

STATISTICS PRESS NOTICE – BIRTHS IN NORTHERN IRELAND (2008)



Seventeen year high in the number of babies born

9:30am – Thursday, 12 March 2009

In total 25,600 live births were registered in Northern Ireland in 2008, 1,200 (5%) more than in 2007 and the highest number recorded since 1991. The latest rise is the sixth consecutive annual increase, with births having increased by 10% since 2006 and by 20% since the 2002 low.

These findings are contained in provisional 2008 birth statistics released today by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

Throughout the 1990s the number of babies fell as more women in their twenties delayed having children. Today those women are now having babies in their thirties with the birth rate of women in their thirties having increased by nearly a quarter over the last decade.

Increased migration to Northern Ireland has also had an impact on the number of children born. Last year 2,300 babies were born to mothers who were born themselves outside the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, a three-fold increase from 2001 when 700 such babies were recorded. In large part this increase is accounted for by the 1,100 babies born in Northern Ireland last year to mothers born in the eight new Central and Eastern European EU countries; this compares with 10 such babies in 2001.

A NISRA spokesperson said that:

“The number of babies born in Northern Ireland has now risen each year since 2002. In 2008 there were 25,600 babies registered an increase of 20% from the 2002 low. Today we are seeing more women in their thirties having children. In addition more women have been moving to Northern Ireland to live and are having children here.”

Summary

- In 2008, there were 25,631 births registered to mothers resident in Northern Ireland. This is a 5% increase on the 2007 figure of 24,451 births. However the number of births registered in 2008 remains below that observed in the mid-1980s when around 27,000 births were registered each year;
- it is estimated that with the current age pattern of fertility¹ the hypothetical “average woman” will have 2.10 children in her lifetime; this is the first time replacement fertility (2.1 children per “average woman”) has been reached since 1991. This fertility rate is an increase of 4% on the 2007 figure (2.02) and a 20% recovery from a record low of 1.75 children in 2000, but still well below the recent highest level of 2.82 children in 1979;
- births of 13,204 baby boys and 12,427 baby girls were registered in 2008;
- a total of 10,988 births (43%) were to first time mothers in 2008, while second time mothers had 8,377 babies (33%) and third time mothers had 4,041 babies (16%). Only nine per cent became mothers for at least the fourth time;
- just over 100 babies were born on Wednesday 17 September, the largest number of births on any single day in 2008. The most common day of the week to have a baby was Wednesday, accounting for 16% of all births. Markedly fewer babies were born on Saturdays (11% of all births) and Sundays in 2008 (10% of all births); and
- around 100 babies were born in places other than a hospital in 2008, a similar figure to 2007.

Mother's Age

- Almost half (49%) of all births registered in 2008 were to mothers aged 30 or over. This is a significant increase from thirty years ago when around 31% of births were to older mothers. This indicates that women are delaying child-bearing to later in life – a trend seen across the developed world;

