

Distance Enquiry Services Survey 2019

A survey of distance users of enquiry services of archives

Headline Report

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Executive Summary

- The survey ran from Monday 09 September until Sunday 01 December 2019. 48 record offices participated in the survey, a reduction from the 55 and 51 offices who participated in 2015 and 2017 respectively. The survey garnered 2,037 responses, an increase from 2,000 in 2017, but a decrease from 2,357 in 2015
- In 2019, 85% of respondents were from Europe – the majority of whom live in the UK
- Following the same trend as in previous years, their main reasons for using email, letter or other electronic method, eg via the web, to contact the Record Office rather than making a personal visit was that they live too far away to visit
- The main purpose for contacting the record office was for family history research; however, this has decreased from 58% in 2013 to 48% in 2019
- The overall satisfaction ratings have increased incrementally over the last four survey cycles: 75% in 2013; 76% in 2015; 77% in 2017; and 79% in 2019 (the % of users responding 'very good')
- 53% of respondents were male – the respondents' gender profile from 2019 is identical to that from 2013. This is the opposite of what occurred in 2017, where females were more likely to respond to the survey
- In 2019, over two thirds (68%) of respondents contacted the record office for the first time; this has been a continuous trend since 2015
- 50% of respondents were aged 65 years and over, greater than 47% in 2017, 46% in 2015 and 43% in 2013.

Introduction

This is the fifth distance user survey since its inception in 2012. While the first survey was run using Adobe forms, the most recent surveys were conducted using an online survey platform.

For the 2019 survey, we have used the same questions from 2013, 2015 and 2017 in order to provide consistency over time. For example, there are questions related to:

- How the respondent found out about the distance enquiry service
- The main reason for them contacting the record office
- Their reasons for using an electronic method
- Reviews of different aspects of the record office service, including quality of content, clarity and promptness of response, charges for goods or service and the website
- How long respondents have been contacting the record office remotely
- Demographic questions, including age, gender and region.

The survey ran from Monday 09 September until Sunday 01 December 2019.

The survey response rates impacted the statistical validity of the results. For the majority of the archives, the statistical validity of the results is constrained by the number of individuals contacted to provide feedback, ie any fewer than 30. In total, some 48 record offices participated in the survey. However, this is fewer than the 55 and 51 offices that participated in the 2015 and 2017 intakes respectively. Despite this, they attracted more than 2,000 responses and thus, the overall error rate can be determined as $\pm 0.8\%$.

Throughout this report, any differences between survey findings greater than 0.8% are deemed statistically significant and meaningful, unless otherwise stated. Consequently it should be noted that any differences equal to or less than 0.8% are considered insignificant and inconsequential.

Method

In technical terms, the survey is best described as being of a cross-sectional design, taking place at a particular point in time. The audience for the survey is any individual who receives a remote service/has an enquiry answered by an archive during the survey window.

Where an individual makes more than one enquiry during the survey window then they were repeatedly canvassed.

For the most part, these invitations to participate were issued by email with a link to the survey embedded within. In some cases, the response from the archives were in writing and the individuals were sent a paper form to complete and return. On receipt of the completed form, archive staff would then submit the response online.

The survey was designed and then hosted to run as a single survey, ie all responses were held in a single database. Each archive was given a unique link so that the system could see on whose behalf the respondent was answering. This was reinforced by the system including the name of the archive at appropriate times. Should an archive issue a broken link, such that their unique identifier was missing, then the respondent was informed to re-contact the archive that sent them the link. This unique identifier also enabled the software to guide the respondent through pertinent options. For example, respondents to Welsh archives were asked:

- Whether they wished to respond in English or Welsh
- An extra question related to the availability of bilingual information.

Further 'routing' was used dependent upon the respondent's answer to which continent/region they lived in and then which country. Such that only those who were residents of Channel Islands, Guernsey, Isle of Man, Jersey, Sark, or the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland were asked questions related to their postcode, ethnic group, disabilities/conditions, and employment status.

A number of questions were constructed to display randomly, with the exception of the 'other' option. In this way, each of the options within a question had the opportunity of being listed first. For example, "How did you find out about our distance enquiry service?" This helped ensure that there was no potential bias in the answers provided.

General

	Time to answer (hrs:mins:secs)			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
Mean/Average	0:08:34	0:06:01	0:06:06	00:06:25
Minimum	0:01:06	0:00:37	0:01:16	00:00:26
Maximum	6:15:42	7:25:00	8:28:23	05:51:17
Percentile 25	0:03:09	0:03:05	0:03:09	00:03:09
Median/Percentile 50	0:04:21	0:04:14	0:04:16	00:04:25
Percentile 75	0:06:59	0:06:01	0:06:04	00:06:23
Percentile 95	0:14:32	0:13:21	0:13:28	00:13:40
No. of cases	2,037	2,002	2,357	2,221

		Count			
		2019	2017	2015	2013
Country	England	1,548	1,486	2,011	1,532
	Wales	337	351	269	578
	Scotland	134	165	77	72
Type	Local	1,592	1,724	2,076	1,622
	National	277	190	135	507
	Special	26			
	University	142	88	146	92

The 2019 survey garnered 2,037 responses, an increase from 2,000 in 2017, but a decrease from 2,357 in 2015. This year, respondents spent significantly more time completing the survey than respondents from previous years; for example, the average time taken was two minutes and 33 seconds longer than in 2017. The guidance provided to respondents suggests that the survey should take no more than 5-10 minutes to complete, and the majority of participants completed the survey within this timeframe.

Fewer participants chose to complete the survey in Welsh in 2019, in comparison with 2017, 2015 and 2013; specifically, 2013 had quadruple the number of participants. This coincides with a drop in the number of participants responding to a survey from a Welsh record office.

	Chosen language			
	Column % (count)			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
English	99% (2,021)	99% (1,978)	99% (2,337)	97% (2,155)
Welsh	1% (16)	1% (24)	1% (20)	3% (66)

How did you find out about our distance enquiry service?

