

Statistical bulletin

# Families and households in the UK: 2022

Trends in living arrangements including families (with and without dependent children), people living alone and people in shared accommodation, broken down by size and type of household.



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## Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Families](#)
3. [Households](#)
4. [Living alone](#)
5. [Families and households data](#)
6. [Glossary](#)
7. [Measuring the data](#)
8. [Strengths and limitations](#)
9. [Related links](#)
10. [Cite this statistical bulletin](#)

# 1 . Main points

- In 2022, there were 19.4 million families in the UK, an increase of just over 1 million families (5.7%) in the decade since 2012.
- In 2022, 43% of families (8.3 million) had no children living within them, 42% had one or more dependent children (8.2 million) and 15% had only non-dependent children (2.9 million).
- Married or civil-partnered couple families accounted for the majority of families in 2022 (66%), while cohabiting-couple families accounted for almost 1 in 5 families (19%) and lone-parent families accounted for the remaining 15%.
- The majority of the 2.9 million lone-parent families in 2022 were headed by a lone mother (2.5 million, 84%), with lone fathers now accounting for 16% (457,000) of lone-parent families.
- There were an estimated 28.2 million households in the UK in 2022, an increase of 6.1% (1.6 million) since 2012; most (2 in 3) households consist of one family, either a couple family with or without children (57%) or a lone-parent family (10%).
- The number of people living alone in the UK in 2022 was 8.3 million, this represents 13% of the household population and 30% of all households; the majority (53%) of these households were women living alone.

## 2 . Families

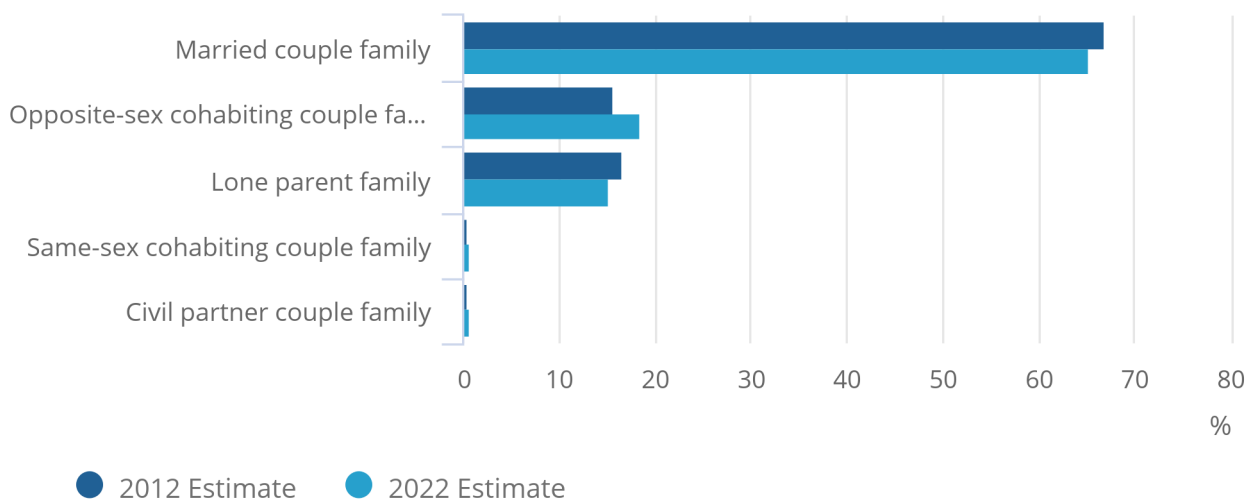
There were an estimated 19.4 million families in the UK in 2022; an increase of 5.7%, or just over 1 million more families than there were in 2012 (18.4 million families).

**Figure 1: Opposite-sex cohabiting couple families have increased as a proportion of all families over the last decade**

Percentage of families by type, UK, 2012 and 2022

Figure 1: Opposite-sex cohabiting couple families have increased as a proportion of all families over the last decade

Percentage of families by type, UK, 2012 and 2022



**Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics**

**Notes:**

1. Married couple families include both opposite-sex married couples and same-sex married couples in 2022. Same-sex marriages have been available since 2014.
2. The civil partner couple families category includes both opposite-sex and same-sex couples in 2022. Opposite-sex civil partnerships have been available since 2019.

