Office for National Statistics

Statistical bulletin

Baby names in England and Wales: 2019

Most popular first names for baby boys and girls in 2019 using birth registration data.

Contact:
David Corps
health.data@ons.gov.uk
+44 (0)1329 444110

Release date:
26 August 2020

Next release:
August to September 2021
(provisional)

Table of contents

1 . Main points

- Oliver and Olivia remained the most popular name for boys and girls in England and Wales.

- Freya and Lily replaced Emily and Ella in the top 10 girls' names, while there were no new entries in the top 10 boys' names in 2019.

- Alfred, Chester, Hudson, Ibrahim and Oakley entered the 2019 top 100 boys' names replacing Alex, Dexter, Dominic, Kai, Sonny and Tobias.

- Lara and Mabel replaced Aisha and Francesca in the top 100 girls' names; Mabel has not been in the top 100 since 1924.

- Shortened versions of traditional boys' names featured in half of the top 10 boys' names chosen by mothers aged under 25 years compared with just one name chosen by mothers aged 35 years and over.

- Only half of the top 10 girls' names chosen by mothers aged under 25 years featured in the top 10 names chosen by mothers aged 35 years and over.

- In 2019, 31.2% of local authorities had a top girls' name outside the top 10 compared with 24.5% in 2018; in contrast, the percentage of local authorities with a top boys' name outside the top 10 decreased to 20.2%.

Statistician's comment

"Oliver and Olivia continued their reign as the top boys' and girls' names in 2019, but analysis shows choices in baby names can differ depending on the mother's age. We found younger mothers opted for more modern girls' names like Harper, which has seen a rise since the Beckhams named their daughter so in 2011, and shortened boys' names like Freddie. In contrast, older mothers chose more traditional names such as Jack and Charlotte.

"Popular culture continues to influence the baby names landscape. Following Dua Lipa's first UK number one single in 2017, the number of girls named Dua has doubled from 63 to 126 in 2019."

David Corps, Vital Statistics Outputs Branch, Office for National Statistics.

Follow Vital Statistics Outputs Branch on Twitter @NickStripe_ONS

2 . Top 10 baby names

Oliver and Olivia were the most popular baby names in 2019 across England and Wales. Oliver has been the top boys' name since 2013, while Olivia has been the top girls' name since 2016.

In 2019, Freya and Lily entered the top 10 replacing Ella and Emily. This is the first time Freya has been in the top 10 most popular girls' names, while it is the first time Emily has not been in the top 10 since 1984. Margaret and Mary were the only girls' names to have featured in the top 10 for a longer period of time than Emily.

In contrast to the top 10 girls' names, there were no new entries in the top 10 boys' names. Arthur continued its recent rise, now at its highest position since records began in 1904 as the fourth most popular boys' name, 11 years since returning to the top 100.

3 . Top 100 baby names

In 2019, Alfred, Chester, Hudson, Ibrahim and Oakley entered the top 100 most popular boys' names in England and Wales. They replaced Alex, Dexter, Dominic, Kai, Sonny and Tobias. This is the first time Alfred has been in the top 100 since 1944.

Within the top 100 boys' names, Tommy increased in the rankings the most by 24 places to become the 26th most popular boys' name, while Matthew decreased the most by 17 places. Matthew is now the 99th most popular boys name, and it looks like the name may soon fall out the top 100 for the first time since 1954.

There were only two entrants into the top 100 girls' names, with Mabel and Lara replacing Aisha and Francesca. This is the first time Mabel has been in the top 100 since 1924.

Hallie increased the most within the top 100 girls' names in 2019, rising 21 places to become the 58th most popular girls' name in England and Wales. In 1999, there were just three girls named Hallie compared with 910 in 2019. Although Lily entered the top 10, the alternative spelling of Lilly decreased the most within the top 100 girls' names by 19 places to become the 86th most popular girls' name (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Trends in the top 100 baby boys' and girls' names have changed over time

England and Wales, 1904 to 2019

Download the data

The top 100 boys' and girls' names for 2019 are also available for England and for Wales separately in our datasets.

4 . Baby names by age of mother

The trends we saw in 2018 continued in 2019 when the choice of name tended to differ between older and younger mothers.

