Oide

Joe Wicks: "We've been conditioned to eat a certain way"



RTE: 3rd December 2025

"My little boy, he had leftover Thai green curry for breakfast yesterday," says Joe Wicks, 40, deadly serious. ***"It had baby corn, mangetout, chicken, not even any rice, it was just the actual curry, and he loved it. And it's like, why do I need to give my child sugary cereals when that's just been sold to us as an option by food companies?"***



The dad of four – to Indie, seven, Marley, six, Leni, three, and Dusty, one – points out that when he went to Indonesia, rice, curry and daal were common breakfast fare. ***"This is really what your body wants, not the low-fat yoghurt, granola and juice,"*** he says. Hence why in his new cookbook, *Protein In 15* – chock-full of high-protein meals for the whole family (not just weight lifters) – he says any of the recipes are great eaten first thing. ***"It's a bit weird, but it tastes just as good,"*** he buzzes. ***"It's real food. It's better than something you grab on the go, or a chocolate croissant and a coffee."***

This is just one example of Epsom-born Wicks, best known to the world and his 4.7m Instagram followers and 2.89m YouTube subscribers as The Body Coach, getting rather adept at making a statement and taking a stand. Maybe it's because he's 40 now. ***("I don't have this issue with growing old,"*** he says. ***"I'm at peace with it, not trying to regenerate my youth and try to be younger. I actually feel like when you get old, you get a bit wiser, and life gets better.")***

Protein In 15 comes off the back of his recent Channel 4 documentary, the horrifying Joe Wicks: Licensed To Kill. Made with Dr Chris van Tulleken, credited with raising awareness of the dangers of ultra-processed foods (UPFs),



it saw the duo attempt to legally create the most dangerous 'health' bar possible. It's a stunt that will turn many a gym bunny's stomach the next time they reach for a protein bar.

"I used to drink whey protein, but my tummy didn't feel great afterwards, so I stopped," says Wicks. ***"It wasn't until the documentary, when we went to manufacture one of these bars, and I was like, 'Where's all the oats and nuts and seeds?'*** [and was told] ***'Oh, no, it doesn't have that.' It's just powders and glycerin and fats and all these weird things. None of it's real."***

It's us being duped into buying so-called 'health bars' when they're just a collection of chemicals, that is really weird, he explains, not having dinner leftovers for breakfast. He's also coming for your snacks. ***"We've been conditioned to eat a certain way,"*** he says. ***"Good marketing makes you buy more snacks."*** But if you get back to ***"proper healthy, hearty meals, you won't want to eat in between meals, you won't need to"***. When we speak, there's a slight weariness to Wicks, and in the book, there's anger that so many of us have been backed into a corner by food companies pushing UPFs.

"The whole food system stresses me out. It's not just health foods claiming to be healthy. It's the whole environment, isn't it? It's the marketing. It's the fact it's everywhere all the time," he says passionately. *"We live in a world where it's normal to eat hyper-processed foods."*

However, as you'd expect from the man who got a lot of us through Covid lockdowns with his P.E. with Joe videos, Wicks refuses to despair. *"I try to focus on the solution,"* he says. *"If I can get a family cooking one meal from my book or Instagram recipes tonight, that's a positive step."*

"The documentary was all about pushing the Government to put health warnings on those foods, but that might take years and years and years," he continues. *"Until that point, let's really do the one thing that makes a difference, which is cooking ourselves,"* because cooking from scratch, *"you are, by default, replacing UPFs in your diet."*

With a busy lifestyle and four kids with his wife, former model Rosie Jones, Wicks knows it can be tough. *"I like it when I have a nice bit of music playing, and there's no one in the kitchen. It's just me. But that happens, like, once a week when the kids are out,"* he says wryly. *"Most of the time, I'm cooking around the kids, they're sitting on the side, they're chopping up the onions. They're helping me because I do also see it as an educational thing. I want them to see how food's made and to be a part of it, and be curious about trying new things."*

Fundamentally, he loves the physical and mental impact of eating home-cooked food. *"You can find time to eat healthy, and you can change the way you feel. In the space of a few days, a little bit of food shopping, planning and cooking, you really can change the energy in your house and in your mood, because everything links back to the food we're eating,"* he says. *"Don't convince yourself you haven't got time and that you can't, because you can."*

The recipes in *Protein In 15* follow much the same pattern as Wicks' *Lean In 15* cookbooks – speed and simplicity are paramount – and don't be put off thinking he's going to tell you to eat steak every night. He's well aware that a meat-heavy diet is exorbitant. *"It'd be lovely to have chicken breast and beef mince and salmon in your meals, but that might be a rare occurrence for some families,"* says Wicks, which is why he has lots of cheaper, plant-based recipes that feature *"lentils, butter beans, chickpeas, switching from potato mash to a butter bean mash, adding quinoa and nuts and seeds".*

