



BMG Research Report

Herefordshire Voice – Panel Survey 10
Commissioned by the Herefordshire Partnership
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Because people matter.

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1 Executive Summary

1.1 Local communities and the future of Herefordshire

Local decision-making

Approaching two in five respondents (37%) feel that they as an individual are able to influence decisions affecting the local area. A larger proportion (61%) however feels that the local community can have a similar impact by working together. Only one in seven respondents (14%) feels that the Council does enough to give local people the opportunity to influence important decisions.

An overwhelming majority of respondents (85%) have undertaken specified actions in order to affect local decision-making, with the largest proportions having signed petitions (66%), taken part in surveys (37%), attended local residents or action group meetings (24%), and/or written letters (23%).

The local neighbourhood

Almost one-half of respondents (48%) agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.

When asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the neighbourhood as a place to live in general, the overwhelming majority (84%) express satisfaction, contrasting with only one in twelve (8%) who are dissatisfied. Despite this high level of satisfaction, respondents are nevertheless more likely to feel that the neighbourhood has deteriorated over the past two years as a place to live (23%), rather than improved (12%).

Community involvement

Whilst 63% of respondents have taken part in community or voluntary activity within the past twelve months, only half this proportion (31%) are actually actively involved in community or voluntary organisations.

Almost four in five respondents (79%) have provided help to any of their neighbours in the past six months *on an unpaid basis*, whilst three in five (58%) have themselves received help from neighbours.

1.2 Saving and borrowing

Financial services

The majority of respondents use the following financial products or services: a current account (96%); debt or cheque guarantee cards (86%); savings accounts (71%); credit cards (64%); investments (61%); pensions; and/or overdrafts (53%).

Of those respondents who have a current account with a bank or building society, 83% are satisfied with the service, contrasting with 5% who are dissatisfied.

In order to find out information about financial services, 53% of respondents make face-to-face enquiries, 39% consult leaflets, and 30% search the Internet.

In order to access financial services, 67% prefer to attend a town centre branch in person, and talk to professional staff. A further quarter telephone the provider

(25%), and over one in five (22%) use electronic means. The majority of respondents (52%) like to access financial services during traditional weekday office hours (9am to 5pm), whilst approaching one half (46%) also like the services to be available on Saturdays 9-5.

Savings

The majority of respondents (54%) feel that they are in a position to save money on a regular basis, although a larger proportion (76%) would like to be able to regularly save (more) money in the future.

In all, 82% of respondents currently have some savings.

Borrowing

Almost three-quarters of respondents (73%) have borrowed money to make purchases between £50 and £5,000 in the past. Of these respondents:

- 67% borrowed via a credit card, 44% obtained a bank loan, and 30% an overdraft.
- These loans were used to purchase cars (47%), for regular spending (e.g. shopping) (26%), emergencies (26%), and/or holidays (20%).
- 80% look at the interest rate when choosing the source of credit. Other key considerations include convenience (39%), a quick answer (26%), and/or professional recommendation (25%).

One in ten respondents (10%) have experienced difficulty in the past in obtaining credit or a loan.

Financial management

In all, 38% of respondents currently owe some money. Over two in five (42%) state that they currently are experiencing some financial difficulties.

Almost one-third of respondents (32%) expect to be better-off financially in twelve months time. In contrast, one in seven (14%) expect to be worse-off.

Over four in five respondents (83%) feel fairly or very confident in their managing of household finances. In contrast, only 2% lack confidence.

Credit Unions

Approaching two in five respondents (39%) are aware of Credit Unions. Of these respondents, 28% would describe them as a place where people can save, 24% as enabling people to borrow at *low interest*, and 23% as a loan provider.

Respondents then read the following description of Credit Unions: "*A Credit Union is a financial co-operative that is owned and run by its members, who are all local people. It aims to encourage saving and to provide people with low-cost loans when needed. It looks at each loan application individually, and welcomes members who are on benefits as well as people who are working or self-employed.*"

Based on the description above, 28% of respondents state that they would be more likely to consider using Credit Unions as opposed to other lenders – 15% would be less likely to use Credit Unions.

When informed that Credit Unions offer free insurance that pays off loans, and increases savings in the event of death, 39% of respondents state that they would be more likely to use Credit Unions than other lenders, whilst 7% would be less likely to use them.

Finally, when informed that the expansion of Moneybox (the Herefordshire Credit Union) is supported by the Council and other local organisations, 38% state that they would be more likely to use Credit Unions than other lenders, whilst 8% would be less likely to use them.

Overall, 15% of respondents are likely to join Moneybox at some stage in the future; 44% are unlikely to do so.

Over one-third of respondents (34%) would use Credit Unions if their savings and loans were offered through schools and health clinics, with one in twenty (5%) prepared to use them on a regular basis in such an instance.

1.3 ICT

ICT access

Overall, 82% of respondents have access to computers or related ICT such as broadband and the Internet at home or at work. The most common types of access includes home access to a computer (75%), home access to the Internet (64%), and work access to a computer (41%).

Broadband

Almost one-quarter of respondents (24%) feel that having a broadband connection is important to them themselves, although a larger proportion (67%) recognise that broadband connections may be more important to people in Herefordshire in general.

Over four in five respondents (82%) were aware of the *We Want Broadband for Herefordshire* campaign prior to the survey. Of these respondents:

- 14% have registered for broadband on the campaign website.
- 35% feel that they have a better understanding of the benefits of broadband as a result of the campaign.

One in six respondents (17%) have registered for BT Broadband.

2 Introduction

2.1 Background

The modernisation agenda presents local authorities with a broad range of challenges and opportunities. Central to this agenda is the need to consult with the public. As part of their consultation strategy, Herefordshire Partnership, which includes Herefordshire Council, the Chamber of Commerce for Herefordshire and Worcestershire, the Herefordshire Health Authority, West Mercia Police, voluntary organisations and Advantage West Midlands, commissioned BMG to recruit a panel of 1000 residents with whom they could consult on a range of local issues.

This report presents the findings of the tenth survey of the panel. The principle aims of the current survey were to investigate attitudes towards and measure usage of :

- Local communities and the future of Herefordshire;
- Saving and borrowing
- Broadband services

2.2 Methodology

The current panel of 1,017 members were sent a copy of the tenth questionnaire "Shaping the Future of Herefordshire and Saving and Borrowing" in April 2004. A second mailing was then implemented for non-returners in early May, with a return date of 8th June being set. A total of 315 questionnaires were returned in total, thus, the response rate was 30.9%.

The sample is thus subject to a maximum standard error of $\pm 5.52\%$ at the 95% confidence level on an observed statistic of 50%. Thus, we can be 95% confident that responses are representative of those that would be given by the total population, if a census had been conducted, to within $\pm 5.52\%$ of the percentages reported.

In addition to this written report, data tabulations have been produced which present the data as a whole, and broken down by the following groups: gender of the respondent; age of the respondent; ward in which the respondent lives; the length of time the respondent has been resident in Herefordshire; housing ownership; housing type; illness/disability; benefits received; marital status; children in household; ICT access; household car access; and employment status.

2.3 Profile

The table below shows key demographic information (unweighted) on the respondents returning questionnaires for this survey:

Respondent profile		
	%	Unweighted base
Total	100	315
Male	48.3	152
Female	51.7	163
Aged 16-24	2.5	8
Aged 25-34	9.8	31
Aged 35-44	21.3	67
Aged 45-54	25.1	79
Aged 55-64	14.0	44
Aged 65+	27.3	86
Has a limiting illness/disability	14.6	46
Does not have a limiting illness/disability	84.8	267
Are children in household	31.1	98
Are no children in household	67.9	214

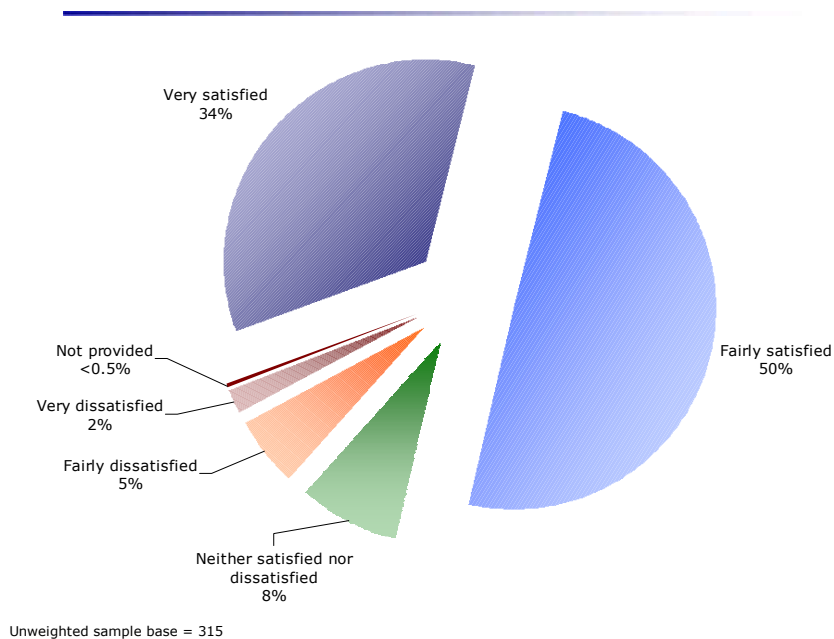
3 Local communities and the future of Herefordshire

3.1 Local community

Satisfaction with the local neighbourhood

The overwhelming majority of respondents (84%) are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live. This contrasts with 8% who are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 8% who are dissatisfied.

Satisfaction with the neighbourhood as a place to live (All respondents)



Across key respondent sub-groups, the proportions who indicate that they are satisfied with their neighbourhood do not vary significantly by gender, length of residence, or whether the respondent falls within a working or non-working cohort. However, variations in the proportions satisfied are observed according to:

- Respondent age. Generally, satisfaction increases with age, from 75% of those aged 16-34, to 85% aged 35-44, 86% aged 45-54 and 55-64, and 93% aged 65+.
- Housing ownership. Those who own, or are buying their own property are far more likely to be satisfied with the neighbourhood than those in rented accommodation (87% and 72% respectively).
- Children in the household. Those with children in the household are less likely to be satisfied than those without (79% and 88% respectively).

