

SELF STORAGE



ANNUAL REPORT

DATA COMPILED FROM
2022 CALENDAR YEAR



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& METHODOLOGY**

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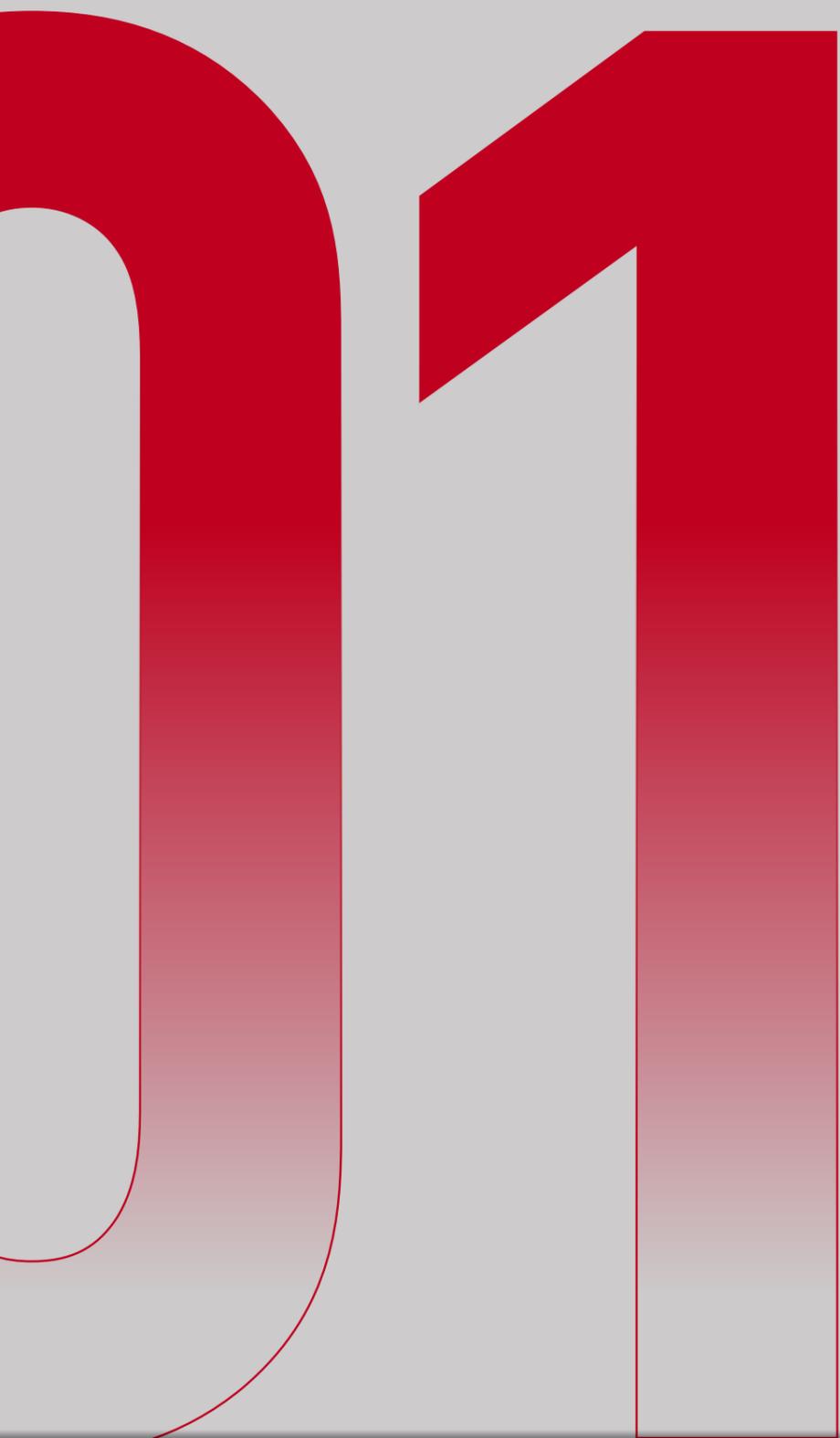
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INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

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This is the 16th year the Self Storage Association UK (SSA UK) has been surveying its members and producing an annual industry report. The report covers all viewpoints of the industry, collecting data from operators, customers and the general public. The last few years have seen some changes in the industry, following the impact of the pandemic and now as we move into a period of inflationary pressure.



There have been some changes to the sample group this year as the industry becomes more consolidated and independent stores are opened. With around a quarter of stores in the UK completing the survey, representing around 40% of the storage space, the sample size is exceptionally robust.

For the past eight years, the report has been produced in conjunction with Cushman & Wakefield. Their extensive experience in valuing self storage properties around the world, as well as knowledge of the broader property market, has further added to the valuable information in this report. The economic overview provided by Cushman & Wakefield included in the report also gives context to the achievements of the industry.

The operator survey was completed by 57 companies with 602 stores in total. They were all members of the SSA UK. The survey was completed in the months of January and February based on data from the 2022 calendar year, unless otherwise stated. Compared to the industry as a whole, the data set is slightly weighted towards larger operators as fewer of the small independent operators complete the survey.

The customer survey was completed in January 2023 across 29 self storage companies across the UK, which have over 152 stores in total. A total of 1,837 customers responded to the survey, of whom 82% were domestic customers and 18% were business customers. This survey was sent to the main contact on the self storage contract. The survey was entirely voluntary and without reward. The latter part of the survey asked specific questions addressed to either private or domestic customers or business customers.

The public survey was carried out online by YouGov on behalf of SSA UK on January 23 and 24. It was an online survey with data drawn from a statistically selected and weighted sample of the adult UK population's demographics. The survey was completed by 2,102 participants this year.

I would like to thank the members of the SSA UK, who responded so promptly to the survey this year, and the team at Cushman & Wakefield for collating the data, providing commentary and interpretation of the data and producing the final report. A special thanks to all the operators who allowed us to survey their customers. I hope that you find value in this report, it certainly shows the industry has continued its strong performance coming out of the pandemic.

RENNIE SCHAFFER
CEO - SSA UK





SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS



RENTAL RETURNS UP
4% TO
£27.19 PER SQ FT



OCCUPANCY STABLE AT
83.3%



CHURN AT
81%



EBITDA UP
3%



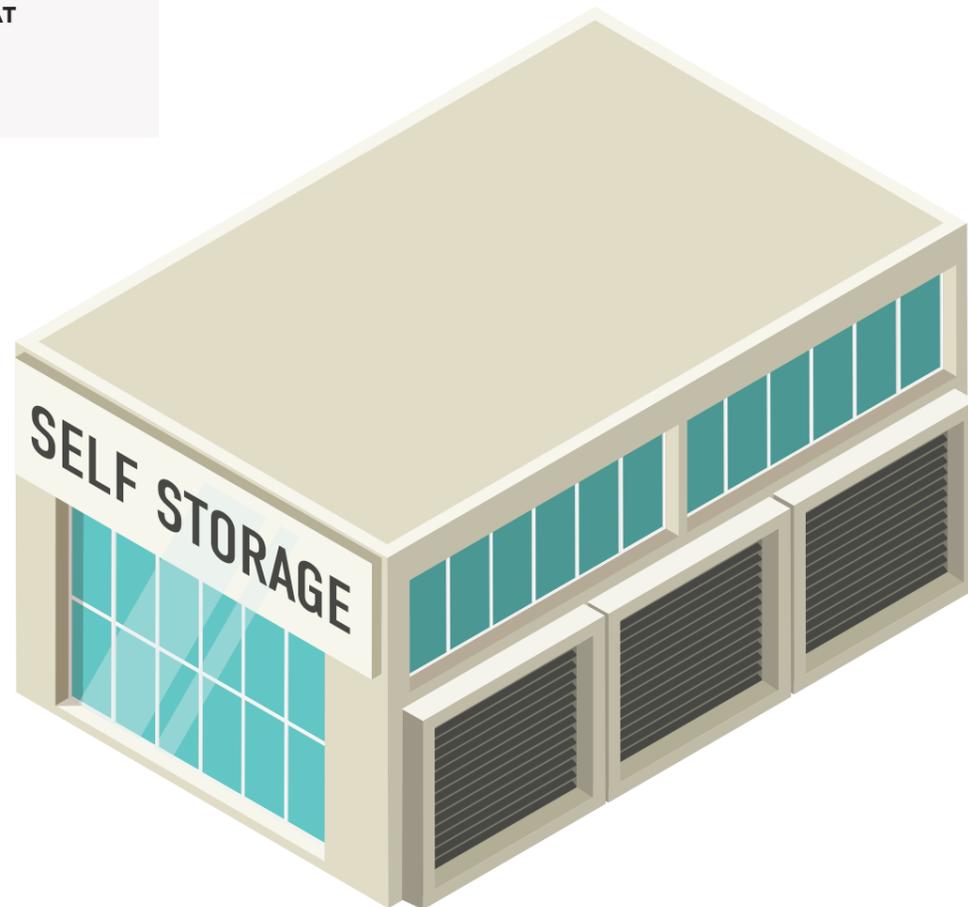
5.7%
GROWTH IN SELF STORAGE SPACE



78%
OF OPERATORS MAKING SUSTAINABILITY IMPROVEMENTS TO THEIR BUSINESS



OVER
2M SQ FT
OF ADDITIONAL SPACE OCCUPIED COMPARED TO LAST YEAR




55%
OF SELF STORAGE CUSTOMERS EARN ABOVE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE WAGE



32%
OF CUSTOMERS HAVE USED SELF STORAGE BEFORE



17%
OF CUSTOMERS SAY THEIR NEEDS FOR SELF STORAGE HAVE CHANGED DUE TO COST OF LIVING



20%
OF BUSINESS CUSTOMERS RUN THEIR ENTIRE BUSINESS FROM THEIR SELF STORAGE UNIT



20%
OF CUSTOMERS HAVE HAD THEIR UNIT FOR OVER 5 YEARS



62%
OF CUSTOMERS TRAVEL LESS THAN 15 MINUTES TO THEIR UNIT



36%
OF THE PUBLIC THINK SELF STORAGE IS TOO EXPENSIVE



LESS THAN
50%
OF THE PUBLIC HAVE A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF SELF STORAGE



66%
OF PEOPLE IDENTIFIED A SELF STORAGE BRAND FROM ITS ROADSIDE STORE PRESENCE



INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

THE SELF STORAGE INDUSTRY CONTINUES TO EVOLVE AND THE EXACT DEFINITION OF SELF STORAGE HAS BEEN DEBATED. SELF STORAGE IS A TERM INCREASINGLY BEING USED BY A VARIETY OF BUSINESSES OFFERING DIFFERENT FORMS OF STORAGE SOLUTIONS.

Self storage in the UK is not a regulated industry, and there is little guidance from the government as to exactly what makes up a self storage facility. There is a European standard for self storage; however, this was drafted 15 years ago, before newer industries like mobile storage, trade counters, peer-to-peer storage, and valet storage emerged. The standard was primarily focused on differentiating self storage from removers and defining minimum levels of security and legal protection for customers. Without a clear definition of self storage, commentary on the size and performance of the industry in documents such as this is difficult.

To provide clarity for this document and future SSA UK publications, the association has defined a self storage unit as >>

A self storage unit is a secure, static space, typically less than 500 square feet in size, that is to be used by a person or business for the storage of goods. Customers have exclusive and ready access to their space. Ready access means the ability to access the unit at will during normal office hours without intervention. It is not intended that the unit be used as a workspace, trade counter, or place where business activities other than storage or storage related activities take place. Storage related activities would include goods receiving, dispatching, and packing that involve the goods in storage. This unit would be rented under a self storage contract that was not part of or tied to an additional agreement such as a residential tenancy, office space, workspace, or similar.

This definition would not include mobile storage, where portable units are delivered to customers and then returned on request, as this does not meet the criteria of static space or ready access. Similarly, it would not cover peer to peer storage in most cases, as this also would not meet the criteria for ready access without intervention. It is understood that some businesses that do not meet this definition do have the term self storage in their name or description; however, for the purpose of clarity, they are not defined as self storage in this report.

Based on this definition, it is estimated that there are approximately 2,231 self storage stores in the UK, of which 739 are predominately external storage (typically converted shipping containers or similar). These stores are spread across 1,086 different brands, and while most of these brands are independently owned, there are a small number of operators with stores under multiple brands. There are around 55.5 million square feet of self storage in the UK.

The average size of a self storage facility is 24,877 square feet and this has been declining in recent years. This is due to more new stores opening in smaller regional markets and the emergence of remotely managed stores.

We have seen a large increase in external storage facilities opening, but most of these are small—less than 50 containers—with many in rural locations or as secondary businesses in industrial estates. The increasing cost of construction for purpose built self storage does not appear to have significantly impacted development. There remains a strong pipeline for the development of new sites and the expansion of existing buildings within the industry.

Consolidation in the industry has continued as existing operators expand their portfolios through acquisitions. Institutional investors were more successful in their acquisitions in 2022, picking up a number of larger portfolios.

SUPPLY	55.5 MILLION SQ FT
STORES	2231
NUMBER OF BRANDS	1086
STORAGE SPACE PER HEAD OF POPULATION	0.82 SQ FT
ANNUAL TURNOVER	£990 M
AVERAGE SIZE OF STORE	24,877 SQ FT

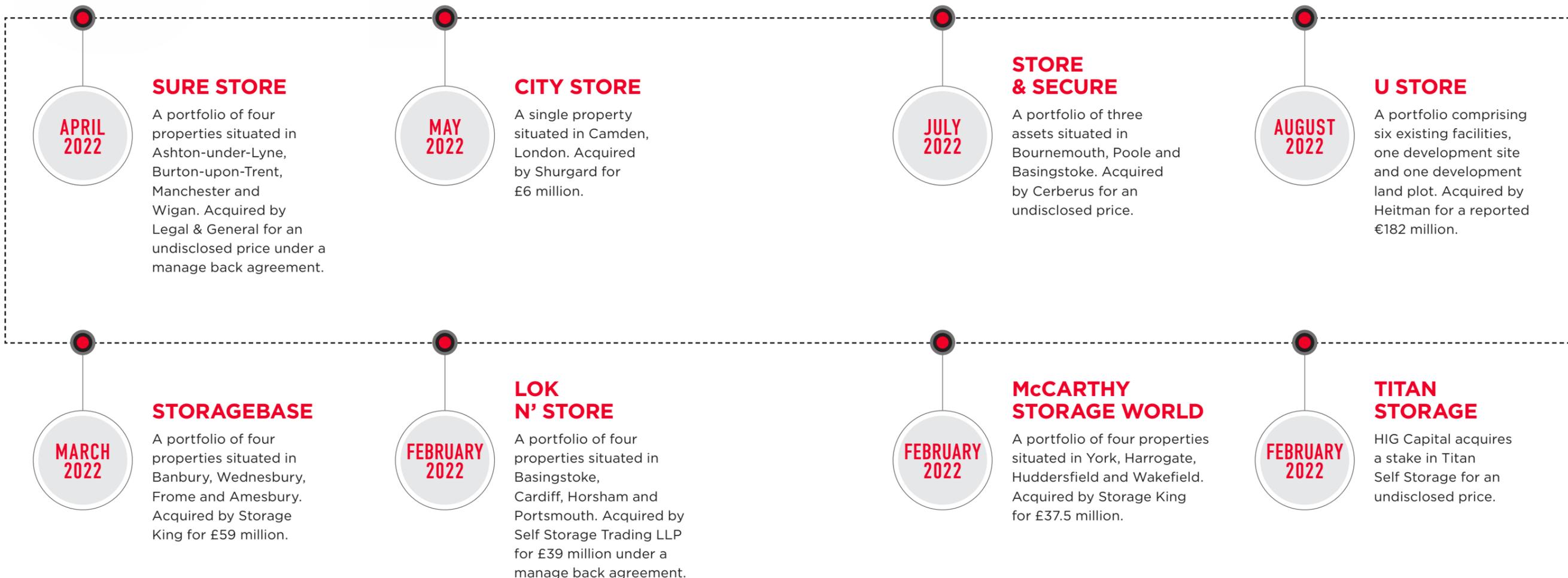
ORGANISATION	NO. OF STORES	TOTAL SPACE
BIG YELLOW (INCLUDING ARMADILLO BRAND)	108	6.3M
SAFESTORE	129	5.7M
ACCESS SELF STORAGE	60	3.4M
SHURGARD SELF STORAGE	41	2.2M
LOK'NSTORE (INCLUDING MANAGED OR FRANCHISE STORES)	40	2.0M
STORAGE KING (INCLUDING MANAGED OR FRANCHISE STORES)	38	1.7M
READY STEADY STORE	27	815,000
FLEXISS GROUP (SURESTORE AND SELF STORAGE COMPANY)	17	786,000
STORAGE MART	18	759,000
LOCK STOCK SELF STORAGE LIMITED (CONTAINER STORAGE)	27	764,000



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INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS

INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS





UK ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

UK ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

IN BRIEF

Inflationary pressures have driven up the cost of living, as a result firstly of supply chain pressures due to disruption in the global economy from the pandemic, and latterly the conflict in Ukraine. At the time of writing, CPI stands at 9.2%. Furthermore, these inflationary pressures have driven a monetary response in the form of interest rate hikes, which have driven up the cost of borrowing, most notably on mortgages.

These have all had the impact of driving down the accumulation of household savings – accumulated during the course of the pandemic – quickly, but also put pressure on consumers’ discretionary spend.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

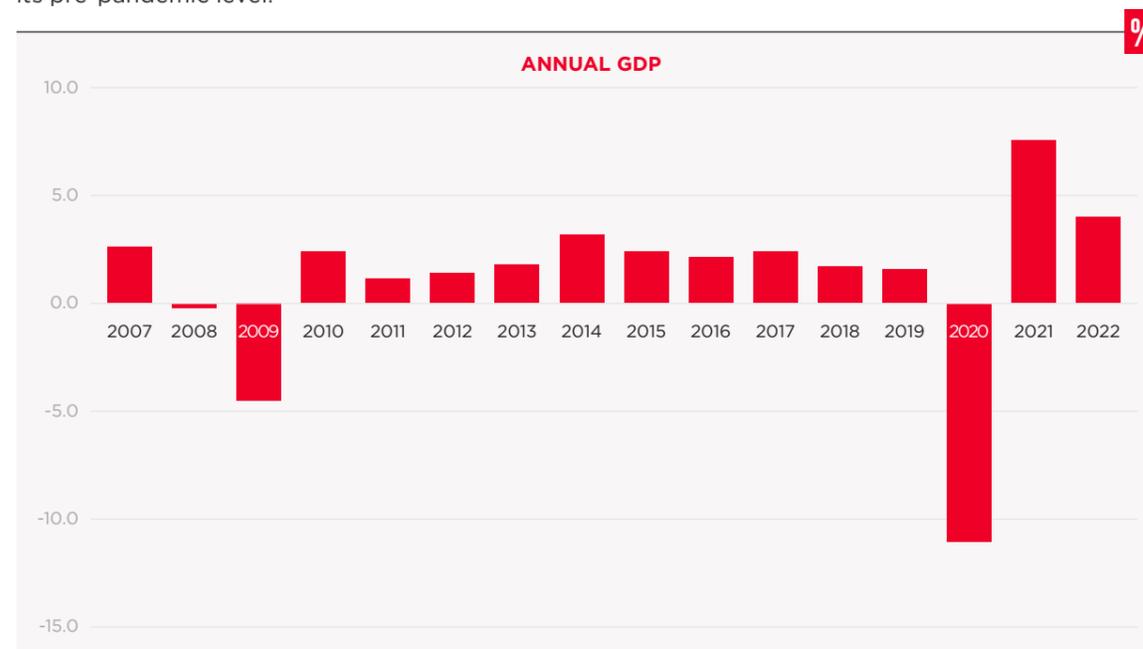
The element of economic uncertainty has increased over the course of the last 12 months, not least as a result of the mini-budget in September 2022, which had the impact of devaluing sterling – to a low point of \$1.07; driving up ten-year gilts to a peak of 4.5%; and increasing the cost of borrowing.

The UK economy remains hamstrung by high inflation, which is impacting consumer spending and driving down household savings to pre-pandemic levels. The Bank of England has now undertaken 11 consecutive rate hikes in its ambition to take inflation out of the system. While most economists continue to forecast inflation falling during the course of 2023, the most recent inflation data – at the time of writing – saw CPIH increase by 9.2% in the 12 months to February 2023, with CPI back up to 10.4%.

The impact of inflation has contributed to significant industrial action across the public sector. There were 220,000 working days lost as a result of disputes in January 2023, down from 822,000 in December 2022.

Overall, during the course of 2022, the economy grew by 4%, with the final quarter seeing marginal growth of 0.1% (revised upwards from 0%), after a marginal fall of 0.1% in Q3. The final quarter’s slowing was driven by negative growth in education, transport and storage, and production. By the end of 2022, the level of quarterly GDP was still 0.8% below its pre-pandemic level.

Positive readings of PMI in February and March suggest short term growth in the economy, although there continue to be a number of headwinds. Most recently, economic uncertainty is centered around the potential for further distress in the banking sector, after the woes of Signature, SVB, Credit Suisse and First Republic.



SOURCE: ONS

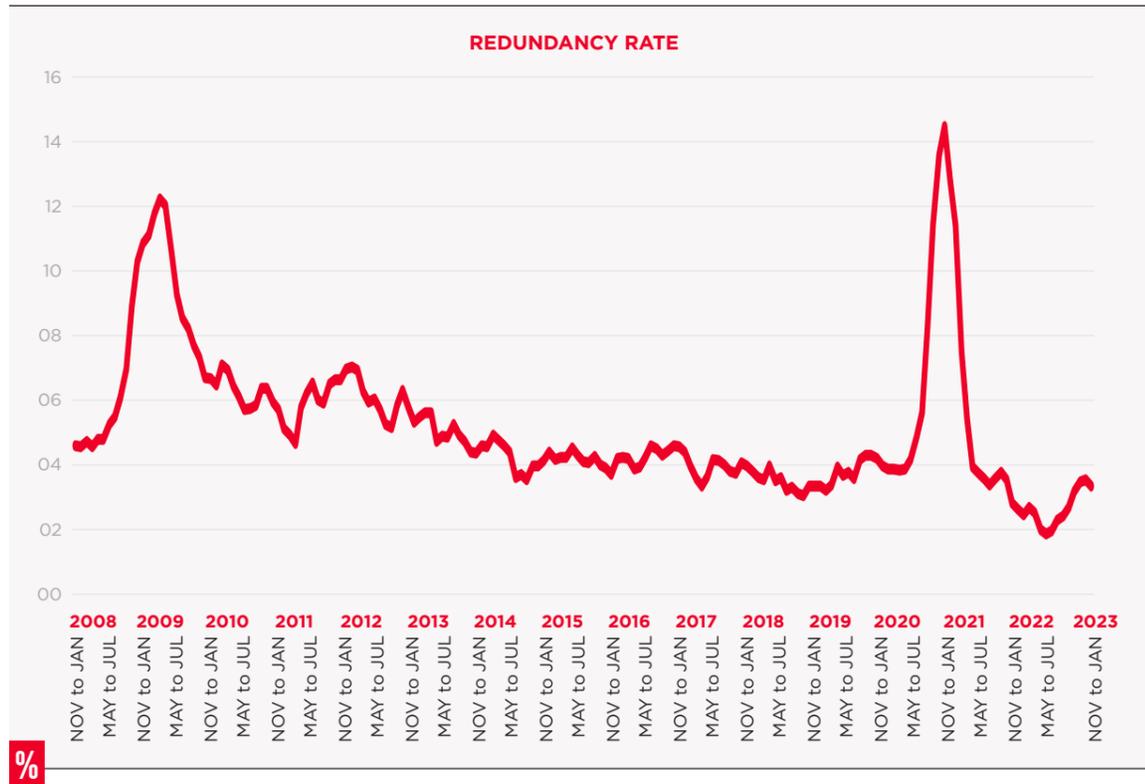
LABOUR MARKET

Relative business resilience has underpinned a healthy labour market. In the three months to January 2023, the UK employment rate was 75.7%, with the unemployment rate at 3.7%.

In the three months to February 2023, the estimated number of vacancies fell – for the eighth consecutive period - to 1,124,000. This is evidence that while unemployment remains historically low, economic uncertainty is weighing on recruitment.

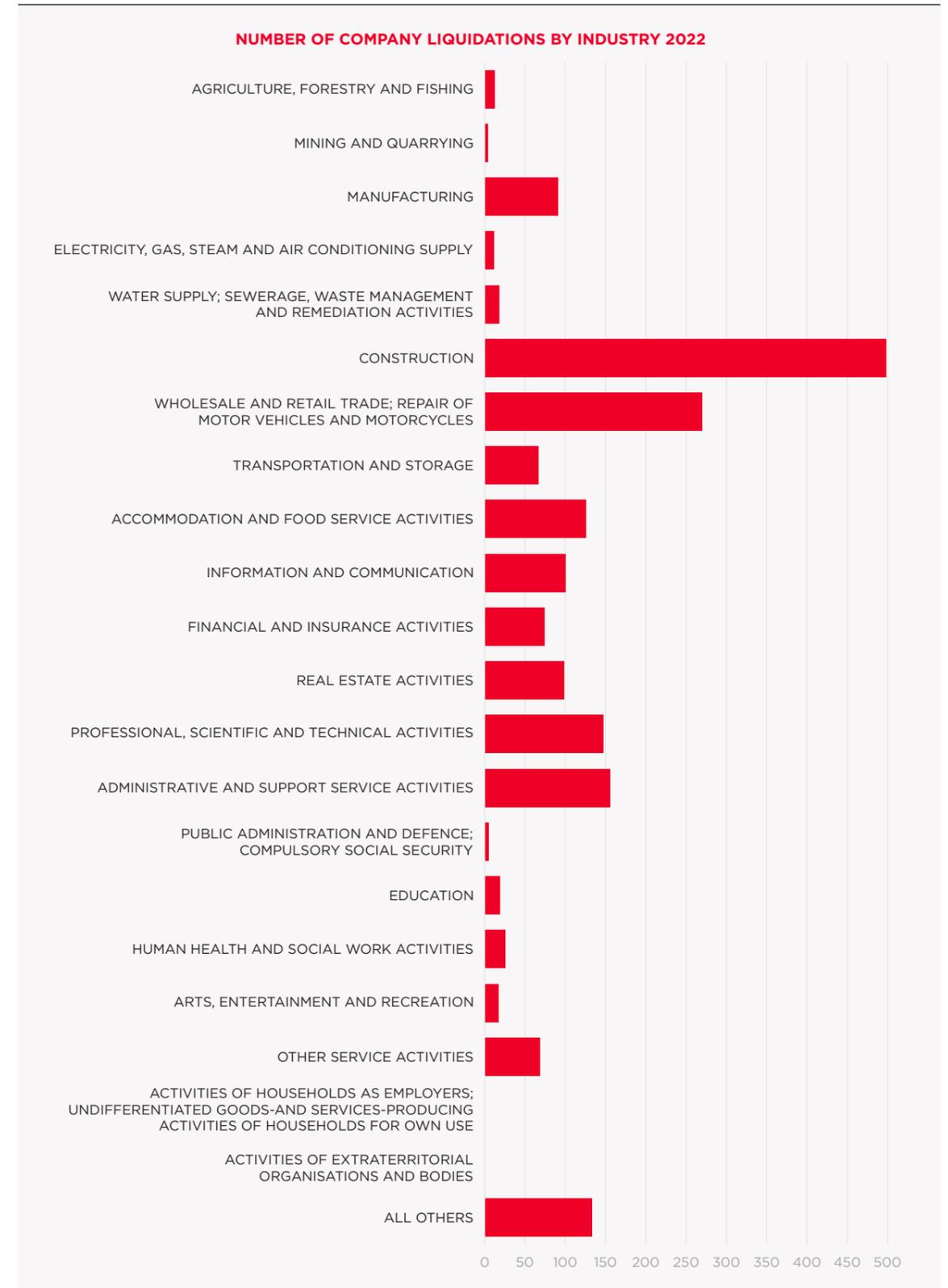
With unemployment low and vacancies still at historically high levels, economic activity is high up on the political agenda. The Spring Budget introduced a number of measures intended to increase the working population – with the expansion of free childcare hours and the changes to universal credit most notable. Whilst we have seen an increase in redundancies, the redundancy rate – the rate of redundancies as a ratio of employees - remains below the long-term norm.





SOURCE: ONS

Lagging business investment – likely to be tempered further by increased cost of borrowing – and a business environment which is creating more business failures than at any point since the global financial crisis will continue to put upward pressure on unemployment levels.



