

Families and Households, 2015



Coverage: **UK**

Date: **05 November 2015**

Geographical Area: **Other**

Theme: **People and Places**

Theme: **Population**

Main points

- In 2015 there were 18.7 million families in the UK.
- The most common family type in 2015 was the married or civil partner couple family with or without dependent children at 12.5 million.
- The cohabiting couple family continues to be the fastest growing family type in the UK in 2015, reaching 3.2 million cohabiting couple families.
- In 2015 around 40% of young adults aged 15 to 34 in the UK were living with their parents.
- There were 27.0 million households in the UK in 2015, 35% of all households were two person households.
- In 2015 there were 7.7 million people in UK households who were living alone.

Introduction

This bulletin presents annual statistics for 1996 to 2015 on the number of families by type, people in families by type and children in families by type. Types of family include married or civil partner couple families, cohabiting couple families and lone parent families. A family is a married, civil partnered or cohabiting couple with or without children, or a lone parent with at least one child who live at the same address. Children may be dependent or non-dependent.

The bulletin also presents statistics for 1996 to 2015 on the number of households by type, household size and people living alone. A household is 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 more than one family, or no families in the case of a group of unrelated people.

The statistics for 2015 are published for the first time today (5 November 2015). The earliest year for which these data are available on a consistent basis is 1996.

The Labour Force Survey, a large household survey of people in the UK, is used to provide estimates about UK families and households presented in this bulletin. The statistics are based on responses to the survey in the April to June quarter each year. Because the estimates are based on a survey, all estimates produced are subject to sampling variability. The precision of the estimates depends on sample size but for some smaller groups, such as civil partner couple families and same sex cohabiting couple families, the estimates are considered less precise and should be treated with more caution. Where estimates are compared, sometimes they will be described as "statistically significant". This means that statistical tests have shown that a difference is likely to reflect a real change in the population rather than occurring by chance due to variation in the samples.

The statistics are used by those who want to improve their understanding of the UK's families and households including:

- policy makers
- MPs
- journalists
- charities
- businesses
- students
- researchers and academics
- members of the general public

Further information about people who use statistics on families and households and what they use the statistics for can be found in the information note [Families and households statistics: User experience \(47.8 Kb Pdf\)](#). For more information on the strengths and limitations of the statistics please see the [Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\) document \(245.9 Kb Pdf\)](#).

Note about marriage of same sex couples

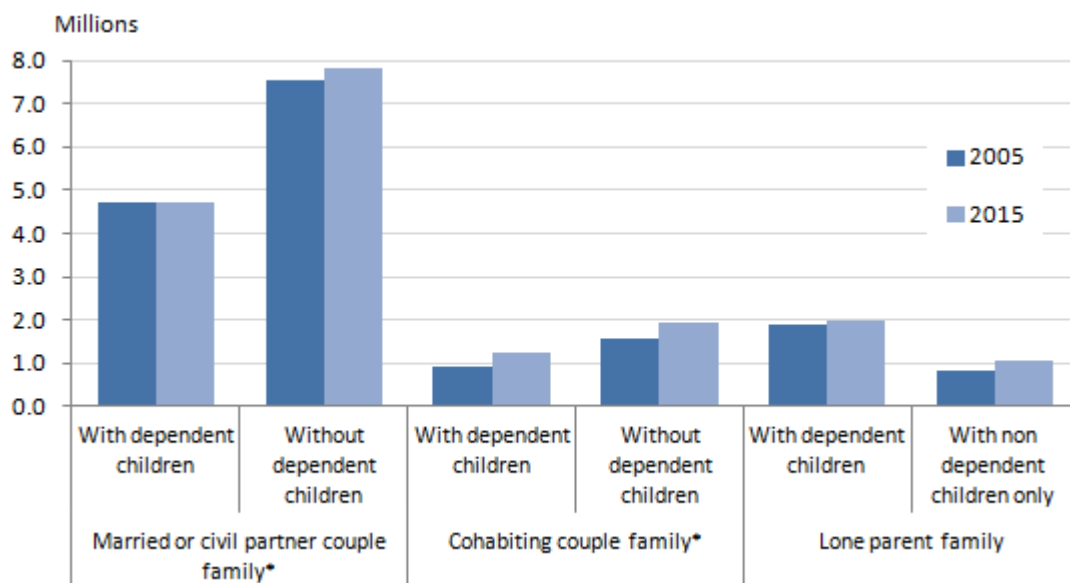
The Marriages (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 made provision for the marriage of same sex couples in England and Wales from 29 March 2014 onwards. Families and Households in the UK, 2015 contains statistics on same sex married couple families for the first time. Within this statistical bulletin a breakdown of married couple families into opposite and same sex married couple families will be provided where possible. Within the reference tables published alongside this statistical bulletin, same sex married couple families will be reported as a total with "married couple families". The breakdown of "married couple families" within the reference tables will be reviewed for the 2016 publication of Families and Households.

The [latest statistics on marriages formed by same sex couples](#) can be found on our website.

Families

Figure 1: Families by family type, 2005 and 2015

UK



Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

- * Married couple families include both opposite sex and same sex married couples. Cohabiting couple families include both opposite sex and same sex cohabiting couples.
- Families without dependent children have only non-dependent children or no children in the household.

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Figure 1 shows that the most common family type in the UK in 2015 was a married (opposite and same sex) or civil partner couple family **without** dependent children. There were 7.8 million such families in 2015. The next most common family type was a married (opposite and same sex) or civil partner couple family **with** dependent children, of which there were 4.7 million in 2015.

All 3 family types, as shown in Figure 1, have increased in number since 2005 but the fastest growing family type in the UK over the decade 2005 to 2015 was the cohabiting couple family (including both opposite and same sex couples with and without dependent children). The number of cohabiting couple families grew by 29.7% between 2005 and 2015. This compares to a growth of 12.1% for lone parent families and 1.9% growth for married (opposite and same sex) or civil partner couple families. Despite an increase in all 3 types of family over the last decade, married couple (opposite and same sex) or civil partner families are still the most common family type in the UK, both with and without dependent children.

