

Divorces and dissolutions in England and Wales: 2024 and 2025

Divorce and civil partnership dissolution numbers and rates, by partnership type and duration of legal partnership.

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1 . Overview

There were 105,961 legal partnership dissolutions in England and Wales in 2025, comprising 105,002 divorces and 959 civil partnership dissolutions. These numbers are similar to 2023 and 2024 but lower than peak levels in the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s, when there were around 150,000 divorces per year.

The divorce rate for opposite-sex couples was 8.4 per 1,000 opposite-sex married people in 2025. This is similar to the rates in 2023 and 2024 but lower than the peak of 14.2 per 1,000 in 1993. The divorce rate for same-sex marriages in 2025 was 19.5 per 1,000 same-sex married people. This is similar to 2024, with the same-sex divorce rate starting to stabilise following increases between 2015 and 2021.

In 2025, 94.2% of all legal partnership dissolutions were granted under the new legislation that came into effect in 2022. Of cases granted under the new legislation, 74.1% were sole applications and 25.9% were joint applications in 2025.

The average duration of legal partnerships at divorce or dissolution increased for most partnership types in 2025. The median duration of marriages ending in divorce was 13.0 years for opposite-sex couples in 2025, the longest since the start of our time series in 1963. Record highs were also seen for same-sex civil partnerships. Median durations at dissolution were 13.7 years for male couples and 13.6 years for female couples in 2025.

By year of marriage, an estimated 16.3% of couples who married in 2015 had divorced before reaching their 10th wedding anniversary. This is lower than for couples who married in 1995 (24.7%), but higher than for couples who married in 1965 (9.9%). Of those who formed a civil partnership in 2015, 14.4% had dissolved their partnership before reaching their 10th anniversary.

2 . How to use these statistics

These statistics rely on data from His Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service and on the population estimates by marital status, which are produced using data from the Labour Force Survey.

With these statistics, you can:

- look at trends over time in divorce and dissolution numbers and rates
- compare opposite-sex and same-sex divorce rates, following a change in the methodology for calculating divorce rates; however, same-sex divorce rates are subject to greater sampling variability than opposite-sex divorce rates, so are less robust
- examine trends over time in the proportion of legal partnerships ending in dissolution and legal partnership durations before dissolution

With these statistics, you cannot:

- look at the grounds for divorce (facts) for any legal partnership dissolutions granted under the new legislation introduced in 2022, as applicants are no longer required to prove one or more facts when seeking a divorce
- find civil partnership dissolution rates for 2020 to 2025; these have not been published because of concerns about the quality of the population estimates by marital status for the civil partnered population for these years

3 . Divorce and dissolution numbers

There were 105,961 legal partnership dissolutions in England and Wales in 2025. This figure comprises:

- 105,002 divorces (102,879 opposite-sex couples and 2,123 same-sex couples)
- 959 civil partnership dissolutions (270 opposite-sex couples and 689 same-sex couples)

This is similar to 2023 and 2024 (when there were 103,816 and 105,664 legal partnership dissolutions, respectively) but lower than peak levels in the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s, when there were around 150,000 divorces per year. These figures include nullity orders, of which there were 301 in 2025.

Figure 1: The number of opposite-sex divorces has increased from 2022 but remains lower than levels in the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s

Number of opposite-sex divorces, England and Wales, 1925 to 2025

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Notes:

1. The Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Act 2020 introduced a minimum period of 20 weeks between the start of proceedings and application for final order. This may have had an impact on the number and timing of divorces taking place in 2022.
2. Trends in divorce numbers from 2020 onwards may have been affected by disruption to family court activity during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which may have influenced the timing of divorces granted in subsequent years.
3. The decrease in the number of divorces between 2017 and 2018, and the increase between 2018 and 2019 can be partly attributed to a delay in the processing of divorce applications by divorce centres. A backlog of divorce petitions made in 2017 were not processed until 2018, resulting in fewer completed divorces in 2018 and more completed divorces in 2019.

There were 2,123 same-sex divorces in 2025, the highest annual figure since they first occurred in 2015. In 2025, same-sex divorces made up 75.5% of all same-sex legal partnership dissolutions. The increase in same-sex divorces over time is expected, as the estimated number of people in same-sex marriages has also increased over time, from 26,194 in 2015 to 218,204 in 2025.