Further, as the following table demonstrates, satisfaction with the local neighbourhood is slightly higher amongst those respondents from wards outside of Hereford than those in Hereford itself (87% and 80% respectively satisfied). Particularly of note is the proportion of those outside of Hereford who state that they

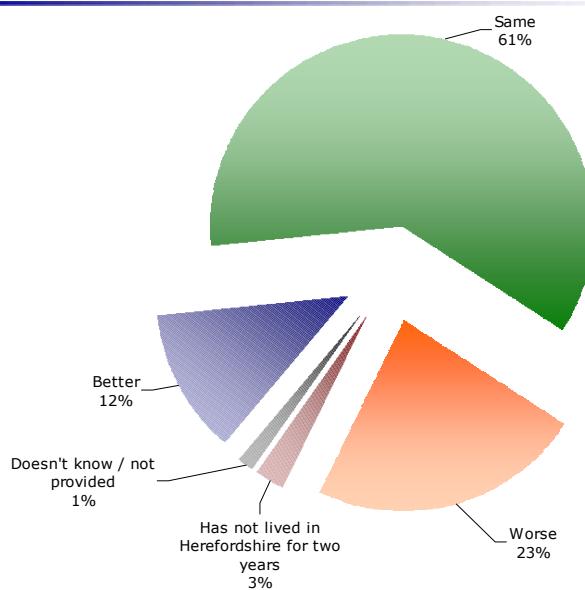
are very satisfied with the neighbourhood, which stands at nine percentage points higher than amongst those respondents in Hereford itself.

Satisfaction with the neighbourhood (All respondents)			
	Hereford City	Other	All
	%	%	%
Very satisfied	29	38	34
Fairly satisfied	51	49	50
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	12	5	8
Fairly dissatisfied	4	6	5
Very dissatisfied	3	1	2
Total satisfied	80	87	84
Total dissatisfied	8	7	8
Not provided	0	<0.5	<0.5
Unweighted sample bases	127	188	315

Change in the quality of the local neighbourhood

Over three in five respondents have noted no change to the quality of their neighbourhood over the past two years. Where a change has been noted however, respondents are more likely to point to a deterioration in the quality of the neighbourhood, rather than an improvement.

Change in the quality of the neighbourhood as a place to live over the past two years (All respondents)



Unweighted sample base = 315

Respondents within Hereford are more likely to point to a deterioration in their local neighbourhood than those from other wards (27% Hereford; 20% other), and less likely to highlight an improvement (9% Hereford; 15% other).

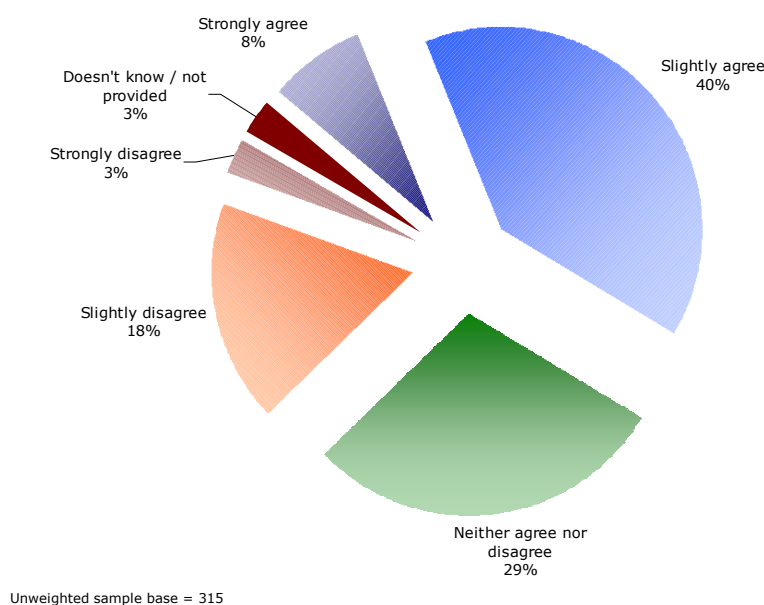
When analysing the perceived change of the neighbourhood against overall satisfaction with the neighbourhood as a place to live, it can be seen that only those who are satisfied with the neighbourhood overall feel that improvements have actually been made.

Change in the quality of the neighbourhood as a place to live over the past two years (All respondents)				
Change in quality of neighbourhood	Satisfaction with neighbourhood as a place to live			
	Satisfied	Neither	Dis-satisfied	All
	%	%	%	%
Better	14	0	0	12
Same	67	66	79	61
Worse	15	31	9	23
Not resident for two years	2	0	12	3
Doesn't know / not provided	1	3	0	23
Unweighted sample bases	271	23	20	315

Community cohesion

Approaching one-half of respondents (48%) agree that the local community is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. In contrast, just over one in five (21%) disagree with this statement.

Agreement that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together (All respondents)



In this instance, little difference is noted between the perceptions of those in Hereford wards, against those in other wards: 46% of those in Hereford agree with that people from different backgrounds get on well, compared to 49% of those from elsewhere.

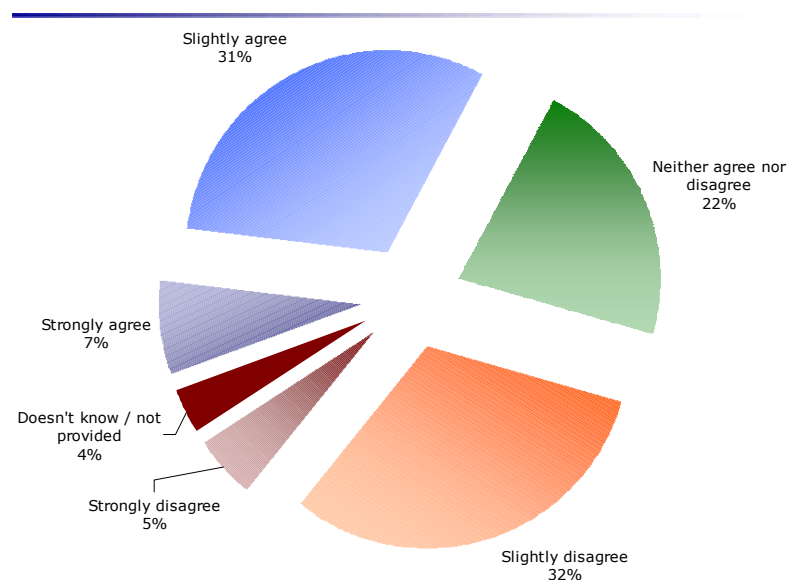
A key division is noted across respondent age groups. Those from the upper age brackets are far more likely to register agreement with the statement than younger respondents: 39% aged 16-24; 33% aged 25-34; 36% aged 35-44; but 59% aged 45-54; 52% aged 55-64; and 65% aged 65+.

3.2 Local decision-making

Ability of individuals to influence local decision-making

When asked to rate the extent to which they feel *individuals* can affect decision-making at a local level, over one-third of respondents (37%) agree that they are able to do so, but a slightly larger proportion (38%) disagree with this.

Agreement that an individual can affect local decision-making (All respondents)



Unweighted sample base = 315

Notably, those based in wards within Hereford City are far less likely to agree that they as individuals have an influence (30% Hereford; 41% elsewhere).

Across other key respondent sub-groups, no clear correlations exist in terms of agreement with aspects such as rising age or length of residency. Generally, the proportions registering agreement fall to within $\pm 5\%$ of the headline figure. Exceptions to this include:

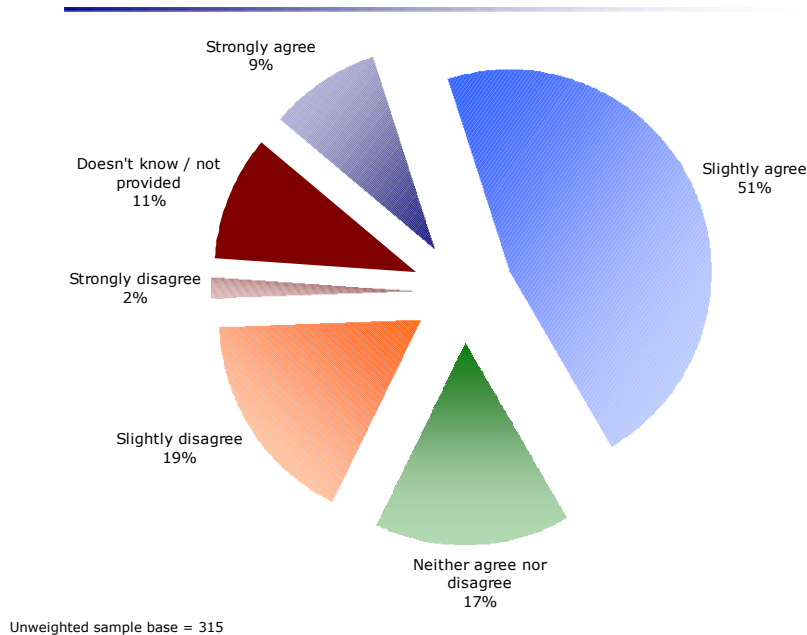
- **More likely to feel they have an influence:** those in receipt of Council Tax/Housing Benefits (70%); the retired (50%); those in receipt of Income Support (47%); those aged 65+ (46%); and the self-employed (45%).
- **Less likely to have an influence:** those in receipt of Family Credit or Child Benefit (13%); those aged 16-34 (25%); those with children

in the household (29%); those in rented accommodation (31%); and those looking after the home or dependents (31%).

Ability of groups to influence local decision-making

Respondents were further asked to rate their level of agreement with the statement, that by working together, people can influence local decision-making. Unlike attitudes towards the role of the individual, a clear majority, 61% do agree that groups can have an impact. Still, a notable proportion (21%) disagrees with this statement.

Agreement that groups can affect local decision-making (All respondents)



As seen with the ability of individuals to affect decision-making, those in Hereford City are less likely to agree that groups have an influence than those from other wards, although the difference is far more narrow in this instance (57% Hereford; 63% elsewhere).

