



Consumer survey: View London.co.uk (entertainment and listings website)

Brief:

View London conducted a far-reaching survey – *The Londoners' Charter* – on topics close to the hearts of Londoners. The company wanted the results analysed and written up, using a personable tone befitting View London, for distribution to key consumer press.

Londoners' Charter

Produced by



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Introduction

Londoners are renowned for their strong opinions. But where can you go to get Londoners' opinions on almost every subject from just one place? From the *Londoners' Charter* – a new far-reaching survey conducted and produced by Viewlondon.co.uk, the Londoner's guide to London.

The *Londoners' Charter* is a revealing insight in to how Londoners really feel about life and living in the capital.

The survey has been designed to incorporate every aspect of modern life, from the serious to the irreverent. The *Londoners' Charter* reveals Londoners' opinions on transport, education, the local environment and amenities, going out, shopping, love and family, to give the most up-to-date and definitive picture of what's important to Londoners.

The *Londoners' Charter* also contains genuine quotes from Londoners.

The *Londoners' Charter* is based on the results of an online survey of 1,000 Londoners.

Executive summary

The overwhelming feeling from the *Londoners' Charter* is that, while London has its flaws, it is one of the most exciting cities in the world in which to live. An appreciation of the sheer scale of London, both in terms of its cultural make-up and what it has to offer, pervaded many responses.

The city clearly gives its inhabitants a sense of being 'part of something' – a feeling that they simply would not get from living anywhere else in the country. It appears most Londoners are happy in the capital and do not envisage deserting the city any time soon. And if they did, it would be to emigrate abroad rather than relocate to anywhere else in the UK.

The capital's celebrated stoicism is also present in the report – high profile issues, such as terrorism and street crime, may grab headlines but they do not perturb Londoners. It appears that Londoners have a keen sense of perspective – for them, there is little point fretting about things over which they have no control.

They are, however, far more likely to be irked by the nitty gritty of London life, such as litter, graffiti and delayed trains. This feeling is exacerbated by the perception that these are things which *are* in the city's control, and can be remedied with monies provided by Londoners – the ever-increasing council tax rates and public transport fares.

Educational provision for their children is something of great concern to Londoners. But this anxiety is not something most would share with their MP – the survey reveals a city disaffected by the political system.

And while the capital offers a myriad of different career opportunities and wealth, nurturing relationships is what Londoners really care about. And it appears that the pub is as good a place as any to nurture these relationships – for most people living in the capital, relaxing means drinking.

Key findings

Work-life balance

Contrary to common belief, the main driver for Londoners is not work – 31 percent claim family is their main priority in life. Love and relationships are a close second (30 percent), while friends come third (15 percent). Career is of primary importance for only 13 percent.

The good – cultural diversity and tolerance

Much is made of the racial tension that exists in pockets of London, but the fact that so many cultures co-exist and flourish in the same city is a source of pride for many Londoners. Cultural diversity is cited as the best thing about living in London by one-fifth of those surveyed. Even when Londoners are faced with religious extremism, they do not allow prejudice to prevail – 81 percent of respondents say that their attitude towards ethnic minorities has not changed in the aftermath of the July 7 terrorist attack.

Also very popular with Londoners is the fact that the city is always a hotbed of activity and that it radiates a palpable ‘buzz’.

The bad – litter, expense and public transport

Every Londoner is aware of crime but by no means does it tarnish their experience of living in the capital. When asked ‘what do you dislike most about living in London?’, crime scored just eight percent of the vote, while fear of terrorism doesn’t even register. Rather, it is the city’s litter and pollution that most riles its inhabitants (22 percent). The capital’s transportation system is also unpopular (19 percent); and many Londoners cite the financial pressure of making their way in the capital as their biggest gripe (14 percent).

Committed to the capital

London’s positives, however, evidently outweigh the negatives – more than one-third (36 percent) plan to live in London for up to five more years, almost the same number (31 percent) envisage staying for up to ten more years, and more than a quarter (28 percent) intend to remain in the capital for the rest of their lives.

Even those who do foresee moving out of the city to somewhere else in the UK want to remain within easy reach of London – 23 percent said they would move to the Home Counties. Other regions of the UK were of little interest, with not one area

scoring more than three percent. The strongest lure came from foreign climes – 56 percent say that, if they were to leave London, it would be to live abroad.