	Column % (Count)			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
The archive's website	60% (1,212)	58% (1,152)	57% (1,336)	62% (1,342)
Other	18% (366)	19% (374)	17% (409)	16% (349)
A library/museum	8% (158)	10% (201)	11% (263)	8% (179)
Word of mouth, including friends or family	7% (150)	7% (140)	8% (199)	8% (167)
Through the course of my employment	6% (114)	6% (110)	5% (125)	5% (89)
A family history society	6% (121)	5% (92)	5% (122)	6% (132)
Through the course of my education/training	4% (89)	4% (88)	4% (92)	5% (110)
A magazine/newspaper/other publication	1% (27)	2% (48)	2% (42)	1% (28)
Through a social media site	2% (46)	1% (22)	2% (40)	1% (29)
Leaflets/posters	1% (11)	1% (15)	1% (17)	1% (21)
Total	100% (2,028)	100% (1,991)	100% (2,351)	100% (2,170)
Base/Survey response rate	100% (2,037)	99% (2,002)	100% (2,357)	98% (2,221)

Similarly to previous years, more than half of respondents discovered the distance enquiry service via the archive's website. In 2017, a slightly higher proportion found out through 'Other' means. However, in 2019, more users found out through a family history society and a social media site.

What was your main reason for contacting the record office at this time?

	Column % (Count)			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
Family history research	48% (961)	52% (1,025)	51% (1,191)	58% (1,251)
Other	14% (275)	13% (257)	13% (294)	10% (212)
Work in connection with your employment	13% (260)	11% (211)	12% (279)	9% (204)
Formal education as student/researcher	11% (220)	10% (207)	11% (251)	10% (210)
Personal leisure/recreation	11% (212)	10% (202)	10% (246)	9% (203)
Non-leisure personal or family business	4% (76)	3% (67)	3% (75)	3% (70)
Formal education as a teacher	1% (13)	1% (13)	1% (14)	1% (19)
Total	100% (2,017)	100% (1,982)	100% (2,350)	100% (2,169)
Base/Survey response rate	99% (2,037)	99% (2,002)	100% (2,357)	98% (2,221)

Overall, in 2019, the most common reason for contacting the office was for family history research (almost half of the respondents answered this way); however, this has decreased by 10% since 2013. On the other hand, more respondents have selected 'Other', 'Work in connection with your employment', 'Formal education as student/researcher', and 'Personal leisure/recreation' than previous years.

What were your main reasons for using email, letter or other electronic method, eg via the web, to contact the Record Office rather than making a personal visit?

	Column % (Count)			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
Live too far away to visit	48% (956)	45% (904)	47% (1,095)	51% (1,107)
See if archive has relevant information	37% (731)	34% (678)	37% (860)	37% (805)
Email/phone/letter/other electronic method more convenient	33% (665)	30% (603)	31% (740)	32% (695)
In advance of a personal visit	22% (442)	19% (379)	23% (538)	20% (428)
Used the archives website but needed further help or advice	23% (450)	17% (345)	16% (376)	17% (378)
Saved on travel costs	15% (292)	12% (241)	13% (317)	15% (330)
Need advice on services available	13% (257)	11% (210)	12% (288)	11% (249)
Don't have time to visit	7% (135)	6% (121)	7% (159)	7% (148)
Cannot visit during your opening hours	5% (109)	5% (106)	5% (115)	5% (112)
Follow-up to personal visit	4% (82)	5% (97)	4% (105)	4% (97)
Other	4% (86)	3% (68)	3% (76)	3% (70)
Total	100% (1,994)	100% (1,992)	100% (2,352)	100% (2,177)
Base/Survey response rate	98% (2,037)	100% (2,002)	100% (2,357)	98% (2,221)

Following the same trend as previous years, the main reason respondents contacted the record office remotely was because they lived too far away to visit the archive. However, in comparison with the 2017 results, a greater proportion of respondents enquired whether they could find relevant information and found it more convenient than a physical visit.

How good do you think the following aspects of the distance enquiry service are at the Record Office?

Overall	Column % (Count)			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
Very good	79% (1,492)	77% (1,482)	76% (1,737)	75% (1,583)
Good	17% (319)	18% (357)	19% (434)	19% (401)
Adequate	3% (48)	3% (67)	3% (69)	4% (84)
Poor	1% (16)	1% (15)	1% (23)	1% (21)
Very poor	1% (13)	1% (10)	0% (0)	1% (21)
Total	100% (1,888)	100% (1,931)	100% (2,285)	100% (2,111)
Base/Survey response rate	93% (2,037)	96% (2,002)	97% (2,357)	95% (2,221)

Between 2013 and 2017, the proportions of respondents stating that the **overall** service is 'very good' increased incrementally; in 2019, the proportion increased at a higher rate by two percent.

Quality of content	Column % (Count)			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
Very good	72% (1,376)	73% (1,386)	71% (1,610)	70% (1,464)
Good	22% (415)	22% (411)	23% (522)	23% (481)
Adequate	4% (80)	4% (78)	4% (91)	5% (105)
Poor	1% (13)	1% (20)	1% (23)	2% (42)
Very poor	1% (13)	1% (12)	0% (0)	1% (21)
Total	100% (1,900)	100% (1,907)	100% (2,268)	100% (2,091)
Base/Survey response rate	93% (2,037)	95% (2,002)	96% (2,357)	94% (2,221)

Since 2013, there has been a marked increase in the proportion of respondents who report that the **quality of content** is very good. The proportion has decreased by one percent over the past year; however, this is not deemed to be statistically significant.

Clarity of response	Column % (Count)			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
Very good	80% (1,531)	81% (1,560)	79% (1,806)	78% (1,633)
Good	16% (296)	15% (299)	16% (366)	17% (356)
Adequate	3% (49)	3% (51)	3% (69)	3% (63)
Poor	1% (14)	1% (13)	1% (23)	1% (21)
Very poor	1% (15)	1% (11)	0% (0)	1% (21)
Total	100% (1,905)	100% (1,934)	100% (2,286)	100% (2,094)
Base/Survey response rate	94% (2,037)	97% (2,002)	97% (2,357)	94% (2,221)

There is a similar pattern for the **clarity of response**, as with the quality of content; ie since 2013, there has been an increase in the proportion of users stating that this aspect of services is 'very good'. The proportion has decreased by one percent over the past year; nonetheless, this finding is not considered to be statistically meaningful.

