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2001 Census of Population: Families

This statistical bulletin looks at various family types (married couple families, cohabiting couple families, lone-parent families etc) in Wales, focusing mainly on data from the 2001 Census of Population.

Definition¹

In the 2001 Census of Population, a family was defined as a married or cohabiting couple with or without children or a lone-parent with child(ren).

Key Results

Families

- Of all people living in households in 2001, 84 per cent lived in a family. There were 836,000 families in Wales.
- Of the 1.2 million households in Wales in 2001, 68 per cent included at least one family. Of the households not including a family, almost all (92 per cent) were single adult households.
- The proportion of families headed by a married couple family decreased from 80 per cent in 1991 to 71 per cent in 2001, whilst the proportion of cohabiting couple families doubled from 6 per cent to 12 per cent.
- In 2001, 17 per cent of families were lone-parent families compared to 14 per cent in 1991. In 2001 nearly 9 in 10 of lone-parent families were headed by lone-mothers.

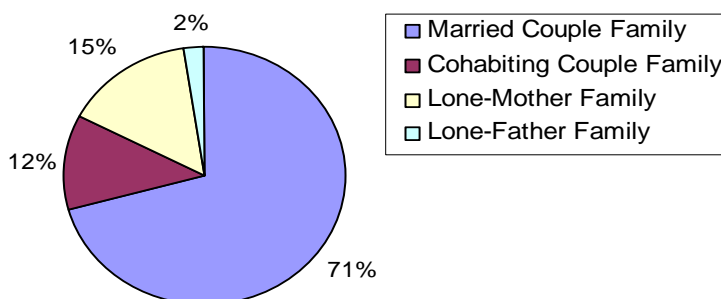
Dependent Children

- Of those dependent children living within a family, nearly two thirds lived within a married couple family.

Stepfamilies

- In 2001, there were 36,500 stepfamilies in Wales, representing 1 in 10 families with dependent children.

Chart 1: Families by type, 2001



¹ A family also included a married or cohabiting couple with their grandchild(ren) or a lone grandparent with his/her grandchild(ren) where there were no children in the intervening generation in the household. Cohabiting couples include same-sex couples. Children in couple families need not belong to both members of couple.

Families

At the time of the 2001 Census of population, there were 2.9 million people living within households² in Wales, and, of these, 84 per cent lived in a family. Data on families living in communal establishments was not collected in the Census.

- Of the 1.2 million households in Wales in 2001, 68 per cent included at least one family, a fall from 73 per cent in 1991.
- Of the 827,000 households in 2001 including at least one-family, the vast majority (95 per cent) consisted of one-family only, with a small proportion (4 per cent) consisting of one family with others and 1 per cent consisting of 2 or more families.

Family Type

The 2001 Census recorded that there were 836,000 families in Wales. Between 1991 and 2001 there was a noticeable change in the proportions of married, cohabiting³ and lone-parent families.

- Although married families were still in the majority in 2001, the proportion of families headed by a married couple decreased from 80 per cent in 1991 to 71 per cent 2001.
- In contrast, the proportion of cohabiting couple families doubled from 6 per cent in 1991 to 12 per cent in 2001.

Table 1: Proportion of families by type, 1991 & 2001

	1991	2001
<i>Percentages</i>		
Married Couple Family	80	71
Cohabiting Couple Family	6	12
Lone-parent family (total)	14	17
All Families	100	100

*Source: Office for National Statistics, Census 1991 and Census 2001
Figures for 1991 are based on a 10 per cent sample of households*

