# bre

# BRE National Security Survey 2017
# The Results

# The BRE National Security Survey 2017

## Introduction

The BRE National Security Survey was created to gather data with which to identify priorities for new research, standards development, campaigns, events and training in the area of crime prevention and protective security.

To help us shape a built environment that will have the greatest positive impact on people's lives, we wanted to look beyond officially published crime statistics and understand users' perceptions of crime and security.

The survey included a series of questions to help us understand how people's perceptions influence their everyday decision-making in relation to their home life, work-life and travel arrangements.

A summary of the key findings can be seen in the infographic, opposite, with discussion and a detailed breakdown of the results provided on the following pages.

Survey results were received from 303 participants between 15 September and 31 October 2017.

For further information about us, please visit
**www.bregroup.com/sabre**

## Background

Scientists and engineers at BRE have been identifying ways to protect our built environment from crime and insecurity for decades. This has largely focused on technical solutions to specific types of crimes occurring at residential, commercial and national infrastructure premises. Whilst this remains incredibly important, the digitisation of the built environment has brought with it a new wave of security threats that need to be addressed and there is the ever evolving and increasingly complex threat associated with terrorism. In dealing with these new and existing threats, it is important that we continue to develop solutions that offer effective protection and do not in themselves reinforce fear of crime.

This survey was specifically designed to help us look beyond official crime statistics and media reporting and help our specialists better understand the public's perceptions of crime and security. We wanted to understand what types of crime give the greatest concern and how these influence behaviours. For example, have repeated terrorist attacks, targeted at people rather than property, influenced their behaviours at home, at work or when out and about travelling?

We also wanted to know what kinds of security responses are viewed positively by the public. After all, developing a solution that is able to stop a hostile vehicle in the street is important, but ensuring that people feel safe and secure as they go about their lives on every street, on every day of the year, is another thing altogether.

# Personal Perceptions

Top 3 security issues of concern were seen as:

## CYBER CRIME
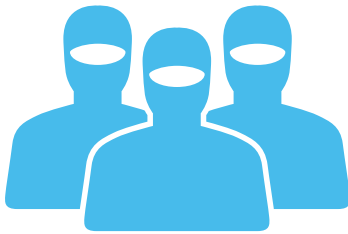
## TERRORISM

## PROPERTY CRIME
(Theft & Burglary)

**2/3**

**2/3** of participants are more concerned about crime now than 5 years ago.

# Security at Home and at Work

After themselves, participants held the police and the local authority jointly responsible for their security where they live.

## AT HOME

Participants believe having well designed and maintained surroundings is the thing that makes them feel most secure when at home.

An insurance incentive would make the majority of participants improve their home security.

## AT WORK

Participants believed pro-active management and regular security updates are the most important factors in making them feel secure when at work.

**83%**

83% of participants held their employer responsible for their security when at work.

# Personal Behaviours

Participants considered general appearance and visible security measures were key indicators of whether a place is secure or not.

Nearly **1/2** of participants are influenced by security when deciding whether to attend an event, concert or festival.

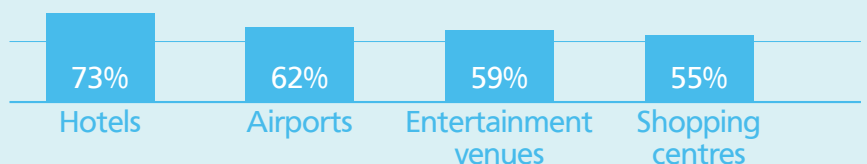**65%** consider security a factor when deciding which hotel they will stay in.

Approximately **2/3** of participants believe recent acts of terrorism have made them more security-conscious when out and about.

**84%** of participants consider security a factor when deciding which property to rent or buy.

**If buildings had security ratings, participants would refer to them before using:**

| Hotels | Airports | Entertainment venues | Shopping centres |
|--------|----------|----------------------|------------------|
| 73% | 62% | 59% | 55% |

# A perspective from the authors

## The Headlines

In the context of a long-term trend of falling recorded crimes, we were surprised to see 2 out of 3 respondents more concerned about crime today than they were 5 years ago. There is no doubt that terrorist incidents and cybercrimes have received significant coverage in both mainstream and social media over the last 12 months and this may well have had an influence over the responses. However, there is no evidence to support a hypothesis that this may be the cause of people's anxiety.

It was not surprising to see property crime appearing in people's Top 3 crime concerns. This reflects recent crime surveys from England and Wales which show up to 80% of recorded incidents of crime falling in this category. Although both cyber-crime and terrorism were also in our Top 3, responses in relation to these crimes seemed to be diametrically split, with respondents seemingly either highly concerned or not concerned at all by these types of crime. Perhaps this reflects on the nature of the threats or respondents understanding of the nature of the threat.

With almost all homes and workplaces in the UK now benefiting from broadband connections, increasing utility of online retail and banking, and a string of successful cyber-attacks on household names, it was no surprise to see a quarter of our respondents place cybercrime as their highest crime concern. Despite this however, 1 in 5 placed it as their lowest concern which could mean these individuals are either content with existing security controls or are potentially agnostic to the threats.

In relation to terrorism, it is very true that an individual's likelihood of falling victim to a terrorist attack remains exceptionally low, even in urban areas. However, the fact that it appears in media channels and in political debate on a daily basis means that it cannot be ignored and may partly explain its high positioning amongst people's greatest concerns. This finding cannot be ignored by those responsible for developing and maintaining our built environment, such as planners and asset managers, as it suggests that even though the likelihood of a terrorist incident at any given location may be low in comparison to other types of potential incidents, terrorism is creating fear amongst the general public and a response is required to reassure the general public. It highlights that fear associated with terrorism, like fear of crime more generally, should be treated as a material development consideration, one that might warrant investment in measures that offer reassurance even if risk assessment judges an actual attack to be highly unlikely.

## At Home

The vast majority of our respondents (87%) felt their homes were either secure or very secure, with nearly 95% stating that they themselves were responsible for security at their homes. This was largely unaffected by the type of tenure, with more respondents holding the police and local authorities responsible for their safety and security, ahead of managing agents and landlords.

Respondents identified well designed and maintained areas immediately adjacent to their properties as being the single most important feature in making them feel safe and secure at home. This supports Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) theories and the importance placed on 'good design' by current national planning policy.

In 2015, security was introduced into building regulations guidance for the first time in the form of a new Approved Document. Approved Document Q 'Security – Dwellings' introduces requirements for secure windows and doors on all dwellings constructed in England. With 63% of our respondents identifying these features as the second most important factor in making them feel secure in their home, this guidance for newly constructed homes will clearly play a key role in further reducing fear of crime. The survey also highlighted the importance of crime and security in influencing the purchasing decisions of home buyers and tenants, with half of respondents stating security was a major influence on their choice of property and a further third stating it would have a minor influence on their purchase decision.

## At Work

Over 80% of our survey respondents felt either secure or very secure at their place of work. The vast majority of respondents stated that they hold their employers responsible for their safety whilst at work (83%) with nearly three quarters recognising their own role in workplace security. This is a good foundation upon which employers can built their security risk management programmes and develop a strong security culture.

When asked whether security influences how they feel at work, half the survey's respondents said that it did not influence them, with the remainder either unsure or stating that it did have an influence upon them. When asked what types of security would make them feel more secure at work, at the top of the list was a desire to see proactive management and regular security updates to employees (over 58%). Security rated windows/doors and CCTV installations came 2nd and 3rd place respectively, highlighting that investment in management programmes may have just as significant an impact in creating an environment where staff feel safe and secure, as more capital intensive crime prevention and security interventions.

## Out and About

When asked whether recent terrorist attacks across Europe had influenced their travel decisions within the United Kingdom, one in two respondents said they had. This demonstrates the remarkable societal reach of terrorism, its ability to create fear far beyond the individuals directly involved in an incident.

The economic impact in sectors such as tourism can be significant. In the aftermath of the Paris 2015 attacks, the number of tourists entering France fell 8% and it is estimated that tourism revenues in Paris alone were reduced by EUR1.5billion. In our survey we asked respondents whether their choice of hotel would be influenced by security: with 1 in 5 respondents stating it would be a major influence when selecting where to stay and over 2 in 5 stating it would have a minor influence. Similar results were seen when respondents were asked about attendance at major events and concerts. Clearly, terrorism is influencing behaviours and making the general public more security conscious when they are planning to be away from home.

But how are these individuals deciding where and where not to travel? How do they determine which concert venue is safe and which hotel can be trusted to look after them? Our survey asked respondents what information they rely upon to help them make these decisions and the top response, with over 2 in 3 respondents including it in their 'self-assessment' of a location, was the general appearance of the building. This was closely followed by the presence of visible security features and whether the location had experienced any previous security incidents. Surprisingly, only 1 in 3 respondents would rely on media reports and more people said they would rely on word of mouth than use official government communications.

