

census
2021

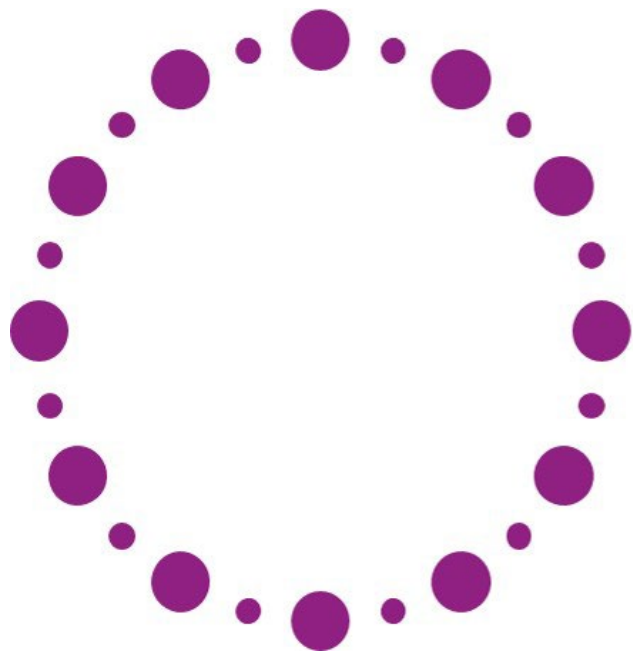


Main statistics for Northern Ireland

Statistical bulletin

Demography and households

22 September 2022



[nisra.gov.uk/Census2021](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/Census2021)

1. Introduction

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) today released further results from Census 2021, which was held on 21 March 2021. The statistics released today provide a profile of the Northern Ireland population covering demography, ethnic group, identity, language and religion. The information covers Northern Ireland and the 11 Local Government Districts (LGDs).

This report relates to demography and households for Northern Ireland – for display purposes figures are appropriately rounded but full figures are available in the [Census 2021 tables](#) on the NISRA website.

This paper should be read alongside an [initial paper with the first results from the 2021 Census on the number of people and households \(PDF 486 KB\)](#).

2. Key points

The key points relating to the demography and households topic are as follows:

- The Northern Ireland usually resident population increased by 5.1% (92,300) from 2011 to 2021. The Census 2021 population is recorded at 1,903,175 people up from 1,810,863 people in 2011.
- Population increase was greatest in the older age groups. The number of people aged 65 or more rose by over 60,000, to nearly one-third of a million people in Census 2021 - a near 25% increase on 2011 and demonstrates the scale of population change due to ageing.
- All Local Government Districts showed an ageing population over the period 2011 to 2021.
- The share of the Northern Ireland population represented by people aged 65 years and over stood at 17.2% in 2021.
- Belfast remains the largest Local Government District by population with 345,400 people in 2021 and Fermanagh & Omagh remains the smallest by population with 116,800 people in 2021.

- Population growth was proportionately greatest in Lisburn & Castlereagh with 149,100 people in 2021 (up 10.6% from 2011).
- On Census Day 2021, there were 768,810 occupied households in Northern Ireland, up 9.3% from the 703,275 recorded in 2011.

3. Population by Local Government District - 2021 Census

The usually resident population of Northern Ireland on census day, 21 March 2021, was 1,903,175. This is an increase of 92,300 (5.1%) from the 2011 Census, and an increase of 217,900 (12.9%) from the 2001 Census.

