Visit Portsmouth

Visitor Survey Results - 2025

Overview and methodology

The latest iteration of the Portsmouth Visitor Survey was conducted in late December 2025. It was designed to find out where our visitors came from, what they did when they were here, how they travelled, how much they enjoyed, and plenty more besides.

We also asked a separate set of questions of those who'd not visited recently (or not at all), to contrast the opinions and circumstances of those who had been to Portsmouth with those who had not.

With many years' results now banked, many of the questions for 2025 were identical to those in previous iterations, to allow like-for-like comparisons and build on our existing datasets.

This year survey generated more than 2,600 responses. These were gathered by sharing the survey in e-newsletters from Tourism South East and Visit Portsmouth (excluding, where possible, those who live and work here, to better reach tourists and not skew the results by including people who come to the city regularly).

Note: As some of the results below will attest, in many questions the respondents were permitted to select all appropriate answers, which is why the totals sometimes exceed 100%.

The three types of Visitor

As in previous surveys and as noted above, respondents were split into three categories:

- **Visitors** were those who had been to Portsmouth within the past two years.
- **Lapsed Visitors** had visited the city more than two years ago but fewer than ten.
- **Non-Visitors** were those who had never visited the city before, or whose last visit was ten years ago or longer.

A unique set of questions was then delivered to respondents in each category; Visitors were asked about their trip, whilst Lapsed and Non-Visitors were quizzed on their perceptions of Portsmouth, any prior experiences, and where else they go instead.

The results are detailed below, along with some comparisons to previous years.

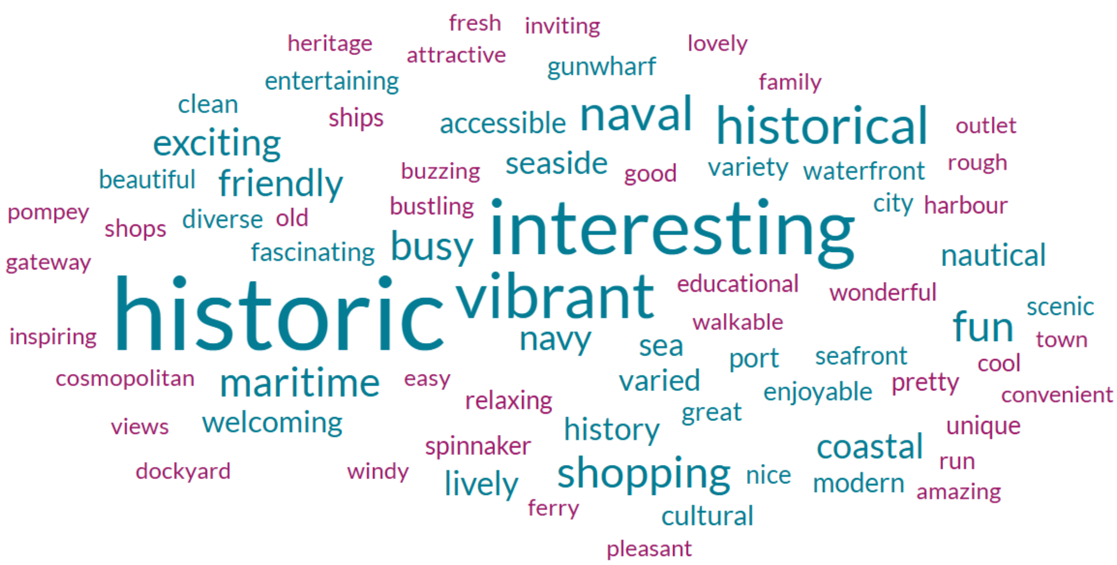
What Three Words

Once they had been categorised, respondents were asked what three words they most associate with Portsmouth.

For some years now the featured words have been descriptive and experiential, rather than some of the dryer, more factual nouns we saw in early Visitor Survey iterations. This remained the case in 2025, with most of the most common words from last year appearing once again, with only slight shifts in the order of the top ten. Particularly experiential words like 'interesting', 'vibrant', 'fun' and 'exciting' were popular once again, alongside the likes of 'historical', 'maritime' and 'shopping'.

Visitors

The below word cloud details the 75 most common responses among Visitors. The larger a word appears the more times it was cited.



The ten most popular were:

1. Historic
2. Interesting
3. Vibrant
4. Historical
5. Naval
6. Shopping
7. Fun
8. Busy
9. Maritime
10. Exciting

Lapsed Visitors

The aforementioned shift towards descriptive words has also been seen among Lapsed and Non-Visitors, a trend that continued this year. What's more, the ten most popular words for Lapsed Visitors in 2025 much more closely aligned with those of Visitors. In fact, 'coastal' and 'navy' were the only words in the Lapsed Visitors' top 10 that didn't appear for Visitors (which had 'exciting' and 'busy' instead).

The top 10 ran as follows:

1. Historic
2. Interesting
3. Naval
4. Historical
5. Maritime
6. Shopping
7. Vibrant
8. Fun
9. Coastal
10. Navy

Non-Visitors

As may be expected from those who've not been to Portsmouth recently (or at all), Non-Visitors moved away from the likes of 'fun' and 'exciting' towards what read more like a profile, with the likes of 'coastal', 'historic' and 'naval' all showing up prominently.

Interestingly, Non-Visitors were the only group for whom 'sea' and 'seaside' broke the top 10. 'Seaside' came 15th for Visitors (although 'coastal' came 13th). For Lapsed Visitors, 'sea' and 'seaside' were 13th and 14th respectively, although 'coastal' did make the top 10.

The top 10 was:

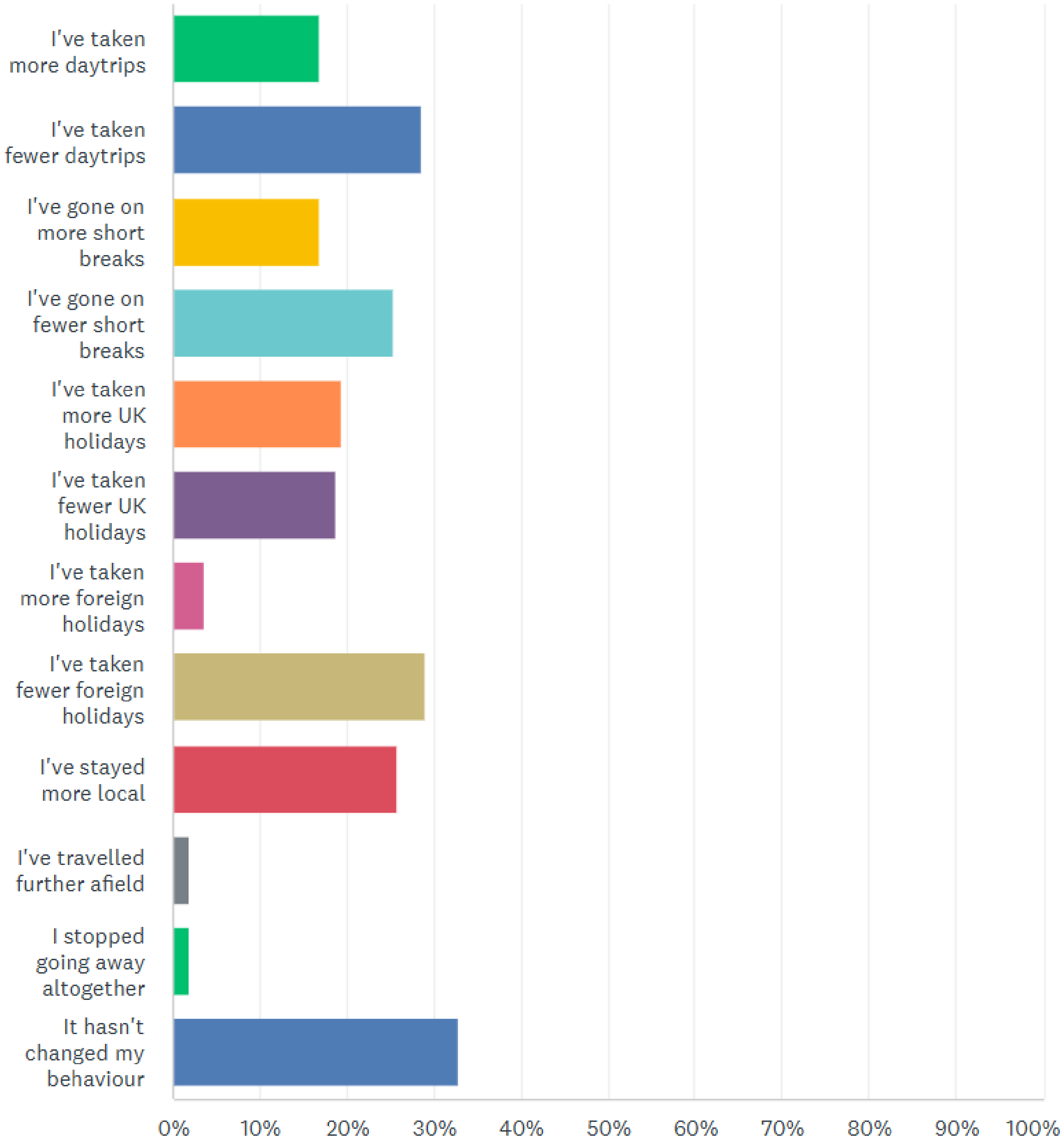
1. Historic
2. Naval
3. Interesting
4. Port
5. Coastal
6. Sea
7. Maritime
8. Navy
9. Seaside
10. Historical

Cost of Living

With ongoing concerns about rising bills and day-to-day expenses, we retained the Cost of Living question first introduced in 2023, to find out how personal finances have impacted decisions to go (or not go) on holiday.

The distribution of answers was largely unchanged, with the most common responses from 2024 remaining popular choices in 2025.

That said, some positive trends identified last year have continued - albeit without posting huge percentage point shifts. The number of respondents who said financial concerns hadn't impacted their travel choices grew to 32.7% (up from 31.5% last year, and 29.1% in 2023). Elsewhere, just 2% said finances have stopped them going away altogether, down from 2.5% last year.



When looking ahead to the coming year, the results also largely mirror those seen in previous surveys. 'It won't change my behaviour' remained top of the pile (albeit dropping from 29.1% to 28.1% year-on-year), followed by 'I'll take fewer foreign holidays' (growing from 21.9% to 23.4%).

Looking at the Lapsed Visitors, there was a notable reversal back to 2023 figures. Whilst the most overall answer distribution remained broadly unchanged, some that saw a drop from 2023 to 2024 (such as 'I've taken fewer daytrips' and 'I've stayed more local') rose back to their previous levels in 2025.

When asked to look ahead, there were some more stark trends. Lapsed Visitors who said they expected to take fewer short breaks over the next 12 months rose from 12.5% to 14.4% between 2023 and 2024, then again to 16.1% in 2025.

That said, these were just some of the more notable percentage shifts. Responses such as 'I'll take more UK holidays', 'I'll take fewer foreign holidays' and 'It won't change my behaviour' all polled higher (18.2%, 23.2% and 28.2% respectively), they just didn't change so much year-on-year.

Non-Visitors showed slightly more optimism. The downward trend for 'I've gone on fewer short breaks' continued into 2025, whilst 'It hasn't changed my behaviour' rose to its highest level of 35.4% (from 30.7% last year and 32.7% in 2023).

These results were similar when Non-Visitors looked to the future - as those who didn't expect cost of living concerns to impact their travel decisions grew to a high of 30.6%, up from 2024's 22.9% and the 26.1% recorded in 2023.

Comparing results across the three groups show some notable differences:

'I've taken more daytrips'
Visitors - 16.8%
Lapsed Visitors - 9.8%
Non-Visitors - 8.6%

'I've gone on more short breaks'
Visitors - 16.9%
Lapsed Visitors - 12%
Non-Visitors - 12.3%

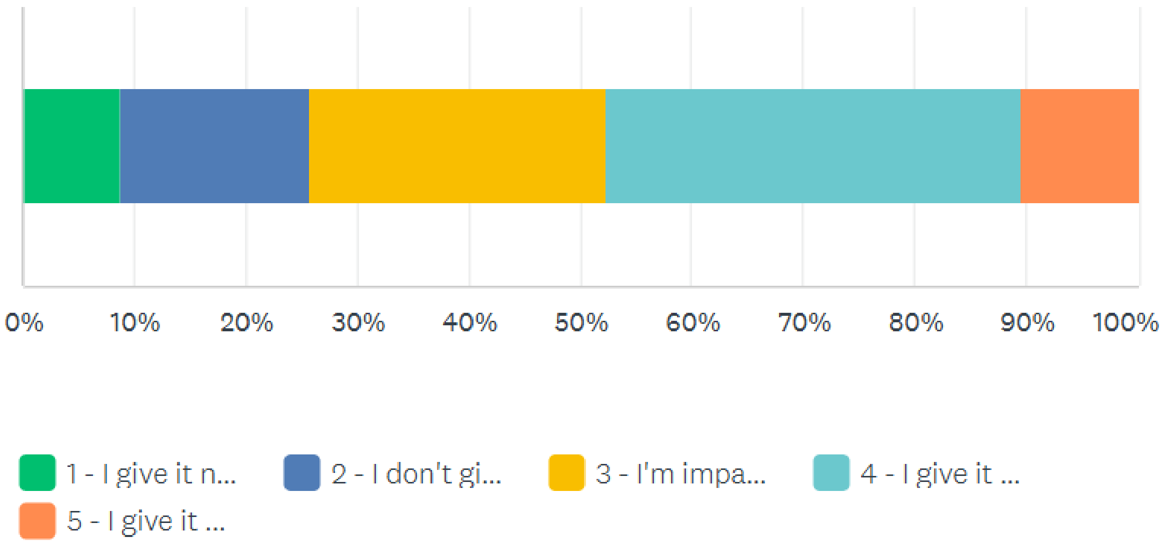
'I've stopped going away altogether'
Visitors - 2%
Lapsed Visitors - 3.5%
Non-Visitors - 5.4%

'I'll take more daytrips'
Visitors - 17.9%
Lapsed Visitors - 11.5%
Non-Visitors - 11.3%

Green Travel

All respondents were next asked to report how much of an impact the environment had on their travel plans. First we asked respondents to label how much of a role green travel plays in their decision-making process - from 1 ('I give it no consideration') to 5 ('I give it major consideration').

