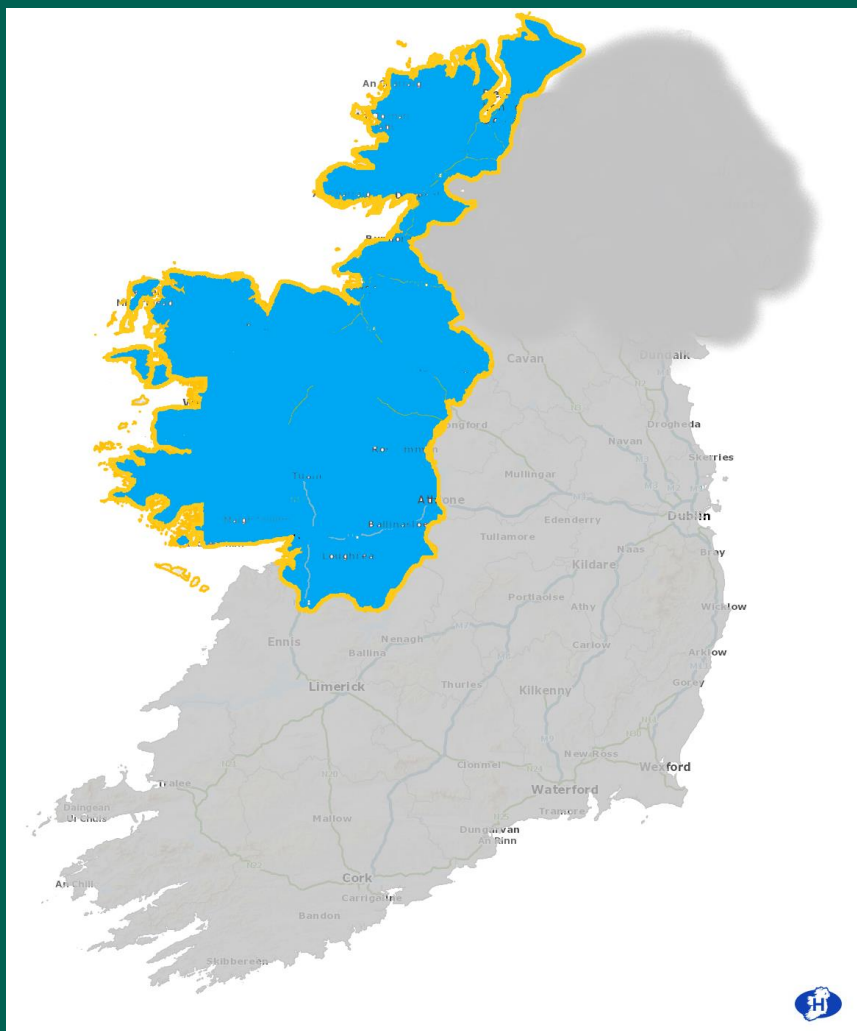




# Regional Population Profile

## Health Region: West and North West



March 2024  
Version 1.1

## Document Control

Version No.	Approval Date	Section(s) Updated	Summary of Update	Approved by:
Version 1.0	6 <sup>th</sup> March 2024		Profile signed off by ADPH and presented to REO	Dr Aine McNamara
Version 1.1	20 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	Population Size (Pg 5)	% Change in Population 2016 – 2022: Update of Table to include the 2022 population size for each CHN within the SW and removal of % change column	Dr Aine McNamara

## Welcome

This first standardised National Regional Population Profile for the West and North West Region provides an 'At a Glance' insight and understanding of the key demographic features of our population which will inform and support the planning of our health services.

This is the first chapter of a more comprehensive standardised regional Population Health profile which will be co-designed with key stakeholders over the coming months. The more comprehensive Population Profile will include information from across the region on different aspects of the population e.g. health status, health assets and services, so as to ensure that it meets the evolving needs of key decision makers across the West and North West region.

I would like to thank all those who have been central to the production of this profile: the HSE Population Based Planning Profile Group, the National Health Intelligence team, the National Health Service Improvement team, the Department of Health (DoH) Health Regions Planning Group and Statistical Analysis Unit, and a special thanks in particular to my team in the West and North West Regional Department of Public Health.

---

Dr. Áine McNamara  
Area Director of Public Health  
HSE West and North West

Contact details for the Department and ADPH are shown below.

### **Department of Public Health, HSE West and North West**

Merlin Park Hospital, Galway, H91N973

Telephone: +353 (0) 91 775200

Email: ADPHAreaF@hse.ie

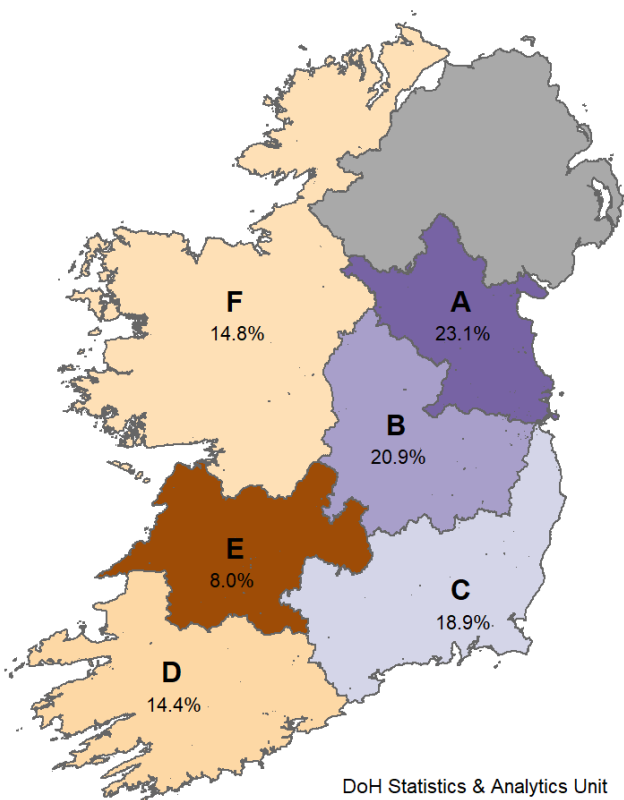


## Key Findings

- The West and North West (WNW) Region is the fourth largest RHA. There are 15 Community Health Networks (CHNs) in WNW, with populations ranging in size from 33,000 (Leitrim & West Cavan) to 81,000 (Sligo South Donegal).
- The total population is 759,652, representing 14.8% of the national population. The population increased by 6.8% between 2016 and 2022, the smallest increase among the health regions.
- The WNW region has a higher proportion of older people compared to the national average and the lowest proportion of those aged 15-64 years across all health regions.
- At a health region level, the WNW region has a lower proportion of those in the affluent groups and a higher proportion of those in deprived groups compared to the national average. The proportion of those who are very/extremely disadvantaged is lower than the national average but considerable variation exists between CHNs. Higher levels of deprivation occur in more rural settings (with pockets of deprivation also noted in larger areas).
- The WNW region has a very similar ethnic composition compared to the national average.
- 19.7% were born outside the island of Ireland. The majority of these were born in the UK.
- The number of people who do not speak English well or at all is highest in East Mayo; Central Galway & East Galway City; and North Roscommon & North East Galway. These are the CHNs that have higher proportions of the population that speak another language at home.
- The majority of the WNW population stated that their health was either good or very good (83.1%). However, there was variation between CHNs – those with higher levels of deprivation also report higher levels of bad/poor health.
- The overall smoking rate for the WNW region was lower than the national average, apart from two CHNs.
- The proportion of the WNW population with at least one long lasting condition or difficulty to any extent was 21.8%, higher than the national average of 21.5%. This is higher in areas of increasing deprivation and in rural CHNs.

# Population Size 2022

**Introduction:** The West and North West (WNW) Region consists of counties Donegal, Galway, Leitrim, Mayo, Roscommon, Sligo and a part of West Cavan and has a population total of just under 760,000 – the fourth largest RHA population. There are 15 Community Health Networks (CHNs) in WNW, with populations ranging in size from 33,000 (Leitrim & West Cavan) to 81,000 (Sligo South Donegal).