SOURCE: ONS



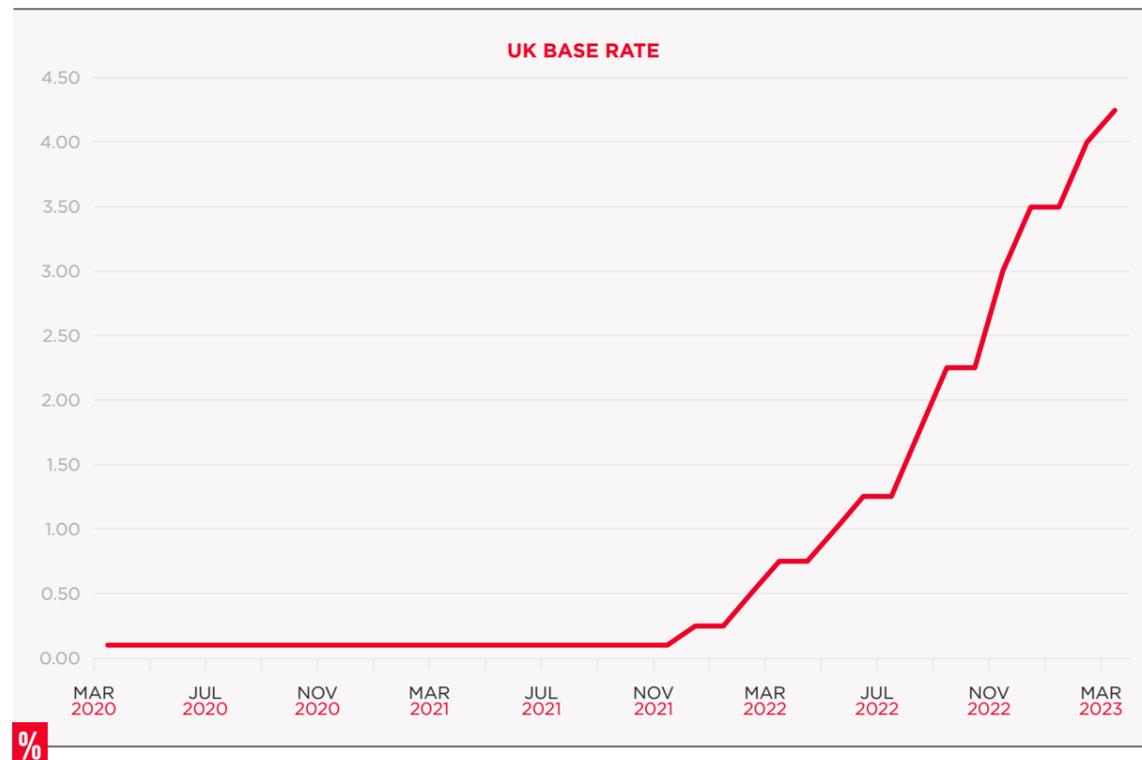
INFLATION AND INTEREST RATES

While most economists continue to forecast inflation falling globally during the course of 2023, the most recent inflation data in the UK – at the time of writing – highlighted its stickiness in the UK. The Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers’ housing costs (CPIH) increased by 9.2% in the 12 months to February 2023, with the Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) back up to 10.4%.

However, there is optimism to be had by looking internationally, with US inflation down from a peak of 9.1% - with goods price inflation up to a record 19% - last year to 6.0% in February. Office for Budget Responsibility forecasts produced in line with the Spring Budget suggest that inflation in the UK will be 2.9% by the end of 2023.

The extension of the energy price cap for an extra three months will do some good in protecting the consumer from additional cost of living pressures. With wholesale prices falling this year and the extension lasting until the summer, the hope will be that energy bills will fall back below the cap of c.£2,100 per annum. This will give the retailer some much-needed breathing room, although expected bills will be in excess of the previous cap of £1,300 per annum. Any benefits from the energy cap are more than offset by other inflationary elements and increased mortgage interest repayments as a result of higher interest rates.

The Bank of England has now undertaken 11 consecutive base rate hikes since December 2021, when the base rate stood at 0.1%, as monetary policy has been directed towards taking inflation out of the system. The base rate currently stands at 4.25%.



SOURCE: BANK OF ENGLAND

HOUSING MARKET

After a buoyant number of years, housing market activity in the UK has slowed, as rising interest rates, high inflation, and a weaker economy have impacted buyers’ confidence. In February 2023, buyer demand remained 8% above pre-pandemic levels, despite being 51% lower than last year.

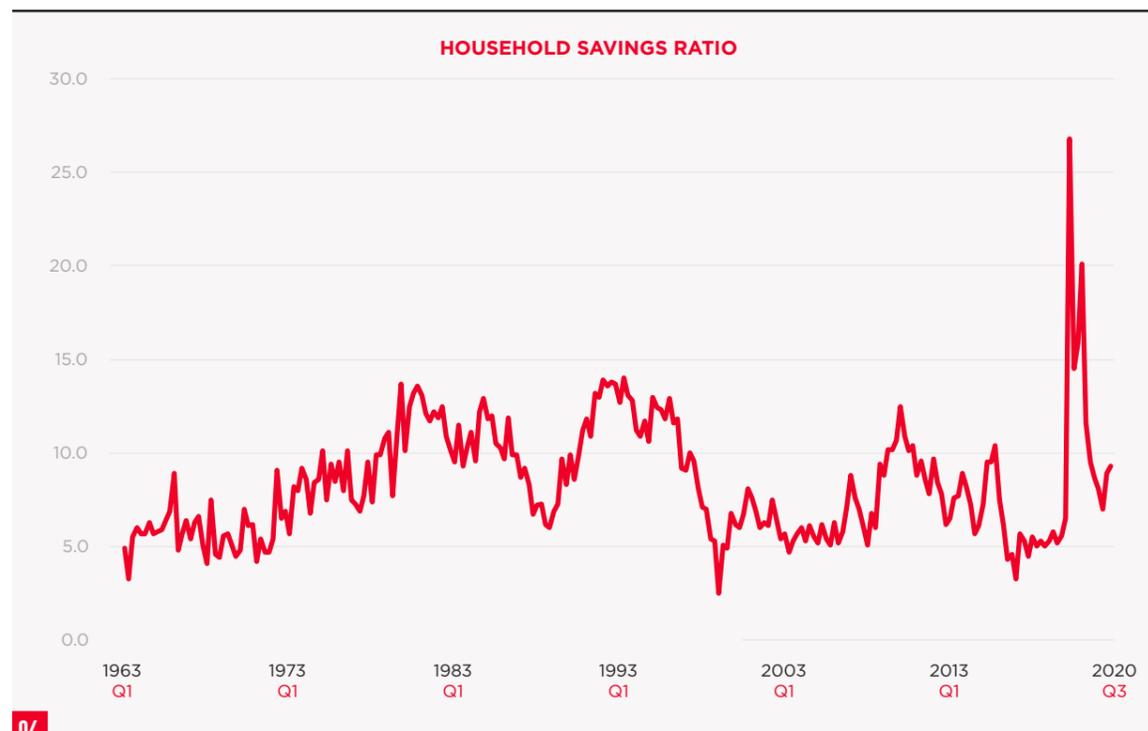
Mortgage approvals have slowed, with Bank of England data showing that 40% fewer were approved in January 2023 than the pre-pandemic average. Sales are starting to slow, with a monthly fall of 27% in January 2023, although sales are still only 3% lower than the pre-pandemic average. In February 2023, house prices experienced their first annual decline since June 2020, with Nationwide showing a 1.1% annual fall, although consensus expectations suggest that 2023 will see continued falls in house prices. As of February, Nationwide house prices were 6% below the August 2022 peak.



COST OF LIVING

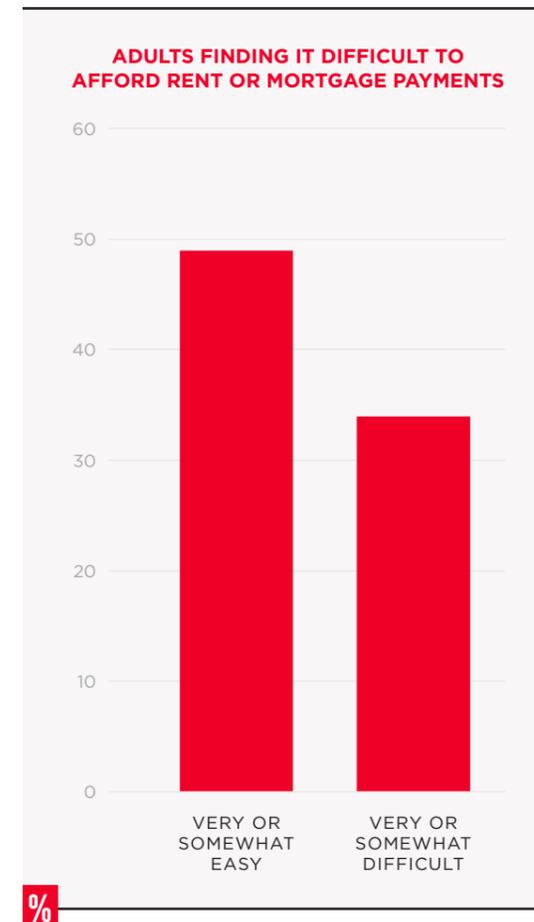
HOUSEHOLD SECURITY

The impact on lifestyles as a result of the pandemic allowed consumers to save their income, in a way never seen previously. While there has been relative robustness compared to pre-pandemic levels, this has now been run down considerably.



SOURCE: ONS

36% of adults making mortgage payments say that these outgoings have increased in the last six months. This has resulted in 34% of adults finding it difficult to afford their rent or mortgage.



SOURCE: ONS

COST OF FOOD

Food prices in the UK are increasing at their fastest rate since 1977, with food and non-alcoholic consumer inflation at 16.8% in January 2023.

This is as a result of increased production costs, with production inflation of food, drinks and tobacco increasing to 19.8%, suggesting that there are elements where manufacturers have not 'passed on' the entire cost. This raises the potential for further increases. Imported food materials increased by 25.7% during the same period.

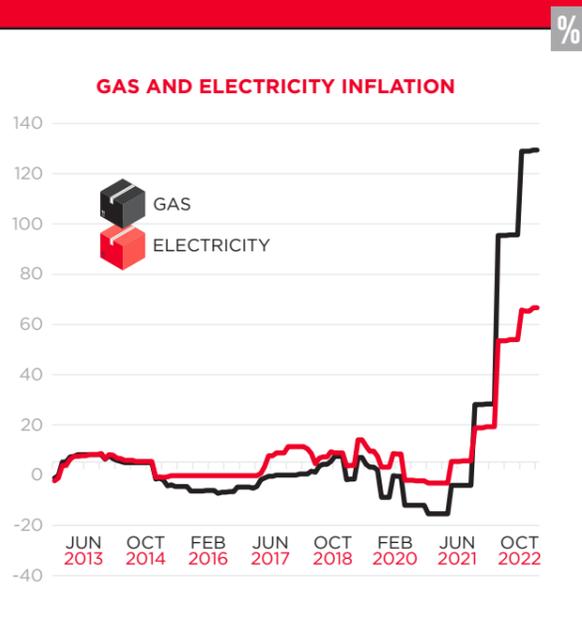
The largest contributor to the increase in food inflation was vegetables, which rose by 18% in February. Furthermore, there have been shortages of produce in supermarkets as a result of bad weather and the impact of increased electricity prices.



COST OF LIVING

UTILITIES

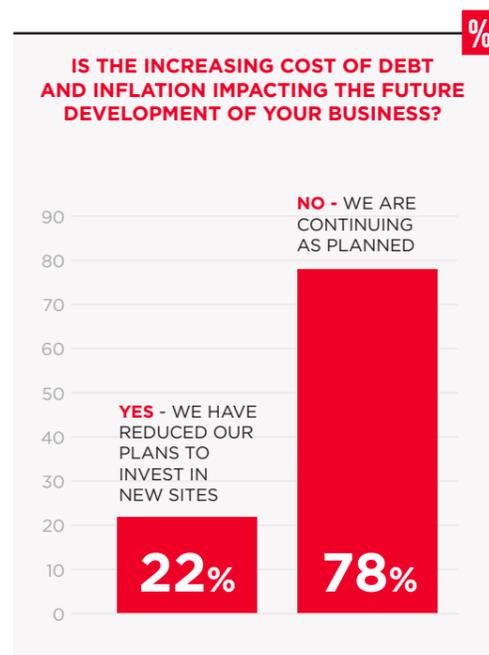
In the year to February 2023, electricity prices had increased by 66.7%, while gas prices had increased by 129.4% in the same time period. As a result, 54% of adults are using less fuel in their homes, while 49% find it difficult to afford it. 20% of people reported being occasionally, hardly ever or never able to keep comfortably warm in their home.



SOURCE: ONS

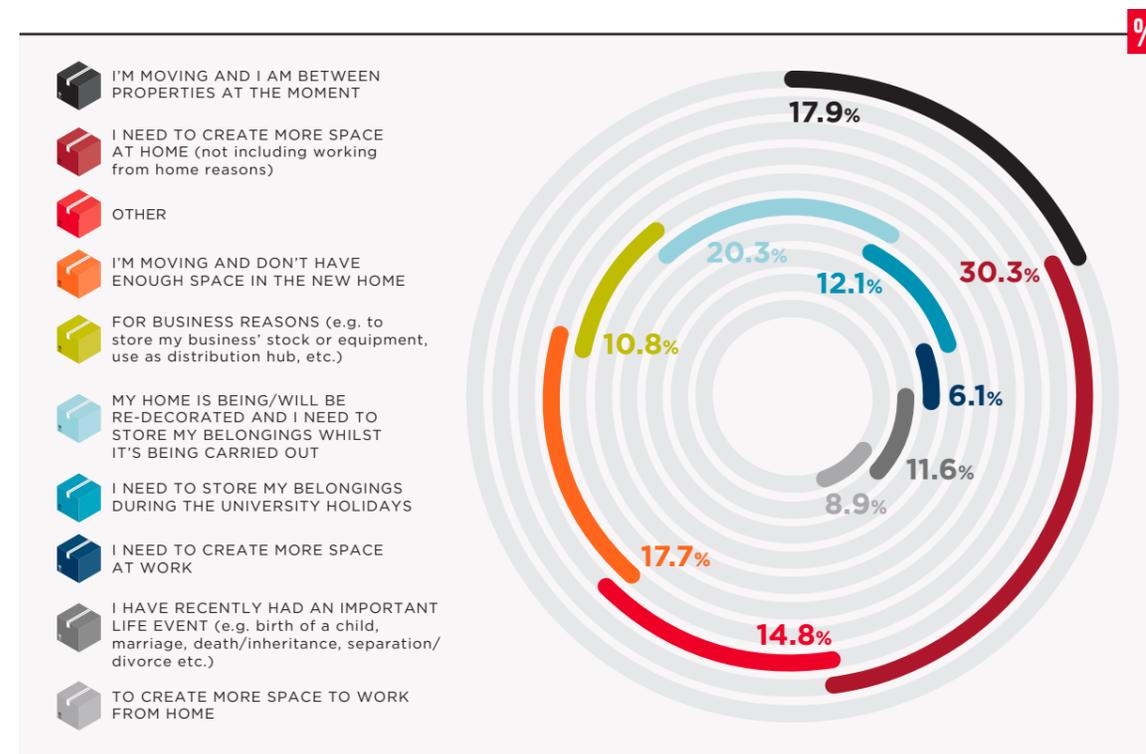
COST OF LIVING IMPACT ON SELF STORAGE

The increased cost of debt and increasing inflation are impacting real estate investment and development across all sectors. In our operator survey, it was made clear that this is likely to potentially hamper future self-storage development - with 22% citing that as a factor.



22% OF OPERATORS SEE THE INCREASED COST OF DEBT AND RISING INFLATION IMPACTING FUTURE SELF STORAGE DEVELOPMENTS.

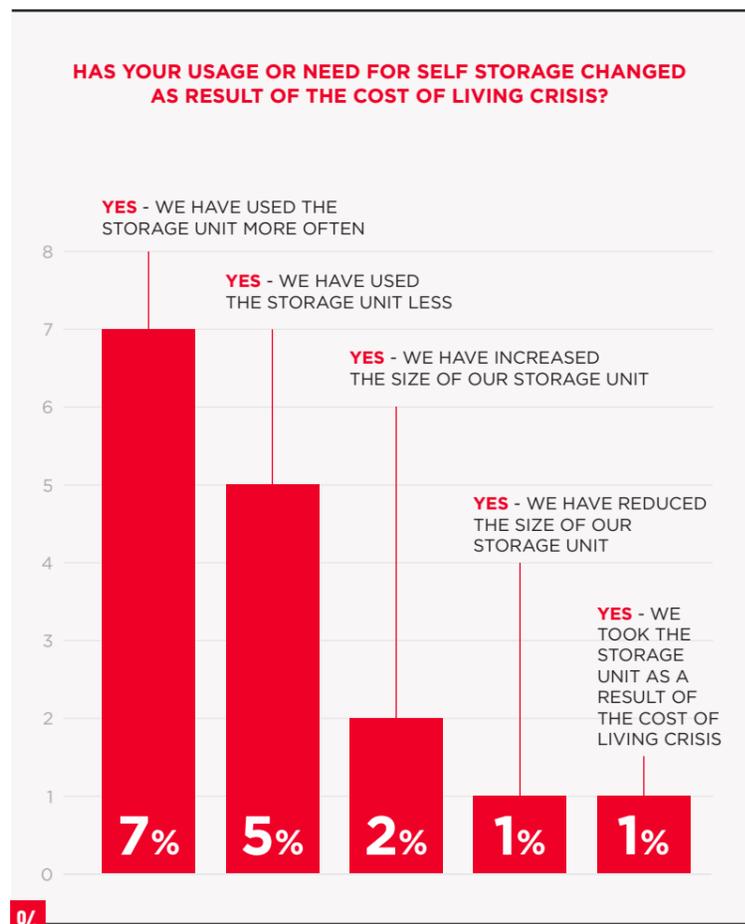
A drag on growth is likely to be the result of potentially reduced demand. The inflationary pressures on consumers are likely to tighten discretionary spend, while the increased cost of mortgages will slow the housing market, and negatively impact liquidity. These are likely to create a drag on demand in the sector as a result of fewer trigger points for entry into the self storage market - 35.7% of users cite moving house as a reason for taking self storage space, either as a result of being in between properties, or moving and not having enough space. Furthermore, economic uncertainty has negatively impacted the number of home renovations, with redecorations making up a further 20.3%.



COST OF LIVING

COST OF LIVING IMPACT ON SELF STORAGE

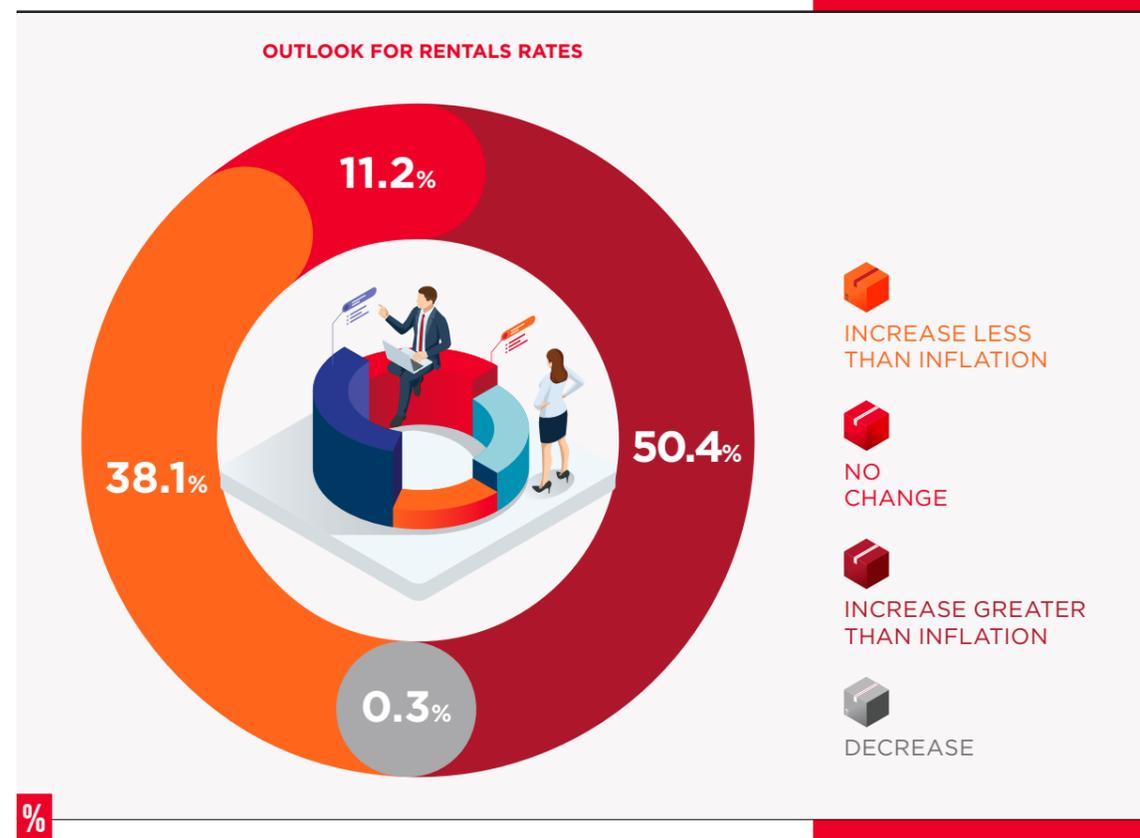
House buyer demand has slowed, as rising interest rates, high inflation, and a weaker economy impact buyers' confidence, which could lead to a lessening of demand for self storage. However, in the rental market, an imbalance between supply and demand has caused record rental growth forcing more tenants to move and often opting for smaller rental homes. For many, this will lead to greater demand for self storage.



Set against a backdrop of record rental levels in the self-storage market and a big drop in the number of incentives. Another issue is that for new and prospective customers, there is very little understanding of potential rental rates. Across the UK, only 10% of respondents from the public survey accurately estimated within the rate range. By and large, this is an underestimation. 52% of potential customers estimate lower than the actual cost, with just 12% overestimating. 25% don't know.

Remaining good value for money will be essential for operators looking to retain customer demand. 60% of customers currently believe that self storage is good value for money, with 40% split between it being poor value, or not having a strong opinion.

While there are likely to be a number of headwinds for demand, operators remain optimistic about the outlook for rental growth. 88.5% of operators see an opportunity to increase rental rates. According to our operator survey, 50.4% are looking to increase rents in excess of inflation, with a further 38.1% looking for increases less than inflation.



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OPERATOR SURVEY

OPERATOR SURVEY

The survey results from 2020 and 2021 were largely boosted by the pandemic and the positive impact it had on the industry. The 2022 results are more reflective of the challenges of operating in an inflationary environment. There are still many positive indicators, and the industry certainly continues to perform better than most others. However, the growth in occupancy, rates and profits has abated. Average occupancy across the country remained stable, and while there was an increase in revenue per square foot, it was not as significant an increase as 2021 and was less than inflation.

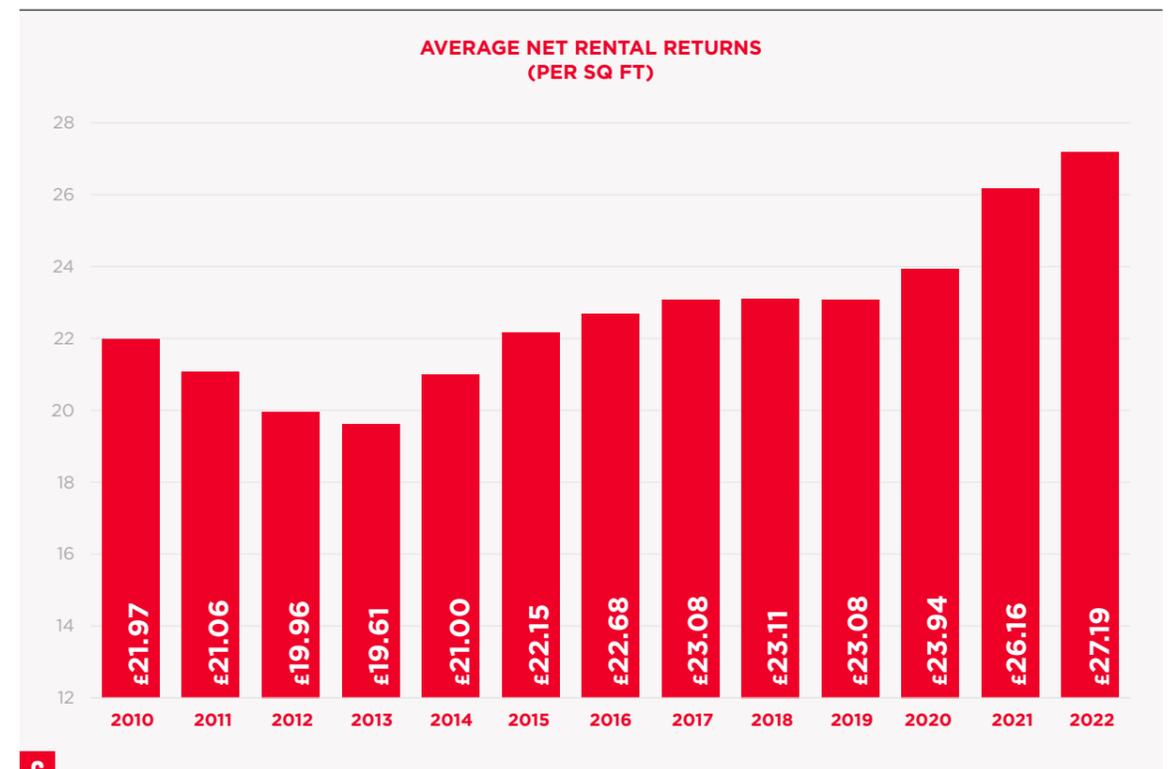


Operators are cautious about the coming 12 months but are continuing to expand their portfolio, suggesting they believe any drop in profits will be short term. The lower churn in the industry since the pandemic will work in its favour, with fewer new customers required to maintain occupancy levels. The industry also has far less exposure to debt than in the last financial crisis, which will mean it is less impacted by the rising cost of debt.

The industry is also coming off an exceptional period, and most mature stores remain close to optimal occupancy with solid rental rates, so there is the ability to absorb some compression in pricing or loss of occupancy. As with most industries, the increasing costs to the business will have the biggest impact. Business rates have risen by around 25% for most operators; energy, staff, and almost every other business cost have also risen. Will operators be able to continue to increase rental revenue to cover these costs? With occupancy so high, the best opportunity for growth in revenue is increasing rates, adding more space, or increasing ancillary income.

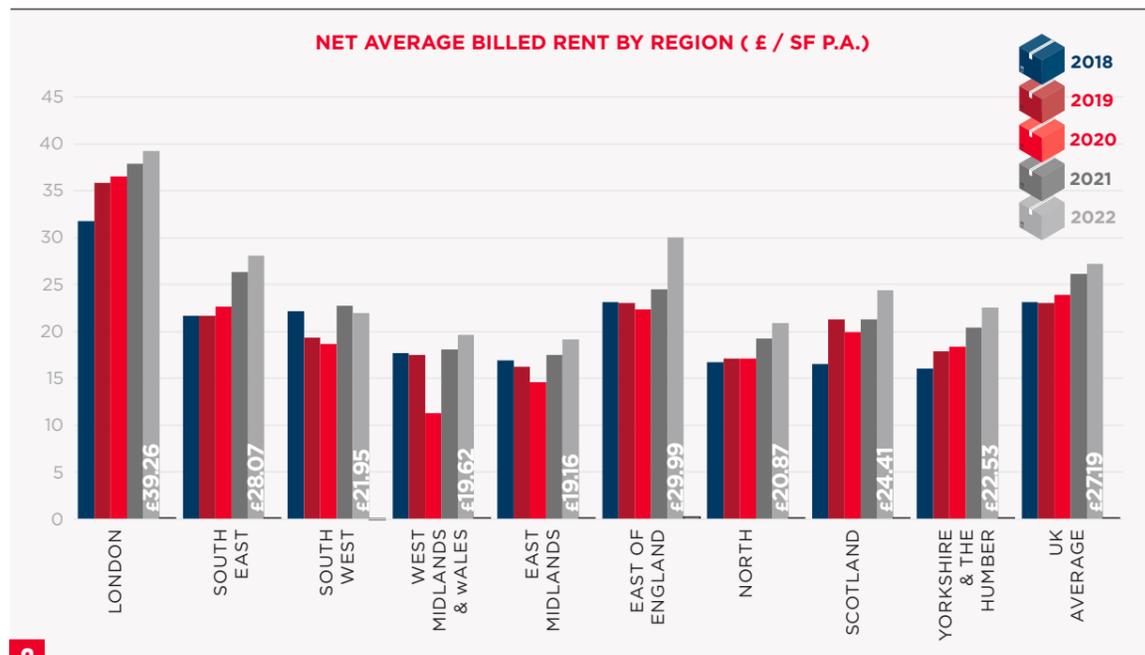
RENTAL RATES

Rental rates continued to increase in 2022, rising 4% to £27.19. However, considering that inflation in the UK grew from 5% in January 2022 to a peak of 9.6% in October, this increase was less than inflation. The industry as a whole has increased rates quite significantly since 2019, up 18%, so there is room for some relative compression of rates vs inflation. It should also be considered that there can be a lag in the results when considering rates on an annual basis. If the store increased rates by 10% in July, then the full effects of this will not be shown. It will be interesting to see how the ongoing inflationary pressures in 2023 impact rental rates and if operators have been increasing prices closer to inflationary levels later in 2023.



