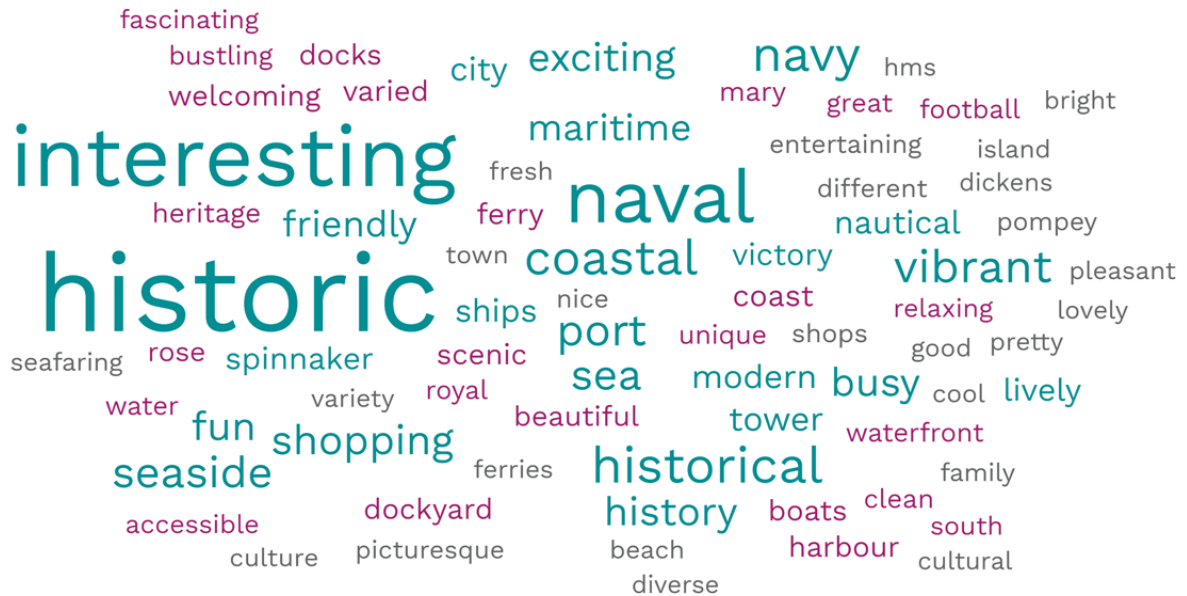


Portsmouth Visitor  
Survey 2023/24  
Results



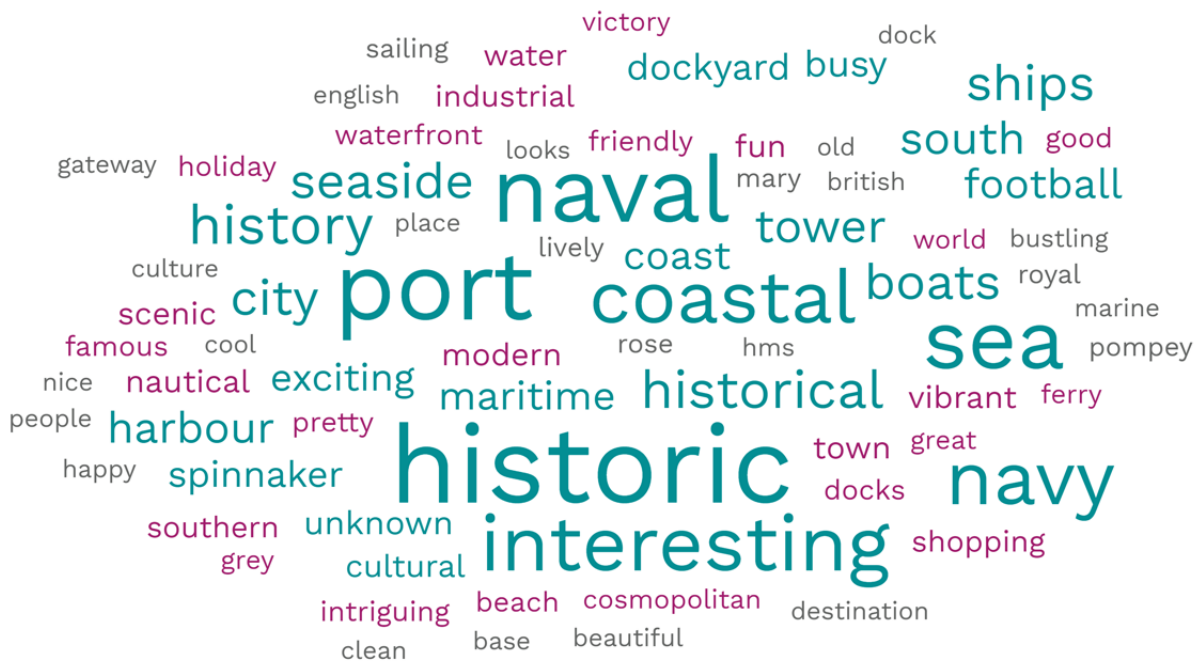
### Lapsed Visitors

As we move through Lapsed to Non-Visitors we typically see a move away from adjectives towards more factual terms and proper nouns ("Vibrant" and "Fun" making way for the likes of "Port" and "Navy", for example). This has been witnessed again in 2023, although "Interesting" remained a popular choice throughout. In fact, "Interesting" was the second most commonly occurring word for Lapsed Visitors (behind only "Historic") and accounted for 7.4% of all words (it was 6.9% of the total for Visitors, also second most popular).



### Non-Visitors

"Interesting" has another decent showing among Non-Visitors, alongside the perennial favourite "Historic". Other top choices include "Port" and "Naval" (the second and third most common words respectively).



## Green travel

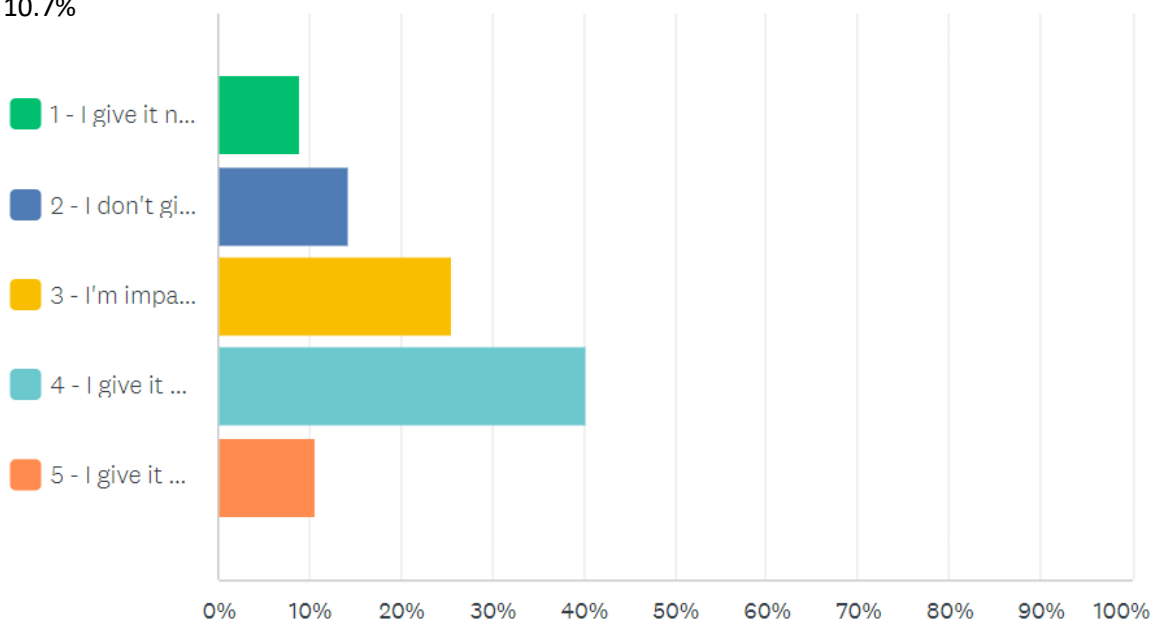
This year we did away with asking questions about how the Covid-19 pandemic had influenced travel decisions and activities, replacing it with a question regarding the issue of green travel. We asked all three groups how much a role the environment plays on where and how they travel, providing five possible answers:

1. I give it no consideration
2. I don't give it much consideration
3. I'm impartial
4. I give it some consideration
5. I give it major consideration

All groups showed an almost identical trend, with a gradual increase from one to four before a rather sharp drop off for five.

The exact split for Visitors was:

1. 9%
2. 14.3%
3. 25.6%
4. 40.4%
5. 10.7%



Among Lapsed Visitors it went:

1. 6.24%
2. 16.11%
3. 23.28%
4. 43.45%
5. 10.91%

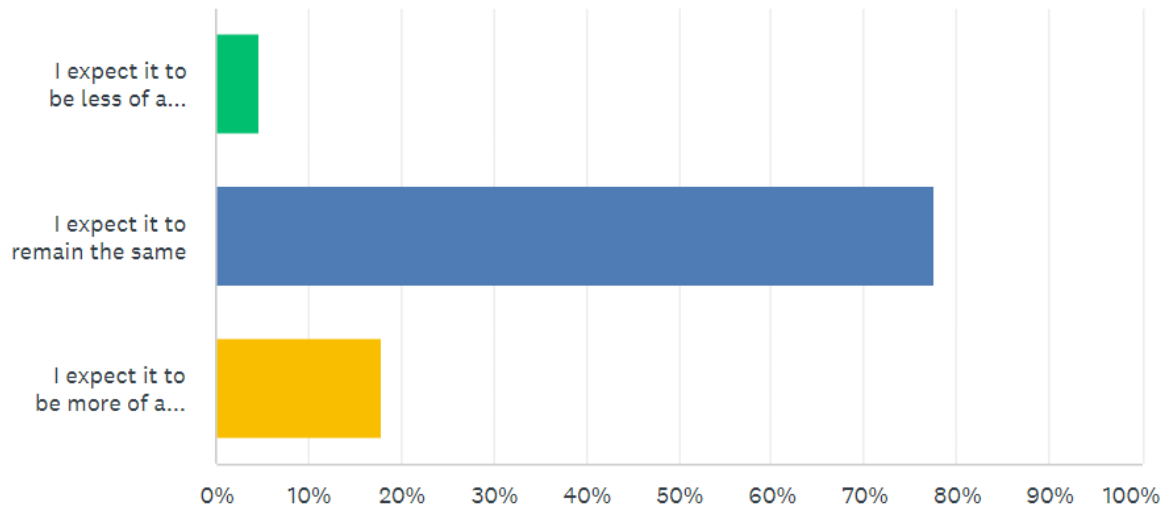
Non-Visitors scored:

1. 5.26%
2. 7.89%
3. 27.82%
4. 46.99%
5. 12.03%

### Green travel- looking ahead

As well as asking how much green travel plays an impact today, we also sought to ascertain how much respondents see the issue impacting their behaviours over the year to come.

The vast majority of Visitors (77.6%) said they expected it to stay the same, but of the remaining two options, 17.8% said it would be more of a concern for them, with just 4.6% saying they'd pay it less consideration.



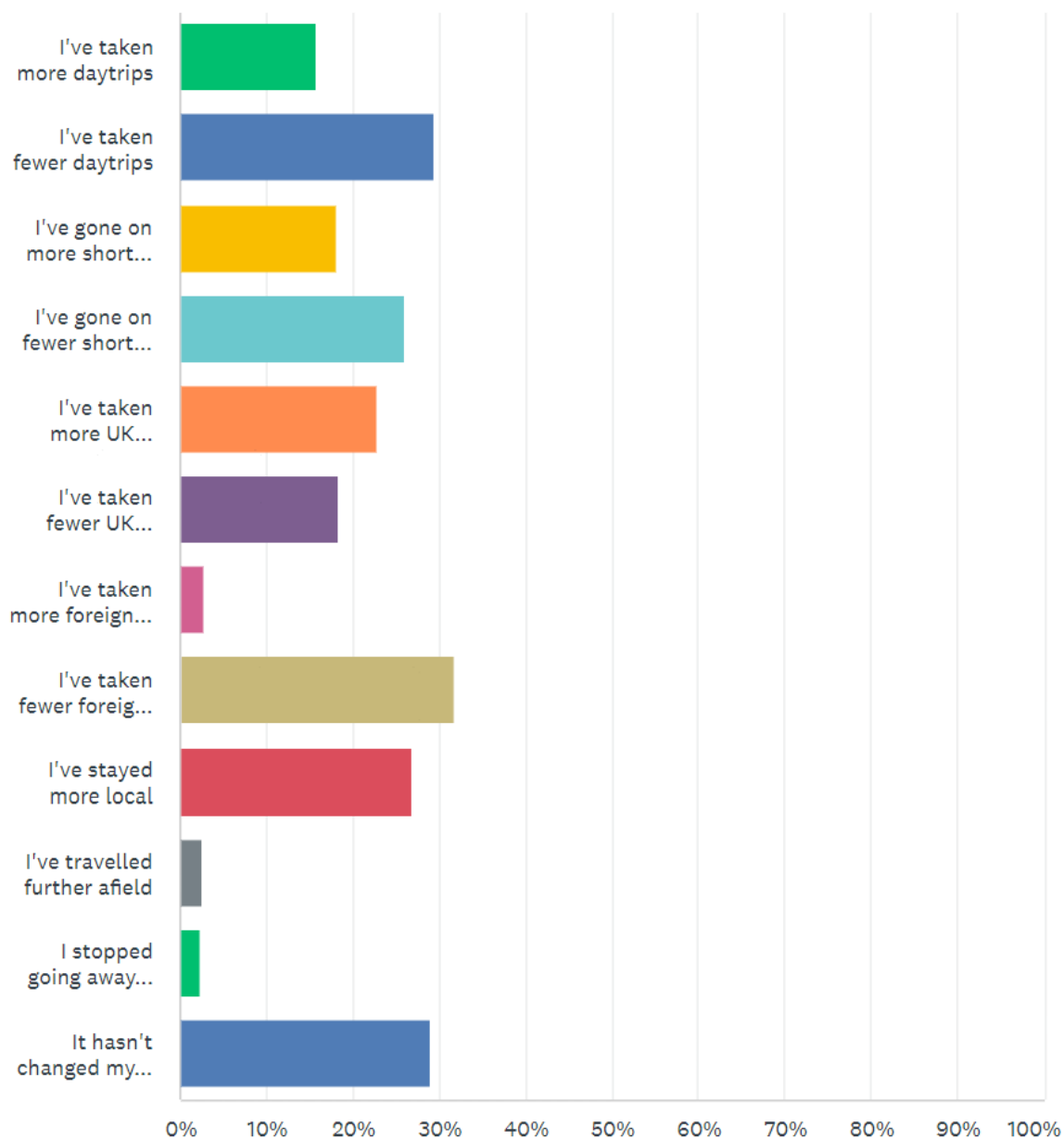
Meanwhile, 73.5% of Lapsed Visitors expected their behaviours to remain unchanged, with 22.3% expecting more change next year and 4.3% anticipating less.

