

2. Geographical distribution

Population by constituency

Urbanisation

Urban centres

Population by constituency

The population by constituency is an important output from each census as the total membership of the Dáil is determined by the population as measured in the census. The constituencies presented in Figure 2.1 are those of the 44th Dáil as defined in the Electoral (Amendment) (No.7) Act 2013.

The population per TD for the country as a whole in April 2016 was 30,138.

There were twenty five constituencies with more than 30,000 people per TD and an additional eleven constituencies where the number of people per TD was in the range 29,000 to 30,000.

The constituency of Limerick County, with 27,948 people, had the lowest population per TD in the country in April 2016.

The constituency of Dublin North-West had the highest with 32,331 people.

Dublin Central was the fastest growing constituency increasing by 7,277 people or 8.2 per cent. It recorded the second highest population per TD with 32,102 people.

Only two constituencies, Donegal and Mayo, showed a population decrease between the two censuses falling by -1.1 per cent and -0.2 per cent respectively.

[See web table EY003](#)

Figure 2.1 Population per TD in each constituency, 2016



	Size type of constituency		
	5 members	4 members	3 members
Number of constituencies	11	16	13
Total persons represented	1,656,194	1,926,080	1,179,591
Average persons represented	30,113	30,095	30,246

Urban population growth continues

While the population overall increased by 3.8 per cent over the five years between April 2011 and April 2016 the population of Dublin city and suburbs increased by 5.6 per cent indicating a growing share of the population living in the capital. There were 62,552 more people in Dublin in 2016 than five years previously.

There were 2,985,781 people in urban areas in Ireland in 2016. This represents an increase of 138,899 or 4.9 per cent on 2011. In contrast, the population of rural areas increased by just 34,714 people, a 2 per cent rise.

The population of large towns increased by 48,269 people, or 6.6 per cent, while that of the smallest towns (1,500 to 2,999) remained static.

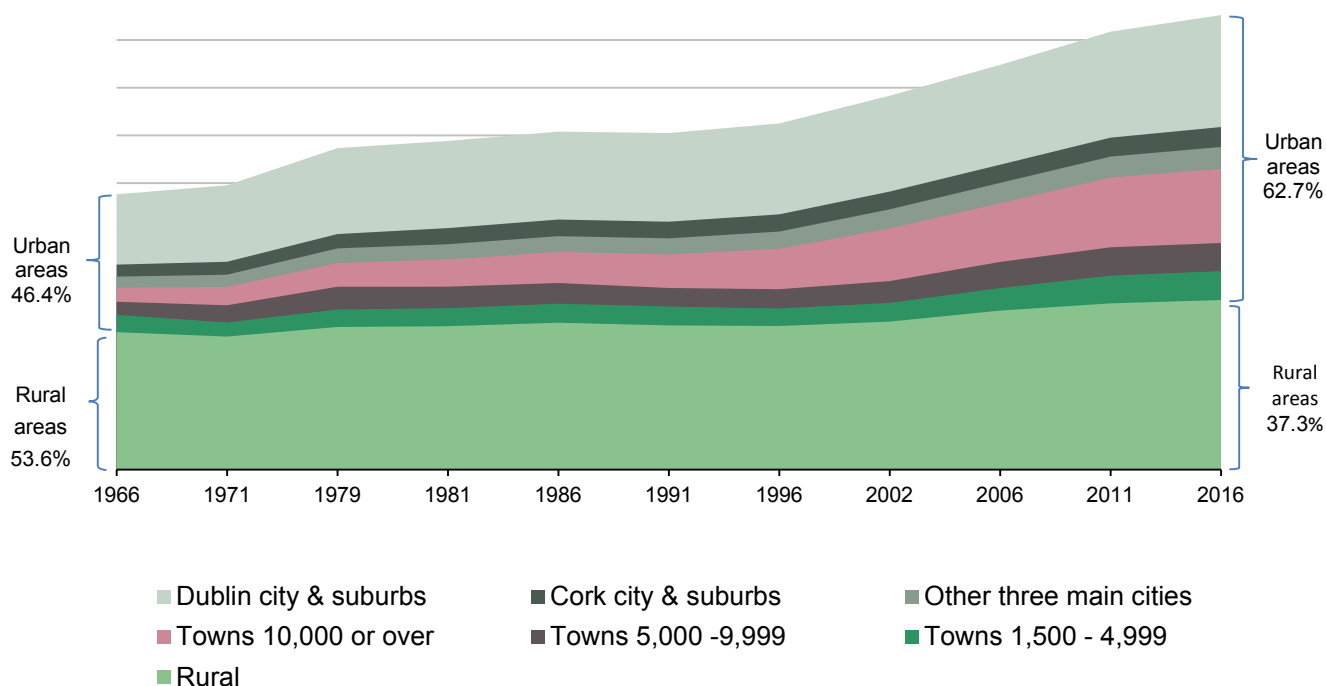
Figure 2.2 below represents the population by urban / rural type and vividly illustrates the increasing share of the urban population over the past fifty years. While the population of rural areas has increased by 23.4 per cent over the period that of urban areas has increased by more than four times that rate with an increase of 106.7 per cent over the same period.

