ERBID How's Business Survey

November, December & Full Year 2024

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Sample and supporting information

This month's survey has a sample of 62 businesses, representing a minimum sample of approximately 85 businesses when self-catering agency properties and respondents representing multiple businesses, outlets or sites are also considered.

This latest report see's the introduction of data produced by Lighthouse (formerly Transparent Intelligence) for Visit Britain looking at the short term rental* market. This provides useful data across the English Riviera and provides a good comparison to the data produced through the How's Business survey moving forward. Our thanks go to Lighthouse and Visit Britain for making this data freely available for the tourism industry.

Lighthouse tracks over 35 million vacation rental listings worldwide and maintains a proprietary database of hundreds of thousands of reservations tracked by month. Listings on the four major short-term rental platforms are tracked: Airbnb, Booking.com, Vrbo and Tripadvisor. Listings data is deduplicated when the same property is advertised on more than one platform.

** The UK Government defines a short-term rental property as 'a dwelling, or part of a dwelling, provided by a host to a guest, for use as accommodation other than the guest's only or principal residence, in return for payment, in the course of a trade or business carried on by the host'.*

At a glance – November and December 2024

Compared to November 2023 businesses reported that:

November 2024 Visitor levels:

Increased 22% / Stayed the same 26% / Decreased 52%

Estimated actual change in visitors -9%

November 2024 Turnover levels:

Increased 25% / Stayed the same 28% / Decreased 47%

Estimated actual change in turnover -7%

Compared to December 2023 businesses reported that:

December 2024 Visitor levels:

Increased 29% / Stayed the same 19% / Decreased 52%

Estimated actual change in visitors -6%

December 2024 Turnover levels:

Increased 29% / Stayed the same 24% / Decreased 47%

Estimated actual change in turnover -4%

Optimism:

Optimism score is 4.49 out of a possible 10

November & December 2024 – Key results

November saw 52% of all businesses experiencing decreased visitors/customers compared with the same time last year – representing a decrease of -9% compared with November 2023 (compared with -6% for the region as a whole). 53% of all businesses experienced increased (25%) or level (28%) turnover in November compared with the same time last year and 47% reporting decreases – representing a decrease of -7% compared with November 2023 (compared with -6% for the region as a whole).

December showed a similar picture with 52% of all businesses experiencing decreased visitors/customers and 53% reporting increased or level (29% and 24% respectively) turnover – decreases of -6% and -4% respectively compared with December 2023 (compared with decreases of -5% each for the region as a whole).

Lighthouse short term rentals occupancy data for November and December 2023, estimate occupancy levels for the English Riviera for November and December 2024 at 28% an 32% respectively, representing decreases of -10% for November and -6% for December compared with the same months in 2023.

In addition, data from the British Retail Consortium (BRC) and Sensormatic reveals that the UK retail sector faced a continued downturn in December 2024, with a 2.2% year-on-year (YoY) reduction in footfall – a slight improvement from November's 4.5% decline. High street locations saw a 2.7% YoY footfall contraction in December. This fall still signaled a recovery from November's 3.7% slump.

At 4.49 out of 10.00 the optimism score has decreased compared with last month (4.72) to its lowest level since April 2024.

All data points to the end of year following a similar pattern to the rest of 2024 with performance levels down on 2023.

2024 overall

2024 Overall visitor levels (compared to 2023):

Increased 20% / Stayed the same 15% / Decreased 65%

Estimated actual change in visitors -9%

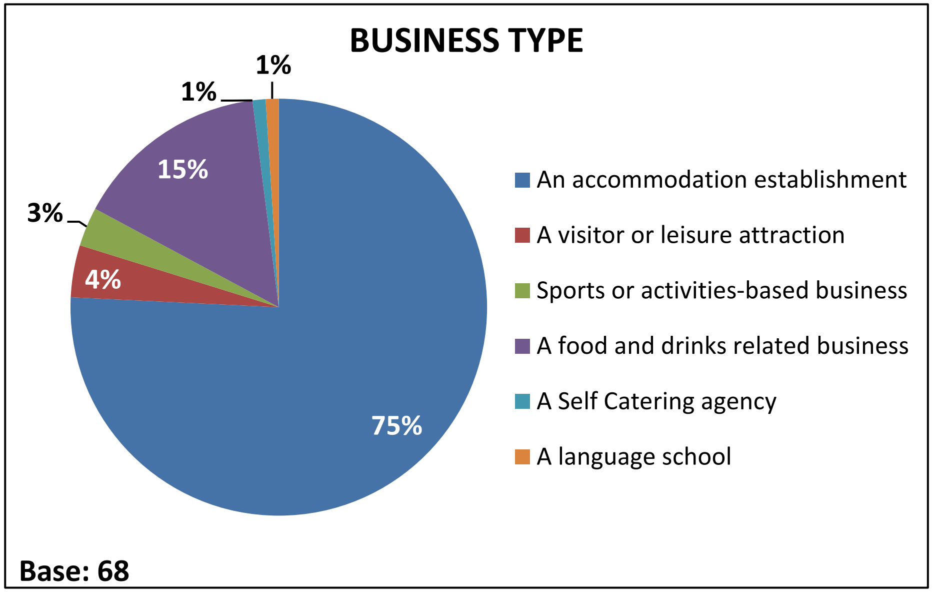
2024 Overall turnover levels (compared to 2023):