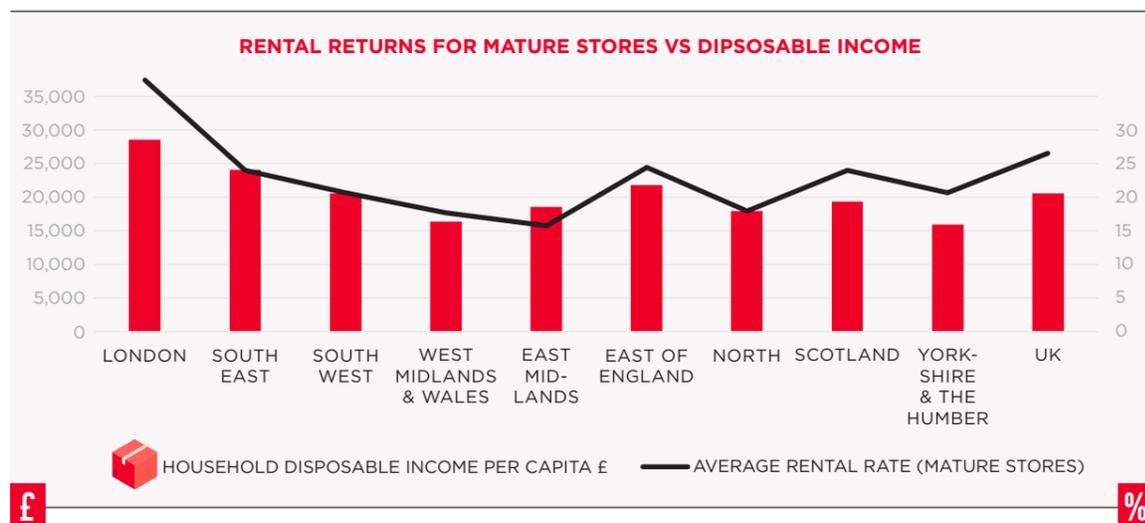
All rental data is excluding VAT.

When considering this data on a regional basis, the South West was the only region not to increase its rental returns. The East of England had the highest increase, 23%, followed by Scotland with a 15% increase. London and Yorkshire are the only regions to have consistently increased their rental returns over the last 5 years.



£

Rental returns in the regions need to be considered with the other economic conditions. While returns are highest in London, so is the cost of living, land costs, and construction. This chart shows rental returns for mature stores against the household disposable income for the region. Once again, Yorkshire and London stand out for having a greater gap between their rental returns and disposable income. The East Midlands have the lowest returns compared to disposable income.

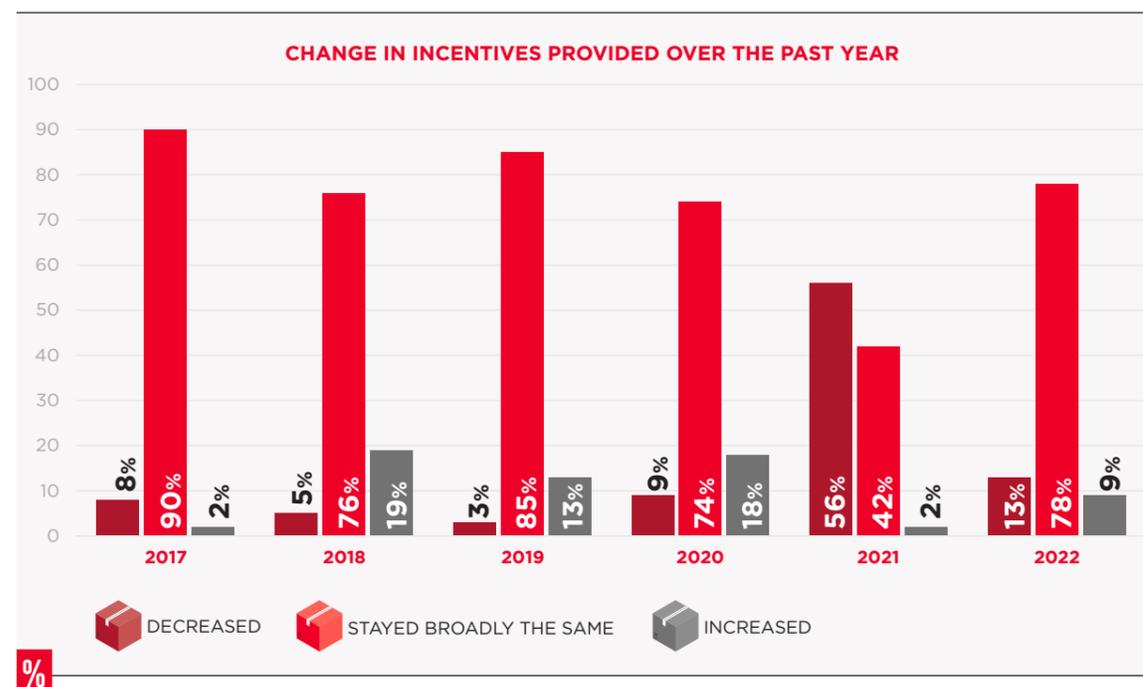


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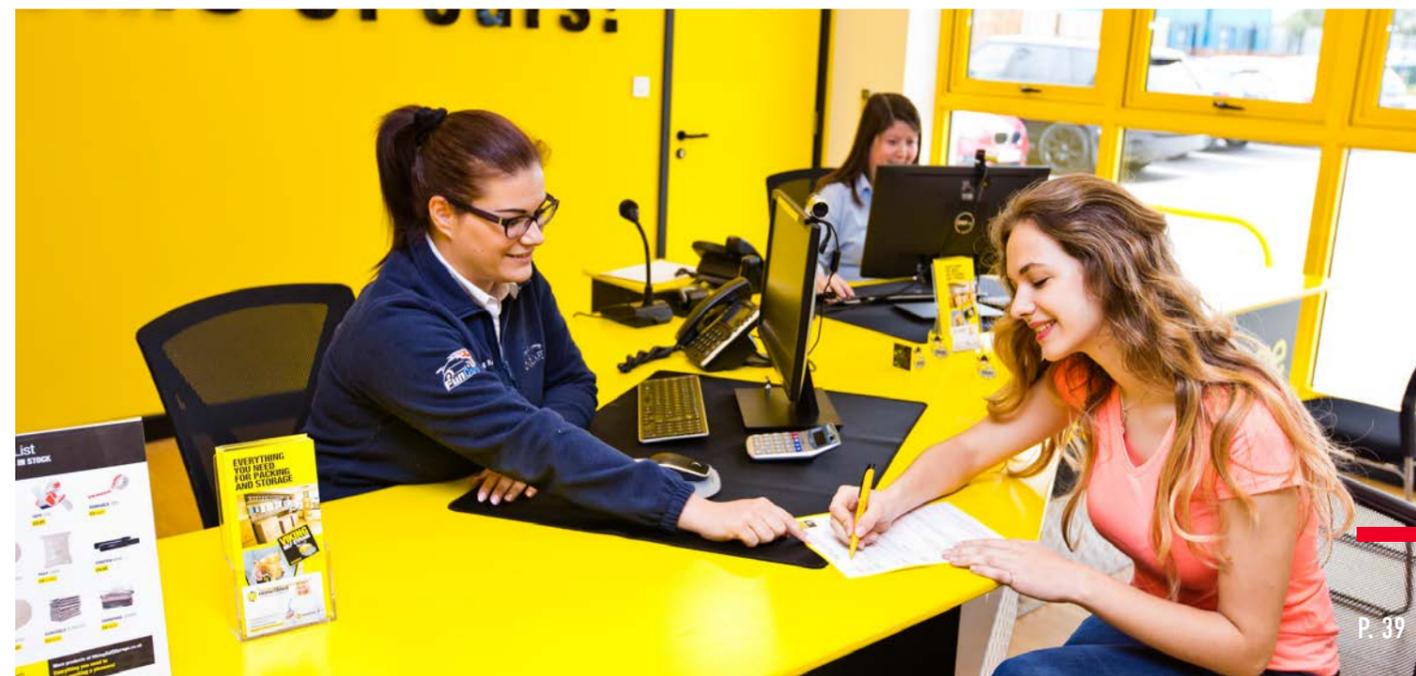
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SOURCE: OXFORD ECONOMICS

Another sign that operators are being somewhat more conservative with pricing is the change in incentives offered to customers. Many customers new to the industry believe the price will be lower than what it is, as demonstrated in the public survey data later in this report. This means the upfront discounts operators often offer can entice customers to use self storage for the first time. Once they have experienced the service, almost all self storage customers end up staying for a longer period than they initially booked it for, returning to normal pricing, which gives operators the opportunity to recover the upfront discounts. In 2021, operators decreased their level of discounts, showing confidence in the market. In 2022, they returned to the normal pattern of keeping discounts the same. However, this means keeping the same as the reduced levels in 2021 for many operators, so this is still a positive sign, and only 9% of respondents indicated they increased discounts.

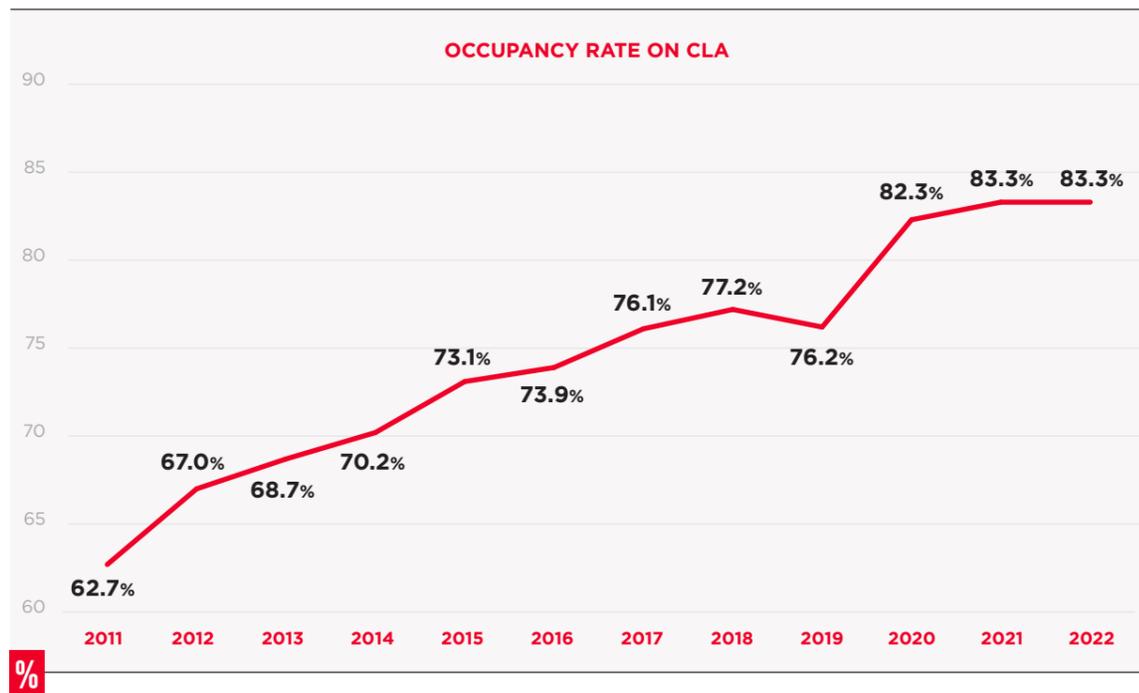


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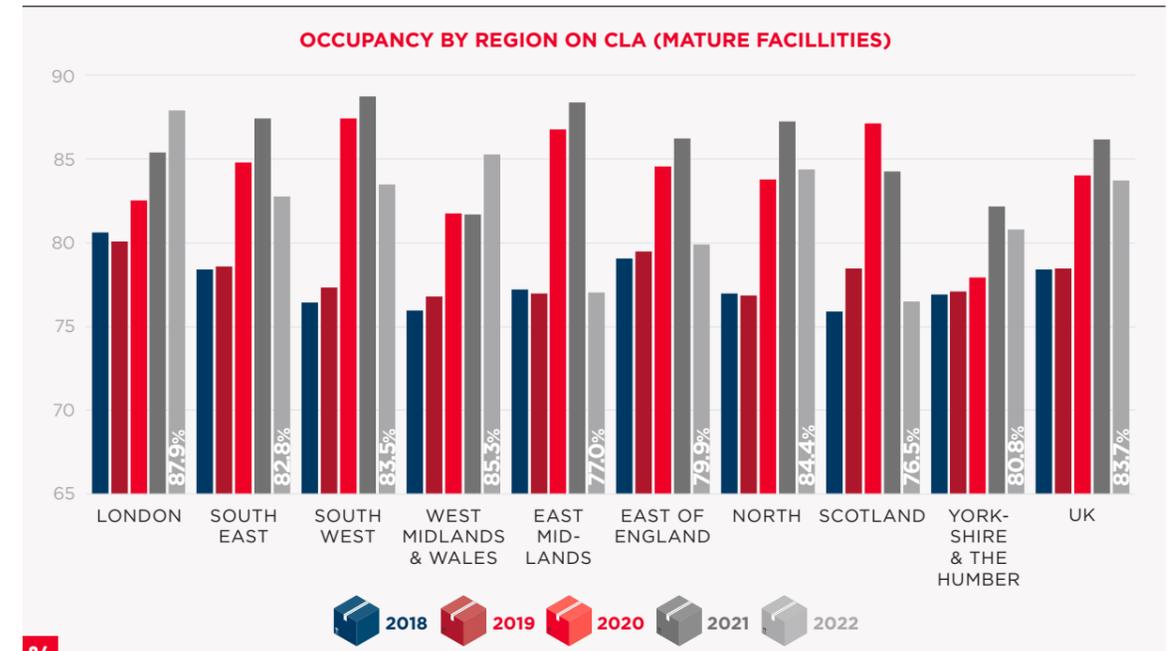


OCCUPANCY

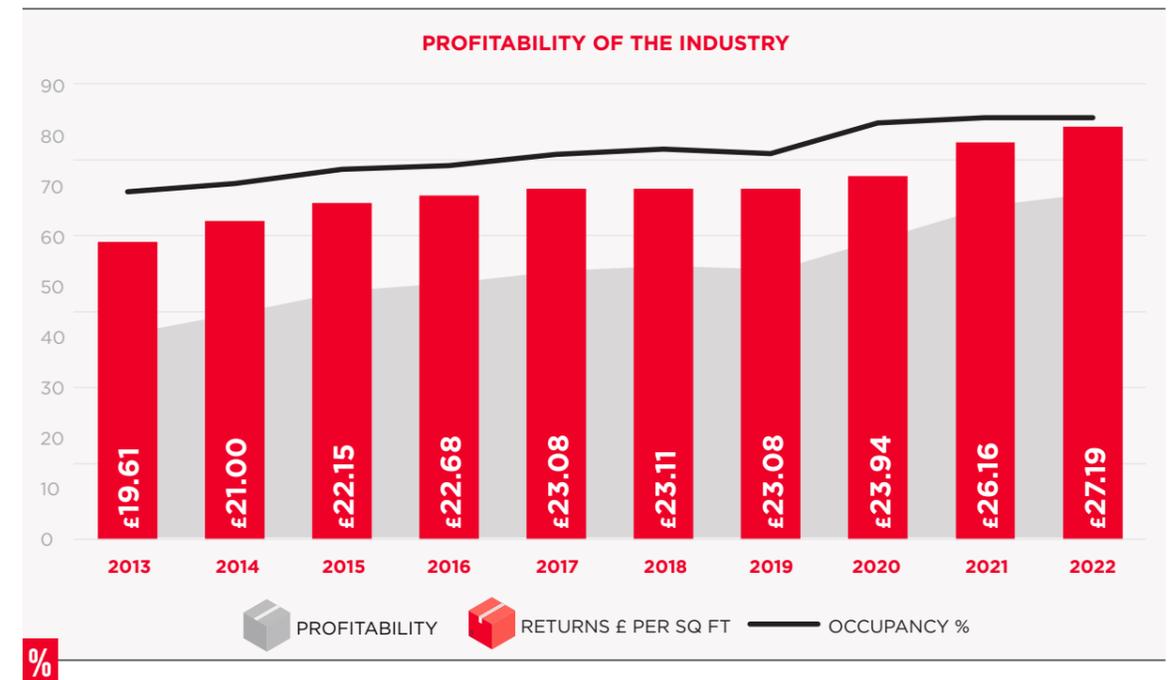
Occupancy across the UK stayed stable at 83.3%. Optimal occupancy for a self storage facility is usually between 85% and 90%, as the store should always have product to sell. Often, stores that are close to 100% occupancy could be more profitable by increasing prices for all customers and decreasing occupancy slightly. Considering this data includes stores that have recently opened or expanded and are in the fill-up stage, it is to be expected that overall occupancy levels would be below 85%. There was a significant increase in occupancy during the pandemic, and this has not been lost, despite an estimated 5% growth in supply for the industry in 2022.

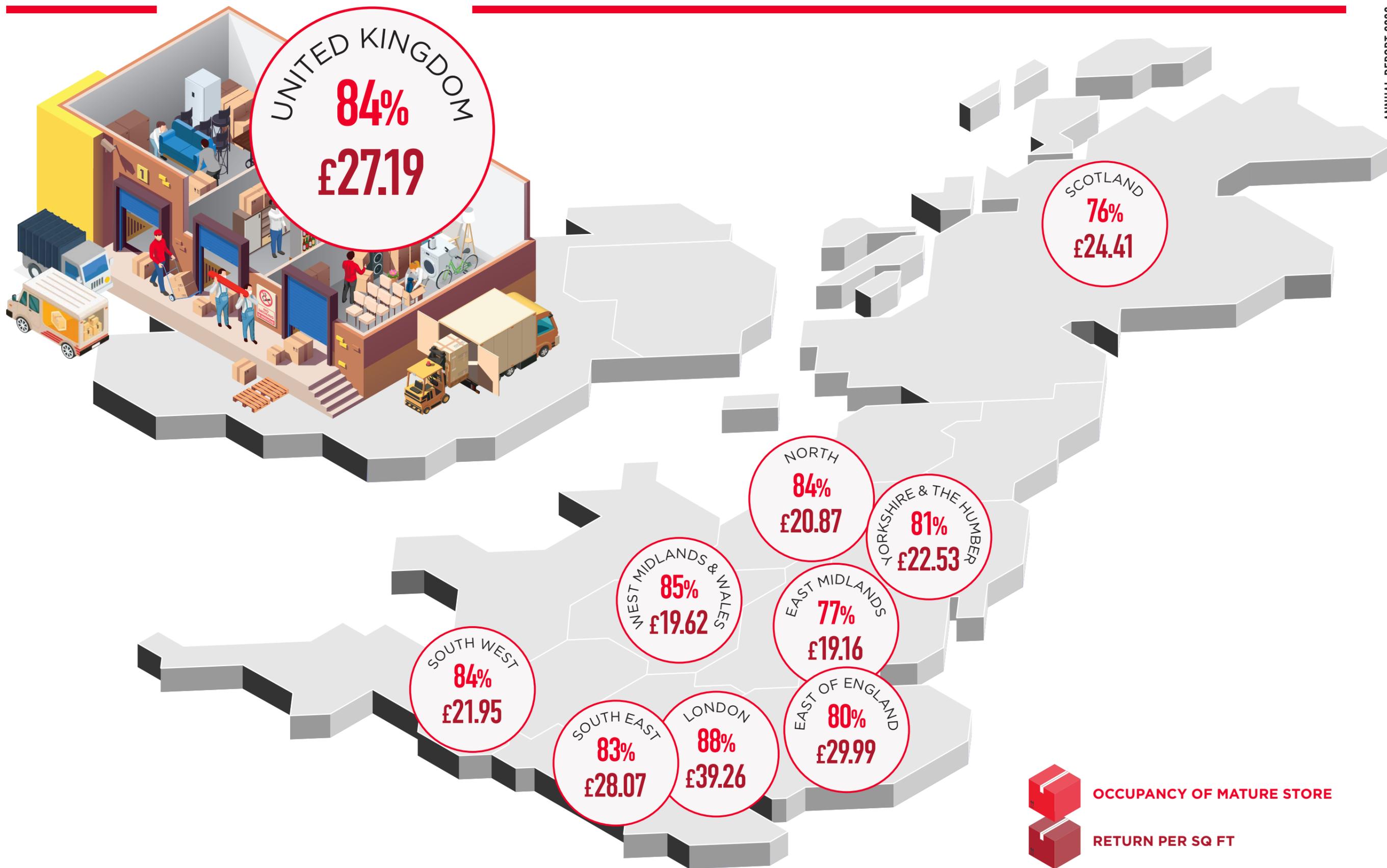


When considering mature stores, which are stores that have had no expansion in the last 2 years, the occupancy levels have dropped, down from 86% in 2021 across the UK. The biggest drop was in Scotland, which also had one of the highest increases in rental rates, so this could be a result of operators pushing pricing in this market. London continues to grow occupancy in mature stores, but this is a more mature market with new development sites hard to find. There is less growth in the London market as a percentage of available space than in markets in the North. With the exception of Scotland and the East Midlands, all markets are still at higher occupancy levels than pre-pandemic levels.



When considering both rental returns and occupancy combined, you can see that the industry has become more profitable while occupancy has remained stable and rental returns have increased. 2019 was the only year in the last decade where the industry became less profitable, and profitability has increased by 68% since 2013.

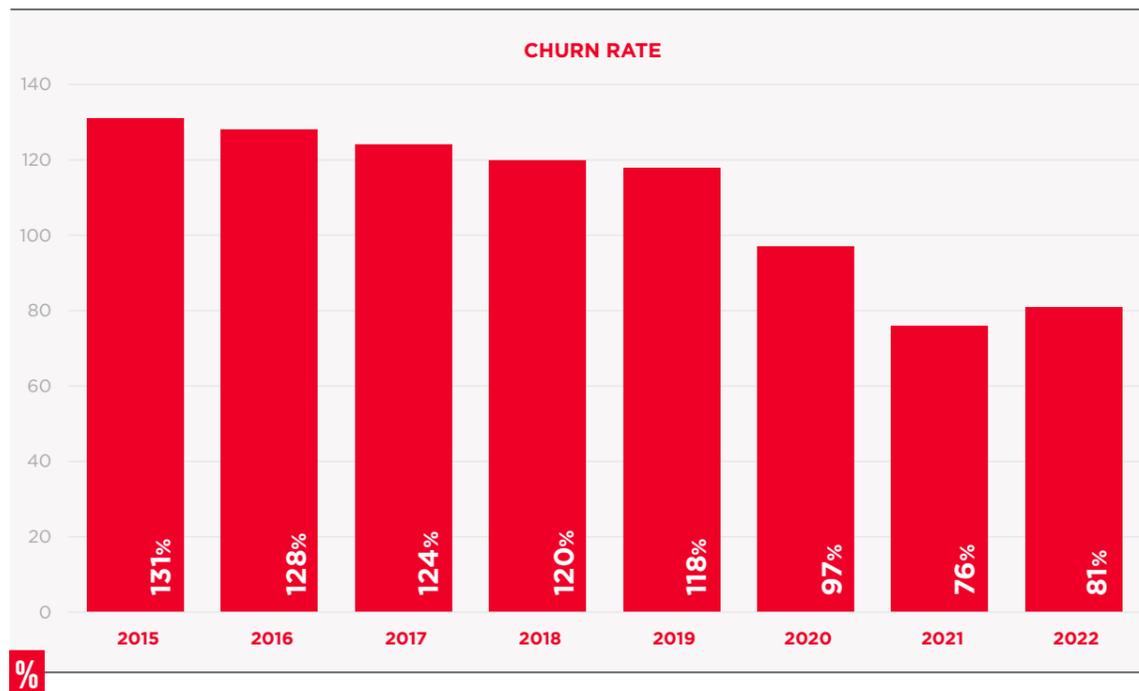




CHURN

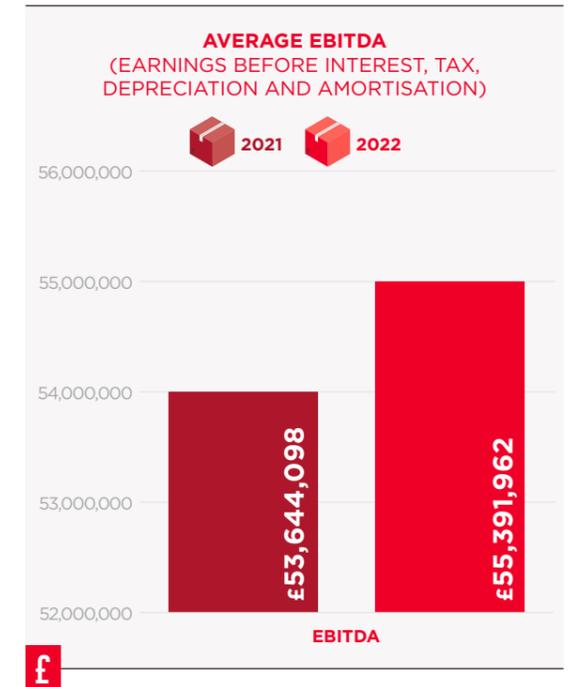
An important metric for self storage operators is the churn rate. This measures how many customers move in and out of the store, which relates to how many new customers the store needs each year to maintain occupancy. If the churn is 100%, then that means on average every unit has been vacated that year and will need a new customer to replace it. For a 400-unit store, that's 400 new customers each year just to maintain occupancy. Churn fell below 100% for the first time during the pandemic, and while it has risen slightly, it is still well below pre-pandemic levels.

Self storage customers generally fall into two clear groups: short-term and long-term. Most new personal use customers come to self storage for a short-term need, possibly a life-changing moment like a death in the family or an addition to the family. Many use self storage for this short term period, usually 3-9 months, and then move out. Others see the benefits of self storage and keep their unit for the long term, which is often many years. Commercial customers also tend to be long-term. The more long-term customers a store has, the fewer new customers they need. However, the store needs a good pricing policy to ensure long term customers get regular price rises and do not end up paying significantly less than new customers.



OTHER OPERATING METRICS

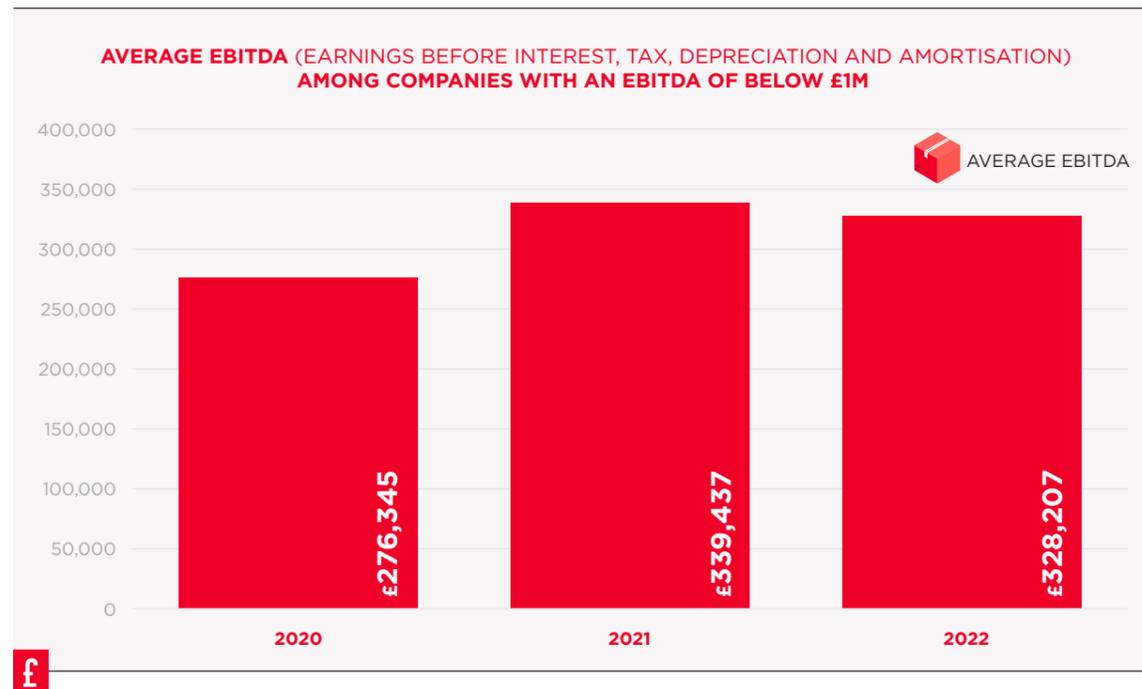
Many self storage businesses use EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortisation) to measure the profitability and growth of their business. This metric measures the profit made by the business and is somewhat a proxy for cash flow. It removes many items business owners have discretion over, such as debt financing, capital structure, and depreciation, to give a simpler analysis of profit from the business. EBITDA will clearly vary depending on the size of the business. This data further supports the success of the industry in the past 12 months.



