

BRIDGET JONES GROWS UP

50 something singletons are living the same lifestyle

Far from simply being a stereotype for thirtysomething singledom, new research from Lloyds TSB 50+ shows that the 'Bridget Jones lifestyle' is also striking a cord with the footloose over 50s. While wine-swigging Bridget - constantly on a diet, smoking, looking for love and turning to her urban family of friends in times of trouble - represents how a single woman in her thirties spends her time and money, single fiftysomethings appear to be matching her drink for drink and diet for diet.

Jacqueline Smith, head of Lloyds TSB 50+ says: "The footloose fiftysomethings are clearly embracing singledom with the same enthusiasm as the younger generation and making the most of the freedom. A wild social life like Bridget's isn't cheap so they'll have to make sure they're in control of their finances, not just their weight!"

Friendships

Bridget notoriously has a group of close friends who help her spend her money on nights out drinking and trips away. Nearly a fifth (17 per cent) of thirtysomething singletons say they too have this type of close knit social circle. But, it is not just the younger generation who can turn to this 'urban family', however - one in ten (11 per cent) fiftysomethings say they had a similar 'surrogate family' of friends.

Both age groups were in agreement when it comes to long term friendships, with a third (34 per cent) saying that their best friends were the ones they had known the longest, while 13 per cent of both age groups saying that they found it easy to make new friends.

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Drinking and smoking

When it comes to drinking habits, age is not a defining factor. In both age groups, 40 per cent admit to regularly drinking wine and a quarter to regularly drinking spirits. However, it is the older generation who appear to be lighting up more as a quarter of fiftysomethings singletons surveyed smoked, compared with only a fifth of thirtysomethings.

Dieting

Fighting the flab is just as familiar a battle for the figure conscious fifty plus as it is for Bridget Jones' own age group. Only one in five (22 per cent) single people in their thirties say they never diet and only a quarter of their counterparts in their fifties say the same. In cross-generational uniformity, fourteen per cent of those single people surveyed in both age groups said they were constantly on a diet.

Looking for Love

Many singletons appear happy to be independent, not only in their finances but also in their life generally. In contrast to the desperation Bridget shows for a boyfriend, over a third (39 per cent) of thirtysomethings questioned claimed they were not looking for, or interested in, a relationship. Fiftysomething singletons appear to be even more uninterested with nearly half of them saying the same.

For those who are looking, however, it appears that finding a partner through friends is considered the best source of dates. A third of fiftysomethings have found or are looking for a partner through friends while nearly half (46 per cent) of single people in their thirties favour this way to find love.

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Jacqueline Smith continues: “Although many single people in their fifties are living life in the same way as those in their thirties it’s important for them to take account of the different financial pressures they face. They may not want to think about it, but they’re approaching retirement sooner so now is the time to make sure they are financially secure.”

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For more information

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Notes to Editors:

Research of 9,114 people was conducted by Tickbox in August 2004.