

Fingal LECP Socio-Economic Profile

Fingal County spans over 450 square kilometres – from the Meath boundary north of Balbriggan stretching south to the Dublin City boundary, to the Irish Sea in the east and the Meath boundary in the west and Louth in the North. The area is characterised by a diverse landscape of rural, urban and suburban dimensions, with 88 kilometres of coastline stretching from Howth in the south to Balbriggan in the north and stretching inland to the west to Blanchardstown.

Fingal has a strong infrastructure network –including Dublin international airport, harbours, rail and road linkages with both Dublin Port and Dublin City in close proximity. Fingal also sits along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor which, alongside Dublin Airport, represents a significant economic asset and opportunity for the county.

Following the amalgamation of the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown with Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) and Institute of Technology Tallaght, Fingal is now home to a campus of Technology University Dublin (TUD). In 2022, a planned €50 million third level institution was announced for Swords, thus positioning the county as a future educational hub for its young and growing population.

As demonstrated in this profile, the population of Fingal reached 330,506 in 2022, making it the third largest local authority area in Ireland. The county's population is characterised by its diversity and youthfulness relative to other local authority areas across the country.

Figure 1: Map of Fingal Electoral Divisions

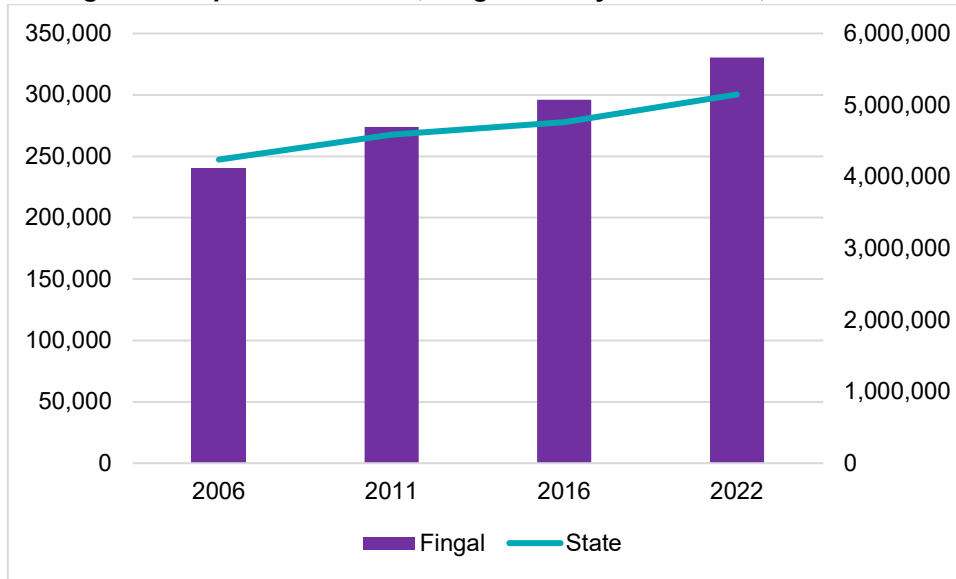


Source: Fingal County Council

Population

According to the 2022 Census, Ireland's population reached 5,149,139 in April 2022 – representing growth of 8.1% from the previous Census in 2016. Fingal's population stood at 330,506 at the time, an increase from 2016 of 11.6%, or just over 34,000 people. The county hence accounts for 6.4% of Ireland's population, with only Dublin City and Cork City and County accounting for higher proportions. Fingal's population is expected to continue to grow with the *Fingal Development Plan 2023 – 2029* forecasting that the county's population will increase by approximately 73,000 people by 2031 (+22.1% versus 2022).

Figure 2: Population Growth, Fingal County and Ireland, 2006 - 2022



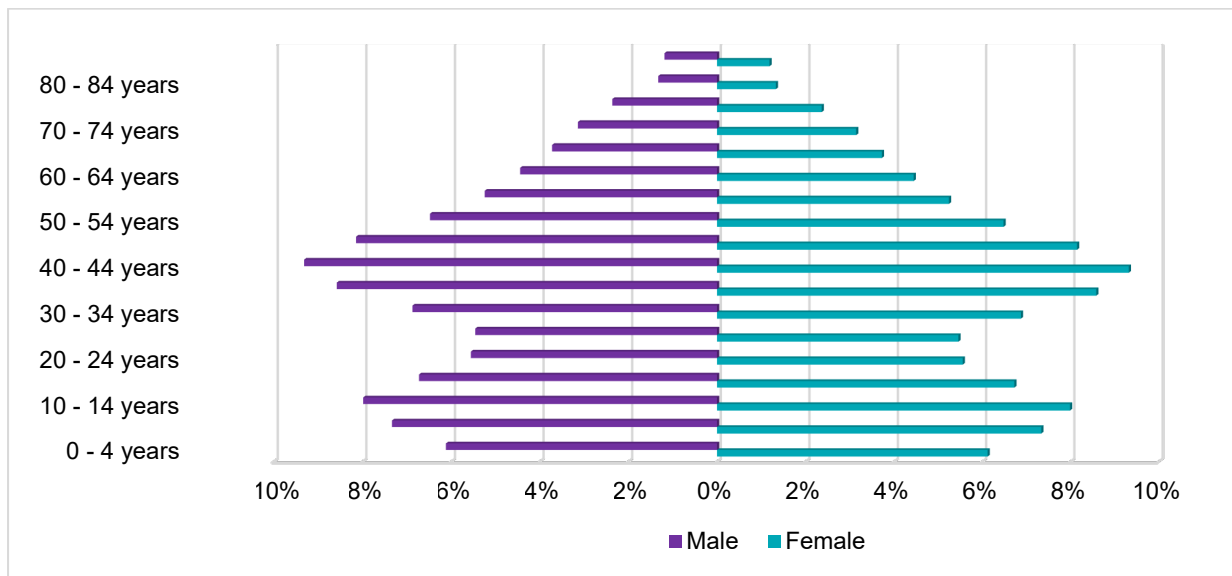
Source: CSO

Between 2016 and 2022, Fingal was the third fastest growing county in Ireland, with only Longford (+14.4%) and Meath (+13.2%) growing at faster paces. Between 2006 and 2022, Fingal’s population grew by more than a third (+37.7%), the fastest of any county in Ireland. This compares to growth of 21.4% nationally.

Based on preliminary 2022 Census findings, the fastest growing EDs within Fingal are Balgriffin, where the population grew by 77.8% over the six year period, and The Ward, where the population increased by 37.9%. In 2016 (latest granular data available), the largest towns in Fingal were Swords and Balbriggan with populations of 39,248 and 21,722 respectively.

In Ireland, the average age of the population increased from 37.4 years in 2016 to 38.8 years in 2022. Fingal had the youngest average age in 2022 at 36.2 years, with some 63% of its population below the age of 44, compared to 58.3% nationally.

