

Registrar General Northern Ireland Annual Report 2022

Publication Date: 26 October 2023



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.

NISRA aspires 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



One Hundred and First
Annual Report
of the
Registrar General
2022

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

26 October 2023

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Foreword by the Registrar General for Northern Ireland



It gives me great pleasure to present the one hundred and first Annual Report of the Registrar General to the Northern Ireland Assembly, my first since taking up the position of Registrar General for Northern Ireland and Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) earlier this year.

The report draws on the work of the General Register Office (GRO) and the NISRA Vital Statistics Unit (VSU) and provides a rich picture of Northern Ireland life through the analysis of vital events such as births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships registered in 2022.

Detailed supporting information (both current and historical) continues to be available on the NISRA website, www.nisra.gov.uk.

Last year, the General Register Office registered over 47,000 key events relating to people from across Northern Ireland. Registration is a vital service in establishing identity, providing information to support the delivery of public services and a host of other applications.

In 2021, NISRA ran the largest statistical exercise in Northern Ireland – the Census – which provides a unique and comprehensive picture of the population on Census Day. The first results of the 2021 Census were published last year and have continued through 2023 with the exciting development of a flexible table builder to enable users to develop their own customised Census outputs. One of the key purposes of the Census is to provide a new benchmark estimate of the number of people who live in Northern Ireland. The statistics provided in this report incorporate the new information provided by the Census.

In presenting this report I wish to recognise the valuable work undertaken by the 13 Registrars and 81 Deputy Registrars in the District Registration Offices across the eleven councils. I also greatly appreciate the efforts of all the GRO and NISRA personnel involved in the delivery of civil registration services and the associated official statistics. I would also like to thank my predecessor, Ms Siobhan Carey CBE – who retired in February 2023 – and the Deputy Registrar General, Mrs Kathie Walker, who will be retiring early in 2024.

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

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'PD Wales', is displayed within a light grey rectangular box.

Dr Philip Wales

Registrar General for Northern Ireland

26 October 2023

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

Main activities in the calendar year 2022 (these figures must be considered in the context of the national pandemic):

- Over 47,000 life events were registered through the DRO offices.
- GRO processed over 97,000 certificate applications. Almost 37,000 certificate applications related to priority (fast-tracked) certificates.
- Just over 112,000 certificates were produced by the GRO certificate production team in 2022. Applications and certificate numbers increased this year as the opportunities for travel and the need for passports continued to increase.
- Different channels are used by the public to submit certificate applications. Online (which includes telephone applications) is by far the most popular. The number of certificates

produced from applications received by the different channels were:

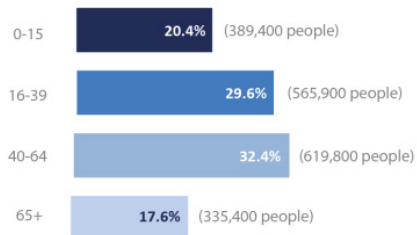
- ◆ Postal – 5,104
 - ◆ Counter – 4,688
 - ◆ Online – 87,341.
- Additionally, GRO processed over 3,300 registration related cases including re-registrations, adoptions, name changes and corrections. Over 700 of these were made at the public counter and over 2,600 by post.
 - GRO shared over 64,000 records with a number of organisations including Business Services Organisation, Electoral Office for Northern Ireland, Department for Work and Pensions, Department for Infrastructure, Department for Communities, Department for Justice, Northern Ireland Local Government Officers Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC), HMRC and the Victim and Survivors Services.
 - Over 12,000 new accounts were registered on the GRO Family History website. There were close to 900,000 searches carried out – the most popular being the basic index search which accounted for almost 870,000 searches. There were over 413,000 credits purchased by online users with almost 380,000 credits used for the enhanced and full index searches.
 - Over 730 people used the GRO Public Search Room in Colby House in 2022.