Crime and terrorism

Despite high-profile incidents of crime and the dark cloud of terrorism, London is anything but a city living in fear. Nearly one-fifth of respondents (18 percent) say they feel very safe living in London, and nearly three-quarters (73 percent) say they feel fairly safe. Just eight percent say they do not feel safe at all. Meanwhile, nearly two-thirds (64 percent) said they aren't worried about the threat of terrorism, with 79 percent claiming they have not changed one thing about their daily routines in the wake of the July 7 bombings.

Local environment

Londoners are not just proud of the capital in general, they also take pride in where they live. Nearly two-thirds (61 percent) say they find their local environment aesthetically pleasing, and 90 percent say they wouldn't be embarrassed to have visitors to their local area. That's no reason for local councils to be complacent, however – when asked what improvements they'd like to see to in their local area, the most popular response is cleaner streets. And again echoing the resolute nature of Londoners, only five percent say they'd like to see more police on the streets of their local area.

Education

One thing that does concern Londoners is their children's education. Despite nearly half of respondents rating the performance of their local school between 'excellent' and 'OK', more than one-third (36 percent) plan to send their children to a private school. High tuition fees won't act as a deterrent either – almost half of all respondents who are planning to snub state schools say they would compromise their own living standards to ensure their children received a private education.

Council Tax

Council tax continues to evoke passionate feelings – largely negative. Forty-percent of Londoners say they feel disgusted every time a council tax hike is proposed. Two-thirds of the capital are at a loss as to where their council tax actually goes, and more than three-quarters (77 percent) believe that their local authority does not distribute properly the council tax payments it receives.

Politics

The report also reveals Londoners' sense of political disenfranchisement and exposes the low opinion the city holds towards its elected representatives – just 12 percent of the capital believe their MP is in touch with their needs. According to the *Charter*, the capital's MPs are simply not putting in the graft, with a meagre 13 percent believing that their MP works hard enough. And when asked to evaluate the performance of their MP, Londoners are damning. Only three percent rate their MP as 'very good', with 24 percent rating them as 'good'. And if apathy really is the biggest threat to democracy, Londoners have sounded a warning to politicians, as more than half of respondents (57 percent) say they have 'no opinion' of their MP.

Transport

When it comes to getting about in the capital, Londoners prefer the tube (26 percent), followed by the bus (18 percent). The biggest grumbles about public transport are that it's overpriced (34 percent) and overcrowded (23 percent). Almost three-fifths of Londoners (59 percent) would welcome a 24-hour tube service.

Hospitals

Londoners harbour a low opinion of local hospitals, with one-third of respondents saying they are below standard and 15 percent claiming they are terrible. Forty-five percent of Londoners are worried about MRSA – which is, interestingly, nine percent more than those who are worried about the threat of terrorism.

Shopping

The capital is certainly not averse to retail therapy. Londoners' most popular purchases are holidays (17 percent) and clothes (15 percent). Central London is the preferred place to shop (34 percent), followed by the local high street (19 percent).

Local high streets are losing their identity, according to more than half of Londoners (55 percent). But if local businesses are heartened to hear that they are supported by 63 percent of Londoners, they may be less cheerful when they hear that they are supported only in spirit – the same number of Londoners actually use supermarkets instead of buying from local traders.

Drinking and eating out

Nearly two-thirds (60 percent) of Londoners said that keeping fit is important to them – but this doesn't mean they aren't partial to a drink. A quarter of Londoners go out

for a drink twice a week. Wine is the tipple of choice (22 percent), followed by beer (15 percent) and spirits (11 percent). Thirty-seven percent of Londoners prefer to enjoy a drink locally, while 31 percent make the trip in to central London. Soho is the most popular destination for those who do venture in to town.

Londoners are very fond of their food – nearly one-third (29 percent) claim to eat out once a week. Italian is the capital's favourite cuisine (17 percent), followed closely by Thai (15 percent) and Indian (10 percent). By far the biggest gripe about eating out is poor service (34 percent).

Love

Those looking for love in the capital may struggle – only 26 percent of Londoners are single; while those looking for a quick fix are equally out of luck, as only 24 percent said they would consider having a one night stand. Online dating is yet to grip the city's singletons – only 13 percent have used an internet dating website. And there's little room for manoeuvre for those likely to stray – 38 percent of the capital consider kissing someone outside of the relationship to be unfaithful.

