



# The Teen Parents Support Programme

## Summary of Work 2015

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

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 2015 there were 357 new referrals to the TPSP representing a 4% increase on 2014. This brings to 6,478 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 type 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, accommodation, social welfare entitlements, legal issues and anything else about which the young person is concerned.

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

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

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

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

**In 2015:**

**33%** of all new referrals to the TPSP had needs located at Hardiker Level 3 and

**5%** of all new referrals had needs located at Hardiker Level 4.

## Summary of Teen Births in Ireland 2005-2015

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

Year	Number of Births	Fertility Rate*
2005	2,427	16.8
2006	2,362	16.4
2007	2,464	17.5
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

Sources: CSO Vital Statistics, Yearly Summary 2015

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

Over the past decade the number of births to mothers under 20 years of age in Ireland has more than halved. When compared to European counterparts, however, the birth rate to teens in Ireland remains 'high to middling' (HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme, National Strategy 2012-2016). Source: <http://www.crisispregnancy.ie>

In 2015, when the births to teen mothers were registered, 381 (32%) mothers were either married, in a civil partnership or living at the same address as the father of their child. This was higher at 35% for 18 year olds and 19 year olds, combined.

While 10% of teen births in 2015 were to mothers aged 16 years or under, 18% of all referrals to the TPSP were in this age group. In 2015 there were 42 births to mothers aged 15 years and under, almost double that of 2014. Of these 42 teen mothers, 29 of them (69%) received support from the TPSP.

### Limerick City Slickers 2015 with Martina Hogan, TPSP Project Leader



## Summary of contact in 2015 with young parents and their families

- 1,029** The number of young parents, their children and other family members who were offered support in 2015
- 357** The number who presented for support for the first time:
- 329 mothers
  - 21 fathers
  - 7 other family member
- 9** The number who had engaged with the service previously and re-presented for support in 2015:
- 8 young mothers
  - 1 young father
- 284** The number who were referred in earlier years and continued to receive support during 2015 and into 2016:
- 261 mothers
  - 22 fathers
  - 1 other family members
- 379** The number of young parents and other family members for whom support ended in 2015:
- 338 mothers
  - 40 fathers
  - 1 other family members

In addition, in 2015, as a result of the mother/father of their child engaging with the projects the TPSP had some contact with **370** other young parents:

- 299 fathers
- 71 mothers

The Table on the next page presents a profile of the 329 young mothers and 21 fathers at the point when they first engaged with the TPSP.

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

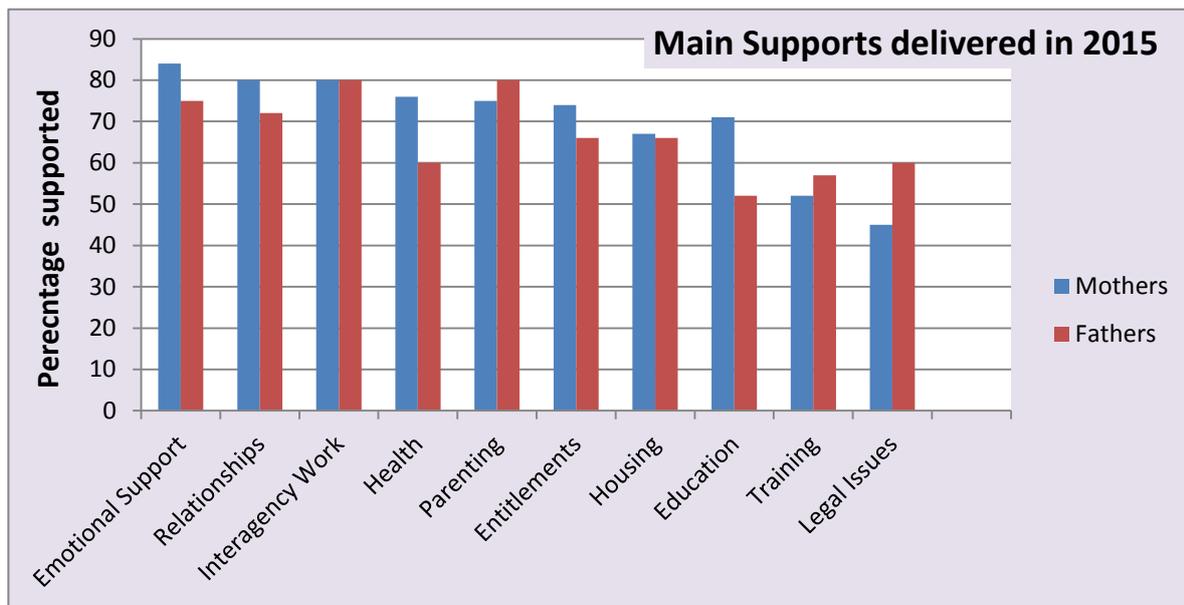
*Care must be taken when interpreting Tables and Charts in this Summary due to the differences in the number of mothers and fathers involved.*



## Profile of young parents at time of referral to TPSP in 2015

Percentages are based on known data.