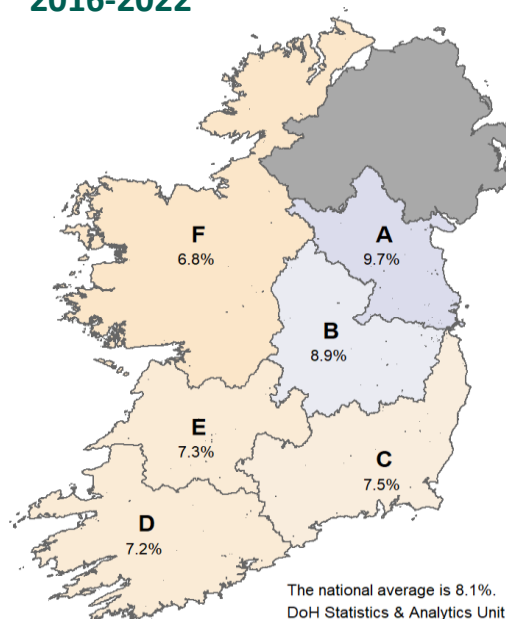


HSE Health Region	2022 Population	% of Total Pop
HSE Dublin & North East (A)	1,187,082	23.1%
HSE Dublin & Midlands(B)	1,077,639	20.9%
HSE Dublin & South East (C)	971,093	18.9%
HSE South West (D)	740,614	14.4%
HSE Midwest (E)	413,059	8.0%
HSE West & North West (F)	759,652	14.8%

## Community Healthcare Networks

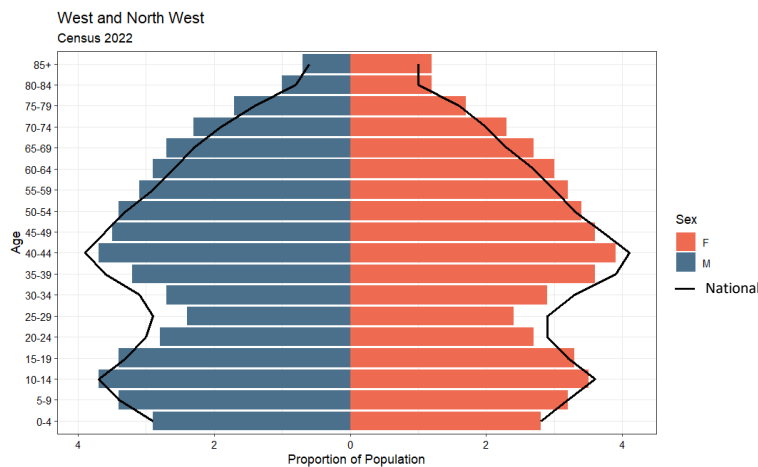
CHN	2022 Pop	CHN	2022 Pop
Sligo South Donegal	81,114	North Mayo	47,999
Central Galway & East Galway City	73,264	West Galway	41,398
West Galway City	61,678	Donegal South & West	37,571
Tuam, Athenry & Loughrea	60,226	West Mayo	37,368
North Roscommon & North-East Galway	59,320	Donegal East	36,292
East Mayo	52,603	Inishowen	34,846
East Galway & South Roscommon	52,110	Leitrim & West Cavan	33,345
Donegal North	50,518		

## % Change in Population 2016-2022



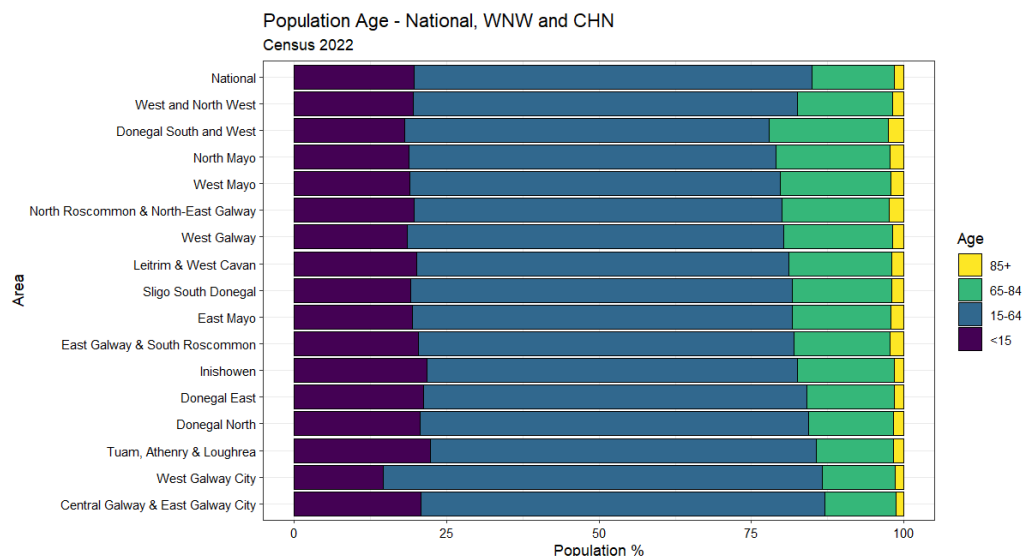
# Age and Sex

Population numbers and the age structure are significant drivers of healthcare need. Populations that have greater proportions of very young and very old people tend to have greater healthcare needs. The population pyramid displays the total population for both male and females in WNW in 5 year age groups, and the national average is shown in black. For both male and female populations, the WNW population shows a greater proportion of people than the national average in the 50-84 year age groups. There are comparatively fewer people in the 20-49 year age groups.



## Comparison across CHNs

The graph below shows the distribution of the population by age group (under 15, 15-64, 65-84 and 85+ years), nationally, for WNW and by CHN. The CHNs with the largest proportion of their population aged 65 years and above (displayed in green and yellow bars) are ranked at the top of the graph. WNW has a higher proportion of people aged 65+ years (**17.5%**) than the national average (**15.1%**). The CHNs with the highest proportion of people aged 65+ years are the Donegal South & West (**22.1%**), North Mayo (**21.0%**) and West Mayo (**20.3%**). The three CHNs with the biggest proportion population aged 85+ years are Donegal South & West (**2.6%**); North Roscommon & North-East Galway (**2.5%**) and North Mayo (**2.4%**). The three youngest CHNs (population <15 years) are Tuam, Athenry & Loughrea (**22.3%**), Inishowen (**21.8%**) and Donegal East (**21.2%**).



## Population Health Implications

- Age is a significant influencer of healthcare needs and types of service required.
- The WNW region has a higher proportion of older people than the national average – which is likely to result in different healthcare needs. This is the case for all CHNs except the three located around Galway City (West Galway City, Central Galway & East Galway City, and Tuam, Athenry & Loughrea).
- The WNW region has the lowest proportion of those aged 15-64 years across all health regions.
- Different age profiles across the WNW region will result in tailored service planning requirements.

# Deprivation

Deprivation is a critical determinant of health need in a population. The Haase-Pratschke (HP) index uses a number of CSO Census parameters to determine an index of deprivation.

## HP Index:

The WNW population is overall less affluent (**19.6%**) than the national comparator (**24.9%**) but there are local variations.

HP Determinant	% WNW Pop	% National Pop
Age dependency rate*	37.0	34.7
Classes - professional, managerial & technical	38.3	39.9
Classes - semi & unskilled	15.7	14.3
Education - primary or lower	10.3	8.5
Education - 3rd level	32.2	33.9
Unemployed - aged 15+	4.4	4.3

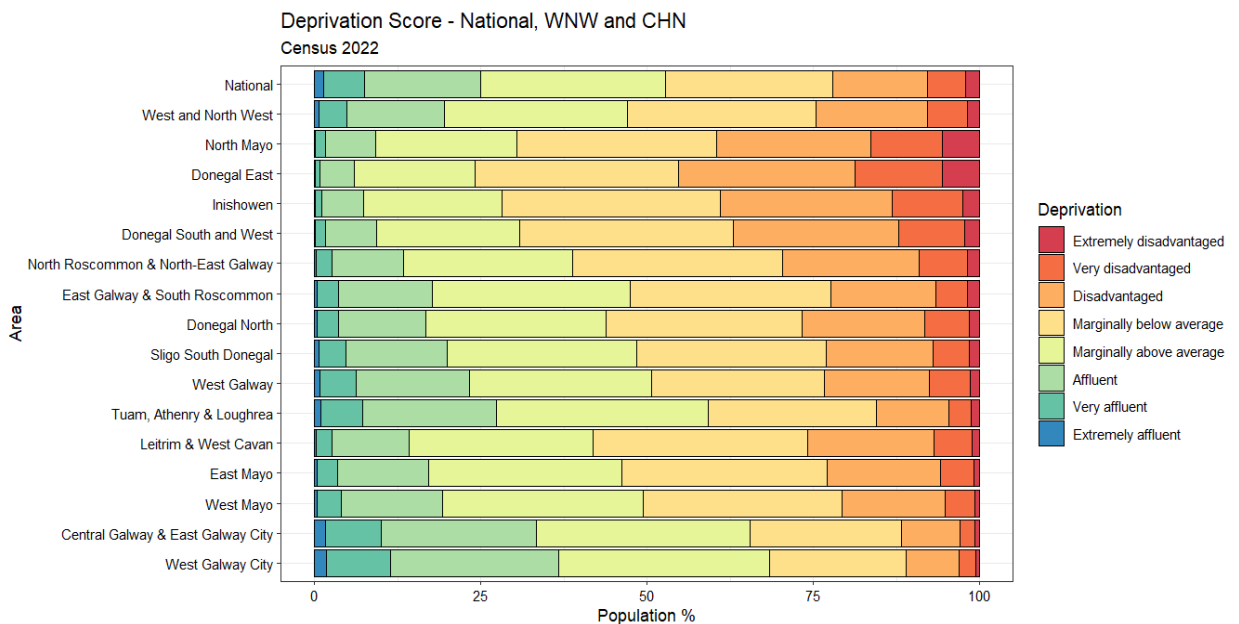
**HP Determinants:** This table outlines some of the determinants that make up the HP index.

