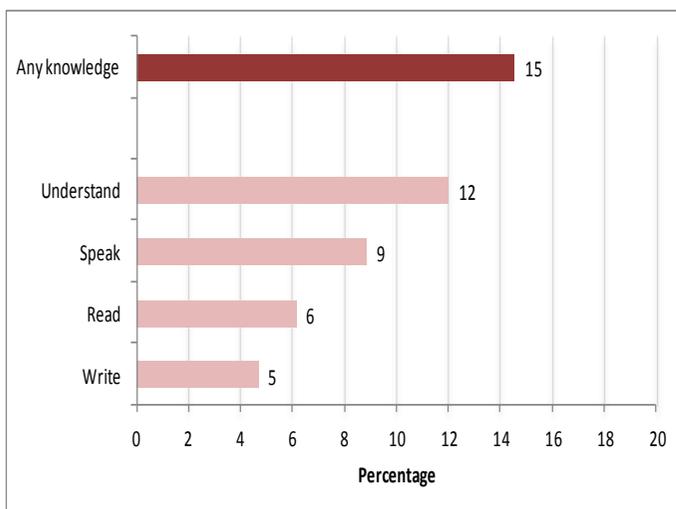


Main stories

- In 2015/16, the proportion of the population who have some knowledge of Irish was similar to the proportion in 2013/14 (both 15%).
- A higher proportion of Catholics have knowledge of Irish than both Protestants and those with other or no religion.
- Almost one fifth of adults are interested in learning or improving their Irish. Of those with no previous knowledge of Irish, 14% are interested in learning Irish.

Knowledge of Irish



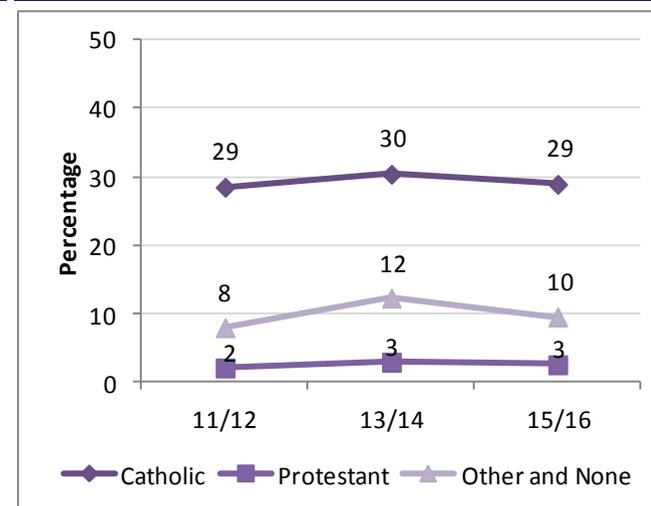
Interested in learning Irish



Almost one fifth of adults (19%) are interested in learning or improving their knowledge Irish. Of those with no previous knowledge of Irish, 14% are interested in learning Irish.

Knowledge of Irish

Religious background



In 2015/16, the proportion of Catholics who have some knowledge of Irish remains greater than the proportions of Protestants and those who gave their religious background as other or none.

In 2015/16, 15% of the population had some knowledge of Irish, i.e. can understand, speak read or write Irish. This is a similar proportion of the population as seen in 2013/14.

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Introduction

The Belfast/Good Friday Agreement committed the Government to ‘recognise the importance of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to linguistic diversity, including in Northern Ireland, the Irish language, Ulster-Scots and the languages of the various ethnic minorities, all of which are part of the cultural wealth of the island of Ireland.’

DfC chairs the Interdepartmental Charter Implementation Group and through this group aims to promote the use of Irish and Ulster-Scots and encourage all departments and their agencies to meet their obligations under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Findings from the Continuous Household Survey

This report presents the findings from the 2015/16 Continuous Household Survey (CHS) in relation to the knowledge and use of Irish by the adult population in Northern Ireland. The information will be used to help inform policy making. More information relating to the CHS, methodology, definitions and the interpretation of the figures can be found in the [definitions and technical notes section](#). Data tables are available in [Excel](#) and [ODS format](#). The questions that were asked in the CHS 2015/16 are available [here](#).

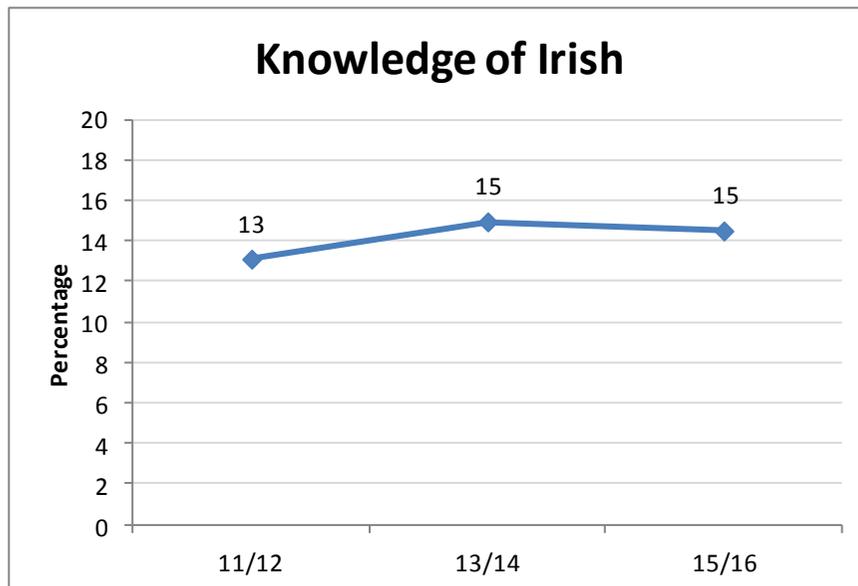
Knowledge of Irish

Trends

In 2015/16, the proportion of adults who have some knowledge of Irish, i.e. can understand, speak, read or write Irish was 15%. This figure shows no change when compared to 2013/14, however both years are higher than the proportion of adults with knowledge in 2011/12 (13%).

