

Article

2011 Census analysis: How do living arrangements, family type and family size vary in England and Wales?

Using new data from the 2011 Census, we look at family size and family types within England and Wales, and how this varies by country of birth. Family types include married couples, cohabiting couples and lone parents with or without children. The proportion of families that were married couples (with or without children) declined from 70% in 2001 to 65% in 2011, with cohabiting couples and lone parent families increasing over the same period. The majority of families (85%) were found to have a UK-born family reference person (FRP).



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1. Foreword

This story summarises the distribution of family types (married couples, cohabiting couples and lone parents with /without dependent children) within England and Wales and the interaction with family size (number of dependent children). Variations in family size and type by country of birth are also highlighted.

2. Key points

- Of the 15.8 million families living in households in England and Wales, 92% (14.4 million) were living in one family households.
- The proportion of families that were married couples (both with and without dependent children) declined from 70% in 2001 to 65% in 2011; cohabiting couples and lone parent families increased over the same period.
- The majority (85%) of families in England and Wales had a UK-born family reference person (FRP).
- Just over one third of non-UK born FRPs were born in the Middle East and Asia (36%), with the two largest countries of birth (India and Pakistan) accounting for more than half (52%) from this region
- Lone parent families accounted for 18% of all families in England and Wales; the proportion was highest for families with a Somali-born FRP (60%).
- Families including three or more dependent children accounted for 7.0% of all families in England and Wales; families with a Somali-born FRP had the highest proportion (47%).
- 11% of couple families with dependent children in England and Wales were stepfamilies; one in five (21%) couple families including dependent children with a Jamaican-born FRP were stepfamilies. This was the highest level of any non-UK born FRP group.

3. Introduction

This analysis looks at family¹ size and type distributions within England and Wales, how families are living, and how this varies by country of birth using new data from the 2011 Census. It is the fifth in a series of short stories analysing families and households² using 2011 Census data, and adds to previous research on [families and households in England and Wales](#), [living arrangements and marital status](#), [concealed families](#) and stepfamilies. These previous stories provide a comprehensive overview of families and households in England and Wales, setting the scene for more detailed and focused analyses of specific topics such as country of birth.

The 2011 Census defined a family as a couple living together (with or without children) or a lone parent living with child/children; a person living alone is not a family. Each family in the household population was assigned a Family Reference Person³ (FRP) identified on the basis of economic activity and age characteristics (lone parents are automatically the FRP). Similarly each household was assigned a household reference person⁴ (HRP). In a one family household the FRP was also the HRP. In households where there was more than one family, the HRP was selected from the FRPs based on economic activity, age and then order on the census form.

Users of these statistics will include those with an interest in family and household structures, family formation and breakdown, and those who want to understand the society in which they live such as:

- policy makers
- MPs
- local government analysts and planners
- journalists
- charities
- businesses including the building industry
- students
- researchers and academics
- members of the public

The usually resident household population of England and Wales was 55.1 million in 2011, living in 23.4 million households. There were 15.8 million families living in households in England and Wales in 2011; the majority (14.4 million or 92%)⁵ of these were living in one family households, with the remaining 1.3 million families (8.3%)⁶ living in 'other households'. There were 1.9 million 'other households' identified in the 2011 Census: these included households of more than one family, those including one family and other unrelated adults, and households comprised of only unrelated adults sharing. The remaining 7.1 million households were people living alone.

Notes for introduction

1. A family is defined as a group of people who are either:

- a married, same-sex civil partnership, or cohabiting couple, with or without child(ren), a lone parent with child(ren),
- a married, same-sex civil partnership, or cohabiting couple with grandchild(ren) but with no children present from the intervening generation, or
- a single grandparent with grandchild(ren) but no children present from the intervening generation.

Children in couple families need not belong to both members of the couple. For single or couple grandparents with grandchildren present, the children of the grandparent(s) may also be present if they are not parents or grandparents of the youngest generation present.

2. A household is defined as:

- one person living alone, or
- a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address who share cooking facilities and share a living room or sitting room or dining area.

This includes:

- sheltered accommodation units in an establishment where 50% or more have their own kitchens (irrespective of whether there are other communal facilities), and
- all people living in caravans on any type of site that is their usual residence. This will include anyone who has no other usual residence elsewhere in the UK.

A household must contain at least one person whose place of usual residence is at the address. A group of short-term residents living together is not classified as a household, and neither is a group of people at an address where only visitors are staying.

3. The Family Reference Person (FRP) is identified by criteria based on the family make up. In a lone parent family it is taken to be the lone parent. In a couple family, the FRP is chosen from the two people in the couple on the basis of their economic activity (in the priority order: full-time job, part-time job, unemployed, retired, other). If both people have the same economic activity, the FRP is identified as the elder of the two or, if they are the same age, the first member of the couple on the form.
4. The concept of a Household Reference Person (HRP) was introduced in the 2001 Census (in common with other government surveys in 2001/2) to replace the traditional concept of the 'head of the household'. HRPs provide an individual person within a household to act as a reference point for producing further derived statistics and for characterising a whole household according to characteristics of the chosen reference person.

For a person living alone, it follows that this person is the HRP. If a household contains only one family (with or without ungrouped individuals, for example unrelated lodgers) then the HRP is the same as the Family Reference Person (FRP). For families in which there is generational divide between family members that cannot be determined (Other related family, for example adult siblings sharing a household), there is no FRP. Members of these families are treated the same as ungrouped individuals.

If there is more than one family in a household the HRP is chosen from among the FRPs using the same criteria used to choose the FRP. This means the HRP will be selected from the FRPs on the basis of their economic activity, in the priority order:

- Economically active, employed, full-time, non-student
- Economically active, employed, full-time, student
- Economically active, employed, part-time, non-student
- Economically active, employed, part-time, student
- Economically active, unemployed, non-student
- Economically active, unemployed, student
- Economically inactive, retired
- Economically inactive, other

