Marriages in England and Wales QMI

Contact:
Kanak Ghosh
vsob@ons.gov.uk

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2. About this Quality and Methodology Information report

This quality and methodology report contains information on the quality characteristics of the data (including the European Statistical System five dimensions of quality) as well as the methods used to create it.

The information in this report will help you to:

- understand the strengths and limitations of the data
- learn about existing uses and users of the data
- understand the methods used to create the data
- help you to decide suitable uses for the data
- reduce the risk of misusing data

3. Important points about marriage statistics

- Marriage statistics are derived from information recorded when marriages are registered as part of civil registration, a legal requirement; these data represent the best and most complete data source.

- Figures represent civil and religious marriages that took place in England and Wales only.

- National Records of Scotland (NRS) and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) publish regular marriage statistics for their own countries, which are comparable with the Office for National Statistics figures.

- Marriages to residents of England and Wales that took place abroad are not included, while marriages that took place in England and Wales to non-residents are included.

- Marriages of same-sex couples first took place on 29 March 2014; our datasets provide statistics on both marriages of opposite-sex couples and marriages of same-sex couples.
4. Quality summary

Overview

The registration of marriages taking place in England and Wales is a service carried out by the Local Registration Service in partnership with the General Register Office (GRO). Legally, a marriage is solemnised in either a civil or religious ceremony and is recorded in a register.

Marriage statistics provide annual data on marriages that took place in England and Wales. The statistics are produced by:

- sex
- age
- period of occurrence
- previous marital status
- type of ceremony (civil or religious)
- religious denomination
- area of occurrence

Final marriage statistics, which are required to be laid before Parliament, are currently published just over two years after the end of the reference year.

Following the implementation of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013, the first marriages of same-sex couples took place on 29 March 2014. Civil partners have been able to convert their civil partnership into a marriage, if they so desired, from 10 December 2014. Figures on marriages of same-sex couples are now included within our annual marriages release alongside figures on marriages of opposite-sex couples: explorable datasets provide more detailed figures on both forms of marriage.

Annual marriage statistics for the UK and its constituent countries are published in the Vital statistics in the UK: births, deaths and marriages.

Our User guide to marriage statistics provides further information on data quality, legislation and procedures relating to marriages.

5. Quality characteristics of the marriages in England and Wales data

Relevance

(The degree to which statistical outputs meet users' needs.)
From 2016, the format of final annual marriage publications changed (2012 data year onwards). We now publish a selection of summary tables. These tables provide an extensive time series for comparison. Alongside these summary tables, we publish explorable datasets, which can be used to obtain more detailed statistics for a particular calendar year. A consultation: understanding user requirements for marriage, divorce and civil partnership statistics given the introduction of same-sex marriage (185.3KB), was published in October 2013. The response to this consultation (103.7KB), published in April 2014, detailed these changes.

Prior to 2016, a large number of data tables were published annually in the spring or summer accompanied by a statistical bulletin providing provisional figures for the latest data year. The data tables provided a summary of provisional marriage statistics for the latest data year and more detailed statistics for the previous year for which marriage figures had been finalised. Some tables provided historical data for comparison. Prior to the 2008 data year, final marriage statistics for England and Wales were published in the Annual Reference Volume FM2: Marriage, divorce and adoption statistics.

We use marriage statistics to report on social and demographic trends and to perform further analyses, for example, determining the percentage of marriages that end in divorce and comparisons with civil partnership formations (Civil Partnerships five years on (190KB)).

Following the introduction of marriages of same-sex couples, the Government Equalities Office (GEO) is monitoring the impact of the new legislation. The GEO also monitors the data for future policy considerations. The GEO is the lead for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality and uses data on the number of marriages of same-sex couples and civil partnerships formed and dissolved to inform policymaking on a range of issues.

In 2014, all relationship support policy was brought under the remit of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). At the same time, every government department was made accountable for the impact of their policies on the family. For example, DWP is encouraging family-based arrangements where appropriate by improving the availability of support for couples.

If the Cohabitation Rights Bill is passed then government will need to monitor the impact on the number of marriages and civil partnerships (and divorces in the longer-term). The distinction between cohabitation and marriage is of importance to policy-makers, as well as to social and political commentators. Issues of policy interest include legal rights and responsibilities of cohabiting partners, the welfare of children of unmarried parents, the stability of families and the numbers of lone-parent families.

