January 2025

The State of the Nation's Women and Girls

DATA +
ANALYTICS

Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Acknowledgements

The Department wishes to acknowledge that many individuals do not identify with binary gender categories of men and women or males and females. The data presented here is limited to the information collected and reported on from available data sources. In most cases, this was the only gender information available.

The Data and Analytics Unit wishes to thank our colleagues in the Gender and Equality Unit for their contributions to the report. We also want to thank colleagues who provided data for the report, including the CSO and Pobal, and colleagues in IPAS and Ukraine Accommodation Services.

1. Introduction

This spotlight report titled "The State of the Nation's Women and Girls" aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the current status of women and girls in Ireland, as well as changes over time, by focusing on several key areas that influence their lives and wellbeing. The report covers demographic trends, health and wellbeing, education and employment, as well as poverty and social vulnerability, providing detailed statistical analysis on each area.

The spotlight is split into five main sections, as follows:

- ❖ **Demographics:** this section will explore population changes and demographic shifts among females in Ireland, including variations across gender, nationality, and age groups.

- ❖ **Health and Wellbeing:** this section will present data on the physical and mental health of women in Ireland, covering maternity and fertility data, health status, physical activity and presenting life expectancy and mortality rates. The data in this section highlights the differing health challenges faced by women and men.

- ❖ **Education:** this section will analyse educational attainment and participation for women and girls across early childcare and education, primary, secondary, and tertiary education levels. The data will explore differences in educational achievement and participation by gender.

- ❖ **Employment and Economic Participation:** this section will examine women's participation in the workforce, looking at representation across different sectors of the economy. It will also address the gender pay gap and female representation in decision making, with the aim of highlighting differences between men and women in the labour force.

- ❖ **Poverty and social vulnerability:** finally, this section will examine the social vulnerabilities experienced by women and girls, highlighting the issues of poverty and deprivation. It will also discuss gender differences among victims of crime and some attention is also given to international protection cases.

Building on the findings of the previous DCEDIY spotlight titled "Gender Norms in Ireland", which explored the social expectations and cultural norms influencing gender roles in Ireland, this report seeks to provide a high-level view of the state of the nation's women and girls in key areas of their life.

This spotlight report is framed within the broader context of international and national commitments to gender equality including the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)[1], which provides a comprehensive framework for addressing gender discrimination. Additionally, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - particularly Goal 5[2], which aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls – helped guide the analysis provided within this report. According to the most recent publication of the Gender Equality Index[3], Ireland ranks 9th among the EU27 countries in terms of Gender Equality with a score of 73.4% in 2024. However, this was a decline from 2022 when Ireland ranked 7th with a score of 74.3%.

In Ireland, *the National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020: Creating a Better Society for All* aimed to work towards: "an Ireland where all women enjoy equality with men and can achieve their full potential, while enjoying a safe and fulfilling life". It followed on from the previous National Women's Strategy 2007-2016 and will soon be followed by the next National Strategy for Women and Girls, currently in the advanced stages of being developed. The objectives of the *National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020 are listed below:*

- Objective One: Advance Socio-Economic Equality for Women and Girls
- Objective Two: Advance the Physical and Mental Health and Wellbeing of Women and Girls
- Objective Three: Ensure the Visibility in Society of Women and Girls, and their Equal and Active Citizenship
- Objective Four: Advance Women in Leadership at All Levels
- Objective Five: Combat Violence Against Women
- Objective Six: Embed Gender Equality in Decision-making

Given the broad-reaching nature of this report, data was drawn from a variety of sources, and primarily includes data from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) and Eurostat, but also from the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), Pobal, the Department of Education, and from within the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (International Protection Accommodation Services [IPAS] and Ukraine arrivals data) and international and national surveys like the Health Behaviours in School-aged Children (HBSC) Survey, the Irish Sports Monitor and the Healthy Ireland Survey.

---

[1] CEDAW
[2] SDG Goal 5
[3] Gender Equality Index

2. Demographics

This section presents a detailed analysis of demographic changes in Ireland, focusing on gender, age, and nationality. The data examines population changes between Census 2011 and Census 2022, and highlights shifts in the demographic structure of Ireland. There is a particular focus on the male-female population distribution, changes in the age structure of Ireland's population, and the proportion of Irish to non-Irish females within the population.

Data for this chapter was sourced from Census 2011, Census 2016, and Census 2022 data, and migration estimates publicly available from the CSO. It is important to note that the population has increased further since 2022 with immigration continuing to increase (see Figure 3 on net migration).

2.1 Population Changes by Gender

The overall population has increased steadily across census years, with both male and female populations showing significant growth. The female population grew from 2.32 million in 2011 to 2.60 million in 2022, with the male population growing from 2.27 million to 2.54 million over the same period. The female population consistently outnumbers the male population at slightly over 50% of the population over the period. Figure 1 illustrates an increase of 12.1% in the female population, and an increase of 11.8% in the male population from 2011 to 2022.

Figure 1 Number of females and males in census years 2011, 2016, 2022
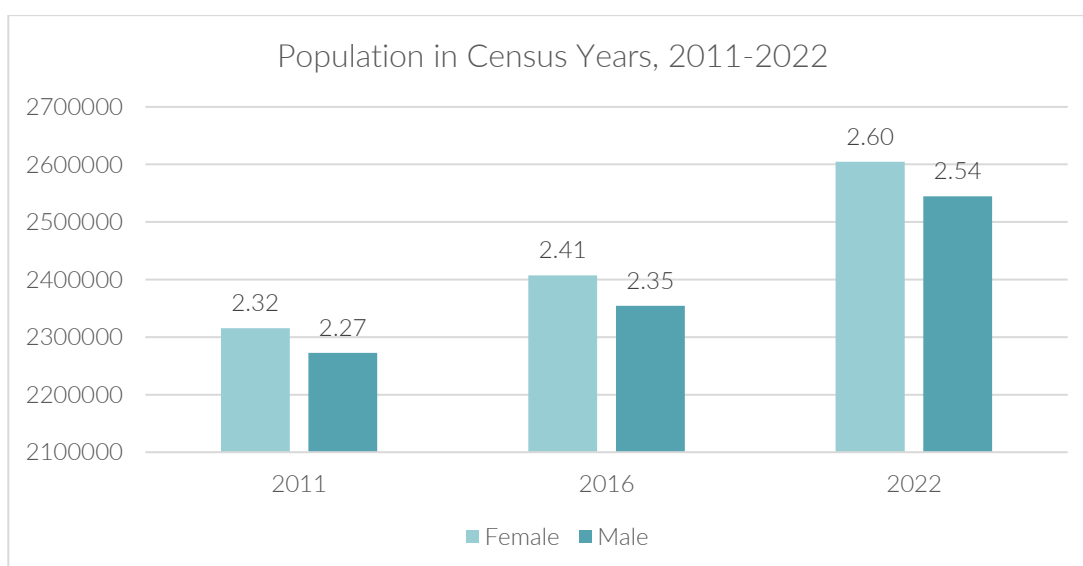
Source: CSO PxSTAT F1001

Figure 2 shows the population pyramids for the years 2011 and 2022. This provides a visual representation of the changes in the age and gender structure of Ireland's population in the past decade.

There is a noticeable increase in the population aged 40-44 and above, reflecting an aging demographic as well as a reduction in the youngest age group, reflecting a fall in birth rates.

There are also differences between 2011 and 2022 among the working-age population, with the highest numbers in the 35-49 age groups in 2022, compared to the 25-39 age groups in 2011. This indicates an increasing average age in the population.

For females, the average age has increased from 36.8 years in 2011 to 39.4 years in 2022[4]. The largest increase in the number of females occurred in the 40-44 age group while the largest proportional increases occurred in the 70-74 and 75-79 age groups.

In both 2011 and 2022 there are a considerably higher number of females than males in the oldest age groups aged 80+. However, while there was a 32.3% increase in the number of females aged over 85 between 2011 and 2022, there was a 71.0% increase in the number of males.

Figure 2 Population by age and gender in 2011 and 2022
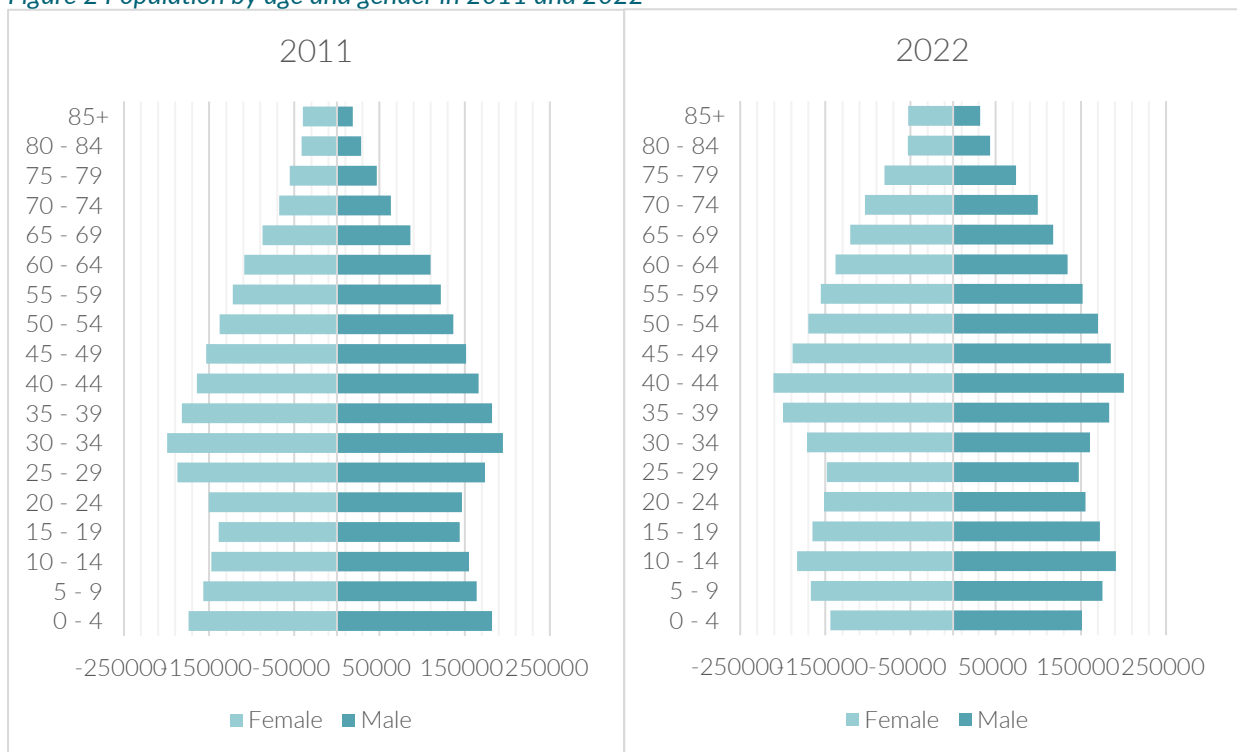
Source: CSO PxStat F1002

---

[4] Average Age of Population 2011 to 2016 and Average Age of Population 2022

2.2 Population by Nationality

Population is also influenced by trends in migration in and out of the country. Figure 3 illustrates the changes in migration in Ireland from 2011 to 2024.

In 2024, net migration[5] amounted to 79,300 inwards, of which 47% (38,000) were female. This contrasts with net outward migration of 27,300 in 2011, of which 42% (11,500) were females and the remaining 15,800 were males.

From 2021 to 2022, female net migration increased substantially from 11.0 thousand inwards to 32.1 thousand inwards, and to a greater extent than male net migration. More recently in 2024 male net migration has surpassed female net migration at 41.3 thousand compared to 38.0 thousand.

Figure 3 Net migration in thousands, 2011-2024
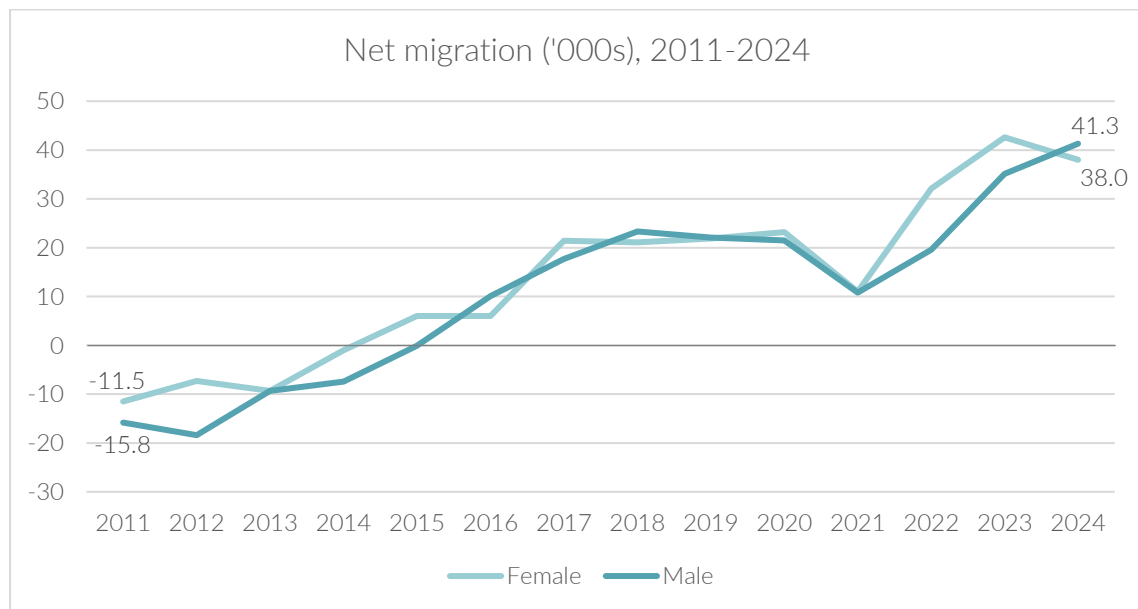
Source: CSO PxStat PEA03

Figure 4 shows the proportion of Irish, dual-national, and non-Irish females in the population between 2011 and 2022. This data shows a gradual increase in the percentage of non-Irish and dual-national females, suggesting an increasingly diverse female population in Ireland.

---

[5] Net migration refers to the number who have immigrated into the country minus the number who have emigrated out of the country.

The female Irish-only population has fallen from 85.7% in 2011 to 81.0% in 2022. Over the same period, the dual-Irish population has increased from 1.2% to 3.4%. The percentage of non-nationals has also increased from 13.1% in 2011 to 15.6% in 2022.

Figure 4 Percentage of Irish and non-Irish females, 2011-2022
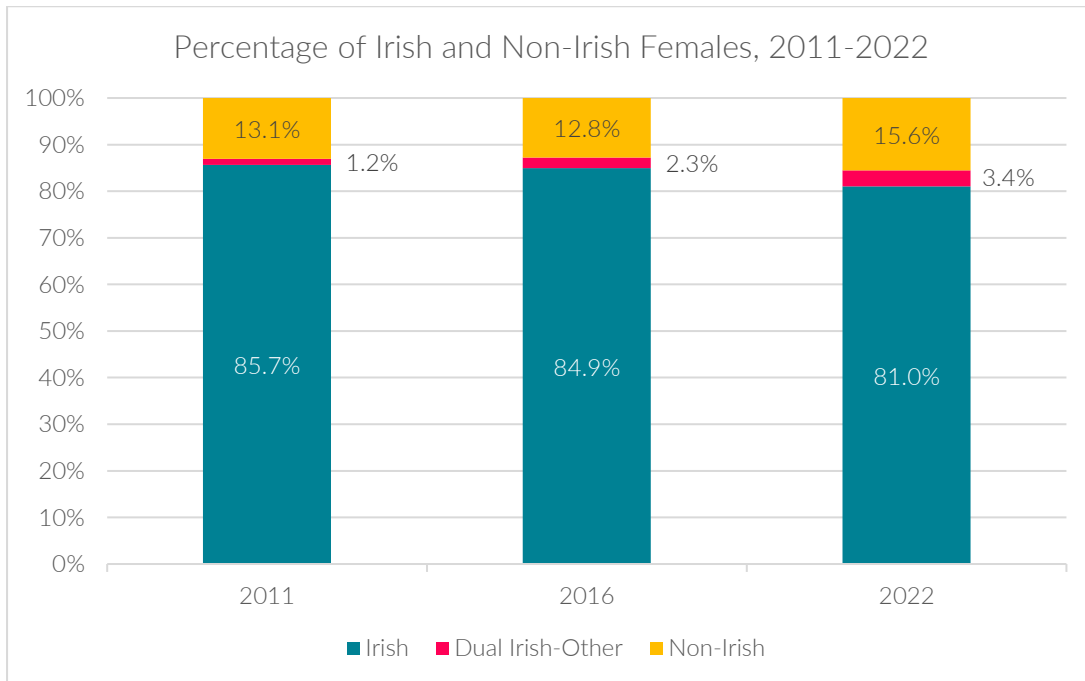
Source: CSO PxStat FY017

Note: Non-Irish includes those who did not state their citizenship or had no citizenship.

Figure 5 presents the population distribution by gender for the fifteen largest citizenship groups in Ireland for 2022. The data shows distinct gender differences among the various groups residing in Ireland.

Among those with citizenship from the Ukraine, USA, Spain and Germany, females represent a higher proportion of the population, whereas for countries such as Croatia and Romania, males outnumber females. Those with citizenship from countries such as Poland and France have a relatively balanced gender distribution.

Figure 5 Fifteen largest citizenship types in Ireland by gender, 2022

Citizenship Types in Ireland, 2022

Country	Female	Male
Poland	50.3%	49.7%
United Kingdom	46.3%	53.7%
India	46.1%	53.9%
Romania	46.0%	54.0%
Lithuania	53.8%	46.2%
Brazil	53.0%	47.0%
Italy	46.7%	53.3%
Latvia	55.9%	44.1%
Spain	57.4%	42.6%
France	51.3%	48.7%
Croatia	45.2%	54.8%
USA	60.6%	39.4%
China	53.3%	46.7%
Germany	57.2%	42.8%
Ukraine	60.7%	39.3%

■ Female ■ Male
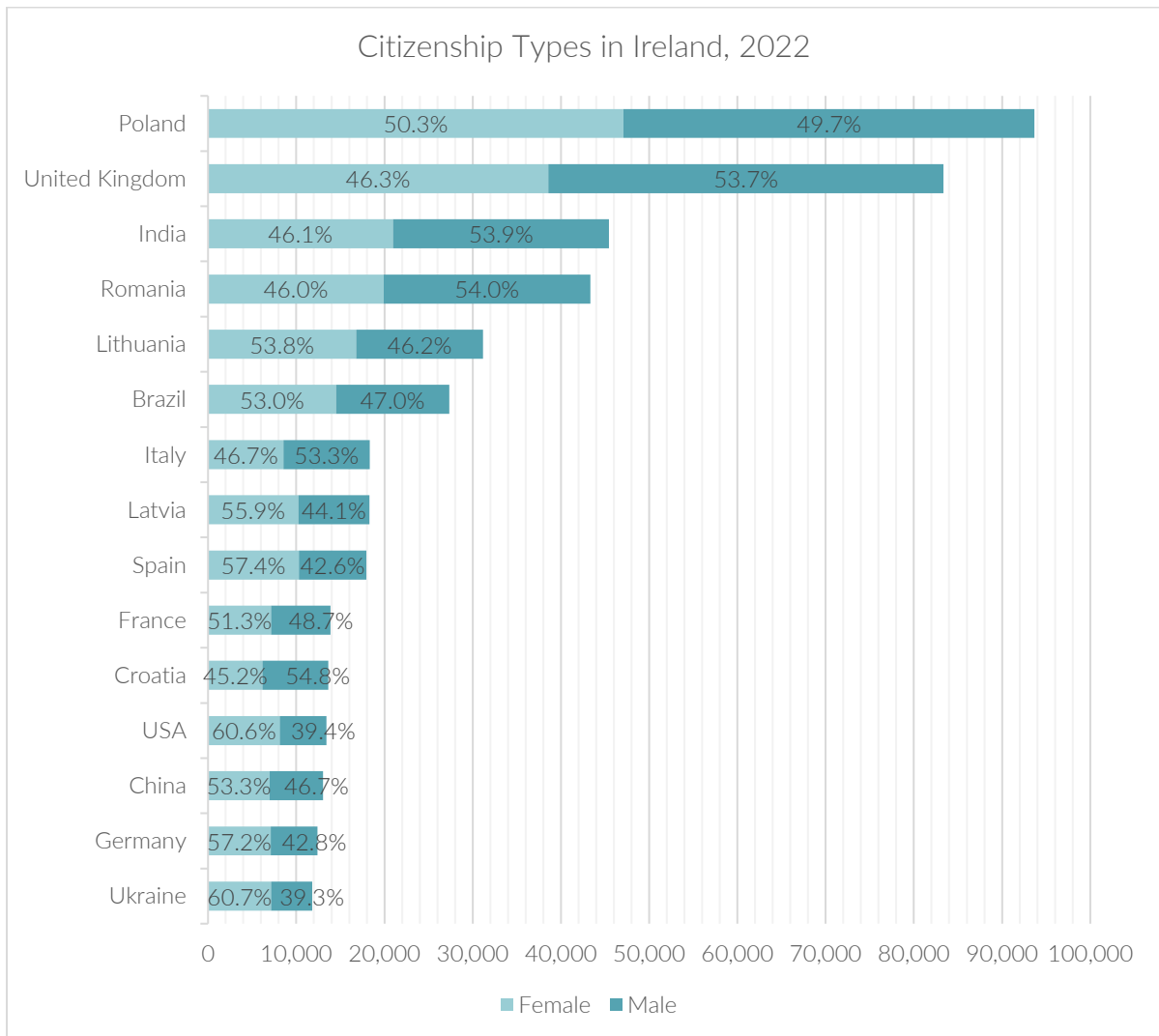
Source: CSO PxStat FY017

3. Health and Wellbeing

This section of the report examines the trends and current situation of women's health and wellbeing in Ireland. It examines key indicators such as life expectancy, mortality rates, maternity and fertility statistics, health status, physical activity levels and the mental health and wellbeing of women and girls in Ireland. Objective Two of the National Strategy for Women and Girls is to Advance the Physical and Mental Health and Wellbeing of Women and Girls. Some of the outcomes listed in the strategy included the improved health and wellbeing of women over 65, and the increased proportion of women and girls that are physically active.

Data in this chapter also somewhat relates to Objective Three of the strategy, to Ensure the Visibility in Society of Women and Girls, and their Equal and Active Citizenship which includes an outcome related to greater female participation in sport and physical activity.

As with the previous chapter, the years covered are 2011 onwards. Some attention is also given to international comparison. Data for this section were sourced from Eurostat, the Central Statistics Office (CSO), the Irish Sports Monitor and the Healthy Ireland and Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC) Surveys.

3.1 Life Expectancy and Mortality

3.1.1 Life Expectancy

Figure 6 shows the change in life expectancy for males and females between 2011 and 2022.

Life expectancy increased for both sexes over this period. In 2011, females had a life expectancy of 83.0 years and males had a life expectancy of 78.6 years. By 2022, these figures had increased to 84.2 years and 80.9 years respectively. This represents a narrowing of the gap between male and female life expectancy over the period.

Figure 6 Life expectancy at birth in Ireland by gender, 2011-2022
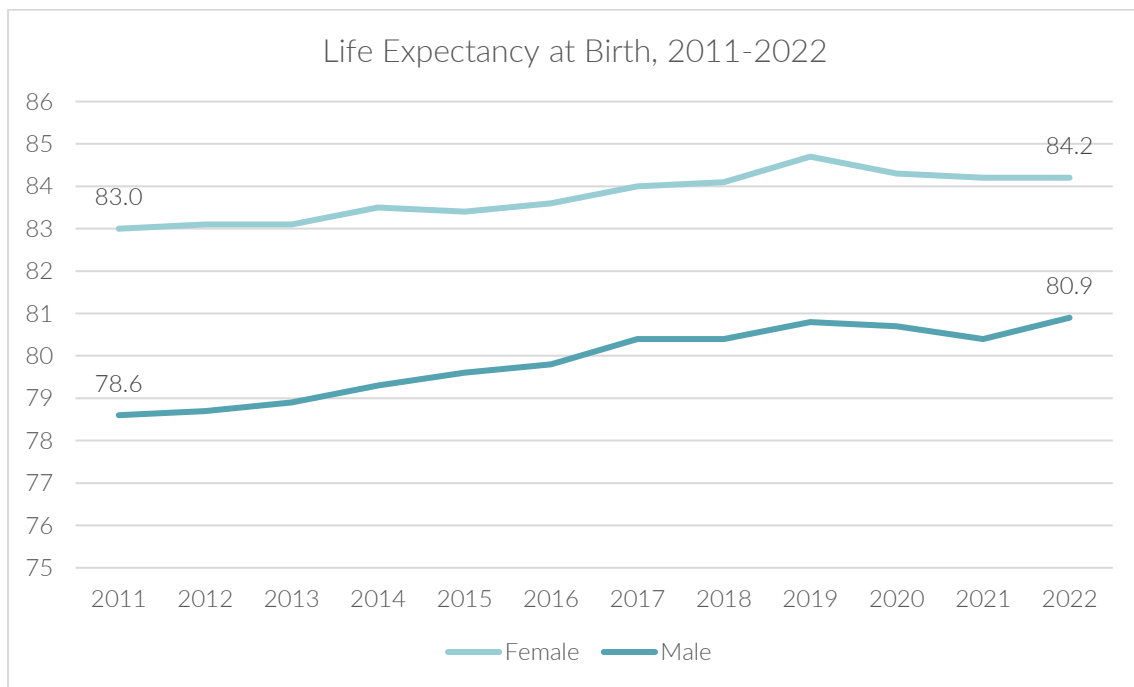
Source: Eurostat demo_mlexpec

Figure 7 presents an international comparison of female life expectancy among the EU27 countries in 2022. In 2022, the EU27 average life expectancy for females was 83.3 years. Ireland ranks eighth for female life expectancy in the EU27 countries at 0.9 years higher than the EU27 average.

