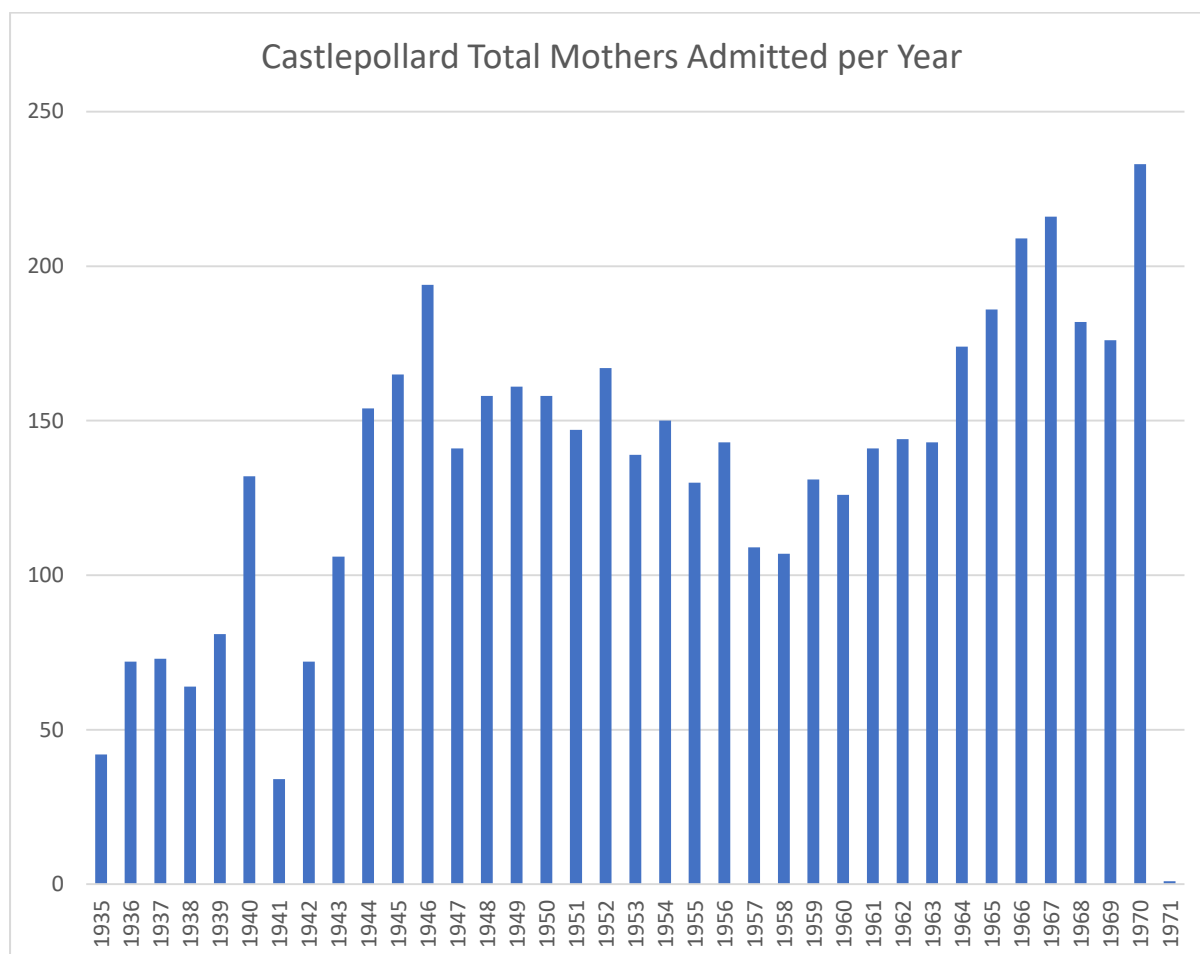


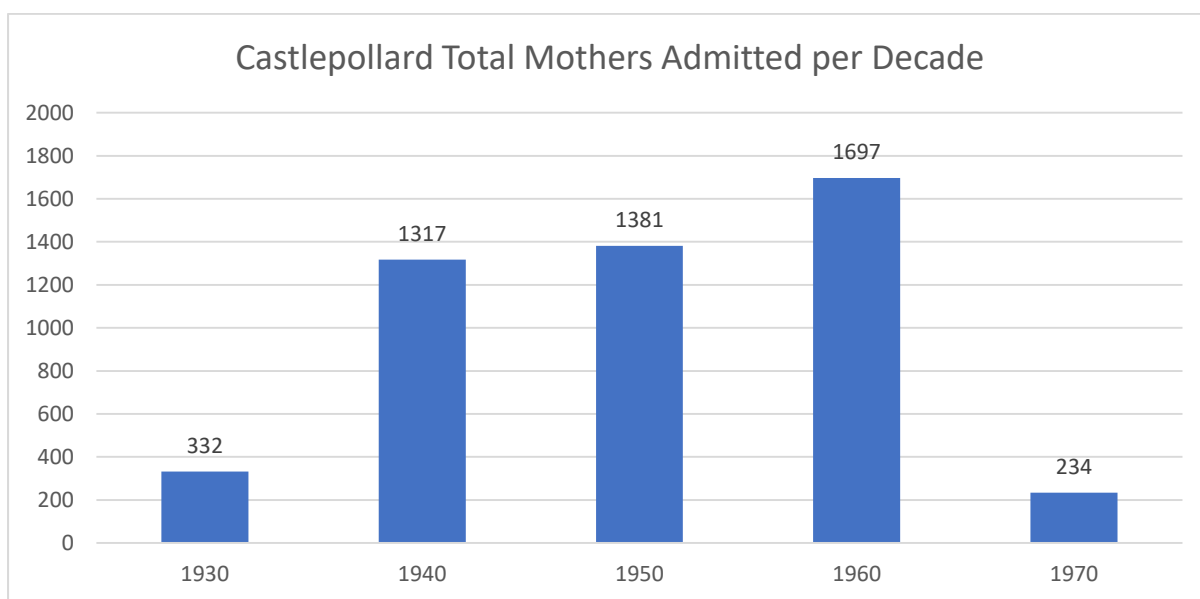
Chapter 20 A: Castlepollard Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis provided here is based on the institutional records provided to the Commission. The Commission compiled a database from the institutional records and analysed the information on a calendar year basis. In the narrative chapter, statistical information from other sources is described. These other sources are not directly comparable with the Commission's analysis. For example, almost all the statistical information available from official publications is on an administrative year basis, that is, from 1 April to 31 March. This was the case until about 1980. However, as is clear from the analysis below, the statistical returns made to the Department of Health by the institution are broadly in line with the Commission's analysis. Statistics from other reports, for example, inspection reports, often relate to a specific day or a non-standard period and so are not directly comparable. In general, the Commission is satisfied that there are no significant differences between its analysis and information from other sources. In a few cases where there are differences, attention is drawn to this in the narrative chapter.

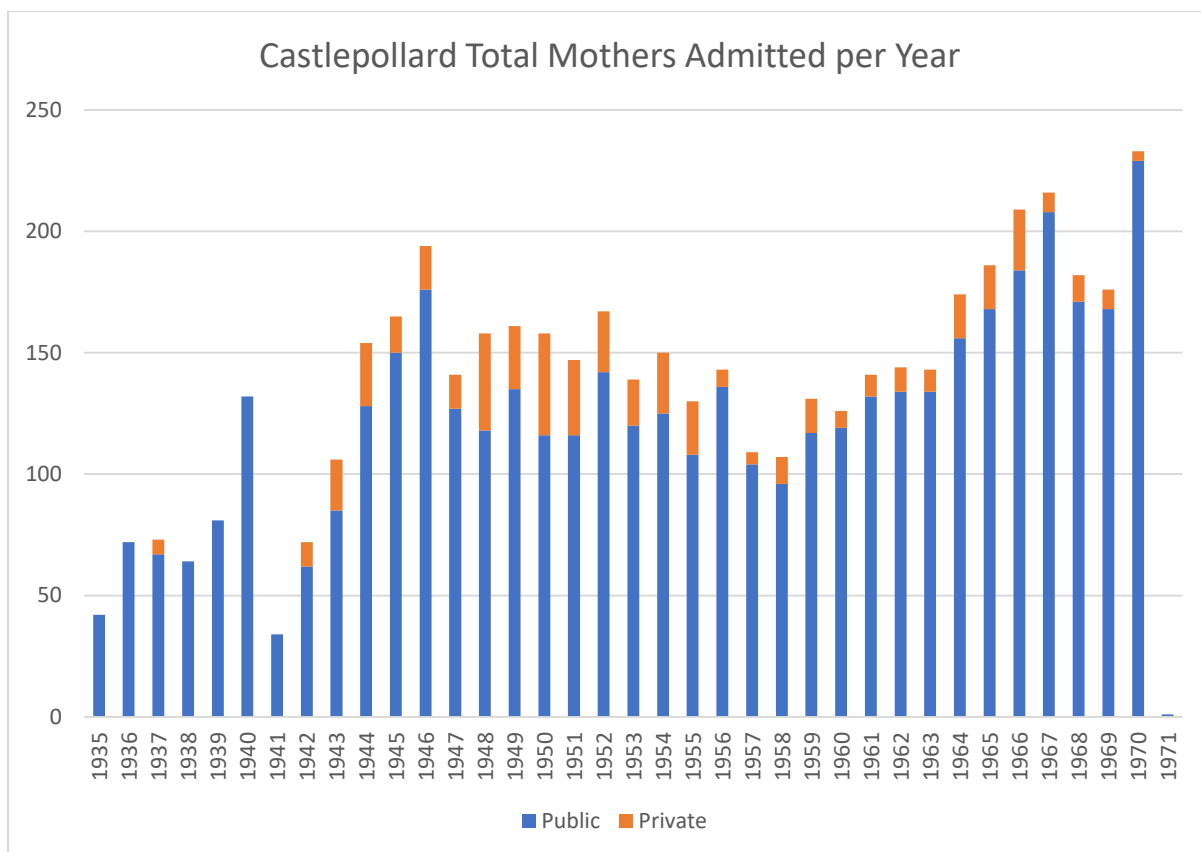
Admissions



The Castlepollard institutional records show that 4,972 women were admitted to the home in the years 1935-71. Information relating to date of admission was available for 4,961 women (99.8% of admissions). On opening, Castlepollard had accommodation for 37 women. However, in its first full year in operation 72 women were admitted. Throughout the 1930s admissions were routinely double the capacity of the home. In 1940, 132 women were admitted to the home causing acute overcrowding. Following DLGPH advice, Castlepollard closed to new admissions for much of 1941; 34 women were admitted that year. Admissions increased steadily during the remainder of the war years and peaked in 1946 when 194 women were admitted. From 1947 to 1957, 146 women on average were admitted annually. Admissions began to increase again from 1959 and peaked in 1970, the home's final year in operation, when 233 women were admitted.

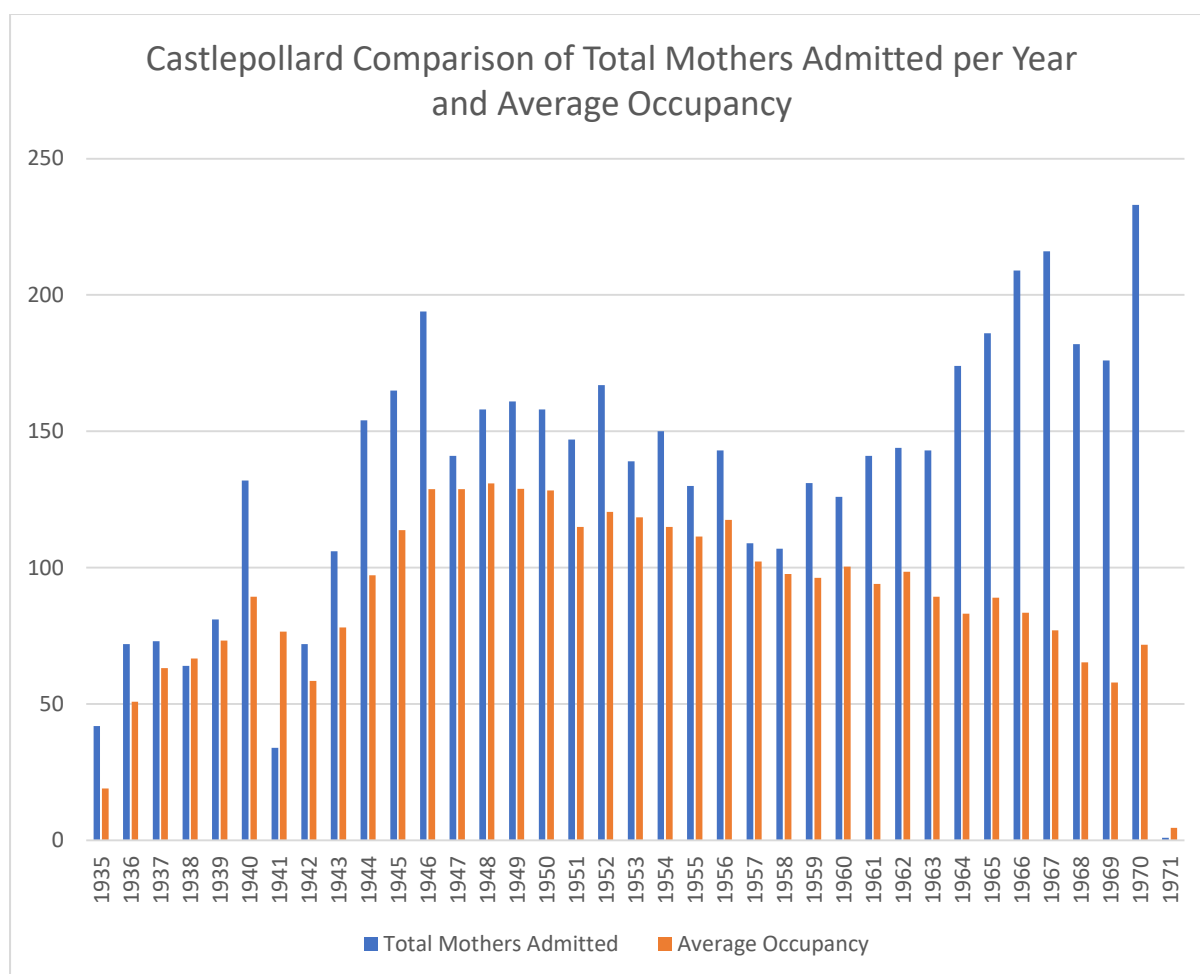


Analysis by decade shows that most admissions to Castlepollard were recorded in the 1960s (34.2%) followed by the 1950s (27.8%); 1940s (26.5%); 1930s (6.7%) and the 1970s (4.7%).