Families and the presence of children

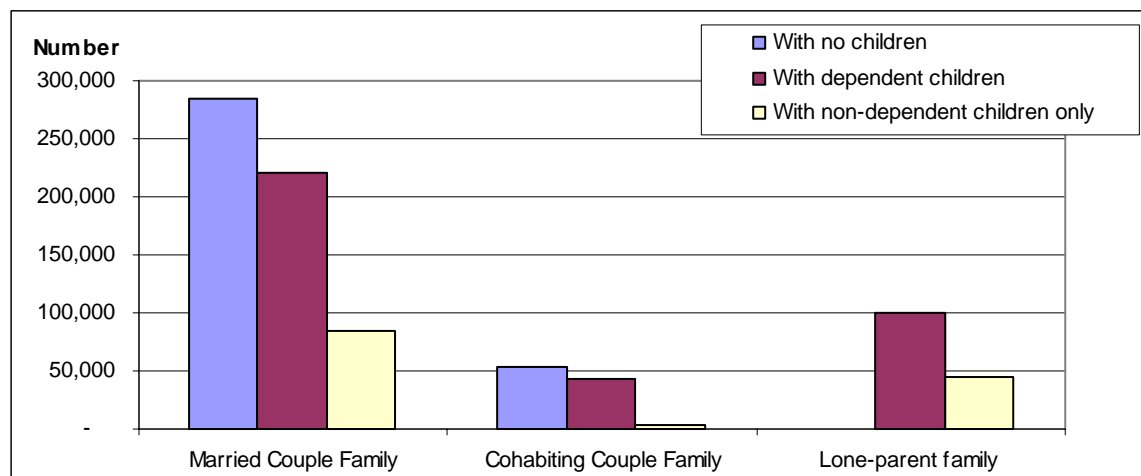
A dependent child is a person aged 0 to 15 in a household (whether or not in a family) or aged 16 to 18 in full-time education and living in a family with his or her parent(s). A non-dependent child is a person aged 16 or over with no children and lives with his/her parent(s). There is no age limit (excludes children aged 16-18 in full-time education).

² Household definition in 2001 Census: a person living alone, or a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address with common housekeeping - that is, sharing either a living or sitting room or at least one meal a day.

³ Figures for cohabiting couples include same-sex couples.

In 2001, over 40 per cent of families had no children living with them⁴ whilst a further 16 per cent only had non-dependent children living with them. Therefore, less than half of families had dependent children living with them.

Chart 2: Family type by presence of children, 2001



Source: Office for National Statistics, Census 2001 (Commissioned Table M501C)

- Nearly 38 per cent of families headed by a married couple had at least one dependent child living with them at the time of the Census, compared to 43 per cent of cohabiting couple families. One difference is that a large proportion of cohabiting couple families are stepfamilies⁵.
- The proportion of married couple families with non-dependent children only was over three times higher than the equivalent proportion for cohabiting couple families (14 and 4 per cent respectively).
- Nearly 7 out of 10 lone-parent families had at least one dependent child, but only 5 out of 10 lone-father families had at least one dependent child.

Table 2: All families by type and presence of children, 2001

	At least one dependent child	All Children non-dependent	No Children	All Families	Number of Families (thousands)
<i>Percentages</i>					
Married Couple Family	38	14	48	100	590.0
Cohabiting Couple Family	43	4	53	100	99.7
Lone-parent family (total)	69	31	-	100	146.0
Lone-Father Family	49	51	-	100	19.7
Lone-Mother Family	72	28	-	100	126.3
All Families	44	16	40	100	835.7

Source: Office for National Statistics, Census 2001 (Commissioned Table M501C)

⁴ Families with no children either do not have children or their children no longer live with them.

⁵ A 'step-family' is one where there is a child (or children) who belongs to only one member of the married or cohabiting couple. A 'non step-family' is one where all children are children of both members of the married or cohabiting couple. By definition, a stepfamily must contain at least one child, but a stepfamily with dependent children may be defined as such by the presence of a non-dependent stepchild.