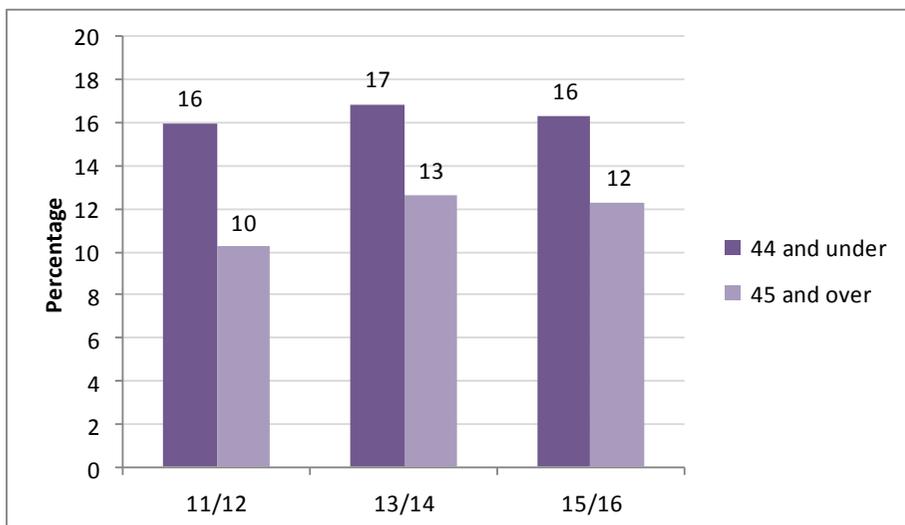
Following a five percentage point increase from 2011/12 to 2013/14, in the proportion of those who live in the least deprived areas of Northern Ireland who have knowledge of Irish the proportion in 2015/16 has now returned to a similar level as was recorded in 2011/12.

All other groups and areas saw no change in the proportions who had some knowledge of Irish when 2013/14 and 2015/16 are compared.



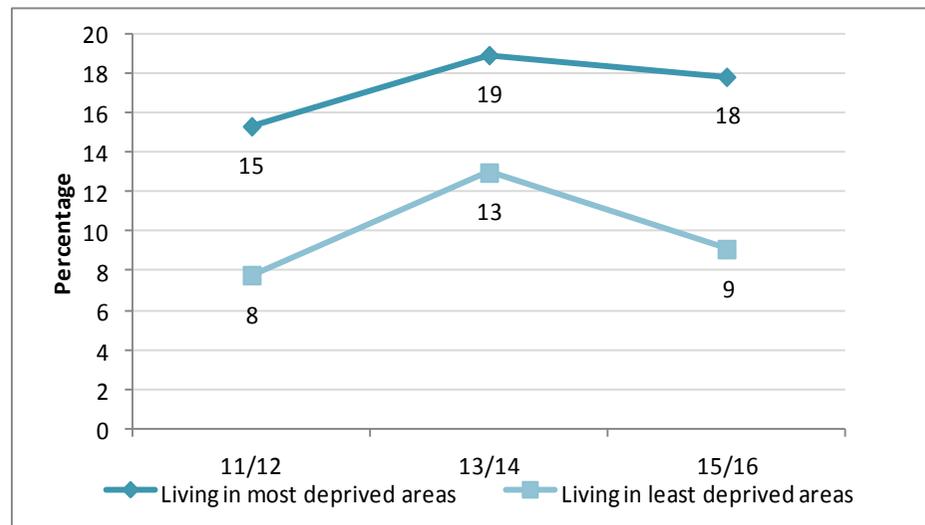
Age

Throughout the three years for which figures are available, people aged 45 years and over are less likely to have knowledge of Irish than those aged 16-44 years (12% and 16% respectively).



Deprivation

In 2015/16, the proportion of adults who have some knowledge of Irish and live in the most deprived areas remains greater than those who live in the least deprived areas, as it has been for each year that figures are available.

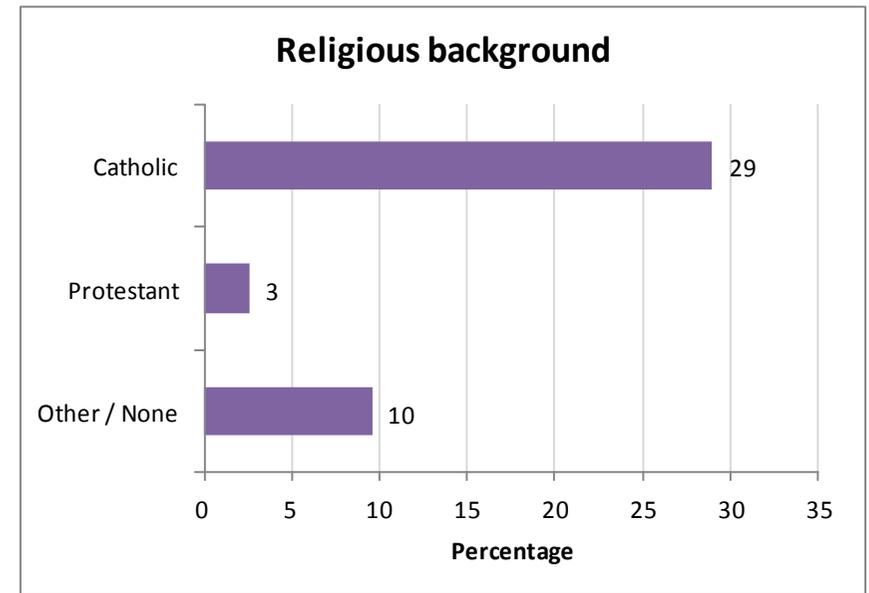


Knowledge of Irish

Age, marital status, religious background and where adults live are all related to having knowledge of Irish.