Results

NB: where percentages do not add up to 100, forms were spoilt by respondents or not applicable

Living in London

What do you like about living in London?	
Diversity of cultures	20%
There is always something to do / something going on	17%
The vibrancy / buzz / atmosphere	9%
The transportation system	5%
It's a cosmopolitan city	4%

What the people say:

- It's quite literally "the world in one city" - it offers just about everything you could possibly want from a city.*
- London is diverse, with different places and different people everywhere. You can never get bored in London.*
- I have the chance to experience different cultures, visit different restaurants, clubs museums... there's just nothing compared to the atmosphere of London.*
- I've been to cities all over the world and just don't think anywhere else has as much to offer as London does – history, people, music, theatre, shopping, museums.*
- Coming from Lincolnshire I love the public transport, it really is taken for granted by the majority of those in London. I love the music here too, a quick search on the net and there's always at the very least a handful of top quality indie gigs being played on any evening and all tube-able.*

What do you dislike about living in London?	
The dirt / pollution / litter	22%
The transportation system	19%
The expense	14%
Rude people	10%
Crime	8%

What the people say:

- At times, it can be lonely, even though there are so many people around. People are always so busy, so it's hard to meet up with friends that often.*
- Very high cost of living, overcrowding, crime, appalling public transport with absolutely no hope of changes to the better during my life time, the arrogant mayor and a few other things.*

- *Rudeness, people don't smile on the street. There's a lack of community spirit. Commuter trains with not enough carriages for everyone to get on morning after morning.*

How long do you envisage living in London?	
0-1 years	5%
1-5 years	36%
5-10 years	31%
Forever	28%

If you moved away from London, where would you go?	
Home counties	23%
Midlands	3%
Wales	3%
North West	3.5%
North East	1.5%
South West	1.5%
Scotland	3%
Overseas	56%

How safe do you feel in London?	
Very	18%
Fairly	73%
Not at all	8%

Terrorism

Does the threat of terrorism in London worry you?	
Yes	36%
No	64%

What habits have you changed since 7/7?	
I haven't changed anything	79%
I avoid the tube	7%
I avoid the bus	0.2%
I use more taxis	1.4%
I walk more	12.4%

Has your attitude towards ethnic minorities changed?	
Positive shift	5%
Negative shift	14%
No change	81%

Work-life balance

What is your main priority in life?	
Money	5%
Work / Career	13%
Love / relationships	30%
Friends	15%
Family	31%
Health	7%

Local environment

Do you find your local environment aesthetically pleasing?	
Yes	61%
No	39%

What the people say:

- *There are improvements going on where I live and I live next to a park which is lovely. However I detest dumped rubbish that no-one bothers to clean up.*
- *In some ways. It's very dirty but in the summer, everything seems beautiful and better.*

Is there too much dog mess on your streets?	
Yes	35%
No	62%

Are you embarrassed to have visitors to your local area?	
Yes	10%
No	90%

What the people say:

- *No, I love having people round, and can introduce them to the Portuguese community in Vauxhall, where I live. They are always surprised how great the cafes, delis and bars are.*
- *Nope; Londoners know what London is all about and visitors from overseas love London anyway.*
- *Certainly not, in fact I am rather proud when friends from 'Up North' visit and I can see the envy in their green eyes!*
- *Sometimes, mainly at nights and weekends, the street can look like a shanty town all closed up with drunk children loitering in gangs and the poor street lighting.*

What improvements would you like to see in your local area?	
Cleaners streets / less visible rubbish	17%
More shops / bars / pubs	12%
Greener areas / more trees	10%

Less crime / violence / graffiti	8%
More police	5%

Education

How are your local schools performing?	
Excellent	4%
Good	17%
Ok	27%
Poor	15%
Don't know	37%

What the people say:

- *I have two children and the schools are middling. The secondary schools are worrying in that there is a lot of aggression in the children.*
- *Terribly. I meet many kids through my job that have dropped out of school, or who cannot read of right [sic], or both. The school system is simply failing many young people.*
- *Generally OK although there are a couple of schools I wouldn't want to send my kids to. However, the schools are under-funded so are doing as good a job as they can.*
- *I believe that the schools in my area are performing very poorly, as you tend to find in poorer, more ethnically intense, areas of London.*