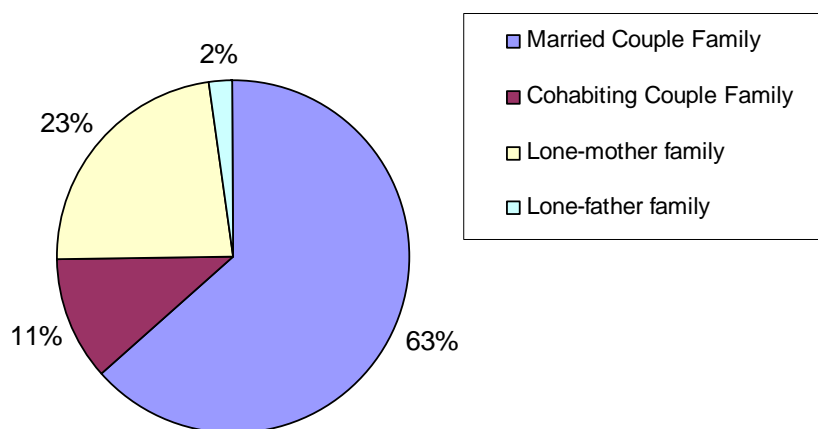
Dependent Children⁶

Dependent Children: Family Type

At the time of the 2001 Census, there were 365,000 families (with at least one dependent child). In total, there were 652,000 dependent children.

- Of those dependent children living within a family, nearly two out of every three lived within a married couple family.
- One in four dependent children lived in a lone parent family.
- Of those living in a lone parent family, one in ten lived with their father, which is an increase from a little over 1 in 20 children at the time of the 1991 Census⁷.

Chart 3: Dependent Children living in families, by family type, 2001



Source: Office for National Statistics, Census 2001 (Theme Table T01)

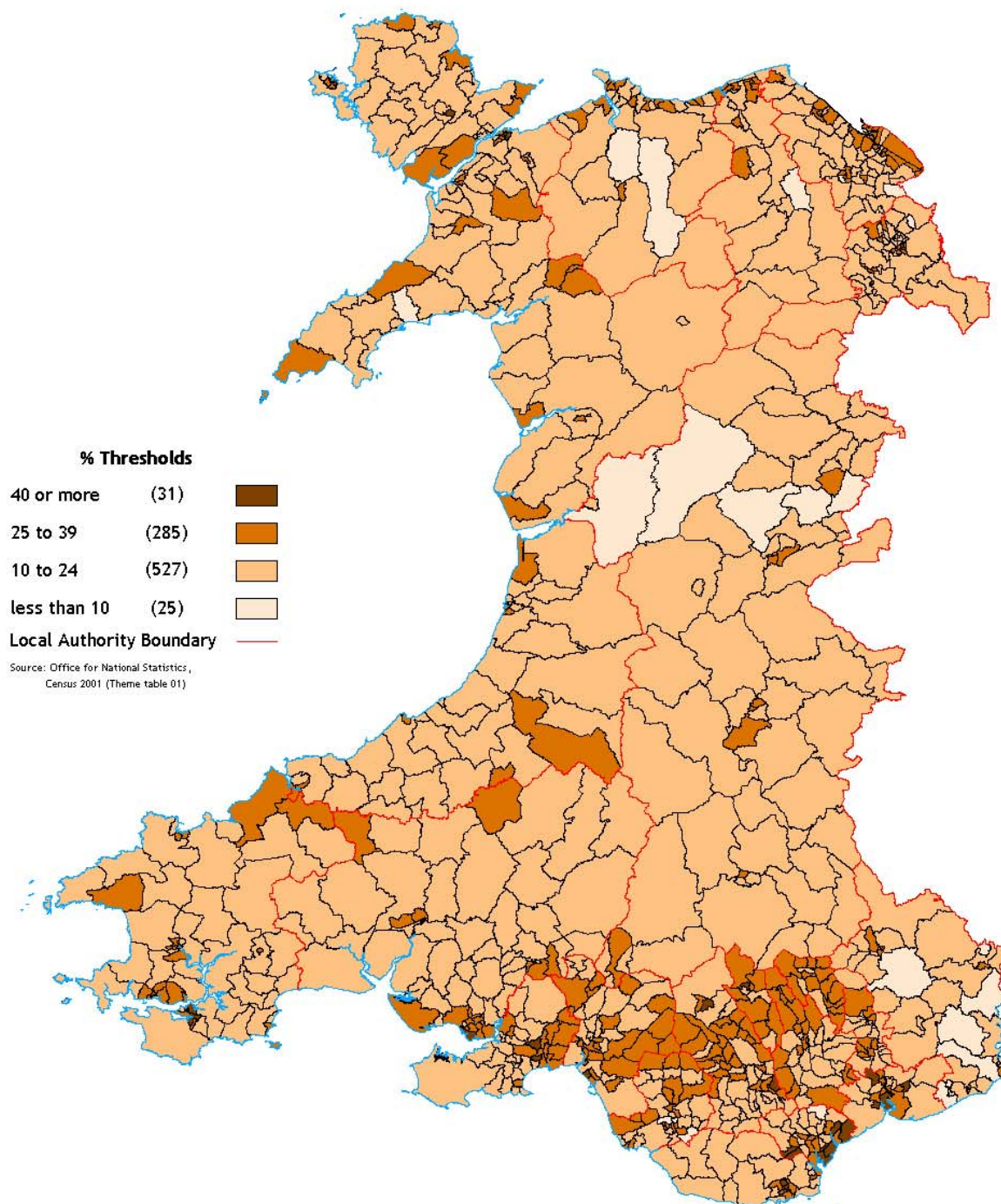
Map 1 shows the percentage of dependent children living within lone parent families in Wales in 2001.