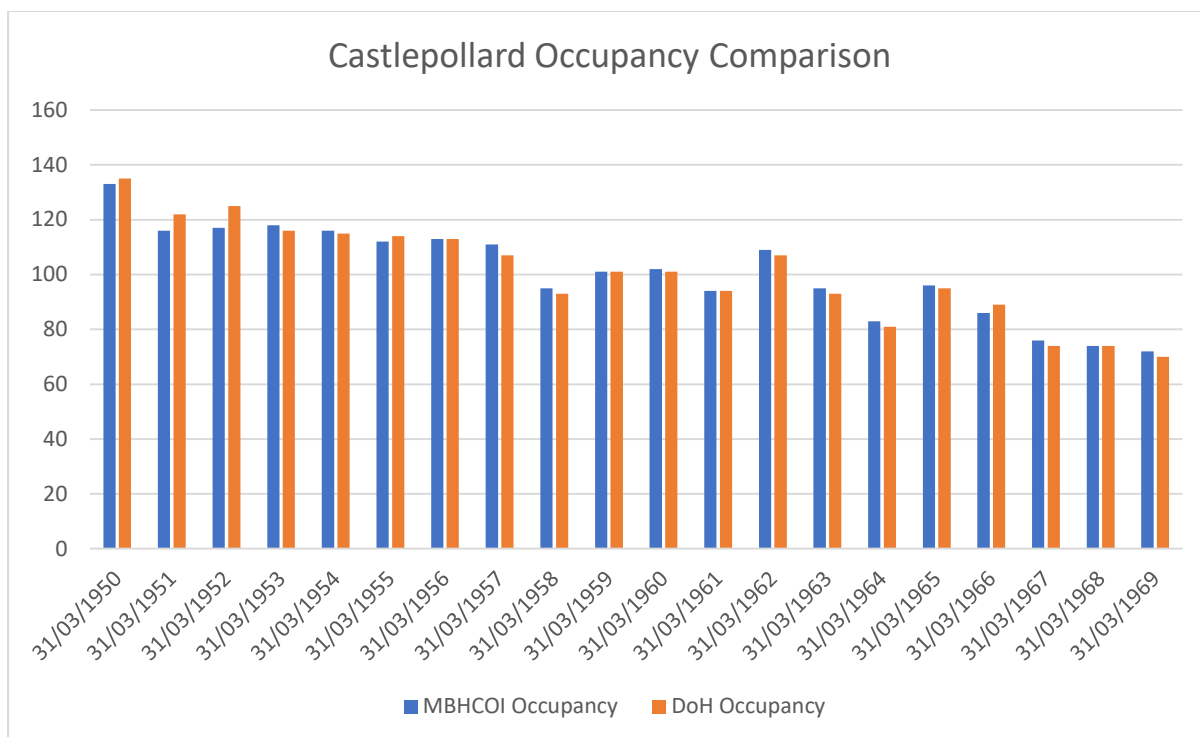
Private patients accounted for around 10% of admissions to Castlepollard. Most private patients were admitted between 1948 and 1955. They accounted for one in four of admissions in 1948 and 1950.

Occupancy

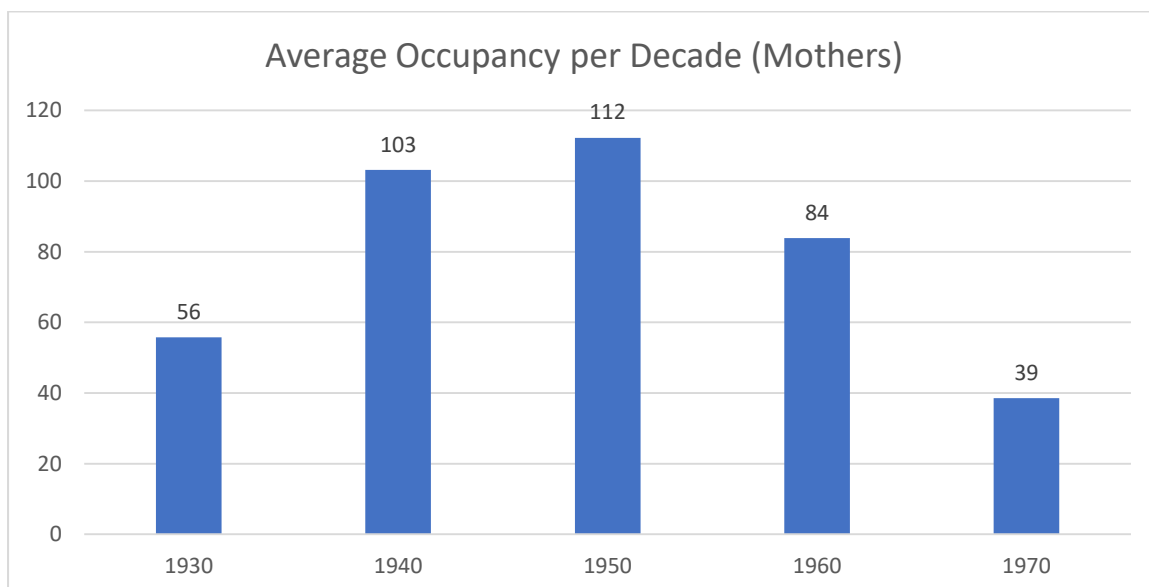


Information relating to occupancy was available for 4,846 women (97.3% of admissions). The institutional records show that occupancy, in relation to the number of admissions, was relatively high throughout the 1930s and was higher than the number of admissions in 1938. High occupancy rates generally related to periods where women stayed for longer durations in the institution and correspond with periods of overcrowding as identified in the historical records. Increased admissions to the home in 1940 caused acute overcrowding to the extent that restricted admissions during 1941 did little to reduce the occupancy rate that year. Occupancy rates increased again in 1943 and remained relatively high until the mid-1950s. Although admissions began to increase significantly in the 1960s occupancy rates declined steadily. This mirrored trends in other mother and baby homes and reflected shorter stays because of the availability of legal adoption.

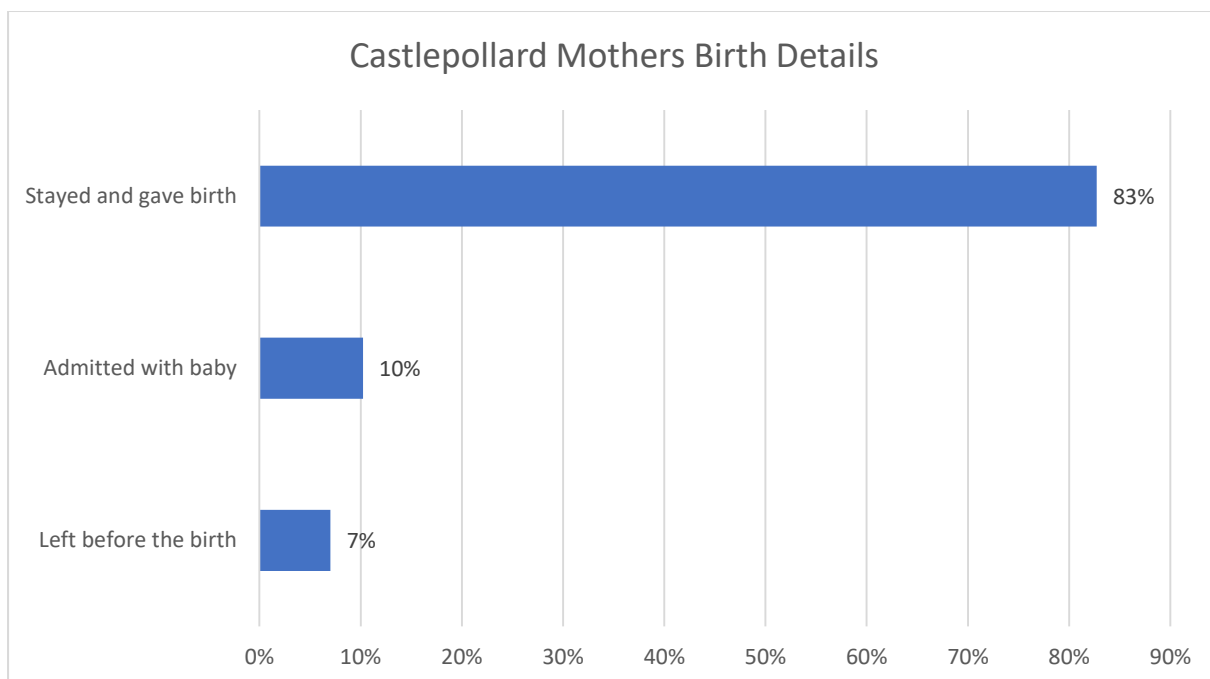
Occupancy comparison



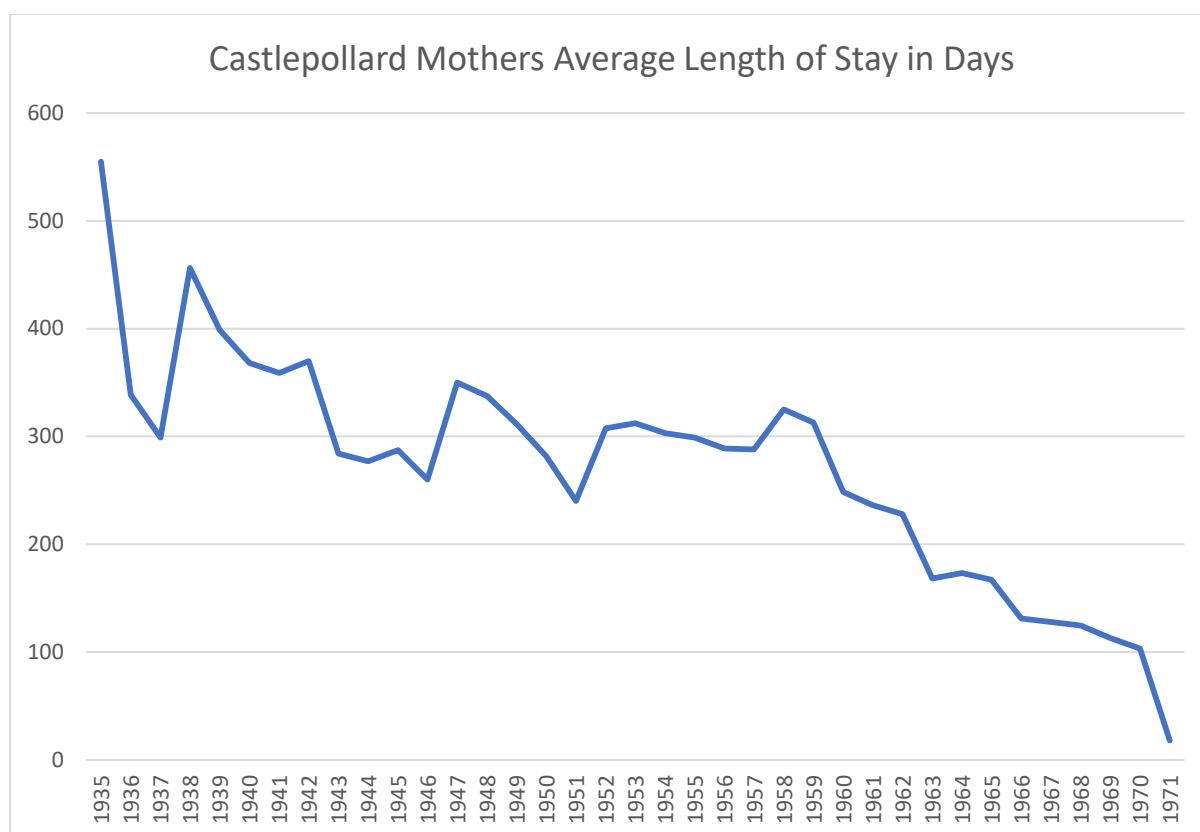
A set of annual statistical returns sent by Castlepollard to the Department of Health for the years 1950-69 inclusive allowed for a comparison of occupancy rates notified by the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts against occupancy rates independently calculated by the Commission. Temporary absences from the home, such as cases where women were temporarily in another hospital, are excluded from the Commission’s calculations and may inflate the Commission’s numbers slightly. Notwithstanding this, it is clear that the occupation rates notified by Castlepollard are broadly in line with the Commission’s calculations.



Analysis by decade shows that there was little variation in average occupancy in Castlepollard in the 1940s and 1950s. A similar number of women were admitted to Castlepollard in both decades (1,317 in the 1940s and 1,381 in the 1950s) and average occupancy was 103 and 112 respectively. A significant change, however, can be identified in the 1960s. Although admissions increased significantly during the decade (1,697 women were admitted) average occupancy had decreased to 84. Although less admissions were recorded in the 1940s and 1950s a woman admitted to Castlepollard in that period could expect to be living with another 106 women on average. Although admissions increased in the 1960s a woman admitted in that decade could expect to be living with another 83 women on average.

Birth details

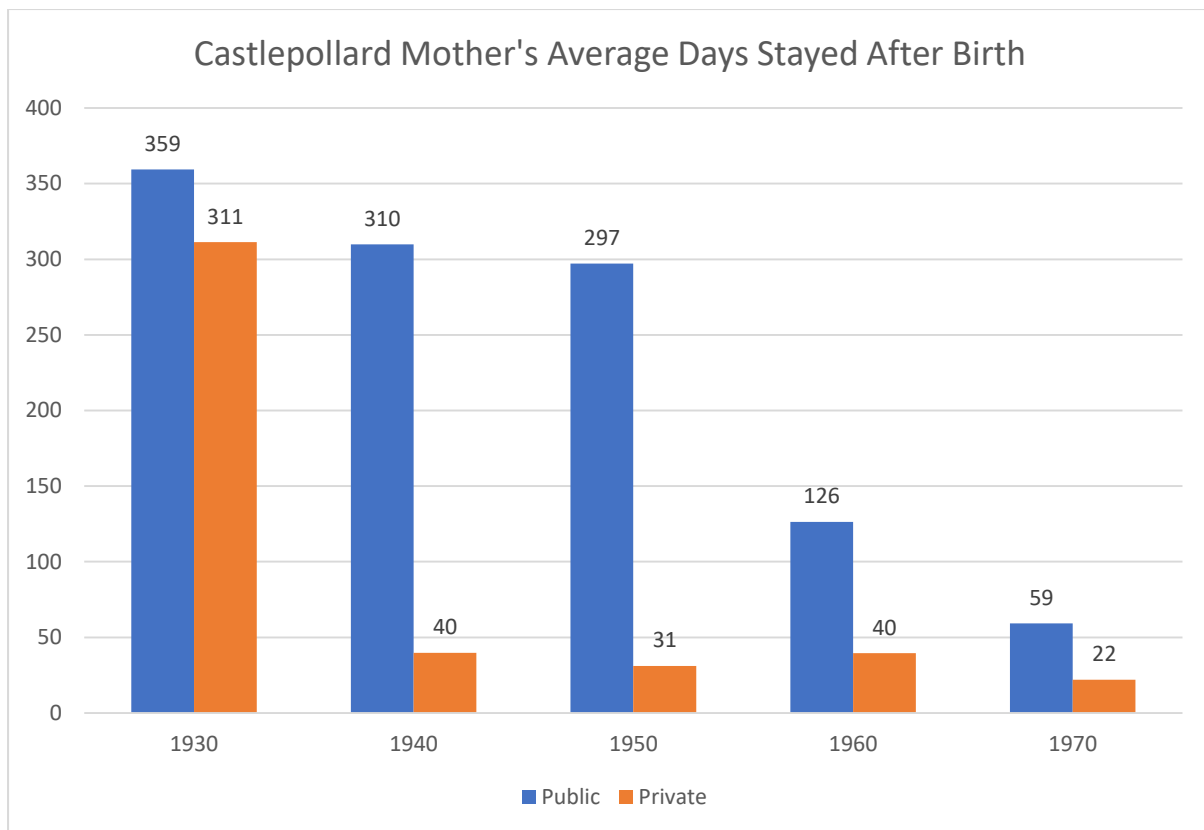
Information relating to birth details was available for 4,913 women (98.8% of births and admissions). The institutional records show that 83% of women admitted to Castlepollard were admitted pregnant, gave birth and stayed; 7% were admitted pregnant, left before giving birth and did not return and 10% were admitted to the institution for the first time accompanied by their baby having given birth elsewhere. Of the women admitted pregnant, who gave birth and stayed, 92% gave birth in Castlepollard, 6% gave birth in the Coombe and 2% gave birth elsewhere.

