

Chapter 2



HOUSING AND HOUSEHOLDS

INTRODUCTION

The housing and households sector has undergone significant change in the past twenty years. This is most evident in the area of house building, ownership and house prices. Housing provision in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland is broadly similar with the stock consisting largely of low-rise family size homes in terraced, semi-detached and detached dwellings. However, in recent years there has been a notable increase in the building of apartment blocks and mid-rise townhouse developments.

In both areas a proportion of the housing stock is provided and maintained by the public sector and is generally referred to as social housing. In both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland the proportion of housing which is rented from the public sector has been declining over the past two to three decades. Housing tenure is now broadly similar in both parts of the island with around three-quarters of all households in each area being owner-occupied.

The number of house completions and the level of house prices both showed record growth since the early 1990s. Dwelling completions in the Republic of Ireland rose to a record level of over 90,000 in 2006 having been just over 50,000 in 2001.

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Similarly, average house prices in the Republic rose from approximately €87,000 in 1996 to over €300,000 in 2006 while Northern Ireland house prices increased from £65,000 to £154,000 over the same period.

Average household size has been in decline for a number of years with a corresponding growth in the proportion of single-person and two-person households in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. This growth is projected to continue in both areas.

Table 2.1 Household size

Percentages and numbers

| Number of persons | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Republic of Ireland | | | | | | |
| 1 | 22 | 22 | 22 | 21 | 22 | 22 |
| 2 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 27 | 27 | 28 |
| 3 | 17 | 18 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 19 |
| 4 | 18 | 17 | 17 | 18 | 17 | 17 |
| 5 | 11 | 11 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| 6 or more | 7 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 5 |
| Average household size | 2.95 | 2.91 | 2.88 | 2.88 | 2.84 | 2.85 |
| Sample base (households) | 39,000 | 39,000 | 39,000 | 39,000 | 39,000 | 39,000 |
| Northern Ireland¹ | | | | | | |
| 1 | 26 | 28 | 26 | 25 | 28 | 27 |
| 2 | 29 | 29 | 31 | 33 | 32 | 32 |
| 3 | 18 | 16 | 14 | 17 | 15 | 16 |
| 4 | 15 | 15 | 17 | 14 | 15 | 15 |
| 5 | 7 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 6 |
| 6 or more | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Average household size | 2.67 | 2.58 | 2.61 | 2.56 | 2.52 | 2.54 |
| Sample base (households) | 2,805 | 2,782 | 2,718 | 2,772 | 2,594 | 2,656 |

Sources Republic of Ireland: Quarterly National Household Survey, CSO
Northern Ireland: Continuous Household Survey, NISRA

¹Northern Ireland data are for financial years.

There has been a general downward trend in average household size between 2001 and 2006 in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland has a generally higher proportion of one or two person households at around 60 per cent compared with around 50 per cent in the Republic of Ireland. Conversely, the Republic of Ireland has a higher proportion of larger households containing five or more people.

Over the period 2001 to 2006, both areas have witnessed a gradual increase in the proportion of two person households in conjunction with a decrease in households containing six or more persons.

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Table 2.2 (a) Household tenure in the Republic of Ireland

| Status | Percentages | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| | 1991 | 2002 | 2006 |
| Owned outright | 39 | 36 | 34 |
| Owned with mortgage | 35 | 38 | 39 |
| Rented from local authority | 10 | 7 | 7 |
| Rented other | 7 | 11 | 13 |
| Rent free | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Other | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source Republic of Ireland: Census of Population, CSO

Table 2.2 (b) Household tenure in Northern Ireland

| Status | Percentages and numbers | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|------------|------------|
| | 1991 | 2002 | 2006 |
| Owned outright | 27 | 31 | 33 |
| Owned with mortgage | 35 | 41 | 39 |
| Rented from local authority | 31 | 17 | 14 |
| Rented other | 7 | 10 | 12 |
| Rent free | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Sample base (households) | 3,106 | 2,781 | 2,653 |

Source Northern Ireland: Continuous Household Survey, NISRA

In the Republic of Ireland the overall proportion of home ownership has remained stable over the 15 years from 1991 to 2006, with just under three quarters of all households living in owner occupied houses. However, a higher percentage is now owned with a mortgage than owned outright, which is a reversal of the situation in the early 1990s.

