

Statistical bulletin

# Population estimates by marital status and living arrangements, England and Wales: 2022

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 51.2% in 2012 to 49.7% in 2021 and 49.4% in 2022, the first time this has fallen below 50.0%.
- People aged 70 years and over accounted for 18.3% of the population who were married or civil partnered in 2022, while those aged under 30 years accounted for 3.2%; this reflects an ageing married or civil partnered population from 2012, when these proportions were 15.1% and 4.9%, respectively.
- 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 almost doubled over the last decade, from 120,000 in 2012 to 222,000 in 2022; this increase includes the introduction of opposite-sex civil partnerships from 31 December 2019.
- While 99.3% of married people were married to someone of the opposite sex, the estimated number of people in marriages with a partner of the same sex has increased, from 26,000 in 2015 to 167,000 in 2022; of people in same-sex marriages, males accounted for around 6 in 10, or 61.2%, while females accounted for around 4 in 10, or 38.8%.
- Living in a couple remained more common than not living in a couple, with 61.3% of the population aged 16 years and over either living with a legal partner or cohabiting; this varied by age, with 27.6% of 16- to 29-year-olds living in a couple compared with 78.0% of 40- to 44-year-olds.
- The proportion of people aged 16 years and over living in a couple who were cohabiting (not in a marriage or civil partnership) increased from 19.7% in 2012 to 22.7% in 2022, equivalent to 5.4 million people in 2012 and 6.8 million people in 2022.

Revised estimates for 2012 to 2020 have been published alongside the latest 2021 and 2022 estimates. This is to incorporate rebased mid-year population estimates for 2012 to 2021 to align with Census 2021 results.

## 2 . Marital status and living arrangements data

### [Population estimates by marital status and living arrangements, England and Wales](#)

Dataset | Released 25 January 2024

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 25 January 2024

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 25 January 2024

Annual estimates of population by marital status and living arrangements by age group and sex in Wales only.

## 3 . Measuring the data

The [Marriage \(Same-Sex Couples\) Act 2013](#) made provision for the marriage of same-sex couples in England and Wales from 29 March 2014 onwards. This publication 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.

The [Civil 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 publication include both opposite-sex and same-sex civil partnerships. It is not currently possible to separate these into same-sex and opposite-sex.

This bulletin focuses on the population aged 16 years and over. All analyses and percentages presented exclude those aged under 16 years. Marital status estimates for those aged 0 to 15 years are included within the datasets accompanying this release. The latest data are for 2022. Therefore, we consider all those aged under 16 years to be never married or civil partnered in line with the legal age of marriage or civil partnership in England and Wales. From February 2023, those aged 16 and 17 years are no longer able to marry or enter a civil partnership in England and Wales. This is because of the introduction of the [Marriage and Civil Partnership \(Minimum Age\) Act 2022](#). This change will be taken into account in future releases.

### Quality

More Quality and Methodology Information (QMI) on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our [Population estimates by marital status and living arrangements QMI](#).

### User feedback

We are now conducting a wider review of our publications on marriages, civil partnerships, divorces and dissolutions, and population estimates by marital status and living arrangements. We would like to receive feedback from users on the information they find most useful across these releases and why, and where there might be user needs that we are not currently meeting. This will help inform our review and the content of our publications going forward. Feedback links are available in our data tables to allow users to easily provide responses on the tables they find useful. Alternatively, feedback can be sent to [pop.info@ons.gov.uk](mailto:pop.info@ons.gov.uk).

## 4 . Related links

### [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.

### [Marriages in England and Wales: 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 11 May 2023

Number of marriages that took place in England and Wales analysed by age, sex, previous partnership status and civil or religious ceremony.

### [Divorces in England and Wales: 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 2 November 2022

Annual divorce numbers and rates, by duration of marriage, sex and to whom granted and reason.

### [Civil Partnerships in England and Wales: 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 9 December 2022

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

### [Labour Force Survey – user guidance](#)

User guide | Released 9 October 2023

Guidance about the background and methodology of the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

## 5 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 25 January 2024, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Population estimates by marital status and living arrangements, England and Wales: 2022](#)