

Statistical bulletin

# Marriages and civil partnerships in England and Wales: 2023

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

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# 1 . Main points

- There were 231,949 marriages and civil partnerships in England and Wales in 2023, an 8.6% decrease from 2022.
- There was an increase in civil partnership formations, contributing 3.3% of all legal partnership formations in 2023, with 6,179 opposite-sex and 1,368 same-sex civil partnerships.
- The South East saw the highest number of marriages taking place in 2023, with 16.1% of marriages being registered; for civil partnerships, London was the most popular, with 24.5% of civil partnerships being registered.
- Saturdays remained the most common day of the week to get married, with Saturday 2 September being the most popular day in 2023.
- The median age for men and women entering an opposite-sex marriage in 2023 remained among the highest median ages recorded, at 34.8 years and 33.0 years, respectively.

## 2 . Marriages and civil partnerships

Note that as of November 2025, the "Marriages in England and Wales" and "Civil partnerships in England and Wales" statistical bulletins have been combined into one annual statistical bulletin. The [datasets](#) remain as they have been previously published as separate entities on the Office for National Statistics website.

### Marriage and civil partnership numbers

There has been increased variance in the number of weddings and civil partnerships in recent years. These may be affected by an increase in weddings that were delayed because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

There were 231,949 marriages and civil partnerships in England and Wales in 2023, an 8.6% decrease from 2022 (253,776). Figure 1 shows that opposite-sex marriages were the most common, with 93.5% (216,901) of total legal partnership formations.

### Figure 1. Opposite-sex marriages were the most common type of legal partnership formed in 2023

Composition of all legal partnerships in 2023 compared with 2022, England and Wales

[Download the data](#)

For opposite-sex civil partnership formations, first introduced in December 2019, there was a steep increase immediately following their introduction, which has since slowed. These now show a gradual increase since 2021 to 6,179 in 2023 (Figure 2).

Same-sex marriages, introduced in 2014, increased up to 2022, with a steep decline in same-sex civil partnerships after their introduction. This suggests that since the introduction of same-sex marriages, same-sex couples may have married instead of forming a civil partnership. The number of civil partnership conversions peaked in 2015, with 4,410 male and 4,746 female civil partnership conversions. Same-sex and opposite-sex civil partnerships follow similar trends after their introduction, with same-sex marriages now increasing above pre-coronavirus levels.

**Figure 2: Same-sex marriages increased alongside a decline in same-sex civil partnerships after their introduction in 2014.**

Number of same-sex and opposite-sex civil partnerships alongside same-sex marriages, England and Wales, 2005 to 2023

Figure 2: Same-sex marriages increased alongside a decline in same-sex civil partnerships after their introduction in 2014.

Number of same-sex and opposite-sex civil partnerships alongside same-sex marriages, England and Wales, 2005 to 2023



Source: Marriages and civil partnerships in England and Wales from the Office for National Statistics

In line with recent trends, there were more female same-sex marriages (59.8%) in 2023 than male same-sex marriages (40.2%), although the difference was smaller than 2022. In contrast, male couples represented 59.2% of same-sex civil partnerships formed in 2023, a slight increase when compared with 2022 (58.2%), while female couples represented 40.8% of same-sex civil partnerships.

## Marriage and civil partnership rates

Marriage and civil partnership rates provide a better indication of changing trends. They account for changes in the adult population not in a legal partnership, that is, those who are referred to as "unmarried" in relation to the number of marriages and civil partnerships.

There has been a steady decline in opposite-sex marriage rates over time (Figure 3a). This has been compounded by a sharp decrease in rates in 2020, during the coronavirus pandemic. In 2023, rates returned to the levels seen before the pandemic, with 18.1 marriages per 1,000 unmarried men, a 10.8% decrease from 2022 (20.3 marriages per 1,000 unmarried men). For women, there were 16.4 marriages per 1,000 unmarried women, a 10.4% decrease from 2022 (18.3 marriages per 1,000 unmarried women).

