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Introduction to Beds

New to beds?

Fast-track your learning with the perfect induction course

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Is this for me?

For those with relatively little knowledge about beds or those completely new to the bed industry, this training module will provide you with a good grounding on the sector.

It will help you get a better understanding of the market, the different products available and their respective features and benefits.

It is unbiased (in that it does not favour one type or brand over another) and is brought to you by the National Bed Federation (NBF), the trade association for UK and Irish bed manufacturers and their suppliers.



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What will I learn?

After completing this module, you should be able to demonstrate:

- An understanding of the UK bed market – size of the market, key industry statistics, major players, brands and which groups they belong to.
- Who we are, what we do and who our members are.
- What the NBF Code of Practice is and what it means to you and the consumer.
- Good working knowledge of the different types of products available, their features and benefits and how they can be applied to fulfil consumers' bed/mattress requirements, particularly where they have specific health issues such as allergies, back or shoulder pain, etc.
- A grasp of commonly used terms and what they mean.
- Knowledge of UK bed sizes and their commonly used names.

Product images and videos featured have been generously provided NBF members



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Who are we and what do we do?

The NBF is the trade association **representing UK & Irish manufacturers of beds and mattresses and their suppliers.** It was founded in 1912 and today has around 85 members – two-thirds of them are manufacturers and one-third are suppliers of component parts or manufacturing equipment.

We are the voice of the UK/Irish bed industry, both nationally and internationally.

We ensure all our members are kept up to date with any relevant British and European Standards and Regulations. We **liaise closely with Trading Standards on unfair or fraudulent trading.**

We provide marketing and technical support and expert advice to bed manufacturers and retailers.

We are at the **forefront of the sustainability agenda** in the UK bed industry to develop eco-friendly products for both sound sleep and a lighter footprint on the earth's resources.



The Bedding & Allied Trades' Association Ltd's first AGM, 1913



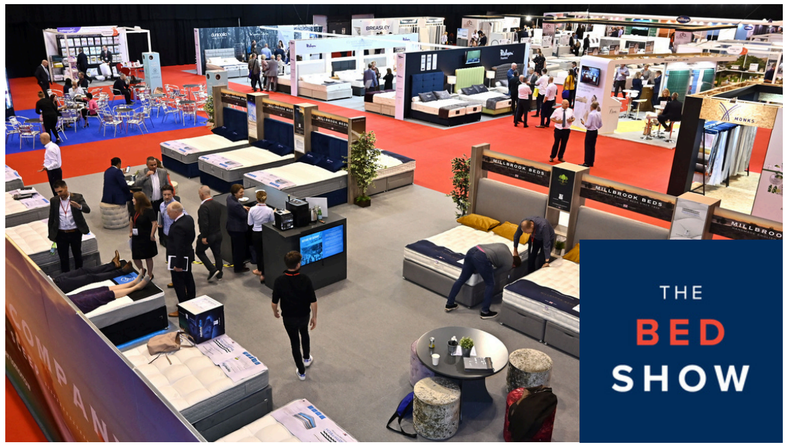
Brand strategy video

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NBF in the industry

We organise the UK **Bed Show**, the biggest and best trade exhibition for anyone involved in the bed industry, held every September at the Telford International Centre since 2010.

We also run the annual **Bed Industry Awards**, presented at a Gala Dinner during the Bed Show.



We provide helpful, impartial advice to consumers on choosing a bed to suit their needs via the **Bed Advice website** and Bed Buyers' Guide.

For retailers, our **Retail Champions Scheme** recognises those that stock predominantly NBF brands. They receive free NBF point of sale as well as a listing on the Bed Advice website with a search facility enabling the consumer to search for their nearest NBF Retail Champion.

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RETAIL CHAMPION

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The Sleep Charity / Sleep Council

The **NBF founded The Sleep Council** in 1995 to educate the nation on the importance of a healthy night's sleep and the role a regularly replaced good bed plays in achieving it.

In 2020, **The Sleep Council merged with** **The Sleep Charity**. In recent years, we partnered with them on projects such as the adult sleep eBook and series 2 of their Sleep On podcast.

The Sleep Charity provides advice and support to empower the nation to sleep better.

They campaign to **improve sleep support** and **access** to high-quality information, raise **awareness** of the value of a good night's sleep and promote understanding of the complexities of sleep.

They want everyone to share their vision that sleep is a vital component of health and wellbeing and that everyone living with sleep issues should have access to effective, consistent, evidence-based support.



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NBF Code of Practice

The NBF Code of Practice sets out criteria for **ensuring processes and procedures are in place for supply chain scrutiny and compliance with regulatory requirements.**

All NBF members manufacturing beds, headboards, and other 'finished' products have to undergo a **thorough and rigorous audit**, which is carried out by an external third party.

A number of our foam and fillings suppliers also choose to be audited. The Code of Practice covers 10 key areas:

1. **Flammability**
2. **Cleanliness of fillings and reuse**
3. **Trade descriptions**
4. **Labelling and composition of textile products**
5. **EU timber legislation**
6. **Chemical legislation (REACH, POPs, Biocides)**
7. **Awareness of health & safety compliance**
8. **Awareness of process controls/ procedures**
9. **PAS 7100 – product safety requirements**
10. **Awareness of the Modern Slavery Act of 2015**

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What does the NBF tick mean?

Only when members have been approved are they allowed to use the 'Made by an Approved NBF Member' tick logo.



The logo has become a familiar sight on members' products and marketing materials. It sends a clear **message of reassurance to consumers** that they can buy from an NBF member with confidence, safe in the knowledge that what they buy is **safe, clean and honest.**

It is important to understand that the NBF Code of Practice is **not a quality mark**. The audits specifically look at **best practice and processes** within each company, rather than checking out every product every company makes, which would be an impossible task!

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MADE BY AN APPROVED MEMBER

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What the Code of Practice means to you

Essentially, we're taking the hard work out of responsible sourcing for retailers. Honest trading has become a hot issue and the media constantly highlights transgressions from unscrupulous traders.

As a result, larger retailers increasingly rely on third-party auditing to maintain trust and avoid scrutiny, while smaller retailers often lack resources and must trust the information provided to them, which is not always reliable.

Retailers should also remember that they are equally responsible for ensuring the products they source comply with the required laws.

Ignorance isn't an excuse and it is YOUR business, along with the supplier's, which could face court action and financial penalties (or worse) and the consequential loss of face and long-term business damage.

Discover how we keep tabs on member AND non-member products with our **Due Diligence Random Testing Programme**



Video on what the Code of Practice means for retailers



Photo of a match test failure from our Due Diligence Programme

Sustainability & NBF Green

Now, more than ever, it is imperative for all businesses to be planning for a greener approach to their operations and their products. Sustainability is high on the NBF's agenda and it should be on yours as a business too. Over the years, our sustainability-related projects have included:

- Set up an **NBF Circular Economy Committee** to advise us on what's important for the industry.
- Set an ambitious target of 75% diversion of mattresses from landfill by 2028.
- Researched how many mattresses are disposed of and what happens to them, with our **End-of-Life reports.**
- Published the NBF **Policy on the Sale of Used and Reconditioned Mattresses and Used Components** and Materials.
- Launched the **NBF Pledge for Our Planet**, asking the bed industry to take steps in unison that will address global environmental damage.
- Produced an overarching Sustainability Guide and a Greenwashing Guide.
- Worked closely with mattress recyclers and the Textile Recycling Association.



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Eco-design and end of life

When a bed has been designed with sustainability in mind, the component products and processes involve using **recycled materials** like refurbished spring units and repurposed fillings, and raw materials such as timber and cotton that have been **sustainably and ethically sourced.**

It also means that when the mattress comes to the end of its life, it can be **given a new lease of life**. Springs can be recycled with other scrap metal, and foam may be recycled for carpet underlay or sent to a waste-to-energy plant, along with textile material such as mattress covers.

