

News release

East of England's relationships under the microscope: new study reveals our couple, family, friendships, sex and work secrets

- **1 in 10 people don't have a single close friend (11%)**
- **Nearly 1 in 5 people never or rarely felt loved in the two weeks before the survey (18%)**
- **Nearly 1 in 4 people say they are not satisfied with their sex lives (23%)**
- **1 in 3 people think their bosses believe the most productive employees put work before family (32%)**
- **More than 8 out of 10 people have good relationships with their partners (83%)**

A new study of more than 5,000 people has lifted the lid on the state of the UK's relationships and found that nearly one in ten people in the East of England has no close friends.

Published today by Relate, the UK's leading relationship support organisation, and Relationships Scotland, [The Way We Are Now 2014](#) is one of the largest studies of its kind. It provides a window into the most important areas of our lives – from couple and family life to sex, friendships and interactions with colleagues and bosses.

The study finds some concerning statistics around how close we feel to others, including one in ten people in the East of England saying they don't have a single close friend and 18% of people rarely or never feeling loved in the two weeks before the survey.

[The Way We Are Now 2014](#) also finds a strong connection between our relationships and our personal wellbeing. It seems that, even in today's fast-paced and ever-changing world, relationships still act as shock absorbers when times are hard and also help us to achieve our goals. Crucially, the study finds that people who enjoy good quality relationships also have higher levels of wellbeing, whilst relationships of poor quality are detrimental to wellbeing, health and how we feel about ourselves.

Elaine Taylor, Relationship counsellor from Relate Cambridge, said: "This new study examines the quality of our relationships, showing a clear link between our personal relationships and our wellbeing. Whilst there is much to celebrate, the results around how close we feel to others are very concerning. There is a significant minority of people who claim to have no close friends, or who never or rarely feel loved – something which is unimaginable to many of us.

"Relationships are the asset which can get us through good times and bad, and it is worrying to think that there are people who feel they have no one they can turn to during life's challenges. We know that strong relationships are vital for both individuals and society as a whole, so investing in them is crucial."

Below is a summary of the study's top findings. For more information, statistics, counsellor comment, top tips and infographics on each topic (including how Relate can help) please click on the topic titles below. To see the full report about the study, [click here](#).

The changing face of family life

- One in four people in the East of England have experienced the breakdown of their parents' relationship (26%)
- 66% think money worries are one of the biggest strains on a relationship

Divorce rates have risen significantly over the last 50 years, leaving generations of children, young people and adults working out how to navigate family life after separation. But families of all shapes and sizes can and do have good quality relationships – it might just take some extra effort.

The majority (66%) say that money worries are one of the biggest strains on relationships.

Partners: enduring love

- Over eight out of ten people in the East of England have a good relationship with their partner (83%)
- 18% of people never or rarely felt loved in the two weeks before the survey

The vast majority of us in relationships feel close to our partners, but there are also some concerning statistics in this section including 18% of people rarely or never feeling loved in the two weeks before the survey.

But being in a relationship alone isn't enough to enjoy good wellbeing – we found that the benefits of being in a couple relationship for people's wellbeing were lost when they were dissatisfied with how things were going.

Sex: a nation divided

- Nearly one in four people in the East of England are dissatisfied with their sex life (23%)
- 22% of people report having had an affair

With nearly one in four people in the East of England being dissatisfied with their sex life it's clear that, for many people, things aren't as good as they could be.

The Way We Are Now 2014 included an additional survey carried out by Relate of 250 Relate and Relationships Scotland counsellors, who listed three factors for a happy sex life: improving communication, making time to be together and learning how to talk about sex with your partner.

Click on the topic title above for advice and guidance from Relate sex therapists.

Work: a delicate balancing act

- One in three in the East of England say their bosses believe the most productive employees put work before family (32%)
- 55% of people have a good relationship with their boss

The picture painted by the work section of the study is an interesting one. Even though many of us enjoy good relationships with our bosses, it's clear that work and family life seem to be incompatible for a significant minority. This is especially worrying in an age where the boundaries between home and work are increasingly blurred, with many of us working from home and being connected to email out of normal working hours. Trust is crucial for successful relationships at work, but this is not always easy to achieve when workplace attitudes and the practicalities of family life clash.

Click on the topic title above for commentary from Professor Sir Cary Cooper CBE on the importance of trust in the workplace.

Friends: I'll be there for you

- Nine out of ten people in the East of England have at least one close friend (89%)
- 76% of people describe their friendships as good.

The vast majority of us have at least one close friend, but it is significant that one in ten does not.

The study finds a clear link between high quality relationships and high levels of wellbeing. But simply being in a relationship doesn't guarantee that people will feel good about themselves: single people feel better about themselves than those in average, bad or very bad relationships, suggesting it's the quality of the relationship that has an impact on wellbeing and happiness.

For all media enquiries including pictures, interviews and case studies contact Elaine Taylor on **01302 347712**

LIKE us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/RelateCambridge>
www.relatecambridge.org.uk

More about *The Way We Are Now 2014*:

*The survey was carried out by YouGov. Responses were gathered between 25 February and 18 March 2014. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc.

The results were weighted to make the data more representative of the population (of UK adults aged 16+) in terms of age, gender, region and country, and an indicator of social class (based on census information). The data featured in the report and the release were analysed using STATA 13 with individual weights attached to all sample members, therefore direct replication of the statistics featured in this report using the tables published by YouGov may be subject to rounding errors. Analyses generally excluded those who did not answer questions or for whom the question was inapplicable (see the report for full information on these numbers). Any inaccuracies or errors in the further analyses of these data are the sole responsibility of Relate.