A *"lentil bolognese isn't going to taste the same, but it still tastes amazing,"* he adds, and a bit of planning can help your bank account too. *"When you get organised, I don't think the meals cost as much as you might think,"* says Wicks. *"[Especially] once you've got the base, core essentials, and you remove all those daily purchases of meal deals, takeaways, processed snacks – they all add up. Even cheap food isn't that cheap anymore."*

These might even just fall by the wayside. *"It's almost like you've got to clean your diet up a little bit, start cooking more, and then those temptations and cravings, they start to go. That's quite a nice feeling, really,"* he says. That's not to say he doesn't cave occasionally. *"Sometimes I'm stressed, and all I want is a massive bar of Tony's Chocolonely, and I'll go and get it, and that's it. But it's not in my house every day,"* Wicks explains.
"I remind myself, actually, if I want to feel better, go in the kitchen and quickly cook some food or do a workout. It changes how you feel way more than a chocolate bar would."

Food and Climate Change: Healthy diets for a healthier planet

United Nations: No Date

What does food have to do with climate change?

What we eat, and how that food is produced, affects our health but also the environment. Food needs to be grown and processed, transported, distributed, prepared, consumed, and sometimes disposed of. Each of these steps creates greenhouse gases that trap the sun's heat and contribute to climate change. About a third of all human-caused greenhouse gas emissions is linked to food.

The largest chunk of food-related greenhouse gases comes from agriculture and land use. This includes, for instance:

- methane from cattle's digestive process,
- nitrous oxide from fertilizers used for crop production,
- carbon dioxide from cutting down forests for the expansion of farmland,
- other agricultural emissions from manure management, rice cultivation, burning of crop residues, and the use of fuel on farms.



A much smaller share of the greenhouse gas emissions of food are caused by:

- refrigeration and transport of food,
- industrial processes such as the production of paper and aluminum for packaging,
- the management of food waste.

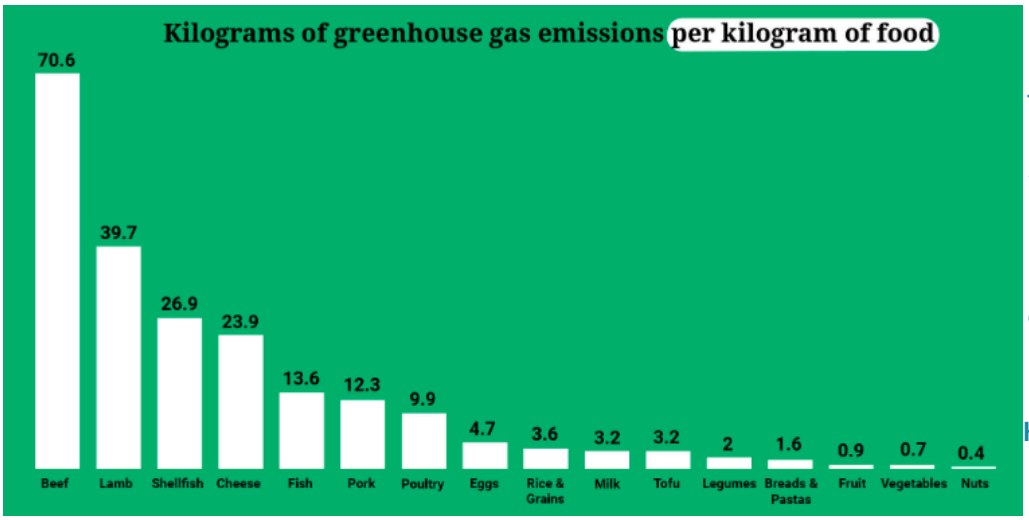


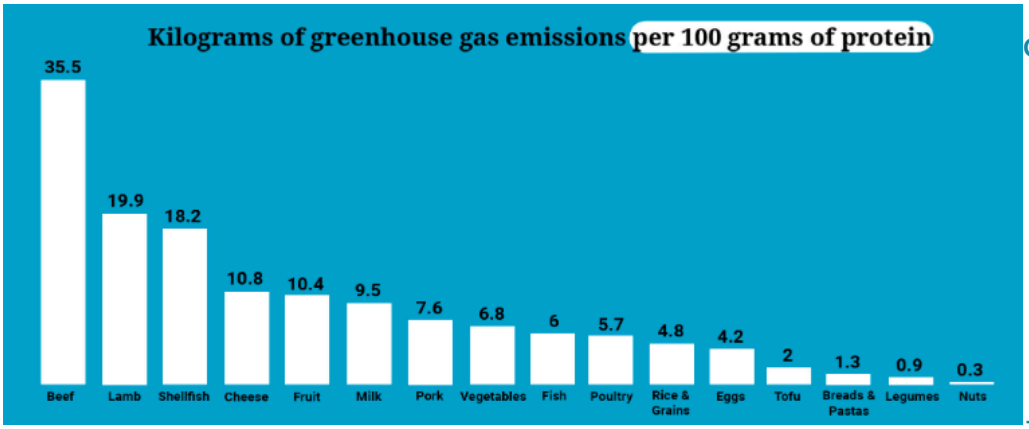
Which foods cause the most greenhouse gas emissions?