Role of the Council in helping people to influence decisions

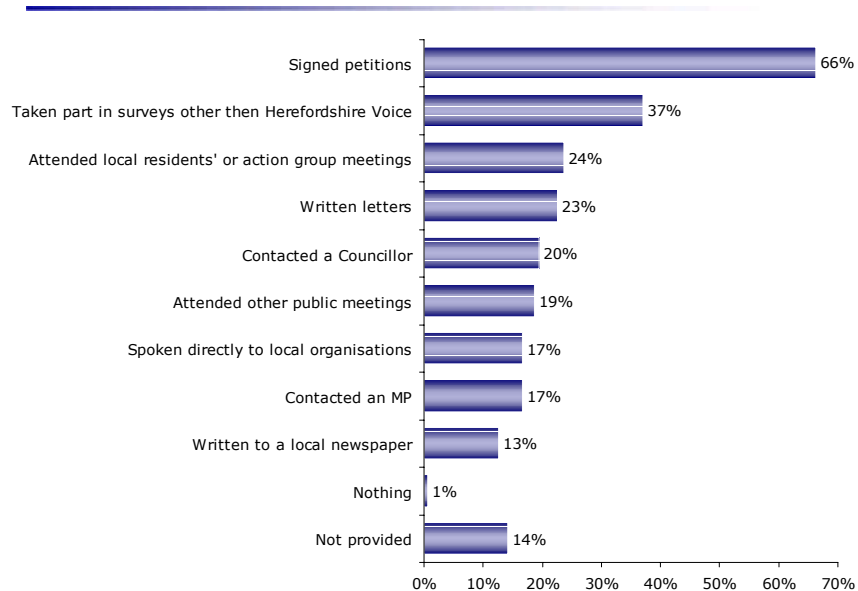
One in seven respondents (14%) feels that the Council does enough to give local people the opportunity to influence local decisions. In contrast, 63% think that the Council does not do enough, 22% are unsure, whilst <0.5% fail to provide a response.

Notably, respondents in Hereford City are far less likely than those from other wards to feel that the Council does enough – 8% compared to 19%.

Methods used to influence local decision-making

An overwhelming proportion of respondents (85%) have undertaken activities in order to influence local community decisions, with the key actions including the signing of petitions, taking part in surveys, and/or attending local action group or residents’ meetings.

Ways in which the respondent has influenced local community decisions - prompted (All respondents)



Unweighted sample base = 315
Multiple response

3.3 Community involvement

Involvement in community or voluntary organisations

Over three in ten respondents are actively involved in local community or voluntary organisations. In contrast, 67% are not involved, whilst 2% are unsure.

The proportions involved in local organisations vary significantly across key respondent sub-groups. The following table shows those respondents most and least likely to have participated in voluntary activity within this timeframe:

Proportion of respondents actively involved in community or voluntary activity within the past two years (All respondents)	
Most likely to be involved	Least likely to be involved
Retired (57%)	Aged 25-34 (10%)
Aged 65+ (55%)	Aged 16-24 (13%)
Self-employed (50%)	In rented accommodation (16%)
Has limiting illness/disability (50%)	Carer (15%)
Outside of Hereford City (38%)	In Hereford City (21%)

Undertaking community activity

In all, 63% of respondents have undertaken community activity of any description (whether structured or unstructured) in the past twelve months. In contrast, 36% have not undertaken any such activity, whilst 1% are unsure.

No notable variations in the proportions of participants are either noted by gender, age, disability, or whether there are children in the household. However, those resident in Hereford City (52%) are far less likely than those from other wards (71%) to have undertaken any such activity.

Unpaid help for/from neighbours

Four in five respondents (80%) state that they have provided help for neighbours on an unpaid basis in the past six months. In contrast, 58% state that they themselves have received unpaid help from neighbours in the same timescale.

The proportions receiving help does not vary significantly by ward, disability or whether there are children in the household. The following should be noted however:

- Males are more likely to have received assistance than females (87% and 72% respectively).
- No clear pattern is observed when analysed by respondent age – those aged 45-54 and 65+ (both 83%) are most likely to have received help; those aged 35-44 least likely to have done so (74%).

In terms of giving help to neighbours, the clearest variations exist according to:

- Ward – 64% outside Hereford, 49% within Hereford.
- Housing ownership – 63% of those who own their own home, 32% of those in rented accommodation.

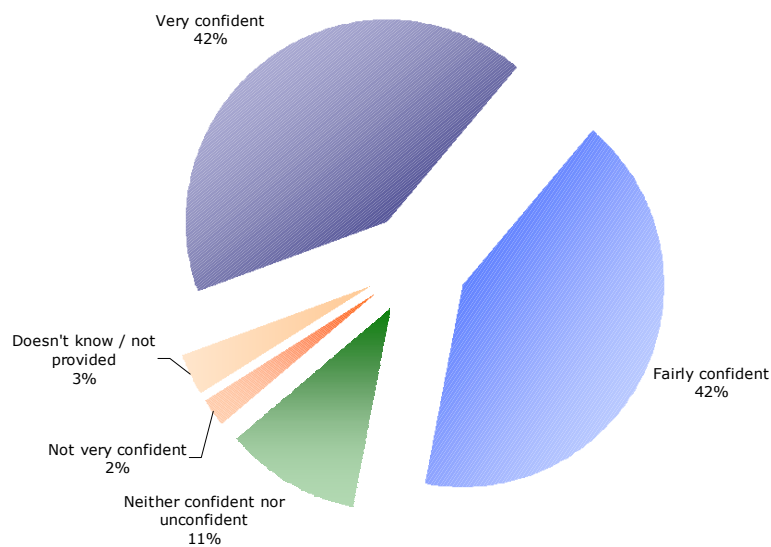
4 Saving and borrowing

4.1 Financial management

Management of household finances

Over four in five respondents (83%) feel fairly or very confident in their management of household finances. In contrast, one in nine (11%) feel neither confident nor unconfident, whilst only a small proportion (2%) lack confidence in managing their finances.

Confidence in the management of household finances (All respondents)



Unweighted sample base = 315

A lack of confidence in the management of household finances is most likely to be expressed by those with long-term illnesses and disabilities (8%), or those in rented accommodation (6%).

Overall, a larger proportion of respondents feel that they will be better off (32%) than worse off (14%) in twelve months time. Most likely to anticipate feeling better off includes those respondents in full-time employment (46%), or who are aged 25-34 (44%). Most likely to anticipate feeling worse off however includes those aged 16-24 (25%) and 65+ (24%), the retired (27%), and those with long-term illnesses or disabilities (21%).

Perception of current financial situation

Over two in five respondents (42%) feel that they have financial difficulties that affect them to some degree, although only 4% would describe these difficulties as being 'severe'. The proportion of respondents who have some degree of financial difficulty is highest amongst those respondents aged 25-44: 23% of those aged 16-24; 55% aged 25-34; 52% aged 35-44; 37% aged 45-54; 45% aged 55-64; and 32% aged 65+.

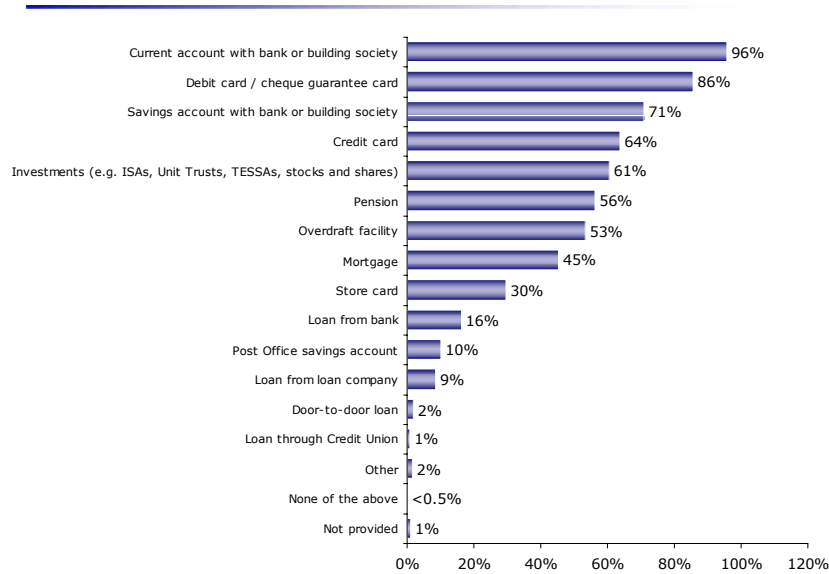
In all, 2% would like to receive some degree of support in order to address these difficulties.

4.2 Financial services

Use of financial services

All respondents were asked whether they used specified financial services, with a majority stating that they use the following: current accounts; debit or cheque guarantee cards; savings accounts; credit cards; investments; pensions; and/or an overdraft facility.

Types of financial products or services that the respondent currently uses – prompted (All respondents)



Unweighted sample base = 315
Multiple response

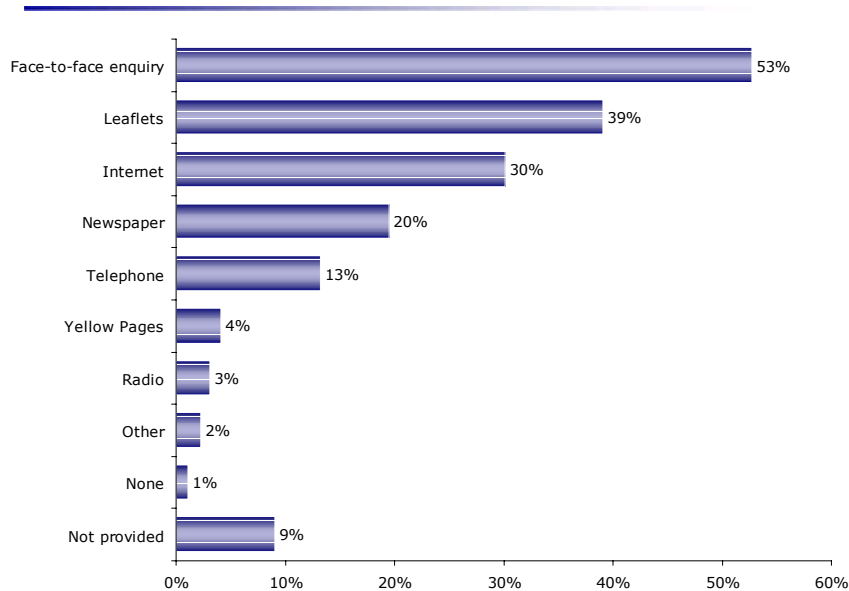
Access to financial services is in part dependent on respondent age, with the largest proportions having access to individual services tending to be highest amongst those aged 25-54. Key exceptions to this include pensions, where those aged over 55 are most likely to have access, and loans from sources other than banks, which predominate amongst respondents aged 16-24.

