

Statistical bulletin

# Families and households in the UK: 2023

Estimates of families (with and without children), people living alone and people in shared accommodation, broken down by size and type of household.



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# 1 . Main points

- In 2023, there were 19.5 million families in the UK, an increase of just over 1.1 million families (6%) since 2013.
- Married or civil-partnered couple families accounted for the majority (66%) of families in 2023, while cohabiting couple families accounted for 18% and lone-parent families accounted for the remaining 16%.
- Lone fathers accounted for 15% (477,000) of the 3.2 million lone-parent families in 2023; lone-father families were more likely to include adult children only (52%) than lone-mother families (34%).
- There were 28.4 million households in the UK in 2023, an increase of 6% (1.7 million) since 2013; most (two in three) households included one family, either a couple family with or without children (56%) or a lone-parent family (11%).
- There were 8.4 million people living alone in the UK in 2023; this was 30% of all households and 13% of all people living in households.
- One-third (33%) of young men aged 20 to 34 years were living at home with their parent(s) in the UK in 2023, compared with less than a quarter (22%) of young women.

## 2 . Families

There were an estimated 19.5 million families living in households in the UK in 2023. This was an increase of 6%, or just over 1.1 million more families, compared with 2013 (18.4 million families). This reflects the growth in the UK population, which was also 6% in the decade 2012 to 2022 (the most recent period for which data are available); see our [United Kingdom population mid-year estimate time series](#).

In this bulletin, we cover families living in households, which is the vast majority of families. The survey data does not include families living in communal establishments, such as married couples living in care homes.

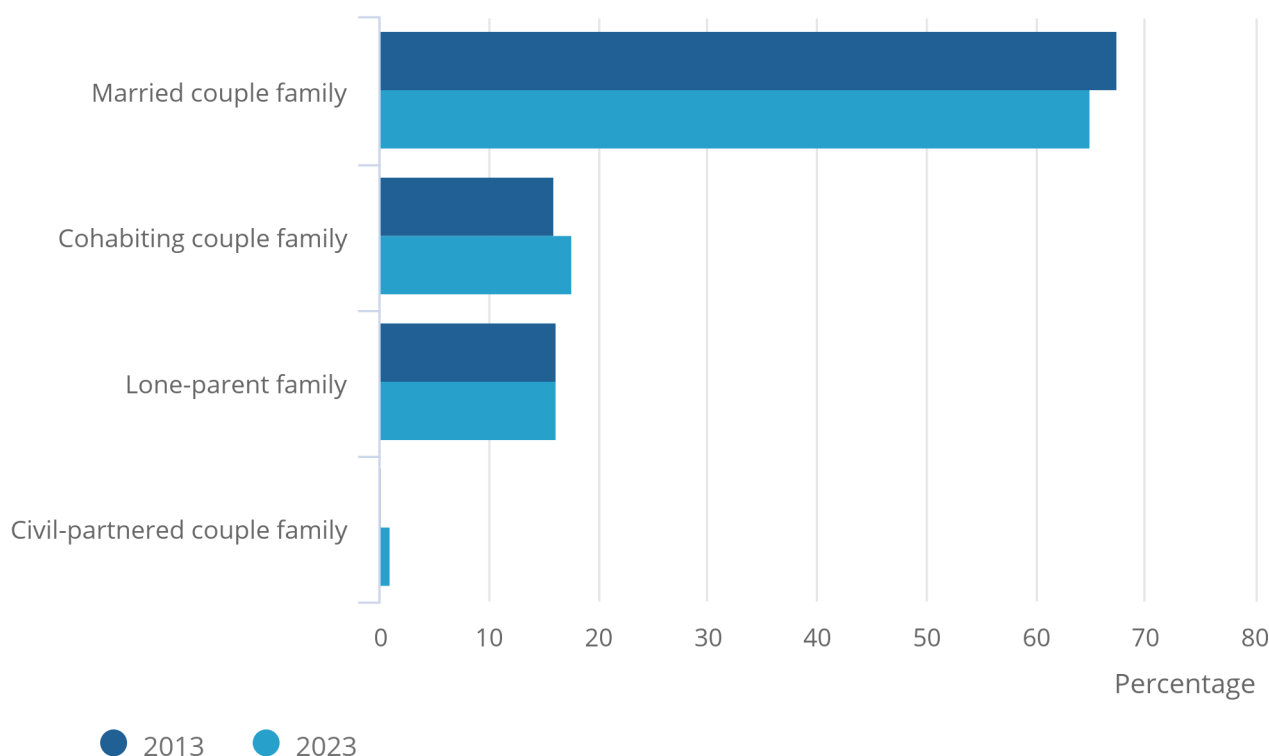
This bulletin focuses on UK data. The accompanying datasets show data for England, Scotland and Wales, as well as the regions of England.

