

Executive Summary

Leitrim: A County in Change was commissioned by Leitrim County Development Board's Social Inclusion Measures Group to identify the extent of poverty and disadvantage in Leitrim. Information from the National Censuses of Population 2002 and 2006 was the main source of information, supplemented by information from agencies and organisations in Leitrim and by national research into poverty and disadvantage. The following outlines the main findings of the research.

An examination of research carried out by organisations such as the Economic and Social Research Institute and Trutz Haase Economic Consultants indicates that, nationally, Leitrim is one of the counties at highest risk of poverty. Leitrim: A County in Change report examined a number of indicators of poverty in relation to Leitrim, comparing in many cases the figures from the 2002 National Census of Population to those from the 2006 National Census of Population.

Table 1 Summary of Indicators

Area	2002			2006		
	State	Leitrim	Gap	State	Leitrim	Gap
Change in Population 1996-2002	8.0%	3.0%	5.0%	8.2%	12.2%	4.0%
Older People	11.1%	16.1%	5.0%	11.0%	14.5%	3.5%
Age Dependency Ratio	47.6%	58.9%	11.3%	45.8%	53.6%	7.8%
Low Social Class (5&6)	16.5%	18.0%	1.5%	15.3%	16.0%	0.7%
Low Education (1&2)	22.2%	28.8%	6.6%	18.9%	22.8%	3.9%
Labour Force Participation Rate	58.3%	53.7%	4.6%	62.5%	59.8%	2.7%
EDR	1.4	1.6	0.2	1.2	1.3	0.1

Source: CSO, National Census of Population 2002 & 2006

Table 1 shows a summary of some of the indicators studied. It illustrates that, in relation to some of the indicators such as the proportion of older people, age dependency ratio, levels of low social class, and levels of low education attainment, labour force participation and economic dependency ratio Leitrim fares worse than the national average but it also shows that the gap between Leitrim and the State narrowed considerably in most categories between 2002 and 2006.

The following is a summary of the key findings and emerging trends identified by the research.

Population & Population Change

- Leitrim has the smallest population in the State with an average population density figure that is almost three and a half times lower than the average for the State.
- There are slightly more males than females living in Leitrim.
- Leitrim is the most rurally based population in the State by a significant margin, though the number of people living in the Aggregate Town Areas of Leitrim increased slightly between 2002 and 2006.
- The major centres of population in Leitrim are Carrick-on-Shannon and Manorhamilton.
- There are 27 EDs in Leitrim with populations of fewer than 200 people and eight of these have populations of less than 100 people.
- Between 1996 and 2002, Leitrim recorded the first population increase since 1841, one of the lowest in the country for that period and substantially lower than the State average. Between 2002 and 2006, the population of Leitrim increased by 12.2%, one of the biggest increases in the country for that period and at 28,950 the population of Leitrim is now the highest it has been since 1966.
- The increases in population between 1996 and 2006 consisted principally of net migration. Between 1996 and 2002, over 1,000 migrants came to Leitrim and net migration accounted for almost 143% of the population increase (in other words, without migration the population of Leitrim would have decreased in this period), and between 2002 and 2006, almost 3,000 people moved to Leitrim. Net migration accounted for 93% of the population increase in that period and the immigration figures for Leitrim are still substantially greater than the State averages.
- The increase in population in Leitrim is not evenly distributed through the county. The figures for 2006 indicate that the population increase is mainly concentrated in the Carrick-on-Shannon and Manorhamilton Rural Areas, where the population between 2002 and 2006 increased substantially and where the combined increase accounts for almost 75% of the overall increase in the population in Leitrim. Comparatively small increases were recorded in Ballinamore and Mohill Rural Areas.
- At ED level, a number of EDs recorded significant increases in population between 2002 and 2006. However, the population of others declined and seven EDs have recorded persistent population decline since 1996.
- Unlike in 2002 when the population increases were not evenly distributed amongst the various age categories, the figures for 2006 show that there was population increases in all the age categories.

Age Profile

The national population is getting older. Against the national trend, the population in Leitrim is getting younger with the average age falling by .4 years between 2002 and 2006. Despite this, Leitrim continues to have one of the oldest populations in the State.

The age dependency rate in Leitrim fell from 37.1% in 2002 to 34.9% in 2006, and though the rate remains one of the highest in the State and substantially higher than the State average, it is no longer the highest in the State and the gap between Leitrim and the State narrowed considerably between 2002 and 2006.

Principal Economic Status, Economic Dependency and Social Class

The labour force and labour force participation rate in Leitrim increased at significantly higher rates than those in the State between 2002 and 2006. In Leitrim, the labour force increased by 26% between 2002 and 2006 and the labour force participation rate increased by 6.1% - almost one and a half times the national rate of increase. The rate of increase was higher for females than males and was higher than the State average for both genders. The gap between the labour force participation rates in Leitrim and the State also narrowed from 4.6% in 2002 to 2.7% in 2006.

In 2002, Leitrim had the third lowest labour force participation rate in the State. By 2006, this position had improved to tenth lowest. The number of people who described themselves as at work increased from 49% to 55% between 2002 and 2006, again a higher rate of increase than the State average.

The unemployment rate remains slightly lower in Leitrim than in the State¹. The proportion of people who describe themselves as not being in the labour force remained higher in Leitrim than in the State, though there were fewer people in this category than in 2002. At sub-county level, when compared to the figures for 2002, the labour force and labour force participation rates increased in all rural areas. Ballinamore and Mohill Rural Areas have the lowest labour force participation rates.

In 2006, the Economic Dependency Rate (EDR) in Leitrim, at 1.3, was significantly lower than the rate of 1.6 in 2002 and the gap between the EDR in Leitrim and the State narrowed considerably between 2002 and 2006. At rural area level the EDR decreased in all the rural areas, most significantly in the Ballinamore and Mohill Rural Areas. Kinlough and Mohill Rural Areas had the highest EDR.

The largest increase in social class between 2002 and 2006 in Leitrim was in the combined professional social classes, which increased at almost three times the national average. However, though the gap between the State and Leitrim narrowed significantly since 2002, proportionally, there are still fewer people from the combined higher social classes and more people from the combined lower social classes in Leitrim than nationally. In the same period, there was an increase in the combined middle social classes, and a decrease in the number of people in the combined lower social classes. At rural area level, all the rural areas have lower proportions than the State average of people in the higher social classes, though the gaps in all areas are narrower than in 2002.

¹ Whilst the unemployment rate of an area is one of the most commonly used and accepted indicators of disadvantage, it is not the most reliable indicator in rural areas. Work carried out by some (for example Haase and Pratschke 2005) indicates that there is no necessary connection between the level of employment and the degree of disadvantage in rural areas.

Households, Families and Accommodation

- There are 10,646 private households in Leitrim, an increase of 1,547 on the figure in 2002 which was 9,099 private households. Leitrim continues to have one of the lowest averages of persons per private household in the State.
- The vast majority of private households are in the Aggregate Rural Areas of County Leitrim and Leitrim continues to have one of the lowest average number of persons per private household in the State. There are 7,153 family units in Leitrim, an increase of 1,037 since 2002.
- The largest proportion of households in Leitrim is made up of a husband and wife with children (31.8%).
Proportionately, there are more people living alone, fewer lone parents with children and more couples with no children in Leitrim than the State.
- There are also fewer co-habiting couples, though the number of co-habiting couples in Leitrim doubled between 2002 and 2006.
- The vast majority of people live in whole houses with few living in flats or apartments.
- Leitrim has one of the highest percentages of one-off housing units in the country.
- Significantly more people own their own houses without a loan or a mortgage than the State average.
- Proportionally, approximately the same numbers of houses are being rented from the local authority in Leitrim as in the State but just under half the number of houses in Leitrim are being purchased from the local authority than in the State.

Education

- According to the information from the 2006 National Census of Population proportionally more people in Leitrim (aged fifteen years and over) finished education with no formal education, primary education only and lower secondary only than the national averages; fewer people finished education with upper secondary and third level; more people finished education at fifteen years or younger and fewer people finished education age twenty years or older than the national average.
- Despite this, the level of education in Leitrim improved considerably between 2002 and 2006. For example, between 2002 and 2006 the number of people aged 15 years and over in Leitrim who left education with no formal education or primary education only decreased significantly, as did the number of people who finished education at age fifteen years or younger.
- At the other end of the spectrum, the number of people who finished education with third level education increased in Leitrim, as did the number of people who ceased education at age twenty years or older.
- The gap between Leitrim and the State in relation to education attainment also narrowed significantly between 2002 and 2006 for all categories except for those who ceased education aged 20 years or older. This category increased in Leitrim between 2002 and 2006 but the gap between Leitrim and the State in this area also increased significantly from 1.6% in 2002 to 5.1% in 2006, reflecting the national trend towards people remaining in education longer.
- The information on the younger people in Leitrim supplied by the Department of Education and Science North Western Regional Office suggests a strong education infrastructure with Leitrim performing very well in comparison with the national picture.

Health

- Some groups of people have a higher risk of ill health than others. These groups include older people, those with a disability and those in the lower socio-economic groups. There tends to be higher levels of people at risk of ill health for socio-economic factors in Leitrim than the average for the State:
- Proportionately there are more people with a disability, more people over the age of 65 years and more people from the lowest social classes in Leitrim than the average for the State.

Vulnerable Groups

- In 2002, there were 913 family units headed by a lone parent in Leitrim. This increased to 1,098 family units in 2006, proportionately a lower number than the State average.
- The largest proportion of lone parent families continue to live in Carrick-on-Shannon, Manorhamilton and Mohill Rural Areas.
- There are higher percentages of all the older age categories and a higher level of older people living alone in Leitrim than the State.
- At sub-county level, the largest proportion of older people live in Mohill Rural Area and Manorhamilton has the highest proportion of older older people (75 years and over).
- Similar to the situation in 2002, there is a slightly higher proportion of people whose nationality is not Irish in Leitrim than in the State.
- The largest proportion of people whose nationality is not Irish have UK nationality, followed by Polish nationality.
- There are significant numbers of immigrants living in Leitrim. Between 2002 and 2006, for example, almost 3,000 people moved to Leitrim.
- According to the 2006 National Census of Population there were 190 members of the Traveller community living in Leitrim, an increase of 56 since 2002.
- A total of 220 people described their ethnic status as Black, Black Irish, Asian or Asian Irish in Leitrim.
- Proportionately there are more people with a disability in Leitrim than the State. At sub-county level, Manorhamilton Rural Area has the highest population of people with a disability followed by Mohill Rural Area.

Resources & Amenities

- The rate of car ownership in Leitrim is higher than the State. However, over 16% of households have no car in Leitrim, the largest proportion of which is in Carrick-on-Shannon Rural Area.
- Almost half of households in Leitrim now have a computer, a significant increase on the figure of a third in 2002, and the rate of computer ownership increased in all the rural areas.
- At ED level, at least a quarter of households in all EDs have a computer.
- Access to the Internet improved significantly with almost 40% of households in Leitrim having access to the Internet, though the 7.8% who have access via broadband is significantly lower than the national average of 20%.
- AT ED level at least a quarter of households in all EDs now have access to the Internet

Sub-County Level

Table 2 shows a summary of some of the indicators at rural area level and identifies the most disadvantaged areas at ED level.

Table 2 Summary of Indicators at Rural Area and ED level

	ED	Change in Population 1996-2002	Change in Population 2002-2006	Older People	Age Dependency Ratio	Low Social Class (5&6)	Low Education (1&2)	Labour Force Participation Rate	EDR
Ballinamore Rural Area		-4.6%	3.3%	14.8%	54.0%	14.7%	23.5%	57.0%	1.3
Carrick-on-Shannon Rural Area		9.0%	23.1%	13.0%	48.0%	14.7%	17.8%	63.2%	1.1
Kinlough Rural Area		15.5%	26.7%	11.6%	52.8%	15.9%	20.5%	61.6%	1.4
Manorhamilton Rural Area		0.7%	11.3%	15.4%	57.4%	18.3%	25.1%	58.9%	1.3
Mohill Rural Area		0.5%	3.1%	16.1%	56.5%	15.7%	26.0%	57.5%	1.4
Ballinamore Rural Area	002 Cloverhill	-4.60%	7.10%	14.10%	62.4%	18.9%	27.7%	50.4%	1.8
Ballinamore Rural Area	003 Corrala	0.00%	7.10%	14.2%	73.8%	9.7%	24.3%	54.9%	1.8
Ballinamore Rural Area	010 Oughteragh	-10.9%	-7.8%	18.1%	56.6%	25.3%	37.5%	45.6%	1.9
Carrick-on-Shannon Rural Area									
Carrick-on-Shannon Rural Area	023 Kiltubbrid	-13.3%	20.2%	16.1%	50.5%	10.1%	20.8%	53.7%	1.5
Carrick-on-Shannon Rural Area									
Carrick-on-Shannon Rural Area	026 Yugan	-4.2%	4.4%	17.2%	49.7%	17.2%	37.5%	50.0%	1.6
Manorhamilton Rural Area	046 Glenfarn	-6.2%	8.3%	24.4%	65.8%	21.4%	41.5%	45.9%	1.7
Manorhamilton Rural Area	048 Killarga	13.6%	-9.0%	22.0%	82.0%	39.6%	45.9%	54.3%	1.8
Manorhamilton Rural Area	049 Kiltyclogher	-0.4%	0.0%	20.9%	81.4%	21.3%	34.5%	48.2%	2.2
Manorhamilton Rural Area	051 Mahanagh	-7.0%	9.4%	15.2%	60.2%	22.4%	23.7%	49.3%	1.8
Manorhamilton Rural Area	053 Munakill	-10.3%	11.5%	19.2%	74.6%	19.2%	29.1%	54.0%	1.6
Manorhamilton Rural Area	Garvagh(41)/Arigna(34)	-14.6%	4.50%	20.7%	50.5%	31.4%	33.6%	54.9%	1.5
Mohill Rural Area	063 Castlefore	17.0%	11.0%	13.9%	77.5%	20.6%	19.4%	57.6%	1.7
Mohill Rural Area	064 Cattan	-4.7%	2.3%	16.5%	54.3%	17.2%	34.6%	53.0%	1.6
Mohill Rural Area	066 Corriga	-5.5%	-5.8%	17.9%	67.0%	21.0%	35.5%	51.6%	1.7
Mohill Rural Area	073 Lisgillock	-4.6%	3.3%	13.9%	57.7%	20.8%	32.9%	62.9%	1.2
Mohill Rural Area	076 Riverstown	-7.4%	5.2%	22.5%	65.8%	13.0%	30.9%	56.7%	1.3
Leitrim		3.0%	12.2%	14.5%	53.6%	16.0%	22.8%	59.8%	1.3
State		8.0%	8.2%	11.0%	45.8%	15.3%	18.9%	62.5%	1.2

Source: CSO, National Census of Population 2002 & 2006