Population & Migration¹

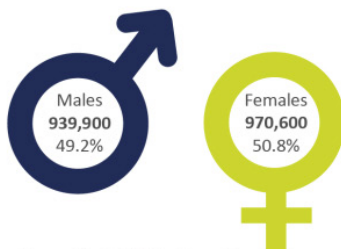
Population of Northern Ireland at 30 June 2022

1,910,500

Population by Age



Population by Sex

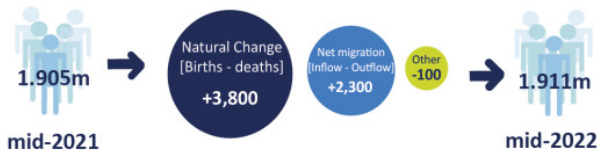


Figures may not always add up to 100% due to rounding
Source: 2022 Mid-year Population Estimates for Northern Ireland

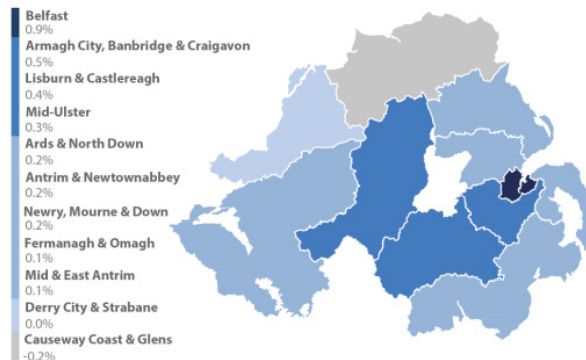
How has the population increased since 30 June 2021?

+6,000 people

(0.3% growth)



Population Change by Local Government District (Mid-2021 to Mid-2022)



In 2022:

- The population of Northern Ireland was estimated to be 1.91 million people, an increase of 6,000 people (0.3 per cent) from [mid-2021](#).
- Natural change was the main driver of population growth, adding 3,800 people (21,500 births minus 17,700 deaths²) to the population.
- Over the year, the number of people coming to live in Northern Ireland (27,000) was greater than the number of people leaving Northern Ireland (24,700), leading to a net migration gain of 2,300 people.
- The population continued to age with the number of those aged 65 and over increasing by 1.9 per cent to reach 335,400 people (17.6 per cent of the population). In contrast, the number of children aged 0 to 15 remained stable at 389,400 children (20.4 per cent of the population).
- The population in only one Local Government District decreased over the year to mid-2022, with a decline of 200 people (0.2 per cent) in Causeway Coast and Glens. Belfast experienced the largest population growth over the year (3,000 people or 0.9 per cent).

¹ Figures may not add due to rounding to the nearest 100.

² All figures in this section are based on 2022 Mid-year population estimates and refer to the mid-year (the period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022). Figures may therefore differ to annual 2022 registration figures included elsewhere in this report