There were 0.5 opposite-sex civil partnerships per 1,000 people not in a legally registered partnership (Figure 3b), an increase for women of 0.1 registrations from 2022 whereas rates for men remained constant. For same-sex civil partnerships, both men and women remained at 0.1 registrations per 1,000 people not in a legally registered partnership.

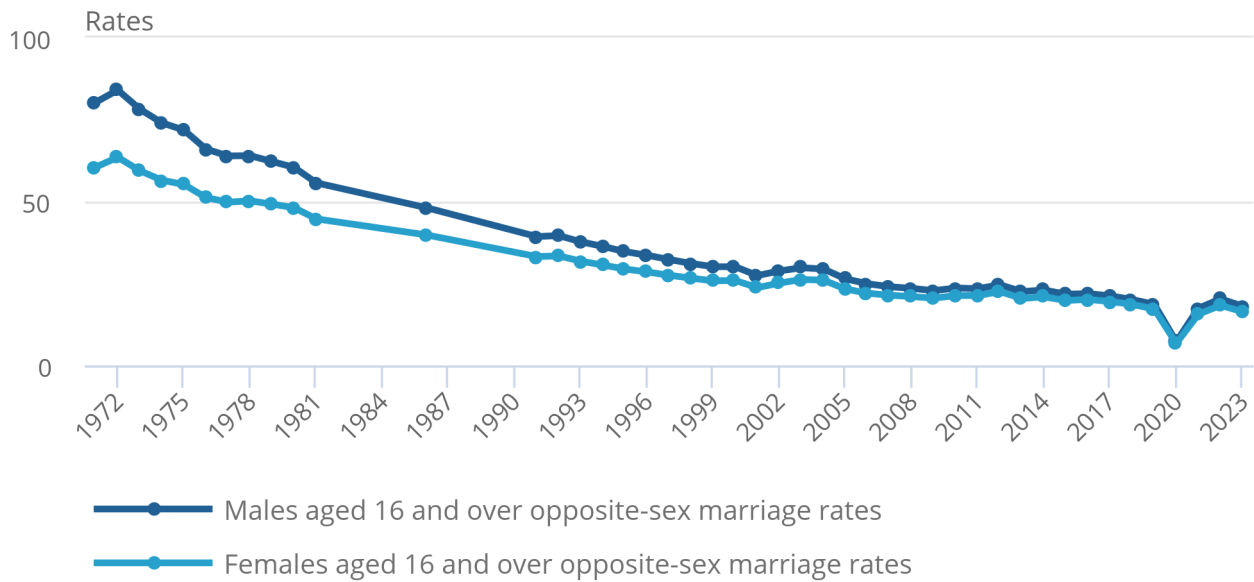
Male same-sex marriage rates also returned to pre-coronavirus levels, with 0.5 marriages per 1,000 unmarried men. Meanwhile, female same-sex marriage rates were 0.7 marriages per 1,000 unmarried women.

### Figure 3a: There has been a steady decline in opposite-sex marriage rates over time

Marriage rates for opposite-sex marriages and same-sex marriages by sex, England and Wales, 1971 to 2023

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Marriage rates for opposite-sex marriages and same-sex marriages by sex, England and Wales, 1971 to 2023



Source: Marriages and civil partnerships in England and Wales from the Office for National Statistics

