



BRISTOL LOVE REPORT 2022

How singles date and find love in the city

June 2022



Rachael Lloyd



Dr Julia Carter

WEST IS BEST WHEN IT COMES TO LOOKING FOR LOVE, ACCORDING TO DATA COMPILED BY ROMANCE EXPERTS AT EHARMONY.

The dating app has explored Bristolians' attitudes towards dating including cheesy chat up lines, where's best for a first date and what adults in the trendy city are looking for relationship-wise.

500 people from the home of cider and the Wurzels were quizzed on their love lives to give a snapshot of romance in the area.

Working with **Dr Julia Carter** of the University of West England (UWE), who has commented on key findings in the report, and eharmony's relationship expert **Rachael Lloyd**, the online dating app hopes to make singletons in Bristol a thing of the past by matching them with like-minded individuals.



INTRO

We are delighted to shine a light on the thriving city of Bristol as summer approaches. Indeed, summer happens to be the optimum season for the city's singles to fall in love, according to the findings in this report. So, the timing couldn't be better.

Our experts at eharmony commissioned this report to get an innate understanding of the romantic goals and challenges experienced by singles dating in the South West. It's part of our new 'levelling up on love' agenda to support singles throughout the UK in regional hotspots.

During times of adversity, human beings crave more intimacy in their lives. We're therefore pleased to see that, post pandemic, 37% of Bristolians want to settle down more than ever. This mirrors national research we undertook with the charity Relate last year, which showed a similar rise in romantic commitments and a decline in casual dating culture.

Furthermore, it's not surprising that most Bristol singles prefer to date in their home environment. Around a quarter (24%) will go 12 miles for a date. Only 5% will go 31 miles. Therefore, we want to encourage Bristolians to celebrate their home city by getting online and arranging dates at local beauty spots and venues. (See page 6 for favourite spots).



What's disappointing to discover is that around a quarter of Bristolians (23%) say they've never been in love.

Blocks to dating include lack of confidence (45%) and not feeling attractive enough (31%), along with feeling too old (23%). This is regrettable, and above all shows that it's our mindset that informs so much of our relationship success or failure.

Fundamentally, we need to be braver, and trust that if we put the effort in, we can most certainly find someone truly special.

We hope this report helps incentivise Bristolians to seize the summer months, and start to enjoy richer love lives.

