

# The Demographic situation of the Traveller Community<sup>1</sup> in April 1996

**Age Structure of the Traveller Community, 1996**

Age group	Travellers		Total Population <sup>2</sup>	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
0-14	5,454	50.1	859,424	23.7
15-64	5,290	48.6	2,352,781	64.9
65+	147	1.3	413,882	11.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,891</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,626,087</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Age structure

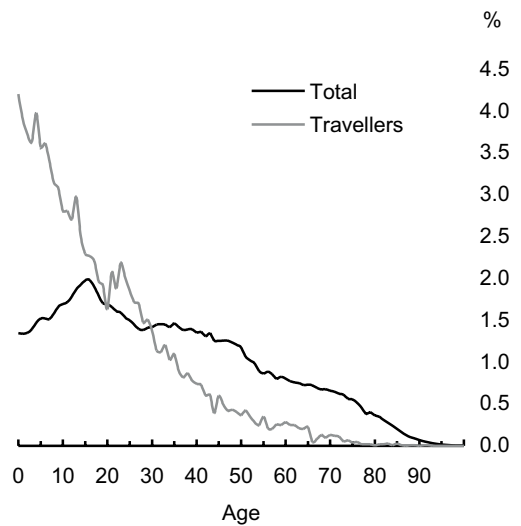
The Traveller Community identified during the course of the 1996 census had a markedly different age structure from that of the population in general. Fifty per cent of the Travellers distinguished by enumerators were aged less than 15 years compared with slightly less than a quarter for the population in general. Older Travellers (i.e. those aged 65 years and over) accounted for just 1.3 per cent of the total Traveller population while the corresponding proportion for the population in general was 11.4 per cent. The distinctive age structure of the Traveller Community resulted in a median age of 14 in 1996 compared with a national figure of 31.

According to the 1996 Census of Population the number of Travellers counted in halting sites, encampments, caravans and mobile homes was 10,891, representing 3 per thousand of the overall population of the State.

The contrast between the age structure of the Traveller Community and the overall population by single year of age is quite stark (see graph). The high birth rate prevalent in the Traveller Community is reflected in the high proportions in the younger age groups. In contrast the fall in the overall number of births in the State between 1980 and 1996 is shown in the graph for the total population.

The single year of age proportions of the Traveller population decline rapidly with increasing age indicating higher mortality rates for the Traveller Community compared with the population as a whole. As shown in the table above, just over 1 per cent of the Traveller Community survived beyond 65 years of age in 1996.

**Percentage population by age, 1996**



<sup>1</sup> The present release refers to the sub-group of Travellers identified by census enumerators during the fieldwork phase of the 1996 Census of Population. They lived mainly, though not exclusively, in halting sites, encampments, mobile homes and caravans. The figures do not purport to represent the totality of the Traveller Community living in the State at that time. The methodological note at the back of this release contains a more detailed description of coverage issues.

<sup>2</sup> Because the Traveller Community represents such a small share of the total population the latter is used for comparison purposes rather than the "settled Community" i.e. the total population less Travellers.

## Travellers by place of enumeration

The counties of Fingal (1,108), South Dublin (1,081) and Dublin County Borough (1,049) had the largest Traveller populations in 1996 (see Table 1). However, in proportionate terms (per thousand total population), Offaly (7.8) had the highest concentration of Travellers, followed by Fingal (6.6) and Galway County Borough (6.4). At the other end of the scale the counties with the smallest concentrations of Travellers were Donegal (0.9) and Monaghan (1.2).

Approximately 11.3 per cent of the 3,440 populated District Electoral Divisions (DEDs) and Wards contained Travellers in 1996. The twenty DED/Wards with the largest Traveller populations accounted for nearly a third of the overall Traveller population.