Over the same period, the proportion of households in owner occupation has increased significantly in Northern Ireland, from 62 per cent in 1991 to 72 per cent in 2006. This rise in home ownership was partly driven by the policy introduced in 1979 which has seen the Northern Ireland Housing Executive selling more than 110,000 social housing dwellings to sitting tenants.

The rental market in both areas has also changed during these fifteen years. In both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland a lower proportion of households are now renting from local authorities with a corresponding increase in other rentals, including the private rental market.

Table 2.3 An assessment of overcrowding: difference from the 'bedroom standard'¹ by tenure, 2004-05

Percentage of households

| Difference from bedroom standard | Owned outright | Owned with mortgage | Rented from local authority/NIHE ² | Other rented | All tenure types |
|----------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|---|--------------|------------------|
| Republic of Ireland | | | | | |
| 1 or more below standard | 2 | 3 | 11 | 9 | 3 |
| Equals standard | 10 | 14 | 44 | 32 | 16 |
| 1 above standard | 27 | 38 | 29 | 33 | 32 |
| 2 or more above standard | 61 | 45 | 17 | 27 | 49 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Northern Ireland | | | | | |
| 1 or more below standard | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| Equals standard | 8 | 16 | 28 | 32 | 17 |
| 1 above standard | 23 | 39 | 46 | 36 | 35 |
| 2 or more above standard | 67 | 43 | 21 | 28 | 46 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Sources Republic of Ireland: Household Budget Survey, CSO
Northern Ireland: Continuous Household Survey, NISRA

¹For a detailed explanation of the term 'bedroom standard' please see the technical note for table 2.3.

²Local authority in Republic of Ireland; Northern Ireland Housing Executive in Northern Ireland.

Occupation density in the owner occupied sector is very similar in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Between 10 and 20 per cent of owner-occupied households in each area live in houses with either insufficient or just enough bedrooms to meet the threshold 'required' by the composition of the household occupants. Up to 90 per cent of owner-occupied households live in homes with one or more additional bedrooms than 'required'.

In both regions, higher proportions of households in the social rented sector live in houses that fall below or are equal to the bedroom standard. However, there is a notably higher proportion of such households in the Republic of Ireland at 55 per cent of socially rented households compared with 32 per cent in Northern Ireland. In Northern Ireland, 67 per cent of houses rented from NIHE are above the standard with only 4 per cent falling below.

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Table 2.4 Dwellings completed

| | | | | | | <i>Numbers</i> |
|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Description | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
| Republic of Ireland | | | | | | |
| Dwellings completed | | | | | | |
| Private | 47,727 | 51,932 | 62,686 | 71,808 | 75,398 | 88,211 |
| Social housing | 4,875 | 5,763 | 6,133 | 5,146 | 5,559 | 5,208 |
| Total | 52,602 | 57,695 | 68,819 | 76,954 | 80,957 | 93,419 |
| Northern Ireland | | | | | | |
| Dwellings completed | | | | | | |
| Private | 12,120 | 12,937 | 13,584 | 15,143 | 16,065 | 16,924 |
| Social housing | 1,530 | 910 | 930 | 413 | 998 | 1,041 |
| Total | 13,650 | 13,847 | 14,514 | 15,556 | 17,063 | 17,965 |

Sources Republic of Ireland: Department of Environment and Local Government
Northern Ireland: NIHE, District Council Building Control Offices, DRD

House-building increased throughout the period 2001 to 2006 in both areas. Growth in the number of dwellings completed was particularly strong in the Republic of Ireland from 2005 into 2006. The residential construction sector has been particularly buoyant in the Republic of Ireland in recent years. Following a notable down-turn in completions during the early part of the period, dwelling completions in the social housing sector in Northern Ireland revived somewhat in 2005 and 2006.