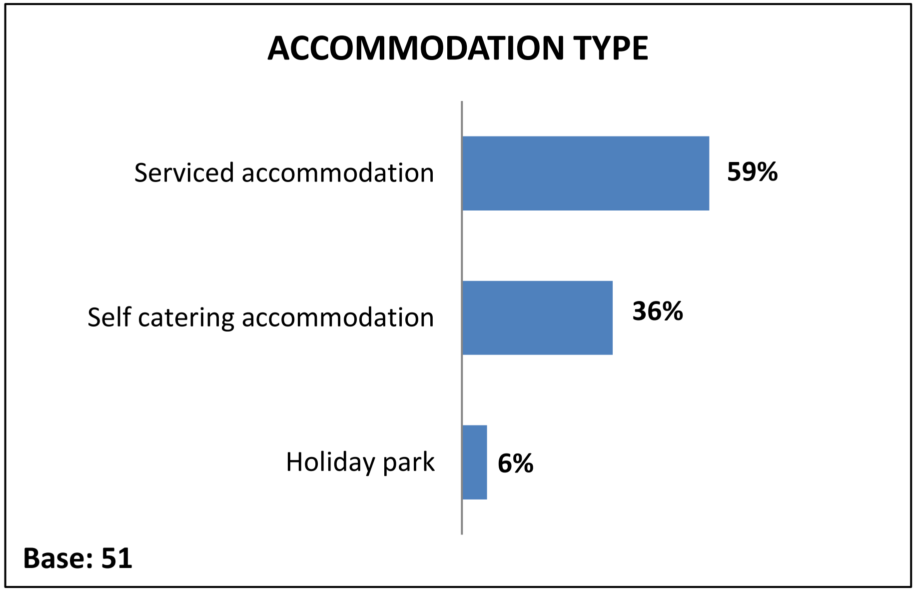
Increased 26% / Stayed the same 11% / Decreased 63%

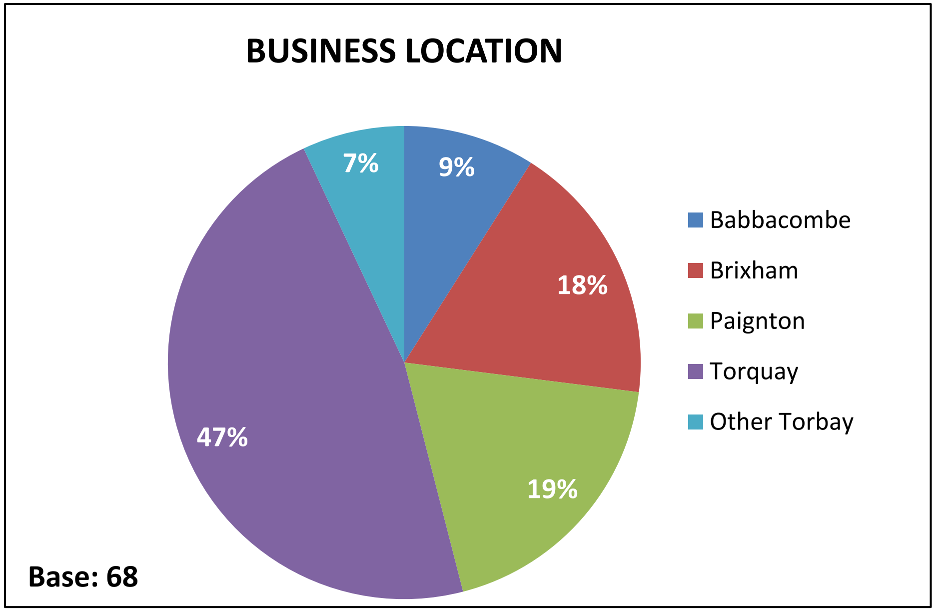
Estimated actual change in turnover -7%

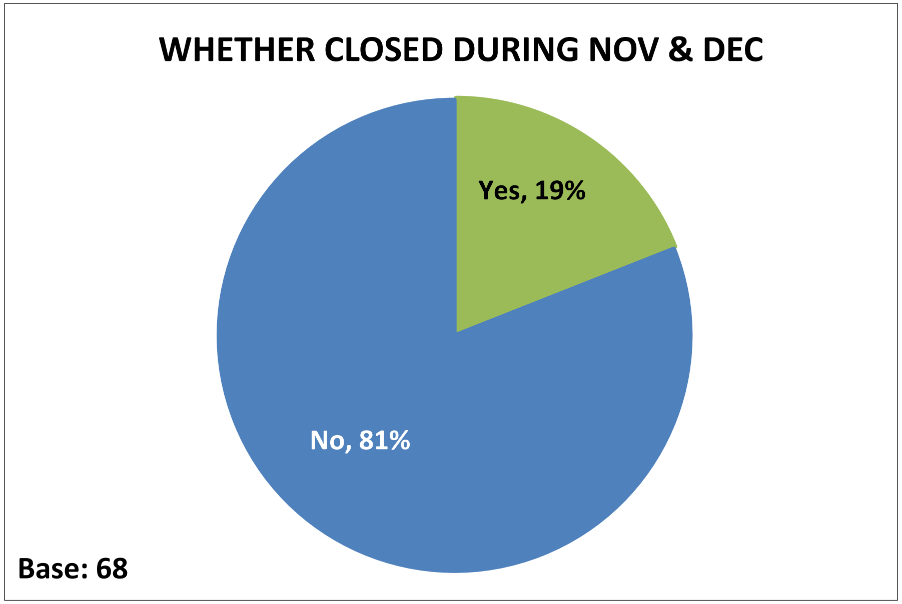
- Compared to 2023 as a whole, 79% of business reported increased staffing costs for 2024, 91% reported increased cost of goods, supplies and services required to operate and 45% reported increasing their business charges to their customers.
- Average length of stay, average group size and average spend per person all decreased compared with 2023.
- Annual serviced room occupancy increased by +1% compared with 2023, whilst annual self catering unit occupancy decreased by -5%.
- An average of -9% in short term rentals occupancy compared to 2023 is calculated through Lighthouse short term rentals occupancy data for 2024.
- At the time of producing this report the Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS, the national domestic staying visitor survey) has data available to the end of Q3 2024 for the South West. For the year to the end of Q3 the survey currently estimates staying visitor trips are -13%, nights -14% and spend -2%. Domestic staying visitors account for approximately 88% of the staying visitor market in the region so the current available data would seem to suggest a similar trend to that produced by this survey.

