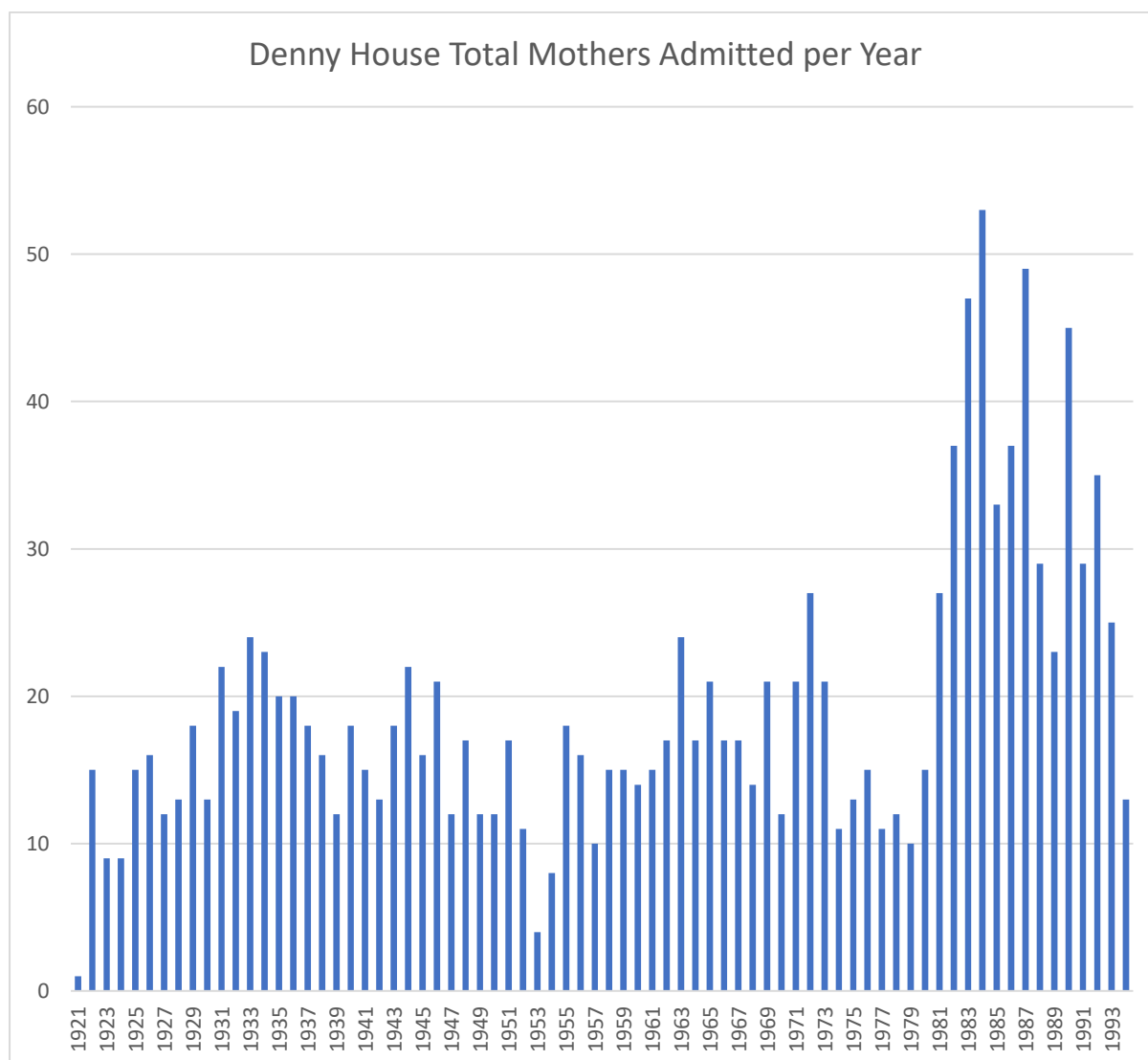


## Chapter 23 A: Denny House: Statistical analysis

*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. 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

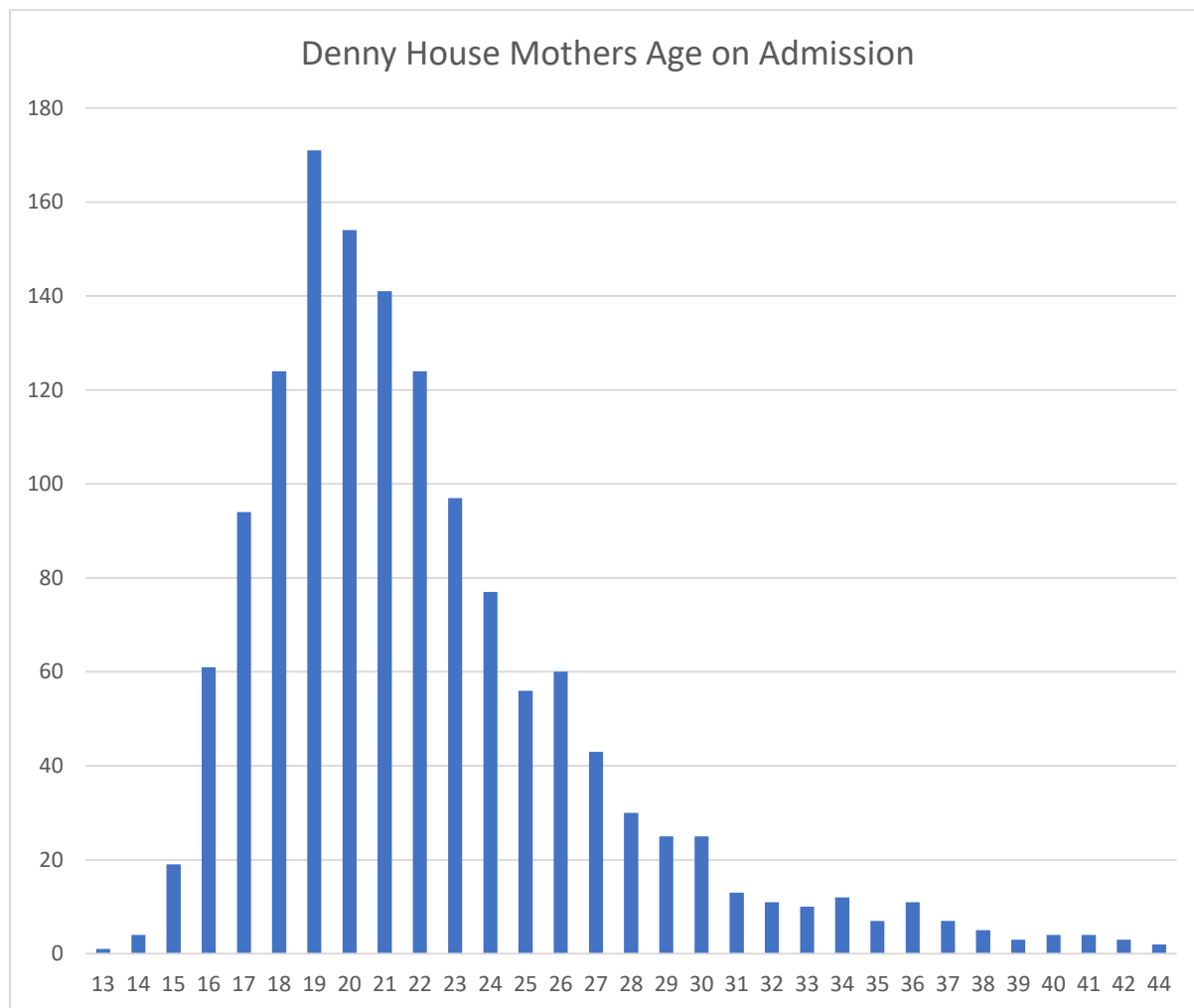


From the institutional records, the Commission identified 1,416 women who were admitted to Denny House in the years 1921 to 1994.

Information relating to date of admission was available for 1,412 women (99.7% of admissions). The busiest period was in the years 1981 to 1993; one in three of all admissions to the home were recorded in that period and peaked in 1984 when 53 women were admitted. Increased admissions in this period resulted from the decision to admit Catholic women. In the 60 years spanning 1921-80, 16 women on average were admitted annually; admissions were above 20 on 11 occasions during this period and peaked in 1972 when 27 women were admitted.

