

# What is the Census of Population?

The Census of Population provides a statistical picture of Ireland and its people. Almost every country in the world carries out a census on a regular basis. It collects information, in five-year intervals, on every person and household in Ireland. By law, every individual and household must participate and, by law, the Central Statistics Office must protect the information that is gathered.

Census questions ask about topics such as age, marital status, household members, relationships between household members, and languages spoken. Census of Population data are important for all communities and are vital for planning services such as schools, day-cares, family services, housing, Gardai, fire services, roads, public transportation and skills training for employment. Local authorities use census information to predict demand for their services and facilities. These data are used by governments, businesses, associations, organisations and many others to make important decisions.

The number of seats in Dáil Eireann is also dependent on the results of the census. Under the Constitution, there must be a TD for every 20,000 to 30,000 persons. After each census a Constituency Commission is set up to consider Dáil Eireann and European Parliament constituencies.

The last Census of Population was conducted in 2016. The next one will take place in 3 April 2022. It was planned for the 18 April 2021 but had to be postponed because of Covid-19. Under the Statistics Act, everyone in the State must complete or be included on the census form.

Following a consultation process and pilot survey, the CSO announced the introduction of eight new questions for the 2022 census.

They will relate to:

- Renewable energy sources
- Internet access and devices
- Smoke alarms
- Smoking
- Working from home
- Volunteering
- Childcare
- Travelling home from work, school or college

Changes were also agreed to 25 existing questions on e.g. disability, ethnic groups, religion and the Irish language.

The census in 2022 will include an optional 'time capsule' question for the first time. This will allow members of the public to write a confidential message of their choice which will be securely stored for 100 years.