

Gníomhaireacht Thuaisceart Éireann um Staitisticí agus Taighde



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The General Register Office (GRO) for Northern Ireland (NI) is part of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). NISRA is an executive agency within the Department of Finance (DoF) and has been in existence since April 1996.

GRO is responsible for the administration of the marriage and civil partnership law in NI along with the registration of births, deaths and adoptions. The Office is also responsible for the maintenance of registration records and the production, on request, of certificates in relation to these events.

NISRA's core purpose is to support decision makers in the formulation of evidence-based policy and inform public debate through the production and dissemination of high quality, trusted and meaningful analysis; facilitate research and deliver the decennial population census and every day civil registration services.

The overall vision of NISRA is to aspire to:

- be the go-to organisation for an accurate and insightful account of life in Northern Ireland, informing decision making and recognising that our people are our strength;
- provide comprehensive registration and genealogy services that give our customers what they need; and
- be motivated and valued people doing excellent work together; innovating, growing, proud of our Agency and our impact.
- The NISRA corporate plan for 2019-2024 is available online at: <u>www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/NISRA-Corporate-Plan-2019-24</u>



Hundredth Annual Report of the Registrar General 2021

Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly under: Section 34 of the Marriage (Northern Ireland) Order, 2003 Article 3(3) of the Births and Deaths Registration (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 Section 154 of the Civil Partnership Act 2004 by the Department of Finance

21 September 2022

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ii

Foreword
Introduction
Population & Migration
Births
Stillbirths & Infant Deaths
Deaths
Cause of Death
Marriages
Divorces
Civil Partnerships
Adoptions, Re-registrations & Gender Recognition 24
Footnotes

Foreword

Foreword by the Registrar General for Northern Ireland



It is my enormous pleasure to present the Annual Report of the Registrar General to the Northern Ireland Assembly which brings to a close a hundred years of the registration service in Northern Ireland which commenced on January 1 1922. These annual reports provide a snapshot of the vital events that take place in people's lives each year, births, death, marriages and chart the improvements to our health with passing time. All of the historic reports are available here www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/registrar-general-annual-reports

Looking back at the very first report by the then Registrar Mr L. W. Bullwinkle it paints a portrait of the different life and circumstances of the population at that time. There were 29,531 births, 8,072 marriages (375 of which were carried out in Registration offices)

and 19,795 deaths. In 1922 there were 2,107 deaths from tuberculosis, the lowest rate in a decade. Although there were 2,853 deaths from bronchitis and pneumonia, this was lower than the average in the previous 10 years. In 1922, 173 women died of complications in pregnancy and childbirth. Almost 200 children aged under 5 died of whooping cough a disease now a thing of the past due to advances in healthcare.

A notable difference with today's report is, the early Registrar General reports provided a summary of the weather which given the variability and granularity of commentary we are currently used to seems rather sweet. Here's what the weather was like in 1922.

Foreword

From these reports, it appears that the weather on the whole during the year was rather wet, cool and unsettled, the rainfall in the first three quarters being considerably above the normal. This type of weather characterised the first four months of the year, excepting the middle fortnight of March, which was dry and sunny but cool. During May and the first half of June the weather was warm and fine, but the remainder of the summer was generally cool, with unsettled weather, and heavy rainfall in July. October was dry and sunny, the temperature being normal. The temperature in November and December was in excess of normal, and the rainfall was light, particularly in November. The weather in these two months was generally overcast or unsettled, and the latter part of December was marked by much rain with strong gales on the coast.

Registrar-General's First Annual report (HMSO: 1924 P7)

Over the next months we will be publishing articles from the rich resource of the Registrar General archive with articles on changes in causes of mortality, how the names we give our children have changed and how the trends in marriage and family formation have changed over the last century.

This latest report documents what happened in the 100th year of the registration service. It draws on the work of the General Register Office (GRO) and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) Vital Statistics Unit (VSU) and provides an overview of Northern Ireland through the analysis of key life events such as births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships registered in 2021. Detailed supporting information (both current and historical) continues to be available on the NISRA website (www.nisra.gov.uk). Should you require information that has not yet been published our customer services team will be happy to consider your requests.