Married-couple families remain the most common type of family in 2022 (12.7 million), accounting for 65% of all families. Since 2012, the number of married-couple families has increased from 12.3 million, however this family type has been generally declining as a proportion of all families over time (67% in 2012).

"Opposite-sex cohabiting couple" was the fastest growing family type over the last 10 years. In 2022, these made up 18% of all families (3.6 million opposite-sex cohabiting couple families), an increase from 16% of all families (2.9 million) in 2012. This increase of almost 700,000 families accounted for almost three-quarters of the total growth in the number of families in the UK over the ten-year period.

There were 2.9 million lone-parent families in 2022, accounting for 15% of all families. This is not significantly different to 2012, when there were 3.0 million lone-parent families, equivalent to 17% of all families. While the majority of lone-parent families are lone-mother families (2.5 million, 84%), in 2022, 16% (457,000) were lone-father families. Lone-mother families are more likely to include one or more dependent children (66%) than lone-father families (48%).

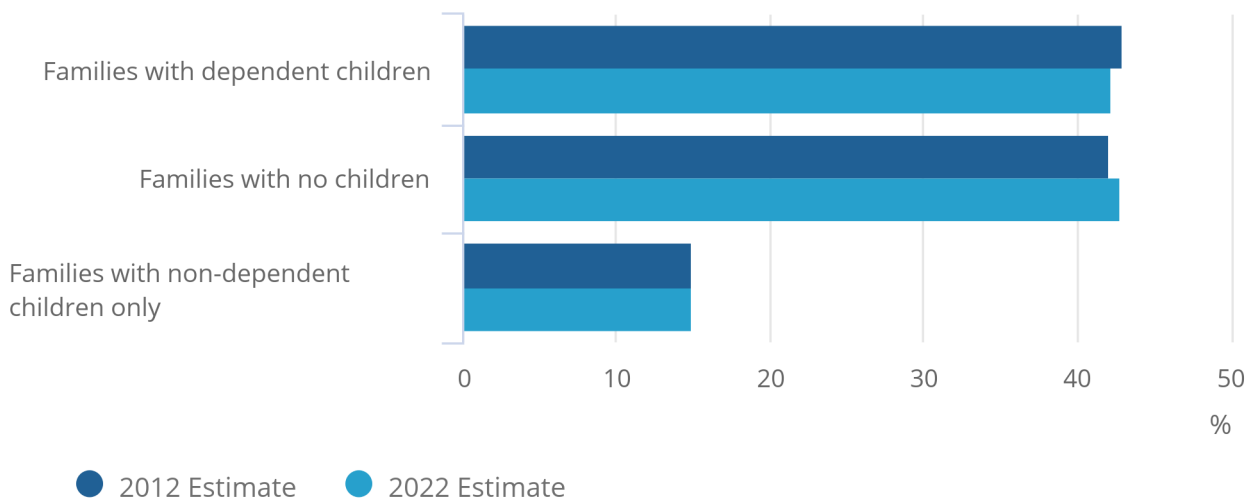
Same-sex cohabiting couple families account for 0.6% and civil-partner couple families (both same sex and opposite sex) account for a further 0.6% of all families in 2022.

**Figure 2: Families with no children made up the largest proportion of families in 2022**

Percentage of families by presence of children, UK, 2012 and 2022

## Figure 2: Families with no children made up the largest proportion of families in 2022

Percentage of families by presence of children, UK, 2012 and 2022



**Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics**

**Notes:**

1. Families with dependent children can include both dependent and non-dependent children.

Families with no children made up the largest proportion (43%) of families (8.3 million) in 2022. Families with one or more dependent children made up 42% of families (8.2 million), while families with non-dependent children only made up 15%. Families with no children will include those who have not had children as well as those whose children live elsewhere.

Of all families with dependent children, families with one child made up 44% (3.6 million) in 2022. Families with two children made up 41% (3.4 million), and families with three or more children made up 15% (1.2 million).

While Census 2021 data for England and Wales is not directly comparable with the Labour Force Survey for the UK presented here, recently published analysis of [Families in England and Wales: Census 2021](#) provides more detailed analysis of Families, such as lone parents, multi-generational households and children with a second parental address.