When respondents were asked whether they would make use of a security rating scheme for different types of facilities, 70% said they would be influenced by a scheme adopted by hotels and 60% in the case of airports and entertainment venues. Other notable facility types included retail malls, transport premises and entertainment venues. Clearly there is a desire amongst the general public, particularly when using crowded places, for greater assurance that these places are safe and secure.
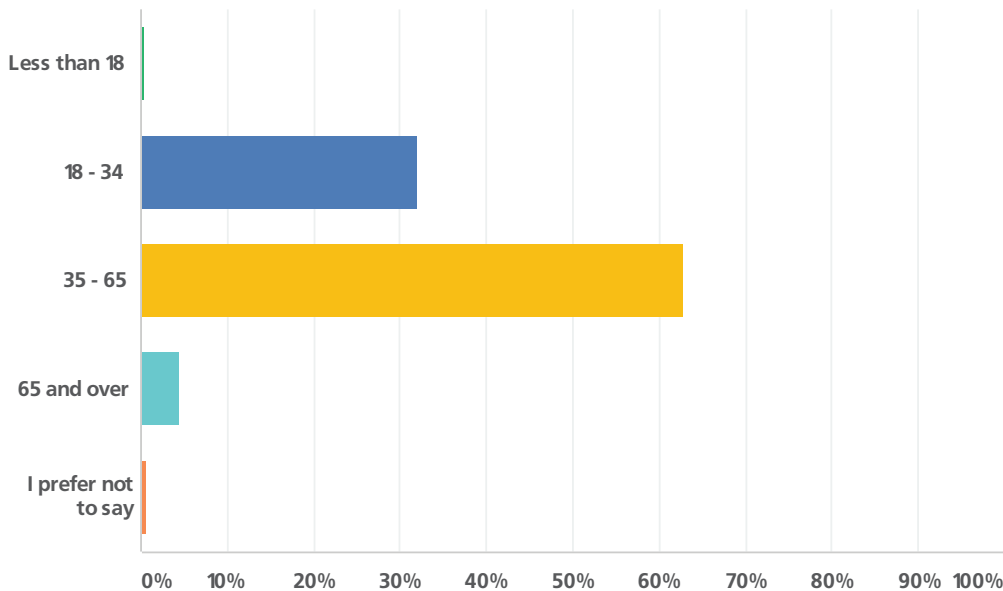
# Detailed Results – About You

**Participants were asked to provide details of their age, gender, occupation and residence to aid future analysis of the survey data.**

## Q1.  What is your gender?
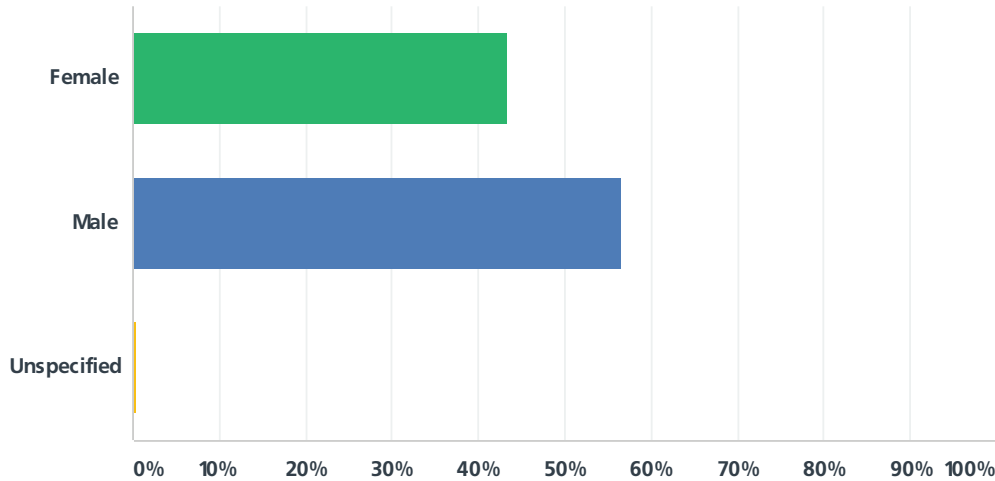


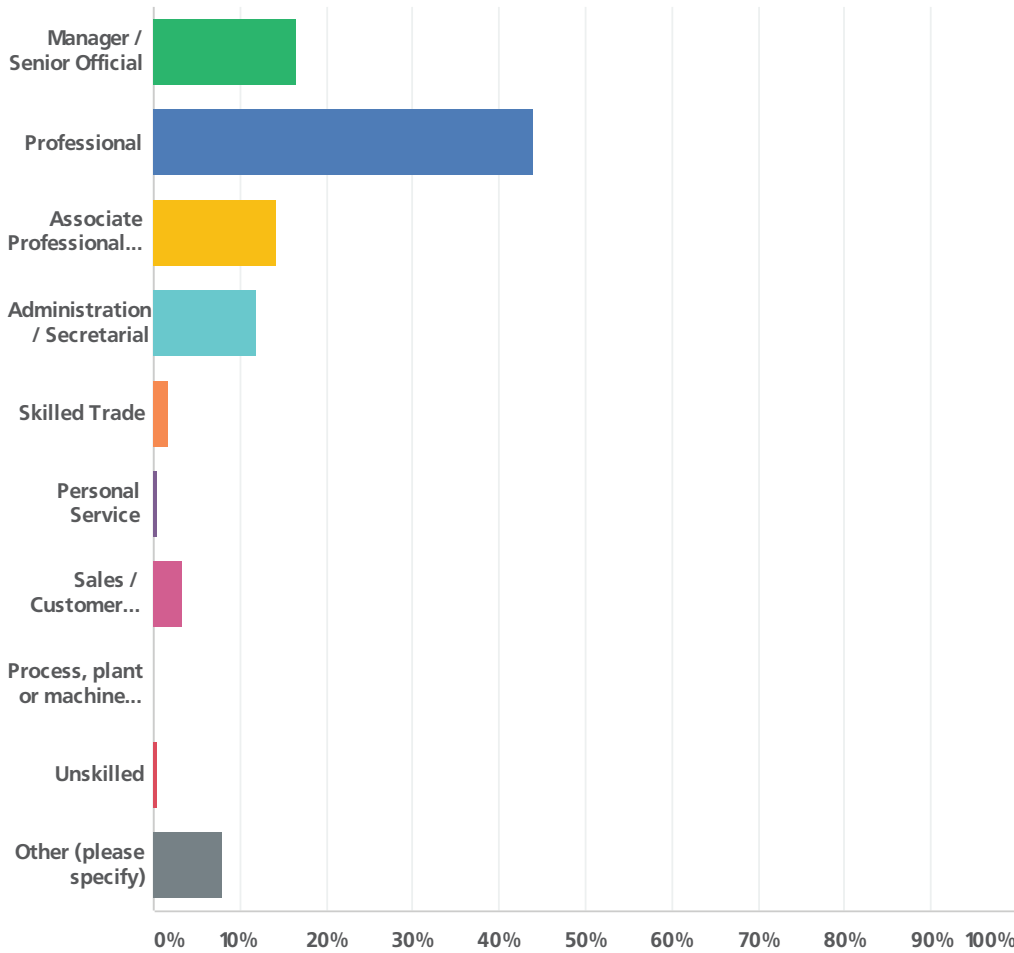| Answer Choices | Responses |
|---|---|
| Female | 43.23% |
| Male | 56.44% |
| Unspecified | 0.33% |

## Q2.  What is your age?



The vast majority (95%) of survey participants were aged between 18 and 65. This age range accounts for approximately 60% of the UK population. The survey therefore may not have accurately captured the views of those aged under 18 and over 65. However, this may be expected given the format and topic of the survey.

| Answer Choices | Responses |
|---|---|
| Less than 18 | 0.33% |
| 18 – 34 | 32.01% |
| 35 – 65 | 62.71% |
| 65 and over | 4.29% |
| I prefer not to say | 0.66% |

# Q3. Which of the following best describes your occupation?

| Answer Choices | Responses |
|---|---|
| Manager / Senior Official | 16.50% |
| Professional | 43.89% |
| Associate Professional / Technical | 14.19% |
| Administration / Secretarial | 11.88% |
| Skilled Trade | 1.65% |
| Personal Service | 0.33% |
| Sales / Customer Service | 3.30% |
| Process, plant or machine operative | 0.00% |
| Unskilled | 0.33% |
| Other (please specify) | 7.92% |

## Q4. Which best describes the location where you live?
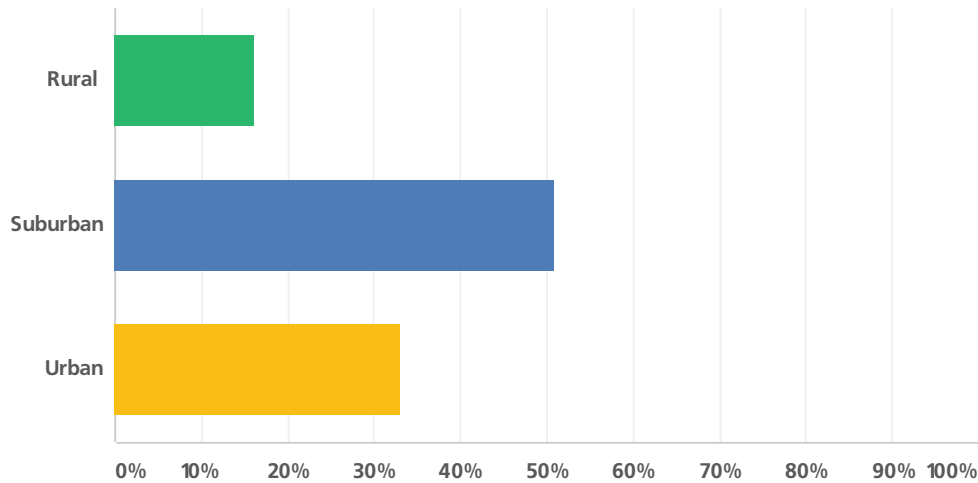


The majority (51%) of survey participants described the location where they live as suburban. This was followed by urban (33%) and rural (16%). Participants' location may influence their answers to subsequent questions in the survey, such as those relating to people's fear of crime and terrorism.