For Non-Visitors the split was 75.2% seeing no change, 21.1% thinking green travel will play a bigger role, and just 3.8% expecting less of an impact.

## Cost of living

With the cost of living still an ongoing concern for many, we repeated our question this year regarding ways it had - or hadn't - influenced how visitors travel, where they go and for how long; encompassing foreign trips, domestic holidays, short breaks and daytrips.

In this multiple-choice question, where respondents could select all statements that applied, 31.8% of Visitors said they'd taken fewer foreign holidays (the most common answer). This was followed by "I've taken fewer daytrips (29.3%), "It hasn't changed my behaviour" (29%), "I've stayed more local" (26.9%) and "I've gone on fewer short breaks" (26%).



Last year, the most popular answer (by a reasonable distance) was "It hasn't changed my behaviour" at 37% (representing a year-on-year drop of 8%). Other results back up 2023 being a leaner year than the one before, with "I've taken fewer foreign holidays" jumping 3.8 percentage points from last year's 28%, "I've stayed more local" increasing 2.9% from its previous 24%, and "I've taken fewer daytrips" rising 6.3% from the 23% who chose this in 2022/23.

When looking at the responses from Lapsed and Non-Visitors, the cost of living seems to have made a real impact, with the number of respondents who reported taking more daytrips, short breaks and foreign holidays all dropping.

For those who said they were taking more daytrips than last year, the results were:

Visitors - 15.76%

Lapsed Visitors - 11.1%

Non-Visitors - 5.64%

On taking more short breaks, the split was:

Visitors - 18.18%

Lapsed Visitors - 12.45%

Non-Visitors - 9.4%

Domestic holidays saw:

Visitors - 22.91%

Lapsed Visitors - 17.32%

Non-Visitors - 11.65%

Surely enough the trend was reversed for the response "I've stopped going away altogether", specifically:

Visitors - 2.3%

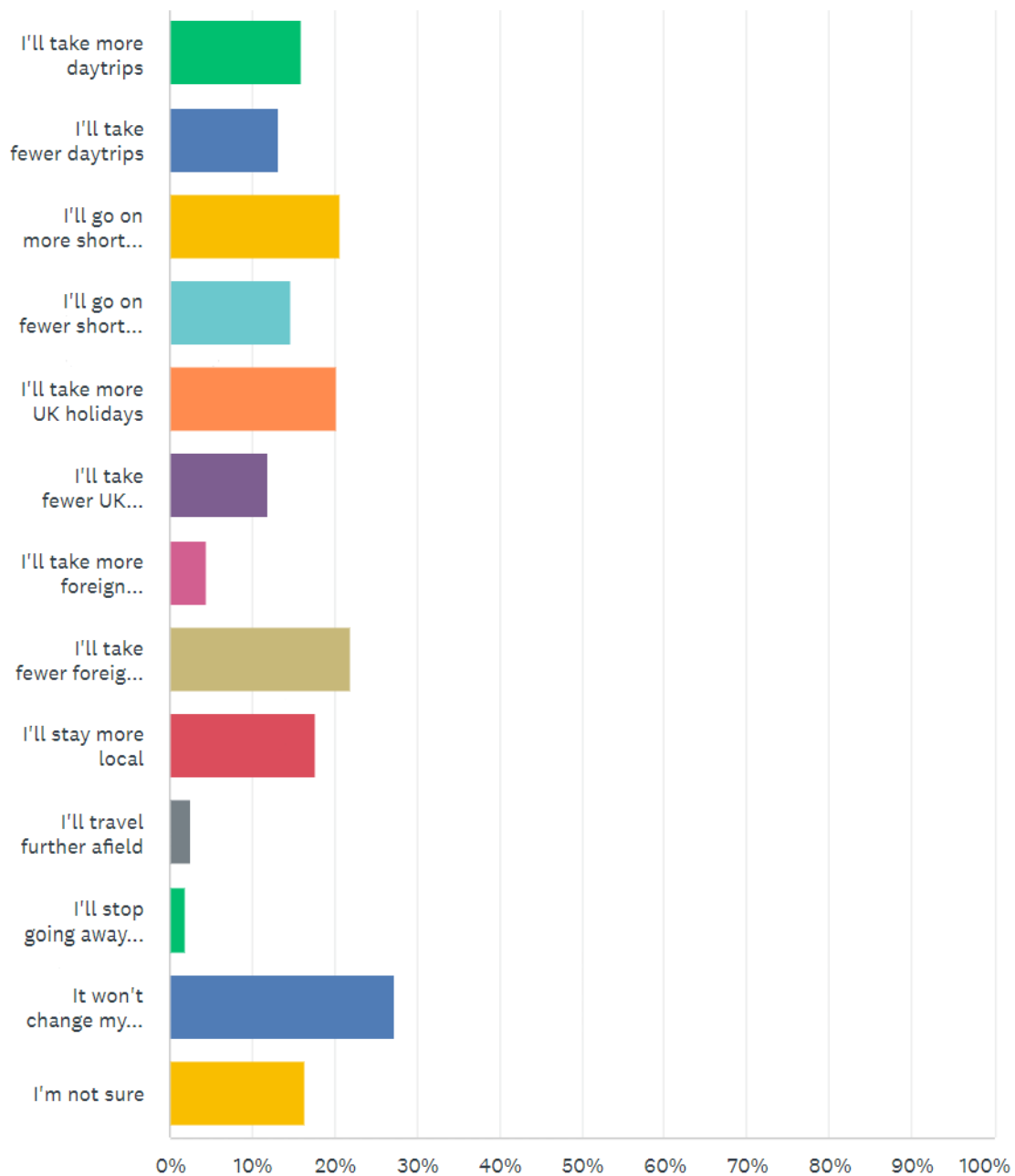
Lapsed Visitors - 5.71%

Non-Visitors - 8.65%

### Cost of living- looking ahead

Visitors are more optimistic about the cost of living in 2024 than they were in 2023. When asked how it would affect their travel in the coming year, respondents most commonly said it would have no impact (27.3%). The other popular answers were "I'll take fewer foreign holidays" (22%), "I'll go on more short breaks" (20.8%) and "I'll take more UK holidays" (20.3%). Only 1.9% said they feared it would stop them going away altogether, although 16.4% said they were unsure how these concerns would affect their travel plans.

The number of respondents expecting to take fewer foreign holidays was four percentage points higher last year (26%), whilst those who said cost of living concerns would have no impact was 7.3% lower at the end of 2022 than this year. Uncertainty also looks to be abating, with those not sure of the impact it will have dropping 2.6% year-on-year.





Lapsed and Non-Visitors aren't feeling quite so optimistic, with similar trends as witnessed in the previous question.

Those who agreed with the statement "I'll take more daytrips" was:

Visitors - 16.04%

Lapsed Visitors - 11.73%

Non-Visitors - 7.95%

The same but for short breaks was:

Visitors - 20.78%

Lapsed Visitors - 19.94%

Non-Visitors - 13.64%

For UK holidays it was:

Visitors - 20.29%

Lapsed Visitors - 19%

Non-Visitors - 13.26%

Again, the trend reversed for those expecting to stop going away altogether:

Visitors - 1.94%

Lapsed Visitors - 2.49%

Non-Visitors - 3.41%

## Visitors

This next section solely concerns Visitors. The sections for Lapsed and Non-Visitors can be found from page 26 onwards.

### Why Portsmouth?

We asked Visitors why they chose to come here (a multiple-choice question where respondents could select as many answers as they like). By some distance the most popular answer was "I had been before and enjoyed", polling 64%. Next most popular was "I wanted to visit a specific attraction" at 27.8%, followed by "I was visiting people I know" on 17.3%.

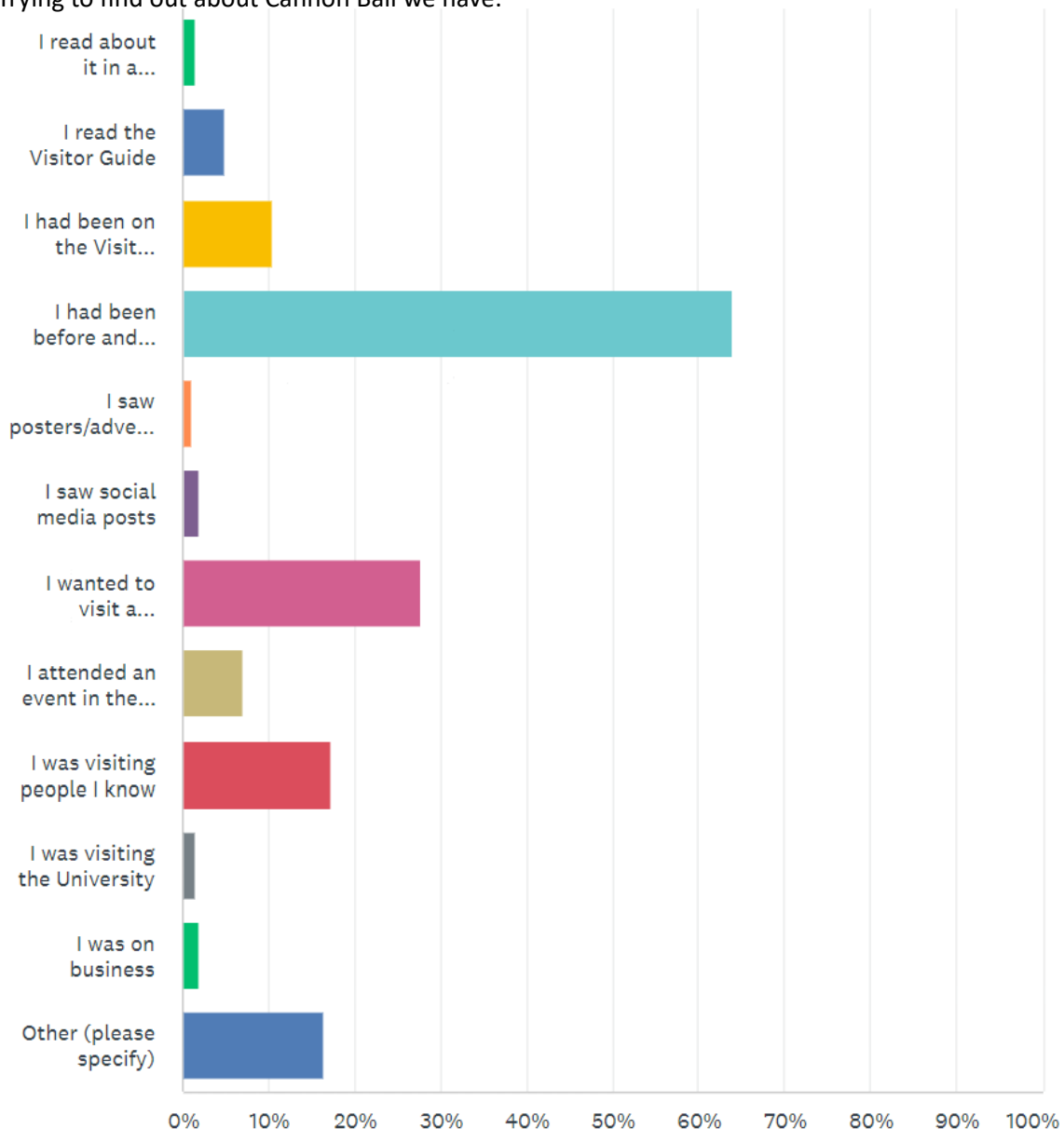
Year-on-year comparisons aren't so straightforward for this question as we bulked out the answers quite significantly based on what people had written in the 'Other' comment box in previous surveys. In fact, 'having visited before and enjoyed' was one such answer, alongside coming to Portsmouth for University-related purposes and on business.

In the 'Other' section this time we had a number of answers that were already offered in the multiple choice, as well as a popular showing for visiting to watch football or to catch a ferry.

