

COMMENTARY

PRINCIPAL ECONOMIC STATUS

Major increase in employment

Analysing the responses to the question on present principal status (Q.24 on the 2002 Census questionnaire) enables the population aged 15 years and over to be classified into those inside and outside the labour force⁴. The labour force consists of persons who are at work, unemployed or seeking regular work for the first time. Those outside the labour force consist mainly of students, persons looking after the home/family and retired persons.

Table A shows that the total population aged 15 years and over increased by 323,000 or 11.7 per cent between 1996 and 2002. The higher numbers in the labour force accounted for over 80 per cent of this increase. Employment grew by over 25 per cent (+334,000) during this six-year period while the number of persons unemployed, including those looking for their first regular job, fell by 67,000.

The total outside the labour force increased by just 4.6 per cent (+56,000). Of these, students accounted for 11,000 of the increase. Intercensal comparisons between the numbers recorded in the other individual non-labour force categories have been affected by changes in the census questionnaire⁵.

Table A Population aged 15 years and over classified by principal economic status and sex, 1996 and 2002

Principal Economic Status	1996			2002		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
Thousands						
Labour Force						
At work	1,307.2	802.6	504.6	1,641.6	963.2	678.3
Looking for first regular job	27.6	16.8	10.8	21.1	12.4	8.7
Unemployed, having lost or given up previous job	199.1	140.8	58.3	138.2	87.8	50.4
Total labour force	1,534.0	960.3	573.7	1801.0	1,063.5	737.4
Non-labour force						
Student	339.6	166.9	172.7	350.8	166.1	184.6
Looking after home/family	553.2	4.1	549.1	439.0	21.3	417.6
Other	339.9	227.4	112.5	499.1	271.1	228.0
Total non-labour force	1,232.7	398.5	834.2	1,288.8	458.6	830.2
Population 15 +	2,766.7	1,358.8	1,407.9	3,089.8	1,522.1	1,567.6

Strong labour force growth

Table B provides a synopsis of the main labour market indicators for the period 1971-2002. The growth in the labour force recorded in recent censuses is largely due to a combination of the underlying growth in the population aged 15 years and over and increasing female labour force participation; the latter increased from 28.2 per cent in 1971 to 47 per cent in 2002. Over the same period participation by males in the labour force declined steadily from 82.0 per cent to 69.9 per cent, with most of the

⁴ The results of the Quarterly National Household Surveys (QNHS) are the basis for the official series of labour force estimates. For an explanation of the differences between the census and the QNHS results relating to principal economic status see Appendix 2 – Definitions.

⁵ For instance the category "Looking after home/family" was described in previous censuses as "Home (i.e. domestic) duties". The inclusion of two questions on disability in 2002 is likely to have affected the number of persons describing themselves as "Unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability".

decrease occurring between 1971 and 1991. The unemployment rate⁶, again measured on a Principal Economic Status basis, increased sharply from 6.7 per cent in 1971 to 17.9 per cent in 1986. Following gradual decreases in the period to 1996, it declined to 8.8 per cent by April 2002.

Table B Main labour market indicators, 1971- 2002

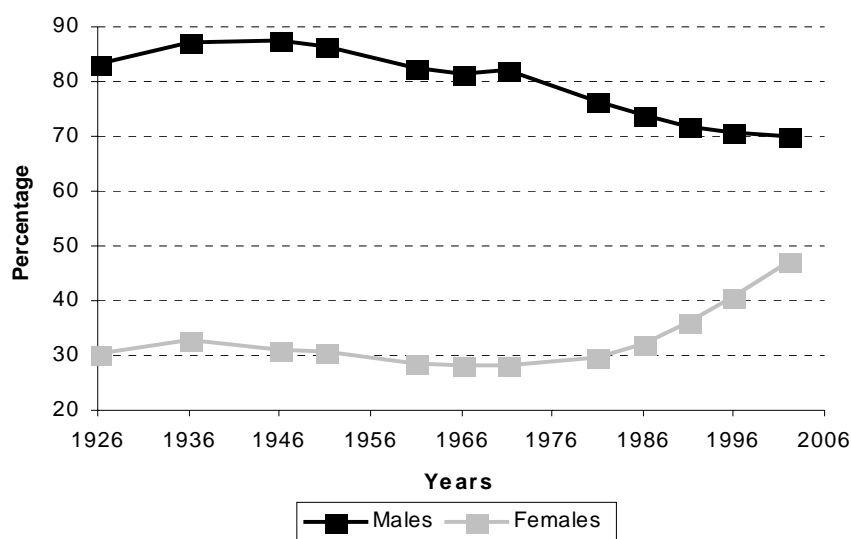
Census Year	Persons in the labour force Thousands	Average Annual percentage Change %	Labour force participation rate		Unemployment Rate %
			Male %	Female %	
1971	1,125	0.0	82.0	28.2	6.7
1981	1,271	1.2	76.4	29.7	10.5
1986	1,330	0.9	74.0	32.2	17.9
1991	1,383	0.8	71.7	35.9	16.9
1996	1,534	2.1	70.7	40.7	14.8
2002	1,801	2.7	69.9	47.0	8.8

As shown in Table 7A, Fingal (64.8%) had the greatest proportion of its population aged 15 years and over in the labour force in 2002, followed by South Dublin (64.6%) and Kildare (63.4%). At the other end of the scale Cork City (52.3%) had the lowest labour force participation rate followed by Leitrim (53.7%) and Roscommon (54%).

