

Natural England Commissioned Report NECR094

# Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment: The national survey on people and the natural environment

Annual Report from the 2011-12 survey

First published 03 July 2012

[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)





# Foreword

Natural England commission a range of reports from external contractors to provide evidence and advice to assist us in delivering our duties. The views in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of Natural England.

## Background

Although there is a growing evidence base about the benefits that people derive from contact with the natural environment, there is a lack of information about how and why people currently engage with the natural environment.

In the past, a series of surveys have been carried out by Government and its partners to track participation in leisure day visits. The Leisure Day Visits Survey Series (undertaken in 1994, 1996, 1998, 2002/03 and 2005) collected information on the extent of participation in leisure day visits and provided estimates of the volume of visits. Whilst these surveys included 'days out' in the countryside, they did not provide up to date and robust information on people's day to day use and enjoyment of the natural environment.

Natural England, Defra and the Forestry Commission therefore commissioned TNS to undertake this survey.

### The survey was commissioned in order to:

- Understand how people use, enjoy and are motivated to protect the natural environment.
- Provide data that monitors changes in use and enjoyment of the natural environment over time, at a range of different spatial scales and for key groups within the population.

### How will Natural England use the findings?

In relation to its remit for promoting public understanding, conservation and enjoyment of the

natural environment, Natural England will use the findings to:

- Inform its work, and that of other interested parties, to link it more closely to need.
- Evaluate the impact and effectiveness of this work. The annual report presents the headline findings for the third year of fieldwork from March 2011 to February 2012.

Published alongside this report are:

- A technical report providing full details of the survey methodology including approaches to sampling, grossing and weighting and estimates of confidence intervals.
- Electronic data table viewer: interactive tool which allows detailed analysis of the MENE dataset.

A number of further reports including the year one and two annual reports and the results of additional analyses of the MENE data are available from the Natural England website.

### Official Statistics

The information within this report is categorised as 'Official Statistics', and has been produced and published according to arrangements approved by the UK Statistics Authority. A document detailing Natural England's compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics is available separately on the Natural England website.

**Natural England Project Manager** - Erica Wayman [erica.wayman@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:erica.wayman@naturalengland.org.uk)

**Contractor** - Duncan Stewart, TNS, 23 Alva Street, Edinburgh EH2 4PS

**Keywords** - visits, engagement, natural environment, participation, motivations, barriers

#### Further information

For further information relating to the statistics in this report contact [stephen.herbert@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:stephen.herbert@naturalengland.org.uk)

This report can be downloaded from the Natural England website:

[www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/research/monitor](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/research/monitor). For information on Natural England

publications contact the Natural England Enquiry Service on 0845 600 3078 or e-mail

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# Summary

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This report summarises the headline findings from the third year of the Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) survey. The survey collects detailed information on people's use and enjoyment of the natural environment, with particular emphasis on visits to the outdoors. Fieldwork took place between March 2011 and February 2012. Where appropriate, comparisons have been made with the first and second years of the survey undertaken between March 2009 and February 2010, and March 2010 and February 2011.

The survey was undertaken by TNS on behalf of Natural England, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Forestry Commission.

For the purposes of this survey the natural environment is defined as the green open spaces in and around towns and cities, as well as the wider countryside and coastline.

Throughout this report, year one or 2009/10, refers to the March 2009 to February 2010 period, and year two or 2010/11, refers to the period March 2010 to February 2011, while year three or 2011/12, relates to the period March 2011 to February 2012. Please note that any results highlighted in the text are statistically significant unless stated otherwise.

## **An overview of visits to the natural environment (see Section 2 for more details):**

- During 2011/12 an average of 42 per cent of the English adult population took a visit to the natural environment over the previous seven days. This is significantly higher than the proportion recorded in 2010/11 (39 per cent), but not significantly different from that recorded during the 2009/10 survey (43 per cent).
- The average number of visits taken per adult during 2011/12 was 65 – significantly higher than the average of 60 recorded in 2010/11, though significantly lower than the 2009/10 average of 69.
- The English adult population participated in an estimated 2.73 billion visits to the natural environment during 2011/12. This is 10 per cent higher than the 2.49 billion visits estimated in 2010/11 but five per cent lower than the estimated 2.86 billion visits taken during 2009/10.
- Between March 2009 and February 2012, the English adult population participated in an estimated 8.08 billion visits to the natural environment.
- During the period March 2009 to February 2012, the highest monthly volumes of visits were recorded during March, May and August 2009 and September 2011. In contrast, the winter months received a lower volume of visits, particularly February 2010, November and December 2010 and March 2011.
- During 2011/12, volumes of visits taken in September, October and December 2011 and January and February 2012 were higher than in either of the previous two years.
- When asked about visits to the natural environment over the previous 12 months, just over half of the adult population stated that they normally visited the natural environment at least once per week (55 per cent), eight per cent had only made one or two visits and eight per cent of respondents claimed they had not taken a visit during the previous 12 months at all. These findings are not significantly different from those recorded in the 2010/11 or 2009/10 surveys.

### **Who? A profile of people that do and don't visit (see Section 3 for more details):**

- The population groups with the largest proportions taking visits to the natural environment included people aged 25 and over, those in employment, and those in the ABC1 socio-economic groups.
- Overall levels of participation were significantly lower amongst the 65 and over groups, the BME population and members of the DE socio-economic groups.
- People living in the areas of greatest deprivation were least likely to have visited the natural environment in the previous seven days, whilst those in the least deprived areas were significantly more likely to have made such a visit.
- Levels of participation were highest in the South West (52 per cent) and lowest in London (31 per cent) and the North West (39 per cent).
- Comparing volumes of visits in the first and third years of surveying, the most notable net decreases in visit taking were recorded amongst the DE socio-economic groups and unemployed people. However, the overall volumes of visits increased amongst those in the AB socio-economic group.

### **Where? The destination of visits (see Section 4 for more details):**

- Just over half of visits to the natural environment were taken to the countryside (52 per cent), while 38 per cent were to green spaces within towns and cities. In total, 10 per cent of visits were taken in coastal locations.
- Between 2009/10 and 2010/11, the proportion of visits to the countryside increased from 49 per cent to 53 per cent, while the proportion of visits to green spaces in towns and cities decreased from 41 per cent to 37 per cent. There were no significant differences in the proportions of visits to each location between the 2010/11 and 2011/12 survey periods.
- Volumes of visits to urban parks, paths, cycleways and bridleways, and playing fields increased significantly between 2010/11 and 2011/12. The increase in visits to urban parks particularly, made a considerable contribution to the overall increase in the volumes of visits across England between 2010/11 and 2011/12.
- Visits by those living in the most deprived neighbourhoods; 16-24 year olds; those in the DE socio-economic group; and the BME population, were more likely to be to urban destinations and to places closer to home.
- Around two thirds of visits (68 per cent) were taken within two miles of the respondent's home, highlighting the importance of accessible local green space. This finding is consistent with that from 2010/11 and 2009/10.
- Visits to coastal areas were more likely to be taken by car, while the majority of countryside and urban visits were taken on foot.

### **What? A profile of visits (see Section 5 for more details):**

- The average visit to the natural environment lasted just under 2 hours (1 hour 58 minutes). This finding is not significantly different from that found in 2010/11 and 2009/10.
- Walking remained the most popular activity on visits to the natural environment and was an activity on just over three-quarters of all visits (78 per cent), or approximately 2.1 billion visits overall. Walking with a dog was undertaken on 51 per cent of all visits (approximately 1.4 billion visits). Walking without a dog was the second most frequent activity, featuring in 27 per cent or around 725 million visits.
- While the volume of visits significantly decreased for many activities between 2009/10 and 2010/11, the subsequent increases during 2011/12 means that the overall change between years one and three of the survey is small. This is most notably the case for visits involving horse riding and watersports.

- In total 54 per cent of visits were taken by an adult on their own, while 22 per cent of visits were taken with children present. This equates to around 597 million of the visits taken by adults.
- Around a quarter (26 per cent) of visits incurred expenditure, with the average spend during these visits being around £28 per person.
- An estimated £20 billion was spent during visits to the natural environment in 2011/12. This figure is not significantly different to that recorded during 2010/11 (£17 billion) and 2009/10 (£20 billion).
- In total, an estimated £58 billion<sup>1</sup> was spent on visits to the natural environment between March 2009 and February 2012.

### **Why? Reasons for visiting and not visiting (see Section 6 for more details):**

- As in the previous two years, exercising dogs, personal health and exercise, relaxing and unwinding, enjoying fresh air and pleasant weather and enjoying scenery were the most frequently cited reasons for taking visits to the natural environment.
- Motivations for visiting the natural environment were influenced by age - notably the likelihood that visits are taken for health or exercise, for fresh air or pleasant weather, to enjoy scenery, and to enjoy wildlife, increases as a person gets older.
- Those aged 25 to 44 were more likely to attribute their visit to the need to entertain children and/or spending time with family (23 per cent each). Spending time with friends was more likely to be mentioned by 16 to 24 year olds (25 per cent).
- A significant increase was recorded between survey years in the proportions of visits taken to the countryside where the motivation was for health or exercise (37 per cent in 2009/10 to 41 per cent to 2011/12).
- Those who had been on visits to the countryside and coast, particularly mountain and moorland or woodland areas were more likely to indicate that they had experienced a positive outcome than those who had been on visits to green spaces in urban areas.
- Infrequent visitors to the natural environment were most likely to cite being busy at work or poor weather as their main reasons for *not* being able to take visits to the natural environment more often. Poor health, old age or a disability were most likely to be mentioned by those who never visit the natural environment.

### **Other engagement with the natural environment (see Section 7 for more details):**

- The vast majority of the population took part in one or more of the other engagement activities asked about in the survey, with sitting and relaxing in the garden and gardening the most frequently undertaken.
- Participation in these activities generally increased with age. Those aged 45 and older were especially likely to take part in sitting or relaxing in the garden (70 per cent compared to 59 per cent amongst younger age groups) and watching or listening to nature programmes on the television or radio (62 per cent compared to 43 per cent amongst younger age groups).
- Just under half (47 per cent) of the population strongly agreed that having open green spaces close to where they live is important, while 40 per cent strongly agreed that spending time out of doors was an important part of their life.
- The more frequently people visit the natural environment, the more likely they are to appreciate it and to be concerned about environmental damage. Frequent visitors are also more likely to engage in pro-environmental behaviours such as recycling and preferring to buy seasonal and locally grown food. These results are consistent with those recorded during 2010/11 and 2009/10.