- The highest proportions of lone-parent families were in parts of Cardiff, Swansea, Newport and Wrexham.
- Merthyr was the local authority area with the highest proportion of dependent children living within a lone-parent family (32 per cent).
- Monmouthshire was the local authority area with the lowest proportion of dependent children living within lone-parent families (17 per cent).

⁶ All data refer to dependent children except for children in communal establishments. In the Census, children not in a household are not classified as either dependent or non-dependent.

⁷ Figures from the 1991 Census relate to children aged 0 to 15, and not all dependent children.

Percentage of dependent children living in lone parent families, Wales 2001



Numbers of Dependent Children (analysis is based on families with dependent children only)

According to the 2001 Census, there were 652,000 dependent children living in 365,000 families in Wales, giving the average number of dependent children in a family as 1.8⁸. Note that this was not the average number of children per family, but rather, the average number of dependent children in a family.

The number of dependent children differed noticeably according to family type.

- Of all families with dependent children, 44 per cent had only one dependent child, 39 per cent had two dependent children, and 17 per cent had three or more dependent children.
- Lone-father families were most likely to have only one-dependent child (67 per cent), and least likely to have three or more dependent children (7 per cent).
- Of the various family types, married couple families were least likely to have only one dependent child (38 per cent) and most likely to have three or more dependent children (19 per cent).

Table 3: Number of dependent children per family; by family type, 2001

	One dependent Child	Two dependent children	Three or more dependent children	All	Number of families with dependent children (thousands)
<i>Percentages</i>					
Married Couple Family	38	43	19	100	221.5
Cohabiting Couple Family	50	45	16	100	42.7
Lone-parent (total)	55	31	14	100	100.5
Lone-mother family	53	32	15	100	90.8
Lone-father family	67	26	7	100	9.7
All Families with Dependent Children	44	39	17	100	364.6

Source: Office for National Statistics, Census 2001 (Commissioned Table M501C)

Over 7,000 dependent children in households did not live in families at all. Thus, 1 per cent of dependent children in Wales were living in households with adults or other relatives who were not their parents or grandparents.

⁸ Calculated as the number of dependent children living in a family, divided by the number of families with at least one dependent child.

