

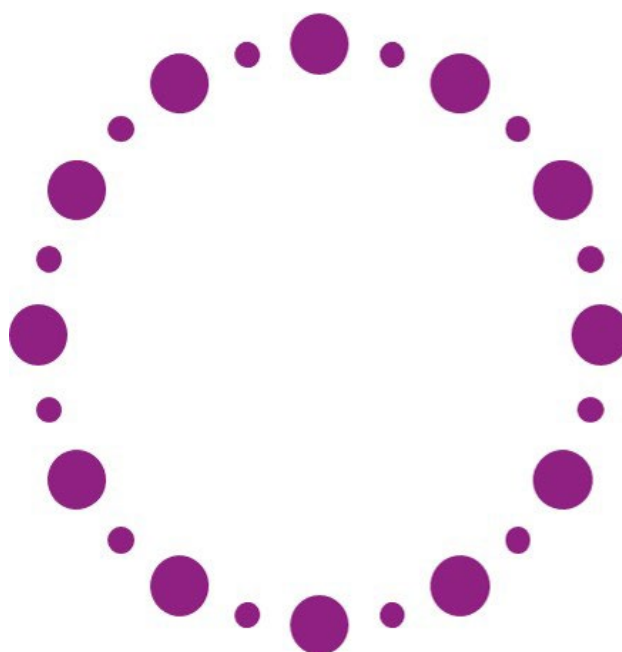
census
2021



Statistical bulletin

Alternative populations for Northern Ireland

8 August 2024



nisra.gov.uk/census2021

Contents

1.	Introduction.....	3
2.	Key points.....	4
3.	Alternative populations – Northern Ireland, Census 2021	6
4.	Daytime population, Census 2021.....	6
4.1.	Daytime population – LGD, Census 2021	7
4.2.	Daytime population – LGD by age and sex, Census 2021	8
4.3.	Daytime population – LGD by selected characteristics, Census 2021	10
4.3.1.	Daytime population – Employment status and hours worked.....	10
4.3.2.	Daytime population – Method of travel to work or study.....	11
5.	Workplace population, Census 2021	13
5.1.	Workplace population – LGD, Census 2021	13
5.2.	Workplace population – LGD by age and sex, Census 2021	14
5.3.	Workplace population – LGD by selected characteristics, Census 2021	17
5.3.1.	Workplace population – Industry	17
5.3.2.	Workplace population – Occupation.....	19
6.	Associated outputs	21
7.	Further information	21
7.1.	Accredited official statistics	21
7.2.	Quality of the results	22
7.3.	Confidentiality	22
7.4.	Comparability with previous censuses	22
7.5.	Supporting material.....	23
7.6.	More details	23
7.7.	Copyright.....	23

1. Introduction

On 8 August 2024, the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) released further results from Census 2021, held on 21 March 2021, which provide a profile of Northern Ireland on two alternative population bases. To date all statistics available from Census 2021 relate to the standard usual resident population base (i.e. those people captured in the census who are [usually resident](#) in Northern Ireland). This publication provides statistics on the following two population bases:

- **Daytime population:** the population and characteristics of people in an area during the daytime. For each area, the daytime population includes all people living in Northern Ireland who either have a workplace or a place of study in that area. It also includes those who are neither in employment nor in full-time education and live in the area. The daytime population excludes people who live in the area who have a workplace or study location outside the area.
- **Workplace population:** the population and characteristics of people working in an area. For each area, the workplace population includes all people aged 16 and over (excluding full-time students) in employment. People with a workplace outside the area, and those not in employment (and full-time students) are excluded.

The information covers Northern Ireland and the 11 Local Government Districts (LGDs).

For display purposes figures are appropriately rounded, however, full figures are available in the [Census 2021 tables](#) on the NISRA website.

Census 2021 took place during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, a period of rapid change which will have affected where people worked and studied. For example, it is possible that some people on furlough may have identified as economically inactive, instead of temporarily away from work. To ensure that students were counted fully in Census 2021, a post-collection process to address any overcount/duplication was carried out. See [Census 2021 student information paper](#) for more information.

2. Key points

The key points relating to the **alternative population** topic are as follows:

- The **daytime population** in an area includes all people living in Northern Ireland who either have a workplace or a place of study in that area, and those who are neither in employment nor in full-time education and live in the area.
- In Census 2021, the daytime population in Northern Ireland was 1,883,700. This is slightly lower than the usual resident population of 1,903,200 as it excludes the 19,500 usual residents living in Northern Ireland that had a workplace or study location outside Northern Ireland.
- Just over one in eight people in the daytime population (12.9%, or 242,200 people) had a daytime address in a different LGD to where they were usually resident.
- Only two LGDs in Northern Ireland had a daytime population which was larger than their equivalent usual resident population - Belfast (19.0% or 65,600 people) and Antrim & Newtownabbey (0.2% or 300 people).
- The remaining LGDs had a daytime population which was lower than the equivalent usual resident population, with Ards and North Down having the largest negative difference (12.3%, or 20,200 people).
- The **workplace population** in an area includes all people aged 16 and over (excluding full-time students) in employment in that area.
- In Census 2021, the workplace population in Northern Ireland was 795,600.
- Over one in five people in the workplace population (22.5%, or 178,600) worked in a different LGD to where they were usually resident.
- The LGD with the largest difference in workplace population compared with the equivalent usual resident population was Belfast. Its workplace

population was 34.5% (or 47,800 people) larger than the equivalent usual resident population.

- All remaining LGDs had a workplace population which was less than their equivalent usual resident population, with Ards and North Down having the largest negative difference (22.9%, or 16,100 people), followed by Mid and East Antrim (17.3%, or 10,500 people) and Causeway Coast and Glens (13.0%, or 7,500 people).