Table 1: Families by family type in 1996, 2005 and 2015

UK

Thousands

Family type	1996		2005			2015			Total families
	With dependent children	Without dependent children ¹	Total families	With dependent children	Without dependent children ¹	Total families	With dependent children	Without dependent children ¹	
Married couple family*	5,223	7,418	12,641	4,732	7,546	12,278	4,704	7,760	12,465
Opposite sex married couple family	5,223	7,419	12,641	4,732	7,546	12,278	4,702	7,750	12,451
Same sex married couple family	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	11	13
Civil partner couple family²	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	44	48
Cohabiting couple family*	540	934	1,474	902	1,547	2,449	1,254	1,924	3,178
Opposite sex cohabiting couple family	539	920	1,459	899	1,493	2,392	1,251	1,836	3,087
Same sex cohabiting	..	15	16	3	54	57	3	88	90

Family type	1996			2005			2015		
	With dependent children	Without dependent children ¹	Total families	With dependent children	Without dependent children ¹	Total families	With dependent children	Without dependent children ¹	Total families
couple family									
Lone parent family	1,631	814	2,445	1,883	814	2,697	1,963	1,059	3,022
All families	7,393	9,167	16,560	7,517	9,907	17,424	7,926	10,787	18,712

Table source: Office for National Statistics

Table notes:

1. Families without dependent children have only non-dependent children or no children in the household.
2. Civil partnerships were introduced in the UK in December 2005.
3. *Married couple families include both opposite sex and same sex married couples. Cohabiting couple families include both opposite sex and same sex cohabiting couples.
4. Marriages to same sex couples were introduced in England and Wales in March 2014.
5. .. indicates that estimates are not sufficiently reliable to be published.
6. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
7. Some small numbers are likely to be less reliable. The reference tables published alongside this bulletin indicate the statistical robustness of each estimate.

Download table

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Table 1 shows that the total number of families in the UK has increased from 16.6 million in 1996 to 17.4 million in 2005 and then to 18.7 million in 2015. This is a rise of 13%, similar to the growth in the UK population during this 19 year period.

Married couples

The total number of married couple families decreased between 1996 and 2005 but increased by 187,000 between 2005 and 2015 to 12.5 million. This rise is statistically significant. The increase in married couple families has been driven mainly by a rise in the number of married couples without dependent children in the household. This is due to increases in both:

- married couples whose children have left home - this is due to the ageing of the married population
- married couples with only non-dependent (adult) children in the household - this could be associated with young adults either delaying leaving the parental home or returning to it

Table 1 also provides a breakdown of married couple families into opposite sex and same sex married couple families. The majority of married couple families are made up of opposite sex married couple families. This is what would be expected as marriages of same sex couples were only introduced in England and Wales in March 2014.

Civil partnerships were introduced in the UK in December 2005. The number of civil partner couple families peaked in 2012 at 67,000; this then decreased to 61,000 in 2014 and then to 48,000 civil partner couple families in 2015. The decline between 2014 and 2015 is not statistically significant. The decline in the number of civil partner couple families is one possible effect of the introduction of marriages of same sex couples. This is because of the facility to convert a civil partnership into a same sex marriage and also couples choosing to marry rather than forming a civil partnership. The current trend of declining civil partnership formations is likely to reduce the number of civil partner couple families in the UK even further in the years to come.

[Registration data](#) shows that 7,366 same sex marriages were formed between March 2014 and June 2015 and that 7,732 couples chose to convert their civil partnership to a same sex marriage between December 2014 and June 2015. This means that there are 15,098 couples that have formed same sex marriages in England and Wales; it is unlikely that any of these marriages will have been granted divorce yet. The registration data will differ from the estimates within this publication as the estimates are based on survey data which is subject to sampling error.

The increase in opposite sex cohabiting couple families between 2005 and 2015 is statistically significant, rising from 2.4 million to 3.1 million. In 2015, there were an estimated 90,000 families consisting of a same sex cohabiting couple; this has increased from around 16,000 same sex cohabiting couples in 1996.

Table 1 also shows that 38% of married couple families had dependent children living in the family compared with 41% of opposite sex cohabiting couple families in 2015. However, these similar percentages mask differences between these groups. Overall, married women of childbearing age are more likely to give birth than cohabiting women¹. However, married women tend to be older on average than their cohabiting counterparts so children may be older and have left home. Cohabiting couples are more likely to be younger and of childbearing age. These competing factors of age and likelihood of childbearing mean that a very similar percentage of married couples and opposite sex cohabiting couples have dependent children living in the household.

A much lower percentage of civil partner couple families and same sex cohabiting couple families (8% and 3% respectively) had dependent children within the family in 2015 than married and opposite sex cohabiting couples. This is also true for same sex married couple families where 19% had dependent children within the family, compared with 38% for opposite sex married couple families in 2015.

Notes for Families

1. [“Fertility and partnership status in the last two decades”](#)**Cohabiting couples**

There were 3.1 million opposite sex cohabiting couple families and 90,000 same sex cohabiting couple families in the UK in 2015. Together, cohabiting couple families account for 17% of all families in the UK.

Cohabiting couple families are the fastest growing family type in the UK. Although there is no such thing as common law marriage in UK law, 51% of respondents to the British Social Attitudes Survey in 2008 thought that unmarried couples who live together for some time probably or definitely had a "common law marriage" which gives them the same legal rights as married couples, although this is not legally the case. [The Cohabitation Rights bill](#) which addresses the rights of cohabiting couples is in the early stages of passing through Parliament.

For opposite sex cohabiting couple families, there has been a statistically significant increase from 14% of all families in 2005 to 17% in 2015. Same sex cohabiting couple families as a percentage of all families also saw a statistically significant increase over the same time period (0.3% to 0.5%).