Figure 7 Life expectancy at birth for females in EU27 countries, 2022

Female Life Expectancy, 2022

Country	Value
Spain	85.9
Luxembourg	85.2
France	85.1
Sweden	84.8
Italy	84.8
Malta	84.6
Portugal	84.5
Ireland	84.2
Slovenia	84.1
Belgium	83.9
Finland	83.8
Austria	83.6
Greece	83.4
Cyprus	83.4
EU27 countries	83.3
Denmark	83.2
Netherlands	83.1
Germany	83.0
Estonia	82.3
Czechia	81.9
Poland	81.1
Croatia	80.8
Slovakia	80.5
Lithuania	80.1
Latvia	79.4
Hungary	79.3
Romania	79.2
Bulgaria	77.9

Legend

	N/a
	84.3 - 85.9
	82.7 - 84.2
	81.1 - 82.6
	79.5 - 81.0
	77.9 - 79.4

Source: Eurostat demo_mlexpec

3.1.2 Mortality

Figure 8 presents age-standardized mortality rates for females in Ireland from 2015 and 2022 by the top five causes of death for females. Age-standardized mortality rates reflect a statistical method used to compare mortality rates across different age cohorts, even when those populations have different age structures. This is particularly relevant because mortality rates vary significantly with age.

Overall, mortality rates for females have decreased across most causes of death. Notably, mortality rates for four of the top five causes of death have decreased, while neoplasms (224.0 per 100,000) have replaced diseases of the circulatory system (221.1 per 100,000) as the highest cause of death in 2022. However, mortality rates have increased somewhat for mental and behavioural disorders, rising from 59.5 per 100,000 deaths in 2015 to 61.9 per 100,000 deaths in 2022.

Figure 8 Age-standardised mortality rates per hundred thousand for females by cause of death, 2015-2022
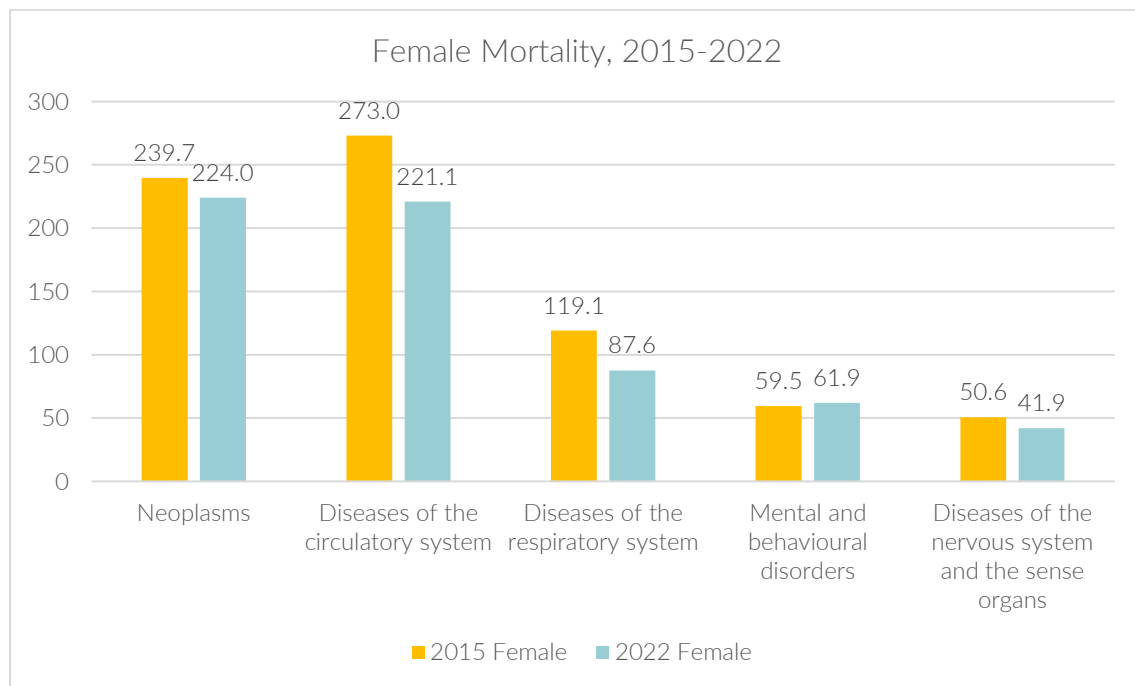
Source: CSO PxStat MORT02

Note 1: The mortality causes presented here are the broad categories contained within the ICD-10 (the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision) groupings. This system is used to diagnose and classify diseases.
Note 2: Data was only available in this format from 2015 onwards.

Figure 9 presents a gender breakdown of the five highest causes of mortality in 2022.

While the leading cause of death for females changed from diseases of the circulatory system to neoplasms in 2022, for males, diseases of the circulatory system have remained the leading cause of death. Males have higher mortality rates for all causes of death than females, except for deaths related to mental and behavioral disorders.

In 2022, among the top five causes, the biggest proportional difference between males and females was for diseases of the circulatory system, where the female mortality rate was 30.5% lower than the male mortality rate. The difference in mortality rates for mental and behavioural disorders is relatively small, with males 8.2% lower than females.

Figure 9 Age-standardised mortality rates per hundred thousand by gender and cause of death, 2022

Gender Breakdown of Mortality, 2022

Cause	Female	Male
Neoplasms	224.0	315.0
Diseases of the circulatory system	221.1	318.3
Diseases of the respiratory system	87.6	123.6
Mental and behavioural disorders	61.9	57.2
Diseases of the nervous system and the sense organs	41.9	52.7
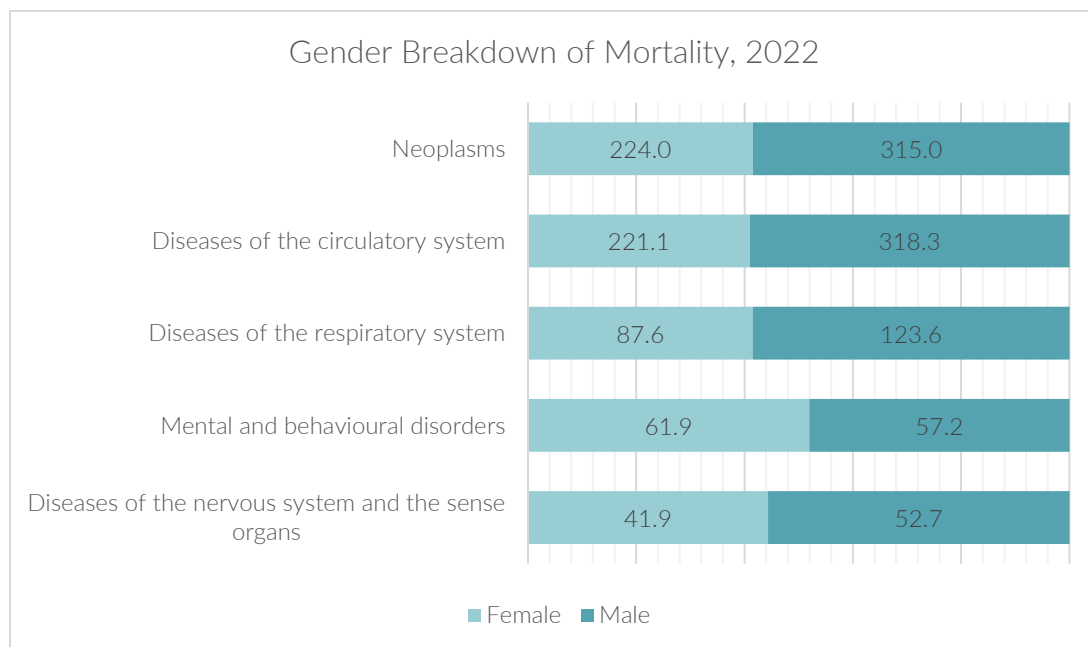
Source: CSO PxStat MORT02

3.2 General Health and Activity

3.2.1 General Health and Disability

Figure 10 presents the percentages of women who reported that they had very good, good, fair, bad or very bad health in each Census between 2011 and 2022.

A very low proportion of females report that they are in bad or very bad health, less than 2% in each year examined (these responses have been grouped in the graph below). The proportion of females reporting that they are in good or very good health has reduced somewhat from 88.1% in 2011 to 82.8% in 2022.

Figure 10 Self-reported health status of females (%) in Census 2011, 2016 and 2022

General Health of Females (%), 2011-2022
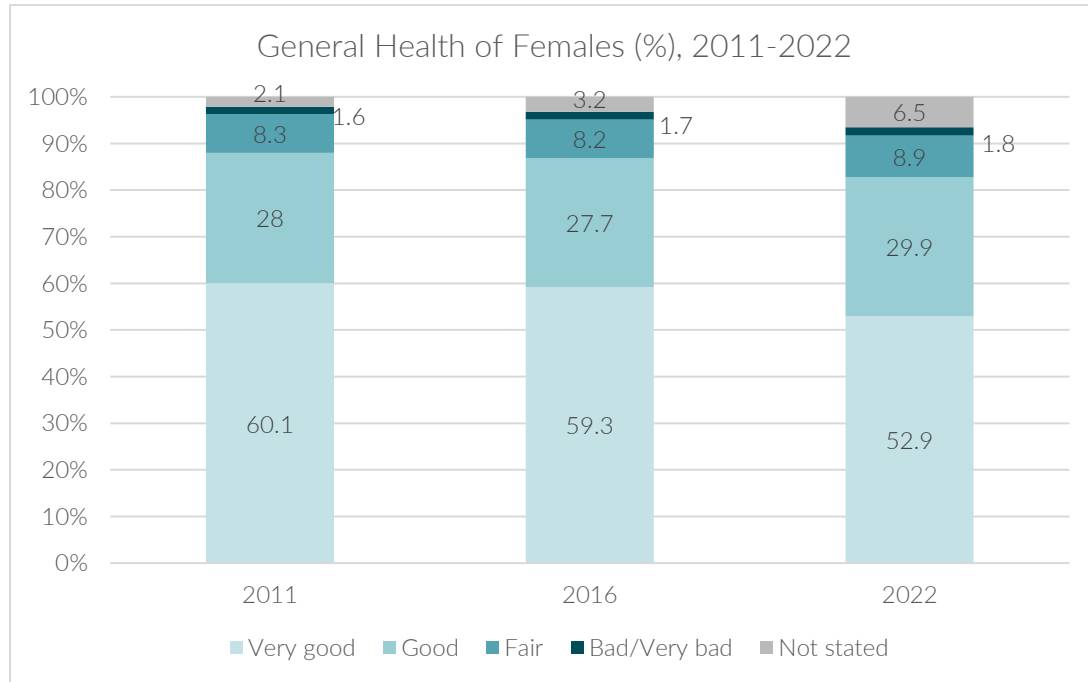
Source: CSO PxStat F4061

Figure 11 presents the percentages of women who reported that they had very good or good health in Census 2022 categorised by age group. Self-reported health tends to decrease with age, with the highest proportion of the population in good or very good health at age 10-14 and the lowest at age 85 and over.

Figure 11 Proportion of females reporting good or very good health by age (%), 2022

General Health of Females (%), 2022

Age group	Very good	Good
85 years and over	9.4	35.0
80 - 84 years	15.3	41.9
75 - 79 years	20.5	44.5
70 - 74 years	26.6	44.7
65 - 69 years	31.6	43.4
60 - 64 years	36.7	40.1
55 - 59 years	41.7	37.9
50 - 54 years	44.3	37.0
45 - 49 years	48.1	35.0
40 - 44 years	50.4	34.1
35 - 39 years	52.0	33.4
30 - 34 years	55.5	30.9
25 - 29 years	59.0	28.7
20 - 24 years	62.5	25.4
15 - 19 years	71.5	18.8
10 - 14 years	79.9	12.5
5 - 9 years	81.2	10.9
0 - 4 years	78.9	10.4

■ Very good ■ Good

Source: CSO PxStat F4061

The 2022 Census similarly asked about people's experience of disability. Disability refers to people who experienced long-lasting conditions or difficulties.

For females, 22.2% said they experienced a disability to any extent, compared to 20.9% among males. Looking at those who said they experienced difficulties to a 'great extent' the rates were lower at 8.3% for females and 7.5% for males. Female rates tended to be higher than males in older age. While male rates were higher than female rates among those aged under 15.

Table 1 Experience of disability in Census 2022

	Disability to any extent	Disability to a great extent
Female	22.2%	8.3%
Male	20.9%	7.5%

Source: CSO PxStat FY084

3.2.2 Physical Activity

This section examines physical activity levels among women and girls.

In terms of physical activity among younger people, the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Survey (HBSC) measures levels of children aged 10-17 reaching the recommended national guidelines on physical activity for children, that is being physically active for at least 60 minutes per day on more than four days per week. Figure 12 displays these percentages for girls and boys from 2014-2022. The HBSC survey takes place every 4 years.

Girls aged 10-17 display consistently lower levels of meeting the national guidelines on physical activity when compared to boys. However, activity among girls has been rising steadily over the period. The lowest gap between boys and girls was in 2018.

Figure 12 Physical activity among boys and girls (%), 2014-2022
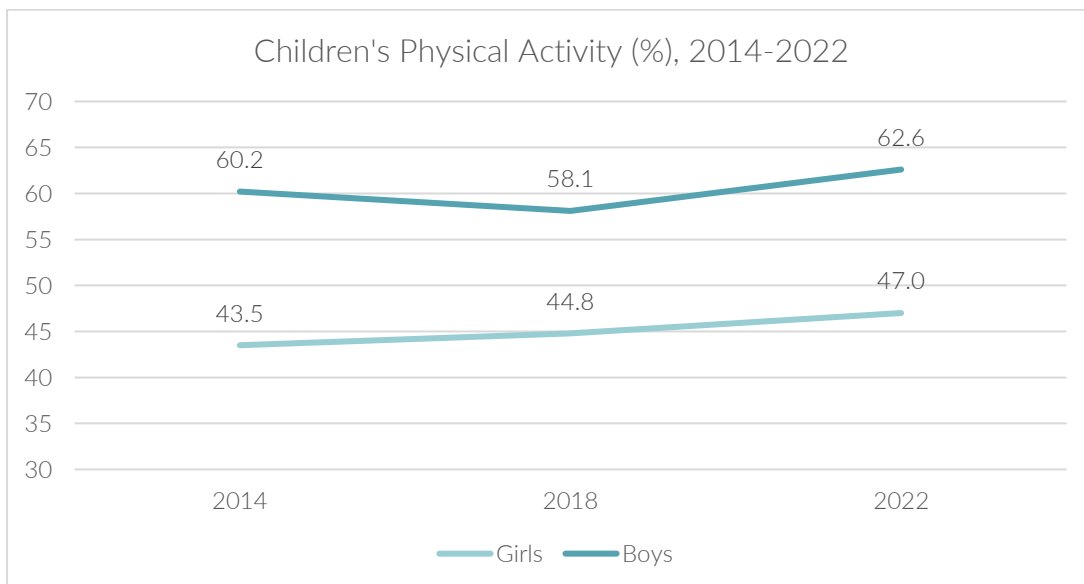
Source: Health Behaviour in School-aged Children, CSO Pxstat SCA09

Looking at differences by age, Figure 13 shows physical activity among girls and boys by age. A similar pattern can be seen across both girls and boys with activity increasing to age 11/12 for boys, 11 for girls and tapering off from there. The largest decline occurred among girls in 2022 dropping from a peak of 67.4 at age 11 to a low of 29.2 at age 17, a decline of 38 percentage points.

Figure 13 Physical activity by gender and age among children aged 10-17 (%), 2014-2022
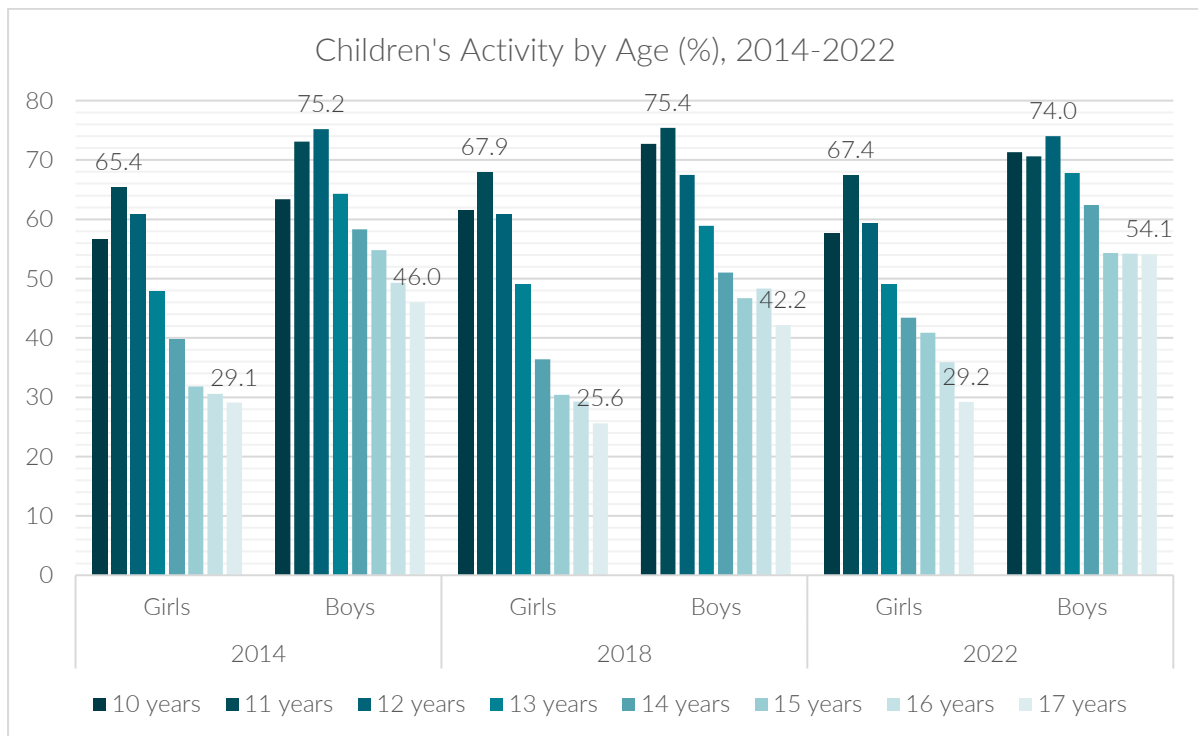
Source: Health Behaviour in School-aged Children, CSO Pxstat SCA09
Note: Labels are included for the highest and lowest value among each group.

The Irish Sports Monitor is an annual survey conducted by Sport Ireland, on sports participation across Ireland among those aged 16+.

Figure 14 presents information on the percentage of women vs men who are highly active, based on the frequency, duration, and intensity of their activity from the Irish Sports Monitor. Those who are highly active are those who have participated in at least 30 minutes of physical activity at least 5 times in the last 7 days through a combination of sport participation and recreational walking. Those who are highly active are considered to be meeting the national physical activity guidelines.

As demonstrated, between 2017 and 2022 more women than men have been highly active, and so are meeting the national physical activity guidelines. However most recently in 2023, there was the same proportion of males as females who were considered highly active and meeting these guidelines (39%).

When it comes to sports participation, women have consistently reported slightly lower participation than males.

Figure 14 Physical activity (%) of adults aged 16+, 2017-2023
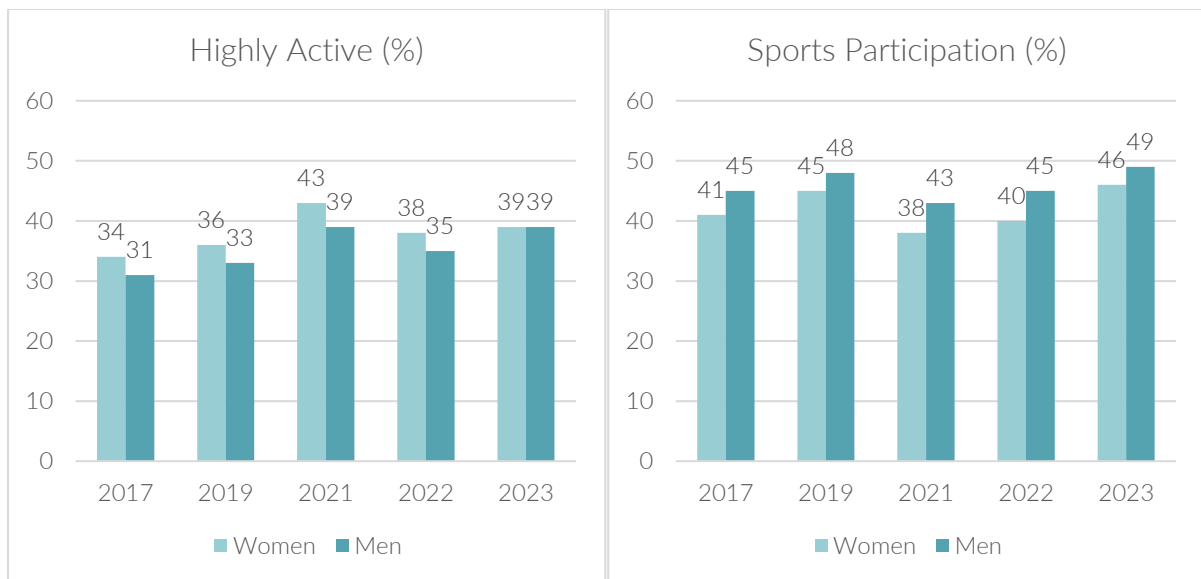
Source: Irish Sports Monitor 2023 Annual Research Report

Figure 15 shows further detail on gender differences in certain types of activities. Women are more likely than men to engage in recreational walking (73% compared to 66%) and slightly more likely to walk for transport (47% compared to 44%). While men are more likely to cycle for transport.

Figure 15 Engagement in other activities (%) of adults aged 16+, 2023
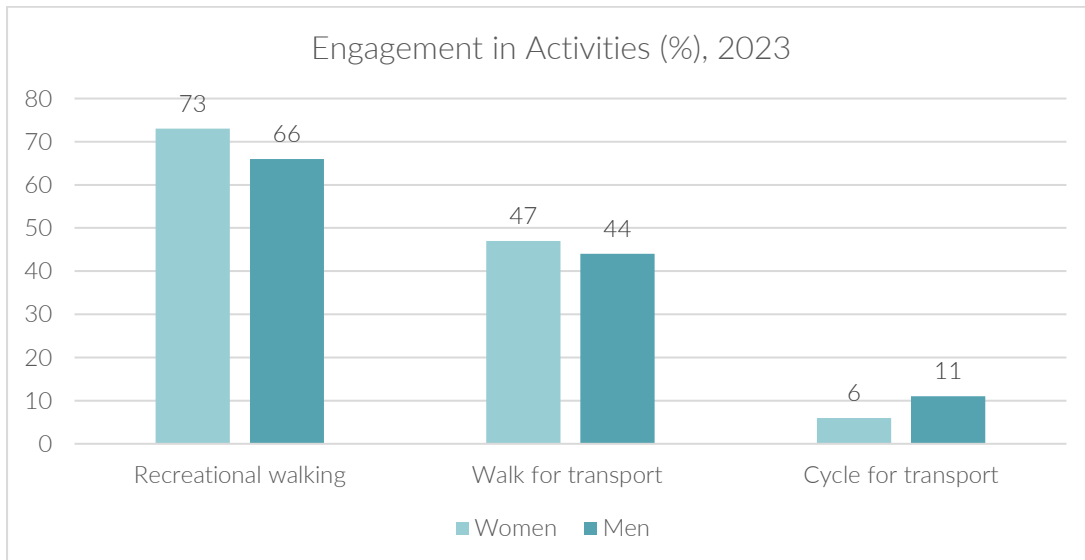
Source: Irish Sports Monitor 2023 Annual Research Report

3.3 Maternal Health and Fertility Rates

The data presented in Table 2 provides an overview of maternity and fertility statistics in Ireland from 2011 to 2022. Over this period, the total number of births decreased by 26.4% from 74,033 to 54,483. The birth rate fell from 16.2 births per thousand population in 2011 to 10.5 in 2022. Further, the average age of mothers at maternity rose from 31.8 years to 33.2 years between 2011 and 2022. This reflects a trend towards later motherhood in the Irish population.

The proportion of births inside marriage has also declined over the period, reflecting changing societal norms.

Table 2 Maternal health and fertility, 2011-2022

Statistic	2011	2016	2022
Total Births	74,033	63,841	54,483
Percentage of Births Inside Marriage/Civil Partnership	66.1	63.4	57.1
Average Age of Mother at Maternity	31.8	32.7	33.2
Birthrate per thousand population	16.2	13.5	10.5
Fertility Rate (TFR)	2.02	1.81	1.53

Sources: CSO PxStat tables VSA38, VSA91, VSA104

Figure 16 illustrates the trend in total fertility rates (TFR) in Ireland from 2011 to 2022. TFR measures the average number of children born per reproductive-age woman. It is a measure of the level of fertility in the population. A TFR of 2.1 is generally considered the replacement level, meaning that each woman would have to have an average of 2.1 children for the population to remain stable over time.[6]

In Ireland, the TFR fell from 2.0 in 2011 to 1.5 in 2022 with a brief uptick in 2021.