NBF members who have taken the NBF Pledge for Our Planet are actively working to create more sustainable bed products.

You should **encourage your customers to recycle their old mattresses**, as opposed to going into landfill. If you don't offer a service that collects old mattresses and arranges for them to be recycled, visit our Bed Advice website or Mattress Disposal website for information on local authority services and legitimate recycling companies we are aware of.



Mattress foam ready to be recycled

Read more about how we're helping the planet.

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CMA Green Claims Code

The Competitions and Market Authority (CMA) has published guidance to **help businesses comply with consumer protection law when making green claims.**

This is just as **important for retailers as it is for manufacturers and suppliers**. Before making a green claim, businesses should understand how their product, brand or business has an impact – both positively and negatively – on the environment for its whole life cycle.

If a business doesn't comply with consumer protection law, the CMA and other bodies – such as Trading Standards Services or sector regulators – may bring court proceedings. The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) can also take action for misleading green claims which appear in advertising.



Read more about the CMA Green Claims Code

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THE BED MARKET

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UK bed market

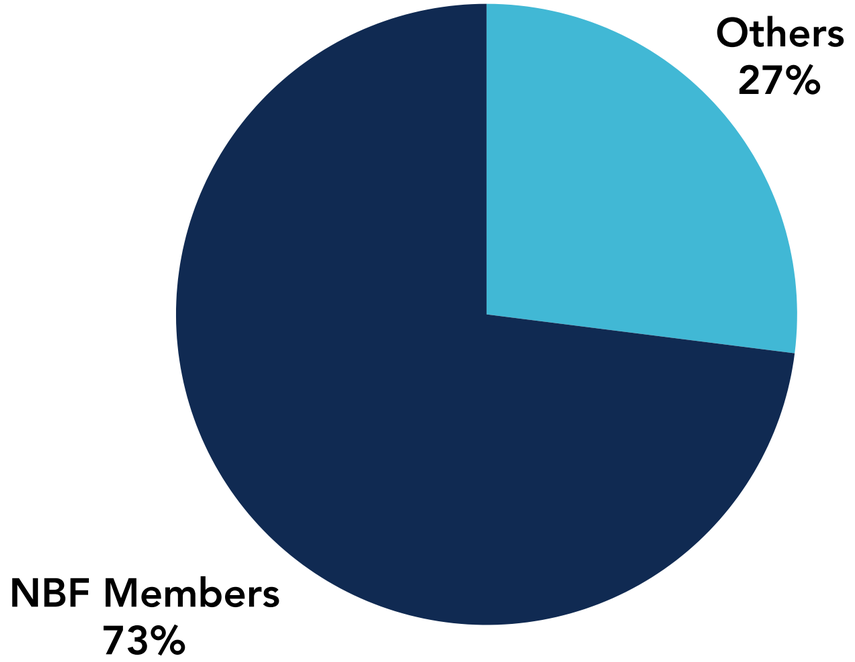
Based on data supplied by NBF members, we estimate that the total UK bed market (at manufacturing prices) in 2024 was worth about £1 billion – so in excess of £2 billion at retail.

We estimate that **NBF members represent about 73% of the UK manufacturing market by value** – and about 50% by volume (units).

Government figures suggest that there are about 240 mattress manufacturing businesses in the UK of which 65% employ fewer than 20 people and over 50% turnover less than half £1 million.

It is often described as a 'cottage' industry.

Estimated 2024 total UK sales at retail value in excess of £2 billion



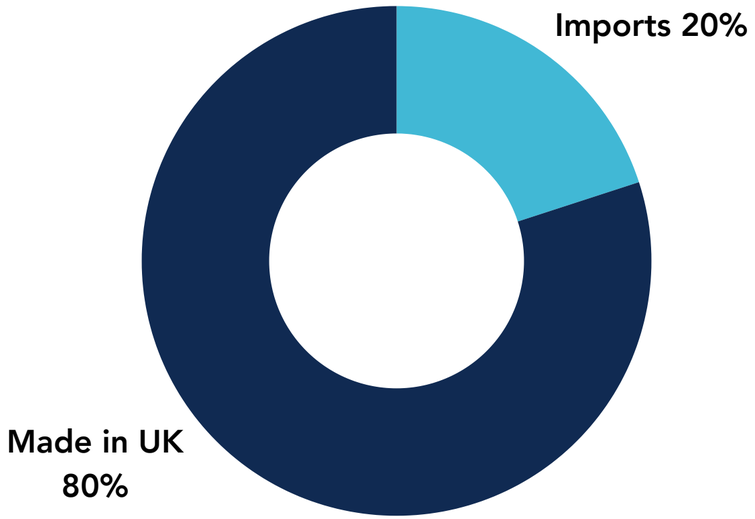
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Imports and exports

- Imports account for about 20% of the UK home market.
- Exports are only 8%.
- Of foam mattresses sold on the UK market, 55% are imported.
- Only 18% of spring interior mattresses sold in the UK are imported.

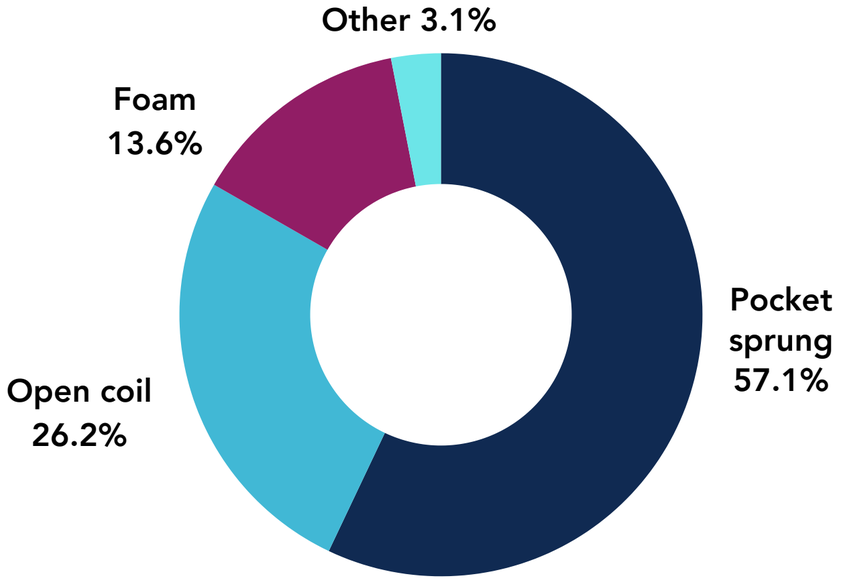
Imports as a percentage of total UK market by £ value

Based on 2023 data



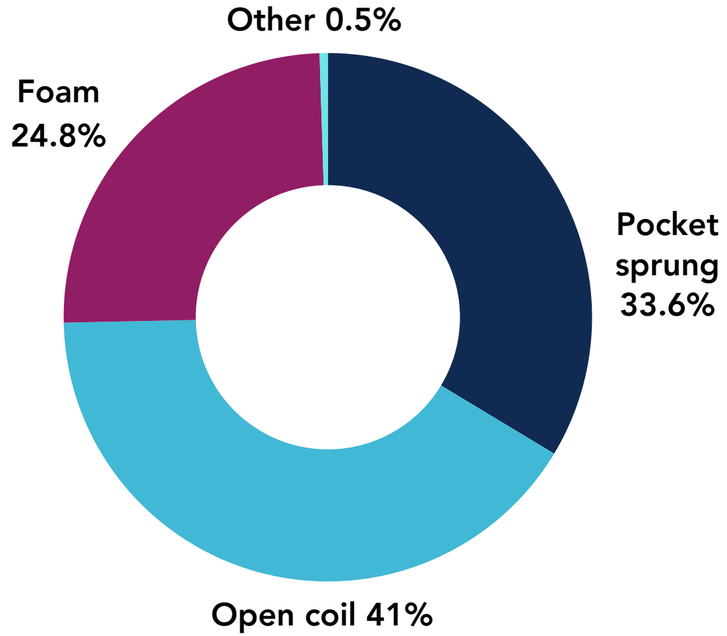
UK market share by £ value for mattress type

Based on 2024 NBF member data



UK market share by volume (units) for mattress type

Based on NBF members' 2024 data



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What are consumers buying?

