

A snapshot of Bournemouth's visitors

Although less seasonal than the average English seaside destination, Bournemouth generally reflects the national picture, with a trend for longer visits than other domestic breaks, a higher than average number of trips involving children, and longer distances travelled. Day trips are also increasing to Bournemouth as to seaside destinations generally, with a 14% increase year on year.

The vast majority of Bournemouth's visitors have been before (87%) – only 13% were first time visitors. Around two thirds (64%) of Bournemouth's visitors were on a day trip either from home or another holiday destination, while 36% were staying in Bournemouth. Out of season, staying visitors drop to around 15%. Bournemouth has a slightly more 'upmarket' profile than the average for English seaside destinations, although the highest proportion of visitors were still from lower social grades (C2DE) – a characteristic shared with seaside destinations nationally.



We commissioned Bournemouth University to conduct a major visitor survey providing fresh insight into the resort's visitor profile, how and when visitors plan their trips, what they do, how much they typically spend and what they think of the experience. The survey's findings make essential reading for Bournemouth's tourism businesses.

Staying visitors in Bournemouth:

- > tend to stay longer than the average English seaside destination
- > mostly stay in serviced accommodation, although almost a quarter stay with friends or relatives
- > are more likely to be on a short break than the average English seaside destination
- > spend an average of £45.24 per person, per night on accommodation
- > generally rated their accommodation positively: 46% rated their overall experience at accommodation as 'very good' and 46% rated their experience as 'good'

The visitor profile differs significantly at different times of the year.

- > Before the summer holidays (May to mid-July), visitors are more likely to be younger (aged 18-24), on a day trip, spending less while here, and less likely to recommend Bournemouth to friends and family
- > During the summer holidays (late July to early September), visitors are more likely to be families, spending time on the beach, on a longer holiday, with a longer lead time
- > After the summer holidays (September to November), visitors are more likely to be older ('empty nesters'), in groups or couples, staying in a hotel, on a short break, with a shorter lead time, spending more while here, and more satisfied with their experience overall

The difference in spend after the summer holidays is significant. Visitors typically spend £9 more per day than during summer holidays and £14 more per day than before the summer holidays.

In common with the national picture, Bournemouth's visitors are increasingly leaving it later to plan or book their trip. 55% of day visitors make their decision to visit the area on the same day as their visit, and 34% of staying visitors decide to visit only within the week before. Technology in planning and booking is ever more important - 84% of all visitors to Bournemouth typically use the internet to plan and book a trip, and 73% typically use smartphones to plan and book a trip.

More visitors were influenced in their decision to visit by verbal information from friends and family than any other source. The beach is unsurprisingly the main decision driver for visitors to Bournemouth, and when here 93% of visitors spent time on the beach.

Visitor satisfaction tends to increase with length of stay, and frequency of visit. 'Very satisfied' visitors are significantly more likely to be:

- > Repeat visitors
- > Staying in Bournemouth rather than on a day trip
- > On a longer break
- > Older adult couples
- > Visiting after the summer holidays

Of all group types, families are most likely to return, and pre-family (aged 18-24) are least likely to visit again.

Bournemouth's visitors generally rate their experience positively, but there are areas for improvement and the opportunities for diversification and growth at both business and destination level are many. Read our full report to find out more.

Questions?

If you would like to discuss the implications for your business of any of the findings in this report, we'd be happy to meet or arrange a call.

E > alex.moss@coastaltourismacademy.co.uk
T > 01202 962 571