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Northern Ireland
Statistics and Research Agency

Gníomhaireacht Thuaisceart Éireann
um Staitisticí agus Taighde



Baby Names in Northern Ireland 2020



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This booklet presents the most popular names given to babies whose birth was registered in Northern Ireland during 2020 and includes all live births to both resident and non-resident mothers. It examines the top 100 first names for boys and girls and discusses additional first names, variations in first name by the age and country of birth of the mother, and makes regional comparisons across Northern Ireland. It also discusses the change in popularity of names over time.

It should be noted that the year of registration is not necessarily the year in which the birth occurred as, for example, a birth that occurred towards the end of December 2020 may not have been registered until early January 2021. Similarly, some names included in this booklet for 2020 will have been given to babies born towards the end of 2019. It should also be noted that different spellings of a name have been treated as separate names, for example Amelia and Amelija. In contrast, names containing accents have been treated as if they did not have those accents, for example Séan is counted together with Sean.

Key users of baby name statistics include parents, soon-to-be parents and those who are interested in the popularity of their own name. Additional users include researchers who examine how names are changing over time and journalists who produce articles on the popularity of names.

The popularity of baby names can be influenced by a variety of factors including current celebrities, memorable places, religion, cultural and/or ethnic origins and names of relatives and friends.

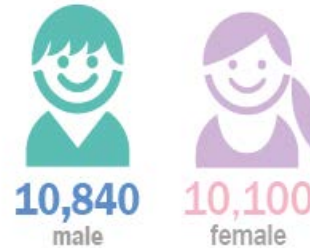
A total of 20,940 births were registered in Northern Ireland during 2020.

There were slightly more births of males (10,840) than females (10,100) registered, accounting for 51.8 per cent and 48.2 per cent of all registrations respectively.

As with previous years, a greater variety of girls' names (2,158) than boys' names (1,719) were registered in 2020. The range of names being used by parents has grown considerably over the past 40 years, with 1,224 girls' names and 650 boys' names being registered in 1980.

There were 381 new boys' names and 485 new girls' names registered in 2020 that had not been registered since the reporting of baby names began in 1997. Some 56 per cent of the new names were for girls and 44 per cent were for boys.

~ 20,940 births registered in 2020 ~



~Range of names~



866 new names registered in 2020

~Top 10 names~

1 James (190)	1 Grace (176)
2 Jack (175)	2 Emily (146)
3 Noah (174)	3 Isla (144)
4 Charlie (169)	4 Fiadh (138)
5 Oliver (134)	5 Olivia (133)
6 Thomas (119)	6 Sophia (125)
7 Finn (112)	7 Sophie (123)
7 Theo (112)	8 Amelia (115)
9 Cillian (111)	9 Lucy (112)
9 Harry (111)	10 Ella (101)
	10 Freya (101)

~Top names~

James (190)

Grace (176)

~New to Top 10~



Cillian **Fiadh**
Finn **Freya**
Theo **Lucy**

13% of babies given
a top 10 name

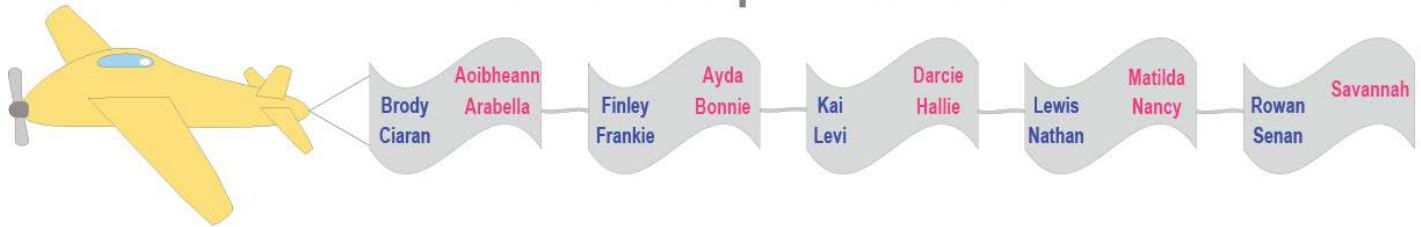
Top 10 boys' names:

- This is James' sixth consecutive year at number one, with 190 babies each being given this name. James has been ranked in the top five each year since reporting of baby names began in 1997.
- Jack has consistently been in the top 10 since 1997, ranking first from 2003 to 2014, before dropping to second in 2020.
- Noah has been in the top 10 since 2012, after being virtually unused in the late 1990s. It fell from first place in 2018 to third place in 2019 and 2020.
- Daniel fell from the top 10 most popular boys' names for the first time since 1998.
- Cillian entered the top 10 in 2020 for the first time, after coming close to the top 10 in 2018 and 2019, ranking 13 and 14 respectively.
- Finn and Theo entered the top 10 in 2020 for the first time, after gaining steady popularity each year since 1997 and 2012 respectively.

Top 10 girls' names:

- Grace was the most popular name for girls, with 176 girls given this name in 2020.
- This is the fifteenth consecutive year Grace has been in the top three. It has been number one since 2018.
- Fiadh entered the top 10 in 2020 for the first time since reporting of baby names began in 1997, after gaining steady popularity each year since 2008.
- Emily remained the second most popular girls' name in 2020, holding this spot in the top 10 for the last three consecutive years.
- Anna fell from the top 10 most popular girls' names for the first time since 2012, while Evie also lost a top 10 position in 2020 after gaining it last year.
- Names are diversifying. In 2020, only 13 per cent of babies were given one of the top 10 names, compared to 20 per cent in 2000.

~Joined the top 100 in 2020~



~Top Climbers since...~



~2000~



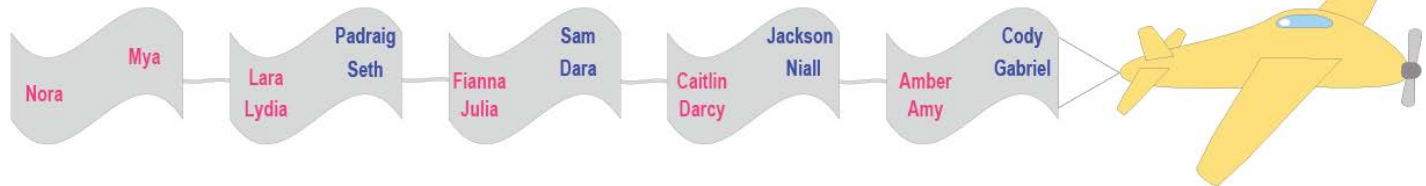
~2010~



~Top climbers in 2020~



~Left the top 100 in 2020~



Top 100 boys' names:

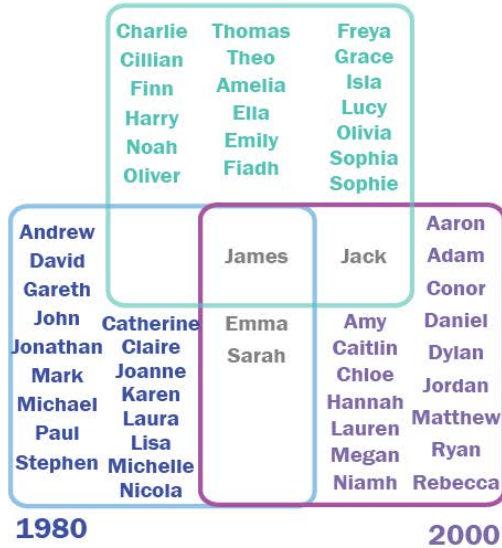
- Of the 10 new entries to the top 100 boys' names in 2020, Finley, Frankie, Levi, and Rowan made the top 100 for the first time since the recording of baby names began in 1997.
- These replaced names such as Gabriel who had only joined the top 100 for the first time in 2019.
- Nathan returned to the top 100 after leaving it for the first time in 2019.
- Within the boys' top 100, the highest climbers in popularity between 2019 and 2020 were Senan, Kai and Brody.
- Since 2000, Theo and Daithi have both climbed approximately 400 places to reach the top 100 in 2020.
- Since 2010, Ezra and Theodore have both climbed almost 600 places to reach the top 100 in 2020.