Foreword

Throughout this past year we have continued to operate under the Covid-19 pandemic emergency legislation with more of our services being delivered remotely to reduce face to face contact to limit transmission of the virus. GRO continued with business as usual as well as providing guidance and support to the Registrars and public on the continuous changes. VSU continued to work hard to ensure that crucial official statistics on Covid-19 related deaths were published in a timely and transparent way. Registrars continued to provide the most difficult service of the registration of deaths with the next of kin, often remotely.

The registration service plays a pivotal role in supporting evidence-based decision making and the delivery of public services, informing both regional and international comparisons, and underpinning NISRA's population estimates and projections that are integral to policy development and the work of government. This last year was also a year for the conduct of the decennial census of population and households. Census day was March 21st 2021. I am most grateful to the population of Northern Ireland for their co-operation in making the census of exceptional high quality. The information gathered will be especially sought after to help understand the impact of Covid-19 and to assist how we might plan for any future such events.

In presenting this report, my sixth and last as Registrar General for Northern Ireland, I greatly appreciate the work undertaken by the 11 Registrars and 84 Deputy Registrars in the District Registration Offices across the eleven councils. I also greatly appreciate all of the GRO and NISRA personnel involved in the delivery of civil registration services. Without their collective commitment, professionalism and support particularly in this year of continuing uncertainty and pressure, the production of this important information simply would not have been possible.

I trust that you will find the report both informative and useful. And to the Registrar General of 2121, I expect that you will have continued to chart the progress of life expectancy and the changing ways in which life is framed by important vital events.

Your feedback on content and format continues to be welcomed.

Sistia Ceny

Siobhan Carey Registrar General for Northern Ireland 21 September 2022

The General Register Office (GRO) is part of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) with the Registrar General having overall responsibility for the work carried out by the GRO. GRO functions are set in legislation, and the main areas of responsibility are:

- the administration of the births, deaths, marriage and civil partnership law in Northern Ireland through the District Registration Offices (DRO);
- policy development, oversight and regulation of the DROs;
- casework relating to name changes, registration of adoptions and re-registrations;
- the maintenance and access to the online official registration records; and
- production, on request, of certificates in relation to these events.

Main activities in the calendar year 2021 (these figures must be considered in the context of the national pandemic):

- Over 48,000 life events registered through the DRO offices.
- GRO processed over 80,000 certificate applications. Almost 26,000 certificate applications related to priority (fast-tracked) certificates.
- Just over 94,000 certificates were produced by the GRO certificate production team in 2021. Applications and certificate numbers increased this year due to the reduction in pandemic restrictions. The opportunities for travel and the need for passports contributed to the increase.
- Different channels are used by the public to submit certificate applications. Online (which includes telephone applications) is by far the most popular. The number of certificates

produced from applications received by the different channels were:

- Postal 5,457
- Counter 0 (due to public counter closure)
- Online 88,645.
- Additionally, GRO processed close to 3,500 registration related cases including reregistrations, adoptions, name changes and corrections.
- GRO shared information with a number of organisations including Business Services Organisation, Electoral Office for Northern Ireland, Department for Work and Pensions, Department for Infrastructure, Department for Communities, Department for Justice, Northern Ireland Local Government Officers Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC) and the Victim and Survivors Services.

- Over 39,000 new accounts were registered on the GRO Family History website. There were close to 1.1 million searches carried out – the most popular being the basic index search which accounted for almost 1 million searches. There were over 1 million credits purchased by online users with almost 475,000 credits used for the enhanced and full index searches.
- There were 433 visits to the GRO Public Search Room in Colby House in 2021. Due to pandemic restrictions, the Public Search Room was closed for several months of the year and visitor numbers were limited during the opening period.

 The first results from Census 2021 were released in May 2022. The 2021 Census showed that 1.903 million people were resident in Northern Ireland on 21 March 2021. More information on the upcoming release of more detailed data from the 2021 Census is available on

https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/census/2021census.