Figure 16 Total fertility rates in Ireland, 2011-2022

Fertility Rates, 2011-2022
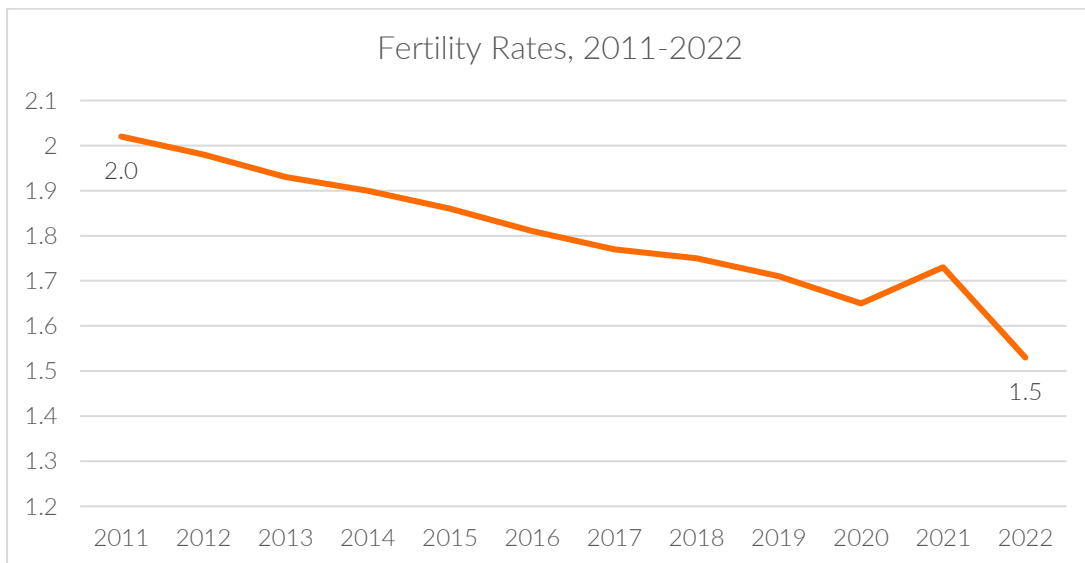
Source: CSO Pxstat VSA104

---

[6] OECD Fertility Rates

3.4 Mental Health

3.4.1 Childhood Mental Health

The Health Behaviour in School Children (HBSC) Survey measures child and adolescent mental health using the World Health Organisation (WHO)-5 Wellbeing Index. The index consists of 5 items that measure wellbeing. Children and young people were asked how often over the last two weeks they had: felt cheerful and in good spirits, calm and relaxed, active and vigorous, woken up feeling fresh and rested, and felt their daily life was filled with things that interested them. Response options ranged from 'all the time' to 'at no time' and were combined to make a score (from zero to 100). Higher scores indicate higher mental wellbeing.

Figure 17 shows scores for Ireland compared to the average of the countries taking part in HBSC in 2022 for three age groups of girls. Wellbeing scores tend to decrease with age with the lowest score evident in the 15-year-old age group. Scores for girls in Ireland are slightly higher than the HBSC average for those aged 11 and 13 but fall lower than the HBSC average for 15-year-old girls at 46.4 (compared to 50.1 for the HBSC average).

Figure 17 Scores on the WHO-5 Wellbeing Index for Girls aged 11, 13 and 15 years-old, 2022
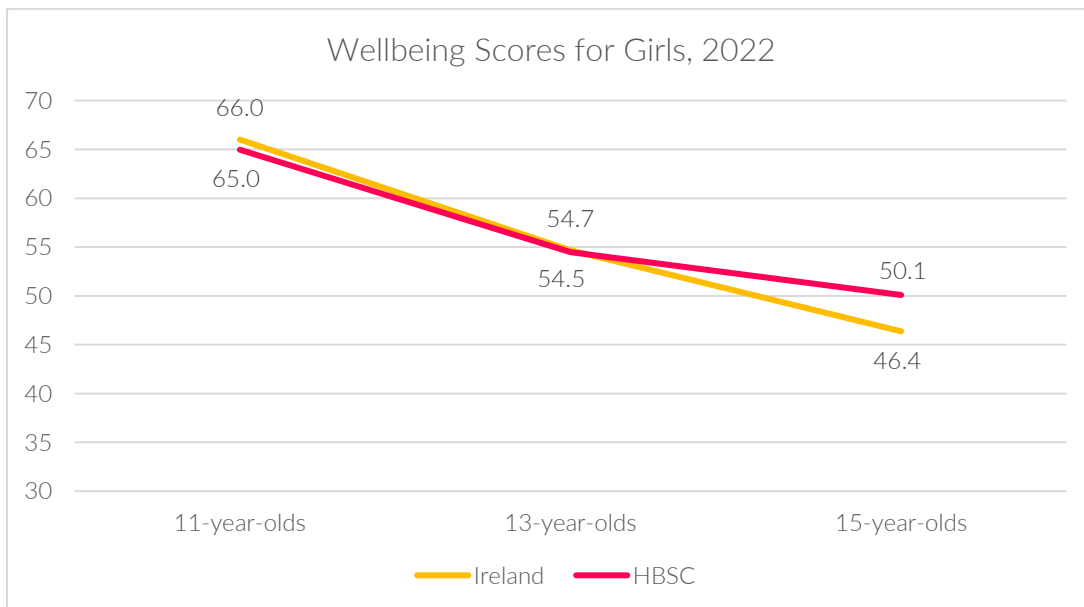
Source: Health Behaviour in School-aged Children, WHO-5 Wellbeing Index

Figure 18 presents more detailed information on the Wellbeing Index scores and includes data for both girls and boys. Boys have higher wellbeing scores than girls at every age in Ireland and in all contributing HBSC countries on average. The biggest differences are evident in the oldest age group of 15-year-olds where there is a difference of 12.6 points between girls and boys participating in HBSC on average and a difference of 11.0 points in Ireland specifically.

Figure 18 Childhood Wellbeing Scores for Ireland and the HBSC average, 2022
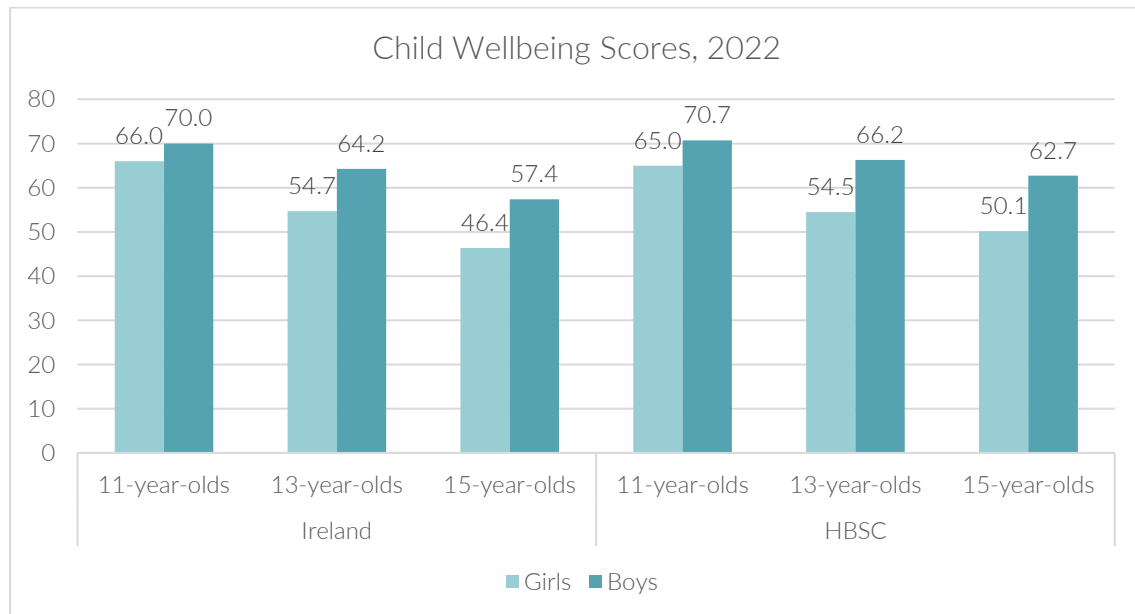
Source: Health Behaviour in School-aged Children, WHO-5 Wellbeing Index

3.4.2 Positive Mental Health

The data for this section comes from the Healthy Ireland survey which collects data from people in Ireland aged 15 years and older. The Healthy Ireland survey uses the 'Energy and Vitality Index' (EVI) to measure positive mental health. Survey responses to questions relating to mental health are recorded and aggregated to calculate an EVI score. EVI scores range from 0-100, with higher scores indicating more positive mental health. Respondents were asked about the extent to which they felt "full of life", "calm and peaceful", had "a lot of energy" and had "been a happy person".

Figure 19 presents the EVI scores for men and women between 2016 and 2023.

In 2023, the average EVI score was 63.3 for women and 67.4 for men. This represented an increase from 60.3 and 64.6, respectively, in 2021, but is still lower than the 2016 averages of 65.9 and 69.8, respectively. Men reported higher positive mental health than women in each year examined.

Figure 19 Average Energy and Vitality Index scores, 2016-2023

EVI Scores, 2016-2023
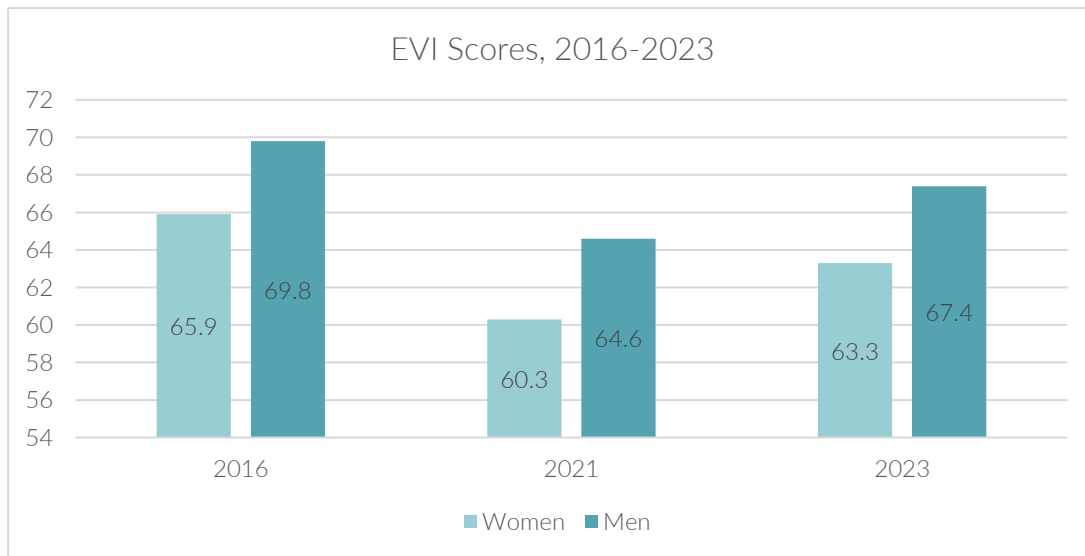
Source: Healthy Ireland Summary Report 2023
Note: the years 2016, 2021 and 2023 are presented here due to the inclusion of the EVI in certain waves of the Healthy Ireland survey. Earlier data is not available.

Figure 20 shows the proportion with positive mental health in each age group in 2023. Positive mental health is defined as "the percentage with an EVI score equal to or over 1 standard deviation from the mean score for the population." See Appendix 1 for details of the mean scores for each year.

When broken down by age class, women exhibited lower levels of positive mental health than men across all age groups. The proportion of women with positive mental health remained stable between the ages of 15 and 64 at 7-8%. The highest level of positive mental health was observed for women in the 65-74 age class (9%), and the lowest in the oldest age group aged 75+ at 6%.

Figure 20 Proportion with positive mental health by age, 2023
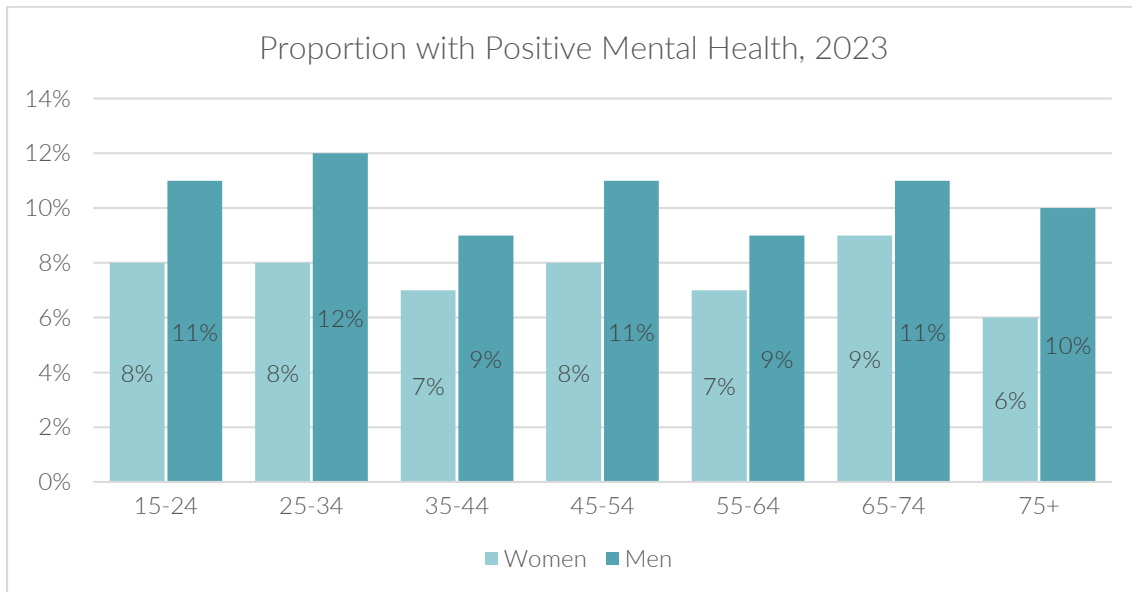
Source: Healthy Ireland Summary Report 2023

3.4.3 Negative Mental Health

The Mental Health Index (MHI-5) is another measure used in the Healthy Ireland survey, in this instance to measure negative mental health. Survey respondents are asked a number of questions relating to their mental health, and the scores are used to calculate an MHI-5 score for each respondent. MHI-5 scores can range from 0-100 and lower scores indicate greater levels of psychological distress and poorer mental health. Respondents were asked about the extent to which they felt "downhearted and blue", "worn-out", "tired", "so down in the dumps that nothing could cheer you up" and a "very nervous person".

Figure 21 presents the MHI-5 scores for men and women between 2016 and 2023.

The average MHI-5 scores for women and men in 2023 were 76.5 and 80.1 respectively. Similarly to the trend in EVI scores, men exhibited higher MHI-5 scores than women, indicating lower levels of negative mental health. Overall, levels of poor mental health were lower in 2023 than in 2021 but were still higher than levels observed in 2016.

Figure 21 Average Mental Health Index scores, 2016-2023
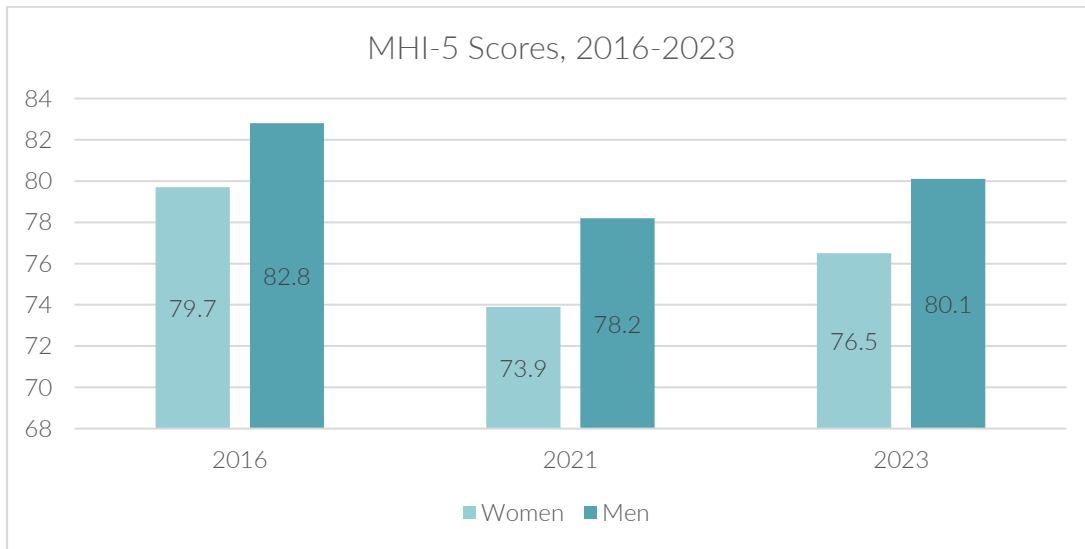
Source: Healthy Ireland Summary Report 2023

Healthy Ireland defines the proportion with negative mental health as "the percentage with an MHI-5 score of 56 or lower indicating a probable mental health problem".

When broken down by age, women showed poorer mental health than men in every age group except the 35-44 age group in 2023. Women aged 15-24 exhibited the highest level of negative mental health, with almost one-in-four showing a high level of psychological stress. Levels of negative mental health ranged between 12% and 16% between the ages of 25-64 for females, after which it reduced to 10% or lower.

Figure 22 Proportion with negative mental health by age, 2023
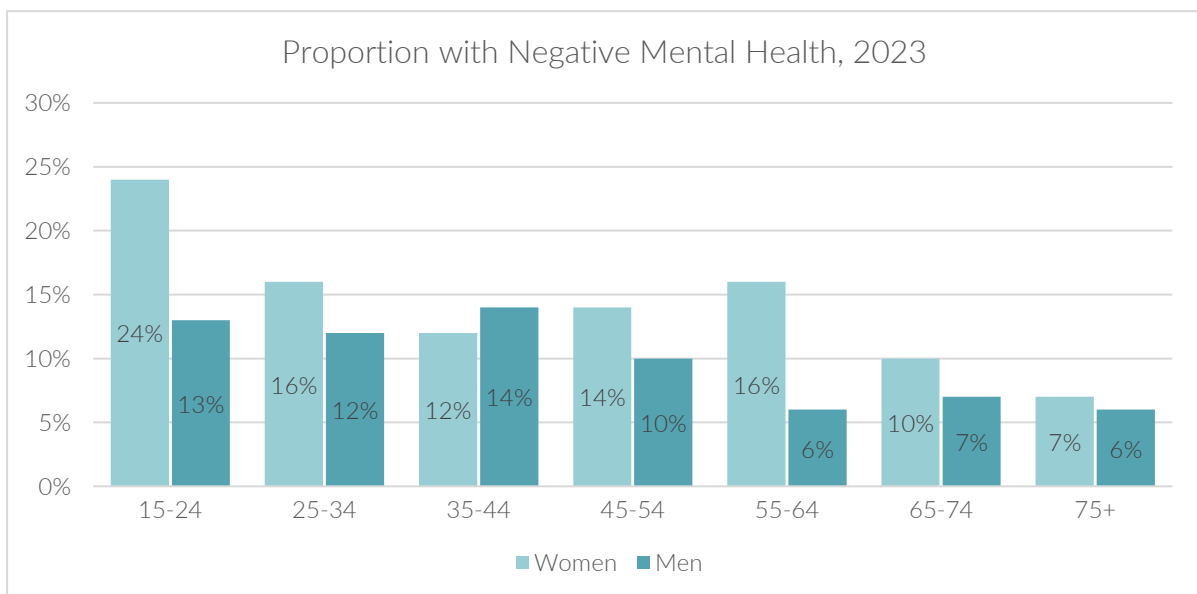
Source: Healthy Ireland Summary Report 2023

3.4.5 Hospital Admissions for Psychiatric Causes

Figure 23 shows the trend of hospital admission rates for psychiatric causes from 2011 to 2023. In 2023, the rate of hospital admissions per 100,000 was 305.4 for males and 301.8 for females.

Over the period presented, the rate of admissions has declined for both males and females. Male rates of hospital admissions for psychiatric causes slightly exceeded female rates for much of the 2010s, however rates have been similar across genders since 2020.

Figure 23 Hospital admissions for psychiatric causes by gender (rate per 100,000 pop), 2011-2022
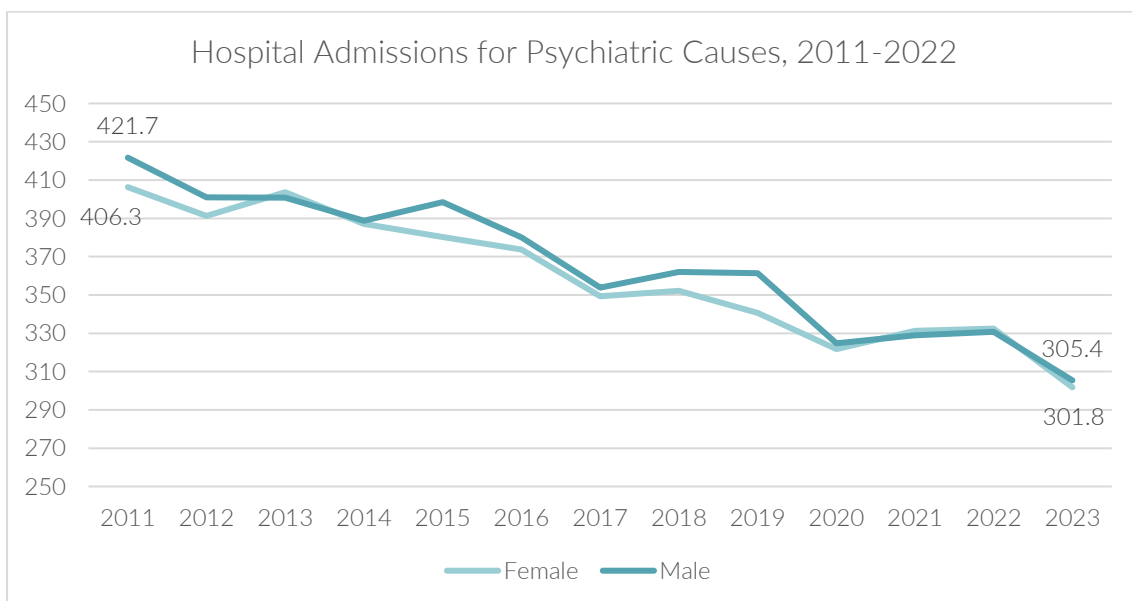
Source: CSO PxStat HRA02

Figure 24 presents the rate of hospital admissions per 100,000 population in 2023, categorised by gender and age group.

Hospital admissions with psychiatric causes are highest for females aged 20-24. The rate remains lower between the ages of 25 and 64, with the lowest rate occurring among females aged 55-64. The rate increases again among females aged 65–74-years.

Female admission rates are higher than male rates in young adulthood (18-19 years old). Between the ages of 20 and 44, male admission rates are higher than female rates. However, for all age groups above 45-54, females have higher admission rates than males.

Figure 24 Hospital admissions for psychiatric causes (rate per 100,000 pop.) by age group, 2023

Female Hospital Admissions for Psychiatric Causes, 2023
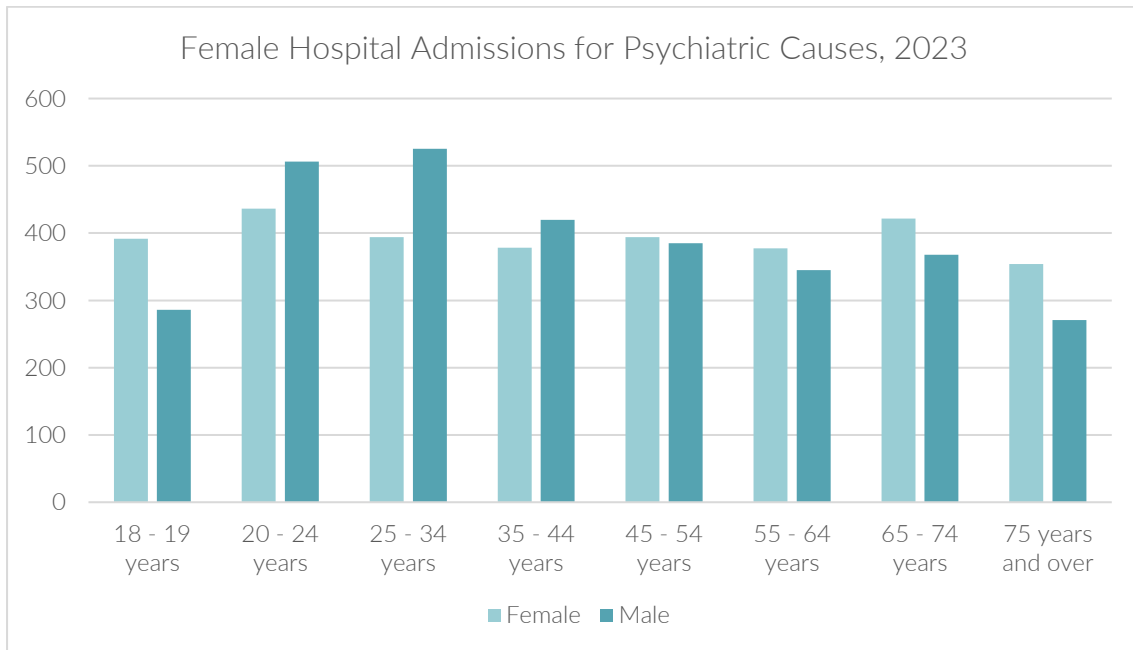
Source: CSO PxStat HRA02

4. Education

This section will present data on the educational profile of women and girls in Ireland. Statistics on educational enrolment and attainment are examined, and a gendered breakdown of early care and education, and second and third level fields of study is given. Objective One of the National Strategy for Women and Girls is to Advance Socio-Economic Equality for Women and Girls. Some of the outcomes listed in the strategy included tackling the gender imbalance in STEM education and careers and increasing female participation in apprenticeships.

Data is presented for the period 2011 onwards, where available, and was primarily sourced from Eurostat and the CSO.

4.1 Educational Attainment and Current Participation

4.1.1 Educational Attainment

Figure 25 illustrates the educational attainment level of the female population aged 15-64 between 2011 and 2023. Educational attainment has been separated into three levels: Junior Certificate level or lower, Leaving Certificate and further education, and Third-level or higher. Junior Certificate and lower includes the categories less than primary, primary and lower secondary education. Leaving Certificate and further education includes the categories upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (general and vocational) and Third level or higher includes the category Tertiary education.

There has been a substantial increase in the percentage of women attaining third level education, rising from below 37.6% in 2011 to 50.4% in 2023. The percentage of women with at most a Leaving Certificate level of education has declined slightly from 36.1% to 34.5%. However, the percentage of women with only a Junior Certificate or lower level of education has declined substantially from 26.2% in 2011 to 15.1% in 2023.