Top 100 girls' names:

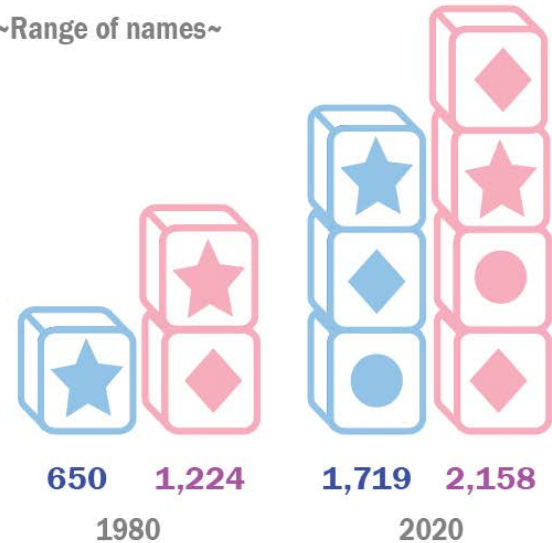
- Of the nine new entries to the top 100 girls' names in 2020, Arabella, Ayda, Bonnie, Hallie, and Nancy made the top 100 for the first time since the recording of baby names began in 1997.
- Nora left the top 100 having only joined for the first time in 2019. Amy and Caitlin also left the top 100, and did so for the first time in 2020.
- Within the girls' top 100, the highest climbers in popularity between 2019 and 2020 were Arabella, Aoibheann, and Matilda.
- Since 2000, Isla, Ava, and Eabha have all climbed around 600 places to reach the top 100 in 2020.
- Since 2010, Harper and Arabella have both climbed over 700 places to reach the top 100 in 2020.

Change over time

~Most popular names over the past 5 decades~



~Range of names~



~Top 10 boys' & girls' names in 1980, 2000 & 2020~

Top 10 boys' names: 1980 versus 2020

- James is the only name from the 1980 top 10 boys' names to have made the top 10 in 2020.
- David, Paul, John, Stephen and Mark were the five most popular boys' names registered in 1980.
- The names David, Paul and John were each given on more than 500 birth registrations in 1980. The two most popular names in 2020 were given fewer than 200 times each.
- There were 650 boys' name variations used in 1980 compared with 1,719 in 2020.

Top 10 boys' names: 2000 versus 2020

- Of the top 10 boys' names in 2000, only James and Jack appear in the top 10 in 2020. James was ranked fourth in 2000.
- Matthew, Jack, Ryan, James, and Adam were the five most popular boys' names in 2000.