Types of financial products or services that the respondent currently uses – prompted (All respondents)							
	Respondent age						All
	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Current account with bank or building society	87	91	97	98	95	99	96
Debit card / cheque guarantee card	90	82	90	89	86	75	86
Savings account with bank or building society	51	63	76	77	73	73	71
Credit card	26	59	80	66	60	61	64
Investments (e.g. ISAs, Unit Trusts, TESSAs, stocks and shares)	64	49	60	62	75	58	61
Pension	26	40	57	57	67	77	56
Overdraft facility	38	49	70	64	53	26	53
Mortgage	13	59	68	59	40	5	45
Store card	13	35	32	35	27	27	30
Loan from bank	0	27	21	21	10	8	16
Post Office savings account	0	10	18	6	5	10	10
Loan from loan company	23	10	11	6	3	2	9
Door-to-door loan	10	3	2	0	0	0	2
Loan through Credit Union	0	3	0	1	0	0	1
Other	0	0	3	0	3	2	2
None of the above	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Not provided	0	3	1	1	0	0	1
Unweighted sample bases	8	31	67	79	44	86	315

Financial information

In order to find out information about financial services, the majority of respondents make face-to-face enquiries, whilst two in five consult leaflets, and three in ten search the Internet.

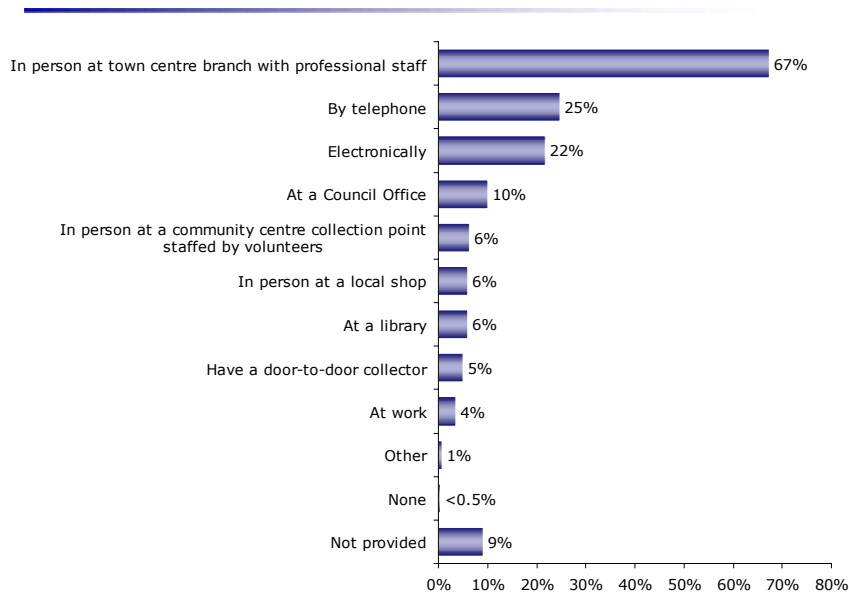
Preferred source of information on loans and savings – prompted (All respondents)



Unweighted sample base = 315

In order to access financial services, two-thirds prefer to attend a town centre branch in person, and talk to professional staff. A further quarter telephone the provider, and over one in five use electronic means.

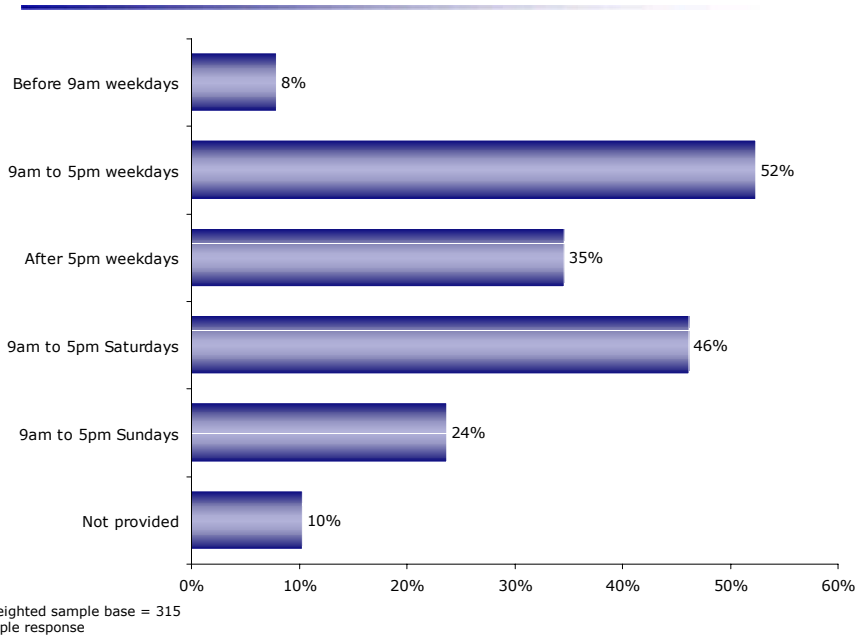
Preferred type of access to financial services – prompted (All respondents)



Unweighted sample base = 315
Multiple response

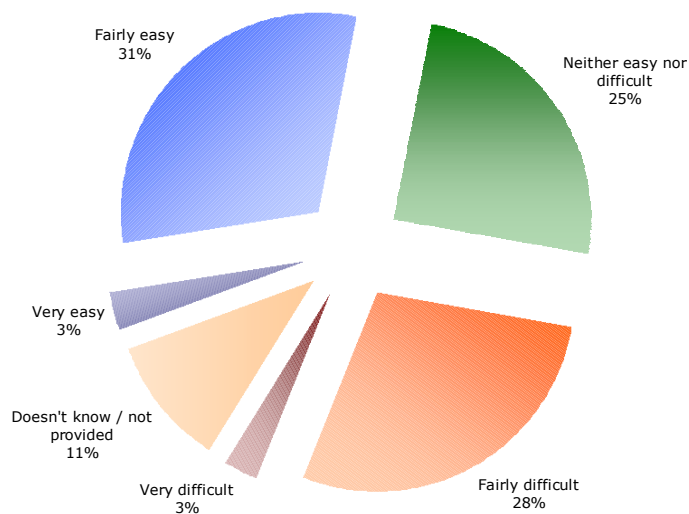
The majority of respondents like to access financial services during traditional weekday office hours (9am to 5pm), whilst approaching one half also like the services to be available on Saturdays 9-5.

Preferred times to access financial services – prompted (All respondents)



Similar proportions of respondents find information offered by financial service providers easy (34%) or difficult (33%) to understand.

Ease of understanding information provided by financial service providers (All respondents)



Generally, it is younger respondents who are less likely to find this information easy to understand: 13% of those aged 16-24; 29% aged 25-34; 43% aged 35-44; 33% aged 45-54; 32% aged 55-64; and 33% aged 65+.

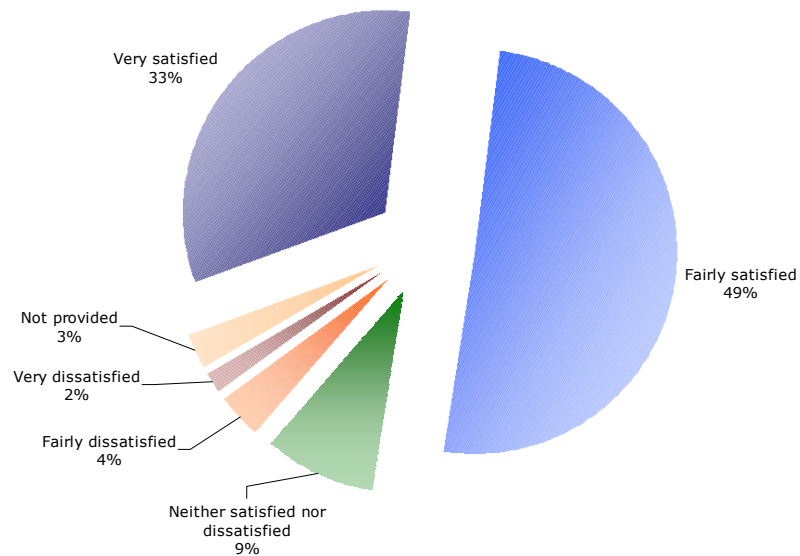
4.3 Current accounts and saving

Current accounts

As noted in section 4.2, 96% of respondents have a current account with a bank or building society.

Of those respondents who have a current account, 83% state that they are satisfied with the service they receive, contrasting with 5% who are dissatisfied.

Satisfaction with the current account
(Respondents who have a current account with a bank or building society)



Figures in parentheses denote unweighted bases

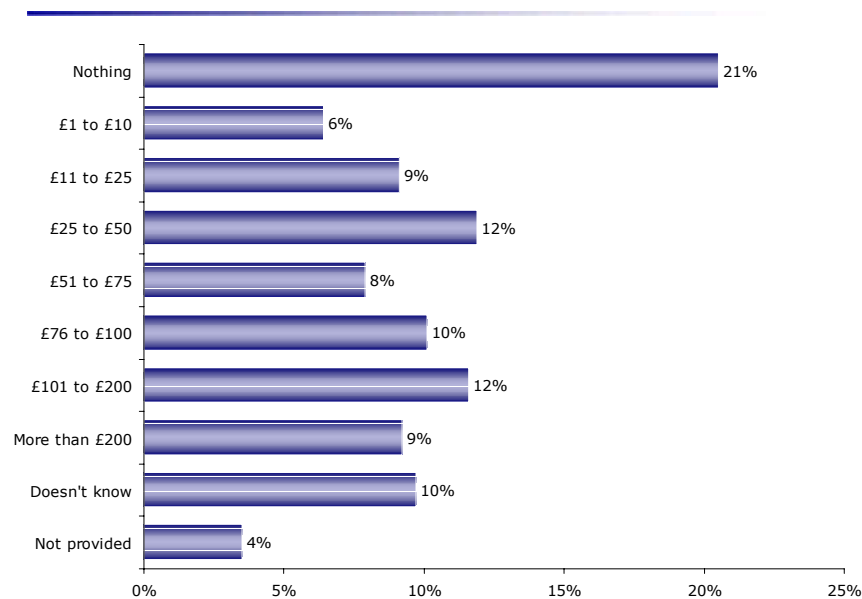
Of the fourteen respondents who do not have a current account, 8/14 (54%) state that they do not require one, 2/14 (16%) state that they are unable to get an account as they are not in work, and 1/14 (10%) states that they cannot get an account as they have a poor credit rating.

Savings

Over four in five respondents (82%) currently have some savings, a proportion which is slightly lower amongst younger respondents: 77% of those aged 16-24; 73% aged 25-34; 81% aged 35-44; 83% aged 45-54; 87% aged 55-64; and 86% aged 65+.