| Answer Choices | Responses |
|----------------|-----------|
| Rural | 16.17% |
| Suburban | 50.83% |
| Urban | 33.00% |

## Q5. Which best describes your living arrangements?
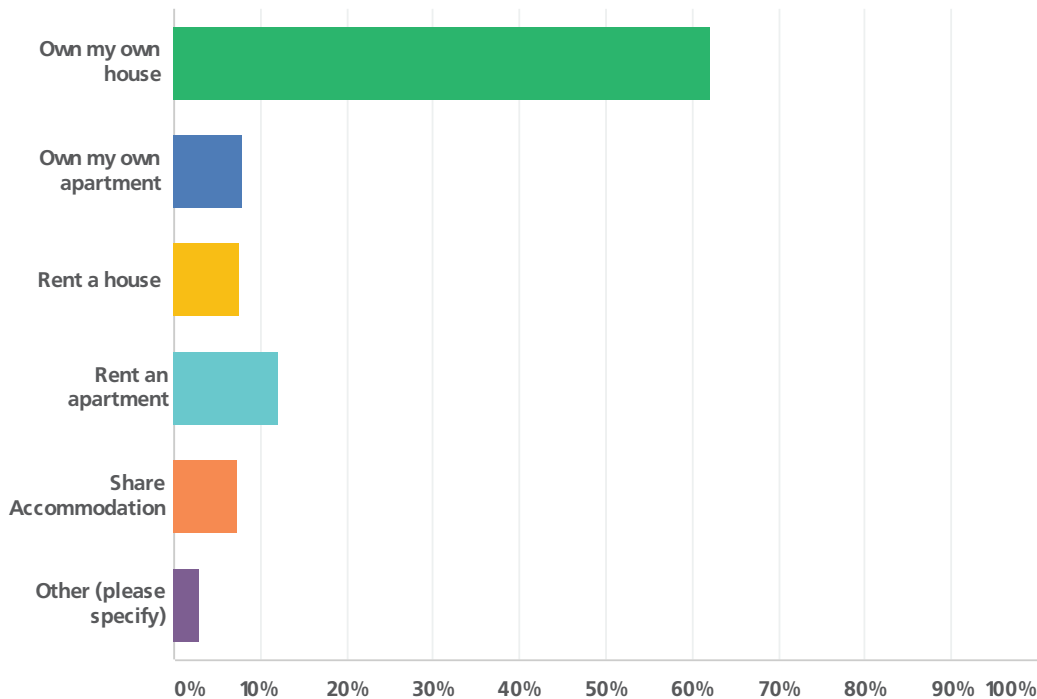


The majority (70%) of survey participants described themselves as owning their own home. This is only slightly higher than the levels of ownership seen in the English Housing Survey 2015-16 (DCLG)

| Answer Choices | Responses |
|----------------|-----------|
| Own my own house | 62.05% |
| Own my own Apartment | 7.92% |
| Rent a house | 7.59% |
| Rent an apartment | 12.21% |
| Share accommodation | 7.26% |
| Other (please specify) | 2.97% |

# Q6. Which best describes the location where you work?
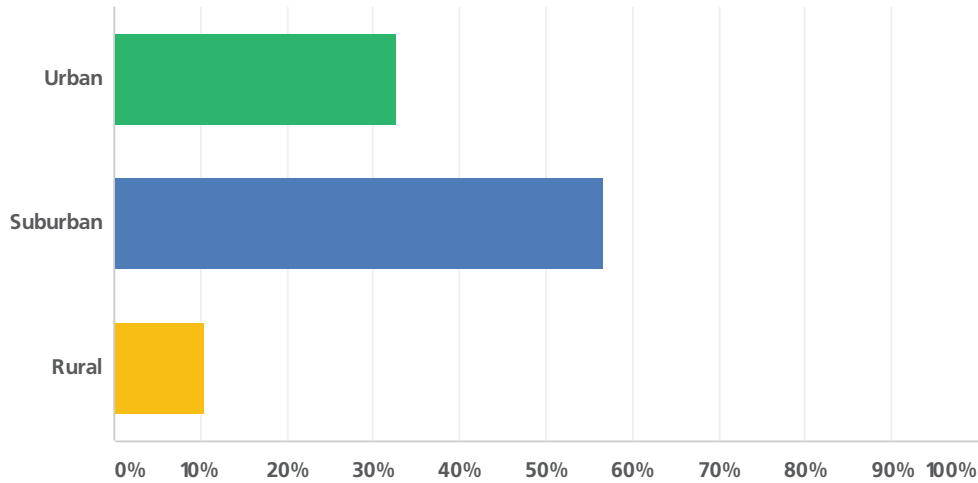


The majority (57%) of survey participants described the location where they work as suburban. This was followed by urban (33%) and rural (11%). These responses broadly reflect those received for Question 4 (where participants live).

| Answer Choices | Responses |
|----------------|-----------|
| Rural | 32.67% |
| Suburban | 56.77% |
| Urban | 10.56% |

# Personal Perceptions of Crime and Security

**Participants were asked to answer questions relating to how they are feeling about current events.**

**Q7.** Participants were asked to answer questions to help us understand how over time, their perceptions are influenced by recent events.

**Cyber crime**

**Robbery**

**Terrorism**



The issues of highest concern (i.e. those ranked 1-3) amongst participants were:

1. Property Crime;

2. Terrorism; and

3. Cyber crime.

Of these, participants' ranking of 'Terrorism' and 'Cyber crime' provided interesting results. In both cases, the majority of participants ranked these issues in 1st or 6th position, indicating that the issue was either most, or least, concern. This suggests that perceptions or understanding of these issues can trigger very different responses from the general public.

'Vandalism & Antisocial behaviour' was generally of the least concern to survey participants when compared to other issues, though it is important to note that this does not imply a lack of concern.

'Robbery' featured mostly in the mid-rankings (2 to 5), whilst participants' ranking of 'Violent crime' was relatively evenly spread.

The responses in this section raise the issue of people's understanding of various threats, and whether their concerns are well-founded or perhaps influenced by other factors.

**Property crime (Theft & Burglary)**

**Vandalism & Antisocial behaviour**

**Violent crime**

| Answer Choices | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cyber crime | 24.45% | 17.63% | 13.31% | 13.31% | 12.59% | 18.71% |
| Robbery | 3.24% | 14.39% | 26.62% | 21.94% | 21.58% | 12.23% |
| Terrorism | 25.54% | 14.75% | 14.39% | 11.15% | 12.23% | 21.94% |
| Property crime (Theft & Burglary) | 16.55% | 26.62% | 20.14% | 18.71% | 11.51% | 6.47% |
| Vandalism & Antisocial behaviour | 11.15% | 11.15% | 13.31% | 15.83% | 23.38% | 25.18% |
| Violent crime | 19.06% | 15.47% | 12.23% | 19.06% | 18.71% | 15.47% |

## Q8. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel?
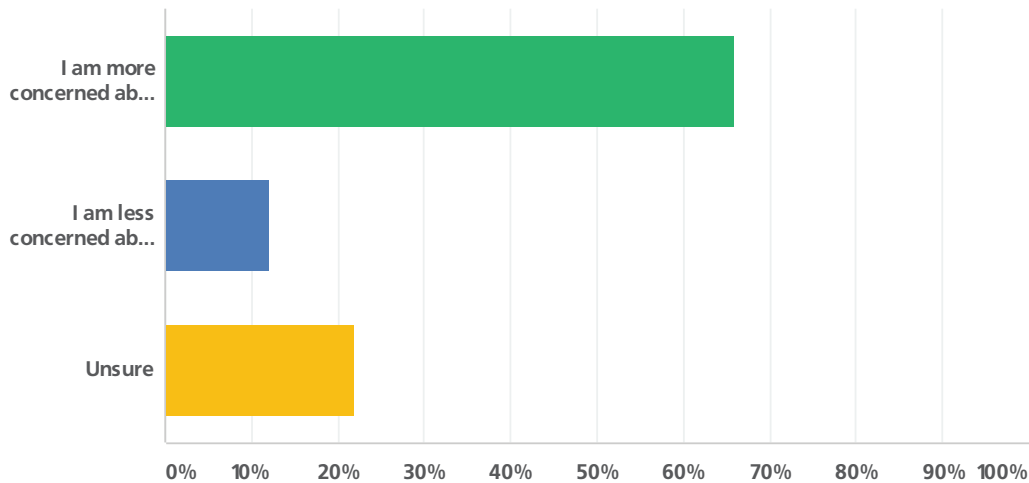


| Answer Choices | Responses |
|---|---|
| I am more concerned about crime now than 5 years ago | 65.83% |
| I am less concerned about crime now than 5 years ago | 12.23% |
| Unsure | 21.94% |

Crime levels in the UK have experienced an overall decline in recent years. Whilst the 2017 British Crime Survey highlights a 13% annual increase in recorded crimes, this may be attributable to changes in recording practices rather than an increase in actual incidents of crime.

