

# Marriage rates plummet to record lows

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Last Updated: 1:59am GMT 22/02/2007

- [National Statistics Online: Marriages decrease](#)

The number of adults choosing to marry has fallen to the lowest level since records began, according to provisional figures published today.

While the number of unmarried adults rose in 2005, the number who chose to wed dropped by 10 per cent, producing the lowest marriage rates since they were first calculated in 1862.

Figures released today by the Office for National Statistics show the marriage rate for men was 24.2 per 1,000 unmarried men aged 16 and over, down from 27.8 in 2004.

For women, the marriage rate in 2005 was 21.6 per 1,000, down from 24.6 a year earlier.

In total, the actual number of couples choosing to walk down the aisle annually also fell to the lowest levels since 1896, with only 244,710 marriages in 2005, compared to 273,070 in 2004, and 242,764 in 1896.

advertisement The figures also showed the trend to marry later is continuing.

In 2005 men got married, on average, at just over 36 years old, while women married at an average age of 33.6, which represents an overall increase of just over three years for men and just under three years for women from 1995.

The figures relate only to marriages solemnised in England and Wales. Marriages of England and Wales residents that take place outside these countries are not included.

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Marriage rates are at an all-time low

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