Overall the determinants in WNW show a higher Age Dependency rate, lower education/skill levels and lower proportions in professional classes and 3<sup>rd</sup> level education compared to the national figures.

\*Definition: Percentage of people who are under 15 or over 65 years of age out of the total population

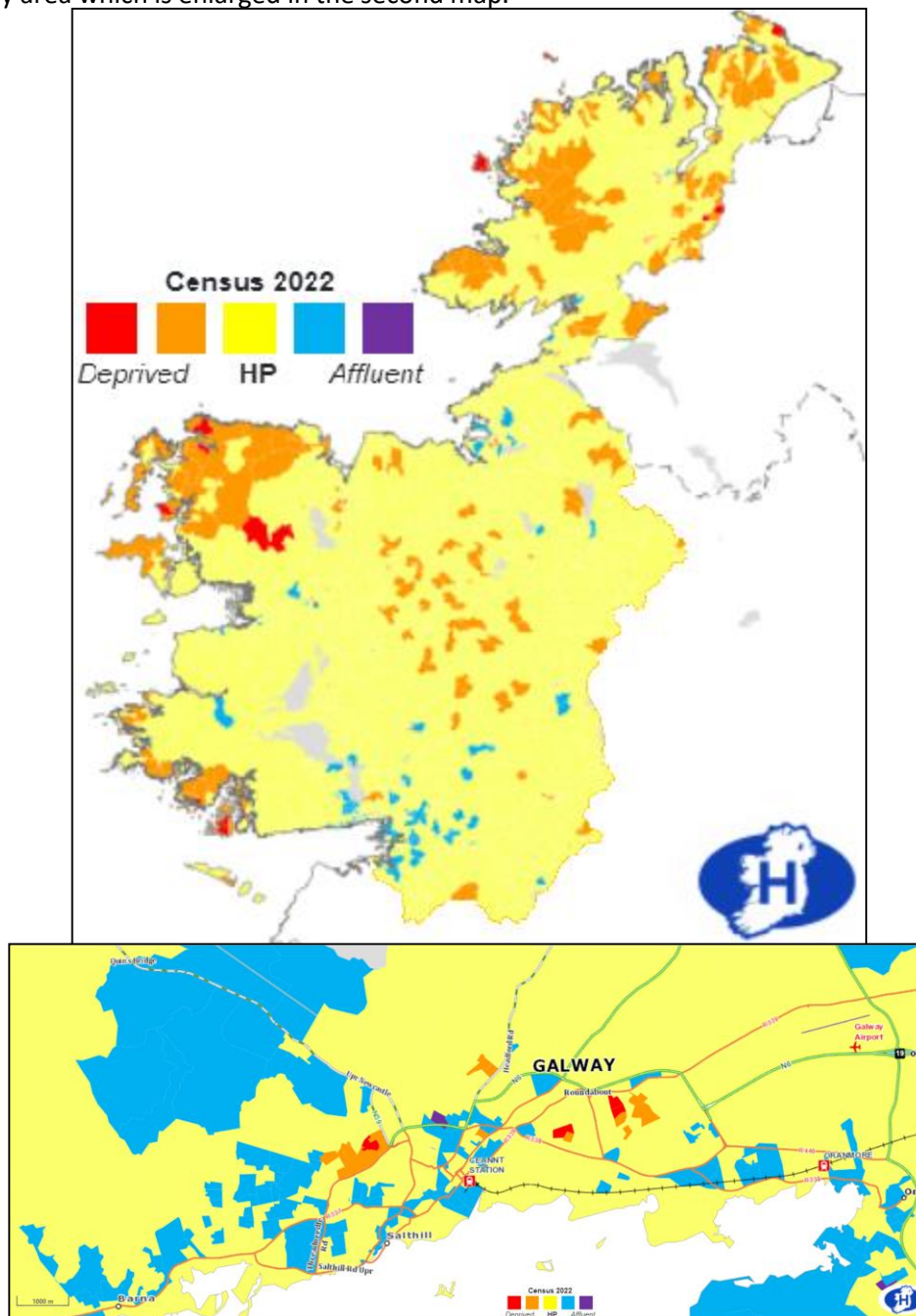
## Deprivation score – National, WNW and by CHN

The graph below shows the distribution of deprivation in the population nationally, in WNW and by CHN in the WNW region. CHNs are ranked from the top by degrees of deprivation (with the highest proportion of population that are extremely disadvantaged at the top – in red). As described above, WNW is less affluent than the national average but there is variation within the region. The three CHNs with the greatest proportion of people who are very or extremely disadvantaged are Donegal East (**18.7%**), North Mayo (**16.4%**) and Inishowen (**13.1%**). The three CHNs with the lowest proportion of people that are extremely or very disadvantaged are Central Galway & East Galway City (**2.9%**), West Galway City (**3.0%**) and Tuam, Athenry & Loughrea (**4.6%**).



# Deprivation

The map below of WNW uses a five-point scale to display deprivation. Red and orange are deprived areas, while blue and purple are affluent. Yellow indicates average deprivation/affluence. The WNW region includes the entirety of the Galway City area which is enlarged in the second map.



## Population Health Implications:

- There is a well-established social gradient in health. Increased deprivation is associated with poorer health outcomes, including lower life expectancy, increased risk of development of long term health conditions and mental illness.
- The WNW region has the lowest proportions in the affluent groups, with all CHNs being below the national average apart from the three located around Galway City (West Galway City, Central Galway & East Galway City and Tuam, Athenry & Loughrea). The WNW region has the highest proportions in the marginally below average & disadvantaged groups, with all CHNs having more than the national average of these levels of deprivation apart from the three CHNs located around Galway City.
- The proportions of those who are very or extremely disadvantaged are lower than the national average overall for the WNW region and are associated with increasing rurality (e.g. 18.7% of Donegal East and 16.4% of North Mayo compared to 2.9% of Central Galway & East Galway City).
- The maps show that there is variation within CHNs, with pockets of deprivation. Further identification of areas of high levels of disadvantage can be examined at small area level – allowing specific needs to be assessed, interventions targeted and tailored to reduce health inequities.



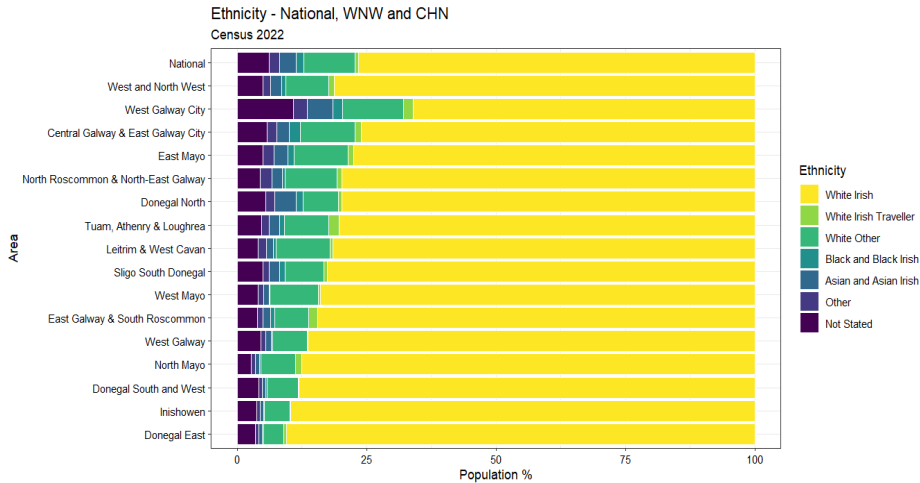
# Ethnicity and Country of Birth

People from minority ethnic groups can often experience poorer health than the rest of the population. Low incomes, poor working and housing conditions, poor social networks and nutrition as well as lack of access to health services can impact on the health of those from minority ethnic groups who have immigrated to a new country. This also affects the health of their children and future generations.

