

Visit Portsmouth Visitor Survey Results 2021/22

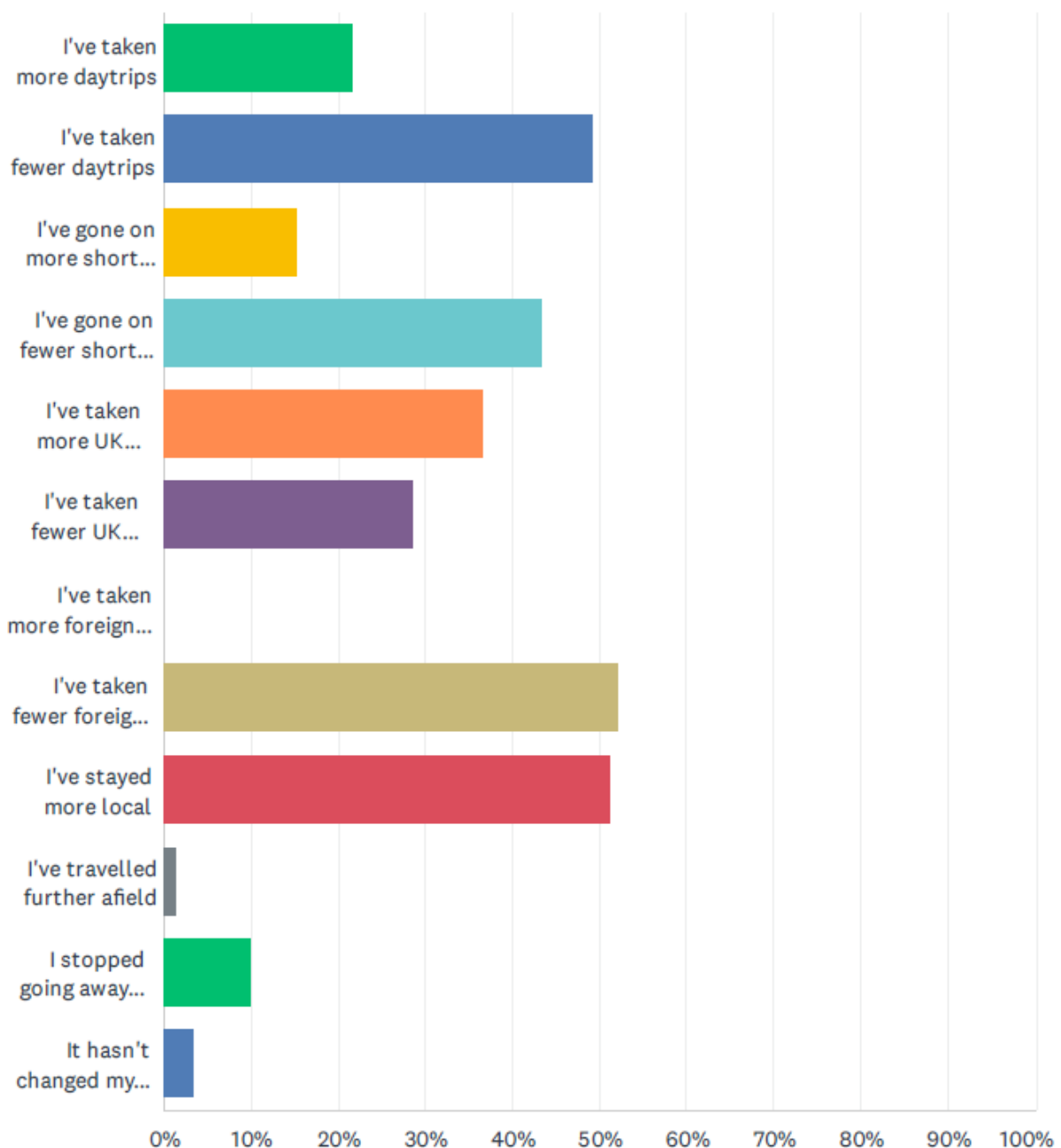


The Covid-19 impact

This year we added a question to ascertain how much the pandemic - and its associated restrictions, lockdowns and fears - impacted people and their travel plans. 49.2% of respondents said they had taken fewer daytrips as a direct result of the pandemic, with 21.8% saying the number of trips they'd taken had increased. It was a similar story around short breaks, with 43.5% saying they had taken fewer than usual over the past two years, whereas just 15.3% had taken more.

As expected, travel restrictions left more people searching for holidays at home. 36.6% of our respondents said they'd been on more UK holidays than usual these past two years, with 52.3% saying they'd taken fewer foreign holidays. Not a single respondent said they'd taken more foreign breaks than they had done pre-pandemic.

