

Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment

The national survey on people and the natural environment

Visits to coastal England

NATURAL
ENGLAND



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Foreword

Natural England produces a range of reports providing evidence and advice to assist us in delivering our duties.

Background

In 2009 Natural England, Defra and the Forestry Commission commissioned TNS to undertake the Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) survey for the first time.

The data enables Natural England, its partners and data users to:

- Understand how people use, enjoy and are motivated to protect the natural environment.
- Monitor changes in use of the natural environment over time, at a range of different spatial scales and for key groups within the population.
- Inform on-the-ground initiatives to help them link more closely to people's needs.
- Evaluate the impact and effectiveness of related policy and initiatives.
- Measure the impact of and inform policy relating to the natural environment.

This report

This report presents the results of an analysis of the MENE findings from the first six years of fieldwork from March 2009 to February 2015 regarding visits to the coast.

A separate Headline Report providing a broader overview of the latest survey findings is available separately.

Published alongside these reports are:

- A Technical Report providing full details of the survey methodology, sampling, grossing and weighting and estimates of confidence intervals.
- An electronic data table viewer: an interactive tool which allows detailed analysis of the MENE dataset.

Please see GOV.UK for further outputs from the survey:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/monitor-of-engagement-with-the-natural-environment-survey-purpose-and-results>

National Statistics

The UK Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- Meet identified user needs.
- Are well explained and readily accessible.
- Are produced according to sound methods.
- Are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

The responsible Statistician for this publication is Haney King: haney.king@naturalengland.org.uk

Keywords: visits, engagement, natural environment, coast, participation, motivations, barriers, activities and expenditure

This report can be downloaded from the Natural England website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/monitor-of-engagement-with-the-natural-environment-2014-to-2015>

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Contents

List of Figures	5
1 Introduction.....	8
2 Headline findings	11
3 We do like to be beside the seaside.....	14
4 The coast is a valuable greenspace.....	25
5 Opportunities to increase visits to the coast.....	31
6 The England Coast Path.....	42
7 Taking MENE further – an analysis of visits to urban greenspaces	45
8 Annex	50

List of Figures

Figure 3.1	Distribution of visits to natural environment by main type of place visited MENE Year 6: March 2014 to February 2015.....	14
Figure 3.2	Annual number of visits including natural places/ green spaces (millions) MENE Year 6: March 2014 to February 2015.....	15
Figure 3.3	Proportion of visits taken by people from a different Local Authority by destination type MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015.....	15
Figure 3.4	Average distance travelled by destination type (miles) MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015.....	16
Figure 3.5	Use of car and walking to travel to destination by destination type MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015.....	16
Figure 3.6	SEG profile of visitors by destination type MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015.....	17
Figure 3.7	Lifestage of visitors by destination type MENE Years 1-6 : March 2009 to February 2015.....	17
Figure 3.8	Age profile of visitors by destination type MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015.....	18
Figure 4.1	Visit duration by destination type MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015.....	25
Figure 4.2	Activities undertaken on visits by destination type MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015.....	26
Figure 4.3	Distribution of expenditure on visits to natural environment by main type of place visited MENE Year 6: March 2014 to February 2015.....	28
Figure 4.4	Reasons for visits by destination type MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015.....	28
Figure 4.5	Outcomes of visits by destination type – agree strongly with statement MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015.....	29
Figure 5.1	Billions of visits including natural places/ green spaces by the coast MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015.....	31
Figure 5.2	Annual volume of visits to the coast by specific types of place included in visit. MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015.....	32
Figure 5.3	Annual volume of visits to the coast by activities undertaken on visit (percentage figures shown are average year on year changes between each of the six years of MENE). MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015.....	32
Figure 5.4	Annual volume of visits to the coast by motivations for visit. MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015.....	32
Figure 5.5	Annual volume of visits to the coast by age MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015.....	33
Figure 5.6	Annual volume of visits to the coast by socio-economic grade MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015.....	33

Figure 5.7	Frequency of visits taken to the coast to take part in outdoor activities such as walking (last 12 months)	34
Figure 5.8	Quarterly volume of visits by destination type – indexed data 100= monthly average of 6 year period MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015 ..	36
Figure 5.9	Daily volume of visits by destination type MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015.....	36
Figure 5.10	Whether would like to visit the English coast more often.....	37
Figure 5.11	Current frequency of visits to coast in last 12 months and whether interested in visiting more often.....	37
Figure 5.12	Barriers to visiting the English coast more often.....	39
Figure 5.13	Problems encountered when visiting the English coast	40
Figure 6.1	Awareness of the England Coast Path	42
Figure 6.2	Whether proposed changes would influence likelihood to take visits	43
Figure 7.1	Annual volume of visits to the natural environment - urban greenspace, coast and countryside destinations (Billions) MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015....	45
Figure 7.2	'Top 5' activities undertaken on visits to urban greenspaces MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015.....	46
Figure 7.3	'Top 5' reasons for visits to urban greenspaces MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015.....	46
Figure 7.4	Proportion of visitors in Black and Minority Ethnic Population by destination.....	47
Figure 8.1	Conceptual diagram of how expenditure on items used or consumed for a trip relates to expenditure during a trip.	51
Figure 8.2	Conceptual diagram of how expense attributed to a visit to the natural environment relates to trip.....	51

INTRODUCTION



1 Introduction

- 1.1. This report provides the results of an analysis of data which focus on visits taken to the coast using the following sources:
 - Results from the Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) survey using data collected between March 2009 and February 2015.
 - The results of questions regarding coastal visits and the England Coastal Path which were added to the omnibus survey used for MENE. These additional questions were included over a two week period in March 2013 and again in December 2015.
 - Where appropriate, results from other surveys, including the Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS) and Great Britain Day Visits Survey (GBDVS). These surveys are undertaken by TNS for VisitEngland, VisitScotland and Visit Wales.
- 1.2. In Section 7 this report also includes an introduction to an upcoming report on visits to urban greenspaces, which will be published as part of the suite of outputs released for the 2015-16 survey.

Background

- 1.3. The MENE survey was conducted by TNS on behalf of Natural England, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Forestry Commission.
- 1.4. In the six years since the survey commenced, a wealth of evidence on outdoor recreation behaviour, attitudes and engagement with the natural environment has been collected. MENE has provided a basis for specific analysis on areas such as how members of different societal groups and children engage with the outdoors. The data set also provides scope for deeper exploration of the data in relation to areas such as well-being, the relationship between valuing the natural environment and actions taken to protect it and visits taken to specific types of place.
- 1.5. MENE fieldwork is undertaken using the TNS in-home omnibus survey with at least 800 interviews undertaken with a sample representative of adult residents in England every week. This provides an average annual sample size of around 47,000 interviews.

MENE aims and objectives

- 1.6. MENE provides information about the relationship between people and the natural environment. Whilst the main focus of the survey is on visits to the natural environment, it also captures other ways of using or enjoying the natural environment such as time spent in the garden and watching nature programmes on television.
- 1.7. The objectives of the survey are to:
 - Provide estimates of the number of visits to the natural environment by the English adult population (16 years and over).
 - Measure the extent of participation in visits to the natural environment and identify the barriers and drivers that shape participation.
 - Provide robust information on the characteristics of visitors and visits to the natural environment.
 - Measure other ways of using and enjoying the natural environment.
 - Identify patterns in use and participation for key groups within the population and at a range of spatial scales.

MENE survey scope

- 1.8. The survey relates to engagement with the natural environment. By natural environment we mean all green open spaces in and around towns and cities as well as the wider countryside and coastline.
- 1.9. The main focus of the survey is on leisure visits to the outdoors in the natural environment, away from home and private gardens. This could be anything from a few minutes to all day. These may include time spent close to a person's home or workplace, further afield or while on holiday in England. Routine shopping trips or time spent in a person's own garden are not included in the definition of a leisure visit in MENE.
- 1.10. The survey also includes a smaller section of questions regarding engagement with the natural environment other than that experienced during visits. This includes activities such as time spent in private gardens, watching nature programmes on television, undertaking pro-environmental activities such as recycling and access to a private garden.
- 1.11. Please note that any trends or variations between results highlighted in the text are statistically significant unless stated otherwise. This means that differences between results, for example when comparing two years or two population groups, have been proven through statistical analysis as likely to be real differences at the 95 percent confidence limits, as opposed to differences which are the result of sampling error or chance.

Further publications from the survey

- 1.12. This report forms one part of a larger suite of outputs from the survey. Published alongside this report are an annual report, technical report, an electronic data viewer, quarterly reports, SPSS and Excel data sets. To access these, go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/monitor-of-engagement-with-the-natural-environment-survey-purpose-and-results>

HEADLINE FINDINGS





WE DO LIKE TO BE BESIDE THE SEASIDE



The Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) survey captures data on use and enjoyment of the natural environment by members of the English adult population (aged 16+).

313 million

= coastal visits by English adults March '14 - Feb '15



A VALUABLE GREENSPACE

Average amount spent on greenspace visits:



£18

Coastal visit



£6

Town & city



£6

Countryside

Spend reflects longer visits, greater range of activities, including eating and drinking, and further distances travelled to destination.

Source: MENE Years 1 to 6 (March 2009 to February 2015)

MORE THAN THE MONEY

People are attracted by:



37%

Health & exercise



36%

Relaxing & unwinding



34%

Fresh air & pleasant weather



30%

Scenery

Source: MENE Years 1 to 6 (March 2009 to February 2015)

The positive outcomes:



55%

Enjoyment



37%

Appreciated surroundings



36%

Calm & relaxed



36%

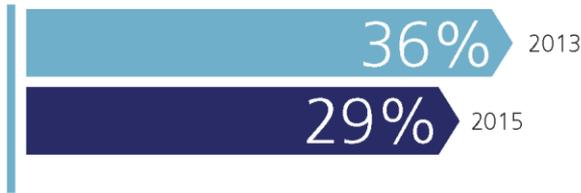
Refreshed & revitalised

Source: MENE Years 1 to 6 (March 2009 to February 2015)

MAKING THE MOST OF THE COAST

Problems are decreasing

People experiencing any access problems:



People experiencing litter, vandalism, graffiti:



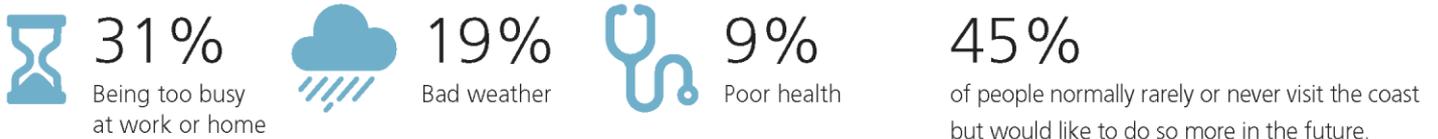
Source: Additional questions added to MENE in March 2013 and December 2015

Since 2009, visit numbers have not changed but how people are enjoying the coast and why is changing



Source: MENE Years 1 (March 2009 to Feb 2010) to 6 (March 2014 to Feb 2015)

Barriers to visiting the coast



Source: Additional questions added to MENE in March 2013 and December 2015

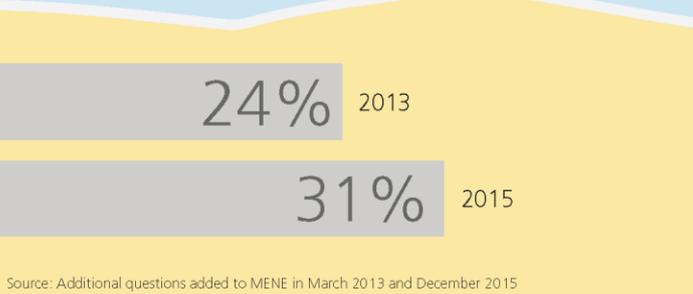
Source: Additional questions added to MENE in March 2013 and December 2015

TAKE THE PATH

The England Coast Path provides a route to more coastal visits - tackling challenges and building on the appeal of health and wellbeing.

Awareness of the path is increasing

People who have heard of the path:



Source: Additional questions added to MENE in March 2013 and December 2015

Of people who hear about the path:



WE DO LIKE TO BE
BESIDE THE SEASIDE



3 We do like to be beside the seaside

Over 300 million coastal visits per year

Between March 2014 and February 2015, adults resident in England took 3.12 billion visits to the natural environment. As illustrated in Figure 3.1, 10 percent of these visits (313 million) were taken to the coast.

By comparison, the national tourism surveys estimate that around a third of all domestic holidays (32 percent) and nine percent of tourism day visits have a coastal destination¹.



Figure 3.1 – Distribution of visits to natural environment by main type of place visited
MENE Year 6: March 2014 to February 2015

As shown in Figure 3.2 overleaf, in around two-thirds of these 313 million visits, the main place visited was a seaside resort or town (202 million visits) while other visits were taken to more rural places on the coastline (111 million).

During the same period, the national tourism surveys recorded that around 13 million holidays and 123 million tourism day visits were taken to the English seaside by GB residents and that an estimated £7 billion was spent during these visits¹.

It is important to note that the scope of MENE means that the survey includes shorter visits, those taken closer to home and visits taken for a variety of reasons, whereas the tourism visits are typically longer and therefore there may be greater scope for some to include a coastal visit as part of these trips.

¹ Data on holidays obtained from GB Tourism Survey 2014 and data on tourism day visits from GB Day Visits Survey 2014. Note these visits are not mutually exclusive from those recorded in MENE.

