

4. Households and families

Marital status

Living alone

Separation and divorce

Families and children

Fertility

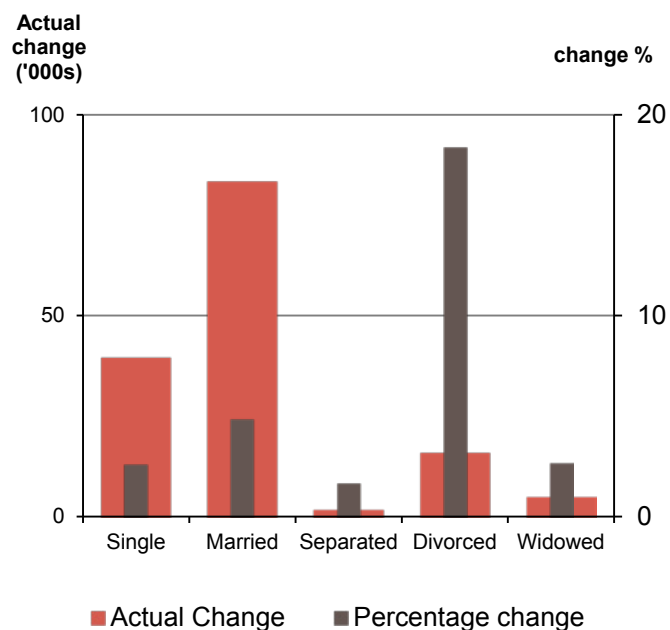
More people married

Table 4.1 presents figures on the marital status of the population aged 15 and over in April 2016 compared with 2011 and shows that while the actual number of those married increased by 83,547 over the five years the percentage of the population who were married remained stable at 37.6 per cent.

The majority of this increase (70,290) was among those married for the first time with a further 9,031 re-married.

Same-sex civil partnerships were captured separately for the first time in 2016 and the results show there were 4,226 persons in this category in 2016. A further 706 persons identified as being in a same-sex couple were married.

Figure 4.1 Change in marital status, 2011-2016



Proportion of widows drops

While the number of people aged 70 and over increased by 64,576 the number of those who were widowed rose by just 6,914; there was an increase of 47,058 in those who were married.

This reflects a trend where men are living longer. In the over 70 age group, the number of men has grown faster than the number of women. In 2011 there were 767 men aged 70 and over for every 1,000 women in the same age band. In 2016 this has narrowed to 818 per 1,000.

[See web table EY006](#)

It's a fact!

37.6%

The percentage of population who were married

40.8%

The percentage married in Galway county

30.8%

The percentage married in Dublin city

Table 4.1 Population aged 15 and over by marital status, 2006-2016

Table 10.1 Separation aged 15 and over by marital status, 2006-2016									
Years	Total	Single	Married				Separated (incl. deserted)	Divorced	Widowed
			Total	First marriage	Remarried	Registered same- sex civil partnership			
Thousands									
2006	3,375.4	1,453.2	1,565.0	1,523.5	41.5	0.0	107.3	59.5	190.4
2011	3,608.7	1,505.0	1,708.6	1,655.9	52.7	0.0	116.2	87.8	191.1
2016	3,755.3	1,544.9	1,792.2	1,726.2	61.7	4.2	118.2	103.9	196.2
Actual change (Thousands)									
2006/2011	233.3	51.8	143.6	132.4	11.2	0.0	8.9	28.2	0.7
2011/2016	146.7	39.8	83.5	70.3	9.0	4.2	2.0	16.1	5.2
Percentage change									
2006/2011	6.9	3.6	9.2	8.7	27.0	-	8.3	47.4	0.4
2011/2016	4.1	2.6	4.9	4.2	17.1	-	1.7	18.4	2.7

Elderly and living alone

There were a total of 587,284 aged 65 and over in private households in April 2016 and of these 156,799 (27%) lived alone. Among the 231,304 persons aged 75 and over, 81,672 (35.3%) lived alone while almost 45 per cent of the 51,503 persons aged 85 and over also lived alone.

Cities, along with the Border and Western regions, had the highest proportions of elderly living alone, as illustrated well on Map 4.1. Counties in the Eastern region, particularly those in the Dublin commuter belt generally had lower proportions of elderly living alone. Dublin city was an exception to this.

More elderly women live alone

There were more elderly women living alone than men, with women accounting for 62.3 per cent of all elderly people living alone. Among the older age group - aged 85 and over – women accounted for almost three in every four of those living alone, as can be seen in Figure 4.3.

[See web table EY015](#)

Figure 4.2 Persons living alone as a percentage of persons living in private households aged 65 and over, 2016

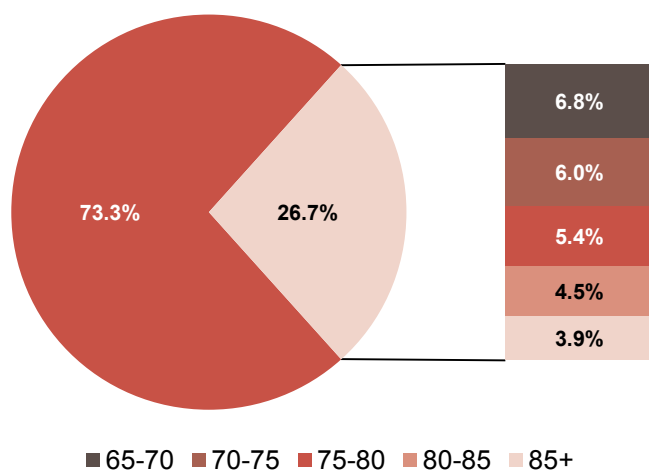
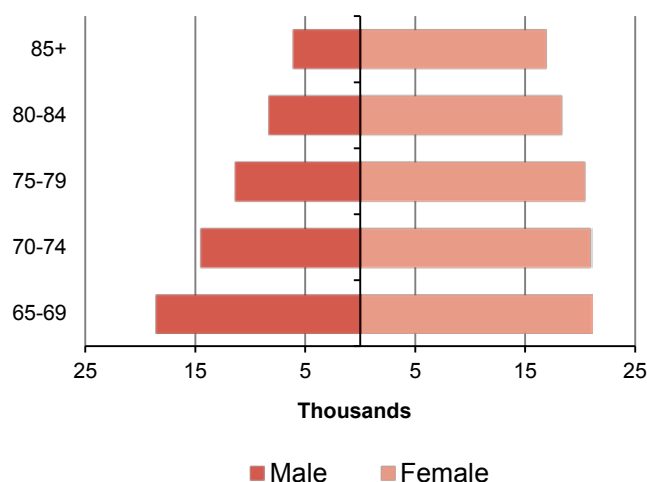