- An official mid-year population estimate (MYE) for 2021 is planned for release in Autumn 2022, after which MYEs for all years back to the previous Census (2011) will be revisited in light of the 2021 Census findings. Publication of rebased mid-year population estimates for 2011 to 2020 is planned for Spring 2023.
- As an official 2021 MYE was not available at the time of production, the estimated population for mid-2021, used for calculating rates for the 2021 Annual Report of the Registrar General, was taken from 2018 population projections¹.

- The 2021 population, as per the 2018-based projections, comprises 50.7% females and 49.3% males. Almost a fifth (19.6%) were aged 0-14, close to two-thirds (63.3%) were aged between 15 and 64 and the remaining (17.1%) were aged 65 or over.
- At 30 June 2021, the largest Health and Social Care Trust was the Northern area with a population of 482,261, while Belfast was the largest Local Government District with a population of 344,161.

¹ The report and tables contain rates at both Northern Ireland level and sub-national level. While a more recent 2020-based set of population projections are available at Northern Ireland level (https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/2020-based-interimpopulation-projections-northern-ireland), sub geographies are only available through the 2018-based projections. For consistency in the report and associated tables the 2018-based population projections have been used throughout.



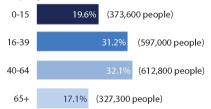
Northern Ireland Population, 2021



Northern Ireland Population on Census Day, 2021

1,903,100

Population by age, using 2018-based population projections for 30 June 2021



Population by Local Government District, using 2018-based population projections for 30 June 2021

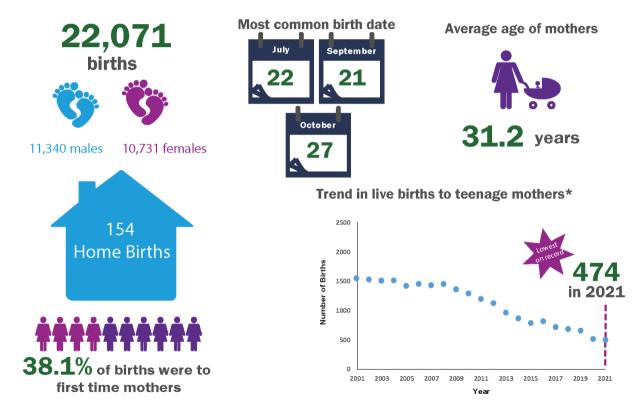
Belfast 344,200 Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon 220,400 Newry, Mourne & Down 183,800	Derry City and Strabane 151,300 Mid Uister 151,200 Lisburn & Castlereagh 149,000	Antrim & Newtownabbey 144,500 Mid & East Antrim 140,100
Ards & North Down 162,700	Causeway Coast & Glens 145,200	Fermanagh & Omagh 118,300

www.nisra.gov.uk/population

Population by Sex, using 2018-based population projections for 30 June 2021



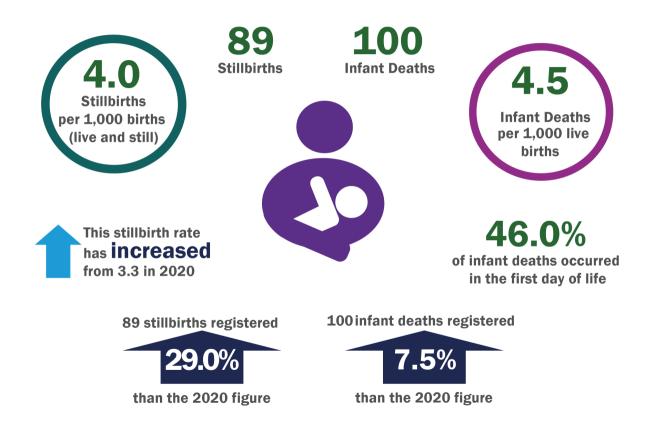
Figures may not always add up to 100% due to rounding Source: 2018-Based Population Projection for 2021



