

LELO

LELO Economics
of orgasm report 2026:

The productivity impact of young people living at home



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- **"Erotic inequity" arises where structural factors like poverty or lack of education hinder sexual well-being.**
- **Living at home, whether with parents or in a shared multi-generational household, significantly shapes the frequency, and nature of intimacy in relationships. It often introduces logistical constraints that require intentional planning to maintain physical and emotional closeness, while also creating opportunities to strengthen trust.**
- **Orgasm is not purely biological; it is a deeply socialized experience.**
- **Addressing these gaps requires recognizing sexual pleasure as a component of overall health influenced by social conditions.**

For too long, conversations about sexual well-being have been confined to the realms of biology and personal preference. However, the ability to pursue a fulfilling sexual life—including the experience of orgasm—is not purely biological. It is a deeply socialized and economic experience.

This report, *The Economics of Orgasm*, fundamentally shifts the dialogue by asserting the new concept of erotic Inequity.

Erotic Inequity arises where systemic, structural factors—such as economic precarity, soaring housing costs, and the resulting necessity for young adults to delay independence—hinder fundamental human well-being and, specifically, sexual health.

Driven by a significant and rising percentage of young people in the US and EU living at home well into their late twenties and thirties, this report explores the direct and indirect consequences of a generation forced to navigate intimacy, relationships, and self-expression under the logistical and psychological constraints of a multi-generational household.



Background:

The Structural Roots of Delayed Independence

The ability of young adults to establish financial and residential independence is a critical marker of societal health. Over the last two decades, a significant and rising percentage of young people across the US and EU have been forced to delay this milestone, remaining in multi-generational households well into their late twenties and thirties. This phenomenon is the foundation for the structural pressures that give rise to erotic inequity.

Data across Western nations highlights the scale of this shift:

- **Prevalence:** Generally, between 18-23% of 25-34 year olds in the US and EU live with their parents. This rate dramatically increases for younger cohorts, with over half of 18-24 year olds in the US still living at home.
- **Regional Variance:** The trend is particularly pronounced in high-cost or culturally traditional regions, with countries like Croatia and Italy reporting much higher percentages, and many there delaying leaving home into their 30s. Conversely, countries like Denmark, with strong social safety nets and low student debt, have significantly lower rates of young adults living at home, a factor that may contribute to their different sexual health outcomes - apparent lack of "sex recession" among their Gen Z population (*).
- **Gender Gap:** A distinct international trend shows that young men are more likely to live with parents than young women, particularly in the 20-34 age bracket.

Main Drivers for Delayed Independence

The primary drivers for this living arrangement are complex and largely structural, moving beyond individual choice:

- **Housing Affordability & Debt:** High rent and soaring property prices, compounded by crushing student loan debt, are the major forces making independent living financially untenable for many.
- **Economic Precarity:** Stagnant wages, job market chaos following economic shocks like the pandemic, and the need to manage general financial instability compel young people to leverage the family home as a critical financial safety net.
- **Cultural Shifts:** While necessity is the main driver, the stigma associated with living at home has decreased, allowing it to become a more accepted and often deliberate financial strategy.

The constraints imposed by these living arrangements—including a profound lack of privacy, diminished autonomy, and the constant renegotiation of parent-child boundaries—create the context for the report's core investigation: the link between this structural economic problem and its subsequent toll on the physical, mental, and sexual well-being of a generation, ultimately posing an unseen drag on economic potential.

*<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2026/feb/19/denmark-no-sex-recession>

Survey highlights (overall)

The LELO survey reveals that for young adults living at home, financial necessity is the primary driver, but the cost extends into profound psychological, emotional, and relational strain.

Key Findings:

