

NISRA STATISTICAL BULLETIN

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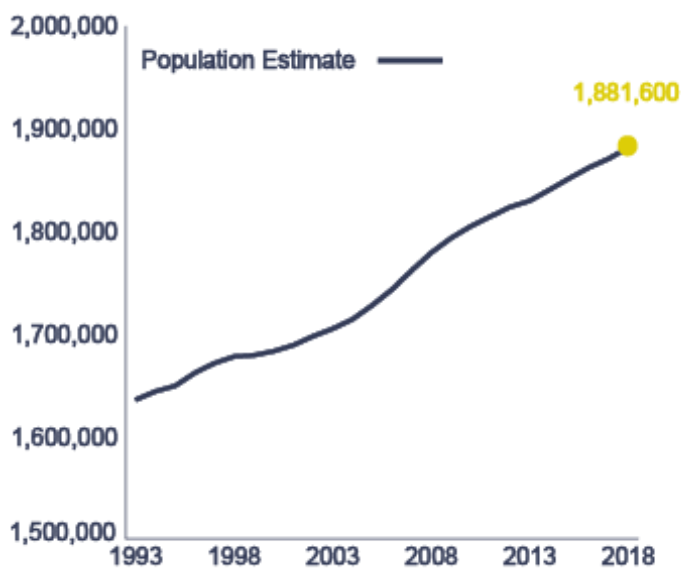
Theme: Population

Time period: mid-2018

2018 Mid-year Population Estimates for Northern Ireland



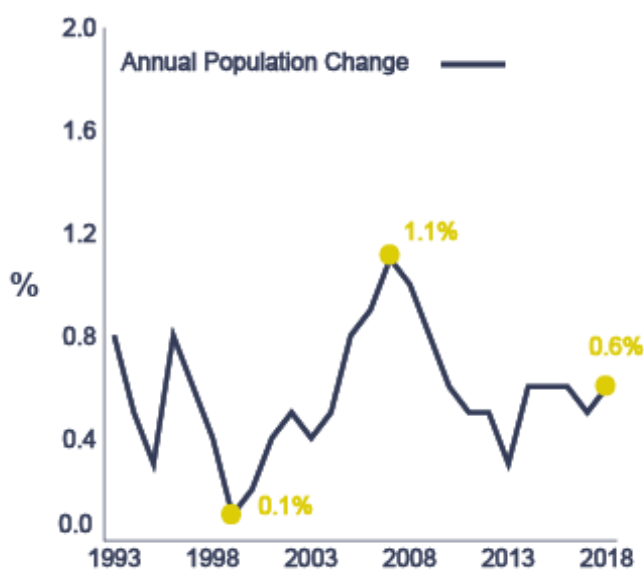
This statistical report provides population estimates for Northern Ireland, its Local Government Districts and Parliamentary Constituencies, by age and sex.



Northern Ireland's Population grows to 1.88 million

The latest estimate of Northern Ireland's population (on 30 June 2018) was 1,881,600.

The population increased by 10,800 people between mid-2017 and mid-2018 (0.6 per cent).

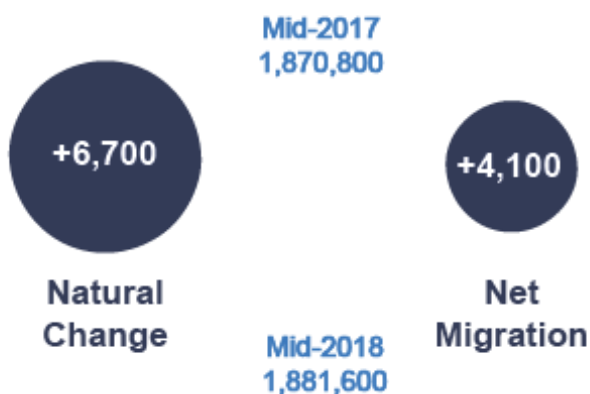


Population growth has remained steady over the past decade

The annual rate of growth has fluctuated from 0.1 per cent in 1999 to 1.1 per cent in 2007.

From mid-2017 to mid-2018 population growth was 0.6 per cent. Over the decade from mid-2008 average annual growth has remained at 0.6 per cent.

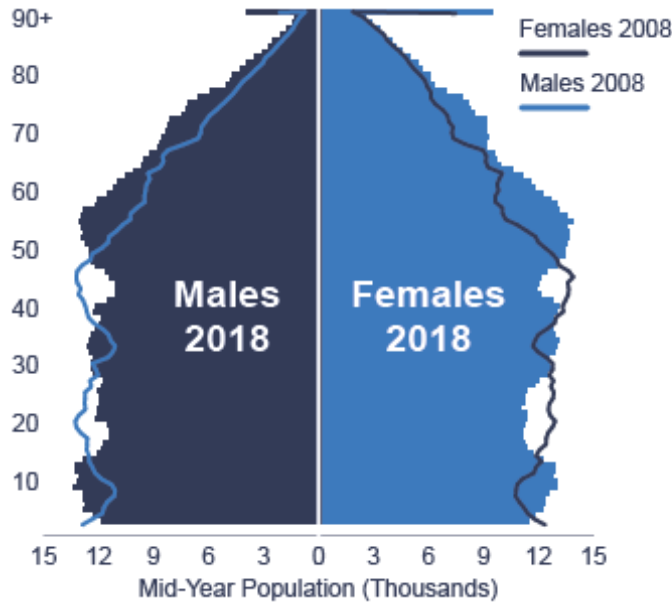
Components of Population Change



Natural change is the main driver of population growth

Growth due to natural change and net migration totalled 10,800 through the year to mid-2018.

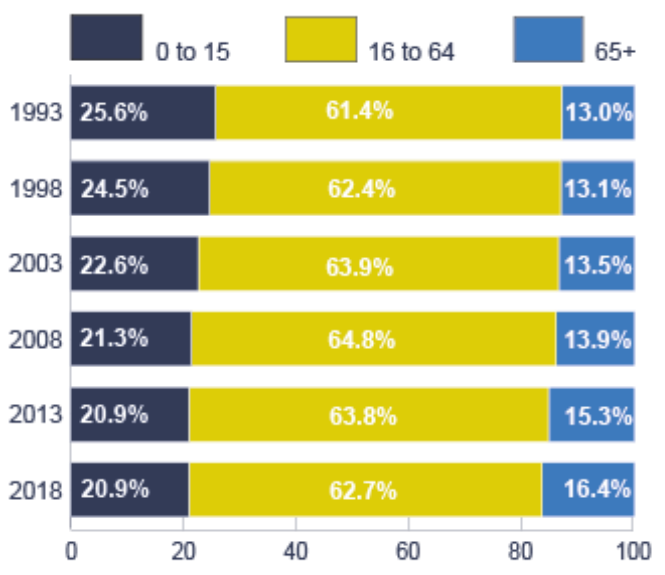
Natural change was the main driver of this growth, accounting for 6,700 people.



Northern Ireland's Population is ageing

The population pyramid shows the ageing of the population over the decade with an evident increase in the population amongst the older ages from mid-2008.

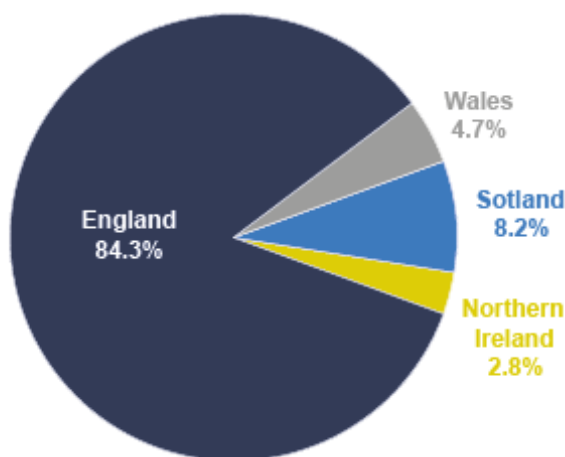
The population aged 65 and over increased by 1.7 per cent to 308,200 people between mid-2017 and mid-2018.



In 2018, just under one in six people were aged 65 and over

The proportion of the population aged 65 and over has increased to 16.4 per cent in mid-2018.

The proportion of children (aged 0-15) has decreased from 25.6 per cent to 20.9 per cent since mid-1993.

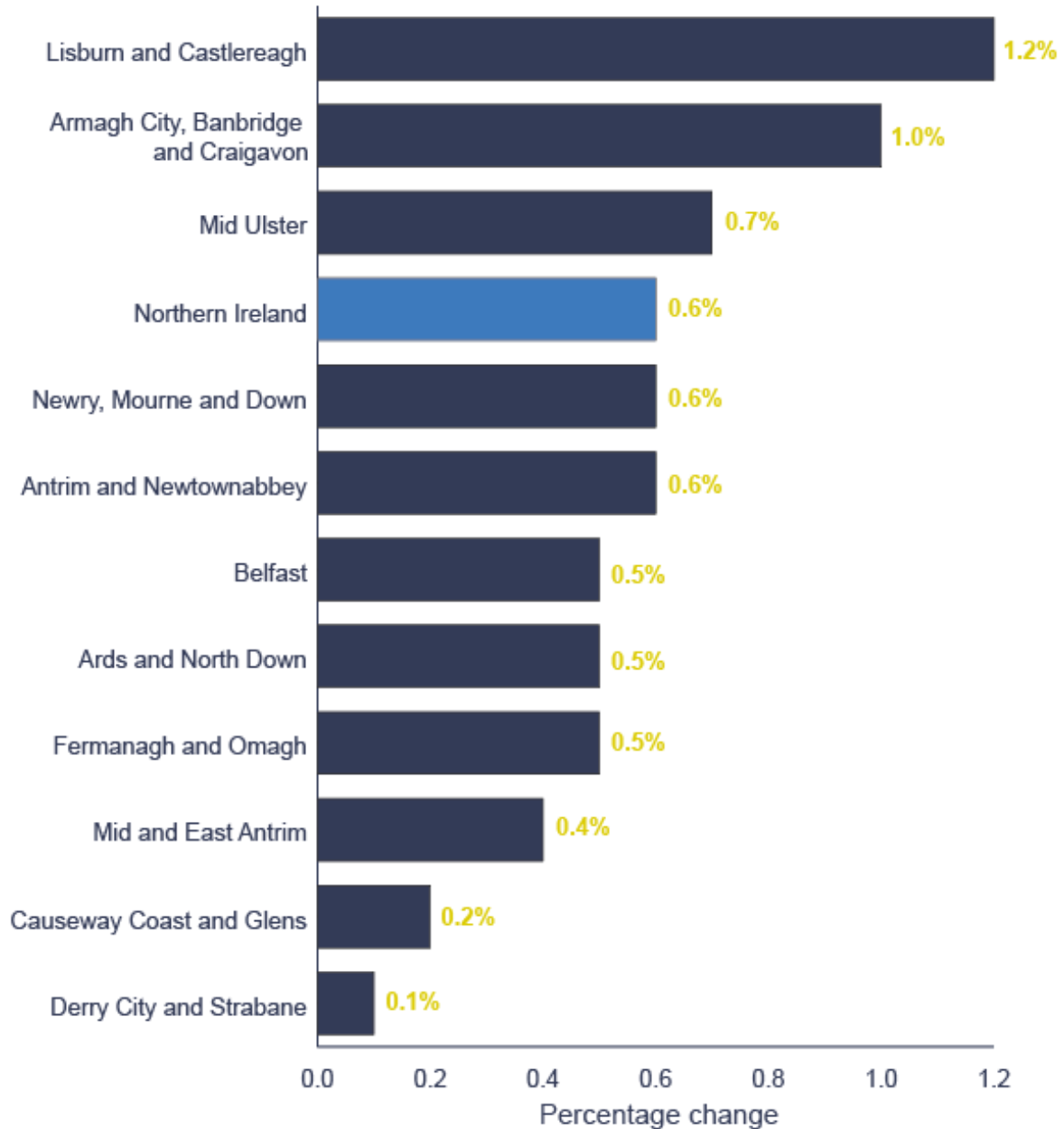


Northern Ireland's share of the UK population is 2.8 per cent

The Northern Ireland population represents the smallest share of the UK population as a whole. Unsurprisingly, England represents the greatest share (84.3 per cent).

