

PlentyOfFish

Safer Dating Report

January 2019







Introduction

A quarter (25%) of adults feel they don't know enough when it comes to dating safety.¹

The following Safer Dating Report has been compiled by dating app Plenty of Fish, to provide an in-depth analysis of the state of the nation's dating habits and give practical advice to British singles. Combining UK demographic data and independent omnibus research of 2,000 British adults, it investigates the UK's attitudes to modern dating as a whole, identifying the knowledge gaps of British daters and delving into gender and generational differences.

Half of the UK population is single, according to the Office for National Statistics.² The prevalence of online dating in the UK has risen over the years, with many first encounters happening online or via an app. Accompanied by the rise of social media, people are increasingly sharing their lives with their digital following.

However, Brits aren't harnessing the full power of technology when it comes to dating safely. Almost a quarter of UK residents have felt concerned for their safety on a date in the last 12 months, and nearly half of Brits have ignored their gut instinct and stayed on a date longer than they wanted to in order to avoid causing offence (49%).

This report aims to inform Brits about dating safety by providing practical guidance on how to stay safe on dates and make the most of the tools available to them. The report has been curated by former undercover police officer and cyber security expert Danni Brooke, in partnership with Plenty of Fish.

Danni is well known for her role on Channel 4's hit show *Hunted* and *Celebrity Hunted*, where she is part of the most successful team in the show's history (by securing the most captures). After spending 10 years in the Undercover Officer Unit at New Scotland Yard, Danni is one of the UK's leading covert specialists, and has been involved in some of the most dangerous and high profile undercover operations across the nation, leading to countless convictions.

Danni is a Co-Director for leading American cyber security firm, Fortalice Solutions.



The State of Play in the Dating Game

18 – 24 year olds feel the safest when dating, 18% more than any other age group

Less than half of the population think that typical date locations, such as pubs, bars and restaurants are currently doing enough to protect the safety of daters **(38%)**

24% of people have felt concerned for their own safety whilst on a date in the last 12 months

Before a date, women are twice as likely as men to tell a friend or family member where they are going, who they are going with and when

Half of Brits have felt compelled to stay on a date in order to appear polite, even when the date has made them feel uncomfortable **(49%)**

Only 20% of daters keep in regular contact with a friend or family member when meeting a date for the first time



Dating Safely

A quarter of Brits (25%) don't know how to stay safe when meeting a potential love interest for the first time, found the Safer Dating Report. Former undercover police officer and cyber security expert, Danni Brooke, outlines a series of practical steps singles should take to stay safe while dating.

Danni advises a quick check online to find out about your date.

“As with anything in life, we should always proceed with caution, but obviously without taking the fun away! Checks can be as simple as a google search, and should also include looking for your date's social media pages.



Danni Brooke
Former undercover police officer

“Over 83% of UK citizens have social media, so always check to see if your date has an online presence. A social media page saves you time and provides a wealth of knowledge about someone.”

Ask yourself whether their page or account looks brand new. This could be a warning sign. Also, do this person's friends or followers look legitimate? Checking your date's social pages can give you important information early on.

To help this search, **PIPL** is a great tool to check if usernames are linked to any other accounts, and to see how many followers/friends/pictures are on these other pages.

Also, consider an image reversal search. We all use our best pictures online, so if the person is authentic and has other social media platforms, their pictures will probably be used on those too, if the picture is genuine. If it isn't, you could find it in stock photos on Google for example.”

The Key Details - what Brits want to know about their date before meeting them

1	Full name	50%
2	Age	48%
3	Profile picture	45%
4	Relationship intention	33%
5	Mobile number	33%
6	Interests & hobbies	32%
7	Hearing their voice	29%
8	Profession	25%
9	Kids	24%
10	Social media handles	23%



Dating Safely continued

Key questions to ask a love interest:

Early questions should be around them and their lifestyle. After all, you are trying to get to know this person.

1. **What do they do for a living?**
2. **What area do they live in?**
3. **Have they got any children/pets?**
4. **What are their hobbies?**
5. **Have they used dating apps before?**

These questions will give you a good idea of someone quite quickly. Alternatively, their answers could signal red flags if they are inconsistent with your earlier checks.

When it comes to what personal information you should share, Danni adds:

“Sharing personal information with someone you barely know could result in a bad or unwelcome outcome. My advice is, don’t be too specific when you are just getting to know someone. An astonishing 27% of singles have disclosed their home address on a first date. Instead, just give an area, i.e. if you live London, just give the borough. How much you want to disclose and when to disclose it is your choice.”

One of the most important things is to let a friend or family member know where you are going, and who you are going with. 35% of British daters fail to do this when meeting someone for the first time, rising to 42% if they have met that person beforehand. Only 20% of daters keep in regular contact with a friend or family member when meeting a date for the first time.

If the date moves on to a different location, be sure to let someone know.