The NBF has also been carrying out consumer research into bed-buying habits since 2016. The latest report is from June-July 2026, in which we surveyed 1000 people who had bought a bed in the previous 12 months.

We found that **65% of purchases were for a mattress on its own**, of which 33% were roll-ups, 32% were flat, 22% were mattress & bedstead and 13% were mattress & divan. **Pocket springs were the most popular core (main component).**

Type of mattress purchased



Mattress only, roll up (in a box or bag)



Mattress only, flat



Mattress & bedstead/ bedframe



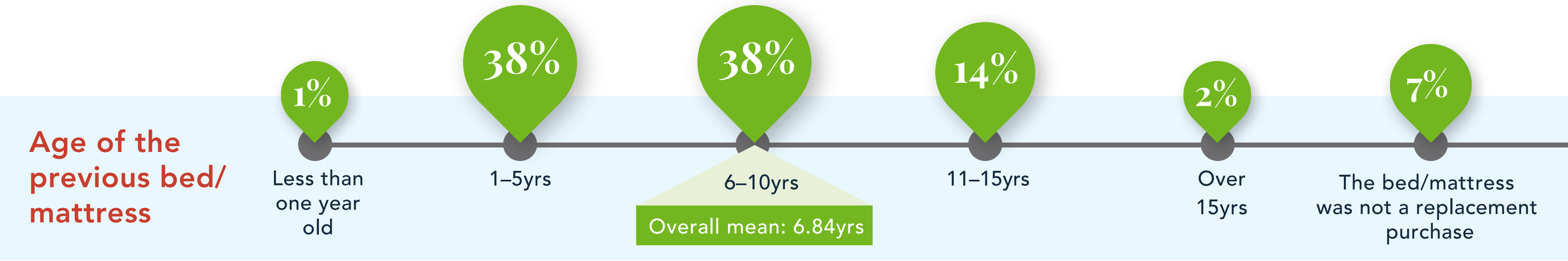
Mattress & divan base i.e. divan set

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How often do people buy a new mattress?

77% are replacing their old mattress in less than 10 years, and 39% are replacing it in under 5 years, driven mainly by the younger age groups.

The average replacement cycle was reported as 6.84 years, down from 7.28 years in 2025. With sustainability in mind, you must **encourage consumers to take good care of their mattresses** to get the most out of them and **recycle** them at the end of their life.



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The Green Consumer

With growing urgency on a more sustainable bed industry - and planet! - we also asked questions to better understand how sustainability can play a part in consumer shopping habits.

We informed them that around 75% of old mattresses go to landfill - but that nowadays some mattresses are eco-designed so they can be completely deconstructed and fully recycled at their end of life (avoiding landfill).



Our survey indicated that **70.3% of consumers were willing to pay more** for a mattress if they knew it was more sustainable.

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Size matters

The **double-size bed remains the most popular** choice in the UK (33%). The larger king size remains a close second at 27%, and the super king is steadily growing in popularity at 10%.

Remind your customers that a standard UK double bed only gives each user about 2ft 3" or 67.5cm in width, which is **about the same as a baby has in a cot!** It's no wonder people sleep better in larger beds (king size or super king size), where they are **less likely to be disturbed by their partner** - a common reason for not sleeping well.



Size of bed/mattress

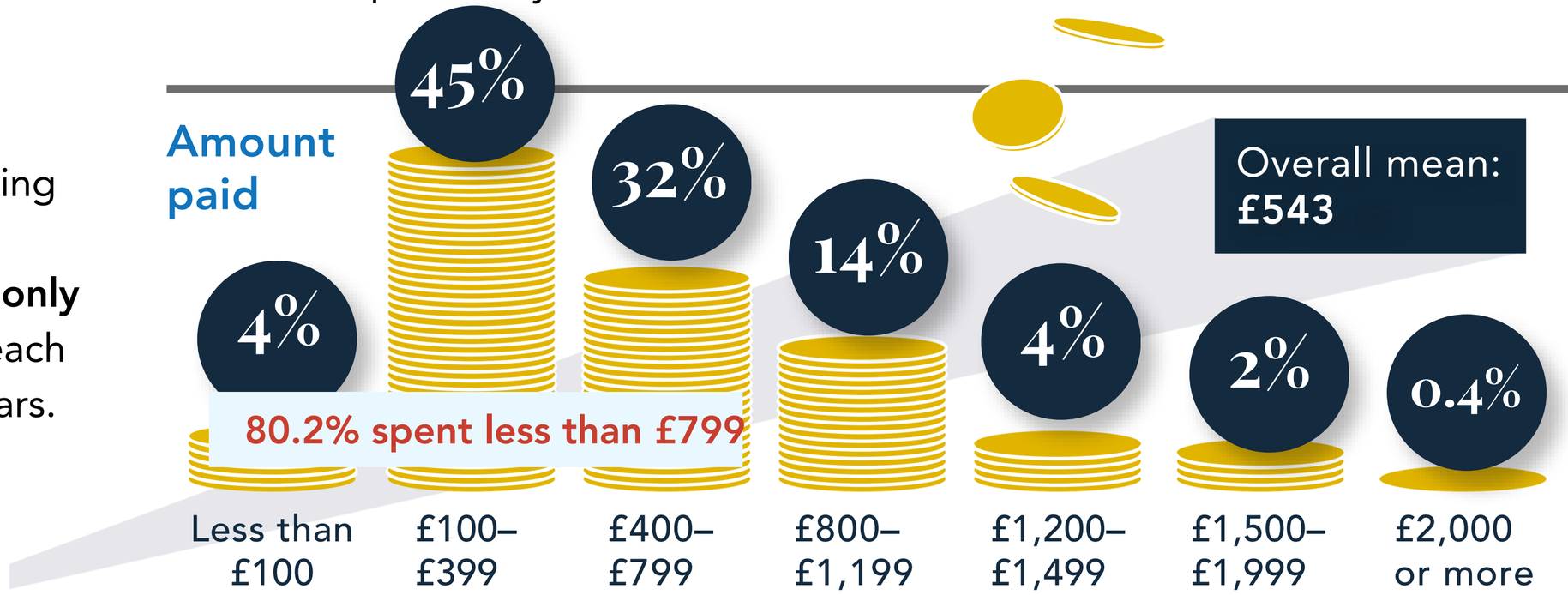
1% Special size made to order

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Price

Most respondents (80.2%) paid **up to £799** for their mattress, up from 71.5% in 2025. However, almost half (49%) of all respondents paid less than £400. Overall, consumers are spending less on their mattresses: the mean price paid was £543, down from £645 previously.

A good point worth remembering when talking to a customer is that a **£1000 bed equates to only 40p per night** (or 20p each for two users) over 7 years.