Table 2: Cohabiting couple families in 2015

UK

Family type	Number of families (Thousands)	Percentage of total (%)
Opposite sex cohabiting couple family	3,087	
Dependent children	1,251	41
No children	1,689	55
Non-dependent children only	147	5
Same sex cohabiting couple family	90	
Dependent children	3	3
No children or non-dependent children only	88	98

Table source: Office for National Statistics

Table notes:

1. Totals may not sum due to rounding

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In 2015, Table 2 shows that 41% of all opposite sex cohabiting couple families had dependent children in the household, in contrast to only 3% of same sex cohabiting couple families.

The largest group of opposite sex cohabiting couple families are those with no children in the household (55%). This could be associated with young couples choosing to cohabit before getting married and starting a family. However, some young cohabiting couples may choose to have a child before getting married; this is demonstrated in the [age at first marriage being higher \(30.3 years\)](#) than the [average age of women at the birth of their first child \(28.3 years\)](#).

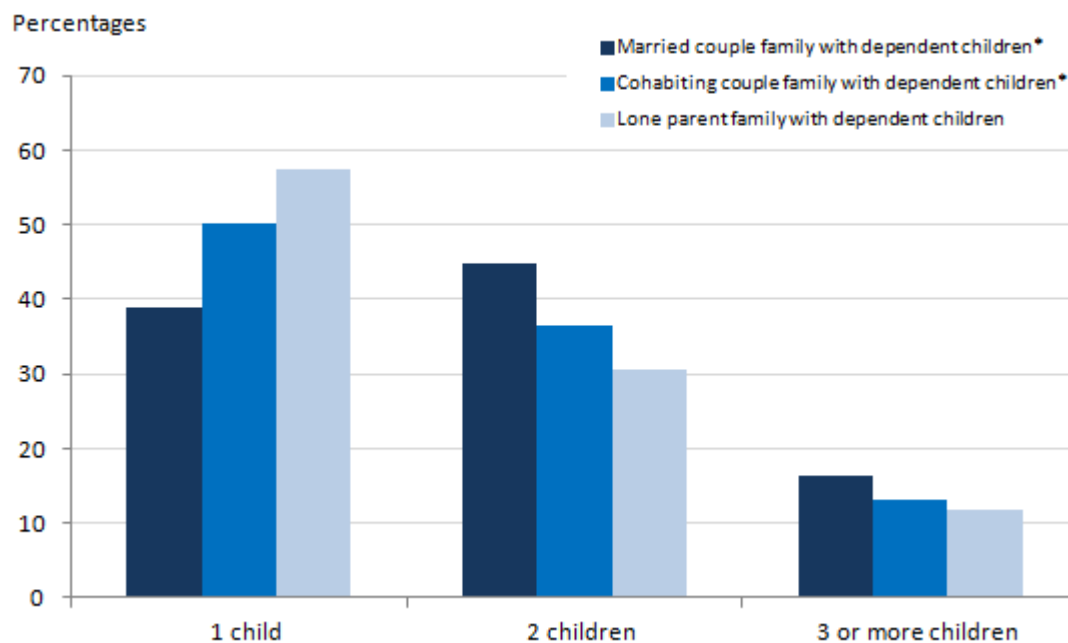
Lone parents

There were nearly 2.0 million lone parents with dependent children in the UK in 2015, a figure which has grown from 1.6 million in 1996 to 1.9 million in 2005 and then further to 2015. The increase of around 81,000 between 2005 and 2015 is statistically significant. Lone parents with dependent children represented 25% of all families with dependent children in 2015, similar to 2005 and a little higher than 22% in 1996.

In 2015, women accounted for 90% of lone parents with dependent children and men the remaining 10%. These percentages have changed little over the 19 years since 1996. Women are more likely to take the main caring responsibilities for any children when relationships break down and therefore become lone parents

Figure 2: Families with dependent children by family type and number of dependent children, 2015

UK



Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

- * Married couple families include both opposite sex and same sex married couples. Cohabiting couple families include both opposite sex and same sex cohabiting couples.
- Less than 1% of dependent children lived in civil partner couple families in 2015. Therefore the percentages are too small to be shown.

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Figure 2 shows that 57% of lone parents with dependent children have only 1 child, higher than both other family types shown in the chart. Further, only 12% of lone parents have 3 or more children. Conversely, married couples with dependent children have more children on average than other family types and only 39% have only 1 dependent child. These patterns are likely to reflect the stability of parental partnerships, as well as the fact that people often marry after having a child and then have further children within marriage; this is demonstrated in the [registration status at birth statistics](#).

In 2015, 1.1 million lone parents had only non-dependent children (sometimes called adult children). This is a statistically significant increase from 814,000 in 2005. Fathers accounted for 22% of lone parents with non-dependent children, compared with 10% of lone parents with dependent children. Further information about young adults living with their parents can be found later in this statistical bulletin.