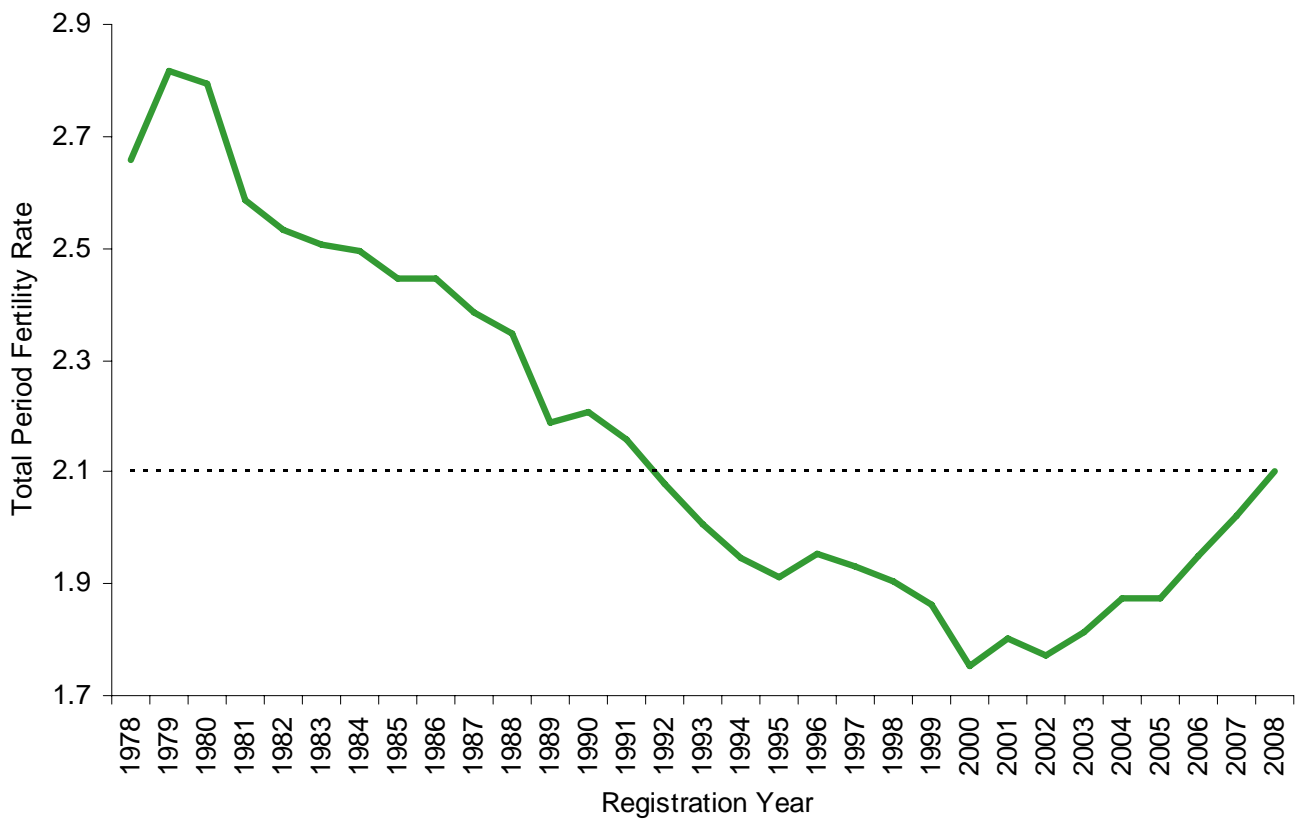
¹ All 2008 rate statistics in this release have been calculated using 2008 population projections.

- looking at first births this trend is even more pronounced. In 1978, only around 13% of married mothers aged 30 and over were first-time mothers, while in 2008, 28% of married mothers aged 30 and over were first-time mothers;
- in 2008 the average age of mothers was 29.7 years, compared with 29.0 years in 1998, 27.6 years in 1988, and 27.4 years in 1978. The average age of first time mothers was 27.4 years last year compared with 24.5 years in 1978;
- the trend to later childbearing is most apparent in the decline in fertility among 20-24 year old females. Over the past three decades fertility for this age group has more than halved, from 142 births per 1,000 women aged 20-24 in 1978 to 66 births per 1,000 women aged 20-24 in 2008; and
- the number of births to teenage mothers has fallen in recent years. In 2008 there were 1,426 births to teenage mothers, a small increase on the 1,405 births in 2007, and a decrease of more than 20% from the recent high of 1,791 such births in 1999.

Fertility Trend

- The total period fertility rate (or overall average fertility level) dropped below population replacement level (2.1 children) in Northern Ireland for the first time in 1992;
- for the first time since falling below replacement level in 1992 the total period fertility rate for 2008 has again reached replacement at 2.10 children, which is a recovery from a record low of 1.75 children in 2000. However this fertility rate is still well below the levels witnessed in the 1980s. The total period fertility rate for Northern Ireland since 1978 is shown in Chart 1 below; and
- in 2007 Northern Ireland's total period fertility rate was 2.02, higher than those in England (1.92), Scotland (1.73) and Wales (1.90) and slightly lower than the Republic of Ireland (2.03). Comparable statistics for 2008 are not yet available for all countries.