When asked how much money they are able to save each month, 21% are able to save nothing, 14% up to £25; 20% between £26 and £100, and 21% more than this.

Average amount that the respondent manages to save each month
(All respondents)



Unweighted sample base = 315

Unsurprisingly, those respondents not currently in work are far more likely to be in a position where they are unable to save than working respondents (29% and 15% respectively).

The majority of respondents (54%) are in a position where they are able to save money on a regular basis. In contrast, 44% are not in a position to save, whilst small proportions are unsure (1%) or fail to provide a response (1%).

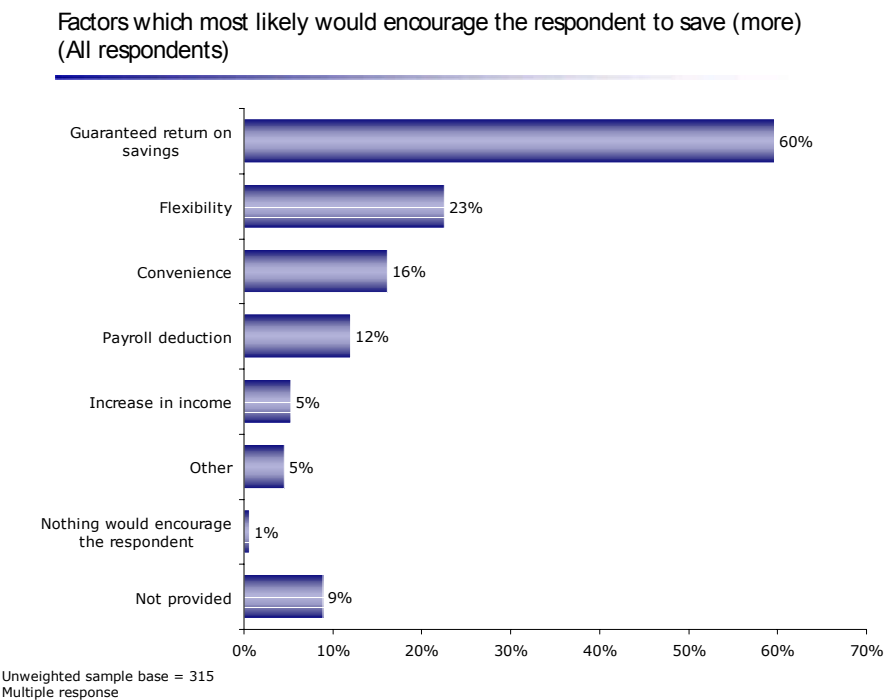
The proportions able to save money on a regular basis do not vary by respondent gender, marital status, whether there are children in the household, or ward. However variations are noted when looking at the following sub groups:

- Age: those aged over 55 are generally least likely to be able to save money; 52% of those aged 16-24, 63% aged 25-34, 53% aged 35-44, 67% aged 45-54, 39% aged 55-64, and 45% aged 65+.
- Housing ownership: those who own their house or who have a mortgage are more than twice as likely to be able to save on a regular basis than those in rented or other accommodation (60% and 25% respectively).

- Disability: those with long-term illnesses or disabilities are less likely to be able to save regularly than those without (31% and 57% respectively).
- Receipt of benefits: whilst those in receipt of Council Tax or Housing Benefits are slightly more likely to be able to save regularly than those not in receipt of benefits (60% and 57% respectively), the proportions of potential savers amongst those who receive Family Credit or Child Support (41%) or Income Support (33%) are far lower.
- In all, 65% of those in work are able to save on a regular basis, with little variation observed between those in full-time or part-time employment. In contrast, only 36% of those not in work are able to save on a similar basis.

Over three-quarters of respondents (76%) would like to be able to save (more) money in the future. In contrast, 16% do not feel the need to save more money, whilst 5% are unsure, and 4% fail to provide a response.

The main factor that would encourage respondents to save more in the future would be if a guaranteed return on savings were to be provided. Notable proportions also mention flexibility, convenience, and direct deductions from their paycheck.



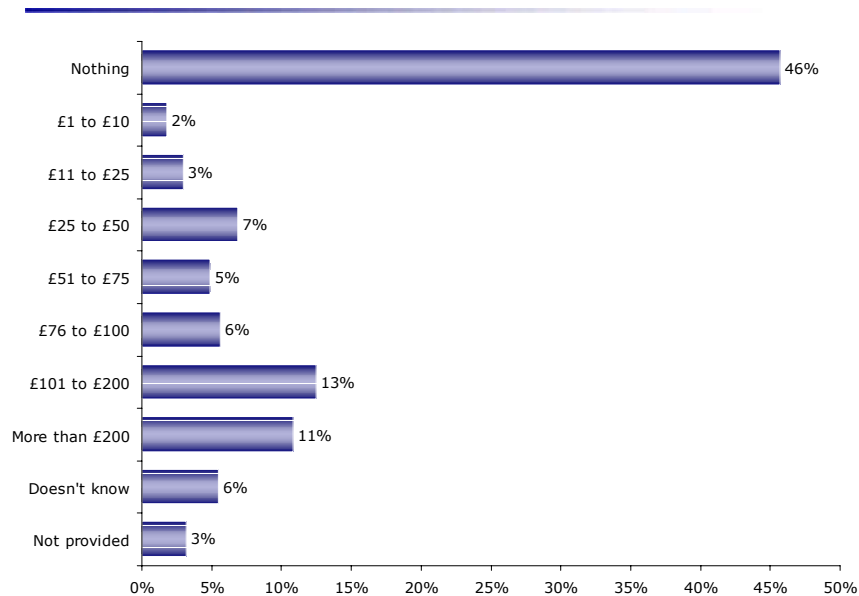
4.4 Loans and credit

Whether the respondent has loaned money

Approaching two in five respondents (38%) currently have some debts, a proportion which is highest amongst those respondents from the core working age groups of 25-54: 23% of those aged 16-24; 52% aged 25-34; 54% aged 35-44; 47% aged 45-54; 20% aged 55-64; and 12% aged 65+.

Currently, 5% of respondents are making credit repayments of up to £25 per month; 17% are paying back £26 to £100 per month, and 23% are paying at least £101.

Average amount that the respondent spends on repaying credit every month
(All respondents)



Unweighted sample base = 315

Approaching three-quarters of respondents (73%) have borrowed money in the past (through a loan or credit card) in order to make purchase of between £50 and £500. Over one-quarter (26%) have not borrowed money for this purpose, whilst small proportions are unsure (1%), or fail to provide a response (<0.5%).

The proportion that has borrowed money peaks amongst those core working age groups of 25-54: 36% of those aged 16-24; 80% aged 25-34; 87% aged 35-44; 82% aged 45-54; 66% aged 55-64; and 58% aged 65+.

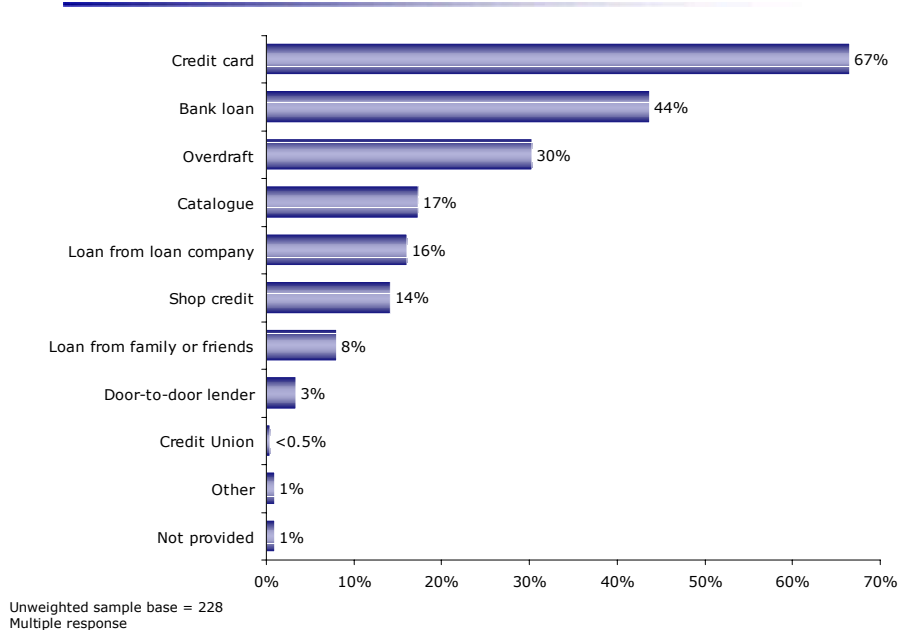
Also of note is that 86% of those who are working have made a loan, which contrasts with 52% of those not in work.

Amongst those respondents who have never taken a loan to make purchases, 79% state that they prefer never to borrow money, 14% that they have never needed to borrow money, and 4% that they are worried about getting into debt.

Sources of loans

Amongst those who have borrowed money in the past to make significant purchases, the key sources of this finance include credit cards, bank loans, and overdrafts. The full range of responses is given below.

Types of credit or loans obtained by the respondent in the past (Respondents who have borrowed between £50 and £5000 in the past to make a purchase)



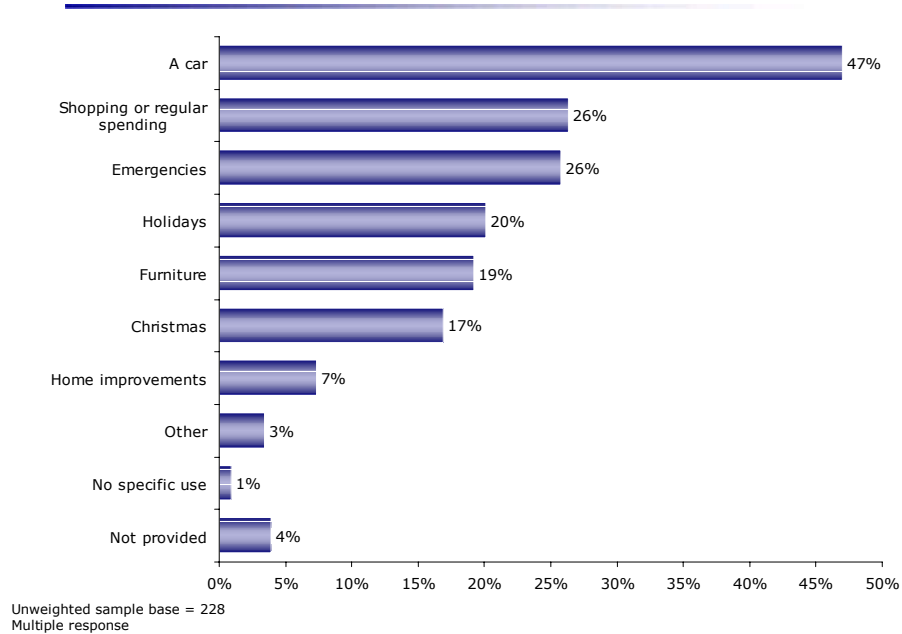
Of those respondents taking out loans, 84% usually know what the interest rates have been. However, key differences in this proportion are observed by respondent gender and age:

- Males are more likely to be aware of the interest rate (90%, compared to 78% of females).
- Awareness of the interest rate is higher amongst older respondents: 81% of those aged 16-34; 77% aged 35-44; 88% aged 45-54; 93% aged 55-64; and 94% aged 65+.

