



# NISRA

Northern Ireland  
Statistics and Research Agency

Gníomhaireacht Thuaisceart Éireann  
um Staitisticí agus Taighde



## Baby Names in Northern Ireland 2021



Department of

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This booklet presents the most popular names given to babies whose birth was registered in Northern Ireland during 2021 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 2021 may not have been registered until early January 2022. Similarly, some names included in this booklet for 2021 will have been given to babies born towards the end of 2020. 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 22,179 births were registered in Northern Ireland during 2021.

There were slightly more births of males (11,397) than females (10,782) registered, accounting for 51.4 per cent and 48.6 per cent of all registrations respectively.

As with previous years, a greater variety of girls' names (2,263) than boys' names (1,818) were registered in 2021. The range of names being used by parents has grown considerably over the past 40 years, with 1,194 girls' names and 635 boys' names being registered in 1981.

There were 389 new boys' names and 540 new girls' names registered in 2021 that had not been registered since the reporting of baby names began in 1997. Some 58.1 per cent of the new names were for girls and 41.9 per cent were for boys.

~ 22,179 births registered in 2021 ~



**11,397**  
male



**10,782**  
female

~Range of names~



**929** new names registered in 2021

## ~Top 10 names~

1 Jack (193)	1 Grace (182)
2 Noah (191)	2 Emily (150)
3 James (173)	3 Fiadh (149)
4 Charlie (155)	4 Olivia (148)
5 Oliver (131)	5 Isla (138)
6 Theo (119)	6 Sophie (128)
7 Leo (117)	7 Aoife (122)
8 Cillian (116)	8 Ella (111)
9 Finn (115)	9 Anna (106)
10 Harry (114)	10 Sophia (102)

## ~Top names~

**Jack (193)**  
**Grace (182)**

## ~New to Top 10~



**Leo**  
**Anna Aoife**

**12%** of babies given  
a top 10 name

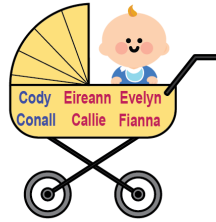
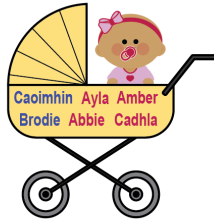
### Top 10 boys' names:

- This is Jack's first time at number one, since its 12 year stretch at the top spot between 2003 and 2014, with 193 babies each being given this name.
- Noah was a close second. After sharing the top spot with James in 2018, Noah fell to third position in 2019 and 2020.
- James (which held the top spot for 6 consecutive years between 2015 and 2020) followed in third position.
- Thomas fell from the top 10 most popular boys' names for the first time since 2016.
- Leo entered the top 10 in 2021 for the first time since 2018, although it was close to the top ten in 2019 and 2020 when it was in eleventh place.
- Theo remains in the top 10 for the second year running, after gaining rapid popularity each year since 2012.

### Top 10 girls' names:

- For the fourth year running Grace was the most popular name for girls, with 182 girls given this name in 2021.
- This is the sixteenth consecutive year Grace has been in the top three.
- Emily remained the second most popular girls' name in 2021, holding this spot in the top 10 for the last four consecutive years.
- Fiadh followed in third position for 2021, after entering the top 10 in 2020 for the first time since reporting of baby names began in 1997 since gaining steady popularity each year since 2008.
- Anna returned to the top 10 most popular girls' names after dropping out of the top 10 in 2020.
- Aoife also joined the top 10 for the first time since 2015.
- Freya and Amelia both left the top 10 most popular girls names in 2021.

## ~Joined the top 100 in 2021~



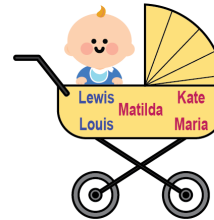
## ~Top Climbers since 2001~



## ~Top climbers in 2021~



## ~Left the top 100 in 2021~



### Top 100 boys' names:

- Of the 9 new entries to the top 100 boys' names in 2021, Caoimhin, Donnacha and Sonny made the top 100 for the first time since the recording of baby names began in 1997.
- Finley left the top 100 after joining for one year in 2020.
- Seth returned to the top 100 in 2021, after falling off in 2020 for the first time since 2014.
- Nathan left the top 100 for the second time ever since the recording of baby names began in 1997. It previously dropped to 101 in 2019.
- Within the boys' top 100, the highest climbers in popularity between 2020 and 2021 were Seth, Conall and Sonny.