Sample profile, business location and status

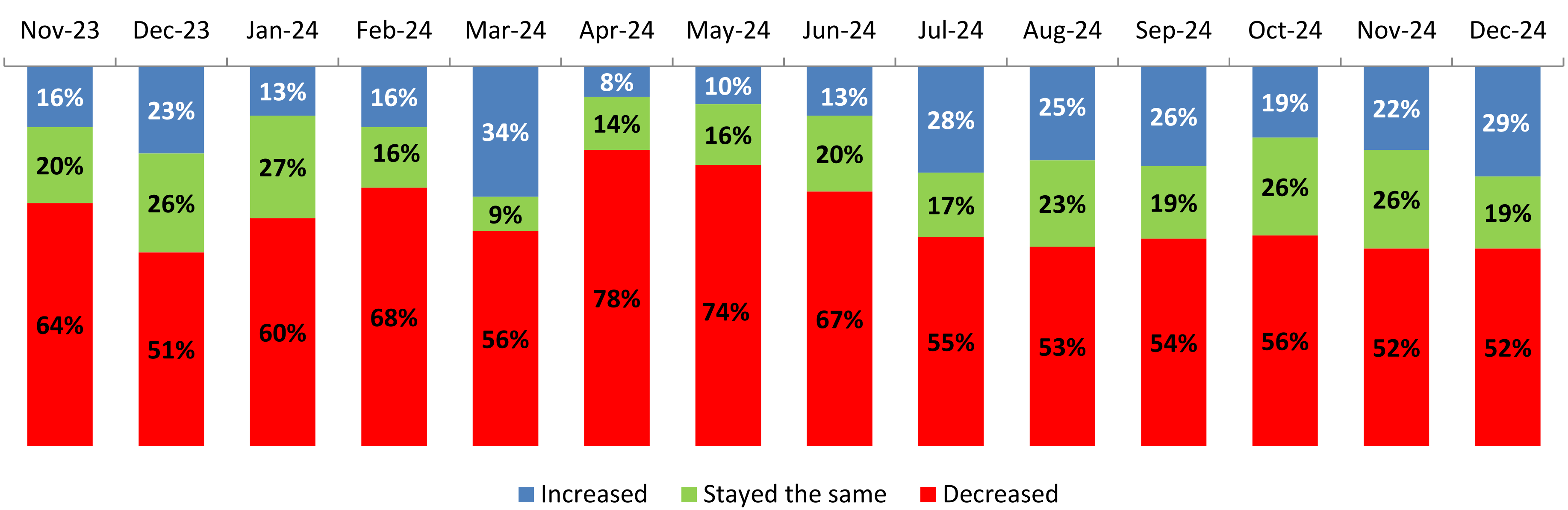


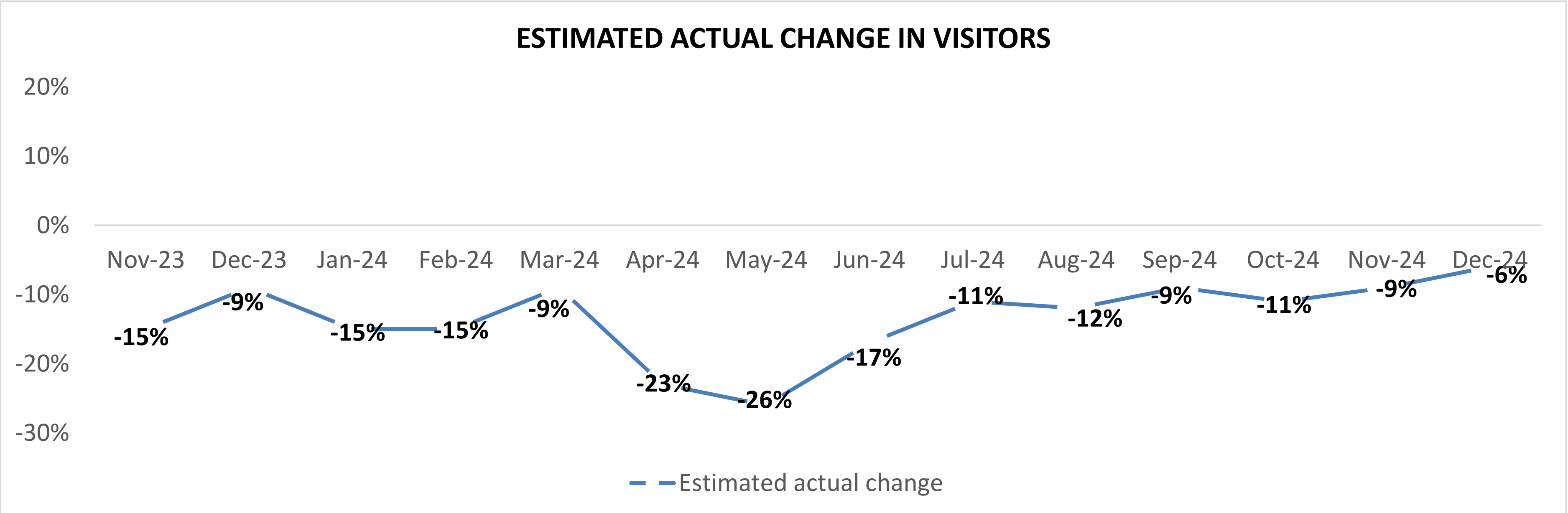




