

MAKE

YOURSELF

AT HOME

The IKEA Life at
Home Report 2022



ABOUT THE LIFE AT HOME REPORT

Every year we speak to people all over the world to find out what life at home means today – and how we can help make it better. For the 2022 Report, we made home visits in Germany, India, Japan, UK, and USA. We also ran a survey of over 37,000 people across 37 countries, all to find out how we can make home our own.



Tomohiro (Japan)



Marqus (USA)



Karin (Germany)



Mehek (India)



Abi (UK)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Home is a place to feel like ourselves

During times of deep uncertainty, we continue to turn to home as a place of comfort and security.

Around

4 in 10

people feel more positive about their home compared to this time last year, amid shared concerns about the economy, household finances and climate change.

We're more likely to feel good about home when it reflects our personality.

Our ability to see ourselves reflected in our home is shaped by the things we own, how we use the space we have, and who we share it with – all of which are also the biggest sources of regular household tension.

Today, only about

6 in 10

of us feel our home reflects who we are. We don't think that's good enough.

None of us should feel out of place in our own home. Let's share solutions that ease the stresses and celebrate the different ways we live at home, so that we can all feel like ourselves when we walk through the front door.



Abi (UK)

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What do you see when you look around your home?

A 20-year-old trophy from your under-12 footballing days? Your grandmother's handknitted doll covering the spare toilet roll? The chaos of a make-believe pirate battle yet to be tidied away?

What about the spaces you love (and love to hate), like your favourite snuggle-spot on the sofa or the spare-room dumping ground you can't bear to look at?

"A home is an extension of one's personality; we can see their lifestyles through their ornaments, their choice of sofa, TV... A person's home is something that they configure to reflect who they are."

TOM, UK

Do you see yourself at home?

Whatever you see matters – our latest research has found that when the space we live in reflects our unique identity, we're more likely to feel positive about our life at home.

But not all of us feel this way.

Only about

6 in 10

people say their home is a reflection of who they are. This drops even further to just half of all young people.

And that matters more than ever. For many, home continues to be a place of comfort and security – somewhere we can retreat to and recharge to deal with life's challenges. This is especially important in light of people's top concerns today, including the economy and climate change, all of which impact on everyday life and our experiences at home.



Tomohiro (Japan)

Around

4 in 10

of us feel more positive about our home compared to this time last year, and just over **1 in 10** people feel more negative. So there's clearly more to be done to ensure that home is the sanctuary we all need and deserve.

The top global concerns are:

#1: The national economy (66%)

#2: Household finances (61%)

#3: The impact of climate change (56%)



Abi's sister, Hannah (UK)

The good news is that there are clear ways to dial up the positivity, and it starts with us.

When we feel our home reflects our identity, we're

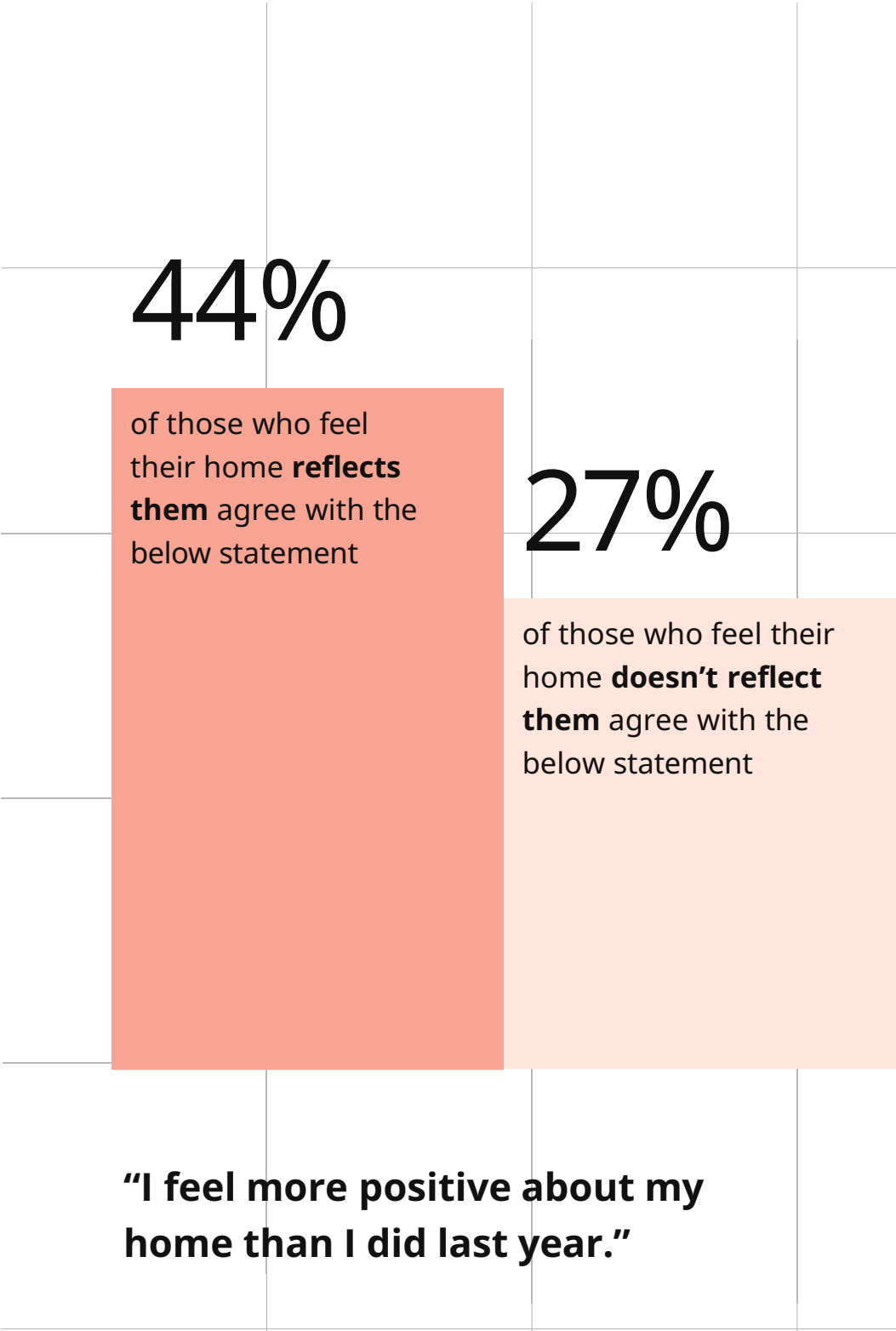
1.5 times

more likely to feel more positive about it.

Having a home that reflects us helps us fall more deeply in love with it. We're able to feel happier, despite the chaos that surrounds us.

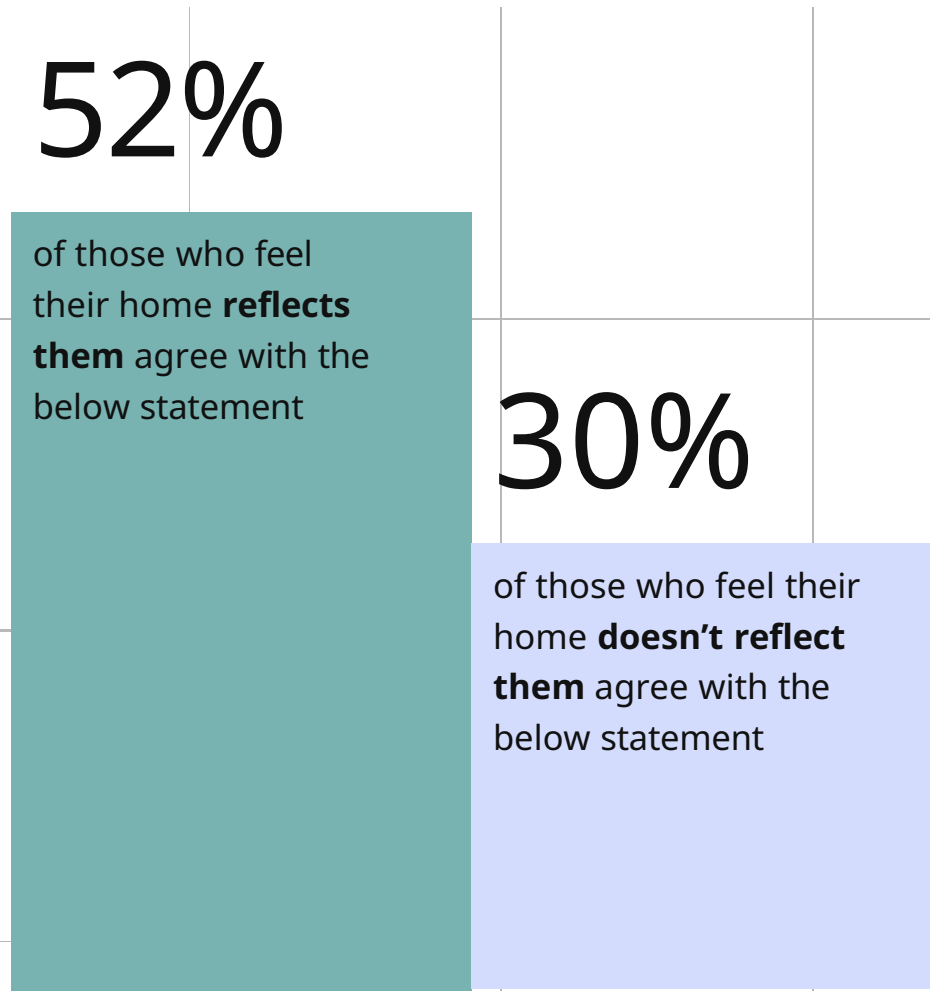
"I really like it when I have things in my home which reflect my hobbies and interests. It's a reflection of me and I want people to see that the first time they walk into the flat."

ABI, UK



If our home reflects us, we’re almost twice as likely to believe it’s a source of mental wellbeing.

The things we own, the space we have available and our relationships are important ways for us to feel our home reflects who we are.



“My home is a source of mental wellbeing.”

“It’s only been a few months, but it’s a room that I love and I’ve collected a lot of things and built it up. It’s like a castle.”

ISHIDA, JAPAN

But home can also be one of the biggest sources of tension.

As many as **4 in 5** people regularly feel frustrated at home, often because it’s untidy, there are household chores to get done, or there’s just too much clutter.



Marqus (USA)

“I love a clean space. I can’t function if there’s clutter around me.”

MARQUS, USA

It’s no wonder there’s a persistent gap between how we want to feel at home and the reality of how it actually feels for us to live there.

For example, **89%** of people say it’s important to experience enjoyment at home. But only **56%** of people say home is where they experience enjoyment the most.