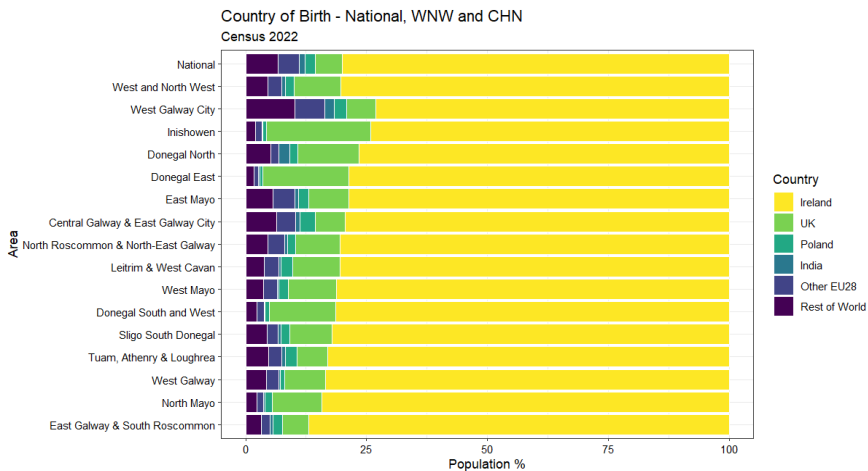
In WNW, the proportion of the population that identify as 'White Irish' is **81.3%**. The national average is **76.6%**.

There is variation in ethnic background between CHNs. The figure below which displays ethnicity nationally, for WNW and by CHN. The CHN with the lowest proportion of people identifying as 'White Irish' at the top of the graph. The three CHNs with the largest proportion of people that are **not** White Irish are the West Galway City (**34.0%**); Central Galway & East Galway City (**24.0%**) and East Mayo (**22.4%**).

The proportion of White Irish Travellers is higher than the national average (**1.0%** vs **0.6%**) and the proportion is over three times the national average in Tuam, Athenry & Loughrea (**2.1%**); West Galway City (**1.9%**) and East Galway & South Roscommon (**1.8%**).



Ethnicity was not stated for a considerable number of respondents in Census 2022. Country of birth also provides some indication of the ethnic, cultural and migration patterns within a region. The figure below displays country of birth nationally, for WNW and by CHN. **19.7%** of people in WNW were born outside of Ireland, slightly lower than the national average (**20.0%**). For CHNs, the highest proportion of people born outside of Ireland are the top of the graph. The three CHNs with the lowest proportion of people born in Ireland are West Galway City (**27.0%**), Inishowen (**25.9%**) and Donegal North (**23.5%**) Area Networks. In many CHNs, a large proportion of those born outside of Ireland were born in the UK.



## Population Health Implications:

- Areas with higher levels of migration and minority ethnic groups may require specific interventions to ensure culturally appropriate services and information is available to the population.
- Health needs may differ for different ethnic groups – including different risks of inherited conditions, or variations in healthcare seeking behaviour.
- The WNW region has a very similar ethnic composition compared to the national average.

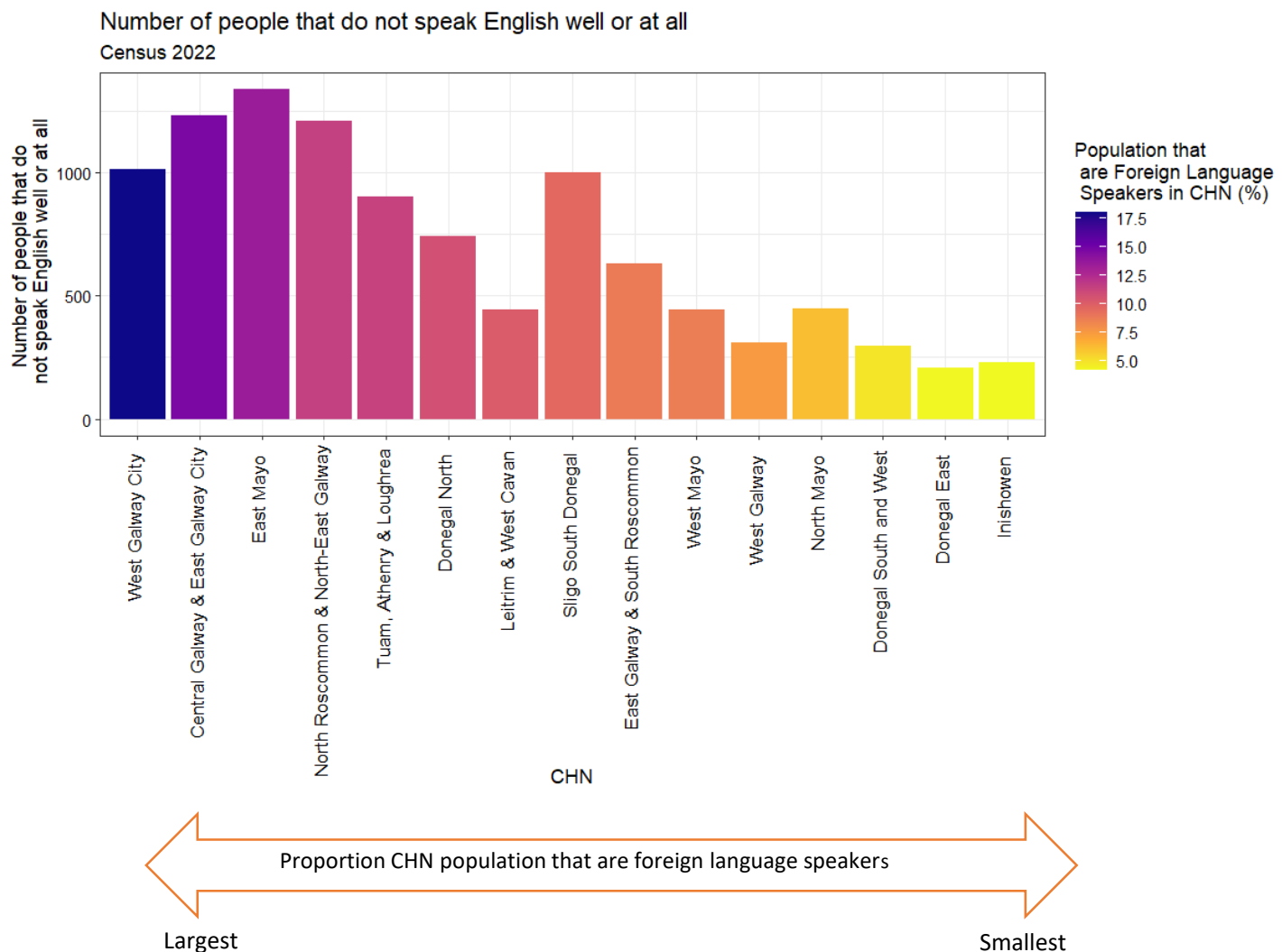
# Language

Language barriers lead to difficulties accessing suitable healthcare and unequal health outcomes. They also impact on the wider determinants of health, for example, employment. They impact on the cost and quality of healthcare.

In WNW, **10.3%** of people speak a language other than English or Irish at home, lower than the national average of **15.1%**. This ranged from **4.3%** in Donegal East and Inishowen to **18.0%** in West Galway City.

The graph below shows the number of people in each CHN that do not speak English well or at all, ordered by the percentage population in each CHN that are foreign language speakers.

The number of people that do not speak English well or at all is highest in East Mayo; Central Galway & East Galway City; and North Roscommon & North-East Galway. These also have higher proportions of the population that speak another language at home.



