Statistical bulletin

Population estimates by marital status and living arrangements, England and Wales: 2024

Annual estimates of population by legal marital status and cohabitation status by age and sex for England and Wales.

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1 . Main points

- Married or civil partnered remained the most common legal partnership status among the population aged 16 years and over in England and Wales; however, this proportion has decreased from 51.5% in 2014 to 49.5% in 2024, reflecting smaller proportions of married people aged 25 to 34 years and 55 to 69 years, compared with 2014.

- Living in a couple remained more common than not living in a couple in 2024, with 60.5% of the population aged 16 years and over either living with a legal partner or cohabiting; this varied by age, with around 1 in 4 (25.1%) of those aged 16 to 29 years living in a couple, compared with over 7 in 10 for all those aged 30 to 64 years.

- There was an increase in the number and proportion of the population aged 16 years and over that were never married or civil partnered in 2024 (18,572,052 or 36.8%) compared with 2014 (15,818,480 or 33.9%); the proportion of people aged 16 years and over who were living in a couple, but not currently in a marriage or civil partnership, also increased from 11.9% in 2014 to 12.9% in 2024, which is equivalent to 5.5 million people in 2014 and 6.5 million people in 2024.

- There was no overall change in the number or proportion of people that were divorced or had legally dissolved their civil partnerships in 2024, compared with 2014; this varied by age, with decreases in the number and proportion of divorced people among those aged 30 to 59 years and increases among those aged 65 years and over, compared with 2014.

- People in civil partnerships still account for a small proportion of those in a legal partnership, though the estimated number of people in a civil partnership has more than tripled in the last decade, from 116,028 in 2014 to 372,719 in 2024; this increase includes the introduction of opposite-sex civil partnerships from 31 December 2019.

- People in same-sex marriages accounted for a small proportion of married people in 2024 (0.8% or 206,087), but the number of people in same-sex marriages has increased from 26,194 since they were first introduced in 2015; of people in same-sex marriages, men accounted for almost 6 in 10, or 59.5%, while women accounted for just over 4 in 10, or 40.5%.

- We are publishing revised estimates for 2022 alongside our latest 2023 and 2024 estimates; this is because revised population estimates for mid-2022 were published in July to be consistent with long-term international migration estimates and to use previously unavailable administrative data for internal migration.

The Labour Force Survey data are used to produce estimates for marital status and living arrangements, but recent lower response rates have increased uncertainty. Measures of uncertainty and statistical robustness have been included in the datasets accompanying this release.

2 . Data on marital status and living arrangements

Population estimates by marital status and living arrangements, England and Wales
Dataset | Released 15 October 2025
Annual estimates of population by marital status and living arrangements by age group and sex in England and Wales.

Population estimates by marital status and living arrangements, England
Dataset | Released 15 October 2025
Annual estimates of population by marital status and living arrangements by age group and sex in England only.

Population estimates by marital status and living arrangements, Wales
Dataset | Released 15 October 2025
Annual estimates of population by marital status and living arrangements by age group and sex in Wales only.

3 . Data sources and quality

TheMarriage (Same-Sex Couples) Act 2013 made provision for the marriage of same-sex couples in England and Wales from 29 March 2014 onwards. This bulletin provides an estimate of the number of people in a same-sex marriage by sex. Until sample sizes become large enough to produce robust estimates, data are unlikely to be available by age group. This will be reviewed annually.

TheCivil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registrations etc) Act 2019 received royal assent on 29 March 2019 and made provision for opposite-sex civil partnerships to be formed in England and Wales from 31 December 2019. Therefore, the estimates for civil partnerships in this bulletin include both opposite-sex and same-sex civil partnerships. It is not currently possible to separate these into opposite-sex and same-sex.

All analyses and percentages presented in this bulletin exclude those aged under 16 years. Marital status estimates for those aged zero to 15 years are included within the datasets accompanying this release. We consider all those aged under 16 years to be never married or civil partnered in line with the historical legal age of marriage or civil partnership in England and Wales.

From February 2023, those aged 16 and 17 years were no longer able to marry or enter a civil partnership in England and Wales, which will affect estimates for the 16 to 19 years age group for 2023 and 2024. This is because of the introduction of theMarriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022.

By 2025, it will not be feasible for anyone aged under 18 years to be married or civil partnered. This will be considered in our future releases. We do not expect the impact of this change to cause the decrease in married people in 2024, compared with 2014, given the decrease was seen in multiple age groups. Additionally, this group typically represents a small number of marriages. There were under 100 people aged 16 to 17 years entering an opposite-sex marriage in England and Wales in 2022, as outlined in our Marriages in England and Wales: 2021 and 2022 dataset.

Quality

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in ourPopulation estimates by marital status and living arrangements quality and methods guide.

4 . Related links

Marriages in England and Wales: 2021 and 2022
Bulletin | Released 20 June 2024
Number of marriages that took place in England and Wales analysed by age, sex, previous partnership status and civil or religious ceremony.

Divorces and dissolutions in England and Wales: 2023
Bulletin | Released 2 July 2025
Annual divorce and civil partnership dissolution numbers and rates, partnership type, to whom granted and duration of marriage.

Civil partnerships in England and Wales: 2022
Bulletin | Released 29 February 2024
Number of civil partnership formations in England and Wales analysed by age, sex, previous legal partnership status and registration area.

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

People's living arrangements in England and Wales: Census 2021
Article | Released 9 February 2023
This article provides an overview of people's living arrangements. 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.

Labour Force Survey – user guidance
User guide | Last revised 19 February 2025
Guidance about the background and methodology of the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

5 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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