“There are location apps available such as Find my Friends and Google Maps which can help, by giving a live feed of your location. They are simple and many are completely free, yet 81% of daters have never used these apps. Make the most of the extra layer of security available. Should you be in a position where you don’t have immediate access to friends/family or you are away from home, post your location on social media, if you have a secure profile and feel comfortable doing so.”



The golden rule?
If something doesn't seem right, it probably isn't. Walk away.



Date Locate

Nearly a quarter (23%) of Brits have met a first date alone and in private, which former undercover officer, Danni Brooke, strongly advises against.

“23% is too high a percentage, and shows too many Brits are going on dates in secluded and private locations. Don't go to their house or invite them to yours, meet in a public place. Bars, coffee shops or restaurants are good. Many of these options will have CCTV cameras and you have the comfort of the staff being present.

My advice is to arrive early to get a feel for the place, and sit where you have the best vantage point so you can see what is going on at all times.”

“Check your phone signal strength, and connect to the Wi-Fi. This will give you the guarantee you can communicate with a friend or family member should you need to.”

“Going to a location you know is always a good idea. Going somewhere too far away from where you live, in an area you don't know as well, should be avoided.”

Best case scenario, the location has dating safety measures in place already. In fact, half (49%) of Brits admit they'd feel safer on a date if measures like 'Ask for Angela' were active in the venue. Introduced by the Lincolnshire County Council, 'Ask for Angela' encourages daters to use 'Angela' as a code word to alert staff if they feel unsafe on a date. However, if that's not possible, Danni Brook advises:

“If you feel unsafe on your date, seek out a member of staff at the location in private and let them know your concerns. Don't be embarrassed! You won't be the first person they have helped nor will you be the last!”





Dishonesty in Dating

When it comes to the date itself, Danni adds:

“Unfortunately, there are dishonest people around us and this includes the dating world. Try to repeat a question you have already asked your date, and see how they respond. If you feel your date is lying, these are the questions you should be asking yourself on your date:

- Does your date’s story and answers match up to the checks you carried out on them?
- What is their body language like? Are they fidgeting?
- Are they avoiding eye contact?
- How are they responding to your questions?
- Are they being vague when asked about themselves?
- And last but by no means least... What does your **INSTINCT** say?”

“Dating is supposed to be fun and enjoyed by all, but of course all daters should be aware and vigilant. 17% of Brits admit to having lied on a date, and 25% have done so while talking to someone online.”

A massive 88% of Brits say that trusting your intuition is one of the most important factors when it comes to dating. However, well-mannered Brits seem to be putting their own safety aside and prioritising politeness as nearly half (49%) have ignored this intuition and felt obliged to stay in the company of a date longer than they had wanted to, in order to avoid causing offence. Danni says:

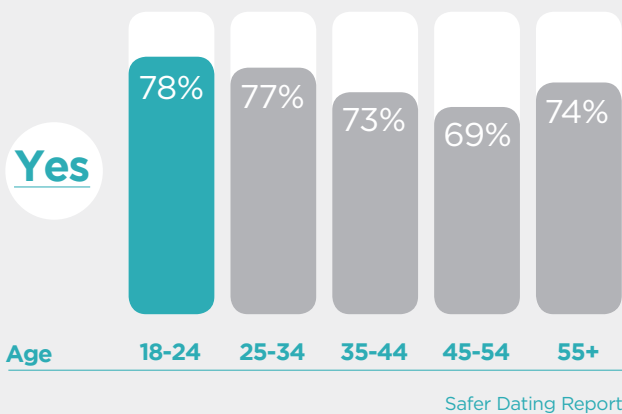
“If at any point you’re unhappy during your date and feel unsafe – leave! Simply say to your date you have to go and ensure you get a taxi, or text a friend or family member and ask them to meet you.”



Generation Sensible

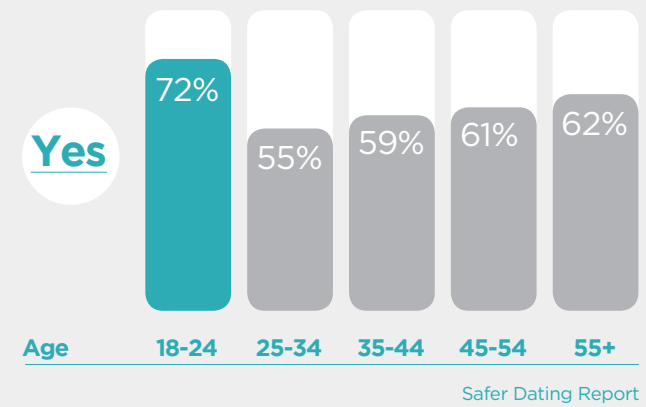
18 - 24 year olds are 'Generation Sensible' when it comes to dating. This age group is more likely to stay up to date with the conventional wisdom of safety in dating than any other generation, and they feel the safest of any age group.³