With the cost of living on the rise, many people anticipate cutting back on the expense of hobbies and interests outside home, so we’re likely to spend even more time in our houses, apartments and rooms over the coming year.



Abi with her sister, Hannah (UK)

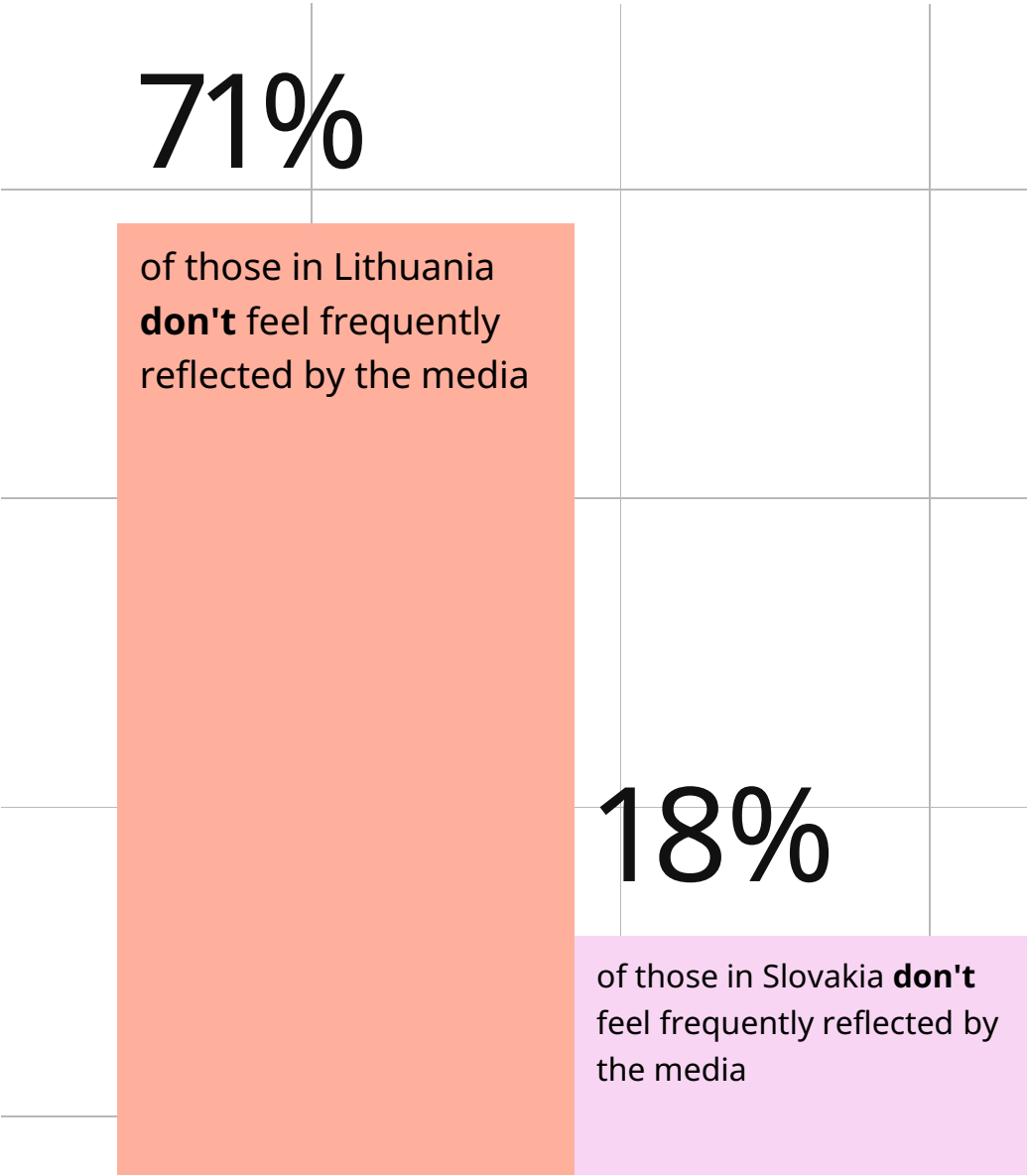
Stretched household budgets are also impacting big life decisions and who we might live with as a result.

Roughly
1 in 10
people say that they expect their family plans, such as getting married or having children, to be negatively impacted by the increased cost of living.

Against this backdrop, it's important to create a home where we can truly be ourselves. One that's right for us and those we share our homes with.

It's why we crave home improvement inspiration that feels authentic, from real people in real homes.

48%
of people globally say they don't feel the media frequently reflects the way they live at home.



FEEL
FEEL
FEEL

LIKE

OURSELVES



Marqus (USA)

None of us should
feel out of place in
our own home.

This report explores the many different
and authentic ways we're living at home,
so that we can all feel like ourselves
when we walk through the front door.

CHAPTER 01:

What makes us feel at home?

FEEL
FEEL
FEEL
AT
HOME



Karin (Germany)

Home, sweet home



Marqus with his wife, Eva, and their dog, Carrie (USA)

Even with everything the world is throwing at us, home remains an important space to relax and recharge.

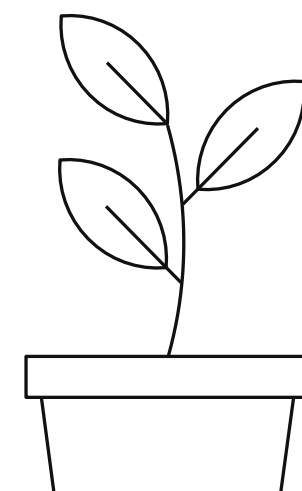
It's a place some of us are desperate to spend more time in – even if that means telling a white lie!

Nearly

1 in 4

people have faked plans so they can stay at home. This increases to about **1 in 3** among young people, and goes up to around **2 in 5** among people living in the Philippines.

It's where we feel free to be our weird and wonderful selves.



More than

1 in 10

people have talked to their plants in the last 12 months, rising to **1 in 4** in India.

While some of us feel more positive about our home than last year, we're still realistic. We know it's not perfect all the time. Not least when we're trying to snatch forty winks or craving an arm around our shoulder.

"Home provides me with protection. It is like a tree shielding me from all the problems."

MEHEK, INDIA

Roughly

1 in 4

people confess to having slept somewhere other than their own bed while at home in the last year.

1 in 5 people have felt lonely at home. This rises to more than **1 in 4** among single parents.



Understanding our seven emotional needs at home

For many years, at IKEA, we've been exploring what creates the 'feeling of home'.

We found that no matter where or how we live, it all boils down to the same essential ingredients: a generous slug of security and comfort, big handfuls of belonging and ownership, and a healthy dollop of privacy.

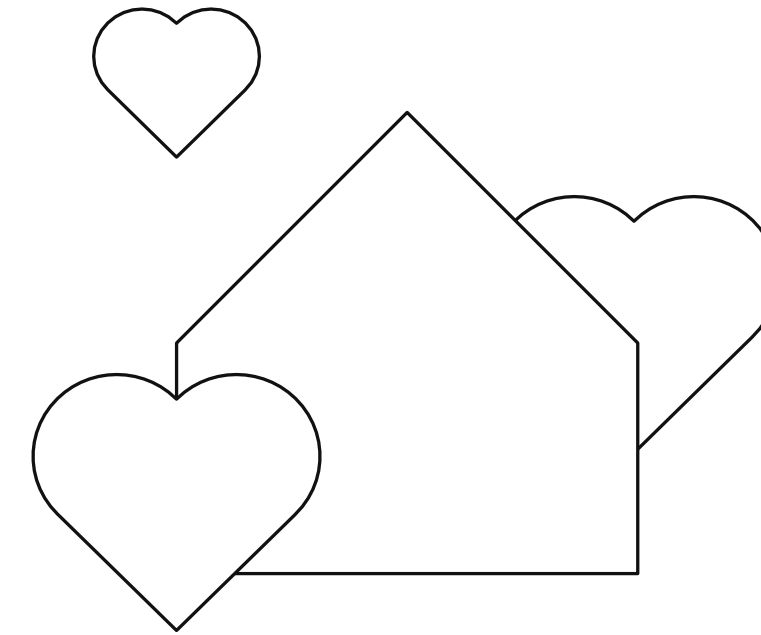
But needs change, and our latest research sniffed out two more must-haves.

When the pandemic uprooted our lives, we asked home to work even harder. As a result, enjoyment and accomplishment became new 'emotional needs' for our homes to meet.

We feel enjoyment when our home gives us the mental and physical space to enjoy fun activities, be entertained and follow our passions.

"You need to enjoy being in the home, I would probably tag enjoyment into everything else we do. Generally, I still see the home as quite functional, eat, sleep, play, but I'd tag doing all those things with enjoyment."

