

Saga / Populus Panel

October 2012

Populus interviewed 9,556 Saga customers, all aged 50+, online between 19th and 26th October 2012. Populus is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules; for more information see www.populus.co.uk.

Well-being and the cost of living

- Just over three fifths of respondents felt that their standard of living has remained consistent over the past year. Whilst a little under a third (29%) felt it got worse, the majority felt it had only got a bit worse (25% of all respondents).
- Younger (50-54 42% worse) and those on lower incomes (48% DE) were more likely to have felt their standard of living had dropped over the last year than older (27% 70-74 year olds) and wealthier respondents (24% AB).
- Those in the North East are the most likely to feel their standard of living has fallen (36%), while those in London are the least (26%).
- Two thirds (60%) judge their happiness to be about the same as last year. Happiness was not directly equitable to perceived standard of living, but was correlated, with 18% stating they are happier now than they were a year ago (9% better standard of living), 60% are as happy this year as last (62% same standard of living), 22% were less happy (29% standard of living has declined).
- Over half (55%) consider the standard of their health to be about the same as last year. In terms of age this is relatively consistent from 50-74 (56% average), but drops after for those over the age of 75 (45%).

- Financial issues were of the greatest concern to respondents. Just under three fifths (58%) said that the cost of living had become a greater concern over the past year, with the youngest respondents particularly likely to report an increase in this worry (65% of 50-54 year olds). Savings income (45%) and interest rates (42%) were the issues next most likely to have become of greater concern. As well as the cost of living, the youngest respondents were also more likely to be worried about their current/future pension income (48% of 50-54 year olds and 42% of 55-59 year olds compared to 19% of over 75s).
- Respondents were more likely than not to feel satisfied, purposeful, happy and positive, although in each case significant minorities felt the opposite. In particular significant minorities felt worried (26%) and lonely (21%).
- The younger the respondent, the less likely they were to feel satisfied (6.6 amongst 50-54 year olds compared to 7.31 amongst over 75s), happy (6.62 amongst 50-54 year olds compared to 7.43 amongst over 75s), and positive (6.53 amongst 50-54 year olds compared to 7.44 amongst over 75s).

	Mean Score (/10)
Positivity	7.28
Happiness	7.24
Purpose	7.16
Satisfaction	7.16
Happiness	7.24
Worry	3.62
Loneliness	2.72



How important or unimportant is each of the following in influencing how happy you feel at the moment? [All respondents – excluding those stating non-applicable]

	NET: Important	Neither important nor unimportant	NET: Unimportant
My relationship with my spouse / partner	94%	3%	3%
My relationship with my children	94%	3%	3%
My health	94%	4%	3%
My partner's or family's health	94%	3%	3%
My relationship with my grandchildren	89%	6%	4%
My income	84%	12%	4%
My relationship with my friends	83%	13%	4%
My hobbies / interests	75%	19%	6%
My work	63%	25%	10%
My sexual relationship	51%	34%	14%
External factors seen in the news	44%	40%	15%

- The most important issues to respondents were related to their direct family or their health. Individual's income was also seen as highly important (84%), over 20% more important than the work itself (63%).



Over the past year, to what extent would you say each of the following has improved or got worse? [All respondents – excluding those stating non-applicable]

	NET: Improved	Stayed the same	NET: Got worse
My relationship with my grandchildren	16%	82%	2%
My hobbies / interests	11%	83%	6%
My relationship with my children	11%	86%	3%
My income	11%	59%	30%
My relationship with my spouse / partner	10%	84%	5%
My work	11%	66%	23%
My health	9%	63%	28%
My relationship with my friends	6%	91%	3%
My partner's or family's health	4%	74%	22%
My sexual relationship	3%	82%	15%
External factors seen in the news	1%	54%	46%

- 16% of respondents said that their relationship with their grandchildren had improved in the past year, whilst a fifth (11%) said that their hobbies and interests had improved. A little under a third (30%) said that their income had deteriorated.
- Of those that said certain aspects of their lives had improved, younger respondents were at least twice as likely to say their relationship with their spouse/partner, children and grandchildren has improved.
- Significant minorities however felt that their income had deteriorated (30%), respondents health (28%) and that of their partners (22%) and their work in general had got worse (23%). Whilst more generally a little under half (46%) thought that events seen on the news had gotten worse since last year.