For girls, only half of the top 10 names chosen by mothers aged under 25 years featured in the top 10 girls' names chosen by mothers aged 35 years and over (Figure 2). Mothers aged 35 years and over continued to choose more traditional names like Charlotte and Emily, while younger mothers opted for more modern names like Harper and Mia.

Figure 2: Mothers aged 35 years and over chose more traditional girls' names

Top 10 baby names for girls, by mothers' age in years, England and Wales, 2019

Notes:

1. Ranks for names outside of the top 10 are not drawn to scale but are included so users can see their rank.

2. Figures reflect girls' names that ranked in the top 10 for at least one age-group. The corresponding rank for each of the other age-groups has been included for comparison purposes.

3. The full list of the top 100 names per age-group are available in table 8 of our dataset.

The trend continued with boys' names where younger mothers chose less traditional names or shortened versions of traditional names (Figure 3). Of the top 10 boys' names chosen by mothers aged under 25 years, seven had not featured in the top 100 boys' names prior to the late 1990s. In contrast, 8 out the top 10 boys' names selected by mothers aged 35 years and over had featured in the top 100 before the late 1990s, and only one name was a shortened version of a traditional name.

Figure 3: Half of the top 10 boys' names chosen by mothers aged under 25 years were shortened versions of traditional names

Top 10 baby names for boys, by mothers' age in years, England and Wales, 2019

Notes:

1. Ranks for names outside of the top 10 are not drawn to scale but are included so users can see their rank.

2. Figures reflect boys' names that ranked in the top 10 for at least one age-group. The corresponding rank for each of the other age-groups has been included for comparison purposes.

3. The full list of the top 100 names per age-group are available in table 8 of our dataset.

5 . Baby names and popular culture

As well as looking at the most popular names, each year we take a light-hearted look at other interesting changes. These may be where changes appear to be driven by popular culture or current affairs or where names have all but disappeared completely.

Since 2016, when the Amazon Alexa was first available in the UK, the girls' name Alexa has decreased in popularity from 2016 when there were 332 girls named Alexa to just 39 in 2019. In contrast, a girls' name that may have increased following the rise to fame of a celebrity is the name Dua. Dua Lipa, the popstar, had her first UK number one single in 2017. In that time, the number of girls named Dua has doubled from 63 in 2017 to 126 in 2019; this is the highest number since our annual records began in 1996.

Similar trends have been seen in boys' names where the name Taron has increased in popularity, with 48 boys born in 2019 being given this name, the most since detailed records began in 1996. This choice in name might be influenced by the actor Taron Egerton who starred in the 2019 award-winning Elton John biopic, Rocketman. Continuing the cinematic trends, the name Kylo appears to have increased in popularity since the release of the new Star Wars sequel trilogy. Kylo Ren, a leading character, first appeared in 2015. Since then, the number of boys named Kylo has risen from 10 to 67 in 2019.

Looking back to 1996, when detailed annual rankings of baby names first became available, we have seen names rise and fall and some all but disappear completely. The girls' names Brittany and Kerry were reasonably popular 20 years ago, with Brittany the 101st most popular name in 1999, and Kerry was 136th in 1996. However, in 2019, there were two or fewer children given these names.

There were similar cases for boys' names. In 2019, there were two or fewer boys named Kieren or Glenn for the first time since our detailed annual rankings were first available in 1996. Kieren's highest rank was in 1997 when it reached 169th position. The more popular spelling of this name, Kieran, has declined too, decreasing from 89th position in 2010 to 374th in 2019. Meanwhile, Glenn was once the 95th most popular boys' name in 1964.

6 . Baby names by mother's usual area of residence

The regional variation in top boys' names continued in 2019 when, despite Oliver being the top name in England and Wales overall, it was only top in the East Midlands, the East of England, the South West and Wales. Muhammad remained the most popular boys' name in the North West, Yorkshire and The Humber, the West Midlands, and London while Harry and Arthur were the most popular boys' names in the North East and South East respectively. Of all the Arthurs born in England and Wales, a fifth were born in the South East.

In 2019, 20.2% of local authorities had a top name that was not in the top 10 for England and Wales, down from 21.2% in 2018.

The highest proportion of boys given the same name in any given area remained in Pendle where 13.1% of boys born were named Muhammad; this is up from 10.3% in 2018 (Figure 4). Muhammad was the seventh most popular boys' name in England and Wales.