Chart 1: Total Period Fertility Rate (1978 to 2008)



Country of Birth of Mother

- There were over 4,500 births registered in Northern Ireland during 2008 where the mother was not born in Northern Ireland (18% of all births). Just under half (48%) of mothers not born in Northern Ireland were either born elsewhere in the United Kingdom or in the Republic of Ireland (2,189 mothers);
- however births to mothers born outside the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland have risen markedly in recent years, from 586 such births in 1998 to 2,347 births last year. Within these figures there has been a large increase in births to mothers born in the eight countries that joined the European Union in 2004 – the A8 countries. Around 10 babies were born to A8 mothers in 2001 compared to nearly 1,100 such births in 2008;
- generally mothers born in the A8 countries are younger than their Northern Ireland born counterparts. Last year, 75% of A8 mothers were aged in their twenties compared to 45% of mothers born in Northern Ireland. This is likely to be the result of the age profile of A8 born women living in Northern Ireland; and

Table 1: Births registered in Northern Ireland by Mother's Country of Birth, 1998-2008^P

Registration Year	Country of Birth of Mother					
	All countries	Northern Ireland	Rest of UK	Republic of Ireland	A8 Countries ¹	All other Countries ²
1998	23,668	20,645	1,682	755	3	583
2001	21,962	18,993	1,557	722	12	678
2002	21,385	18,507	1,480	653	16	729
2003	21,648	18,610	1,459	654	21	904
2004	22,318	19,056	1,408	689	34	1,131
2005	22,328	19,040	1,463	705	118	1,002
2006	23,272	19,611	1,477	736	390	1,058
2007	24,451	20,325	1,456	723	775	1,172
2008 ^P	25,631	21,095	1,410	779	1,080	1,267

^P Provisional.

¹ Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

² Includes not stated.

- the percentage of births to mothers born outside the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland ranged from 21% (1 birth in every 5) in Dungannon Local Government District (188 births) to 2% in Larne and Strabane Local Government Districts. Antrim, Belfast, Coleraine, Cookstown and Craigavon Local Government Districts also exhibited high percentages of births (over 10%) to mothers born outside the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

Births Outside Marriage

- Last year, 39% of all registered births occurred outside marriage – an increase on the 2007 figure (38%) and the highest proportion on record. This compares with one in seventeen births (6%) occurring outside marriage in 1978;
- last year just under 10,000 babies were born outside marriage compared with 1,500 babies born outside marriage in 1978;
- in 2008, of the births outside marriage, over three-quarters (79%) were jointly registered by both parents. The remaining 21% were registered by the mother only; and
- the percentage of births outside marriage differs across Northern Ireland. Last year over half of all births in Belfast (57%) and Derry (50%) Local Government Districts occurred outside marriage. In contrast under one quarter of births in Magherafelt and Omagh (both 24%) Local Government Districts occurred outside marriage.

Births by Area

- At Health and Social Services Board level, birth rates ranged from 14.0 births per 1,000 population in the Eastern and Northern Board areas to 16.0 births per 1,000 population in the Southern Board area. The birth rate in the Western Board was 14.4 births per 1,000 population;
- Dungannon and Magherafelt Local Government Districts had the highest birth rate of all the Local Government Districts in 2008 with 16.5 births per 1,000 population while the lowest birth rate was in Larne Local Government District at 10.7 births per 1,000 population; and
- the total period fertility rate for the three year period 2006-2008 ranged from 2.24 children in Craigavon Local Government District to 1.79 children in Belfast Local Government District. The Northern Ireland total period fertility rate for this three year period 2006-2008 was 2.01 children.

Births to Non-residents

- Births are assigned to the usual place of residence of the mother and this press release excludes births to non-Northern Ireland residents as these will not be included in the population estimates. In 2008, there were 621 births registered where the mother was not resident in Northern Ireland;
- the number of births to non-Northern Ireland residents has been stable at around 500 births for the last three years, so 2008 sees an increase of around 100 additional births to non-Northern Ireland residents; and
- over 95% of births to non-Northern Ireland residents are to mothers from the Republic of Ireland.