The climate impact of food is measured in terms of greenhouse gas emissions intensity. The emissions intensity is expressed in kilograms of "carbon dioxide equivalents" – which includes not only CO2 but all greenhouse gases – per kilogram of food, per gram of protein or per calorie. Animal-based foods, especially red meat, dairy, and farmed shrimp, are generally associated with the highest greenhouse gas emissions. This is because:

- Meat production often requires extensive grasslands, which is often created by cutting down trees, releasing carbon dioxide stored in forests.
- Cows and sheep emit methane as they digest grass and plants.
- The cattle's waste on pastures and chemical fertilizers used on crops for cattle feed emit nitrous oxide, another powerful greenhouse gas.
- Shrimp farms often occupy coastal lands formerly covered in mangrove forests which absorb huge amounts of carbon. The large carbon footprint of shrimp or prawns is mainly due to the stored carbon that is released into the atmosphere when mangroves are cut down to create shrimp farms.

Plant-based foods – such as fruits and vegetables, whole grains, beans, peas, nuts, and lentils – generally use less energy, land, and water, and have lower greenhouse gas intensities than animal-based foods. Here are three charts showing the carbon footprint of different food products. Emissions can be compared based on weight (per kilogram of food), or in terms of nutritional units (per 100 grams of protein or per 1000 kilocalories) which shows us how efficiently different foods supply protein or energy.





Sources:
- Babiker, M., G. Berndes, K. Blok, B. Cohen, A. Cowie, O. Geden, V. Ginzburg, A. Leip, P. Smith, M. Sugiyama, F. Yamba, 2022: Cross-sectoral perspectives (Chapter 12). In IPCC, 2022: Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change. Contribution of Working Group III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [P.R. Shukla, J. Skea, R. Slade, A. Al Khourdajie, R. van Diemen, D. McCollum, M. Pathak, S. Some, P. Vyas, R. Fradera, M. Belkacemi, A. Hasija, G. Lisboa, S. Luz, J. Malley, (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York, NY, USA. doi: 10.1017/9781009157926.005

- Poore, J., & Nemecek, T. (2018). Reducing food's environmental impacts through producers and consumers. Science, 360(6392), 987-992

- EDGAR-FOOD global emission inventory of GHGs from the food systems
- Our World in Data: Environmental Impacts of Food Production

How can food-related emissions be reduced?

Reducing emissions from the food sector requires changes at all stages, from producers to consumers. Where appropriate, shifting food systems towards plant-rich diets – with more plant protein (such as beans, chickpeas, lentils, nuts, and grains), a reduced amount of animal-based foods (meat and dairy) and less saturated fats (butter, milk, cheese, meat, coconut oil and palm oil) – can lead to a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions compared to current dietary patterns in most industrialized countries.

Alternative proteins – such as plant-based meat and dairy substitutes, insect-based proteins, and cell-based/cultivated meat – provide promising prospects and are attracting growing demand, financial investment and technological innovation.

But animal products remain an important source of food security, nutrition, livelihoods for large numbers of rural populations around the world. Improved feeds and feeding techniques can reduce methane generated during cattle's digestion as well as the amount of gases released by decomposing manure. Smaller herd sizes, with fewer, more productive animals can also help. And better agricultural practices, such as improved manure and fertilizer management, rotational grazing to maintain healthy soil to store carbon, and the restoration of degraded lands can significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

At the same time, reducing food waste is key. Over 1 billion tons of food – 17 percent of all food available to consumers worldwide – goes into trash bins every year. Producing, transporting, and letting that food rot contribute more than 8-10 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions - nearly five times the total emissions from the aviation sector. If food waste were a country, it would be the third-largest emitting country in the world.

Oide

Food resolutions that just might stick

Irish Examiner: 2nd January 2026



EVERY year at about this time, exhausted from a surfeit of Christmas cheer, many of us get ambitious with our self-improvement resolutions. They often focus on the kind of things — giving up chocolate and alcohol — that are bound to be abandoned after a couple of weeks.