## Figure 1: Married couple families remained the most common type of family in the UK in the decade since 2013

Family type as a percentage of all families living in households, UK, 2013 and 2023

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Family type as a percentage of all families living in households, UK, 2013 and 2023



Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

#### Notes:

1. Married couple families include both opposite-sex married couples and same-sex married couples in 2023. Same-sex marriages have been available since 2014.
2. Civil-partnered couple families include both opposite-sex and same-sex couples in 2023. Opposite-sex civil partnerships have been available since 2019.
3. Totals may not sum because of rounding.

The bar chart in Figure 1 shows that married couple families remained the most common family type in 2023, accounting for 65% of all families. Since 2013, the number of married couple families has increased from 12.4 million to 12.7 million. However, this family type has been generally decreasing as a proportion of all families over time (67% in 2013).

This is consistent with a general decrease in the number of marriages in the UK. See our [Vital statistics in the UK: births, deaths and marriages dataset](#) and our [Marriages in England and Wales](#) dataset for the latest data.

Cohabiting couple families accounted for 18% of all families in 2023. Opposite-sex cohabiting couple families made up 17% of all families in 2023 compared with 15% a decade earlier. This is an additional 469,000 families, accounting for 42% of the total growth in families since 2013.

The increase in opposite-sex cohabiting couple families was attributed to couples without children. These couples will include those who have not had children, those who may have children later, and those whose children live elsewhere.

Same-sex cohabiting couple families accounted for the smallest proportion of families in 2023 at 0.7% (137,000 families). This was an increase from 0.5% (89,000) in 2013.

Civil-partnered couple families accounted for a very small proportion (1%) of all families in 2023. However, their number (198,000) was three times as many as 2013 (64,000). Civil partnerships became possible for opposite-sex couples in 2019, which is likely to have contributed to this increase.

## Lone parents

There were 3.2 million lone-parent families in 2023, an increase from 3.0 million in 2013. This increase was primarily in lone-parent families with adult children only (an additional 130,000 families).

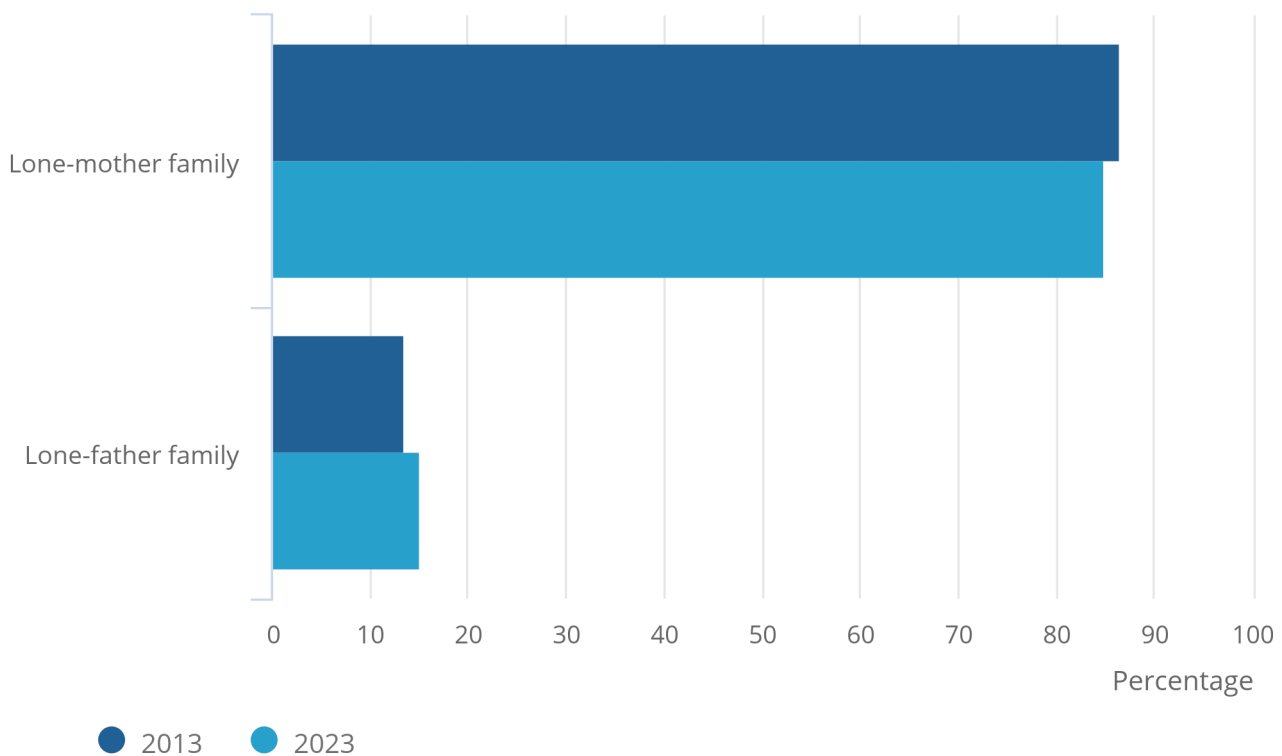
In this bulletin, we use the term "adult children" to describe anyone who is considered a "non-dependent child". This refers to a person aged over 18 years who is living with their parent(s) and does not have a spouse, partner or child living with them. It also includes anyone aged 16 to 18 years who is not in full-time education and does not have a spouse, partner or child living with them.

