



Census 2016 - Preliminary Results for the Western Region

In July the CSO published Preliminary Results of the Census of Population (conducted in April 2016). These results are for a small number of indicators and will be subject to revision when the full results are published next year. It is nonetheless useful to examine them as the period 2011-2016 was one of considerable fluctuation and uncertainty in population trends, nationally and in the Western Region.

This *WDC Insights* highlights some of the key results for the seven county Western Region. The population of each county is shown below in Table 1.

Table 1: Population in Western Region in April 2016

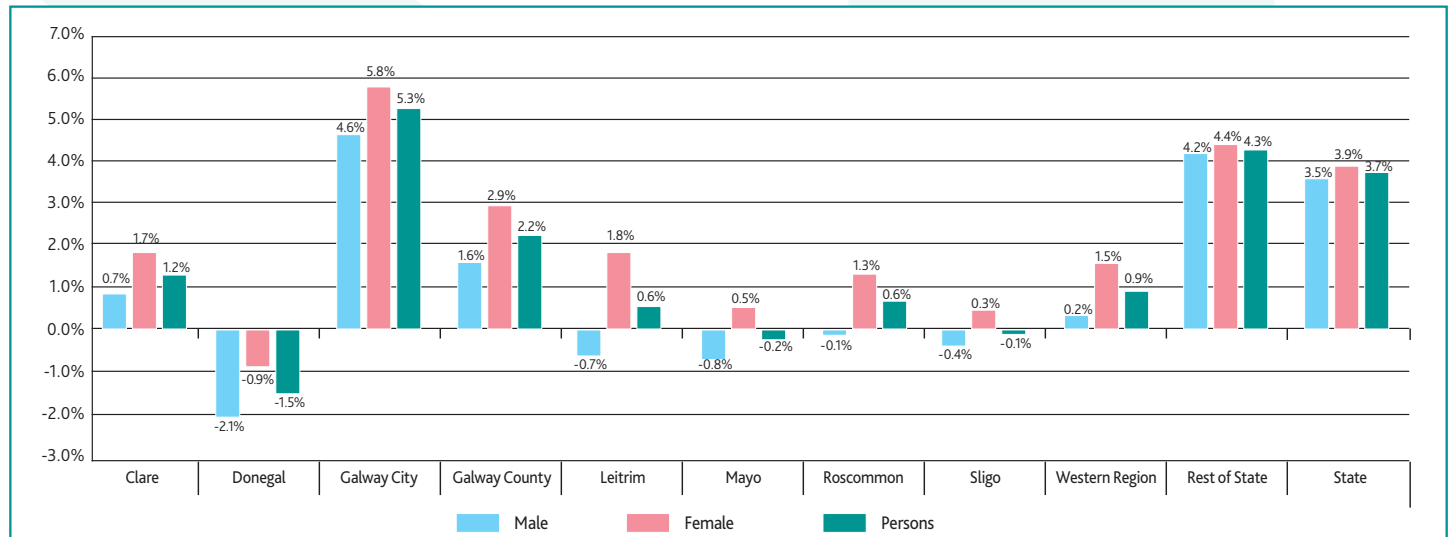
	Clare	Donegal	Galway City	Galway Co.	Leitrim	Mayo	Roscommon	Sligo	Western Region	State
Population 2016	118,627	158,755	79,504	179,048	31,972	130,425	64,436	65,357	828,124	4,757,976

Source: CSO, 2016, Preliminary Census Results, Table EP001

Population change in the Western Region

The Western Region population was 828,124 people in April 2016, an increase of 0.9% since 2011. This was much lower than the national population increase (3.7%). Three counties (see Fig 1) in the Western Region experienced population decline over the period: Donegal (-1.5%); Mayo (-0.2%) and Sligo (-0.1%) while Leitrim and Roscommon had the smallest population growth (both 0.6%) nationally. The highest population growth in the Western Region was in Galway City (+5.3%).

Figure 1: Percentage change in male, female and total population 2011-2016



Source: CSO, 2016, Preliminary Census Results, Table EP001

The difference in population growth rates for males and females was quite noticeable during this period (see Fig 1). In all counties (and in the Western Region and the state) there was higher growth in the female population than the male population. In the Western Region there was a 1.5% increase in the female population and 0.2% in the male population. For the rest of the state the difference was not so pronounced (males +4.2% and females +4.4%).