All Local Government Districts (LGDs) experienced population growth in the year to mid-2018

Between mid-2017 and mid-2018, all of Northern Ireland's 11 Local Government Districts experienced population growth. The LGD with the largest growth was Lisburn and Castlereagh LGD (1.2 per cent) and the LGD with the smallest growth was Derry City and Strabane LGD (0.1 per cent).



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Note: Throughout the report figures have been presented in a rounded form to ease readability. For example population figures have been presented to the nearest 100 and percentages have been presented to 1 decimal place. However, all calculations have been undertaken on the basis of unrounded numbers which will, in some instances, give rise to apparent discrepancies.

1 Introduction

This bulletin details the key findings from the 2018 Mid-year Population Estimates for Northern Ireland and for areas within Northern Ireland published on 26 June 2019. These estimates are updated from the [2017 Mid-year Population Estimates](#) for Northern Ireland, which were published on 28 June 2018. The majority of this bulletin contains analyses of the population and migration estimates for Northern Ireland and its 11 Local Government Districts. It also includes a brief analysis of population estimates for the 18 Parliamentary Constituencies.

Detailed tables for Northern Ireland and the 11 Local Government Districts are available on the [NISRA website](#), as well as those for Parliamentary Constituencies, Health & Social Care Trusts and Super Output Areas. In addition, tables are available for some former geographic areas in Northern Ireland, namely: the former 26 Local Government Districts; former Education & Library Boards; former Health & Social Services Boards; former NUTS-III areas¹; and the former 582 Electoral Wards.

Population statistics are used to allocate public funds to the Northern Ireland Executive through the Barnett formula². Population estimates are also widely used by Northern Ireland government departments for the planning of services, such as health and education. These statistics are also of interest to those involved in research and academia. They are widely used to express other statistics as a rate, and thus enable comparisons across the United Kingdom and other countries. Furthermore, population estimates form the basis for future population statistics such as population projections³.

2 Background

The population estimates refer to the number of people in the population at 30 June each year. The statistics are, therefore, often referred to as the mid-year estimates. Population estimates for Northern Ireland, sub-national levels and small geographical areas are published annually and approximately one year in arrears. Population estimates are based on the most recent Census of population: each year, the population is 'aged-on' by one year with the number of births in the year added and the number of deaths in the year subtracted.

¹ NUTS Level III areas were changed to be equivalent to the current 11 Local Government Districts in Northern Ireland in January 2018.

² A mechanism used by Her Majesty's Treasury to adjust the amounts of public expenditure allocated to the Devolved Administrations. See <http://archive.niassembly.gov.uk/finance/2007mandate/research/090320.pdf>

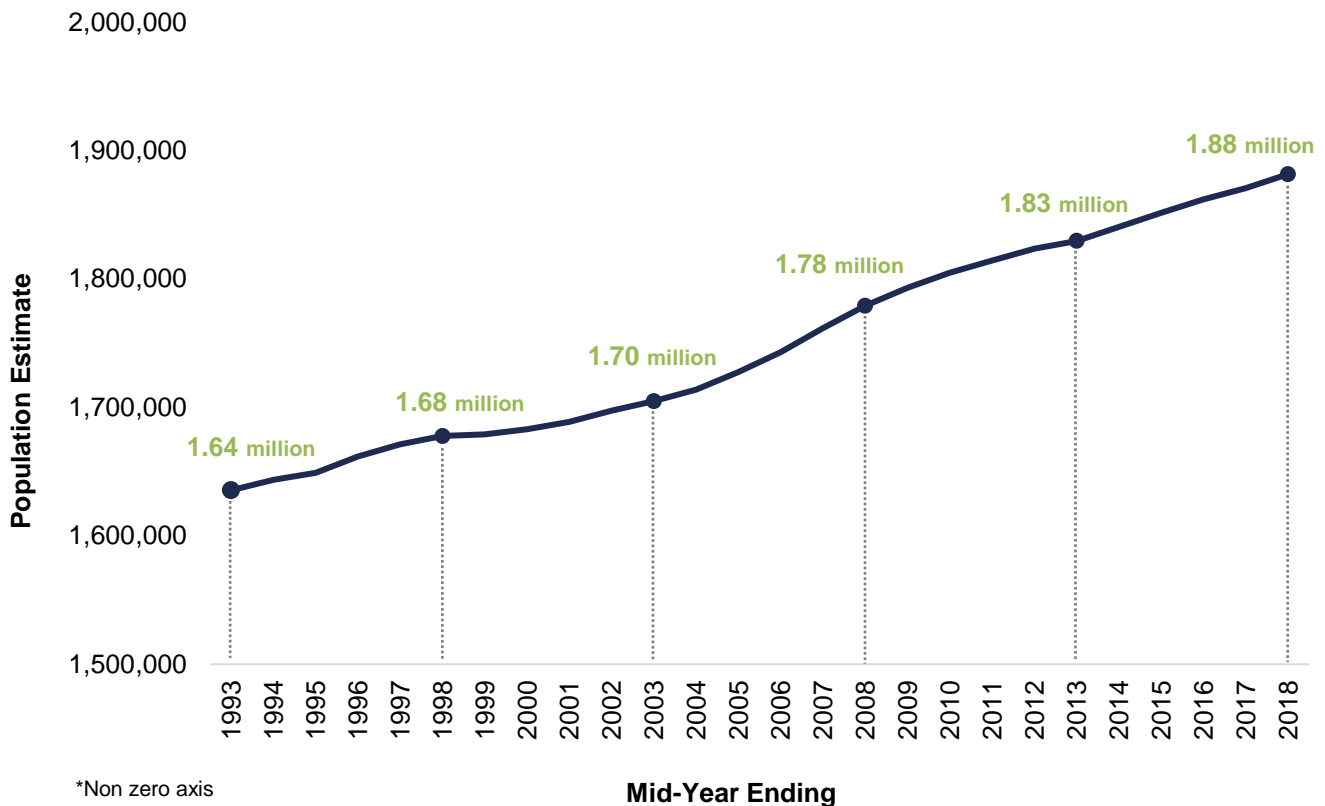
³ For the latest Northern Ireland population projections see <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/2016-based-population-projections-northern-ireland>

An adjustment is also made for migration. Subsequent mid-year population estimates then use the previous year's figures as the base.

3 Population Estimates for Northern Ireland

3.1 Northern Ireland's population continues to increase

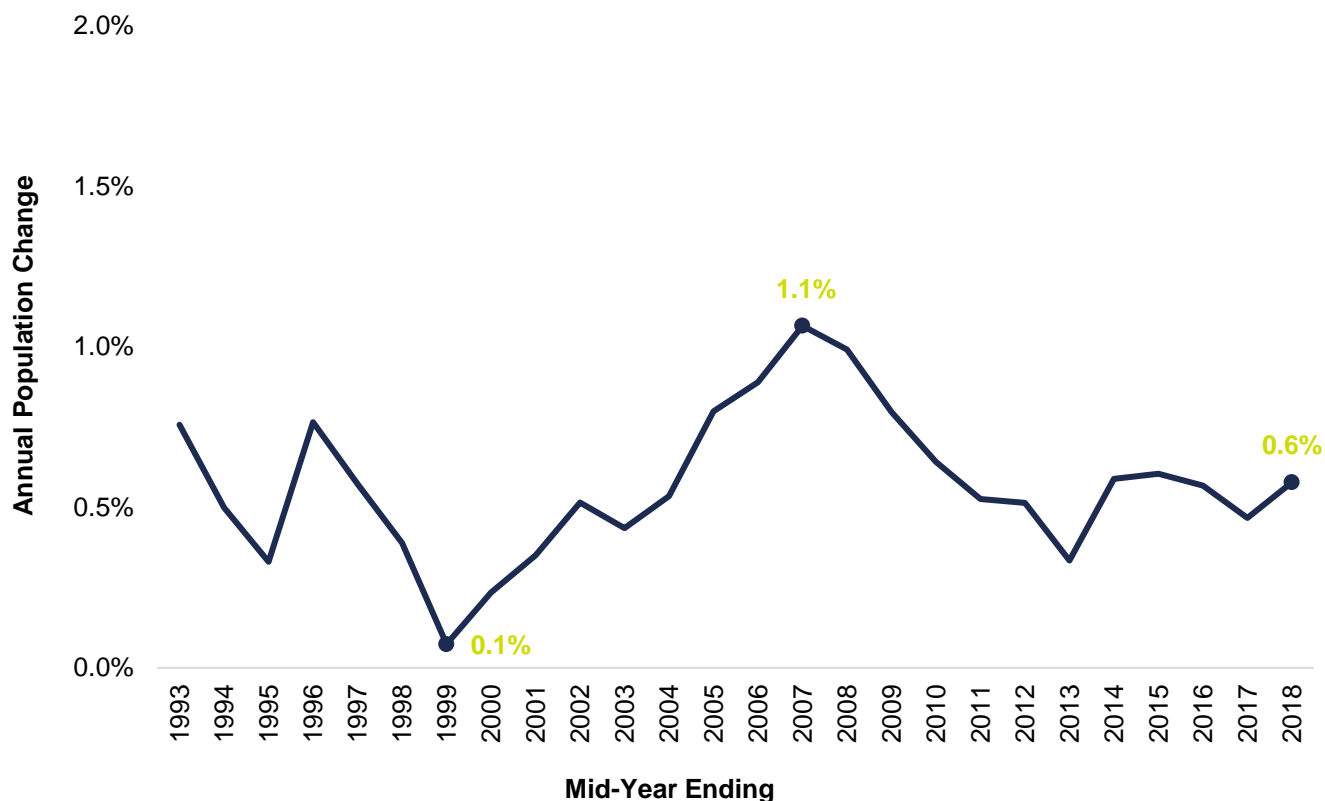
Figure 1: Estimated Population of Northern Ireland, mid-1993 to mid-2018*



[Download Chart](#) (XLSX format – 91 Kb)

On 30 June 2018, Northern Ireland's population was estimated to be 1.88 million people. Between mid-2017 and mid-2018, the population of Northern Ireland increased by 10,800 people (0.6 per cent). Just over half of the population (50.8 per cent) were female, with 955,400 females compared to 926,200 males (49.2 per cent).

Figure 2: Annual population change for Northern Ireland, mid-1993 to mid-2018



[Download Chart](#) (XLSX format – 90 Kb)

Over the last 25 years, the annual rate of population growth in Northern Ireland has fluctuated between a low of 0.1 per cent in 1999 and a high of 1.1 per cent in 2007. Over the decade mid-2008 to mid-2018, the population of Northern Ireland increased by a total of 102,500 people with an average year-on-year increase of 0.6 per cent.

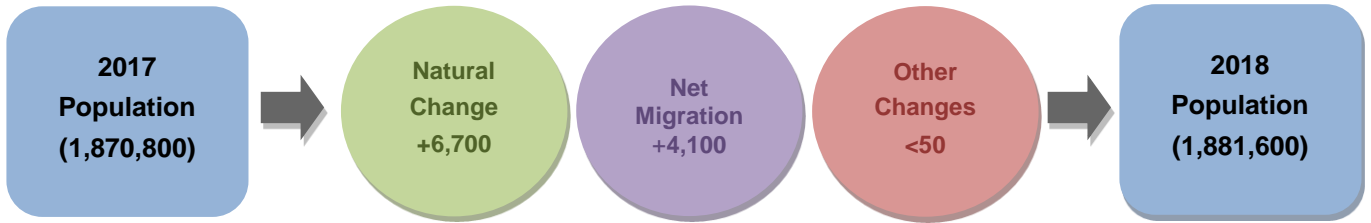
3.2 Why is the population increasing?

The two main components of population change are **natural change** and **net migration**. Natural change is the difference between the number of births and deaths, while net migration is the difference between the number of people entering and leaving Northern Ireland. **Other Changes** is a third minor component and takes into account changes in the number of armed forces stationed here.

The latest increase in the Northern Ireland population was a result of (see Figure 3):

1. Positive natural change of 6,700 people (23,100 births minus 16,400 deaths);
2. an estimated growth of 4,100 people due to net migration (23,600 people came to live in Northern Ireland and 19,400 people left).
3. A slight reduction of less than 50 people due to other changes.