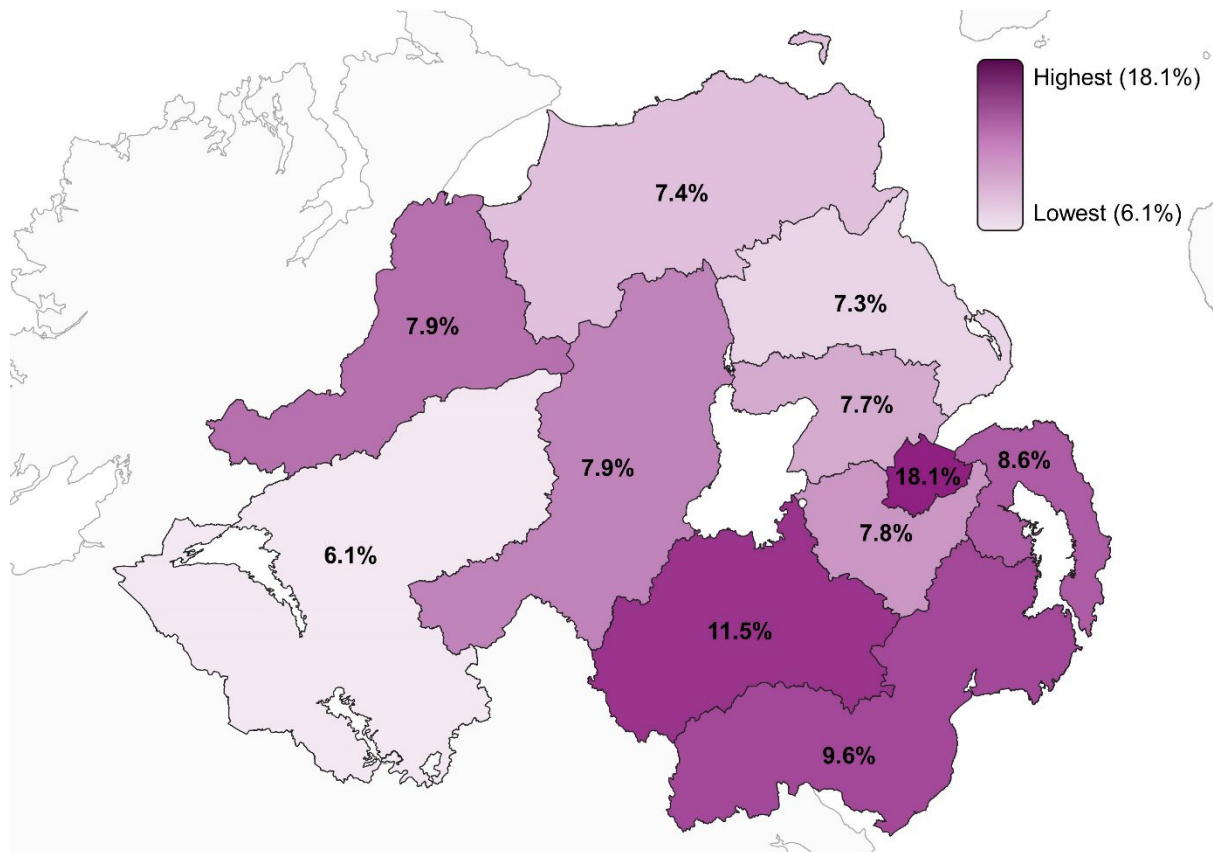
Table 1 below shows the population of each of the 11 Local Government Districts in Northern Ireland from Census 2021.

Table 1: Usually resident population by LGD for Census 2021

Geography	All usual residents 2021	Percentage share of Northern Ireland population
Antrim and Newtownabbey	145,700	7.7%
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	218,700	11.5%
Belfast	345,400	18.1%
Causeway Coast & Glens	141,700	7.4%
Derry City & Strabane	150,800	7.9%
Fermanagh & Omagh	116,800	6.1%
Lisburn & Castlereagh	149,100	7.8%
Mid & East Antrim	139,000	7.3%
Mid Ulster	150,300	7.9%
Newry, Mourne & Down	182,100	9.6%
Ards & North Down	163,700	8.6%
Northern Ireland	1,903,200	100.0%

Belfast remains the largest Local Government District by population with 345,400 people in 2021 and Fermanagh and Omagh remains the smallest Local Government District by population with 116,800 people. Another way of looking at this is to consider overall shares of the Northern Ireland population – also shown in Table 1 and in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Percentage share of Northern Ireland population by LGD (Census 2021)



4. Change in population by Local Government District (Census 2011 and 2021)

Looking back to Census 2011 shows the level of change across each of the Local Government Districts over the last decade. This is shown in Table 2 below. All 11 Local Government Districts had an increase in population over the decade.

Table 2: Usually resident population by LGD for Census 2011 and 2021

Geography	All usual residents 2011	All usual residents 2021	Change	Percentage change
Antrim and Newtownabbey	138,600	145,700	7,100	5.1%
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	199,700	218,700	19,000	9.5%
Belfast	333,900	345,400	11,500	3.5%
Causeway Coast & Glens	140,900	141,700	900	0.6%
Derry City & Strabane	147,700	150,800	3,000	2.1%
Fermanagh & Omagh	113,200	116,800	3,700	3.2%
Lisburn & Castlereagh	134,800	149,100	14,300	10.6%
Mid & East Antrim	135,300	139,000	3,700	2.7%
Mid Ulster	138,600	150,300	11,700	8.4%
Newry, Mourne & Down	171,500	182,100	10,500	6.1%
Ards & North Down	156,700	163,700	7,000	4.5%
Northern Ireland	1,810,900	1,903,200	92,300	5.1%

Clearly the rate of growth varied between the Local Government Districts. Lisburn and Castlereagh saw the largest percentage growth (10.6%) while Causeway Coast and Glens saw the smallest percentage growth (0.6%).

5. Population age structure - Census 2021

Table 3 shows the age-structure of the Northern Ireland population from Census 2021.

Table 3: Usual residents by age band – Census 2021

Age band	Population	Percentage
0-14	365,200	19.2%
15-64	1,211,500	63.7%
15-39	594,400	31.2%
40-64	617,100	32.4%
65+	326,500	17.2%
65-84	287,100	15.1%
85+	39,400	2.1%
All ages	1,903,200	100%

The table shows that the proportion of children aged 0 to 14 (19.2%) is now only marginally greater than the proportion of older adults aged 65 and over (17.2%). The Census 2021 Population Statistics Bulletin published in May noted the continued ageing of the population and more details of this are discussed there – see the [Census 2021 Population and household estimates statistical bulletin](#) (PDF 486 KB) from 24 May 2022.

