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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 with all adults aged 16 and over in the selected households.

## Smoking

In 2006/07 just over a quarter of adults (25%) were smokers, a decrease from 1983 when one third (33%) were smokers.

More than half (55%) of all smokers had their first cigarette of the day within thirty minutes of waking. 41% stated it would be very difficult to go without smoking for a day.

### Attempts to Quit Smoking

Three quarters (75%) of smokers have tried to quit smoking; of these half (50%) used willpower and one third (35%) used nicotine gum or patches during their quit attempt.

Three quarters (75%) of smokers would like to give up smoking. Health reasons (68%) and the price of cigarettes (16%) were the most frequently mentioned factors that would encourage smokers to quit.

### Passive Smoking and the Smoking Ban

Prior to the smoking ban being implemented respondents were asked their views on the ban. The majority (86%) supported the proposed smoking ban.

Almost all (91%) adults believed that inhaling other peoples tobacco smoke damages health. 66% were bothered to some extent by tobacco smoke in public places.

Fig 1: Attitude to the Smoking Ban by Smoking Status



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.

## Drinking

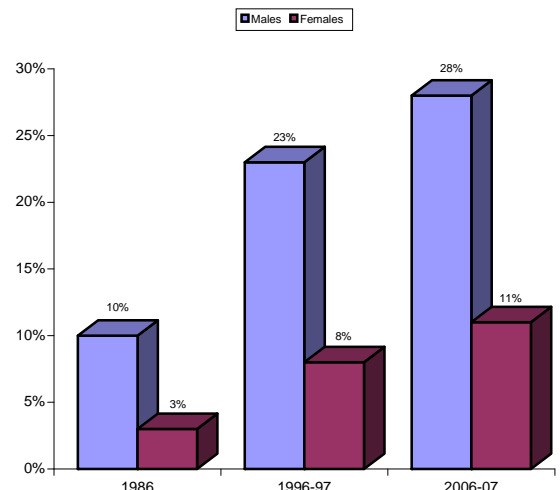
Three quarters (75%) of those aged 18 years and over consumed alcohol in 2006-07, an increase from 64% in 1986.

### Drinking in excess of recommended levels

One fifth (18%) of individuals regularly drank in excess of recommended sensible levels; 21 units per week for males and 14 units per week for females.

The proportion of males drinking in excess of sensible levels has been consistently higher than that of females (in 2006-07 28% and 11%). The proportion of both males and females drinking above sensible levels has increased from 1986 (10% to 28% and 3% to 11% respectively).

Fig 2: Drinking in excess of recommended sensible levels



### Drinking while under the influence of alcohol

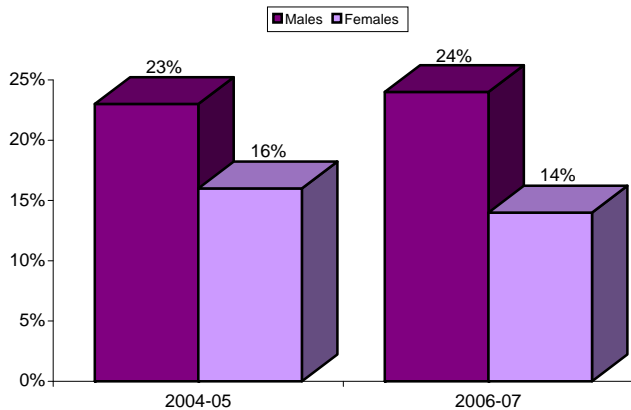
A small proportion (4%) of people who drink alcohol and have a driving licence stated they had driven on at least one occasion when they were sure they had consumed more than the legal limit. 1% had driven while they were over the legal limit on four or more occasions.

**Please note:**  
Increases, Decreases and Comparisons where noted can be read as statistically significant

## Drug Use

Respondents aged 16-64 were asked whether they had ever used any illicit or prescription drugs other than those prescribed for them. One in five (18%) had used these types of drugs at least once, a similar level to 2004-05 (19%). More males reported using drugs, 24% compared to 14% of females.

Fig 3: Prevalence of drug taking



The most commonly used drugs were cannabis (16%) and ecstasy (5%).

A small proportion of those aged 16-64 had used drugs in the previous 12 months (5%) or 4 weeks (3%). Of this age group 4% had used cannabis in the last 12 months and 2% in the previous 4 weeks.

