



Registrar General Northern Ireland Annual Report 2018

Publication Date: 6 November 2019



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:
www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/NISRA-Corporate-Plan-2019-24



Ninety-Seventh
Annual Report
of the
Registrar General
2018

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

6 November 2019

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Foreword 2

Introduction.. 4

Population & Migration 6

Births 8

Stillbirths & Infant Deaths 10

Deaths 12

Cause of Death 14

Marriages.. 16

Divorces. 18

Civil Partnerships & Civil Partnership Dissolutions. 20

Adoptions, Re-registrations & Gender Recognition 22

Footnotes.. 24

Foreword by the Registrar General for Northern Ireland



I am delighted to present the ninety-seventh Annual Report of the Registrar General to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The report draws on the work of the General Register Office (GRO) and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) Vital Statistics Unit and provides an overview of Northern Ireland through the analysis of key life events such as births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships that were registered in 2018. 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 any requests you may have.

Following the relocation in 2017 of the GRO and NISRA headquarters to Colby House, Stranmillis Court, the priority certificate service of '30 mins while you wait' has continued to be well utilised and appreciated by our customers, with many comments being received on the service speed and the helpfulness of the staff. The number of visitors to the public search room has increased to the level achieved prior to the relocation to Colby House, with 2018 figures slightly exceeding those of 2016.

The functions of the Registrar General are often hidden from view but they form an integral part of key events in the lives of people and businesses in Northern Ireland. Information from 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 evaluation as undertaken by both central and local government.

In presenting this report, my third as Registrar General for Northern Ireland, I greatly appreciate the work undertaken by the team of 11 Registrars and 71 Deputy Registrars located in the District Registration Offices across the eleven councils, and all the NISRA and GRO personnel involved in the delivery of civil registration services. Without their collective commitment, professionalism and support the production of this important information simply would not have been possible.

I trust that you will find the report both informative and useful. Your feedback on content and format continues to be welcomed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Siobhan Carey". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Siobhan Carey

Registrar General for Northern Ireland

November 2019

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, 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 of and access to the online official registration records; and
- the production, on request, of certificates in relation to these events.

Main Activities in 2018 – January to December

- Almost 48,000 life events registered through the DRO offices.
- 82,460 certificate applications were processed, a decrease of 1.1 per cent on the previous year. Of these, 32,991 applications related to priority (fast-tracked) certificates, a decrease of 7.7 per cent on the previous year.
- From these 82,460 applications, a total of 107,052 certificates were produced due to some customers requesting multiple certificates.
- The number of certificates applied for in 2018 decreased slightly on the 2017 figure, but did not return to the pre Brexit vote position.

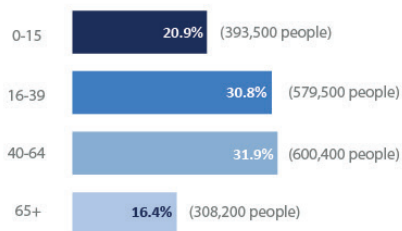
- Different channels are used by the public to submit certificate applications. Online (which includes telephone applications) is by far the most popular. In 2018, 85.3 per cent of applications were made via this channel.
- Applications made over the counter accounted for 10.0 per cent, whilst postal applications accounted for the remaining 4.7 per cent of applications in 2018.
- Additionally, GRO processed over 2,490 registration related cases including reregistrations, adoptions, name changes and corrections.
- GRO shared information with Business Services Organisation, Electoral Office for Northern Ireland, Department for Work and Pensions, Department for Infrastructure and Department for Communities.
- Over 14,900 new accounts were registered on the GRO family history website.
- There were almost 1.2 million searches carried out, of which the most popular being the basic index search¹ which accounted for 1.06 million searches. There were over 960,000 credits purchased by online users with almost 488,000 credits used for the enhanced² and full³ index searches.
- There were 1,136 visits to the GRO public search room in Colby House in 2018.
- In June 2018 there was a court judgement that required GRO to introduce a process to facilitate civil marriages to be solemnised by humanist celebrants. There were 15 civil marriages conducted by humanist celebrants registered in 2018.

