

# PREGNANT? DON'T PANIC.

/HELP IS AVAILABLE

If you've just found out you're expecting a baby its important to know that you are not alone.

Whether you decide to keep your baby or to choose adoption, help is available. This factsheet makes it easier to find out how to get the help you and your baby require.

## RAISING YOUR BABY

You are entitled to the following if you are a Irish/EU citizen:

### DURING PREGNANCY

#### *If you are not working:*<sup>1</sup>

- Supplementary Welfare allowance
- Medical Card/G.P. Visit Card
- Rent/Mortgage Interest supplement
- Money towards cost of necessary items such as a pram or a cot etc

#### *If you are working:*

- Maternity Benefit, if you have paid enough Social Insurance Contributions
- Health and safety benefits
- You are entitled to 26 weeks Maternity leave, plus an additional 16 weeks unpaid leave

**Contact your local social welfare office for more information or contact the Maternity Benefit Section of the Department of Social Protection at 1890-690690.**

### WHEN THE BABY IS BORN:<sup>2</sup>

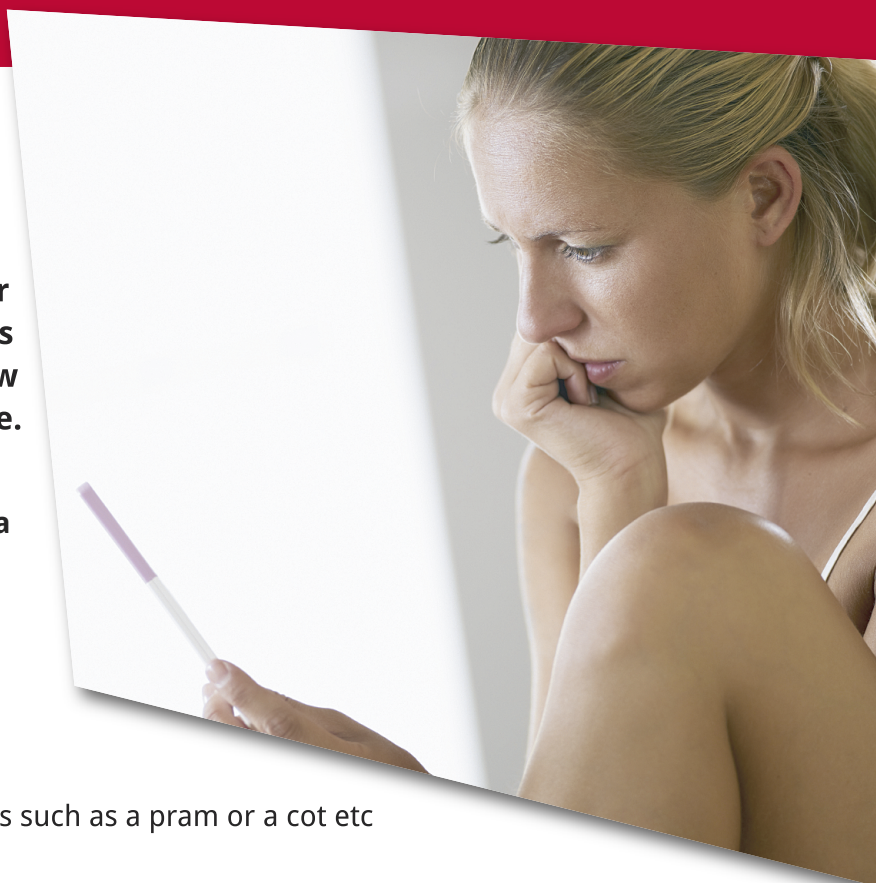
*If you are a single-parent family with Irish/EU citizenship you are entitled to:*

- The current maximum rate of One-Parent Family (OPF) for a parent plus one child (for 2011 €225.80). For every additional child you get €29.80 each per week.
- Child Benefit - €15-40 for each of the first two children per month - available to **all** children
- Higher amounts are paid for additional children.
- The Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) - Free pre-school year for all children between the ages of 3 years and 3 months and 4 years and 6 months from September 2010.