Length of stay

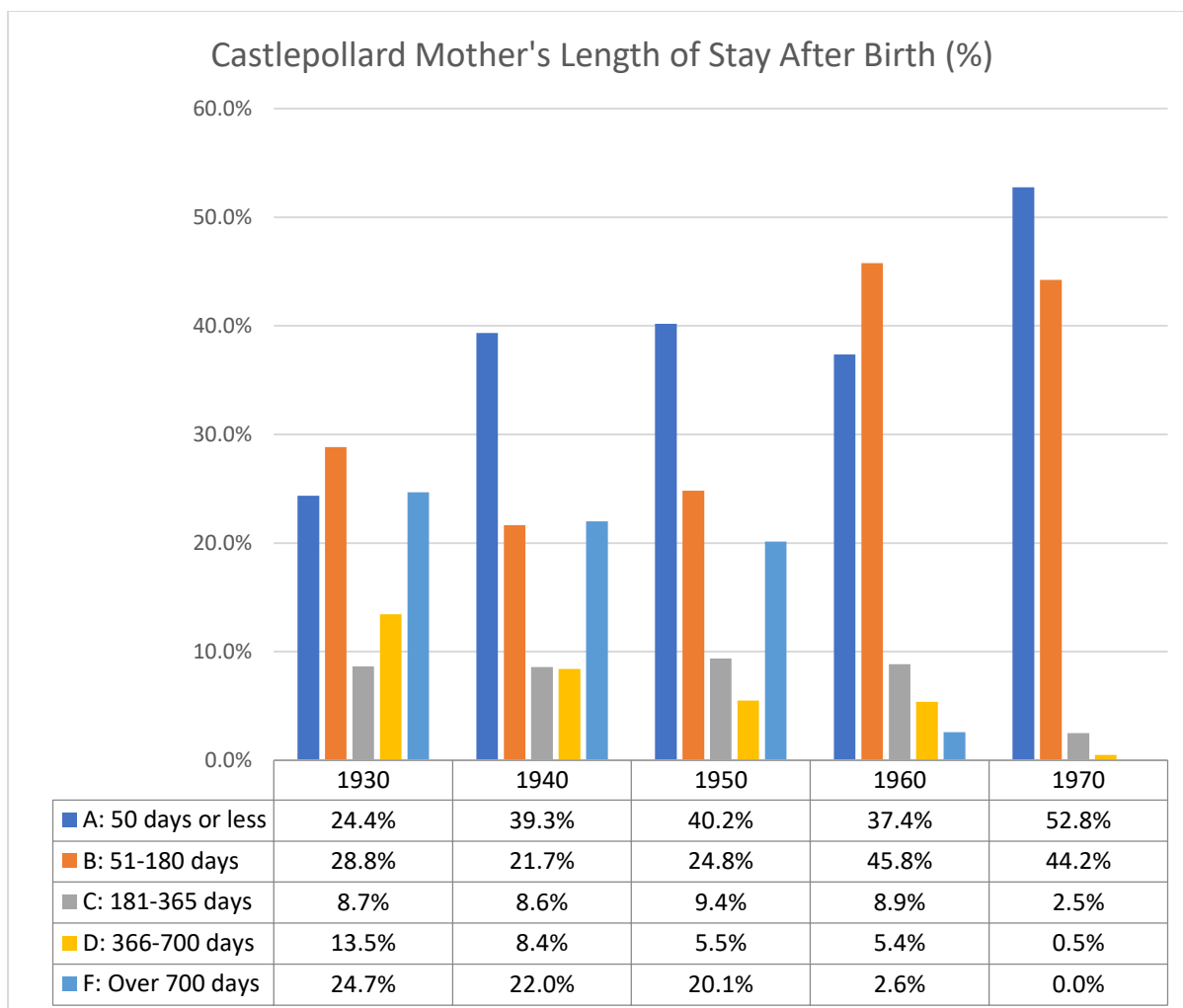
Information relating to length of stay was available for 4,836 women (97.3% of admissions). Length of stay was longest for women admitted during 1938.¹ Women admitted that year spent 456 days on average in the home: one woman spent just eight days in the home while others remained there for over three years. Average length of stay decreased gradually until 1946 but increased significantly for women admitted in 1947. In the period 1947 to 1959 length of stay remained relatively high at 304 days on average. Length of stay decreased dramatically during the 1960s and for women admitted in 1970, the home's last full year in operation, women spent 103 days on average in the home.

Analysis by decade shows that the average length of stay in Castlepollard was highest during the 1930s. Although the average length of stay decreased somewhat in the 1940s there was no great reduction until the 1960s. A woman admitted to Castlepollard in the 1960s could expect to spend around half as long in the home as a woman admitted in the 1940s.

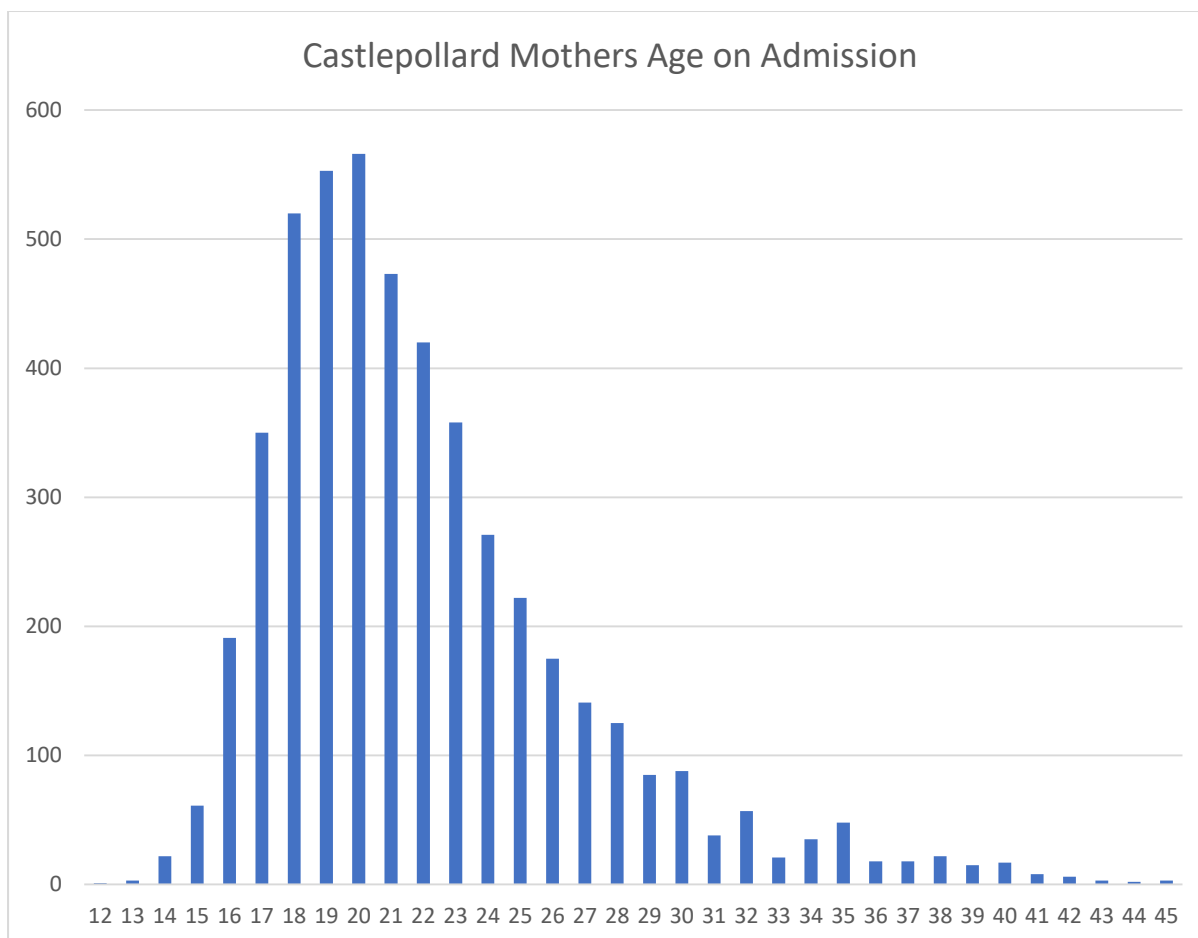
¹ 1935 is discounted here as it was not a full year.



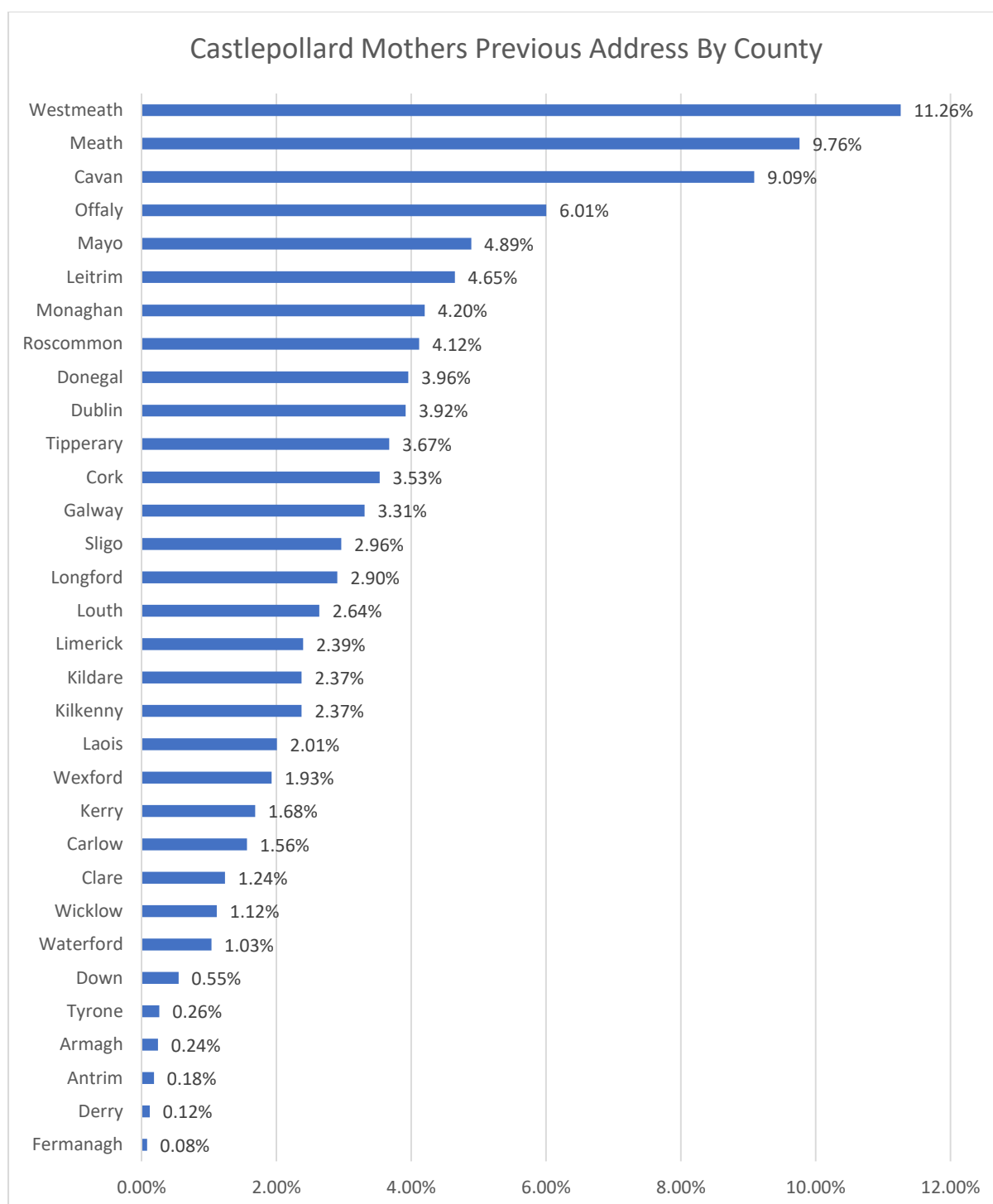
Comparative analysis of average length of stay between public and private patients shows that while private patients spent slightly less time in the institution in the 1930s, they spent significantly less time there from the 1940s through to the 1970s. For instance, in the 1940s the average stay for a private patient was 40 days; approximately one eighth of the 310 days on average which public patients spent in the home. Although this margin reduced somewhat in the 1960s and 1970s public patients remained in Castlepollard around three times longer than their private counterparts in those decades.



Analysis of length of stay in the institution after giving birth shows that, in the 1930s, 24.4% of women left Castlepollard within 50 days of giving birth and 53.2% left within six months of giving birth. However, 24.7% of women, or one in four remained in the home for over 700 days. In the 1940s, 39.3% of women left within 50 days of giving birth and over 60% left within six months. The number of women who spent over two years in the home had decreased slightly to 22%. By the 1960s, 37.4% of women had left the home within 50 days of giving birth and over 83% had left within six months. The number of women who spent over two years in the home had decreased dramatically to 2.6%. By the 1970s, almost 53% of women left within 50 days of giving birth and 97% had left within six months. By this time only a small number of women spent over six months in the home.