Stepfamilies

A 'step-family' is one where there is a child (or children) who belongs to only one member of the married or cohabiting couple. A 'non step-family' is one where all children are children of both members of the married or cohabiting couple. By definition, a stepfamily must contain at least one child, but a stepfamily with dependent children may be defined as such by the presence of a non-dependent stepchild.

Stepfamilies: Families by type

Due to the introduction of a relationship matrix question, the 2001 Census was the first census that allowed the identification of stepfamilies. There were 36,500 stepfamilies identified in Wales, representing 1 in 10 families with dependent children.

Table 4: All families with dependent children by family type, 2001

	Stepfamily	Non - stepfamily	All Families	Number of families with dependent children (Thousands)
<i>Percentages</i>				
Married Couple	9	91	100	221.5
Cohabiting Couple	37	63	100	42.7
Lone - parent	.	100	100	100.5
All families	10	90	100	364.6

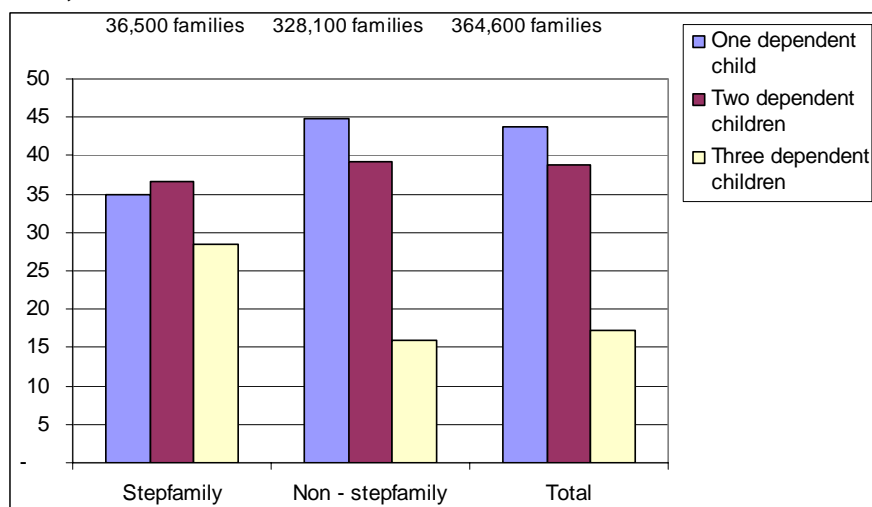
Source: Office for National Statistics, Census 2001 (Commissioned Table M501C)

Size of Stepfamilies

According to the 2001 Census, stepfamilies were generally larger than non-stepfamilies.

- Over 28 per cent of stepfamilies with dependent children had three or more children compared to 16 per cent of equivalent non-stepfamilies.
- 45 per cent of non-stepfamilies with dependent children had only one dependent child, compared to 35 per cent of equivalent stepfamilies.
- The proportion of stepfamilies with dependent children that had 2 children was similar to the equivalent figure for non-stepfamilies (37 and 39 per cent respectively).

Chart 4: Families with dependent children, by type and number of dependent children, 2001



Source: Office for National Statistics, Census 2001 (Commissioned Table M501C)

Stepfamilies: Nature of Step-relationship

Following the break-up of a marriage or partnership, dependent children were more likely to stay with their mother than with their father.

- In 2001, only 4 per cent of stepfamilies with dependent children included children from both partners' previous marriage/relationship whereas the children in 84 per cent of stepfamilies were the children of the mother, and the children in the remaining 12 per cent of stepfamilies were the children of the father.