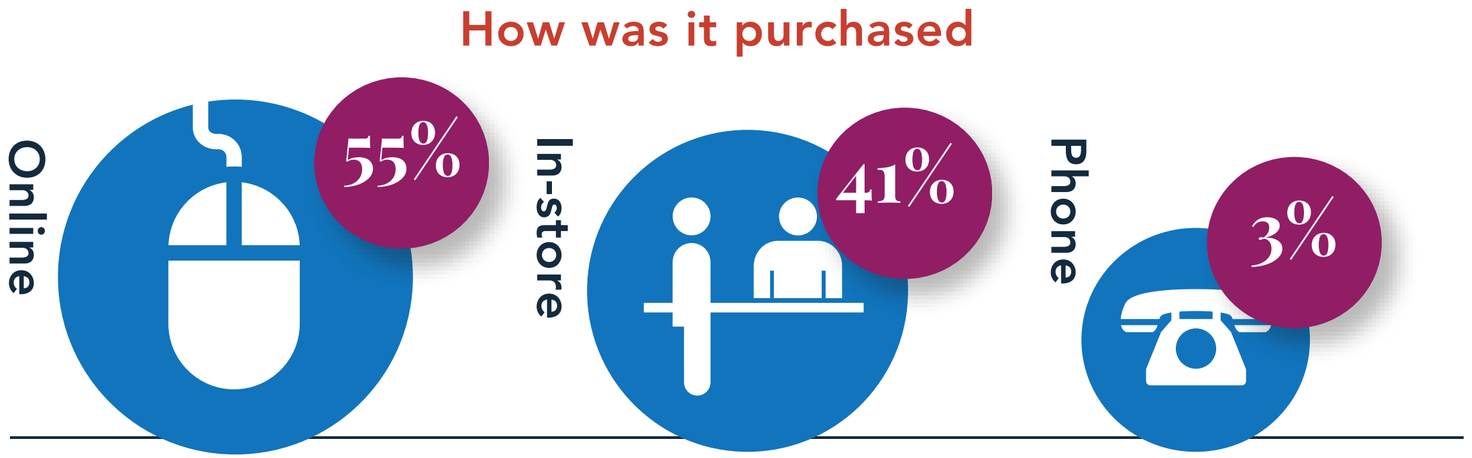


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Online v in-store

In the UK, the percentage of mattress **purchases made online has grown steadily** over the last few years: 55% were bought online and 41% in-store.

Over half of the over-55s chose to buy online, evidence that **older generations are becoming more tech-savvy.**



1% Other

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Major brands and explanation of groups

You may well have heard of some of the more well-known brand names in the UK bed sector.

Names like Silentnight, Sealy, Harrison Spinks, Relyon, Sleepeezee, Hypnos or Vispring.

What you may not be quite so familiar with are some of the group names that these brands are part of.

Knowing that **certain brands are part of a bigger group** will give you a better understanding of the landscape of UK bed manufacturing.



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Some of the main groups and their brands

The Sleep Group

- Silentnight Beds
- Rest Assured
- Sleepeezee

GNG Group

- Komfi
- Sonlevo

Harrison Spinks

- Harrison Spinks
- Somnus
- Herdysleep
- Adam Henson

Relyon

- Relyon
- Dunlopillo

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Major brands and non-members

Of course, there are some large stand-alone brands in the UK bed market – e.g. Highgrove Beds, Hypnos, Sealy, Vispring as well as many smaller manufacturers. For a full list of NBF manufacturer members and their brands, please go to our online directory.

There are very few recognisable bed brands in the UK and Ireland whose **products are not made here and therefore they are not eligible to be NBF members** – the most well-known being Tempur, Mlily and Dormeo.



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BRAND ASSOCIATE MEMBER

Brand Associate Members

There are also a number of well-known, roll-up mattress brands who **do not have their own manufacturing facilities** but are selling to UK and Irish retailers.

If **100% of their mattresses** sold to UK and Irish retailers are **made by NBF-approved members**, then they can become a Brand Associate Member. So far, these include Higgys and Nectar Sleep.

HIGGYS

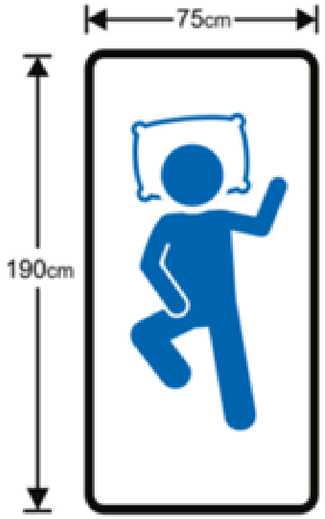
nectar

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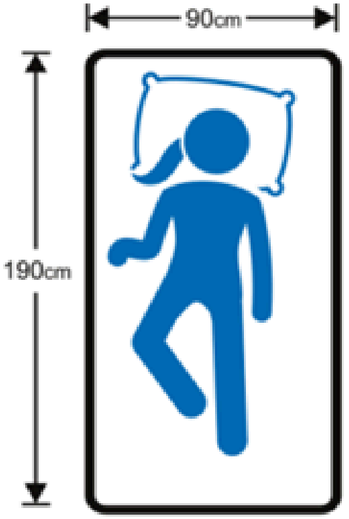
BED SIZES

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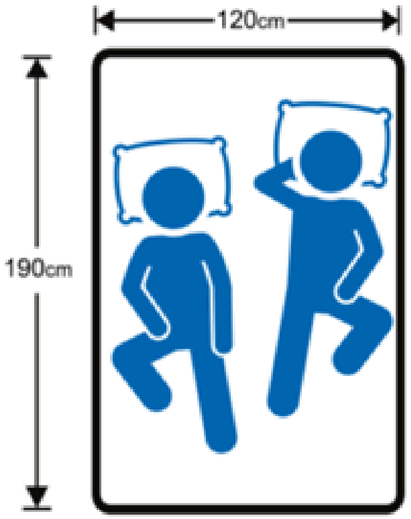
Typical UK bed sizes



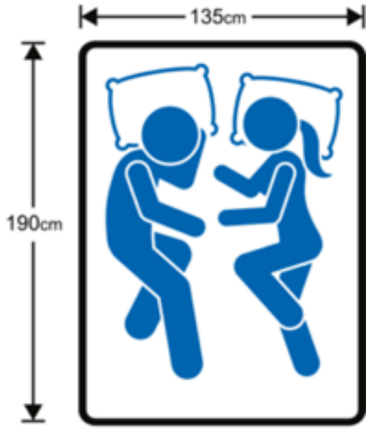
Small Single



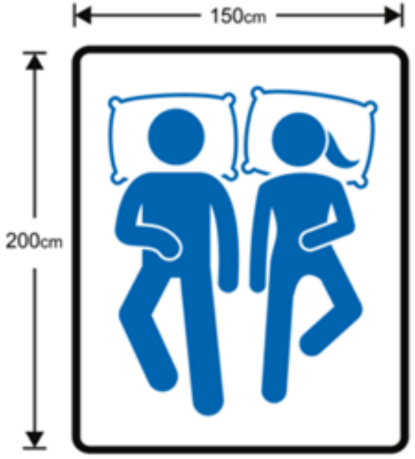
Single



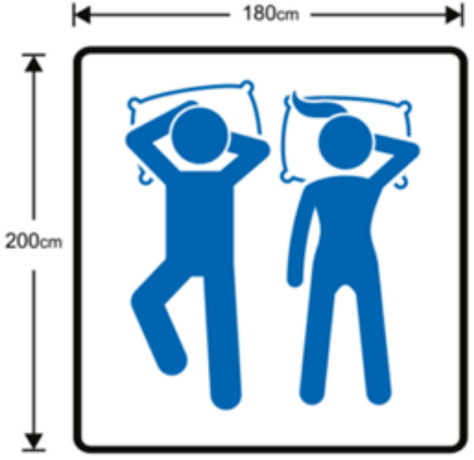
Small Double



Double



King



Super King

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UK bed sizes

NAME	IMPERIAL SIZE	METRIC SIZE
Small Single	2′6″ x 6′3″	75 x 190 cm
Single	3′ x 6′3″	90 x 190 cm
Small Double	4′ x 6′3″	120 x 190 cm
Double	4′6″ x 6′3″	135 x 190 cm
King	5′ x 6′6″	150 x 200 cm
Super King	6′ x 6′6″	180 x 200 cm

Other sizes

KNOWN AS	IMPERIAL SIZE	METRIC SIZE
	2′6″ x 6′6″	75 x 200 cm
European single	3′ x 6′6″	90 x 200 cm
	3′4″ x 6′6″	100 x 200cm
European double	4′8 x 6′6″	140 x 200 cm
European king size	5′4″ x 6′6″	160 x 200 cm
	5′6″ x 6′6″	165 x 200 cm
	6′ x 7′	180 x 215cm
	6′6″ x 7′	200 x 215cm
	7′ x 7′	215 x 215cm

N.B. Metric and imperial sizes are not exact equivalents.