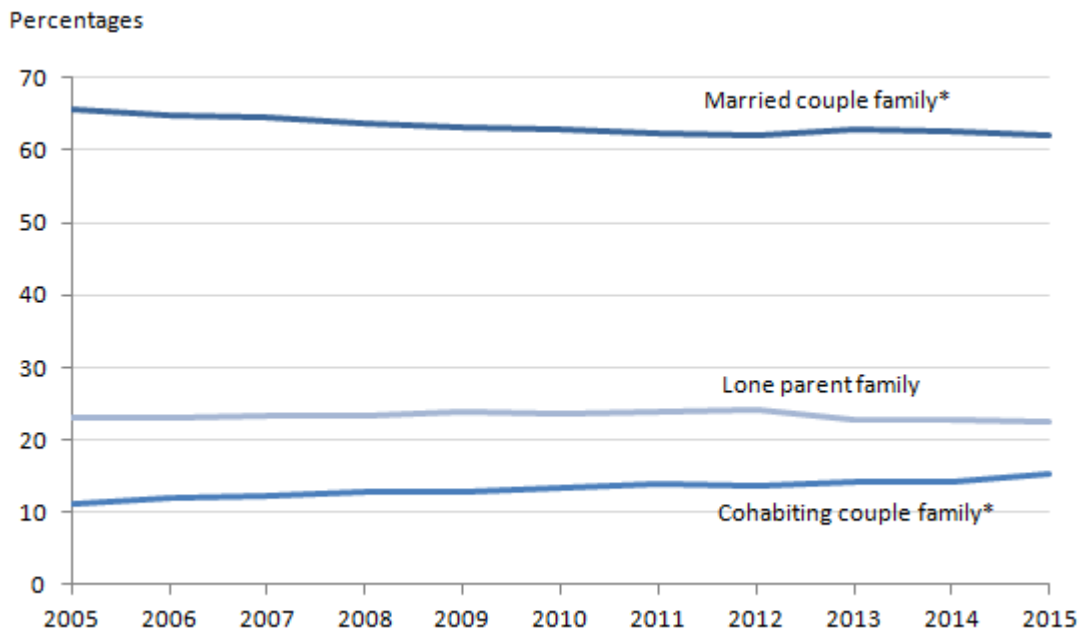
Dependent children

Dependent children are those living with their parent(s) and either (a) aged under 16, or (b) aged 16 to 18 in full-time education, excluding children aged 16 to 18 who have a spouse, partner or child living in the household. There were 13.8 million dependent children living in families in the UK in 2015, around 658,000 more than a decade earlier. This increase in dependent children is associated with the [higher number of births](#) in the most recent decade (2004 to 2014) compared with the previous decade.

The types of families in which dependent children live have changed significantly. Figure 3 shows that the biggest change is for dependent children living in cohabiting couple families. In 2005, 11% of dependent children lived in such families and this rose to 15% by 2015. Over the same period, the percentage of dependent children living in a married couple family fell by 4 percentage points to 62% in 2015. The percentage of dependent children living in lone parent families changed little over the decade; 23% lived in lone parent families in 2015.

Figure 3: Percentage of dependent children: by family type, 2005 to 2015

UK



Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. * Married couple families include both opposite sex and same sex married couples. Cohabiting couple families include both opposite sex and same sex cohabiting couples.
2. Less than 1% of dependent children lived in civil partner couple families in 2015. Therefore the percentages are too small to be shown.

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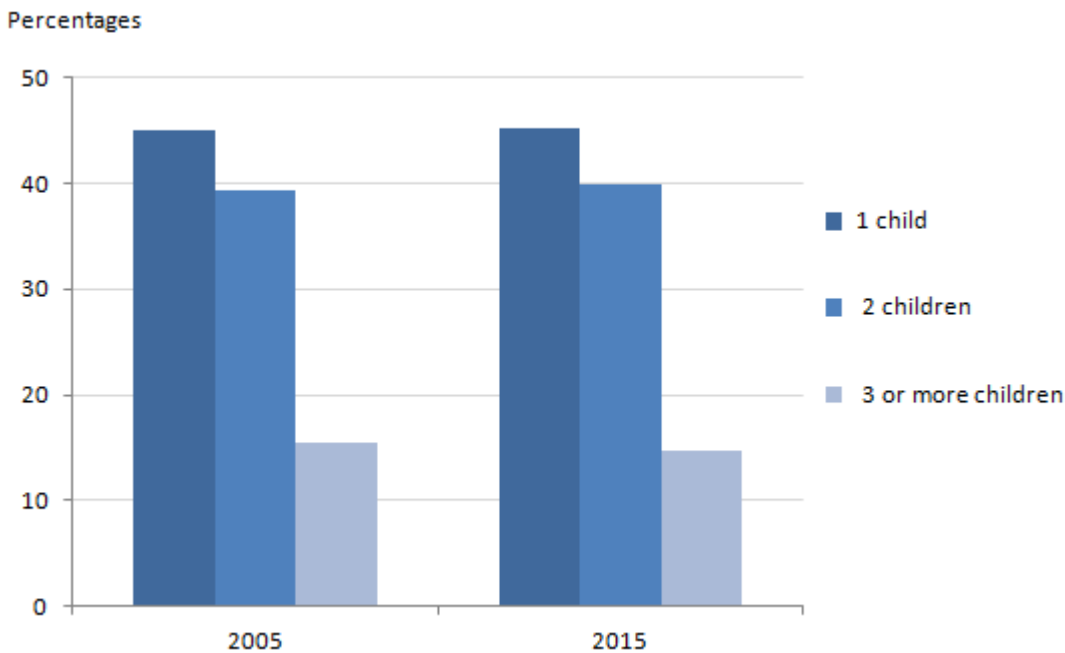
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Figure 4 shows that in 2015, 45% of families with dependent children had only 1 dependent child in the family at the time of the survey, this is the same percentage as in 2005. In 2015, 40% of families with dependent children had 2 dependent children and 15% had 3 or more dependent children. The statistics do not necessarily indicate that families who have "only children" are more common. This is partly because some families may have 1 dependent child, but also other non-dependent (adult) children within or outside of the household. Furthermore, women have been postponing their childbearing to older ages in recent years; this could be temporarily increasing the proportion of families who have had a first child but not yet had their second. Further information about family size can be found in the [Family Size 2012 publication](#) and, on the number of children women are having, in the latest [childbearing publication](#).