Figure 2.1 Growth rates in total dwellings completed, 2001-2006

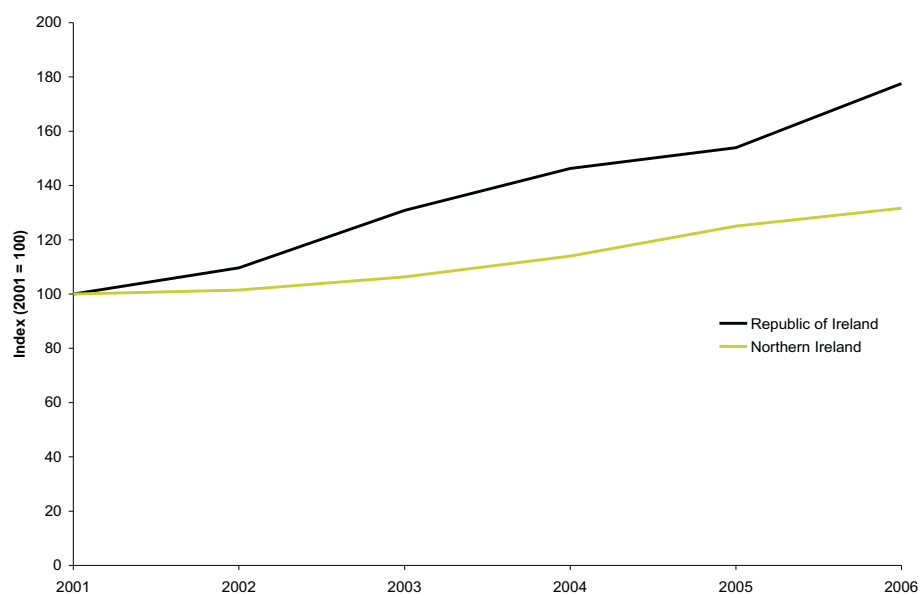


Table 2.5 Average new house prices

Units as indicated

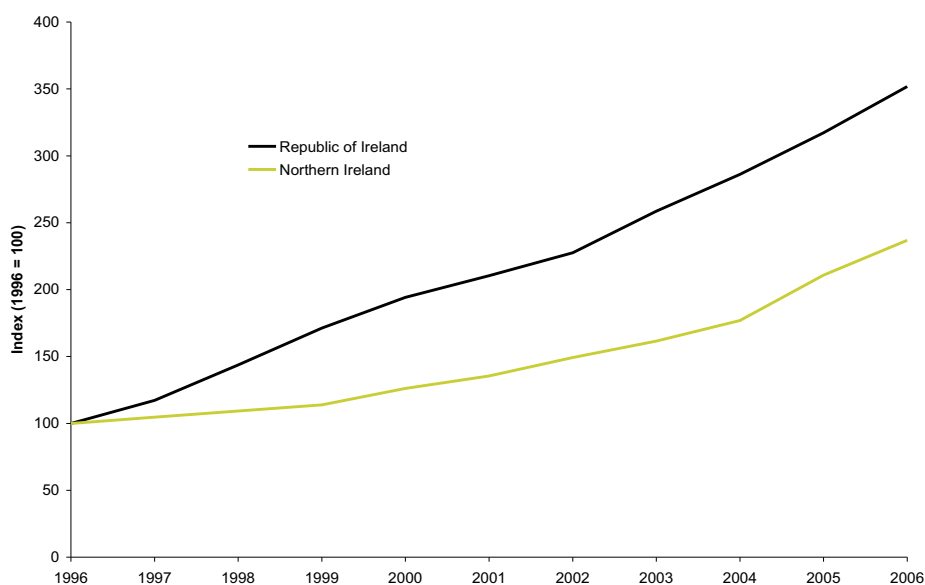
| 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Republic of Ireland (€) | | | | | | | | | | |
| 87,000 | 102,000 | 125,000 | 149,000 | 169,000 | 183,000 | 198,000 | 225,000 | 249,000 | 276,000 | 306,000 |
| Northern Ireland (£)¹ | | | | | | | | | | |
| 65,000 | 68,000 | 71,000 | 74,000 | 82,000 | 88,000 | 97,000 | 105,000 | 115,000 | 137,000 | 154,000 |