*Teenage mothers are defined as mothers who are under the age of 20

- There were 22,071 births (11,340 males and 10,731 females) registered to Northern Ireland mothers, 1,256 more than in 2020.
- 22 July, 21 September, and 27 October were the most common birth dates, with 85 babies born on each of those days.
- The average age of mothers was 31.2 years, a slight increase on 2020 (31.1). By way of comparison, in 1991 the average age of mothers was 27.9 years.
- 24.4 per cent of all births were to mothers aged 35 years or over, up from 10.1 per cent 30 years ago.
- Births to mothers under 20 years of age (teenage mothers) decreased from 489 in 2020 to 474 in 2021. This is the lowest number on record and is noticeably lower than a decade previously (1,170) and three decades ago (1,783).
- First-time mothers (i.e. mothers with no previous live born children) accounted for 38.1 per cent of all births.

- Only 9.3 per cent of mothers already had three or more live born children. This compares with 12.2 per cent in 1991.
- The average age of first-time mothers was 29.2 years, almost four years older than in 1991 (25.5 years).
- 47.3 per cent of births occurred outside of marriage/ civil partnership, compared with 19.2 per cent three decades ago.
- Of the 21,868 maternities, 1.3 per cent resulted in multiple births with 286 sets of twins and three sets of triplets being born.
- 10.3 per cent of births were to mothers who were born outside of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. This compares with 2.8 per cent 20 years ago.
- The number of births taking place at home increased by over a third (36.3%), from 113 in 2020 to 154 in 2021.



- 89 stillbirths (47 males and 42 females) were registered. This was 20 more than in 2020 and equates to a stillbirth rate of 4.0 per 1,000 total births (both live and still) which is an increase from the 2020 rate of 3.3 per 1,000 births.
- Although the number of stillbirths registered in 2021 showed an increase after 3 years of decline since the 2017 total of 102, looking longer term, 40 years ago, in 1981, there were 241 stillbirths registered.
- Conditions originating in the perinatal period were the cause of 83.1 per cent of stillbirths, whilst congenital malformations, deformations and chromosomal abnormalities and were the cause of all but one of the remaining 16.9 per cent.
- 100 infant deaths (i.e. deaths in the first year of life) were registered, representing an increase of 7.5 per cent on the previous year (93). This equates to 4.5 infant deaths per 1,000 live births.

- This was 12 more than the lowest number of infant deaths registered in one year on record, which was 88 deaths registered in 2017. By way of comparison, in 1979 there were 417 infant deaths registered.
- 46.0 per cent of infant deaths occurred during the first day of life.
- Two thirds (66.0 per cent) of infant deaths occurred in the first week of life. (The first week of life is considered to be between zero and six days.)
- Conditions originating in the perinatal period were the cause of 49.0 per cent of infant deaths, whilst congenital malformations, deformations and chromosomal abnormalities were the cause of a further 39.0 per cent. The remaining 12.0 per cent of infant deaths were due to other factors.

^{*} The Stillbirth (Definition) Act 1992 redefined a stillbirth, from 1 October 1992, as a child which had issued forth from its mother after the 24th week of pregnancy and which did not breathe or show any other sign of life.



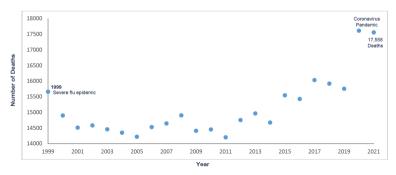




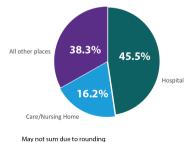
2/3 deaths were of people aged 75 and over