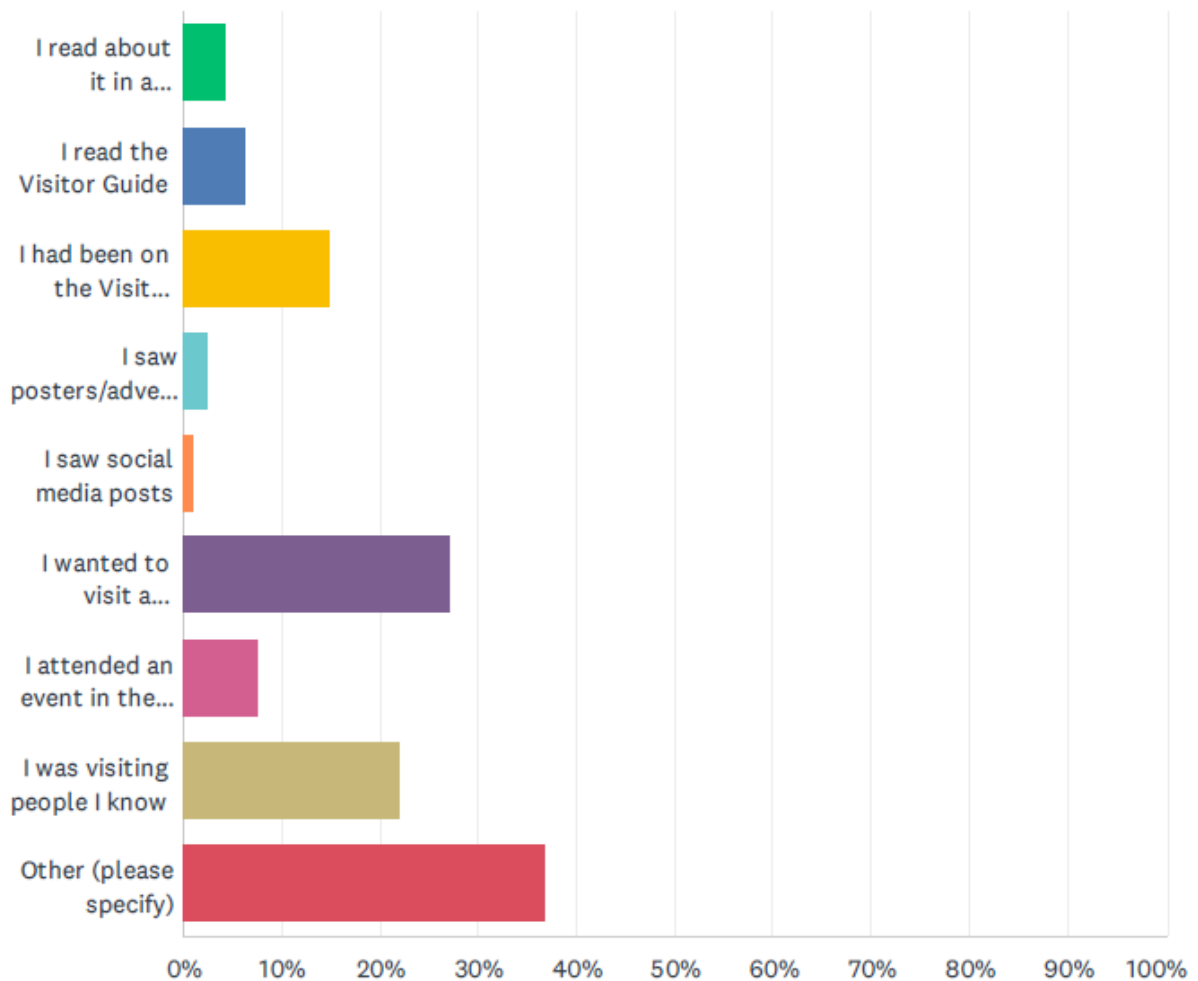
Almost one in ten (9.9%) respondents said the pandemic had stopped them going away altogether, whilst 3.4% reported the pandemic having had no impact on their travel habits whatsoever.



Why Portsmouth?

Just as in previous years, in 2021 we asked visitors what made them choose to come to Portsmouth. Of the options we provided, visiting a specific attraction came out on top (27%), followed by visiting friends or relatives (22.1%) and the Visit Portsmouth website (14.8%). These largely mirror the results from 2019, when the top three was the same, with only minor differences in the percentages.

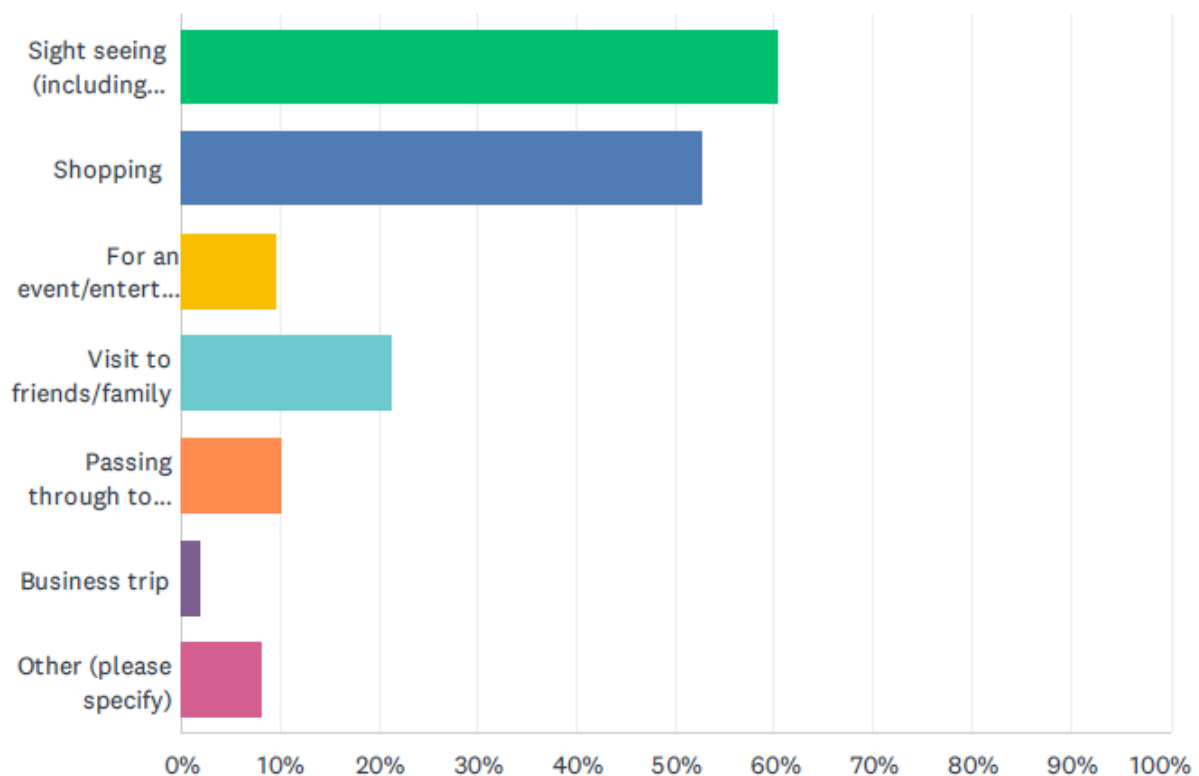
The 'Other' option also proved popular, garnering responses covering everything from heading back to old University stomping grounds, to supporting Portsmouth FC, and even going to hospital.



