

STATISTICS PRESS NOTICE – BIRTHS IN NORTHERN IRELAND (2006)



Increase in the number of births in Northern Ireland

9:30am – Thursday, 15 March 2007

The number of births registered in 2006 was 23,300 – 1,000 more births than in 2005 and the fourth annual increase from the record low of 21,400 births in 2002.

This finding is contained in provisional birth statistics for 2006 released today by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

The figures indicate a number of reasons for the increasing number of births. Firstly, there has been an increase in the number of births to mothers in their thirties who were born in Northern Ireland. This is in part due to what demographers refer to as “delayed fertility” where women delay child-bearing until later in life.

Secondly, significantly more babies are being born in Northern Ireland to mothers from outside the UK and Ireland. Last year over 1,400 babies were born in Northern Ireland whose mother was born outside the UK and Ireland, compared to around 700 babies in 2001. Within this there has been an increase in births to mothers born in the eight Eastern European countries that joined the European Union in 2004, with around 10 such births in 2001 compared to 390 births in 2006.

However it is important to keep the latest rise in perspective. The number of births in 2006 is still well below the corresponding level of the mid-1980s, when over 27,000 births were registered annually.

A NISRA spokesperson said that:

“Last year the number of babies born in Northern Ireland continued to rise from the record low number in 2002. Part of this increase relates to more women in their thirties having children. In addition more women are moving to Northern Ireland to live and then having children here.”

Summary

- in 2006, there were 23,272 births registered to mothers resident in Northern Ireland. This is a 4% increase on the 2005 figure of 22,328 births. However the number of births registered in 2006 remains well below that observed in the mid-1980s when over 27,000 births were registered annually;
- it is estimated that with the current pattern of fertility¹ the “average” woman will have 1.95 children in her lifetime. This is an increase of 4% on the 2005 figure (1.87) and an 11% recovery from a record low of 1.75 children in 2000, but still well below the recent highest level of 2.82 children in 1979;
- there were 12,010 boys and 11,262 girls registered in 2006;
- a total of 9,929 births (43%) were to first time mothers in 2006, while second time mothers had 7,560 babies (32%) and third time mothers had 3,660 babies (16%). Only nine per cent became mothers for at least the fourth time;

Mother's Age

- almost half of all births registered in 2006 were to mothers aged 30 or over. This is a significant increase from thirty years ago when around 30% of births were to older mothers. This indicates that in general women are delaying child-bearing to later in life – this trend is seen across the developed world;
- looking at first births this trend is even more pronounced. In 1976, only around 14% of married mothers aged 30 and over were first-time mothers, while in 2006, 27% of married mothers aged 30 and over were first-time mothers;
- in 2006 the average age of mother was 29.2 years, compared with 28.3 years in 1996, 27.0 in 1986, and 26.9 in 1976. The average age of first time mothers was 26.7 years last year compared with 23.9 years in 1976;
- the trend to later childbearing is most apparent in the decline in fertility among 20-24 year old females. Over the past three decades fertility for this age group has more than

¹ Mid-year population estimates for 2006 are not yet available, thus all 2006 *rate* statistics in this release have been calculated using 2005 mid-year population estimates.

