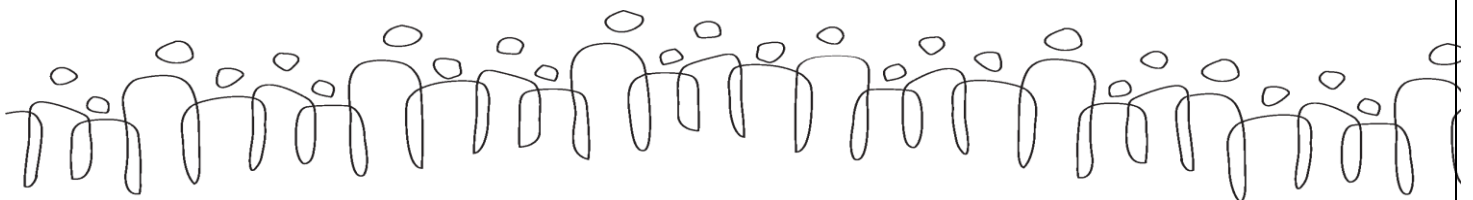


Summary of contact in 2018 with young parents and their families

- 898** The number of young parents, their children and other family members who were offered support in 2018
- 282** The number who presented for support for the first time:
- 246 mothers
 - 35 fathers
 - 1 grandmother
- 13** The number who had engaged with the service previously and presented again for support in 2018.
- 12 mothers
 - 1 father
- 268** The number who were referred in earlier years and continued to receive support during 2018 and into 2019:
- 258 mothers
 - 10 fathers
- 335** The number of young parents and other family members for whom support ended in 2018:
- 294 mothers
 - 36 fathers
 - 4 grandmothers
 - 1 other family members

In addition, in 2018, as a result of the mother/father of their child engaging with the projects the TPSP had some contact with **360** other young parents:

- 275 fathers
- 85 mothers



Young mothers

During 2018, 810 young mothers engaged with the TPSP. Of these:

- 77% were Irish and 7% were Irish Travellers.
- 18% were aged 16 or under when referred to the TPSP
- 35% were known to have a social care history*
- 29% were described in 2018 as either Level 3 or Level 4 on the Hardiker scale.
- 12% had at least one repeat birth.

Of the 810 young mothers supported in 2018, 52% had been referred by maternity services and 7% by Tusla Social Workers.

**For the purpose of this Summary 'social care history' refers to current or previous engagement with Tusla Family Support Services, including young people currently or previously in care.*

Education

Fewer than half of the mothers supported in 2018 were in education or training. An analysis of those whose educational attainment was known shows that 47% of those not in education were early school leavers i.e. had left school without their Leaving Certificate with 20% of them not having a Junior Certificate. The analysis also shows that 27% of the early school leavers left school during their pregnancy. In 2018 fewer than half of the early school leavers were living with their family of origin, 48% had a social care history and 44% presented with very high welfare or care needs.

Accommodation

In 2018, 72% of all the young mothers supported were living in a family home (either with their family of origin, a sibling, the family of their child's father or in foster care) while 17% were in private rented accommodation. The remaining 11% had a variety of living arrangements including 33 who were living in homeless accommodation, 10 in supported accommodation, 3 in direct provision and 1 (whose child was in care) was sleeping rough.

Employment

Of the 810 mothers supported in 2018, 18% were in employment. These were in the older age range supported, had a lower level of need and higher educational attainments than those supported overall. For example, 13% were described as having high welfare/care needs compared to 29% overall. In terms of education, all had at least their Junior Cert with 51% having completed their Leaving Certificate and an additional 26% having a PLC or 3rd Level qualification.

Social Protection

Most mothers (60%) were in receipt of the One Parent Family Payment (OFP) while 16% were on Jobseekers Allowance, 7% were on a Training Allowance and a further 7% were dependents of a Social Welfare Recipient. The remainder were on a Disability Allowance, Back to Education Allowance, The Working Family Payment, Supplementary Welfare Allowance and Carer's Allowance, in that order. A large group (17%) of those supported were reported to have no income. Most of these young people were under 18 years of age and antenatal. However, others were non-Irish nationals who were not able to satisfy the Habitual Residence condition.