Figure 3: Percentage of Population by Age and Sex in Fingal, 2022



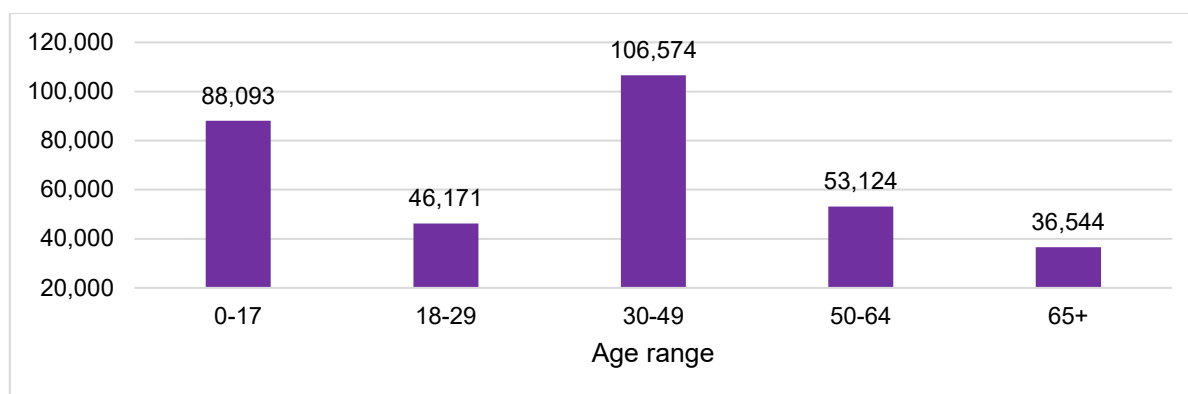
Source: CSO

Further breakdowns show that 26.7% of the Fingal population was under 18 years old in 2022, while 134,264 people (40.6%) were under 30. This compares to 28.3% of the population under 18 years old and 42.2% under 30 years old in 2016. The proportion of under 30s in Fingal was higher than at the national level, where 38% of the population was under 30. The number of people under the age of 30 increased by 7.5% from 124,960 people in 2016.

Other notable aspects of the 2022 Census with regards to the age profile of the Fingal population included:

- The number of persons aged 18 years or over was 242,413, of which 36,544 people were aged 65 and over.
- The population of pre-school age (0-4) was 21,017, of primary school going age (5-12) was 42,248, and of secondary school going age (13-18) was 29,301.

Figure 4: Population of Fingal by Age Group, 2022



Source: CSO

At 50.3% in 2022, Fingal had a lower than average age dependency rate (the proportion of the population under 15 years of age or over 64 years of age relative to the total population). The rate had dropped slightly compared to 2016, and was favourable compared to the 2022 national average (53.2%).

Table 1: Fingal and State Age Dependency Rates, 2016-2022

		Age 15-64	Age Under 15 and 65+	Age Dependency Rate
Fingal	2016	196,372	99,648	50.7%
	2022	327,584	165,454	50.5%
State	2016	3,117,746	1,644,119	52.7%
	2022	3,360,537	1,788,602	53.2%

Source: CSO

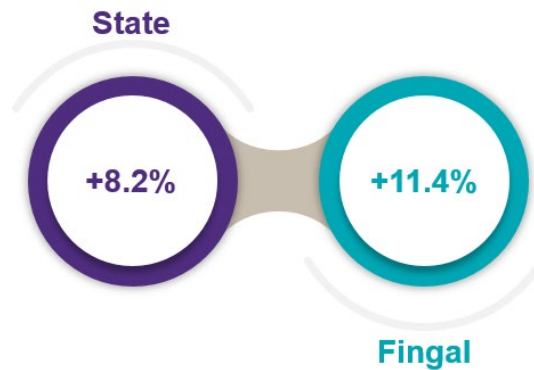
Population changes by county show that Fingal had the largest natural increase in the inter-censal period (+19,183), followed by Cork (county and city combined, +17,218). At 11 people per 1,000 of the population, Fingal recorded the highest annual average natural increase (the difference between births and deaths) in Ireland between 2016 and 2022.

At ED level, in 2016 (latest available) Lucan North had the highest age dependency rate at 71.7%. Howth and Ballyboughal followed – each with an age dependency of 63%. At the other end of the scale, the area around the Airport had the lowest age dependency rate at 22.4%. Castleknock Park and Swords Village’s age dependency rates were both exceptionally low at the time, each standing below 35%. Of the 42 EDs in Fingal, only 16 had an age dependency rate higher than 50%.

Housing and Households

According to the 2022 Census, the number of private households in Fingal reached 107,846, an increase of 11.4% from 2016. Growth was higher than the national average rate over the period (+8.2%).

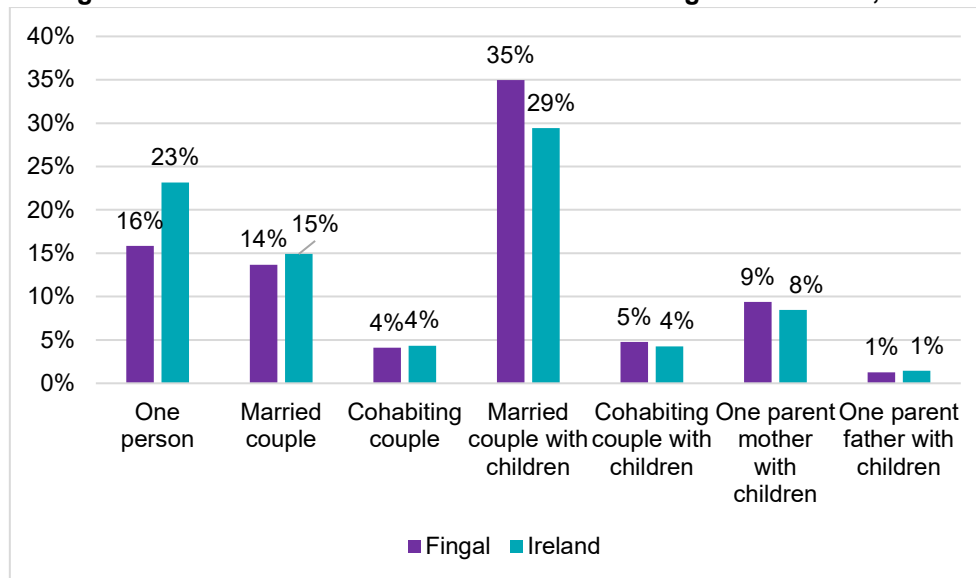
Figure 5: Increase in Number of Private Households in Fingal and the State, 2016-2022



Source: CSO

Of the private households in Fingal, 17,099 (15.9%) were single person households, compared to 15,257 in 2016. Such households account for a larger proportion of all households nationally, at 23.1%. Married couples with children accounted for the largest proportion of households (35%) in Fingal – considerably higher than the national average of 29.4%. A further 13.7% consisted of married couples with no children, marginally below the national equivalent (14.9%).