Type of trip

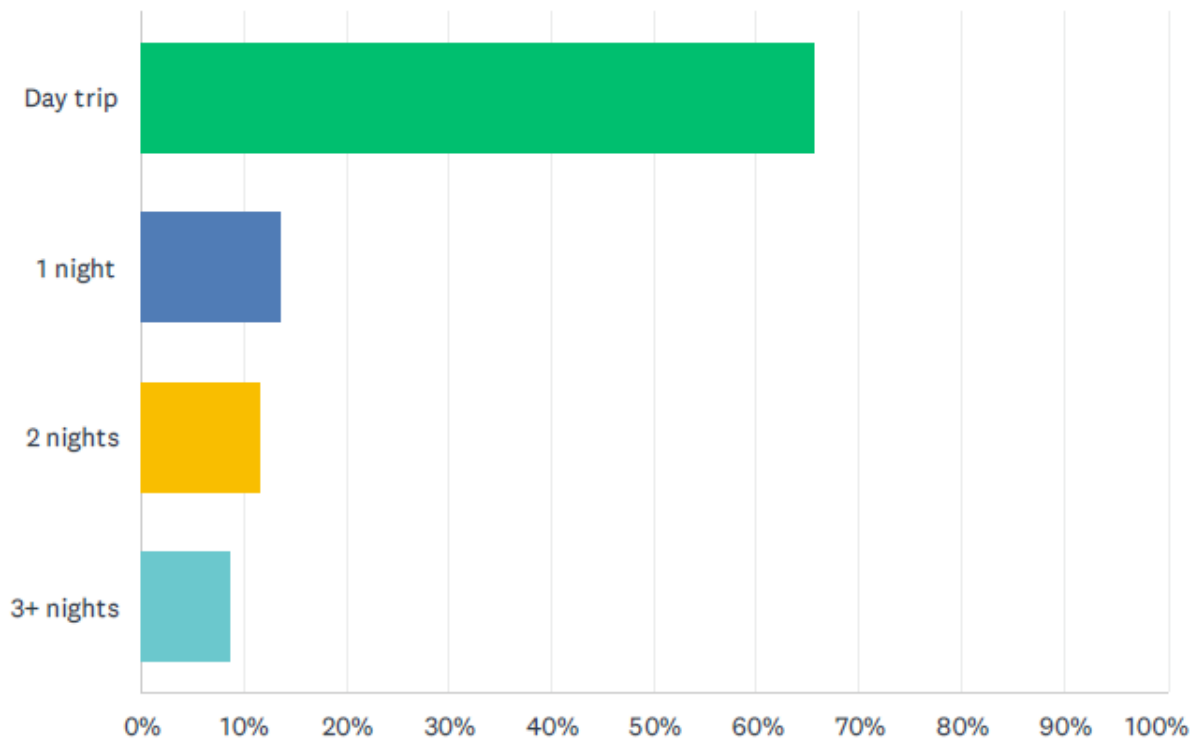
What visitors did on their trips to Portsmouth was also largely unchanged over the years. In 2021, 60.3% of respondents said they visited Portsmouth for sightseeing - a figure that stood at 60.5% in 2019. Similarly, 52.7% said they fitted shopping into their trip during 2021, as did 52.3% of respondents in 2019.

The largest difference concerned events, dropping from 17.9% in 2019 to 9.5% in 2021 - unsurprising, given how much had to be cancelled in line with government restrictions and concerns around the spread of the virus. This also impacted visits to friends and family, which dropped from 27.3% to 21.4%. That people decided against visiting friends and relatives here but continued to come for attractions and shopping should showcase how much of a draw the city is to culture buffs and shopaholics alike.



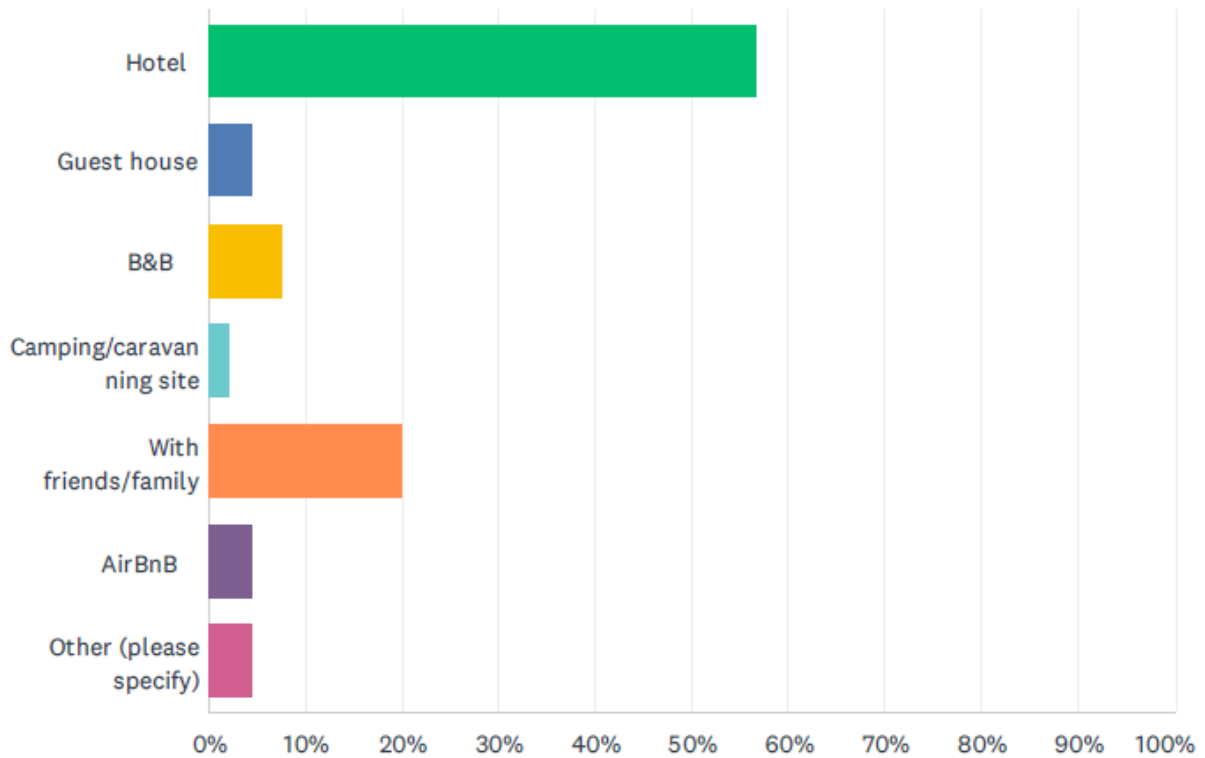
Length of stay

Daytrips remain by far the most common types of break in Portsmouth - and have become even more commonplace during the pandemic. 65.7% of respondents in 2021 stayed just for the day, compared with 55.2% in 2019. Of those who stayed longer this time around, 13.7% were here for one night, 11.8% for two nights, and 8.8% for longer.