Figure 25 Educational attainment of females aged 15-64, 2011-2023

Educational Attainment of Females, 2011-2023
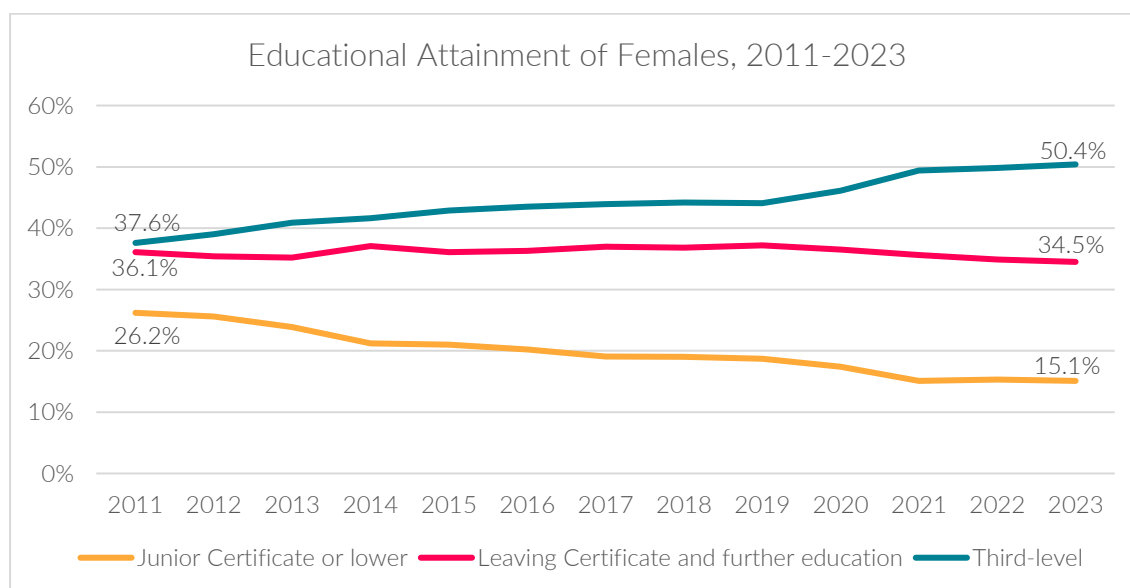
Source: Eurostat edat_lfs_9916

Looking at Census data, Figure 26 compares the educational attainment levels of males and females aged 15 or over in 2022, excluding those who are currently in education.

The data shows that females are less likely than males to have no formal education, only a primary education level, or only a lower secondary education level. The share of the population with an upper secondary level of education was similar for males and females (16.4% and 16.9% respectively).

At third level, 7.9% of females have ordinary bachelor's degrees, and 13.3% have honours bachelor's degrees. A further 11.7% of females are educated to postgraduate level. At all three of these education levels, the proportion of females is higher than males.

However, males have greater representation than females in advanced certificates or apprenticeships.

Figure 26 Educational attainment of population (%) aged 15 or over, 2022

Educational Attainment of Population (%), 2022

	Female	Male
Doctorate (Ph.D.)	1.0	1.1
Postgraduate diploma or degree	11.7	8.9
Honours bachelor degree/professional qualification or both	13.3	11.1
Ordinary bachelor degree/professional qualification or both	7.9	6.9
Higher certificate	5.8	4.3
Advanced certificate/completed apprenticeship	3.4	7.1
Technical/vocational	7.5	6.3
Upper secondary	16.9	16.4
Lower secondary	10.7	13.6
Primary	6.3	7.3
No formal education	1.9	2.5
Not stated/other	13.6	14.3

Source: CSO PxStat F7017
Note: These percentages exclude those who are currently in education.

4.1.2 Current Participation in Education

While Figure 26 covers educational attainment, Figure 27 presents the gender breakdown of the population currently enrolled in education.

Male and female educational participation is broadly equal up to the compulsory age of education (16 years old or upper secondary). However, as the population progresses to higher level, gender disparities begin to appear. Males are more likely than females to participate in post-secondary, non-tertiary education and have slightly higher proportions in short-cycle tertiary education, while females have somewhat higher proportions enrolled in bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degrees.

These differences in current educational participation help to explain the gender differences seen above in the educational attainment of the population.

Figure 27 Proportion enrolled in education by level, 2022
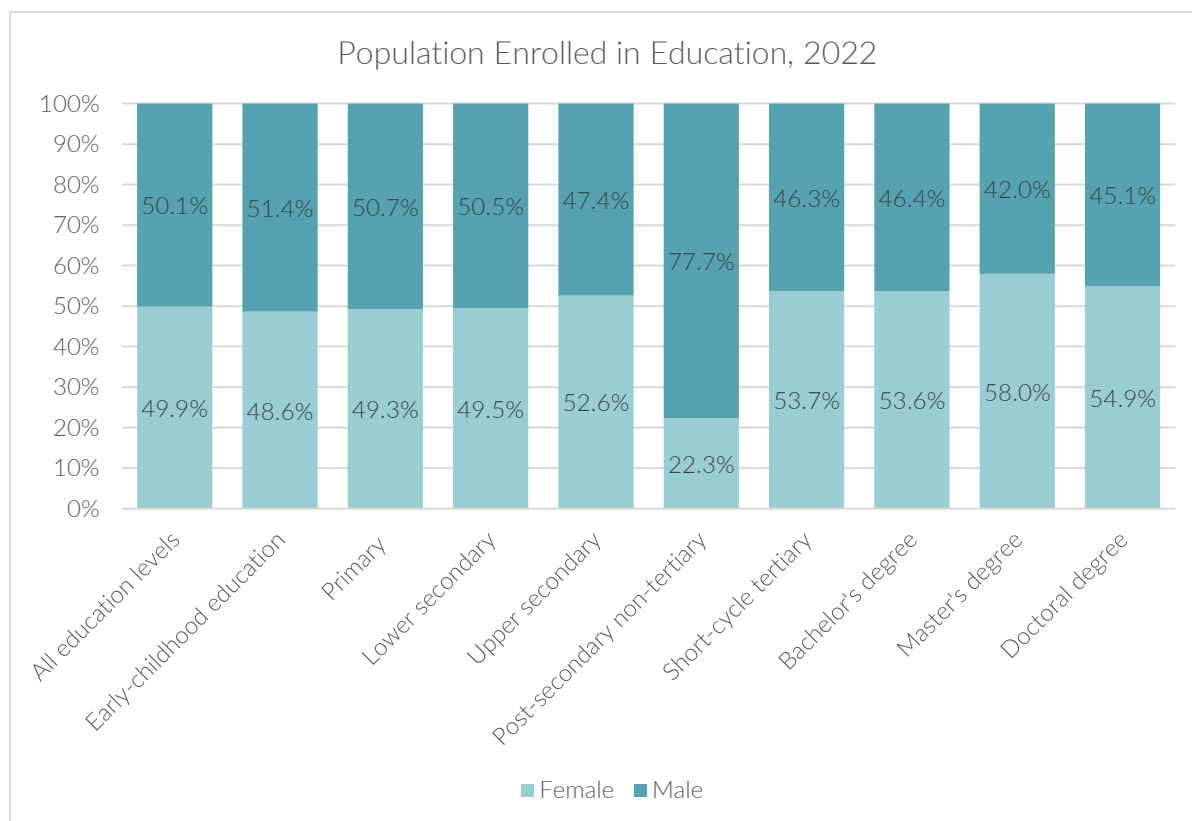
Source: Eurostat educ_uoe_enra01

4.2 Early Childhood Care and Education

Figure 28 presents data on the number of children registered for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. The ECCE programme is a universal free pre-school programme available to all eligible children for two years before starting primary school.

All children are eligible from the September after they turn 2 years and 8 months and the upper age limit is 5 years and 6 months. This means that, in order to be eligible, a child cannot turn this age at any point before the end of the pre-school year (i.e. end of June).

The number of children registered for ECCE has increased from 2015 to 2024. The number of female children has risen from 67,812 in 2015 to 80,386 in 2024. This represents an increase of 18.5%. While for male children there has been a growth of 19.5%.

The number of male children has exceeded the number of females throughout the period. However, this is in line with CSO population estimates which show slightly more male than female children aged between 2 and 6 throughout this time period.

Figure 28 Number of Children Registered for the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme, 2015-2024

ECCE Registrations, 2015-2024
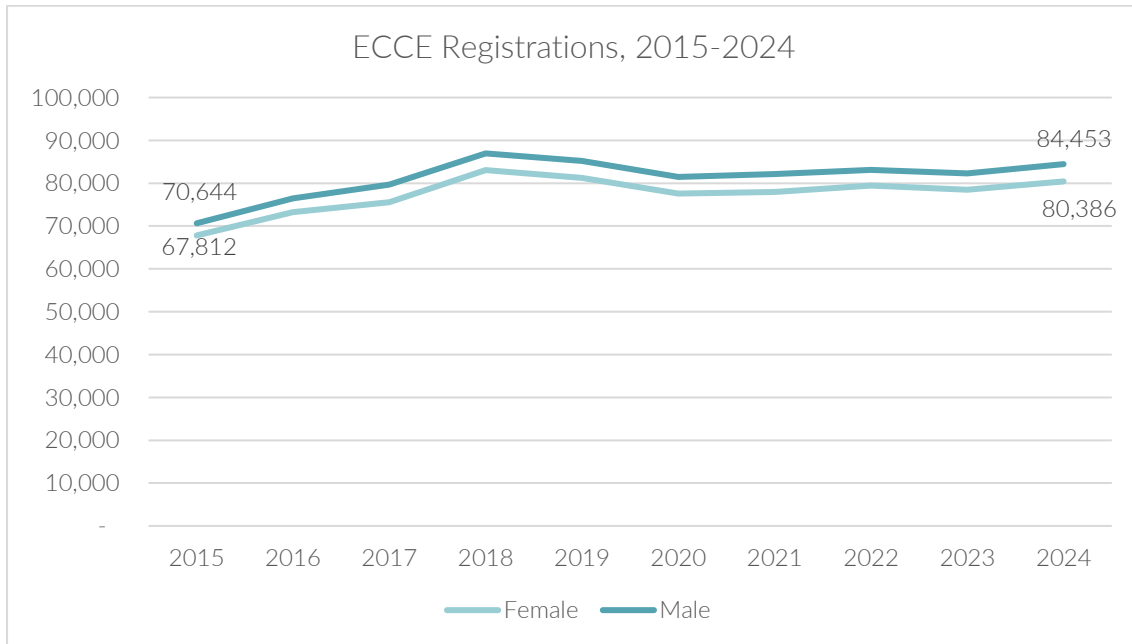
Source: Pobal (special request)

4.3 Secondary Level Education

4.3.1 Early School Leaving

Figure 29 presents information on the percentage of early school leavers, which is defined as persons aged 18 to 24 whose highest level of education attained is lower secondary or below.

The percentage of early school leavers has fallen substantially in the last 13 years, as illustrated in Figure 29. In 2011, 8% of females and 13% of males did not complete schooling to Leaving Certificate level. By 2024, those percentages were 2% and 3% for females and males respectively. This represents a narrowing of the gap between male and female early school leavers, although males still account for more of those not completing secondary education in 2024.

Figure 29 Percentage of early school leavers aged 18-24, 2011-2024
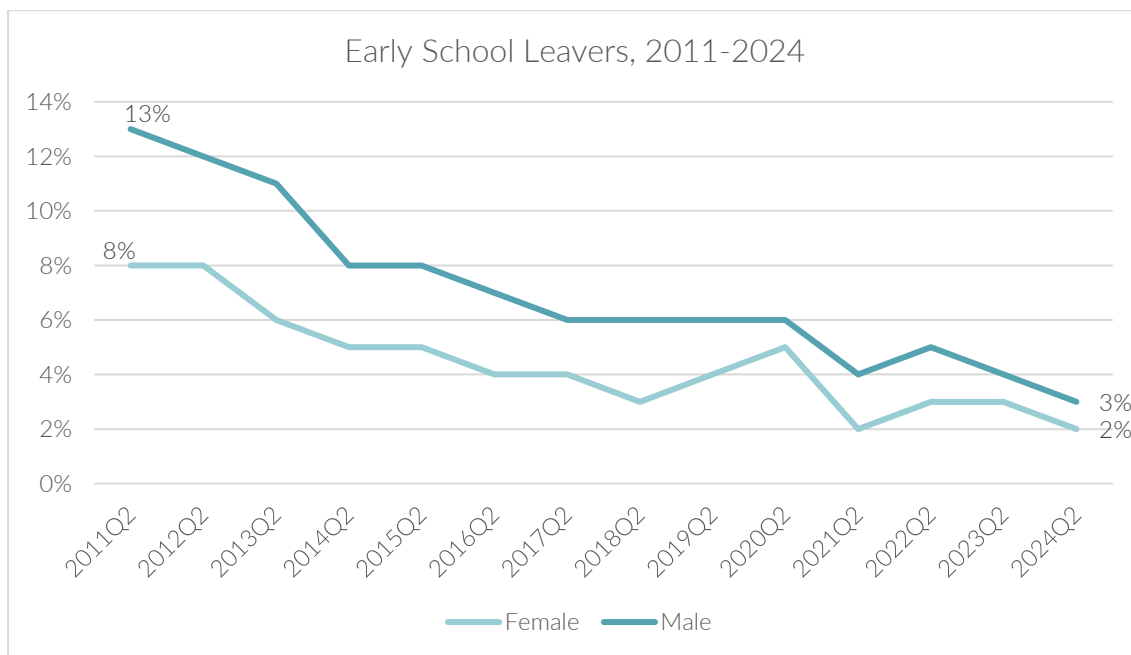
Source: *CSO PxStat EDQ07*

Note: Early school leavers are defined as persons aged 18 to 24 whose highest level of education attained is lower secondary or below and have not received education (either formal or non-formal) in the four weeks prior to the Labour Force Survey.

4.3.2 Retention to Leaving Certificate

Retention rates to Leaving Cert are another measure of how many students are completing second level schooling. The percentage of males and females who completed their Leaving certificate are presented in Figure 30 (left axis) alongside the gender gap in retention (right axis). The figures are presented in terms of the year of entry into secondary school, therefore the 2005 entry cohort would have completed their Leaving Certificate in 2011 or 2012 and the 2017 entry cohort would have completed their Leaving Certificate in 2022 or 2023.

Females have maintained higher retention rates to Leaving Certificate than males throughout the period. Retention reached a peak for both males and females among the 2015 entry cohort but has declined somewhat since then. For females entering school in 2005, 91.4% completed their Leaving Cert, this is compared to 93.8% for females entering school in 2015 and 91.6% for the 2017 entry cohort. Similarly, retention for males rose from 87.6% for the 2005 entry cohort to a peak of 90.5% for the 2015 entry cohort but has declined to 88.4% among the 2017 entry cohort.

The gender gap in retention has fluctuated somewhat over the past decade. The highest gender gap was seen in the 2014 entry cohort at 4.1% and the lowest in the 2008 entry cohort at 2.6%.

Figure 30 Retention rates to Leaving Certificate, 2005-2017 entry cohorts
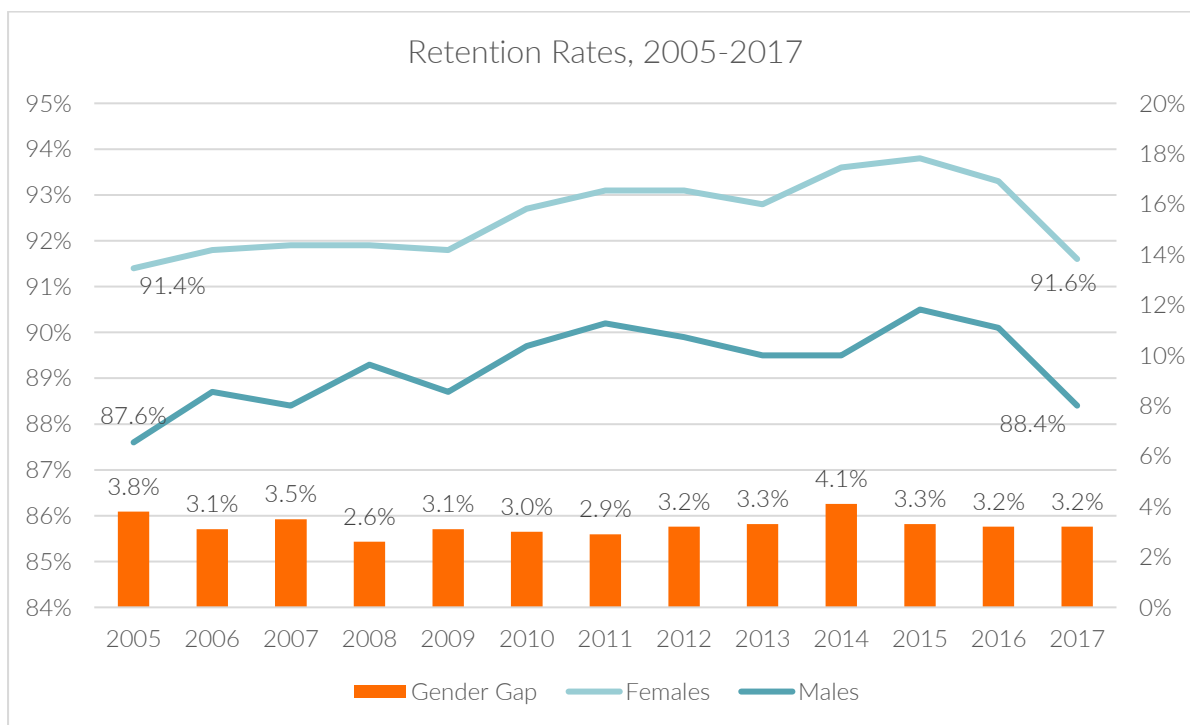
Source: Department of Education Retention Rate reports

4.3.3 Leaving Certificate Subject Choice

Turning to subject choices at Leaving Certificate level, there are clear gender differences between the subject choices of females and males. Figure 31 presents these differences, comparing all subjects with over 1000 students enrolled nationally in 2023.

Females have higher representation than males in Home Economics, for which 84.7% of students are female. Art and Music are the subjects with the next highest proportion of females, at 70.5% and 68.2%, respectively.

Females are slightly overrepresented in the study of languages, outnumbering males in French, Spanish and German. The gender breakdown is more equal for the compulsory subjects such as English, Mathematics, and Irish.

For mathematical and technical subjects, females are substantially underrepresented. Females accounted for just 9.4% of the students taking Engineering Science, and 15.0% of those taking Construction Studies. In Applied Mathematics, and Physics, females made up less than one third of students. For Computer Science, the proportion of females was 20.6%.

Figure 31 Leaving Certificate subject choice, 2023
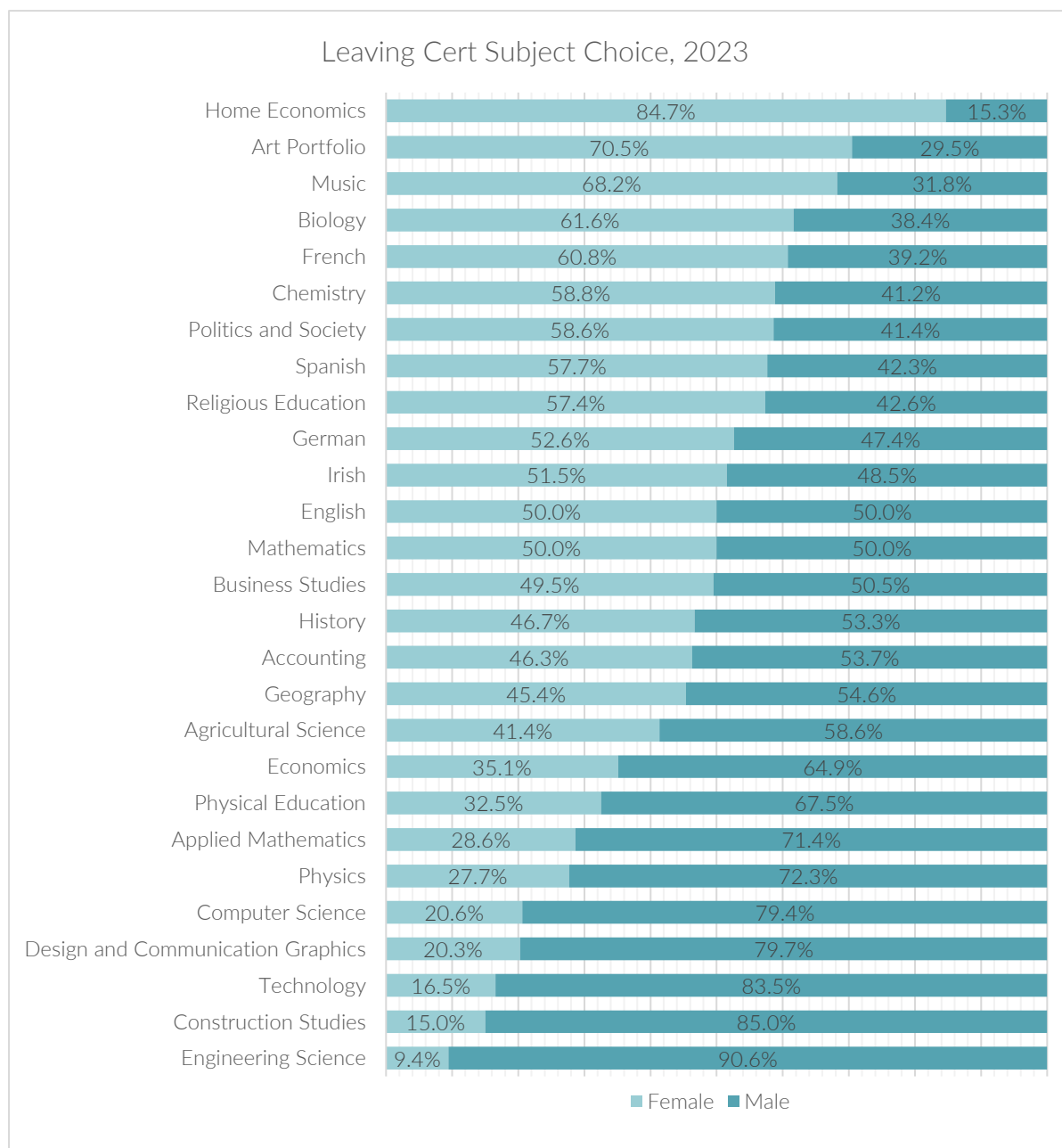
Source: CSO PxStat WMI09

Note: Subjects with less than 1,000 students enrolled are not presented here.

4.4 Third Level Education

Figure 32 presents the number of female students enrolled in third level education by field of study. Over the period 2016-2022, there have been noticeable increases in female enrolments across almost all fields.

The field of study in which female participation is highest is health and welfare, with 33,225 enrolments in 2022. This is an increase from 29,010 in 2016. Business administration and law, with the second highest number of female enrolments, increased from 21,645 in 2016 to 26,905 in 2022.

The only fields of study to see reductions in the number of female enrolments between 2016 and 2022 were arts and humanities and services, although arts and humanities remained the third most popular field of study for women in 2022.

In terms of the proportions of females compared to males over the period, the share of females enrolled in ICT degrees increased from 18.5% in 2016 to 23.1% in 2022. For engineering, manufacturing and construction, the increase was slightly larger, from 18.8% in 2016 to 24.4% in 2022.

Across all fields of education, females represented 54.5% of enrolled third-level students. This is greater than in 2016, when females represented 51.9% of enrolled students.

Figure 32 Number of females enrolled in third level education by field of study, 2016/17 and 2022/23

Number of Females in each Field of Study, 2016/17-2022/23
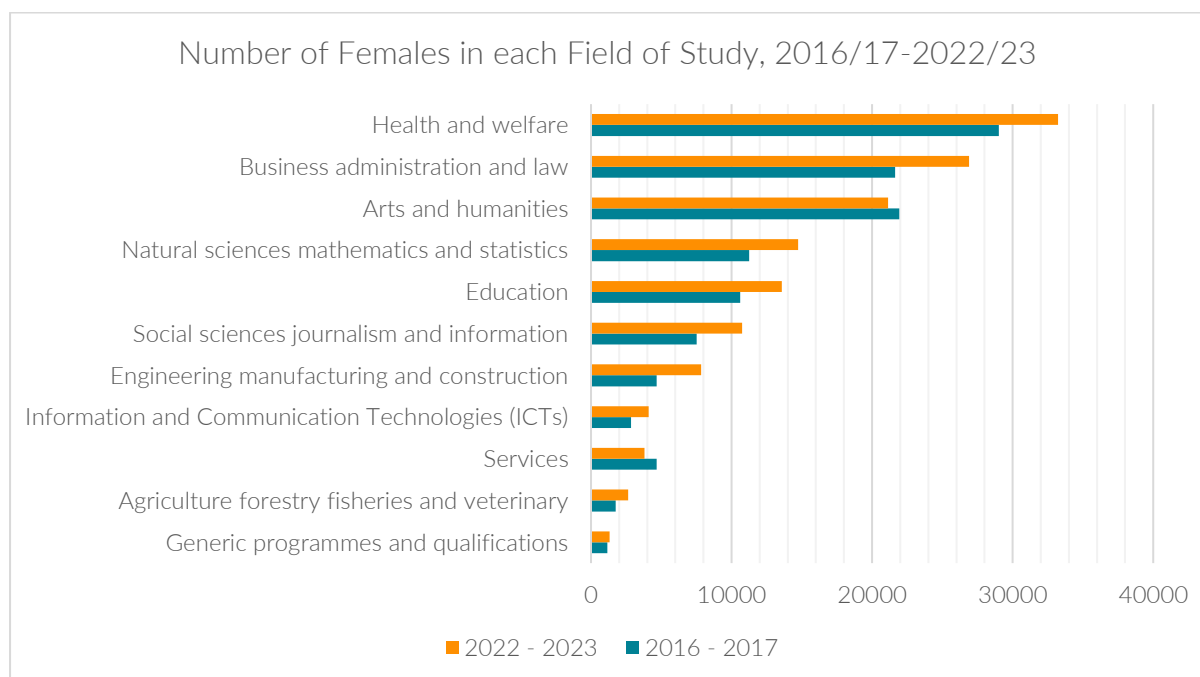
Source: CSO PxStat HEA01

Note: Data was not available from this source for earlier years.