*see page 24 for footnotes

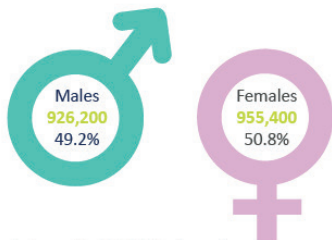
Population of Northern Ireland at 30 June 2018

1,881,600

Population by Age



Population by Gender

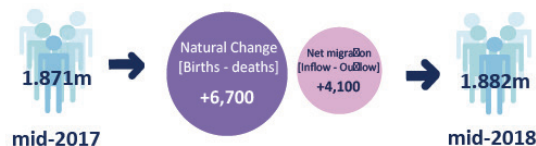


Figures may not always add up to 100% due to rounding
Source: 2018 Mid-year Population Estimates for Northern Ireland

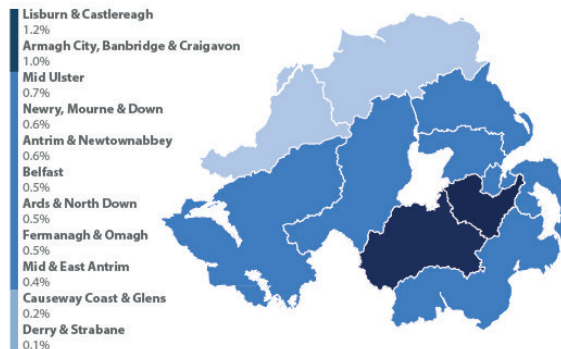
How has the population increased since 30 June 2017?

+10,800 people

(0.6% growth)



Population Change by Local Government District (Mid-2017 to Mid-2018)



In 2018:

- The population of Northern Ireland was estimated to be 1.88 million people, an increase of 10,800 people (0.6 per cent) from mid-2017.
- Natural change was the main driver of population growth, adding 6,700 people (23,100 births minus 16,400 deaths) to the population.
- For a fifth successive year the number of people coming to live in Northern Ireland (23,600) was greater than the number of people leaving (19,400), leading to a net migration gain of 4,100 people*.
- The population continues to age with the number of those aged 65 and over increasing by 1.7 per cent to reach 308,200 people (16.4 per cent of the population). In contrast, the number of children aged 0 to 15 years increased by just 0.7 per cent to reach 393,500 children (20.9 per cent of the population).

* Figures may not add back due to rounding

- Each of the 11 Local Government Districts experienced an increase in population, with Lisburn and Castlereagh experiencing the largest increase (1.2 per cent).

2018-based Population Projections:

- The Northern Ireland population is projected to increase by 3.7 per cent to 1.95 million in the next ten years to mid-2028, reaching the 1.99 million mark by mid-2043.
- Projections also indicate a continued ageing population here, with the number of people aged 65 and over projected to grow by 25.1 per cent in the 10 year period to mid-2028.
- The number of people aged 65 and over is projected to overtake that of children by mid-2028, with the proportion aged 85 and over projected to double by mid-2043 (up from 2.0 per cent to 3.9 per cent).

Births

22,829

births



11,613 males 11,216 females

Most common birth date



Average age of mothers



30.8 years

Most popular baby names

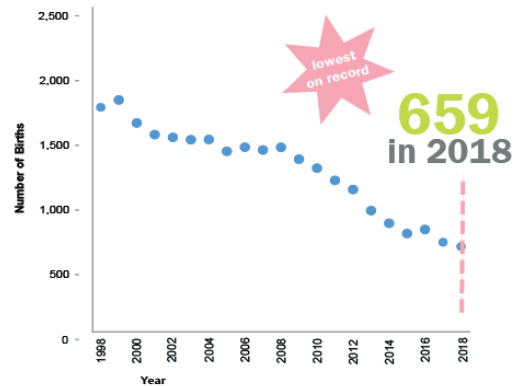
James/Noah

Grace



39.1% of births were to first time mothers

Trend in live births to teenage mothers*



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

In 2018:

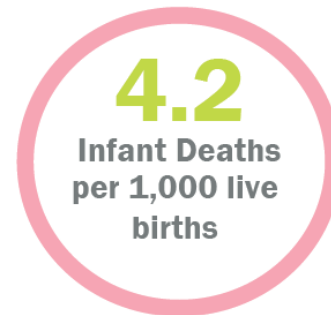
- There were 22,829 births (11,613 males and 11,216 females) registered to Northern Ireland mothers, 246 fewer than in 2017.
- The most popular names for boys registered this year were James and Noah whilst for girls it was Grace.
- October 5th was the most common birth date, with 93 babies born on that day.
- The average age of mothers was 30.8 years, the same as in 2017. By way of comparison, in 1988 the average age of mothers was 27.6 years.
- 23.1 per cent of all births were to mothers aged 35 years or over, up from 10.2 per cent 30 years ago.
- Births to mothers under 20 years of age (teenage mothers) decreased from 692 in 2017 to 659. This is the lowest number on record and is noticeably lower than a decade previously (1,426) and three decades ago (2,053).
- First-time mothers (i.e. mothers with no previous live born children) accounted for 39.1 per cent of all births.
- Only 9.1 per cent of mothers already had three or more live born children. This compares with 14.5 per cent in 1988.
- The average age of first-time mothers was 28.8 years, almost four years older than in 1988 (24.9 years).
- 44.5 per cent of births occurred outside of marriage, compared with 16.2 per cent three decades ago.
- Of the 22,512 maternities, 1.7 per cent resulted in multiple births with 384 sets of twins, four sets of triplets and one set of quadruplets being born.
- 10.7 per cent of births were to mothers who were born outside of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. This compares with 2.3 per cent 20 years ago.

Stillbirths & Infant Deaths



79
Stillbirths

97
Infant Deaths



This stillbirth rate
has **decreased**
from 4.4 in 2017



47.4%
of infant deaths occurred
in the first day of life

79 stillbirths registered

22.5%

than the 2017 figure

88 infant deaths registered

10.2%

than the 2017 figure

In 2018:

- 79 stillbirths (32 males and 47 females) were registered. This was 23 less than in 2017 and equates to a stillbirth rate of 3.4 per 1,000 total births (both live and still).
- This stillbirths number is the second lowest on record for NI since records began. The lowest number of stillbirths registered in a year in NI was 76, in 2015. By way of comparison, in 1978, there were 238 stillbirths registered.
- Conditions originating in the perinatal period were the cause of 79.7 per cent of stillbirths, whilst congenital malformations, deformations and chromosomal abnormalities were the cause of a further 16.5 per cent. The remaining 3.8 per cent of stillbirths were due to other causes.
- 97 infant deaths (i.e. deaths in the first year of life) were registered, representing a rise of 10.2 per cent on the previous year (88). This equates to 4.2 infant deaths per 1,000 live births.
- This is the third time that the number of infant deaths registered in a year in NI has been below 100. The lowest number on record is 88, registered in 2017. By way of comparison, in 1978 there were 419 infant deaths registered.
- 47.4 per cent of infant deaths occurred during the first day of life.
- Almost two thirds (64.9 per cent) of infant deaths occurred in the first week of life. The first week of life is considered to be between days zero and six.
- Conditions originating in the perinatal period were the cause of 56.7 per cent of infant deaths, whilst congenital malformations, deformations and chromosomal abnormalities were the cause of a further 28.9 per cent. The remaining 14.4 per cent of infant deaths were due to other factors.

15,922

 deaths in 2018

Average age at death



74.2 years
for males



79.6 years
for females



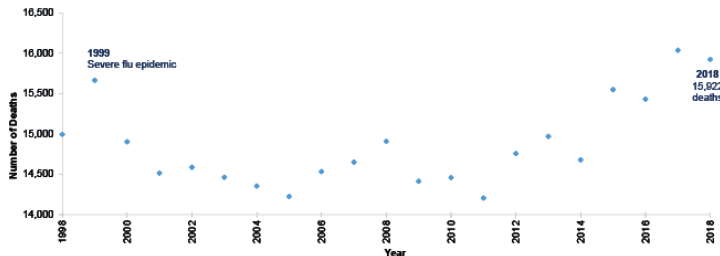
2/3 deaths were of
people aged 75 and over