Figure 3: Contribution of components of change to population increase, mid-2017 to mid-2018



In the year between mid-2017 and mid-2018 growth due to positive natural change and net migration totalled 10,800 people. As has been the case in recent years, natural change (i.e. births minus deaths) was the main contributor to the increase in population, accounting for 61.8 per cent (6,700 people) of this growth.

In 2018, Net migration was at its **highest** level (+ 4,100 people) since mid-2008

Net migration (i.e. inflows⁴ minus outflows⁵) accounted for 38.2 per cent of the growth, with the number of people coming to live in Northern Ireland exceeding those leaving by 4,100 (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Components of population change (year ending mid-2001 to year ending mid-2018)



[Download Chart](#) (XLSX format – 98 Kb)

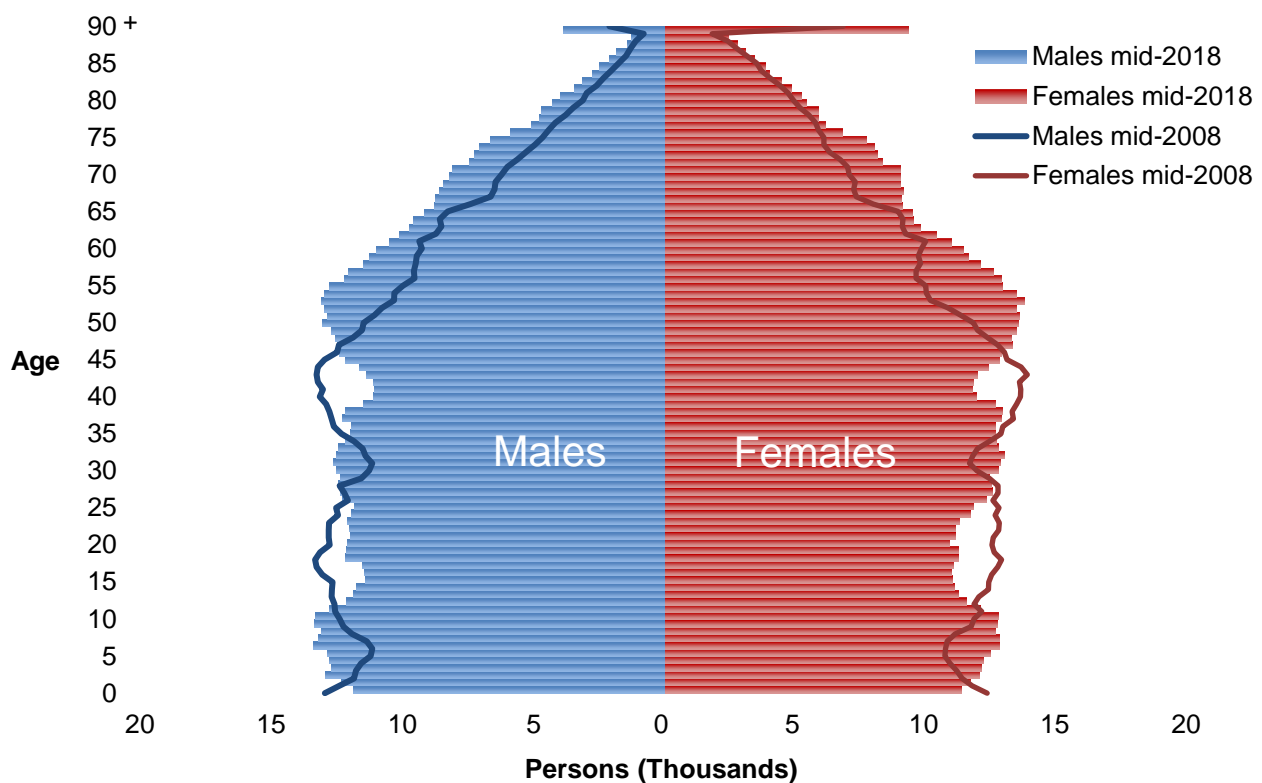
⁴ Inflows: the number of people coming to Northern Ireland to live.

⁵ Outflows: the number of people leaving Northern Ireland to live elsewhere.

4 The age structure of Northern Ireland's population

4.1 The population of Northern Ireland is ageing

Figure 5: Population by age and sex (mid-2008 and mid-2018)



[Download Chart](#) (XLSX format – 98 Kb)

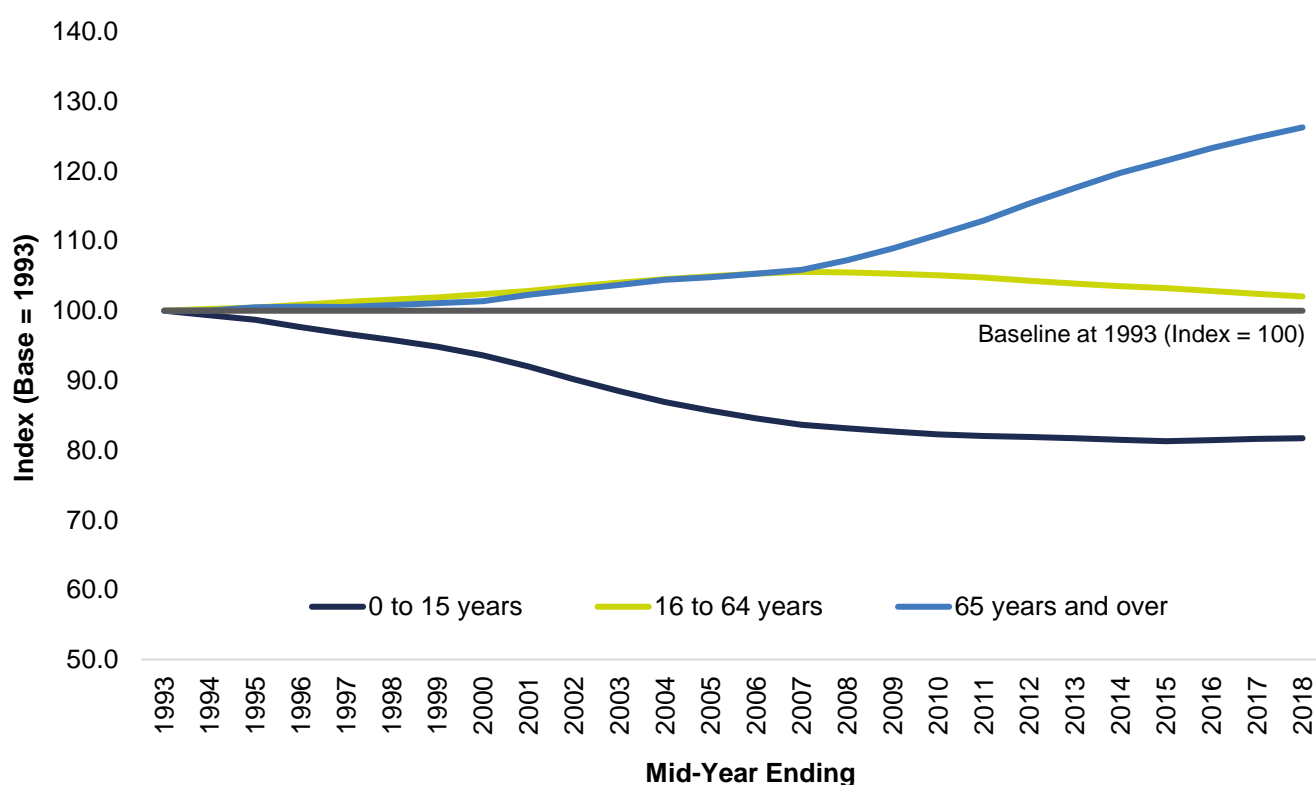
Age composition is one of the most important aspects of the population since changes in different age groups will have varied social and economic impacts. Figure 5 shows the population split by age and sex for mid-2008 and mid-2018 in the form of a population pyramid. This particular data representation allows for a more visual idea of how the numbers of people have 'aged on' in the decade to the year ending mid-2018.

Over the three decades from year ending mid-1988 to year ending mid-2018 the median age (i.e. the age at which half the population is older and half is younger) of the Northern Ireland population has increased from 30.4 to 38.7 years. It is projected that from mid-2028 onwards the older population (people aged 65 and over) will be larger than the number of children (i.e. people aged 0 to 15 years).

4.2 How is the age structure of the population changing?

Over the 25 year period (1993 to 2018) Northern Ireland has seen changes in the proportion of the population in key age groups. The proportion of the population aged 65 and over has experienced the largest increase over the 25 year period, with a distinct accelerated growth in this population occurring from mid-2007. As a result, the proportion of the population aged 65 and over has increased by 26.3 per cent from mid-1993 to mid-2018. Conversely, the proportion of children (i.e. people aged 0 to 15 years) in Northern Ireland has decreased since mid-1993 resulting in the proportion of children falling by 18.3 per cent by mid-2018. The proportion of the population who are of working age (i.e. people aged 16 to 64 years) has remained relatively stable over the period.

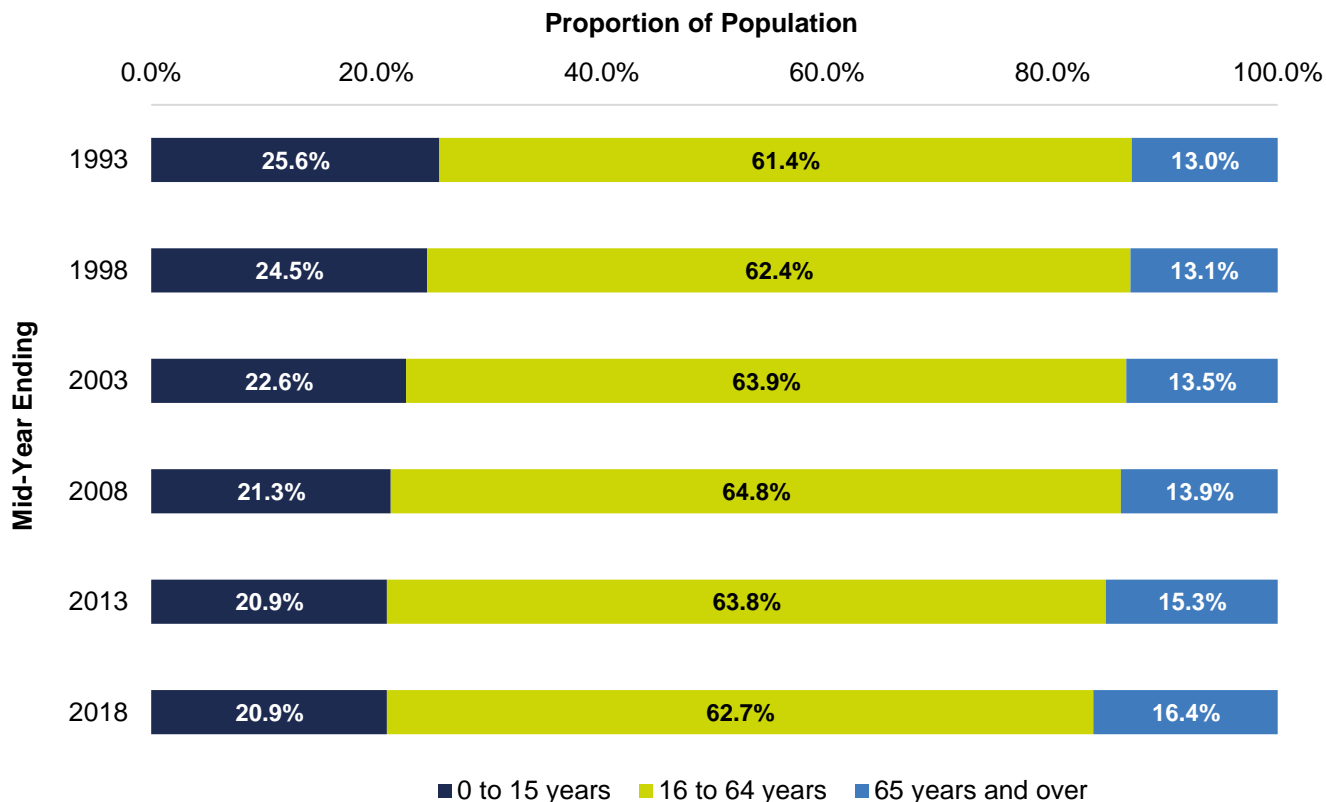
Figure 6: Index of population change for key age groups in Northern Ireland, mid-1993 to mid-2018



[Download Chart](#) (XLSX format – 95 Kb)

Figure 7 below shows how the rate of change between these three age groups translates into the makeup of the Northern Ireland population as a whole. The population has gradually become older with the proportion of children decreasing from 25.6 per cent of the population in mid-1993 to 20.9 per cent of the population in mid-2018. Conversely, the proportion of the older population (aged 65 years and over) has increased throughout this period from 13.0 per cent in mid-1993 to 16.4 per cent in mid-2018.

