How many people have a disability in Ireland?

643,131

According to the 2016 Census

That’s 1 in 7 people, a slight increase since 2011.

What are the most common types of disability?

The most common type of disability is ‘other disability, including chronic illness’. This might include, for example, asthma, diabetes or heart disease. The next most common is ‘a condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities’, like arthritis or a spinal injury. However, people can have more than one disability.

Age and disability

As most disability is acquired during our lives, older people are more likely to have a disability than younger people.

Most people with a disability are of working age.

Disability rates by area

As disability increases with age, areas with a high proportion of older people also have a high rate of people with disabilities.

Men and Women

Slightly more females than males have a disability, mostly because women live longer than men.

Education

The education level of people with a disability is increasing. This graph shows the education level of people with disability in 2011 and 2016.

Employment

Only 6.3% (128,777) of all workers have a disability.

What will happen in the future?

The Irish population will grow to 5.2 million by 2026. Because there will be both more people and more older people, there will be more people with a disability. By 2026, we expect that the number of people with a disability will have increased by 20%.

The 2018 budget for disability services is €1.8 billion. The NDA estimates that by 2026 this will need to increase by up to 33% to support the increased number of people with a disability.