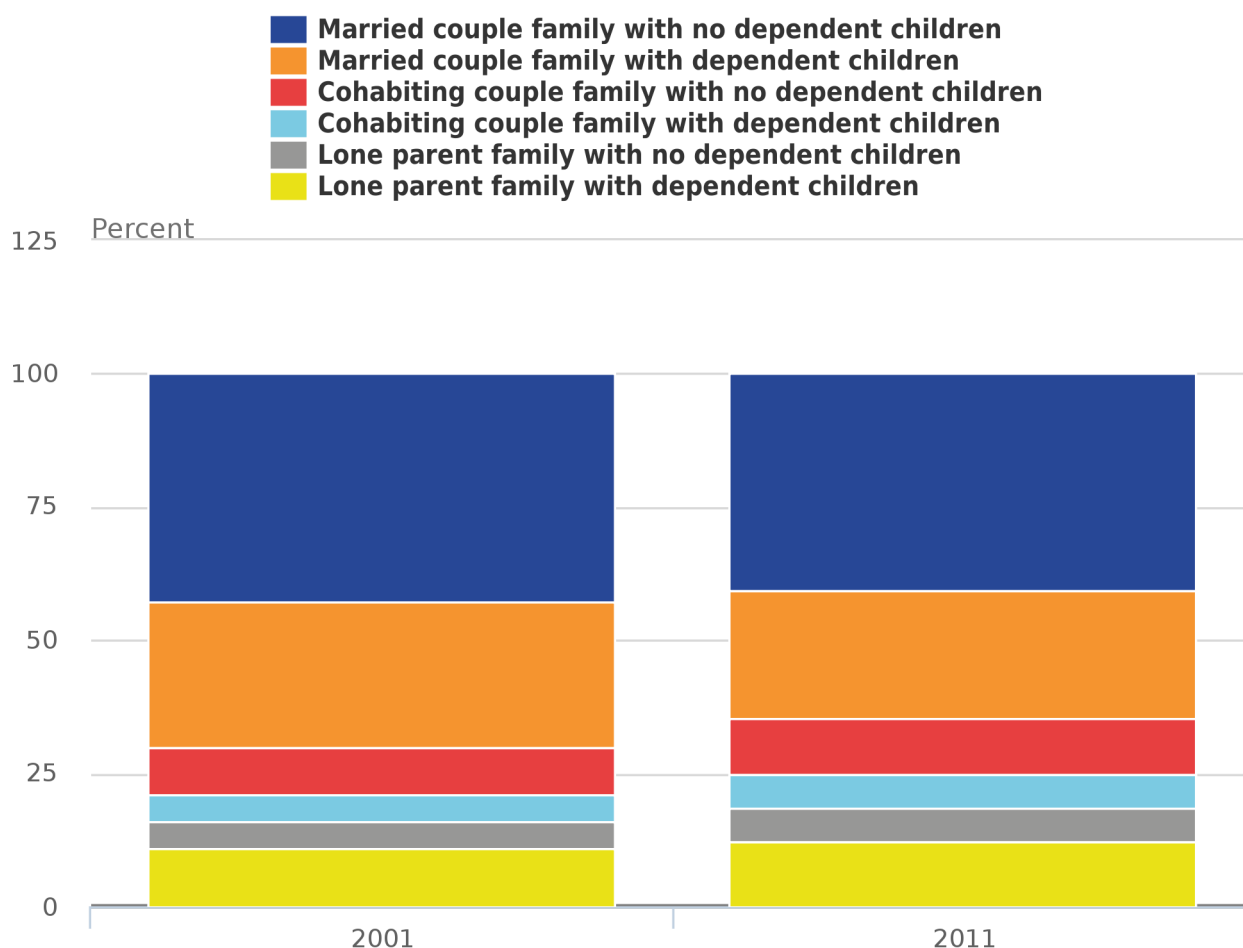
If some or all FRPs have the same economic activity, the HRP is the eldest of the FRPs. If some or all are the same age, the HRP is the first of the FRPs from the order in which they were listed on the questionnaire. If a household is made up entirely of any combination of ungrouped individuals and other related families, the HRP is chosen from among all people in the household, using the same criteria used to choose between FRPs. Students at their non term-time address and short-term migrants cannot be the HRP.

5. Some numbers and percentages throughout this report may not sum due to rounding.
6. ONS publication policy is for percentages under 10 per cent to be rounded to one decimal place; those of 10 per cent or greater are rounded to the nearest whole number.

4. Family types in England and Wales

In 2011, the majority (65%) of families¹ were couples who were married (including civil partnered), with or without dependent children². Married couple families including dependent children accounted for 37% of all married couple families, and almost one in four families overall (24%) (Figure 1). Cohabiting couples accounted for 17% of all families, with 38% of these including dependent children. Lone parents accounted for 18% of all families in England and Wales, with two out of three (67%) of these families including dependent children. The proportion of families that were married couples (both with and without dependent children) declined from 70% in 2001 to 65% in 2011; the proportion of cohabiting couples and lone parent families increased over the same period.

Figure 1: Families by partnership status and presence of dependent children; England and Wales, 2001 and 2011



Source: Census - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. 2011 Census Table CT0151 and 2001 Census Table S007 were used to produce Figure 1

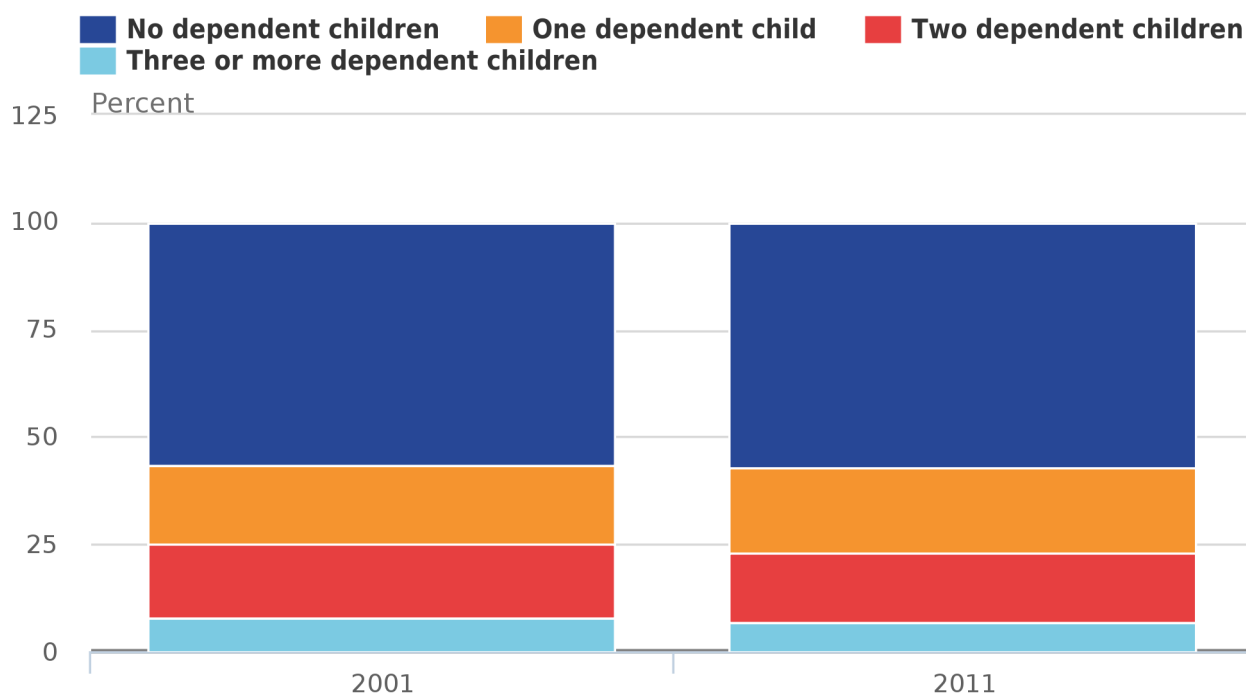
Of the 15.8 million families in England and Wales in 2011, the majority (57% or 9.0 million) did not include dependent children; 43% (6.8 million) included one or more dependent children. The majority (56%) of all families with dependent children were married couple families. The proportion of families with dependent children who were married couples was lower than that of all families, as older couples are more likely to be married than cohabiting. Cohabiting couple families accounted for 15% of families with dependent children, while the remaining 29% were lone parent families.

Number of dependent children in families

Of the 6.8 million families in England and Wales with dependent children, almost half (46%) had only one dependent child in the family; 38% had two dependent children and 16% had three or more dependent children in the family (Figure 2). Of those families with dependent children in 2001 (6.4 million), 43% had one dependent child, 40% had two dependent children and 18% three or more dependent children. The proportion of families with no dependent children (57%) was the same in 2001. At the time of both the 2001 and 2011 censuses not all families were yet complete, so the number of dependent children is a snapshot.

These figures do not relate directly to total family size as families with dependent children may also include non-dependent³ children. Those families that do not include dependent children may include non-dependent children only. Couple families may also have children (dependent or non-dependent) who are not living as part of the family, for example with another parent.

