# Love Island’s evolving influence reshapes UK culture from beauty trends to mental health



In 2015, a group of twelve singles entered a Majorcan villa, embarking on a journey of love and competition that has since reshaped UK culture. Love Island, now entering its twelfth series, has evolved into a cultural phenomenon that transcends mere entertainment, as psychologist Dr Louise Goddard-Crawley notes, remarking that the show has fundamentally altered our perceptions of love, attraction, and even language itself. The series has normalised discussions around cosmetic enhancements, sexual empowerment, and contemporary relationship dynamics, marking a significant shift in societal attitudes.

One area where Love Island's impact is particularly evident is in fashion. The evolution of swimwear trends showcased on the show has led to dramatic changes in consumer behaviour. Flashy thong bikinis dominated the beach scene in 2018, prompting an increased sales surge as viewers rushed to emulate their favourite contestants. As fashion editor Clemmie Fieldsend points out, the anticipation surrounding each new series has retailers clamouring to adopt the "Love Island look." Innovations like the "upside-down bikini" have also emerged, sparking a rise in interest for new swim styles, with searches increasing by 203 per cent following appearances from standout contestants.

Beyond fashion, the show has changed the narrative surrounding beauty and body image. The "Love Island Effect" has been cited by plastic surgeons, revealing a twelve-fold increase in requests for cosmetic procedures among young women in the wake of last year's series. However, this surge has sparked counter-narratives; many former contestants have opted to dissolve their fillers or turn away from invasive beauty enhancements altogether. The examples of Malin Andersson, who has eschewed Botox, reflect a growing trend among contestants to challenge unrealistic beauty standards characterised by the show's early seasons.

Love Island has also drawn criticism for fostering toxic behaviour, as seen in several controversies involving contestants’ treatment of one another. Instances of alleged gaslighting and misogyny have raised alarms among mental health advocates. Domestic abuse charity Women's Aid has felt compelled to engage with the show's producers repeatedly, reflecting a societal concern that reality television can propagate harmful interactions and reinforce negative relationship dynamics.

The language popularised by Love Island has permeated everyday conversations, with terms like “the ick” and “mugged off” becoming part of the vernacular. Linguist Ana Clarke notes how the show's phrases have aided young men in articulating their feelings, thereby nurturing more open dialogues about relationships. This newfound emotional expressiveness among participants and viewers alike represents a departure from traditional norms, making emotional discussions more accessible.

However, not all influences of Love Island have been as benign. The tragic deaths of former contestants Sophie Gradon, Mike Thalassitis, and host Caroline Flack have cast a long shadow over the series. Following these events, ITV instituted extensive duty-of-care protocols aimed at safeguarding the mental health of participants, including thorough psychological evaluations and ongoing support. The posthumous changes underline the critical need for responsible practices in reality television, a sentiment echoed by PR expert Nick Ede.

Furthermore, Love Island’s influence extends into the realm of consumer behaviour, particularly around sustainability. Recently, the show has pivoted towards sustainable fashion by collaborating with eBay to dress contestants in pre-loved clothing, a move that has ignited significant interest in secondhand shopping among its audience. Reports indicate that this initiative caused eBay searches for “pre-loved clothing” to skyrocket by 1,600%, prompting a broader dialogue about the environmental impacts of fast fashion and the responsibility of media platforms to promote more sustainable practices.

Despite its numerous contributions to cultural discourse, the show has faced scrutiny regarding its representation of body diversity and inclusion. Critics have pointed out that while efforts have been made to showcase a broader range of body types, Love Island predominantly amplifies a narrow, idealised standard of beauty. Initiatives such as featuring Tasha Ghouri, who uses a cochlear implant, have shown progress in representation, yet the lack of plus-size contestants remains a glaring omission.