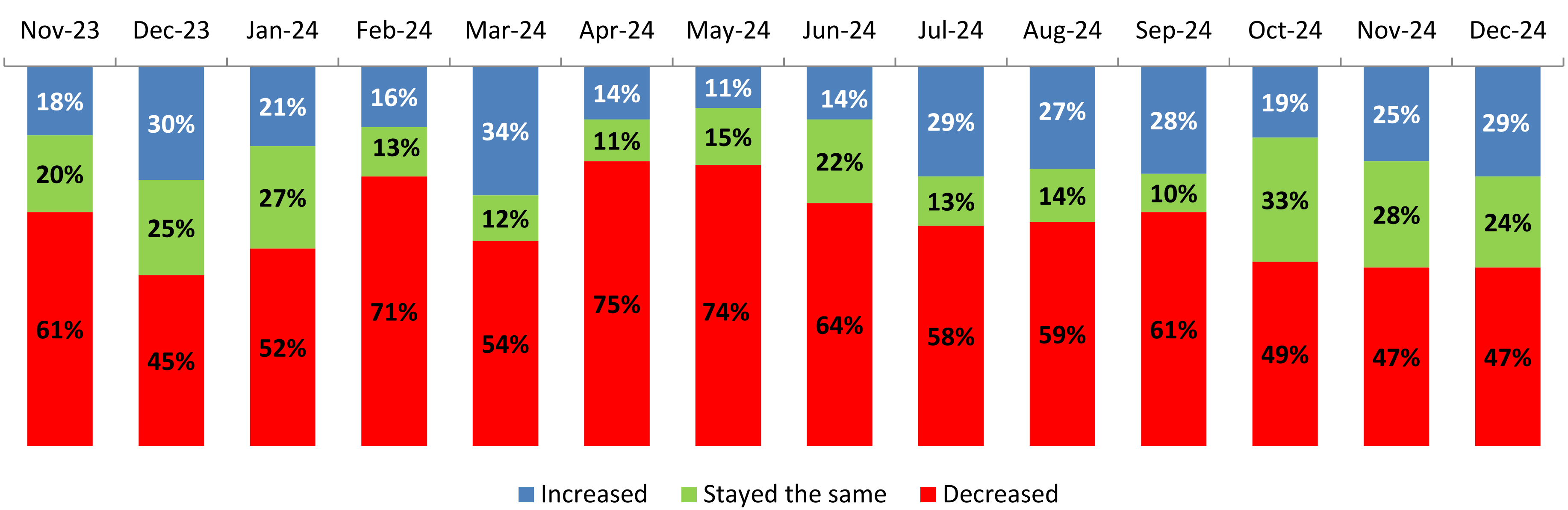


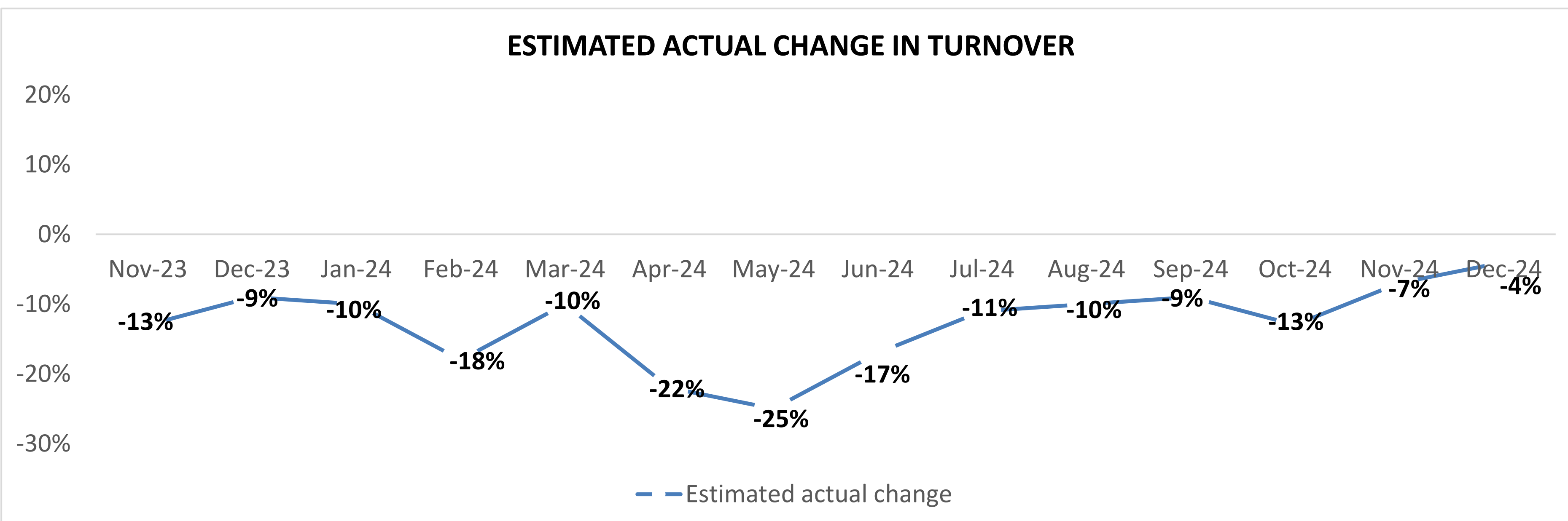
Performance – Number of visitors compared to previous year



