

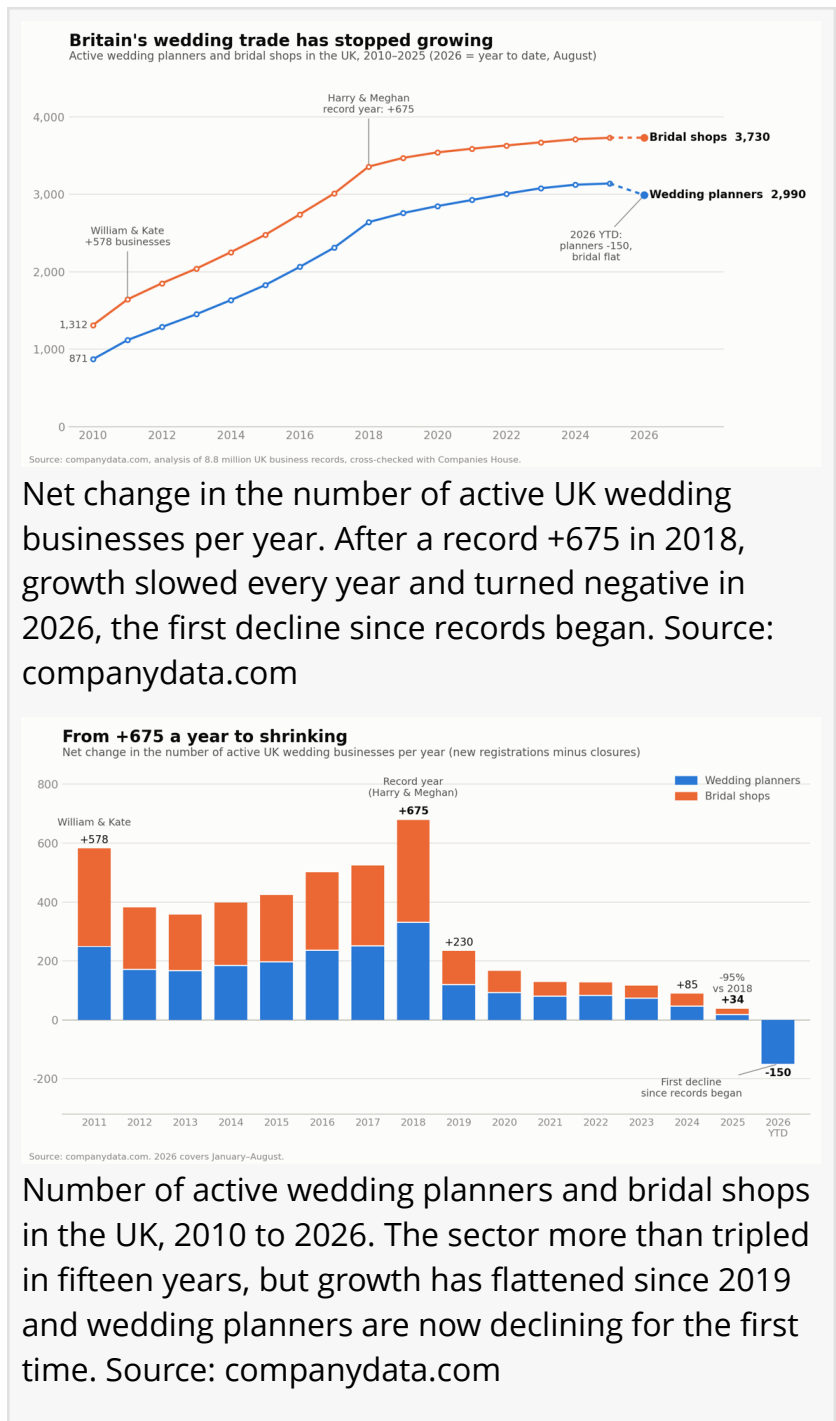
Cold feet: Britain's wedding boom is over

UK wedding businesses shrink in 2026 for the first time since 2010: 150 wedding planners gone in eight months, bridal shops flat at 3,730, new data shows.