### 3 . Households

There were an estimated 28.2 million households in the UK in 2022; 6.1% or 1.6 million more households than there were in 2012 (26.6 million households).

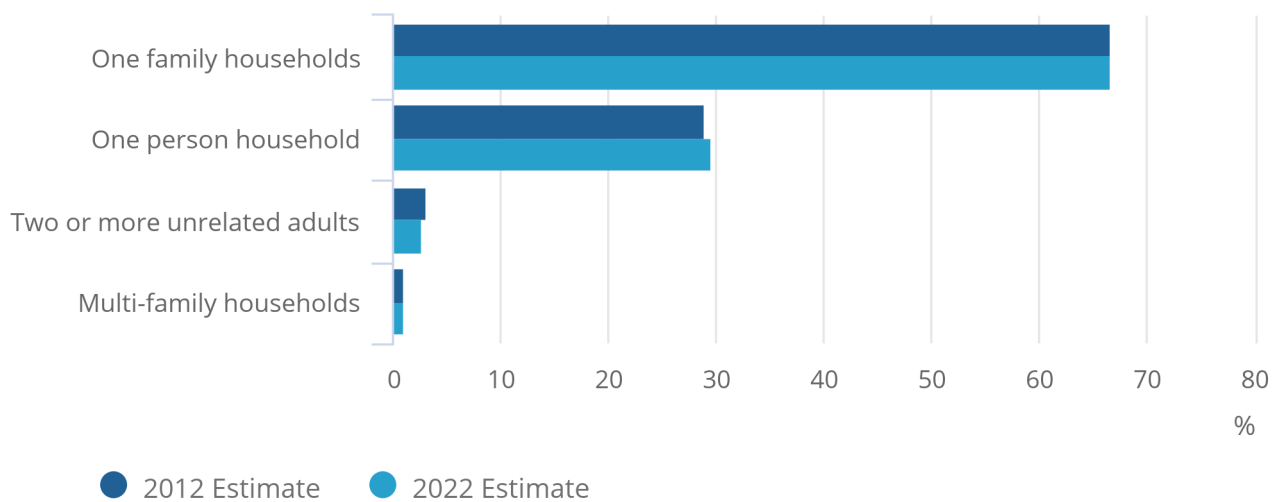
The average household size remained similar over the last 10 years, with 2.36 residents per household in both 2012 and in 2022.

**Figure 3: The majority (97%) of households are either one family or one person households**

Percentage of households by type, UK, 2012 and 2022

Figure 3: The majority (97%) of households are either one family or one person households

Percentage of households by type, UK, 2012 and 2022



Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. One-family households include households with one family and other individuals (related or unrelated), e.g., a married couple living with a lodger.

One-family households were the most common type of household, accounting for 2 in 3 UK households in 2022, (18.8 million households). This is a similar proportion to 2012 when one-family households accounted for 67% of UK households (17.8 million).

One-person households (those living alone) are the second most common type of household, accounting for almost 1 in 3 (30%) UK households in 2022, 8.3 million households. This is a similar proportion to 2012 when one-person households accounted for 29% of UK households (7.7 million households). One-person households were estimated to be a greater proportion of all households in Scotland (36%) in 2022 than in England or Wales (both 30%) and the English region with the highest proportion of one-person households was the North East (34%).

Households formed of unrelated adults accounted for 3% of all UK households in both 2012 and 2022, while multi-family households made up 1% of all UK households in both years.