### Figure 2: The percentage of lone-parent families headed by a father in 2023 increased compared with 2013

Percentages of lone-parent families headed by a mother and by a father, UK, 2013 and 2023

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Percentages of lone-parent families headed by a mother and by a father, UK, 2013 and 2023



Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

The bar chart in Figure 2 shows that in 2023 most lone-parent families were headed by a lone mother (85% or 2.7 million families) while 15% were headed by a lone father (477,000 families). Lone-father families have increased as a proportion of all lone-parent families compared with 2013.

In 2023, around half (52%) of lone-father families contained adult children only. This compares with one-third (34%) of lone-mother families. However, this gap has narrowed compared with 2013, when the proportions were 59% of lone-father families and 30% of lone-mother families.

## Children in families

Of all families in 2023 living in households, 43% had one or more dependent children, 42% had no children and 16% had only adult children living with them. Families with no children include those who have not had children, those who may have children later and those whose children live elsewhere.

Of all families with dependent children, 45% (3.7 million families) contained one dependent child only. Families with two dependent children made up 41% (3.4 million) and families with three or more dependent children made up the remaining 14% (1.2 million).

## 3 . Households

There were an estimated 28.4 million households in the UK in 2023. This was 6% (1.7 million) more households compared with 2013 (26.7 million). This increase is consistent with a growth of 6% in the UK population in the decade 2012 to 2022 (the most recent period for which data are available). See our [United Kingdom population mid-year estimate time series](#).

### Household size

The average household size was 2.36 residents per household, similar to the size in 2013 (2.37 residents).

### Household types

#### Figure 3: Most households contained either one family or one person

Household type as a percentage of all households, UK, 2023

**Notes:**

1. One-family households include households with one family and other individuals (related or unrelated), eg a married couple living with a lodger.
2. A multi-family household consists of two or more families. The families can be unrelated (for example, two unrelated couples sharing a house); related and multi-generational (for example, cohabiting couple plus children and elderly parents, or married couple plus their daughter and her child); or related but not multi-generational (for example, cohabiting couple plus son and girlfriend, or two brothers and their partners sharing a house).

The doughnut chart in Figure 3 shows that one-family households were the most common type of UK household in 2023, accounting for two in three households (18.9 million). One-person households accounted for almost one in three households. Very small proportions of households were formed of two or more unrelated adults (3%) and two or more families (1%). All proportions were similar to 2013.

## 4 . Living alone

In 2023, the number of people living alone in the UK was 8.4 million, an increase from 2013 (7.8 million). The additional 620,000 people living alone in 2023 represented an 8% increase compared with 2013, greater than the 6% increase in the UK population in the decade since 2012.

The number of men living alone in 2023 has grown by more than the number of women living alone compared with 2013 (415,000 more men and 204,000 more women).

People living alone in 2023 represented 30% of all households and 13% of all people living in households, a slight increase compared with 2013 (29% and 12%, respectively).