But what if we took a different approach to 2026? What if we decided to ditch the self-denial and worked on embracing more sustainable food goals that will broaden our minds, our palates, and the nutritional content of the food that we eat?

Stir up some Irish-grown oats, bake a loaf of bread, try a new vegetable, incorporate beans into something surprising, and eat joyfully for 2026. The best kind of resolutions let us explore the world around us, one delicious, nutritious bite at a time.

Choose a better breakfast

According to the Irish Nutrition & Dietetic Institute, people who eat breakfast are more likely to have a balanced diet.



Starting the day off on a nutritional footing pays dividends in the long term as those who eat breakfast every day are less likely to develop metabolic diseases such as type 2 diabetes. What you eat is also important: don't kid yourself that the bowl of sugar-laden cereal counts as a healthy breakfast, even if it does include milk.

According to the research, consuming breakfast foods high in whole grains and cereal fibre improves our metabolic health.

Oats tick all those boxes. They're a high-fibre wholegrain, with the added benefit of being rich in cholesterol-lowering beta-glucan fibre, and are successfully grown at scale here in Ireland.

Add Irish oats to your breakfast menu and choose from the long-established Flahavan's in Co Waterford, running now for almost two-and-a-half centuries, or pick from something newer: Kilbeggan Organic Porridge Oats in Westmeath, Stradbally's Merry Mill, or Cotter Farm in Cork.

January is the perfect time for a warming bowl of porridge or a hearty dish of baked oats. Serve with a dollop of natural yogurt, scatter some seeds and nuts on top, and you'll be nourished and satisfied until lunchtime.

Bake your own bread



Two months ago, ultra-processed foods (UPFs) hit the headlines — again — with the publication of a series of articles from international experts in *The Lancet* warning that UPFs are "a key driver of the escalating global burden of multiple diet-related chronic diseases".

Before the Irish Government policy catches up with the research, we can make small changes ourselves. Baking bread is the resolution that keeps on giving, and it doesn't have to be complicated.

Mixing a simple loaf of soda bread for a weekend lunchtime or baking some puffy pittas to accompany soup for dinner takes only a little longer than updating your social media feed, and there's a great satisfaction in putting something on the table that you can name all the ingredients for. Before you know it, you'll have progressed on to easy yeast loaves, homemade bagels, and savoury cornbread.

Get a cookbook and bookmark a new recipe a week to try — Darina Allen's *The New Ballymaloe Bread Book* is excellent.

Eat more plants

Almost 20 years ago, American journalist Michael Pollan coined a famous phrase: "Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants."

It's a mantra that still has power to cut through confusing dietary advice, focusing on what you eat — real, unprocessed food — in moderation, while advocating a plant-rich diet that moves meat out from the centre of the plate. You don't have to be a vegetarian or vegan to eat more plants, you just have to think outside the traditional Irish meat-and-three-veg meal.

After all the rich, meaty Christmas dishes, it's no hardship to add a few veg-focused meals into the daily dinner rotation. For inspiration, sign up for a veg box delivery — Waterford-based social enterprise GIY assembles boxes of fresh seasonal vegetables from the GIY Farm for nationwide delivery (giy.ie, €25). Find new recipes to make the most of the best in season with books such as The *GIY Diaries* and *Grow Cook Eat* from GIY founder Michael Kelly.

Give peas a chance

Humble cupboard heroes with a nutritional heft, peas, beans, and lentils prove that the best of things come in small packages.



Rich in plant protein, complex carbohydrates, and dietary fibre, these legumes are also good for the environment: beans enrich the soil by converting atmospheric nitrogen into a plant-usable form, reducing the need for fertilisers. They're also filling, good value, and — most importantly — delicious.

The international Beans is How campaign, working towards achieving the UN's second Sustainable Development Goal of zero hunger, aims to double bean consumption worldwide by 2028.

We can get ahead of that by checking out the new cookbook *Beans* by Cork chef and food advocate Ali Honour, which will be published on January 29. Honour, who recently collaborated with Wexford sustainable chocolatiers Bean & Goose to make brownies, adds beans to dishes from salads, pancakes, and stews to muffins and brioche buns.

Find @honouryourfood on Instagram for new ways to incorporate beans into your daily diet.

