

# Change and Continuity in Family Life: an Irish Case Study

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with

Dr. Rosemary Crosse

# COTTAGE to crèche

FAMILY CHANGE IN IRELAND

FINOLA KENNEDY

## Family and Family Change in Ireland: An Overview

John Canavan<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

In Ireland, historically and in the current era, family has been a central concern for society and the State. This article provides a descriptive overview of family life in Ireland and of major family-related changes over the past 40 years. It presents a general framework of analysis within which these changes can be understood, considers the general nature of change and continuity in family in Ireland, and proposes some implications for research and policy in the early part of this century.

### Keywords

family change, Ireland, alternative families, families in poverty, policy

Although its exceptionalism is a matter for debate (Seward, Stivers, Igoe, Amin, & Cosimo, 2005), there is no doubt that family<sup>1</sup> in Ireland has had enormous historical significance and that it retains a central position in the major social and policy discourses of the current era. What family is, what family does, and how it does it are ongoing questions for Irish society and its government. It is fair to say that in the first 50 years of the modern Irish State, answers to these questions were provided by a State that took its lead from the Catholic Church. Yet, in spite of a more recent period of autonomy from

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# Ireland's Economy 2017 And Quarter 1 2018

## How Is Our Economy Doing?



**+7.2%**  
Year On Year  
GDP Growth  
(2017 vs 2016)

**-0.6%**  
Quarterly GDP  
Growth  
(Q1 2018  
vs Q4 2017)

**+3.7%**  
Total Domestic  
Demand  
(Q1 2018  
vs Q4 2017)

## What Are We Spending Our Money On?

(2017 vs 2016)



**+1.6%**  
All Personal  
Consumption  
Expenditure



**+3.3%**  
Food,  
Beverages  
& Tobacco



**+7.7%**  
Clothing &  
Footwear

## How Are The Different Parts Of Our Economy Doing?

(2017 vs 2016)



**+7.6%**  
Industry



**+15.2%**  
Construction



**+16.0%**  
Information &  
Communication

## Our Interactions With The Rest Of The World

**€107.6bn**  
Goods Net  
Exports



**€18.4bn**  
Services Net  
Imports

**€24.9bn**  
Current Account

**€61.0bn**  
Net profit outflow

## Removing The Effects of Globalisation

**€2.2bn**  
Current Account\*

**+2.8%**  
Modified Domestic Demand  
(Q1 2018 vs Q4 2017)



**€234.2bn**  
GNI

**€181.2bn**  
GNI\*





# AIMS

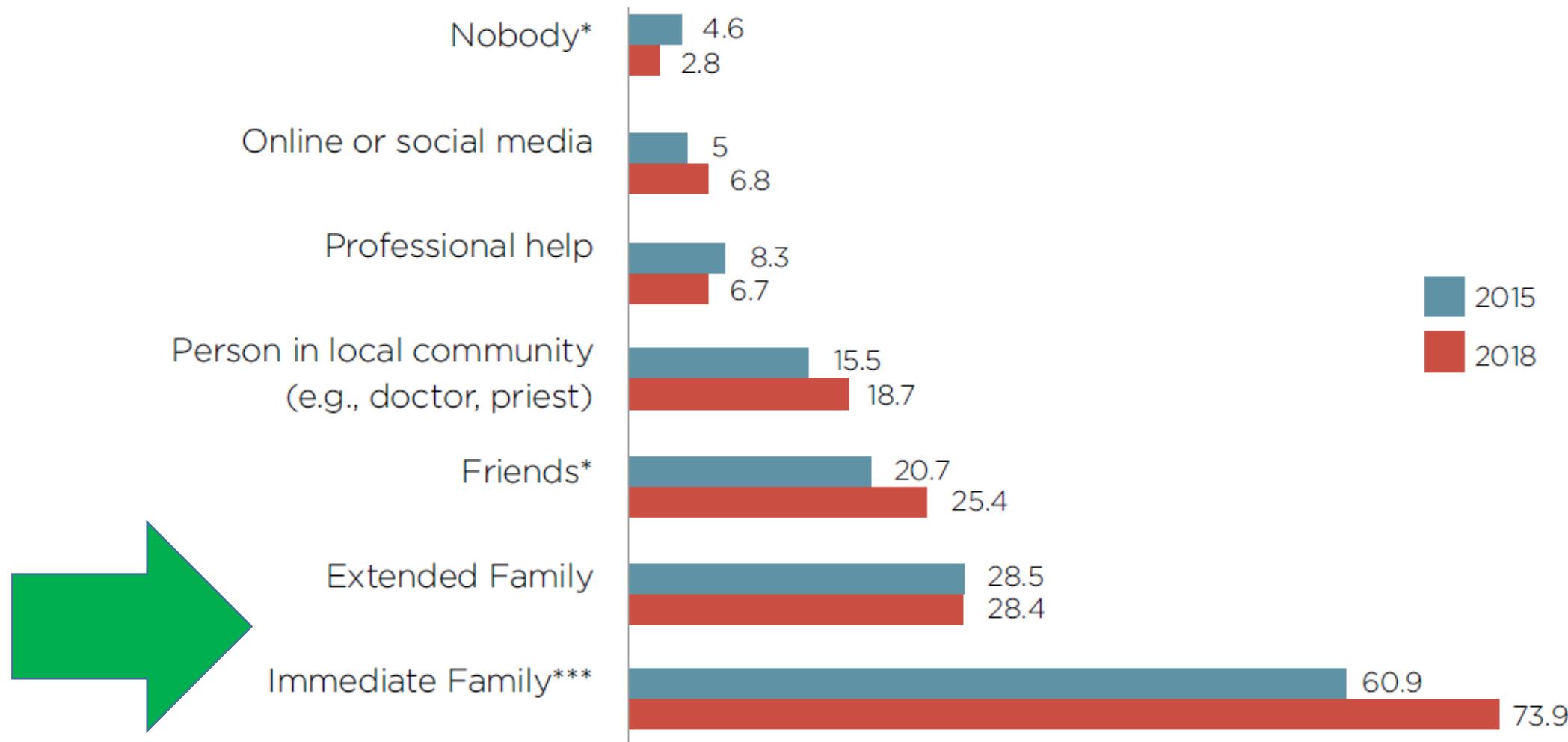
- Provide a case-study on family change and continuity in Ireland to inform the conference deliberations
- Offer a framework for delegates' own reflections on the meaning and significance of family
- Develop the case for new attention to family as an explicit focus in social policy development and implementation

# Structure

1. Introduction and Context
2. Family Change:
  - Fertility, formation, diversity, work and poverty
3. Services' Crisis
4. Summary and Conclusion
  - Caveat – dominant heterosexual family narrative
    - emerging family forms and contexts but much of the research and policy focus still narrow....

# Why do families matter ?

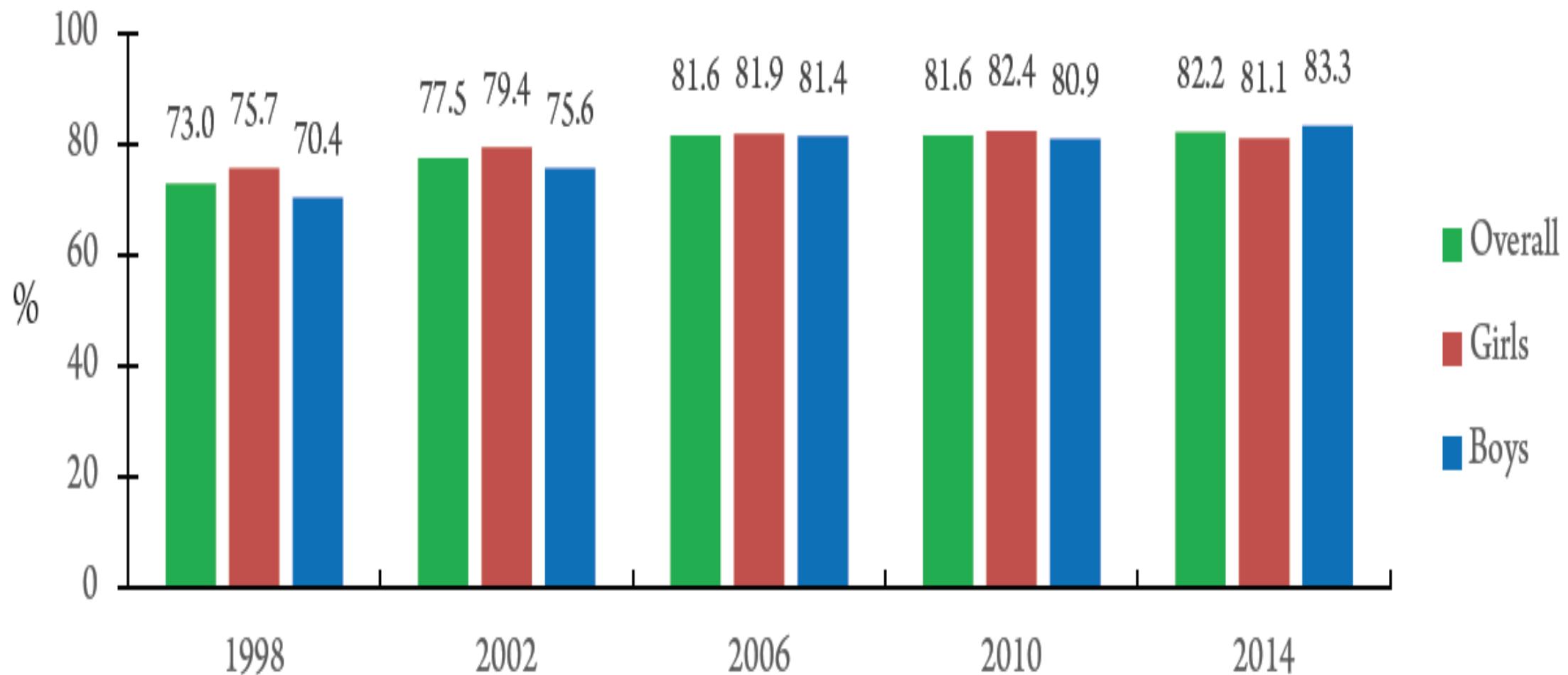
1. Because of the nature and significance of family as a social institution
2. Formative for who we are as individuals, citizens and future family members
3. Context within which many adversities are played out
4. Context within most of the help needed to overcome adversity is accessed or solutions developed
5. Source of most CARE
6. Central to policy – State, Market, Non-Profit Sector and Family
7. Strong constitutional position



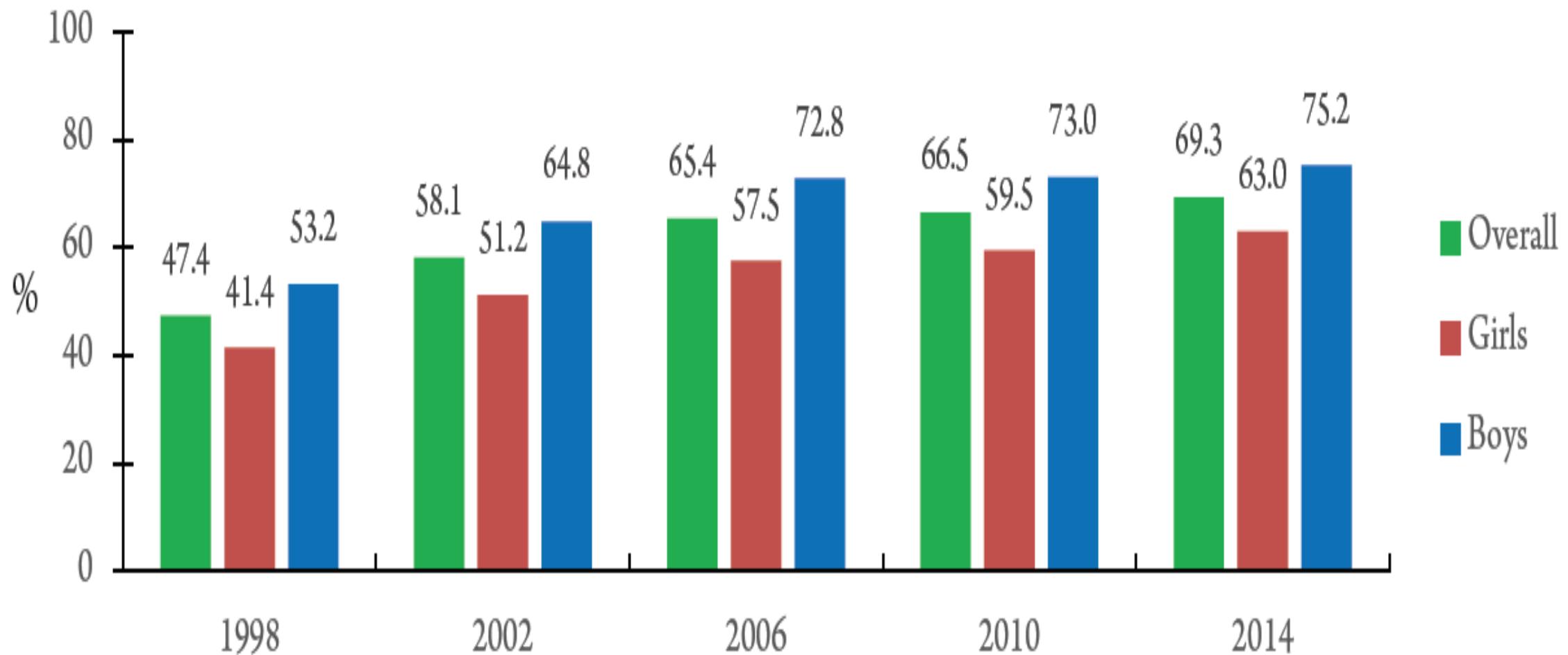
\* p < 0.05; \*\* p < 0.01; \*\*\* p < 0.001