### Top 100 girls' names:

- Of the 17 new entries to the top 100 girls' names in 2020, Ayla, Callie, Eireann, Evelyn, Hope, Lyla, Millie, Remi and Saorlaith made the top 100 for the first time since the recording of baby names began in 1997.
- Abbie returned to the top 100 in 2021 for the first time since 2017. Abbie consistently featured in the top 100 girls' names between 1997 and 2017.
- Abigail and Holly left the top 100 for the first time since the recording of baby names began in 1997.
- Arabella, Hallie and Nancy left the top 100 girls' names having only joined for the first time in 2020.
- Abbie and Callie were the biggest climbers over the year 2020 to 2021, climbing 80 and 77 places respectively.



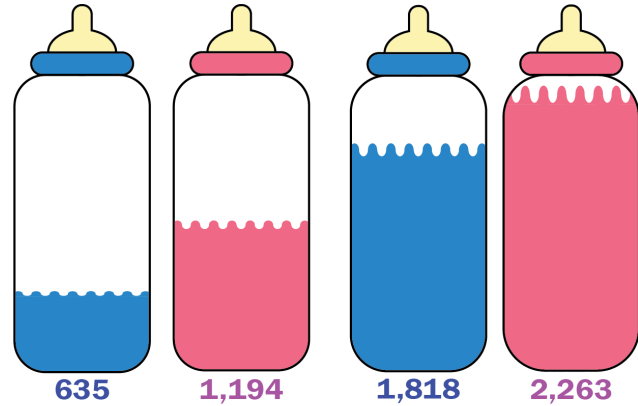
# Change over time

~Most popular names over the past 5 decades~



2021				
Charlie	Finn	Olivia		
Noah	Harry	Isla		
Oliver	Grace	Sophie		
Theo	Emily	Aoife		
Leo	Anna	Ella		
Cillian	Fiadh	Sophia		
David		James	Jack	Caitlin
Michael				Megan
Stephen				Hannah
Christopher	Lisa	Ryan	Adam	Sarah
Mark	Louise		Conor	Rebecca
Andrew	Michelle	Matthew	Dylan	Amy
Claire	Karen	Daniel	Joshua	Niamh
Sarah	Joanne	Emma	Thomas	Rachel
Laura	Catherine		Lauren	Chloe
1981			2001	

~Range of names~



~Top 10 boys' & girls' names in 1981, 2001 & 2021~

### Top 10 boys' names: 1981 versus 2021

- James is the only name from the 1981 top 10 boys' names to have made the top 10 in 2021.
- David, Paul, John, Stephen and Michael were the five most popular boys' names registered in 1981.
- The names David and Paul were given on more than 500 birth registrations in 1981. The two most popular names in 2021 were given fewer than 200 times each.
- Only one name (James) from the top 10 in 2021 appeared in the top 100 in 1981 .

### Top 10 boys' names: 2001 versus 2021

- Of the top 10 boys' names in 2001, only James and Jack appear in the top 10 in 2021. Jack was ranked first and James was ranked fifth in 2001.
- Jack, Matthew, Adam, Ryan and James were the five most popular boys' names in 2001.