Analysis by decade shows that more women (24.8%) were admitted in the 1980s than any other decade followed by the 1930s (13.2%); 1960s (12.5%); 1940s (11.6%); 1970s (10.9%); 1990s (10.4%); 1950s (8.9%) and the 1920s (7.7%).

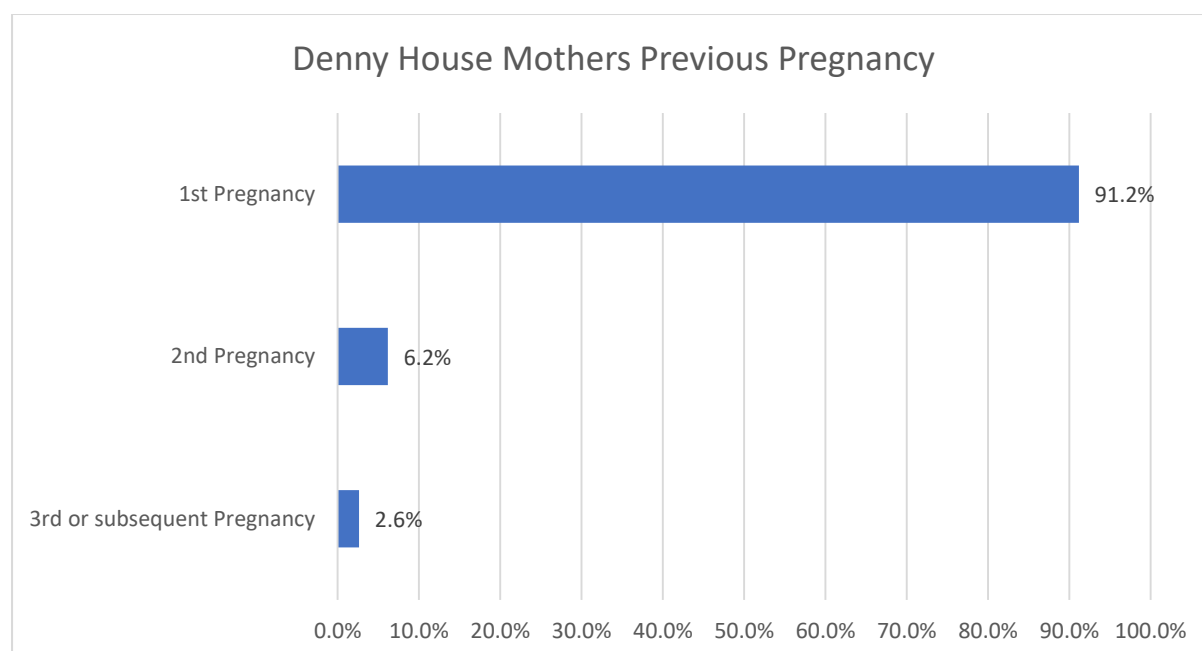
**Age on admission**



Information relating to age on admission was available for 1,398 women (98.7% of admissions).

The institutional records show that the age on admission ranged from 13 to 44 years. Most women (78.8%) were between 18 and 29 years; 12.8% were 17 years and younger and 8.4% were 30 years and older. Just over 6% were between 13 and 16 years on admission. Mode of age on admission from the 1920s to the 1940s was 20 years, this increased to 21 in the 1950s and reduced to 18 years in the 1960s. The mode of age on admission remained at 19 years in the 1980s and 1990s.

### Previous pregnancy



Information relating to previous pregnancy was available for 1,215 women (85.8% of admissions). The institutional records show that most women (91.2%) were admitted on their first pregnancy; 6.2% on their second pregnancy and 2.6% on a third or subsequent pregnancy.

### Outcome

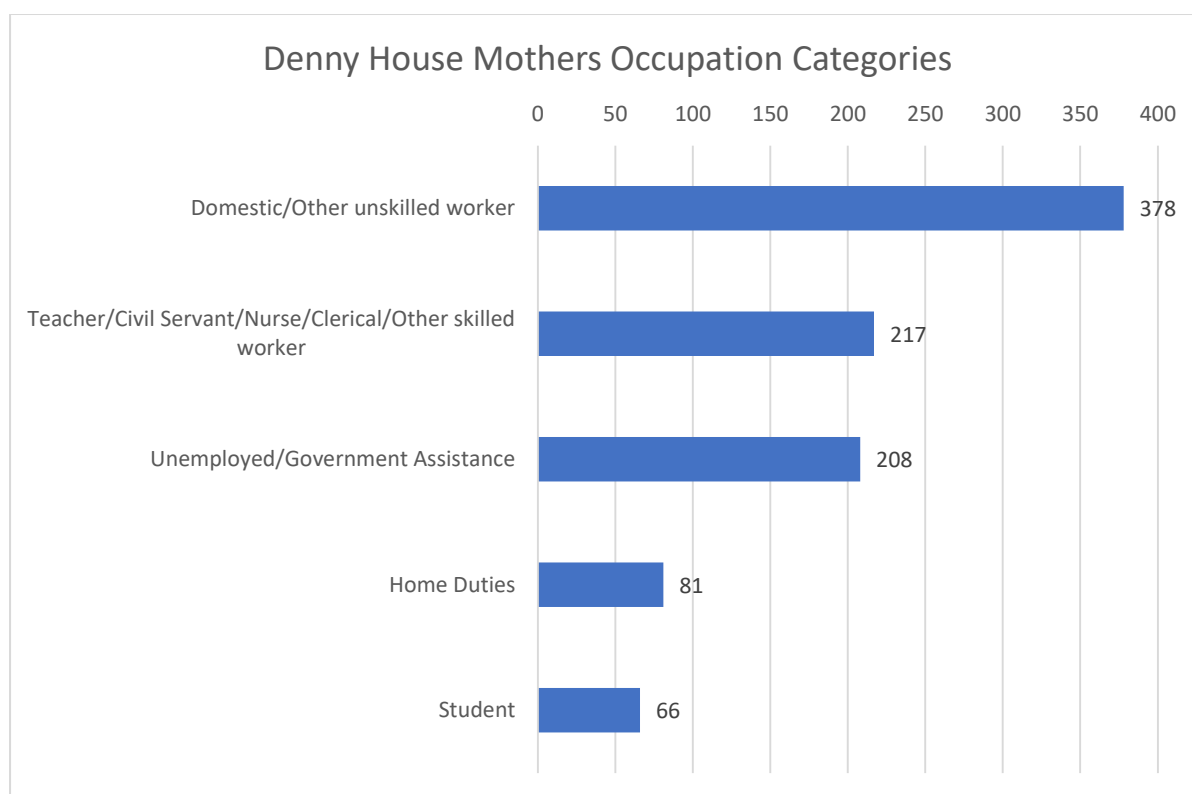
The institutional records show that almost 62% of expectant women admitted to Denny House stayed and gave birth. Of those, 98.4% delivered living infants; 1.5% delivered stillborn infants and 0.1% experienced a miscarriage. 25.7% of women were admitted in the first instance accompanied by their baby and 12.4% left Denny House before the birth and did not return. A total of 869 women were admitted before giving birth and stayed until after the birth. Twenty per cent of these women gave birth in Denny House; 38% gave birth in the Rotunda; 25% in Holles Street and 15% in the Coombe. Only two babies were born in Leeson Street.

### Marital status

Information on marital status was available for 1,410 women (99.6% of admissions).

The institutional records show that the vast majority of women (99%) were single and the remaining 1% of women were either married, separated or widowed.

