

Press Release: Monday, 31st October, 2005

“Sorry, I can’t make it in today ... I’m down with the love bug.”

- 25% of workers admitted to pulling a sickie because of LOVE
- People earning over £25,000 twice as likely to fall sick with the love bug
- 40% of seniors managers work longer hours due to a love split
- Scots least likely to take time off work when they fall in love (20%), but most likely to after a break-up (31%)

The weathermen are predicting a tough winter. Bird flu is on everyone’s mind ... and now there is news of a chronic disease that can hit at the heart of Britain’s workforce at any moment ... Lovesickness, a new survey reports, can account for the loss of at least two million working days a year.

A quarter of all single people claim to have taken time off work when struck by the love bug. With more than 8.5 million dating singles people in the UK, that represents a huge impact on the nation’s productivity.

The survey – commissioned by PARSHIP.co.uk, the UK’s first compatibility-based online dating service – shows that a quarter (23%) of Britain’s workforce have taken time off work when smitten with new love, while 27% have done so after a break-up. Figures are not available on whether lovesickness forced them to take to their beds (alone or in company).

London, Britain’s lonely hearts capital, with 33 per cent more singletons than anywhere else in Britain, is actually the city worst hit by the “in love” bug: nearly one third (29%) skived off work to spend time with a loved one, but only 24% phoned in sick when getting over a lost love. It’s the Scots who top the poll as the most likely to take time out to get over a relationship spilt, 31% admitted to phoning in sick.

The figures are especially worrying in the light of a recent CBI survey, which revealed that employers fear that 25 million working days were lost last year through staff pulling sickies, especially on a Monday or Friday, as people look forward to or recover from a heavy weekend.

It’s not just the underlings who are working the system either. More than a third of senior managers – the highest proportion for any working group – admitted to taking time out to get over an emotional split. The epidemic does have an upside for companies though: 40% of senior managers also claimed to have compensated for lost love by working longer hours.

There are darker implications too. Nearly a third of single people fell into clinical depression at the end of an affair. The workforce's long-term health stands to suffer too, since 17% of respondents took up smoking as the result of a love trauma. The good news is that 14% of people give up smoking when new love is in the air. Infatuation, and perhaps an attendant increase in cardiovascular exertion, can also lead to weight-loss (25% of respondents), although lost love caused 22% of men and 39% of women to drop some extra kilos. Bingeing after a break-up caused 19% of men and 31% of women to put them back on, however.

Dr Victoria Lukats, a psychiatrist with a special interest in relationships, commented:

“Although the odd days that some people may take off work during the early stages of new relationship may be put down to simply skiving, the same cannot be said for those people who are coming out of a relationship. A traumatic break-up would inevitably be stressful for anyone. Many people would experience symptoms similar to depression in the first days and weeks following a split. These might include sleeplessness, low mood, poor appetite, reduced concentration, low energy levels and low self-esteem. For most people this will get easier over a few days or weeks, but for others problems can persist longer than this, developing into an episode of clinical depression. It's understandable that anyone experiencing such high stress levels and difficulty in concentrating would need to take time off work.”

All these ups and downs can't be conducive to a stable working life. What's more, nearly a third of single people are caught in a vicious circle which ensures that the love bug comes around with far more frequency than the annual report: on the rebound from a split, nearly a third (31%) of respondents have gone out with someone completely unsuitable.

It seems that HR departments had better get used to more phone calls punctuated by dramatic coughs, splutters and moans. Alternatively, they could always recommend the services of PARSHIP.co.uk to their staff. The service's unique matching process, based on detailed psychometric testing, has been proven to help men and women from all walks of life find a long-term partner who really is right for them. It could do wonders for the UK economy.

Gone out with someone completely unsuitable on the rebound

31% in total

38% of women (25% men)

37% senior/mid mgr

38% admin/clerical

25% blue collar

<p>IN Love</p> <p>Taken days off work 23% in total 32% of people in casual relationship 28% of 25-44 32% of £25K+ 19% in Scotland 29% in London/SE 31% senior/mid mgr 16% trade/blue collar</p> <p>Stopped smoking 14%</p> <p>Lost weight 25% in total 32% of people in casual relationship 18% men vs 31% women</p> <p>Gained weight 15% in total 32% of people in casual relationship 10% men vs 21% women</p>	<p>OUT of love</p> <p>Taken days off work 27% in total 41% of people in casual relationship 35% of 25-44 35% of £25K+ 31% in Scotland 24% in London/SE 34% senior/mid mgr 30% trade/blue collar</p> <p>Worked longer hours 30% total 40% senior/mid mgr</p> <p>Started smoking 17%</p> <p>Become clinically depressed 29% Total 37% of casual 38% divorced</p> <p>Lost weight 30% in total 22% men vs 39% women</p> <p>Gained weight 25% in total 19% men vs 31% women</p> <p>Gone out with someone completely unsuitable on the rebound (vicious circle!) 31% in total 38% of women (25% men) 37% senior/mid mgr 38% admin/clerical 25% blue collar</p>
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