Births by Place of Birth

- Almost all births take place in a hospital, with just under 100 babies being born in places other than hospitals in 2008;
- the number of births in Northern Ireland since 2002 has increased by 20 per cent and with the exception of maternity unit closures the number of births in each hospital has also increased over this period. In the Antrim, Craigavon and Ulster Hospitals increases have been greater at over 35 per cent; and
- the increase in Antrim Area Hospital is in part due to the closure of the maternity unit in the Mid-Ulster Hospital and the increase in the Ulster Hospital may be due to the opening of a new maternity unit in 2007.

Also included are a number of tables – these are listed below:

Table 2	Registered births 1978, 1988, 1998 to 2008
Table 3	Registered births by area, 2008
Table 4	Registered births by area, 1978, 1988, 1998, 2002 to 2008
Table 5	Age-Specific Fertility Rates by age-group of mother, 1978, 1988, 1998, 2002 to 2008
Table 6	Registered births by place of birth, 2002 to 2008

Table 2 Births - 1978, 1988, 1998 to 2008^P

Year	Estimated Population	Live Births									Average age of first time mothers ⁶	Multiple Births ⁷		
		All Resident Births ¹	Birth Rate ^{2,3}	Total Period Fertility Rate ³	Births Outside Marriage		Teenage Mothers ⁵		Mother aged 30 and over			Sets of Twins	Sets of Triplets, etc	% of Maternities
					Number	% ⁴	Number	% ⁴	Number	% ⁵				
1978	1,523,200	26,239	17.2	2.66	1,523	5.8	2,127	8.1	8,109	30.9	25	249	2	1.0
1988	1,585,400	27,514	17.4	2.35	4,446	16.2	2,053	7.5	8,716	31.7	..	283	2	1.0
1998	1,677,800	23,668	14.1	1.90	6,743	28.5	1,735	7.3	10,593	44.8	26	305	7	1.3
1999	1,679,000	22,957	13.7	1.86	6,957	30.3	1,791	7.8	10,426	45.4	26	334	6	1.5
2000	1,682,900	21,512	12.8	1.75	6,833	31.8	1,614	7.5	10,090	46.9	26	314	5	1.5
2001	1,689,300	21,962	13.0	1.80	7,144	32.5	1,524	6.9	10,652	48.5	27	330	10	1.6
2002	1,696,600	21,385	12.6	1.77	7,161	33.5	1,502	7.0	10,485	49.0	27	313	13	1.5
2003	1,702,600	21,648	12.7	1.81	7,439	34.4	1,484	6.9	10,729	49.6	27	304	5	1.4
2004	1,710,300	22,318	13.0	1.87	7,703	34.5	1,486	6.7	11,305	50.7	27	330	7	1.5
2005	1,724,400	22,328	12.9	1.87	8,108	36.3	1,395	6.2	11,259	50.4	27	294	6	1.4
2006	1,741,600	23,272	13.4	1.94	8,832	38.0	1,427	6.1	11,619	49.9	27	315	1	1.4
2007	1,759,100	24,451	13.9	2.02	9,261	37.9	1,405	5.7	12,229	50.0	27	357	5	1.5
2008 ^P	1,773,600	25,631	14.5	2.10	9,966	38.9	1,426	5.6	12,606	49.2	27	356	6	1.4

^P Provisional.

¹ All births prior to 1981.

² Rate per 1,000 population.

³ Rate calculated using mid year estimates for years 1978-2007 and for 2008 using the 2008 projected population.

⁴ Percentage of all live births.

⁵ All births to mothers aged under 20 years at the time of birth.

⁶ Prior to 1997 birth order is available for married mothers only. The figure for 1978 is therefore calculated for married mothers only.

⁷ Maternities refer to the number of pregnancies ending in stillbirths or live births with multiple births counting only once.