Increasing number of women in the labour force

Historically, male labour force participation rates have greatly exceeded those of females (see Figure 1). The difference between them was greatest in 1946 when the gap was close to 60 percentage points. In that year male participation had reached a peak of 87.4 per cent following a small upward trend over the previous twenty years. The trend has been steadily downwards ever since and the rate stood at 69.9 per cent in 2002.

Figure 1 Labour force participation rates for males and females, 1926-2002



Female participation remained largely unchanged at around 30 per cent over the period 1926 to 1981. It has increased sharply since then to reach a high point of 47.0 per cent in 2002 with most of the increase coming in the period since 1991. At the same time, the percentage of women aged 15 years and over, describing their status as “engaged in home duties/looking after home/family”, declined from 61.9 per cent in 1971 to 26.6 per cent in 2002.

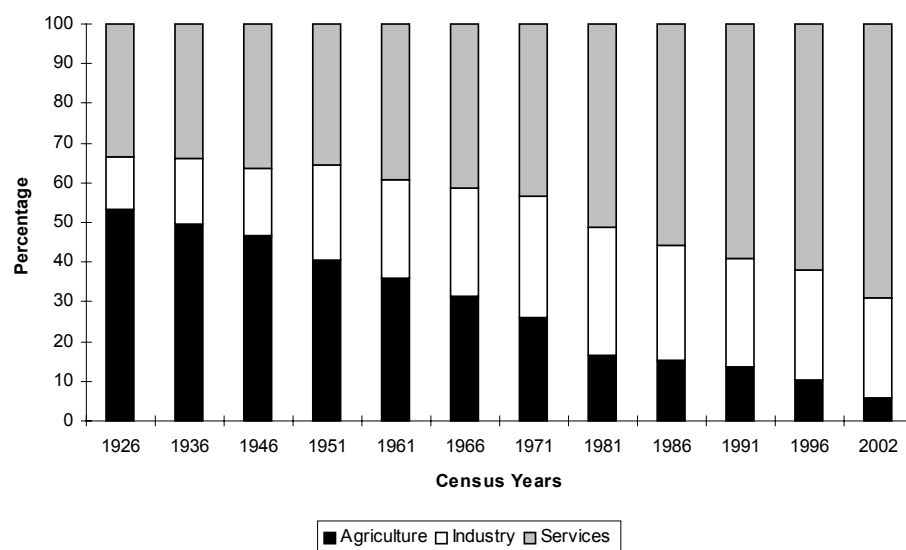
⁶ The sum of unemployed and those seeking regular work for the first time expressed as a percentage of the labour force.

EMPLOYMENT

Sectoral employment shares

Major changes have taken place since 1926 in the relative employment shares of the three broad sectors of economic activity: Agriculture, Industry and Services. The diminishing importance of Agriculture is clearly evident from Figure 2 with the sector accounting for a reduced share of just under 6 per cent of total employment in 2002 compared with over 50 per cent in 1926. The growth in Services sector employment has been particularly pronounced over the entire period, particularly since 1971. Its share now stands at 69 per cent of the total. Industry's share of total employment increased from 13 per cent in 1926 to 32 percent in 1981. Since then, however, it has tended to decline and stood at 25 per cent in 2002.

Figure 2 Sectoral employment shares, 1926-2002



Occupational segregation

Table C sets out the occupations that have the highest proportions of males and females, respectively. Females accounted for only 0.4 per cent of the work force in the top ten male dominated occupations combined. These occupations, which were mainly concentrated in the building industry, accounted for 84,000 workers in total and 8.7 per cent of the male work force.

The top ten female dominated occupations were not as segregated. These occupations combined numbered 129,000 persons in total in 2002 (19.1 per cent of the female work force). They included secretaries and receptionists, which together amounted to 40,600 persons at work, with males making up 6.7 per cent of the relevant occupations.

Table C Occupations with highest segregation

Male dominated occupations	Females as a percentage of total	Female dominated occupations	Males as a percentage of total
Plasterers	0.2	Secretaries	1.3
Carpenters	0.2	Receptionists	2.9
Bricklayers	0.3	Housekeepers	4.0
Roofers	0.4	Educational assistants	4.4
Rail construction Workers	0.4	Child minders	4.9
Mechanical plant Drivers	0.5	Nurses	8.3
Builders	0.6	Radiographers	8.8
Vehicle body Repairers	0.6	Care assistants	8.9
Motor mechanics	0.7	Sewing machinists	9.3
Sheet metal workers	0.8	Hairdressers and Barbers	11.1

Socio-economic group by county

By examining the current occupations of those at work, and the previous occupations of unemployed and retired persons, it is possible to categorise the relevant individuals by socio-economic group. All other persons are classified to the socio-economic group of the person in the family on whom they are deemed to be dependent. Tables 10a to 10c provide the relevant details on a county basis.

The eastern counties of Dún-Laoghaire-Rathdown (26.3%), Fingal (22.4%), Kildare (19.8%), Meath (19.3%) and Wicklow (19.3%) had the highest proportion of persons classified to socio-economic group A (Employers and Managers) while Tipperary South (11.6%), Limerick City (11.7%) and Cork City (11.7%) had the lowest rates. Socio-economic group I – Farmers – predominated in the rural counties of Cavan (14.7%) and Roscommon (13.7%).

Male employees work longer hours

Employees worked an average of 38 hours in the week before Census Day 28 April 2002. On average, male employees worked 10 hours more than their female colleagues (42.3 hours compared with 32.3 hours). Those involved in Agriculture worked the longest hours (55.4) followed by mining (44.2) and construction (42.9). Those involved in the education sector had the shortest working week (29.9 hours).

