



Mind your manners when moving

New research from Halifax Estate Agents shows the modern world of moving etiquette and the realities of forming a relationship with neighbours is as complex as ever and expectations vary depending on the region, age and type of property you are moving into.

Key Findings of the research include:

- Two-fifths of people (37%) believe that existing residents should take the initiative to introduce themselves to new neighbours.
- A quarter (23%) of people would be offended if new neighbours did not introduce themselves.
- Half of respondents (45%) believe that introductions should be made within the first week.
- Giving gifts (44%) is more popular than inviting new neighbours round for drinks (34%).

First moves

When moving into a new home, almost two fifths of people (37%) believe that the existing residents should make the first move and pop round to say hello. This etiquette is most strongly regarded amongst the younger generation of 18 to 24 year olds and is a significant shift from last year's survey where almost half (48%) left the responsibility to current residents. Conversely, almost a quarter (22%) feel that it is the new home owners' responsibility to make that initial contact. (See table 1).

However, responses do vary depending upon which region you are moving to as almost a third (31%) of those in the North think the responsibility lies with those moving in, where as more than two fifths (43%) of those in the North West, place the onus on existing residents. More than two fifths (42%) in East Anglia think it is the responsibility of both parties to initiate an introduction.

Moving manners

When it comes to matters of politeness, almost a quarter (23%) would think their neighbours rude if they did not introduce themselves, whereas three quarters (76%) would not be offended at all. The age group who would feel most slighted are those aged between 35 and 44 years of age (34%) compared to just a sixth (16%) of people aged between 55 and 64.

On a regional basis, those in the West Midlands (32%), London (30%) and Scotland (29%) are most likely to think their neighbours rude if they did not introduce themselves, whereas those from the North (87%), Wales (84%) and East Anglia (83%) would not consider it to be an issue.

Right time for introductions

With the furniture just moved in and boxes still to unpack, a sixth of people (16%) would leave it less than 24 hours before greeting new neighbours. Almost half of people (45%) think it is acceptable for neighbours to introduce themselves within the first two to seven days, whilst a further fifth (21%) think within one to two weeks is an acceptable time frame. (See table 2).

More/....

It also seems that the closer we live to our neighbours, the longer we leave the introduction. For example, around half of those who live in a detached (49%) or semi-detached house (51%) would introduce themselves within the first two to seven days, yet a third of those in flats (34%) and almost a quarter of residents in terraced houses (22%) would leave it one to two weeks.

Gift giving

Although it seems we are fairly keen to meet those living next door, two fifths of new residents (42%) did not receive a welcome gift from their new neighbours.

The most popular gifts given were greetings cards (28%), a bottle of wine (18%), plants and flowers (18%) or home made cakes and biscuits (15%). (See table 3).

Getting together

A third of people (34%) said they had been invited round for a drink by new neighbours. In Wales, new home owners are more likely to receive an invitation for drinks with the neighbours (46%), while in the North over three quarters (76%) said that they had no invitation at all.

Sneakily, a fifth of people (18%) admit to welcoming their neighbours and inviting themselves in just so they can have a look around the house. This is most common for those aged 35 to 44 (22%) and the nosiest region is Yorkshire and Humberside (27%). More than a quarter of flat residents (26%) also admit to this.

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

"Moving home is one of the most significant events in your life, and, having made the move integrating into the local community is so important.

"It is reassuring that many people do take the time to introduce themselves to their new neighbours. Receiving a warm welcome can really help you settle into a new home and it is always useful to know a friendly face if you can't find the tea bags when you are unpacking."

Ends.

Editors' Notes

Table 1: Do you believe it is up to the people moving in, or those neighbours already living in an area to make the first move and introduce themselves?

	Percentage
People moving in	22%
Existing residents	37%
Both	24%

Table 2: After someone moves in, how long do you think is an appropriate length of time before new neighbours should introduce themselves to each other?

	Percentage
One day or less	16%
Two to seven days	45%
One to two weeks	21%
Two weeks to one month	7%
A month or more	5%

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%

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