The number of opposite-sex civil partnership dissolutions has increased each year since they were first recorded in 2021. In 2025, there were 270 opposite-sex civil partnership dissolutions in England and Wales, up from only 2 in 2021.

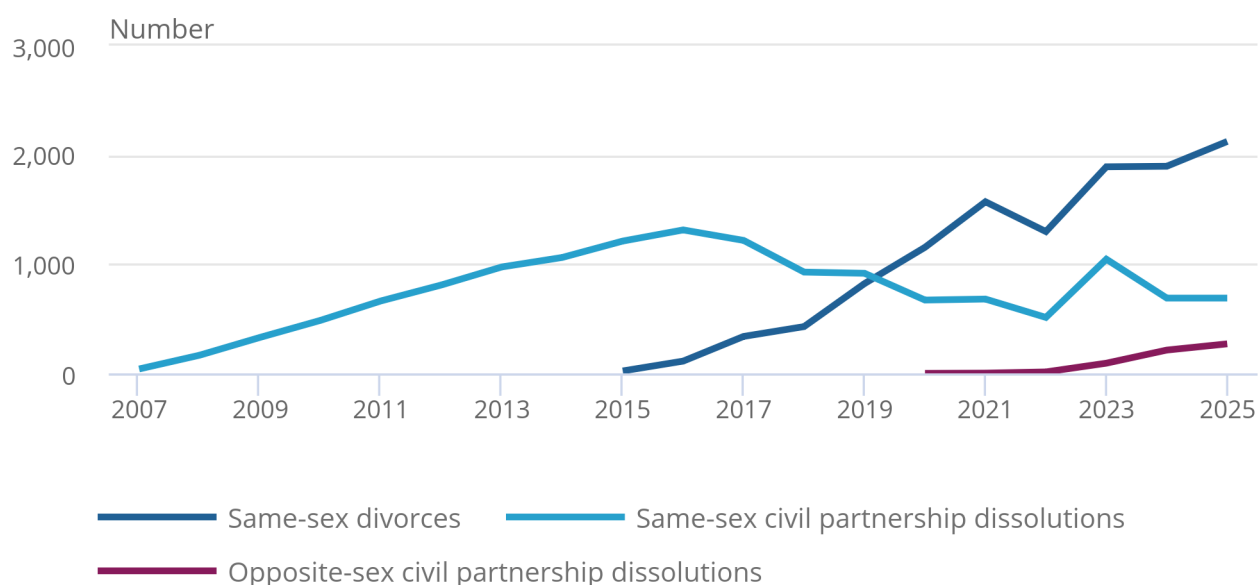
There were 689 same-sex civil partnership dissolutions in 2025. This was lower than the peak of 1,313 in 2016, but similar to the average number of cases each year since 2020.

Figure 2: The number of same-sex divorces has continued to rise, while same-sex civil partnership dissolutions remain below their 2016 peak

Number of same-sex divorces, same-sex civil partnership dissolutions and opposite-sex civil partnership dissolutions, England and Wales, 2007 to 2025

Figure 2: The number of same-sex divorces has continued to rise, while same-sex civil partnership dissolutions remain below their 2016 peak

Number of same-sex divorces, same-sex civil partnership dissolutions and opposite-sex civil partnership dissolutions, England and Wales, 2007 to 2025



Source: Divorces and dissolutions in England and Wales from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. The Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Act 2020 introduced a minimum period of 20 weeks between the start of proceedings and application for final order. This may have had an impact on the number and timing of divorces taking place in 2022.
2. Trends in divorce and civil partnership dissolution numbers from 2020 onwards may have been affected by disruption to family court activity during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which may have influenced the timing of divorces granted in subsequent years.

Sole and joint applications

In 2025, 94.2% (99,795) of all legal partnership dissolutions were granted under the new legislation introduced on 6 April 2022, following the [Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Act 2020](#). The proportion of cases granted under the new legislation has increased each year since its introduction, rising from 9.2% in 2022. As only annulments and cases initiated before 6 April 2022 continue to be processed under the previous legislation, the proportion of cases granted under the new legislation is expected to increase further over time.