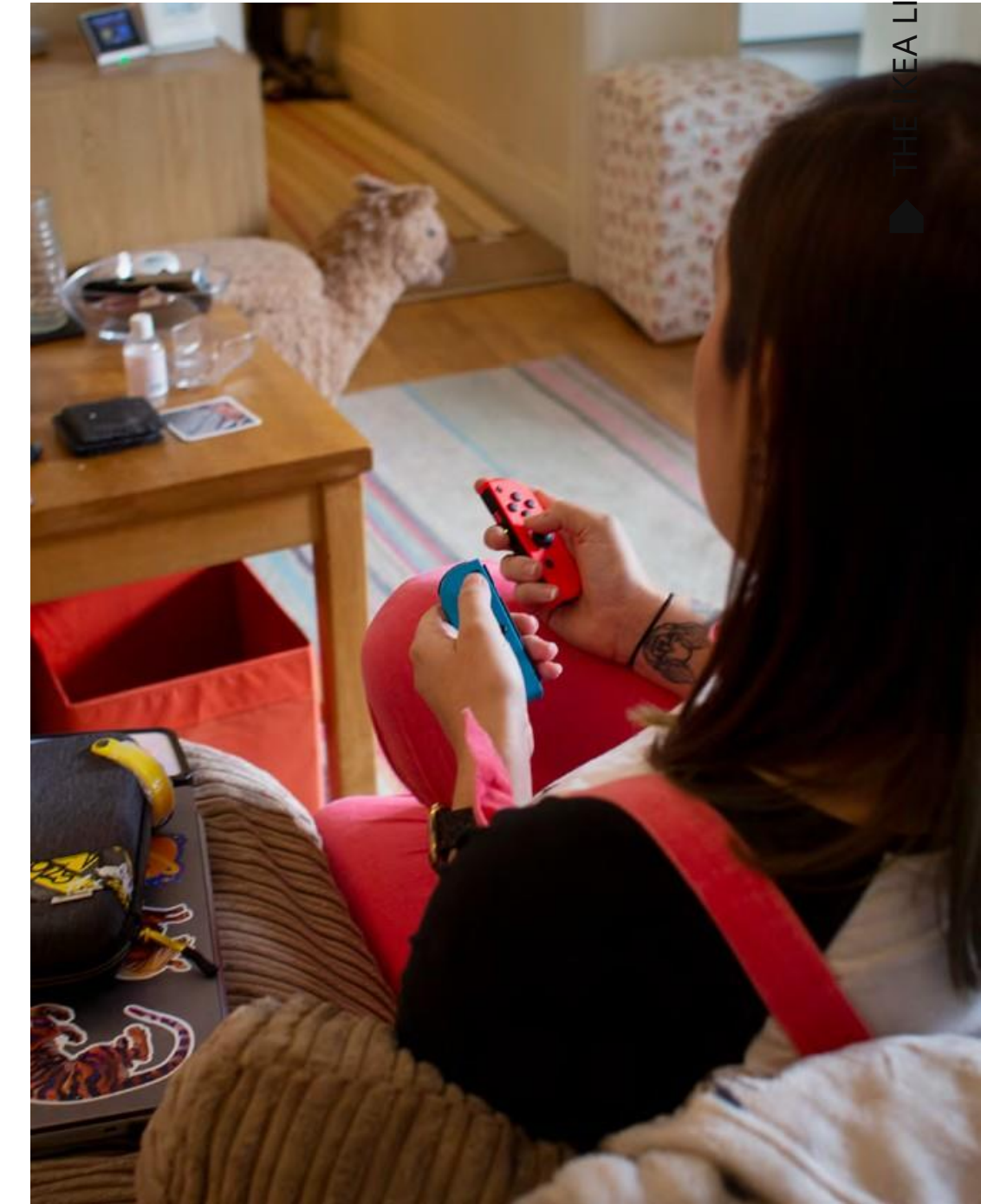
ANISH, UK



We feel accomplishment when we get that kick of productivity and effectiveness, whether that's from work, study or our personal hobbies – anything from hosting a legendary dinner party to finishing a fiendish jigsaw.

"In my flat I can finally be my own adult, I have my own four walls, I can take care of myself, be a part of society while making my own decisions."

JELDOS, GERMANY



Abi (UK)

Our homes can sometimes miss the mark

Even when we look to the future and think about our ideal home, we often picture a place that delivers on our need for accomplishment and enjoyment.

A place where we can cast off our shoes, wipe the stresses from our minds and zero in on the things that bring us joy and satisfaction.

54%

believe the most important aspect in an ideal home is the ability to unwind and relax. This is most important to people in Japan (**66%**), but least important for people in India (**22%**).

However, for all the love we heap on our home, it doesn't always step up to the mark for us.

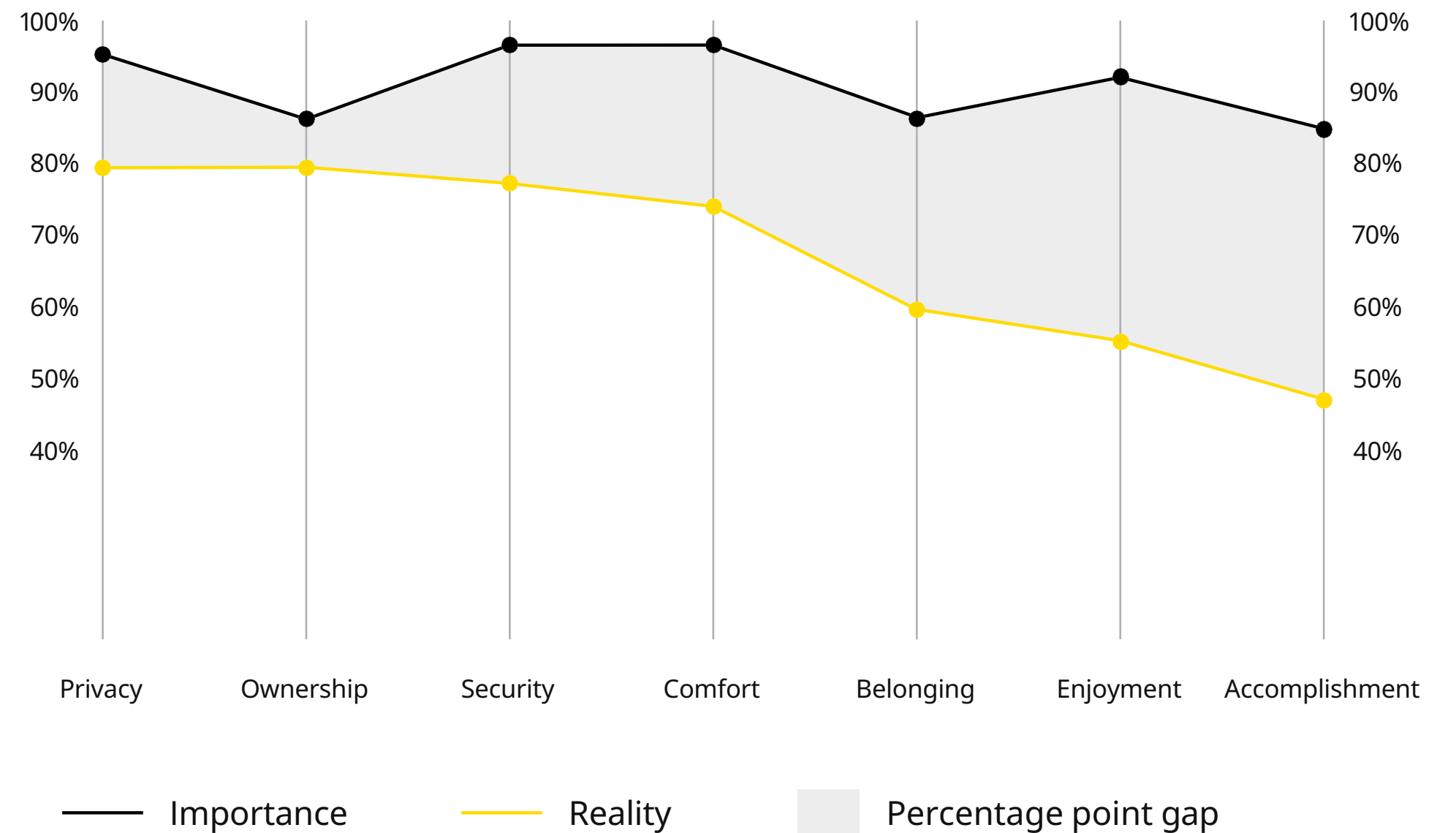
Wherever and however we live, there's a persistent gap between what we want from our home and what it actually provides, especially when it comes to those all-important new needs of enjoyment and accomplishment.

This gap differs depending on where in the world we live.

When it comes to enjoyment, **72%** of people in Japan agree that their home is the place that provides this the most. Spain lies at the other end of the spectrum, with only **43%** agreeing.

59%

of people in Thailand say that their home is the place they feel the greatest sense of accomplishment – the most of any country surveyed. This compares to just **29%** in South Korea, who were the least likely to agree.



72% of people in Japan agree that their home is the place that provides the most enjoyment

versus just **43%** of people in Spain



Tomohiro (Japan)

THE

MOST
MOST
MOST

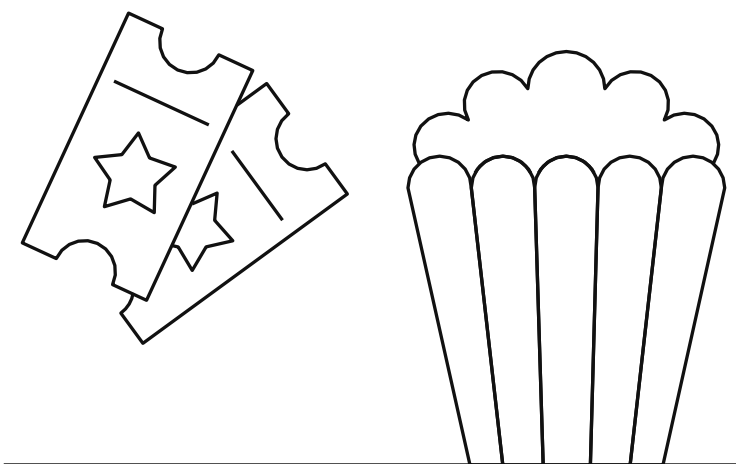
ENJOYMENT

A retreat back home will increase its importance

As belts tighten around the world, it's a fair bet that we'll spend more time at home to save on expenses.

Which means that if the enjoyment and accomplishment gaps persist, it might really start to bite over the months and years ahead.

Hobbies outside of the home is the area most of us think will take the biggest hit – even more so than the stability of our work.



43%

expect their hobbies and interests outside of home to be negatively impacted if the cost of living significantly increases.

21%

expect their work stability will be negatively impacted.



Karin (Germany)

After long stretches of being restricted within our four walls due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many of us feel like we've only just been able to get back to our hobbies and interests outside of our rooms, houses, or apartments. But as many of us cut our outgoings, another retreat back home is seemingly inevitable and we may truly begin to feel the effects of spaces that don't meet all our functional and emotional needs.

So, whether we get our kicks from cross stitch or our fun from fitness, we need affordable ways to enjoy and accomplish them at home in the future.

The many different home experiences

Of course, we don't always get to do what we really want at home.

Sometimes it feels like our hands are tied. So it's perhaps no surprise that the people we live with, and the places we live in, have a big say over whether or not our home meets our emotional needs.

People living with housemates or family have the biggest at-home deficits in enjoyment, accomplishment and, perhaps surprisingly, belonging.

Those living in halls of residences, flat shares, rented rooms or parental homes struggle to get a sense of accomplishment at home. That's bad news for anyone trying to study or work from home.

Whether we own our homes also impacts how well our emotional needs are met.