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<sup>1</sup> Taking account of margins of error, at the 95% confidence level estimated total visits range from £55 billion to £67 billion

- Respondents were also asked about the extent to which they were willing or able to change their current behaviour to address environmental concerns. Since the 2009/10 survey, the proportion of the population unwilling to change their lifestyle has significantly increased from 26 per cent to 32 per cent. Just 18 per cent of the population expressed their intention to make changes to their lifestyle.
- In terms of pro-environmental behaviours, over three quarters (77 per cent) said that they usually recycled items rather than throwing them away, while 42 per cent chose to walk or cycle instead of using their car. Furthermore, 39 per cent of people stated that they usually bought seasonal or locally grown food.

## Acknowledgements

The TNS project team would like to thank all the officers of Natural England who provided assistance in the administration and reporting of the third year of the Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) survey. In particular, many thanks go to Hazel Thomas, Stephen Herbert, Alan Booth, Ben Nichols and Erica Wayman.



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# 1 Introduction

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- 1.1 This report summarises the headline findings from the third year of the Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) survey. Where appropriate, comparisons have been made with the first and second years of the survey undertaken between March 2009 and February 2010 and March 2010 and February 2011.
- 1.2 The survey was undertaken by TNS on behalf of Natural England, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Forestry Commission.
- 1.3 The spatial information gathered by MENE – the origin and destination grid references for visits taken across the country since March 2009, presently represents over 36,000 visits, and grows each month. To exploit this large sample, Natural England plans to publish a new spatial report, and summaries of Local Authority level information throughout the remainder of 2012. Anyone wishing to explore the spatial data for themselves is encouraged to download the data, or contact Natural England for advice<sup>2</sup>.

## Background

- 1.4 A series of previous surveys were carried out by Government and its partners to track participation in leisure day visits. The leisure day visits survey series (undertaken in 1994, 1996, 1998, 2002 and 2005) collected information on the extent of participation in leisure day visits and provided estimates of the volume of visits. While these surveys included 'days out' in the countryside, they did not provide up-to-date and robust information on people's day to day use and enjoyment of the natural environment.
- 1.5 In 2009, Natural England, Defra and the Forestry Commission commissioned TNS to undertake the MENE survey. This survey provides the most comprehensive dataset yet available on people's use and enjoyment of the natural environment. It includes information on visits to the natural environment (including short, close to home visits) as well as other ways of using and enjoying the natural environment. In addition, MENE is the only survey of its type to be conducted over consecutive years, allowing for greater confidence when tracking trends over time.

## Survey aims and objectives

- 1.6 This survey aims to provide information about the relationship between people and the natural environment. Whilst the main focus of the survey is on visits, it also seeks to capture 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; and

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<sup>2</sup> Go to [www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/research/mene.aspx](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/research/mene.aspx) or write to [MENE@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:MENE@naturalengland.org.uk)

- identify patterns in use and participation for key groups within the population and at a range of spatial scales.

## 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 *visits to the natural environment*. By visits we mean time spent outdoors in the natural environment, *away from home and private gardens*. The results in sections two to six relate to visits to the natural environment.
- 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 and undertaking pro-environmental activities such as recycling. The results of these questions are included in section seven of this report.
- 1.11 Throughout this report 2009/10 refers to the March 2009 to February 2010 period, 2010/11 refers to the period March 2010 to February 2011, while 2011/12 relates to the period March 2011 to February 2012. Please note that any results highlighted in the text are statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence level unless stated otherwise.

## Structure of the report

- 1.12 This report presents the headline findings from the 2011/12 survey under the following sections. Where appropriate, comparisons are made with the results from 2010/11 and 2009/10, with statistically significant differences highlighted where appropriate. Results are also presented by key population groups.

**Section 2: An overview of visits to the natural environment** – this summarises national and regional results for the proportion of the English adult population visiting the natural environment, and provides estimates of the total volume of visits taken.

**Section 3: Who? A profile of people that do and don't visit** – this section focuses in detail on the people that do and don't visit the natural environment and on the key differences and characteristics of these groups.

**Section 4: Where? The destination of visits** – this section provides an analysis of the destination of visits to the natural environment, and the modes of transport used.

**Section 5: What? A profile of visits** – the nature of visits to the natural environment is explored in this section. It includes the duration of visits, activities undertaken, party composition and expenditure.

**Section 6: Why? Reasons for visiting or not visiting** – this section examines the motivations for visiting the natural environment and the benefits gained from doing so. It also includes an analysis of the barriers to participation.

**Section 7: Other engagement with the natural environment** – this section summarises findings on other ways of enjoying and appreciating the natural environment.

### Appendices:

**Appendix 1: Survey scope and methods** – summarises survey scope, method, fieldwork and approach to data analysis.



**Appendix 2: Accuracy of survey results** – this provides a summary of the margins of error associated with key survey results and ‘rules of thumb’ to apply when interpreting the survey findings.

**Appendix 3: Definitions of socio-economic groups**

## Further publications from the survey

- 1.13 This annual report forms just one part of a larger family of outputs from the survey. Published alongside this report are:
- **Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment Technical Report** – which provides full details of the survey methodology for the 2011/12, 2010/11 and 2009/10 surveys, including approaches to sampling, grossing and weighting, estimates of confidence intervals and the full questionnaire;
  - **Electronic data table viewer** – an interactive tool which allows detailed analysis of the MENE dataset at the England, Regional and County level from 2011/12, 2010/11 and 2009/10;
  - **Monthly reports** - brief summary reports which summarise the key figures and messages from the survey each month.
- 1.14 A series of further outputs based on additional analysis of the MENE data are also available from the Natural England website<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> See [www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/research/monitor/default.aspx](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/research/monitor/default.aspx)

## 2 An overview of visits to the natural environment

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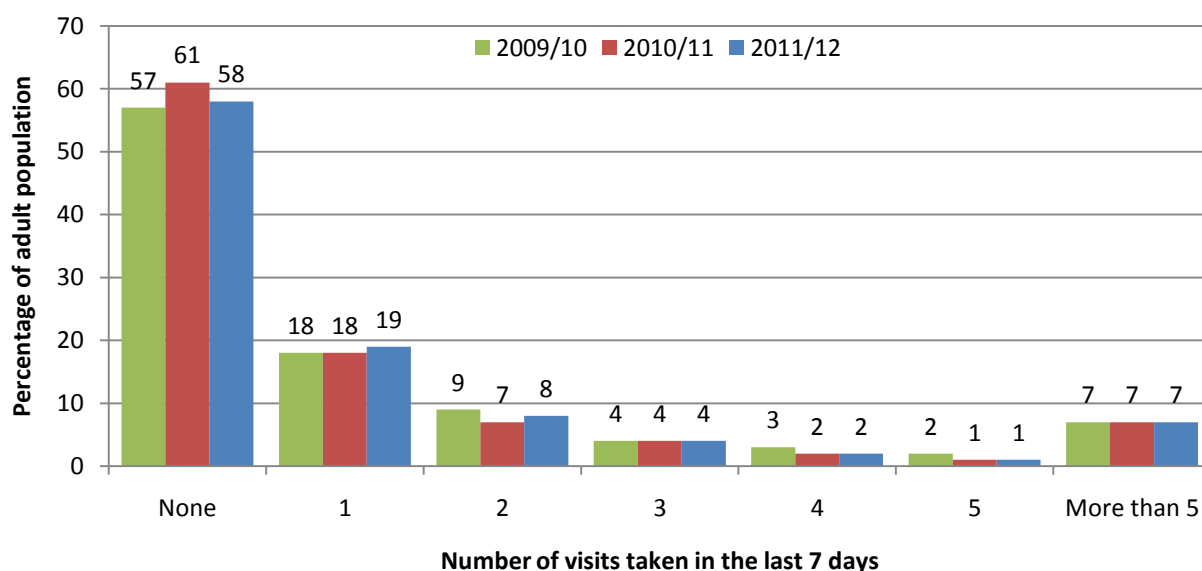
2.1 This section focuses on the frequency and volume of visits at national and regional level between March 2011 and February 2012. Comparisons are made with the key results from the 2010/11 and 2009/10 surveys where appropriate.

### Headline results in this section

- During 2011/12 an average of 42 per cent of the English adult population took a visit to the natural environment over the previous seven days. This is significantly higher than the proportion recorded in 2010/11 (39 per cent), but not significantly different from that recorded during the 2009/10 survey (43 per cent).
- The average number of visits taken per adult during 2011/12 was 65 – significantly higher than the average of 60 recorded in 2010/11, though significantly lower than the 2009/10 average of 69.
- The English adult population participated in an estimated 2.73 billion visits to the natural environment during 2011/12. This is 10 per cent higher than the 2.49 billion visits estimated in 2010/11 but five per cent lower than the estimated 2.86 billion visits taken during 2009/10.
- Between March 2009 and February 2012, the English adult population participated in an estimated 8.08 billion visits to the natural environment.
- During the period March 2009 to February 2012, the highest monthly volumes of visits were recorded during March, May and August 2009 and September 2011. In contrast, the winter months received a lower volume of visits, particularly February 2010, November and December 2010 and March 2011.
- During 2011/12, volumes of visits taken in September, October and December 2011 and January and February 2012 were higher than in either of the previous two years.
- When asked about visits to the natural environment over the previous 12 months, just over half of the adult population stated that they normally visited the natural environment at least once per week (55 per cent), eight per cent had only made one or two visits and eight per cent of respondents claimed they had not taken a visit during the previous 12 months at all. These findings are not significantly different from those recorded in the 2010/11 or 2009/10 surveys.