139 deaths were of people aged 100 and over

Number of deaths over time



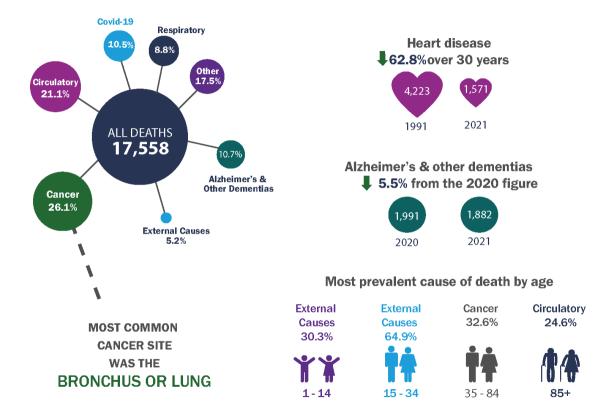




- 17,558 deaths (8,838 males and 8,720 females) were registered, a 0.3 per cent decrease on the 2020 figure (17,614) and 21.0 per cent more than two decades ago in 2001 (14,513).
- There were 99 female deaths for every 100 male deaths, less than the female to male ratio in the population as a whole (almost 103 females for every 100 males).
- There were 139 deaths of people aged 100 or over, one more than the previous year (138) but almost 3 times higher than over 30 years previously (47 in 1991).
- The average age at death for men was 74.4 years and 79.3 years for women. This compares with 69.3 years and 75.7 years respectively three decades ago.
- Approximately two out of every three deaths (64.8 per cent) were of people aged 75 or over.
- 45.5 per cent of deaths occurred in NHS hospitals, whilst a further 16.2 per cent of deaths occurred in care homes or nursing homes. The remaining 38.3 per cent of deaths occurred at home or in other places.

- Approximately four out of every five deaths (81.9 per cent) in a hospital was a person aged 65 or over.
- 88.9 per cent of deaths were of people born in Northern Ireland and 8.9 per cent were born in the rest of the UK and the Republic of Ireland. The remaining 2.2 per cent were born in the rest of the world, including Poland (0.3 per cent), Lithuania and the United States of America (0.2 per cent each).
- Life expectancy* figures for Northern Ireland for 2021 were not available at time of publication. The 2020 data has therefore been used instead. Female life expectancy (82.4 years) was almost four years higher than for males (78.7 years). This gap has however been closing, down from over six years three decades before.

^{*} These figures have been produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Official life expectancy figures for Northern Ireland are produced by the Department of Health, NI.



- Of the 17,558 deaths, the leading cause of death was cancer (26.1 per cent), followed by circulatory disease (21.1 per cent), Covid-19 (10.5%) and respiratory disease* (8.8 per cent).
- For both males and females, the most common cancer site was the bronchus or lung (22.2 per cent of all cancers); the breast was the second most common cancer site in females (14.1 per cent of all cancers in females), whereas the prostate was the second most common cancer site in males (12.2 per cent of all cancers in males).
- 62.8 per cent fewer people died of heart disease than three decades ago with 1,571 deaths registered in 2021 compared with 4,223 deaths in 1991.
- Tragically, there were 237 registered deaths due to suicide (including self-inflicted injury and events of undetermined intent) in Northern Ireland in 2021, compared with 219 in 2020**. Males accounted for three quarters of all deaths due to suicide (176).
- There were 195 deaths registered due to accidental poisoning, a 6.7 per cent decrease on the previous year (209). Males accounted for almost three quarters of these deaths (143).

- External causes of death (for example accidents and suicides) were the leading cause of death in people aged 15-34, accounting for 64.9 per cent of deaths in this age group. External causes accounted for 5.2 per cent of all deaths.
- Cancer was the leading cause of death for those aged 35-84, accounting for 32.6 per cent of deaths in this age group. Circulatory disease was the leading cause for those aged 85 or over, accounting for 24.6 per cent of all deaths in this age group.
- Covid-19 was the third most common cause of death in 2021 accounting for 1,843 deaths. Prior to 2021 respiratory disease was consistently the third most common cause of death. People aged 85 or over accounted for over a third of these deaths (36.5 per cent).
- The number of deaths due to Alzheimer's disease and other dementias decreased by 5.5 per cent on the previous year, from 1,991 in 2020 to 1,882.

