

NISRA STATISTICAL BULLETIN

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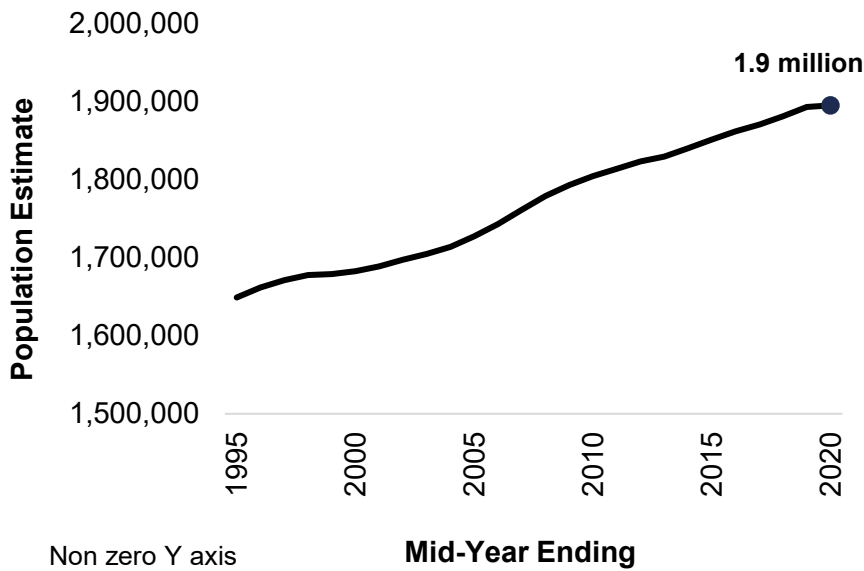


2020 Mid-year Population Estimates for Northern Ireland



This statistical report provides population estimates for Northern Ireland, its Local Government Districts and Parliamentary Constituencies, by age and sex.

2020 Mid-year Population Estimates for Northern Ireland - Summary

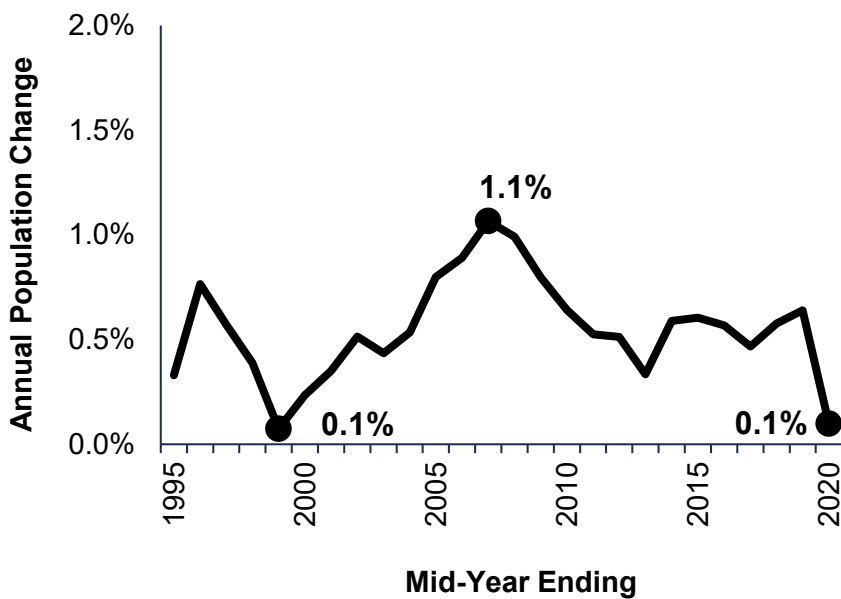


Northern Ireland population grows to 1.9 million in mid-2020

Northern Ireland's population (30 June 2020) was 1,895,500.

The population increased by 1,800 people or 0.1 per cent between mid-2019 and mid-2020.

The graph shows the trend from 1995-2020.

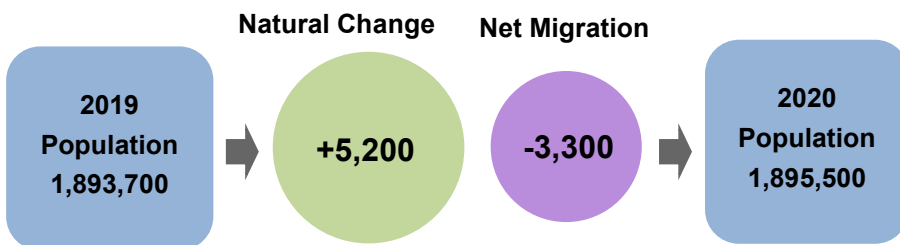


Population growth at lowest level since 1999

Annual population change has remained positive over the last twenty five years.

Growth over the last year was similar to that in 1999 (0.1 per cent).

Over the decade mid-2010 to mid-2020, the population of Northern Ireland increased by a total of 90,700 people with an average year-on-year increase of 0.5 per cent.

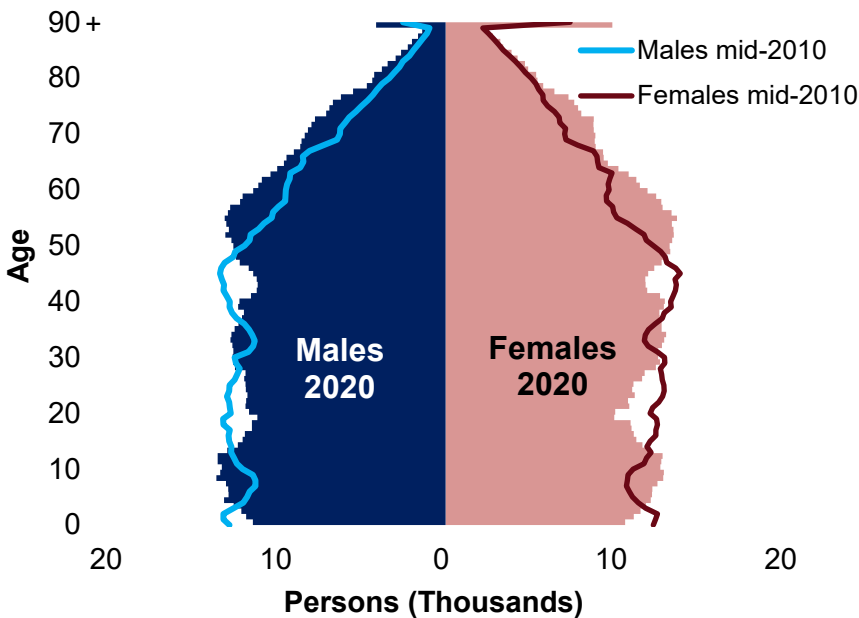


Natural change is the main driver of population growth

Natural change (births minus deaths) accounted for the total population growth over the last year.

Net migration for Northern Ireland was negative (-3,300) for the first time since mid-2013.

2020 Mid-year Population Estimates for Northern Ireland - Summary

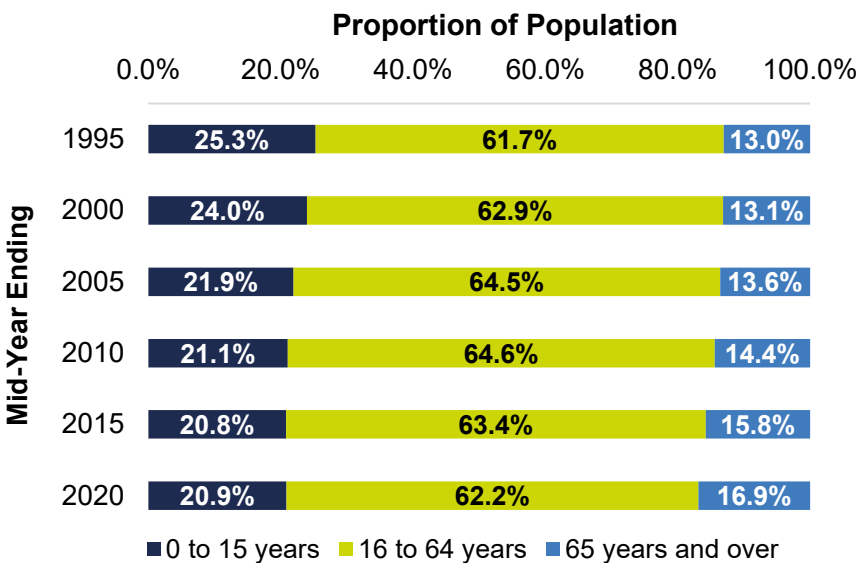


The Northern Ireland population continues to age

The population pyramid (left) shows the population structure.

The ageing of the population from 2010 to 2020 is evident in the increasing population amongst the older ages. This is evident by the pyramid beginning to broaden around age 50.

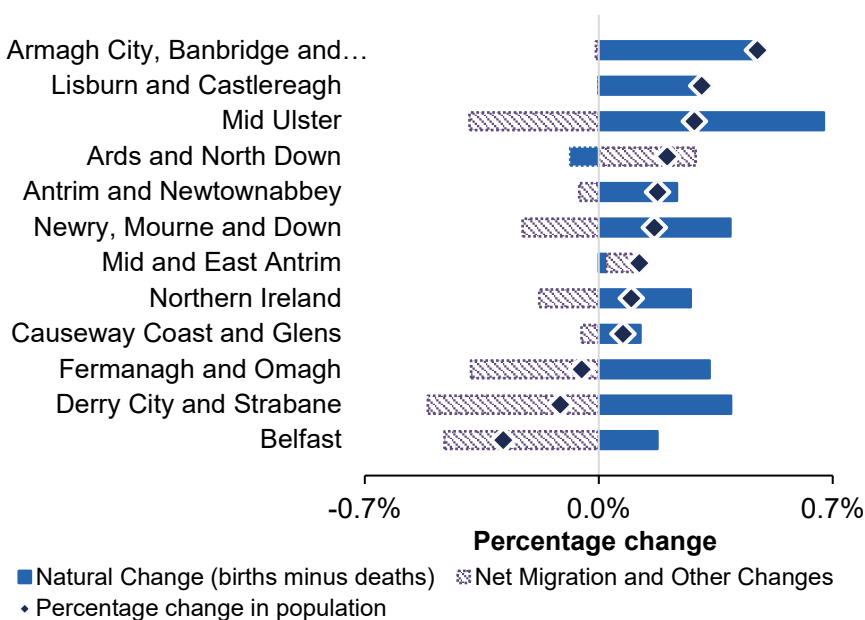
In the year to mid-2020, the number of people aged 65 or more increased by 1.7 per cent to 319,900 people.



By mid-2020, one in six people in Northern Ireland were aged 65 and over

The proportion of the population aged 65 or more has increased from 13.0 per cent in mid-1995 to 16.9 per cent in mid-2020.

In contrast, the proportion of the population aged 0 to 15 years has decreased from 25.3 per cent in mid-1995 to 20.9 per cent in mid-2020.



Three LGDs experienced population decline over the year

Fermanagh & Omagh (0.1 per cent), Derry City & Strabane (0.1 per cent) and Belfast (0.3 per cent) all experienced population decline over the year. Negative net migration was the driver of this population decrease.

Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon LGD had the largest population growth over the year (0.5 per cent) with natural change being the main contributor to population change (0.5 per cent).

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Note: Throughout the report figures have been presented in a rounded form to ease readability. For example population figures have been presented to the nearest 100 and percentages have been presented to 1 decimal place. However, all calculations have been undertaken on the basis of unrounded numbers which will, in some instances, give rise to apparent discrepancies.

1 Introduction

This bulletin details the key findings from the 2020 Mid-year Population Estimates for Northern Ireland and for areas within Northern Ireland published on 25 June 2021. The majority of this bulletin contains analyses of the population and migration estimates for Northern Ireland and its 11 Local Government Districts. It also includes a brief analysis of population estimates for the 18 Parliamentary Constituencies.

Detailed tables for Northern Ireland and the 11 Local Government Districts are available on the [NISRA website](#), as well as those for Parliamentary Constituencies, Health & Social Care Trusts and Super Output Areas. In addition, tables are available for some former geographic areas in Northern Ireland, namely: the former 26 Local Government Districts; former Education & Library Boards; former Health & Social Services Boards; former NUTS-III areas¹; and the former 582 Electoral Wards.

Population statistics are used to allocate public funds to the Northern Ireland Executive through the Barnett formula². Population estimates are also widely used by Northern Ireland government departments for the planning of services, such as health and education. These statistics are also of interest to those involved in research and academia. They are widely used to express other statistics as a rate, and thus enable comparisons across the United Kingdom and other countries. Furthermore, population estimates form the basis for future population statistics such as population projections³.