Some other highlights included:

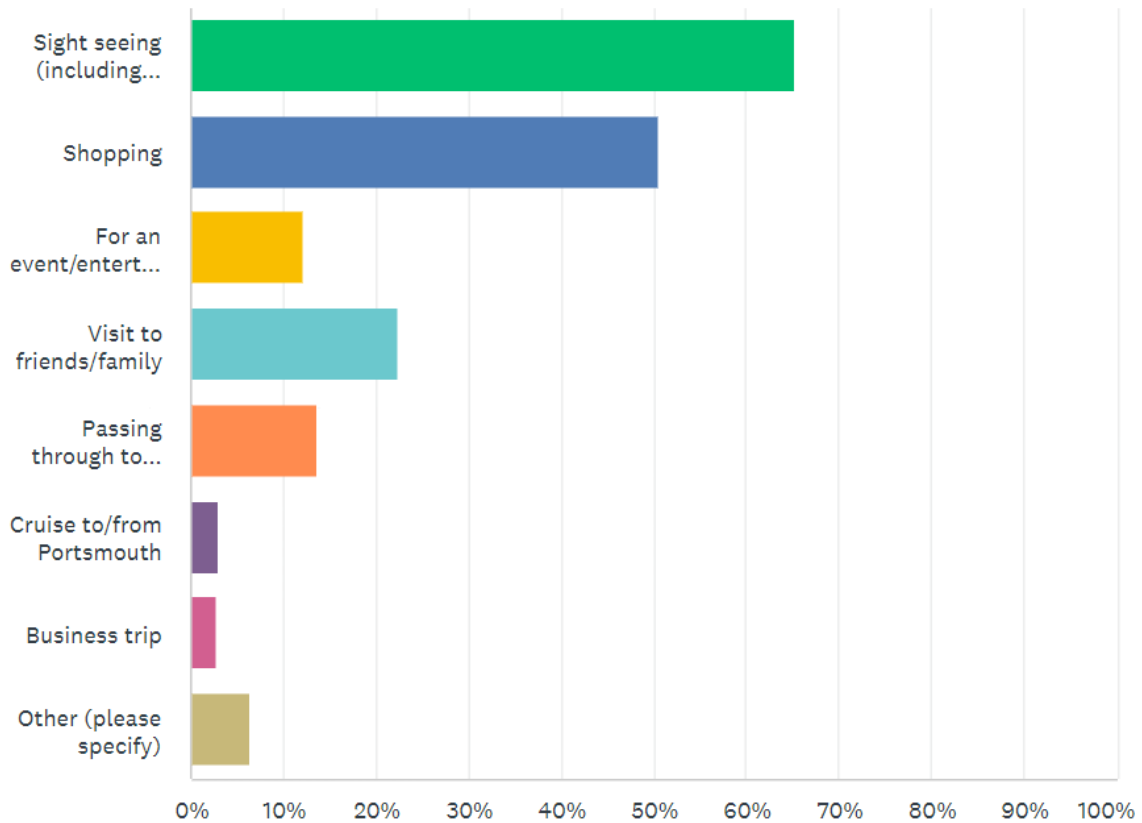
"I was group leader of some Italian students for English Courses and Work experience. 5 weeks there and I fall in love with Portsmouth."

"Trying to find out about Cannon Ball we have."



### What type of trip?

Next we asked Visitors to classify their type of trip, asking whether it was for sightseeing (the most popular answer at 65.2%), shopping (next most common at 50.4%), or visiting friends and relatives (22.3%). The first two show a small year-on-year increase of four and three percentage points respectively. VFR (visiting friends and relatives) was down by around 2.5%, although we did see a marked increase in this segment during and after the pandemic.

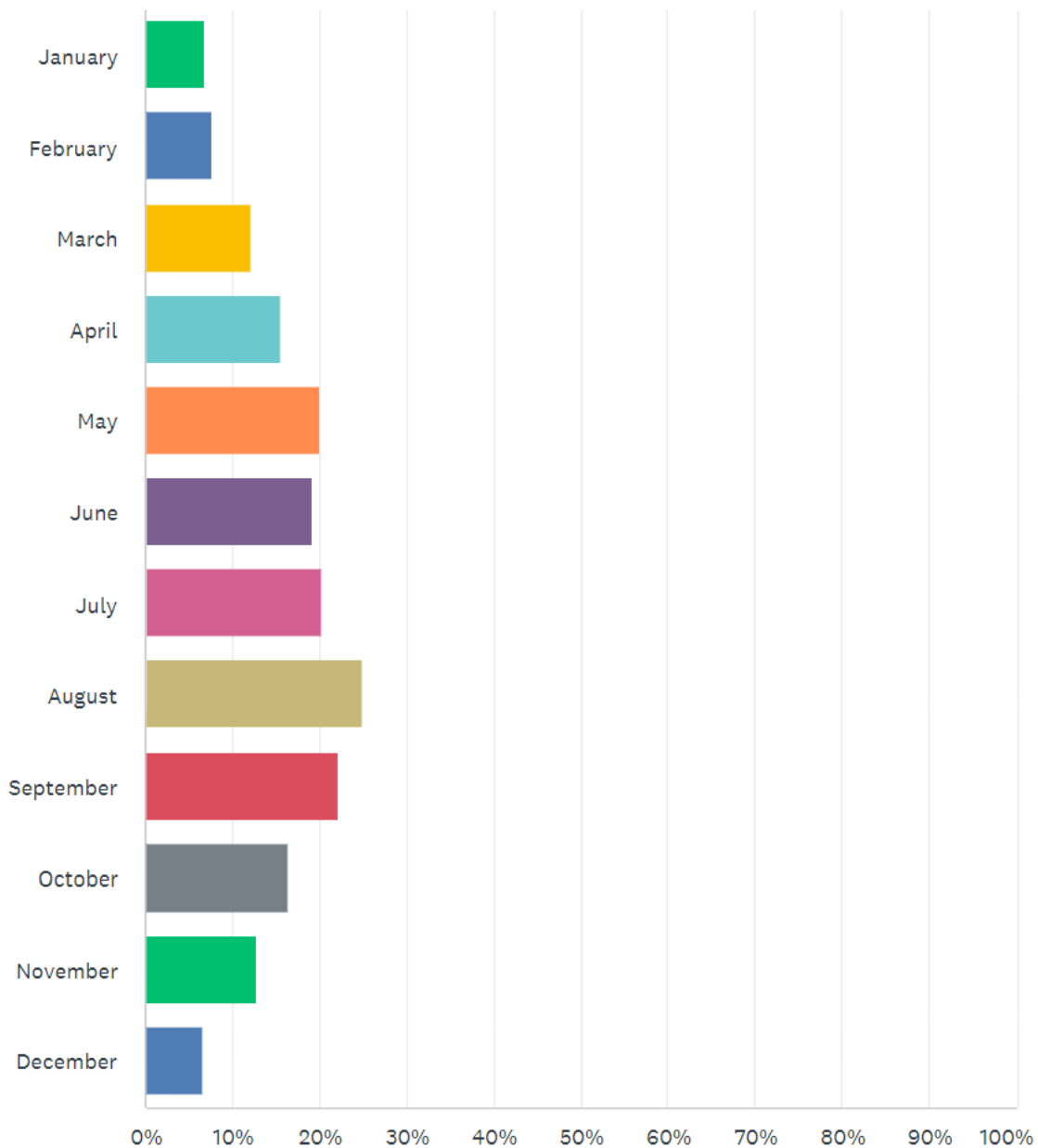


### Month of visit

In last year's survey we began asking people the months in which they visited Portsmouth. We repeated it this year and saw marginally different.

As expected, the summer months proved most popular, but it was August which came out on top this time (a surprise last year was that - albeit a close-run thing - more people reported visiting in September).

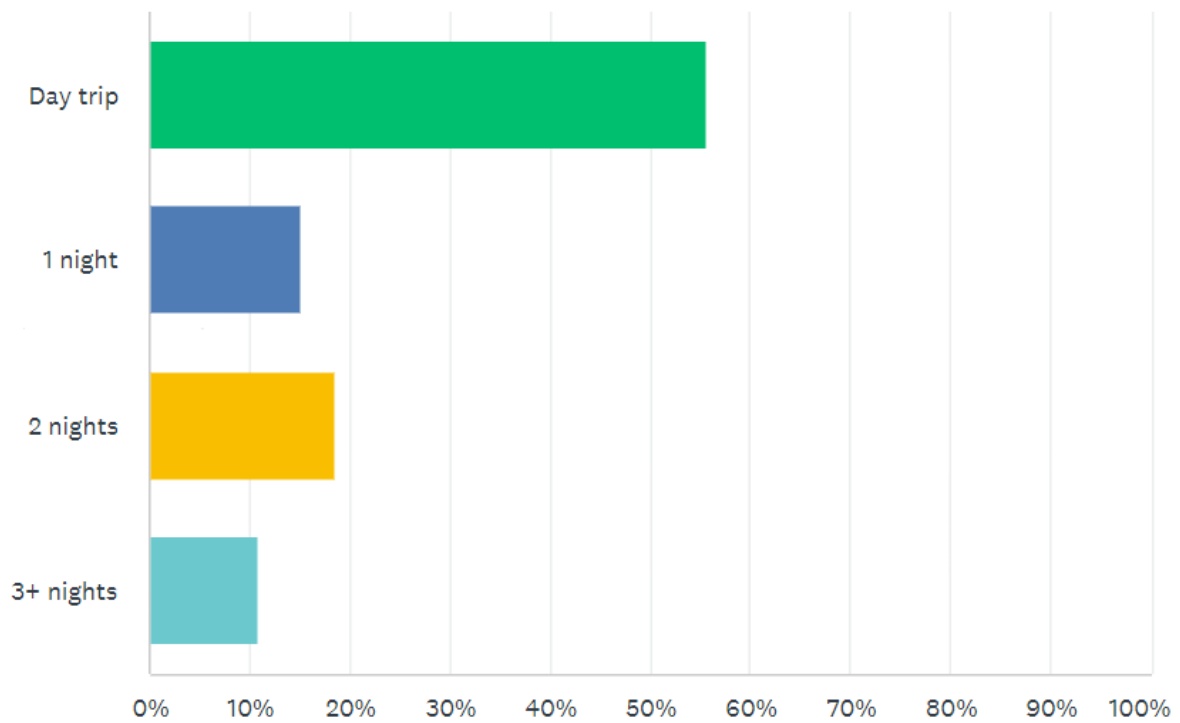
Those two months remained the most popular this time around (polling 25% and 22.3%), and were followed by July (20.2%), May (20%) and June (19.1%). Bottom of the pile was December on 6.6% (though this would be hamstrung by the survey going out from the end of November) and January - 6.9%.



### Length of stay

We again asked Visitors how long they stayed in Portsmouth, and once more it was daytrippers who came out on top. Some 55.6% came just for the day, with 15% staying one night, 18.5% staying for two and 10.9% staying three or more.

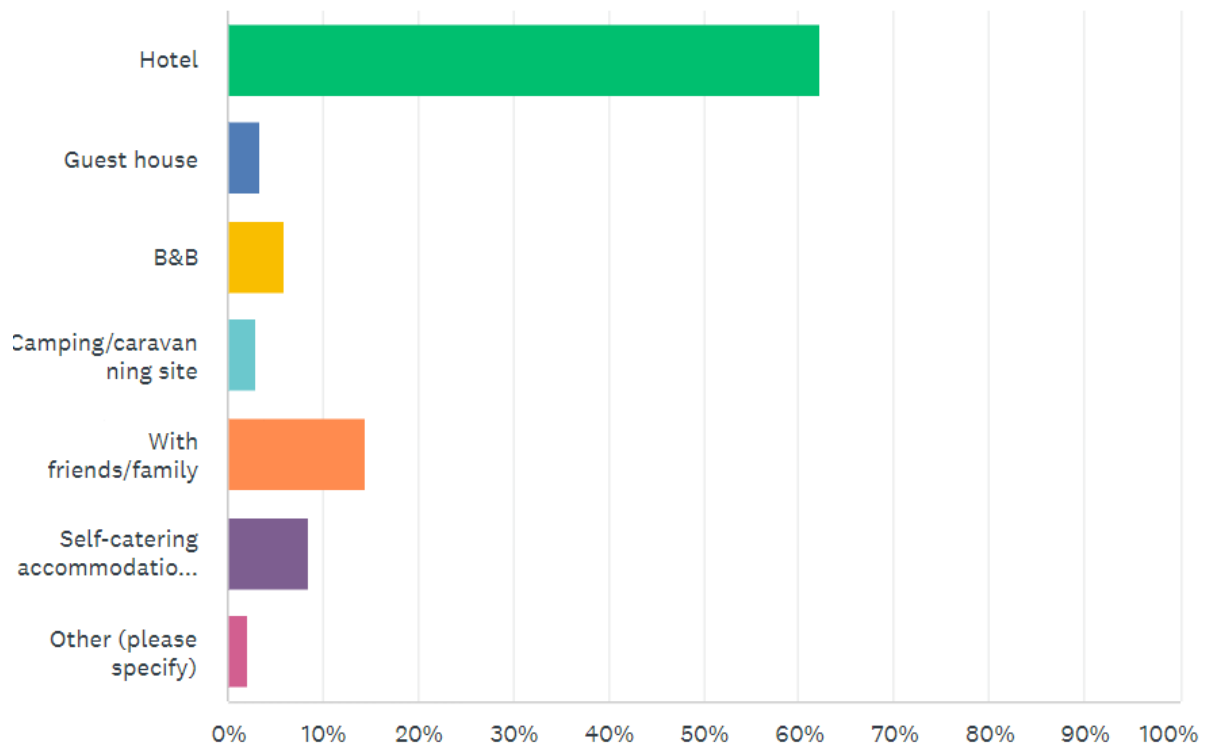
The daytrip market is up very marginally on the 55% recorded last year (which itself was a steep drop from the 66% of the year before, owing to pandemic rules and behaviours). The number staying three or more nights stayed almost identical, whilst there was just a 1% difference in the other two.