Promptness of response	Column % (Count)			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
Very good	77% (1,482)	75% (1,459)	75% (1,719)	73% (1,536)
Good	16% (314)	19% (368)	18% (413)	20% (421)
Adequate	5% (88)	5% (92)	5% (115)	6% (126)
Poor	1% (18)	1% (20)	1% (23)	1% (21)
Very poor	1% (23)	1% (13)	1% (23)	1% (21)
Total	100% (1,925)	100% (1,952)	100% (2,292)	100% (2,104)
Base/Survey response rate	95% (2,037)	98% (2,002)	97% (2,357)	95% (2,221)

The proportion of respondents perceiving the **promptness of response** as 'very good' has increased by two percent since 2015 – 2017, and four percent since 2013.

Charges for goods or services	Column % (Count)			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
Very good	56% (869)	57% (892)	55% (1,025)	54% (904)
Good	24% (372)	25% (390)	26% (485)	27% (452)
Adequate	16% (246)	15% (237)	16% (298)	15% (251)
Poor	3% (41)	2% (24)	2% (37)	2% (33)
Very poor	1% (19)	1% (14)	1% (19)	1% (17)
Total	100% (1,547)	100% (1,557)	100% (1,864)	100% (1,674)
Base/Survey response rate	76% (2,037)	78% (2,002)	79% (2,357)	75% (2,221)

Users are still more likely to state that **charges for goods and services** is 'very good' in comparison with users from 2015 and 2013; since 2017, the proportion has decreased by one percent.

Ease of navigation to our website	Column % (Count)			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
Very good	50% (913)	48% (871)	46% (994)	46% (918)
Good	34% (611)	37% (669)	38% (821)	37% (738)
Adequate	13% (237)	13% (229)	14% (303)	14% (279)
Poor	2% (33)	2% (43)	2% (43)	2% (40)
Very poor	1% (15)	1% (14)	0% (0)	1% (20)
Total	100% (1,809)	100% (1,826)	100% (2,161)	100% (1,995)
Base/Survey response rate	89% (2,037)	91% (2,002)	92% (2,357)	90% (2,221)

Compared with all previous surveys, a greater proportion of respondents reported that the **ease of navigation to the website** is 'very good'; now exactly half the total number of respondents.

Our website	Column % (Count)			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
Very good	48% (876)	47% (846)	45% (962)	47% (932)
Good	36% (649)	39% (702)	40% (855)	38% (754)
Adequate	13% (237)	12% (214)	13% (278)	13% (258)
Poor	2% (33)	2% (34)	2% (43)	2% (40)
Very poor	1% (12)	1% (15)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Total	100% (1,807)	100% (1,811)	100% (2,137)	100% (1,984)
Base/Survey response rate	89% (2,037)	90% (2,002)	91% (2,357)	89% (2,221)

Feedback regarding **our website** has remained consistent over time, with an increase of one percent in 2019. The majority of respondents, almost half, consider the website to be 'very good'.

Availability of bilingual information <i>(only asked of respondents to Welsh archives)</i>	Column % (Count)			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
Very good	68% (182)	65% (193)	58% (135)	62% (284)
Good	25% (66)	28% (84)	30% (70)	27% (124)
Adequate	7% (20)	6% (17)	12% (28)	10% (46)
Poor	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Very poor	0% (0)	0% (1)	0% (0)	1% (5)
Total	100% (268)	100% (295)	100% (233)	100% (458)
Base/Survey response rate	80% (337)	84% (351)	87% (269)	79% (578)

In comparison with the earlier surveys, a greater proportion of respondents believe the **availability of bilingual information** is 'very good'; in particular, since 2015, the proportion has significantly increased by 10%. Furthermore, none of the users perceived the availability as 'poor' or 'very poor'.

For how long have you been contacting the Record Office by email, letter or other electronic method, eg via the web?

	Column % (Count)			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
This was the first time	68% (1,331)	68% (1,350)	68% (1,685)	65% (1,419)
For less than a year	8% (157)	9% (170)	10% (237)	10% (221)
One to four years	13% (249)	12% (238)	13% (333)	13% (285)
Five to ten years	6% (118)	7% (140)	5% (140)	7% (157)
More than ten years	5% (99)	5% (91)	4% (101)	4% (92)
Total	100% (1,954)	100% (1,989)	100% (2,352)	100% (2,174)
Base/Survey response rate	96% (2,037)	99% (2,002)	100% (2,357)	98% (2,221)

The responses have been consistent since 2015; over two thirds (68%) of respondents reported they were contacting the record office for the first time.

Your Gender

	Column % (Count)			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
Male	53% (1,034)	49% (973)	53% (1,254)	52% (1,113)
Female	47% (904)	51% (1,002)	47% (1,101)	48% (1,045)
Total	100% (1,938)	100% (1,975)	100% (2,355)	100% (2,158)
Base/Survey response rate	95% (2,037)	99% (2,002)	100% (2,357)	97% (2,221)

The respondents' gender profile from 2019 is identical to that from 2015, with a higher percentage of males responding to the survey than females (the total comprises 53% males and 47% females). The gender profile for 2017 is inconsistent or contradictory and anomalous in comparison with all the survey profiles; there is a significantly greater proportion of female users, who were more likely to respond to the survey than males.

