

STATISTICS PRESS NOTICE – ANNUAL REPORT OF THE REGISTRAR GENERAL (2012)



9:30am: Thursday 28 November

Lowest Infant Death Rate Ever

Last year saw the lowest ever infant death rate (3.5 infant deaths per 1,000 live births) 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 2012 a similar number to the last four years. Of these 1,100 births were to teenage mothers – a record low for Northern Ireland.

The report also highlights the continuing trend towards later childbearing. Just over half (13,200) 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 a mother aged 30 or more.

A NISRA spokesperson said:

“Last year saw the lowest infant death rate ever in Northern Ireland. This is one of many improvements to death rates across all ages over the last 30 years. Today less than one maternity in 100 results in an infant death or stillbirth, half the level seen 30 years ago.

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 twenty-five is to a teenage mother compared to one birth in every fourteen a decade ago. Over half of all births are now to mothers aged 30 or more compared to around one birth in every three during the 1980s.”

BIRTHS – Births to teenage mothers reach new low

- There were 25,269 births registered in 2012, a similar number to the 2011 figure of 25,273 births and 1,603 (six per cent) fewer than the number of births registered in 1982 (26,872).
- In 2012, the average age of women at childbirth was 30.1 years compared with 29.5 years in 2002, 28.1 years in 1992 and 27.6 years in 1982. Over half (52.4 per cent) of all babies born in 2012 were to mothers aged 30 or more.
- The number of births to teenage mothers reached a record low for Northern Ireland in 2012, at 1,100 births.
- In 2012, 42.6 per cent of births were to unmarried parents, the highest figure ever recorded.

STILLBIRTHS AND INFANT DEATHS – Lowest infant death rate on record

- The number of stillbirths recorded in 2012 was 106, while the number of infant deaths (deaths of children aged under one year) recorded was 90. The infant death rate (3.5 per 1,000 live births) was the lowest on record last year.

DEATHS – Cancer the most common cause of death

- In 2012 there were 14,756 deaths registered in Northern Ireland, an increase of 552 deaths or 3.9 per cent on the 14,204 deaths registered in 2011. However, the long-term trend in the number of deaths is one of falling death rates.
- In 2012, the two most common causes of death were cancer and diseases of the circulatory system (including heart disease and stroke). Indeed more than two-thirds of all deaths in 2012 can be attributed to three causes; cancer (4,134 deaths – 28.0 per cent of deaths), diseases of the circulatory system (4,001 deaths – 27.1 per cent of deaths) and diseases of the respiratory system (2,023 deaths – 13.7 per cent of deaths).

MARRIAGES – Increase in number of marriages in 2012

- There were 8,480 marriages registered in 2012, an increase of 144 marriages on the 2011 figure of 8,366 marriages.
- In 2012, almost one third (31%) of all marriages were celebrated by a civil ceremony. Of these, 1,240 ceremonies (47.2 per cent of all civil marriage ceremonies) were held outside Registrar's Offices in Approved Venues.
- Saturday 25th August was the most popular day in 2012 to get married, with 113 couples marrying on that date.

DIVORCES – Number of divorces increase in 2012

- The number of divorces last year was 2,444, a 4.3 per cent increase from the 2011 figure of 2,343. The highest number of divorces on record for Northern Ireland was in 2007, when 2,913 divorces were granted by the Courts.
- Last year, just over 2,540 children (aged under 18) and 1,790 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 2012, 727 civil partnerships were registered in Northern Ireland.
- During 2012 there were 101 civil partnerships registered in Northern Ireland, 51 male and 50 female civil partnerships. This is an increase from the 2011 figure of 89 civil partnerships.

- **NOTES TO EDITORS**

1. This is the 91st 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. To set the scene the report also includes a special article, written by Census Office, on the Northern Ireland 2011 Census and its key findings. One of the key purposes of the Census is to provide a new benchmark estimate of the number of people who live in Northern Ireland. The statistics provided in this report all incorporate the new information provided by the Census.
6. Follow NISRA on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).
7. Media enquiries should be addressed to the Department of Finance and Personnel Communications Office on Tel: 028 9081 6724.

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

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

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