#### Notes:

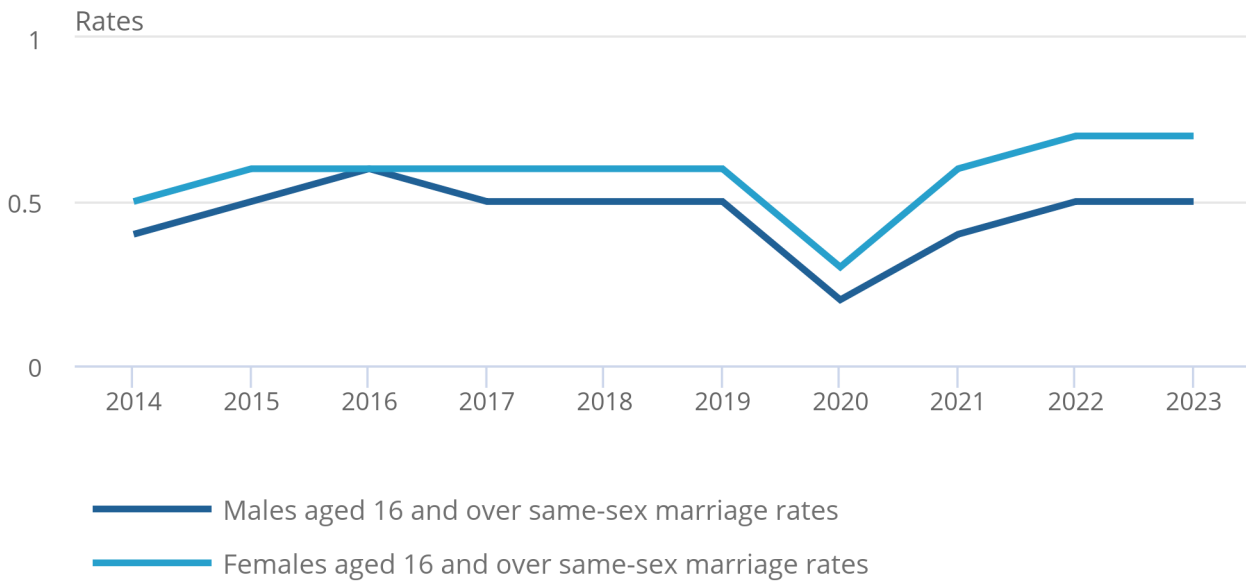
1. Some shorthand is used in this table, [x] = not available.
2. Rates for both opposite-sex and same-sex marriages are calculated per 1,000 unmarried men and women. As there are fewer same-sex marriages, the rates for same-sex marriages are much lower than for opposite-sex marriages.
3. Rates for 1982 to 1985 and 1987 to 1990 are not shown because population estimates by marital status are not available for these years.

### Figure 3b: There has been an increase in female same-sex marriages over time

Marriage rates for same-sex marriages by sex, England and Wales, 2014 to 2023

### Figure 3b: There has been an increase in female same-sex marriages over time

Marriage rates for same-sex marriages by sex, England and Wales, 2014 to 2023



Source: Marriages and civil partnerships in England and Wales from the Office for National Statistics

#### Notes:

1. Some shorthand is used in this table, [x] = not available.
2. Rates for both opposite-sex and same-sex marriages are calculated per 1,000 unmarried men and women. As there are fewer same-sex marriages, the rates for same-sex marriages are much lower than for opposite-sex marriages.

## Marriages and civil partnerships by area and time of the year

The area that saw the largest number of marriages occurring in 2023 was the South East, contributing 16.1% (36,136) of all marriages in England and Wales.

Lambeth (London) saw the biggest increase in marriages, increasing by 30.6% when compared with 2022, from 666 to 870 marriages. Denbighshire (Wales) had the largest decrease, with marriages falling by 27.3%, from 611 to 444 marriages.

Among couples forming a civil partnership, London was the most popular area for formations to be registered, with 24.5% (1,847) of all civil partnership formations in 2023. Compared with 2022, London saw a 16.1% increase for same-sex civil partnership formations and a 17.9% increase for opposite-sex civil partnership formations.

The most popular month to get married in 2023 was August, when 14.3% (32,121) of marriages took place. For civil partnerships, September was the most popular month, with 9.9% (744) of civil partnerships occurring. January was the least popular month for both marriages and civil partnerships, when 2.6% of marriages and 6.3% of civil partnerships took place.

For marriages, the most popular day of the year to get married in 2023 was Saturday 2 September, with a total of 3,227 marriages (Figure 4). This deviates from recent trends in which Saturdays in July were the most popular days to get married.

