

'This night, of all nights': The celebration of Passover among UK Jews

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The JPR UK Jewish population research panel is designed to gather data on Jewish people's attitudes, beliefs, behaviours and preferences to help support planning across the community. In this paper, we draw on data from over 4,800 JPR research panel members who participated in our 2025 Jews in Uncertain Times Survey to explore how many Jews in the UK celebrate Pesach (Passover).

/ Introduction

The festival of Pesach (Passover) commemorates the biblical story of the Exodus, when the Israelites were freed from slavery in Egypt. Observed annually in the spring, on the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Nisan, the key highlight of the holiday is the Pesach 'seder' – a ritual meal during which participants retell the story of liberation using the text and ideas embedded in the 'Haggadah', eat symbolic foods, and ask questions about the meaning of slavery, freedom and redemption.

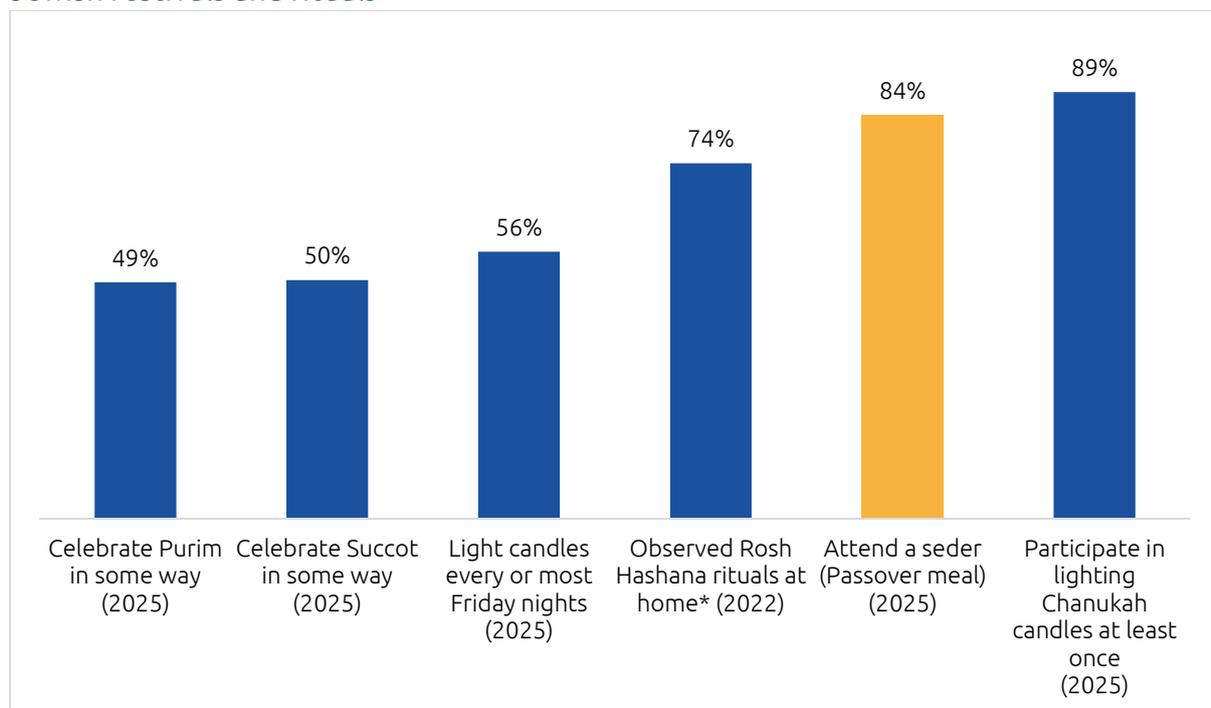
Seder night participation is one of the most widely observed rituals in Jewish life. It combines religious symbolism, family traditions and communal storytelling. While the festival of Pesach is based on biblical commandments, the seder itself developed out of rabbinic tradition as a way to live and discuss these commandments, and as such has become a powerful social institution: a moment when Jewish collectivity, both historical and contemporary, is expressed through shared tradition, narrative and experience.

In our summer 2025 'Jews in Uncertain Times' survey, JPR asked a representative sample of Jews aged 16 and above living in the UK (n=4,822) a series of questions to explore the breadth and depth of their Jewish practice over the previous twelve months, including their Pesach-related practice. This note examines data from that study, focusing on the proportion of Jews who reported attending a Pesach seder in the previous year.