## Frequency of visits

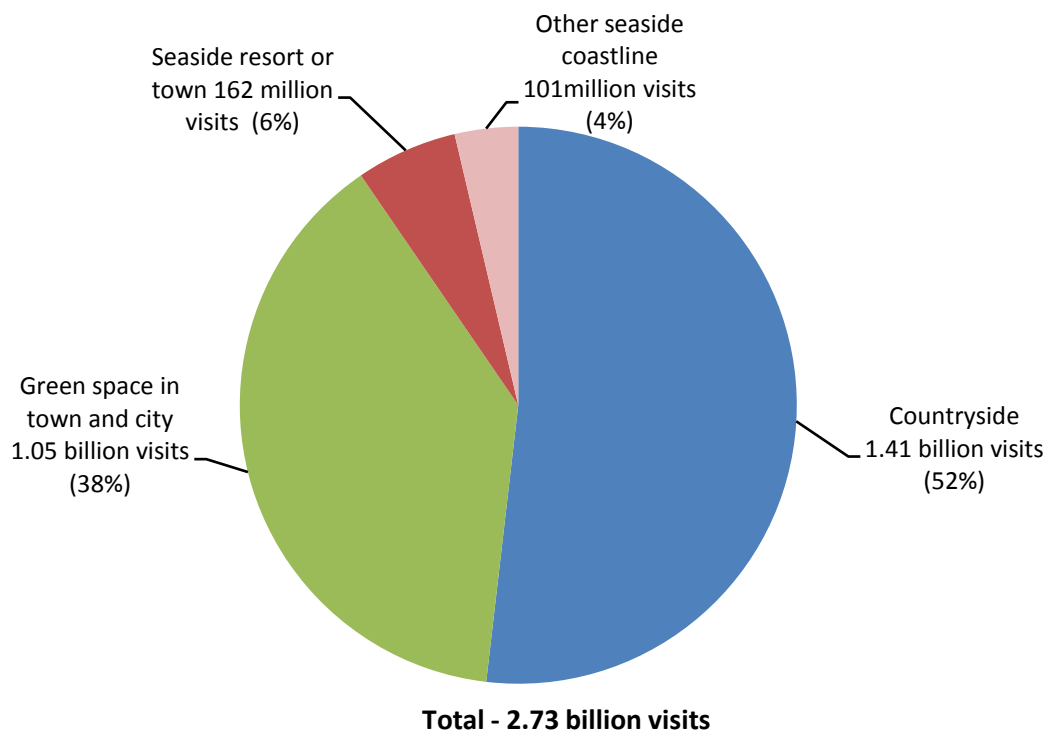
- 2.2 The survey records the number of visits taken per adult during the last seven days. This allows estimates of the total volume of visits taken in each week of the survey period to be calculated.
- 2.3 Between March 2011 and February 2012, 42 per cent of the English adult population had visited the natural environment during the previous seven days, 19 per cent had taken one visit while eight per cent had visited twice (Figure 2-1). Overall, eight per cent had taken five visits or more to the natural environment over the previous week.
- 2.4 The proportion of the English adult population who took a visit to the natural environment over the previous seven days during 2011/12 (42 per cent), is significantly higher than the proportion recorded in 2010/11 (39 per cent), but not significantly different from that recorded during the 2009/10 survey (43 per cent).
- 2.5 The average number of visits taken per adult was 65 – significantly higher than the average of 60 recorded in 2010/11, though significantly lower than the 2009/10 average of 69.



**Figure 2-1** Number of visits to the natural environment taken in the previous seven days (%)  
 Q1 How many times, if at all, did you make this type of visit? (Base: All respondents, weekly questions  
 2009/10 N=48,514; 2010/11 N=46,099; 2011/12 N=47,418)

## Estimated volume of visits in the last year

- 2.7 It is estimated that between March 2011 and February 2012, the 42.1 million adults resident in England took a total of 2.73 billion visits to the natural environment<sup>4</sup>. Around 1.41 billion (52 per cent) were to places in the countryside, while around 1.05 billion (38 per cent) were taken to green spaces within a town or city. A further 162 million (six per cent) were taken to a green space in a seaside town or resort and the remaining 101 million (four per cent) were taken to other seaside coastline areas (Figure 2-2).



**Figure 2-2** Volume of visits by general place visited (March 2011 to February 2012)

- 2.8 The 2.73 billion visits taken between March 2011 and February 2012 is ten per cent higher than the 2.49 billion visits taken between March 2010 and February 2011. The increase was most notable in visits to green spaces in towns and cities which increased by 13 per cent.

<sup>4</sup> Taking account of margins of error, at the 95% confidence level estimated total visits range from 2.66 to 2.80 billion

**Table 2-1** Volume of visits by general place visited by survey year  
 Q2 Which of the following best describes where you spent most of your time on this visit? (Base: All visits, weekly questions 2009/10 N=58,653; 2010/11 N=47,825; 2011/12 N=53,898)

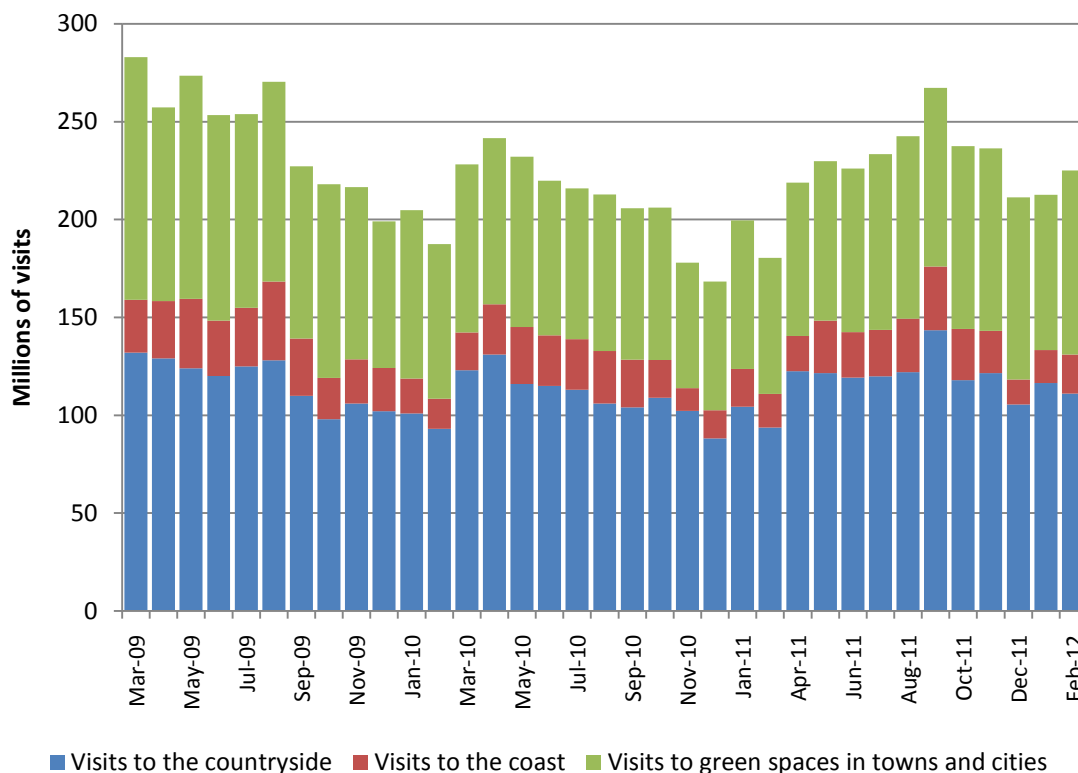
	Volume of visits (billions)		
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Countryside	1.38	1.31	1.41
Towns and cities	1.16	0.92↓	1.05↑
Seaside resort	0.21	0.17↓	0.16
Other coastal	0.11	0.09	0.1
<b>Total (billions)</b>	<b>2.86</b>	<b>2.49</b>	<b>2.73</b>

Note: Statistically significant year-on-year changes are highlighted by up or down arrows

2.9 The 2.73 billion visits recorded during 2011/12 is significantly lower than the 2.86 billion visits taken in 2009/10. Overall however, between March 2009 and February 2012, the English adult population participated in an estimated 8.08 billion visits.

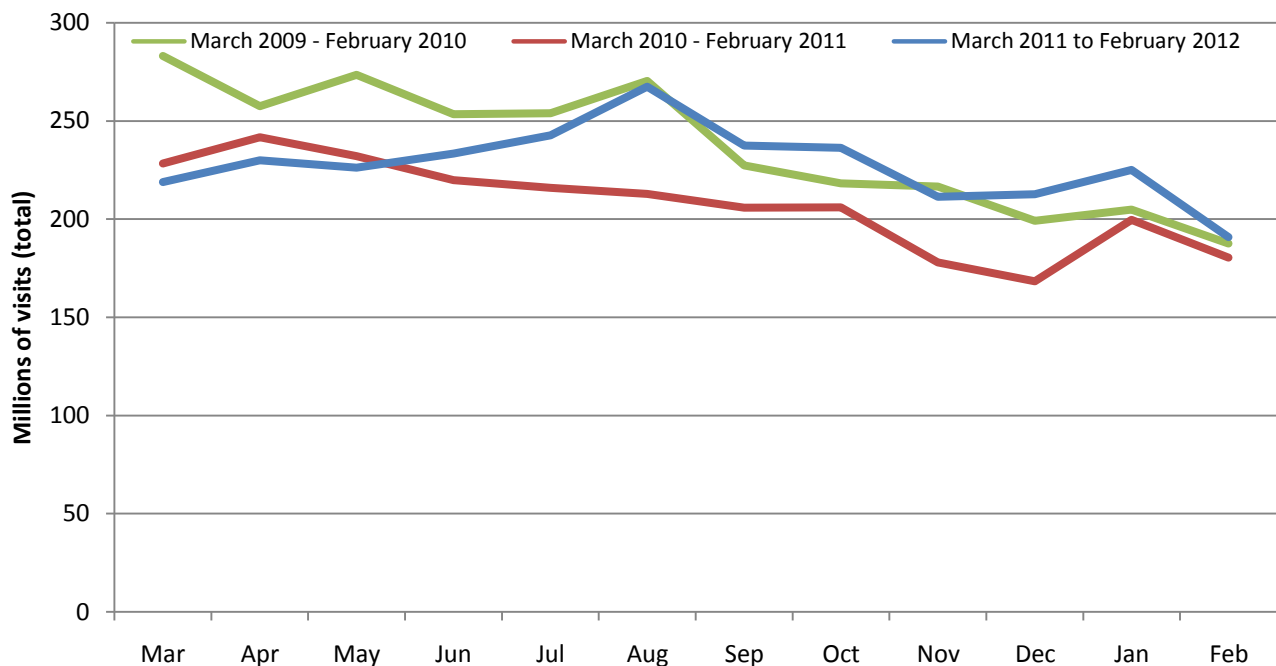
## Changes by month

2.10 During the period March 2009 to February 2012, the highest monthly volumes of visits were recorded during March, May and August 2009 and September 2011 while the winter months received a lower volume of visits, particularly February 2010, November and December 2010 and March 2011. As Figure 2-3 illustrates, the overall pattern of visits to each of the main types of destination follow seasonal variations.



**Figure 2-3** Estimated monthly volume of visits to the natural environment by general type of place visited (March 2009 to February 2012)  
 (Monthly base at least 4,400)

2.11 Figure 2-4 compares the monthly volume of visits taken in each year of surveying. In the third year of surveying, the volumes of visits recorded from June to February inclusive were higher than in the same months of the previous year. Also the volumes of visits taken in September, October and December 2011 and January and February 2012 were higher than in either of the previous two years.