The participants' responses to this questions are therefore somewhat surprising given the above, but could be attributed to the recent spike in low incidence, yet harmful events across UK and continental Europe in recent months and years. Such events are extensively covered by news outlets and social media platforms, therefore have the potential to increase fear of crime despite the overall decline in crime over the past 10-15 years.

# Personal Behaviours

**Participants were asked to answer questions so we can better understand how their perception of crime and security influences their personal behaviours on a day to day basis.**



## Q9. Have recent terrorist attacks across Europe made you more security conscious when out and about close to work?
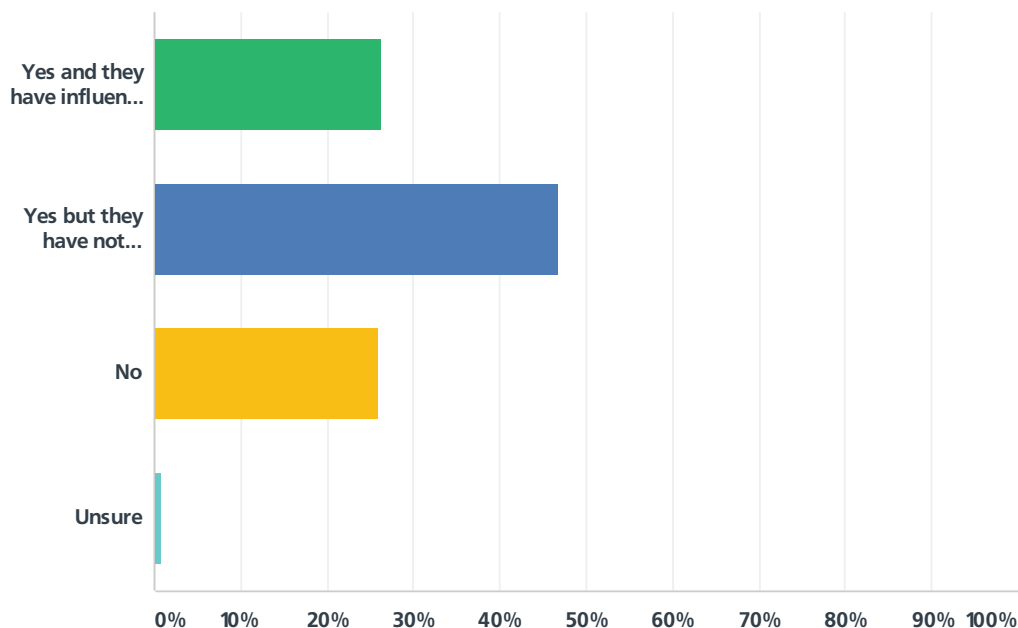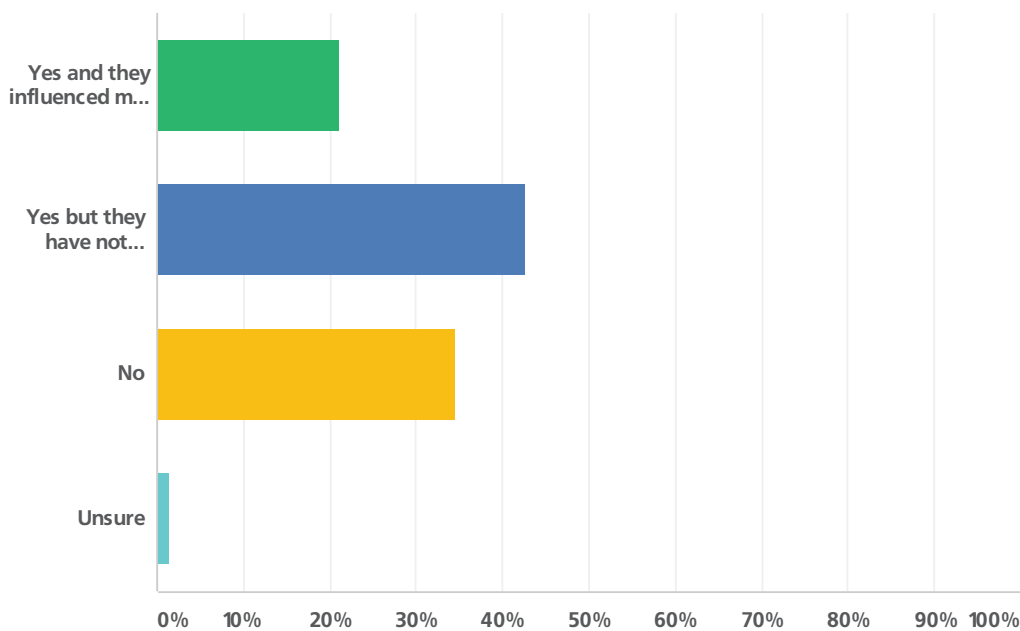


The majority of participants (73%) are more security conscious when out and about close to work owing to recent terrorist attacks across Europe. Of these, around a third admitted such events had influenced their behaviour. This may be in the form of travel arrangements, vigilance in and around crowded places or keeping in touch with their employer regarding their whereabouts.

There was no significant correlation between the responses to this question and the participants' work location.

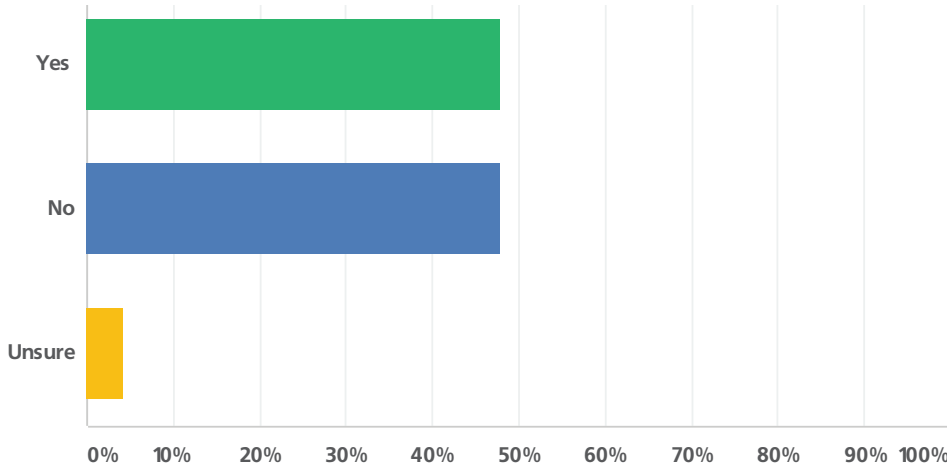| Answer Choices | Responses |
|---|---|
| Yes and they have influenced my behaviour | 26.39% |
| Yes but they have not influenced my behaviour | 46.84% |
| No | 26.02% |
| Unsure | 0.74% |

## Q10. Have recent terrorist attacks across Europe made you more security conscious when out and about close to work?



Whilst the majority of participants (64%) are more security conscious when out and about close to home, this was fewer than when out and about close to work (refer to Q9). This may be due to such incidents being associated with commercial environments, therefore participants feeling at less risk in a residential setting.

| Answer Choices | Responses |
| --- | --- |
| Yes and they have influenced my behaviour | 21.19% |
| Yes but they have not influenced my behaviour | 42.75% |
| No | 34.57% |
| Unsure | 1.49% |

## Q11. Have recent terrorist attacks across Europe influenced your behaviour when travelling elsewhere within the UK?



Participants were evenly split when asked whether recent terrorist events had influenced their travel behaviour in the UK.

| Answer Choices | Responses |
|---|---|
| Yes | 47.96% |
| No | 47.96% |
| Unsure | 4.09% |

## Q12. Is security a factor that influences whether you will attend a major event / concert / festival?
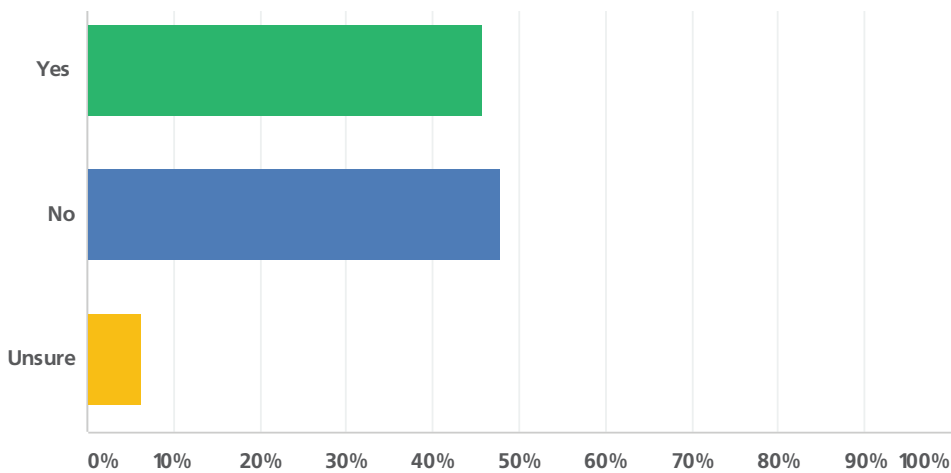