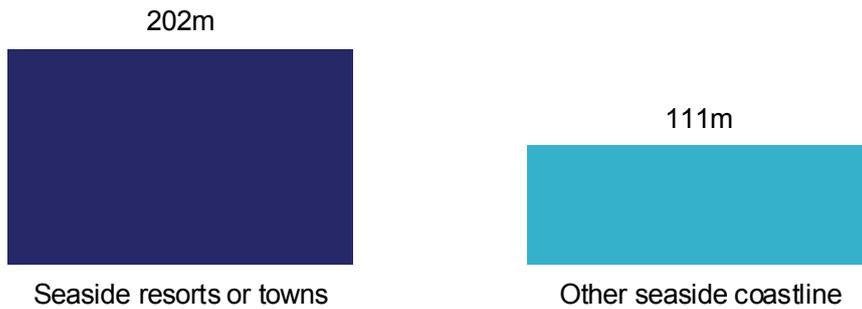


Figure 3.2 – Annual number of visits including natural places/ green spaces (millions)
MENE Year6: March 2014 to February 2015

The coast attracts a range of visitors

In terms of place of residence, the coast attracts a mix of local users, day visitors and tourists. Specifically, as shown in Figures 3.3 to 3.5 below and overleaf:

- Almost two in five visits to the coast (38 percent) were taken by people resident in a different Local Authority area, a much higher proportion than recorded for other types of place.
- The average distance travelled to reach coastal destinations was significantly longer than on visits to other types of place.
- Almost half of visits taken to coast were taken by car (47 percent), a much higher proportion than recorded for other types of place.

Also, some eight percent of visits to the coast started from holiday accommodation – a much higher proportion than recorded for other places (one percent of urban green space visits, two percent of countryside visits).

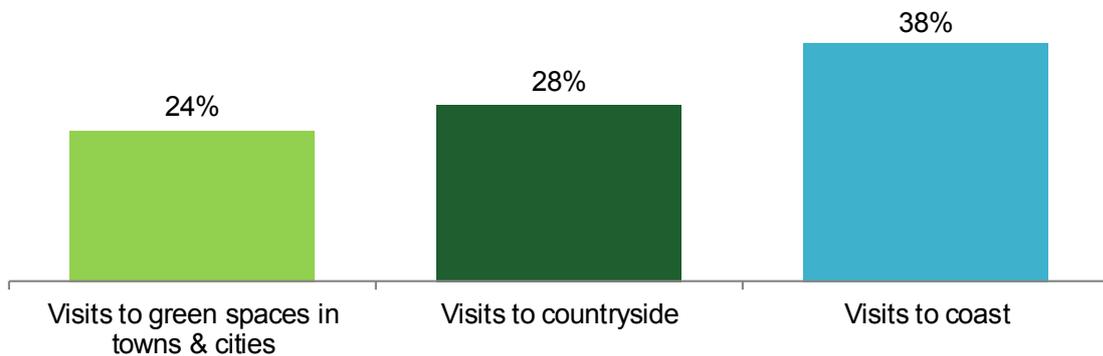


Figure 3.3 – Proportion of visits taken by people from a different Local Authority by destination type
MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015

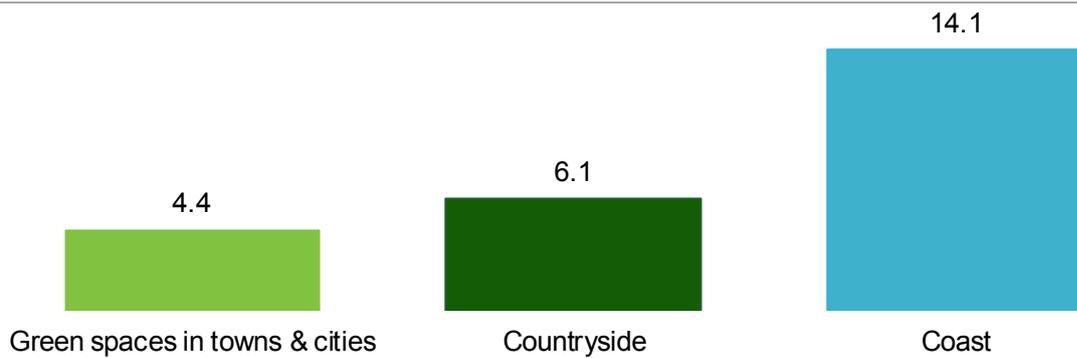


Figure 3.4 – Average distance travelled by destination type (miles)
MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015

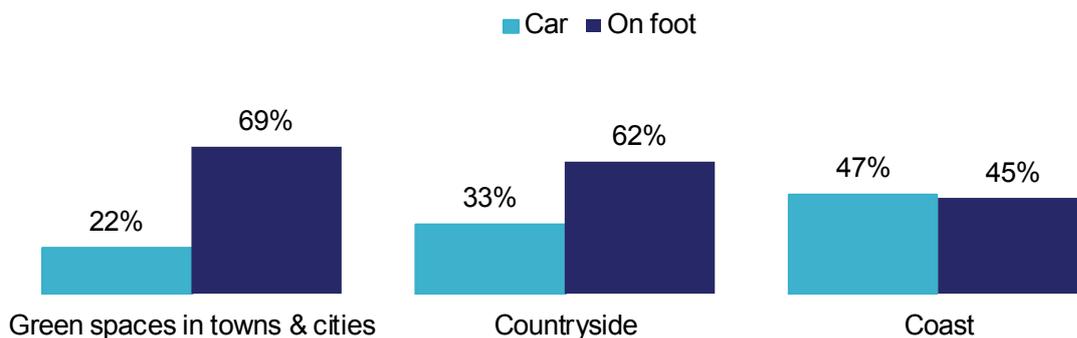


Figure 3.5 – Use of car and walking to travel to destination by destination type
MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015

Considering the demographic profile of visitors, as shown in Figure 3.6 overleaf, the coast attracts a wide spread of socio-economic groups (SEG²) with around a third of visits taken by members of the most affluent AB groups (32 percent) while 19 percent were taken by members of the D and E groups (unskilled manual occupations and unemployed).

Compared to the English adult population, visitors to the coast were more likely to be in the more affluent socio-economic groups. Also related to these socio-economic variations:

- 86 percent of visits to the coast were taken by people with a car (compared to 75 percent of GB households who own a car).
- 73 percent of visits to the coast were taken by people who either own their home outright or have a mortgage (compared to 63 percent of all households in England who own outright or have a mortgage on their home).

² See Annex for SEG definition
16 Visits to coastal England

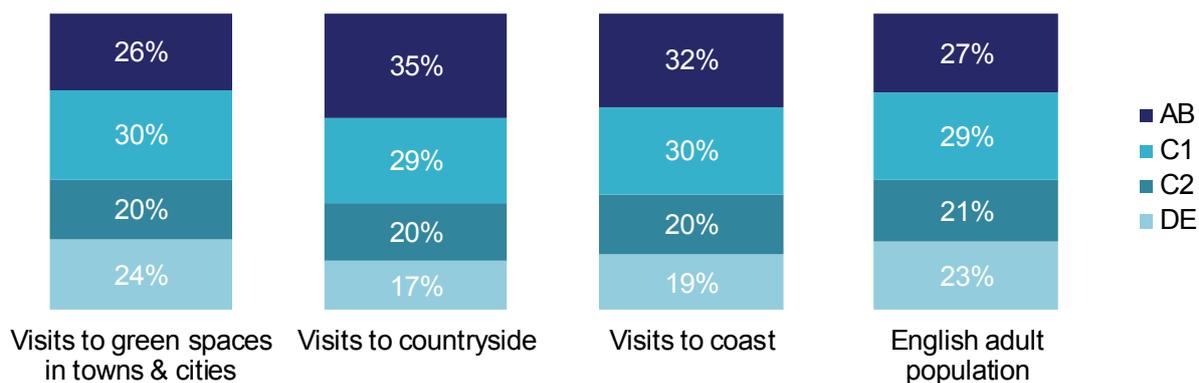


Figure 3.6 – SEG profile of visitors by destination type

MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015

As shown in Figures 3.7 and 3.8 below, the coast also attracts a variety of people at different life stages and in different age groups. While around a quarter of visits were taken by families (i.e. children in household), a larger proportion were taken by people classified as Empty Nesters (55 and over, no children).

Compared to the English adult population, visitors to the coast had an older age profile. Also, related to this variation:

- 29 percent of visits to the coast were taken by people who are retired (compared to 18 percent of population).
- 17 percent of visits to the coast were taken by people with a long term illness or disability (compared to 18 percent of the population).

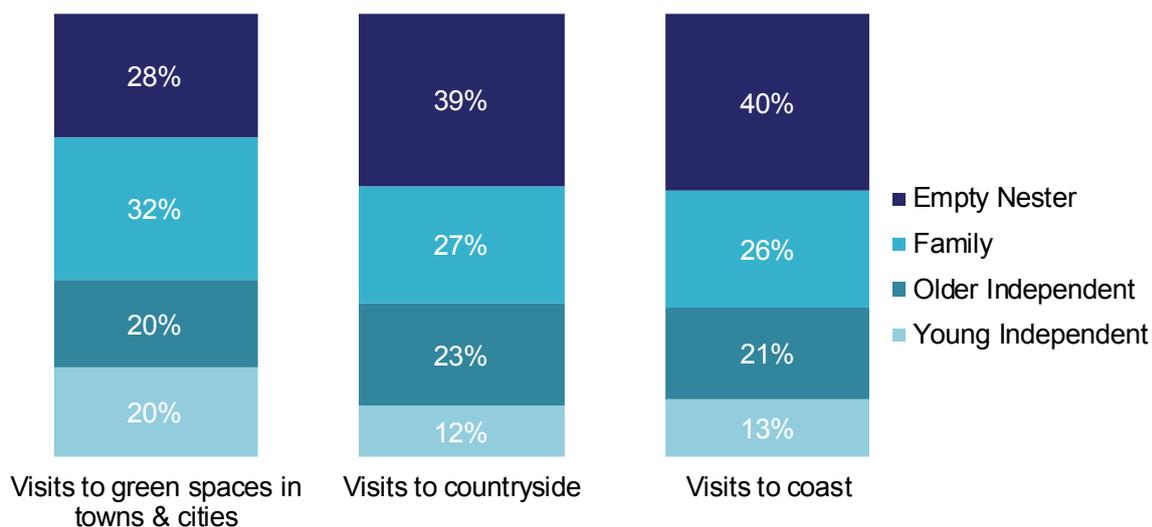


Figure 3.7 – Lifestage of visitors by destination type

MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015

Definitions: Young Independent – aged 16-34, no children under 16 at home; Older Independent – aged 35-54, no children under 16 at home; Family – any children under 16 at home; Empty Nester – aged 55+, no children under 16 at home.

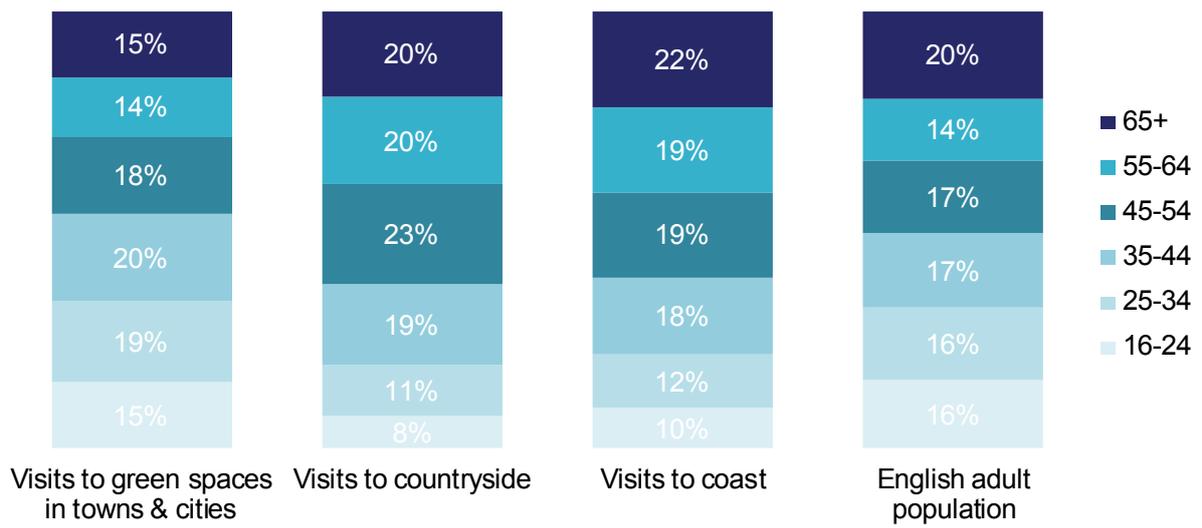


Figure 3.8 – Age profile of visitors by destination type
 MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015

