

3. Age and sex composition

Age structure

Average age

Age dependency

Sex ratio

Age structure

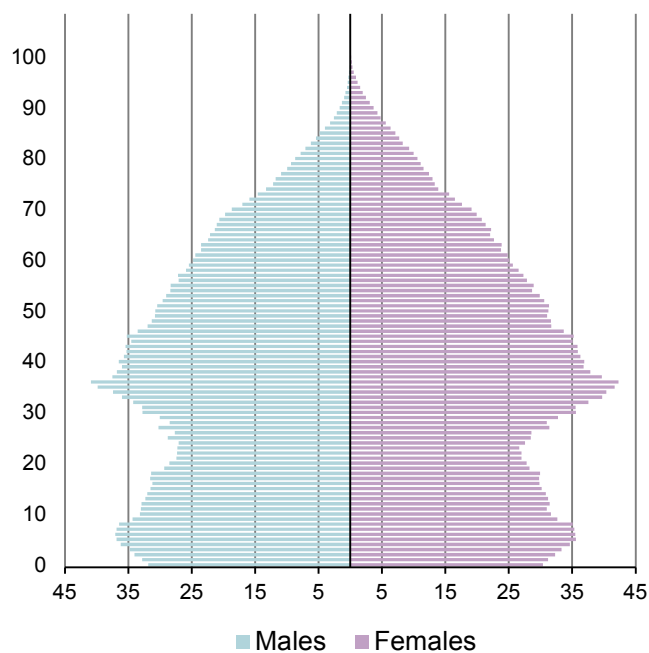
The number of males and females in 2016, by single year of age, is represented in the population pyramid in Figure 3.1.

A peak in the number of births in 1980 and again in 2009 can be seen in today's 36 and 6 year olds respectively. The decline in births throughout the late eighties and early nineties is also clearly visible, as is the more recent fall in births since 2009.

The contraction at the top of the pyramid reflects declining population with increasing age.

[See web table EY007](#)

Figure 3.1 Population by age and sex, 2016



How the population has changed

Figure 3.2 compares the population structure in 2016 and 2011. The number of people increased over the five years in almost all age groups with the exception of those in the 0-4 age group and the age groups spanning 20-34.

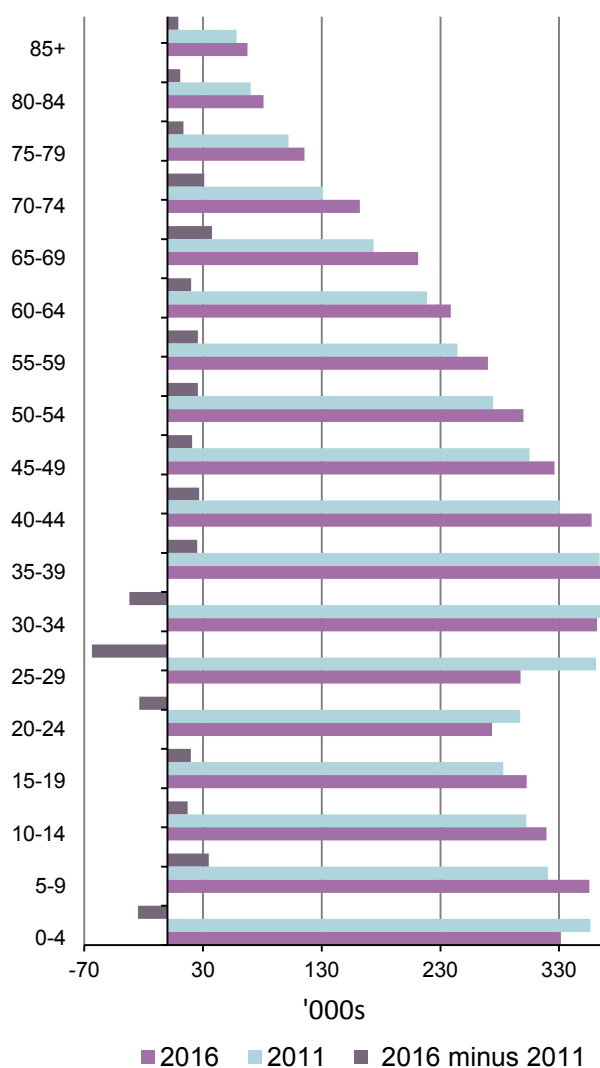
There has been a fall of 24,814 persons in the 0-4 age group primarily due to a fall in births since 2009 while the lower numbers in the age group 20-24 is mainly a cohort effect (low births 20 years ago). There were 63,687 fewer persons in the age group 25-29 and this is primarily as a result of recent high net outward migration among this group.

