

7 June 2007

Coverage

England and Wales

Theme

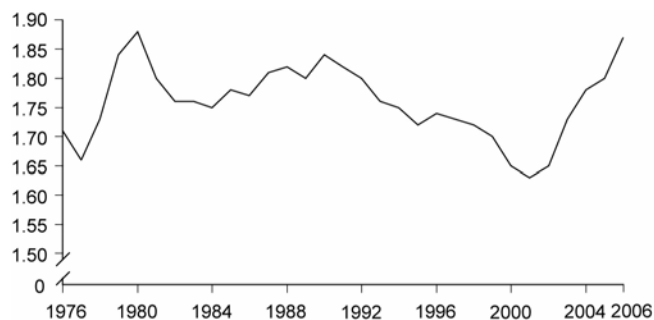
Population and Migration

Fertility rate is highest for 26 years

Provisional fertility rates for 2006 give an average number of 1.87 children per woman in England and Wales, the highest since 1980, according to data released today by the Office for National Statistics.

The 2006 total fertility rate (TFR) of 1.87 is up from 1.80 children per woman in 2005, the fifth consecutive annual increase from a low point of 1.63 in 2001.

Total fertility rate (TFR) in England and Wales, 1976-2006



In 2006, there were 3,368 infant deaths registered giving a rate of 5.0 deaths per 1000 live births. This is the same as the rate recorded in 2005, which was the lowest rate ever recorded in England and Wales.

Other key statistics on births and deaths in 2006:

Births in England and Wales, 2006

There were 669,531 live births in England and Wales in 2006 compared with 645,835 in 2005, an increase of 3.7 per cent. The number of live births has been increasing since 2001 and the number of live births in 2006 reached the highest level since 1993 (673,467).

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There have been increases in fertility rates for all age groups compared with 2005. The highest percentage increase was observed for women in their late thirties. The figure of 53.8 live births per 1,000 women aged 35-39 represents an increase of over 7 per cent compared with the previous year.

Fertility rates for women aged 40 and over have more than doubled in twenty years and in 2006 reached 11.4 live births per 1,000 women aged 40 to 44. The number of live births to mothers aged 40 and over has almost doubled in a decade from 12,103 in 1996 to 23,703 in 2006.

The proportion of live births to mothers born outside the United Kingdom continued to rise. In 2006, 21.9 per cent of live births were to mothers born outside the United Kingdom compared with 20.8 per cent in 2005.

The number of live births to mothers born outside the United Kingdom increased by nearly 10 per cent from 134,189 in 2005 to 146,944 in 2006. This compares with a 2.1 per cent increase for mothers born in the United Kingdom over the same period. The number of live births to mothers born outside the United Kingdom in 2006 is 77 per cent higher than in 1996 (83,123).

Live births in England and Wales, 2006: area of residence

The highest fertility level among the Government Office Regions of England in 2006, as represented by the TFR, was in the West Midlands at 1.96 children per woman. The lowest was in the North East (1.78).

Among the Local Authorities in England, Newham had the highest TFR with 2.56 children per woman, while Westminster had the lowest (1.12).

In Wales, the highest TFR was in Merthyr Tydfil (2.13), while the lowest was in Ceredigion (1.38).

Death registrations in England and Wales, 2006

Death rates for males have fallen by nearly a quarter in the ten years to 2006. Since 1996, the age-standardised mortality rate has decreased by 24 per cent for males and 18 per cent for females to a (provisional) rate in 2006 of 7,111 deaths per million population for males and 4,997 per million for females. The 2006 rates, for both males and females, are the lowest ever recorded in England and Wales.

The number of deaths registered continues to decrease and is at its lowest in over 50 years. In 2006, there were 502,599 deaths registered in England and Wales representing a fall of 2.1 per cent from 2005. This is the lowest annual number of death registrations since 1954, when 501,896 deaths were registered.

Circulatory diseases are still the most common major cause of death contributing to over a third (35 per cent) of all deaths registered in 2006. However, the overall trend for these diseases has continued downward. Throughout the decade to 2006, the death rate for circulatory diseases has fallen by 40 per cent to 2,421 per million population for males and by 38 per cent to 1,531 per million for females.

Cancer accounted for just over a quarter (28 per cent) of all deaths registered in 2006, with a rate of 2,160 per million population for males and 1,546 for females. The death rates for cancer have also fallen since 1996 by 18 per cent for males and 13 per cent for females.

Death registrations in England and Wales, 2006: area of residence

Among the English regions, and Wales, the North East Government Office Region had the highest level of mortality in 2006 as measured by standardised mortality ratios (SMRs). In 2006 the SMR in the North East for all persons was 12 per cent above the national level, while the lowest was in the South West (9 per cent below the national level).



Among local authorities, mortality levels were highest in Halton (30 per cent above the national level) and lowest in Kensington and Chelsea (42 per cent below the national level). While Kensington and Chelsea has remained the local authority with the lowest SMR since 2003, Halton had the highest SMR for the first time since 2001.

More detailed data for births can be found at:
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=14408>

More detailed data for deaths can be found at:
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=14409>

BACKGROUND NOTES

1. Further statistics on 2006 births will be published on 28 June 2007 as a report in *Population Trends* 128. This will give numbers of live births, total fertility rates and general fertility rates by mother's usual area of residence.
2. The total fertility rate (TFR) is the average number of children that a woman would bear if the female population experienced the age-specific fertility rates of the calendar year in question throughout their childbearing lifespan. The TFR is a summary measure of current fertility, and changes in timing of births means that it can often be a poor indicator of the actual average number of children women will eventually have. The TFR for 2006 is provisional as it was calculated using the 2004-based population projections for 2006. It will be revised in Autumn 2007 when the 2006 mid-year population estimates are published.
3. Data collected on the number of births for 1981 were affected by a registrars strike. Figures for this year are based on a 10 per cent sample of registrations.
4. All deaths figures in this release are based on deaths registered in 2006. It is planned that statistics on deaths that occurred in 2006 will be published in October 2007.
5. Further statistics on 2006 death registrations will be published on 7th June 2007 as a web supplement to *Health Statistics Quarterly* 34 (<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=6725>). This publication will give the numbers of deaths registered in England and Wales in 2006 by age and sex, and for selected causes of death. Deaths by area of usual residence will appear in a report in *Population Trends* 128 to be published on 28 June 2007.
6. The age-standardised death rates in this release are directly age-standardised to the European Standard Population, which allows comparisons between populations with different age structures, including between males and females and over time. Age-standardised rates for 2006 in this release are provisional as they were calculated using the 2004-based population projections for 2006. They will be revised in Autumn 2007 when the 2006 mid-year population estimates are published.



7. Standardised mortality ratios (SMRs) compare mortality in one population with mortality in a 'standard' population, while allowing for differences in age structure. The ratio is of 'observed' to 'expected' deaths. 'Expected' deaths are the number that would have occurred if the sex and age-specific mortality rates of the standard year had applied to the population of interest. SMRs are calculated for males and females using the appropriate sex-specific and age-specific standard rates.
8. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the Press Office.
9. **National Statistics** are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference. © Crown copyright 2007.