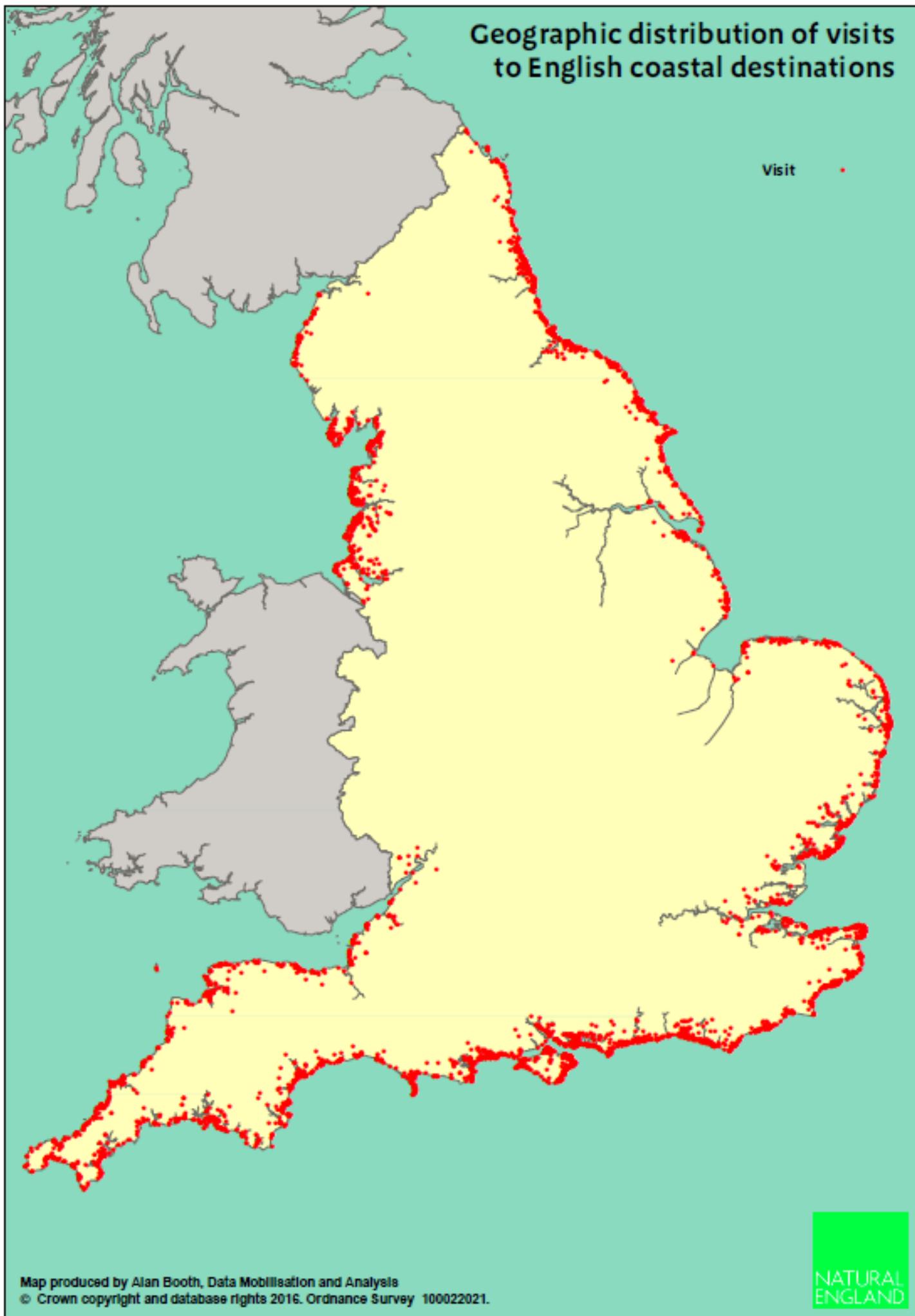
Geographic variations

While MENE recorded that 10 percent of all visits to the natural environment taken by adults resident in England had a coastal destination, this proportion varied significantly by region and county – generally reflecting the proximity of large population centres to the coast.

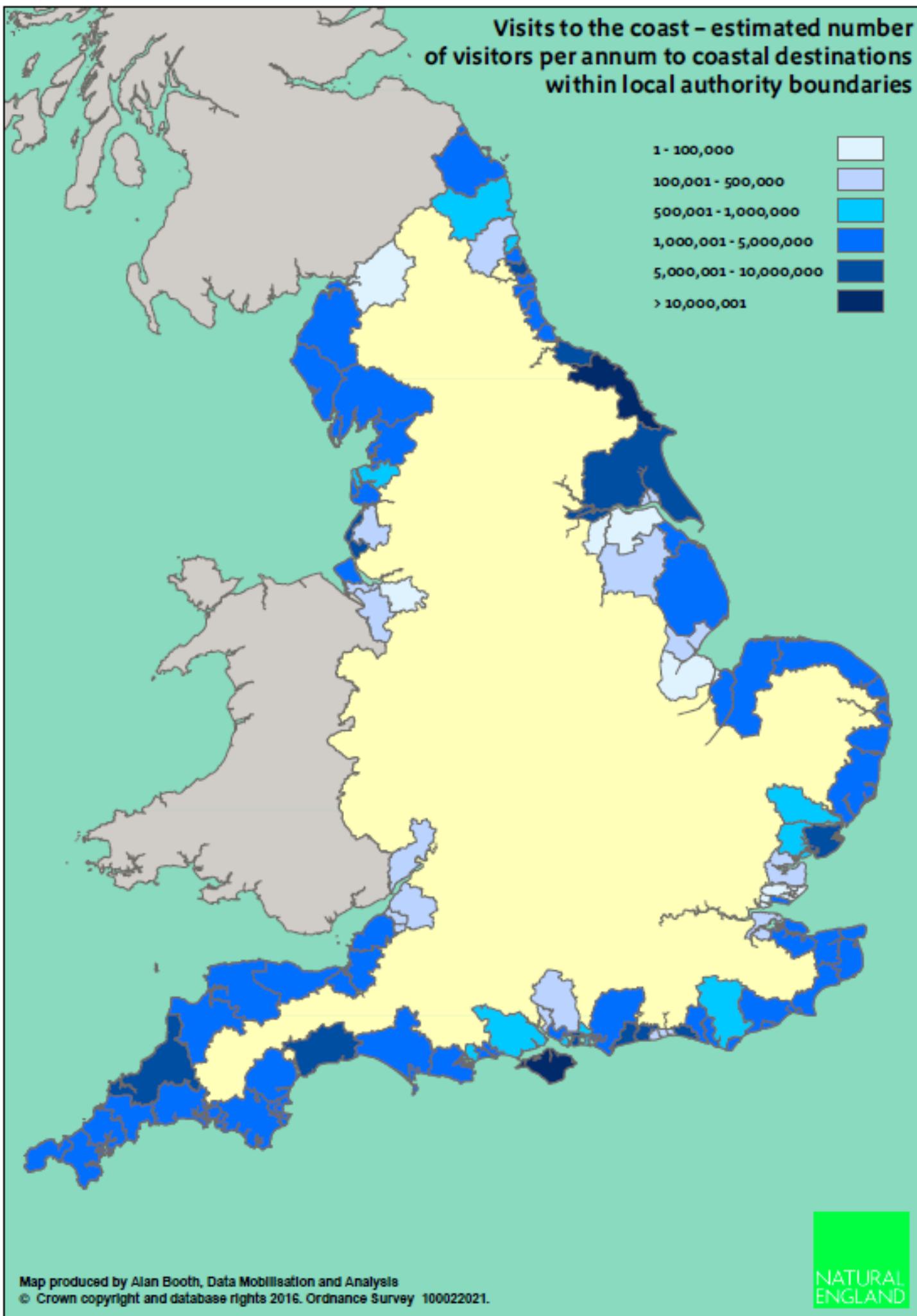
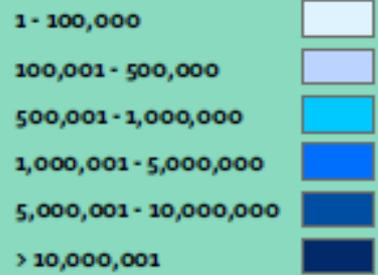
The maps on the following pages illustrate the geographic distribution of visits made to the natural environment by MENE survey respondents to English coastal destinations, the estimated annual number of visitors to English coastal destinations by destination local authority and the average distance in kilometres travelled by visitors when making visits to coastal destinations. The source data for these maps employed MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015 survey data; visitors were identified by their response to core survey Question 2 'General type of place where most time during the visit was spent' and further refined by selecting visit data from destinations laying within a 5km buffer inland from the coastal mean high water mark.

Geographic distribution of visits to English coastal destinations

Visit

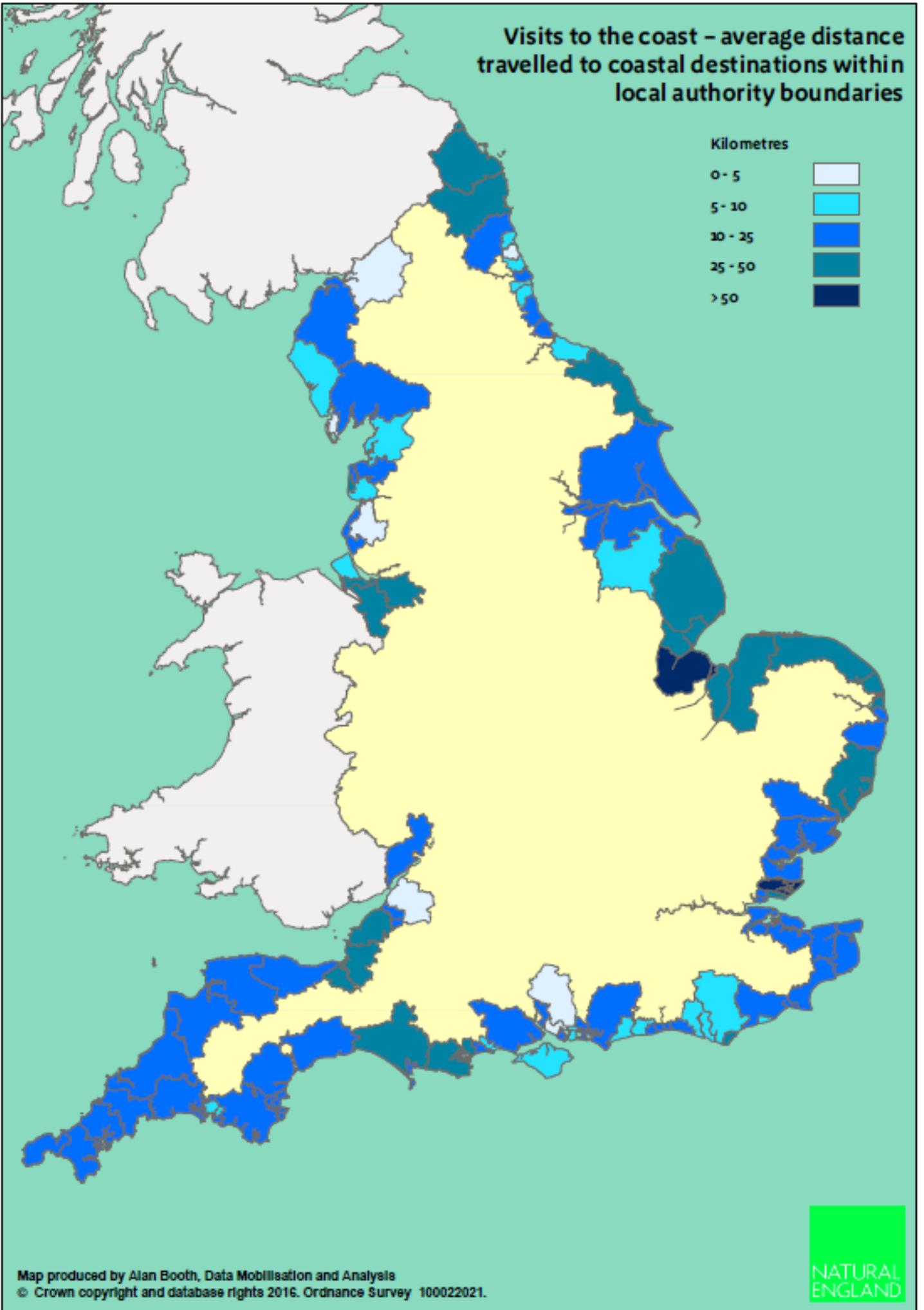
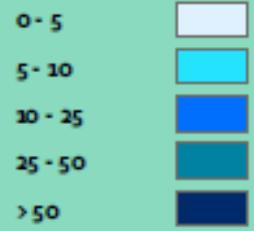


Visits to the coast - estimated number of visitors per annum to coastal destinations within local authority boundaries



Visits to the coast – average distance travelled to coastal destinations within local authority boundaries

Kilometres



Visitor profiles variations

The profile of visitors to the coast varies significantly by the type of place visited, day of visit and place of residence.

Some of the key variations are summarised below, highlighting where visits to, for example, coastal towns and resorts are significantly more likely to be taken by a particular group or for a particular reason than recorded for visits taken to other coastal places.

<p>Variations by type of place visited</p>	<p>Visitors to coastal towns & resorts are more likely to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> C2DE socio-economic groups. Non-locals (live in different local authority). Travelling on longer journeys to reach coast. Visiting to relax & unwind or to entertain children. Taking part in beach activities, eating out, playing with children. Spending more money than average for all coastal visits. 	<p>Visitors to other coast are more likely to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ABC1 socio-economic groups. Locals (live in same local authority). Taking visits for health & exercise, peace & quiet. Taking part in dog walking, wildlife watching, appreciating scenery. Feeling close to nature.
<p>Variations by day of the week</p>	<p>Weekend visitors are more likely to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Younger age groups & families. Non-locals (live in different local authority). Travelling on longer journeys to reach coast, taken by car. Spending time with family, entertaining children. Taking part in beach activities, eating out, playing with children. Spending more money than average for all coastal visits. Feeling enjoyment, relaxation. 	<p>Weekday visitors are more likely to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Older age groups, empty nesters. Locals (live in same local authority), travelling on foot. Taking visits for health & exercise. Taking part in dog walking.
<p>Visits by place of residence</p>	<p>Non-local visitors (live in different local authority) are more likely to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travelling on longer journeys to reach coast, taken by car. Visiting at weekends Taking visits for health & exercise. Taking part in eating out, picnics, playing with kids, sightseeing by car, beach activities. Feeling enjoyment, refreshed & revitalised, appreciative of surroundings, close to nature. 	<p>Local visitors (live in same local authority) are more likely to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empty nesters. Travelling on foot. Visiting on weekdays. Spending time with family, relax & unwind. Taking part in dog walking.

**THE COAST IS A VALUABLE
GREENSPACE**



4 The coast is a valuable greenspace

Coastal visits last longer and involve a greater range of activities

On average visits to the coast lasted around three hours (3hrs 3 mins), about an hour longer than the averages recorded for visits to the countryside or urban destinations (1 hr 58 mins and 1 hr 51 mins respectively).

The breakdown shown in Figure 4.1 below illustrates the wide range of visit durations. Around two fifths of visits to the coast lasted three hours or more (39 percent) compared to 20 percent of visits to urban greenspaces and 21 percent of visits taken to the countryside.