2 Background

The population estimates refer to the number of people in the population at 30 June each year. Population estimates for Northern Ireland, sub-national levels and small geographical areas are published annually and approximately one year in arrears. Population estimates are based on the most recent Census of population: each year, the population is ‘aged-on’ by one year with the number of births in the year added and the number of deaths in the year subtracted. An adjustment is also made for migration. Subsequent mid-year population estimates then use the previous year’s figures as the base.

¹ NUTS Level III areas were changed to be equivalent to the current 11 Local Government Districts in Northern Ireland in January 2018.

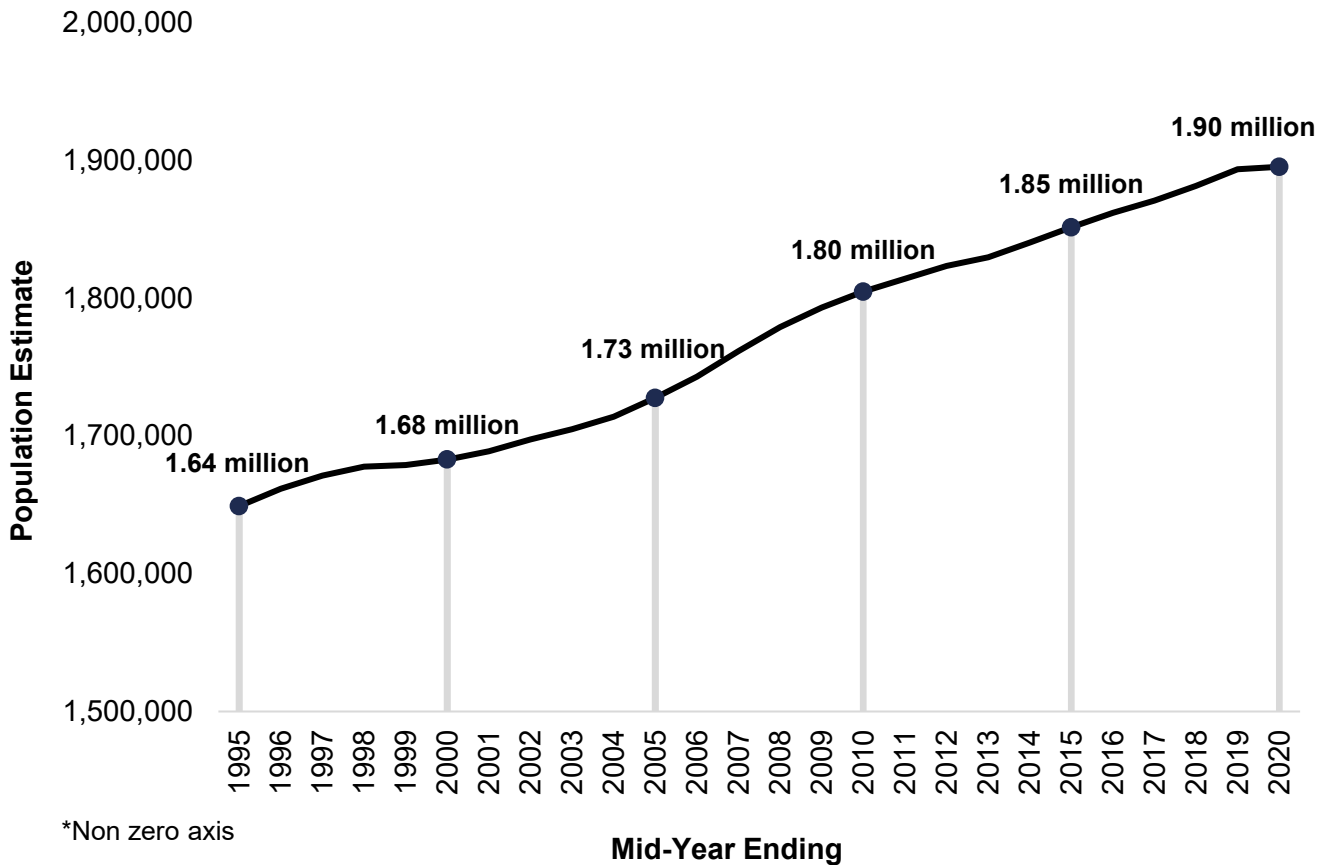
² A mechanism used by Her Majesty’s Treasury to adjust the amounts of public expenditure allocated to the Devolved Administrations. See <http://archive.niassembly.gov.uk/finance/2007mandate/research/090320.pdf>

³ For the latest Northern Ireland population projections see <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/2018-based-population-projections-northern-ireland>

3 Population Estimates for Northern Ireland

3.1 Northern Ireland's population continues to increase

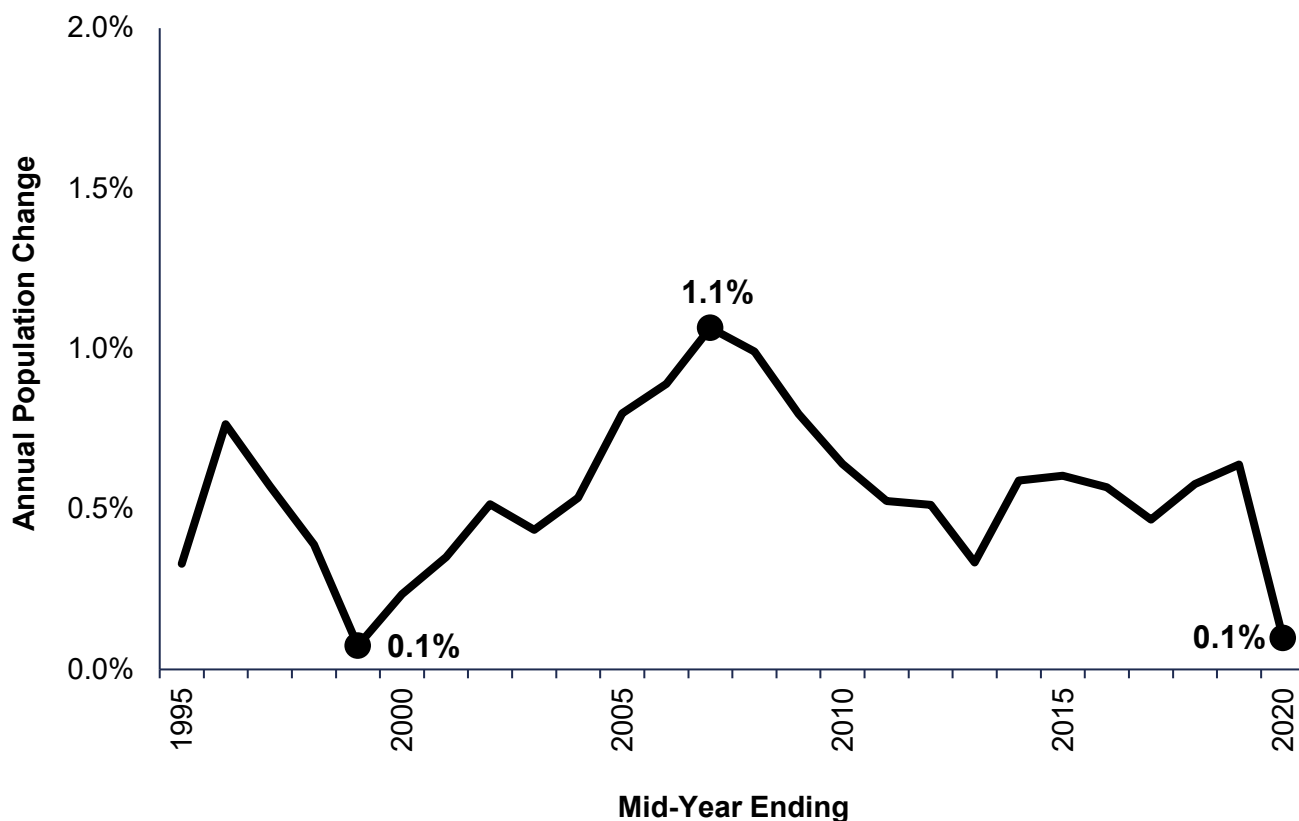
Figure 1: Estimated Population of Northern Ireland, mid-1995 to mid-2020*



[Download Chart](#) (XLSX format – 93 Kb)

At 30 June 2020, Northern Ireland's population was estimated to be 1.90 million people. Between mid-2019 and mid-2020, the population of Northern Ireland increased by 1,800 people (0.1 per cent). Just over half of the population (50.7 per cent) were female, with 961,400 females compared to 934,200 males (49.3 per cent).

Figure 2: Annual population change for Northern Ireland, mid-1995 to mid-2020



[Download Chart](#) (XLSX format – 92 Kb)

Over the last 25 years, the annual rate of population growth in Northern Ireland has fluctuated between a low of 0.1 per cent in 1999 and a high of 1.1 per cent in 2007. Over the decade mid-2010 to mid-2020, the population of Northern Ireland increased by a total of 90,700 people with an average year-on-year increase of 0.5 per cent.

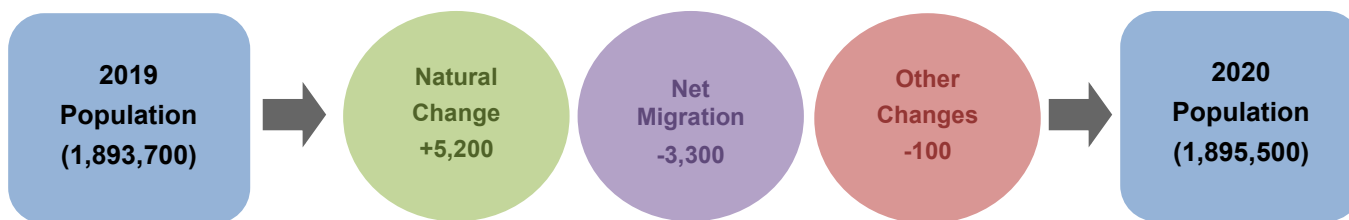
3.2 Why is the population increasing?

The two main components of population change are **natural change** and **net migration**. Natural change is the difference between the number of births and deaths, while net migration is the difference between the number of people entering and leaving Northern Ireland. **Other Changes** is a third minor component and takes into account changes in the number of armed forces stationed here.

The latest increase in the Northern Ireland population was a result of (see Figure 3):

1. Positive natural change of 5,200 people (21,900 births minus 16,700 deaths);
2. An estimated loss of 3,300 people due to net migration (21,200 people came to live in Northern Ireland and 24,500 people left).
3. A slight reduction of 100 people due to other changes.

Figure 3: Contribution of components of change to population increase, mid-2019 to mid-2020

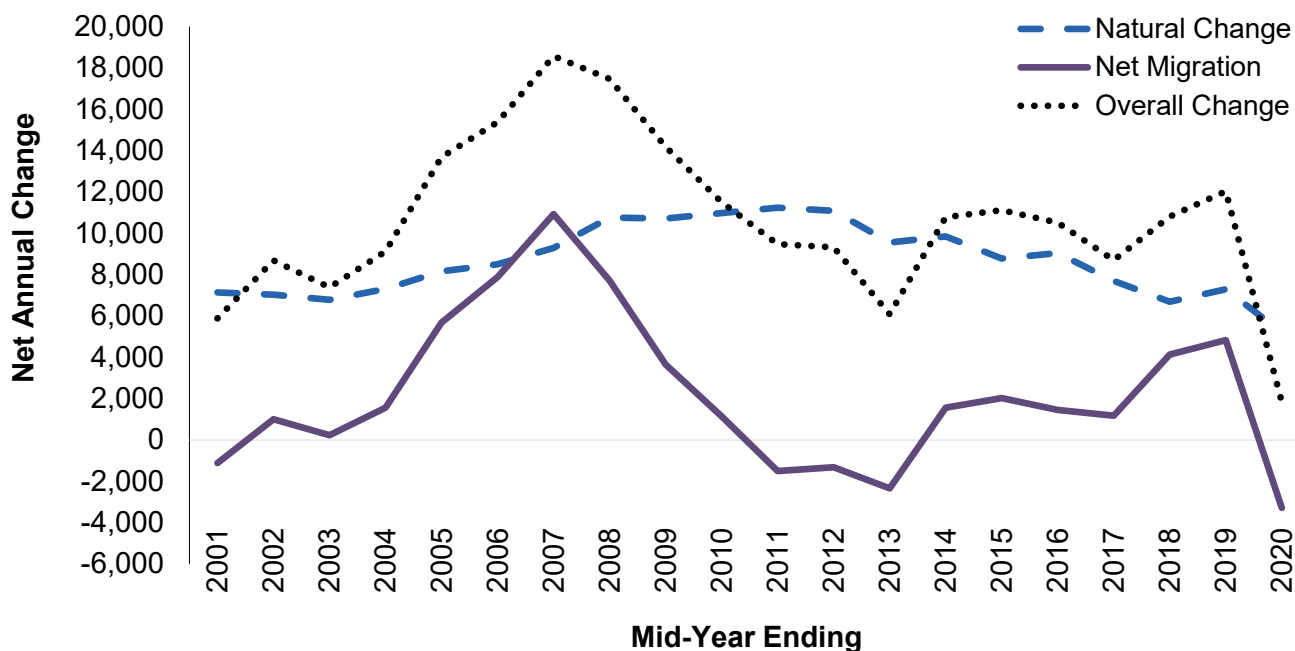


Northern Ireland's population growth at the lowest level since 1999

In the year between mid-2019 and mid-2020 population change totalled 1,800 people. This was a result of positive natural change and negative net migration. This represents the lowest population growth since mid-1998 to mid-1999 (1,200 people). One of the main reasons for significantly lower population growth over the year is that natural change (i.e. births minus deaths) is at the lowest level since the time series began in 2001 (5,200 people).

