

The National Lottery Luck Study

The nation's attitude to luck – the first ever regional
barometer of luck across the UK



Research conducted by **ICM Research (Fieldwork UK)**
Psychological analysis led by **Dr Linda Papadopoulos**,
psychologist and author

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Introduction

With four million winners created each week and over 1,900 millionaires or multi-millionaires created since its launch in 1994, The National Lottery is synonymous with the concept of luck.

One in 15,917 of the UK's adult player population¹ has won a share of a National Lottery jackpot and as a result of publicity jackpot winners and statistics released regarding the number of jackpot-winning tickets in UK, different regions have had cause to perceive themselves to be luckier than others at various times over the last 12 years.

The concept of luck, however, extends beyond the chance of scooping the jackpot, governing all aspects of our everyday lives including work, relationships, family, and health.

Given the inextricable link between luck and the lottery, The National Lottery therefore decided to carry out research into how the nation perceives its luck, beyond its attitude to the lottery, and conduct the first regional barometer of luck across the towns and cities of the UK.

The key findings of this research into luck and insights into the various factors that impact on our perception are highlighted below and outlined in more detail in this report.

Key findings

- The UK population generally expresses a high level of satisfaction with life and around two thirds believe themselves to be lucky
- Regionally, the South East and Northern Ireland are the most satisfied with life
- The North West considers itself the luckiest region followed by the South East
- Scotland has the lowest satisfaction scores and considers itself the least lucky part of the UK
- Northern Ireland is the part of the UK which is the most hopeful about the future
- Brighton residents are the most satisfied and feel the luckiest out of all the towns surveyed
- Cambridge is the city least satisfied with life and Aberdeen considers itself to be the unluckiest
- Married and cohabiting couples have the highest levels of satisfaction and feel the luckiest of any demographic.

1. Based on share of the total adult (16+ player) population of the UK of 47 million – Source: Census Day 2001 (29 April). Census Day data is kept on Camelot's award-winning Optimum database.

Foreword by Dr Linda Papadopoulos (psychologist and research consultant)

Everyone has a different perception of the concept of luck – some define it as good fortune or success, others believe it is fate. Whatever your definition, for a large proportion of people, luck underscores the decisions they make and whether they believe to have good luck or bad luck impacts on the kind of life they lead.

The way we live our lives has changed since previous generations when we believed success came from working hard. Nowadays we expect something for nothing and have adopted a more ‘gameshow’ style of life in which glamour, celebrity and luck play a bigger role.

A strong sense of luck has been developed as religion has declined. We need to have a faith in the order of things and as religion becomes less popular, we can see a surge in our belief in luck.

In recent years, we have realised that being at the right place at the right time can determine our success in life. With that comes the realisation that we are not necessarily in control of our destinies, and we have become more fatalistic and open to the concept of luck.

When I was first approached by The National Lottery to lead their research into the UK’s attitude to luck, the relevance to the lottery brand was obvious. When I started exploring the concept further, however, it was clear that luck, good fortune or whatever you call it, incorporates so much more than your attitude to winning the lottery.

In order to develop the research framework, we conducted focus groups among people who considered themselves ‘lucky’ and ‘unlucky’. In both these groups, two key themes also emerged – positivity and control.

We, therefore, decided to include life satisfaction and locus of control questions alongside the statements of luck in order to investigate to what extent these two themes relate to how lucky we feel.

Although studies into the concept of luck have been carried out in the past, we decided to conduct the research across the UK in order to develop the first regional barometer of luck, determining how lucky people are feeling across the UK, what the reasons are for their attitude, and whether this indicates that individuals can change their perception of their own luck for the better.

In addition to collecting basic demographic information about respondents, the questionnaire covered the following:

- 'Life satisfaction' – a series of seven true / false statements designed to establish respondents' basic satisfaction with their life
- 'Locus of control' – a series of 20 true / false statements designed to assess respondents' internal versus external control of events²
- 'Luck' – a series of 27 true / false statements developed especially for this research programme and designed to assess respondents' attitudes towards their life and the role of chance and luck within it

The questionnaire was then put into research among 1,550 adults in 31 towns across the UK.