3. Alternative populations – Northern Ireland, Census 2021

In Census 2021, the daytime population in Northern Ireland was 1,883,700, slightly lower than the usual resident population of 1,903,200. This is because the daytime population excludes the 19,500 usual residents living in Northern Ireland with a workplace or study location outside Northern Ireland.

The workplace population of Northern Ireland in Census 2021 was 795,600. This includes all usual residents aged 16 and over (excluding full-time students) in employment and working in Northern Ireland. This count does not include any people with a workplace in Northern Ireland who were not usual residents in Northern Ireland at the time of Census 2021 (for example, people living in the Republic of Ireland and working in Northern Ireland). See Table 1 below.

Table 1: Census 2021 populations

Population base	Census 2021 count
Usual resident population	1,903,200
Daytime population	1,883,700
Workplace population	795,600

4. Daytime population, Census 2021

The daytime population in an area includes all people living in Northern Ireland who either have a workplace or a place of study in that area. It also includes those who are neither in employment nor in full-time education and live in the area. The daytime population excludes people who live in the area who have a workplace or study location outside the area.

This section focusses on differences between the daytime populations and the usual resident populations across the LGDs in Northern Ireland. Analysis on the characteristics of the populations is provided for selected topics and, where relevant, includes statistics for selected LGDs with the largest population differences.

4.1. Daytime population – LGD, Census 2021

Table 2 below shows the Census 2021 daytime population by LGD compared to the usual resident population. Overall, 12.9% (242,200) of the daytime population had a daytime address in a different LGD to where they were usually resident.

Table 2: Daytime population by LGD: Comparison with usual resident population

Geography	Usual resident population	Daytime population	Percentage difference (Usual resident as a base)
Antrim & Newtownabbey	145,700	146,000	0.2%
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	218,700	204,700	-6.4%
Belfast	345,400	411,000	19.0%
Causeway Coast & Glens	141,700	132,900	-6.2%
Derry City & Strabane	150,800	148,400	-1.6%
Fermanagh & Omagh	116,800	112,700	-3.5%
Lisburn & Castlereagh	149,100	140,100	-6.1%
Mid & East Antrim	139,000	127,100	-8.6%
Mid Ulster	150,300	146,400	-2.6%
Newry, Mourne & Down	182,100	170,900	-6.1%
Ards & North Down	163,700	143,500	-12.3%

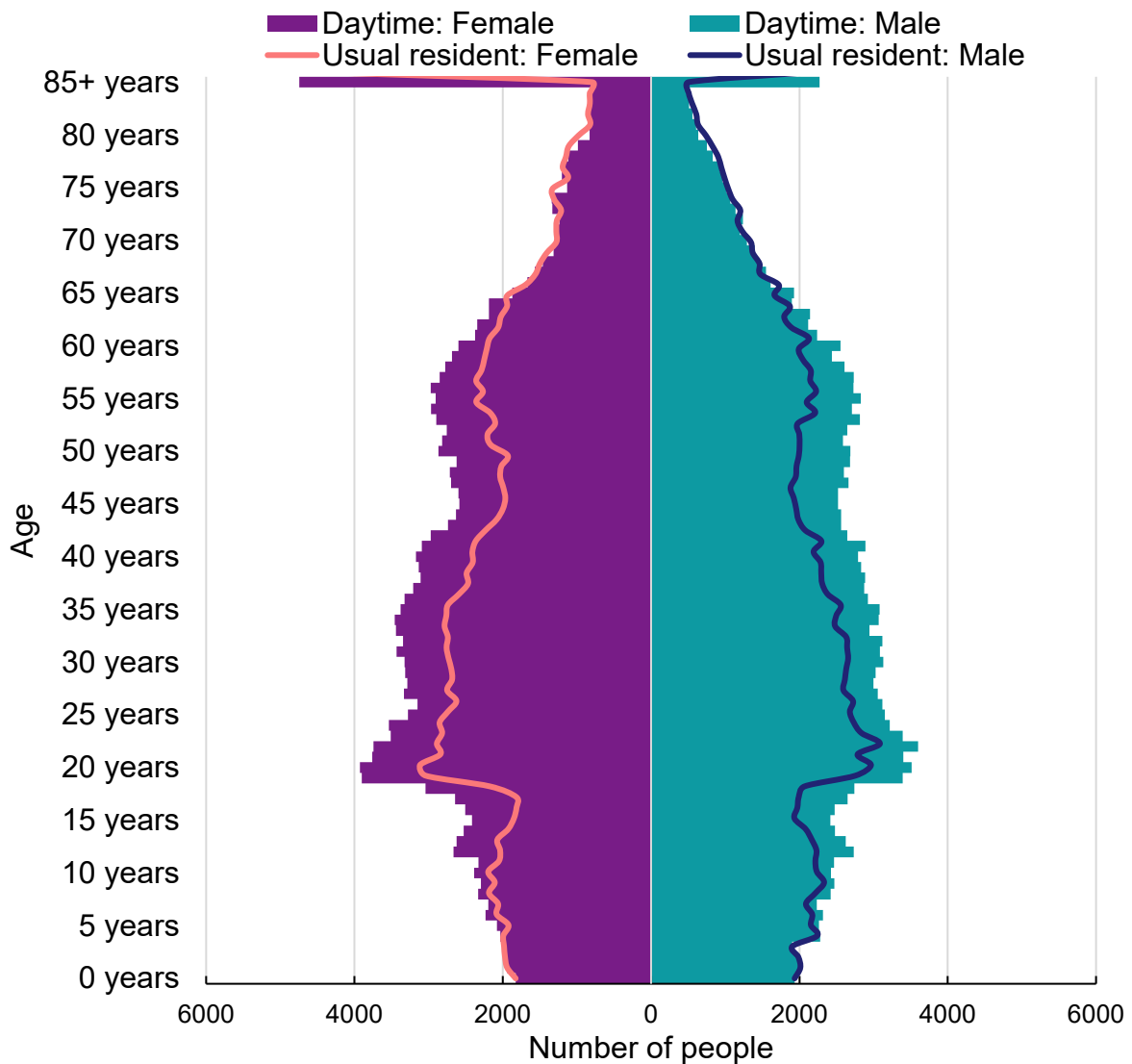
Table 2 shows that only two LGDs in Northern Ireland had a daytime population which was larger than the usually resident population - Belfast (19.0% or 65,600 people) and Antrim & Newtownabbey (0.2% or 300 people).