Accommodation

Those who did stay the night chose most often to base themselves in a hotel. The figures were largely unchanged over the two most recent surveys, polling around 56% for both. Staying with friends and family dropped in popularity, most likely because of the fall in trips of that kind, as noted above. Instead, guest houses and B&Bs both saw increases, from 2.5% to 4.4%, and from 4.5 to 7.8% respectively.

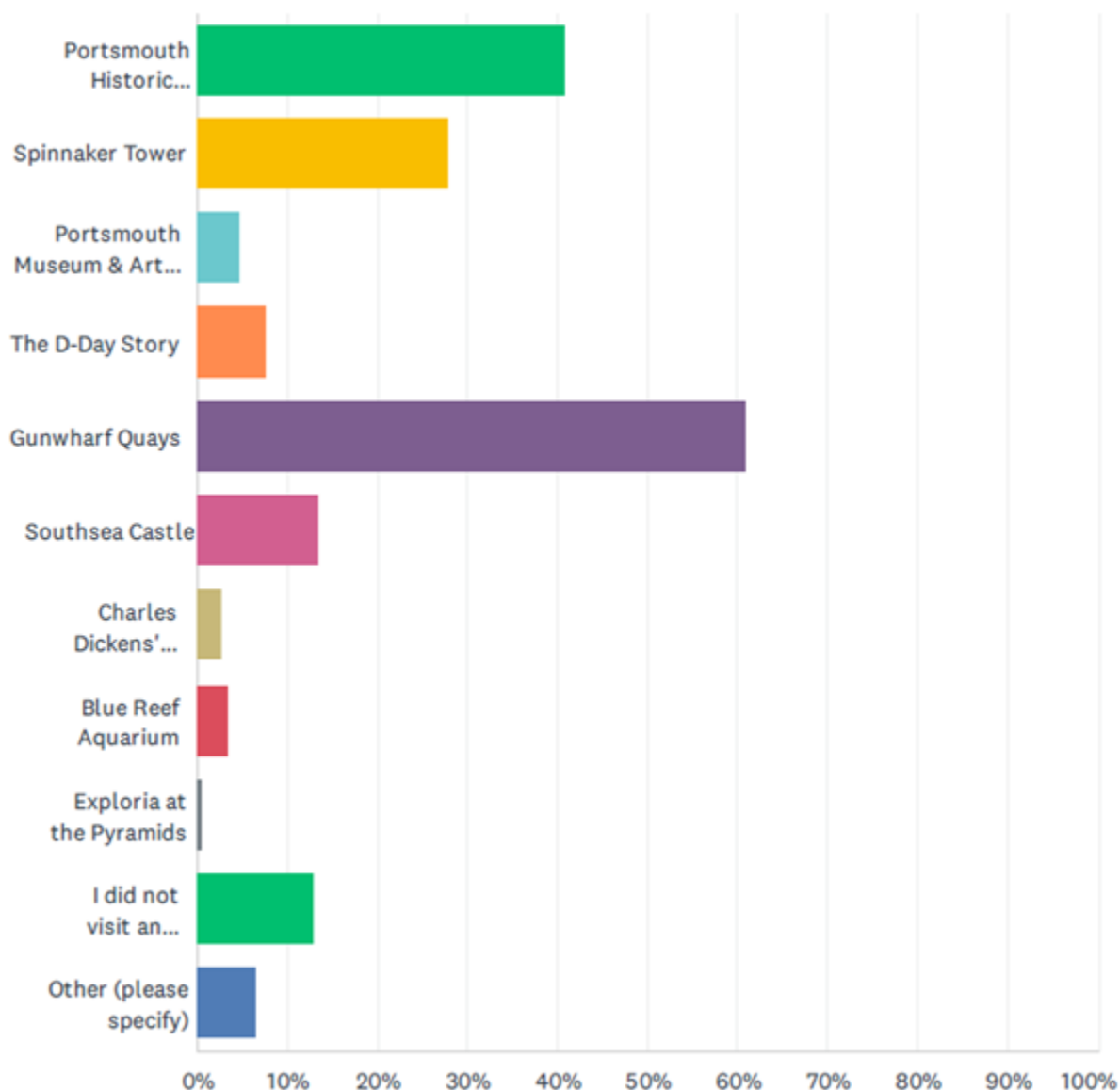


Attractions

As we've already covered, shopping was still a big draw for visitors, even amid fears of increased virus transmissibility indoors. Surely enough, Gunwharf Quays remained top of the list for attractions visited in our survey. Some 60.9% of respondents in 2021 found time in their trip to head to Gunwharf Quays, just slightly down on the 65% who did so in 2019.

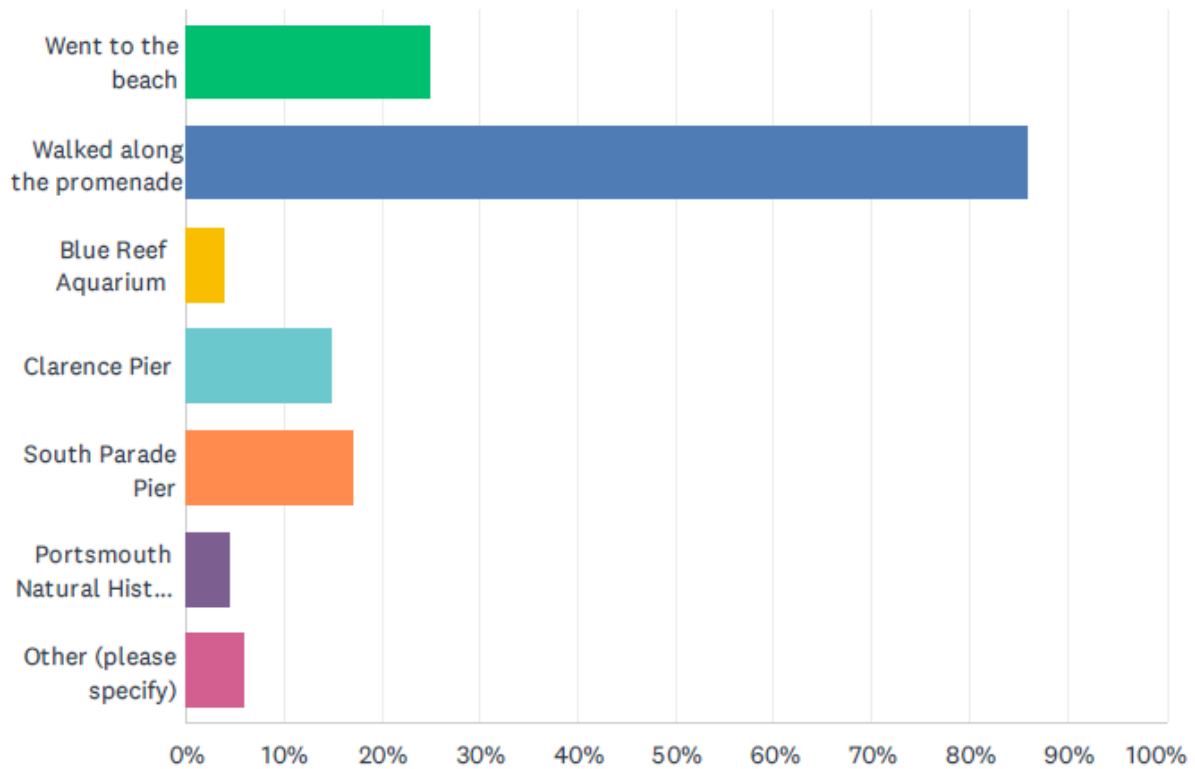
It wasn't such great news at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, however, which dropped from 51% to 41% over the same period. However, the changes in regulations around what was able to open at different levels of lockdown meant that Gunwharf Quays was open for longer than the Historic Dockyard, which is likely to have played a large part in these results.