Purpose of loans

Of those respondents who have taken out a loan previously, approaching one-half did so in order to purchase a car. Other key reasons for borrowing include shopping and other regular expenses, and/or emergencies.

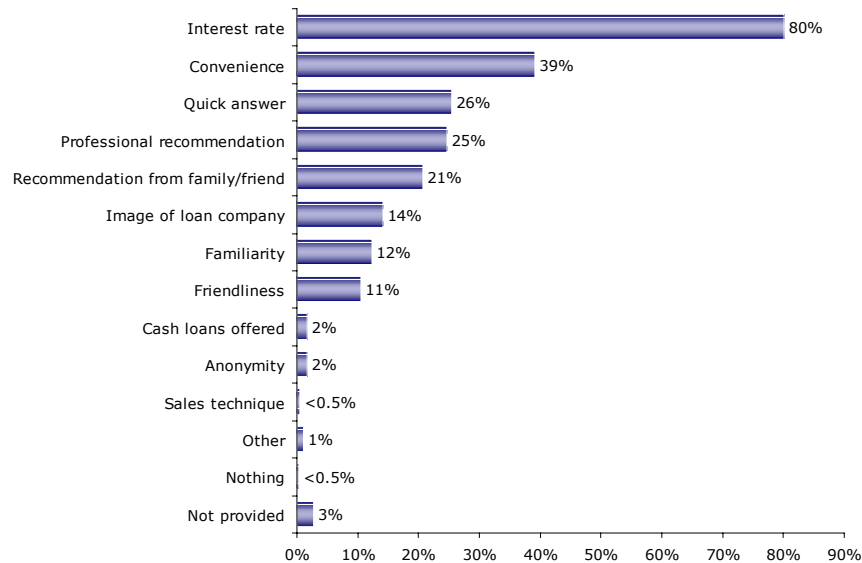
Purposes for which loans have been obtained (Respondents who have borrowed between £50 and £5000 in the past to make a purchase)



Considerations when obtaining loans

When taking out a loan, four in five of those who have borrowed money in the past take the interest rate into consideration, whilst two in five look at the convenience of taking the loan from that source. Other key considerations include a quick decision on loan acceptance, and/or a professional recommendation.

Factors which influence the respondent's choice of where to obtain credit or a loan
(Respondents who have borrowed between £50 and £5000 in the past to make a purchase)



Unweighted sample base = 228
Multiple response

Problems in loaning money

One in ten respondents (10%) have had difficulties in obtaining loans or credit in the past. In contrast, 82% have had no such difficulties, whilst 7% are unsure, and 2% fail to provide a response. Most likely to have had problems in gaining credit include:

- Those in rented accommodation (35%);
- those in receipt of Family Credit or Child Benefit (25%);
- Those not married or living with a partner (22%);
- The self-employed (19%)

Of those respondents who have experienced past difficulties in obtaining loans or credit, 77% state that a poor credit rating led to the problem, whilst others mention other loan commitments already in place (24%), and/or the lack of employment (9%) as barriers.

4.5 Credit Unions

Awareness of Credit Unions

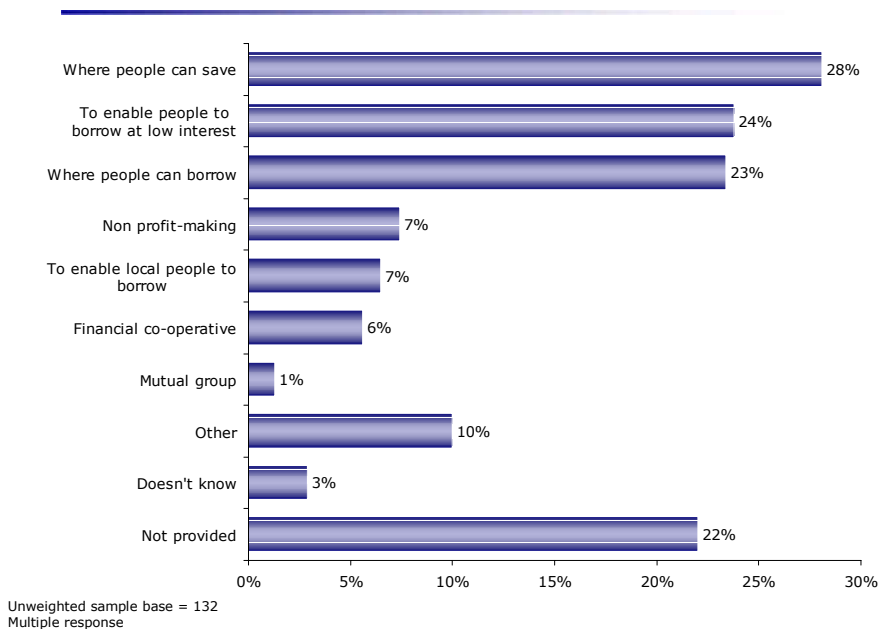
Almost two in five respondents (39%) had previously heard of Credit Unions prior to the survey. Differences in the proportions aware are observed across key respondent sub-groups however:

- Males are more likely to have been aware than females (45% and 34% respectively);
- Awareness is significantly lower amongst the youngest respondents; 13% of those aged 16-24, contrasting with 36% of those aged 25-34, 39% of those aged 35-44, 46% of those aged 45-54, 50% of those aged 55-64, and 42% of those aged 65+.
- Those from outside Hereford are more likely to have been aware than those from within the city (47% and 28% respectively).

Perceptions of Credit Unions

When asked to describe on a spontaneous basis what they thought a Credit Union to be, the largest proportion of those aware of these organisations describe them as a place where people can save. Further, similar proportions highlight Credit Unions as organisations which enable people to borrow at low interest rates, or a place from where people can borrow money in general.

Respondent's description of a Credit Union – unprompted
(Respondents aware of Credit Unions prior to survey)



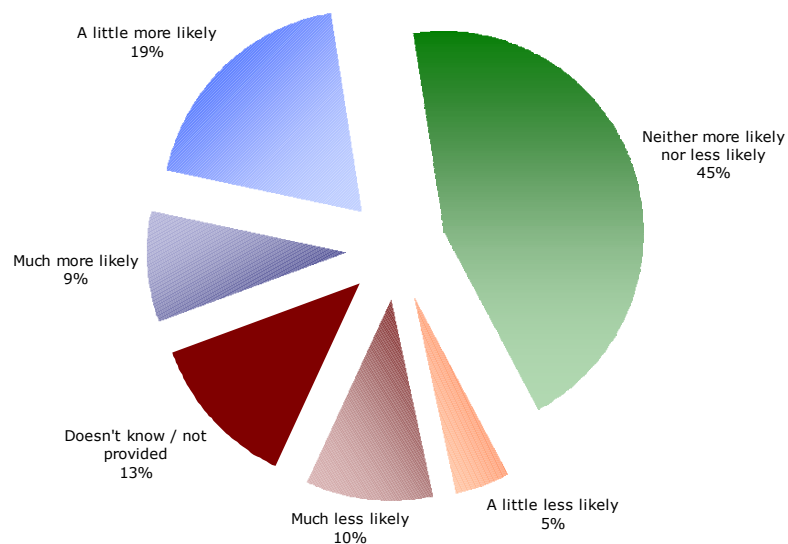
Likelihood of using Credit Unions

All respondents, regardless of their awareness of Credit Unions, were asked to rate the likelihood of using a Credit Union as opposed to other lenders after reading the following description:

"A Credit Union is a financial co-operative that is owned and run by its members, who are all local people. It aims to encourage saving and to provide people with low-cost loans when needed. It looks at each loan application individually, and welcomes members who are on benefits as well as people who are working or self-employed."

In all, 28% of respondents would be more likely to use a Credit Union after having read this, approximately double the proportion (15%) who would be less likely to do so.

Likelihood of using a Credit Union as opposed to other lenders (All respondents)



Unweighted sample base = 315

Respondents who are in work are more likely to consider the use of Credit Unions than those from non-working groups (31% and 24% respectively), but in particular in comparison to retired respondents, where only 14% would consider using Credit Unions to borrow money.

The likelihood of using Credit Unions also varies according to respondent age, with those aged 45-64 being most likely to consider those source of borrowing: 26% of those aged 16-24 and 25-34; 31% aged 35-44; 36% aged 45-54; 35% aged 55-64; and 15% aged 65+.

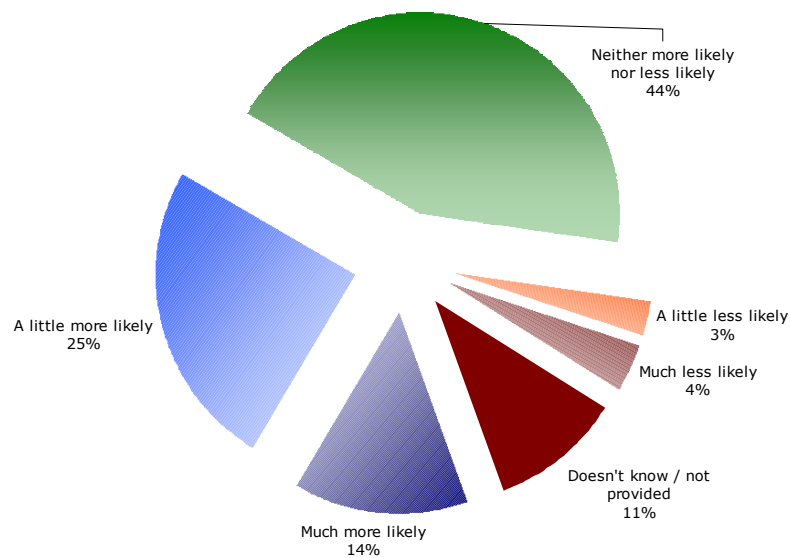
The key reasons for or against considering Credit Unions as a source of borrowing are as follows:

- **For those much more likely to use Credit Unions:** low cost loans (24%); they take into consideration individual circumstances (19%).

