

Regular C of E worshippers form less than 2% of England's population

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Fewer than two per cent of people in England regularly worshipped at Church of England churches in 2019, despite tens of thousands of children attending services for schools.

The C of E's [statistics for mission for 2019](#), which were published today, show that 1.1m people were part of its 'worshipping community' last year. That number has fallen by three per cent since 2014.

Almost a sixth of those – 182,000 people, most of whom were children – attended school services on an average week in October 2019.

That figure has risen from 148,000 five years earlier. It has since fluctuated slightly, standing at 197,000 in 2017 and 175,000 in 2018.

The stats also show that:

- On average, 854,000 people attended Church of England services and acts of worship each week in October 2019.
- The number of people attending services on a usual Sunday fell below 700,000 for the first time, to 690,000.
- Most of the church's key measures of attendance fell by between 15% and 20% from 2009 to 2019. This fitted within a pattern of decline in attendance at C of E church services over recent decades.
- The number of C of E marriages, which was over 50,000 in 2012, fell below 30,000 in 2019.

NSS comment

National Secular Society chief executive Stephen Evans said:

"Any basis there once was for the Church of England being the national legally established church has crumbled.

"Its shameful failings which have been laid bare by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse undermine any claims of moral authority, and the unrelenting decline in adherents has removed any majoritarian argument.

"C of E attendance continues to fall even though pupils who are compelled to attend Christian services as part of their schooling are inflating the numbers.

"Britain is one of the few democratic states in the world that continue to promote an official religion, and the fact that most of its citizens no longer subscribe to it makes a nonsense of continuing with this archaic form of religious privilege.

"The need to give equal weight and recognition to all citizens, irrespective of their religious or philosophical beliefs, has never been clearer. The church should be disestablished and its role in

state-funded schools rolled back."

Note: impact of coronavirus reflected in separate figures

- Today's statistics for mission were accompanied by a report outlining the C of E's digital figures for 2020. This shows that many services and events are now being provided online following the Covid outbreak.
- The latest statistics for mission report also notes that its equivalent next year is likely to "take a very different form".

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