Figure 4.3 Males and females aged 65 and over living alone by age group, 2016



Map 4.1 Percentage of persons aged 65 and over living alone, 2016

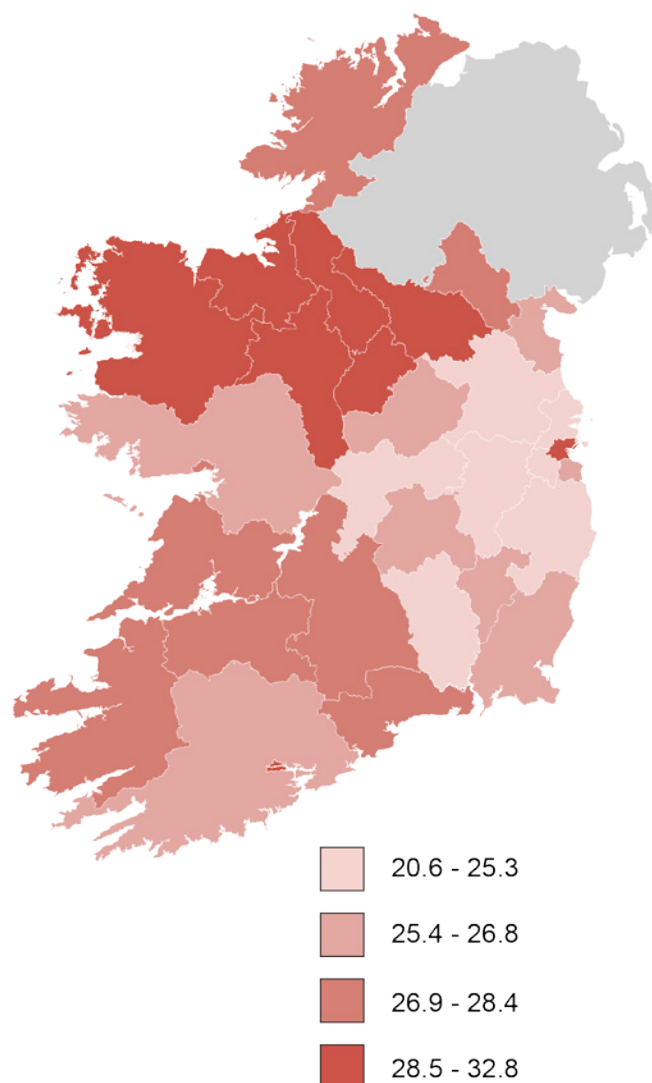
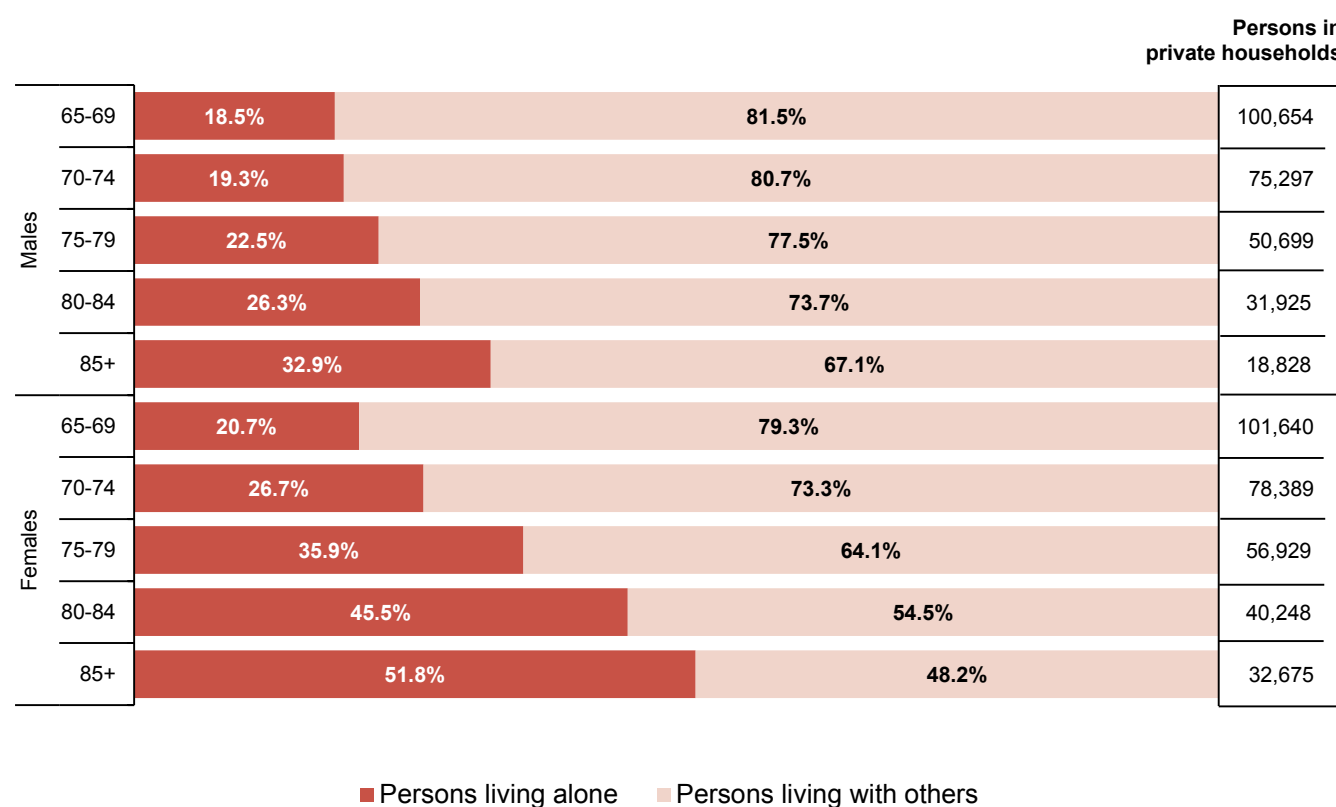


Figure 4.4 Percentage of elderly persons living alone and with others, 2016

Single people

In 2016, the percentage of people aged 15 and over who were single decreased slightly to 41.1 per cent compared with 41.7 per cent in 2011. Just over 43 per cent (43.5%) of men and almost 39 per cent (38.9%) of women were single in 2016.