### Top 10 girls' names: 1981 versus 2021

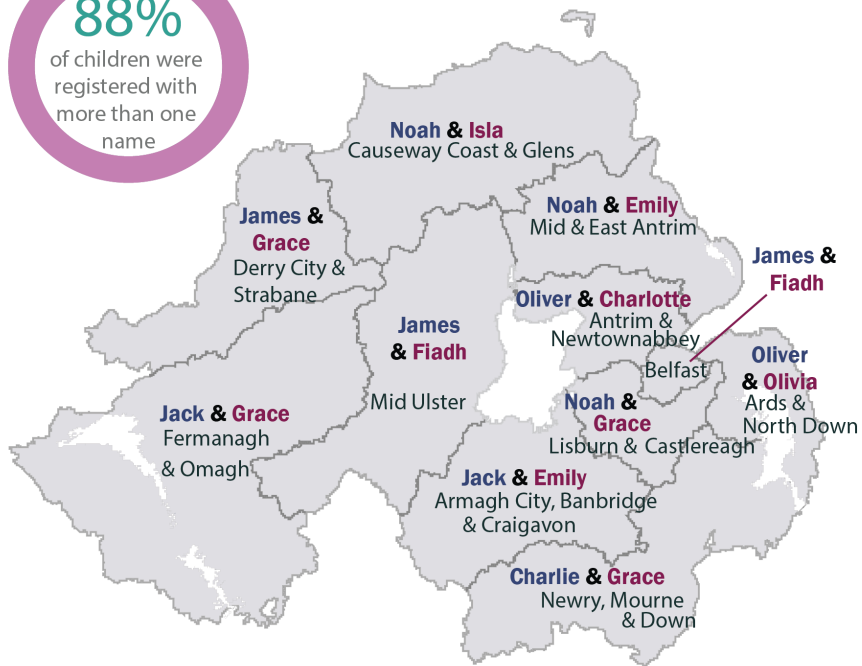
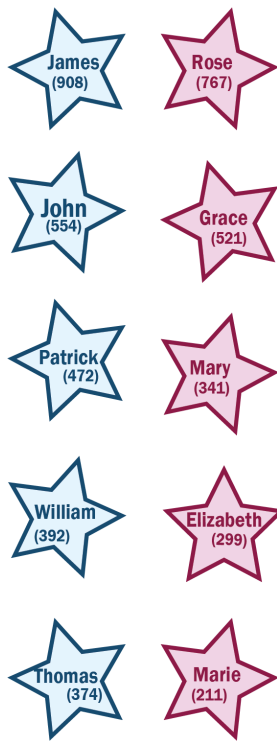
- None of the top 10 girls' names of 1981 made the top 10 in 2021. None of the names from the 1981 top 100 made the top 100 of 2021.
- Emma, Claire, Lisa, Laura, and Sarah were the five most popular girls' names chosen by parents in 1981.
- Even in 1981, parents were more diverse in the range of names given to girls (1,194) as opposed to boys (635).
- The variety of girls' names has continued to expand with a total of 2,263 different girls' names registered in 2021.

### Top 10 girls' names: 2001 versus 2021

- None of the most popular girls' names in 2001 appeared in the top 10 in 2021.
- Chloe, Lauren, Emma, Caitlin and Megan were the five most popular girls' names in 2001.

# 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 2021 were given at least one additional name.
- James, John, Patrick, William and Thomas were the most popular choices for additional names.
- Over 900\* boys were given James as an additional first name.

## Regional variations boys' names:

- Jack, which was the most popular boys' name in Northern Ireland in 2021, was the most popular in two of the 11 Local Government Districts (LGDs).
- Although Noah was the second most popular boys' name in Northern Ireland 2021, at district level it was the most popular in three of the 11 LGDs, along with James.
- Charlie and Oliver were the remaining most popular names at LGD level.

## Additional girls' names:

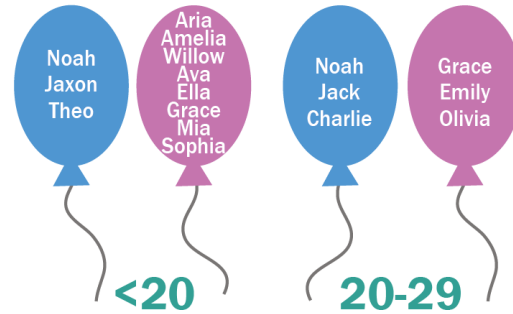
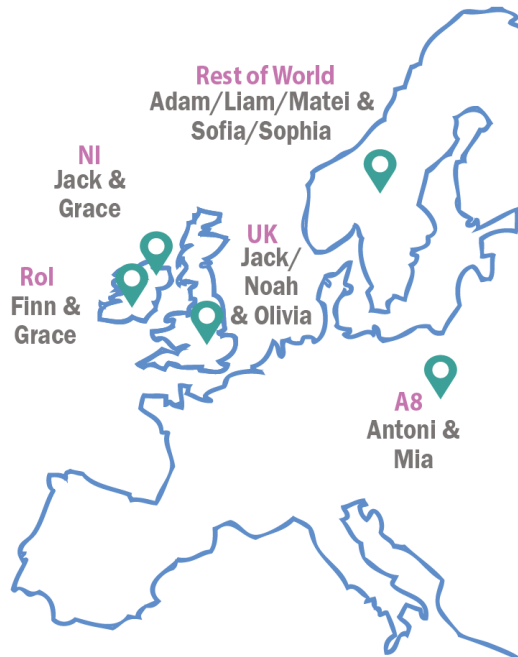
- Eighty-six per cent of girls registered in 2021 were given one or more additional names.
- Rose, Grace, Mary, Elizabeth and Marie were the five most popular additional names for girls.
- More than 750\* girls were given Rose as an additional name.