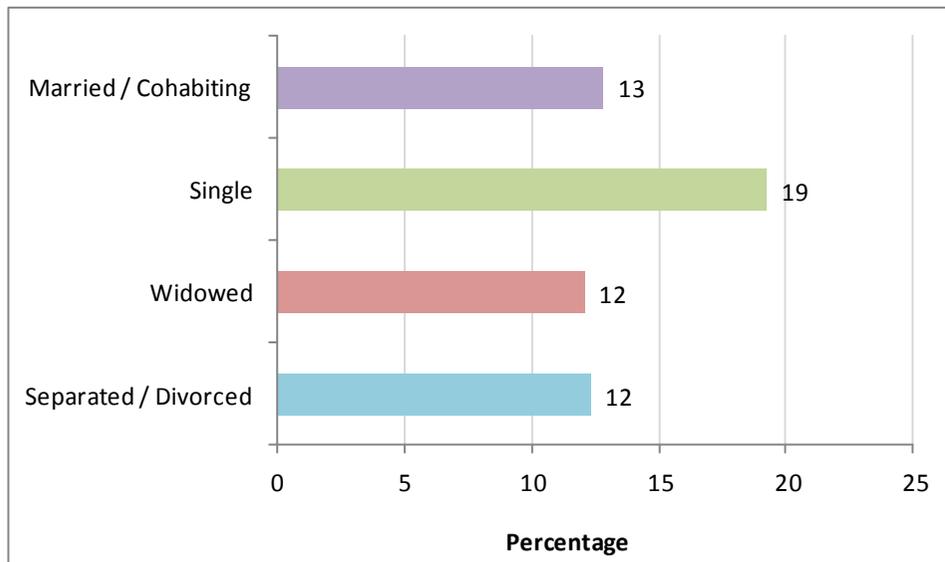
The proportion of females (16%) who have some knowledge of Irish is similar to the proportion of males (13%). However, knowledge of Irish appears to decrease with age with those aged 16-44 years being more likely to have knowledge than those aged 45 years and over (16% and 12% respectively).

The religious background of the population of Northern Ireland relates to whether they have any knowledge of Irish. A higher proportion of Catholics (29%) have knowledge of Irish than both those with other or no religion (10%) and Protestants (3%).



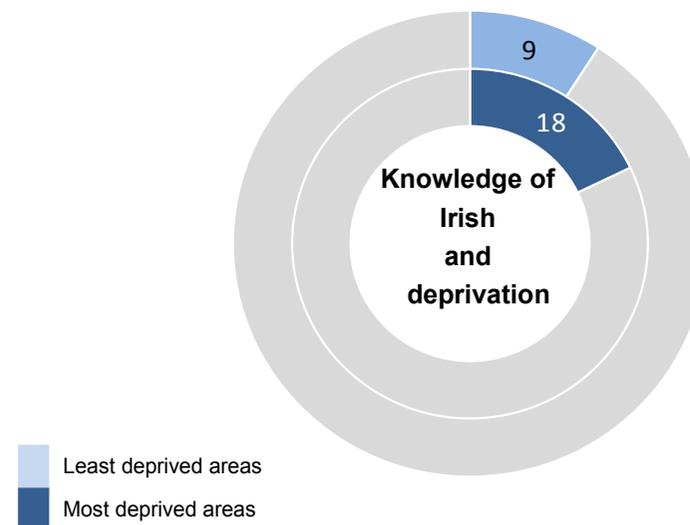
Marital Status

Adults who are single are more likely to have knowledge of Irish than any other marital status group, i.e. Married/cohabiting, widowed and separated/divorced.



Deprivation

In 2015/16 adults living in the least deprived areas are less likely to have knowledge of Irish than those living in the most deprived areas (9% and 18% respectively).



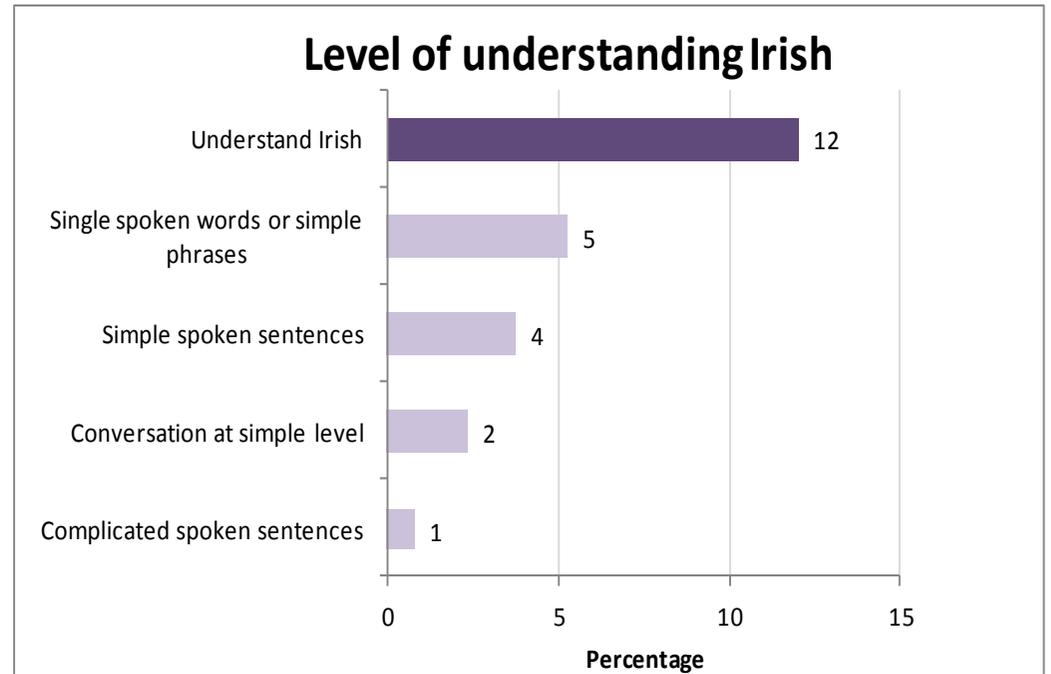
Understanding Irish

More than one in every ten (12%) of the adult population can understand Irish.