Figure 6: Breakdown of Private Households in Fingal and Ireland, 2016



Source: CSO

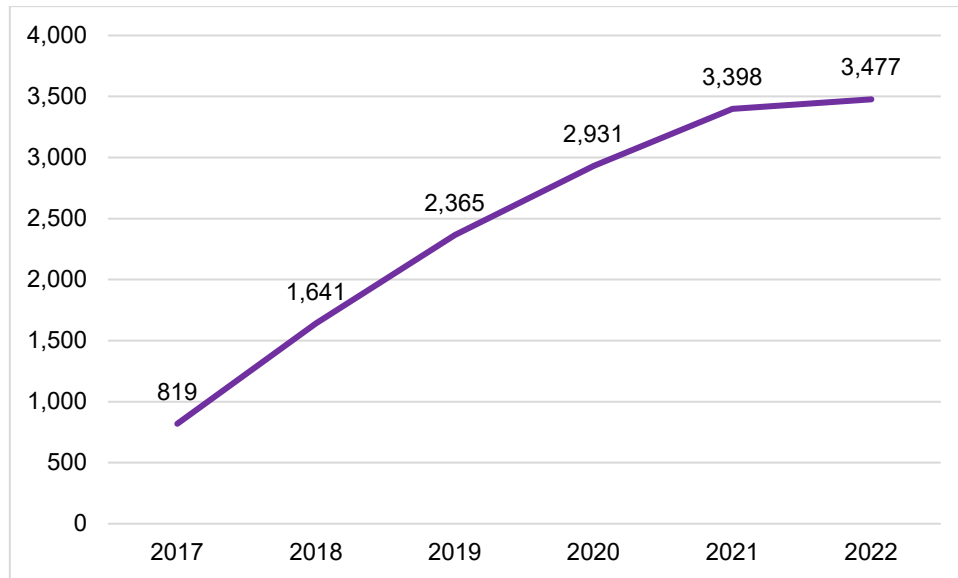
Average household size in Fingal in 2022 was 3.02 persons. This was stable in the period from 2016, having increased from 2.9 in 2011. By comparison, Dublin City had an average household size of 2.48 in 2022, while the national average was 2.74. In general, higher average sizes were recorded in the east of the country with lower sizes in the west.

In 2016 (latest available), the average number of children per family in Fingal was 1.4, which was equal to that found across the State.

With regards to housing, there were 116,135 residential units in Fingal in 2022. This represented 5.5% of the total Irish housing stock, with only Dublin City having a higher proportion (11.8%). Of Fingal's housing stock, 4,974 dwellings (4.3%) were vacant. A further 434 dwellings (0.3%) were classed as unoccupied. It should be noted that other sources of vacancy data are available. For instance, GeoDirectory produces residential vacancy rates by county¹, and has indicated that as of December 2022 the overall Dublin residential vacancy rate was considerably lower at 1.2%. This further underlines the challenges facing the Capital's housing stock.

In 2022 the number of housing association properties in Fingal had grown 325% since 2017, rising from 819 to 3477.

Figure 7: Number of Housing Association Properties in Fingal, 2017 – 2022

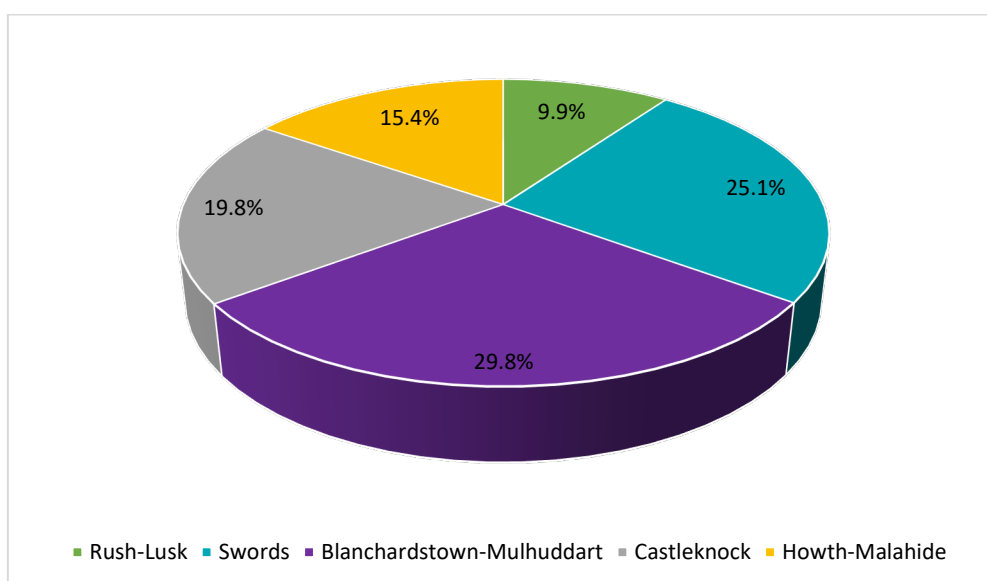


Source:CSO

At Electoral Area level, Blanchardstown-Mulhuddart had the largest proportion of housing association properties (29.8%) in 2022, with 1,035 properties located in the area. Swords accounted for 25.1% (874 properties).

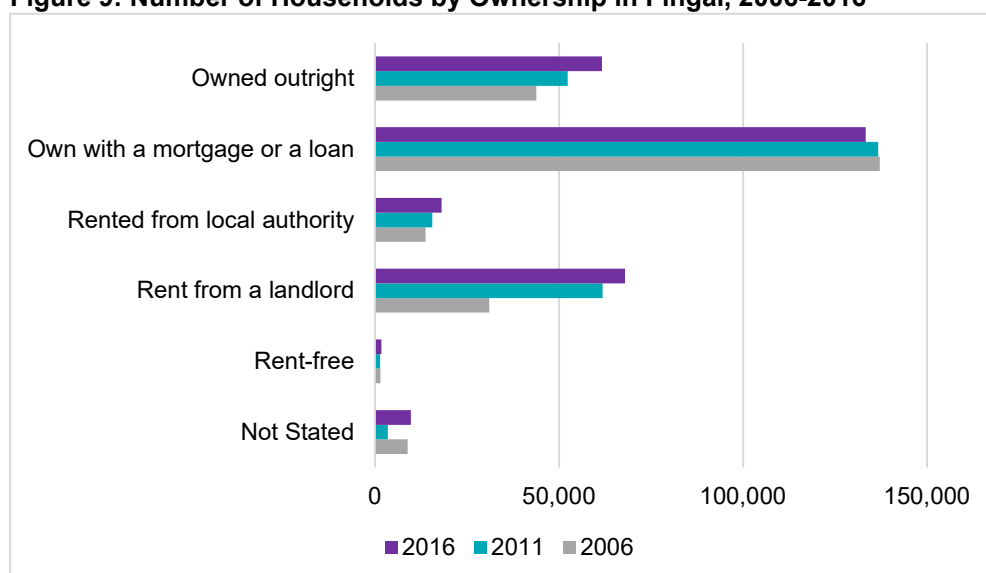
¹ <https://www.geodirectory.ie/knowledge-centre/reports-blogs/geodirectory-residential-buildings-report-q4-2022>

Figure 8: Percentage of Housing Association Properties in Fingal by Local Electoral Area, 2022



