

# STATISTICS PRESS NOTICE – ANNUAL REPORT OF THE REGISTRAR GENERAL (2010)



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## Lowest Death Rate Ever Recorded

In total last year there were just under 14,500 deaths registered. With the increasing population, this resulted in 2010 having the lowest death rate in the history of Northern Ireland.

This is just one of the many findings in the Annual Report of the Registrar General published today by the Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

Last year, of all births registered nearly 2,500 (10 per cent) were to mothers from outside the UK and Ireland; a four-fold rise from a decade ago when there were 600 such births.

A NISRA spokesperson said:

*“The figures in this report indicate the continuation of a number of trends. Improving mortality rates will in time lead to an ageing population, which will have policy impacts across Government. The figures also point to a greater diversity in our population, with births here to mothers from outside the UK and Ireland continuing to rise.”*

## ***POPULATION – More births than deaths drives continued population growth***

- The size of the Northern Ireland resident population rose in the year to 30 June 2010 by 10,500 people, or 0.6 per cent, to just under 1.8 million (1,799,400);
- in the year to 30 June 2010, population increase was driven by natural change (more births than deaths). Last year births exceeded deaths by 10,800, which was the highest level of natural change since the early 1990s;
- in the year to 30 June 2010, it is estimated there were equal numbers of people coming to and leaving Northern Ireland (22,500 people moving either way). Of the 22,500 people who came to live here, 5,100 came from the eight Central and Eastern European countries that joined the European Union in 2004;
- in the last ten years, the number of children (aged under 16) has fallen from 403,000 to 382,000, a fall of five per cent. In contrast, the older population (aged 65 and over) increased from 221,000 to 260,000, a rise of 18 per cent; and
- population **projections** indicate the number of older people will continue to increase markedly relative to the number of younger people. In total, the Northern Ireland population is **projected** to grow to 1.9 million by 2019. Longer-term projections indicate the population will reach 2.0 million by the early 2030s.

## ***BIRTHS – Over 25,000 births registered***

- In 2010, there were 25,315 births, an increase of 1.6 per cent on the 2009 figure of 24,910 births;
- over the last thirty years there has been a trend towards later childbearing. In 2010, the average age of women who gave birth was 30 years, compared with 27 years in 1980. Just over half of all births (51 per cent) registered in 2010 were to mothers aged 30 or more; while in 1980 less than one-third of all births (31 per cent) were to mothers aged 30 and over;
- of the births last year, nearly 2,500 (10 per cent) were to mothers who were born outside the UK or Ireland. This is a four-fold rise from a decade ago when there were 600 such births; and

- last year, 40 per cent of births occurred outside marriage. Looking across Northern Ireland, over half of all births in the two major City Council Areas, Belfast (57 per cent) and Derry (54 per cent), were outside marriage.

### ***DEATHS – Lowest death rate on record***

- In 2010 there were 14,457 deaths registered in Northern Ireland. With the population increasing, last year saw the lowest death rate in the history of Northern Ireland (eight deaths per 1,000 population);
- the continued reduction in death rates has occurred despite the population increasing in size and having a larger proportion of older people. Indeed, if death rates of 1980 continued to apply today, the number of deaths last year would have been just over 27,000, nearly double the number recorded. This is a remarkable improvement and will have significant policy impacts in a wide variety of areas;
- children born today will live longer than children born in the past. **Based on current death rates**, baby boys could expect to live until they are 77 and baby girls could expect to live until they are just over 81;
- however **if death rates continue to improve**, as they have done over the last century, then both baby boys and girls could on average expect to live until well into their late 80s;
- cancer accounted for 4,018 deaths in 2010 (just over one death in every four). Cancer continues to increase, representing 28 per cent of deaths last year compared to 17 per cent in 1980. In contrast, 2,234 people died from ischaemic heart disease last year, a decrease of over 50 per cent from 1980; and
- in 2010, a total of 284 people died from alcohol related deaths, around 50 per cent more than ten years ago. There were 92 drug related deaths last year, significantly more than ten years ago (53 deaths in 2000).

### ***STILLBIRTHS AND INFANT DEATHS – Significant falls over the long term***

- The number of stillbirths recorded in 2010 was 105, while the number of infant deaths recorded was 146. The number of stillbirths and infant deaths has fallen significantly from the levels seen thirty years ago.

### ***MARRIAGES – Increase in number of marriages in 2010***

- There were 8,156 marriages registered in 2010, an increase of 225 marriages or 2.8 per cent on the 2009 figure of 7,931 marriages;
- people are waiting longer to get married, the average age for first marriages has increased and is now just over 29 years for **single** females and just over 31 years for **single** males, both six years older than in the early 1980s. Considering all weddings, including those involving widowed and divorced people, the average age at marriage is just over 31 years for brides and nearly 34 years for grooms;
- Saturday 4th September 2010 was the most popular day in 2010 to get married, with 112 couples marrying on that date; and
- the majority of marriages are still by religious ceremony, with 69 per cent of all marriages celebrated in this way last year. However, the proportion of marriages by civil ceremony continues to rise; last year, 31 per cent of marriages were celebrated in this way compared to 11 per cent in 1980.

### ***DIVORCES – Number of divorces rise in 2010***

- The number of divorces in Northern Ireland in 2010 was 2,600. The highest number of divorces on record for Northern Ireland was in 2007, when 2,913 divorces were granted by the Courts; and
- last year, just over 2,700 children (aged under 18) and 1,800 adult “children” (aged 18 or more) were affected by the divorce of their parents.

### ***CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS – Increase 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. Between 2005 and 2010, 537 civil partnerships have been registered in Northern Ireland; and
- during 2010 there were 116 civil partnerships registered in Northern Ireland, 54 male and 62 female civil partnerships. This is an increase from the 2009 figure of 96 civil partnerships.

## NOTES TO EDITORS

1. This is the 89th Annual Report of the Registrar General for Northern Ireland. The report can be accessed on the NISRA website at:  
<http://www.nisra.gov.uk/demography/default.asp22.htm>
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 [National Records of Scotland](#). Similar figures for the Republic of Ireland are available from the Central Statistics Office Ireland.
4. This Annual Report provides statistics on a number of areas which have policy relevance. In particular, the number of births has implications for planning maternity services and schools, and the number of deaths has implications for hospital and palliative care strategies. Population statistics are widely used in policy development, in areas as diverse as pensions, housing, healthcare and education.
5. Last winter, Northern Ireland experienced one of the coldest spells ever. Cold weather can have an impact on the health of the population. To further understand this issue, the Annual Report also contains a special article entitled “Seasonality of Mortality in Northern Ireland” written by Dr Chris Morris, an independent social researcher. Alongside the Annual Report, NISRA today will also publish the first figures on excess winter mortality during last winter – there is a separate press release on this issue.
6. All media inquiries should be directed to the DFP Press Office:

Telephone:

028 9016 3388

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

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