**Figure 6: Who respondents would ask for help with a parenting problem if they could not manage, % in 2015 and 2018**

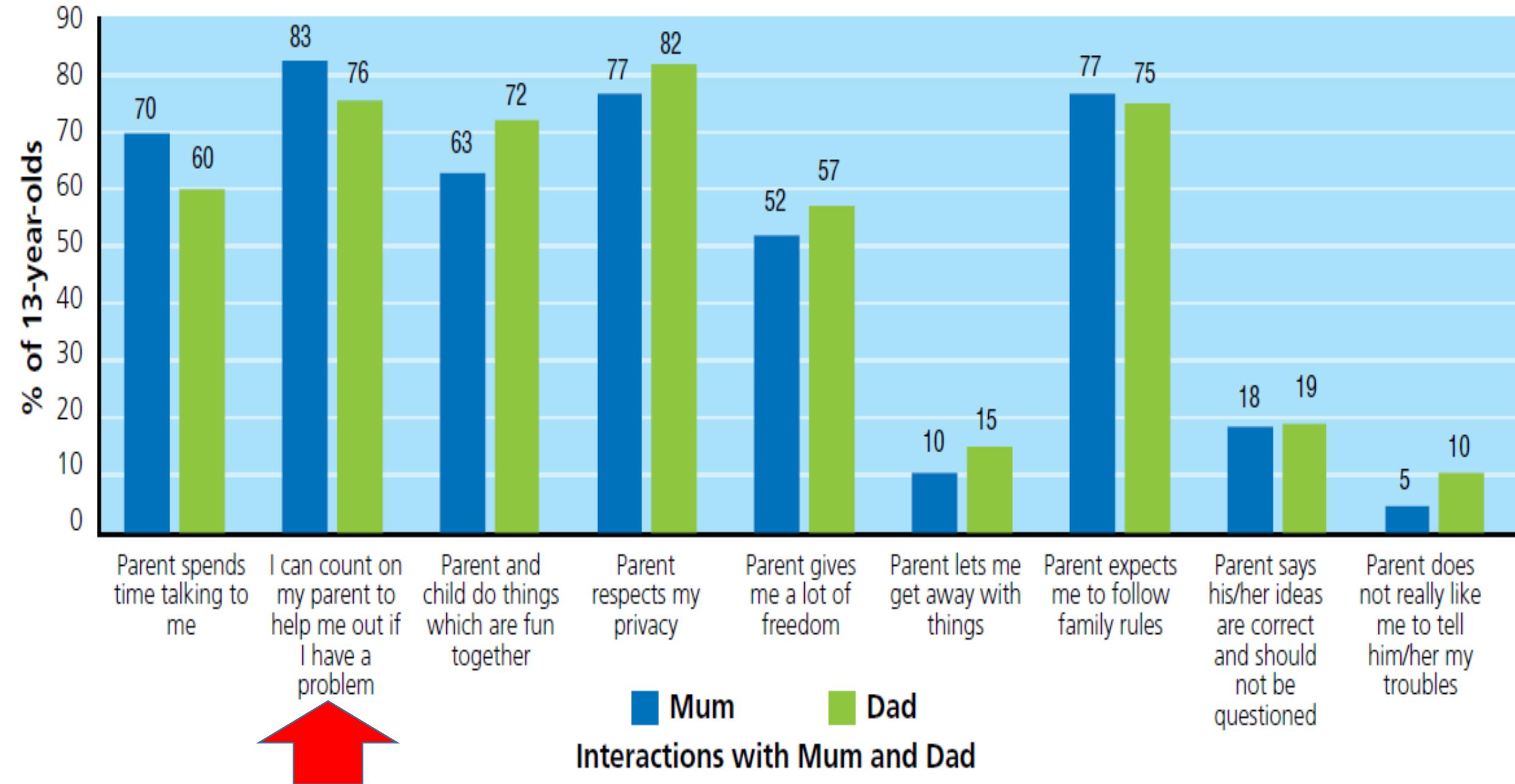
Figure 19: Percentage of 10-17 year olds who reported finding it easy to talk to their mother about things that really bother them, overall and by gender from 1998-2014



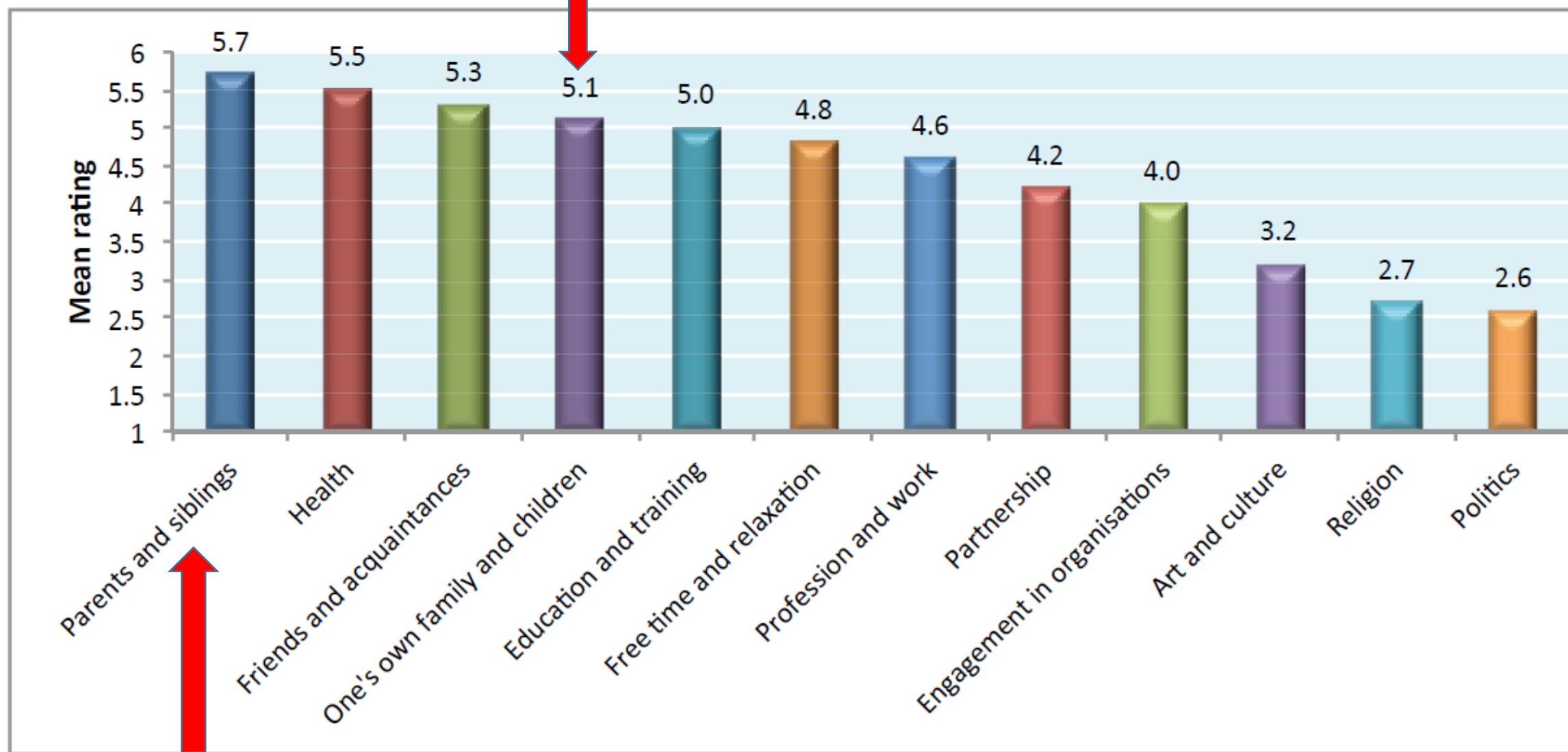
**Figure 20: Percentage of 10-17 year olds who reported finding it easy to talk to their father about things that really bother them, overall and by gender from 1998-2014**



**Figure 1: 13-year-olds' interactions with their parents**



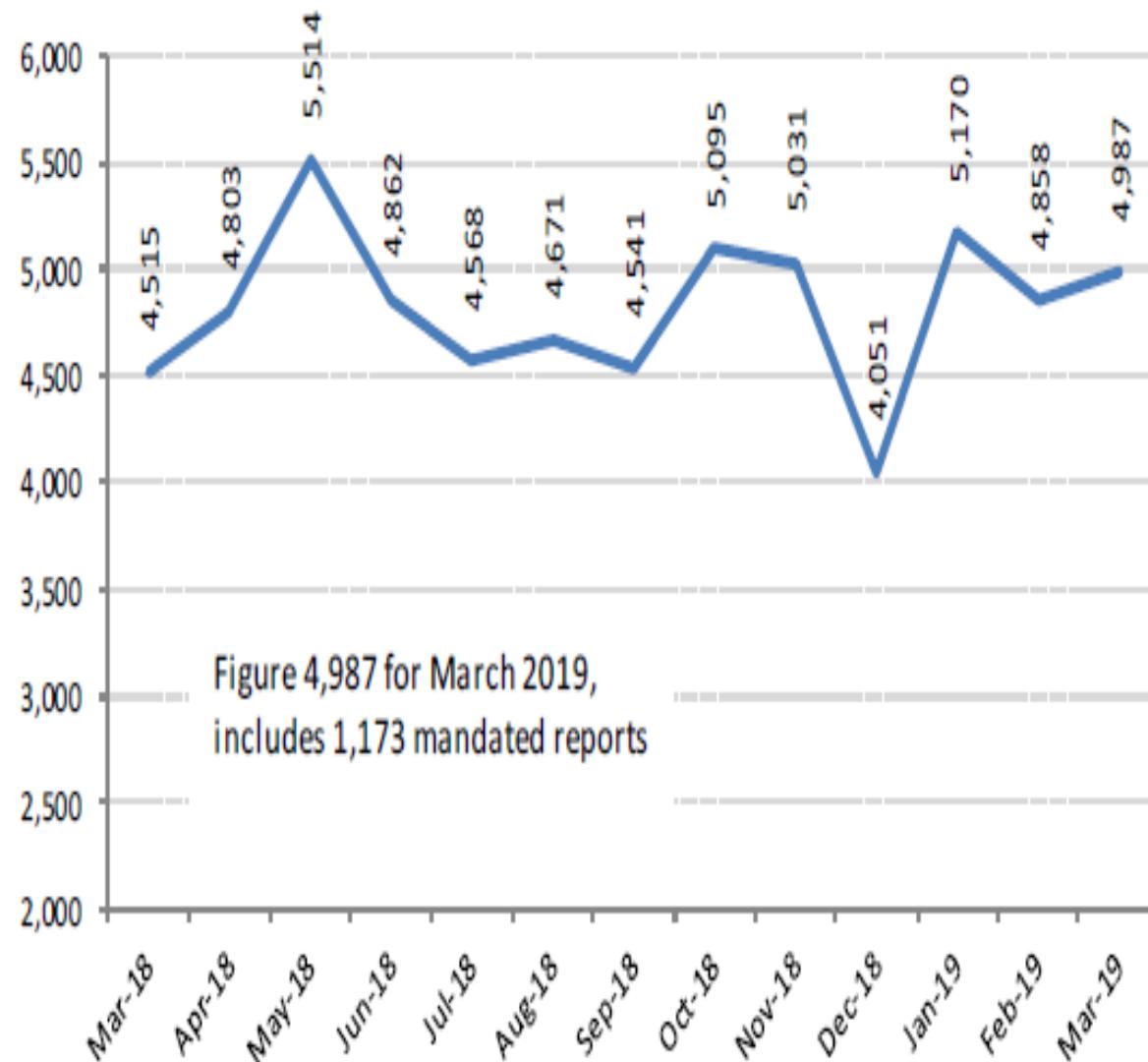
**Figure 3: Ratings of importance for different aspects of life (where 6 = very important)**



# Family is problematic

- Extended out-washing of the consequences of the Irish State's alliance with Catholic church
- A source of suffering for significant minority of people:  
continuum from unhappy, conflict ridden contexts to families where there are validated cases of child abuse and neglect and ongoing domestic and sexual violence
- As the basis of patriarchal control of women by men