In addition to the individual responses to the various questions on life satisfaction, control and luck, the information derived from these areas above was used as input to a segmentation programme (factor and cluster analyses) designed to identify groups of consumers with similar sets of attitudes towards luck and other aspects of their life.

These groups and the key findings of the research are explored further in this report.

2. The locus of control personality test was devised by Julian Rotter (1966). The questions used for this survey are those subsequently developed by Terry Pettijohn (1998). **Locus of Control** refers to the extent to which individuals believe that they can control events that affect them. Individuals with a high 'internal locus of control' believe that events result primarily from their own behaviour and actions. Those with a high 'external locus of control' believe that powerful others, fate, or chance primarily determine events.

A positive and lucky UK

In conducting the research into the concept of luck, an overwhelmingly positive UK emerges from the results into all three areas investigated – life satisfaction, locus of control and attitudes to luck.

Despite the portrayal of the UK population as a nation of cynics who complain about everything from the weather, to trains not being on time or bad service in restaurants, UK residents actually express high satisfaction with life, overall contentment with their lot and optimism for the future.

Despite the familiar British stereotype, ultimately the results show that the UK has a 'glass half full' attitude to life and this has an impact on how lucky we perceive ourselves to be.

At the focus groups, it was interesting that there were no differences between the 'lucky' group and the 'unlucky' group in terms of illnesses suffered or difficult circumstances experienced. What differed was how the individuals in each group chose to see the negatives and how this then impacted on their perception of their own luck.

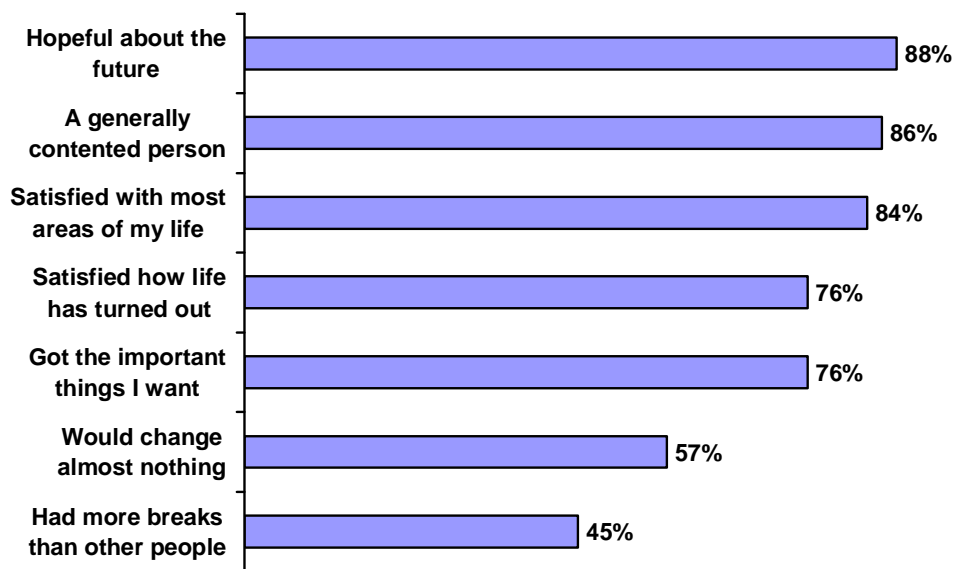
Equally, the 'unlucky' group equated financial gain to luck, whereas the 'lucky' group focused more on family and relationships. Again, the 'lucky' group felt a strong internal sense of control whereas the 'unlucky' group believed themselves to be more at the mercy of outside factors that were beyond their influence.

To a large extent therefore how we define good fortune in life is integral to how we see our luck, and not surprisingly our values and belief system are closely bound up with this. Therefore, drawing from this data, the assumption could be made that by changing your point of view you could in fact change your luck.