People living longer

People are living longer as can be seen in the changes in the population aged over 65 which has increased by 19.1 per cent since 2011. This is especially evident in the male population which rose by 53,523 (22%) to 296,837 compared with an increase of 48,651 (16.7%) to 340,730 for females.

For the population aged over 85, the male population increased by 24.8 per cent to 23,062 while the female population increased by 11.4 per cent to 44,493.

Figure 3.2 Changes in population structure, 2011-2016



Average age rises

The average age of the population has continued to increase and stood at 37.4 in April 2016 compared with 36.1 five years earlier, a gain of 1.3 years.

The average age has increased by 3.3 years over the twenty years since 1996 when it was just 34.1 years.

Fingal continues to have the youngest population followed by Kildare. Kerry and Mayo have the oldest population followed closely by Leitrim. The figures are represented in Table 3.1.

[See web table EY006](#)

Table 3.1 Average age for selected counties, 2011-2016

	County		Age	
	2011	2016	2011	2016
State			36.1	37.4
Oldest	Cork City	Kerry	38.7	40.2
	Mayo	Mayo	38.6	40.2
	Kerry	Leitrim	38.5	39.8
	Leitrim	Roscommon	38.4	39.7
	Roscommon	Sligo	38.4	39.2
Youngest	Laois	Laois	34.3	35.6
	South Dublin	South Dublin	34.1	35.5
	Meath	Meath	33.8	35.2
	Kildare	Kildare	33.5	34.9
	Fingal	Fingal	32.9	34.3