## Referrals to Child Protection & Welfare Services



## Number of Children in Care

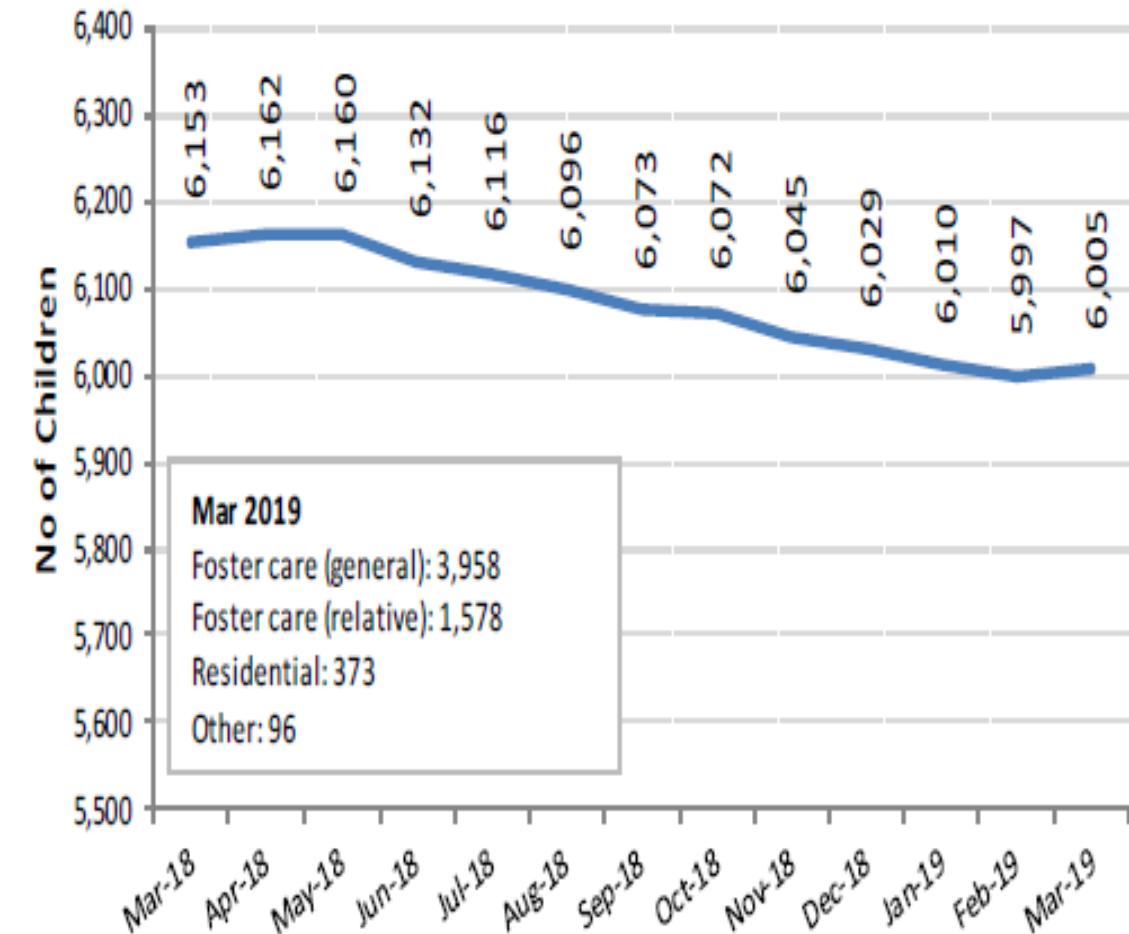


Figure 6,005 includes 49 children under the Social Work Team for Separated Children Seeking Asylum

## **Domestic Violence Services National Statistics 2016**

**50,551** helpline calls were answered by domestic violence services across Ireland in 2016.

**10,101** individual women received support from Domestic Violence Support Services in Ireland in 2016.

This figure includes...

**8,549** individual women who received a wide range of face-to-face supports, including advocacy, emotional and practical support, information, counselling, court accompaniment and/or support groups.

**1,460** individual women who were accommodated and received a range of other supports in refuge.

In total, there were **1,682** women admissions to refuges in 2016<sup>1</sup>.

**44**<sup>2</sup> individual women who were accommodated and received support in Transitional Housing.

The refuges were unable to accommodate **3,981** requests from women for emergency accommodation because they were full.

More than **3,685** individual children received support from Domestic Violence services in 2016.



This figure includes...

**2,190** individual children who lived in a refuge and **147** children who lived in transitional housing.

In total, there were **2,206** children admissions to refuge.

**2,602** children received non-accommodation supports in 2016, such as one-to-one support, supervised access, childcare, play therapy and counselling.

**1,165** children were less than 5 years old.



# Family is problematic

- Also because its hard to define and therefore hard to study / measure
- For all of these reasons policy makers in Ireland may not want to articulate an explicit focus on families ...

- ....it is probably true to say at present that ‘family’ does not really serve as an influential organising concept in Irish policymaking. It is currently less forceful in that context than, for example, the concern with children ...
- ....as a traditional loose array of distributive measures, services and regulatory frameworks targeted on various aspects of family life rather than as a single well-integrated or clearly defined field’ (Fahey and Nixon, 2013, p.126).

# Values Changes – Recent Referenda

1. Children's Rights 2012  
(58:42)

- The long standing image of Ireland as a conservative, Catholic country has been shattered. The scale of the Yes vote produced newspaper headlines around the world.

2. Same-sex Marriage  
2015 (62:38)

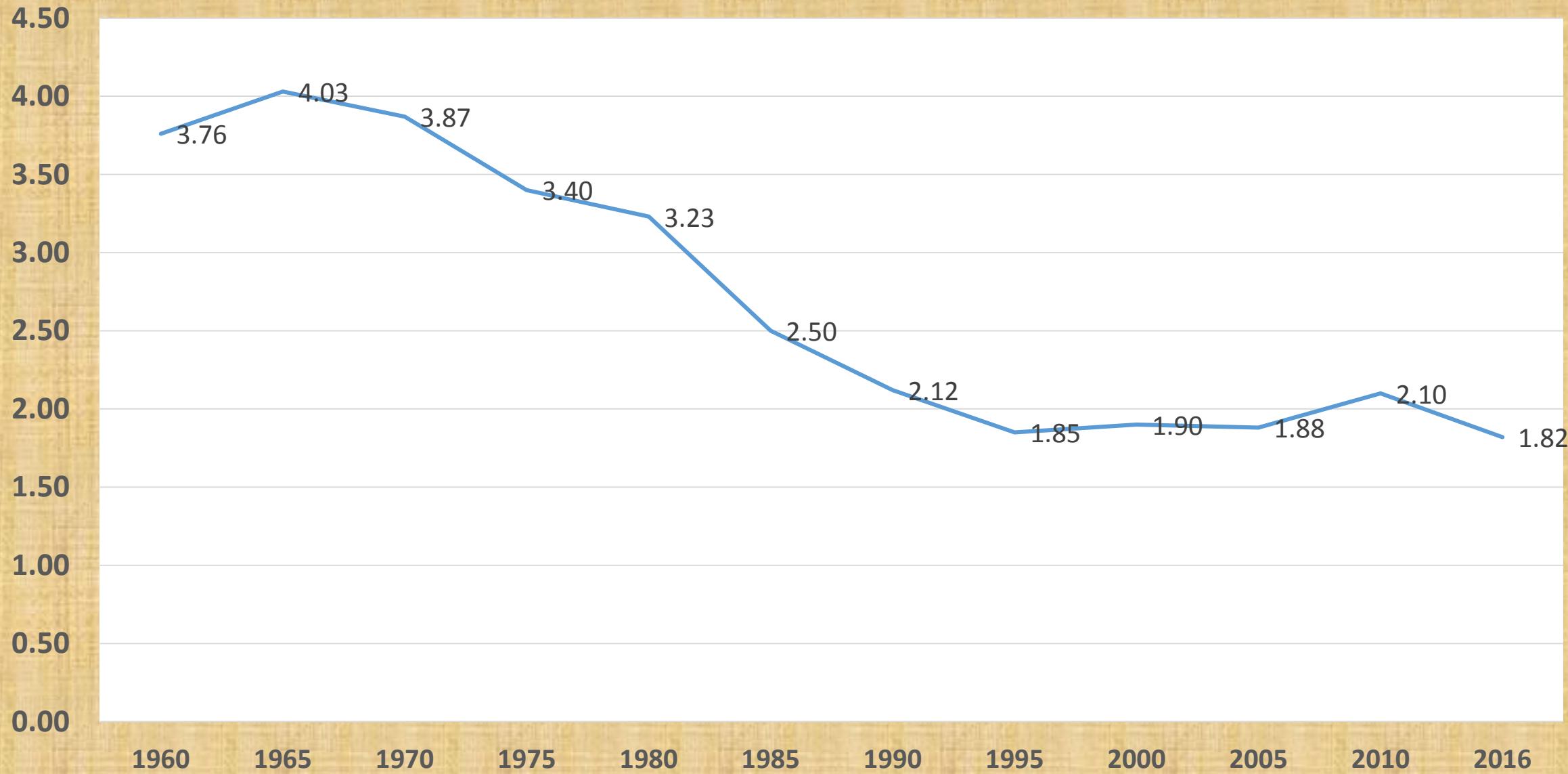
Analysis of the voting patterns using a demographic lens confirms that the change in values is generational. Irish citizens are becoming more liberal and the conservative base has shrunk to a one-third minority (Elkink, Farrell, Reidy and Suiter, 2017 p.378)

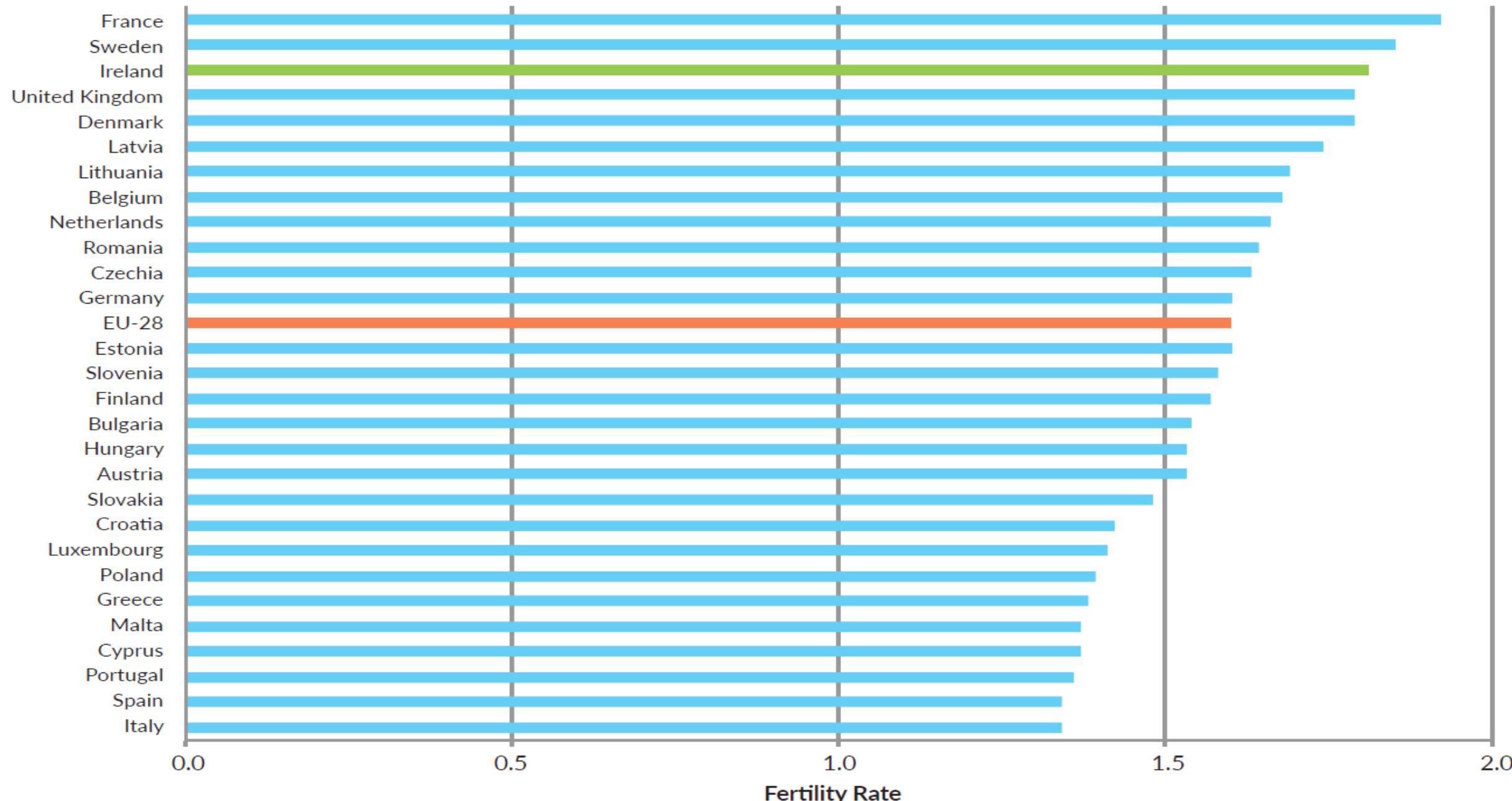
3. Abortion 2018 (66:34)