Figure 33 provides a gender breakdown of enrolled third-level students by field of study in the most recent year available (2023), enabling a comparison between male and female participation in certain fields of study today in Ireland.

This comparison shows that females dominate most fields of study, particularly so in health and welfare (76%), education (75.3%), and the social sciences and journalism (66%). This contrasts with information and communication technology (ICT), and engineering, manufacturing, and construction, where despite increases in enrolments since 2016, females represent less than a quarter of enrolled students.

Figure 33 Gender breakdown of enrolled third level students by field of study, 2023

Gender Breakdown of each Field of Study, 2023

Field of Study	Female	Male	Other gender
Health and welfare	76.0%	23.6%	0.4%
Education	75.3%	24.5%	0.2%
Social sciences journalism and information	66.0%	33.2%	0.8%
Arts and humanities	61.6%	37.3%	1.1%
Generic programmes and qualifications	58.4%	40.4%	1.1%
Agriculture forestry fisheries and veterinary	57.3%	42.2%	0.4%
Natural sciences mathematics and statistics	55.4%	43.9%	0.7%
All fields (average)	54.5%	44.9%	0.5%
Business administration and law	51.7%	47.8%	0.5%
Services	42.3%	57.6%	0.1%
Engineering manufacturing and construction	24.4%	75.3%	0.3%
Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)	23.1%	76.3%	0.6%

■ Female ■ Male ■ Other gender

Source: CSO PxStat HEA01

5. Employment and Economic Participation

This section will present data on the employment and economic participation of females in Ireland. Statistics on female representation across different sectors of the economy, the gender pay gap and female representation in decision making positions are provided as well as international comparisons where available.

As mentioned previously, Objective One of the National Strategy of Women and Girls 2017-2020 is to Advance Socio-Economic Equality for Women and Girls. Many of the objectives under this outcome relate to employment and economic participation, for example; improved supports for working parents; that parents have access to quality, affordable childcare; increased number of women returners to the labour market; that the employment rate of women is brought closer to 69-71% to meet the Europe 2020 target for Ireland; that female participation in the Defence Forces is increased; and that the gender pay gap is reduced.

Data in this chapter also relates to Objective Four of the strategy, to Advance Women in Leadership at All Levels and Objective Six, to Embed Gender Equality in Decision-making. Some of the outcomes included under these objectives were: greater female representation in politics, greater representation of women in senior positions in the civil and public service, and gender equality being formally addressed by public bodies.

Data is presented for the period 2011 onwards, where available, and was primarily sourced from Eurostat and the CSO, as well as the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).

5.1 Labour Force Participation, Employment and Unemployment

5.1.1 Labour Force Participation

Labour force participation refers to the share of the total population of persons aged 15 years and older who are in the Labour Force. Those in the labour force are defined in the Labour Force Survey[7] as those currently in employment and those unemployed but looking for work. It excludes all other persons who are inactive/not in the labour force[8]. The below data includes those aged 15-64 only.

---

[7] Labour Force Survey
[8] See here for further information on labour force definitions.

Figure 34 presents data on the labour force participation rates of females and males in Ireland between 2011 and 2024. Over this period, the female participation rate increased from 63.6% in Q1 2011 to 74.2% in Q2 2024. This represents an increase in female labour force participation of 10.6 percentage points. This contrasts with the increase in male labour force participation of 5.0 percentage points over the same period.

Figure 34 Labour force participation rates for 15–64-year-olds, 2011-2024
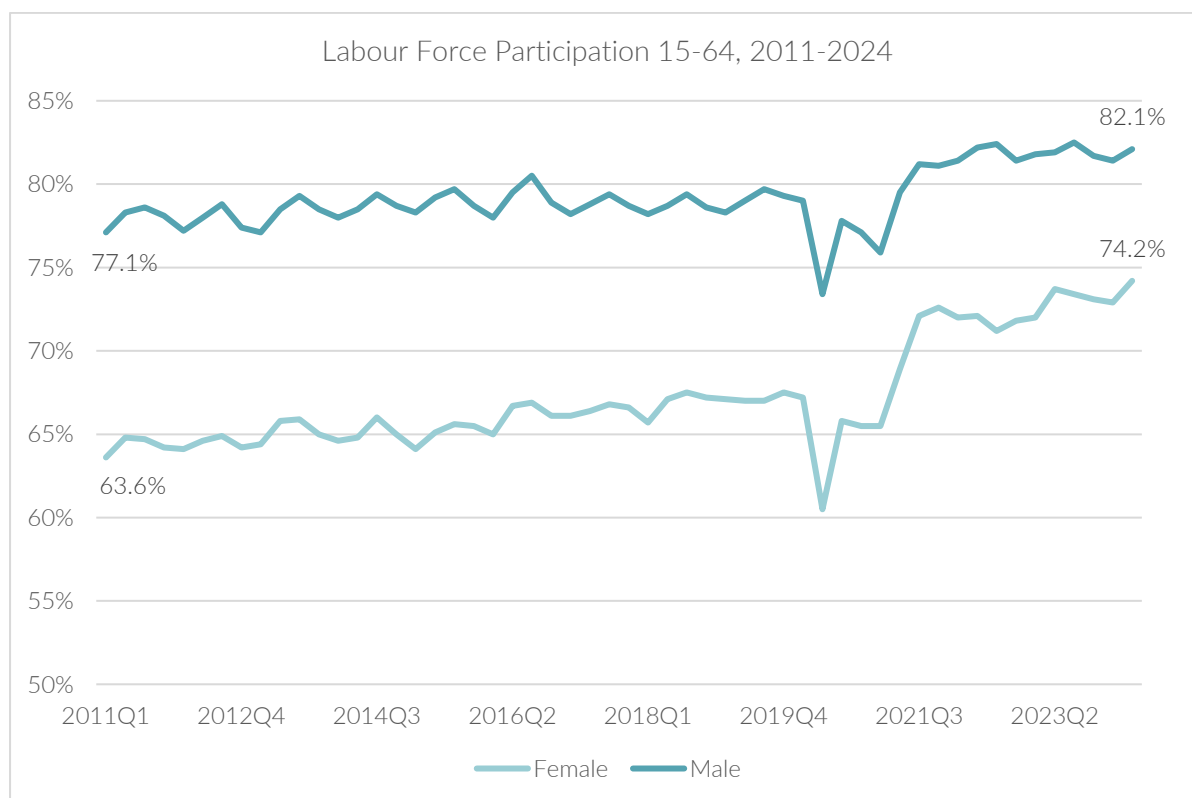
Source: CSO Labour Force Survey (special request)

Figure 35 shows female and male labour force participation across age groups in Q2 2024. For both females and males, participation is low in early adulthood (15-19 years old), but quickly increases with age. Peak participation rate for females is 85.1% in the 25–34-year age group while for males it is 92.8% in the 35–44-year age group.

The female participation rate remains broadly stable until women reach the 55–59-year group. For the 55-59 and the 60-64 age groups, labour force participation rates reduce to 70.9% and 52.5%, respectively. However, as women age, the decrease in labour force participation is more pronounced than for males, and the gender participation gap widens to 18.4% in the 60–64-year group, with males being more likely to stay in the labour force over 60 years of age.

Figure 35 Labour force participation rates by age group, Q2 2024

Participation Rates by Age (%), Q2 2024
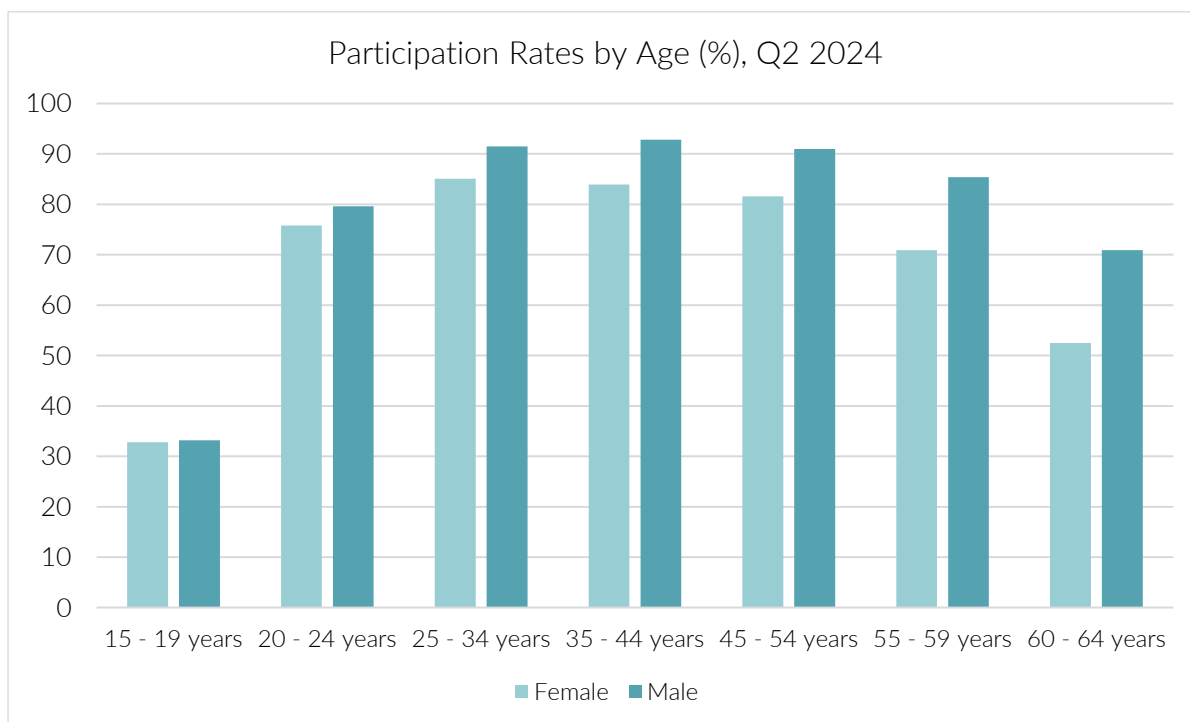
Source: CSO PxStat QLF28

Figure 36 presents an international comparison of female labour force activity for those aged 15 years to 64 years in the EU27 countries in 2023. Note the activity figures are reported as annual figures rather than quarterly as in participation figures above, there may also be further differences in the way figures are calculated by Eurostat.

Female labour force activity was highest in Sweden at 82.2% and lowest in Romania at 57.2%. Ireland's activity rate in 2023 was 73.0%, higher than the EU27 average of 70.2%.

Figure 36 Female labour force activity (%) in EU27 countries, 15-64 years, 2023

Female Labour Force Activity (%), 2023

Country	%
Sweden	82.2
Netherlands	81.9
Estonia	81.0
Finland	79.3
Denmark	78.4
Lithuania	77.8
Cyprus	75.9
Germany	75.8
Portugal	75.4
Latvia	74.4
Austria	73.9
Hungary	73.5
Ireland	73.0
Slovakia	72.8
Malta	72.7
Slovenia	72.0
France	71.2
Luxembourg	70.7
Spain	70.5
Czechia	70.4
Bulgaria	70.4
EU27 countries	70.2
Poland	68.9
Belgium	66.7
Croatia	66.6
Greece	61.8
Italy	57.7
Romania	57.2

Legend
N/a
77.2 – 82.2
72.2 – 77.1
67.2 – 72.1
62.2 – 67.1
57.2 – 62.1

Source: Eurostat lfsa_argaed

5.1.2 Unemployment Rates

The unemployment rates for men and women aged 15 to 64 are presented in Figure 37. Between 2011 and 2024, total unemployment rates have fallen significantly from 18.0% and 12.0% for males and females, respectively, in Q1 2011 to 4.8% and 4.6% respectively in Q2 2024.

It is interesting to note that female unemployment rates have historically been much lower than unemployment rates for males. However, over the period 2011-2024 female unemployment rates overtook male rates on several occasions, for example in 2018, 2020, and during 2022-2024.

Figure 37 Unemployment rates of 15–64-year-olds, 2011-2024

Source: CSO Labour Force survey (special request)

Figure 38 further analyses the most recent unemployment rates (Q2 2024) and presents data broken down by age cohorts. Unemployment rates are considerably higher among the youngest age groups 15-19 and 20-24 than all other age groups, the highest unemployment rate is among males aged 15-19 at 18.8%. However young people in education or training and not in the labour force are included in these figures. There are higher unemployment rates among males from age 15-44. However, there are more females unemployed at age 45-54 and 60-64.

Figure 38 Unemployment rates by age cohort (15–64-year-olds), Q2 2024

Source: CSO PxStat QLF18

5.2 Representation by Sector and Types of Employment

5.2.1 Representation by Sector

Table 3 presents the number of females employed in each NACE Rev 2 economic sector for 2011, 2016 and 2023. The NACE Rev 2 sectors are a method of statistical classification for economic activities in the EU.

In 2023, the three largest female sectors were Human Health and Social Work (277,200 employed), Education (160,600) and Wholesale Retail and Trade (160,400). Indeed, these have been the three sectors with the largest female representation throughout the period from 2011 to 2023.

One of the sectors with the lowest female representation in 2023 was Construction (12,900). However, the growth of females in this sector was the largest proportional growth of any sector, increasing by 135% since 2011. There were also large proportional increases in Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities (+87%), in Information and Communication (+75%) and in Public Administration and Defence (+74%).

Almost all industries have seen an increase in female employment between 2011 to 2023, in line with the increases in female labour force participation observed in Figure 34. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing remained stable in the period.

Table 3 Number of females aged 15-64 employed by NACE Rev 2 sector ('000s), 2011-2023

Females Employed in NACE Sectors, 2011-2023				
	2011	2016	2023	Trend
Human Health and Social Work Activities	198.4	214.2	277.2	
Education	101.9	112	160.6	
Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles	139.4	144.4	160.4	
Manufacturing	65.7	76.7	95.9	
Accommodation and Food Service Activities	59.4	79.1	94.4	
Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities	41.4	54.9	77.6	
Public Administration and Defence; Compulsory Social Security	41.3	44.8	71.8	
Financial and Insurance Activities	49.9	50.0	59.8	
Information and Communication	30.1	35.8	52.7	
Administrative and Support Service Activities	34.5	33.7	46.8	
Other Service Activities	31.2	34.6	39.5	
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	20.7	24.8	26.1	
Transportation and Storage	16.8	17	19.5	
Construction	5.5	5.9	12.9	
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	12.5	12.4	12.5	
Activities of Households as Employers; Undifferentiated Goods and Services-Producing Activities of Households for Own Use	6.8	6.9	-	
Real Estate Activities	3.6	4.4	-	
Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air Conditioning Supply	2.1	2.6	-	

Source: Eurostat lfsa_egan2

Note: Data on females was missing in 2023 for three sectors: Activities of Households as Employers, Real Estate Activities and Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air Conditioning. Data on females was missing in every year for an additional three sectors: Mining and Quarrying, Water Supply; Sewerage, Waste Management and Remediation Activities and Activities of Extraterritorial Organisations and Bodies.

Figure 39 presents the proportion of females and males in various industries in 2023.

As mentioned above, the two sectors with the highest number of females employed in 2023 were Human health and social work activities and Education. Similarly, these are also the two sectors with the largest proportion of females relative to males at 79.2% and 74.3% respectively. However, while the next largest number of females are employed in Wholesale and Retail Trade, proportionally there are more females in the sectors of Other Services (71.4%), Accommodation and Food Services (53.9%) and Public Administration and Defence (52.1%).

Gender proportions are roughly equivalent in several sectors. However, notable gender differences exist in ICT and Manufacturing, where women make up just a third of employed persons. These differences widen in other primary and secondary industries, with Transportation and Storage having 18.1% female employment, Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing having 15.7%, and Construction having only 8.0% female employment.

Figure 39 Percentage of females and males by NACE Rev 2 sector ('000s), 2023

Gender Breakdown of Sectors, 2023

Sector	Female	Male
Human Health and Social Work Activities	79.2%	20.8%
Education	74.3%	25.7%
Other Service Activities	71.4%	28.6%
Accommodation and Food Service Activities	53.9%	46.0%
Public Administration and Defence; Compulsory social security	52.1%	48.0%
Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles	49.7%	50.3%
Financial and Insurance Activities	48.5%	51.5%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	46.7%	53.3%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities	45.5%	54.5%
Administrative and Support Service Activities	44.2%	55.8%
Manufacturing	34.1%	65.9%
Information and Communication	30.8%	69.2%
Transportation and Storage	18.1%	81.9%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	15.7%	84.1%
Construction	8.0%	92.0%

Source: Eurostat lfsa_egan2

5.2.2 Part-time Employment

Figure 40 shows the percentage of females and males aged 15-64 employed in part-time employment in Ireland between 2011 and 2023. Over the period, the percentage of females in part-time employment has fallen somewhat from 34.9% in 2011 to 30.3% in 2023. Females consistently represent a larger proportion than males in part-time employment. For comparison, male part-time employment fell from 13.0% to 11.2% over the time-period.

Figure 40 Percentage aged 15-64 in part-time employment, 2011-2023
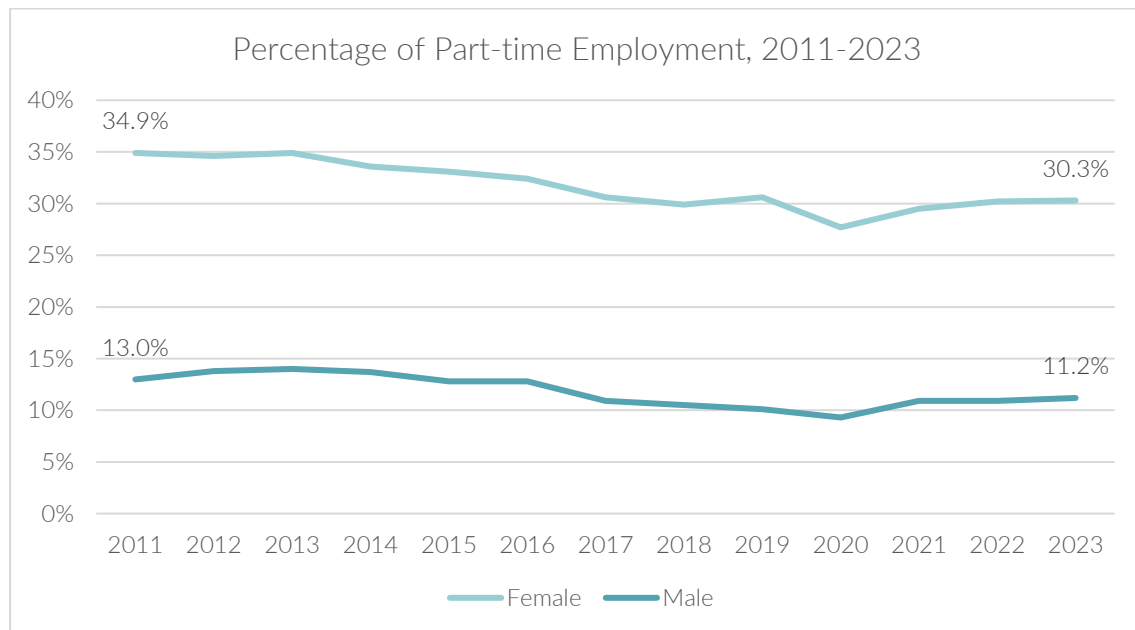
Source: Eurostat lfsi_pt_a

Figure 41 provides an international comparison of the percentage of females who are employed in part-time employment. Ireland's rate of 30.3% is slightly above the EU average of 28.5%, putting us in line with Luxembourg and Italy. Ireland's rate is seventh highest in the EU27 countries.

The Netherlands and Austria had the highest rates of females in part-time employment. In these countries, over half of all women employed were working part-time.

Eastern and South-Eastern European countries had the lowest rates, with most countries having fewer than 15% of females in part-time employment.

Figure 41 Percentage of females aged 15-64 in part-time employment (%), 2023

Country	%
Netherlands	62.9
Austria	50.1
Germany	47.9
Belgium	38.1
Denmark	35.2
Italy	31.4
Ireland	30.3
Luxembourg	29.4
EU27 countries	28.5
Sweden	28.0
France	25.8
Finland	22.4
Spain	21.0
Estonia	18.1
Malta	17.9
Slovenia	12.2
Greece	11.7
Czechia	11.6
Cyprus	10.9
Portugal	10.0
Latvia	8.9
Poland	8.4
Lithuania	7.7
Hungary	5.8
Slovakia	5.0
Croatia	4.5
Romania	2.9
Bulgaria	1.5

Females in Part-time Employment, 2023

Legend

	N/a
	50.7 - 62.9
	38.4 - 50.6
	26.1 - 38.3
	13.8 - 26.0
	1.5 - 13.7
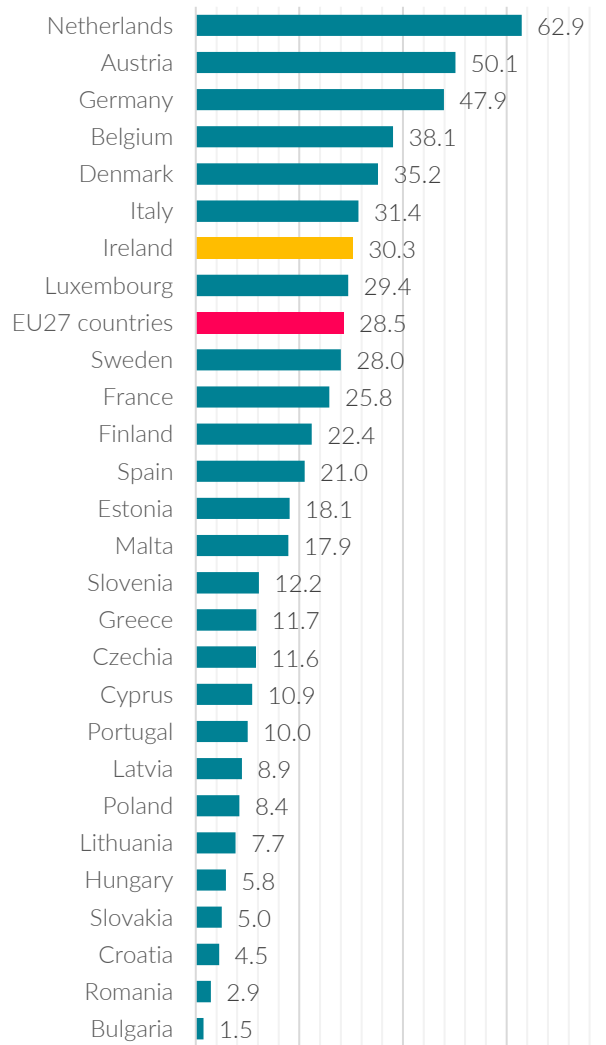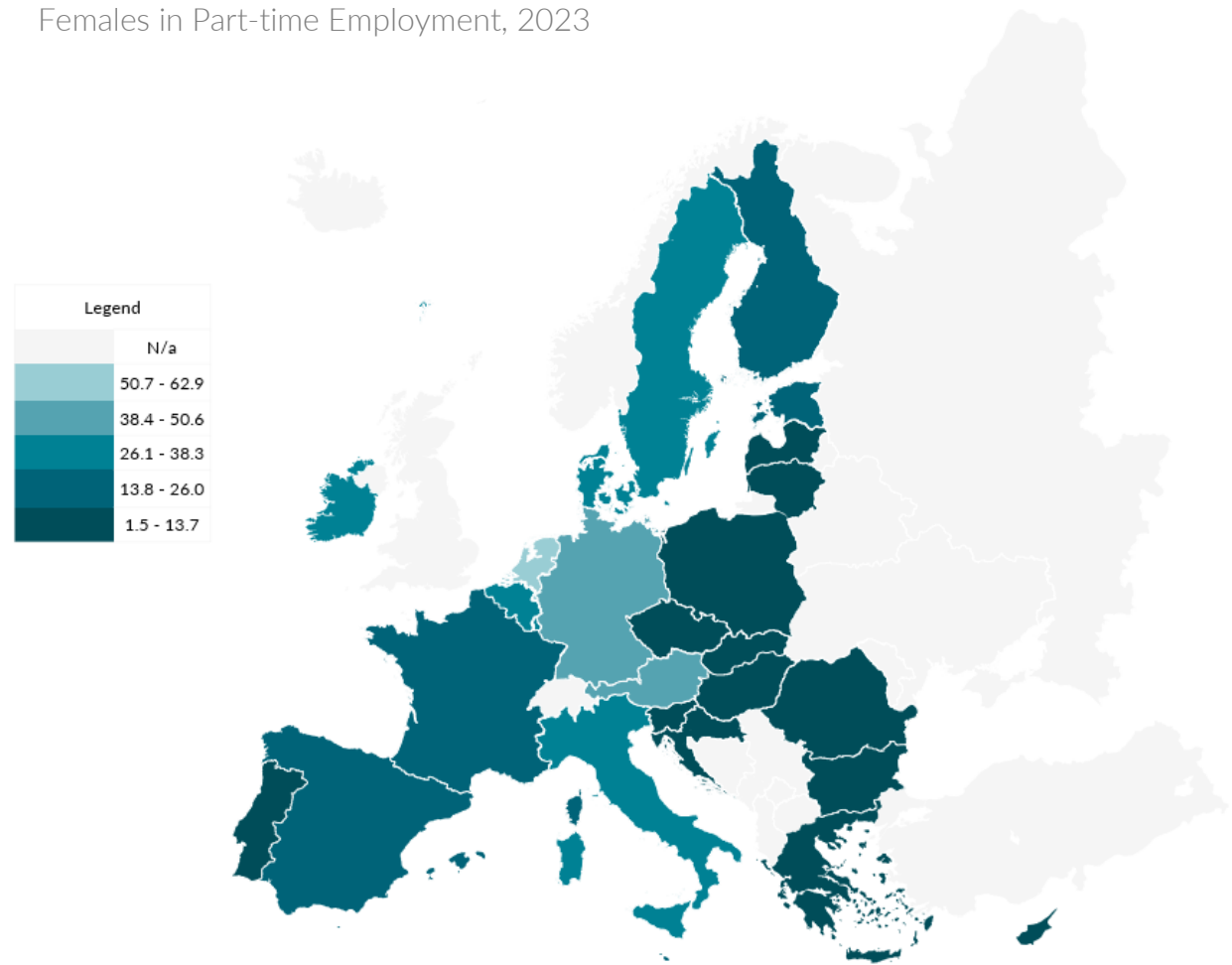
Source: Eurostat lfsi_pt_a

5.3 Earnings and Gender Pay Gap

5.3.1 Earnings

Figure 42 shows the change in weekly earnings over the period 2011 to 2023. Over this timeframe, female earnings have increased from €471.94 to €623.22. This represents wage growth of 32.1% between 2011 and 2023.