Figure 2: Families by number of dependent children; England and Wales, 2001 and 2011



Source: Census - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. 2011 Census Table CT0151 and 2001 Census Table S007 were used to produce Figure 2

Notes for family types in England and Wales

1. A family is defined as a group of people who are either:
 - a married, same-sex civil partnership, or cohabiting couple, with or without child(ren),
 - a lone parent with child(ren),
 - a married, same-sex civil partnership, or cohabiting couple with grandchild(ren) but with no children present from the intervening generation, or
 - a single grandparent with grandchild(ren) but no children present from the intervening generation.
2. Children may be dependent or non-dependent. Dependent children are those aged under 16 living with at least one parent, or aged 16 to 18 in full-time education, excluding all children who have a spouse, partner or child living in the household. Non-dependent children are age 19 and over or aged 16-18 and in employment and living with at least one parent.

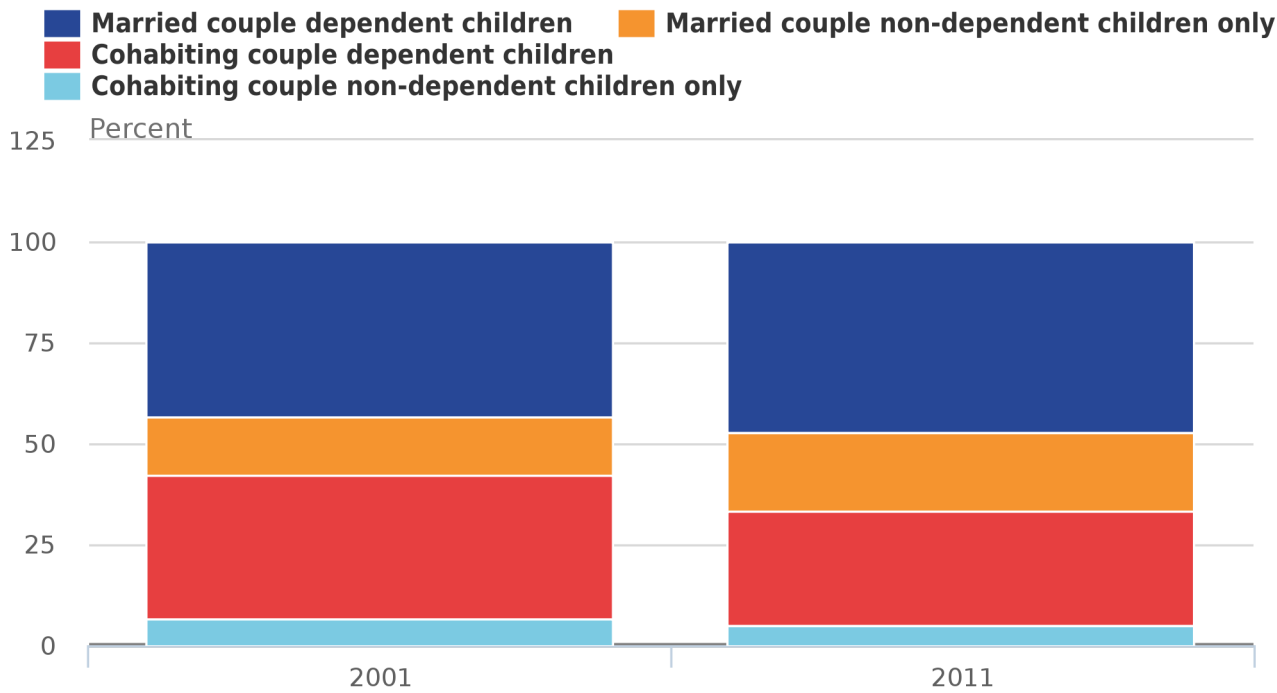
5. Stepfamilies

Children in couple families can be the natural or adopted children of both members of the couple (non-stepfamilies) or one member. Children living in stepfamilies may include natural or adopted children of the couple as well as children of one or both partners from previous relationships (stepchildren). Stepfamilies were therefore defined in the 2011 Census as couple families including at least one stepchild. Stepfamilies accounted for 4.5% (717,000) of all families in England and Wales in 2011, a decrease from 5.4% (799,000) in 2001; however it is only possible for a couple family with children to be a stepfamily. Three in four (76%) stepfamilies included dependent children in 2011 (the remaining stepfamilies included non-dependent children only); this was a decrease from almost four in five (79%) in 2001.

[Previous ONS research](#) has noted that 11% (544,000) of couple families with dependent children were stepfamilies in 2011. This was a decrease in both number and percentage from 2001, when stepfamilies accounted for 13% (631,000) of couple families with dependent children. While the number of stepfamilies with dependent children decreased by 14% (from 631,000 to 544,000), the number of stepfamilies with only non-dependent children increased by 3.3% (Figure 3). The increase in stepfamilies with non-dependent children is a result of the increase of 22% (24,500) in married couples with non dependent children only. This relates to increasing numbers of [young adults living with parents](#).

While 11% of couple families with dependent children were stepfamilies in 2011, this varied by partnership status: 9% of married couple families with dependent children were stepfamilies, while 20% of cohabiting couple families with dependent children were stepfamilies. There may be a higher proportion of stepfamilies in cohabiting couples as people who have been divorced or formerly in a cohabiting relationship may choose to form a cohabiting stepfamily rather than marry.

Figure 3: Stepfamilies by partnership status and presence of dependent children; England and Wales, 2001 and 2011



Source: Census - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. 2011 Census Table CT0151 and 2001 Census Table S007 were used to produce Figure 3

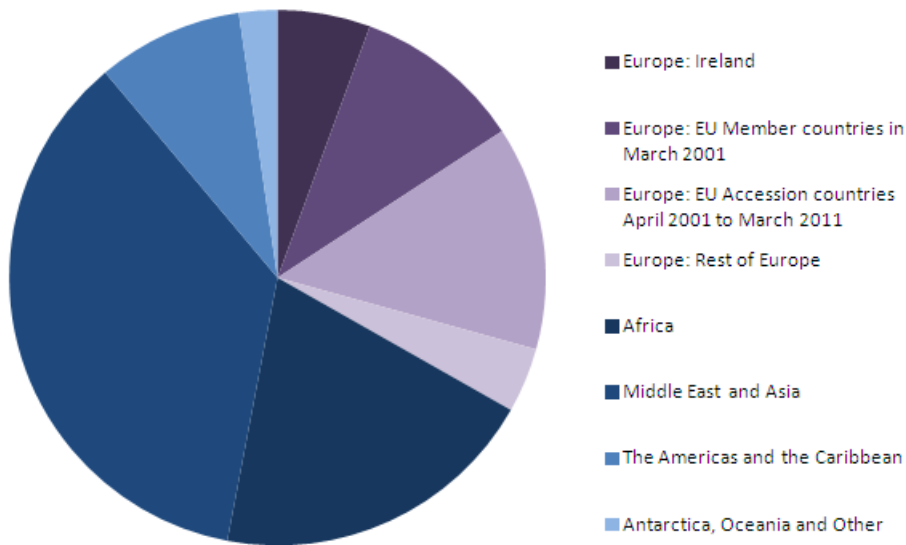
6. Families in England and Wales by Country of Birth of FRP

Families are analysed by country of birth of the Family Reference Person (FRP)¹ as this family characteristic can be related to cultural differences in family size and structure: people may change their nationality over time, and passport held² will not necessarily reflect cultural differences relating to family size and structure. Equivalent data are also available by passport held. Other variables such as education, occupation and economic activity may also have an influence on family structure and size.

Data from the 2011 Census reveal that the majority (85%) of families in England and Wales had a UK-born FRP; the remaining 15% had a non-UK born FRP. It is possible that the method used to assign a FRP may have an influence on this distribution for couple families where members of the couple were born in different countries. For example, a couple family with one UK-born and one non-UK born member who were both working full time would be assigned to the country of birth group of the older member of the couple.