4. Divorce 2019 (82:18)

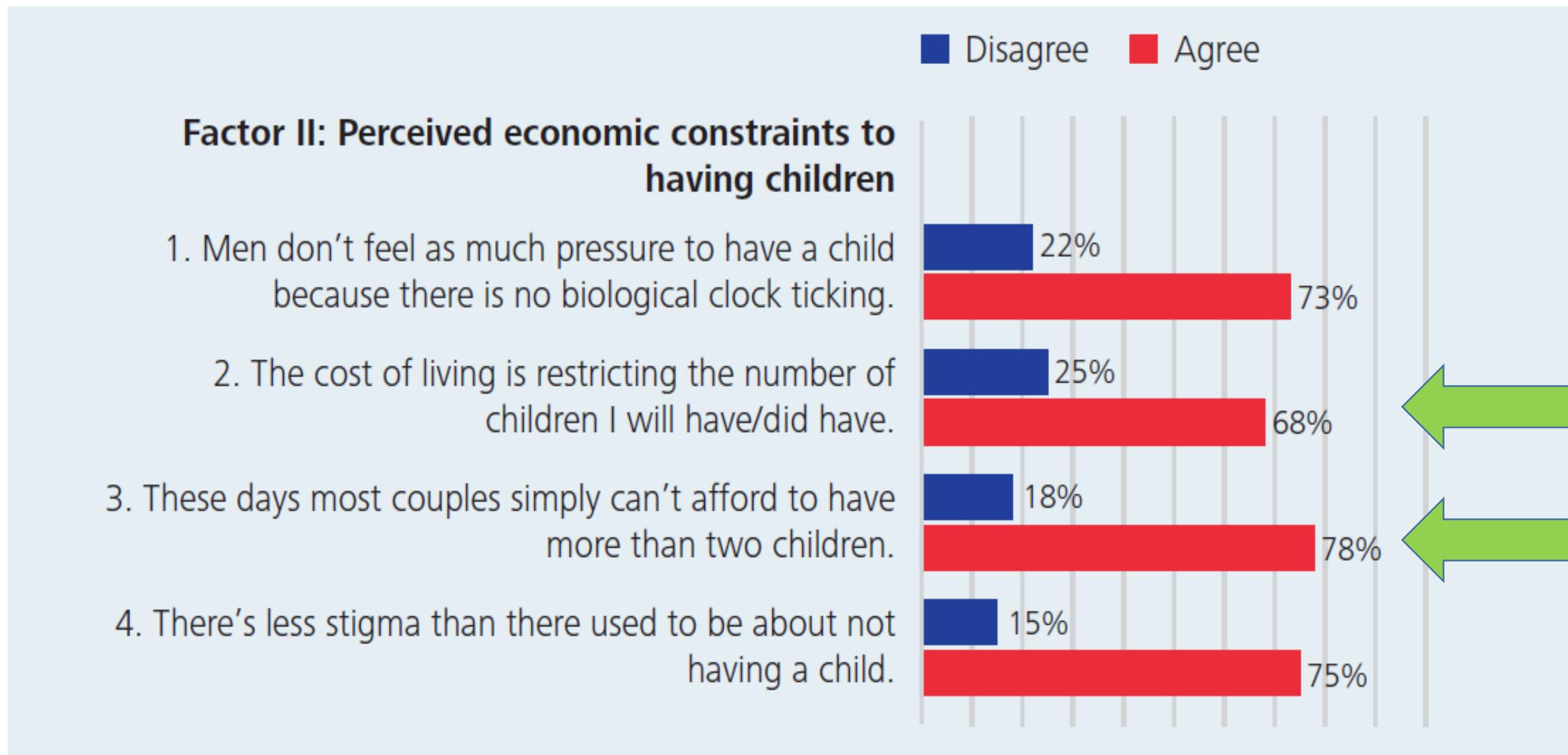


# TFR Ireland 1960 - 2016



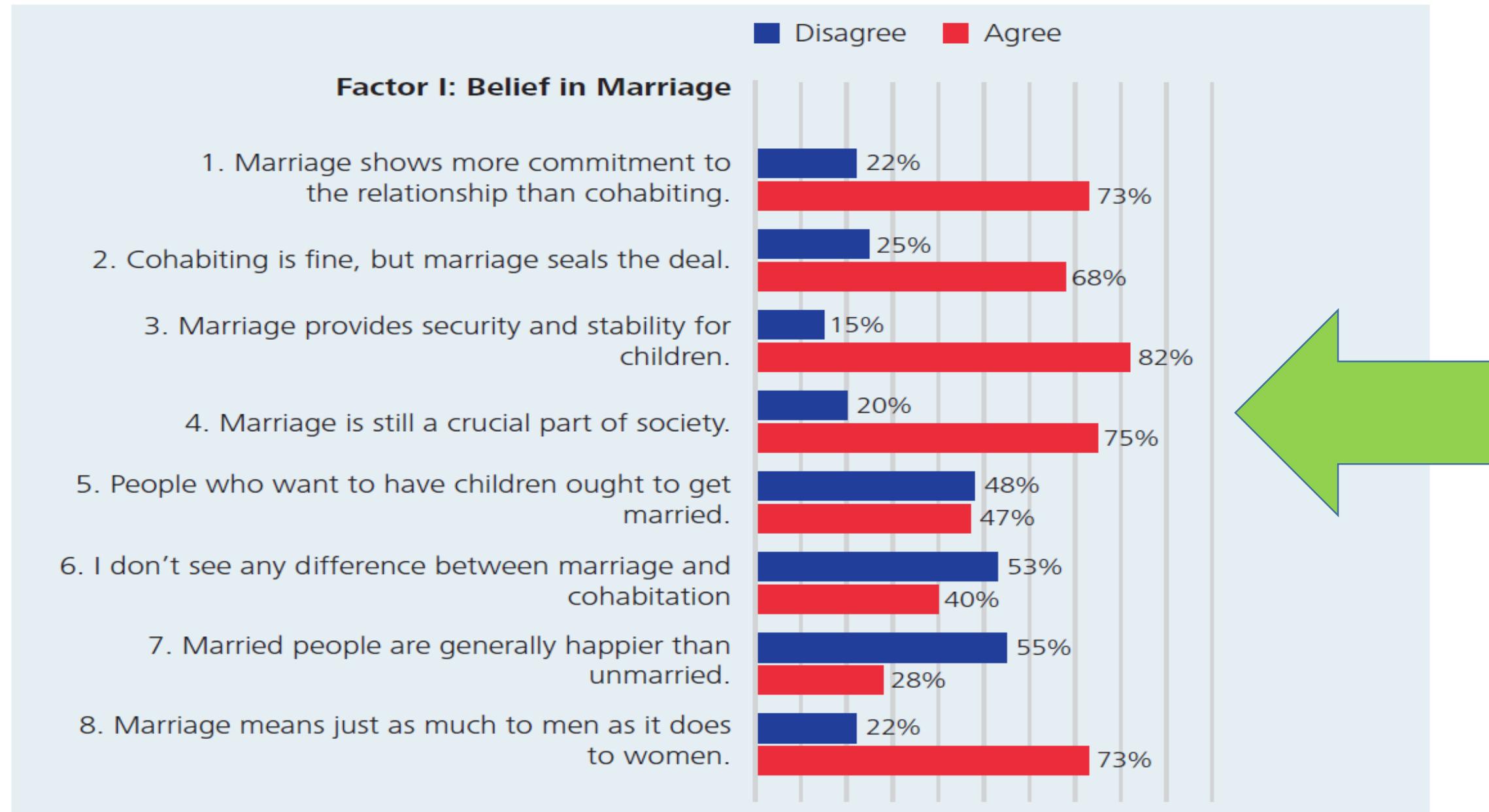
**Figure 1.4****Total Fertility Rates in Europe, 2016**

**Figure 7.2: Summary Agree and Disagree Responses to Items on Factor II: Perceived Economic Constraints to having Children (N=1,404)**





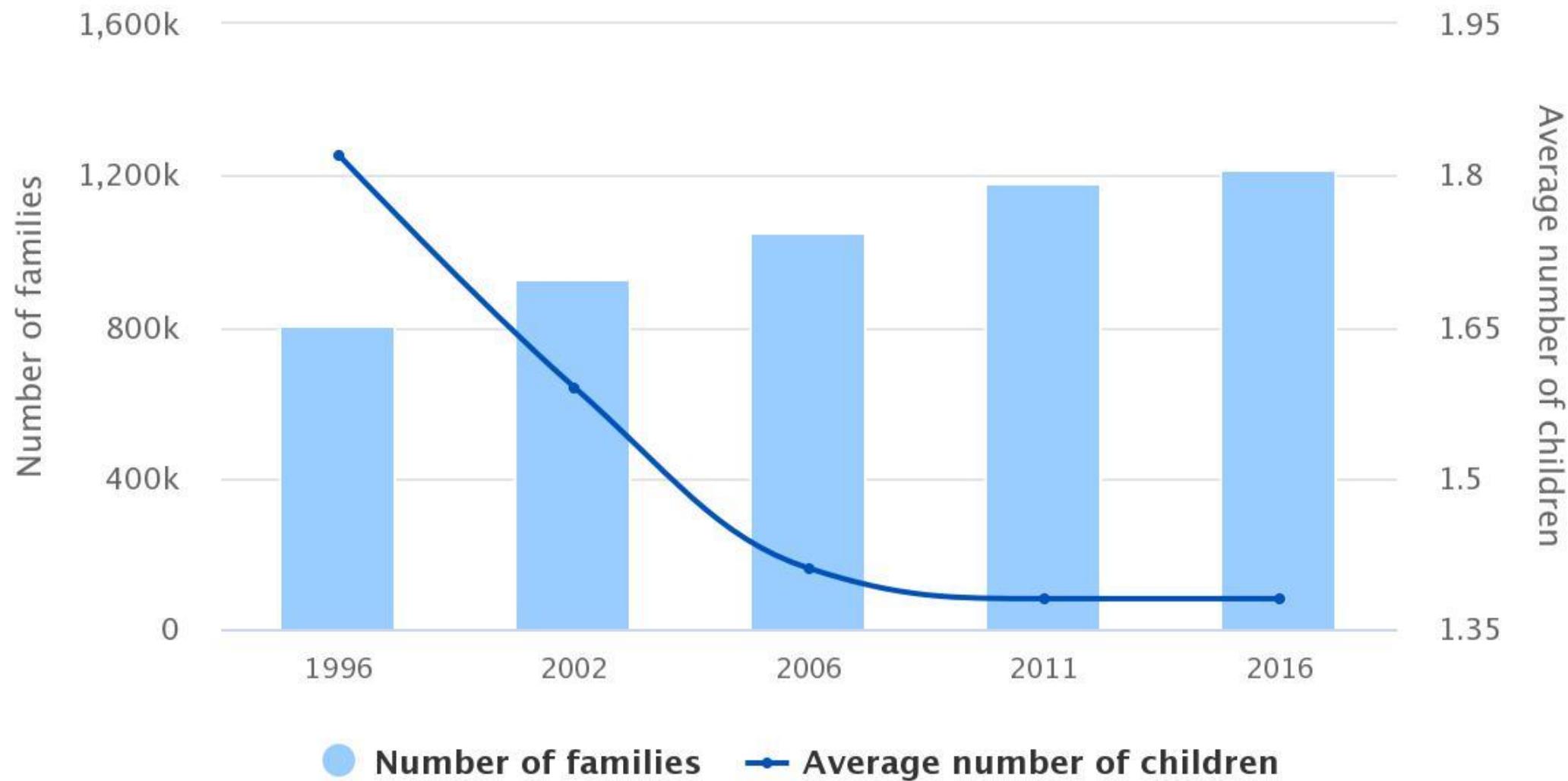
**Figure 6.1: Summary Agree and Disagree Responses to Items on Factor I: Belief in Marriage**  
(N=1,404)



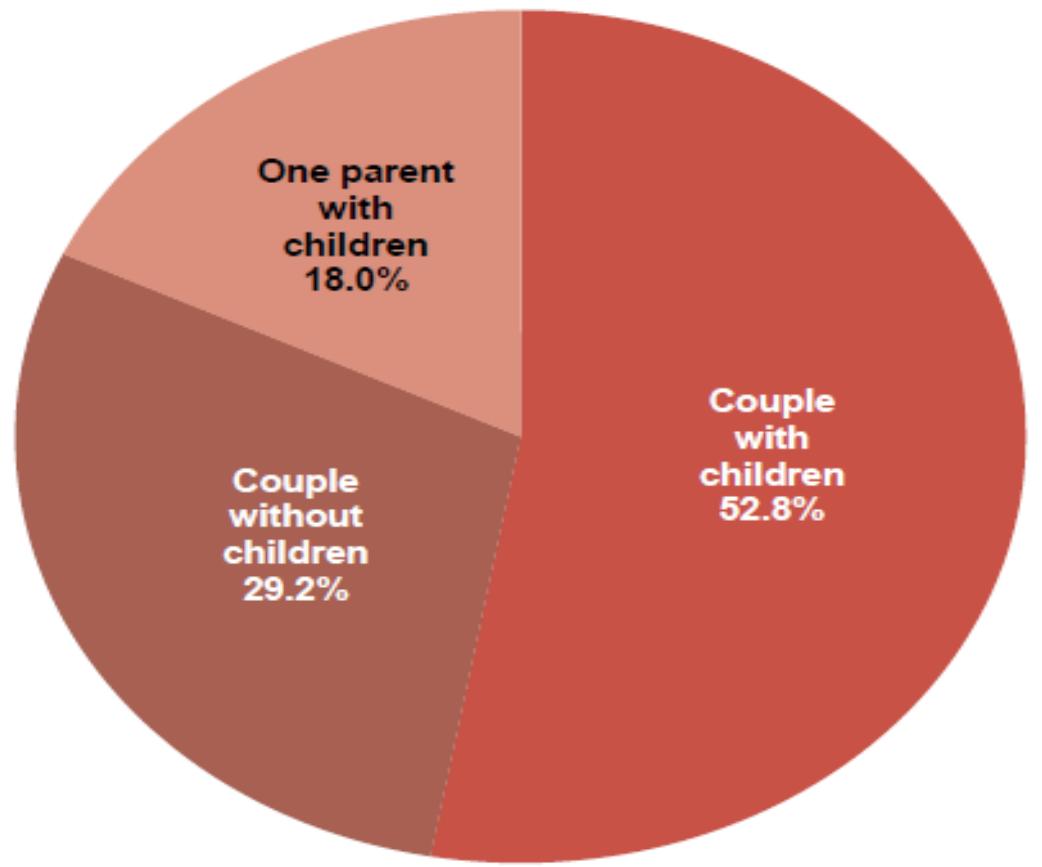
**Fig.1 Average age of bride and groom,  
1965 - 2015**