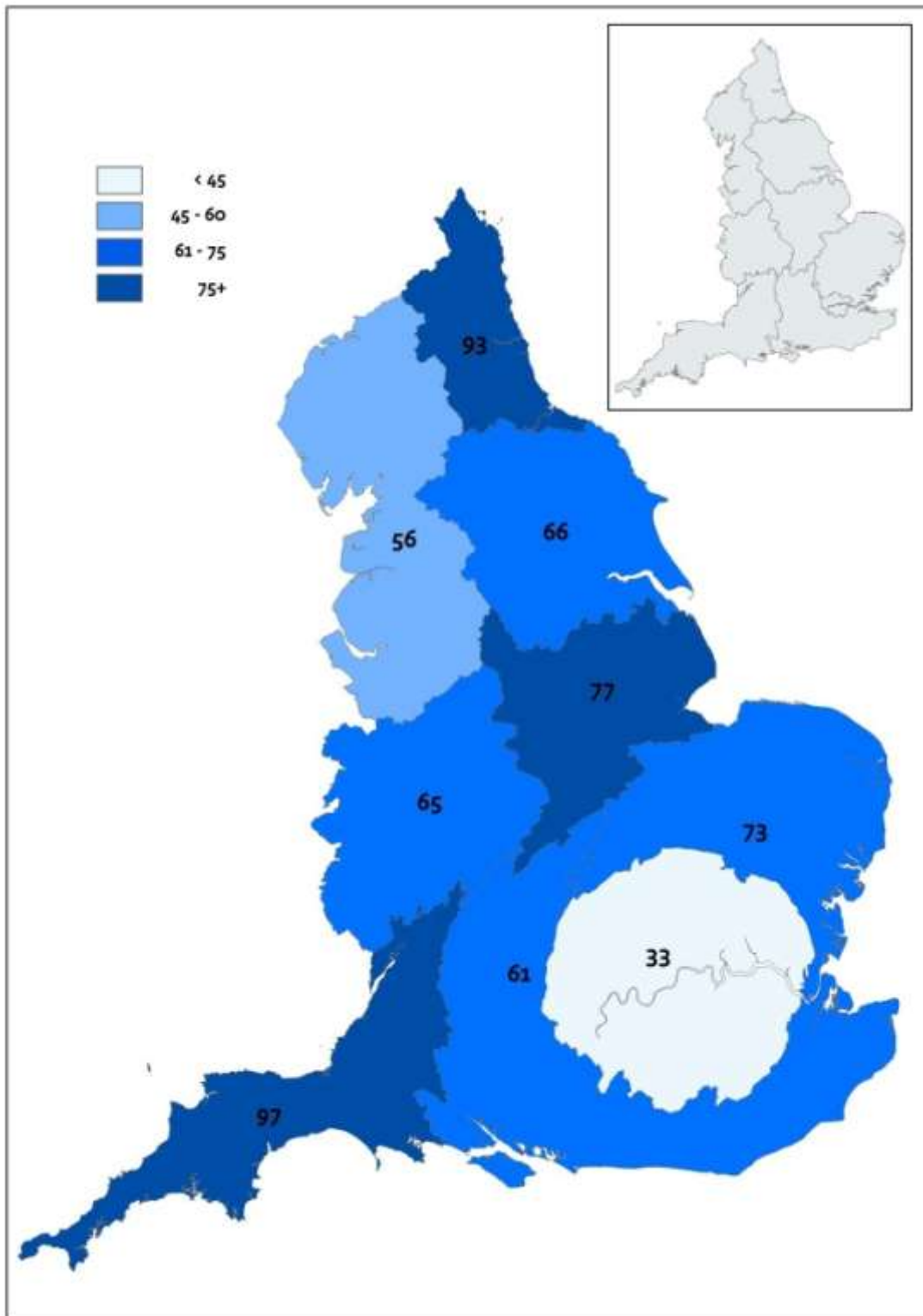


**Figure 2-4** Comparison of volume of visits to the natural environment by month, March 2009 to February 2012  
(Monthly base at least 4,400)

## Regional distribution of visits

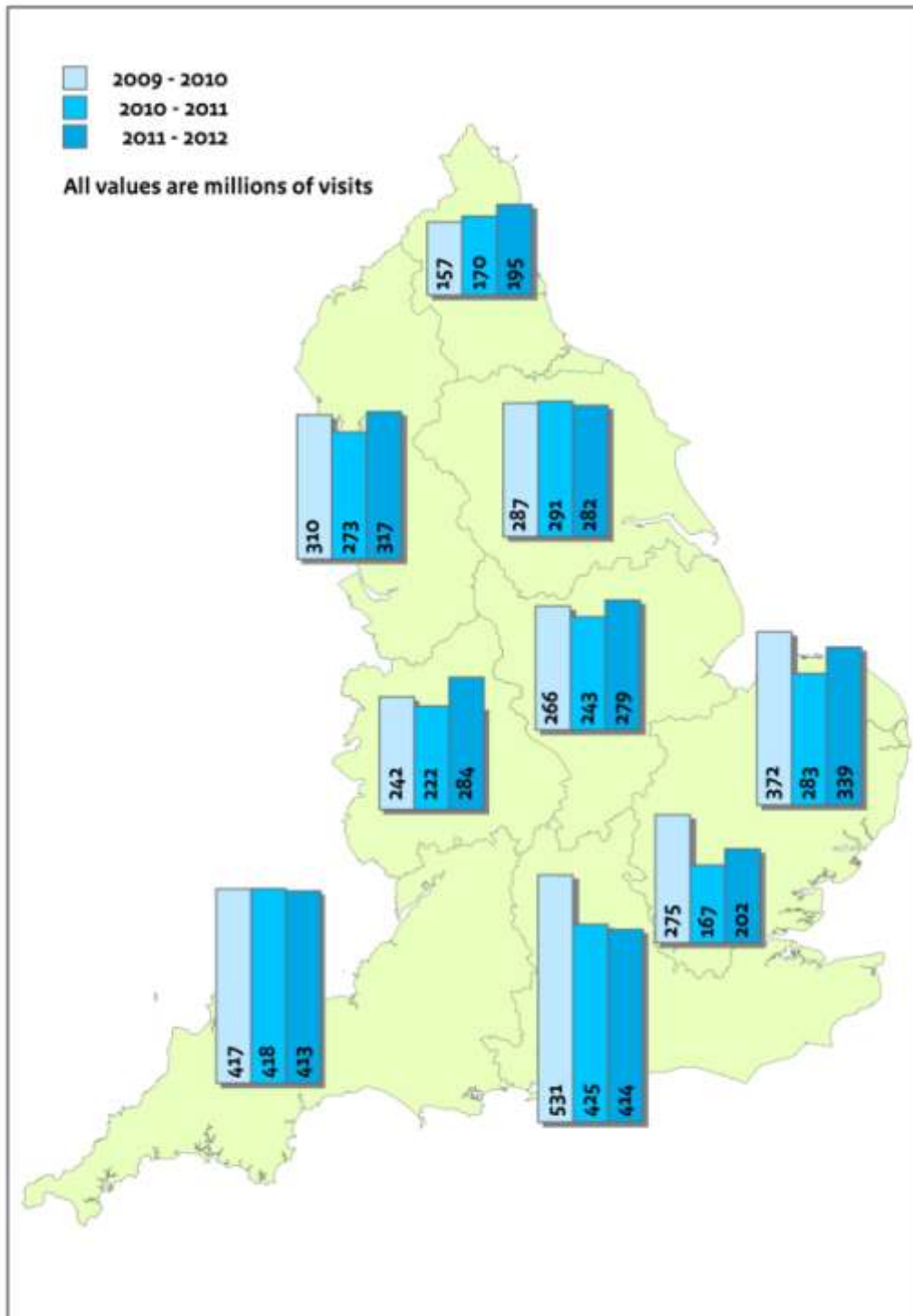
### Resident-based distribution

- 2.12 The following cartogram distorts the geographical boundaries of each English region according to relative population size. Areas of greater population appear larger; areas of lowest population appear smaller. Once the boundaries have been stretched they are reassembled such that the new map is a distorted reflection of the original. Cartograms are popular in human geography because the presentation favours population size, rather than area of land.
- 2.13 The average number of visits taken per adult for the English adult population over the 12 month survey period was 65. There was however considerable variation between regions – ranging from 97 visits by residents of the South West and 93 by those living in the North East, to 33 visits by London residents. The cartogram demonstrates how those regions with the largest populations tend to have the fewest visits per person.



**Figure 2-5** Average numbers of visits per adult by residents of each region (March 2011 to February 2012)

2.14 Figure 2-6 illustrates the estimated total volume of visits to the natural environment taken by residents of England's regions. The volume of visits by residents in each region is likely to be influenced both by the size of the population in each region and the availability of accessible natural environment destinations.



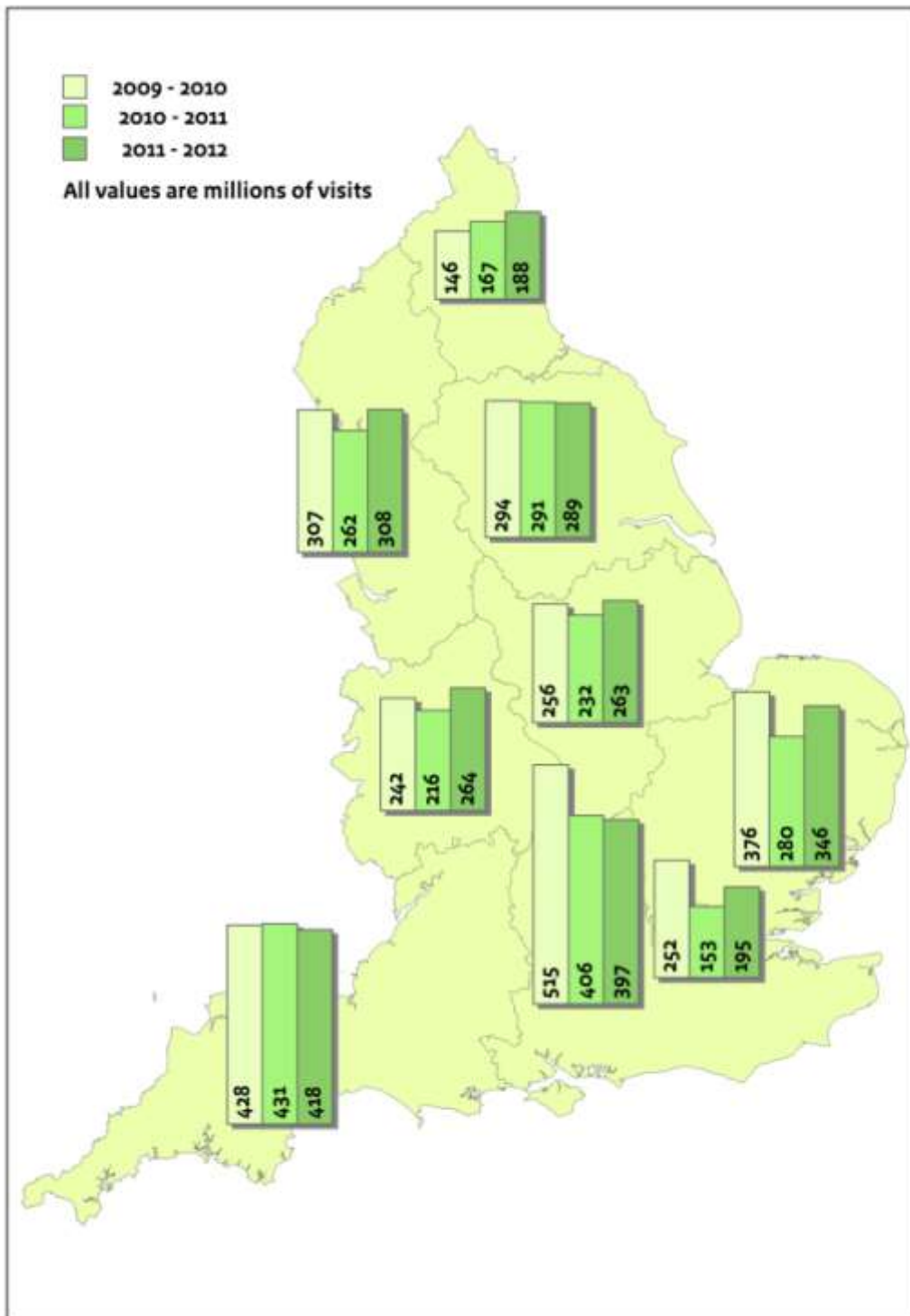
**Figure 2-6** Volume of visits taken by residents of English regions (March 2009 to February 2012)

2.15 Comparing the estimated volume of visits taken over the three survey years suggests an increase in the North East of England, and a decrease in the South East. However in other areas the volume of visits recorded each year was broadly similar (most notably the South West) or volumes varied with no constant trend.



