

9.30am Tuesday 24 May 2022

Highest population ever recorded

Census 2021 recorded a Northern Ireland population of 1.903 million – the highest ever. This is one of the first Census 2021 statistics released today.

Over the last ten years the population increased by over 90,000 people from 1.811 million to 1.903 million or by five per cent. The 2021 Census recorded 967,000 females and 936,000 males.

Population increase was greatest in the older age groups. The number of people aged 65 or more rose by over 60,000 to nearly one-third of a million people - a near 25 per cent increase on 2011. This demonstrates the scale of population change due to ageing. This looks set to continue as the ‘baby boom’ generation of the 1950s and 1960s reach retirement age. In contrast, and in line with the recent falling birth rate, the number of young children (aged 0 to 4) decreased by nine per cent from the last Census.

Census 2021 also recorded 769,000 occupied households – again the highest ever. This was 65,000 or nine per cent more households than the 2011 Census.

The Registrar General Siobhán Carey said

“I would like to thank the public for their support last year. The statistics released today help us to understand our society in terms of ageing and household structure. The data will inform decisions on public policy for years to come. More census statistics on local areas and equality factors such as ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation will be published this Autumn.”

Notes for Editors

1. Today's statistics provide estimates of the usually resident population of Northern Ireland on census day 2021, broken down by age and sex along with information on occupied households. The full information can be accessed on the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) website at: www.nisra.gov.uk/Census2021
2. Alongside today's release Census Office have released a number of infographics and visual data stories – these can also be accessed on the NISRA website at www.nisra.gov.uk/Census2021
3. Census 2021 data are [National Statistics](#). The census plays a fundamental role in the provision of official statistics – census data are also used to inform key policies, plan key services and allocate public funds.
4. Media queries to Department of Finance Press Office by email dof.pressoffice@finance-ni.gov.uk or telephone 028 9081 6724.
5. Equality statistics from Census 2021 on ethnicity, national identity, religion, sexual orientation and other key factors will be published this Autumn. A specific date will be announced as soon as it is available. Details on future releases can be found in the [outputs prospectus](#) on the NISRA website.
6. Further information on the statistics provided in this publication can be obtained from Census Customer Services at:

Telephone: 028 9025 5156
Email: census@nisra.gov.uk
Responsible Statistician: Dr David Marshall