Top 10 girls' names: 1980 versus 2020

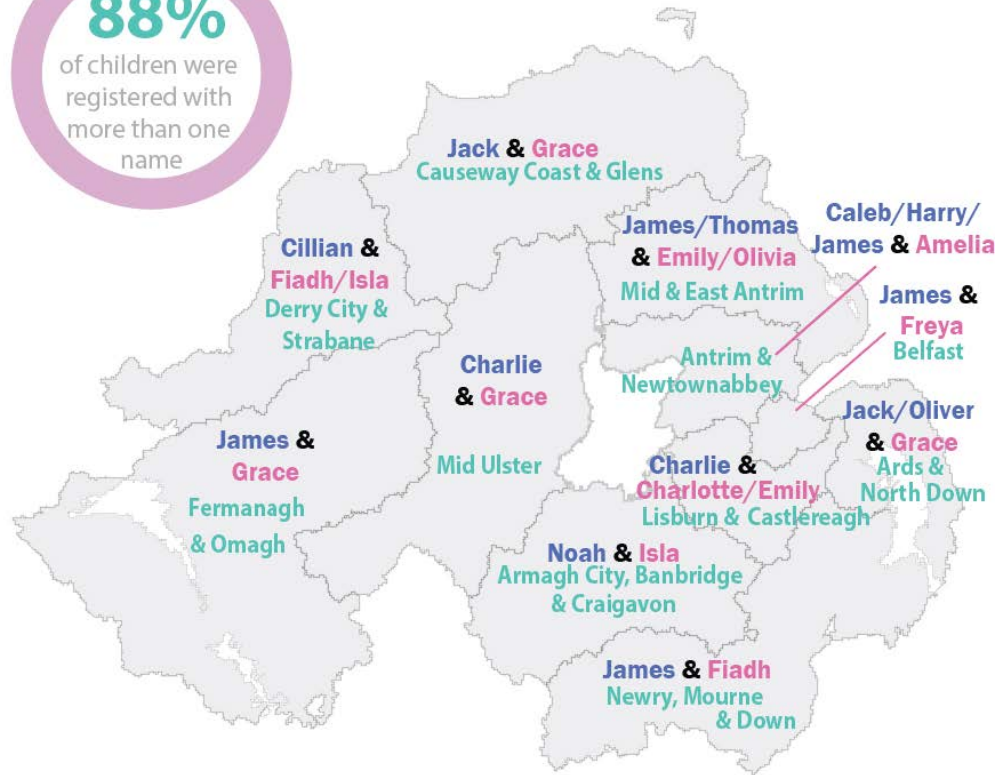
- None of the top 10 girls' names of 1980 made the top 10 in 2020. None of the names from the 1980 top 100 made the top 100 of 2020.
- Emma, Lisa, Claire, Joanne and Laura were the five most popular girls' names chosen by parents in 1980.
- Even in 1980, parents were more diverse in the range of names given to girls (1,224) as opposed to boys (650).
- The variety of girls' names has continued to expand with a total of 2,158 different girls' names registered in 2020.

Top 10 girls' names: 2000 versus 2020

- None of the most popular girls' names in 2000 appeared in the top 10 in 2020.
- Chloe, Emma, Caitlin, Megan and Rebecca were the five most popular girls' names in 2000.

Additional Names and Regional Variations of First Names

~Top 5 additional names~



~Top first names by Local Government District~

Additional boys' names:

- Eighty nine per cent of boys whose births were registered in 2020 were given at least one additional name.
- James, John, Patrick, William and Thomas were the most popular choices for additional names.
- Almost 1,000* boys were given James as an additional first name.

Regional variations boys' names:

- James, who was the most popular boys' name in Northern Ireland in 2020, was the most popular in five of the 11 Local Government Districts (LGDs).
- Although Jack was the second most popular boys' name in Northern Ireland 2020, at district council level it was the most popular in two of the 11 LGDs.
- Charlie, Cillian, Caleb, Harry, Noah and Oliver were the remaining most popular names at LGD level.

* All additional names have been included in this figure, not just the first additional name.

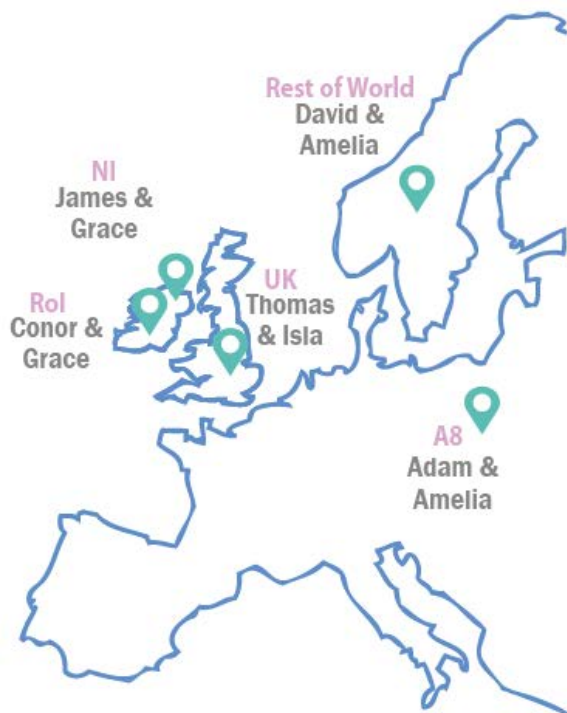
Additional girls' names:

- Eighty-six per cent of girls registered in 2020 were given one or more additional names.
- Rose, Grace, Mary, Elizabeth and Marie were the five most popular additional names for girls.
- More than 700* girls were given Rose as an additional name.