**Contact the One-Parent Family Section of the Department of Social Protection at 1890 500 000 and press 4, or call the Child Benefit Section at 1890 400 400.**

### BENEFITS FOR PERSON WITHOUT IRISH/EU CITIZENSHIP:

- There are currently no state benefits for people who are not Irish/EU citizens.
- But, Life Pregnancy Care Service is available to help you (regardless of citizenship) with everything including financial help, housing assistance, hospital costs, etc.



**HELP. SUPPORT.  
ENTITLEMENTS.  
FOR YOU AND YOUR BABY**

# HELP IS FREE

## LIFE PREGNANCY CARE SERVICE

**Confidential Helpline: 1850 281 281**

(Mon-Sat 9am-9pm, Sun 3-9pm)

Life provides free pregnancy tests, counselling, accommodation and/or help finding a place to stay, guidance on claiming welfare entitlements, help with accessing medical services, and support as long as you need it. They offer information on: welfare entitlements, legal issues, job rights, continuing your education or training, and adoption.

### LOCAL CARE CENTRES

**Dublin:** 01 6798989

**Cork:** 021 4270445

**Galway:** 091 566939

**Midlands:** 057 9341110

**Thurles:** 0504 24402

**Letterkenny:** 074 9127007

### ADOPTION

**If you are considering giving your baby up for adoption you have several options:**

Adoption gives you the choice of making sure you know your **baby has gone to a secure, properly vetted and loving household.**

You can choose an **Open Adoption:** an adoption in which you and the adoptive family get to know each other and the adoptive family allows visiting rights to you.

You may also put your baby into **foster care** until you are better able to take care of him / her

**For more information, contact Life Pregnancy Care Service at 1850-281281 or the Adoption Authority of Ireland at 01 2309306 to speak to a Social worker.**

### lifefacts/backup

1. <http://www.welfare.ie/EN/Schemes/BirthChildrenAndFamilies/MaternityBenefit/Pages/mb.aspx>
2. <http://www.welfare.ie/EN/Schemes/BirthChildrenAndFamilies/ChildRelatedPayments/Pages/cb.aspx>
3. <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/features/2010/1108/1224282859358.html>

### KIM'S STORY: I KEPT MY BABY

'When I found out I was pregnant 4 years ago, I was only 15. I thought my life would be over if I went through with the pregnancy. People told me I was too young and it would be wrong to bring my child into the world. I was totally torn in two. I couldn't decide whether to have an abortion or to have the baby.

Then I met a counsellor and talking about it made me feel more positive. I no longer felt alienated from this life growing inside of me, instead I felt warmth and love. I made the decision to keep the baby. The first time I held my little boy I knew it was worth it and that I could make a real go of things. Sometimes it's hard being a single young mother, and it does get frustrating, but when Rory looks up at me with his big blue eyes I feel like I'm melting. I honestly love him more than words can describe.'

**KIM, TALLAGHT, DUBLIN**

### TONI'S STORY: MY BABY WAS ADOPTED

While on a holiday abroad, 23-year-old Toni was raped.

She became pregnant and says she spent much of her pregnancy in denial. She says she didn't want to have an abortion because she felt the child had a right to life.

When her son was born Toni says she didn't want to hold the child. Through the hospital social worker, she was referred to a voluntary adoption agency. The agency counselled her about her choices, and Toni made the final decision to give the baby up for adoption. The agency and the adoptive family gave Toni the option of an open adoption, which would give her the opportunity to keep in touch with her child and the adoptive family, but Toni felt she was unable to handle it.

She eventually opted for 'semi-open' adoption. Twice a year she writes to her son and his birth parents respond with letters and photographs of her little boy. This is known as 'letterbox' adoption. Toni believes that giving her son up for adoption to a loving family, something good came from her trauma. She said, 'I know I made the right decision. I would do nothing different.'

**TESTIMONY ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN THE IRISH TIMES, 8 NOVEMBER 2010<sup>3</sup>**



**LIFE INSTITUTE**

**T: 353 1 873 0465**

**W: [www.thelifeinstitute.net](http://www.thelifeinstitute.net)**