## 4 . Living alone

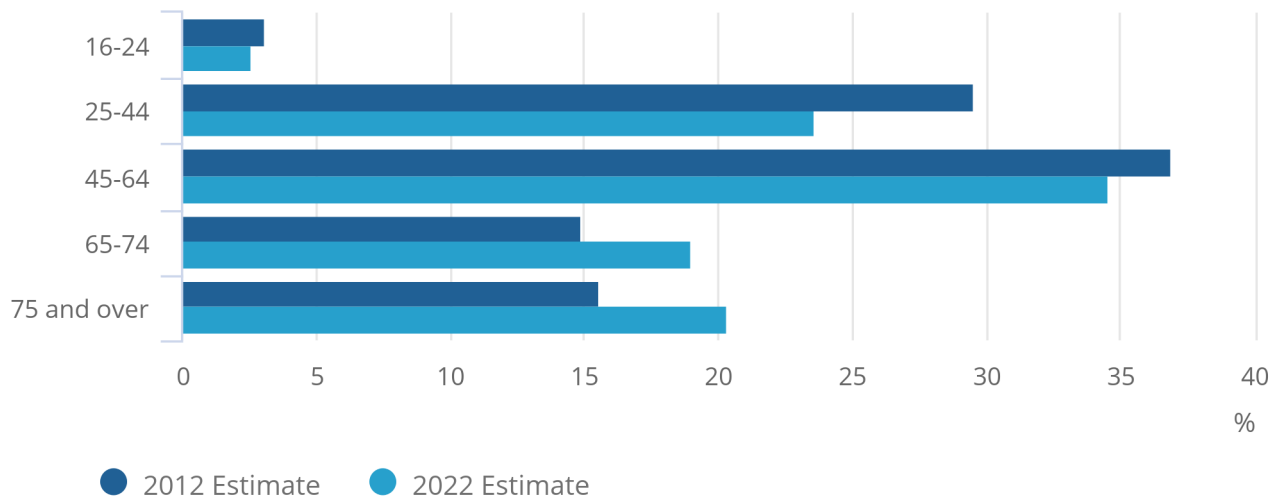
In 2022, the number of people living alone in the UK was 8.3 million, 13% of the people who live in households. There were 4.4 million women living alone (53% of the total) compared with 3.9 million men; however, the number of men living alone has grown by more than the number of women living alone over the last decade (0.4 million more men compared with 0.2 million more women).

**Figure 4a: A larger proportion of men living alone are now aged 65 years or over than in 2012**

Percentage of men living alone by age, UK, 2012 and 2022

Figure 4a: A larger proportion of men living alone are now aged 65 years or over than in 2012

Percentage of men living alone by age, UK, 2012 and 2022



Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

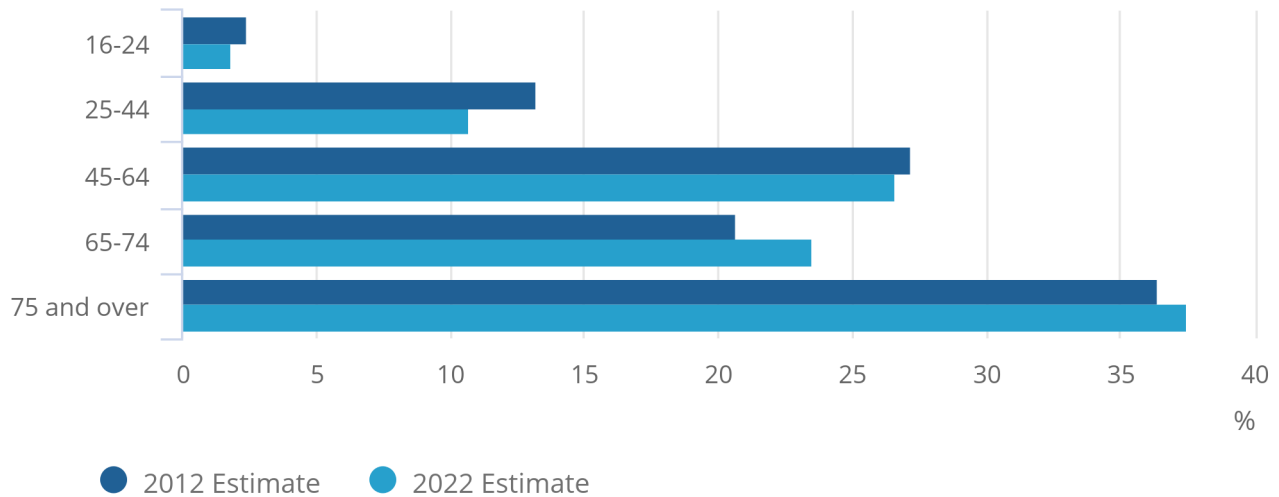


## Figure 4b: A larger proportion of women living alone are now aged 65 years or over than in 2012

Percentage of women living alone by age, UK, 2012 and 2022

### Figure 4b: A larger proportion of women living alone are now aged 65 years or over than in 2012

Percentage of women living alone by age, UK, 2012 and 2022



Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

The age distribution of those living alone has been increasing over time for both men and women. Since 2020, half of those living alone have been aged 65 years and over (51% in 2022). A decade earlier in 2012, 45% of those living alone were in this age group. In 2022, more than 1 in 5 men and 1 in 3 women living alone were aged 75 years or over.