Age on admission

Information relating to age on admission was available for 4,936 women (99.3% of admissions). Age on admission ranged from 12 to 45 years. The average age on admission was 22 years and the mode of age was 20 years. 79% of women were aged between 18 and 29 years on admission; 8% were 30 years or over and 13% were under 18 years. Around 5.6% of all admissions were aged between 12 and 16 years.

Address prior to admission

Information relating to address prior to admission was available for 4,929 women (99% of admissions). The institutional records show that all 32 counties featured as an address prior to admission. Westmeath was the most cited address and accounted for 11.26% of admissions. Over 36% of women were recorded as having a previous address in either Westmeath, Meath, Cavan or Offaly.

Previous pregnancy

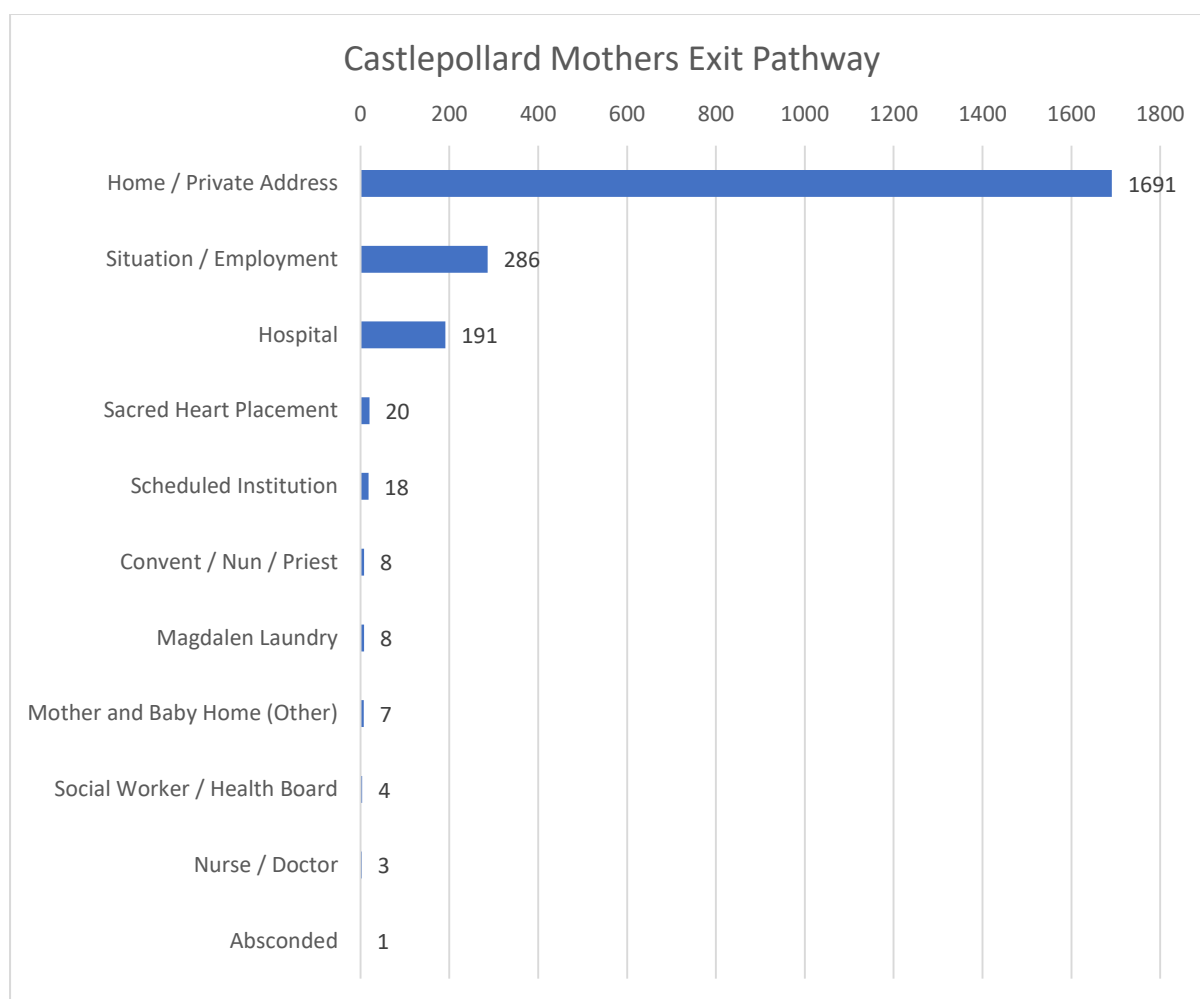
Information relating to previous pregnancies was available for 179 women (3.6% of admissions). The Commission considered this sample too small to enable it to draw any conclusions.

Occupations

Information relating to occupation was available for 172 women (3.5% of admissions). Again, this this sample too small from which to draw any conclusions.

Referral pathways

Information relating to referral pathways was available for 91 women (1.8% of admissions). The Commission considered this sample too small from which to draw any conclusions.

Exit to place

Information relating to exit to place was available for 2,237 women (45% of admissions). The institutional records show that over 75% of women left Castlepollard and returned to the family home or other private address; 12.78% left to take up employment; 8.54% transferred to hospital; 0.89% were placed in employment in a Congregation of the Sacred Hearts run institution; 0.8% transferred to one of the other institutions under the Commission's remit; 0.36% were discharged to a convent, nun or priest; 0.36% to a Magdalen Laundry; 0.3% transferred to private mother and baby homes and small numbers were discharged to social workers, nurses and doctors. One woman 'absconded' without her baby. These exit pathways altered very little from the 1930s to the 1970s. All transfers to Magdalen Laundries were recorded between 1936 and 1950.

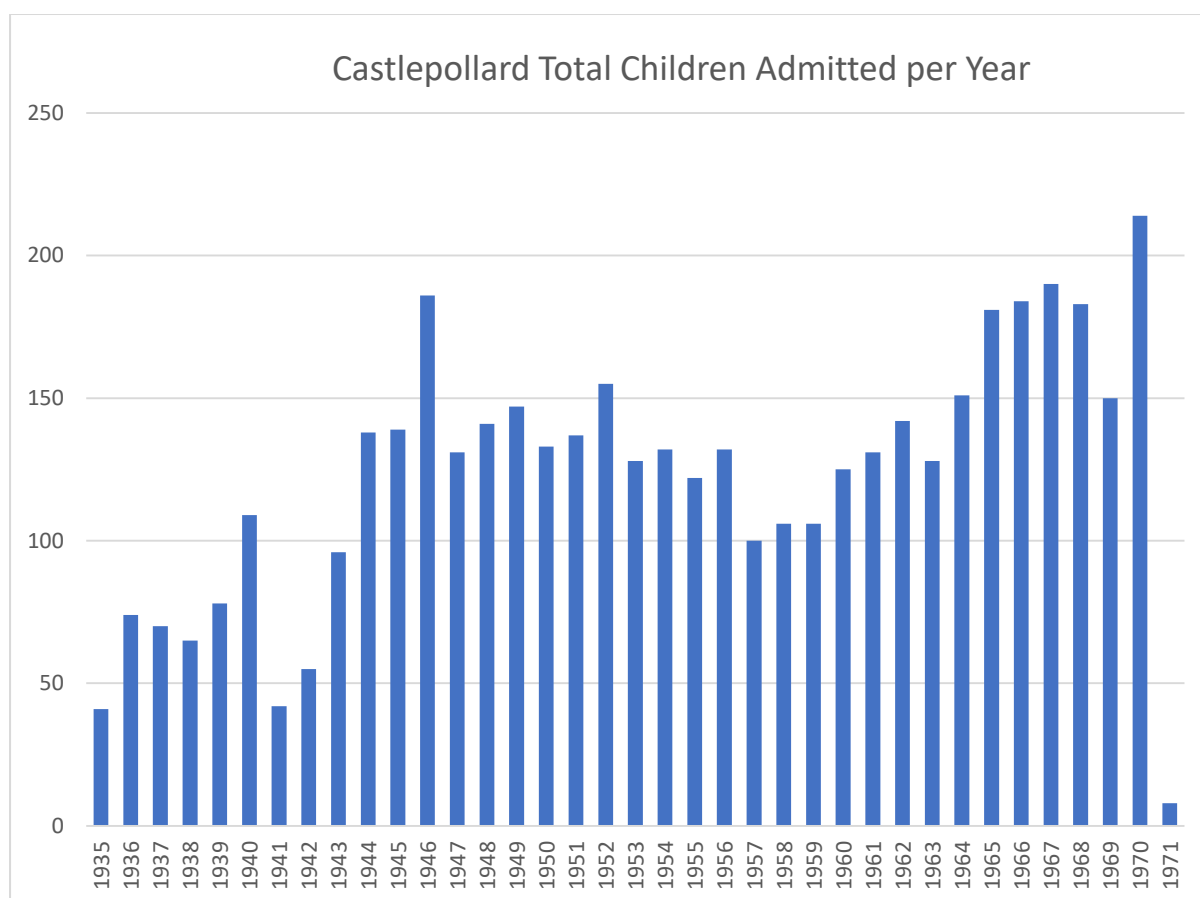
Annual statistical returns furnished by Castlepollard to the Department of Health for the years 1951-69 inclusive confirm trends relating to exit pathways established by the Commission's analysis of the institutional records. The annual returns show that, in this period, most women were discharged to the family home (64%) or directly to employment.

In the 1950s, 30% of women were discharged directly to employment; by the 1960s close to 50% of women were discharged via this route. The annual returns also show that 2% of women left the home to marry in this period and 1% were transferred to unnamed institutions.

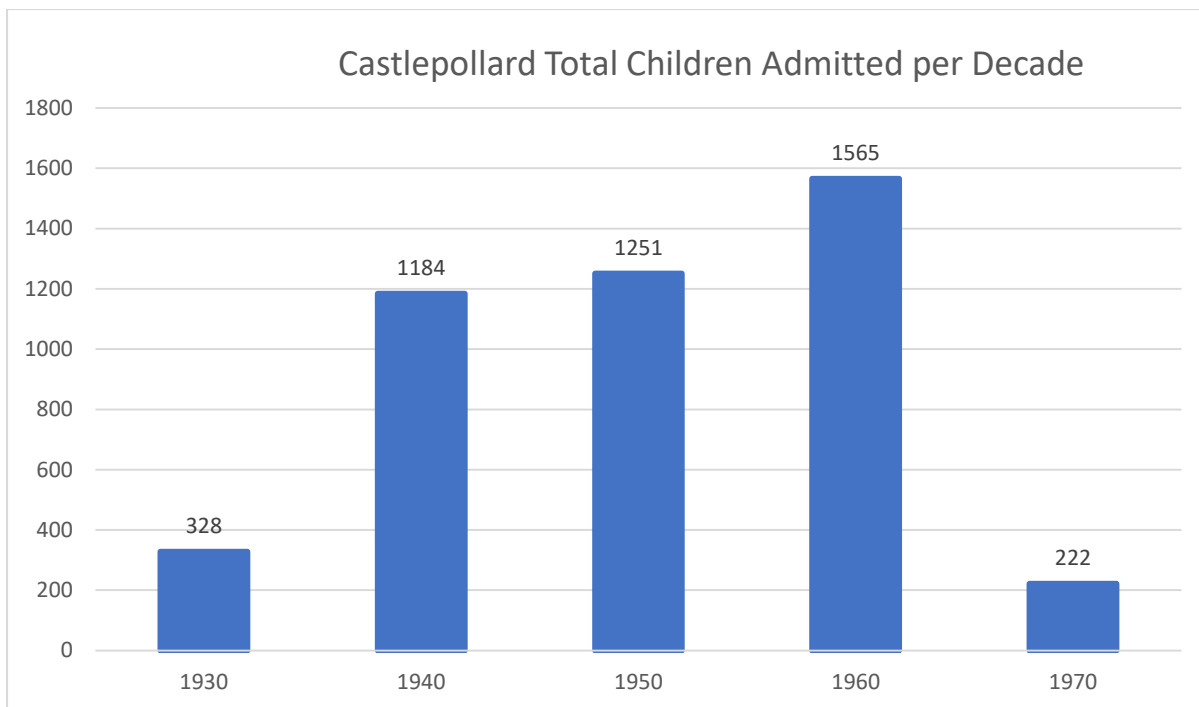
Maternal mortality

Through the institutional records, the Commission identified nine deaths among women admitted to Castlepollard: representing a mortality rate of 0.18%. All but one death occurred in Castlepollard. One death was not associated with pregnancy or childbirth and was due to tubercular meningitis. Three deaths were indirect obstetric deaths in the sense that they were conditions that developed during pregnancy, were aggravated by the physiological effects of pregnancy - all three were notified as syncope. Five deaths were directly associated with pregnancy and childbirth. Direct obstetric deaths were mainly due to puerperal septicaemia/sepsis, eclampsia and atrophy of the liver. Adhering to WHO guidelines the maternal mortality rate in Castlepollard was 0.16%.²

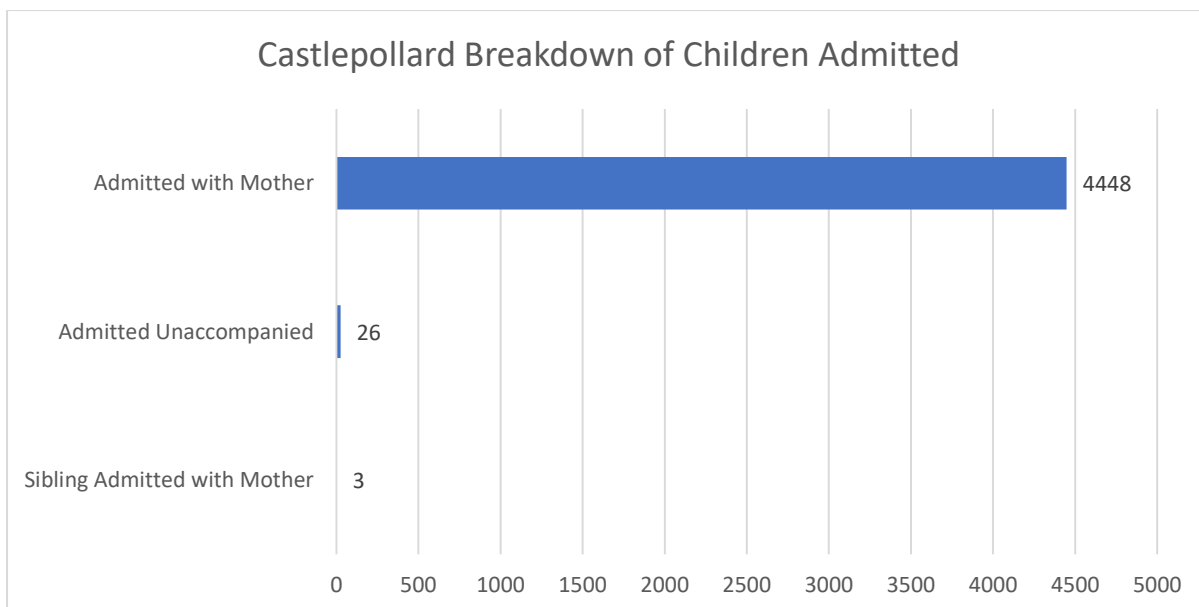
² Maternal death is the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management but not from accidental or incidental causes. <https://www.who.int/healthinfo/statistics/indmaternalmortality/en/>

Children: Admissions

The institutional records show that 4,559 children were admitted to Castlepollard. Information relating to date of admission was available for 4,550 children (99.8% of births/admissions). On opening in 1935, Castlepollard had capacity for 37 women and their children. However, from 1936-39 almost double that number were admitted each year. In 1940, 109 children were born/admitted to Castlepollard which led to acute overcrowding. Admissions were restricted during 1941, but increased steadily from 1942 and peaked in 1946 when 186 children were born/admitted. Child births and admissions remained relatively high in the period 1947-63 when 129 births/admissions on average were recorded annually. Births and Admissions increased substantially in 1964 and remained high throughout the 1960s. In 1970, the last full year of Castlepollard's operation, 214 children were born in or admitted to the home.