## Accommodation

For those who stayed the night, hotels were by far the most popular option at 62.3% (up from 60% last year). Many of the remainder stayed with friends or relatives (14.6%, down from 19% last year) or in self-catering accommodation (8.5%, largely unchanged year-on-year).

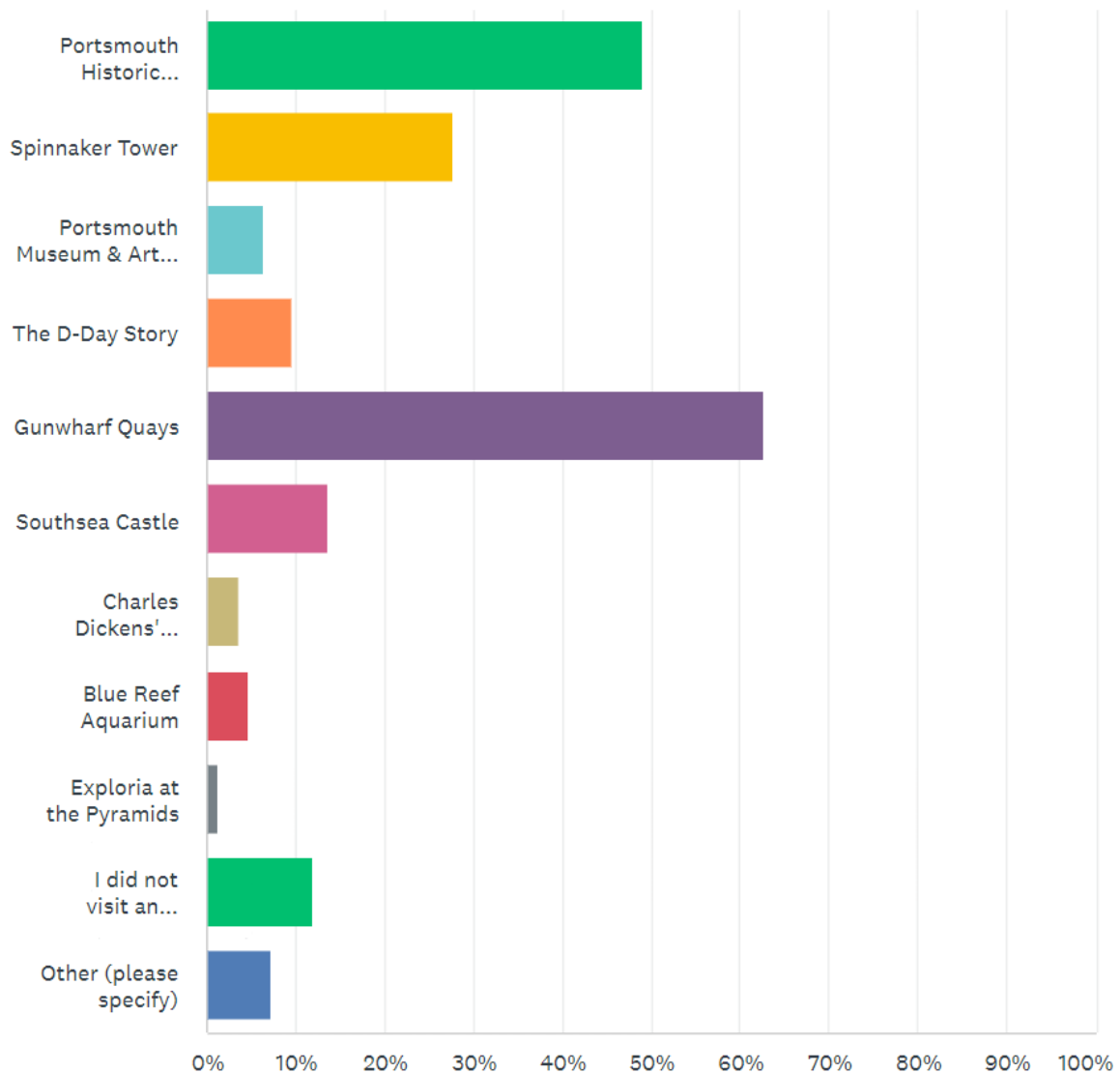
Of course, it's worth noting that some respondents may have picked the Hotel option (especially as it was the first answer in the list) when their accommodation could perhaps more accurately be deemed a guest house or B&B.



### Attractions visited

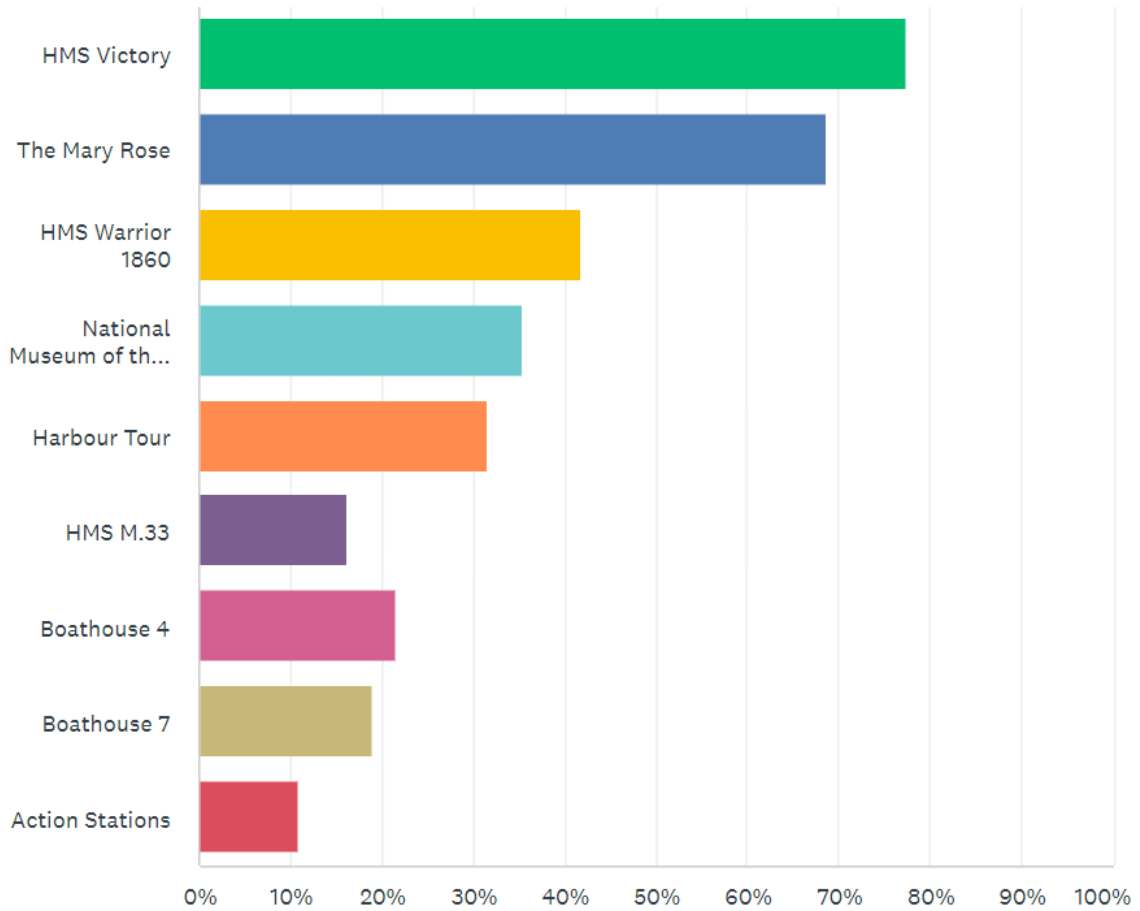
When it comes to attractions visited, Gunwharf Quays and Portsmouth Historic Dockyard remain most popular among our respondents - and have seen their status increase further still. They came out on top this year, with Gunwharf Quays polling 62.6% (up from 61% last year) and Portsmouth Historic Dockyard being visited by 49.1% of Visitors (up from 46%). Spinnaker Tower also saw an increase (from 26% to 27.8%), as did Southsea Castle (up one percentage point to 13.7%).

The number of people who said they didn't visit an attraction dropped from 15% to 12%.



### Within the Dockyard

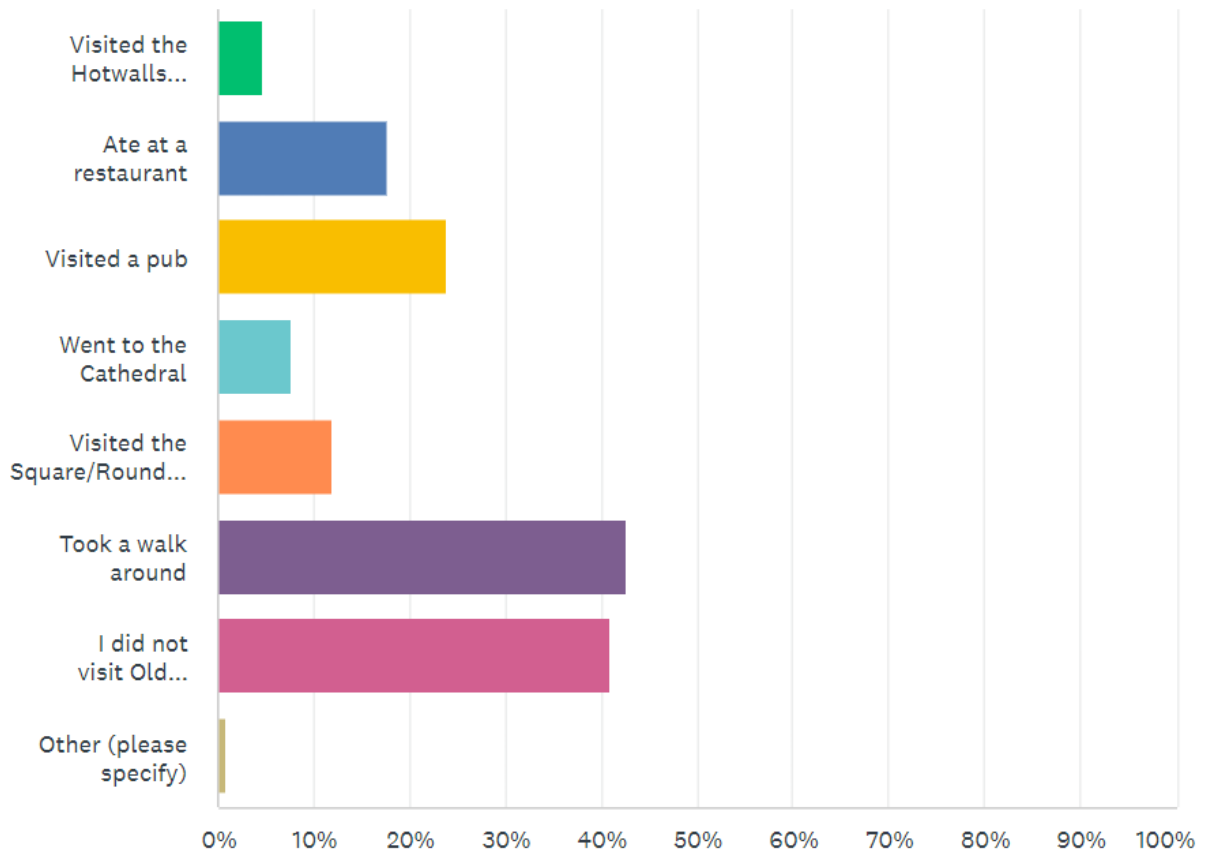
We followed up with those who said they'd visited Portsmouth Historic Dockyard to find out where they went. The trend saw a similar pattern to last year, with HMS Victory coming out on top (77.5% of visitors, up on the 75.8% last year), followed by The Mary Rose (68.6%, up from 64.9%) and HMS Warrior (41.8%, up from 40.8%).





## Old Portsmouth

We asked visitors whether they'd been to Old Portsmouth during their trip and if so, what they got up to whilst they were there. Those who went most commonly reported taking a walk around the sights (41.1%) and visiting a pub (25%) or restaurant (16%). Those who went for a walk and a restaurant were down slightly on last year's results, which came in at 42.7% and 17.7% respectively. Pub visitors increased a small amount, though, from last year's 23.9%.