/ More than eight in ten British Jews attended a seder in 2025

Our survey found that **84% of respondents reported attending a Pesach seder in 2025**, making it one of the most widely observed Jewish practices in the UK. This continues a well-known historical pattern in which the seder is a cornerstone of Jewish practice and tradition. Compared with other Jewish festivals, Pesach stands out with participation levels substantially higher than those observed, for example, for Rosh Hashana (74%) and Succot (50%), and only slightly lower than participation in Chanukah candle lighting (89%), the most commonly marked festival. These data reinforce a well-established pattern: the Pesach seder is one of the most universal expressions of Jewish connection and identity, often bringing together people who may otherwise have limited engagement with Jewish life.

Figure 1. Attending a Pesach seder in April 2025 among British Jews, compared to other Jewish festivals and rituals



* The data are from the JPR survey conducted in June/July 2025, so relate to levels of practice/observance in the twelve months prior to that, with the exception of the data for Rosh Hashana, which were gathered in the JPR National Jewish Identity Survey (conducted in late 2022; N=4,891) and relate to levels of practice in that calendar year. Note that the 2022 data were gathered at a time when there was still concern about the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and when online services and events were being held, especially by non-Orthodox Jewish communities, so the results may not be typical.

Question (2025): *Thinking about your Jewish practice over the last twelve months, did you:* [Response options: Light, or observe Shabbat candles being lit, in your home every or most Friday nights; Attend a seder (Passover meal); Light, or participate in the lighting of, Chanukah candles at least once; Celebrate Succot in some way (e.g. attending synagogue, spending some time in a 'Sukkah' etc.); Celebrate Purim in some way (e.g. hear the Megillah, dressing up or attending a Purim meal or party)]

Question (2022): *Thinking back to Rosh Hashanah in September (2022), did you do any of the following?* [Response option: Observed rituals at home e.g. lit candles, ate apple and honey]

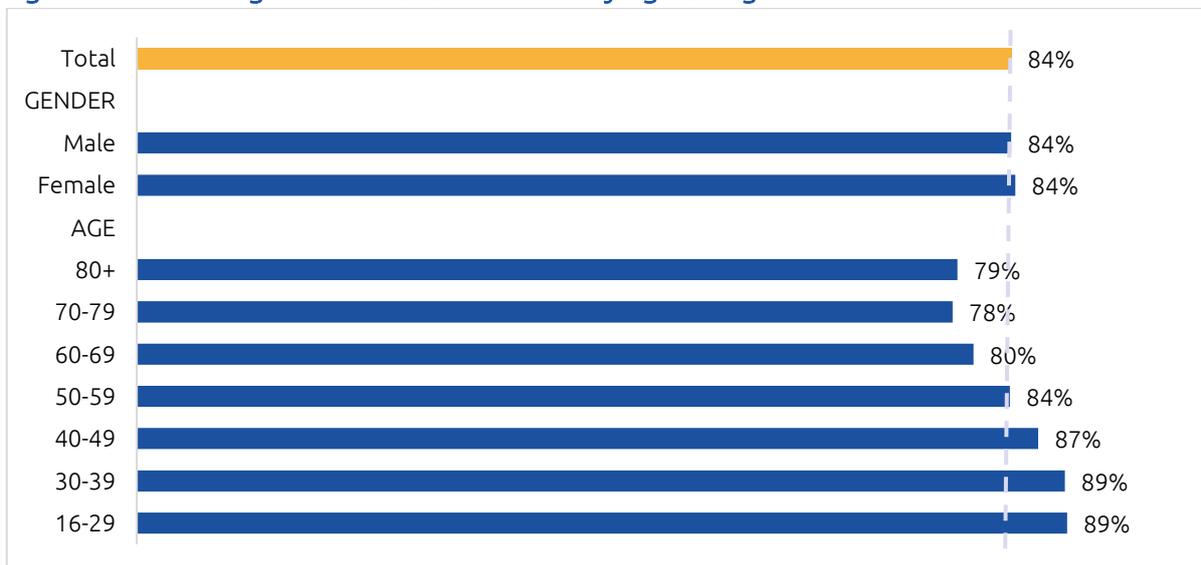
/ Celebration of Pesach by age and gender

As with many Jewish festivals, little distinguishes male from female respondents in terms of Pesach observance. Men and women report attending a seder at very similar rates.