While women account for the majority of those living alone age 65 years and over (64%), this proportion has been reducing over time (69% in 2012). This reflects the greater increases in male life expectancy seen in recent years, as more men are living alone at older ages.

## 5 . Families and households data

[Families and households](#) Dataset | Released 18 May 2023 Families and children in the UK by family type including married couples, cohabiting couples and lone parents. Also shows household size and people living alone.

[Young adults living with their parents](#) Dataset | Released 18 May 2023 Total number of young adults aged 15 to 34 years and total number of young adults aged 20 to 34 years in the UK living with their parents.

[Families by family type, regions of England and GB constituent countries](#) Dataset | Released 18 May 2023 Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates including measures of uncertainty of the number of families by specific family types, for regions of England and also Scotland and Wales.

[Households by household size, regions of England and GB constituent countries](#) Dataset | Released 18 May 2023 Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates including measures of uncertainty of the number of households by household size, for regions of England and also Scotland and Wales.

[Households by type of household and family, regions of England and GB constituent countries](#) Dataset | Released 18 May 2023 Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates including measures of uncertainty of the number of households by types of household and families, for regions of England and also Scotland and Wales.

[People in households by type of household and family, regions of England and GB constituent countries](#) Dataset | Released 18 May 2023 Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates including measures of uncertainty of the number of people in households by types of household and families, for regions of England and also Scotland and Wales.

[People in families by family type and presence of children, regions of England and GB constituent countries](#) Dataset | Released 18 May 2023 Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates including measures of uncertainty of the number of people in families by specific family types and presence of children, for regions of England and also Scotland and Wales.

## 6 . Glossary

### Family

A "family" is a married, civil-partnered or cohabiting couple with or without children, or a lone parent with at least one child, who lives at the same address; children may be dependent or non-dependent.

### Dependent children

"Dependent children" are those living with their parent(s) who are either aged under 16 years, or aged 16 to 18 years and who are in full-time education, excluding children aged 16 to 18 years who have a spouse, partner or child living in the household.

### Non-dependent children

"Non-dependent children" are those living with their parent(s) and who are either aged 19 years or over and have no spouse, partner or child living in the household or aged 16 to 18 years and who are not in full-time education and have no spouse, partner or child living in the household. Non-dependent children are sometimes called adult children.

## **Household**

A "household" is (current definition, from 2011) 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, sitting room or dining area. A household can consist of a single family, more than one family or no families in the case of a group of unrelated people.

A "household" is (previous definition, from 1996 to 2010) a person living alone, or a group of people living at the same address who have the address as their only or main residence and either share one main meal a day or share living accommodation (or both).

A helpful way to think of the relationship between families and households is to consider families as a subset or portion of a household, as more than one family can live in a household.

### **One-person household**

A household that contains just one person. One person living on their own is classed as a family unit in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) but is not classed as a family in the families and households statistics.

### **One-family household**

A household type consisting of both couple households (with or without children) and lone-parent households. Households where there is one family and one individual (for example, a married couple with their daughter and a lodger, or a married couple with one elderly parent) are also classified as one-family households.

### **Couple family**

Either a married, civil-partnered or cohabiting couple with or without children living with them. This will include couples whose children have moved out or are living with former partners.

### **Lone-parent family**

A family with a single male or female parent living with either dependent or non-dependent children. Note: The definition of a lone parent does not make any distinction between situations where a child has regular contact and /or partly resides with their other parent and a child who solely resides with and is cared for by one parent. Only the parent living with their children is included in the estimated number of lone-parent families and households.

### **Two or more unrelated adults household**

A household with two or more people, none of whom are living as part of a family (that is, they do not contain either a couple or a parent with their child). Examples of this type could be students or friends living together but could also consist of two siblings sharing a house.

