



# Baby Names Northern Ireland, 2016

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## Key Findings For New Arrivals in 2016

### Boys

James was the most popular first name given to baby boys in 2016.

Jack followed a close second, followed by Oliver.

This is the second consecutive year that James has held the top spot since the reporting of baby first names began in 1997. Jack held the top spot 13 times during this period, and Matthew the remaining five times.

Ezra climbed the greatest number of places to join the top 100 names for boys (up from rank 126 in 2015 to rank 88 in 2016).

Four of the 10 most popular boys' names in 2016 were also among the top 10 a decade ago, namely James, Jack, Daniel and Matthew.

Some less common names given to baby boys in 2016 were Colby, Hendrix, Kiefer, Prince and Woody.

### Girls

Emily was the most popular first name given to baby girls in 2016.

Grace came in second in 2016, closely followed by Olivia.

This is the fourth consecutive year that Emily has held the top spot since reporting began (albeit jointly with Grace in 2013). Chloe and Katie each held the top spot on six occasions, Sophie three times, and Emma once.

Elsie climbed the greatest number of places to join the top 100 names for girls (up from rank 155 in 2015 to rank 59 in 2016).

Grace and Sophie were the only two girls' names from the top 10 in 2016 to feature in the top 10 list a decade previously.

Some less common names given to girls in 2016 were Cinderella, Dallas, Gigi, Melania and Scout.

## 1. Introduction

This bulletin presents the most popular names given to babies whose birth was registered in Northern Ireland during 2016 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 compares the ranks of these names with the ranks in previous years, showing the names that have grown in popularity.

It should be noted that the year of registration is not necessarily the year the birth occurred as, for example, a birth that occurs towards the end of December 2016 may not be registered until early January 2017. It should also be noted that different spellings of a name have been treated as separate names, for example Conor and Connor. However, 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.

In 2016 there were 1,733 different boys' names and 2,199 different girls' names registered. This is in contrast to the 1,327 boys' names and 1,868 girls' names registered in 2006. These figures demonstrate that parents have become more diverse in the first names they give to their babies, with a wider variety of girls' names than boys' names being used. 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.

## 2. Top 10 baby names registered in Northern Ireland in 2016

James was the most popular first name given to baby boys in Northern Ireland in 2016. There were 254 baby boys named James in 2016, compared to 300 in 2015 when it also held the top position. Jack remained the second most popular name for boys in 2016, while Oliver climbed from sixth in 2015 to third in 2016. Alfie and Jacob entered the boys' top 10 in 2016, replacing Jake and Thomas.

Emily remained the most popular name for girls for the fourth consecutive year, with 237 baby girls registered in 2016. Grace climbed in popularity from third place in 2015 to second in 2016, replacing Ella which fell to eighth place. Aoife and Lucy fell from the girls' top 10, to be replaced by Lily and Sophia. Sophia has appeared in the top 10 since 2011, only dropping from it briefly in 2015. Table 1 shows the top 10 names and changes in rank since 2015 for baby boys and girls.

**Table 1: Top 10 baby names registered in Northern Ireland, 2016**

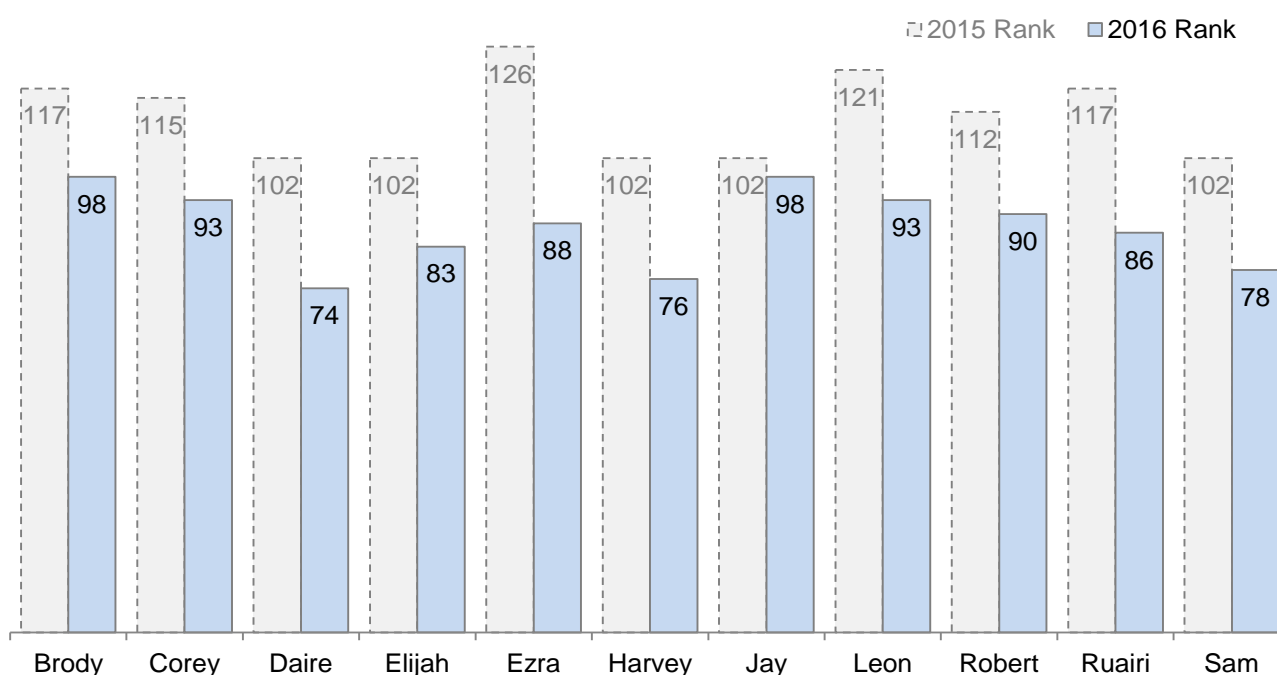
Rank in 2016	Boys			Girls		
	Name	Number	Change in rank since 2015	Name	Number	Change in rank since 2015
1	James	254	0	Emily	237	0
2	Jack	243	0	Grace	198	1
3	Oliver	207	3	Olivia	191	2
4	Charlie	204	0	Anna	164	2
5	Noah	201	-2	Sophie	155	-1
6	Harry	188	2	Lily	151	9
7	Jacob	173	5	Amelia	150	0
8	Daniel	159	-3	Ella	142	-6
9	Matthew	142	-2	Ava	136	1
10	Alfie	139	3	Sophia	135	2