Figure 7: Age structure of Northern Ireland's population, mid-1993 to mid-2018



[Download Chart](#) (XLSX format – 90 Kb)

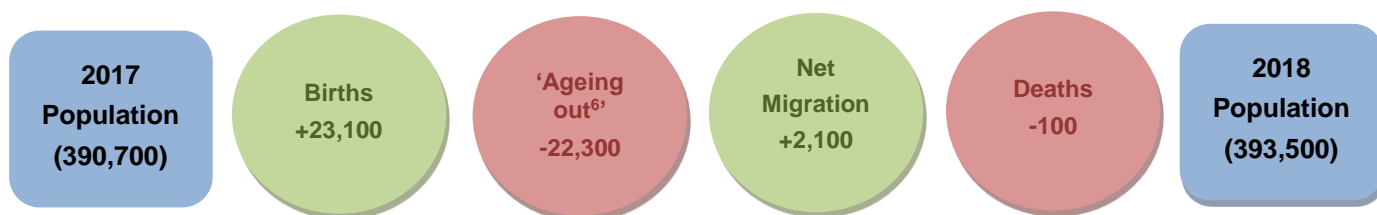
4.3 Change in age structure over the year

4.3.1 Children (0 to 15 years)

In mid-2018, just over **one in five** (20.9 per cent) people in Northern Ireland were Children

In the year ending mid-2018, the number of children increased by 0.7 per cent (from 390,700 to 393,500), representing 20.9 per cent of the population.

This growth of 2,800 children was a result of:

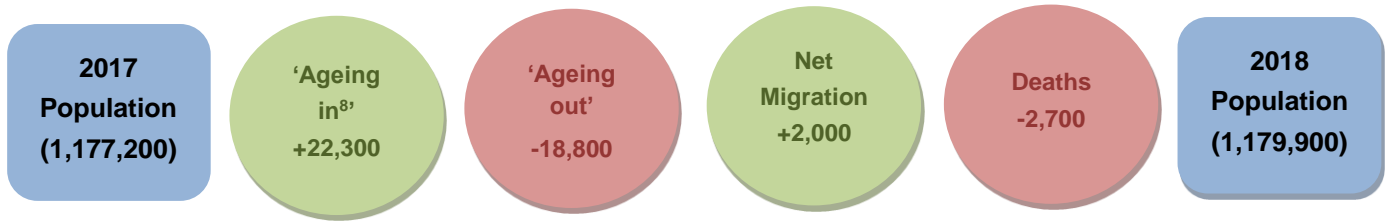


⁶ Ageing out refers to the cohort of people ageing from one group into the next. For example, people who are aged 15 in mid-2017 will turn 16 by mid-2018 and therefore 'age out' of the Children (0 to 15 years) age group.

4.3.2 Working age population (16 to 64 years)

In the year ending mid-2018 the working age population⁷ increased by 0.2 per cent (from 1,177,200 to 1,179,900), representing 62.7 per cent of the population.

This growth of 2,800 people was a result of:



Over the same period, the **younger working age population** (i.e. people aged 16 to 39 years) is estimated to have remained stable with a slight reduction from 579,800 to 579,500 people, representing 30.8 per cent of the population. This population decline of 300 people in the younger working age group was a result of:

- more people 'ageing out' of this age group (22,900) than 'ageing in' (22,300);
- a net gain of 700 in this population age group due to migration; and
- a relatively small number of deaths (400)

The **older working age population** (i.e. people aged 40 to 64 years) grew by 0.5 per cent in the year ending mid-2018 (from 597,400 to 600,400), representing 31.9 per cent of the population. This growth of 3,000 was a result of:

- more people 'ageing into' this age group (22,900) than 'ageing out' (18,800);
- a net gain of 1,200 people due to migration; and
- a total of 2,300 deaths among people in this age group

⁷ The working age population is defined by the age at 30 June 2018 and is not based on the age for entitlement to state pension. Following the Pensions Act 2007 and 2011, the State Pension Age (SPA) for women will increase gradually to 65 by November 2018.

⁸ Ageing in refers to the cohort of people ageing from one group into the next. For example, people who are aged 15 in mid-2017 will turn 16 by mid-2018 and therefore 'age in' to the 'working age' group (16 to 64 years).

4.3.3 The older population (65 years and over)

Approximately **one in six (16.4 per cent)** people in Northern Ireland are aged 65 and over

In the year mid-2017 to mid-2018, the population aged 65 and over increased by 1.7 per cent (from 303,000 to 308,200), representing 16.4 per cent of the population.

This increase of 5,200 was due to:



The **population aged 85 and over** increased by 1.5 per cent (from 37,200 to 37,700) between mid-2017 and mid-2018, representing 2.0 per cent of the population. The growth of 600 people in this age group was a result of:



5 Migration of people into and out of Northern Ireland

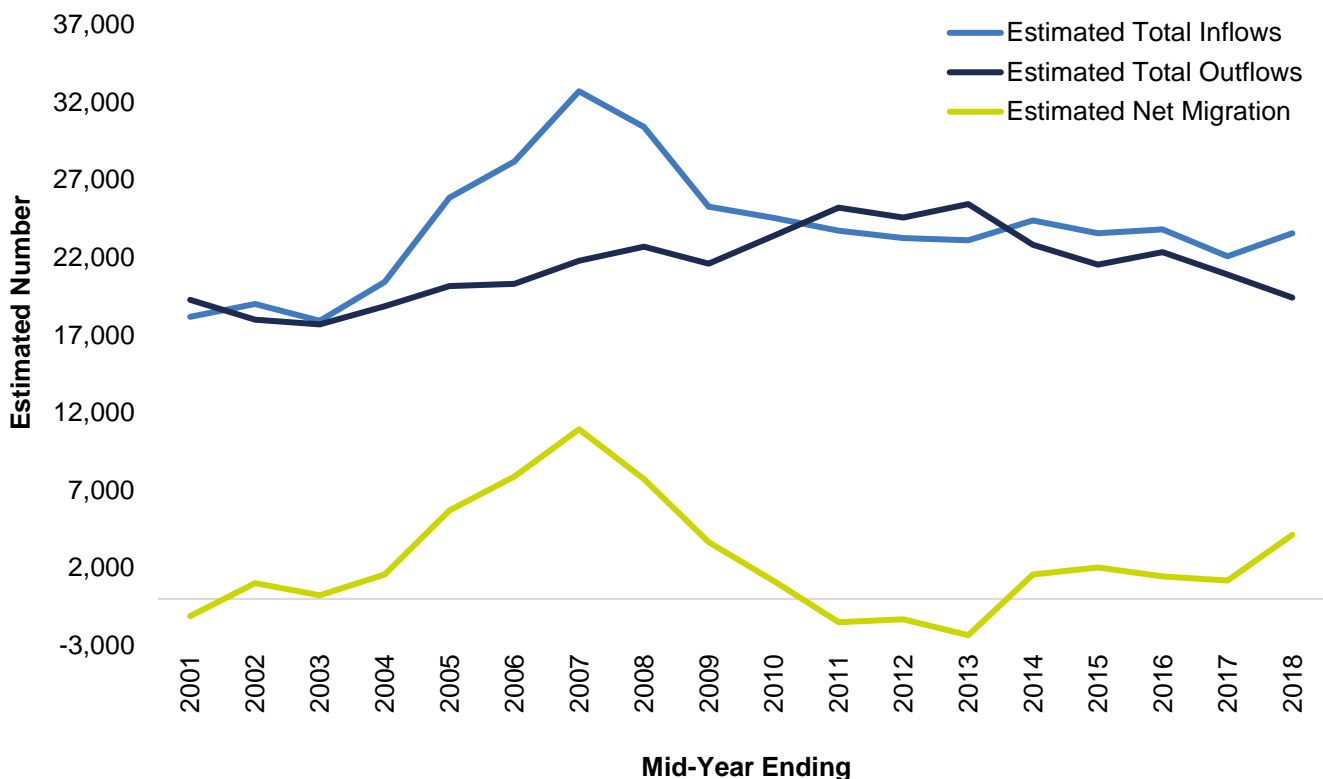
5.1 Northern Ireland continues to have a positive net migration

In 2018, Northern Ireland outflows were at the **lowest** level (19,400) since mid-2004

In the year ending mid-2018, the number of people coming to Northern Ireland to live was 23,600 and the number of people leaving to live outside of Northern Ireland was 19,400, resulting in a net increase in the population due to migration of 4,100 people. This was the fifth successive year that the number of people who came to live in Northern Ireland exceeded the number who left.

Between the year ending mid-2017 and the year ending mid-2018, the number of people leaving Northern Ireland decreased by 1,500 (7.1 per cent), while the number of people coming to live in Northern Ireland increased by 1,500 (6.7 per cent). Since the number of people coming into Northern Ireland increased and the number of people leaving Northern Ireland decreased, the net change in population due to migration grew from +1,200 people to +4,100 people between the year ending mid-2017 and the year ending mid-2018 (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Estimated Total Inflows, Total Outflows and Net Migration (year ending mid-2001 to year ending mid-2018)



[Download Chart](#) (XLSX format – 96 Kb)

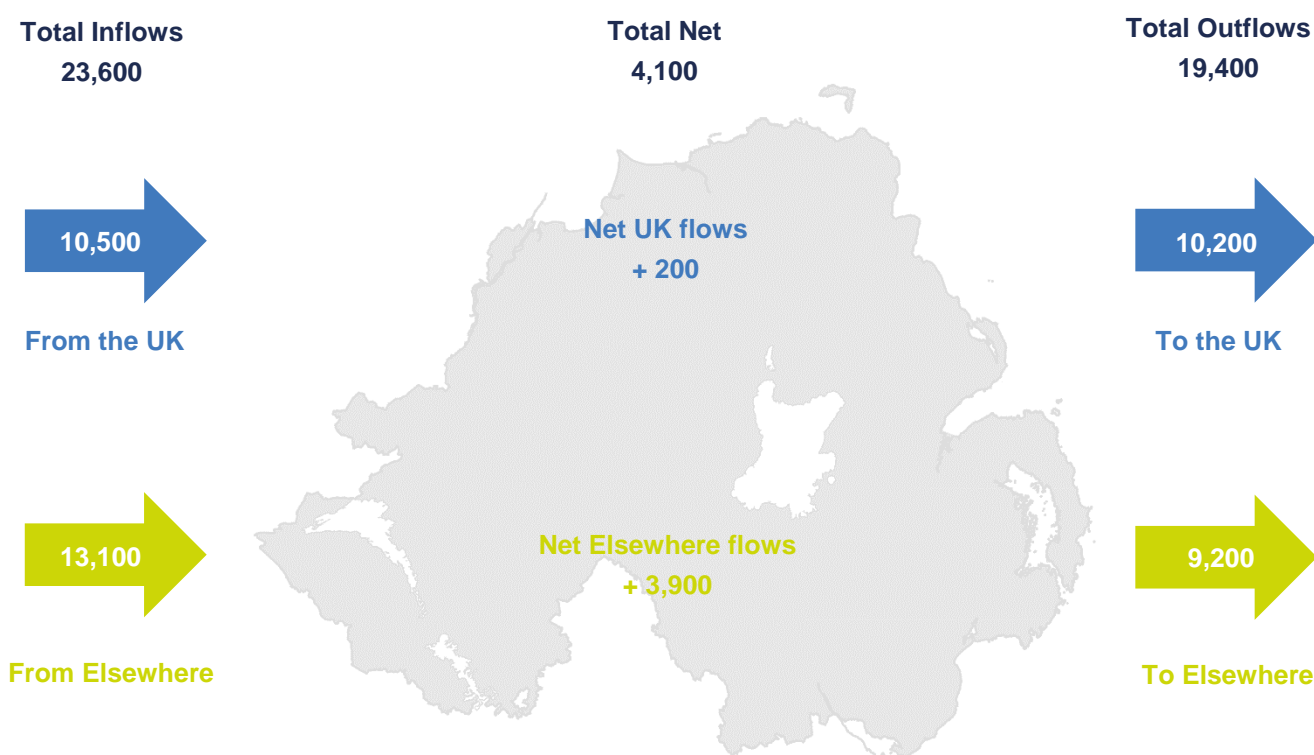
5.2 Where do migrants come from and go to?