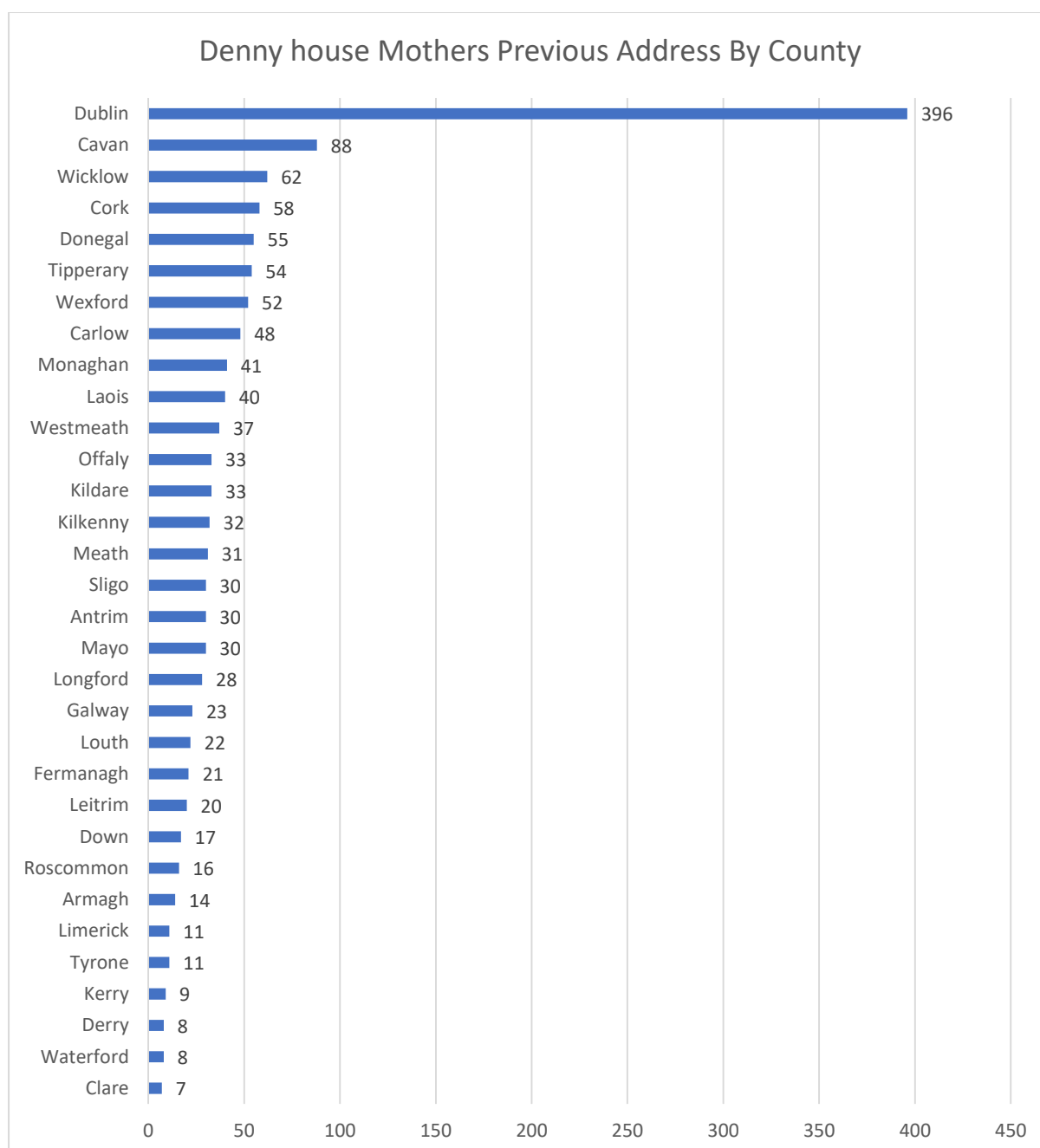
## Occupation



Information relating to occupation was available for 950 women (67% of admissions).

The available records show that most women (39.8%) were recorded as domestic servants or other unskilled worker; 22.8% as teacher/civil servant/nurse/clerk or other skilled worker; 21.9% were recorded as being unemployed or in receipt of government assistance; 8.5% were recorded as working in the family home or on the family farm and 7% were recorded as being in full time education. Most full time students were in second and third level; one was recorded as a primary school student.

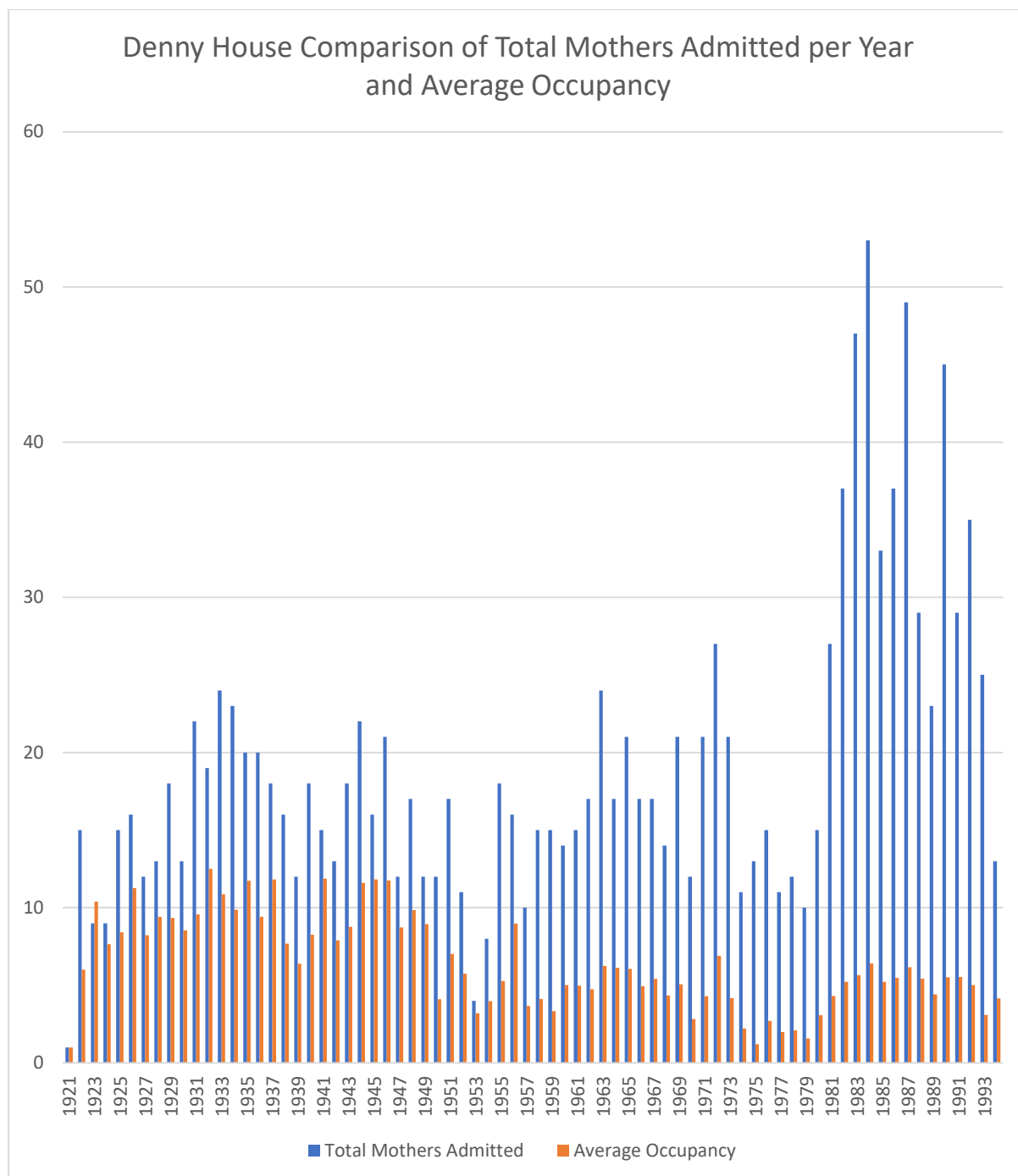
The proportion of women in each occupation category altered over the timeframe of the home's operation. For instance, women recorded as being unemployed accounted for 3% of admissions in the 1920s and 75% in the 1990s. Women recorded as civil servants/skilled worker accounted for 15.2% of admissions in the 1920s; 46.3% in the 1960s and 6.1% in the 1990s. Women recorded as being in full time education accounted for 6.1% of admissions in the 1920s; 9.7% in the 1970s; 11.4% in the 1980s and 6.1% in the 1990s. Women recorded as a domestic servant/unskilled worker accounted for 72.7% of admissions in the 1920s; 62.1% in the 1950s and 12.9% in the 1990s. Women recorded as working in the family home or on the family farm accounted for 3% of admissions in the 1920s; 34.9% in the 1940s and 0.9% in the 1980s.