The remaining LGDs had a daytime population which was lower than the usual resident population, with Ards and North Down having the largest negative difference (12.3%, or 20,200 people).

4.2. Daytime population – LGD by age and sex, Census 2021

Differences between the usual resident population and the daytime population by age and sex varies across the LGDs. The figures below focus on the age/sex profiles of the LGDs with the largest differences between their usual residence population and their daytime population (i.e. Belfast and Ards & North Down) as examples of how the population structures change between these population bases.

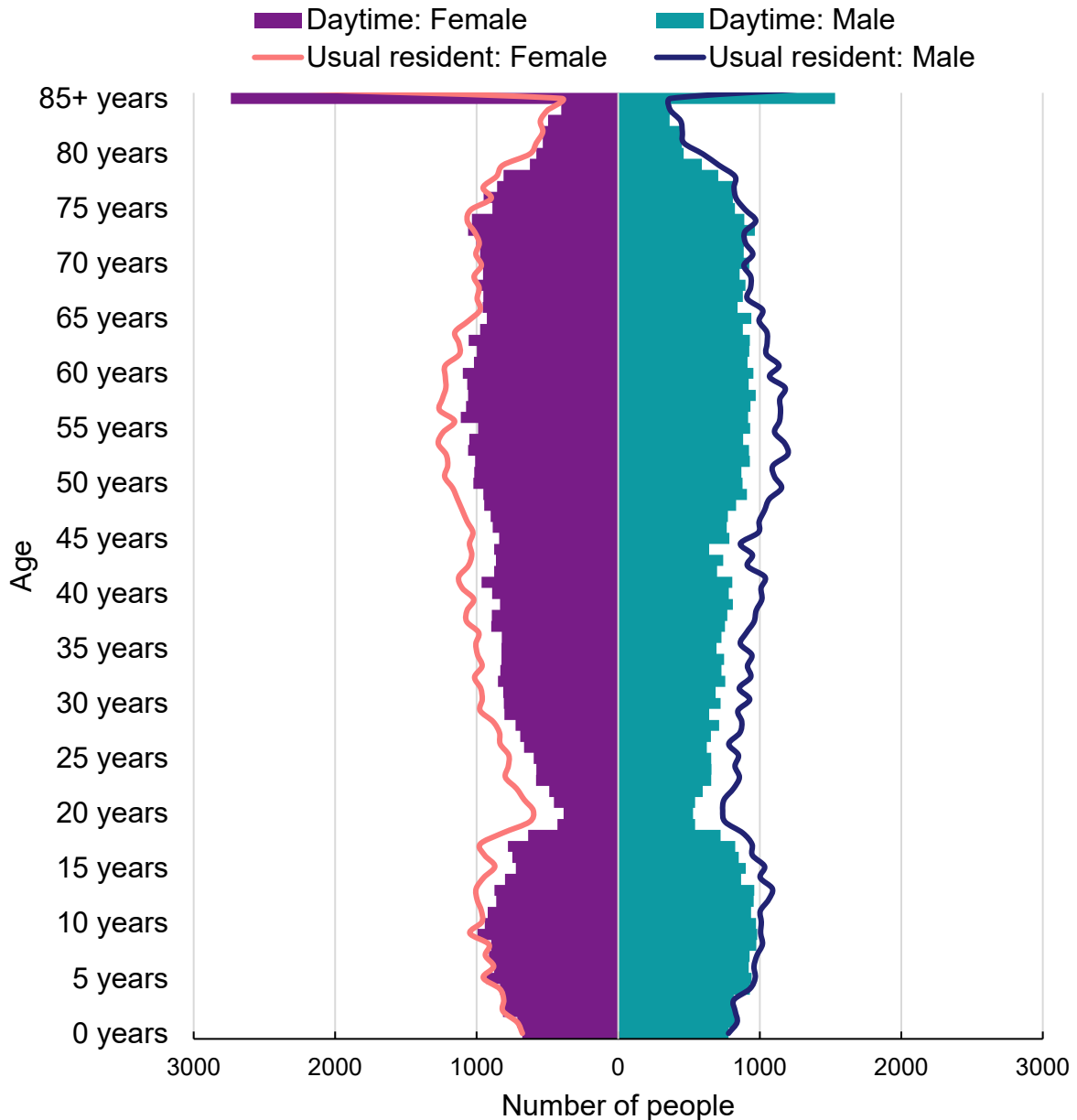
Figure 1: Daytime and usual resident populations by age and sex – Belfast LGD



In Belfast LGD, there were 19.0% more people in the daytime population than the usual resident population. The overall proportional increase was greater for females at 20.0% (35,400 females) compared with 18.0% for males (30,200 males). The largest percentage increase among females was seen in those aged 16 to 18 years,

where the daytime population was 41.1% (2,400 females) greater than the usual resident population. For comparison, males in this age band increased by 30.3% (1,800 males). The largest percentage difference among the male population in Belfast LGD was for those aged 45 to 54 years (32.2%, or 6,400 males). Females in this age band increased by a similar proportion (31.4% or 6,600 females).