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What are 'Zip & Links'?

There are certain sizes that are generally available as 'zip & link' (for varying comfort options where one partner requires a **different firmness** to the other partner or for ease of handling when **negotiating tight stairways**).



The most common combinations are:

Two 75 x 200cm Z&L = 150 x 200cm

Two 90 x 200cm Z&L = 180 x 200cm

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MATTRESSES EXPLAINED

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Ticking

The first thing you will notice about a mattress is its **cover** – known in the trade as ticking. Manufacturers spend a lot of time choosing attractive colours and designs so their mattresses will look good – but remember that **99% of the time it will be covered up** with bedclothes!

The ticking is not just there for its good looks: it also **needs to be tough and tear-resistant.** Better-quality cloths are woven or knitted in high-quality viscose or cotton yarns.

Cheaper cloths in polyester or polypropylene are often printed. At the budget end of the market are bonded or stitchbond fabrics and some cheaper knits.



Watch the ticking in action

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Ticking continued

Ticking with special qualities is now also increasingly being used by mattress manufacturers. Some of the options include anti-dust mite/anti-allergy, anti-bacterial, anti-microbial, anti-static, breathable, water-resistant, stain-resistant, highly absorbent, vegan, bamboo fibres, naturally fire retardant etc.

But some of the most popular options are tickings that offer effective **thermal regulation** through moisture-wicking and evaporation technology.

There are now quite a few companies offering performance fabrics that move perspiration away from the body and through the fabric where it can evaporate quickly allowing you to feel cooler and more comfortable.



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Quilting or Tufting?

Quilting is a decorative effect attaching the outer fabric to the surface fillings; these mattresses tend to have a **smoother, flatter** surface.

Tufting is where **tapes are passed right through** the mattress at regular intervals and secured on each side by tags or washers to prevent loose fillings from being dislodged.

Quilting



Watch hand-tufting in action



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Borders and side panels

The side panels of some higher-quality mattresses - particularly traditionally pocket-sprung mattresses - are **hand-side stitched.** This traditional skill and lengthy process **improves mattress edge support** and extends the sleeping area to the very edge of the mattress.

The same **visual effect** of hand-side stitching **can be achieved on an automatic quilting machine**. This type of border is known as a 'mock stitch border'. There are plenty of other popular quilted border patterns available – straight channel, diamond, wavy etc.

Diamond quilted border



Watch hand stitching video



Hand-side stitched border



Straight quilted border



Wavy quilted border



Watch mattress panels being machine-sewn to the borders

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Spring Interior Mattresses

There are essentially two main types of mattress construction – those with springs and those without, although hybrid mattresses are becoming more popular, which can combine spring, foam or gel layers.

The **majority of mattresses in the UK have spring interiors**, which provide the 'core' support. Changing the spring construction, thickness (gauge) of the wire, the number of coils, the height of each spring and the quantity alters the tension, feel and weight distribution properties of each mattress.



Spring interior mattresses **can be 'zoned'** – across the middle to give extra support for heavier hips and shoulders; half and half, to provide different tensions on each side of the bed; or round the edge of the mattress to give it extra rigidity.

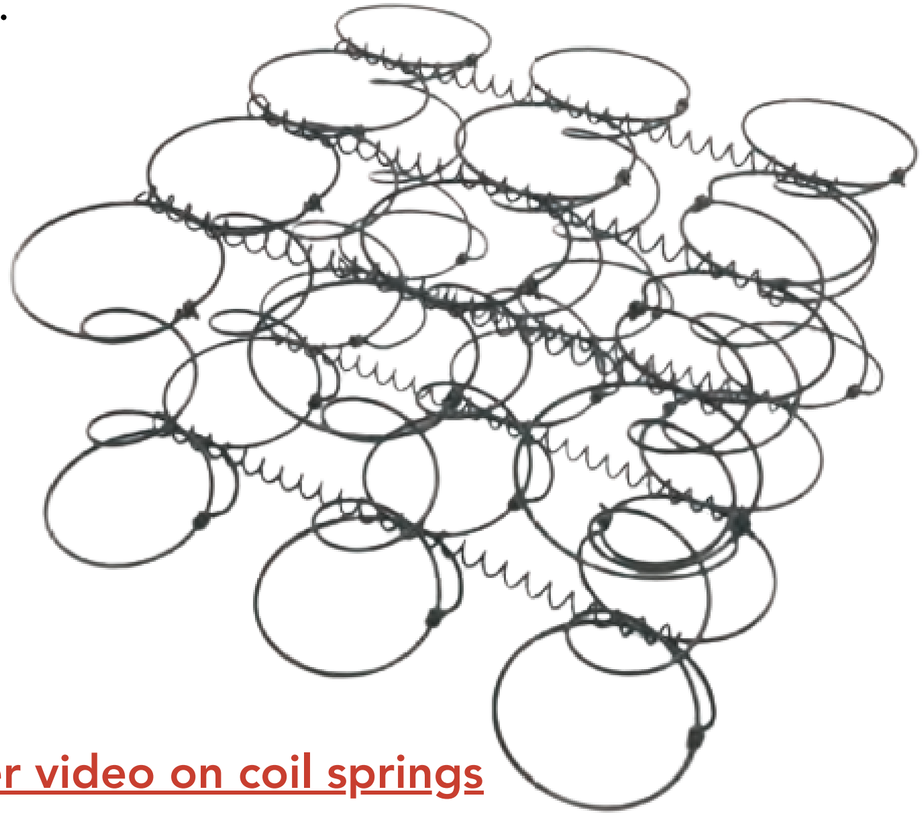
Different tensions can be achieved within the same mattress. Some units also allow the user to adjust the mattress tension themselves.

There are three types of spring interiors...

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1. Open Coil or Open Sprung

- The **most widely used option**, also known as the Bonnell spring.
- Springs are arranged in rows and **connected to one another**, top and bottom, by a spiral helical wire with an outer rod strengthening the perimeter.
- There is usually a minimum of 325 coils in a 5ft/150cm size – but some mattresses may have more.
- Come in a choice of tension, starting from a very firm 12.5 gauge wire.
- Priced from **budget to mid-range.**



Watch our explainer video on coil springs

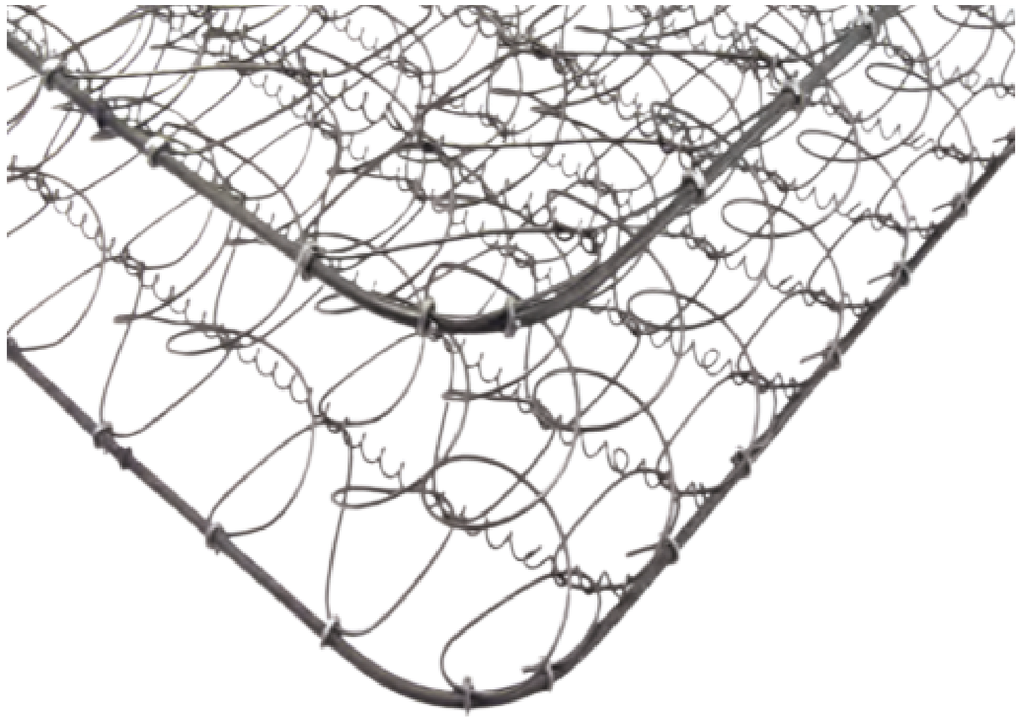
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2. Continuous Spring

- The continuous spring unit is made from **a single length of wire** 'knitted' into a series of interwoven springs which usually run up and down the bed and are linked vertically rather than horizontally.