There is a statutory requirement under Section 16 of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 to conduct a review of survivor benefits. In 2014, the government carried out a review. The Government Actuary’s Department (GAD) used our statistics to estimate the cost of requiring pension schemes to equalise benefits for same-sex partners with opposite-sex partners.

DWP also uses marriage data to feed into dynamic simulation models covering pension-age population to model pensioner incomes, as well as entitlement to State Pensions and pension-age benefits. This involves modelling whole life courses, including the formation of partnerships (marriage, civil partnership and cohabitation) and dissolution of the same partnerships. The projections used rely on the associated historic data.

Organisations such as Eurostat and the United Nations Statistics Division use our marriage statistics; for example, to monitor progress towards global indicators as part of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals. Also, organisations in the voluntary sector use our marriage statistics for comparison purposes and to support campaigns. These organisations often pass on our marriage statistics to their own users.

Lawyers, solicitors and those involved in family law, as well as academics and researchers in demography and social sciences, are often interested in marriage statistics.
Those involved in the “marriage business”, for example, hotels and catering businesses, bridal shops and wedding planners, often wish to see marriage statistics. Such customers therefore generally have more interest in marriages within England and Wales than marriages abroad. The clergy and in particular the Church of England are also interested in marriage statistics by area and the number of religious marriages taking place each year.

Accuracy

(The degree of closeness between an estimate and the true value.)

The marriage statistics we publish use data taken directly from the copy of the entry in the marriage register and are based on details collected by the General Register Office (GRO) when a marriage is performed. The information in the marriage entry is largely supplied by the persons being married, who are responsible for its accuracy. Supplying false information may render them liable to prosecution for perjury, hence the information supplied is generally believed to be correct. There is no routine statistical verification of the data, although editing checks are carried out to detect clerical, coding and keying errors. However, certain corrections subsequently come to light and are resolved by GRO.

Each year, a certain number of marriages are not included in the published figures because we received the entries later than the date on which the annual dataset was taken. This is due to delays in the submission of marriage entries by the clergy and registrars (more detail is available in Section 6). A table is published in our User guide to marriage statistics that shows the difference between the number of marriages stored on our database and the number included in our publications each year. Although this means some marriages are not included in the statistics, it is a compromise that must be taken to publish more timely data.

During the annual quality assurance work, further checks are carried out on the data, including frequency checks and comparisons with previous years’ data. Checks are also carried out to look for inconsistencies within the dataset to ensure there are minimal internal errors. Checks are carried out on the number of marriages by area to ensure that there are no obvious differences from the previous year or quarter, which could indicate missing records. Any anomaly is queried with the GRO and amended where necessary.

Marriage statistics by manner of solemnisation can be misleading as some religious marriages (such as Muslim and Sikh) can take place at unregistered premises. To be registered as a legal marriage the couple have a further marriage ceremony in a registry office or approved building. Such weddings are coded as civil marriages because only the civil marriage certificate is received. Given that marriage statistics can be misleading for some religions, since 2011 we have only published religious denominations under broad groupings.

Revisions of marriage statistics occur infrequently and have only taken place following revisions to the population estimates by marital status resulting in revised marriage rates. Tables contain footnotes to show if any rates have been recalculated since the last publication using revised population estimates.

Some couples choose to get married abroad. There is no legal requirement for those marriages of persons usually resident in England and Wales, but solemnised outside England and Wales, to be registered by the GRO. However, some overseas marriages are recorded with the overseas section at the GRO. These fall into two main types: marriages of armed forces personnel and marriages that take place in certain UK consuls (only 31 consuls have this facility).

It is possible to estimate the number of UK residents marrying abroad and the number of overseas residents marrying in the UK using data from the International Passenger Survey (IPS). These estimates are based on visits of less than 12 months and are derived from interviews conducted at the end of visits, where the main reason for visit was marriage. These estimates are based on a very small number of IPS interviews and so the standard errors on the estimates are correspondingly high. Further information on marriages taking place abroad can be found in the Population Trends Report: Marriages abroad, 2002 to 2007 (1815KB).
In 2016, an estimated 73,000 UK residents went abroad to get married and an estimated 17,000 overseas residents married in the UK. This represents a decrease compared with 2015, when 78,000 UK residents were estimated to have married abroad, but an increase from 8,000 overseas residents estimated to have married in the UK in 2015. The Population trends report: marriages abroad, 2002 to 2007 suggests that the vast majority (around 90%) of the marriages to UK residents estimated as taking place abroad are to residents of England and Wales, while only about half of people coming to the UK to get married do so in England and Wales.