One out of every hundred (1%) adults in Northern Ireland can understand complicated spoken sentences, so could understand programmes in Irish on the radio or television.

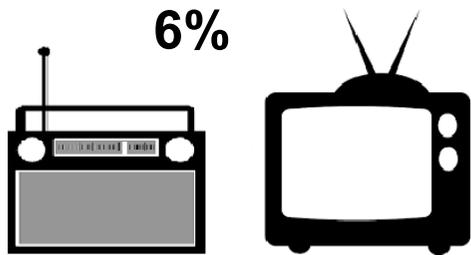
Two out of every hundred (2%) adults can understand a conversation in Irish conducted at a simple level so, for example, could understand directions given in the street.

Four per cent of the population can understand simple spoken sentences or passages, e.g. 'It's half past three', while a further 5% can understand single spoken words or simple phrases, e.g. 'Hello', or 'How are you?'.



Those who can understand Irish

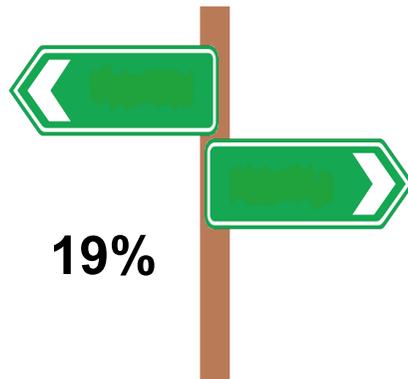
Analysis of those adults in the population who can understand Irish shows that about one in every four (25%) understand a conversation at either a simple or complicated level. The remaining three in every four understand simple spoken sentences or simple spoken words or phrases.



6%

Complicated spoken sentences

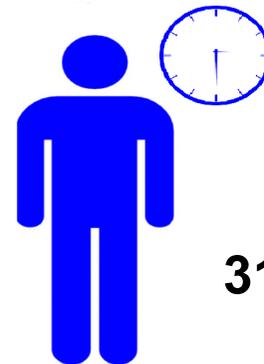
Could understand programmes in Irish on the radio or television.



19%

Conversation at simple level

Could understand directions given in the street



31%

Simple spoken sentences

Understand simple spoken sentences or passages e.g. 'It's half past three'



A Hundred Thousand Welcomes

44%

Single spoken words or simple phrases

Understand simple spoken words or phrases e.g. 'Hello' or 'How are you?'

Speaking Irish

Just under one in every ten (9%) of the adult population can speak Irish.

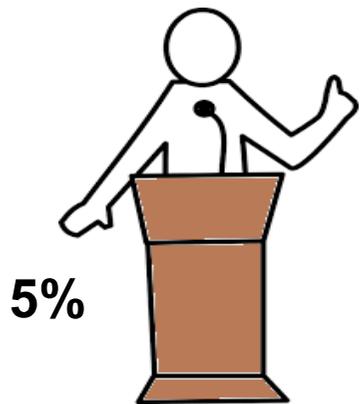
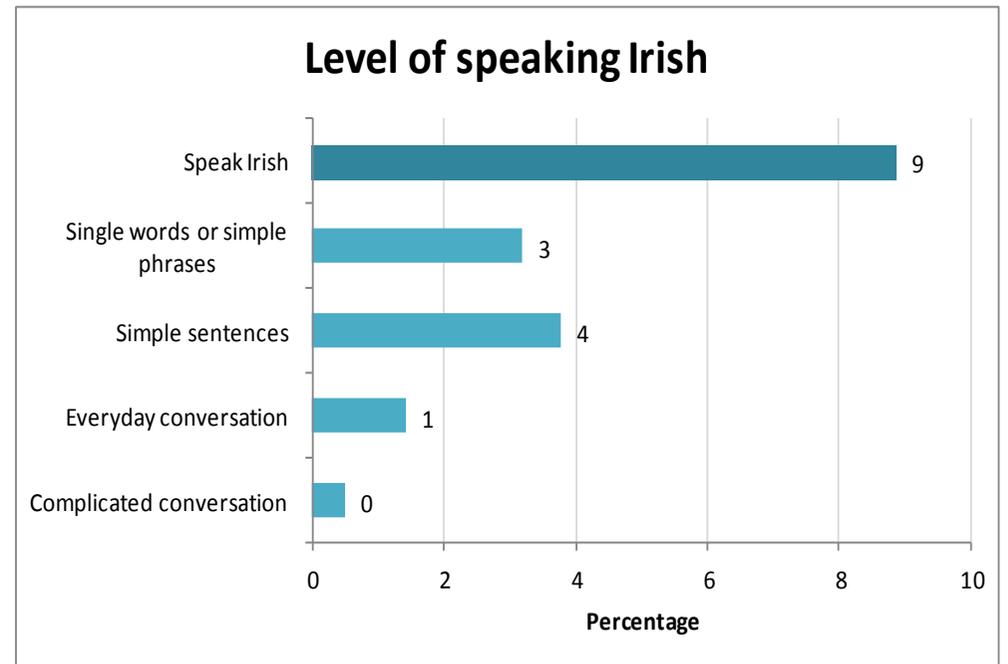
One out of every hundred people (1%) can carry on a complicated conversation in Irish e.g. talking about any subject, or carry on an everyday conversation, e.g. could describe their day.