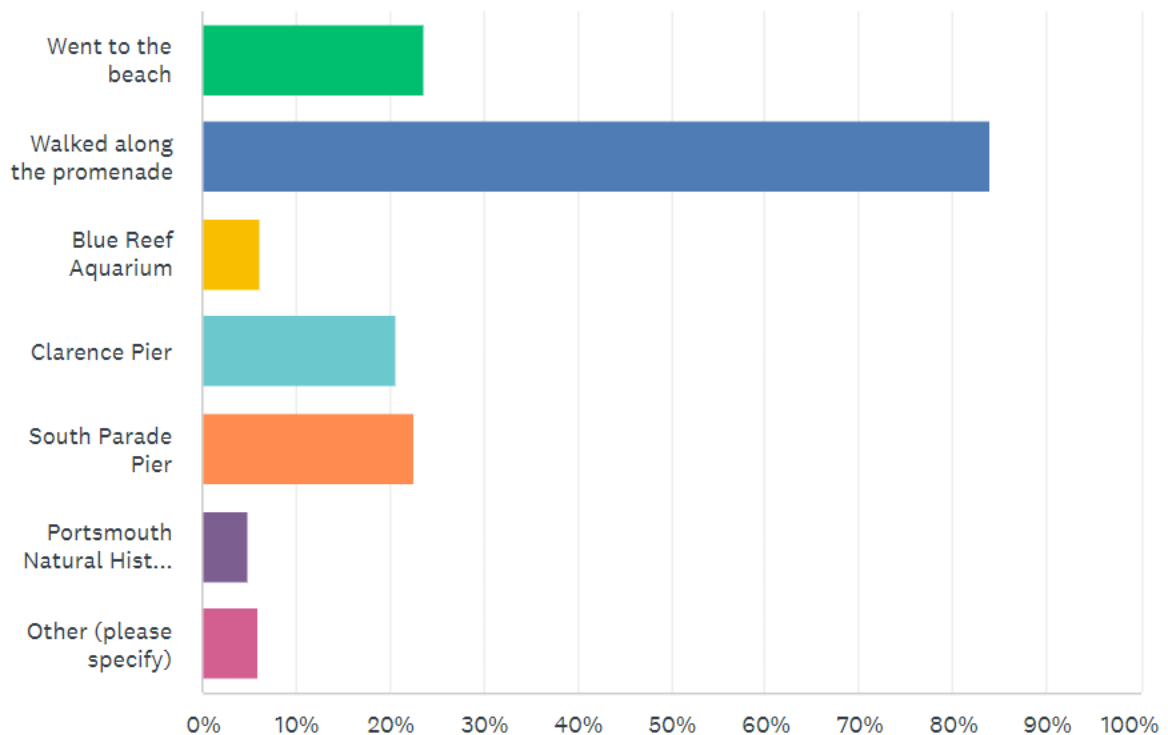
## Visits to the seafront

Southsea Seafront remains one of the city's biggest draws, featuring either as the main reason to visit, or something bolted on to also do when coming primarily for the shopping or attractions.

This year we saw a marginal increase in people reporting trips to the waterfront, with 74.1% of Visitors saying they had been to see the sea (up slightly from the 73.7% recorded last year).

For those who'd done so, going for a walk along the promenade remained top of the pile - featuring in the itineraries of 84% of Visitors (though slightly down on the 85.8% figure from last year, perhaps as a result of the ongoing Southsea Coastal Scheme).

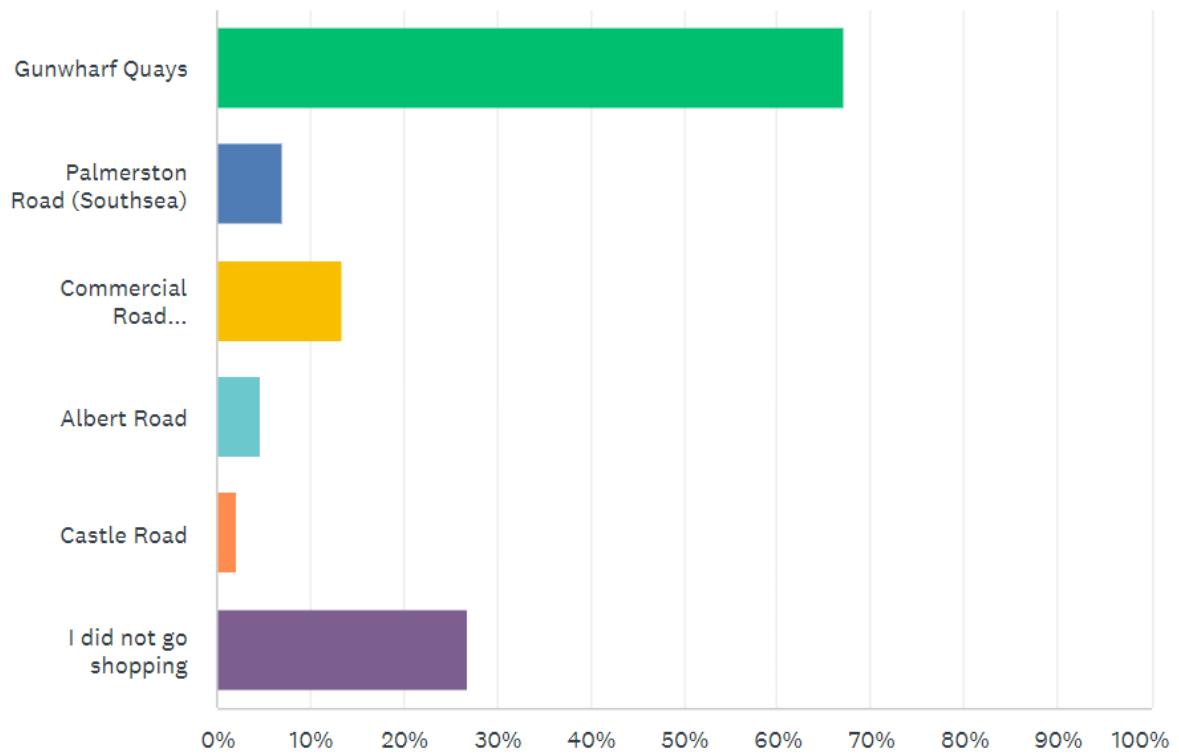
Elsewhere there wasn't much to separate visits to the beach (23.6%) and to the two piers, with South Parade Pier polling 22.6% and Clarence Pier 20.7%. Year-on-year this represents a 3% fall in trips to the beach, but makes a good showing for South Parade Pier, which saw an almost 4% increase year-on-year.



## Shopping

As noted already, Gunwharf Quays is a large draw for Visitors to Portsmouth, and this was reinforced in the shopping section, where 68.6% of people said they'd been to the waterfront outlet centre. What's more, this was one of the few responses to the shopping question that posted a year-on-year increase, growing from the 67.2% who said the same last year.

Elsewhere, Commercial Road proved next most popular with 11.1% (down from 13.3% last year), followed by Palmerston Road on 6.6% (down from 7%).

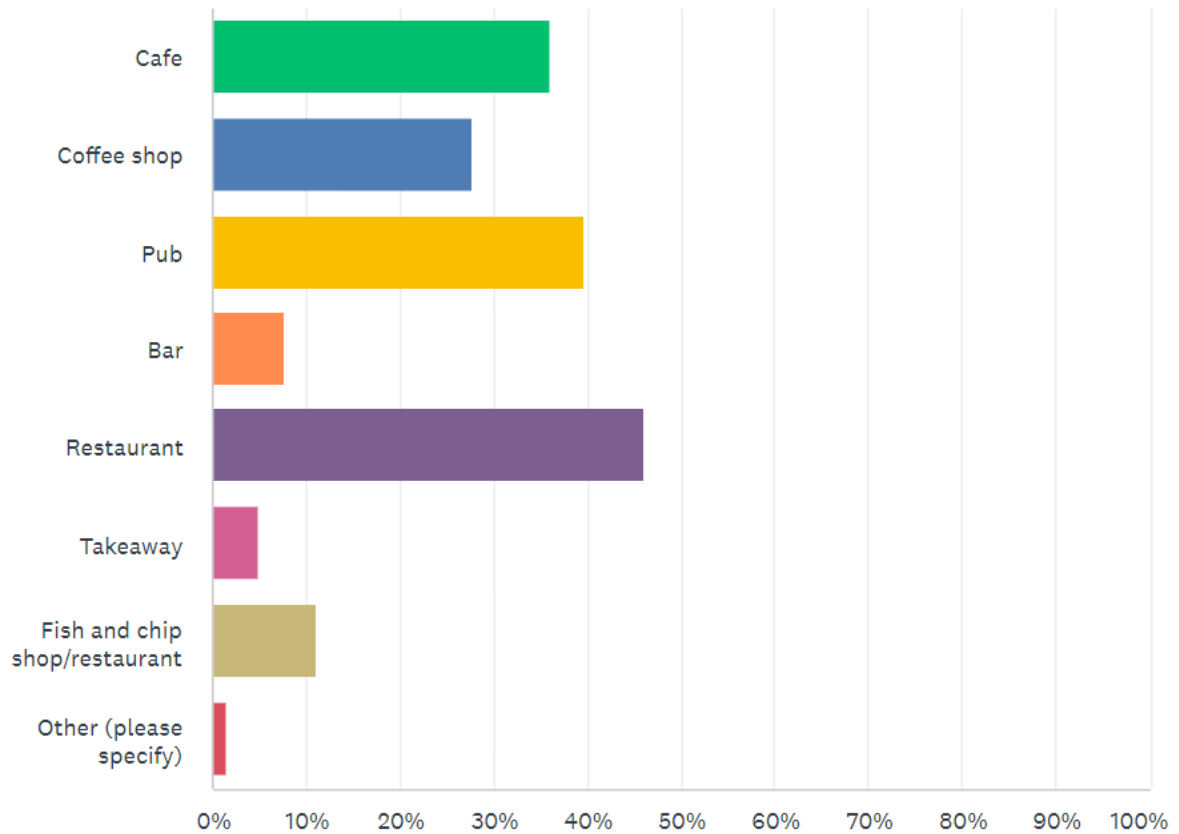


## Food and drink

Some 82.2% of Visitors said they went out for food and drink during their trip, up slightly on the 80% who said so last year. We then asked all those who said they had been out for food and drink where they went.

When segmenting by type, restaurants came out on top (46.1%), then pubs (39.6%) and cafes (36%). These results are largely in line with responses from last year.

Pizza Express, Spinnaker Tower and Brasserie Blanc were some of the specific names that came up most often.

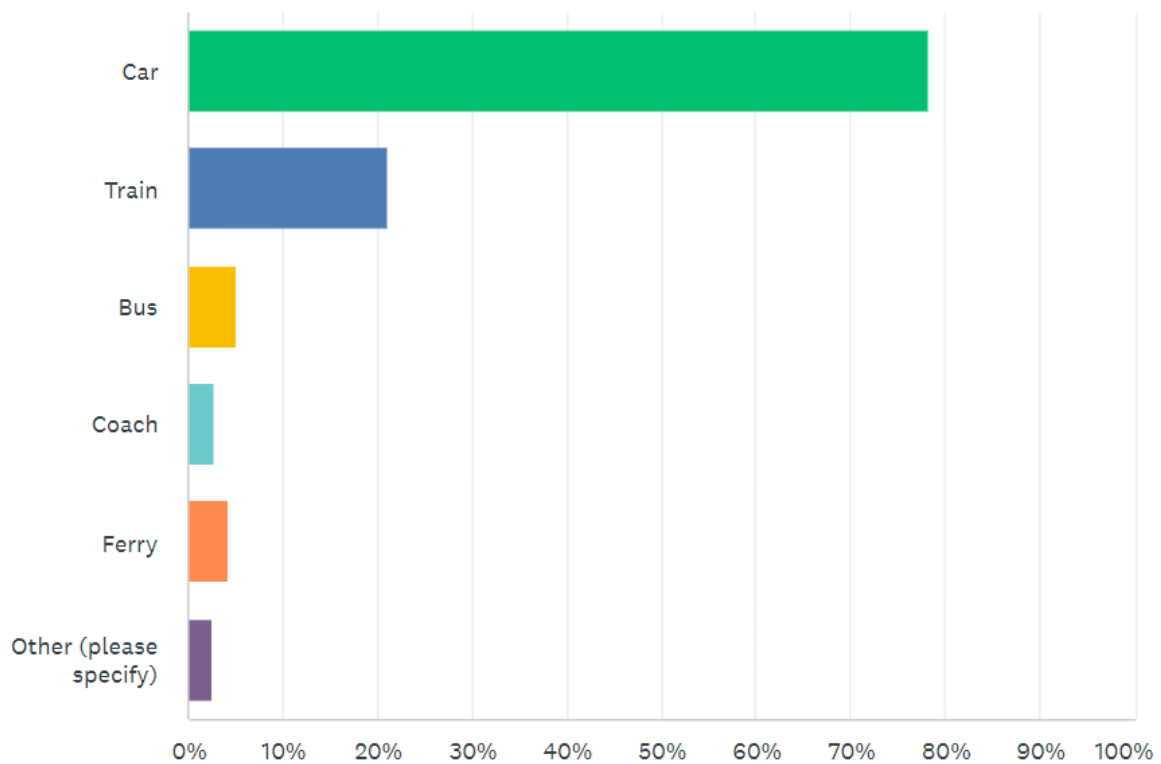


## Travel to Portsmouth

There's always a clear favourite when it comes to ways of travelling to Portsmouth, and this year was no exception, with 78.3% of Visitors coming to the city by car. What's more, despite over half of respondents saying they give green travel "some" or "major" consideration, this figure actually increased year-on-year by just over 1.5 percentage points.

Despite this, there was also a good showing for those who travelled by train, selected by 21.2% of Visitors (up markedly on the 16% who said the same last year). There were similarly large jumps for those who took the bus (increasing from 1.6% to 5.2%), ferry (going from 1.9% to 4.3%) and coach (1.9% to 2.9%).