When examined for urban and rural areas separately, the data shows that there was a higher proportion of single people in urban (44.5%) than in rural (35.4%) areas.

Likelihood of never marrying

The percentage of those aged 40 - 49 who were single is a good indicator of those who never marry in the long term.

In 2016 more than a quarter of males (26.3%) in this age group were single, while amongst women 23.6 per cent were single. Figure 4.5 illustrates clearly how there has traditionally been more unmarried men than women in this age group but that the gap is narrowing; over the twenty year period from 1996 to 2016 the percentage of single women in this age group has more than doubled from 11 per cent to almost 24 per cent.

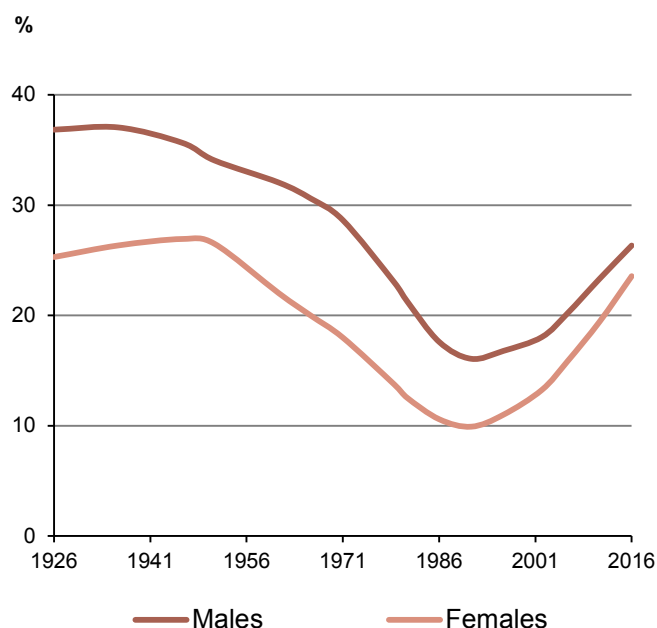
The data for the urban and rural areas differs sharply as illustrated in Table 4.2. In rural areas only 16.6 per cent of women in this age group were single compared with 28.0 per cent in urban areas, while for men the figures were 22.3 per cent and 28.9 per cent respectively.

[See web table EY005](#)

Table 4.2 Percentage of single people in urban and rural area by sex, 2016

Age group	Total	Urban	Rural
Persons			
30 - 39 years	46.6	48.9	41.2
40 - 49 years	24.9	28.4	19.5
50 - 59 years	16.2	17.9	13.8
Males			
30 - 39 years	50.0	51.3	46.8
40 - 49 years	26.3	28.9	22.3
50 - 59 years	18.0	18.6	17.2
Females			
30 - 39 years	43.5	46.6	35.9
40 - 49 years	23.6	28.0	16.6
50 - 59 years	14.4	17.3	10.3

Figure 4.5 Percentage of people who were single aged 40-49, 1926-2016



It's a fact!

45%

The percentage of people aged 15 and over in urban areas who were single

35%

The percentage of people aged 15 and over in rural areas who were single

Continued increase in numbers divorced

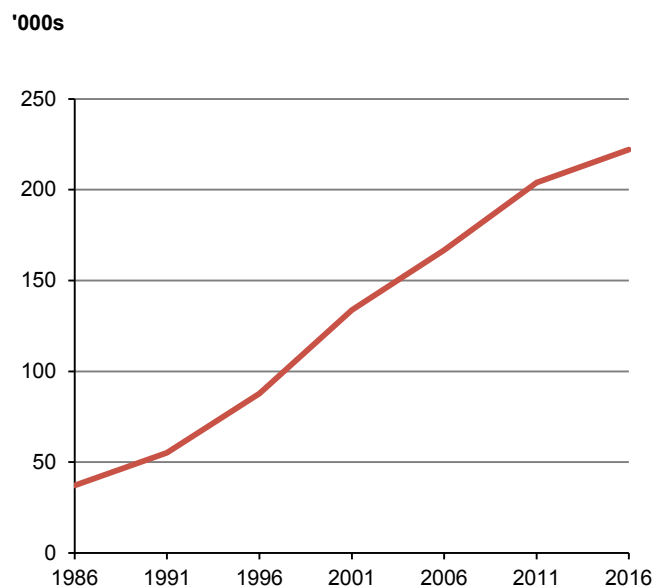
The number of divorced people in Ireland has increased from 87,770 in 2011 to 103,895 in 2016, an increase of 16,125 persons. This is less than the previous intercensal increase of 28,236 persons.

In contrast, the number of people identified as separated has levelled off and stood at 118,178, up marginally from 116,194 five years earlier. As divorce in Ireland generally requires a period of separation in the first instance (up to five years) the data no doubt reflects both a progression for people from separation to divorce, combined with new numbers joining the category of separation.

More women than men

As has been seen in previous census results, the figures for men and women differ, with consistently more women than men recorded in these categories. In 2016 there were 66,563 separated women compared with 51,615 separated men and 60,586 divorced women compared with 43,309 divorced men, as illustrated in Figure 4.7.

Figure 4.6 Separated and divorced persons, 1986-2016



It's a fact!