Although the estimated number of marriages abroad is high, many users are interested in marriages taking place in England and Wales, for example, those involved in the “marriage business” such as wedding planners. However, users with an interest in social change may consider the numbers of marriages both abroad and in England and Wales.

**Coherence and comparability**

(Coherence is the degree to which data that are derived from different sources or methods, but refer to the same topic, are similar. Comparability is the degree to which data can be compared over time and domain, for example, geographic level.)

Our marriage statistics have always been produced using data collated by the General Register Office (GRO) from entries in marriage registers. Methods and classifications for marriage statistics remained similar for many years and time series data are available on a comparable basis back to 1837 in some tables.

Internationally, we provide marriage data to Eurostat each year to allow them to compare marriage figures across different European countries. We also supply marriage data to the United Nations Statistics Division who use our marriage statistics; for example, to monitor progress towards global indicators as part of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Comparability between countries within the UK is very easy for marriages as they are recognised across the UK and the world. We quality assure marriage data for England and Wales and also co-ordinate and publish statistics for the whole of the UK with breakdowns for each constituent country. Although both the National Records of Scotland (NRS) and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) publish regular statistics for their own countries, collating all UK data together allows our users to compare data easily for each country.

Comparability is maximised by the following:

- marriage statistics published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), NRS and NISRA are all produced using date of marriage
- marriage statistics published by the ONS, NRS and NISRA cover all marriages that were registered as having taken place in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland respectively, regardless of the usual residence of the parties involved
- a number of couples who are resident in England and Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland now go abroad to be married; these marriages are not included in the marriage statistics published by the ONS, NRS and NISRA and only some of these marriages abroad come to the attention of the Registrar General through notification to consular authorities

We publish marriage rates using the unmarried population aged 16 years and over as the denominator (single, widowed and divorced persons obtained from the population estimates by marital status published by the respective statistics office). Similar marriage rates for Scotland are available up to 2008. After consulting users of its demographic statistics in December 2010, NRS decided to no longer produce population estimates by marital status because of other priorities. NISRA do not produce marital status population estimates, so marriage rates for Northern Ireland are generally calculated using the population aged 16 years and over as the denominator.
There are no other marriage outputs produced based on administrative data. Comparisons of marriage data with census and survey data containing estimates of the number of people married in England and Wales are possible. However, it must be noted that these figures are not directly comparable as they are estimates of the number of people married at a certain point in time rather than the number of marriages that took place during a particular year.

**Accessibility and clarity**

(Accessibility is the ease with which users are able to access the data, also reflecting the format in which the data are available and the availability of supporting information. Clarity refers to the quality and sufficiency of the release details, illustrations and accompanying advice.)

Our recommended format for accessible content is a combination of HTML web pages for narrative, charts and graphs, with data being provided in usable formats such as CSV and Excel. Explorable datasets provide more detailed statistics for a particular calendar year. Our website also offers users the option to download the narrative in PDF format. In some instances, other software may be used, or may be available on request. Available formats for content published on our website that we do not produce, or is referenced on our website but stored elsewhere, may vary. For further information please refer to the contact details at the beginning of this report.

For information regarding conditions of access to data, please refer to:

- terms and conditions (for data on the website)
- accessibility

Special extracts and tabulations of marriage data for England and Wales are available to order (subject to legal frameworks, disclosure control, resources and our charging policy, where appropriate). Enquiries should be made to Vital Statistics Outputs Branch via email to vsob@ons.gov.uk or by telephone on +44 (0)1329 444110. User requested data will be published onto our website.

**Timeliness and punctuality**

(Timeliness refers to the lapse of time between publication and the period to which the data refer. Punctuality refers to the gap between planned and actual publication dates.)

The annual release of marriage statistics is announced on the GOV.UK release calendar at least four weeks in advance.

The publication of provisional marriage statistics was discontinued in 2016, to ensure value for money across our outputs. Final figures are published just over two years after the end of the reference period and are required to be laid before Parliament.