Oide

Smart Living in the Home

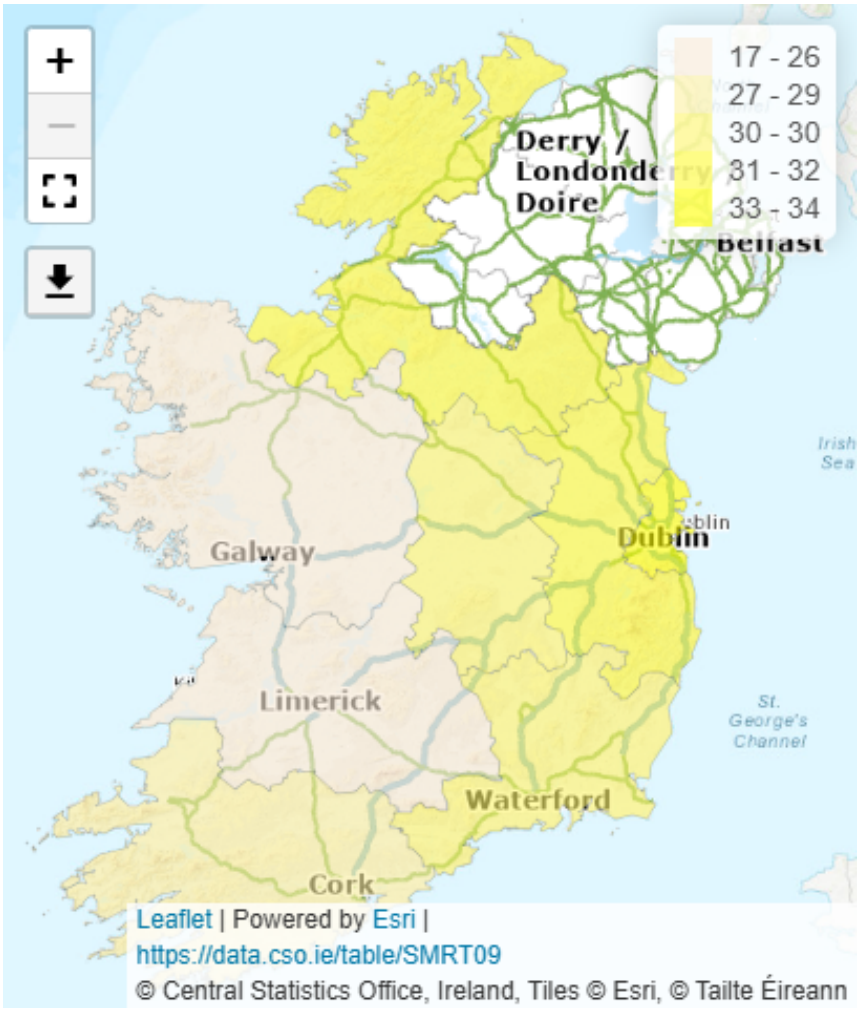
Central Statistics Office (CSO): 18th October 2024

Dubliners most likely to use smart energy management systems in their homes

Nearly three in ten (28%) internet users use internet-connected devices and systems for energy management in the home, an increase of six percentage points on the same period in 2022. Those solutions encompass internet-connected smart devices or systems such as thermostats, smart meters for gas, electricity, smart lights, plug-ins, energy panels, etc. Smart home solutions such as connected windows or window blinds integrated in a system aiming at optimising energy consumption are also included here.

At a regional level, Dubliners were more likely to use such smart energy management systems in their homes with over one third (34%) of internet users in Dublin compared with just 17% of internet users in the West region using such devices and systems for smart living.

There has been a notable increase in the take-up of smart solutions for security in the home such as internet-connected home alarm system, smoke detector, or security cameras, smart doorbell, etc., 30% of internet users were using such smart solutions in their homes in 2024, compared with just less than one in six (17%) in the same period in 2022. See Map 3.1, Table 3.1 and PxStat Tables for comparisons with 2022.
Note that respondents could select more than one option.



One in seven internet users use smart home appliances such as robot vacuums, ovens, etc.

Just over one in seven (15%) of internet users say they use such internet-connected home appliances such as robot vacuums, fridges, ovens, coffee machines, etc. Both in-house appliances (e.g. connected robot vacuums, fridges, ovens, dishwashers, coffee machines, cooking robots, laundry machines) and equipment for the garden (e.g. connected lawn mowers, garden irrigation device or system) are included here.

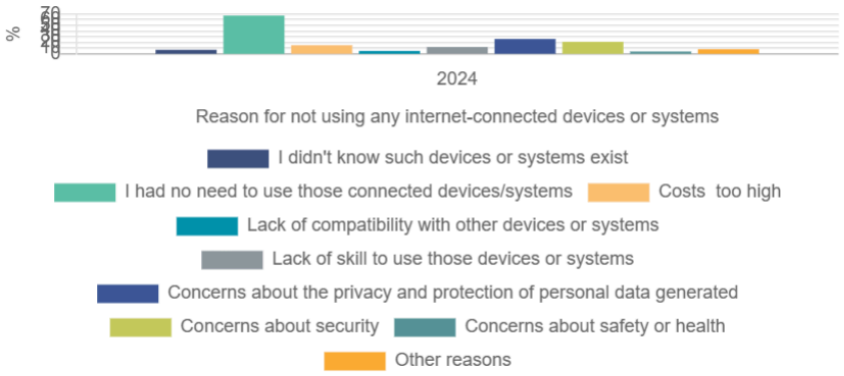
Over four in ten internet users (41%) use a virtual assistant (or an intelligent personal assistant) in the form of a smart speaker or of an app, such as Google Home, Amazon Alexa/Echo/Computer, Google Assistant, Apple HomePod, etc. A virtual assistant is a software that can perform tasks or services for an individual based on verbal commands. Some virtual assistants are able to interpret human speech and respond via synthetized voices. Users can also ask their assistants questions, control home automation devices and media playback via voice, and manage other basic tasks such as email, timers, alarms, to-do lists and calendars with verbal commands.