153

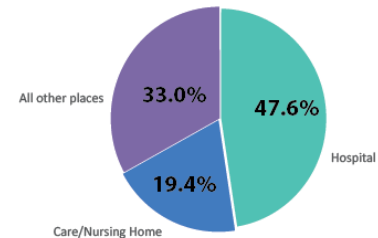
deaths

were of people
aged 100 and over

Trend in number of deaths over time



Place of Death

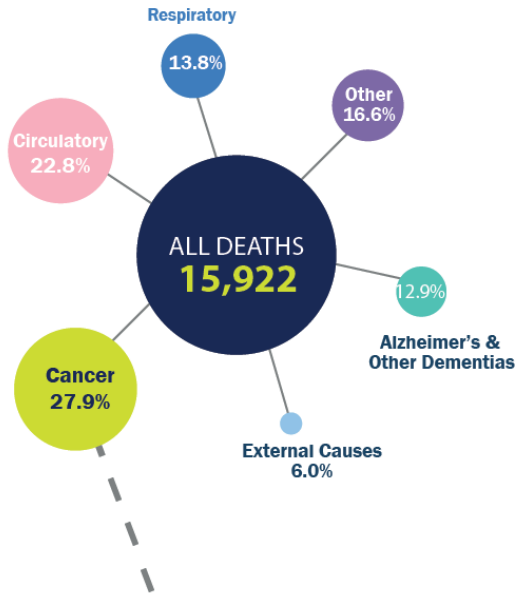


In 2018:

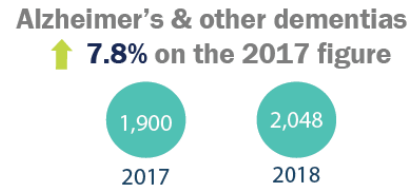
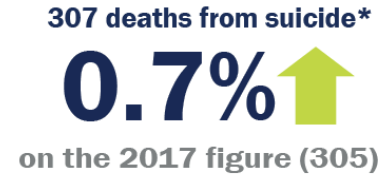
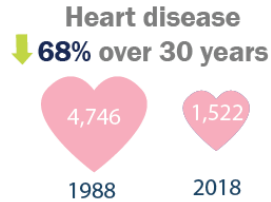
- 15,922 deaths (7,771 males and 8,151 females) were registered, a 0.7 per cent decrease on the 2017 figure (16,036) and 1.7 per cent more than in 1999 (15,663) when the severe flu epidemic occurred.
- There were 104 female deaths for every 100 male deaths, slightly more than the female to male ratio in the population as a whole (103 females for every male).
- The average age at death for men was 74.2 years and 79.6 years for women. This compares with 68.7 years and 74.8 years respectively three decades ago.
- There were 153 deaths of people aged 100 or over, 2.9 times higher than the number of 30 years previously (52 in 1988).
- Approximately two out of every three deaths (64.8 per cent) were of people aged 75 or over.
- 47.6 per cent of deaths occurred in NHS hospitals, whilst a further 19.4 per cent of deaths occurred in care homes or nursing homes. The remaining 33.0 per cent of deaths occurred at home and or in other places.
- Approximately four out of every five deaths (83.3 per cent) in an NHS hospital was a person aged 65 or over.
- Life expectancy* for females (82.3 years) was almost four years higher than for males (78.6 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. Official life expectancy figures for Northern Ireland are produced by the Department of Health, NI, with 2016-2018 estimates due for release on 4th December 2019.