### 3. Top 100 baby names registered in Northern Ireland in 2016

#### Boys: New entries to the Top 100 Names

Within the 100 most popular boys' names in 2016 there were 11 new entries, with Ezra the biggest climber moving up 38 places to rank 88. Figure 1 shows the change in rank of all the new entries to the boy's top 100 names in 2016. The new entries replaced Andrew, Ciaran, Cody, Eli, Eoghan, Joe, Josh, Owen, Peter, Tyler and Zachary, all of which fell out of the top 100 boys' names between 2015 and 2016.

**Figure 1: New entries to the boys' Top 100 names in 2016 by change in rank**



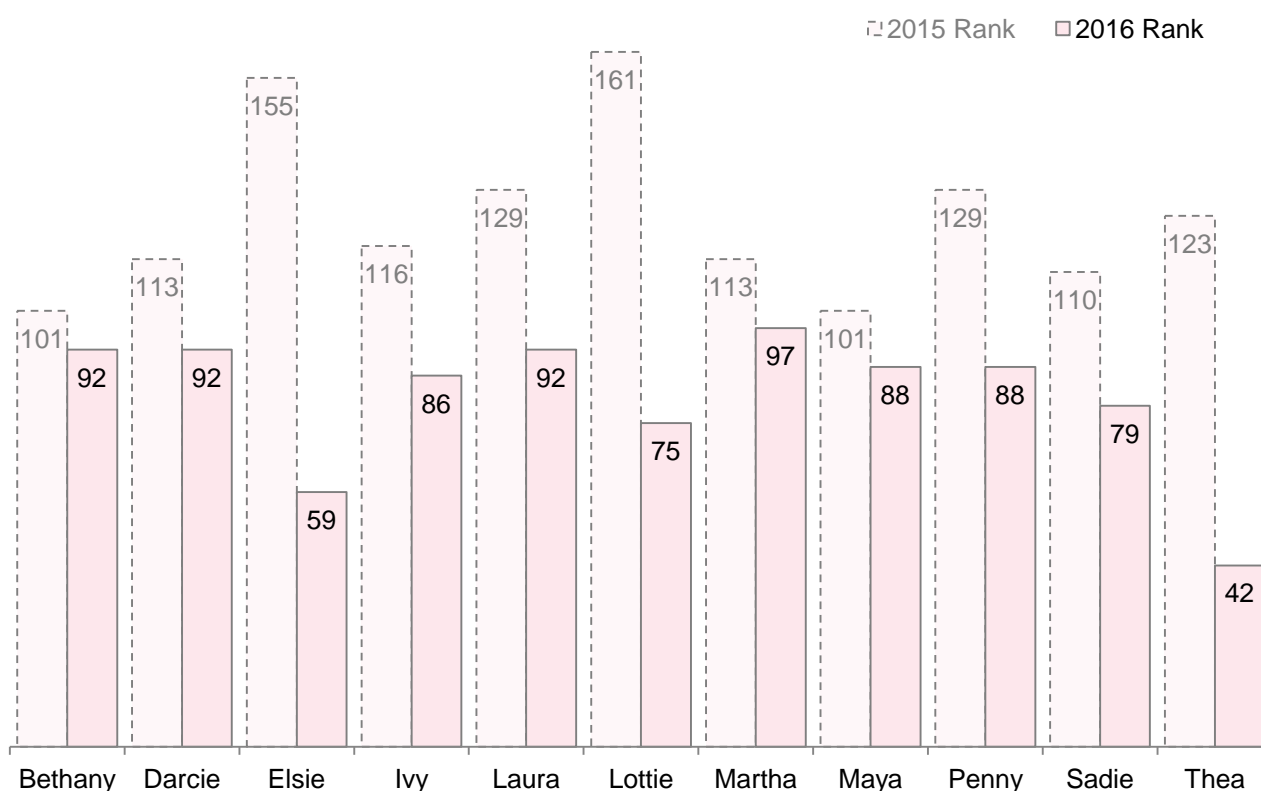
#### Boys: Names in the Top 100 in both 2015 and 2016