Figure 4: Percentage of families with dependent children: by number of dependent children in the family, 2005 and 2015

UK



Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

Download chart

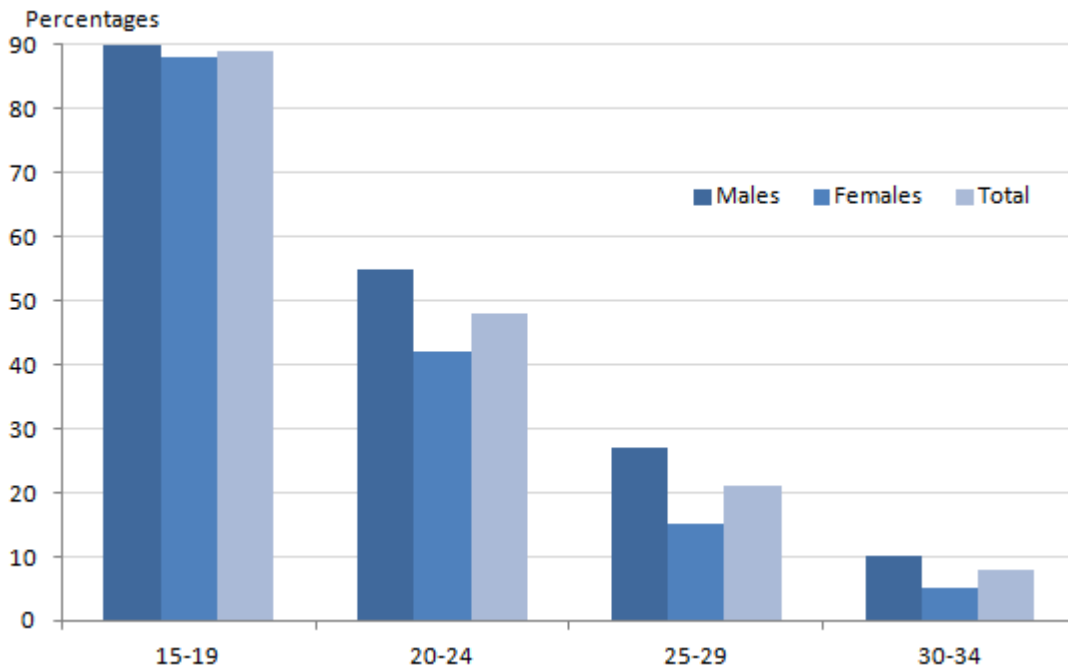
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Young adults living with their parents

Figure 5: Percentage of young adults who are living with their parents by age group, 2015

UK



Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Once a person either lives with a partner or has a child, they are considered to have formed their own family and are no longer counted as being part of their parents' family even if they still live in the same household. Therefore such people are deemed to be not living with their parents here.
2. The term "Parent" could include grandparents, step-parents or foster parents.
3. Students living in halls of residence during term-time and living with their parents outside term-time are counted as not living with their parents here.

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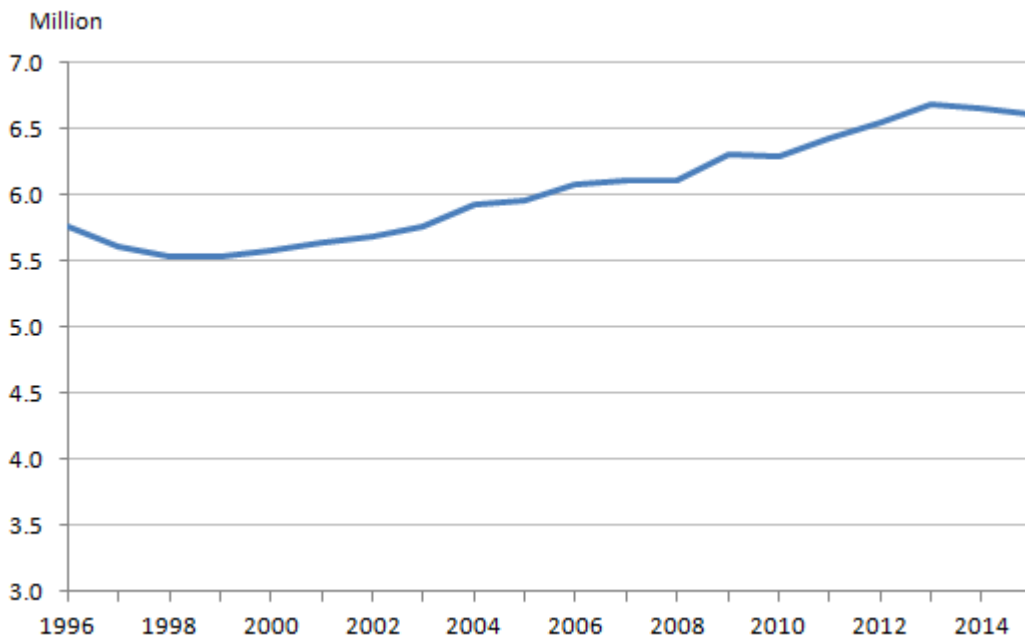
Figure 5 shows that in 2015 the age group most likely to be living at home with their parents was those aged 15 to 19. This is most likely as these young adults will be in full-time education or training. In 2015, 90% of males aged 15 to 19 were living at home with their parents compared to 88% of females.

The percentage of young adults living with their parents greatly reduces by age 20 to 24. This is consistent with young adults moving out of the family home to go to university or to work or training away from the family home. In the 20 to 24 age group, males are still more likely to be at home compared to females (55% and 42% respectively).

At the oldest age groups, 25 to 29 and 30 to 34, the proportion living with their parents was greatly reduced. Males were still more likely than females to be living with their parents at these older ages; this may be because men may return to the parental home while women may retain main caring responsibilities for children if a relationship breaks down. If a lone parent family is formed by either partner, within or outside their parental home, they would not feature in these statistics.

Figure 6: Young adults aged 15 to 34 living with their parents, 1996 to 2015

UK



Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Once a person either lives with a partner or has a child, they are considered to have formed their own family and are no longer counted as being part of their parents' family even if they still live in the same household. Therefore such people are deemed to be not living with their parents here.
2. The term "Parent" could include grandparents, step-parents or foster parents.
3. Students living in halls of residence during term-time and living with their parents outside term-time are counted as not living with their parents here.