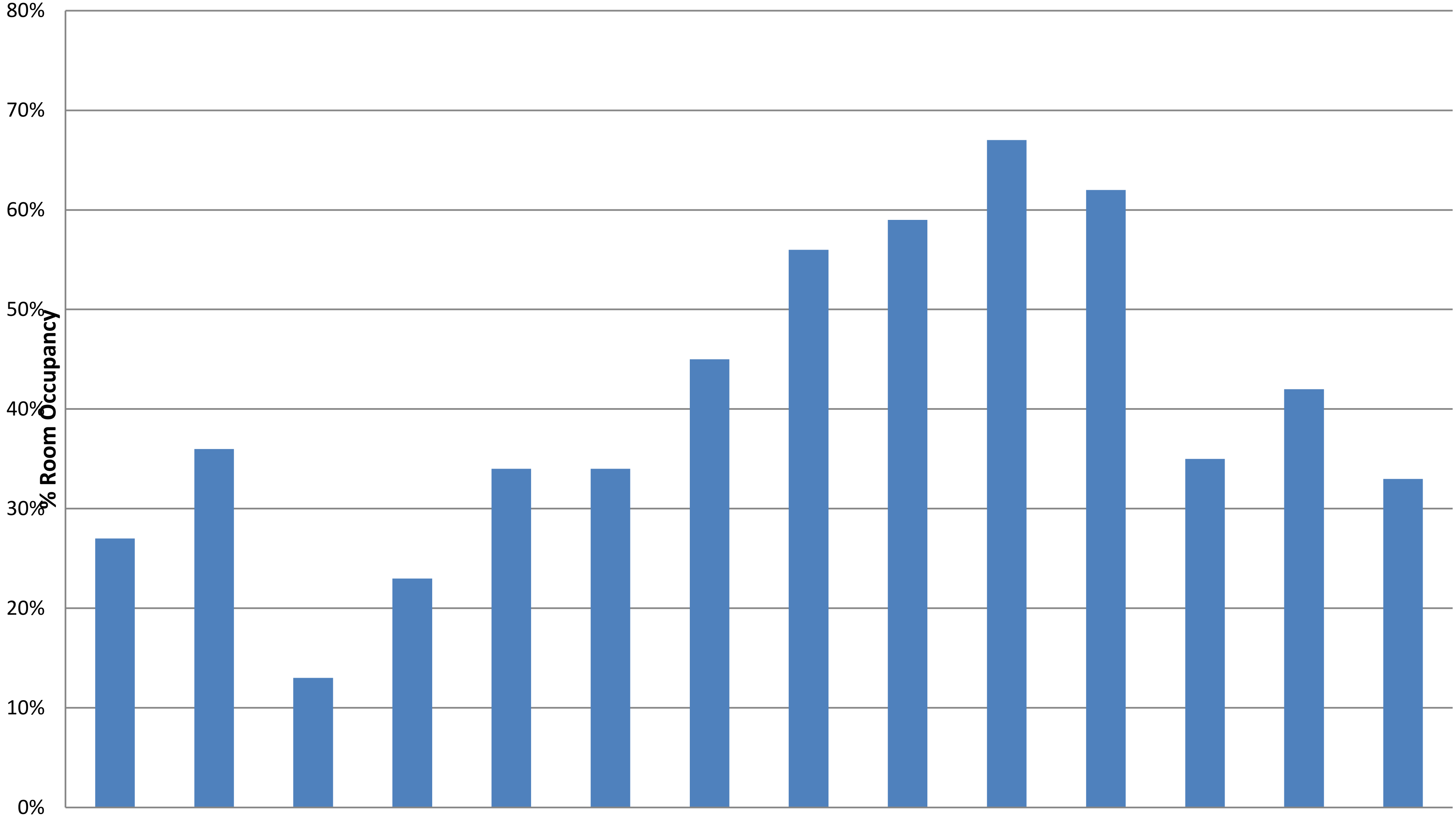


Performance – Turnover compared to previous year





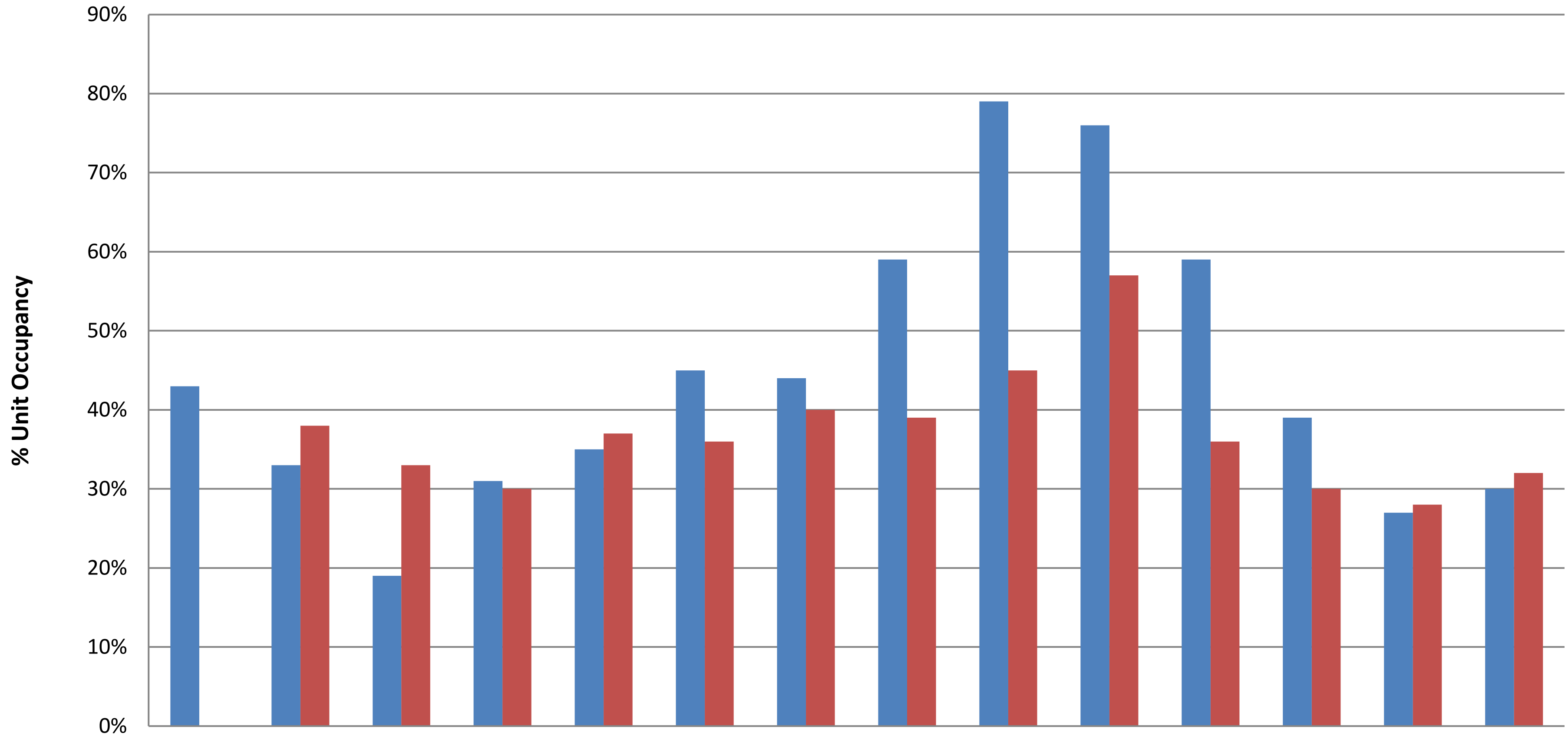
Performance – Serviced Room Occupancy



	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24
ER	27%	36%	13%	23%	34%	34%	45%	56%	59%	67%	62%	35%	42%	33%

It should be noted that the figures provided represent the occupancy rates for those responding to this survey and the results are not weighted to represent regional and county accommodation stocks.

Performance – Self Catering Unit Occupancy



	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24
ER	43%	33%	19%	31%	35%	45%	44%	59%	79%	76%	59%	39%	27%	30%
Lighthouse		38%	33%	30%	37%	36%	40%	39%	45%	57%	36%	30%	28%	32%

It should be noted that the HB figures provided represent the occupancy rates for those self catering businesses responding to this survey and the results are not weighted to represent regional accommodation stocks.

Lighthouse data represents the short term rental market on the English Riviera.