As in all other years, four was by some distance the most popular option, heading down to 3, 2, 5 and, finally, 1. These were split out across the Visitor categories, but the results were similar across all three - the below chart being that of Visitors.



One change was a drop in those selecting option 4, with that shortfall made up by an increase of two percentage points for those who chose option 3, and a one percentage point increase for those who gave a 1.

At the other end of the scale, the percentage of Visitors who chose 5 did see an increase, albeit a small one - from 9.9% to 10.4% year-on-year.

Despite widespread reports that eco-travel is an ever-growing concern, this hasn't seemed the case among our respondents. Asked how much of a difference green considerations will have to their booking habits over the coming 12 months, those who expected it to have a greater impact dropped from 18.9% to 14.1%. Meanwhile, those who expected it to be less of a deciding factor grew from 5.1% to 7.1%.

That said, the largest share was straight down the middle. Some 78.8% of Visitors in 2025 said they expected green travel considerations to remain about the same in the coming 12 months (up from the 76% who said the same last year).

The answer distributions for Lapsed and Non-Visitors were almost identical, with only very minor differences of little more than one percentage point.

Visitors

This section of the report details Visitors (i.e. those who had been to Portsmouth within the past two years), and the specific set of questions asked to them - which began by finding out what influenced them to come to Portsmouth in the first place.

Why Portsmouth?

Here, the answer distribution very closely followed those of recent years, with 'I had been before and enjoyed' coming out on top (and by some distance too, having been selected as a deciding factor by some 62.5% of respondents). The next most popular was 'I wanted to visit a specific attraction' on 27.3%. Last year these two answers polled 62.4% and 28.4% respectively.

Completing the top five responses were:
'I was visiting people I know' - 17.4%
'I was catching a ferry' - 14%
'I had been on the Visit Portsmouth website' - 13.2%

As in previous iterations, an 'other' box was also offered for people to add free text responses. They included:

'Visiting our son who is in the Navy'

'Visited an old family home'

'Viewing warships'

'Fascinated by the history of Portsmouth'

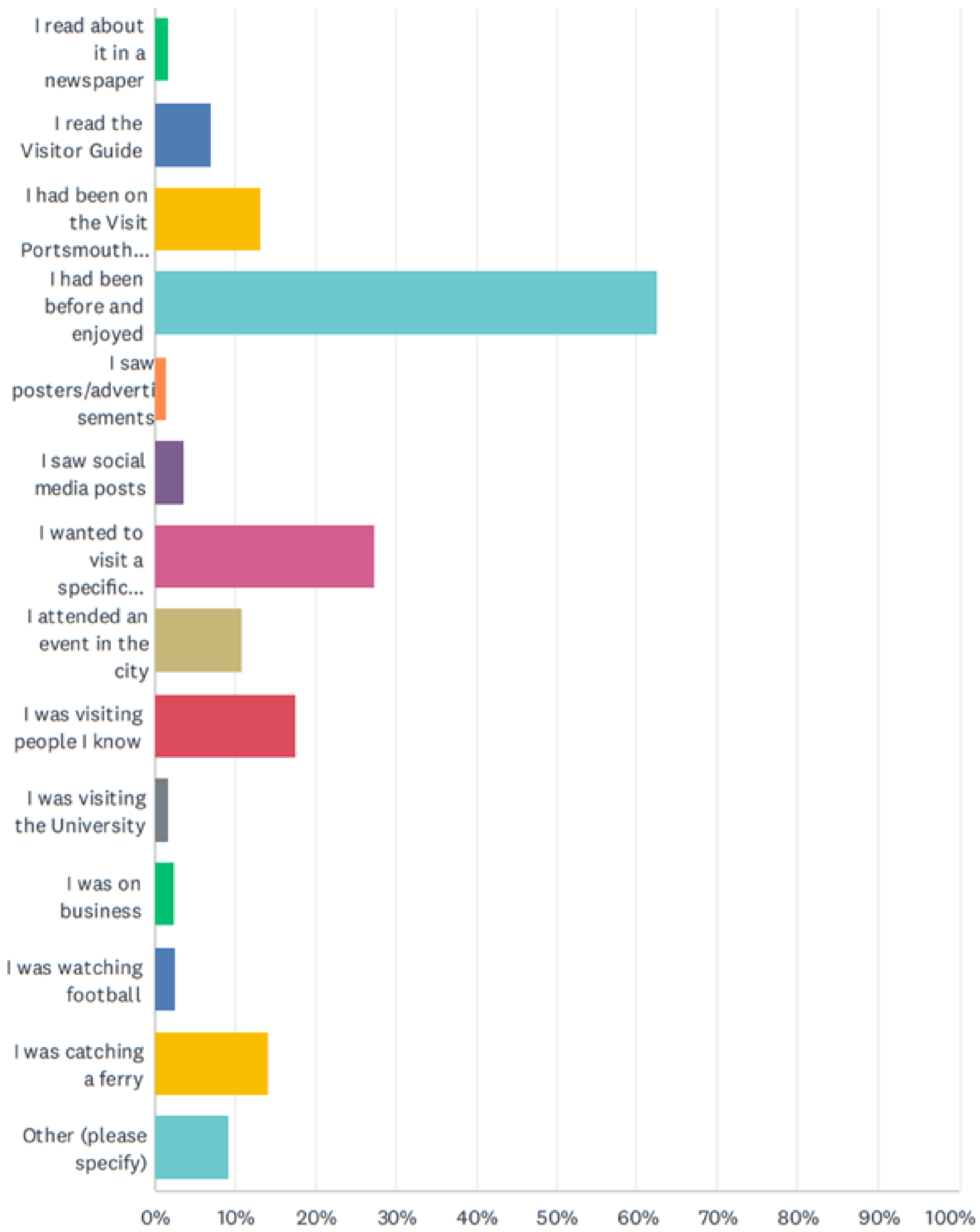
'I hadn't been before'

'Friends recommended'

'Went for breakfast in Royal Maritime Hotel before attending hospital appointment at QA to have new false eye made'

'Needed some time by the coast. It’s easy by train and affordable'

'Holiday Trade Show Utrecht (Vakantiebeurs)'

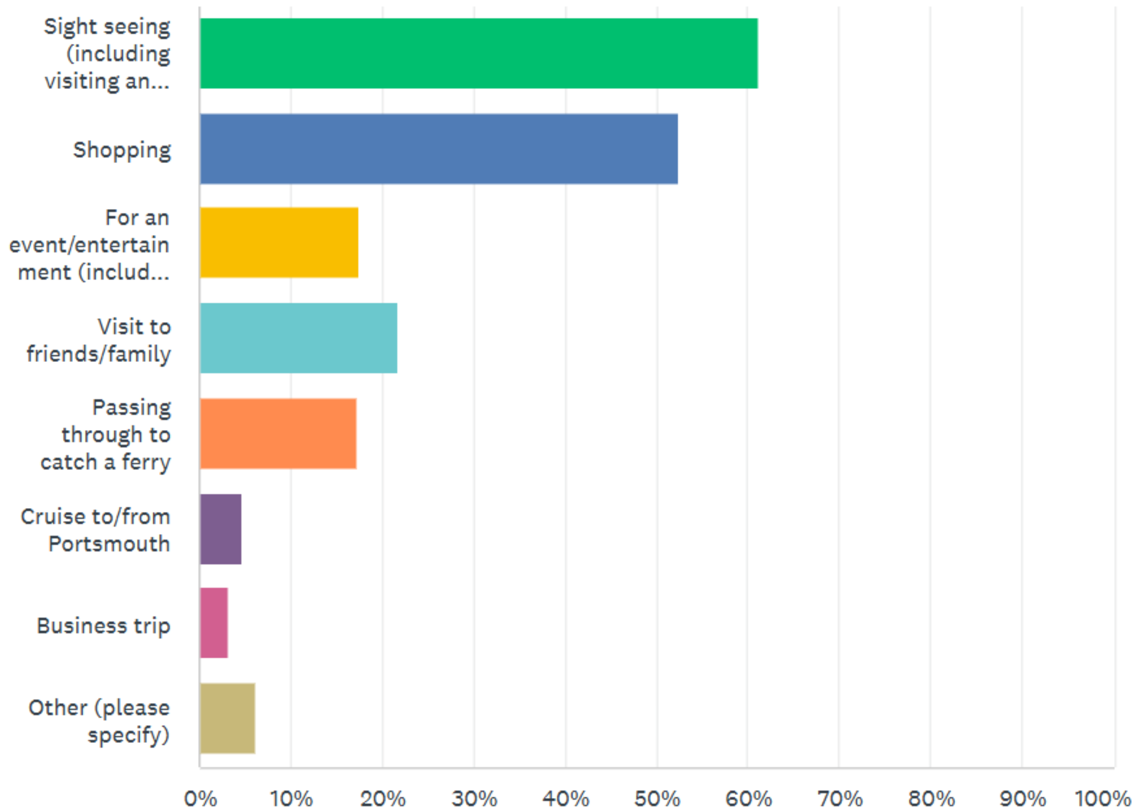


I read about it in a newspaper
I read the Visitor Guide
I had been on the Visit Portsmouth...
I had been before and enjoyed
I saw posters/advertisements
I saw social media posts
I wanted to visit a specific...
I attended an event in the city
I was visiting people I know
I was visiting the University
I was on business
I was watching football
I was catching a ferry
Other (please specify)
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%

The type of trip

Asked to categorise the kind of trip they took, most Visitors (61.3%) opted for 'Sightseeing'. Also popular was 'Shopping' at 52.4% (the total exceeding 100% as respondents could select all that applied). This represented a drop of 2.3 percentage points for sightseeing (which itself had come down the year before, too) and a 1.8 point increase for shopping (which also turned up well as a keyword in the What Three Words question).

Events and entertainment also saw sustained year-on-year growth, having polled 12.2% in 2023, 15.8% in 2024, and 17.5% this time around. Visiting friends and relatives was another popular choice, but saw a slight drop. This is a common trend, as post-pandemic activities like visiting loved ones soared in 2021, before a regression back to the mean came in more recent years.

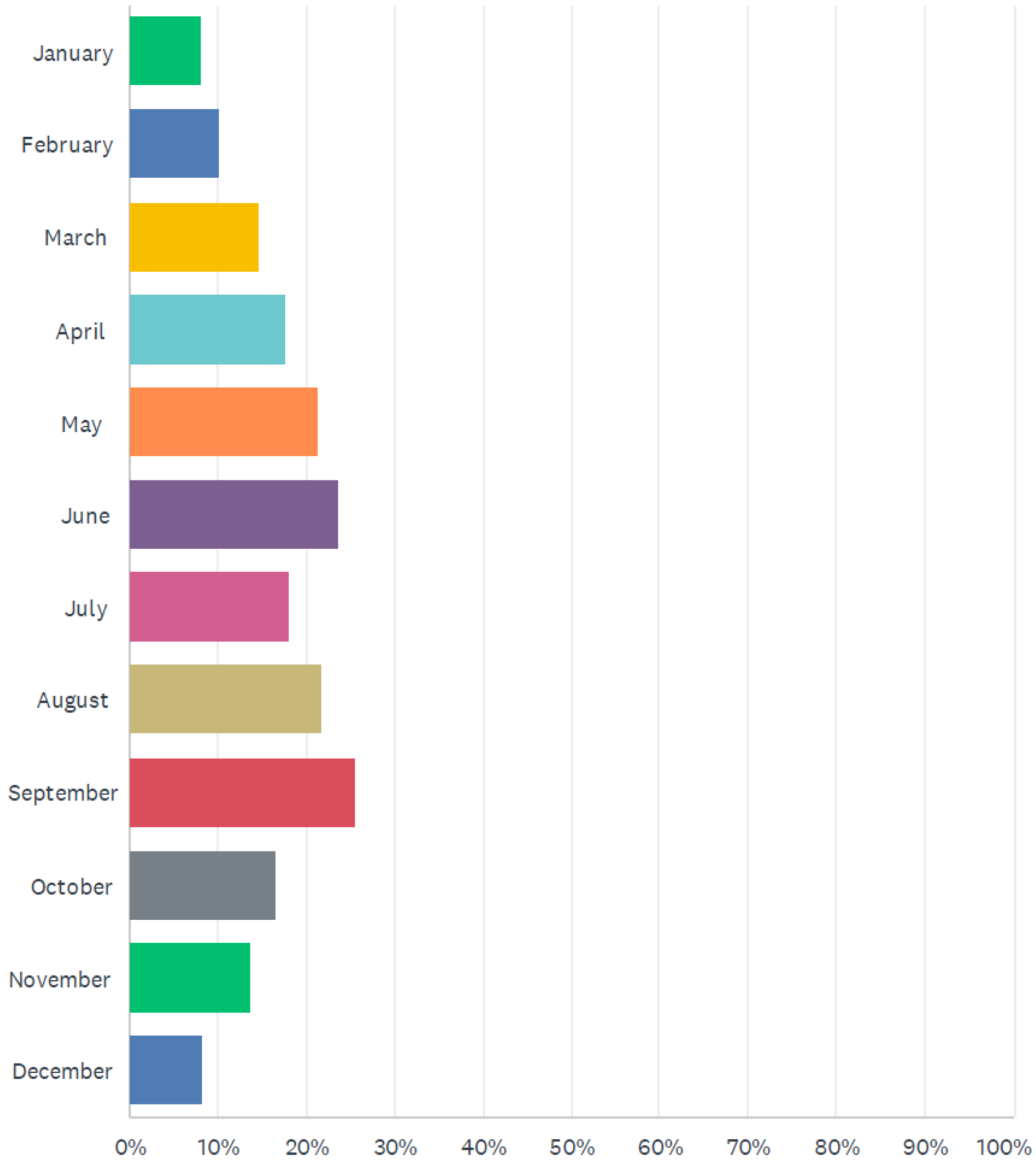


What time of year

Since 2022 we've asked Visitors when in the year they came on their trip. For all bar one of those years September proved the most popular month, and 2025 was no exception.

The trend shows a steady increase towards the summery months, then a slow decay towards the end of the year. Notable this time, though, was the drop in July and August, a time when figures would be widely expected to be at their peak.