Figure 4 shows broad geographical continents/regions of the world for birth groupings for the 2.4 million families with non-UK born FRPs; Europe is further sub-divided by EU membership status³. The most common region of birth was Middle East and Asia: more than one in three (36%) non-UK born FRPs were born in this region, with the two largest countries of birth (India and Pakistan) accounting for more than half (52%) of the FRPs born in this region. The second largest group were families with European-born FRPs (including Ireland, EU member countries in 2001, EU Accession countries 2001-2011, rest of Europe), accounting for around one in three (33%) non-UK born FRPs. Within the European born, EU Accession countries were the largest group, accounting for 41% of all European-born FRPs. Polish-born accounted for 22% of the European-born FRPs. This distribution is similar to that for all non-UK born population in England and Wales: 34% born in the Middle East and Asia, 37% in Europe. The small differences are likely to reflect the younger age structure of the European-born population who are therefore less likely to have families.

Figure 4: Continent/region of birth distribution of non-UK born FRPs in England and Wales, 2011



Source: Census - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. 2011 Census Table CT0151 was used to produce figure 4.

Differences in family type and size by country of birth are complex, and may be explained by a combination of factors, including: the [age structure](#) of the populations from different countries of birth; the different [historic immigration patterns](#) and reason for migration; and [cultural and economic factors](#) such as education and employment and attitudes towards marriage and cohabitation.

Populations with both an early arrival profile and older age structure are likely to have higher proportions of couple families and lower numbers of dependent children in families, as many will have completed childbearing and have adult children who have left the family home. For example, of the Irish-born population, 43% were aged 65 or over, whereas this age group accounted for 16% of the England and Wales population as a whole; a large proportion (38%) of the Irish-born population arrived before 1961. By contrast, those populations with a more recent arrival profile and younger age structure such as the Somali-born population are more likely to have higher numbers of dependent children in the family. The Somali-born population was younger, with 79% aged under 45 in 2011, compared with 58% of the population as a whole; more than half (57%) of the Somali-born population in 2011 had arrived since 2001, with one in four having arrived between 2001 and 2003.

Notes for families in England and Wales by country of birth of FRP

1. The Family Reference Person (FRP) is identified by criteria based on the family make up. In a lone parent family it is taken to be the lone parent. In a couple family, the FRP is chosen from the two people in the couple on the basis of their economic activity (in the priority order: full-time job, part-time job, unemployed, retired, other). If both people have the same economic activity, the FRP is identified as the elder of the two or, if they are the same age, the first member of the couple on the form.
2. Passports held is derived from census question 22 which asks "What passports do you hold?". This is used to determine nationality in this analysis. People may change their nationality over time or acquire dual nationality and hold more than one passport. Priority is given to British passports held, then Irish passports; then if someone does not have a British or Irish passport they are coded according to the response written in the 'other' passport box.

22 What passports do you hold?

→ Tick all that apply

United Kingdom

Irish

Other, write in

None

This question should not be confused with census question 15, which deals with national identity ("How would you describe your national identity?"). Whereas passport held (nationality) is an objective measure, national identity is a subjective self-defining measure and is intended primarily to record identification with the different countries within the United Kingdom.

3. EU member countries in 2001. Excluding the UK, these were: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Republic of Ireland, Spain and Sweden. EU Accession countries refers to those nations in Central and Eastern Europe that joined the European Union in May 2004 (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) and January 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania). Cyprus and Malta also joined the EU in May 2004. The rest of Europe are those European countries outside the EU as of January 2007. The rest of world refers to all countries outside Europe.

7. Family types by country of birth

The most common family types differ by the Family Reference Person's (FRP) ¹ country of birth (Table 1). Married couple families² were the majority for families with a FRP born in all regional country of birth groups. Families with a FRP born in the Middle East and Asia had the highest proportion of married couple families (79%) and the lowest proportion of cohabiting couple families (6%); this may be the result of cultural attitudes towards marriage and cohabitation. Conversely, families with a FRP born in an EU Accession country³ had the lowest proportion of married couple families (53%) and the highest proportions of cohabiting couple families (30%); this may also relate to cultural factors and the younger age structure of the Accession born population.

Lone parent families were highest for those with an African-born FRP (29%) and lowest for those with an FRP born in the region of Antarctica, Oceania and Other (10%). The proportion of lone parent families may relate to the reasons for migration: many African-born residents (and therefore FRPs) may have moved to the UK with their families due to instability in their countries of birth. For example, [previous research](#) has identified arrivals of Kenyan-born migrants in the 1960s, Ugandan-born in the 1970s, and Somali-born and Rwandan-born in the 1990s following instability or discrimination in these countries. Those born in the Antarctica, Oceania and Other region may be younger economic migrants.

Table 1: Family type distributions by couple status and country/region of birth of FRP; England and Wales, 2011

	Total families (Thousands)	Couple family: Married %	Couple family: Cohabiting %	Lone parent family %
All Families	15,764	65	17	18
United Kingdom	13,392	65	17	18
Ireland	133	67	14	19
Europe member countries in March 2001	242	58	24	18
EU Accession countries April 2001 to March 2011	320	53	30	17
Rest of Europe	93	67	12	21
Africa	470	60	10	29
Middle East and Asia	851	79	6	15
The Americas and the Caribbean: Total	209	59	14	28
Antarctica, Oceania and other: Total	55	62	28	10

Source: 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics

Note:

1. 2011 Census Table CT0151 was used to produce Table 1

Figure 5 shows the family type distributions for selected countries of birth, with UK born and non-UK born for comparison. Countries included are those with the highest and lowest proportions of each family type (where individual country data are available in a published table), demonstrating the diversity in family types. High proportions of married couple families were seen in families with FRPs born in India (85%), Sri Lanka (84%), Afghanistan (83%), Pakistan (80%), Bangladesh and Kenya (both 79%); this is likely to reflect the cultural attitudes to family structures and marriage in these communities.

The highest proportion of cohabiting couple families was among families with a Lithuanian-born FRP: one in three families (33%) with a Lithuanian-born FRP were cohabiting couples. This was almost double the proportion of families with a UK born FRP (17%). In contrast, cohabiting couple families accounted for 3.0% of families with a Bangladeshi-born FRP. These differences are also likely to reflect cultural differences in attitudes towards cohabitation and marriage, and the age structures of different country of birth populations.

The highest proportions of lone parent families were seen for families with a Somali-born FRP (60%), a Jamaican-born FRP (44%) or a Ghanaian-born FRP (40%); the lowest proportion was 8.3% for families with a New Zealand-born FRP. The reasons for this may vary. For families with a Somali-born FRP this may relate to the reasons for migration: a previous report suggested that many [Somali-born migrants](#) arrived during the 1990s following the Somali civil war in 1991. At 78 men per 100 women, the sex ratio of the Somali-born population was lower than that of England and Wales (97 men per 100 women). Many women and children may have left Somalia without their partner during this period; 7.6% of Somali-born lone parents were male, around half the proportion of all lone parents who were male. The Jamaican-born and Ghanaian-born populations also had low sex ratios at 81 and 93 men per 100 women respectively; by contrast the New Zealand born population had a higher sex ratio with the numbers of men and women being equal. Age may also be a factor: for example, the Jamaican-born population has an older age structure and an earlier arrival profile, allowing more time for potential partnership breakdown.