Of internet users who had not used any of these home internet-connected devices and systems, over two thirds (67%) said that they did not need to use them, while one quarter (26%) had concerns about the privacy and protection of personal data generated by the devices or systems, while over one in five (21%) had security concerns such as that the device or system could be hacked. Over one in seven (15%) said that such home internet-connected IoT devices or systems were too costly.

Less-frequently cited reasons were unfamiliarity with such devices and systems (12%), non-compatibility with other home equipment already used by the respondent (5%) and concerns about personal safety and health (4%).

Just 7% of internet users who don't use any home internet-connected devices and systems for management of home energy, security, etc. in their home were unaware that such home automation devices or systems existed. See Figure 3.1, Table 3.1, Table 3.2 and PxStat Tables for comparisons with 2022.

Figure 3.1 Individuals who did not use any internet-connected devices or systems for private purpose by their reason for not using, 2024



© Central Statistics Office, Ireland
https://data.cso.ie/table/SMRT06

Over three quarters using internet-connected TV at home

Respondents were also asked about their use of internet-connected home entertainment. Over three quarters (76%) use internet-connected TV, such as smart TVs or other less advanced connected TV sets, including where a TV set has been connected to the network via a Chromecast. Internet-connected game consoles such as Wii U, PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Nintendo Switch, etc. were used by 37% of internet users in 2024. A similar number (37%) use a home audio system connected to the internet or smart speakers, also including basic speakers which can be connected via for example Bluetooth.

Oide

Advertising campaigns failing to represent modern Irish households, research finds

Irish Times: 3rd November 2023

Almost two-thirds of people say portrayal of families in ads is stereotypical, Folk Wunderman Thompson study reveals



Irish Life's recent female health campaign, created by Folk Wunderman Thompson, included a same-sex couple. The traditional family structure of mixed-sex parents and children only accounts for 36 per cent of Irish households. Photograph: Folk Wunderman Thompson

Brands must adapt to the structure of modern Irish households and the evolving concept of "family" to stay relevant to their customers, a research study by Dublin creative agency Folk Wunderman Thompson has found.

Only 38 per cent of people in Ireland feel advertisers are in touch with their family life and needs, while more than half believe brands should help normalise *"non-traditional"* family structures, according to a survey of more than 1,000 adults contained in the agency's Family Fallacy report.

Some 63 per cent of people say the portrayal of families in advertising is stereotypical, with 70 per cent of child-free families and 71 per cent of families headed by same-sex couples believing that this is the case.

The publication of the report, which WPP-owned Folk Wunderman Thompson has shared with its clients, coincides with the launch of a number of high-profile Christmas advertising campaigns.

It concludes that brands are missing out on opportunities to resonate with consumers by maintaining a disproportionate focus on the *"traditional"* family of a mother, father and children.

This family structure only accounts for 36 per cent of Irish households yet remains *"the single most overrepresented and overcatered group when it comes to advertising, marketing, products and services"*.

Eimear Fitzmaurice, head of planning for Folk Wunderman Thompson and a co-author of the report, said there was *"a huge opportunity"* for brands to catch up with the rise in blended and divorced families, single-parent families, same-sex families and child-free families.
Advertisers also need to update their messages to acknowledge *"new living arrangements and realities"*, including the rise in multigenerational households triggered by high rents and barriers to home ownership, the report notes.

"I do think there is greater scope to tell that story. The housing crisis has been here for a while, but it is only really now that we are dealing with the emotional impact of milestones being delayed," said Ms Fitzmaurice.
One of the positive examples cited is Disney, which in 2021 began a trilogy of advertisements focusing on the experiences of a blended family as they prepare for the festive season.

Ms Fitzmaurice said brands were starting to realise that they must be aware of different family dynamics if they want to authentically connect with a wider group of households. *"Disney is a prime example of that. It is absolutely critical that they understand their customers and what they are feeling,"* she said.