Christmas Day and Boxing Day continue the trend of being the least popular days to get married, with one marriage occurring on both days in 2023. The most common day of the week to get married remained a Saturday, with 41.9% (93,916) of all marriages occurring.

### Figure 4: Saturday 2 September was the most popular day of the year to get married.

Total number of marriages by date of year, England and Wales, 2023

#### Notes:

1. Daily breakdowns for civil partnerships are not available because of smaller numbers following their introduction.

[Download the data](#)

## Marriages and civil partnerships by age

The median ages of marriage remain among the highest median ages recorded for men and women entering an opposite-sex marriage.

Men forming a same-sex marriage remained older than those forming opposite-sex marriages (37.4 years compared with 34.8 years, respectively). For women marrying a same-sex partner, the median age decreased from 34.2 years in 2022 to 34.0 years in 2023, supporting the trend of same-sex partners forming marriages at an older age than opposite-sex couples (33.0 years).

For civil partnerships, the median age for male same-sex partners to form a civil partnership was 48.7 years, a 1.9 year decrease from 2022 (50.6 years). For female same-sex partners, the median age to form a civil partnership was 42.5 years, a 3.4 year decrease from 2022 (45.9 years).

For opposite-sex partners forming a civil partnership, the median ages at formation tend to be higher when compared with same-sex couples. For males, the median age for forming an opposite-sex civil partnership was 55.2 years, a 0.7 year decrease from 2022 (55.9 years). Females forming an opposite-sex civil partnership remained younger than males, with the median age for 2023 being 52.9 years, a 0.4 year decrease from 2022 (53.3 years).

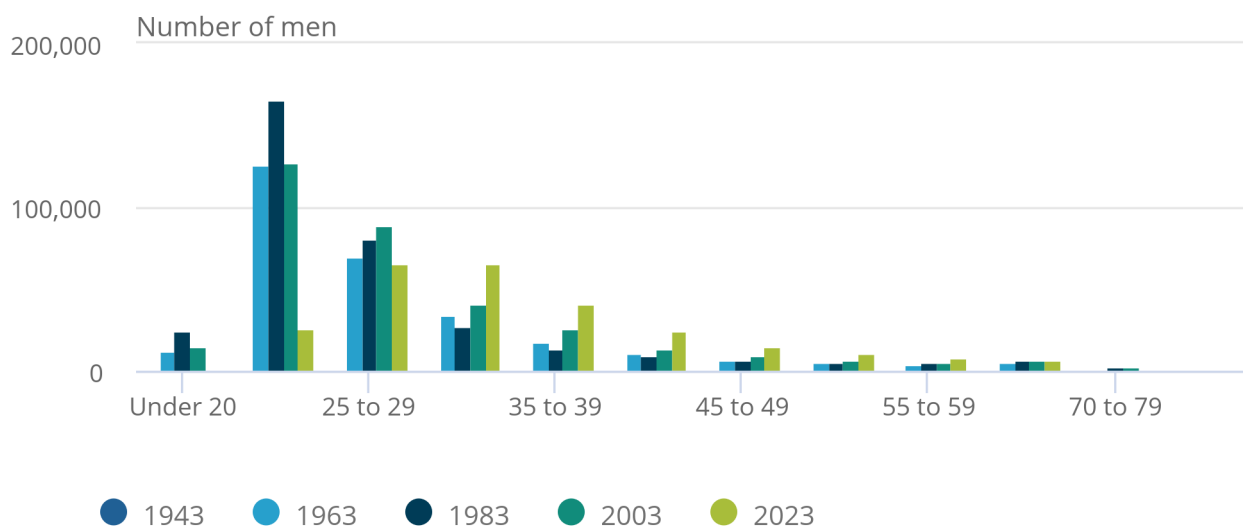
Men and women aged between 30 and 34 years had the highest number of opposite-sex marriages occurring in 2023 (59,925 and 58,616, respectively) (Figures 5a and 5b). For same-sex marriages, men and women aged between 30 and 34 years also had the highest number of marriages (1,379 and 2,450, respectively).