[See web table EY003](#)

Table 2.2 Population of urban areas, 2011 and 2016

Population			
Area	2011	2016	Actual change
Dublin city & suburbs	1,110,627	1,173,179	62,552
Cork city & suburbs	198,582	208,669	10,087
Limerick city & suburbs	91,454	94,192	2,738
Galway city & suburbs	76,778	79,934	3,156
Waterford city & suburbs	51,519	53,504	1,985
Towns 10,000 or over	730,415	778,684	48,269
Towns 5,000 -9,999	297,174	294,020	-3,154
Towns 3,000 -4,999	119,705	132,913	13,208
Towns 1,500 -2,999	170,628	170,686	58
Urban Total	2,846,882	2,985,781	138,899
Rural Total	1,741,370	1,776,084	34,714
Total	4,588,252	4,761,865	173,613

Figure 2.2 Urbanisation, 1966 - 2016



More and larger urban centres

The table below shows the number of urban centres classified by type along with the increase in the respective populations.

The total number of urban centres increased from 197 in 2011 to 200 in 2016 (for definitions, see Appendix 3). Small towns with population between 3,000 and 4,999 people were the fastest growing category, increasing their population by 11 per cent since 2011 and by 22.4 per cent since 2006.

Two towns (Longford and Skerries) joined the category of 10,000 or more (i.e. large towns) since the last census, bringing the total number to 41. The population of all large towns increased by 6.6 per cent, and by 26.4 per cent since 2002.

Table 2.3 Number of urban population centres, 2011 and 2016

Area	Population centres		
	2011	2016	% change
Dublin city & suburbs	1	1	5.6
Cork city & suburbs	1	1	5.1
Limerick city & suburbs	1	1	3.0
Galway city & suburbs	1	1	4.1
Waterford city & suburbs	1	1	3.9
Towns 10,000 or over	39	41	6.6
Towns 5,000 -9,999	41	40	-1.1
Towns 3,000 -4,999	30	33	11.0
Towns 1,500 -2,999	82	81	0.0
Urban Total	197	200	3.8

Figure 2.3 Share of population in urban areas, 1966 and 2016



Shifting share.....

Figure 2.3 clearly shows how Dublin city has lost population share of the total urban population at the expense of other urban areas over the past fifty years.

In 1966 Dublin city accounted for over half the urban population of the country with 51 per cent living there. In April 2016 this had fallen to 39 per cent.

This fall has been offset by the growth of large towns. In 1966, 1 in 10 people in urban areas lived in this category of town, compared with more than 1 in 4 in 2016.

It's a fact!

200

The total number of urban centres in 2016

11%

The percentage increase in the population of small towns - the fastest growing category

6.6%

The percentage increase in the population of large towns - the second fastest growing category

26%

The percentage of the urban population living in large towns in 2016

51%

Dublin's share of the urban population in 1966

39%

Dublin's share of the urban population 50 years later