Figure 5: Family types by partnership status for selected countries of birth of FRP; England and Wales, 2011



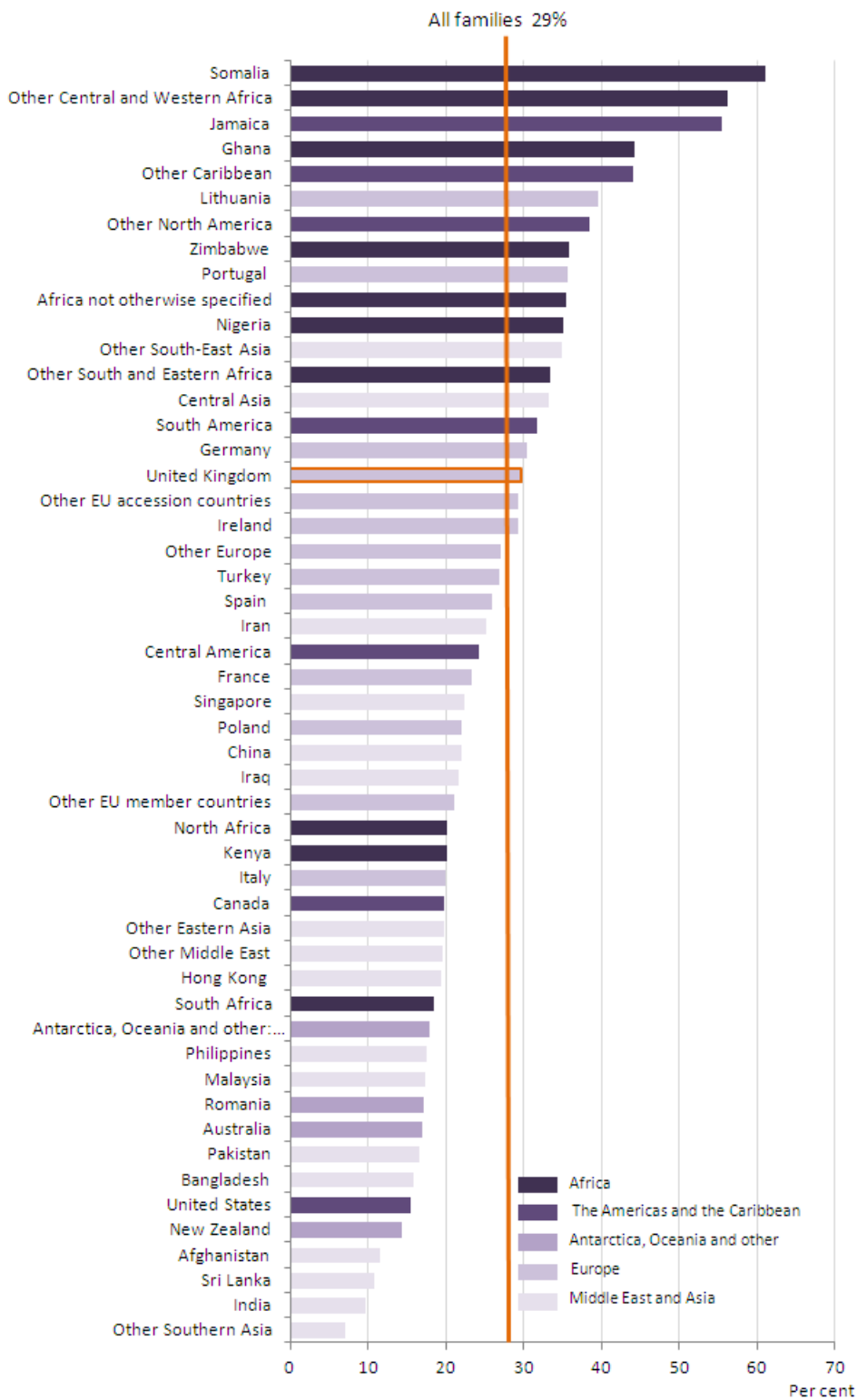
Source: Census - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. 2011 Census Table CT0151 was used to produce Figure 5

Figure 6 summarises the proportions of all families with dependent children (6.8 million) who were lone parent families (2.0 million) for different countries/regions of birth of the FRP. The highest proportions of lone parent families with dependent children were found for FRPs born in Somalia (61%), Other Central and Western Africa (56%), Jamaica (55%), Ghana (44%) and Other Caribbean (44%). In contrast, the lowest proportions were for the FRPs born in Southern Asian Other (6.9%), India (9.5%), Sri Lanka (11%), Afghanistan (11%) and New Zealand (14%). Proportions of lone parent families may relate partly to varying attitudes towards marriage and partnership formation in different cultures and also to the arrival profiles and [age structures](#) of population from different countries of birth.

Figure 6: Proportion of all families with dependent children who were lone parent families by FRP's country of birth; England and Wales, 2011



Source: Census - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. EU member countries are those in March 2001 and Accession countries are those which joined between April 2001 and March 2011
2. 2011 Census Table CT0151 was used to produce Figure 6

Notes for family types by country of birth

1. The Family Reference Person (FRP) is identified by criteria based on the family make up. In a lone parent family it is taken to be the lone parent. In a couple family, the FRP is chosen from the two people in the couple on the basis of their economic activity (in the priority order: full-time job, part-time job, unemployed, retired, other). If both people have the same economic activity, the FRP is identified as the elder of the two or, if they are the same age, the first member of the couple on the form
2. A family is defined as a group of people who are either:
 - a married, same-sex civil partnership, or cohabiting couple, with or without child(ren),
 - a lone parent with child(ren),
 - a married, same-sex civil partnership, or cohabiting couple with grandchild(ren) but with no children present from the intervening generation, or
 - a single grandparent with grandchild(ren) but no children present from the intervening generation.
3. EU member countries in 2001. Excluding the UK, these were: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Republic of Ireland, Spain and Sweden. EU Accession countries refers to those nations in Central and Eastern Europe that joined the European Union in May 2004 (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) and January 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania). Cyprus and Malta also joined the EU in May 2004. The rest of Europe are those European countries outside the EU as of January 2007. The rest of world refers to all countries outside Europe

8. Number of dependent children in families by country of birth

The number of dependent children¹ in families² varied by country of birth of the FRPs³. Families with an African-born FRP (470,000) had the lowest proportions with no dependent children (37%) and the highest proportions with three or more dependent children (16%); followed closely by Middle East and Asian-born (almost 16%) (Table 2). In 2011 women born in several African countries were featured in the top 20 for number of births; some of these groups also had higher [total fertility rates](#) (TFR) than for the UK-born: Nigeria (3.32), Ghana (3.24) and Somalia (4.19) compared to 1.84 for the UK-born population.

Families with a FRP born in an EU Accession country⁴ (320,000) had smaller proportions with no dependent children (49%), but also a smaller proportion of families with three or more dependent children (4.7%) compared with all families in England and Wales; these families also had the highest proportions of families with one dependent child (31%). This may relate to the younger age structure of this group and the relatively short time resident in the UK.