Northern Ireland has also experienced negative net migration (i.e. inflows⁴ minus outflows⁵), over the year with the number of people leaving Northern Ireland exceeding those coming here to live by 3,300 (see Figure 4). Mid-2020 represents the first negative net migration year since mid-2013 and the largest level of negative net migration over the time series.

Figure 4: Components of population change (year ending mid-2001 to year ending mid-2020)



[Download Chart](#) (XLSX format – 93 Kb)

⁴ Inflows: the number of people coming to Northern Ireland to live.

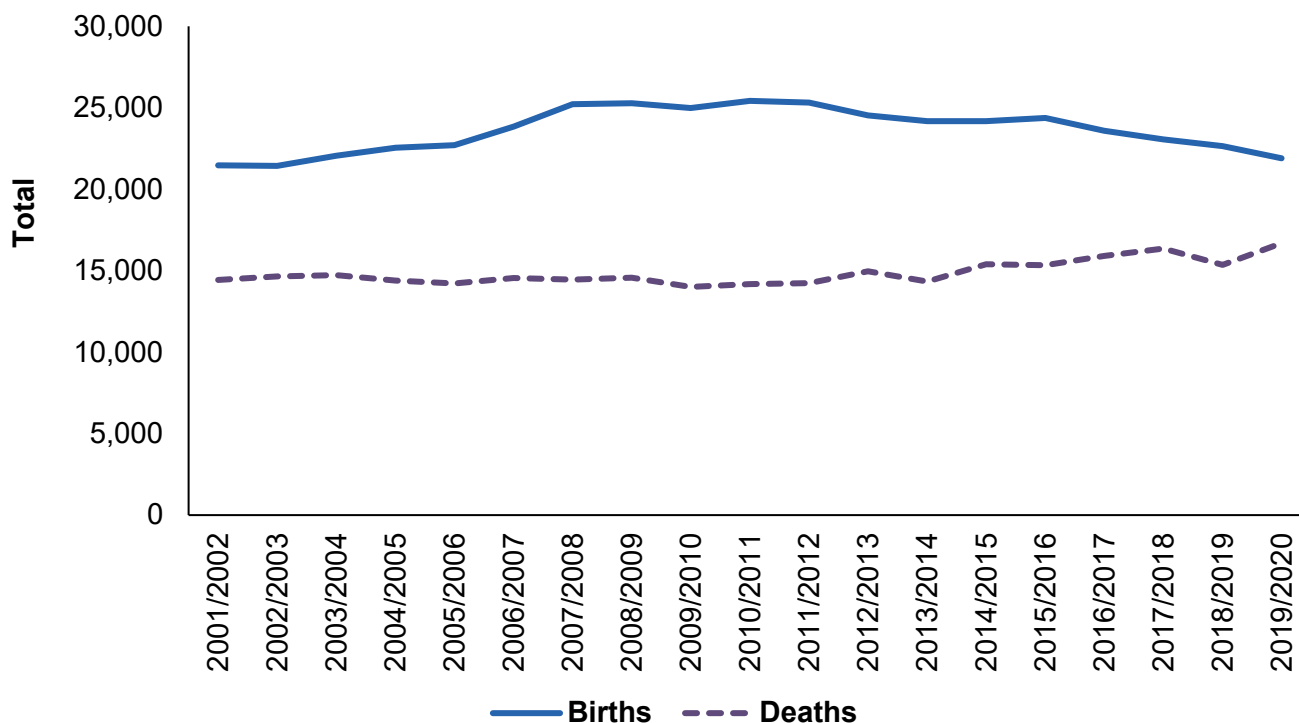
⁵ Outflows: the number of people leaving Northern Ireland to live elsewhere.

4 Covid-19 and population change

The mid-2020 population estimates cover the period mid-2019 to mid-2020, a timespan which includes the first few months of the coronavirus pandemic. Given the decrease in natural change and shift to negative net migration it is important to outline what part the pandemic has likely played in contributing to the lowest level of population growth in over 20 years.

4.1 Births and Deaths

Figure 5: Births and Deaths from mid-2001 to mid-2020, Northern Ireland



[Download Chart](#) (XLSX format – 91 Kb)

There were 21,900 births in Northern Ireland from mid-2019 to mid-2020 which was 700 less than the previous year (22,600) (see Figure 5). The number of births has been on a gradual decline over the past 5 years with an average of 500 less births each year since mid-2015. Given the pandemic period covered in the mid-2020 population estimates relates to March to June 2020 it is not thought that the pandemic has had an influence on the number of births over the year.

Alternatively, Figure 5 shows deaths in Northern Ireland increased by 1,300 over the year to 16,700 and it is possible to quantify what impact the pandemic has had on this rise. NISRA produced a report in March 2021 looking at [excess mortality and Covid-19](#). Excess mortality is considered to be a good measure of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, as it does not rely on the availability or interpretation of the (primary and secondary) causes of death. It captures deaths from all causes, which may be related to a range of factors associated with the pandemic.

During the period March to June 2020 it was estimated that there were 905 excess deaths (17.8% higher than average) than in corresponding months over the previous five years. The 905 excess deaths due to Covid-19 represents 5.4% of all deaths which occurred over the year (16,700).

As a result, the continued natural decline in births, coupled with a higher number of excess deaths during the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in the lowest level of natural change (5,200) reported since the time series began in 2001.

4.2 Migration of people into and out of Northern Ireland

The coronavirus pandemic has had a major impact on people's lives with significant disruption to worldwide travel. Restrictions to travel, alongside various social and economic factors, have influenced people's plans and decisions to travel or migrate to and from Northern Ireland.

There have been sizeable changes to international mobility (or in other words people travelling or moving between Northern Ireland and other countries) since the UK lockdown in March 2020, when UK travel restrictions were enforced⁶ because of the pandemic.

Immigration and emigration to/from Northern Ireland is measured through registrations and deregistration on the medical card register⁷. As Covid-19 is not recorded as a reason for migration, quantifying the affect the pandemic has had on migration numbers is much more difficult than for births and deaths. However, in quarter two of 2020, we have seen a considerable drop in migration inflows to Northern Ireland coupled with an increase in migration outflows which suggests the pandemic may have played a part in influencing people's decisions to migrate to/from Northern Ireland.

Additionally, throughout mid-2019 to mid-2020, the EU Exit transition period has likely influenced migration flows for Northern Ireland. As a result, it is expected that a combination of the pandemic and EU Exit has contributed to the shift to negative net migration.

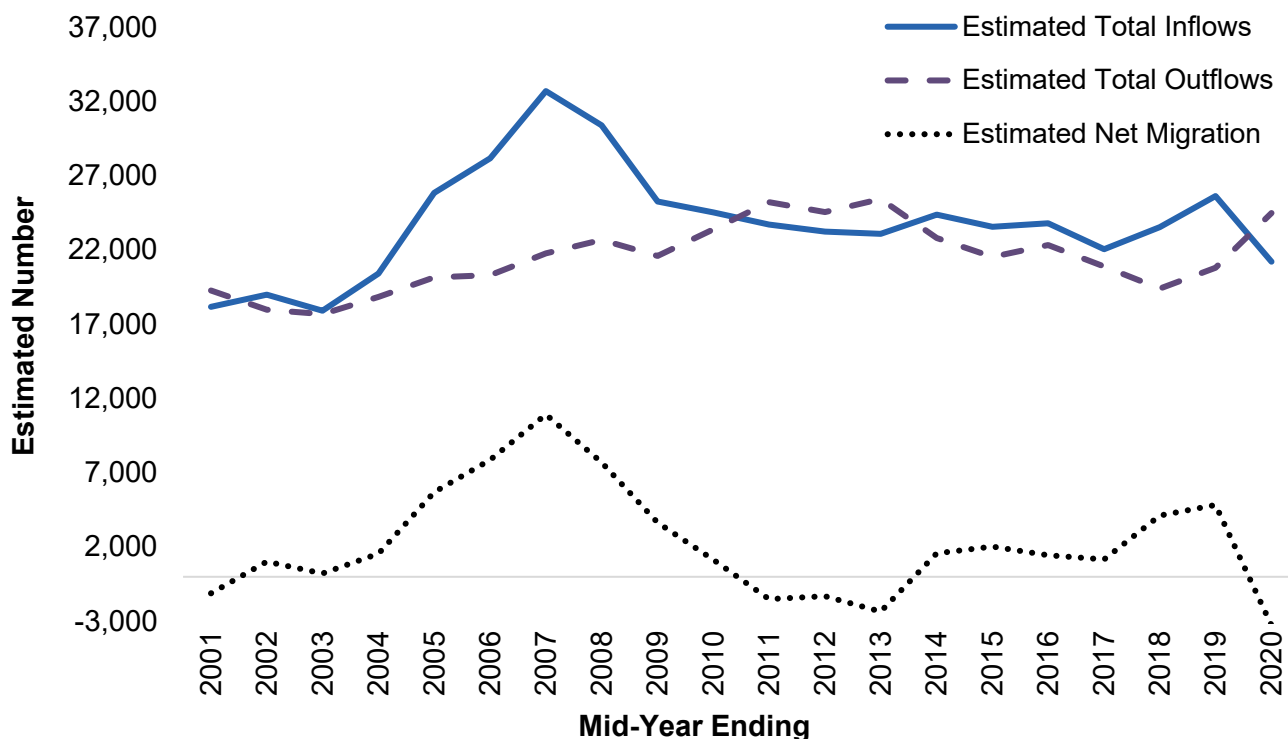
In the year ending mid-2020, the number of people coming to Northern Ireland to live was 21,200 and the number of people leaving to live outside of Northern Ireland was 24,500, resulting in a net decrease in the population due to migration of 3,300 people. This was the first year of negative net migration in Northern Ireland since mid-2013.

⁶ Restrictions were also put in place in other countries across the world, which will also have impacted travel to and from Northern Ireland prior to these dates.

⁷ Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic people's ability to register with a doctor may have diminished and therefore our ability to accurately estimate migration levels may have been impacted. See the [mid-year population estimates summary quality report](#) for more details.

Between the year ending mid-2019 and the year ending mid-2020, the number of people leaving Northern Ireland increased by 3,700 (17.7 per cent), and the number of people coming to live in Northern Ireland decreased by 4,400 (17.2 per cent). Since the number of people immigrating into Northern Ireland decreased and the number of people leaving Northern Ireland increased, the net change in population due to migration fell from +4,800 people in 2019 to -3,300 people in 2020 (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Estimated Total Inflows, Total Outflows and Net Migration (year ending mid-2001 to year ending mid-2020)



[Download Chart](#) (XLSX format – 91 Kb)

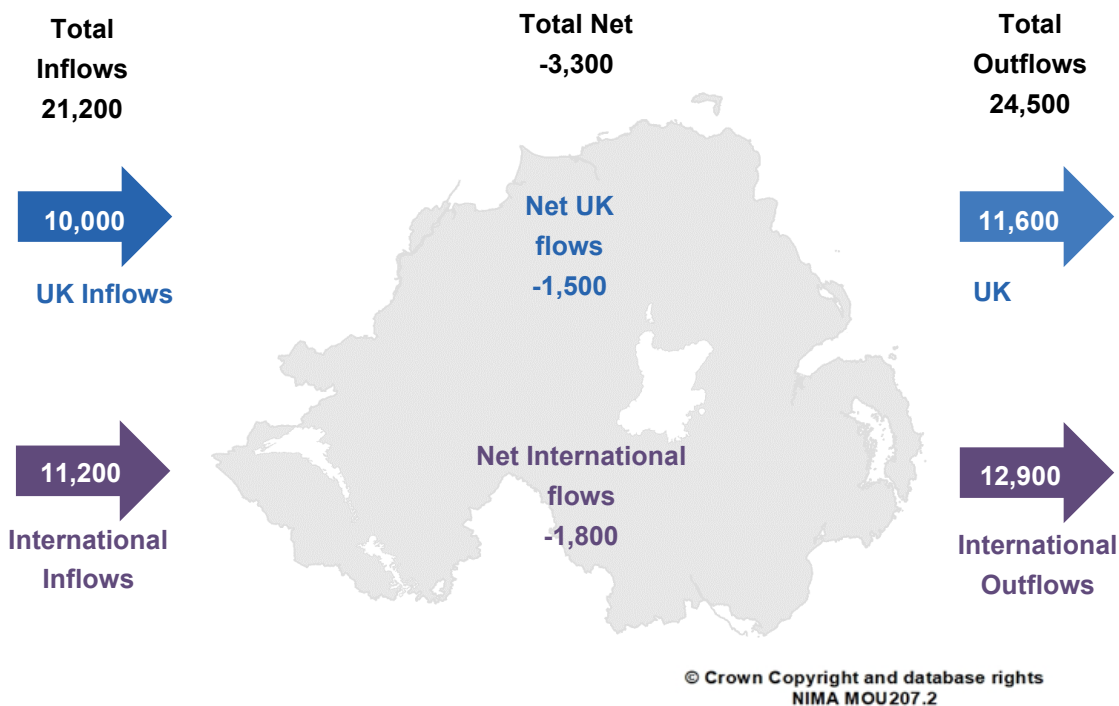
5 Where do migrants come from and go to?