Childcare

Regarding childcare needs, 31% of mothers who were postnatal did not have childcare. Many of these mothers (85%) were not in education or employment although some of them would have benefitted from childcare as respite for themselves and as stimulation for their children. The remaining 15% had an unmet childcare need or their childcare needs were only partially met. Most of those (55%) who had childcare used a creche. Where home-based childcare was used this was provided mainly by the maternal grandmother (76%), by another family member (12%) or by a private childminder (12%).

Mothers with a Social Care History

Of the 810 young mothers supported 35% (280) had a social care history. Of these, over a quarter (28%) were aged 16 years or under when they were referred to the TPSP. They had a lower level of educational attainment compared to all mothers supported with 63% not in any form of education or training. Of those not in education or training, 59% were early school leavers compared to 49% of all mothers supported. They were also more likely to experience a housing crisis with 10% of them living in homeless accommodation compared to 5% of all mothers supported.

Children with a Social Care History

In 2018, there were 104 children who had previous or current involvement with Tusla Social Work Services. These include 12 children who had previously spent time in care and 2 children who had were in care when the data was collected in 2018. The TPSP data shows that 83% of the mothers of these children also had current or previous involvement with Tusla Social Workers.

Irish Traveller Mothers

In 2018 the TPSP supported 59 young mothers who are Irish Travellers. In 80% of cases these young mothers were referred by maternity services compared to 52% of all mothers. They tended to be older than other young mothers supported with 7% of them aged 16 years or under compared to 28% of all the young mothers supported. In terms of education, however, they were very disadvantaged compared to all young mothers supported. For example, 43 (73%) of the young Traveller mothers were not in education and only 4 of them had completed their Leaving Certification leaving 39 (66%) early school leavers compared 47% of all the young mothers supported. In 2018, 70% of young Traveller mothers were living in a family home (either with their family of origin, a sibling, the family of their child's father or in foster care) which is similar to all mothers supported. However, 10 of them were living in a halting site and 3 of them were in homeless accommodation.

