

# Census Bulletin

## Marital Status and Household Composition in West Sussex

Issue 7

### Marital Status and Household Composition

The 2001 Census gathered information on marital status of adults, household composition and dependent children, which forms the focus of this bulletin.

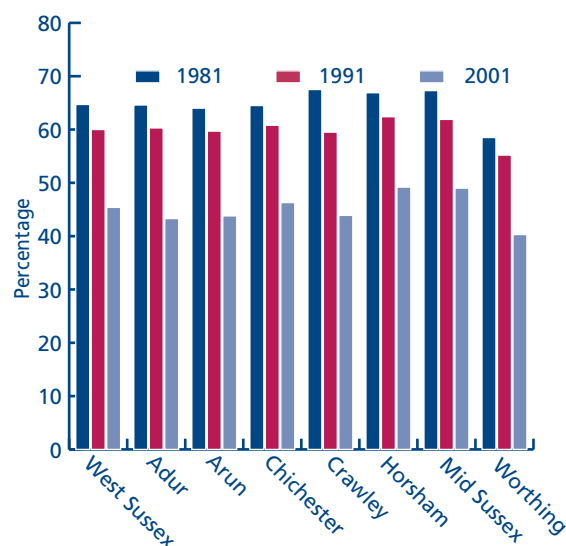
### Marital Status

Each Census has asked people aged 16 years and over to identify their legal marital status on the day of the Census. Marriage is the only marital status that is comparable over the last three Censuses, and is illustrated as a proportion of the population aged 16 years and over in Figure 1.

According to the 2001 Census, 45% of the adult population are married in West Sussex (44% in England and Wales (E&W)), varying within the county from 49% in Horsham and Mid Sussex to 40% in Worthing. Figure 1 clearly illustrates the significant decrease in the proportion of married people that has occurred over the last two decades; in 1981 65% of the adult population in West Sussex were married compared to 45% in 2001, which is similar to the decline seen nationally. The majority of this fall occurred between 1991 and 2001. Crawley has seen the greatest reduction in the proportion of married people (24%); in 1981, along with Horsham and Mid Sussex, it had the highest proportion of married people in the county (67%), but by 2001 only Adur and Worthing have lower percentages (Crawley 44%, Adur 43% and Worthing 40%).

Although the proportion of married adults has decreased substantially over the last two decades, marriage still remains the most common marital status, both in E&W and West Sussex (Table 1). Marital status, however, varies considerably with age as illustrated in Figure 2. While the majority of people aged between 30 and 74 years are married in West Sussex, most of those aged 75 years and over are widowed (48%), owing to the higher death rates in this age group. This is significant in explaining the high number of lone pensioner households in many areas in West Sussex. The highest prevalence of separation and divorce is seen in people aged between 30 and 59 years, while the highest percentage of remarried people is found

**Figure 1:** Percentage of the total population aged 16 years and over who are married according to the 1981, 1991 and 2001 Censuses by local authority and for West Sussex



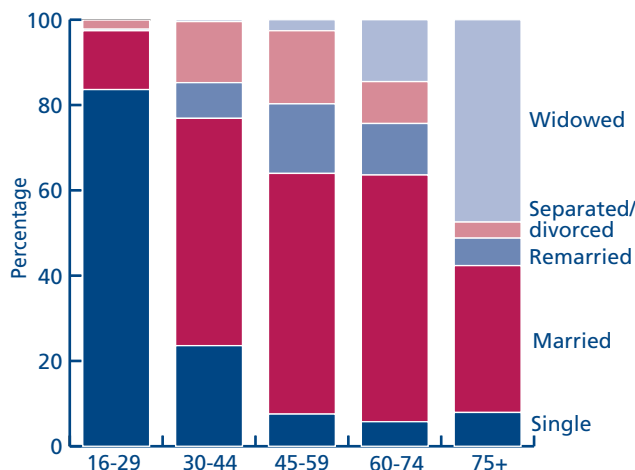
amongst those aged between 45 and 74 years. The highest percentage of single people is seen in those aged 16-29 years (84%), falling in each age group to just 6% amongst those aged 60-74, with a slight increase seen in the 75 and above age group.

Prevalence of marriage is broadly similar between males and females before the age of 60, after which a gender gap appears, with marriage rates for men much higher than those for women. At 60-74 years the difference in prevalence is 12%, whereas by 75 years and over the gap is 32% with only 23% of women married compared to 55% of men. The reason for this is the high incidence of widowhood amongst older women, owing to the higher life expectancy of females compared to males. Women actually comprise 70% of widowed individuals in all age groups. At age 75 years and over 26% of all men are widowed compared to 60% of all women.