20,837
births



10,642 males



10,195 females



40.1% of births were to first time mothers

Most common birth date

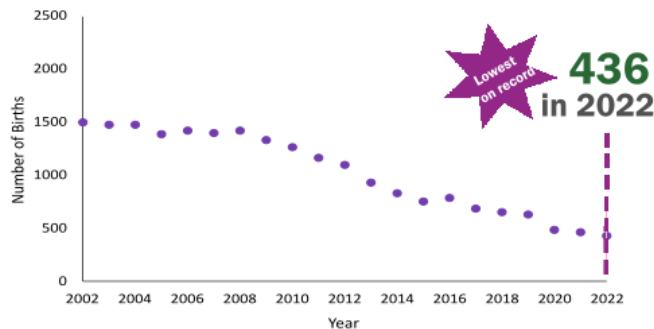


Average age of mothers



31.4 years

Trend in live births to teenage mothers*

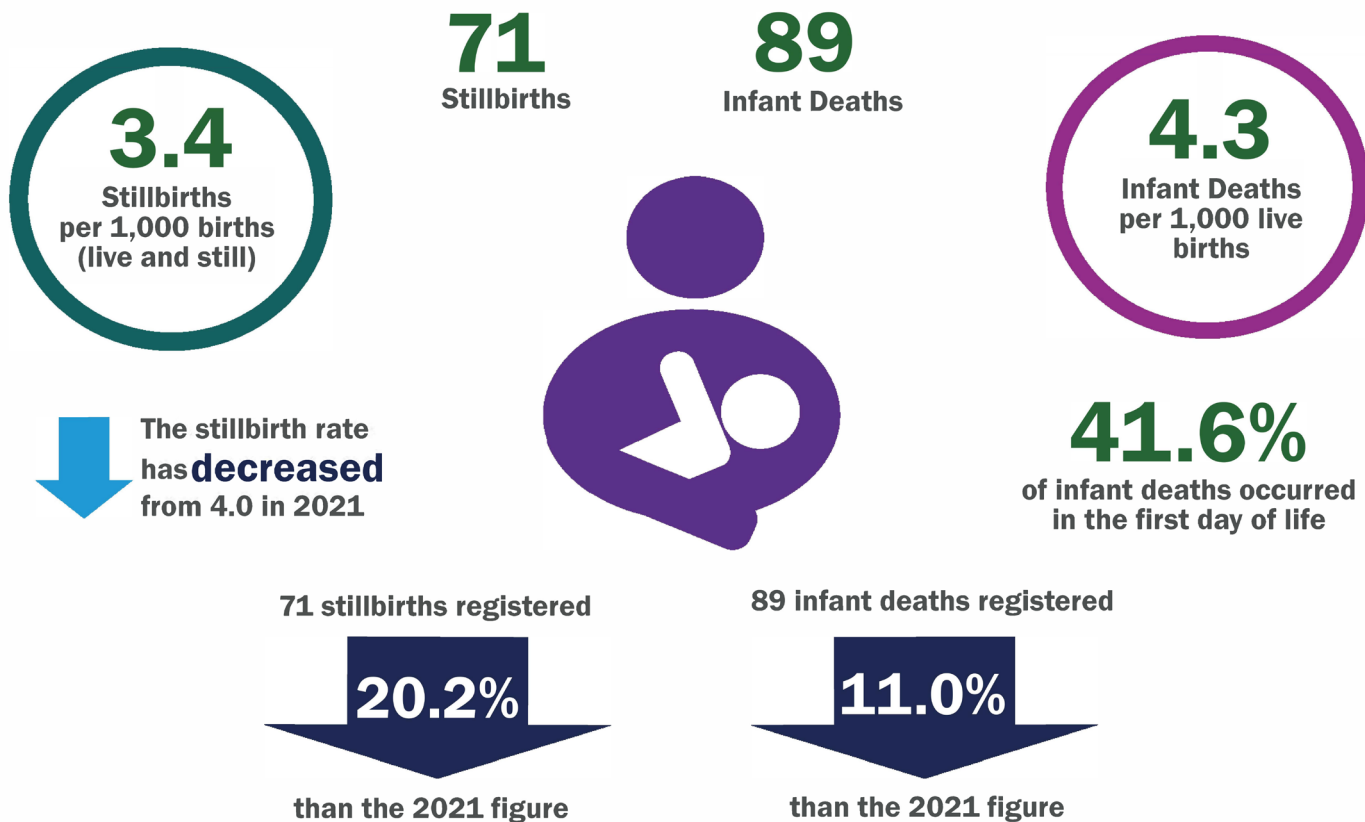


*Teenage mothers are defined as mothers who are under the age of 20

In 2022:

- There were 20,837 births (10,642 males and 10,195 females) registered to Northern Ireland mothers, 1,234 less than in 2021.
- 20 September was the most common birth date, with 88 babies born on this day.
- The average age of mothers was 31.4 years, a slight increase on 2021 (31.2). By way of comparison, in 1992 the average age of mothers was 28.0 years.
- 26.2 per cent of all births were to mothers aged 35 years or over, up from 10.7 per cent 30 years ago.
- Births to mothers under 20 years of age (teenage mothers) decreased from 474 in 2021 to 436 in 2022. This is the lowest number on record and is noticeably lower than a decade previously (1,100) and three decades ago (1,855).
- First-time mothers (i.e. mothers with no previous live born children) accounted for 40.1 per cent of all births.
- Only 9.6 per cent of mothers already had three or more live born children. This compares with 11.7 per cent in 1992.
- The average age of first-time mothers was 29.3 years, almost four years older than in 1992 (25.7 years).
- 47.2 per cent of births occurred outside of marriage/ civil partnership, compared with 22.0 per cent three decades ago.
- Of the 20,608 maternities, 1.4 per cent resulted in multiple births with 290 sets of twins and five sets of triplets being born.
- 11.5 per cent of births were to mothers who were born outside of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. This compares with 3.6 per cent 20 years ago.
- The number of births taking place at home increased by 7.8% from 154 in 2021 to 166 in 2022.