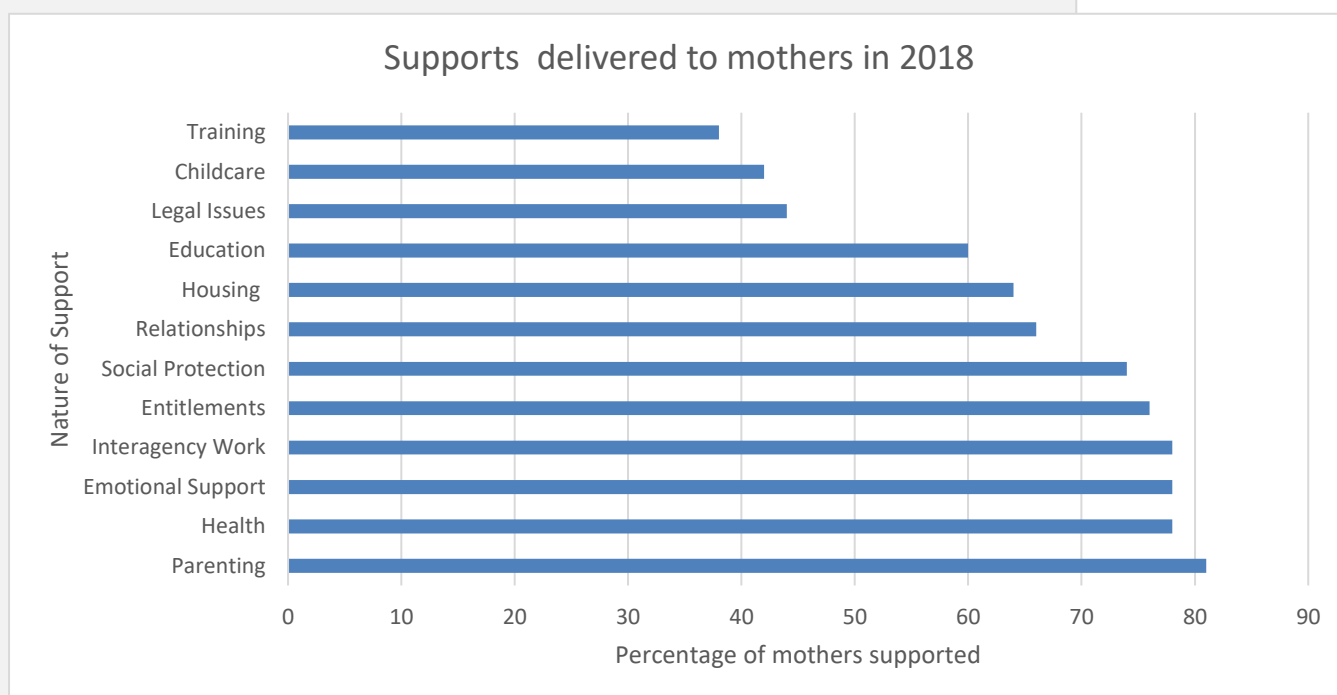
Non-Irish Mothers

In 2018 the TPSP also supported 110 non-Irish mothers, 13 of whom were English and 4 of whom were from other parts of Western Europe. In the case of 5 mothers, their nationality was not specified. The remaining 88 mothers represented 30 different nationalities. These included:

- 25 who were Polish
- 12 from other parts of Eastern Europe
- 18 who identified as Roma
- 18 from various African countries
- 8 from South America and
- 7 from Asia.

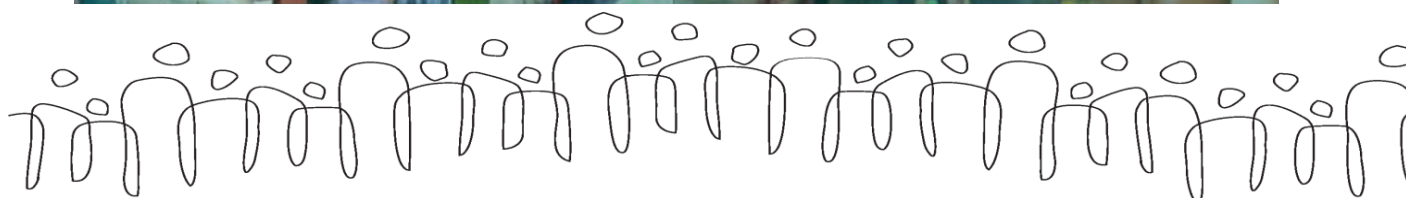
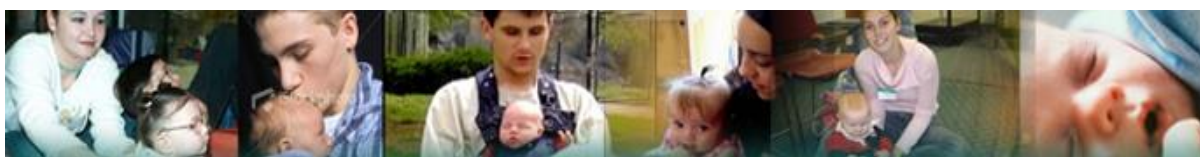
These young mothers received additional support with accessing services, understanding Irish birth and parenting practices, resolving dual cultural issues (where parents are from different ethnic backgrounds) as well as support in relation to entitlements and habitual residence requirements.

Supports to all young mothers in 2018



The Chart above shows, in percentage terms, the areas in which all young mothers received support in 2018. While most support was delivered on a one-to-one basis, where opportunities arose TPSP staff organised Groups and Programmes, including evidence-based parenting programmes, either on an ongoing basis or in response to specific identified needs. In total 244 young mothers attended one of these Groups or Programmes while 57 availed of TPSP- based antenatal classes tailored to meet the needs of young expectant mothers.

The TPSP works in close partnership with all local organisations, agencies and services available to a young parent such as family support services, health services, schools, housing agencies and relevant non-governmental agencies. This partnership takes the form of collaboration and mutual referral systems. In 2018, the TPSP liaised with other agencies on behalf of 76% of all its young mothers. In order of frequency, most contact took place with the following: Tusla Family Support Services (including social workers, aftercare workers and Meitheal); Local Authorities & Housing Agencies combined; Maternity Services; Educational Institutions (Second and Third Level institutions, combined); Department of Social Protection representatives (formerly CWOs); Training Organisations; Public Health Nurses; Childcare Providers; Counselling Services and Youth Services. There was also contact with Disability Services, services for those who are victims of domestic violence, CICs and non-governmental organization providing family support, such as Lifestart and others.



Young fathers

In 2018, 82 fathers engaged with the TPSP separately from the mothers of their children. Of these:

- 72% were Irish and 7% were Irish Travellers.
- 7% were 16 years or under when referred to the TPSP
- 37% were known to have a social care history.
- 36% had needs at Hardiker Levels 3 or 4.