9 in 10

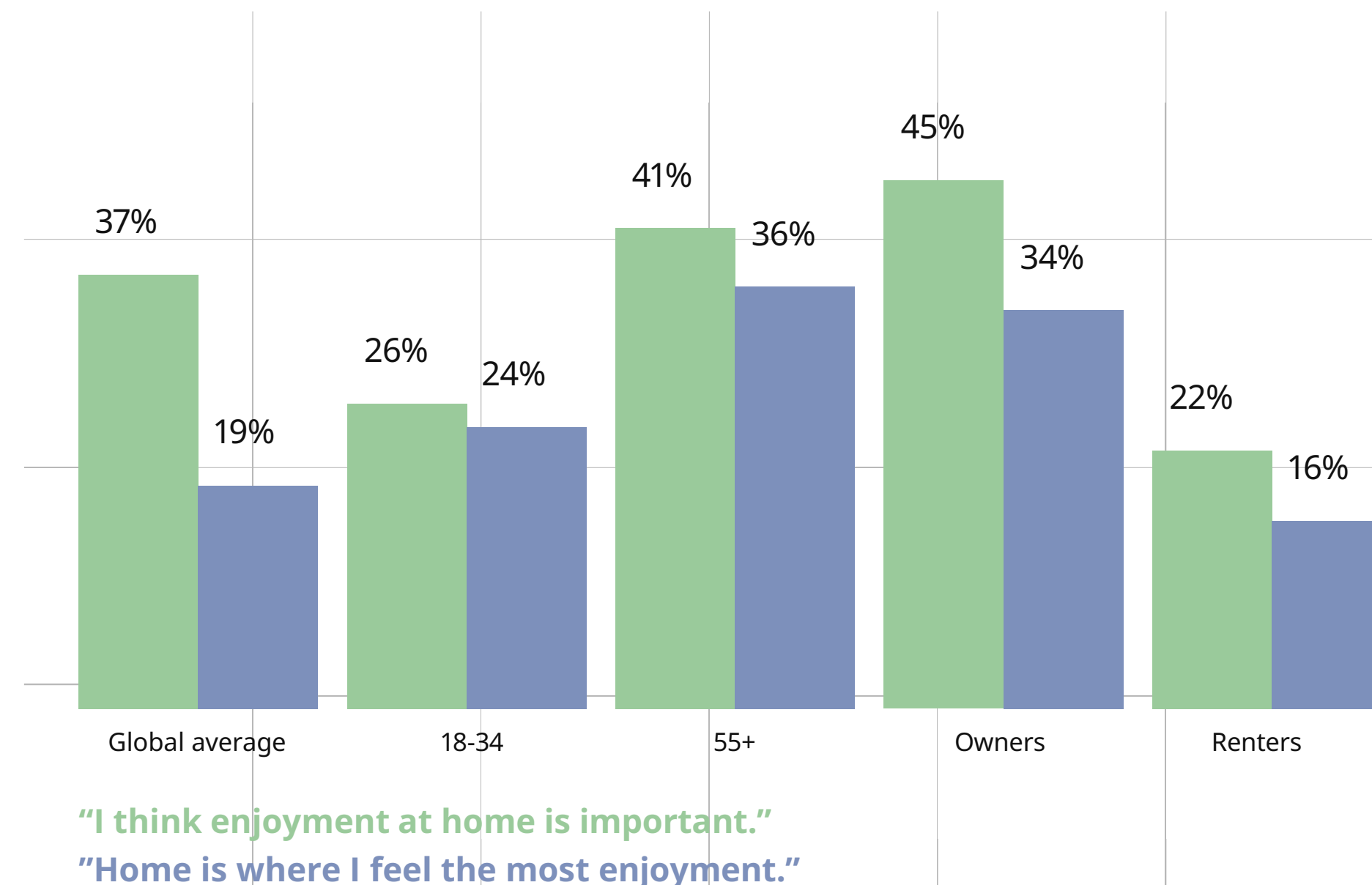
people say it's important to feel enjoyment at home, but only **5 in 10** get it. This increases to **8 in 10** amongst homeowners.

For those of us feeling gloomy about these needs gaps, we should be reassured that the future looks brighter.

As we get older, we tend to establish more control over our home – most likely because we own it, or our relationships change. In fact, compared to all other age groups, it's older people who are most likely to say they are in control of how their home is organised and looks. All of which helps close those gaps and makes us feel more at home.

While the youngest and oldest age groups both see enjoyment as equally important (**88%**), it's the older group that has this need met best at home.

There's a similar difference between owners and renters, with those who own their home more likely to experience the most enjoyment within it, compared to those who are renting.





Marqus (USA)

AFFECTION

FOR OUR

HOMES HOMES HOMES

We know things aren't perfect, either inside or outside the front door.

But we have a blossoming affection for our home which, as we're about to see, can flourish still further if we invest a touch of ourselves into it.

CHAPTER 02:

Creating a home that reflects us

HOME

REFLECTS
REFLECTS
REFLECTS

US



Tomohiro (Japan)

Expressing yourself at home is good for you



Karin (Germany)

At its best, home acts like a mirror to our identity.

In practice, this means that when we look around our home we see our unique personality reflected back. Whether it's through photos of past adventures or a shrine to family ancestors, what matters to us is represented across our living space.

58%

of people agree that their home reflects who they are.

Those who feel their home reflects their identity are

1.5 times

more likely to feel more positive about them.

"My friends would say this is a very 'Chris' flat."

CHRIS, UK



Karin (Germany)

"When someone comes in here they know that Karin lives here. You see Frank Zappa everywhere – a pity he died so early. His music accompanied me since I was 18 or 17."

KARIN, GERMANY

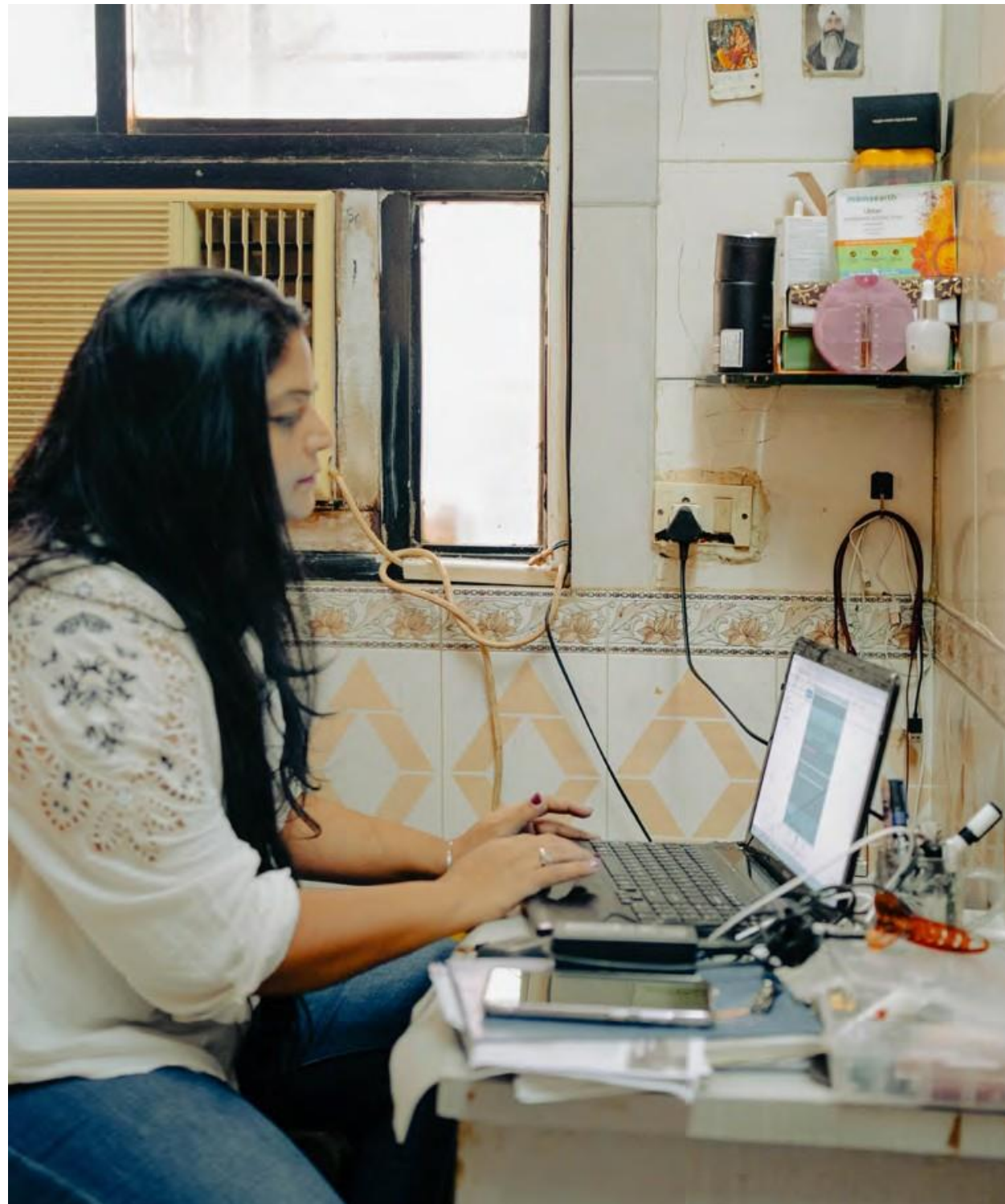
The cherry on top is that when our home reflects us, they're better for us, too.

Those who say their home reflects them are almost **twice** as likely to agree that it's also a source of positive mental wellbeing.

52% of those who agree their home reflects them believe their home also supports their mental wellbeing. This drops to **30%** among those who don't think their home reflects them.

The uneven reflection of home

Who we are and where we live shape how much our home reflects us.



Mehek (India)

Only about
6 in 10
people say their
home is a reflection
of who they are.

The older we get, the
more we see ourselves
in our home:

Only
half
of young people feel
their home reflects
them, rising to almost
two-thirds of over 55s.

Women feel better
reflected than men:

62%
of women feel their
home reflects them,
but only **54%** of men.

Homeowners more
so than renters:

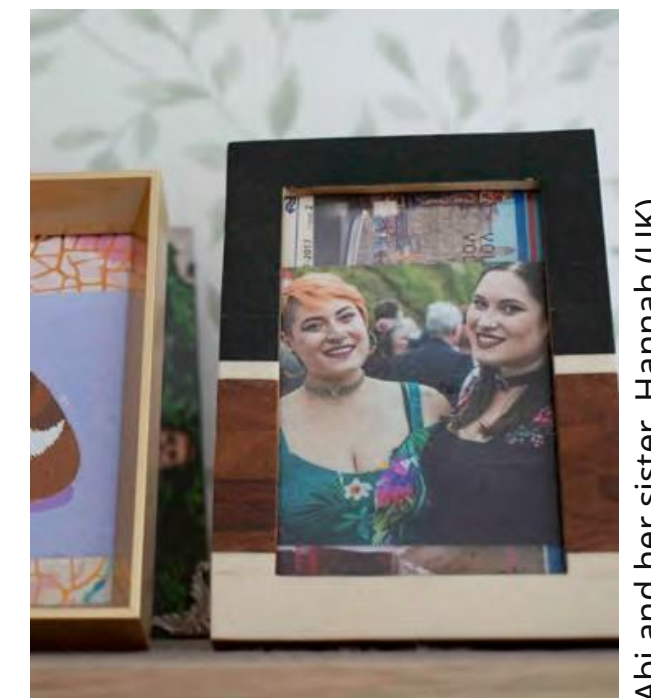
62%
of homeowners say
their home reflects
their identity, dropping
to **42%** among those
renting rooms.