Almost 80 per cent of people surveyed for the agency by Bounce Insights agree that you don't have to have kids to be a family, 78 per cent agree that family is no longer defined just by blood or marriage and 68 per cent consider some of their close friends to be their family.

Ms Fitzmaurice said a rise in the number of people opting not to have children – despite a *"very deeply embedded expectation"* that they should want to do so – had *"provoked a lot of interest"* from clients, who were keen to better reflect their lives.

"It feels like the most untapped truth," she said.

Folk Wunderman Thompson – which counts Lidl Ireland, Irish Life, Vodafone, Bord Gáis Energy and Brennans among its clients – has made a commitment to *"showcasing the full spectrum of family structures"* in its campaigns, she said.

Urban and Rural Life in Ireland, 2025

Central Statistics Office (CSO): 21st April 2026

Households and Families

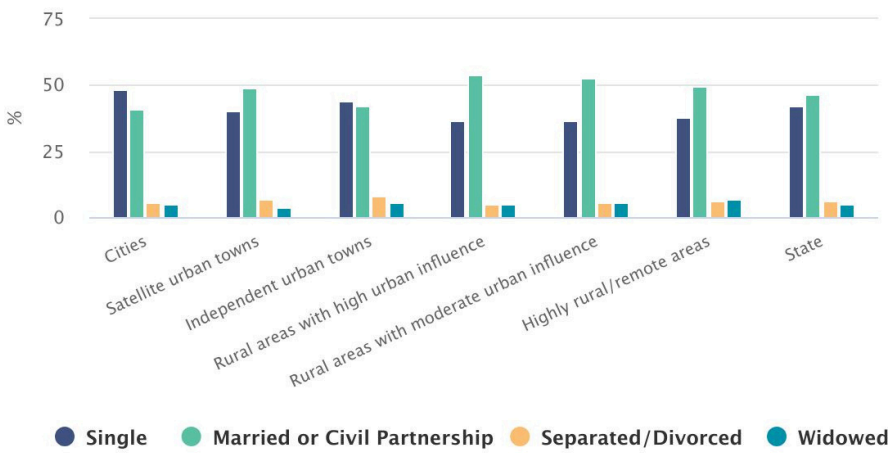
Satellite urban towns consisted of a greater proportion of families (45.7%) where all children were aged below 15 years

Largest proportion of single people living in Cities

Using data from Census 2022, the proportion of people aged 15 and over who were single was 48.5% in Cities, where the State average was 42.4%. The proportion of those who were single in rural areas was lower than the State average in each case, ranging from 36.3% in Rural areas with high urban influence to 37.8% in Highly rural/remote areas.

In Rural areas with high urban influence, 54.0% of those aged 15 and over were married or in a civil partnersip, 7.6 percentage points higher than the State average of 46.4%. Across urban areas, Satellite urban towns had the highest proportion of those aged 15 and over who were married or in a civil partnership, at 49.1%.

Figure 3.1 Marital status by area type, 2022

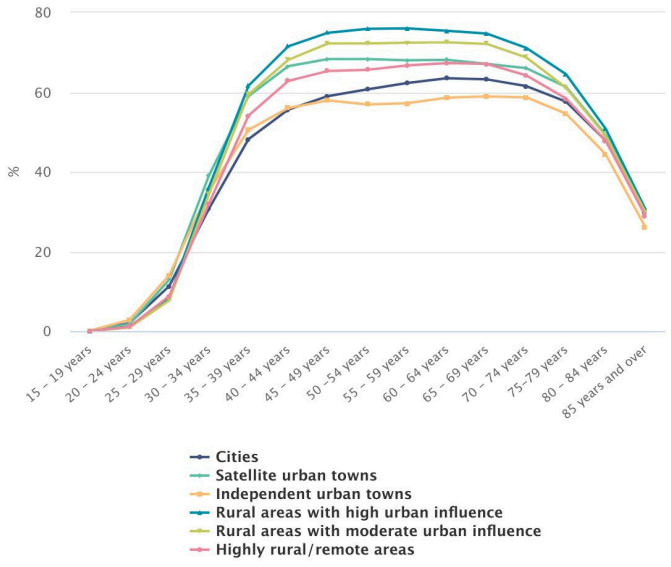


Source: CSO Ireland

Overall, 6.1% of people aged 15 and over were separated or divorced in 2022, with the highest proportion of 8.2% in Independent urban towns.

Highly rural/remote areas had the greatest proportion of widowed people at 6.8% in 2022, followed by Rural areas with moderate urban influence at 5.7%. Satellite urban towns had the lowest proportion of widows and widowers at 4.0%, while the average in the State was 5.1%.