## Destination-based distribution

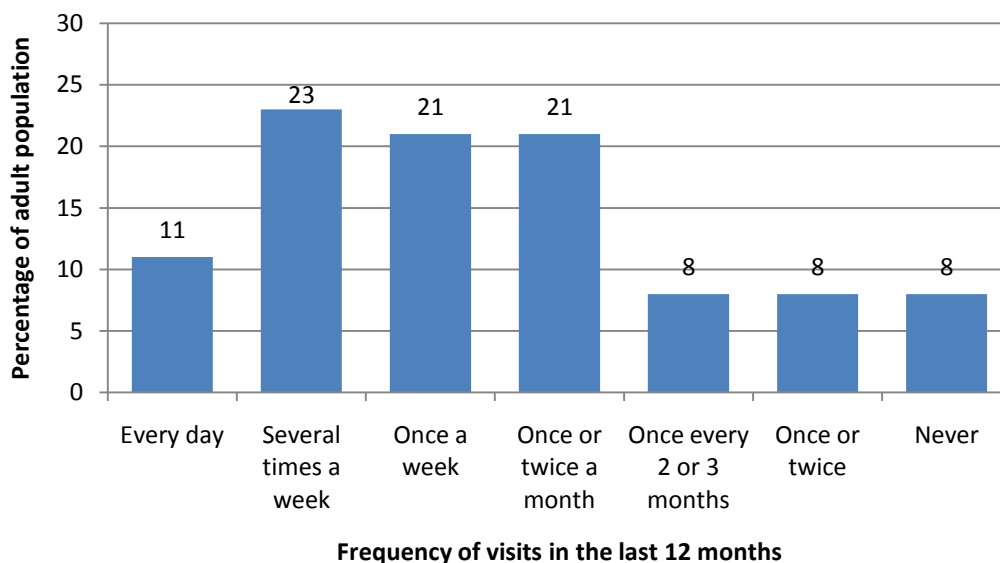
- 2.16 The largest proportions of visits were taken to destinations in the South West and the South East, with both accounting for 15 per cent of visits.
- 2.17 Comparing the 2010/11 and 2011/12 survey periods, the volume of visits taken increased most significantly in London, the East of England and West Midlands but remained at a similar level in the South East.



**Figure 2-7** Estimated volume of visits taken to destinations in each region (March 2009 to February 2012)

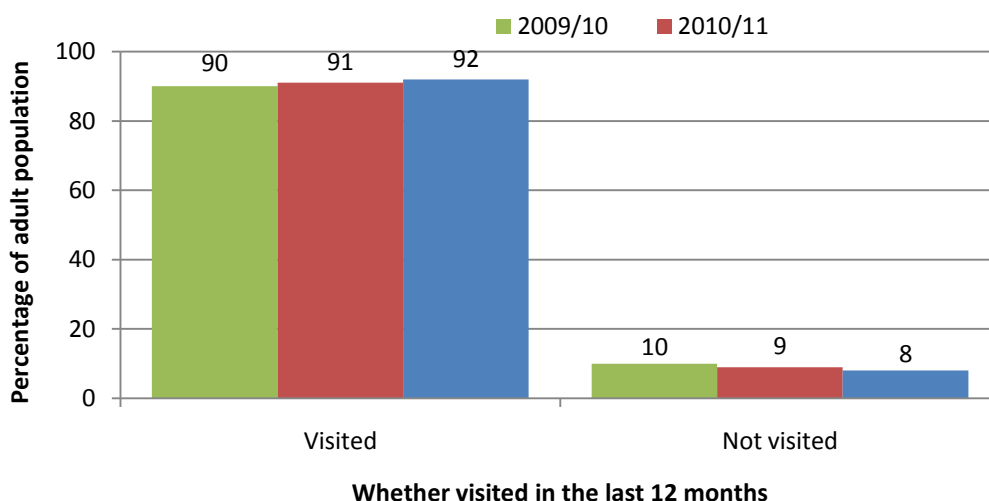
*Note: The sum of the estimated volume of visits to England's regions (2.67 billion) is less than total volume of visits taken in England (2.73 billion) as the destination of 2% of visits could not be coded to a region.*

- 2.18 The survey also contains a question asking respondents about how often they have typically visited the natural environment during the last 12 months. The data collected from this question provides a useful, broad measure of participation levels and general propensity to visit the outdoors amongst the population as a whole. The results of this question have also been used to categorise the population into groups typifying their frequency of engagement (see Section Three).
- 2.19 The frequency of visits taken to the natural environment varies greatly across the English population. While just over half of the adult population stated that they normally visited the natural environment at least once per week (55 per cent), eight per cent had only made one or two visits and eight per cent of respondents claimed they had not taken a visit during the previous 12 months at all.



**Figure 2-8** Frequency of visits to the natural environment (%)  
 Q17 Thinking about the last 12 months, how often on average have you spent your leisure time out of doors, away from home? (Base: All respondents, monthly questions 2011/12 N=10,587)

- 2.20 As illustrated in Figure 2-9, over the past three years, the proportion stating that they visit the outdoors at least once a year has increased by a small but statistically significant amount from 90 per cent to 92 per cent.



**Figure 2-9** Whether visited the natural environment in last 12 months (%)  
 Q17 Thinking about the last 12 months, how often on average have you spent your leisure time out of doors, away from home? (Base: All respondents, monthly questions 2009/10 N=11,107; 2010/11 N=10,630; 2011/12 N=10,587)

## 3 Who? A profile of people that do and don't visit

---

3.1 This section provides a profile of people that do and don't visit the natural environment. It focuses on differences by age, gender, ethnicity and socio-economic group.

### Headline results in this section

- The population groups with the largest proportions taking visits to the natural environment included people aged 25 and over, those in employment, and those in the ABC1 socio-economic groups.
- Overall levels of participation were significantly lower amongst the 65 and over groups, the BME population and members of the DE socio-economic groups.
- People living in the areas of greatest deprivation were least likely to have visited the natural environment in the previous seven days, whilst those in the least deprived areas were significantly more likely to have made such a visit.
- Levels of participation were highest in the South West (52 per cent) and lowest in London (31 per cent) and the North West (39 per cent).
- Comparing volumes of visits in the first and third years of surveying, the most notable net decreases in visit taking were recorded amongst the DE socio-economic groups and unemployed people. However, the overall volumes of visits increased amongst those in the AB socio-economic group.

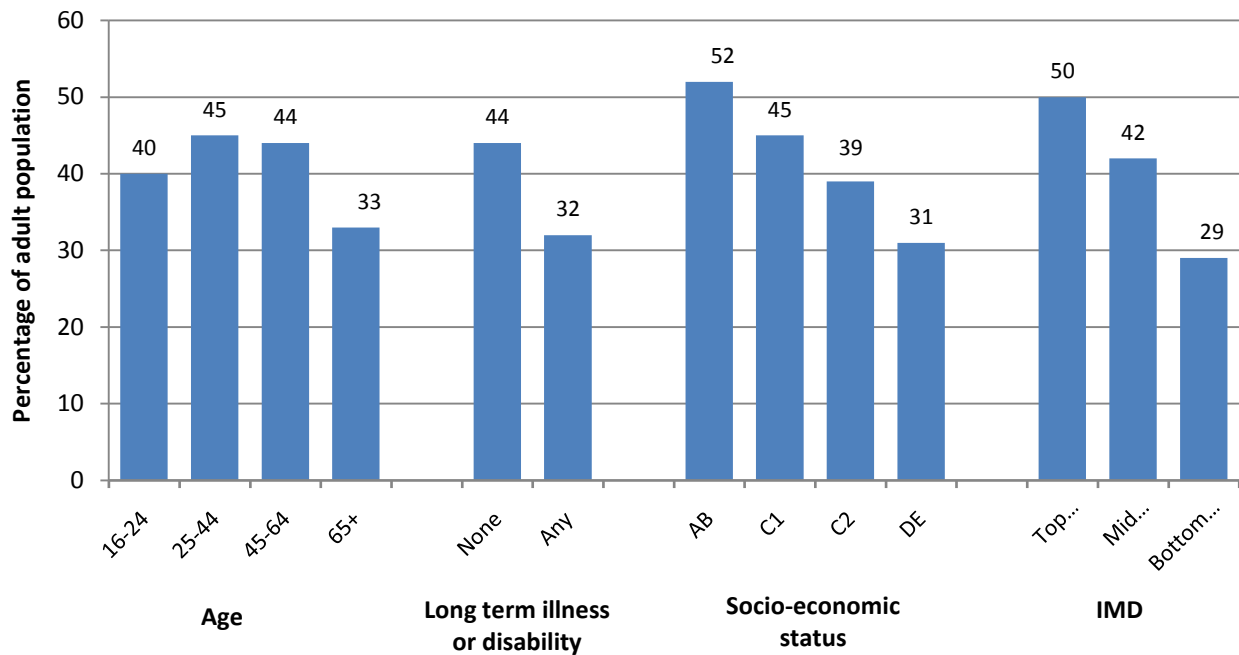
3.2 Respondents were asked about their visits to the natural environment in the week prior to being interviewed. The focus on the previous week improves the likelihood of respondents accurately recalling details of the visits they have taken. Overall 42 per cent of the English adult population stated that they had taken at least one visit to the natural environment in the week prior to being interviewed<sup>5</sup>.