Source: CSO

Figure 9: Number of Households by Ownership in Fingal, 2006-2016



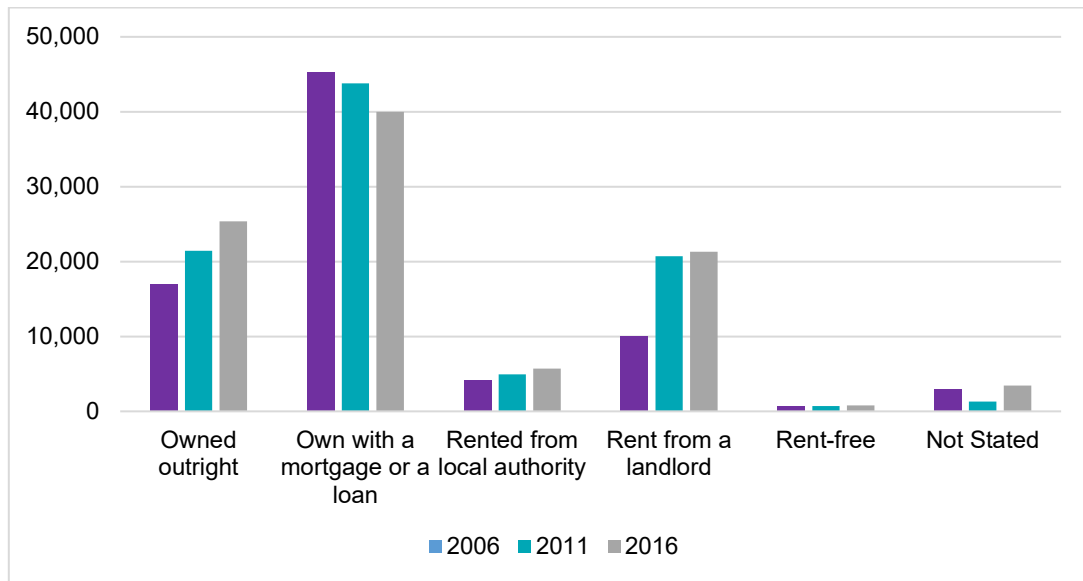
Source: CSO

In 2016 (latest available), 67.6% of houses in Fingal were owner-occupied, with a further 28% rented. These broadly matched the national rates. The number of households which owned their own home in Fingal had declined, however, falling from 70.2% in 2011 and 77.8% in 2006. In contrast, rental properties increased, rising from 17.7% in 2006 and 27.6% in 2011.

The number of households owned with a mortgage/loan fell from 43,811 in 2011 to 39,983, dropping 6 percentage points as a proportion of total households. The number of houses rented from the local authority increased by 15.7%. Nationally, the number of dwellings rented from local authorities increased by 11%. Those owning their own home outright and households which were rent free increased by 17.7% and 20.2% respectively.

The 2016 Census (latest available granular data) further indicated that 81% of private households in permanent housing units lived in houses in Fingal, with a further 17.6% living in apartments, flats or bedsits. Of the total dwellings, 28% (27,016) were rented.

Figure 10: Breakdown of Housing Ownership in Fingal, 2006-2016



Source: CSO

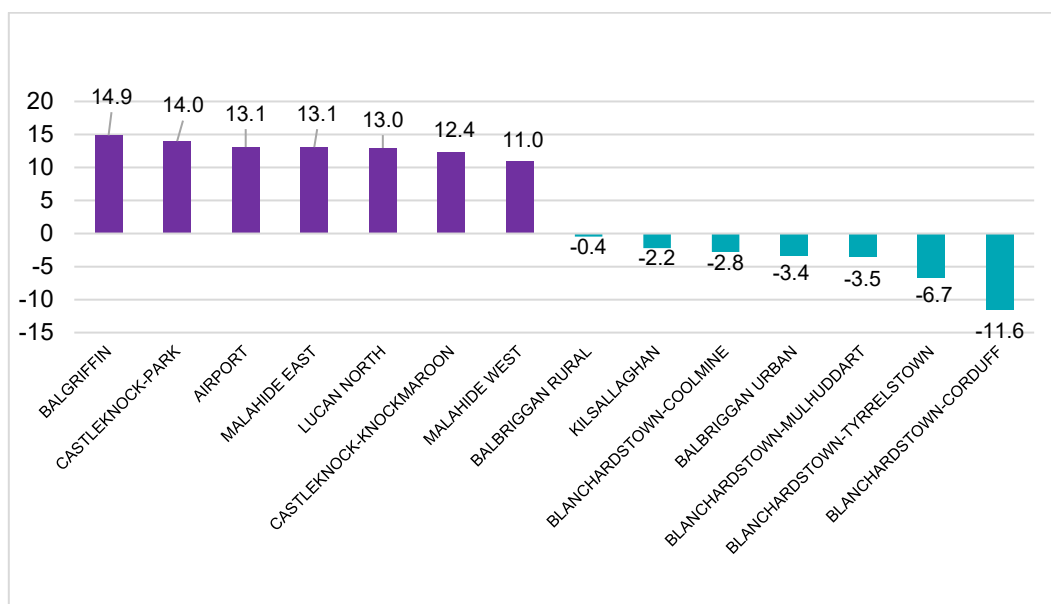
The number of people living in apartments has been increasing at a faster rate than the number living in houses. In the 10 years between 2006 and 2016, the number of people living in apartments in Fingal increased by 69.3%, compared to a 31.6% increase in the number of people living in houses in the same period.

Affluence and Deprivation

Fingal was the second most affluent local authority area in Ireland in 2016 with a relative HP index score of 5.3², an increase from scores of 5.1 in 2011 and 4.6 in 2006. The most affluent local authority area in the country was Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown.

There are considerable differences in the relative affluence and deprivation between various parts of the county. Of the total of 42 EDs in Fingal, 35 were classed as affluent in 2016. The most affluent areas were Balgriffin and Castleknock Park. The most disadvantaged were more urban areas of Blanchardstown³ and Balbriggan.

Figure 11: Relative HP Index Scores in Fingal EDs, 2016



Source: Pobal HP Deprivation Index

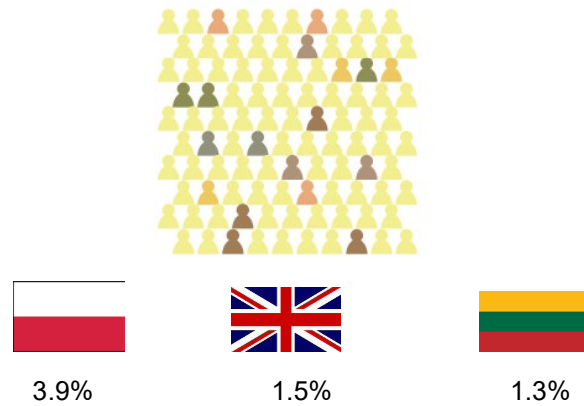
² The Pobal HP Deprivation Index is a series of indicators measuring the relative affluence or disadvantage of a particular geographical area in Ireland, using data compiled from various censuses. Relative scores are based on an average of 0. Scores above 0 indicate levels of affluence and scores below 0 indicate levels of deprivation. While the index provides a guide, there are some areas of weakness to this indicator. The index doesn't highlight that there may be areas of deprivation within affluent areas, or vice versa, and therefore the overall outcomes may be misleading for some ED's.

³ Blanchardstown, which includes a former RAPID area, includes some of the largest EDs by population. The ED level data identifies considerable differences with regard to affluence and deprivation within each of these EDs.

Ethnicity and Education

Fingal is ethnically diverse with non-Irish nationals accounting for 18% of the population in 2016 (latest available data). Polish nationals were the largest grouping, accounting for 3.9% of the population (11,405 people). UK nationals made up 1.5% (4,469) with Lithuanian nationals accounting for a marginally smaller proportion (3,815).