**Table 1: Number and percentage of people aged 16 years and over by marital status, local authorities and for West Sussex 2001**

	Adur		Arun		Chichester		Crawley		Horsham		Mid Sussex		Worthing		West Sussex	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Married</b>	20,892	43.3	51,159	43.8	40,576	46.3	34,446	43.9	47,694	49.2	49,839	49.0	32,144	40.3	276,748	45.4
<b>Single</b>	11,860	24.6	26,576	22.8	21,188	24.2	23,368	29.8	22,950	23.7	25,300	24.9	21,592	27.1	152,834	25.1
<b>Separated/ Divorced</b>	5,578	11.6	13,017	11.2	8,685	9.9	8,792	11.2	9,351	9.7	9,779	9.6	9,628	12.1	64,837	10.6
<b>Widowed</b>	5,173	10.7	13,784	11.8	8,804	10.1	5,866	7.5	7,538	7.8	8,131	8.0	9,043	11.3	58,340	9.6
<b>Remarried</b>	4,789	9.9	12,170	10.4	8,294	9.5	6,055	7.7	9,359	9.7	8,677	8.5	7,386	9.3	56,744	9.3
<b>Total</b>	48,292	100	116,706	100	87,547	100	78,527	100	96,892	100	101,726	100	79,793	100	609,503	100

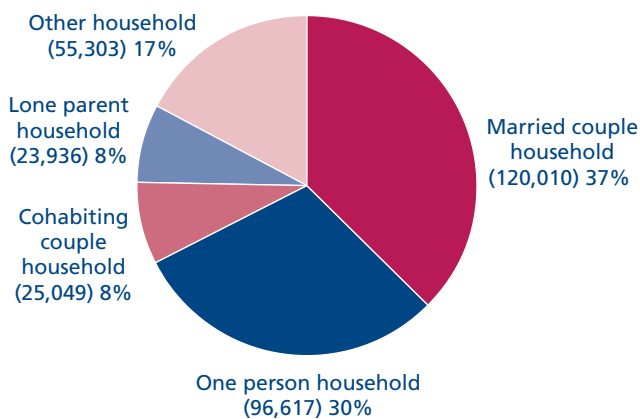
**Figure 2: Marital status by age group for West Sussex**



**Household composition**

Cohabitation in the 2001 Census was only recorded for households, i.e. number of households containing cohabiting couples. Figure 3 shows a breakdown of household composition in West Sussex. As in E&W, married couple households form the largest group, comprising 37% of all households, closely followed by one person households (30%). Cohabiting couple households account for around 8% of all households, both in West Sussex and E&W. As would be expected from the relationship between age and single marital status there is a strong age relationship with cohabitation; 18% of 16-29 year olds in West Sussex cohabit, falling steadily with age to just 1% of people aged 75 years and over. The percentage of lone parent households is slightly lower in West Sussex than in E&W (8% and 10% respectively), although the proportion ranges within the county from 6% in Horsham to 10% in Crawley. ‘Other’ households, which account for 17% of all households in West Sussex, include those containing one family and other individuals, households with more than one family with or without other individuals and households containing ungrouped individuals, such as people living with friends or siblings.

**Figure 3: Household composition in West Sussex**

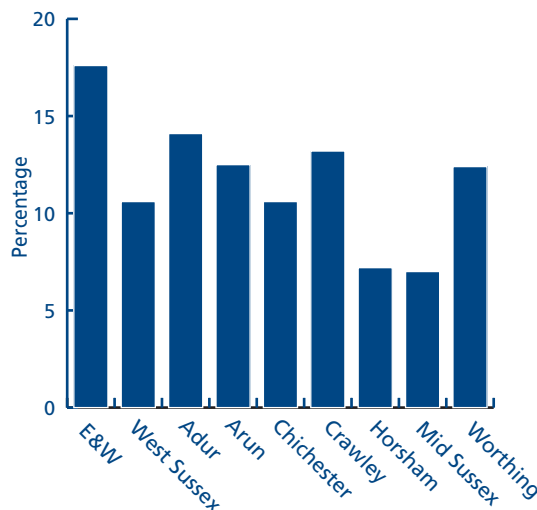


**Dependent Children**

The 2001 Census defined a dependent child as a person aged 0-15 years in a household (whether or not in a family) or aged 16-18 years in full-time education and living in a family with his or her parent(s). In West Sussex, dependent children comprise some 158,935 or 40% of the resident population. Just over 70% of these dependent children are part of a married couple family, 10% belong to a cohabiting couple family and 18% are in a lone parent family (65%, 11% and 23% respectively in E&W).

The number of dependent children within a household varies by household type. A larger proportion of lone parent households have just one dependent child, 34%, compared with 17% for all couple households in West Sussex. Overall, 29% of couple households have two or more dependent children, although married couples tend to have more children than cohabiting – 31% of married couple households have two or more dependent children, while 18% of cohabiting couple households do so.

**Figure 4: Percentage of dependent children living in households with no adults in employment**



In E&W as many as 18% of dependent children live in households with no adults in employment. Although the figure for each LA in West Sussex falls below this (Figure 4), peaking at 14% in Adur, each LA contains wards where the proportion of dependent children living in households with no adults in employment is significantly above that for E&W.