This profile is broadly like that of the young mothers. Regarding the mothers of their children, however, 48% had a social care history compared to 35% of all mothers who engaged with the TPSP and 10% of the mothers of their children at least one other child. Most of young fathers self-referred to the TPSP having heard about the Programme through the mother of their child, a peer or a family member.

Education

Of the 82 young fathers supported in 2018, one-third (33%) were in education or training. Of the remainder, 39% were early school leavers i.e. had left school without their Leaving Certificate and 11% did not have a Junior Certificate. Of these early school leavers, 62% had a social care history and 65% of them were described as having high welfare or social care needs.

Employment

Of the fathers supported, 31% were in employment. Like the mothers who were working these young fathers were also in the older age range supported, had a lower level of need and higher educational attainments than those supported overall. All of those in employment had at least their Junior Certificate with 50% having the Leaving Certificate and an additional 18% having a Post Leaving Cert course (PLC).

Social Protection

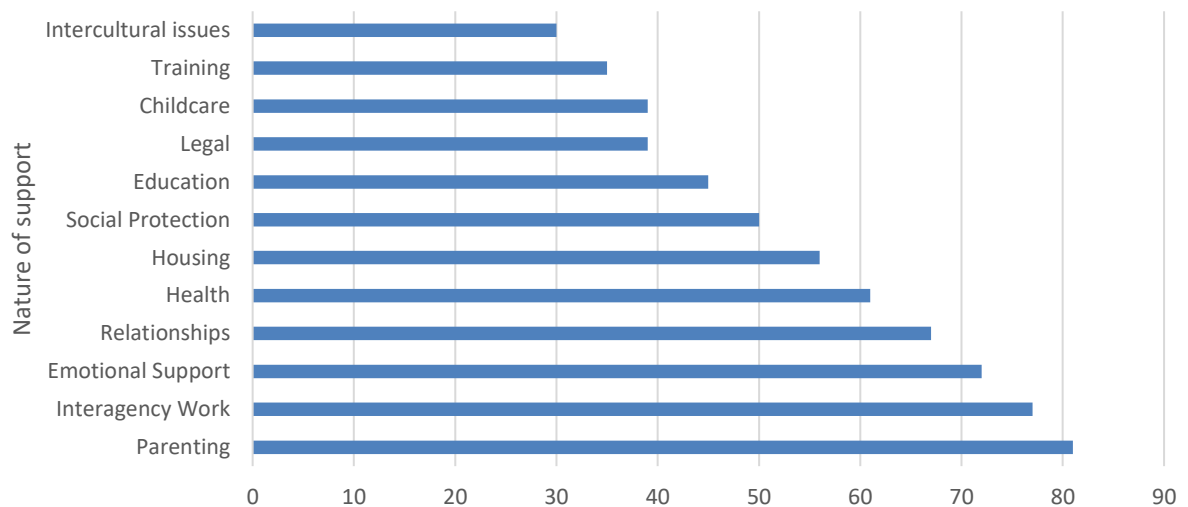
Of those not in education, 65% were in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance. The remaining included 16% on a Training Allowance, 4% on Disability Allowance, 1 person in direct provision and those early school leavers who were too young to be eligible for a Social Welfare Payment.

Contact with their children

Where the mother was postnatal only 3 fathers (5%) were described as having no contact with their child. Of the remainder 35% were married or cohabiting; 36% were described as having frequent contact; 18% were described as having infrequent contact; 9% had a legal access arrangement and 1 father had joint custody of his child.