- **Financial Drivers are Primary:** The main motivations for living at home are financial: Saving Money (43.96%) and the high cost of **Housing (31.34%)** due to rising rents and house prices.
- **Significant Psychological Toll:** A vast majority feel intense negative societal pressure, reporting a **sense of failure (79.03%)**, **stigma (77.86%)**, or **general pressure (82.81%)** due to not living independently. Over half experience feelings of **stress (52.47%)** and **feeling stuck (52%)**.
- **Conflict and "Emotional Tax":** While not constant, a significant minority experience frequent conflict or an "emotional tax"—being treated like a teenager—with **15.94%** reporting it "often" and **6.31%** reporting it "always."
- **Negative Impact on Intimacy:** The lack of independence has a direct, negative consequence on personal relationships:
 - a. **Romantic Relationships: 72.94%** agree their situation makes pursuing romantic relationships more challenging.
 - b. **Sex Life: 57.33%** report a negative impact on their sex life, affecting frequency (37.99%) and quality (29.94%).
 - c. **Intimacy Challenges:** The main challenges are a Lack of Privacy (39.26%) and Fear of being heard (34.34%).
- **Resulting Mental Strain:** The cumulative stress leads to poor mental health outcomes, with many feeling **sexually frustrated (29.78%)** and reporting negative effects on their **behavior/efficiency at work (28.55%)** and **sleep (27.10%)**.
- **Arrangement Outlook:** While nearly half view the arrangement as **Temporary (45.17%)**, a substantial portion see it as a **Longer-term arrangement for financial benefit (26.60%)** or an **Indefinite living situation (20.96%)**.



The research was conducted by Censuswide, among a sample of 7000 in total. 1000n aged 18-40 who are living with parents in each of UK, USA, France, Spain, Sweden, Italy and Mexico. The data was collected between 30.01.2026 - 09.02.2026. Censuswide is a member of the Market Research Society (MRS) and the British Polling Council (BPC), and a signatory of the Global Data Quality Pledge. Censuswide adheres to the MRS Code of Conduct and ESOMAR principles.

About our expert:



FINANCIAL JOURNALIST

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Rosanna Spero has been a financial journalist for more than 30 years, working on a range of publications, including the Daily Mail, Independent, Daily Mirror and House Beautiful. She has also written a book called Every Woman's Guide to Personal Finance and has worked with brands such as Aviva, AXA, AA, Allianz, RBS, Standard Life, BMW, RBS, Tesco, Zurich and Healthspan.

LELO report: The productivity impact of young people living at home

Sex makes us happy, and in a world where the news is so often depressing, that can only be a good thing. But it is not just world politics which are decreasing peoples' happiness, their living arrangements are also having a profound effect.

According to the UK's Office of National Statistics (1) some 28% of the 12.9 million young adults aged 20-34 lived with parents in 2024, accounting for 34% of men and 22% of women in that age bracket. In the US, the Pew Research Centre (2) found 18% of young adults ages 25-34 were still in their parent's home in 2023. And again young men, at 20%, were less likely than young women, at 15%, to have flown the nest.

In Europe, according to Eurostat (3) the picture is more mixed. In 2024, in Croatia, Slovakia, Italy, Spain, Poland, Greece and Ireland, more than 80% of 16-29 year olds lived with their parents. While in Sweden, Denmark and Finland, fewer than 40% of 20-24 year olds lived in the family home, and for those aged 25-29, only 4.3% lived with their parents in Denmark, 6.4% in Finland and 12.1% in Sweden.

While still living at home as a young adult is not a bad thing in itself, it can have a profound impact on people's mental well being. Young adults living at home often report feeling of stress, worthlessness and being stuck. This deteriorating mental health leads to reduced happiness, which adds a financial strain on businesses and government through increased absenteeism, inability to work because of mental health issues and reduced productivity in the workplace. In addition, parents whose adult children live with them also suffer. They are potentially unable to downsize their homes to release cash and have higher living costs through extra bills and food consumption.

As a counter balance however young people often appreciated the safety net, both emotional and financial, they were afforded by living with their parents. It often allowed them to save and formed deeper family ties. And for parents, they had help and companionship as they aged.

Living with parents has wider economic implications. A 2019 paper from the US Federal Reserve estimated young adults who move out of their parents' home would spend about \$13,000 more per year on items such as housing, food and transportation (4). In the UK, the Institute for Fiscal Studies revealed in its 2025 report, *Hotel of Mum and Dad? Co-residence with parents among those aged 25–34 saved an average £560 a month on housing costs alone by living in the family home* (5). On top of this, another recent survey revealed young adults aged 18-25 cost their parents around £280 per month through living at home. Those aged over 25 cost a slightly lower amount around £271 per month (6).

The other huge drawback of these living arrangements is a lack of privacy when intimacy with their partner, or alone is desired by a young adult. There is nothing worse than the thought of a family member hearing you gasp with pleasure! This again compounds the unhappiness felt by young people as orgasms are clinically proven to make people happier.