94,924

The number of men who were separated or divorced

127,149

The number of women who were separated or divorced

Figure 4.7 Separated and divorced by sex, 2002-2016

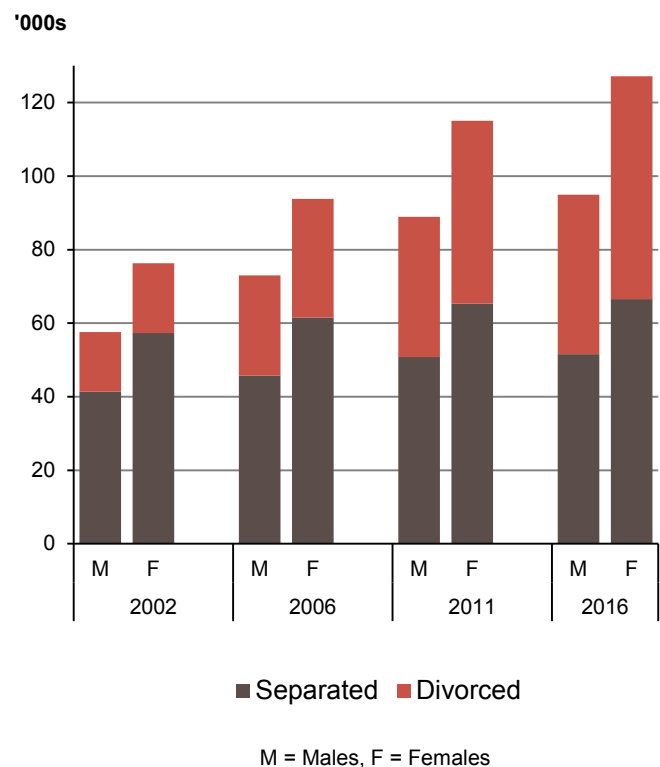


Table 4.3 Marital breakdown rates for selected counties, 2016

County or City	Rate of marital breakdown
3 Highest	%
Cork City	11.9
Galway City	11.8
Dublin City	11.7
3 Lowest	%
Galway County	8.1
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown	8.8
Cork County	8.9

Rates of marital breakdown

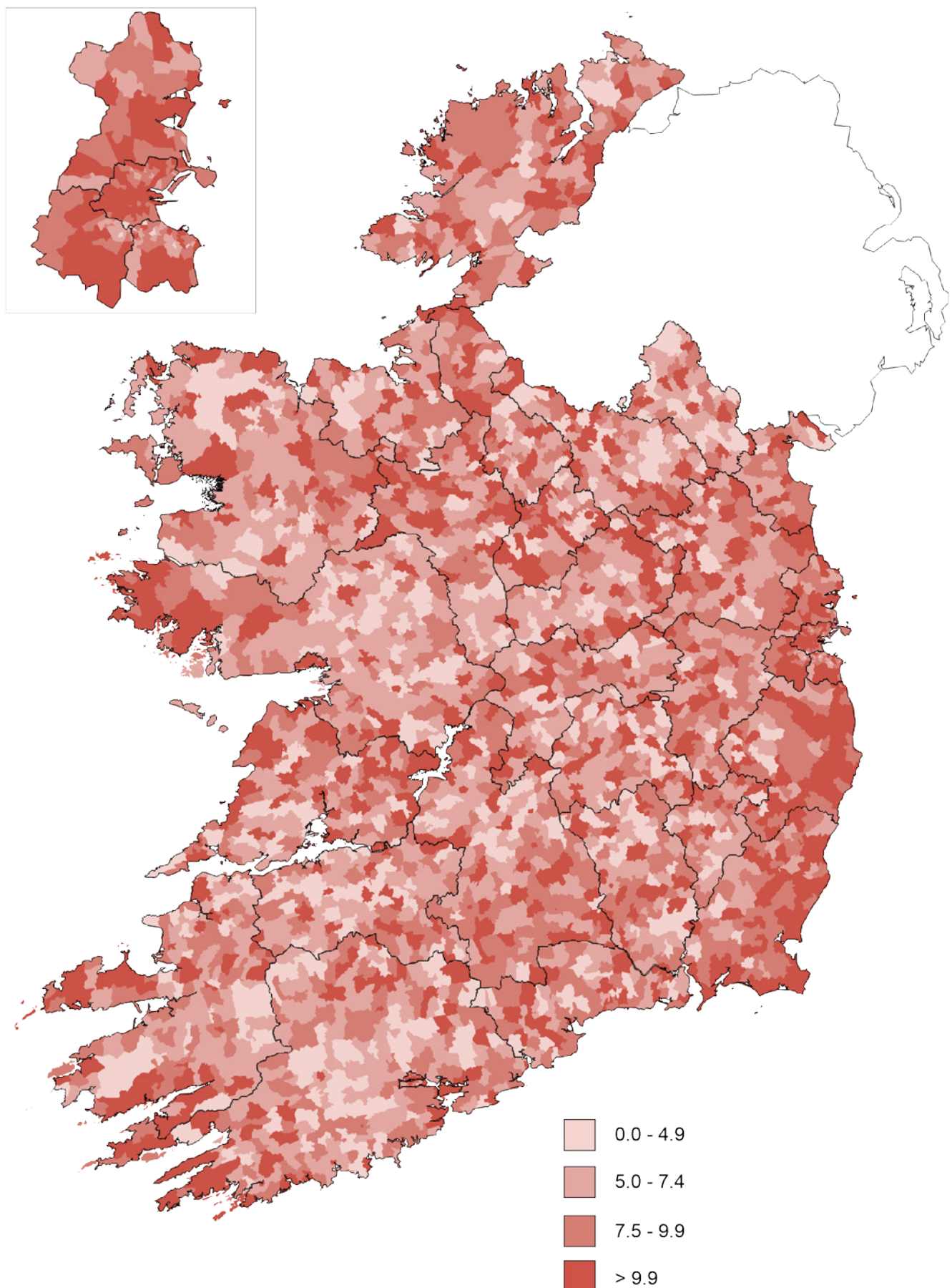
The increase in the number of divorced people has resulted in a small increase in the marital breakdown rate from 9.7 per cent in 2011 to 10 per cent in 2016. This rate is calculated as the number of separated and divorced persons as a proportion of those who were ever married.

When examined on a county basis the highest rates were in the cities, topped by Cork City with a rate of 11.9 per cent, while Galway County had the lowest rate (8.1%). This data is illustrated in Map 4.2 opposite at an electoral district level.

Remarriage following divorce

The data on re-marriage shows that the 2002 figure of 30,500 had more than doubled to 61,729 in April 2016. Here the number of men exceeds women with 34,583 men in the category compared with 27,146 women, partially explaining the lower number of divorced men compared with women.