On census day, there were 365,200 children aged 0 to 14, a 10,500 increase compared from the 354,700 children in 2011. In contrast the number of persons aged 65 and over has increased from 263,700 in 2011 to 326,500 in 2021.

The ageing of the population can also be seen in the median age of the population (the age at which half the population are above or below), which over the last decade has increased by two years from 37 in 2011 to 39 in 2021.

5.1. Population aged 0 to 14 by Local Government District -Census 2021

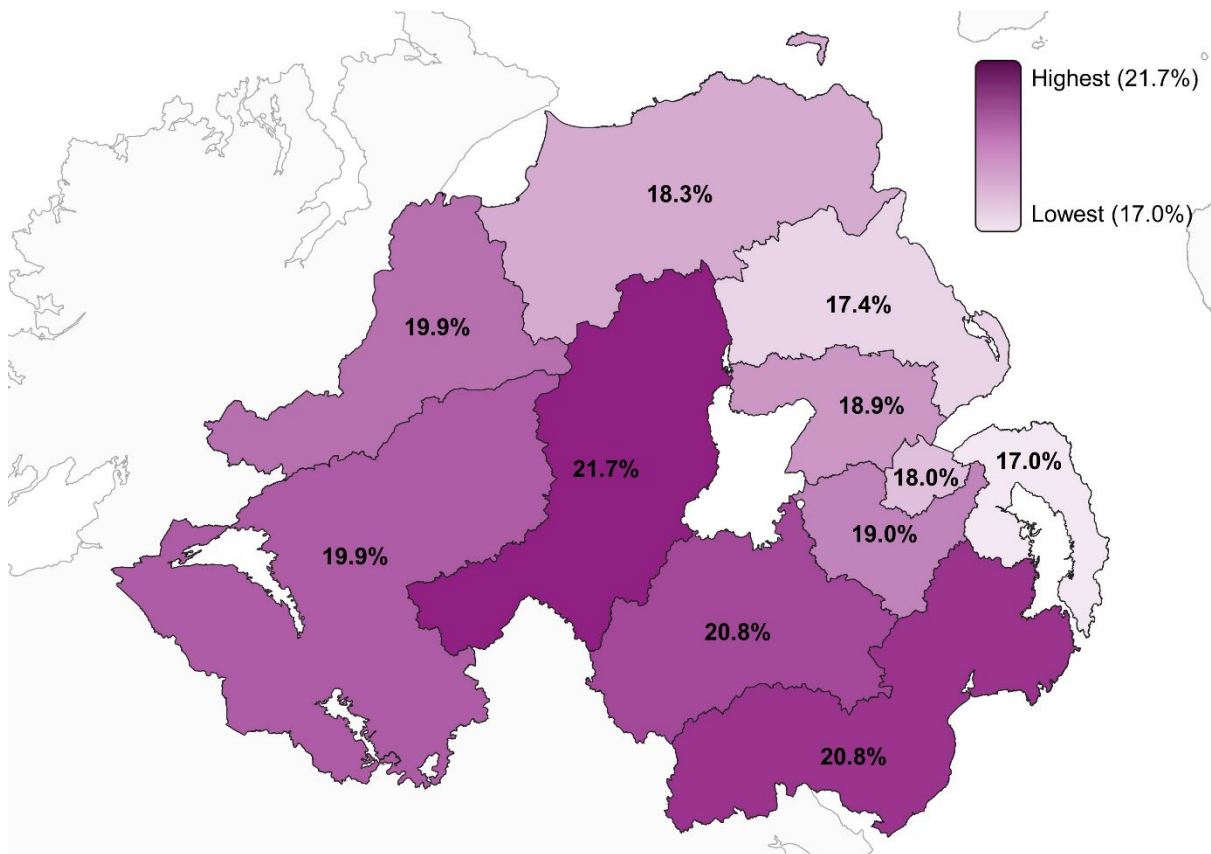
As noted, children (defined as those aged 0 to 14) make up 19.2% of the Northern Ireland population. This percentage varies across the Local Government Districts and is highest in Mid Ulster where the proportion is 21.7%, and lowest in Ards and North Down where the proportion is 17.0%. The statistics are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Children (aged 0-14) population and usually resident population by LGD Census 2021

Geography	Population aged 0-14	Population	Percentage of population aged 0-14
Antrim and Newtownabbey	27,500	145,700	18.9%
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	45,400	218,700	20.8%
Belfast	62,300	345,400	18.0%
Causeway Coast & Glens	26,000	141,700	18.3%
Derry City & Strabane	30,000	150,800	19.9%
Fermanagh & Omagh	23,200	116,800	19.9%
Lisburn & Castlereagh	28,400	149,100	19.0%
Mid & East Antrim	24,200	139,000	17.4%
Mid Ulster	32,600	150,300	21.7%
Newry, Mourne & Down	37,800	182,100	20.8%
Ards & North Down	27,800	163,700	17.0%
Northern Ireland	365,200	1,903,200	19.2%

