

STATISTICS PRESS NOTICE – ANNUAL REPORT OF THE REGISTRAR GENERAL (2008)



9:30am Monday 30 November 2009

Population set to pass 1.8 million next year

The size of the resident population in Northern Ireland at 30 June 2008 is estimated to be 1.775 million people, with the population likely to reach 1.8 million by 2010.

These are some of the findings in the Annual Report of the Registrar General published by the Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) today. The report provides information on births, deaths, marriages, civil partnerships, adoptions and divorces registered in 2008.

Today cancer is one of the most common causes of death with nearly 4,000 deaths annually. Every year the disease touches a large number of individuals and families across Northern Ireland. Therefore this year the report contains an invited article entitled "A Review of Cancer Mortality in Northern Ireland" by Dr Anna Gavin and Dr David Donnelly of the Northern Ireland Cancer Registry, Queen's University Belfast.

POPULATION – High fertility drives continued population growth

- The size of the Northern Ireland resident population rose in the year to 30 June 2008 by 15,900 people or 0.9 per cent to 1,775,000;
- there are more births than deaths in Northern Ireland leading to the population growing through natural change. In the year to 30 June 2008, births exceeded deaths by 10,600; this is the highest level of natural change seen since the year to mid-1992;
- in terms of civil migration it is estimated that in the year to mid-2008, 27,500 people came to live here and 21,700 people left Northern Ireland to live elsewhere; thus giving a net migration gain of 5,700 people. Of the 27,500 people who came to live here; 8,300 came from the eight Eastern European countries that joined the European Union in May 2004;
- between 2007 and 2008, Craigavon and Dungannon Local Government Districts had the greatest increases in population (2.3 per cent and 2.0 per cent). These rates of increase are more than twice the Northern Ireland percentage increase (0.9 per cent);
- in the future the Northern Ireland population is projected to exceed 1.8 million by 2010 and 1.9 million by 2019. Longer-term projections indicate the population will reach 2 million by the early 2030s; and
- population projections indicate a marked increase in the size of the population at older ages. The number of people of current pensionable age is projected to increase by around 11 per cent in the next five years and by around 40 per cent over the fifteen year period between 2008 and 2023.

BIRTHS – Seventeen year high in the number of babies born

- The number of births registered in Northern Ireland last year was 25,631, a 5 per cent increase on the 2007 figure of 24,451 births;
- for the first time since falling below replacement level (2.1) in 1992, the total period fertility rate for 2008 has again risen above replacement at 2.11 children, which is a recovery from the record low of 1.75 children in 2000;
- there has been a recent trend towards later childbearing by mothers. In 2008, for all live births, the average age of the mother was 30 years, compared with 29 in 1998, 28 in 1988 and 27 in 1978. Just under half of all births registered in 2008 were to mothers aged 30 and over; this is a significant increase from 1978 when around 30 per cent of births were to mothers aged 30 and over;
- over recent years, the number of births to mothers born in one of the eight EU accession countries has increased. The number of births in 2001 to mothers born in one of the eight accession countries was 12. Between 2007 and 2008 the number of such births increased from 775 to 1,080;
- the percentage of births to mothers born outside the UK and Ireland range from 20 per cent in Dungannon Local Government District (189 births) to 2 per cent in Larne Local Government District; and
- last year, 39 per cent of all births in Northern Ireland occurred outside marriage. However this varies from area to area. In Belfast (57 per cent) and Derry (50 per cent) Local Government Districts at least half of births were outside marriage. Whereas, in Magherafelt (24 per cent) and Omagh (24 per cent) Local Government Districts less than one-quarter of births were outside marriage.

DEATHS – Nearly 4,000 deaths from cancer in 2008

- The number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland last year was 14,907, a slight increase on the 2007 figure of 14,649;
- although the number of deaths increased last year, the long-term trend is one of falling death rates. The reduction in the death rate in recent years has occurred despite the population increasing in size and containing a higher proportion of elderly people;
- children born today can expect to have longer lives than children born in the past. Based on current death rates, males born in recent years could expect to live until they are 76.3 years and females could expect to live until they are 81.2 years, with corresponding figures for men and women born around 1920-22 of 53.8 and 54.4 years respectively;
- in 2008, 3,971 people died from cancer, a slight increase on recent years. This however can be accounted for by the ageing population. When age is taken into account death rates from cancer for both males and females have fallen by around 1 per cent per year. Cancer deaths represent 27 per cent of all deaths registered in 2008 compared to 18 per cent of all deaths in 1978; and
- in 2008, a total of 276 people died from alcohol related deaths, this is over 74 per cent higher than the 158 deaths registered in 1998. There were 89 drug related deaths in Northern Ireland in 2008 which is a slight increase on the 2007 figure of 86 deaths and more than double the 40 deaths registered in 1998.

STILLBIRTHS AND INFANT DEATHS – Significant falls over the long term

- The number of stillbirths recorded in 2008 was 115, while the number of infant deaths recorded was 123. The number of stillbirths and infant deaths has fallen significantly from the levels seen twenty years ago.