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Figure 6 shows how the number of 15 to 34 year olds living with their parents has changed over time. In 1996, around 5.8 million 15 to 34 year olds in the UK lived with their parents, this increased to a peak of 6.7 million in 2014 and remained around 6.6 million in 2015. Although the total population aged 15 to 34 in the UK has increased over the time period, the percentage living with their parents has changed from 36% in 1996 to 40% in 2015. Larger numbers of young adults tending to stay at home for longer may be explained by staying in education and training for longer,

delaying leaving the parental home as young adults formalise relationships and have children at older ages and also as it has become more expensive to rent or buy a home.

Household size

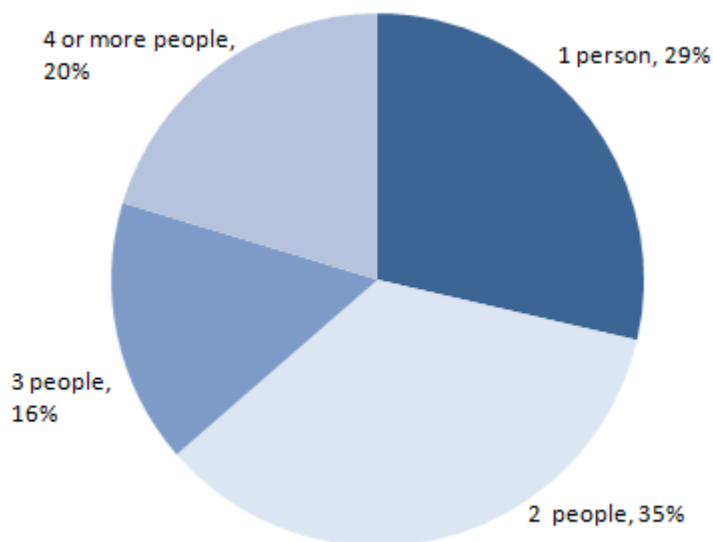
A household is defined as one person living alone, or a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address who share cooking facilities and share a living room, sitting room or dining area. A household can consist of more than one family, or no families in the case of a group of unrelated people.

There were 27.0 million households in the UK in 2015. Household size in 2015 is shown in Figure 7. The number of households has increased by 7% since 2005, similar to the growth in the UK population during this period. As a result, average household sizes have changed little over the decade: 20% of households contained 4 or more people in 2015, this is the same as in 2005.

In 2015 29% of households contained 1 person. Although this has not changed much over the last decade, another source, the General Lifestyle Survey¹, which provides a longer time series, shows that 17% of households in Great Britain contained 1 person in 1971. Although not directly comparable, this is 12 percentage points lower than the estimate for 2015 for the UK from the Labour Force Survey, suggesting that the proportion of one person households has increased considerably since the early 1970s. Further discussion about living alone can be found later on in this statistical bulletin.

Figure 7: Percentage of households by household size in 2015

UK



Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

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Of the 7.7 million one person households in the UK in 2015, 54% of them contained 1 woman and 46% of them contained 1 man.

The percentage of UK households which contain 1 person (29%) is similar to the European average² of 32%. In 2015, the average number of people per household was 2.4, the same as the European average. According to the 2011 Census³, Northern Ireland had the highest average number of people per household of the UK constituent countries at 2.5, England had 2.4 people per household, Wales had 2.3 people per household and Scotland had the lowest at 2.2 people per household.

Notes for Household size

1. [General Lifestyle Survey 2011](#)
2. The EU Statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC) is the source of the European comparisons. The statistics are for 2014 and come from table ilc_lvph03 which can be found [on the Eurostat web page Income and Living Conditions](#). The countries covered are the EU28 countries.
3. [2011 Census population and household statistics for the UK](#)

Household type

Table 3: Households by household type in 1996, 2005 and 2015

UK

Millions

Year	One person households	One family household: couple*	One family household: lone parent	Two or more unrelated adults	Multi-family households	All households
1996	6.6	13.9	2.3	0.7	0.2	23.7
2005	7.2	14.5	2.6	0.8	0.2	25.2
2015	7.7	15.3	2.8	0.9	0.3	27.0

Table source: Office for National Statistics

Table notes:

1. 1 family household: couple and 1 family household: lone parent, can contain dependent and non-dependent children.
2. *Households where there is 1 family and 1 individual for example a married couple with their daughter and a lodger or a married couple with 1 elderly parent are classified as a 1 family household: couple.

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Table 3 shows that the most common household type in 2015 was one family consisting of a couple with or without children. There were 15.3 million such households, an increase from 14.5 million in 2005 and 13.9 million in 1996. Despite this increase in absolute numbers, there has been little change in the proportion of all households of this type, remaining at 57% of all households in 2015 falling from 58% of all households in 1996.

The next most common household type was one person households, of which there were 7.7 million in 2015. UK households containing 1 lone parent family increased from 2.3 million in 1996 to 2.6 million in 2005 and then further to 2.8 million a decade later. Although international comparisons are not straightforward due to definitional differences, the proportion of households in the UK which consist of a lone parent with dependent children is much higher than the European average¹; only 3 countries (Ireland, Iceland and Norway) have a higher proportion.