Figure 2: Daytime and usual resident populations by age and sex – Ards and North Down LGD



In Ards and North Down LGD, there were 12.3% fewer people in the daytime population than the usual resident population. The overall proportional decrease was

greater for males at 13.4% (10,700 males) compared with 11.3% for females (9,500 females). The largest percentage decreases for both males and females were seen in those aged 19 to 24 years, where the daytime population was 25.6% (1,200 males) and 30.3% (1,300 females) lower than the usual resident population.

4.3. Daytime population – LGD by selected characteristics, Census 2021

The movement of people between LGDs based on their place of work or study can have an effect on population structures when looking at census characteristics.

Differences in many of the census topics released today are relatively minor when looking at the daytime population. Therefore, this section focusses on the three census topics that show notable differences when comparing the usual resident population with the daytime population – they are Employment Status, Hours Worked and Method of Travel.

For brevity, analysis is provided for those LGDs that have the largest differences within these topics.

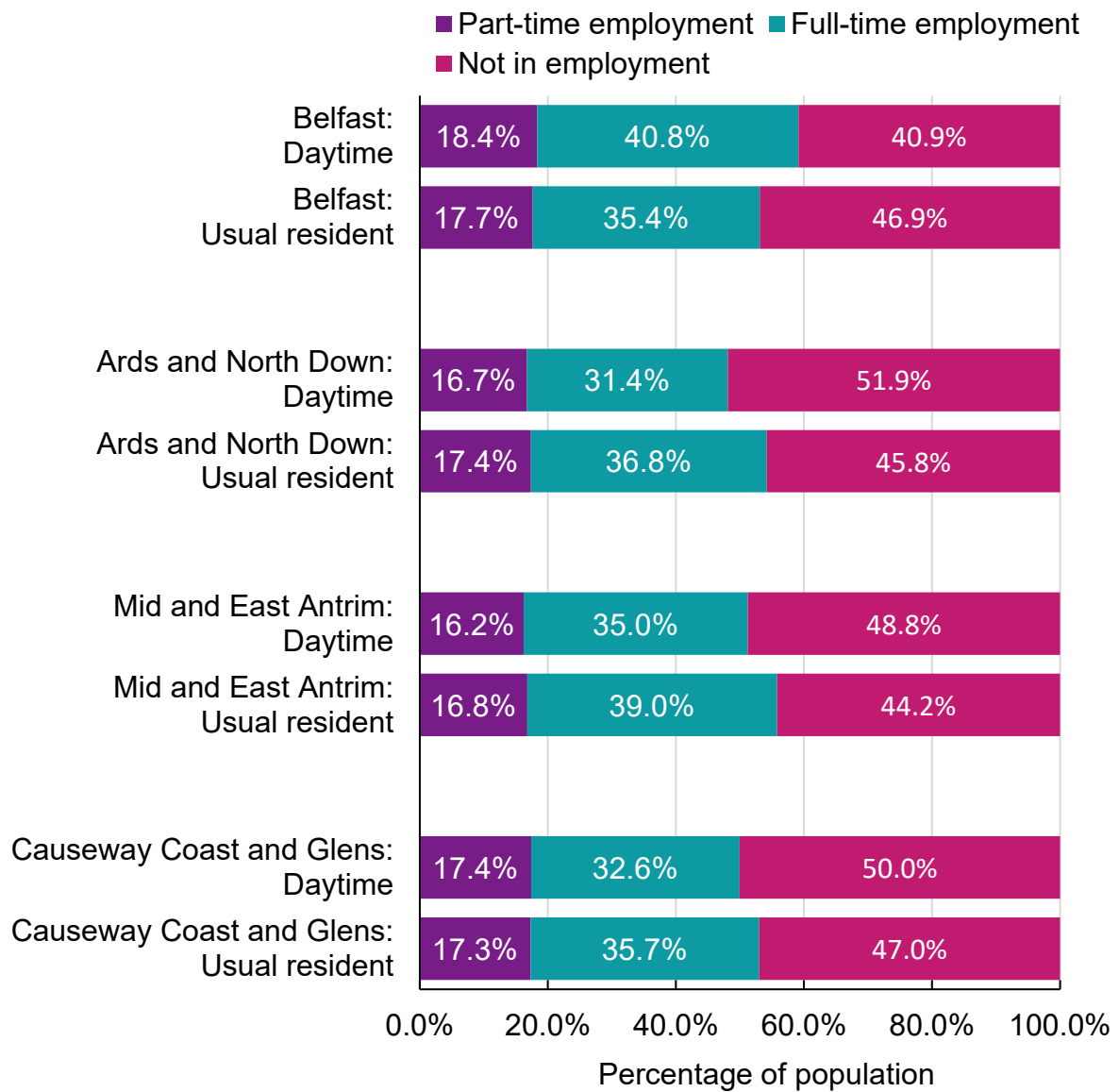
4.3.1. Daytime population – Employment status and hours worked

LGDs that saw the largest differences in employment status and hours worked of people aged 16 and over in the daytime population compared to the usual resident population are shown in Figure 3 below.

In Belfast LGD, the daytime population aged 16 and over were more likely than the equivalent usually resident population to work full-time hours (40.8% compared to 35.4%) and less likely to not be in employment (40.9% compared to 46.9%).

Conversely, the daytime populations in Ards and North Down LGD, Mid and East Antrim LGD and Causeway Coast and Glens LGD were less likely to work full-time hours and more likely to not be in employment than their usually resident populations.