### Age first time used drugs

A quarter of individuals (23%) used drugs for the first time under the age of 16, with similar numbers of males and females (24% and 21% respectively).

### Driving under the influence of drugs

Among individuals who held a driving licence and who had used drugs 7% reported driving within a few hours of taking drugs. This is a significant decrease from 2004-05 when 11% had driven after taking drugs.

43% of respondents thought it would be very easy or fairly easy to obtain drugs, while 41% were not sure.

## Health

### Self-Reported General Health

Over half (56%) of adults considered their health to be good, with a minority stating that it was not good (15%). This has remained relatively unchanged for the last ten years when 56% also reported good health.

### Long-Standing Illness

One third (35%) of adults in Northern Ireland reported having a long-standing illness compared to 29% in 1983. One quarter (24%) have a long-standing illness which limits their activities, an increase from 1983 (21%).

### Consultations with an NHS GP

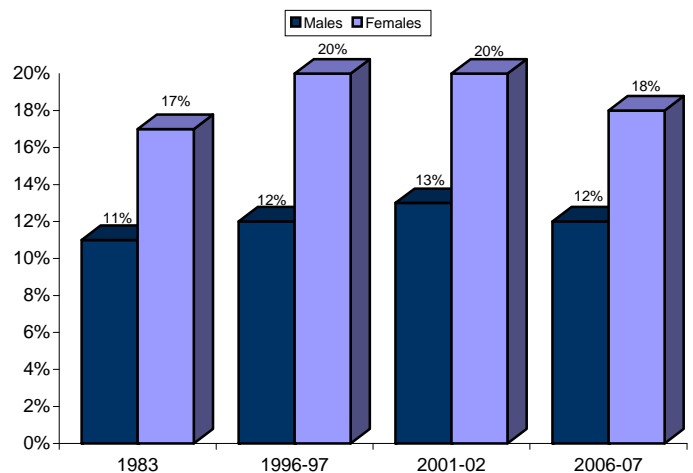
In total 15% reported visiting an NHS GP in the two weeks prior to being interviewed. A higher proportion of females have consistently reported attending a GP (18% compared to 12% of males in 2006-07; in 1983 17% of females and 11% of males).

Most individuals (85%) spent less than 20 minutes with their GP on their last visit; 44% spent less than ten.

### Consultations with a Practice Nurse

A small proportion (7%) of respondents reported seeing a practice nurse in the 2 weeks prior to being interviewed. Of those aged 65+, 14% had visited a nurse at the GP surgery in the previous 2 weeks.

Table 4: Consultations with an NHS GP in the previous 2 weeks



## Dental Health

Just under two thirds (62%) of people reported going to the dentist for regular checkups, an increase from 2004-05 when 56% attended so frequently.

Significantly more females reported having regular checkups with the dentist (68% compared to 53% of males).

Table 1: Frequency of visits to the dentist

	1999-00	2004-05	2006-07
Regular Checkup	54%	56%	62%
Occasional Checkup	13%	17%	14%
Only when having trouble	29%	24%	21%
Never go to dentist	4%	3%	3%
All Persons	4,201	3,636	3,336

### Last visit to the dentist

Just under half (48%) of adults had visited a dentist in the last 6 months, while 30% had not attended in the last year. One third of males (36%) had not been to the dentist in the last year compared to a quarter (25%) of females.

### Registered with a dentist

The majority of individuals (86%) are registered with a dentist, this figure has remained relatively unchanged since 1999-00 (83%).

### NHS and private patients

Four out of five people (80%) last attended the dentist as an NHS patient compared to 86% in 2002-03.

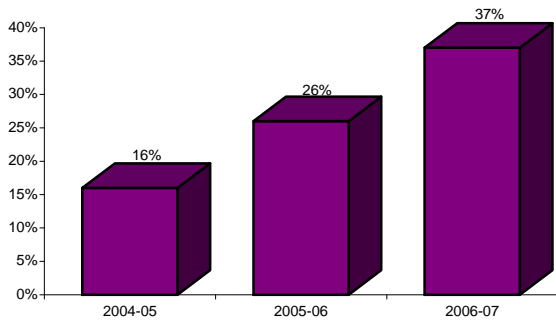
# Internet Access

## Household Internet Access

In 2006-07 57% of households in Northern Ireland had a home computer. Half of households had internet access (49%) and 47% used their home computer to access the internet. Among households with internet access 75% had a broadband connection.

Over one third (37%) of all households had a broadband internet connection, an increase from 16% in 2004-05.

Fig 5: Households with broadband internet access



# Environmental Issues

## Environmental Concerns

Four out of five (80%) households were very concerned or fairly concerned about the environment in 2006-07.

The most commonly cited environmental concerns were climate change (34%), household waste disposal (33%) and traffic exhaust fumes and urban smog (32%). The proportion of households citing climate change as an important problem has increased significantly each year since 2003-04.

Table 2: Important environmental concerns

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Climate change	14%	19%	29%	34%
Household waste Disposal	33%	33%	34%	33%
Traffic exhaust fumes and urban smog	38%	34%	32%	32%
Pollution in rivers	32%	30%	31%	29%
Traffic congestion	29%	28%	27%	28%
Ozone layer depletion	23%	26%	28%	27%
All Households	2,521	2,749	2,577	2,675

# Child Health

## Child Long-Standing Illness

In 2006-07 15% of children in Northern Ireland had a long standing illness, this has remained relatively unchanged since 1997-98 (15%).

Less than one in ten (8%) had a long standing illness that limited their activities, the same proportion as in 1997-98.

## Child NHS GP Consultations

8% of those under 16 had visited an NHS GP in the previous two weeks. A small proportion had been an in-patient (6%) or a day-patient (4%) in hospital in the previous 12 months; while 7% had been an out-patient in the previous 3 months.

## Individual Internet Access

Over half of adults (58%) accessed the internet in 2006-07, an increase from 54% the previous year.

## Methods of accessing the Internet

Home computers are used by three quarters (75%) of internet users, while one third (34%) use a computer at work. One third (36%) of individuals who accessed the internet did so using more than one method.

## Individuals reasons for accessing the Internet

The most common reasons for accessing the internet were for email (55%), finding out about goods and services (46%), general browsing (43%), buying or ordering tickets (42%) and work related reasons (29%).

## Individuals reasons for not accessing the Internet

The most frequently mentioned reasons for not accessing the internet were a lack of interest (44%) and not having a computer (33%).

## Household Recycling

The proportion of households regularly recycling at least one of the following; glass, cans or paper continued to increase significantly from 81% in 2005-06 to 89% in 2006-07. 86% regularly recycled paper, 79% recycled cans and 64% regularly recycled glass.

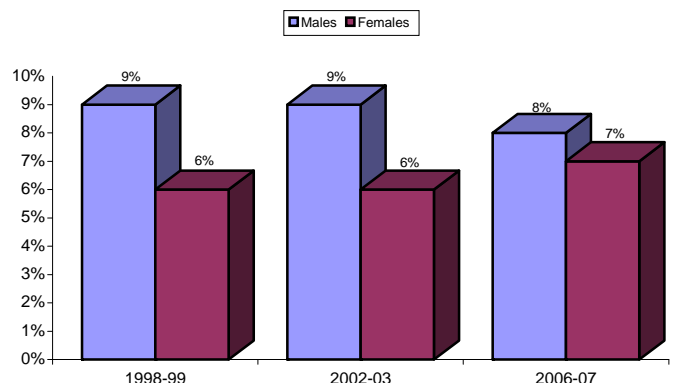
## Reasons for not regularly recycling

The most frequently mentioned reasons for not regularly recycling glass, cans and paper were having a small amount of glass, paper and cans (34%), no kerbside collection (29%) and recycling facilities too far away (20%); these were also the most common reasons in 2003/04 (30%, 27% and 27% respectively).

## Environmentally friendly actions

When asked to indicate environmentally friendly actions taken the most common were using energy saving light bulbs (47%), and reducing the amount of energy used in the home (37%). Both of these have increased from the previous year when 43% and 31% of households mentioned these.

Fig 6: Limiting long standing illness among children



# Household Composition

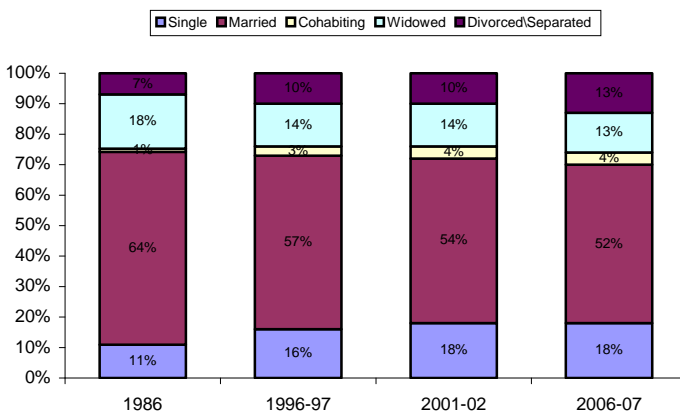
## Household Size

The average household size (2.54) in Northern Ireland has remained relatively unchanged from 2002-03 when it was 2.58.

## Marital Status of Household Reference Person

The proportion of households headed by a married couple has decreased significantly in the last two decades from 64% in 1986 to 52% in 2006-07. In 1986 households headed by a divorced or separated individual accounted for 7% of households, in 2006-07 it had increased to 13%.

Fig 7: Marital Status of Household Reference Person



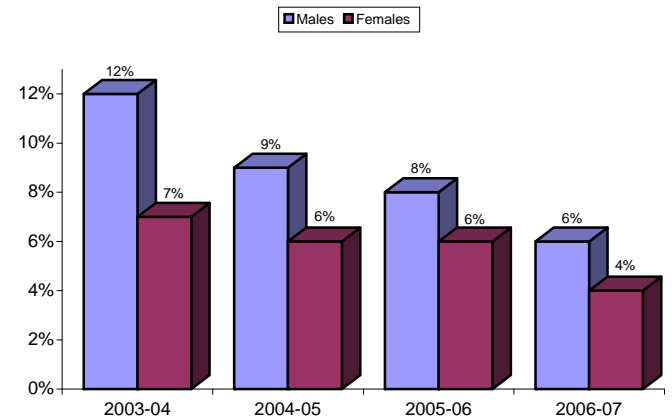
# Accidents at Work

In 2006-07 13% reported having had an accident at work; this is the same percentage as reported for each of the previous three years. The prevalence of accidents at work has consistently been higher among males than females, with 21% of males and 8% of females stating they had an accident.

## Illnesses caused or made worse by work

Only a small proportion (5%) reported having an illness that was caused or made worse by their work. There was a decrease from 2005-06 when 7% reported having such an illness.

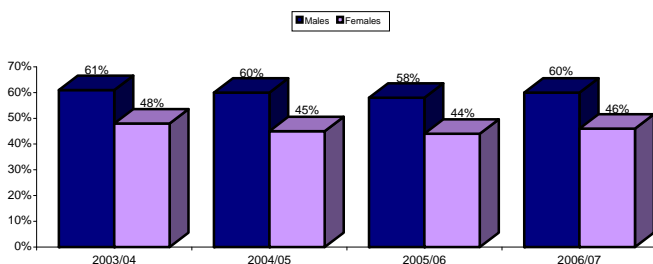
Fig 8: Had an illness caused or made work by work



# Sport and Leisure

Half (52%) of adults in Northern Ireland participated in sport in the previous 12 months; 60% of males compared to 46% of females. Two thirds (64%) of those who played sport did so at least once a week.

Fig 9: Participation in sport in the last 12 months



## Attendance at Sporting Events

One third (32%) attended a sporting event in Northern Ireland during the last 12 months; with twice as many males attended events (44% and 22% respectively). 16% attended a sporting event outside Northern Ireland in the last year.

## Satisfaction with Sports Provision

Half (56%) were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with sports provision, a decrease from 2005-06 (59%).

## Attendance at 'The Arts'

Almost half (46%) attended an arts performance in the previous year, while only 7% had participated in the Arts during the same period. 60% were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with Arts provision in Northern Ireland.

## Use of Public Libraries

One third (34%) visited a public library in the last year, while one fifth (19%) had never visited a public library. Of those who used a public library 17% did so at least once a week, the same proportion as in 2005-06.

## Satisfaction with Public Library Provision

Most respondents (60%) were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with public library provision in Northern Ireland.

## Visits to Museums in Northern Ireland

One third of respondents (30%) had visited a museum in the previous year; 16% visited W5 the Odyssey Centre, 13% the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Cultra and 11% had been to Ulster Museum Belfast.

## Satisfaction with Museum Provision in Northern Ireland

Almost two thirds (62%) of respondents were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with museum provision in Northern Ireland.

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