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The Continuous Household Survey (CHS) provides a regular source of information on a wide range of social and economic issues in Northern Ireland, and has been running since 1983.

The survey is based on a random sample of 4,500 domestic addresses. Interviews are sought of all adults aged 16 and over in the selected households.

## Environmental Issues

There has been a noticeable increase in the proportion of households in Northern Ireland regularly recycling; almost three-quarters (72%) regularly recycle at least one form of packaging an increase from 53% in 2003-04.

Table 1: Household Recycling

	2003/04	2004/05
Recycled paper	50%	67%
Recycled glass	35%	45%
Recycled cans	28%	44%
<b>All households (100%)</b>	<b>2,533</b>	<b>2,772</b>

The most commonly cited reasons for not recycling all household paper, cans and glass were; small amount of glass, paper, or

## Breastfeeding

Households with children under 2 years of age were asked about how their youngest child was fed at different stages of their infancy.

Almost half the children (47%) were breast fed for their first feed. By their second week one third (33%) were breast-fed, while a quarter (26%) were breast-fed at 6 weeks.

At 4 months a quarter (23%) were still being breastfed. For 3% this was in combination with bottle feeds, 8% with bottle feeds and solids. At this stage half of all children (50%) were being fed solids and bottle fed.

Table 2: Prevalence of Breastfeeding

	First Feed	2 weeks
Breast fed	47%	30%
Bottle fed	52%	67%
<b>All families (100%)</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>133</b>

The nature and aims of the CHS are similar to those of the General Household Survey (GHS-L) carried out by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in Great Britain.

In addition to this bulletin, a wide range of additional results and technical details are available on-line. Information on how to access these is provided at the end of this bulletin.

cans (35%), no kerbside collection (28%) and recycling facilities were too far away (23%).

### Environmental Concerns

Traffic exhaust fumes (33%) and household waste disposal (33%) were mentioned most frequently by people as being one of their top three environmental concerns. The next most common concerns were pollution in rivers (30%) and traffic congestion (28%).

### Environmentally Friendly Actions

Two-fifths (42%) of households used low energy light bulbs for environmental reasons, while one-third (33%) recycled paper or glass, took action to protect wildlife or bought bottled water because of poor quality tap water.

## Use of Antibiotics

The majority (85%) of people aged 16 and over had been prescribed antibiotics at least once in their life.

Over half (58%) of those prescribed antibiotics last received them within the last 2 years. Almost all (92%) completed their prescribed course of antibiotics fully. Two-thirds (67%) of those who were prescribed antibiotics in the last year, received only one course.

Chest infections were the most common conditions for which antibiotics were prescribed (35%), followed by throat infections (20%) and other infections (14%).

Four out of five (82%) consider antibiotics to have been the most appropriate treatment for their condition.

# Health

## Self- Reported General Health

Most individuals (84%) consider their health to be good or fairly good. This is similar to 1983 when 86% reported the same.

## Long-Standing Illness

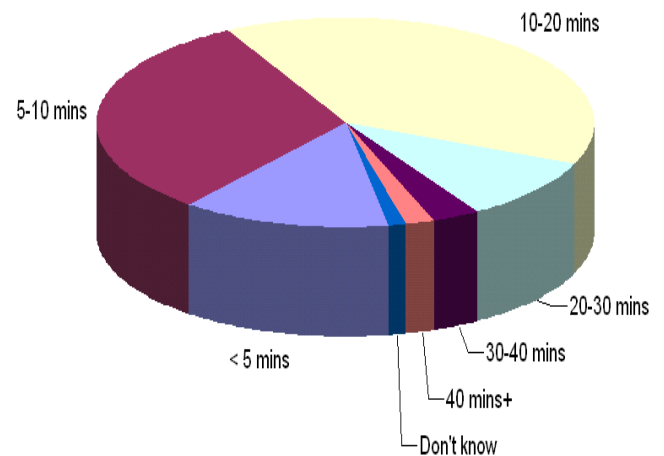
The prevalence of long-standing illness has remained relatively stable since 1998-99 (35%). A quarter of adults (25%) reported having a long-standing illness which limits their activities in 2004/05 compared to 21% in 1983.