2024 v 2023 - Key indicators for the English Riviera

-9% Visitors

-7% Turnover

Average length of stay

Average group size

Average spend per person

+1% How's Business Serviced room occupancy

-5% How's Business Self catering unit occupancy

-9% Lighthouse short term rental occupancy

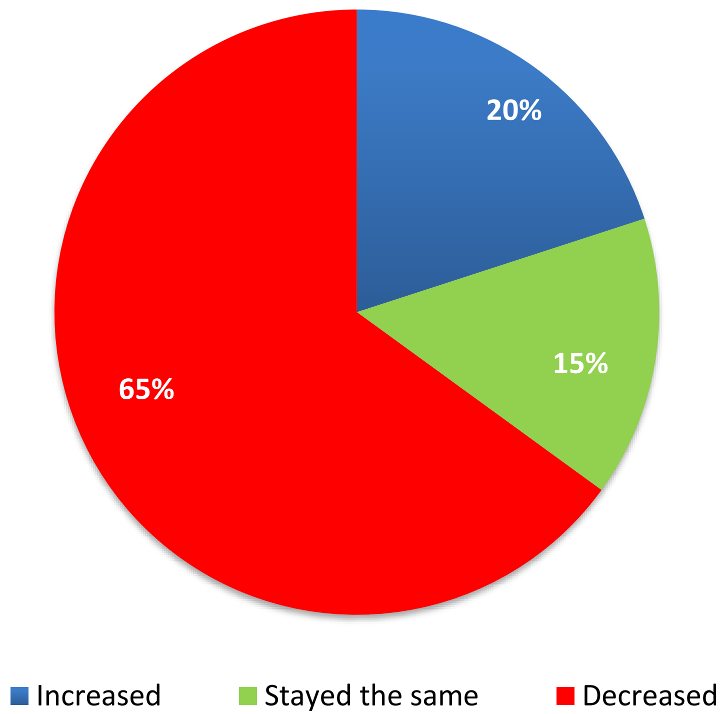
Staffing costs

Cost of supplies goods & services

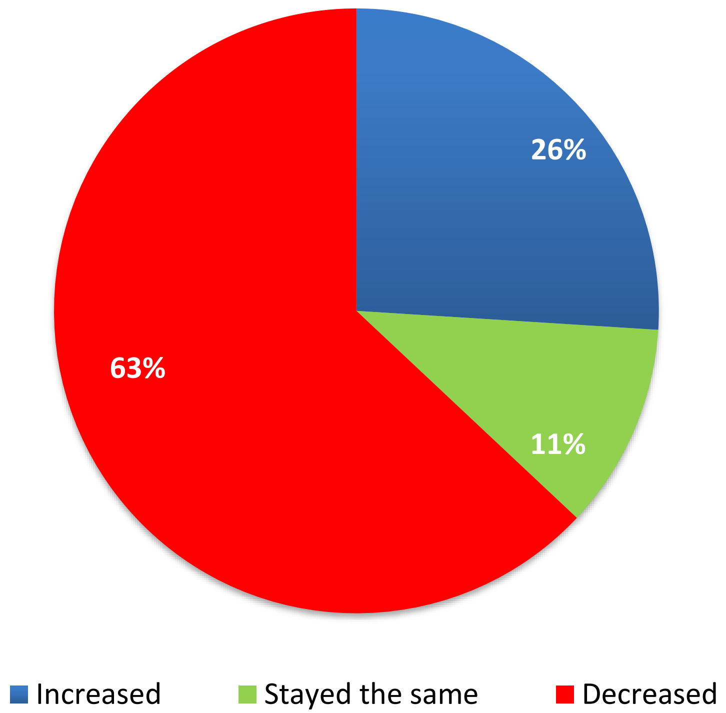
Tourism business charges to customers

Annual performance – 2024 compared to 2023

NUMBER OF VISITORS
2024 VS 2023



TURNOVER
2024 VS 2023



ESTIMATED ACTUAL CHANGE IN VISITORS
-9%

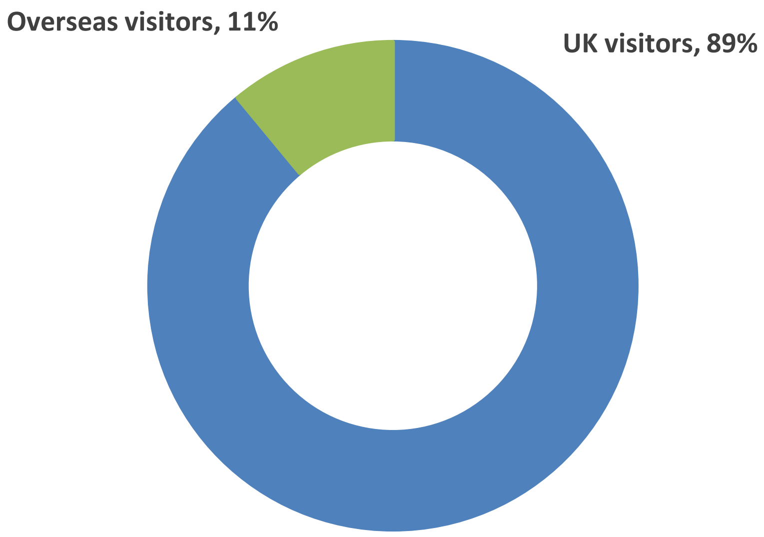
Base: 65

ESTIMATED ACTUAL CHANGE IN TURNOVER
-7%

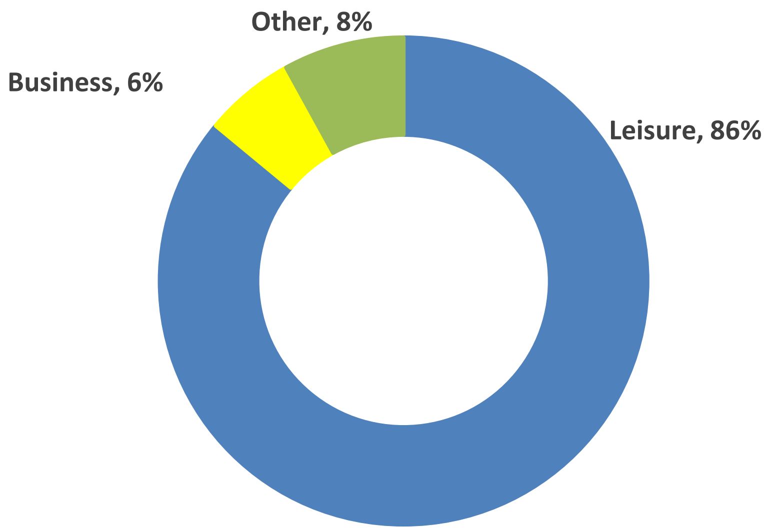
Base: 65

Annual performance – Visitor profiles for the English Riviera 2024

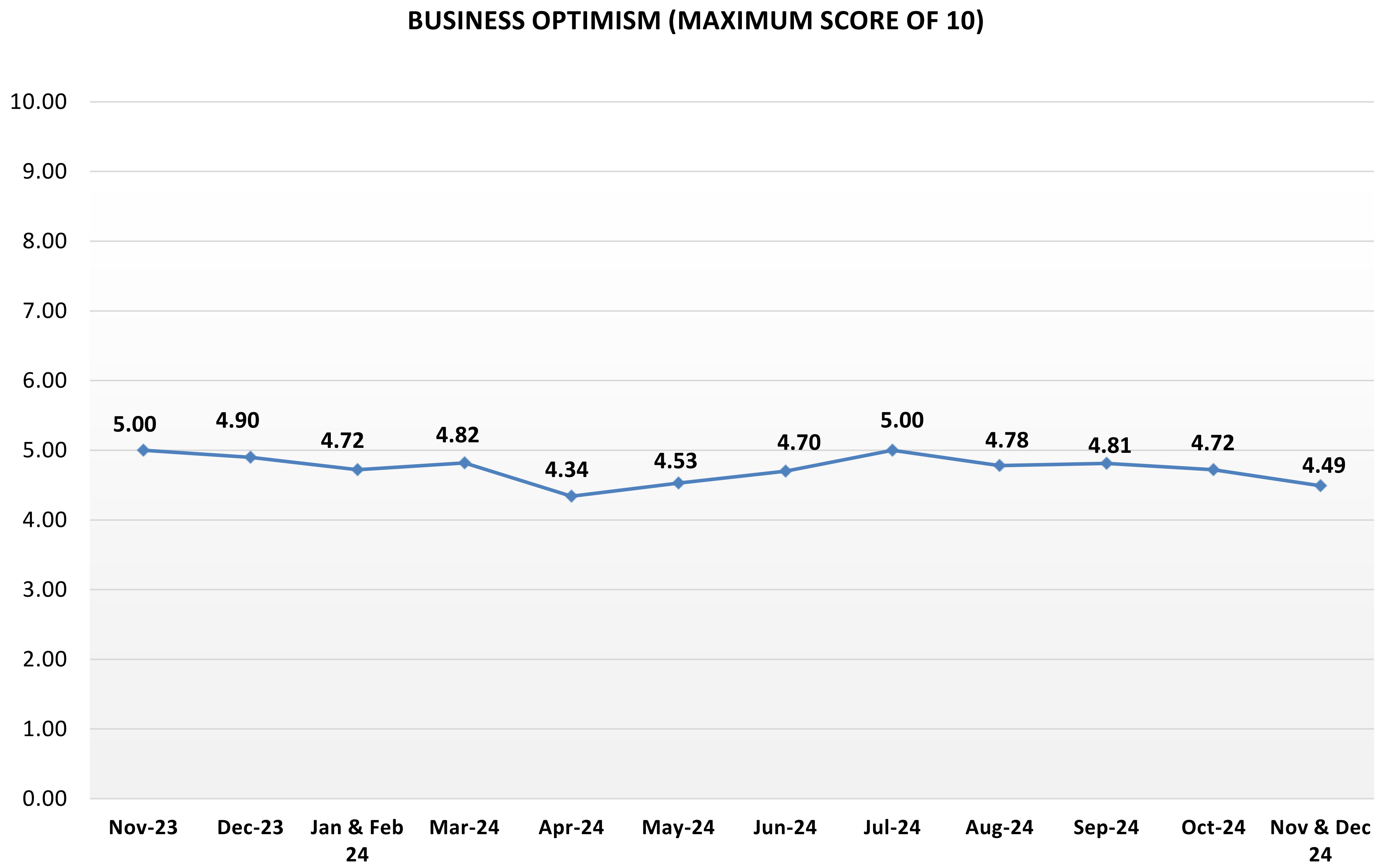
VISITOR ORIGIN



VISITOR TYPE



Business optimism



Key results – Sample of other comments on impacts

A really tough year - the worst in nearly 20 years. Surely 2025 will be better? (But we said that about 2024 compared to 2023!)

Although we just about held our own in 2024 it was clearly a bigger struggle attracting customers. We had to reduce prices compared to the previous year despite increased costs. Profit was therefore reduced. We have increased prices for the coming year but it is questionable how long this can be maintained since advance bookings are currently looking very poor (40% down on this time last year, and last year was itself down on the year before).

2024 was a difficult year. Costs on everything were higher mainly due to energy costs but we felt unable to raise our prices. We had some peak weeks that did not book. We offered more flexibility on dates and shorter breaks (more changeovers & costs) in order to get bookings. We maintain a database of email addresses of past guests and those that sign up on our website in order to send mailshots which we did regularly. Despite this, plus our social media posts, we struggled to fill any gaps that we had which is unusual. I feel that 2024 was a popular year for foreign travel and not so much domestic.

