

29<sup>th</sup> May 2020

## HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme

### Press statement about decrease in the number of births to teenagers in 2019 following release of the Vital Statistics Yearly Summary Report 2019 by the CSO.

The HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme (SHCPP) welcomes data published by the CSO today, which reports a decline in the number of births to teenagers in 2019 (864 births to female under 20) compared to 2018 (980 births to females under 20).

The number of births to teenage mothers has been consistently decreasing since 2001. In that year there were 3,087 births to teenage mothers. The figures today represents a decline of 72% over the 18 year period. The figures equate to a decrease in the teenage birth rate from 20 per 1,000 of women aged 15-19 in population in Ireland in 2001 to 5.5 per 1,000 in 2019.

This decrease bears out research findings indicating that teenagers are making good efforts to stay healthy and well across a number of health behaviours. This includes behaviours relating to sexual health and wellbeing; with the majority of those who are sexually active reporting consistent use of contraception.<sup>1 2</sup>

To support young people, the SHCPP works with others to improve access to information on relationships and sexuality in schools, youth work settings and in the home environment.

As the role of parents is particularly important, the SHCPP has developed a range of helpful resources for them, including 'Talking to Your Young Child about Relationships, Sexuality and Growing Up', 'Busy Bodies', and, 'Making the 'Big Talk', many small talks'. Parents can also access information and support on how to talk to their children (aged 12 and under) on <http://sexualwellbeing.ie/for-parents>.

All SHCPP-published resources are available free of charge from [www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie).

For further information on sexual health and wellbeing, log onto [www.sexualwellbeing.ie](http://www.sexualwellbeing.ie)

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#### Notes

1. The SHCPP is responsible for implementing the National Sexual Health Strategy 2015 – 2020 to improve sexual health and wellbeing and reduce negative sexual health outcomes. The strategy sets out that all young people will have continued access to and knowledge about sources of age appropriate, trustworthy information and support relating to relationships and sexual health.

<https://www.sexualwellbeing.ie/about/corporate-publications/national-sexual-health-strategy/national-sexual-health-strategy.pdf>

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<sup>1</sup> Economic and Social Research Institute. 2016. Growing Up in Ireland Key Findings: Child Cohort at 17/18 years, no. 4: Risky Health Behaviours and Sexual Activity. <https://www.growingup.ie/pubs/SUSTAT59.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Health Promotion Research Centre. 2020. Health Behaviour in School Aged Children (HBSC) Study 2018. National University of Galway. <http://www.nuigalway.ie/media/healthpromotionresearchcentre/hbscdocs/nationalreports/2018-report---online-version-interactive---updated.pdf>