Compared to this time last year, have you cut back, increased or not changed your spending on the following? ? [All respondents – excluding those stating non-applicable]

	Increased	Not changed	Cut back
Using a car	6%	59%	35%
Hairdressing/beauty	2%	77%	21%
Clothes	4%	66%	30%
Heating your home	11%	63%	26%
Using the phone	5%	79%	16%
Donating to charity	10%	67%	23%
Visiting the theatre/cinema	5%	66%	29%
Taking short breaks	13%	57%	30%
Eating in pubs or restaurants	8%	58%	33%
Club membership	5%	75%	20%

- The areas where respondents had cut back most were using their car (35%) and eating in pubs and restaurants (33%). Notably however there were no areas where over half of respondents have either changed their spending behaviour.
- Those in social grade DE (41%) were almost twice as likely to have cut back on heating their home as those in AB (22%).
- In response to the rising cost of living, a little less than half (45%) of respondents said that they had cut back on non-essential spending, while a third (34%) said they had helped children or grandchildren financially. The youngest respondents were particularly likely to have cut back on non-essential spending (59% of 50-54 year olds compared to, for example, 41% of 65-69 year olds). Almost a fifth (18%) have cut back on essential spending, with the most purchase category to being food (82%), but heating (72%) and travel (69%) also faced reduced spending from respondents.
- Over half of respondents (56%) felt that prices of day to day services had risen by between 2-6%. Notably a fifth (18%) felt they had risen by over 8%. Perceptions on this were unaffected by age, income, region or retirement status.
- The expectation on the level of inflation was largely in line with respondents projections of how much prices had risen. Nearly three fifths (57%) felt that prices should have risen by 2-6%, and a slightly lower proportion (15%) felt that prices should have risen by over 8%.
- Nearly three quarters of respondents cited petrol (76%) and utility fuel prices (72%) as having risen the most, whilst increases to the cost of groceries was also cited by over half (54%). These views were unaffected by respondents age, income, region or retirement status.



Powers of Attorney

- Half of respondents (51%) felt strongly that they understood what the term ‘Lasting Power of Attorney’. Whilst a further 29% thought they understood it slightly. Those in social grade AB (58%) were far more likely to feel that they strongly understood term, than those in social grades C2 (34%) and DE (30%).
- Irrespective of whether respondents understood the term, over three quarters (77%) either knew or assumed that financial and property affairs were examples of power of attorney, this dropped to two thirds (66%) when asked about financial affairs in isolation. In contrast only around a third thought personal welfare (37%), medical care (32%) and health and wealth (30%) were examples.
- A third (32%) of respondents stated that they had at one point taken on such responsibilities for a friend or relative, and of those that had held such powers, half (49%) had used them.
- Those in social grade AB (37%) were more likely than those in other social grades (C2 23%, DE 22%) to have been given the responsibility.
- Respondents felt the major difficulties when enacting powers of attorney are having to constantly prove ones identity (55%), send original documents rather than copies (51%), and each institution having separate procedures and requirements (46%).

How easy or difficult have you found it to deal with each of the following regarding your Lasting Power of Attorney? [All ever used Lasting Power of Attorney]

	NET: Easy	Neither easy nor difficult	NET: Difficult
Doctors/NHS	45%	25%	9%
The Department for Work and Pensions	40%	27%	14%
Banks	37%	21%	38%
Utility companies	30%	26%	18%
Tax authorities	29%	27%	14%
Pension providers	29%	25%	13%
Benefit authorities	28%	22%	17%
Building Societies	24%	19%	27%
Insurance companies	23%	21%	24%



- The easiest organisation to deal with is the Doctors/NHS (45%), followed by the pension service (40%). Opinion was split over dealing with banks: although two-fifths say they found banks easy to deal with (37%), a similar percentage (38%) said they were difficult to deal with.
- Older respondents find banks (48% of 75+ compared to 29% of 55-59 year olds) and the Department for Work and Pensions (41% of 75+ compared to 22% of 50-54 year olds) easier to deal with than younger respondents.