The DED/Wards with the highest percentages of Travellers were:

The Ward, Fingal	38.7%
Ballybeg South, Waterford CB	29.1%
Ballinascorney, South Dublin	23.0%
Eglis, Offaly	22.1%

There was little difference between the proportion of Travellers living in urban<sup>3</sup> areas (58.5 per cent) and that of the population as a whole (58.1 per cent).

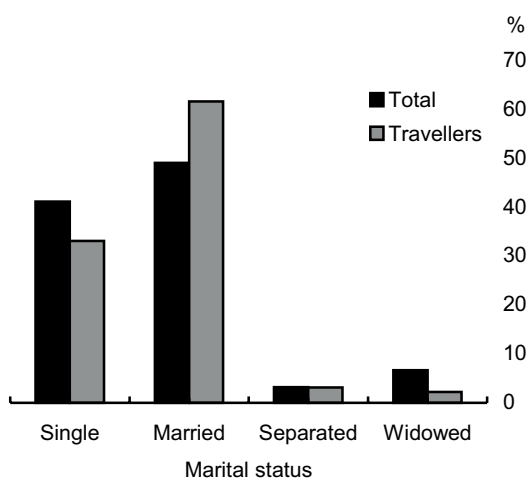
Of the towns with a population of 1,500 or more in 1996, Rathkeale (4.7 per cent) had the highest proportion of Travellers, followed by Tullamore (2.6 per cent) and Rathluirc - Charleville (2.2 per cent).

## Sex ratio

Overall the ratio of male to female Travellers was 102 per hundred (see Table 2). This contrasts with the population as a whole for which the corresponding ratio was 98.6. The male deficit in the 15-24 age group for Travellers may be due to migration impacting more heavily on the males than on the females.

In the overall population the effects of lower female mortality were evident for all age groups over 65 where there were only 75 males for every 100 females. However, this trend was not borne out in the case of the Traveller Community. Even allowing for the fact that so few Travellers survive beyond 65 years of age the mortality experience of female Travellers appears to be worse than that of males as evidenced by a sex ratio of 119 males to 100 females.

Population 15+ by marital status, 1996



## Marital status

The figures on marital status indicate that marriage is more prevalent among the Traveller Community than in the population in general. Only slightly more than a third of male Travellers aged 15 years and over were single in 1996 compared with 45 per cent for the overall population. The percentages single were lower for females: 30.7 per cent for Travellers and 37.4 per cent for the population as a whole (see Table 3).

Travellers also tend to marry at younger ages as shown by the figures for the 15-24 year age group in which 30.7 per cent of male and 39 per cent of female Travellers were married. The corresponding totals for the general population in this age group are 1.3 per cent and 3.0 per cent, respectively.

The rate of marital separation for Travellers stood at 4.8 per cent in 1996, slightly lower than the figure of 5.4 per cent for the State.

<sup>3</sup> Urban areas are defined as towns with a population of 1,500 or more.

### Household size

The high birth rates experienced by the Traveller Community resulted in an average household size of 4.9 in 1996 compared with 3.1 for the population as a whole. Nearly half of all Traveller households have at least five persons living in them compared with less than a quarter in the case of the general population (see Table 4).

The typical household type in the case of Travellers was husband and wife with children. This category represented 59.1 per cent of all Traveller households compared with 39.2 per cent for the overall population (see Table 5).

Traveller families had 3.5 children on average in 1996. The average number of children per family stood at 1.8 for the population at large at the same time.

### Place of birth

Nearly 92 per cent of usually resident Travellers at the time of the census were born in the State. This compares closely with the figure for the population in general (93 per cent). However, the greater tendency for Travellers to move within the State is reflected in the data in Table 7. At the time of the 1996 census nearly 37 per cent of Irish born Travellers lived in a county other than their county of birth compared with just over 20 per cent for the overall population.

Some 731 Travellers (6.7 per cent) residing in Ireland at the time of the 1996 census were born in Great Britain.