Taking this a stage further, happiness is proven to make you more productive. A report, *Happiness and Productivity*, co-authored by Andrew Oswald, Professor of Economics at the University of Warwick (7) revealed respondents were between 10-12% more productive after having their happiness increased, and some saw a 20% spike in productivity.

LELO has confirmed this happiness/productivity link in a number of exclusive surveys. In 2018, a UK based survey revealed 94% of respondents said they were more productive when they were happy, and almost half claimed to be less happy if they hadn't had an orgasm or sex for a few days. For three quarters of them, this translated into reduced productivity. Then in 2023, LELO asked a similar question of

respondents living in the UK, US and a number of European countries and found one in 10 people across all countries felt they were a staggering 71-80% more productive when they were happy, with the same number putting the increase at a marginally more modest 51-60%. More than seven in 10 also believed they were less productive generally when they were stressed.

Eight in ten respondents felt relaxed and less stressed after having an orgasm with two in ten people saying these feelings lasted for up to 24 hours after, with one in 20 feeling the benefits up to two days later.

If an orgasm-derived boost in happiness could be translated into the workplace, a global 10% increase could translate to an increase in GDP of an incredible US\$11.72 trillion across the globe from the 2025 figure of US\$117.2 trillion. If the 20% could be sustained, that would add US\$23.44 trillion to the global economy.



So how can an orgasm help?

How sex improves productivity:

When we orgasm our brains become flooded with dopamine, and in the period immediately after oxytocin, prolactin and endorphins. These hormones leave us feeling more relaxed and bonded with our partners or the people around us. Since these feelings can last for long periods of time, the benefits are felt when we go to work, where the happiness translates to increased productivity.

Dopamine: A chemical messenger in the brain, technically known as a neurotransmitter, which is responsible for sending signals from the central nervous system. It is what allows information to be passed from one neurone to another. Dopamine is the central chemical in our brain regulating how we perceive and experience pleasure.

Endorphins: These are also neurotransmitters and are responsible for our feelings of pleasure. The majority of our emotions are processed by our brain's limbic system, which is rich with opioid receptors. When endorphins reach the opioid receptors we experience pleasure and a sense of satisfaction.

Oxytocin: Known as the love hormone as it is released when we hug and have intimate contact. It makes us feel more trusting and connected to our partners and the people around us. Oxytocin is secreted by the posterior lobe of the pituitary gland, a pea-sized structure at the base of the brain.

Prolactin: This hormone works as a dopamine inhibitor, curtailing our sex drives once we orgasm and providing us with feelings of satiation and sexual gratification. The happy feelings caused by our orgasms are carried along by prolactin.

Productivity

Why is productivity so important? It is essentially the efficiency in which resources are transformed into goods, by a company or an economy. Higher productivity means greater output from the same amount of input. Increasing productivity leads to better living standards through cheaper goods and services and potentially higher wages as businesses become more profitable.

The problem is productivity has been falling across the globe for decades, and no one seems to have found the answer to this 'productivity puzzle'. LELO believes it is a lack of sexual fulfilment and the happiness it brings which is making people less productive, which is why it believes the issue of societal happiness must be at the forefront of Governments' minds when the design policy.

And it's not just LELO that believes this. "Happy people are more energetic, can concentrate better and have more energy for additional tasks and dealing with setbacks,' according to the 2025 report Happiness and productivity: a research synthesis using an online findings archive, by Yizhen Fang, Ruut Veenhoven & Martijn J. Burger (8).

The authors go on to conclude: "In sum, happiness goes typically together with productivity at work as measured with objective indicators, both at the micro level of individuals and the macro level of nations. Moreover, earlier happiness predicts later productivity."

Bring the equation of happiness equalling higher productivity back to orgasms, a recent ZipHealth study revealed workers in the US who had sex before work in the morning reported the highest levels of

productivity (71%), task completion (70%), focus (58%), and motivation (57%). In addition almost one in three said having a fulfilling sex life had a positive impact on their income or career progression. (9)

Further Gallup's State of the Global Workplace 2025 report revealed global employee engagement fell in 2024, costing the world economy US\$438 billion in lost productivity. Less than a third of employees under 35 said they were thriving, but if everyone was fully engaged and thriving this would add US\$9.6 trillion according to the data, a 9% increase in global GDP. Broken down, only 22% of employees under the age of 35 felt engaged by their work, and one in four young employees felt sadness and loneliness for most of the previous day (10).