Weekly wages for males, by comparison, rose by 27.6%. The minimum wage is also shown on the graph for reference[9]. Minimum wage rose by 30.6% over the period.

Figure 42 Median weekly earnings for those aged 15 years and over by gender 2011-2023
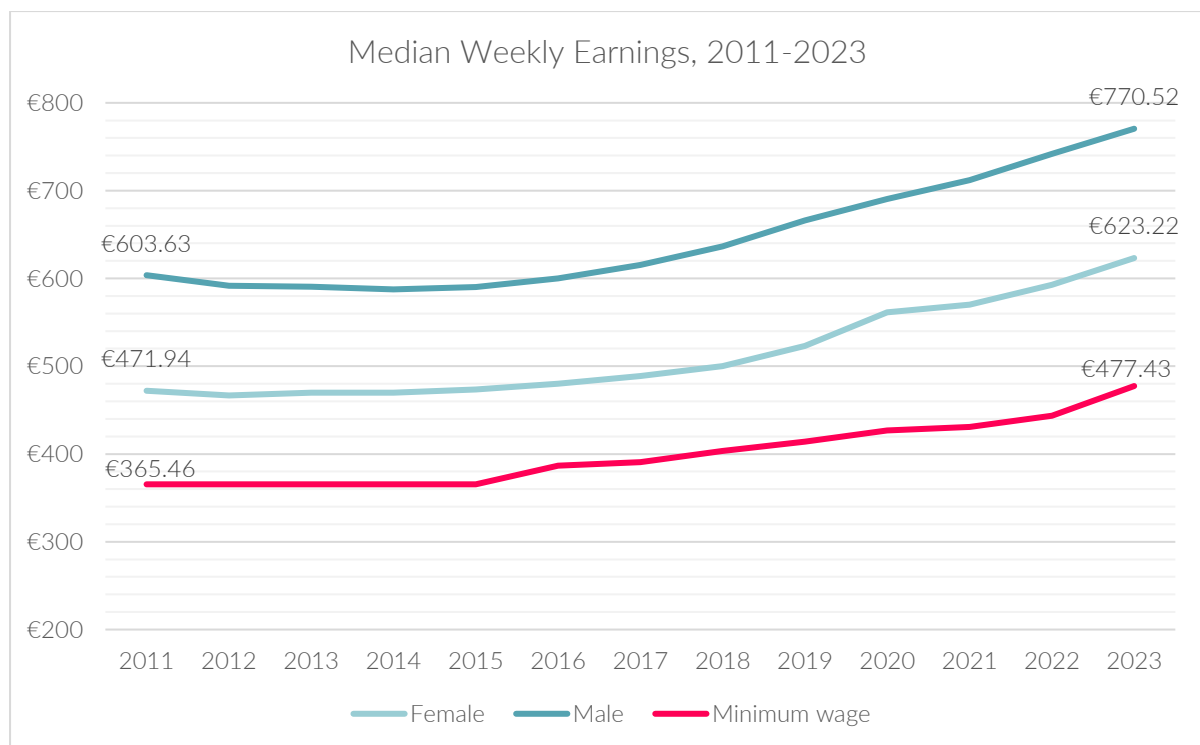
Source: <u>CSO PxStat DEA05</u> *and* <u>Eurostat earn_mw_cur</u>

Figure 43 shows the median annual earnings of men and women aged 18+ by educational attainment level in 2023. Despite a higher proportion of females achieving the highest education levels, women face a significant gap in median earnings.

---

[9] Minimum wage was sourced from Eurostat as monthly minimum wage, these figures were divided by 4 to get a weekly figure.

Women with a primary level or lower secondary level earn 6.4% less than males with the same education level. For females with an upper secondary level of education, the gap widens to 7.7%. In the third-level group, females earn a median of €37,004 as compared with male earnings of €39,460, representing a pay gap of 6.6%.

Figure 43 Median annual earnings for those aged 18+ by education level, 2023
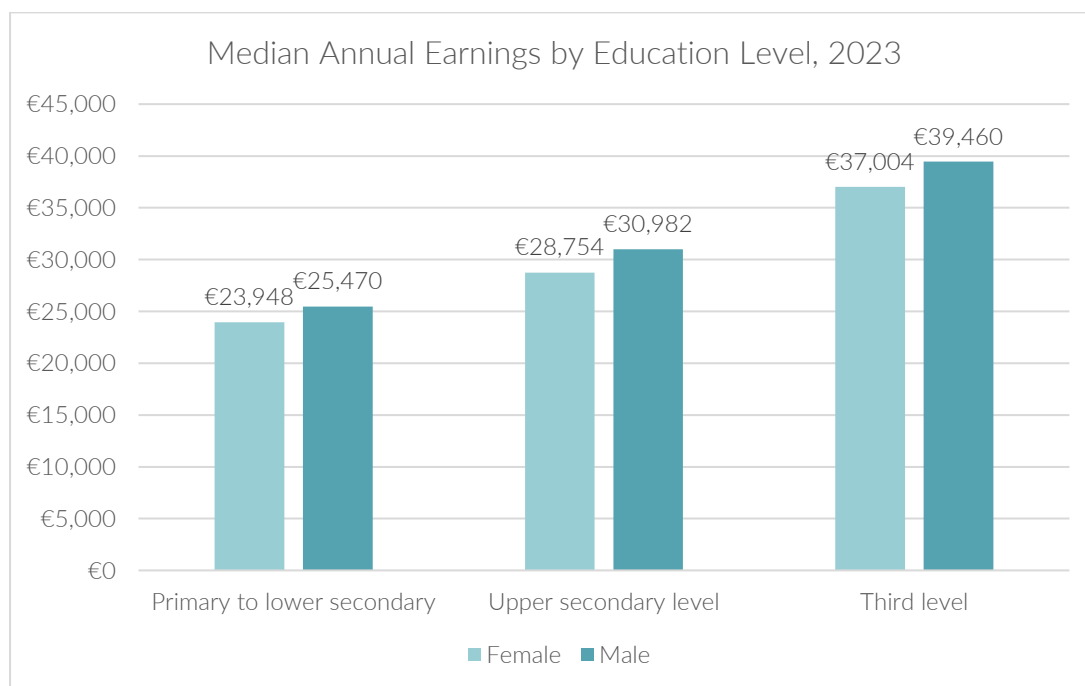
Source: Eurostat ilc_di08

5.3.2 Gender Pay Gap

Figure 44 presents the trend in the gender pay gap in Ireland and the EU27 countries on average from 2011 to 2022. The gender pay gap is the difference between male and female earnings. A lower percentage represents a lower pay gap and is a positive indicator for gender equality.

In both Ireland and the EU27, the gender pay gap (GPG) has fallen by over 3 percentage points over the period presented. The GPG in Ireland rose slightly between 2012 and 2017, but has generally fallen since then, with a brief uptick in 2021. For 2022, the GPG in Ireland was 9.3%, and for the EU27 the figure was 12.7%. This puts Ireland substantially below the EU27 average for 2022, and for five years running.

Figure 44 Gender pay gap in Ireland and the EU27 average 2011-2022
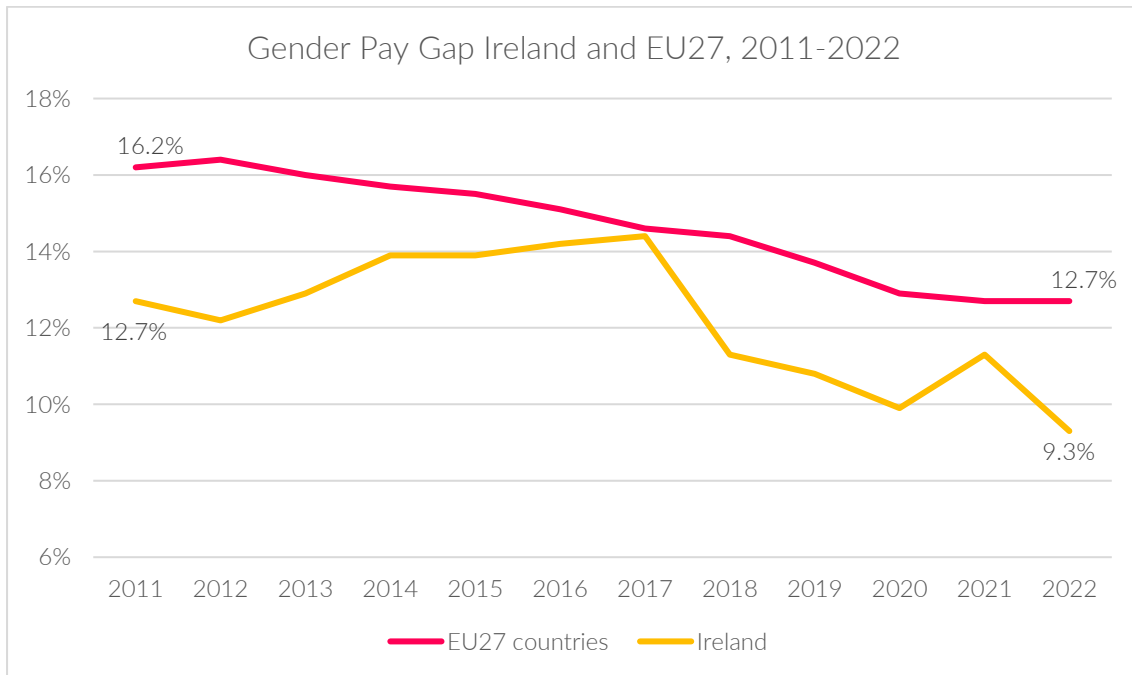
Source: Eurostat earn_gr_gpgr2

Figure 45 below presents the gender pay gap for the EU27 countries in 2022. Ireland, at 9.3% ranks eighth in the EU27, in between Spain and Malta and has a lower gender pay gap than the EU27 average of 12.7%.

The highest gender pay gap is observed in Estonia (21.3%), followed by Austria (18.4%) and Czechia (17.9%).

The lowest gender pay gap is seen in Luxembourg, where there is a negative earnings gap – that is, females earn 0.7% more than males. Italy, Romania, and Belgium also showed a low earnings gap, at 4.3%, 4.5% and 5.0% respectively.

Figure 45 Gender pay gap in the EU27 countries, 2022

Gender Pay Gap, 2022

Country	Value
Luxembourg	-0.7%
Italy	4.3%
Romania	4.5%
Belgium	5.0%
Poland	7.9%
Slovenia	8.2%
Spain	8.7%
Ireland	9.3%
Malta	10.2%
Cyprus	10.2%
Sweden	11.1%
Lithuania	12.0%
Portugal	12.5%
Croatia	12.5%
EU27 countries	12.7%
Netherlands	13.0%
Bulgaria	13.0%
France	13.9%
Denmark	13.9%
Finland	15.5%
Latvia	17.1%
Hungary	17.5%
Slovakia	17.7%
Germany	17.7%
Czechia	17.9%
Austria	18.4%
Estonia	21.3%

Legend

	N/a
	-0.7 - 3.6
	3.7 - 8.0
	8.1 - 12.4
	12.5 - 16.8
	16.9 - 21.3

Source: Eurostat earn_gr_gpgr2

Note: Data was not available for Greece for 2022. Data refers to Industry, Construction and Services (except Public Administration, Defense, Compulsory Social Security) sectors.

In Figure 46, the gender pay gap is presented for different age groups in Ireland in 2022.

For the 25 years and younger group, the earnings gap is 1.2%. However, this widens sharply to 5.6% in the 25-34 age cohort, and continues to rise for every age group, reaching a peak of 13.9% for the 55-64 group. In the 65 and older category, the gap reduces somewhat, but remains large at 9.5%.

Figure 46 Gender pay gap by age class, 2022
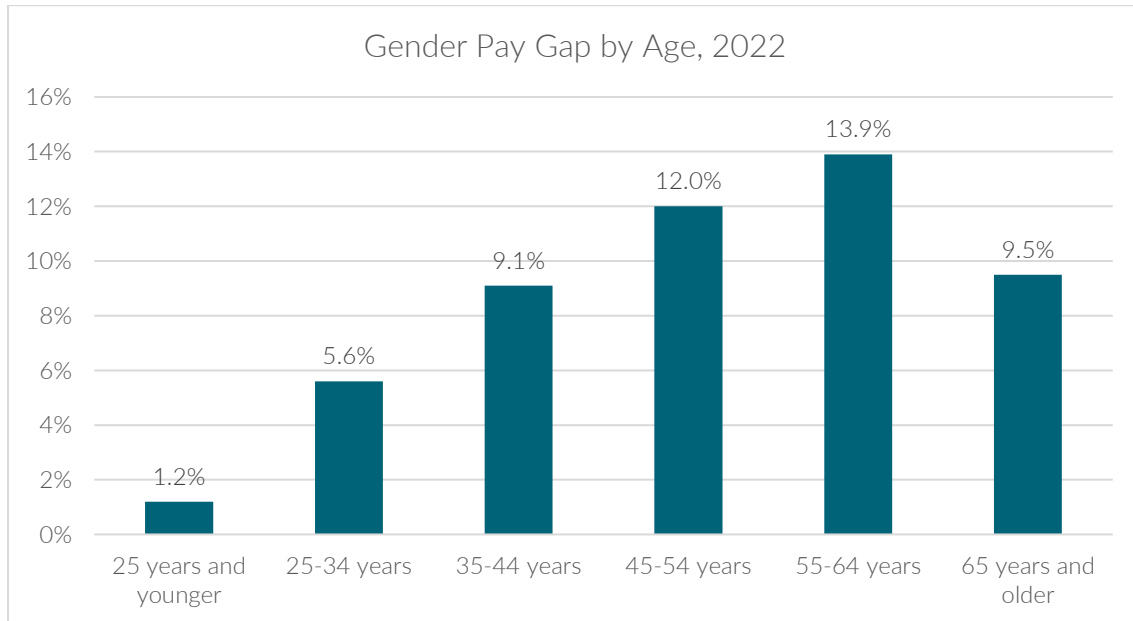
Source: Eurostat earn_gr_gpgr2ag

5.4 Representation in Decision Making

This section presents data on the representation of women in high-level decision-making positions.

5.4.1 Representation of Females in Government and Parliament

Figure 47 below shows the percentage of females in national parliaments for Ireland and the EU27 countries on average from 2011-2023. The national parliament is defined as the national legislative assembly and the indicator refers to both chambers (lower house and an upper house, where relevant). The count of members of a parliament includes the president/speaker/leader of the parliament.

Female representation in parliament in Ireland has increased over the period from 19.0% in 2011 to 27.8% in 2023. This has remained below the EU27 average over the period. The average in the EU27 countries has also increased over the period from 23.9% in 2011 to 33.2% in 2023. Female representation in parliament in Ireland was closest to the EU27 average in 2016.

Figure 47 Female representation in national parliaments in Ireland and EU27 average, 2011-2023
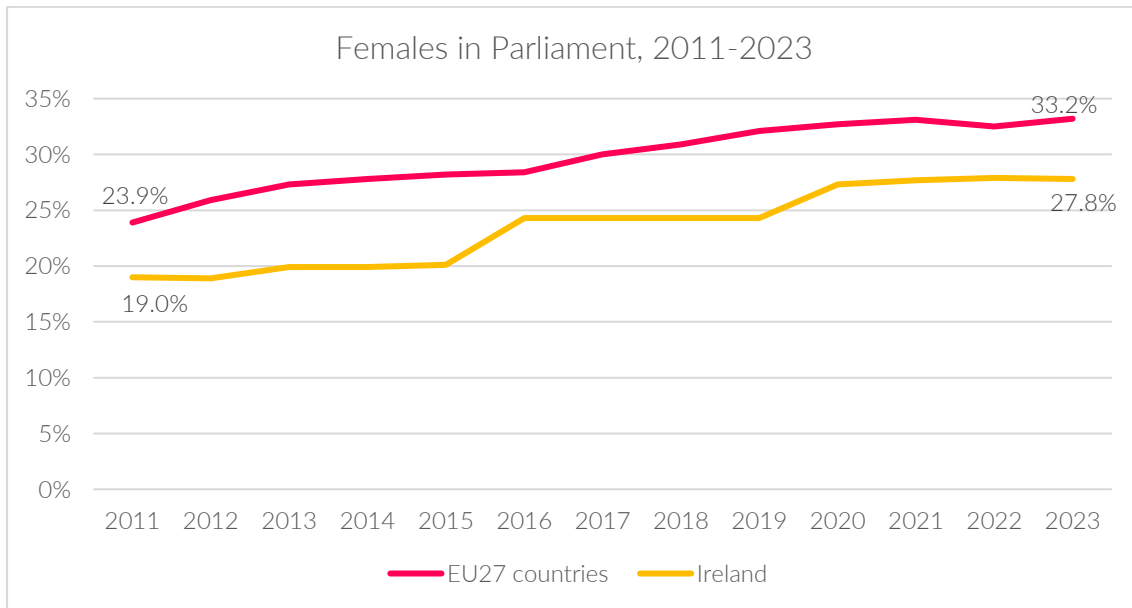
Source: Eurostat sdg_05_50

Figure 48 presents the percentage of females in national parliaments for the EU27 countries in 2023. Female representation varies from 14.1% in Hungary to 46.6% in Sweden. Ireland's rate of 27.8% is below the EU27 average of 33.2% in 2023 and is line with countries like Malta and Poland.

Figure 48 Female representation in national parliaments in the EU27 countries, 2023

Country	%
Sweden	46.6%
Finland	46.0%
Denmark	44.1%
Spain	43.4%
Belgium	42.9%
Austria	42.4%
Netherlands	39.0%
France	37.3%
Portugal	36.1%
Germany	35.4%
Italy	33.6%
EU27 countries	33.2%
Croatia	33.1%
Latvia	32.0%
Slovenia	31.5%
Luxembourg	30.0%
Estonia	29.7%
Lithuania	29.1%
Malta	27.8%
Ireland	27.8%
Poland	27.3%
Czechia	24.9%
Bulgaria	24.8%
Slovakia	22.0%
Greece	21.3%
Romania	19.4%
Cyprus	14.3%
Hungary	14.1%

Female Representation in Parliament, 2023

Legend

	N/a
	40.1 – 46.6
	33.6 – 40.0
	27.1 – 33.5
	20.6 – 27.0
	14.1 – 20.5

Source: Eurostat sdg_05_50

Figure 49 shows the percentage of females in national governments for Ireland and the EU27 countries on average from 2011-2023. The government is defined as the executive body with authority to govern a country or a state. Members of government include both senior ministers (having a seat in the cabinet or council of ministers, including the prime minister) and junior ministers (not having a seat in the cabinet). In some countries state-secretaries (or the national equivalent) are considered as junior ministers within the government (with no seat in the cabinet) but in other countries they are not considered as members of the government.

Female representation in government in Ireland, has increased from 20.0% in 2011 to 28.6% in 2023. This represents an increase in female representation in government over the period. The peaks and dips evident between 2011 and 2023 align with elections, cabinet reshuffles and resignations. However, Ireland remains below the EU27 average in terms of female representation in government. In 2023, the EU27 percentage average for females in government was 35.2%. Ireland was 6.6 percentage points below this rate. Ireland was closest to the EU27 average in 2016.

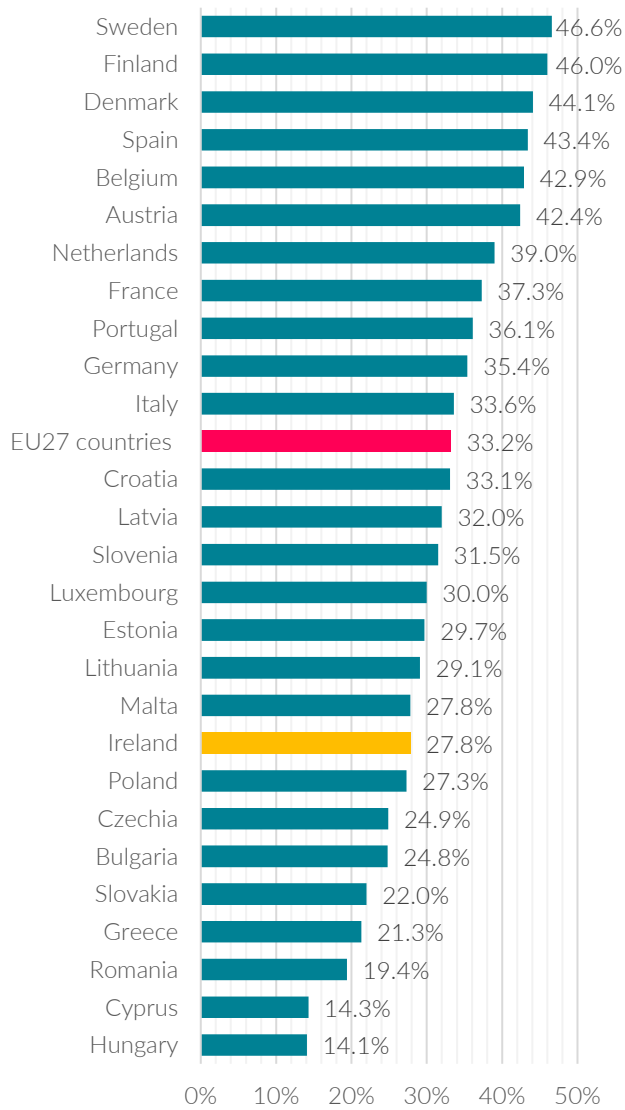*Figure 49 Female representation in national government in Ireland and the EU27 countries, 2011-2023*
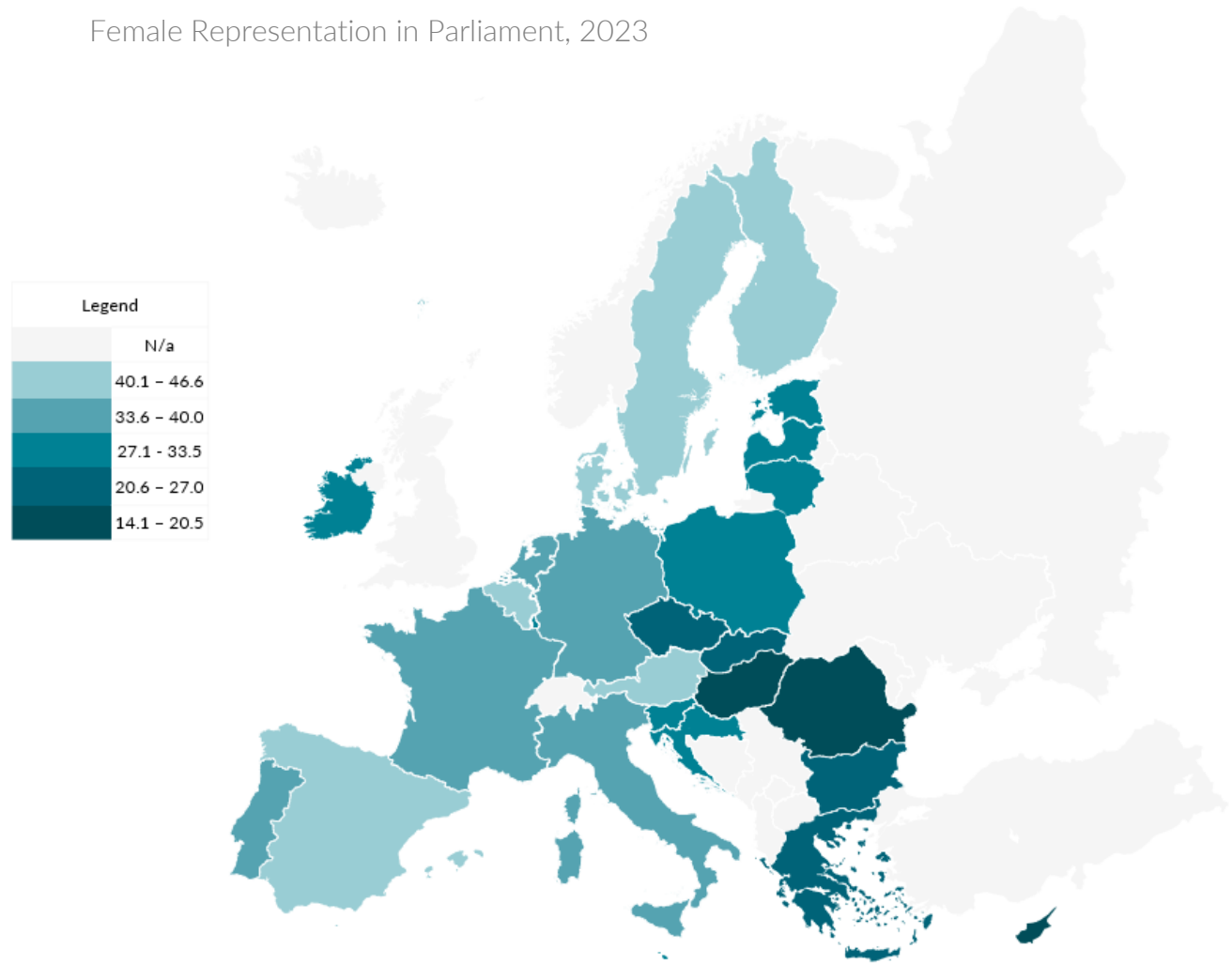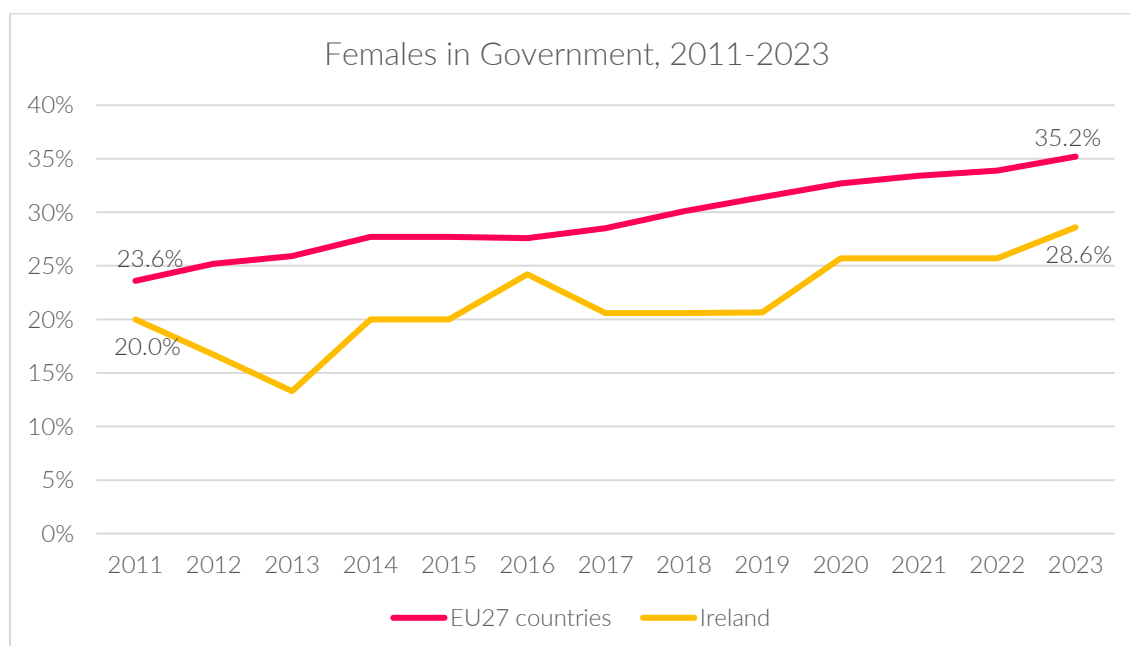

Source: Eurostat sdg_05_50

5.4.2 Representation of Females in National Administrations

Figure 50 presents the percentage of women in senior positions in national administrations in Ireland and on average in the EU27 countries. Since 2011 Ireland's proportion of female senior administrators has improved and is moving closer to the EU27 average. The percentage of women in senior positions has risen from a low of 20.8% in 2013 to a high of 41.8% in 2024.