Participants were relatively evenly split when asked whether recent terrorist events had influenced their attendance at an event, concert or festival.

| Answer Choices | Responses |
|---|---|
| Yes | 45.72% |
| No | 47.96% |
| Unsure | 6.32% |

## Q13. When travelling away from home, is security a factor that influences your choice of hotel?
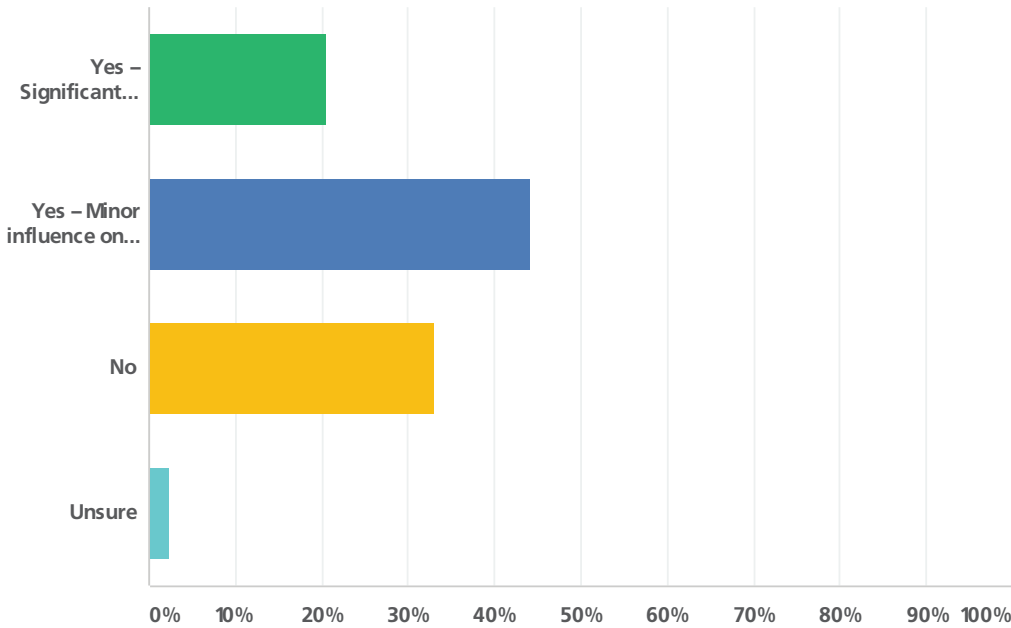


Most participants (65%) consider security to be a factor when selecting a hotel. Of these, a third confirmed that influence to be significant.

Despite this, very few hotel operators openly promote their security credentials, leaving guests largely to determine for themselves whether a hotel offers security or not.

| Answer Choices | Responses |
| --- | --- |
| Yes – Significant influence on my decision | 20.45% |
| Yes – Minor influence on my decision | 44.24% |
| No | 33.09% |
| Unsure | 2.23% |

## Q14. Is security a factor that would influence your decision making when purchasing or renting a property?
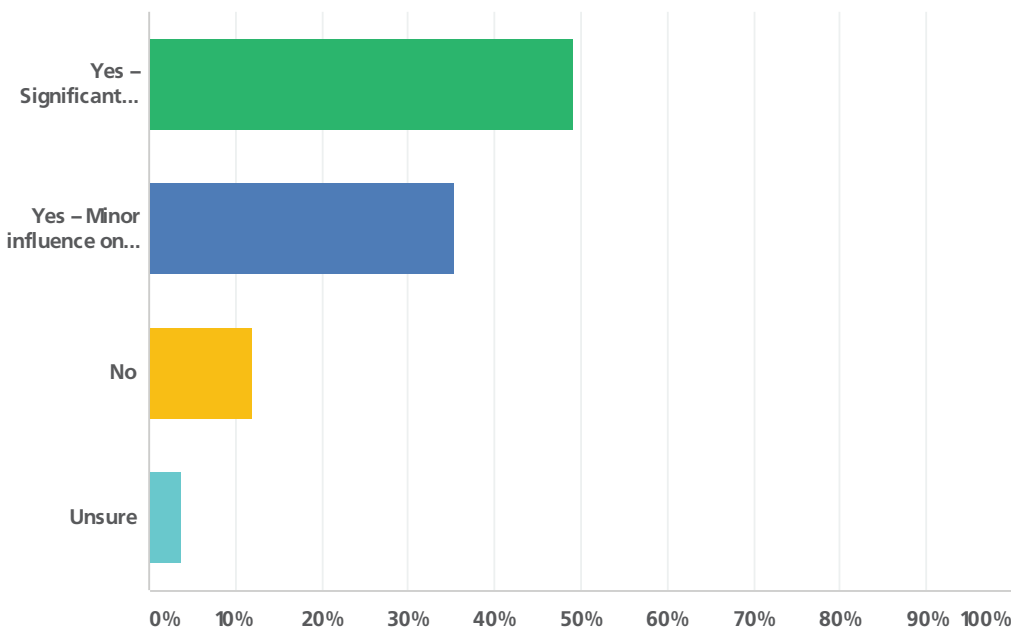


The vast majority of participants consider security to influence their decision making when buying or renting a home. Of these, 3/5 felt that influence was significant.

Previous studies have shown security to feature highly among buyers' priorities (along with fitted carpets and garages), and this new data supports the notion that security is still a key factor.

| Answer Choices | Responses |
| --- | --- |
| Yes – Significant influence on my decision | 49.07% |
| Yes – Minor influence on my decision | 35.32% |
| No | 11.90% |
| Unsure | 3.72% |

## Q15. What types of information would you use to make a decision on whether a place or building is safe & secure?
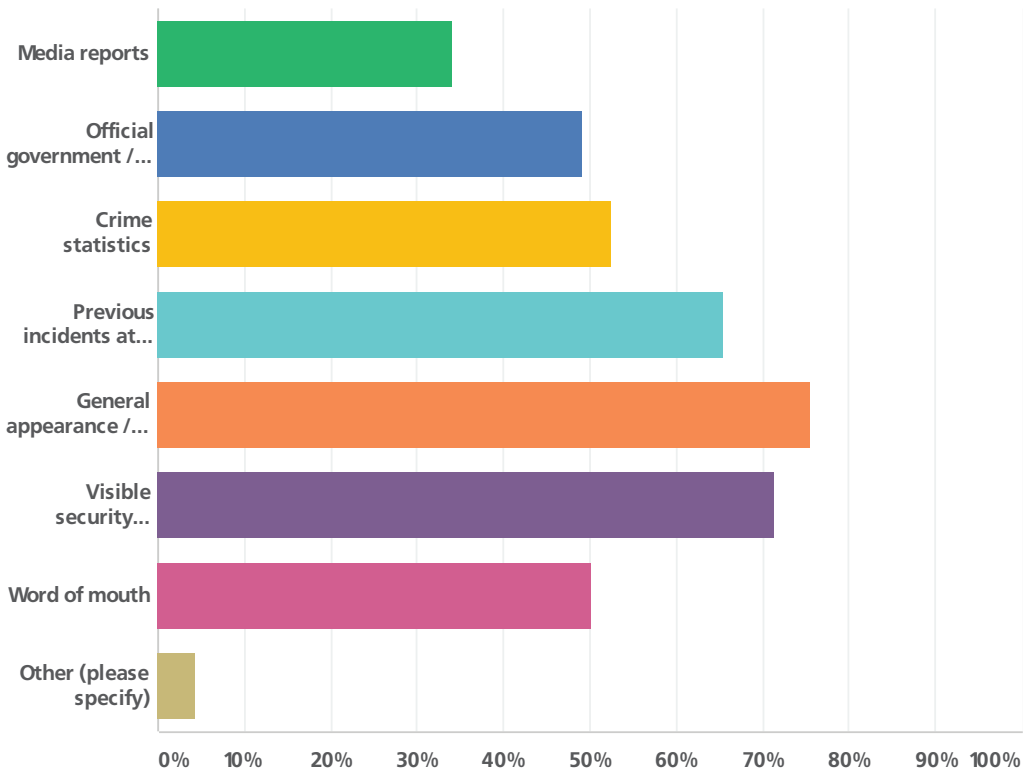


Participants relied on a range of resou rces in deciding whether a place or building was safe and secure. However, 'first impressions' was the most popular response, with participants judging a place or building on its general appearance. This supports the concept that welldesigned, managed and maintained places have the potential to reduce opportunities for crime, and the fear of crime. This was followed by the presence of visible security measures, and then knowledge of previous incidents to have occurred at a location.