## Consultations with an NHS GP

The proportion of individuals who reported attending an NHS GP in the 2 weeks prior to being interviewed remained relatively unchanged since 1983 (14% in 1983, 16% in 2004/05).

45% of individuals spent less than 10 minutes with their GP during their last consultation, while 39% spent between 10 and 20 minutes.

Fig 1: Length of last GP consultation



# Dental Health

Over half (56%) of individuals attend the dentist for regular check ups, a quarter (24%) only attend when they are having trouble, and 3% never attend.

Table 3: Frequency of visits to the dentist

	1999-00	2002-03	2004-05
Regular Check-up	54%	57%	56%
Occasional Check-up	13%	13%	17%
Only When having trouble	29%	26%	24%
Never go to dentist	4%	4%	3%
<b>All Persons (100%)</b>	<b>4,201</b>	<b>3,679</b>	<b>3,636</b>

During 2004-05 most adults (85%) in Northern Ireland were registered with a dentist, a similar proportion to those in 1999-00 (83%).

One third (33%) last visited the dentist 12 months or more before being interviewed. Most people (84%) attended as an NHS patient on their last visit to the dentist.

# Immunisations

Three out of five parents (61%) of children aged under 2 years reported that their child had already received the MMR vaccination, the same proportion as in 1999-00 (59%), with some having children too young to have received this vaccination yet.

Most children received vaccinations for Diphtheria (84%) polio (82%) and Hib (77%).

Table 4: Parents who consider vaccines to be completely safe

	1999-00	2003-04	2004-05
MMR	34%	43%	42%
Polio	55%	75%	70%
Hib	43%	64%	69%
DTP (Diphtheria)	48%	71%	61%
Tetanus	56%	85%	72%

Most parents (88%) received a leaflet about immunisations. Almost all (97%) felt informed of the benefits while 84% were informed of the side effects before their child was immunised. Almost all (95%) would have another child immunised.

# Smoking

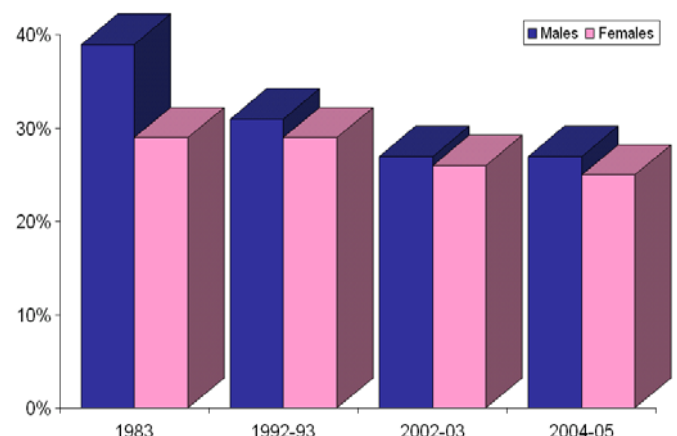
Just over a quarter of adults (26%) smoke cigarettes, with similar proportions of males and females falling into this category (27% and 25% respectively).

Only a small minority of adults (2%) smoke a pipe or cigar, this has fallen slightly from 1983 (5%).

From 2000-01 the proportion of current smokers who indicate that they would like to give up smoking has remained unchanged at 77%.

Three-quarters (74%) of smokers cite health reasons as the factor that would most persuade them to give up smoking. One in ten (12%) consider the cost of cigarettes as an influencing factor to stop smoking.

Fig 2: Prevalence of Cigarette Smoking



## Drinking

During 2004-05 three-quarters of adults (76%) consumed alcohol compared to 64% in 1986. The prevalence of drinking was similar for males (81%) and females (72%).