Figure 3.3 Population aged 65 and over, 2011-2016

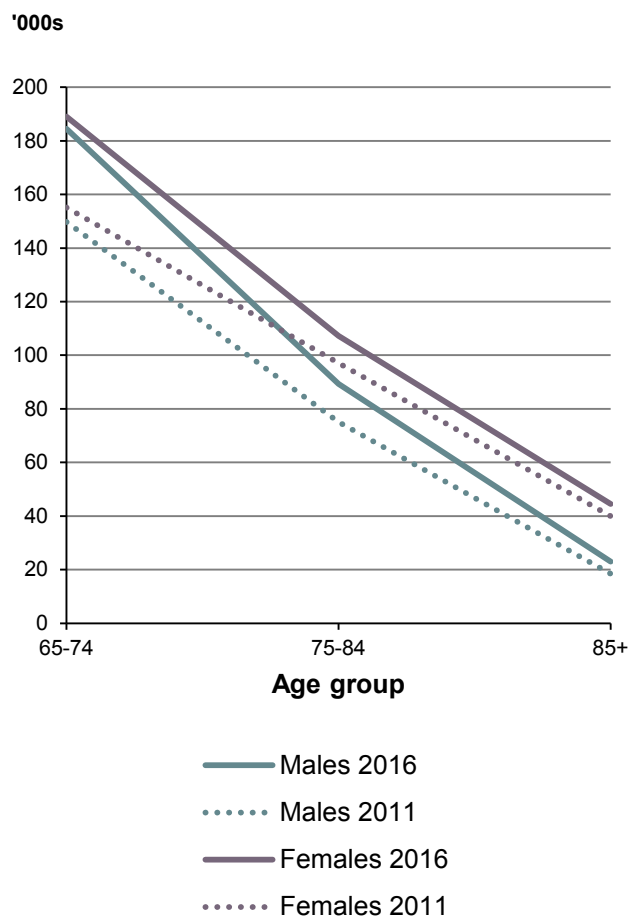
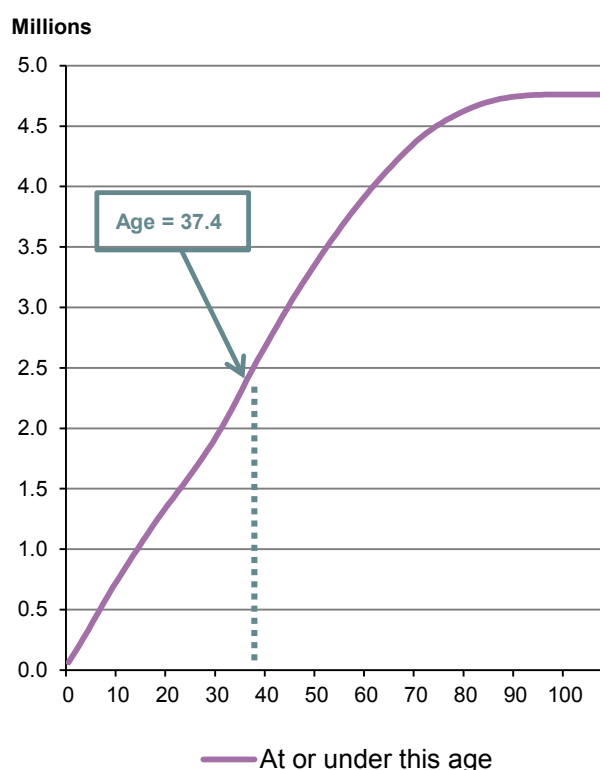
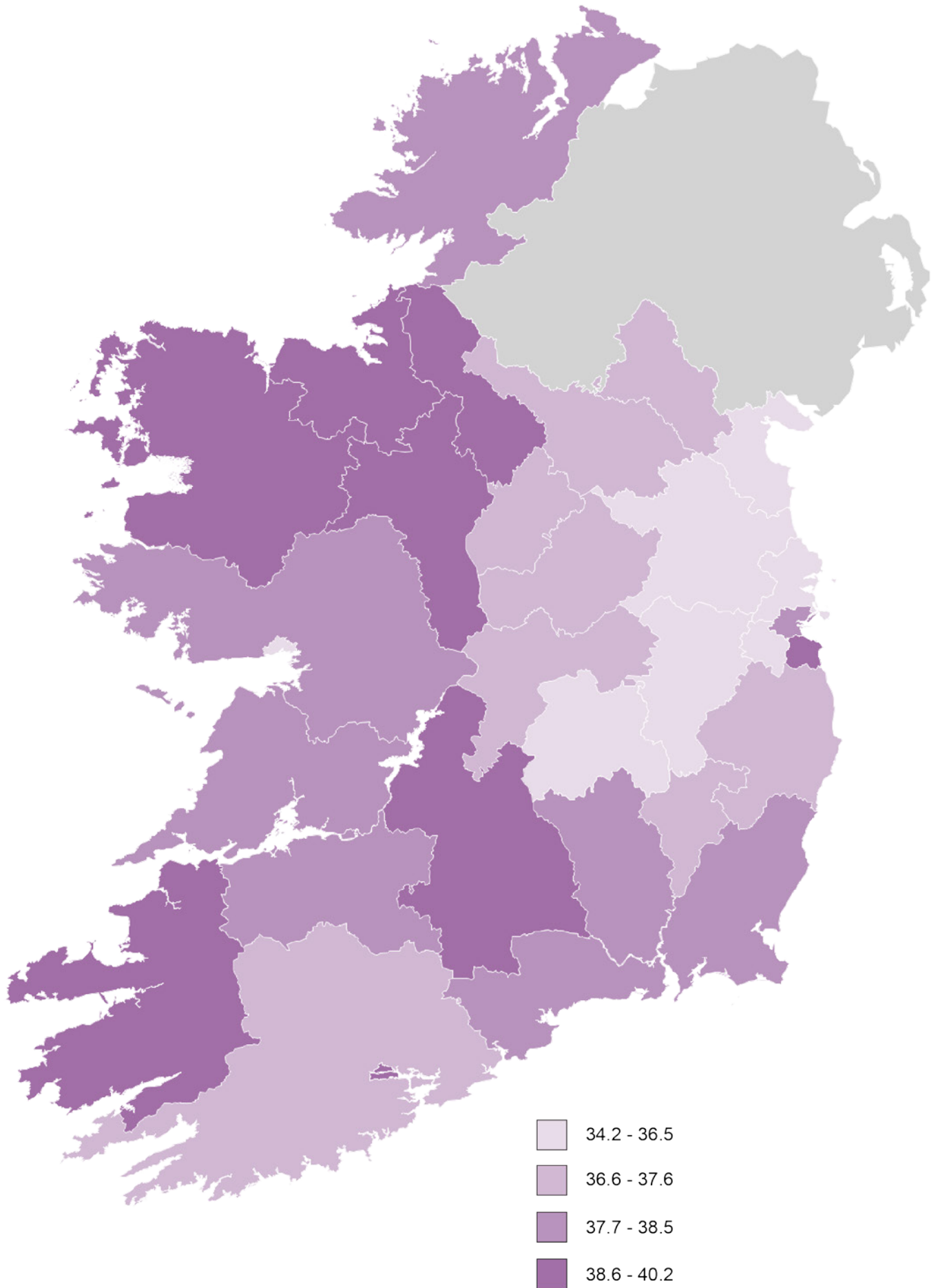