### Figure 5a: Men and women aged between 30 and 34 years had the highest number of opposite-sex marriages

Number of men forming opposite-sex marriages by age group and sex, England and Wales, 2023

#### Figure 5a: Men and women aged between 30 and 34 years had the highest number of opposite-sex marriages

Number of men forming opposite-sex marriages by age group and sex, England and Wales, 2023



Source: Marriages and civil partnerships in England and Wales from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

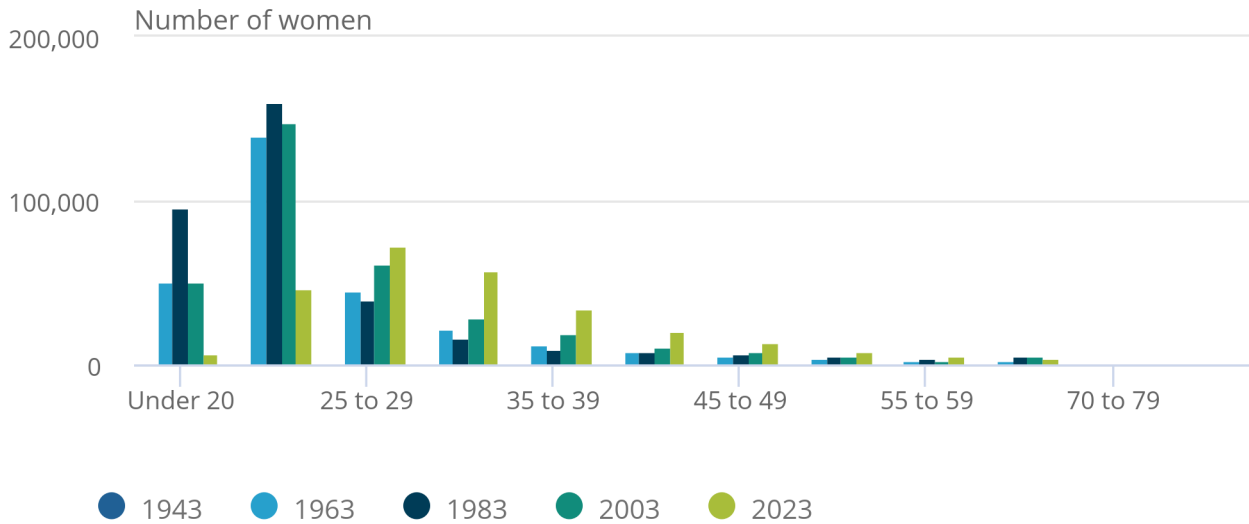
1. In 1943, 1,840 men did not state their ages, therefore these are not shown in the graph.

**Figure 5b: Men and women aged between 30 and 34 years had the highest number of opposite-sex marriages.**

Number of women forming opposite-sex marriages by age group and sex, England and Wales, 2023.

**Figure 5b: Men and women aged between 30 and 34 years had the highest number of opposite-sex marriages.**

Number of women forming opposite-sex marriages by age group and sex, England and Wales, 2023.



Source: Marriages and civil partnerships in England and Wales from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. In 1943, 1,895 women did not state their ages, therefore these are not shown in the graph.