Migration into and out of Northern Ireland can be analysed in two groups, namely:

- UK migration – Flows of people between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK
- Migration to Elsewhere – Flows of people between Northern Ireland and outside the UK (sometimes referred to as International Migration)

Figure 9 below shows the number of people migrating into and out of Northern Ireland by type (i.e. whether to/from the UK or Elsewhere) for the year ending mid-2018.

Figure 9: Migration to and from Northern Ireland by Type in the year ending mid-2018



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[Download Map](#) (PDF format – 89 KB)

Between the year ending mid-2017 and the year ending mid-2018, the number of people leaving Northern Ireland to live in the rest of the UK increased by less than 100 people (0.7 per cent), and the number of people coming to live in Northern Ireland from the rest of the UK decreased by 300 people (2.9 per cent). This led to inflows of 10,500 people and outflows of 10,200 people in the year ending mid-2018 and resulted in a net UK migration gain of 200 people.

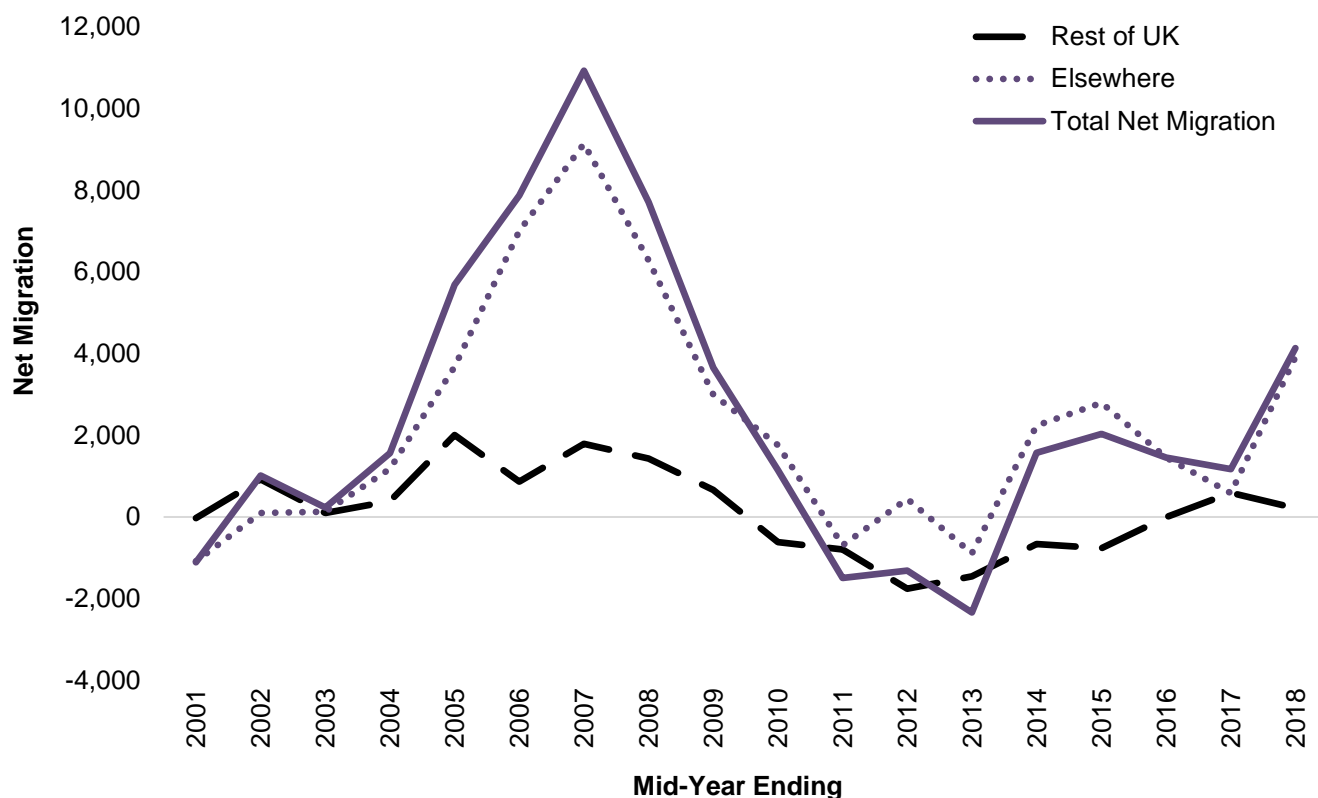
In 2018, outflows to Elsewhere were at the **lowest** level (9,200) since mid-2006

During the same time, the number of people leaving Northern Ireland to live outside the UK decreased by 1,500 people (14.4 per cent) to 9,200, while the number of people coming to live in Northern Ireland from outside the UK increased by 1,800 to 13,100 (15.8 per cent). The increase in migration from outside the UK and

decrease in migration to outside the UK has resulted in a net gain of 3,900 people due to international migration (see Figure 9).

Figure 10 shows a time series of net migration by type from year ending mid-2001 to year ending mid-2018.

Figure 10: Estimated net migration by type (year ending mid-2001 to year ending mid-2018)



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6 Population Estimates for areas within Northern Ireland

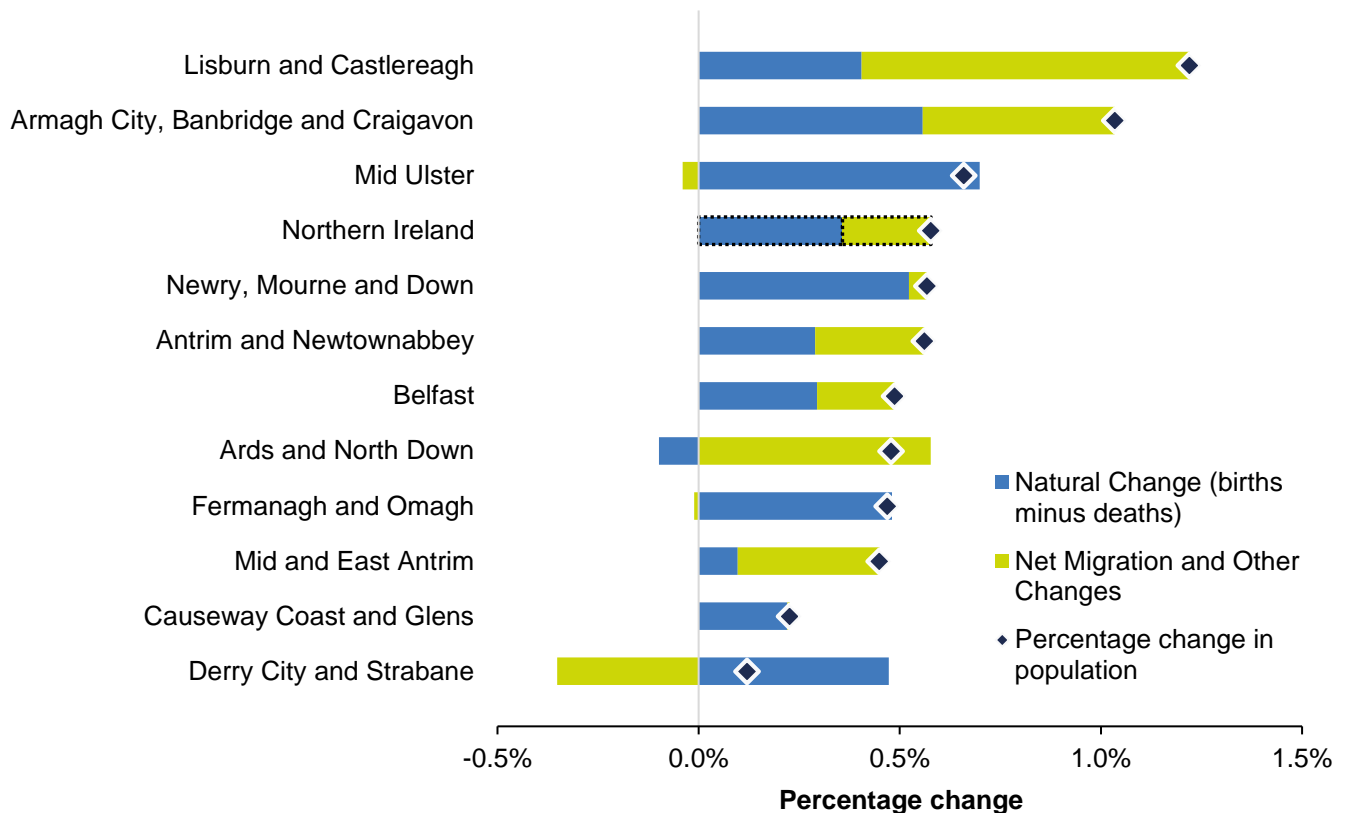
6.1 How has the population changed for Local Government Districts?

The estimated population for the 11 Local Government Districts (LGDs) in mid-2018 ranged from 116,800 people in Fermanagh & Omagh LGD to 341,900 in Belfast LGD. The mid-2018 population estimates by LGD are shown in Map 1 (overleaf).

All Local Government Districts experienced population growth in the year to mid-2018

Figure 11 presents the overall percentage population change for LGDs and the effect the components of change have had on the population. The population in all 11 LGDs increased in the year ending mid-2018. Lisburn & Castlereagh LGD had the largest percentage increase in population of 1.2 per cent, with migration being the main driver of growth (0.8 per cent) in this area. Derry City and Strabane LGD had the smallest percentage increase in population of 0.1 per cent which was caused by natural change of 0.5 per cent and loss of people due to migration (-0.4 per cent). The net effect of natural change and outward migration in this area has led to a modest growth of 0.1 per cent.

