

# Crisis Pregnancy Agency Statistical Report 2006: Revised teenage pregnancy data

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## **Crisis Pregnancy Agency Statistical Report 2006: Revised teenage pregnancy data**

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## Glossary

### Teenage fertility rate

The teenage fertility rate is the number of live births per 1,000 females aged 15 to 19. This rate does not include miscarriages and does not include the number of pregnancies aborted. In some reports teenagers aged 15 to 19 are referred to as teenagers under twenty, nevertheless in these reports, rates are calculated using data for teenagers aged 15 to 19.

### Abortion Rate

The abortion rate is calculated as the number of induced abortions occurring per 1,000 women in different age groups. The number of abortions only reflects the number of teenagers giving Irish addresses at UK abortion clinics, therefore data in this regard may be incomplete.

### Teenage pregnancy rate

The teenage pregnancy rate is the number of teenage pregnancies per 1,000 females aged 15-19. This rate includes both births and abortions but does not take account of miscarriages. However it should be noted that the abortion figures only reflect the number of teenagers giving Irish addresses at UK abortion clinics and thus the data in this regard is incomplete.

### EU-15

The EU-15 refers to the European Union prior to the most recent enlargement in 2004. The countries that comprise the EU-15 are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

### EU-25

The EU-25 refers to the European Union following the most recent enlargement in 2004. The countries that comprise the EU-25 are Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

This is the 2nd in a series of statistical reports produced by the Crisis Pregnancy Agency. The Crisis Pregnancy Agency, established by Statutory Instrument No.446 of 2001, is tasked with three functions that are specified in the Establishment Order. The functions of the Agency are as follows:

To provide for:

- 1) a reduction in the number of crisis pregnancies by the provision of education, advice and contraceptive services
- 2) a reduction in the number of women with crisis pregnancies who opt for abortion by offering services and supports which make other options more attractive
- 3) the provision of counselling and medical services after crisis pregnancy.

This statistical report aims to present, in one document, a range of statistical indices relating to teenage pregnancy in Ireland. The report intends to compare data over time to give a picture of how teenage pregnancy in Ireland has changed over the years. It also intends to describe in a reader friendly manner how trends in Ireland compare with other countries.

We hope that by presenting these data in a clear way, it will be of use to practitioners, policy makers, the media and researchers interested in teenage pregnancy and parenting. By compiling statistical data on a range of indicators relevant to teenage pregnancy it will help to highlight important trends and clarify common myths.

This report will be available to download from the Crisis Pregnancy Agency's website and will be updated from time to time as new data comes on stream.

### 1.2 Description of sub-sections

Section 2 presents statistics in relation to teenage fertility. Fertility rates for 15 -19 year olds are displayed and compared with international data. Geographical variations in the teenage fertility rate in Ireland are also presented. Age at maternity, marital status and birth order are also examined for births to teenagers in Ireland. Section 3 looks at abortion statistics. Trends in the number of teenagers giving Irish addresses at UK abortion clinics are examined. Section 4 documents trends in teenage pregnancy rates (an aggregate of births and abortions). Where available, international comparisons of teenage pregnancy rates are displayed.

### 1.3 Data sources

Data included in the report have been sourced from the Central Statistics Office, Cork and Eurostat, the principle statistics agency of the EU. Unless otherwise stated, data presented are for the Republic of Ireland with figures for international comparisons presented where possible. Every effort has been made to ensure that a variety of countries are included in the comparison groups where possible, including Nordic countries, Southern European countries, English-speaking countries and countries such as the Netherlands that are viewed as progressive in terms of fertility and contraception. In some cases, the absence of standard reporting conventions does not allow direct comparisons between countries. In general, when the European Union is referred to in this report (EU-15), this denotes the EU prior to the most recent enlargement in 2004.

Data are presented mainly in tabular or diagrammatic form with text providing context for the data. Historic data are presented for time periods available and/or considered most relevant to the topic. Where data have been sourced from a specific publication, the full reference is provided. In some cases, findings are based on data from a variety of sources. In these instances, all data sources are listed. Every effort has been made to preserve the accuracy of original data supplied to us by external sources.

It is important to note that, depending on the data source, small variations in rates (fertility and abortion rates) can be seen across various published reports. This is due to:

- Variations in the age range used to calculate rates.
- Variations in the (often estimated) total population figures upon which rates are calculated.