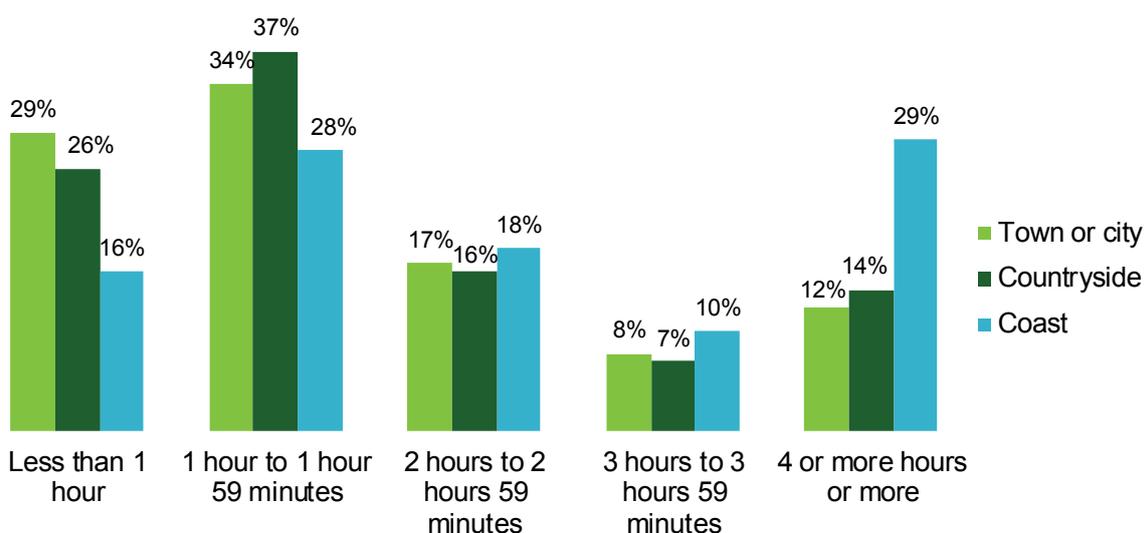


Figure 4.1 – Visit duration by destination type
MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015

Visits to the coast also typically involved participation in more leisure activities than visits taken to other places. Coastal visits were particularly likely to include walking (without a dog) and eating out, with other activities including visiting attractions, enjoying scenery from a car and/or picnics.

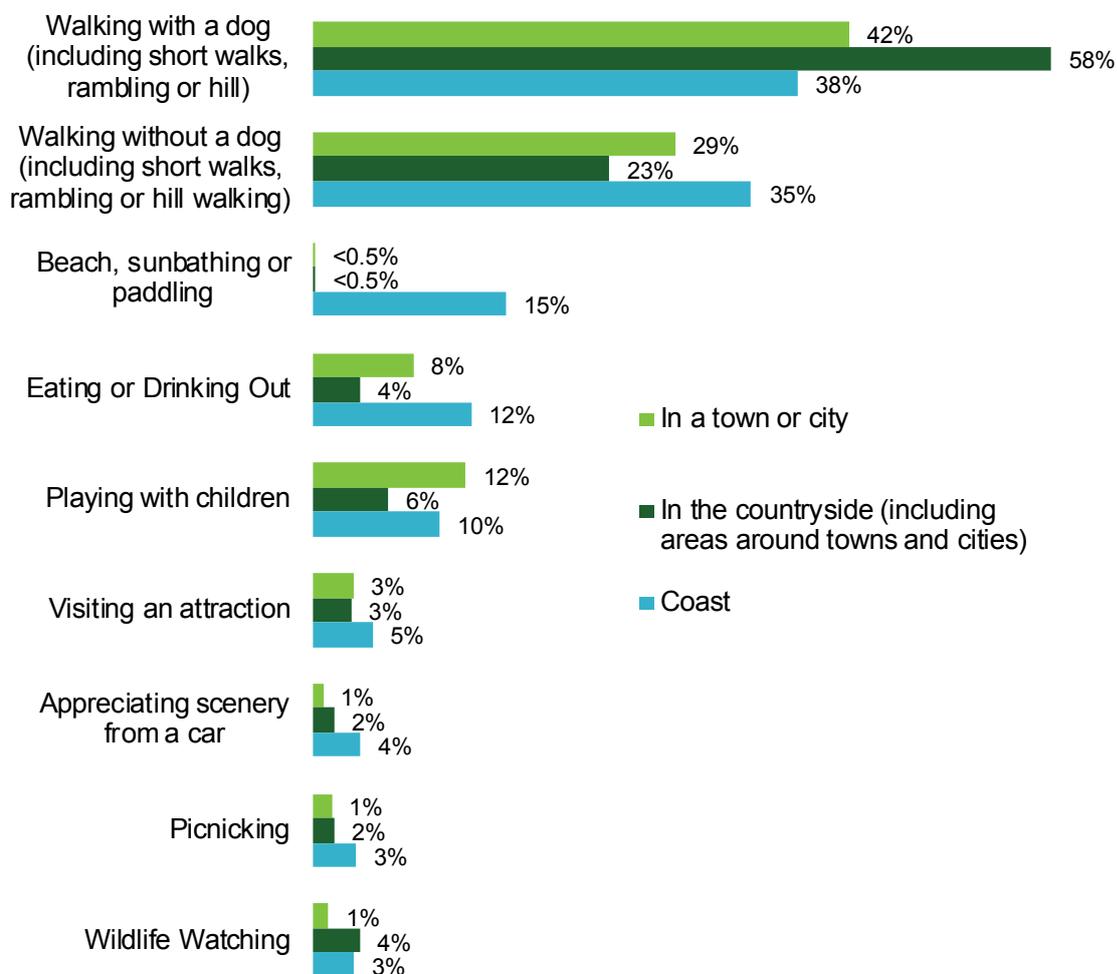


Figure 4.2 – Activities undertaken on visits by destination type
MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015

Visits to the coast involve higher expenditure levels

Reflecting the greater distances travelled, longer visit durations and wider range of activities typically undertaken, the amount of money spent during visits to the coast tended to be higher than during visits to other destination types³.

Also, reinforcing their importance to seaside economies, coastal visits were more likely than those with a countryside or urban greenspace destination to be taken by people from outside of the local area (38 percent of visits taken by people living in a different local authority – see Figure 3.3).

Table 4.1 illustrates the average amounts spent on different items during visits to the coast and other types of destination.

Overall, the average amount spent during coastal visits was just over £18, around three times more than the amounts spent during visits to urban greenspaces (£6) or the countryside (£6). The largest amounts were spent on food and drink and fuel (51 percent and 17 percent of total spend respectively).

	Town & cities	Countryside	Coast
TOTAL	£6.42	£5.67	£18.29
By item:			
Food and drink	£3.78	£2.86	£9.38
Fuel	£0.65	£0.96	£3.20
Admission fees	£0.54	£0.76	£1.49
Gifts\Souvenirs	£0.42	£0.26	£1.24
Other items	£0.43	£0.33	£1.21
Car parking	£0.13	£0.11	£0.58
Bus\Train\Ferry fares	£0.33	£0.11	£0.58
Purchase of equipment	£0.08	£0.20	£0.41
Hire of equipment	£0.05	£0.06	£0.16
Maps\ Guidebooks, etc.	£0.01	£0.01	£0.03

Table 4.1 Average spend per visit by destination type (including visits with no expenditure on items)

MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015. Note to take account of inflation values have been adjusted to 2014 prices using annual CPI rates. As a rule of thumb, when comparing prices, only differences of around £5 or more can be considered as statistically significant.

Given these higher levels of spend, while 10 percent of all visits to the natural environment had a coastal destination, 25% of all expenditure made took place during these visit (see Figure 4.3).

³ See note in Annex regarding expenditure data recorded by MENE

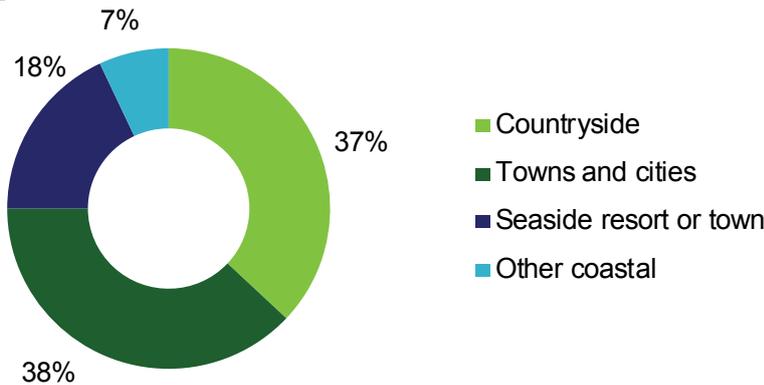


Figure 4.3 – Distribution of expenditure on visits to natural environment by main type of place visited

MENE Year 6: March 2014 to February 2015

A place to exercise and unwind

The benefits of visits to the coast extend beyond their economic value and include positive health and wellbeing impacts.

As shown in Figure 4.4, the coast attracts visitors for a wide variety of reasons. The most common motivations relate to health and exercise, relaxing and unwinding.

As described in more detail in Section 5, over the six years since MENE commenced, the volume of visits taken to the coast for health and exercise reasons has increased significantly (+31 percent). This reflects broader trends seen for other natural places.

Compared with visits to towns/cities, coastal visits were more likely to be motivated by opportunities to enjoy scenery.

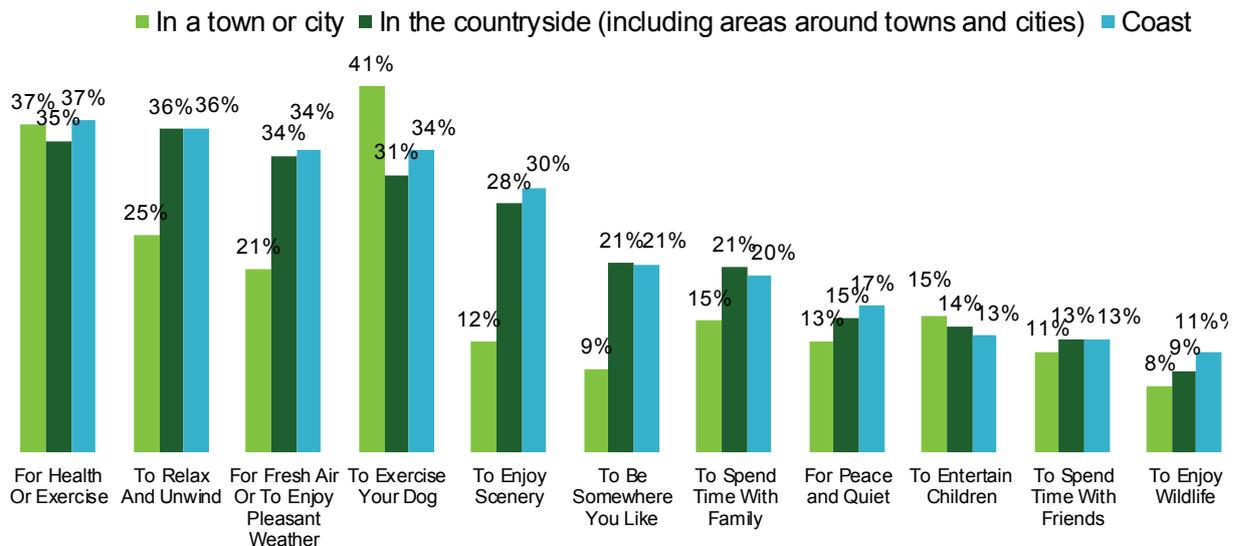


Figure 4.4 – Reasons for visits by destination type

MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015

Reflecting the wide range of reasons for visiting, visits taken to the coast and countryside tend to have stronger positive outcomes than those taken to urban green space (Figure 4.5 below).

Notably, enjoyment is rated higher for visits to the coast than for other types of place (55 percent strongly agree compared to 50 percent of countryside visits and 40 percent of urban greenspace visits).

Also, visits to rural coastline receive the highest ratings in relation to visitors feeling ‘calm & relaxed’ and ‘appreciating surroundings’.

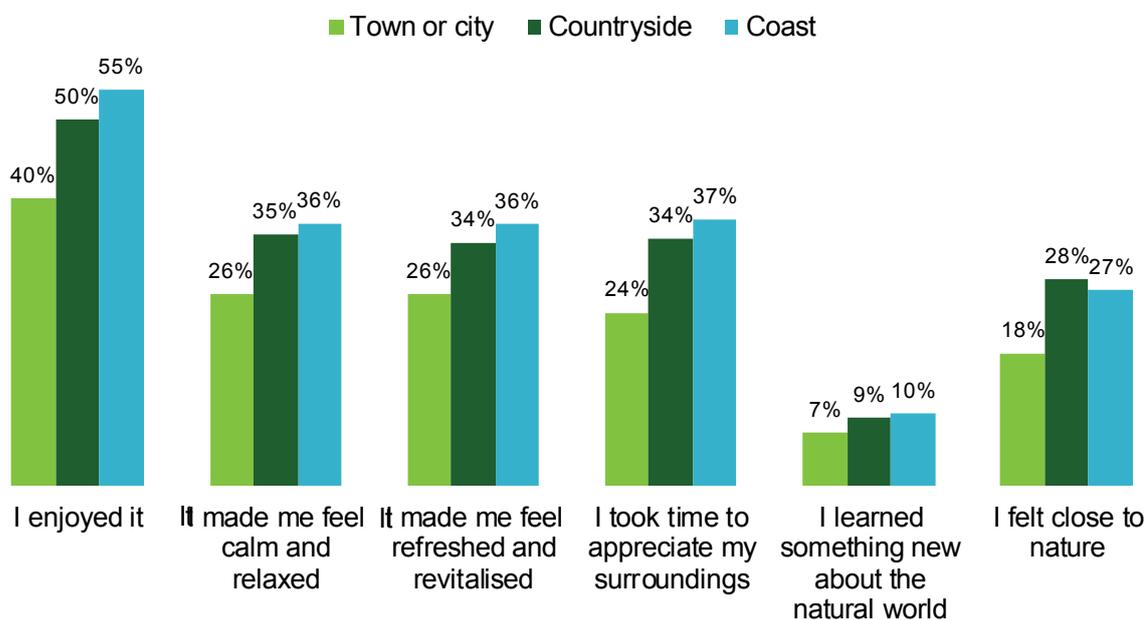


Figure 4.5 – Outcomes of visits by destination type – agree strongly with statement
MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015

**OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE
VISITS TO THE COAST**



5 Opportunities to increase visits to the coast

2009 to 2015 trends

As shown in Figure 5.1 below, during the six years since March 2009, the annual volume of visits to the coast (both seaside resorts and other coast) has fluctuated but there has been no consistent upward or downward trend.