Figure 11: Components of population change by Local Government District, mid-2017 to mid-2018 (ordered by population change)

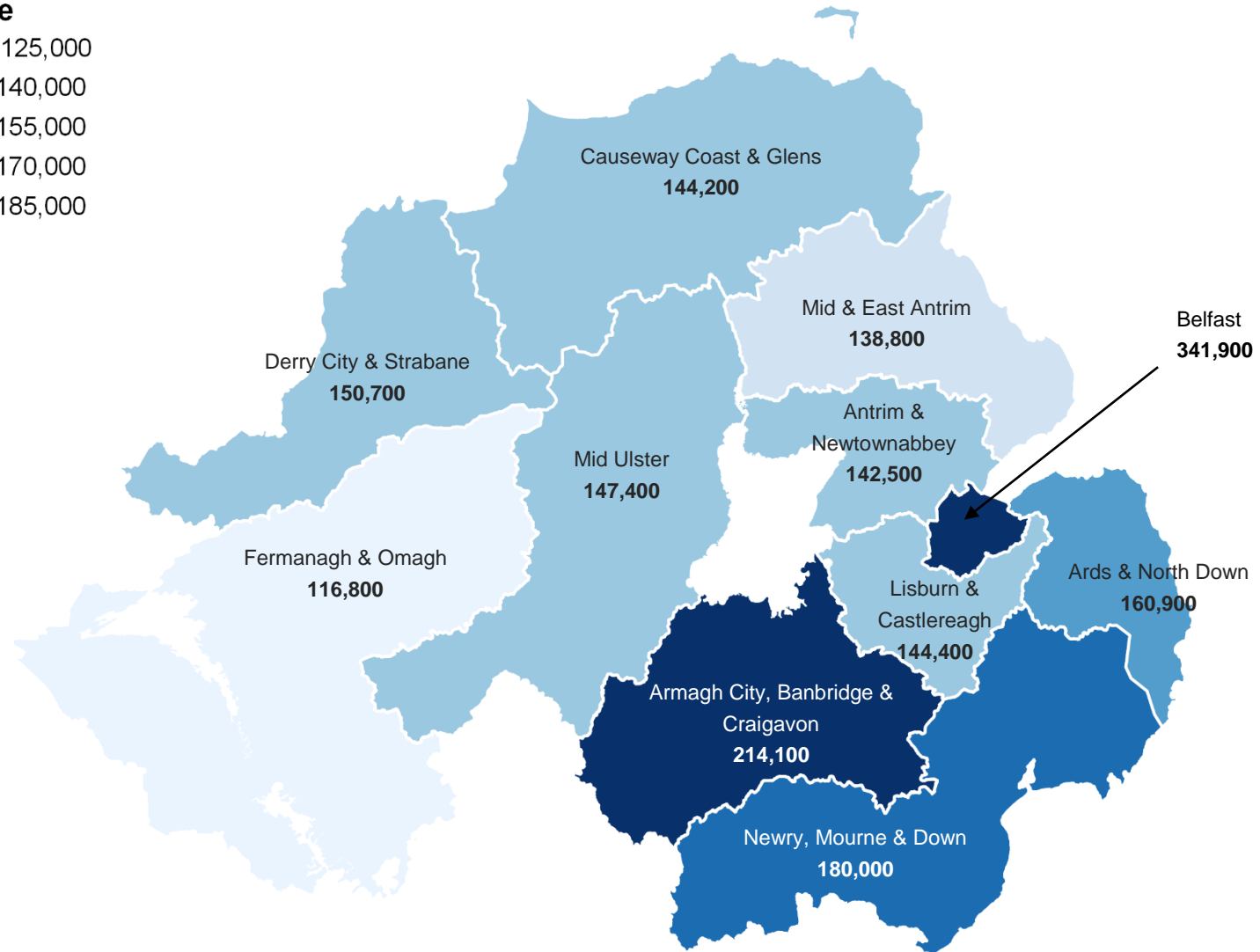


[Download Chart](#) (XLSX Format – 96 Kb)

Map 1: Population estimates by Local Government District (mid-2018)

Population Size

- 110,000 to <125,000
- 125,000 to <140,000
- 140,000 to <155,000
- 155,000 to <170,000
- 170,000 to <185,000
- 185,000 +



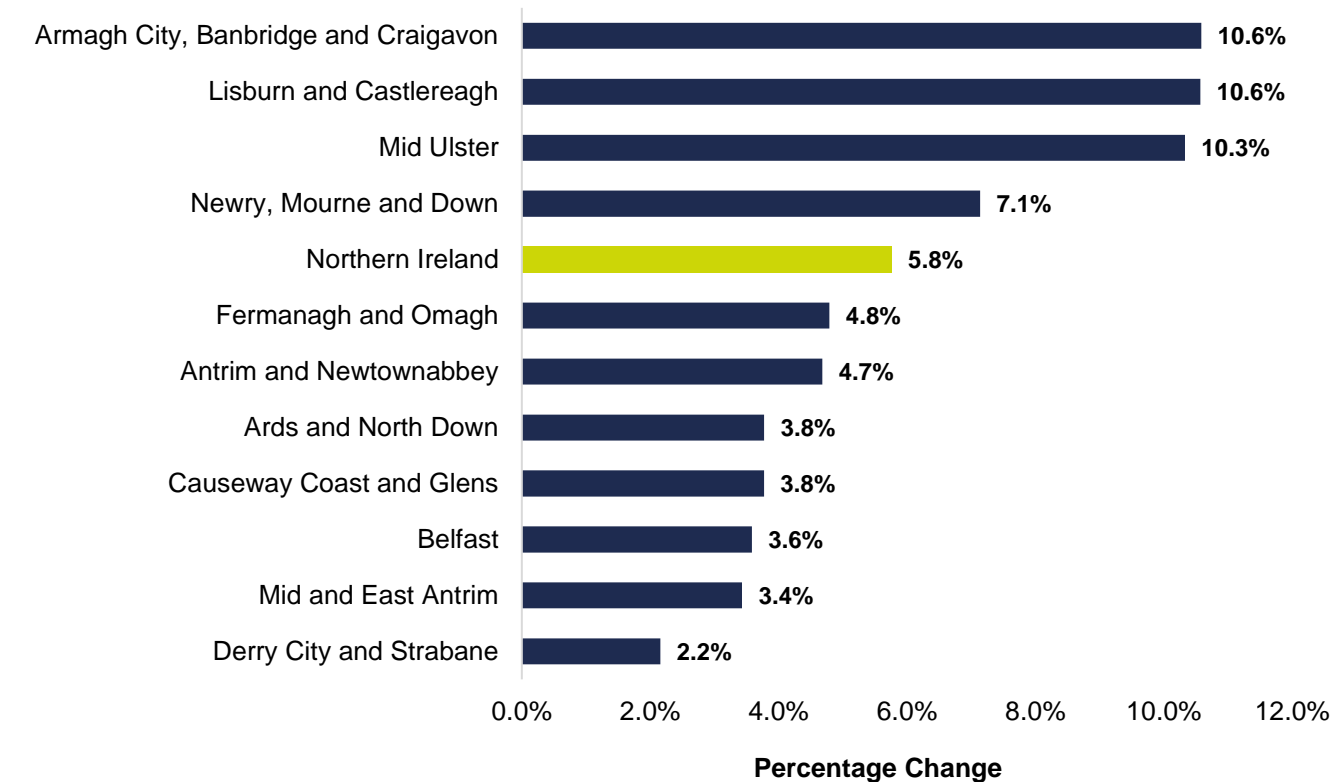
[Download Map](#) (PDF format – 225 Kb)

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Population change in Local Government Districts over the decade

Figure 12 presents the overall percentage population change for LGDs in the decade between mid-2008 and mid-2018 and shows that all LGDs increased in population over the ten year period. Over the period in question, the growth ranged from 2.2 per cent in Derry City and Strabane LGD to 10.6 per cent in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon LGD and Lisburn and Castlereagh LGD and Lisburn and Castlereagh LGD.

Figure 12: Percentage population change by Local Government District (mid-2008 to mid-2018) (ordered by population change)



[Download Chart](#) (XLSX Format – 90 Kb)

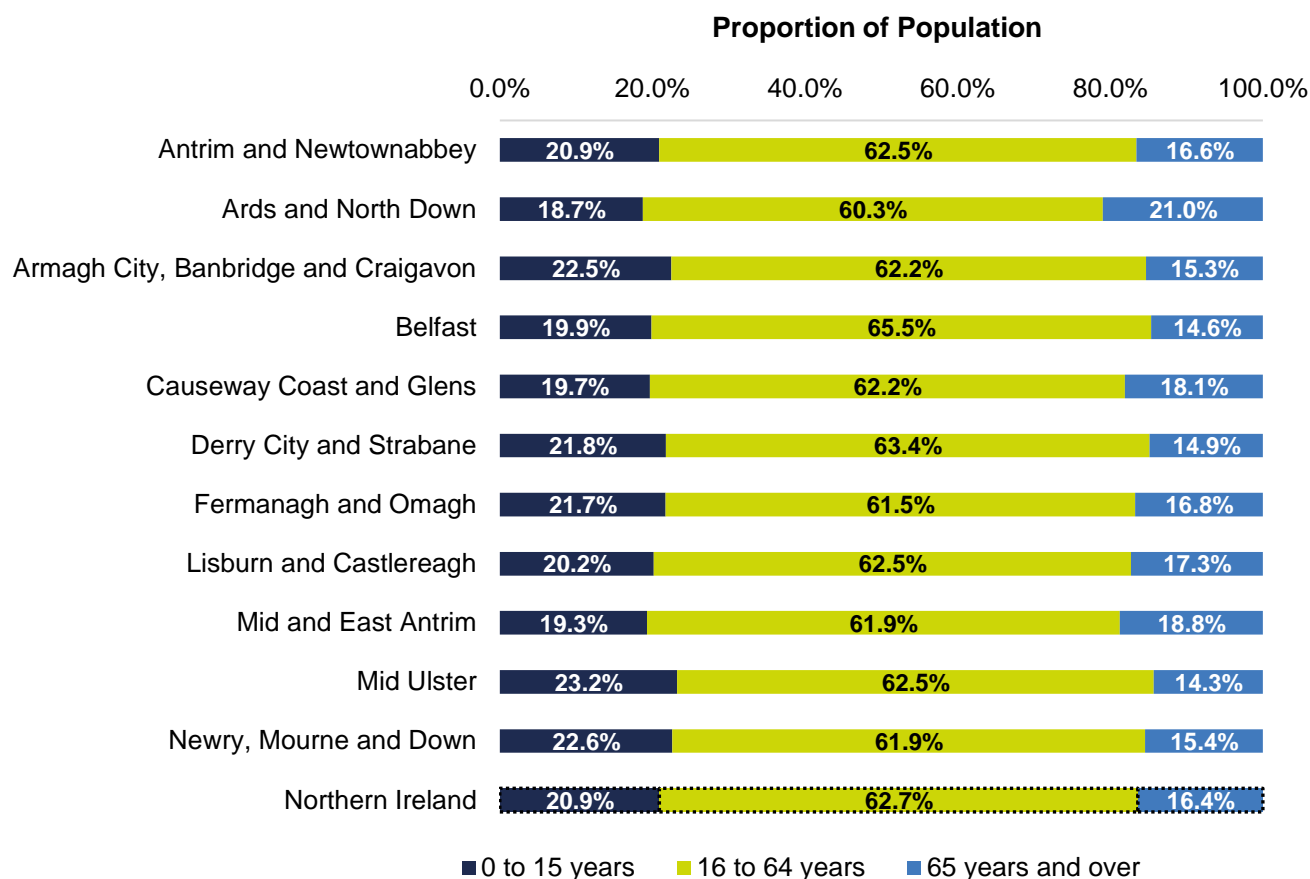
6.2 What is the age structure of the population in Local Government Districts?

Over **one in five** people (21.0 per cent) living in Ards and North Down in 2018 were estimated to be aged 65 and over

Some general themes can be observed when looking at the age distribution of Local Government Districts. Figure 13 shows that in mid-2018, Mid Ulster LGD had the highest proportion of **children** (i.e. people aged 0 to 15 years) among its population (23.2 per cent) and this LGD also had the lowest proportion of population aged 65 and over (14.3 per cent). Conversely, Ards & North Down LGD had the lowest proportion of **children** (18.7 per cent) and the highest proportion of people aged 65 and over (21.0 per cent) in its population.

Belfast LGD had the highest proportion of the **working age population** (i.e. people aged 16 to 64 years) among its population (65.5 per cent), particularly at the **younger working ages** (people aged 16 to 39 years) (35.8 per cent). This may be attributable, in part, to Belfast being the primary centre for third-level education in Northern Ireland.

Figure 13: Age structure of Local Government Districts (mid-2018) (ordered alphabetically)



[Download Chart](#) (XLSX Format – 94 Kb)

In each of the LGDs, with the exception of Belfast, the proportion of the population aged 65 and over has been rising over the last decade. For example, in Ards and North Down LGD the proportion of the population aged 65 and over has increased by 4.6 percentage points since mid-2008 (16.4 per cent to 21.0 per cent). In Belfast LGD the proportion of older people has remained relatively stable at approximately 15 per cent since the year ending mid-2008.

Median Age at Local Government District level

The differences in age distribution across the Local Government Districts can also be demonstrated using the median age. The median age in mid-2018 ranged from 35.8 years in Belfast LGD to 43.9 years in Ards and North Down LGD. In addition, the median in all eleven LGDs has steadily increased over the decade from mid-2008. For example, the median age in Derry City and Strabane (34.6 years to 37.7 years), Causeway Coast and Glens (37.6 years to 41.1 years) and Ards and North Down (40.7 years to 43.9 years) has increased by over 3.0 years from mid-2008 to mid-2018 respectively (download [median age table](#) for all LGDs).