Characteristic	Category	Mothers (329)		Fathers (21)	
		No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Age	15 or under	29	9	2	10
	16	31	9	3	14
	17	75	23	5	24
	18	64	19	1	5
	19	91	28	4	19
	Over 19	39	12	6	28
Level of Need	Hardiker 2	301	62	8	38
	Hardiker 3	108	33	13	62
	Hardiker 4	14	5	0	0
	Not known when data was collected	4			
Social Care History	Yes	92	38	11	52
	No	149	62	5	48
	Not known when data was collected	88		5	
Education/Training Status	In Education/Training	133	47	10	50
	Not in Education/Training	150	53	10	50
	Not known when data was collected	46		1	
Highest Educational Attainment	PLC	18	7	0	0
	Leaving Certificate	83	33	3	19
	Junior Certificate only	114	45	10	62
	Non-Irish qualification	4	2	0	0
	No Certification	26	10	3	19
	Other	8	3	0	
Not known when data was collected	76		5		
Accommodation Type	Living in family home	224	66	25	68
	Living with other family member	17	7	2	6
	Private rented accommodation	26	1	1	3
	Temporary accommodation	7	19	5	14
	Supported accommodation	3	2	1	3
	In care	8	1	1	3
	Direct Provision	3	3	0	0
	Other	3	1	1	3
	Not known when data was collected	38			
Background	Irish	242	82	14	70
	Irish Traveller	11	4	3	15
	African	7	2	0	0
	Eastern European	15	5	1	5
	Other European	6	2	0	0
	Roma	11	4	0	0
	Other	3	1	2	10
	Not known when data was collected	34		1	
Location	Urban	229	70	16	76
	Rural	100	30	5	24



The Chart above refers to 642 pregnant or parenting teens (598 mothers and 44 fathers) who either:

- engaged for the first time in 2015
- had engaged previously and needed to re-establish contact with TPSP in 2015 or
- were referred in previous years and were receiving ongoing support in 2015.

The Chart shows, in percentage terms, the main supports received by these young parents in 2015. While most support was delivered on a one-to-one basis, where opportunities arose TPSP staff organised Groups and Programmes for young parents (fathers as well as mothers) either on an ongoing basis or in response to specific identified needs.

The TPSP works in close partnership with all local institutions, agencies and services available to a young parent such as schools, family support services, housing agencies and relevant non-governmental agencies. This partnership takes the form of joint collaboration, mutual referral systems. In 2015, the TPSP liaised with other services on behalf of 80% of service users. For young mothers, in order of frequency, most contact took place with the following: educational settings (2<sup>nd</sup> level and 3<sup>rd</sup> level institutions, combined), Tusla Family Support Services (including social workers and aftercare workers), Department of Social Protection representatives, maternity services, Local Authorities, public health nurses, training organisations, childcare providers and youth services. There was also contact with counselling services, disability services, services for those who are homeless and services for those who are victims of domestic violence and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

For young fathers, in order of frequency, most contact took place with the following: Tusla Family Support Services (including social workers and aftercare workers), secondary schools, Local Authorities, youth services and training organisations. There was also contact with public health nurses, maternity services, counselling services, Department of Social Protection representatives and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

The above Chart includes 145 service users (136 mothers and 9 fathers) from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. These include 18 mothers and 4 fathers who are Irish Travellers, 15 young parents (14 mothers and 1 father) who identified as being from the Roma community as well as 21 mothers who were originally from Africa. These 145 young parents received additional support with accessing services, understanding Irish birth and parenting practices, resolving dual cultural issues (where parents are from different ethnic backgrounds) as well as support in relation to habitual residence requirements.

## Outcomes for parents whose contact with the TPSP ended in 2015

During 2015, a total of 379 service users ceased contact with the TPSP. These consisted of 338 young mothers, 40 fathers and 1 other family member. The following Table gives a short profile of these 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.

**Percentages are based on known data.**

Characteristic	Category	Mothers (338)		Fathers (40)	
		No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Age at time of referral	15 years or under	18	3	0	0
	16 years	42	14	8	20
	17 years	57	17	5	12.5
	18 years	81	19	6	15
	19 years	93	30	5	12.5
	Over 19 years	47	17	16	40
Level of Need at time of referral	Hardiker 1	0	0	0	0
	Hardiker 2	208	63	28	71
	Hardiker 3	104	31	11	24
	Hardiker 4	20	6	1	5
	Not known when data was collected	6			
Level of Need when support ceased	Hardiker 1	55	16	4	10
	Hardiker 2	206	61	26	65
	Hardiker 3	64	20	9	22
	Hardiker 4	11	3	1	3
	Not known when data was collected	2			
Accommodation at time of referral	Living in family home	207	70	28	55
	Living with other family member	16	5	1	7
	Own home	4	1	1	0
	Private rented accommodation	45	15	9	29
	Direct Provision	2	1	0	0
	Homeless	9	3	0	7
	Supported accommodation	3	1	1	0
	In care	9	3	0	0
	Other	2	1	0	2
Not known when data was collected	41				
Accommodation when support ceased	Living in family home	155	53	22	60
	Living with other family member	14	5	0	0
	Own home	12	4	1	3
	Private rented accommodation	93	32	12	32
	Direct Provision	2	1	0	0
	Homeless	3	1	1	3
	Supported accommodation	6	2	1	3
	In care	8	2	0	0
	Other	2	1	0	0
Not known when data was collected	43		3		
Reasons support ceased	Needs were met	125	37	13	33
	Needs partially met	18	5	4	10
	Child > 2 years of age	4	1	0	0
	Referred to other support	20	6	5	12
	Moved out of area	21	6	2	5
	Did not avail of service	70	21	5	12
	Parent ceased contact	72	21	11	28
	Other	8	2	0	0



