

Protected Characteristics Profile: Marriage and Civil Partnership

Purpose

This profile is one of nine, presenting quantitative (mainly through the Census) and qualitative (through locally run focus groups) data alongside desktop research. The purpose is to inform discussions about our local community.

Background

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination and unfair treatment in Britain; this is because of the Protected Characteristics they have. The Protected Characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

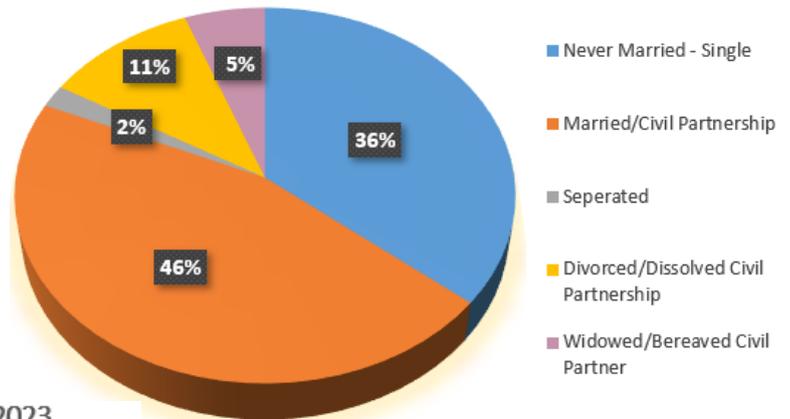
It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of a Protected Characteristic. Marriage and civil partnership discrimination is when a person is treated differently at work because they are married or in a civil partnership.¹

Key Points

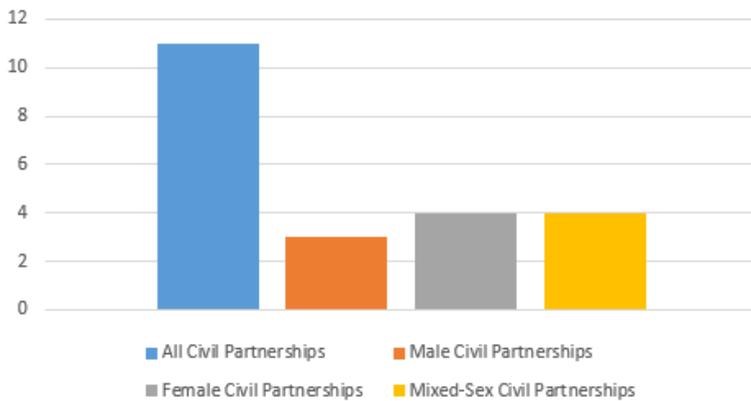
1

In 2022, 46% of Shetland's population who responded to the Scottish Survey Core Questions were married or in a civil partnership, with 36% single, 11% divorced, 5% widowed and 2% separated. This trend is similar for Orkney, the Western Isles, Highland and Scotland overall.

Marital and Civil Status in Shetland in 2022



Civil Partnerships in Shetland from 2005 - 2023



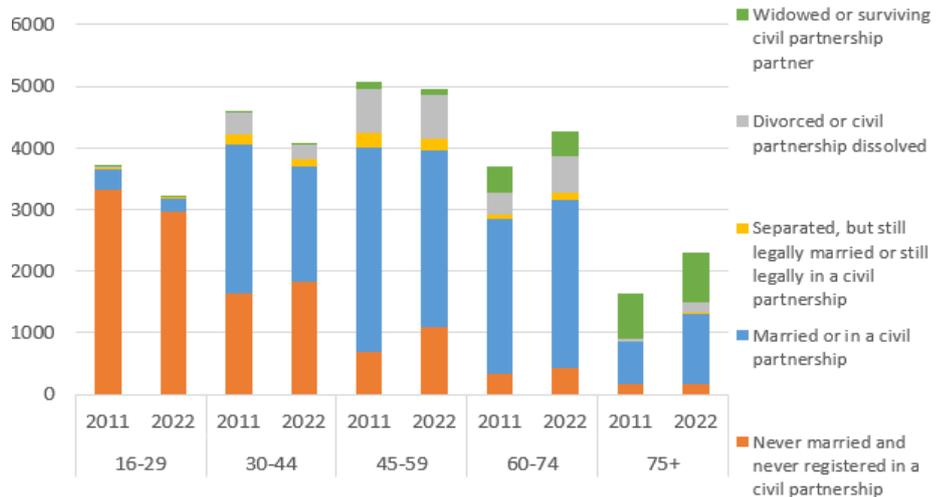
2

In Shetland, most registered civil partnerships through National Records Scotland are female or mixed-sex, with fewer male partnerships. This trend is similar to Scotland overall and Highland, but Orkney and the Western Isles have more mixed-sex and fewer male partnerships.

3

There has been a decline in those who are married or in civil partnerships, across most age groups between 2011 and 2022. There is an increase in those never married or registered in a civil partnership among younger groups. As expected, the number of people married, in a civil partnership, separated, or divorced increases to the 45-59 age range.

Marital and Civil Status in Shetland in 2011 vs 2022



¹ [Marriage and civil partnership discrimination | EHRC \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/marriage-civil-partnership-discrimination)

Summary of Other Publications

There is a lack of focused research on marriage and civil partnership discrimination at work in Scotland and Britain. While there is some research on same-sex couples and transgender individuals within the marriage and civil partnership framework, these studies are part of the broader discussions on LGBTQ+ rights.

Summary of Feedback from Local Focus Groups

Efforts were made to engage with individuals by inviting all Council staff to participate in a Focus Group or 1-1 discussion; to date, no one has made contact wishing to discuss issues.