Other attractions also saw minor decreases - most likely as visitors flocked to the seafront and parks to explore more open areas in line with official health advice.



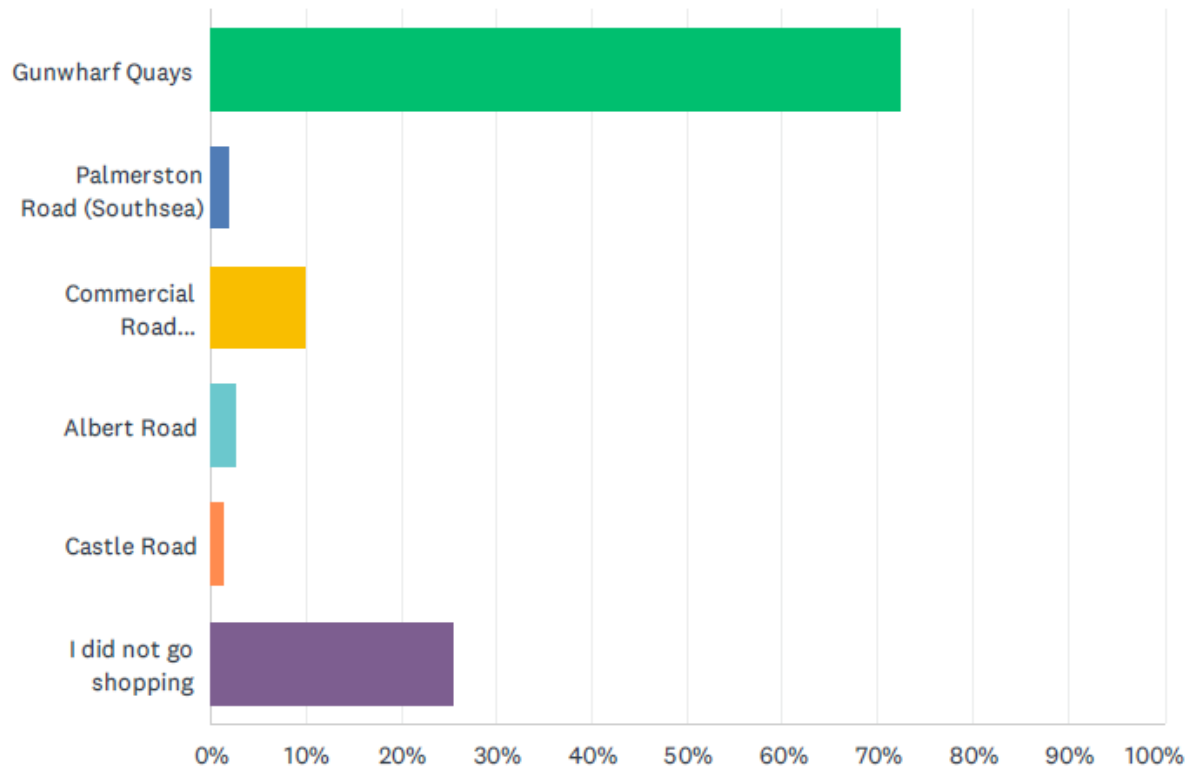
Seafront

The move towards open spaces is evidenced by responses to the question of whether people factored in a visit to the seafront during their trip. Whilst only a small increase, the share of people who headed to the water's edge still rose, from 76.3% to 77.2%. Whilst at the seafront, walks along the promenade remained popular, being enjoyed by exactly 86% of respondents in both 2019 and 2021. It wasn't such great news for indoor attractions, however. Those who reported having visited Clarence Pier, for example, fell from 25.7% to 15%.



