

Standard Report
on
Methods and Quality (v1)
for
Births Registration

This documentation applies to the reporting period:

<2007 onwards>

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1 Overview

Every birth occurring in Ireland must be registered with the General Register Office. The details of these birth registrations are compiled into statistical reports by the Central Statistics Office, acting on behalf of the Department of Health and Children.

Statistics on births registered in Ireland have been collected and published since 1864.

They provide a comprehensive picture of the number of births, and the demographic details of the parents. They are crucial for demographic research, and are also used in health research and social research.

2 General Information

2.1 Statistical Category

Compilation based on administrative data

2.2 Area of Activity

Social Statistics

2.3 Organisational Unit Responsible, Persons to Contact

Vital Statistics

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2.4 Objectives and Purpose; History

Statistics on births registered in Ireland have been collected and published since 1864. This was initially done by the General Register Office. Since 1953 the reports have been compiled by the Central Statistics Office, based on administrative data supplied by the General Register Office.

They provide a comprehensive picture of the number of births, and the demographic details of the parents. They are crucial for demographic research, and are also used in health research and social research.

2.5 Periodicity

There is a quarterly publication of births, deaths and marriages registered in the year with a yearly summary included with the fourth quarter.

There is an annual publication of births and deaths occurring in the year.

2.6 Client

Vital Statistics releases and publications are prepared on behalf of the Minister for Health and Children in accordance with the provisions of Section 2 of the Vital Statistics and Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act, 1952 and Section 73 of the Civil Registration Act 2004.

2.7 Users

- Government
- Other CSO sections
- Demographic Researchers, Health Researchers
- The general public
- Professional Bodies
- European Union/Eurostat
- World Health Organisation

2.8 Legal basis

Vital Statistics releases and publications are prepared on behalf of the Minister for Health and Children in accordance with the provisions of Section 2 of the Vital Statistics and Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act, 1952 and Section 73 of the Civil Registration Act 2004.

3 Statistical Concepts, Methods

3.1 Subject of the Statistics

Information on births occurring in Ireland.

3.2 Units of Observation/Collection Units/Units of Presentation

Births as recorded on birth notification forms.

For the quarterly publication on births, deaths and marriages registered in the reference quarter, tables on births are aggregated by sex, and age, area of residence, and marital status of parents.

For the annual publication on births and deaths occurring in the reference year, tables on births are presented by date, month and quarter of occurrence, sex, weight, place of birth, birth parity, multiple birth, gestation period, and age, along with area of residence, marital status and years married (where applicable), of parents. Crude birth rates, standardised birth rates and fertility rates are also presented.

3.3 Data Sources

General Registration Office.

3.4 Reporting Unit/Respondents

Every birth occurring in Ireland must be registered with the General Register Office.

3.5 Type of Survey/Process

Aggregation of administrative data concerning registered births.

3.6 Characteristics of the Sample/Process

3.6.1 Population and Sampling Frame

Not applicable

3.6.2 Sampling/Census Design

Not applicable

3.7 Survey Technique/Data Transfer

Weekly files of births registered in the previous week are sent electronically from the General Register Office to the Central Statistics Office.

3.8 Questionnaire (including explanations)

Not applicable

3.9 Participation in the Survey

Not applicable

3.10 Characteristics of the Survey/Process and its Results

Quarterly publications on birth registrations include aggregation by

- sex, weight, gestation period
- age, area of residence, socio-economic group and marital status of parents
- number of previous children of mother
- babies' names

Annual publications on birth occurrences include aggregation by

- sex, weight, gestation period, place of birth
- age, area of residence, and marital status of parents
- number of previous children of mother, multiple births
- date, month and quarter of occurrence
- crude birth rates, standardised birth rates and fertility rates are also presented.

3.11 Classifications used

There is a 12 category classification of socio-economic group assigned to each parent.

3.12 Regional Breakdown of Results

Births are classified by the residence of the mother. The classification is at the level of counties, cities and certain towns.