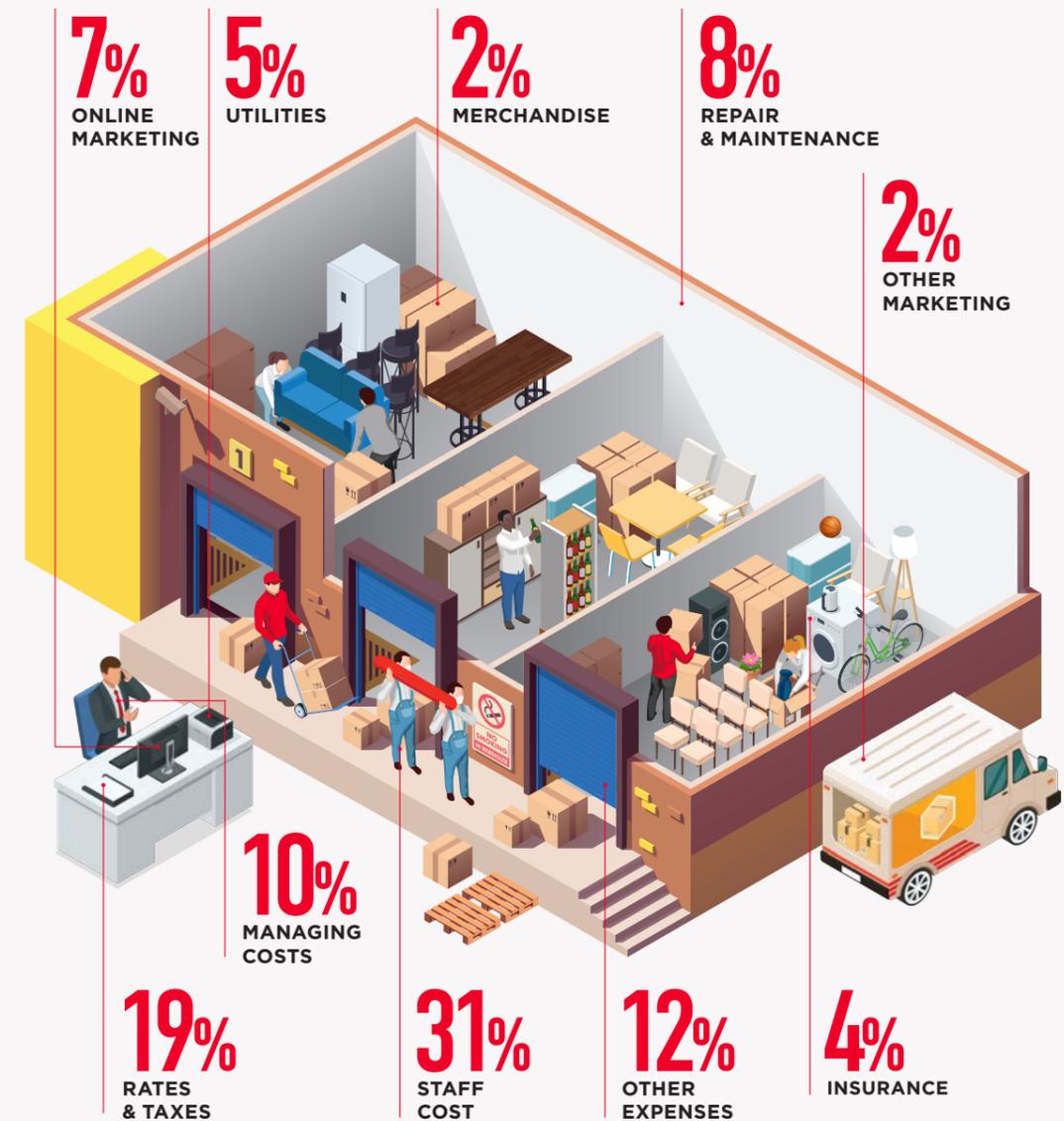
It should be noted that not all operators have provided this data to the survey. Also, self storage businesses during the initial fill up stage will usually have a lower and maybe even negative EBITDA result. EBITDA has increased, albeit by 3%, which is to be expected given the increased profitability of the industry.



For smaller businesses there has been a drop in EBITDA. When smaller businesses add space or open stores this has a more significant impact on their EBITDA as they have less earnings to spread this over. This means their results can be more volatile. The 2022 results are still significantly higher than 2020.



SOURCE OF OPERATING COSTS



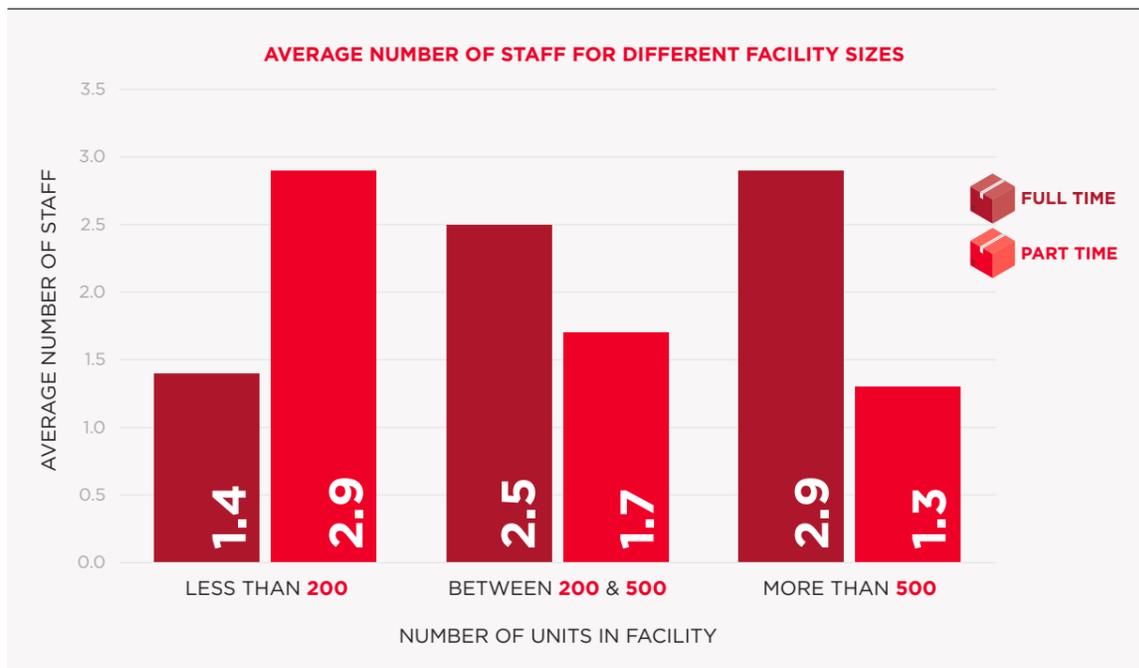
Operating cost data can vary materially, with operators taking differing approaches to the allocation of certain cost lines. Consequently, a certain amount of judgment is required when analysing operating costs. Staff costs, rates and taxes remain the largest expenses, totaling 50% of all costs. The long-term trends for this data are relatively stable. The biggest movement this year was a 2% point drop in management fees.

The ongoing inflationary pressures and changes to business rates and other taxes may impact this in 2023. Most self storage businesses in the UK saw a circa 25% increase in business rates as of April 2023.



Self storage stores themselves do not employ many people, with even the largest stores having on average only three full-time staff. However, while not direct employers, self storage stores are strong supporters of local small businesses. Many are viewed as business incubators, assisting local businesses transition from family-based, home-based operations to larger-scale operators themselves employing more staff.

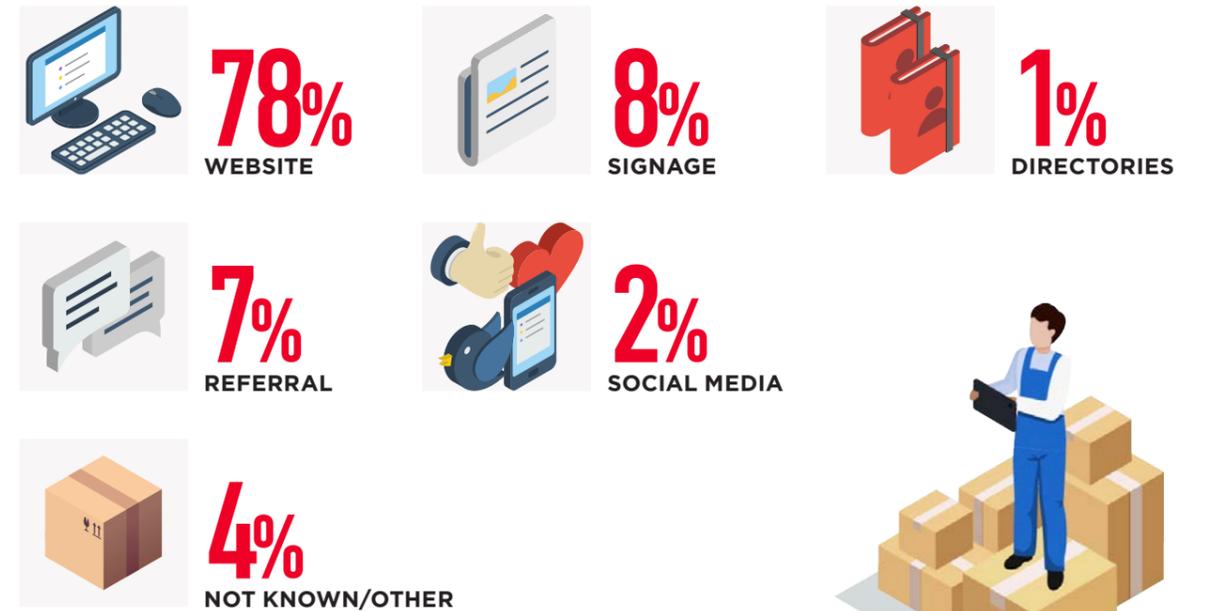
This data is largely the same as 2021. The current labour market makes it more difficult to hire new staff so many operators are looking at incentive packages and other benefits to retain existing staff. Automation is also being adopted by self storage operators, particularly in new stores, which could see a reduction in staff over time.



Caution must be taken when considering the source of enquiry data, as this can depend on the methods the store uses to track the data. A person may contact the store through their website, but they looked them up because they were aware of the store from signage or local advertising. There is no doubt, however, that online methods are the main source of contact for customers and are growing, up from 75% last year. It is likely that a portion of the unknown or other is from online sources that have not been measured. Directories have fallen to just over 1% as they become less relevant to customers in an online world. Social media remains low. The industry generally does not have a strong presence in social media, and it is likely that people who research using social media are measured as internet based sources as that is how they eventually contact the store.



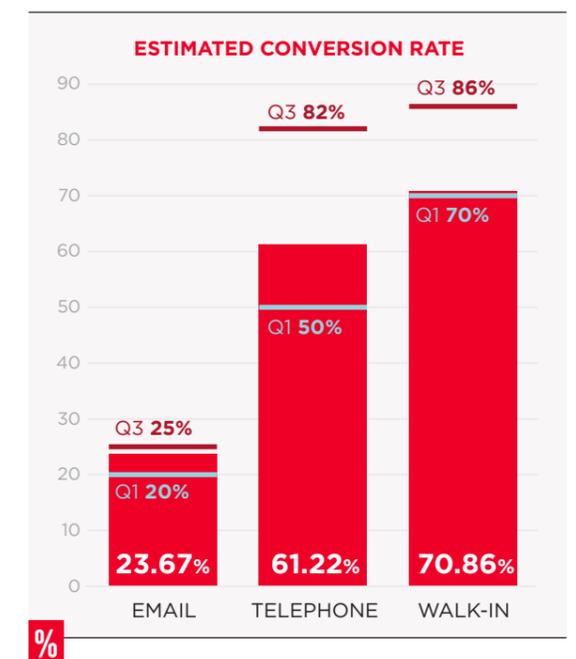
SOURCE OF ENQUIRIES



Conversion data varies considerably from store to store as shown by the quartile bars in this graph. This is partly due to the way in which stores handle customer enquiries, but it is also influenced by the way in which they record their data. Recording all incoming enquiries to their correct source requires robust management systems.

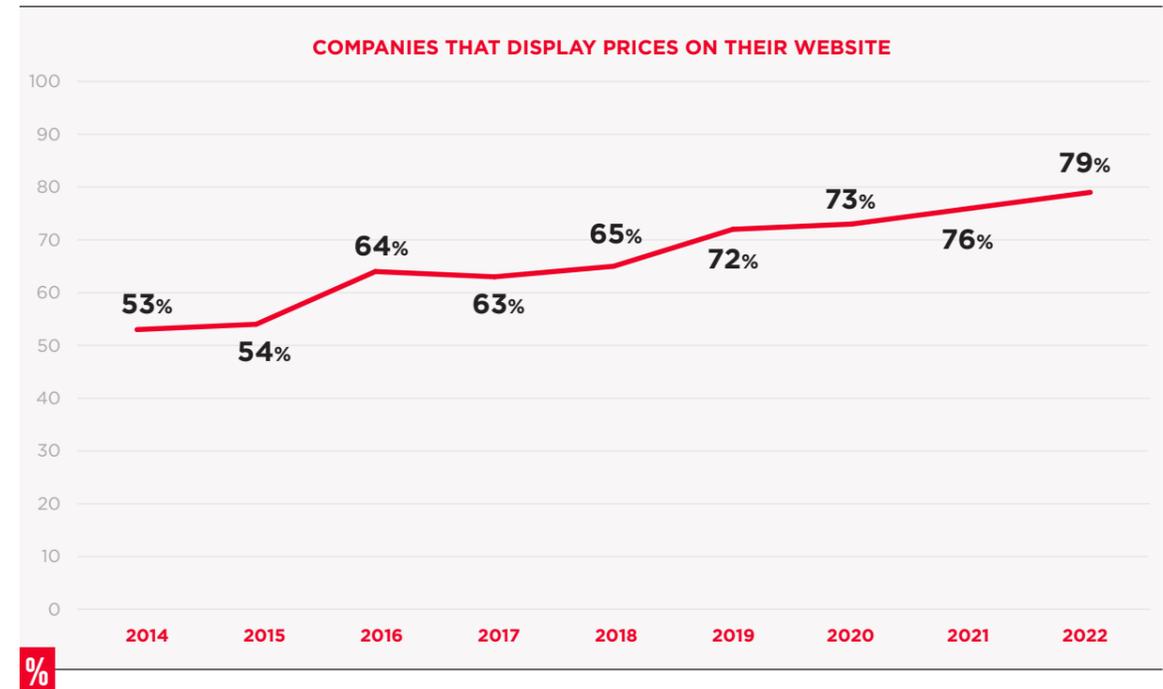
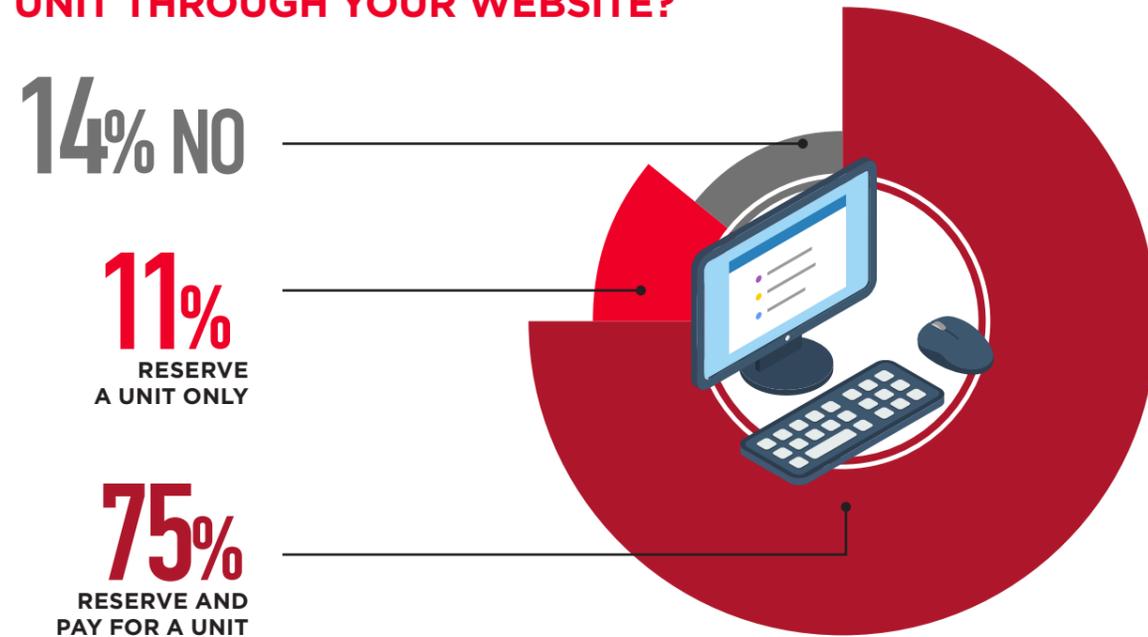
Conversions online will always be lower as customers usually contact more stores online than they would in person. Many also find it more difficult to close a sale online without real time interaction between people.

Online and walk in conversions both dropped this year. This is indicative of customers shopping around more than previously. Possibly a result of the inflationary pressures, people are looking to find the best price and will potentially travel further to do so.

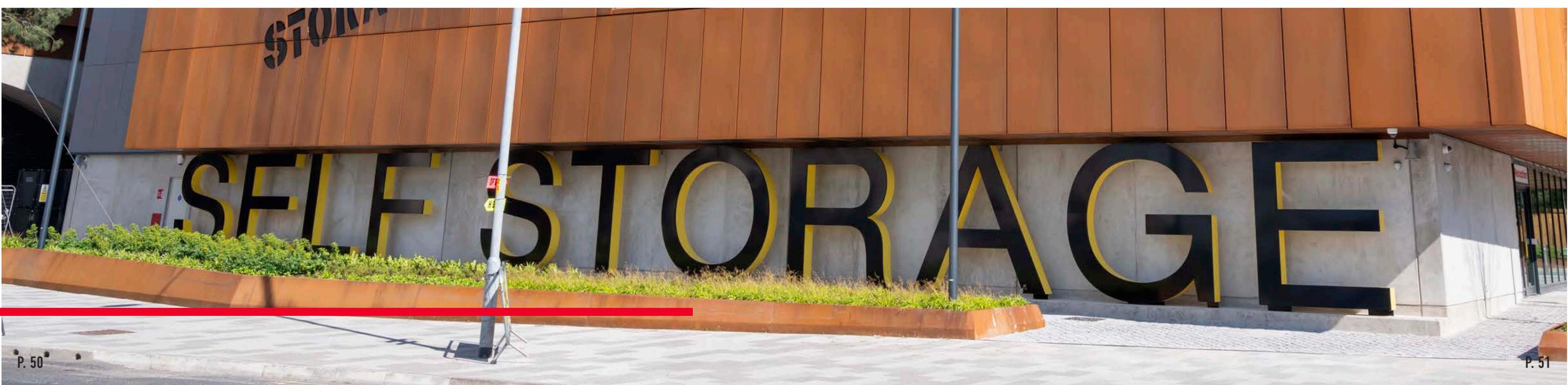


The number of stores that allow people to pay for their unit online also continues to increase, up from 71% in 2021. This gain appears to have come from people who previously allowed a reservation online without payment, as the number of stores offering no booking service has remained at 14%. There are a growing number of ways in which ID can be checked online, with people becoming more accustomed to using these when purchasing online. This would encourage more self storage businesses to complete the entire booking process online. More use of automation in stores and remotely managed stores will also likely increase this in the future.

CAN CUSTOMERS RESERVE A UNIT THROUGH YOUR WEBSITE?



The number of companies that display prices on their websites continues to increase. There are differences in how companies display their prices. Some have them open for anyone to view, while others require you to enter some personal contact information before displaying the price or to request a quote online before a specific price is displayed. It is primarily smaller stores that do not display their prices online and more container based stores. This could be because they have less sophisticated websites that cannot be easily updated as prices change.



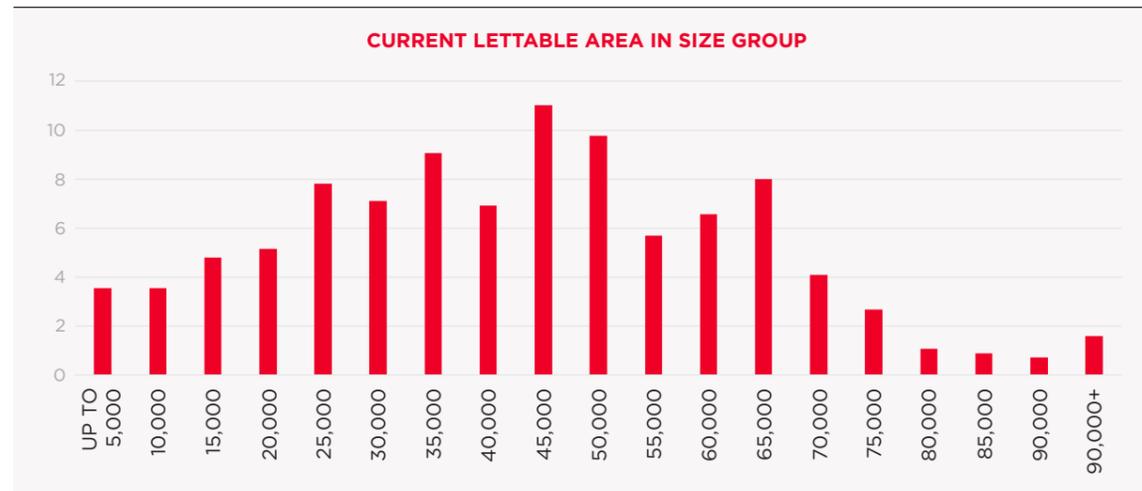
STORE DATA

Data from the stores that completed the survey shows the average store size has fallen back towards the 2019 levels after two years of increase during COVID. In 2022, over 2.3 million square feet of space was added to the sample group. This is more than the three previous years combined. This is indicative of the growth of the industry since the restrictions of the pandemic have eased.

We are seeing fewer megastores being built, and much of the growth in the industry is in secondary markets where smaller stores are common. It is to be expected that as the industry continues to grow, the average store size will decrease. This is compounded by the emergence of remotely managed stores, which are often much smaller than traditional self storage, with operators opening multiple smaller stores in a region. The sample group indicated that there was 1,694,000 square feet of space in their stores that was yet to be fitted out, indicating there is significant further supply if required. This is just from the survey data, the result across the industry as a whole would be much higher.

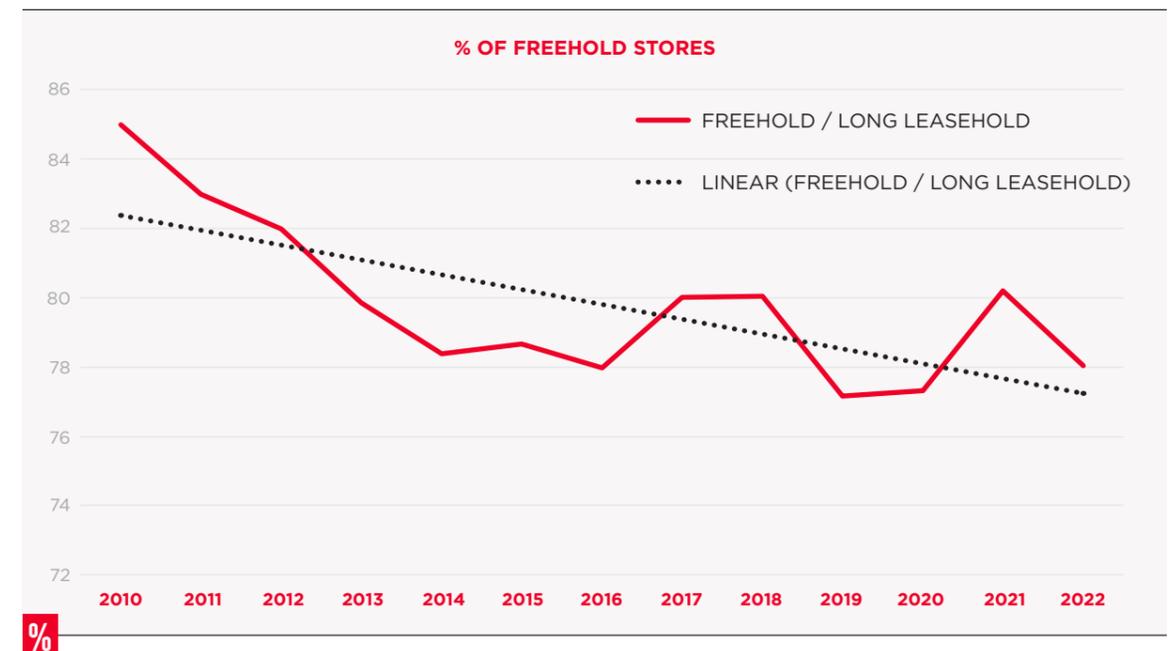
LETTABLE SPACE	2019	2020	2021	2022
CURRENT LETTABLE AREA (SQ FT)	40,400	41,600	43,400	40,800
MAXIMUM LETTABLE AREA (SQ FT)	42,500	44,100	45,500	43,600

This chart shows the spread of store sizes within the sample group. There has been an increase in smaller stores, while the number of stores with 65,000 sq ft and above has stayed relatively stable. 45,000-55,000 remains the most common size for a self storage facility, accounting for 21% of the sample group stores.

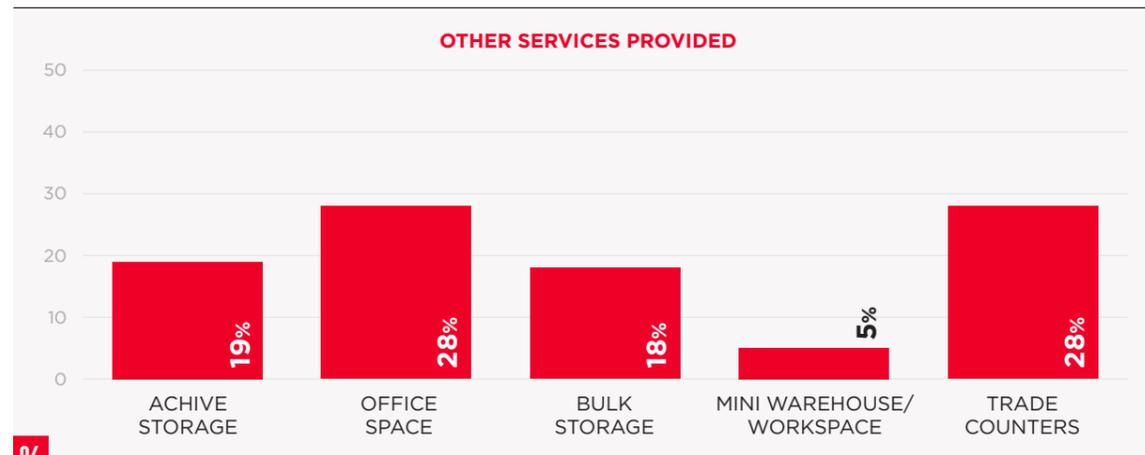


Needs to labeling

Operators clearly have a preference for freehold or long leasehold (25+ years) properties where they can earn capital gains on the property as well as operating profits from the business. This chart shows that the trend is towards more leasehold properties. This could be due to the difficulty in finding freehold properties to develop for self storage. There is also a growing number of operators starting their businesses with leasehold properties that require less capital. This allows them to open stores quicker than saving the capital to purchase property. Often, once they have built capital with leasehold stores, they then look to acquire freehold. Container based storage stores are also more likely to use leasehold property. Of the sample group, almost 60% of container stores were on leasehold land.

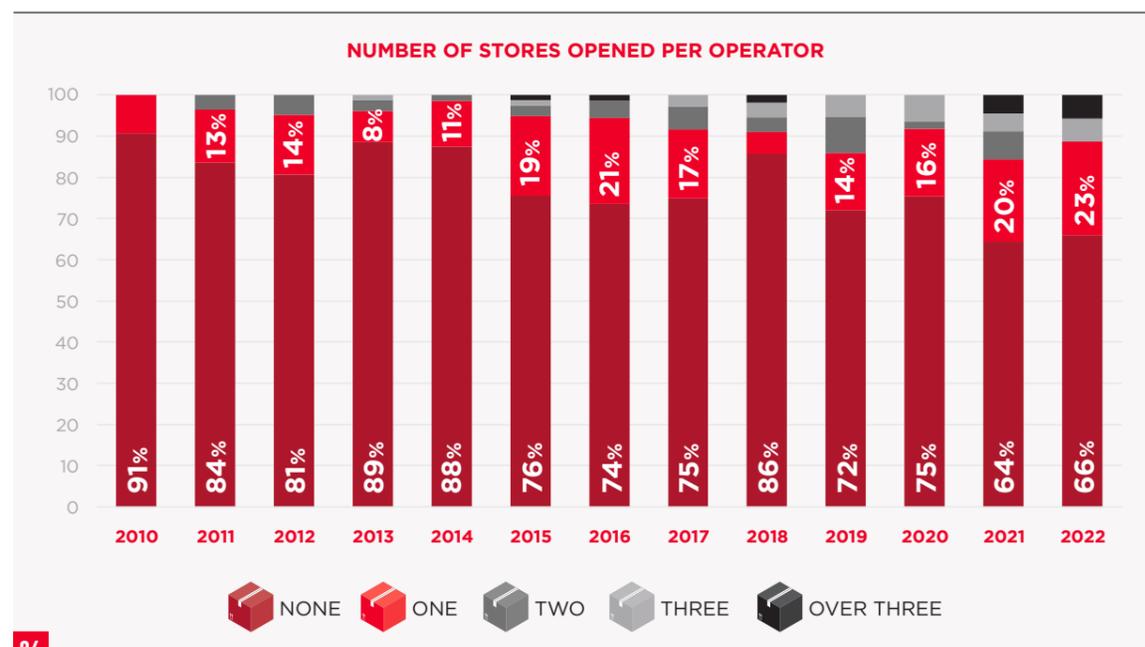


Self storage businesses continue to offer associated services to their customers, with office space and trade counters being the most common. These services are seen as complimentary to self storage customers, particularly commercial customers. This makes self storage a more attractive solution for businesses and allows them to conduct more of their business from the self storage store, which often results in them using the service for longer. Most of these services would also come at an additional cost, providing further revenue for the self storage business.