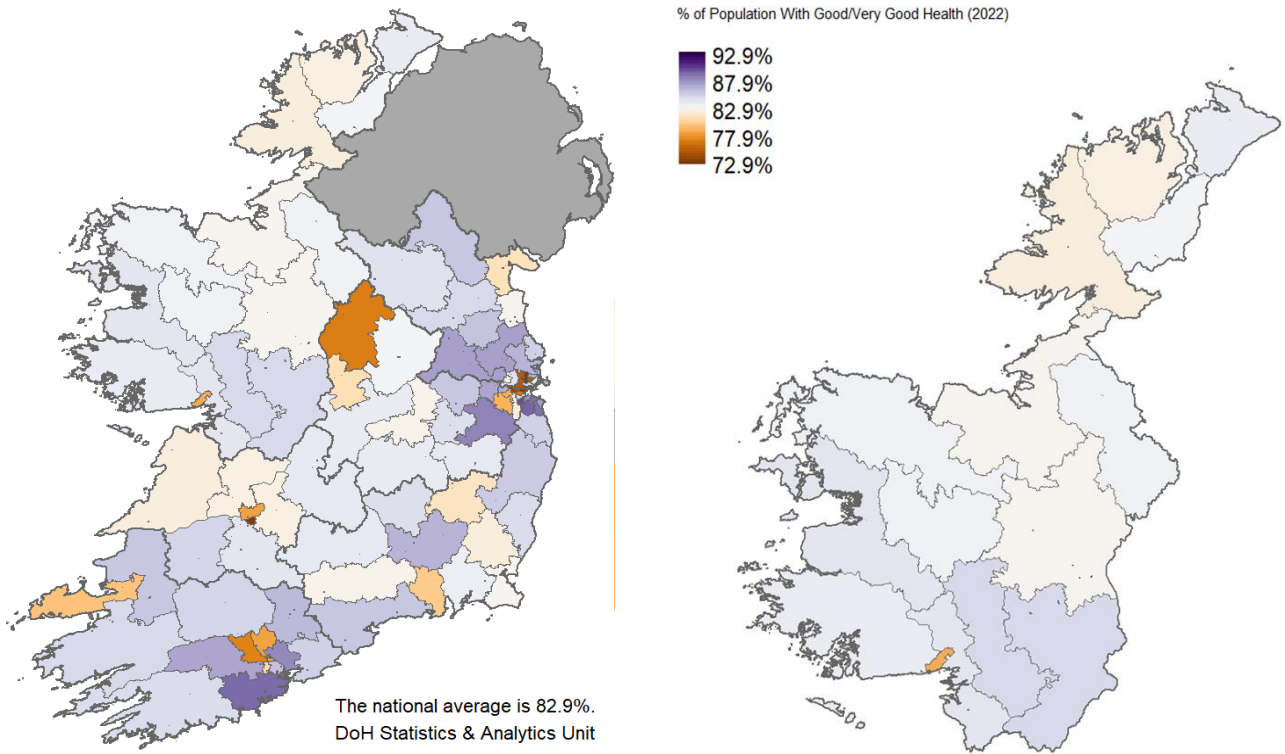
## Population Health Implications:

- Language barriers contribute to health inequities.
- Health communication and messaging needs to be tailored to the population so it can be understood and impactful. Posters and other written material may require translation to different languages depending on the location.
- Healthcare in CHNs in the WNW may require different levels of interpreter services – particularly in CHNs with higher proportions of people who do not speak English well or at all (e.g. 18.8% of the foreign language speaking population of East Mayo).

## General Health

Self-perceived health provides a well validated and widely used measure of actual health.

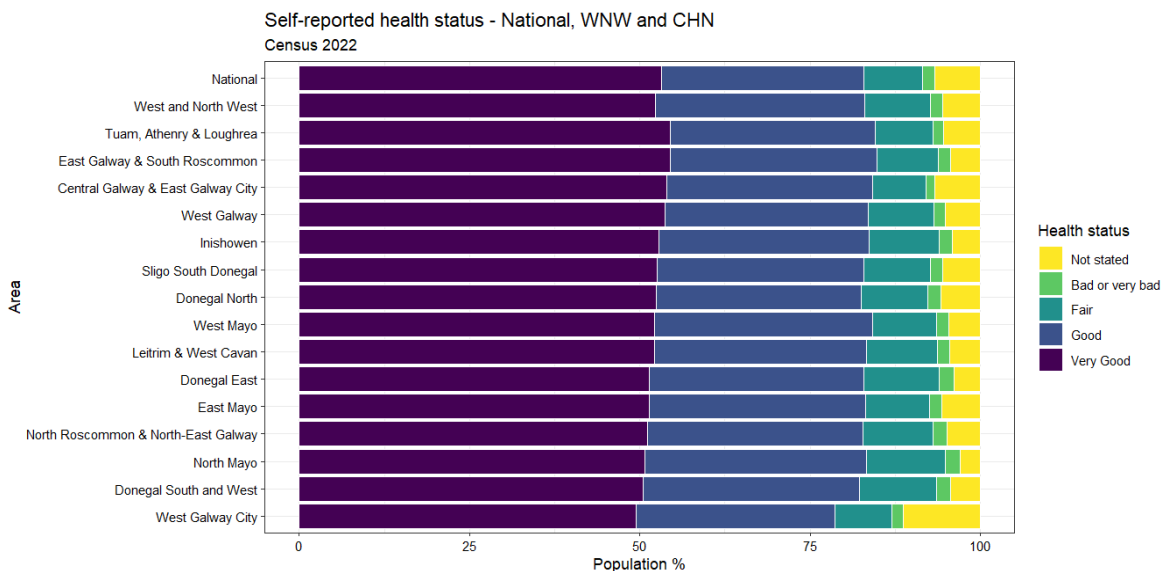
Within **WNW 83.1%** of the population stated that their health was either good or very good. However, the map below shows there was variation between CHNs.



## Variation between CHNs

The graph below displays self-reported health nationally, for WNW and by CHN. The proportion of people with very good health in WNW is **52.3%**, lower than the national average of **53.2%**. The CHNs with the highest levels of very good health are the Tuam, Athenry & Loughrea (**54.5%**), East Galway & South Roscommon (**54.4%**) and Central Galway & East Galway City (**53.9%**).

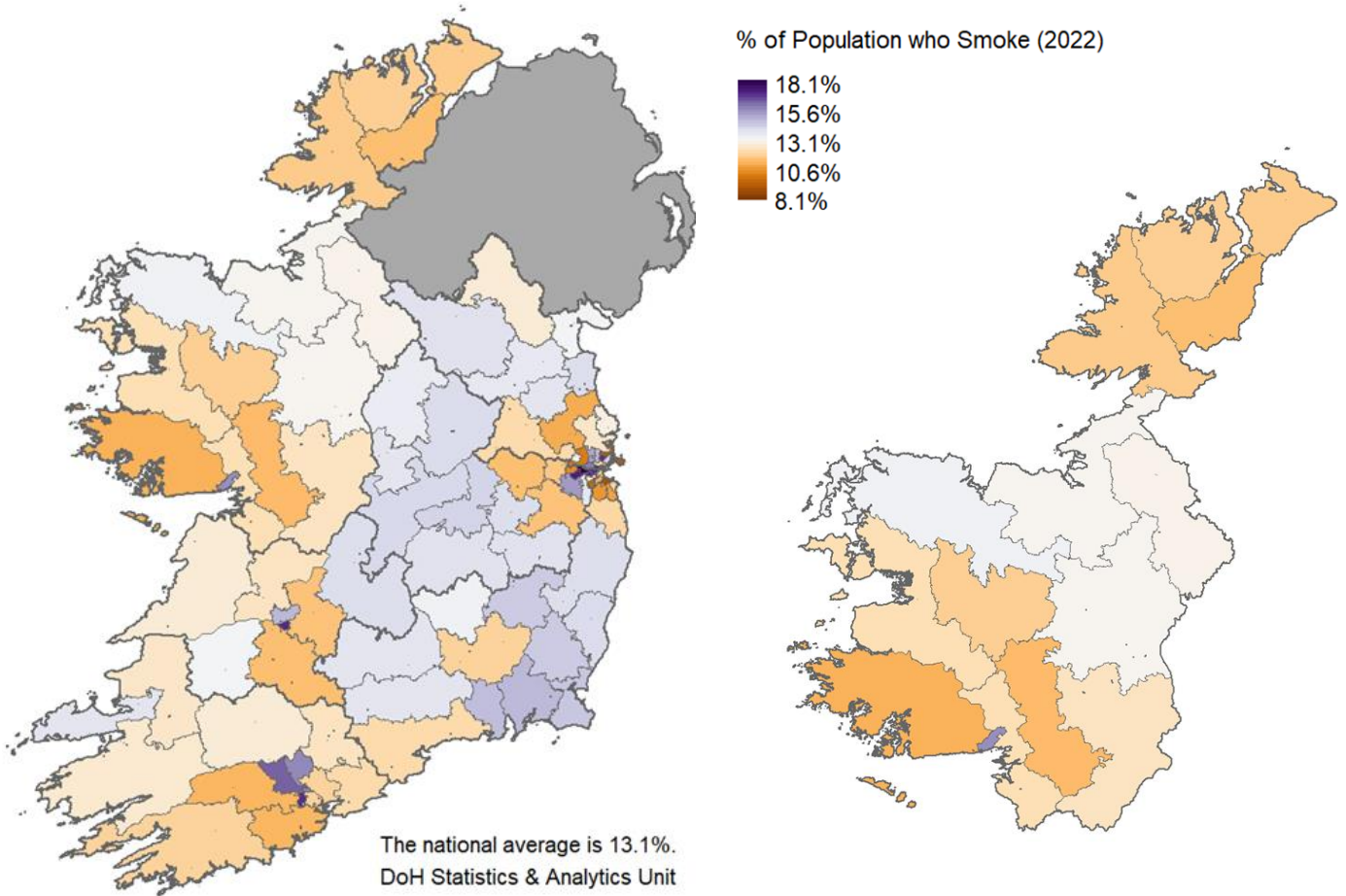
The proportion of people with bad or very bad health is **1.8%**, slightly above the national average of **1.7%**. CHNs with the highest levels of bad or very bad self-reported health are Donegal East (**2.2%**), North Mayo (**2.1%**) and Donegal South & West (**2.1%**).



