

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Essential information for unmarried expectant parents**

Treoir, the National Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children, today launched a public information campaign to provide information for expectant unmarried parents, living together or apart. The campaign aims to highlight key information such as maintenance, birth registration, maternity leave/benefit, cohabitation, shared parenting and establishing paternity.

To promote the new information campaign, Treoir has produced a specially branded badge 'Baby on Board' which pregnant women may find useful against the age-old plight of finding it difficult to get a seat on public transport.

Speaking at the launch of the campaign, Margaret Dromey, CEO of Treoir, expressed concern about the lack of information and the misinformation that is "out there" among unmarried parents and those involved with them. "Over 25,000 births were registered as outside marriage in 2011, which represents 34% of all births in the country. The legal position of unmarried families is very different to that of married families and it is hugely important that women and their partners know and understand their legal rights and financial entitlements. It can be a very daunting prospect for unmarried expectant parents, and especially young parents, to know and understand what the legal and financial implications are and where to find the relevant information".

Points of information from Treoir's information campaign:

- If the pregnancy is stressful or unplanned, talk to one of the state funded crisis pregnancy agencies.
- Where possible it is good for your baby to have the names of both parents on her/his birth cert.
- An unmarried father does not get any legal rights to his baby by having his name on the birth cert. A father has to take action to become his baby's guardian, even if he is living with the mother.
- For the first time, couples living together, both opposite and same sex, may now be eligible to apply for maintenance, property and other benefits if their relationship ends, following the enactment of the Civil

Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations of Cohabitants Act 2010.

- If you are not living together you will need to think about how much maintenance the non-resident parent will pay in respect of your baby.
- It may be necessary to establish paternity where paternity is in doubt. Treoir has information on relevant addresses and costs. A useful leaflet is also available which discusses the issue.

Further details on how to get the badge and of the information campaign can be found on [www.treoir.ie](http://www.treoir.ie)

Ends

### **Notes to Editor:**

#### **About Treoir**

Founded in 1975 Treoir is the national federation of services for unmarried parents and their children. Its main aim is to promote the rights and welfare of unmarried families in Ireland. Membership of Treoir is open to professional agencies providing services to unmarried parents. They are a combination of statutory and non-statutory bodies, including specialist agencies, HSE, maternity hospitals, adoption societies, self-help groups.

#### **Births outside marriage Ireland – the statistics<sup>1</sup>**

- There were 25,190 births registered as outside marriage in 2011.
- This accounts for 34% of all births, the same as 2010.
- Almost 55% of births outside of marriage were to couples who are living together (cohabiting).
- The highest percentage of births outside marriage occurred in Limerick City at 49%, while the lowest percentage was 25% which occurred both in Galway County and Dun Laoghaire Rathdown.
- A total of 1,720 teenagers had babies last year, 40 of whom were aged under 16.

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<sup>1</sup> (CSO Vital Statistics 4th quarter 2011 and yearly summary).

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