Four out of every hundred (4%) can use simple sentences in Irish e.g. 'Can I have a cup of tea?'

A further 3% can use single words or simple phrases e.g. 'Hello' or 'How are you?'

Those who can speak Irish

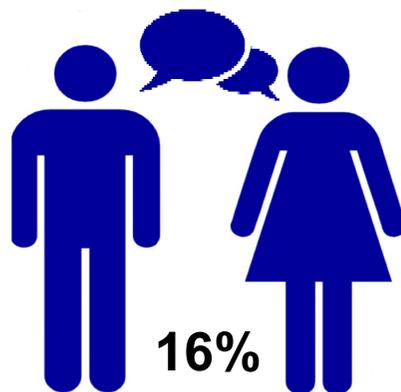
Analysis of those adults in the population who can speak Irish shows that about one in every five (21%) could carry on a conversation at either a simple or complicated level. The remaining four in every five can use simple sentences or single words or simple phrases.



5%

Complicated conversation

Could carry on a complicated conversation in Irish e.g. Talking about any subject



16%

Everyday conversation

Could carry on an everyday conversation in Irish e.g. Could describe their day



43%

Simple Sentences

Can use simple sentences in Irish e.g. 'Can I have a cup of tea?'



36%

Single words or simple phrases

Can use single words or simple phrases e.g. 'Hello' or 'How are you?'

Reading Irish

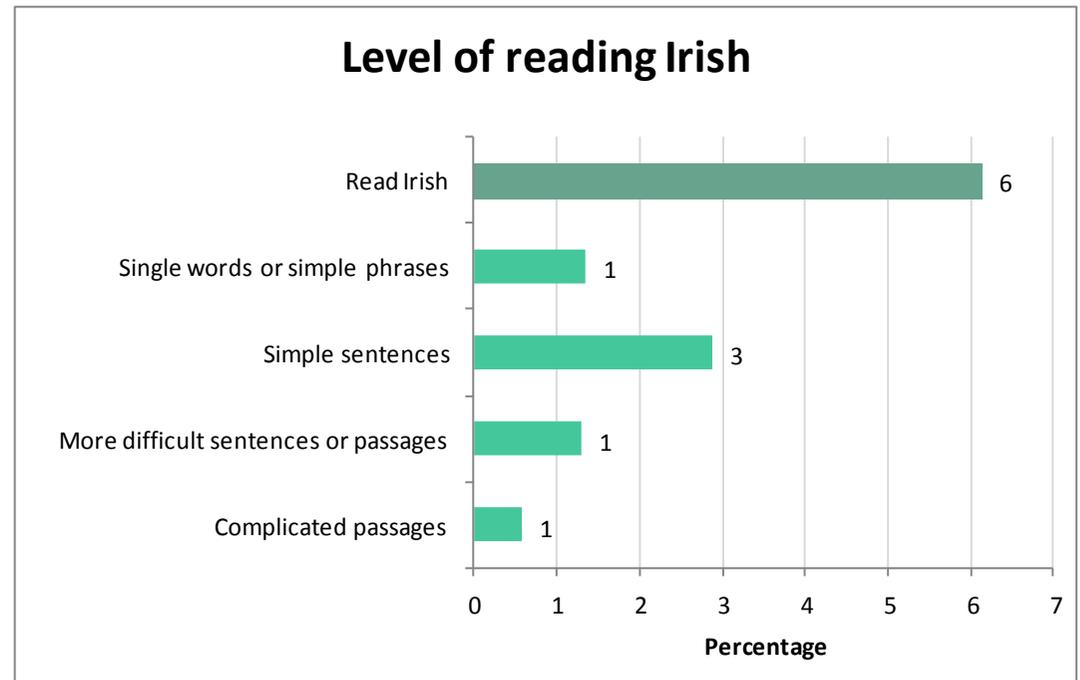
More than one out of every twenty adults (6%) can read Irish.

One out of every hundred people (1%) can read and understand complicated passages, so could read a book or newspaper written in Irish.

One per cent of the population can read and understand more difficult sentences or passages, so could read a letter or email written in Irish.

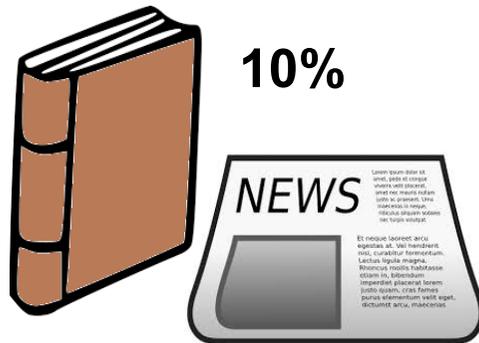
An additional three out of every hundred (3%) of the population can read and understand simple sentences or passages, so could read a postcard written in Irish.

A further 1% can read and understand single words or simple phrases, e.g. 'Entrance' or 'No smoking'.



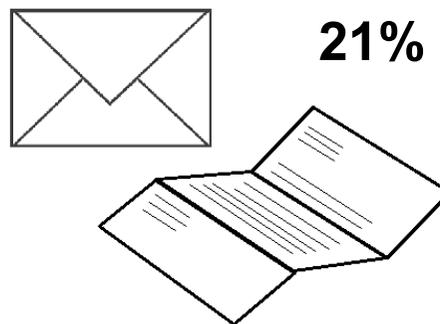
Those who can read Irish

Analysis of those adults in the population who can read Irish shows that nearly one third (31%) can read and understand moderately difficult or complicated passages. The remaining two thirds can read and understand simple sentences or single words or simple phrases.



