

Mrs Santa Lives Up North!

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Latest research from Ipsos MORI's Omnibus study shows women buy more presents and spend more than men – and Northerners spend more than Londoners!

On average women are buying presents for more people than men: on average, women buy presents for 14.7 people compared to men who buy for 10.7 people.

And an interesting picture emerges across the social grades. C2s – lower middle class workers – buy presents for more people on average than any other socio-economic group, 13.42 compared to 13 presents for ABs, 12.83 for C1s and 11.83 for DEs.

Men also spend less on presents than women do. On average, men spend £588 on all the Christmas presents they buy whereas women spend an average of £738. So much for Father Christmas, the evidence is it's Mrs Santa you should thank!

However, because men buy fewer presents, they spend an extra fiver on each gift they buy compared to women.

C2s also spend significantly more for presents on average than other socio-economic groups, even more than ABs. The average total spend is £724 for ABs £541 for C1s, £612 and a whopping £786 for C2s. D and E groups also spend significant amounts – again, more than C1s, at £612 per adult. So if you thought richer people were Scrooges, then perhaps you thought right!

Regionally, it's also not what you might think about those flashy Londoners and where are those much hyped City bonuses? In fact Londoners spend significantly less on Christmas presents than other regions – £446 on average, compared with Scotland and the North spending £757 and £755 on average. The national average spend for Christmas presents is £655 among those buying presents.

As you would imagine, the bulk of gift buying falls to 35- 44 year -olds and those with families.

When we don't get the presents we really want, some people are much more likely to return the gifts they receive! Overall, 15% take back a present they received. If you thought this might include those grumpy teenagers and fussy young people, you thought right – 22% of 15-24 year olds took back at least one present last year. But there are grumpy grown-ups too – 35-44 year olds were also significantly more likely to take back presents – 23% admitted to taking back at least one gift they didn't like. In terms of regional habits, Southerners were much more likely to take back gifts than people from other regions – 18% admitted to taking stuff back after Christmas compared with 12% for the Midlands and 15% for other regions.

Technical details

2,072 people aged 15+ in Great Britain were interviewed by Ipsos MORI via CAPIBUS, the face-to-face omnibus. Interviews were conducted in home between 26th October to 1st November 2007.