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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **NEW MARITAL STATUS PROJECTIONS FOR ENGLAND & WALES**

Results of the Government Actuary's 2003-based population projections by marital status for England & Wales are released today. The projections cover both legal marital status and cohabitation.

On the basis of the assumptions underlying these projections, the new figures show that:

- The proportion of the adult population who are married is projected to fall from 53 per cent in 2003 to 42 per cent by 2031 for males, and from 50 per cent to 40 per cent for females. (*Table 1*)
- The proportion of adults who have never married is projected to rise from 35 per cent in 2003 to 46 per cent by 2031 for males, and from 28 per cent to 39 per cent for females. (*Table 1*)
- The recent steep fall in marriage rates at ages under 30 will, in time, have an impact at older ages. So there will be marked falls in the married population, and increases in the never-married population at ages 30 to 64 in the period to 2031. (*Table 1*)
- The proportion of adults who are divorced is expected to continue rising at ages over 65. At ages 45-64, the proportion will rise to a peak around 2016 and then start to fall. At younger ages, the proportion of adults who are divorced is projected to fall gradually from 2003. (*Table 1*)
- The proportion of females aged 65 and over who are widowed is projected to fall from 46 per cent in 2003 to 28 per cent by 2031, and from 16 per cent to 12 per cent for males. This is largely due to projected improvements in mortality. (*Table 1*)
- The number of cohabiting couples, estimated to be 2.0 million in 2003, is projected to almost double to 3.8 million by 2031. (*Table 2*)
- In 2003, only 21 per cent of male cohabitants and 18 per cent of female cohabitants were aged over 45. By 2031, the proportions over 45 are projected to rise to 41 per cent for males and 36 per cent for females. (*Table 2*)



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### Underlying assumptions

The projections assume some continuation of recent trends in marriage, divorce and cohabitation. In particular, it is assumed that:

- marriage rates at ages under 30 will continue to fall, although there will be some increases in rates at older ages;
- there will be a small further increase in divorce rates; and
- the proportion of people who cohabit will rise for single (never-married) people, but will remain constant for previously married people.





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**Table 1a Population by age, sex and legal marital status, 1991 - 2031, England & Wales**  
**Males**

Males		Number (000s)					Percentages				
		Total	Never married	Married	Widowed	Divorced	Total	Never married	Married	Widowed	Divorced
All 16+	1991	19,441	5,891	11,636	727	1,187	100	30	60	4	6
	2001	20,198	6,894	11,090	733	1,482	100	34	55	4	7
	2003	20,520	7,261	10,940	728	1,590	100	35	53	4	8
	2011	21,810	8,707	10,465	729	1,910	100	40	48	3	9
	2021	23,050	9,952	10,230	760	2,107	100	43	44	3	9
	2031	23,958	10,975	10,001	803	2,178	100	46	42	3	9
16-29	1991	5,407	4,207	1,106	1	93	100	78	20	0	2
	2001	4,633	4,099	500	2	32	100	88	11	0	1
	2003	4,671	4,231	410	2	28	100	91	9	0	1
	2011	5,087	4,768	300	1	18	100	94	6	0	0
	2021	4,876	4,574	285	0	16	100	94	6	0	0
	2031	4,760	4,479	265	0	15	100	94	6	0	0
30-44	1991	5,353	997	3,804	13	539	100	19	71	0	10
	2001	5,897	1,897	3,465	15	520	100	32	59	0	9
	2003	5,960	2,071	3,339	14	537	100	35	56	0	9
	2011	5,544	2,531	2,551	10	452	100	46	46	0	8
	2021	5,620	3,132	2,153	6	329	100	56	38	0	6
	2031	5,799	3,263	2,196	5	335	100	56	38	0	6
45-64	1991	5,433	456	4,394	127	456	100	8	81	2	8
	2001	6,159	644	4,647	121	747	100	10	75	2	12
	2003	6,283	702	4,647	118	815	100	11	74	2	13
	2011	7,026	1,114	4,719	112	1,082	100	16	67	2	15
	2021	7,401	1,804	4,357	90	1,149	100	24	59	1	16
	2031	7,171	2,426	3,715	70	961	100	34	52	1	13
65+	1991	3,248	231	2,332	586	99	100	7	72	18	3
	2001	3,510	254	2,478	595	183	100	7	71	17	5
	2003	3,607	258	2,544	594	211	100	7	71	16	6
	2011	4,153	294	2,895	606	358	100	7	70	15	9
	2021	5,153	441	3,436	663	613	100	9	67	13	12
	2031	6,228	806	3,825	728	868	100	13	61	12	14

Note: Latest actual data are for 2003. Figures below the line are projected.