Figure 4: Explore the top 100 boys' names by local authority

England and Wales, 2019

Download the data

Notes:

1. Figures are based on mothers' usual area of residence, based on boundaries as of May 2020.

There was less regional variation of top girls' names than boys' names. Olivia was the most popular name across all regions in England and Wales except for the West Midlands and London where Amelia was the most popular name.

Across all local authorities in England and Wales, 31.2% of local authorities had a top name that was not in the top 10 in England and Wales, up from 24.5% in 2018.

The local authority with the highest proportion of girls given the same name changed from Craven (Olivia 3.8%), in 2018, to South Norfolk in 2019 where 3.8% of girls born in South Norfolk were named Isla (Figure 5). Isla was the third most popular name in England and Wales.

Figure 5: Explore the top 100 girls' names by local authority

Notes:

1. Figures are based on mothers' usual area of residence, based on boundaries as of May 2020.

7 . Baby names data

Baby names for girls in England and Wales
Dataset | Released 26 August 2020
Rank and count of the top names for baby girls, changes in rank since the previous year and breakdown by country, region and month of birth.

Baby names for boys in England and Wales
Dataset | Released 26 August 2020
Rank and count of the top names for baby boys, changes in rank since the previous year and breakdown by country, region and month of birth.

8 . Glossary

Live birth

A live birth is a baby showing signs of life at birth.

Stillbirth

A stillbirth is a baby born after 24 or more weeks' completed gestation and that did not, at any time, breathe or show signs of life.

9 . Measuring the data

Birth statistics represent births that occur and are then registered in England and Wales. Figures are derived from information recorded when live births and stillbirths are registered as part of civil registration, a legal requirement; these data represent the most complete data source available.

The registration of births is a service carried out by the Local Registration Service in partnership with the General Register Office (GRO), in England and Wales.

Baby name statistics are compiled from first names recorded when live births are registered in England and Wales as part of civil registration, a legal requirement. Statistics are based only on live births, as there is no public register of stillbirths.

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in the Baby names QMI.

10 . Strengths and limitations

Our User guide to birth statistics provides further information on data quality, legislation and procedures relating to births, and it includes a glossary of terms.

National Statistics status for Births in England and Wales

National Statistics status means that our statistics meet the highest standard of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

Date of most recent full assessment: September 2011

Most recent compliance check that confirms National Statistics status: September 2011

Improvements since last review:

- Revisions to the way statistics are produced are explained in the user guide, detailing the year the change took place and reason why.

- In cases where corrections were implemented, they were accompanied by explanations of the change and the reasons why.

- Where applicable, we added additional background information into our user guide and QMI to inform the user of the differences in methods between the UK countries and the reasons underlying these differences.

11 . Related links

[Births in England and Wales: 2019](#)
Bulletin | Released 22 July 2020
Live births, stillbirths and the intensity of childbearing, measured by the total fertility rate.

[Births by parent's country of birth, England and Wales: 2019](#)
Bulletin | Released 22 July 2020
Annual statistics on live births including countries of birth for non-UK-born mothers and fathers.

[Birth characteristics in England and Wales: 2018](#)
Bulletin | Released 6 December 2019
Annual live births by sex, ethnicity and month, maternities by place of birth and with multiple births, and stillbirths by age of parents and calendar quarter.

[Baby names comparison tool by Anna Powell-Smith using our data](#)
Web page | Updated as new data become available
Baby name trends in England and Wales from 1996 to 2019.

[Top 100 baby names in England and Wales: historical data](#)
Dataset | Released 15 August 2014
Historical lists of the top 100 names for baby boys and girls for 1904 to 1994 at 10-yearly intervals.

[What's in a name? There's more than you might think to the ONS baby names list](#)
Blog | Released 28 August 2018
Here, Nick Stripe argues in defence of baby names lists. Far from being inconsequential, he argues, the annual changes hint reliably at the social and cultural changes underway in our population.

[Baby name statistics for Scotland](#)
Web page | Updated as new data become available
National Records of Scotland's (NRS's) statistics on baby names.

[Baby name statistics for Northern Ireland](#)
Web page | Updated as new data become available
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's (NISRA's) statistics on baby names.