Migration into and out of Northern Ireland can be analysed in two groups, namely:

- UK migration – Flows of people between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK
- International migration – Flows of people between Northern Ireland and outside the UK

Figure 7 below shows the number of people migrating into and out of Northern Ireland by type (i.e. whether to/from the UK or International) for the year ending mid-2020.

Figure 7: Migration to and from Northern Ireland by Type in the year ending mid-2020



[Download Map](#) (PDF format – 84 KB)

Between the year ending mid-2019 and the year ending mid-2020, the number of people leaving Northern Ireland to live in the rest of the UK increased by 1,200 people (12.0 per cent), while the number of people coming to live in Northern Ireland from the rest of the UK decreased by 1,400 people (12.3 per cent). This led to inflows of 10,000 people and outflows of 11,600 people in the year ending mid-2020 and resulted in a net UK migration loss of 1,500 people.

During the same time, the number of people leaving Northern Ireland to live outside the UK increased by 2,500 (23.4 per cent) to 12,900, while the number of people coming to live in Northern Ireland from outside the UK decreased by 3,000 (21.2 per cent) to 11,200. As a result, in the year ending mid-2020, there was a net migration loss of 1,800 people due to international migration.

Figure 8 shows a time series of net migration by type from year ending mid-2001 to year ending mid-2020. Mid-2020 is the first year since 2013 that Northern Ireland has experienced negative net migration.

Figure 8: Estimated net migration by type (year ending mid-2001 to year ending mid-2020)

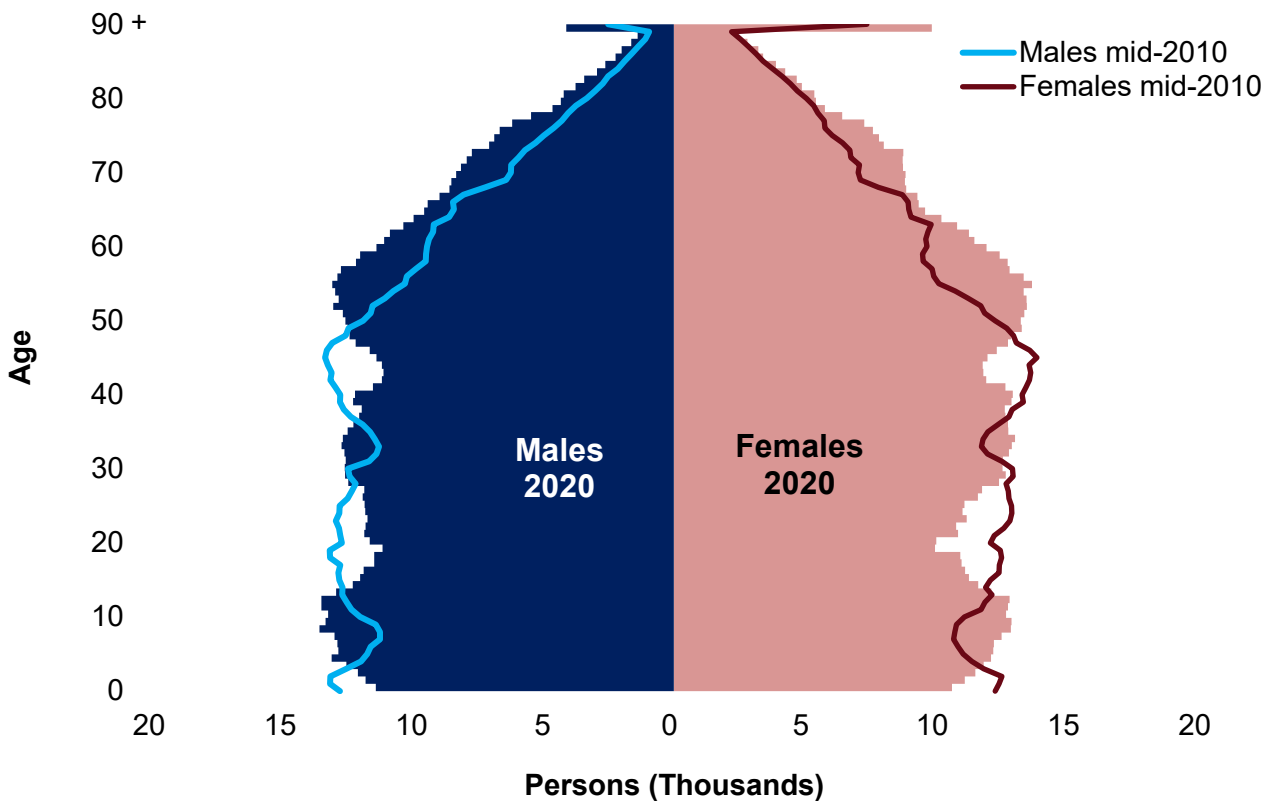


[Download Chart](#) (XLSX format – 93 Kb)

6 The age structure of Northern Ireland's population

6.1 The population of Northern Ireland is ageing

Figure 9: Population by age and sex (mid-2010 and mid-2020)



[Download Chart](#) (XLSX format – 101 Kb)

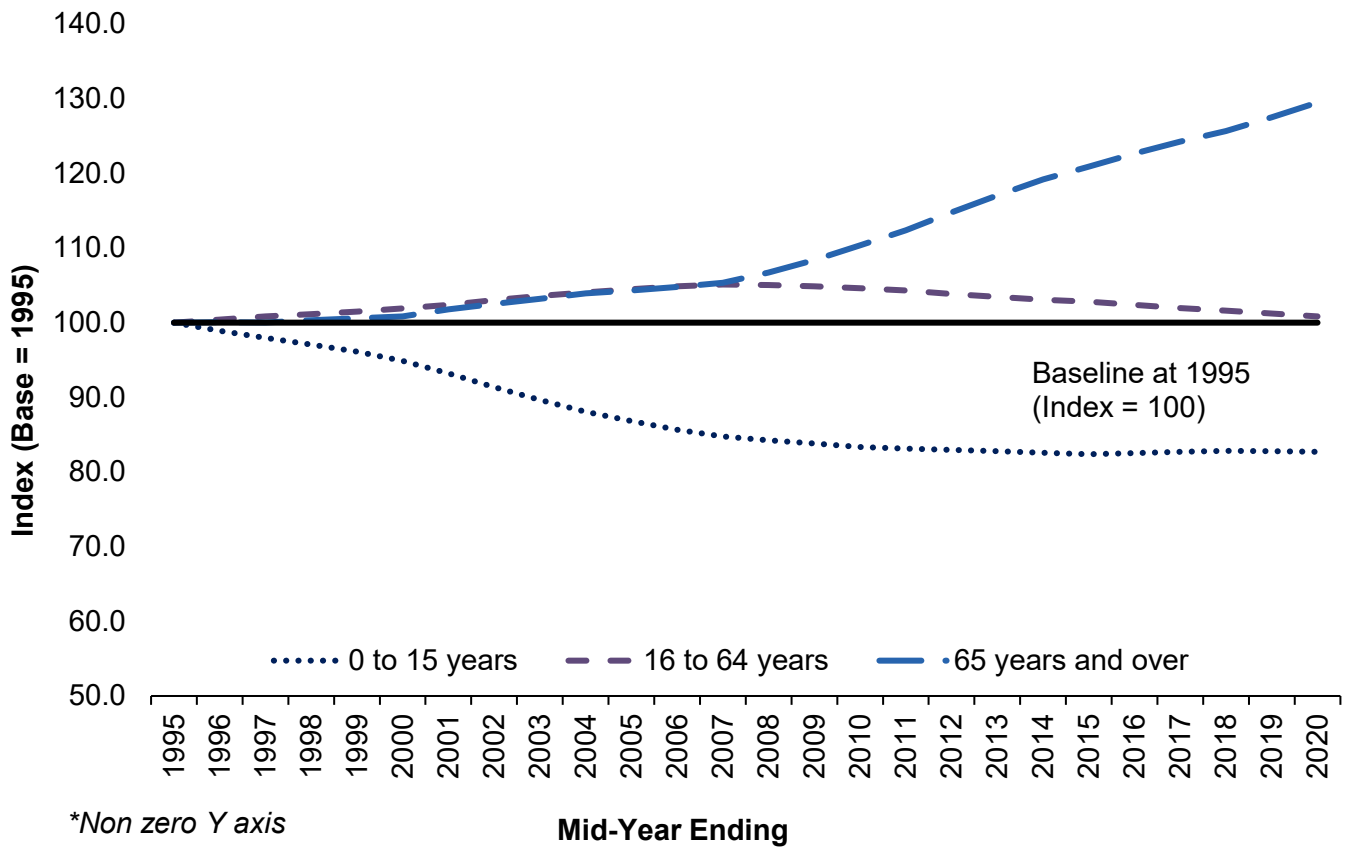
Age composition is one of the most important aspects of the population since changes in different age groups will have varied social and economic impacts. Figure 9 shows the population split by age and sex for mid-2010 and mid-2020 in the form of a population pyramid. This particular data representation allows for a more visual idea of how the numbers of people have 'aged on' in the decade to the year ending mid-2020 with the pyramid beginning to broaden around age 50 and over.

Over the three decades from year ending mid-1990 to year ending mid-2020 the median age (i.e. the age at which half the population is older and half is younger) of the Northern Ireland population has increased from 31.0 to 39.2 years. It is projected that from mid-2028 onwards the older population (people aged 65 and over) will be larger than the number of children (i.e. people aged 0 to 15 years).

6.2 How is the age structure of the population changing?

Over the 25 year period (1995 to 2020) Northern Ireland has seen changes in the proportion of the population in key age groups. The proportion of the population aged 65 and over has experienced the largest increase over the 25 year period, with a distinct accelerated growth in this population occurring from mid-2007. As a result, the proportion of the population aged 65 and over has increased by 29.5 per cent from mid-1995 to mid-2020. Conversely, the proportion of children (i.e. people aged 0 to 15 years) in Northern Ireland has decreased since mid-1994 by 17.3 per cent to mid-2020. The proportion of the population who are of working age (i.e. people aged 16 to 64 years) has remained relatively stable over the period.