### Migration

An indication of the extent of migration is provided by comparing the address of usual residence at the time of the census with the address one year earlier. A surprisingly high 89.3 per cent of Travellers stated that they lived at the same address twelve months before the 1996 census (see Table 8). The proportion of Travellers who lived outside the State one year before the census was slightly less than 2 per cent.

Just over 9 per cent of the Traveller Community lived outside the State for a period of one year or more (see Table 9). Great Britain was the location of the vast majority of these and nearly 58 per cent of immigrant Travellers returned in the five year period 1991-1996.

Households by size, 1996

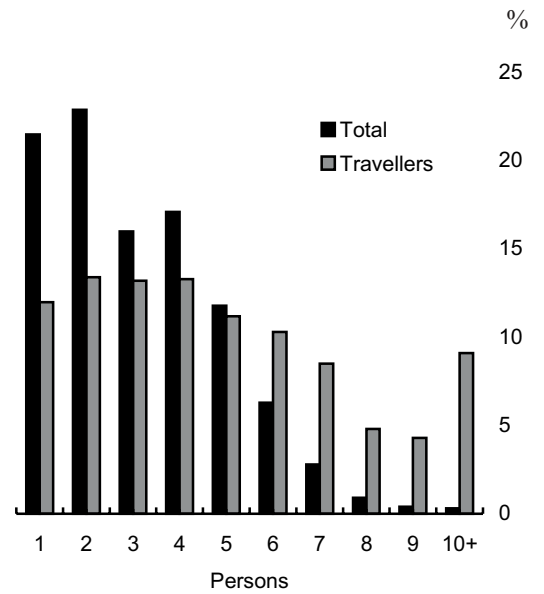


Table 1 Travellers in each Province, County and County Borough classified by sex, 1996

Province, County or County Borough	Persons	Males	Females	Travellers per 1,000 total population
Leinster	6,219	3,102	3,117	3.2
Carlow	153	73	80	3.7
Dublin	3,613	1,789	1,824	3.4
<i>of which</i>				
Dublin Co. Borough	1,049	511	538	2.2
Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown	375	180	195	2.0
Fingal	1,108	543	565	6.6
South Dublin	1,081	555	526	4.9
Kildare	248	118	130	1.8
Kilkenny	123	65	58	1.6
Laoighis	292	150	142	5.5
Longford	43	28	15	1.4
Louth	237	127	110	2.6
Meath	241	118	123	2.2
Offaly	459	222	237	7.8
Westmeath	215	112	103	3.4
Wexford	404	200	204	3.9
Wicklow	191	100	91	1.9
Munster	2,684	1,363	1,321	2.6
Clare	317	161	156	3.4
Cork	858	439	419	2.0
<i>of which</i>				
Cork Co. Borough	451	216	235	3.5
Cork County	407	223	184	1.4
Kerry	174	90	84	1.4
Limerick	495	239	256	3.0
<i>of which</i>				
Limerick Co. Borough	268	124	144	5.1
Limerick County	227	115	112	2.0
Tipperary, N.R.	321	174	147	5.5
Tipperary, S.R.	310	151	159	4.1
Waterford	209	109	100	2.2
<i>of which</i>				
Waterford Co. Borough	110	59	51	2.6
Waterford County	99	50	49	1.9
Connacht	1,623	868	755	3.7
Galway	855	456	399	4.5
<i>of which</i>				
Galway Co. Borough	366	197	169	6.4
Galway County	489	259	230	3.7
Leitrim	88	50	38	3.5
Mayo	269	135	134	2.4
Roscommon	203	113	90	3.9
Sligo	208	114	94	3.7
Ulster (part of)	365	178	187	1.6
Cavan	189	88	101	3.6
Donegal	115	57	58	0.9
Monaghan	61	33	28	1.2
State	10,891	5,511	5,380	3.0