UNEMPLOYMENT

Table 1 shows the number of persons who classified themselves as unemployed on the basis of their stated Principal Economic Status. According to the 2002 Census of Population there were 159,000 such persons - a fall of 67,000 compared with the previous census in 1996. Male unemployment accounted for 57,000 of this decline. The overall unemployment rate for the State measured on this basis was 8.8 per cent.

County unemployment rates

Table 6A reveals that at county level Donegal (15.6%) had the highest unemployment rate in 2002. Limerick City (13.9%) and Louth (13.2%) were next in line. Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown (5.7%), Kildare (6.2%) and Cork County (6.4%) had the lowest unemployment rates.

Unemployment among males was highest in Donegal (17.5%), Limerick City (15.9%) and Cork City (14.2%), while Donegal (12.6%), Louth (12.6%) and Limerick City (11.2%) had the highest female rates.

Unemployment blackspots

At the overall State level, the unemployment rate for urban areas was 9.5 per cent in 2002 compared with 7.9 per cent for rural areas. One of the major advantages of a Census of Population is its ability to provide data for small areas such as Electoral Divisions (EDs). Table D provides a summary analysis of the worst unemployment blackspots in 2002⁷. These were located in both urban and rural areas. The 88 EDs, which are considered unemployment blackspots according to the chosen criteria, had an average unemployment rate of 24 per cent compared with 8.8 per cent nationally.

Table D Distribution of unemployment blackspots at Electoral Division level by county, 2002

County	Number of unemployment blackspots	Average Unemployment	Average unemployment rate
Cork City	11	163	24.7
Dublin City	15	341	24.0
Donegal	18	105	25.2
Galway County	6	134	27.6
Limerick City	11	147	24.8
Louth	4	445	22.1
Mayo	5	95	29.9
Waterford City	6	125	24.5
Other counties*	12	197	22.6
Total	88	188	24.0

*Clare, Fingal, Kerry, Kildare, Limerick county, Longford, Monaghan, South Dublin, Tipperary South and Wexford.

Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Waterford Cities contained 38 of the 88 unemployment blackspots nation-wide. In addition to having the highest unemployment rate on a county basis, Donegal also had the highest number of Electoral Divisions, which could be considered as unemployment blackspots in April 2002.

At individual Electoral Division level Knocknallower, adjacent to Belmullet in Co. Mayo, had an unemployment rate of 40.1 per cent in April 2002, followed by the ED of John's A in Limerick City (37.7%) and An Geata Mór Theas (37.4%), also near Belmullet. The EDs of Lettermore (36.4%), Skannive (35.3%) and Gorumna (35%), all in Galway county, had the next highest unemployment rates.

⁷ For the purposes of the present report an Electoral Division is defined as an unemployment blackspot if its labour force exceeds 200 persons and its unemployment rate on a Principal Economic Status basis exceeds 20 per cent. There were 88 such EDs in 2002.

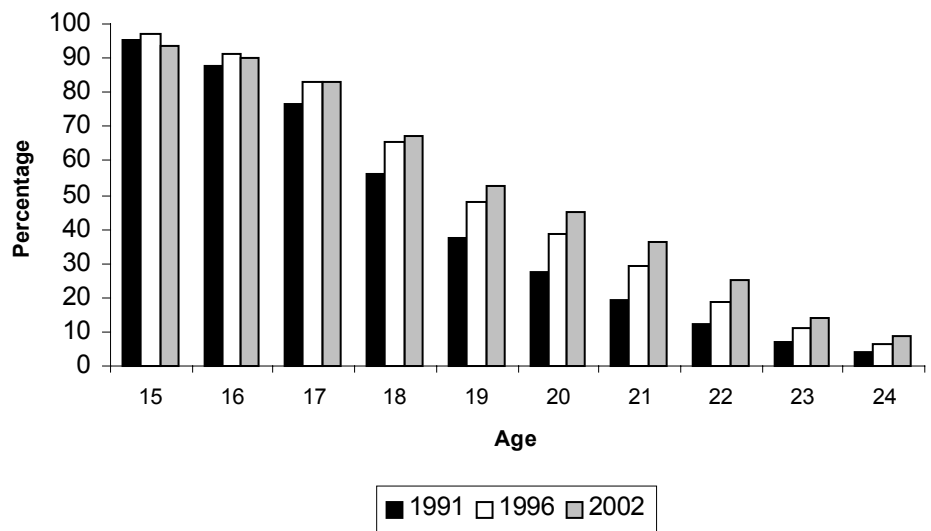
EDUCATION

Increase in number of older students

The number of students aged 15 years and over increased by 3.3 per cent from 340,000 in 1996 to 351,000 in 2002 (see Table 1). Students aged 15 to 24 years numbered 327,000 at the time of both censuses – a decline of 23,000 in those aged 15 to 19 years being counterbalanced by a corresponding increase in those aged 20 to 24 years. The number of students aged 25 years and over increased from 12,400 in 1996 to 23,700 in 2002.