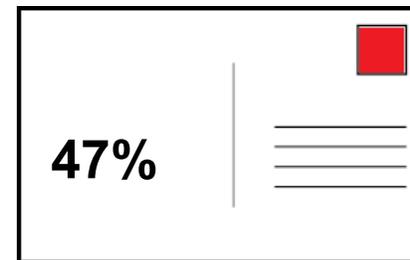
Complicated passages

Can read and understand complicated passages, so could read a book or newspaper written in Irish



Moderately difficult sentences or passages

Could read a letter or email written in Irish



Simple Sentences

Can read and understand simple sentences in Irish, so could read a postcard written in Irish



Single words or simple phrases

Can read and understand single words or simple phrases e.g. 'Entrance' or 'No smoking'

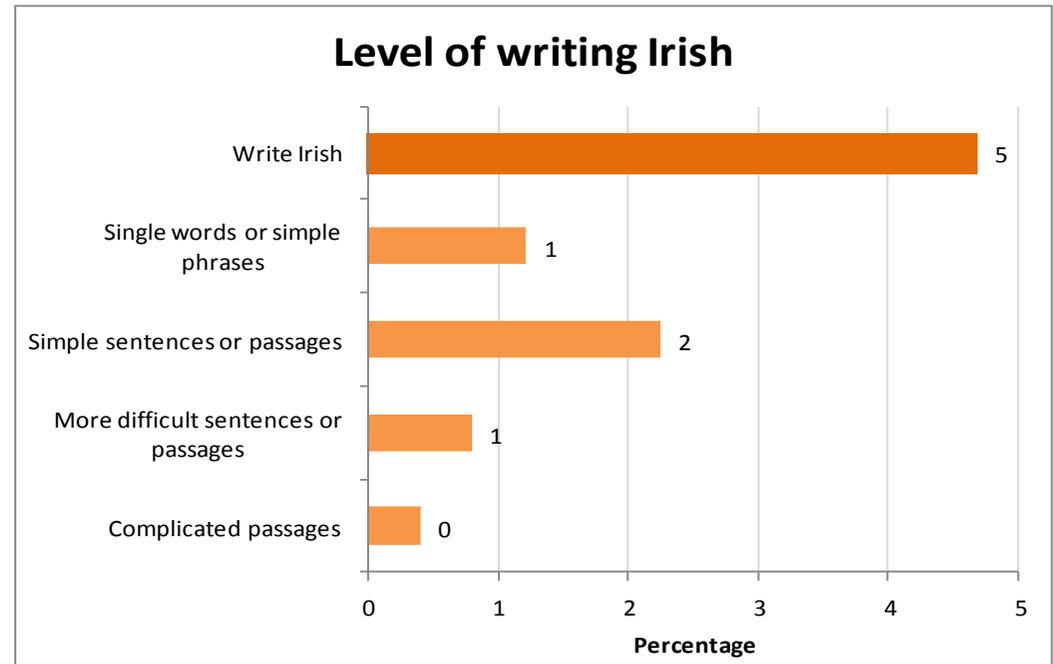
Writing Irish

One in every twenty adults (5%) can write Irish.

One out of every hundred adults (1%) can write complicated passages, e.g. could translate part of a book or report into Irish, or write difficult sentences and moderately difficult passages, e.g. could write a letter or email in Irish.

An additional two out of every hundred (2%) of the adult population can write simple sentences or passages, so could write a postcard in Irish.

A further 1% can write single words or phrases, e.g. 'Hello', or 'How are you?'.



Those who can write Irish

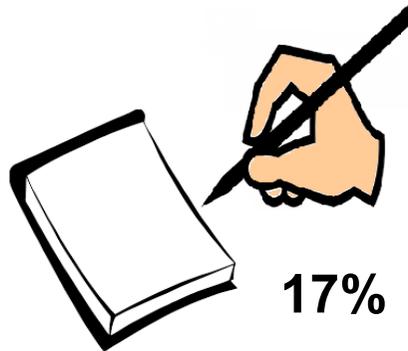
Analysis of those adults in the population who can write Irish shows that about one in every four (26%) can write moderately difficult or complicated passages. The remaining three out of four can write simple sentences or single words or simple phrases.



9%

Complicated passages

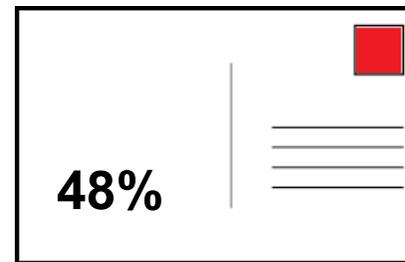
Could translate part of a book or report into Irish