Among the boys' names that appeared in the top 100 in both 2015 and 2016, Arthur increased most in popularity rising 32 places to rank 57. Tom jumped up 30 places from rank 72 to rank 42 in 2016. The greatest drops within the boys' top 100 were for Liam and Danny, each down 26 places to ranks 80 and 93 respectively. Shea dropped in popularity ranking by 24 places from 33 to 57.

## Girls: New entries to the Top 100 Names

The top 100 names for girls also had 11 new entries in 2016, with Elsie increasing in rank the most, up 96 places to rank 59. Figure 2 shows the change in rank of all the new entries to the girl's top 100 names in 2016. These replaced Annabelle, Elizabeth, Julia, Lauren, Lexi, Naomi, Orla, Orlaith, Paige and Rachel, all of which exited the top 100 girls' names list in 2016.

**Figure 2: New entries to the girls' Top 100 names in 2016 by change in rank**



## Girls: Names in the Top 100 in both 2015 and 2016

Among the girls' names that appeared in the top 100 in both 2015 and 2016, the highest climbers between the two years were Saoirse and Zoe, which both rose 32 places to ranks 56 and 49 respectively. Faith was the next highest climber, up 30 places to position 51. The greatest falls in rank for girls within the top 100 were Rosa and Megan (down 47 and 41 places respectively to a joint rank of 100) and Caitlin (down 40 places to rank 79).

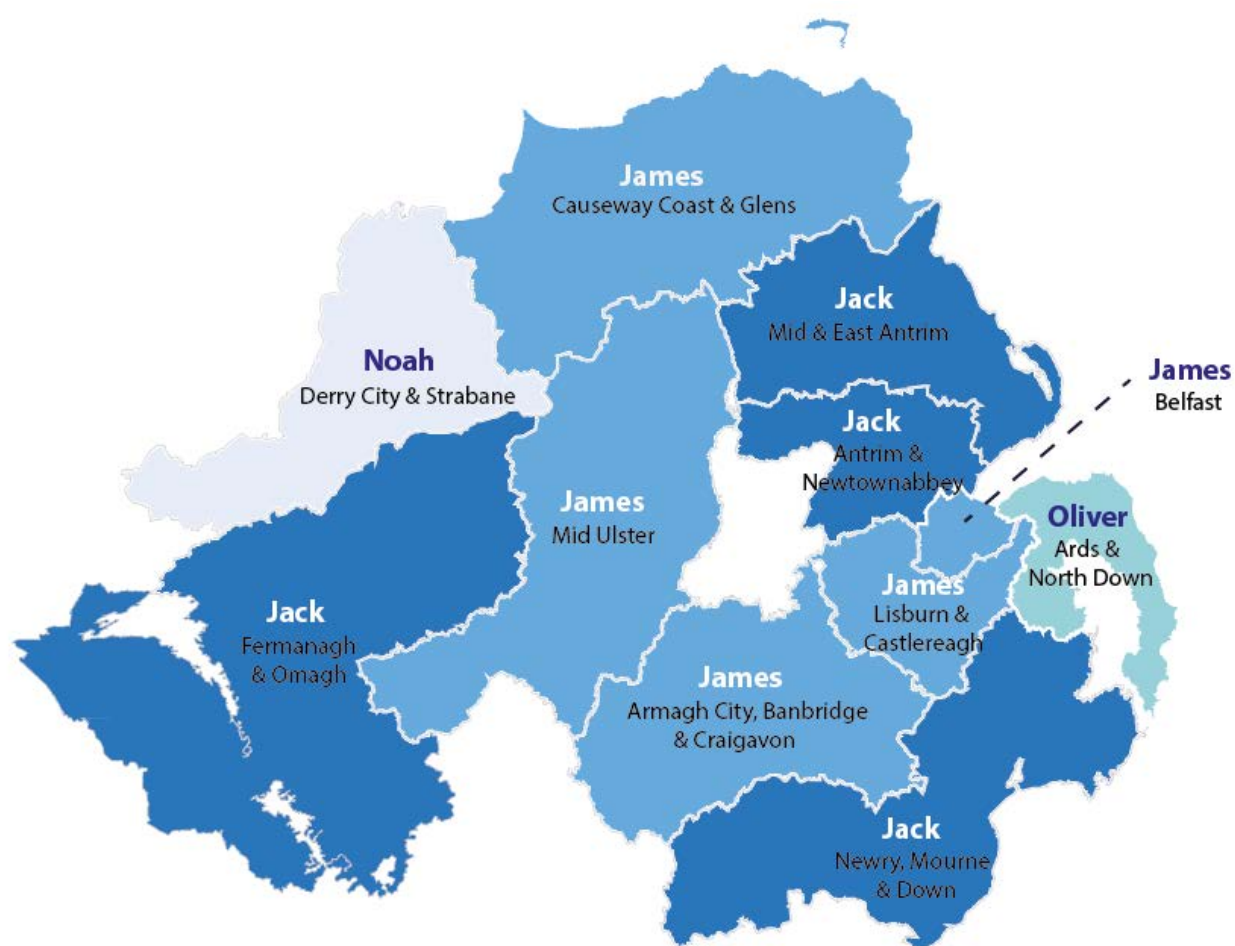
Tables for the top 100 baby names for boys and girls whose births were registered in 2016 can be downloaded [here](#).