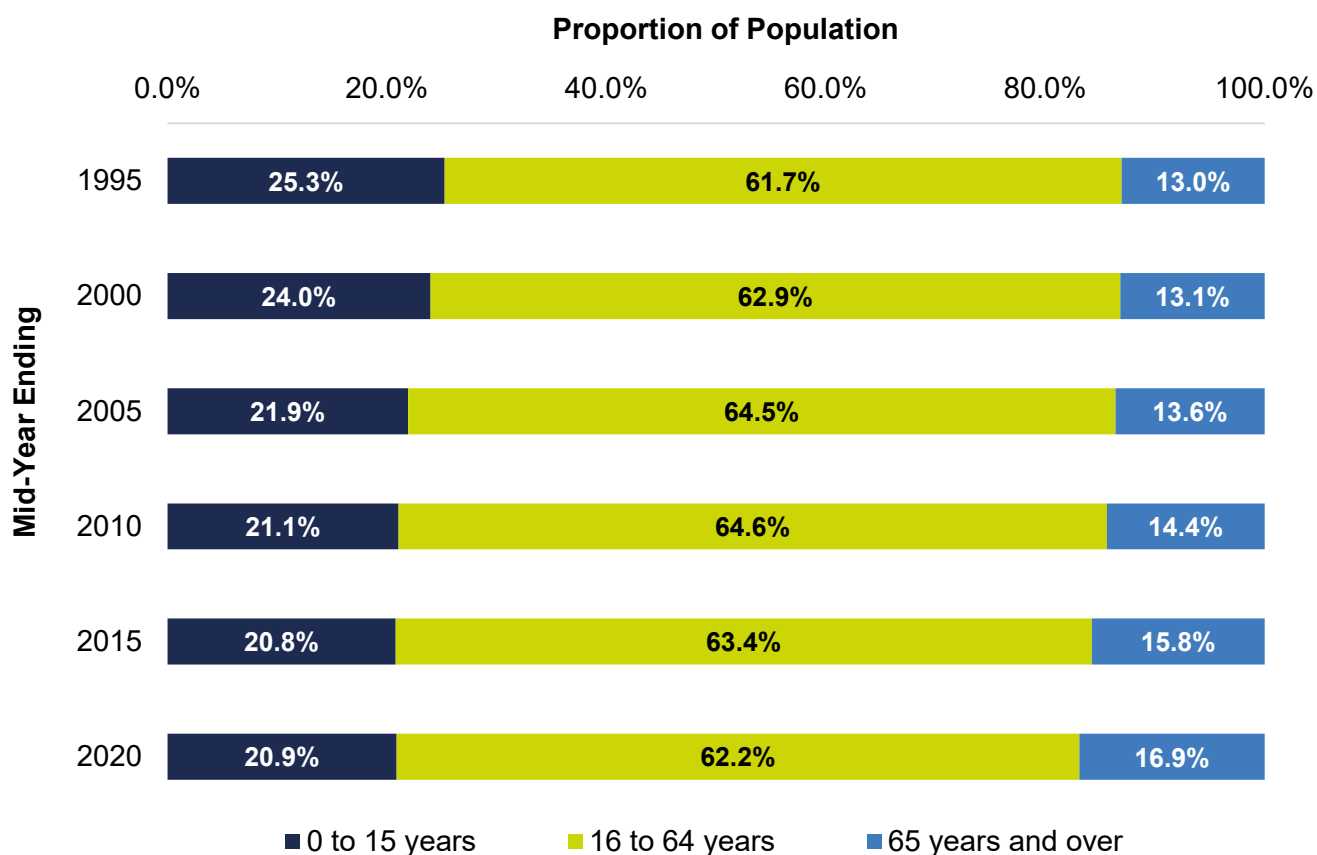
Figure 10: Index of population change for key age groups in Northern Ireland, mid-1995 to mid-2020



[Download Chart](#) (XLSX format – 95 Kb)

Figure 11 shows how the rate of change between these three age groups translates into the makeup of the Northern Ireland population as a whole. The population has gradually become older with the proportion of children decreasing from 25.3 per cent of the population in mid-1995 to 20.9 per cent of the population in mid-2020. Conversely, the proportion of the older population (aged 65 years and over) has increased throughout this period from 13.0 per cent in mid-1995 to 16.9 per cent in mid-2020.

Figure 11: Age structure of Northern Ireland's population, mid-1995 to mid-2020



[Download Chart](#) (XLSX format – 91 Kb)

6.3 Change in age structure over the year

6.3.1 Children (0 to 15 years)

In mid-2020, just over **one in five** (20.9 per cent) people in Northern Ireland were Children

In the year ending mid-2020, the number of children decreased slightly by 100 people (from 395,900 to 395,800), representing 20.9 per cent of the population.

This decrease of 100 children was a result of:



⁸ Ageing out refers to the cohort of people ageing from one group into the next. In this case, people who are aged 15 in mid-2019 will turn 16 by mid-2020 and therefore 'age out' of the Children (0 to 15 years) age group.

6.3.2 Working age population (16 to 64 years)

In the year ending mid-2020 the working age population⁹ decreased by 0.3 per cent (from 1,183,000 to 1,179,700), representing 62.2 per cent of the population.

This decrease of 3,300 people was a result of:



Over the same period, the **younger working age population** (i.e. people aged 16 to 39 years) is estimated to have decreased by 1.2 per cent from 578,500 people to 571,800 people, representing 30.2 per cent of the population. This population decline of 6,800 people in the younger working age group was a result of:

- more people 'ageing out' of this age group (25,100) than 'ageing in' (22,900);
- a net loss of 4,100 in this population age group due to migration; and
- a relatively small number of deaths (400)

The **older working age population** (i.e. people aged 40 to 64 years) grew by 0.6 per cent in the year ending mid-2020 (from 604,500 to 608,000), representing 32.1 per cent of the population. This growth of 3,500 was a result of:

- more people 'ageing into' this age group (25,100) than 'ageing out' (19,300);
- negligible change due to migration; and
- a total of 2,300 deaths among people in this age group

⁹ The working age population is defined by the age at 30 June 2020 and is not based on the age for entitlement to state pension. Following the Pensions Act 2007 and 2011, the State Pension Age (SPA) for women will increase gradually to 65 by November 2018.

¹⁰ Ageing in refers to the cohort of people ageing from one group into the next. In this case, people who are aged 15 in mid-2019 will turn 16 by mid-2020 and therefore 'age in' to the 'working age' group (16 to 64 years).

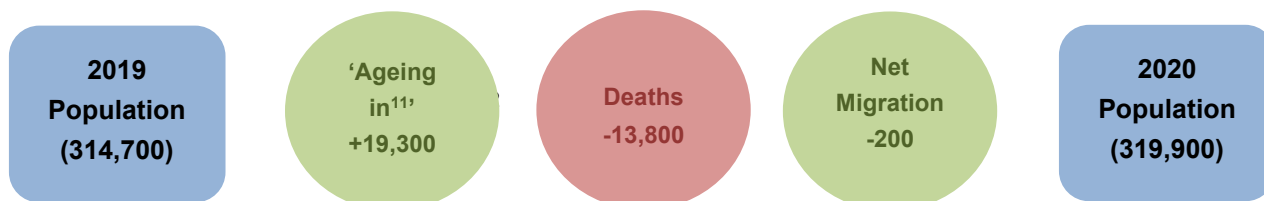
¹¹ Ageing out refers to the cohort of people ageing from one group into the next. In this case, people who are aged 64 in mid-2019 will turn 65 by mid-2020 and therefore 'age out' of the working age group and 'age in' to the 'older population' group (65 years and over) age group.

6.3.3 The older population (65 years and over)

One in six (16.9 per cent)
people in Northern Ireland are
aged 65 and over

In the year mid-2019 to mid-2020, the population aged 65 and over increased by 1.7 per cent (from 314,700 to 319,900), representing 16.9 per cent of the population.

This increase of 5,200 was due to:



The **population aged 85 and over** increased by 1.9 per cent (from 38,700 to 39,500) between mid-2019 and mid-2020, representing 2.1 per cent of the population. The growth of 700 people in this age group was a result of:



¹¹ Ageing in refers to the cohort of people ageing from one group into the next. For example, people who are aged 64 in mid-2019 will turn 65 by mid-2020 and therefore 'age in' to the 'older population' group (65 years and over).

¹² Ageing in refers to the cohort of people ageing from one group into the next. For example, people who are aged 84 in mid-2019 will turn 85 by mid-2020 and therefore 'age in' to the 'population aged 85 and over' group.

7 Population Estimates for areas within Northern Ireland

7.1 How has the population changed for Local Government Districts?

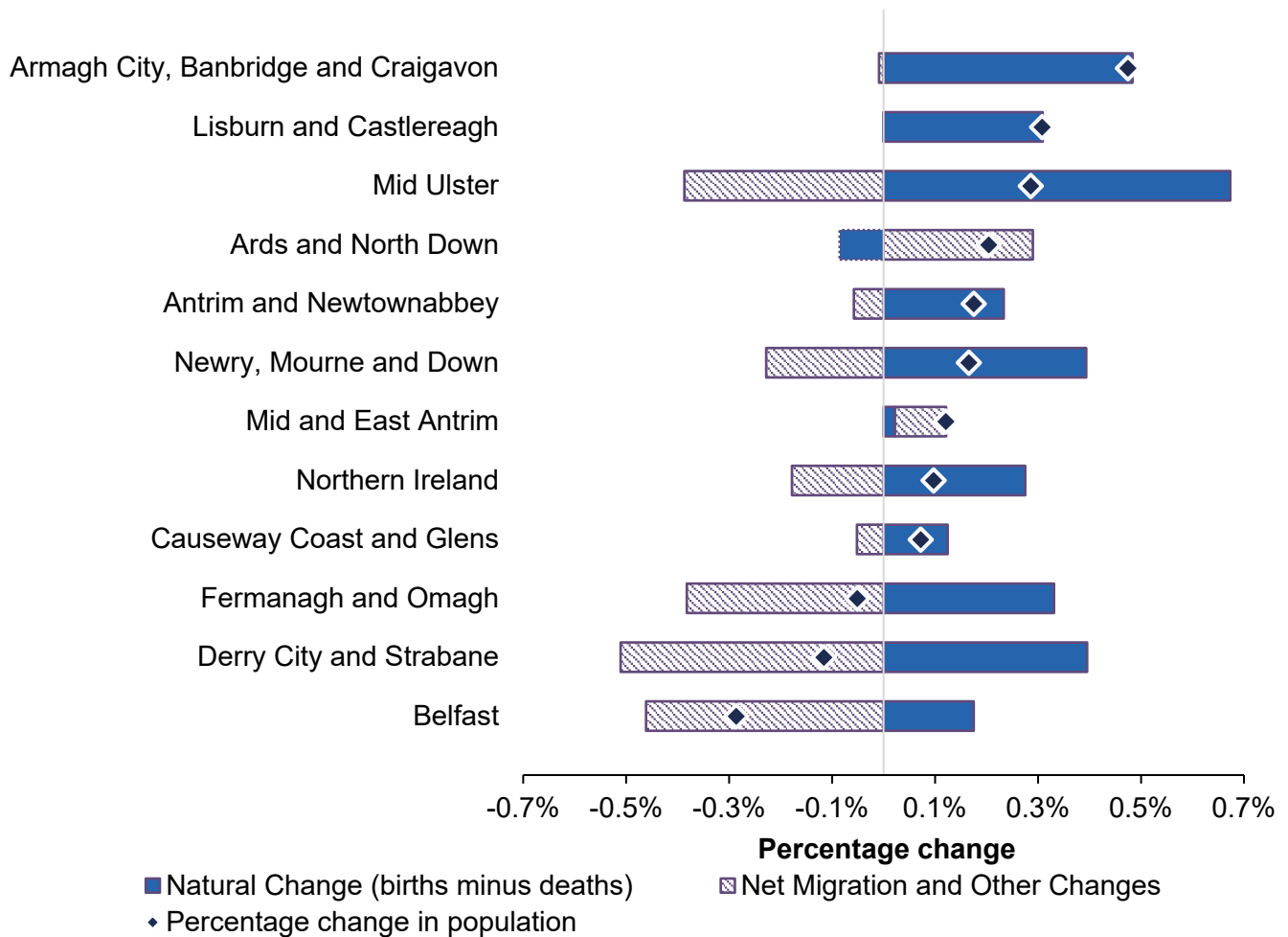
The estimated population for the 11 Local Government Districts (LGDs) in mid-2020 ranged from 117,300 people in Fermanagh & Omagh LGD to 342,600 in Belfast LGD. The mid-2020 population estimates by LGD are shown in Map 1 (overleaf).

Belfast LGD experienced the largest population decline over the year (0.3 per cent)

Figure 12 presents the overall percentage population change for LGDs and the effect the components of change have had on the population. The population in three LGDs decreased in the year ending mid-2020.

Belfast LGD experienced the largest percentage decrease in population (0.3 per cent), with negative net migration (0.5 per cent) being the main driver of population decline in this area. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon LGD had the largest percentage increase in population (0.5 per cent) which was mainly driven by natural change (0.5 per cent) and negligible net migration over the year.