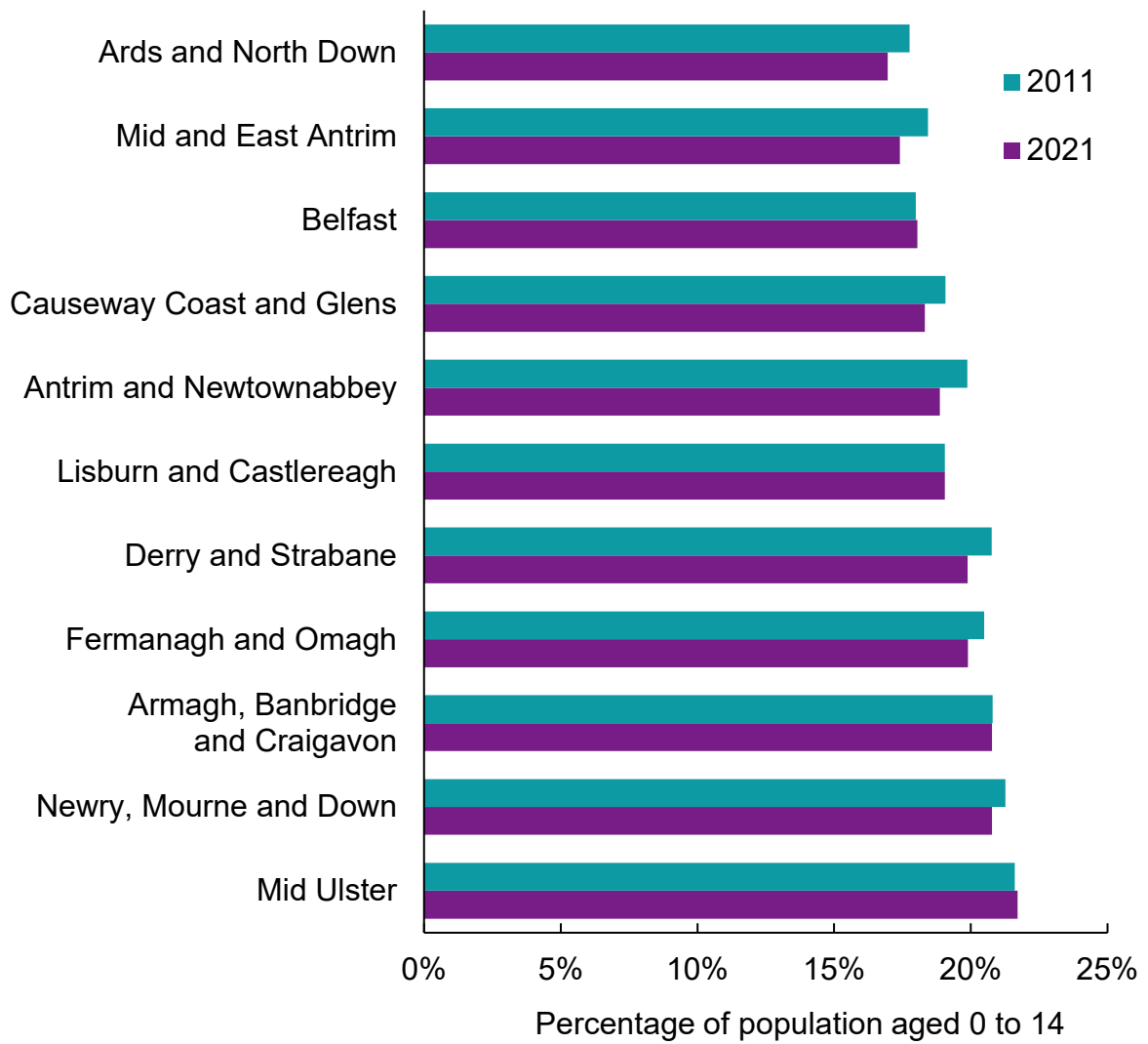
The percentage of the population aged 0 to 14 across each Local Government District is shown in the map at Figure 2.

Figure 2: Percentage of children aged 0 to 14, by LGD Census 2021



When comparing over time – see figure 3 – the percentage of the population who are children has fallen in 8 of the 11 Local Government Districts from Census 2011. In contrast, the percentage of the population who are aged 0 to 14 has increased in 3 Local Government Districts but it should be noted that any increases from the 2011 to the 2021 Census are only marginal.