Your age, at your last birthday

	Column % (Count)			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
16 to 24	2% (44)	3% (54)	3% (74)	3% (66)
25 to 34	5% (89)	6% (113)	6% (153)	6% (125)
35 to 44	6% (118)	7% (127)	7% (170)	6% (129)
45 to 54	12% (224)	12% (228)	13% (302)	15% (304)
55 to 64	24% (429)	25% (476)	25% (581)	28% (578)
65 to 74	34% (616)	33% (619)	33% (767)	32% (661)
75 to 84	14% (255)	12% (231)	11% (257)	10% (201)
85 or over	2% (43)	2% (33)	2% (52)	1% (21)
Total	100% (1,818)	100% (1,881)	100% (2,356)	100% (2,085)
Base/Survey response rate	89% (2,037)	94% (2,002)	100% (2,357)	94% (2,221)

The age profile of respondents has remained fairly consistent over the past four survey intakes; however, the proportion of those aged over 65 continues to increase – now exactly half of the respondents are aged 65+, greater than 47% for 2017, 46% for 2015 and 43% for 2013. According to ONS population estimates, there are now one million more individuals aged over 65 years in the UK, in comparison with mid-2013; this can explain the upwards trend.

Your age, at your last birthday BY gender

Male	Column % (Count)			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
16 to 24	2% (21)	2% (23)	2% (30)	3% (27)
25 to 34	2% (21)	5% (50)	5% (62)	5% (54)
35 to 44	5% (46)	7% (63)	6% (78)	5% (50)
45 to 54	10% (100)	10% (95)	12% (147)	13% (141)
55 to 64	23% (226)	23% (219)	23% (286)	25% (272)
65 to 74	37% (370)	35% (331)	35% (435)	35% (375)
75 to 84	18% (177)	15% (143)	14% (171)	13% (139)
85 or over	3% (28)	2% (19)	4% (45)	2% (19)
Total	100% (989)	100% (943)	100% (1,254)	100% (1,077)
Base/survey response rate	96% (1,034)	97% (973)	100% (1,254)	97% (1,113)
Average age	63.2	59.9	61.1	59.4
Over 65 (%)	58%	52%	53%	50%

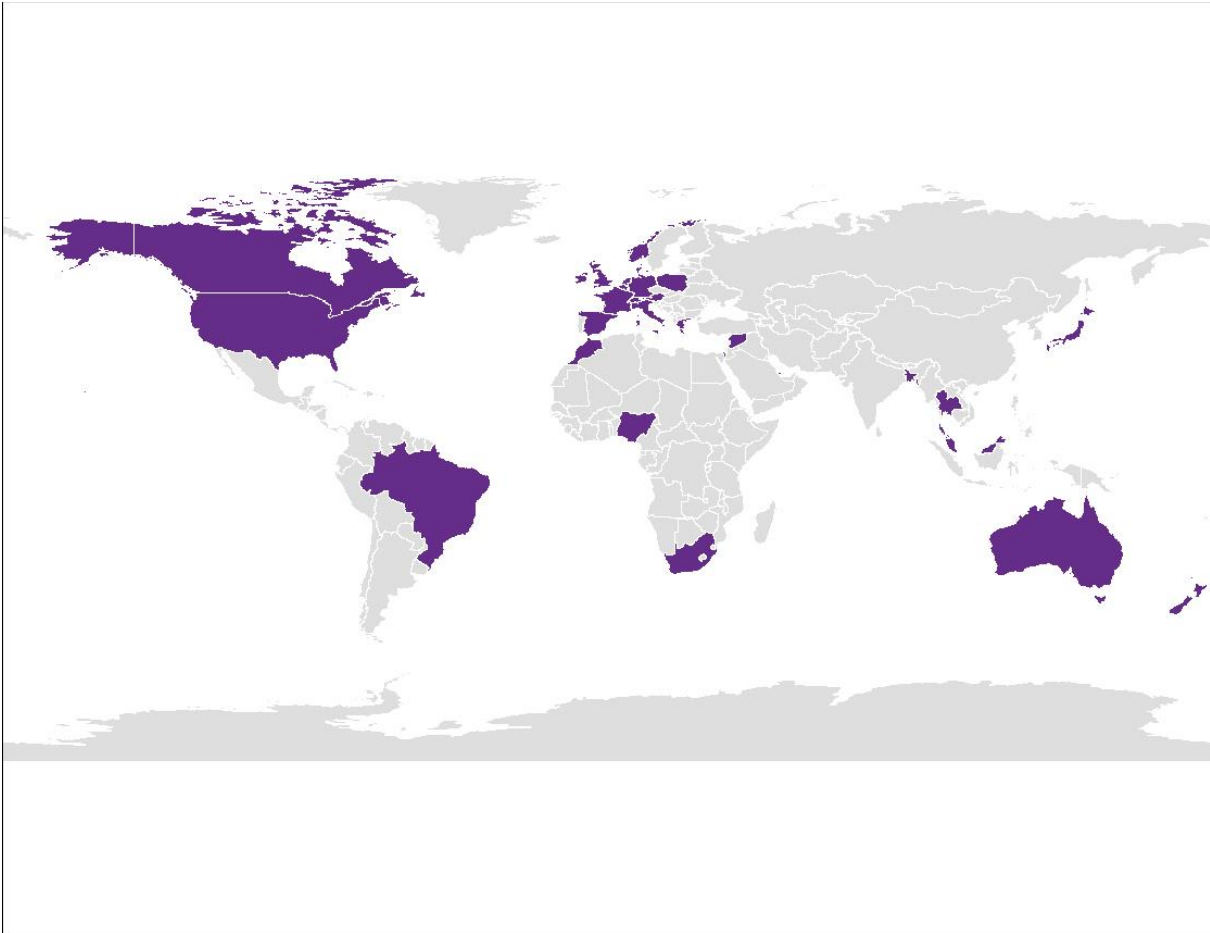
Female	Column % (Count)			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
16 to 24	3% (23)	3% (31)	4% (44)	4% (39)
25 to 34	8% (68)	7% (63)	8% (91)	7% (70)
35 to 44	9% (72)	7% (64)	8% (92)	8% (77)
45 to 54	15% (124)	14% (133)	14% (153)	16% (162)
55 to 64	24% (202)	27% (255)	27% (295)	30% (303)
65 to 74	30% (246)	30% (284)	30% (332)	29% (285)
75 to 84	9% (78)	9% (88)	8% (85)	6% (62)
85 or over	2% (15)	2% (14)	1% (6)	0% (2)
Total	100% (828)	100% (932)	100% (1,100)	100% (1,000)
Base/survey response rate	92% (904)	93% (1,002)	100% (1,101)	96% (1,045)
Average age	53.5	54.6	52.4	54.4
Over 65 (%)	41%	41%	39%	35%

Historically male respondents are, on average, older than their female counterparts. Since 2017, the average age of males has increased to 63.2 years, while the average age of females has decreased to 53.5 years. It can also be seen that the proportion of respondents over the age of 65 is greater for males than females (58% males, 41% females). Between 2013 and 2017, the proportion of females aged 65+ increased incrementally, whilst for males it changed little. However in 2019, the proportion of females that age remained the same (41%), while the proportion of males increased by 6% (58%).