Table 2: Proportion of families by number of dependent children and FRP's region of birth; England and Wales, 2011

	All families (Thousands)	No dependent children %	One dependent child %	Two dependent children %	Three or more dependent children %
All families	15,764	57.0	19.8	16.2	7.0
United Kingdom	13,392	58.9	19.2	15.8	6.2
Ireland	133	75.9	11.6	8.7	3.9
EU member countries in March 2001	242	54.3	21.7	17.3	6.7
EU Accession countries April 2001 to March 2011	320	49.1	30.5	15.7	4.7
Rest of Europe	93	40.1	25.9	23.4	10.6
Africa	470	37.4	25.3	21.3	16.0
Middle East and Asia	851	42.0	22.4	20.1	15.5
The Americas and the Caribbean	209	55.9	22.6	15.2	6.4
Antarctica, Oceania and other	55	55.7	19.5	18.2	6.6

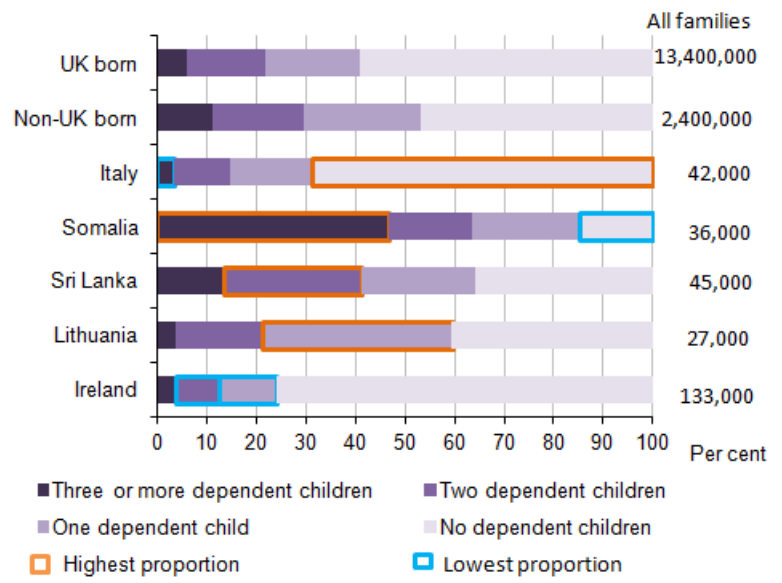
Source: 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics

Note:

1. 2011 Census Table CT0151 was used to produce Table 2

There were large variations in the number of dependent children in families by individual country of birth within regional groupings. Figure 7 shows the countries with the highest and lowest proportions for number of dependent children. Among families with an EU Accession country-born FRP, families with a Lithuanian-born FRP had the highest proportion with one dependent child (38%). Three out of four families with an Irish-born FRP included no dependent children, while families with a Somali-born FRP had the lowest proportion with no dependent children (15%). The different [age structures](#) of country of birth groups are relevant as younger families such as those with a Lithuanian-born FRP may not have finished child bearing, while others such as families with an Irish-born FRP are more likely to have completed their child bearing and have fewer children remaining dependent: 82% of the Lithuanian-born population were aged under 40 in 2011, while 21% of the Irish-born population were in this age group.

Figure 7: Families by number of dependent children for selected countries of birth of FRP; England and Wales, 2011



Source: Census - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. 2011 Census Table CT0151 was used to produce Figure 7

Families with a Sri Lankan-born FRP had the greatest proportion with two dependent children (28%), while almost half (47%) of all families with a Somali-born FRP included three or more dependent children. High proportions of families with three or more dependent children were also seen for families with a FRP born in Afghanistan (34%) or Bangladesh (33%). This may be related to the age structure of the Somali-born and Afghan-born populations and to cultural differences in desired and actual family size. A recent ONS report on [total fertility rates](#) (TFR) by country of birth identified particularly high TFRs for Somali-born (4.19) and Afghan-born (4.25) women in England and Wales in 2011; both were more than twice the England and Wales average. The lowest proportions of families with three or more dependent children were those with an Italian-born FRP (3.5%).

The number of dependent children in a family does not relate directly to total family size, as families may include both dependent and/or non-dependent children; the number of dependent children will be partly influenced by the age structure of the population from different countries of birth. The high proportion of families with no dependent children and an Irish-born FRP is most likely to be the result of the age profile of the Irish-born population (43% aged 65 or over), compared with the England and Wales population as a whole (16% aged 65 and over).

Notes for number of dependent children in families by country of birth

1. Children may be dependent or non-dependent. Dependent children are those aged under 16 living with at least one parent, or aged 16 to 18 in full-time education, excluding all children who have a spouse, partner or child living in the household. Non-dependent children are age 19 and over or aged 16-18 and in employment and living with at least one parent
2. A family is defined as a group of people who are either:
 - a married, same-sex civil partnership, or cohabiting couple, with or without child(ren),
 - a lone parent with child(ren),
 - a married, same-sex civil partnership, or cohabiting couple with grandchild(ren) but with no children present from the intervening generation, or
 - a single grandparent with grandchild(ren) but no children present from the intervening generation.
3. A Family Reference Person (FRP) is identified by criteria based on the family make up. In a lone parent family it is taken to be the lone parent. In a couple family, the FRP is chosen from the two people in the couple on the basis of their economic activity (in the priority order: full-time job, part-time job, unemployed, retired, other). If both people have the same economic activity, the FRP is identified as the elder of the two or, if they are the same age, the first member of the couple on the form.
4. EU member countries in 2001. Excluding the UK, these were: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Republic of Ireland, Spain and Sweden. EU Accession countries refers to those nations in Central and Eastern Europe that joined the European Union in May 2004 (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) and January 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania). Cyprus and Malta also joined the EU in May 2004. The rest of Europe are those European countries outside the EU as of January 2007. The rest of world refers to all countries outside Europe.

9. Stepfamilies by country of birth

The proportion of stepfamilies including dependent children¹ in 2011 varied by the Family Reference Person's (FRP)² country of birth; stepfamilies with an Irish-born FRP had the lowest proportion including dependent children (59%), while 93% of stepfamilies with a Somali-born or Afghani-born FRP included dependent children. These proportions are likely to be due to the age structure and migration patterns of these populations. The Irish-born population are generally older and therefore likely to have older (non-dependent) children, while those born in Somalia or Afghanistan are younger populations and more recent arrivals and therefore less likely to have adult children living in the family³.

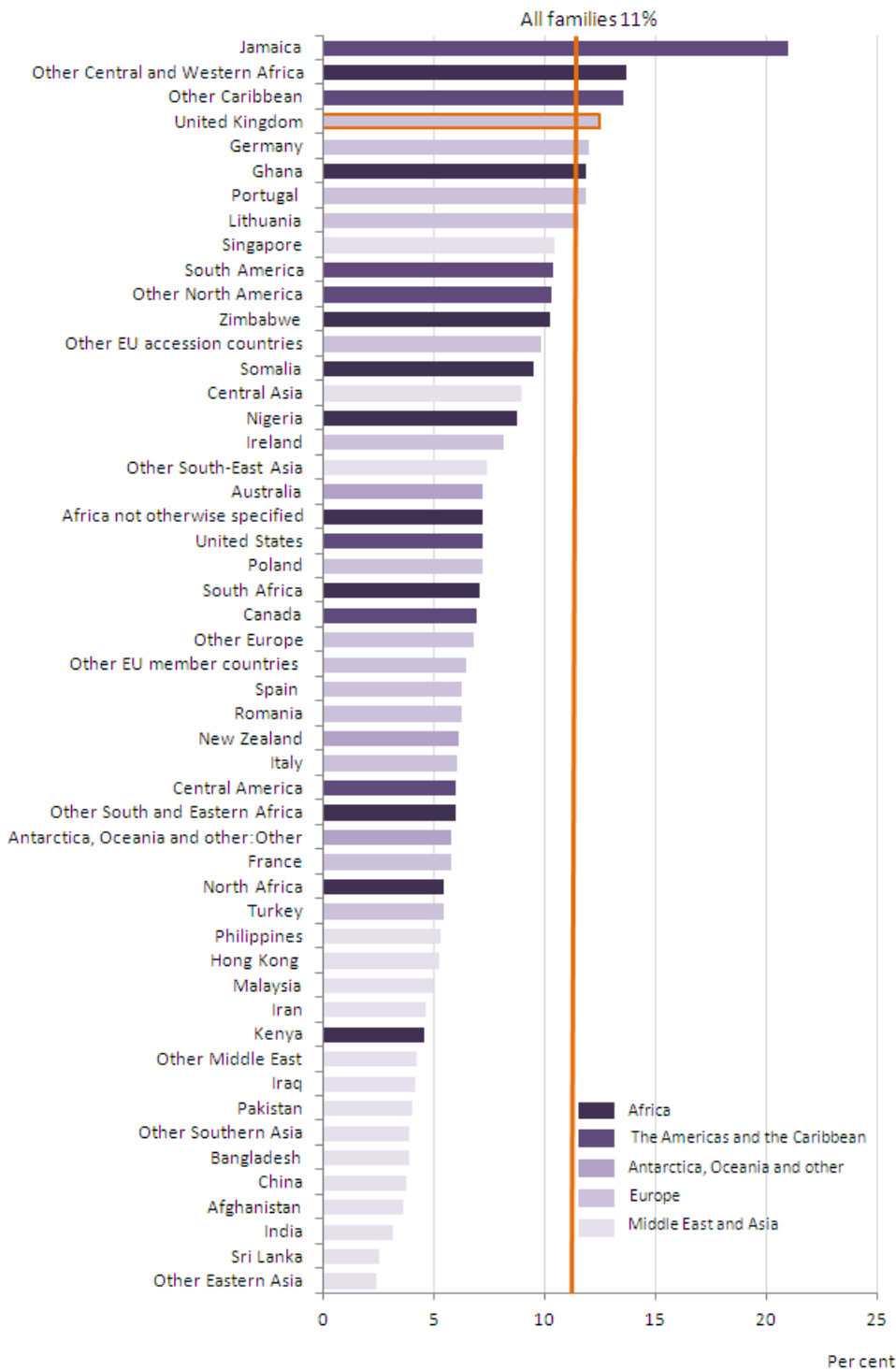
The proportion of couple families with dependent children that were stepfamilies varied by country of birth of the FRP. One in five (21%) couple families including dependent children with a Jamaican-born FRP were stepfamilies (Figure 8); this was the highest proportion for any non-UK country of birth group and almost double the proportion for all families (11%). The lowest stepfamily proportions among couple families with dependent children were seen for those with a FRP born in 'Other Eastern Asia' at less than 3 in 100 families (2.3%) and Sri Lanka (2.5%).