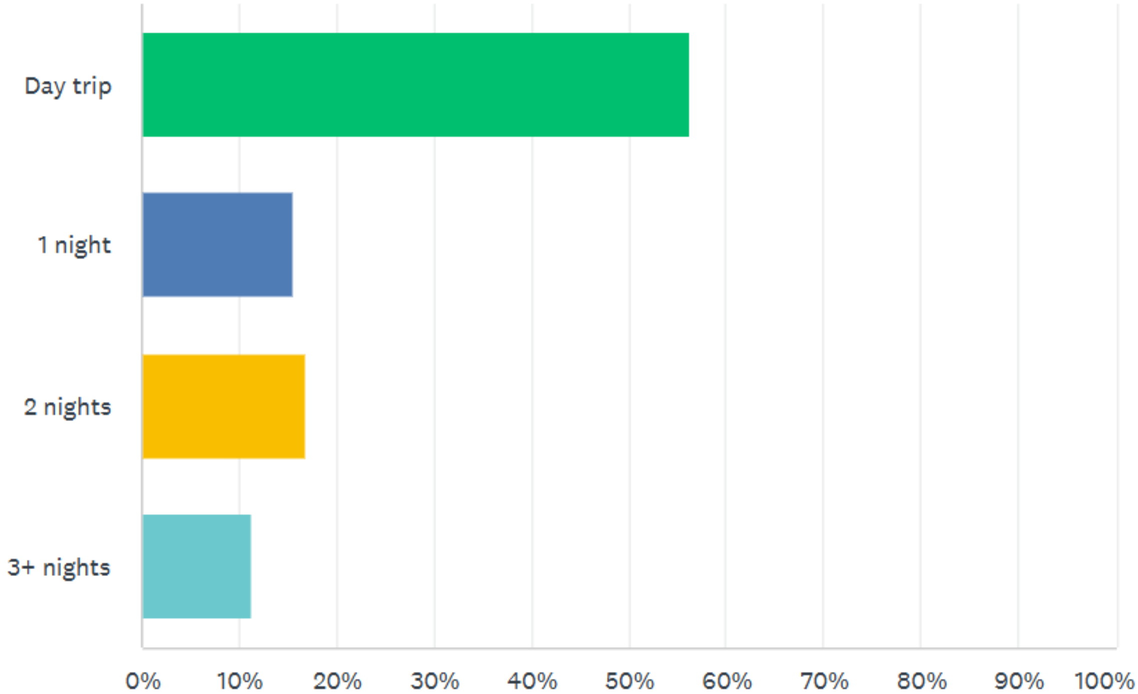
The reason for this could be explained by the demographics data, which (per page 38 of this report), shows that nearly three quarters of survey responders (73.2%) were aged 55 and above. As this is the group most likely to avoid summer holiday dates, it could go a long way to explaining the mid-summer drop off.



Visit duration

There was very little change on the visit duration front. When asked how long they stayed, the majority (56.3%) just took a day trip (marginally up on the 55.4% who said the same last year.

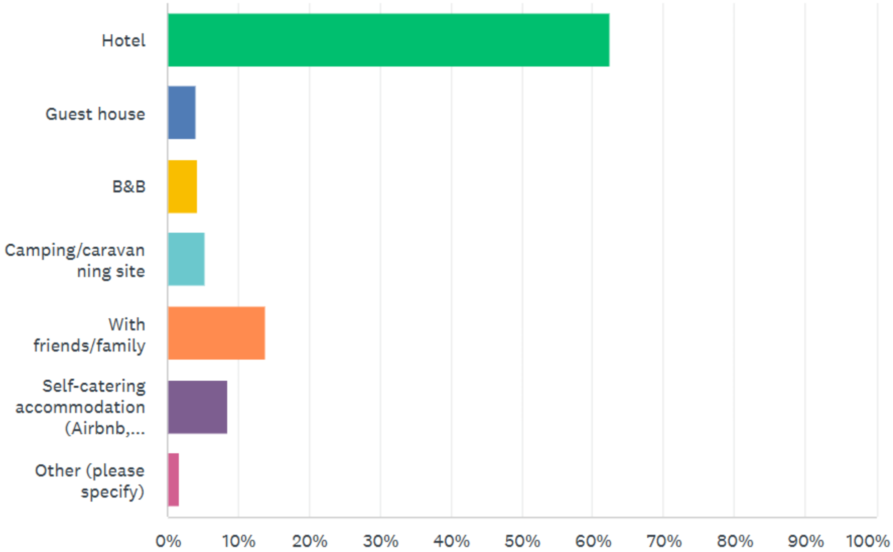
Again, two-night breaks remain slightly more popular than one-night, but the year-on-year shifts are little more than a percentage point either way.



Accommodation

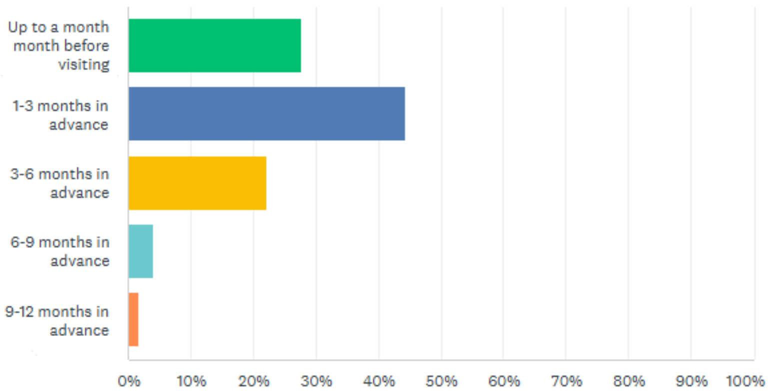
Those who reported staying overnight were then asked the type of accommodation they used. As in previous years, there was one clear favourite, with 62.4% of Visitors choosing hotels. However, it did represent a minor drop; the figure last year was 65.2%. This shortfall was made up by those who put 'guest house', which rose from 1.4% to 4.1%, and those staying in camping/caravan sites, which rose from 3.4% to 5.3%. However, these were of course much smaller figures and therefore more prone to larger swings with only small shift in actual response volumes.

Looking more widely, staying with friends and family proved second most popular overall at 13.8%, followed by self-catering options at 8.5%.



A new question asked for 2025 was how early Visitors booked their accommodation. The options available were: up to a month before visiting, 1-3 months in advance, 3-6 months in advance, 6-9 months in advance and 9-12 months in advance. An option for more than 12 months in advance was also offered but had zero responses.

The most common answer here was 1-3 months ahead, accounting for 44.4%. As 'within a month' and '3-6 months ahead' polled 27.6% and 22.2% respectively it means that some 94.2% of visitors booked their accommodation less than six months before travelling.

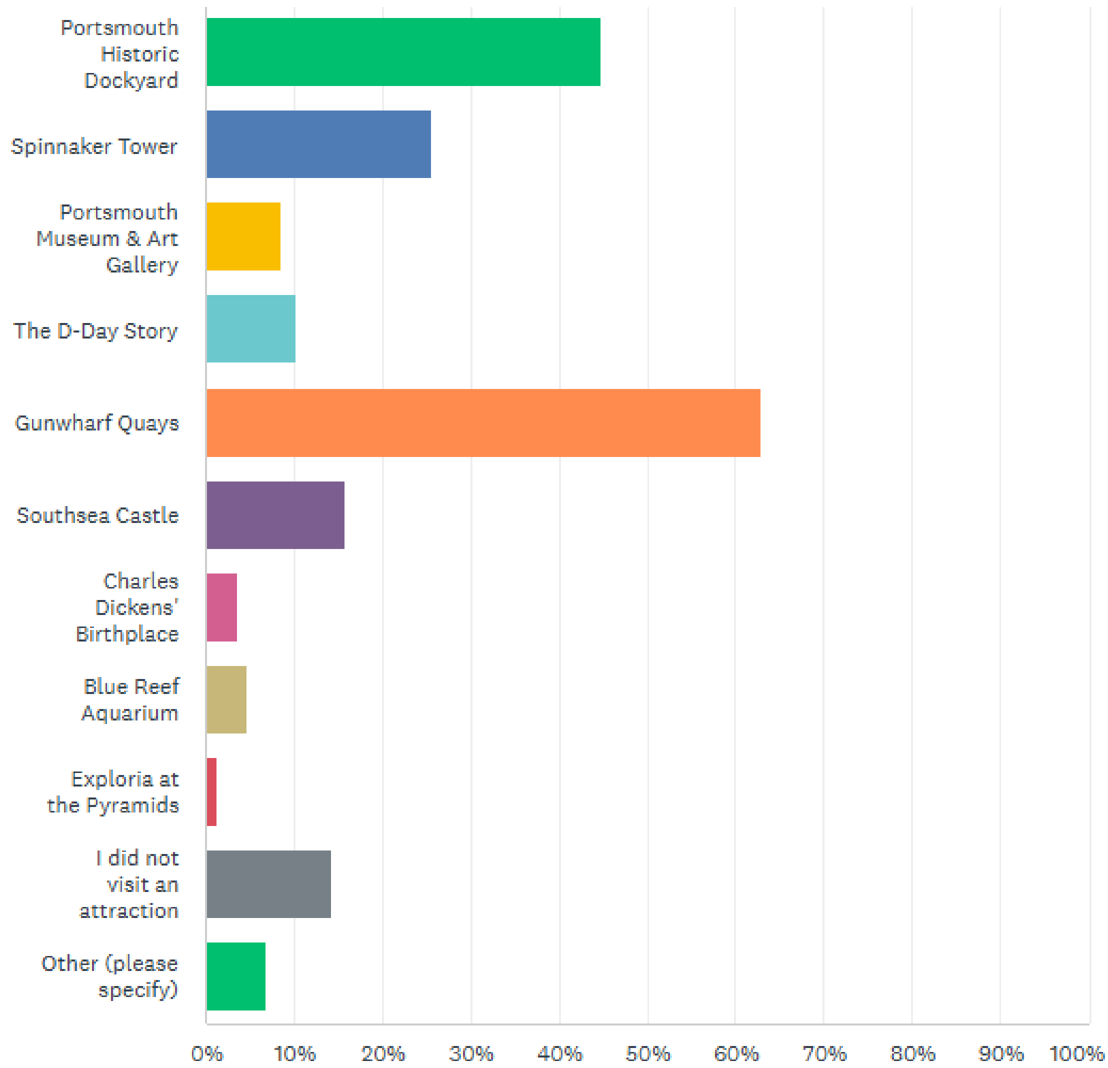


Attractions

Gunwharf Quays retained its top spot as the most-visited attraction, this time being a destination for 63% of Visitors (down slightly on the 64.9% who went in 2024, but up on the 62.6% who said the same in 2023.

Other top attractions were Portsmouth Historic Dockyard (44.8% - a fall from last year's 48.4%) and Spinnaker Tower (25.7% - a very marginal drop on last year's 26%).

Some of these declines can be accounted for by those who said 'I did not visit an attraction' which was up slightly from 13.1% to 14.2%. Some, however, wrote 'Gunwharf', 'ships' and other relevant comments in the 'Other' field, which may also be a consideration.

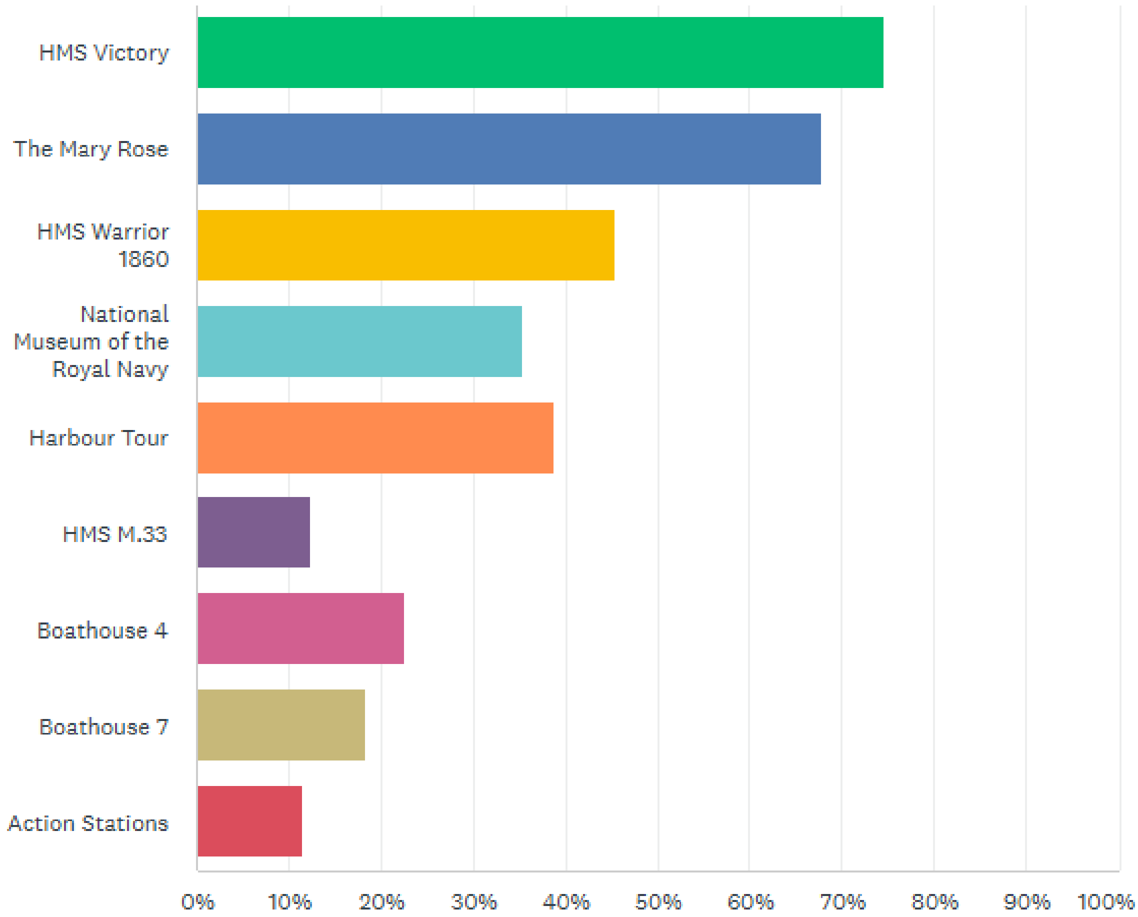


Dockyard Attractions

Those who reported visiting Portsmouth Historic Dockyard were given a follow-up question to ask what attractions specifically they visited. HMS Victory and The Mary Rose remained the two most popular options, polling 74.7% and 67.7% respectively.