**Previous address by county**

Information relating to previous address by county was available for 1,365 women (96.4% of admissions).

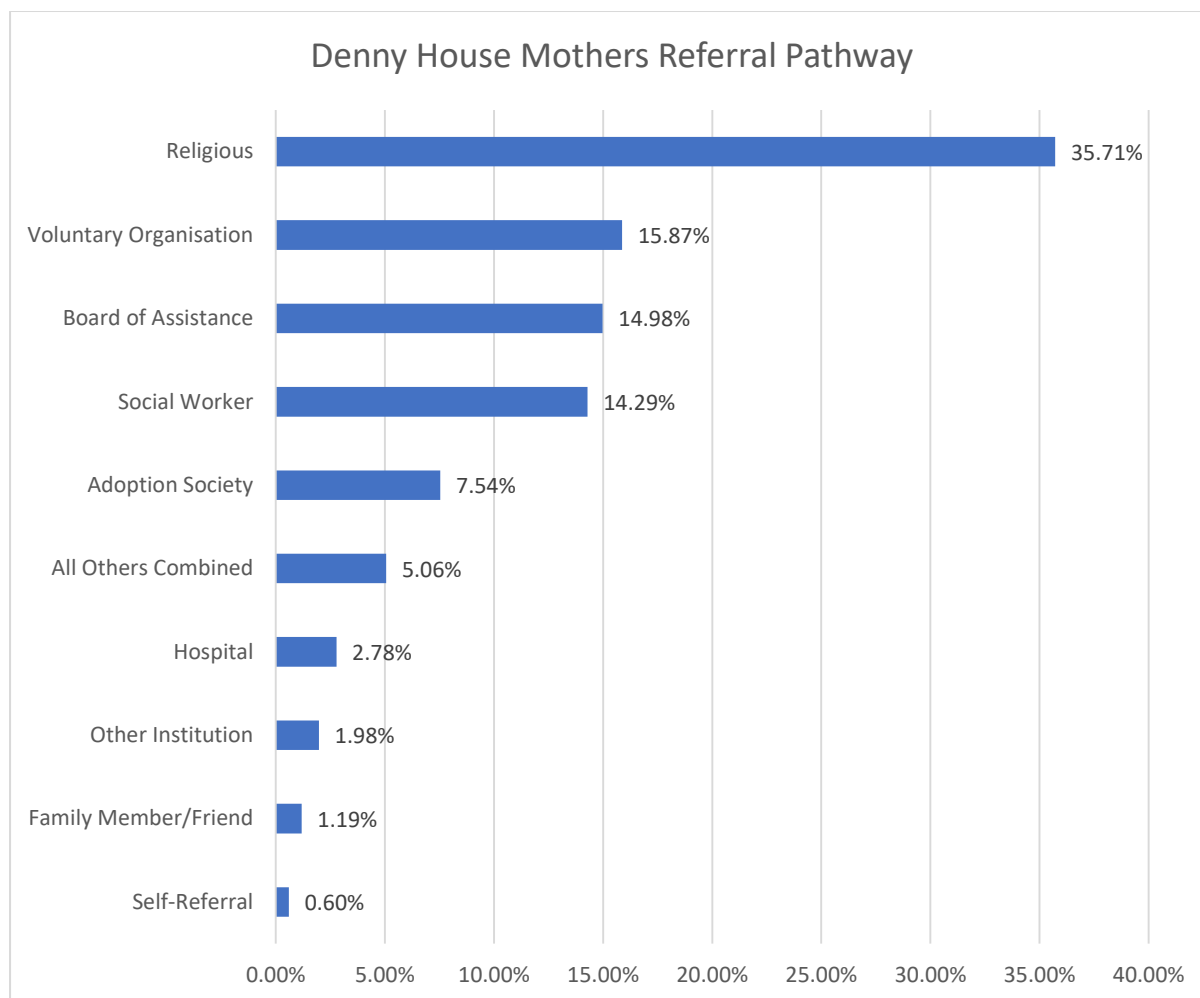
The institutional records show that most women (29%) gave Dublin as a previous address followed by Cavan (6.4%); Wicklow (4.5%); Cork (4.2%); Donegal and Tipperary (4%); Wexford (3.8%); Carlow (3.5%); Monaghan (3%); Laois (2.9%); Westmeath (2.7%); Offaly and Kildare (2.4%); Kilkenny and Meath (2.3%); Sligo and Antrim (2.2%). The remaining 18% of admission combined gave one of the remaining 15 counties as a previous address.

**Occupancy**



Information relating to occupancy was available for 1,394 women (98.4% of admissions). The institutional records show that average occupancy in Denny House from the 1920s to the 1940s was ten women; from the 1950s to the 1990s around five women were living in the home at any one time.

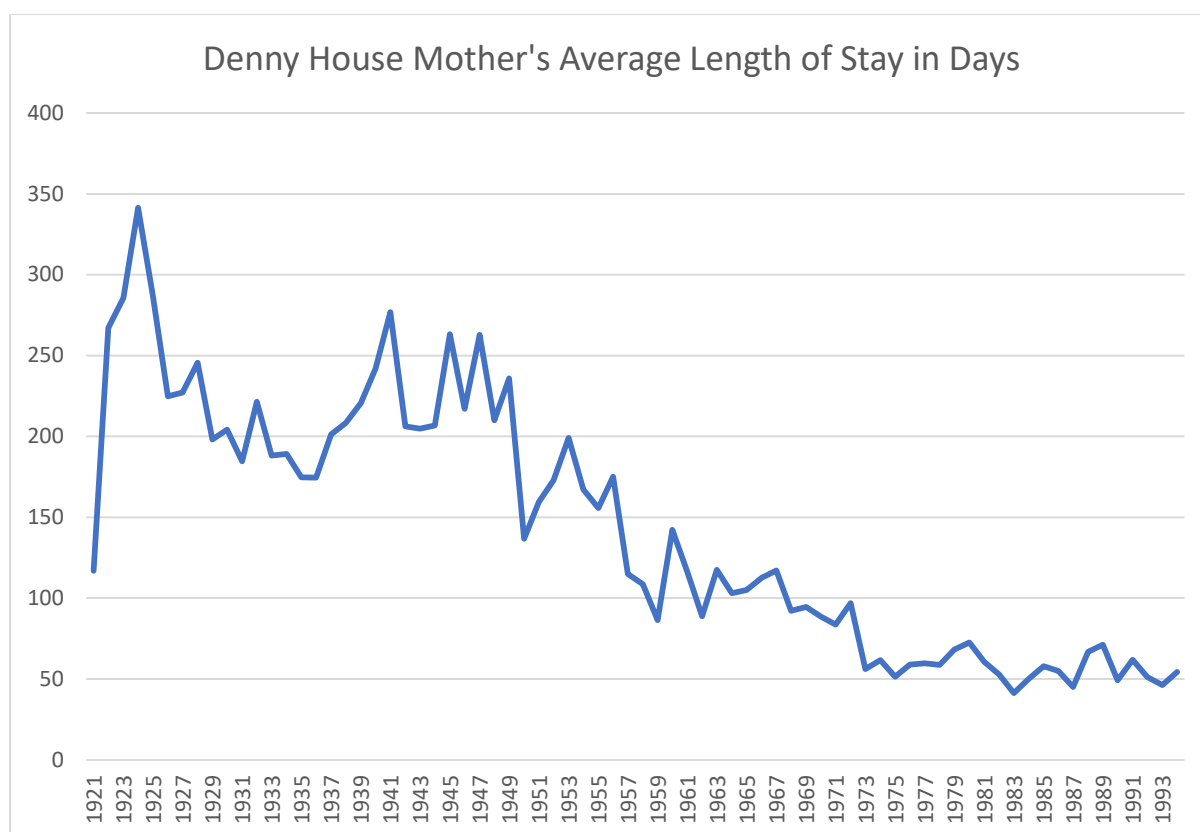
## Referral pathways



Information relating to referral pathways to Denny House was available for 1,008 women (71.2% of admissions).

