

# Top 10 Key Facts

- 1 If current trends remain as they are, **35% of children** born in the UK today will not be living with both birth parents by the age of 15.
- 2 Cohabiting parents make up 19% of all couples with dependent children, but account for **half of all family breakdown**.
- 3 90% of cohabiting parents who stay together until their children reach 15 are married.
- 4 Parents who are married before they have a child are far more likely to stay together.
- 5 Family breakdown is the biggest driver of teenage mental health issues. Marriage reduces family breakdown so helps protect our children.
- 6 Contrary to popular belief, high conflict relationships are not the most common reason for divorce - 60% of couples are both happy and not quarrelling a year prior to splitting compared to just 9% of couples who have a high conflict relationship...
- 7 In fact, more than one third of husbands and wives cite 'drifting apart' as the reason they divorced.
- 8 Although almost all teenagers aspire to marry, on current estimates only about half will do so.
- 9 There's a growing Marriage Gap: 87% of parents who earn over £43,000 marry whilst only 24% of parents earning less than £16,000 marry. The better off get married (and stay together); the poor don't.
- 10 Children, especially boys, who need father figures are now more likely to have a smartphone than their father at home.



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# MARRIAGE REALLY WORKS



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Championing marriage for the good of society...  
*especially our children*

# The BIG picture

## Marriage is a social justice issue

Our research shows that divorce rates have been on the decline for eight years and are now at their lowest for fifty years (just a third of couples marrying today are now predicted to divorce, compared with nearly half in the 1980s). But for unmarried cohabitants the picture remains persistently bleak. These couples break up at three times the rate of married couples and there is no sign of improvement. Unmarried parents make up only 19% of all couples with dependent children, yet account for half of all family breakdown.

Does this matter? Yes, because marriage remains the norm among the better-off, but for those least well-off, marriage has become increasingly rare. A 2019 Centre for Social Justice report revealed the 'significant relationship between family breakdown and some of the most complex and challenging social issues facing Britain today': addiction, mental health problems, failure in education, knife crime and homelessness. Those who experience family breakdown when aged 18 or younger are approximately twice as likely to encounter these issues.

*Our mission is to halt the decline of marriage rates and so reduce family breakdown for the least well-off.*

## Marriage Foundation challenges the status quo?

Since 2012, we have been championing marriage as the 'gold standard' for couple relationships and dispelling myths that marriage is just a piece of paper that makes no difference. By undertaking, publishing and broadcasting groundbreaking research we heighten public, media and government awareness and understanding of the scale of family breakdown. To this end we have produced more than 40 research papers and been interviewed, quoted or cited more than 1,000 times in the mainstream media.

*We're transforming the debate around marriage and family breakdown.*



## Good news and bad news

Family breakdown costs the nation £51 billion a year which we can't afford. Will you be part of the solution and help us confront the social injustices inherent in family breakdown? We are passionate to see more people forming healthy and stable relationships within marriage and to see fewer relationships, especially those with children and young people, breaking down.

However, to maintain this momentum and carry out our vital work, we need more supporters like you to help us with funding. Why not become a regular supporter or give us a one-off donation to help us to continue our work to see better outcomes for couples, children and our society as a whole? Please go to our website at [www.marriagefoundation.org.uk](http://www.marriagefoundation.org.uk) and click donate.

*Together, we can make a difference, please help us today.*