Margins are being squeezed. Unfortunately, holiday makers are not willing to accept rate increases in line with operating costs. 2025-2026 will be punishing with the increase in labour costs - near 10% when all is considered (minimum wage, NI contributions and, for many, VAT contribution on extra income needed to cover those increases). These increases will be throughout the supply chain.

A very good year , started early in March .

We are still reeling from the effects of brexit and the pandemic.

We all know that the market was dramatically affected by the weather, the economy and latterly the water situation. In view of the water situation any advertising that was done last year was primarily wasted because it was counteracted by the very negative media articles. We are fortunate that we can potentially absorb last years figures without too much of a detrimental effect, however, going forward we need to see a more positive year in order to recoup the losses and basically reset the business. Upcoming bookings for the summer are healthy but for the Spring, with the exception of the Pirate Weekend and the Trawler Event weekend, the bookings are fairly low. Currently Easter has no bookings in the calendar. For this reason, the national advertising that has been promised, in my opinion, needs to start a lot earlier than Spring and continue with short bursts throughout the summer to try and capture business for the Autumn.

We are extremely concerned with the climate and negative press on our industry currently (holiday park). The budget has hugely negatively impacted us too. The industry is really unstable and we are experiencing a last minute booking trend, which does not give you confidence over the season ahead.

May-July ish bookings were down simply because of SWW and their shambolic managing of a serious situation. Thankfully Sept, Oct and November were excellent- we picked up some trades people working in November and that was great.

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