The HMS Victory result is an especially noteworthy one, in light of Victory Live: The Big Repair making current visits a rather different prospect to how they may have been some years previously. Rather than put our Visitors off it seems to have had the opposite effect, with numbers of people going to Victory rising by 4.6 percentage points (it was at 70.1% in 2024).

Another good increase was 'Harbour tour', which rose from 35.2% to 38.8%.



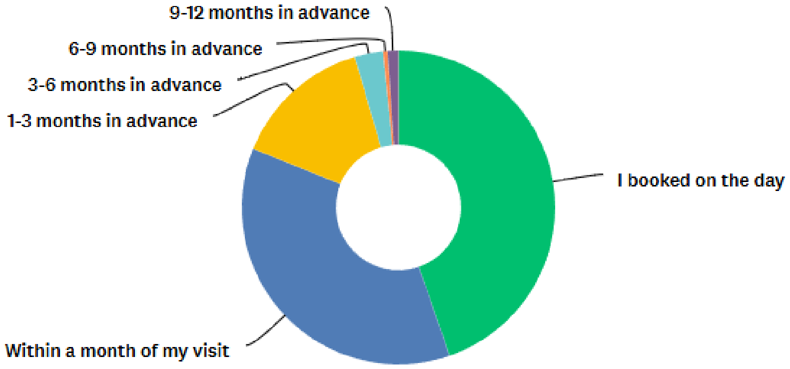
Attraction bookings

As with the accommodation booking dates, we also asked a new question this year to anyone who selected that they visited Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, Spinnaker Tower and The D-Day Story.

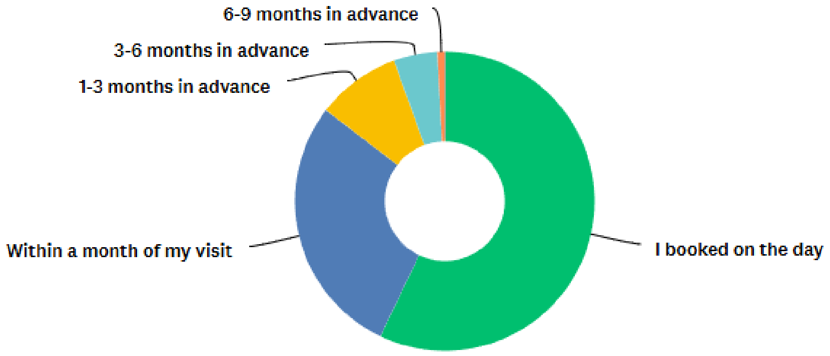
Here, respondents were asked when they booked their tickets, be that on the day, within a month of visiting, 1-3 months in advance, 3-6, 6-9, 9-12 months ahead, or more than a year before their visit.

Again, nobody said they booked over a year in advance, but all others showed a trend towards booking late. Even Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, which had the most advance booking of the three, saw 81.1% of Visitors book with little time to spare (44.7% doing so on the day and 36.4% doing so within a month of their visit).

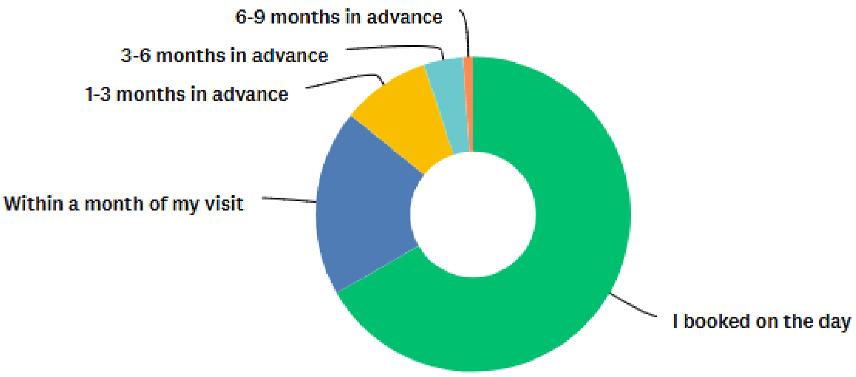
Portsmouth Historic Dockyard



Spinnaker Tower



The D-Day Story

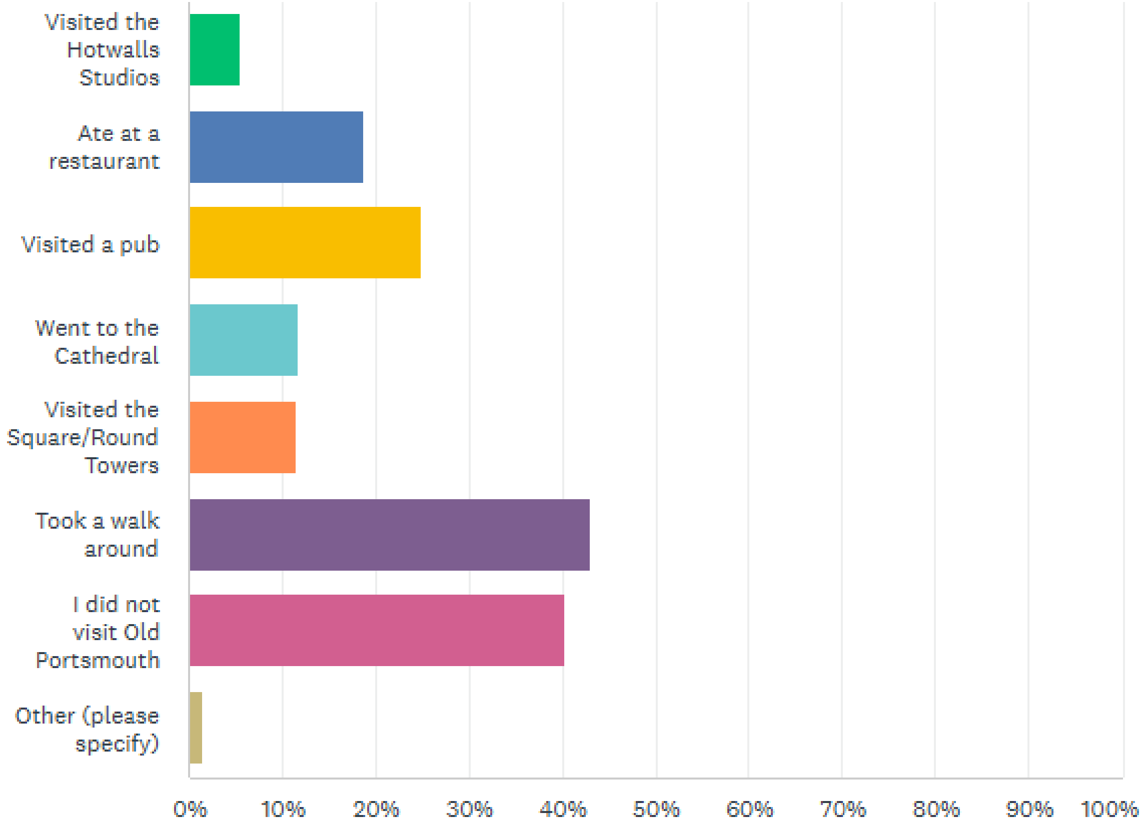


Old Portsmouth

Old Portsmouth appears to be growing in popularity among our Visitors, with the 'I did not visit Old Portsmouth' option continuing its yearly decline. From 42.85 who chose it in 2023, this option has dropped to 41.4% in 2024 and 40.4% in 2025.

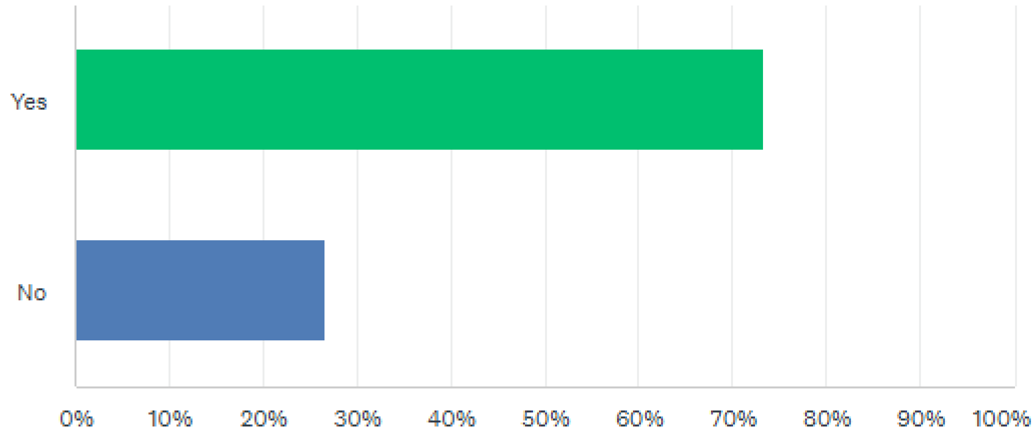
Now comfortably ahead is 'I took a walk around', which has seen an upward trend over that same period from 41.1% to 43.1%.

These remain the most popular options, with visiting the area's pubs and restaurants also having a decent showing - on 24.9% and 18.8% respectively.

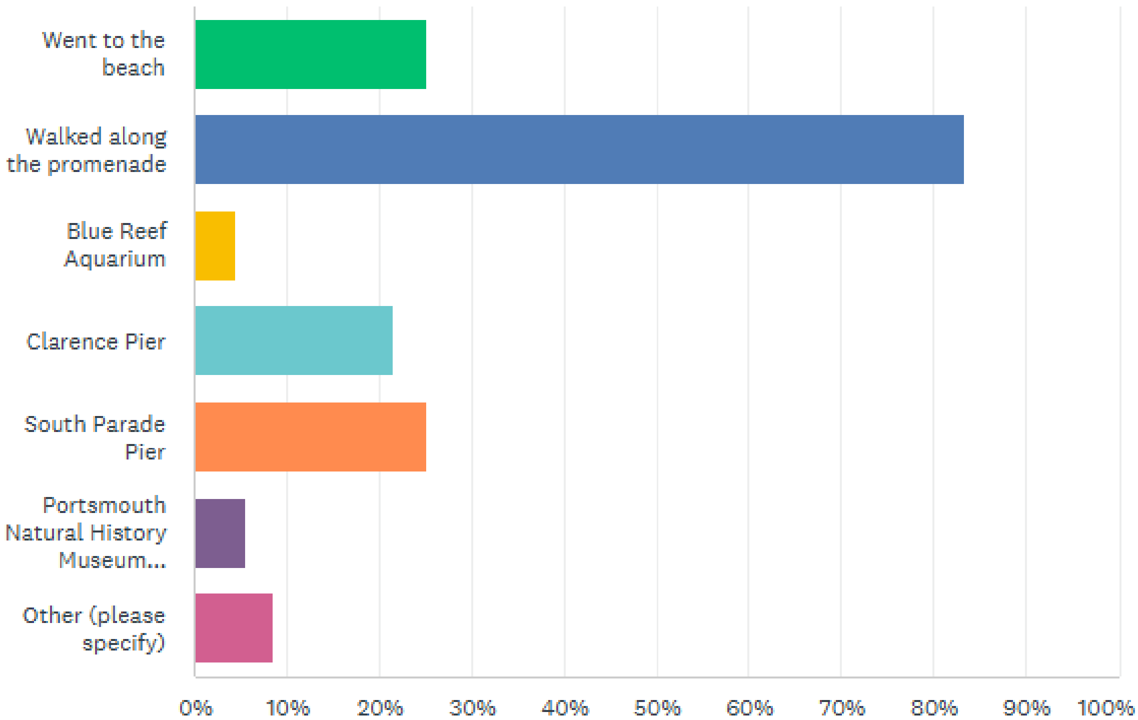


The seafront

The seafront remained a popular option for Visitors to Portsmouth, with more than 7 in every 10 Visitors (71.6%) finding time during their trip to head to the coast. That said, this has shown a downward trend in recent years; the figure was 73.3% in 2024 and 74.1% in 2023. Whilst this could also be a post-Covid regression to the mean (as this was one of the questions that saw the largest increase - for obvious reasons - during the height of the pandemic) it may also be partly due to ongoing coastal defence works making some beach and promenade areas temporarily inaccessible.



Surely enough 'Walked along the promenade' was one of the responses to see the largest year-on-year declines for the activities people did when they went to the seafront. It fell from 86.6% in 2024 to 83.3% this time, although that does still represent the most popular thing to do by quite some margin. Another big change was South Parade Pier, which was selected by 20.5% of Visitors in 2024 and 25.1% in 2025 - polling exactly the same as 'I went to the beach'.