3.3 There is a relationship between age and participation in visits to the natural environment. As the following figure shows, those in the youngest and oldest age groups are least likely to have taken a visit to the natural environment in the last seven days (40 per cent of those aged 16 to 24 and 33 per cent of those aged 65, compared to 45 per cent of those aged 25 to 44 and 44 per cent of those aged 45 to 64).

3.4 The relationship between socio-economic status and participation is also evident, with 52 per cent of those in the AB socio-economic groups visiting the natural environment in the previous seven days compared to only 31 per cent of those in the DE groups.

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<sup>5</sup> Taking account of margins of error, at the 95% confidence level the estimated percentage of the population taking visits ranges from 41.0 per cent to 42.3 per cent

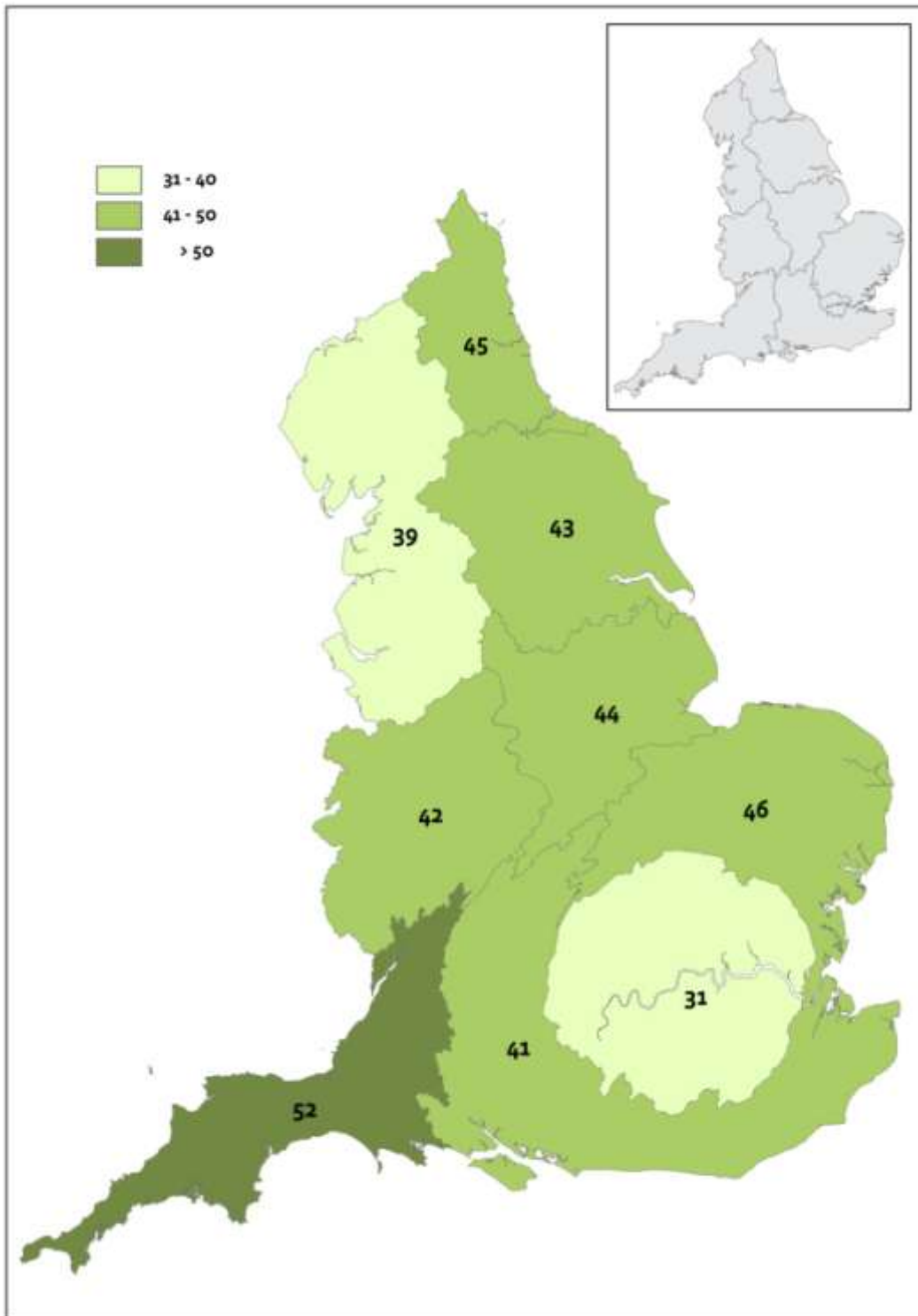


**Figure 3-1** Participation in visits to the natural environment in last week by age, long term illness and disability, socio-economic status and Index of Multiple Deprivation (% reporting at least one visit in the last week)

Q1 How many times, if at all, did you make this type of visit? (Base: All respondents, weekly questions 2011/12 N=47,418)

- 3.5 People living in the areas of greatest deprivation as measured by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)<sup>6</sup> were least likely to have visited the natural environment in the previous seven days (29 per cent of people living in the areas scoring in the bottom 10 per cent of IMD), whilst those in the least deprived areas were significantly more likely to have made such a visit (50 per cent of people living in the areas scoring in the top 10 per cent of IMD).
- 3.6 Participation also varies by ethnicity; 27 per cent of those from the BME population visited in the seven days prior to interview compared to 44 per cent of those from a White ethnic background.
- 3.7 Overall 28 per cent of those with no access to a car had taken a visit to the natural environment in the week prior to interview compared to 46 per cent of those who owned or had access to a car.
- 3.8 Figure 3-2 again uses a cartogram to display the variations in levels of participation in visits to the natural environment during the week prior to interview, amongst the residents of each region. Levels of participation were highest in the South West (52 per cent) and lowest in London (31 per cent) and the North West (39 per cent).
- 3.9 Since over two thirds of visits taken in England are close to home (68 per cent within 2 miles), participation in visits over the previous week by residents of each region is likely associated with the amount of locally accessible greenspace, and the frequency at which visits are taken for routine purposes (for example, dog walking).

<sup>6</sup> The IMD combines a number of social and economic indicators to give small geographic areas a single derivation score. The 2007 Index were used in 2009/10 and the 2010 Index for subsequent survey years. These scores are then ranked allowing the most and least deprived areas to be identified. For more details see URL: [www.communities.gov.uk/communities/neighbourhoodrenewal/deprivation/](http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/neighbourhoodrenewal/deprivation/)



**Figure 3-2** Participation in visits to the natural environment in week prior to interview by residents of each region (%)

### Changes by population group

- 3.10 The volume of visits taken to the natural environment over the three year survey period also varied amongst demographic groups as shown in Table 3-1.
- 3.11 Comparing volumes of visits in the first and third years of surveying, the most notable net decreases in visit taking were recorded amongst the DE socio-economic groups and unemployed people. However, the overall volumes of visits increased amongst those in the AB socio-economic group.

**Table 3-1** Estimated volume of visits to the natural environment by age, socio-economic group, working status and ethnicity  
 (Base: All visits in last 12 months, weekly questions 2009/10 N=20,374; 2010/11 N=17,389; 2011/12 N=19,014)

	Volume of visits (millions)		
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<b>Age</b>			
16-24	313.3	258.8↓	303.7↑
25-34	406.3	350.0	383.8
35-44	612.7	528.6	570.0
45-54	543.4	501.0	530.0
55-64	501.8	448.1	481.5
65+	480.3	407.5	458.0
<b>Socio-economic group<sup>7</sup></b>			
AB	769.5	804.2	807.4
C1	828.6	708.9	813.3
C2	569.5	505.0	548.3
DE	690.1	475.7↓	557.5
<b>Working status</b>			
Full/ part-time	1,682.3	1,524.3	1,656.1
Retired	645.1	558.1	596.0
Still in education	123.7	96.5↓	121.1↑
Unemployed	406.3	314.9↓	353.3
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
White	2,706.7	2,377.5	2,564.3
BME	145.5	110.0↓	153.8↑
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,857.8</b>	<b>2,493.8</b>	<b>2,726.5</b>

Note: Statistically significant year-on-year changes are highlighted by up or down arrows

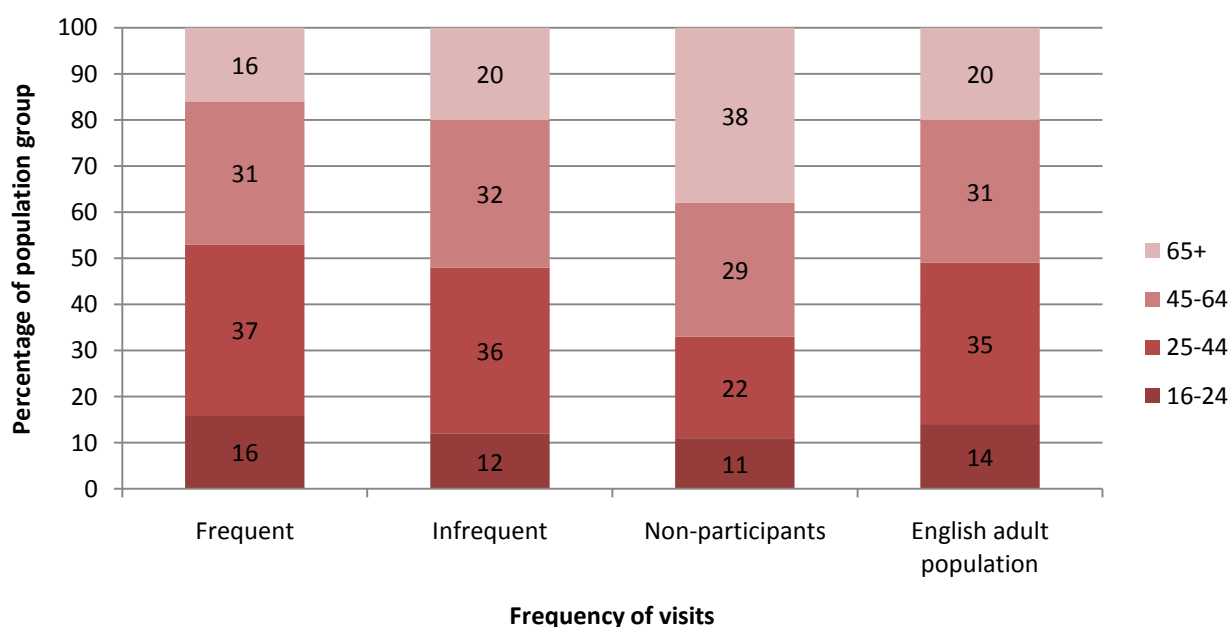
<sup>7</sup> For definitions, see Appendix 3

## Participation in visits in the last 12 months

3.12 The English population can be divided into three broad groups according to their level of participation:

- **Frequent visitors** – those who state that on average they normally take visits to the natural environment at least once a week (55 per cent or around 23 million adults).
- **Infrequent visitors** – those who state that on average they normally visit once or twice a month or less often (37 per cent or around 15 million adults).
- **Non-participants** – those who state that they have not visited the natural environment in the last 12 months (eight per cent or around 3.5 million adults).

