



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

## Research and Information Service Briefing Note

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# Updated Statistics on Section 75 Categories for Education Service

**NIAR 44 – 21**

This Briefing Note has been requested by the Education Service. It updates a previous paper (NIAR 380 – 20) and contains statistics on the nine Section 75 categories relating to young people aged 13 – 17 years.

## 1 Introduction

On 22 July 2020, the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission (the Commission) approved plans to introduce a Youth Assembly for Northern Ireland. To facilitate recruitment, the Education Service has asked for a breakdown of the Section 75 (S.75) categories by age. In particular, the percentage in each category who are aged 13 – 17. The aim is to make the Youth Assembly as representative of the wider young population in Northern Ireland as possible.

There are nine S.75 categories, namely: persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation, men and women generally, and persons with a disability.

## 3 Statistics on Young People and the Section 75 Categories

The statistics in this section are drawn from a variety of sources, including Census 2011, population Mid-year Estimates 2019, NI Life and Times Survey, and the Department of Education School Census 2019/20.

Five of the nine indicators have been updated to take into account the new age range (13 – 17), namely: religious belief, political opinion, men and women, persons with a disability and age.

### Religious Belief

Table 1(overleaf) is extracted from Census 2011, and shows figures for the 3 – 7 age group in 2011 ‘aged forward’ by 10 years, to become the 13 – 17 cohort<sup>1</sup>. The table shows that young people in this age group account for 6.1 per cent of the Northern Ireland population. In terms of religious affiliation, Catholics are the largest group in this cohort (49.1%), followed by Protestants (38.8%) and Other Religions (0.9%). Over one-in-ten (11.2%) had no religious affiliation.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Ageing forward’ forms part of the cohort-component methodology used by NISRA and other statistical agencies when calculating population estimates. While there is a margin of error when using the 2011 census figures to estimate the 2021 situation (e.g. deaths and migration over the succeeding decade have not been accounted for), this is likely to be no more than 2 – 3 percentage points, which would be similar to most large-scale surveys.

**Table 1: ‘Religion or religion brought up’ in by Projected Age (13 – 17) , Census 2011**

	All Residents	Catholic	Protestant (and other Christians)	Other Religions	None
<b>All Residents</b>	1,810,863	817,385	875,717	16,592	101,169
Count (13-17)	116,892	57,410	45,320	1,067	13,095
Percent (13-17)	6.1	49.1	38.8	0.9	11.2

Table DC2117NI, Religion or Religion brought up in by Age, Census 2011.

## Political Opinion

There is no official source for this information, as it is not recorded in the Census of Population, nor in any other official statistics release. Instead, a clue to the political opinions of young people can be found in the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey. In 2019, respondents (all ages) were asked, “Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a unionist, nationalist or neither?”

When the results were broken down by age it was found that a quarter (24%) of 18 – 24-year-olds years declared they thought of themselves as unionist, while a third (34%) said they were nationalist. A further third (33%) were neither unionist nor nationalist (Table 2).

**Table 2: Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a unionist, nationalist or neither?” (n = 2,167)**

Political Opinion	Percentage (%)
Unionist	24
Nationalist	34
Neither	33
Other	3
Don't know	7

Source: NI Life and Times Survey 2019 Results.

The NI Young Life and Times Survey caters for those under the age of 18, notably 16-year-olds. In the 2019 survey (Table 3), when asked if “any Northern Ireland parties or

politicians represent their political opinion, only just over a quarter (28%) said yes. The remainder said 'no' or 'don't know'.

**Table 3: Do any Northern Ireland parties or politicians represent your political opinion? (n = 1,161)**

	Percentage (%)
Yes	28
No	28
Don't know	44

Source: NI Young Life and Times Survey 2019 Results.

## Racial Group

Table 4 contains figures from Census 2011, 'aged forward' by ten years, so that those aged 0 – 7 in 2011 are now aged 10 – 17. This is the closest approximation available to the requested age cohort (13 – 17 years).

**Table 4: Ethnic Group by Age, Census 2011**

Category	Count	Percentage (%)
<b>All usual residents</b>	1,810,863	
<b>Aged 10 – 17</b>	192,044	100.0
<b>White</b>	186,260	97.0
<b>Asian</b>	2,868	1.5
<b>Black</b>	535	0.3
<b>Mixed</b>	2,100	1.1
<b>Other</b>	281	0.1

Source: NISRA (2013) Table DC2101NI

## Notes:

**White** includes Irish Travellers; **Asian** includes Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Other Asians; **Black** includes Black-Caribbean, Black-African and Other Black; **Mixed** denotes mixed race. The figures include both settled residents, and new migrants, on Census Day 2011.