4 Production of the Statistics, Data Processing, Quality Assurance

4.1 Data Capture

Details of the birth are captured on a birth notification form at the hospital and forwarded to the General Register Office. The birth notifications of the previous week from all registry offices are sent in a weekly XML file from the General Register Office to the Central Statistics Office.

4.2 Coding

Each Birth is geographically coded and given a Socio-Economic Group code for each parent.

4.3 Data Editing

The EXCEL data file is edited to ensure that the ages of parents, number of previous children, weight and gestation periods are feasible. These details will sometimes be checked with the hospital where the birth occurred.

4.4 Imputation (for Non-Response or Incomplete Data Sets)

No imputation.

4.5 Grossing and Weighting

No grossing or weighting.

4.6 Computation of Outputs, Estimation Methods Used

Results are aggregated – no estimation used.

4.7 Other Quality Assurance Techniques Used

Not applicable

5 Quality

5.1 Relevance

Statistics on births are crucial for demographic research, and are also used in health research and social research.

5.2 Accuracy and Reliability

5.2.1. Sampling Effect & Representivity

Not applicable

5.2.2 Non-Sampling Effects

5.2.2.1 Quality of the Data Sources used

The source of the data is the information gathered on the birth notification form at the hospital where the birth occurred.

5.2.2.2 Register Coverage

All births occurring in Ireland are legally obliged to be registered. Non-registration is rare because of the necessity of a Birth certificate for many legal purposes.

5.2.2.3 Non-response (Unit and Item)

Not applicable

5.2.2.4 Measurement Errors

Not applicable

5.2.2.5 Processing Errors

Not applicable

5.2.2.6 Model-related Effects

Not applicable

5.3 Timeliness & Punctuality

5.3.1 Provisional Results

Not Applicable

5.3.2 Final Results

The aim is to publish quarterly results on the Deaths, births, and marriages registered within 4 months of the end of the quarter.

The annual report on Deaths, births, and stillbirths is generally published within 2 years.

5.4 Coherence

The National Perinatal Reporting System (NPRS) (http://www.esri.ie/health_information/nprs/) also produces statistics on births, which can be compared to the numbers in CSO reports. The NPRS does not include births weighing less than 500 grams in its statistics. In 2006, there was a difference of less than 0.2% between the CSO and NPRS total for live births.

5.5 Comparability

Statistics are internationally comparable and comparable over time. Some countries do not include births under a certain weight in their statistics. The CSO does not use any weight criterion in including a live birth in its statistics.

5.6 Accessibility and Clarity

5.6.1 Assistance to Users, Special Analyses

Specific user requests are acceded to where possible, and where confidentiality issues do not arise. Please contact vitalstats@cs.ie

5.6.2 Revisions

Generally there are no revisions.

5.6.3 Publications

5.6.3.1 Releases, Regular Publications

Vital Statistics - Quarterly report

Report on Vital Statistics (annual)

The most recent versions of these reports can be accessed at:

http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/pr_bdm.htm

5.6.3.2 Statistical Reports

Statistical Yearbook

5.6.3.3 Internet

More publications are in our archive at:

http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/pr_bdmarchive.htm

Users can create their own tables from the Database Direct Facility:

<http://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/database/eirestat/Births%20Births%20and%20Marriages/Births%20Births%20and%20Marriages.asp>

5.6.4 Confidentiality

All data are treated as strictly confidential in accordance with Section 73 of the Civil Registration Act, 2004.

6 Additional documentation and publications

Many of the regular thematic CSO publications include tables of birth statistics. Examples are Measuring Ireland's progress, Women and Men in Ireland, and Ireland – North and South. These publications can be seen at:

http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/other_publications.htm

The entries for this statistic under StatCentral (the portal to Ireland's official statistics) is at

<http://www.statcentral.ie/viewStat.asp?id=35>

<http://www.statcentral.ie/viewStat.asp?id=205>