17%

Moderately difficult sentences or passages

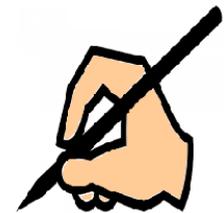
Could write a letter or email in Irish



48%

Simple Sentences or passages

Can write simple sentences or passages, so could write a postcard in Irish



Dia dhuit

26%

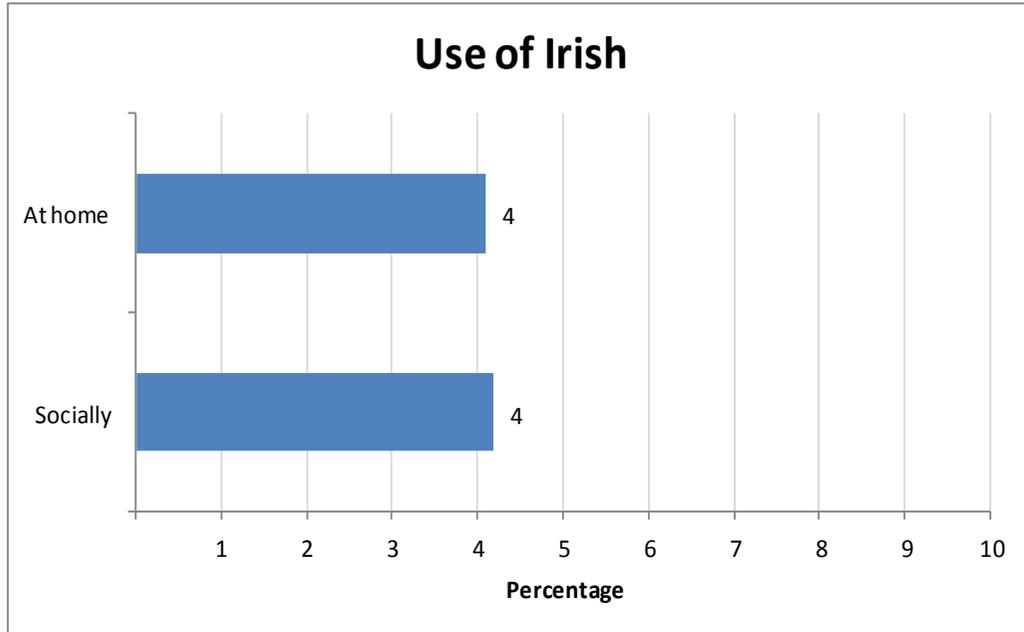
Single words or simple phrases

Can write single words or phrases e.g. 'Hello' or 'How are you?'

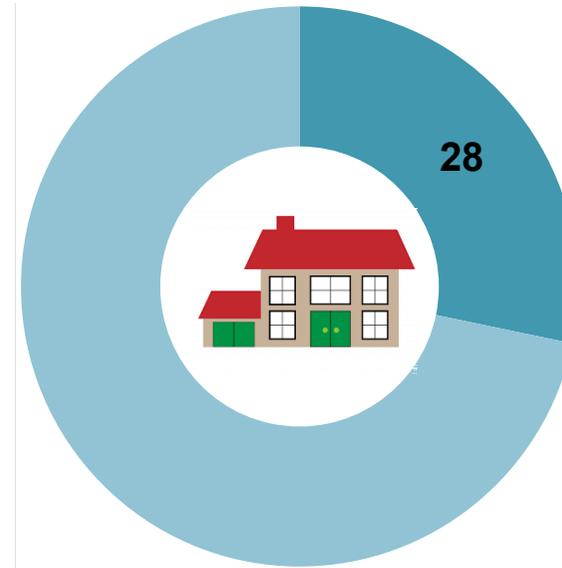
Use of Irish

Four out of every hundred adults in Northern Ireland (4%) use Irish at home, conversing with family or housemates, either on a daily basis or at least very occasionally (less often than once a week).

A similar proportion (4%) use Irish socially, either on a daily basis or at least very occasionally, to converse with friends or acquaintances.



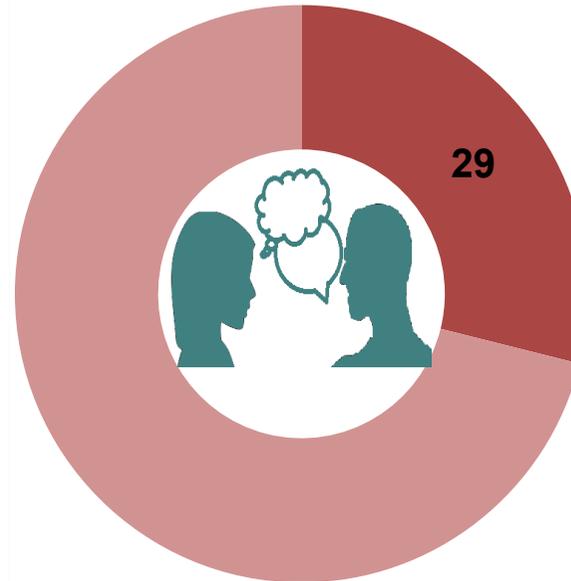
Using Irish at home



Those with some knowledge of Irish

Over one quarter (28%) of those who have some knowledge of Irish *use* Irish at home at least very occasionally

Using Irish socially

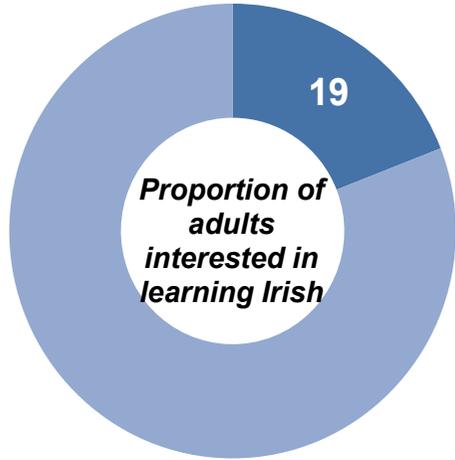


Those with some knowledge of Irish

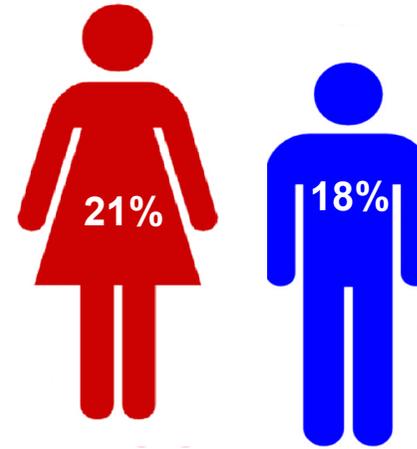
Nearly three out of every 10 (29%) of those who have some knowledge of Irish *use* Irish socially.

Interested in learning Irish

Almost one fifth (19%) of adults are interested in learning or improving their Irish. Of those with no previous knowledge of Irish 14% are interested in learning Irish.