AMSTERDAM, NH, NETHERLANDS, September 8, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Britain's wedding industry has stopped growing. New analysis by international business database companydata.com shows that the number of active wedding businesses in the UK has fallen in 2026 for the first time since records began in 2010. The country now counts 6,720 wedding businesses: 2,990 [wedding planners](#) and 3,730 bridal shops.

The number of wedding planners has dropped by 150 so far this year, a decline of almost five percent, while bridal retail has not added a single shop. It is a sharp reversal for one of the country's most romantic growth sectors.

Between 2010 and 2025 the UK wedding trade more than tripled, from 2,183 to 6,870 businesses. Wedding planning alone grew 3.6-fold, from 871 firms to 3,140. But the engine behind that growth has been losing power for seven years. In 2018, the sector's record year, 675 businesses were added on balance. In 2025 that net gain had shrunk to just 34, a decline of 95 percent. This year, the line has turned downward.



Two royal weddings, one boom

The growth curve tracks the national mood with uncanny precision. The two strongest years in the data coincide with Britain's two royal weddings. In 2011, the year Prince William married Kate Middleton, the number of wedding businesses jumped by 578, with bridal shops up 331 in a single year, the strongest growth the sector had seen. The record was broken in 2018, when Harry and Meghan married at Windsor: 329 new wedding planners and 346 new bridal shops on balance, a combined 675.

Then the music stopped. Net growth fell to 230 in 2019, before the pandemic had even begun, and has declined every year since: 162 in 2020, 125 in 2021, 123 in 2022, 112 in 2023, 85 in 2024 and 34 in 2025. The post-lockdown wedding rush, widely expected to reignite the sector, never translated into new businesses.

Fewer marriages, smaller weddings

The numbers mirror what is happening at the altar. Marriages and civil partnerships in England and Wales fell 8.6 percent in 2023 to 231,949, according to the Office for National Statistics, returning to a long-term decline that stretches back to the 1970s. The couples who do marry are spending around £21,000 to £22,000, according to Bridebook and Hitched, but they are inviting fewer guests: 11 percent fewer reception guests than in 2024, with the average wedding now hosting 80 people. More than half of couples (56 percent) went over budget last year. For an industry worth around £15 billion, fewer and smaller weddings leave less room for new entrants.

Bridal retail hit hardest

Bridal retail feels the squeeze most acutely. Between 2010 and 2018 the number of bridal shops grew by an average of 256 a year. Since 2021 the annual gain has hovered around 40, and in 2026 it has stopped altogether at 3,730. The stagnation fits a wider picture of high-street distress: 11,341 independent shops closed across the UK in 2024, up 45.5 percent on the year before, according to the Centre for Retail Research. Long-established bridal boutiques from Dundee to Greater Manchester have announced closing-down sales this year.

Still the bridal capital of Europe

Despite the slowdown, the UK remains the bridal capital of Europe with 3,730 bridalwear retailers, nearly twice as many as Germany (1,961) and well ahead of Italy (1,452), France (1,218) and Spain (415). Only the [United States](#) counts more, with 8,540.

Teun Ebbes, retail data expert at companydata.com, said: "For fifteen years the UK wedding trade only knew one direction. What we see now is not a crash, but a market that has reached saturation at the same moment its customers are marrying less and spending more carefully.

Existing businesses are holding on; new ones are no longer coming in."

About companydata.com

Companydata.com is an international business database covering 386 million companies in 200 countries, built on official trade registers such as the UK's [Companies House](#) and the Dutch Chamber of Commerce. From its Amsterdam headquarters, the company delivers this data as datasets and through its real-time company data API, used for identity verification, market research, CRM and compliance. Its sector statistics are regularly cited by national and trade media across Europe and the US.

Notes to editors

Using our data? Please include a link to our source page. Need more figures or information? Just ask us for more data.

Methodology: companydata.com analysed 8.8 million UK business records and counted the number of currently active wedding planning and bridalwear businesses at the end of each year from 2010 to 2025, plus the position as of August 2026. Year-on-year changes reflect net growth (new registrations minus closures). 2026 figures are year to date. Figures were cross-checked against Companies House. International comparisons are based on the same database.

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