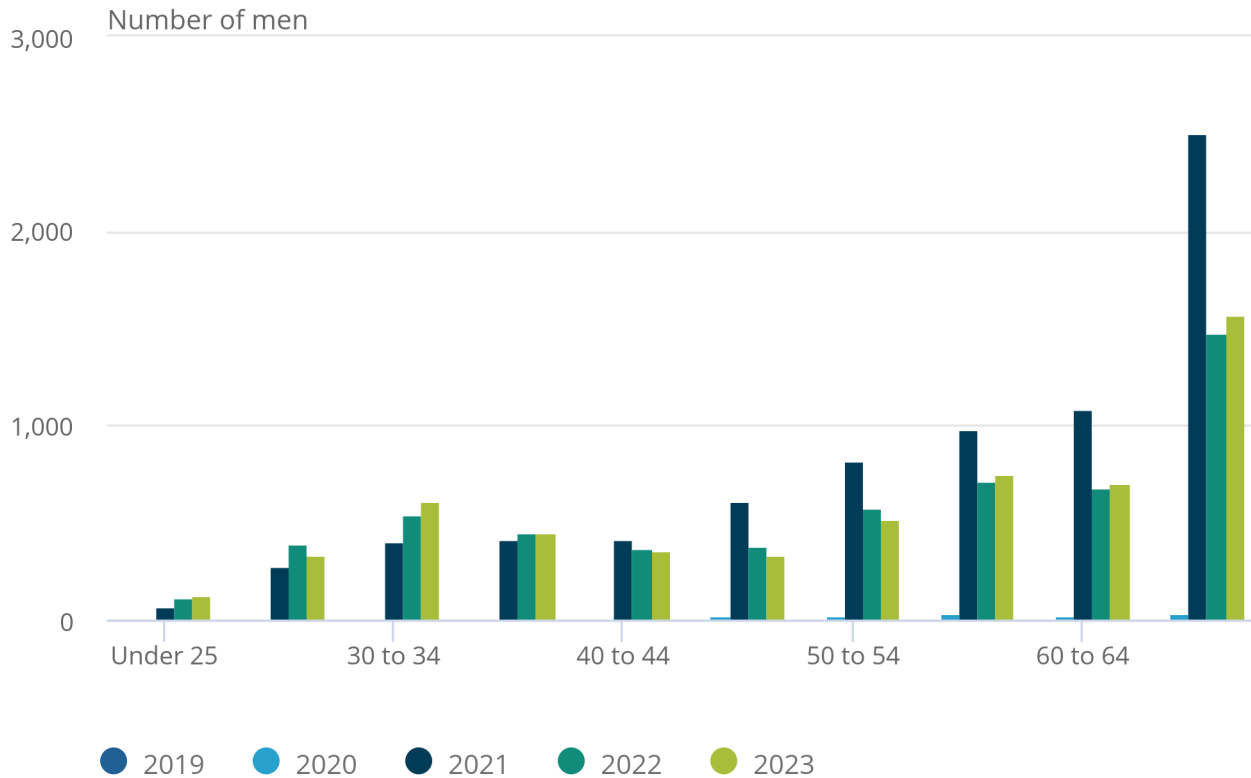
For civil partnerships, both men and women aged 65 years and over had the highest number of opposite-sex civil partnerships in 2023 (1,723 and 1,347, respectively) (Figures 6a and 6b). This was also shown in same-sex civil partnerships, with 309 males and 180 females aged 65 years and over forming a civil partnership.

**Figure 6a: Men and women aged 65 years and over had the highest number of opposite-sex civil partnerships**

Number of men forming opposite-sex civil partnerships by age group and sex, England and Wales, 2023

Figure 6a: Men and women aged 65 years and over had the highest number of opposite-sex civil partnerships

Number of men forming opposite-sex civil partnerships by age group and sex, England and Wales, 2023