Figure 50 Female representation in senior positions in national administrations in Ireland and the EU27, 2011-2024

Female Senior Administrators, 2011-2024
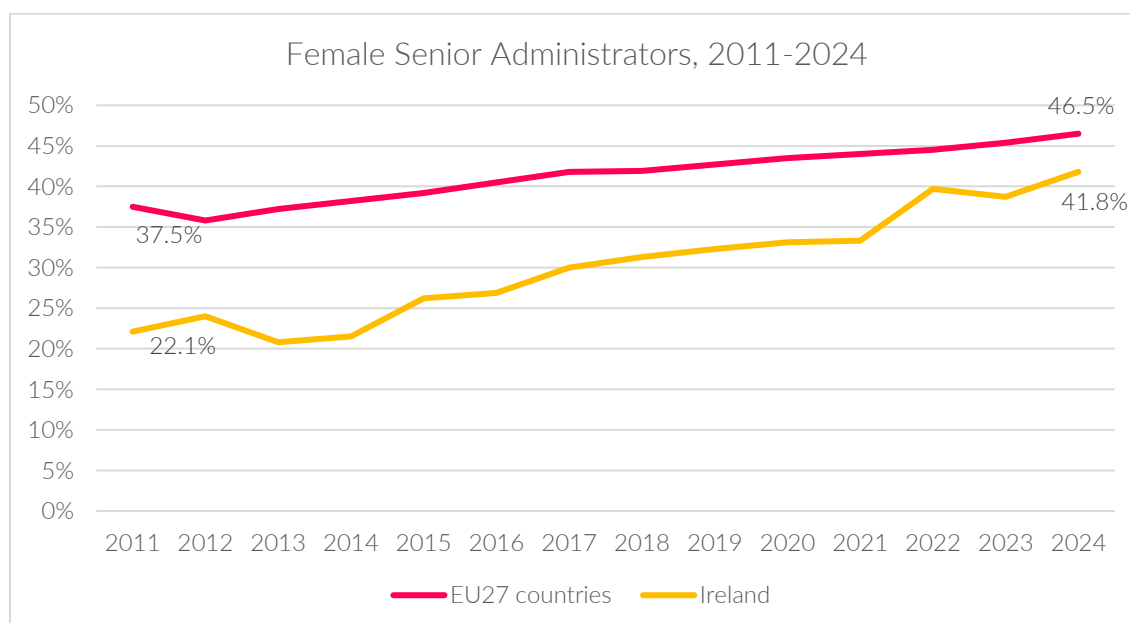
Source: EIGE

Figure 51 presents the percentage of females in senior positions in national administrations in Ireland and the EU27 countries in 2024. Slovenia has the highest level of female representation among the EU27 countries for senior positions in national administrations at 62.7% and Hungary has the lowest at 24.7%. Ireland is in line with countries like Austria and Spain at 41.8% but below the EU27 average of 46.5%.

Figure 51 Female representation in senior positions in national administrations (%) in the EU27 countries, 2024

Country	%
Slovenia	62.7
Croatia	62.0
Lithuania	60.4
Latvia	58.7
Estonia	56.3
Greece	54.8
Finland	54.4
Bulgaria	53.7
Sweden	51.6
Slovakia	50.9
Portugal	50.8
Romania	50.2
Malta	47.6
Netherlands	46.7
EU27 countries	46.5
Cyprus	43.5
Ireland	41.8
Austria	41.6
Spain	41.2
Germany	41.0
Poland	40.7
Belgium	39.6
Italy	38.8
Denmark	37.2
France	36.8
Luxembourg	29.7
Czechia	27.4
Hungary	24.7
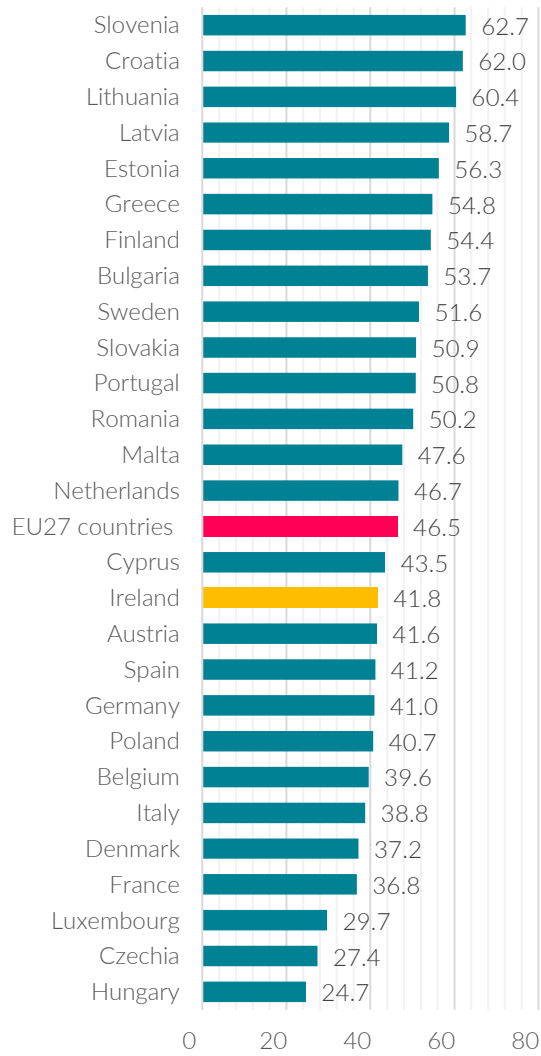
Female Representation in National Administrations (%), 2024

Legend
No data
55.1 – 62.7
47.5 – 55.0
39.9 – 47.4
32.3 – 39.8
24.7 – 32.2
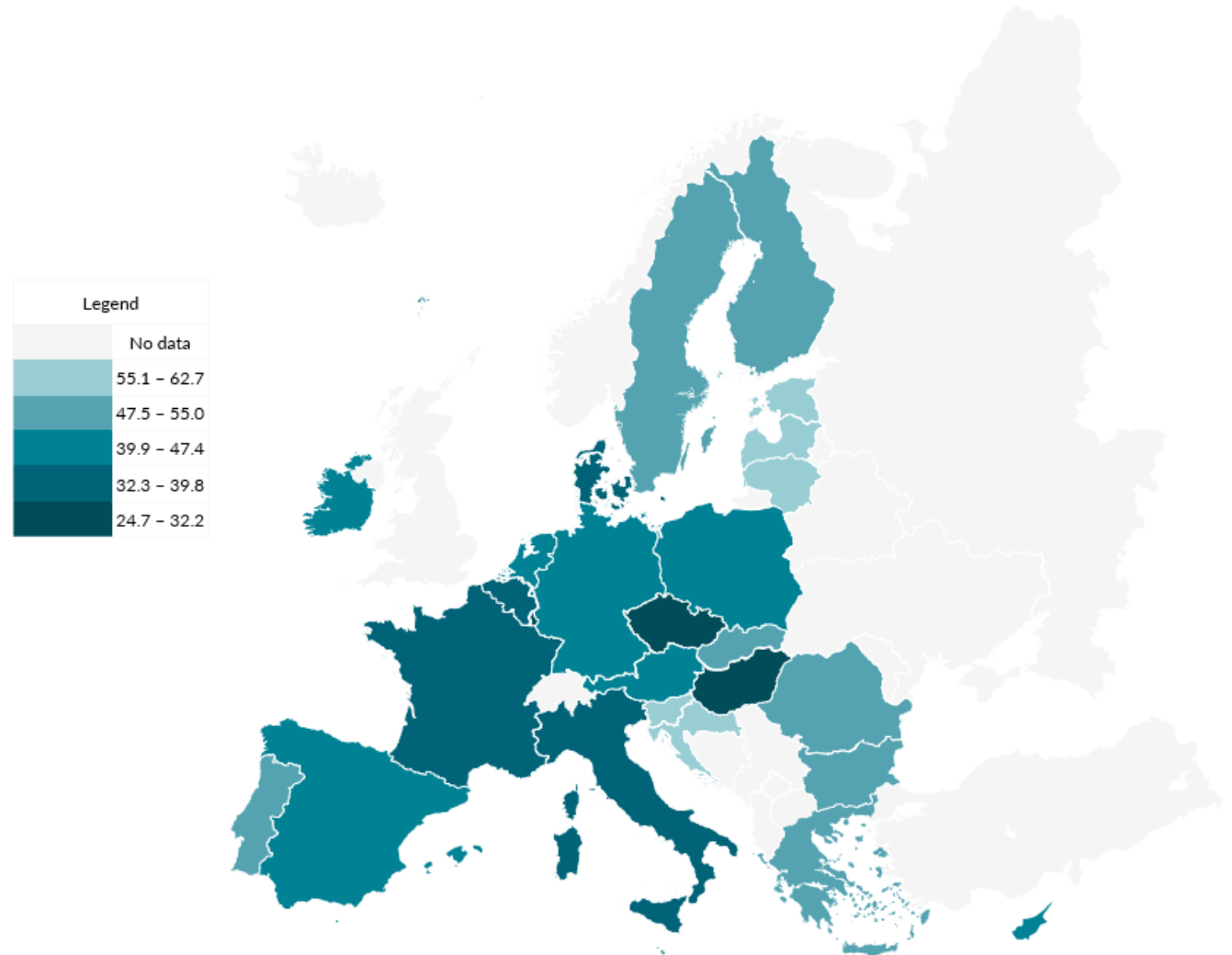
Source: EIGE

6. Poverty and Social Vulnerability

This section will present data on how women and girls are faring in terms of poverty and other areas of social vulnerability like homelessness, crime and international protection.

Data in this chapter relates to Objective One of the of the National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020, to Advance Socio-Economic Equality for Women and Girls, in particular to outcomes such as Poverty reduction of female-headed households, including lone parent families and Improved position of women on low pay, and/or in precarious or low hours work. Data presented here also refers to Objective Five of the strategy, to Combat Violence Against Women. Some of the outcomes included under this objective were increased awareness of domestic and sexual violence, and increased supervision of sex offenders.

Data is presented for the period 2011 onwards, where available, and was primarily sourced from the CSO, as well as the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth for International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) and Ukraine Arrivals data.

6.1 Poverty, Deprivation and Homelessness

6.1.1 Poverty and Deprivation

Figure 52 shows the rates of females at risk of poverty, in enforced deprivation, and in consistent poverty between 2011 and 2023. The definition of each of these rates are as follows. At-risk of poverty means earning less than 60% of the national median income. In 2023, this meant earning less than €16,558 annually. The enforced deprivation rate refers to when a person can't afford at least two of eleven essential items for a good quality of life, like food, heating or clothing[10]. The consistent poverty rate combines both enforced deprivation and an income less than 60% of the national median income.

In general, the percentage of females who are financially vulnerable has fallen since 2011.

In 2011 15.6% of females were at risk of poverty, this has dropped by over 5 percentage points to 10.4% in 2023.

---

[10] SILC Glossary

The enforced deprivation rate has been more volatile over the period, rising to a peak in 2013 at 31.5%. Rates generally trended downward to 2021, despite a peak in 2019. Since 2021 however the deprivation rate has been rising once again and in 2023, 18.7% of women were in enforced deprivation.

In terms of consistent poverty, rates have nearly halved in the period from 6.9% in 2011 to 3.7% in 2023.

Figure 52 Percentage of females at risk of poverty, in deprivation, and in consistent poverty, 2011-2023
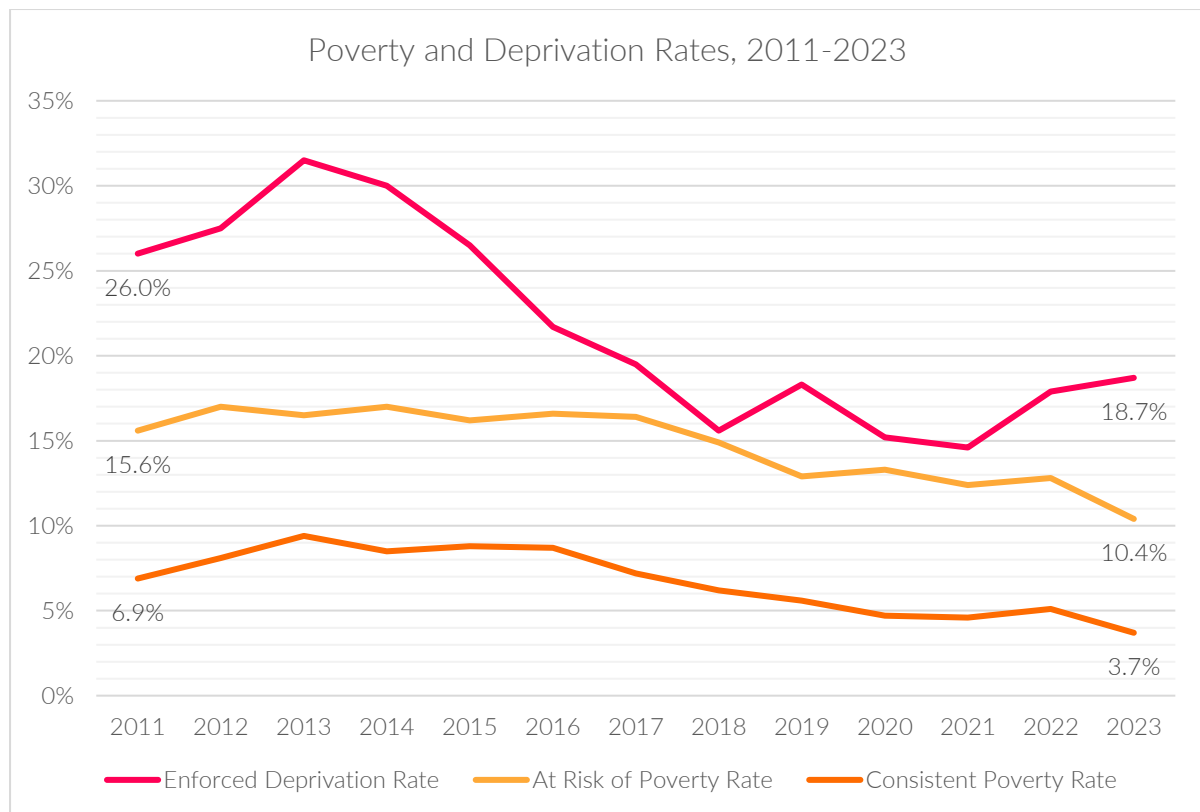
Source: CSO PxStat SIA60 *and* CSO PxStat SIA12

Note: The data for 2020 onwards was updated due to changes made to weights, reflecting updated household population benchmarks, because of the availability of Census 2022 data.

Figure 53 further compares female and male at-risk of poverty rates, deprivation rates and consistent poverty rates for the most recent year available, 2023. These statistics show that while there is little difference between males and females in relation to being at risk of poverty and in consistent poverty, females were more likely to be impacted by deprivation than males in 2023.

The at-risk of poverty rate is slightly higher for males than females, with 10.4% of females and 10.8% of males at risk of poverty. The consistent poverty rate is slightly higher for females at 3.7% compared to 3.5% for males. However, the greatest difference can be seen in the enforced deprivation rates where 18.7% of females are in deprivation compared to 16.0% for males.

Figure 53 Percentage at risk of poverty, in deprivation and in consistent poverty by gender, 2023
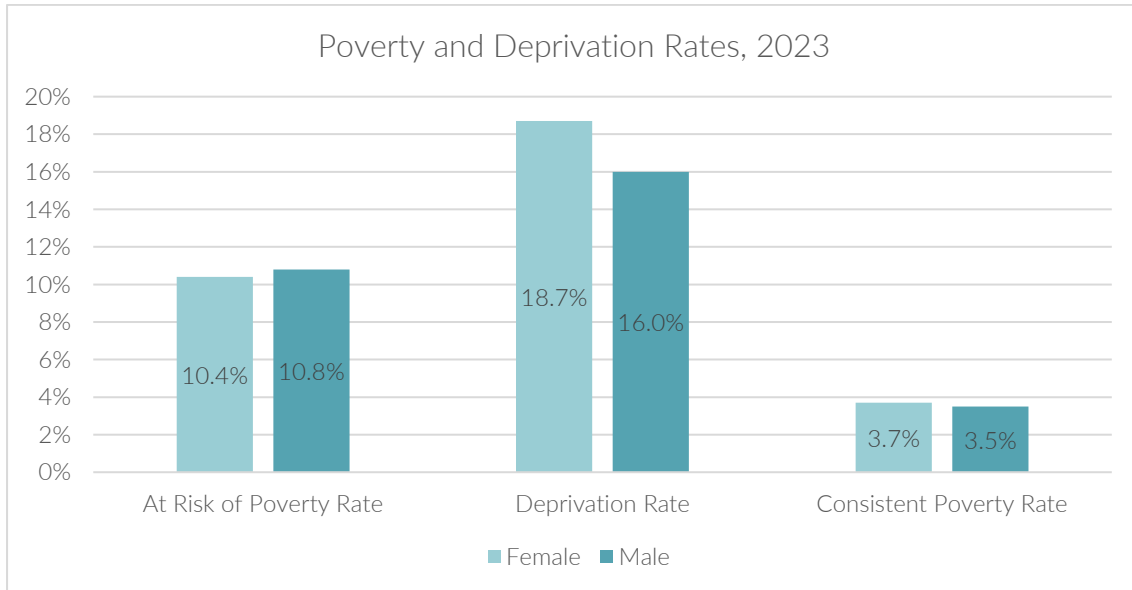
Source: CSO PxStat SIA60

6.1.2 Homelessness

Figure 54 presents data on the number of homeless persons[11] recorded in Census 2016 and 2022. The number of people recorded as homeless has increased since 2016 for both males and females. The number of females that were homeless increased by 42% from 2016 to 2022, while the number of males that were homeless increased by a higher 55%.

---

[11] Homeless persons in the Census include a count of people spending the night in accommodation designated by the State for homeless people or sleeping rough.

Figure 54 Number of homeless persons in Census 2016 and 2022

Number of Homeless Persons, 2016-2022

Source: CSO PxStat F6003 and CSO PxStat E5003

Figure 55 shows a breakdown of the numbers of homeless people by age. Homelessness tends to decrease from age 0-19 but increases once again in early adulthood to middle adulthood before tapering with older age. In general, there are more males homeless at nearly every age compared to females, this is particularly evident from age 30 onwards. For females, children aged 0-4 represent the largest group that were homeless in both 2016 and 2022. For males the largest number of homeless people were aged in their late thirties and early forties but there are similarly a large number of male children aged 0-4 that are homeless.

The largest relative increase from 2016 to 2022 occurred in the group age 10-14 which increased by 87.4% for females and 101.6% for males. There was also a large proportional reduction in the number of females that are homeless in older age (75+).

Figure 55 Number of homeless persons by age in Census 2016 and 2022

2016			2022		
Age	Female	Male	Age	Female	Male
75+	27	30	75+	9	32
70 - 74	13	44	70 - 74	13	35
65 - 69	26	103	65 - 69	24	78
60 - 64	48	122	60 - 64	45	181
55 - 59	66	213	55 - 59	89	328
50 - 54	86	290	50 - 54	145	428
45 - 49	151	348	45 - 49	223	592
40 - 44	198	384	40 - 44	296	640
35 - 39	263	436	35 - 39	362	626
30 - 34	297	381	30 - 34	403	585
25 - 29	375	355	25 - 29	401	508
20 - 24	335	286	20 - 24	495	474
15 - 19	170	165	15 - 19	278	289
10 - 14	174	190	10 - 14	326	383
5 - 9	273	292	5 - 9	428	426
0 - 4	386	379	0 - 4	550	629
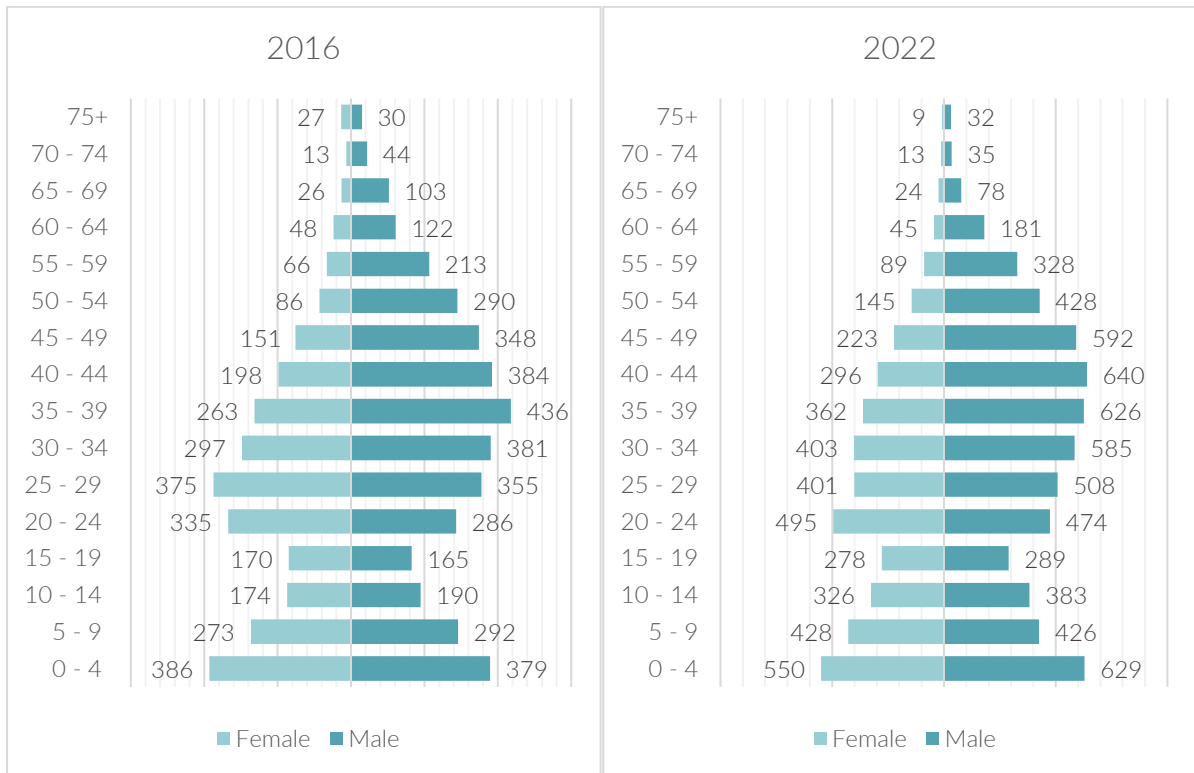
Source: CSO PxStat F6003 *and* CSO PxStat E5003

6.2 International Protection and Ukraine

6.2.1 International Protection

Table 4 shows the gender distribution of International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) residents as of November 2024, when there were 13,860 females and 19,925 males. This represents a slightly higher 58.9% proportion of males in IPAS accommodation, compared to 41.0% females. The remaining 0.1% are accounted for by those whose gender was not declared.

Table 4 Number of residents in IPAS centres, 2024

| IPAS residents as of November 2024		
Gender	Number	Percentage
Females	13,860	41.0%
Males	19,925	58.9%

Source: Data extract from International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS)
Note: the remaining 0.1% are listed as Other or Non-Specified

Figure 56 breaks down the gender distribution of males and females within the five largest nationality groups in IPAS accommodation.

Gender disparities are most substantial for Algerians, of whom 17.7% are female. For Georgians and Somalians, females make up 36.4% and 40.6% respectively. The Nigerian IPAS population is more gender-equal, with 51.8% of residents being female, and 48.2% being male. The Zimbabwean population has a female majority, with 57.8% being female.