Figure 12: Components of population change by Local Government District, mid-2019 to mid-2020 (ordered by population change)

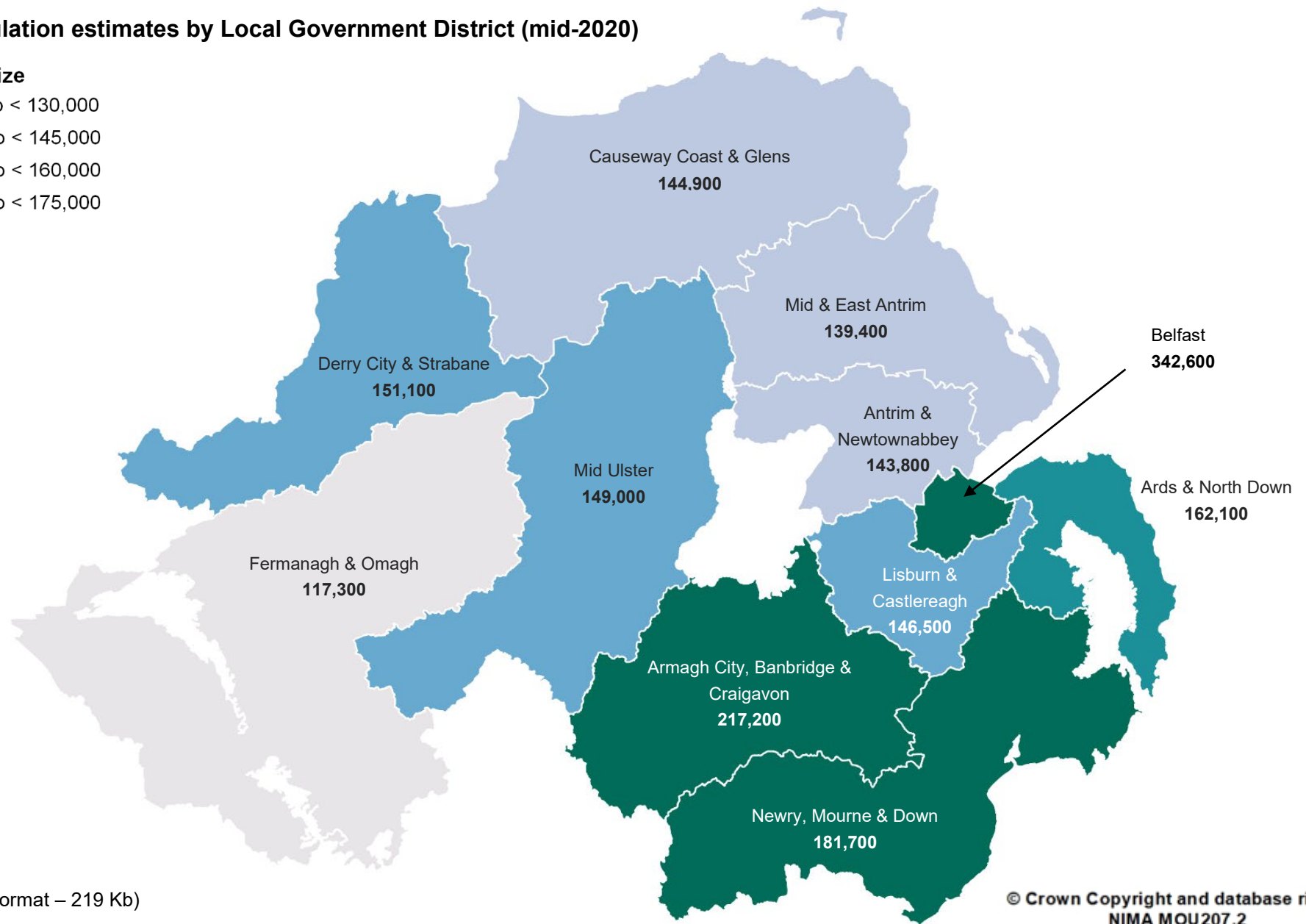


[Download Chart](#) (XLSX Format – 95 Kb)

Map 1: Population estimates by Local Government District (mid-2020)

Population Size

- 115,000 to < 130,000
- 130,000 to < 145,000
- 145,000 to < 160,000
- 160,000 to < 175,000
- 175,000 +



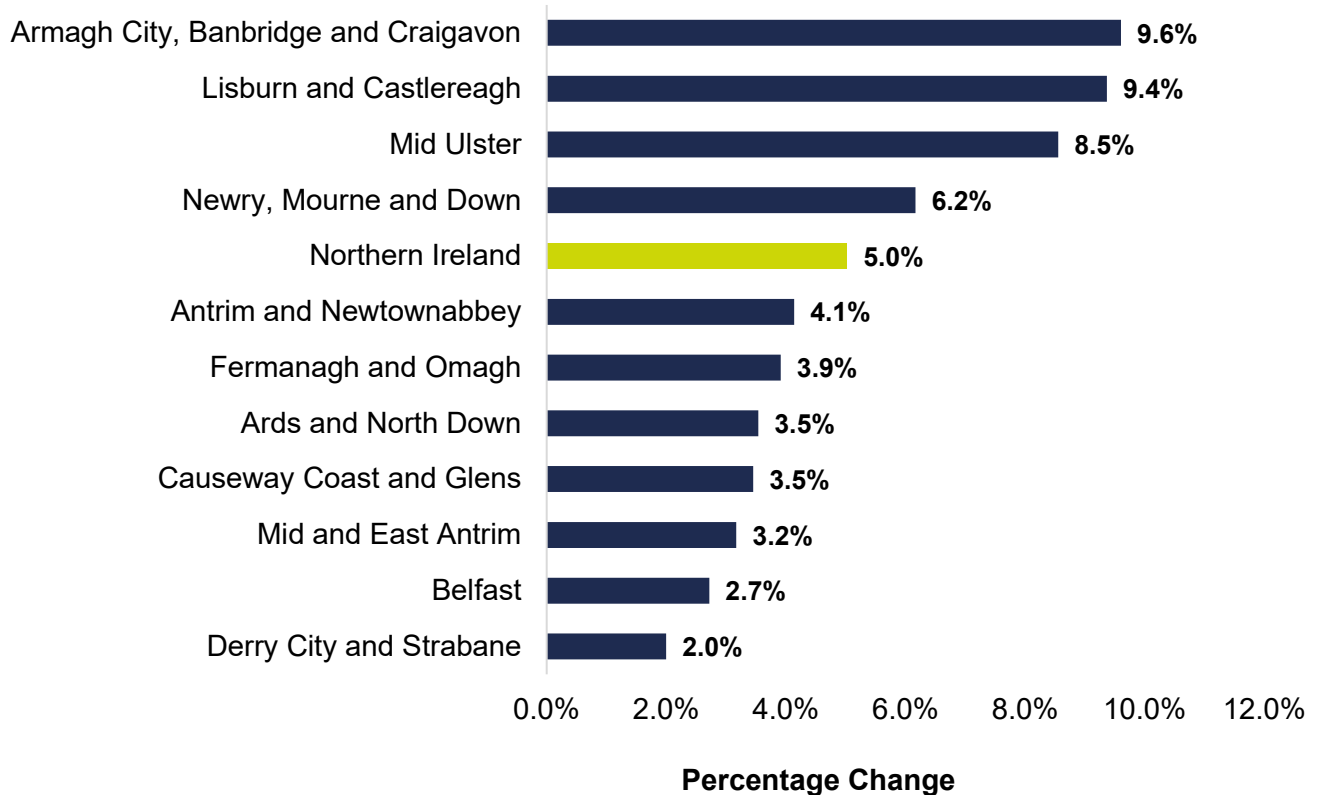
[Download Map](#) (PDF format – 219 Kb)

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Population change in Local Government Districts over the decade

Figure 13 presents the overall percentage population change for LGDs in the decade between mid-2010 and mid-2020 and shows that all LGDs increased in population over the ten year period. Over the decade, population growth ranged from 2.0 per cent in Derry City and Strabane LGD to 9.6 per cent in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon LGD.

Figure 13: Percentage population change by Local Government District (mid-2010 to mid-2020) (ordered by population change)



[Download Chart](#) (XLSX Format – 91 Kb)

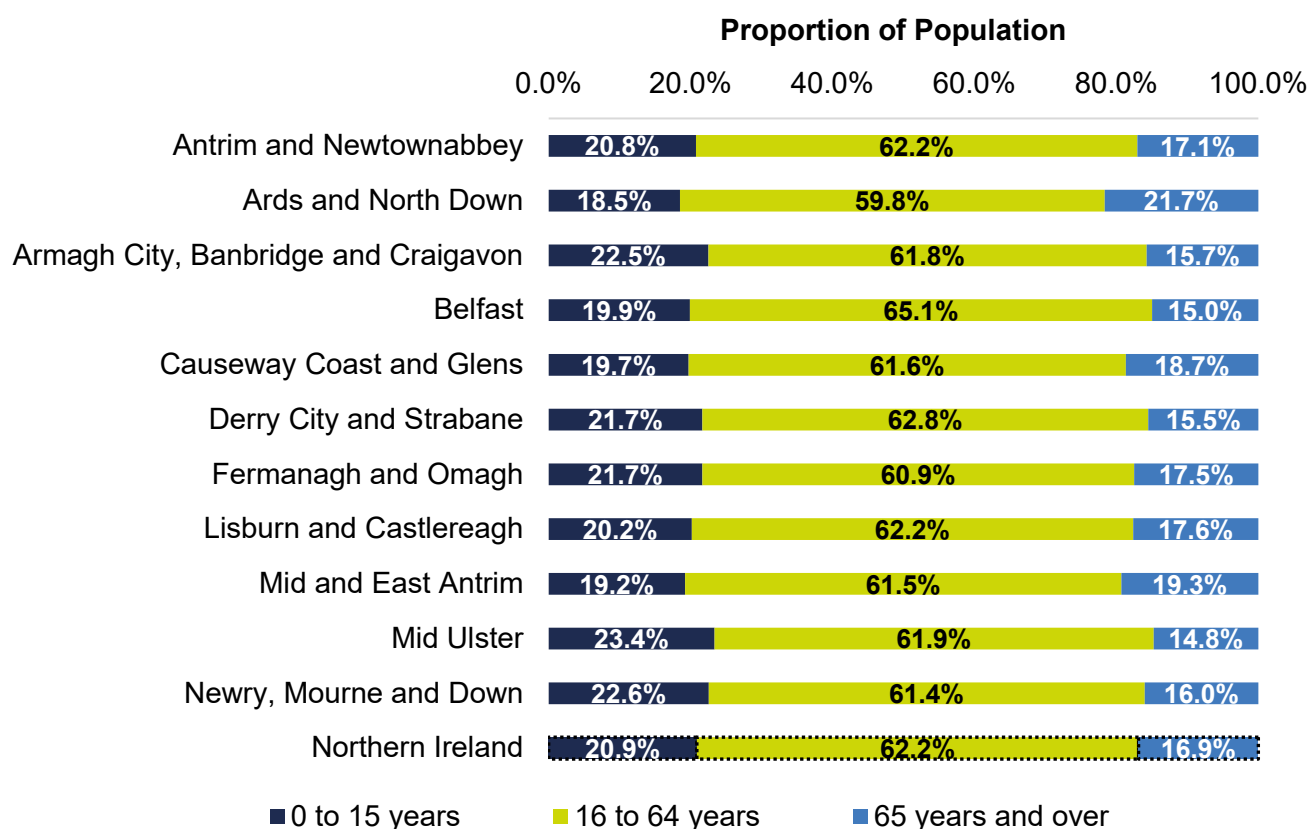
7.2 What is the age structure of the population in Local Government Districts?

Over **one in five** people (21.7 per cent) living in Ards and North Down in mid-2020 were estimated to be aged 65 and over

Some general themes can be observed when looking at the age distribution of Local Government Districts. Figure 14 shows that in mid-2020, Mid Ulster LGD had the highest proportion of **children** (i.e. people aged 0 to 15 years) among its population (23.4 per cent) and this LGD also had the lowest proportion of population aged 65 and over (14.8 per cent). Conversely, Ards & North Down LGD had the lowest proportion of **children** (18.5 per cent) and the highest proportion of people aged 65 and over (21.7 per cent) in its population.

Belfast LGD had the highest proportion of the **working age population** (i.e. people aged 16 to 64 years) among its population (65.1 per cent), particularly at the **younger working ages** (people aged 16 to 39 years) (35.3 per cent). This may be attributable, in part, to Belfast being the primary centre for third-level education in Northern Ireland.

Figure 14: Age structure of Local Government Districts (mid-2020) (ordered alphabetically)



[Download Chart](#) (XLSX Format – 92 Kb)

Median Age at Local Government District level

The differences in age distribution across the Local Government Districts can also be demonstrated using the median age. The median age in mid-2020 ranged from 36.2 years in Belfast LGD to 44.4 years in Ards and North Down LGD. In addition, the median in all eleven LGDs has steadily increased over the decade from mid-2010. For example, the median age in Derry City and Strabane (35.3 years to 38.3 years), Causeway Coast and Glens (38.4 years to 41.5 years), Fermanagh and Omagh (37.1 years to 40.1 years) and Ards and North Down (41.4 years to 44.4 years) has increased by over 3.0 years from mid-2010 to mid-2020 respectively (download [median age table](#) for all LGDs).

