

Statistical bulletin

Families and households in the UK: 2020

Trends in living arrangements including families (with and without dependent 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 2020 there were 19.4 million families, an increase of 1.4% on the previous year, with a 7.4% increase over the decade from 2010 to 2020.
- There were 2.9 million lone parent families in 2020, which accounts for 14.7% of families in the UK; the proportions ranged from 11.1% in the South East of England to 21.3% in Northern Ireland.
- There were an estimated 27.8 million households in the UK in 2020, an increase of 5.9% over the last 10 years.
- The number of people living alone in the UK has increased by 4.0% over the last 10 years; in 2020 the proportion of one-person households ranged from 22.8% in London to 33.6% in Scotland and the North East of England.
- Households containing multiple families represent the smallest share of all households (1%) but are the fastest growing type of household over the last two decades, having increased by two-thirds to an estimated 278,800 households in 2020.
- The average household size in the UK is 2.4 while there were 162,900 (0.6%) households in the UK with seven or more people; proportions of households containing seven or more people ranged from 0.3% in the North East of England and Wales to 1.1% in the West Midlands.

Statistician's comment

“The number of families and households in the UK has continued to rise in line with the growth of the UK population over the past decade. However, the ways that people live have been changing.

“Married and civil partnered couple families remain the most common family type, but this is a declining trend in the UK, as more people choose to live together before, or without, getting married.

“While average household size has remained stable over the last two decades, the proportion of people who live alone has increased and multifamily households, despite making up a very small proportion, has been the fastest growing household type over this period.”

2 . Families and households in the UK data

[Families and households](#)

Dataset | Released 2 March 2021

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 2 March 2021

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 by family type, regions of England and UK constituent countries](#)

Dataset | Released 2 March 2021

Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates including measures of uncertainty of the number of families by specific family types, for regions of England and also Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

[Households by household size, regions of England and UK constituent countries](#)

Dataset | Released 2 March 2021

Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates including measures of uncertainty of the number of households by household size, for regions of England and also Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

[Households by type of household and family, regions of England and UK constituent countries](#)

Dataset | Released 2 March 2021

Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates including measures of uncertainty of the number of households by types of household and families, for regions of England and also Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

3 . Measuring the data

The family and households' estimates are produced using the Labour Force Survey (LFS). This is a large-scale UK household survey carried out by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) that interviews approximately 40,000 households per quarter. Most communal establishments are excluded from the LFS, except for National Health Service accommodation, and students in halls of residence are included through the parental home.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has affected the data collection and weighting methodology of the LFS. More information can be found in [Coronavirus and its impact on the Labour Force Survey](#) and in blogs on [Measuring the labour market during the pandemic](#) and [Understanding the impact of Covid-19 on UK population](#). The ONS continues to examine potential non-response bias and may make further adjustments if appropriate in future.

The estimates are subject to sampling variation and their precision depends on the sample size. For some smaller groups (such as civil partner couple families and same-sex cohabiting couple families), the estimates are considered less precise and should be treated with caution.

Measures of quality (to show the levels of uncertainty associated with survey estimates) are presented in the [datasets](#), alongside a note on the impact of the survey methodology changes because of the coronavirus. We advise referring to both the note and the quality measures when interpreting the estimates. For recent changes in marriage and civil partnerships, please read the [Families and households statistics explained](#) article.

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, glossary of terms and how the data were created is available in the [Labour Force Survey – user guidance](#) and [Families and households QMI](#).

4 . Related links

[Marriages in England and Wales](#)

Dataset | Published annually

Annual estimates of the number of marriages that took place in England and Wales by age, sex, area, previous marital status, civil or religious ceremony, day and month of wedding and marriage rates.

[Civil partner formations](#)

Dataset | Published annually

Civil partnership formations which took place in England and Wales analysed by sex, age, previous marital status and area of occurrence.

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

Bulletin | Published annually

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

[General Lifestyle Survey: 2011](#)

Dataset | Released on 7 March 2013

Includes chapters on health, smoking, drinking, households, families and access to vehicles.

[Does our household type put us at more risk from the effects of Covid-19?](#)

Article | Released 2 June 2020

Access to outdoor space, overcrowding, precarious finances and insecure employment are all factors which can cause households to be more vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19.

[Changing living arrangements and stress in lockdown](#)

Article | Released 30 September 2020

Research shows that parents living with children under 18 found family bonds strengthened by their extra time together in lockdown – but what about people whose adult children moved back in?