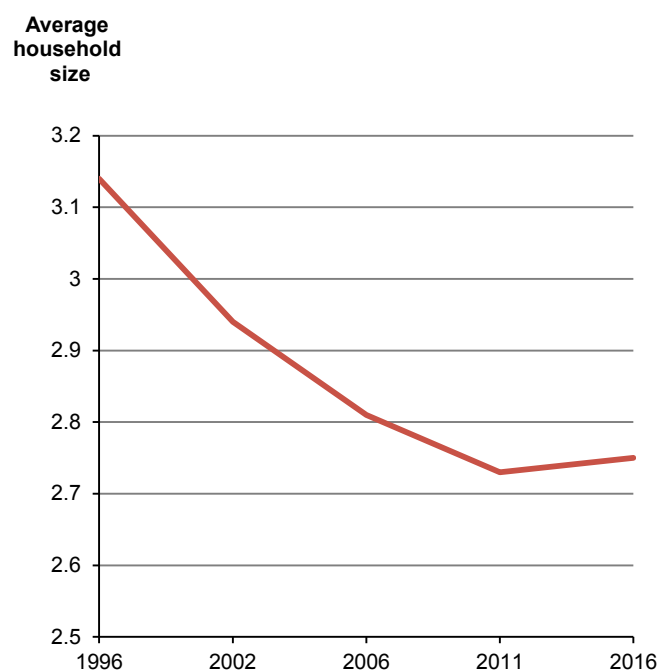
[See web table EY006](#)

Map 4.2 Percentage rate of marital breakdown by electoral district, 2016

Household size increases

The number of private households increased from 1,654,208 in April 2011 to 1,702,289 in April 2016, an increase of 2.9 per cent over 5 years. As the number of people living in private households rose by 3.7 per cent over the period household formation has now fallen behind population increase. This has resulted in an increase in average household size from 2.73 persons to 2.75 persons and represents a reversal of the long-term decline in average household size in Ireland, as illustrated in Figure 4.8.

Figure 4.8 Average household size by census year



Couples with children see highest increase

Couples with children have long been the most dominant household type in Ireland, accounting for 35.2 per cent of all private households. Since 2011 they have also had the largest absolute growth of all household types, increasing by 20,796, as illustrated in Figure 4.9.

One-person households and couples without children also grew over the 5 years, increasing by 7,815 and 9,883 respectively.

[See web table EY011](#)

Figure 4.9 Change in household types, 2011-2016

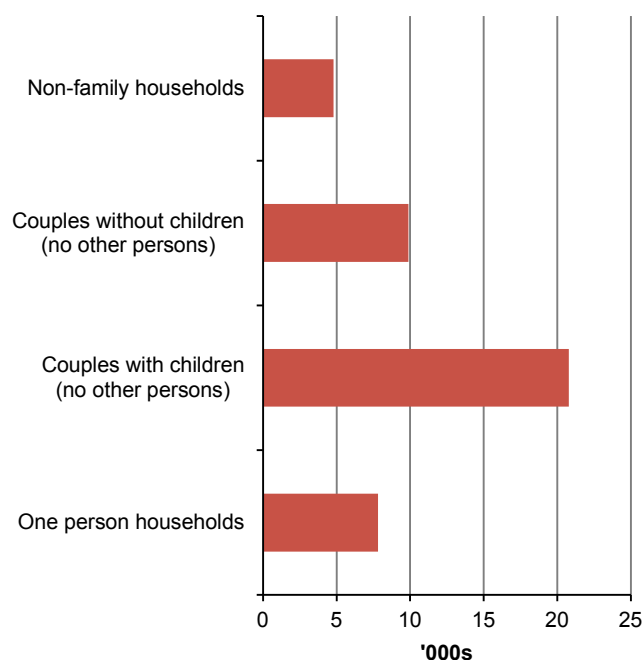
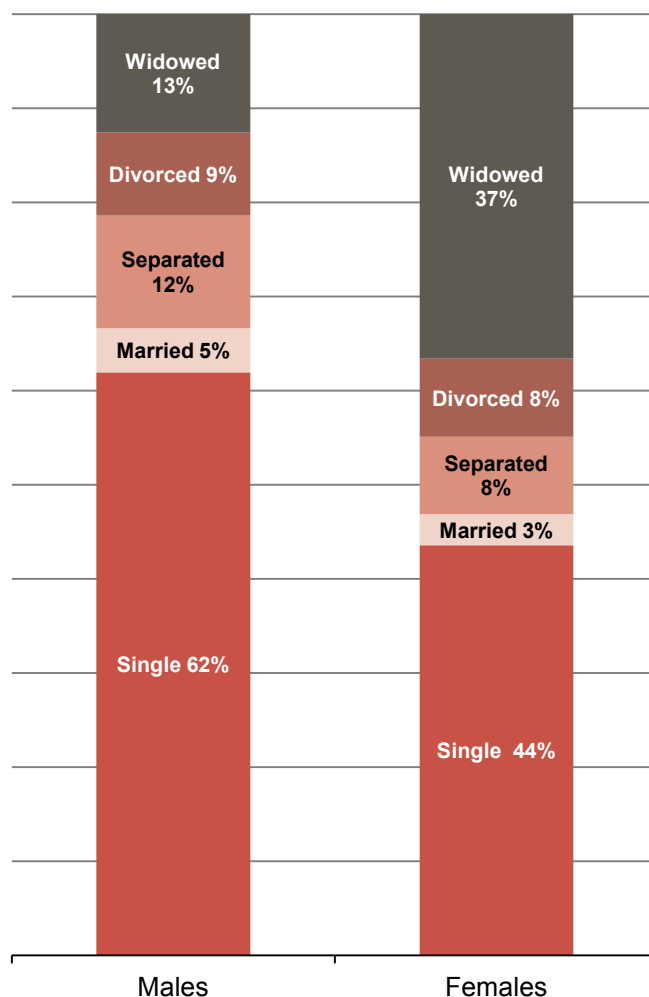


Figure 4.10 One person households by marital status



There were 399,815 one person households in total, of which 204,296 were female and 195,519 were male. Figure 4.10 presents the marital status of this group and shows that 62 per cent of males who lived alone were single with only 13 per cent widowed (21,517). Amongst females 74,725 were widowed, representing 37 per cent of the group, while 89,069 were single, accounting for 44 per cent.

Table 4.4 presents the composition of households in 2011 and 2016. Households comprised of families with other persons, be it couples with children, one parent families or two family households all showed the biggest increases, while the nuclear household of couple with children (with no other persons) remained the dominant type.