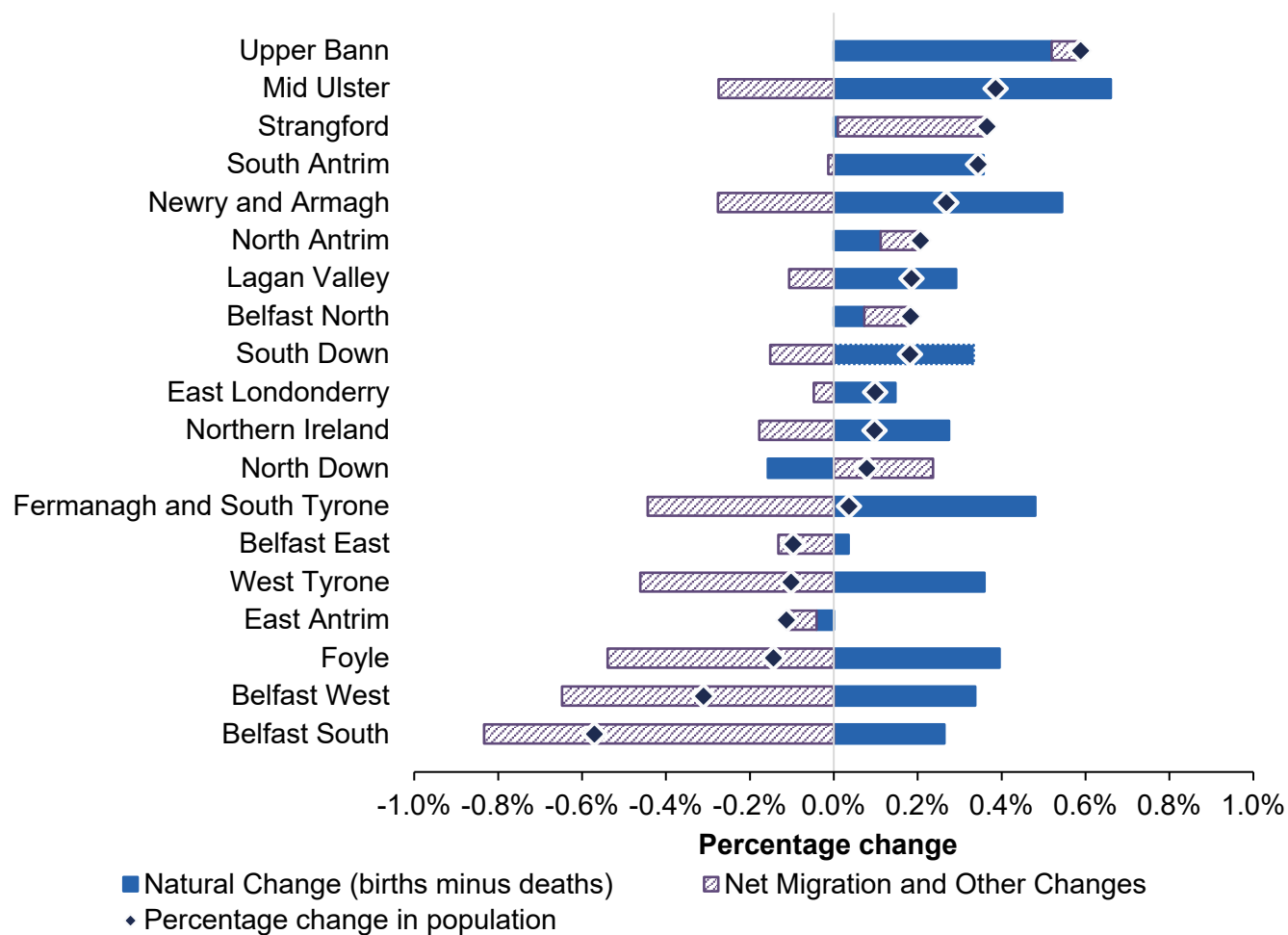
7.3 How has the population changed within Parliamentary Constituencies?

Parliamentary Constituencies¹⁶ (PCs) were designed to have roughly similar populations. The average population across PCs at mid-2020 was 105,300 people, ranging from 90,400 people in East Antrim PC to 129,700 in Upper Bann PC.

Six Parliamentary Constituencies experienced population **decline** in the year to mid-2020

Upper Bann PC had the greatest percentage population increase (0.6 per cent). The main driver of population growth in Upper Bann PC was natural change (0.5 per cent) with net migration contributing 0.1 per cent. For the areas which experienced population decline the largest percentage decrease in population was in Belfast South PC. This decline was the result of a loss of people due to migration (-0.8 per cent) outweighing growth through natural change (0.3 per cent). The net effect of natural change and outward migration in this area has led to a decrease of 0.6 per cent over the year.

Figure 15: Components of population change by Parliamentary Constituency, mid-2019 to mid-2020 (ordered by population change)



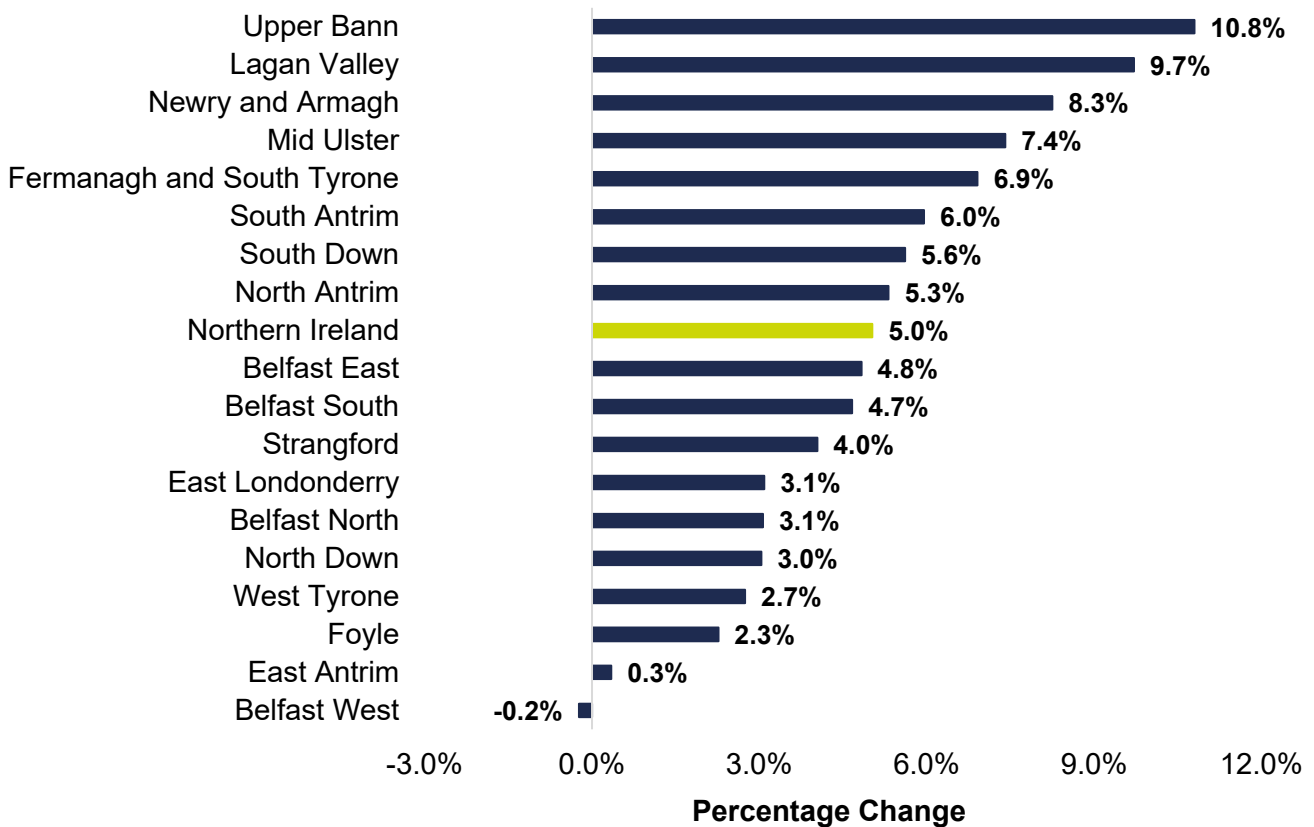
[Download Chart](#) (XLSX Format – 96 Kb)

¹⁶ Parliamentary Constituencies and Northern Ireland Assembly Areas share identical geographies and names.

Population change in Parliamentary Constituencies over the decade

Over the ten year period mid-2010 to mid-2020 all Parliamentary Constituencies, with the exception of Belfast West PC, experienced population growth. The population of Belfast West PC decreased by 0.1 per cent over the decade while Upper Bann PC experienced the largest population growth (10.8 per cent) from mid-2010. The average population across the PCs increased from 100,300 in mid-2010 to 105,300 in mid-2020.

Figure 16: Percentage population change by Parliamentary Constituency (mid-2010 to mid-2020) (ordered by population change)



[Download Chart](#) (XLSX Format – 147 Kb)

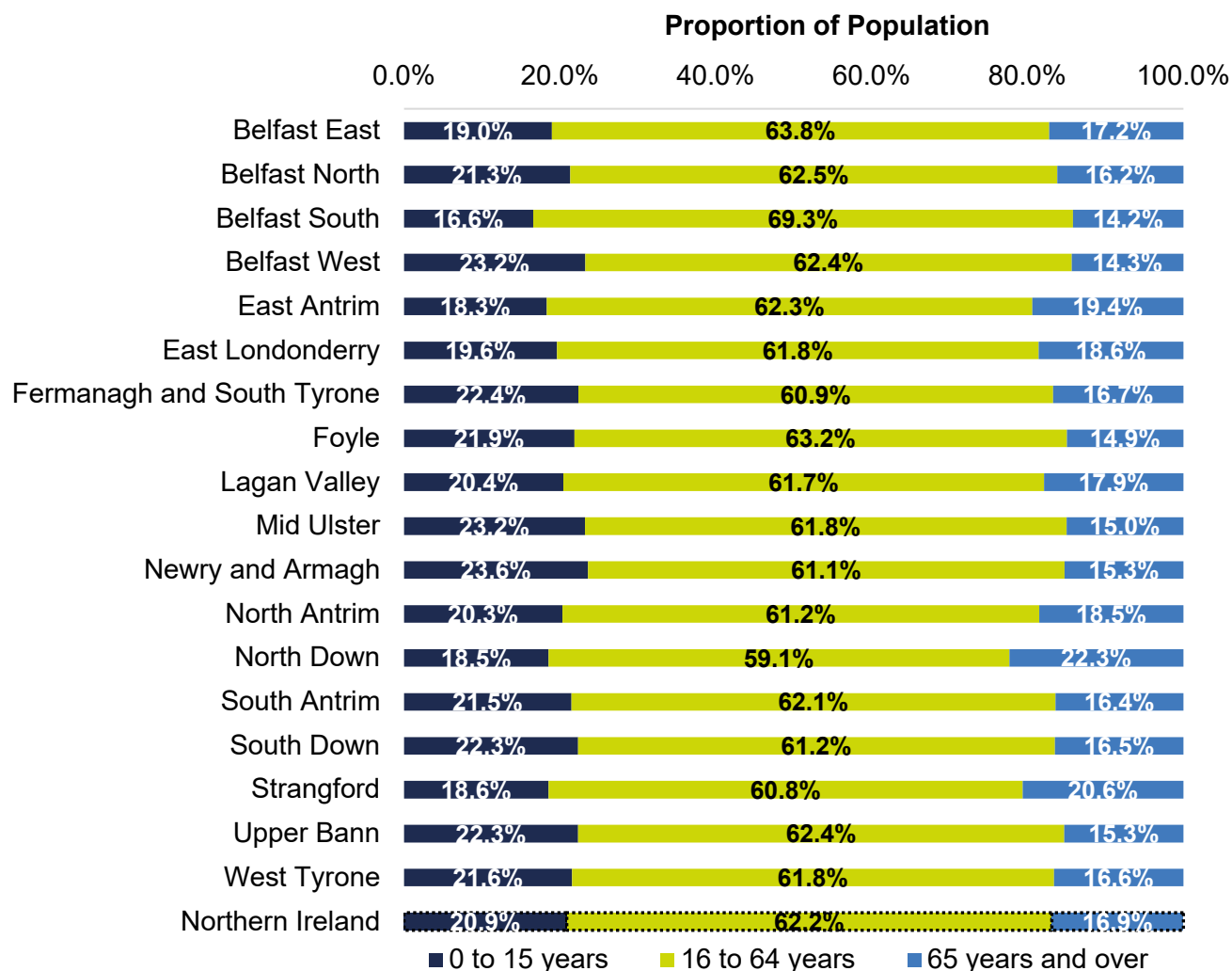
7.4 What is the age structure of the population in Parliamentary Constituencies?

In 2020, over **one in five** people living in North Down PC (22.3 per cent) and Strangford PC (20.6 per cent) were aged 65 and over

In mid-2020, Newry and Armagh PC had the highest proportion of **children** (i.e. people aged 0 to 15 years) in its population (23.6 per cent). In contrast, Belfast South PC had the lowest proportion of children among its population (16.6 per cent). The PCs with the highest proportion of **older people** (i.e. people aged 65 years and over) among its population were North Down (22.3 per cent) and Strangford (20.6 per cent), while Belfast South PC had the lowest proportion of older people (14.2 per cent).

At 69.3 per cent and 40.9 per cent Belfast South PC also had noticeably the largest proportion of its population being in the **working age** (i.e. people aged 16 to 64 years) and **younger working age** (i.e. 16 to 39 years) categories respectively.