The overall percentage of 15 to 24 year olds in full-time education remained unchanged at 51 per cent between 1996 and 2002. Slight declines were observed in the education participation rates of those aged 15 to 17 years during the intercensal period, probably due to increased employment opportunities. However, for the older age groups, especially those aged 19 to 22 years, the upward trend observed during the 1991 to 1996 period continued into the most recent period (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 Percentage of persons aged 15 to 24 years receiving full-time education by single year of age, 1991, 1996 and 2002



Proportionately more females in education

In the censuses of 1986 and 1991 there were proportionately more females than males aged 15 to 19 years in full time education while the opposite applied for those aged 20 to 24. By 1996 the female participation rate in education exceeded that of the male for all but 23 and 24 year olds. The results of the 2002 census continue that trend with the proportion of females in education now exceeding that of males for all single years of age in the range 15 to 24 years. The differential between males and females is widest for 18 year olds at 15.2 percentage points (see Table E).

The percentage of persons age 20 years and still in education is shown for Electoral Divisions (EDs) located in Dublin City, Dún Laoghaire/Rathdown, Fingal and South Dublin in the map on page 17. Students living away from home in EDs adjacent to third level campuses are likely to upwardly bias the figures for the small number of relevant EDs. However, notwithstanding this qualification, the map does provide an indication of the variation in the proportion of 20 year olds attending third level college by district within Dublin.

Table E Percentage of males and females aged 15 to 24 years receiving full-time education, 1996 and 2002

Age	1996		2002	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
15 years	96.3	97.5	92.5	94.5
16 "	88.3	93.8	87.3	93.2
17 "	78.7	88.1	78.3	88.1
18 "	59.8	71.7	60.0	75.2
19 "	43.3	53.3	46.0	59.6
Total 15-19 years	74.4	81.8	72.6	81.8
20 years	35.7	41.2	39.2	50.6
21 "	28.4	30.4	32.6	40.1
22 "	19.0	19.1	23.6	26.5
23 "	11.4	10.8	13.5	14.5
24 "	6.9	6.2	8.8	9.0
Total 20-24 years	20.7	21.9	23.9	28.4
Total 15-24 years	49.6	53.9	47.8	54.2

Persons staying on in education longer

A consequence of the increasing education participation rates is a general increase in the age at which full-time education ceases. This is illustrated in Table F. Nearly 50 per cent of the population aged 15 years and over in 1981 whose full-time education had ceased left the educational system before reaching the age of 16. By 2002 the corresponding figure had fallen to 24.4 per cent. Conversely, in 1981 only 10.1 per cent of those whose full-time education had ceased left aged 19 years or over compared with 28.4 per cent in 2002.

Table F Percentage distribution of persons whose full-time education has ceased, classified by age at which education ceased, 1981-2002

Year	Age at which full-time education ceased				
	Under 15 years	Under 16 years	Under 17 years	Under 18 years	Under 19 years
	Percentage				
1981	36.8	49.7	66.2	77.8	89.9
1986	28.6	41.8	60.1	73.1	88.0
1991	27.8	40.0	57.6	70.9	86.6
1996	23.9	34.9	50.8	64.4	80.8
2002	15.4	24.4	39.9	53.3	71.6

The increasing participation in education is also reflected in the highest level of education completed (see Table G).

Highest level of education

The proportion of persons who had left the education system with only a Primary education fell from 31.8 per cent in 1996 to 26.2 per cent in 2002. Conversely, there was an increase in the proportion of persons who completed their education with a Third level qualification (from 19 per cent in 1996 to 24.7 per cent in 2002).

Just over 15 per cent of persons in the labour force in 2002 were educated to Primary level only compared with nearly 20 per cent in 1996. The proportion of the labour force with a Third level qualification grew from 25 per cent in 1996 to 32 per cent in the most recent census.

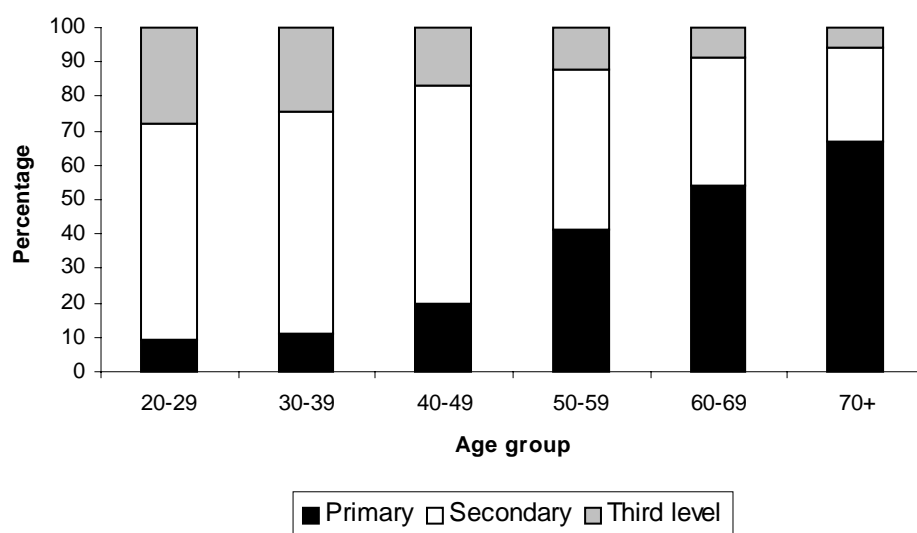
Table G Percentage distribution of the population whose full-time education has ceased classified by highest level of education completed, 1996 and 2002

Year	Highest level of education completed		
	Primary (incl. no formal education and not stated)	Second level	Third level
Total persons			
1996	31.8	49.1	19.0
2002	26.2	49.2	24.7
Persons in the Labour Force			
1996	19.9	54.7	25.4
2002	15.4	52.5	32.1

Cohort analysis

The improvement in education attainment is most pronounced when viewed from a cohort perspective. Figure 4 illustrates that over two thirds of persons aged 70 years and over were educated to Primary level only. In contrast less than 10 per cent of persons aged 20-29 years in 2002 completed their education at Primary level. The increasing proportions of more recent cohorts with a Third level education is also evident. By 2002, 28 per cent of the 20-29 age group had completed third level education.