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD):

Productivity is commonly defined as a ratio between the volume of output and the volume of inputs. In other words, it measures how efficiently production inputs, such as labour and capital, are being used in an economy to produce a given level of output. Productivity is a key source of economic growth and living standards and, as such, internationally comparable indicators of productivity are central for assessing economic performance.

Labour productivity, measured as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour worked or per worker, is one of the most widely available measures of productivity.

But the statistics don't give the whole picture about how the world's young feel about living in their family home into adulthood. So LELO decided to find out exactly how young people are feeling. It surveyed 7,000 people aged 18-40 still living with their parents, with respondents from France, Italy, Mexico, Spain, Sweden, the UK and the US.



LELO wanted to know if this lack of independence was stifling their love lives, their feelings of self worth and ultimately their ability to be fully contributing members of their societies.

Firstly, why are young adults still living at home? Unsurprisingly the desire to save money to buy a first property was cited by 44% of all respondents, equally split between those living in urban and rural areas. Across the globe more than three in 10 also cited rising rents and housing costs, while the emotional support and the convenience of living at home, were appreciated by more than a quarter of respondents. Stagnant wages, at 24%, and general financial instability, at 19%, played heavily on the minds of young people. However more than one in 10 (13%) claimed they always planned to stay in or return to their family home.

- In France, 43% of respondents living with their parents were doing so to save for a deposit, 19% cited rent and house price rises, 18% emotional support and convenience and 7% an economic shock such as the Pandemic. 16% always planned to remain or return home.
- In Italy, 38% of respondents living with their parents were doing so to save for a deposit, 26% cited rent and house price rises, 25% emotional support and convenience and 9% an economic shock such as the Pandemic. 10% always planned to remain or return home.

- In Mexico, 44% of respondents living with their parents were doing so to save for a deposit, 32% cited rent and house price rises, 36% emotional support and convenience and 15% an economic shock such as the Pandemic. 13% always planned to remain or return home.
- In Spain, 50% of respondents living with their parents were doing so to save for a deposit, 48% cited rent and house price rises, 20% emotional support and convenience and 16% an economic shock such as the Pandemic. 6% always planned to remain or return home.
- In Sweden, 31% of respondents living with their parents were doing so to save for a deposit, 25% cited rent and house price rises, 30% emotional support and convenience and 22% an economic shock such as the Pandemic. 18% always planned to remain or return home.
- In the UK, 53% of respondents living with their parents were doing so to save for a deposit, 35% cited rent and house price rises, 27% emotional support and convenience and 11% an economic shock such as the Pandemic. 14% always planned to remain or return home.
- In the US, 50% of respondents living with their parents were doing so to save for a deposit, 34% cited rent and house price rises, 29% emotional support and convenience, 14% an economic shock such as the Pandemic. 16% always planned to remain or return home.

Regardless of the reason they are at home, how did this make them feel? Over half of all respondents said it made them feel stressed and stuck in their situation, with almost half saying their living situation made them stressed. On the flip side however a quarter felt no stress or tension from the situation and 23% didn't feel stuck. Drilling down further, 45% felt their situation was only temporary. While just over a quarter said it was a financial arrangement for the longer term and 21% an indefinite living arrangement.

- In France, 49% felt stressed by the situation, 27% did not, 45% felt stuck against 28% who did not and 48% experienced tension against 26% who did not.
- In Italy, 53% felt stressed by the situation, 21% did not, 46% felt stuck against 16% who did not and 51% experienced tension against 22% who did not.
- In Mexico, 47% felt stressed by the situation, 27% did not, 46% felt stuck against 28% who did not and 43% experienced tension against 29% who did not.
- In Spain, 54% felt stressed by the situation, 24% did not, 61% felt stuck against 18% who did not and 48% experienced tension against 27% who did not.
- In Sweden, 47% felt stressed by the situation, 27% did not, 49% felt stuck against 30% who did not and 45% experienced tension against 27% who did not.
- In the UK, 56% felt stressed by the situation, 23% did not, 56% felt stuck against 22% who did not and 52% experienced tension against 26% who did not.
- In the US, 62% felt stressed by the situation, 19% did not, 61% felt stuck against 17% who did not and 55% experienced tension against 22% who did not.