The legislation introduced the option for couples to apply jointly, as well as solely, for a divorce or civil partnership dissolution. In 2025, nearly three-quarters (74.1%) of all final orders granted under the new legislation were from sole applications, a similar proportion to those seen each year since the legislation was introduced in 2022.

Sole applications were more common among divorces than among civil partnership dissolutions. In 2025, 74.3% of divorces granted under the new legislation were from sole applications, compared with 52.0% of civil partnership dissolutions.

Figure 3: Divorces consistently had a higher proportion of sole applications than equivalent civil partnership dissolutions across all partnership types

Percentage of new law divorces and civil partnership dissolutions by partnership type and application type, England and Wales, 2025

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Across all partnership types, opposite-sex civil partnership dissolutions remained the only group where joint applications accounted for the majority of final orders granted under the new legislation, at 56.9%. However, the number of opposite-sex civil partnership dissolutions remains relatively small, with 269 new law cases in 2025. For this reason, proportions may be more sensitive to change than for other partnership types.

Among sole applications granted to opposite-sex couples under the new legislation, female applicants accounted for a larger proportion than male applicants. In 2025, 61.2% of all opposite-sex sole applications were from female applicants, with 35.6% from male applicants. In the remaining 3.2% of cases, the sex information was missing.

4 . Divorce and dissolution rates

For the first time in the 2024 and 2025 data release, we can compare divorce rates between opposite-sex and same-sex marriages. This is because, instead of using the total married populations as the denominators for both sets of rates, we have changed the methodology to use the opposite-sex and same-sex married populations, respectively. We have applied the new methodology to the back series.

The divorce rate for opposite-sex marriages was 8.4 per 1,000 opposite-sex married people in 2025. This is similar to the average rate over the past 10 years, following a decline in opposite-sex divorce rates from a peak of 14.2 per 1,000 in 1993.

The divorce rate for same-sex marriages was 19.5 per 1,000 same-sex married people in 2025. This is similar to 2024, with the same-sex divorce rate starting to stabilise following increases between 2015 and 2021.

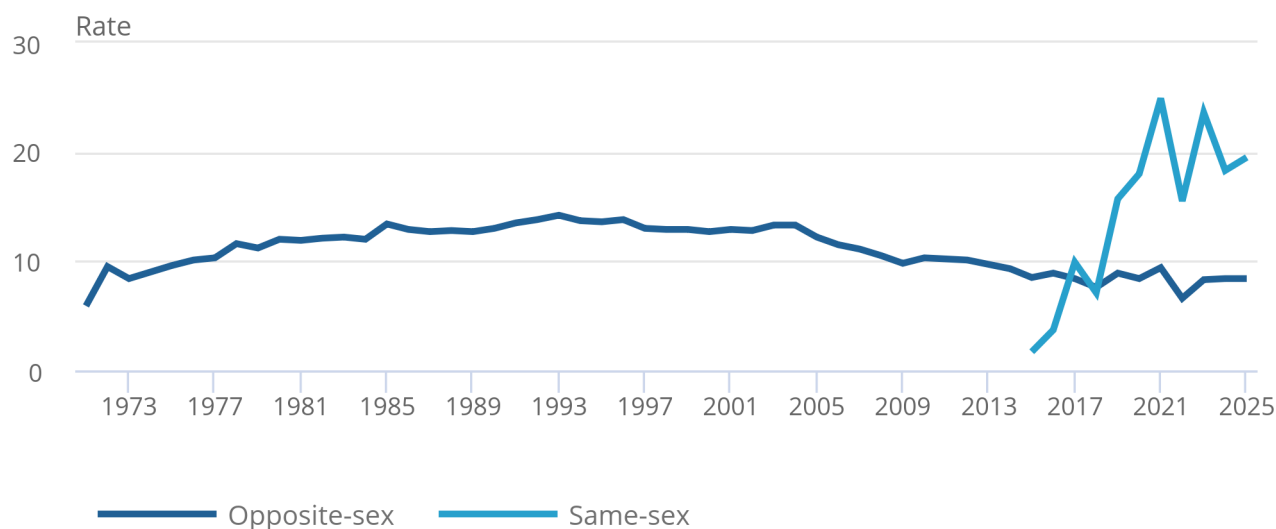
The same-sex divorce rate is subject to more variability than the opposite-sex divorce rate, as same-sex married people make up less than 1% of the adult population. This means the number of same-sex married people in the Labour Force Survey sample each year (from which the population estimates by marital status are derived) is relatively small and the estimates are less robust.