Will you be sending your children to state or private schools?	
State	43%
Private	36%
Whatever is closest	21%

Are you going private because of the poor standard of your local schools?	
Yes	20%
No	15%
Not applicable	65%

Would you sacrifice living standards to put your children in a private school?	
Yes	49%
No	51%

How can your local schools improve?	
More money	17%
Better teachers	10%
More discipline	25%
Smaller class sizes	15%
No idea	33%

What the people say:

- *They can only improve if the parents of the children have the mentality, motivation and desire to change their thinking first, and then demand that changes are made on that basis.*

- *I think there is a lot to be said for discipline and respect being taught to children at school. They must also involve and educate parents to help bring up the children.*
- *They are all generally good, though some could do with better security for the safety of young children. Even though this may be impossible to implement, screening of high school children for knives etc. would be a start as this has become more evident in schools.*
- *Teachers should be better qualified and paid, discipline should be harder and there should be less financial support for those who drop out and take social security*
- *By getting the right people into teaching and separating the management of the school from the teachers so that experienced teachers aren't bogged down by paper work to the extent they teach less.*

Politics

Do you know who your local MP is?	
Yes	64%
No	36%

How do you rate your local MP?	
Very good	3%
Good	24%
Poor	13%
Very poor	3%
No opinion	57%

Do you feel your MP is in touch with your needs?	
Yes	12%
No	63%
Sometimes	25%

Is your MP working hard enough for you?	
Yes	13%
No	44%
Don't know	43%

What the people say:

- *No, he is not aware of any issue and has no presence in the community.*
- *She sent me a letter about a street crime seminar. There was no address to reply, or phone number. The seminar was at 10.00am on a Thursday morning, most people I know who lives near me would be at work. How is that in touch with our needs?*
- *I do get a newsletter but it seems to be just about slagging off the other parties*

Council tax

Do you know where your local council tax contributions go?	
Yes	34%
No	66%

Do you feel it's being properly distributed?	
Yes	23%
No	77%

Where would you like to see the majority of your council tax directed?	
Cleaner streets	9%
Recreational facilities	10%
Crime prevention	27%
Schools	14%
Social services	7%
Public transport	12%
Pensions	3%
NHS	18%

How do you feel about the proposed council tax hike?	
Happy	10.88%
Disgusted	40.32%
Didn't know	18.09%

Transport

Do you use public transport?	
Most days	52.74%
Every now and again	16.15%

What is your preferred method of transport?	
Tube	25.70%
Train	8.14%
Taxi	3.40%
Bus	17.96%
Car	10.15%

How do you feel about the transport infrastructure in London?	
Good	46.60%
Poor	22.50%

What do you dislike most about the public transport system?	
Overpriced	34.11%
Never on time	5.21%
Dirty	4.54%
Overcrowded	23.16%
Rude staff	1.34%
Unsafe	1.07%

Would you accept a rise in fares for a guaranteed better service?	
Yes	21.76%
No	47.33%

If things didn't improve would you consider boycotting the transport network?	
Yes	32.04%
No	37.25%

Would you welcome a 24/7 tube service?	
Yes	59.41%
No	10.08%

Hospitals and health

What do you think of your local hospital?	
Good	5%
Okay	7%
Below standard	33.1%
Terrible	15%

What the people say:

- *Absolutely atrocious. Horrible. Dirty. Disorganised. Staff from hell – obnoxious, threatening and ignorant.*
- *It's a shambles.*
- *Having had surgery at my local hospital I was shocked at how dirty it was and how low the general standard of care was. This was largely due to it being Christmas and all the staff seemed to be from agencies.*
- *Front line staff are trying their best but the building and administration are shambolic.*
- *Poor. The A&E department at my local hospital badly needs a facelift – it is often filled with homeless people looking for shelter in the colder months. The hospital is in a general state of disrepair.*

Are you worried about MRSA?	
Yes	45%
No	30%

How do you rate your local NHS trust?	
Good	3%
Okay	4%
Below average	36%
Terrible	20%
Don't know	7%

What the people say:

- *Doing the best it can with poor funding*

- *Appalling, the financial management of the trust is appalling*
- *We have one?*
- *Struggles like every other trust. It wants to provide a good service but is under-resourced*
- *I rate the NHS as a whole as extremely poor. In need of reform rather than throwing more taxpayers' money down an endless pit.*