### **Multi-family household**

Households that consist of two or more families. The families can be unrelated (for example, two unrelated couples sharing a house); related and multi-generational (for example, cohabiting couple plus children and elderly parents, or married couple plus their teenage daughter and her child); or related but not multi-generational (for example, cohabiting couple plus son and girlfriend, or two brothers and their partners sharing a house).

## 7 . Measuring the data

The Families and households' estimates are produced using the April to June quarter of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) (household dataset). This is a large-scale UK household survey we carry out that interviews approximately 40,000 households per quarter. Most communal establishments are excluded from the LFS, except for National Health Service accommodation. Students in halls of residence are included through the parental home.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has affected the data collection and weighting methodology. More information can be found in our [Coronavirus and its impact on the Labour Force Survey bulletin](#) and in our blog posts [Measuring the labour market during Coronavirus](#) and [Understanding the impact of Covid-19 on UK population](#).

The LFS data were reweighted for 2020 and 2021, as shown in our [Impact of reweighting on Labour Force Survey key indicators: 2022 article](#). Estimates for 2020 and 2021 have been updated to reflect the new weights, with confidence intervals and coefficients of variation recalculated.

The ONS plans a further reweighting of the LFS and Annual Population Survey (APS) datasets following the results of the 2021 censuses for England and Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as the 2022 Scottish census. Details around the timing and specific datasets of this reweighting are yet to be announced.

Measures of quality such as confidence intervals (to show the levels of uncertainty associated with survey estimates) are presented in the datasets. Users are advised to consult the quality measures when interpreting the estimates.

## 8 . Strengths and limitations

We have published a [user guide on household estimates and projections across the UK](#). This provides further detail on the coherence and comparability of household estimates across the UK. We will no longer be publishing Labour Force Survey (LFS) based estimates of families and households for Northern Ireland. LFS-based estimates are still available for England, Scotland and Wales. These should be used when making comparisons with estimates for the UK as a whole, or across GB countries.

The [National Records of Scotland \(NRS\)](#), the [Welsh Government](#) and [Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(NISRA\)](#) publish the official estimates of households for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, respectively. These should be used when analysing household estimates at national and sub-national level.

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our [Families and households QMI](#).

The figures published from our regular families and household publications are likely to differ from Census 2021 for a number of reasons. Census data refer to a point in time whereas survey data are accumulated over a period of three months. Census is self-completed whereas surveys are interviewer led. Census covers nearly all the of the population with only a small amount of estimation, whereas surveys are weighted up from a sample to be representative.

## 9 . Related links

[Families and households statistics explained](#) Article | Released 09 March 2022 Outlines families and households definitions, classifications, uses and users of the data, common queries, and other sources of household estimates.

[Household estimates and projections across the UK: user guide](#) Article | Released 09 March 2022 Guidance for users about the coherence and comparability of data on household estimates and projections for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

[Families in England and Wales: Census 2021](#) Article | Released 10 May 2023 Analysis of families from Census 2021 for England and Wales and comparisons with results from Census 2011.

[People's living arrangements in England and Wales: Census 2021](#) Article | Released 09 February 2023 Analysis of living arrangements from Census 2021 for England and Wales. It includes analysis on: their legal partnership status, non-dependent children, people living alone, people with second addresses, and whether people had moved in the year prior to census.

[Marriage and civil partnership status in England and Wales: Census 2021](#) Article | Released 22 February 2023 Details adults' legal partnership status, including: changes over time; where groups of each legal partnership status live; education; ethnicity; and, religion.

[Household projections for England: 2018-based](#) Bulletin | Released 29 June 2020 Indication of the future number of households in England and its regions and local authorities. Used for planning in areas such as housing and social care.

[Population estimates by marital status and living arrangements, England and Wales: 2020](#) Bulletin | Released 16 December 2021 Annual estimates of population by legal marital status and cohabitation status by age and sex for England and Wales.

[Marriages in England and Wales: 2020](#) Bulletin | Released 11 May 2023 Number of marriages that took place in England and Wales analysed by age, sex, previous marital status and civil or religious ceremony.

[Civil partnerships in England and Wales: 2021](#) Bulletin | Released 9 December 2022 Annual statistics on formations and dissolutions of civil partnerships analysed by the sex, age, partnership type and previous marital status of the couples and the place of registration.

## 10 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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