Figure 4: The divorce rate for same-sex marriages is higher than for opposite-sex marriages

Divorce rates for opposite-sex and same-sex marriages, 1971 to 2025

Figure 4: The divorce rate for same-sex marriages is higher than for opposite-sex marriages

Divorce rates for opposite-sex and same-sex marriages, 1971 to 2025



Source: Divorces and dissolutions in England and Wales from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022 increased the minimum age for marriage and civil partnership in England and Wales from 16 to 18 years from 27 February 2023. Divorce rates for 2024 and earlier are based on populations aged 16 years and over; rates for 2025 are based on populations aged 18 years and over.
2. The Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Act 2020 introduced a minimum period of 20 weeks between the start of proceedings and application for final order. This may have had an impact on the number and timing of divorces taking place in 2022.
3. Trends in divorce rates from 2020 onwards may have been affected by disruption to family court activity during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which may have influenced the timing of divorces granted in subsequent years.
4. The decrease in the divorce rates between 2017 and 2018, and the increase between 2018 and 2019 can be partly attributed to a delay in the processing of divorce applications by divorce centres. A backlog of divorce petitions made in 2017 were not processed until 2018, resulting in fewer completed divorces in 2018 and more completed divorces in 2019.

Civil partnership dissolution rates have been published in our accompanying data tables for 2007 to 2019 only. This is because of concerns about the quality of the population estimates by marital status for the civil partnered population (the denominators for calculating the civil partnership dissolution rates) for 2020 onwards.

5 . Duration of legal partnership at divorce or dissolution

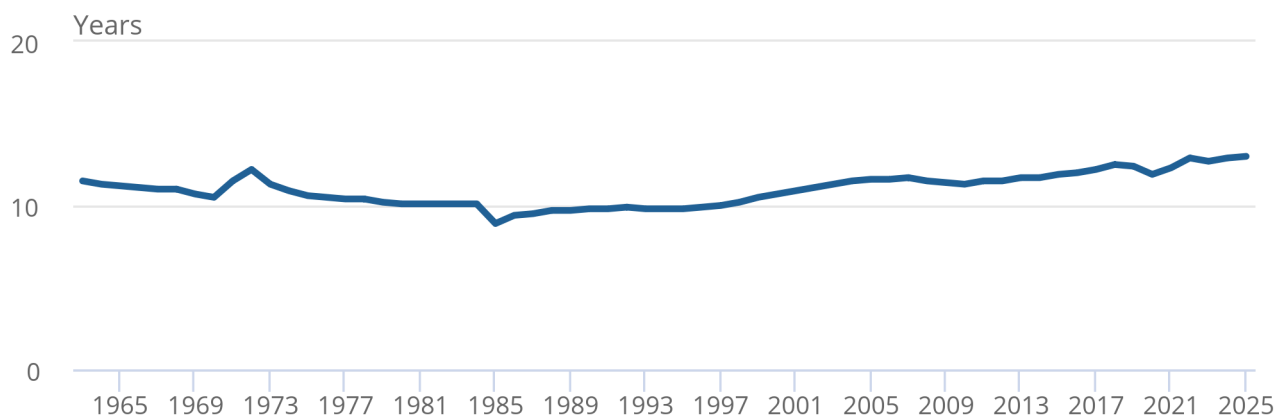
The median duration of legal partnership at divorce or dissolution increased for most partnership types in 2025. For opposite-sex couples, the median duration of marriage at divorce was 13.0 years, the longest since the start of our time series in 1963. This continues the long-term trend of marriages lasting longer before divorce, with the median duration increasing from a record low of 8.9 years in 1985.