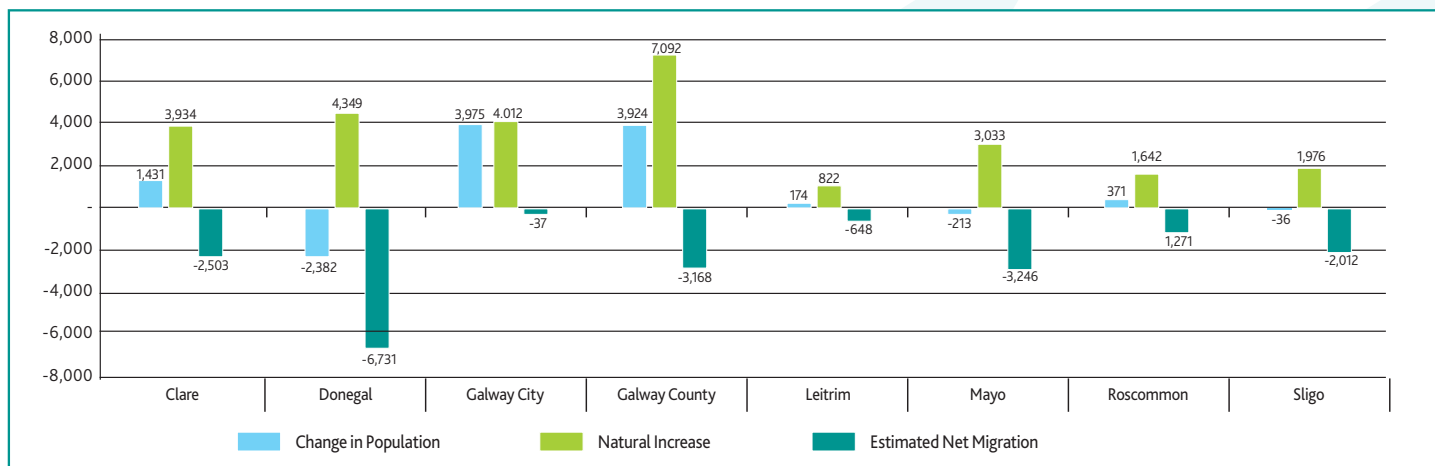


The male population fell in all western counties except Galway city and county and Clare. The largest male decline (-2.1%) was in Donegal. The gender difference was due to the pattern of migration (discussed below), given that natural increase is relatively similar for the two sexes. Donegal was the only county in the state that had a decline in the female population (-0.9%), while five counties, all in the Western Region, had declines in the male population.

Components of change-natural increase and migration

Changes in population arise from the number of births and deaths (termed natural increase or decrease) and migration. Every administrative area in Ireland had a positive natural increase (more births than deaths) during 2011-2016.

Figure 2: Population change, estimated net migration and natural increase in western region counties, 2011-2016



Source: CSO (2016), Preliminary Census Results, Table EP005

The second source of population change is net migration – the difference between the number moving into an area and the number moving out. All western counties and the majority of counties nationally had negative net migration between 2011 and 2016. Donegal (-8.4 per 1,000 population) and Sligo (-6.2) had the two highest rates of negative net migration nationally.

In the case of Donegal, Mayo and Sligo, the population loss caused by migration offset their gains from natural increase. In particular Donegal experienced very substantial population loss due to migration. In contrast Galway city only had a very marginal loss of population through migration.

All counties experienced a far greater loss to migration of men than women, although women in Galway city was the only example of a population group which grew due to positive migration (greater number moving in than moving out). In the case of Galway County and Leitrim, over 70% of their population loss due to migration, was male. The direct connection between job losses in construction and related traditional manufacturing sectors, very male dominated sectors, and the greater share of migration induced population decline accounted for by men is clear. Only five administrative areas nationally had positive migration for men, while 12 administrative areas nationally, including Galway city, had positive female net migration.

Conclusions

The Preliminary Results of Census 2016 show a worrying decline in population in three counties in the Western Region (Donegal, Mayo and Sligo), the only counties in Ireland to show a population decline. There was only very small growth in other Western Region counties with the exception of Galway.

Out-migration has been a key differentiating factor, as all counties experienced growth through natural increase. Population loss due to migration is a stark reversal of the long run trend of population growth since the early 90s.

As full results of Census 2016 are published over the course of 2017, in a series of thematic demographic and socio-economic reports, the WDC Policy Analysis Team will analyse the results and their implications for the Western Region.

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