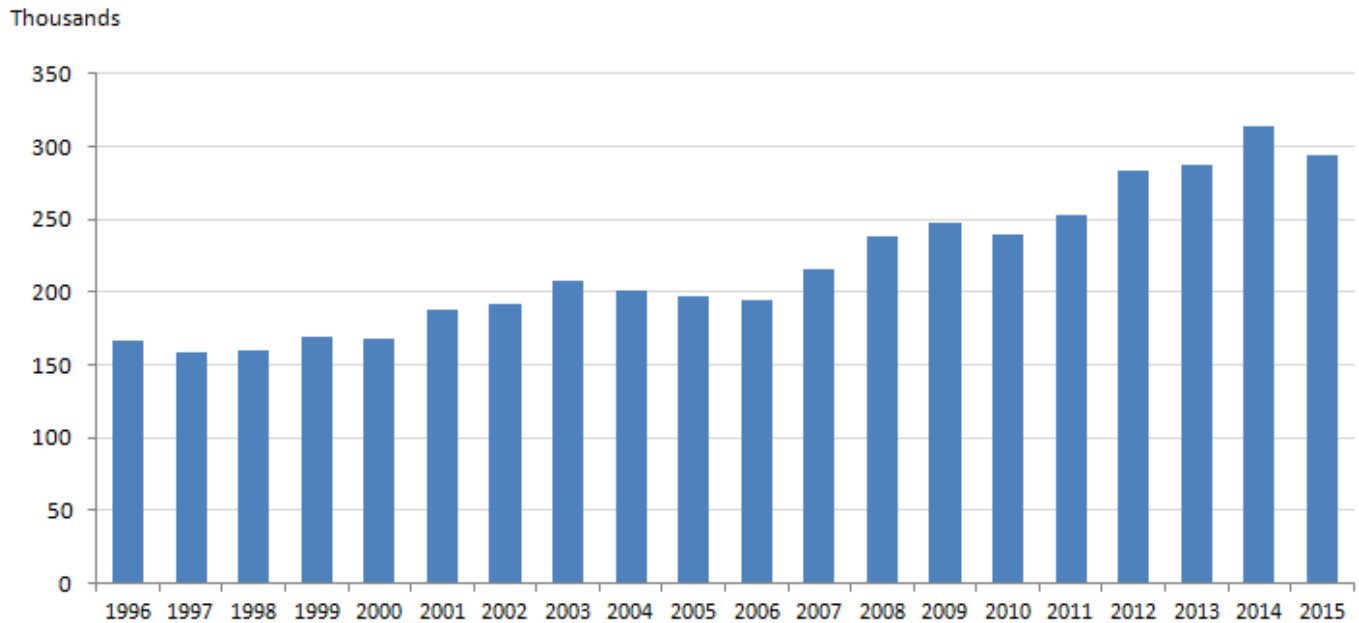
Households containing 2 or more families were the fastest growing household type over the decade to 2015, increasing by 50% from 197,000 households in 2005 to 295,000 households in 2015. This increase is statistically significant. Families in these households may be unrelated, or may be related in some way, for example a married couple with their son and his girlfriend.

Changes in the number of multi-family households may be because of older couples moving in with their adult child and their family, young adults who are partnered or lone parents, remaining or returning to their parent's households and unrelated families sharing a household. Despite this rise, which was also seen using the [2011 Census results](#), multi-family households still only represented a very small proportion (1%) of all households in 2015.

Figure 8 shows that growth in multi-family households was observed between 1996 and 2015, but particularly since 2006 with larger estimates in most recent years. However, the increase observed between 2013 and 2014 and the decrease between 2014 and 2015 are not statistically significant.

Figure 8: Multi-family households, 1996 to 2015

UK



Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Please click on the image to view a larger version

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Notes for Household type

1. The EU Statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC) is the source of the European comparisons. The statistics are for 2013 and come from table ilc_lvph04 which can be found [on the Eurostat web page Income and Living Conditions](#). The countries covered are the EU28 countries.

Living alone

In 2015, 7.7 million people in UK households lived alone, of which 4.1 million were aged 16 to 64. Of those in this age group, the majority (58%) were male. Possible reasons for more men living alone at this age include: higher proportions of men than women never marrying, men marrying at older ages than women and marrying women younger than themselves, and partnership dissolution leading to men living alone while women may live with any children from the relationship. [Further studies by academics looking at living arrangements in mid-life](#) can be found on the Centre for Population Change website.

For those aged 65 to 74, and 75 and over, the pattern is reversed; at these ages the majority of people living alone were female (61% and 72% respectively). This is partly because there are more women than men in the total population aged 65 and over due to women's higher life expectancy. By the age of 65 most women have been married¹, and husbands are typically older than their wives. These 2 factors accentuate the gap in life expectancy between husbands and wives and mean that more women than men become widowed, which may lead to living alone. In spite of this, the number of widowed women is falling due to [life expectancy increasing faster for men compared to women](#).

Figure 9 shows the trends in the number of people living alone by age group between 2005 and 2015. The largest change is in the 45 to 64 age group, where the number of people living alone increased by 23% between 2005 and 2015, a statistically significant change. This is partly due to the increasing population aged 45 to 64 in the UK over this period, as the 1960s baby boom generation have been reaching this age group. The increase could also be due to a rise in the proportion of the [population aged 45 to 64 who are divorced or single never married](#).

In contrast, the number living alone in the 25 to 44 age group fell by 18% between 2005 and 2015; this was a statistically significant change. Figure 6 presented within this bulletin shows that the number of those aged 15 to 34 living with their parents has increased over the past 2 decades. Affordability of moving out of the parental home has been cited as a possible factor in this increase. In addition, academic research² has illustrated that there has been a shift towards sharing with others outside a family among young adults.