Figure 3: Percentage of the population aged 0 to 14 by LGD (Census 2011 and 2021)



5.2. Population aged 65 and over by Local Government District - Census 2021

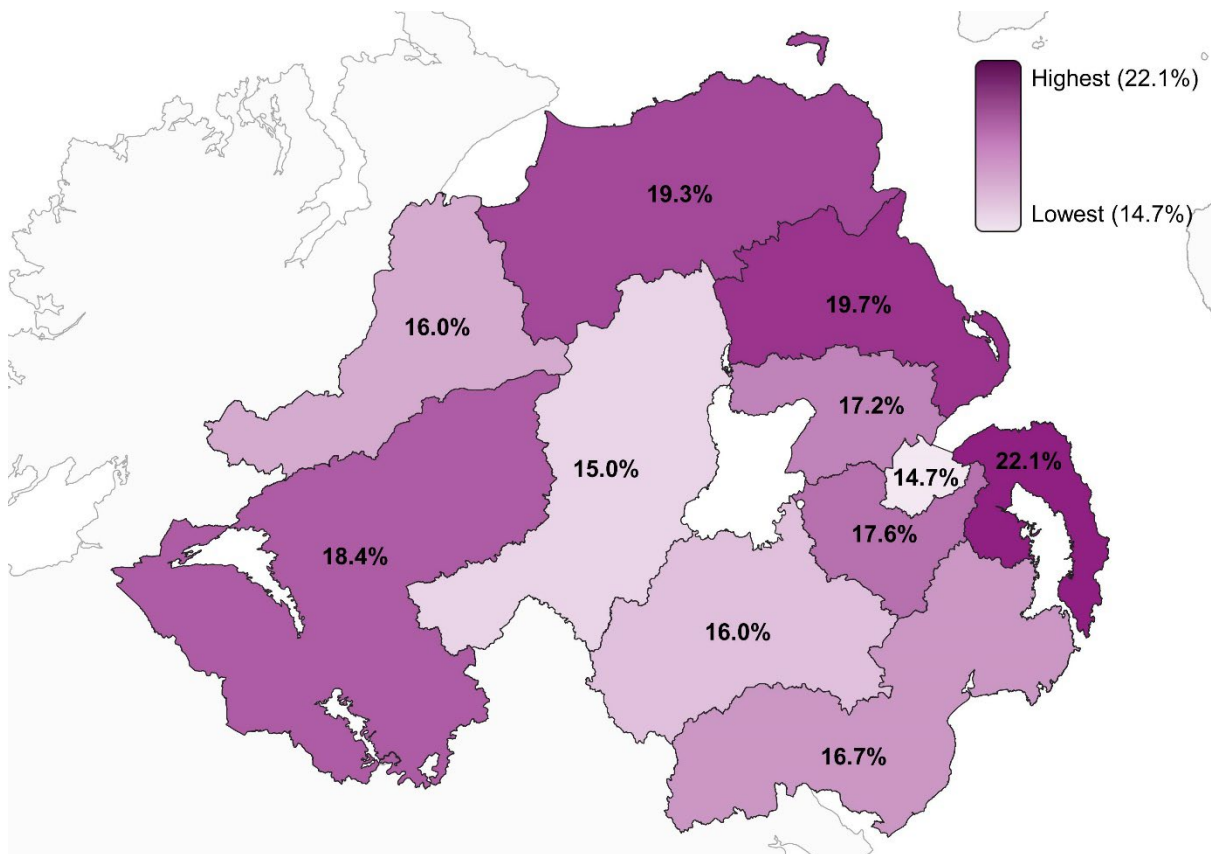
People aged 65 and over account for 326,500 people or 17.2% of the Northern Ireland population. This percentage varies by Local Government District and is shown in Table 5 and in the map at Figure 4.

Table 5: People aged 65 and over and usually resident population by LGD Census 2021

Geography	Population aged 65 and over	Population	Percentage of population aged 65 and over
Antrim and Newtownabbey	25,100	145,700	17.2%
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	35,000	218,700	16.0%
Belfast	50,800	345,400	14.7%
Causeway Coast & Glens	27,300	141,700	19.3%
Derry City & Strabane	24,200	150,800	16.0%
Fermanagh & Omagh	21,400	116,800	18.4%
Lisburn & Castlereagh	26,200	149,100	17.6%
Mid & East Antrim	27,300	139,000	19.7%
Mid Ulster	22,500	150,300	15.0%
Newry, Mourne & Down	30,300	182,100	16.7%
Ards & North Down	36,200	163,700	22.1%
Northern Ireland	326,500	1,903,200	17.2%