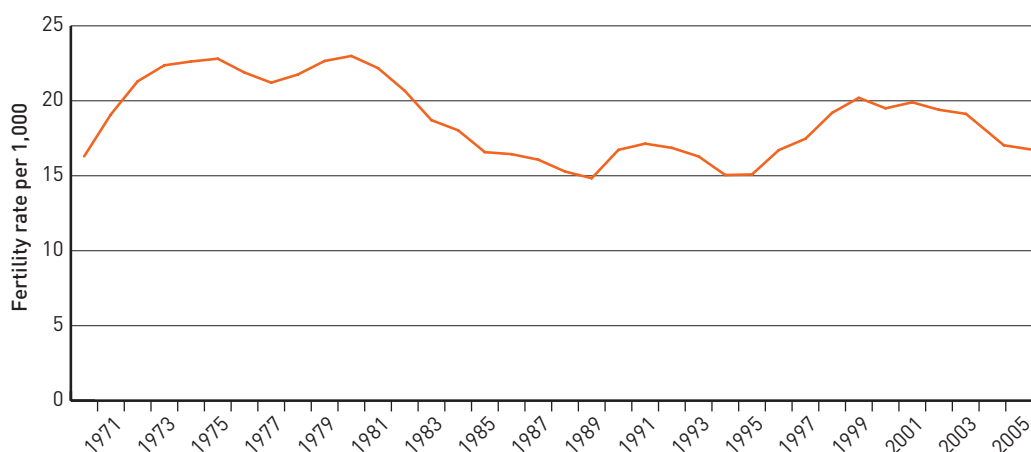
## 2.0 Teenage fertility

Teenage fertility is often voiced as an area of concern by both analysts and policy makers, and there is a common misconception that teenage fertility is increasing in Ireland. This section examines the statistical information available on teenage fertility in Ireland. The fertility rate for women aged 15–19 years from 1973 to 2005 is examined. Unless otherwise indicated, the term ‘teenagers’ refers to persons between the ages of 15 and 19. The teenage fertility rate is calculated as the number of births to teenagers per thousand of the population, aged 15 to 19. A very small number of pregnancies take place to younger aged teenagers, for example in 2005, just 2% (42) of all births to teenagers took place to those aged 15 and under. This section also compares the teenage fertility rate in Ireland with that of other countries. There are geographical variations in the teenage fertility rates in Ireland and these are presented. The age of maternity is examined as it highlights the fact that the majority of births taking place to teenagers occur to women aged 18 or 19. The marital status and birth order of those giving birth as teenagers is also examined.

### 2.1 Teenage fertility rate

The teenage fertility rate is the number of live births per 1,000 females aged 15 to 19. This rate does not include the number of pregnancies aborted, which are accounted for in the teenage pregnancy rate (see section 4). The teenage fertility rate increased from 16.3 in 1970 and reached its peak of 23.0 in 1980. The teenage fertility rate declined throughout the 1980s. From 1995, the fertility rate steadily increased to 20.2 births per 1,000 in 1999 and has since decreased to 16.8 in 2005 (see figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1 Fertility rates (number of live births per thousand women) for women aged 15 to 19 years in Ireland 1970 – 2005



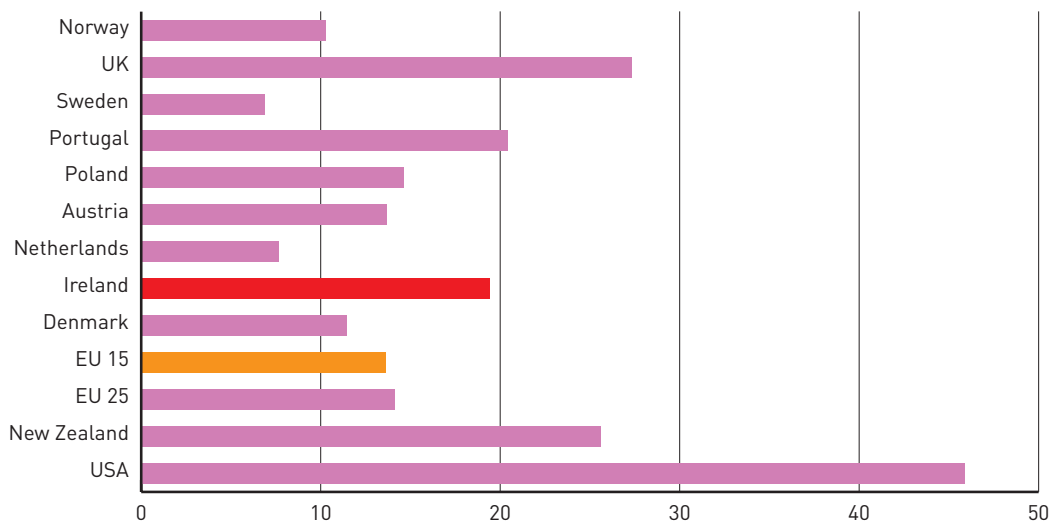
Source: CSO

- The teenage fertility rate in Ireland has been relatively stable over the course of the last 35 years.

