

News release

Thursday, 30 April 2020

For immediate release

More than one in eight people in the East Midlands currently living with their partner is having lockdown relationship doubts
Relate Derby & Southern Derbyshire warns of “post-lockdown relationship reckoning”

- **Just under one in five (18%) people surveyed living in the East Midlands who are in a relationship say the current circumstances are placing pressure on their relationship compared to a UK average of 23%.ⁱ**
- **Almost one in ten (9%) of people surveyed in the East Midlands who currently live with their partner is having relationship doubts after staying at home.ⁱⁱ**
- **26% of respondents in a relationship and living in the East Midlands are finding their partner irritating right now.ⁱⁱⁱ**
- **31% of surveyed parents in the East Midlands who currently live with their children say they are struggling to create structure for their kids and keep to a routine.^{iv}**
- **Relate anticipates post-lockdown peak in enquiries but urges people to consider webcam or telephone counselling before crisis hits.**

Relate, the leading relationships charity, has provided an insight into how relationships in the East Midlands and the rest of the UK are holding up while staying at home. Evidence of growing unease has led Relate Derby to warn of a “post-lockdown relationship reckoning”, where individuals, couples and families who are currently brushing issues under the carpet see tensions boil over as government restrictions are eased.

The findings in more detail

In new research* commissioned by Relate, just under one in five (18%) of people surveyed living in the East Midlands who are in a relationship said the current

circumstances are placing pressure on their relationship with their partner right now. Almost one in ten (9%) of those surveyed in the region who currently live with their partner went as far as agreeing that staying at home is making them doubt their relationship.

The poll of 2,021 UK adults also found that 22% of respondents in relationships in the East Midlands have had more arguments with their partner since lockdown.^v Finances were likely to have played a big part here, as 24% said money worries were placing more pressure on their relationship than usual^{vi}. Irritation is also a big issue for couples: 26% of respondents in a relationship and living in the East Midlands said they were finding their partner irritating right now.

Surveyed parents who are currently living with their children are under particular pressure with almost a third (31%) in the East Midlands saying they are finding it hard to create structure for their kids and keep to a routine. To add to this, one in five (20%) say their children's behaviour had become an issue since staying at home^{vii}.

But it's also important to note that the majority (66%) of respondents living in the East Midlands who have a partner said they feel supported by their partner^{viii} and 39% of respondents in the region who currently live with their partner actually said their experience of staying at home has brought them closer^{ix}. This doesn't necessarily translate into more sexual intimacy: 14% of respondents living in the East Midlands who have a partner are having more sex than usual compared to 17% across the UK as a whole^x.

Claire Rintoul, Interim CEO at Relate Derby & Southern Derbyshire said:

“We always see a peak in people seeking relationship support after Christmas, when spending unusually long together brings issues to the surface. Add to that the current extended period of isolation, worries about job security, finances, how to juggle work with childcare and uncertainty about the future – and it's clear why we're expecting a relationship reckoning once lockdown begins to lift.

“These findings reflect what our counsellors are seeing. People coming to us for support are saying that the COVID-19 pandemic and its repercussions are magnifying existing issues. Everyone's trying their best to get through whilst stuck under one roof but that door won't stay closed forever, which is why we're urging anyone experiencing issues to get in touch with Relate Derby now rather than letting things fester until things get irreparably bad.”

Relate is here to help

Relate Derby & Southern Derbyshire has made an immense effort to increase the availability of our skilled counsellors to support your relationships during this very

difficult time. We're proud to be here for you, offering high quality, effective webcam counselling, phone counselling and Live Chat. We have availability right now to help you find ways to handle the huge impact of this situation on yourself, your family and the health of your relationships – all from your own sofa. You can also visit our dedicated COVID-19 area on relate.org.uk for lots of information and support.

Whilst we ask for payment for many of Relate's services, we're also continuing to work with national and local government and other organisations to ensure that some people in some situations and professions can access free or subsidised counselling – contact us on 01332 349177 or info@relatederby.org.uk to find out more.

ENDS

For all media enquiries contact Gopa Nath on 07741193484 or gnath@relatederby.org.uk or Claire Rintoul on 07741193480 or claire.rintoul@relatederby.org.uk For urgent out of hours enquiries call 07875 049415.

* Online survey of 2,021 general respondents nationally representative (144 of which were living in the East Midlands) carried out by Censuswide on behalf of Relate between 9-14 April 2020.

Notes to editors:

- [Relate](https://relate.org.uk) is a registered charity number 207314.
- Relate champions the importance of strong and healthy relationships for all as the basis of a thriving society.
- Relate provides impartial and non-judgmental support for people of all ages, gender identities and sexual orientations at all stages of couple, family and social relationships.
- Last year, more than four million people accessed information, support and counselling from Relate but it's clear many more would benefit from support.
- For more information visit: relate.org.uk.

ⁱ Combining respondents in the East Midlands who strongly agree and somewhat agree with the statement 'The current circumstances are placing pressure on my relationship with my partner'. UK average: 23%.

ⁱⁱ Combining respondents in the East Midlands who strongly agree and somewhat with the statement 'Staying at home with my partner is making me doubt our relationship'. Percentage is same as UK average (12%).

ⁱⁱⁱ Combining respondents in the East Midlands who strongly agree and somewhat agree with the statement 'I find my partner irritating right now'. UK average: 27%.

^{iv} Combining respondents in the East Midlands who strongly agree and somewhat agree with the statement 'I'm finding it hard to create structure for my kids and keep to a routine'. UK average: 34%.

^v Combining respondents in the East Midlands who strongly agree and somewhat agree with the statement 'I have had more arguments with my partner since lockdown. UK average: 23%.

^{vi} Combining respondents in the East Midlands who strongly agree and somewhat agree with the statement ‘money worries are placing added pressure on our relationship right now (more so than usual). UK average: 26%.

^{vii} Combining respondents in the East Midlands who strongly agree and somewhat agree with the statement ‘My children's behaviour has become an issue since staying at home.’ UK average: 24%.

^{viii} Combining respondents in the East Midlands who strongly agree and somewhat agree with the statement ‘I feel supported by my partner’. UK average: 65%.

^{ix} Combining respondents living in the East Midlands who strongly agree and somewhat agree with the statement ‘Staying at home with my partner is bringing us closer’. UK average: 43%.

^x Combining respondents who strongly agree and somewhat agree with the statement ‘My partner and I are having more sex than usual’. UK average: 17%.