Figure 3: Employment status and hours worked of persons aged 16 and over by selected LGD – percentage of daytime population compared to usual resident population



4.3.2. Daytime population – Method of travel to work or study

LGDs that saw the largest differences in method of travel to work or study in the daytime population compared to the usual resident population are shown in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Method of travel to place of work or study by selected LGD – percentage of daytime population compared to usual resident population

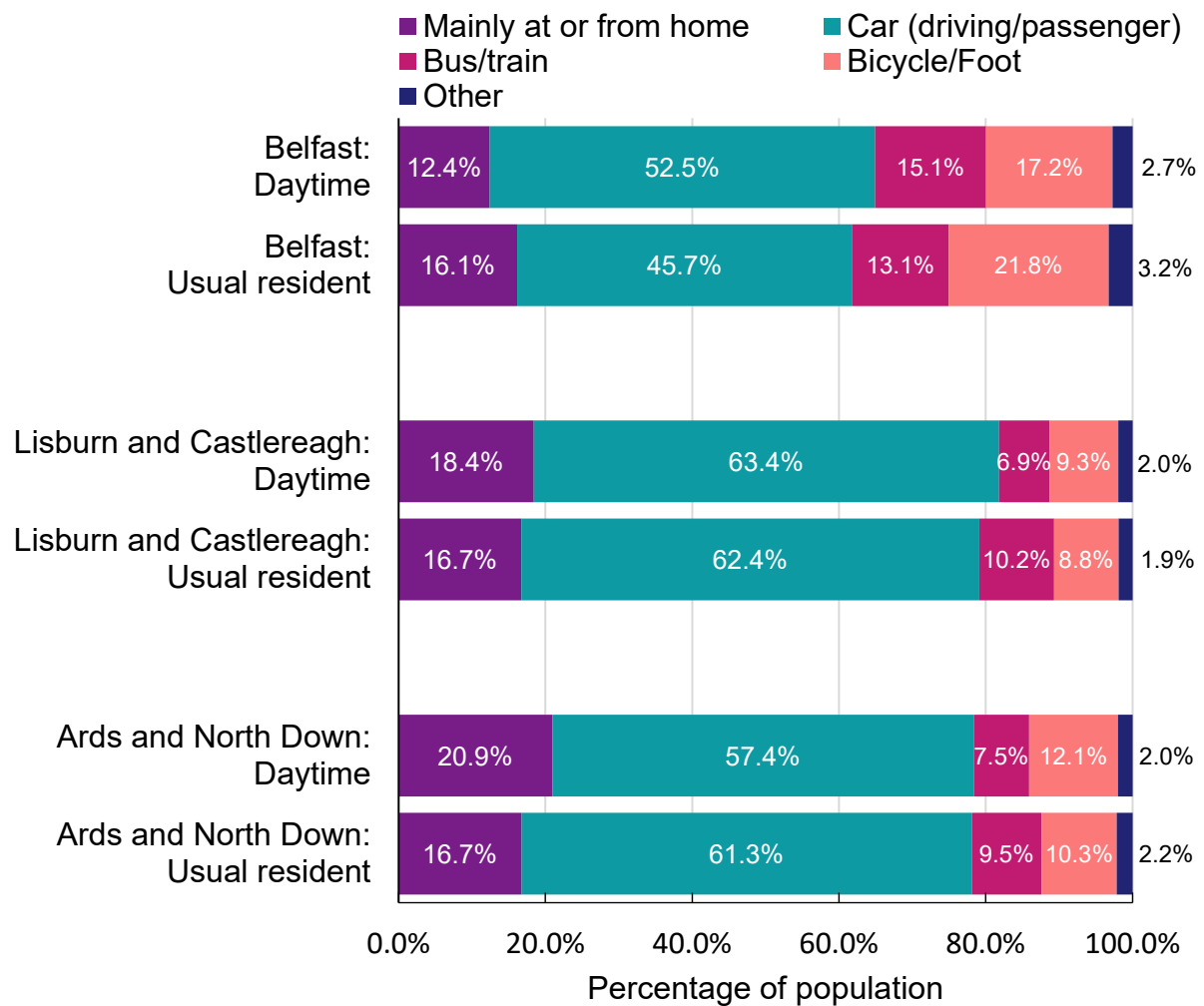


Figure 4 shows that the daytime population in Belfast LGD were less likely to work or study at home than the usually resident population (12.4% compared to 16.1%). Conversely, the daytime populations in Lisburn and Castlereagh LGD and Ards and North Down LGD were more likely to work or study at home than their usually resident population.

The daytime population in Belfast were also less likely to travel to work or study by bicycle or on foot (17.2% compared to 21.8%) and more likely to travel by bus or train, or by car (driving or as a passenger) than the usually resident population.

5. Workplace population, Census 2021

The workplace population in an area includes all people aged 16 and over (excluding full-time students) in employment in that area. People with a workplace address outside the area, and those not in employment, are excluded.

This section focusses on differences between the workplace populations and the usual resident populations across the LGDs in Northern Ireland. Contrary to the comparisons made for the daytime populations in Section 4, due to the nature of the workplace population it is necessary to limit comparisons to those from the usual resident population who are aged 16 and over in employment (excluding full-time students) – referred to as the “usual resident working population” in this section.

Analysis on the characteristics of the populations is provided for selected topics, and where relevant, includes statistics for selected LGDs with the largest population differences.

5.1. Workplace population – LGD, Census 2021

Table 3 shows the Census 2021 workplace population by LGD compared to the usual resident working population. Overall, 22.5% of the workplace population (178,600 people) worked in a different LGD to where they were usually resident.

The LGD with the largest difference in workplace population compared with the usual resident working population was Belfast, which had a workplace population which was 34.5% (47,800 people) larger than the equivalent usual resident population. All remaining LGDs had a workplace population which was less than their usual resident working population, with Ards and North Down having the largest negative difference (22.9%, or 16,100 people), followed by Mid and East Antrim (17.3%, or 10,500 people) and Causeway Coast and Glens (13.0%, or 7,500 people).

