

Statistical bulletin

Births in England and Wales: 2022

Live births and stillbirths annual summary statistics.



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1 . Other births outputs in this release

Other commentary from the latest births data can be found on the following pages:

- [Births by parents' country of birth, England and Wales: 2022](#)

2 . Main points

- There were 605,479 live births in England and Wales in 2022, a 3.1% decrease from 624,828 in 2021 and the lowest number since 2002; the number remains in line with the recent trend of decreasing live births observed before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
- In 2022, there were 2,433 stillbirths, a decrease of 164 (6.3%) from 2,597 in 2021.
- The stillbirth rate in 2022 decreased to 4.0 stillbirths per 1,000 total births from 4.1 in 2021; this is higher than the rate observed before the coronavirus pandemic in 2019 (3.9).
- The number of births outside of marriage or civil partnership remain higher than births within marriage or civil partnership in England and Wales; 311,306 live births (51.4%) were registered to women outside of a marriage or civil partnership.

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In this release, fertility rates for 2022 have not been calculated because mid-year 2022 population estimates were not available at the time of production. See [Section 7: Measuring the data](#) for more information.

3 . Live births

In 2022, there were 605,479 live births in England and Wales, a decrease of 3.1% compared with 2021 (624,828). Although there was a small increase in the number of live births in 2021, the number of live births in 2022 was lower than the number of live births in 2019 and remains in line with the recent trend of decreasing live births observed before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic (Figure 1). The number of live births in 2022 was the lowest number seen since 2002.

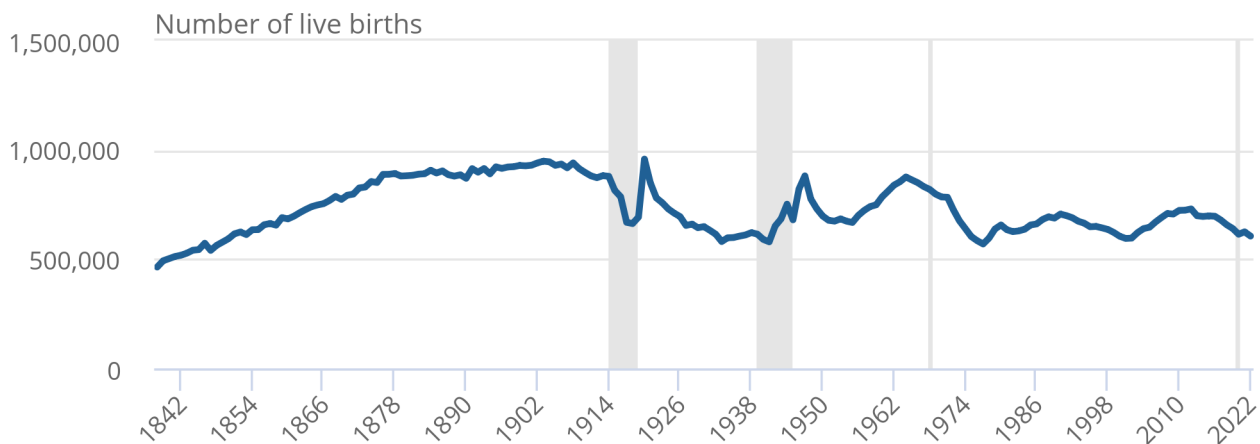
In 2022, 577,046 live births occurred in England and 28,296 live births took place in Wales.

Figure 1: The number of live births has decreased over the last decade

Number of live births, England and Wales, 1838 to 2022

Figure 1: The number of live births has decreased over the last decade

Number of live births, England and Wales, 1838 to 2022



Source: Births in England and Wales from the Office for National Statistics

In England and Wales, the month with the highest number of live births in 2022 was October, with 8.7% of live births. In comparison, February had the lowest number of live births (7.7%).

The number of live births outside of marriage or civil partnership remains higher than births within marriage or civil partnership – 311,306 live births (51.4%) were registered to women outside of a marriage or civil partnership in 2022.

4 . Stillbirths

In 2022, the number of stillbirths in England and Wales was 2,433. This was a 6.3% decrease compared with 2021 (2,597). The number of stillbirths in 2022 was lower compared with the 2,522 stillbirths observed in 2019 before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

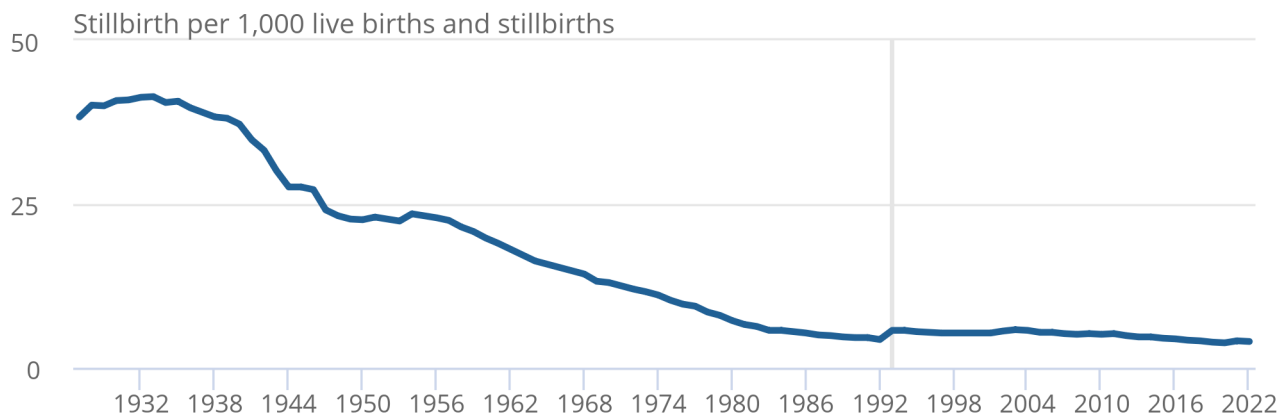
The stillbirth rate decreased slightly to 4.0 stillbirths per 1,000 total births in 2022 from 4.1 in 2021. This is still a slightly higher rate than both 2019 and 2020 (3.8 and 3.9 stillbirths per 1,000 total births, respectively) (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Stillbirth rate decreased slightly in 2022

