

Statistical bulletin

Families and households in the UK: 2021

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.



Contact:
Amanda Sharfman and Pamela
Cobb
pop.info@ons.gov.uk
+44 1329 444661

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1 . Main points

- In 2021, there were 19.3 million families in the UK, which represents a 6.5% increase over the decade from 2011 to 2021.
- In 2021, there were 3.0 million lone parent families, which accounts for 15.4% of families in the UK; the proportions ranged from 13.1% in the South East of England to 17.8% in the North East of England.
- The number of families that include a couple in a legally registered partnership in the UK has increased by 3.7% in the past decade, to 12.7 million; by comparison, the number of cohabiting couple families saw an increase of 22.9% over the same period, to 3.6 million.
- There were an estimated 28.1 million households in the UK in 2021, an increase of 6.3% over the last 10 years.
- The number of people living alone in the UK has increased by 8.3% over the last 10 years; in 2021, the proportion of one-person households ranged from 25.8% in London to 36.0% in Scotland.
- In 2021, 3.6 million people aged 20 to 34 years were living at home with their parents; this represents 28% of people in this age group, an increase from 24% a decade ago.

2 . Families and households data

[Families and households](#)

Dataset | Released 9 March 2022

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 9 March 2022

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 UK constituent countries](#)

Dataset | Released 9 March 2022

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 9 March 2022

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 9 March 2022

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.

3 . 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 carried out by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) 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 of the LFS. More information can be found in [Coronavirus and its impact on the Labour Force Survey](#) and in blog posts titled [Measuring the labour market during Coronavirus](#) and [Understanding the impact of Covid-19 on UK population](#).

The [LFS data for periods from January to March 2020](#) has been reweighted, improving the UK, EU and non-EU born population estimates. This release of Families and Households' data adds the 2021 estimates to the previously published estimates for 1996 to 2020. Estimates for 2020 have also been reweighted, and confidence intervals for the 2020 estimates have been provided for the first time.

The ONS plans a further reweighting of the LFS and Annual Population Survey (APS) datasets that include data from March 2020. Details of these plans, including a timeline, will be included in the [March edition of our Labour market overview bulletin](#).

Our [Families and households statistics explained article](#) provides further information on the complexities around the definitions and how these relate to situations people might be experiencing. There have recently been legislative changes to marriages and civil partnerships in the UK that will affect future statistics on families and households. Further details of these changes and when they came into effect are also provided in our Families and household statistics explained article.

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.

The upcoming publication of Census 2021 results will provide high-quality estimates of families and households within England and Wales. The results will give us the richest picture of society across England and Wales. We will have more information about the release schedule in early Summer 2022. Additional information can be found in our [population statistics and sources guide](#).

Quality

Alongside this release, 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 households for Northern Ireland. LFS-based estimates of households 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 UK 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 the [Families and households QMI](#).

4 . Related links

[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: 2018](#)

Bulletin | Released 10 August 2021

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: 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 13 December 2021

Annual statistics on formations and dissolutions of civil partnerships analysed by the couples' sex, age, previous marital status and the place of registration.