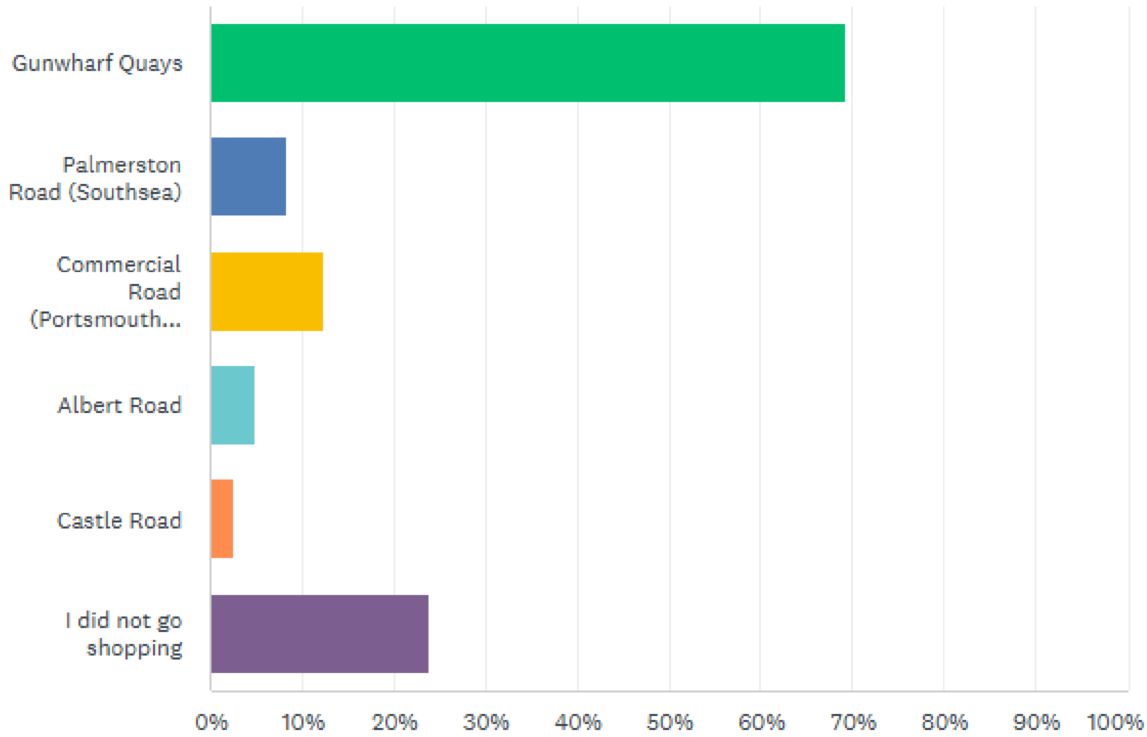


Shopping

Gunwharf Quays has long been the most popular shopping area in Portsmouth, and this year was no exception. Whilst its 69.4% vote share was slightly down on the 71.2% it polled in 2024, Gunwharf was still way ahead of its nearest competitor (Commercial Road, on 12.4%).

Further, if the 23.9% of respondents who ticked 'I did not go shopping' were removed, the results would show that 91.2% of those who shopped in Portsmouth went to Gunwharf Quays (and 16.3% for Commercial Road).

Palmerston Road continued its slow but steady year-on-year growth (6.6% in 2023, 7.7% in 2024 and 8.3% this time) but it's still way down on highs from the years when Debenhams and John Lewis were still present.



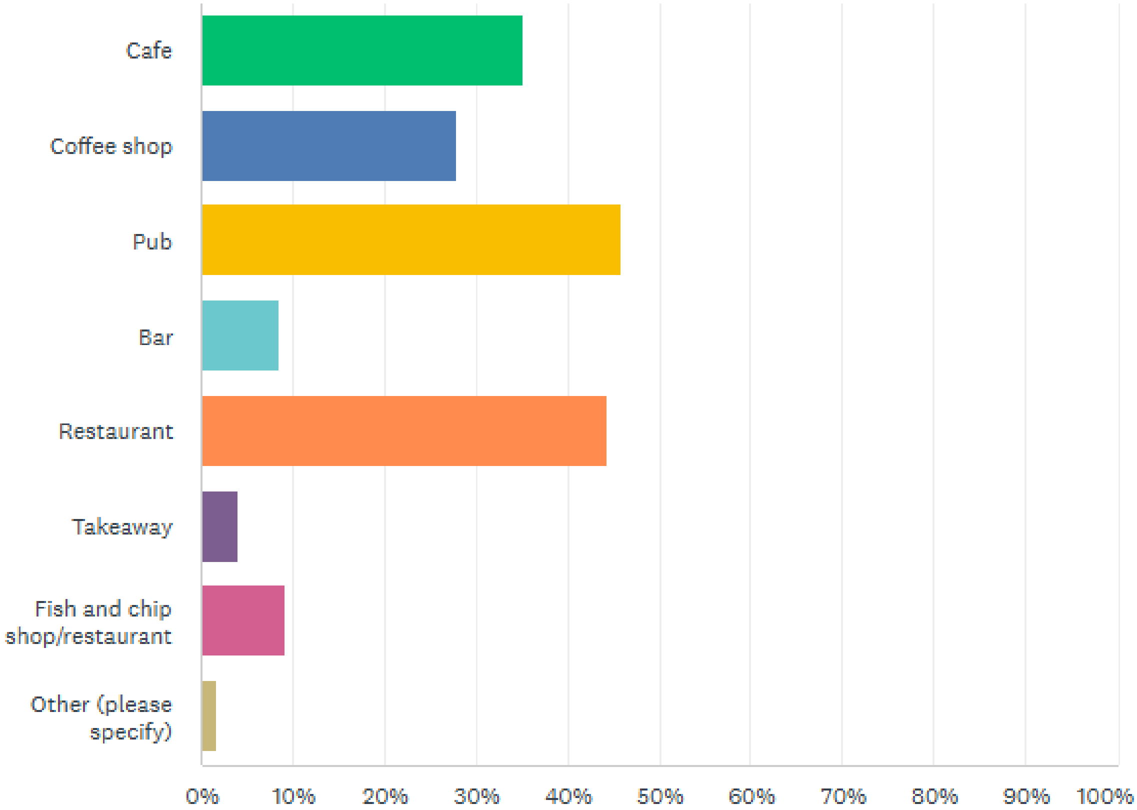
Food and drink

A trip to one of Portsmouth's many cafes, pubs, bars and restaurants is part of the attraction for many of our Visitors, with 78.2% having treated themselves to some food and drink out. Whilst still a vast majority, it does represent something of an annual decline, as the figure for the previous two years was quite steady around the 82.2% mark.

In the free text field where respondents were asked where they went, pubs proved popular but 'Wetherspoons' was no longer the most common entry. Top billing this time went to 'Spice Island'. Joint second were 'Spinnaker' and 'Spice Island' - although whilst the former probably means the cafe at the base of the Tower it could also be the one in Old Portsmouth with which it partly shares a name. This year Wetherspoons had to settle for fourth place, whilst many others in the top 10 were at Gunwharf Quays (among them Zizzi and Brasserie Blanc).

A word cloud of responses is below but note that results here may be somewhat skewed, with individual words being split, so 'Coffee' has a good showing, having been included in numerous answers (Costa Coffee, Southsea Coffee, The Coffee Cup and others).

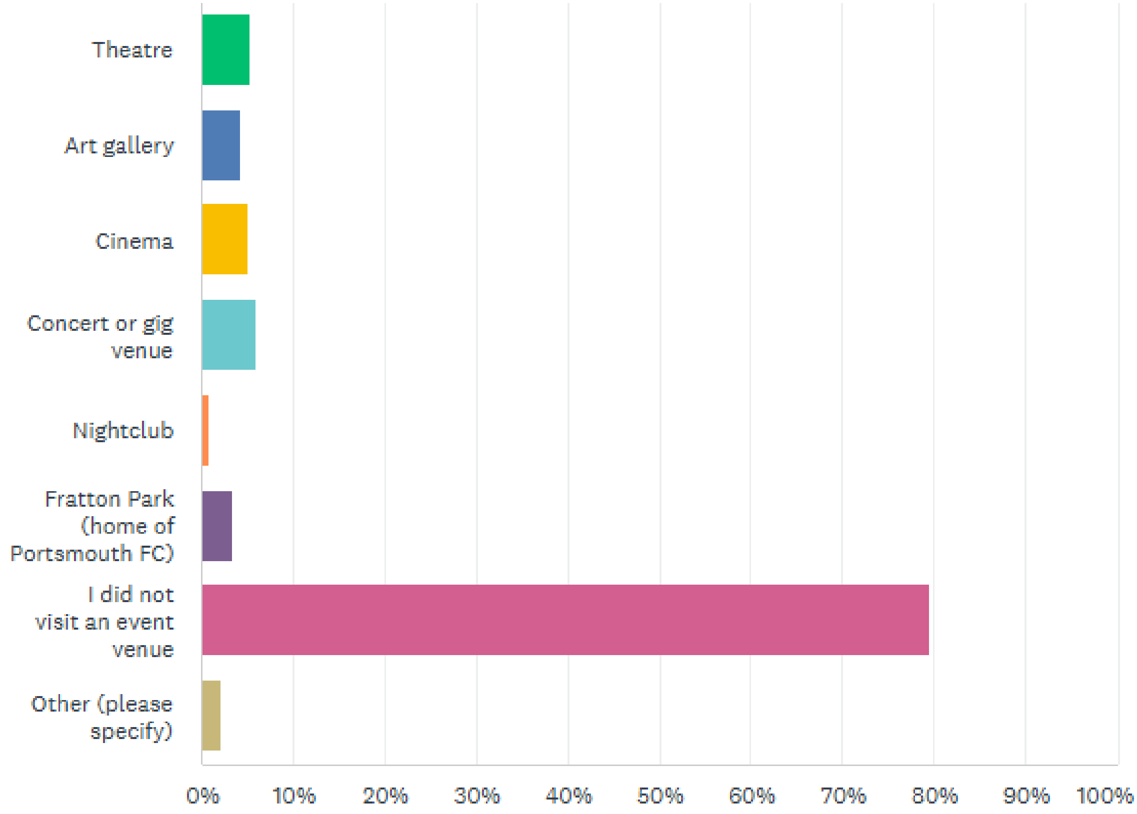
The popularity of Portsmouth's pubs was borne out when we asked Visitors to categorise the type of establishment(s) they visited. The answer spreads were virtually identical year-on-year, with pubs polling 45.8%, restaurants just behind on 44.3%, and cafes on 35.1%.



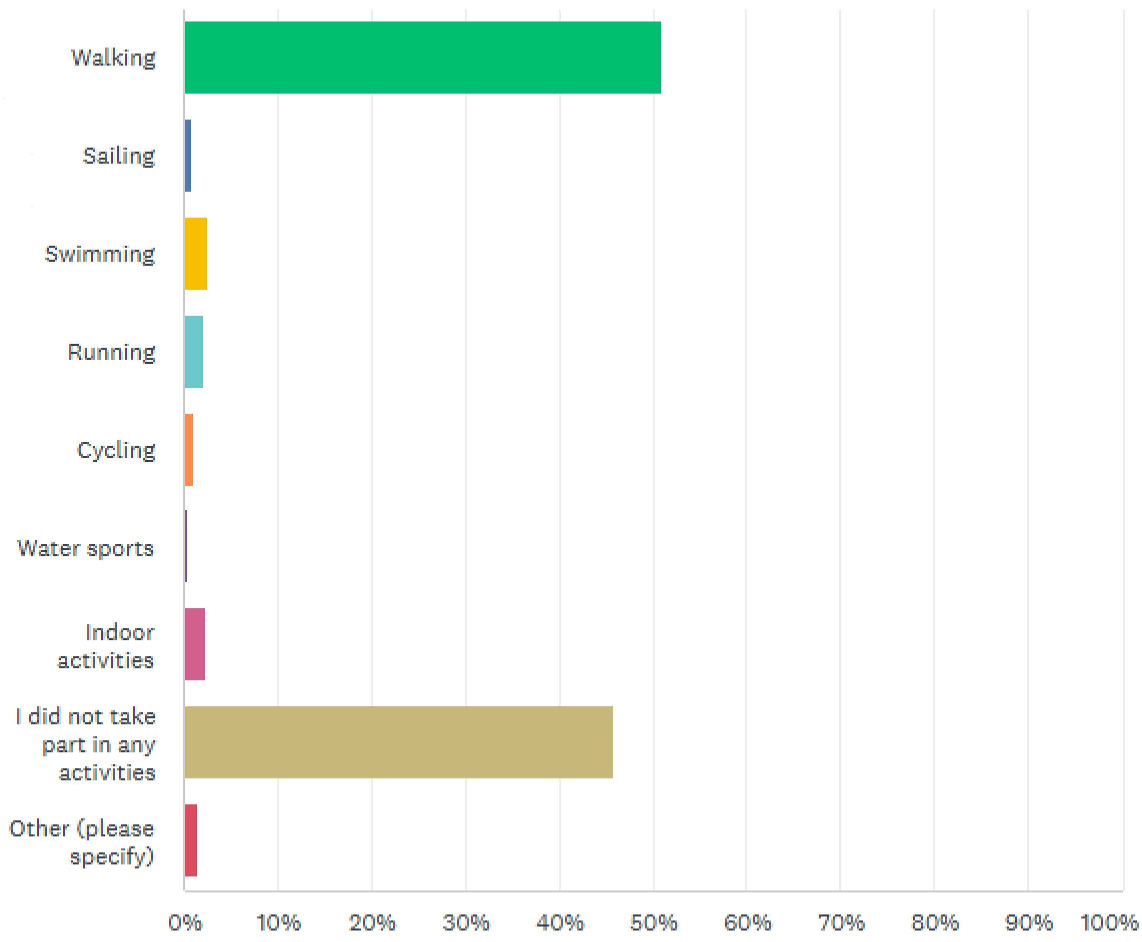
Venues and activities

We continue to ask Visitors whether they visited any cultural venues during their trip as some of these also come up in the free text 'Other' field for the Attractions question. However, as has been the case in recent years, the vast majority (79.6%) said they didn't attend any such venues during their trip. With those excluded, concert/gig venues (28.9%), theatres (26.4%) and cinemas (24.9%) proved the most popular.

Year-on-year comparisons haven't been included here as they may not be hugely illustrative - or, worse, give an erroneous impression - as the smaller dataset means that relatively minor changes in actual response numbers could have a disproportionately large effect on percentages.



There was a similar story when asking Visitors about the activities in which they participated. 'Walking again topped the bill, having been chosen by just over half (50.9%) of Visitors. Next was 'I did not take part in any activities' at 45.8% - the next most popular answer after these two was 'Swimming' on 2.6%.



Travel to Portsmouth

The green questions asked at the start of this survey showed an arguably regressive trend, as people reported less consideration for environmental concerns when booking their breaks, and didn't anticipate it to play any greater a role over the months ahead.