Provisional figures showing the number of marriages of same-sex couples were published in August 2014 and October 2015. Due to the very small number of religious marriages to same-sex couples it was possible to provide very timely and high-level provisional figures in response to a recent change in legislation. As religious marriages account for a large proportion of marriages to opposite-sex couples, it is not possible to publish these figures in such a timely manner. See the Accuracy section for more information on timeliness.
Prior to the 2008 data year, the first release of summary data occurred during National Marriages Week in February. On this day provisional marriage statistics for England and Wales for the calendar year that ended just over a year before were released. Final marriage statistics for England and Wales were laid before Parliament and published just over two years after the end of the reference period in March in the Annual Reference Volume FM2: Marriage, divorce and adoption statistics. Following a review of marriage statistics, FM2 was discontinued from 2011 and instead final detailed marriage statistics (with an improved content and layout), as well as provisional summary marriage statistics for the following calendar year, were published at the same time.

Users are happy with the data available on marriages given their high quality; however, the release of data is not considered to be timely. See the Accuracy section for more detail on factors affecting the timeliness of marriage statistics. We hope to improve the timeliness of marriage statistics in future years and continue to work with the General Register Office (GRO) monitoring the receipt of marriage registrations.

The release of our marriage statistics has been delayed five times in recent years. The release of final 2012 statistics was delayed initially to enable revised population estimates by marital status to be used in the calculation of marriage rates and then further delayed to enable us to change the format of the release, publishing explorable datasets alongside a selection of summary tables. Due to the delay, final figures for 2012 were published alongside final figures for 2013 in April 2016.

From January 2011, marriage entries were recorded by the GRO using the Registration Online system (RON). In 2013, the publication of Marriages in England and Wales (provisional) 2011 was postponed to allow for delays in recording marriage entries on the new system. The delay was also necessary to allow time for detailed quality assurance given the changes in data collection methodology.

In 2014, the publication of Marriages in England and Wales (provisional) 2012 was postponed to allow for a more detailed quality assurance process on final 2011 marriage statistics given the move to RON.

In 2004, the publication of the Annual Reference Volume FM2 2002 was postponed to allow for known late notifications of entries in the marriage register by a small number of registration districts and to take account of revised marital status estimates. In March 2005, the FM2 providing 2002 data was finally published. The decision was taken to implement the new time of year for future publications because the completeness of the data would be improved by delaying the publication date.

Quality checks carried out on the marriage database during 2002 had suggested that the 2001 data were incomplete. Further investigation by the GRO confirmed that there were missing entries from several registration districts. Following the receipt of late returns, the first release for 2001 marriage data took place in March 2003 rather than January 2003 as originally planned.

For more details on related releases, the GOV.UK release calendar is available online and provides 12 months’ advance notice of release dates. In the unlikely event of a change to the pre-announced release schedule, public attention will be drawn to the change and the reasons for the change will be explained fully at the same time, as set out in the Code of Practice for Statistics.

Concepts and definitions

(Concepts and definitions describe the legislation governing the output and a description of the classifications used in the output.)

The existing provisions for the preliminaries to, and registration of, marriages and civil partnerships and the processing, reporting and analysis of relevant data appear in different legislation. This reflects the distinct and separate roles of the Registrar General for England and Wales and the UK Statistics Authority. The legislation by which the Registrar General and the UK Statistics Authority are guided is available in our User guide to marriage statistics.
Output quality

Each year, a certain number of marriages are not included in the published figures because we have received the entries later than the date on which the annual dataset was taken. See the Accuracy section for more information. Although this means some marriages are not included in the statistics, it is a compromise that must be taken to publish more timely data.

Prior to the 2011 data year, if the age of one of the parties was not given, a value for that age based upon the other party’s stated age was imputed; see Section 6 for more information. From the 2011 data year onwards, missing values for age at marriage have not been imputed. The small numbers of missing values over recent years mean that imputation adds no significant value to the dataset. Some records also contain missing values for area of occurrence. Published tables now include information on the small number of records for which this information is missing.

Assessment of user needs and perceptions

(The processes for finding out about use and users, and their views on the statistical products.)

We welcome feedback on the content, format and relevance of our releases and encourage users to send feedback via email to vsob@ons.gov.uk.

Feedback is requested with all emails sent by the customer service team within Vital Statistics Output Branch. Feedback is also received through our regular attendance at user group meetings and conferences.

