

Any estimates of the lesbian, gay and bisexual population are likely to be under-estimates. Some people still feel that being open about their sexuality, 'being out', puts them at risk of harassment or discrimination.

Government estimates put the gay, lesbian and bisexual population at between 5% and 7% of the population in England and Wales (DTI, Final Regulatory Impact Assessment: Civil Partnership, 2004). In a report by the National Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders (NACRO, Without Prejudice, April, 2002) estimates vary from 5% of the population in rural areas, to 25% in parts of London and Brighton.

Using these estimates, it can be assumed that there are between 9,000 and 13,000 people in Stockton who are gay, lesbian or bisexual.

In May 2005 the Office for National Statistics published a consultation document 'The 2011 Census: Initial view on content for England and Wales' showing there is insufficient evidence of user demand to justify inclusion in the 2011 Census. However, a number of central government departments, local authorities, health service providers, education services and police authorities agree that collecting information on sexual orientation would allow effective and targeted allocation of resources.

The Commission for Equality and Human Rights is due to be operational in October 2007; this commission will recognize sexual orientation as a diversity strand of equal importance to race, gender, age, disability and religion. Currently, all five other strands are monitored in the Census. The Equality Act 2006 introduced protection from discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. It is thought that these and future policy developments will be constrained by absence of reliable information about the size and characteristics of the lesbian, gay and bisexual population.

Although it is important for the Census to provide data on the population as a whole, it is important to provide information on local areas where lesbian, gay and bisexual people cluster. There is a particular interest in the differences between urban and rural areas. Generally, local authorities require small area statistics to gain an accurate picture of the communities they serve. There are no alternative sources that collect reliable and comprehensive information about the lesbian, gay and bisexual community.

Civil Partnerships

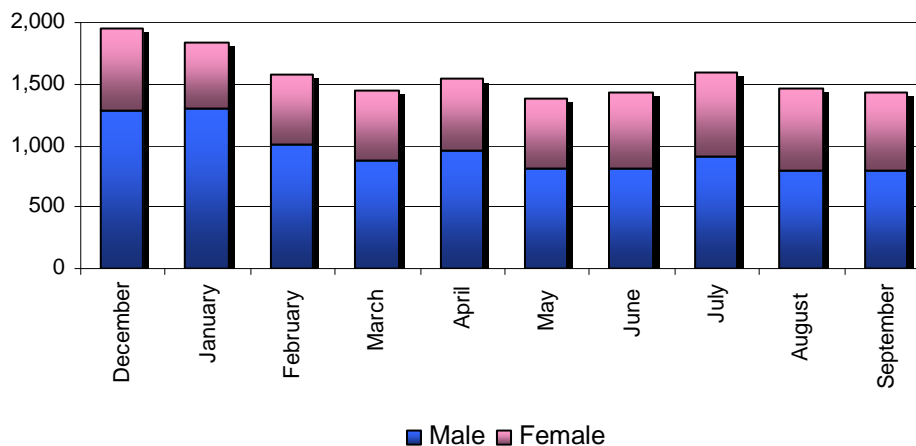
An indication of the gay, lesbian and bisexual population within the UK can be given by the number of civil partnerships. It is important to remember that these figures are only a guide as they exclude single people and couples who choose not to register their partnership.

There were 15,672 civil partnerships formed in the UK between December 2005 and the end of September 2006. A total of 14,084 partnerships took place in England with 537 in Wales, 942 in Scotland and 109 in Northern Ireland. The first day that most couples could form a civil partnership was 19 December 2005 in Northern Ireland, 20 December 2005 in Scotland and 21 December 2005 in England and Wales (Office for National Statistics, 2006).

ENGLAND			WALES			SCOTLAND			N. IRELAND		
Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
14,084	8,704	5,380	537	274	263	942	533	409	109	61	48

In December 2005, almost 2,000 partnerships were formed. The average number formed per month between January and March 2006 was 1,621 falling to 1,498 between July and September.

Number of Civil Partnerships by Month and Gender



Ninety per cent of all civil partnerships were formed in England, with 3% in Wales, 6% cent in Scotland and 1% in Northern Ireland. The corresponding proportions of the resident population aged 16 and over in these countries were 84%, 5%, 9% and 3% respectively.

London and the South East are the most popular regions in which to register a partnership. One in four of all civil partnerships between December 2005 and September 2006 took place in London, more than double the proportion of the population of the UK aged 16 and over (12%) living in this region.

Government Region	Number of Partnerships
North East	444
North West	1,502
Yorkshire and The Humber	1,084
East Midlands	881
West Midlands	944
East	1,155
London	3,918
South East	2,623
South West	1,533

Up to the end of September 2006, there were more male civil partnerships than female in all four countries of the UK. The gap between the proportion of male partnerships and female partnerships was greatest in England (62% male compared with 38% female) and smallest in Wales (51% male compared with 49% female). In Scotland and Northern Ireland, males accounted for 57% and 56% of all partnerships respectively. The gap between the proportion of male and female partnerships in England and Scotland appears to be reducing over time.

In London, there were approximately three times as many male partnerships formed as female partnerships. Yorkshire and The Humber is the only region where, since January

2006, the number of women registering in each quarter has been higher than the number of men. However, between July and September 2006, more women than men formed a partnership in the North East, East Midlands and East regions of England, and in Wales.

In December 2005, only 12% of all civil partners were aged under 35. This had doubled to 25% by September 2006. Conversely, the proportion of partners aged 50 and over halved from 50% to 24% within the same time period. The age distribution among men forming partnerships has changed over time. Between December 2005 and March 2006, over half of men forming partnerships were aged 50 and over. This number declined to one in four by September 2006. The age distribution among women forming partnerships has been more consistent over time.

In Stockton, there have been 31 civil partnerships since December 2005, with around one or two ceremonies per month. There have been 16 male partnerships and 15 female partnerships in total.

Civil Partnerships in Stockton by Gender