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**Table 1b Population by age, sex and legal marital status, 1991 - 2031, England & Wales**  
**Females**

Females		Number (000s)					Percentages				
		Total	Never married	Married	Widowed	Divorced	Total	Never married	Married	Widowed	Divorced
All 16+	1991	21,060	4,817	11,833	2,951	1,459	100	23	56	14	7
	2001	21,667	5,798	11,150	2,745	1,975	100	27	51	13	9
	2003	21,892	6,128	11,000	2,668	2,096	100	28	50	12	10
	2011	22,886	7,470	10,525	2,406	2,484	100	33	46	11	11
	2021	23,993	8,652	10,291	2,265	2,785	100	36	43	9	12
	2031	24,925	9,664	10,061	2,274	2,925	100	39	40	9	12
16-29	1991	5,323	3,488	1,680	3	152	100	66	32	0	3
	2001	4,577	3,686	820	5	67	100	81	18	0	1
	2003	4,576	3,818	696	4	58	100	83	15	0	1
	2011	4,918	4,351	528	2	37	100	88	11	0	1
	2021	4,755	4,218	504	1	33	100	89	11	0	1
	2031	4,655	4,142	482	1	31	100	89	10	0	1
30-44	1991	5,377	615	4,090	39	633	100	11	76	1	12
	2001	5,969	1,403	3,792	43	731	100	23	64	1	12
	2003	6,030	1,572	3,676	40	742	100	26	61	1	12
	2011	5,572	2,057	2,876	26	613	100	37	52	0	11
	2021	5,524	2,628	2,433	16	447	100	48	44	0	8
	2031	5,682	2,757	2,470	13	442	100	49	43	0	8
45-64	1991	5,527	292	4,211	503	521	100	5	76	9	9
	2001	6,289	391	4,578	401	918	100	6	73	6	15
	2003	6,433	437	4,613	380	1,002	100	7	72	6	16
	2011	7,221	795	4,764	326	1,337	100	11	66	5	19
	2021	7,565	1,462	4,429	247	1,426	100	19	59	3	19
	2031	7,230	2,096	3,771	185	1,178	100	29	52	3	16
65+	1991	4,832	422	1,853	2,405	152	100	9	38	50	3
	2001	4,832	318	1,960	2,295	259	100	7	41	47	5
	2003	4,854	301	2,015	2,244	294	100	6	42	46	6
	2011	5,175	268	2,358	2,052	497	100	5	46	40	10
	2021	6,149	343	2,925	2,001	879	100	6	48	33	14
	2031	7,358	669	3,338	2,076	1,275	100	9	45	28	17

Note: Latest actual data are for 2003. Figures below the line are projected.



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**Table 2 Cohabiting population by age, sex and legal marital status, 2003-2031, England & Wales**

		<i>thousands</i>					
		Males			Females		
		All statuses	Never Married	Previously Married	All statuses	Never Married	Previously Married
All 16+	2003	2,000	1,406	594	2,000	1,427	573
	2011	2,756	2,128	629	2,756	2,165	592
	2021	3,374	2,776	598	3,374	2,822	552
	2031	3,806	3,247	559	3,806	3,310	496
16-29	2003	645	629	16	860	838	23
	2011	831	820	11	1,131	1,116	15
	2021	822	812	10	1,155	1,141	14
	2031	776	768	9	1,126	1,113	13
30-44	2003	926	680	246	789	527	262
	2011	1,223	1,023	201	1,044	827	216
	2021	1,426	1,279	147	1,266	1,102	164
	2031	1,471	1,323	148	1,328	1,165	163
45-64	2003	375	91	284	317	60	257
	2011	625	273	352	536	213	323
	2021	984	634	349	866	540	326
	2031	1,253	969	283	1,118	857	260
65+	2003	54	6	47	34	3	31
	2011	77	13	65	45	8	37
	2021	142	50	92	87	39	48
	2031	305	186	119	234	175	59

Note: Latest actual data are for 2003. Figures below the line are projected.



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### Notes:

1. The Government Actuary's Department (GAD) produces national population projections by age and sex for the United Kingdom and its constituent countries at the request of the Registrars General for England & Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. An article on the latest (2003-based) national projections is available at [http://www.gad.gov.uk/Publications/docs/Results\\_of\\_Pop\\_Trends\\_118.pdf](http://www.gad.gov.uk/Publications/docs/Results_of_Pop_Trends_118.pdf).
2. GAD also periodically produces marital status projections for England & Wales. These new marital status projections are based on the official estimates of the population of England & Wales at the middle of 2003 by marital status as published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). ONS published estimates by legal marital status on 4 November 2004 (<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=13296&image.x=19&image.y=10>) and estimates of the population cohabiting on 22 February 2005 (<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=13607&More=n>). These projections are also consistent with GAD's interim 2003-based projections of the population by age and sex published on 30 September 2004 (see Note 1).
3. The cohabitation estimates produced by ONS and the cohabitation projections produced by GAD relate to opposite-sex co-residential cohabiting adults.
4. Full results of the marital status projections are available on the GAD website at [http://www.gad.gov.uk/marital\\_status\\_projections/2003/index\\_principal.htm](http://www.gad.gov.uk/marital_status_projections/2003/index_principal.htm) and there will be a report on the new marital status projections in the June 2005 issue of Population Trends.
5. All figures presented in the tables in this release have been rounded independently, so component figures may not add exactly to totals.
6. The previous set of marital status projections was 1996-based and was published in January 1999.
7. The Government Actuary is Chris Daykin. He joined GAD in 1970 and qualified as a Fellow of the Institute of Actuaries in 1973. He worked in all major areas of GAD before being appointed Government Actuary in 1989.
8. 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 2005
9. **Statistician contact: Chris Shaw 020 7211 2662**  
**Email: [chris.shaw@gad.gov.uk](mailto:chris.shaw@gad.gov.uk)**

Government Actuary's Department  
Finlaison House  
15/17 Furnival Street  
London EC4A 1AB  
Switchboard: 020 7211 2600/2601