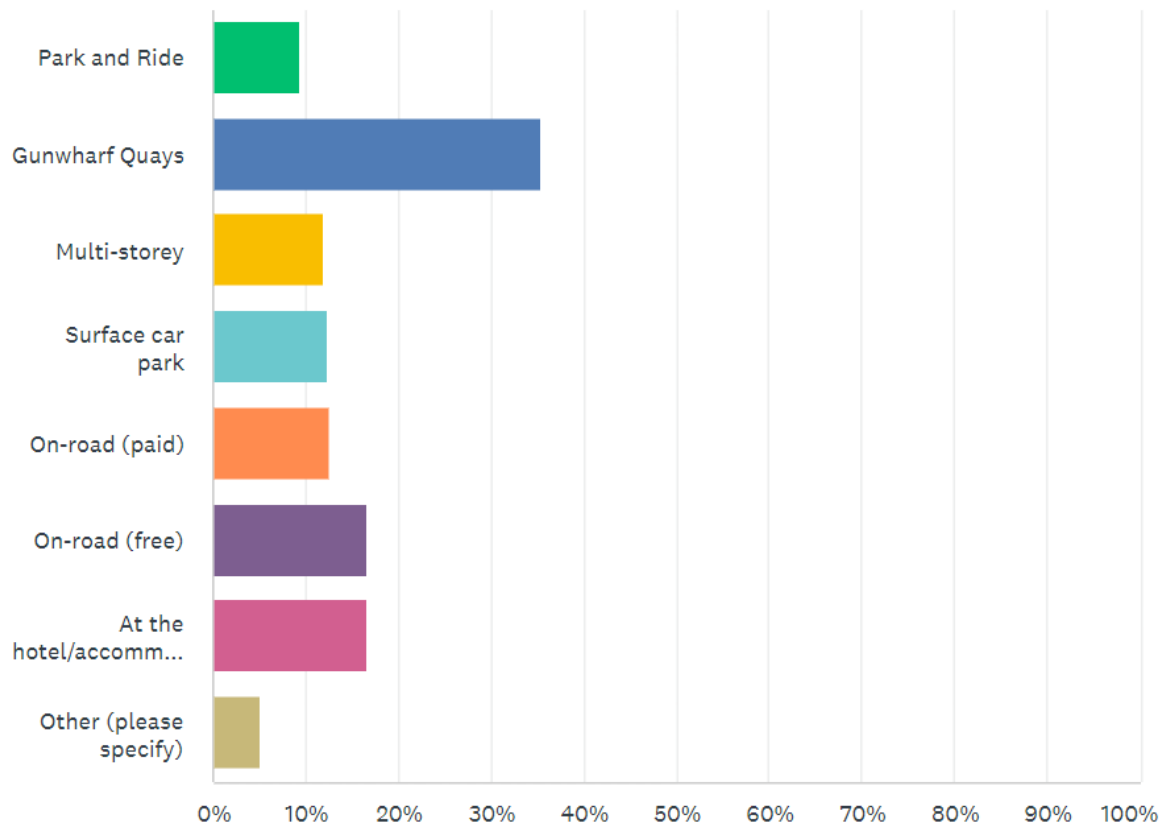
Note: These total more than 100% as we gave people the option to select as many responses as were applicable in case they used different modes of transport for each visit, or split their journeys across multiple transport options.



## Parking

Somewhat unsurprisingly given the popularity of Gunwharf Quays as a destination, the centre's underground car park came out on top for where people left their cars, taking 35.4% of the vote. It was followed by parking at the hotel or free on-road spaces which took an identical 16.6% apiece.

Though still accounting for the smallest percentage, Park & Ride saw some of the largest growth, increasing from 7.3% last year to 9.3% this time around.



## Enjoyment

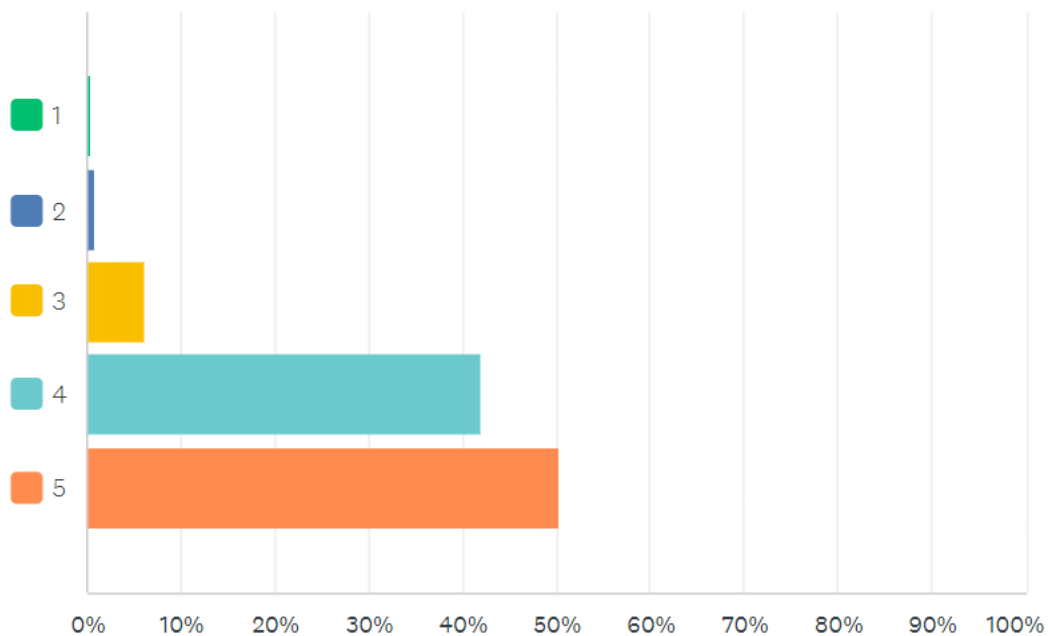
Having covered how Visitors travelled and what they did, we turned our attention to whether or not they enjoyed their trip to Portsmouth. Respondents were asked how much they enjoyed on a scale of one to five, with one being the worst and five the best.

Over half of Visitors awarded the full five stars, and with a further 42% giving four stars it means that 92.5% were pleased with their trip.

The full results were:

1. 0.5%
2. 0.87%
3. 6.19%
4. 42.08%
5. 50.37%

This gives a weighted average score of 4.41, a slight increase on the 4.38 recorded last year.



### Likelihood of returning

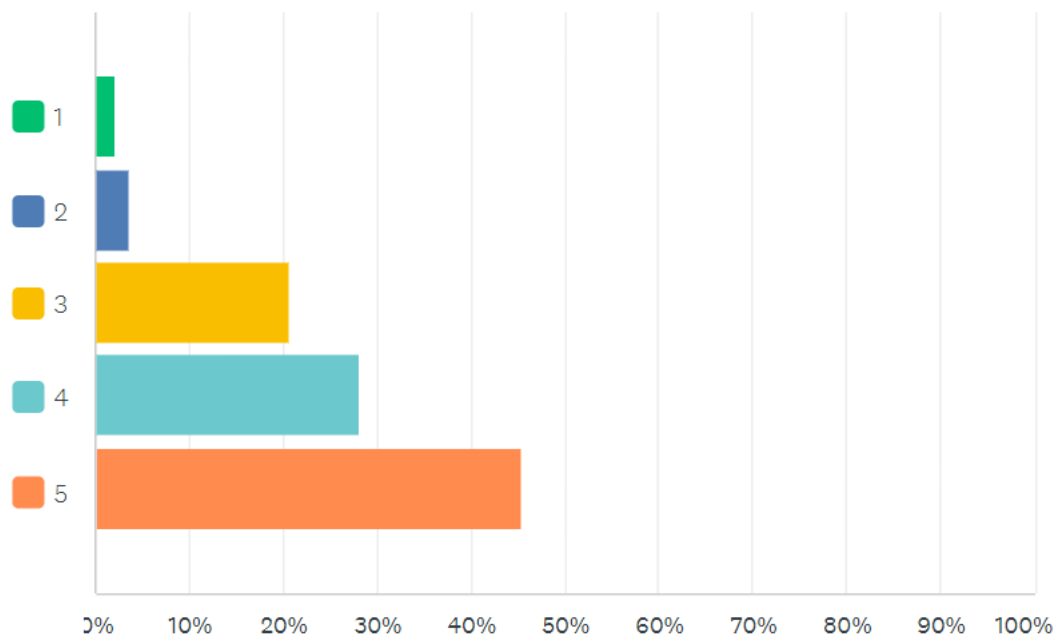
Similarly we asked Visitors how likely they thought it would be they'd come back to Portsmouth next year, using the same scale.

Here, 47.6% gave a score of five, whilst 26.2% gave four - giving a positive rating from 73.8% of Visitors.

The full breakdown was:

- 1. 1.98%
- 2. 4.09%
- 3. 20.2%
- 4. 26.15%
- 5. 47.58%

This provided a weighted average score of 4.13 out of five - just a fraction over the 4.11 from last year.







## Lapsed Visitors

The following questions were specifically asked to Lapsed Visitors - those who had been to Portsmouth more than two years ago but fewer than five.

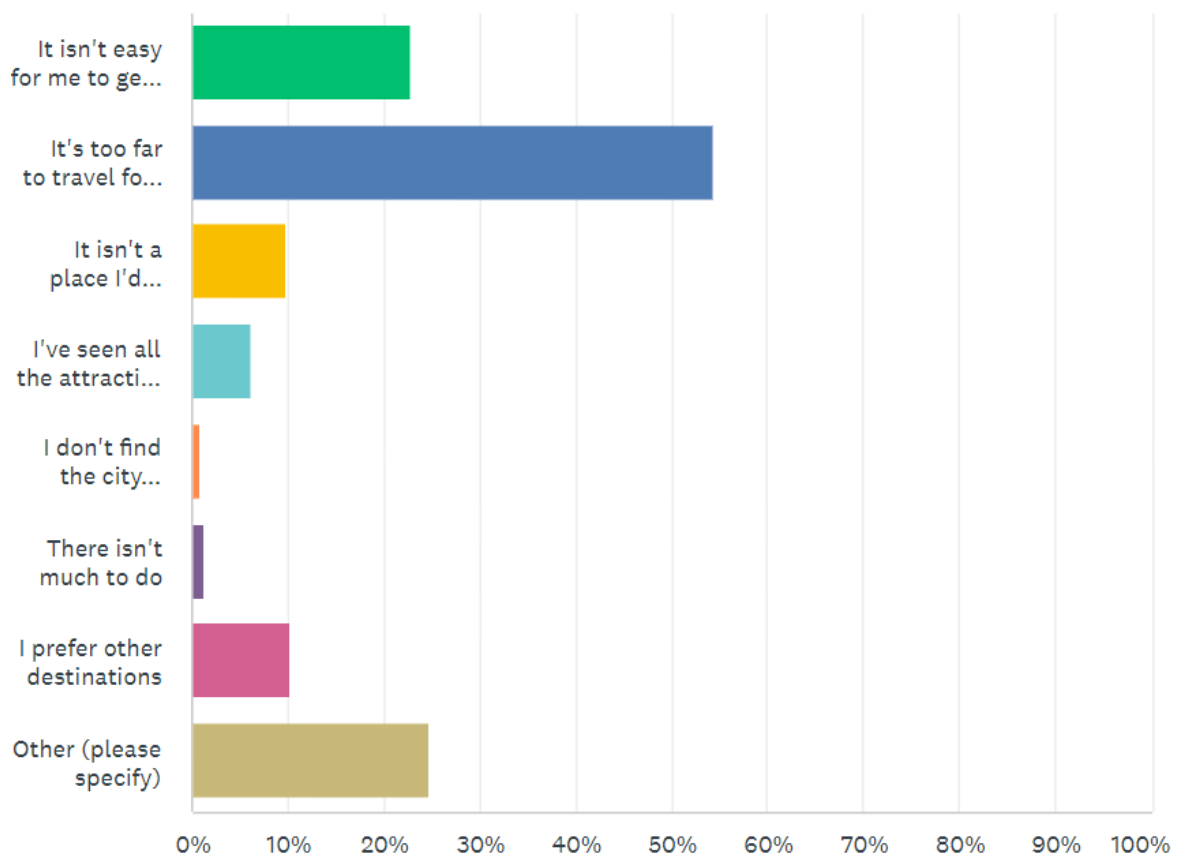
### Why not Portsmouth?

Just as we asked Visitors why they chose Portsmouth, we quizzed Lapsed Visitors on why not. As in previous years, the simple fact that Portsmouth is too far from home was given by the majority of respondents (54.3%, down from 55.5% last year).

This continues to illustrate the need to position Portsmouth as a staying destination, to alleviate any concerns about distance and prove it's worth the journey.

The next most common response was "It isn't easy for me to get to" at 22.9% (up from the 21.2% of last year). Preferring other destinations and simply not considering Portsmouth as a place for a short break took around 10% each.

For those who selected 'Other', many mentioned simply not getting around to it, the cost of travel, having responsibilities that preclude them from travelling, and a notable amount who said they had plans to visit this year.