## 2.2 Teenage fertility rate – international comparisons

In 2002, the teenage fertility rate (number of births per 1,000 women) for the EU-15 countries was 13.64 (see figure 2.2). Countries with a low fertility rate included Norway (10.3), Sweden (6.9) and the Netherlands (7.68). Countries with a comparatively high fertility rate included the USA (45.9), the UK (27.34) and New Zealand (25.6). At 19.4, Ireland's teenage fertility rate is higher than that of the EU average. It is important to note that teenage fertility rates do not take account of abortions and the low teenage fertility rates in countries such as Norway and Sweden may be as a result of the high rates of teenage abortion in these countries (see section 4.2).

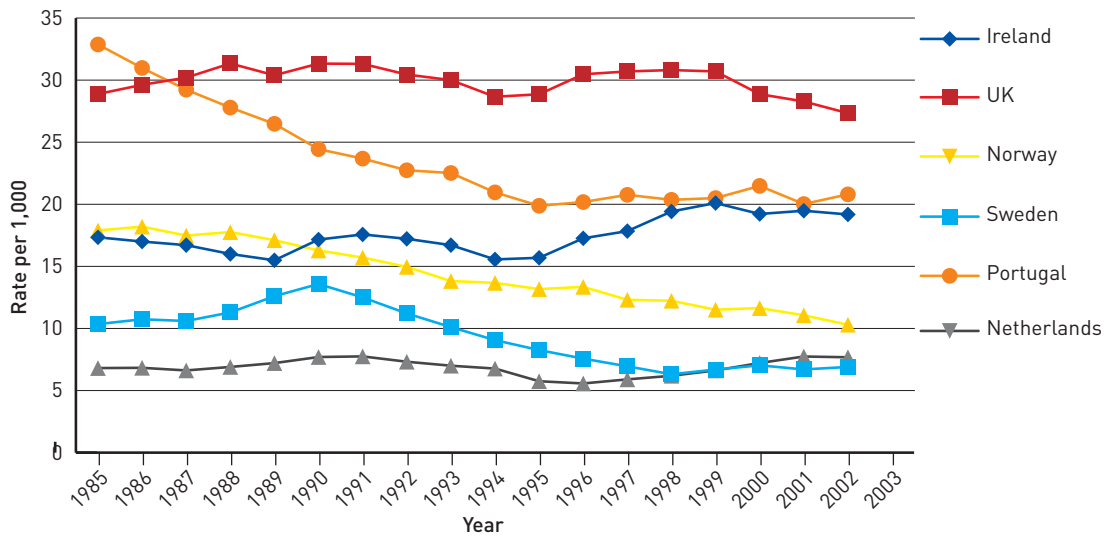
Figure 2.2 International comparative data on teenage fertility rates 2002



Source: Eurostat; Data for New Zealand and the USA sourced from Statistics New Zealand

Figure 2.3 provides international comparative data on teenage fertility rates between 1985 and 2002. In some countries the teenage fertility rate was low throughout the entire period. For example, the teenage fertility rate in Sweden decreased marginally from 10.35 in 1985 to 6.9 in 2002. Other countries witnessed a dramatic decline in the teenage fertility rate over two decades, for example, teenage fertility rates in Portugal decreased from 32.87 in 1985 to 20.44 in 2002. The teenage fertility rate in the UK remained high between 1985 and 2002 and was 27.34 in 2002. The teenage fertility rate in Ireland marginally increased during this time period from 17.34 in 1985 to 19.42 in 2001. Kane and Wellings (1996) examined variations in teenage fertility rates over a 40 year period across Europe and concluded that Ireland's rate, like that of Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Switzerland, has been "consistently low".

Figure 2.3 International comparative data on teenage fertility rates 1985 – 2002



Source: Eurostat ("age in completed years" data)

As mentioned above, teenage fertility rates do not take account of abortions to teenagers. Therefore, the low teenage fertility rates in Norway and Sweden may be partly as a result of the high rates of teenage abortion in these countries (see section 4.2 for international comparison of the teenage fertility and abortion rates).