Figure 5: The median duration of marriage at divorce for opposite-sex couples has generally been increasing since 1985

Median duration of marriage at divorce for opposite-sex couples, England and Wales, 1963 to 2025

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Median duration of marriage at divorce for opposite-sex couples, England and Wales, 1963 to 2025



Source: Divorces and dissolutions in England and Wales from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. The Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Act 2020 introduced a minimum period of 20 weeks between the start of proceedings and application for final order. This may have had an impact on the number and timing of divorces taking place in 2022.
2. Trends in marriage durations from 2020 onwards may have been affected by disruption to family court activity during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which may have influenced the timing of divorces granted in subsequent years.
3. Delays in the processing of divorce applications by divorce centres resulted in a backlog of petitions made in 2017 being processed in 2018 and 2019. As a result, median durations for divorces completed in 2018 and 2019 may have been affected by the delayed progression of these cases.

Among same-sex marriages, the median duration at divorce was 7.5 years for male couples and 6.6 years for female couples in 2025. The median duration for female same-sex marriages was the highest recorded since the first same-sex divorces in 2015. It is expected that the median duration of same-sex marriages at divorce is lower than opposite-sex marriages because same-sex marriages were only introduced in March 2014.

Among same-sex civil partnerships, the median duration at dissolution was 13.7 years for male couples and 13.6 years for female couples in 2025. These were the longest median durations recorded for both groups and the longest median durations among all partnership types in 2025.

For opposite-sex civil partnership dissolutions (which were only introduced in December 2019), the median duration of civil partnership at dissolution was 3.7 years in 2025.

6 . Divorces and dissolutions by year of legal partnership

Looking at the data by marriage and civil partnership cohorts (that is, those who married or formed a civil partnership in the same year), until the cohorts who married in the mid-1990s, there were an increasing proportion of:

- marriages ending in divorce
- divorces occurring earlier in the marriage

For more recent cohorts, the trend appears to be reversing.

By their 10th wedding anniversary, 9.9% of couples who married in 1965 had divorced. This proportion increased for successive cohorts, reaching 24.7% among couples who married in 1995. More recent cohorts were less likely to divorce within the first 10 years of marriage, with 20.7% of couples who married in 2005 and 16.3% of those who married in 2015 divorced by their 10th anniversary. Among civil partnerships formed in 2015, 14.4% had been dissolved by their 10th anniversary.

We are starting to see the same pattern over longer durations too. By their 20th wedding anniversary, 21.7% of couples who married in 1965 had divorced, compared with 38.1% of those who married in 1995. Among couples who married in 2005, 35.3% had divorced by their 20th anniversary.

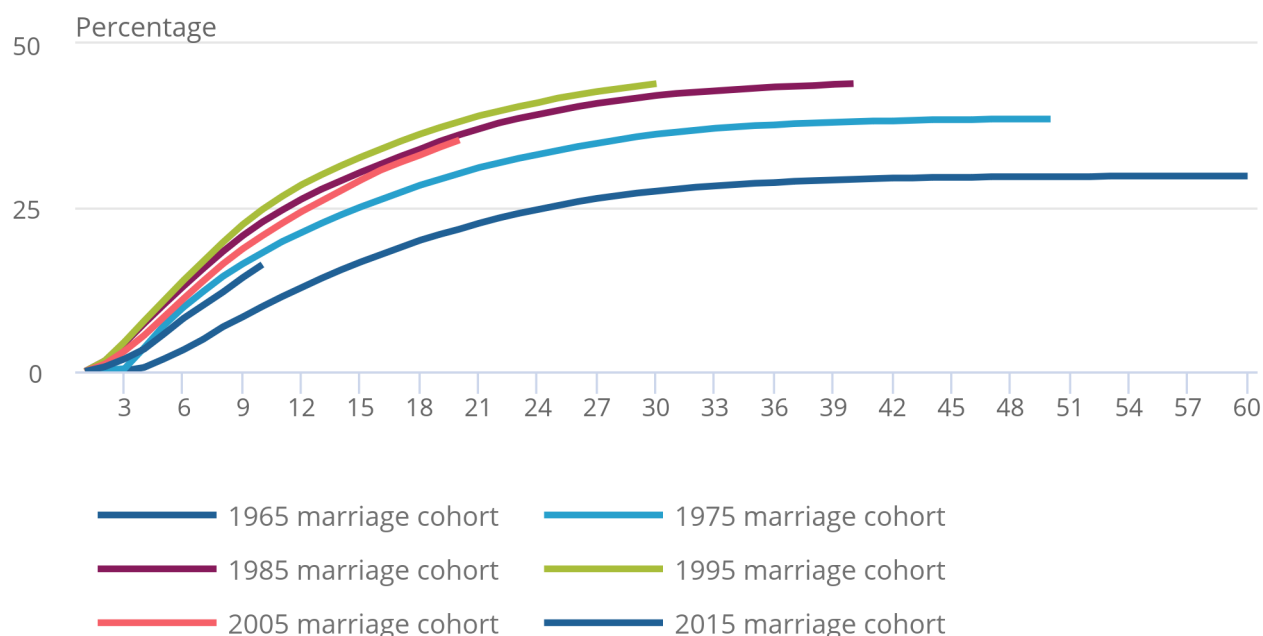
These changes are likely be caused by a range of factors including legislation changes, change over time in the average age at marriage, and changes in societal attitudes to divorce and dissolution.