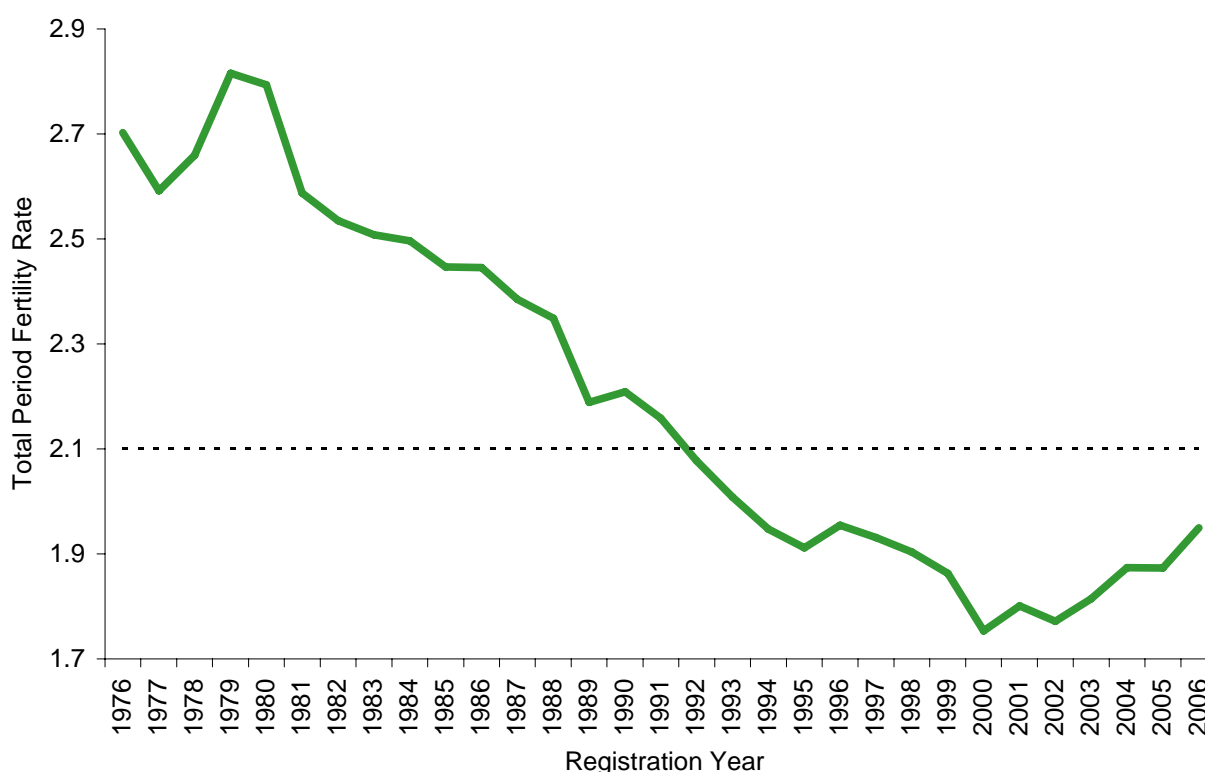
halved, from 152 births per 1,000 women aged 20-24 in 1976 to 67 births per 1,000 women aged 20-24 in 2006;

- the number of births to teenage mothers has fallen in recent years. In 2006 there were 1,427 births to teenage mothers, a small increase on the 1,395 births in 2005, but a decrease of more than 20% from the recent high of 1,791 such births in 1999;

Fertility Trend

- the total period fertility rate (or overall average fertility level) dropped below population replacement level (2.1 children) in Northern Ireland for the first time in 1992;
- the total period fertility rate for 2006 was 1.95 children, which is a recovery from a record low of 1.75 children in 2000. However this fertility rate is still well below the levels witnessed in the 1980s. The total period fertility rate for Northern Ireland since 1976 is shown in Chart 1 below;

Chart 1: Total Period Fertility Rate (1976 to 2006) [non-zero Y axis]



- Northern Ireland's total period fertility rate in 2005 – the most recent year for which comparative statistics are available - (1.87) is higher than those in England (1.80), Scotland (1.62) and Wales (1.79) and similar to that in the Republic of Ireland (1.88);

Country of birth of mother

- there were 3,700 births registered in Northern Ireland during 2006 where the mother was not born in Northern Ireland (16% of all births);
- in 2006, the majority of new mothers not born in Northern Ireland were either from elsewhere in the UK or the Republic of Ireland. However over 6% of all births (1,450 births) were to mothers born outside the UK and Ireland. This is a marked rise on previous years, for example, there were fewer than 600 such births in 1997 or 2% of all births;

Table 1: Births registered in Northern Ireland by Mother's Country of Birth, 1997-2006

Registration Year	Country of Birth of Mother					
	All countries	Northern Ireland	Rest of UK	Republic of Ireland	A8 Countries ¹	All other Countries
1997	24,089	21,030	1,766	719	2	572
2001	21,962	18,994	1,553	724	12	679
2002	21,384	18,506	1,477	654	16	731
2003	21,648	18,610	1,458	655	21	904
2004	22,318	19,059	1,404	689	34	1,132
2005	22,328	19,039	1,460	706	110	1,013
2006	23,272	19,611	1,475	736	390	1,060

¹ Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

- the percentage of births to mothers born outside the UK and Ireland ranged from 15% (around 1 birth in 7) in Dungannon Government District (117 births) to 1% in Larne and Strabane Government Districts. Belfast, Castlereagh, Craigavon and North Down Local Government Districts also exhibited high percentages of births (9%) to mothers born outside the UK and Ireland;

Births outside marriage

- last year, 38% of all registered births occurred outside marriage - the highest proportion on record. This compares with one in twenty births (5%) occurring outside marriage in 1976;
- in 2006, of the births outside marriage, three-quarters (76%) were jointly registered by both parents. The remaining one-quarter (24%) were registered by the mother only;
- in 2006 the percentage of births outside marriage differed markedly between areas, with over half (58%) of births in Belfast Local Government District occurring outside marriage and under one quarter (22%) of births in Magherafelt Local Government District occurring outside marriage;

Births by area

- at Health and Social Services Board level, birth rates ranged from 12.6 births per 1,000 population in the Eastern Board area to 15.4 births per 1,000 population in the Southern Board area. The birth rates in the Northern and Western Boards were 13.2 and 14.0 births per 1,000 population respectively;
- Dungannon Local Government District had the highest birth rate of all the Local Government Districts in 2006 with 15.7 births per 1,000 population while the lowest birth rate was in Moyle Local Government District, 11.1 births per 1,000 population.

