

24 June 2008

Coverage
United Kingdom

Theme
Population and Migration

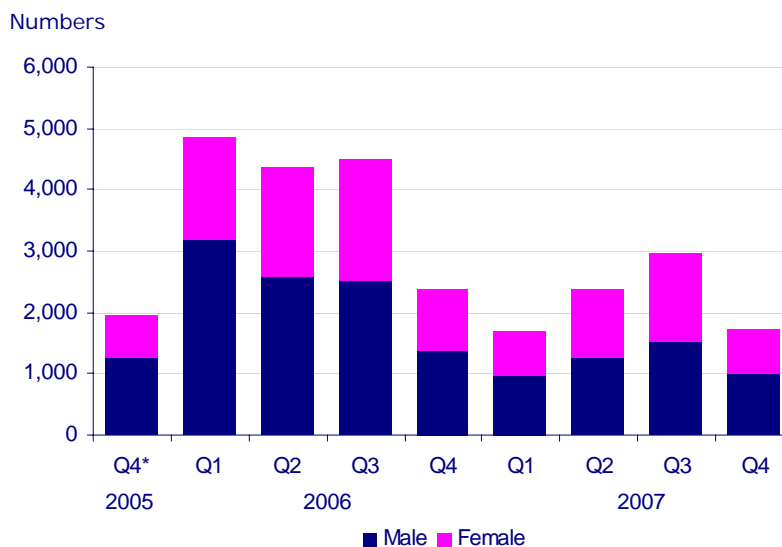


UK civil partnerships fall by 46 per cent in 2007

The number of civil partnerships formed in the UK by same-sex couples fell to 8,728 in 2007 compared with 16,106 in 2006, the first full year in which civil partnerships could be formed. This represents an overall decrease of 46 per cent between 2006 and 2007, according to provisional figures released today by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The total number of civil partnerships formed in the UK since the Civil Partnership Act came into force in December 2005 is 26,787.

Civil partnerships in England and Wales fell by 47 per cent in 2007 to 7,929. In Scotland and Northern Ireland, civil partnerships fell by 34 per cent to 688 and 4 per cent to 111.

Civil Partnerships, UK



* The Civil Partnership Act 2004 came into force on 5 December 2005

In 2007, 55 per cent of all people forming a civil partnership in the UK were male compared with 60 per cent in 2006. In England, 4,242 male and 3,393 female partnerships were formed in 2007. The corresponding figures were 129 and 165 in Wales, 339 and 349 in Scotland and 60 and 51 in Northern Ireland.

Issued by

Office for National Statistics
Government Buildings
Cardiff Road
Newport
NP10 8XG

Contact

Media Office 0845 604 1858
Lois Cook 01329 444095

www.statistics.gov.uk

Less than one person (0.7) per 1,000 unmarried adults aged 16 and over entered into a civil partnership in England and Wales and in Scotland in 2007. In 2006, 1.4 people per 1,000 unmarried adults entered into a partnership in England and Wales. The rate was slightly lower in Scotland (1.0).

In December 2005, when civil partnerships were first introduced, although there were only 11 days in England and Wales and 12 days in Scotland on which to form a civil partnership (see note 2), the number of partnerships formed in England and Wales (1,857) and in Scotland (84) were equivalent to an annual rate of 5.7 people and 2.5 people per 1,000 unmarried adults.

The high rates for 2005 reflect the fact that many same-sex couples in long-standing relationships took advantage of the opportunity to formalise their relationship as soon as the legislation was implemented. The high rates continued into the first quarter of 2006, with 1.7 people per 1,000 unmarried adults forming a civil partnership in England and Wales and 1 person in Scotland, but fell by the end of the year to 0.8 people in England and Wales and 0.7 people in Scotland.

In 2007, the average number of partnerships formed in the UK each month between January and March was 562 compared with 1,623 in the same period in 2006. The average number rose to 888 between April and September 2007 and fell back down to 571 between October and December.

The average age at formation in the UK in 2007 was 42.8 years for men and 41.2 years for women. In 2006, it was 47.0 years and 43.6 years respectively. The average age of all partners in 2007 was highest in Wales (42.2) and lowest in Northern Ireland (39.7). The average age in England was 42.1 and in Scotland, 41.9 years.

As in 2006, London was the most popular region within the UK in which to register a partnership in 2007 and also the region with the highest proportion of male civil partnerships compared with female. Almost a quarter (24 per cent) of all partnerships took place there (1,545 male and 565 female), twice the proportion of the UK adult population living in this region.

The most popular areas in which to form a civil partnership in 2007 were the London Borough of Westminster (291 male and 50 female partnerships) and Brighton and Hove Unitary Authority (199 male and 122 female partnerships). These two areas have swapped places compared with 2006.

In 2007, 11 per cent of men and 23 per cent of women forming a civil partnership in the UK in 2007 had been in a previous marriage or civil partnership. The proportions for 2006 were similar. In 2007, 20 per cent of people entering a partnership in Wales had previously been in a legal partnership compared with 17 per cent in Scotland, 16 per cent in England and 13 per cent in Northern Ireland.

BACKGROUND NOTES

1. Civil Partnership data released today are provisional. Civil partnership data released today are available at:
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=14675>
2. The Civil Partnership Act 2004 came into force on 5 December 2005 in the UK, the first day couples could give notice of their intention to form a civil partnership. The Act enables same-sex couples aged 16 and over to obtain legal recognition of their relationship. The first day that couples could normally form a partnership was 19 December 2005 in Northern Ireland, 20 December 2005 in Scotland and 21 December 2005 in England and Wales.
3. The figures relate only to civil partnerships taking place in the constituent countries of the UK. They do not include civil partnerships of UK residents taking place abroad but will include non UK residents who form a partnership in the UK.
4. Figures for England and Wales are based on date of formation. Figures for Scotland and Northern Ireland are based on date of registration.
5. Data are based on area of formation and not area of residence.

6. Population data used in this release are the latest available and are based on the 2001 Census: mid-year 2006 population estimates for the resident population of the UK were published on 22 August 2007. The population estimates by marital status used to calculate rates in this release are the latest available: revised mid-year 2005 and mid-year 2006 estimates for England and Wales were published on 29 November 2007; mid-year 2005 and mid-year 2006 estimates for Scotland were published on 28 July 2006 and 27 July 2007. Population estimates by marital status are not available for Northern Ireland and they are not produced at subnational level. Civil partnership status is not included in the mid-year population estimates by marital status. Further information on population estimates can be found on the National Statistics website at www.statistics.gov.uk/popest.
7. The average (mean) ages presented in this first release are not standardised and therefore take no account of the structure of the population by age or legal partnership status.
8. Areas are defined as non-metropolitan counties, London boroughs, metropolitan districts and unitary authorities (within England); unitary authorities (within Wales); council areas (within Scotland); and health boards (within Northern Ireland).
9. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the press office.
10. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference. © Crown copyright 2008.