Stillbirths* & Infant Deaths



In 2022:

- 71 stillbirths (39 males and 32 females) were registered. This was 18 less than in 2021 and equates to a stillbirth rate of 3.4 per 1,000 total births (both live and still) which is a decrease from the 2021 rate of 4.0 per 1,000 births.
- Conditions originating in the perinatal period were the cause of 83.1 per cent of stillbirths, whilst the remaining 16.9 per cent were due to congenital malformations, deformations and chromosomal abnormalities.
- 89 infant deaths (i.e. deaths in the first year of life) were registered, representing a decrease of 11.0 per cent on the previous year (100). This equates to 4.3 infant deaths per 1,000 live births.
- The lowest number of infant deaths registered in one year, on record, was 88 deaths in 2017. Although there can be some variability in the numbers, the general trend in infant deaths has been a decreasing one. In 1992 a total of 153 infant deaths were registered, and fifty years ago, in 1972, 616 infant deaths were registered.
- 41.6 per cent of infant deaths occurred during the first day of life.
- Two thirds (66.3 per cent) of infant deaths occurred in the first week of life. (The first week of life is considered to be between zero and six days.)
- Conditions originating in the perinatal period were the cause of 52.8 per cent of infant deaths, whilst congenital malformations, deformations and chromosomal abnormalities were the cause of a further 32.6 per cent. The remaining 14.6 per cent of infant deaths were due to other factors.

* The Stillbirth (Definition) Act 1992 redefined a stillbirth, from 1 October 1992, as a child which had issued forth from its mother after the 24th week of pregnancy and which did not breathe or show any other sign of life.