This suggests that participants – knowingly or not – may be 'thinking criminal' and basing their decisions on whether a place is secure or not on both probability of an event occurring and the deterrent effect of the local environment.

| Answer Choices | Responses |
|---|---|
| Media reports | 34.20% |
| Official government / police communications | 49.07% |
| Crime statistics | 52.42% |
| Previous incidents at a location | 65.43% |
| General appearance / first impressions | 75.46% |
| Visible security measures | 71.38% |
| Word of mouth | 50.19% |
| Other (please specify) | 4.46% |

## Q16. If buildings had a security rating, like food establishments have a food rating, which of the following places would you be more inclined to use if they had a good security rating?
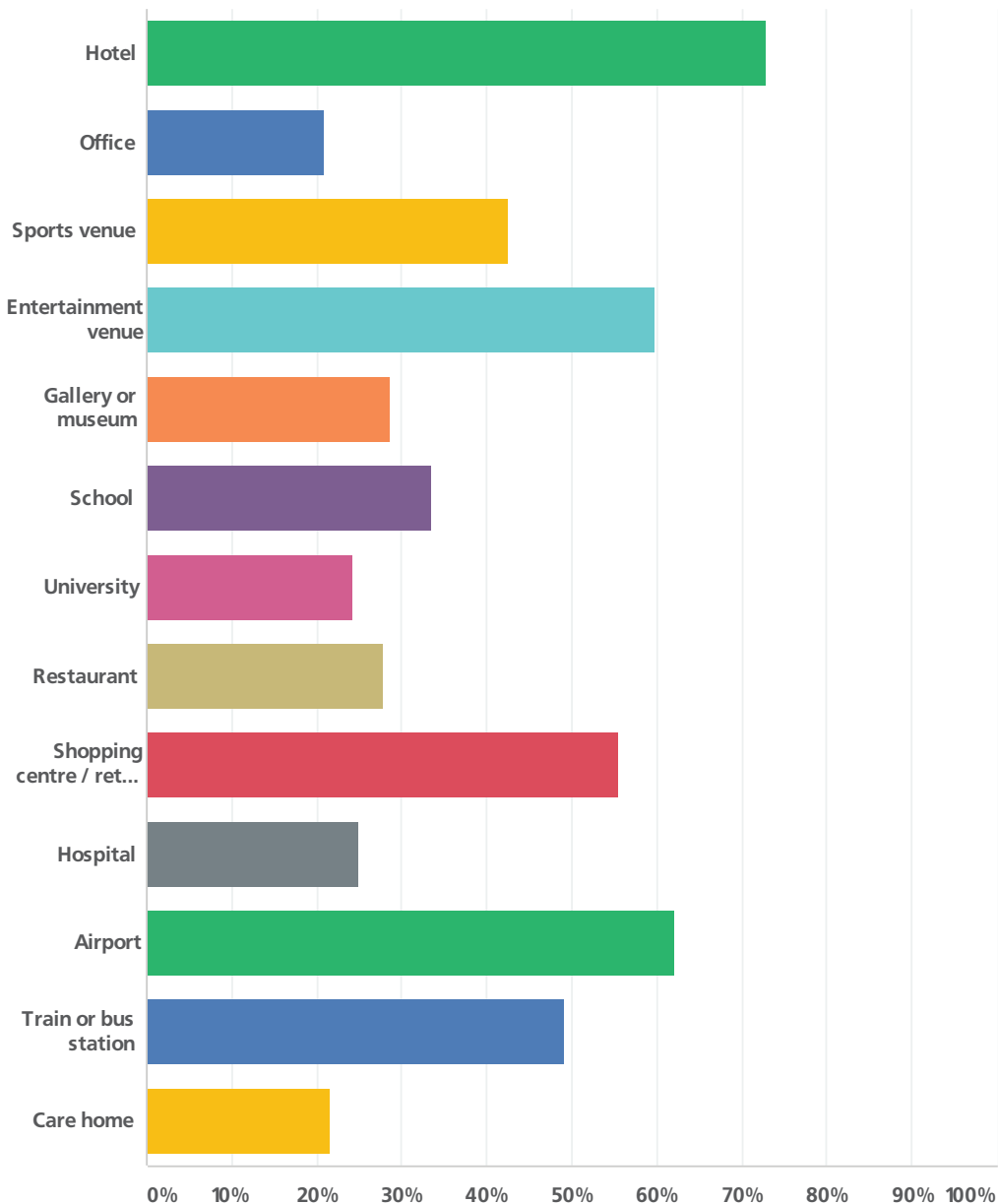
Participants identified the locations with generally high crowd densities (airports, entertainments & sports venues, and stations) as ones they would be more inclined to use if there were a 'security rating' attributed to them. This is somewhat understandable given the attention paid to such locations during the recent period of high profile terrorist attacks across Europe.

Whilst hotels may feature somewhat reduced crowd densities, compared with the aforementioned locations, they can be considered as a 'home from home' and it is understandable that guests should demand at least the same level of security that they do from their own residence.

| Answer Choices | Responses |
|---|---|
| Hotel | 72.86% |
| Office | 20.82% |
| Sports venue | 42.38% |
| Entertainment venue | 59.85% |
| Gallery or museum | 28.62% |
| School | 33.46% |
| University | 24.16% |
| Restaurant | 27.88% |
| Shopping centre/ retail park | 55.39% |
| Hospital | 24.91% |
| Airport | 62.08% |
| Train or bus station | 49.07% |
| Care home | 21.56% |

# Security in the Workplace

**Participants were asked to answer questions relating to security in the workplace. This will help inform our understanding of how crime and security influences employees and how employers and other stakeholders might be able to address society's needs.**

## Q17. Who do you hold responsible for your security while you are at work?
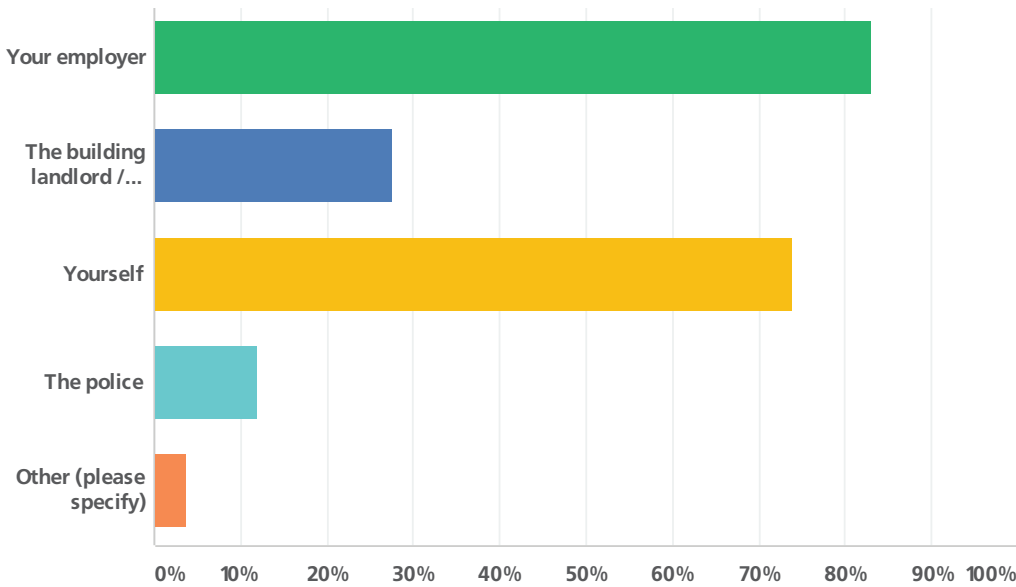


Aside from themselves, the vast majority (83%) of participants held their employer responsible for their security when at work, significantly higher than the police (12%).

Some employers operate a security risk management system which enables them to communicate to staff that security is managed appropriately for their well-being.