Figure 4 Highest level of education completed by birth cohort, 2002



Unemployment related to level of education

The higher the educational level attained the less likely the risk of unemployment, as indicated by the figures in Table H from the 2002 Census of Population. The progression from Primary education through both levels of Secondary education to Third level certificate/diploma and degree/higher results in a clear pattern of decreasing risk of unemployment for both males and females. The risk of unemployment was over four times higher in 2002 for a person with only a Primary education than for someone who had completed a Third level (degree or higher) course.

Table H Unemployment rate by educational level and sex, 2002

Highest level of education completed	Persons	Males	Females
	%	%	%
Primary*	18.2	18.4	17.5
Lower Secondary	12.2	11.7	13.3
Upper Secondary	6.6	6.4	6.7
Third level (non-degree)	4.7	5.0	4.4
Third level (degree or higher)	4.1	4.4	3.8
Total	8.8	9.4	8.0

* Includes no formal education and not stated.

One in five have third level qualifications

Over 626,000 persons aged 15 years and over in April 2002 held third level qualifications, which they attained after completing two, or more years of study (see Table 20). Of these, 330,000 (52.6%) were females. The most recent birth cohorts contained the highest proportions of persons with third level qualifications (36.1% for those aged 25 to 34 compared with 5.6% for those aged 65 years and over). Accordingly, persons aged 25 to 34 years at the time of the census accounted for over a third of all graduates.

The most popular branch of study was social sciences/business/law (17.2%) followed by medicine/dentistry/nursing/social services (12.1%). More than one in eight graduates held qualifications in more than one discipline. Engineering/architecture was the most prominent branch of study among male graduates while medicine/dentistry/nursing/social services predominated among women. Male graduates in computing and information technology outnumbered females by 7,500 (24,000 males to 16,500 females).

TRAVEL PATTERNS

More car users

Driving to work by car was the principal means of travel used by Irish workers in 2002. Just over 55 per cent of all workers drove to work, up from 46 per cent six years previously. Taken in combination with workers who travelled to work as car passengers or who drove vans or lorries to work, more than two out of three workers were private vehicle users in 2002.

Pattern changing over time

In contrast, public transport usage (bus and train) by those travelling to work fell slightly from 9.3 per cent in 1996 to 8.8 per cent in 2002. Bicycle usage continued to decline while the percentage of workers walking to their workplaces was largely unchanged.

Table I Means of travel to work, 1986-2002

Means of Travel	1986	1991	1996	2002
	%	%	%	%
On foot	12.6	11.1	11.5	11.4
Bicycle	5.6	4.4	3.6	2.1
Bus	8.6	7.7	7.6	6.7
Train	1.5	1.7	1.7	2.1
Motor cycle	1.4	1.1	0.9	1.1
Car driver	37.2	38.9	46.3	55.1
Car passenger	8.3	8.0	8.7	6.7
Other (incl. lorry or van)	3.1	4.0	4.3	7.1
None	17.2	19.8	12.3	6.1
Not stated	4.5	3.2	3.1	1.7
Total	100.-	100.-	100.-	100.-

Student travel

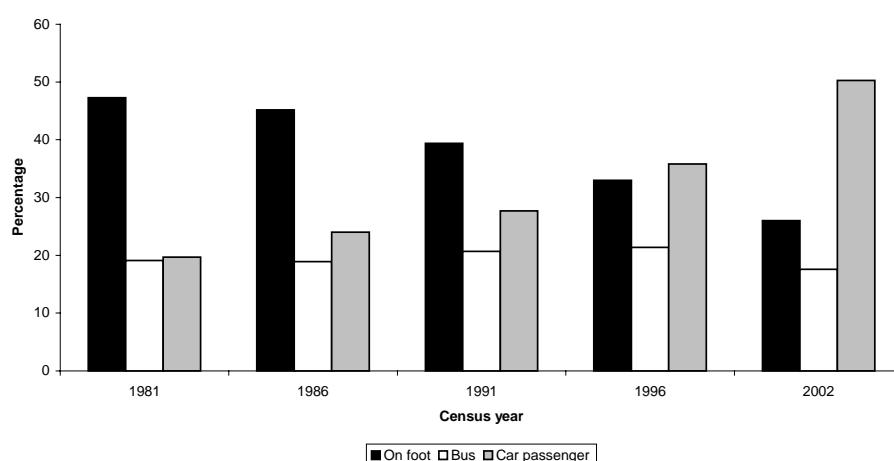
More than half of primary schoolchildren were driven to school by car in 2002, a further quarter walked while less than one in five used the bus. The most popular means of transport for secondary students was the bus (37.5%) while 27.8 per cent were driven to school. Third level students mainly walked to college (32.5%) while a further 27.3 per cent travelled by bus. Nearly 15 per cent of third level students drove to college in 2002.