## Percent of Population who smoke

- 12.5% of the WNW population smoke
- National average is 13.1%

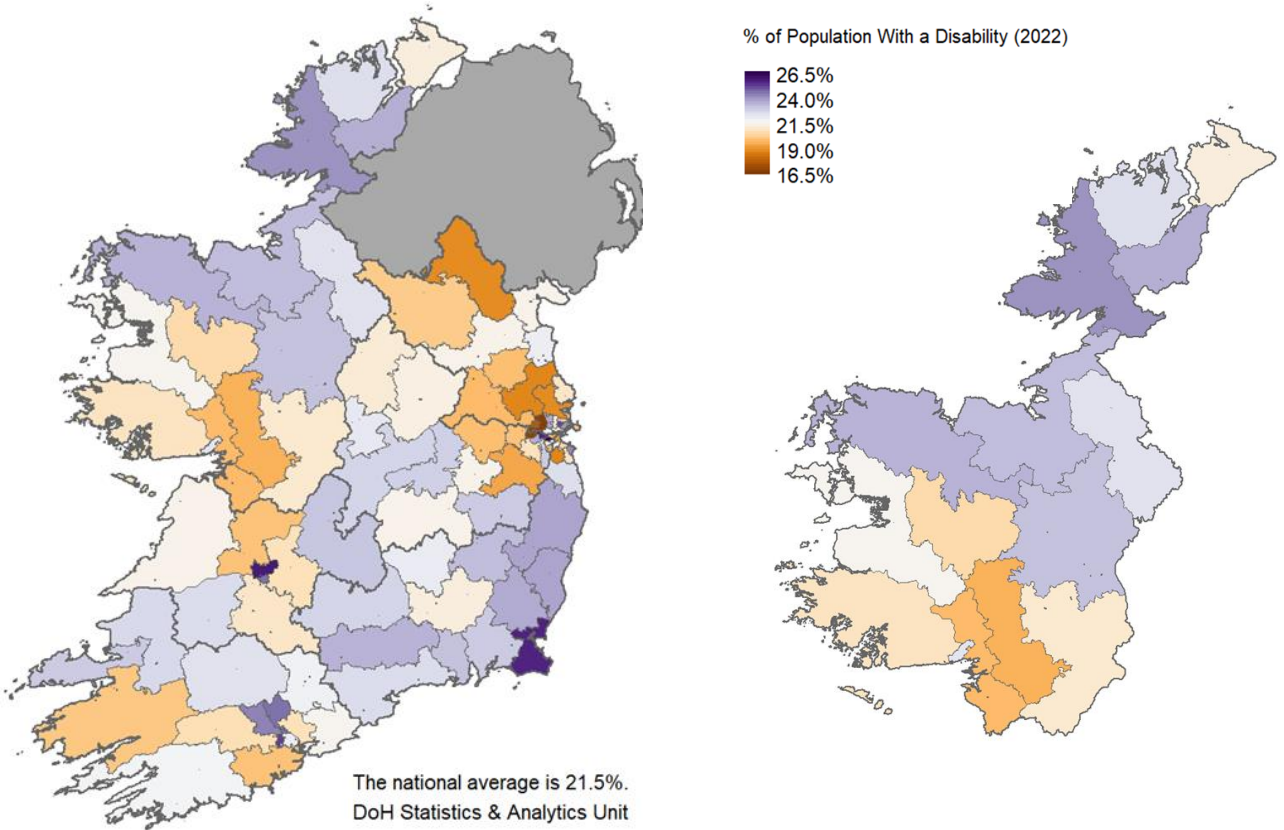
\*This data refers to the population who smoked either daily or occasionally in 2022. (Please note that this is a percentage of total population. This differs from Healthy Ireland where respondents are aged 15+.)



CHNs with the highest % of people who smoke	% of pop who smoke
West Galway City	15.5%
North Mayo	13.2%
North Roscommon and North East Galway	13.1%
Sligo South Donegal	13.1%
Leitrim and West Cavan	13.0%
East Galway and South Roscommon	12.4%
Central Galway and East Galway City	12.2%
West Mayo	12.2%
Donegal North	11.8%
East Mayo	11.7%

## Percent of Population with a Disability

- **21.8%** of the WNW population have “at least one long-lasting condition or difficulty to any extent”.
- The national average is **21.5%**

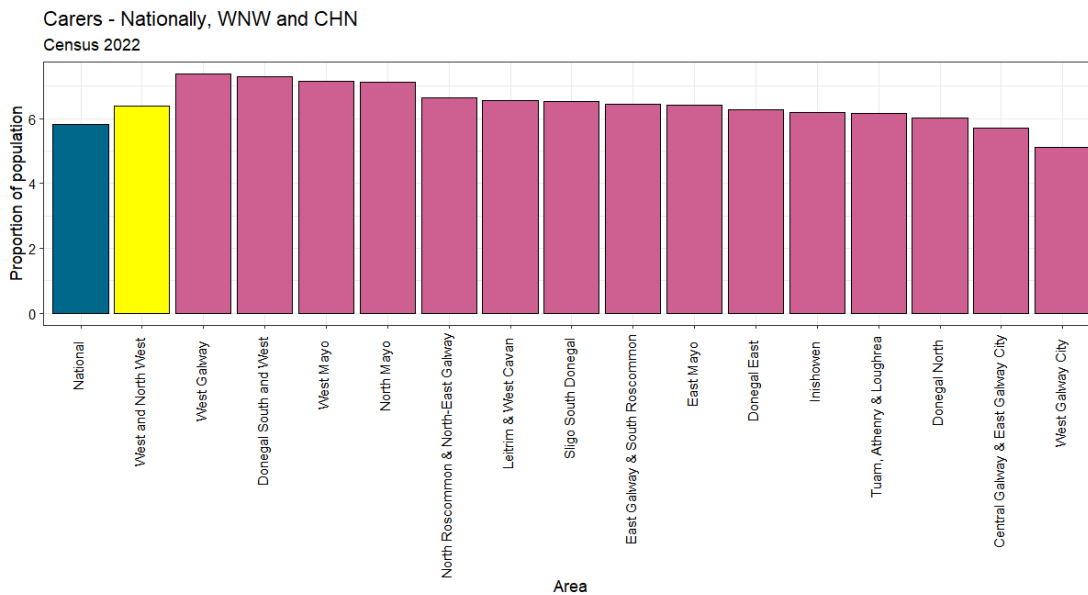


CHNs with the highest % of population with a disability	%
Donegal South and West	24.0%
Donegal East	23.5%
North Mayo	23.4%
Sligo South Donegal	23.2%
North Roscommon and North East Galway	23.1%
Donegal North	22.4%
Leitrim and West Cavan	22.4%
West Galway City	22.2%
West Mayo	21.5%
Inishowen	21.2%

## Percent of Population that are Carers

The graph below shows the proportion of the population that provide unpaid care, nationally, in WNW and by CHN.

- The proportion of people providing unpaid care in WNW (**6.4%**) is above the national average (**5.8%**).
- West Galway has the highest proportion of people providing unpaid care, at **7.4%**.
- West Galway City has the lowest proportion of people providing unpaid care, at **5.1%**.



### Population Health Implications:

**General health:** All except one CHN (West Galway City) report proportions of good or better health that is above the national average. There is variation within CHNs as those that are reporting higher than average proportions of bad/poor health, are also reporting good health at similar rates to the national average (such as in Donegal East; Inishowen; Donegal South and West; and North Mayo). CHNs with higher levels of deprivation report higher levels of bad/poor health.

**Smoking:** The overall smoking rate for the WNW region was lower than the national average. There was variation among CHNs for smoking prevalence with two CHNs having higher rates than the national average. There is some association between higher smoking prevalence and lower levels of health.

**Disability:** Over 20% of the WNW population have at least one long lasting condition or difficulty to any extent. This is higher in areas of increasing deprivation and in rural CHNs.

**Carers:** Every CHN within the WNW region (apart from the CHNs comprising Galway City) had higher proportions of unpaid carers than the national average. Higher proportions of carers were reported in areas with older populations.

# Education and Internet

Education is an important determinant of health and a strong relationship between education levels and health outcomes exists. Higher levels of education not only benefit the individual but have positive effects for the economy and society.