Even our country
changes our experience:

69%
of people in Malaysia
and the Philippines feel
their home reflects who
they are, versus only **51%**
in the UK, **37%** in Japan
and **23%** in Slovakia.

And our level of income
has a big impact too:

63%
of people on high incomes
feel their home reflects
them, versus only **56%** of
those on lower incomes.



Abi and her sister, Hannah (UK)

The media doesn't always reflect our lives at home

How do we create a home that shows off our true, fabulous selves, regardless of our living and earning status?

It can be tough to find the inspiration, especially when our home lives aren't represented in the media.

The media often depicts homes that society deems 'ideal', but this doesn't resonate with many of us.

48%

of people say their lives at home aren't frequently represented in the media.



"I don't feel represented at all... as a single gay man in his 40s I don't ever see that in an advert... we try and celebrate singledom but it's not an aspirational thing for your home."

CHRIS, UK

MEET SIETSKE GERLA

How can you use interior design to help express your identity at home?

Sietske Gerla, an interior design manager at IKEA, offers advice for finding your style through a common thread in your favourite objects.

"I see interior design as a way to create space for the things you love and that make you happy. When home reflects your identity, it's because you feel able to do the things that are important to you.

If you struggle to know what your interior design style is, then collect a few items that mean a lot to you and have a look for the common thread – maybe it's a certain kind of colour palette or they connect with nature. Then ask yourself, is this something I've always been drawn to or is it because it's trendy?



I encourage you to think long term about your interior design, not just what's fashionable now – it will reflect your personality better and it's cost conscious too.

Then there are a few simple tricks to changing things up for the seasons or holidays in simple and affordable ways. Buying fabric by the metre instead of getting new tablecloths, for example, means that you can reuse the fabric in lots of fun ways – maybe your kids could build a tent!"

SPOTLIGHT

Living *with* yourself

Living alone has historically been portrayed negatively, often associated with isolation and a lack of companionship.

But as many as **13%** of people we surveyed said they have decided to live alone in the last year. For many people, it can be a liberating experience that allows them to focus on their own needs.

This is exactly what we heard from Karin, 64, from Germany. Now living solo after previously living with family, Karin explained that she has a newfound appreciation for the extra space to concentrate on herself:

"In my past, my home was very functional, I was less concerned with taking care of myself, I didn't take my home very seriously, I didn't have any decorations, no plants, no important objects. Today, that has changed because you are calmer and spend more time at home, you no longer have a partner to live up to. Today I am completely different and place a lot of emphasis on emotional values in my home and take care of every detail."

KARIN, GERMANY



TAKE CARE

OF EVERY

DETAIL DETAIL



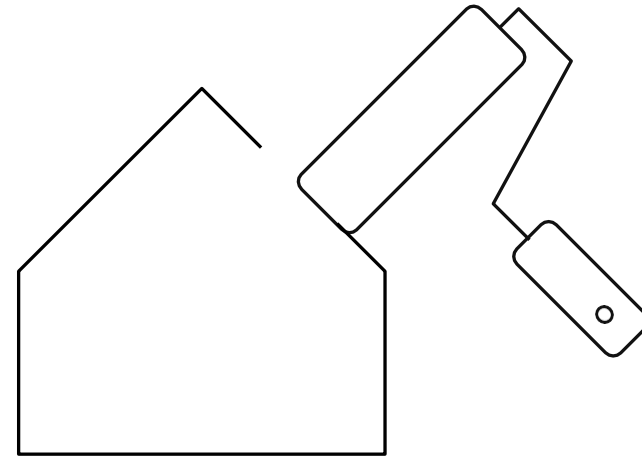
Karin (Germany)

We want inspiration from real people in real homes

To make changes in our home, we first need to be shown what's possible. For this, we seek inspiration from the people we know and trust.

When shown a list of common sources of home inspiration – including social media and TV shows – more than **1 in 4** of us stated that we use 'none of these' to spark our imaginations. This highlights that many of us struggle to identify with what's typically deemed home inspiration.

When we do get inspired, seeing what real people have achieved fires us up to follow their lead. It not only provides us with ideas for what can be done, but it also gives us the confidence that we need to get it done – one small change at a time.



People are most inspired by:

#1: TV home renovation shows (24%)

#2: Physical home furnishing stores (22%)

#3: Friends' homes (19%)

"It would be nice to get ideas pushed to you on what you could do realistically – ideas about how to merge family life into your home."

ANISH, UK

However, our sources of inspiration differ depending on our age.

When we're older, we're more likely to feel inspired by TV home-makeover shows, physical stores and magazines. When we're younger, we're most inspired by our neighbours' and friends' homes, and are more likely to find inspiration through social media and podcasts.



Abi (UK)

FIND THAT INSPIRATIONAL

SPARK
SPARK
SPARK

Karin (Germany)

When we find that inspirational spark, when our individuality seems to seep out of every corner of every room, we dote on our beautiful home – and it nourishes us in return.

And, as it turns out, it might be easier to create our ideal home than we realise.

CHAPTER 03:

The power of much-loved possessions

POWER
POWER
POWER



OF

POSSESSIONS

Things that matter, matter



No matter how head-over-heels in love we are with our life partner or the cute, new, family puppy, it's what we have in our homes, rather than who, that most determines how much of ourselves we see around us.

Whether it's furniture or fridge magnets, our possessions become memory-filled scrap books, celebrating our unique sense of self and serving a higher purpose than that for which they were designed.

42%

of people say it's things they've bought themselves that make home reflect who they are, while only **32%** say it's the people they live with.

"It's only been a few months, but it's a room that I love and I've collected a lot of things and built it up. It's like a castle."

ISHIDA, JAPAN

However, who we live with does impact our priorities.

For those living alone, with family, or with housemates, meaningful possessions people have bought themselves are especially important.

For those living with a partner or children, the people they live with are what matters most.

For those living with grandchildren or siblings, having space for their needs and interests is most important.

But right across the board, our treasured 'stuff' is consistently one of the three biggest factors in turning a home into our home.

"I enjoy making model automobiles. I put them on display. I also like to collect high-end commercially available miniature cars, which I currently display alongside my own creations. They are so important that I don't want them to be touched."

TOMOHIRO, JAPAN

We want to be reminded of special moments

Almost 1 in 3 of us say possessions that help us recall memories and experiences are important to make home reflect who we are.

When we put our most treasured objects on show, they connect us with the cultures, communities and traditions we're proud to identify with.

In India, we found commitment to religion is a key part of many people's sense of identity. In India, we found a commitment to religion is a key part of many people's sense of identity. For many, it's customary to give temples and shrines pride of place in the home, further reflecting the part of their identity that's rooted in their religion.

"My favourite object in the corner is this temple... it is a special space and a special part of my day."

MEHEK, INDIA



In Japan, we spoke to people who saw home furnishings as beloved items, often passed down through generations. For them, furnishings act as a constant in their homes and lives, kept through every house move until the items eventually fall apart.

For those of us far from our places of birth, the possessions we display are like a red thread linking us to distant times and places.



"All the things that are in my flat are memorabilia from my holidays, often in Scandinavia, or from concerts and festivals"

KARIN, GERMANY

The power of possessions seeps into furniture too

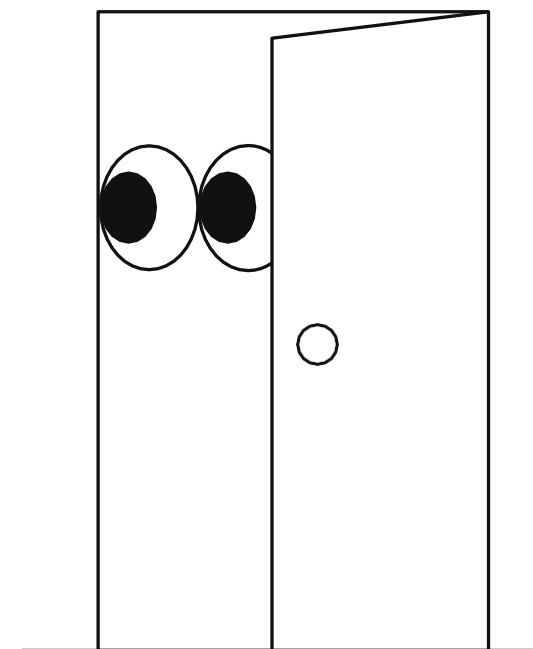
It isn't only the keepsakes and trinkets dotted around our homes that reflect our identities; their emotional charge seeps into the furniture that displays them.

When it's stuffed with trophies, even the old bookcase can enhance our feelings of accomplishment. And a rickety table adorned with favourite holiday snaps becomes an extension of that best summer ever.

"I have a glass cabinet from IKEA where I display my favourite things, such as DJ equipment, stereos, figurines and cameras. I see a lot of things I like on display; it boosts my daily motivation."

HIGUCHI, JAPAN

Knowing that our possessions speak volumes about our personality might explain why **1 in 20** of us admit having looked through other people's home storage in the last year without telling them...



India is the nosiest nation, where peeking in drawers and cupboards increases **threefold**.