Numerous reports have revealed being forced to live at home is impacting young adults' mental health, which then impacts society as a whole as they are less able to form relationships, have a thriving social life and flourish in the workplace.

An Australian study, Parental co-residence and young adults' mental health found a strong negative association between living in the family home and mental health. The report's authors, Amber Howard, Ang Li and Rebecca Bentley, revealed the mental health of young adults living at home was an estimated 4.03 points lower than those with their own household. However there were nuances. In the youngest (18-21) age group, living with parents was positively associated with mental health. Amongst the oldest age groups (30-34), living at home was significantly negatively associated with mental health, with a decrease of approximately 1 point in mental health between each age category. (11)



LELO's own research confirms this. We asked respondents whether perceived societal pressure to live independently made them feel a sense of failure, which four in five agreed with, stigmatised, felt by more than three quarters and pressurised by 83%. These feelings increased with age, with 82% of 30-40 years olds feeling they had failed, against 78% of 18-29 year olds and 81% versus 77% feeling stigmatised.

- In France 78% felt pressurised, 22% did not, 70% felt stigmatised, 30% did not and 74% felt a sense of failure, 26% did not.
- In Italy, 82% felt pressurised, 18% did not, 78% felt stigmatised, 22% did not and 77% felt a sense of failure, 23% did not.
- In Mexico, 80% felt pressurised, 20% did not, 75% felt stigmatised, 25% did not and 76% felt a sense of failure, 24% did not.
- In Spain, 83% felt pressurised, 17% did not, 78% felt stigmatised, 22% did not and 78% felt a sense of failure, 22% did not.
- In Sweden 89% felt pressurised, 11% did not, 87% felt stigmatised, 13% did not and 85% felt a sense of failure, 15% did not.
- In the UK, 84% felt pressurised, 16% did not, 79% felt stigmatised, 21% did not and 82% felt a sense of failure, 18% did not.
- In the US, 83% felt pressurised, 17% did not, 78% felt stigmatised, 22% did not and 82% felt a sense of failure, 18% did not.



Respondents were then asked if living at home had a negative impact on both their social lives and building romantic relationships. The answer was an overwhelmingly yes across the board. Globally, 73% of young people found living at home a barrier to forming romantic relationships and 63% to building a social life. Broken down, 77% of men and 70% of women felt it stifled their potential love lives and 65% and 61% respectively their social lives.

- In France, 67% of young adults found romance more challenging because
 - of their living situation and 59% their social life
- In Italy, 73% of young adults found romance more challenging because of their living situation and 60% their social life
- In Mexico, 64% of young adults found romance more challenging because of their living situation and 60% their social life
- * In Spain, 75% of young adults found romance more challenging because of their living situation and 49% their social life
- * In Sweden, 84% of young adults found romance more challenging because of their living situation and 78% their social life
- * In the UK, 74% of young adults found romance more challenging because of their living situation and 65% their social life
- * In the US, 73% of young adults found romance more challenging because of their living situation and 70% their social life

According to the World Happiness Report 2025 (12), the link between social connection and wellbeing is observed both at a national level and for individuals. On average, young adults who report higher levels of both quantity and quality of social connection tend to feel more satisfied with their lives. Individuals who reported having at least one person they are close to are 16% more satisfied than individuals with no close contacts.

The authors, Mariano Rojas, Lina Martinez, Geraldo Leyva Parra, Roberto Castellanos and Margarita Tarragona report “We observe a significant positive association between the quality of social connection and wellbeing. A 1-point increase in perceived social support is associated with a 0.29-point increase in life satisfaction. Data from all 22 countries and regions in the Global Flourishing Study data showed a positive association, although the size of this positive association varied slightly across countries. When these two factors of social connection are entered in the same model to predict life satisfaction, both the quantity and quality of social connection were significantly associated with life satisfaction, with comparable effect sizes. This result indicates that the quantity and quality of social connection independently predict life satisfaction.”

Drilling down further, the LELO survey asked what negative impacts their living situation had on their sex lives. Globally 38% said it had a negative impact on the frequency and 30% on the quality. More men at 61% felt it had an overall negative impact than women at 54%, but these feelings increased for both sexes as they got older, with six in ten of 30-40 years negatively impacted both on quantity and quality, against 56% of 19-29 year olds.