- **For those a little more likely to use Credit Unions:** low interest rates (29%); sounds like a good idea (11%).
- **For those neither more nor less likely to use Credit Unions:** no need for a loan (19%); doesn't like to borrow money (15%).
- **For those a little less likely to use Credit Unions:** doesn't consider them to be a professional organisation (15%); does not want local people managing their finances (15%).
- **For those much less likely to use Credit Unions:** no need for a loan (41%); prefers to use credit card (9%).

When informed that Credit Unions offer free insurance that pays off loans, and increases savings in the event of death, 39% of respondents state that they would be more likely to use Credit Unions than other lenders, whilst 7% would be less likely to use them.

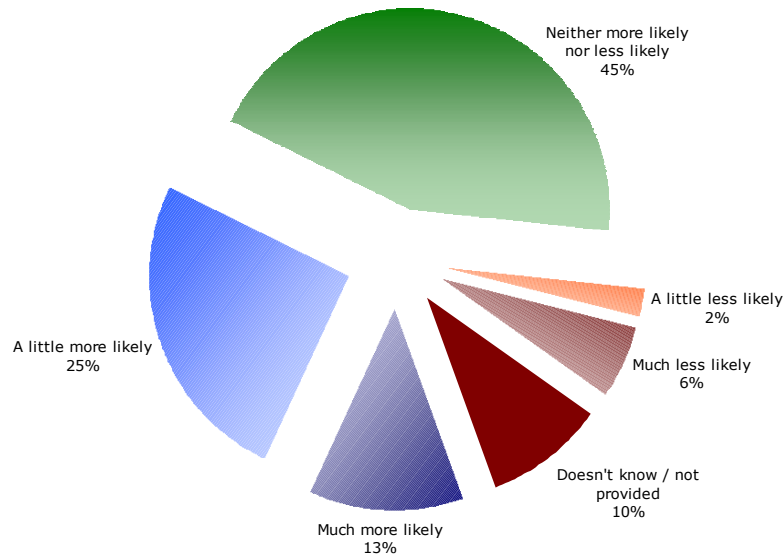
Likelihood of using a Credit Union as opposed to other lenders due to the free insurance that pays of loans or increases savings (All respondents)



Unweighted sample base = 315

Finally, when informed that the expansion of Moneybox (the Herefordshire Credit Union) is supported by the Council and other local organisations, 38% state that they would be more likely to use Credit Unions than other lenders, whilst 8% would be less likely to use them.

Likelihood of using a Credit Union as opposed to other lenders due to the support from the Council and other organisations (All respondents)



Unweighted sample base = 315

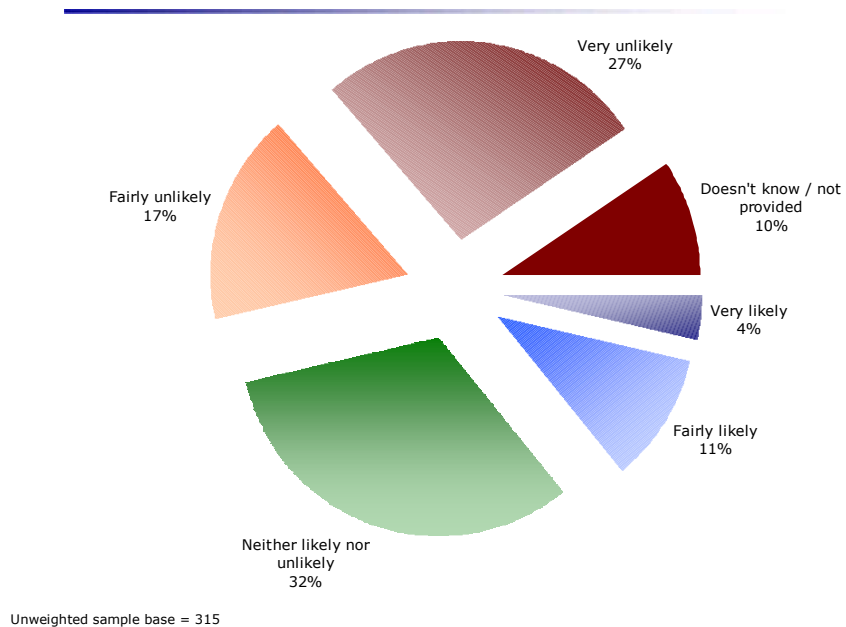
The key reasons in this instance for or against considering Credit Unions as a source of borrowing are as follows:

- **For those much more likely to use Credit Unions:** they are supported by the Citizens' Advice Bureau (25%); they are local accessible (10%).
- **For those a little more likely to use Credit Unions:** the backing gives them a more credible image (36%); the backing of the Citizens' Advice Bureau imparts confidence (16%).
- **For those neither more nor less likely to use Credit Unions:** no need for a loan (20%); happy with existing lenders (13%).
- **For those a little less likely to use Credit Unions:** prefers to use building society (16%); has no faith in Council or Citizens' Advice Bureau (16%).
- **For those much less likely to use Credit Unions:** no need for a loan (24%); Council should not get involved (24%).

Likelihood of joining Moneybox

Overall, 14% of respondents state that they would be likely to join Moneybox, Herefordshire's Credit Union in the future. In contrast, 44% would be unlikely to do so.

Likelihood of joining Moneybox (All respondents)

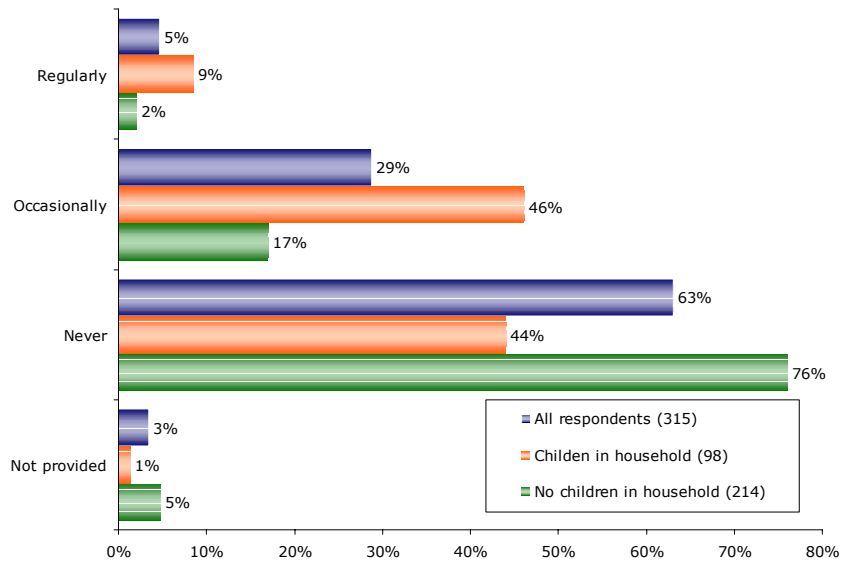


Whilst the proportions prepared to use Moneybox in the future are fairly consistent by respondent age or whether they are in work or not, there is a wide difference in the proportion of potential users according to whether there are children in the household: 22% of those with children in the household would be prepared to use Moneybox, contrasting with 9% of those from households without children.

Credit Union savings and loans

Were Credit Union savings or loans to be made available through schools or health clinics, 34% of respondents would make use of these, with 5% doing so on a regular basis. Potential uptake increases still further amongst those respondents from households containing children, where 55% would make use of the savings or loans (cf. 19% of those from households with no children).

Frequency with which the respondent would use Credit Unions if savings/loans were offered through schools or health clinics (All respondents)



Figures in parentheses denote unweighted bases

These savings or loans would be used for general family finances (25%), children’s savings (21%), and/or school trips and uniforms (15%).

5 ICT

5.1 ICT Access

Overall, 82% of respondents have access to computers or related ICT such as broadband and the Internet at home or at work. The most common types of access includes home access to a computer (75%), home access to the Internet (64%), and work access to a computer (41%).

Access to ICT facilities is generally lowest amongst those aged 65+.

ICT access at home and work (All respondents)							
	Respondent age						All
	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A computer at home	87	79	94	73	67	38	75
A computer at work	38	61	54	53	30	6	41
A computer elsewhere	64	26	14	9	19	11	19
Internet at home	77	66	80	68	60	26	64
Internet t work	38	54	46	36	20	4	34
Internet elsewhere	64	26	14	6	16	10	18
Broadband Internet at home	26	17	10	9	5	2	10
Broadband Internet t work	13	10	15	11	0	3	10
Broadband Internet elsewhere	25	10	3	1	2	3	6
No access	0	12	3	16	18	46	16
Not provided	0	0	1	1	4	7	2
Unweighted sample bases	8	31	67	79	44	86	315

5.2 Broadband connections

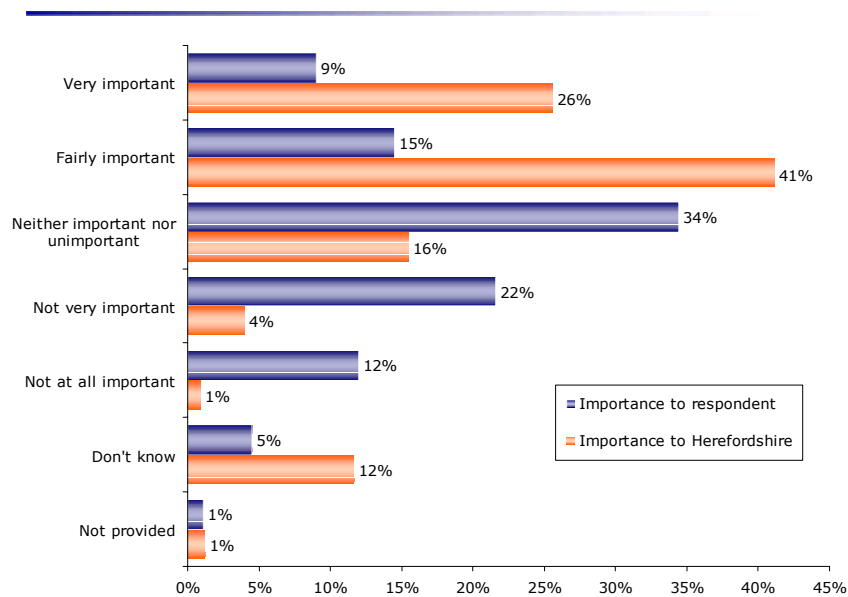
Importance of broadband connections

All respondents, regardless of their current use of computers and other ICT equipment, were asked to rate how important a broadband connection would be, both to themselves, and to people in Herefordshire in general.