### 2.3 Geographical variations in the teenage fertility rate

Geographical variations in the teenage fertility rate in Ireland can be observed. Table 2.1 shows the age specific fertility rates for females aged 15-19 years in all Counties/County Boroughs in Ireland for 1996 and 2002. Counties/County Boroughs with the highest fertility rates in both 1996 and 2002 included Limerick City (30.6 and 40.9), Dublin City (25.2 and 32.1), Waterford City (20.8 and 27.2) and Carlow (24.2 and 26.5). Counties/County Boroughs with the lowest fertility rates included Roscommon (7.1 and 7.2), Galway County (6.8 and 9.9) and Sligo (11.4 and 10.5). The majority of Counties/County Boroughs recorded an increase in fertility rates for 15-19 year olds. Limerick City and Offaly recorded particularly large increases.

Research in other countries has indicated a link between teenage pregnancy and socio-economic deprivation (e.g. Lee et. al. 2004). Unfortunately, investigation of this aspect of teenage pregnancy in an Irish context is hampered due to the unavailability of key data.

Table 2.1 Age specific fertility rates for females aged 15-19 by area of residence of mother in 1996 and 2002

Area of residence	1996	2002
Limerick City*	30.6	40.9
Dublin City*	25.2	32.1
Waterford City*	20.8	27.2
Carlow	24.2	26.5
Louth	21.5	26.1
Offaly	14.3	25.4
Dublin South	24.5	25.0
Laois	15.4	22.7
Wexford	22.3	22.9
Westmeath	21.4	22.3
North Tipperary	17.3	21.0
Kildare	17.0	20.7
Donegal	16.1	19.9
Dublin Fingal	14.2	19.7
Longford	16.1	19.3
Cork City*	19.1	18.9
Wicklow	18.5	18.8
Meath	13.5	17.6
Cavan	12.5	17.4
Leitrim	12.2	17.2
Kerry	12.3	16.7
Clare	9.1	16.4
South Tipperary	18.8	16.2
Monaghan	15.3	15.3
Galway City*	12.3	13.7
Cork County	11.5	12.8
Limerick County	12.5	12.8
Mayo	12.6	12.8
Kilkenny	10.0	12.5
Waterford County	14.1	12.2
DL/Rathdown	12.5	10.7
Sligo	11.4	10.5
Galway County	6.8	9.9
Roscommon	7.1	7.2

Source: CSO Report on Vital Statistics 2001 and 2002

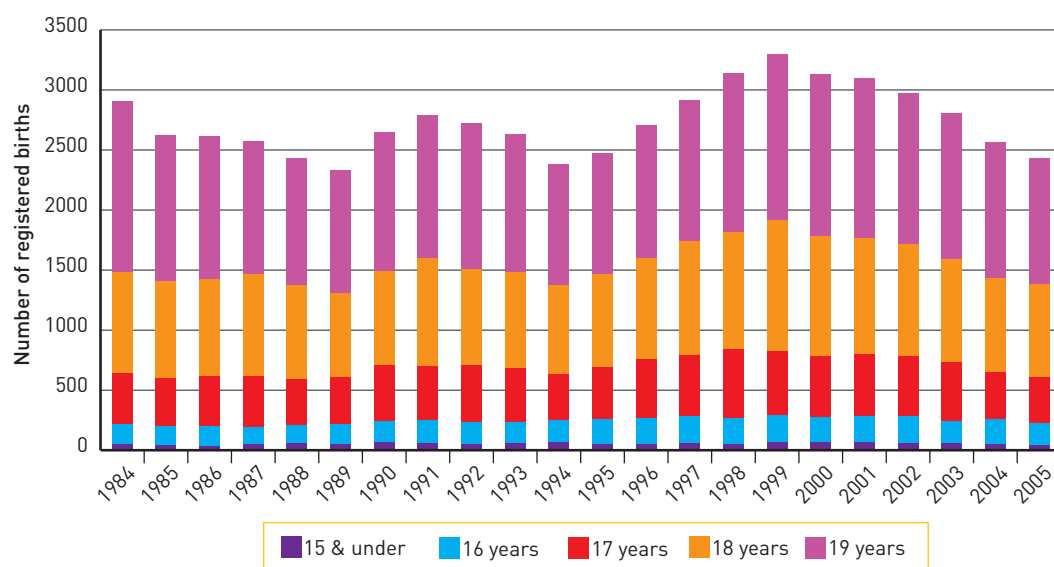
\*Cities were known as County Boroughs in 1996

This table will be updated once geographical data from the 2006 census becomes available in 2007.