Table 5: All Stepfamilies with dependent children; by family type, 2001

	Number (thousands)	Per cent
Married Couples		
Couple with children from woman's previous marriage/cohabitation	17.0	83
Couple with children from man's previous marriage/cohabitation	2.7	13
Couple with children from both partners previous marriage/cohabitation	0.9	4
All married couple stepfamilies	20.6	100
Cohabiting couples		
Couple with children from woman's previous marriage/cohabitation	13.5	85
Couple with children from man's previous marriage/cohabitation	1.7	11
Couple with children from both partners previous marriage/cohabitation	0.7	4
All cohabiting couple stepfamilies	15.9	100
All couples		
Couple with children from woman's previous marriage/cohabitation	30.5	84
Couple with children from man's previous marriage/cohabitation	4.4	12
Couple with children from both partners previous marriage/cohabitation	1.6	4
All stepfamilies	36.5	100

Source: Office for National Statistics, Census 2001 (Commissioned Table M509)

Families by age of Family Reference Person FRP⁹

The Family Reference Person (FRP) is used to identify a family and its characteristics. In the 2001 Census, most FRPs were men.

In 2001, there were 836,000 families in Wales. Of these families, 3 per cent were headed by an FRP aged 24 and under, 16 per cent were headed by a person aged 25 to 34, 33 per cent were headed by an FRP aged 35 to 49, and the remaining 48 per cent were headed by a person aged 50 or over.

The family reference person of cohabiting couple families was much younger than for married couple families.

- Over half of cohabiting couple families in Wales were headed by a person under 35, and only 17 per cent of cohabiting couple families were headed by a person aged 50 or over.
- Cohabiting couples with no children tended to be younger than married couples, reflecting the increasing popularity of cohabiting before/instead of marriage.

Table 6: Families by type and age of FRP, 2001

	Lone parent family: Total	Couple family: Married or remarried	Couple family: Cohabiting	All Families
<i>Number (thousands)</i>				
FRP aged 24 and under	13.4	2.8	11.6	27.7
FRP aged 25 to 34	34.0	60.5	38.6	133.0
FRP aged 35 to 49	53.1	189.1	32.6	274.8
FRP aged 50 and over	45.6	337.7	17.0	400.2
All Families	146.0	590.0	99.7	835.8

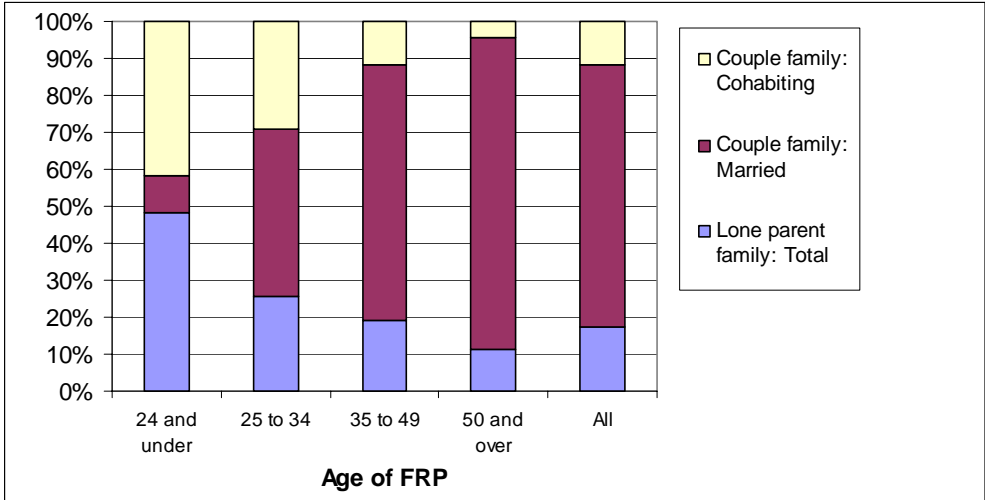
Source: Office for National Statistics, Census 2001 (Standard Table S007)

⁹ In a Lone Parent Family, the Family Reference person (FRP) is taken to be the lone parent. In a couple family, the FRP is chosen from the two people in the couple on the basis of their economic activity (in the priority order; full-time job, part-time job, unemployed, retired, other). If both people have the same economic activity, the FRP is identified as the elder of the two, or, if they are the same age, the first member of the couple on the form.