## Education and Training

The TPSP places particular emphasis on supporting young parents to complete their education, if that is their choice. Alongside support with parenting, this enables them to focus on their own development as young people and contributes to future equality of opportunity for parent and child. During the 2014/15 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 improve 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 of 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 2015, TPSP support ceased for 338 young mothers and 40 young fathers. The following table compares their highest educational attainment when they were first referred to the TPSP and when contact ceased in 2015.

Highest Educational Attainment	When referred to the TPSP		When support ceased in 2015	
	Mothers (338)	Fathers (40)	Mothers (338)	Fathers (40)
Completed 3 <sup>rd</sup> Level Education	1	0	9	1
Completed PLC Course	18	1	44	4
Completed Leaving Certificate	87	9	103	10
Completed Junior Cert only	124	14	72	10
No 2nd Level Qualification	20	6	21	8
Other	11	5	20	4
Not known***	77	5	69	3

\*\*\*refers to those who did not engage with the service or those whose non-Irish qualifications were unclear.

## National Co-ordination of the TPSP

The national co-ordinator of the TPSP is based in Treoir and provides 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.

During 2015 this was achieved mainly through:

- regular contact with projects and meeting project staff and management when required
- keeping TPSP staff informed of changes in government policy and legislation in areas which affect young parents such as education, housing, social welfare, birth registration and guardianship
- maintaining contact with key staff in relevant government departments and agencies such as Education and Science, Department of Children and Youth Affairs, the Department of Social Protection, the National Education and Welfare Board and the Higher Education Authority
- collecting , collating and analysing detailed data from the TPSP database. This is used for the annual TPSP Summary of Work, to explore outcomes and to inform advocacy work undertaken by the national co-ordinator on behalf of young parents
- providing the Corporate Planning and Corporate Performance Section (CPCP) of Tusla with quarterly updates on the work of the TPSP
- Responding to queries from TPSP staff, professionals, young parents living outside areas covered by a TPSP and families involved with young parents.

To ensure that communication flows among all strands of the TPSP structure, in 2015 the co-ordinator organised 2 separate meetings of all TPSP staff, TPSP Host Organisations and the TPSP National Advisory Committee.

Among the issues raised at these meetings and followed up by the co-ordinator were:

- Childcare needs of mothers in education
- Support for young mothers reared in the care system
- Issues regarding Supplementary Welfare Allowance, the One-Parent Family Payment and the Rent Supplement Scheme
- Access to higher education
- Medical card eligibility and
- Housing.

This type of advocacy work aims to keep the needs of teen parents to the fore among relevant policy makers and ensures that the TPSP is included in national consultations such as Tusla's consultation in 2015 with the Community and Voluntary Sector working in Family Support and the Needs Analysis of the Roma Community in Ireland carried out by Pavee Point in 2015.

The Co-ordinator 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.

### **TPSP Website**

The TPSP website ([www.tpssp.ie](http://www.tpssp.ie)) was updated regularly with items of interest to young parents and those involved with them. In 2015, there were over 64,000 viewings of the website.

The TPSP Toolkit is a resource for those working with pregnant or parenting teenagers and was funded by the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme. The Toolkit aims to improve outcomes for teen parents (both mothers and fathers) by providing information, sample work sessions and activities that focus on the particular issues that arise in combining parenthood with their continuing development as young people.

In 2015 additional funding was secured from the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme to run 2 Workshops for non-TPSP professionals working with young parents and their families. This has proved to be a very efficient way of disseminating learning and good practice from the TPSP to areas where there are no specific support services for teen parents.

In total, 134 non-TPSP staff now have access to the TPSP Toolkit including youth workers, social workers, family support workers, aftercare workers, staff in family resource centres, crisis pregnancy counsellors and those working with marginalised groups such as young Traveller mothers.

**Focus on Fathers**

During 2015 the TPSP organized two workshops targeting those working with young fathers. These built on the “*Focus on Fathers*” materials developed previously by the Louth TPSP and funded at that time by the Crisis Pregnancy Agency. These workshops were co-facilitated by Treoir’s Information and Training Officer and Finian Murray, Men’s Health Development Worker, HSE Dublin North East.



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