Table 4 shows that the White ethnic group is by far the largest in Northern Ireland, accounting for 97 per cent of those aged 10 – 17 years. The remaining 3 per cent (5,784) of this age cohort is composed of Asian, Black, Mixed and Other ethnicities <sup>2</sup>.

## Men and Women

The Population Mid-year Estimates for 2019 show there were a total of 114,586 young people aged 13 – 17 living in Northern Ireland at 30 June 2019, 58,792 males (51.3%) and 55,794 females (48.7%) <sup>3</sup>.

**Table 5: Young People (aged 13-17) by Sex, 2019**

	Count	Per Cent (%)
<b>Male (13-17)</b>	58,792	51.3
<b>Female (13-17)</b>	55,794	48.7
<b>All (13-17)</b>	114,586	100.0
<b>Total Pop.</b>	1,893,667	

Source: NISRA (2020) Mid-year Estimates 2019

## Marital Status

The legal minimum age for marriage in Northern Ireland is sixteen (with parental permission) and eighteen (without parental consent). Therefore, it can be safely assumed that the overwhelming majority of young people aged 13 – 17 will be single.

Table 6 lists the marital status of young people, aged 19 and under, from Census 2011. As indicated above, the overwhelming majority were single (99.6%).

<sup>2</sup> The Census figure of 3 per cent for non-white ethnic groups corresponds to 3 out of 90 Youth Assembly delegates. To compensate for a probable under-estimate (e.g. the figures do not include international migrants from 2011 onwards) it may be prudent to increase the number of BAME delegates from three to four. For reference purposes, based on the figure of 192,000 young people (10-17 years) in Northern Ireland in 2011, each additional delegate to the Youth Assembly from a BAME background would represent an extra 1,920 young people from a BAME background in Northern Ireland as a whole.

<sup>3</sup> NISRA (2020) Mid-2019 Population Estimate: Single year of age and gender. Retrieved from [https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/MYE19\\_SYA\\_OldFormat\\_0.xlsx](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/MYE19_SYA_OldFormat_0.xlsx)

**Table 6: Marital Status of Young People (0 – 19 years), Census 2011**

Category	Count	Percentage (%)
<b>Total</b>	101,621	
<b>Single</b>	101,247	99.6
<b>Married</b>	204	0.2
<b>Civil Partnership</b>	17	0.0
<b>Separated</b>	58	0.1
<b>Divorced</b>	48	0.0
<b>Widowed</b>	47	0.0

Source: Table DC1103NI, Marital Status by Age, Census 2011

## Age

The total population of the 13 – 17 age band on 30 June 2019 was estimated to be 114,586, with each individual year contributing around 20 per cent to the total (Table 7).

**Table 7: Age profile of 13 – 17 cohort (2019)**

Age	Count	Percentage (%)
<b>13 years</b>	23,761	20.7
<b>14 years</b>	23,162	20.2
<b>15 years</b>	22,883	20.0
<b>16 years</b>	22,396	19.5
<b>17 years</b>	22,384	19.5
<b>Total</b>	114,586	

Source: NISRA (202) Mid-year Estimates 2019

## Children with a Disability

In Census 2011, respondents were asked whether they had a disability which had lasted for more than 12 months, and which limited their daily activities 'a little' or 'a lot.'

For this exercise, the cohort aged 3 – 7 in 2011 have been 'aged forward by a decade', so they will now be aged 13 – 17 in 2021.

Table 8 shows that only five per cent of this cohort are projected to have a limiting long-term illness or disability which limited their activities ‘a little or a lot’ in 2021. For the vast majority (95%), their daily activities should not be limited by disability.