Figure 2.1 Number of families and average number of children per family,  
-2016

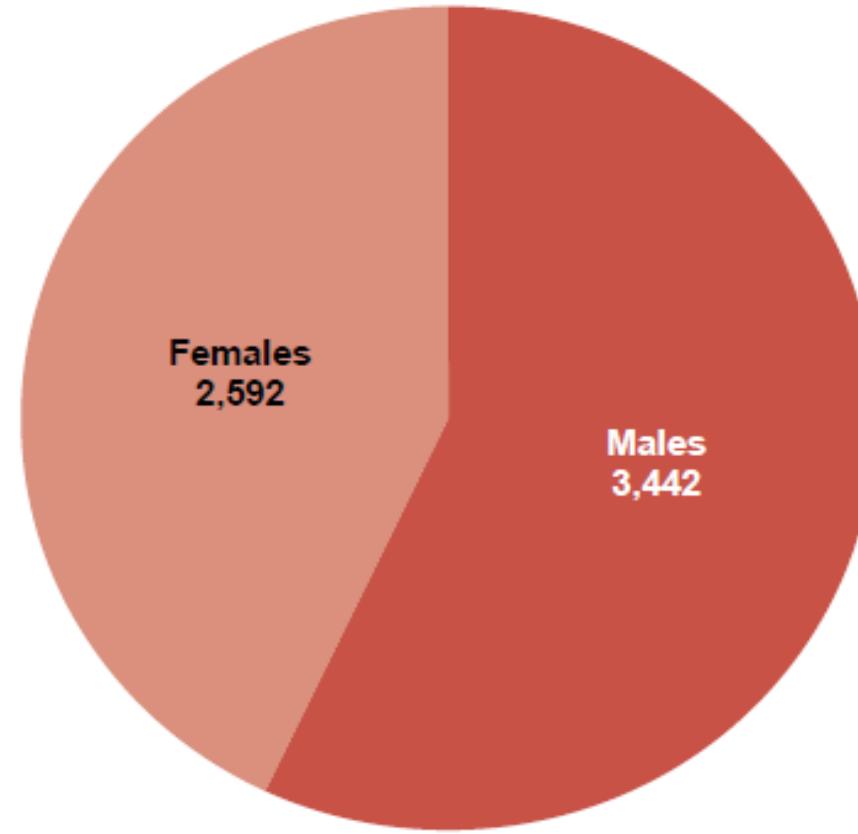


**Figure 4.11 Types of families, 2016**



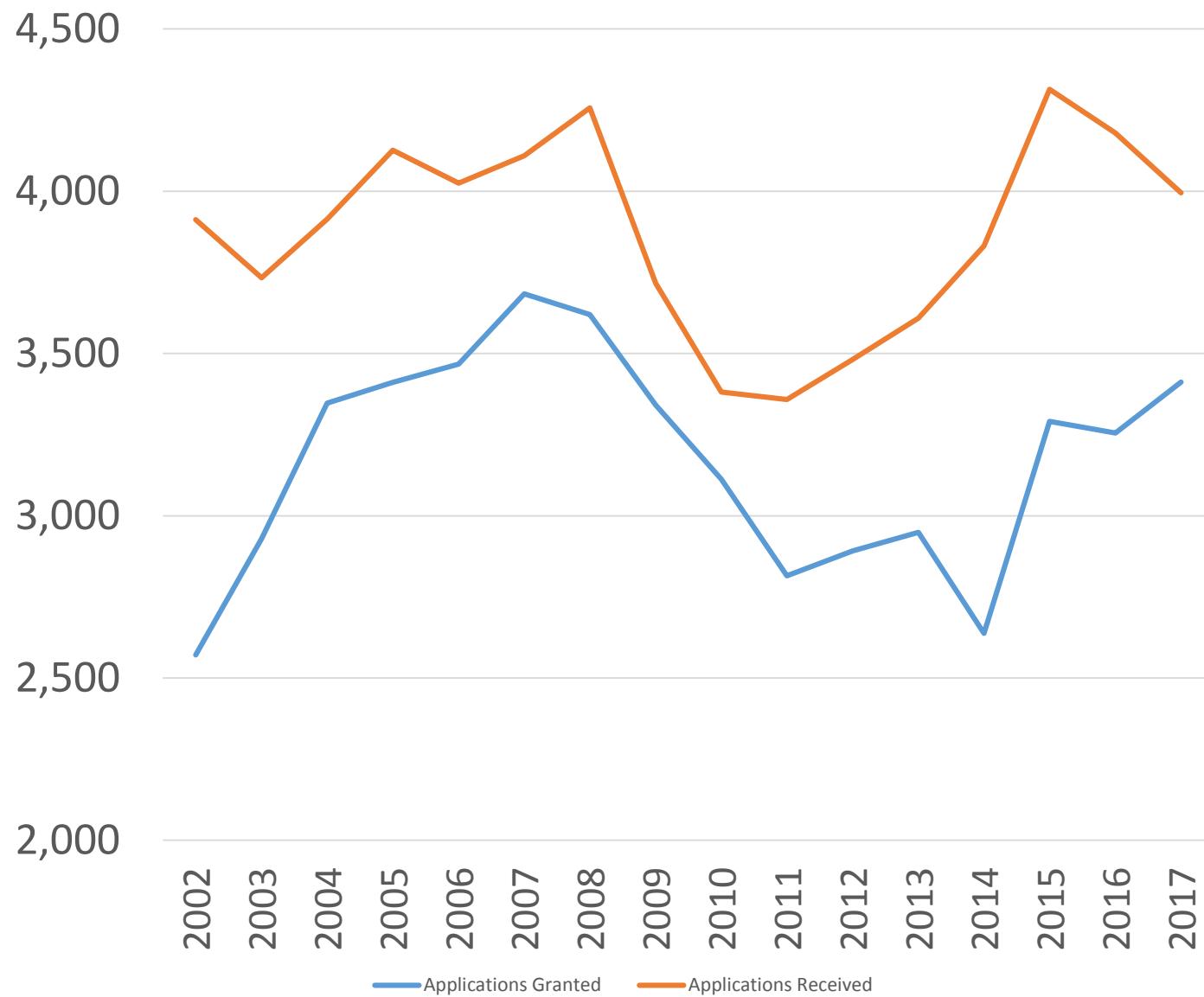
152,302 Cohabiting Couples,  
average number of children 0.9

**Figure 4.13 Same-sex couples by sex, 2016**



There were 591 couples with children, with the vast majority (82.9%) of these being female couples.

Divorce Applications Received and Granted Ireland



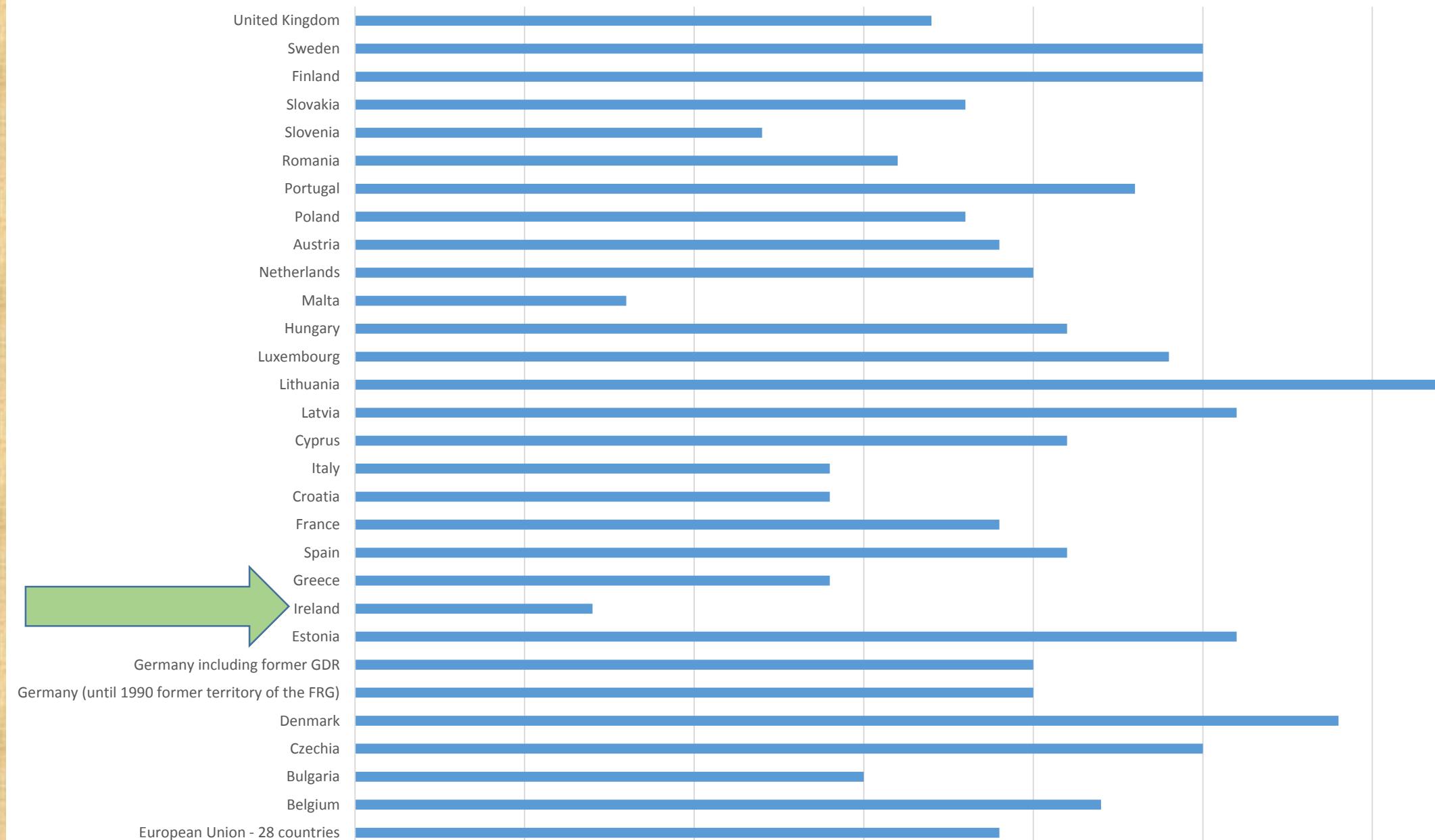
94,924

The number of men  
who were separated  
or divorced

127,149

The number of  
women who were  
separated or  
divorced

2015







An Phríomh-Oifig Stáidrimh  
Central Statistics Office

# CENSUS 2016

Migration and  
Diversity

census  
**2016**  
RESULTS  
[www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)