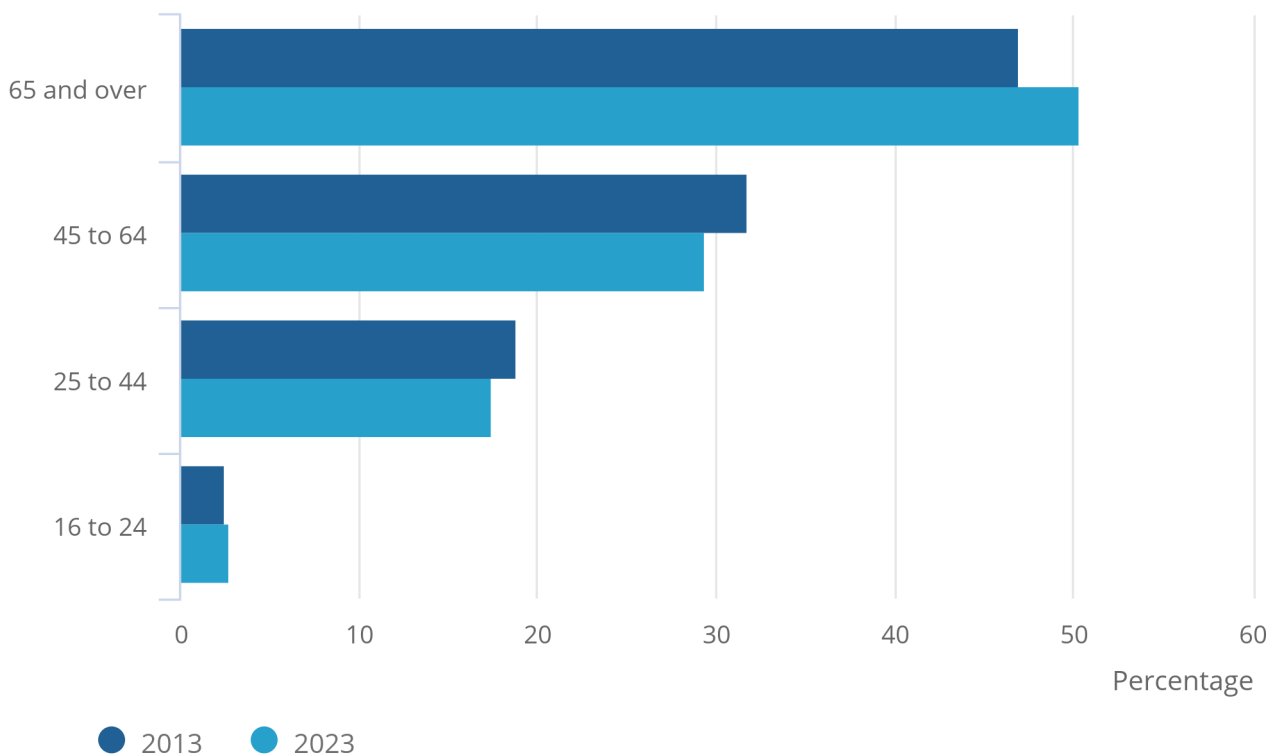
The increase in people living alone was primarily attributed to people aged 65 years and over, who accounted for 93% of the total growth in the number of people living alone.

### Figure 4: Half of people living alone in 2023 were aged 65 years or over

Percentage spread of one-person households across different age groups, UK, 2013 and 2023

Figure 4: Half of people living alone in 2023 were aged 65 years or over

Percentage spread of one-person households across different age groups, UK, 2013 and 2023



Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics



The bar chart in Figure 4 shows that the age distribution of one-person households was broadly similar when comparing 2023 with 2013. Half (50%) of the 8.4 million people living alone in the UK in 2023 were aged 65 years or over. This is an increase compared with 2013 when the proportion was 47%. It has been at least 50% since 2020.

Most people living alone in 2023 were women (52%). This proportion was larger among older people living alone; 59% of those aged 65 to 74 years and 68% of those aged 75 years and over living alone were women. However, these proportions have decreased compared with 2013 (62% and 72%, respectively).

## 5 . Young people living with their parent(s)

In 2023, there were 3.6 million young people aged 20 to 34 years living at home with their parent(s). This was 28% of all young people aged 20 to 34 years living in households in the UK, an increase compared with 26% in 2013.

One-third (33% or 2.2 million) of all young men aged 20 to 34 years who lived in households in 2023 were living in their parental home. This compares with less than a quarter (22% or 1.4 million) of all young women living in households.

### Figure 5: Young males lived with their parent(s) for longer than young females

**Young people living in their parental home as a percentage of all young people living in households, by single year of age, separated by sex, UK, 2023 and 2013**

The line graphs in Figure 5 show that in 2023 and 2013, young males were living in their parental home for longer than young females. In 2023, the age at which less than 50% of young people were living in their parental home was 25 years for males and 22 years for females. This compares with 2013, when these ages were 24 years for males and 21 years for females.

Larger numbers of young adults tending to stay in their parental home for longer may be explained by factors such as staying in education and training for longer, formalising relationships and having children at older ages, and increased costs in renting or buying a home. See our articles, [Milestones: journeying through modern life](#) and [More adults living with their parents](#).