%

Further illustrating the expansion of the industry, this year more operators opened three or more new stores than ever before. There has clearly been a significant push for expansion by operators since the pandemic, despite the increasing costs of construction. It will be interesting to see if this abates as the current inflationary conditions put pressure on operators and potentially reduce the current escalation of profit margins.



%

NONE ONE TWO THREE OVER THREE

FUTURE PROSPECTS

Operators remain very positive about the future growth of the industry. From within the sample group, they plan on opening or acquiring 113 new stores. This is even more ambitious than in 2021, when they predicted 82 stores in total for 2023, while the prediction for 2024 has remained the same.

There were fewer existing stores traded in the UK in 2022 than in 2021, and so far in 2023 there have also been limited trades. The price paid by purchasers for stores has decreased, as has been seen in the property market generally, as the cost of debt increases. It could be that vendors are potentially waiting for an easing of the inflationary pressures before selling. However, there remains significant interest in the market from both institutional investors and existing operators. With a limited supply of self storage businesses on the market, demand will be high for those that do come up for sale, which in itself could drive values back up. Particularly if the industry continues to perform better than many other property based assets.

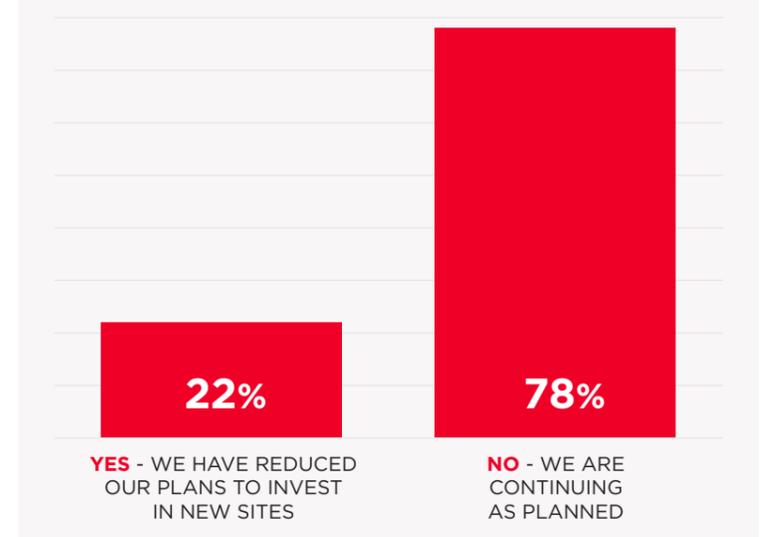
NUMBER OF STORES EXPECTED TO BE DEVELOPED



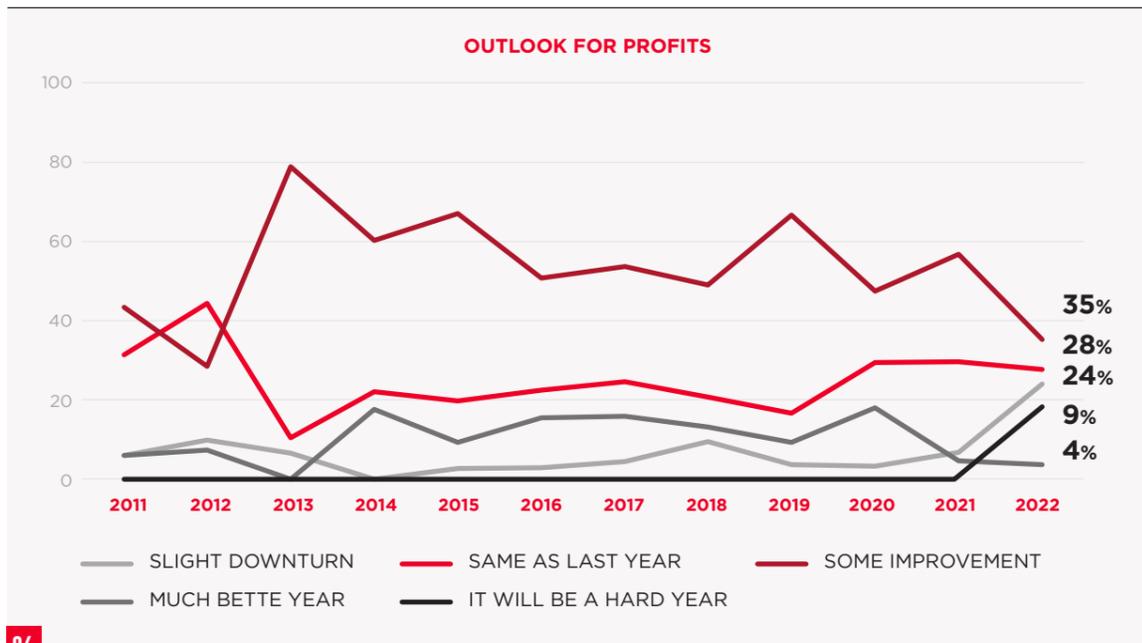
When directly asked if the current inflationary conditions would impact their future development, only 22% indicated they were reducing their investment in development.



IS THE INCREASING COST OF DEBT AND INFLATION IMPACTING THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR BUSINESS?

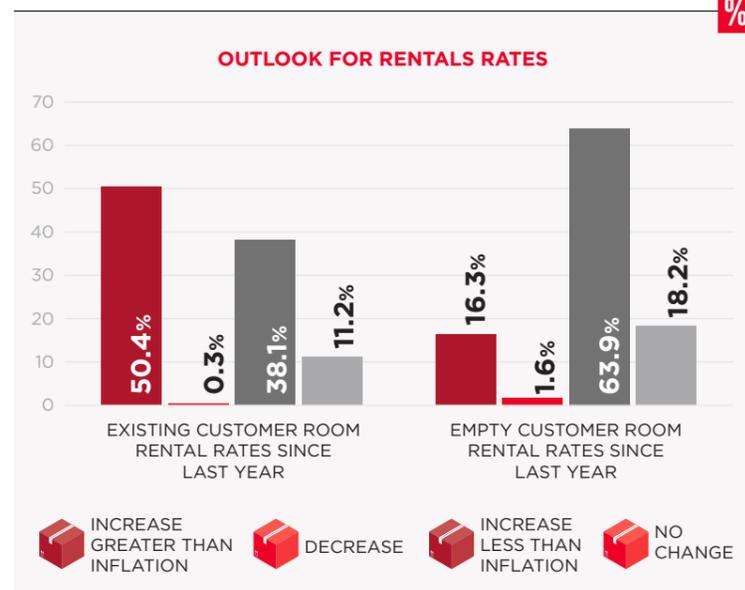


While operators may not be shelving their expansion plans, they do have a more cautious outlook for profits. For the first time, some operators (9%) have indicated it will be a hard year, and another 24% expect a downturn. While the majority continues to expect some improvement, overall expectations are significantly lower than in previous years. While operators have shown the ability to increase rents, the increasing cost of operating a store will impact profitability. The industry is coming off a period of record occupancy, rental rates, and profits; expecting further improvement in the current economic conditions may be optimistic; however, even maintaining the current levels would be a good result and better than many other industries would expect.



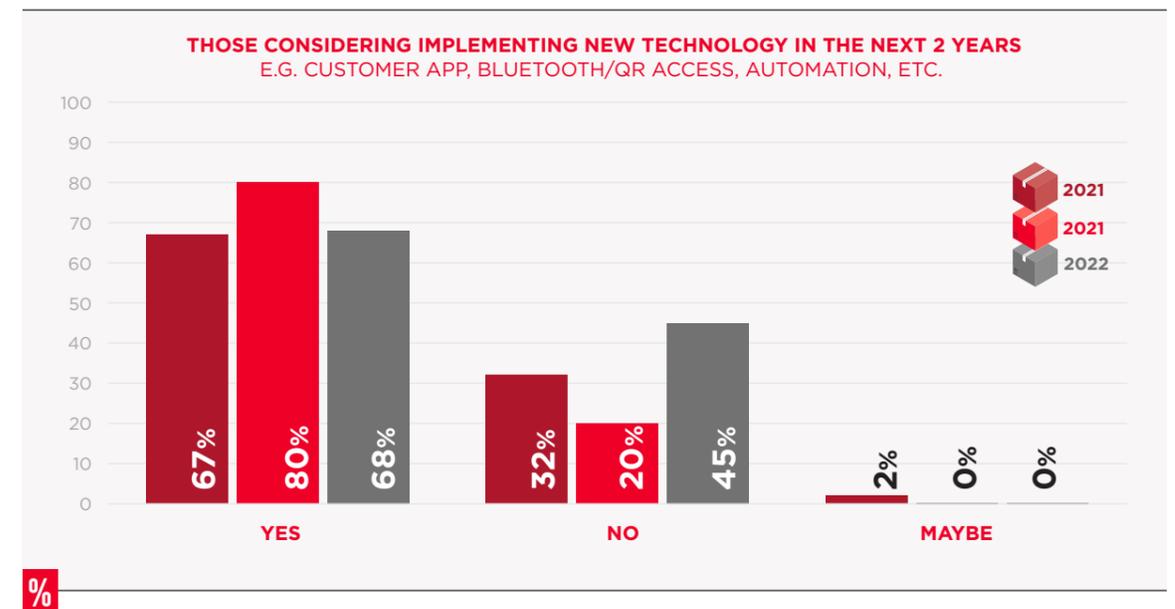
%

When further investigating the operators outlook, they remain more confident about maintaining and increasing rents for existing customers than for new ones. This could mean that discounting for new customers will increase. If the low churn rates can be maintained, then this is less of a concern for the industry. But if long term customers also begin to move out, this will require more new customers at potentially lower room rates, which will impact profits.



%

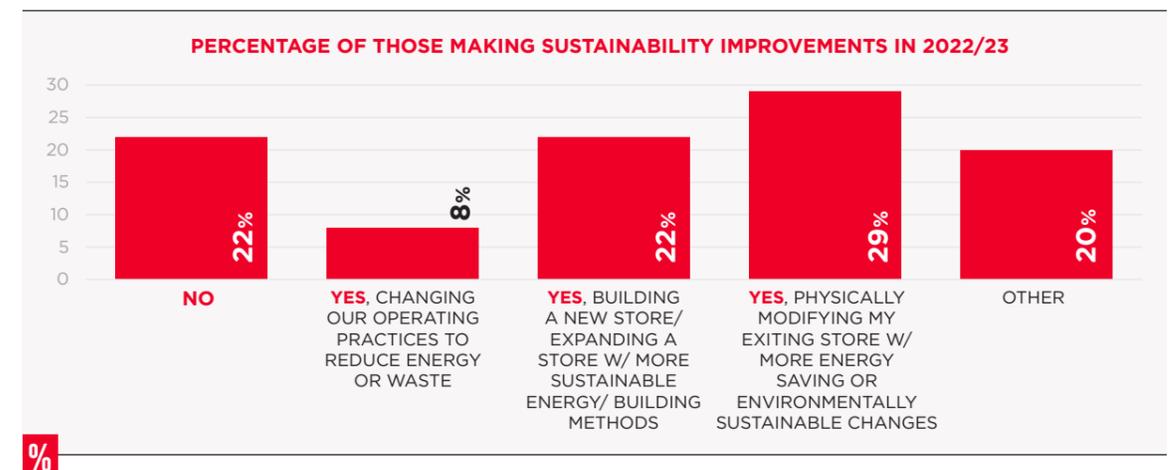
Less operators are considering implementing new technology into their stores. This could be because they have already upgraded over the past couple of years. Although it is more likely, businesses are looking to reduce costs by delaying unnecessary capital expenses that do not necessarily result in more direct income.



%

While there may be less interest in investing in technology, there remains a focus on making changes to the business that are more sustainable. Only 22% of respondents stated that they were not planning on making sustainability improvements to their stores.

Self storage businesses, are not large consumers of energy, especially when measured against the size of their physical footprint. However, with energy costs increasing, any savings in this area are important. Also, the construction of stores relies heavily on steel and concrete, which have traditionally been less environmentally friendly. This is why having stores both operated and constructed using sustainable materials and practises is a significant step forward for the industry. Institutional investors are beginning to demand this approach.



%

37

**PUBLIC
SURVEY**

PUBLIC SURVEY

PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS

The results in this portion of the report are taken from a survey conducted using an online interview administered to members of the YouGov Plc UK panel of 800,000+ individuals who have agreed to take part in public surveys.

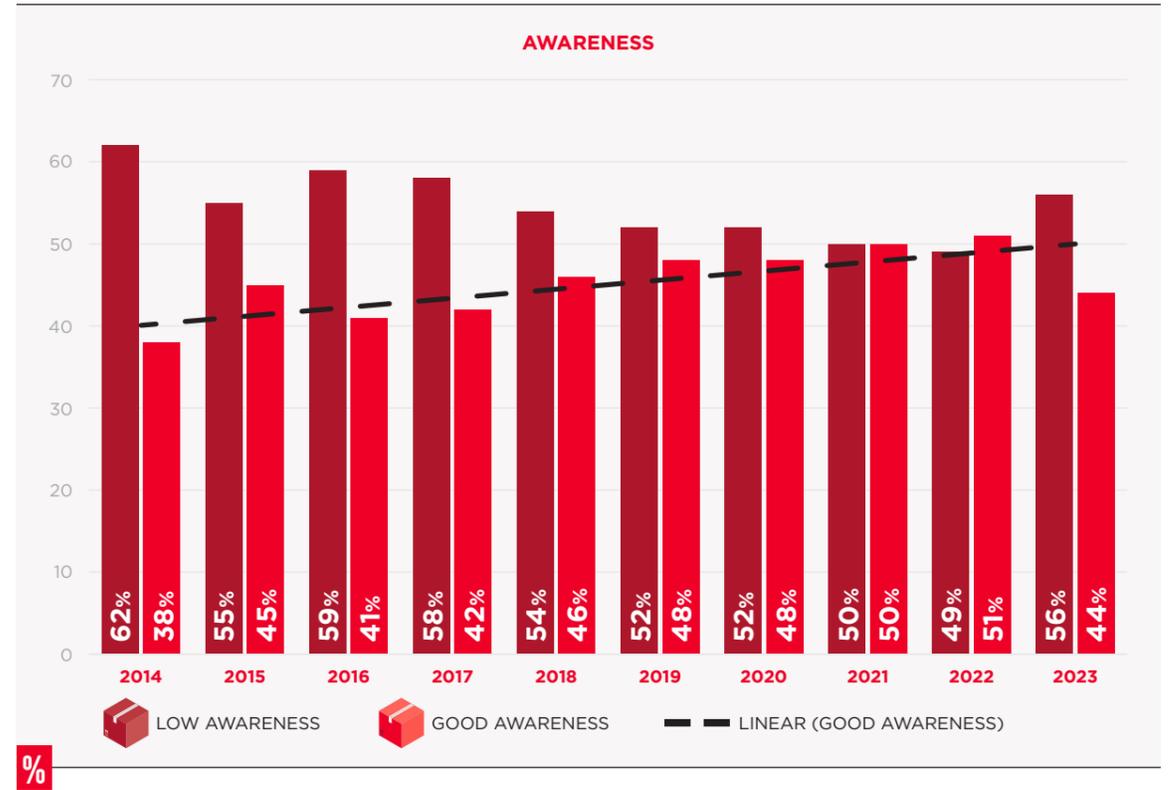
The responding sample of 2,102 UK adults aged 18 or over is weighted to the profile definition to provide a representative reporting sample. The profile is derived from census data or, if unavailable, from industry accepted data. Fieldwork was undertaken between 23rd - 24th January 2023.

This survey is completed to gauge the understanding and attitude towards self storage by members of the general public. Considering that such a small portion of the population uses self storage, it is important for the industry to understand how they can grow awareness, understanding and use of self storage. It has been completed each year since 2014 with a similar sample size based on the same demographic representation of the UK population.

INDUSTRY AWARENESS

For the first time, awareness of self storage dropped compared to the previous year.

This was largely a result of a drop in awareness in the London area and an increase in the "don't know" responses. This is most likely as a result of an anomaly in the data set this year. The follow up questions asked do not support this drop in awareness with understanding of the product increasing. Stripping out the respondents answering 'don't know', the results are more typical with a small increase in awareness. London has had the highest level of awareness for some time, even with the drop this year, over 53 % of people showed positive awareness of the product.



To qualify awareness and understanding of self storage, survey respondents were asked if they agreed with a series of related statements. The majority relate to core services that self storage provides. Examples include:

PROVIDING A RANGE OF UNIT SIZES IS A KEY SELLING POINT FOR SELF STORAGE, YET ONLY

THE CUSTOMER LOCKS THE UNIT AND KEEPS THE KEY/PASSCODE AND THEREFORE CONTROLLING WHO HAS ACCESS TO THEIR GOODS, YET ONLY

52% OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS UNDERSTOOD THIS.

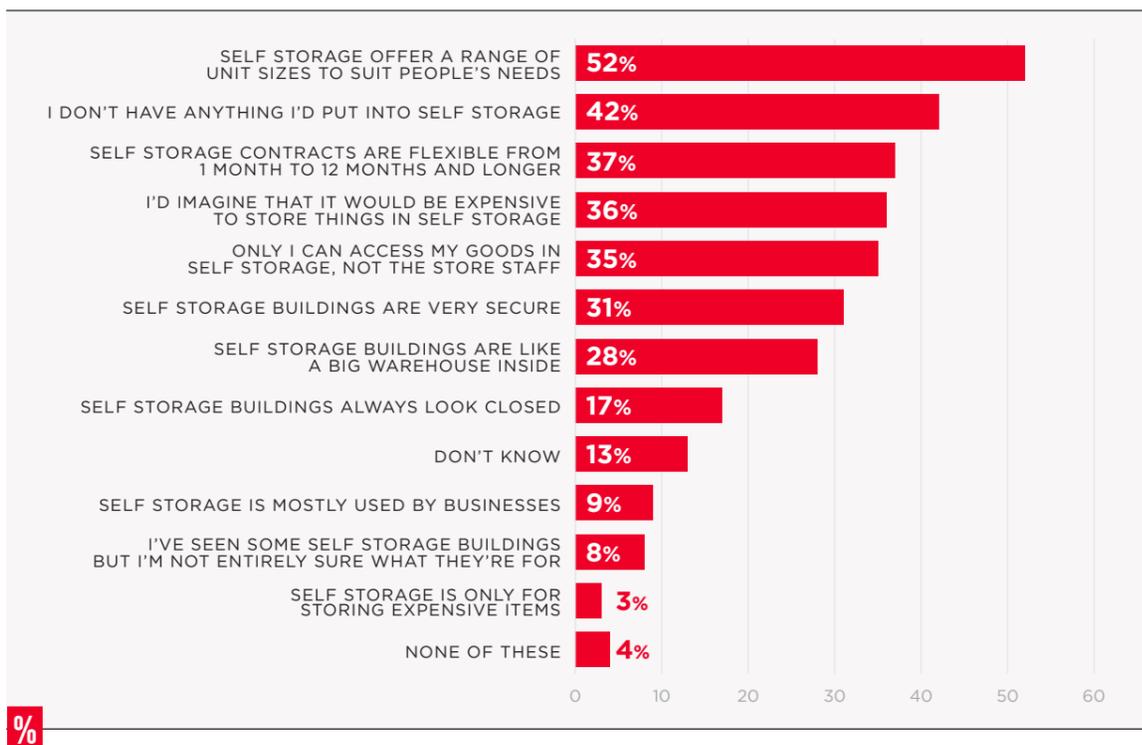
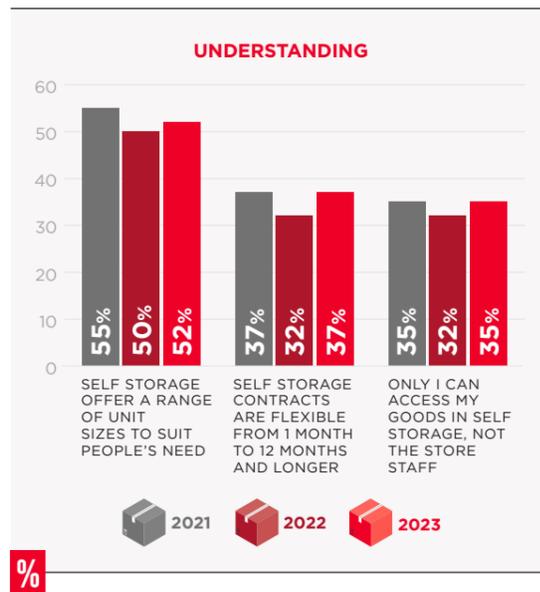
35% OF SURVEY RESPONDENT UNDERSTOOD THIS.

This illustrates the point that the general public continue to not fully understand the full benefits of self storage. This should be read in context with the fact that self storage is largely a needs based purchase, so if people don't need it they are less likely to understand it. However, the data suggests there are people that are going through life changing events or require more storage space that are not considering self storage as a solution as they fail to understand the product.

PRICING

36% of survey respondents think self storage is expensive, albeit in general they have never previously used self storage and are therefore unlikely to know the actual cost.

With this being one of the barriers to new customers trying self storage, the industry is trying to address this with up front discounting to encourage people to try the product and overcome initial price resistance. While 42% of people may not have anything to put into self storage now, it is a needs driven service that people will look for when they need it. Given that less than 3% of the population is currently using self storage, the fact that more than 50% of the survey group do have items to put into storage shows the potential growth of the market.



%

POTENTIAL USE

Currently, only around 2% of the adult population use self storage. Whilst this is a small portion of the sample size and population, it has grown from just 1.3% in 2018.

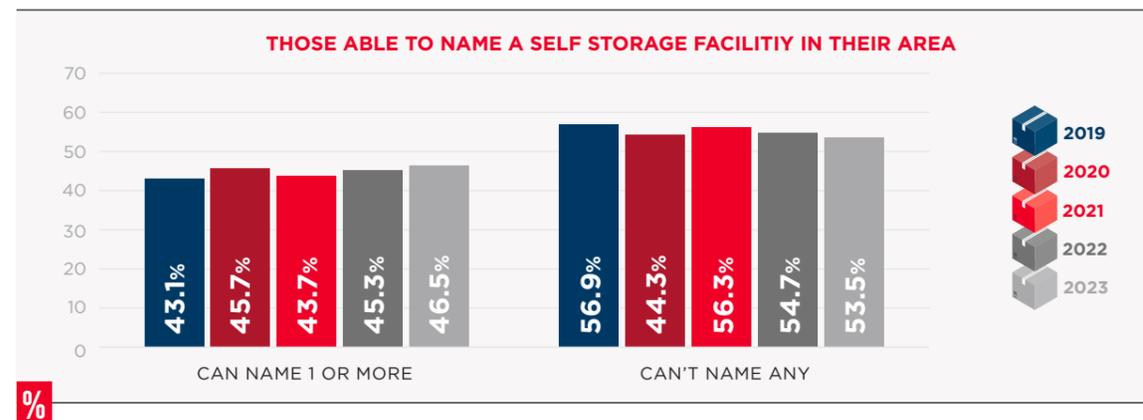
This is further supported by the increasing amount of self storage space occupied each year. Potential demand continues to accumulate, with a significantly higher number of people considering using the service than actually using it - 7% of our survey. In reality, there would not be enough space for all these people to use self storage even if they chose to.



AWARENESS BASED ON CUSTOMER KNOWLEDGE

With over 2,000 self storage stores in the UK, there is a store in almost every significant town. Yet over 50% of survey respondents cannot name a single self storage store in their local area.

This is likely to be influenced by self storage being a needs based purchase, hence you don't look for it until you need it. Despite more stores being built, brand and product awareness has not improved significantly in the past 5 years. For providers, it appears as though population education needs to be escalated.



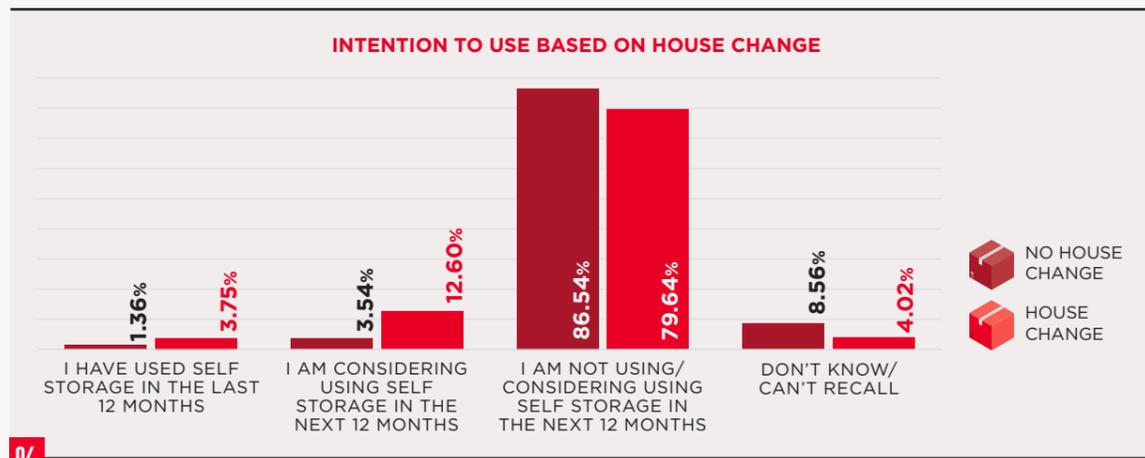
%

AWARENESS BASED ON NEED

Awareness of self storage is much higher in the population that have undergone renovations or moved house. This supports the needs-based awareness concept.



However, house moving is not the primary driver of use. 30% of those that have used self storage have done so primarily as a result of needing to create more space - not as a result of working from home. This is likely to underpin increased length of agreements, rather than self storage taken on for short term moves. Redecoration and house moves make up 20.3% and 17.9% of the market respectively, while an additional 17.7% of demand is made up of those that have moved but no longer have the space required for all their possessions - once again, another long term driver for self storage space.



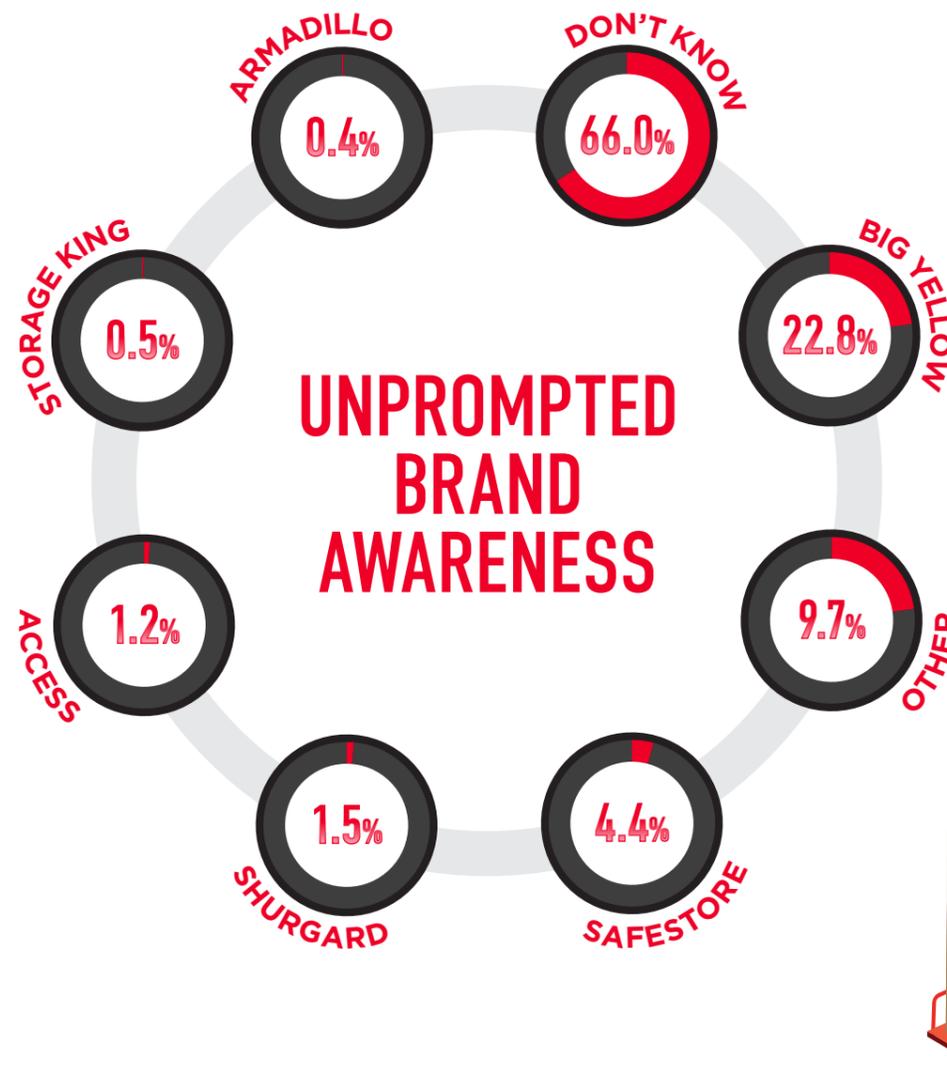
%



UNPROMPTED BRAND AWARENESS

The following chart shows how limited brand awareness there is within the public. Around 66% of survey respondents could not name a single self storage brand and a further 5% named brands that were in fact not self storage.