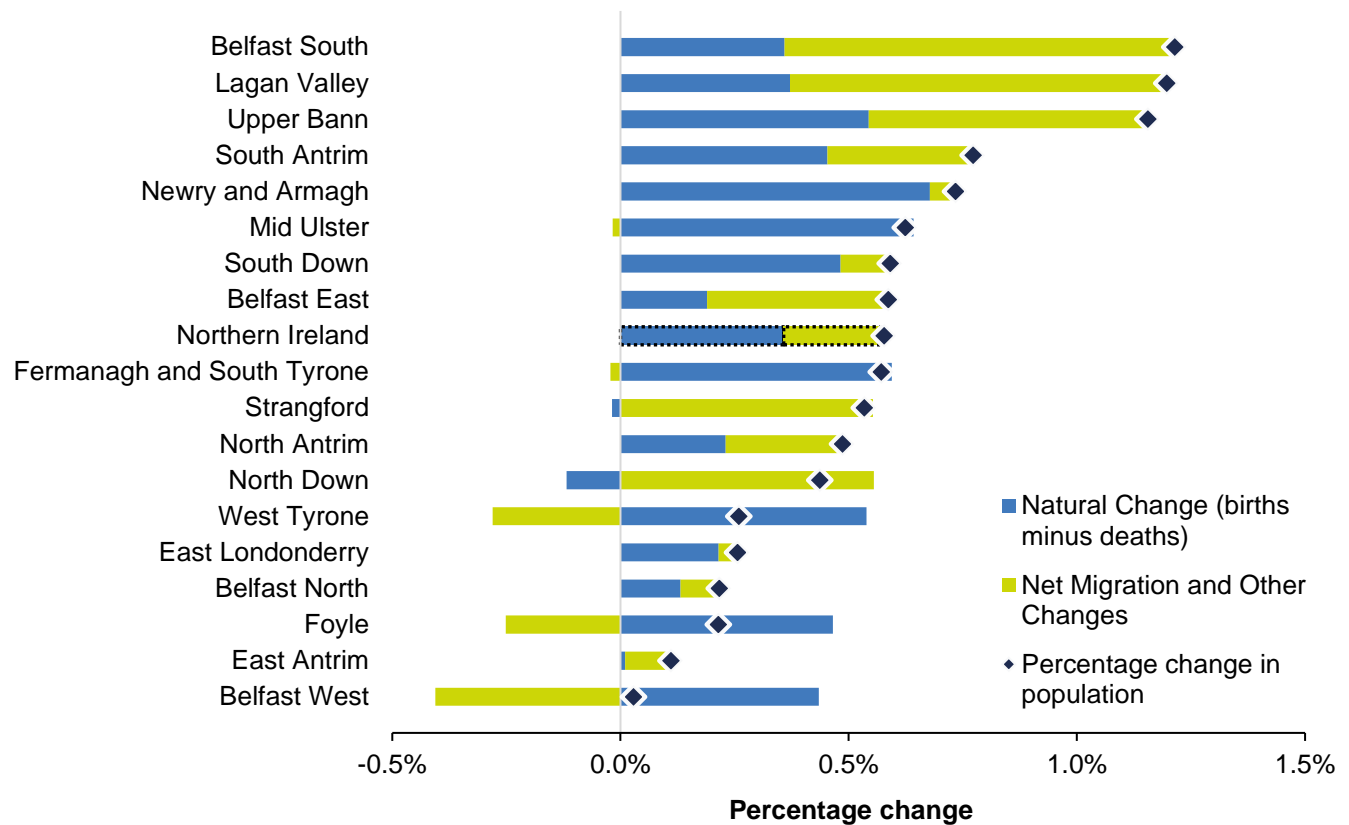
6.3 How has the population changed within Parliamentary Constituencies?

Parliamentary Constituencies⁹ (PCs) were designed to have roughly similar populations. The average population across PCs at mid-2018 was 103,900 people, ranging from 90,300 people in East Antrim PC to 127,600 in Upper Bann PC.

All Parliamentary Constituencies experienced population growth in the year to mid-2018

Belfast South PC had the greatest percentage population increase (1.2 per cent), with migration being the main driver of growth (0.9 per cent) in this area. The smallest percentage increase in population was in Belfast West PC (less than 0.1 per cent) which was caused by natural change of 0.4 per cent and loss of people due to migration (-0.4 per cent). The net effect of natural change and outward migration in this area has led to a modest growth of less than 0.1 per cent.

Figure 14: Components of population change by Parliamentary Constituency, mid-2017 to mid-2018 (ordered by population change)



[Download Chart](#) (XLSX Format – 97 Kb)

⁹ Parliamentary Constituencies and Northern Ireland Assembly Areas share identical geographies and names.

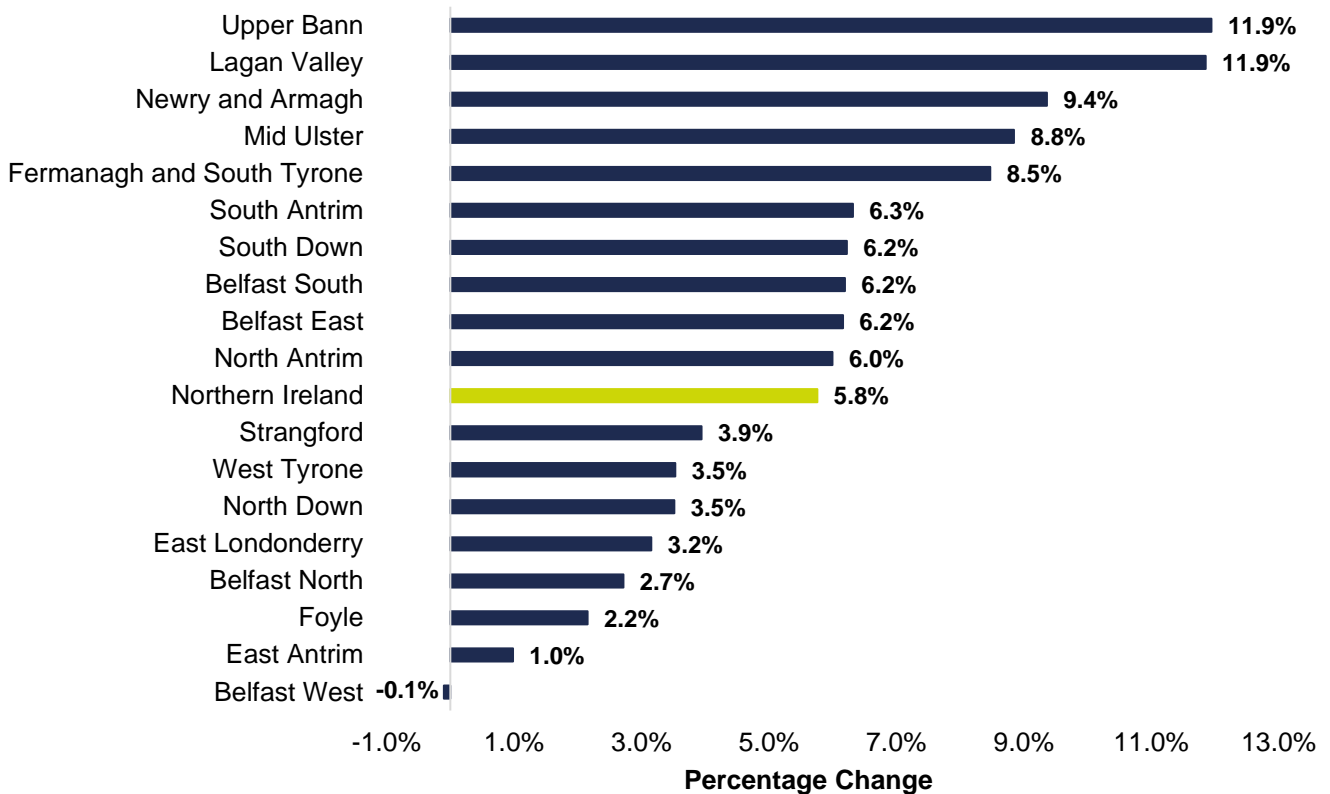
Population change in Parliamentary Constituencies over the decade

Belfast West was the only PC to experience **population decline** from mid-2008 to mid-2018

Over the ten year period mid-2008 to mid-2018 all but one Parliamentary Constituency experienced population growth, ranging from an increase of 1.0 per cent in East Antrim to 11.9 per cent in Lagan Valley

and Upper Bann PCs. Belfast West was the only PC to experience a decline in population over the decade (0.1 per cent).

Figure 15: Percentage population change by Parliamentary Constituency (mid-2008 to mid-2018) (ordered by population change)



[Download Chart](#) (XLSX Format – 148 Kb)

6.4 What is the age structure of the population in Parliamentary Constituencies?

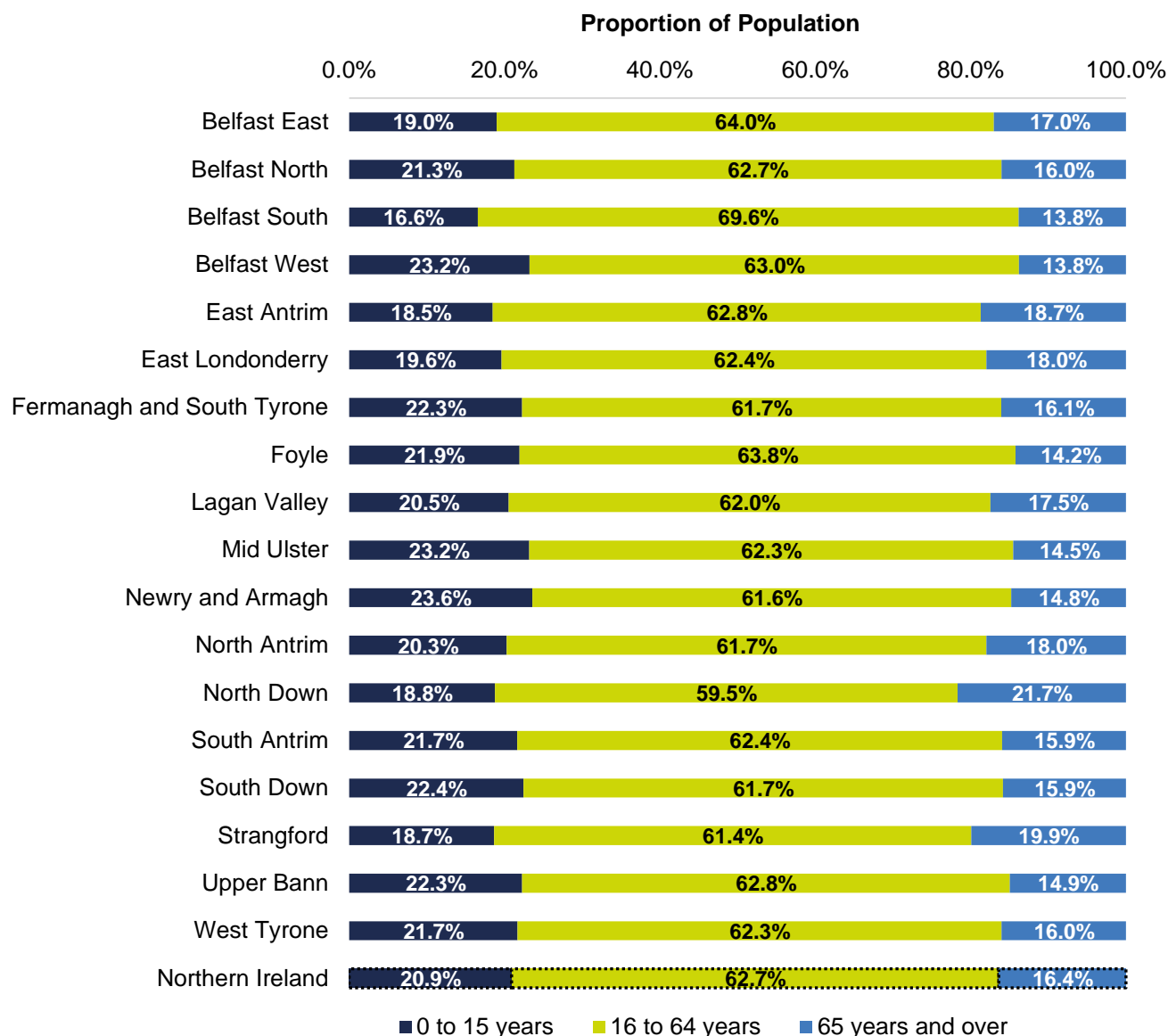
In 2018, over **one in five** people living in North Down PC (21.7 per cent) were aged 65 and over

In mid-2018, Newry and Armagh PC had the highest proportion of **children** (i.e. people aged 0 to 15 years) in its population (23.6 per cent). In contrast, Belfast South PC had the lowest proportion of children among its population (16.6 per cent). The PC with the highest

proportion of **older people** (i.e. people aged 65 years and over) among its population was North Down (21.7 per cent), while Belfast West PC and Belfast South PC had the lowest proportion of older people (13.8 per cent each).