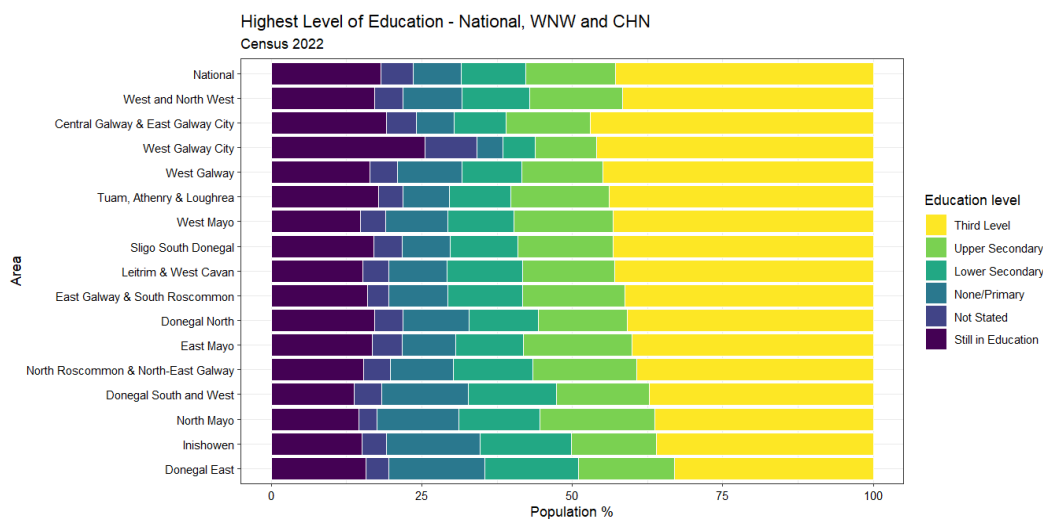
The graph below displays the highest level of education attained for the population aged 15+ years nationally, for DNE and by CHN. The CHNs are ordered with the highest proportion of people with third level education at the top of the chart.

**41.6%** have a third level education in WNW, slightly below the national average of **42.8%**.

Central Galway & East Galway City (**47.0%**), West Galway City (**46.0%**) and West Galway (**45.0%**) have the highest proportion of people with third level education.

The population with third level education is lowest in Donegal East (**33.1%**), Inishowen (**36.1%**) and North Mayo (**36.3%**).

Donegal East (**16.0%**), Inishowen (**15.5%**) and Donegal South and West (**14.4%**) have the largest proportion of people with primary or no education.



## Internet Access

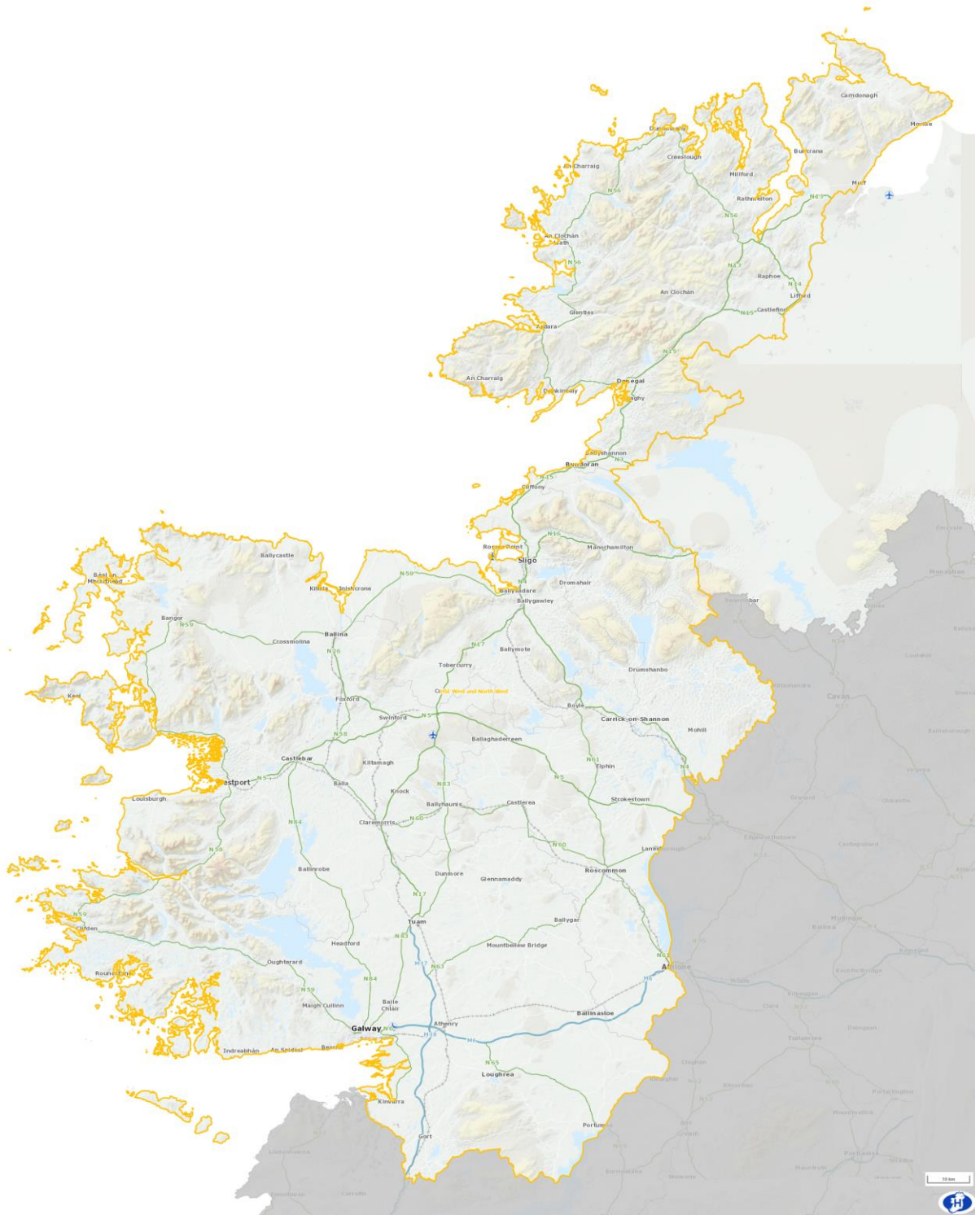
- **11.7%** of households have no internet access, higher than the national average of **8.7%**
- This ranges from **5.4%** of households (West Galway City) to **15.5%** of households (North Mayo).

## Population Health Implications:

- Improving educational outcomes in the most disadvantaged groups has the potential to make a positive impact on health inequities. The WNW region has the highest proportion of those with primary or no education (9.8% compared to 8% nationally). There is variation in educational attainment levels across CHNs, with the four lowest CHNs also being the most deprived.
- Lower internet access was more prevalent in areas of deprivation and in rural areas. Exploring alternative methods of providing health information in these areas may assist narrowing health inequities.

## Ordnance Survey Ireland map of West and North West (whole region)

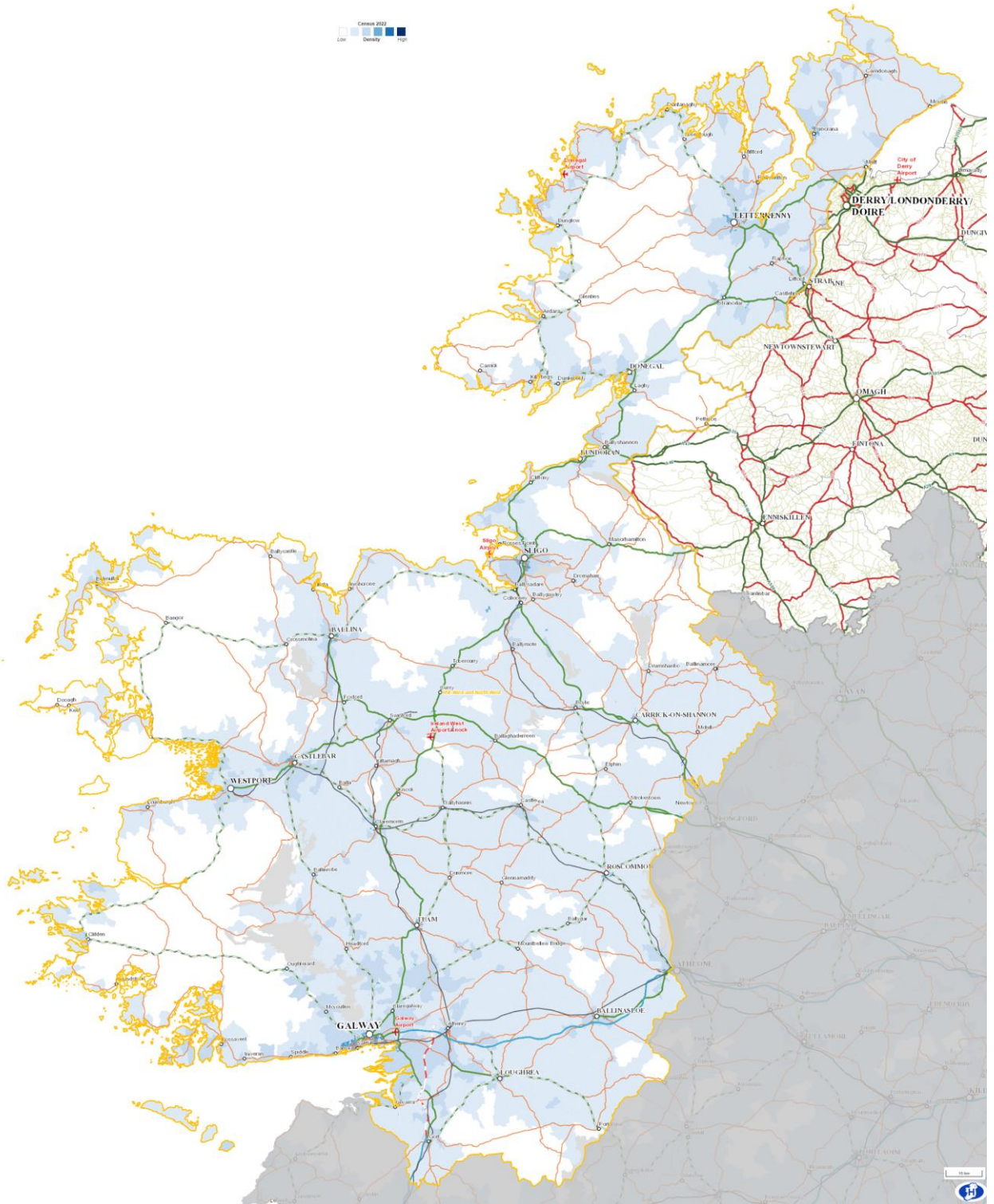
The following map shows the boundary (in yellow) and major population centres and road network for the entire Health Region.