## 6 . Families and households data

### [Families and households](#)

Dataset | Released 8 May 2024

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 8 May 2024

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 and households datasets for the regions of England and Great Britain constituent countries are available on the [Related data page](#).

## 7 . Glossary

## Family

A "family" is a married, civil-partnered or cohabiting couple with or without children, or a lone parent with at least one child, who lives at the same address; children may be dependent or non-dependent.

## Children

"Dependent children" are those living in families who are either aged under 16 years, or aged 16 to 18 years and who are in full-time education, excluding children aged 16 to 18 years who have a spouse, partner or child living in the household. "Non-dependent children" are those living with their parent(s) and who are either aged 19 years or over and have no spouse, partner or child living in the household or aged 16 to 18 years and who are not in full-time education and have no spouse, partner or child living in the household. Non-dependent children are often called adult children.

## Household

A "household" is (current definition, from 2011) 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 a single family, more than one family or no families in the case of a group of unrelated people.

A "household" is (previous definition, from 1996 to 2010) 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).

A helpful way to think of the relationship between families and households is to consider families as a subset or portion of a household, as more than one family can live in a household, with or without other individuals.

## One-family household

A household type consisting of both couple households (with or without children) and lone-parent households. Households where there is one family and one individual (for example, a married couple with their daughter and a lodger, or a married couple with one elderly parent) are also classified as one-family households.

## Lone-parent family

A family with a single male or female parent living with either dependent or non-dependent children. Note: The definition of a lone parent does not make any distinction between situations where a child has regular contact and /or partly resides with their other parent and a child who solely resides with and is cared for by one parent. Only the parent living with their children is included in the estimated number of lone-parent families and households.

## Multi-family household

Households that consist of two or more families. The families can be unrelated (for example, two unrelated couples sharing a house); related and multi-generational (for example, cohabiting couple plus children and elderly parents, or married couple plus their daughter and her child); or related but not multi-generational (for example, cohabiting couple plus son and girlfriend, or two brothers and their partners sharing a house).

For a full glossary and definitions, see our [Families and households statistics explained](#) and [Families and households Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\) report](#).

## 8 . 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 we carry out 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.

We plan to reweight the LFS and Annual Population Survey (APS) datasets following the results of the 2021 censuses for England and Wales, and Northern Ireland, as well as the 2022 Scottish census. Details around the timing and specific datasets of this reweighting are yet to be announced. See our [Labour market transformation – update on progress and plans articles](#).

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.

## 9 . Strengths and limitations

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 no longer publish Labour Force Survey (LFS)-based estimates of families and households for Northern Ireland. LFS-based estimates 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 Great Britain (GB) 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.

In this bulletin, we have made comparisons of 2023 estimates against earlier points in time. Such comparisons are [statistically significant](#). This means that there is likely to have been a real change and that the difference we are observing is unlikely to be a result of chance.

We have rounded estimates to the nearest 1,000. Totals of estimates may not sum because of this rounding. We have used unrounded estimates to calculate percentages. In the bulletin, percentages are typically rounded to one decimal place in the charts and to whole numbers in the text apart from very small percentages (less than 1%) which are rounded to one decimal place. Totals of percentages may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

More quality and methodology information (QMI) on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our [Families and households QMI](#).

The figures published from our regular families and households publications are likely to differ from Census 2021 for a number of reasons. Census data refer to a point in time whereas survey data are accumulated over a period of three months. Census is self-completed, whereas surveys are interviewer-led. Census covers nearly all of the population with only a small amount of estimation, whereas surveys are weighted up from a sample to be representative.

## 10 . Related links

### [Families and households statistics explained](#)

Article | Released 8 May 2024

Outlines families and households definitions, classifications, uses and users of the data, common queries, and other sources of household estimates.

### [Household estimates and projections across the UK: user guide](#)

Article | Released 18 May 2023

Guidance for users about the coherence and comparability of data on household estimates and projections for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

### [Milestones: journeying through modern life](#)

Article | Released 8 April 2024

Revisits the key events that mark out adult life, the age at which people tend to experience them, and how they have changed over time.

### [More adults living with their parents](#)

Article | Released 10 May 2023

Explores the number and characteristics of adult children living with their parents in England and Wales in Census 2021 compared with Census 2011.

### [Population estimates by marital status and living arrangements, England and Wales: 2022](#)

Bulletin | Released 25 January 2024

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

### [Vital statistics in the UK: births, deaths and marriages](#)

Dataset | Released 24 February 2023

Annual UK and constituent country figures for births, deaths, marriages, divorces, civil partnerships and civil partnership dissolutions.