Also included are a number of tables – these are listed below:

Table 2 Registered births 1976, 1986, 1996 to 2006

Table 3 Registered births by area, 2006

Table 4 Registered births by area, 1976, 1986, 1996, 2000 to 2006

Table 2 Registered births - 1976, 1986, 1996 to 2006^P

Year	Estimated Population	Live Births									Multiple Births ⁷			
		All Resident Births ¹	Birth Rate ^{2,3}	Total Period Fertility Rate ³	Births Outside Marriage		Teenage Mothers ⁵		Mother aged 30 and over		Average age of first time mothers ⁶	Sets of Twins	Sets of Triplets, etc	% of Maternities
					Number	% ⁴	Number	% ⁴	Number	% ⁵				
1976	1,523,500	26,361	17.3	2.70	1,330	5.0	2,126	8.1	7,848	29.8	24	264	5	1.0
1986	1,573,500	27,975	17.8	2.44	3,575	12.8	2,094	7.5	8,637	30.9	..	280	3	1.0
1996	1,661,800	24,382	14.7	1.95	6,346	26.0	1,582	6.5	10,225	41.9	..	310	13	1.3
1997	1,671,300	24,087	14.4	1.93	6,427	26.7	1,644	6.8	10,527	43.7	26	330	7	1.4
1998	1,677,800	23,668	14.1	1.90	6,743	28.5	1,735	7.3	10,593	44.8	26	305	7	1.3
1999	1,679,000	22,957	13.7	1.86	6,957	30.3	1,791	7.8	10,426	45.4	26	334	6	1.5
2000	1,682,900	21,512	12.8	1.75	6,833	31.8	1,614	7.5	10,090	46.9	26	314	5	1.5
2001	1,689,300	21,962	13.0	1.80	7,144	32.5	1,524	6.9	10,652	48.5	26	330	10	1.6
2002	1,696,600	21,385	12.6	1.77	7,161	33.5	1,502	7.0	10,485	49.0	26	313	13	1.5
2003	1,702,600	21,648	12.7	1.81	7,439	34.4	1,484	6.9	10,729	49.6	26	304	5	1.4
2004	1,710,300	22,318	13.0	1.87	7,703	34.5	1,486	6.7	11,305	50.7	27	330	7	1.5
2005	1,724,400	22,328	12.9	1.87	8,108	36.3	1,395	6.2	11,259	50.4	27	294	6	1.4
2006 ^P	NA	23,272	13.5	1.95	8,832	38.0	1,427	6.1	11,619	49.9	27	314	1	1.4

^P Provisional.

¹ All births prior to 1981.

² Rate per 1,000 population.

³ Rate calculated using 2005 mid-year estimates of population.

⁴ Percentage of all live births.

⁵ All births to mothers aged under 20 years at the time of birth.

⁶ Prior to 1997 birth order is available for married mothers only. The figure for 1976 is therefore calculated for married mothers only.

⁷ Maternities refer to the number of pregnancies ending in stillbirths or live births with multiple births counting only once.

Table 3 Births by Health Board and Local Government District, 2006 (Provisional)

Area	All Resident Live Births			Birth Rate ¹	Births Outside Marriage	
	Total	Male	Female		Number	% ²
Northern Ireland	23,272	12,010	11,262	13.5	8,832	38.0
Eastern Board	8,373	4,390	3,983	12.6	3,804	45.4
Ards	866	470	396	11.5	309	35.7
Belfast	3,393	1,717	1,676	12.7	1,971	58.1
Castlereagh	747	376	371	11.4	223	29.9
Down	949	508	441	14.1	361	38.0
Lisburn	1,526	824	702	13.7	616	40.4
North Down	892	495	397	11.4	324	36.3
Northern Board	5,789	2,929	2,860	13.2	1,998	34.5
Antrim	736	378	358	14.6	233	31.7
Ballymena	786	383	403	12.9	275	35.0
Ballymoney	402	190	212	14.0	136	33.8
Carrickfergus	471	241	230	12.0	177	37.6
Coleraine	646	333	313	11.4	266	41.2
Cookstown	498	267	231	14.6	150	30.1
Larne	357	191	166	11.5	162	45.4
Magherafelt	624	301	323	14.9	140	22.4
Moyle	183	91	92	11.1	59	32.2
Newtownabbey	1,086	554	532	13.4	400	36.8
Southern Board	5,042	2,595	2,447	15.4	1,504	29.8
Armagh	858	445	413	15.4	216	25.2
Banbridge	646	320	326	14.4	170	26.3
Craigavon	1,324	658	666	15.6	462	34.9
Dungannon	799	417	382	15.7	235	29.4
Newry & Mourne	1,415	755	660	15.5	421	29.8
Western Board	4,068	2,096	1,972	14.0	1,526	37.5
Fermanagh	825	438	387	13.8	221	26.8
Limavady	483	261	222	14.1	157	32.5
Derry	1,529	780	749	14.3	756	49.4
Omagh	687	340	347	13.5	168	24.5
Strabane	544	277	267	14.0	224	41.2