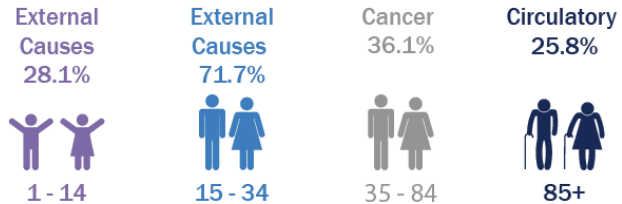
Cause of Death



**MOST COMMON
CANCER SITE
WAS THE
BRONCHUS OR LUNG**



Most prevalent cause of death by age



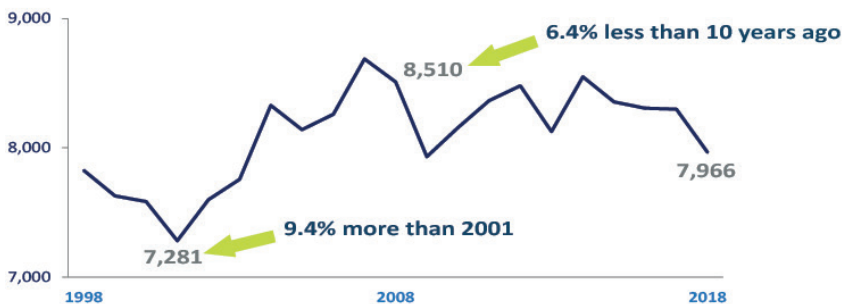
*includes deaths from intentional self harm and events of undetermined intent

In 2018:

- Of the 15,922 deaths, the leading cause of death was cancer (27.9 per cent), followed by circulatory disease (22.8 per cent) and respiratory disease (13.8 per cent).
- For both males and females, the most common cancer site was the bronchus or lung; the breast was the second most common cancer site in female deaths, whereas the prostate was the second most common cancer site in males.
- 67.9 per cent fewer people died of heart disease than three decades ago with 1,522 deaths compared with 4,746 deaths in 1988.
- There were 307 deaths registered due to suicide (intentional self-harm and events of undetermined intent), a 0.7 per cent increase on the previous year (305). Males accounted for almost three quarters of all suicides (228).
- The number of deaths due to Alzheimer's and other dementias increased by 7.8 per cent on the previous year, from 1,900 in 2017 to 2,048.
- External causes of death (for example accidents and suicide) were the leading cause of death in people aged 15-34, accounting for 71.7 per cent of deaths in this age group.
- Cancer was the leading cause for those aged 35-84, accounting for 36.1 per cent of deaths in this age group. Circulatory disease was the leading cause for those aged 85 or over.

Marriages

 **7,966** marriages



Average age at marriage



35.2 years
for males



33.1 years
for females

Most popular dates

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec



1,174

marriages took place
in August



In 2018:

- 7,966 marriages were registered, equivalent to just under 1 every hour.
- August was the most popular month to get married. Saturday the 18th of August was the most popular day, with 111 couples having married on this day.
- Grooms were on average two years older than brides (35.2 years and 33.1 years respectively). Compared with 30 years previously, the average age of both brides and grooms increased by more than seven years (27.7 and 25.5 respectively).
- Four in five marriages (80.4 per cent) were first-time marriages for both partners while for 8.0 per cent of marriages both partners had been previously married.
- 12.0 per cent of marriages were of couples who both reside outside NI. Of these couples, 99 were both born in NI and returned to get married.
- Four in five religious marriages (81.1 per cent) were held in a religious building. St Eugene's Cathedral, Derry was the most popular religious venue for religious marriages, with 50 marriages having taken place there.
- The remaining 18.9 per cent of all religious marriage ceremonies were held outside of religious buildings, in approved venues.
- Just over half of all civil marriages (53.4 per cent) were held in a registrar's office. The Belfast Registration Office was the most popular venue for civil marriage ceremonies.
- The remaining 46.6 per cent of civil marriages were held in approved venues.
- There were 15 civil marriages conducted by humanist celebrants.