## 4. Regional variations

### Boys

On the basis of the 11 Local Government Districts (LGDs) in Northern Ireland, James was the most popular name given to baby boys in five districts in 2016 while Jack was the most popular in four districts. Noah and Oliver were the most popular names in the remaining two districts.

**Figure 3: Map of the most popular boys' names in 2016 for the 11 Local Government Districts**

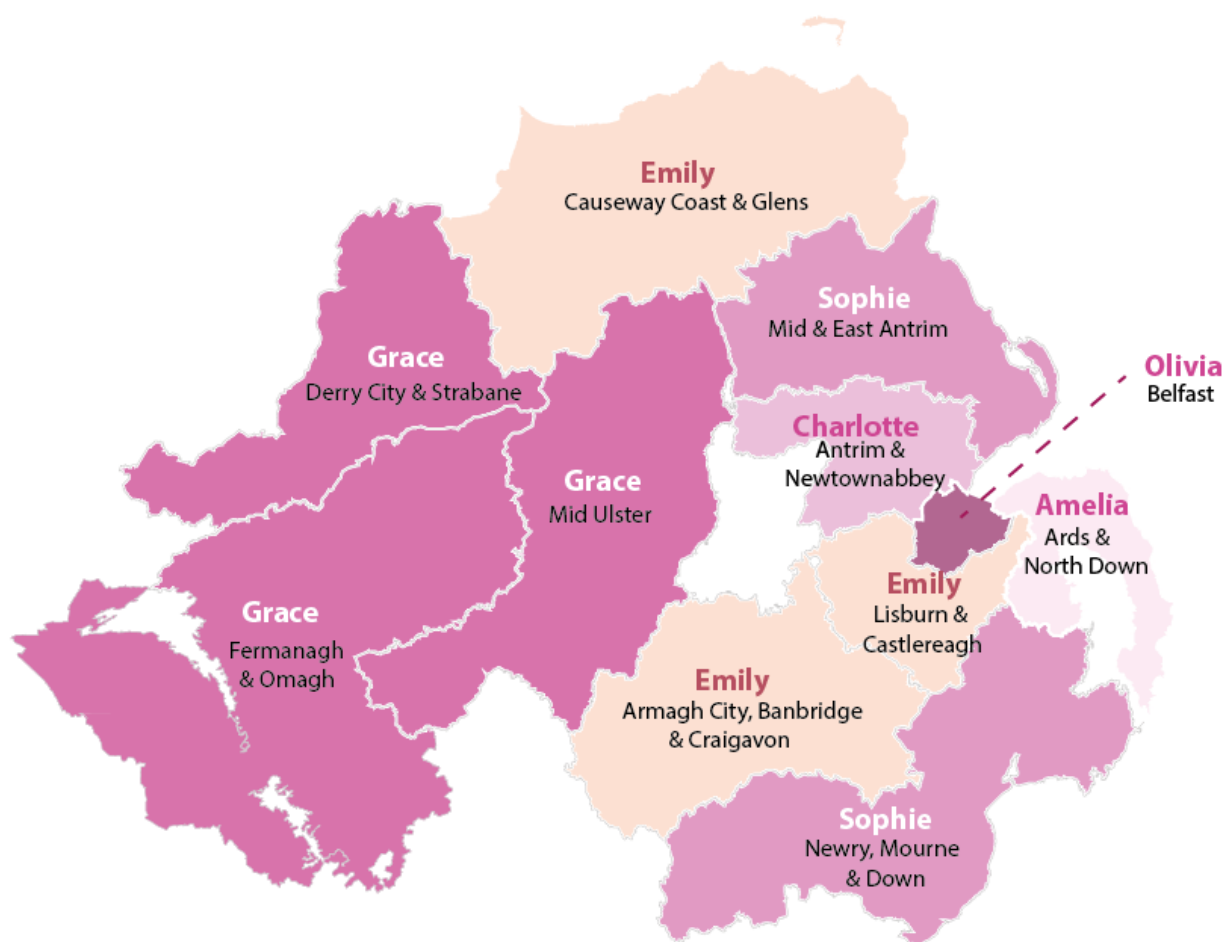




## Girls

In terms of baby girls, Emily and Grace were each the most popular choices in three of the 11 LGDs. Sophie was the most popular choice in two of the 11 LGDs, while Amelia, Charlotte and Olivia were the top choices in the remaining three districts.