* Excludes deaths from Covid-19.

**see <u>https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/review-suicide-statistics-northern-ireland</u> for details of the review of suicide statistics in NI for the years 2015 to 2020.

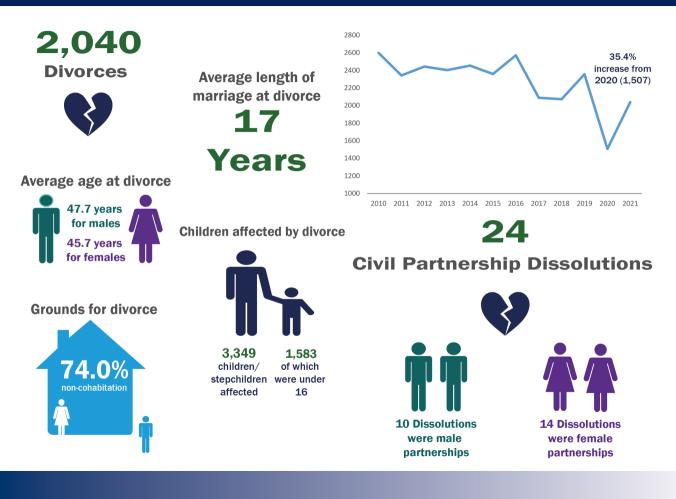
Marriages



- Even with the pandemic still in a prominent position in 2021, the first signs of life getting back to normal can be seen in the marriage registrations, particularly in the second half of the year.
- 7,962 marriages were registered, equivalent to just under 1 every hour, over twice the number registered in 2020 (3,724) when Covid-19 restrictions were in place for much of the year. Same-sex marriage in Northern Ireland has been legal since 13 January 2020, following the enactment of the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc.) Act 2019, therefore, this figure includes both opposite sex and same sex marriages.
- July was the most popular month to get married, however the most popular day was Saturday 28 August when 107 marriages took place.
- Men were on average over two years older than women getting married in 2021 (35.4 years and 33.4 years respectively). Compared with 30 years ago the ages of both grooms and brides increased by almost seven years (28.6 and 26.5 respectively).

- The majority of marriages (83.1 per cent) were firsttime marriages for both partners, while for 6.5 per cent of marriages both partners had been previously married.
- 10.7 per cent of marriages were of couples who both resided outside NI.
- Around 2 in every 3 religious marriages (67.7 per cent) were held in a religious building. St Mary's Church, Ballymena was the most popular religious venue for religious marriages, with 129 marriages having taken place there over the year.
- The remaining 32.3 per cent of all religious marriage ceremonies were held in approved venues.
- Three-fifths of all civil marriages (60.4 per cent) were held in a registry office. The Belfast Registration Office was the most popular venue for civil marriage ceremonies with 820 civil marriages having taken place there in 2021.
- The remaining 39.6 per cent of civil marriages were held in approved venues.