The institutional records show that the most frequent referral pathway (35.7%) was by a reverend, dean or canon; 15.9% were referred by Church of Ireland voluntary organisations as well as Cherish, ALLY and Barnardo's; almost 15% were referred by a local authority board of assistance; 14.3% by a social worker; 7.5% by Church of Ireland adoption societies - most notably the Church of Ireland Moral Welfare Society; 2.8% by hospital personnel; almost 2% were referred by staff in other institutions; 1.2% by family or friends and 0.6% self-referred. The remaining 5% of women were referred by named individuals. From the 1920 to the 1950s referral by a member of the religious was the most frequent referral pathway; from the 1960s, however, voluntary organisations, adoption societies and boards of assistance assumed more significant roles in this regard. The available information shows that most women entered Denny House directly from the family home, a private address or transferred from a maternity hospital.

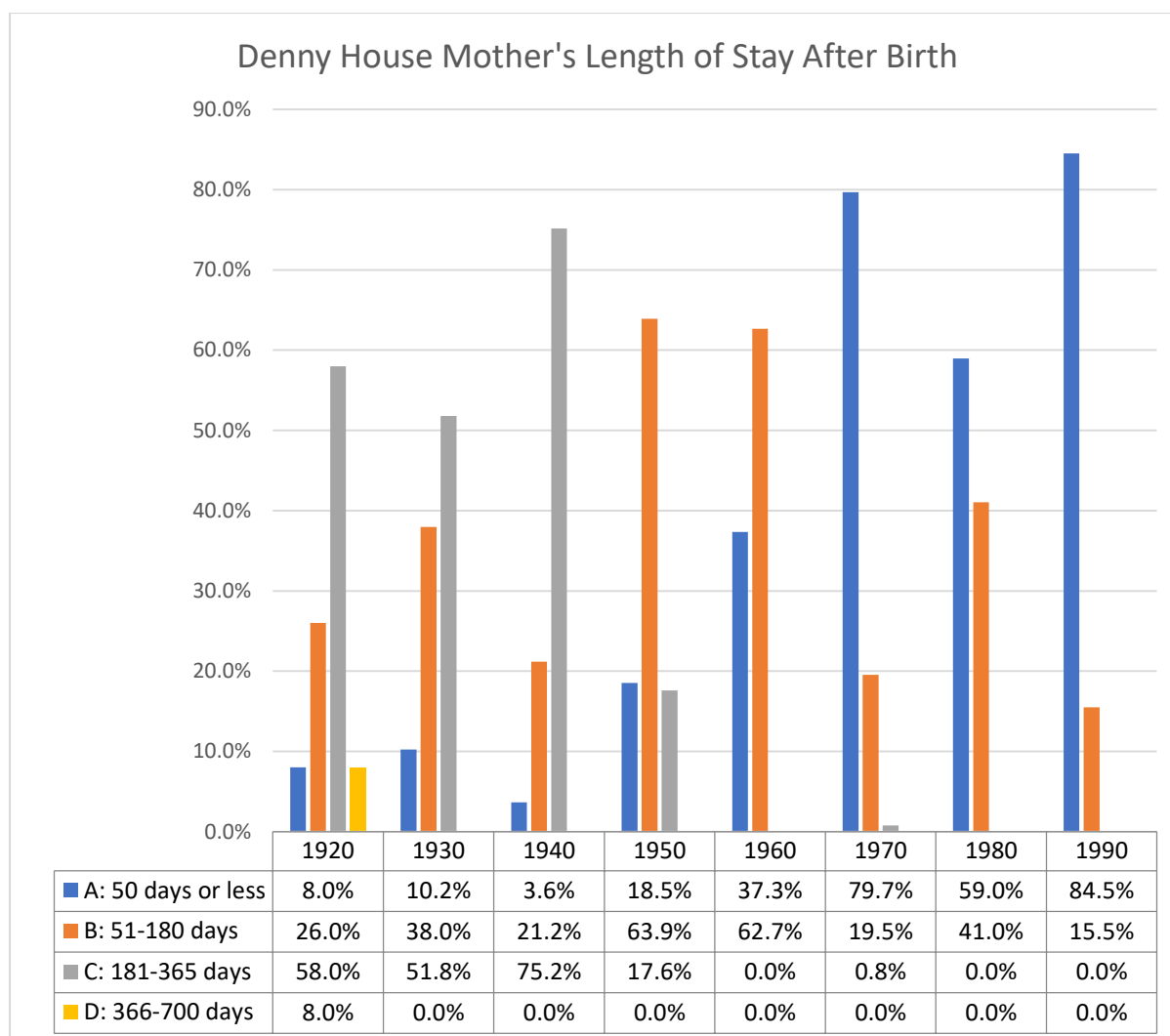


**Length of stay**

Information relating to length of stay was available for 1,394 women (98.4% of mothers).

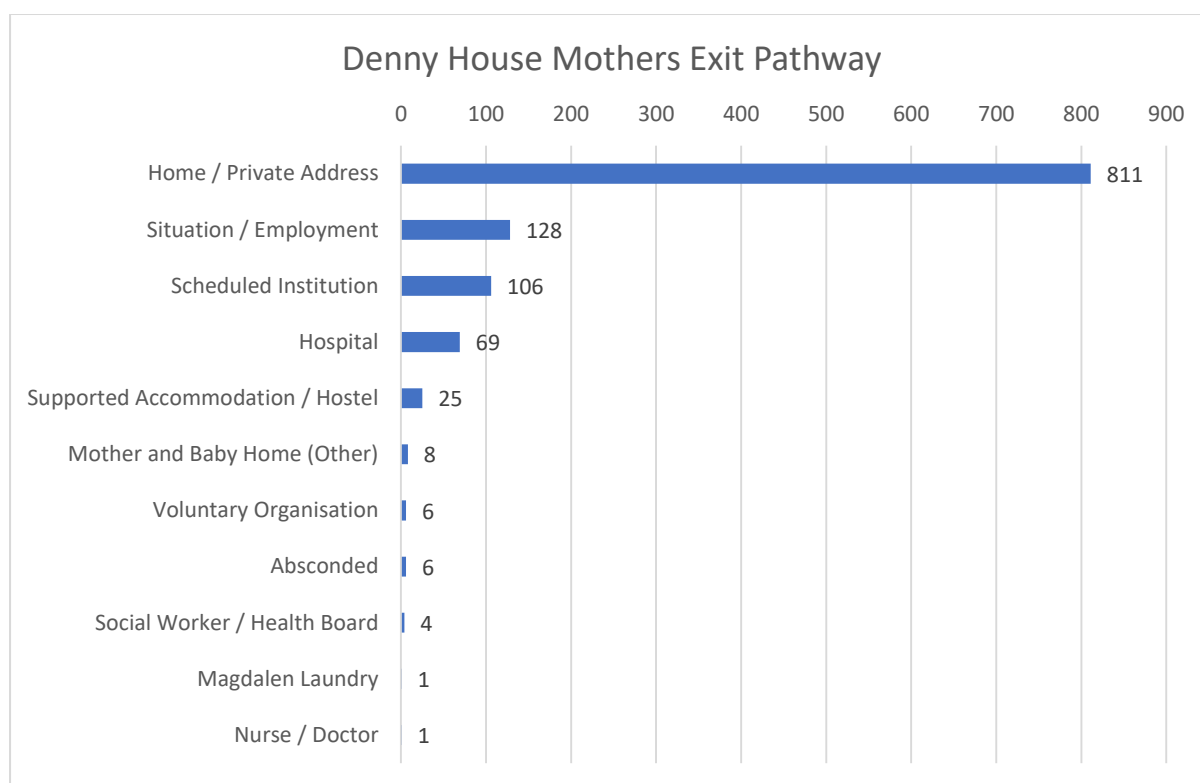
The institutional records show that women admitted to Denny House in 1924 stayed there for 341 days on average; this had reduced to just 175 days for women admitted in 1935 and 1936. Although the average length of stay for women admitted in 1941 had increased to 277 days, a staggered decrease in the average length of stay is observable from then. For instance, women admitted in 1959 spent 86 days on average in the home; for women admitted in 1983 this had decreased to just 41 days.