**Non-Irish nationals  
living in Ireland**  
535,475

Down 1.6%  
since April 2011



**Mixed Irish and  
non-Irish  
households**

134,838

up 14.7% since April 2011

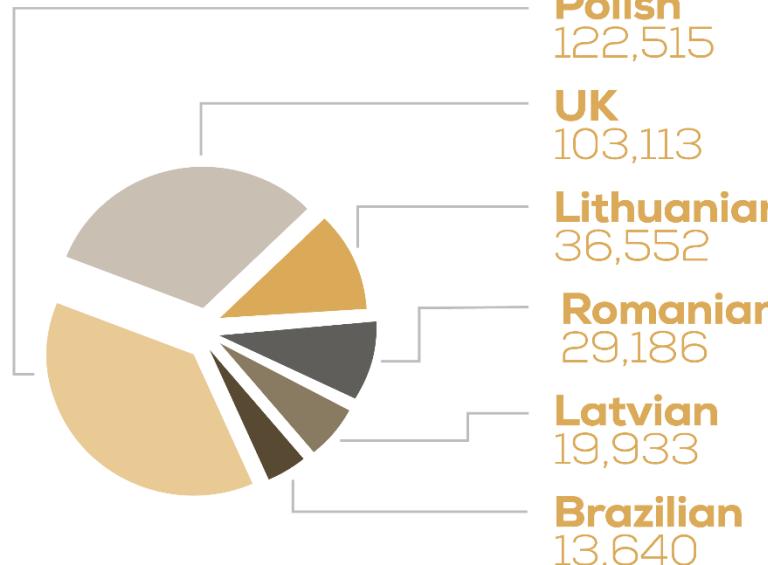


**Dual Irish  
nationality**  
104,784

Up 87.4%  
since April 2011



## The top nationalities in Ireland



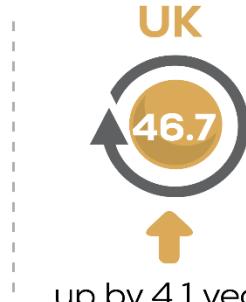
## Recent Immigration

82,346 persons arrived to live in Ireland in the year prior to April 2016

53,708 Non-Irish

28,143 Irish

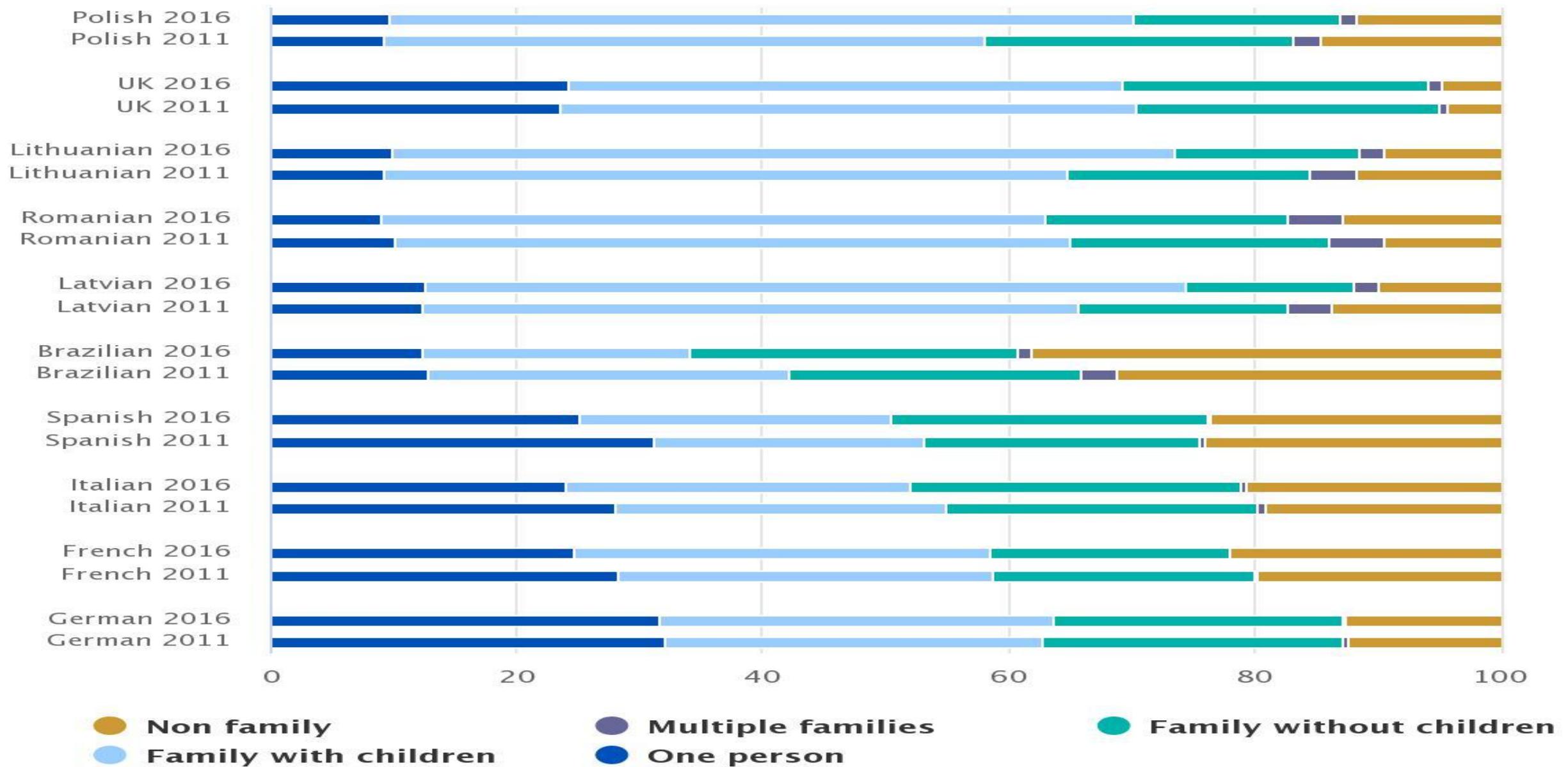
## Average age of population by nationality



**Table 6.1 Usual residents by ethnic or cultural background, 2011-2016**

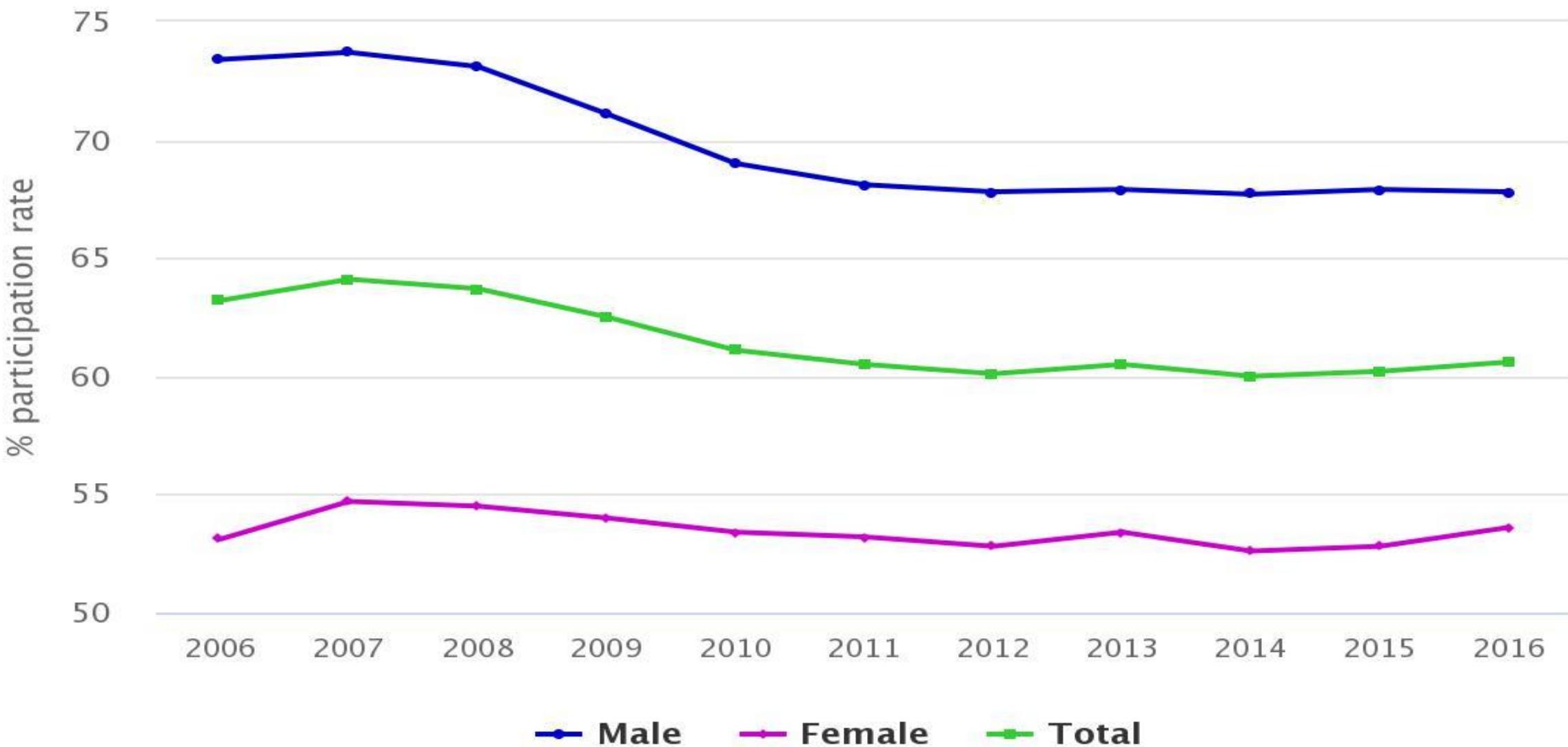
Category	2011	2016	% change
White Irish	3,821,995	3,854,226	0.8
Irish Travellers	29,495	30,987	5.1
Other White	412,975	446,727	8.2
Black Irish or Black African	58,697	57,850	-1.4
Other Black	6,381	6,789	6.4
Chinese	17,832	19,447	9.1
Other Asian	66,858	79,273	18.6
Other	40,724	70,603	73.4
Not stated	70,324	124,019	76.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,525,281</b>	<b>4,689,921</b>	<b>3.6</b>

**Figure 2.6 Composition of private households by nationality, 2011 and 2016**

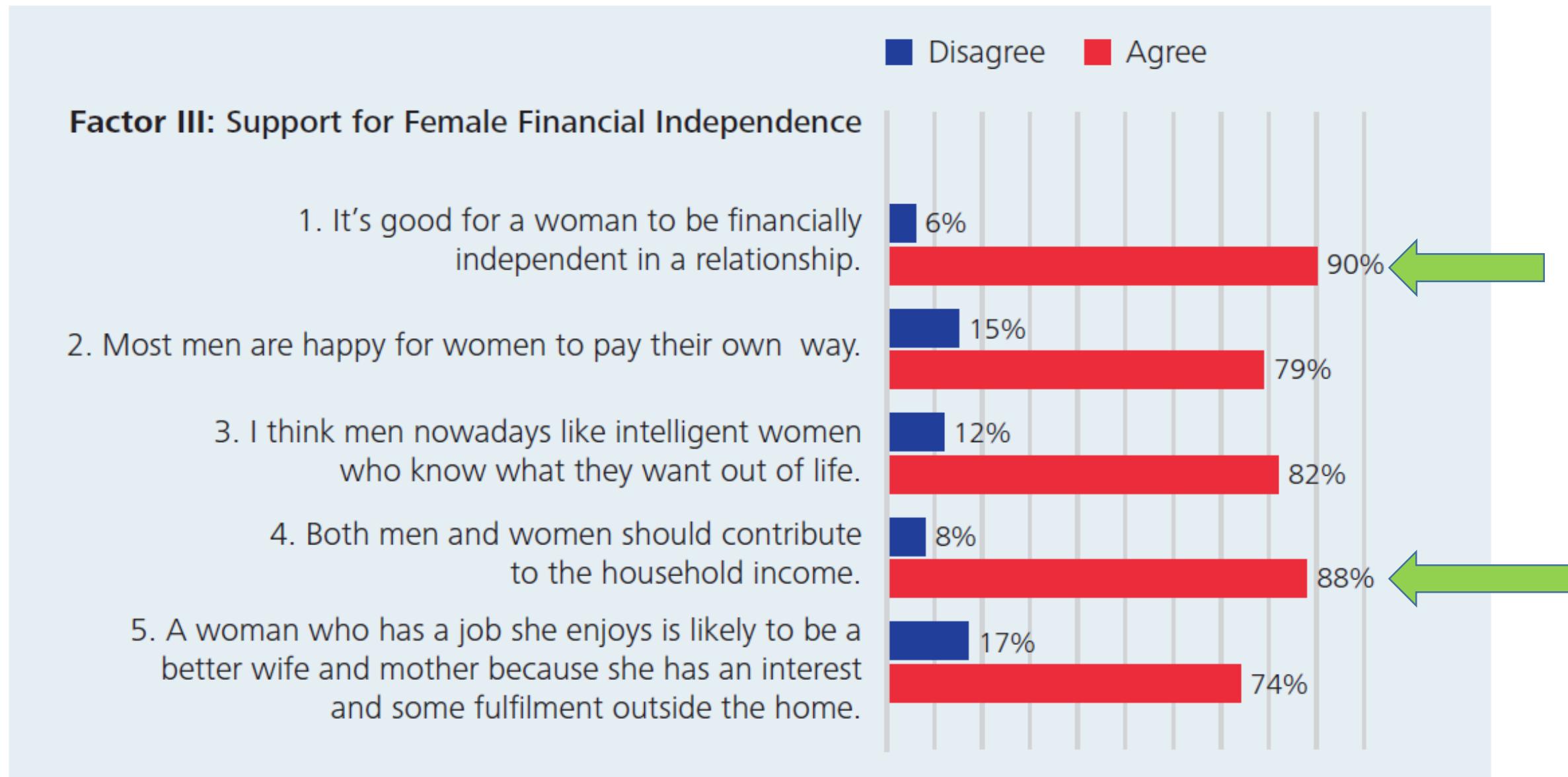




## 2.5 Ireland: Labour force participation rate, 2006 – 2016

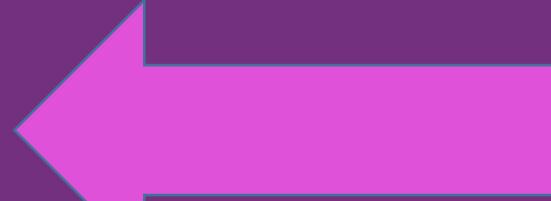


**Figure 5.3: Summary Agree and Disagree Responses to Items on Factor III, Support for Female Financial Independence (N=1,404)**