Sources Republic of Ireland: Department of Environment and Local Government
Northern Ireland: NHBC

¹Prior to 2000, Northern Ireland figures are published for financial years i.e. the figure for 1996 is for the period April 1996 to March 1997. From 2000 onwards figures are for calendar years.

Although these figures are in current, not constant, prices, they show significant growth in the average price of new houses in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Over the decade 1996 to 2006 the average price of a new home has more than trebled in the Republic of Ireland and more than doubled in Northern Ireland. Growth rates were particularly strong in the first half of the period for the Republic of Ireland and in the latter half for Northern Ireland.

Figure 2.2 Growth rate in new house prices, 1996-2006



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Table 2.6 Average gross weekly household income by source, 2005-06

Percentages and numbers

| Republic of Ireland | | Northern Ireland | |
|----------------------|------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Income source | | Income source | |
| Wages and salaries | 61 | Wages and salaries | 72 |
| State transfers | 22 | Social security benefits | 16 |
| Other sources | 17 | Other sources | 12 |
| Total | 100 | Total | 100 |
| Sample base | 5,836 | Sample base | 1,895 |

Sources Republic of Ireland: EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions, CSO
Northern Ireland: Family Resources Survey, DSD

In the Republic of Ireland in 2005-06, 61 per cent of household income was generated by wages and salaries compared to 72 per cent in Northern Ireland. In conjunction with this, a higher proportion of household income was derived from state transfers in the Republic of Ireland, 22 per cent, compared to a rate of 16 per cent of household income being derived from social security benefits in Northern Ireland. Similarly, a greater proportion of household income in the Republic was generated from 'other sources' which includes investments and property incomes.

Table 2.7 Weekly household expenditure on goods and services, 2004-05

Percentages and numbers

| | Republic of Ireland | | Northern Ireland | | |
|---|---------------------|------------|---|---------------|------------|
| | € | % | £ | % | |
| Food and non-alcoholic drinks | 105.71 | 13 | Food and non-alcoholic drinks | 45.76 | 12 |
| Alcoholic drinks, tobacco and narcotics | 47.18 | 6 | Alcoholic drinks, tobacco and narcotics | 12.05 | 3 |
| Clothing and footwear | 42.93 | 5 | Clothing and footwear | 29.31 | 8 |
| Housing (net), fuel and power | 85.56 | 11 | Housing (net) ¹ , fuel and power | 30.54 | 8 |
| Household goods and services | 61.50 | 8 | Household goods and services | 35.07 | 9 |
| Health | 20.93 | 3 | Health | 2.96 | 1 |
| Transport | 97.31 | 12 | Transport | 47.47 | 13 |
| Communication | 29.46 | 4 | Communication | 10.97 | 3 |
| Recreation and culture | 90.34 | 11 | Recreation and culture | 43.08 | 11 |
| Education | 16.30 | 2 | Education | 2.72 | 1 |
| Restaurants and hotels | 50.57 | 6 | Restaurants and hotels | 32.99 | 9 |
| Miscellaneous goods and services | 92.55 | 12 | Miscellaneous goods and services | 30.63 | 8 |
| All expenditure groups | 740.34 | 94 | All expenditure groups | 323.56 | 86 |
| Other expenditure items | 46.78 | 6 | Other expenditure items | 54.21 | 14 |
| Total expenditure | 787.12 | 100 | Total expenditure | 377.77 | 100 |
| Number of households | 6,884 | | Number of households | 533 | |

Sources Republic of Ireland: Household Budget Survey, CSO
Northern Ireland: Expenditure and Food Survey, NISRA

¹Excluding mortgage payments and Northern Ireland rates.