Age, however, shows a more nuanced pattern. Participation is high across all age groups, but younger adults are somewhat more likely to attend than older respondents. In part, this reflects life stage, since these groups are more likely to have children at home, which is an important driver of participation (as discussed below).

Nevertheless, the overall pattern is remarkably consistent. Unlike some Jewish rituals that vary considerably by age, the Pesach seder is attended by large majorities across all age groups, demonstrating its enduring place in Jewish family and communal life.

Figure 2. Attending a Pesach seder in 2025 by age and gender



/ Households with children are especially likely to attend a seder

Household size is closely associated with Pesach participation. Respondents living in larger households are more likely to attend a seder than those living in smaller ones. This reflects the fact that Orthodox respondents, who are more likely to attend a seder, have larger households on average. Still, it is also likely related to the communal nature of the seder itself – those who live alone are more likely to be communally disconnected or isolated.

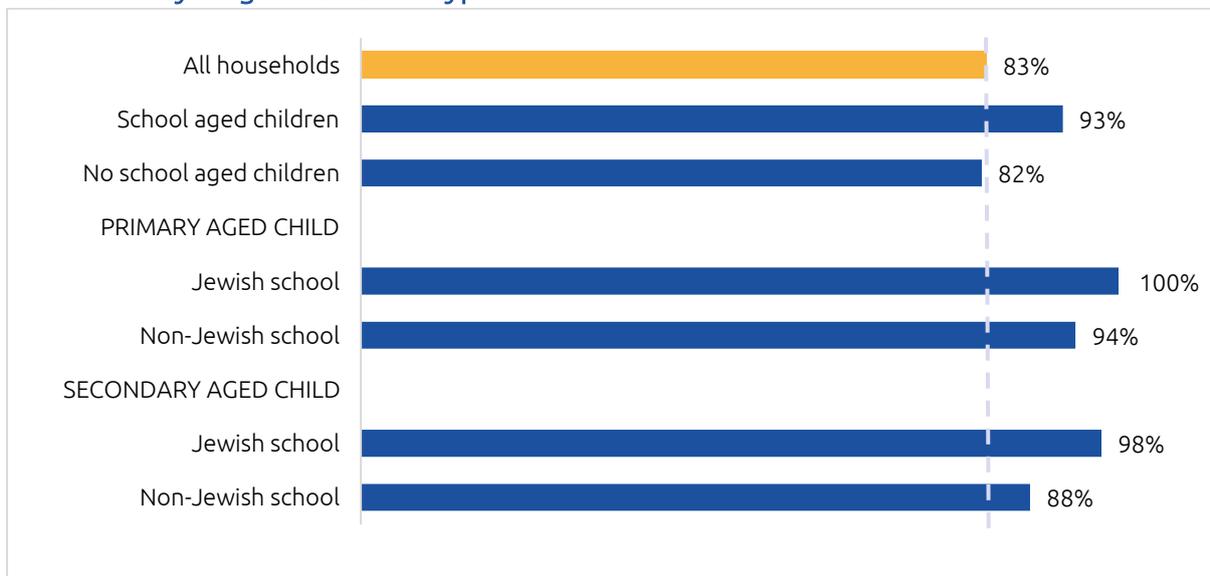
Married people are more likely to attend a seder than those who are single or widowed, with those who are divorced the least likely to report participating, perhaps because of its familial focus.

Figure 3. Celebration of Pesach in 2025 by household size and marital status



As already stated, the presence of children in the household is important. Among households with school-aged children, participation in the seder is especially high (93%). This finding is hardly surprising: perhaps the main biblical commandment of seder night is “you shall tell your child,” and the seder is structured around storytelling, symbolic foods and the asking of questions, all elements designed to help engage children.