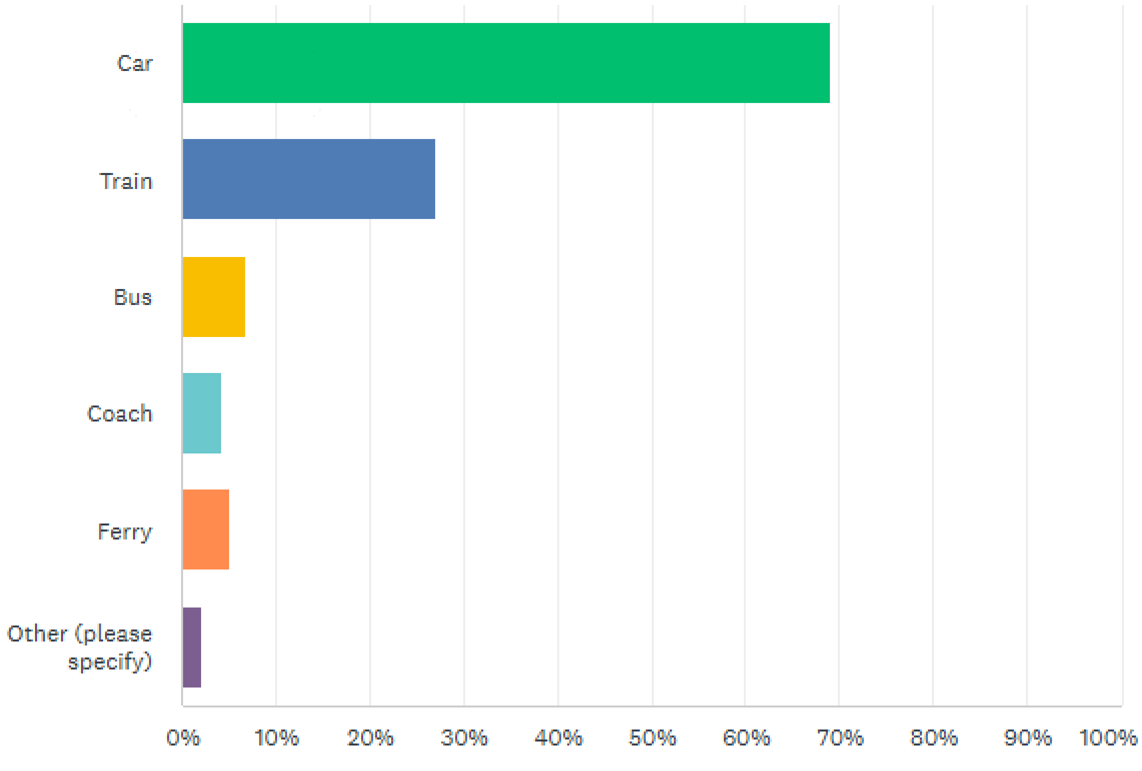
However, we are seeing a real shift in the way people actually travel into Portsmouth.

For the third consecutive year the number of Visitors coming into Portsmouth by car has dropped. Though it still makes up the largest share (by some distance), the total was 78.2% in 2023, then 73.6% in 2024 and 69% in 2025.

Over the same period rail travel has increased its share. This year it reached 27%, up from 2024's 25.8% and the 21.4% recorded in 2023.

2025 also saw an increase in those who reported taking a bus or coach to Portsmouth - responses that had been largely static in previous years.

As noted already, these figures combine to greater than 100% as some people either split their journeys or travelled to Portsmouth a number of times and took different options for each trip.



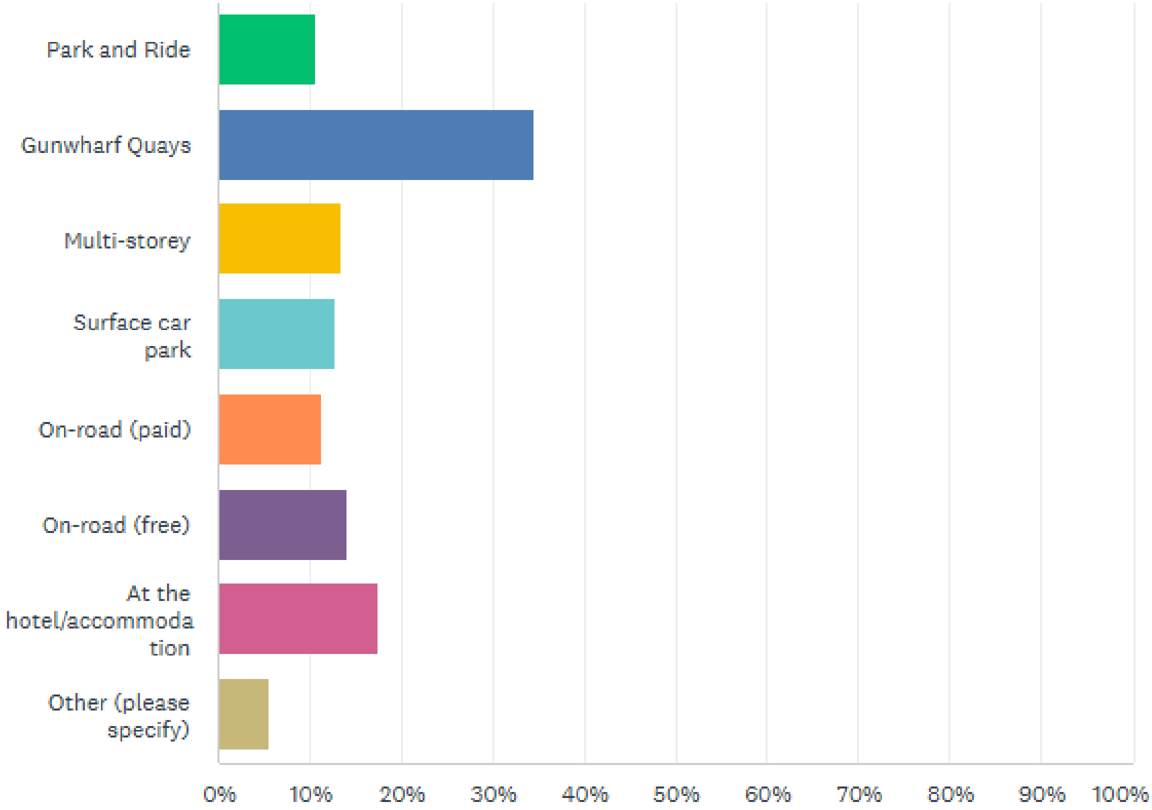
Parking

A secondary question was asked of those who reported driving into the city, to discover where they parked.

This is another question where there are minor percentage point shifts over the years, but the general answer spread remains unchanged.

Gunwharf Quays is the most popular option - almost certainly linked to it being the most-visited attraction. It was the chosen car park for 34.5% of Visitors, with the next most popular ('At the hotel/accommodation') at 17.4%.

Year-on-year, Park & Ride rose by 2%, growing from an 8.8% share in 2024 to 10.8% in 2025.



Most and least enjoyed

Next we asked Visitors to tell us what they enjoyed the most about their trip. As with last year, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard came out on top, being mentioned more than anything else. 'Dockyard' was the most frequently occurring word, followed by 'Historic'. The top five was completed by 'Shopping', 'History' and 'Gunwharf', though there's special mention for 'sea' and 'seafront' which were in sixth and seventh place, but if combined would have been top (then again, so would 'shopping' [third] and 'shops' [eighth]).

The below word cloud illustrates 75 of the most commonly occurring words (but, again, takes each word individually and cuts out 'stop words' [the, is, at, etc.] so some meaning may be stripped out).

In some of the longer-tail responses, a large number of people praised the general atmosphere of Portsmouth, the ease of getting around, and the variety of attractions, pubs and events on offer.

We also asked Visitors what they liked least, to get a view on some pinch points or challenges. Reassuringly, the most popular response to 'What did you enjoy the least' was 'Nothing'. Furthermore, variations on that theme also came out well, including 'N/A', 'Can't think of anything', and even 'Having to leave'.

Elsewhere, 'Parking' and 'Traffic' proved a challenge, coming up frequently (albeit with a few responders admitting that it's somewhat to be expected in a tourist destination). So too did 'Busy' and 'Crowds'/'Crowded'. Other responders, meanwhile, lambasted the weather - complaining of rain during their trip.

How much did you enjoy and will you be returning?

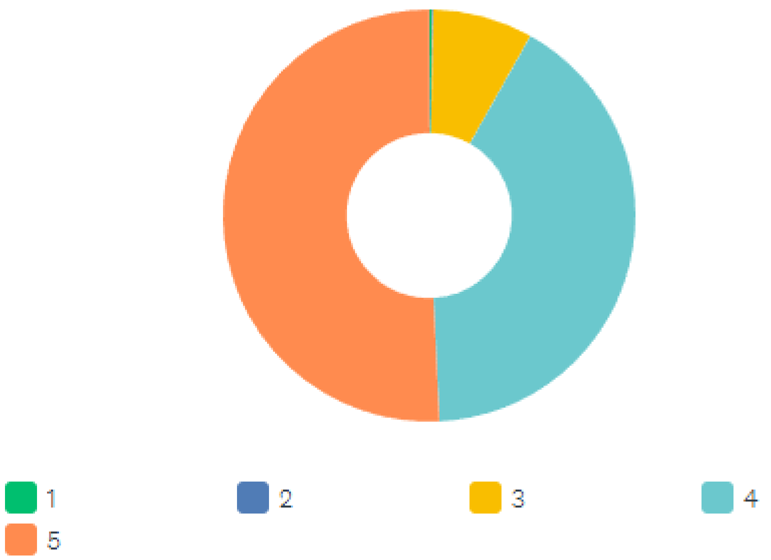
The final two questions we ask Visitors cover how much they enjoyed their trip and whether they'd be likely to return next year.

Using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being 'not at all' and 5 being 'very much', we first asked Visitors how much they enjoyed their recent trip(s).

This year saw - by some distance - the lowest ever negative score. Those who rated their trips at either a 1 or 2 accounted for just 0.3% of the total (0.2% gave a 1 rating, 0.1% opted for a 2). At the other end of the scale, 91.9% had a good time, with 41.1% giving a 4 and 50.8 giving the full 5.

Last year, the negative score was 1.2% and the positive one was 90.6%.

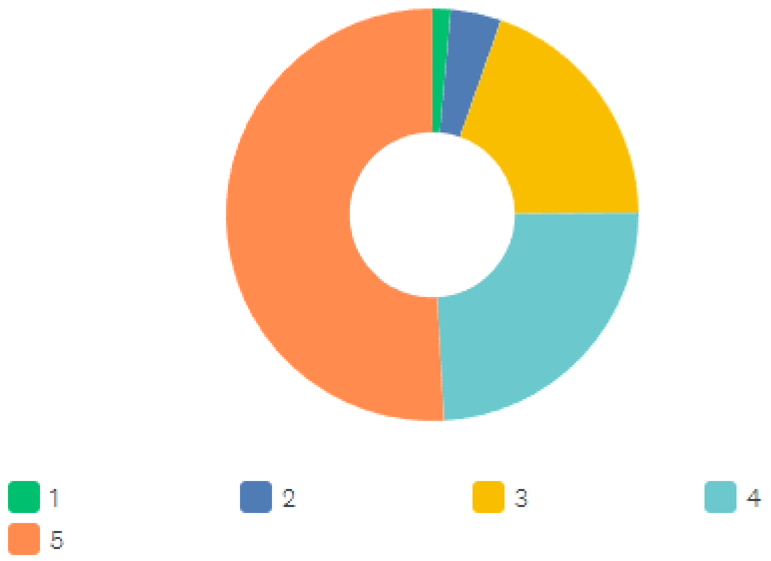
However, this year did see a minor drop in those awarding a 5 and an increase in those who went for 4. This means that the weighted average score for 2025 was 4.42 out of 5. This has been incredibly steady over recent years, being 4.43 in 2024 and 4.41 in 2023.



On the likelihood of returning (again, rated out of 5, with 1 being 'very unlikely' and 5 being 'extremely likely'), more than three quarters of Visitors gave a positive score, comprising 50.9% who gave the full 5, and a further 24.3% who chose a 4.

At the other end of the scale, 5.4% gave a negative score, with 1.4% selecting a 1 and 4% going for a 2.

Combined, this puts the weighted average score at 4.19 - a slight drop on last year which was 4.26, but up on the 4.13 recorded in 2023.



Lapsed Visitors

Why haven't you visited?

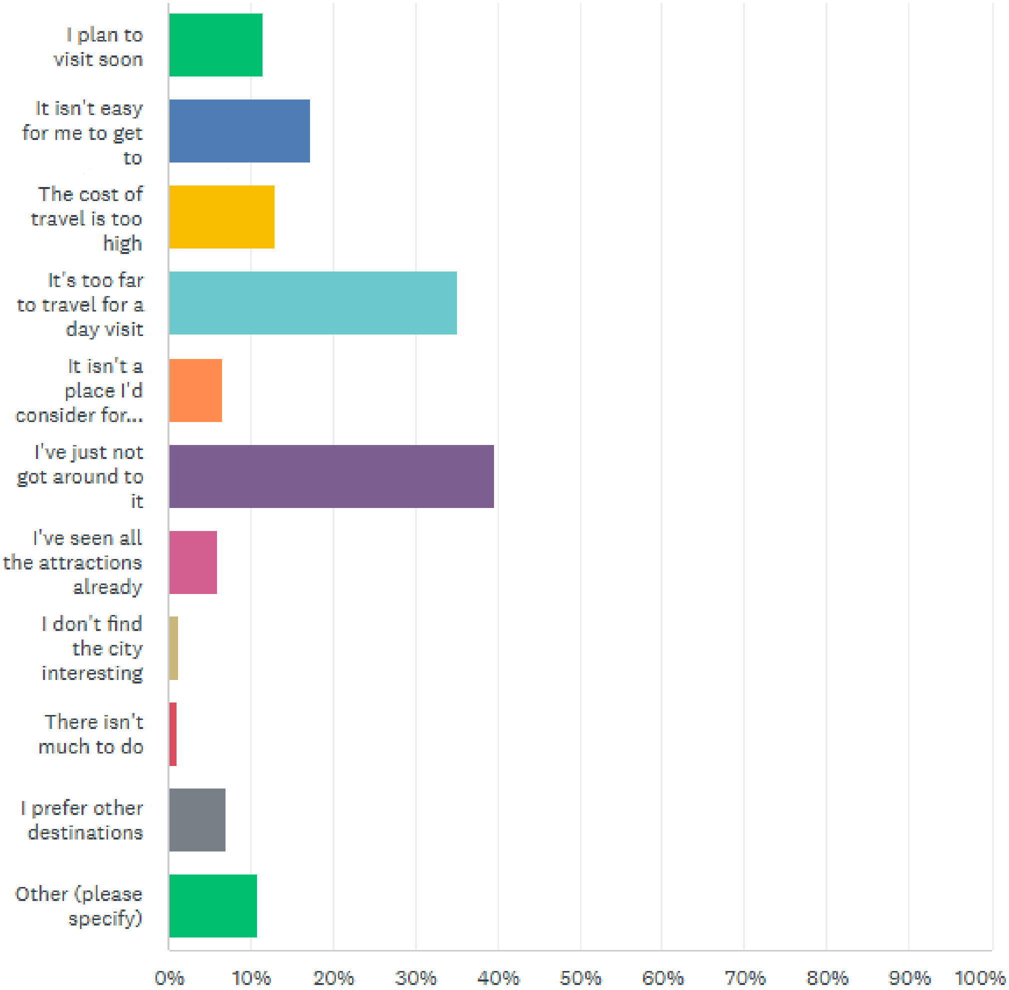
We begin the question deck for Lapsed Visitors (who last visited more than two but less than ten years ago) by finding out why they've not been to the city more recently.