During the same period visits to the countryside have also remained at fairly constant levels. However the volume of visits taken to urban green spaces has increased significantly (63 percent increase from 2010/11 to 2014/15), driving the overall upward trend in visits taken to natural places.

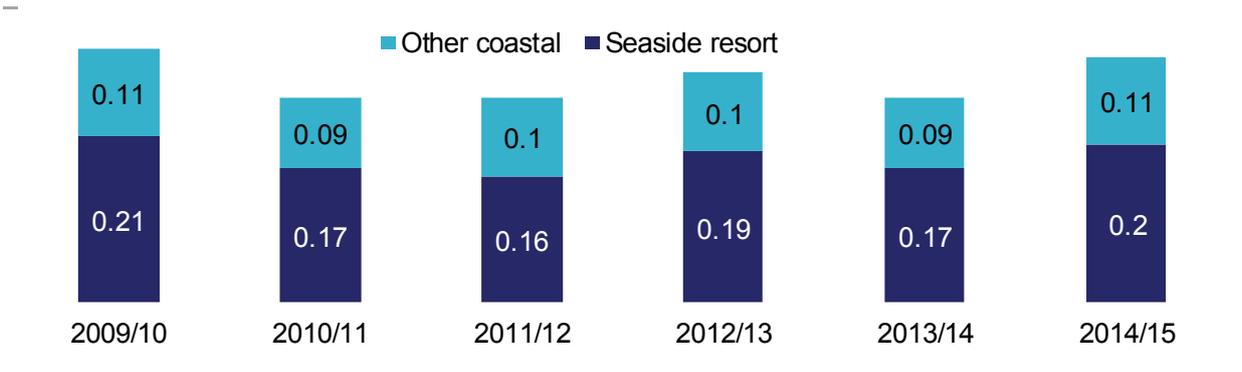


Figure 5.1 – Billions of visits including natural places/ green spaces by the coast
MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015

While there has been no significant change in the overall volumes of visits taken to the coast between 2009 and 2015, further analysis suggests a number of underlying trends.

Most notably, as shown in Figures 5.2 to 5.4, between the first and sixth years of the survey the volumes of coastal visits including **usage of a path, cycleway or bridleway**, including participation in **walking without a dog** or **playing with children** and the volumes of visits taken for **health or exercise reasons** increased.

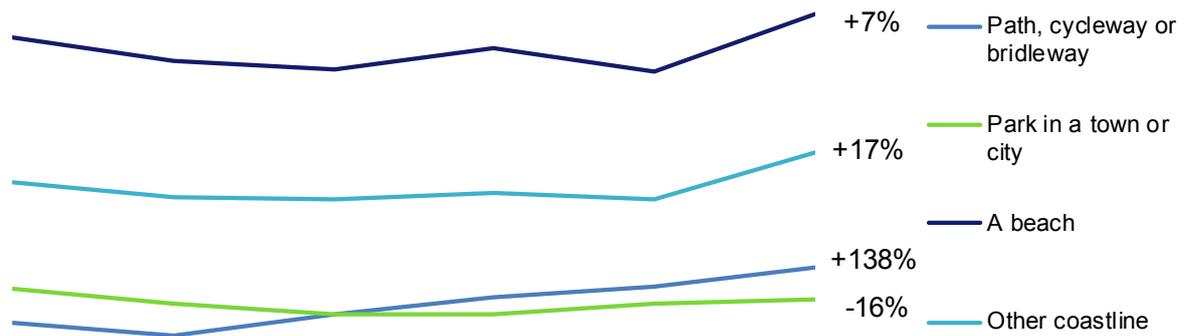


Figure 5.2 – Annual volume of visits to the coast by specific types of place included in visit. MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015. Percentage figures show differences in volumes of visits between Year 1 and Year 6 of MENE

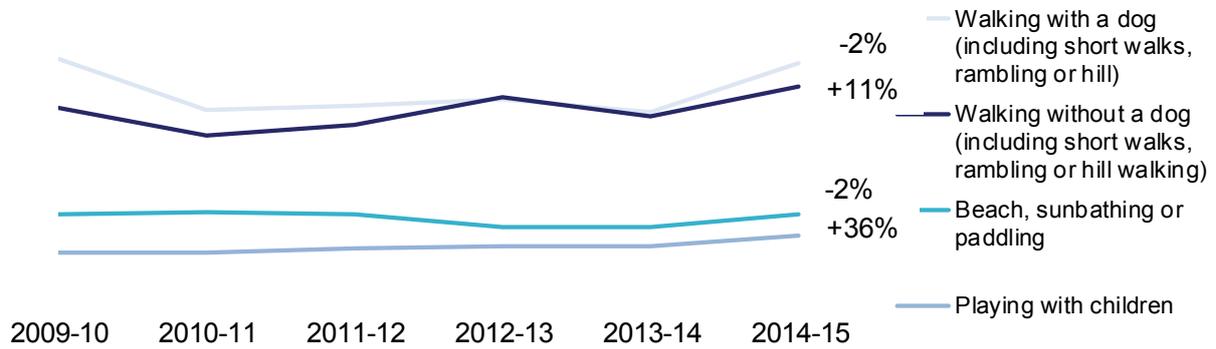


Figure 5.3 – Annual volume of visits to the coast by activities undertaken on visit (percentage figures shown are average year on year changes between each of the six years of MENE). MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015. Percentage figures show differences in volumes of visits between Year 1 and Year 6 of MENE

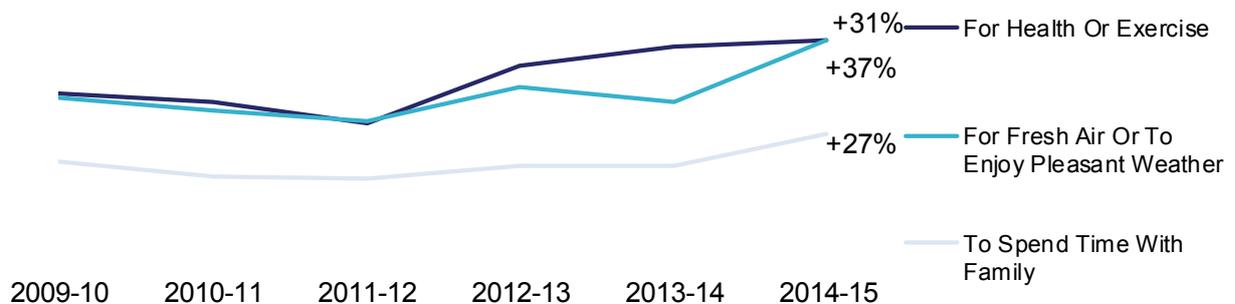


Figure 5.4 – Annual volume of visits to the coast by motivations for visit. MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015. Percentage figures show differences in volumes of visits between Year 1 and Year 6 of MENE

In terms of the demographic profile of visitors, during the first six years of MENE, the volume of visits taken to the coast by **older age groups** (esp. those in empty nester lifestage) and **more affluent** socio-economic groups increased (Figures 5.5 and 5.6).

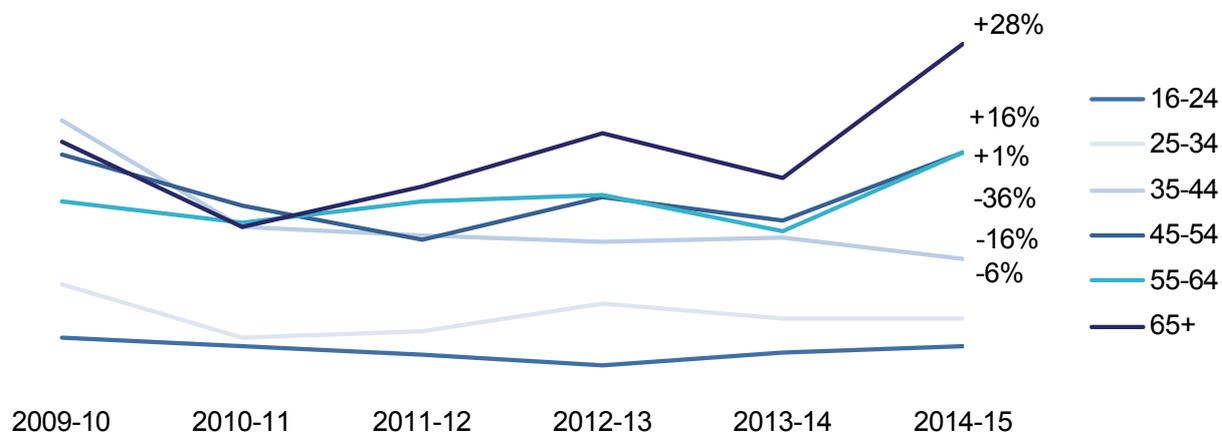


Figure 5.5 – Annual volume of visits to the coast by age MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015. Percentage figures show differences in volumes of visits between Year 1 and Year 6 of MENE

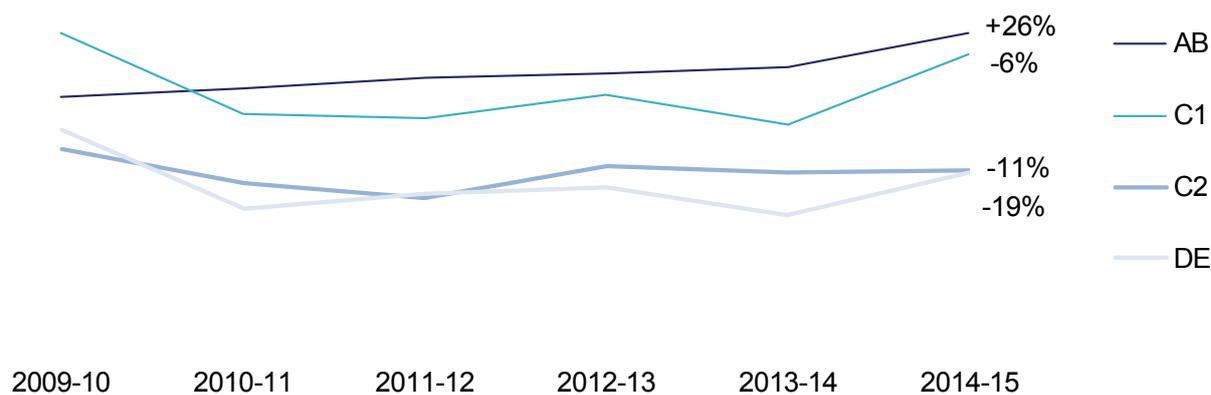


Figure 5.6 – Annual volume of visits to the coast by socio-economic grade MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015. Percentage figures show differences in volumes of visits between Year 1 and Year 6 of MENE

Most visits to the coast are taken by around a fifth of the population

In December 2015 a sample of MENE respondents were asked to state how often they typically visited the coast to take part in activities such as walking (Figure 5.7). This question was also asked in 2013.

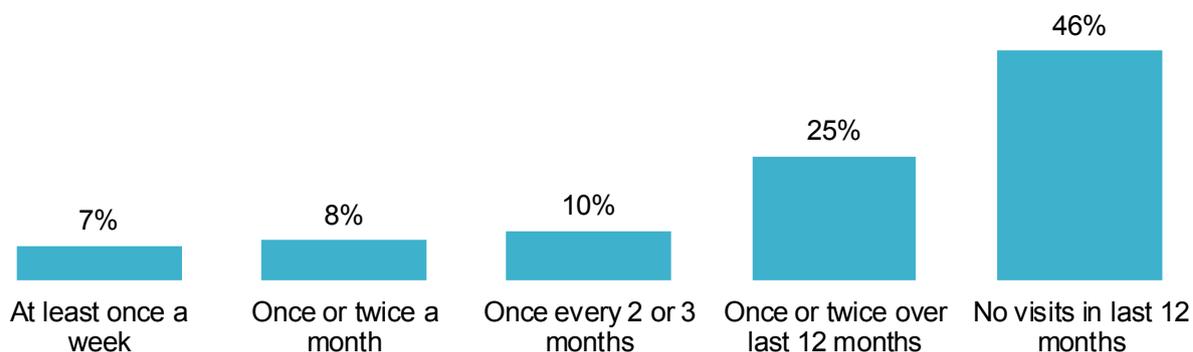


Figure 5.7 – Frequency of visits taken to the coast to take part in outdoor activities such as walking (last 12 months)

Omnibus questions 2015. Base: All respondents (2015: 1763)

Q1. How often, on average, have you visited the English coast to take part in outdoor activities such as walking? Please include all visits, regardless of how long they lasted or whether they were taken from home or while on a holiday in England. Chart does not show Don't Know responses (3 percent in 2015)

These results suggest that most of the c.300 million visits taken to the coast annually are made by a relatively small proportion of the population while many people rarely or never take visits.

In 2015, around 71 percent of the population had taken two or less visits to the coast in the preceding 12 months. The following demographics were more likely to be in this low visit frequency group:

- Women (73 percent compared to 69 percent of men)
- People in C2DE socio-economic groups (75 percent compared to 66 percent of ABC1s)
- People with children in their household (74 percent compared to 70 percent with no children).
- Members of the Black and Minority Ethnic population (90 percent).

Comparing the 2015 results with those obtained when the same question was asked in 2013 (Table 5.1), it is notable that the proportion of the English adult population had *not* taken a visit to the coast in the last 12 months increased from 32 percent in 2013 to 46 percent in 2015.

However, as shown in Figure 5.1, over the same period the overall volumes of visits taken to the coast by the population have remained fairly constant. These apparently contrasting results, with no change in overall visit volumes whilst more people claim to never take visits, may be explained by an increase in the frequency of visit taking amongst those groups who take visits most often (for example those who indicated that they normally visit 'once or twice a month' or 'at least once a week').