Table 3 Births by Health Board and Local Government District, 2008^P

Area	All Resident Live Births			Birth Rate ¹	TPFR (2006-2008) ²	Births Outside Marriage	
	Total	Male	Female			Number	% ³
Northern Ireland	25,631	13,204	12,427	14.5	2.01	9,966	38.9
Eastern Board	9,424	4,865	4,559	14.0	1.92	4,200	44.6
Ards	975	512	463	12.5	1.93	350	35.9
Belfast	3,889	2,022	1,867	14.5	1.79	2,213	56.9
Castlereagh	864	440	424	13.2	1.96	263	30.4
Down	984	502	482	14.1	2.12	340	34.6
Lisburn	1,741	892	849	15.2	2.08	704	40.4
North Down	971	497	474	12.3	1.91	330	34.0
Northern Board	6,341	3,253	3,088	14.0	2.03	2,326	36.7
Antrim	851	445	406	15.9	2.17	302	35.5
Ballymena	853	435	418	13.6	2.04	315	36.9
Ballymoney	411	206	205	13.6	2.01	128	31.1
Carrickfergus	508	275	233	12.6	1.85	198	39.0
Coleraine	725	374	351	12.8	1.91	320	44.1
Cookstown	533	258	275	14.9	2.04	168	31.5
Larne	338	178	160	10.7	1.83	147	43.5
Magherafelt	720	367	353	16.5	2.17	174	24.2
Moyle	203	100	103	12.1	1.92	84	41.4
Newtownabbey	1,199	615	584	14.7	2.12	490	40.9
Southern Board	5,593	2,864	2,729	16.0	2.19	1,763	31.5
Armagh	876	431	445	15.0	2.12	251	28.7
Banbridge	734	384	350	15.5	2.13	202	27.5
Craigavon	1,476	791	685	16.4	2.24	553	37.5
Dungannon	917	458	459	16.5	2.21	274	29.9
Newry & Mourne	1,590	800	790	16.3	2.22	483	30.4
Western Board	4,273	2,222	2,051	14.4	1.99	1,677	39.2
Fermanagh	876	470	406	14.1	2.11	252	28.8
Limavady	470	236	234	13.7	1.96	194	41.3
Derry	1,638	847	791	15.0	2.00	822	50.2
Omagh	720	378	342	13.8	1.89	173	24.0
Strabane	569	291	278	14.3	1.99	236	41.5

^P Provisional.

¹ Rate per 1,000 population. Rate for 2008 calculated using 2008 projected population.

² The TPFRR is the average number of children that would be born to a cohort of women who experienced, throughout their childbearing years, the fertility rates of the calendar year in question. Rates are calculated using 3 years births data and the 2006-7 mid-year estimates and 2008 population projections.

³ Percentage of all live births.

Table 4 Births by Health Board and Local Government District, 1978, 1988, 1998, 2002 to 2008^P

Area	All Resident Live Births									
	1978 ¹	1988	1998	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 ^P
Northern Ireland	26,239	27,514	23,668	21,385	21,648	22,318	22,328	23,272	24,451	25,631
Eastern Board	9,547	10,659	8,931	7,654	8,011	8,205	7,995	8,387	8,995	9,424
Ards	977	977	932	811	882	864	890	863	941	975
Belfast	4,768	5,163	3,708	3,168	3,327	3,423	3,289	3,396	3,664	3,889
Castlereagh	568	804	900	744	727	713	722	751	803	864
Down	981	1,035	922	810	851	895	798	950	960	984
Lisburn	1,329	1,679	1,641	1,381	1,367	1,464	1,473	1,535	1,705	1,741
North Down	924	1,001	828	740	857	846	823	892	922	971
Northern Board	6,373	6,374	5,774	5,421	5,335	5,697	5,623	5,781	6,021	6,341
Antrim	835	774	748	674	708	755	702	728	809	851
Ballymena	962	870	751	751	735	784	794	784	815	853
Ballymoney	408	386	352	363	344	397	376	404	385	411
Carrickfergus	446	509	515	434	456	439	479	471	472	508
Coleraine	675	726	762	657	621	672	589	646	644	725
Cookstown	520	569	482	450	411	502	483	498	540	533
Larne	397	452	381	357	344	316	350	358	364	338
Magherafelt	602	703	574	580	562	589	607	624	652	720
Moyle	271	227	169	162	198	198	193	183	225	203
Newtownabbey	1,257	1,158	1,040	993	956	1,045	1,050	1,085	1,115	1,199
Southern Board	5,064	5,329	4,628	4,422	4,469	4,682	4,813	5,038	5,362	5,593
Armagh	794	873	768	720	765	728	807	855	862	876
Banbridge	349	506	549	577	643	584	646	644	688	734
Craigavon	1,340	1,410	1,154	1,036	1,073	1,176	1,193	1,324	1,416	1,476
Dungannon	932	860	720	720	652	785	760	802	876	917
Newry & Mourne	1,649	1,680	1,437	1,369	1,336	1,409	1,407	1,413	1,520	1,590
Western Board	5,255	5,152	4,335	3,888	3,833	3,734	3,897	4,066	4,073	4,273
Fermanagh	941	902	759	749	710	692	732	823	802	876
Limavady	481	556	486	432	468	426	451	483	491	470
Derry	2,196	2,131	1,748	1,574	1,504	1,485	1,529	1,530	1,583	1,638
Omagh	907	919	702	655	645	646	682	687	687	720
Strabane	730	644	640	478	506	485	503	543	510	569