## Parents' employment

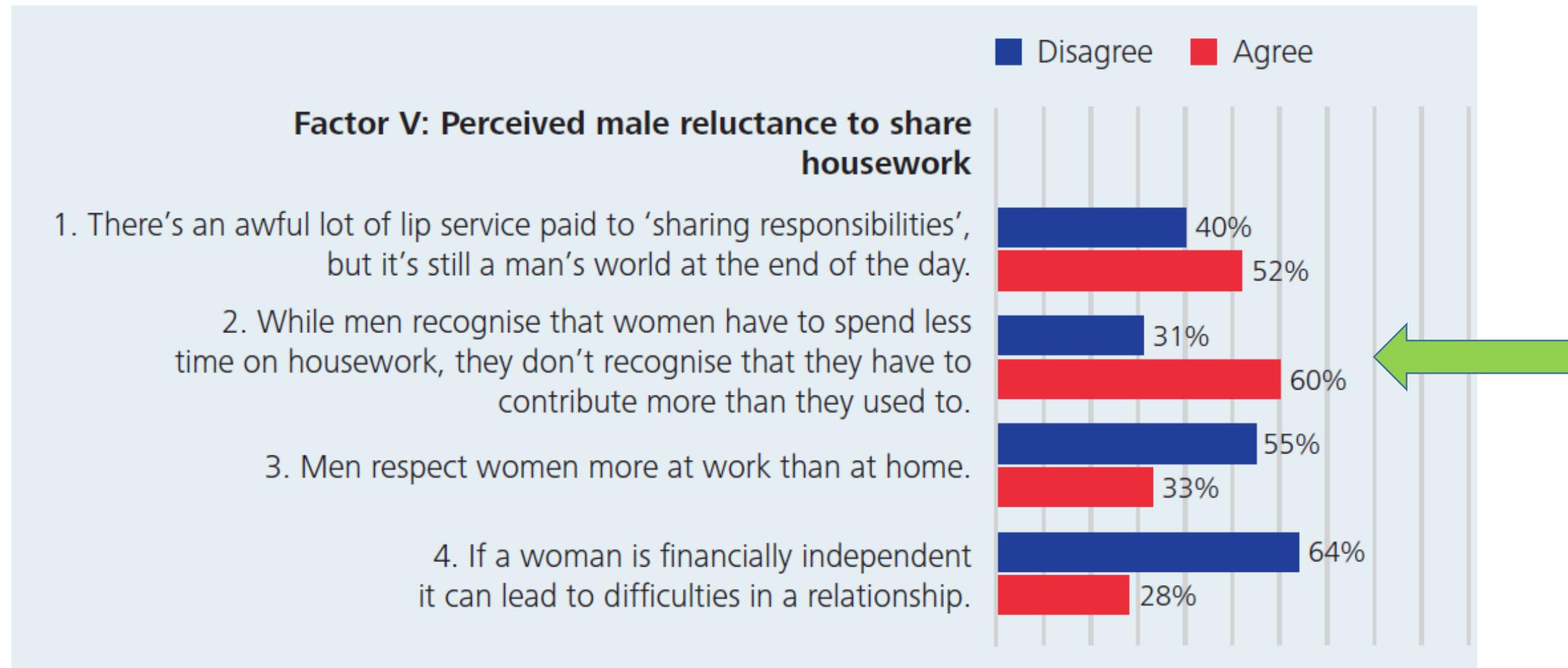
- Mothers of children aged 0-5 are less likely to be employed than fathers.
- Employment rate of females aged 20-44: 67.6%
  - 85.7% for women without children
  - 60% for women whose youngest child is aged 4-5
  - 43.5% for mothers parenting alone whose youngest child is aged 4-5
- Employment rate of males aged 20-44: 88.3%
  - 90.2% for men whose youngest child is aged 4-5
  - 89.1% for men without children



## Time for work and family

- The majority of men and women work full time; men are more likely to work more hours.
  - 23% of women and 10.5% of men in employment work less than 30 hours a week.
  - 74.4% of men and 52.3% of women in employment work for 35 hours or more a week.

**Figure 5.5: Summary Agree and Disagree Responses to Items on Factor V, Perceived Male Reluctance to Share Housework (N=1,404)**





**Table 3: Composition of Poverty, 2017**

At work	14.3%
Unemployed	13.5%
Students/school	18.3%
On home duties	13.1%
Retired	5.9%
Ill/disabled	9.0%
Children (under 16 years)	23.9%
Others	2.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 4: Risk of each group being in Poverty, 2017**

At work	5.6%
Unemployed	42.0%
Students/school	35.4%
On home duties	25.5%
Retired	9.1%
Ill/disabled	35.4%
Children (0-17 years)	18.4%
<b>Overall population</b>	<b>15.7%</b>

231,000 children living in households  
experiencing poverty in 2017

*Figure 6: Risk and Composition of Economic Stress by Income Quartile in Wave 1 and Wave 2*

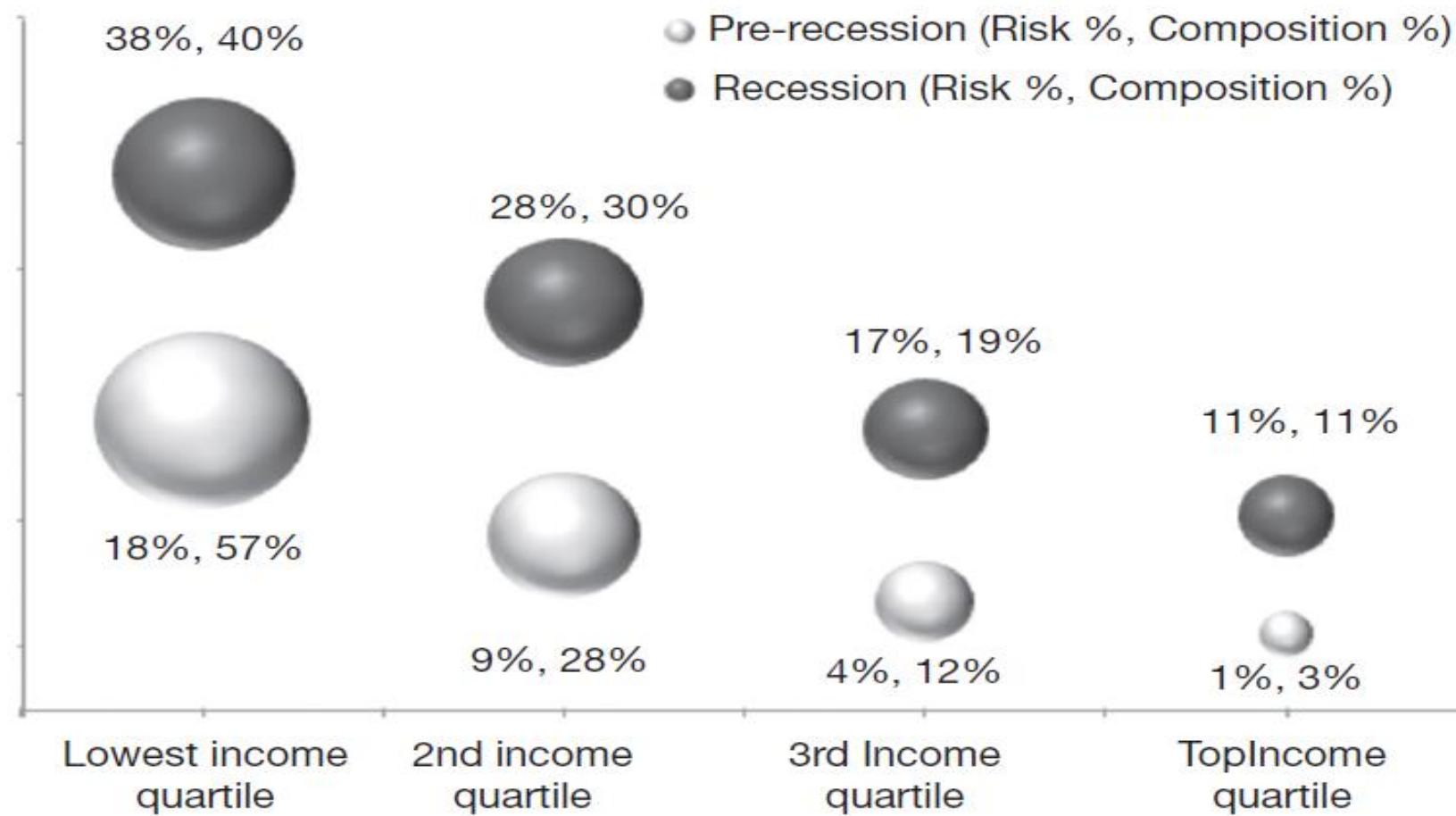
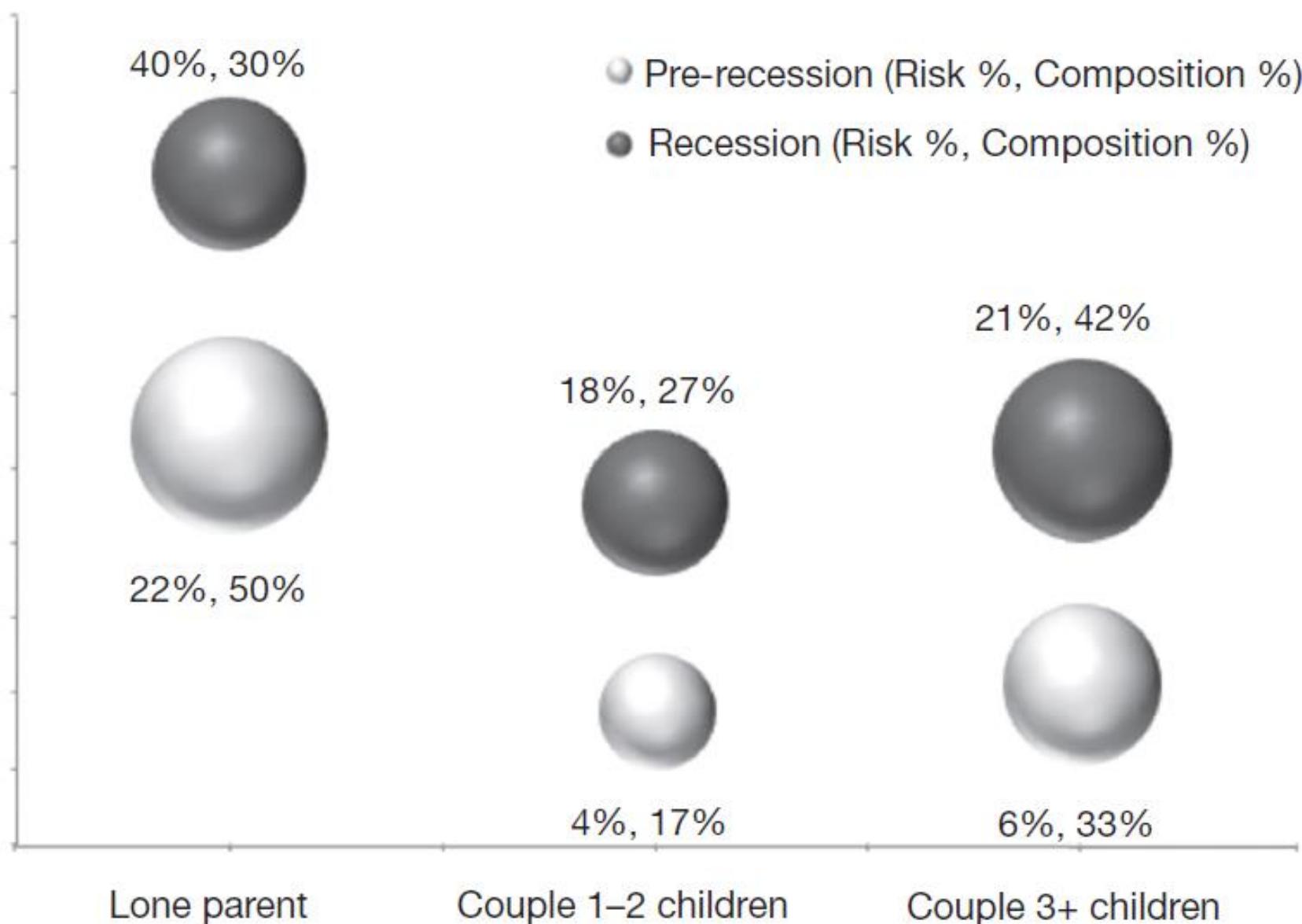


Figure 7: Risk and Composition of Economic Stress by Family Type in Wave 1 and Wave 2



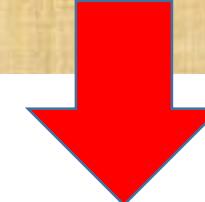
- ‘increasing socio-economic diversity of households experiencing economic stress points to the relevance of more broadly-based policy responses, incorporating supports for housing, debt relief, childcare costs and improvements in the quality of public services’ (Watson and Whelan, 2016, 496).



