

CPC

centre for population change



# An overview of fertility trends in Scotland between 2000 and 2010

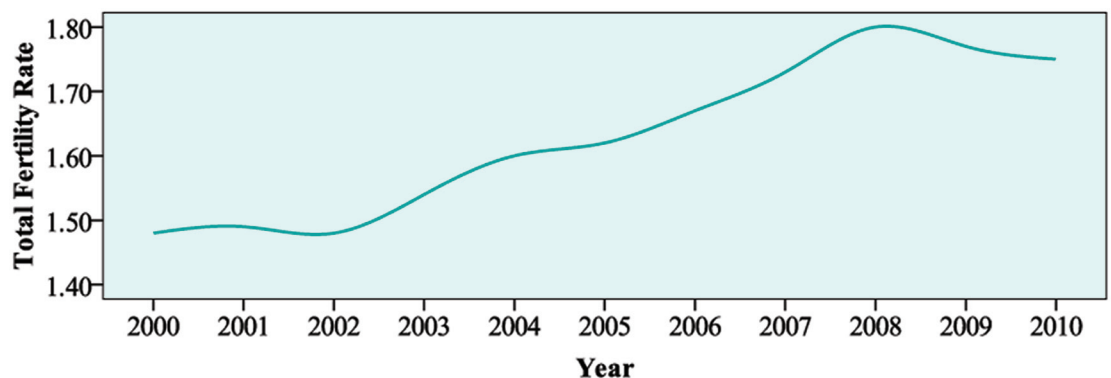
Data published in August 2011 shows that the number of births in 2010 was lower than the previous year, continuing the trend seen since 2008.

## Recent Fertility Trends in Scotland

Most recent National Records of Scotland (NRS) figures (Aug, 2011) show that there were 58,781 births in Scotland in 2010, a slight drop from the 59,046 births in 2009; evidence of a continuing decline in the number of births from the 2008 peak of 60,041. Despite an overall increase in the number of births since the 2002 low-point, fertility rates in Scotland are still below levels required to replace the population naturally<sup>1</sup>. Figure A shows Scotland's total fertility rate (TFR), this is the average number of children a woman would bear over her lifetime if current fertility rates prevailed throughout her reproductive years. To maintain

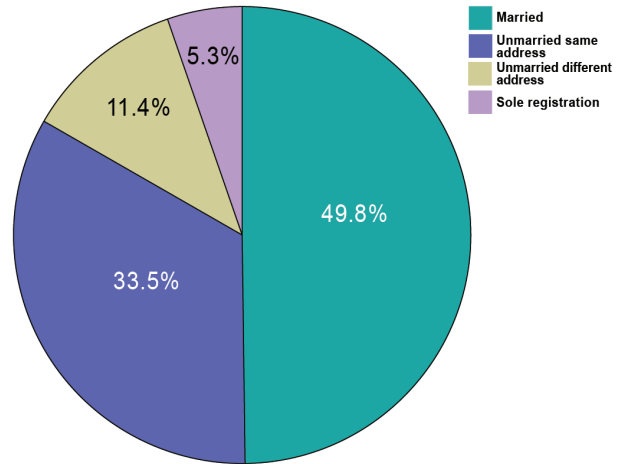
a stable population, that is a population that is neither growing or declining in size, each woman needs to bear 2.1 children. While the TFR of Scottish women has been higher in the last few years than it was a decade ago, there is evidence to suggest that the TFR 'high' of 1.80 that was achieved in 2008 will not be sustained in the immediate future. The TFR in Scotland is projected to decrease further to around 1.6 in the mid term. Due to below replacement fertility and considerable net out-migration, Scotland currently employs an active migration policy in an attempt to counter the shortfall.

Figure A: The average number of births per woman in Scotland over the last 10 years



<sup>1</sup> Natural replacement refers to a population that has the level of fertility required for the population to replace itself in size, given constant mortality rates and in the absence of migration.

Figure B: Births in Scotland 2010, by type of registration



### Mothers in Scotland

Since the 1970s, women have been delaying childbearing to later ages. In 1976 mothers aged 20 years old and under made up 11% of all births, in 2000 this figure dropped to 9%. In 2010, this figure declined further, with women 20 and under having only 6% of all births in that year.

Conversely, women aged 35-39 made up 13% of all births in 2000, which increased to 15% in 2010. Similarly in 2000 only 2% of births were from women aged 40-44, by 2010 this increased to 3.4%.

The proportion of children born to married parents in 2010 was 49.8%, similar to the 2008 and 2009 figures of 49.9 and 49.7%, respectively. However, this is lower than the 2000 figure of 57% and remarkably lower than 1991 when 73% of births occurred within marriage. Whilst the number of births within marriage has declined, the number of births to cohabiting parents continues to increase, with a third of births occurring within families in which the parents are unmarried (Figure B).

Mothers who are younger tend to be unmarried, while older mothers tend to be married (Figure C).

Finally, in 2010 86% of births were to mothers born inside the UK, with the majority being born in Scotland. 6% of mothers were born elsewhere in the European Union, 4% in Commonwealth countries, and 5% from elsewhere.

Figure C: The distribution of births by marriage type and age