The composition of household expenditure is broadly similar in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland with households spending similar proportions of their total weekly expenditure across each of the expenditure categories.

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Table 2.8 Expenditure per household per week on various food items¹*Percentages and numbers*

| | Republic of Ireland | | | | Northern Ireland | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| | 1994-95 | | 2004-05 | | 1994-95 | | 2004-05 | |
| | € | % | € | % | £ | % | £ | % |
| Bread, rice & cereals | 11.58 | 13 | 21.93 | 21 | 3.4 | 8 | 4.5 | 10 |
| Milk | 7.11 | 8 | 5.68 | 5 | 3.2 | 8 | 2.6 | 6 |
| Cheese and curd | 1.41 | 2 | 2.80 | 3 | 1.0 | 2 | 1.0 | 2 |
| Eggs | 0.95 | 1 | 1.04 | 1 | 0.5 | 1 | 0.4 | 1 |
| Buns, cakes, biscuits | 3.95 | 4 | 5.74 | 5 | 3.4 | 8 | 3.5 | 8 |
| Beef (fresh, chilled or frozen) | 4.79 | 5 | 5.72 | 5 | 2.9 | 7 | 2.3 | 5 |
| Poultry (fresh, chilled or frozen) | 3.66 | 4 | 4.40 | 4 | 2.0 | 5 | 1.9 | 4 |
| Pork (fresh, chilled or frozen) | 1.45 | 2 | 1.48 | 1 | 0.8 | 2 | 0.7 | 2 |
| Fresh vegetables | 5.41 | 6 | 7.26 | 7 | 2.8 | 7 | 2.5 | 5 |
| Fresh fruit | 2.46 | 3 | 4.95 | 5 | 2.5 | 6 | 2.0 | 4 |
| Other food items | 42.92 | 48 | 34.38 | 33 | 16.7 | 40 | 20.3 | 44 |
| Total expenditure on food | 85.69 | 95 | 95.38 | 90 | 39.2 | 93 | 41.7 | 91 |
| Non-alcoholic beverages | 4.25 | 5 | 10.33 | 10 | 3.1 | 7 | 4.1 | 9 |
| Food and non-alcoholic drinks | 89.94 | 100 | 105.71 | 100 | 42.2 | 100 | 45.8 | 100 |

Sources Republic of Ireland: Household Budget Survey, CSO
Northern Ireland: Expenditure and Food Survey, NISRA

¹The COICOP classification was introduced in 2001-02; therefore, figures before and after this date are not precisely comparable. Categories above have been mapped as closely as possible between classifications. Data are in current prices.

In 2004-05, households in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland spent a similar proportion of their weekly expenditure on food and non-alcoholic drinks, at around 13 per cent and 12 per cent respectively (see table 2.7). However, over the decade from 1994-95 to 2004-05 the absolute increase in household expenditure on these items was notably higher in the Republic of Ireland than in Northern Ireland. Total expenditure on food in the Republic of Ireland was 11 per cent higher in 2004-05 than in 1994-95 compared with a rise of 6 per cent in Northern Ireland. For non-alcoholic beverages, Republic of Ireland households' weekly expenditure was over 140 per cent higher in 2004-05 than in 1994-95. The equivalent increase among households in Northern Ireland was 32 per cent. The effects of inflation are included in these figures as the data are in current, not constant, prices.

There has been a particularly notable increase in expenditure on bread, rice and cereals in the Republic of Ireland. This has been both in terms of the absolute level of expenditure and as a proportion of total food expenditure, whereby these food groups now constitute one-fifth of weekly expenditure on food for Republic of Ireland households.