¹ Rate per 1,000 population. Rate for 2006 calculated using 2005 mid-year estimates of population.

² Percentage of all live births.

Table 4 Births by Health Board and Local Government District, 1976, 1986, 1996, 2000 to 2006^P

Area	All Resident Live Births									
	1976 ¹	1986	1996	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006 ^P
Northern Ireland	26,361	27,975	24,382	21,512	21,962	21,385	21,648	22,318	22,328	23,272
Eastern Board	9,746	10,585	9,298	8,082	8,079	7,654	8,011	8,205	7,995	8,373
Ards	941	952	912	853	825	811	882	864	890	866
Belfast	4,852	5,368	3,987	3,347	3,298	3,168	3,327	3,423	3,289	3,393
Castlereagh	627	681	973	806	786	744	727	713	722	747
Down	976	1,099	883	828	851	810	851	895	798	949
Lisburn	1,406	1,435	1,687	1,450	1,490	1,381	1,367	1,464	1,473	1,526
North Down	944	1,050	856	798	829	740	857	846	823	892
Northern Board	6,464	6,592	5,895	5,303	5,413	5,421	5,335	5,697	5,623	5,789
Antrim	859	835	791	682	727	674	708	755	702	736
Ballymena	1,001	1,001	818	727	721	751	735	784	794	786
Ballymoney	343	357	332	319	366	363	344	397	376	402
Carrickfergus	464	527	525	462	459	434	456	439	479	471
Coleraine	800	811	718	642	634	657	621	672	589	646
Cookstown	514	503	478	430	461	450	411	502	483	498
Larne	379	423	419	340	331	357	344	316	350	357
Magherafelt	552	683	580	571	565	580	562	589	607	624
Moyle	242	251	196	186	196	162	198	198	193	183
Newtownabbey	1,310	1,201	1,038	944	953	993	956	1,045	1,050	1,086
Southern Board	4,998	5,409	4,694	4,212	4,556	4,422	4,469	4,682	4,813	5,042
Armagh	802	814	806	711	757	720	765	728	807	858
Banbridge	348	458	541	535	560	577	643	584	646	646
Craigavon	1,295	1,551	1,234	1,053	1,115	1,036	1,073	1,176	1,193	1,324
Dungannon	987	962	692	619	713	720	652	785	760	799
Newry & Mourne	1,566	1,624	1,421	1,294	1,411	1,369	1,336	1,409	1,407	1,415
Western Board	5,153	5,389	4,495	3,915	3,914	3,888	3,833	3,734	3,897	4,068
Fermanagh	908	993	799	722	721	749	710	692	732	825
Limavady	554	555	516	431	485	432	468	426	451	483
Derry	2,124	2,210	1,845	1,556	1,537	1,574	1,504	1,485	1,529	1,529
Omagh	802	941	737	679	652	655	645	646	682	687
Strabane	765	690	598	527	519	478	506	485	503	544

^P Provisional.

¹ Data for 1976 includes births to mothers resident outside Northern Ireland.

NOTE FOR EDITORS

1. This information can also be accessed on the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency web site at <http://www.nisra.gov.uk>.
2. The figures on births have been compiled from returns furnished by the local registrars. The figures are provisional and the final figures for each year are published in the Annual Report of the Registrar General.
3. The results are based on analysis of all births registered within the 2006 calendar year. A more detailed breakdown of these statistics will be published in the Annual Report of the Registrar General.
4. Some events may have occurred prior to this registration year.
5. Rates for 2005 and 2006 data are calculated on the estimated home population as at 30 June 2005. The 2006 home population estimate will be published in Summer 2007.
6. Corresponding information for England and Wales is published by the Office for National Statistics and for Scotland by the General Register Office for Scotland.
7. All media inquiries should directed to:
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8. Further information on the statistics provided in this publication can be obtained from NISRA Customer Services at:
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