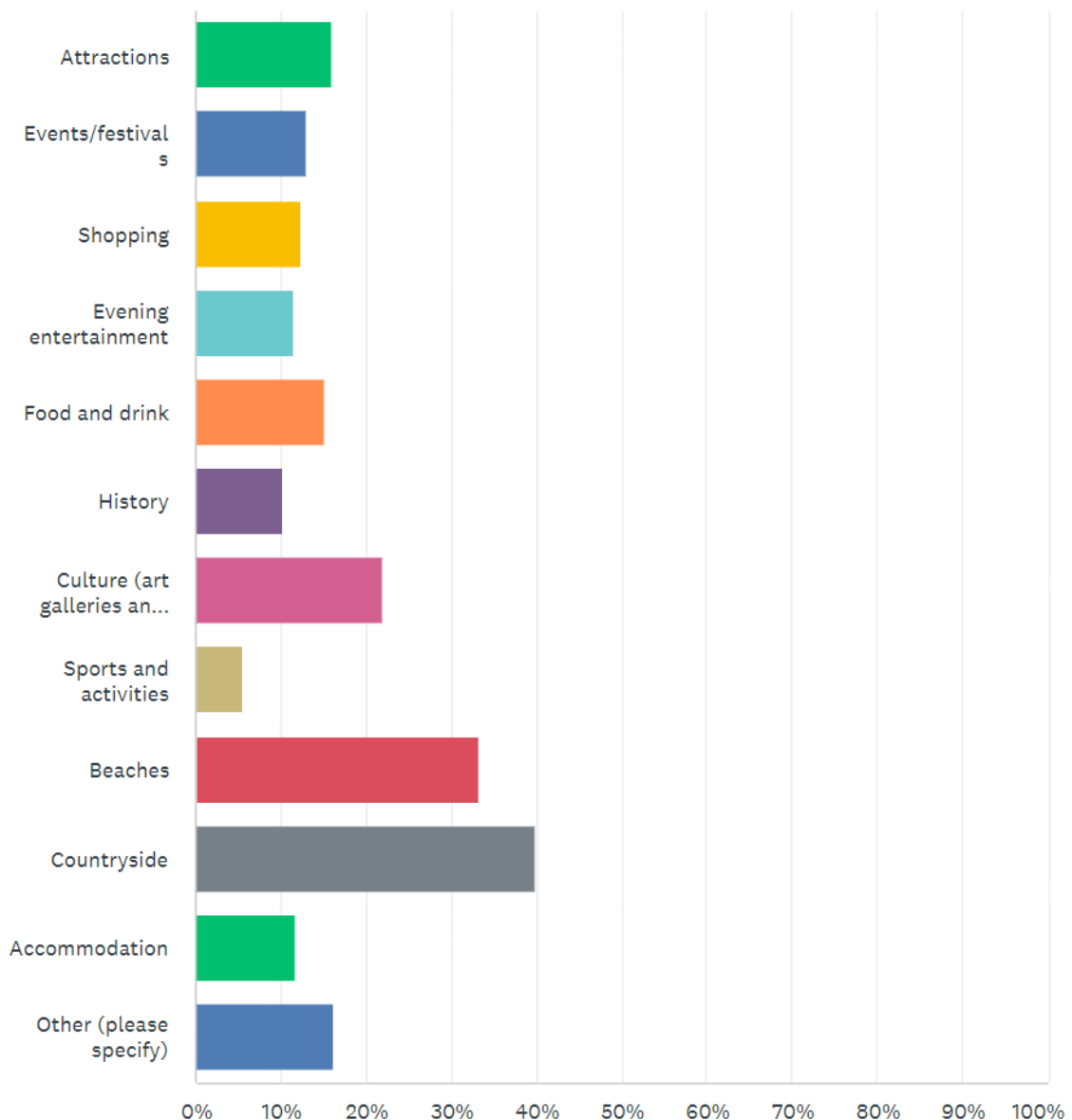
When quizzed on where they prefer to go instead of Portsmouth, Cornwall was mentioned most frequently, followed by Bournemouth, London, Spain and Devon - in that order.

### What can you get more of elsewhere?

Lapsed Visitors were asked what they feel they can get more of elsewhere, with countryside topping the bill, being named by 40% of respondents (up from 38% last year). Beaches came a relatively close second on 33.2% (up from 32.6%).

Reassuringly, those who said they could get better attractions elsewhere dropped from 17.4% to 15.9%, whilst shopping also saw a (small) improvement, from 12.9% last year to 12.3% this time around.

In the 'Other' free text field, the most commonly occurring word was, in fact, "Nothing", with many recipients saying there were other reasons as to why they'd not visited recently (with distance to travel, time, and financial concerns cropping up once again).

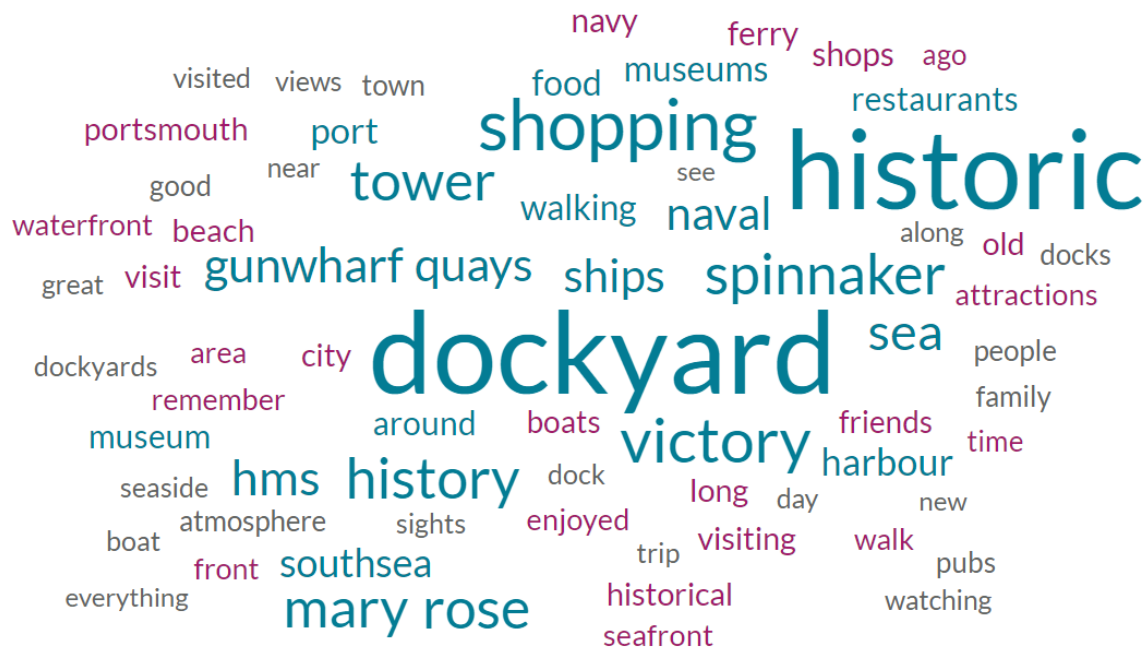


## What did you enjoy and would you come back?

We asked Lapsed Visitors what they particularly remember about their most recent visit. The results are not too dissimilar to the general What Three Words responses, no doubt because these most memorable experiences are what they now associate with the city.

That said, there was less about history more generally, and more of it coming up when people specifically mentioned Portsmouth Historic Dockyard and its ships or museums.

Others that proved particularly popular include "Shopping", "Gunwharf Quays" and "Spinnaker Tower".



We also asked Lapsed Visitors what would encourage them to make a return visit. Again, these responses are rather open-ended with a huge variety of answers and some quite detailed replies. As such it doesn't make for a quite so illuminating word cloud, though answers which cropped up most frequently involved discount deals and offers, more free time, to visit specific attractions, or to see friends and relatives.

## Non-Visitors

Finally we reach the questions for Non-Visitors, covering why they've not been to Portsmouth (at least not in recent memory) and what could entice them to make the journey.

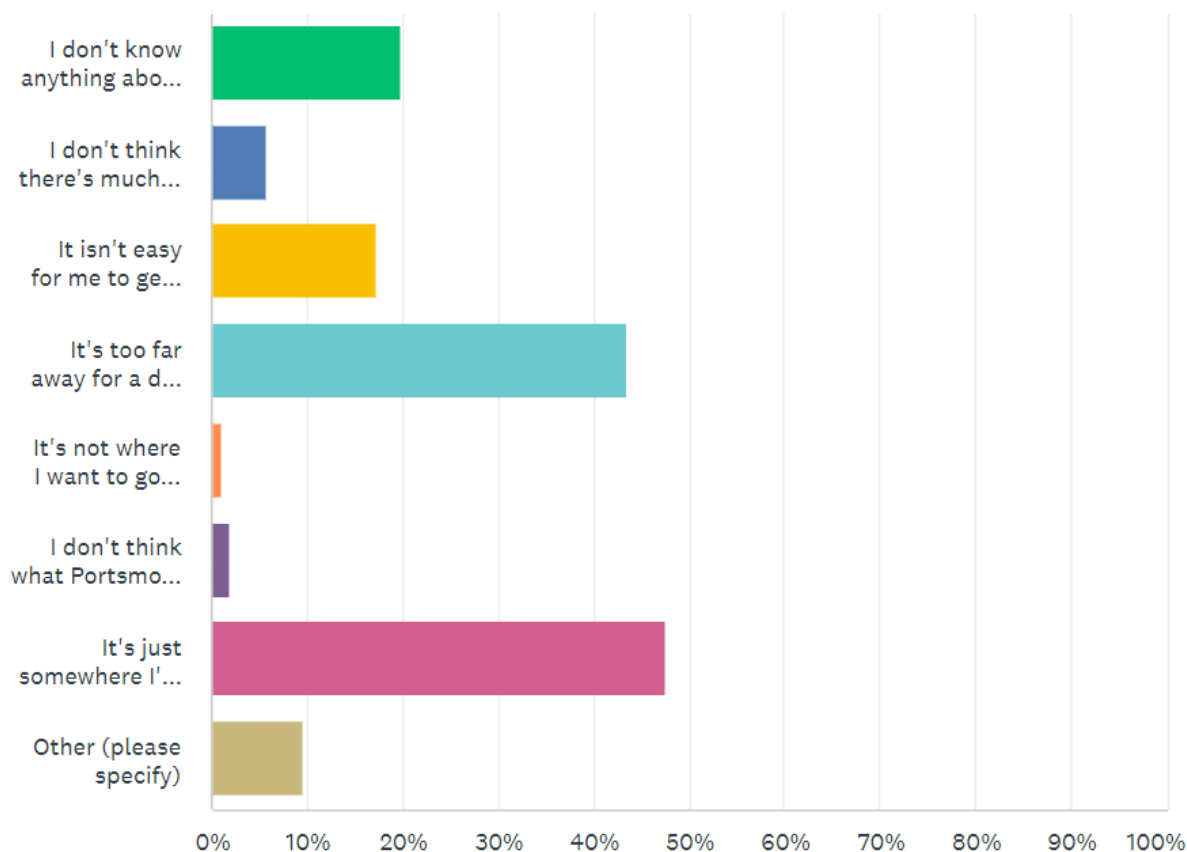
### Why haven't you visited?

First up we sought to ascertain why Non-Visitors hadn't been to Portsmouth. As with the Lapsed Visitors, geography played a big part, with the largest share (50.8%) saying it was too far for them to travel.

Second most common was "It's just not somewhere I've considered", which was cited by 44% of respondents. This has dropped from the 47.5% who gave this answer last year (when it was the most common response of them all).

Others include "It isn't easy for me to get to" (25.9%, up from 17.3% last year) and "I don't know anything about the city" (15.4%, down from 19.7%).

A great many of the 'Other' responses are variations on "I just haven't got round to it yet".

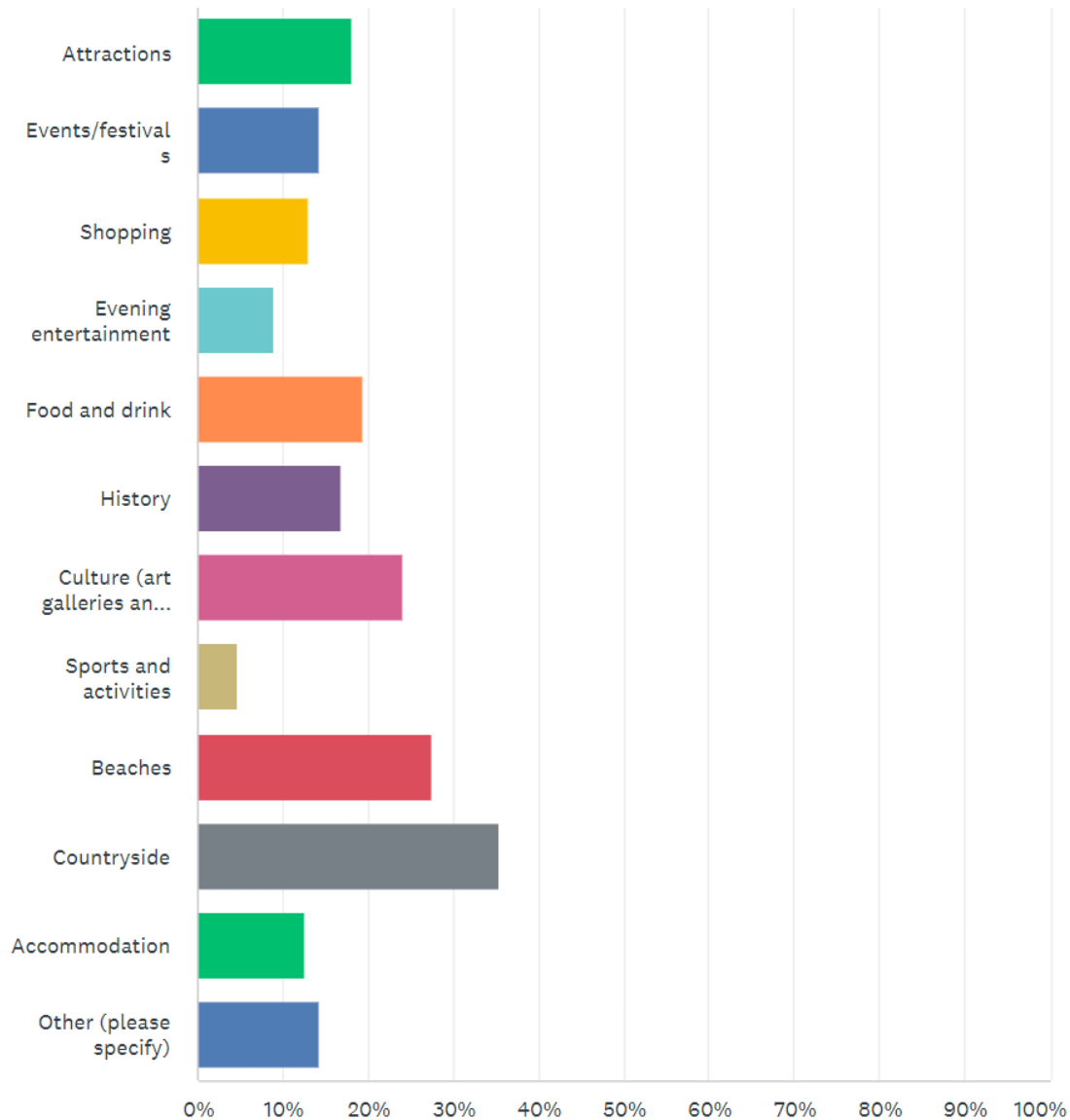


### What can you get more of elsewhere?

As with Lapsed Visitors, we sought to find out what people go to other destinations for (and by extension what they believe Portsmouth may not be able to offer so strongly).