Figure 6: Marriages formed in more recent cohorts were less likely to end in divorce within the first 10 years than those formed in the 1980s and 1990s

Cumulative percentage of marriages ending in divorce by year of marriage and anniversary, England and Wales, selected 1965 to 2015 marriage cohorts

Figure 6: Marriages formed in more recent cohorts were less likely to end in divorce within the first 10 years than those formed in the 1980s and 1990s

Cumulative percentage of marriages ending in divorce by year of marriage and anniversary, England and Wales, selected 1965 to 2015 marriage cohorts



Source: Divorces and dissolutions in England and Wales from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Data include opposite-sex marriages and divorces, same-sex marriages (from 2014 onwards) and same-sex divorces (from 2015 onwards).

7 . Definitions

Applicant

The person or persons seeking a divorce, civil partnership dissolution or nullity (previously referred to as the petitioner).

Final order

For applications issued from 6 April 2022, the court order that legally ends a marriage or civil partnership (previously called the decree absolute).

Legal partnership dissolution

The legal ending of a marriage or civil partnership, including both final orders (or decree absolutes) and nullity orders.

Marriage or civil partnership cohort

A group of marriages or civil partnerships that took place in the same year.

Median duration of legal partnership at dissolution

The middle value when the data on duration are arranged in increasing order. The median is used, rather than the mean, because the data on the duration of legal partnerships at dissolution are not symmetrically distributed. Therefore, the median provides a more accurate reflection of the average duration of marriage.

Nullity order

A nullity order, commonly known as an annulment, declares that the marriage or civil partnership is void (that no valid marriage or civil partnership ever existed) or voidable (was legal at time of registration but is no longer legal). This was previously referred to as a "decree of nullity".

8 . Data on divorces and dissolutions in England and Wales

[Divorce and dissolutions in England and Wales](#) Dataset | Released: 23 September 2026 Divorce and civil partnership dissolution numbers and rates, by partnership type and duration of legal partnership.

9 . Quality, methods and data sources

About the statistics

[Divorces and dissolutions in England and Wales quality and methods guide](#) Methodology | Released: 23 September 2026 What the divorce and civil partnership dissolution statistics cover, how we produce them, and their quality and comparability. Includes definitions and latest, past and upcoming changes.

Statistical designation

The Office for Statistics Regulation independently reviewed these accredited official statistics in December 2011 (Civil partnerships in England and Wales) and April 2012 (Divorces in England and Wales). They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics and should be labelled "accredited official statistics".

10 . Related links

[Divorce and dissolution statistics for Scotland](#)

Publication | Released: 30 April 2024

Statistics on civil law cases in the Scottish courts together with other related information, such as statistics from the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey.

[Divorce statistics for Northern Ireland](#)

Web page | Released: 20 November 2025

Divorce statistics for Northern Ireland based on decree absolute data provided by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS).

[Marriages and civil partnerships in England and Wales: 2023](#)

Statistical Bulletin | Released: 18 November 2025

Number of marriages and civil partnerships that took place in England and Wales, analysed by age, sex, area and time of year.

[Population estimates by marital status and living arrangements, England and Wales: 2025](#)

Statistical Bulletin | Released 31 July 2026

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

[Ministry of Justice Family Court Statistics Quarterly](#)

Web page | Last updated: 25 June 2026

A collection of accredited official statistics on activity in the family courts of England and Wales.

11 . Cite this page

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