A consultation to understand user requirements for marriage, divorce and civil partnership statistics (185.3KB) following the introduction of marriages of same-sex couples was published in October 2013. Information provided has been used to help us meet user needs as much as possible. A summary of the responses to the consultation and future plan (103.7KB) was also published.

6. Methods used to produce the marriages in England and Wales data

How we collect the data, main data sources and accuracy

We are responsible for publishing statistics on marriages taking place in England and Wales. There are two distinct procedures for marriage in England and Wales. Marriage may be solemnised according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England or the Church in Wales. All other marriages must be preceded by civil preliminaries.

All religious marriages, with the exception of marriages solemnised according to the rites of the Society of Friends, those professing the Jewish religion, marriages of the housebound and detained and marriages by Registrar General’s licence, must be solemnised in buildings registered for the purpose.

In most cases the marriage is registered immediately after the ceremony. In churches and other buildings of the Church of England or the Church in Wales, it will be registered by a member of the clergy in duplicate registers. In registered buildings, the marriage is registered either by a Registrar in their own register, or by an “Authorised Person” in duplicate registers supplied for the registered building. An Authorised Person is not necessarily the person who conducts the ceremony.
In register offices and approved premises, the marriage is solemnised in the presence of a Superintendent Registrar and a Registrar who carries out the registration. Jewish marriages are registered by the secretary (for marriages) of the man’s synagogue. Marriages according to the rites and ceremonies of the Society of Friends are registered by the registering officer of the monthly meeting in which the marriage took place.

The information collected when a marriage is solemnised comes from the entry in the marriage register. The majority of the details entered into the marriage registers are supplied by the bride and groom although some information is also provided by the person(s) solemnising and registering the marriage.

Prior to 2011, marriage entries were collated by registrars in the registration district where they occurred. The entries were then sent to the General Register Office (GRO) for the compilation of central records and indexes in the month following the end of each quarter. Certified copies of each completed marriage entry appearing in the marriage register (both civil and religious) were also sent to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) by the GRO on a regular basis. Once received, the forms were entered onto the ONS systems and verified. Examples of marriage forms used for civil and religious marriages are reproduced in Appendix A (158KB).

From January 2011, all marriages registered within England and Wales have been recorded on the web-based Registration Online system (RON). Civil marriages are entered onto RON by registrars within seven days of the marriage. The majority of religious marriages each year are in the Church of England or Church in Wales. Returns from churches continue to be in paper format. Local registrars co-ordinate the receipt of paper returns for these marriages, including issuing reminders to the churches in the month following the end of each quarter. The GRO, however, is very much reliant on the clergy in this respect. The information from the paper copies is entered onto RON at the GRO providing a means of issuing certified copies electronically and allowing statistical data to be extracted. It is estimated that each year, around 4% of religious marriage returns remain outstanding one year after the end of the reference period (this is based on marriage records received at the ONS); this directly affects the timing of statistical outputs. This may be due to several factors such as the closure of a building or change of incumbent.

An electronic system has been introduced to track returns from every building in which marriages may be solemnised. This provides data that enable the GRO to identify potential outstanding returns and take targeted action via the local registrar. In addition, the GRO has also improved communications with all denominations via a regular newsletter covering a range of topics, including the importance of providing the timely return of copies of marriage records.

Marriage data recorded on RON are then passed to us for statistical purposes. We perform regular receipt and diagnostic tests resulting in contact with the GRO to resolve any issues identified.

For more information on administrative sources of data that the ONS uses to produce statistics (including a list of administrative sources), or that are available for use in the production of statistics in the future, and information on statistical techniques for using administrative data, please see the Statement of Administrative Sources.

How we process, analyse, quality assure and validate the data

Validation and quality assurance checks are conducted monthly on new marriage registrations received from the GRO. Once marriage data are considered to be suitably complete for the data year, an annual extract is taken. Further quality assurance is conducted on this dataset and any anomalies queried with the GRO. Counts between years are compared and any large changes are investigated. Once all queries have been resolved and any necessary amendments made, the dataset is used to create the data tables for publication.