## 2.4 Age at maternity

As illustrated in figure 2.4, the majority of teenage births in Ireland take place to females aged 18 or 19 years. For example in 2005, 75% of all births to females under 20 years of age were to women aged 18 or 19 years (1,815 of the 2,427 births to teenagers). A very small number of pregnancies take place to younger teenagers. In 2005, there were 42 births to teenagers aged 15 and under, which represented 2% of all births to teenagers that year.

Figure 2.4 Number of registered births by the age of mothers at maternity 1984 - 2005



Source: CSO

Table 2.2 gives a breakdown of the number of births to those teenagers aged 12-14 between 1991 and 2005. It highlights the very small number of teenage births that take place to teenagers aged 12-14.

Table 2.2 Number of births to teenagers aged 12-14 between 1991 and 2005

Year	No of births to teenagers aged 12-14	Year	No of births to teenagers aged 12-14
1991	7	1999	11
1992	6	2000	10
1993	11	2001	9
1994	10	2002	8
1995	11	2003	12
1996	3	2004	3
1997	10	2005	7

Source: CSO

- The majority of teenage births in Ireland take place to females aged 18 or 19 years.

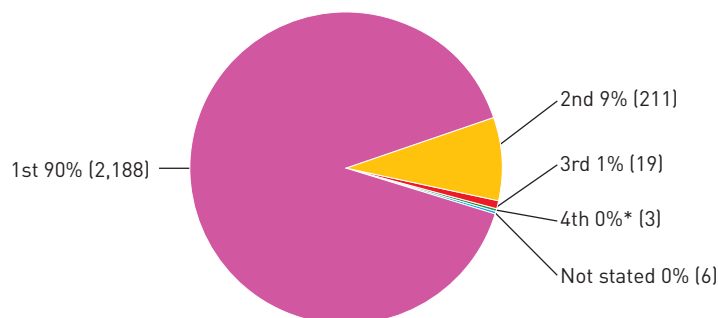
## 2.5 Births to teenagers inside and outside marriage

While the rate of teenage fertility has not varied considerably over the past three decades, the marital status of teenage parents has changed dramatically. In 1984, 39.8% of births to women under the age of twenty were marital births. By 2005, just 7% of births to those under the age of twenty were marital births (CSO Vital Statistics Yearly Summary 2005). Thus, while the number of births to teenagers has remained relatively stable, there has been an increase in the proportion of these births taking place outside of marriage and a corresponding decrease in the proportion of teenage births that occur within marriage. However as noted by Fahey and Russell (2001), there is a lack of information concerning the status of non-marital births in Ireland, i.e. whether they represent births to women not involved in a stable relationship.

## 2.6 Birth Order

As illustrated by the pie chart (figure 2.5), the majority of births that take place to teenagers are first births. In 2005, 90% of births to teenagers (2,188) were first births. There were 211 second births to teenagers in 2005 and 19 third births to women under twenty.

Figure 2.5 Birth Order for Teenagers 2005



Source: CSO Vital Statistics Yearly Summary 2005

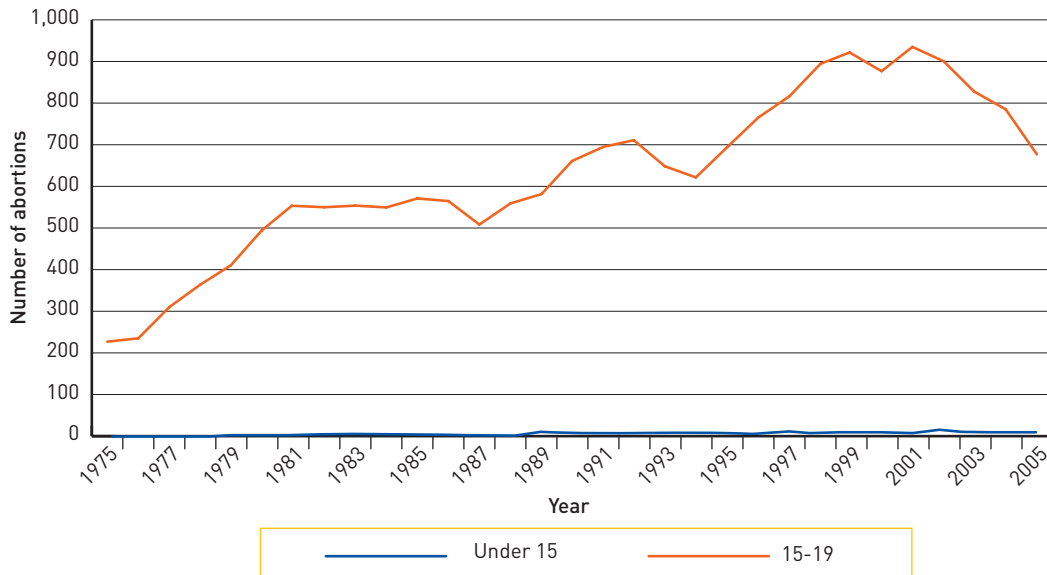
\*Note percentages are rounded: Actual percentage of 4th births is 0.12%.

