

Singled out

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New figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) have revealed that two in five homes in England will be occupied by only one person within the next 20 years...

How many of you would go it alone if you could afford it? No more inconsiderate flatmates or fussy friends to come home to. Having said that, as much as we like our own space, most of us either want to live with someone for the extra cash, if not for the companionship/love/help with washing up.

Back in 2002, it was discovered that, for the first time, more people were living alone, or as a single parent, than as a traditional family unit.

The study of how family life has changed since the 1960s - carried out by The Future Foundation - found that living alone had become the norm in the UK. A little over 40 years ago the traditional family unit household made up half of all households in the UK.

Now, a new report published today, Tuesday March 17th, 2009, has shown that this trend of being 'alone together' has continued and a whopping four in ten houses in England will soon have just one occupant.

Three years ago, the number of single occupancy homes sat at 6.8 million which meant that 13 per cent of people were living alone. This new ONS report predicts that, by 2031, this figure could rise to 10.9 million people, or 18 per cent of the population.

A combination of population growth and a higher number of people living alone will push the number of households up by 6.3 million, to 27.8 million, compared with three years ago.

As the number of people living alone is ever increasing, the number of homes needed will rise accordingly and the housing market needs to get moving again to fulfill the demand.

A Spokesman for the National Housing Federation said, "The increase in single-occupancy properties has naturally had an impact on housing supply."

One factor which is behind the increase in single-living is the break-up of relationships. Research indicates that by 2011, more than 60 per cent of marriages will end in divorce.

More elderly people are also living alone after losing their partners.

Picture by dearoot