Marriages taking place in Scotland and Northern Ireland are recorded by Registrars in Scotland and Northern Ireland. National Records of Scotland (NRS) and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) quality assure and produce regular statistics for their own countries. We quality assure marriage data for England and Wales and also co-ordinate and publish statistics for the whole of the UK with breakdowns for each constituent country. Annual marriage numbers and rates for the UK and constituent countries are published in Vital statistics in the UK: births, deaths and marriages.
The majority of annual marriage statistics for England and Wales are counts taken from the datasets, but some information is not part of the basic data supplied, but is derived as follows:

- type of religious ceremony (denomination) is derived from the place of marriage, since 2011 this has been received on the marriage record
- civil marriage location type (approved premise or register office) is derived from the marriage venue
- an indicator is also derived to show whether or not the bride and groom gave the same address at marriage

Up until 2011, the same address indicator was based on whether the bride and groom gave the same address at marriage as we keyed this information. From 2011, the indicator is created using both the bride and groom’s postcodes. Where the postcodes match, it is assumed that the bride and groom were cohabiting prior to marriage. Around 10% of marriage records are missing either one or both postcodes, consequently it is only possible to provide estimates of the percentage of couples cohabiting prior to marriage.

Prior to 2011, in cases where one or more of the items of information collected was found to be missing, the procedure was as follows:

- age at marriage – if the age of one of the parties was not given in the marriage record, a value for that age based upon the other party’s stated age was assigned, taking into account the combined previous marital status of the parties (where the ages of both parties were missing, the values assigned were those of the previous couple having the same pair of previous marital statuses)
- any other relevant item of information that appeared to be omitted was queried and corrected where appropriate

Few records required such imputation each year. Our User guide to marriage statistics includes the level of imputation applied to each annual dataset. This process meant that all records could be published by age, but also that time was not spent trying to obtain the missing information.

From the 2011 data year onwards, missing values for age at marriage have not been assigned to a valid age. The small numbers of missing values over recent years mean that imputation adds no significant value to the dataset. Some records also contain missing values for area of occurrence. Published tables now include information on the small number of records for which information is missing.

**How we review and maintain the data processes**

From 2011, we have used a look-up function to code records where previous marital status or denomination recorded on the marriage entry is equal to “other” when received. Where text fields providing further information show that the previous marital status or denomination should actually be coded to one of the existing values, the marital status code is amended.

The mean and median age at marriage are calculated for England and Wales. As the age recorded at marriage registration is the age at last birthday rather than the exact age, it is assumed that the exact ages are evenly spread between successive single years of age. The mean ages produced are not standardised and are therefore affected by changes in structure of the male and female population by age and marital status.

Marriage rates are published for England and Wales (combined). The general rate is the number of people marrying per 1,000 unmarried male and female population aged 16 years and over (unmarried means single, widowed and divorced). Marriage rates for opposite-sex couples and same-sex couples use the same denominator since population estimates by marital status are not available by sexual identity.
Following a consultation (373.8KB) surrounding the population estimate by marital status (327.7KB) in summer 2014, there was a change in the methodology used to produce the estimates for England and Wales, for the years 2002 onwards. The new method involves using the marital status distribution from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and applying this to published population estimates (by five-year age group and sex) for England and Wales. Annex B in the consultation response document (327.7KB) provides more information on the new methodology.

Population estimates by marital status and living arrangements for the years 2002 to 2010 were revised and published in July 2015 alongside new population estimates by marital status for the years 2011 to 2014. As a result of the change in methodology, revised marriage rates for England and Wales back to 2002 were published in March 2016 to reflect the revised population estimates by marital status.

Population estimates by marital status and living arrangements used in the rates are the latest available when the statistics are published. The Quality and Methodology Information for population estimates by marital status and living arrangements provides overview notes, which pull together important qualitative information on the various dimensions of quality as well as providing a summary of methods used to compile the output.

7. Other information

Useful links

More data on marriages in England and Wales are available. Our User guide to marriage statistics provides further information on data quality, legislation and procedures relating to marriages.

Annual marriage figures for the UK and constituent countries can be found in Vital statistics in the UK: births, deaths and marriages. National Records of Scotland provides marriage statistics for Scotland. Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency provides marriage statistics for Northern Ireland.

Further statistics on divorces, civil partnership formations and civil partnership dissolutions are available, together with data on families and households.

Population estimates by marital status and living arrangements provide the estimated resident population by five-year age group, sex and marital status (single, married, civil partnered, divorced and widowed) for England and Wales.