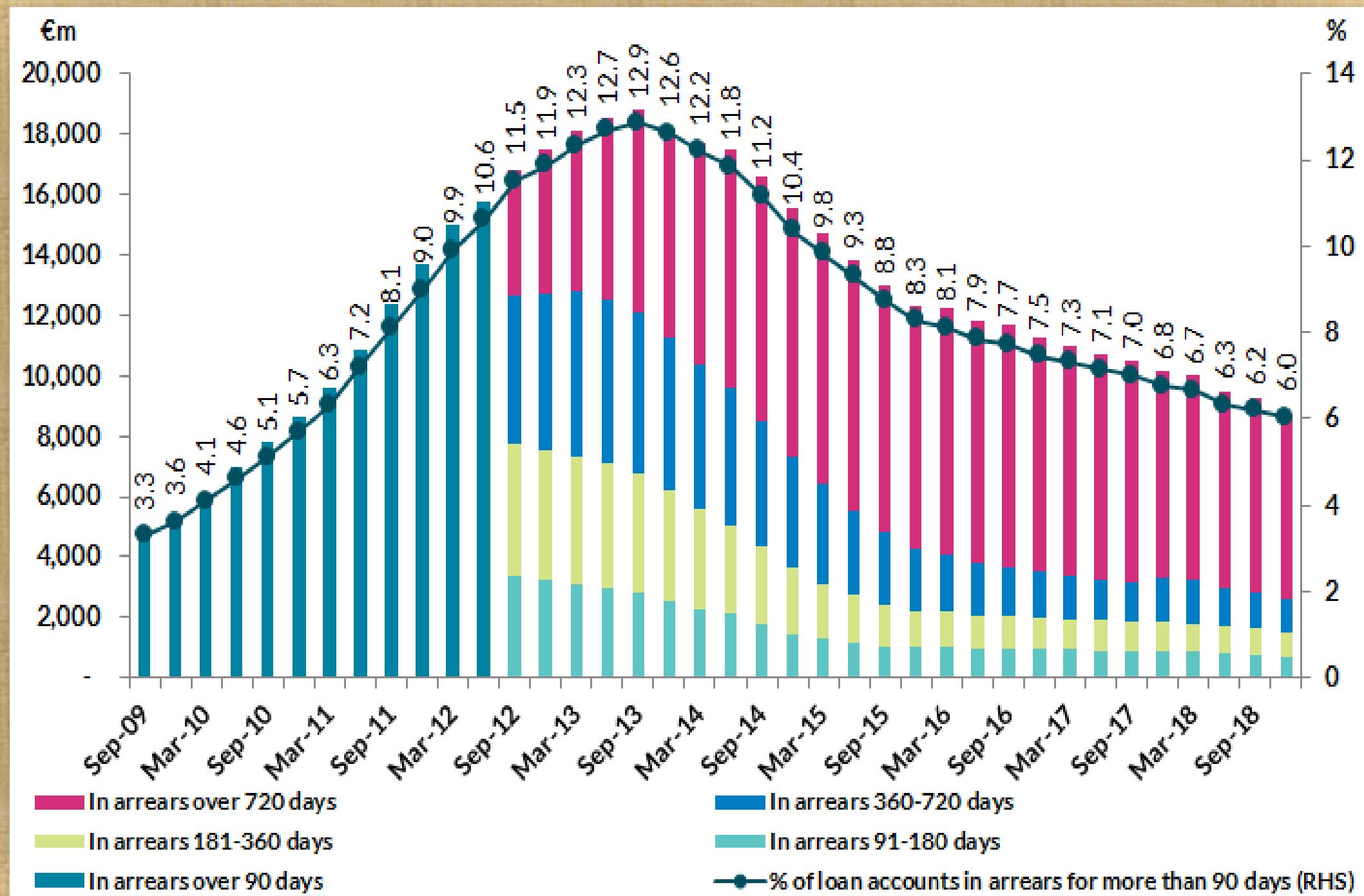
# Housing Need and Homelessness

- 10,378 people homeless in Week April 22-28, 2019
- 3,794 children
- 6,584 adults
- 1,729 families
- 1,003 single parent families

Table 2.4: Household Composition



Household Composition	2017		2018		Change 2017/2018	
	No. of HH	%	No. of HH	%	No. of HH	%
Single Person Household	38,170	44.5	33,556	46.7	-4,614	-12.1
Single Person with child/children	25,963	30.3	22,195	30.9	-3,768	-14.5
Couple with or without child/children	21,176	24.7	15,643	21.8	-5,533	-26.1
Multi-Adult Household	490	0.6	464	0.6	-26	-5.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>85,799</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>71,858</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>-13,941</b>	<b>-16.2</b>

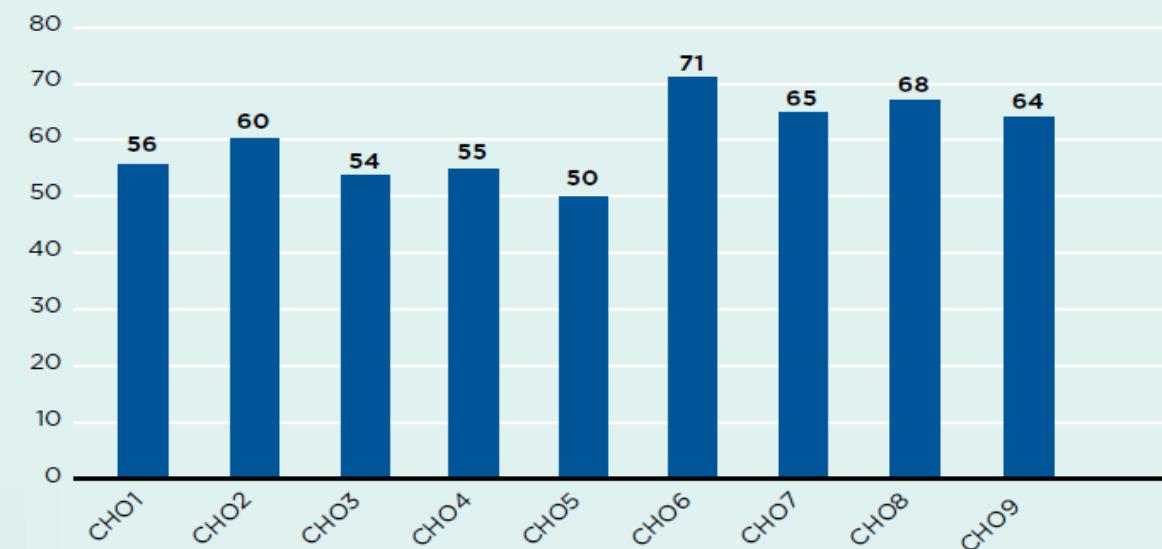


**Table 3** Number of admissions of children to adult units 2012-2017

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
106	98	90	95	68	82

With approximately 2,400 children and young people with mental health disorders on the waiting list for CAMHS in 2017, over 200 were waiting for more than a year. We enquired into waiting times for CAMHS appointments in each CHO.

**Fig. 12** Staffing of CAMHS teams as % of A Vision for Change recommendations by CHO



Overall, staffing of CAMHS teams is only 60% of that recommended by A Vision for Change.

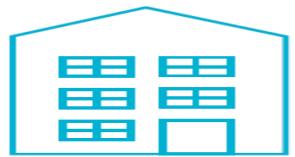
## Services required by people with intellectual disabilities

**4,729**

new residential, day and/or residential support places will be needed in the period 2018–2022.

**10,418**

people currently receiving services require alternative, additional, or enhanced services in the period 2018–2022.



**2,179**

new full-time residential placements are required

**2,267**

people require changes or enhancements to their residential service



**185**

people require new day programmes

**8,883**

day places require changes or enhancements



**19,589**

people require new or enhanced multidisciplinary supports



**2,365**

new residential support services are required

**1,461**

people require changes or enhancements to their residential support service

**28,388**

Records<sup>1</sup>

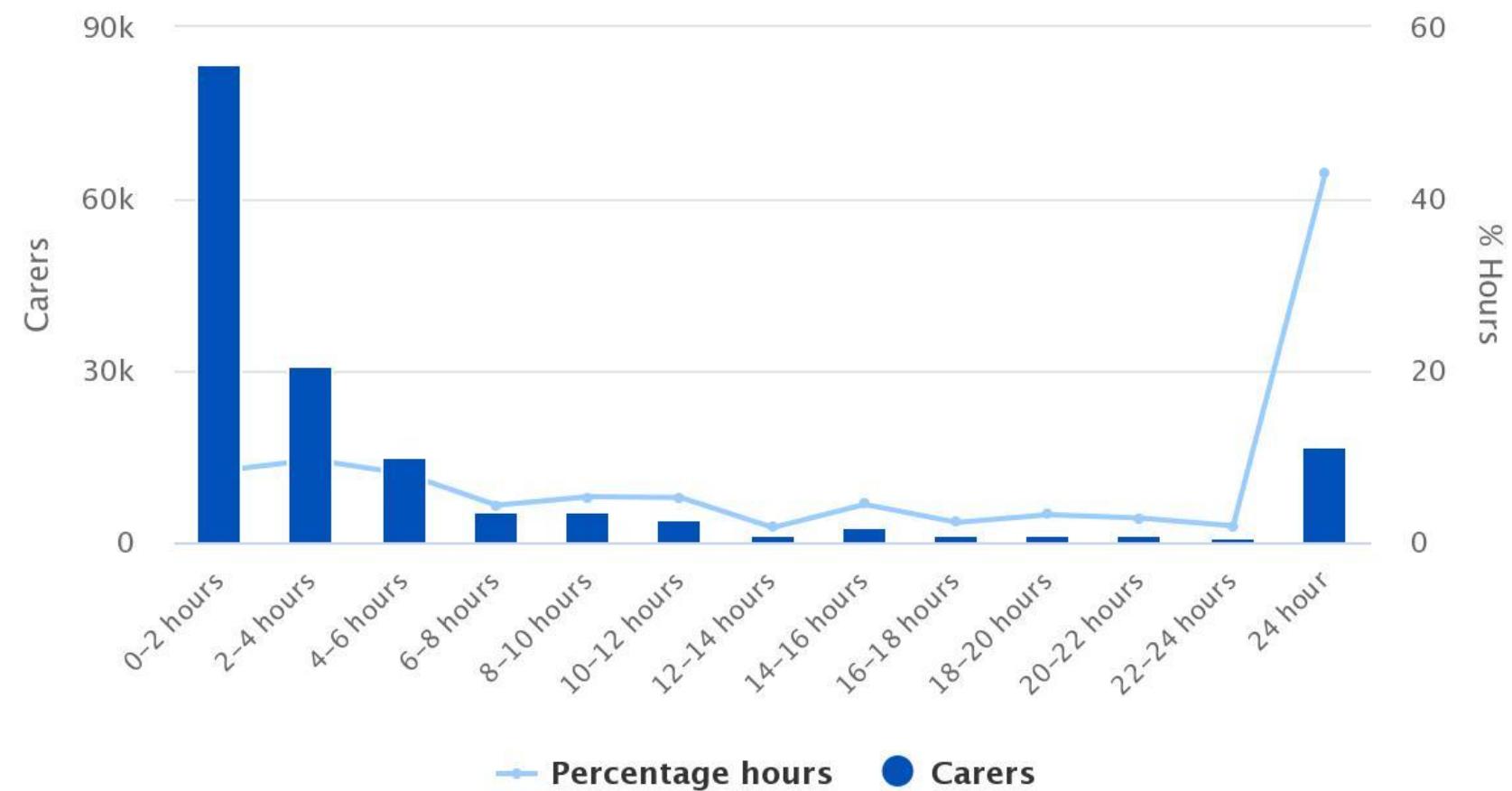
## Services provided to people with intellectual disabilities

The majority of adults live with their families. As caregivers age, a wide range of additional services are required for people who wish to continue to live as independently as possible.

# Caring

- 195,263 persons (4.1% of population) were providing unpaid assistance to others
- Women made up just over 6 in 10 carers (60.5%, 118,151 carers) with 77,112 (39.5%) men.
- 3,800 children under 15 years engaged in providing care to others, accounting for 1.9 per cent of all carers.

Figure 5.2 Number of carers and percentage hours caring, 2016



# Key Points

1. Significant values changes, demographic changes, socio-economic changes
2. Increasing diversity
3. Continuity in values regarding family and marriage
4. Impact of austerity on families – poverty and services' crisis
5. The caring role of families
6. Some families and all families (economic and non-economic bases of adversity)
7. Many implications for policy and service responses

# Fertile Period for Policy and Strategy

- (first?) Commission on the Family 1998; FSA, FRC Programme, Marriage Counselling etc.
- Active role of the state in directly undertaking / sponsoring research studies relating to family
  - GUI; FSA; DESP – (DSFA)
- National Childrens Strategy, Agenda for Children's Services, BOBF and Associated Sectoral Strategies, First 5
- Various Social Protection Measure Changes
- Child and Family Relationships Act (2015)
- Parents and Fathers

Children  
Parents/Parenting

Individualist  
Instrumental  
Sectoral

Relational/Interdependent  
Values  
Integrated / Holistic

# In Conclusion

## A Simple Argument:

- Family a central social institution affecting and affected by society
- Major demographic and socio-economic changes but continuing significance of families
- Post(?)-Austerity services' crises deeply affecting families
- Range of policy developments affecting families and children many positive
- Time to reflect on place of family in Irish society and social policy
  - Values – societal and individual
  - Organising concept for social policy development, implementation and integration
- A second Commission on the Family?