Table 4.4 Composition of households, 2011-2016

Composition of households	Number of households		Change 2011 - 2016	
	2011	2016	Actual	%
	<i>Thousands</i>			
One person	392.0	399.8	7.8	2.0
Couple without children	313.3	323.1	9.9	3.2
Couple with children	577.9	598.7	20.8	3.6
Couple without children but with other persons	21.7	20.3	-1.4	-6.5
Couple with children and other persons	30.5	32.4	2.0	6.5
One parent with children	179.8	177.9	-1.8	-1.0
One parent with children and other persons	18.2	20.6	2.4	13.4
Two or more family units	18.8	22.4	3.6	19.2
Non-family households	102.2	107.0	4.8	4.7
Total	1,654.2	1,702.3	48.1	2.9

More families and more children

The total number of families increased by 3.3 per cent, to 1,218,370, over the five years to April 2016. Families are defined as couples with or without children, or one parent with children. While husband, wife and children remained the most common family type, accounting for almost half of all families in Ireland, the largest increase was among married couples without children which accounted for 17,282 of the total increase of 39,160; cohabiting couples with children increased by 15,318.

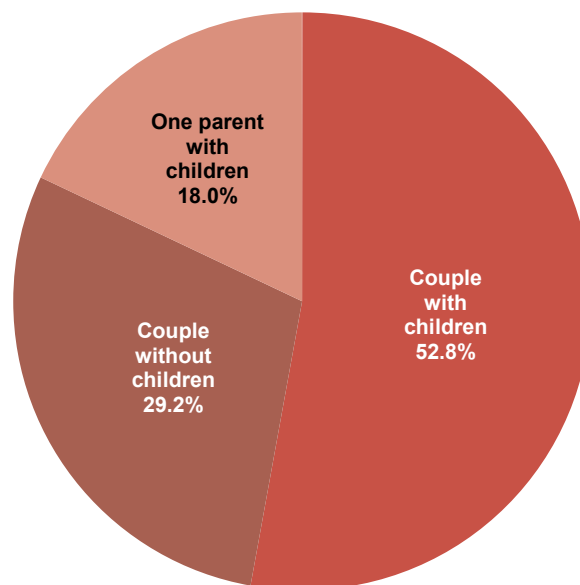
Decline in family size stabilises

The total number of children in families increased by 56,626 (3.5%) to 1,682,600 in 2016 as shown in Table 4.5 opposite.

The long-running decline in the number of children per family has levelled off. The average number of children in each family was 1.38, the same as in 2011. In 2006 it was 1.41.

[See web table EY016](#)

Figure 4.11 Types of families, 2016



It's a fact!

1,426

The number of families containing seven or more children

0.5%

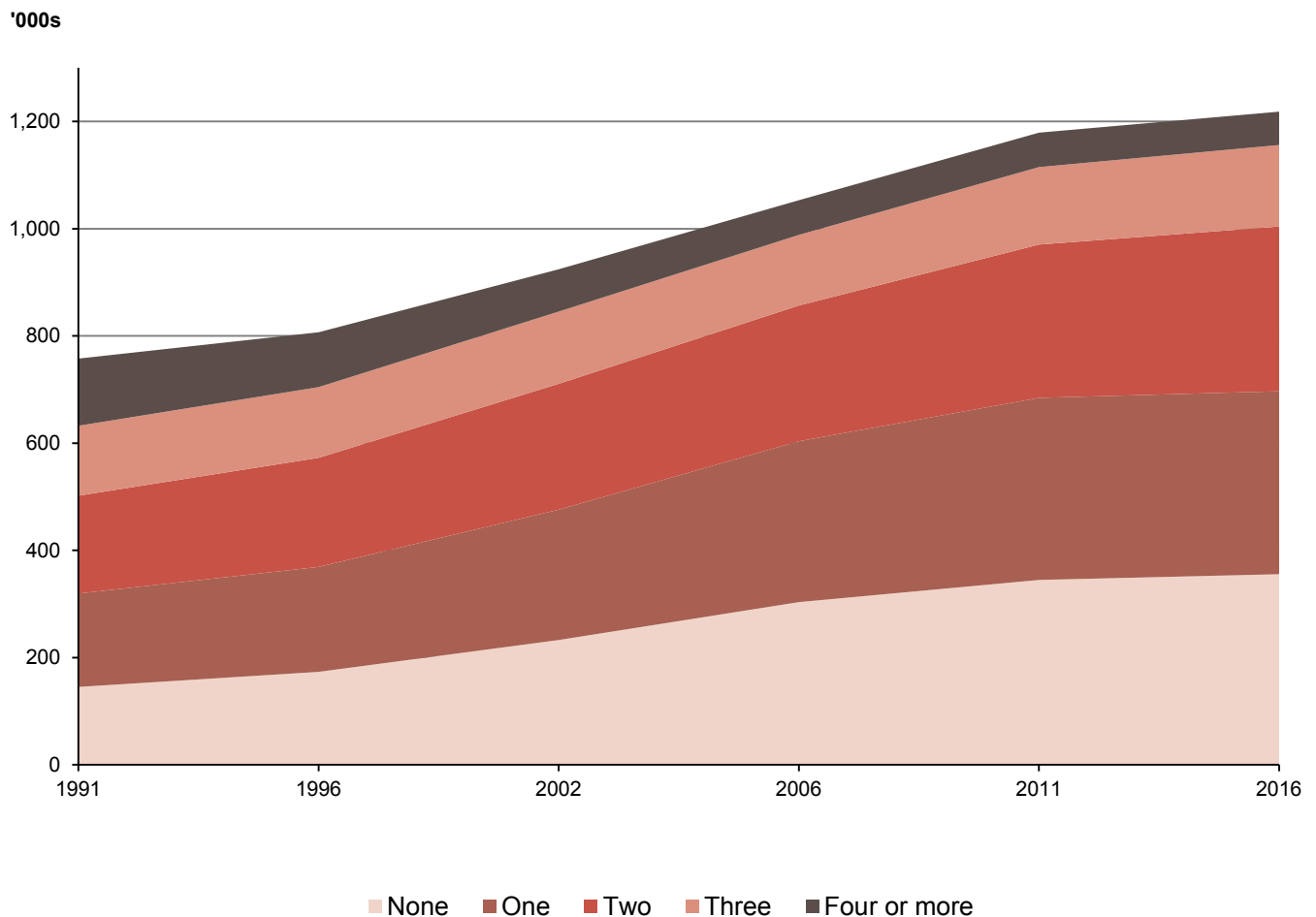
The increase in the number of one-child families

