

**One in seven people in the East of England  
never finds time for a “date night”**  
*As Valentine’s Day approaches, Relate Cambridge offers advice  
on how to make more time for your relationship*

More than one in seven adults (14%) in the East of England says they “never” find dedicated time to spend with their partner, and 22% spend time together just once, or a few times a year. This is according to figures released by relationship support charity, Relate Cambridge, ahead of Valentine’s Day.

The good news is that four in ten (40%) of people living in the East of England manage to spend dedicated time with their partner, such as a date night, once a week or more. A reassuring 8% find time for each other once a fortnight and 13% do so once a month.

According to the research, partners with children are considerably less likely to find time to spend together – 12% said they never find time and 29% said they find time once a year or a few times a year. The younger the children, the less likely couples were to spend time together.

Relate Cambridge, which provides relationship support to individuals, couples, families, children and young people says that spending quality time together is a key ingredient for a healthy relationship. They are concerned that time-strapped couples, particularly those with young children, are struggling to find opportunities to enjoy each other’s company and are offering tips for turning things around.

Elaine Taylor, relationship expert at Relate Cambridge said: “Relationships are good for our health and wellbeing, so it’s important to make time for them, not only on Valentine’s Day but throughout the year. This can seem difficult when you’re juggling commitments like work and childcare, but if you look after your relationship it’s likely to have a positive effect on other areas of your life. Spending time together doesn’t have to mean spending money. A “date” could happen in your own home and it could just as easily happen during the day. The key is to create space to concentrate on each other.”

Vassos Alexander, sports presenter on BBC Radio Two’s Chris Evans Breakfast Show is married to Caroline, who works as an art consultant. Along with their busy jobs, they have children aged 13, 11 and 3, but as listeners to the show will know, they make time for a date each Tuesday. Vassos said: “Carving out weekly time together is genuinely the best thing we do. It reminds us how well we get on. We’re both busy working parents but we ring-fence a few hours every Tuesday for each other. We go for long walks, watch films, visit museums and always have a nice lunch. It’s sometimes difficult to arrange life around this, but we always manage. It reinforces our friendship which in turn makes us better parents. I don’t know many other people who look forward to Tuesdays!”

**Relate Cambridge’s tips on finding time for your relationship:**

**Remember that dates can be cheap or free.** It could be a walk in the park, a bike ride or a trip to the museum.

**Keep it fair.** Write one list each of things you’d like to do together. Select any activities that appeal to you both, put them in a jar and pick them out randomly.

**Step out of your comfort zone.** If your partner suggests a date idea that’s not completely up your street, don’t dismiss it immediately. Trying something that’s a bit of a challenge will let you see each other in a new light and you may end up loving it.

**Make it work for you.** Some people like to try different things each time whereas others prefer a routine and have something they do together each week.

**If you're low on time, try a date hour.** This could be a coffee during the day while your kids are at a swimming lesson, an hour eating a meal together with no phones, and no TV just the two of you. You have to eat so why not use that time to connect.

**Think beyond Valentine's Day.** If you tend to do something together on Valentine's Day and enjoy it then make it into a more regular thing. If there's an element of surprise, even better!

**KISS** Stands for **Keep It Small and Simple**. Its not necessary to lavish gifts on each other or have unlimited time together in order to feel loved. You can simply show your partner you care for them by kind words and gestures.

Relate Cambridge's non-judgmental services support individuals, couples, families, children, young people and friends to strengthen their relationships. Please contact 01302 347866 to find out more or to book an appointment.

**ENDS**

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***Relate Cambridge – supporting relationships at every stage of your life***

*\*All figures are taken from The Way We Are Now– an annual study of the relationships of over 5000 people across the UK by Relate and Relationships Scotland. The sample size for the East of England was 413. The study was carried out by YouGov. Fieldwork was undertaken between 18<sup>th</sup> June and 7<sup>th</sup> July 2016. These regional statistics have not been released to the media previously. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults (aged 16+). YouGov is a member of the British Polling Council. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Any inaccuracies or errors in the further analyses of these data are the sole responsibility of Relate.*

*To see the national figures, please contact the Relate media office. Statistics are available for other regions of the UK but the differences are not statistically significant.*

#### **Notes to editors:**

- Relationships are the beating heart of our lives – when they aren't healthy, we suffer. That's why Relate, the UK's leading relationship support charity, is here to help.
- Relate champions the importance of strong and healthy relationships for all as the basis of a thriving society.
- Nearly 3 million people in the UK are in distressed relationships – that's 1.4 million families at breaking point.
- Relate's work helps prevent loneliness, depression, abuse, homelessness, debt and many other life-shattering events that can happen when relationships go wrong.
- Relate's non-judgmental services helped more than 1.5 million people last year, of all backgrounds and sexual orientations.
- Relate celebrates its 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2018.
- Visit [relate.org.uk](http://relate.org.uk) or call 0300 100 1234 to find out more.
- Relate is a registered charity number 207314.