Figure 4. Attending a seder in 2025 by the presence of school-age children in the household by stage and school type



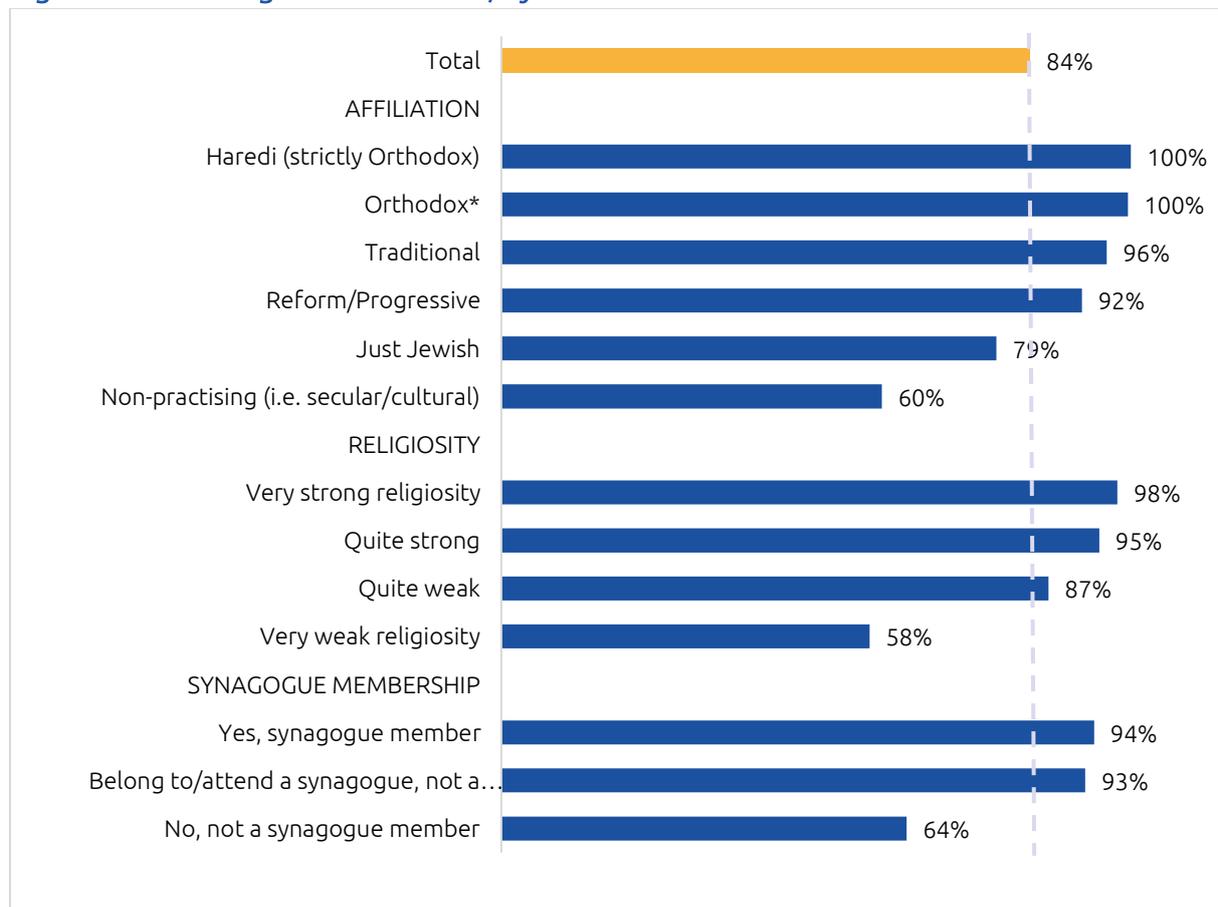
Indeed, the popularity of Pesach means it has long served as one of the primary mechanisms for transmitting Jewish tradition across generations. This is especially so with the seder and its focus on children, not just as participants but in key devices within the Haggadah’s rituals and narrative, such as the ‘four questions’ and ‘four children’ – both well-known and much-loved sections of the seder.

/ Pesach is celebrated across the religious spectrum

As with most aspects of Jewish practice, celebrating Pesach is closely associated with religiosity and synagogue engagement. Those who describe themselves as more religious or who belong to synagogues are more likely to attend a seder than those who are less religiously engaged.

However, the differences observed across this spectrum are less pronounced than those observed in many other Jewish festivals and practices. Participation rates remain well above 50% even among Jews who describe themselves as secular or culturally Jewish, or report weak levels of religiosity, or who are not synagogue members.