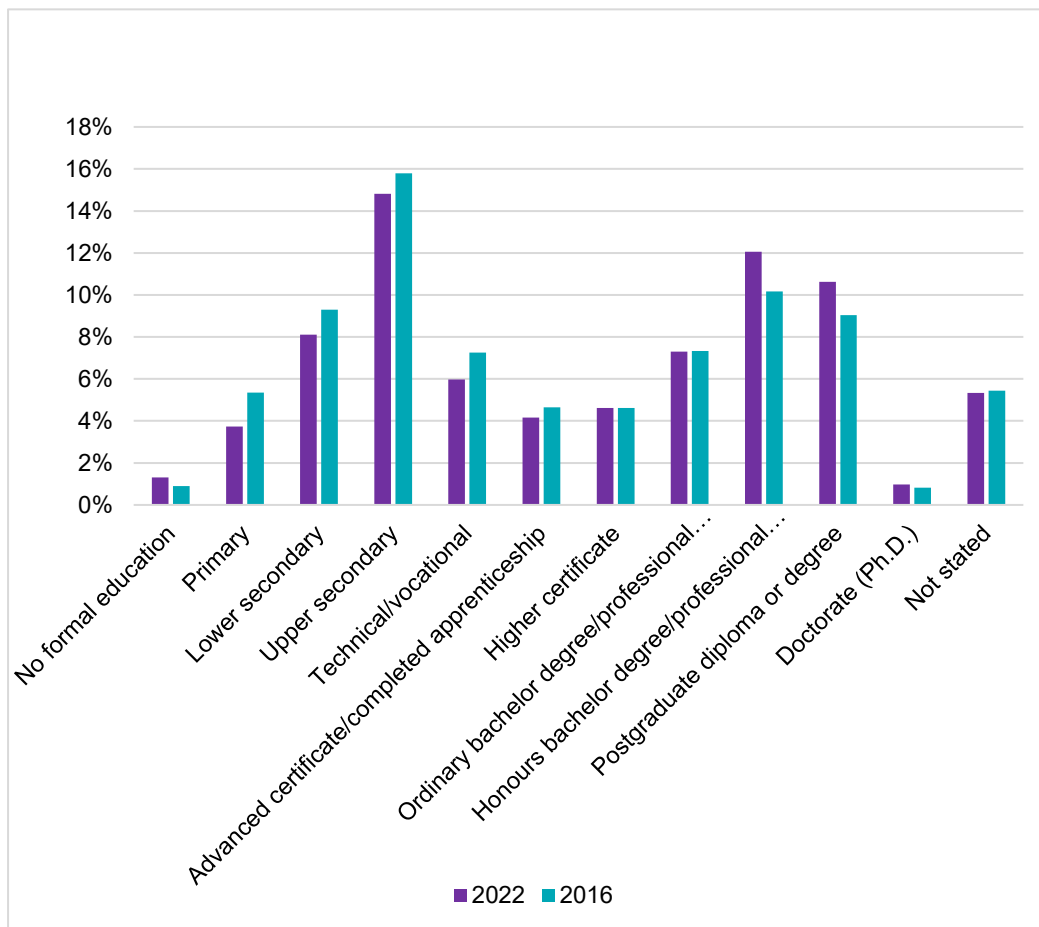
Figure 12: Ethnicity in Fingal, 2016



Source: CSO

According to the 2016 Census, 100,989 persons could speak the Irish language – and of those, 40,975 spoke the language daily. 66,625 persons spoke a language other than Irish or English at home, and of those 9,081 could not speak English well or at all. Polish was the most common foreign language with 12,730 speakers in the county.

Figure 13: Level of Education as a Percentage of Total Persons Educated in Fingal, 2016-2022



Source: CSO

The levels of educational attainment in Fingal and across Ireland have been improving over recent years. According to the 2022 Census, 256,458 persons in Fingal had completed their education. Of this total, 3.7% were educated to primary level only, compared to 5.4% in 2016 and 6.5% in 2011.

Some 26.7% of Fingal’s population were educated to primary/secondary level, with this standing below the State average (31.7%), thus highlighting Fingal’s relatively high educational attainment levels.

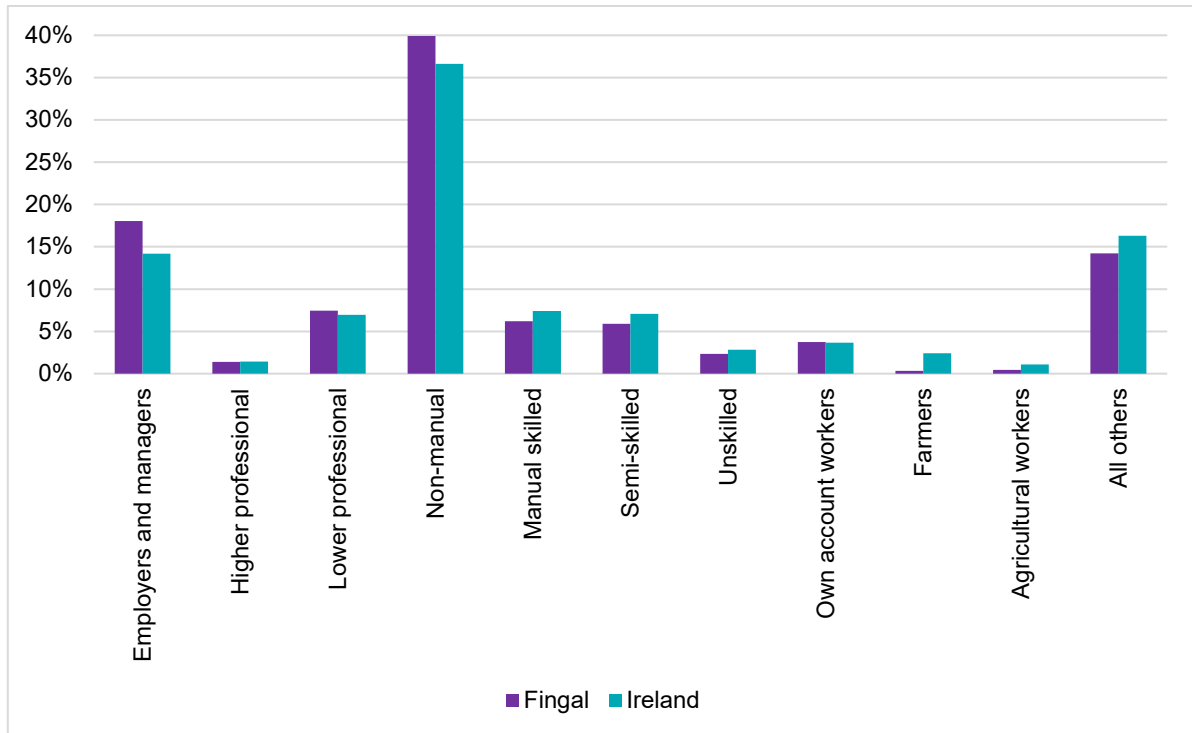
Of those educated to degree level and further in Fingal, 31% had a degree – compared to 28% nationally.

When compared to 2016, the number of people educated further than degree level had increased by over a third in Fingal. Those with an honours bachelor degree, postgraduate degree or doctorate increased by 36.1%, 34.8% and 36.3% respectively from 2016. The number of people educated to ordinary degree level increased by 14.3% from 2016.

Socio-Economic Classes

In Fingal, 27% of the population were within the socio-economic group of ‘professional workers’ in 2022 (employers, higher professional and lower professional). This was the highest in the country with only Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown and Kildare featuring higher proportions of such workers. Nationally, 22.6% of the population were professional workers.

Figure 14: Fingal & Irish Socio-Economic Groups by Percentage of Total, 2022



Source: CSO

Non-manual workers made up 40% of Fingal’s workforce. This is the largest proportion of non-manual workers in Ireland. Nationally, non-manual workers account for 36.6%.