Whilst acknowledging that a broadband connection may not be important from a personal standpoint, a large proportion of respondents do recognise the benefits for the district on the whole:

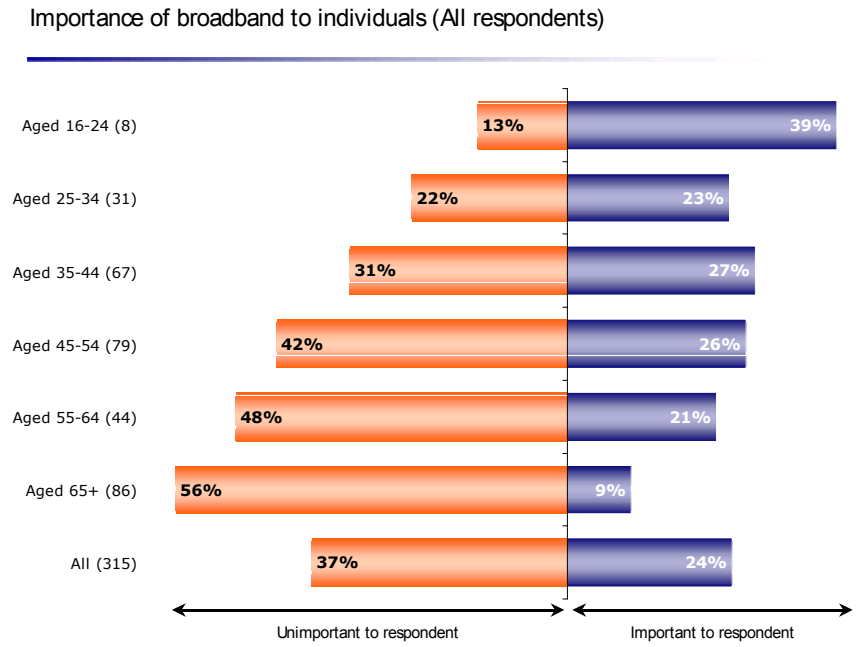
- In all, almost one-quarter (24%) feel that a broadband connection is important from a personal standpoint, whilst two-thirds (67%) feel that such services would be important for Herefordshire on the whole.
- Very few respondents (5%) perceive broadband availability for Herefordshire to be unimportant, even though 37% do not consider the services important to them.

Importance of broadband to individuals and the population of Herefordshire (All respondents)



Sample bases = 315

With regards to the **personal** importance of broadband to the individual, the proportions giving a rating of fairly/very important are fairly consistent across the core age groups of 25-64. However, those aged 16-24 are far more likely to perceive a broadband connection to be important to them¹, and those aged 65+ far less likely to perceive an importance.



Figures in parentheses denote unweighted bases

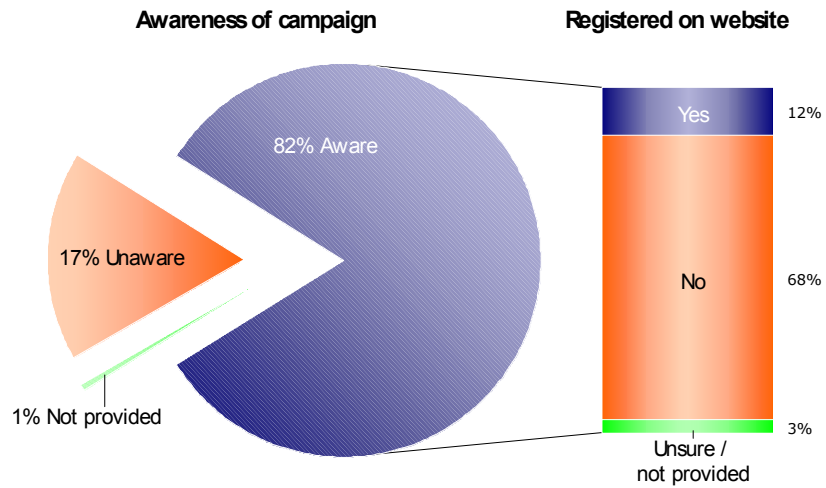
Note in addition, that 30% of those in wards outside of Hereford perceive a broadband connection to be important to themselves personally. This is over double the proportion (14%) observed in Hereford itself.

¹ Albeit on a small sample base

We Want Broadband for Herefordshire campaign

Prior to the survey, over four in five respondents (82%) were aware of the *We Want Broadband for Herefordshire* campaign. In all, 12% of respondents have registered for broadband on the website².

Awareness of and registration on the *We Want Broadband for Herefordshire* campaign



Sample base = 315

Whilst awareness of the campaign does not vary significantly between Hereford respondents and those from other wards, those in Hereford are far less likely to have actually registered on the website – 5% in all, compared to 16% from other wards.

² This equates to 14% of those respondents who were previously aware of the campaign.

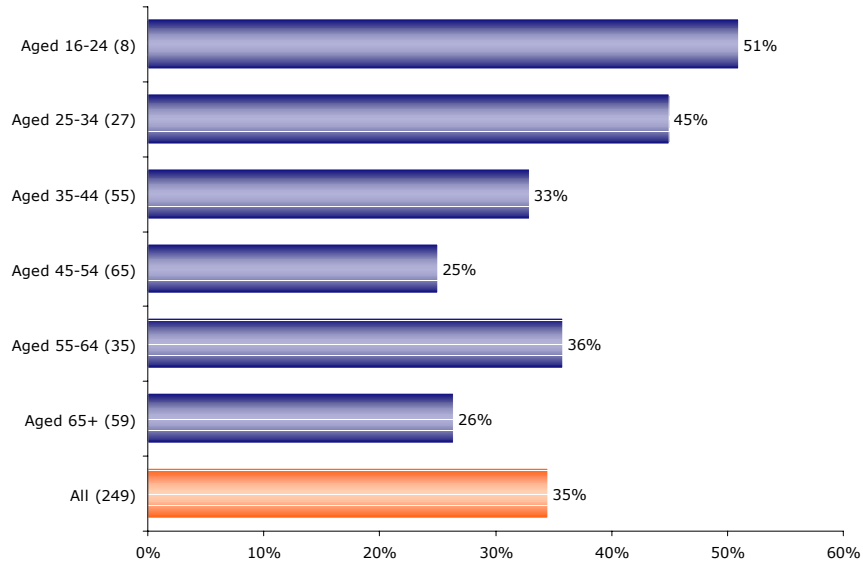
Awareness of the campaign falls with respondent age, although encouragingly, a high proportion of those aged 65+ (68%) still indicate awareness. Registration on the website is most likely amongst younger respondents aged up to 44, and particularly amongst those aged 25-44. Few respondents aged 65+ (3%) have registered on the website however.

Awareness of and registration on the <i>We Want Broadband for Herefordshire</i> campaign		
	Aware	Registered
	%	%
By ward		
Hereford City (127)	79	5
Other wards (188)	84	16
By respondent age		
Aged 16-24 (31)	100	13
Aged 25-34 (41)	88	17
Aged 35-44 (67)	83	18
Aged 45-54 (79)	82	8
Aged 55-64 (44)	80	11
Aged 65+ (86)	68	3
Whether there are children in household		
Yes (98)	88	11
No (214)	79	13
All (315)	82	68
Figures in parentheses denote unweighted bases		

Of those respondents who are aware of the *We Want Broadband for Herefordshire Campaign*, 35% feel that the campaign has given them a better understanding of the benefits that broadband services could provide. The majority however (57%) do not feel that they have a better understanding.

An understanding of the benefits tends to be higher amongst younger respondents aged up to 34.

Proportion of respondents who have a better understanding of the benefits of broadband since the *We Want Broadband for Herefordshire Campaign*
(Respondents who are aware of the campaign)



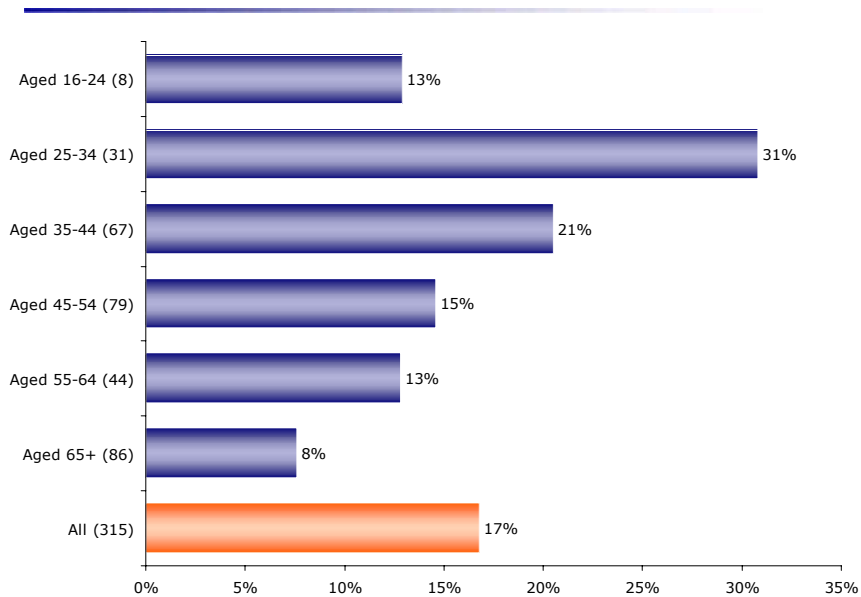
Figures in parentheses denote unweighted bases

BT Broadband

Approximately one in six respondents (17%) have registered for BT Broadband. In contrast, 81% have not registered, 1% are unsure, and 1% have failed to provide a response. As with registration on the *We Want Broadband...* website, registrations for BT Broadband are far lower within Hereford than elsewhere in the district (9% and 22% respectively).

The key age groups who have registered for BT Broadband are those within the 25-44 year banding. The proportions registering are lowest amongst those aged 65+.

Proportion of respondents who have registered for BT Broadband, by age (All respondents)



Figures in parentheses denote sample bases

Finally, those with children in the household are slightly more likely than those from childless households to have registered for the service (22% and 14% respectively).