**Figure 4: Map of the most popular girls' names in 2016 for the 11 Local Government Districts**



Tables containing the most popular baby boys' and baby girls' names in 2016, broken down by Local Government District and Health and Social Care Trusts, can be downloaded [here](#).

## 5. Variation in baby names by country of birth of mother

There is some variation in the popularity of baby names in Northern Ireland depending on the country of birth of the mother (see Table 2 below).

James and Emily were the most popular baby names chosen by mothers who were born in Northern Ireland. For mothers born in the rest of the UK, Oliver was the most popular boys' name registered in 2016, whereas Emily was the most popular girls' name for this group also. For mothers born in the Republic of Ireland, James and Grace were the most popular choice.

Adam and Amelia were the most popular names given to baby boys and girls of mothers born in one of the A8<sup>1</sup> countries followed by Filip for boys and Maja for girls. For mothers born in the rest of the world, David and Emily were the top names followed by James and Lucas for boys, and Emma for girls.

**Table 2: Top baby names registered in 2016 by country of birth of mother**

Mother's Country of Birth	Rank in 2016	Boys		Girls	
		Name	Number	Name	Number
Northern Ireland	1	James	225	Emily	207
	2	Jack	215	Grace	177
	3	Charlie	183	Olivia	157
Rest of UK	1	Oliver	17	Emily	11
	2	Jack	14	Olivia	10
	3	Jacob	12	Lily	9
Republic of Ireland	1	James	10	Grace	12
	2	Jack	9	Anna/Lily/Sarah	8
	3	Charlie/Oisín	8	Sophie	7
A8 <sup>1</sup>	1	Adam	17	Amelia	17
	2	Filip	13	Maja	16
	3	Alan/Oliver	10	Laura	15
Rest of World	1	David	16	Emily	10
	2	James/Lucas	11	Emma	7
	3	Alexander	10	Eva/Grace/Sophia	6

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

## 6. Variation in baby names by age of mother

The popularity of the names given to baby boys and girls registered in Northern Ireland during 2016 also varied depending on the age of the mother. Table 3 below shows the most popular names given to boys and girls by the age of the mother.

### Boys

For mothers under twenty years of age, Charlie was the most popular choice of name for baby boys. Jack and James were the most popular choices for mothers in their twenties and for those aged 30 and over respectively.

### Girls

For baby girls, Amelia and Ella were jointly the most popular choices for mothers under twenty years of age. Emily was most popular choice for mothers in their twenties and thirties, whereas for mothers aged 40 and over Grace was the most popular choice.