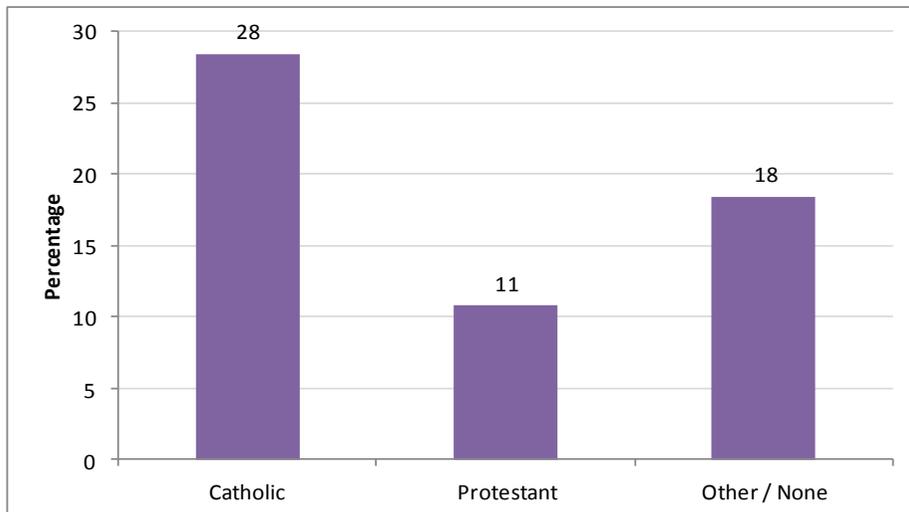
Gender



A higher proportion of females than males are interested in learning Irish (21% and 18% respectively).

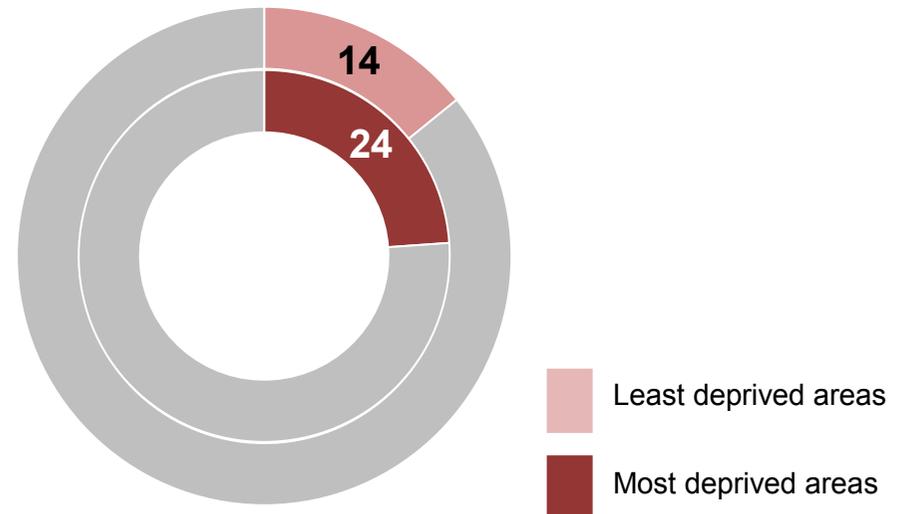
Religion

A higher proportion of Catholics (28%) are interested in learning Irish than both Protestants (11%) and those with other or no religion (18%).



Deprivation

Analysis by deprivation shows that a higher proportion of adults living in the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland are interested in learning Irish than those living in the least deprived areas (24% and 14% respectively).



Definitions and technical notes

Knowledge of Irish— Can understand, speak, read or write Irish or any combination of these skills

Disability—The questions used to ascertain whether or not a person has a disability are harmonised with the definition of disability in the Equality Act 2010. This states that a disabled population is classified on the basis of having a long-lasting physical or mental health condition or illness which restricts day-to-day activities. The disabled population in this report are those who have answered yes to both the questions below:

- Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more?
- Does your condition or illness / do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry out day to day activities?

Dependants— A person is defined as having dependants if they have responsibility for either the care of a child, a person with a disability or an elderly person.

Deprivation— The data have been analysed by whether respondents are living in the 20% most deprived Super Output Area (SOAs) or in the 20% least deprived SOAs. This is estimated using the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010¹ which is a weighted combination of seven domains of deprivation. Rank 1 indicates the most deprived SOA, while rank 890 denotes the least deprived SOA.

Urban / rural— The data have also been analysed by whether respondents are living in SOAs than have been categorised as either urban or rural as set out in the Statistical Classification and Delineation of Settlements report (2015)². This report classified each settlement in Northern Ireland into one of eight bands (A-H) and recommended that Government and other users should consider defining 'urban' and 'rural' areas in ways which are appropriate for different programmes and projects. In the absence of a programme-specific definition, Bands A-E can be defined as urban and Bands F-H as rural. This definition was applied in the analysis in this bulletin.

Statistical significance in this report— Any statements in this report regarding differences between groups such as males and females, different age groups, religion etc., are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. This means that we can be 95% confident that the differences between groups are actual differences and have not just arisen by chance. Both the base numbers and the size of the percentages have an effect on statistical significance. Therefore on occasion, a difference between two groups may be statistically significant while the same difference in percentage points between two other

groups may not be statistically significant. The reason for this is because the larger the base numbers or the closer the percentages are to 0 or 100, the smaller the standard errors. This leads to increased precision of the estimates which increases the likelihood that the difference between the proportions is actually significant and did not just arise by chance.

Other notes

The following should be noted when interpreting figures and tables:

Percentages less than 0.5% are denoted by '0' and where there are no responses, they are denoted by '-'.

Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Percentages may not add up to 100% for questions where multiple responses are allowed.

Detailed tabulations are not provided where the number of respondents is too small to allow meaningful analysis.

The base number of responses to each question, which is shown in each table, is the unweighted count. The base may vary due to some respondents not answering certain questions.

¹ [Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Report 2010](#)

² [Statistical Classification and Delineation of Settlements 2015 Report](#)