Figure 17: Age structure of Parliamentary Constituencies (mid-2020) (ordered alphabetically)



[Download Chart](#) (XLSX Format – 93 Kb)

Median Age at Parliamentary Constituency Level

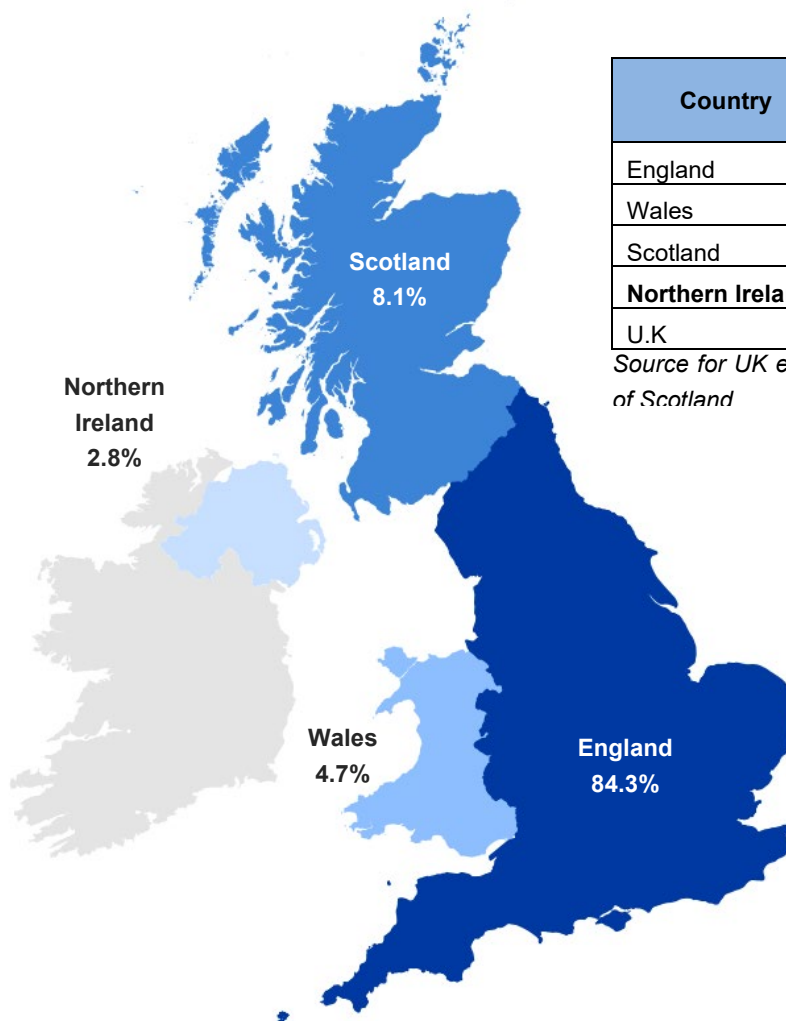
The differences in age distribution across the PCs can also be demonstrated using the median age. In mid-2020, the median age across PCs ranged from 34.8 years in Belfast South PC to 44.6 years in North Down PC. In addition, the median in all eighteen PCs has steadily increased over the decade from mid-2010, ranging from an increase of 0.5 years in Belfast East PC (39.3 years to 39.8 years) to an increase of 3.6 years in East Antrim PC (39.8 years to 43.4 years) (download [median age table](#) for all PCs).

8 How does Northern Ireland compare to the rest of the UK?

Mid-2020 population estimates for England and Wales¹⁷ were published by the [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#) on 25 June 2021, together with the UK estimate as an aggregate of the UK constituent countries. [National Records of Scotland](#) also published mid-2020 population estimates for Scotland¹⁸ on 25 June 2021.

Northern Ireland's share of the UK population has remained at 2.8 per cent since the year ending mid-2014. Map 2 below shows the mid-2020 population estimates for the UK. The population of Northern Ireland grew by 0.10 per cent in the year ending mid-2020. This was higher than the growth in Scotland (0.05 per cent). England and Wales experienced growth larger than Northern Ireland (0.47 percent and 0.53 per cent, respectively), while UK growth was 0.43 per cent for the year.

Map 2: Mid-2020 Population share of the UK by Constituent Countries



Country	Population mid-2020	Population change since mid-2019	% Population change since mid-2019
England	56,550,100	263,200	0.47
Wales	3,169,600	16,700	0.53
Scotland	5,466,000	2,700	0.05
Northern Ireland	1,895,500	1,800	0.10
U.K.	67,081,200	284,400	0.43

Source for UK estimates: Office for National Statistics, National Records of Scotland

[Download Map](#) (PDF format – 69 Kb)

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¹⁷ Final [mid-2020 population estimates for England, Wales and the UK](#) were published by ONS on 25 June 2021.

¹⁸ The mid-2020 [population estimates for Scotland](#) were published by NRS on 25 June 2021.

9 How does Northern Ireland compare to Republic of Ireland?

The population of Northern Ireland grew by 0.1 per cent in the year ending mid-2020. However, the Republic of Ireland (RoI) had a higher rate of population growth (year to April 2020)¹⁹, its population grew by 1.1 per cent to 4.98 million. Table 1 compares the population estimates for Northern Ireland, RoI and the UK.

Table 1: Estimates for the population of Northern Ireland, ROI and the UK (2020)

Country	2020 Population Estimate	Population change since 2019	
		Number	%
Northern Ireland	1,895,500 (mid-2020)	1,800	0.1
Republic of Ireland ²⁰	4,977,400 (year ending April 2020)	55,900	1.1
Island of Ireland	6,872,900	57,700	0.8
UK ²¹	67,081,200 (mid-2020)	284,400	0.4

[Download Table](#) (XLSX Format – 85 Kb)

¹⁹ The reference period for population estimates for the Republic of Ireland is the year to April 2020 therefore the impact of COVID-19 is limited as much of the reference period predates the beginning of the pandemic

²⁰ Population estimates for the Republic of Ireland (year ending April 2020) are published by the Central Statistics Office Ireland (CSO), and are available at:

<https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/pme/populationandmigrationestimatesapril2020/>

²¹ UK population estimates for the UK are published by the Office of National Statistics (ONS), and are available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates>

10 Links to related statistics

[Population estimates for the UK](#) and its constituent countries are available from the Office for National Statistics website.

More detailed population estimates for Local Government Districts and Parliamentary Constituencies are available on the [NISRA website](#). Population estimates can also be found for Health and Social Care Trusts, former 26 Local Government Districts, former Education and Library Boards, former Health and Social Services Boards, former NUTS Level III areas, Super Output Areas and former Electoral Wards.

Population Factsheets for Local Government Districts are now published as a separate summary document and can be found on the [NISRA website](#).

[Estimates of the population aged 85 and over](#) are available on the NISRA website and released in September following the mid-year population estimates in June. Mid-2020 based population estimates will be released in September 2021.

[Population projections for Northern Ireland](#) and [sub-national areas](#) (2018-based) are available from the NISRA website. 2020-based National Population Projections are scheduled to be published at the end of 2021

[Population estimates for small areas in Northern Ireland](#) are available on the NISRA website and are released in November following the mid-year population estimates in June. Mid-2020 based population estimates will be released in November 2021.

How to find data and related documents	
What are you looking for?	Where is it?
The tables and figures used throughout this publication in Excel format.	Tables and figures
Population estimates in Open Data format (3* CSV).	Open Data NI
Interactive data to engage with population estimates and compare geographies within Northern Ireland	Interactive data visualisations
	1. Components of Change
	2. Population Totals
	3. Population by age bands
Quality Report	Background Quality Report

11 National Statistics

National Statistics status means that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

Population Estimates for Northern Ireland last underwent a full assessment by the Statistics Authority against the [Code of Practice](#) in July 2015. The assessment report can be found [here](#). Following the Statistics Authority assessment the continued designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in [August 2016](#).

National Statistics status was confirmed subject to NISRA implementing six specific requirements. An action plan outlining how and when NISRA addressed each of these requirements can be found [here](#).

An action plan checklist with supporting documentation can also be found on the [NISRA website](#).

Since the assessment by the UK Statistics Authority, we have continued to comply with the code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- Improved clarity and insight by redesigning the statistical bulletin to include a key point's summary for users. In addition, key point headlines have been included throughout the commentary so users are alerted to key messages.
- The associated data tables for mid-year population estimates are disseminated in a more innovative way by including a flat file and tabular format which users can interact with.
- We have improved the accessibility of mid-year population estimates by publishing data in 3* open data format on Open Data NI. We have also included a new 'Links to related statistics' section within the bulletin so users can explore the whole population statistics package, including older person estimates, population projections, small area population estimates and a range of other material.

12 Background Notes

12.1 Population coverage

Mid-year population estimates relate to the *usually resident* population on 30 June of the reference year and ages relate to a person's age at this mid-year period. Long term international migrants are included in population estimates, however, short term migrants are not. The definition of a long term migrant which has been adopted from the United Nations is, '*a person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year (12 months), so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence*'. Other changes include changes in armed forces personnel stationed in Northern Ireland.

12.2 Methodology

Population estimates are produced using two separate methods, the components of change and ratio change methods. At the Northern Ireland level population estimates are derived using the components of change method, which updates the latest Census estimates by 'ageing on' populations and adjusting for births, deaths and migration. Population estimates for areas within Northern Ireland are aggregated from Super Output Area level and are generally calculated from an average of the two statistical methods: the ratio change and cohort-component methods. Detailed information on the data sources which inform these two methods and how the estimates are produced is available in the [Methodology Report](#).

12.3 Quality of administrative data

Population estimates are produced using a range of administrative data sources, the quality of which have been assessed in detail within the [Population Estimates and Projections Data Quality Document](#). In addition, population estimates are compared to several administrative data sources including, active medical cards, electoral register, benefit claimants and National Insurance Number registrations to assure the quality of outputs. Any significant differences are examined further. NISRA also works closely with colleagues in ONS and National Records of Scotland (NRS) to assure the quality of population estimates across the UK. A paper comparing the methodological approaches adopted by producers of population statistics across the UK is available [here](#).

12.4 Census 2021

The decennial census population estimate forms the baseline for the mid-year population estimates going forward. As each year from the baseline passes the accuracy of the population estimates slightly diminishes. The 2020 mid-year population estimates are the final round of population estimates which are based on the 2011 census. Following the release of Census 2021 results in 2022 a review of the population estimates will take place followed by a rebasing

exercise to revise their accuracy between 2011 and 2021. The 2021 population estimates will be the first in the series which are based on the results of the 2021 census.

13 Limitations

Migration is the most difficult component of population change to measure due to the absence of an administrative dataset designed specifically for measuring migration. NISRA uses the medical card register as the source in the production of migration estimates, however, there are known deficiencies with this approach. For example, it is recognised that the medical card register is deficient in recording the movements of young adult males; therefore the age distribution for movements of young adult males is adjusted to be similar to the age distribution for the movements of young adult females. Furthermore, not all outflows are measured fully by the medical card register and therefore outflows are scaled up by an additional 67 per cent. It is assumed only 3 out of 5 people will de register with their GP if they are leaving Northern Ireland (see [Methodology Report](#) for more detail).

England, Wales and Scotland use the International Passenger Survey (IPS)²² to measure international migration, however, Northern Ireland cannot rely on the IPS for measurement. The limitation with the IPS is that it does not cover the land border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and the uncertainty introduced when “Ireland” is given in response to survey questions – some people stating “Ireland” as their origin or destination may be referring to Northern Ireland.

While this means there is a methodological difference for the international migration estimates of Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, NISRA and ONS are content that the methods used for Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK yield robust estimates for the UK as a whole. Furthermore, Northern Ireland migration statistics have been previously assessed by UKSA, who found them to be fit for purpose²³.

Some data sources used in the production of population estimates for small geographical areas (e.g. School Census, Child Benefits, and Pensions data) rely on the use of postcodes to allocate people to specific small geographical areas. In a small number of cases, postcodes can span more than one small geographical area (3-5 per cent of postcodes). Therefore, properties within the same postcode can be in different small geographical areas. However, all properties with a given postcode are allocated to a single small geographical area based on where the “centre of the postcode” is located. This can give rise to some small inaccuracies in the resultant estimates for small geographical areas and is not unique to Northern Ireland statistics.

²² [See details on the suspension of the IPS following the outbreak of coronavirus](#)

²³ [UKSA Assessment Report - Statistics on Demography and Vital Events in Northern Ireland \(2011\)](#)

Enquiries and suggestions

- The revisions policy for Northern Ireland population statistics is available [here](#).
- We welcome feedback from users on the content, format and relevance of this release. Please send feedback directly to census@nisra.gov.uk.
- Follow NISRA on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).
- All media inquiries should be directed to the DOF Press Office:

Telephone: 028 9081 6724

Email: dof.pressoffice@finance-ni.gov.uk

- Further statistical information can be obtained from NISRA Customer Services:

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