Romain Bertrand
UK Managing Director, eharmony

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GETTING TOGETHER

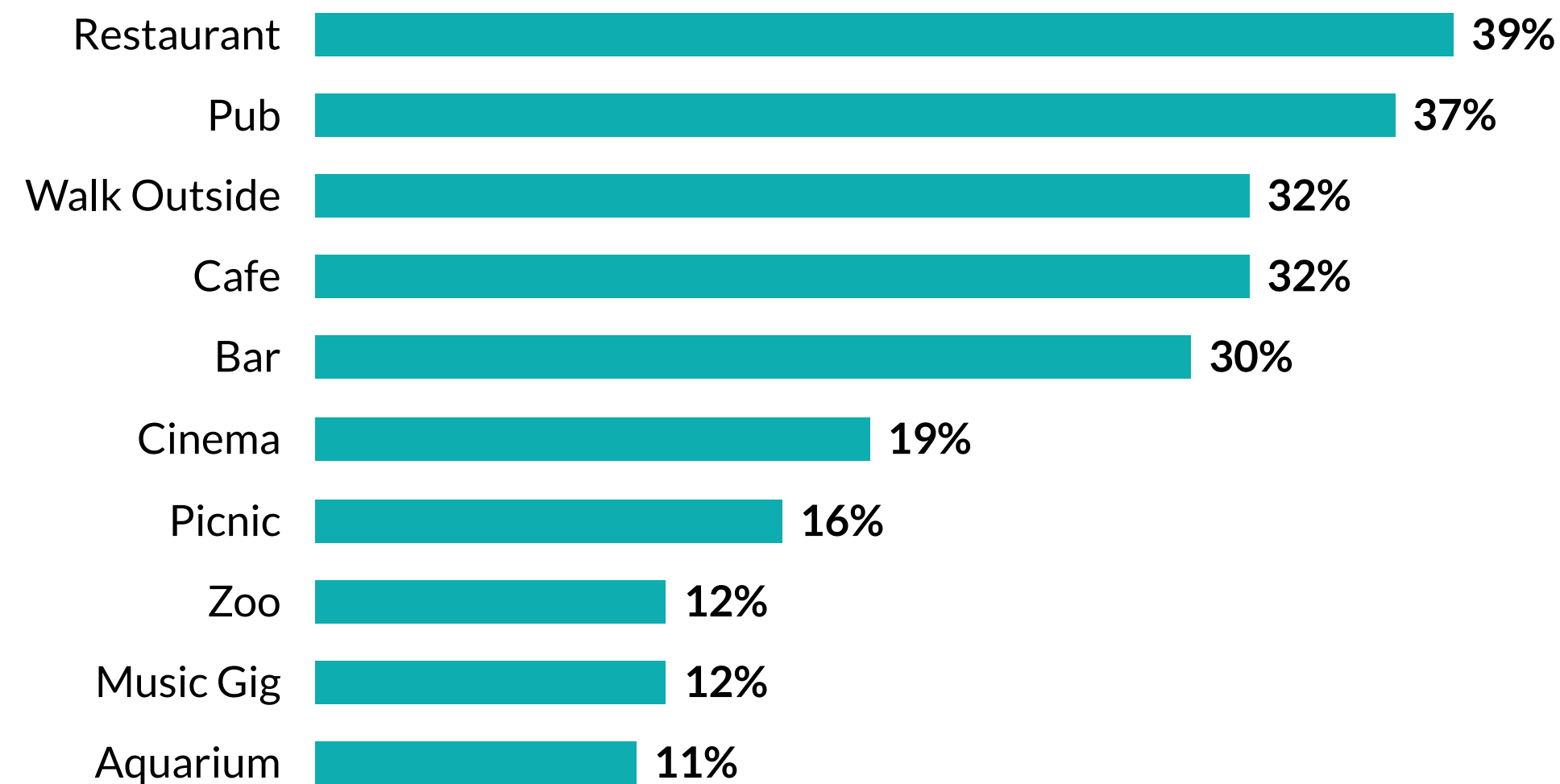


GETTING TOGETHER

Bristolians are still pretty traditional when it comes to meeting new flames, as 43% most commonly find dates through random meetings in clubs, pubs or even shops. However, dating apps and websites account for a third (32%) of new unions – while more than a quarter (27%) are set up through friends and family members.

While 1 in 12 Bristolians would go ape at the zoo, 1 in 10 would swim on down to the Aquarium for some romance.

Where do people in Bristol like to go on a first date?



It's fantastic to see that just over a third of Bristolians meet on dating apps, in addition to other methods. This correlates with wider trends we're seeing across the country. In the seventies and eighties most singles met their partner through friends or in the office. But over the last decade that trend has changed dramatically.

The beauty of a quality dating app is that it gives singles access to a large pool of motivated singles.

Rachael Lloyd
Relationship expert, eharmony

GETTING TOGETHER

The best place in Bristol to take a first date, according to residents, is the aquarium.

A fifth of respondents admit to liking the classic Bristolian greeting of 'Alright me luvver?' while 14% would blush when told they were 'gert lush'.

Around a quarter of people in Bristol (24%) would be willing to travel up to 20km – 12 miles – to see a person they'd recently started dating. However, 5% would be willing to give someone who lived further than 50km – or 31 miles – away a chance if they felt they'd made a love-match.

Which venues in Bristol did respondents recommend for a date?



We encourage local singles to participate in activity dates like a visit to the Aquarium or Clifton Observatory. Sitting across a table from each other at a bar can be intimidating for a first or second date. Whereas activity dates energise the process and give natural talking points.

Rachael Lloyd
Relationship expert, eharmony

GETTING TOGETHER



Although dating apps allow us to meet people from further afield, we still tend to want to meet someone closer to home. This makes dating in the city a lot easier than meeting new people in rural countryside settings.

Dr Julia Carter
Relationship expert, UWE



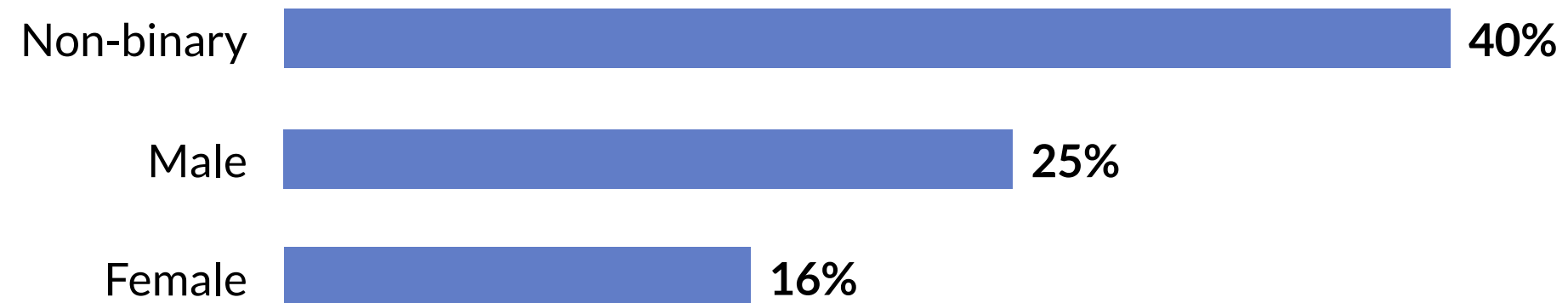
FALLING IN LOVE



FALLING IN LOVE

It's been a few months and things are progressing well – but who's the first to drop those three magic words in Bristol?

Who is most likely to drop the L word at the beginning of a relationship?



Perhaps as a result of **lockdowns speeding up relationships**, adults in Bristol are tempted to say I love you after just a few weeks of dating.

Bristolians are also gearing up for a summer of love – as the **majority** (31%) say the last time they **fell in love was in the summertime**. Interestingly, the love-factor was evenly split between the other three seasons, which each rated 15%.



Heartening and surprising to see men drop the L Bomb first!

And very interesting to see that the non-binary community are ahead of the pack when it comes to saying 'I love you'. This may be because they are less constrained by dusty old conventions, and more willing to take risks in relationships.

Rachael Lloyd
Relationship expert, eharmony

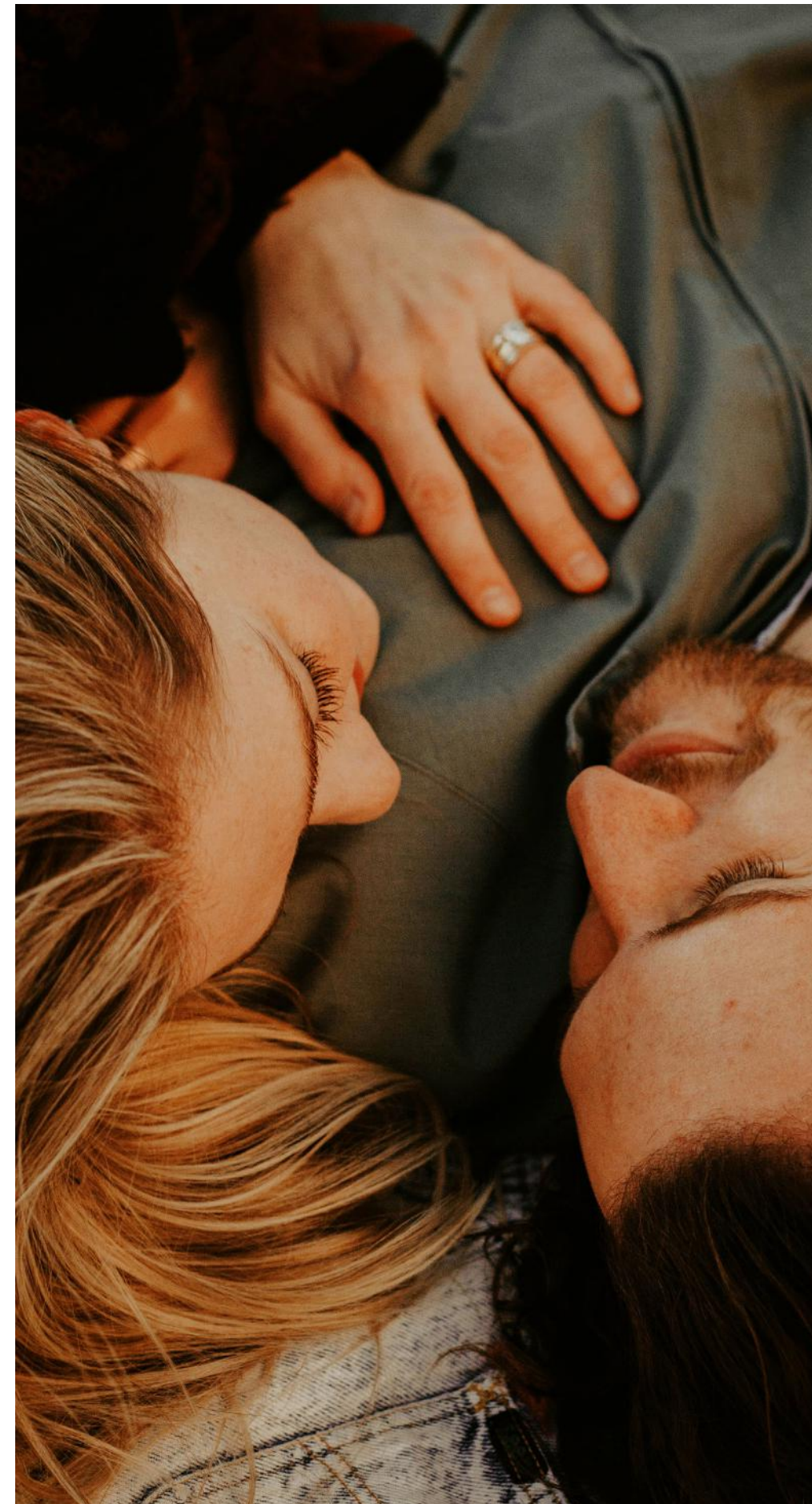
FALLING IN LOVE

Of the 69% of respondents who are currently in a relationship, only three quarters actually believe their current partner is ‘the one’.

But just over 1 in 20 (6%) admit they don’t even really believe in the concept of ‘the one’ anyway.

4 in 10 Bristolians met their new partner’s parents after a few months, although a super-keen tenth had made their acquaintance after just a few days.

39% get on ‘fairly well’ with the in-laws and 35% say their relationship is going ‘very well’ – but 6% say they don’t get on well with them at all.



We live in a society that prioritises couple relationships above all others; this shapes our desire for finding one special partner.

But, in some cases, it also drives relationship breakdowns as we believe there may be someone better out there. This may be why casual dating is still reasonably prevalent in our culture.

So before you commit to someone, think about the kind of partner you’re most compatible with, and learn to value those secure attachments.

Dr Julia Carter
Relationship expert, UWE

DATING TYPES UNCOVERED



DATING TYPES UNCOVERED

Bristolians have encountered some pretty unusual scenarios in their dating history.

A quarter have encountered an **'app addict'** – someone who messages on dating apps for weeks but never actually makes a move.

A fifth were dismayed to learn they had been chatting to a **'dating desperado'**, which is someone who leaps into a new relationship eagerly and acts as if a relationship is the be-all and end-all.

And 18% have been ghosted by a **'bash and dasher'** – who sleeps with them and then never messages them again.

Poor hygiene was deemed the single biggest dating turn-off for Bristolians, with women far more fussy in this regard than men. Almost half (42%) of Bristolians dislike an aggressive date, or someone who is rude – while 35% can't abide bad manners.



The goal of any good dating app is to get people offline and into real life dates and relationships.

Our research suggests the optimum time to ask someone online out on a date is seven days. Don't wait any longer or you'll likely miss the boat!

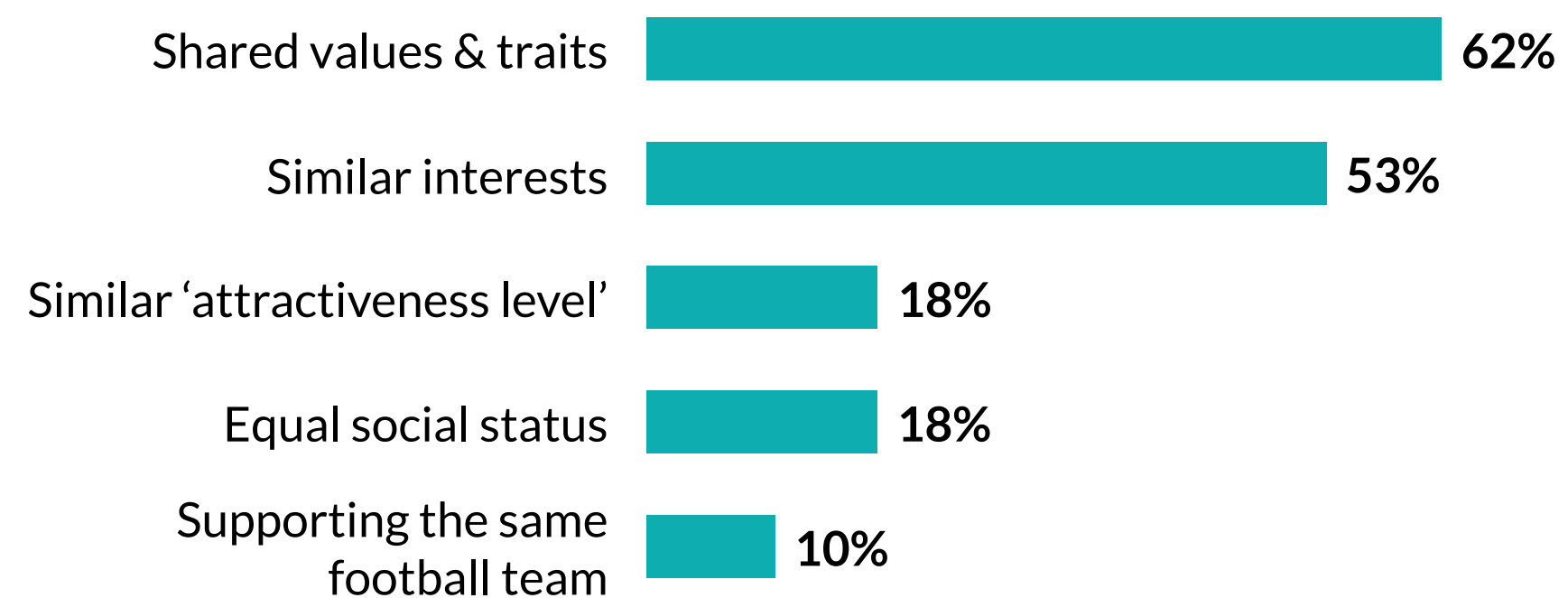
Rachael Lloyd
Relationship expert, eharmony

DATING TYPES UNCOVERED

1 in 4 Bristol daters say they don't have a 'type' – although 23% reckon their go-to is someone who loves music.

16% are likely to fancy someone who's a bit of an outdoorsy type, while 11% enjoy when their beau-to-be is sporty. For 1 in 10, however, supporting different football teams would be enough to become a deal-breaker.

What makes people click?



Our wider research shows that over one in two Brits is in a relationship with someone who wasn't their type when they met.

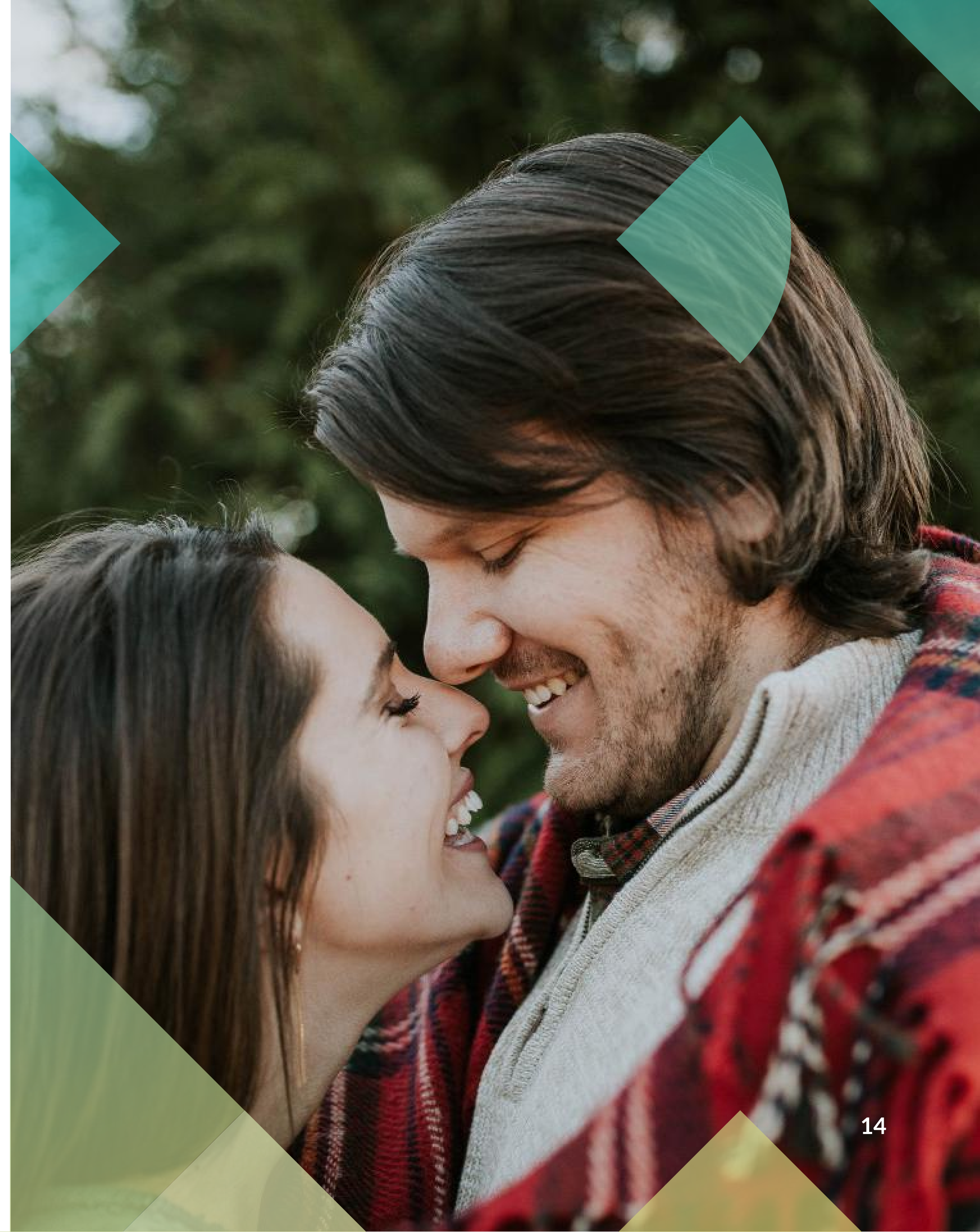
Rachael Lloyd
Relationship expert, eharmony

DATING TYPES UNCOVERED



My research has shown that there are certain factors which ‘push’ a couple together and others which ‘pull’ them towards each other. While compatibility and shared values provide pulls in the early stages of relationships, in more established relationships external elements come into play, ensuring a couple stays together. These include shared finances, housing, investments, and children. These factors push couples together, allowing them to maintain a long-term relationship based on a complex interplay of shared interests and values, external constraints and emotional, as well as tangible investments.

Dr Julia Carter
Relationship expert, UWE

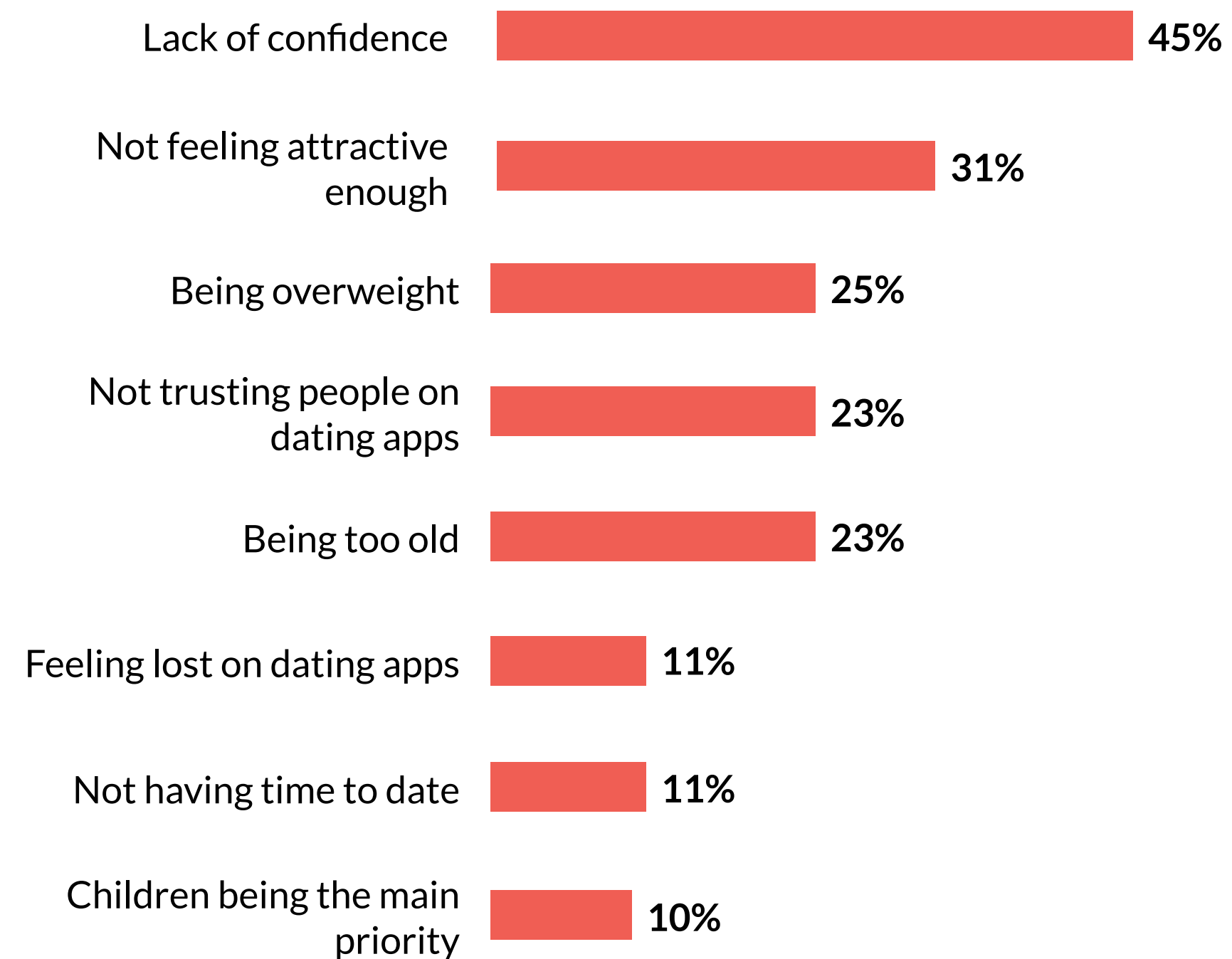


DATING FEARS



DATING FEARS

Biggest dating challenges



So much of attraction comes from confidence. Therefore, the more confident we feel about dating and finding love, the more desirability we generate.

The trick is to remember that confidence increases the more we're willing to flex our 'dating muscles' and meet compatible matches. Before you go on a date, make sure you have the same relationship goals and good rapport. This means you're more likely to enjoy the experience and generate bundles of self-esteem.

Rachael Lloyd
Relationship expert, eharmony

DATING FEARS

There can be many fears when it comes to dating – from fear of having nothing to talk about on a date to fear of never meeting ‘the one’.

When asked what their biggest challenges are when it comes to dating, lack of confidence came in as the highest barrier. This could stem from previous bad relationships or simply not getting out there enough to gain the experience and confidence.

This was followed closely with a third not feeling attractive enough – but what is classed as ‘attractive’ these days? And this is exactly why everyone has a ‘type’.

The thing to remember is that desirability is fluid. What you might find attractive could be the complete opposite to what someone does, but each and every one of us has attractive features and traits.



You’re never too old, unfit or too ordinary for love. This is just one of the stories we tell ourselves when we’re fearful about getting vulnerable with someone.

Remember there are also lots of great matches out there, but you won’t find them if you’re sitting at home in a pool of anxiety.

1 in 2 eharmony first dates lead to second dates, so what are you waiting for?

Rachael Lloyd
Relationship expert, eharmony

DATING FEARS

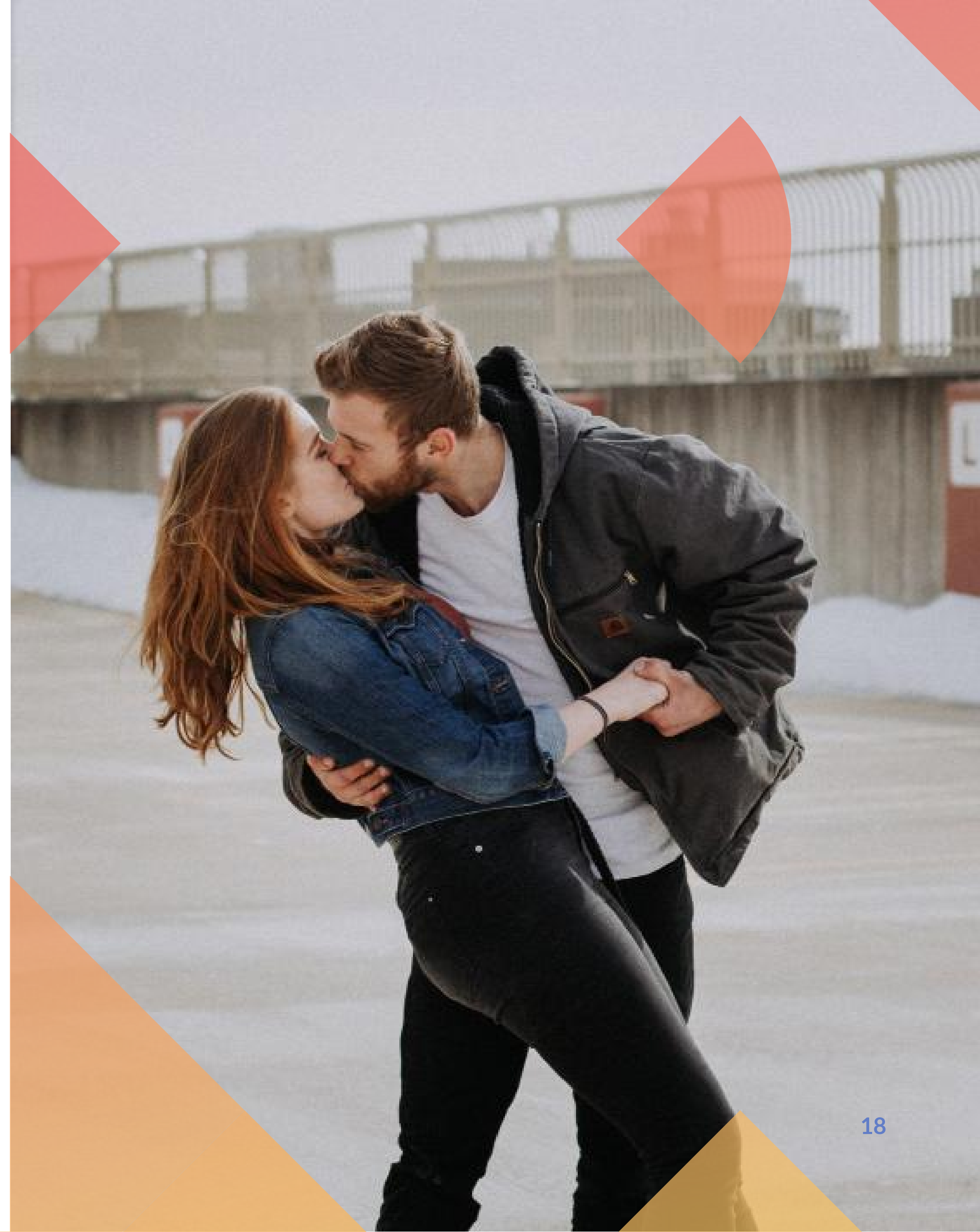


In the online dating community, when we only have our own judgement to go by, the importance of both authenticity and trustworthiness become heightened. We need to trust the other and ourselves to make a 'good' and 'right' decision. What is considered 'good' and 'right' in dating is shaped by our social and cultural norms and collective values.

When we feel inadequate, this is because of a clash between our view of ourselves and these shared cultural values, which constantly tells us to look younger, thinner and prettier.

Seeing these messages for what they are, attempting to resist them and the associated normative pressures will enable us to reject social expectations. This means we will make dating decisions free from these arbitrary, damaging social norms and lead happier lives.

Dr Julia Carter
Relationship expert, UWE



DATING TRAITS



DATING TRAITS

The top 20 dating traits most important to Bristolians:

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Honest | 11. Good manners |
| 2. Trustworthy | 12. Compassionate |
| 3. Kind | 13. Attractive |
| 4. Funny | 14. Responsible |
| 5. Loving | 15. Similar interests |
| 6. Respectful | 16. Gentle |
| 7. Caring | 17. Family-orientated |
| 8. Considerate | 18. Good in bed |
| 9. Understanding | 19. Independent |
| 10. Easy going | 20. Forgiving |



Lovely to see that honesty is considered the number one trait in a new partner. It's the bedrock of a healthy relationship along with trust and humour.

eHarmony subscriber data from thousands of profiles also indicates that agreeableness (kindness) is a big draw for all genders.

Rachael Lloyd
Relationship expert, eHarmony

DATING TRAITS



The importance of honesty and trustworthiness for daters may also be a reaction against the perceived dishonesty and selfishness inherent in wider society.

Romantic relationships provide a refuge and compensation for external social ills.

Dr Julia Carter
Relationship expert, UWE

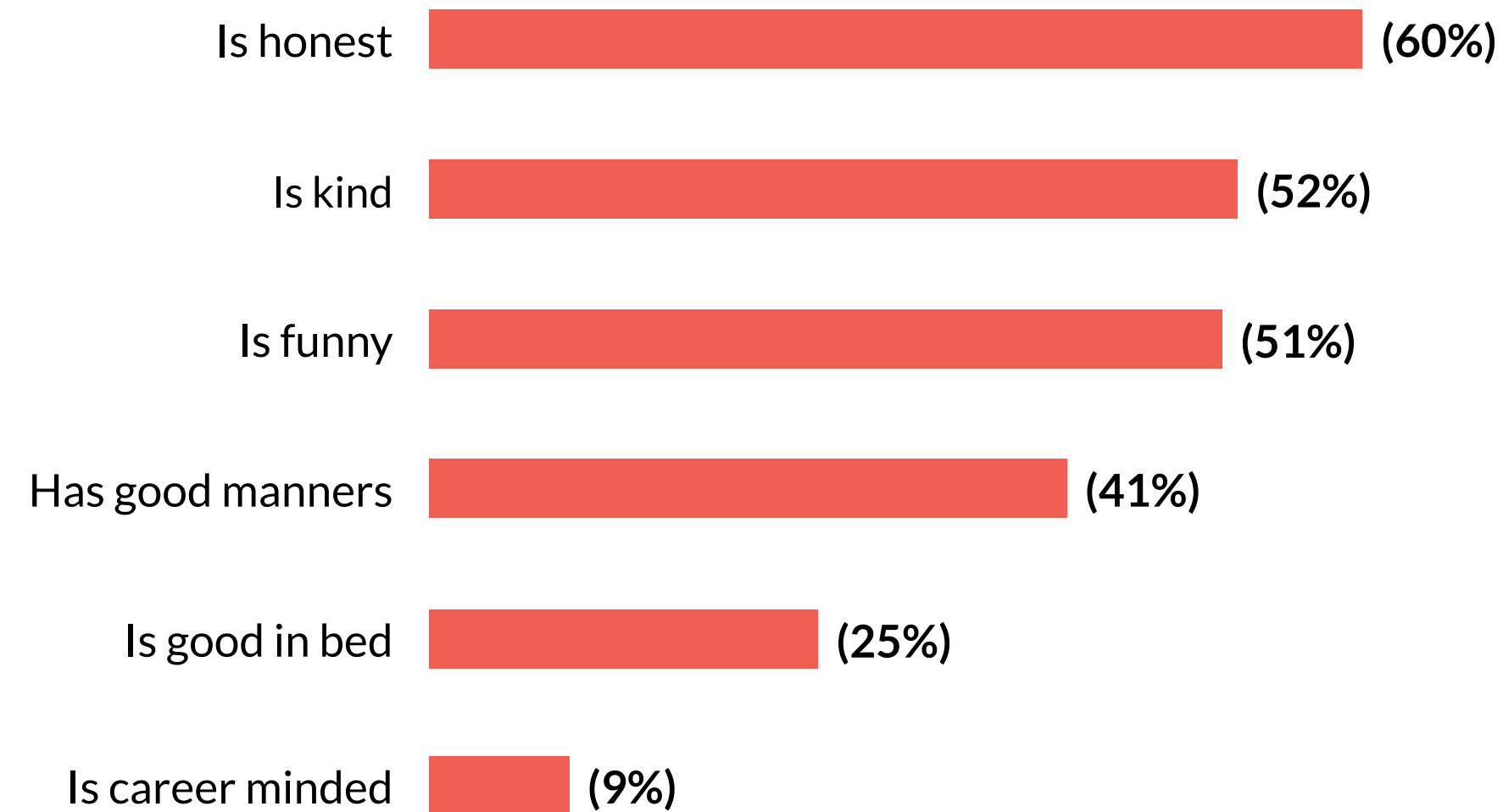


POST PANDEMIC PARTNERSHIPS



POST PANDEMIC PARTNERSHIPS

Bristolians are looking for someone who...



The last two years have been rocky for everyone, let alone the singletons of Bristol, as 3 in 10 believe their views on dating have changed since the pandemic kicked off.

More than a third (37%) want to settle down more now than they ever did, but 22% want more freedom than before.



In societies characterised by 'risk', times of heightened danger will push individuals into seeking security within their own environment.

For many this will mean searching out a stable and secure couple relationship that will provide surety against the backdrop of unknown precarity.

Dr Julia Carter
Relationship expert, UWE



Our research suggests that while opposite attract, they later attack!

This is because once the chemistry wears off you have two people with totally different traits and goals.

Rachael Lloyd
Relationship expert, eharmony

CONCLUSION

Overall, this report illustrates the fact that Bristol singles are more motivated to date post-pandemic and ready to embrace summer loving. However, one in four has never been in love and blocks to dating include a lack of confidence about their appearance and age.

The most important thing to bear in mind is that there are plenty of quality matches who genuinely want to find real love in the Bristol area.

And this fabulous city also offers many beauty spots and compelling venues to sample during the dating process. We therefore hope Bristolians will dust off their dating shoes, jump online to connect with a large pool of like-minded local singles and set the wheels of love in motion.

It's never too late when it comes to love.

Love, eharmony x

For enquiries contact us at pressuk@eharmony.com



EHARMONY REAL LOVE STORIES



Name: Letty & Ashley

Location: Bristol, UK

Ages: 29 & 27 (at time of joining)

Status: Married (September 2017)

Matched: Dec 2012/Jan 2013

I wasn't sure about online dating, but eharmony had an offer, so I set myself a target of trying it for three months to see how I felt about it.

My husband was one of the first people I engaged with. We got on brilliantly. We are quite different at surface level, that makes us well balanced. We do have the same sense of humour though, no one can make me cry with laughter as much as Ash does.

We also agree on all things that matter, for example, how we want to raise our sons (twin boys). We never expected to be parents of twins, it was a big shock and the pregnancy – particularly the first six months – ended up being incredibly difficult, but we got through it together. The boys have recently celebrated their second birthday and are the best thing that ever happened to us.

EHARMONY REAL LOVE STORIES



Name: Morwenna & Martin

Location: Bristol, UK

Ages: 37 & 38 (at time of joining)

Status: Married

Matched: August 2009

We emailed and talked on the phone for a couple of weeks before we met in person, so we were both very invested before meeting for the first time. We knew about our personal dealbreakers before we met, so we trusted that we were on the same page. When we did finally meet in person it was to see if we had chemistry, which we did, and still do!

We complement each other well; we have shared interests, but also have our individual things that we like to do. Throughout our relationship, we've supported each other to pursue our separate interests, making us stronger as a couple.

We're very blessed, but in life there are inevitable ups and downs, which we have worked through together. Communication, honesty and respect - plus our shared commitment to each other and our family (which includes our children, now 6 and 8 years old) - gives us a powerful framework to face whatever comes our way.