Where there is brand awareness, this relates to just 40 different operators and represents just 0.40% share of the UK market. Respondents could name more than one brand, so these figures can add up to more than 100%, however only 91 (4.3%) named more than one actual self storage brand and only 25 (1.2%) people named three or more.



DRIVERS OF RECOGNITION

Site recognition remains the clear leader in terms of identification of stores and brands. Both major and independent brands continue to invest in high profile sites to display their brand to as many people as possible. Referrals from friends and family is the second highest source of recognition, above all other advertising.

Most operators spend the vast bulk of their marketing spend on online AdWords and the like. They typically use search terms such as “self storage near me” that target people already looking for self storage. Such campaigns do not promote the product to people that may have a need for self storage, but are not currently considering self storage as an option for their needs. There is limited marketing in the UK that promotes self storage to the general public such as outdoor advertising or other mass marketing.



 **66%**
THE SELF STORAGE FACILITY IS DIRECTLY VISIBLE ON THE ROAD

 **12%**
FRIEND OR FAMILY

 **11%**
OUTDOOR ADVERTISING (e.g. BILLBOARDS etc.)

 **12%**
INTERNET

 **9%**
OTHER

 **6%**
DON'T KNOW / CAN'T RECALL

 **5%**
ADVERTISING IN A LOCAL PAPER

 **2%**
YELLOW PAGES

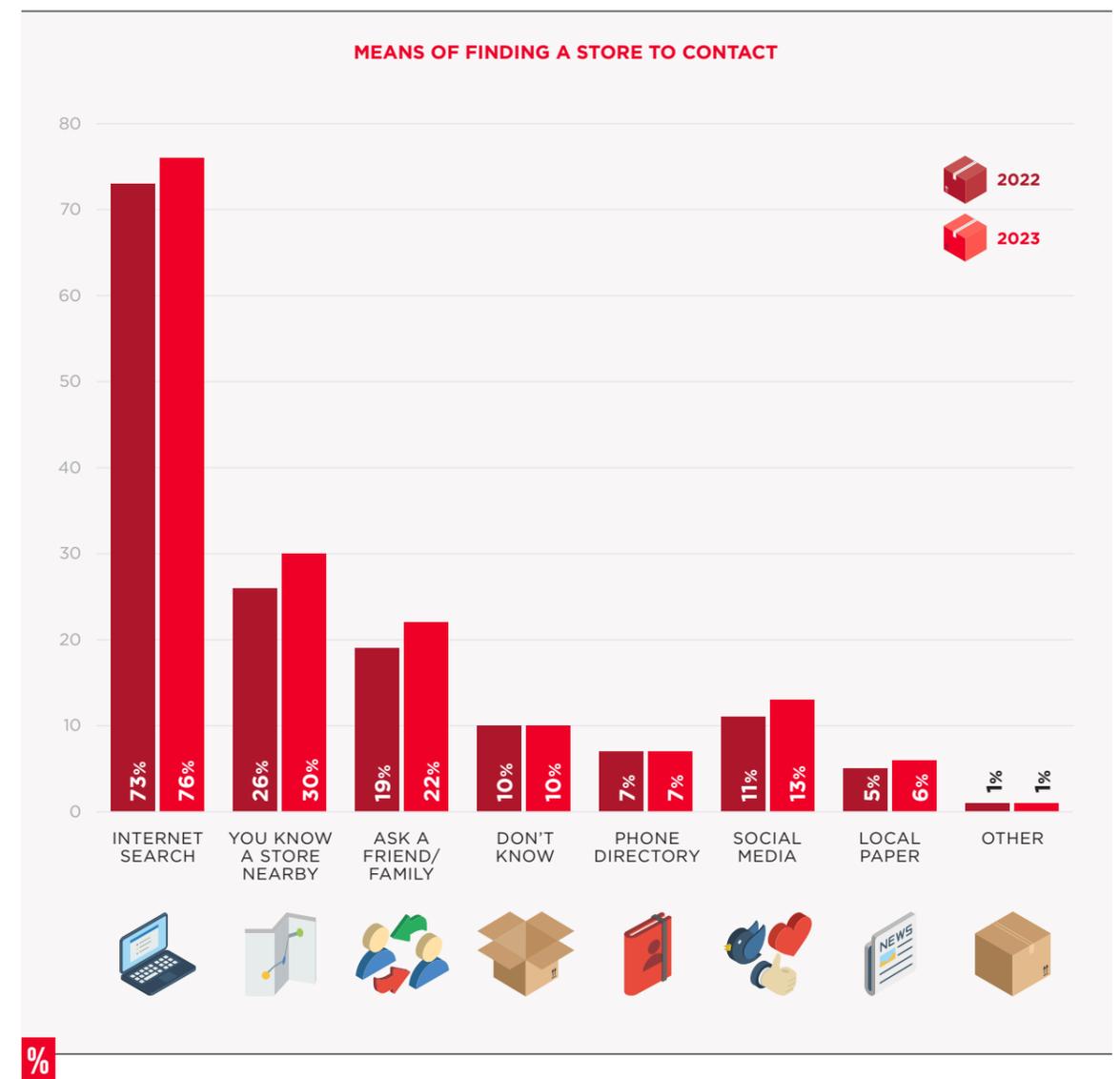
 **3%**
ADVERTISING ON RADIO

 **1%**
DIRECT POST



SEARCH PATTERNS

When survey respondents were asked how they would identify or contact a store, unsurprisingly over 75% search using the internet. This is lower than some other industries such as hotels, which are 85% or higher. Local knowledge and referrals are the next highest options and social media continues to grow. Please note that respondents can and have chosen multiple options, hence the total is in excess of 100%.



When we asked how people prefer to contact a store on a gender basis, we saw that males are more likely to visit a store, whilst females are more likely to email or call a store. This is valuable information for operators to consider when setting up their websites and online offerings. These patterns have been largely the same since the COVID pandemic, where the preference to use online jumped considerably.

GENDER PREFERENCE FOR CONTRACTING A STORE?

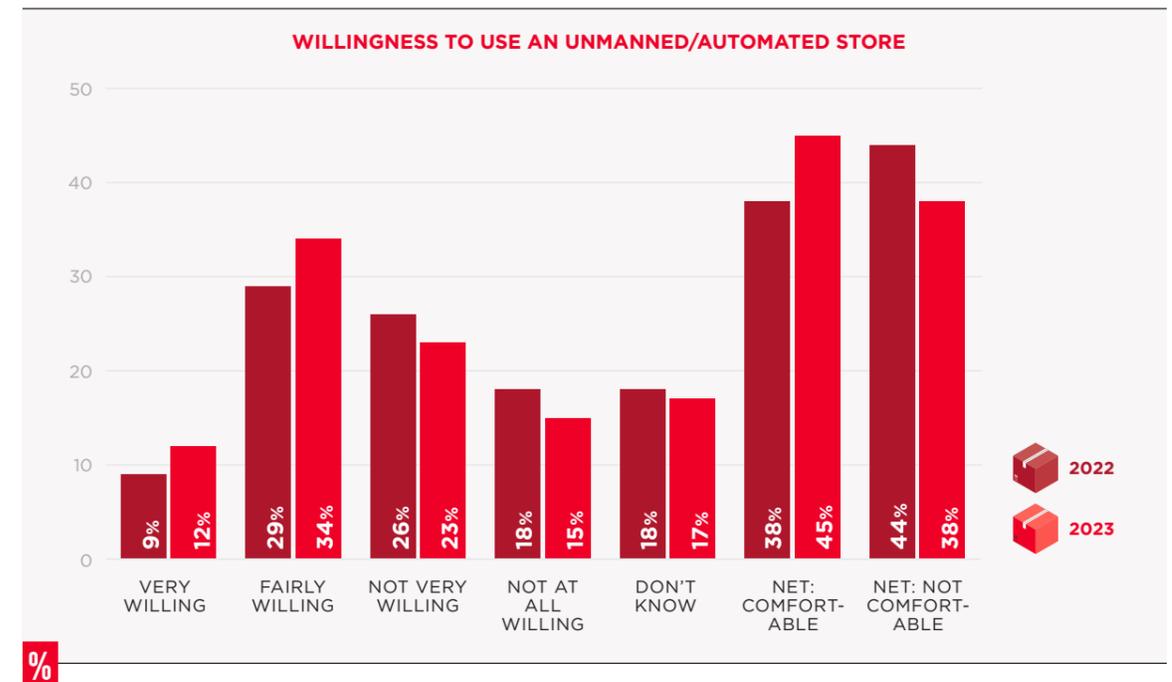


ATTITUDE TO AUTOMATION

A major change in the industry in recent years has been the industry's greater use of automation, through access control, security customer sign up, marketing, electronic locks and online move in processes.

This allows some operators to reduce or entirely remove staff from their stores without reducing the ability of the customer to access their unit. The adoption of fully unmanned sites is relatively low in the UK, compared to markets such as Sweden, but it is growing, particularly in smaller regional locations.

Since 2020, comfort with visiting unmanned stores has increased from 38% to 45% - although there is a nuance with levels of willingness.



PRICE EXPECTATIONS

Survey respondents that have not previously used self storage, believe it will be cheaper than it is. This could be one of the reasons why those considering using self storage find cheaper or free alternatives such as container storage or friend and family garages. There has been an increase in the perceived price of self storage this year. With inflation sitting at 10%, this is to be expected and the perceived cost remains well below the actual cost.



When considering the typical cost of self storage, the table below shows that across the UK only 10% of survey respondents have a correct understanding of the cost of a self storage unit and 77% thought it would be cheaper or did not know. Initial price shock is an issue the industry needs to deal with and is only partly mitigated by individual discount options such as 50% off the first 2 months. That said, there has been improvement in this data in recent years. In 2019, less than 7% of people were in range and over 32% did not know.

	UK	LONDON	SOUTH	NORTH	SCOTLAND
INDICATIVE AVERAGE NET MONTHLY RENTAL RATE FOR A 90 SQ FT UNIT	£194	£273	£163	£131	£175
IN RANGE	10%	7%	11%	17%	11%
OVER	12%	9%	15%	20%	12%
UNDER WITHOUT DON'T KNOW	52%	58%	50%	38%	50%
DON'T KNOW	25%	26%	24%	26%	27%

%





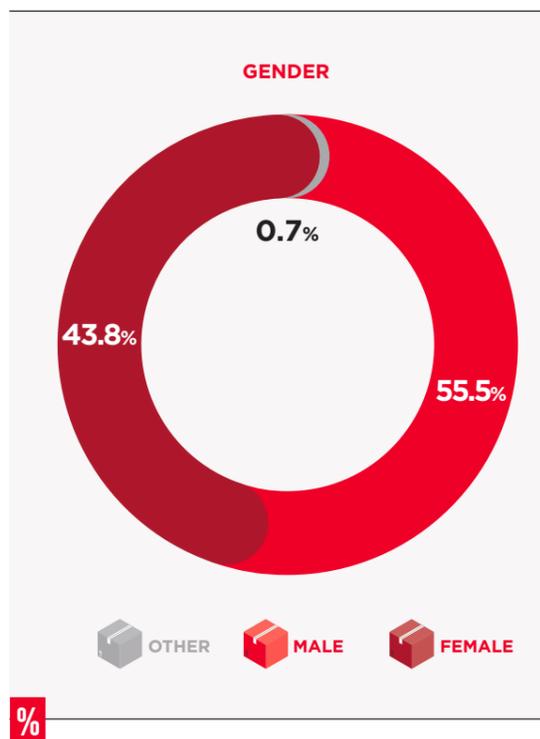
CUSTOMER SURVEY

CUSTOMER SURVEY

THE DATA IN THIS SECTION IS TAKEN FROM RESULTS OF AN ONLINE SURVEY OF CUSTOMERS FROM SSA UK MEMBERS' SELF STORAGE FACILITIES. A TOTAL OF 1,827 RESPONSES WERE RECEIVED FROM OVER 80 SELF STORAGE STORES LOCATED THROUGHOUT THE UK. THERE ARE NO INCENTIVES OFFERED TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY.

CUSTOMER PROFILING

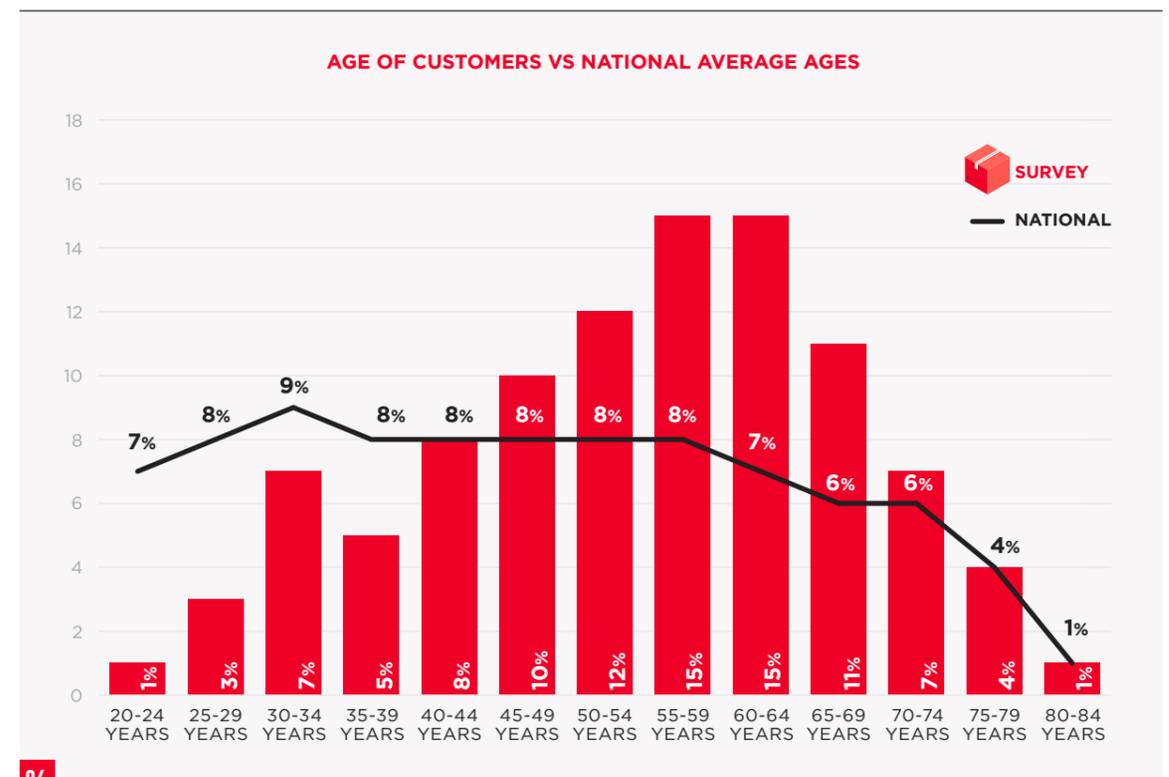
The typical self storage customer base is slightly more male orientated and, including 2022, this has been consistent for the last 7 years. The respondents are those whose name is on the contract. It is likely that this includes many relationships where both partners use the unit, however it is the male name on the contract and responded to this survey.



When comparing the age of customers, compared with the national average, it is clear that self storage customers are more likely to be aged between 45 and 70. Of these, 55 - 64 year olds are the most common age group representing around twice the national average.

Younger people are increasingly spending more time at home where storage is largely their parents' problem. Self storage is to some extent a discretionary spend that many younger people would not consider important. Also, consider that often life changing events generate self storage customers. These can include moving house, death, divorce, entering a new relationship, having a new child and so on. These life events happen over time so middle age and older people are more likely to have experienced one or more of these reasons.

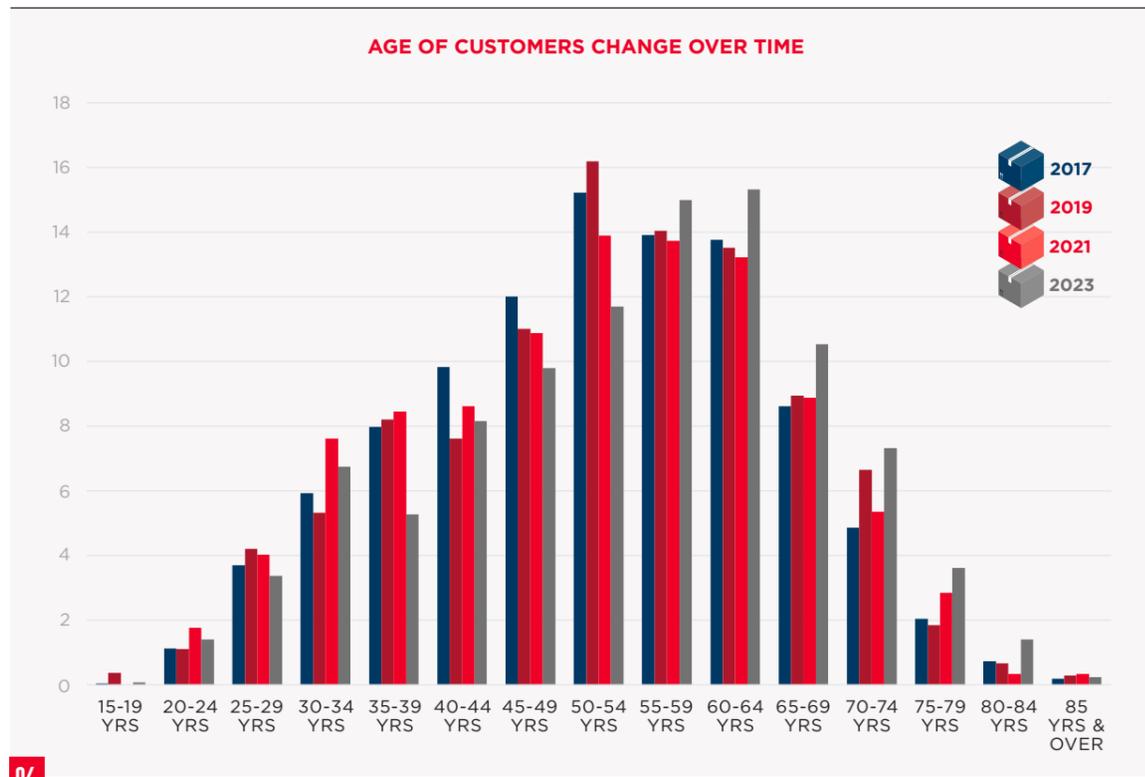
This is likely the result of a combination of factors. Customers having amassed a larger amount of goods to date compared with the younger generation.



When considering this data over time, it shows that the number of people using storage over the age of 55 is increasing and less young people are using self storage. This could be a concern for the industry if millennials are less likely to use storage as they hit their 40s as the previous generation. Or it could just be that long term storage customers are getting older and staying longer, hence making up a greater portion of customers.

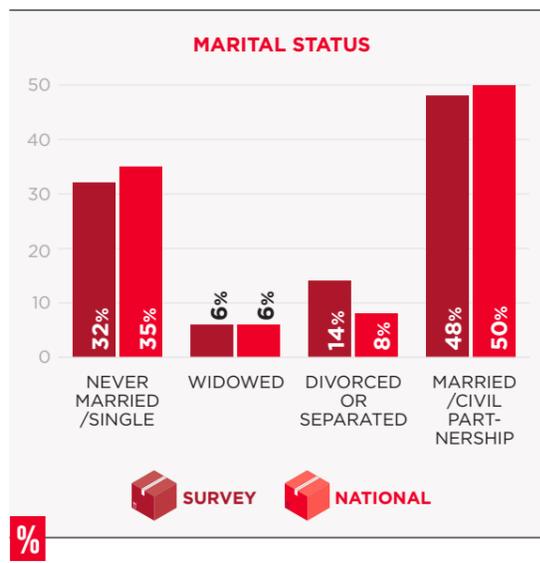


Further consideration could be that this data is taken at a fixed point in time and does not account for the possibility that younger people use their units for a shorter period of time, contributing to the churn of customers, but not as representative at a fixed point sample such as this. Comparing the age of customers with their length of stay. Customers under 45 are more likely to be short term, 59% having their unit for less than 12 months compared to 39% of customers over 45.



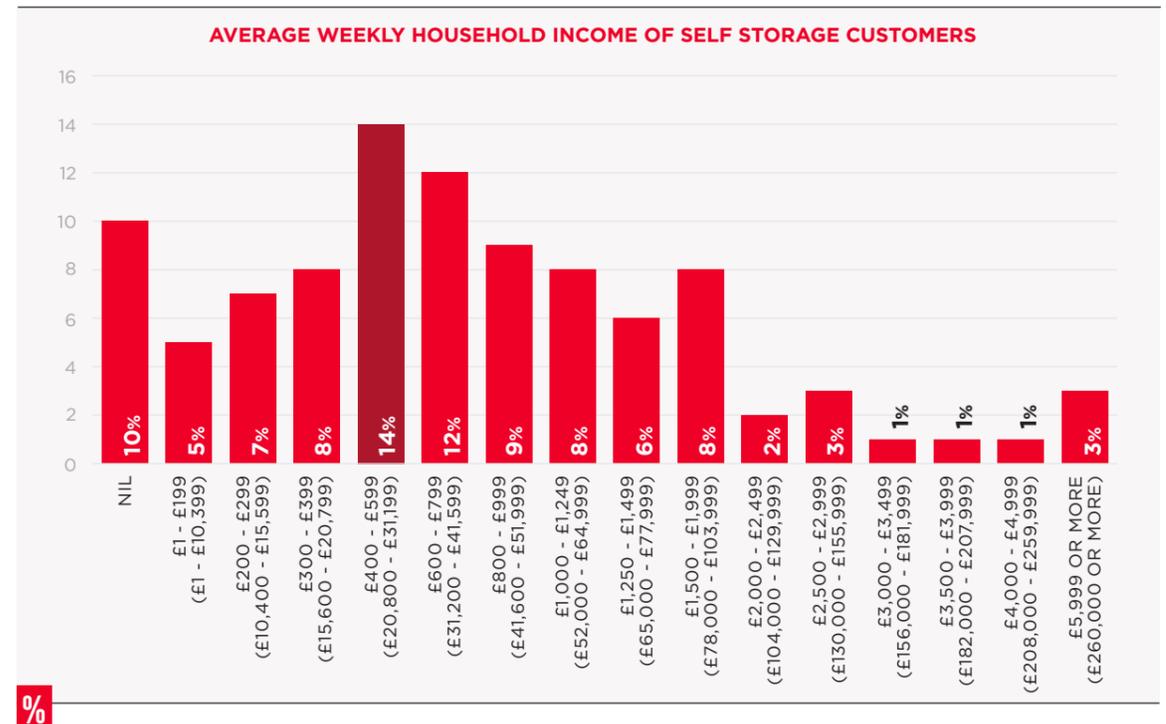
%

Of the life changing events, divorce or couples separating are most likely to use self storage. Couples separating need to find somewhere else to live, often downsizing, with the need for somewhere to store their belongings during the transition and potentially for the long term.



%

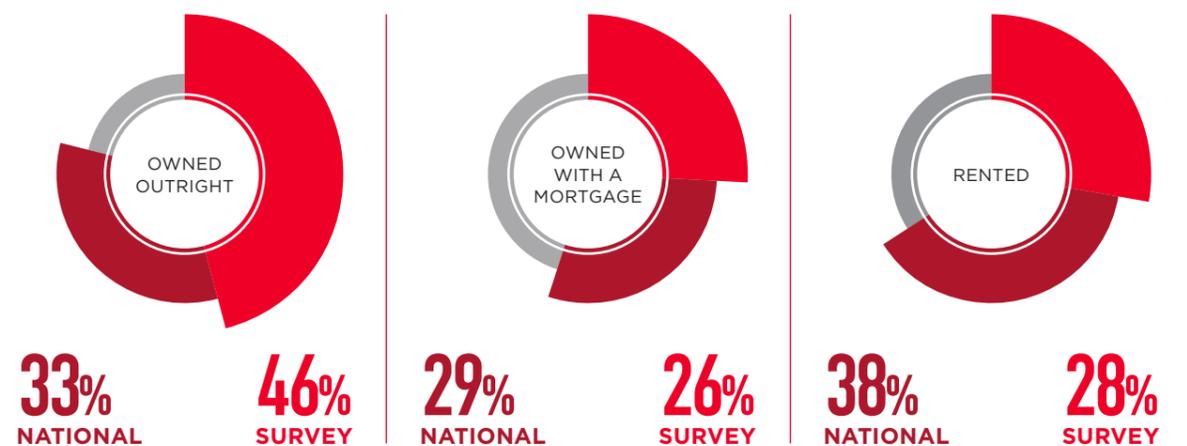
Self storage customers tend to have access to more disposable income, with 55% earning more than the national average wage. Higher wage earners tend to fall within the self storage catchment age group due to the fact they have had longer to accumulate a large number of goods. The table below shows the third largest group have nil income, but these are customers that have retired. Of the survey respondents, 25% were retired.



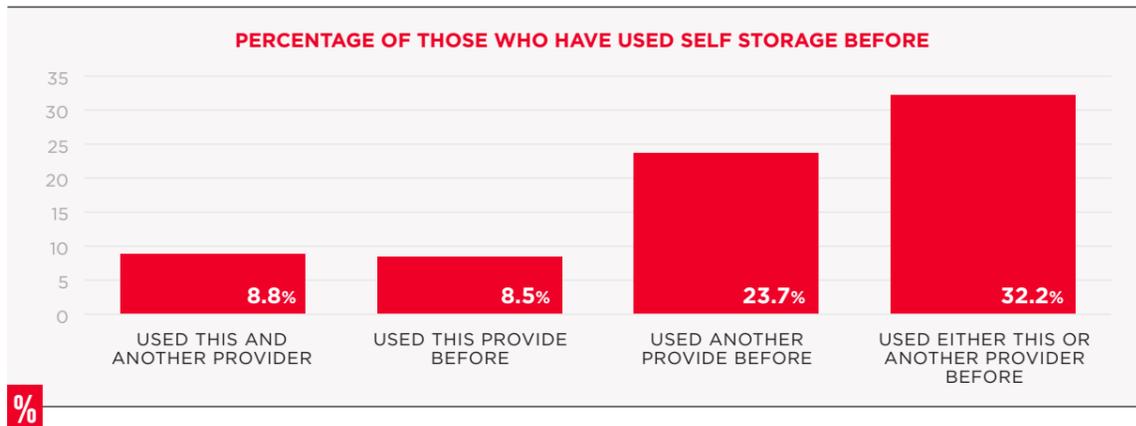
%

More self storage customers own their homes rather than rent and represent a larger group compared with the national average. This marries with previous data, where the 50 and over age group own their own home and therefore tend to have greater disposable income compared with the national average.

HOUSE OWNERSHIP



Of these, 32% of customers have previously used self storage, either their current facility or another business. Repeat business is a large part of the industry. This further reinforces the concept that once people experience self storage they better understand and see value in it and are likely to continue using it when the need arises.