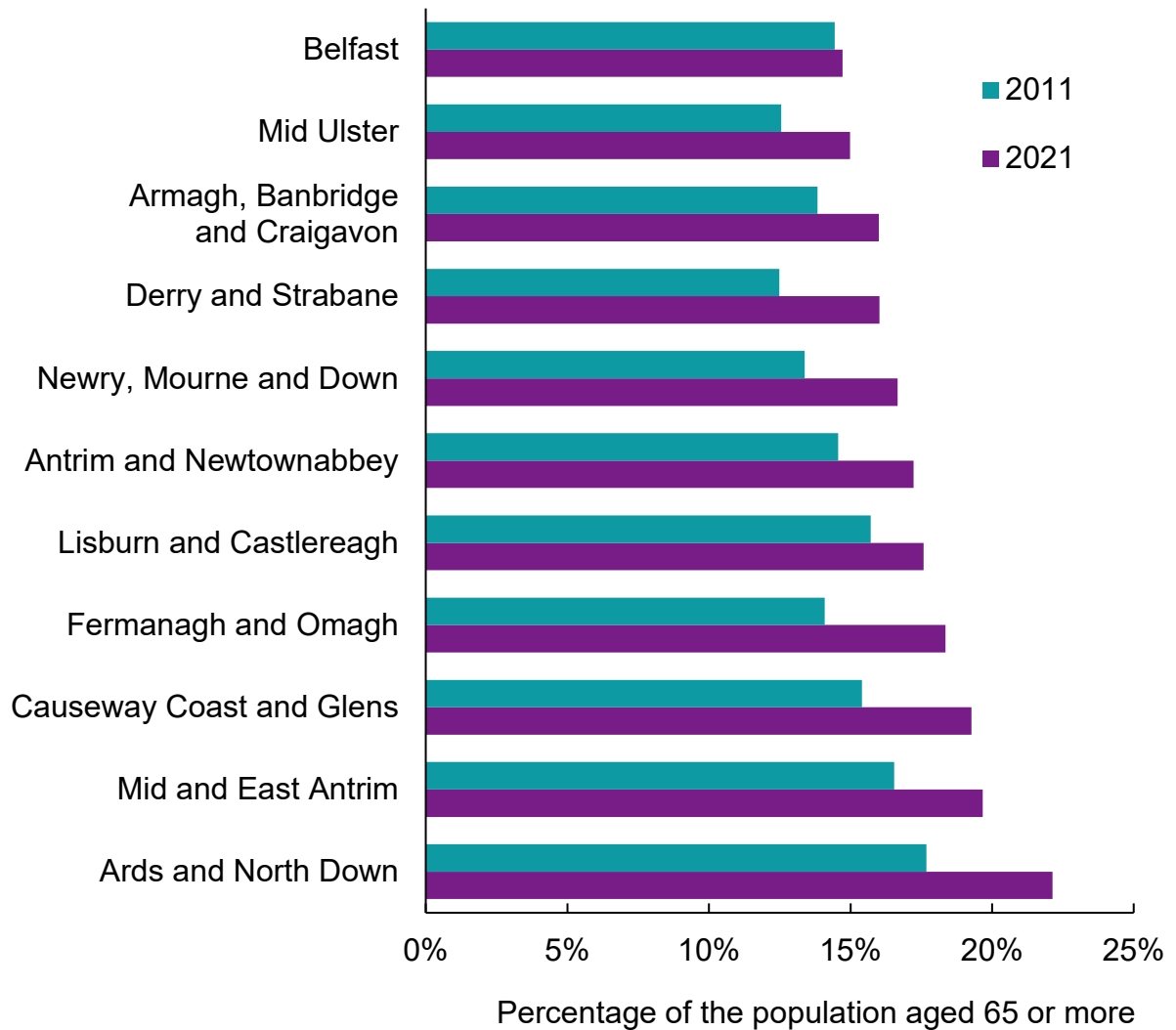
As can be seen, the percentage of the population who are aged 65 or more is lowest in Belfast (14.7%) and highest in Ards and North Down (22.1%).

Figure 4: Percentage of older adults aged 65 or more, by LGD (Census 2021)



When comparing over time – see figure 5 – the percentage of the population who are aged 65 or more has increased over the last ten years in all 11 of the Local Government Districts. The largest increase is in Ards and North Down, increasing from 17.7% in 2011 to 22.1% in 2021. The smallest increase is in Belfast where it changed from 14.4% in 2011 to 14.7% in 2021.

Figure 5: Percentage of the population aged 65 or more by LGD (Census 2011 and 2021)



5.3. Sex composition of population by Local Government District - Census 2021

The census day population comprised of 967,000 females and 936,100 males. This means that for every 100 females in Northern Ireland there were 96.8 males. The sex ratio varies across the Local Government Districts and this is shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Females, Males and sex ratio (males per 100 females) by LGD (Census 2021)

Geography	Females	Males	Sex ratio (males per 100 females)
Antrim and Newtownabbey	74,200	71,500	96.4
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	110,400	108,300	98.1
Belfast	177,300	168,100	94.8
Causeway Coast & Glens	71,900	69,800	97.1
Derry City & Strabane	77,100	73,700	95.5
Fermanagh & Omagh	58,500	58,300	99.7
Lisburn & Castlereagh	75,800	73,300	96.8
Mid & East Antrim	70,900	68,100	95.9
Mid Ulster	75,000	75,300	100.4
Newry, Mourne & Down	92,000	90,100	97.9
Ards & North Down	84,000	79,700	94.9
Northern Ireland	967,000	936,100	96.8

Only in Mid Ulster are there more males than females (300 more males). Belfast has the lowest proportion of males to females with 94.8 males to every 100 females. The pattern of sex ratios is consistent with more rural Local Government Districts having a sex ratio closer to parity and more urban Local Government Districts having markedly more females than males.

