

Women are starting their families later

9:30am – Tuesday, 7 November 2017

Women who are having children are having them later in life and are having fewer of them. This is one of the findings of the statistics published today by the Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

The report reveals that the average age of first time mums has increased from 24 to 28 years since 1986, with the average age of all mums similarly rising from 27 to 30 years over the last three decades. Moreover, the average number of children per woman of child bearing age (15-44 years) has reduced from 2.44 to 1.95 between 1986 and 2016.

Of the 24,076 births registered in 2016 (12,425 baby boys and 11,651 baby girls), just over one fifth (22 per cent) were to mums aged 35 and over. Some 43 per cent of all births occurred outside of marriage, while 3.3 per cent (791) were to teenage mothers. Tragically 82 stillbirths were registered in 2016, equivalent to a stillbirth rate of 3.4 per 1,000 births - the third lowest rate on record in Northern Ireland.

The NISRA report also highlights that life expectancy has been increasing for both males and females over the years and this is reflected to a degree in the age profile of those that died. For example, 36 per cent of the 15,430 people who died in 2016 were aged under 75, compared with 50 per cent thirty years ago in 1986.

Cancer continued to be the leading cause of death in 2016, accounting for 29 per cent of all deaths, with the number of such deaths among males and females increasing by 0.5 per cent and 8 per cent respectively since the previous year.

Both men and women are waiting on average six years longer to tie the knot than was the case thirty years ago, with the average ages of first time brides and grooms now being 30 and 32 years respectively.

A total of 8,306 marriages and 84 civil partnerships were registered last year, equivalent to roughly 1 every hour. August was again the most popular month for weddings in 2016 with Saturday 6th August being the most popular day.

There were 2,572 divorces and 8 civil partnership dissolutions granted in 2016, with non-cohabitation remaining the most frequently recorded reason for separation.

In terms of population change, the resident population of Northern Ireland rose by 10,500 people to reach 1.862 million in the year ending 30 June 2016. At 14 per cent, net inward migration

accounted for a noticeably lower percentage of the growth in Northern Ireland than was the case in the rest of the UK.

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. This is the 95th Annual Report of the Registrar General for Northern Ireland.
2. This release 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, whereas the number of deaths has implications for hospital and palliative care strategies. Population estimates, projections and life expectancy statistics are all of policy interest because of their implications for pensions and the delivery of front line services for the population in areas such as housing, health care, education and transport.
3. The Report of the Registrar general is published annually and is available [here](#). The report includes commentary and infographics designed to bring out the key demographic trends and issues. Detailed statistical tables are also available.
4. Corresponding information for England and Wales is published by the [Office for National Statistics](#) (ONS) and for Scotland by the [National Records of Scotland](#) (NRS). Similar figures for the Republic of Ireland are available from the [Central Statistics Office](#) (CSO) Ireland.
5. Interactive content, including population pyramids, infographics and interactive maps are available at the [NINIS website](#).
6. Follow NISRA on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). We welcome feedback on the content, format and relevance of this release. Users can send feedback directly to demography@nisra.gov.uk.
7. All media inquiries should be directed to the DoF Communications Office:
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8. Further statistical information can be obtained from NISRA Customer Services:
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