Tomohiro (Japan)



Possessions can be a source of tension

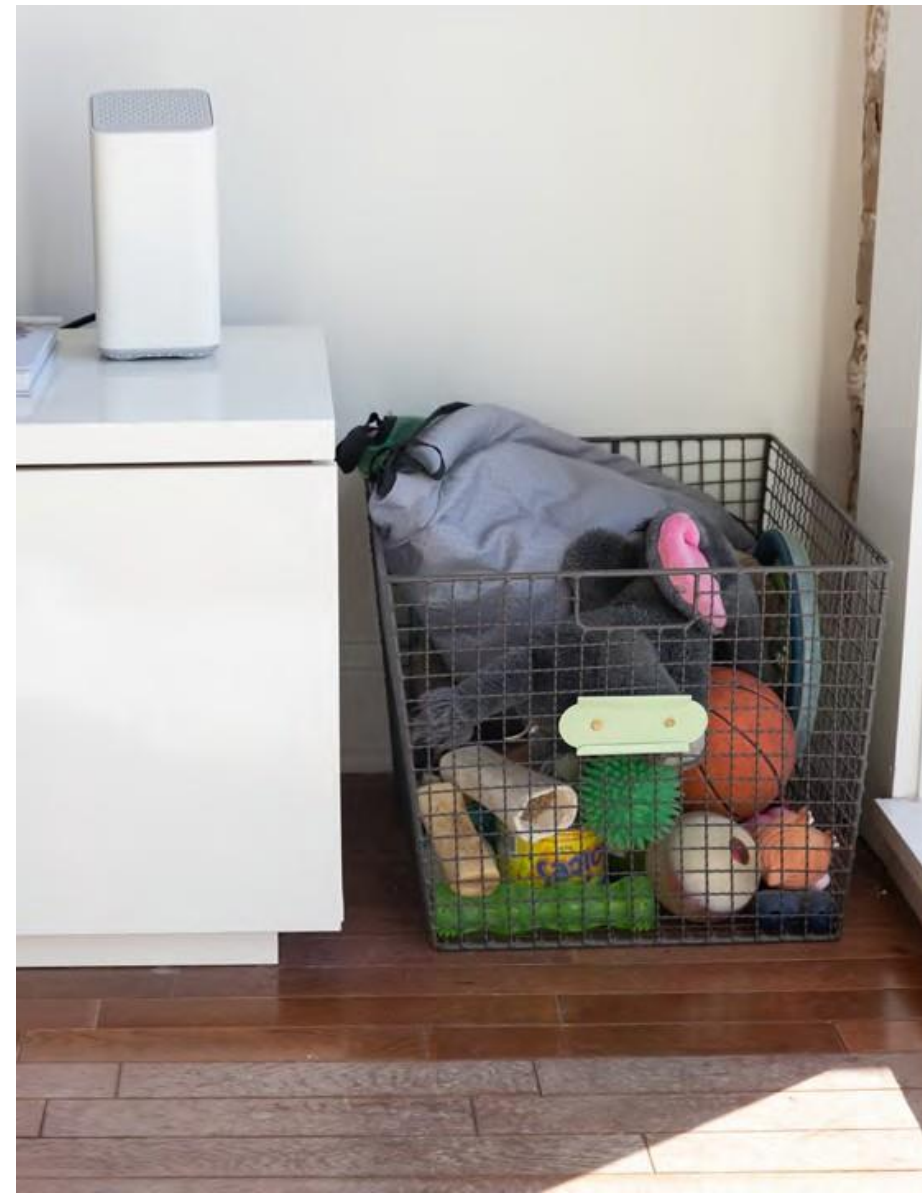
We don't always see our home possessions through rose-tinted glasses. Sometimes, they become a source of household tension.

4 in 5

people are regularly frustrated by aspects of their home.

Too much 'stuff' is one of our biggest bugbears. Clutter makes cleaning hard work and acts like a forcefield, preventing our true identity from breaking through into our home.

"I would say close your eyes and get through. Or simply close the door. My guest room is certainly a place that doesn't deserve the name. It looks so bad in there that I avoid the room and also feel uncomfortable when others see the mess in it." – Grit, Germany



Worldwide, the top five frustrations about our homes are:

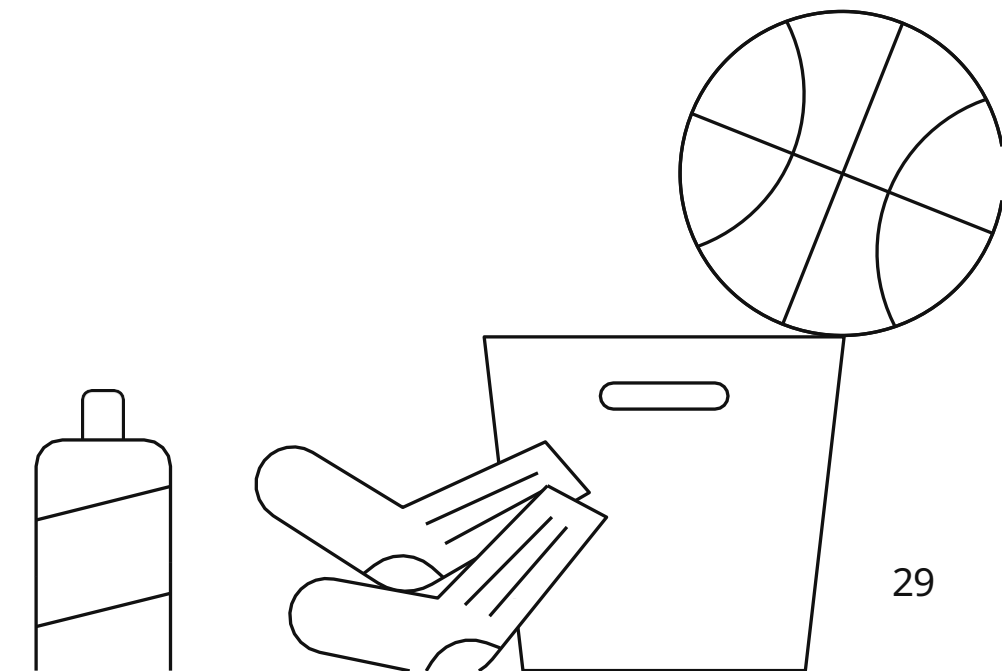
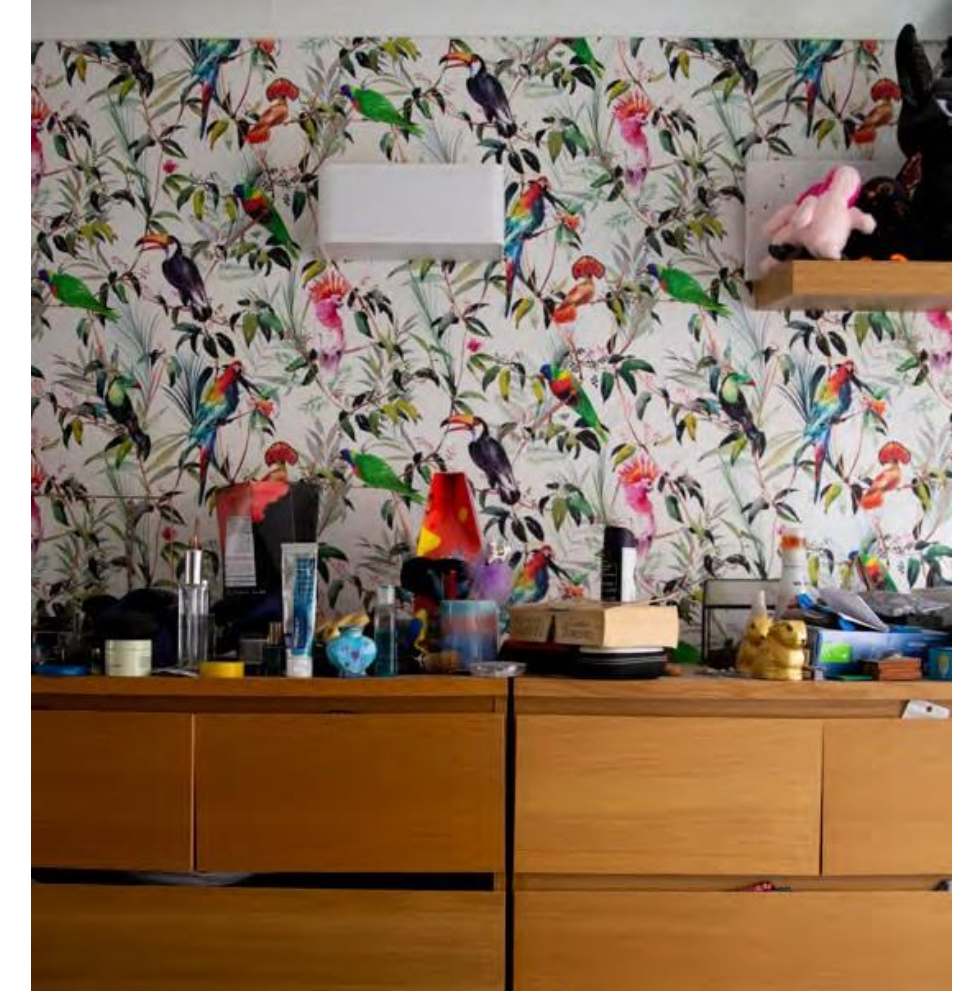
#1: An unclean or untidy home **(25%)**

#2: Household chores **(23%)**

#3: Too many things without a designated place **(21%)**

#4: No space to put things **(19%)**

#5: Different perspectives of what 'mess' is compared to other householders **(17%)**



SOLUTIONS FROM THE MANY PEOPLE

Household frustrations

From keeping rooms clean to getting creative with space, people like Abi, Tomohiro and Mehek are finding practical ways to navigate frustration in the home.

“My biggest frustration I’d say is space and utilising that space.

We worked well to compromise but it’s definitely the biggest frustration... I do wish our home was bigger. But we can’t change that. That’s why we change everything else inside it. Instead, we try and make what space we have work for us. Rather than create space that doesn’t exist.”

ABI, UK

Creative storage routines:

“The most common thing around the house is children’s toys. Storage boxes are prepared from the start and we ensure that children can tidy things away if they make a mess. [We] sing a song about tidying up because the kids don’t always listen to what they are told.” – Tomohiro, Japan



Tomohiro with his son (Japan)

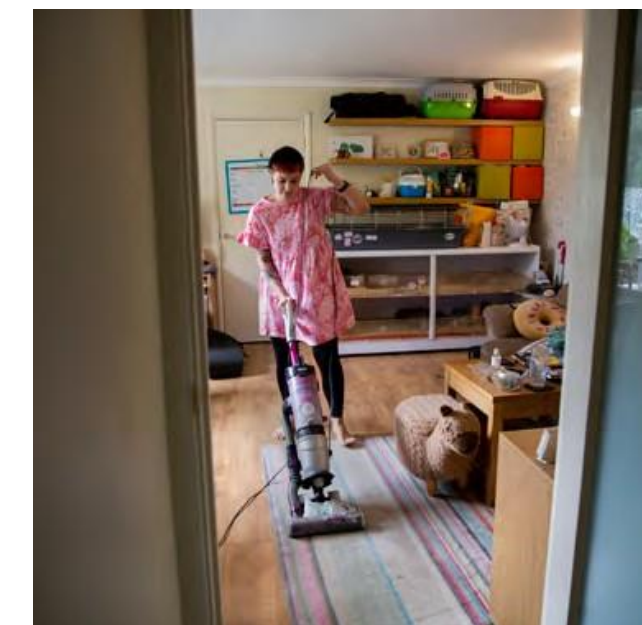


Thinking ahead:

“Where you live in a joint family home, you always feel somewhere the space is small... I choose things which will need less organising. I prefer to buy things that are easier to use for every member.” – Mehek, India

Making the most of every space:

“We have a lot of boxes, a lot of shelves, everything sort of has its place. We’ve utilised all of our surfaces, every surface is covered by something and has its place.” – Abi, UK



Abi’s sister, Hannah (UK)

Keeping things spick and span:

“Yeah, we have a cleaning rota. So Hannah does the kitchen. I do the hoovering. Rob does the bathroom.” – Abi, UK

Home remains a gendered space

When it comes to scrubbing sinks and mopping floors, there's still a clear gender gap in our homes.