17,159 deaths in 2022

Average age at death



74.8 years
for males

80.1 years
for females

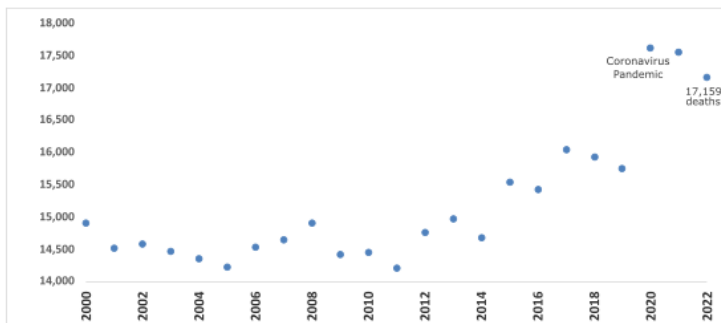


2/3 deaths were of
people aged 75 and over

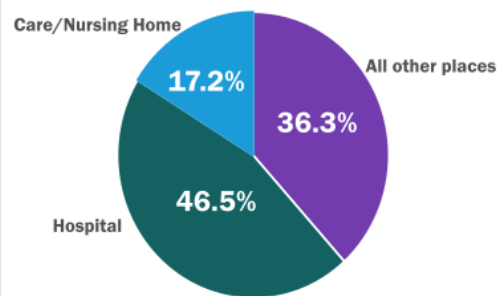
152

deaths
were of people
aged 100 and over

Number of deaths over time



Place of Death

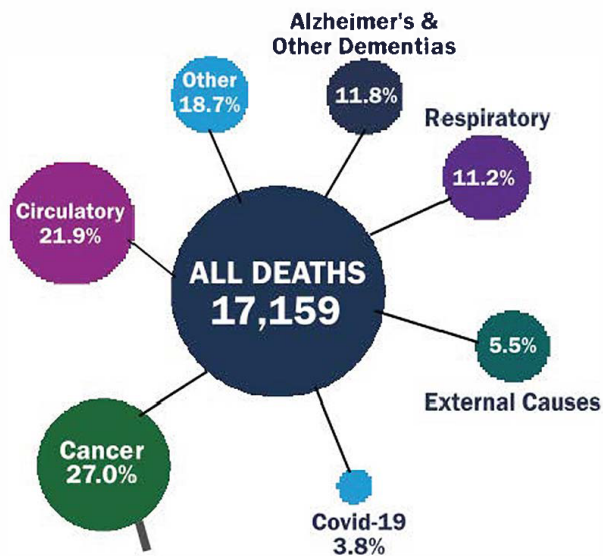


May not sum due to rounding

In 2022:

- 17,159 deaths (8,548 males and 8,611 females) were registered, a 2.3 per cent decrease on the 2021 figure (17,558).
- While the number of deaths has generally been increasing over time, this can be primarily connected to the growing and aging population. Age-standardised mortality rates (ASMRs) put the number of deaths into the context of the size and age structure of the population. They do this by adjusting for age and showing deaths as a rate per 100,000 population. Over the last decade there has been some variation in ASMRs but an overall decrease from 1,058.9 deaths per 100,000 in 2012 to 1,008.4 in 2022.
- There were almost 101 female deaths for every 100 male deaths, less than the female to male ratio in the population as a whole (just over 103 females for every 100 males).
- There were 152 deaths of people aged 100 or over, 13 more than the previous year (139) but over 3 times higher than over 30 years previously (45 in 1992).
- The average age at death for men was 74.8 years and 80.1 years for women. This compares with 69.9 years and 76.3 years respectively three decades ago.
- Approximately two out of every three deaths (65.9 per cent) were of people aged 75 or over.
- 46.5 per cent of deaths occurred in NHS hospitals, whilst a further 17.2 per cent of deaths occurred in care homes or nursing homes. The remaining 36.3 per cent of deaths occurred at home or in other places.
- More than four out of every five deaths (83.3 per cent) that occurred in a hospital was a person aged 65 or over.
- 89.2 per cent of deaths were of people born in Northern Ireland and 8.7 per cent were born in the rest of the UK and the Republic of Ireland. The remaining 2.1 per cent were born in the rest of the world, including Poland (0.3 per cent), Lithuania and the United States of America (0.2 per cent each).

Cause of Death

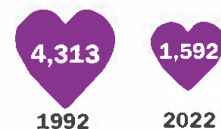


**MOST COMMON
CANCER SITE
WAS THE
BRONCHUS OR LUNG**

May not sum due to rounding

Ischaemic Heart Disease

↓ 63.1% over 30 years

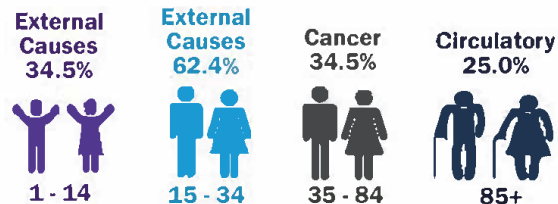


Alzheimer's & Other Dementias

↑ 7.2% from the 2021 figure



Most prevalent cause of death by age



In 2022:

- Of the 17,159 deaths, the leading cause of death was cancer (27.0 per cent), followed by circulatory disease (21.9 per cent), then Alzheimer's disease and other dementias (11.8 per cent) and respiratory disease* (11.2 per cent).
- For both males and females, the most common cancer site was the bronchus or lung (21.9 per cent in males and 21.7 per cent of all cancers in females); the breast was the second most common cancer site in females (13.6 per cent of all cancers in females), whereas the prostate was the second most common cancer site in males (11.5 per cent of all cancers in males).
- 63.1 per cent fewer people died of ischaemic heart disease than three decades ago with 1,592 deaths registered in 2022 compared with 4,313 deaths in 1992.
- Tragically, there were 203 registered deaths due to suicide (including self-inflicted injury and events of undetermined intent) in Northern Ireland in 2022, compared with 237 in 2021. Males accounted for three quarters of all deaths due to suicide (156).
- There were 143 deaths registered due to accidental poisoning, a 26.7 per cent decrease on the previous year (195). Males accounted for three quarters of these deaths (107).
- External causes of death (for example accidents and suicides) were the leading cause of death in people aged 15-34, accounting for 62.4 per cent of deaths in this age group. External causes accounted for 5.5 per cent of all deaths.
- Cancer was the leading cause of death for those aged 35-84, accounting for 34.5 per cent of deaths in this age group. Circulatory disease was the leading cause for those aged 85 or over, accounting for 25.0 per cent of all deaths in this age group.
- The proportion of deaths where Covid-19 was the underlying cause dropped from 10.5 per cent in 2021, to 3.8% (655) in 2022.
- The number of deaths due to Alzheimer's disease and other dementias increased by 7.2 per cent on the previous year, from 1,882 in 2021 to 2,017.

* Excludes deaths from Covid-19.

Marriages

Most popular dates



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



1.4%
Male
Marriages



1.8%
Female
Marriages



96.9%
Opposite-Sex
Marriages

*May not sum due to rounding

Average age at marriage



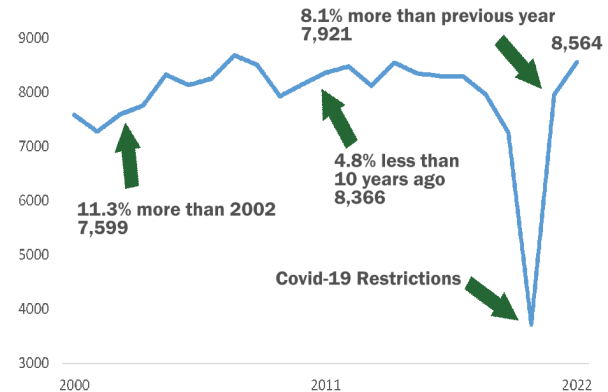
Males
35.7 years



Females
33.9 years



8,564 marriages



In 2022:

- 8,564 marriages were registered, equivalent to just under 1 every hour, and 643 more than the 2021 total (7,921). Same-sex marriage in Northern Ireland has been legal since 13 January 2020, following the enactment of the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc.) Act 2019, therefore, this figure includes both opposite sex and same sex marriages.
- July was the most popular month to get married, however the most popular day was Saturday 28 May when 99 marriages took place.
- Men were on average almost two years older than women getting married in 2022 (35.7 years and 33.9 years respectively). Compared with 30 years ago, the ages of both grooms and brides increased by approximately seven years (28.9 and 27.0 respectively).
- The majority of marriages (81.8 per cent) were first-time marriages for both partners, while for 6.9 per cent of marriages both partners had been previously married.
- 85.4 per cent of marriages were of couples who both resided in NI.
- Around 2 in every 3 religious/belief marriages (64.4 per cent) were held in a religious building. The remaining 35.6 per cent of all religious/belief marriage ceremonies were held in approved venues.
- Over half of all civil marriages (55.6 per cent) were held in a registry office. The remaining 44.4 per cent of civil marriages were held in approved venues.

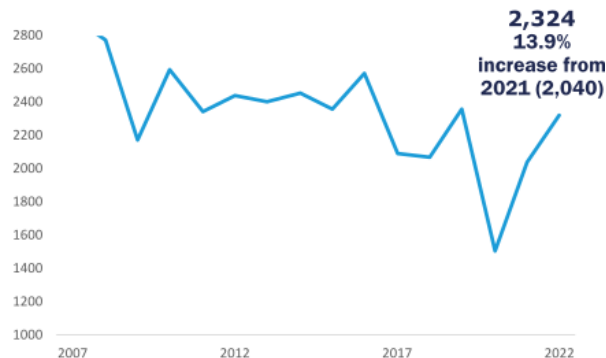
2,324

Divorces

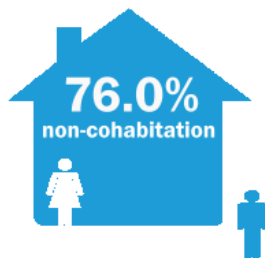


Average length of
marriage at divorce

18 Years



Grounds for divorce



Children affected by divorce



18

Civil Partnership Dissolutions



In 2022:

- There were 2,324 divorces granted, including 2 that were same-sex couples. This was an increase on the previous year (2,040), and 20.2 per cent lower than the peak number of 2,913 in 2007.
- Non-cohabitation remained the most frequently recorded reason for divorce, accounting for 76.0 per cent of all divorces.
- Those marriages that ended in divorce had lasted an average of 18 years, compared with 14 years three decades previous.
- 3,995 children/stepchildren were connected to the divorces that were granted, of which 1,784 were under the age of 16.

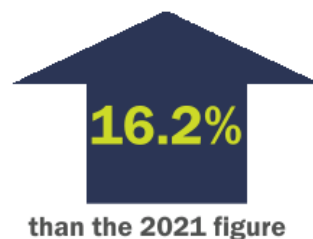
Civil Partnerships



Most popular month

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

6 civil partnerships took
place in both October
and November



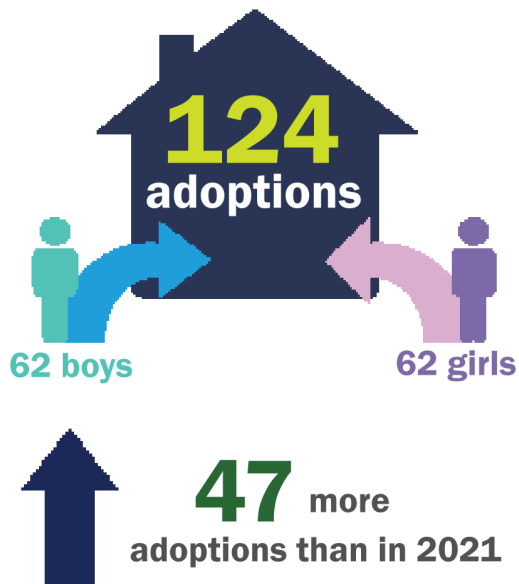
Location of civil partnership ceremony



97.7% registrar's office
2.3% approved venue

In 2022:

- The Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc.) Act 2019 enabled opposite-sex civil partnerships to take place through the Civil Partnership (Opposite-sex Couples) (NI) Regulations 2019. The regulations came into force on 13 January 2020; therefore, totals for civil partnerships registered in Northern Ireland in 2022 includes both opposite sex and same-sex partners.
- There were 43 civil partnerships registered (9 male partnerships, 4 female partnerships and 30 opposite-sex partnerships), 6 more than in 2021.
- The average age of males entering a male-male civil partnership was 39.9 years, while for females entering a female-female partnership, it was 38.4 years. The average age of a partner in an opposite-sex civil partnership was 40.3.
- 42 (97.7%) of the civil partnership ceremonies in 2022 were held in a District Registration Office. The remaining one ceremony was held in an approved venue.
- October and November were the most popular months for civil partnership ceremonies, with a total of 12 held in these two months.



66.1% of adopted children
were aged
between 0 and 5 years

499
re-registrations

Reasons for re-registering
a birth can include:



Parents getting
married



Adding father's
details

97

more re-registrations
than in 2021

6

Gender changes
in the Gender
Recognition
Register



In 2022:

- 124 children (62 boys and 62 girls) were adopted, an increase of 61.0 per cent from the 2021 figure of 77, and almost matching the 2019 total of 125.
- The average age of the adopted children was five years.
- 82 children adopted were aged five or under. This represented approximately two thirds of all children adopted during this year. A further 30 children were aged between six and ten, with the remaining 12 children aged 11 or over.
- 499 births were re-registered, 24.1 per cent more than the 2021 figure of 402.
- In addition to these 499 birth re-registrations, there were six individuals who re-registered their birth with a new gender in the Gender Recognition Register. This is a decrease from 12 registrations under the Gender Recognition Register in 2021.

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 – displays 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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You are welcome to contact us directly with any comments about how we meet these standards. Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing regulation@statistics.gov.uk or via the OSR website.

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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