Do you use a local NHS dentist?	
Yes	25%
No	44%

If not, why?	
I can't get a place	18%
It's a poor service	9%
I never remember to visit	15%
I do use my local NHS dentist	17%

Is keeping fit important to you?	
Yes	60%
No	9%

Do you use a gym?	
Yes	34%
No	35%

Why do you use a gym?	
Pressure to look good	6%
Desire to feel healthy	24%
Addicted to exercise	1%
Stress relief	4%
I don't use the gym	32%

Do you play a sport?	
Yes	25%
No	42%

Shopping

What things do you most like to spend your money on?	
Consumer electronics	6%
Clothes	15%
Shoes	4%
Books	7%
IT equipment	3%
Games	1%
Holidays	17%
Food	31%
Other	16%

Where do you prefer to go shopping for clothes?	
Local high street	19%
Central London	34%
Out of town shopping centres/malls	11%
Online	5.2%

Do you use supermarkets over your local traders?	
Yes	63%
No	13%

Would you like to see local trade preserved?	
Yes	63%
No	6%

Do you think your high street has lost some of its identity?	
Yes	55%
No	25%

Do you buy organic food?	
Yes	42%
No	27%

Drinking and going out

Do you usually watch sport at home or in the pub?	
Home	18%
Pub	7%
Both	18%
I don't	27%

How often do you go out drinking?	
Daily	2%
Once a week	14%
Twice a week	24%
Every so often	17%
Rarely	8%
Never	4%

What do you prefer when you're going out?	
Drinking	17%
Clubbing	11%
Gigging	7%
Eating out	33%

Where do you prefer to drink?	
Locally	37%
Centrally	31%

How much do you drink each night?	
0	15%
1 – 3 pints	23%
3 – 6 pints	18%
6 + pints	12%

What is your preferred drink?	
Water	7%
Soft drinks	6.5%
Beer	15%
Wine	22%
Cocktails	6%
Champagne	2%
Spirits	11%

Love

Are you in a relationship?	
Yes	43%
No	26%

How long have you been in your relationship?	
Just started	3%
A few months	9%
A few years	21%
Married/civil partnership	11%
I'm single	24%

Would you consider having a one night stand?	
Yes	24%
No	45%

What is your preferred drink?	
Yes	12%
No	56%

What would you consider to be cheating?	
Flirting	4%
Kissing	38%
Sharing a bed with someone	3%
Sex	24%

Have you ever used online dating?	
Yes	13%
No	56%

The arts

What's your favourite artistic pursuit?	
Galleries	4%
Museums	3%
Concerts	10%
Theatre	14%
Film	22%
Books	10%
Dance	5%
None of these	1%

What kind of art do you like?	
Painting	24%
Sculpture	4%
Photographic	35%
None of these	5%

Eating out

What's your favourite cuisine?	
Indian	10%
Chinese	9%
Thai	15%
Japanese	6%
Italian	17%
Greek	2%
Spanish	3%
Other	6%

How often do you go out to eat?	
Daily	3%
Weekly	29%
Fortnightly	17%
Monthly	13%
Rarely	7%
Never	0%

Would you travel a long distance to a restaurant just for the food?	
Yes	51%
No	18%

What's the most important element for a perfect dining experience?	
Food	36%
Ambiance	11%
Service	4%
Price	5%
Company	15%

How do you find out about where to go to dine out?	
Online	23%
Magazines	4%
Yellow Pages	27%
Word of mouth/recommendations	39%
I don't	3%

Would you go to a restaurant just because it's famous?	
Yes	29%
No	39%

What's your biggest gripe about eating out?	
Poor/rude service	34%
Overpriced	22%
Tipping	17%
Smoking in restaurants	11%
Small portions	3%

What the people say:

- *London prices are often over-inflated just because it's London – I don't mind paying if the service and the food is good but invariably it isn't*
- *Feeling obliged to pay 12.5% service charge regardless of whether the meal was worth it, simply because it's automatically added to the bill*
- *Poor service, miserable waiters who make lots of mistakes and resent fixing them*
- *Prices. They are sometimes so high that you have to allow for the evening in your monthly expenses budget*