Figure 5. Attending a seder in 2025, by various measures of Jewish attachment



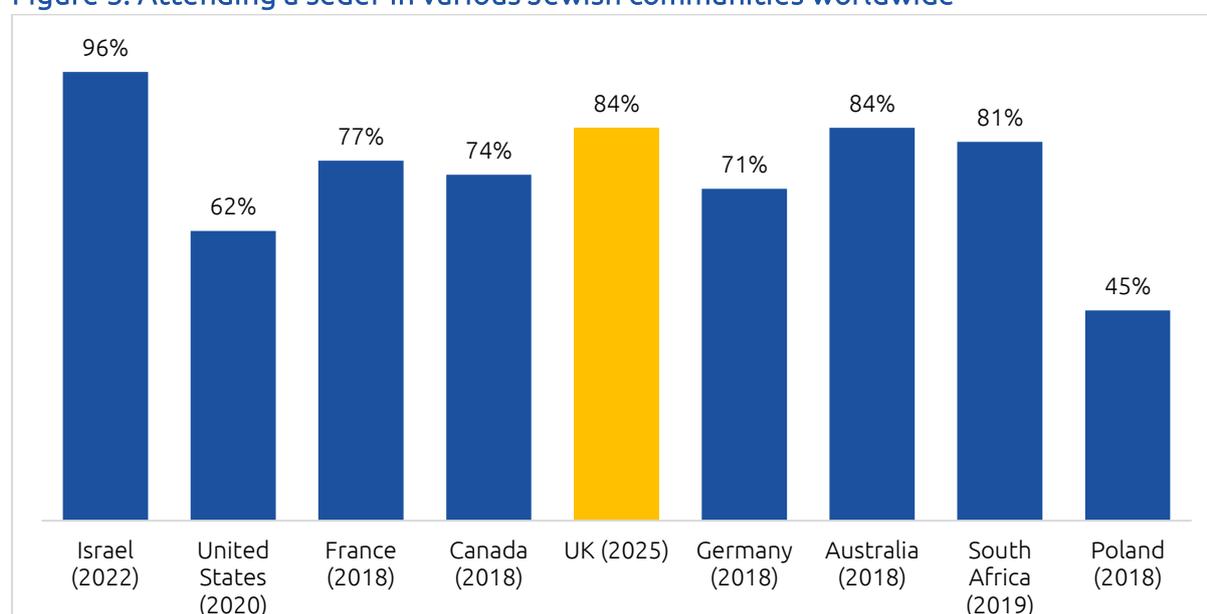
* Orthodox - e.g. would not turn on a light on Shabbat

This high level of secular engagement reflects the particular place of Pesach within Jewish life. Unlike some rituals that are primarily synagogue-based, the seder is commonly held at home with family and friends. This means that, despite its strong religious dimensions, seder night participation reaches well beyond the more observant segments of the community, not least because its religious demands are relatively 'light,' inherently social, and generally fun and family-oriented.

/ Celebrating Pesach around the world

Comparing levels of Pesach observance across countries is not straightforward. Surveys examining this dimension of Jewishness have been conducted by different research organisations in different years, using different sampling methods and often different question wording: some ask respondents whether they **attended** a Pesach seder the previous year, while others ask whether they **usually attend** a seder or **plan to celebrate** Pesach. As such, the results are not strictly comparable. Nevertheless, taken together, they provide some indication of how seder participation varies worldwide. Some of the more recent survey findings worldwide are shown in Figure 5 below, arranged by the total Jewish population in each country, from largest to smallest.

Figure 5. Attending a seder in various Jewish communities worldwide



Israel: A 2022 survey by the Israel Democracy Institute¹ found that 96% of Jewish Israelis *planned to attend a Passover seder that year*.

United States: The 2020 survey of Jewish Americans conducted by the Pew Research Center² found that 62% of Jewish adults *attended or hosted a seder during the previous year*.

France: Data from the 2018 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) survey of Jews in 12 countries, conducted by JPR and Ipsos and subsequently analysed further by JPR,³ found that 77% of French Jews *attend a Passover seder most or all years*.

¹ Israel Democracy Institute, '[Israel Voice Index – March 2022](#).'

² Pew Research Center, '[Jewish Americans in 2020](#).'

³ DellaPergola and Staetsky (2022). [The Jewish identities of European Jews: What, why and how?](#) London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.

Canada: The 2018 Survey of Jews in Canada, conducted by the Environics Institute⁴, reported that 74% of Jewish *households always or usually attend a Passover seder*.

UK: The JPR 'Jews in Uncertain Times' survey, wave 7 of the JPR Research Panel, found that 84% of self-identifying Jewish adults *attended a seder (Passover meal) in 2025*.