Life satisfaction

Between 80 and 90 per cent of those surveyed described themselves as “a generally contented person”, “satisfied with most areas of my life” and “hopeful about the future”, with over half (55 per cent) agreeing with six or seven of the seven positive life satisfaction statements.

Agreement with life satisfaction statements



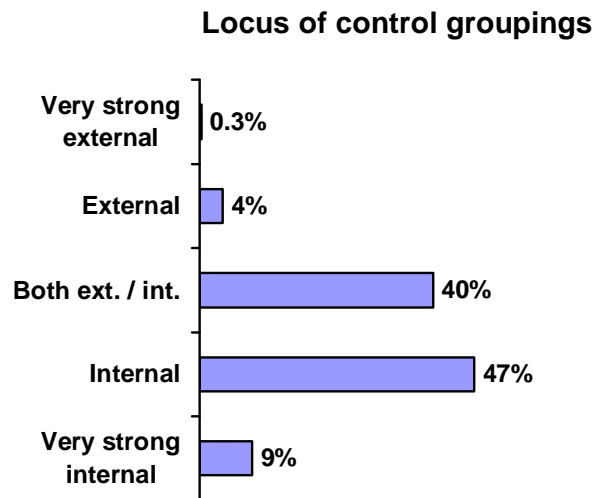
Base: All: 1550

Satisfaction tends to be influenced by a number of factors including personal circumstances – with 60 per cent of those married or cohabiting agreeing with six of the seven statements, compared with 49 per cent of those who are widowed, separated or divorced or single (see later section of this report).

Locus of control

The research also indicates that most people feel largely in control of their own destinies. Most UK adults are inclined towards an internal locus of control, believing that events result primarily from their own behaviour and actions.

Only 4 per cent of those surveyed consider their lives subject to 'external' control, with 56 per cent demonstrating 'internal locus of control'.



Base: All: 1550

Locus of control is also strongly linked to life satisfaction – of those with high life satisfaction scores (agreeing with 6/7 of the statements), 65 per cent have internal or very strong internal scores, and only 1 per cent external – while of those with low life satisfaction scores (agreeing with 0-3 of statements), only 28 per cent have internal or very strong internal locus scores, 12 per cent external.

The demographics of locus of control largely reflect what can be seen from the life satisfaction results with 59 per cent of those married or cohabiting showing internal locus of control, compared with 52 per cent of those who are single.

Luck

This overall positivity is echoed in the attitudes to luck. Two thirds of adults (65 per cent) agree that “generally speaking, I consider myself to be a lucky person”.

Approximately half of these statements received general agreement (by around three-quarters or more of the sample):

Luck statements: general agreement



Base: All: 1550

Perceptions of luck are also related to similar demographics. Luck is more strongly influenced by social grade than the other two subjects, with 75 per cent of ABs considering themselves lucky in life compared with only 60 per cent of DEs. The influence of social grade reflects the ‘gameshow’ society mentioned earlier that we now inhabit. We tend to associate luck with money and the concept becomes a superficial one for those who don’t have it but much more deep for those who do.

Age plays a role with 69 per cent of those aged 55 and above believing themselves to be more fortunate than younger generations. At a younger age, we focus on money more and this can become synonymous with luck but as we become older, we become more reflective and our perception of luck is less diluted by superficial areas of life – focusing more on family, relationships and health.

As with life satisfaction and locus of control, married or cohabiting individuals (70 per cent) are more likely to feel lucky than their single counterparts (63 per cent) and in particular, those who are widowed, divorced or separated (56 per cent).

The importance of a relationship and its impact on our attitudes to luck is particularly interesting. The perception is that 'young, free and single' is the ideal situation, however, the support, companionship and nurturing that a relationship offers determines a higher level of satisfaction in life, and a greater sense of good luck. By facing adversity together, we are able to turn negatives into positives, thus increasing our feeling of being 'lucky'. This demographic is explored more fully in a separate section of this report.

Not unexpectedly, feeling lucky is strongly related to the other two personality areas. Those with internal locus of control are more likely to consider themselves lucky (71 per cent) compared to those with external locus of control (33 per cent).

