

Saga / Populus Panel

16 November 2012

**Populus interviewed 8,524
Saga customers, all aged
50+, online between 9th and
16th November 2012.**

**Populus is a member of the
British Polling Council and
abides by its rules; for more
information see
www.populus.co.uk.**

Pets at Christmas

- A third (32%) of respondents have a cat, a dog, or both. The older the respondent, the less likely they are to own a dog or a cat (57% of 50-54 year olds rising to 81% of those aged 75 and over).
- Of pet owners, two fifths (40%) buy their cat a Christmas present and three fifths (62%) buy their dog a Christmas present. The average amount spent on a cat present is £2.65, whereas for a dog present the average is £5.14.
- Nearly two fifths (37%) of pet owners feed their cat something special at Christmas time, whilst dogs are treated by over half (52%) of pet owners. Christmas dinner leftovers are the most popular option.

Christmas giving and spending

- Respondents tend to spend the following amounts on Christmas presents for their relatives:

Relative:	Average amount spent:
Spouse / Partner	£71.69
Children	£70.32
Grandchildren	£58.80
Parents	£34.98

- When it comes to buying presents for spouses or partners, men tend to spend more, on average, than women (£76.41 compared to £62.36).

- More than a third (36%) of respondents admit they spend more than they should at Christmas, and a third (33%) will dip into their savings to pay for everything. Nearly half (45%) pay for everything on credit card and then pay this off at the end of December. Women are more likely than men to plan ahead and pay for everything in advance of Christmas (35% compared to 28%).
- Almost half (44%) of respondents say they sometimes feel they buy presents out of obligation rather than generosity, and the vast majority (88%) feel that Christmas has become too materialistic. In addition, just under half (46%) would not mind receiving no presents this year, and less than a third (31%) have something they would like for Christmas this year.
- Women are more likely than men to recycle old presents (28% compared to 12%) and to say there is something they would like to have for Christmas this year (38% compared to 27%). They are less likely to say they would be happy not to receive a present (39% compared to 50% of men).
- A quarter (24%) of respondents say they will spend more on Christmas this year than in previous years, whilst less than a fifth (18%) say they will spend less. The younger the respondent the more likely they were to say they would spend less on Christmas (36% of 50-54 year olds falling to 12% of those aged 75 or over).
- A fifth (22%) of respondents will be going to a UK based Christmas market this year, with the average spend likely to be £34.79. 3% will be going to a market abroad, with the most likely destination being Germany (46% of those going to a market overseas), and the likely spend being £42.21.
- Those respondents who go to Christmas markets are most likely to be motivated by the prospect of a fun day out shopping (50%), or the festive mood (49%).
- The most popular method of passing on Christmas greetings is by far the Christmas card, with 91% of respondents intending to send these this year. Half (51%), however, will send fewer cards due to the rise in the price of stamps.
- The average number of cards respondents will send this year is 28 (28.46), down 10 from last year's 38 (38.22).
- The vast majority (91%) have someone on their Christmas card list for whom the card will be their only form of correspondence all year.

Winter fuel and heating

- Nearly three fifths (58%) of respondents are worried about the cost of heating their home this winter, and more than a third (35%) say they will struggle this year, more than last year, to pay their heating bills. In addition, a quarter (25%) say they will have to cut back on other spending in order to afford heating this winter. In all three cases, those who are retired are slightly less likely to be concerned.



- The main source of concern over home heating bills is the rising cost of fuel (61%).
- To combat rising heating costs, more than half (53%) of respondents will adopt the stoic approach of wearing extra layers of clothing. Women (64%) are much more likely than men (47%) to do this. A similar proportion (52%) will only put the heating on at certain times of day.
- The vast majority (92%) of respondents believe that winter fuel payments are important, with over three fifths (63%) describing them as very important.
- In addition, three quarters (74%) believe giving winter fuel payments to all pensioners is right, most often because it saves the complexity of means testing millions of pensioners (41%). Of the quarter (26%) who believe universal winter fuel payments are wrong, most feel the Government should only offer this benefit to those who need it, regardless of the administrative cost of means testing (16%).
- Nearly half (46%) of respondents say they need (or will need) winter fuel payments, compared to a quarter (26%) who say they don't really need their winter fuel payments.
- Three fifths (60%) of respondents oppose means testing winter fuel payments. Those who are retired are more likely than those not yet retired to oppose this idea (63% compared to 52%). The younger the respondent, however, the more likely they are to support the idea (21% of those aged 75 or over compared to 51% of those aged 50-54).