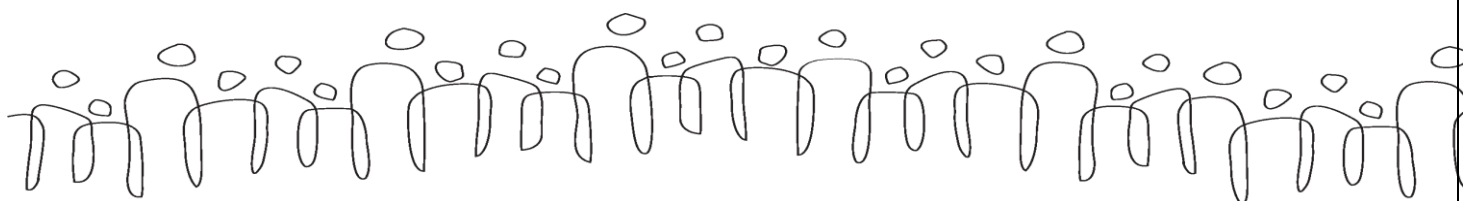
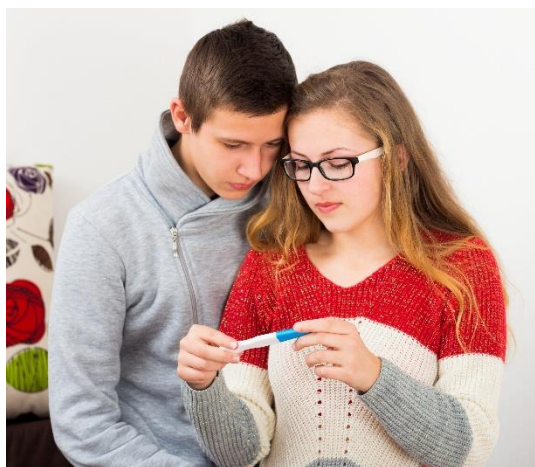
Supports delivered to fathers in 2018



Percentage of fathers supported

The Chart above shows, in percentage terms, the areas in which young fathers received support in 2018. As with mothers most support was delivered on a one-to-one basis. However, 22 fathers (more than 25% of those supported) participated in Young Fathers Groups facilitated by TPSP staff.

Regarding interagency work, in 2018 the TPSP liaised with other agencies on behalf of 68% of the young fathers supported. In order of frequency, most contact took place with the following: Tusla Family Support Services (including social workers, aftercare workers and Meitheal); Local Authorities & Housing Agencies combined; Educational Institutions (Second and Third Level combined); Training Organisation; Department of Social Protection representatives (formerly CWOs); Training Organisations; Maternity Services; Counselling Services and Addiction Services. There was also contact with Disability Services, the Department of Social Protection, Childcare Providers and Youth Organisations.



Outcomes for parents whose contact with the TPSP ended in 2018

During 2018, a total of 335 service users ceased contact with the TPSP. These consisted of 294 young mothers, 36 fathers and 5 other family members. The following Table gives a short profile of the young mothers and fathers including their ages at time of referral, levels of need at time of referral and when support ceased; accommodation at time of referral and when support ceased as well as the reasons why support ceased.

Characteristic	Category	Young Parents (330) No.
Age at time of referral	15 years or under	12
	16 years	27
	17 years	61
	18 years	63
	19 years	107
	Over 19 years	60
Level of Need at time of referral	Hardiker 1	0
	Hardiker 2	238
	Hardiker 3	75
	Hardiker 4	17
Level of Need when support ceased	Hardiker 1	37
	Hardiker 2	230
	Hardiker 3	56
	Hardiker 4	7
Accommodation at time of referral	Living in family home	213
	Living with other family member	25
	Home of child's other parent	18
	Private rented accommodation	36
	In care	9
	Homeless	9
	Refuge	2
	Supported accommodation	3
	Direct Provision	2
	Other	13
Accommodation when support ceased	Living in family home	179
	Living with other family member	17
	Home of child's other parent	20
	Private rented accommodation	57
	In care	2
	Homeless	13
	Own Home-Local Authority	12
	Supported accommodation	5
	Direct Provision	2
	Other	3
	Not known when data was collected	20
Reasons support ceased	Needs were met	137
	Child >2 and needs partially met	41
	Referred to other support	24
	Moved out of area	23
	Did not avail of service	49
	Parent ceased contact	47
	Other	9



Education and Training

The TPSP places emphasis on supporting young parents to complete their education, if that is their choice. Alongside support with parenting, this enables them to focus on their own development as young people and contributes to future equality of opportunity for parent and child. During the 2017/18 academic year, 8 of the 11 TPSPs received funding from the School Completion Programme (SCP) through Tusla's Education Welfare Services. The aim of the SCP is to increase the numbers of young people staying in primary and second level school and in doing so increase the numbers of pupils who successfully complete the Senior Cycle, or the equivalent.

<http://www.tusla.ie/services/educational-welfare-services>

Supports funded through the SCP included contributions towards childcare, grinds, books, transport and uniforms. TPSP staff also organised revision groups, peer support groups, personal development courses, pre-vocational taster programmes and guidance counselling. In addition, all the young parents known to have a childcare need received information and support in relation to accessing childcare which would enable them to complete their education.