Figure 3.4 Average age of the population, 2016



Map 3.1 Average age by county, 2016



Age dependency increasing

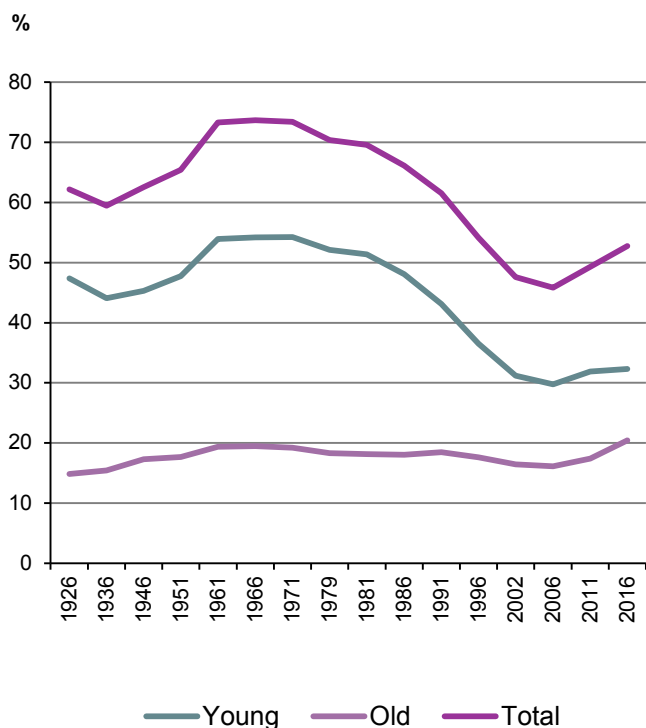
Dependents are defined for statistical purposes as people outside the normal working age of 15-64. Dependency ratios are used to give a useful indication of the age structure of a population with young (0-14) and old (65+) shown as a percentage of the population of working age (i.e. 15-64).

The total dependency ratio increased from 49.3 in 2011 to 52.7 in 2016, a rise of 3.4 points. The young dependency ratio increased by 0.4 points while the old dependency ratio increased by 3.0 points.

