

Public Toilets Consumer Research Campaign

December 2021

Three quarters of Londoners buy a coffee to use a store's toilets – rather than hunt for a public WC, according to research.

A survey quizzed 2,000 adults on the state of their local public loos and discovered that overall, more than one in three (34 per cent) aren't happy with the facilities in their nearest town or city.

But 77 per cent of Londoners have struggled to locate their nearest toilet when in need, with 70 per cent preferring to buy something from a nearby coffee shop than use a free public loo.

Meanwhile, those in Oxford are the happiest with the state of their city's public toilets, with 71 per cent satisfied with the number of toilets available.

And 81 per cent are pleased with the accessibility of the facilities.

However, half of Mancunians claimed the cleanliness of the toilets in the north west city are not up to scratch, with 69 per cent encountering an unflushed loo and 55 per cent a lack of toilet paper.

Overall, more than three quarters (76 per cent) of all adults admitted they will only use a public toilet if it is completely unavoidable.

Robert Guice, executive vice president for Citron Hygiene, which commissioned the research, said: "Washroom hygiene has never been more important, and it is clear many towns and cities across the country need to do more to provide a better public toilet experience.

"When we are out and about, we shouldn't dread having to find our nearest facilities, and when we do find one, the state of them shouldn't make us think twice about using them."

When asked why they would use a toilet in a hospitality setting, like a café or fast-food restaurant, 70 per cent claimed it is because of superior cleanliness.

And 37 per cent will use these facilities as they have better hand washing stations.

It also emerged 58 per cent have not been able to use a public toilet because they didn't have any change to hand, with just over 30p considered to be a fair amount to pay for the facility.

Proper maintenance and repairs, having a regular cleaning schedule and more being available are the top aspects considered to improve public toilets.

And for a third, they would like to see more investment in touch free technology in their local toilets – such as flushes, taps and hand dryers.

The survey, carried out via OnePoll, also found 76 per cent believe a good quality public toilet is something their area can be proud of.

And with that in mind, those polled issued a rallying cry to local councils – as 82 per cent want more investment to ensure their public toilets are clean and safe.

A medical condition, such as bladder weakness, has made being able to access public toilets even more important for 32 per cent.

Whereas, for almost one in four (23 per cent) public toilets took on an extra importance when they were potty training a child.

Robert Guice, executive vice president for Citron Hygiene added: "Despite often being overlooked, public toilets are a really important aspect to each town and city centre.

"Washrooms will come under high levels of scrutiny from the public as we continue to adapt to new ways of living post-pandemic. Everyone deserves to be able to feel clean and safe when they need to use these facilities and local councils must ensure that their spaces are well-maintained and properly stocked in order to provide a safe and hygienic environment."

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About Citron Hygiene

Citron Hygiene is a leading provider of commercial washroom services. With over 45 years of extensive industry experience, we are headquartered in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, with offices across Canada, the United States, and the UK.