- In France, 33% were impacted in the frequency and 30% in the quality of their sexual encounters.
- In Italy, 39% were impacted in the frequency and 31% in the quality of their sexual encounters.
- In Mexico, 33% were impacted in the frequency and 21% in the quality of their sexual encounters.
- In Spain, 45% were impacted in the frequency and 27% in the quality of their sexual encounters.
- In Sweden, 40% were impacted in the frequency and 37% in the quality of their sexual encounters.
- In the UK, 39% were impacted in the frequency and 33% in the quality of their sexual encounters.
- In the US, 37% were impacted in the frequency and 30% in the quality of their sexual encounters.

Why are young adults experiencing these problems? Globally two in five blame lack of privacy for the paucity of their love lives. More than a third the fear of being heard and almost three in ten an inability to relax and enjoy the act. 19% also faced parental refusal to allow them to have sex under their roof and 18% a partner who didn't feel comfortable in the situation.

These restrictions brought with them a gamut of emotions. Overall, three in ten respondents said they felt sexual frustration, with an equal number feeling deep dissatisfaction and frustration with the uncontrollable circumstance they found themselves in. Feelings of shame were felt by 19%, failure, felt by 23% and depression by 20%. 21% were more pragmatic, saying the benefits of living at home outweighed the inconvenience of having to plan intimate moments.



- In France, 23% were sexually frustrated, 25% were dissatisfied with their situation, 20% felt a failure, 18% were depressed and 22% felt shamed by others.
- In Italy, 20% were sexually frustrated, 28% were dissatisfied with their situation, 14% felt a failure, 16% were depressed and 11% felt shamed by others.
- In Mexico, 32% were sexually frustrated, 30% were dissatisfied with their situation, 20% felt a failure, 20% were depressed and 18% felt shamed by others.
- In Spain, 31% were sexually frustrated, 33% were dissatisfied with their situation, 25% felt a failure, 14% were depressed and 20% felt shamed by others.
- In Sweden, 26% were sexually frustrated, 23% were dissatisfied with their situation, 30% felt a failure, 22% were depressed and 24% felt shamed by others.
- In the UK, 39% were sexually frustrated, 29% were dissatisfied with their situation, 21% felt a failure, 17% were depressed and 16% felt shamed by others.
- In the US, 39% were sexually frustrated, 37% were dissatisfied with their situation, 30% felt a failure, 32% were depressed and 21% felt shamed by others.

This lack of sexual intimacy and orgasms has profound consequences for society as well as the individual. Already often feeling stigmatised and a failure for living at home in the first place, these feelings of unhappiness and frustration manifest themselves as more days off sick from work, negative thoughts and lack of sleep. In turn this all impacts on productivity and the financial health of the country they live in.

LELO respondents were asked what impact their stunted love lives had on other areas of their lives.

Overall almost three in ten said it had had a negative effect on their life. Moreover, 28% said they had had no meaningful connections, 27% were not sleeping well, more than one in five had taken more sick days and 17% had started therapy. Only one in five said it had had no impact on them.

- In France, 26% felt negative, 23% had no meaningful connections, 23% bad sleep, 20% more sick days and 17% had started seeing a therapist.
- In Italy, 22% felt negative, 25% had no meaningful connections, 23% bad sleep, 18% more sick days and 13% had started seeing a therapist.
- In Mexico, 28% felt negative, 32% had no meaningful connections, 25% bad sleep, 18% more sick days and 17% had started seeing a therapist.
- In Spain, 25% felt negative, 23% had no meaningful connections, 26% bad sleep, 16% more sick days and 12% had started seeing a therapist.
- In Sweden, 28% felt negative, 28% had no meaningful connections, 31% bad sleep, 27% more sick days and 23% had started seeing a therapist.
- In the UK, 32% felt negative, 31% had no meaningful connections, 27% bad sleep, 23% more sick days and 16% had started seeing a therapist.
- In the US, 39% felt negative, 37% had no meaningful connections, 34% bad seep, 30% more sick days and 24% had started seeing a therapist.