Figure 3.2 Marriage rates by area type and 5-year age groups, 2022



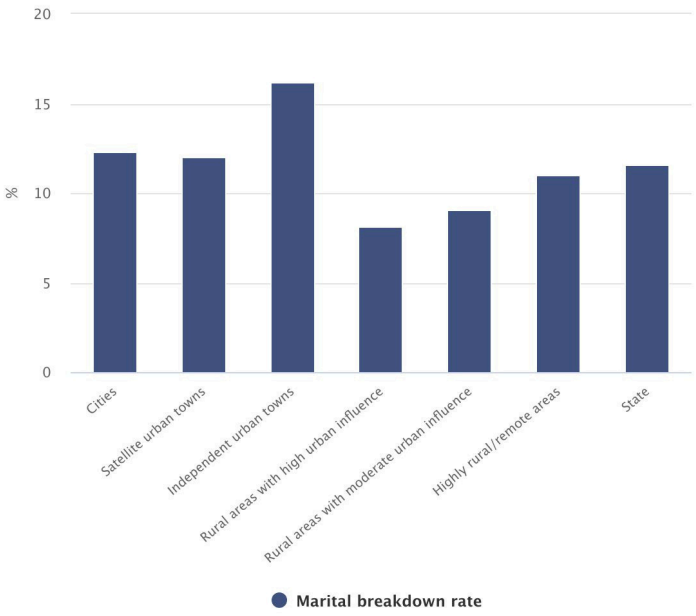
Source: CSO Ireland

Rural areas with high urban influence had the highest marriage rates among those aged 35 and over

More than half of all people aged between 40 and 79 years were married in 2022, and this was true across all area types, Figure 3.2.

Rural areas with high urban influence had the highest marriage rates among those aged 35 and over, peaking at 76.0% in the 55-59 year age group.

Figure 3.3 Marital breakdown rate, 2022, by area type



Source: CSO Ireland
Highcharts.com

Marital breakdown rate highest in Independent urban towns

The marital breakdown rate for the State was 11.6% in 2022, calculated as the number of separated or divorced people as a proportion of those who were ever married, excluding those who were widowed.

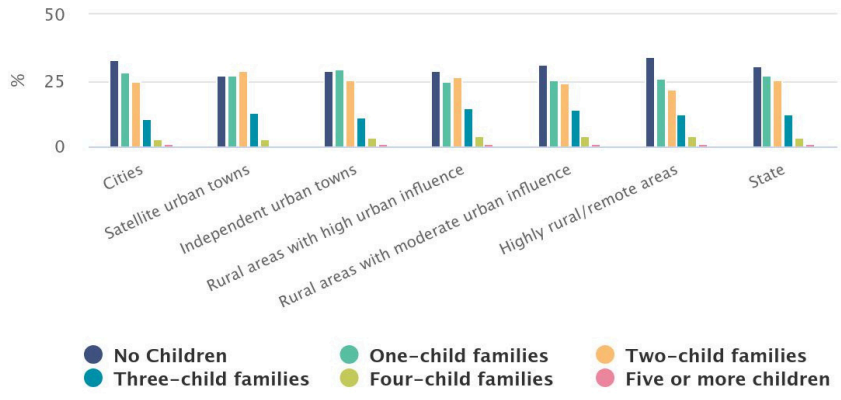
The rate was highest in Independent urban towns at 16.2% and lowest in Rural areas with high urban influence at 8.1%.

Couple with children most frequent household type in all areas

Households consisting of a couple with children were the most frequent household type in both 2016 and 2022. Rural areas with high urban influence had the highest proportion of 'couple with children' households in 2022 at 43.2%, while Cities were the lowest at 28.0%, the State average was 33.7%, having fell from 35.2% in 2016.

Highly rural/remote areas recorded the highest percentage of households comprising of 'couples without children' at 21.4%, while the State average was 19.2%. Just under three in ten households (28.7%) in Highly rural/remote areas consisted of one person, the highest rate in the State, while the lowest rate was 18.2% in Rural areas with high urban influence. For the State, the prevalence of one-person households was 23.1% in 2022, down from 23.5% in 2016.

Figure 3.5 Number of children in a family as a proportion of all families by area type



Source: CSO Ireland
Highcharts.com

Greater proportion of young families found in urban areas

Figure 3.5 illustrate the number of children in a family as a proportion of all families in each of the six area types.

One-child families were most common in Independent urban towns (29.6%) while two-child families were most common in Satellite urban towns (28.9%). Families with three or more children, were more common in rural areas.

Of the families with children, Satellite urban towns (47.7%) and Independent urban towns (45.7%) consisted of a greater proportion of young families where all children were under 15 years of age. Highly rural/remote areas had a greater proportion of families (45.8%) where all children were aged 15 years and over than any other area type.