## Regional variations girls' names:

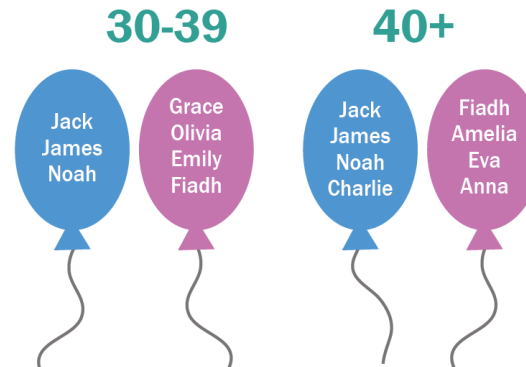
- Grace, which was the most popular girls' name in Northern Ireland in 2021, was the most popular in four of the 11 LGDs.
- Although Emily was the second most popular girls' name in Northern Ireland 2021, at district council level it was joint most popular in two of the 11 LGDs, along with Fiadh.
- Charlotte, Isla and Olivia were the most popular names in the remaining LGDs.

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

## ~Top names by mothers' country of birth~



## ~Top names by mothers' age~



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

### Mothers' country of birth - boys' names:

- Jack was the most popular boys' name choice for mothers born in Northern Ireland.
- Jack and Noah was the favourite for mothers born throughout the rest of the United Kingdom and Finn the most popular for mothers born in the Republic of Ireland
- For mothers born in the A8 countries<sup>1</sup>, Antoni was the most popular choice of boys' name. Adam, Liam and Matei were 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 was Noah. Noah was also the most popular name given by mothers in their twenties.
- Jack was the most popular choice with mothers in their thirties and for those aged 40 and over.

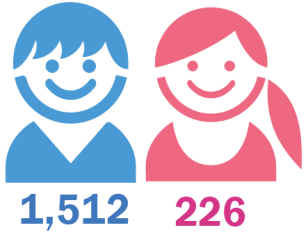
### Mothers' country of birth - girls' names:

- Grace was the favourite girls' names given by mothers born in Northern Ireland.
- Olivia 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.
- Mia was the most popular choice of first name for mothers born in the A8 countries<sup>1</sup> and Sofia or Sophia elsewhere in the world.

### Variation by mothers' age - girls' names:

- Amelia was the most popular girls' name choice for teenage mothers.
- Grace was the favourite name for mothers in their twenties and thirties.
- Fiadh was the favourite name for mothers aged 40 and over.

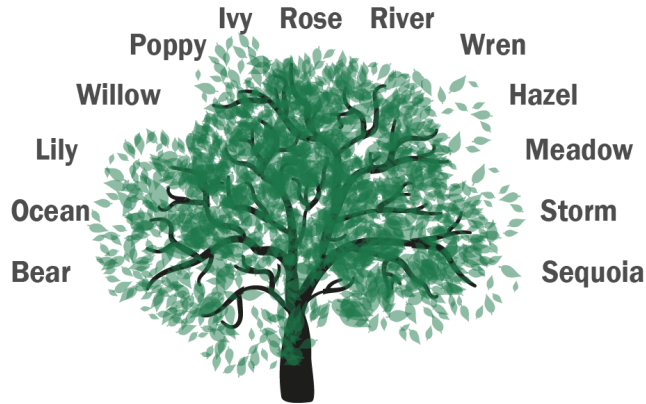
~Children given the name of a parent~



~Place names~



~Nature 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 Ivy born in December.
- In Summer, there was a peak in the number of girls named Summer.
- Autumn saw names like Asher and Willow given to babies registered in those months (September - November)

## Place names:

- India, Ireland, Jordan and Rio were some of the place names given to children whose births were registered in 2021.

## Names from nature:

- Some girls were given names inspired by nature. These include; Poppy, Willow, Lily, Sequoia and Primrose. Some boys given nature names include; Bear, River and Storm.

## Less common names:

- There were nine names in 2021 that consisted of at least 11 letters (not including those containing a hyphen). The longest name given was 14 letters long, Oluwanfunmilayo.
- Some of the less common names given to baby boys in 2020 included: Americano, Apollo, Bently, Harlem, Jet, Napoleon and Sunny.
- Some of the less common names given to baby girls in 2020 included: Blessing, Bluebell, Destiny, Dove, Fleur, Journie, Life, Precious, Serenity.

## Parents' names:

- Of those registrations containing details of the father, 1,512 boys were given their fathers' first name as a first or additional name. Only 226 girls were given their mothers' name.



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

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

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