

GAD 2003-based National Marital Status Projections

Key points

- This note covers the basic results of the GAD marital status projections for England and Wales; looking at proportions of never married, married, widowed and divorced.
- The proportions of married and not married will be used in the household projections that will be part of the 2004 Round Demographic Projections.
- GAD project that the proportion of males that are married will drop from 53.3% in 2003, to 45.9% in 2016 and further to 41.7% in 2031. Equivalent proportions for females show 50.2% married in 2003, 44.2% in 2016 and 40.4% in 2031.

Marital status projections, as well as projections based on cohabitation status, are produced by GAD on an irregular basis, the most recent being part of the 2003-based projections published in September 2004.

The projections show, for England and Wales, that the proportion of males and females not married is set to increase while the proportion married decreases. The increase in the not married proportion is driven by increases in the never married and divorced categories, with the proportions widowed decreasing for females and staying broadly the same for males, over the projection period 2003 to 2031.

In all ages for males, and all ages except 80+ for females, the proportions of those never married is projected to increase between 2003 and 2031. The largest increases are in the 35-59 year old age groups where the increase for both males and females are of the order of 25 percentage points. The increases for males are similar to those for females, although at the start of the projection period, on the whole, fewer females than males were 'never married'. As these projections relate only to legal marital status, a proportion of the 'never married' will be cohabiting rather than single 'unattached' people.

The proportion of those widowed is projected to stay approximately the same over the projection period for the younger age groups – 16-34. In the older groups, the proportion of widowed persons does show significant falls between 2003 and 2031. The number of widowed women is projected to reduce quicker than widowed males, which may be related to a projected increase in the life expectancy of men and an increased likelihood of remarriage. The largest fall for males is projected to be in the 90 and over age group, while for females it is the 80-84 age group.

The proportions of males and females who are divorced, is projected to increase slightly overall; with the proportions divorced decreasing slightly for the 16-54 year olds while the 55+ age groups are projected to see a slight increase. For both males and females the largest fall in the proportion of divorced persons is projected to be in the 40-44 age group with the largest rise being in the 75-79 age group.

The charts on the following page show the change in proportions of all four groups by gender.

Chart 1: Marital Status Projections - Married and Never Married

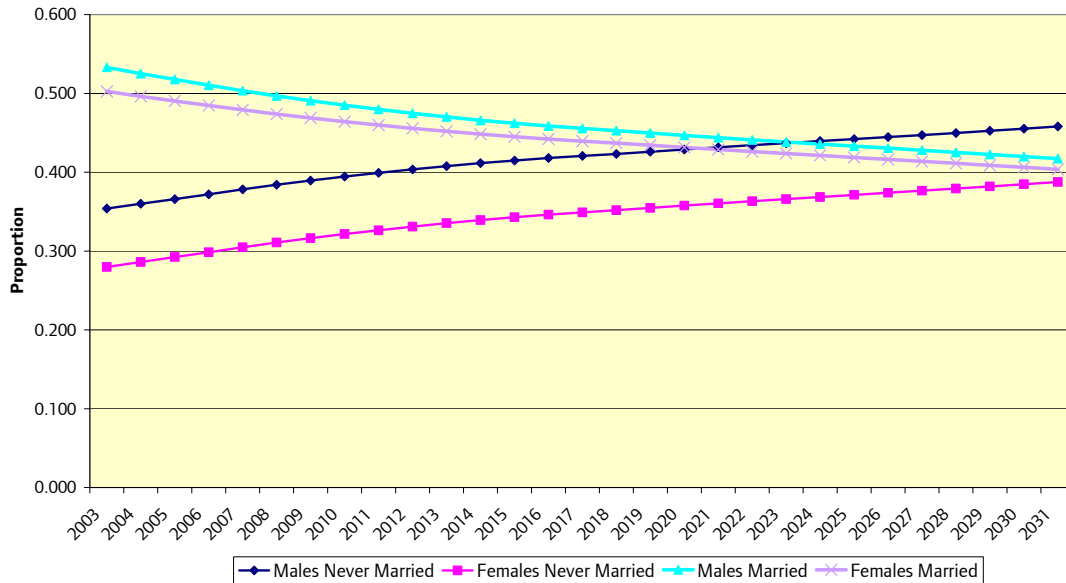
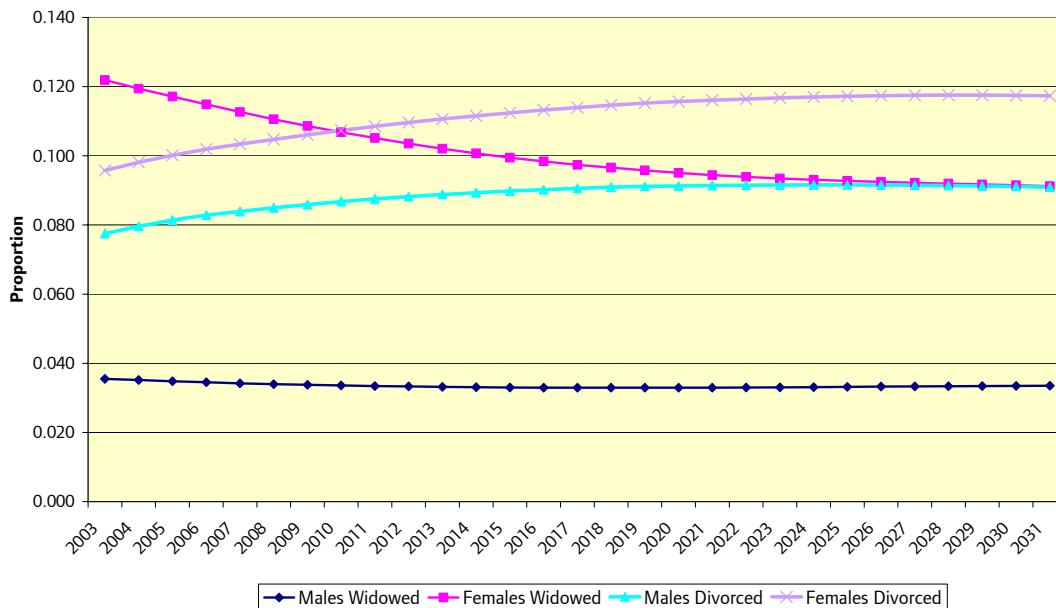


Chart 2: Marital Status Projections - Widowed and Divorced



The data, showing numbers of people in each marital status, by gender and age are available on the GAD website: http://www.gad.gov.uk/marital_status_projections/2003/index_principal.htm and the calculated proportions, at all ages and for all projection years 2003 to 2031, are available from Georgia Hay.

Comments or further information:

If you have comments or would like further information, please contact Georgia Hay (020 7983 4347) or John Hollis (020 7983 4604) of the GLA Data Management and Analysis Group.
georgia.hay@london.gov.uk, john.hollis@london.gov.uk