



Marriage Foundation

Divorce rates back at 1975 levels

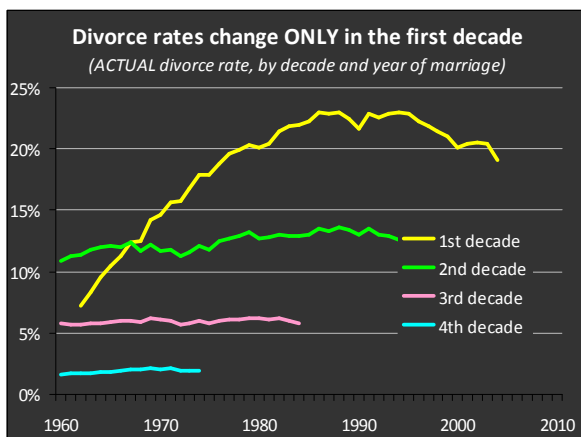
Harry Benson, Marriage Foundation

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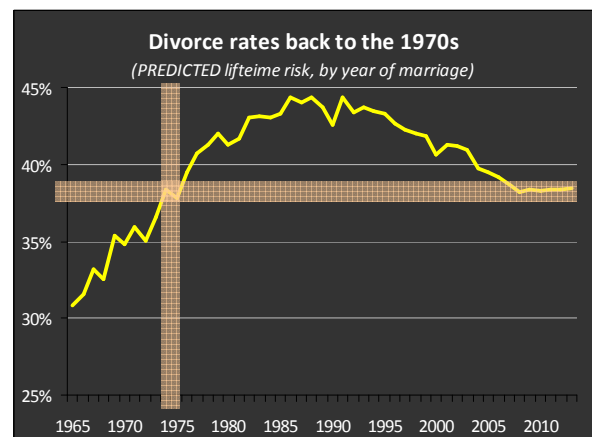
- ONS data released today show that the **number of divorces** in England & Wales are down 3% in the year 2014, “consistent with fewer marriages”. However **divorce rates** – which track couples by year of marriage – have now fallen to levels not seen since 1975, a year when there were actually 38% more marriages.
- During the first three years of marriage, the actual divorce rates of couples who married in 2011 are **down 49%** compared to the peak for couples who married in 1993. Over five years of marriage, divorce rates are **down 39%** from their peak. Over ten years they are **down 17%**.

First xxx years of marriage	Latest year of marriage	Divorces during that period	Comparison with peak year for divorces		Change in divorce rate
			Year	Divorces	
Three	2011	2.2%	1993	4.4%	-49%
Five	2009	6.5%	1991	10.6%	-39%
Ten	2004	19.0%	1988	23.0%	-17%

- On current predictions – using the same method as ONS – couples marrying today face a 42% lifetime risk of divorce. However our model includes an estimate for overseas weddings which boosts the total number of weddings in England & Wales by 10-15%. A more realistic prediction is that **couples marrying today face a 38% lifetime risk of divorce**, a rate not seen since 1975.
- All of the change in divorce rates continues to occur during the first decade of married life.



All of the variation in divorce rates has occurred during the 1st decade of marriage, regardless of whether couples married in the 1960s or 1990s.



The worst years to marry were between 1985 and 1995. Today's newlyweds will divorce at the same rate as those who married in 1974

IMPORTANT NOTE: Unmarried cohabiting couples have a higher break-up rate than married couples. This can only be calculated from national surveys. For example, our research shows that 24% of parents who are married when their child is born will have split up by the time their child is aged sixteen, compared to 56% of cohabitees who marry after their child is born, and 69% of cohabitees who never marry.