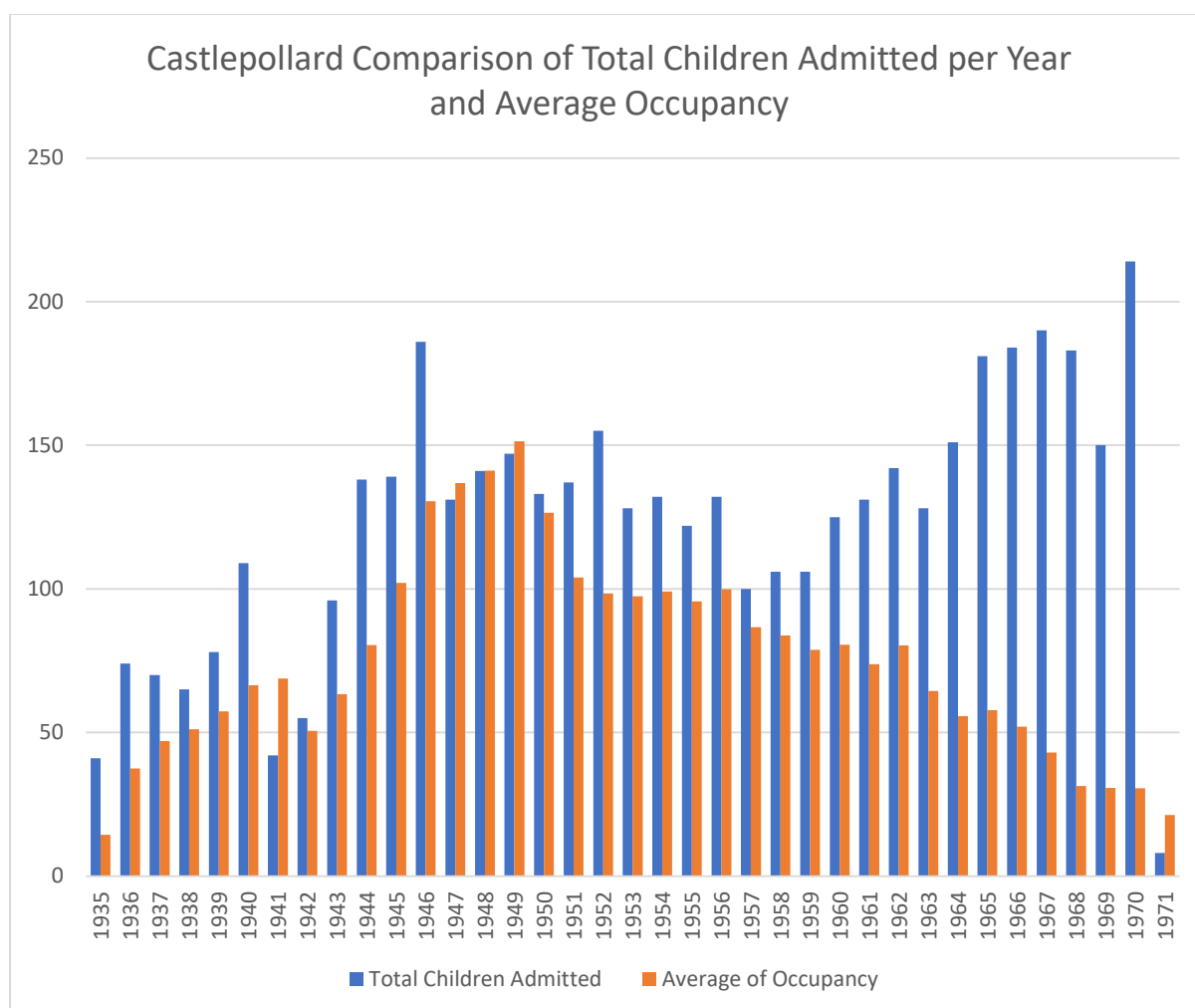


Analysis by decade shows that most births/admissions to Castlepollard (34.4%) were recorded in the 1960s followed by 27.5% in the 1950s and 26% in the 1940s. Numbers recorded in the years 1935-39 accounted for 7.2% of all births/admissions and 4.9% were recorded in 1970-71.

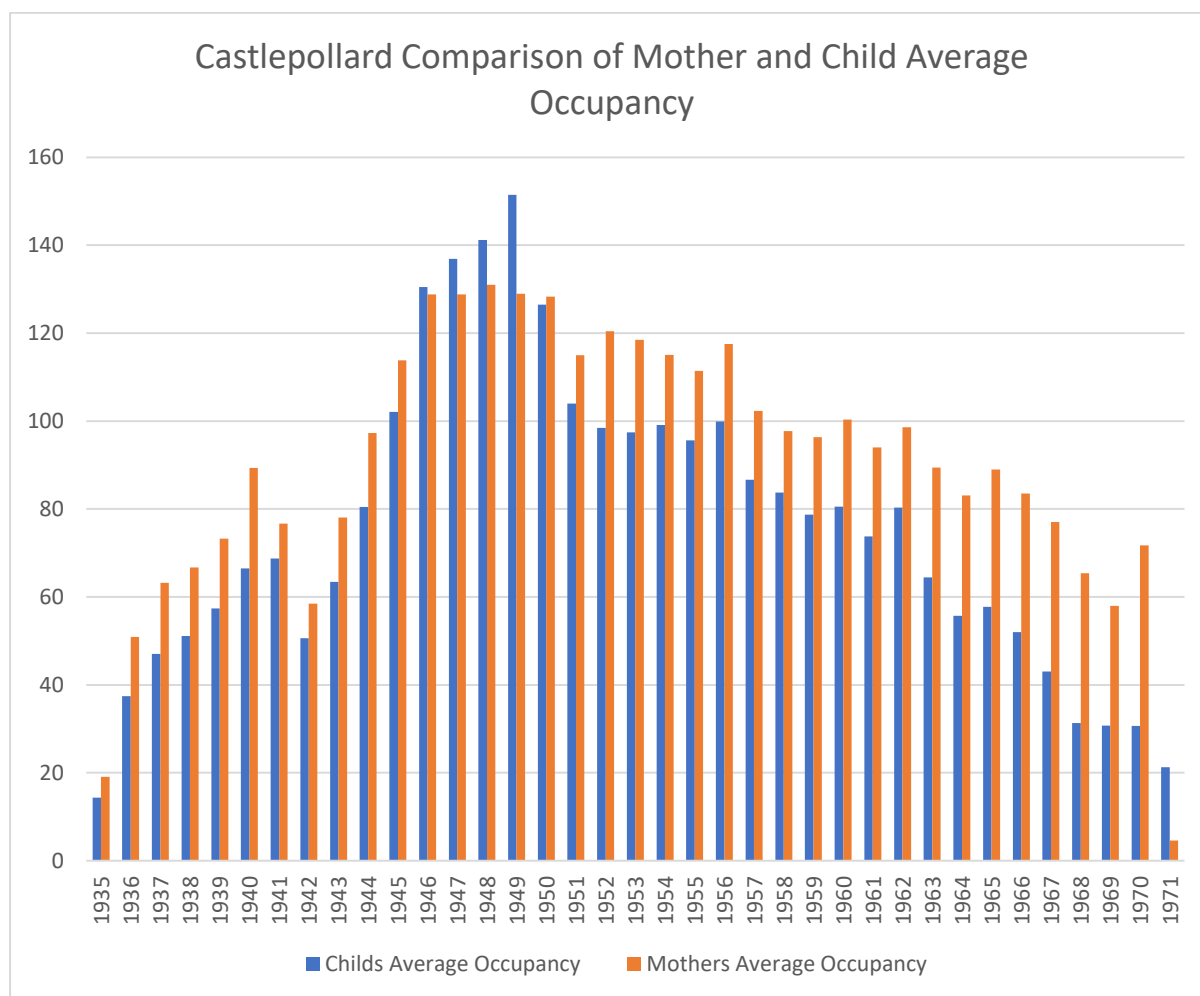


Information relating to accompanied/unaccompanied children on entry was available for 4,477 children (98.2% of admissions). The institutional records show that 99.4% were admitted accompanied by their mother and 0.6% were admitted unaccompanied. Three children were admitted as accompanying siblings.

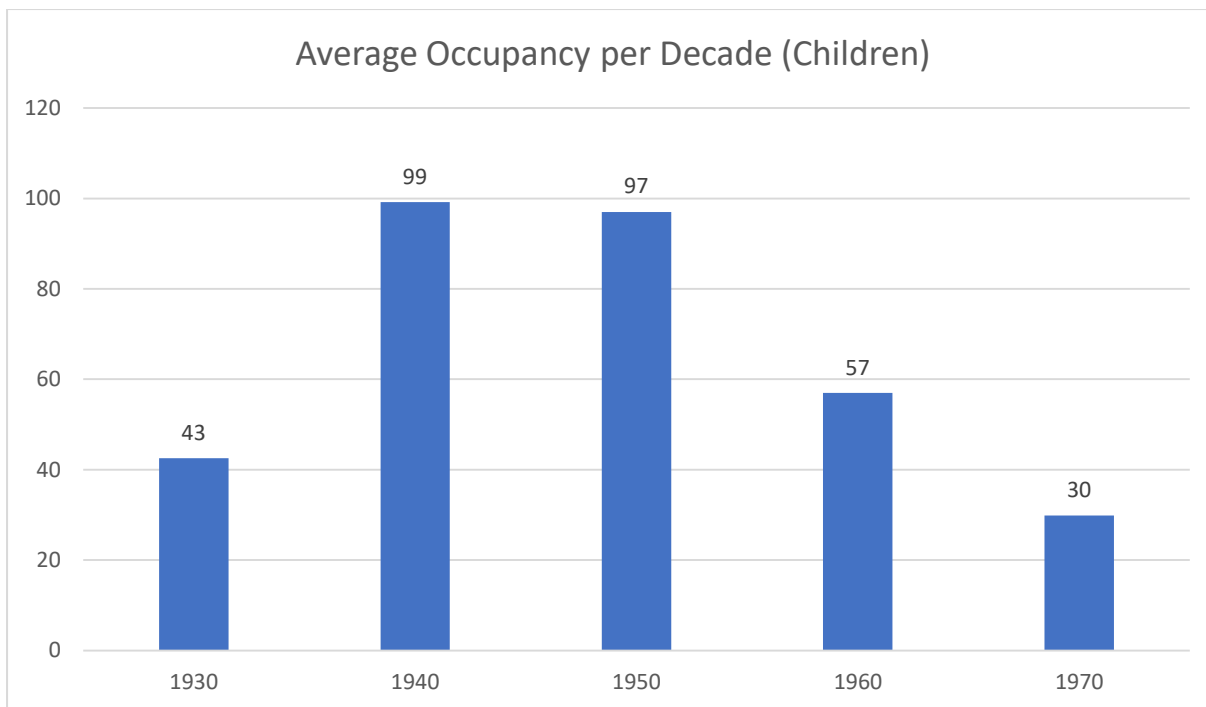
Child Occupancy



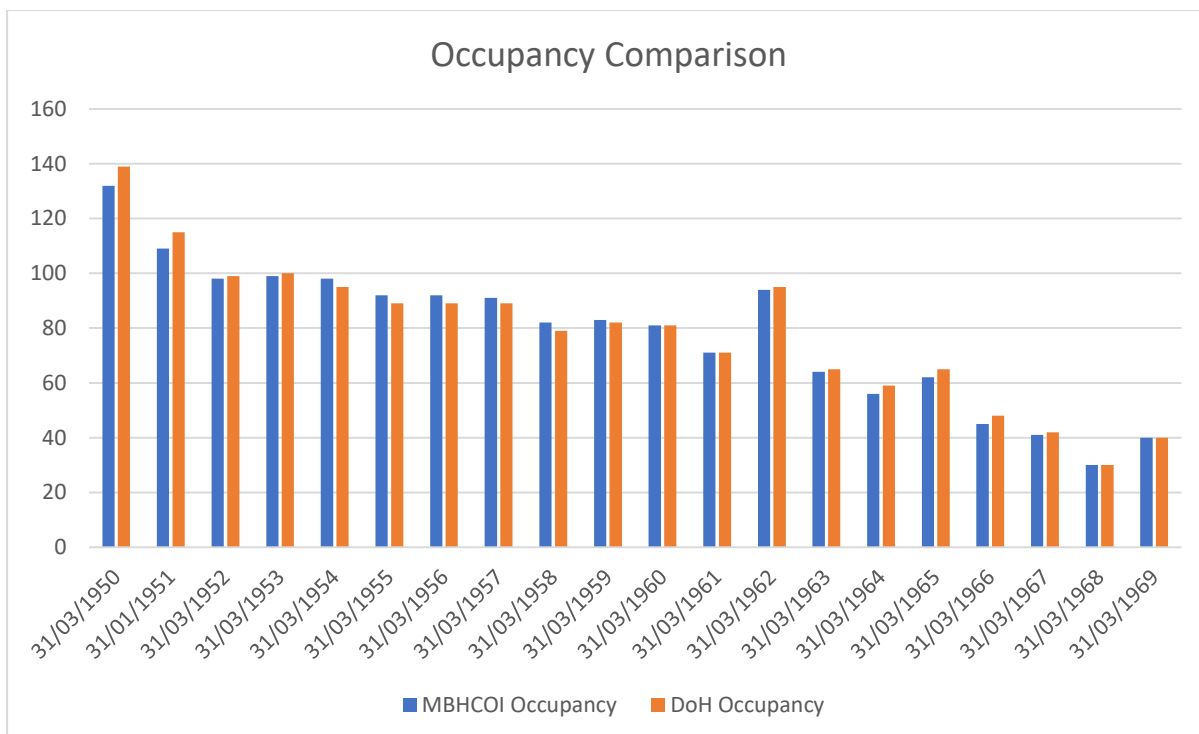
Information relating to child occupancy in Castlepollard was available for 4,335 children (95.1% of admissions). From 1935 to 1940 average occupancy increased in line with increased admissions. In 1941, average occupancy was substantially higher than average admissions and was most likely caused by the temporary restriction on admissions that year. However, in the years 1947-50 average occupancy was often higher or on par with average admissions. As was the case with other mother and baby homes, occupancy rates decreased in the 1960s as more women were opting for adoption.