Figure 56 Gender breakdown of five largest nationality groups in IPAS accommodation, November 2024
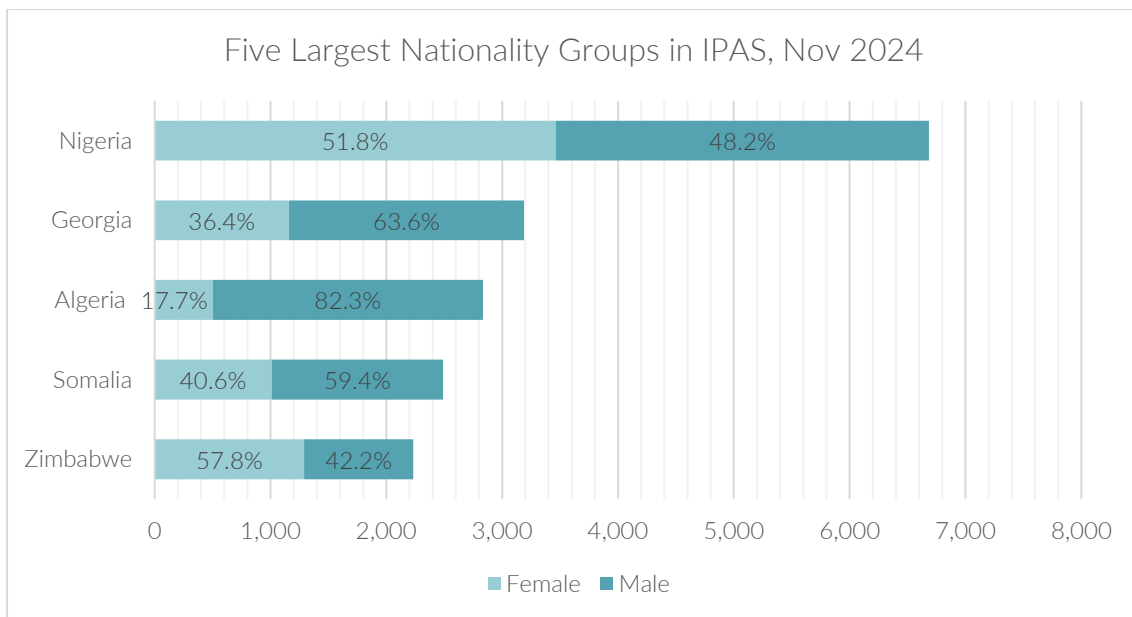
Five Largest Nationality Groups in IPAS, Nov 2024

Source: Data extract from International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS)
Note: The small number of individuals whose gender are listed as other or non-specified are excluded from the above percentages.

6.2.2 Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection for Ukraine

Since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, 112,358 beneficiaries of temporary protection (BoTPs) arrived in Ireland to flee the war.

Figure 57 displays the number of BoTP arrivals in Ireland from 2022 to early December 2024.

In 2022, there were a considerably higher number of female BoTPs of all ages (43,650) arriving to Ireland compared to males (26,033). By 2023 this gap had narrowed considerably to 18,854 females and 14,212 males and in December 2024 the number of female arrivals were very similar to male arrivals. The number of BoTPs arriving to Ireland has trended downward from 2022-2024.

Figure 57 Number of beneficiaries of temporary protection (BoTPs) arriving to Ireland, 2022-2024
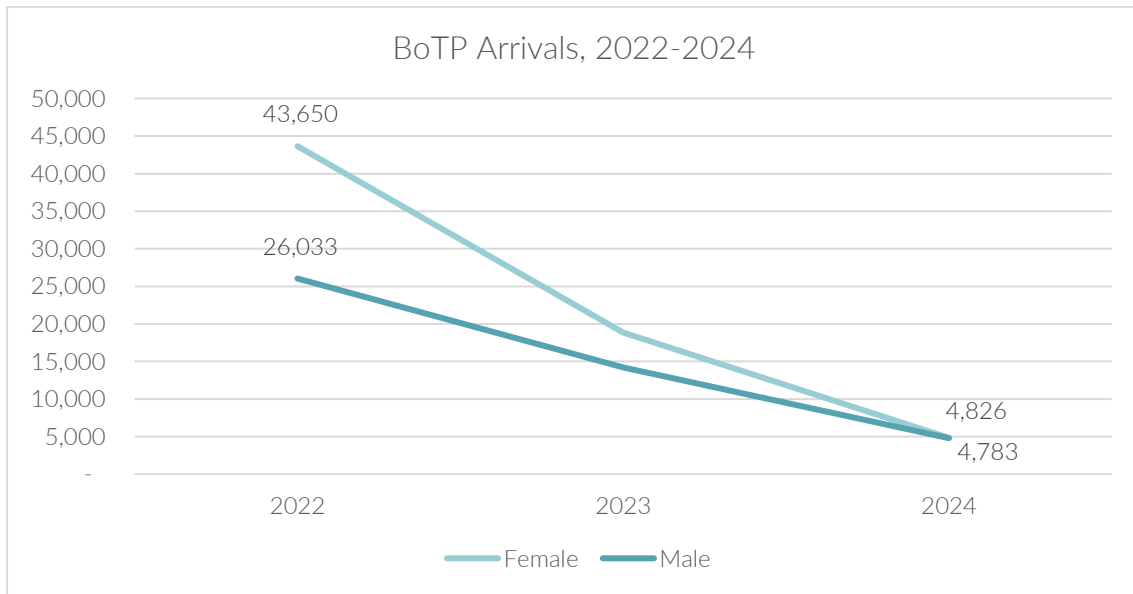
Source: DCEDIY (special request)

Figure 58 further shows the number of beneficiaries of temporary protection (BoTPs) arriving to Ireland that are aged under 18 and 18 and over for both males and females. In 2022, there were a similar number of male and female BoTPs under 18 arriving, with the gender difference observed in Figure 57 being driven by the adult population. Children represent a larger proportion of male BoTPs across the period 2022-2024 compared to females.

Figure 58 Number of beneficiaries of temporary protection (BoTPs) by age, 2022-2024
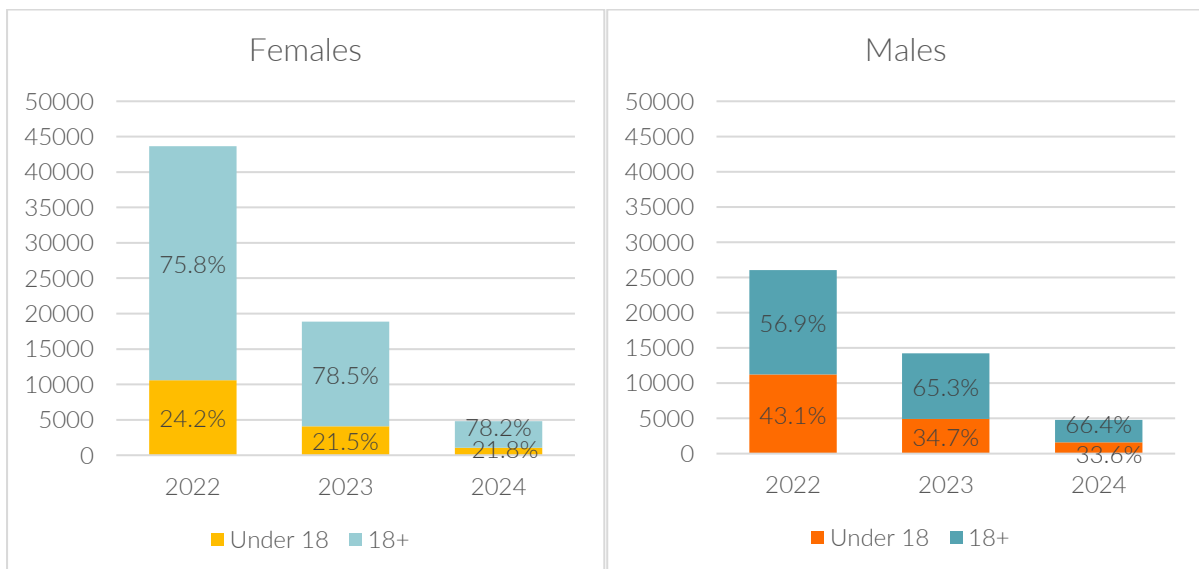
Source: DCEDIY (special request)

6.3 Crime and Sexual Violence

Figure 59 presents the number of female victims for three offence types from 2016 to 2023.

The number of rape and sexual assault offences and attempts/threats to murder, assaults harassments and related offences reported by women have increased over the period (left axis). This may indicate increased disclosure and willingness to report such crimes.

In relation to homicide offences (right axis) the number has fluctuated over the period with the highest number of homicides of females occurring in 2017 at 33 and the lowest in 2019 and 2021 at 15.

Figure 59 Female victims of recorded crime, 2016-2023
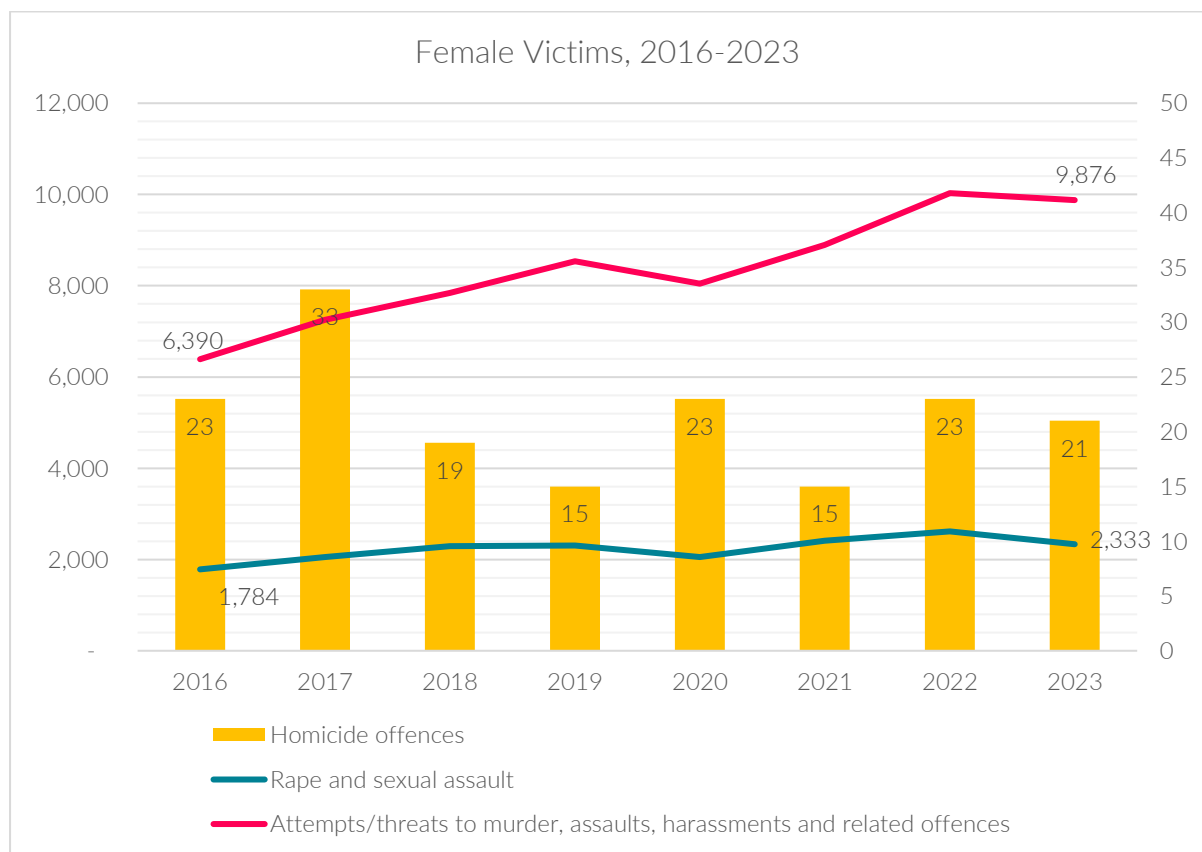
Source: CSO PxStat CVA03

Note: Data was not available prior to 2016.

Table 5 presents more detail on the criminal offences listed and a gender breakdown for 2023. The data indicates that men are more frequently victims of homicide than women with 43 male victims and 21 female victims in 2023. This is the case for both murder/ manslaughter and dangerous driving leading to death. However, when it comes to rape and sexual assault, women are overwhelmingly the majority of victims, with 2,333 female victims compared to 551 male victims.

Harassment and related offenses were similarly more frequently committed against women than men with 1,291 female victims and 607 male victims in 2023. However, for assaults males are the more common victims (11,848 compared to 7,783).

Table 5 Victims of recorded crime, 2023

	Female	Male
Homicide offences	21	43
Murder/manslaughter/infanticide	11	25
Dangerous driving leading to death	10	18
Rape and sexual assault	2,333	551
Attempts/threats to murder, assaults, harassments and related offences	9,876	13,350
Attempts/threats to murder	802	895
Assaults	7,783	11,848
Harassment and related offences	1,291	607

Source: CSO PxStat CVA03

7. Summary

This spotlight report titled "The State of the Nation's Women and Girls" has aimed to provide a snapshot of how women and girls are faring in Ireland in a range of areas that influence their lives and wellbeing. This has included demographics, health and wellbeing, education and employment, and poverty and social vulnerability.

Demographics

The female population has grown in recent years from 2.32m in 2011 to 2.60m in 2022, with particular growth evident in the older age groups due to an ageing population.

Female net migration has also increased substantially from 11,500 outwards in 2011 to 38,000 inwards in 2024. There was a sharp increase in particular between 2021 and 2023, when female net migration rose from 11,000 inwards in 2021 to 42,600 inwards in 2023. Non-Irish females made up 15.6% of the female population in 2022, with the largest numbers from Poland, the UK and India.

Health

Female life expectancy has increased from 83.0 years in 2011 to 84.2 years in 2022. Ireland ranks eighth among the EU27 countries in terms of female life expectancy and is higher than the EU27 average of 83.3 years. Overall, mortality rates for females in Ireland have decreased across most causes of death since 2015. Neoplasms - that is cancers - were the leading cause of death amongst females in 2022. Diseases of the circulatory system are also a leading cause of death.

However, the proportion of females reporting that they are in good or very good health has reduced somewhat from 88.1% in 2011 to 82.8% in 2022.

In terms of physical activity, girls aged 10-17 (47.0%) remained less likely than boys (62.6%) to meet the national guidelines on physical activity for children in 2022. However, activity among girls has risen steadily from 2014-2022. While males are more active than females in childhood, in adulthood the proportion of women meeting the national physical activity guidelines tends to be greater than the proportion of men. Though males did match females for the first time since 2017 in 2023 at 39%. Overall, less than half the population of both women and men are reaching this guideline. Women are more likely than men to engage in recreational walking and walking for transport but less likely to participate in sport or cycle for transport.

The birth rate fell from 16.2 births per thousand population in 2011 to 10.5 per thousand in 2022. Further, the average age of mothers at maternity rose from 31.8 years to 33.2 years between 2011 and 2022. This reflects a trend towards later motherhood in the Irish population.

Female mental health performs consistently lower than that of males and has worsened since 2016. Females aged 15-24 exhibited the highest level of having negative mental health. However, hospital admissions for psychiatric causes among females have declined considerably since 2011. Wellbeing among girls aged 11, 13 and 15 was similarly lower than among boys at these ages, particularly among those aged 15 where girls have a wellbeing score of 46.4 compared to boys at 57.4.

Education

There has been a substantial increase in the percentage of women attaining third level education, rising from below 37.6% in 2011 to 50.4% in 2023. While the percentage of women with only a Junior Certificate or lower level of education has declined substantially from 26.2% in 2011 to 15.1% in 2023. The proportion of females who have attained ordinary bachelor's degrees, honours bachelor's degrees and postgraduate level degrees exceeded males in 2022. Similarly looking at current enrolments, females have slightly higher proportions in Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degrees.

ECCE registrations have risen somewhat over the last decade, registrations by gender are in line with population differences.

The percentage of early school leavers has fallen substantially since 2011. Although there are still less females than males leaving school early, the gender gap has narrowed considerably in this period, with 2% of females and 3% of males defined as early school leavers in 2024. Similarly, females have slightly better retention rates to Leaving Cert than males at 91.6% compared to 88.4% for those entering school in 2017.

In terms of subject choice, females have the highest representation in Home Economics, Art and Music and the lowest representation in Engineering Studies, Construction Studies and Technology. Looking at third level, the fields of study with the highest percentage of females are Health and welfare, and Education, with the lowest representation in ICT and in Engineering, manufacturing and construction.

Employment

The female labour force participation rate has increased in recent years from 63.6% in Q1 2011 to 74.2% in Q2 2024. The male participation rate was somewhat higher at 82.1% in Q2 2024. However, as women age, the decrease in labour force participation is more pronounced than for males, and the gender participation gap widens to 18.4% in the 60–64-year group. Female labour force activity in Ireland was higher at 73.0% than the EU27 average of 70.2% in 2023.

Female unemployment has dropped steadily from 12.0% in Q1 2011 to 4.6% in Q2 2024, though with a slight spike between 2020 and 2022.

In 2023, the sectors with the highest number of females employed were Human Health and Social Work (277.2 thousand employed), Education (160.6 thousand) and Wholesale and Retail Trade (160.4 thousand). Indeed, these have been the three sectors with the largest female representation throughout the period from 2011- 2023.

One of the sectors with the lowest female representation in 2023 was Construction (12.9 thousand). However, the growth of females in this sector was the largest proportional growth of any sector, increasing by 135% since 2011. There were also large proportional increases of females in Professional, scientific and technical activities (+87%), in Information and communication (+75%) and in Public administration and defence (+74%).

Females consistently represent a larger proportion than males in part-time employment.

Median weekly earnings for females have increased from €471.94 in 2011 to €592.92 in 2022. This represents wage growth of 25.6% in the period. However, females with an upper secondary level of education earn 7.7% less than males with the same education level and 6.6% less than males when it comes to third level education.

Despite this, the gender pay gap in Ireland has fallen from 12.7% in 2011 to 9.3% in 2022 and has remained moderately below the EU27 average since 2018. The gender pay gap is highest in Ireland in the 55-64 age group.

Female representation in parliament has improved from 19.0% in 2011 to 27.8% in 2023, though remains below the EU27 average of 33.2%. A similar trend can be seen for women serving in the government. The number of females in senior positions in national administrations has also increased from 22.1% in 2011 to 41.8% in 2023.

Poverty and Social Vulnerability

In general, the percentage of females who are financially vulnerable has fallen since 2011. In 2011, 15.6% of females were at risk of poverty, this has dropped by over 5 percentage points to 10.4% in 2023.

The enforced deprivation rate for females has been more volatile over the period, rising to a peak in 2013 at 31.5%. Rates generally trended downward to 2021, despite a slight peak in 2019. Since 2021 however, the deprivation rate has been rising once again and in 2023, 18.7% of women were in enforced deprivation.

In terms of consistent poverty, rates have nearly halved for females in the period from 6.9% in 2011 to 3.7% in 2023.

While rates of being at risk of poverty and in consistent poverty are similar across genders in 2023, the greatest difference can be seen in the enforced deprivation rates where 18.7% of females are in deprivation compared to 16.0% for males.

In terms of homelessness, the number of people recorded as homeless on Census night has increased since 2016 for both males and females. The number of females that were homeless increased by 42% from 2016 to 2022 (4,087), while the number of males that were homeless increased by a higher 55% (6,234). The largest relative increase from 2016 to 2022 occurred in the group aged 10-14, which increased by 87.4% for females and 101.6% for males. However, there was a large proportional reduction in the number of females that are homeless in older age (75+).

Looking at those being accommodated for international protection, as of November 2024 there were 13,860 females and 19,925 males. This represents a slightly higher proportion of males (58.9%) in IPAS accommodation, compared to females (41.0%). Of the 5 countries with the highest numbers in IPAS, the Zimbabwean population has the highest female majority, with 57.8% of people in IPAS from Zimbabwe being female.

Since 2022, 67,330 female beneficiaries of temporary protection (BoTPs) have arrived to Ireland fleeing the war in Ukraine. The number of male BoTPs arriving in this time was 45,028.

The number of rape and sexual assault offences and attempts/threats to murder, assaults harassments and related offences reported by women have increased from 2016 to 2023. This may indicate increased disclosure and willingness to report such crimes.

Men are more frequently victims of homicide than women with 43 male victims and 21 female victims in 2023. However, when it comes to rape and sexual assault, women are overwhelmingly the majority of victims, with 2,333 female victims compared to 551 male victims.

Conclusion

Overall, in the past decade, women and girls are faring better in relation to many aspects of their lives. In terms of health, female life expectancy has risen, female mortality rates across most causes of death have decreased, both girls and women are more active, and hospital admissions for psychiatric causes are down. In relation to education, attainment of third level qualifications among females has risen substantially, while those whose highest education level is junior certificate or lower has reduced. There are also more young girls registered for early care and education (ECCE), and the number of early school leavers has reduced considerably.

Looking at employment, there are a larger proportion of women in the labour force (Ireland has now met the target set out in Europe 2020 for female employment to be brought closer to 69-71%), unemployment is drastically down, and there are larger proportions of women in sectors like Construction, Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities and Information and Communication. The median wage for women has increased and the gender pay gap has reduced. There is also greater representation of women in parliament, in government and among senior administrators. Looking at poverty and social vulnerability there are less women and girls at risk of poverty and in consistent poverty.

However, there are some areas of the lives of women and girls that have seen declines, self-reported health status has reduced somewhat, and mental health has worsened. There are greater numbers experiencing homelessness, and there are a large number of women and girls now in Ireland who had to flee their own countries under international protection and temporary protection. There are also a higher number of female victims of rape and sexual assault offences and attempts/threats to murder, assaults harassments and related offences, though this may be due to increased disclosure and willingness to report such crimes.

Overall, the lives of women and girls are improving but there are still gains to be made in several areas. Females continue to exhibit less sports participation than men. There are still lower numbers of girls choosing STEM subjects in school and in turn lower numbers in these fields of study in third level and in employment. Further, Ireland remains below the EU27

averages in relation to female representation in parliament, in government and in national administrations.

———————————————————

David Boylan

Lucy Bruton

Shauna Allen

Nicola Tickner

Data and Analytics Unit | January 2025

DATA +
ANALYTICS

For queries please contact the
Data and Analytics team at
dataandanalytics@equality.gov.ie

Background Notes

This is the 15th publication in the Statistical Spotlight series. A Statistical Spotlight is a short publication focused on a specific topic, gathering together available statistical data and highlighting trends or patterns in the data. These are intended to be short, statistics-based publications bringing together available information for interested users. The publications include some commentary detailing (where relevant) trends and comparisons as appropriate (e.g. comparisons between gender, region, age group, etc.).

The primary purpose is to gather together the most relevant data, highlight those most recent, and draw attention to the most evident features or trends. Therefore, although it could serve as the basis for further research, none of the information contained therein should in and of itself be used to ascribe cause and effect between any two variables.
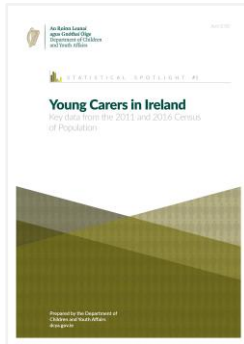
Appendices

Average Energy Vitality Index (EVI) scores by gender (2016, 2021, 2023)

	2016	2021	2023
Total	67.8	62.4	65.3
Men	69.8	64.6	67.4
Women	65.9	60.3	63.3

Average Mental Health Index (MHI-5) scores by gender (2016, 2021, 2023)

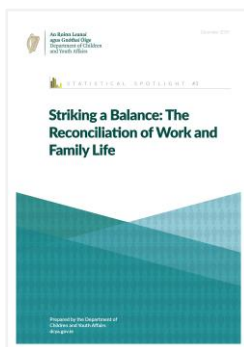|	2016	2021	2023
Total	81.2	76.0	78.2
Men	82.8	78.2	80.1
Women	79.7	73.9	76.5

Previous Statistical Spotlights in the series

Statistical Spotlight #1

Young Carers in Ireland

Published
April 2018
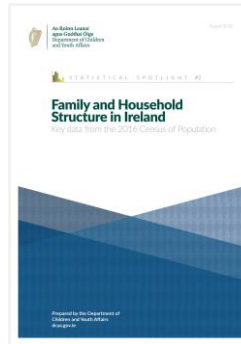
Statistical Spotlight #2

Family and Household Structure in Ireland

Published
August 2018

Statistical Spotlight #3

Striking a Balance: The Reconciliation of Work and Family Life
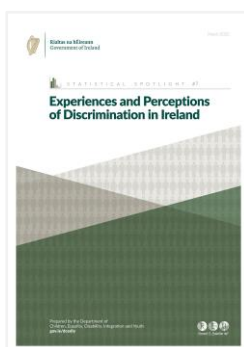
Published
December 2019

Statistical Spotlight #4

Young Travellers in Ireland

Published
April 2020

Statistical Spotlight #5

Profile of Parents in Ireland

Published
May 2021

Statistical Spotlight #6

Gender Norms in Ireland

Published
December 2021

Statistical Spotlight #7

Experiences and Perceptions of Discrimination in Ireland
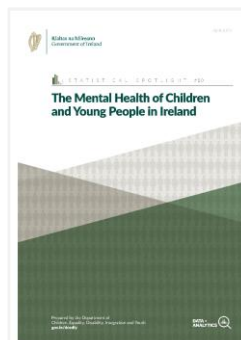
Published
March 2022

Statistical Spotlight #8

The First Five Years of Life in Ireland
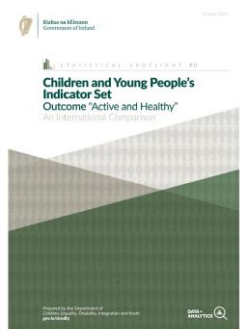
Published
December 2022

Statistical Spotlight #9

Young People's Participation in Youth Organisations

Published
February 2023

Statistical Spotlight #10

The Mental Health of Children and Young People in Ireland

Published
April 2023

Statistical Spotlight #11

Children and Young People's Indicator Set: Outcome "Active and Healthy", An international Comparison.

Published
October 2023

Statistical Spotlight #12

Children and Young People's Indicator Set: Outcome "Economic Security and Opportunity" Healthy", An international Comparison.

Published
July 2024

Statistical Spotlight #13

Child and Youth Mortality in Ireland

Published
July 2024

Statistical Spotlight #14

Roma in Ireland

Published
December 2024