^P Provisional.

¹ Data for 1978 includes births to mothers resident outside Northern Ireland.

Table 5 Age-Specific Fertility Rates¹ by age-group of mother, 1978, 1988, 1998, 2002 to 2008^P

Age-Group of Mother	Registration Year									
	1978 ²	1988	1998	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 ^P
15-19 ³	31	31	28	23	23	23	22	22	23	23
20-24	142	114	70	66	66	63	63	64	63	66
25-29	177	157	119	103	107	110	109	112	116	121
30-34	113	112	108	104	107	113	115	119	125	130
35-39	51	47	47	48	50	56	55	58	64	66
40-44 ³	14	11	9	10	10	9	10	11	12	13
Total Period Fertility Rate⁴	2.66	2.35	1.90	1.77	1.81	1.87	1.87	1.94	2.02	2.10

^P Provisional.

¹ Rate per 1,000 population. Rate for 2008 calculated using 2008 projected population.

² Data for 1978 includes births to mothers resident outside Northern Ireland.

³ Rate for 15-19 includes births at younger ages and rate for 40-44 include births at older ages.

⁴ The TPF_R is the average number of children that would be born to a cohort of women who experienced, throughout their childbearing years, the fertility rates of the calendar year in question. Rates are calculated using mid-year population estimates and for 2008 population projections.

Table 6 Resident Births by Place of Birth, 2002 to 2008^P

Place of Birth ¹	Registration Year						
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 ^P
Altnagelvin Area Hospital	2,428	2,436	2,398	2,459	2,485	2,528	2,672
Antrim Area Hospital	2,229	2,262	2,394	2,330	2,495	3,064	3,078
Causeway Hospital	1,171	1,102	1,208	1,126	1,239	1,328	1,447
Craigavon Area Hospital	2,691	2,727	2,966	3,123	3,413	3,670	3,805
Daisy Hill Hospital	1,533	1,565	1,694	1,637	1,675	1,797	1,875
Downe Hospital	421	269	-	-	-	-	-
Erne Hospital	1,204	1,134	1,092	1,154	1,268	1,240	1,331
Lagan Valley Hospital	1,068	1,049	1,224	1,154	1,122	1,190	1,196
Mater Maternity Hospital	1,022	1,029	1,075	1,082	1,084	1,159	1,272
Mid-Ulster Hospital	642	636	637	662	570	-	-
Royal Group of Hospitals	4,598	4,821	5,018	4,998	5,193	5,459	5,437
Ulster Hospital	2,309	2,541	2,523	2,504	2,623	2,908	3,416
All Other Places ²	69	77	89	99	105	108	102
Total	21,385	21,648	22,318	22,328	23,272	24,451	25,631

^P Provisional.

¹ This table includes resident births only. There are around 500 births each year to non-residents and most of these births occur in Altnagelvin and Daisy Hill Hospitals.

² This includes births at home and births in hospitals where the count was less than 5 births per year.

NOTE FOR EDITORS

1. This information can also be accessed on the NISRA website at:

<http://www.nisra.gov.uk/demography/default.asp23.htm>.

2. Birth figures have been compiled from returns to local registrars. All 2008 statistics are provisional until final figures are published in the Annual Report of the Registrar General. The results are based on analysis of all births registered within the 2008 calendar year and some births may have occurred prior to this registration year. Rates for 2008 data are calculated on the projected home population as at 30 June 2008.

3. All media inquiries should be directed to DFP Press Office

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

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