	2013 (%)	2015
Most days	2	2
Several times a week	3	2
Once a week	4	3
Once or twice a month	10	8
Once every 2 or 3 months	13	10
Once or twice over last 12 months	32	25
Never	32	46

Table 5.1 Frequency of visits taken to the coast to take part in outdoor activities such as walking (last 12 months)

Omnibus questions 2013. Base: All respondents (2013: 1701)

Q1. How often, on average, have you visited the English coast to take part in outdoor activities such as walking? Please include all visits, regardless of how long they lasted or whether they were taken from home or while on a holiday in England. Chart does not show Don't Know responses (4 percent in 2013)

Visits to the coast are more seasonal and focused on weekends

Compared to visits to other types of place, there is a greater seasonal variation in the volumes of visits taken to the coast. This variation is illustrated in the indexed data in Figure 5.8.

This comparison also illustrates the upward trend in the volumes of visits taken to green spaces in towns and cities while visits to the countryside and coast have varied but with no general upward or downward trend.

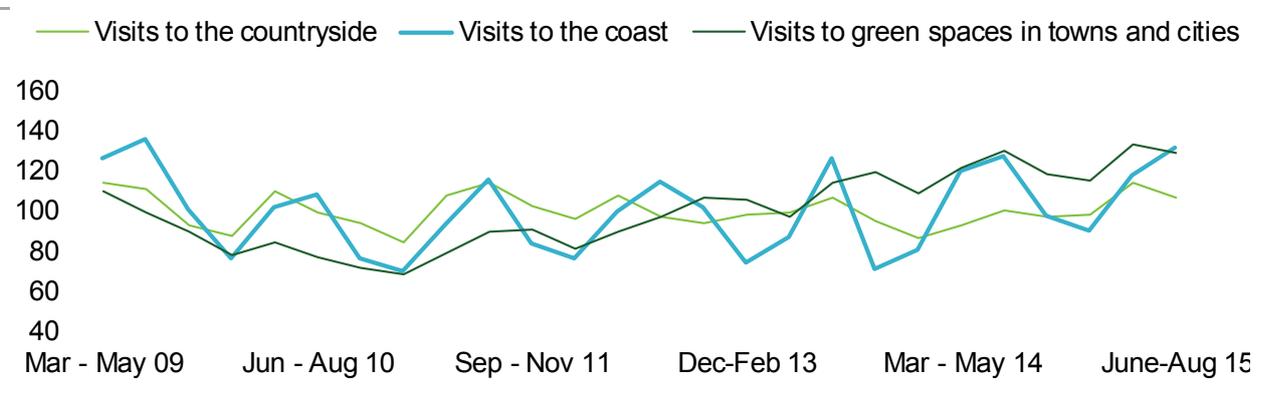


Figure 5.8 – Quarterly volume of visits by destination type – indexed data 100=monthly average over 6 year period

MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015

Also, compared to visits to other types of place, visits to the coast are more likely to take place at weekends (40 percent), especially Sundays when around a quarter of visits are taken (23 percent). In contrast, the distribution of visits to urban green spaces is more evenly spread over the week.

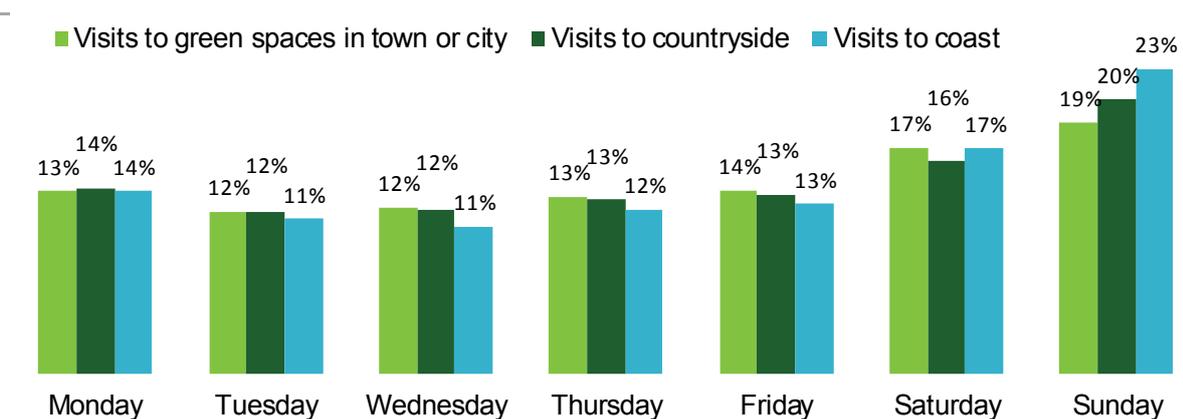


Figure 5.9 – Daily volume of visits by destination type

MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015

Half of English adults would like to take more visits to the coast

Around half of the population (49 percent) would like to visit the English coast more often than they do at the moment (Figure 5.10). While this is a lower proportion than recorded in 2013 (57 percent), it suggests a significant opportunity to increase visit levels.

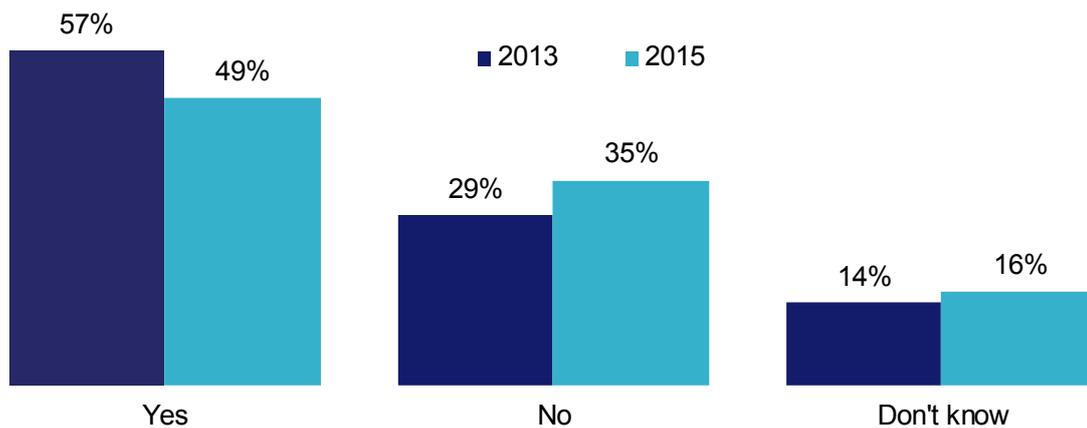


Figure 5.10 – Whether would like to visit the English coast more often

Omnibusquestions2013,2015. Base: All respondents(2013:1701, 2015:1763)

Q6. Now thinking of the next 12 months, would you like to visit the English coast more often than you do at the moment?

Looking across demographic groups, interest in visiting the coast more often was highest amongst:

- Women (52 percent compared to 45 percent of men).
- People aged under 55 (53 percent compared to 43 percent of those aged 55+).
- People in ABC1 socio-economic groups (52 percent compared to 46 percent of C2DEs).
- People with children in their household (56 percent compared to 46 percent with no children).

Figure 5.10 below illustrates frequency of visits to the coast in the last 12 months amongst the 49 percent of the population who would like to visit more often.

This analysis illustrates that while 36 percent of this group currently never take visits to the coast, 56 percent are occasional visitors (visiting at most once or twice a month).

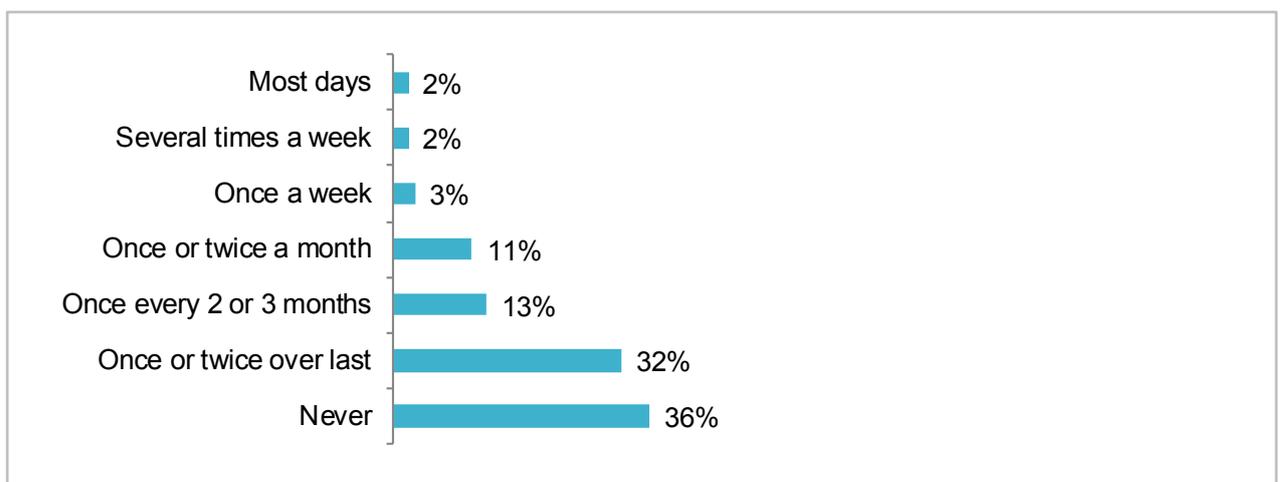


Figure 5.11 – Current frequency of visits to coast in last 12 months amongst those who would like to visit more often

Omnibusquestions2015. Base: All respondents(2015:1763)

As summarised in the table below and overleaf, the profile of these groups and their reasons for not taking more visits to the coast vary somewhat with those who generally never take visits more likely to be limited by factors such as health or expense while those who occasionally take visits are more likely to mention a lack of time as an issue.

<p>Want to visit more – currently never visit -</p>	<p>More likely to be...</p> <p>Aged 16-24</p> <p>C2DE</p> <p>Children in household or pre-family</p> <p>Residents of London or Midlands</p> <p>Barriers to visiting the coast more likely to include...</p> <p>Poor health</p> <p>Too expensive</p> <p>Too far from home</p> <p>No access to car</p> <p>A physical disability</p>
<p>Want to visit more – currently visit less than weekly</p>	<p>More likely to be...</p> <p>Aged 25-54</p> <p>ABC1C2</p> <p>Children in household</p> <p>Working full or part time</p> <p>Residents of Yorkshire, Humberside, East of England</p> <p>Barriers to visiting the coast more likely to include...</p> <p>Too busy at work</p> <p>Too busy at home</p> <p>Young children</p>

Overall a lack of time is the main barrier to visiting the coast

In both 2015 and 2013 the most frequently mentioned barriers preventing people from visiting the coast more often were being too busy at work or home and the weather (Figure 5.12). The proportion of people stating that nothing in particular stopped them from visiting the coast more often increased between 2013 and 2015.

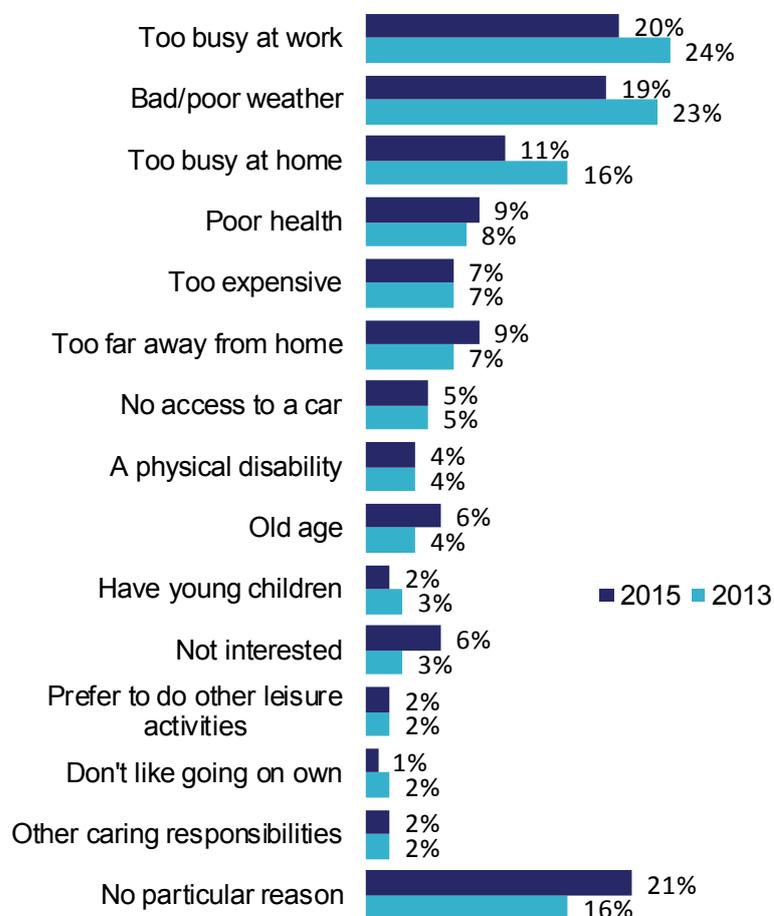


Figure 5.12 – Barriers to visiting the English coast more often

Source: Omnibus questions 2013, 2015. Base: All respondents (2013: 1701, 2015: 1763)

Q5. What, if anything, has stopped you from visiting the coast more often during the last 12 months?

Demographic variations in the barriers mentioned included:

- Too busy at work – more mentions by men, 24-44 age group and people with children.
- Bad/poor weather – more mentions by people with children.
- Too busy at home – more mentions by women, 35-54 age group and people with children.

Problems encountered during visits to the English coast

As in 2013, the most frequently encountered access issues continued to relate to litter, the behaviour of other users and path conditions in 2015 (Figure 5.13). Notably, less than a third (29 percent) of those who visited the coast for activities such as walking during 2015 encountered any types of access problems – a lower proportion than in 2013 (36 percent).