3.13 Just over two-thirds of frequent visitors were between the ages of 25 and 64 (67 per cent), with those aged 25-44 most likely to have frequently visited the outdoors in the last 12 months (36 per cent). Almost two in five (38 per cent) of those who did not take a visit to the natural environment in the last 12 months were aged 65 and over (Figure 3-3). These proportions are not significantly different from those recorded in the 2010/11 or 2009/10 surveys.



**Figure 3-3** Age profile by frequency of participation in visits to the natural environment (%)  
 Q17 Thinking about the last 12 months, how often on average have you spent your leisure time out of doors, away from home? (Base: Monthly questions. 2011/12 Frequent N=5,715; Infrequent N=3,870; Non-participants=1,002)

3.14 Reflecting the age variations above, 40 per cent of infrequent visitors are retired, whereas this group makes up just 19 per cent of those who take visits frequently (Table 3-2). These findings are not significantly different to those found in 2010/11 or 2009/10.

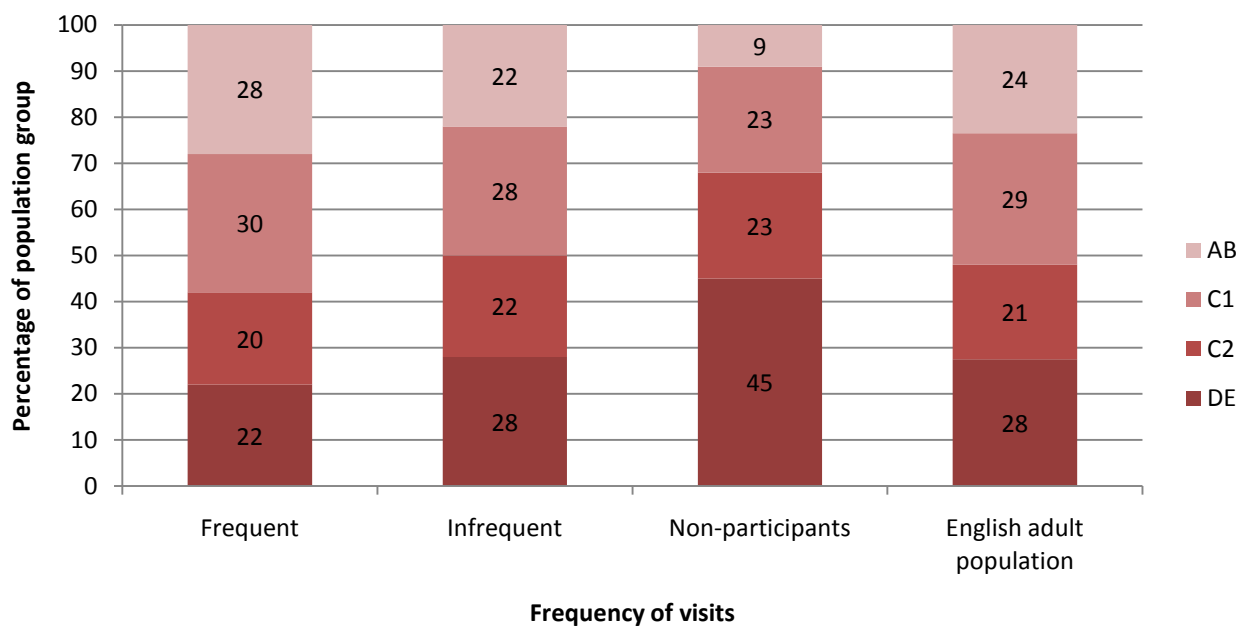
**Table 3-2** Working status profile and long term illness or disability by frequency of participation in visits to the natural environment (%)

Q17 Thinking about the last 12 months, how often on average have you spent your leisure time out of doors, away from home? (Base: Monthly questions. 2011/12 Frequent N=5,715; Infrequent N=3,870; Non-participants=1,002)

	Frequency of visits			
	English adult population %	Frequent %	Infrequent %	Non-participants %
<b>Working status</b>				
Working full time (30+ hours per week)	47	48	49	31
Working part time (less than 30 hours per week)	11	12	9	7
Retired	23	19	22	40
At school or full time higher education	6	7	5	4
Unemployed/not seeking work	13	14	15	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Long term illness and disability</b>				
Any long term illness or disability	18	14	19	37
No long term illness of disability	82	86	81	63
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

- 3.15 A higher proportion of non-participants were retired (40 per cent) or unemployed/not seeing work (18 per cent) than is the case amongst the total English adult population (23 per cent and 13 per cent respectively). The proportion of those with a long term illness or disability was also higher amongst non-participants (37 per cent) than amongst the English adult population as a whole (18 per cent).
- 3.16 Socio-economic status is an important factor in determining levels of participation with the natural environment. The results from the 2011/12 survey further confirm a relationship, with 28 per cent of frequent visitors being from the AB socio-economic groups when they represent 24 per cent of the English population as a whole (Figure 3-4 overleaf).
- 3.17 In contrast those in the DE socio-economic groups represent 28 per cent of the population but account for 45 per cent of non-participants.





**Figure 3-4** Socio-economic profile by frequency of participation in visits to the natural environment (%)

Q17 Thinking about the last 12 months, how often on average have you spent your leisure time out of doors, away from home? (Base: Monthly questions. 2011/12 Frequent N=5,715; Infrequent N=3,870; Non-participants=1,002)

- 3.18 Although accounting for 13 per cent of the population as a whole, almost a fifth of non-participants were from the BME population (17 per cent, see Table 3-3).
- 3.19 Analysis of participation using the Index of Multiple Deprivation reveals an association between levels of deprivation and general propensity to visit the natural environment. In total, 16 per cent of those living in the areas that score in the bottom ten per cent of IMD are non-participants, even though this group represent ten per cent of the English adult population. In comparison, those people living in the areas that score in the top ten per cent of IMD represent eight per cent of the English adult population, but 10 per cent of frequent visitors to the outdoors.

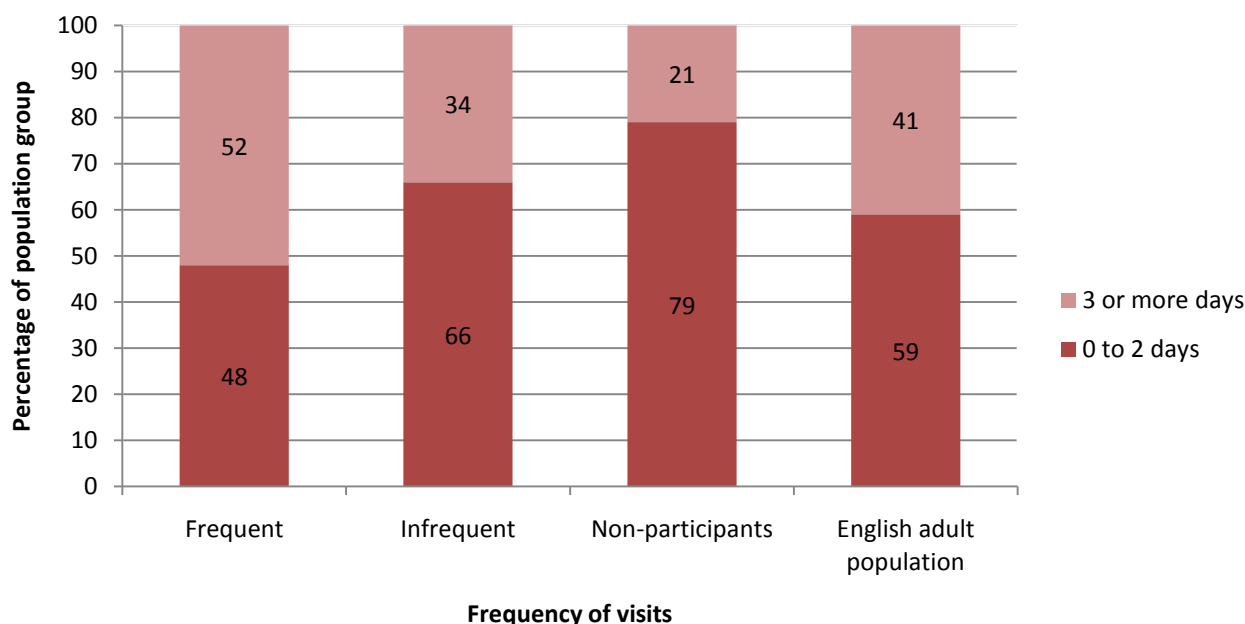
**Table 3-3** Ethnicity and Index of Multiple Deprivation by frequency of participation in visits to the natural environment (%)

Q17 Thinking about the last 12 months, how often on average have you spent your leisure time out of doors, away from home? (Base: Monthly questions. 2011/12 Frequent N=5,715; Infrequent N=3,870; Non-participants=1,002)

	Frequency of visits			
	English adult population %	Frequent %	Infrequent %	Non-participants %
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
BME	13	10	18	17
White	87	90	82	83
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Index of Multiple Deprivation</b>				
Bottom 10%	10	8	11	16
Mid 11% to 89%	74	72	71	71
Top 10%	8	10	8	4

Note: Not every respondent gave a postcode, therefore, IMD percentages do not equal 100%

3.20 Figure 3-5 highlights an association between frequency of visits to the outdoors and levels of physical exercise. Just over half (52 per cent) of those who visited the natural environment frequently took part in at least 30 minutes of physical activity at least three times a week, compared to just over a fifth (21 per cent) of non-participants.



**Figure 3-5** Number of days in over the last week that the respondent undertook 30 minutes of more of physical activity by frequency of participation in visits to the natural environment (%)

Q17 Thinking about the last 12 months, how often on average have you spent your leisure time out of doors, away from home? (Base: Monthly questions. 2011/12 Frequent N=5,715; Infrequent N=3,870; Non-participants=1,002)

# 4 Where? The destination of visits

---

4.1 This section of the report focuses upon the destination of visits to the natural environment, including the type of place, distance travelled and mode of transport.

## Headline results in this section

- Just over half of visits to the natural environment were taken to the countryside (52 per cent), while 38 per cent were to green spaces within towns and cities. In total, 10 per cent of visits were taken in coastal locations.
- Between 2009/10 and 2010/11, the proportion of visits to the countryside increased from 49 per cent to 53 per cent, while the proportion of visits to green spaces in towns and cities decreased from 41 per cent to 37 per cent. There were no significant differences in the proportions of visits to each location between the 2010/11 and 2011/12 survey periods.
- Volumes of visits to urban parks, paths, cycleways and bridleways, and playing fields increased significantly between 2010/11 and 2011/12. The increase in visits to urban parks particularly, made a considerable contribution to the overall increase in the volumes of visits across England between 2010/11 and 2011/12.
- Visits by those living in the most deprived neighbourhoods; 16-24 year olds; those in the DE socio-economic group; and the BME population, were more likely to be to urban destinations and to places closer to home.
- Around two thirds of visits (68 per cent) were taken within two miles of the respondent's home, highlighting the importance of accessible local green space. This finding is consistent with that from 2010/11 and 2009/10.
- Visits to coastal areas were more likely to be taken by car, while the majority of countryside and urban visits were taken on foot.