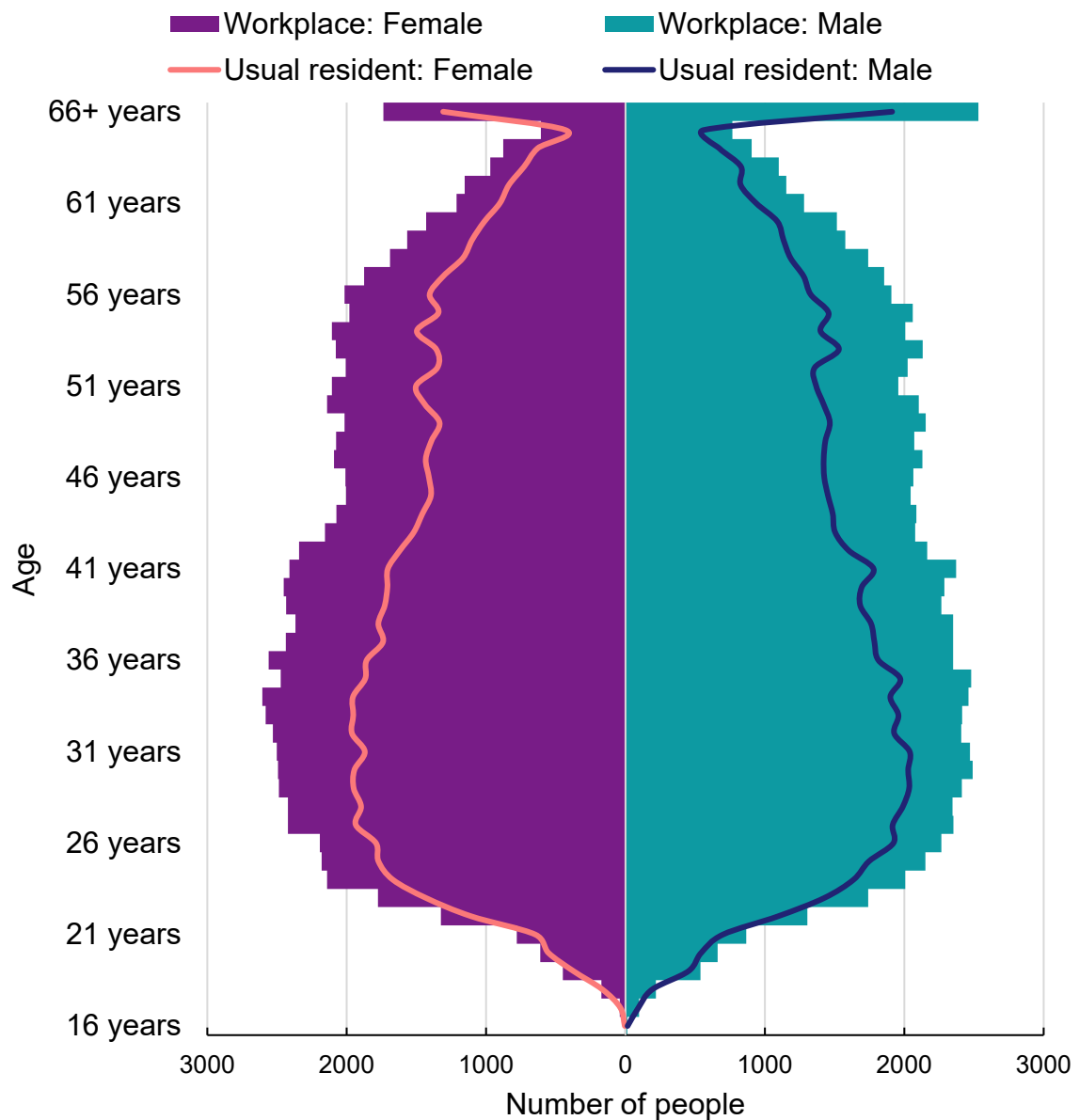
Table 3: Workplace population by LGD: Comparison with usual resident working population

Geography	Usual resident working population	Workplace population	Percentage difference (Usual resident as a base)
Antrim & Newtownabbey	65,900	64,700	-1.8%
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	97,700	88,000	-9.9%
Belfast	138,500	186,300	34.5%
Causeway Coast & Glens	58,000	50,500	-13.0%
Derry City & Strabane	58,500	56,200	-3.9%
Fermanagh & Omagh	49,800	46,700	-6.3%
Lisburn & Castlereagh	69,500	66,400	-4.5%
Mid & East Antrim	61,000	50,500	-17.3%
Mid Ulster	67,500	64,600	-4.3%
Newry, Mourne & Down	77,000	67,600	-12.2%
Ards & North Down	70,300	54,200	-22.9%