**Table 2 Travellers classified by age group and sex, 1996**

Age Group	Persons	Males	Females	Males per 100 females
0- 4 years	2,118	1,095	1,023	107
5-14 "	3,336	1,679	1,657	101
15-24 "	2,227	1,094	1,133	97
25-34 "	1,537	767	770	100
35-44 "	820	429	391	110
45-54 "	438	238	200	119
55-64 "	268	129	139	93
65 years and over	147	80	67	119
Total	10,891	5,511	5,380	102

**Table 3 Travellers classified by age group, sex and marital status, 1996**

Age Group	Total	Marital status			
		Single	Married	Separated*	Widowed
<b>Persons</b>					
0- 4 years	2,118	2,118	—	—	—
5-14 "	3,336	3,336	—	—	—
15-24 "	2,227	1,402	778	45	2
25-34 "	1,537	277	1,204	47	9
35-44 "	820	59	707	40	14
45-54 "	438	26	375	20	17
55-64 "	268	18	201	14	35
65 years and over	147	17	84	3	43
Total	10,891	7,253	3,349	169	120
<b>Males</b>					
0- 4 years	1,095	1,095	—	—	—
5-14 "	1,679	1,679	—	—	—
15-24 "	1,094	741	336	17	—
25-34 "	767	145	602	18	2
35-44 "	429	45	368	13	3
45-54 "	238	17	204	13	4
55-64 "	129	12	100	8	9
65 years and over	80	10	54	1	15
Total	5,511	3,744	1,664	70	33
<b>Females</b>					
0- 4 years	1,023	1,023	—	—	—
5-14 "	1,657	1,657	—	—	—
15-24 "	1,133	661	442	28	2
25-34 "	770	132	602	29	7
35-44 "	391	14	339	27	11
45-54 "	200	9	171	7	13
55-64 "	139	6	101	6	26
65 years and over	67	7	30	2	28
Total	5,380	3,509	1,685	99	87

\* Including divorced.

**Table 4 Private households classified by size, 1996**

Size of Household	Total private households		Traveller households	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1 person	241,838	21.5	264	12.0
2 persons	256,795	22.9	297	13.4
3 "	179,819	16.0	291	13.2
4 "	191,812	17.1	294	13.3
5 "	133,011	11.8	247	11.2
6 "	70,246	6.3	227	10.3
7 "	31,939	2.8	187	8.5
8 "	10,065	0.9	106	4.8
9 "	4,362	0.4	95	4.3
10 or more persons	3,351	0.3	201	9.1
Total private households	1,123,238	100.0	2,209	100.0

**Table 5 Private households classified by composition, 1996**

Composition of Household	Total private households		Traveller households	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
One person	241,838	21.5	264	12.0
Husband and wife*	152,477	13.6	214	9.7
Husband and wife* with children	440,414	39.2	1,305	59.1
Lone mother with children	88,342	7.9	171	7.7
Lone father with children	17,049	1.5	29	1.3
Husband and wife* with children and other persons	76,138	6.8	71	3.2
Lone mother with children and other persons	16,762	1.5	23	1.0
Lone father with children and other persons	3,339	0.3	6	0.3
Two or more family units with or without other persons	6,132	0.5	15	0.7
Non-family households containing related persons	35,852	3.2	39	1.8
Non-family households containing no related persons	44,895	4.0	72	3.3
Total private households	1,123,238	100.0	2,209	100.0

\* Including cohabiting couples.

**Table 6 Traveller family units with two or more children, classified by type of family unit and age group of oldest child, 1996**

Type of Family Unit	Total	Age group of oldest child				
		0-4 years	5-9 years	10-14 years	15-19 years	20 years and over
Husband and wife*	1,161	218	297	225	278	143
Lone mother	153	21	27	31	34	40
Lone father	26	—	2	3	9	12
Total	1,340	239	326	259	321	195

\* Including cohabiting couples.