355,649

The number of families without children

Table 4.5 Families by number of children, 1991-2016

Number of children	1991	1996	2002	2006	2011	2016
<i>Thousands</i>						
None	145.4	173.5	232.9	303.6	344.9	355.6
One	174.2	195.7	243.1	300.1	339.6	341.2
Two	182.5	203.5	234.8	253.1	286.0	307.3
Three	130.4	131.9	134.7	131.7	144.5	152.1
Four or more	125.3	102.3	78.9	64.7	64.2	62.2
Total family units	757.9	806.8	924.5	1,053.2	1,179.2	1,218.4
Total children in family units	1,523.9	1,470.2	1,470.8	1,486.4	1,626.0	1,682.6
Average number of children per family	2.00	1.80	1.60	1.41	1.38	1.38

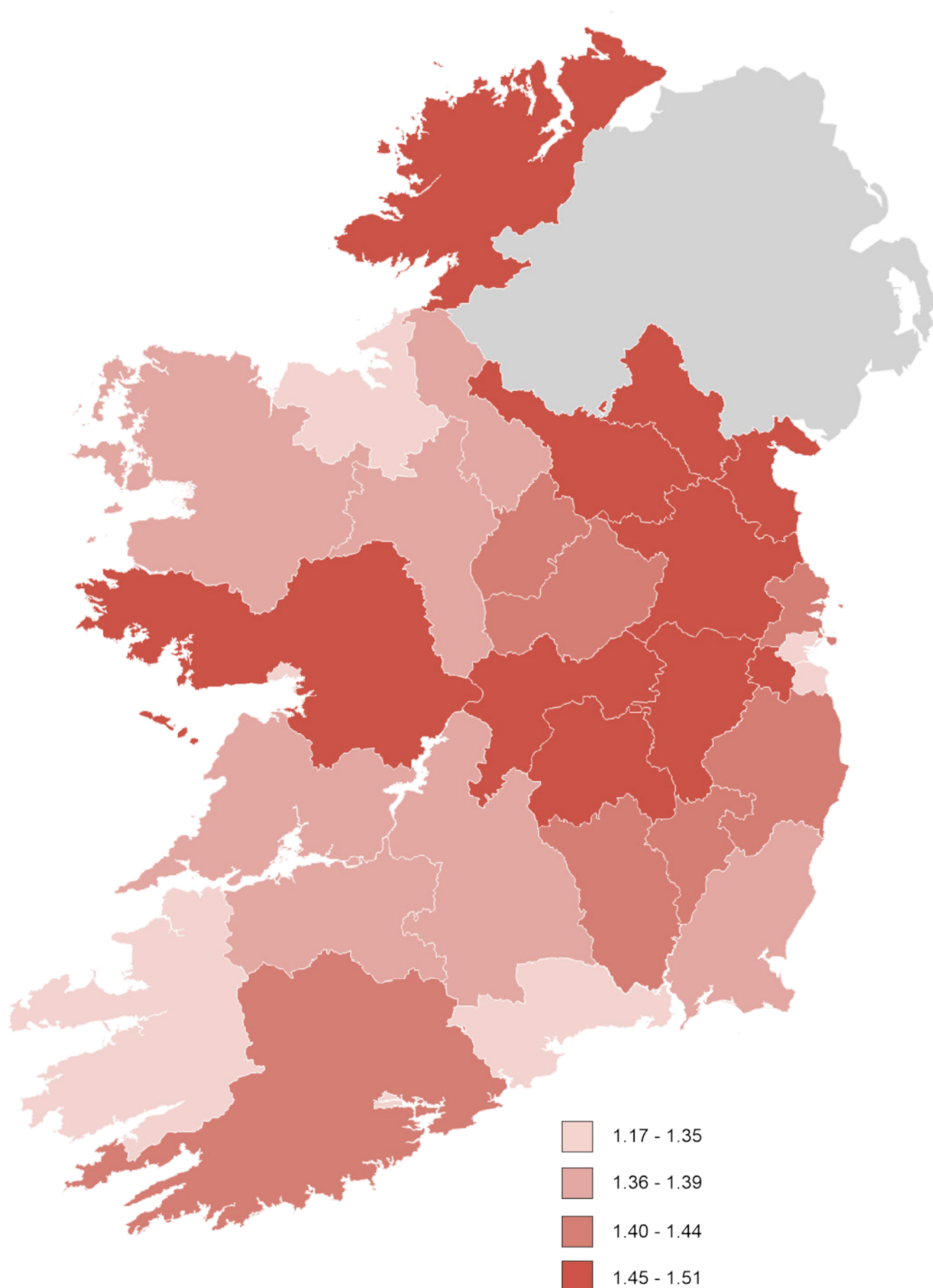
Figure 4.12 Families by number of children, 1991-2016

Average number of children by county

Map 4.3 (following page) presents the average number of children per family by county. County Meath, with an average of 1.51 children per family was the highest in the

country, followed by Monaghan with 1.50 and Laois with 1.49. At the other end of the scale in Dublin city there was an average of only 1.17 children per family, while Cork city the average was 1.18 and in Galway city 1.24.

Map 4.3 Average no. of children per family, 2016



Cohabiting couples

Of the 1.22 million families in Ireland, 152,302 were comprised of cohabiting couples. This was an increase of 8,741 on the 2011 figure and reflects a slower rate of growth than in previous inter-censal periods; between 2006 and 2011 the number of cohabiting couples increased by 21,800.

While the majority of these couples (50.4%) had no children, the average number of children per cohabiting couple increased from 0.7 in 2011 to 0.9 children in 2016.

As cohabitation is often a precursor to marriage in Ireland, these couples tend to be younger on average than married couples (37.1 years as opposed to 52.1 for married).

One parent families

There were 218,817 families headed by one parent, the vast majority of whom (86.4%) were one parent mothers. Almost 90,000 (89,686) were single; a further 50,496 were widowed while the remaining 68,378 were separated or divorced.