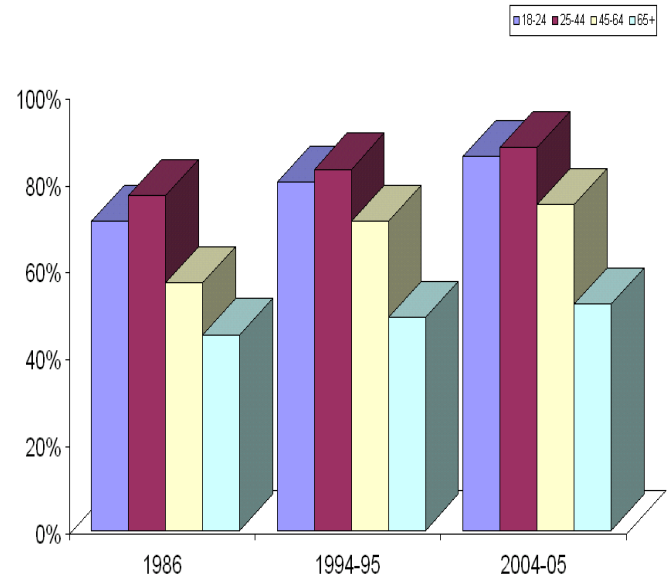
The proportion of people who drank was much smaller for those aged 65+ than any other age group (52% compared to 86% of those aged 18-24).

Within 65+ age group there was a significant difference between males and females reported as 'drinkers' (64% of males and 42% of females).

4% of adults with a current driving licence and who drank reported driving on at least one occasion when they were sure they had drunk enough to be over the legal limit.

3% drove whilst over the limit on one or two occasions while 1% have done so more than four times.

Fig 3: Prevalence of drinking



## Drug Use

### Prevalence of drug use

Adults aged 16-64 were asked about their use of drugs. One fifth (19%) had used drugs at least once, with more males (23%) reporting use than females (16%).

Cannabis was the most commonly used drug, 17% having used it at least once.

7% had used drugs in the last 12 months, while only a minority (4%) had done so in the last 4 weeks.

### Age first time used drugs

Just over half (53%) of those who had used drugs did so for the first time under the age of 18. 12% of males reported using drugs under the age of 14 in comparison to just 4% of females.

### Driving under the influence of drugs

Of those who hold a current driving licence and who had used drugs, one in ten (11%) have driven within hours of taking drugs. Males were significantly more likely to have done so, 15% compared to 7% of females.

Almost half (48%) of those questioned thought it would be easy or fairly easy to get illegal drugs.

Table 5: Drugs used ever and in the last 12 months

	Ever	Last 12 months
Cannabis	17%	6%
Solvents	2%	<1%
Ecstasy	5%	1%
Speed	2%	1%
LSD	3%	<1%
Poppers	3%	<1%
Tranquilisers	2%	1%
Heroin	<1%	<1%
Magic Mushrooms	2%	<1%
Methadone	<1%	<1%
Crack	<1%	<1%
Cocaine	2%	1%
Anabolic Steroids	<1%	<1%
Did not use drugs	81%	93%
<b>All Persons (100%)</b>	<b>3,208</b>	<b>3,208</b>

## Sport and Leisure

Just over half of adults (53%) in Northern Ireland participated in sport in the 12 months prior to being interviewed, a slightly smaller proportion than in 1999-00 (59%).

The most popular forms of physical activity were swimming or diving (23%) and keepfit, yoga and aerobics (20%).

Two out of five (40%) attended a sporting activity in the previous year, 15% at least once a month. Over half (58%) reported being very satisfied or fairly satisfied with sports provision in Northern Ireland.

### "The Arts" in Northern Ireland

A minority (6%) participated in an Arts performance in the previous 12 months. Almost half (47%) attended an Arts performance during the same period.

Most people (62%) were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the arts provision in Northern Ireland.

### Cultural Attractions in Northern Ireland

One-third (33%) visited at least one of Northern Ireland's museums in the last year. W5 in the Odyssey Centre was the most popular attraction to visit (23%), followed by The Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Cultra (17%) and Ulster Museum Belfast (16%).

## Household Composition

In 2004-05 the average household size in Northern Ireland was 2.56 compared to 3.14 in 1983.