Table J Means of travel to school or college, 2002

Means of Travel	Primary (aged 5-12 years)	Secondary (aged 13-18 years)	Third level (aged 19 years and over)
	%	%	%
On foot	26.0	25.7	32.5
Bicycle	1.1	3.5	5.6
Bus	17.6	37.5	27.3
Train	0.1	1.4	5.9
Motor cycle	0.0	0.4	1.1
Car driver	0.0	0.8	14.7
Car passenger	50.3	27.8	9.4
Other (incl. lorry or van)	0.5	0.3	0.4
None and not stated	4.4	2.7	3.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

The changing transport usage pattern by primary schoolchildren is clearly evident from Figure 5. The proportion of primary schoolchildren walking to school has declined from 47.3 per cent in 1981 to 26 per cent in 2002. During the same period the proportion of primary schoolchildren being driven to school has increased significantly from 19.7 per cent in 1981 to 50.3 per cent in 2002 with most of the increase occurring since 1991. Bus usage has declined in the most recent intercensal period.

Figure 5 Proportion of primary schoolchildren classified by means of travel to school, 1981-2002



Longer journeys being undertaken

Workers travelled on average 9.8 miles from their homes to their workplaces in 2002, up from 6.7 miles six years earlier. Rural based workers, who tend to travel longer distances than their urban counterparts, travelled over twice as far to work in 2002 than they did in 1981. The map on page 23 charts the percentage of workers who undertake a journey of 20 miles or more to work each day. Long distance commuting patterns are clearly evident from the map.

Table K Average distance travelled to work, school or college, 1981-2002

Year	Average distance travelled (miles)		
	State	Urban	Rural
Workers			
1981	4.2	4.0	4.5
1986	4.4	4.1	4.8
1991	4.8	4.4	5.3
1996	6.7	5.7	8.2
2002	9.8	7.8	13.3
Primary (5-12 years)			
1981	1.5	1.1	2.1
1986	1.5	1.1	2.1
1991	1.5	1.1	2.1
1996	2.0	1.5	2.6
2002	2.5	2.0	3.1
Secondary (13-18 years)			
1981	3.3	1.8	5.1
1986	3.3	1.9	5.1
1991	3.6	2.0	5.5
1996	4.4	2.5	6.4
2002	5.0	3.0	7.1
Third level (19 years and over)			
1981	4.6	3.8	8.9
1986	5.0	3.9	9.7
1991	5.7	4.5	10.7
1996	7.3	5.2	14.8
2002	9.1	6.8	15.4

Average distances travelled by primary schoolchildren were remarkably stable between 1981 and 1991 but have since increased slightly for both urban and rural children. The distances travelled suggest that most children attend schools that are situated in close proximity to their homes.

Students travel greater distances according as they progress from Primary through Secondary to Third level institutions. The gap between the distance travelled by urban and rural students widened at secondary level to 4.1 miles in 2002. Third level students undertook the longest journeys of all those in education although the increases evident from previous censuses appear to have stabilised during the most recent intercensal period.

Less than a half an hour to work

The average journey time to work was 27 minutes in April 2002. Even though urban workers travelled shorter distances to their workplaces than workers living in rural areas, traffic congestion meant that they spent longer periods commuting (28 minutes compared with 26 minutes for rural workers).

Primary schoolchildren spend an average of 12 minutes in making the journey from their homes to school. The variation in journey time between urban and rural based schoolchildren is relatively minor – 13 minutes for urban schoolchildren compared with 11 minutes for rural ones.

The journey time increases to 20 minutes for secondary students reflecting the greater distance they travel from home to school. Rural students take an average of 3 minutes more than their urban counterparts to get to school.

Third level students spend over half an hour on average getting to college each day. This reflects the relatively long distances travelled as well as the mode of travel undertaken.

Time leaving home

More than 30 per cent of male workers leave home before 7.30 in the morning to start their journey to their place of work. Almost 40 per cent of female workers depart between 8 and 9 am, the time slot which accounts for 63.7 per cent of departing primary schoolchildren and 71 per cent of secondary students. Nearly 50 per cent of third level students depart for college between 8 and 9 am.

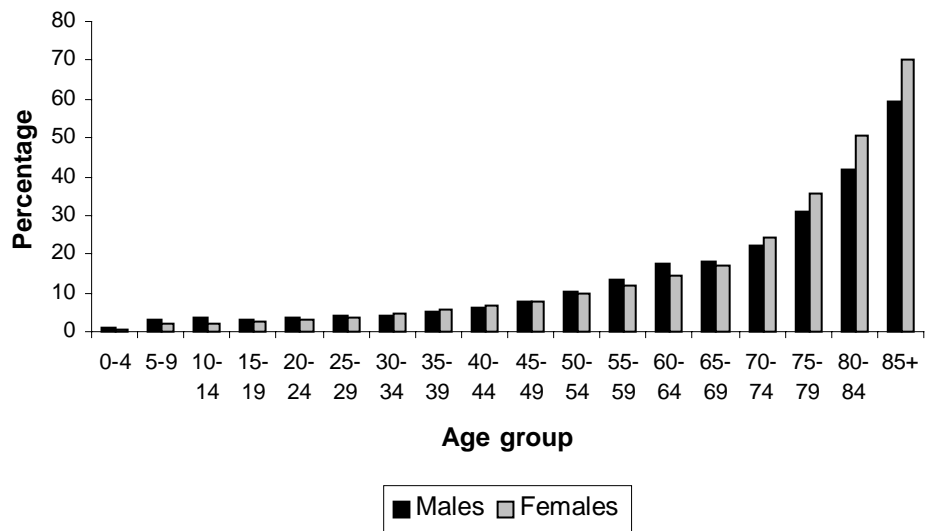
DISABILITY AND CARING

8.3% of population with a disability

Almost 324,000 persons, representing 8.3 per cent of the total population, had a long lasting health problem or disability in April 2002. These persons answered “Yes” in response to at least one of the categories distinguished in Questions 14 and 15 of the 2002 census form in relation to disability (see Appendix 1 for the 2002 questionnaire and Appendix 2 for a definition of those with a disability).