MARRIAGES – Friday 8th August most popular day to get married last year

- Last year there were 8,510 marriages registered in Northern Ireland, a decrease of 177 marriages or 2 per cent on the 2007 figure of 8,687 marriages;
- people are waiting longer to get married, the average age at first marriage is 29 years for females and 31 years for males, both are six years older than their counterparts of the 1970s. Considering all weddings, including those involving widowed and divorced people, the average age at marriage is 31 years for brides and 33 years for grooms;
- the most common month to get married in 2008 was August (1,486 couples) followed by July (1,072 couples). Friday 8th August 2008 was the most popular day in 2008 to get married, with 139 couples marrying on that date;
- the majority of marriages are by religious ceremony, last year 6,039 or 71 per cent of all marriages were celebrated in this way. However the proportion of marriages by civil ceremony has risen over the last forty years; last year 29 per cent of marriages were celebrated in this way compared to only 5 per cent in 1961; and
- marriage legislation underwent change in 2004. The new law allows civil marriage ceremonies to be conducted in 'approved venues'. In 2008, 1,056 civil marriage ceremonies (43 per cent of all civil marriage ceremonies) were held in approved venues other than a Registrar's Office.

DIVORCES – Second highest number on record

- There were 2,773 divorces granted in 2008, this is a decrease of 140 divorces or 5 per cent from the 2007 figure of 2,913 divorces. However the 2008 figure is the second highest on record after the 2007 figure which was the highest number of divorces ever recorded in Northern Ireland;
- over the last three years 14 per cent of divorces here were following a marriage which took place outside Northern Ireland; and
- in 2008, just over 4,700 children/stepchildren were affected by divorce; 2,768 children aged under 18 at the time of divorce and 1,953 children aged 18 and over at the time of divorce.

CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS – Fall in number of civil partnerships

- The Civil Partnership Act came into force in late 2005, enabling same-sex couples to obtain legal recognition of their relationship. During 2008 there were 86 civil partnerships registered in Northern Ireland, this compares to 111 civil partnerships registered in 2007 and 116 registered in 2006; and
- for male civil partnerships the average age of partners was just under 41 years, this compares to just under 38 years for female civil partnerships.

ADOPTIONS

- The number of children recorded in the Adopted Children Register during 2008 was 97. The number of adoptions has been falling steadily since 1970 when over 500 children were recorded in the Adopted Children Register.

RE-REGISTRATIONS OF BIRTH

- Since the early 1940s, the number of births authorised to be re-registered has increased from 165 in 1942 to 827 in 2008. The most common reason for a re-registration is to add the father's name to the birth entry.

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. This is the 87th Annual Report of the Registrar General for Northern Ireland. The report is available, at a cost of £25, from The Stationary Office, Belfast ISBN number 978-0-337-09569-6; a digital copy can be accessed on the NISRA website www.nisra.gov.uk.
2. The report includes commentary designed to bring out the key demographic trends and issues. Detailed statistical tables are available on CD and on the NISRA website at <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/demography/default.asp.htm>.
3. Corresponding information for England and Wales is published by the Office for National Statistics and for Scotland by the General Register Office for Scotland.
4. Dr Anna Gavin and Dr David Donnelly of the Northern Ireland Cancer Registry have written an article in the report on trends in cancer mortality in Northern Ireland. A summary of this article is attached. Dr Donnelly can be contacted for comment through the DFP Press Office. All media inquiries should be directed to the DFP Press Office:

Telephone: 028 9052 7374

Fax: 028 9052 7149

5. Further information on the statistics provided in this publication can be obtained from NISRA Customer Services at:

Telephone: 028 9034 8160

Fax: 028 9034 8161

E-mail: census.nisra@dfpni.gov.uk

“A review of Cancer Mortality in Northern Ireland”: Dr Anna Gavin and Dr David Donnelly: Northern Ireland Cancer Registry, Queen’s University Belfast.

- During 2004-2008 there was an average of 1,985 male and 1,829 female cancer deaths per year with lung cancer the biggest cause of cancer death, making up 22 per cent of all cancer deaths. The next most common cancers causing fatality were colorectal cancer (11 per cent), breast cancer (8 per cent), prostate cancer (6 per cent) and pancreatic cancer (5 per cent);
- the single most important factor relating to the development of cancer is age with half of the patients dying from cancer in Northern Ireland during 2004-2008 aged over 74 years with age-specific mortality rates climbing exponentially with increasing age;
- over the last two decades the number of deaths from all cancers combined has increased among both males and females. However when the effect of age is taken into account mortality rates have fallen by approximately 1 per cent per year for males and females. However different cancer sites demonstrate different trends. For example while lung cancer mortality has decreased by 2 per cent per year for males it has increased by 1 per cent per year for females;
- cancer mortality rates are higher in deprived areas, a result of different lifestyle factors with smoking levels in particular causing higher rates of many cancers in particular areas;
- as a result of these differences Belfast and Derry Local Government Districts had higher mortality rates of all cancers combined during 1999-2008 than the average rate for all of Northern Ireland;
- cancer mortality rates in Northern Ireland during 2003-2007 were 3 per cent higher than in England and Wales for males but were similar in both countries for females. Northern Ireland had lower cancer mortality rates than those in Scotland for both males and females;
- five-year survival for patients diagnosed with cancer (excluding non-melanoma skin cancer) during 1998-2002 was 41 per cent for males and 52 per cent for females. This is an improvement of 6 per cent for males and 4 per cent for females compared to patients diagnosed in 1993-1997; and
- in addition to the continuing improvements in treatment and diagnosis cancer mortality reductions and survival improvements can be achieved through public awareness of risk factors and symptoms leading to prevention and early detection of all forms of cancer.