Employers and managers account for 18.1% of Fingal’s socio-economic breakdown, highlighting the county’s entrepreneurial status. Only Cork County and Dublin City had more persons in this category.

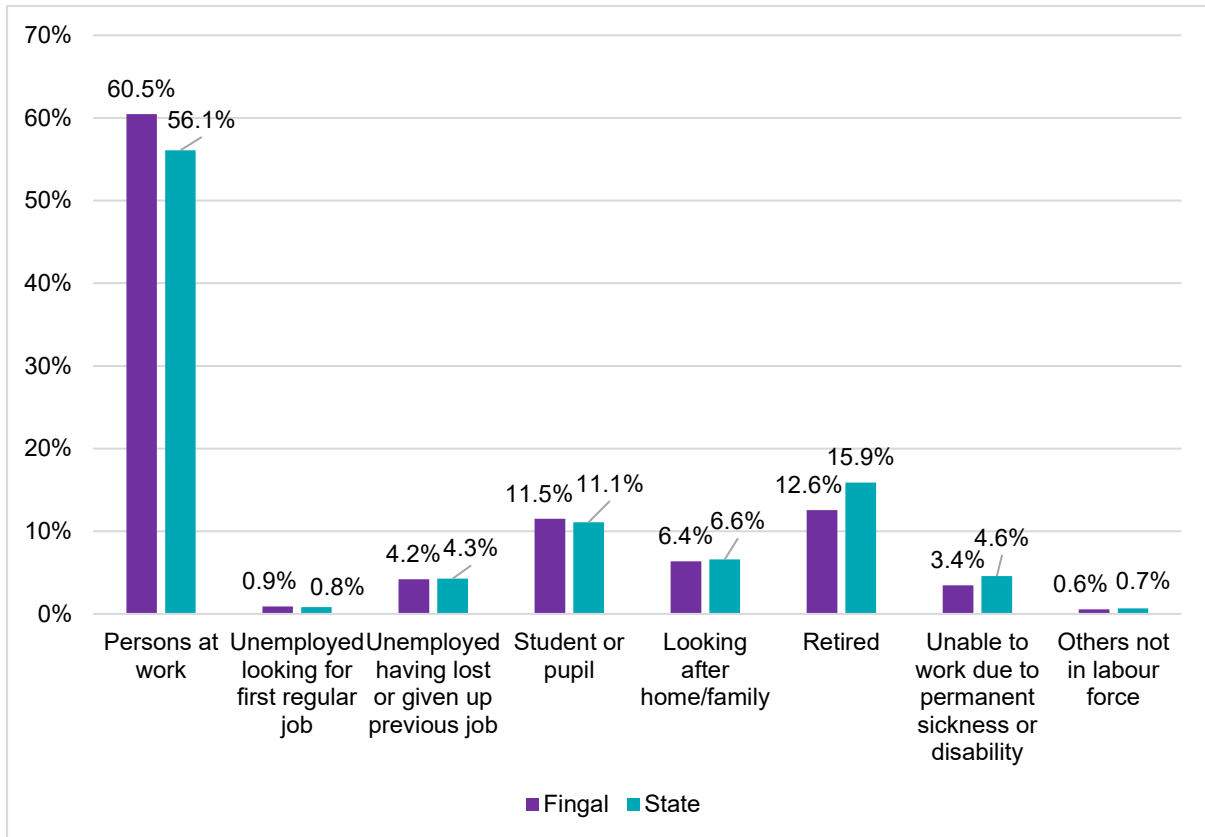
Latest data available for EDs (2016) shows that Castleknock-Knockmaroon, Blanchardstown-Blakestown and Howth combined accounted for 27% of professional workers in Fingal. Areas in north and west Fingal had lower proportions of Professional workers, with Blanchardstown-Tyrrelstown, Blanchardstown-Corduff and Balcadden combined accounting for only 0.7% of professional workers.

Non-manual workers are spread across the county with 14% located in Blanchardstown-Blakestown and a further 6.3% located in Swords-Forrest. Blanchardstown-Blakestown also makes up the largest proportion of skilled manual workers, accounting for 16.1%, followed by Balbriggan Rural and Swords-Forrest, which each accounted for 6.1%.

Labour Force

In 2022, Fingal had a working-age population (those aged 15 and over) of 256,458. Of these, 60.5% or 155,063 were in employment, which compares favourably to the national average of 56.1%. Fingal had the highest proportion of residents in employment in Ireland, with Dublin City ranking second at 59.6%. This is a reflection of the strengthening labour market across the Capital and nationally, where unemployment has fallen to historic lows.

Figure 15: Fingal Labour Force Breakdown, 2022

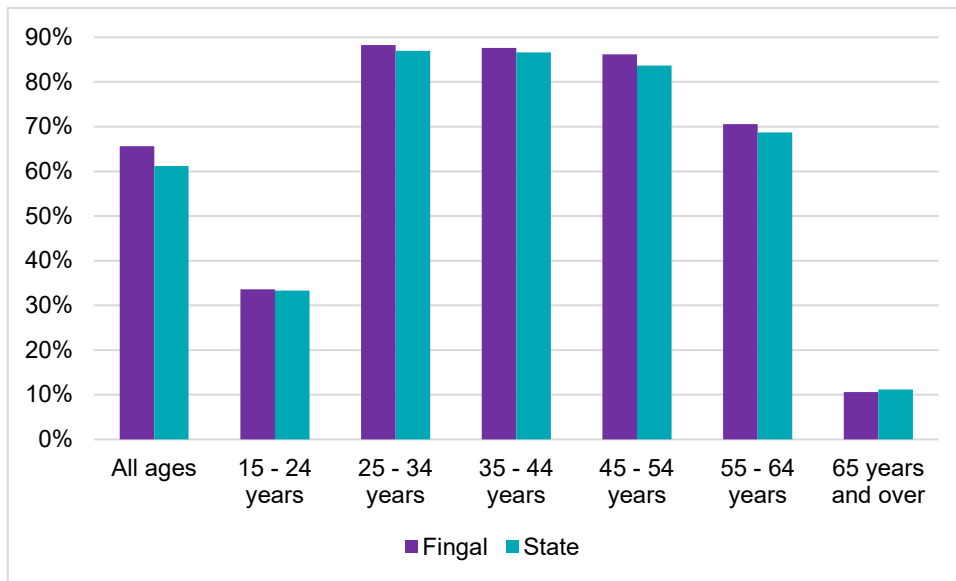


Source: CSO

The number of people in employment in Fingal has changed dramatically over the years from the 2011 Census, with the number of those at work having grown by 30%. This was marginally stronger than the national average (28.4%).

Fingal had the highest labour force participation rate in Ireland at 65.6% in 2022, considerably higher than the national average of 61.2%. When examining labour market participation across age groups, it is evident that those aged 25 to 34 years had the highest level of engagement, with 88.3% of this cohort being in the labour force. Such high levels of participation potentially reflect the greater opportunities and access to employment in the Dublin region, as well as the current labour market interventions being employed – including the *Pathways to Work 2021-2025* strategy.