The link has been proven between unhappiness and stress and reduced productivity in numerous surveys. For example, a 2024 Deloitte report found poor mental health cost UK employers £51 billion a year, with presenteeism, where unhappy employees work in spite of illness but not at full capacity, costing £24 billion annually (13). Half of parents also said worry about the mental health of their children impacted their performance at work, increasing the economic ramifications of adult children being stuck in the family home.

Globally, the World Health Organisation estimates 12 billion working days are lost every year to depression and anxiety at a cost of US\$1 trillion per year in lost productivity (14).

So what can be done to help the world's young adults move out of their family home, increase their sexual happiness, improve their mental health and boost global productivity?

The starting point is to make available more affordable housing to young people, both as rental and properties to purchase. Governments across the world claim to be committed to building more affordable housing, but if the UK is anything to go by, this is unlikely to happen any time soon. The UK Government, when elected in 2024, promised to build 1.5 million new affordable homes over the parliamentary term of five years. But according to a report by the National Housing Federation (NHF), the Home Builders Federation (HBF) and Savills they will miss this target by almost 500,000 - around a third (15).

Both young adults and their parents have to set clear boundaries for living. In LELO's survey 35% of all respondents said they sometimes argued with their parents about setting boundaries, 16% said they often argued and 25% rarely. However difficult conversations around intimacy need to be had, for both children and parents to have fulfilling love lives.

As importantly, employers need to be more tuned into the happiness of their employees and recognise the productivity boost happiness brings to the workplace. Making therapy easily available and promoting the concept of self-care are all important areas for investment to promote a content workforce.

Source:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/families/datasets/youngadultslivingwiththeirparents>

<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/04/17/the-shares-of-young-adults-living-with-parents-vary-widely-across-the-us/> AND <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/index.shtml>

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Young_people_-_housing_conditions

<https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/notes/feds-notes/young-adults-spending-in-and-out-of-their-parents-home-20190205.html>

<https://ifs.org.uk/sites/default/files/2025-01/Hotel-of-Mum-and-Dad-IFS-Report.pdf>

<https://www.comparethemarket.com/loans/content/the-cost-of-adult-children-living-at-home/#:~:text=home or not.,How much do children living at home cost in different,charge their children any rent.>

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<https://www.worldhappiness.report/ed/2025/connecting-with-others-how-social-connections-improve-the-happiness-of-young-adults/#regional-patterns-of-social-connection>

<https://www.deloitte.com/uk/en/about/press-room/poor-mental-health-costs-uk-employers-51-billion-a-year-for-employees.html>

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-at-work>

<https://www.housing.org.uk/news-and-blogs/news/government-to-miss-1.5m-homes-target-by-half-a-million-homes-without-funding-and-policy-intervention-industry-bodies-warn/>

The influence of living at home with parents is a complex socioeconomic phenomenon with both positive and negative effects on a country's economic metrics.

It is not easy to calculate the precise, direct influence of adults living at home on a country's GDP because things like e.g. unpaid household work is not included in standard GDP calculations. However, this phenomenon can influence GDP through changes in consumer spending and labor market dynamics.

There are also consequences arising from this phenomenon that affect a country in a not so straightforward way. Living with parents significantly impacts intimate life by creating logistical challenges, fostering feelings of immaturity or compromised autonomy, and often requiring “creative” solutions to maintain an active sex life. This in turn creates a strain on mental health and consequently the health system. Mental health significantly impacts GDP through lost productivity, increased healthcare costs, and reduced labor force participation, with OECD estimates showing mental health issues costing up to 4% of GDP in some nations due to absenteeism, presenteeism, and disability claims; while conversely, investing in mental health interventions can unlock trillions in potential economic growth, showing a strong reciprocal link between societal well-being and economic output.

CONCLUSION

LELO findings establish a crucial, yet overlooked, link: the personal toll of financial instability and resulting lack of private, autonomous living space is not limited to individual mental health strain, but has a calculable macroeconomic impact. By analyzing survey data alongside economic indicators, this report establishes how the inability of young people to live on their own, and the consequently diminished physical and mental well-being, serves as an unseen drag on a country's economic potential (GDP).

It is time to recognize sexual pleasure and autonomy as a legitimate component of overall health and societal flourishing, one that is inextricably influenced by social and economic conditions. This report is a call to action, providing a comprehensive, data-driven analysis to inform public policy, challenge conventional thinking, and unlock the full economic and human potential of a liberated society.

thank you



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