At 69.6 per cent and 41.6 per cent Belfast South PC also had noticeably the largest proportion of its population being in the **working age** (i.e. people aged 16 to 64 years) and **younger working age** (i.e. 16 to 39 years) categories respectively.

Figure 16: Age structure of Parliamentary Constituencies (mid-2018) (ordered alphabetically)



[Download Chart](#) (XLSX Format – 95 Kb)

In sixteen PCs the proportion of the population aged 65 and over increased over the last decade. The largest growth in the proportion of the population aged 65 and over was in Strangford PC which increased from 15.0 per cent in mid-2008 to 19.9 per cent in mid-2018. In Belfast East PC and Belfast North PC the proportion of the population aged 65 and over has decreased over the decade by 0.7 percentage points and 0.1 percentage points respectively.

Median Age at Parliamentary Constituency Level

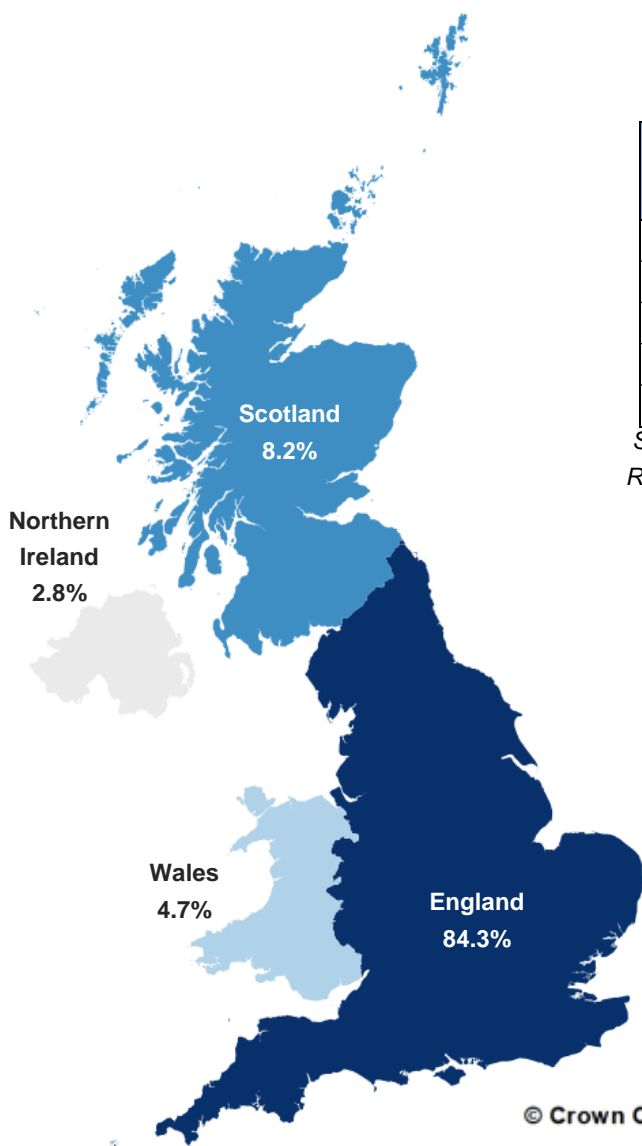
The differences in age distribution across the PCs can also be demonstrated using the median age. In mid-2018, the median age across PCs ranged from 34.3 years in Belfast South PC to 44.1 years in North Down PC. In addition, the median in all eighteen PCs has steadily increased over the decade from mid-2008, ranging from an increase of 0.1 years in Belfast East PC (39.4 years to 39.5 years) to an increase of 4.0 years in East Antrim PC (39.0 years to 43.0 years) (download [median age table](#) for all PCs).

7 How does Northern Ireland compare to the rest of the UK?

The mid-2018 population estimates for England and Wales were published by the [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#) on 26 June 2019, together with the UK estimate as an aggregate of the UK constituent countries.¹⁰

Map 2 below shows the mid-2018 population estimates for the UK. The population of Northern Ireland grew by 0.6 per cent in the year ending mid-2018. This was higher than the growth in Wales and Scotland (0.4 per cent and 0.2 per cent respectively). England experienced growth similar to Northern Ireland at 0.6 per cent, and similar to the UK as a whole. Northern Ireland's share of the UK population has remained at 2.8 per cent since the year ending mid-2014.

Map 2: Mid-2018 Population share of the UK by Constituent Countries



Country	Population mid-2018	Population change since mid-2017	
		Number	%
England	55,977,200	357,700	0.6
Wales	3,138,600	13,500	0.4
Scotland	5,438,100	13,300	0.2
Northern Ireland	1,881,600	10,800	0.6
U.K	66,435,600	395,300	0.6

Source for UK estimates: Office for National Statistics, National Records of Scotland

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NIMA MOU207.2

[Download Map](#) (PDF format – 65 Kb)

¹⁰ The mid-2018 [population estimates for Scotland](#) were published on 25 April 2019.

8 Links to related statistics

[Population estimates for the UK](#) and its constituent countries are available from the Office for National Statistics website.

More detailed population estimates for Local Government Districts and Parliamentary Constituencies are available on the [NISRA website](#). Population estimates can also be found for Health and Social Care Trusts, former 26 Local Government Districts, former Education and Library Boards, former Health and Social Services Boards, former NUTS Level III areas, Super Output Areas and former Electoral Wards.

Population Factsheets for Local Government Districts are now published as a separate summary document and can be found on the [NISRA website](#).

[Estimates of the population aged 85 and over](#) are available on the NISRA website and released in September following the mid-year population estimates in June. Mid-2018 based population estimates will be released in September 2019.

[Population projections for Northern Ireland](#) and [sub-national areas](#) (2016-based) are available from the NISRA website. The 2018-based population projections for Northern Ireland and sub-national areas will be published in October 2019 and April 2020 respectively.

[Population estimates for small areas in Northern Ireland](#) are available on the NISRA website and are released in November following the mid-year population estimates in June. Mid-2018 based population estimates will be released in November 2019.

How to find data

What are you looking for?

The tables and figures used throughout this publication in Excel format.

Population estimates in Open Data format (3* CSV).

Interactive data to engage with population estimates and compare geographies within Northern Ireland

Where is it?

[Tables and figures](#)

[Open Data NI](#)

[Interactive data visualisations](#)

1. [Components of Change](#)
2. [Population Totals](#)
3. [Population by age bands](#)
4. [Population Pyramid](#)

9 National Statistics

National Statistics status means that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

Population Estimates for Northern Ireland last underwent a full assessment by the Statistics Authority against the [Code of Practice](#) in July 2015. The assessment report can be found [here](#). Following the Statistics Authority assessment the continued designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in [August 2016](#).

National Statistics status was confirmed subject to NISRA implementing six specific requirements. An action plan outlining how and when NISRA addressed each of these requirements can be found [here](#).

An action plan checklist with supporting documentation can also be found on the [NISRA website](#).

Since the assessment by the UK Statistics Authority, we have continued to comply with the code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- Improved clarity and insight by redesigning the statistical bulletin to include a key point's summary for users. In addition, key point headlines have been included throughout the commentary so users are alerted to key messages.
- The associated data tables for mid-year population estimates are disseminated in a more innovative way by including a flat file and tabular format which users can interact with.
- We have improved the accessibility of mid-year population estimates by publishing data in 3* open data format on Open Data NI. We have also included a new 'Links to related statistics' section within the bulletin so users can explore the whole population statistics package, including older person estimates, population projections, small area population estimates and a range of other material.

10 Background Notes

Population coverage

Mid-year population estimates relate to the *usually resident* population on 30 June of the reference year and ages relate to a person's age at this mid-year period. Long term international migrants are included in population estimates, however, short term migrants are not. The definition of a long term migrant which has been adopted from the United Nations is, '*a person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year (12 months), so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence*'. Other changes include changes in armed forces personnel stationed in Northern Ireland.

Methodology

Population estimates are produced using two separate methods, the components of change and ratio change methods. At the Northern Ireland level population estimates are derived using the components of change method, which updates the latest Census estimates by 'ageing on' populations and adjusting for births, deaths and migration. Population estimates for areas within Northern Ireland are aggregated from Super Output Area level and are generally calculated from an average of the two statistical methods: the ratio change and cohort-component methods. Detailed information on the data sources which inform these two methods and how the estimates are produced is available in the [Methodology Report](#).

Quality of administrative data

Population estimates are produced using a range of administrative data sources, the quality of which have been assessed in detail within the [Population Estimates and Projections Data Quality Document](#). In addition, population estimates are compared to several administrative data sources including, active medical cards, electoral register, benefit claimants and National Insurance Number registrations to assure the quality of outputs. Any significant differences are examined further. NISRA also works closely with colleagues in ONS and National Records for Scotland (NRS) to assure the quality of population estimates across the UK. A paper comparing the methodological approaches adopted by producers of population statistics across the UK is available [here](#).

Limitations

Migration is the most difficult component of population change to measure due to the absence of an administrative dataset designed specifically for measuring migration. NISRA uses the medical card register as the source in the production of migration estimates, however, there are known deficiencies with this approach. For example, it is recognised that the medical card register is deficient in recording young adult males; therefore the age distribution of young males is adjusted to be similar to the young female age distribution.

Furthermore, not all outflows are measured fully by the medical card register and therefore outflows are scaled up by an additional 67 per cent. It is assumed only 3 out of 5 people will de register with their GP if they are leaving Northern Ireland (see [Methodology Report](#) for more detail).

England, Wales and Scotland use the International Passenger Survey (IPS) to measure international migration, however, Northern Ireland cannot rely on the IPS for measurement. The limitation with the IPS is that it does not cover the land border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and the uncertainty introduced when “Ireland” is given in response to survey questions – some people stating “Ireland” as their origin or destination may be referring to Northern Ireland.

While this means there is a methodological inconsistency for the international migration estimates of Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, NISRA is content that the data sources used in Northern Ireland to estimate migration yield robust results. Furthermore, Northern Ireland migration statistics have been previously assessed by UKSA, who found them to be fit for purpose¹¹.

Some data sources used in the production of population estimates for small geographical areas (e.g. School Census, Child Benefits, and Pensions data) rely on the use of postcodes to allocate people to specific small geographical areas. In a small number of cases, postcodes can span more than one small geographical area (3-5 per cent of postcodes). Therefore, properties within the same postcode can be in different small geographical areas. However, all properties with a given postcode are allocated to a single small geographical area based on where the “centre of the postcode” is located. This can give rise to some small inaccuracies in the resultant estimates for small geographical areas and is not unique to Northern Ireland statistics.

¹¹[UKSA Assessment Report - Statistics on Demography and Vital Events in Northern Ireland \(2011\)](#)

Enquiries and suggestions

- The revisions policy for Northern Ireland population statistics is available [here](#).
- We welcome feedback from users on the content, format and relevance of this release. Please send feedback directly to census@nisra.gov.uk.
- Follow NISRA on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

- All media inquiries should be directed to the DOF Press Office:

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- Further statistical information can be obtained from NISRA Customer Services:

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