The incidence of disability was higher among females than males (8.7% compared with 7.8%) and, not surprisingly, was age related (see Figure 6). For persons aged 15 years and over the proportion who indicated that they had a long lasting health problem or disability increased for every five year age group from 15-19 up to 80-84 years for both males and females. Nearly two-thirds of those with a disability were aged 50 years or over.

Figure 6 Proportion of persons with a disability by age group and sex, 2002

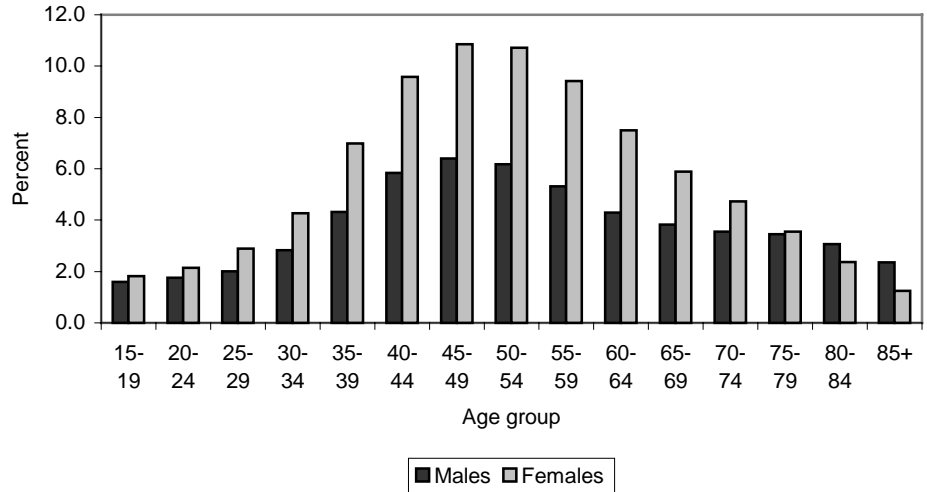


Approximately 45,000 workers, representing 2.7 per cent of total persons at work, had a long lasting health problem or disability in 2002. Males accounted for 62.8 per cent of these workers. Focussing on the 15–64 age group, approximately 30 per cent of males with a disability were in the workforce while for females the relevant proportion was 20 per cent.

Almost 149,000 carers

Almost 149,000 persons aged 15 years and over (4.8% of the total) indicated that they provide regular unpaid personal help for a friend or family member with a long-term illness, health problem or disability in April 2002. Women accounted for over 91,000 (or 61%) of the total and over half of them were in their forties or fifties.

As shown in Figure 7 proportionately more females than males were carers in all age groups apart from the very old. The highest proportions were amongst the middle aged, with over one in ten women aged 40-59 being reported as a carer.

Figure 7 Proportion of carers by age group and sex, 2002

Just over 40,000 persons, representing more than one in four carers, provide regular unpaid help for 43 or more hours each week (i.e. on average more than six hours per day throughout the week). Two-thirds of these heavily committed carers are women. A half of all those aged 65 years and over who are carers spend more than 43 hours each week providing help to others.

HOUSING

There were close to 1.28 million permanent housing units containing usual residents at the time of the 2002 census (see Table 33). Of these, 783,000 (61.2%) were located in urban areas i.e. in towns and cities with a population of 1,500 or more. Table L provides a breakdown of these housing units by type of dwelling distinguishing urban and rural areas.

Table L Percentage distribution of housing units by type of dwelling, 2002

Dwelling type	Total	Urban	Rural
Detached house	44.0	19.6	82.4
Semi-detached house	26.8	38.0	9.2
Terraced house	18.5	27.2	4.7
Flat or apartment in a purpose-built block	5.5	8.7	0.5
Flat or apartment in a converted or shared house	2.3	3.2	0.8
Flat or apartment in a commercial building	0.8	1.0	0.6
Not stated	2.1	2.2	1.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Detached dwellings predominate

Detached dwellings were the predominant housing type in 2002, accounting for 44 per cent of all housing units. More than one in four houses were semi-detached, 18.5 per cent were terraced while flats and apartments accounted for 8.5 per cent of all housing units. More than four out of five rural dwellings were detached residences while semi-detached and terraced housing were the most common dwelling types in urban areas. Flats and apartments featured strongly in urban areas, making up 12.9 per cent of urban dwellings in 2002.

Most houses built since 1971

Table M provides an analysis of the housing stock by period of construction distinguishing urban and rural dwellings. The main housing characteristics are classified by period of construction in Table 33 of the report.

Table M Percentage distribution of housing units by period in which built, 2002

Period of construction	Total	Urban	Rural
Before 1919	13.1	9.0	19.5
1919 to 1940	8.9	7.9	10.6
1941 to 1960	11.4	12.5	9.7
1961 to 1970	8.9	10.6	6.3
1971 to 1980	16.9	17.4	16.2
1981 to 1990	13.3	12.5	14.6
1991 to 1995	7.4	8.1	6.2
1996 or later	15.4	15.9	14.6
Not stated	4.7	6.1	2.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Over half of the permanent housing units distinguished in the 2002 census were built since 1971. The period since 1996, during which the population increased by 50,000 per year, accounted for 197,000 (15%) of the total housing stock. Over 63 per cent of these housing units were located in urban areas. Population growth during the 1970s, which was on a par with that achieved in the most recent intercensal period, explains the relatively large proportion of the housing stock built during that period. Almost 20 per cent of rural houses were built before 1919 compared with 9 per cent of the urban stock.