Educational outcomes for young parents who engaged with the TPSP

In 2018, TPSP support ceased for 294 young mothers and 36 young fathers. The following table compares their highest educational attainment when they were first referred to the TPSP and when contact ceased in 2018.

Highest Educational Attainment	When referred to the TPSP Young Parents (330)	When support ceased in 2018 Young Parents (330)
Completed Third Level	0	7
Completed PLC Course	32	52
Completed Leaving Cert	97	117
Completed Junior Cert	86	102
No 2nd Level Qualification	29	8
Non-Irish Qualification	8	4
Completed Other Training	29	33
Not known***	49	7

***refers to those who were on a waiting list when data was collected, had not engaged with the service, had engaged and then ceased contact or those whose non-Irish qualifications were unclear.

Young Parents and Housing

The current ongoing housing crisis is having a serious effect on the young parents and children supported by the TPSP. TPSP staff report that they are seeing developmental delays in children living in homeless accommodation or substandard/overcrowded housing.

In 2018, the TPSP joined the Irish Coalition to end Youth Homelessness. This is to try to ensure that the needs of young people who are also young parents are included in this discussion.

On 6th June 2018 the TPSP conducted a Census which captured all its service users with a serious housing need. The Census used the ETHOS¹ typology used by FEANTSA, the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless. FEANTSA uses 4 categories to describe housing needs: Roofless, Homeless, Insecure and Inadequate. On 6th June 2018 the TPSP Housing Needs Census found that 140 (16%) of the young parents accessing its supports had a serious housing need. This was comprised of:

Roofless: 4 young parents (3 fathers and 1 mother) were sleeping rough.

Homeless: 37 young parents (31 mothers and 6 fathers) were in homeless accommodation or temporary supported accommodation following homelessness.

Insecure Accommodation: 41 young parents (38 mothers and 3 fathers) were in insecure accommodation. This including those couch surfing with family or friends and those living with insecure tenancies or under the threat of eviction.

Inadequate Accommodation: 58 young parents (52 mothers and 6 fathers) were living in inadequate accommodation such as rented properties that are substandard or homes with serious overcrowding.

The findings of this Census were used to inform the Strategy of the Irish Coalition to end Youth Homelessness. Case Studies developed from the Census were also used in the research on *Young Families in the Homeless Crisis: Challenges and Solutions* conducted on behalf of Focus Ireland.

Roofless - June 2018

The TPSP is working with a father called 'Michael' who is 20 years of age and whose partner is expecting their second child. The family were in emergency accommodation, but Michael had to leave the accommodation due to domestic violence on his part. Suspected drug misuse is also being investigated. Tusla Child Protection Services are working with his partner and child. He has agreed to attend a MOVE (Men Overcoming Violence) group. He was employed until recently but is currently on Job Seekers Allowance and the TPSP had been supporting him to get back into employment as quickly as possible. Michael is currently sleeping rough and, apart from the TPSP, there is no other support service or housing agency working with him pending an interagency meeting with Tusla and others to look at the what needs to be done to support him and his family.

Houseless - June 2018

'Aoife' was placed in care of a family friend when she was aged 12 years due to mother's alcohol addiction. Tusla report this to be a private family care arrangement. She became pregnant aged 16 years following a brief relationship with a young relative of the family friend who was caring for her. Aoife turned 18 years in June 2018 and has a two- year- old daughter. She can now leave this unofficial care arrangement, and wants to immediately, as she is very unhappy living there - but has no house to go to. Her

¹ <https://www.feantsa.org/en/toolkit/2005/04/01/ethos-typology-on-homelessness-and-housing-exclusion>
(accessed 16th April 2019)

family home remains unsuitable as the original alcohol issues with her mother are ongoing. The Department of Employment and Social Protection (DEASP) deem that because Aoife was in an unofficial care arrangement, she is not entitled to any aftercare support and is not entitled to any support in finding a suitable home. Aoife has applied to Dublin City Council, but it will take her 6 weeks to become registered with the housing authority. She then must go on the HAP list and begin looking for a home for herself and her daughter. She will receive support from TPSP and EPIC regarding this. However due to lack of available rental properties she may have to remain in her current accommodation for some time. Her only other option would be to present as homeless, but she does not want to take her daughter into homeless accommodation.