**Table 7 Usually resident travellers classified by place of birth and sex, 1996**

Birthplace	Persons	Males	Females
Ireland (Republic)	9,941	5,010	4,931
County of usual residence	6,268	3,204	3,064
Other county	3,673	1,806	1,867
Northern Ireland	135	67	68
Great Britain	731	381	350
Other country	24	14	10
Total usually resident	10,831	5,472	5,359

**Table 8 Usually resident travellers aged one year and over, classified by sex and usual residence one year ago, 1996**

Usual Residence One Year Ago	Persons	Males	Females
Ireland (Republic)	10,178	5,123	5,055
Same address	9,264	4,673	4,591
Elsewhere in county	430	207	223
In another county	484	243	241
Northern Ireland	9	3	6
Great Britain	183	100	83
Other country	6	1	5
Total usually resident	10,376	5,227	5,149

**Table 9 Usually resident travellers who lived outside the State for one year or more\*, classified by sex and year of taking up residence in Ireland (Republic), 1996**

Year of taking up Residence in Ireland (Republic)	Persons		Males		Females	
	Total	GB as a percentage of total	Total	GB as a percentage of total	Total	GB as a percentage of total
Before 1951	4	—	3	—	1	—
1951 - 1960	5	100.0	4	100.0	1	100.0
1961 - 1970	31	96.8	13	92.3	18	100.0
1971 - 1980	62	80.6	35	85.7	27	74.1
1981 - 1990	296	96.3	142	97.2	154	95.5
1991 - 1996	565	96.3	288	96.5	277	96.0
Not stated	12	58.3	7	71.4	5	40.0
Total	975	94.5	492	94.9	483	94.0

\* Including those who were brought to live in Ireland (Republic) before their first birthday.

## Methodological Note

The fieldwork for the 1996 Census of Population was carried out by 3,400 enumerators in two consecutive stages. The first of these stages, which took place in the three weeks before Census Day, 28 April 1996, involved each enumerator carrying out a comprehensive visual enumeration of the geographical area allocated to him/her. Blank census questionnaires were also distributed to all households in the relevant enumeration area at the same time. The second stage commenced on Monday morning, 29 April 1996 and entailed the collection and examination of the completed questionnaires.

Recommendation DR.49 of the Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community<sup>4</sup> proposed that the CSO “...include the Travelling Community as a separate heading in its classification of households in all future Censuses of Population”. Although arrangements for the printing of the 1996 census form were nearly finalised the CSO agreed to amend Panel C on the front of the census form by adding a category for Travelling people. The panel which was completed by the enumerator during the course of the fieldwork distinguished five different types of households as follows:

Private Household in a conventional house	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Private Household in a flat or bedsitter	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Travelling people	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Private Household in caravan, mobile home, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Non-Private Household (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

The enumerators were instructed to tick box 3 in all cases where it was clear to them that the household consisted of members of the Traveller Community. These were mainly, though not exclusively, Travellers living in halting sites, encampments, mobile homes and caravans. In general Travellers living in the settled community had a household type other than 3 ticked for them unless they indicated that they wanted to be recorded as Travellers.

Because it would not have been operationally practical, enumerators did not ask each householder in the State whether the relevant household contained a member or members of the Traveller Community. For this reason the figures contained in the present release do not purport to represent the totality of the Traveller Community living in the State at the time of the census. Nor is it claimed that the trends observed for the specific sub-group of Travellers covered in the present release are representative of the Traveller Community as a whole.

However, given the distinctive demographic profile of the sub-group of Travellers distinguished during the course of the census fieldwork it is considered that the results warrant publication.

The exact size of the Traveller population living as part of the settled community and not distinguished as Travellers (Box 3, Panel C) in the census is not known. An indication may be provided by comparing the 1996 census count of Traveller households (2,209) with the results obtained from the annual count of Travellers carried out by the Department of the Environment. The November 1996 count distinguished a total of 4,318 Traveller households, comprising 2,135 located in Local Authority or Group housing and a further 2,183 living in serviced or roadside units.

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<sup>4</sup> Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community, July 1995. Stationery Office, Dublin