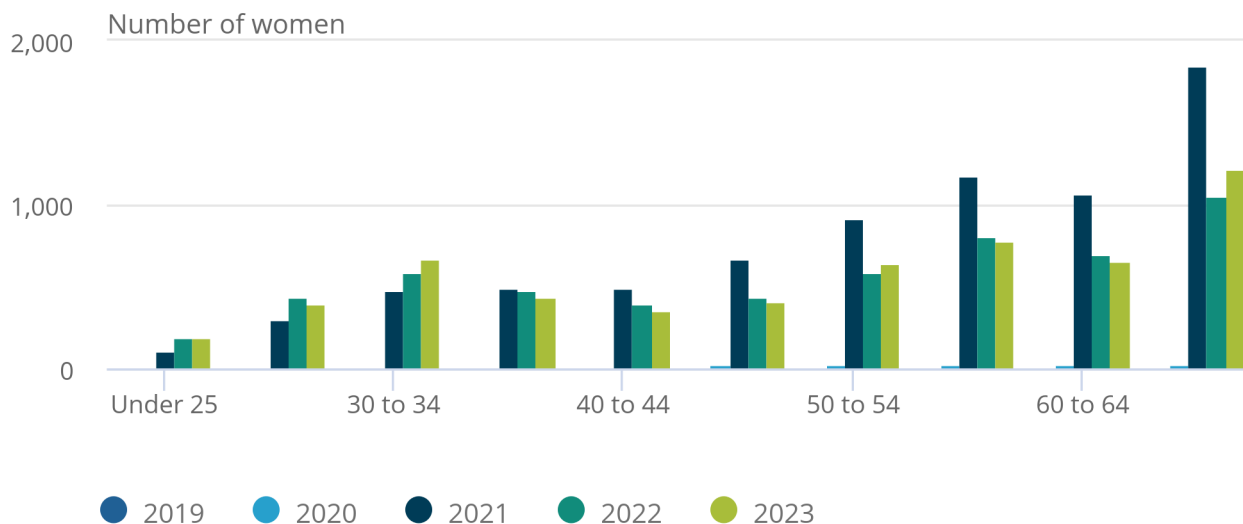
Source: Marriages and civil partnerships in England and Wales from the Office for National Statistics

**Figure 6b: Men and women aged 65 years and over had the highest number of opposite-sex civil partnerships**

Number of women forming opposite-sex civil partnerships by age group and sex, England and Wales, 2023

Figure 6b: Men and women aged 65 years and over had the highest number of opposite-sex civil partnerships

Number of women forming opposite-sex civil partnerships by age group and sex, England and Wales, 2023



Source: Marriages and civil partnerships in England and Wales from the Office for National Statistics

The age at which men and women marry has been increasing for cohorts born more recently. More than half of women born in 1983 had been or were married by age 35 years. For men born in 1983, more than half had been or were married by age 40 years, whereas a decade earlier for those born in 1973, half of men had married by age 35 years and half of women by age 31 years.

### 3 . Data on marriages and civil partnerships in England and Wales

[Marriages in England and Wales](#)

Dataset | Released 18 November 2025

Annual statistics on the number of marriages that took place in England and Wales analysed by age, sex, previous legal partnership status and civil or religious ceremony.

[Civil partnership formations](#)

Dataset | Released 18 November 2025

Annual statistics on the number of civil partnership formations that took place in England and Wales analysed by age, sex, partnership type, previous legal partnership status and area of occurrence.

## 4 . Glossary

### Civil partnership

A civil partnership is a legally registered relationship between two people of the same or opposite sex.

### Civil Partnership Act 2004

The [Civil Partnership Act 2004](#) was introduced for the whole of the UK, making same-sex civil partnership statistics across the UK countries comparable. The [Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths \(Registration etc\) Act 2019](#) has also enabled opposite-sex couples to form civil partnerships across all countries of the UK. For more information on comparability across the UK and the different legislative changes, see our [Marriages and civil partnerships in England and Wales quality and methodology information \(QMI\) report](#)

### Civil partnership formation

A civil partnership is formed when the parties involved register as civil partners in the presence of a registration officer and two witnesses.

### Civil marriage

A civil marriage can take place at a register office or other buildings approved for civil marriage. Both partners must personally give a formal notice of their intention to marry or form a civil partnership to the superintendent registrar of the district(s) where they have resided for the previous seven days.

### First marriages

First marriages refer to marriages where one or both partners had never previously been married or formed a civil partnership.

### Legal partnership

A legal partnership refers to either a civil partnership or marriage between an opposite-sex or same-sex couple.

### Remarriages

Remarriages refer to marriages where one or both partners were previously married or had formed a civil partnership.

### Unmarried population

The unmarried adult population in this release refers to men and women aged 16 years and over who have never entered a legal partnership (marriage or civil partnership), who are divorced (including those whose previous civil partnership has dissolved) or who are widowed (including surviving civil partners). From February 2023, those aged 16 and 17 years were no longer able to marry or enter a civil partnership in England and Wales, because of the introduction of the [Marriage and Civil Partnership \(Minimum Age\) Act 2022](#). We will consider how this affects the unmarried population used in the calculation of our rates in our future releases.