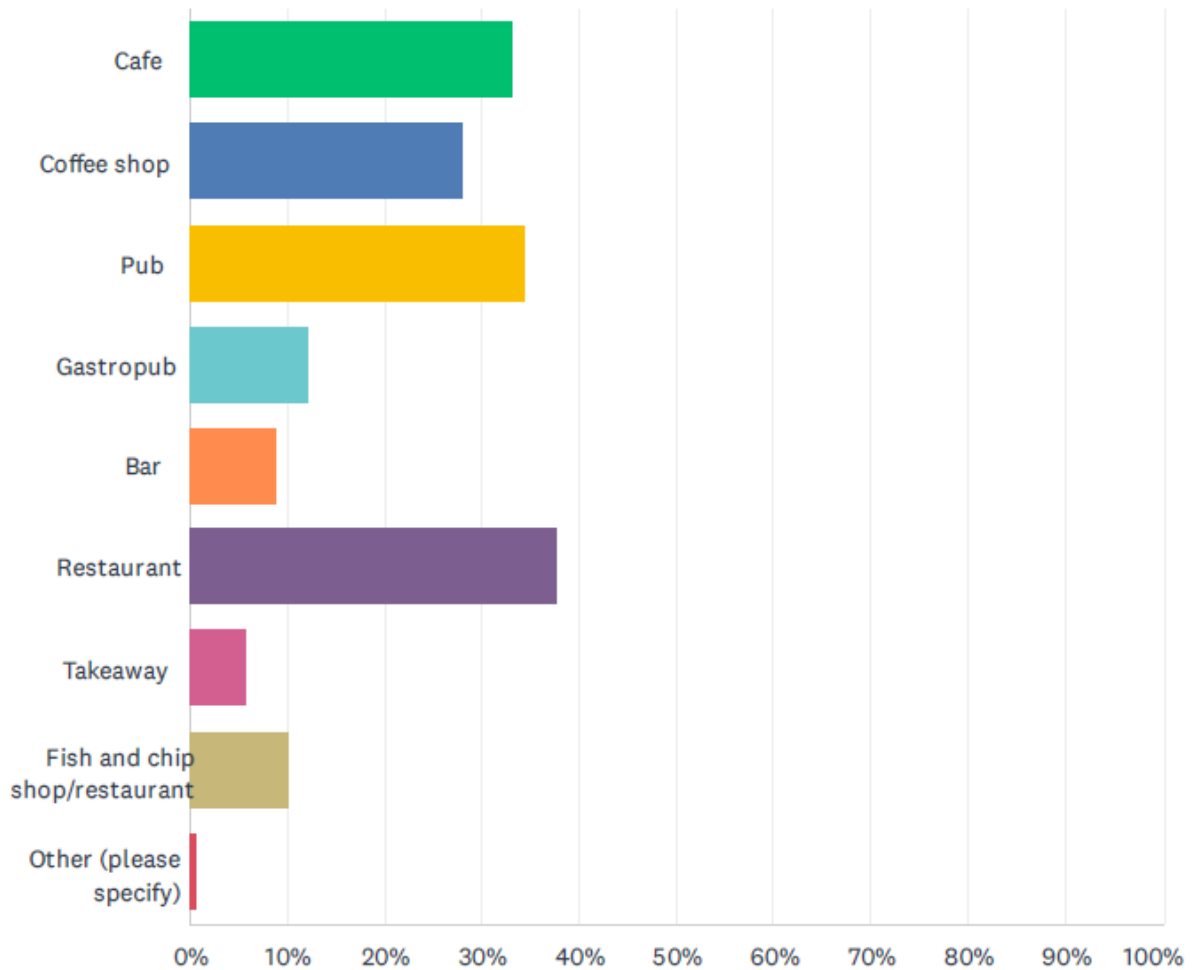
Shopping

As has been established, Gunwharf Quays is a major draw to the city, and it represented the shopping destination of choice for 72.6% of visitors in 2021. A further 10% went to Commercial Road. Interestingly, Albert Road overtook Palmerston Road into third place in our 2021 survey, with the number of people heading into central Southsea dropping from 9.4% to just 1.9%.



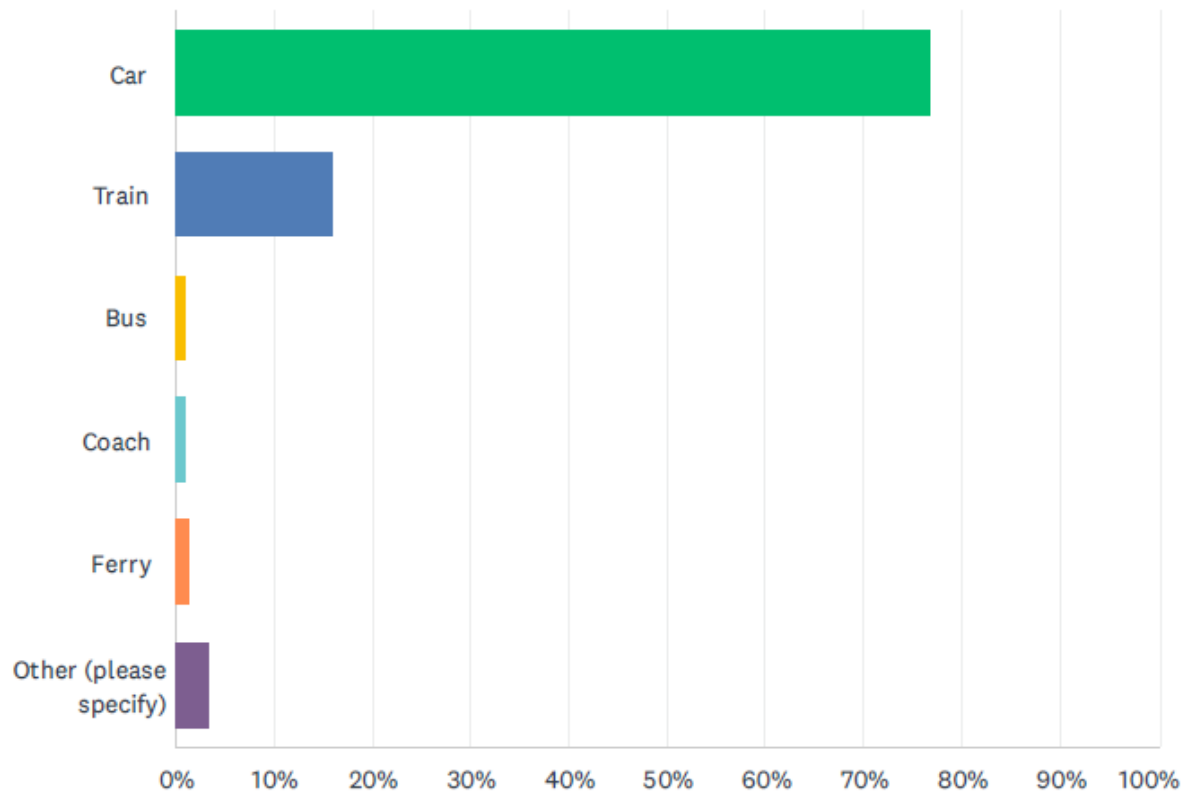
Eating out

Perhaps through concerns around the virus, or maybe because daytrips were on the up, the number of people eating at Portsmouth's restaurants, cafes and pubs saw a small decline in 2021. However, the numbers were still high. Some 77.2% of visitors headed out for food according to our most recent survey, whereas the figure was 84% in 2019.