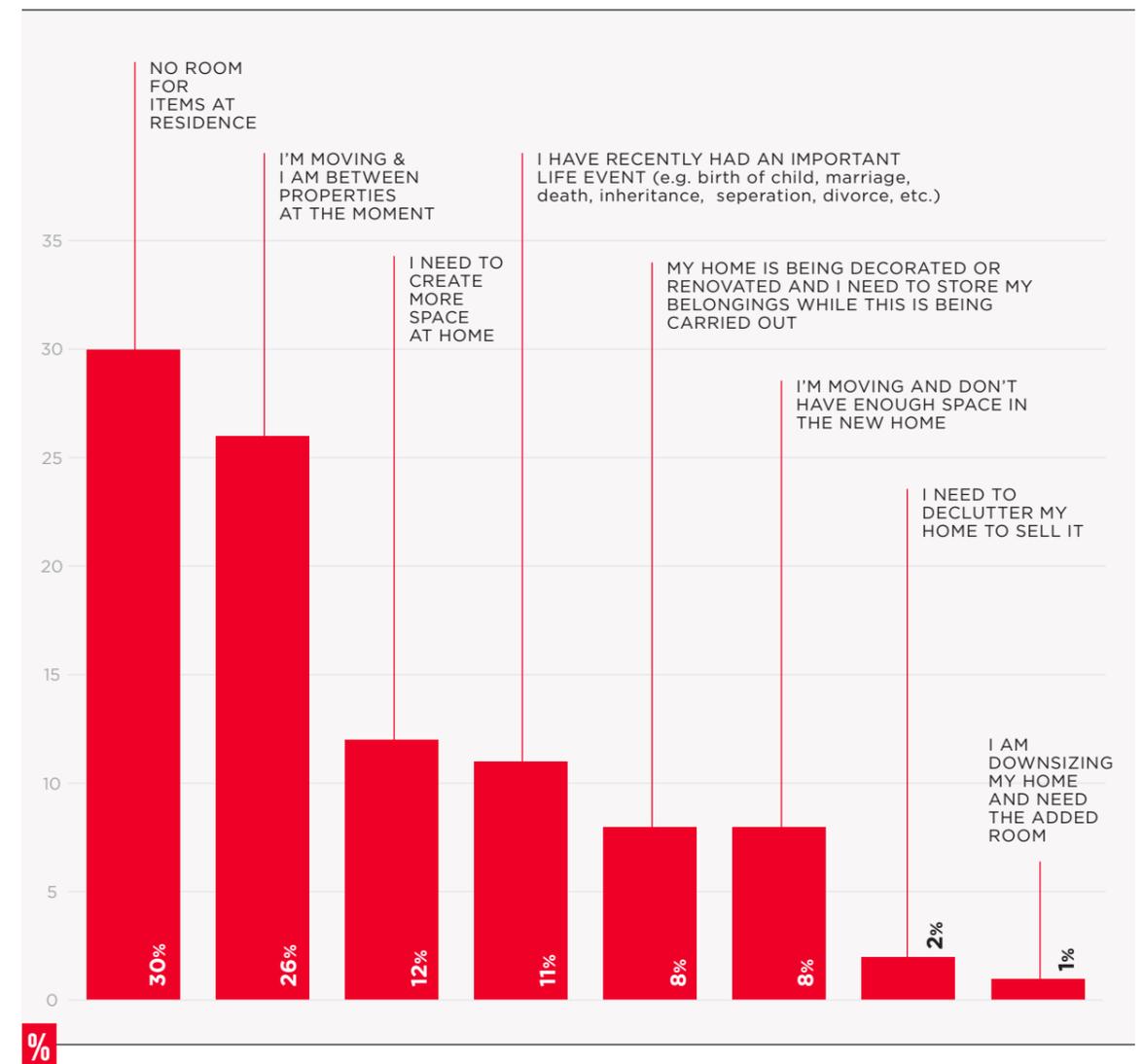


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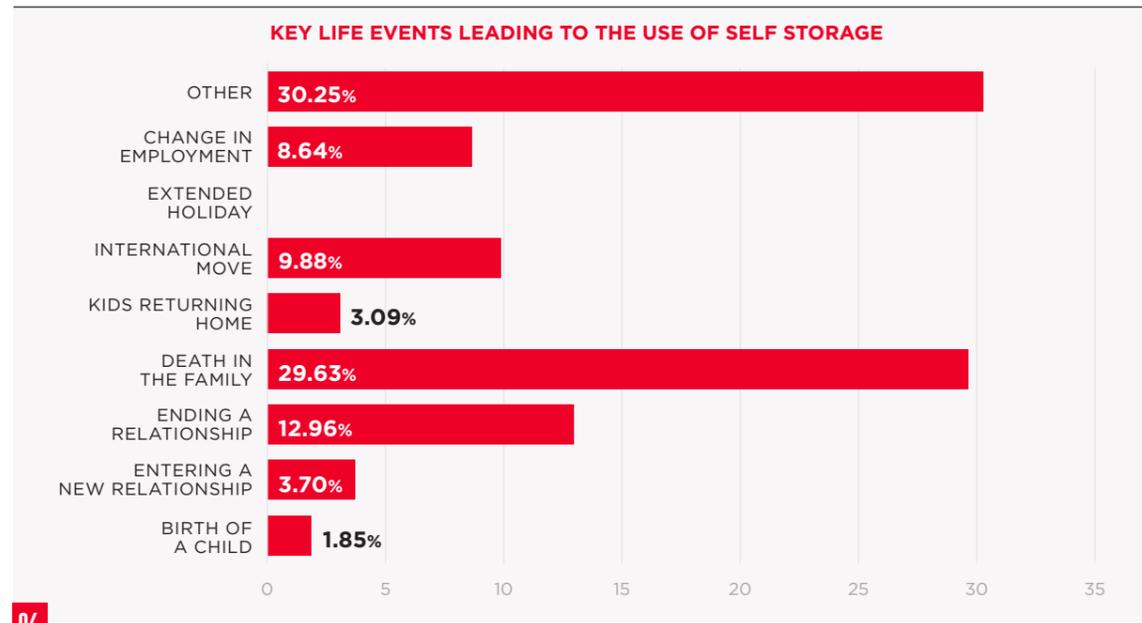
REASONS FOR USING STORAGE

People use self storage for a range of different reasons, which is one of the strengths of the industry. It is not reliant on one single activity or event. As we know, many use self storage during life changing moments, such as a death in the family or divorce, which continue to occur regardless of the economic or political conditions. The residential market contributes the largest number of customers, totaling 36%. That said, decluttering was down from 4% last year to 2%, which could be indicative of the recent slowdown in the housing market owing to the cost of capital and inflationary pressure on disposable income.



%

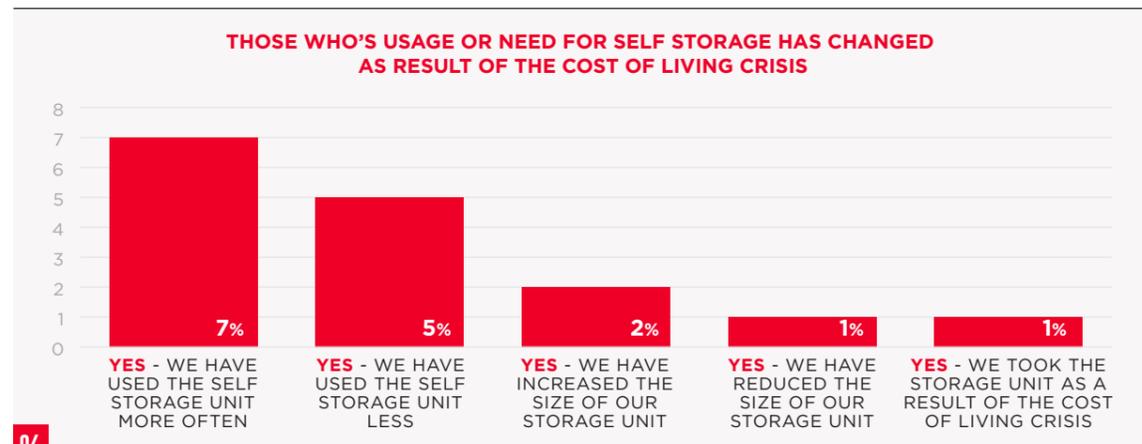
When examining key life events that attract customers to self storage, a death in the family remains the single largest reason, with more than twice as many people than the next highest, which is ending a relationship.



%

Owing to interest rate increases and inflationary pressure, customers now have a lower level of disposable income. As a result, 17% of survey respondents said their need to use self storage has changed.

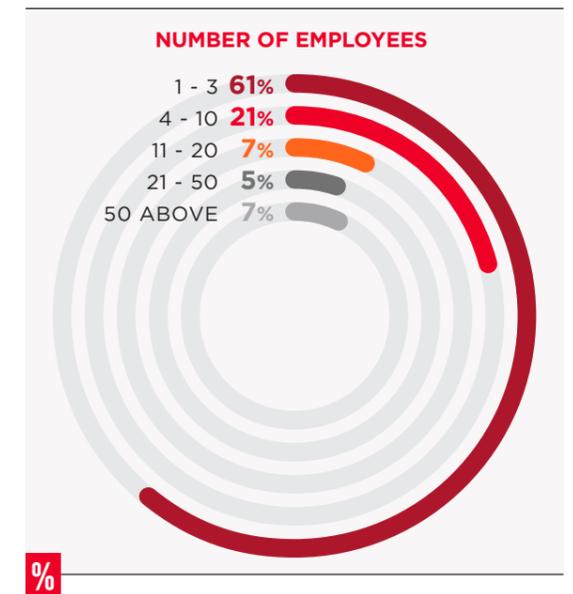
That said, 58% of these people have said that for these reasons, it has been good news for business. These customers are using their unit more frequently, taking more space and also attracting new business as a direct result of the economy. This demonstrates that change can drive demand and is a product that can help people during a time of need.



%

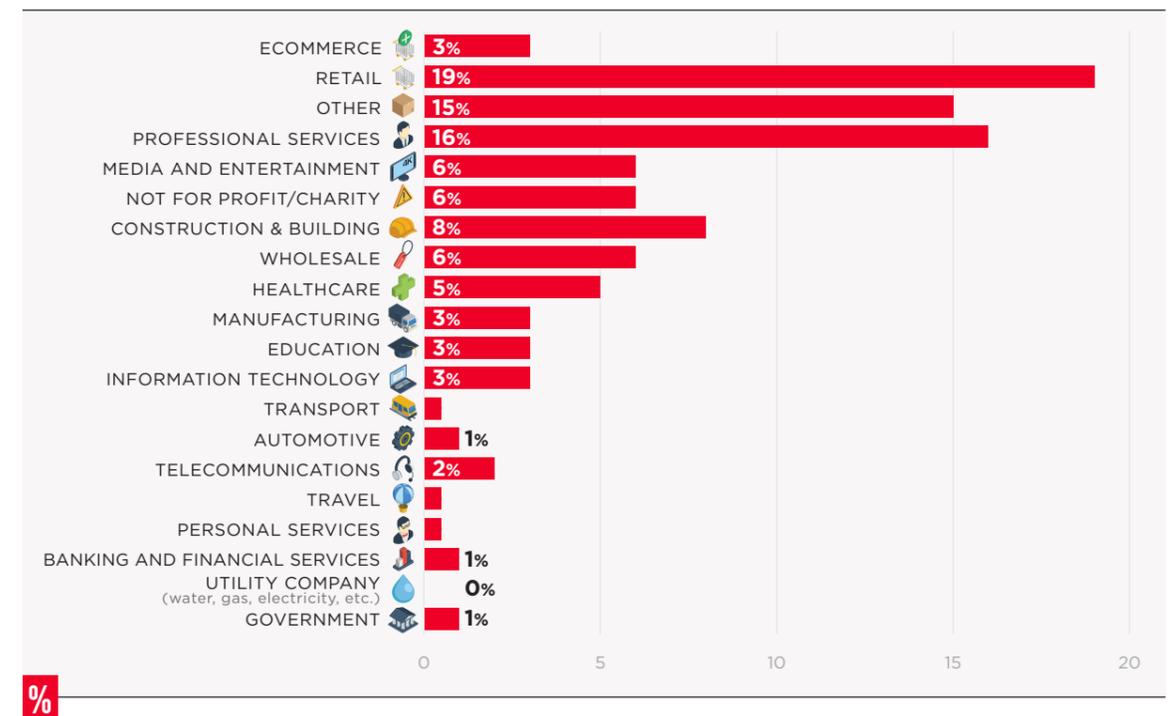
BUSINESS USE

The majority of business customers are small businesses, with 83% considered micro businesses with less than 10 employees. This compares with the UK national average of 95% that make up all businesses in the UK. In contrast, just over 1% of all businesses in the UK have over 50 employees, compared with 7% of our survey. This illustrates the industry's ability to cater for a wide range of business custom.



Retail custom continues to be the most common business to use self storage. However, this number has been steadily decreasing since peaking at 23% during the Pandemic.

Professional services have been steadily increasing over the past 3 years. Interestingly, not for profit and charity use has dropped from 11% in 2021 to 6% this year. Often, operators give free or heavily discounted units to charities. It could be that as stores have higher occupancy with less units available this has become less prevalent and businesses are supporting local charities in other ways.



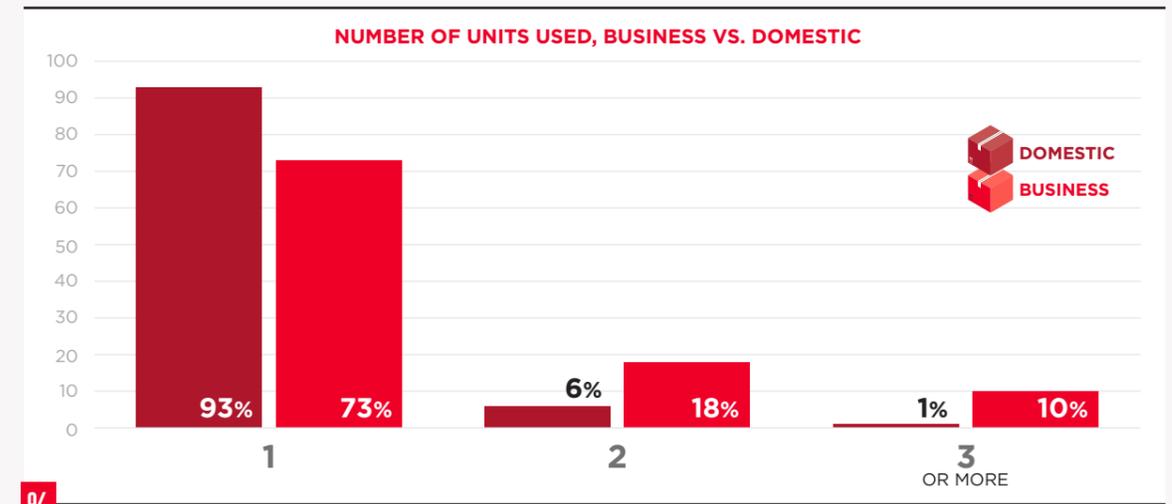
%

While self storage stores may not directly employ high numbers of staff, they support local businesses that could not operate without their self storage units. To this extent, they operate as a kind of local business incubator. 20% of all businesses using self storage operate completely from their unit. One of the most challenging times for small businesses is the first stage of growth from a home business; self storage offers a flexible and cost effective solution to assist with this.

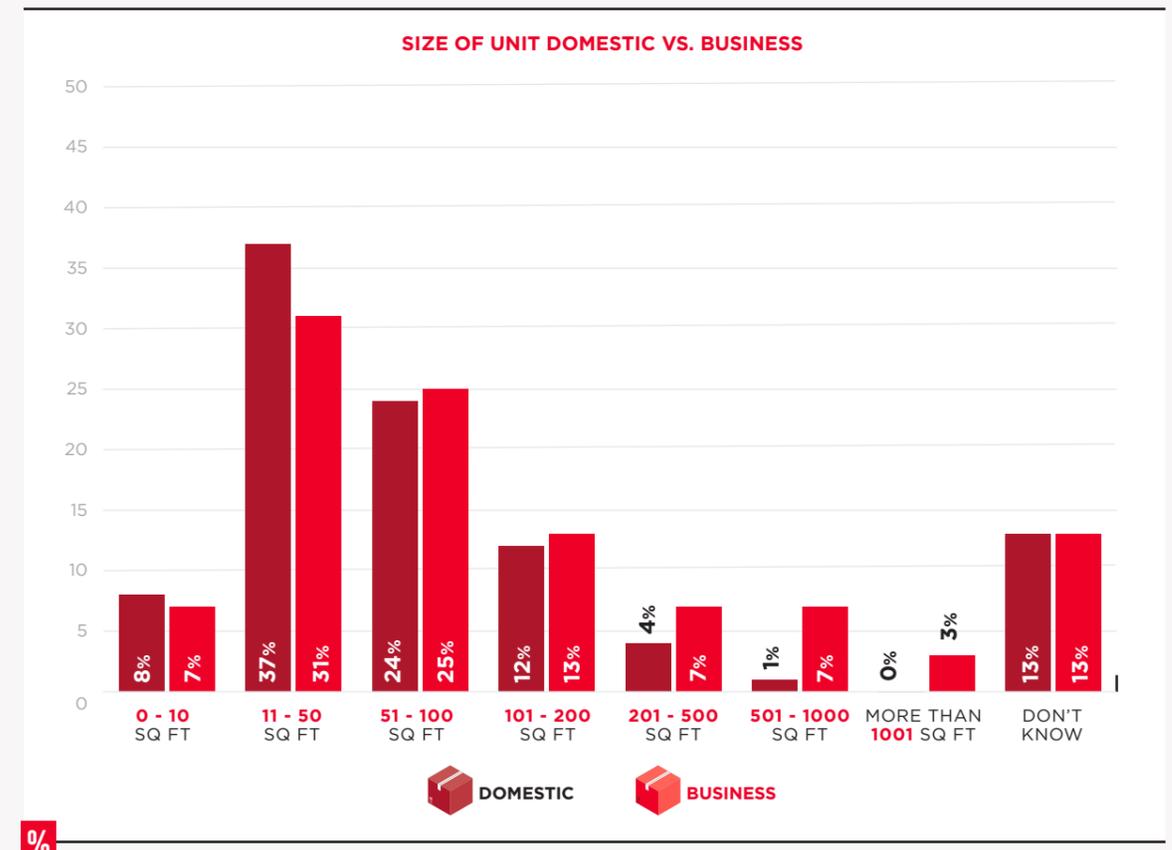


NUMBER AND SIZE OF UNITS RENTED

Most customers (89%) only rent one unit, and only 2% rent three or more. This is primarily because most self storage businesses offer a range of unit sizes to suit customers' needs, so usually only one is required. When considering business vs. domestic use, we see that business users are more likely to use multiple units. This is likely due to the fact that they generally need larger spaces, which may not be able to be accommodated in a single unit. They are also more likely to need additional space as their business grows, which could result in the addition of more units rather than relocating to a bigger space.

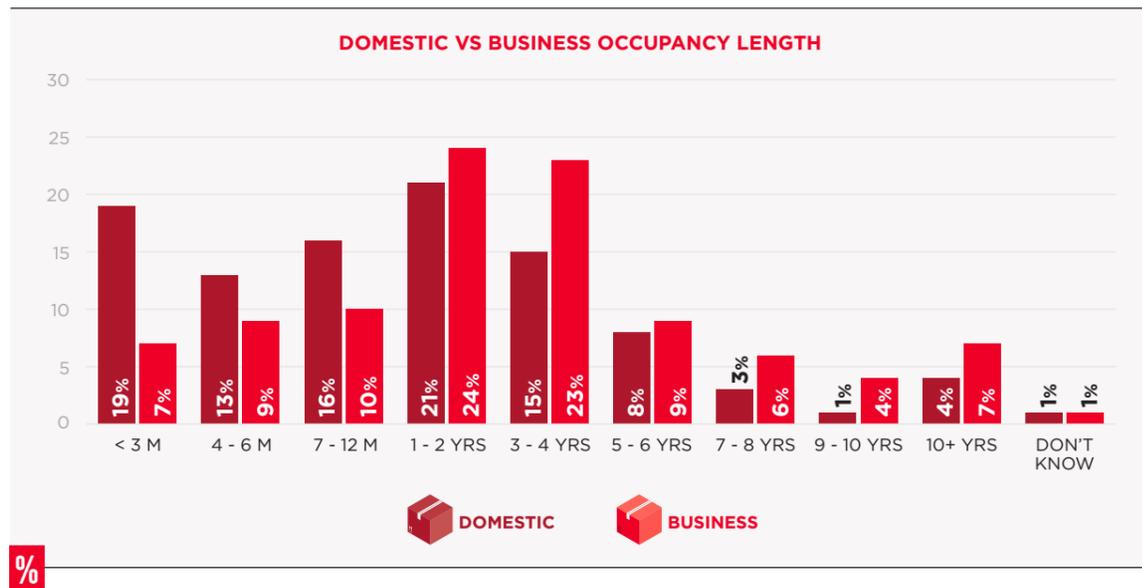


The most popular units range in size between 11-50 sq ft, making up 35% of all respondents. When considering business and domestic customers, it is clear that business customers are more likely to take larger units.

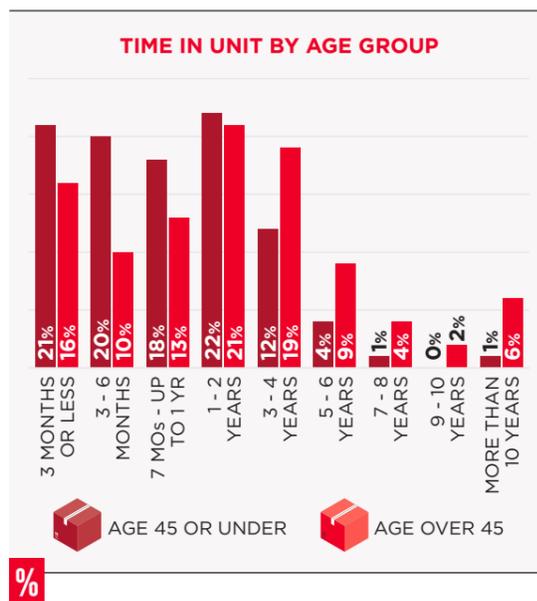


LENGTH OF STAY

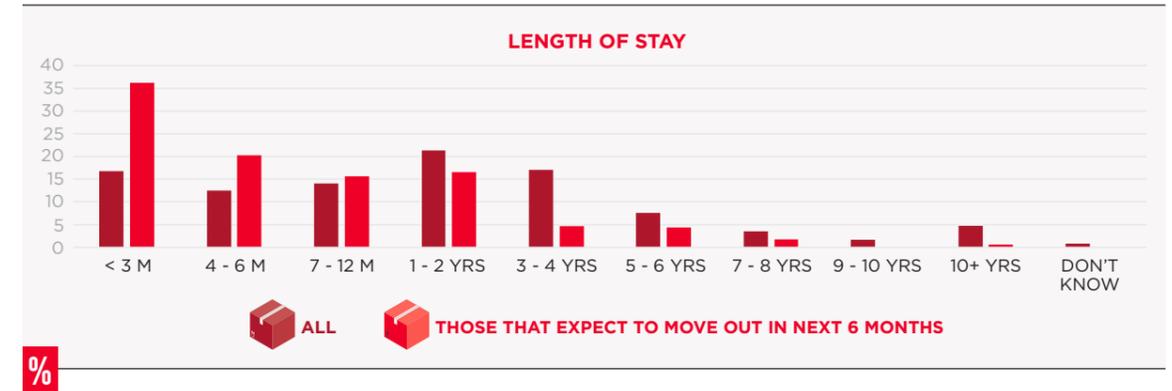
A total of 65% of customers have occupied their unit for around two years, and 43% for one year or less. This chart shows that businesses are more likely to have used their unit longer than domestic customers. Business customers tend to be looking for long term solutions. The chart also indicates the length of stay at this point in time. Customers that only moved in recently will show as having a short stay, but may end up staying for a long period. Consequently, this data appears skewed towards a shorter length of use.



Further analysis on length of stay shows that older people are more likely to be long term customers. When segmenting the data into over and under 45 year olds, 59% of younger people have had their unit for less than 12 months while only 39% of older people have. Younger people are using storage more for their short term needs, but they may also be coming back to re-use at a later time. With 32% of customers having used self storage before and less bias to younger people, it seems younger people are more likely to reuse self storage for short periods while older people will keep their unit for a longer period.

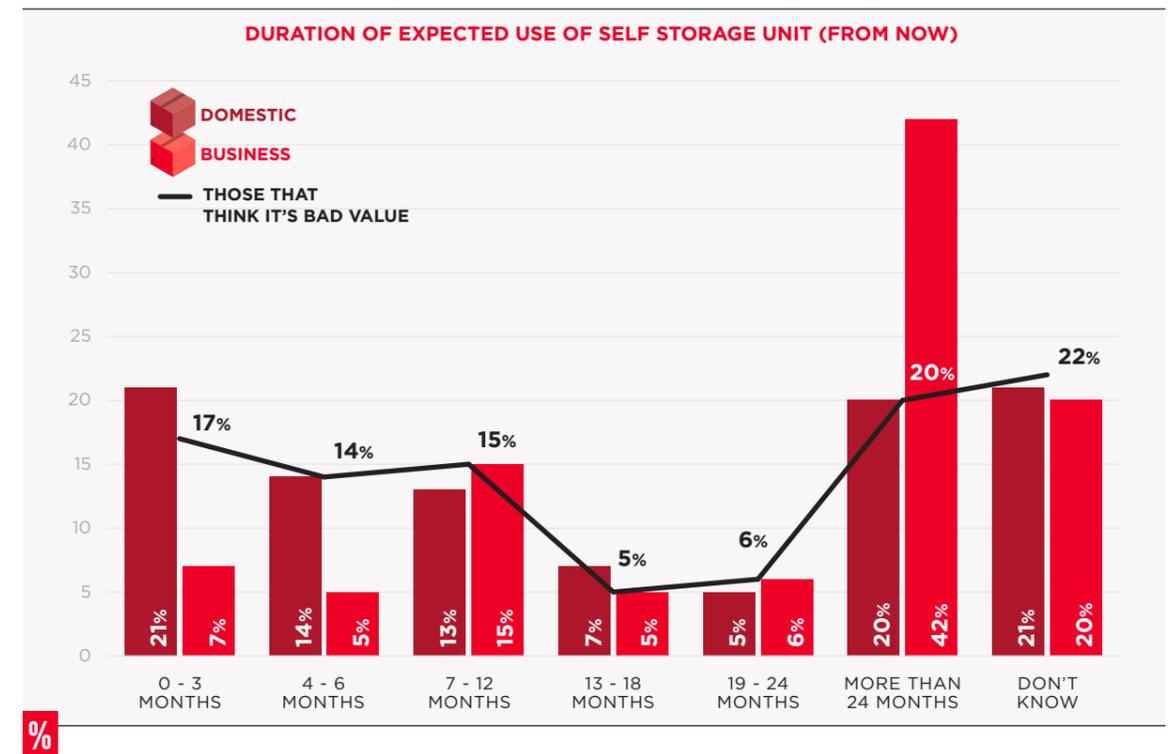


When considering our data based on people's expectation to move out, the differential between short and long term customers becomes clear. A total of 56% of the people planning to move out within 6 months of occupancy have only had their unit for six months or less. Their need for short term storage has been fulfilled. The counter balance are the longer term customers.



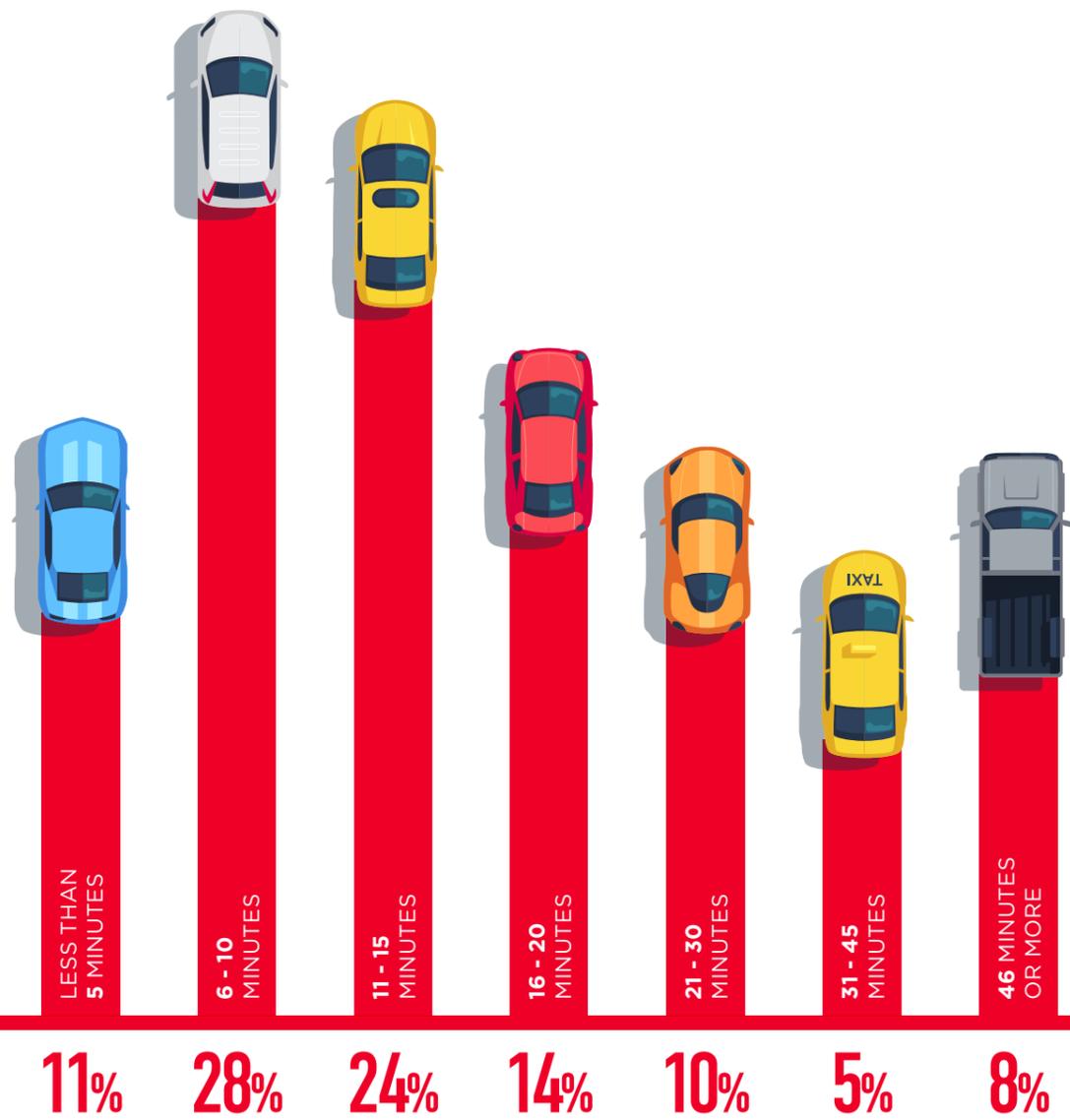
The following chart further demonstrates this split between short and long term customers. Around 11% plan on moving out in one to two years' time, 23% in two years or more and, the largest group, within 3 months. Interestingly, when this is overlaid with perception of value, there is a large number of customers that perceive self storage as poor value yet have no plans to move - raising the possibility that there becomes a tipping point in the future.