5.2. Workplace population – LGD by age and sex, Census 2021

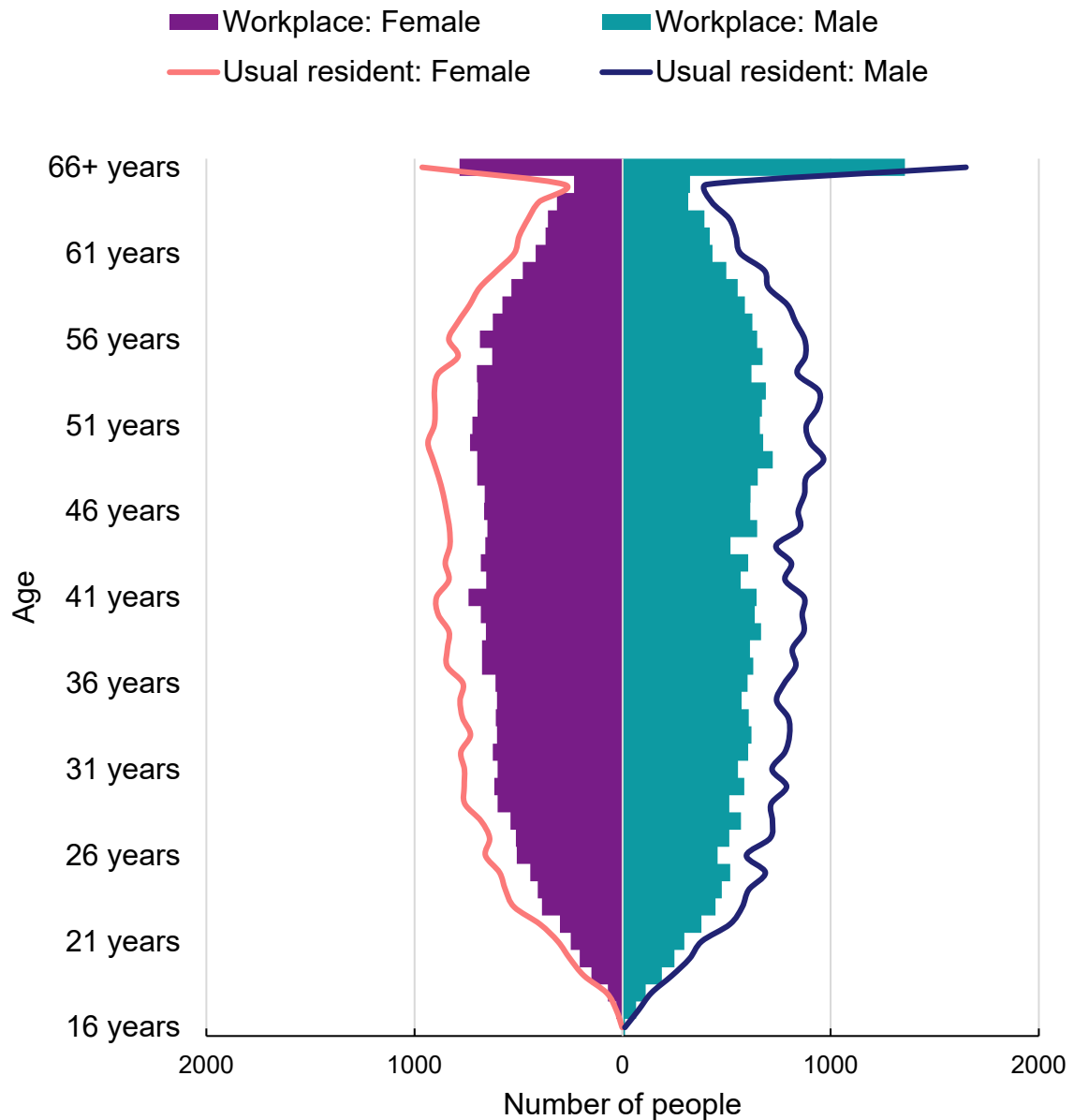
Differences between the usual resident working population and the workplace population by age and sex varied across the LGDs. Rather than providing analysis for all LGDs, the figures below focus on the age/sex profiles of the LGDs with the largest differences between their usual residence working population and their workplace population (i.e. Belfast and Ards & North Down) as examples of how the population structures change between these population bases.

Figure 5: Workplace and usual resident working population by age and sex – Belfast LGD



In Belfast LGD, there were 34.5% more people in the workplace population than the usual resident working population. The overall percentage difference was greater for females at 36.5% (24,900 females) compared with 32.6% (22,900) for males. The largest percentage increases for both females and males were seen in those aged 40 to 54 years, where the workplace population was 44.9% (9,900 females) and 41.8% (9,300 males) greater than the usual resident working population. A smaller difference was seen in workers aged 16 to 24, where the workplace population was just over one-fifth greater than the usual resident population for both females (21.9% or 1,300 females) and males (21.1% or 1,300 males).

Figure 6: Workplace and usual resident working population by age and sex – Ards and North Down LGD



In Ards and North Down LGD, there were 22.9% fewer people in the workplace population than the usual resident working population. The overall proportional decrease was greater for males at 24.6% (8,900 males) compared with 21.1% for females (7,200 females). The largest percentage decreases for both males and females were seen in those aged 40 to 54 years, where the workplace population was 26.6% (3,500 males) and 21.5% (2,800 females) lower than the usual resident working population.

5.3. Workplace population – LGD by selected characteristics, Census 2021

The movement of people between LGDs based on their place of work can have an effect on population structures when looking at census characteristics.

Differences in many of the census topics released today are relatively minor when looking at the workplace population against the equivalent usual resident population. However, there are some differences when looking at some labour market topics such as employment status, hours worked, industry and occupation.

An analysis of employment status and hours worked is included in Section 4.3, where the relevant daytime population (i.e. those aged 16 and over in employment) is very similar to the workplace population in this section (apart from a small number of full-time students in employment). For that reason, the analysis is not repeated here, and this section focusses solely on differences among industry and occupation groups for each LGD.

For brevity, analysis is provided for those LGDs that have the largest differences within these topics.

5.3.1. Workplace population – Industry

The majority of LGDs saw a decrease in numbers across all industries when comparing the workplace population to the usual resident working population. The exceptions were Belfast, Mid Ulster, Lisburn and Castlereagh, and Antrim and Newtownabbey LGDs which had increases in at least one industry group.

Table 4 below shows the largest percentage increases and decreases among industry groups across all the LGDs when comparing the workplace population to the usual resident working population.