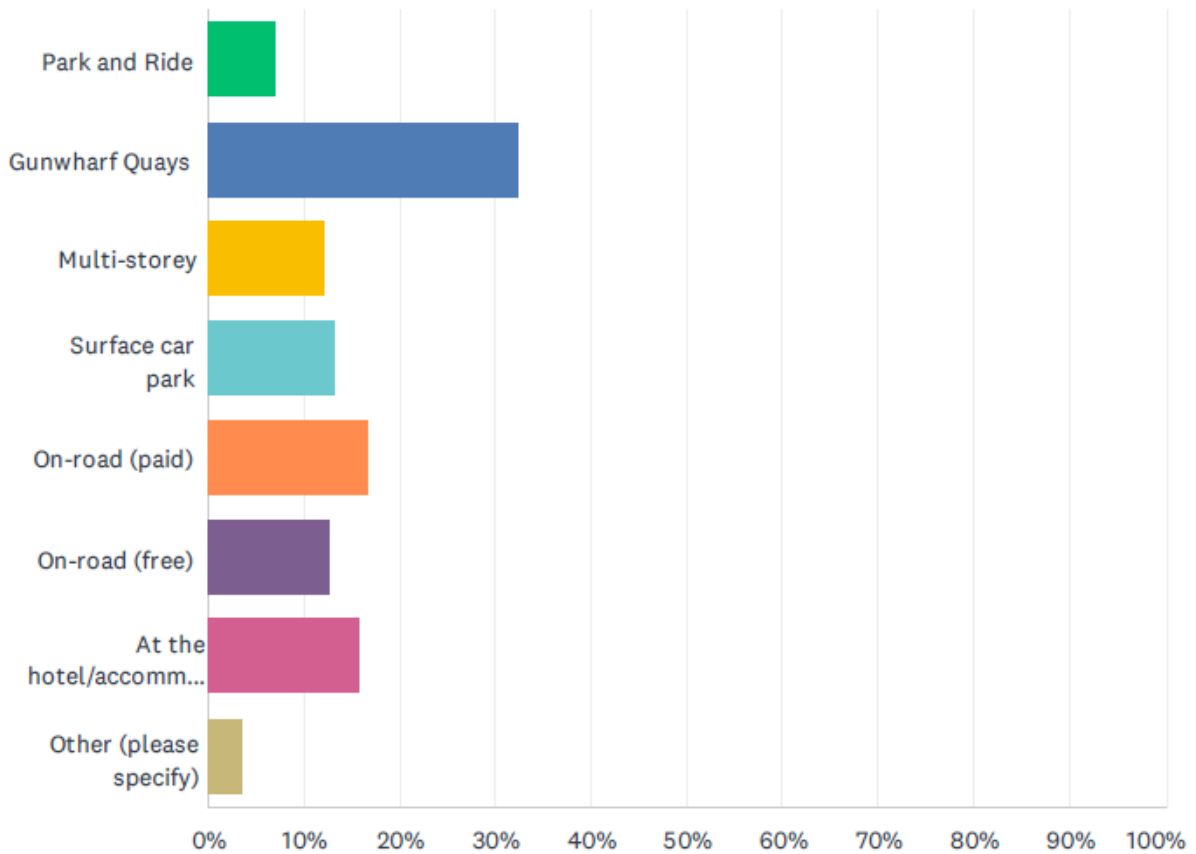
Travel

When it came to travel to Portsmouth, car was king. The share of people who drove themselves into the city rose in 2021, from 72.3% to 76.7% - almost certainly as a result of people wanting to keep distanced from others. Surely enough, the share of visitors who came in by train, bus or ferry saw decreases - though we must remember that many services were cancelled altogether or running limited timetables for much of the pandemic, which is also likely to have played a part.



Parking

As would be expected given its popularity, Gunwharf Quays wasn't just where many people visited, but also where they parked. In both recent surveys, the most popular parking option was Gunwharf Quays, taking around a 32% share. Elsewhere, 2021 saw an increase in those paying to park at the roadside - possibly to visit the seafront or Southsea Common, where much of the parking in the immediate surrounds is Pay and Display.



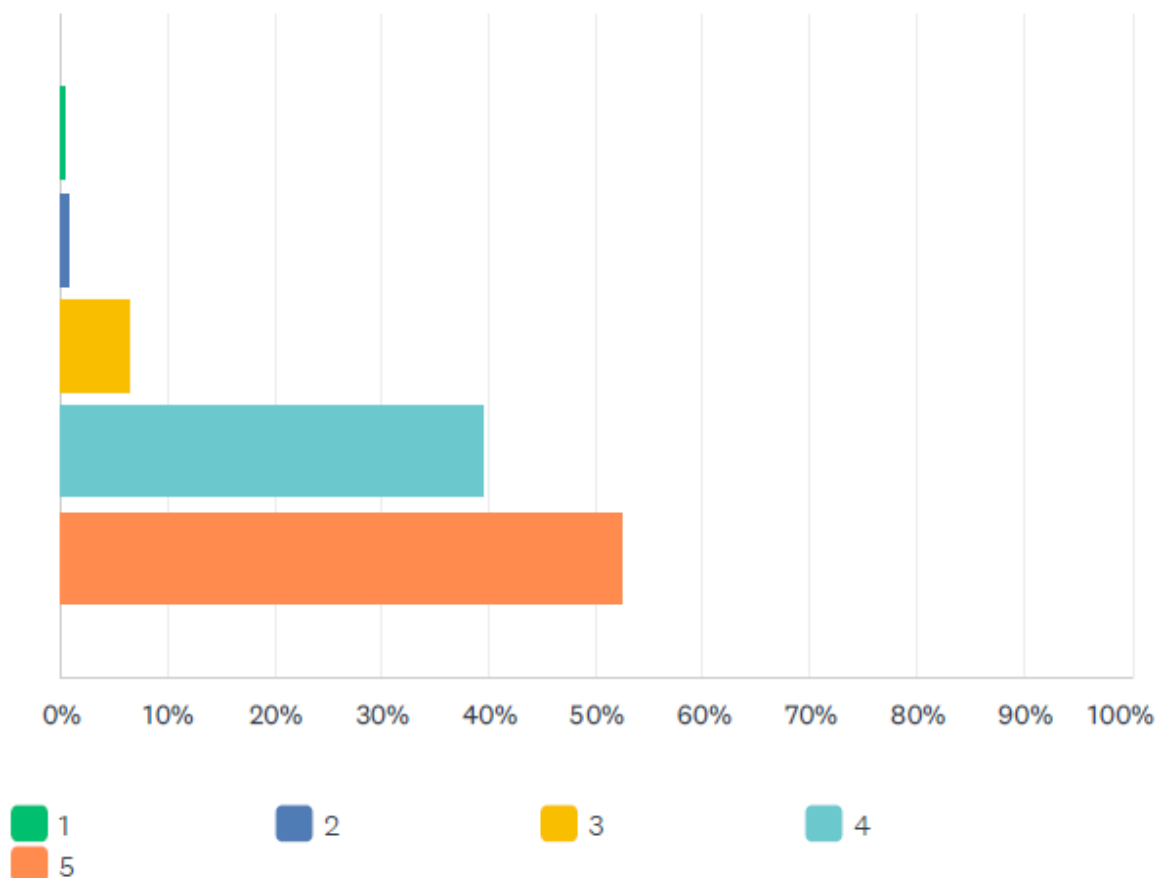
Enjoyment

We ask respondents to tell us how much they enjoyed their visit to Portsmouth on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the best. We also ask them how likely they are to return next year, using the same scale.

