

Information note



Publication of two reports:

“Statistical classification and delineation of settlements” and “Northern Ireland Census 2001 – Key Statistics for settlements”

9:30am 10 February 2005

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) today published two reports on settlements in Northern Ireland.

The first report provides a statistical classification of settlements within Northern Ireland. The report uses information from the 2001 Census and the Planning Service, Department of the Environment to classify and delineate settlements in Northern Ireland. The report entitled “Statistical classification and delineation of settlements” is available on the NISRA website (www.nisra.gov.uk).

In the past a range of different definitions of the terms ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ have been used. This report proposes an eight band categorisation of settlements, which runs from Band A (Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area) to Band H (Small village, hamlet and open countryside), based on population size coupled with the provision of services.

This statistical classification will allow users, both within government and beyond, to group specific categories of settlements for particular policy purposes. For certain purposes it may be useful to group particular categories of settlements as urban, whereas for other purposes a different grouping may be appropriate. The classification allows for such flexibility. However, in the absence of a particular policy focus, the report recognises the value of a general definition of the terms urban and rural. It proposes that for such general purposes all settlements included in the categories A to E (Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area through to Small Towns) are given a classification of urban, while Bands F to H (all settlements with a population less than 4,500 and the open countryside) are given a classification of rural.

The second report applies the classification of settlements to the 2001 Census of Population. The “Northern Ireland 2001 Census – Key Statistics for settlements” report provides a statistical picture of the one hundred or so settlements in Northern Ireland with a population of 1,000 or more. This report complements an earlier Census publication (December 2002) that presented key statistics for administrative areas. The table below summarises the classification, detailing the population size of settlements within each band of the classification.

Label	Statistical Classification	Settlement population size (2001 Census)	Population living within all such settlements (thousands)	Percentage of population of Northern Ireland (%)
Urban			1,097	65.1
A	Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area		580	34.4
B	Derry Urban Area		91	5.4
C	Large towns	18,000 and under 75,000	224	13.3
D	Medium towns	10,000 and under 18,000	101	6.0
E	Small towns	4,500 and under 10,000	102	6.0
Rural			589	34.9
F	Intermediate settlements	2,250 and under 4,500	65	3.9
G	Villages	1,000 and under 2,250	68	4.0
H	Small villages, hamlets and open countryside	Other settlements of less than 1,000 population and open countryside	456	27.0
Northern Ireland			1,685	100.0

The table shows that roughly two-thirds (65.1%) of the population of Northern Ireland live in urban areas, over half of whom live in the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area (34.4% of the population of Northern Ireland). Of those who live in rural areas, the majority (456 thousand out of 589 thousand) live outside settlements containing at least 1,000 people.

The second Key Statistics report from the 2001 Census provides a wealth of information about the characteristics of the populations in different settlements. The report provides information for all settlements with a population of 1,000 or more. Examples of the statistics available are provided below.

Young children: Young children aged under 5 make up a slightly higher proportion of the population of rural areas (7.0%) than in urban areas (6.7%). Across settlements, their representation ranges from 13.2% of the population of Glenavy to 4.1% in Portstewart.

Elderly: The elderly (aged 75 and above) make up a slightly higher proportion of the population of urban areas (6.1%) than in rural areas (5.6%). They represent over 10% of the populations in Donaghadee and Millisle.

Marital Status: On average, urban areas have higher proportions of single, re-married, separated, divorced and widowed people (aged 16 and over) than rural areas, which have higher proportions of married people. The highest proportions of single adults are found in Dromore (Omagh LGD) and Belfast Urban Areas (just over 40%) while the highest proportions of married people are found in Helen's Bay and Glenavy (over 64%).

Health: Urban areas have both a higher percentage of the population with a limiting long-term illness (21.4%) than rural areas (18.4%) and a higher percentage of the population stating that their general health is not good (11.7% in urban areas and 8.8% in rural areas).

