

27 March 2008

Coverage

United Kingdom

Theme

Population and Migration

45 per cent of marriages will end in divorce

Population Trends 131 - Spring 2008

If current divorce rates continue around 45 per cent of marriages will end in divorce, according to a new study of the expected 'life' of marriages published today by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). It shows that almost half of these divorces will happen before married couples reach their tenth anniversary.

Assuming that divorce rates and death rates remain unchanged from 2005, around 10 per cent of married couples will celebrate their 60th or diamond wedding anniversary, with 45 per cent of marriages ending because of divorce and 45 per cent ending due to death.

The study, published today in the Spring issue of *Population Trends**, shows that the risk of divorce or death varies according to the duration of marriage. Once marriages survive for a decade, it is estimated that fewer than 31 per cent will end in divorce, and after 20 years, the proportion ending in divorce falls to almost 15 per cent. For marriages that survive to longer durations, divorce is rare.

Population Trends 131 contains new and up-to-date statistics and feature articles on population and demographic topics. There is an article on the *Proportion of marriages ending in divorce* and there are two feature articles that relate to the previously released 2006-based national population projections:

- The 2006-based national population projections for the UK and constituent countries.
- Fertility assumptions for the 2006-based national population projections.

Issued by
National Statistics
1 Drummond Gate
London SW1V 2QQ

Telephone
Press Office 020-7533 5702
Email: press.office@ons.gsi.gov.uk
Public Enquiries 0845 601 3034

Internet
www.statistics.gov.uk

Next publication date
June 2008

**Population Trends 131 (Spring 2008)*

Palgrave Macmillan £32.50 ISBN 978-0-230-20573-4.

Available free on the National Statistics website:

www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=6303

There is one update in this issue, which also covers previously released data:

- Births in England and Wales, 2006.

Other key findings from the article ***Proportion of marriages ending in divorce*** include:

- The proportion of marriages ending in divorce by the 50th anniversary increased from 34 per cent in 1979/80 to 37 per cent in 1987, 41 per cent in 1993/94 and 45 per cent in 2005.
- Comparing 1993/94 and 2005, there is little difference in the proportion of marriages ending in divorce following 20 years of marriage. However, the 2005 analysis shows that probability of divorce is increasing for marriage durations of 30 and 40 years.
- The proportion of marriages ending in divorce varies with previous marital status. Those who have been previously divorced have higher proportions of marriages ending in divorce than those who marry for the first time or those who remarry following the death of a previous spouse.
- Age at marriage also influences the likelihood of divorce. Those who marry younger have higher proportions of marriages ending in divorce.
- The proportion of marriages ending in divorce has stopped increasing for more recent generations of married couples. In previous analyses a rise was seen between successive marriage generations.

BACKGROUND NOTES

1. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the press office.
2. 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.