Do you make an active effort to stay informed about the current conventional wisdom around dating safety? Age group comparison

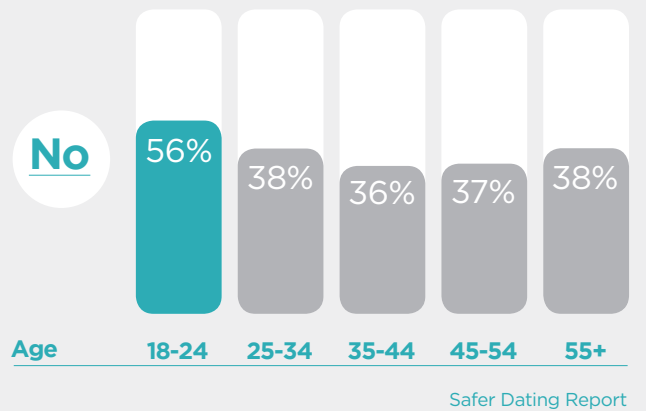


Do you think dating in your local area is safe?

Age group comparison



During the last 12 months, have you felt at all concerned for your own safety while on a date? Age group comparison



Over half of Generation Sensible have never felt at all concerned for their own safety while on a date, 18% more than any other age group. They're also more comfortable with their surroundings, feeling safer in their local area.

This could be down to Generation Sensible's aforementioned utilisation of dating safety measures. This age group is 10% more likely to have alerted a loved one to their whereabouts on a date than any other age group, and is twice as likely than 45- to 55-year-olds to be familiar with safety initiatives such as the Metropolitan Police's Ask for Angela.⁴ Other examples of dating safety measures include "fake call" apps, where daters can schedule a fake incoming call to their phone to give them an excuse to leave a date.



Gender: A Fundamental Difference

The Safer Dating Report found that attitudes towards safety greatly vary by gender.

Women are twice as likely as men to tell someone exactly where they will be, who they will be with and when they're going.

Prior to meeting a date in-person, **have you ever let others know the following?** (Men vs Women):

Where you are going for a date:

MEN
34%

WOMEN
68%

When you are meeting your date:

MEN
34%

WOMEN
69%

Who you are meeting for a date:

MEN
23%

WOMEN
54%

Safer Dating Report

It also takes women longer to feel comfortable with a potential love interest.

When speaking online, **how long does it take to hand out personal information to a love interest?** (Men vs Women):

Full name

MEN
9 days

WOMEN
15 days

Number

MEN
10 days

WOMEN
15 days

Social media

MEN
13 days

WOMEN
17 days

Home address

MEN
25 days

WOMEN
41 days

Safer Dating Report

Former undercover police officer Danni says “these stats show there is a prevailing attitude that men think they need to do less to keep themselves safe, but the reality is that dating safety is important for everyone.”



Leading The Way

The Safer Dating Report was compiled to support an industry-leading advisory council created by its parent company, Match Group. The Match Group Advisory Council brings together leading experts to help further maximize the safety of users on Match Group platforms and to support their campaigns to make the world a safer place for all.

For more information from Plenty of Fish about dating safety, please visit <https://www.pof.com/safety.aspx>

For more information about the Match Group Advisory Council (MGAC) please visit <https://mtch.com/mgac/>

Conclusion

Considering the findings of the Safer Dating Report, Danni Brooke reveals her Top 10 tips for staying safe on a date:

1. Do your background checks on your date (see Dating Safely chapter for more information)
2. Listen to your gut instinct
3. Always tell someone where you're going, and with who
4. Have the date at a known public place
5. If you aren't 100% comfortable - leave. Don't stay to be polite
6. Make sure you have battery life on your phone
7. Set up a coded call with your friend, even if you're ok
8. Get there early
9. Set up Find my Friends on your phone
10. Arrange your transport to and from the date ahead of time

‘Dating is supposed to be fun, so remember to enjoy yourself!’

References

1
Unless specified, all findings in this report from a survey of 2,000 British adults who have experienced both online and offline dating, conducted on behalf of Plenty of Fish by OnePoll in August 2018

2
Office for National Statistics. (2017) Population estimates by marital status and living arrangements, England and Wales: 2002 to 2016. Available from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletinspopulationestimatesbymaritalstatusandlivingarrangements/2002to2016>

3
BBC News, 2018. 'Generation Sensible' in five charts. Available from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/44880278>.

4
Metropolitan Police, 2018. "Ask for Angela. Available from: <https://www.met.police.uk/AskforAngela>

5
Plenty of Fish (POF), a Match Group (MTCH) company, is one of the largest global online dating companies with 150 million registered users. Available in 11 languages and more than 20 countries, POF has more conversations than any other dating app, with 2.5 million happening every day. Unlike any dating offering today, singles have more quality conversations on POF, which can lead to stronger connections, smarter matches and better dates. For more information, please visit <http://iac.com/brand/match-group>.