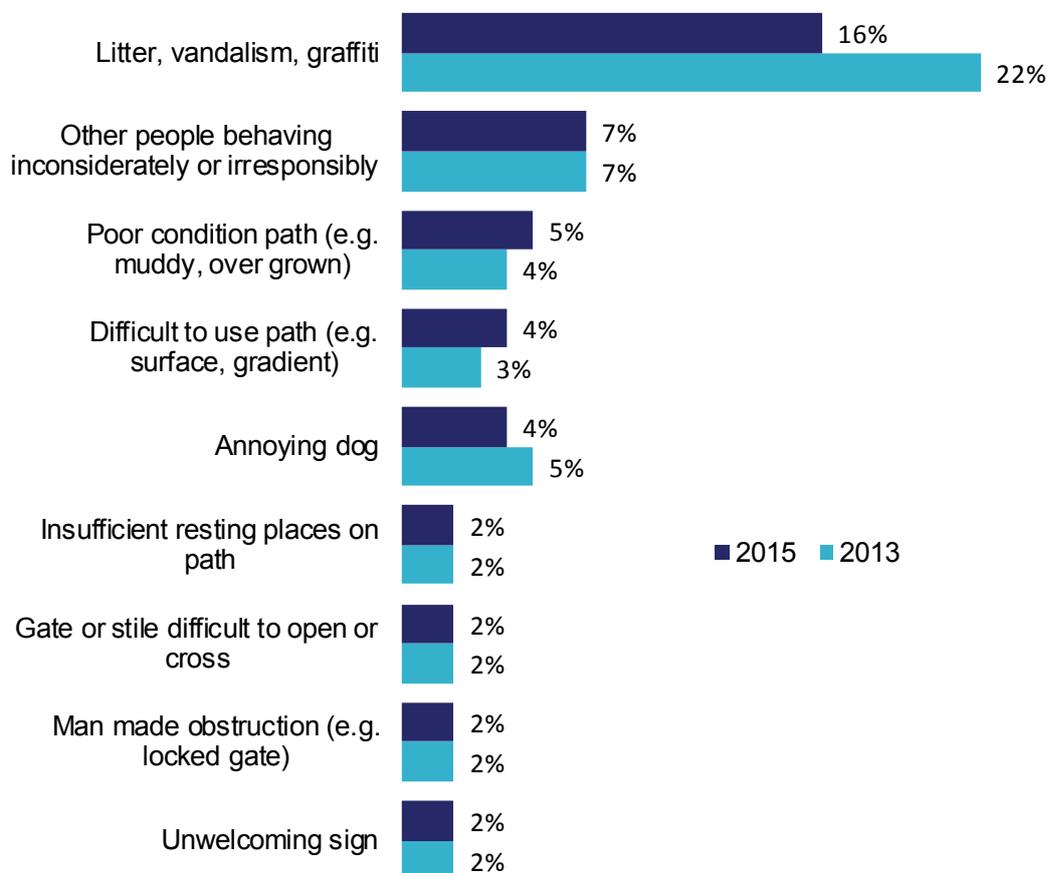


Figure 5.13 – Problems encountered when visiting the English coast

Omnibus questions 2013, 2015. Base: All respondents who have visited the English coast for activities such as walking in the last 12 months (203:1085, 2015:901)

Q2. During the visits you took to the English coast in the last 12 months, which of the following problems, if any, have you encountered?

In 2015 there were a number of demographic and regional variations in the issues encountered during visits to the coast. These included:

- Residents of South East of England – more likely to report litter, vandalism or graffiti (23 percent).
- Residents of South West of England – more likely to report that the path they used was in a poor condition (12 percent)
- Younger age groups (16-24) – more likely than older people to report litter, vandalism or graffiti (26 percent) or an unwelcoming sign (seven percent).

THE ENGLAND COAST PATH



6 The England Coast Path

Awareness of the England Coastal Path is increasing

As shown in Figure 6.1, during 2015 31 percent of the population were aware of plans for a coastal path around England ('definitely' or 'think so'), a significantly higher proportion than recorded in 2013 (24 percent).

Awareness of the plans was highest amongst:

- Men (33 percent compared to 28 percent of women).
- People aged 55 or over (39 percent compared to 25 percent of those aged 16 to 54).
- People who visit the coast most often (44 percent of those who visit weekly compared to 34 percent of those who visit less often and 26 percent of those who normally never visit).

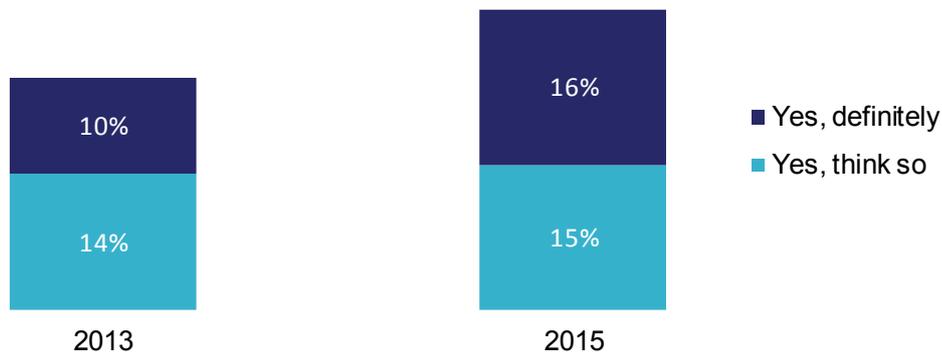


Figure 6.1 – Awareness of the England Coast Path

Work is underway on the England Coast Path - a new National Trail around all of England's coast. When complete, this will provide a walking route around all of England's open coast, extra space to enjoy the coast (for example to picnic), as well as access to all beaches, dunes, flats and cliffs. Some sections already exist with the whole path is due to be completed by 2020.

Prior to this interview were you aware of these plans?

Omnibus questions 2013, 2015. Base: All respondents (2013: 1701, 2015: 1763)

Q7. Prior to this interview were you aware of these plans [for entire England coastal path]?

A third of the population are more likely to visit because of the England Coastal Path

As shown in Figure 6.12 the England Coastal Path plans could influence just over a third of the population to take a visit to the coast – 10 percent believe that they could be a lot more likely to visit the coast. The 2015 result is similar to that recorded in 2013.

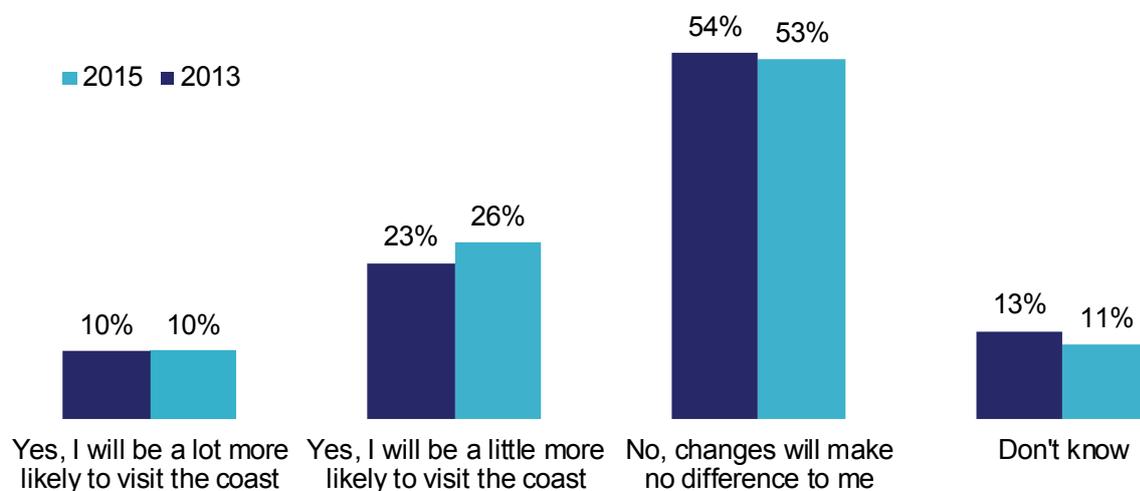


Figure 6.2 – Whether proposed changes would influence likelihood to take visits

Omnibus questions 2013, 2015. All respondents (2013: 1701, 2015: 1763)

Q8. Do you expect these proposed changes to influence your likelihood to take visits to the English coast?

AN ANALYSIS OF VISITS TO URBAN GREENSPACES



7 Taking MENE further – an analysis of visits to urban greenspaces

This report has used MENE data to provide insights regarding visits to the coast. Given the size of the MENE database there is potential to undertake further, similar detailed analyses for other types of place, in relation to specific outdoor activities or in relation to specific population groups.

In light of the significant growth in volumes of visits, urban greenspaces will be one of the focus areas in a future report in this series.

Some of the key survey findings regarding visits to urban greenspaces which will be explored further in this report are summarised below.

A significant growth in visits to urban greenspaces

Between March 2014 and February 2015 adults living in England took around 1.5 billion visits to greenspaces in towns and cities. This equates to around half of all visits (48 percent) taken to the natural environment during this period.

As shown in Figure 7.1, the volume of visits taken to urban greenspaces has increased consistently between the 2010-11 and 2014-15 periods. During the same period, the volumes of visits taken to other natural places (i.e. countryside and coast) remained at fairly constant levels.

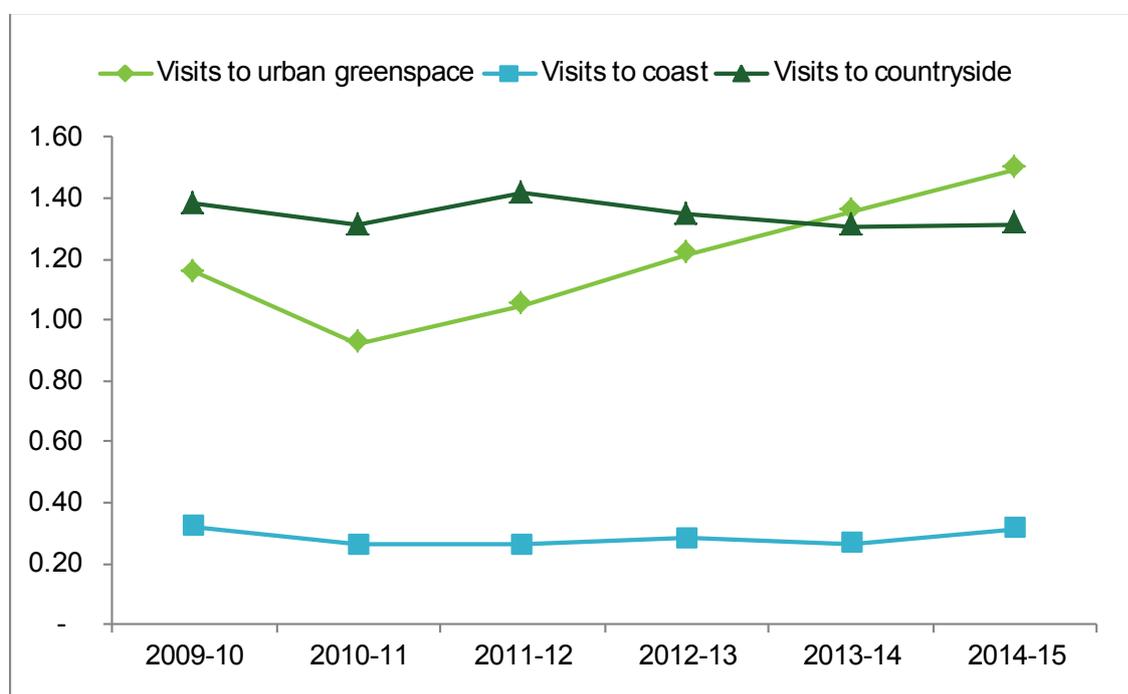


Figure 7.1 – Annual volume of visits to the natural environment - urban greenspace, coast and countryside destinations (Billions)
MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015

Urban greenspaces provide a place for exercise and play

Figures 7.2 and 7.3 illustrate the most frequently undertaken activities and most frequently provided reasons for taking visits to urban greenspaces reported during the first six years of MENE. Most visits involved walking and the largest proportions were motivated by the need to exercise a dog, for personal health & exercise or to entertain children.

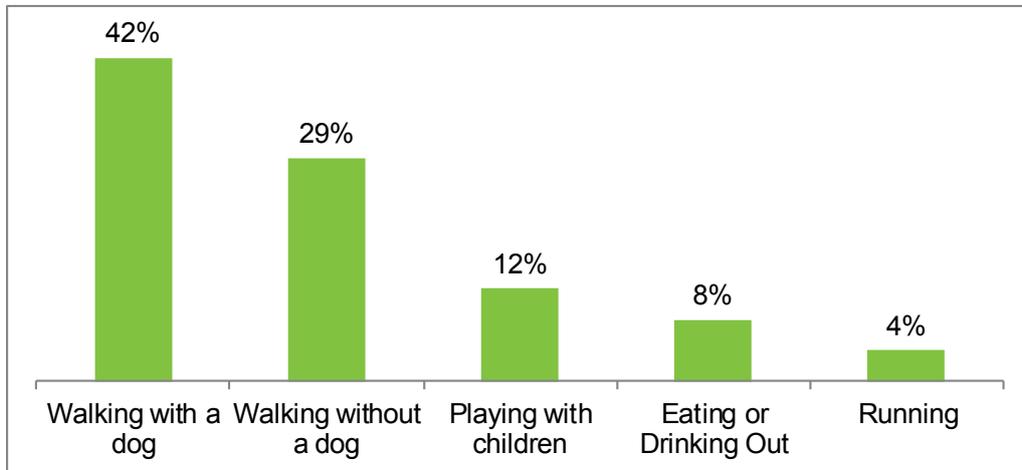


Figure 7.2 – ‘Top 5’ activities undertaken on visits to urban greenspaces
MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015

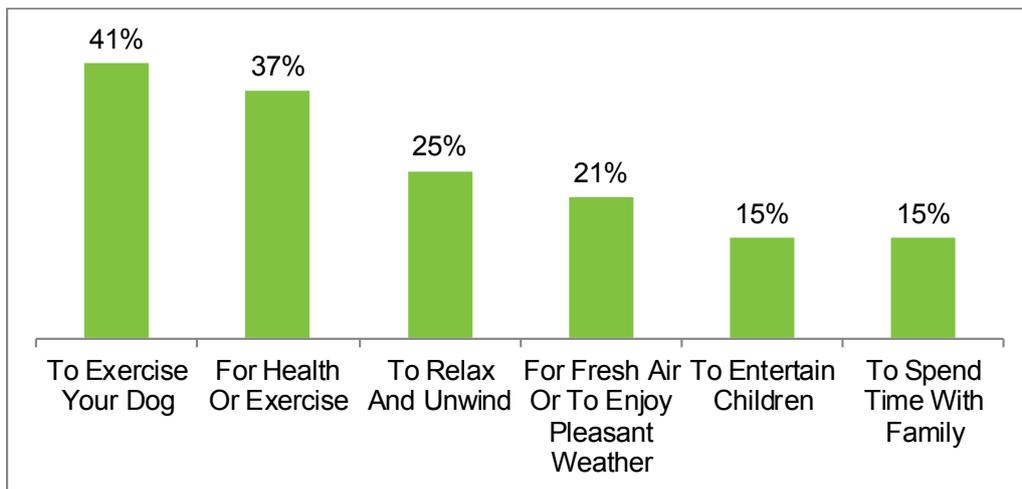


Figure 7.3 – ‘Top 5’ reasons for visits to urban greenspaces
MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015

Urban greenspaces attract a more diverse population than other natural places

As shown in Figures 3.6 to 3.8 in Section 3 of this report, urban green spaces were visited by a wider spectrum of demographic groups than both the countryside or coast. This includes higher levels of usage by younger people, lower socio-economic groups and members of the BAME population.

