

Article

How people are living in England and Wales



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1. A look at what the 2011 Census tells us about families and households

Data from the 2011 Census present a picture of the population of England and Wales. These data are used to aid planning decisions and the allocation of resources, for example in education services and housing.

To help users understand and interpret the data, a series of stories have been produced, which can be found on the [2011 Census Analysis page](#). A full picture of [Families and Households in England and Wales 2011](#) is available, with some of the key points discussed below.

2. Marriages and civil partnerships

The 2011 Census data show that of the 45.5 million adults usually resident in England and Wales 47% were married. This was a decrease from 51% in 2001.

Another 0.2% (105,000) of adults were in civil partnerships in 2011. However, this figure cannot be compared with 2001 as the legal state of civil partnership was only introduced in 2005.

The greatest increase between 2001 and 2011 was for single people, the proportion of whom saw a rise from 30% to 35%.

Figure 1: Marital and civil partnership status of the resident adult population in England and Wales, 2001 and 2011

Figure 1 - Chart

3. Households

In 2011, there were 23.4 million households (which exclude communal establishments, such as care homes, university halls of residence and prisons etc) in England and Wales, with an average of 2.4 residents per household. There were 55.1 million people in these households, made up of 44.5 million adults and 10.5 million children.

Of the adult household population in 2011, 58% were living as part of a couple, either married, civil partnered or cohabiting, a fall from 61% in 2001.

When considering cohabitating couples there has been an increase since 2001: in 2011 cohabiting couples accounted for 12% of the adult household population, compared with 9.8% in 2001.

The household type that has seen the largest increase is 'other households' at 28% in 2011. These 'other households' are made up of people not living in one-family households, even though they may be related (for example siblings), or consist of multi-generational families. It also includes unrelated persons sharing a household (such as students or others flat or house sharing).

Just under a third of households consisted of one person in 2011; proportionally this has remained unchanged since 2001 although the number of people living alone has increased by 0.6 million. This interactive map has been produced to show this distribution across England and Wales.

Interactive Map - Map

Comparisons with other EU countries show that while 13% of the total resident population of England and Wales (7.1 million) were living alone in 2011, Denmark had the highest proportion with 24% of its total resident population living alone.

Figure 3: Percentage of usually resident population living alone in EU27 countries, 2011

Figure 3 - Chart

When considering the age distribution of those living alone, those aged 65 and over formed the largest group in 2011 with 2.9 million (41%) people.

4. Lone parents

Of the 23.4 million households in England and Wales in 2011, 1.7 million (7.2%) consisted of lone parents with dependent children; this increased from 2001 when the comparable figure was 1.4 million (6.5%). This interactive map has been produced to show the distribution of lone parents across England and Wales in 2011.

Interactive Map - Map

Around 9 in every 10 lone-parent households were headed by a woman, both nationally and across English regions and Wales.

*Some numbers and percentages may not sum due to rounding.

If you have any comments or suggestions, we'd like to hear them. Please email us at: web.comments@ons.gsi.gov.uk