**Table 3: Top baby names registered in 2016 by age of mother**

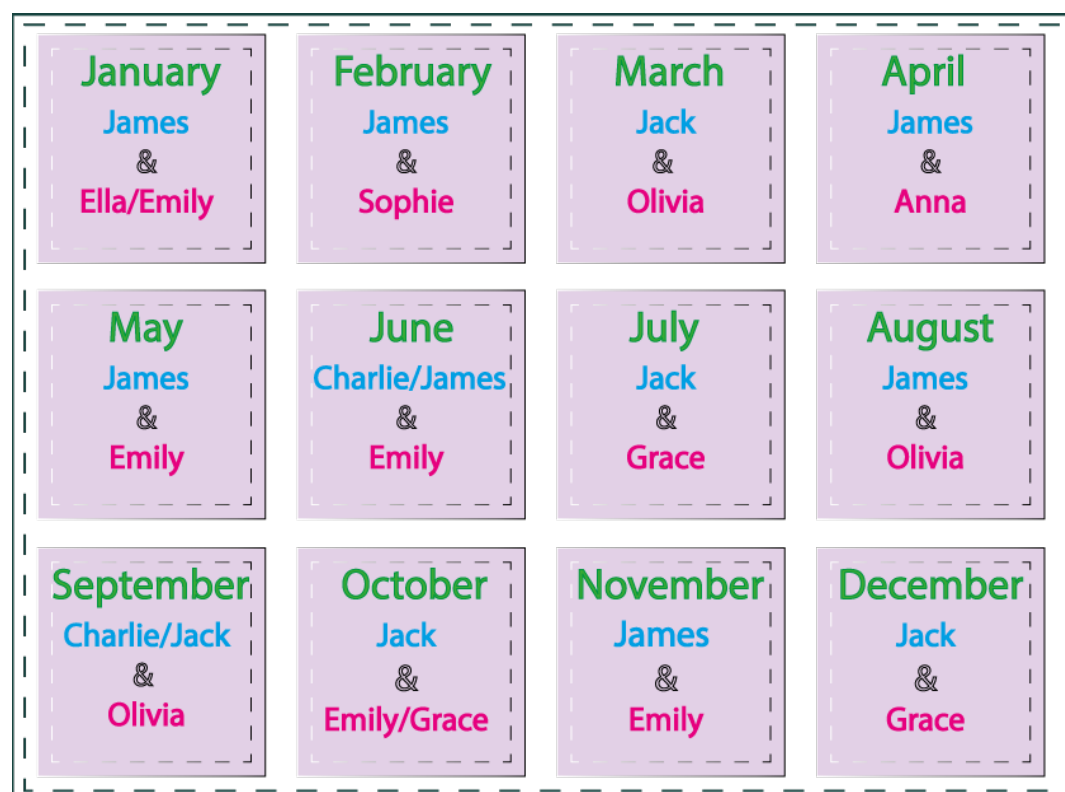
Age of Mother	Rank in 2016	Boys		Girls	
		Name	Number	Name	Number
Under 20	1	Charlie	11	Amelia/Ella	8
	2	Leo/Mason	10	Grace/Olivia	7
	3	Noah	9	Ruby/Sophia	6
20-29	1	Jack	97	Emily	100
	2	James	96	Olivia	77
	3	Noah	95	Amelia	73
30-39	1	James	144	Emily	128
	2	Jack	135	Anna	112
	3	Harry	122	Grace	111
40 and over	1	James	12	Grace	9
	2	Luke	11	Amelia/Anna/Eva	8
	3	Charlie/Jack	9	Aoibheann/Elle/Emily	7

## 7. Variation in baby names by month of registration

There was little variation by month of registration for births in Northern Ireland for baby boys' names. Three of the top four names in 2016 (James, Jack and Charlie) were the most popular boys' names across the year. Oliver was not the most popular name in any month despite being the third most popular in the year overall. James, which was the most popular boys name in 2016, was the most popular name in seven of the 12 months, albeit jointly with Charlie in June.

There was slightly more variation in baby girls' names by month of registration. Emily was the most popular name in five of the 12 months of 2016, albeit jointly with Ella in January and Grace in October. Olivia was most popular in three months, whereas Grace was most popular in two months. Sophie and Anna also each held the top ranking for one month each.

**Figure 5: Top baby names by month of registration in Northern Ireland 2016**



Holly (or Hollie) was a more popular choice of girls' name in January, November and December of 2016 when compared with other months of the year. Similarly, the name Summer was more popular during June and July when compared with other months. The name Autumn also increased in popularity for baby girls registered in October and November of 2016 but was relatively uncommon in other months.

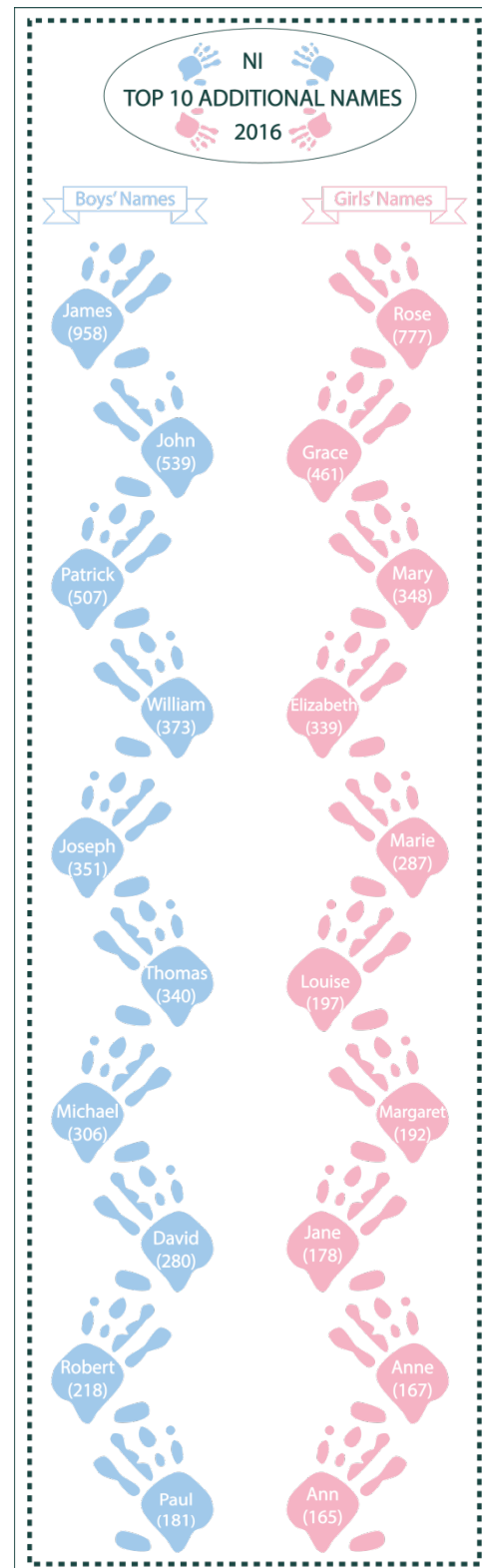
## 8. Additional first names

The majority of babies (87%) registered in Northern Ireland in 2016 had one or more additional first names.

James, John, Patrick, William and Joseph were the 5 most popular choices for boys' additional first names. James was given as an additional forename to 958 boys and John to a further 539 babies.

For baby girls, the names Rose, Grace, Mary Elizabeth, and Marie were the 5 most popular choices as additional first names. Rose was given to 777 girls while Grace was given as an additional first name to 461 girls.

**Figure 6: Top 10 additional first names registered in 2016 in Northern Ireland**



## 9. Changes over the past decade (comparison between 2016 and 2006)

### Boys: Top 10

Four of the top 10 most popular boys' names in 2016 were also in the top 10 in 2006: namely James, Jack, Daniel and Matthew. James and Jack, which were the two most popular names in 2016, were ranked fourth and first respectively in 2006. The greatest changes over the decade within the top 10 include the increases in popularity of Alfie (up 114 places to rank 10 in 2016), Jacob (up 54 places to rank seven in 2016) and Oliver (up 50 places to rank three in 2016).

### Boys: Top 100

Within the top 100 boys' names, the highest climbers between 2006 and 2016 were Ollie (up 569 places to rank 18 in 2016), Jaxon (up 539 places to rank 48 in 2016), and Arthur (up 354 places to rank 57 in 2016). In contrast, Lee (down 338 places to rank 421), Taylor (down 230 places to rank 320) and Brandon (down 223 places to rank jointly with Taylor at rank 320) fell the furthest out of the top 100 between 2006 and 2016.

### Girls: Top 10

Sophie and Grace were the only two names that appeared in the top 10 most popular girls' names in both 2006 and 2016. The two most popular girls' names in 2016, Emily and Grace, were ranked 17 and 2 respectively in 2006. While Katie held the top spot in 2006 this name ranked 19 in 2016. The greatest changes in the top 10 girls' names over the decade include the increase in popularity of Amelia (up 107 places to rank 7 in 2016) and Ava (up 72 places to rank 9 in 2016).

### Girls: Top 100

Within the top 100 girls' names, over the decade Fiadh increased the most in popularity (up 701 places to rank 34 in 2016), followed by Thea (up 460 places to rank 42) and Bella (up 459 places to rank 43). Natasha fell the most in terms of popularity over the decade (down 476 places to rank 562 in 2016) followed by Jodie (down 292 places to rank 353).