Luck is strongly related to life satisfaction – 81 per cent of high scorers (6/7) on life satisfaction feel lucky, compared with only 21 per cent of low scorers (0-3).

From this correlation, we can assume if an individual has a positive outlook, they are more likely to perceive themselves as lucky because they will be focusing on the positives in their life, rather than dwelling on the negative.

The results of the research into people's attitudes to life, control and luck also illustrate an interesting paradox. Those with internal locus of control consider themselves to be luckier, which indicates that we believe in creating our own luck and that good things come from within ourselves. What we are saying is 'because I am in control, I can improve my luck'.

Luck in the regions

The regional breakdown of the research findings highlights particularly optimistic and positive parts of the UK, with specific towns and regions ranking high in life satisfaction, internal locus of control and luck compared to others.

The South East and Northern Ireland are the areas which are most satisfied with life. Northern Ireland also scores highest in response to one of the key life satisfaction statements – being the most hopeful about the future – compared to the rest of the UK.

East Anglia has the highest internal locus of control score and the North West is the region that considers itself the luckiest.

At the other end of the scale, Scotland has the lowest satisfaction scores, demonstrates the lowest internal locus of control and considers itself to be the least lucky part of the UK. This reinforces the link between these three characteristics that we saw in the national statistics, although the scores for Scotland on satisfaction and luck are only low in comparison to other regions.

Life satisfaction

The highest life satisfaction scores can be observed in the South East and Northern Ireland, with the lowest in Scotland and the Yorkshire and Humberside region.

The chart over the page shows average number of true responses out of seven).

Average score for life satisfaction



Base: All: 1550

The residents of Brighton emerge as the most satisfied of the 31 towns and cities surveyed, with Cambridge scoring the lowest.

Highest scores	Lowest scores
Brighton – 6.3	Cambridge – 4.2
London – 5.7	Glasgow – 4.5
Liverpool – 5.6	Leeds – 4.5
Leicester – 5.6	Edinburgh – 4.6
Belfast – 5.5	Cardiff – 4.7
Carlisle – 5.5	Birmingham – 4.7

Base: All: 1550

There are a number of factors which can impact on the positivity of a region or town and its attitude to luck. Key factors include regeneration (both commercial and cultural), tourism, sporting success and even location. In the case of Brighton, this high level of satisfaction can be attributed to a number of elements.

Luck in the regions

The city has a lot going for it in terms of great culture, restaurants and nightlife. Its young population and location by the seafront no doubt have an impact on positivity – as would its liberal attitude. Brighton is a cosmopolitan city which is accepting of different lifestyles and it is difficult to be negative in such an open-minded city.

Most regions describe themselves as ‘hopeful about the future’ (86 per cent). This optimism will give a great deal of energy to those towns and cities for years to come, contributing to greater levels of satisfaction and luck in the future.

The most interesting statistic in this area is that, given its political situation, the population of Northern Ireland is the more hopeful about the future than anywhere else in the UK.

I am hopeful about the future



Base: All: 1550

The peace process has clearly played a key role in Northern Ireland’s optimism, leading to a reduced level of violence which has no doubt led to a better quality of life. There is a new-found confidence in the community which has created a more vibrant nightlife, shopping developments and inner city rejuvenation. This in turn has attracted more industry and tourists to Northern Ireland.