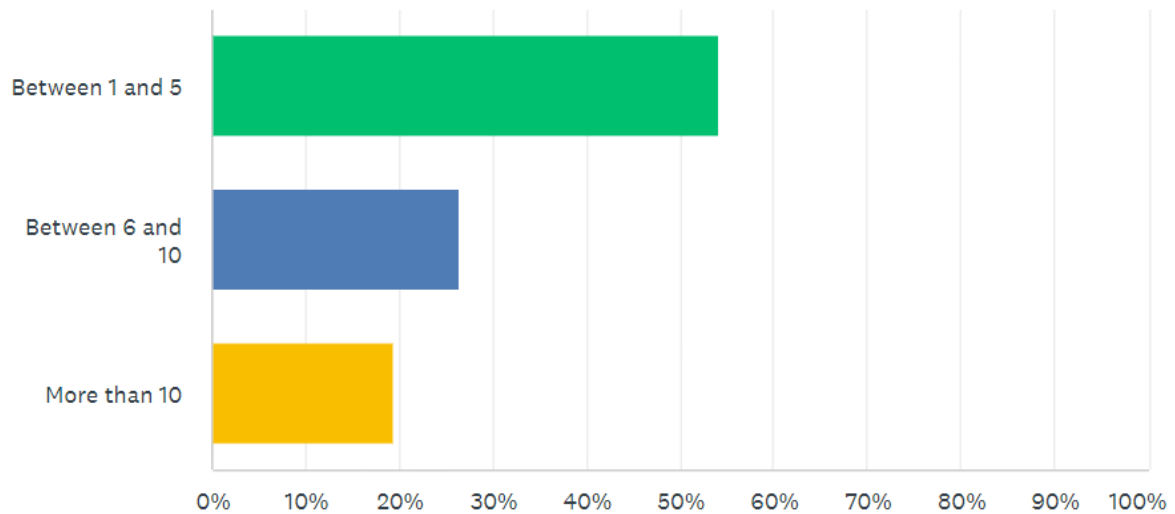
"Countryside" and "Beaches" were again the top two answers, polling 35.4% and 27.4% respectively.

Again, those who preferred attractions elsewhere were notably lower year-on-year, with 18.1% saying it this time around, compared with 24.7% previously. There was a similar shift among those saying they could get more evening entertainment elsewhere too, with last year's 11.7% dropping to 8.9% this time around.

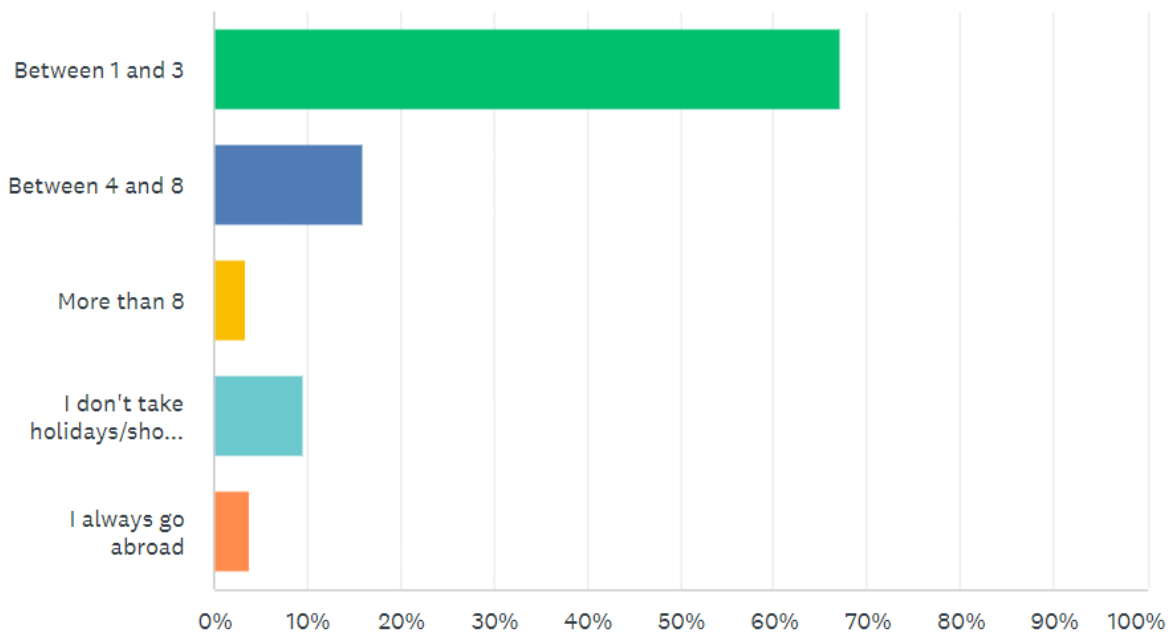


### Daytrips and short breaks

Non-Visitors were asked how many daytrips they usually take in a year. Most said between one and five (54.2%), whilst just over a quarter (26.5%) said six to ten, and 19.3% said they take 11 or more.



They were also asked how many short breaks/holidays they take in the UK each year. Over two thirds (67.2%) take one to three UK holidays annually, dropping to 16% who take four to eight. Some 9.5% don't take any holidays at all, whilst 3.8% said they always go abroad.



## Demographic questions

The survey concluded by bringing all three groups back together for a series of demographic questions. This helps ascertain who took the survey so the results can be viewed through this prism (and, equally crucially, who *didn't* take the survey).

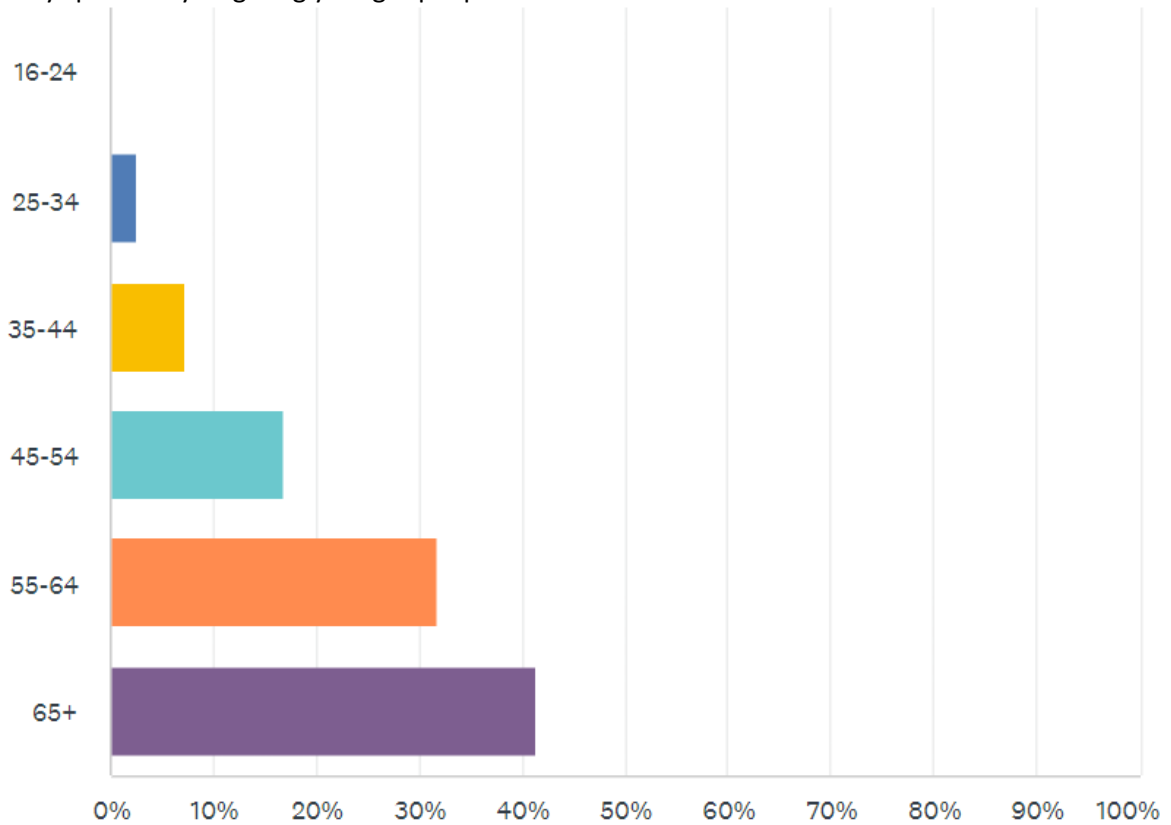
Postcode data showed a good spread across much of the England, as well as some representation in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.



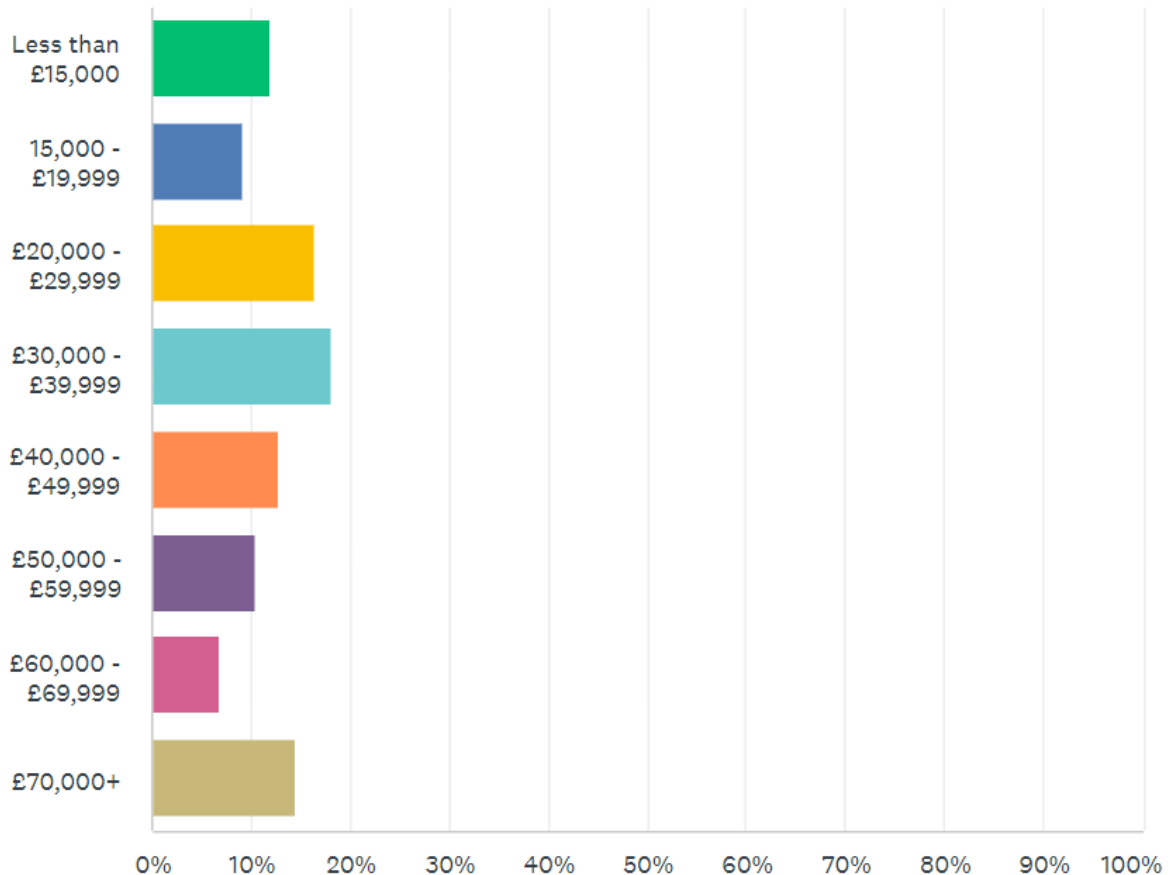
Our survey audience skewed older than the UK as a whole, with 41.3% of respondents being aged 65+, whilst a further 31.9% were aged 55-64 (making for almost three quarters of respondents being aged 55 or above). At the other end of the scale, just 0.3% were aged 16-24. This is something to



consider for future surveys to get a more representative split, or to supplement with an additional survey specifically targeting younger people.



There was a reasonably even split across household incomes, with just 10% difference between the most and least common responses (in this case "£20,000-£29,999" and "£60,000-£69,999" respectively). Similar responses were seen last year.



If you have any questions about this survey or the responses within, please contact the Visit Portsmouth team on: [Tourism@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:Tourism@portsmouthcc.gov.uk)



**Portsmouth**  
the great waterfront city