



Knowing your neighbours

New research from Halifax Estate Agents has examined modern moving etiquette and the fledgling relationship between new neighbours. With the time constraints of modern living, do we take an interest in getting to know our neighbours or do we just observe them from behind net curtains? Just how important are our relationships with neighbours to us?

Key findings of the research include:

- Over two fifths (42%) of respondents believe that it is quite important to build new relationships with their neighbours.
- It takes the majority of people (34%) at least a month to make their minds up about their new neighbours.
- Over two-fifths of new home movers (44%) have received a gift from their new neighbours.
- Only one third of people (34%) were invited round for drinks by their neighbours within the first week of moving.

Love thy neighbour

When moving into a new home over two fifths (42%) of those surveyed said that it was quite important to them that they build relationships with new neighbours. This was particularly fundamental to those aged between 18 to 24 years of age (50%) and those from the South West (54%) and the North (53%).

In contrast, those in Scotland (10%) would prefer it if they did not have any contact with their neighbours at all.

Almost two fifths (19%) of respondents considered neighbourly relationships not to be very important to them, but they were happy to chat to their neighbours over the garden fence occasionally. This sentiment was strongest amongst those from East Anglia (27%) and those aged between 18 and 24 (29%).

In addition, over one third of married, or living as married couples (35%), considered fostering good relationships with their neighbours to be very important to them, as they had a desire to live in a close knit community. This was a feeling shared with those over the age of 65 (41%) and those from Wales (45%).

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Making a lasting impression

15% of the respondents said that they were able to get the measure of their new neighbours immediately. This feeling was strongest amongst those aged over 65 (21%).

Over one third (34%) of those asked, said it would take at least a month before they would be truly able to make their minds up about their new neighbours. Those from the East Midlands (43%) and Wales (43%) also took a month to weigh up new neighbours

A quarter (24%) of those surveyed said that they could usually make up their mind within a week.

Receiving gifts

Of those surveyed almost half (44%) had received house warming gifts from their new neighbours. When choosing gifts, most of us tend to play it safe and stick to a greeting card (28%), which is closely followed by the traditional offering of wine or plants and flowers (18% respectively).

Those from the East Midlands are the most popular when giving alcohol as a gift, with 24% choosing this gift. The North is once again the least generous, with just under half (49%) saying that they had not received a gift at all.

However, anybody receiving anything at all from new neighbours should count themselves honoured as a huge 42% of those surveyed have never received anything.

Invite lost in the post

It appears that neither age, nor gender are boundaries when it comes to being invited round for drinks with new neighbours.

Almost two thirds (64%) said that they were not invited round in the first week, with three quarters (73%) of 25 to 34 year olds seemingly the least popular.

One third (34%) of new home owners were invited round for drinks within the first week of moving. However, people in Wales are more likely to receive an invitation for drinks (46%), while the majority of people in the North (76%) and in Scotland (74%) and the North West (74%) said that they had not received an invitation.

Gordon Edwards, managing director, Halifax Estate Agents, comments:

"Good neighbourly relationships help to maintain a sense of community spirit in towns and villages across the UK. They can also be invaluable for helping each other out, for instance having someone to keep an eye on the house or feed the cat whilst you're away."

Ends.
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Editors' Notes

Table 1: How important is it to you to foster good relationships with new neighbours?

	Percentage
Not at all important – would prefer not to have any contact with them	6%
Not very important – happy to chat over the garden fence occasionally	19%
Quite important – would like to build friendships	42%
Very important – want to live in a close knit community	33%

Table 2: If you have ever had new neighbours, how long after seeing them do you decide what they are like?

	Percentage
Immediately	15%
Ten minutes	6%
One hour	4%
One day	7%
One week	24%
A month or more	34%

Table 3: Have you ever received any of the following as a welcome gift from a new neighbour?

	Percentage
A card	28%
Bottle of wine	18%
Plant/flowers	18%
Homemade cakes/biscuits	15%

Table 4: When you moved, did your new neighbours ever invite you round for drinks within the first week of moving in?

	Percentage
Yes	34%
No	64%

*GfK NOP interviewed a representative sample of 956 adults aged 18+ between 28th and 30th March 2008.