In the 1920s, women were generally admitted approximately 59 days before giving birth. This increased to 76 days on average in the 1940s but decreased to 43 days on average by the 1980s.



In the 1920s, most women spent between six and 12 months in the home after giving birth; 34% had left within six months and 8% remained there for between 13 and 24 months. One woman was in the home for just over two years. In the 1930s, most women (52%) again stayed for between six and 12 months after giving birth. However, the proportion of women who left within six months had increased to 48% and no woman remained in the home for longer than a year. In the 1940s, over 75% of women remained in the home for between six and 12 months; the remaining 25% had left within six months. In the 1950s, the proportion of women who left within six months of giving birth increased to 82.4% - more than one fifth of whom had left within 50 days. The remaining 17.6% remained for between six and 11 months. In the 1960s, every woman left Denny within six months of giving birth; one in three had left within 50 days. In the 1970s, all but one woman left within six months of giving birth; almost 80% had left within 50 days. In the 1980s, almost 60% of women left within 50 days of giving birth and the remaining women left within six months. This pattern continued in the 1990s when 84.5% of women left within 50 days of giving birth and all remaining women had left within six months.

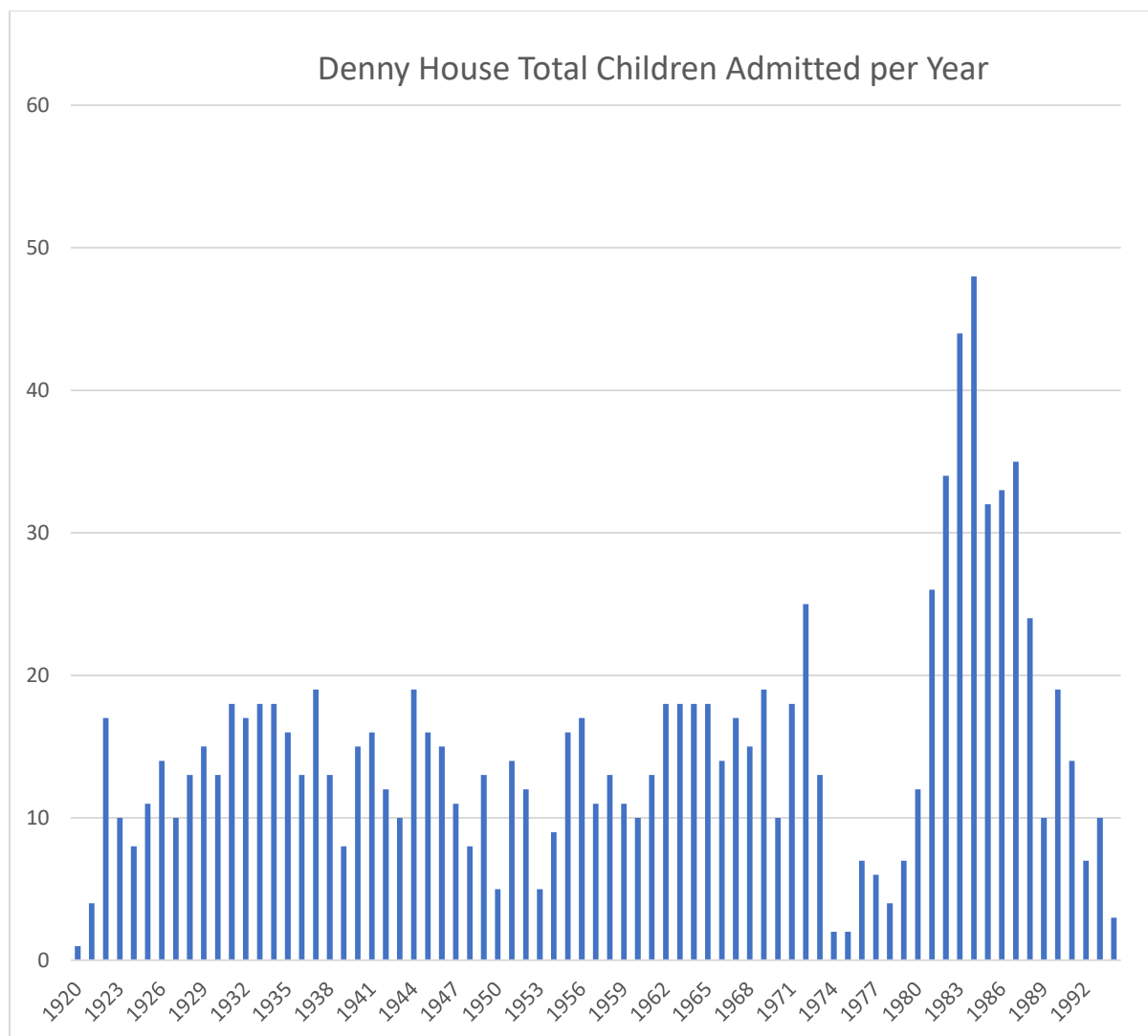
## Exit to place



Information relating to exit pathways was available for 1,165 women (82.3% of admissions). The institutional records show that the majority of women (69.6%) were discharged from Denny to the family home or to another private address; almost 11% were discharged directly to employment; 9% transferred to one of the other institutions under the Commission's remit; almost 6% transferred to hospital and 2% transferred to a hostel or other supported accommodation. Small numbers of women were admitted to other mother and baby homes (8); left in the care of a voluntary association (6); 'absconded' leaving their babies in Denny (6); left in the care of a social worker (4) or in the care of a nurse (1). One woman was transferred to a Magdalen laundry. There were no major deviations in exit pathways over the lifetime of the home's operation.

## Maternal deaths

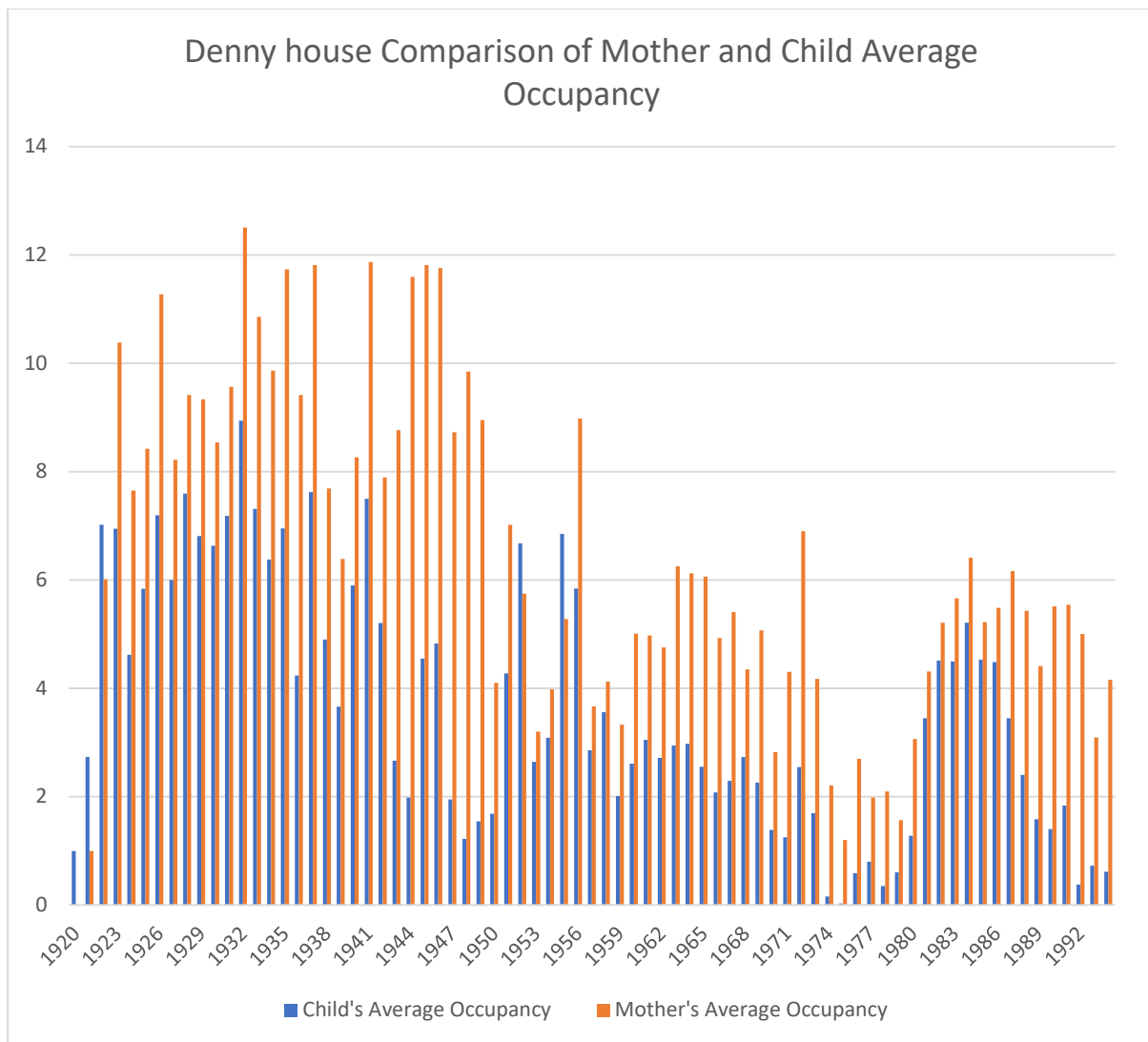
The Commission identified four deaths among women associated with Denny House. Two occurred in the 1930s and two in the 1940s; all four deaths occurred in external hospitals. Cause of death was available for two women - their deaths were notified as being due to bronchopneumonia, and puerperal sepsis.

