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DATING AGENCIES: HOW TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT

The shock expulsion of dating agency Club Sirius from the ABIA (the industry's trade association) may have far-reaching consequences. Hopefully, one positive outcome will be to make the public aware of how careful they need to be in choosing the right agency - and that there are plenty of alternatives to joining an agency at all.

Mike Halson, Director of Single Again, says: "As the singles industry grows and becomes more sophisticated, some companies are using increasingly devious practices and ever more improbable claims to fight for market share. It is vital to find out as much as you can before joining an agency, and not just believe what you read or hear from them."

Unfortunately, single people looking for love are often in a vulnerable state and can easily be persuaded to spend a lot of money in the hope that their perfect partner is waiting just around the corner. Sadly, the gamble often fails to pay off: all too many people find the agency's service to be disappointing and the people they meet thoroughly unremarkable.

One way the media can help is by making people aware of how the singles industry is developing. Dating agencies are now only one option available to anyone looking to get more out of life, and, by giving the impression that you can 'buy' your way to happiness, they encourage people to overlook other problem areas which are preventing their lives from flourishing.

Single Again takes a radically different approach with a focus on helping single people to improve the overall quality of their lives - by making new friends, tackling problems and exploring exciting new avenues. Experience shows the long-term benefits of this holistic technique: by dealing with emotional baggage, gaining in self-confidence and having more to talk about, they also become more attractive to other people and more likely to get into a lasting relationship.

Note to Editors:

- Single Again provides expert, objective advice to anyone considering joining a dating agency. We can explain the different types to consider and some of the dodges to look out for. In association with the marriage bureau Katharine Allen, we publish a leaflet containing 36 key questions you need to have answered before you part with your money. The leaflet can be obtained free of charge from Single Again by sending an sae to: Single Again (watchdog), Suite 33, 10 Barley Mow Passage, London W4 4PH.
- Single Again has appeared hundreds of times in the broadcast and print media. We are available for comment on all singles issues, and can often provide case histories.
- For more information, call Mike Halson, Director of Single Again, on 0181 749 3745 or mobile 0468 814362

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