

## **Love and the single Singaporean**

**Most want to wed but 59% are not dating seriously and 41% have never done so:  
Poll**

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Most of Singapore's singletons intend to marry, though six in 10 are not dating with marriage in mind and four in 10 have never had serious relationships, according to a new government survey.

Among those not dating seriously, 42 per cent are leaving dating to chance. As for those seeking potential partners, more are comfortable with online dating and dating apps, and more of them have met their partners this way.

These were some key findings released by the National Population and Talent Division (NPTD) yesterday from its Marriage and Parenthood Survey.

Commissioned to understand public attitudes and perceptions towards marriage and parenthood, the survey polled 2,940 singles and 2,861 married Singapore residents - both groups aged 21 to 45 years old - last year. Similar surveys were conducted in 2004, 2007 and 2012.

The survey also showed that 83 per cent of the singles aged 21 to 35 years old indicated that they intend to marry, a slight dip from the 86 per cent in 2012.

But 59 per cent of all the singles surveyed were not dating seriously with a view to getting married and 41 per cent had never dated seriously before. Among the singles not dating seriously, four out of 10 prefer to leave dating to chance.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Office Josephine Teo, who oversees population matters, wrote on Facebook yesterday that she is happy that marriage and parenthood remain important life goals that many Singaporeans aspire to.

"The aspirations captured in the survey give us hope. It also points to what more we can do as a community to help our fellow Singaporeans achieve those aspirations," wrote Mrs Teo.

"Some areas the Government is looking into include developing the dating landscape, creating family-friendly and inclusive workplaces and improving pre-school support," she added.

The findings on married respondents showed that, similar to previous years, most couples prefer to have two or more children.

When it comes to looking after infants and children up to six years old, both men and women prefer full-time work with flexible work arrangements, over full-time work without such arrangements and part-time work.

More husbands are now sharing the load of childcare responsibilities with their wives, though women still bear the brunt of childcare. Dr Mathew Mathews, senior research fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies and research consultant for the 2016 survey, said that singles need to be more proactive instead of leaving dating to chance if they aspire to get married.

Statistics show that more Singapore residents in their mid- to late-20s are staying single. They make up 70 per cent of the people in their age group in 2015, a sharp rise from 50 per cent about 15 years ago, according to the latest General Household Survey.

"The top reason cited by singles for not dating was not being able to find a partner. Hopefully, more singles will be proactive and take charge of their dating life, in a similar way when they pursue their career or other personal interests," said Dr Mathews.

Singles have become more open to online dating and dating apps, according to the study.

Around 43 per cent were comfortable with meeting a potential partner through online dating websites or apps, more than double from 19 per cent in 2012. Among singles who were dating or had dated seriously, 13 per cent met their partner through online channels, almost double from 7 per cent in 2012.

As more people go online to find love, industry players cautioned against using unaccredited dating apps which may harbour singles who are not looking for life partners. Ms Violet Lim, chief executive of Lunch Actually Group, said a delicate balance needs to be struck between making sure a mobile app is legitimate and ensuring the safety of users while not scaring users off by over-regulation.

Some singles, such as undergraduate Lim Jiamin, 21, prefer leaving dating to chance as being proactive seems "very forward" and does not reflect her character.

Student Melissa Mook, 21, also prefers to leave it to chance.

"I think for my age now, it is still okay to have such a mindset. However, if I am still single a few years down the road, I may adopt a more proactive approach."