**Children: Admissions**

From the institutional records, the Commission identified 1,134 children who were born in or admitted to Denny House in the years 1920 and 1994. Information relating to date of admission was available for 1,109 children (97.8% of births/admissions). The busiest period was between 1981 and 1993; 30% of births/admissions were recorded in these years. From 1920 to 1980 an average of 13 births/admissions were recorded annually ranging from one in 1920 to 25 in 1972. More births/admissions (26.87%) were recorded in the 1980s than any other decade followed by the 1960s (14.43%); 1930s (13.8%); 1940s (12.17%); 1950s (10.19%); 1920s (9.29%); 1970s (8.48%) and the 1990s (4.78%).

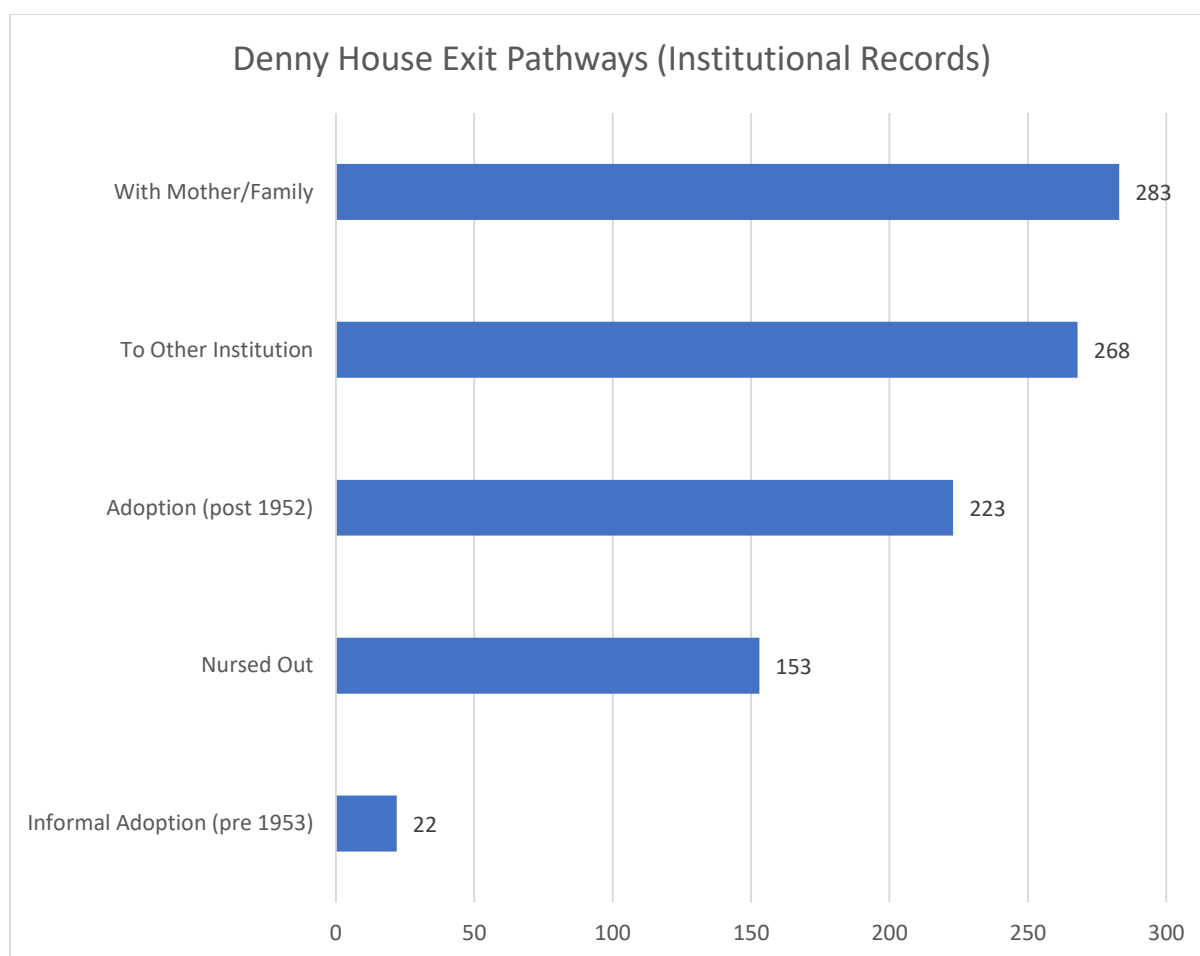
The available information shows that over 99% of children were admitted to Denny House with their mothers; eight children were admitted unaccompanied and one child was admitted with its mother as an accompanying sibling.

## Occupancy



Information relating to occupancy was available for 1,034 children (91.2% of births/admissions). Occupancy rates peaked in 1932; nine children on average were living in the home that year. This was the only occasion in Denny's 74 year history when more than eight children on average were in the home at any one time; average occupancy over this entire period was just four children.

The available information shows that 86.6% of children were discharged either on the same day as their mother or before their mother was discharged; just 13.4% of children spent a period in Denny after their mother had been discharged. A comparison of average occupancy among mothers and children appears to confirm this. On just four occasions the average number of children in Denny exceeded the average number of mothers and it must be pointed out the most pronounced discrepancy related to 1955 when the average number of children exceeded the average number of mothers by two.