Table 4.6 One parent families by marital status, 2016

Marital status	Persons	Males	Females
Single	89,686	5,537	84,149
Married	10,257	2,227	8,030
Separated	41,820	6,460	35,360
Divorced	26,558	3,791	22,767
Widowed	50,496	11,690	38,806
Total	218,817	29,705	189,112

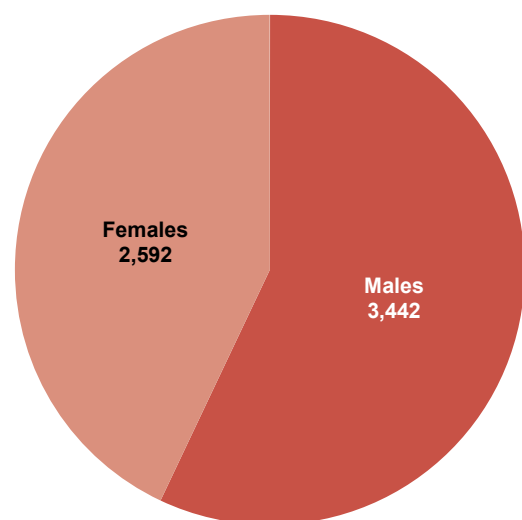
Same-sex couples

In April 2016 the census recorded 6,034 same sex couples of which 3,442 were male couples and 2,592 were female.

There were 591 couples with children, with the vast majority (82.9%) of these being female couples.

The category 'In a registered same-sex civil partnership' was included on the census for the first time in 2016 and there were 1,539 couples in this category; a further 706 couples indicated they were married.

Figure 4.13 Same-sex couples by sex, 2016



It's a fact!

1.6%

The increase in number of children of married couples

32.1%

The increase in number of children of cohabiting couples

1.2%

The increase in the number of children in one parent families

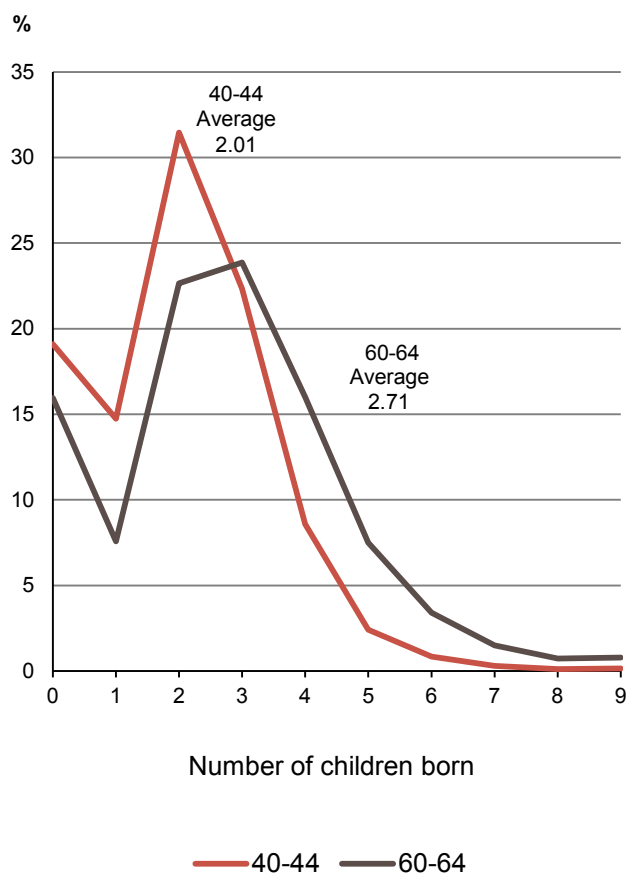
Declining fertility with age

The 2016 results on fertility show that the overall decline in fertility among women in Ireland has continued over the past five years, and this is illustrated in Figure 4.14.

The graph, which presents data for the age group 40-44 and 60-64, plots the number of women in these age groups by number of children born to them. As can be seen a larger proportion of women aged 40-44 had fewer children than those in the higher age group 60-64, while the situation is reversed when looking at women with three children or more.

The average number of children for the lower age group was 2.01, while for the older group it was 2.71.

Figure 4.14 Women in selected age groups by number of births, 2016

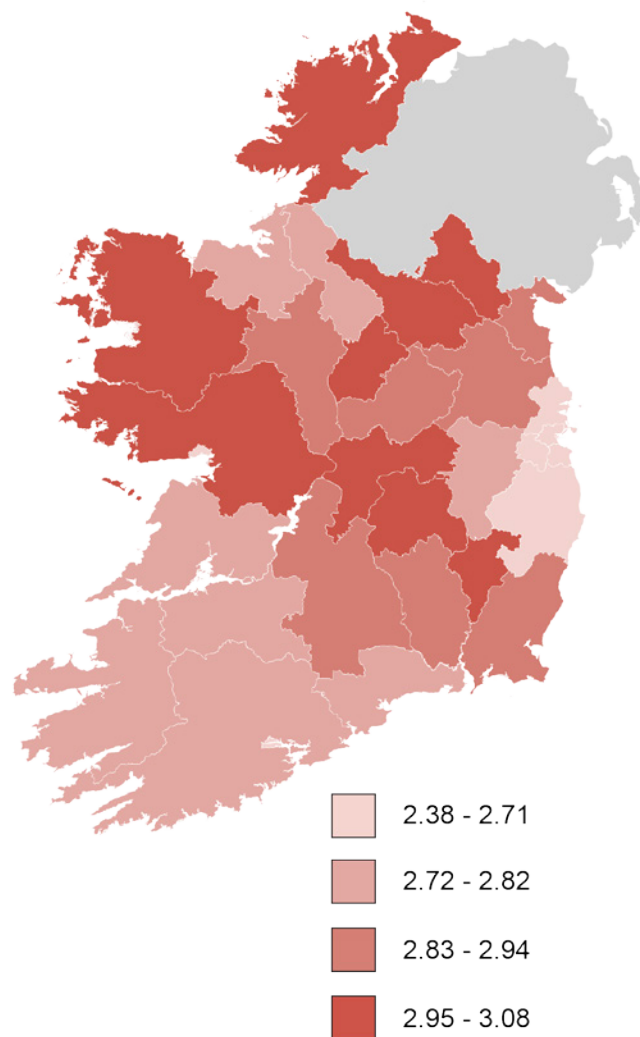


County by county

The average number of children born to women aged 45 and over has been mapped by county below.

Donegal had the highest rate at 3.08 children per woman, followed by Monaghan (3.07) and Offaly (3.06). Dublin city, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown and Galway city had the lowest rates, at 2.38, 2.41 and 2.45 respectively.

Map 4.4 Average number of children born to women aged 45 and over, 2016



It's a fact!

43,761

The decrease in the number of women aged 20-39, peak child bearing years, contributing to the fall in births in recent years

2.01

The average number of children born to every woman aged 40-44

3.27

The average number of children born to every woman aged 70-74