6. Households by Local Government District - Census 2021

Of the 1,903,175 people usually resident in Northern Ireland, the vast majority (98.6% or 1,876,800 people) live in 768,810 private households. The remaining 1.4% of the population (26,300 people) live in communal establishments (for example, Nursing Homes, Halls of Residence, etc.).

Table 7 shows the number of households, household population and average household size in each of the 11 Local Government Districts in Northern Ireland from the 2021 Census.

Table 7: Household statistics by LGD for Census 2021

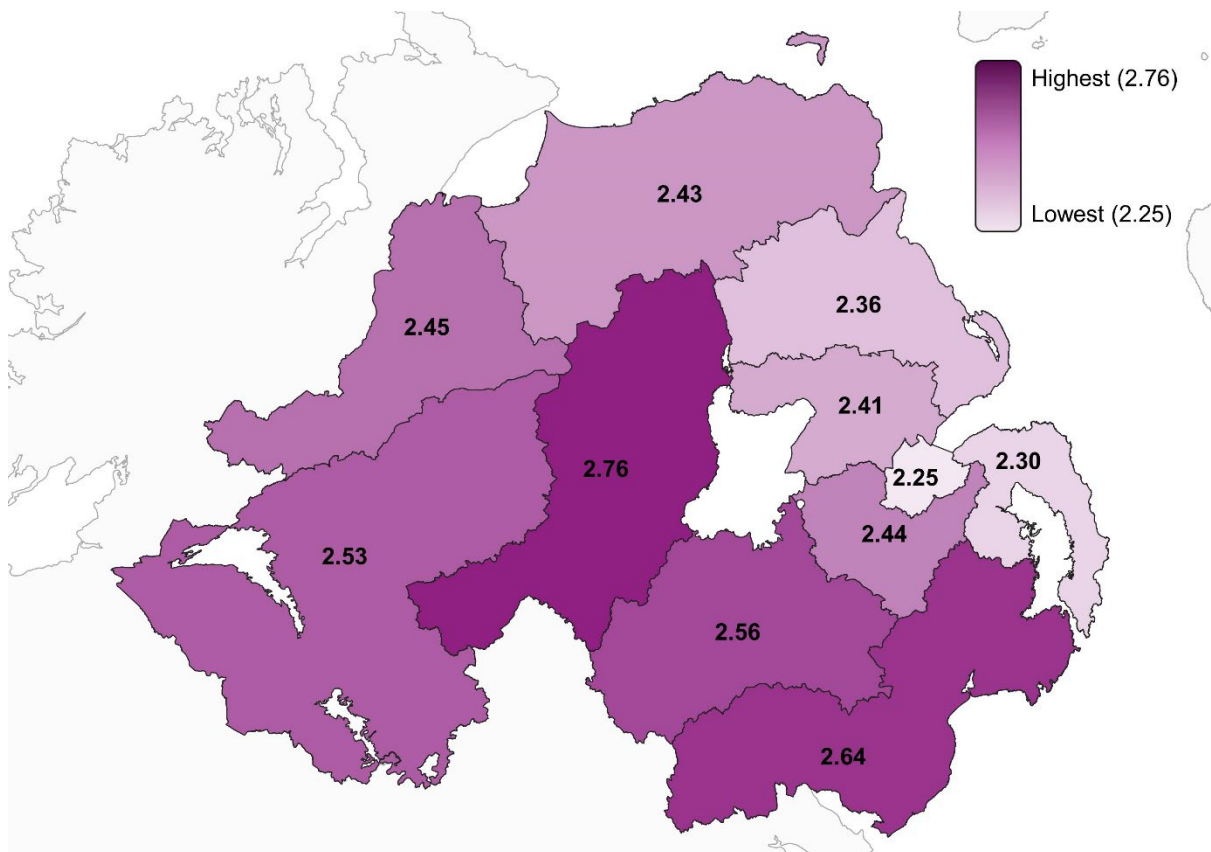
Geography	Households	Population resident in a household	Average household size
Antrim and Newtownabbey	59,500	143,500	2.41
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	84,600	217,000	2.56
Belfast	149,200	336,000	2.25
Causeway Coast & Glens	57,600	139,800	2.43
Derry City & Strabane	60,900	149,300	2.45
Fermanagh & Omagh	45,700	115,600	2.53
Lisburn & Castlereagh	60,100	146,600	2.44
Mid & East Antrim	58,300	137,800	2.36
Mid Ulster	54,000	149,100	2.76
Newry, Mourne & Down	68,400	180,300	2.64
Ards & North Down	70,400	161,900	2.30
Northern Ireland	768,800	1,876,800	2.44

The number of households mirrors to a large extent the population, with Belfast having the largest number of households (149,200 in 2021), and Fermanagh and Omagh the smallest at 45,700 households in 2021. Taken together, households and

population can be used to determine the average household size. In 2021 the overall average household size sat at 2.44 persons per household.