Women are more likely than men to feel represented within the home – but are also more likely to get saddled with maintaining the places we live in.

Globally, women are

56%

more likely than men to list household chores as a top frustration at home.

In Japan, this difference doubles, with women more than twice as likely as men to be frustrated by household chores **(23% vs 10%)**.

The Philippines bucks the trend, though, with almost no difference between women's and men's frustration at chores **(22% vs 21%)**.



Tomohiro with his wife (Japan)

MEET TYLER MOORE

How can we share the burden of keeping our homes clean and tidy?

Tyler Moore, best known for sharing inspirational home-organisation tips as @TidyDad, suggests how to get everyone involved in the household chores.

“When a household is shared by multiple people, it can feel overwhelming when one person shoulders the responsibility of tidying, organising and cleaning. All people make messes, and so all people can learn to clean up messes, regardless of gender.

One solution is to have a discussion with those you live with about ways that you can work together. It's helpful to know the tasks that come naturally to the people you live with, or which chores feel more enjoyable or burdensome. Then, you can discuss ways to compromise and share the workload.



Another solution is to develop family routines that can be implemented consistently to manage household tasks. Breaking down overwhelming tasks into more manageable parts is a great strategy. A series of daily, weekly, and monthly tasks can help you to maintain your space without feeling overwhelmed.”

Clutter is a global issue

Given how frustrated so many of us are about clutter, it's unsurprising that, around the world, keeping spaces clean and tidy is the number one home-organisation priority.

"The sink is cluttered with toothpaste and cups for the family, but there is hardly any storage space. I would like something to store cosmetics and other items."

TOMOHIRO, JAPAN

While the anguish of clutter is universal, its causes and solutions vary. Some of us want our home to look just so. Some are short on storage space. Others come from cultures that collect and keep a lifetime of objects. There's no single formula to explain clutter's steady and sometimes magical accumulation.



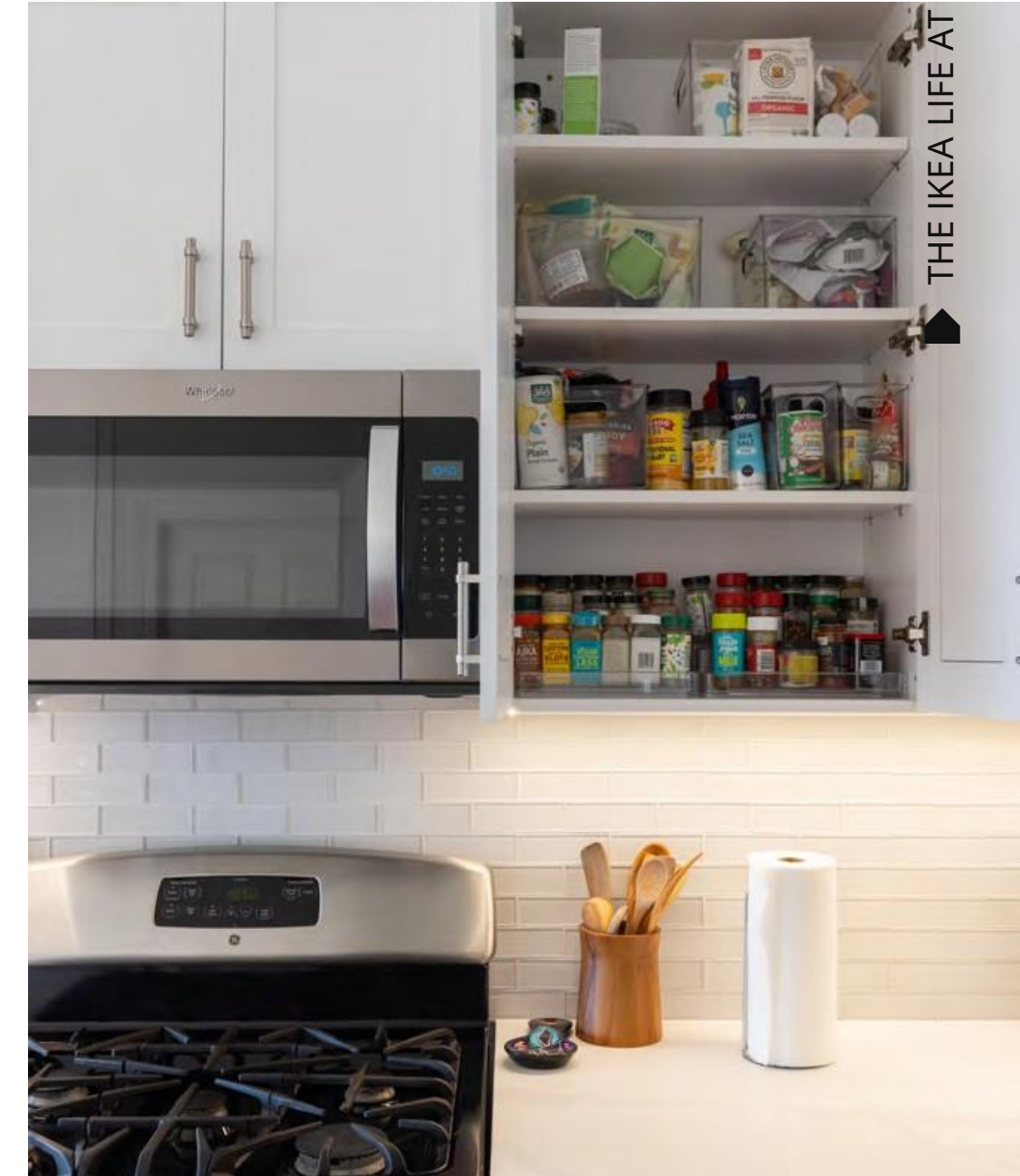
During our home visits around the world, we met many people who shared some common cultural concerns:

In the **USA**, cluttered spaces often cause stress and anxiety. People here crave more storage and clear surfaces.

In **Japan**, the small size of many homes means there isn't much space to add extra storage.

In **Germany**, people are concerned by limited storage and the embarrassment of messy spaces.

And in **India**, some people acquire new items without disposing of old ones. Some even continue to build their clutter by moving to larger homes.



MEET JOSEPH R. FERRARI

Why do we find it so hard to declutter our homes?

Deacon Joseph R. Ferrari, PhD, Distinguished Professor of Psychology at DePaul University, Chicago, explains how to face the challenge of clearing away clutter.

“Why do I view it as ‘stuff’ but others view it as ‘clutter’? Perception. It’s our perception of the quantity of possessions that impacts how we declutter.

For many people, they feel overwhelmed with the breadth and depth of their unorganised possessions. So, in turn, they just avoid tackling the task to declutter. And because we often live with others, a decision to discard an item often involves their agreement – and the other person might not be ready or able to declutter.

The solution is to organise before decluttering. And before choosing to discard an item – touch it. That tactile sense might trigger a positive emotion, yielding to a change of mind. And don’t be sucked into a mindset that more is better. A want should also be a need.”



PRIDE

PLACE PLACE PLACE



By clearing up the clutter and giving pride of place to our most story-filled possessions, we can go a long way towards making our homes feel part of us.

And that’s a boon for our sense of identity and wellbeing. But for maximum impact, so that our homes reflect us like giant disco mirror balls, there’s one more thing for us to consider...

CHAPTER 04:

Giving spaces purpose

GIVING

SPACES

PURPOSE PURPOSE PURPOSE



Marqus with his wife, Eva,
and their dog, Carrie (USA)

Finding space for ourselves



Marqus' wife, Eva, and their dog, Carrie (USA)

Having space for our needs and interests goes a long way towards creating a home stamped with our true selves.

That doesn't mean we're all looking for the biggest mansion in town. We just need to know that we can use the space we have to do what we want.

40%

of people agree that space for needs and interests is important for a home to reflect their identity.

Almost

1 in 3

people say their ideal home should help them make better use of all the space they have.

Abi with her sister, Hannah (UK)



It also doesn't mean that we want all our rooms to be Swiss army knives adaptable to every scenario. We don't aspire for our bedrooms to host our work desks and workout spaces. We don't want our spare rooms to be where we read, play guitar and put the laundry to dry. As a result of the pandemic, we've demanded more from our homes. **But now we get frustrated by rooms that have become too multifunctional.**

Our space needs to be ‘just right’

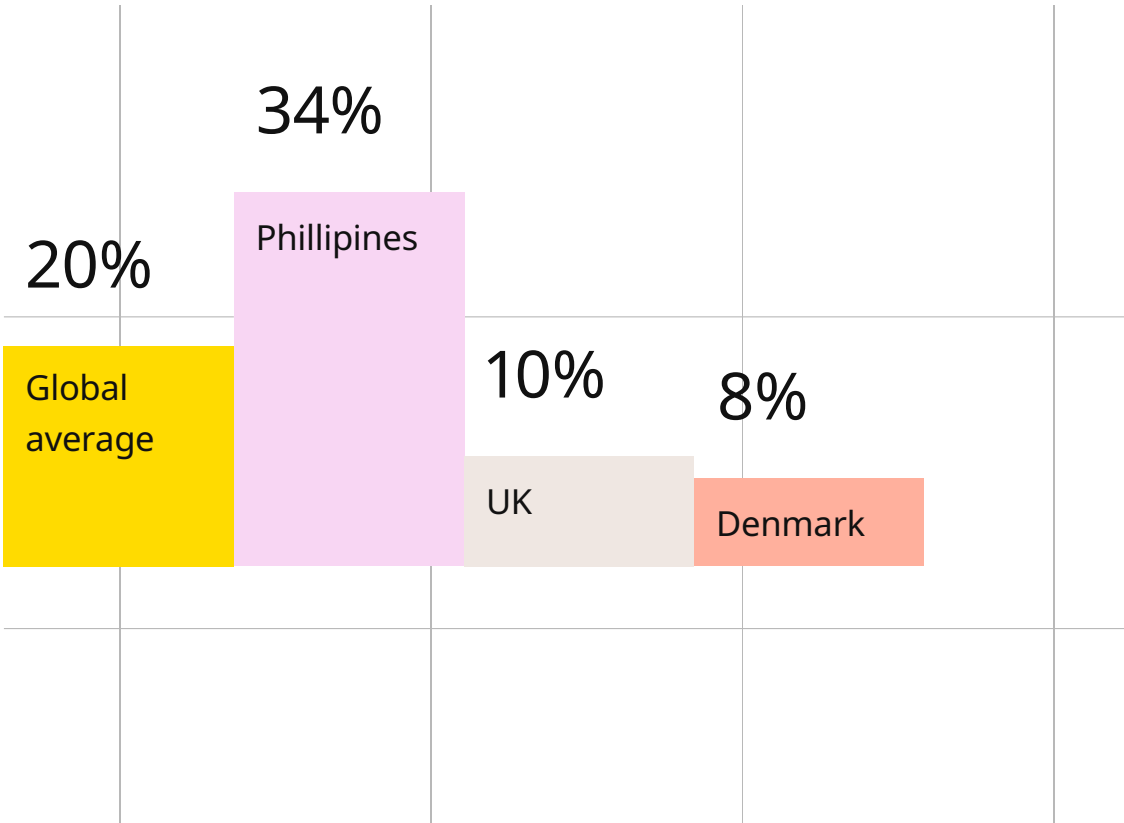
In the spirit of Goldilocks, our space needs to be ‘just right’ – rooms that are not used are equally as frustrating as rooms with too many uses.