- The gauge of wires used is softer and the size of the 'coils' smaller than an open coil, giving a higher spring count and a **more responsive** feel.

- Priced from **mid-market to premium**.



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3. Pocket Springs

- Small, softer springs that **work independently** from each other.
- Conforms and **adjusts to body contours.**
- Helps eliminate roll-together.
- Spring counts typically vary from 600-800 up to 2,500 but can go up to 3 or even 4,000. Like other types, they are made in a range of tensions.
- **Often more expensive** and used mainly in higher-quality products.
- Better quality pocket springs are encased in calico pockets, hand nested in a honeycomb pattern and hand centre tied with linen cord.
- Less expensive pocket springs are encased in fibretex or stitchbond fabrics and are lightly glued together in linear rows.

Pocket springs in fibretex or stitched fabrics





Pocket springs in calico fibre

Watch our explainer video on pocket springs

Watch the pocket spring manufacturing process

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3. Pocket Springs - Mini Springs

A relatively new development in springs is the extra low profile, mini spring, which can have a height under 3cm (1 inch). These units offer an alternative to fillings in providing a **highly resilient comfort layer.**

They can also be stacked together to form a **very soft, high spring count** mattress core. Use of these mini spring layers allows the manufacturer to claim very high spring counts in their mattresses - up to as many as 15,000 or more.



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Fillings

Interior sprung mattresses use a wide variety of fillings to **create different properties and comfort options**, as well as affecting price. Fillings are chosen for their **resilience**, **durability**, **flexibility** and ability to **absorb** body moisture.

In cheaper mattresses, fillings usually come in compact pads; in better quality models, layers of loose fillings in greater volumes are often preferred.

FILLING	FUNCTION
Cotton	Often used near the surface for its soft feel and its ability to breathe, and to absorb moisture.
Wool	Naturally resilient fibre, creating a luxurious feel with good fire retardancy properties, it is also breathable.
Foam	Different types of foam are used for their cushioning effect. They include latex, polyurethane, visco-elastic (memory foam) and gel. Explanations of these different types of foam can be found later.
Polyester	A synthetic material with good recovery properties supplied in pads of varying thickness and density.
Hair	Highly resilient fibre, often described as "nature's spring". Available in pads or loose for high luxury.
Mixed Flock	Made from re-claimed fibres, they are generally used as **pads** next to the spring to insulate and prevent the spring being felt or penetrating. Alternatives include synthetic pads or coir (coconut) fibre pads.
Silk, cashmere, mohair and other fine, natural fibres	Used for additional luxury and insulation properties.

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Natural fillings: hair, wool, cotton



Watch layers of natural fillings being added to the mattress

Polyester fibre pads



Mixed flock pad



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Non-Sprung Mattresses

There are four main types: **foam, gel, floatation, and futons**

Foam:

Most foam mattresses are made from **layers of different densities of foam**. By varying their density and depth, it's possible to achieve different levels of comfort and support. They are particularly suitable for use with slatted bases and adjustable beds as they are more pliable than spring interior mattresses.

There are three main types of foam in use...

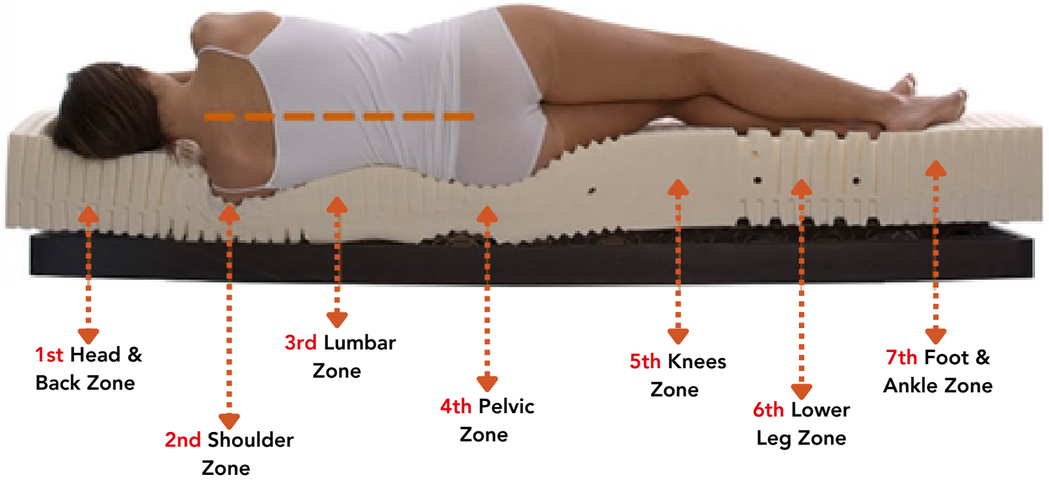
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Latex

- A **premium quality** material, the natural type is derived from the sap of the rubber tree.
- Has a distinctive, resilient feel, is very **durable** and has anti-microbial properties that offer **benefits to many allergy sufferers.**
- Its natural elasticity means it **recovers its shape** immediately when pressure is removed.
- It also has very good point elasticity resulting in an even **distribution of pressure** for independent support.
- Through its open cell structure, latex also has excellent **ventilation** and air circulation properties.
- Can be cut into different profiles to aid ventilation or **provide zoning** for different levels of support.



Profile cut latex



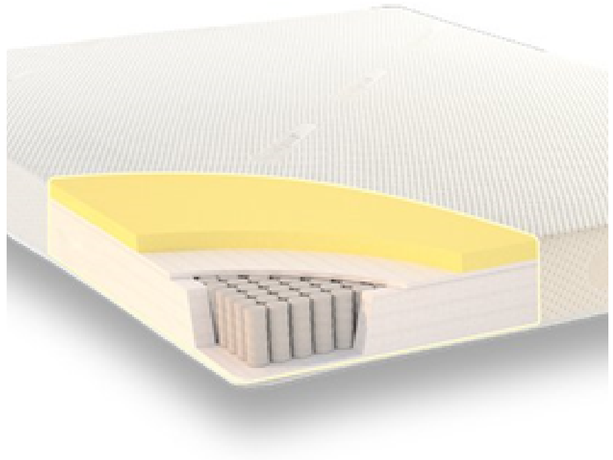
Watch the manufacturing process of a latex mattress - beginning with gathering sap from the tree

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Visco Elastic/Memory Foam

- Responds slowly to individual shape, body heat and pressure.
- Excellent **pressure-relieving** properties.
- Reduces the need to toss and turn during the night by as much as 80%.
- Beneficial to those suffering from **arthritic or rheumatic conditions.**
- Available in a variety of qualities and densities.
- For memory foam to work correctly, it **must have a support layer underneath** it, either a spring unit or a layer of foam. There are no 100% memory foam mattresses.
- Can be cut into different profiles to aid ventilation or provide zoning for different levels of support.