Among married couple families with dependent children the highest level of stepfamilies was for families with a Jamaican-born FRP (20%); the lowest levels were for married couple families with an 'other Eastern Asian-born' FRP (1.9%) and Sri Lankan-born FRP (2.2%).

For cohabiting couple families including dependent children, the highest proportions of stepfamilies were for families with Central Asian-born FRPs (30%) or Singaporean-born FRPs (24%). The lowest proportions were for families with Chinese-born FRPs (7.2%) and Other Eastern Asian-born FRPs (9.7%).

Differences may relate to varying cultural attitudes towards marriage and cohabitation and to age profiles of the populations from different countries of birth. For example, the Jamaican-born population had an older age structure as migration from Jamaica began in the 1960s. Families with a Jamaican-born FRP may therefore have included older dependent children and have had more time for couples to break up and form new stepfamilies. High proportions of stepfamilies may also result partly from high proportions of lone parent families, as this leads to a greater potential for stepfamily formation: for example, 44% of families with a Jamaican-born FRP were lone parent families in 2011.

Figure 8: Proportion of couple families with dependent children that were stepfamilies by FRP's country of birth; England and Wales, 2011



Source: Census - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. EU member countries are those in March 2001 and Accession countries are those which joined between April 2001 and March 2011
2. 2011 Census Table CT0151 was used to produce Figure 8

Notes for stepfamilies by country of birth

1. Children may be dependent or non-dependent. Dependent children are those aged under 16 living with at least one parent, or aged 16 to 18 in full-time education, excluding all children who have a spouse, partner or child living in the household. Non-dependent children are age 19 and over or aged 16-18 and in employment and living with at least one parent
2. A Family Reference Person (FRP) is identified by criteria based on the family make up. In a lone parent family it is taken to be the lone parent. In a couple family, the FRP is chosen from the two people in the couple on the basis of their economic activity (in the priority order: full-time job, part-time job, unemployed, retired, other). If both people have the same economic activity, the FRP is identified as the elder of the two or, if they are the same age, the first member of the couple on the form.
3. A family is defined as a group of people who are either:
 - a married, same-sex civil partnership, or cohabiting couple, with or without child(ren),
 - a lone parent with child(ren),
 - a married, same-sex civil partnership, or cohabiting couple with grandchild(ren) but with no children present from the intervening generation, or
 - a single grandparent with grandchild(ren) but no children present from the intervening generation.

Children in couple families need not belong to both members of the couple. For single or couple grandparents with grandchildren present, the children of the grandparent(s) may also be present if they are not parents or grandparents of the youngest generation present.

10. Households

Three out of four household residents (75%) in England and Wales were living in a household¹ of one family² only in 2011; the majority were in married couple families where at least one member was aged under 65. A further 13% were living alone (in one person households), while the remaining 12% were living in 'other' (including multi-family or multi-person) households³. These proportions varied by country of birth of the Household Reference Person (HRP)⁴, with more than one in four of those born in Ireland (27%) and the Caribbean (26%) living alone. These differences may relate to the age structure of the population born in Ireland and the Caribbean: both groups had a higher median age than the population as a whole as [historic immigration patterns](#) show that many people born in these countries migrated to the UK before 1971, and older people are more likely to live alone.

The UK-born population was more likely to live in a one family only household than the non-UK born population (77% and 61% respectively), while a greater proportion of non-UK born residents (28%) lived in 'other' (including multi-family and multi-person) households compared with UK-born residents (10%). Of the eight non-UK region of birth groups⁵ the highest proportions living in 'other' households were seen for residents born in EU Accession countries (41%), more than four times the proportion of UK-born residents living in these households. This may reflect the more recent arrival and younger age structure of residents born in EU Accession countries (84% of residents in 2011 arrived since 2001, and 76% were aged under 40), as well as the reasons for migration, which are likely to be mainly economic.

Other (including multi-family and multi-person) households with dependent children accounted for 5.4% of the household population in 2011. In some cultures it is more common for an extended family to share a household: the highest proportions living in other households with dependent children were the Bangladeshi-born (26%) and Pakistani-born (24%) populations, with around one in four people living in these household types (five times the level for the household population as a whole).

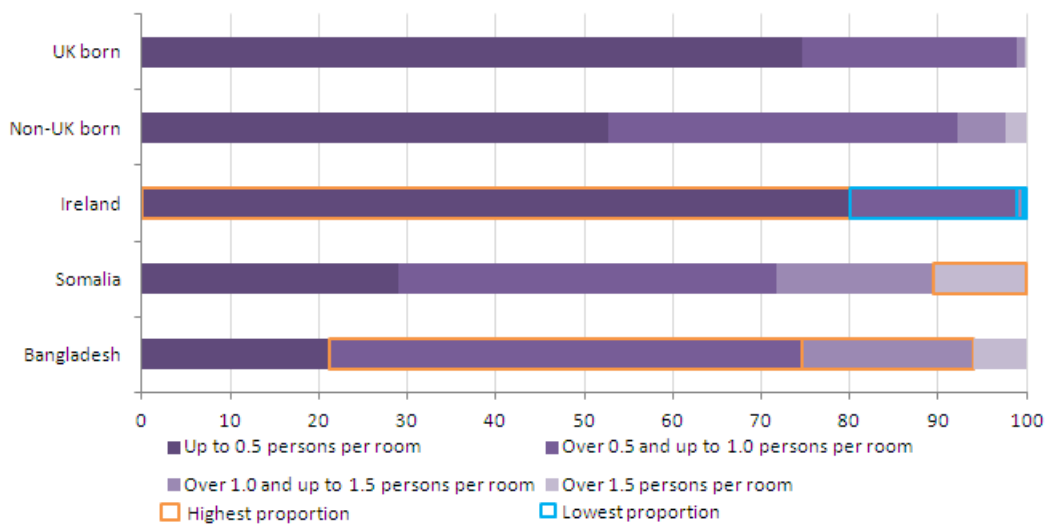
A [previous ONS report](#) analysed occupancy ratings (bedroom)⁶ across England and Wales in 2011 as an indicator of overcrowding and under-occupation. This analysis showed that more than one in ten households (11%) in London were overcrowded (had less than the required number of bedrooms), the highest level across all the English regions and Wales. Within London, Newham had the highest proportion, with a quarter of its households overcrowded.