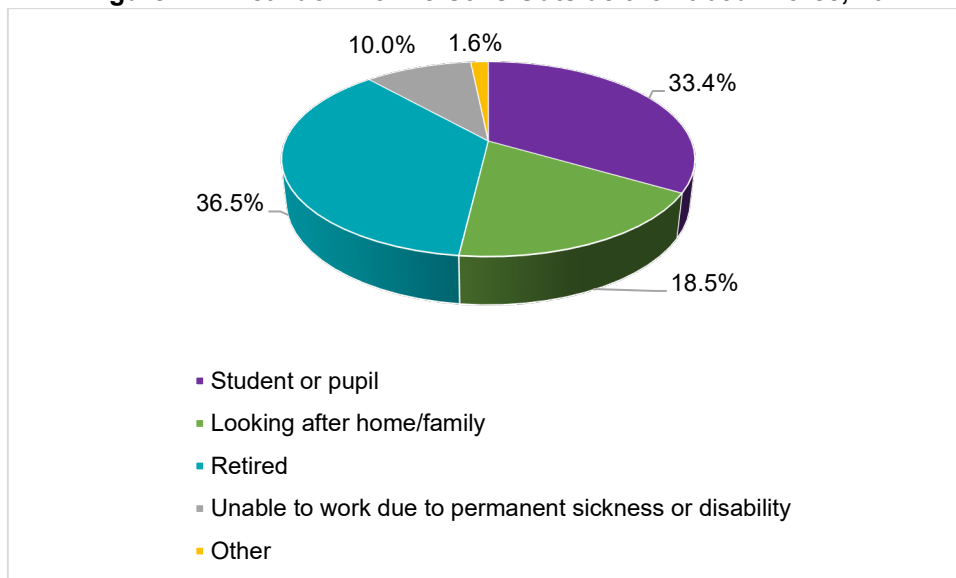
Figure 16: Labour Force Participation, 2022



Source: CSO

Of the 88,345 persons aged 15 years and over who were outside the labour force in 2022, 36.5% were retired, 33.4% were students and almost 18.5% were looking after the home/ family.

Figure 17: Breakdown of Persons Outside the Labour Force, 2022



Source: CSO

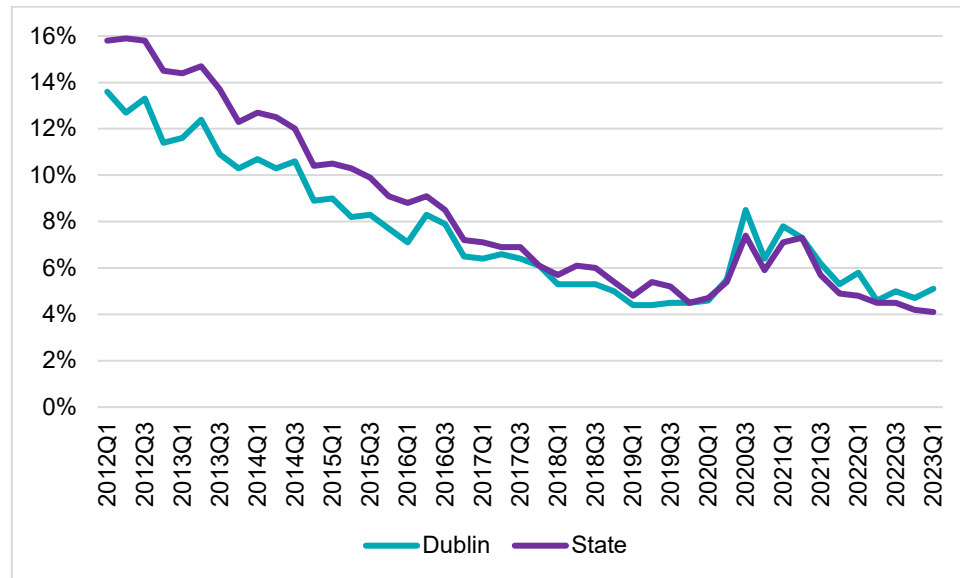
Unemployment

The unemployment rate in Fingal equalled the national average of 5.1% in 2022, having declined from 7.9% in 2016.

The female unemployment was slightly below the male rate, with 4.8% of females classed as unemployed, compared to 5.4% of males.

Recent data from the CSO's Labour Force Survey showed that across Dublin – which includes the Fingal, Dublin City, Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown and South Dublin local authority areas – 41,800 people (SA) were unemployed in Q1 2023. This equated to an unemployment rate of 5.1% (SA).

Figure 18: Dublin and State Unemployment Rates, Q1 2012 – Q1 2023



Source: CSO

Enterprise Base

Fingal, supported by a strong supply of zoned land, is home to a number of key economic clusters. This incorporates the agri-food and beverage sector, where Fingal produces 14.5% of national potato output, 47% of field vegetable output and 37% of protected fruits, vegetables and nursery plants – making it one of the most important Irish counties for food production (Agriland). Further key sectors include Information and Communication Technology (ICT), aviation, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, financial services, tourism, retail and hospitality – each of which makes significant contributions towards economic activity and employment in the Dublin region each year.

Figure 19: Key Sectors in Fingal



Source: Fingal County Council

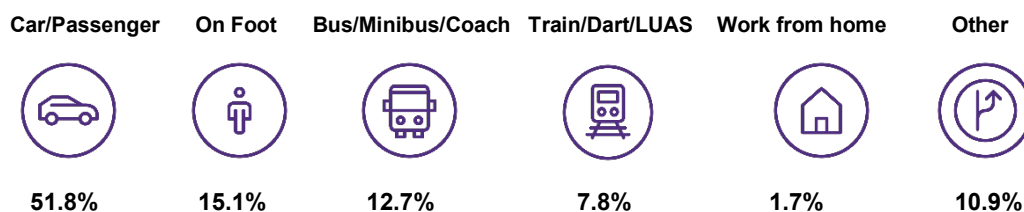
Clustering has been a key concept in Fingal with many successful clusters already in place including the ICT sector in Blanchardstown, the Pharmaceutical sector in both the Swords area and in Blanchardstown/ Mulhuddart, the Aviation sector in proximity to Dublin Airport, and the Agri-Food sector in rural locations principally in the north of the county.

Further clustering is evident in the Dublin Enterprise Zone which consists of 1,571 hectares of industrial land in the Dublin 15 area. The zone supports 34,600 jobs and contributes €14.4 billion to national economic output each year (Ireland Gateway to Europe). It is home to many large IT companies including IBM, PayPal, eBay and Symantec. World-leading pharmaceutical companies are also located in the Zone including Helsinn-Birex, Mallinckrodt, Bristol-Myers Squibb, the Tech Group and Alexion Pharma. There is, according to Ireland Gateway to Europe, potential to create an additional 20,000 jobs on 716 hectares of undeveloped, zoned and serviced land which is available in the Zone.

The *Fingal Development Plan 2023 – 2029* lays out plans to encourage existing economic clusters and develop new clustering opportunities. It also sets out plans to attract new foreign direct investment (FDI) to the county along with other indigenous investment. FDI is a key component of Ireland's economy, with 20% of all private sector employment directly or indirectly attributable to it. (Pinset Mason).

Commuting & Remote Working

Figure 20: Methods of Transport for Commuting in Fingal, 2016



Source: CSO

In 2016 (latest available), the most common method of transport for commuting (to work and school) in Fingal was by car, accounting for 51.8%. Public transport accounted for 20.5%, with a further 15.1% of commuters walking.

In 2016, 50% of commuters in Fingal worked within the county. A further 31.2% commuted to Dublin City.

Some 37.6% of persons at work stated that they worked from home in 2022, compared to 32.3% nationally. Only Dublin City and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown had higher proportions of people working from home. Social Justice Ireland has highlighted that a 2022 [Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service evaluation of the impacts of remote working](#) found that such trends are likely to have a positive impact on the Irish economy and society. Some of the advantages included:

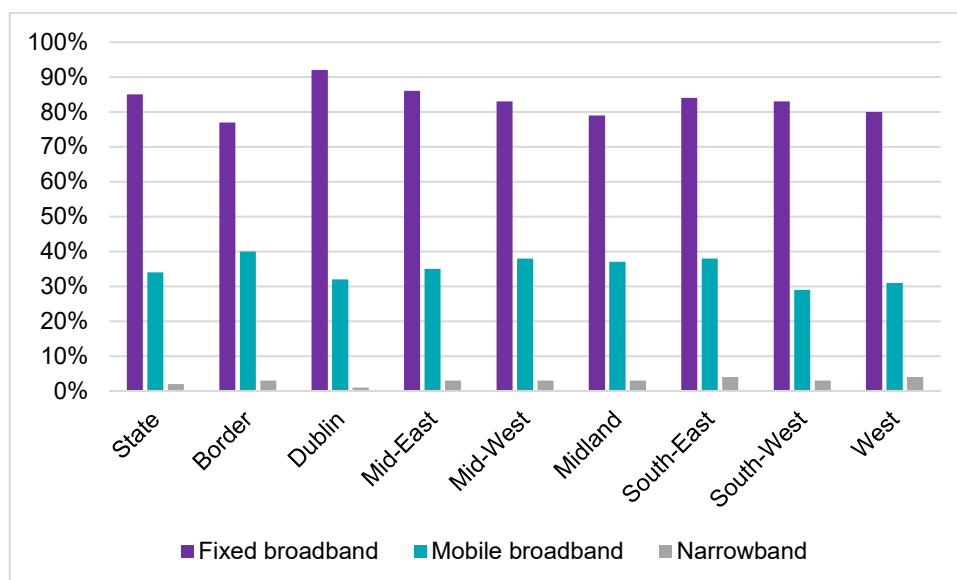
1. Increased productivity;
2. Improved labour market outcomes from people with disabilities and caring responsibilities;
3. Greater flexibility in terms of time management, childcare and commuting options;
4. Emissions savings; and
5. Cost savings for both employer and employee.

Connectivity

Ireland's internet connectivity in 2022 stood at 94% coverage, an increase of one percentage point from 2021. Dublin (97%) and the Mid-East region (95%) held the highest levels of internet access in the year.

Fixed broadband connection was the most common, accounting for 85% of household Internet in Ireland. Households in Dublin and the Mid-East continue to outpace the rest of the country for access to fixed broadband (with 92% and 86% connectivity respectively).

Figure 21: Internet Connectivity by Type and Region, 2022



Source: CSO

With an average download speed of just over 72Mbps in 2022, up from 51Mbps in 2020, Ireland ranks 36th out of 220 countries and territories globally (2022 study from Cable.co.uk).

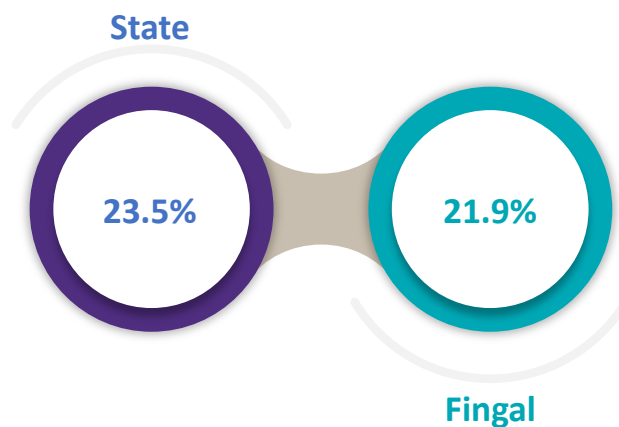
The *National Broadband Plan* aims to deliver reliable high speed broadband throughout Ireland via a combination of State and commercial investment. By the end of 2022, it had connected 27,600 premises to high speed broadband in Ireland and had already achieved its target of 100,000 premises by the end of January 2023.

The country ranked 5th in the *EU Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI)* in 2022. The Index monitors Europe's overall digital performance and tracks the progress of EU countries in their digital competitiveness. Between 2017 and 2022, Ireland's average yearly growth of its DESI score was approximately 8.5%, one of the highest in the EU.

Lone Parents

The proportion of Lone Parents (as a proportion of all households with dependent children) in Ireland has remained steady at between 23% and 24% in each of the last three Censuses (2011, 2016 and 2022). Fingal's proportion of Lone Parents is slightly lower than the national rate at 21.9% in 2022.

Figure 22: Proportion of Lone Parents in Ireland and Fingal, 2022



Source: CSO

Health

In Fingal, 31,970 people had a disability as per the 2016 census (latest data available). Of this, 27% (8,658) were aged 65 and over.

Figure 23: Age Ranges of People in Fingal with a Disability, 2016

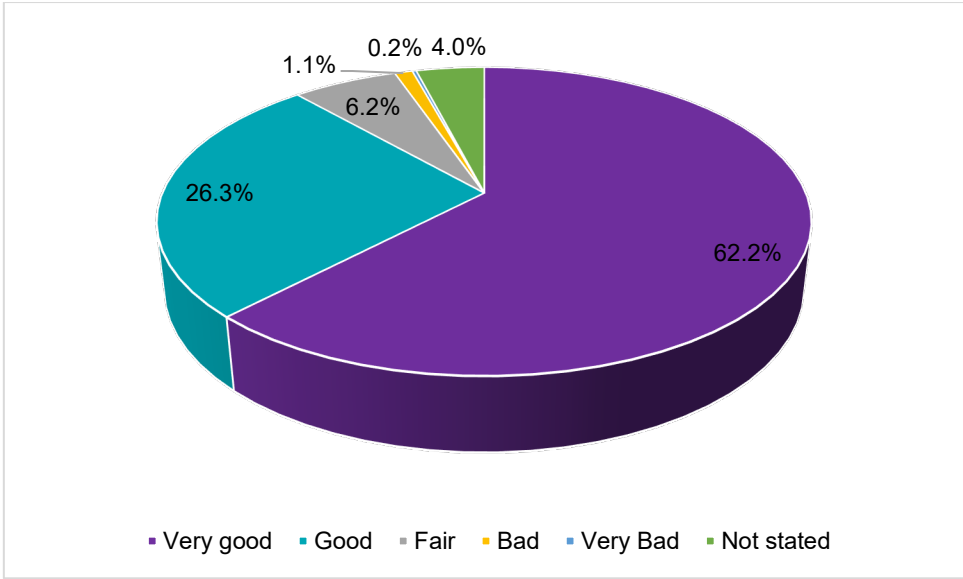


Source: Disability Federation of Ireland

In 2016 in the Dublin region, 50,391 persons stated they were carers, of which 42.1% provided more than 14 hours of care per week.

According to the 2016 Census, 261,965 people in Fingal stated they were in 'very good' or 'good' health, representing 89% of total persons. This compares to 87% nationally. 3,804 persons stated they were in 'bad' or 'very bad' health, representing 1.3% of total persons in Fingal. This compares with 1.6% nationally.

Figure 24: General Health in Fingal, 2016



Source: CSO