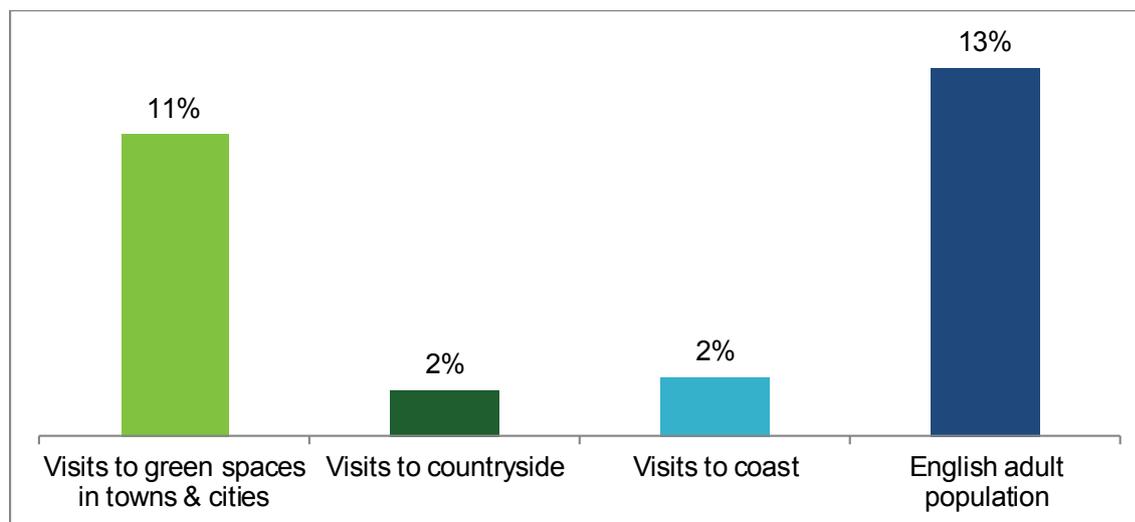


Figure 7.4 – Proportion of visitors in Black and Minority Ethnic Population by destination MENE Years 1-6: March 2009 to February 2015

A link between local greenspaces availability and frequency of visit taking?

Visits to urban greenspaces also tend to be taken by people who live locally (see Figures 3.3 to 3.5 in Section 3). Between 2009 and 2015, 76 percent of visits to urban greenspaces were taken by people who lived in the same Local Authority as the place visited and in 69 percent of visits the participant walked from their home to the place visited.

Given these very high levels of local usage, previous MENE analyses have sought to better understand the relationship between the available local greenspace and levels of participation in outdoor recreation⁴.

At a national level these analyses have shown a strong association between levels of greenspace density and frequency of participation in outdoor visits. This relationship was also explored in an analysis of MENE data which focused on a number of East London boroughs, finding a link between the availability of greenspace in these areas and the frequency of visits⁵.

⁴ See Section 8 of the Year 5 MENE Annual Report

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6579788732956672?category=47018>

⁵ Visits to the Natural Environment in East London

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5400445944070144>

An increasingly urbanised population

Between 2004 and 2013, the UK population grew by seven percent. This population growth was greatest in cities, especially in the south of England (London, South West, South East and East) where the population increased by 11 percent⁶.

Current estimates suggest that this urbanisation trend will continue. ONS predict that by 2022, around four million more people will live in England. The greatest rate of population growth is predicted in London where a 13 percent increase is anticipated, equating to one million more people.⁷

Looking ahead to the urban greenspace report

The next report in the MENE Thematic series will explore these topics further using the latest MENE data covering the period March 2009 to February 2016.

Areas of interest to be covered will include:

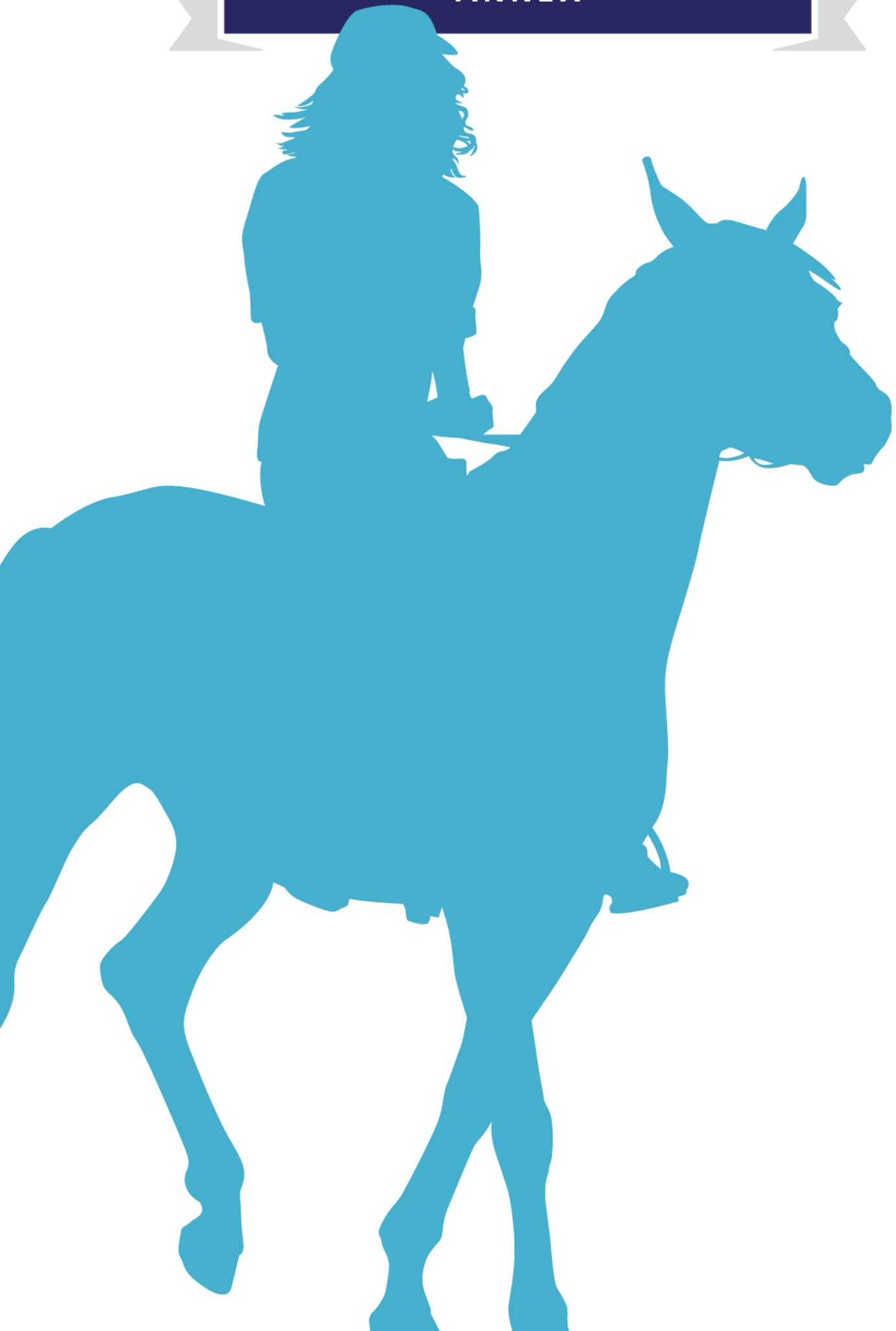
- Wider environmental behaviours and attitudes amongst those taking visits to urban greenspaces including attitudes towards the natural environment and actions taken to protect/ conserve it.
- Analysis of sub-national data, for example the report will provide an opportunity to focus upon the results at a local authority level to understand where urban greenspaces visits are being taken, who they are being taken by and how this has changed over time.
- Exploring external data sources to provide context and colour to the findings, such as weather data, accessibility to greenspace, health levels etc.
- Mapping the MENE data to show data such as urban greenspace visits by Local Authority or region, movement between regions with regards to visiting urban greenspace, visits to urban areas taken for health reasons etc.
- Analysis of expenditure data for visits to specific types of urban greenspaces such as parks, Local Nature Reserves etc.

With data collected on thousands of urban visits per year (c. 142,000 visits between March 2009 and February 2015), the size of the MENE data set available means that there is a great deal that can be done, even more so with the addition of the data for the 2015-16 survey.

⁶ <http://www.centreforcities.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/15-01-09-Cities-Outlook-2015.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/re/snpp/sub-national-population-projections/2012-based-projections/stb-2012-based-snpp.html>

ANNEX



8 Annex

Definitions

The Natural Environment	MENE records engagement with the natural environment. By natural environment we mean all green open spaces in and around towns and cities as well as the wider countryside and coastline.
Visits to the Natural Environment	The main focus of MENE is on visits to the natural environment. By visits to the natural environment we mean time spent outdoors in the natural environment, away from home and private gardens.
Visits to the coast	Visits to the coast are the sub-set of visits to the natural environment where most of the duration of the visit was spent either in a seaside resort or town or in another seaside coastline place such as a beach or cliff. Respondents self define whether recent visits they took were to the coast, countryside or natural places in a town or city.
Socio economic groups	MENE respondents are classified by socio-economic group. In summary the classification is based on the chief-income earner's occupation as follows: A – Higher managerial, administrative or professional B – Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional C1 – Supervisory or clerical and junior managerial, administrative or professional C2 – Skilled manual workers D – Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers E - Casual or lowest grade workers, pensioners, and others who depend on the welfare state for their income
BAME population	Black & Minority Ethnic Community

Note on MENE expenditure data

As illustrated in Figures 8.1 and 8.2 below, the data on expenditure collected by MENE tells us the amount of money that people spend during a visit to the natural environment. This is different to the expense that people incur in making the visit – which is not specifically collected by MENE.

Some of the expense that is incurred – such as food, fuel and public transport – may be met through purchases made before the trip.

During the trip people may spend money on goods such as equipment, food and fuel that they use after the visit. Expenditure on car parking, admission fees and gifts and souvenirs are likely to be incurred as part of the trip.

It is also important to remember that the MENE data does not tell us where people spend money on many of the items. For example, they may purchase food and fuel from close to where they set off from, on the way or at the place that they visit.

Also people may undertake their visit to the natural environment as part of a trip that includes other activities such as visiting a relative. Additional information is needed if we are to attribute expenditure specifically to visits to the natural environment.

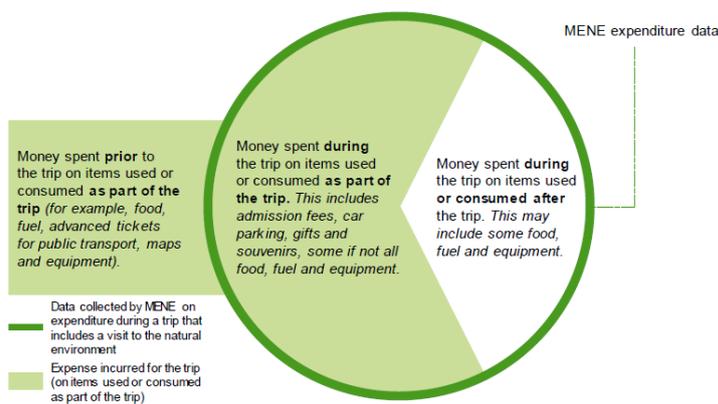


Figure 8.1 – Conceptual diagram of how expenditure on items used or consumed for a trip relates to expenditure during a trip.

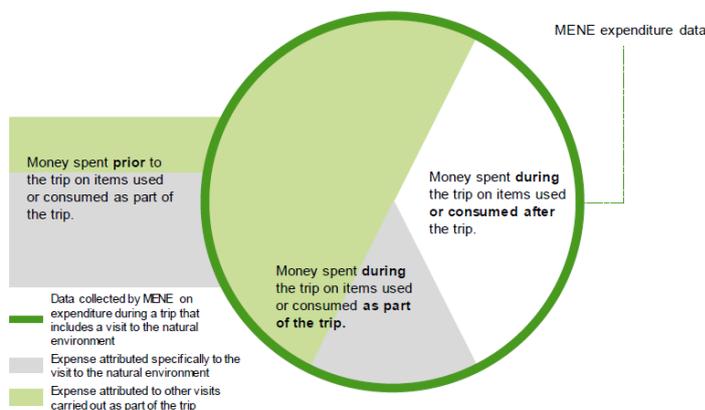


Figure 8.2 – Conceptual diagram of how expense attributed to a visit to the natural environment relates to trip