Layer of memory foam on top of pocket springs





Watch our explainer video on memory foam v latex

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Polyurethane (PU) Foam

- A synthetic, petroleum-based foam with **performance and price varying according to density and quality.**
- It is widely used and very **versatile**.
- Can be cut into different profiles to aid ventilation or provide zoning for different levels of support.

PU foam





Ventilation channels can be cut into foam

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Gel

- A relatively new filling, developed to help overcome the 'heat retention' issues with memory foam.
- Consists of gel particles fused with memory foam to **reduce trapped body heat**, speed up spring back time and help the mattress feel softer.
- The latest development in this technology now uses gel beads within the foam, which, as a 'phase-change material', means the beads change from a solid to a liquid state to **regulate the user's body temperature.**
- Delivers benefits such as **breathability**, temperature regulation, pressure relief and body support.



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Floatation Beds



- Support is determined by the amount of water used and the level of motion can also be varied.
- Known for their pressure-free support and **good for allergy sufferers.**
- **Variable temperature heaters** keep the bed warm and cosy.

Futons



- Made from layers of cotton or fibre wadding, which moulds itself to the shape of the body.
- In Japan, they are used on the floor with a mat underneath and rolled away during the day.
- In the UK, they are more **often sold as budget-priced sofa beds** with **slatted convertible frames**.

Find more information and videos on mattresses in our Bed Buyers' Guide and Marketing Support hub

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BED BASES EXPLAINED

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Divans

Most mattresses are used in combination with one of the various choices of bed bases, such as divans, bedsteads, adjustable beds and bunk beds. Remember to **ensure that the mattress and base are suitable for use together**, especially if your customer is buying them separately.

Divans are still a popular style of base in the UK. They are **essentially an upholstered box**, fitted with castors (or glides) for mobility on deep bases or on legs with shallow bases to create space beneath. These days, there are many beautifully tailored and upholstered bases with matching headboards offered in a range of colours and fabrics.



There are three main types of divan...

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Sprung Edge

Sprung edge divans are the most luxurious option and feature a complete open coil or pocket spring unit mounted on a frame that acts like a **giant shock absorber**, increasing the mattress's durability.



A sprung edge divan with drawer

Solid/Platform Top

Solid or platform top divans have a **rigid, non-sprung top panel,** often made from hardboard.

Beds with these bases are generally **firmer**, as well as **cheaper** than beds with sprung bases.



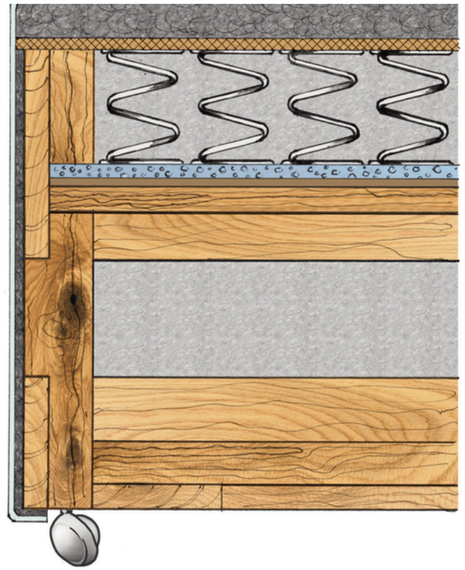
A solid platform top divan

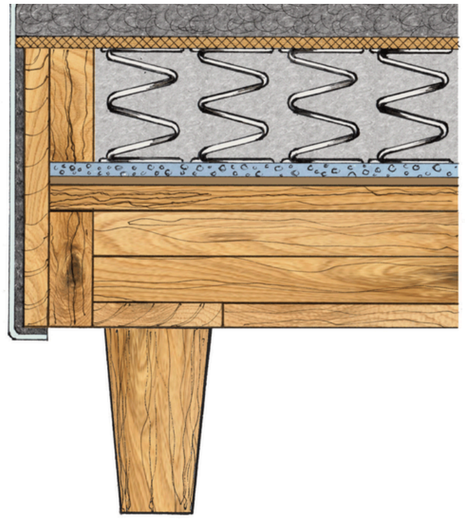
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Firm Edge

Firm edge divans generally feature a smaller number of **larger, heavy-duty springs** set within a **rigid, wooden-sided frame.**

Often made as shallow bases on legs.





Ottomans

A divan is useful if your customer is **tight on space,** as most are available with **drawers** or **lift-up storage**, known as ottomans.

Storage need not affect the comfort or quality of the bed – but it does **cost a little more.**



Drawer divan base



Ottoman divan base

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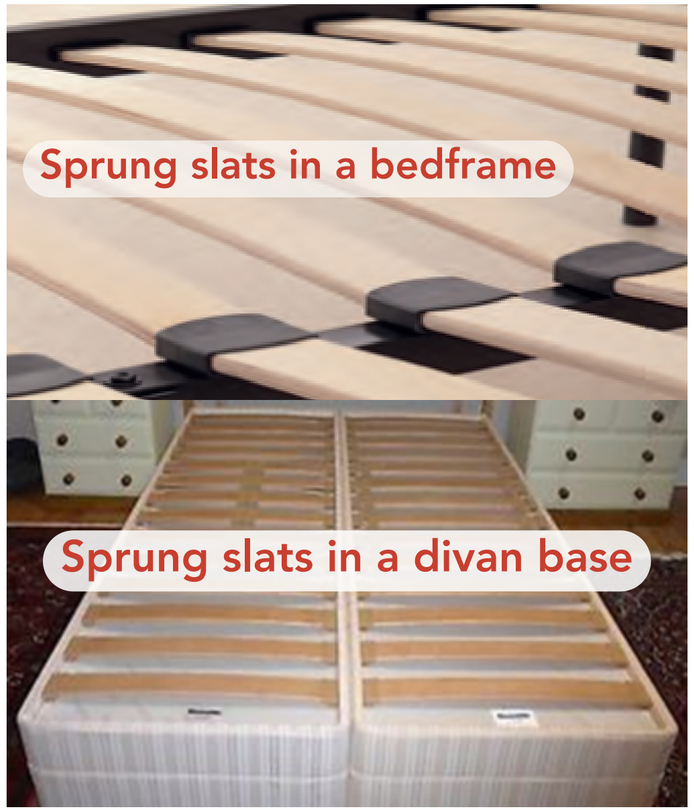
Slatted Bases

Slatted bases are **mostly used with bedsteads** but can be incorporated into a divan base. These can be either **rigid** (with no give) or **flexible** (known as sprung timber).

Flexible slats are made from laminated softwoods mounted in a frame creating a modest level of springiness from their bowed shape. The tension of some slats can be adjusted to suit individual requirements.

It is important to **ensure the slatted base is compatible with the mattress.** There are many different suppliers of slatted bases with differing specifications of slat widths and the space between each slat.

Mattress manufacturers should provide their own recommendations for slat spacing and slat widths to suit their particular mattresses, so we strongly advise that your customers check these before buying, as they can vary. A mattress used on an incompatible base can invalidate the guarantee.



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Adjustable Bases

Adjustable beds are becoming **increasingly popular as the bedroom evolves into a multi-functional space.** As well as reading or having breakfast in bed, people now watch TV from their beds and spend time on their laptops and mobile devices (although we don't recommend this to poor sleepers!).

Of course, adjustable beds still offer many benefits for a range of medical complaints requiring a **raised sleeping position** or raised legs, or **aid in getting in and out** of bed.

Styling choices range from a **traditional divan look** right through to **contemporary bedstead** designs. Some even incorporate massage units as an optional extra.



Adjustable Bases continued

Available as **single beds or as doubles** with individually **adjustable halves**, these beds either feature flexible laminated slats or fully sprung upholstered sections.

Some models have five or more **individually adjusting sections** - for neck, head, upper body, legs and feet; other models might just adjust the head and feet; or even just the upper body.

Some models (known as wall-huggers or headboard-huggers) are designed to **slide backwards** as the head end comes up, thus keeping the user in more convenient contact with their bedside table! Others fit side tables, which can be moved along the side rails.