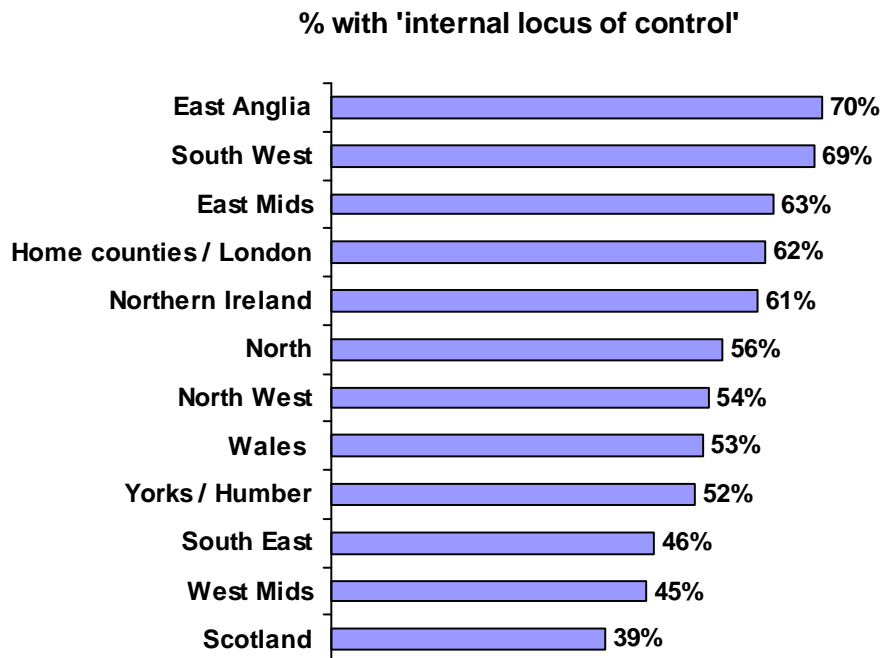
Luck in the regions

In difficult circumstances, it is important to have faith that there is more good than bad in the world, otherwise people would never venture out of bed in the morning. Therefore, it is likely that even before the peace process was underway, the people of Northern Ireland have had to develop a sense of optimism in order to get on with day to day life in the region.

In contrast, the West Midlands displays the least optimism. This could be due to the way in which the region's core motor industry has suffered recently.

Locus of control

The highest internal locus of control scores are shown in East Anglia and the South West, and the lowest in Scotland – while, out of the individual UK towns and cities in which the research was undertaken, the residents of Norwich and Ipswich emerge as having the strongest internal locus of control.

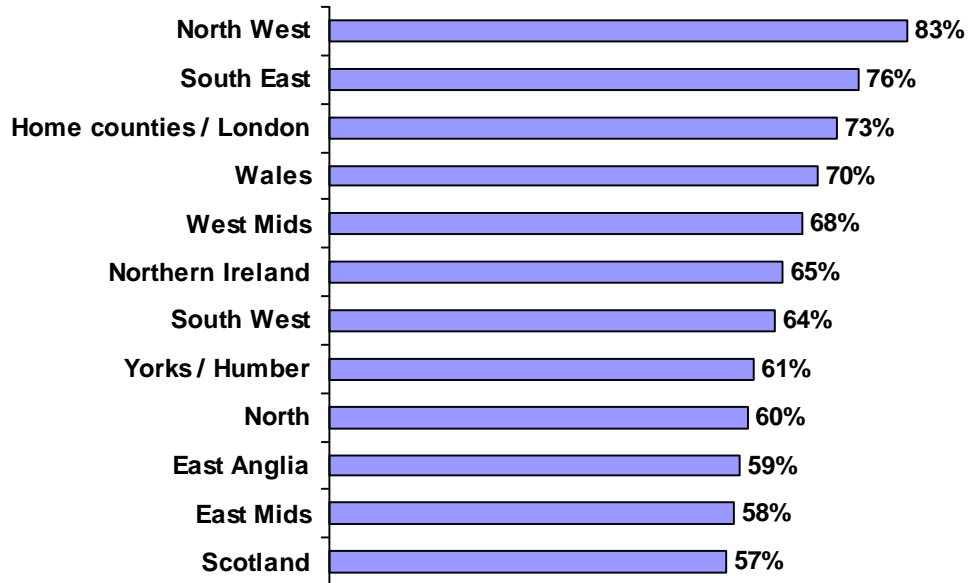


Base: All: 1550

Luck

Those in the North West and South East are most likely to consider themselves lucky.

Generally speaking, I consider myself to be a lucky person



Base: All: 1550

By individual towns and cities, it is once again the residents of Brighton who are likeliest to feel lucky – they nearly all do, reflecting earlier responses.