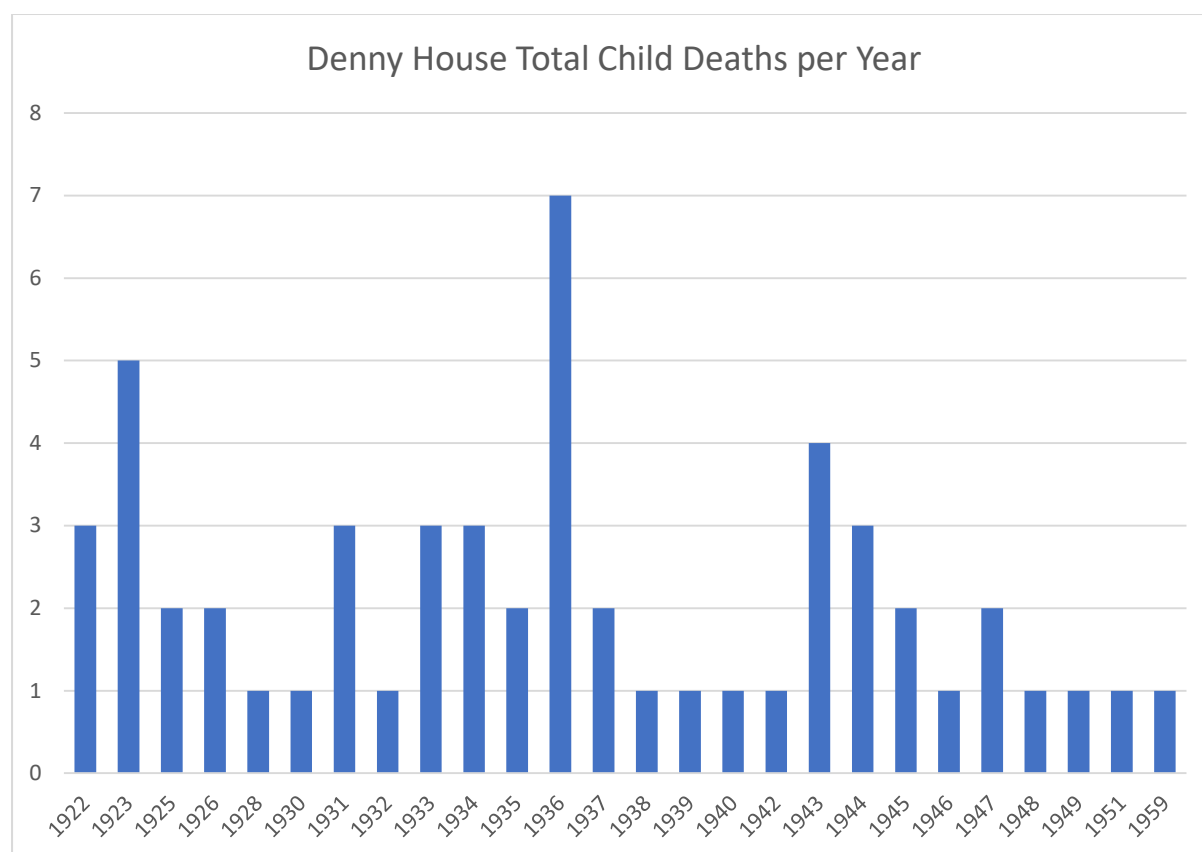
**Exit pathways**

Information relating to exit pathways was available for 949 children (83.7% of births/admissions). The institutional records show that the majority of children (29.8%) were either discharged with their mother or other family member: transferred to another institution (28.2%) or were legally adopted (23.5%). A further 16.1% were placed at nurse and 2.3% were informally adopted (pre 1953).

From the 1920s to the 1940s the most frequent exit pathway was 'nursed out' and accounted for 73% of exit pathways in the 1920s and almost 76% in the 1940s. Legal adoption was the primary exit pathways in the 1950s and 1960s and accounted for 51% and 62% respectively. In the 1980s and 1990s approximately 60% of children left Denny with their mother; around 30% of children transferred to other institutions and less than 10% were placed for adoption in this period.

The available records identified eight children who were placed for foreign adoption from Denny as follows: USA (3); Great Britain (3); Australia (1) and Canada (1).

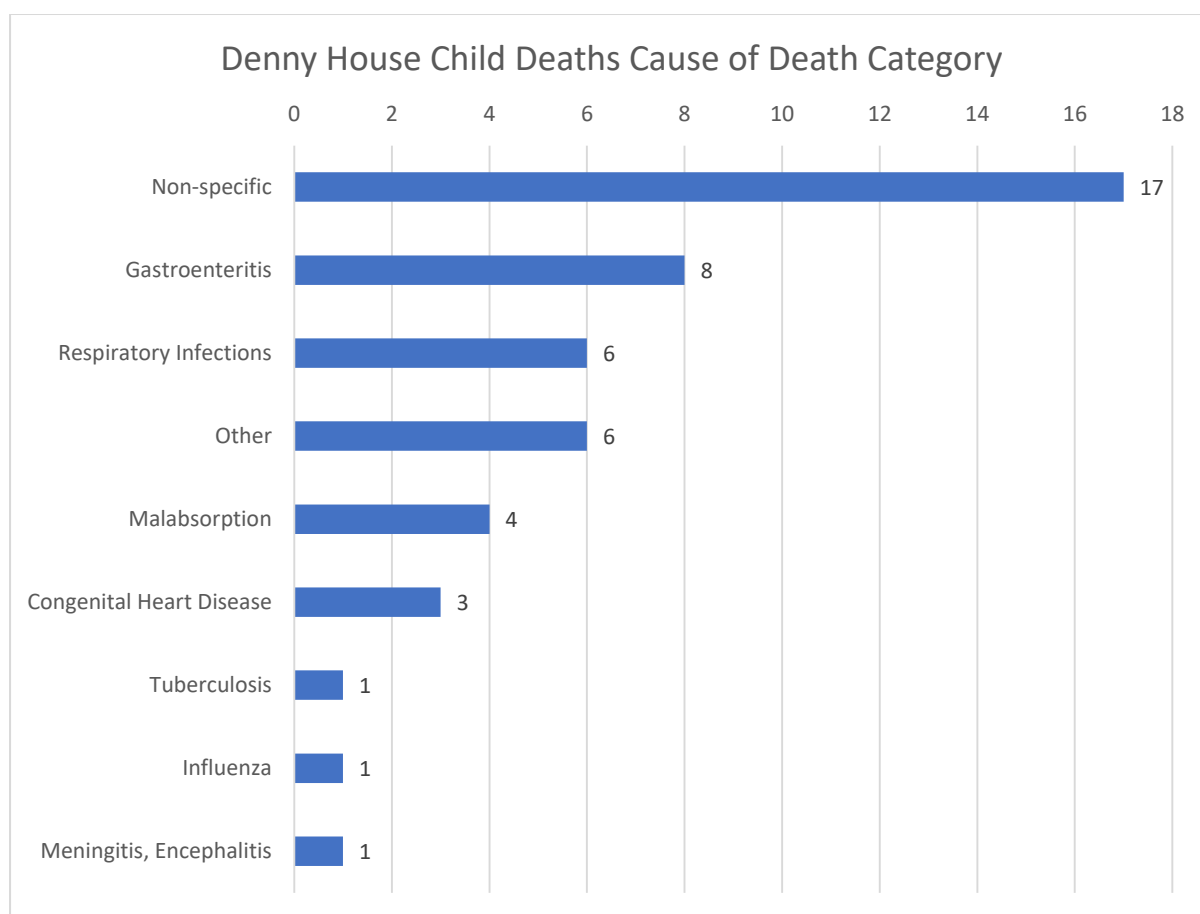
## Child deaths



From the institutional records, the Commission identified 55 child deaths associated with Denny House. This includes children who died in Denny House, children who were admitted to Denny but died elsewhere and children who were never admitted to Denny but whose mothers had been resident there prior to their birth. GRO death records were located for 47 children. The 1930s was the worst decade for child deaths in Denny; the peak was in 1936 when seven deaths were recorded. The majority of child deaths (35) occurred in external hospitals - mainly in the National Children's Hospital - and 17 occurred in Denny House. One death occurred in a private address and one occurred in the Bethany home. Burial records were located for 34 children - all are interred in Mount Jerome cemetery.

## Age on death

Information relating to age on death was available for all but one child. The available records show that 94.4% of deaths occurred in infants as follows: perinatal (0-7 days) 22.2%; neonatal (8-28 days) 24.1% and infant (29-365 days) 48.1%. The remaining children were aged between 12 and 16 months at the time of death.

**Cause of death**

Information relating to cause of death was available for 48 children (85.7% of child deaths). The available records show that the most frequently notified cause of death (35.4%) was non-specific - mainly congenital debility and weakness from birth; 16.6% of deaths were notified as gastroenteritis; 12.5% as respiratory infections - mainly pneumonia; 12.5% were notified as being due to a range of other, mainly one off, causes such as pertussis (whooping cough), jaundice and birth injury; 8.3% were notified as malabsorption - mainly marasmus; 6.2% as congenital heart disease and 4.1% as tuberculosis. Influenza and meningitis were notified in two cases.