## 10. Changes in popularity over the past 15 years

**Figure 7: Top baby names in Northern Ireland over the past 15 years**

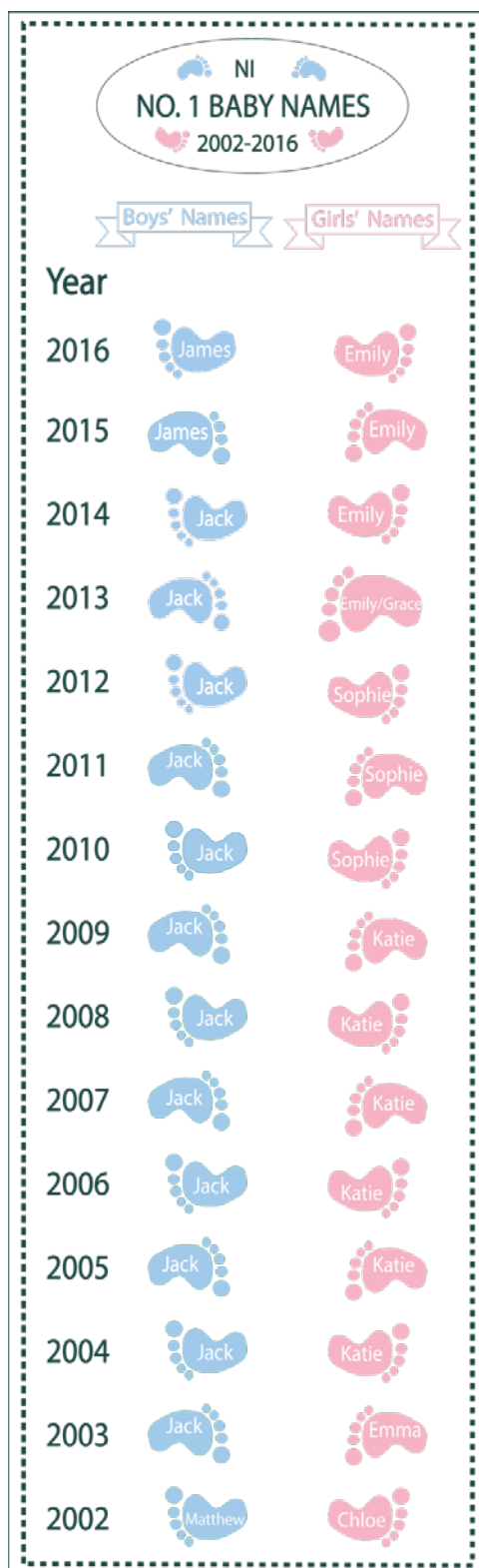


Figure 7 gives details of the most popular baby names each year for the last 15 years. Interestingly, the boys' names have retained their popularity much more than girls' names, with the name James retaining the top position in 2016.

Whilst James has been the most popular boys' name in both 2015 and 2016, Jack was the most popular name for baby boys in each of the previous 12 years. Matthew was the most popular boys' name in 2002.

For baby girls, the most popular name has varied more often over the past 15 years, despite Emily having held the top spot in 2016 for the fourth consecutive year (including joint top ranking with Grace in 2013).

Sophie held the top spot for three consecutive years from 2010 to 2012, while Katie was ranked first for the previous six consecutive years from 2004 to 2009.

Over the past 15 years, Chloe and Emma have each held first place on one occasion, in 2002 and 2003 respectively.

## 11. Changes in popularity compared with 30 years ago

Table 4 below highlights the baby boy and baby girl names which made the Top 10 thirty years ago, in 1986, and shows their corresponding rank in 2016.

James is the only name which appears in both the 1986 and the 2016 top 10 names for baby boys. In contrast to the boys names, none of the top 10 girls' names from 1986 appeared in the top 10 in 2016.

**Table 4: Top 10 baby names registered in 1986 in Northern Ireland**

Boys			Girls		
Name	Rank in 1986	Rank in 2016	Name	Rank in 1986	Rank in 2016
Christopher	1	120	Laura	1	92
David	2	64	Sarah	2	32
Michael	3	216	Emma	3	25
Stephen	4	190	Claire	4	440
Mark	5	131	Catherine	5	151
Andrew	6	156	Michelle	6	--
Paul	7	162	Jennifer	7	353
John	8	47	Nicola	8	306
James	9	1	Lisa	9	--
Ryan	10	39	Ciara	10	175

-- Unranked due to extremely low numbers

## 12. New and less common names in 2016

There were 933 new names registered in 2016 that had not been registered between 1997 and 2015. Of these, 389 (42 per cent) were boy's names, including Fox, London and West. The remaining 544 (58 per cent) were girl's names including Bodhi, Guinevere and Monroe.

Some other less common names in 2016 were as follows:

**Boys:** Colby, Hendrix, Kiefer, Prince and Woody.

**Girls:** Cinderella, Dallas, Gigi, Melania and Scout.



### 13. Further Information:

The latest baby name statistics in Great Britain and Ireland are available at the following links:

[Northern Ireland](#)

[England and Wales](#)

[Scotland](#)

[Republic of Ireland](#)

If you want to analyse baby name trends over time in Northern Ireland, the following interactive tools may be of interest to you:

Interactive maps enable trends in baby names to be analysed at Local Government District level for [boys](#) and for [girls](#).

This [interactive tool](#) returns the rank that any particular name has held over the period 1997 to 2016.

## 14. Background Notes

1. The baby name statistics have been derived from annual births registration data and include all live births, to both resident and non-resident mothers, registered in Northern Ireland in 2016. The results are based on analysis of all births registered within the 2016 calendar year. This is not necessarily the year these births will have occurred (e.g. a birth that occurs near the end of December 2016 may not be registered until early January 2017 and as such, will not be included in these figures).
2. Different spellings of a name have been treated as separate names, e.g. Conor and Connor. Names containing accents have been analysed as if they did not have those accents, e.g. Séan was counted together with Sean.
3. A8 countries include the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.
4. Further information on the production of Baby Names statistics in Northern Ireland is provided in the [Baby Names Information Paper](#) on the NISRA website.
5. We welcome feedback from users on the content, format and relevance of this release. Please take a few minutes to leave some feedback for the Vital Statistics Team by clicking on this [link](#) or you can send feedback to the email address below.
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Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

9. The [Vital Statistics Quality Assurance Policy](#) and [Revisions and Errors Policy](#) are both available from the NISRA website.

10. All media inquiries should be directed to the DOF Communications Office:

Telephone: 028 9081 6724

11. Any queries relating to its statistical or data content and requests for further information should be addressed to NISRA Customer Services at:

E-mail: [census.nisra@finance-ni.gov.uk](mailto:census.nisra@finance-ni.gov.uk)

Telephone Number: 028 90255156

Responsible Statistician: Brian Green

12. Date of next publication of most popular baby names in 2017: Spring 2018.

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