



Statistics

Number of lone parents

Just under 1 in 4 children in Scotland live in a lone parent household.

There are 151,450 lone parents in Scotland with around 257,000 children. (source 1)

The table shows the number of lone parent households with dependant children in Scotland in 2001. (3)

Local Authority	2001
Aberdeen City	5,297
Aberdeenshire	3,955
Angus	2,690
Argyll & Bute	2,042
Borders	2,198
Clackmannanshire	1,620
Dumfries & Galloway	3,299
Dundee City	5,861
E Lothian	2,259
E. Renfrewshire	1,803
E.Dunbartonshire	2,216
East Ayrshire	3,398
Edinburgh City	11,135
Eilean Siar	502
Falkirk	4,344
Fife	10,369
Glasgow City	27,920
Highland	5,077
Inverclyde	3,166
Midlothian	2,377
Moray	1,250
North Ayrshire	5,045
North Lanarkshire	11,352
Orkney Islands	313
Perth & Kinross	3,009
Renfrewshire	5,727
Shetland Islands	475
South Ayrshire	2,788
South Lanarkshire	9,285
Stirling	2,042
West Dunbartonshire	3,866
West Lothian	4,770
SCOTLAND	151,450

Scotland has the highest percentage of lone parent families in the UK. There are two and a half times as many children under 16 living in households with one adult in 2001 as there were in 1981. (2)

Age of Lone Parents

The media image of lone parents is often that of a teenager. However, only 10% of lone parents in Scotland are under 25; 55% are 35-44 years old. (4)

Pregnancies amongst 16-19 year olds are falling. The 2001 rate of 68.1 per 1000 is the lowest reported. (2)

Children of Lone Parents

47% of all births in 2003 were to unmarried parents, but the proportion of births registered in the mother's name alone has remained constant at 6-7%. (5)

Between 1981 & 2001 the number of children living in households with one adult almost trebled from about 70,000 in 1981 to 195,000 in 2001. (2)

Sex of Lone Parents

91% are female and 9% are male. (6)

Lesbian and Gay families

31% of lesbian women and 13% of gay men have children. (7)

Marital Status

57% of lone parents have been married and are lone parents because they divorced (31%), separated (21%) or were widowed (5%). 43% are single, mainly separated cohabiters. (1)

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All fact-sheets are available free to lone parents.

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Divorce

There were 11,227 divorces in Scotland in 2004, some 299 more than in 2003. The average duration of marriages ending in divorce in 2004 was 14 years. The majority of divorces (82%) were on grounds of non cohabitation. In 27% of divorces one, or both of the parties had been under 20 at the time of the marriage. (5)

Income and Standard of Living

Lone parents have overtaken pensioners as the poorest group of people.

Around two thirds of lone parent households in Scotland fall below the 70% low income threshold, and more than half below the 60% threshold. This is double the rate for other households. (8)

34% of lone parents have an annual income of less than £10,000 compared to 5% of two parent families and 72% have an income of less than £15,000, compared to 15% of two parent families. (9)

Lack of income has a number of effects on living standards as shown in the table below depicting ownership of key items among single parents, compared to two parent families.

	single Parents	two parents
Car	41%	89%
Internet at home	68%	34%
Bank Account	77%	94%

Financial insecurity is also an effect of poverty with 74% of single parents having no savings, compared to 36% of two parent families. (9)

Benefits Paid to Lone Parents Income Support

In Scotland over 87,100 lone parents claim Income Support – almost 5,000 fewer than in 2003. Of these 15,400 are in receipt of a pensioner or disability premium and 36,800 (42%) have a child under 5 years old. (10)

Childcare element of tax credits

There are 21,000 lone parents receiving this. The average payment is £46.28. (11)

Maintenance

In 1989 before the start of the Child Support Agency 29% of lone parents received regular maintenance payments. The average weekly payment was £26.81, but the most frequent payment was only £10 a week. (12)

In 2003/03 the Child Support Agency received £601 million from non-resident parents, and made payments of £447 million to parents with care. In addition £144 million was transferred to the Secretary of State where parents with care were in receipt of Income Support or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance and the Secretary of State had taken action to recover child support maintenance from the non-resident parents. (13)

Housing

Single parent households in Scotland compared to two parent families are still much more dependent on rented housing, and are more likely to live in a flat.

In 2003 31% of single parents lived in owner occupied housing, compared to 78% of two parent families and 9% rented from private landlords compared to 5% of two parents, with the remainder renting from the local authority/Scottish Homes (45%) and other Housing Associations (15%) compared to 12% and 4% respectively of two parent families. The majority of single parents (53%) lived in a flat, compared to 19% of two parent families. 21% of single parents lived in houses, compared to 57% of two parent families.

Most (88%) of lone parents have central heating, (95% of two parent families)

Although the majority of single parents (80%) rate their neighbourhood as very good or fairly good, this is a lower level of satisfaction than two parent families (93%). This is reinforced by the fact that single parents are almost twice as likely as two parent households to experience problems such as groups of young people hanging around (49%), rubbish or litter lying around (42%), people drinking or using drugs (41%), vandalism, graffiti and property damage (34%) and noisy neighbours (17%). (9)

13% of single parents have experienced homelessness compared to 17% of two parent families. (9)

In 2002-03 23% of homeless applications were received from single parents, predominantly women. The total number of households with dependent children in temporary accommodation increased from 1,400 in June 01 to 1,600 in March 03. (2)

Education and Training

In 2006 one fifth (19%) of lone parents had no compared with 3% of couple families.

One third of lone parents in work for 16 or more hours per week had taken part in a training course in the last 12 months, compared with approximately a quarter (23%) of those who were not working. (12)

However, for all lone parents there has been an increase in the proportion with educational or vocational qualifications from 74% in 2000 to 78% in 2001. This compares with 81% of low/moderate income couples having such qualifications. 54% of lone parents have a driving licence, compared to 69% of low/moderate income couples. (15)

Employment

Three fifths (59%) of mothers in couple families were working 16 hours or more per week, compared with around half (48%) of lone mother families.

Half (48%) of lone mothers worked no hours compared with 28% of mothers in couple families (16)

1. Office for National Statistics 2002 Labour Force Survey
2. NCH Scotland Fact File 2004
3. 1991 and 2001 Population Census
4. NCH Scotland fact file 2006/07
5. NCH Scotland fact file 2006/07
6. NCH Scotland fact file 2006/07
7. Towards a Healthier LGBT Scotland. October 2003. Inclusion Project 6 LGBT Scotland
8. Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion in Scotland 2002, Joseph Rowntree Foundation
9. Scottish Household Survey Annual Report 2003. Note that comparisons are between single parents and small two parent families.
10. Income Support Quarterly Statistical Enquiry May 2004.
11. Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit Quarterly Statistics, Inland Revenue April 2004.
12. Lone Parent Families in the UK. DSS Research Report
13. CSA Annual Report and Accounts 2003-2004
14. Lessof C et al 2001. New Deal for Lone Parents Evaluation: A Quantitative Survey of Lone Parents on Income Support ESR 10. Sheffield Employment Service
15. Marsh A and Perry J (2003) Family Change 1999 to 2001 DWP Research Report 80 Leeds.
16. Families & Children Study - April 2006