Please tell us which continent/region you live in

	Column % (Count)			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
Africa	0% (7)	0% (2)	0% (9)	0% (9)
Americas	9% (164)	8% (159)	7% (173)	7% (158)
Asia	1% (15)	1% (140)	1% (129)	1% (19)
Europe	85% (1,633)	84% (1,646)	86% (2,015)	84% (1,805)
Oceania	5% (103)	7% (140)	6% (129)	8% (162)
Total	100% (1,922)	100% (2,087)	100% (2,455)	100% (2,153)
Base/Survey response rate	94% (2,037)	98% (2,002)	99% (2,357)	97% (2,221)

The data shows that since 2017, there has been a slight increase in the proportion of respondents from the Americas and Europe; whereas, there are fewer respondents from Oceania, the smallest proportion from the four most recent surveys (with 5%). The map below, as well as the tables that follow overleaf, illustrate the responses by country.



Please tell us which continent/region you live in:

Africa	Column % (Count)			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
Egypt				13% (1)
Kenya			11% (1)	
Morocco	17% (1)			
Nigeria	33% (2)			
Saint Helena			11% (1)	
Sierra Leone				13% (1)
South Africa	50% (3)	100% (2)	78% (7)	63% (5)
Tunisia				13% (1)
Total	100% (6)	100% (2)	100% (9)	100% (8)
Base/Survey response rate	86% (7)	100% (2)	100% (9)	89% (9)

A very small proportion of users live in Africa. When the survey was carried out in 2013 – 2017, the majority of respondents using the distance service from Africa lived in South Africa, ie 100% respondents in 2017. Since then, the total number of respondents from Africa has increased and the proportion of respondents from South Africa halved; respondents additionally live in Morocco and Nigeria.

Please tell us which continent/region you live in:

Americas	Column % (Count)			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
Argentina				1% (1)
Brazil	2% (3)	1% (1)	1% (2)	
Canada	34% (55)	37% (58)	30% (52)	39% (62)
Colombia				1% (1)
Jamaica			1% (1)	
Panama			1% (1)	
Trinidad and Tobago	1% (1)			1% (1)
United States of America	64% (104)	63% (99)	66% (114)	58% (91)
United States Virgin Islands			1% (1)	1% (1)
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)			1% (1)	
Total	100% (163)	100% (158)	100% (172)	100% (158)
Base/Survey response rate	99% (164)	99% (159)	99% (173)	100% (158)

Following the same trend as previous years, the American region with the greatest proportion of users in 2019 was the United States of America (64%, almost two thirds), followed by Canada (34%, a third). Since 2017, the total number of respondents from the Americas has increased and the proportion of users from Canada has decreased by three percent, with an increase in users from Brazil, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Please tell us which continent/region you live in:

Asia	Column % (Count)			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
Afghanistan				5% (1)
Bangladesh	7% (1)	10% (1)		11% (2)
China		20% (2)	8% (1)	11% (2)
China, Hong Kong (SAR)				11% (2)
India				26% (5)
Indonesia		10% (1)	8% (1)	
Iran (Islamic Republic of)				5% (1)
Israel	13% (2)	20% (2)	8% (1)	
Japan	40% (6)	30% (3)	25% (3)	5% (1)
Lebanon			8% (1)	
Malaysia	7% (1)			11% (2)
Qatar	13% (2)	10% (1)		
Saudi Arabia			8% (1)	
Singapore	13% (2)			
Thailand	7% (1)		8% (1)	11% (2)
Turkey			8% (1)	5% (1)
United Arab Emirates			17% (2)	
Total	100% (15)	100% (10)	100% (12)	100% (19)
Base/Survey response rate	100% (15)	100% (10)	92% (13)	100% (19)

A very small proportion of distance users are from Asia; the location of these users varied considerably between 2017 and 2019. Japan remains the Asian country with the greatest proportion of users, which increased by 10% since 2017 (now 40%). The total number of respondents from Asia has increased, while there have been no users from China and Indonesia, unlike previous years. A greater proportion of distance users are from Malaysia, Qatar, Singapore and Thailand.

Please tell us which continent/region you live in:

Europe	Column % (Count)			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
Åland Islands	0% (1)			
Albania				
Austria	0% (5)	0% (3)		
Belgium	0% (4)	0% (1)	0% (4)	0% (3)
Channel Islands	0% (1)	0% (2)		
Czech Republic		0% (1)		
Denmark	0% (1)		0% (3)	0% (1)
Finland		0% (1)	0% (2)	
France	1% (18)	1% (10)	1% (19)	1% (22)
Germany	1% (11)	0% (7)	1% (16)	0% (8)
Gibraltar			0% (1)	
Greece	0% (1)		0% (4)	0% (3)
Hungary			0% (1)	
Ireland	1% (10)	1% (14)	1% (16)	1% (25)
Isle of Man	0% (1)			
Italy	0% (4)	0% (5)	0% (3)	0% (3)
Jersey	0% (5)	0% (4)	0% (2)	
Luxembourg			0% (2)	
Netherlands	0% (8)	0% (5)	0% (4)	0% (5)
Norway	0% (3)		0% (4)	
Malta	0% (1)	0% (1)		
Poland	0% (2)		0% (1)	0% (2)
Portugal		0% (2)	0% (2)	0% (1)
Romania			0% (1)	0% (1)
Russian Federation		0% (2)	0% (4)	0% (3)
Slovakia				0% (1)
Spain	0% (8)	0% (2)	1% (11)	1% (12)
Sweden	0% (5)	0% (5)	0% (2)	0% (5)
Switzerland	0% (3)	0% (2)	0% (4)	0% (3)
United Kingdom	94% (1,524)	96% (1,563)	95% (1,897)	94% (1,691)
Total	100% (1,616)	100% (1,630)	100% (2,005)	100% (1,790)
Base/Survey response rate	99% (1,633)	99% (1,646)	100% (2,015)	99% (1,805)

