Ageing statistics for Ireland, North and South

Updated July 2012

Ageing population

- In 1961, there were 315,000 people aged 65 or over in the Republic of Ireland (ROI). At the 2011 census, there were 535,393, an increase of 70% (Central Statistics Office, 2012a).

- In Northern Ireland (NI) in 1961, there was a population of 144,500 of people aged 65 and over. In 2011, the population was 263,700, a rise of 82% (NISRA, 2012).

- By 2041, there will be 1.4 million in ROI aged 65 and over, three times more than the older population now. This older group will make up 22% of the total population, compared to 11.6% of the population in 2011 (Central Statistics Office, 2007) (Central Statistics Office, 2012a).

- In NI, in 2041 the 65+ population is projected to make up 24% of the population, compared with 15% in 2011 (NISRA, 2007) (NISRA, 2012).

- The number of very old people is a crucial feature of the ageing populations in the ROI and NI. By 2041, the number of people aged 75 and over is projected to reach almost 1 million by 2041 on the island of Ireland. The number of 85+ year olds is predicted to rise from 74,000 in 2006 to 356,000 in 2041 on the island of Ireland (Central Statistics Office, 2007) (NISRA, 2007).

Life expectancy and health

- Life expectancy at birth in the ROI (2005-2007) is 76.8 years for men and 81.6 years for women (Central Statistics Office, 2009). In NI (2008-2010), it is 76.96 years for men and 81.4 years for women (NISRA, 2010).

- In ROI, healthy life expectancy at aged 65 is 9.1 years for men and 9.9 years for women (Eurostat, 2009). In NI, healthy life expectancy is 12.5 years for men and 13.4 years for women (Office of National Statistics, 2007).

- 95% of men and women in ROI aged 70 and over rate their health as very good (19%), good (50%) or fair (26%) (Central Statistics Office, 2008).
• In NI, 66% of people aged 70 and over rate their health as good (25%) or fairly good (42%) (NISRA, 2009).

### Healthcare system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>NI</th>
<th>ROI</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total health spending</td>
<td>11.5% of GDP (NI Executive, 2010)</td>
<td>9.5% of GDP (OECD, 2011)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physicians per 1,000 population</td>
<td>2.7 UK wide (OECD, 2011)</td>
<td>3.1 (OECD, 2011)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nurses per 1,000 population</td>
<td>9.5 UK wide (OECD, 2011)</td>
<td>12.7 (OECD, 2011)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gross health expenditure</td>
<td>£4.3 billion in NI (47% of all expenditure)</td>
<td>€14.85 billion (Department of Health and Children, 2010)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beds available for long-term care</td>
<td>1,259 on average in Northern Ireland</td>
<td>24,253 (92.5% for older people)</td>
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</table>

### Older people and income

• 8.8% of older people in ROI (aged 65 and over) are still in employment, 14% of men and 4.6% of women (Central Statistics Office, 2011a). In NI 6.6% of the over 60s are in employment, 7.7% of men and 5.4% of women (Department of Finance and Personnel, 2012).

• In ROI, 9.6% of people aged 65 and over are at risk of poverty and 1.1% are in consistent poverty (Central Statistics Office, 2011b).

• In NI, 33% of single pensioners are at risk of poverty, and 16% of pensioner couple households are similarly at risk.

• The full Basic State Pension in NI is £107.45 per week for a single person. This is 23.8% of the average full-time salary (Department of Finance and Personnel, 2011).

• In ROI, the contributory State Pension is worth €230.30 per week for someone with maximum social insurance contributions. This is 33% of the average salary (Central Statistics Office, 2012b).

### Care and carers

• According to the 2001 census in NI, 185,000 people provide unpaid care. 12% of these are aged 65 or over (CARDI, 2009). In ROI, there are 187,000 carers, and 13% of these are 65 years of age or over (Central Statistics Office, 2012a).

• The average age of care recipients on the island of Ireland is 76 years. The average age of care givers for an older person is 73 years (CARDI, 2009).
In ROI, the cost of long-term care for older people is projected to rise from 0.9% of GDP now to 1.8% of GDP in 2050. In the UK, the current cost of long term care is 0.8% of GDP but this will rise to 1.2% in 2050 (Mrsnik, 2010).

References
CARDI. (2009). Care and Caring in Ireland, North and South: Older People as both Recipients and Givers of Care. Belfast: CARDI.


Eurostat. (2009). Healthy Life years data.