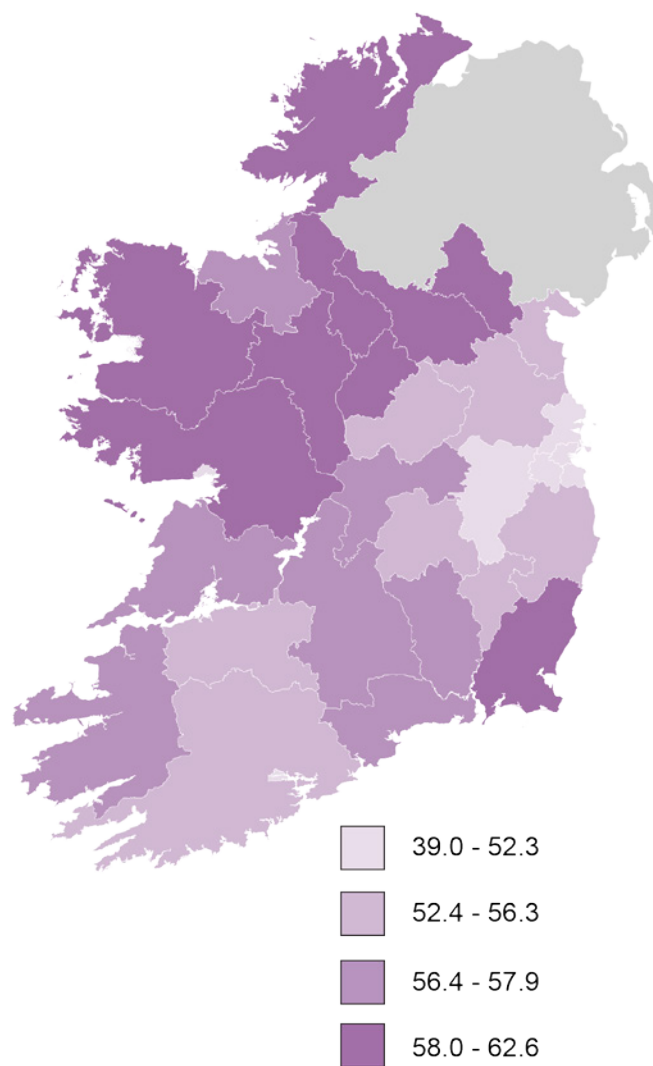
While the number of people aged 15-64 increased by 44,477 over the five years, the number of those aged 65 and over rose by 102,174 - more than twice that amount. The number of those aged 0 to 14 increased by just 26,962.

It is important to bear in mind that dependency ratios are a rather crude measure as variations occur over time due to the number of young people in third level education and people over 65 continuing to work.

Figure 3.5 Age dependency ratios, 1926-2016



Map 3.2 Age dependency by county, 2016



Dependency highest in Connacht and lowest in cities

Leitrim had the highest dependency ratio of any county at 62.6 per cent, closely followed by counties Mayo (61.0%), Roscommon (60.8%) and Donegal (60.5%).

The lowest dependency ratios were in Galway city at 39.0 per cent, followed by Cork city (42.8%), Fingal (50.7%) and Kildare (51.4%).

More women than men

There were 53,009 more females than males in the State in April 2016 resulting in an overall sex ratio of 97.8 males for every 100 females.

This reflects a falling sex ratio since 2011 when there were 42,854 more females than males and a sex ratio of 98.1.

More males born.....

Due to higher male birth rates more males than females can traditionally be found in the younger age groups and this is well illustrated in Figure 3.7 on the right. In the age group 0-19 there was an average of 104.6 males for every 100 females.

...but females live longer!

However, among the older age groups the opposite is true. Lower female mortality accounts for the higher proportion of women in those aged 65 and over, and this becomes more pronounced with increasing age. There were just under 52 males for every 100 females in the 85+ age group.

The gap is narrowing!

While the total ratio of males to females has fallen between 2011 and 2016, this varies by age group, as illustrated in Figure 3.8.

Among those aged 24 to 65 the ratio has fallen (proportionally fewer males than females), while among those aged 65 and over it has increased, reflecting decreasing male mortality rates. This trend is most evident in persons aged 85 and over where the ratio increased to 52 males per 100 females in 2016 compared to 46 males per 100 females in 2011.