Regional variations girls' names:

- Grace, who was the most popular girls' name in Northern Ireland in 2020, was the most popular in four of the 11 LGDs.
- At District Council level Isla, Fiadh and Emily were either the most popular or joint most popular names in 2 LGDs each.
- Amelia, Charlotte, Freya, and Olivia were the most popular names in the remaining LGDs.

~Top names by mothers' country of birth~



~Top names by mothers' age~



¹ The A8 countries are Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia

Mothers' country of birth - boys' names:

- James was the most popular boys' name choice for mothers born in Northern Ireland.
- Thomas was the favourite for mothers born throughout the rest of the United Kingdom and Conor the most popular for mothers born in the Republic of Ireland
- For mothers born in the A8 countries¹, Adam was the most popular choice of boys' name. David was the most popular among mothers born elsewhere in the world.

Variation by mothers' age - boys' names:

- For teenage mothers the most popular choice of boys' names were Kai and Noah. Noah was the most popular name given by mothers in their twenties.
- Jack was the most popular choice with mothers in their thirties and Oliver was the most popular choice for those aged 40 and over.

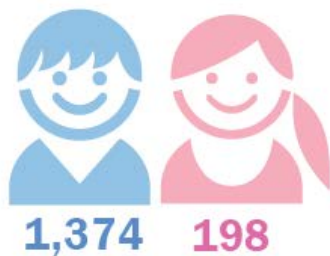
Mothers' country of birth - girls' names:

- Grace was the favourite girls' names given by mothers born in Northern Ireland.
- Isla was the most popular girls' name given by mothers born in the rest of the United Kingdom and Grace was most popular for mothers born in the Republic of Ireland.
- Amelia was the most popular choice of first name¹ for mothers born in the A8 countries¹ and elsewhere in the world.

Variation by mothers' age - girls' names:

- Mia and Sophia were the most popular girls' name choice for teenage mothers.
- Grace was the favourite name for mothers in their twenties, their thirties and aged 40 and over.

~Children given
the name of a parent~



~Celestial names~



Luna
Nova
Venus
Skye
Phoenix
Leo
Orion

~Place names~



~Seasonal Names~



Seasonal Names:

- There was the usual spike in the number of girls named April who were born in April.
- There was a spike in the number of girls named Holly or Hollie born in December.
- In August, there was a peak in the number of girls named August.
- There were no babies named Summer in the winter months (December - February)

Place names:

- Francisco, Ireland, Jordan and Nevada were some of the place names given to children whose births were registered in 2020.

Celestial names:

- Some girls were given celestial names. These include; Luna, Nova, Skye and Venus.
Some boys given celestial names include; Leo, Orion and Phoenix.

Less common names:

- There were nine names in 2020 that consisted of 11 letters and were also the longest first names given (not including those containing a hyphen). Some of these include; Constantine, Fionnghuala, and Maximillian.
- Some of the less common names given to baby boys in 2020 included: Bono, Bowie, Denzel, Jagger, Maverick, River, Rocky, Triumph and Wolfe.
- Some of the less common names given to baby girls in 2020 included: Dior, Divine, Ever, Harley-Quinn, Honor, Liberty, Nirvana, Porsche and Vogue.

Parents' names:

- Of those registrations containing details of the father, 1,374 boys were given their fathers' first name as a first or additional name. Only 198 girls were given their mothers' name.

All of the data in this booklet are available on the NISRA website

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