

News release

Embargoed until Monday 20 July 2020

New statistics show East of England's lockdown 'relationship realisations'

New researchⁱ released today by Relate, the leading relationships charity, paints a divided picture of relationships in the East of England and the rest of the UK as lockdown is eased. Across couple, family and social relationships, people have had a range of 'relationship realisations'. A heart-warming 60%ⁱⁱ of respondents in the East of England said that lockdown has made them realise relationships are the most important thing in their lives and more than a third (36%) of respondents in the region who have parents feel emotionally closer to them.ⁱⁱⁱ Sadly, just under a quarter (23%) of respondents living in the East of England who have a partner have struggled to support them emotionally during this time^{iv} and 7% noted that lockdown has made them realise they need to break-up, divorce or separate^v.

60% of respondents in the East of England said that lockdown has made them realise relationships are the most important thing in their lives

The poll of 2,058 UK adults found that more than half (57%) of respondents in the East of England said their relationships with loved ones have helped them get through lockdown^{vi}. As Relate launches its first ever [Relationships Week](#) (20-26 July), Relate Cambridge is asking people to share their #RelationshipRocks via social media – with a picture or video and a short message about how someone has been a 'rock' to them lately.

Claire Godward, Centre Director at Relate Cambridge said: *"Most of us can't remember a sustained period of pressure on every aspect of life on such a scale. Relationships are central to health and wellbeing and we want to raise awareness of their power to protect and sustain us in the worst of times. Relationships are now in the spotlight more than ever so we want to grasp this opportunity to encourage everyone to talk about them more openly – the good, the bad and the ugly. That's why today marks the start of our first-ever Relationships Week and we're calling on people in Cambridgeshire to join in the conversation."*

Make or break time for couples

When it came to couple relationships, almost a quarter (23%) of people in the East of England who have a partner said they have struggled to support their partner emotionally during lockdown. Just over one-in-seven in the region (15%) were anxious about how their relationship with their partner will change when lockdown ends^{vii}. 6% of respondents in a relationship said lockdown has made them realise they want to propose to their partner^{viii}, while 7% came to the conclusion during lockdown that they need to end their relationship.

Socially distanced but emotionally closer to family and friends

While we may have been practising social distancing during lockdown, many have realised their emotional bonds with loved ones have strengthened. More than a third (36%) of

respondents in the East of England who have parents said they felt 'emotionally closer' to them as a result of lockdown. Despite this, 15% have argued or had a disagreement with their parents during lockdown.

35% of respondents living in the region who have a sibling felt emotionally closer to them since lockdown^{ix}, and 25% of respondents felt closer to their neighbours while 29% felt closer to their friends.

Relationship hopes post-lockdown

Lockdown has made many people experience first-hand the benefits of quality family time. More than half of respondents in the East of England (52%) agreed that the experience has inspired them to make more effort with loved ones in the future.^x When asked exactly what lockdown relationship habits people would like to continue in the future, family walks/spending time outdoors together came in top (30%), followed by video calls with family (28%) and spending more quality time with family (25%)

Claire Godward, Centre Director at Relate Cambridge concluded: *"This Relationships Week, we want to help everyone in Cambridgeshire celebrate the best of their lockdown relationship realisations and address the more difficult ones. I'm encouraging everyone to start a conversation about their relationships this week, whether it's to thank someone for their support during lockdown or to begin addressing issues that have been swept under the carpet in recent months."*

Relate Cambridge is now taking appointments for counselling sessions, including virtual sessions via Zoom or telephone. The appointments line is available Monday to Friday between 9am and 1pm. Please call on 01302 347 866 to book your appointment.

For more information about relationships week, visit relate.org.uk/relationships-week.

ENDS

For all media enquiries (including interviews with a Relate counsellor) contact Amy Kong on 01302 347712 or admin@relatecambridge.org.uk

Notes to editors:

- Relate [Cambridge](https://relate.org.uk) is a registered charity (1096975), and champions the importance of strong and healthy relationships for all as the basis of a thriving society.
- Relate Cambridge delivers counselling throughout Cambridgeshire, including Peterborough and Fenland.
- Relate Cambridge offers a range of counselling, including; relationship counselling, sex therapy, family counselling and children and young people's counselling.
- For more information visit: www.relatecambridge.org.uk

ⁱ The research was conducted online from 26 June- 3 July 2020 by Censuswide, with a sample of 2,058 adults (aged 16+), 182 of which were in the East of England. The sample was weighted to be nationally representative.

ⁱⁱ Combining respondents who strongly agree and somewhat agree with the statement 'Lockdown has made me realise that relationships are the most important thing in my life'. Compares to a UK average of 61%.

ⁱⁱⁱ Combining respondents who answered much more close and slightly more close to 'Do you feel more or less emotionally close to the following people since lockdown happened?'

^{iv} Combining respondents who strongly agree and somewhat agree with the statement 'I have struggled to support my partner emotionally during this time'.

^v Combining respondents who strongly agree and somewhat agree with the statement 'Lockdown has made me realise we need to break-up/ divorce/ separate'.

^{vi} Combining respondents who strongly agree and somewhat agree with the statement 'My relationships with loved ones has helped me get through lockdown'.

^{vii} Combining respondents who strongly agree and somewhat agree with the statement 'I'm anxious about how my relationship with my partner might change when lockdown ends'.

^{viii} Combining respondents who strongly agree and somewhat agree with the statement 'Lockdown has made me realise I want to propose to my partner'.

^{ix} Combining respondents who answered much more close and slightly more close to 'Do you feel more or less emotionally close to the following people since lockdown happened?'. UK averages: 36% of respondents who have sibling felt emotionally closer to their siblings since lockdown, 34% of those with grandparents felt closer to their grandparents, 31% of all respondents felt closer to their neighbours and 30% felt emotionally closer to their friends.

^x Combining respondents who strongly and somewhat agree with the statement 'This experience has inspired me to make more effort with loved ones in the future.'