[See web table EY005](#)

It's a fact!

45-49

The most gender balanced age group, where the ratio of men to women was 99.7

Figure 3.6 Women as a percentage of total population by age group, 2016

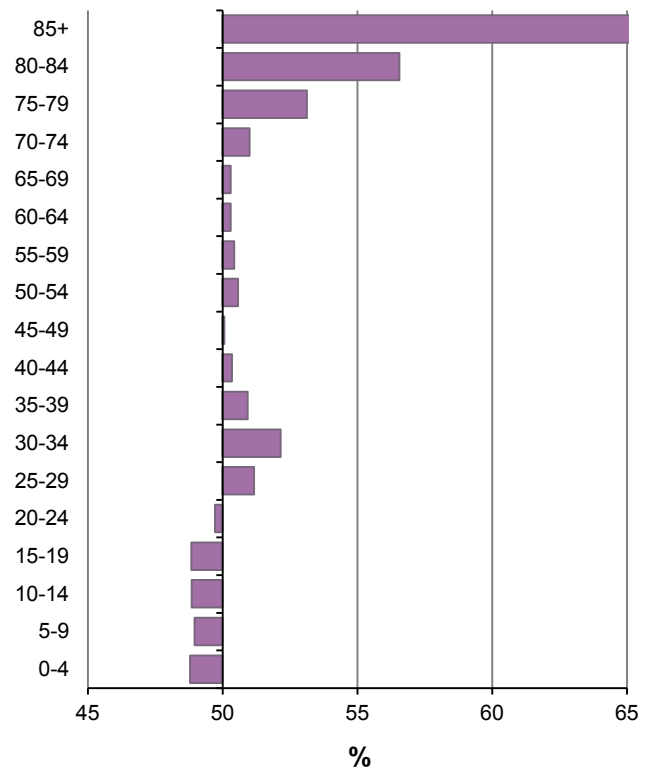
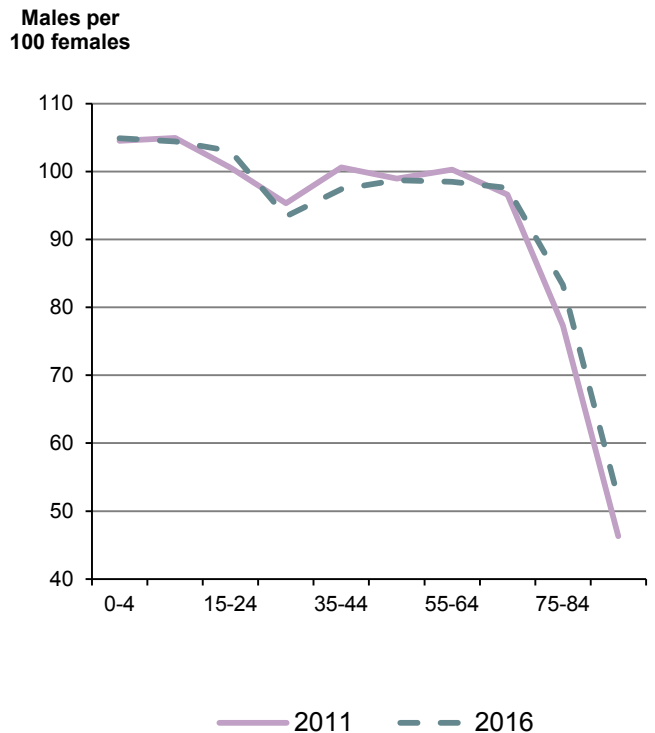


Figure 3.7 Sex ratio, 2011-2016



County by county

The county breakdown of the sex ratio (i.e. the number of males per 100 females) in the chart below gives an insight into the relative position of men and women at different age groups across the country. For instance in

the 75 and over age group County Laois has the highest ratio of men to women with a sex ratio of 87, while in Dublin city the ratio is lowest at 63. The shorter the line overall, the fewer men per women in that area.

Figure 3.8 County breakdown of men per 100 women by age group, 2016