Highest scores	Lowest scores
Brighton – 93%	Aberdeen – 48%
Liverpool – 87%	Edinburgh – 50%
Reading – 84%	Leicester – 50%
Manchester – 79%	Leeds – 51%
Cardiff – 79%	Middlesbrough – 51%
London – 76%	Nottingham – 55%

This again reinforces the impact of satisfaction with life and locus of control on attitudes to luck. A positive outlook on life results in an individual perceiving themselves as being lucky, by focusing on the positive elements of their situation rather than dwelling on the negative.

Luck in the regions

At the same time, those who have a strong internal locus of control also consider themselves to be luckier because they believe it is within their power to change their luck, rather than being at the mercy of external factors.

Breakdown of town and cities:

Satisfaction (Chart shows average number of 'true' responses out of seven):

City	Score
Brighton	6.3
London	5.7
Leicester	5.6
Liverpool	5.6
Belfast	5.5
Carlisle	5.5
Derby	5.4
Ipswich	5.4
Norwich	5.4
Stoke-on-Trent	5.4
Reading	5.3
Wrexham	5.3
Bristol	5.2
Hull	5.2
Manchester	5.2
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	5.2
Aberdeen	5.1
Middlesbrough	5.1
Plymouth	5.1
Sheffield	5.1
Exeter	4.9
Oxford	4.9
Nottingham	4.8
Southampton	4.8
Wolverhampton	4.8
Birmingham	4.7
Cardiff	4.7
Edinburgh	4.6
Glasgow	4.5
Leeds	4.5
Cambridge	4.2

Luck

(Percentage agreeing with the statement ‘Generally speaking, I consider myself to be a lucky person’):

City	Score
Brighton	93%
Liverpool	87%
Reading	84%
Cardiff	79%
Manchester	79%
London	76%
Glasgow	74%
Stoke-on-Trent	73%
Birmingham	69%
Derby	69%
Carlisle	68%
Sheffield	68%
Plymouth	67%
Exeter	66%
Belfast	65%
Norwich	65%
Hull	64%
Wrexham	61%
Bristol	60%
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	60%
Oxford	60%
Southampton	60%
Wolverhampton	60%
Cambridge	58%
Ipswich	56%
Nottingham	55%
Leeds	51%
Middlesbrough	51%
Edinburgh	50%
Leicester	50%
Aberdeen	48%

'Smug marrieds'

One of the most interesting demographics to come out of the research is the attitudes of married and cohabiting couples – in particular, they score above average on life satisfaction and luck.

Numerous studies have shown that married people tend to live longer than their unmarried counterparts – although interestingly, it has been noted that this protective effect seems to apply to men more than women. Whether or not a couple are married or cohabiting, however, it is apparent that being in a relationship impacts on our life satisfaction and therefore, our attitude to luck.

As we have seen, a positive outlook on life and optimism about the future mean someone is more likely to perceive themselves as lucky – because they will be focusing on the positives in their life, rather than dwelling on the negative.

Life satisfaction and locus of control

The investigation into life satisfaction indicates that levels of satisfaction among respondents tend to be influenced by personal circumstances. Sixty per cent of those married or cohabiting agree with 6/7 statements, compared with 49 per cent of those widowed, separated, divorced and single.

A high proportion of those surveyed (86 per cent) describe themselves as 'generally contented'. However, married or cohabiting couples score above average (89 per cent), compared to 83 per cent of singles.

People who are married or cohabiting are satisfied with their private lives, so they have a more balanced view of life in general, in comparison with 'singletons' – who tend to look to work for their satisfaction. If contentment is not forthcoming from this area, this has an impact on the rest of their lives, whereas couples get their life satisfaction from other sources – like their relationship. They have more bases for self esteem and are able to see any negatives at work – along with their health or their finances – into a wider context, because of the support, companionship and nurturing that a relationship can offer.

People with children are also score above average, with 89 per cent describing themselves as contented. Parents also score above average in response to being hopeful about the future, with 94 per cent agreeing with this statement, compared to the overall response of the sample (86 per cent).