Mother/Child occupancy comparison

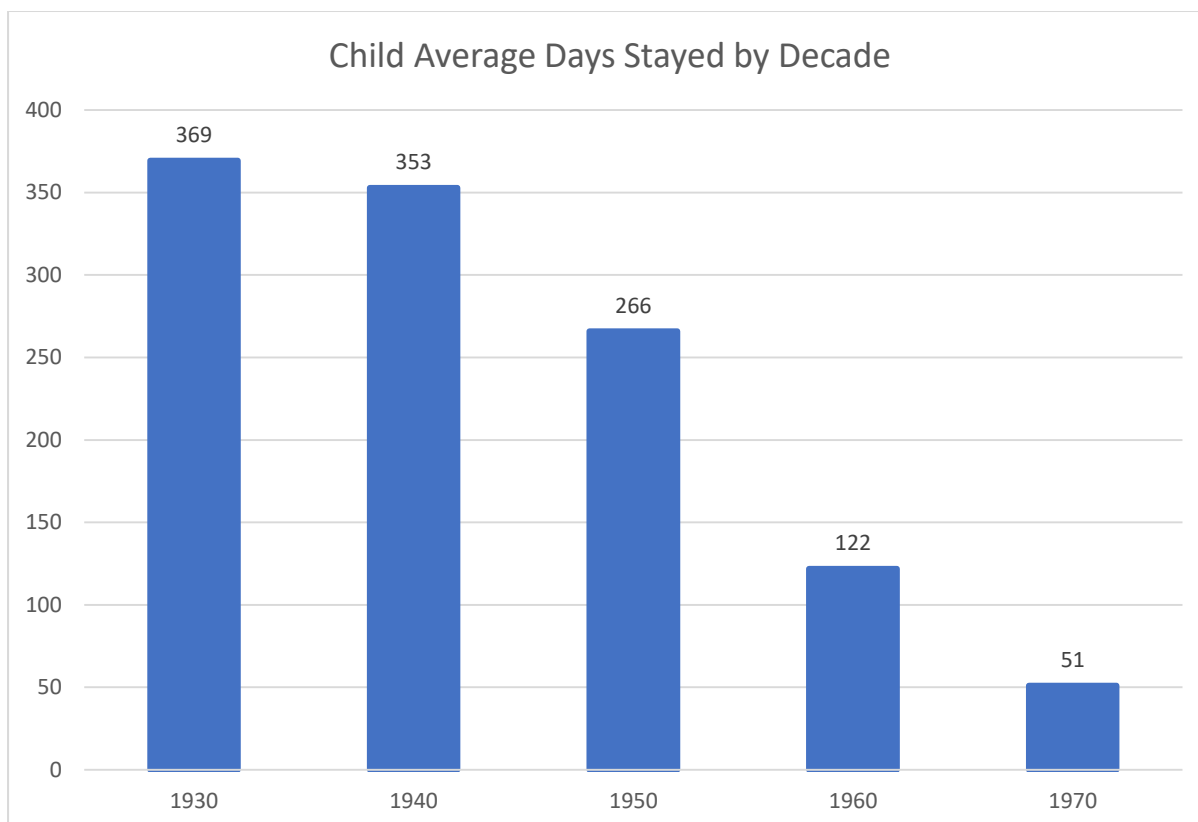
Further analysis of occupancy rates in the late 1940s shows that child occupancy rates were greater than mothers' occupancy rates from 1946-49. This suggests that, in those years, more women left Castlepollard without their babies. Conversely, from 1951 to 1970, mothers' occupancy rates were substantially greater than child occupancy rates; the discrepancy was most pronounced in the mid to late 1960s. This suggests that women remained in Castlepollard for a period after their children had been discharged.



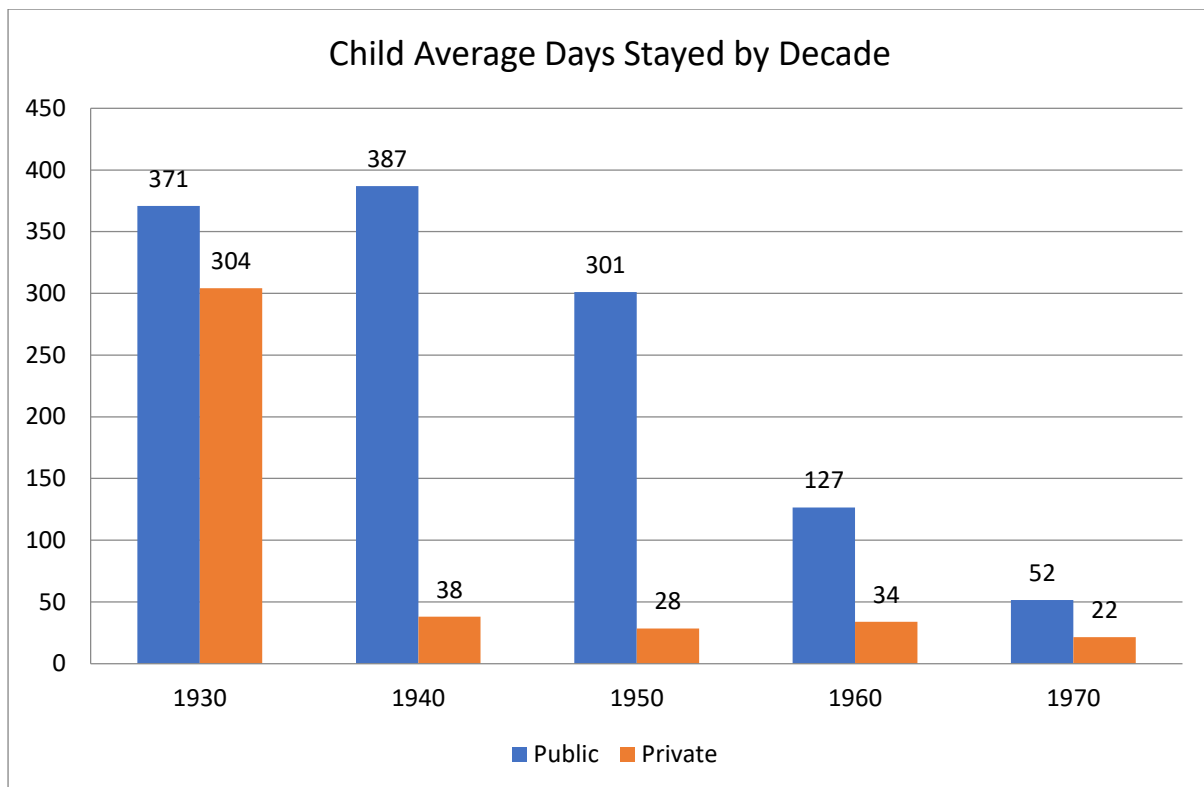
Analysis of child occupancy by decade shows that a child admitted to Castlepollard in the 1940s could expect to be living with another 98 children on average. Although child admissions had increased in the 1960s, a child admitted in that decade could expect to be living with another 56 children on average.



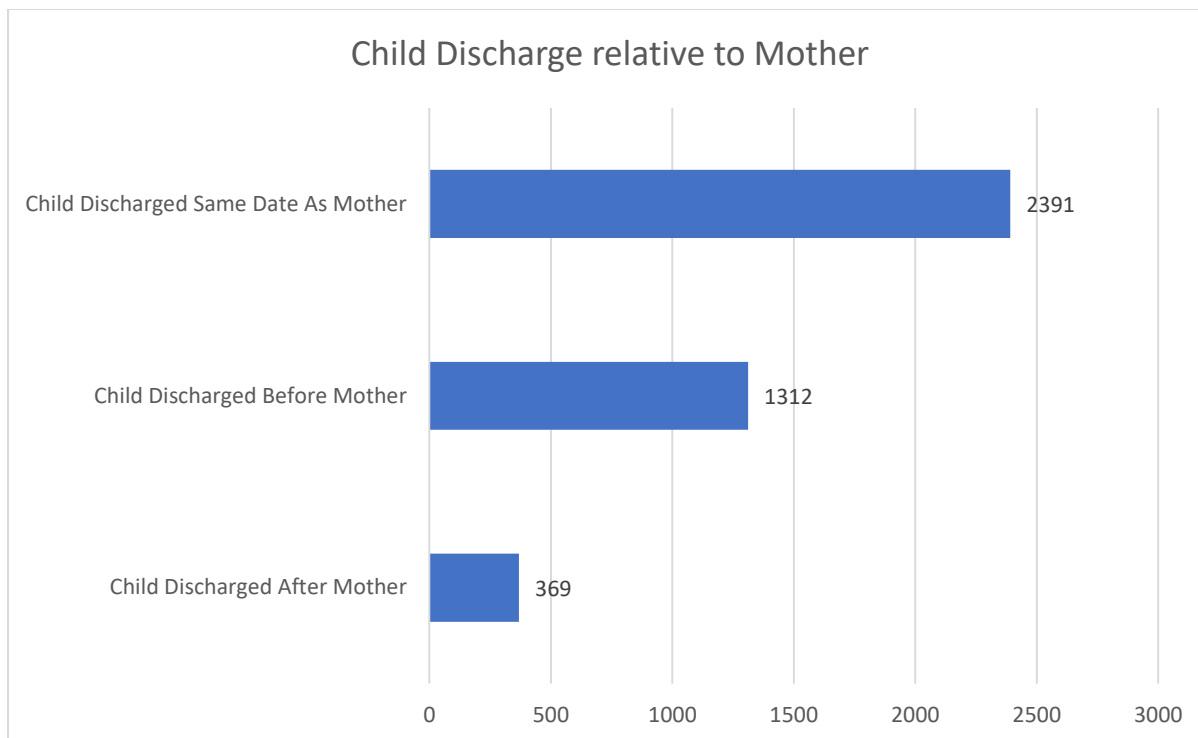
The Commission compared data relating to occupancy derived from institutional records with annual returns sent by Castlepollard to the Department of Health for the years 1950-69. Temporary absences from the institution, such as instances where children were being treated in external hospitals, are not recorded in the Commission's occupancy numbers. No date of admission and/or discharge was available for 4.9% of children and these were excluded from the Commission's calculations. These factors caused the Commission's calculations to fluctuate slightly. Notwithstanding this, the Commission is satisfied that the occupancy rates forwarded by Castlepollard to the Department of Health were broadly in line with rates which the Commissions independently arrived at.

Children: Length of stay

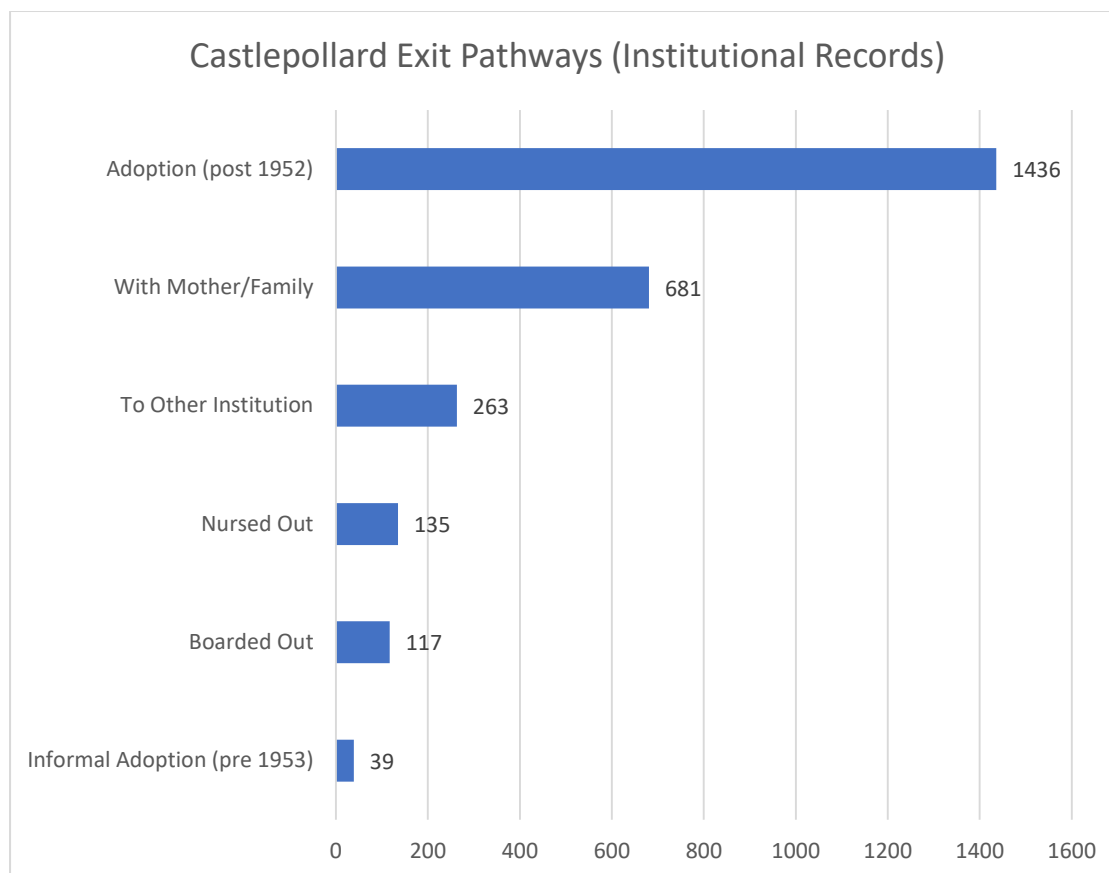
Information relating to length of stay was available for 4,335 children (95.1% of admissions). The institutional records show that children stayed in Castlepollard longest in the 1930s when the average stay was 369 days. This decreased steadily to 353 days in the 1940s; 266 days in the 1950s; to 122 days in the 1960s and to 51 days in the 1970s. Children admitted to Castlepollard in the 1930s spent three times longer in the home than those admitted in the 1960s and seven times longer than those admitted in the 1970s.