Insecure - June 2018

'Niamh' is 21- year- old single mother with one child. She is living in an unregistered property that does not accept HAP. This property is substandard and only available short-term. Niamh is finding it difficult to budget as she must pay all the rent from her Jobseekers Allowance. She cannot manage her spending on utilities - or budget for them - because the heating and electricity are tied to her landlady's house. She has no control over when the heat comes on and is asked for money towards utilities without any evidence of the costs. Her landlady will not provide rent receipts or any proof that she is living in the property which has caused a problem with her application for One- parent Family Payment (OFP) and the TPSP has supported her to appeal her application. Tusla is also working with this young mother and her child. She would like to return to education but cannot do this until she finds a suitable place to live.

Inadequate - 2018

'Sadbh' became pregnant with twin girls at 16 years of age. She will be 21 years old in July 2018 and her daughters will be four in August 2018. Sadbh lives with her mother in a three-bedroom Dublin City Council house where Sadbh shares a bedroom with her daughters. She has a single bed and the girls are each in a toddler bed. Three full sized single beds will not fit in this room. Sadbh's 12- year -old sister sleeps in the box room. Downstairs until recently, Sadbh's brother used the front sitting room as a bedroom for himself and his partner and two of their children as they were on the housing list and waiting to be housed for over two years. They have recently been given a property in a supported housing development. However, Sadbh's other brother, who is also homeless, has now moved into this downstairs sitting room with his partner. Previously, he was in the box room and Sadbh's 12- year- old sister was sharing her mother's bedroom. Sadbh has been on the Dublin City Council housing list since she was 18 years of age. She is HAP approved but has been unable to secure independent affordable accommodation due to the lack of available housing.



National Co-ordination of the TPSP

The national co-ordinator of the TPSP is based in Treoir. The main purpose of this post is to provide a central focal point for the promotion of the work of the TPSP and the enhancement of the lives of all young parents including those living outside areas covered by a TPSP.

In 2018 this was achieved mainly through:

- maintaining regular contact with TPSP projects and holding regular meetings of all project staff, project management and the TPSP National Advisory Committee
- keeping TPSP staff informed of changes in government policy and legislation in areas which affect young parents such as education and training, childcare, social welfare, birth registration, guardianship and housing
- maintaining contact with key staff in relevant government departments and State agencies and advocating on behalf of the TPSP and young parents nationally
- collecting, collating and analysing detailed data from the TPSP database in relation to referrals received and supports offered by the TPSP. This is used for the annual TPSP Summary of Work; for reports to Tusla; to explore outcomes and to inform TPSP policies and advocacy
- collaborating with other agencies and initiatives who have interests in common with young parents in areas such as housing, childcare, sexual health and maternity services
- providing training to TPSP staff and other professionals working with young parents
- responding to queries from young parents and those involved with them
- maintaining the TPSP website.

TPSP Meetings

To ensure cohesion and the flow of communication among all strands of the TPSP structure, in 2018 a separate meeting was organized for the TPSP Employing Organisations and the TPSP National Advisory Committee. Two separate meetings were organised for all TPSP staff. The Coordinator followed up issues raised at these meetings such as Childcare, Housing, The School Completion Programme, The Youth Participation Strategy and aspects of the Supplementary Welfare System.

Policy and Advocacy

One of the other main ways in which the TPSP supports all young parents in Ireland is through advocating on their behalf. During 2018, the National Coordinator made a Pre-Budget Submission to the Department of Social Protection (DEASP) and a submission to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) which is reviewing the delivery of the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Programme in schools. Both these submissions were informed by the views of TPSP staff.

During 2018 the National Coordinator represented the needs of young parents on Working Groups such as:

- The Coalition to end Youth Homelessness
- A Working Group in relation to NCCA's Review mentioned above
- The HSE's Maternity Services Advisory Group and
- The Parenting Network.

The TPSP National Coordinator also advocated for young parents at events such as

- The Tusla Parenting Conference
- An Open Policy Day on Parenting organised by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA)
- The Pre-budget Forum organised by DEASP

- A Pre-budget Forum of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVP)
- The Social Inclusion Forum and
- The launch by the Children's Rights Alliance of *Home Works – A study on the Educational Needs of Children Experiencing Homelessness and Living in Emergency Accommodation*

In terms of outcomes, in 2018 student mothers in secondary education were included under Section 14 of the Childcare Support Act. This Section permits exceptions to the general rules of the National Childcare Scheme for certain categories of vulnerable children. In practice it means that exceptions may be made regarding the age at which their children may avail of the Scheme, the number of hours of childcare for which they may receive a subvention and the level of that subvention. The inclusion of mothers in second level education under Section 14 is the direct result of a proposal made in 2016 by the TPSP to DCYA and engagement with Senior Officials in the Department in 2017.