One obvious reason for these high percentages is that having children puts your life in perspective. An individual can be having the worst day at work, for example, but their child can say or do something that can transform how they are feeling at that moment, enabling them to focus on the positive. Equally, having children represents an investment in the future, which translates into a high level of optimism about what lies ahead.

A large proportion of married and cohabiting individuals are hopeful about the future (89 per cent), but singles score even higher than this group at 92 per cent. This compares to only 74 per cent of those who are widowed, separated or divorced.

Personal circumstances also influenced locus of control with 59 per cent of those who are married or cohabiting showing internal locus of control, compared with 52 per cent of those who are single.

Luck

The high scores for life satisfaction and locus of control were also reflected in the responses to the luck questions, echoing the strong link between the three areas.

As detailed in an earlier section of this report, nearly two thirds of adults (65 per cent) agree that 'generally speaking I consider myself to be a lucky person'. Again, those who are married or cohabiting score higher on luck – with 70 per cent more likely to be feeling lucky than those who are single (63 per cent), or particularly those who are widowed, divorced or separated (56 per cent).

This is also reflected in response to the statement 'I am very lucky in life – one way or another, things always seem to go my way', with which around two thirds of adults (66 per cent) agree. Those who are married or cohabiting (71 per cent) are more likely to feel lucky in life than those who are single (61 per cent), or particularly those who are widowed, divorced or separated (57 per cent).

A relationship offers support, companionship and nurturing that enables individuals to face difficult situations together. People are therefore more positive about their circumstances and their ability to cope with what life throws at them. By facing adversity together, they are able to turn negatives into positives, thus increasing their feeling of being 'lucky'.

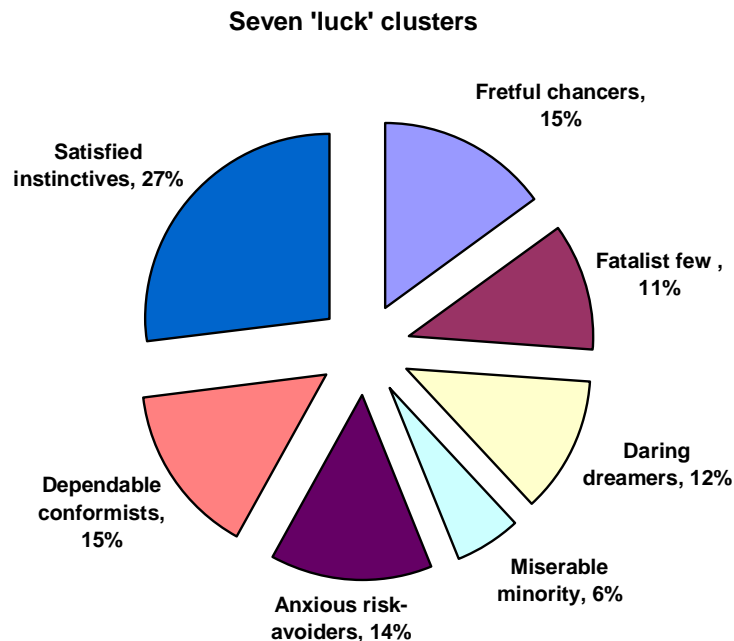
The nation's luck profile

By analysing the responses in the three key areas of life satisfaction, locus of control and luck, it was possible to identify a number of groups within the adult audience who have similar attitudinal characteristics, developing a luck profile of the UK as a result.

A process of factor analysis and cluster analysis provided seven personality types, based on attitudes to life and luck.

The 27 'luck' statements were analysed to look for sets of statements that tend to elicit very similar responses (e.g. "I consider myself to be a lucky person" and "I am very lucky in life" tend to be answered in a very similar way – most of those who agree with one also agree with the other). In this way, a number of statements can be grouped into certain 'themes' – a reduced number of 'factors'. In this instance, a solution that grouped the statements into eight factors was chosen.