A single size adjustable divan set

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Adjustable Bases continued

Some mattresses are specially made for adjustable beds, so **ideally, the base and mattress should be bought together.**

It's a good idea for your customers to make sure that any **electrical parts are separately guaranteed and fully compatible** with UK systems.



Double size adjustable bed with one slatted base and one mattress



Two linked adjustable beds

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Bedsteads

Bedsteads come in a **vast array of styles** from traditional classics to more modern designs and are available in wood, metal, plastics, upholstered, or any combination of these.

The choice will largely be an aesthetic one but your customers should **bear in mind mattress support**. This could be fixed or sprung slats or a metal grid or rigid woven wire. It is also possible to have a fully sprung bed base (with the same benefits as a divan) inside. Some manufacturers make these to order.

Always **make sure your customer tests mattresses on the same type of base** as their chosen bedstead.

As many bedsteads are imported or antique, they may not conform to current UK standard sizes, so **ensure that they check their mattress and bedstead are the same size!**



Traditional metal bedstead



Upholstered bedframe

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Children's Beds

Bunk beds, high sleepers, mid sleepers, and cabin beds are popular options for parents and children.

They are fun as well as practical and space-saving.







Read more information on all types of bed bases and specific advice about children's beds.

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ACCESSORIES EXPLAINED

- an important 'add on sale' opportunity

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Headboards

Headboards have grown in popularity and **can create a focal point** in any bedroom. They are usually an optional extra and can **often coordinate with the divan base**.

Like most things in the bedroom, the headboard acts as a style statement and will be a dominant feature, so remind your customer that it is worth doing a bit of research.

Ask them what fabrics/colours they have in mind; will the colour choice or pattern blend in with the rest of the room? Are they after a simple rectangular design or a more lavish padded design?

All of the different materials and designs have their own merits.

For example, **upholstered headboards provide more comfort,** whereas wooden or metal headboards can be matched with bedroom furniture.







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Pillows

If your customer tells you they suffer from neck and shoulder pain, their **pillow may be the culprit.**

Pillows come in a range of **different shapes and sizes**, including pre-shaped ones that support your head and neck, as well as a **choice of fillings** – goosedown, duckdown, feather, fibre filled, memory foam, latex foam, polyurethane foam and even mini springs – plus any number of combinations of these.



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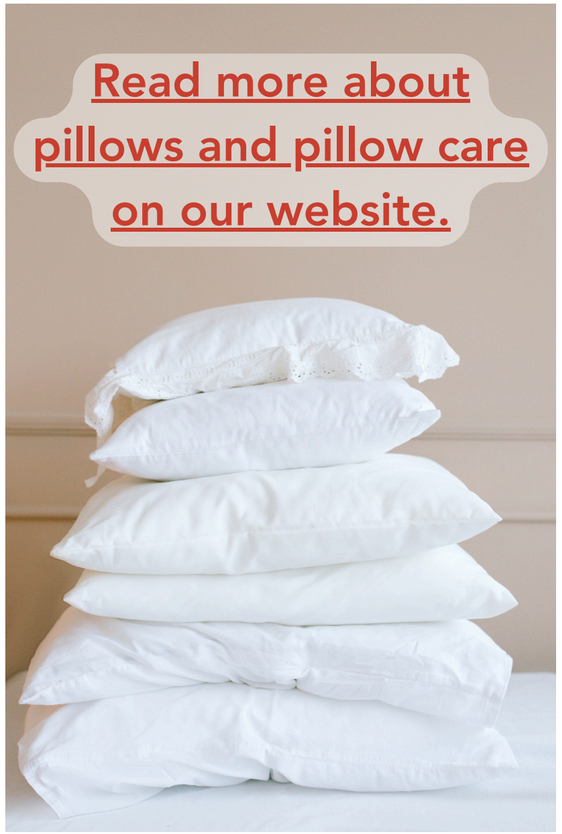
What your customers should look for

- A good pillow should **hold your head in the correct alignment** – that is, in the same relation to your shoulders and spine as if you were standing upright with the correct posture – and be tucked well into the neck and shoulder to support your head fully.

- The thickness and number you need **depend on your body shape and your preferred sleeping position.** You will need a thicker pillow (or two thinner ones) if you sleep on your side rather than if you sleep on your back.

- It is a good idea to invest in quality pillows and **replace them at least every two - three years.** When they have lost their 'loft' (height) and become lumpy, discoloured, or misshapen they should be replaced.

- Did you know, an old, unwashed pillow could also contain as much as **10% of its weight in skin scale, mould, dead and living dust mites,** and their allergen-laden droppings?



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Toppers

Overlays and toppers are mostly used to soften the feel of a mattress by adding **extra layers of cushioning**. Generally non-sprung, they may be made of a variety of materials: polyester fibre, latex, memory or other foams, or even feathers. The choice is entirely subjective.

Toppers are **not a substitute for correct support** – your customer will need a mattress of the right tension. Nor are they a substitute for replacing an old, worn-out bed – any impression of improved comfort will probably be short-lived.

Some modern mattresses styles include a **fixed topper**, known as a 'pillow top', which is often on styles that have been designed to eliminate the need for turning.





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Mattress protectors

A mattress protector **should always be recommended** to someone purchasing a new mattress. Buying two means their mattress will always be protected when one is in the wash.

They are a fairly inexpensive way to help the mattress stay looking good for years and as well as **protecting it from staining** caused by accidental spillages or body perspiration etc. They can also aid in reducing allergens, dust mites, and asthma issues.

They are generally made from cotton or polyester and the latest intelligent fabrics now offer complete protection from seepage whilst still being breathable to maintain **a cool sleeping surface** (unlike some of the old rubber or PVC versions).



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ADVICE TO GIVE YOUR CUSTOMERS ON BED AND MATTRESS MAINTENANCE

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Like most new products, a useful lifespan depends on the amount of tender loving care the bed receives throughout its life. Here's what to advise:

- **Do not bend or roll a new mattress.** It will permanently damage the spring unit and invalidate any warranties or guarantees.

- **Let the mattress breathe.** Like a new car or new carpets, a new bed may initially have a 'new' smell about it. Any odour won't be harmful and will eventually disperse if well aired.

- **Follow the care instructions carefully.** Unless it is a non-turn, single-sided mattress (which has been specifically designed not to be turned/flipped but **must still be rotated**), it is important that the mattress is turned/flipped from end to end and side to side every week for the first few months and thereafter about every three months. This will prolong the lifespan of the mattress and minimise body impression marks.

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- **Body-shaped impressions are normal.** Impression marks – **sometimes known as settlement or dipping** – are a normal characteristic of quality mattresses working as intended to conform to the shape of your body. These will be minimised with regular turning if the mattress is two-sided. To help mitigate any potential future queries on 'body impressions' forming, it is a good idea to **talk about this during your demonstration to manage your customer's expectations** on what to expect from their new mattress.

- **Getting used to a new bed.** It will take a while to adjust to sleeping on a new surface, so don't worry if the new bed doesn't immediately meet your customers' expectations. Give it time – it could take a few weeks.

- **Use washable mattress and pillow protectors** to prolong the life of the mattress and pillow.

Read more about bed care

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FAQs

We list some common questions that consumers ask about their bed purchases on our Bed Advice UK website.

We've suggested appropriate answers which will help you, but you may wish to prepare your own answers.



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A - Z Glossary

There are a lot of confusing terms and jargon used in every industry and the bed sector is no different.

Quickly get up to speed with our handy A-Z guide of some of the words you'll need to know to make you sound like a bed expert.



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ARE YOU UP TO THE CHALLENGE?

Please click here to test your new-found knowledge

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That's all folks!

We hope you found this presentation useful and
it has given you a better understanding of the 'wonderful world of beds'.

Please click here to complete our short feedback survey
and receive your certificate

If you have any further questions that you'd like to ask us, please email info@bedfed.org.uk