## Population density map of West and North West (whole region)

The map below shows the population density of the whole HR, based on Census 2022 data. The density is shown at Small Area (SA) level, which provides the most granular view for mapping. The darker the colour, the more densely populated the area.



# Technical Notes and further information

Data for this profile is based on Census 2022. Unless otherwise specified, Health Atlas Finder (HSE) was used to access and analyse CSO data to inform this profile. The Department of Health Statistical Analysis Unit generated the Population Size map and associated data table, % Population Change map, General Health maps, Smoking maps and associated data table, Disability maps and associated data table.

For further detail on any parameter contact your local Public Health Department or access the Health Atlas Finder (see below).

The Regional Department of Public Health can provide local expertise for the generation, analysis and interpretation of population profiles e.g.

- Derive population profiles at sub-regional geographies e.g. Integrated Health Areas (IHA), Community Health Network (CHN), Primary Care Team (PCT), Electoral Division (ED) and Small Area (SA).
- Generate estimates for healthy behaviours and self-reported morbidity, applied to local populations and based on Healthy Ireland and TILDA national surveys.
- Interpret the significance of each parameter, define local variations and explore what this means in terms of health planning and the provision of services.

## **Health Atlas Finder**

Health Atlas Finder allows the user to create a detailed population profile for any selected geography. HAF is a web-enabled tool and does not require the user to download software or to use a password. The Atlas home page can be accessed at <https://www.healthatlasireland.ie/>; or the Finder can be accessed directly at: <https://finder.healthatlasireland.ie/>

Health Atlas Finder can allow the user to:

1. Prepare population pyramids and tables for any chosen area, based on Census 2022, and export these by PDF or Excel.
2. Show estimates of the numbers of people in a chosen geography with selected health behaviours and with selected chronic conditions.
3. Create maps for a given area, showing boundaries, services, population density and deprivation, and export these as a PNG (image) file.

Population projections will be available within the Finder by Q2, 2024, and this will allow the user to estimate the size and age structure of a population, projected as far ahead as 2056.

## **Department of Health profiles**

The Department of Health has prepared an interactive site which allows users to explore some of the principal parameters, and display them via map or table. The DoH site can be used to show comparisons of major parameters by HR or CHN and provide national, regional and sub-regional pictures of major Census characteristics. This site will go live in 2024.

# Appendix 1: Parameters available in Health Atlas

THEME	PARAMETER
Age & Sex	Age group (5 year) - all
Age & Sex	Age group (5 year) - female
Age & Sex	Age group (5 year) - male
Age & Sex	Age (0 - 19 yrs) - all
Age & Sex	Age (0 - 19 yrs) - female
Age & Sex	Age (0 - 19 yrs) - male
Deprivation	Deprivation level - HP Index
Deprivation	HP Index determinants
Deprivation	HP Index determinants - female
Deprivation	HP Index determinants - male
Health	Population by general health
Health	Population by general health - female
Health	Population by general health - male
Health	Health indicators
Health	Health indicators - female
Health	Health indicators - male
Health	Persons with a disability by sex
Health	Carers by sex
Health	Persons who smoke
Education	Population aged 15+ years by age education ceased
Education	Population aged 15+ years by age education ceased - female
Education	Population aged 15+ years by age education ceased - male
Education	Population aged 15+ years whose education has not ceased
Education	Population aged 15+ years whose education has not ceased - female
Education	Population aged 15+ years whose education has not ceased - male
Education	Population aged 15+ years by highest level of education completed
Education	Population aged 15+ years by highest level of education completed - female
Education	Population aged 15+ years by highest level of education completed - male
Occupation	Persons at work or unemployed by occupation
Occupation	Persons at work or unemployed by occupation - female
Occupation	Persons at work or unemployed by occupation - male
Occupation	Persons at work by industry
Occupation	Persons at work by industry - female
Occupation	Persons at work by industry - male
Occupation	Population aged 15+ years by principal economic status
Occupation	Population aged 15+ years by principal economic status - female
Occupation	Population aged 15+ years by principal economic status - male
Socio-Economic	Population by social class
Socio-Economic	Population by social class - female
Socio-Economic	Population by social class - male
Socio-Economic	Persons in private households by socio-economic group of reference person (by no. of persons)
Family	Population by marital status
Family	Population by marital status - female
Family	Population by marital status - male
Family	Families, family members & children in families, by size of family - Number of families in private households by size of family
Family	Families, family members & children in families, by size of family - Number of persons in private households by size of family
Family	Families, family members & children in families, by size of family - Number of children in private households by size of family
Family	Families, family members & children in families, by size of family - Number of families in private households by size of family
Family	Families, family members & children in families, by size of family - Number of persons in private households by size of family
Family	Families by age of youngest child by No. of families

THEME	PARAMETER
Family	Families by age of youngest child by No. of persons
Family	Family units by family cycle by No. of families
Family	Family units by family cycle by No. of persons
Family	Family units with children by size and age of children
Family	Family units with children by type of family and age of children by No. of children
Family	Family units with children by type of family and age of children - No. of families (to be added)
Family	Family units with children by type of family and age of children - No. of children (to be added)
Access	Number of households with cars
Access	Number of households with internet access
Commuting	Usually resident by means of travel to work
Commuting	Usually resident by means of travel to school, college or childcare
Commuting	Usually resident by means of travel to work, school, college or childcare (total)
Commuting	Population aged 5+ years by time leaving home to travel to work, school or college
Commuting	Population aged 5+ years by journey time to work, school or college
Commuting	Population aged 15+ years by working from home
Commuting	Number of children under 15 in Childcare by age
Language	Population aged 3+ years by ability to speak Irish
Language	Irish speakers aged 3+ years by frequency of speaking Irish
Language	Irish speakers aged 3+ years by frequency of speaking Irish - female
Language	Irish speakers aged 3+ years by frequency of speaking Irish - male
Language	Speakers of foreign languages by language spoken
Language	Speakers of foreign languages by ability to speak English
Migration & Ethnicity	Citizenship
Migration & Ethnicity	Birthplace
Migration & Ethnicity	Ethnic or cultural background
Migration & Ethnicity	Usual residence 1 year ago
Migration & Ethnicity	Population by religion
Housing	Private households by type of accommodation
Housing	Persons by household type of accommodation
Housing	Permanent private households by year built
Housing	Persons by permanent private household by year built
Housing	Permanent private households by type of occupancy
Housing	Persons by permanent private household by type of occupancy
Housing	Permanent private households by number of rooms
Housing	Persons by permanent private household by number of rooms
Housing	Permanent private households by heating
Housing	Permanent private households by water supply
Housing	Permanent private households by sewerage facility
Housing	Occupancy status of permanent dwellings on Census night
Housing	Private households by type
Housing	Persons by private household type
Housing	Private households by size
Housing	Persons by private household size



**An Roinn Sláinte**  
Department of Health