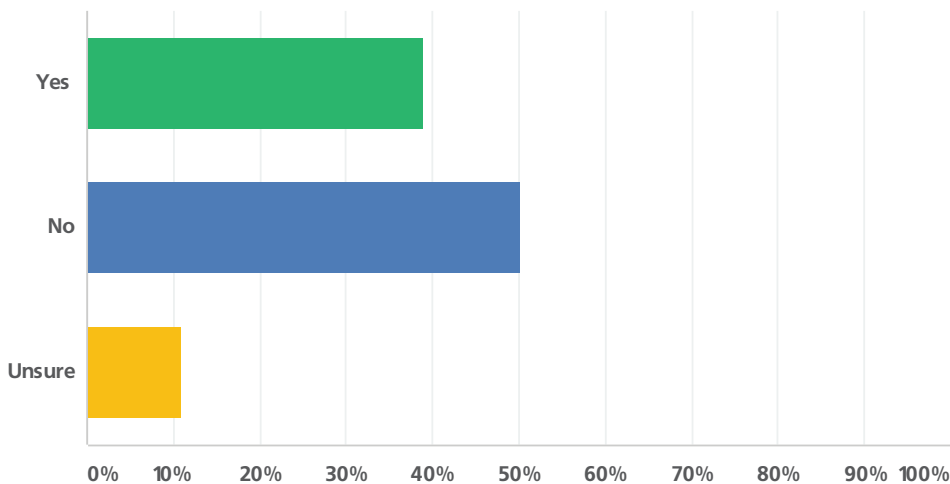| Answer Choices | Responses |
|---|---|
| Your employer | 83.15% |
| The building landlord / manager | 27.72% |
| Yourself | 73.78% |
| The police | 11.99% |
| Other (please specify) | 3.75% |

## Q18. Which of the following best describes how you feel about the security of your place of work?
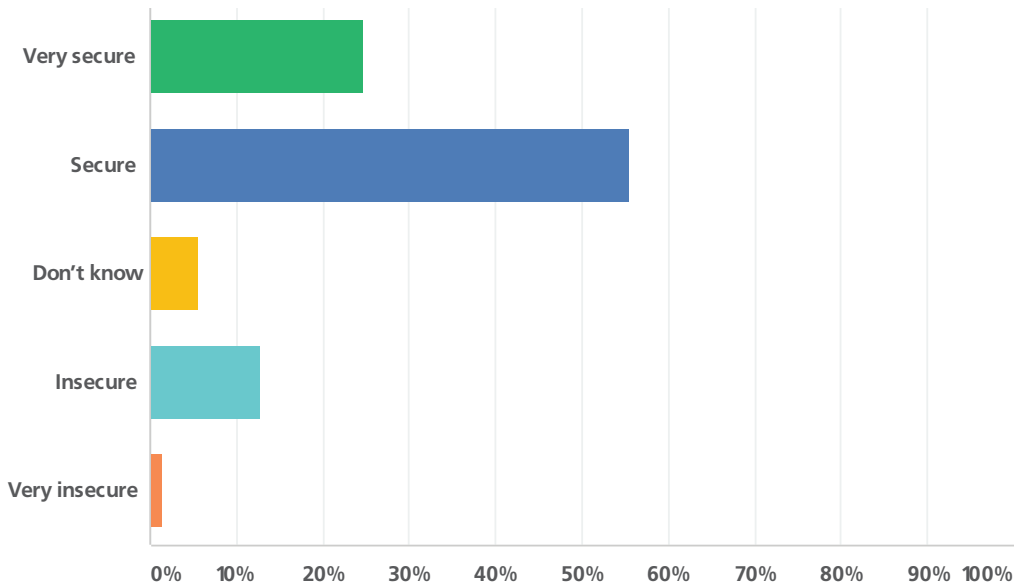


Most participants (80%) felt secure at work, and of these 1/3 felt very secure.
Around 1 in 5 either felt insecure or didn't know.

| Answer Choices | Responses |
| --- | --- |
| Very secure | 24.72% |
| Secure | 55.43% |
| Don't know | 5.62% |
| Insecure | 12.73% |
| Very insecure | 1.50% |

## Q19. Does security influence how you feel at work?



Half of participants believed that security did not influence how they felt at work, though 39% did.
1 in 10 participants were unsure whether security had an influence or not.

| Answer Choices | Responses |
| --- | --- |
| Yes | 38.95% |
| No | 50.19% |
| Unsure | 10.86% |

## Q20. Which of the following would make you feel secure at work?
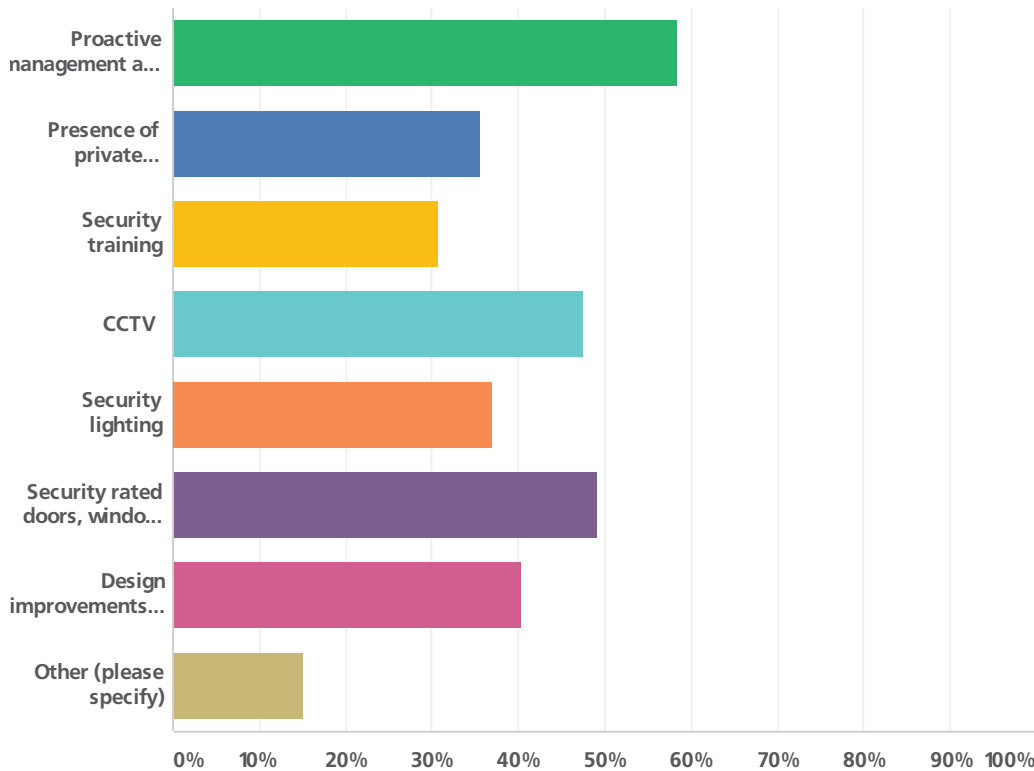


Participants believed proactive management along with regular security updates would have the most impact in making them feel safe and secure at work. These are key features of security risk management systems which employers are increasingly adopting to demonstrate their commitment to security.

Visible security measures (security products, lighting and CCTV) also had a positive effect.

Participants also recognised the effect that design related improvements can have in the creation of safe and security places.

| Answer Choices | Responses |
|---|---|
| Proactive management and regular security updates | 58.43% |
| Presence of private security | 35.58% |
| Security training | 30.71% |
| CCTV | 47.57% |
| Security lighting | 37.08% |
| Security rated doors, windows and other features | 49.06% |
| Design improvements to the area immediately surrounding your workplace | 40.45% |
| Other (please specify) | 14.98% |

# Security at home

**Participants were asked to answer questions relating to security where they live. This will help inform our understanding of how crime, fear of crime and security affects the general public. This will help developers, local authorities, the police and other stakeholders identify opportunities to create safer communities.**

## Q21. In your opinion, who is responsible for security where you live?
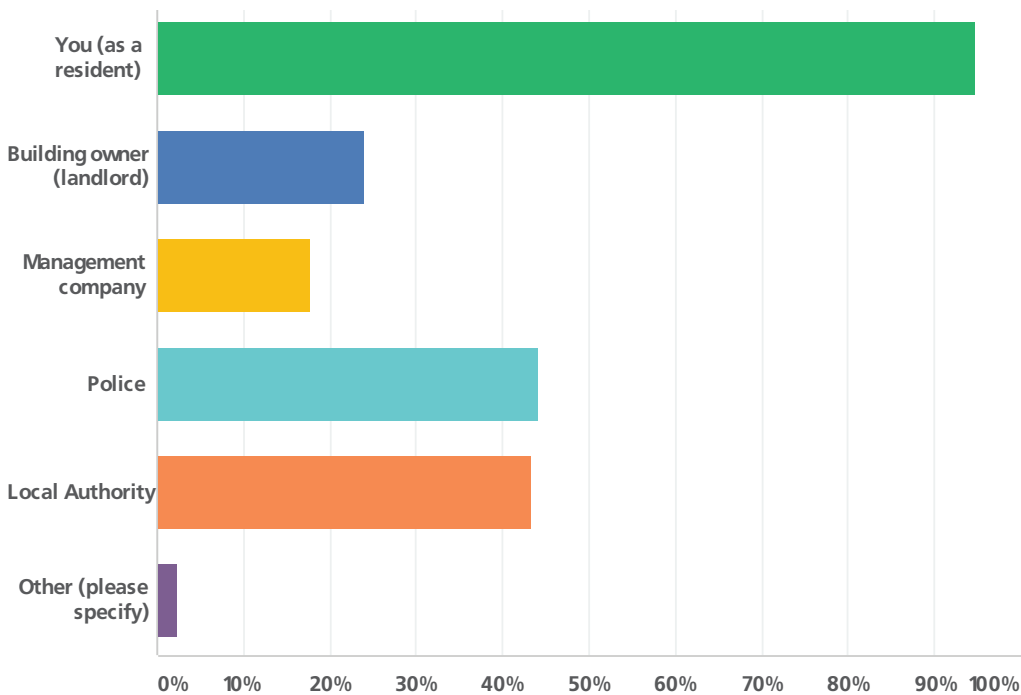
Participants believed themselves, more than any other party, to be responsible for security where they live. This was followed by both the police and local authorities sharing a large portion of responsibility.