Last year saw the addition of two new response options after they appeared frequently in the 'Other' free text field: 'It's too far to travel for a day visit' and 'I've just not got round to it yet'. In their debut last year these became the two most popular responses, and that continued in 2025.

Those who've simply not got round to returning topped the charts, being selected by 39.7% of Lapsed Visitors. Close behind was those who said Portsmouth was slightly too far to come regularly, on 35.3%. Last year these polled similarly: 40.9% and 35% respectively.

Beyond these two the next most popular was 'It isn't easy for me to get to' on 17.2%.

In the free text field for 'Other', the most common responses involved financial challenges, mobility issues and general life commitments. One responder, meanwhile, wrote: 'I live in Inverness', which is fair enough.



Where do you prefer instead?

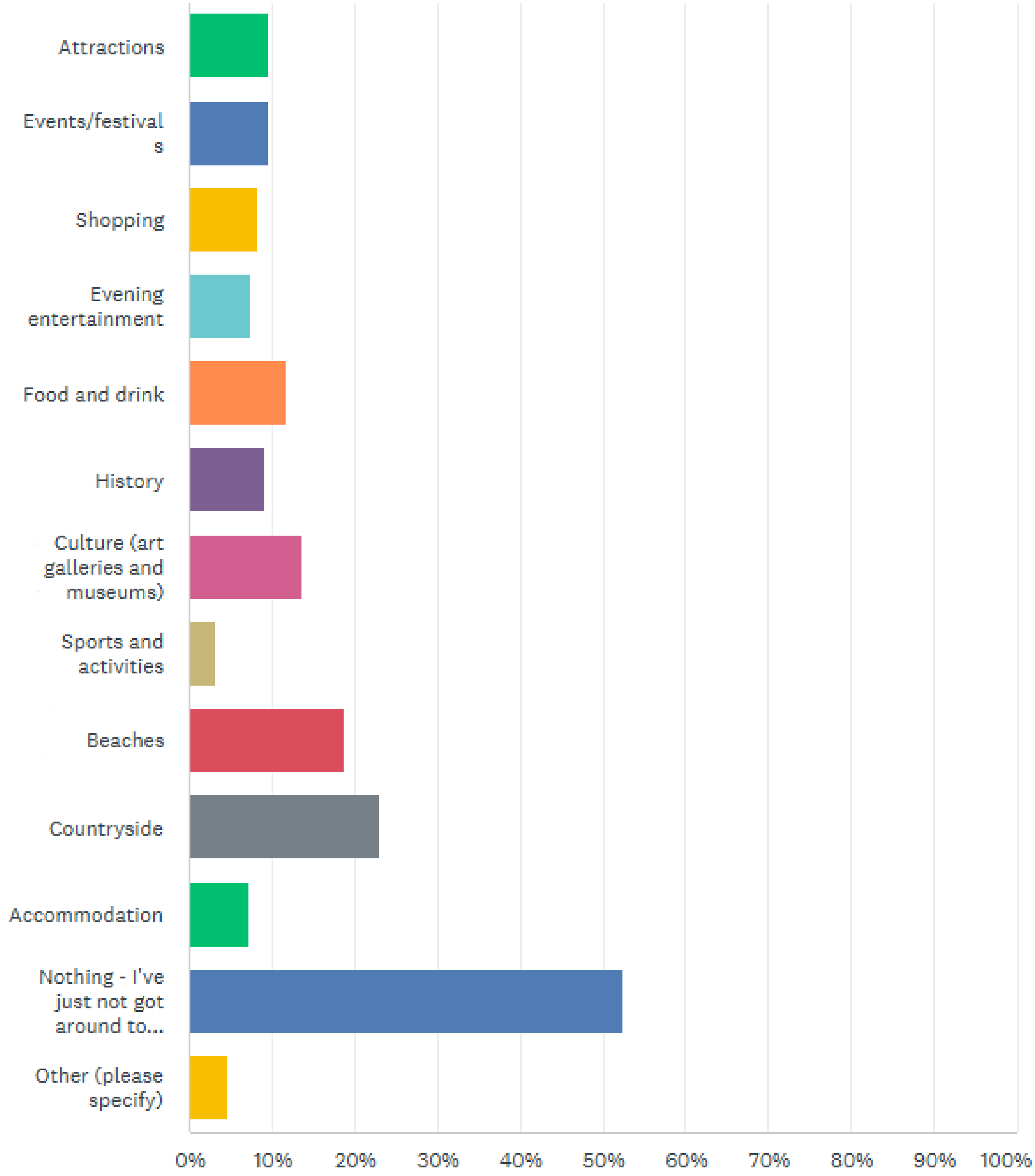
We followed the first question up with a free text field asking Lapsed Visitors where they might prefer to go instead. 'Cornwall' and 'Devon' placed joint top last year but this time have been leapfrogged by 'London'. In fact, 'Devon' dropped to fourth, with 'Brighton' joining 'Cornwall in joint second place. Further away places had a good showing - 'Scotland' and 'Europe' amongst them - whilst nearer home we saw 'New Forest' and Bournemouth' come up (although by this point we're getting into low single-figure percentages).

What can you get elsewhere?

Next we sought to discover what specifically the other destinations offered that proved a greater pull than Portsmouth. As with the 'Why not...' question, last year saw the addition of 'Nothing, I've just not got around to it' after that came up frequently in the free text 'Other' field.

As before, it was this latest addition that proved most popular, being cited by over half (52.5%) of Lapsed Visitors. Of the remaining options, 'Countryside' (22.9%), 'Beaches' (18.8%) and 'Culture' (13.6%) had the best showing.

There were minor variations between answers year-on-year, but the response spread was largely identical.



What did you enjoy last time?

Of course, Lapsed Visitors had been to Portsmouth not that long ago, so we asked them what it was they enjoyed, to find out what sticks in the memory. The results here somewhat mirror the 'What three words' and 'Attractions' questions, with particularly good showings for 'Dockyard', 'Shopping', 'Historic', 'Spinnaker Tower' and 'Mary Rose'.

These attraction-based keywords came out on top in terms of volume, but in the longer-tail answers a lot of people wrote more about experiences and feelings, commending the time spent outdoors, trips to the seafront, and eating out.

What could tempt you back?

Our Lapsed Visitor question bank concluded by asking responders what would tempt them to return. As in other years, a large volume of the responses fall into one of three broad categories: time, money and circumstances.

Many people report wanting to return to Portsmouth - or even said they were actively planning to - but as yet hadn't found the time to do so. Others cite financial concerns, either with ongoing cost of living worries, or mentioning specific issues like expensive rail fares or needing accommodation to fit everything in.

The final hurdle is circumstance, with Lapsed Visitors mentioning ill health, new caring responsibilities, or simply living too far away for it to be an easy trip to make.

Others, meanwhile, may have it easier but want to explore new places for now - perhaps best summed up by the person who simply wrote: 'I love Portsmouth but it's a big world'.

With many of these answers being longer form, or quite contextual in their very nature, a word cloud wouldn't be as illustrative, so has not been included here.

Non-Visitors

Why not Portsmouth?

Non-Visitors (those who have never been to Portsmouth, or last visited more than ten years ago) were first asked why they had not been.

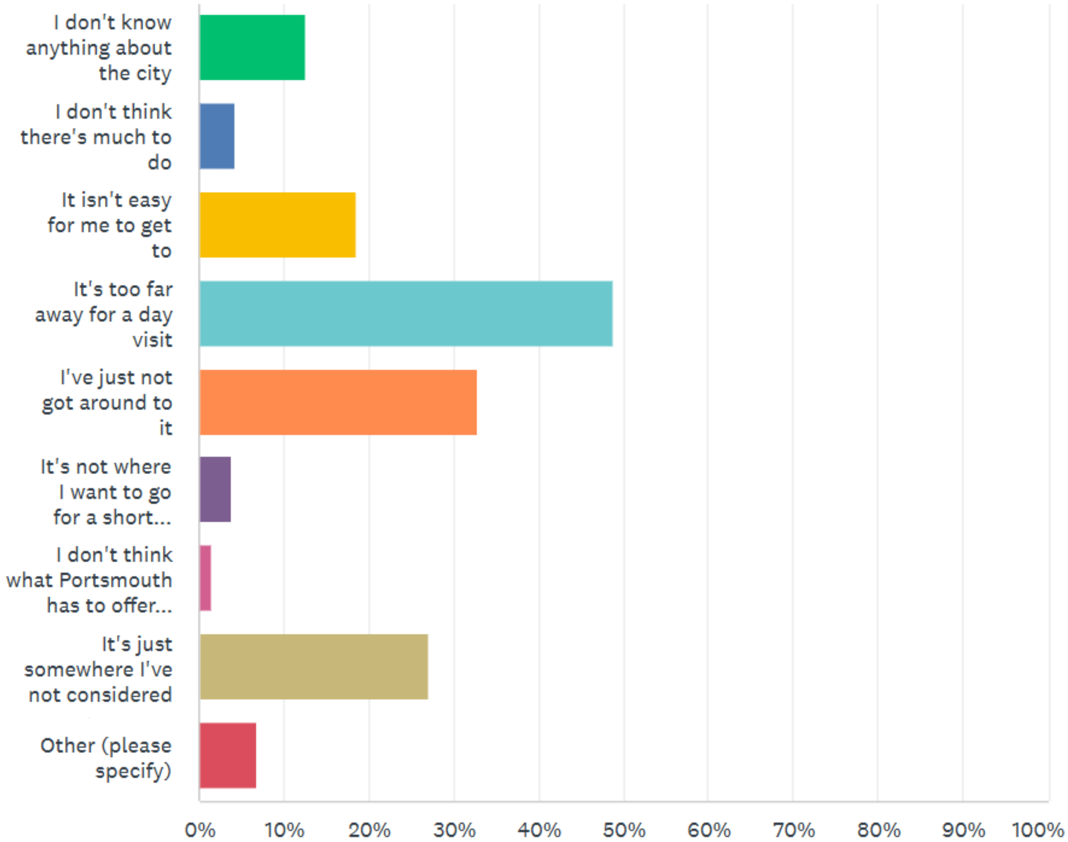
This year we added additional options into the answer deck, so the year-on-year changes are rather different. Having noted the number of Lapsed Visitors saying 'I've just not got round to it yet' (first in the free text 'Other' field, then later selecting that as one of the provided answers), it was added here as well.

Whilst for Non-Visitors the issue of not getting around to it didn't spring quite to the top of the pile, it did come in second place, polling 32.9%. The most popular answer was 'It's too far away for a day visit' on 48.9%.

Of the questions that were in last year's deck, there was a notable drop in those who selected 'I don't know anything about the city', which dropped by over half in just 12 months, from 25.5% to 12.6%.

Another big drop was 'It's just somewhere I've not considered', which fell from 40% to 27.2% (although this could be partially attributed to the question having some similarities to the new one about not getting around to a visit just yet).

Answers provided in the 'Other' free text box continued in the same vein as previous questions, with the majority citing hurdles in the form of cost, health and geography.

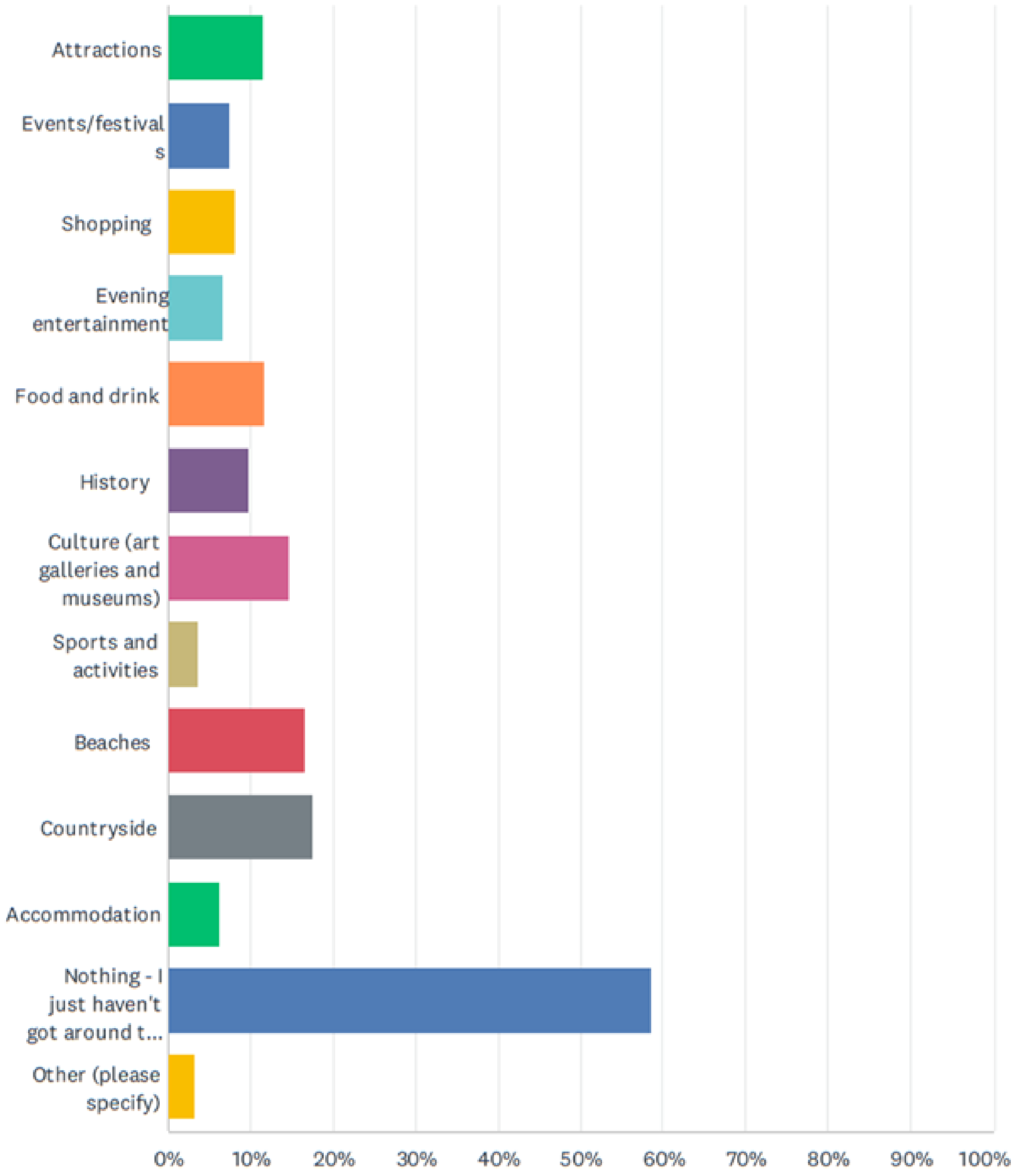


What can you get more of elsewhere?