An alternative measure is the number of persons per room in a household⁷. The majority (75%) of households with a UK-born HRP had 0.5 persons per room or fewer (see Figure 9). Around one in four households (24%) had more than 0.5 and up to one person per room, while the remaining 1.1% had over one person per room. Households with a non-UK born HRP had higher proportions with more than one person per room: seven times the proportion (7.8%) of these households had over one person per room compared to households with a UK-born HRP. This varied by country of birth of the HRP. Figure 9 presents the countries of birth with the highest and lowest proportions in each persons per room category.

Households with an Irish-born HRP had the highest levels of households with 0.5 or fewer persons per room (80%), higher than that of households with a UK-born HRP. Families with an Irish-born FRP had the lowest proportions with dependent children; this may relate to the older age structure of the [Irish-born population](#). Under-occupation may also relate to a higher number of widowed people living alone.

Households with a Somali-born HRP had the highest levels with more than 1.5 persons per room (11%). This may relate to differing economic pressures; families with a Somali-born FRP had both the highest proportion with three or more dependent children and the highest proportion of lone parent families.

Figure 9: Persons per room in households by selected country of birth of HRP; England and Wales, 2011



Source: Census - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. 2011 Census Table CT0151 was used to produce Figure 9.

Notes for households

1. A household is defined as:

- one person living alone, or
- a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address who share cooking Facilities and share a living room or sitting room or dining area.

This includes:

- sheltered accommodation units in an establishment where 50% or more have their own kitchens (irrespective of whether there are other communal facilities), and
- all people living in caravans on any type of site that is their usual residence. This will include anyone who has no other usual residence elsewhere in the UK.

2. A household must contain at least one person whose place of usual residence is at the address. A group of short-term residents living together is not classified as a household, and neither is a group of people at an address where only visitors are staying. A family is defined as a group of people who are either:
 - a married, same-sex civil partnership, or cohabiting couple, with or without child(ren),
 - a lone parent with child(ren),
 - a married, same-sex civil partnership, or cohabiting couple with grandchild(ren) but with no children present from the intervening generation, or
 - a single grandparent with grandchild(ren) but no children present from the intervening generation.

Children in couple families need not belong to both members of the couple. For single or couple grandparents with grandchildren present, the children of the grandparent(s) may also be present if they are not parents or grandparents of the youngest generation present.

3. Other households included households of more than one family, households comprised of unrelated adults sharing and those including one family and other unrelated adults.
4. The concept of a Household Reference Person (HRP) was introduced in the 2001 Census (in common with other government surveys in 2001/2) to replace the traditional concept of the 'head of the household'. HRPs provide an individual person within a household to act as a reference point for producing further derived statistics and for characterising a whole household according to characteristics of the chosen reference person.

For a person living alone, it follows that this person is the HRP. If a household contains only one family (with or without ungrouped individuals, for example unrelated lodgers) then the HRP is the same as the Family Reference Person (FRP). For families in which there is generational divide between family members that cannot be determined (Other related family, for example adult siblings sharing a household), there is no FRP. Members of these families are treated the same as ungrouped individuals.

If there is more than one family in a household the HRP is chosen from among the FRPs using the same criteria used to choose the FRP. This means the HRP will be selected from the FRPs on the basis of their economic activity, in the priority order:

- Economically active, employed, full-time, non-student
- Economically active, employed, full-time, student
- Economically active, employed, part-time, non-student
- Economically active, employed, part-time, student
- Economically active, unemployed, non-student
- Economically active, unemployed, student
- Economically inactive, retired
- Economically inactive, other

If some or all FRPs have the same economic activity, the HRP is the eldest of the FRPs. If some or all are the same age, the HRP is the first of the FRPs from the order in which they were listed on the questionnaire. If a household is made up entirely of any combination of ungrouped individuals and other related families, the HRP is chosen from among all people in the household, using the same criteria used to choose between FRPs. Students at their non term-time address and short-term migrants cannot be the HRP.

5. Ireland, EU member countries in March 2001 (excluding UK and Ireland), EU Accession countries April 2001 to March 2011, Rest of Europe, Africa, Middle East and Asia, The Americas and the Caribbean, Antarctica, Oceania and other.

6. For each household, an occupancy rating (bedroom) is derived by subtracting the number of bedrooms available from the bedroom standard (a prescribed legal number of bedrooms for each household, based on the size, age, sex, marital status and relationship among members of the household). An occupancy rating indicates overcrowding or under-occupation within the household. Data on occupancy rating for both rooms and bedrooms are available from the 2011 Census.
7. The number of persons per room is equal to the number of usual residents in a household divided by the number of rooms in that household's accommodation. The definition of a room does not include bathrooms, toilets, halls or landings, or rooms that can only be used for storage. All other rooms, for example, kitchens, living rooms, bedrooms, utility rooms, studies and conservatories are counted. If two rooms have been converted into one they are counted as one room. Rooms shared between a number of households, for example a shared kitchen, are not counted.

11. Background notes

1. Relevant table numbers are provided in all download files within this publication. All data tables are available via the [Nomis](#) website.
2. Further information on future releases is available online in the [2011 Census Prospectus \(806 Kb Excel sheet\)](#).
3. ONS has ensured that the data collected meet users' needs via an extensive [2011 Census outputs consultation](#) process in order to ensure that the 2011 Census outputs will be of increased use in the planning of housing, education, health and transport services in future years.
4. ONS is responsible for carrying out the census in England and Wales. Simultaneous but separate censuses took place in Scotland and Northern Ireland. These were run by the National Records of Scotland (NRS) and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) respectively.
5. A person's place of usual residence is in most cases the address at which they stay the majority of the time. For many people this will be their permanent or family home. If a member of the services did not have a permanent or family address at which they are usually resident, they were recorded as usually resident at their base address.
6. All key terms used in this publication are explained in the [2011 Census glossary](#). Information on the [2011 Census geography products for England and Wales](#) is also available.
7. All census population estimates were extensively quality assured, using other national and local sources of information for comparison and review by a series of quality assurance panels. An extensive range of [quality assurance, evaluation and methodology](#) papers were published alongside the first release in July 2012 and have been updated in this release, including a [Quality and Methodology \(QMI\) document](#).
8. The census developed the coverage assessment and adjustment methodology to address the problem of undercounting. It was used for both usual residents and short-term residents. The coverage assessment and adjustment methodology involved the use of standard statistical techniques, similar to those used by many other countries, for measuring the level of undercount in the census and providing an assessment of characteristics of individuals and households. ONS adjusted the 2011 Census counts to include estimates of people and households not counted.
9. The 2011 Census achieved its overall target response rate of 94% of the usually resident population of England and Wales, and over 80% in all local and unitary authorities. The population estimate for England and Wales of 56.1 million is estimated with 95% confidence to be accurate to within +/- 85,000 (0.15%).
10. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html or from the Media Relations Office email: media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk