

Press response – for immediate release 22.4.2013

RELATIONSHIP CHARITY RESPONDS TO ‘LIVING APART TOGETHER’ RESEARCH

New research released today (Tuesday April 23rd) shows one in 10 adults in Britain is in a relationship but does not live with their partner. A fifth of these people would be classed as ‘single’ in a Census or official statistics.

Researchers from NatCen and the Universities of Bradford and Birbeck believe ‘Living Apart Together’ (LAT) should be recognised as a relationship status and counted by those producing statistics and seeking to understand contemporary relationships and families.

Responding to the research, Penny Mansfield, Director of OnePlusOne, said: “In the 1960s men and women rushed to marriage at young ages, but by the late 1980s living together became the prelude to marriage and increasingly an alternative. This research puts the spotlight on relationships where people see themselves as couples (only 7 % said they rarely or never saw themselves as a couple) but with reservations. They don’t live together, because it is too early to move in together or, because they have reasons for wanting to retain a degree of separateness in their togetherness.

“The evidence is clear that strong and stable couple relationships matter because they bring benefits to adult and child wellbeing, an important source of social capital especially in the age of austerity. So should these LAT relationships be recognised as a relationship status as the researchers believe?

“A key feature of strong and stable couple relationships, married or not, heterosexual or same-sex, is being able to rely on your partner, to be looked after when ill, financially supported or turned to when in need of help. Yet only 20% of the LAT couples said their partner would care for them when if they were ill and just 34% that they would turn to their partner if they had a problem they were unable to sort out. OnePlusOne supports couples to build and sustain the kind of relationship where they can rely on their partner.

“Perhaps the most interesting thing about LATs is the evidence of caution about living together – a consequence of the increasingly fragile nature of couple relationships in the UK today.”

- Ends -

For more information or to arrange an interview with Penny Mansfield, please contact Lynne Milford, Interim Press Officer on 0207 553 9535 or email lm2@oneplusone.org.uk

Notes to editors

About OnePlusOne

- Penny Mansfield is a researcher specialising in couple and family relationships who has long championed the principle of early intervention, devoting much of her career to deriving simple insights from research and translating them into accessible resources for practitioners and, more recently, the public. She received a CBE in the New Years' Honours List in 2013 for her work in this field.
- OnePlusOne is a UK charity, which aims to strengthen relationships, helping couples and parents through a range of online resources.
- It also provides online training for frontline family workers to equip them with the skills to offer timely relationship support in a face-to-face setting.
- Based on latest research evidence, it promotes early action to equip couples to deal with relationship issues before they become entrenched.
- It was recently commissioned by the Department for Education to lead a high-profile campaign to encourage couples to see seeking support as normal in strengthening their relationship. The charity will be working with expert partners, such as Working Families, Contact a Family, DAD.info, Netmums, The Student Room and YouthNet, to create online spaces where couples can find tools to help them.
- It launched the CoupleConnection.net in 2008 to put its wealth of research and practical experience into the hands of couples themselves, providing articles, self-assessment tools, activities and exercises to help improve and strengthen relationships.
- For more information, visit the website www.oneplusone.org.uk