Stillbirth rates, England and Wales, 1927 to 2022

Figure 2: Stillbirth rate decreased slightly in 2022

Stillbirth rates, England and Wales, 1927 to 2022



Source: Births in England and Wales from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Figures for stillbirths from 1993 are not fully comparable with those for previous years because of a definitional change, see [Section 6: Glossary](#).

For Wales the stillbirth rate has remained at 4.4 stillbirths per 1,000 total births since 2020.

In England, the government has [an ambition to halve the 2010 stillbirth rate by 2025](#). To achieve this, the stillbirth rate would need to decrease to 2.6 stillbirths per 1,000 total births. In 2022, the stillbirth rate for England decreased to 3.9 stillbirths per 1,000 total births from 4.1 stillbirths per 1,000 total births in 2021.

The regions in England with the highest stillbirth rates were the North East and West Midlands at 4.3 stillbirths per 1,000 total births in 2022. The South West had the lowest stillbirth rate with 2.9 stillbirths per 1,000 total births.

5 . Births data

[Births in England and Wales: summary tables](#)

Dataset | Released 17 August 2023

Annual summary statistics on live births and stillbirths, by sex, age of mother, whether inside marriage or civil partnership, percentage of non-UK-born mothers, birth rates and births by months and mothers' area of usual residence.

Please filter the explorable datasets for births in England and Wales, 2022 data will be added as soon they are available:

- [Live births in England and Wales: birth rates down to local authority areas \(2013 onwards\)](#)
- [Live births in England and Wales by sex and characteristics of mother: national/regional \(2013 onwards\)](#)
- [Live births in England and Wales by characteristics of mother and father \(2013 onwards\)](#)
- [Live births in England and Wales down to local authority local area \(2013 onwards\)](#)
- [Live births in England and Wales for small geographic areas \(2013 onwards\)](#)

6 . Glossary

Live birth

A baby showing signs of life at birth.

Stillbirth

A stillbirth is a baby born after 24 or more weeks completed gestation and which did not, at any time, breathe or show signs of life. On 1 October 1992 the [Still-Birth \(Definition\) Act 1992](#) changed the legal definition of a stillbirth to 24 or more weeks completed gestation, instead of 28 or more weeks completed gestation.

Stillbirth rate

The stillbirth rate is defined as the number of stillbirths per 1,000 live births and stillbirths.

A more complete glossary is available from our [User guide to birth statistics](#).

7 . Measuring the data

The birth registrations dataset represents live births and stillbirths occurring in the calendar year, plus a small number of late registrations from the previous year.

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, which is a legal requirement. Figures include mothers and fathers whose usual residence is outside England and Wales. 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. Birth registration is linked to the NHS birth notification within the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to obtain the age of the mother where this was missing on the birth registration. It also enables the analysis of further characteristics such as birthweight, ethnicity of the baby and gestation of live births.

In this release we have included an additional table, Table 4: Live births by month of occurrence, which has been brought forward from [Birth characteristics in England and Wales](#).

Population estimates revisions and impact on rates

Fertility rates for 2022 have not been calculated in the release because mid-year 2022 population estimates were not available at the time of production. Rates for 2021 were calculated using provisional mid-year 2021 population estimates. These were the latest population estimates available at the time of production and are Census 2021-based estimates. The 2021 mid-year estimates are due to be revised in 2023 along with the back series to 2012, in line with normal practice following the decennial Census. The 2022 mid-year estimates should be available at the same time. Care should be taken when comparing rates from 2021 with previous years until the back series has been revised. The 2022 rates and a revised back series of rates for timeseries tables will be provided as soon as possible once the population estimates are available.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) and birth statistics

Delays in birth registrations because of the coronavirus pandemic affected the cut-off dates for our annual birth registrations datasets for 2020 to 2022. The differences are detailed in our [accompanying dataset](#) and in our [User guide to birth statistics](#).

8 . Strengths and limitations

More quality and methodology information on the strengths, limitations and accuracy of the data are available in our [Birth statistics Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#).

Our [User guide to birth statistics methodology](#) provides further information on data quality, legislation and procedures relating to births, and includes a glossary of terms.

9 . Related links

[Births by parents' country of birth, England and Wales: 2022](#)

Bulletin | Released 17 August 2023

Annual statistics on live births including countries of birth for non-UK-born mothers and fathers.

[Explorable datasets for births in England and Wales](#)

Datasets | Updated as new data become available

Datasets on life events in England and Wales.

[Baby names in England and Wales: 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 5 October 2022

Most popular first names for baby boys and girls in 2021 using birth registration data.

[Birth characteristics in England and Wales: 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 19 January 2023

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.

[Births in Northern Ireland](#)

Web page | Updated as new data become available

Births statistics from 1887 onwards and Baby Names statistics from 1997 onwards for Northern Ireland.

[Births in Scotland](#)

Web page | Updated as new data become available

National Records of Scotland's (NRS's) statistics on births.

[User guide to birth statistics](#)

Article | Released 17 August 2023

Supporting information for birth statistics, which present figures on births that occur and are then registered in England and Wales. Figures are based on information collected at birth registration.

10 . Cite this statistical release

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