Table 2.9 Households with consumer durables

| Consumer durables | Percentages | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---------|------------------|---------|
| | Republic of Ireland | | Northern Ireland | |
| | 1994-95 | 2004-05 | 1994-95 | 2004-05 |
| Washing machine | 87 | 95 | 89 | 96 |
| Tumble drier | 27 | 62 | 34 | 56 |
| Dishwasher | 19 | 50 | 16 | 40 |
| Microwave oven | 47 | 86 | 60 | 90 |
| Home computer | 16 | 56 | 15 | 52 |
| Video | 66 | 80 | 69 | 85 |
| DVD | .. | 65 | .. | 61 |
| Hi-fi/Music centre | 52 | 71 | 59 | 71 |
| Compact disc player | 24 | 58 | 29 | 69 |
| Television (at least one colour set) | 97 | 99 | 97 | 98 |

Sources Republic of Ireland: Household Budget Survey, CSO
Northern Ireland: Continuous Household Survey, NISRA

Table 2.10 Percentage of households accessing the Internet from home

| Description | Percentages | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | 2001-02 | 2002-03 | 2003-04 | 2004-05 | 2005-06 | 2006-07 |
| Republic of Ireland | 34 | 34 | 38 | 45 | 49 | 57 |
| Dial-up | .. | .. | .. | 38 | 36 | 26 |
| Broadband | .. | .. | .. | 7 | 13 | 31 |
| Northern Ireland¹ | 32 | 36 | 42 | 45 | 45 | 49 |
| Dial-up | .. | .. | .. | 29 | 19 | 12 |
| Broadband | .. | .. | .. | 16 | 26 | 37 |

Sources Republic of Ireland: Quarterly National Household Survey, CSO
Northern Ireland: Continuous Household Survey, NISRA

¹Broadband question only asked from 2004-05 onwards.

Growth in the proportion of households accessing the Internet from home was highest in Northern Ireland in the first three years of the period from 2001 to 2007, with the proportions accessing the Internet increasing in the latter part of the period but at a slower rate than previously. Around 50 per cent of households in each area now access the Internet at home.

The increasing availability and take-up of broadband Internet is evident in the period 2004-05 to 2006-07. In the Republic of Ireland, the proportion of households accessing the Internet through broadband jumped from 7 per cent to 31 per cent over this period. In Northern Ireland, the corresponding increase was from 16 per cent to 37 per cent. Broadband is now the most favoured method of accessing the Internet for private households in both areas.

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Table 2.11 Percentage of EU households having access to the Internet at home

| | <i>Percentages</i> | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
| EU (27) | .. | .. | 40 | 48 | 49 |
| Austria | 33 | 37 | 45 | 47 | 52 |
| Belgium | .. | .. | .. | 50 | 54 |
| Bulgaria | .. | .. | 10 | .. | 17 |
| Czech Republic | .. | 15 | 19 | 19 | 29 |
| Denmark | 56 | 64 | 69 | 75 | 79 |
| Germany | 46 | 54 | 60 | 62 | 67 |
| Estonia | .. | .. | 31 | 39 | 46 |
| Republic of Ireland | 34 | 38 | 45 | 49 | 57 |
| Greece | 12 | 16 | 17 | 22 | 23 |
| Malta | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Spain | .. | 28 | 34 | 36 | 39 |
| France | 23 | 31 | 34 | .. | 41 |
| Italy | 34 | 32 | 34 | 39 | 40 |
| Cyprus | .. | .. | 53 | 32 | 37 |
| Latvia | .. | .. | 15 | 31 | 42 |
| Lithuania | 4 | 6 | 12 | 16 | 35 |
| Luxembourg (Grand-Duché) | 40 | 45 | 59 | 65 | 70 |
| Hungary | .. | .. | 14 | 22 | 32 |
| Netherlands | 58 | 61 | .. | 78 | 80 |
| Poland | .. | .. | 26 | 30 | 36 |
| Portugal | 15 | 22 | 26 | 31 | 35 |
| Romania | .. | .. | 6 | .. | 14 |
| Slovenia | .. | .. | 47 | 48 | 54 |
| Slovakia | .. | .. | 23 | 23 | 27 |
| Finland | 44 | 47 | 51 | 54 | 65 |
| Sweden | .. | .. | .. | 73 | 77 |
| United Kingdom | 50 | 55 | 56 | 60 | 63 |
| Northern Ireland ¹ | 36 | 42 | 45 | 45 | 49 |

Sources Eurostat
 Republic of Ireland: Quarterly National Household Survey, CSO
 Northern Ireland: Continuous Household Survey, NISRA

¹NI data refer to the financial year.