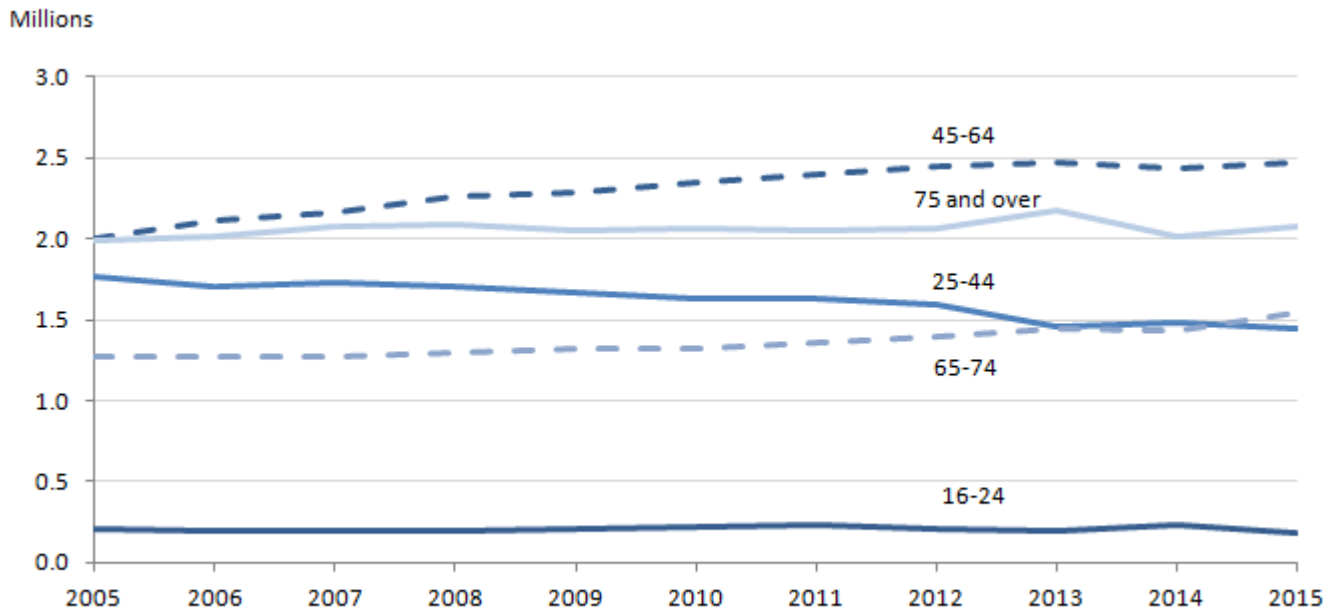
The number living alone in the 16 to 24 age group decreased by 9% over the decade 2005 to 2015; this decrease is not statistically significant. The estimated number of 16 to 24 year olds who are living alone has fluctuated over the time period. These individuals could be affected by policy changes such as the introduction of Universal Credit and the benefit cap, raising of school leaving age to 18 in 2015³ and in the future, changes to housing benefit for those aged 18 to 21 announced in the July Budget 2015⁴.

Those aged 65 to 74 living alone saw a statistically significant increase of 22% over the decade. The number living alone aged 75 and over also increased over the decade to 2015, this was by a smaller percentage of 5% which was not a statistically significant change.

[Further analysis of those living alone based on 2011 Census data, including looking at their ethnicity and tenure](#) can be found on our website.

Figure 9: People living alone: by age group, 2005 to 2015

UK



Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

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Notes for Living alone

1. [Statistics showing the proportion of men and women ever married by certain ages are available on our website](#)
2. [The changing determinants of UK young adults' living arrangements](#)
3. [School leaving age](#)
4. [Summer Budget 2015](#)

Further information

1. [Data tables about families and households](#) were published on 5 November 2015.
2. Also available on our website are:
 - a [Quality and Methodology Information Report](#) on these statistics

- [information about people who use statistics \(47.8 Kb Pdf\)](#) on families and households and what they use the statistics for
3. Further information about the Labour Force Survey can be found in the [Labour Force Survey user guidance](#).
 4. Further statistics on [marriages \(including marriages of same sex couples\)](#), [divorces](#) and [civil partnerships](#) are available on our website.
 5. [Population estimates by marital status and living arrangements](#) provide the estimated population by age group, sex, marital status (single, married, civil partnered, divorced, and widowed) and living arrangements for England and Wales.
 6. The [General Lifestyle Survey](#) provides statistics on households, families, marriages and cohabitation back to the 1970s.
 7. The [Overview of Population Statistics](#) outlines the range of demographic statistics which we publish.
 8. [Revisions Policy](#) - specific to population, migration and life events statistics.

Next publication:

Autumn 2016

Issued by:

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Background notes

1. The Office for National Statistics would appreciate feedback on the uses made of the statistics and the usefulness of the information provided. Please email families@ons.gsi.gov.uk (preferred) or call +44 (0)1329 447890 to provide feedback.
2. A family is a married, civil partnered or cohabiting couple with or without children, or a lone parent with at least one child. Children may be dependent or non-dependent.
3. Dependent children are those aged under 16 living with at least one parent, or aged 16 to 18 in full-time education, excluding all children who have a spouse, partner or child living in the household.

4. A small number of children are excluded from the analysis on families. These include (a) foster children and (b) children who live in communal establishments which are not covered by the Labour Force Survey.
5. Since 2011 a household has been defined as 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. Previously a household was defined as 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). The aim of the change in definition was to ensure consistency with the definition used in the 2011 Census but has no impact on the comparability of the statistics over time.
6. As estimates of the UK's families and households are based on the Labour Force Survey, all estimates produced are subject to sampling variability. [Indications of the robustness of the estimates are provided with the tables.](#)
7. The 2015 Labour Force Survey dataset was first published on 6 October 2015. It covers the period from April to June 2015. Further information about the quality of the Labour Force Survey can be found in the [Performance and Quality Monitoring Reports](#).
8. The EU Statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC) is the source of the European comparisons in this bulletin. The statistics can be found [on the Eurostat web page Income and Living Conditions](#) and the countries covered are the EU28 countries.
9. If a change or a difference between estimates is described as "statistically significant", it means that statistical tests have been carried out to reject the possibility that the change has occurred by chance. Therefore statistically significant changes are very likely to reflect real changes in families and household structures. The definition of "statistically significant" used within the Families and Households 2015 publication has been altered compared to the definition used in previous years. Further information about the accuracy of these statistics can be found in the [Quality and Methodology Information Report](#).
10. [Follow Population Statistics Division \(PSD\) on Twitter](#) and sign up to our [quarterly newsletter](#).
11. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the Media Relations Office.
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This document is also available on our website at www.ons.gov.uk.

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