Germany: Data from the 2018 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) survey of Jews in 12 countries, conducted by JPR and Ipsos and subsequently analysed further by JPR,⁵ found that 71% of German Jews *attend a Passover seder most or all years*.

Australia: The Gen17 Australian Jewish Community Survey, conducted in 2017 and published in 2018 by the Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation at Monash University and the Jewish Communal Appeal⁶, found that 84% of Australian Jews *attend a Passover seder most years*.

South Africa: The 2019 South African Jewish Community Survey, conducted by JPR together with the Kaplan Centre at the University of Cape Town⁷, reported that 81% of Jews *attend a Passover seder every year or most years*.

Poland: Data from the 2018 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) survey of Jews in 12 countries, conducted by JPR and Ipsos and subsequently analysed further by JPR,⁸ found that 45% of Polish Jews *attend a Passover seder most or all years*.

⁴ Brym, Neuman and Lenton. '[2018 Survey of Jews in Canada: Final Report](#).' Environics Institute for Survey Research, University of Toronto and York University.

⁵ DellaPergola and Staetsky, op. cit.

⁶ Graham and Markus, 2018. '[Gen17 Australian Jewish Community Survey. Preliminary Findings](#).' JCA and Monash University Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation.

⁷ Graham, 2020. '[The Jewish of South Africa in 2019](#).' London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, and Cape Town: Isaac and Jessie Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Cape Town.

⁸ DellaPergola and Staetsky, op. cit.

/ Summary: Why this night?

Pesach stands out as one of the most widely celebrated festivals in the Jewish calendar in the UK and around the world. With more than eight in ten UK Jews attending a seder in the previous year, seder attendance is one of the most widespread aspects of Jewish practice.

The popularity of seder night lies perhaps in its combination of ritual, storytelling, food and family interaction in ways that resonate across different religious groups and generations. For some, it is a deeply spiritual experience rooted in religious observance; for others, it is a cultural gathering centred on family tradition and shared memory. For many, it is both of these. The beauty of the seder is that it caters for all these differences.

A key component of the seder is also that it is commonly a home-based ritual. Most Jews experience the seder in the privacy of their homes, whether their own or someone else's. And while there are communal seders, their purpose tends to be to cater for those who do not have a home to visit. The home makes the seder intimate, private, and easy to observe or mark (at least for those who do not have to cater)! And as we have shown in other research, the home is also the most fundamental context in which Jewish identity is cultivated, statistically leaving more of an enduring mark than any other programme or institution.⁹

But it is also the universal message of the seder that resonates and further bolsters its popularity. Seder night focuses on the retelling of the Israelites' freedom from slavery in Egypt, but its story is related both as history and as a key component of who Jews are, and should be, today. Used well, it prompts Jews worldwide to reflect on what freedom and slavery mean, to consider how Jewish historical experience shapes Jewish values today, and to celebrate the very condition of freedom with family and friends in the context of the contemporary world.

⁹ See: Graham, Bankier-Karp and Boyd (2025). [What works? The impact of Jewish programmes and experiences on Jewish identity outcomes in the UK](#). London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.

/ Methodological note

The data in this paper on Jews in the UK are drawn from the JPR Research Panel – particularly from its seventh wave in the 'Jews in Uncertain Times Survey' which took place between 8 June and 20 July 2025 (n=4,822), but also from 2022 (wave 3, 16 November to 23 December, n=4,891). The panel is designed to explore the attitudes and experiences of Jews in the UK on a range of issues in order to generate data to support planning both within and for the Jewish community.

All panel surveys were completed online, on computers, smartphones or tablets, with a handful of individuals being interviewed by telephone. Respondents to all surveys discussed here are UK residents aged 16 or above who self-identify as being Jewish in some way.

Survey data have been cleaned and weighted by age, sex, geography and synagogue membership drawing on 2021 Census data and other administrative sources. All aspects of the panel and its constituent surveys are developed, implemented, analysed and reported in-house at JPR. The panel and its component surveys are delivered using specialist, secure software provided by Forsta, and ZK Analytics provides additional support for data management and weighting. The panel and survey data have been analysed using SPSS, while weighting was carried out using R.

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/ About the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR)

The Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) is a London-based research organisation, consultancy, and think tank. It aims to advance the prospects of Jewish communities in the United Kingdom and across Europe by conducting research and informing policy development in dialogue with those best placed to positively influence Jewish life. Web: www.jpr.org.uk.