## 5 . Data sources and quality

This is the first time that final marriage and civil partnership statistics for England and Wales have been published for 2023. The release provides final annual data.

- Marriage statistics are derived from information recorded when marriages are registered as part of civil registration, a legal requirement.
- Civil partnership formation statistics are derived from information recorded when civil partnerships are legally registered as part of civil registration; the General Register Office (GRO) maintains the records.
- Figures represent civil and religious marriages that took place in England and Wales only.
- Legal partnerships to residents of England and Wales that took place elsewhere are not included, while legal partnerships that took place in England and Wales to non-residents are included.
- Marriages of same-sex couples first took place on 29 March 2014 and are included in these statistics.
- Same-sex couples in a civil partnership have been able to convert their existing civil partnership into a marriage, if they so desired, from 10 December 2014; these are not included in the marriage statistics but are reported separately; opposite-sex couples in a civil partnership are currently unable to convert their existing civil partnership into a marriage.
- From February 2023, those aged 16 and 17 years were no longer able to marry or enter a civil partnership in England and Wales, which will affect estimates for these ages for 2023; this is because of the introduction of the [Marriage and Civil Partnership \(Minimum Age\) Act 2022](#).
- For the first time, we have published marriages and civil partnership formation statistics concurrently in one bulletin.

## Strengths and limitations

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our [Marriages and civil partnerships in England and Wales quality and methodology information \(QMI\) report](#).

Marriage statistics are comparable between countries within the UK. More information on comparability, including comparability with survey data sources, is available in the QMI.

Our [User guide to marriage statistics](#) provides further information on data quality, legislation and procedures relating to marriages and includes a more detailed glossary of terms.

Legal partnership statistics are compiled to enable the analysis of social and demographic trends. They are also used for considering and monitoring policy changes, including the introduction of marriages of same-sex couples.

Coverage of annual civil partnership statistics was altered from UK to England and Wales only from the 2014 data year onwards following a consultation exercise in February 2015. This has led to more timely final statistics for England and Wales.

## Timeliness of marriages in England and Wales data

It was previously only possible to publish final annual marriage statistics around 26 months after the end of the reference year because of delays in the submission of religious marriage entries by the clergy and authorised persons. It was estimated that each year around 4% of religious marriage returns received at the Office for National Statistics remained outstanding one year after the reference period. Marriage statistics are published once we consider the annual dataset is acceptably complete. More information on this can be found in our [User guide to marriage statistics](#).

However, following the introduction of the [Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths \(Registration etc.\) Act 2019](#) (that came into force on 4 May 2021), we have been able to reduce the delay in the submission of religious marriage entries and therefore improved the timeliness of future marriage statistics.

## Accredited official statistics

These [accredited official statistics](#) were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation in April 2012. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) and should be labelled "accredited official statistics".

## 6 . Related links

### [Marriage and civil partnership status, England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

Article | Released 22 February 2023

Details adults' legal partnership status, including changes over time, where groups of each legal partnership status live, education, ethnicity and religion.

### [Population estimates by marital status and living arrangements: 2024](#)

Bulletin | Released 15 October 2025

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 for the latest years available.

### [Civil partnership formation statistics for Scotland](#)

Web page | Released 26 August 2025

Marriage and civil partnership formation statistics for Scotland for 2024 and earlier years.

### [Civil partnership statistics for Northern Ireland](#)

Web page | Released 21 November 2024 Civil partnership formation and dissolution statistics for Northern Ireland for 2023 and earlier years.

### [Divorces and dissolutions in England and Wales, 2023](#)

Bulletin | Released 2 July 2025

Annual divorce and civil partnership dissolution numbers and rates, partnership type, to whom granted and duration of marriage.

## 7 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 18 November 2025, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Marriages and civil partnerships in England and Wales: 2023](#)