Europe has the greatest proportion of distance users, although the total amount has gradually decreased since 2015. Between 2013 and 2019, the majority of respondents made an enquiry from the United Kingdom; this proportion has decreased since 2017 and is now equal to that from 2013. 2019 had the same top four locations as the earlier survey findings, with the Netherlands and Spain joint fifth, replacing Sweden.

Please tell us which continent/region you live in:

Oceania	Column % (Count)			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
American Samoa	1% (1)			
Australia	77% (78)	85% (119)	78% (101)	86% (138)
Kiribati				1% (1)
New Zealand	22% (22)	14% (20)	22% (28)	14% (22)
Norfolk Island		1% (1)		
Total	100% (101)	100% (140)	100% (129)	100% (161)
Base/Survey response rate	98% (103)	100% (140)	100% (129)	99% (162)

Following the same trend as previous years, the majority of distance users from Oceania reside in Australia, followed by New Zealand. Since 2013, the number of users from Australia has significantly reduced and the number from New Zealand has remained the same. The total number of respondents from Oceania has decreased considerably since 2013.

What is your ethnic group?

	Column %			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
Asian	1% (10)	0% (6)	0% (9)	0% (3)
Black	0% (5)	0% (3)	0% (7)	0% (2)
Mixed	1% (10)	1% (10)	0% (9)	1% (13)
White	97% (1,439)	97% (1,455)	97% (1,812)	98% (1,603)
Other	1% (21)	1% (22)	1% (25)	1% (18)
Total	100% (1,485)	100% (1,496)	100% (1,862)	100% (1,639)
Base/Survey response rate	97% (1,533)	95% (1,569)	98% (1,902)	97% (1,692)

Only asked if European and resident in one of: Channel Islands, Guernsey, Isle of Man, Jersey, Sark, or United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The ethnic group percentages in 2019 are almost equal to the previous years, with the majority of participants stating they were White. It can also be seen that the proportion of users who identify as Asian has increased by one per cent since 2017; although, this change is not statistically significant.

Please indicate if you consider yourself to have any of the following disabilities/conditions:

	Column %			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
Dexterity	1% (16)	2% (33)	2% (34)	2% (26)
Eyesight	2% (25)	1% (21)	1% (25)	1% (22)
Hearing	6% (89)	6% (89)	6% (112)	6% (99)
Learning disability	2% (24)	1% (17)	1% (20)	1% (16)
Mental health problem	4% (51)	4% (62)	3% (48)	4% (60)
Mobility	8% (116)	8% (123)	8% (151)	9% (141)
Other	3% (43)	3% (46)	2% (37)	2% (34)
None/not applicable	81% (1,171)	79% (1,159)	79% (1,499)	81% (1,299)
Total	100% (1,446)	100% (1,460)	100% (1,824)	100% (1,605)
Base/Survey response rate	94% (1,533)	93% (1,569)	96% (1,902)	95% (1,692)

Only asked if European and resident in one of: Channel Islands, Guernsey, Isle of Man, Jersey, Sark, or United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

In 2019, a marginally greater proportion of respondents said they had no disabilities/conditions than in 2017. More respondents reported that they had eyesight and learning disabilities.

Are you currently:

	Column %				Census 2011
	2019	2017	2015	2013	
A student?	3% (50)	5% (78)	5% (90)	5% (84)	6%
Employed or self-employed, full or part-time?	37% (540)	38% (574)	38% (708)	36% (589)	62%
Long-term sick or disabled?	1% (14)	1% (19)	1% (19)	1% (19)	4%
Looking after the home or family?	1% (21)	2% (32)	1% (24)	2% (25)	4%
On a government sponsored training scheme?	0% (1)	0% (1)	0% (1)	0% (1)	3%
Retired (whether receiving a pension or not)?	55% (802)	49% (741)	52% (959)	52% (854)	14%
Unemployed?	1% (11)	2% (27)	1% (22)	1% (22)	4%
Other	2% (31)	2% (34)	1% (26)	2% (39)	2%
Total	100% (1,470)	100% (1,506)	100% (1,849)	100% (1,692)	
Base/Survey response rate	96% (1,533)	96% (1,569)	97% (1,902)	100% (1,692)	

Only asked if European and resident in one of: Channel Islands, Guernsey, Isle of Man, Jersey, Sark, or United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

A slightly lower percentage of respondents said that they were employed in 2019, in comparison with 2015 and 2017. The data also shows a greater proportion of retired respondents in 2019 and a smaller proportion of unemployed respondents. The profile differs significantly from the 2011 profile of residents in England and Wales.

If you are happy for your email address to be attributed to/connected with your replies to the Record Office AND/OR you require a response from them, then please do indicate this below by selecting 'yes' for each option as appropriate

Attributed to/connected with

	Column %			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
No	55% (1,043)	50% (975)	51% (1,187)	48% (1,049)
Yes	45% (865)	50% (985)	49% (1,133)	52% (1,145)
Total	100% (1,908)	100% (1,960)	100% (2,320)	100% (2,194)
Base/Survey response rate	94% (2,037)	98% (2,002)	98% (2,357)	99% (2,221)

Response required

	Column %			
	2019	2017	2015	2013
No	96% (1,831)	95% (1,859)	95% (2,194)	94% (2,057)
Yes	4% (77)	5% (101)	5% (126)	6% (137)
Total	100% (1,908)	100% (1,960)	100% (2,320)	100% (2,194)
Base/Survey response rate	94% (2,037)	98% (2,002)	98% (2,356)	99% (2,221)

Appendices

The survey

0%

You recently contacted by letter, email or other electronic method, e.g. via the web, to draw on our distance enquiry services. Your feedback and views will help improve our services to customers. Do note that:

- This survey is being conducted by CIPFA Research on behalf of
- This survey is conducted in accordance with the Market Research Society (MRS) Code of Conduct
- This survey should take you no more than 5 to 10 minutes to complete
- We, CIPFA Research, guarantee that your anonymity will be preserved unless you explicitly provide your consent for your details to be revealed or for your comments to be passed on.