“Originally, [we had a spare room that] was intended to be a family study room, but we took the desk to a private room and it was empty. Now it’s a room with no purpose. We put a big TV in there, but we don’t watch it, and it has become a big hallway-like area. I don’t feel very comfortable [there].” – Kikuchi, Japan

However, rooms without a purpose might seem like a luxury when space is tight. Given that many of us already struggle to find places in our homes for the things and activities we love, making space for sustainable home solutions can be really hard.

Even though climate change is one of our top three concerns, small challenges like finding room for all our recycling bins can feel like deal breakers. And for those of us who rent our home, it’s even harder – if not impossible – to make meaningful sustainable living renovations.

Only
1 in 5
people agree that their home helps them live in a sustainable way. But where people live has a big impact on their perspective.



MEET CLIFF TAN

How can we make the most purposeful use of our living spaces?

Cliff Tan, founder of Dear Modern, an architectural and feng shui practice that optimises home and interior spaces, suggests that energy rather than function holds the key.

“Rather than specific uses, feng shui defines a space by energy and emotional association. For example, even though an ‘office’ is a very defined room, it could imply different energies. It could be a quiet place to read and focus in private, or it could be more energetic where one collaborates and discusses with co-workers.



So, when it comes to rooms with multiple purposes, it’s important to unite rooms with similar energy levels. If we define our spaces by energy and emotional connections, and use them in a way where we feel matched to their energy, these spaces will feel more purposeful and never become neglected.”

The struggle for space and privacy

It's not just prioritising space for sustainable living that can be difficult.

The more of us there are under one roof, the more needs and interests a home has to cater for. Getting the right balance between a room's defined purpose and its adaptability is something of a tightrope walk, especially when we live with children. We tend to prioritise space for our kids, sacrificing room for us to enjoy our own hobbies and be ourselves, free from the label of 'parent'.

In Japan, one father who gave up his own space to put his children first often struggled to feel like himself at home.

In the USA, one family's children flocking back to the nest created uncertainty about how spaces would be used.

For some people, certain rooms provide space for them to express a specific part of their identity. For example, one woman found refuge in her bathroom as this was the only place in the home where she felt she could be a woman rather than a wife or mother.

In fact, giving us space to squirrel ourselves away from others is a vital – but tricky – feature for our home to provide.

Only

4 in 10

people think their home provides privacy for everyone living in it. This drops to **3 in 10** for people renting a room.

More than **1 in 10** people have hidden from others at home. This increases to almost **1 in 3** for people who own a snake!



Tomohiro (Japan)

Even when we live alone we can struggle to get privacy from our neighbours. In the UK one of the people we met, Chris, said that he loves his balcony but the close contact with his neighbours makes him feel awkward and uncomfortable.

Being able to **shut a door, or pop on a pair of headphones** to signal that we don't want to be disturbed, boosts our mental wellbeing. Safely tucked away in our own private spaces, we can be whoever we really are or simply find the headspace to get things done.

"Even if children are getting excited or making a noise, if I come back to this room. As long as the door is closed, it's possible to be quiet... This room is the private space, where I work and do my hobbies. The reason a private space is important is because I can focus on things I like without being harassed by anyone."

TOMOHIRO, JAPAN

Almost

1 in 3

people admit to having talked to themselves at home in the last 12 months.

22% of people have eaten a meal in bed during the last 12 months, rising to **32%** of 18- to 34-year-olds.

8%

of people have worked while in the bathroom.

We want the feeling of being ‘alone, together’

In multi-member households, we’re looking for an equilibrium that allows us all to be ‘alone, together’.

Setting boundaries with this in mind helps all of us thrive – individually and collectively.

“Things like having open walls and the sound travelling through the house, which make it feel very connected. With it being so narrow and tall this house could feel like four houses on top of each other, but it all gets brought together.”

NICOLA, UK

To achieve this, we’re looking to carve spaces up without totally cutting ourselves off from the people we live with.

In the **USA**, there’s a desire to separate spaces used for work and home, including erecting physical barriers.



Marqus' wife, Eva, and their dog, Carrie (USA)

In the **UK**, creating different ‘zones’ within rooms helps to make sure that the areas we use for work, rest and enjoyment don’t overlap.



Tomohiro (Japan)

In **Japan**, people are creating designated office spaces for working.

In **India**, people are setting up dedicated places for activities such as worship, yoga and meditation. The choice of space may be dictated by factors such as the direction of prayer.



Mehek (India)

SOLUTIONS FROM THE MANY PEOPLE

Creating spaces to house multiple identities

It can be tricky to maintain a unique sense of identity when sharing living space with others.

By making a conscious decision to address the issue, Abi, Karin, Marqus and those they share their homes with have all made efforts to get the balance right.

“For us to live together finally, in one place, it really means a lot to me. And the fact that we got to put our own special touches on this place, it means that much more.” – Marqus, USA

Finding a schedule that works:

“So Rob works from home about 80% of the time, Hannah and myself work from home once or twice a week. And we sometimes work together on the sofa.” – Abi, UK



Abi with her sister, Hannah (UK)

Agreeing a design direction:

“My wife and I did a really good job of just putting our ideas together. We’re not so outlandish, we’re pretty low key with our design, really contemporary. So it goes hand in hand with our decision making.” – Marqus, USA



Karin (Germany)

Choosing furniture that works for all:

“I wanted a big, long wooden desk, so that all children and grandchildren and families-in-law can fit.” – Karin, Germany



Marqus (USA)

But we definitely need shared spaces too. They bring us together to create lasting memories that help us love our home more and more.

There's one shared space in particular that we have a special affection for.

From grannies and roommates to tiny tots and furry pets, we've fallen hard for our squishy sofas. So much so that they're in the running to overtake the kitchen as the hub of the home. They're where we seek moments of privacy to read a book or take a break, and also where we choose to enjoy time together.



Marqus (USA)

"That's where I like to go. I like to watch my basketball game, and it's a great view downtown... One of my favourite places to be."

MARQUS, USA

In the USA, comfort cocoons are particularly important to younger household members who are forming their individual identity but also need to feel part of something bigger.



Abi with her sister, Hannah (UK)

MEET SIMONE BOSE

How can we agree to create space for our own needs in homes we share with others?

Simone Bose, a BACP-registered counsellor with a Masters in Relationship Therapy, offers some practical advice.

"A lot of self care is about your individuality and your quiet time. It's not always about being on your own, but being with yourself, by yourself, is a big part of it.

It's important to have open and honest conversations about managing space with the people you live with – whether that's friends, partners, parents or even people you don't really know. But you might approach those conversations differently based on your relationship.



For example, you might tell a partner more about why you need your own space so they don't worry they've said or done something wrong. With housemates you're less close to, starting the conversation can feel difficult. But if you can let them share what they need from a home or communal space, you might feel more comfortable expressing your own needs."



Abi's sister Hannah (UK)

For our home to truly reflect us, it must include space for our needs and interests.

But it's a juggling act – rooms still need to have a defined purpose, and they need to provide everyone with a place to be alone, together. Although, as long as we have a comfy sofa, we might be halfway towards achieving what we need.

Our homes, our way

There's no place like our own home.

It's where we relax, get together, do our hobbies, work, play, laugh, fight (and make up) and – most importantly – feel like ourselves.

It's through the items we treasure, spaces we use and people we live with, that we create homes as unique as us.

When we picture our ideal home, it's one of comfort. And we're determined to forge our own path to making this happen.

Only

8%

of us care what other people think about how we live at home. This increases to **17%** in Thailand, where people are the most concerned about others' views, and drops to just **3%** in Estonia.

When our living spaces reflect us – in all our quirky and imperfect glory – they have a powerful, positive effect on the way we view our home. And there's no denying that when we feel good about home, we feel better equipped to take on whatever's coming our way in the rest of our lives.

No one should feel out of place at home. Regardless of who we live with, where we live and what we need our homes to do, all of us have the right to feel like ourselves in our own home.

It's time to make home your own.

lifeathome.ikea.com

#MakeYourselfAtHome



ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

Meet some of the faces you've seen throughout this report...

In addition to speaking to more than 37,000 people and visiting homes all over the world, five people allowed us into their homes to film and photograph them.



Marqus, USA

Ex-professional basketball player Marqus lives with his wife, Eva, and their dog, Carrie. The couple share similar design tastes: clean, modern and minimal.



Mehek, India

Daily routine is important for Mehek. She lives with her daughter, husband and father-in-law, and always finds the time to pray three times a day.



Tomohiro, Japan

Tomohiro lives with his wife and two young sons. While his children's toys can often get in the way at home, he finds comfort by working on his favourite hobby: making model toy cars.



Karin, Germany

There's nothing better than living alone, according to Karin. She proudly displays all the things she loves, including Frank Zappa memorabilia.



Abi, UK

Guinea pigs rule the roost in Abi's home, which she shares with her sister and her sister's boyfriend. Although space is tight, the household prioritise room for their four guinea pigs.



Technical note:

The quantitative research was carried out by YouGov on behalf of Ingka Holding B.V. – IKEA Group. YouGov is an international research and data analytics group. The quantitative Life at Home study was conducted as an online survey among a national representative sample of people aged 18+ in 37 countries, where a total of 37,405 interviews were collected. The following countries were included:

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Netherlands, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States.

The data collection was completed in the period from July to August 2022. Quotas have been applied on gender, age and region, and data was weighted according to the dimensions of gender, age and region on the basis of an ideal weighting from statistics in each country, so that the results are representative of the population in regard to the target group.

Bases:

All adults = 37,405