- The majority of births that take place to teenagers are first births.

### 3.0 Teenage abortions

The previous section looked at the teenage fertility rate. As noted previously, the fertility rate does not include abortions. This section looks at the number of Irish women aged less than 20 years giving addresses at UK abortion clinics. Data on women giving Irish addresses at UK abortion clinics has been collected in the UK since 1975. Though these data are incomplete, they illustrate a substantial increase in the number of teenagers travelling to the UK for abortions over the last three decades (figure 3.1). However, the number of teenagers giving Irish addresses at UK abortion clinics has declined since 2001.

Figure 3.1 Number of Irish teenagers\* having abortions in the UK between 1991 and 2005



Source: NSO UK. Department of Health UK  
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Statistics/StatisticalWorkAreas/StatisticalPublicHealth/fs/en>

\*Refers to women giving Irish addresses in UK abortion clinics; does not include women for whom no age was stated, which since 1985 has been less than two women per year.

The age-specific abortion rate takes into consideration any variation in the population structure across different years by calculating an abortion rate per 1,000 females in the specific age group. Table 3.1 shows abortion rates per 1000 women aged 12-14 and 15-19 in Ireland from 1986 to 2005. In 1986, the abortion rate was 0.04 for under 12-14 year olds and 3.5 for 15-19 year olds. By 2001, the abortion rate had risen to 6.0 for 15-19 year olds, but it has since dropped to 4.7 in 2005. The abortion rate for 12-14 year olds increased until 2002, when it stood at 0.18, and decreased slightly to 0.15 in 2005.

Table 3.1 Numbers and rates for Irish teenagers\* having abortions in the UK 1986-2005

Year	Number of abortions for <15 years	Rate of abortion for 12-14 years	Number of abortions for 15-19 years	Rate of abortions for 15-19 years
1986	4	0.04	565	3.5
1987	2	0.02	510	3.2
1988	1	0.01	555	3.4
1989	10	0.10	578	3.6
1990	9	0.09	658	4.1
1991	7	0.07	693	4.2
1992	5	0.05	711	4.4
1993	9	0.09	650	4.0
1994	9	0.09	619	3.8
1995	7	0.07	691	4.2
1996	6	0.06	760	4.6
1997	10	0.11	812	4.8
1998	7	0.08	891	5.3
1999	8	0.09	919	5.6
2000	10	0.11	874	5.4
2001	12	0.14	932	6.0
2002	15	0.18	901	5.9
2003	10	0.12	826	5.5
2004	11	0.13	787	5.4
2005	12	0.15	682	4.7

Source: Calculated from data provided by National Statistics Office & Department of Health UK

\*Refers to girls giving Irish addresses in UK abortion clinics; does not include girls for whom no age was stated, which since 1985 has been less than two per year.

- **There has been a substantial increase in the number of teenagers travelling to the UK for abortions over the last three decades, with a slight decrease in recent years.**

International comparisons of abortion rates can be found in section 2.8. It should be noted that by international standards, Ireland has a very low rate of teenage abortion.



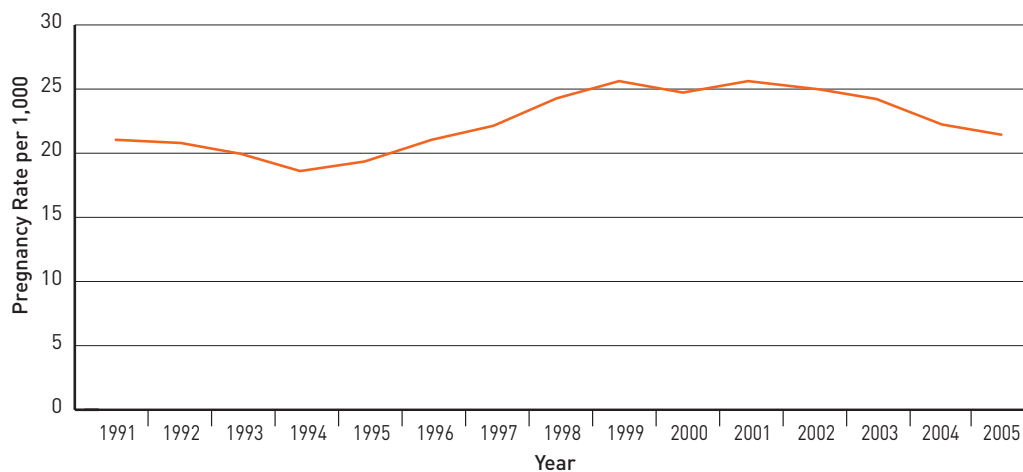
### 4.0 Teenage pregnancies (births and abortions)