The proportion of families that consisted of married couples increased as the age of the Family Reference Person increased, whilst the proportion of families that were cohabiting or lone parent families decreased with age.

- In 2001, 1 in 10 families where the Family Reference Person was 24 or younger were married couple families, 4 in 10 were cohabiting couple families and 5 in 10 were lone parent families.
- On the other hand, in families where the Family Reference was aged 50 or over only 1 in 20 were cohabiting couple families and 1 in 10 per cent were lone parent families.

Chart 5: Age of FRP by family type, 2001



Source: Office for National Statistics, Census 2001 (Standard Table S007)

Presence of dependent children within families by age of FRP

In 2001, predictably, families where the Family Reference Person was aged 50 or younger were the families most likely to have dependent children.

- Over three-quarters of married couple families within these age groups had dependent children, and around a half of cohabiting couple families within these age groups had dependent children.
- Nearly 7 in 10 families with a FRP aged 24 or under had at least one dependent child, the vast majority of these children were in lone parent families.
- 15 per cent of lone parent families where the parent was aged 35 to 49, and 82 per cent of lone parents aged 50 and over had non-dependent child(ren) only.

Table 7: Percentage of families with at least one dependent child (by type and age of FRP), 2001

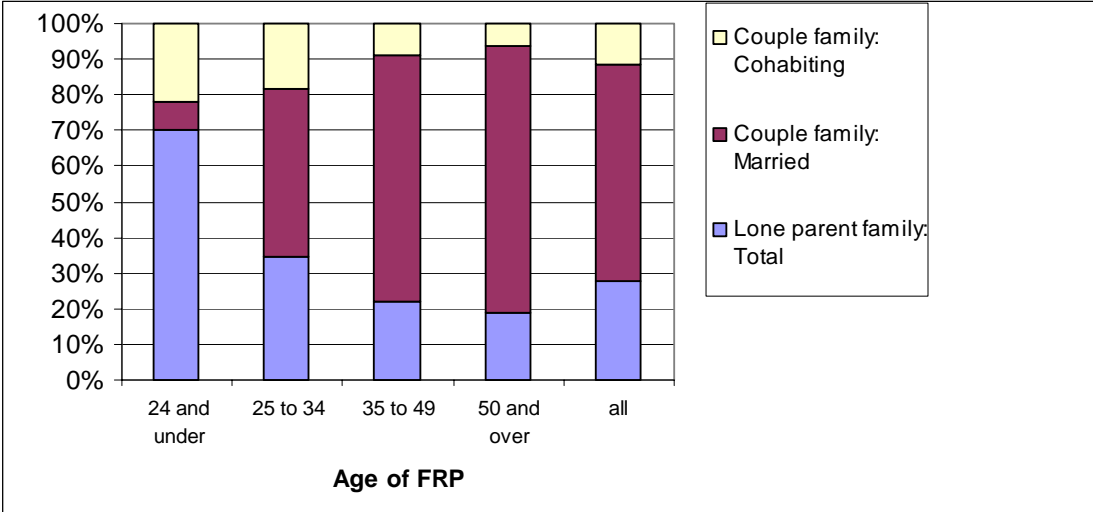
	Lone parent family: Total	Couple family: Married	Couple family: Cohabiting	All Families
<i>Percentages</i>				
FRP aged 24 and under	100	57	36	69
FRP aged 25 to 34	100	76	47	74
FRP aged 35 to 49	85	75	55	75
FRP aged 50 and over	18	9	16	11
All Families	69	38	43	44

Source: Office for National Statistics, Census 2001 (Standard Table S007)

The type of families with at least one dependent child varied significantly according to age. Older families with dependent children were far more likely to be married/remarried couples than younger families with dependent children.

- 7 in 10 families with dependent children and headed by a person 24 or younger were lone parent families whilst less than 1 in 10 were headed by married couple families.
- For families headed by a person 50 years or older and with dependent children, the vast majority of these (three-quarters) were married/remarried couple families.