Table 4: Industry groups with the largest percentage differences by LGD, workplace population compared with usual resident working population

Geography	Industry group with largest percentage increase	Industry group with largest percentage decrease
Antrim & Newtownabbey	Transport and communication (10.7%)	Other (-17.3%)
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	<i>No increases</i>	Financial, Real Estate, Professional and Administrative activities (-12.1%)
Belfast	Public administration, education and health (44.2%)	<i>No decreases</i>
Causeway Coast & Glens	<i>No increases</i>	Manufacturing (-17.1%)
Derry City & Strabane	<i>No increases</i>	Construction (-10.7%)
Fermanagh & Omagh	<i>No increases</i>	Manufacturing (-10.3%)
Lisburn & Castlereagh	Construction (11.5%)	Transport and communication (-19.4%)
Mid & East Antrim	<i>No increases</i>	Transport and communication (-26.1%)
Mid Ulster	Manufacturing (11.9%)	Public administration, education and health (-19.6%)
Newry, Mourne & Down	<i>No increases</i>	Public administration, education and health (-16.2%)
Ards & North Down	<i>No increases</i>	Public administration, education and health (-28.6%)

The largest difference for any LGD was in the ‘public administration, education, and health’ industry group in Belfast, where the workplace population was 44.2% (22,600 people) larger than the usual resident working population. In fact, Belfast LGD saw increases across all industry groups when looking at the workplace population compared to the usual resident working population.

Outside of Belfast, Mid Ulster had the next largest percentage increase, where numbers working in the manufacturing industry increased by 11.9% (1,200 people). Ards and North Down had the largest proportional decrease in numbers working in a particular industry group, where those working in 'public administration, education and health' decreased by 28.6% (7,600 people).

5.3.2. Workplace population – Occupation

Not surprisingly, the overall picture for occupation is similar to industry. The majority of LGDs saw a decrease in numbers across all occupations when comparing the workplace population to the usual resident working population. The exceptions again were Belfast, Mid Ulster, Lisburn and Castlereagh, and Antrim and Newtownabbey LGDs which had increases in at least one occupation group. Table 5 below shows the largest increases and decreases among occupation groups across all the LGDs.

The largest percentage difference for any LGD was in the 'administrative and secretarial occupations' group in Belfast, where the workplace population was 63.7% (10,900 people) larger than the usual resident working population. In fact, Belfast LGD saw increases across all occupation groups when looking at the workplace population compared to the usual resident working population.

Table 5: Occupation groups with the largest percentage differences by LGD, workplace population compared with usual resident working population

Geography	Occupation group with largest percentage increase	Occupation group with largest percentage decrease
Antrim & Newtownabbey	Process, plant and machine operatives (17.5%)	Administrative and secretarial occupations (-15.9%)
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	<i>No increases</i>	Associate professional and technical occupations (-14.5%)
Belfast	Administrative and secretarial occupations (63.7%)	<i>No decreases</i>
Causeway Coast & Glens	<i>No increases</i>	Associate professional and technical occupations (-21.0%)
Derry City & Strabane	<i>No increases</i>	Skilled trades occupations (-7.7%)
Fermanagh & Omagh	<i>No increases</i>	Professional occupations (-13.9%)
Lisburn & Castlereagh	Caring, leisure and other service occupations (11.6%)	Professional occupations (-13.7%)
Mid & East Antrim	<i>No increases</i>	Administrative and secretarial occupations (-24.8%)
Mid Ulster	Process, plant and machine operatives (5.2%)	Professional occupations (-21.9%)
Newry, Mourne & Down	<i>No increases</i>	Professional occupations (-19.8%)
Ards & North Down	<i>No increases</i>	Administrative and secretarial occupations (-34.1%)

Outside of Belfast, Antrim and Newtownabbey had the next largest percentage increase, where numbers working in ‘process plant and machine operative occupations’ increased by 17.5% (800 people). Ards and North Down had the largest proportional decrease in numbers working in a particular occupation group, where those working in ‘administrative and secretarial occupations’ decreased by 34.1% (4,200 people).

6. Associated outputs

Census 2021 alternative population tables are available to download from the NISRA website:

- [daytime population](#)
- [workplace population](#)

A number of commissioned tables have also been produced to support the Census 2021 outputs on alternative populations:

- [CT0102 Census 2021 populations](#)
- [CT0103 Reconciliation of daytime population](#)
- [CT0104 Reconciliation of workplace population](#)

7. Further information

7.1. Accredited official statistics

This is an accredited official statistics publication. [Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.](#)

Accredited official statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the [Code of Practice](#) for Official Statistics. They are produced free from any political interference. Our statistical practice is regulated by the [Office for Statistics Regulation \(OSR\)](#). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

These accredited official statistics were independently reviewed by the [Office for Statistics Regulation \(OSR\)](#). They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, 14 quality and value in the Code of Practice and should be labelled 'accredited official statistics'. further details can be found on our [National Statistics accreditation page](#).

You are welcome to contact us directly with any comments about how we meet these standards by emailing census@nisra.gov.uk.

Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing regulation@statistics.gov.uk or via the [OSR website](#).

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.

7.2. 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 \(PDF, 275 KB\)](#).

7.3. 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 \(PDF, 168 KB\)](#). These processes may result in very marginally different results between tables for the same statistic.

7.4. 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.

Census 2021 took place during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, a period of rapid change which will have affected employment patterns and, due to travel restrictions, the locations of where people worked and studied. Consequently, this will have impacted the alternative populations statistics published today, so care should be taken when comparing these to equivalent statistics from Census 2011.

It has not been possible to quantify the effects of such restrictions, but the statistics are still considered useful in the context of measuring alternative populations from Census 2021.

7.5. 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.

7.6. 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: Richard Elliott

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.

7.7. Copyright

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