The previous sections have looked at teenage fertility rates (births per 1,000 females aged 15-19) and abortion rates (abortions<sup>1</sup> per 1,000 females aged 15-19). The teenage pregnancy rate is an aggregate of the birth and abortion rates. This section examines the pregnancy rate for women aged 15 to 19 years in Ireland and compares the teenage pregnancy rate in Ireland with international data.

#### 4.1 Teenage pregnancy rate

There were 21.12 pregnancies per 1,000 females aged 15-19 in 1991. The teenage pregnancy rate increased during the second half of the 1990's, to reach a high of 25.7 in 2001 (see figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1 Irish teenage pregnancy rate (aggregate of births and abortions per 1,000 females aged 15-19 years) 1991 - 2005



Source: Calculated by the CPA based on figures provided by the CSO and NSO/Department of Health UK

- **The teenage pregnancy rate in Ireland has remained relatively stable between 1991 and 2005.**

Table 4.1 provides a breakdown of the number of births to teenagers aged 15-19 and the teenage fertility rate between 1991 and 2005. This table also examines the number of abortions to teenagers aged 15-19 and the abortion rate for this age group, along with the number of pregnancies to females aged 15-19 and the pregnancy rate for this age group.

<sup>1</sup> The abortion figures only reflect the number of teenagers giving Irish addresses at UK abortion clinics and thus the data in this regard may be incomplete

**Table 4.1** Number and rates of: births, abortions and pregnancies for 15-19 year old females in Ireland

	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Total births</b>	<b>Fertility rate*</b>	<b>Total abortions</b>	<b>Abortion rate</b>	<b>Total Pregnancies</b>	<b>Pregnancy rate</b>
1991	163,600	2,771	17.1	693	4.2	3,464	21.2
1992	162,500	2,708	16.9	711	4.4	3,419	21.0
1993	161,000	2,592	16.3	650	4.0	3,242	20.1
1994	161,800	2,407	15.0	619	3.8	3,026	18.7
1995	163,800	2,456	15.1	691	4.2	3,147	19.2
1996	165,600	2,760	16.7	760	4.6	3,520	21.3
1997	167,600	2,912	17.5	812	4.8	3,724	22.2
1998	168,000	3,202	19.2	891	5.3	4,093	24.4
1999	164,700	3,303	20.2	919	5.6	4,222	25.6
2000	160,500	3,106	19.5	874	5.4	3,980	24.8
2001	156,200	3,078	19.9	932	6.0	4,010	25.7
2002	152,800	2,940	19.4	901	5.9	3,841	25.1
2003	149,800	2,816	19.0	826	5.5	3,642	24.3
2004	146,700	2,490	17.1	787	5.4	3,277	22.34
2005~	144,500	2,420	16.8	682	4.7	3,102	21.46

Sources: \* CSO Vital Statistics Annual Report 2004; other rates calculated by the CPA based on figures provided by the CSO and NSO/Department of Health UK