Chart 6: Families with dependent children, by type and age of FRP, 2001



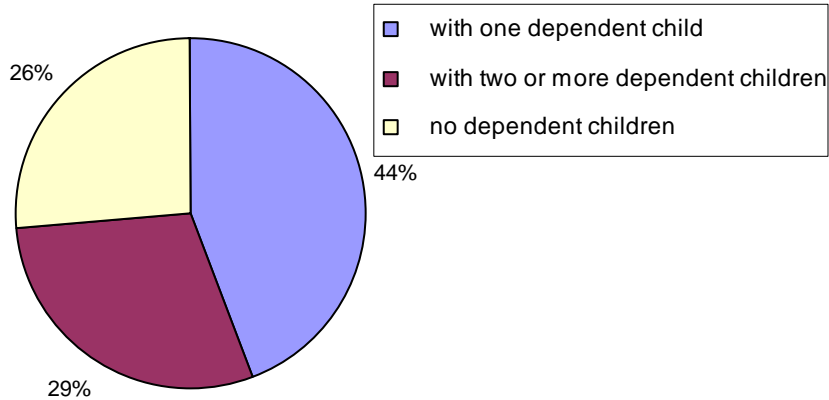
Source: Office for National Statistics, Census 2001 (Standard Table S007)

Concealed Families

A concealed family is a family that does not include the Household Reference Person.

- In 2001, there were 8,500 concealed families in Wales.
- Nearly three-quarter of concealed families had at least one dependent child¹⁰.

Chart 7: Concealed Families, 2001



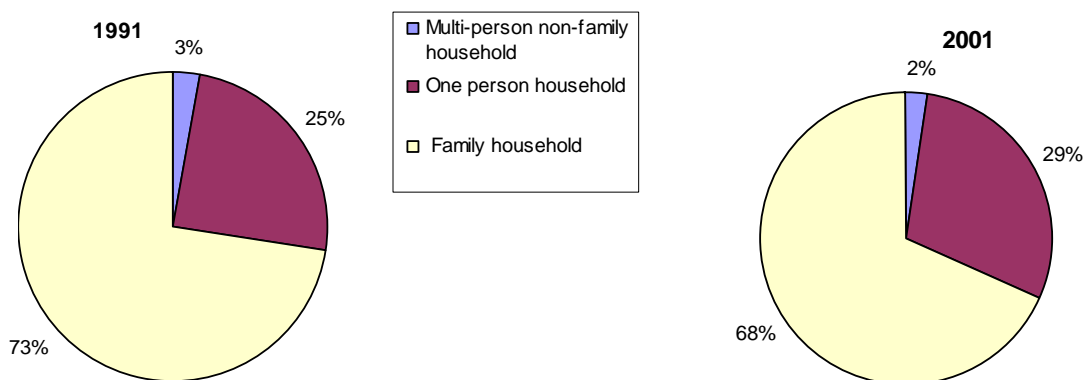
Source: Office for National Statistics, Census 2001 (Commissioned Table M511)

Non-Families

Households

Of the 1.2 million households in Wales in 2001, 32 per cent did not include a family. These households were either one-person households or multi-person non-family households (including all-student households)

Chart 8: Household Composition, 1991 & 2001



Source: Office for National Statistics, Census 1991 and Census 2001

¹⁰ A concealed family living in a household with one dependant child would appear against 'with one dependant child' category even if the child was not a part of the concealed family.

- By 2001, over 29 per cent of households (352,000) were one-person households, an increase from 25 per cent of households in 1991.
- Of those people living alone in 2001, over half (187, 000) were pensioners.
- Three quarters of lone-pensioner households contained a lone female.
- Of the multi-person non-family households in 2001, around 17 per cent were all-student households.

Communal Establishments

In addition to those living in households, a small number of people in Wales (approximately 44,000) lived in communal establishments e.g. student halls of residence, residential care homes and hostels, as opposed to households.