The eight factors derived from the luck questions, together with respondents' life satisfaction and locus of control scores, were then analysed further to identify groups ('clusters') of people who gave broadly similar responses – i.e. linked by common attitudes or personality attributes (e.g. cluster 1 generally tends to score above average on factors x, y and z, but below average on factors r, s and t). From a number of possible groupings, a solution was selected that produced seven clusters or attitudinal groups, described below:



Base: All: 1550

- The largest group are the **Satisfied Instinctives**, accounting for just over a quarter (27 per cent) of the population. This group have high life satisfaction and believe themselves to be lucky. Their luck derives from their own efforts and trusting their instincts – although willing to listen, they are slightly cautious about risk and the unfamiliar, but are not superstitious. They are more likely than average to be married or cohabiting and working full-time. They account for the majority of respondents in the North West and in Liverpool and Stoke-on-Trent.
- **Dependable Conformists** account for 15 per cent of the population. They are reasonably solid and dependable, reject the unknown, and prefer to stick with the known and the more conventional. They are reasonably satisfied, controlled, realistic, not superstitious – but maybe worry a bit about their life. They are particularly likely to be older and upmarket. This is the largest cluster in Belfast.
- **Fretful Chancers** also account for 15 per cent of the population. They do not mind taking risks and are prepared to try, and stick with, the unknown or unconventional. They are satisfied with their lot, optimistic, feel in control of their destiny, and have a strong belief in their own instincts and abilities – but can get anxious and stressed. This tends to be a younger and more upmarket group. This is the largest cluster in East Anglia and is heavily represented in Aberdeen and Leicester.
- **Anxious Risk-Avoiders** represent 14 per cent of the population. They are very dissatisfied with life and do not feel in control of their own destiny. They also tend to feel that they are unlucky in life, avoid risk and get anxious about it. This tends to be a downmarket group, often working part time or not currently working. This cluster tends to be over-represented in Scotland, West Midlands, South East and the North.
- **Daring Dreamers** (12 per cent of the population) do not mind taking risks and are prepared to try the unconventional and unknown. They feel quite positive and have some belief in their own luck – but they have an unrealistic approach to life. This tends to be a younger group. The towns and cities with the highest proportion of this cluster are Brighton, Derby, Plymouth, Oxford, Carlisle and Nottingham.

The nation's luck profile

- The **Fatalist Few** represent 11 per cent of the population. They do not feel fully in control or have faith in their own instincts, so tend to be superstitious and do not feel lucky. They accept this as part of life, however, and are fairly relaxed and laid back. This is again a slightly more downmarket group. These are slightly over-represented in Yorkshire and Humberside and Wales – the towns and cities with the highest proportion of this cluster are Leeds, Birmingham, Reading, Cardiff and Glasgow.
- The smallest group is the **Miserable Minority** (6 per cent). They think negatively, are generally dissatisfied with life, are superstitious and do not consider themselves lucky. They are not guided by their own instincts and believe they have little control over events that affect them. Again, a downmarket group, they are often single or widowed, separated or divorced, work part-time or not currently working. This is the largest cluster in Wales, and by town or city, in Wrexham, Leeds and Cambridge.

About the research

The study was conducted by ICM Research (FieldWork UK) among 1,550 adults on 14-17 June 2006. Approximately 50 interviews were conducted in each of the 31 towns and cities.

The sample is broadly representative of the UK adult population (aged 16+) by main demographic criteria.

The towns where interviews were conducted are as follows:

- North West: Liverpool, Manchester
- Yorkshire / Humberside: Leeds, Sheffield, Hull
- South West: Bristol, Plymouth, Exeter
- North: Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Middlesbrough, Carlisle
- South East: Southampton, Brighton
- West Midlands: Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Stoke-on-Trent
- Home Counties & London: Oxford, Reading, London
- East Midlands: Nottingham, Derby, Leicester
- East Anglia: Norwich, Ipswich, Cambridge
- Wales: Cardiff, Wrexham
- Scotland: Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen
- Northern Ireland: Belfast

Psychological analysis was led by Dr Linda Papadopoulos, psychologist and author, who acted as a research consultant.

The research programme was managed by David Burton Associates, an independent research company: www.davidburtonassociates.com.