The distribution of average household size by Local Government District can be seen in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Average household size by LGD (Census 2021)



The largest average household size can be seen in Mid Ulster, with on average 2.76 persons in each household and the lowest in Belfast, with on average 2.25 persons in each household.

This distribution of average household size follows the patterns of age in the population. Local Government Districts having larger average household sizes tend to have a younger population and Local Government Districts with smaller average household sizes tending to have older populations.

6.1. Change in number of households by Local Government District (Census 2011 to 2021)

Since 2011, the number of households has increased by 9.3% from 703,275 to 768,810. This increase is seen across all Local Government Districts. The largest proportional increase was in the Lisburn and Castlereagh Local Government District where the number of households increased by 14.2%, while the smallest increase was in the Belfast Local Government District which saw an increase of 5.4%. This is shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Households by LGD for 2011 and 2021 Census

Geography	Households 2011	Households 2021	Change	Percentage change
Antrim and Newtownabbey	54,000	59,500	5,400	10.0%
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	75,500	84,600	9,100	12.1%
Belfast	141,600	149,200	7,600	5.4%
Causeway Coast & Glens	53,700	57,600	3,900	7.2%
Derry City & Strabane	55,600	60,900	5,300	9.6%
Fermanagh & Omagh	41,500	45,700	4,200	10.1%
Lisburn & Castlereagh	52,600	60,100	7,500	14.2%
Mid & East Antrim	54,300	58,300	4,000	7.3%
Mid Ulster	47,800	54,000	6,200	13.0%
Newry, Mourne & Down	62,000	68,400	6,400	10.3%
Ards & North Down	64,600	70,400	5,800	9.0%
Northern Ireland	703,300	768,800	65,500	9.3%

7. Associated outputs

Census 2021 outputs on [demography](#) and [households](#) are available to download from the NISRA website, they include:

- MS-A01 Usual resident population
- MS-A02 Age - five year age bands - all usual residents
- MS-A03 Age - five year age bands - females
- MS-A04 Age - five year age bands - males
- MS-A05 Age - single year
- MS-A06 Age structure
- MS-A07 Sex
- MS-A08 Five year age bands and sex
- MS-A09 Single year of age and sex
- MS-A10 Broad age bands and sex
- MS-A11 Broad age bands and sex - 1851-2021
- MS-A12 Sex ratio (males per 100 females) by five year age bands
- MS-A13 Median age by sex
- MS-A14 Population density
- MS-A15 Residence type
- MS-E01 Households
- MS-E02 Household size
- MS-E03 Households, household residents and average household size - 1851- 2021

8. Further information

Census statistics are produced by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency free from political influence. In May 2022, following a full assessment, the United Kingdom Statistics Authority designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the [Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007](#) and the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). National Statistics status means that the statistics meet the

highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is NISRA's responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

The census plays a fundamental role in the provision of official statistics – census data are used to inform key policies, plan key services and allocate public funds.

8.1. Quality of the results

The census data collection operation was supported by an independent [coverage survey](#). The coverage survey along with administrative data and information from the field operation were combined to allow statistical estimates to be made of the small proportion of people who did not make a return. The statistical estimates discussed here, as with all Census 2021 outputs, reflect the full population of Northern Ireland.

Further information on accuracy, coverage and imputation is provided on the NISRA website in the [Census 2021 quality assurance report \(PDF 275 KB\)](#).

8.2. Confidentiality

Census Office has taken steps to ensure that the confidentiality of respondents is fully protected. All published results from the census have been subject to statistical processes to ensure that individuals cannot be identified. For more information, please refer to the [statistical disclosure control methodology](#). These processes may result in very marginally different results between tables for the same statistic.

8.3. Comparability with previous censuses

The census is designed to provide the most accurate possible picture of the population on the day the census is taken. Whilst this report contains a small number of historical tables that give comparisons at the Northern Ireland level of some key demographic statistics, users should be aware that comparisons may be affected by other differences, in particular, between the census questionnaires, impacts of issues of the day, etc.

As the last three censuses (2001, 2011 and 2021) were all adjusted for under-enumeration and reflect the Northern Ireland population on census day, this supports comparisons between those censuses.

8.4. Supporting material

A number of [supporting documents](#) are available on the census pages of the NISRA website. These documents describe the census methodology in more detail, the quality assurance processes applied, the paper questionnaire used in the census, and a full list of definitions and output classifications.

8.5. More details

Further information on the statistics provided in this publication can be obtained from Census Customer Services at:

Telephone: 028 9025 5156

Email: census@nisra.gov.uk

Responsible Statistician: Dr David Marshall

This report was made possible by the co-operation of the public in responding to the census, the commitment of the census field and headquarters staff, and the assistance of many other people and organisations throughout all aspects of the census. The Registrar General for Northern Ireland, who is responsible for the planning, conduct and reporting of the census, would like to thank all of those who contributed to the census.

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