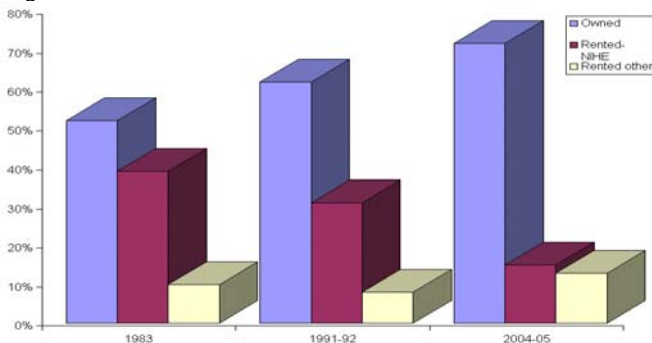
Single-occupant households under pension age made up 13% of households in Northern Ireland. This is more than double that of 1983 (5%), while this figure is relatively unchanged since 1997-98 when one in ten (11%) households were in this category.

## Tenure

The proportion of households owning their home outright or with a mortgage has increased by 20% from 1983 (52% in 1983 and 72% in 2004-05).

Households renting their home from the Housing Executive have more than halved during the same period (39% in 1983, and 15% in 2004-05).

Fig 4: Household Tenure



## Internet Access

### Household Internet Access

In 2004-05 45% of households in Northern Ireland had access to the internet through at least one method. 43% of households had access via a home computer compared to 13% five years previously in 1999-00.

### Individual Internet Access

Just over half (54%) of adults accessed the internet compared to 35% in 2001-02. A home computer is the most common method of accessing the internet with 45% of people using it.

62% of those who access the internet do so at least once a week, with 35% using it on a daily basis.

### Individuals reasons for accessing the Internet

For over half (54%) of internet users email is the most common reason for going online. The next most common reasons were finding out about goods and services (44%), buying or ordering tickets (42%) and general browsing (39%).

## Families with dependent children

Lone parent families accounted for 29% of all families with children, more than double that of 1983 (11%).

Most of this increase was due to the rise in lone mother households, which increased from 10% in 1983 to 27% in 2004-05.

People responded that the ideal number of children was 2.8 in 2004-05 compared to 3.2 in 1983 and 2.7 in 1999-00.

## Consumer Durables

Many electrical appliances previously considered 'luxury items' are now found in most households. The most significant growth from 1983 were for videos (15% to 85%), fridge-freezers (16% and 70%) and microwave ovens (2% and 90%).

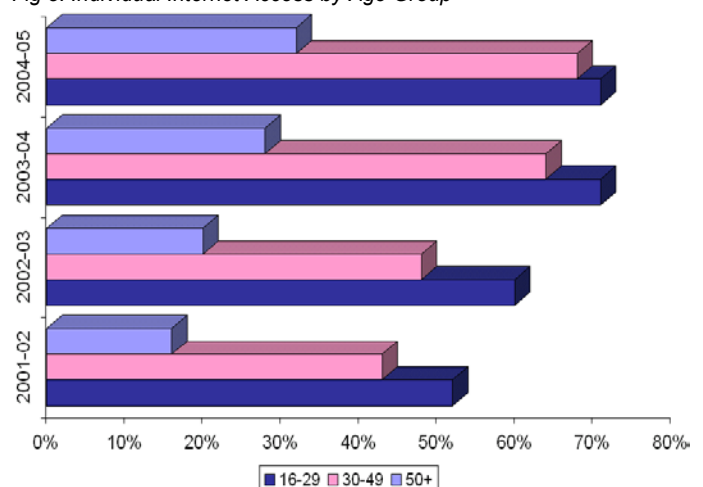
Table 6: Household Durables

	1983	1994/95	2004/05
Home Computer	8%	15%	52%
Video	15%	69%	85%
Microwave Oven	2%	60%	90%
Tumble Dryer	22%	33%	56%
Dishwasher	6%	15%	40%
Central Heating	55%	89%	97%
2 or more cars/vans	11%	18%	33%
<b>All Households (100%)</b>	<b>2,940</b>	<b>3,220</b>	<b>2,768</b>

### Individual reasons for not accessing the Internet

The most common reason for not using the internet is a lack of interest (44%), followed by not owning a computer (39%).

Fig 5: Individual Internet Access by Age Group



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Additional Trend tables and Update tables are available on the website