Promoting the work of the TPSP and networking with other agencies also ensures that TPSP staff and participants are consulted in major pieces of research to do with their client group such as research entitled *Young Families in the Homeless Crisis: Challenges and Solutions* conducted by UCC on behalf of Focus Ireland and referred to above.

Reporting to Tusla

In 2018 the National Coordinator provided the Corporate Planning and Corporate Performance Section (CPCP) of Tusla with quarterly updates on the numbers of young parents supported by the TPSP projects.

Training for Tusla staff

In addition, during 2018 the National Co-ordinator and other TPSP staff gave two separate inputs on the work of the TPSP as part of an Induction Programme for over 200 newly recruited Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinators employed by Tusla

Training for TPSP staff

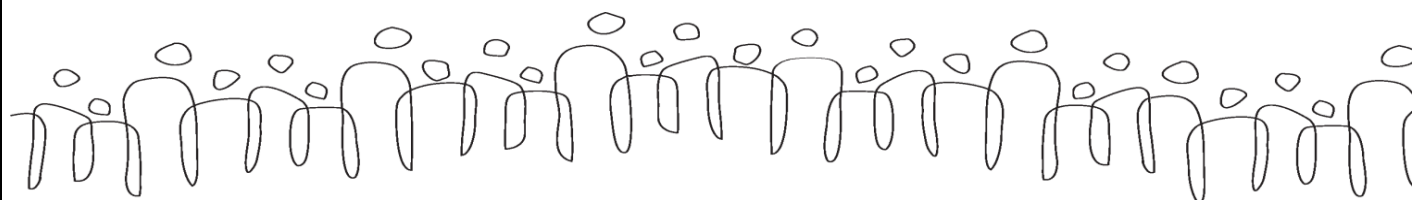
Part of the role of the TPSP National Co is to respond to training needs identified by TPSP staff. During 2018, TPSP staff participated in an Antenatal Programme delivered by Archways. The main aim of this Programme is to support attachment in the third trimester of pregnancy. It was particularly relevant to the TPSP because most TPSP service users first engage with the projects while they are still antenatal.

Responding to queries

The Coordinator also acts as a source of information, advice and guidance for professionals working with young parents in areas where there is not a TPSP and directs them to other appropriate services. She also responds to queries from pregnant and parenting teen and their parents/guardians from areas where there is not a TPSP. During 2018 she also delivered an Information Session on teen pregnancy to two separate Leaving Certificate Applied classes.

TPSP Website

The TPSP website (www.tpsp.ie) was updated regularly with items of interest to young parents and those involved with them. In 2018, there were 54,000 pages viewed with the page on fathers the most frequently visited.



Focus on Fathers

During 2018, the TPSP organized two workshops targeting professionals working with young parents nationally. The first of these, the *Focus on Fathers* Workshop, built on materials developed previously by the Louth TPSP and funded at that time by the Crisis Pregnancy Agency. This workshop was co-facilitated by Veronica Black, Treoir's Information and Training Officer and Finian Murray, Men's Health Development Worker, HSE Dublin

North East. To date, 60 non-TPSP workers have completed this Workshop.



In 2018, the TPSP also organized a Workshop based on *The TPSP Toolkit*. The *TPSP Toolkit*, which was funded by the HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme, brings together in one resource manual the knowledge, skills and experience of TPSP staff. The Toolkit focuses on what are the unique needs of young parents. This was the 12th Toolkit Workshop organised by TPSP bringing to 175 the number of professionals working in non-TPSP areas who have availed of it. These include youth workers, social workers, family support workers, aftercare workers, staff in family resource centres, staff in housing agencies, those working with marginalised groups such as young Traveller mothers and those working in drug addiction services.

Both these Workshops have proved to be a very efficient way of disseminating learning and good practice from the TPSP to staff in areas where there are no specific support services for teen parents. They are also a way in which young parents living in these areas can benefit to some extent from the resources and expertise of the TPSP.



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