



Marriage Foundation

Press Release from Marriage Foundation
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TikTok Generation emphatically says "I do" to marriage, finds new study

- **Good news for marriage as 18-30 year-olds back institution**
- **8 in 10 young people say they want to marry**
- **Three-quarters of young people expect to marry**
- **Government urged to back Marriage Week**

The TikTok generation emphatically back the institution of marriage, finds a major new study from the Marriage Foundation.

The study, which includes a survey of 2,000 young people, aged between 18-30 is being released ahead of Marriage Week, (10th – 16 May). It finds 86 per cent of unmarried women and 80 per cent of unmarried men under 30 in a relationship say they would “like to get married at some point” in their life. While 76 per cent of women and 77 per cent of men under 30 say they “expect to get married at some point”.

Its findings help debunk the myth that the under 30s have fallen out of love with the idea of marrying.

“Our new survey of 2,000 young unmarried UK adults aged 18-30, commissioned by Marriage Foundation for Marriage Week 10-16 May 2021 and conducted by OnePoll, reveal that the desire to get married among young adults at some point is remarkably strong,” it says.

Importantly the survey finds that neither age or socio-economic group significantly diminishes the desire to wed. Nearly nine in 10 (89 per cent) of women aged 18-24 want to marry, dropping just six points to 83 per cent for 25-30 year olds. By contrast, the proportion of men who want to marry, marginally increased in the two age ranges from 78 per cent to 81 per cent.

While in the top tercile, nine in 10 (91 per cent) of women and 83 per cent of men want to marry, this drops only a few points in the bottom tercile to 81 per cent of women and 82 per cent of men wanting to tie the knot.

Harry Benson, Marriage Foundation's Research Director commented: "A dangerous and pervasive myth has developed that paints young people as a group that rejects commitment and shuns traditional institutions we usually think are more closely associated with their parent's generation. However, our study finds the opposite. Young people emphatically aspire to be married and expect to get married, clearly recognising the benefits associated with long-term stable relationships. This is great news as we mark the start of Marriage Week."

It found little difference in the levels of support when how couples met was taken into account. 88 per cent of women who met online want to marry compared to 82 per cent who met socially in a bar or elsewhere. The figure was 86 per cent of women who met in school, family or work settings. While men were a little lower in all three categories.

The study, which is largely positive in its findings, is critical at the lack of support for married couples from the Government. "...as rates of marriage have declined, politicians and policymakers have been strangely reluctant to distinguish or prefer marriage, so that in government fiscal policy and on many government forms, couples are often invited to say whether they are married or living together 'as if married' (Benson 2020).

"This policy silence comes despite the popularity of marriage among the top income groups, including politicians themselves..."

It continues: "Marriage Week is a chance to remind ourselves of the central stabilising role marriage plays in society.

"While government policy has been reluctant to recognise the primacy of marriage, the British public still do....

"...We, therefore, invite the government to send a message of affirmation for this desire among young adults by backing Marriage Week.

"Better still, we invite government to begin the process of building a serious policy that promotes, encourages and distinguishes marriage from 'living together as if married, in order to help young adults translate their aspiration for marriage into achievement. This is a social justice issue."

Sir Paul Coleridge, founder of Marriage Foundation commented: "Government ministers still seem highly reluctant to back the institution of marriage out of an irrational fear of being portrayed as old fashioned. But as our study shows support for the institution of marriage and the desire to wed remains strong, regardless of age, class or how couples are meeting.

"Given that young people realise the importance of stable relationships and that marriage provides this, why do politicians from all side continue to lack the moral courage to back marriage?"

Mr Benson added: “Only last week a Government Minister refused to recognise the indisputable research that marriage is three times more stable than informal cohabitation and parroted the line that ‘families come in all shapes and sizes’. Yes, they do, but that does not prevent the Government from promoting marriage and providing more support for struggling couples.

“We invite government – of whose cabinet 85 per cent are married – to affirm this strong desire to marry among young adults by backing Marriage Week, and to motivate the development of a fearless policy that promotes and distinguishes marriage in line with the evidence.”

ENDS

Notes to editors

About Marriage Foundation

Marriage Foundation was founded in 2012 by Sir Paul Coleridge, a High Court judge who was moved by his personal experience in 40 years as a barrister and judge specialising in family law. The think tank seeks to improve public understanding of marriage and to reduce the numbers of people drawn into the family justice system – some 500,000 children and adults each year. It has established itself as a leading voice on marriage issues in the UK.

Sir Paul Coleridge, Harry Benson and Michaela Hyde from the Marriage Foundation are available for comment and for interviews linked to these new findings.

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