There is a mostly equal representation across all expectations to move out as this line largely follows the chart below. You would expect people who see storage as poor value, to move out sooner. This demonstrates that, for many, self storage is not simply a discretionary spend, but necessary despite their thinking on value for money.



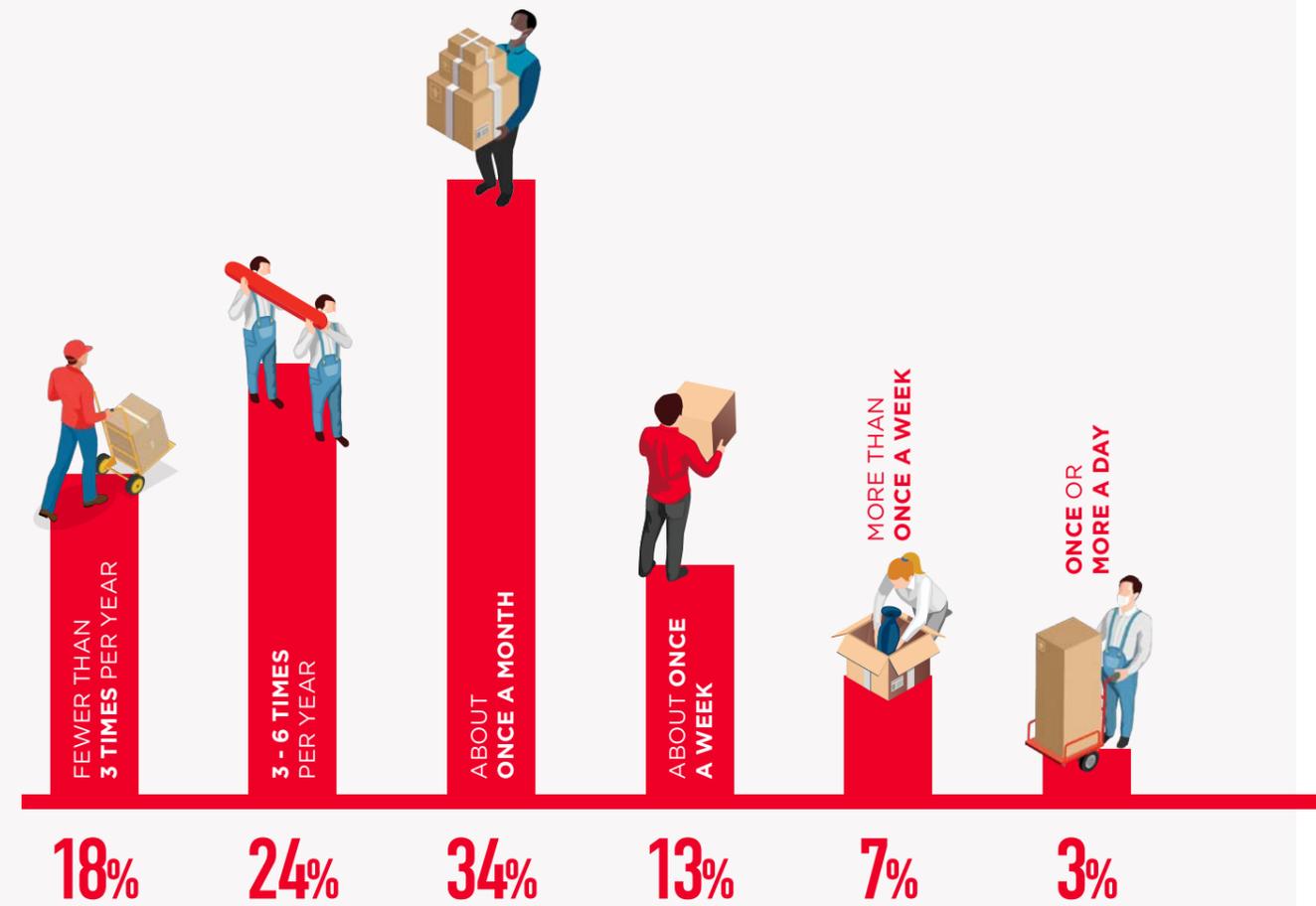
DISTANCE TO UNIT AND USE

Around 62% of customers travel less than 15 minutes to access their storage unit, with self storage largely being sold on convenience and ease of access - *“a room away from home”*. It is not surprising that customers prefer a self storage unit that is closer to where they live or work. Where customers travel further to their unit, it is likely they use their unit infrequently. Such customers could be travelling or temporarily living outside the UK.



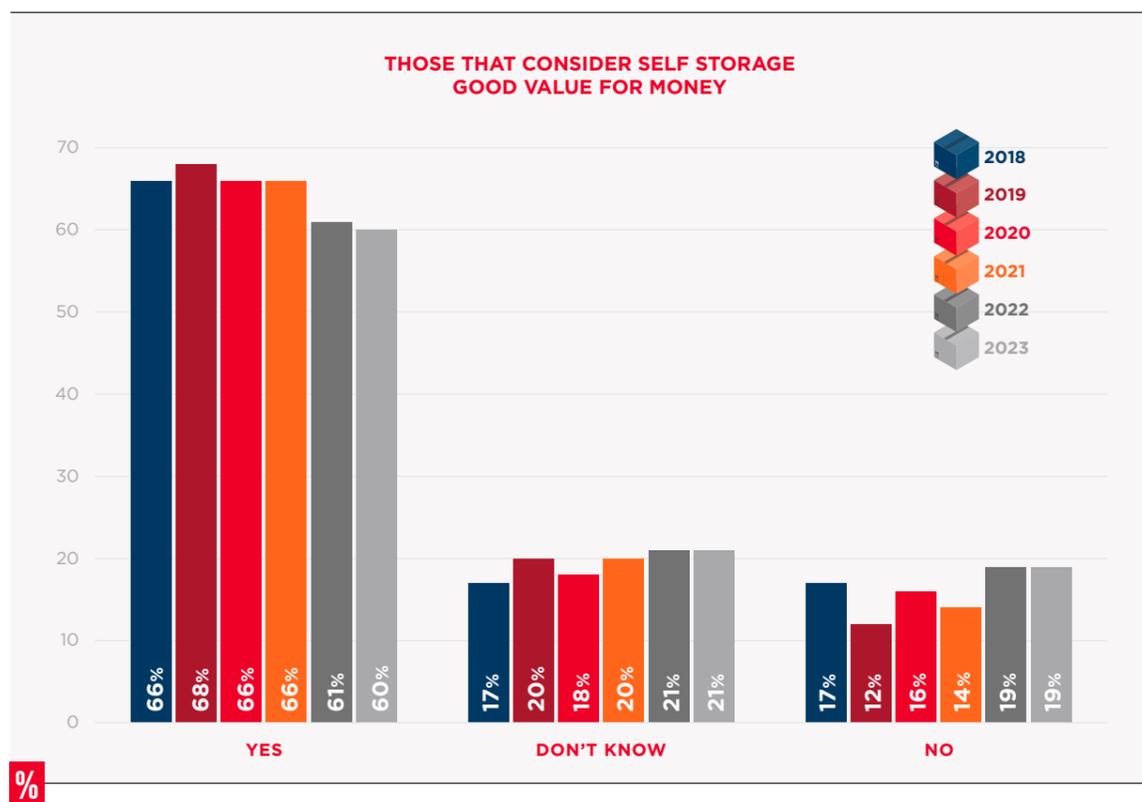
Whilst self storage customers prefer being close to their storage unit, they also access their storage unit infrequently. Only 23% of customers access their unit more than once per month. When you consider purely domestic customers, this reduces to 13%.

STORAGE UNIT VISITS

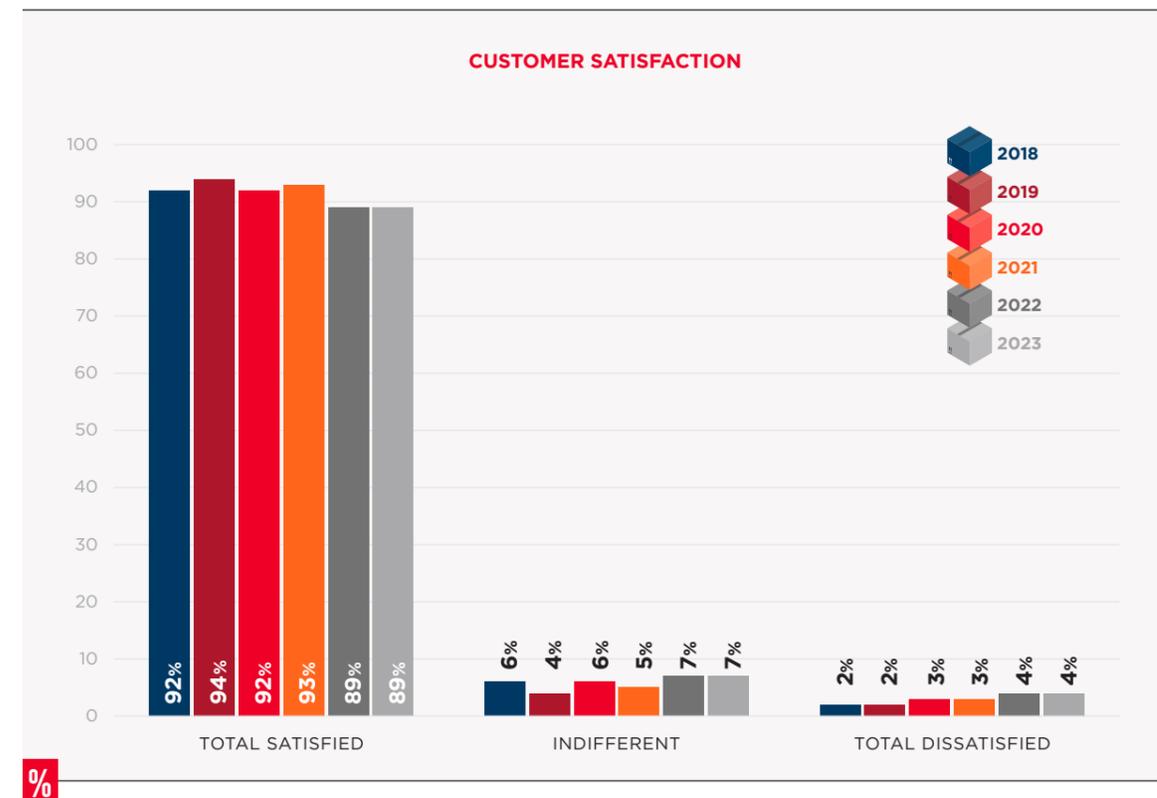


CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

The majority of survey respondents view self storage as good value for money. However, the number of respondents that considered it poor value jumped during the pandemic and has remained at 19% this year. This was a period when operators were increasing prices due to low product availability and high demand. It will be interesting to see how value is perceived as the cost of living and inflationary pressures impact households and disposable income in 2023.

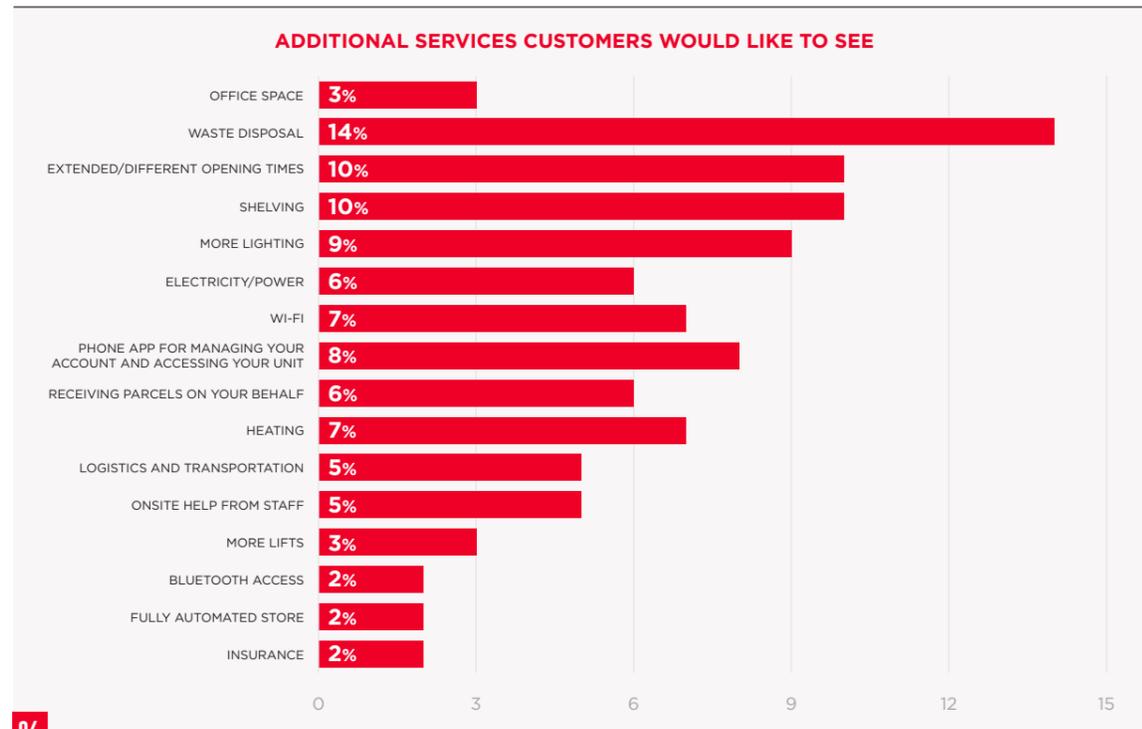


Customer satisfaction is higher than value for money, with 59% of customers very satisfied with their store. This is much higher than many other customer facing industries, especially when customers have limited options given the restriction of locations. When examining this over time, there was again a small increase in dissatisfaction last year and this did not correct itself this year.



ADDITIONAL SERVICES

Waste disposal remains the most sought-after additional service customers would like to see their store offer. Some stores do offer this service, but it does increase OPEX and can lead to untidy areas on site. When comparing this data historically, the largest increase was in phone apps for managing your account and accessing your unit, up from 6% last year to 8%. The biggest drop was better lighting, down from 11% to 9%. Many operators have been upgrading their lighting to brighter, energy efficient lighting which could account for this change. This was a prompted question with respondents choosing items from the restricted list provided.



When asked if customers used boxes or packing materials, 57% of customers stated they did. However, just over a third of these bought from their store and only 12% bought all of them from their store. There has been limited change in this statistic over the past 6 years and remains an opportunity for the industry. In markets such as the US and Australia, stores tend to be more pro-active in selling packaging materials to both customers and also non-storage customers.



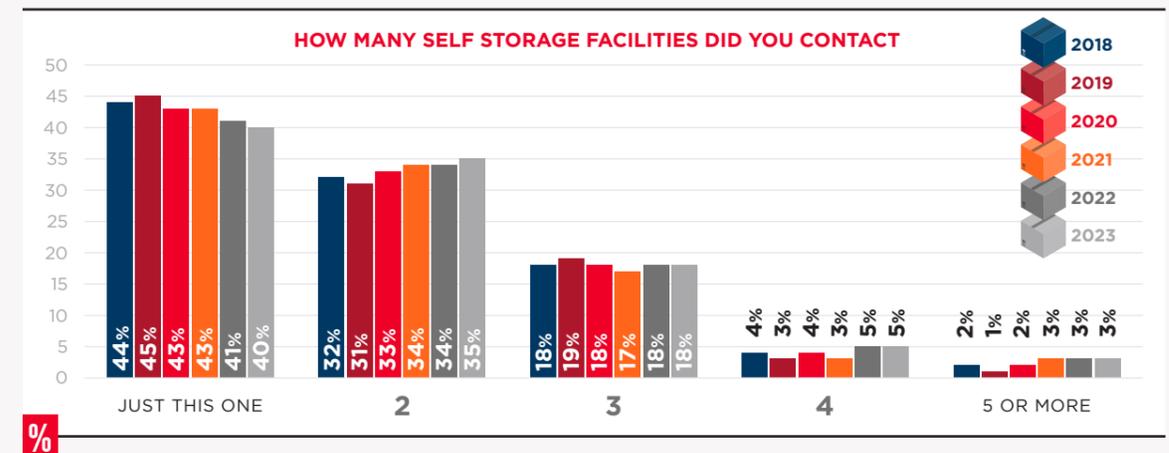
DID YOU BUY BOXES OR PACKAGING MATERIALS?



PURCHASE PATTERNS

Only 40% of customers contacted the store they finally chose and were already aware of its presence or had been referred by a third party. They could have researched multiple stores online, but then stored their items with the first one they contacted. We are now seeing customers contact more than one store, which is likely a result of online search engines and their usability.

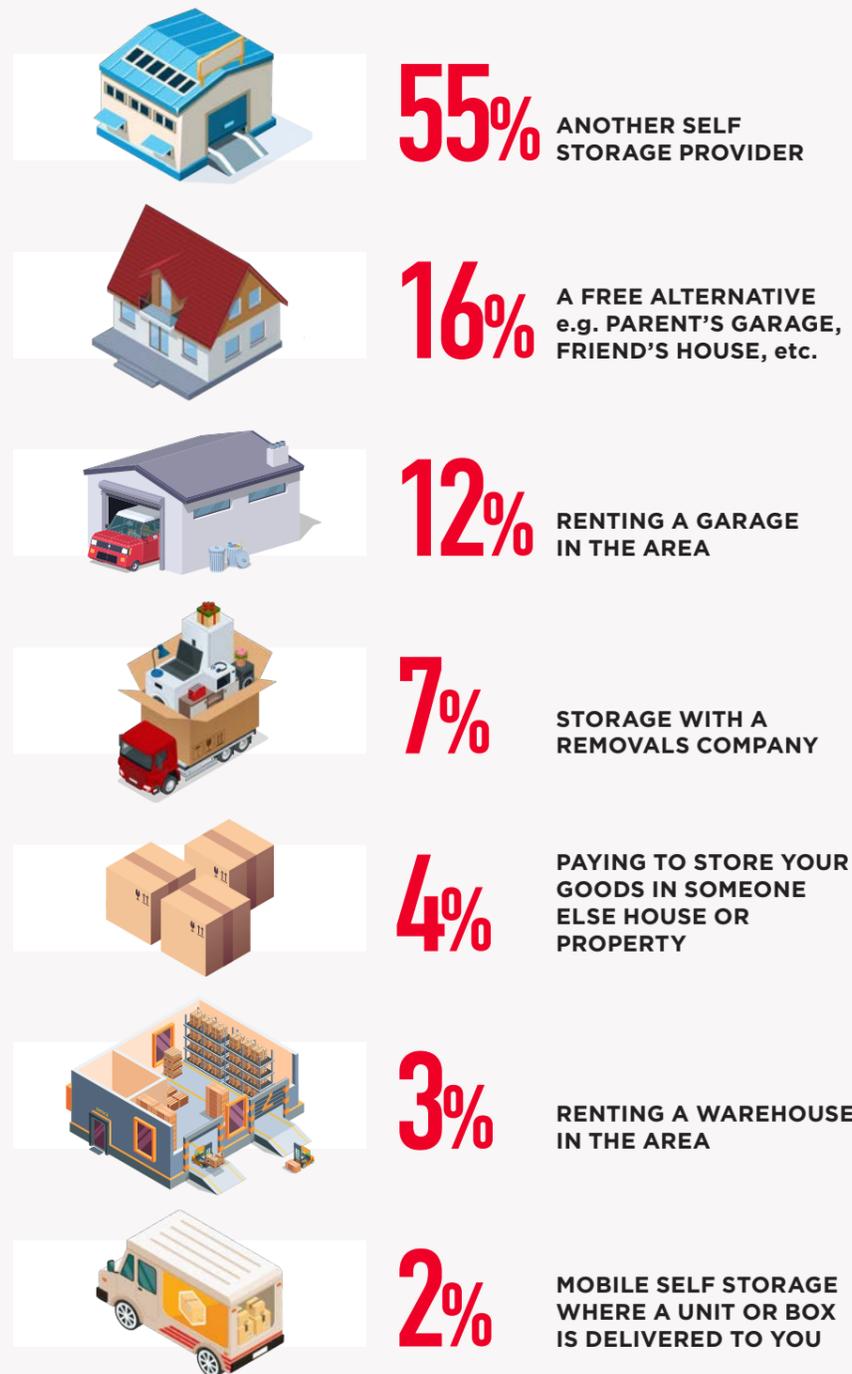
This question included four options. These being contact either by email, phone, in person or other electronic means.



A non-cost alternative remains the largest competitor to the industry as a whole.

So called 'disruptors to the industry' of paying someone else to store your goods or having units delivered to you continue to have minimal impact on the industry with few customers considering them as a viable option compared with self storage.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED?



For now, customers continue to prefer to contact a store in person when booking rather than using online means. The preference for or the ability to visit a store dropped during the pandemic and has increased in the following years but not to pre-pandemic levels. App usage remains low but continues to grow, while there remains little interest in social media. The preference to contact a store through phone or in person, could be linked to a poor understanding of the product. Customers would prefer to speak to someone to ensure they have the right size and understand the process. This is interesting as remotely managed sites with limited staff are beginning to emerge, encouraging customers to complete the entire sign-up process online.

WHEN MAKING AN ENQUIRY ABOUT RENTING A SELF STORAGE UNIT HOW WOULD YOU PREFER TO CONTACT A STORE?



19

CONTRIBUTORS

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THANK YOU TO ALL SSA UK MEMBERS WHO TOOK THE TIME TO COMPLETE THE MEMBER SURVEY AND SURVEY THEIR CUSTOMERS. WE COULD NOT PRODUCE THIS REPORT WITHOUT THEIR ASSISTANCE. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT SOME SURVEY PARTICIPANTS CHOSE NOT TO BE INCLUDED IN THIS LIST.



A&S SELF STORAGE	LOK'N STORE
APEX SELF STORAGE	MAGENTA SELF STORAGE
ADAM SELFSTORE	MS SELF STORAGE
ARMADILLO SELF STORAGE	MEGASTORAGE
ATTIC SELF STORAGE LIMITED	MYSTORE SELF STORAGE
BARN STORE	NEWQUAY SELF STORAGE
BIG YELLOW SELF STORAGE	PREMIER SELF STORE
BILLERICAY SELF STORAGE	ROBINSONS RELOCATION
BLUE SELF STORAGE	SELF STORAGE CENTRE OXFORD
BWI STORAGE	SHEEPLANDS SELF STORAGE
CINCH SELF STORAGE	SHURGARD SELF-STORAGE
BALL BROTHERS (CLACTON SELF STORAGE)	SPACE STATION SELF STORAGE
THE SPACE PROGRAM	SPACEBANK DIY STORAGE
EASY ACCESS SELF STORAGE	SQUAB STORAGE
FLEXISS	STOCK N LOCK SELF STORAGE
GO STORE SELF STORAGE	STORAGE KING
HARRISON AND ROWLEY	STORAGE WORLD
HILLS SELF STORAGE	STORAGEMART
HOGLEAZE STORAGE	STORE & GO DERRY
INNER SPACE STATIONS SELF STORAGE	SUFFOLK SELF STORAGE
KANGAROO SELF STORAGE	THE STORAGE TEAM
KEEPSAFE STORAGE CENTRES	URBAN LOCKER
KENT SPACE	VANGUARD SELF STORAGE
LOC-BOX SELF STORAGE	YOUR SPACE SELF STORAGE

CONTACTS

RENNIE SCHAFER

CEO | Self Storage Association

T +44 (0) 1270 698 500**E** rschafer@ssauk.com**HELEN BOURKE**

Operations Director | Self Storage Association

T +44 (0) 1270 623 150**E** hbourke@ssauk.com**RACHEL JAMES**

Membership Services Officer | Self Storage Association

T +44 (0) 7539 969 841**E** rjames@ssauk.com**STEPHEN RAMAGE**

Membership Services Officer

T +44 (0) 7547 672 541**E** sramage@ssauk.com**PHILIP MACAULEY**

Head of Self Storage | Cushman & Wakefield

T +44(0) 7584 857 149**E** philip.macauley@cushwake.com**DARYL PERRY**

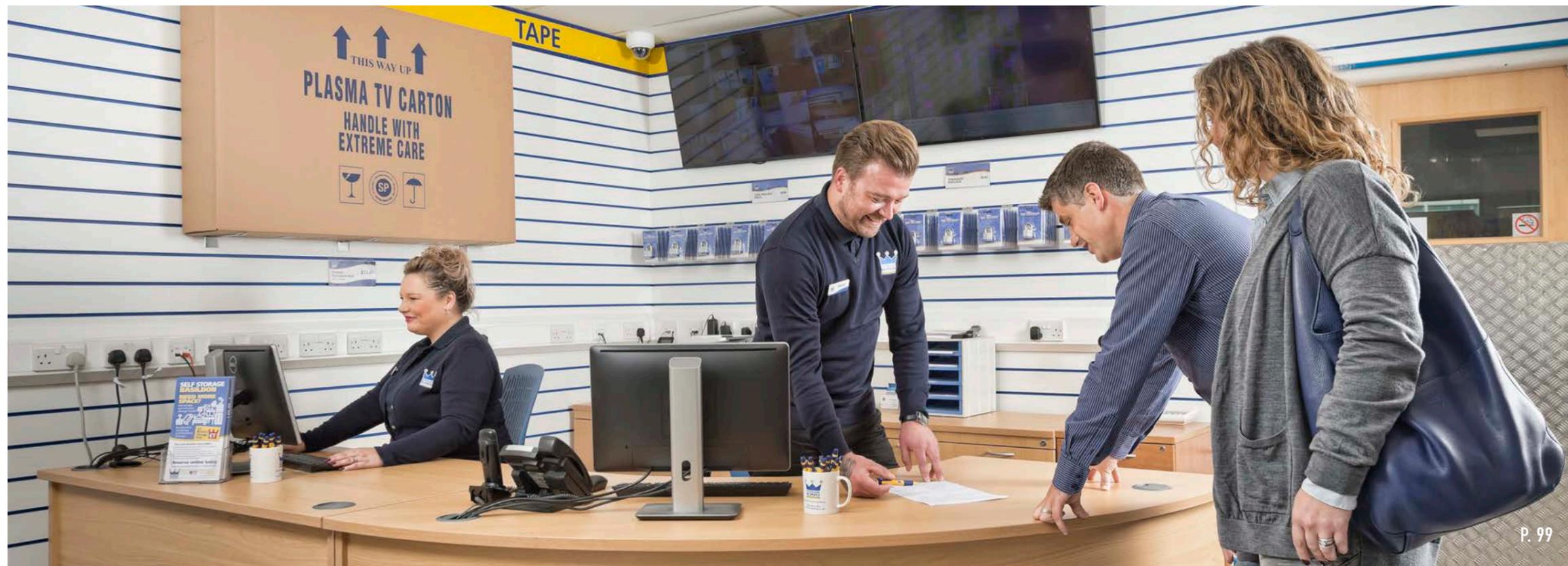
Head of UK Research & Insight | Cushman & Wakefield

T +44 (0) 7341 109 340**E** daryl.perry@cushwake.com**ILDA KREKURTI**

Head of Business Intelligence UK&I | Cushman & Wakefield

T +44 (0) 734 186 7583**E** ilda.krekurti@cushwake.com**CHRISTIE WARD**

Senior Business Intelligence Analyst | Cushman & Wakefield

T +44 (0) 7775 543 299**E** christie.ward@cushwake.com



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