

Saga / Populus Panel Results, September 2011

Populus interviewed 10,483 Saga customers, all aged 50+, online between 12 September and 15 September 2011. Populus is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules; for more information see www.populus.co.uk.

Exercise

- 16% of Saga panellists say they do no exercise at all during the course of the week, with the majority doing at least some. The biggest proportion - 42% - spend between 2 and 5 hours a week exercising.
- Walking and hiking is, by far, the most common type of exercise amongst Saga panellists; 73% of those who exercise say they walk or hike for exercise. The gym, swimming, and cycling are also popular forms of exercise (undertaken by 14%, 14%, and 13% respectively). Women are noticeable more likely to swim and take part in exercise classes than men.
- Just a third of Saga panellists believe that they do the right level of exercise, with 45% admitting to doing too little. Amongst those who don't exercise at all, 19% regard this as about the right level of exercise.
- Overall, more than half (54%) say that they exercise less now compared to in their 30s. This is despite 80% of Saga panellists saying they are more conscious of the need to exercise and live a healthy lifestyle now than they were in their 30s. A quarter of women say they, however, exercise more now than in their 30s.
- Saga panellists believe maintaining their mental fitness is important (99% agree that it is 'very important' or 'important') and crossword puzzles, Sudoku, and TV quiz games were the most popular forms of mental exercises (60%, 40% and 36% respectively doing each). One-in-ten use electronic brain-training games.

Retirement

- Less than half (44%) were aware that those with certain medical or lifestyle conditions were able to access a range of annuities that paid higher pensions. When asked which conditions might qualify for this type of annuity, 45% admitted to not knowing. Cancer, heart attacks, diabetes, and smoking were all seen as conditions that would qualify for higher-yield annuities (selected by between 32% and 44%).
- Amongst those yet to retire, there was a strong desire to maximise the value of pensions, and just 5% (of those who need to purchase an annuity) said they would definitely purchase it from their pension provider. 30% intend to shop around and 22% consult a financial adviser (with the remaining 43% yet to decide.) This contrasts strongly with those who have actually retired (and purchased an annuity) as, amongst this group, 45% didn't shop around at all.
- Of those who shopped around on retirement, but ultimately decided to remain with their pension provider, most attributed this to there being little difference between their provider and the alternatives (45%). A third, 32%, discovered that their pension provider actually offered a better deal than the alternatives.
- Amongst those who did not shop around on retirement, a third (34%) did not do so because they thought their provider offered a good deal. A fifth of this group admitted to not knowing, at the time, that they had the option to look elsewhere for their annuity.

Driving Licences

- More than half - 57% - support the Department for Transport's proposals for the age at which a driver has to renew their licence to 75, rather than 70, and the frequency of renewals to 5 years, rather than 3. There was a significant difference in views by age; 39% of those aged 50-54 supported the move, while 79% of those aged 75+ did.

Winter Fuel Payment

- By a narrow margin, Saga panellists support the universal nature of the Winter Fuel Payment. 53% want to see the benefit remain universal, 43% want to see it means tested, and 3% don't know. Again, a significant divide by age emerges; 58% of those aged 50-54 say the Payment should be means tested and paid only to those most in needed, while amongst those aged over 75, 61% say it should remain universal.
- Reaction was largely muted to the idea, put forward by some charities, that those able to should donate their Winter Fuel Payment. Just a third support the idea and just 11% say they are interested in donating their own Winter Fuel Payment. In part, this is explained by the 87% who say it is the government's job – not that of individuals – to help the vulnerable to heat their home.