

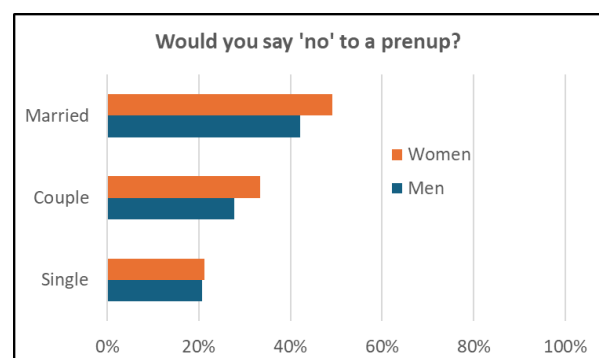
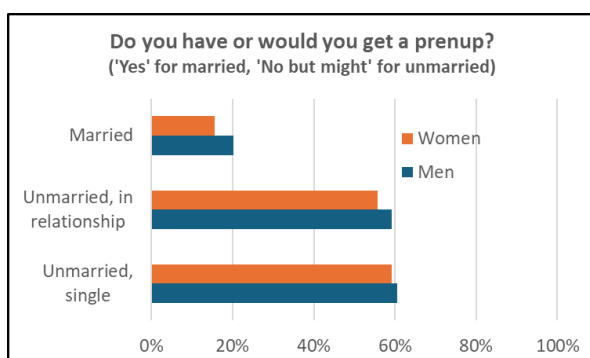


Marriage Foundation

Our second survey affirms that one in five weddings begin with a prenup

Harry Benson, December 2025

- Four years ago, we ran a survey of 2,000 ever married UK adults which included a question about prenuptial agreements or 'prenups', legal contracts that some couples sign before getting married to outline how assets, debts and other financial matters will be handled in the event of divorce. Despite lots of promotion from family lawyers who champion the perceived advantages of 'prenups', this was the first national survey to assess their prevalence.
- Having been careful to distinguish our original question so that respondents did not conflate prenups with marriage preparation, we were surprised to find that as many as 20% of the couples who married since the year 2000 said they had signed one.
- In a new survey of 2,000 young UK adults aged 18-35, commissioned by Marriage Foundation and conducted by the survey company Whitestone, we replicated this question with additional clarification about the nature of the contract.
- Among the 599 married adults, 20% of the men and 16% of the women said they had signed one. This mirrors our original findings and confirms that about one in five of those who have married in recent years have signed a 'prenup'. Among the 1,396 unmarried adults, 60% of the men and 58% of the women said they would consider signing one. Logistic regression analyses also showed that those who were in higher economic group ABC1 or religious were more likely to sign or consider signing a prenup.
- One finding that we didn't look at last time was who ruled out a prenup. Nearly twice as many of those married (42% of the men and 49% of the women) said they would not consider a prenup, compared to those who were not married (23% of the men and 27% of the women). The difference was most apparent among the non-religious, of whom 68% ruled it out if they were married but only 23% if they were not.
- Our findings replicate and affirm our previous survey results with a new national sample of younger adults. Findings suggest that 'prenups' have become a serious consideration for more than half of couples and are an integral part of the wedding process for one in five.



Introduction

Prenuptial agreements – prenups – are legal arrangements signed prior to a marriage that are intended to plan for the division of assets should that marriage fail. Prior to the famous Radmacher case in 2010, there was a great deal of legal doubt about the enforceability of prenups above and beyond the normal constraints of divorce law.

But how common are prenups? And how do they effect subsequent marriages?

A brief search of US family journals and Google Scholar reveals much on the legal aspects of prenups but precious little on their prevalence or effect, aside from our previous study.

Four years ago, we commissioned the first ever national survey to ask about prenups from the polling company Savanta ComRes. We asked 2,027 ever married adults over 30 if they had signed a prenup or even knew anybody who had signed one, for their first marriage.

Having personally run marriage preparation courses in Bristol for over 500 couples between 2002 and 2012, my expectation was that prenups were only ever a curiosity for the super-rich.

Like others, I find the idea of prenups deeply unromantic. “Darling, will you marry me?” “Oh yes.” “Could you now sign this prenup so I can keep all my stuff in case it goes wrong?”

No thank you.

The results were a big surprise. Prenups turned out to be far more prevalent than I had imagined.

The earliest prenup in our sample was signed in 1970, with a further four signed during the 1970s, representing just 1.5% of weddings.

Their prevalence increased in the 1980s to 5% of weddings and 1990s to 8% of weddings. However, from about the year 2000, they were present among 20% of all weddings except for the year 2019 where 31% of our specific sample of 44 signed a prenup.

Our finding attracted a great deal of coverage in the Sunday and weekday newspapers and broadcast media. But I’ve always wondered whether our finding would replicate in a different sample. Did people misunderstand the question perhaps? Or are prenups really as commonplace as our survey showed?

Results of our new survey

This summer we commissioned a further survey, this time from the survey company Whitestone covering 2,000 young adults aged 18-35. Of these, 599 were married and 20% of the men and 16% of the women said they had signed a prenup.

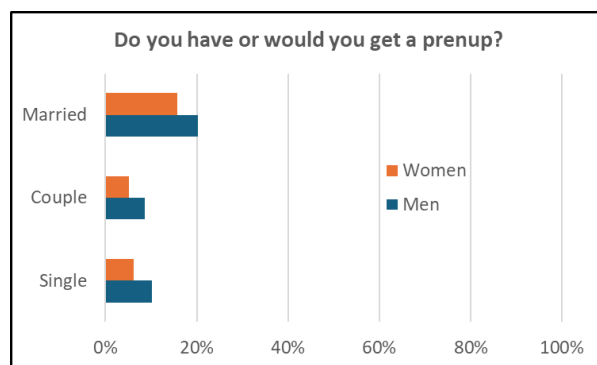
The specific question we asked was ‘Do you have, or would you get, a ‘pre-nup’ which is a legal contract signed before you get married to outline how your assets, debts and other financial matters will be handled in the event of divorce?’

There were four potential responses: ‘Yes I have or have had one’, ‘No but I might’, ‘No and I would not’, and ‘Don’t know/prefer not to say’. Although I was mostly interested in those who said ‘Yes I have or have had one’, the table below also shows proportions of those who said ‘No but I might’ and ‘No and I would not’.

Responses by Gender and Marital Status			
Response	Marital Status	Men	Women
Yes	Married	20%	16%
	Not married	10%	6%
Yes or might	Married	50%	43%
	Not married	60%	58%
No	Married	42%	49%
	Not married	23%	27%

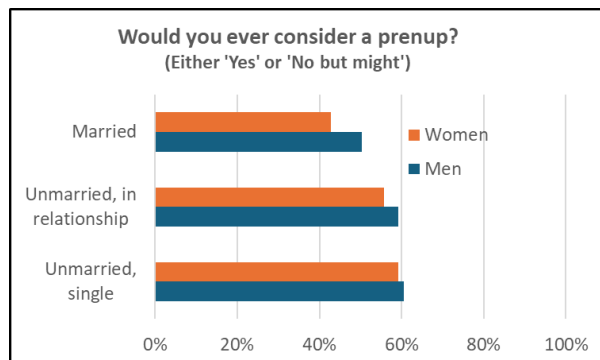
Overall, 20% of married men and 16% of married women said they had signed a prenup. Results are weighted to reflect the UK population. This affirms our previous finding that around one in five couples who marry also sign a prenup.

That proportions are below 10% among those unmarried is not a surprise. It is not clear whether these reflect prenups for a future marriage, prenups from a previous marriage, or cohabiting agreements.



More relevant among those not married is that 60% of men and 58% of women said they either had or would consider signing a prenup. Proportions for those single and those in a

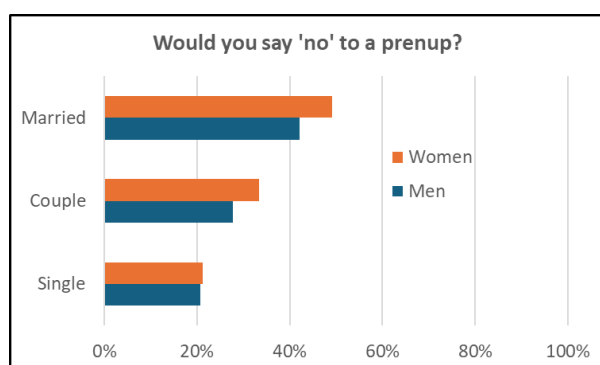
relationship were similar. Fewer of those already married say that they would consider one, although this is a moot point since they are already married.



The proportion of those who would definitely say no to a prenup is highest among those already married, at 42% of men and 49% of women, and lowest among those single, at 21% of both men and women.

That proportions among those in a relationship are higher than singles, at 28% of men and 33% of women, suggests people are most open to the idea as singles, but become progressively more sceptical as they move into a relationship and get married.

It's not clear from this whether more people who marry don't like prenups or more people who like the idea of prenups are less likely to marry. What seems most plausible is that those who have yet to commit feel the strongest need for the additional security of a prenup, whereas those who have already committed feel the least need.



Other factors

As well as looking at prevalence and opinions on prenups by marital status and gender, I looked at age, social class and religion. Using logistic regression analyses to isolate the unique influence of each factor independent of all other factors, I determined that age was not a factor.

However, those in social classes ABC1 were significantly more likely to sign, or consider signing, a prenup than those in social classes C2DE, whether married or unmarried, as shown in the table below.

Responses by Marital Status and Social Class			
Response	Marital Status	ABC1	C2DE
Yes or might	Married	49%	37%
	Not married	61%	54%
No	Married	43%	52%
	Not married	25%	26%

Attitudes towards prenups varied most widely among those non-religious, depending on whether they were married or not, as shown in the next table.

Whereas the proportions of those who were religious and said they would consider signing a prenup varied little between the married and unmarried (both 55%), those who were not married and non-religious were significantly more disposed towards prenups than those already married (62% vs 27%). This pattern was also seen where 23% of those non-religious and not married ruled out a prenup, compared to 68% of those non-religious and married.

In other words, it may be that those who are non-religious are most open to the idea of a prenup if they have not committed. But once they have committed, they no longer see the need.

Responses by Marital Status and Religion			
Response	Marital Status	Religious	Non
Yes or might	Married	55%	27%
	Not married	55%	62%
No	Married	37%	68%
	Not married	28%	23%