To proceed please click **Next** below, thank you

Next

0%

How did you find out about our distance enquiry service?

Please select all that apply

- A family history society
- Through the course of my education / training
- Leaflets / posters
- The archive's website
- Through the course of my employment
- Through a social media site, e.g. Twitter, Facebook
- A library / museum
- A magazine / newspaper / other publication
- Word of mouth, including friends or family
- Other

Next

0%

What were your main reasons for using email, letter or other electronic method, e.g. via the web, to contact rather than making a personal visit?

Please select all that apply

- See if archive has relevant information
- Used the archive's website but needed further help or advice
- In advance of a personal visit
- Email / phone / letter / other electronic method more convenient
- Live too far away to visit
- Saves on travel costs
- Don't have time to visit
- Cannot visit during your opening hours
- Follow-up to personal visit
- Need advice on services available
- Other

Next

0%

How good do you think the following aspects of the distance enquiry service are at ?

Please select one option per row

	Very good	Good	Adequate	Poor	Very poor
Overall	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clarity of response	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promptness of response	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Charges for goods or services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ease of navigation to our website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of bilingual information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Next

0%

For how long have you been contacting by email, letter or other electronic method, e.g. via the web?

Please select one option

- This was the first time
- For less than a year
- One to four years
- Five to ten years
- More than ten years

Next

0%

Your gender

Please select one option

- Male
- Female

Next

0%

Your age, at your last birthday:

Next

0%

Please tell us which continent / region you live in?

Please select one option

- Africa
- Americas
- Asia
- Europe
- Oceania

Next

0%

Which one of the following African countries do you live in?

Please select one option ...

Next

0%

Which one of the following American (North or South) countries do you live in?

Please select one option ...

Next

0%

Which one of the following Asian countries do you live in?

Please select one option ...

Next

0%

Which one of the following European countries do you live in?

Please select one option ...

Next

0%

Which one of the following Oceanian countries do you live in?

Please select one option ...

Next

0%

What is your home postcode?

Next

0%

What is your ethnic group?

Please select one option

- Asian
- Black
- Mixed
- White
- Other

Next

0%

Please indicate if you consider yourself to have any of the following disabilities / conditions:
Please select all that apply

- None / not applicable**
- Mobility, e.g. walking short distances or climbing stairs
- Hearing, e.g. deafness or partial hearing
- Eyesight, e.g. blindness or partial sight
- Dexterity, e.g. lifting and carrying objects
- Learning disability, e.g. dyslexia
- Mental health problem, e.g. depression
- Other

Next

0%

Are you currently:
Please select one option

- Employed or self-employed, full or part-time?
- On a government sponsored training scheme?
- Unemployed?
- A student?
- Retired (whether receiving a pension or not)?
- Looking after the home or family?
- Long-term sick or disabled?
- Other

Next

0%

Are there any changes or improvements you would like to see made to the service at ?

Next

0%

Are you happy for your email address to be attributed to / connected with your replies to ?

Yes No

Do you require a response?

Yes No

Next

0%

{INS_ERR}

Please provide your email address in the box below:

So we can check we've got your email address recorded correctly, please enter your email address again:

Next

0%

If you wish to submit your responses please click **Next** below:

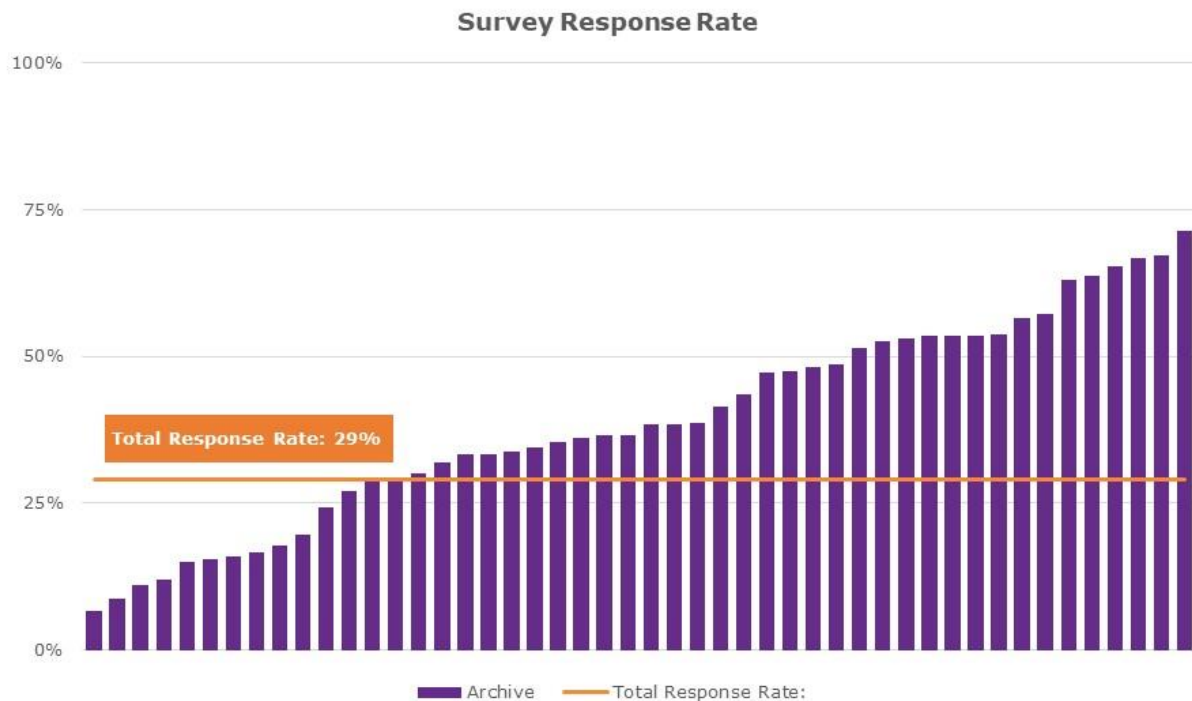
Next

Participating Archives 2019

Archive	Country	Type
Bangor University Archives and Special Collections	Wales	University
Bath Record Office	England	Local
Bedfordshire Archives	England	Local
Berkshire Record Office	England	Local
Bristol Archives	England	Local
Britten-Pears Foundation	England	Special
Ceredigion Archives	Wales	Local
Cheshire Archives & Local Studies	England	Local
Denbighshire Archive Service	Wales	Local
Dorset History Centre	England	Local
Flintshire Record Office	Wales	Local
Glamorgan Archives	Wales	Local
Gwent Archives	Wales	Local
Hackney Archives	England	Local
Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS)	England	Local
Historic Environment Scotland	Scotland	National
Jersey Archive	Channel Islands	National
Kent History and Library Centre	England	Local
Lancashire Archives	England	Local
London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Local Studies Library and Archive	England	Local
London Metropolitan Archives	England	Local
National Library of Wales	Wales	National
National Monuments Record of Wales	Wales	National
North Yorkshire County Record Office	England	Local

Archive	Country	Type
Nottinghamshire Archives	England	Local
Oxfordshire History Centre	England	Local
Parliamentary Archives	England	National
Pembrokeshire Archives	Wales	Local
Perth & Kinross Archive	Scotland	Local
Richard Burton Archives, Swansea University	Wales	University
Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Library and Archive	England	Local
Shropshire Archives	England	Local
Special Collections and Archives, Cardiff University	Wales	University
Staffordshire Record Office	England	Local
Stoke on Trent City Archives	England	Local
Surrey History Centre	England	Local
the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies	England	Local
The Keep	England	University
The Postal Museum	England	National
The University of Manchester Special Collections	England	University
Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives	England	Local
UCL Institute of Education	England	University
UCL Record Office	England	University
UCL Special Collections	England	University
University of Nottingham	England	University
Warwickshire County Record Office	England	Local
Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service	England	Local
Wrexham Archives and Local Studies	Wales	Local

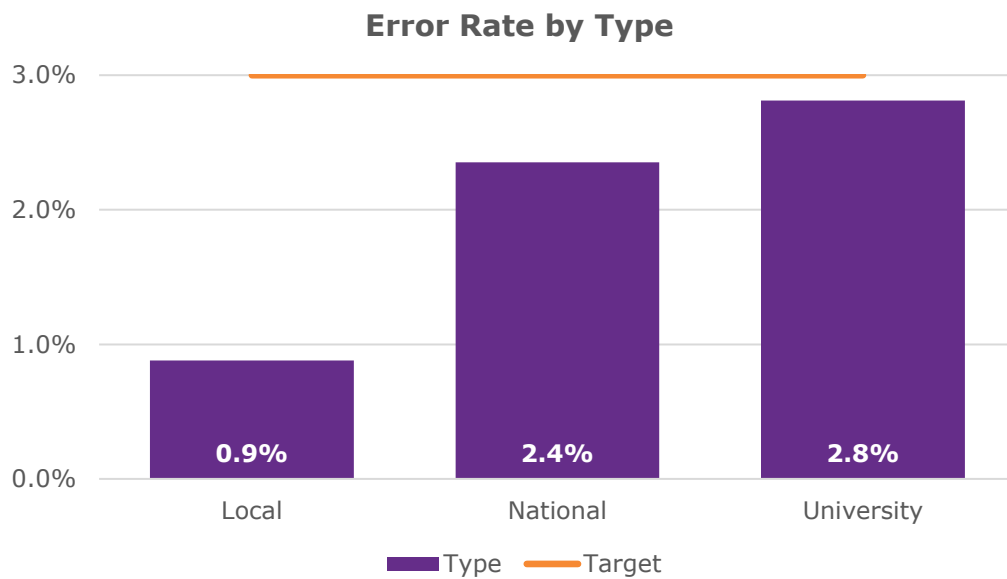
Survey Response Level and Error Rate



The chart above reflects the variation in response rates across the participating archives that ranged from 7% to 71%. As can also be seen the total response rate was 29%, although this is slightly down compared to the result for 2017 of 34%. Evaluating response by archive type we find that university archives achieved a response rate of 39% whilst for local archives it was 32% and for national archives just 16%. Across the regions there was also a degree of variation in response rates as follows: Wales 34%; England 32%; and Scotland 11%.

The other measure used to evaluate the statistical reliability of a survey is the error rate. The error rate is calculated based on just two factors, the number of people invited to take part in the survey (7,041) and the number who actually responded (2,037). As a general rule of thumb error rates of less than or equal to 10% are deemed acceptable with those of less than or equal to 5% deemed excellent. Of the 48 participating archives some 15, approximately a third, achieved an error rate of less than or equal to 10% of which one had an error rate of approximately 5%. However, it should be emphasised that for a survey of this type where contact with the client is by email achieving statistical reliability will always be challenging. Fortunately the situation at the overall level, as well as by type and region, is far better as can be seen in the charts overleaf.

Error rates at this level, ie aggregated to represent the type of archive, are typically deemed acceptable if they are at or close to 3%. On this basis all types of archives achieved this.



A relatively similar picture emerges when the error rate is evaluated by region. Although for Scotland the result is slightly higher than 3% but not to the extent that the results become ineligible.



Finally, with some 2,037 people taking part in total, the overall error rate is just 0.8%. This should be judged as being very healthy and means that we can have a high degree of confidence in our results.

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77 Mansell Street, London E1 8AN

020 7543 5600 \ www.cipfa.org

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