Fall in Local Authority housing

Table N sets out the changes that have occurred since 1961 in the occupancy status of dwellings. The number of Local Authority rented dwellings has declined at each census since 1961. At that stage there were over 124,000 Local Authority rented dwellings, representing 18.4 per cent of the housing stock. By 2002 the number of Local Authority dwellings had fallen to 88,000, representing a share of 6.9 per cent.

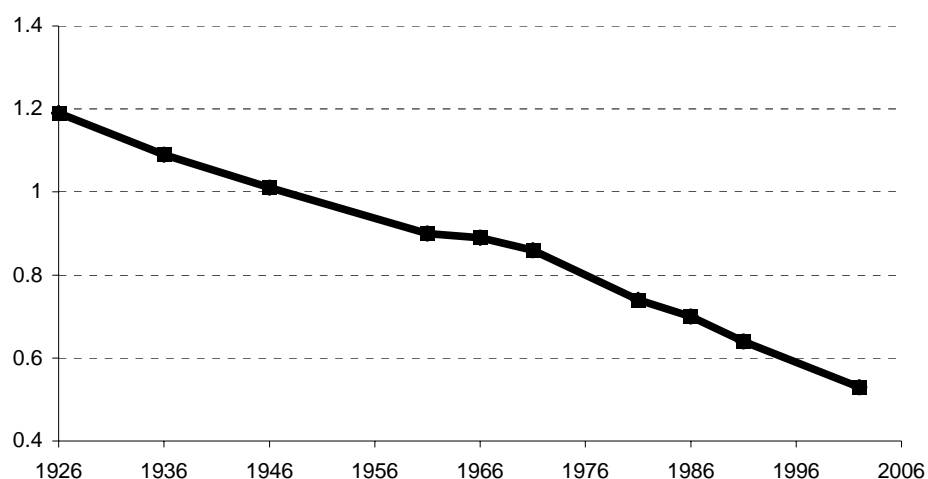
Table N Percentage distribution of housing units by occupancy status, 1961 to 2002

Occupancy status	1961	1971	1981	1991	2002
LA rented	18.4	15.9	12.7	9.7	6.9
Other rented	17.2	10.9	8.1	7.0	11.1
Owner occupied	53.6	60.7	67.9	80.2	77.4
Other	10.8	12.5	11.2	3.0	4.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Doubling of private rented dwellings

The number of private rented dwellings almost doubled (from 71,000 to 141,000) between 1991 and 2002 following declines observed during the previous thirty years. One in nine dwellings are now rented privately. Owner occupied dwellings continue to be the most prevalent occupancy status. While the number of such dwellings increased by 22.7 per cent (from 807,000 to 991,000) during the most recent intercensal period, their share of all housing units actually fell from 80.2 per cent in 1991 to 77.4 per cent in 2002 – the first time such a decline was recorded in recent decades.

The number of persons per room provides a general indicator of housing conditions. Figure 8 charts the steady improvement that has taken place in the period since the foundation of the State.

Figure 8 Average number of persons per room, 1926 to 2002

Between 1926 and 2002 the density of persons per room has more than halved, from 1.19 in 1926 to 0.53 in the most recent census.

Of the 1.28 million housing units identified in the 2002 census, approximately 938,000 (73.3%) relied on public mains for their water supply while a further 164,000 (12.8%) houses were connected to a group water scheme. Nearly 138,000 (10.8%) houses, located almost exclusively in rural areas, had a private source of water.

Over 820,000 (64.3%) housing units were connected to a public sewerage system in 2002. Houses using individual septic tanks for sewerage disposal amounted to 408,000 (31.9%). These were mainly located in rural areas.

Highest proportion of one off housing in Co. Galway

Over one in four of the 290,000 housing units built since 1991 were individual one-off houses in rural areas (i.e. detached buildings with individual septic tanks). The counties with the highest percentage of these one-off housing units built since 1991 were: Co. Galway (63.1%), Monaghan (54.1%), Roscommon (52.5%), Cavan (52.4%) and Leitrim (52.3%).

PC ownership and Internet access

Over 555,000 (43.5%) households had a personal computer (PC) in April 2002 while 436,000 (34.1%) had access to the Internet. Urban areas were ahead of rural ones in terms of access to both facilities (45.3% compared with 40.6% for PCs and 35.9% compared with 31.1% for Internet access). The Dublin counties of Dún Laoghaire/Rathdown, Fingal and South Dublin had the highest penetration rates for PCs and Internet access while Limerick City, Cavan and Leitrim had the lowest.

Meath (87.8%) had the highest proportion of households with at least one car in 2002 followed by Kildare and Fingal (86.6% each). At the other end of the scale the city areas, especially Dublin City (58.3%) and Limerick City (61%), had the lowest car ownership rates.

Increased car ownership

Car ownership was higher in rural areas (86.2%) than in urban areas (73.3%). The trend in both areas has been sharply upwards since 1991 when the relevant percentages were 74.6 per cent and 59.5 per cent, respectively. Over a million households had at least one car each in 2002 – an increase of 330,000 compared with 1991. When account is taken of the growth in the overall numbers of households in the same period, those without a car declined by 70,000 or 20 per cent.