

# STATISTICS PRESS NOTICE – ANNUAL REPORT OF THE REGISTRAR GENERAL (2011)



9:30am: Thursday 29 November

## **Lowest Number of Deaths Ever**

Last year there were 14,200 deaths recorded, the lowest number in the history of Northern Ireland.

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

There were 25,300 births registered in 2011 a similar number to the last three years. Around 10 per cent of births last year were to mothers who were born outside the United Kingdom and Ireland.

The report also highlights the continuing trend towards later childbearing. Just over half (12,800) of all births registered last year were to mothers aged 30 or more. In contrast during the 1980s around one birth in every three was to an older mother.

A NISRA spokesperson said:

*“Last year saw the lowest number of deaths ever. After allowing for today’s older population death rates are now around half of those thirty years ago - a remarkable improvement. We also saw the lowest infant and stillbirth death rates ever last year.*

*The report also points to trends in birth statistics. The number of births has remained stable at around 25,000 for the last number of years. Today around one birth in every ten is to a mother who was born outside Britain and Ireland. This is a three-fold increase from a decade ago and illustrates the increased diversity of the Northern Ireland population.”*

### **POPULATION – More births than deaths drives population increase**

- The size of the Northern Ireland population rose in the year to 30 June 2011 by 7,500 people or 0.4 per cent to just over 1.8 million.
- In the year to 30 June 2011, births exceeded deaths by 10,900. This is the highest level of natural change seen since the year to mid-1992.
- It is estimated that in the year to 30 June 2011, the number of people coming to live in Northern Ireland (21,700 people) was less than the number of people leaving Northern Ireland (24,900 people).

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

- There were 25,273 births registered in 2011, a decrease of 42 (or 0.2 per cent) on the 2010 figure and 1,893 fewer or 7.0 per cent less than the number of births registered in 1981.
- The trend towards later childbearing continues, with the average age of women at childbirth being 30.0 years last year compared with 29.4 years in 2001, 28.0 years in 1991 and 27.5 years in 1981.
- Older mothers have a greater chance of having a multiple birth. Last year saw the highest percentage of maternities on record resulting in a multiple birth (1.7 per cent). There were 410 sets of twins and four sets of triplets registered in 2011.
- In 2011, 42 per cent of all births occurred outside marriage – the highest figure ever.

## ***STILLBIRTHS AND INFANT DEATHS – Lowest stillbirth and infant death rates on record***

- The number of stillbirths recorded in 2011 was 91, while the number of infant deaths recorded was 110. Both stillbirth and infant death rates fell and were the lowest on record last year.

## ***DEATHS – Lowest number of deaths on record***

- In 2011 there were 14,204 deaths registered – the lowest number in the history of Northern Ireland. This also led to the lowest death rate ever at 8 deaths per 1,000 population.
- In total 1,966 people died from ischaemic heart disease last year, a decrease of almost 60 per cent from 1981. This is one of the main drivers of the improving mortality statistics.
- In contrast cancer accounted for 4,059 deaths or 29 per cent of all deaths last year. This is the largest number ever. The increase in cancer mortality is related to people living longer as the risk of developing cancer increases with age.
- In 2011, 252 people died from alcohol related causes, 40 per cent more than a decade ago. There were a further 102 drug related deaths last year, almost three times the number ten years ago (35 deaths in 2001).

## ***MARRIAGES – Increase in number of marriages in 2011***

- There were 8,366 marriages registered in 2011, an increase of 210 marriages or 2.6 per cent on the 2010 figure of 8,156 marriages.
- People are waiting longer to get married. The average age for first marriages has increased and is 30 years for **single** females and 31 years for **single** males, both six years older than thirty years ago. Considering all weddings, including those involving widowers and divorcees, the average age is 31 for brides and 34 for grooms.
- Saturday 27th August 2011 was the most popular day last year to get married, when 109 couples tied the knot.
- The majority of marriages are by religious ceremony, with 67 per cent of all marriages

celebrated in this way. However, the proportion of marriages by civil ceremony is rising; last year, 33 per cent of marriages were celebrated in this way compared to 12 per cent in 1981.

### ***DIVORCES – Number of divorces decrease in 2011***

- The number of divorces last year was 2,343, a 10 per cent decrease from the 2010 figure of 2,600. The highest number of divorces on record for Northern Ireland was in 2007, when 2,913 divorces were granted by the Courts.
- The average age at divorces granted last year was 46 for men and 44 for women.
- Last year, just over 2,400 children (aged under 18) and 1,600 adult “children” (aged 18 or more) were affected by the divorce of their parents.

### ***CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS – Decrease 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 2011, 626 civil partnerships were registered in Northern Ireland.
- During 2011 there were 89 civil partnerships registered in Northern Ireland, 46 male and 43 female civil partnerships. This is a decrease from the 2010 figure of 116 civil partnerships.

## NOTES TO EDITORS

1. This is the 90th 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. Population estimates and rates within the report relate to the mid-year population estimates rolled forward from the 2001 Census and do not take account of the latest Census figures. These estimates were not available when producing this report. For information on the release plans for the NI Census 2011 statistics see:

<http://www.nisra.gov.uk/Census/2011CensusProposedOutputs.html>

The 2012 report will incorporate population estimates based on Census 2011.

6. To set the scene the report also includes a special article, written by Ian White from the Office for National Statistics, on the History of the Census in Ireland / Northern Ireland from 1813 to 2011. This article paints a picture of the 21 censuses taken across this period. The article highlights the challenges facing census takers and also similarities in census taking across this period.

7. Follow NISRA on Twitter and Facebook.

8. We welcome feedback from users on the content, format and relevance of this release. Please send feedback to the email address below.

9. All media inquiries should be directed to the DFP Press Office:

Telephone: 028 9016 3388

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

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