Technical Notes

Tables 2.1, 2.10 and 2.11

Republic of Ireland data are from the Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS). The QNHS is the main source of official employment statistics for the Republic of Ireland but can also be used as the source of a range of additional household and demographic statistics.

Table 2.2 (a)

Republic of Ireland data are from the Censuses of Population. Social housing in the Republic of Ireland includes Local Authority houses and Voluntary and Co-operative houses. Voluntary and Co-operative houses consist of completions under the capital loan and subsidy, and capital assistance schemes.

Tables 2.1, 2.2(b), 2.3, 2.9 and 2.10

Northern Ireland data are taken from the Continuous Household Survey (CHS). The CHS, which began in 1983, is based on a simple random sample of the general population resident in private households in Northern Ireland.

Table 2.3

The concept of the 'bedroom standard' is used to estimate occupation density. A standard number of bedrooms is allocated to each household in accordance with its age/sex/marital status composition and the relationship of the members to one another. A separate bedroom is allocated to each married couple, any other person aged 21 or over, each pair of adolescents aged 10-20 of the same sex, and each pair of children under 10. Any unpaired person aged 10-20 is paired if possible with a child under 10 of the same sex, or, if that is not possible, is given a separate bedroom, as is any unpaired child under 10.

This standard is then compared with the actual number of bedrooms (including bedsitters) available for the sole use of the household, and deficiencies or excesses are tabulated. Bedrooms converted to other uses are not counted as available unless they have been denoted as bedrooms by the informants; bedrooms not actually in use are counted unless uninhabitable.

Tables 2.4 and 2.5

Republic of Ireland house price figures are average prices for the year and are derived from the data supplied by mortgage lending agencies on loans approved by them.

Table 2.4

In Northern Ireland, social housing includes the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) houses and Housing Association properties.

A dwelling is regarded as completed when it becomes ready for occupation, whether it is occupied or not. The figures given in table 2.4 have been adjusted by statistical methods to correct, as far as possible, the proven under-recording of private sector completions.

Table 2.5

In Northern Ireland, data for new house sales and prices are derived from transactions for new dwellings notified by solicitors to the National House Building Council (NHBC). While NHBC-registered builders account for a very high proportion of newly built dwellings, their coverage is less comprehensive in rural areas.

Table 2.6

Republic of Ireland data are from the EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), which is the main annual source for income and poverty related statistics in Ireland.

Northern Ireland data are from the Family Resources Survey which collects detailed information on the incomes and circumstances of private households from April to March each year.

Tables 2.7, 2.8 and 2.9

Republic of Ireland data are from the Household Budget Survey (HBS). The main purpose of the HBS is to determine in detail the current pattern of household expenditure for the purpose of updating the weighting basis of the Consumer Price Index. Extensive additional information is collected concerning household income, accommodation occupied, existence of appliances and facilities, etc.

Tables 2.7 and 2.8

The Expenditure and Food Survey (EFS) is the result of the amalgamation, in 2001, of the Family Expenditure and National Food Surveys (FES and NFS). Both surveys were established sources of information for government and the wider community, charting changes and patterns in spending and food consumption. The EFS is primarily used to provide information for the UK Retail Prices Index, National Accounts estimates of household expenditure, the analysis of the effect of changes in taxes and benefits, and trends in nutrition. However, the results are multi-purpose, providing an invaluable supply of economic and social data. The EFS sample for Northern Ireland is based on a systematic random sample drawn from the Land and Property Services Agency (LPS) list of domestic properties. The LPS addresses were sorted by district council and ward, so the sample was effectively stratified geographically. The survey runs on a continuous basis and the set annual sample size in Northern Ireland is 1200 addresses.

COICOP - Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose