

Press Release

4 in 10 say starting a family when aged 30+ is "ideal"

Royal London survey reveals:

- 52% of adults in Ireland believe 25-30 is the 'ideal age' to start a family.
- Just 3% favour starting a family when aged between 36 and 40.
- Five times as many people in Munster, compared to Dublin, favour starting a family before the age of 25.

A survey from leading protection specialist Royal London has found that over half (52%) of adults in Ireland believe the ideal age to start a family is between 25 and 30 years of age, with 29.5 years being the ideal average age. This is one of the main findings of a survey of 1,000 adults from around the country, commissioned by Royal London and conducted by iReach, which examined popular attitudes around family and family finance.

Speaking of the findings, Sara Murphy of Royal London said,

"While everybody has their own story and ideal ages for important life events will be different for everyone, these findings aren't too surprising. Indeed, they align well with Eurostat data* published in 2019 which showed that the average age for women in Ireland to have their first child was 30. It is interesting that 36% of people surveyed think that waiting until you reach your 30s, and being between 31 and 35, might be the ideal scenario – with slightly more women (38%) than men (34%) favouring this approach."

Respondents to the Royal London survey were asked **Q**: If a person would like to have children, what do you think is the ideal age to start a family?

| | Total | Male | Female | 18 - 34 | 35 - 54 | 55+ | Dublin | Rest of Leinster | Munster | Connaught / Ulster |
|----------|-------|------|--------|---------|---------|-----|--------|---------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| Under 25 | 9% | 11% | 6% | 9% | 7% | 10% | 3% | 8% | 16% | 4% |
| 25 - 30 | 52% | 49% | 54% | 46% | 54% | 57% | 46% | 59% | 48% | 58% |
| 31 - 35 | 36% | 34% | 38% | 41% | 34% | 31% | 42% | 31% | 36% | 32% |
| 36 - 40 | 3% | 5% | 2% | 4% | 4% | 1% | 8% | 1% | 0% | 5% |
| 41 - 45 | 0% | 1% | 0% | 0% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 0% | 1% |
| 45+ | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |

According to figures from the CSO**, the average age of first-time mothers in Ireland has increased over the last 30 years by almost five years or 18% from 26 years and four months in 1988 to 31 years and one month in 2018.

Ms. Murphy commented,

"The CSO figures show a steady increase in the age that women are having their first child in Ireland. It looks like as each decade passes, the average age for first-time mothers increases by around a year.

"In the case for waiting to start a family, the survey points to a major fall-off after age 36 – with just 3% of people (women 2%: men 5%) overall saying it would be their ideal age to start a family. Of course, these are average findings and there's no doubt that many people's ideal age to start a family will be higher than age 36. Among the youngest cohort of respondents (18-34), there was a mixed attitude towards the ideal age, with 55% favouring starting a family by 30, and 45% after 30."

The Royal London survey revealed that at the other end of the spectrum, more men than women felt that having a family at a young age was a good idea. 11% of men compared to 6% of women thought starting a family under 25 would be the ideal scenario.

Ms. Murphy went on to say,

"There is also a significant difference between Dublin-based respondents and those in Munster, with five times more people in Munster (16%) than Dublin (3%) believing that starting a family under 25 is the ideal option."

ENDS

Sources

- * Eurostat, March 2019: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Fertility_statistics#Total_fertility_rate_and_age_of_women_at_birth_of_first_child
- ** CSO Births by State, Year and Statistic 2018, , 2008, 1998,1988 https://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Statire/SelectVarVal/Define.asp?maintable=VSA17&PLanguage=0

Notes to the Editor:

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