When drilling down into the specifics of what Non-Visitors feel they can get more of at other destinations, we also added a new option ('Nothing - I just haven't got round to visiting yet') as this, too, appeared regularly as an 'Other' option. It became by far the most popular response - despite being buried somewhat among other answers - polling 58.7%.

The next most popular answer was 'Countryside' at 17.5%, followed by 'Beaches' (16.7%) and 'Culture' (14.9%). Notably, the number of people who said they can get more or better Attractions elsewhere saw a relative drop, as this was in third place last year but fell away in the placings during 2025.

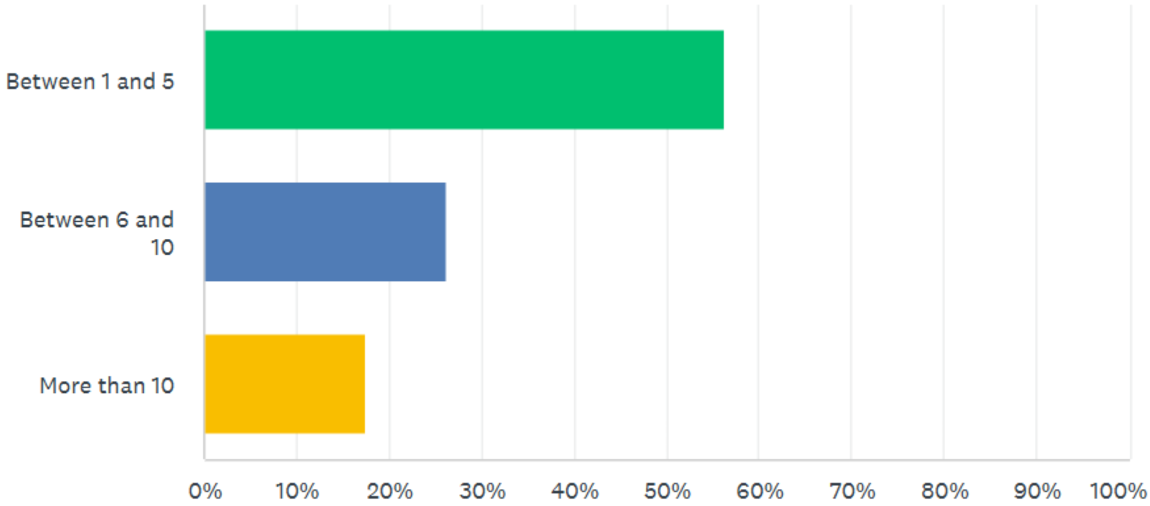
There weren't enough responses in the 'Other' field to make any statistical inferences, but 'Nothing' cropped up more than anything else.



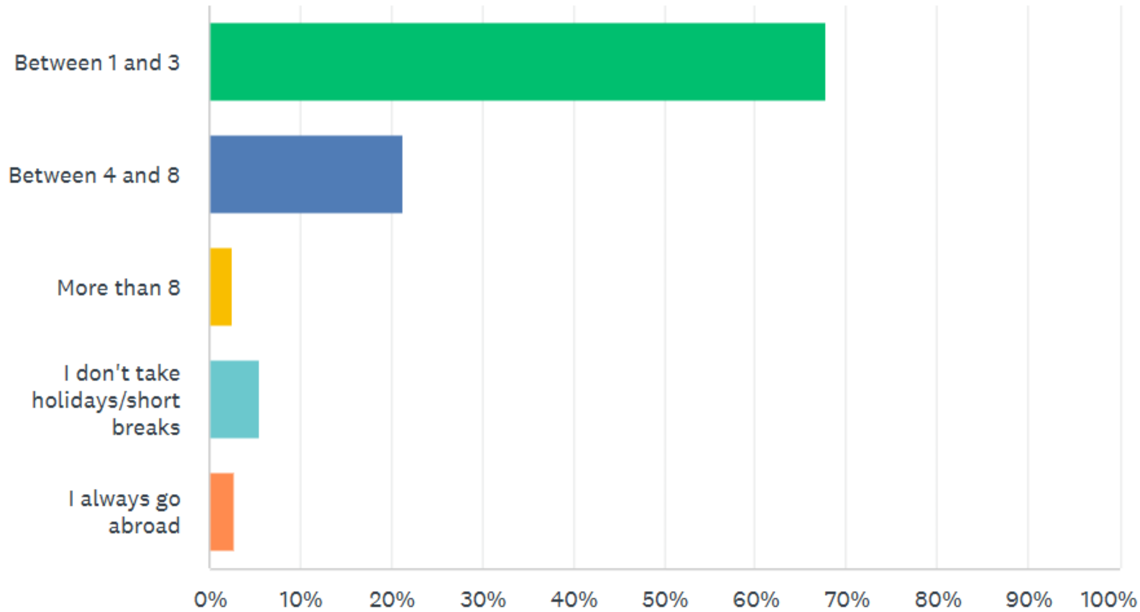
How many trips do you take?

Non-Visitors were also asked how many day trips and short breaks/holidays they take in the UK each year.

For day trips, the majority of respondents (56.3%) take just one to five, with a further 26.2% taking between six and ten. Only 17.5% take more. Whilst year-on-year changes were slight (the overall trend remained unchanged) it did show a minor shift towards additional daytrips taken, with 'More than 10' rising from its 14.1% vote share last year, whilst the other two dropped slightly.

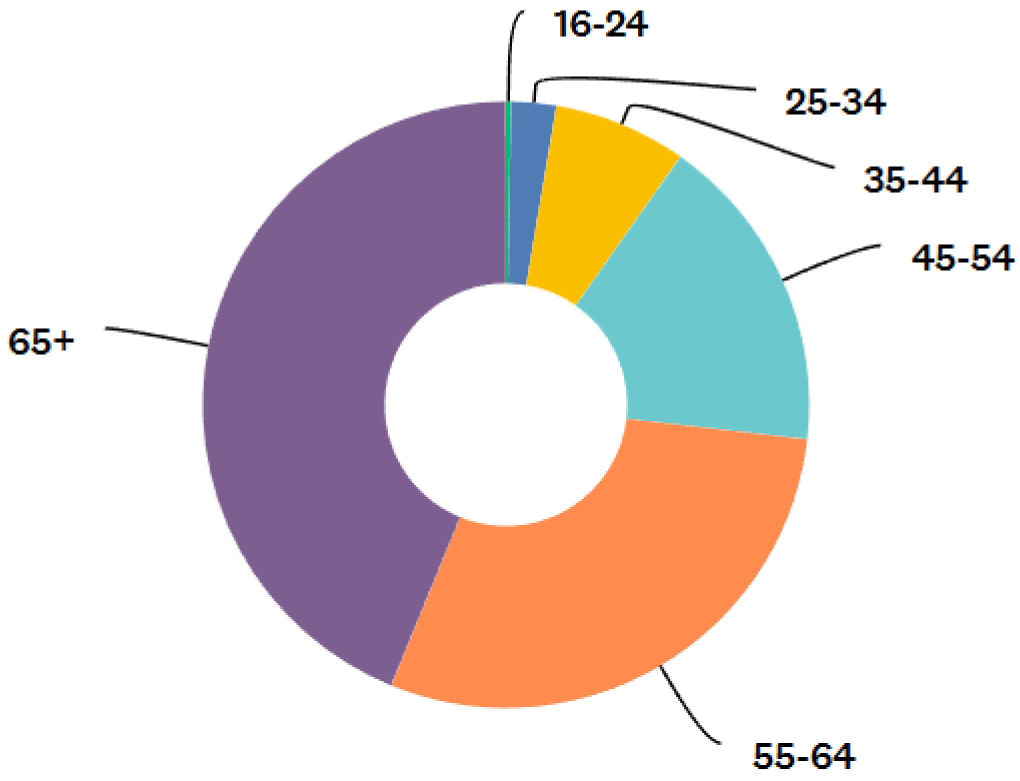


There was a similar story where it comes to short breaks/holidays. Whilst the majority (67.7%) take one to three in a year, this was down slightly year-on-year, with the shortfall made up by increases in those who take between four and eight holidays (21.4% in 2025). The other answer options in this question deck remained low - including the number of people who reported always going abroad, despite this being mentioned in some of the free text responses.



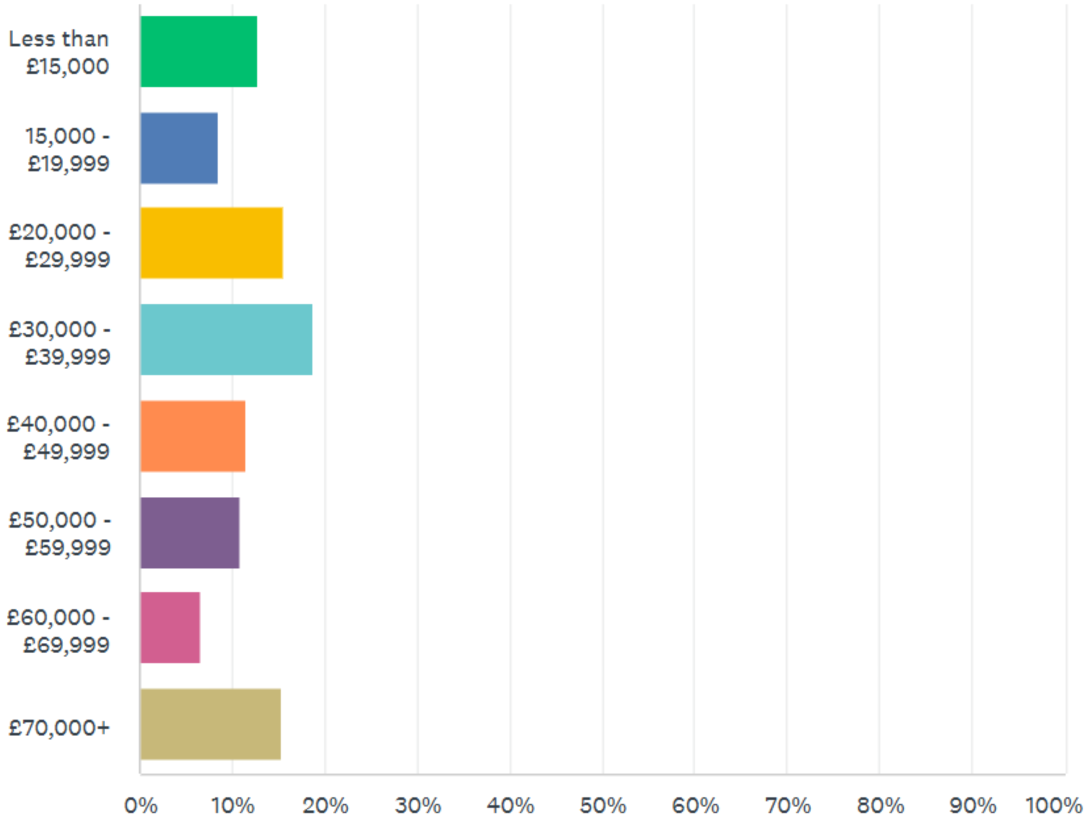
Demographics

The survey concluded as always with all three categories of visitor brought back into one stream, where we then ask demographic questions to ascertain their age, wealth and location. This helps partly to inform knowledge of our visitors, but also give context to some of the answers provided. This year we had marginally more responses from the 65+ age demographic (already our largest cohort), with this group rising by 3.5 percentage points to account for 43.8% of all respondents. Every other age range dropped slightly, to account for this increase (the spread of responses was unchanged).



Likewise, we ask respondents for their household income, to again provide some context to the answers already given. There were some changes across the board this year, but all were minor (the largest movement of all was still just a 2% shift).

The most commonly occurring response was £30,000 - £39,999, followed by £20,000 - £29,999 (18.9% and 15.6% respectively). This puts respondents slightly below the national average, which the Office for National Statistics said at the end of 2024 was £36,700. However, this can be attributed to the fact that our responses more typically came from the 65+ age bracket who may no longer be in full time employment, and that the ONS figure is for 'disposable household income', being the amount that remains after Income Tax, National Insurance and Council Tax have been taken.



We concluded by asking respondents to provide the first half of their post code, to see where those with an interest in the city/region had come from (remembering that the survey was distributed via the e-newsletters of Visit Portsmouth and Tourism South East, which may play a significant part).

The below map (credit: UK Grid Reference Finder) plots out responses for the UK only. It shows responses from Britain, with London and the South East being particular hotspots. That said, there was coverage across almost all of England, as well as much of Wales and parts of Scotland too.

Contact us

If you have any questions about the results of our 2025 Visitor Survey please get in touch:

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