~ CSO Preliminary figures in 2005 4th Quarter and Yearly Summary

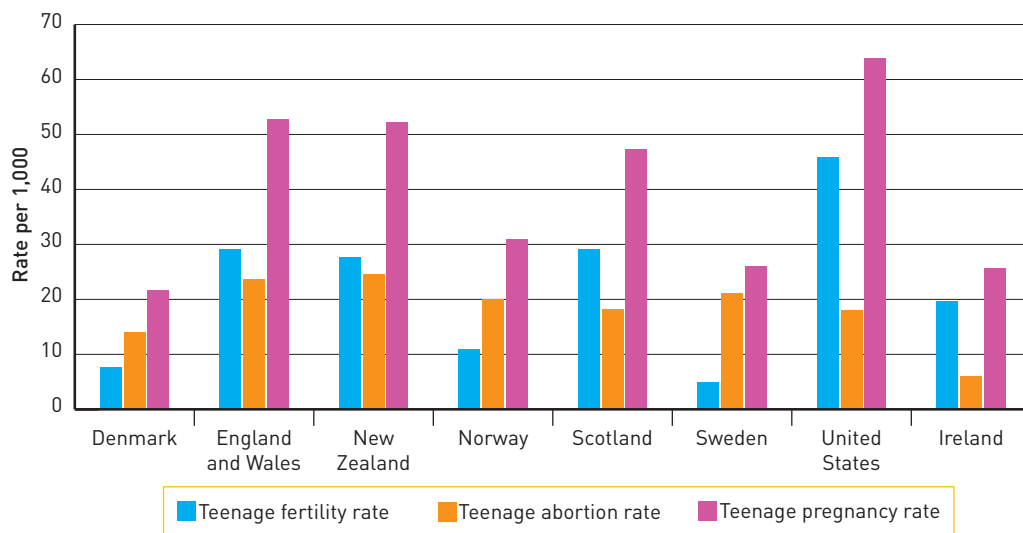
Please note that very slight variations can occur when calculating fertility rates over time. This is due to the population estimates sourced at the time of calculation and the age range included in the calculation.

#### 4.2 International comparisons of teenage fertility and abortion rates

By international standards, Ireland has a low rate of teenage abortion. Figure 4.2 illustrates that teenage conception is less likely to result in abortion in Ireland than other countries, particularly in comparison to countries such as Norway, Sweden and Denmark, suggesting that abortion is a more likely outcome of teenage pregnancy in these countries.

When examined in relation to the conception rates in other European countries, Ireland's teenage conception rate is lower than that of England and Wales, Scotland, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and the USA.

Figure 4.2 International comparisons of teenage fertility and abortion rates



Source:[http://www.stats.govt.nz/domino/external/web/prod\\_serv.nsf/0/36863e81f7da76d4cc256da30073ddb3/\\$FILE/Sept-03.pdf](http://www.stats.govt.nz/domino/external/web/prod_serv.nsf/0/36863e81f7da76d4cc256da30073ddb3/$FILE/Sept-03.pdf). Ireland data sourced from CSO; Irish abortion data sourced from NSO UK.

NOTE: The teenage fertility rate is the number of live births per 1,000 estimated mean for females aged 15-19. The teenage abortion rate is the number of abortions per 1,000 estimated mean for females aged 15-19 (based on women giving Irish addresses in UK abortion clinics and population data from 2002 Census). Figures are based on available data from 1998 to 2002. The teenage pregnancy rate is an aggregate of the teenage fertility and abortion rates.

• **By international standards, Ireland has a very low rate of abortion amongst teenagers aged 15 to 19.**

## 5.0 Conclusion

While there are a number of limitations associated with use of the statistics presented in this report, some tentative conclusions can be drawn. Statistics suggest that a moderate number of births take place each year to teenagers in Ireland. The majority of these births occur to 18 and 19 year olds, with few occurring to females under 15. While the teenage fertility rate has remained relatively stable since 1970, there has been a dramatic change in the marital status of teenage parents, with few teenage births now occurring within marriage.

The number of teenagers travelling to the UK for abortion has increased substantially over the last 30 years, although a decline has been recorded since 2001. These data may be incomplete since they are based on women who give an Irish address at UK abortion clinics. The rate of teenage abortions in Ireland is low by international standards. The teenage pregnancy rate, an aggregate of births and abortions, has remained relatively stable since 1991.

Compared to other countries, there is a lack of statistical data on teenage fertility and pregnancy in Ireland. In order to develop effective policy, build capacity and plan service delivery it is necessary to have an accurate and robust picture of the relevant issues. Furthermore, data reporting must be standardised to enable comparisons over time and across countries. It is clear that a research agenda in relation to teenage pregnancy in Ireland is required. This relates to; a) improvements and developments in the collection of routine national statistics and indicators related to teenage pregnancy in Ireland and b) collaboration on research projects designed to build our evidence base.

### 5.1 Summary

- The teenage fertility rate in Ireland has been relatively stable over the course of the last 35 years.
- The majority of teenage births in Ireland take place to females aged 18 or 19 years.
- The majority of births that take place to teenagers are first births.
- There has been a substantial increase in the number of teenagers travelling to the UK for abortions over the last three decades, with a slight decrease in recent years.
- By international standards, Ireland has a very low rate of abortion amongst teenagers aged 15 to 19.
- The teenage pregnancy rate (births and abortions) in Ireland has remained relatively stable between 1991 and 2005.

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