Community Background - Religion or religion brought up: The community background of settlement populations range from those such as Crossmaglen, Dunloy and Cushendall, where over 95% of the population have a Catholic community background, through settlements such as Carryduff, Gilford and Moneymore where the two main communities are relatively balanced in population share, to settlements such as Bushmills, Cullybackey and Portavogie where over 95% of the population have a Protestant community background. Just over half of settlements (57%) have a community background composition that is predominantly (at least 75%) Catholic or predominantly Protestant.

Self employment: Among those aged 16-74, self-employment is more common in rural areas (13.4%), rising to 15.0% of those living in small villages, hamlets and open countryside, than in urban areas (5.6%).

Industry: Concentrations of employment in certain industries can be seen among the residents of settlements such as Portavogie (15.2% of those aged 16-74 in employment work in the agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing industry), Portrush (11.6% in hotels and catering), and Larne (10.9% in transport storage and communication).

Hours worked: On average males in rural areas worked 44.0 hours per week in their main job in the four weeks leading up to the Census compared to an average of 40.7 hours worked by males in urban areas. Men in the coastal settlements of Portavogie, and to a lesser extent, Kilkeel and Annalong were amongst those who worked the longest hours in the four weeks leading up to the Census (49.8 hours, 44.6 hours and 44.5 hours respectively).

Educational qualifications: Just under 5% of those aged 16-74 across Northern Ireland have a higher degree or equivalent, this rises to over 11% in Culmore, Hillsborough, Portstewart and Helen's Bay.

Travel to work: People living in rural areas are more likely to drive to work (60.6% of those aged 16-74 in employment) than people in urban areas (53.2%). In contrast people in urban areas are more likely to use the train, bus, taxi, bicycle or go on foot than those in rural areas. People in rural areas, in particular small villages, hamlets and open countryside, are more likely to work at home.

Access to a car: Some 31.8% of households in urban areas have no access to a car or van, rising to 43.9% of households in Belfast Urban Area, compared to 14.5% of households in rural areas.

Type of house: Detached houses are more common in rural areas (63.7% of household spaces) - rising to 72.4% in small villages, hamlets and open countryside - than urban areas (23.7%). Semi-detached, terraced and purpose built flats or tenements are more common in urban areas than rural areas.

Housing Tenure: In rural areas 79.7% of households are owner occupied compared to 64.9% of households in urban areas. The neighbouring settlements of Seahill and Helen's Bay on the North Down coast, along with Maghaberry, have the highest proportions of owner occupied households (each at least 93%). This compares with Bushmills, Newtownstewart and Strathfoyle where less than 50% of all households are owner occupied.

Irish language: Knowledge of the Irish language is higher in rural areas (11.2%) than in urban areas (9.9%). Knowledge of the Irish language is highest among residents of Coalisland, Dunloy, Crossmaglen and Rostrevor where over 25% have some knowledge of the Irish language.

Background notes

1. A published version of the report “Northern Ireland Census 2001 – Key Statistics for settlements” will be available at a cost of £20 from The Stationary Office, 16 Arthur Street, Belfast (ISBN Number: 0337 08727X).
2. For the purposes of these reports, statutory settlement development limits provided by the DOE Planning Service as of March 2004 have been used as the geographical delineation of settlements. The naming of settlements used in the reports follows that used by the Planning Service. Details are available on the Planning Service website (www.planningni.gov.uk).
3. The full reports are accessible via the NISRA website www.nisra.gov.uk. NISRA has developed a website for the dissemination of these statistics, the Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NINIS). The site includes a facility to view maps of the settlements on-line so that the geographical extent of areas can be visualised. The NINIS system will be used to disseminate both the statistical profiles of the settlements and maps showing the extent of the settlements. The website can be visited on-line at www.ninis.nisra.gov.uk
4. Further information on the statistics provided in either publication can be obtained from Census Customer Services at:
Customer Services
NISRA
McAuley House
2-14 Castle Street
Belfast
BT1 1SA
Phone: 02890 348160
Faxsimile: 02890 348161
E-mail: census.nisra@dfpni.gov.uk