In 2021, 52.5% of respondents ranked their enjoyment as a full five stars, with a further 39.7% giving four stars. This makes for a total of 92.2% respondents ranking their visit as four or five stars. At the other end of the scale, just 0.4% and 0.8% gave one and two stars respectively (as shown in the graph below).

Though good, these are still somewhat down on 2019, where 61.4% awarded five stars and 33.1% four stars (94.5% combined). However, with restrictions still in place for many visitors and the full experience of a trip away arguably still not yet back, this still seems a good result.

On their likelihood of returning, 47.9% of respondents in 2021 gave five stars, with a further 32.3% giving four (80.2% total). In 2019, five stars was given by 64.1% of respondents, with an additional 21.9% selecting four stars (86% total).

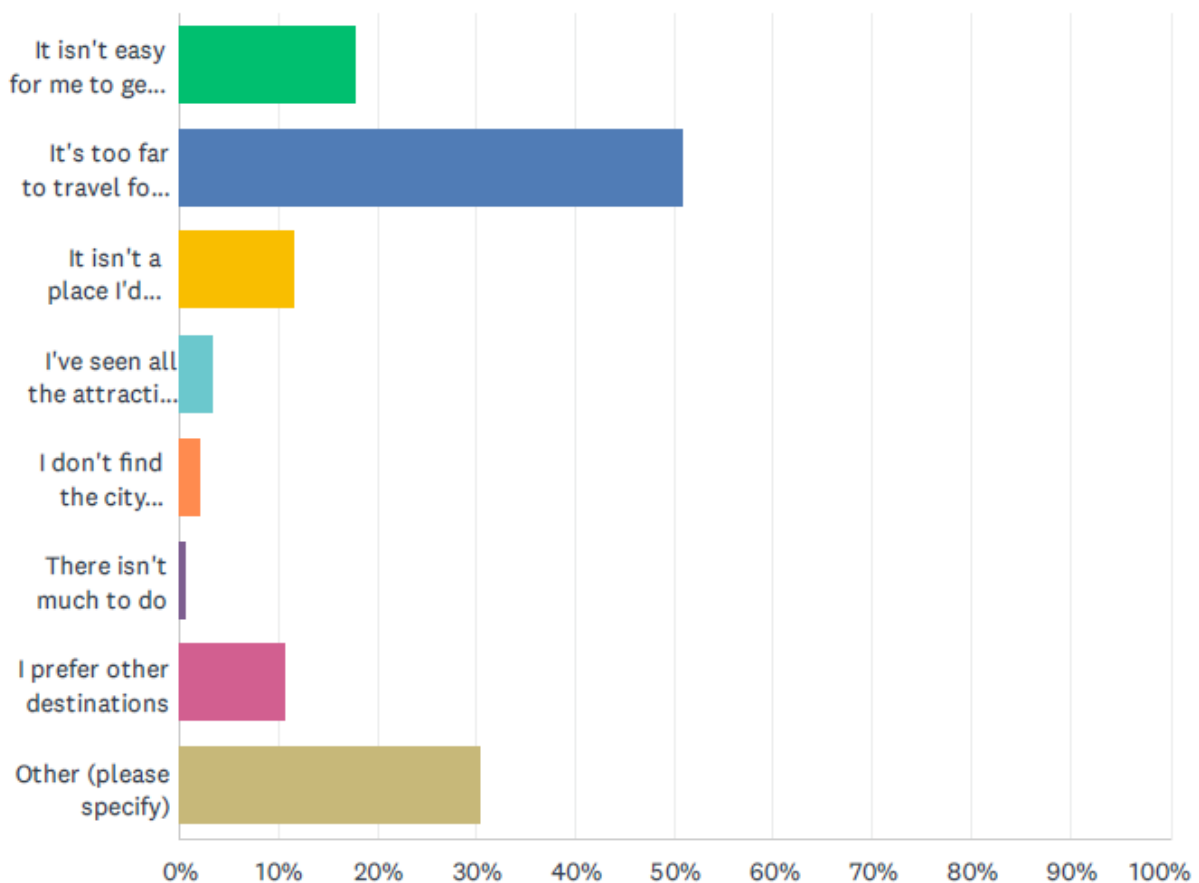


Why people don't visit

As well as visitors, we also gauge the opinions of non-visitors and lapsed visitors, to see why they haven't come. As in previous years, simple geography was by far the biggest obstacle for lapsed visitors, with over half (51%) saying it was too far for them to travel. Next (and possibly related) were those who said it wasn't easy to get here, at 17.8%. Other responses selected by around one in ten people were that they'd not considered Portsmouth for a short break (11.6%), and that they prefer other destinations (10.6%).

For non-visitors, the results were largely the same. However, the percentage of people who said they don't think there's much to do here dropped from 4.4% to 2.5% between 2019 and 2021. Also, those who said they thought Portsmouth wasn't for them fell from 2.3% to zero.

When pressed on what visitors can get more of elsewhere, countryside and beaches topped the list, at 44.2% and 37% respectively. These results mirror those seen in 2019, where countryside and beaches (one would assume of the sandy variety) also topped the list of draws to other destinations.



Visitor demographics

Each survey ends with a series of questions to ascertain the demographics of our visitors. From these, we discover the average respondent is aged 55-64, takes between 1 and 5 day trips a year, and between 1 and 3 short breaks. Responses to their annual household income are fairly evenly spread across all options, the order going:

£30,000 - £39,000 (17%)

£70,000+ (16.2%)

Less than £15,000 (14.5%)

£20,000 - £29,000 (14.3%)

£40,000 - £49,000 (14%)

£15,000 - £19,999 (9%)

£50,000 - £59,000 (7.8%)

£60,000 - £69,000 (7.2%)