Comparative analysis of public and private patients shows that children born to private patients experienced significantly shorter stays in Castlepollard than their public counterparts. In the 1930s, the discrepancy was around 20%. However, in the 1940s and 1950s the discrepancy had increased to around 90%. Although the gap reduced significantly in the 1960s a public patient still spent around four times longer in the home. The gap reduced further in 1970, but public patients still spent over twice as long in the home as their private counterparts.

Child discharge relative to mother

Information on child discharge relative to the mother was available for 4,072 children (89.3% of admissions). The institutional records show that 58.7% of children discharged from Castlepollard left the home on the same day as their mother; 32.2% were discharged while their mothers remained in the home and 9.1% were discharged after their mothers had left the home.

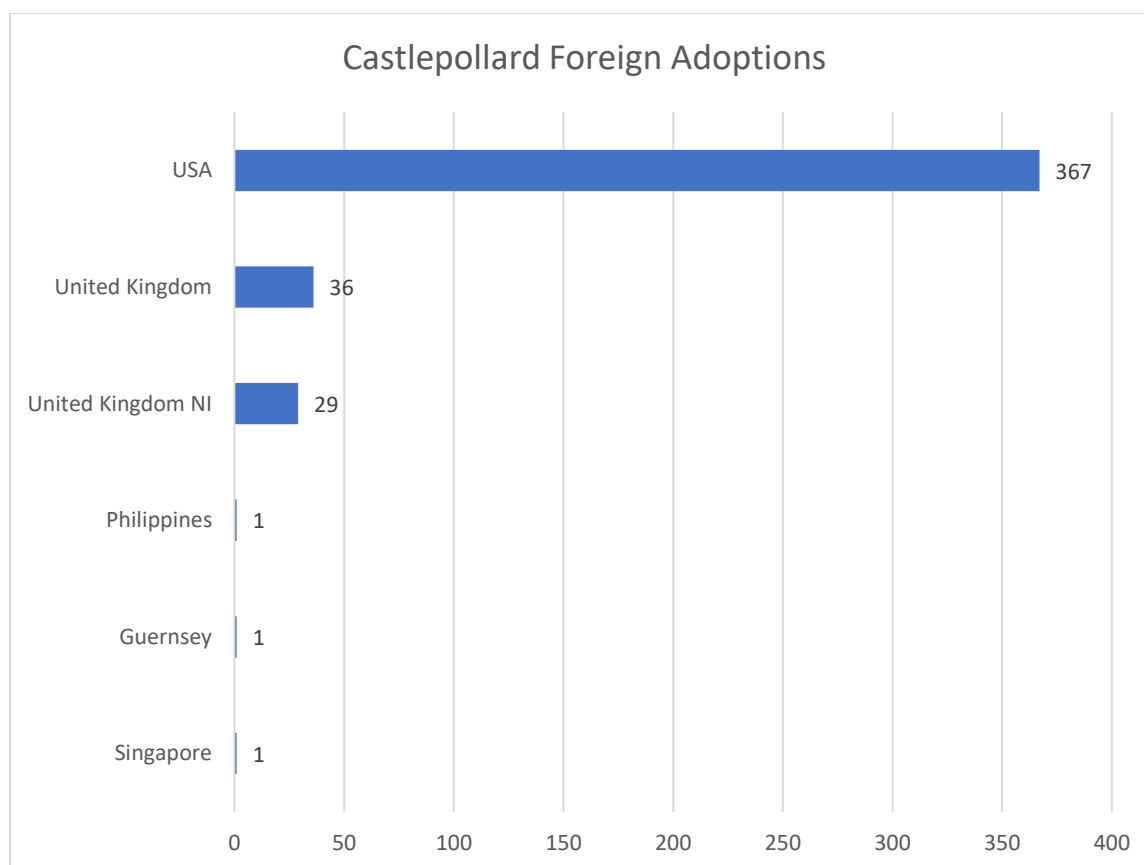
Child exit pathways

Information relating to exit pathways was available for 2,892 children (63.43% of admissions). The institutional records show that legal adoption (49.65%) was the most frequent exit pathway for children; 23.55% went home with their mother; 9.09% transferred to another institution; 4.67% were nursed out; 4.05% were boarded out and 1.3% were informally adopted (pre 1953).

Annual statistical returns furnished by Castlepollard to the Department of Health for the years 1951-69 inclusive show that the main child exit pathways from Castlepollard during this period were with the mother, through adoption, placement with an adoption society with a view to adoption and through local authority boarding out schemes. In 1951 around 1 in 3 children were discharged from Castlepollard with their mothers; by 1969 around 1 in 6 were discharged in this manner. In 1961 a noticeable increase in the number of children discharged to the care of an adoption society can be observed. While the statistical returns record such children under the heading 'Placed at nurse through a Society' in these cases 'at nurse' refers to temporary foster arrangements while the child awaited placement for adoption. Similarly, in 1964 there is a discernible increase in the number of children placed for adoption directly from Castlepollard. By 1969 almost 80% of children discharged from

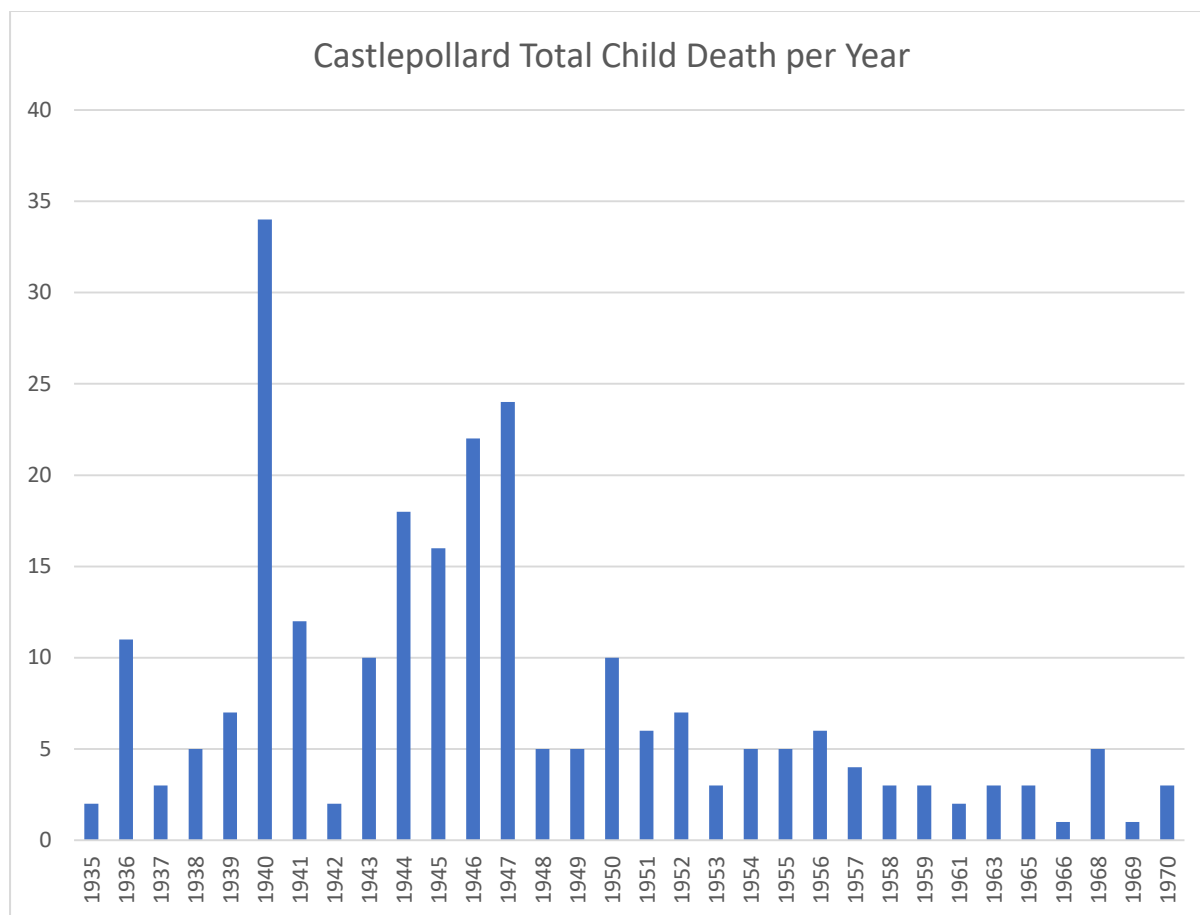
Castlepollard were adopted directly from the home or through an adoption society. In 1951 around 1 in 5 children were discharged under a local authority boarding out scheme. As legal adoption became a more frequent exit pathway the number of children placed in boarding out schemes fell dramatically and by 1969 just two children were discharged from Castlepollard in this manner. During this period around 3.5% of children were discharged from Castlepollard to other unidentified institutions. These discharges are likely to relate to children who were transferred to specialist hospitals, or to the placement of older children in industrial schools. However, the records show that seven discharges to 'other institutions' notified in 1967 and 1968 were transfers to Nazareth Home, Fahan, Co. Donegal.

Foreign adoptions



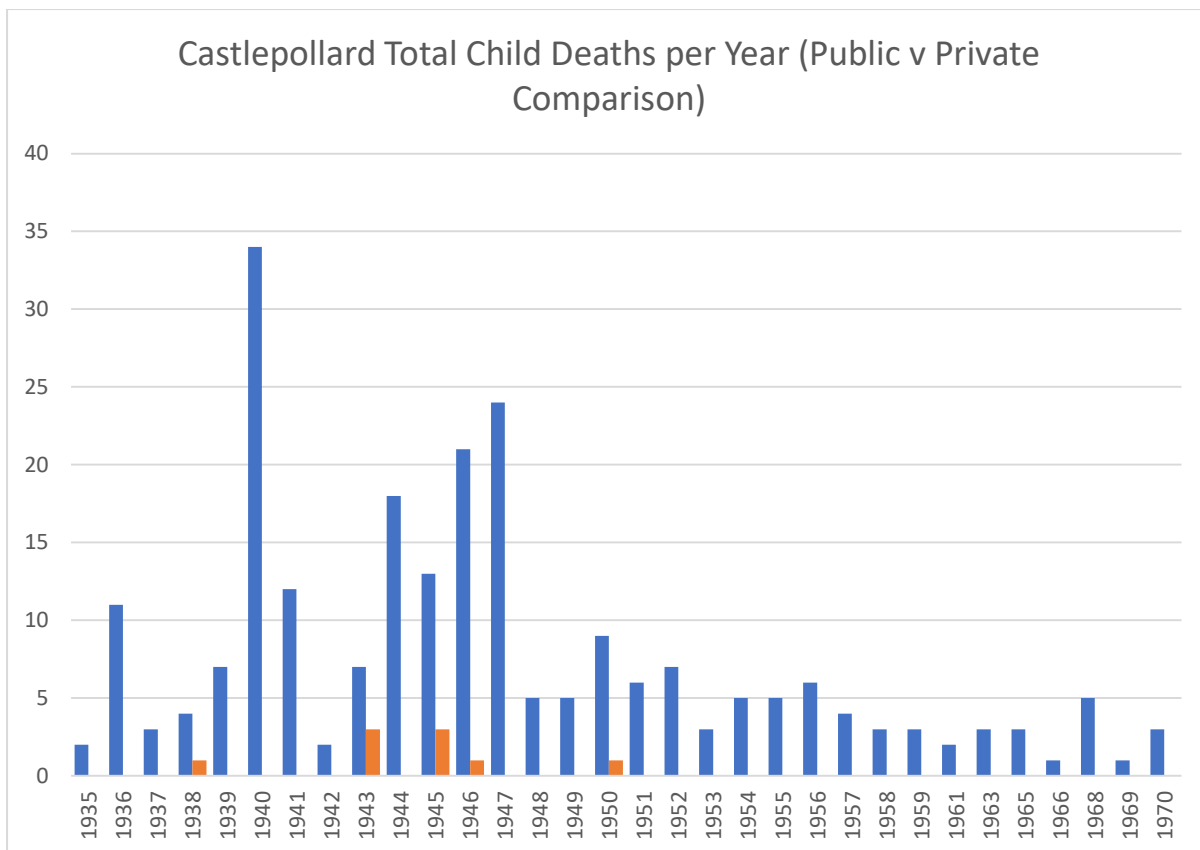
The institutional and official external records show that 435 children admitted to or associated with Castlepollard were placed for foreign adoption. The Commission identified passport office records for 314 of these children. Most foreign adoptions (84.36%) relate to children adopted in the USA; 8.27% in Great Britain and 6.6% in Northern Ireland. Three children were adopted in the Philippines, Guernsey and Singapore respectively.