2,073

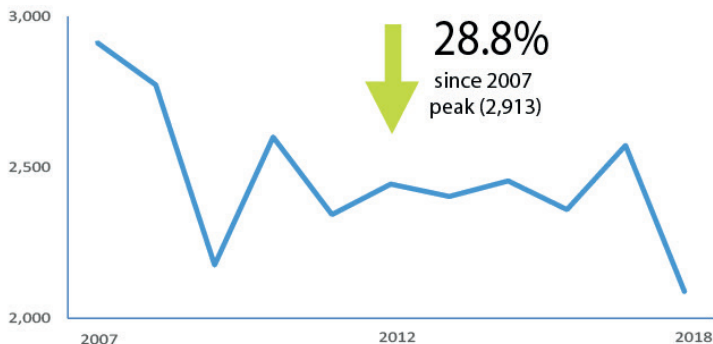
Divorces



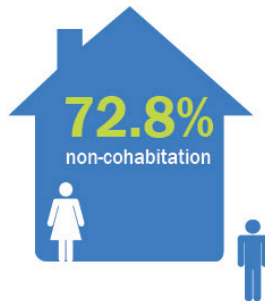
Average length of marriage at divorce



Average age at divorce



Grounds for divorce



Children affected by divorce



In 2018:

- There were 2,073 divorces granted. This was a decrease on the previous year (2,089), and 28.8 per cent lower than the peak number of 2,913 in 2007.
- Non-cohabitation remained the most frequently recorded reason for divorce, accounting for 72.8 per cent of all divorces.
- Those marriages which ended in divorce had lasted an average of 18 years, compared with 14 years three decades previously.
- The average ages of the men and women concerned were 47.6 years and 45.4 years respectively.
- For approximately one in ten men and women who divorced (10.4 per cent), this was not their first divorce.
- 3,699 children/stepchildren were affected by the divorces that were granted, of which 1,553 were under the age of 16.

Civil Partnerships & Civil Partnership Dissolutions

 **108**

civil partnerships



53.7%

female
partnerships

46.3%

male
partnerships

Most popular month

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

20 civil partnerships took place in August

Average age at partnership



40.3 years
for males



36.4 years
for females

Location of civil partnership ceremony



65.7% registrar's office

34.3% approved venue



10 civil partnership dissolutions



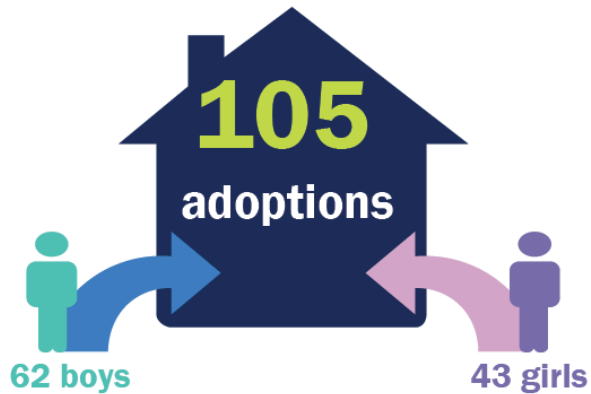
3 male partnerships

7 female partnerships



In 2018:

- There were 108 civil partnerships registered (50 male partnerships and 58 female partnerships), 16 more than in 2017.
- The average age of males entering a civil partnership was 40.3 years, while for females it was 36.4 years.
- Almost two-thirds (71) of civil partnership ceremonies were held in a District Registration Office. The remaining 37 ceremonies were held in an approved venue.
- August was the most popular month for civil partnership ceremonies, with 20 being held then.
- Ten civil partnership dissolutions were registered. Of these, three were of male couples and seven were of female couples.
- The average age of all partners dissolving a civil partnership was 39.0 years.
- Those civil partnerships which ended in dissolution had lasted an average of seven years.



14 more
adoptions than in 2017

An upward-pointing dark blue arrow is positioned to the left of the number '14'.

71.4% of adopted children were
aged between 0 and 5 years

765

re-registrations

Reasons for re-registering
a birth include:



Parents
getting
married



Adding
father's
details

81 fewer re-registrations
than in 2017

In 2018:

- 105 children (62 boys and 43 girls) were adopted, an increase of 15.4 per cent from the 2017 figure of 91.
- The average age of the adopted children was four years.
- 75 children adopted this year were aged five or under. A further 23 children were aged between six and ten, with the remaining seven children aged 11 or over.
- 765 births were re-registered, 9.6 per cent fewer than the 2017 figure of 846.
- There were two 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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National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is NISRA's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

All of the data in this report are available on the NISRA website www.nisra.gov.uk.

Any queries or requests for further information should be addressed to:

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