**Table 8: Limiting Long-term Illness (13 – 17 years), Census 2011**

Age	Daily activities limited a little or a lot	Daily activities not limited	Total
<b>13 years</b>	911	24,235	25,146
<b>14 years</b>	1,056	23,028	24,084
<b>15 years</b>	1,227	21,762	22,989
<b>16 years</b>	1,289	21,117	22,406
<b>17 years</b>	1,310	20,957	22,267
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5,793</b>	<b>111,099</b>	116,892
<b>Per cent</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>95.0%</b>	

Source: Table CT0291NI, Limiting Long-term Illness

## Sexual Orientation

[The Office for National Statistics](#) (ONS) have indicated that around 1.2 per cent of the household population in Northern Ireland identify as Lesbian Gay or Bisexual (LGB). The estimate for those aged 16 – 24 is higher at 4.2 per cent. The age of consent is sixteen in Northern Ireland and there are no reliable estimates in respect of sexual orientation for those aged under 16.

## Young Carers

A **young carer** is a person under 18 who regularly provides emotional and/or practical support and assistance for a family member who is disabled, physically or mentally unwell, or who misuses substances<sup>4</sup>.

According to the [Health and Social Care Board](#) (2020), “There are around 310,000 carers in NI, with an estimated 98,000 extra since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. Before lockdown restrictions commenced, almost 4 per cent of carers in Northern Ireland were young carers.”

<sup>4</sup> Child Law Advice (2018) Young Carers. Available at: <https://childlawadvice.org.uk/information-pages/young-carers/>

## Children in Care

- At 31 March 2019, [3,281 children were in care in Northern Ireland](#)<sup>5</sup>. This was the highest number recorded since the introduction of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995;
- The majority of children in care in Northern Ireland had been looked after for less than three years, with just under a tenth looked after for ten years or longer;
- Four fifths of the children in care were in foster care placements (79%), 11% placed with parents, 6% in residential care and 4% in other placements. This was similar to previous years;
- During 2018/19 there were 884 admissions to care and 677 discharges.

## Children and Free School Meals (FSM)

- On Census Day (11 October 2019) 39,498 post-primary schools, aged 11 – 18, had a free school meal, representing 27.2 per cent of all post-primary pupils<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Department of Health (2020) **Children's Social Care Statistics 2018/19**. Available at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/child-social-care-18-19.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Department of Education (2020) **School Meals in Northern Ireland 2019/20**. Available at: [https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/School meals statistical bulletin - Apr 2020.PDF](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/School%20meals%20statistical%20bulletin%20-%20Apr%202020.PDF)



## 4 Summary

Section 75 Category	Percentage (%) of young people (aged 13-17, unless otherwise stated)
<b>Religious belief</b>	Catholic (49.1%); Protestant (38.8%); Other Religions (0.9%); None (11.2%)
<b>Political opinion</b>	<u>NI Life and Times Survey</u> : 18 – 24 age band: unionist (24%), nationalist (34%), neither (33%), other/don't know (10%)  <u>NI Young Life and Times Survey</u> : 16-year-olds: 'Do NI political parties represent your political opinion?' - yes (28%), no (28%), don't know (44%)
<b>Racial group</b>	10 – 17 age band: White (97%), Asian (1.5%), Black (0.3%), Mixed (1.1%), Other (0.1%)
<b>Men and women</b>	Male (51.3%); Female (48.7%)
<b>Marital status</b>	Aged 0-19: Single (99.6%); Married (0.2%); Separated (0.1%)
<b>Age</b>	Age profile of 13 – 17 age band (2019): 13-year-olds (20.7%) 14-year-olds (20.2%) 15-year-olds (20.0%) 16-year-olds (19.5%) 17-year-olds (19.5%)
<b>Children with a disability</b>	Census 2011: Only 5% of those aged 13 -17 have a disability which limits their daily activities.
<b>Young Carers</b>	Before lockdown restrictions commenced, almost 4 per cent of carers in Northern Ireland were young carers.
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	The Office for National Statistics (ONS) have indicated that around 1.2 per cent of the household population in Northern Ireland identify as Lesbian Gay or Bisexual (LGB). The estimate for those aged 16 – 24 is higher at 4.2 per cent. No estimate for those under 16.
<b>Children in Care</b>	At 30 March 2019, 3,281 children were in care in Northern Ireland
<b>Children and FSM</b>	On Census Day (11 October 2019) 39,498 post-primary schools, aged 11 – 18, had a free school meal, representing 27.2 per cent of all post-primary pupils <sup>7</sup> .

<sup>7</sup> Department of Education (2020) **School Meals in Northern Ireland 2019/20**. Available at: [https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/School meals statistical bulletin - Apr 2020.PDF](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/School%20meals%20statistical%20bulletin%20-%20Apr%202020.PDF)