| Answer Choices | Responses |
| --- | --- |
| You (as a resident) | 94.72% |
| Building owner (landlord) | 24.15% |
| Management company | 17.74% |
| Police | 44.15% |
| Local Authority | 43.40% |
| Other (please specify) | 2.26% |

## Q22. Which of the following best describes how you feel about the security where you live?
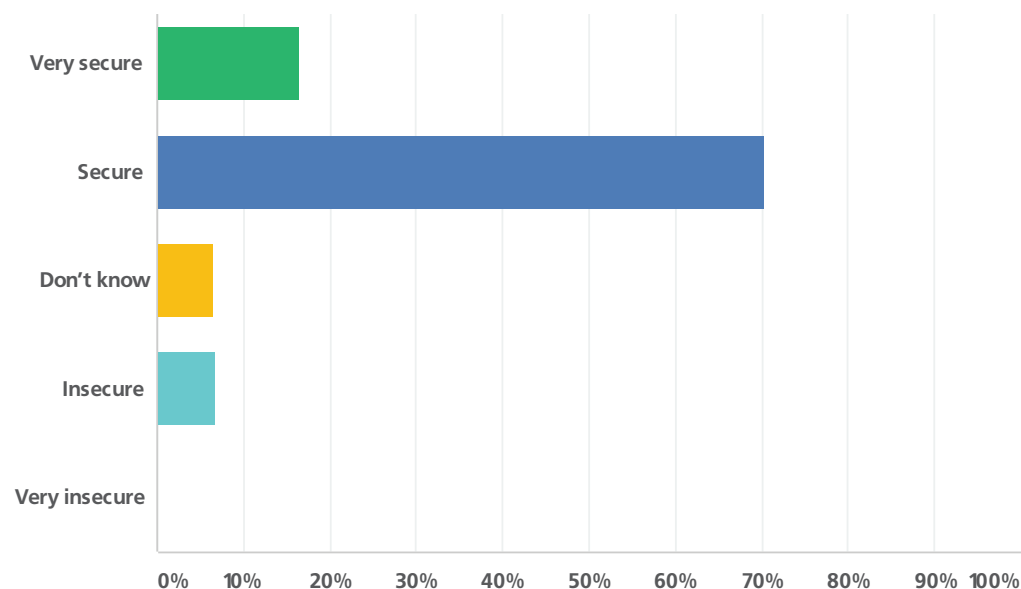
As with security in the workplace, the majority of participants believed their home was secure or very secure.

It should be noted that participants may not have been willing to disclose feelings of insecurity where they live on a public survey.

| Answer Choices | Responses |
| --- | --- |
| Very secure | 16.60% |
| Secure | 70.19% |
| Don't know | 6.42% |
| Insecure | 6.79% |
| Very insecure | 0.00% |

# Q23. Which of the following would make you feel secure at home?
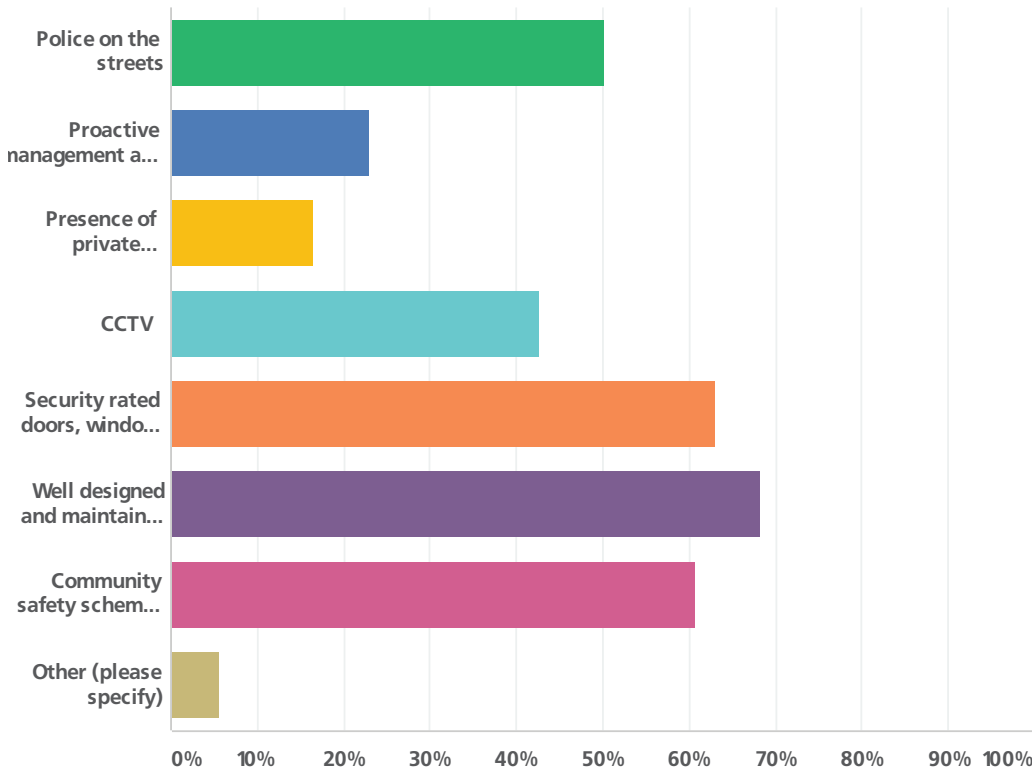


Most participants recognised the effect that a well-designed environment can have in the creation of safe and secure places, with 68% of respondents citing this as a feature which would make them feel secure at home.

Visible security measures (security products, lighting and CCTV) also had a positive effect.

Participants also believed that additional police patrols and community safety schemes in the area where they live would make them feel more secure.

| Answer Choices | Responses |
|---|---|
| Police on the streets | 50.19% |
| Proactive management and regular security updates | 23.02% |
| Presence of private security | 16.60% |
| CCTV | 42.64% |
| Security rated doors, windows and other features | 63.02% |
| Well designed and maintained areas immediately surrounding my home | 68.30% |
| Community safety schemes e.g. neighbourhood watch | 60.75% |
| Other (please specify) | 5.66% |

## Q24. What would encourage you to make improvements to the security of your home?
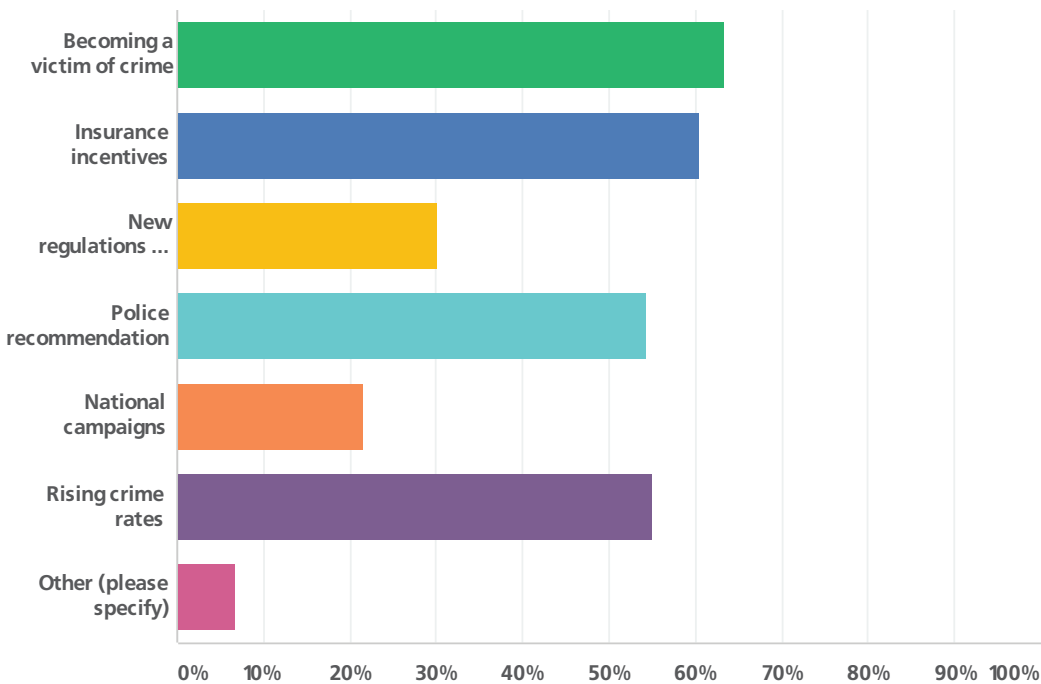


The most popular reason for making security improvements at home was 'becoming a victim of crime'. This supports the idea that security investment is often reactive.

However, the availability of insurance incentives and increasing crime rates would also encourage participants to be more pro-active about improving security at home.

| Answer Choices | Responses |
| --- | --- |
| Becoming a victim of crime | 63.40% |
| Insurance incentives | 60.38% |
| New regulations and standards | 30.19% |
| Police recommendation | 54.34% |
| National campaigns | 21.51% |
| Rising crime rates | 55.09% |
| Other (please specify) | 6.79% |