Child deaths

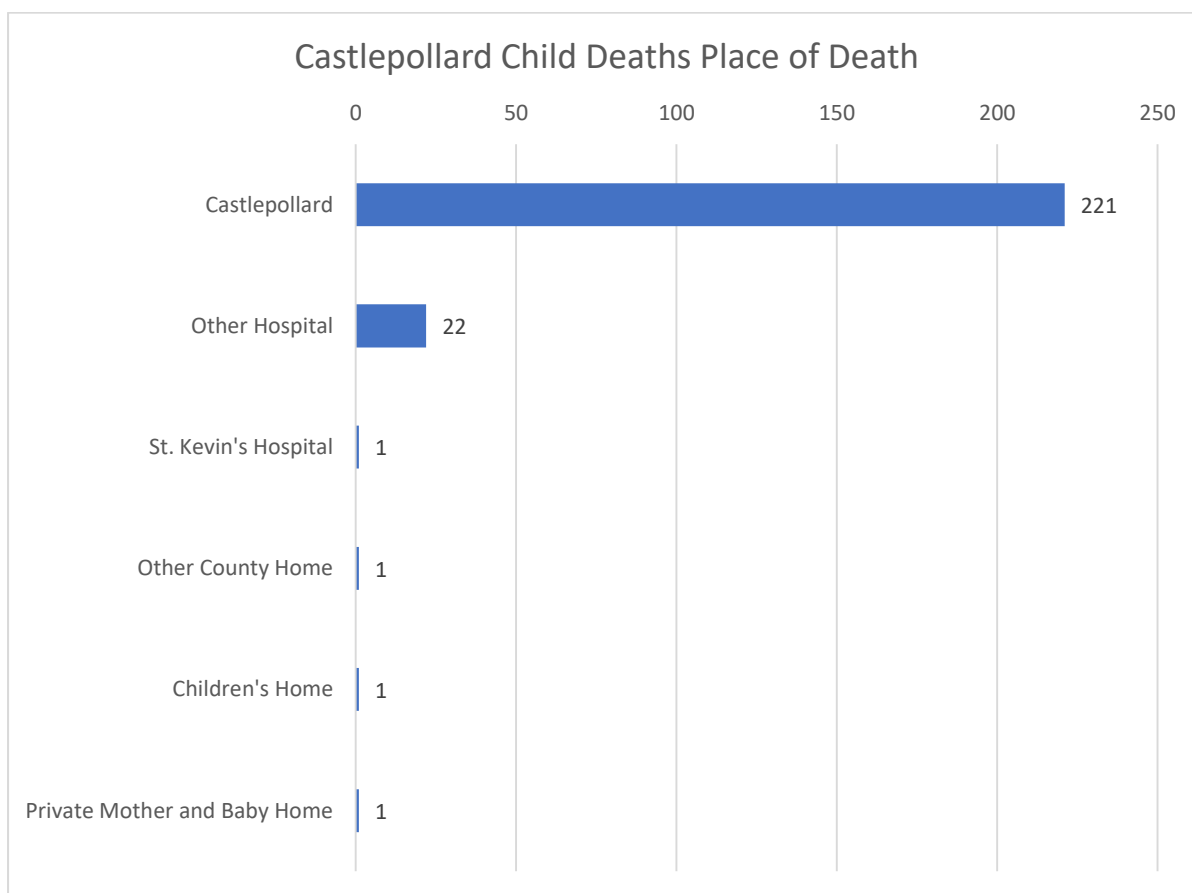


The Commission established 247 deaths among children associated with Castlepollard. Information relating to date of death was available for 246 children (99.6% of deaths). The Commission identified death records relating to 230 children which are held by the GRO. Most infant and child deaths in Castlepollard (67.5%) were recorded between 1935 and 1947 and peaked in 1940 when 34 deaths were notified. Infant and child mortality was also high in the years 1944-47; 80 deaths were recorded in that period. The number of deaths fell from 24 in 1947 to five in 1948, and apart from a slight spike in 1950 (10 deaths were recorded that year) mortality remained relatively low for the remaining years of the home's operation.

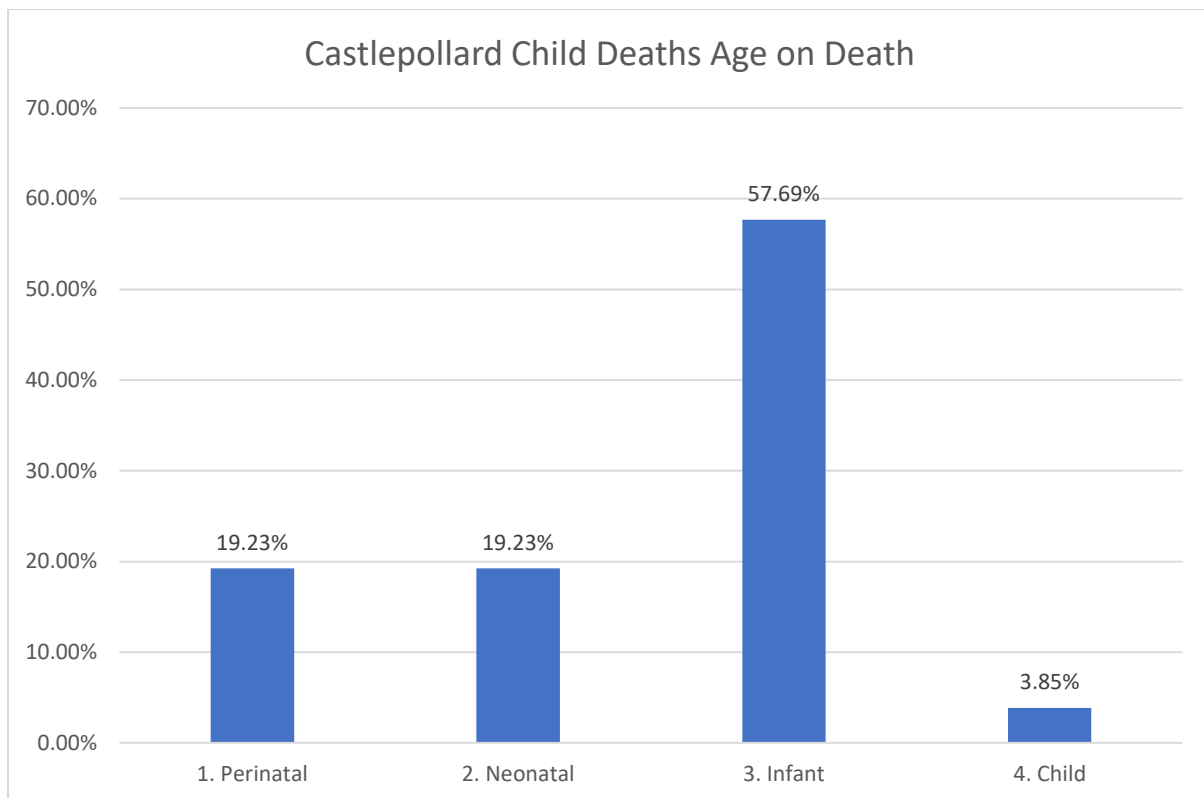
Analysis by decade shows that most infant and child deaths (60.2%) were recorded in the 1940s; 21.1% in the 1950s; 11.4% in the 1930s; 6.1% in the 1960s and 1.2% in the 1970s. The institutional records show that in 93% of cases the child's mother was resident in Castlepollard at the time of the child's death. The remaining 7% died unaccompanied by their mothers.



Although children born to private patients accounted for around 10% of admissions, they accounted for just 3.7% of infant and child deaths; 96.3% of deaths occurred among children born to public patients.

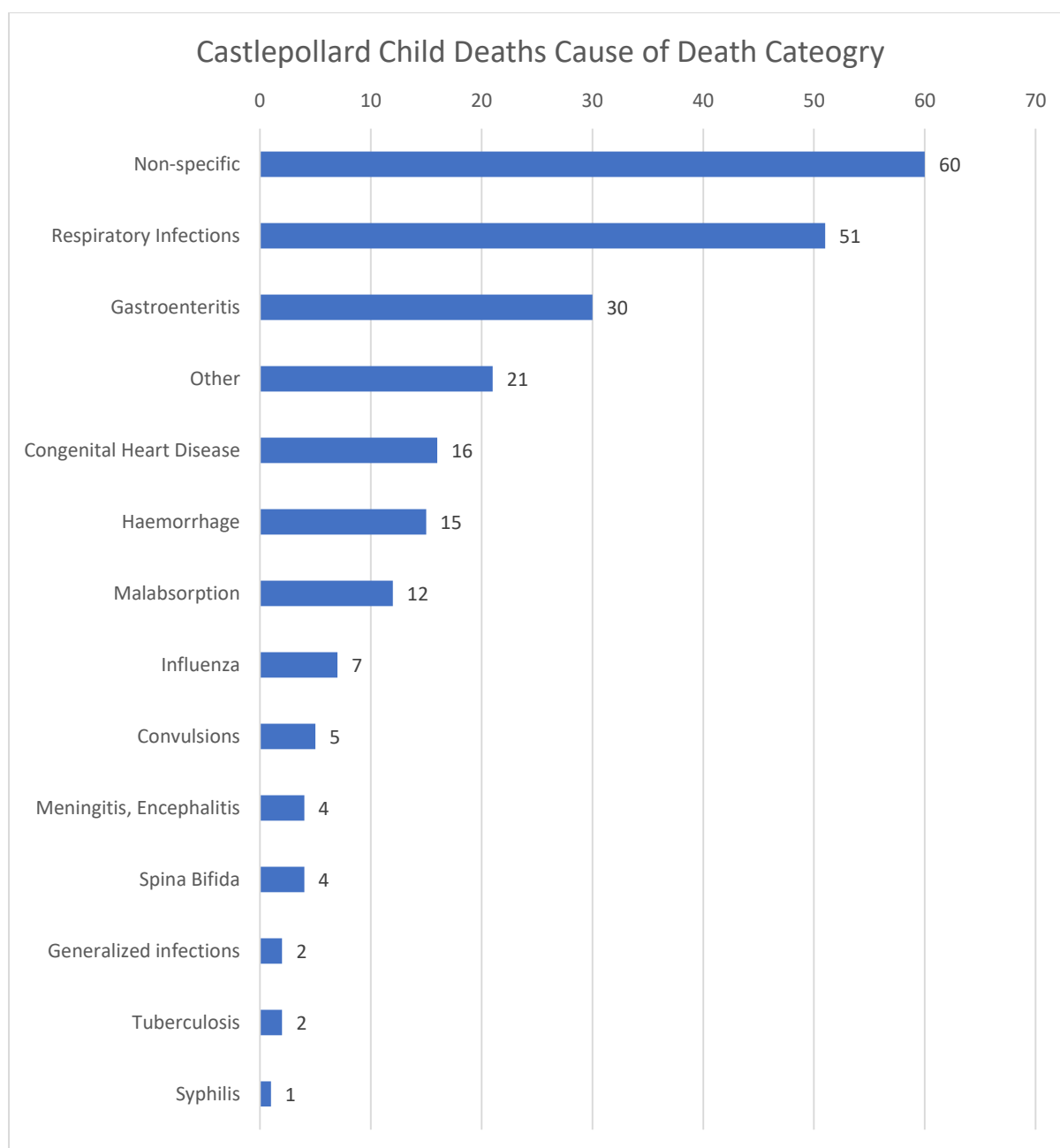
Place of death

Information relating to place of death was available for 247 infants and children (100% of deaths). Most deaths (89.5%) occurred in Castlepollard/St Peter's Hospital; 8.9% occurred following transfer to other hospitals. One death was recorded in St Kevin's Hospital, a county home, a children's home and a private mother and baby home respectively.

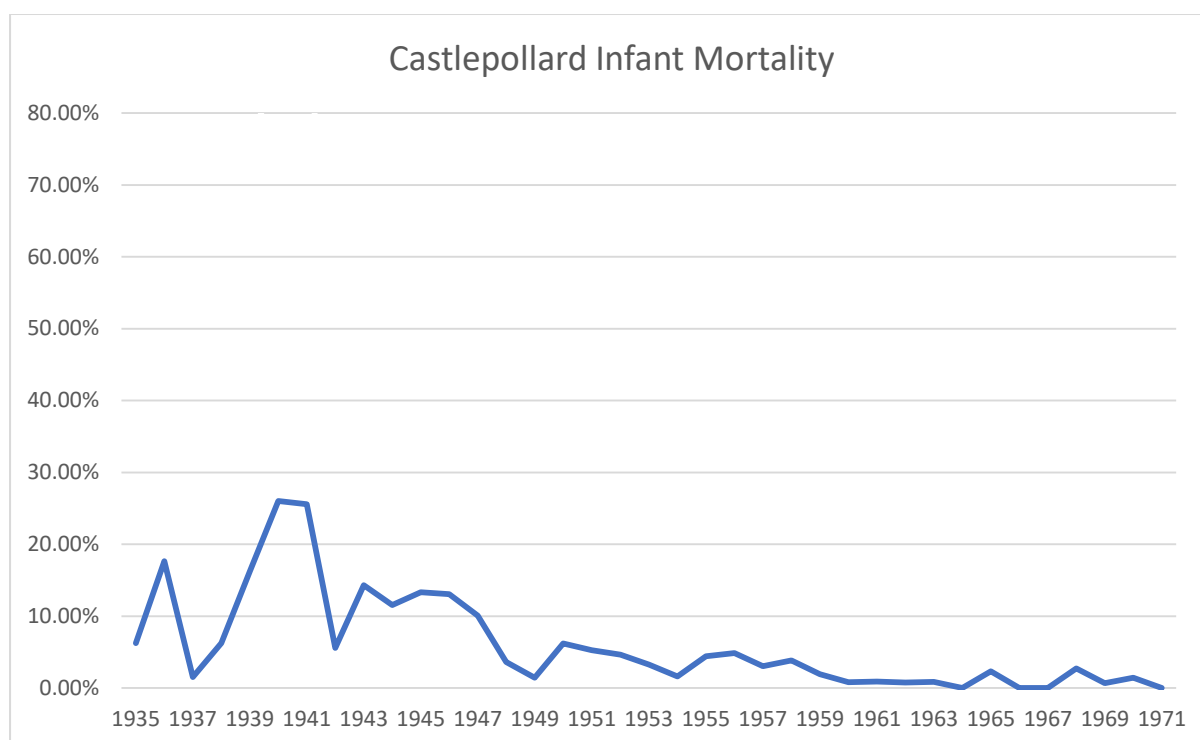
Age on death

Most deaths (96.15%) occurred among infants as follows: perinatal: 0-7 days (19.23%); neonatal: 8-28 days (19.23%) and infancy: 29-365 days (57.69%). The remaining 3.85% of deaths occurred among children aged between one and three years old.

Cause of death



Information relating to cause of death was available for 230 children (93.1% of deaths). The most frequently notified cause of death (26.1%) was congenital debility and prematurity; 22.2% were notified as respiratory infections - mainly bronchopneumonia; 13% as gastroenteritis and gastritis; 9.1% as whooping cough and one off causes; 6.9% as congenital heart disease; 6.5% as haemorrhage - mainly cerebral haemorrhage; 5.2% as malabsorption - mainly marasmus; 3% as influenza; 2.2% as convulsions; 1.7% as meningitis or encephalitis; 1.7% as spina bifida; 0.9% as generalised infections; 0.9% as tuberculosis and 0.4% as congenital syphilis.

Infant mortality rate³

Infant mortality rates in Castlepollard were by far the lowest recorded across all three homes run by the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Infant mortality peaked in the home in 1940 when a rate of 26% was recorded. This was approximately half the peak mortality rate recorded in Sean Ross (50%) and approximately one third of the peak infant mortality rate recorded in Bessborough (75%).

In its first full year in operation, 1936, Castlepollard recorded an infant mortality rate of 17.65%. Unusually for an institution of this type, infant mortality decreased dramatically to just 1.52% in 1937 and remained relatively low at 6.25% in 1938. In the years 1939-41, Castlepollard experienced acute overcrowding. Infant mortality increased to 26% in 1940 and remained relatively high at 25.58% in 1941. However, following restrictions on admission to the home in 1941 and an easing of overcrowded living conditions infant mortality decreased to 5.56% in 1942. The infant mortality rate remained relatively steady in the years 1943-47 when an annual average of 12.5% pertained. From 1948 to its closure in 1971, infant mortality rates in Castlepollard remained relatively low; it was above 5% on just two occasions (6.2% in 1950 and 5.3% in 1951) and remained below 1% most years after 1960.

³ Infant mortality rate is calculated as follows: Living infants born in a given year who died before the age of 1 year as a percentage of all infants born in the same year.