As Love Island prepares to launch its latest series, its dual role as an entertainment platform and a societal mirror continues to evoke both praise and concern. The show's effects on everything from beauty standards to social conversations about mental health exemplify its powerful reach within British culture, making it a topic of discussion that extends well beyond the screen. The way culture intersects with entertainment, and the implications therein, will undoubtedly remain a potent discussion point as the series continues to evolve.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.thesun.co.uk/tv/35211825/love-island-ten-reality-tv/), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2023/jul/30/face-fillers-fire-pits-and-the-ick-how-10-series-of-love-island-have-shaped-uk-culture)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.thesun.co.uk/tv/35211825/love-island-ten-reality-tv/), [[3]](https://www.theconversation.com/love-island-ditches-fast-fashion-how-reality-celebrities-influence-young-shoppers-habits-183771), [[4]](https://www.euronews.com/green/2023/01/12/love-island-hit-uk-tv-show-to-promote-sustainable-fashion-in-latest-series)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.thesun.co.uk/tv/35211825/love-island-ten-reality-tv/), [[6]](https://www.mentalhealthtoday.co.uk/blog/awareness/did-love-island-spawn-a-nation-of-psychologists)
* Paragraph 4 – [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2023/jul/30/face-fillers-fire-pits-and-the-ick-how-10-series-of-love-island-have-shaped-uk-culture), [[3]](https://www.theconversation.com/love-island-ditches-fast-fashion-how-reality-celebrities-influence-young-shoppers-habits-183771), [[5]](https://www.digitalmediateam.co.uk/blog-posts/how-love-island-has-shaped-the-new-age-of-marketing)
* Paragraph 5 – [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2023/jul/30/face-fillers-fire-pits-and-the-ick-how-10-series-of-love-island-have-shaped-uk-culture), [[6]](https://www.mentalhealthtoday.co.uk/blog/awareness/did-love-island-spawn-a-nation-of-psychologists)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.thesun.co.uk/tv/35211825/love-island-ten-reality-tv/), [[3]](https://www.theconversation.com/love-island-ditches-fast-fashion-how-reality-celebrities-influence-young-shoppers-habits-183771)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.thesun.co.uk/tv/35211825/love-island-ten-reality-tv/), [[5]](https://www.digitalmediateam.co.uk/blog-posts/how-love-island-has-shaped-the-new-age-of-marketing), [[4]](https://www.euronews.com/green/2023/01/12/love-island-hit-uk-tv-show-to-promote-sustainable-fashion-in-latest-series)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.thesun.co.uk/tv/35211825/love-island-ten-reality-tv/), [[3]](https://www.theconversation.com/love-island-ditches-fast-fashion-how-reality-celebrities-influence-young-shoppers-habits-183771)
* Paragraph 9 – [[1]](https://www.thesun.co.uk/tv/35211825/love-island-ten-reality-tv/), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2023/jul/30/face-fillers-fire-pits-and-the-ick-how-10-series-of-love-island-have-shaped-uk-culture)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.thesun.co.uk/tv/35211825/love-island-ten-reality-tv/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2023/jul/30/face-fillers-fire-pits-and-the-ick-how-10-series-of-love-island-have-shaped-uk-culture> - This article examines how 'Love Island' has influenced UK culture over its ten series, highlighting the introduction of phrases like 'the ick' into everyday language. It discusses the show's impact on fashion trends, such as the popularity of thong bikinis and the 'upside-down bikini' style, and its role in promoting body image discussions. The piece also addresses the show's influence on mental health awareness, particularly following the tragic deaths of former contestants, and its effect on social media engagement and marketing strategies.
3. <https://www.theconversation.com/love-island-ditches-fast-fashion-how-reality-celebrities-influence-young-shoppers-habits-183771> - This article explores 'Love Island's' shift from promoting fast fashion to endorsing sustainable shopping habits by partnering with eBay to dress contestants in secondhand clothing. It discusses the environmental impact of fast fashion and how the show's new approach has influenced viewers' shopping behaviours, leading to a significant increase in searches for 'pre-loved clothing' on eBay. The piece also examines the broader implications of reality TV on consumer habits and the fashion industry.
4. <https://www.euronews.com/green/2023/01/12/love-island-hit-uk-tv-show-to-promote-sustainable-fashion-in-latest-series> - This article reports on 'Love Island's' collaboration with eBay to promote sustainable fashion by dressing contestants in pre-loved clothing. It highlights the success of this initiative, noting a 1,600% increase in searches for 'pre-loved clothing' on eBay following the show's airing. The piece also discusses the growing popularity of secondhand fashion among young consumers and the environmental benefits of choosing pre-owned items over new ones.
5. <https://www.digitalmediateam.co.uk/blog-posts/how-love-island-has-shaped-the-new-age-of-marketing> - This article analyses how 'Love Island' has transformed marketing strategies, particularly in the fashion industry. It highlights the show's significant influence on brand partnerships, with companies like I SAW IT FIRST and PrettyLittleThing collaborating with contestants. The piece also discusses the show's impact on social media engagement, noting that contestants often gain substantial followings, which brands leverage for marketing purposes. Additionally, it examines the show's role in shaping consumer behaviour and trends.
6. <https://www.mentalhealthtoday.co.uk/blog/awareness/did-love-island-spawn-a-nation-of-psychologists> - This article discusses the mental health implications of 'Love Island,' focusing on how the show's portrayal of idealised beauty standards affects viewers' body image and self-esteem. It highlights concerns about the impact of the show on young people's mental health, particularly regarding eating disorders and low self-esteem. The piece also critiques the advertising of cosmetic surgery during the show's commercial breaks, suggesting it contributes to a culture of body dissatisfaction.
7. <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/tv-shows-making-social-change-uk-its-a-sin/> - This article highlights how British TV shows, including 'Love Island,' have inspired viewers to engage in social change. It provides examples of former contestants who have become advocates for various causes, such as refugee support and mental health awareness. The piece underscores the platform that reality TV offers for raising awareness and encouraging activism among audiences.