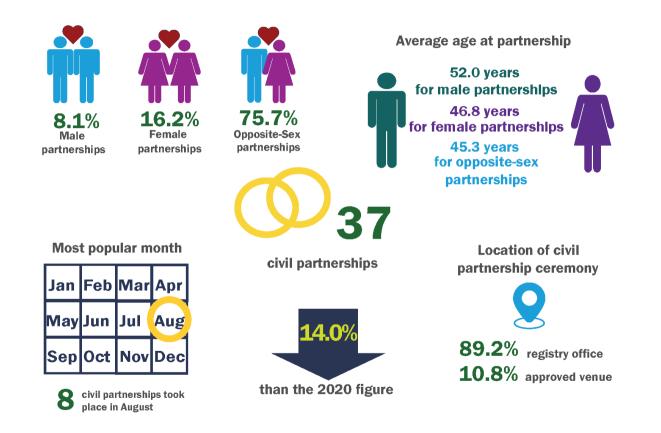
Divorces



Divorces

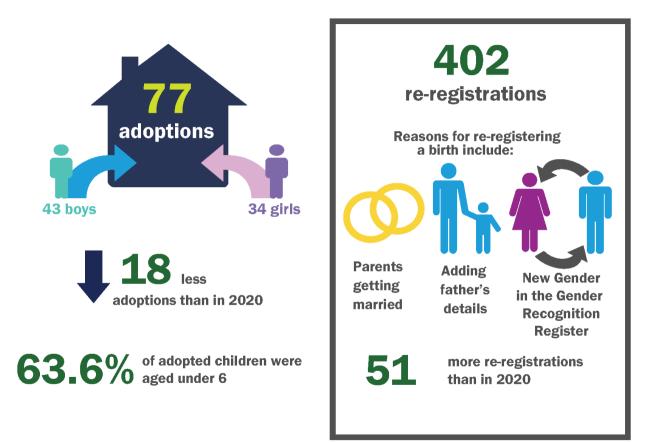
- There were 2,040 divorces granted. This was an increase on the previous year (1,507), and 30.0 per cent lower than the peak number of 2,913 in 2007.
- Non-cohabitation remained the most frequently recorded reason for divorce, accounting for 74.0 per cent of all divorces.
- Those marriages that ended in divorce had lasted an average of 17 years, compared with 14 years three decades previous.
- The average ages of the men and women concerned were 47.7 years and 45.7 years respectively.
- For approximately one in ten men and women who divorced (10.2 per cent), this was not their first divorce.
- There was one divorce in 2021 of a same-sex couple.
- 3,349 children/stepchildren were connected to the divorces that were granted, of which 1,583 were under the age of 16.

Civil Partnerships



- The Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc.) Act 2019 enabled opposite-sex civil partnerships to take place through the Civil Partnership (Opposite-sex Couples) (NI) Regulations 2019. The regulations came into force on 13 January 2020; therefore, totals for civil partnerships registered in Northern Ireland in 2021 includes both opposite sex and same-sex partners.
- There were 37 civil partnerships registered (3 male partnerships, 6 female partnerships and 28 opposite-sex partnerships), 6 fewer than in 2020.
- The average age of males entering a male-male civil partnership was 52.0 years, while for females entering a female-female partnership, it was 46.8 years. The average age of a partner in an opposite-sex civil partnership was 45.3.
- 33 (89.2%) of the civil partnership ceremonies in 2021 were held in a District Registration Office. The remaining 4 ceremonies were held in an approved venue.
- August was the most popular month for civil partnership ceremonies, with 8 held in that month.

Adoptions, Re-Registrations & Gender Recognition



- 77 children (43 boys and 34 girls) were adopted, a decrease of 18.9 per cent from the 2020 figure of 95, and 38.4 per cent from the 2019 total of 125.
- The average age of the adopted children was five years.
- 49 children adopted were aged five or under. A further 20 children were aged between six and ten, with the remaining 8 children aged 11 or over.
- 402 births were re-registered, 14.5 per cent more than the 2020 figure of 351.
- There were twelve adults in Northern Ireland who re-registered their birth with a new gender in the Gender Recognition Register.

¹ Basic index search:

Births – displays forename and surname, date of birth, sex, mother's maiden surname, registration number and district of registration.

Deaths – displays forename and surname of deceased, date of death, sex, date of birth or age at death, registration number and district of registration.

Marriages – displays surname of bride and groom, forename of either bride or groom, date of marriage, registration number and district of registration.

Civil Partnerships – displays surname of both partners, forename of either partner, year of civil partnership, registration number and district of registration.

² Enhanced index search:

Births – displays basic index information along with date of birth, district of birth, father's forename and surname and mother's forename and surname.

Deaths – displays basic index information along with date of death, date of birth and marital status.

Marriages – displays basic index information along with date of marriage, place of marriage, date of birth of bride and groom and age at marriage of bride and groom.

Civil Partnerships – plays basic index information along with date of civil partnership, place of civil partnership, date of birth of both partners and age at civil partnership of both partners.

³ Full Index Search:

View full registration details (image or data).

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