## Type of place visited

### General type of place visited

- 4.2 Respondents were asked about the general type of place that they visited – whether it was the countryside, a green space in a town or city, a green space in a seaside town or another coastal location.
- 4.3 Just over half of visits to the natural environment taken by the adult population in England were to the countryside (52 per cent), equating to 1.41 billion visits, with 38 per cent of visits taken to a green space in a town or city (1.05 billion visits). In addition, 10 per cent of all visits (263 million) were taken to coastal locations, with six per cent of those to a green space in a seaside resort or town (162 million visits) and four per cent to another coastal location (101 million visits).
- 4.4 Between 2009/10 and 2010/11, the proportion of visits to the countryside increased from 49 per cent to 53 per cent, while the proportion of visits to green spaces in towns and cities decreased from 41 per cent to 37 per cent. There were no significant differences in the proportions of visits to each location between the 2010/11 and 2011/12 survey periods.

**Table 4-1** Proportion of visits by general place visited by survey year (%)

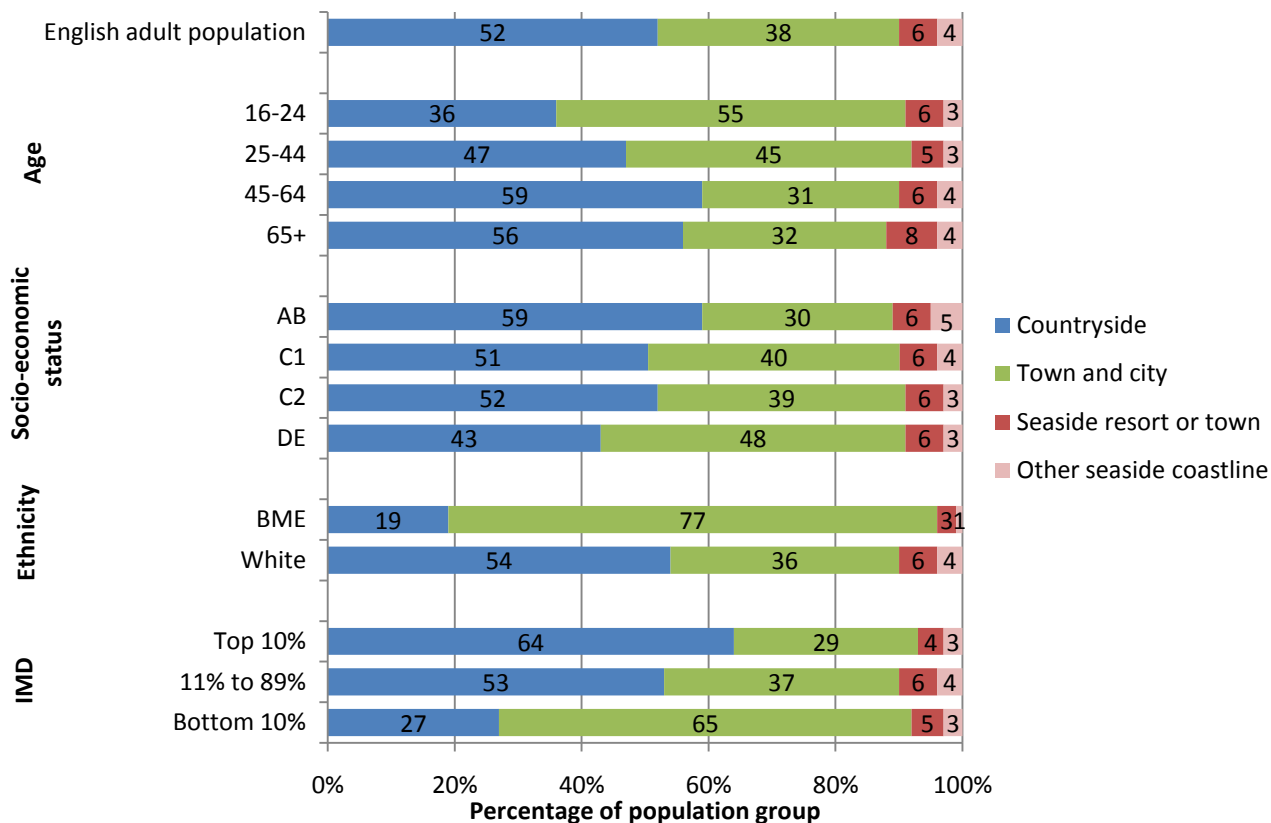
Q2 Which of the following best describes where you spent most of your time on this visit? (Base: All visits, weekly questions 2009/10 N=58,653; 2010/11 N=47,825; 2011/12 N=53,898)

	Proportion of visits		
	2009/10 %	2010/11 %	2011/12 %
Countryside	49	53↑	52
Towns and cities	41	37↓	38
Seaside resort	7	7	6
Other coastal	4	4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: Statistically significant year-on-year changes are highlighted by up or down arrows

4.5 Countryside locations were more likely to be visited by people aged 45 or over, those in the AB social groups, the White population and those living in the top ten per cent least deprived areas.

4.6 Conversely, those aged 16 to 24, those in the DE social group, the BME population and those living in areas scoring in the bottom ten per cent of IMD were most likely to have visited a green space in a town or city.



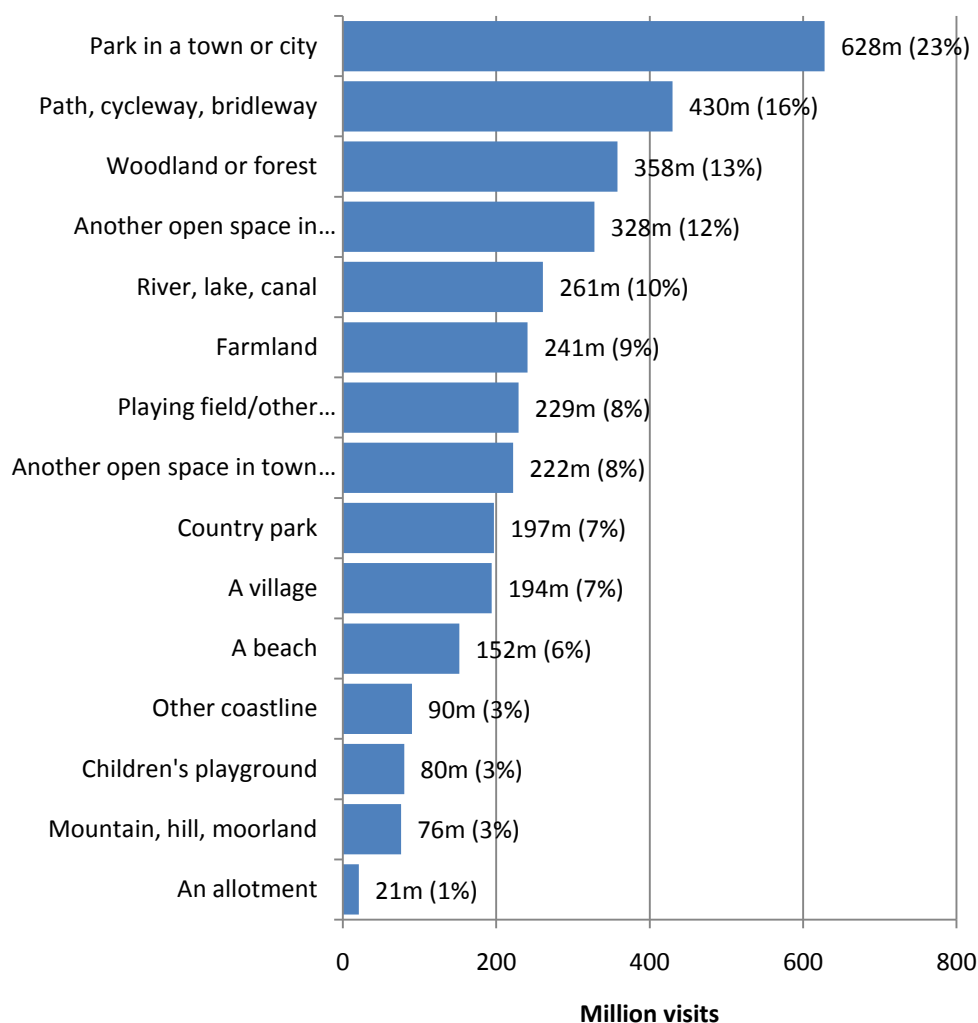
**Figure 4-1** Type of place visited by age, socio-economic status, ethnicity and Index of Multiple Deprivation (%)

Q2 Which of the following best describes where you spent most of your time on this visit (Base: 2011/12 All visits, weekly questions (N=53,898)

- 4.7 Countryside visits were more common amongst those who owned a dog (58 per cent), those with access to a car (56 per cent), retired people (56 per cent) and those who had undertaken physical activity three or more times in the previous week (54 per cent),
- 4.8 In contrast, those most likely to visit a green space in a town or city were those undertaking fewer than three days of physical activity per week (42 per cent), those who did not own a dog (49 per cent), those who were unemployed (45 per cent), those accompanied by children (60 per cent), and those with no access to a car (62 per cent).

### Detailed type of place visited

- 4.9 As well as the general type of place visited, respondents were also asked to provide more specific details about the detailed type of destination of their visit. Figure 4-2 features all of the types of destination which accounted for at least one per cent of visits<sup>8</sup>.



**Figure 4-2** Type of places visited – specific (volume of visits March to February 2011/12 and percentage of total visits in this period)

Q5 Which of the following list of places best describes where you spent your time during your visit? (Base: Random visit, weekly questions 2011/12 N=19,014)

Note: Sum of totals is more than 100% as visits could have included more than one type of place

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that respondents were asked to specify *all* of the types of place included in their visit and could select more than one of the answer options. Therefore in some cases, an individual visit is included in the total for more than one type of place. This means that the sum of the percentages is more than 100 per cent.

- 4.10 Parks in towns and cities continued to be the most visited type of destination, and were included in 23 per cent of all visits to the natural environment during 2011/12. In total there were 628 million visits to parks in town and cities during, an increase of 13 per cent on the 558 million visits taken during 2010/11, but a decrease of eight per cent on the 679 million visits taken during 2009/10.
- 4.11 Volumes of visits to urban parks, paths, cycleways and bridleways, and playing fields increased significantly between 2010/11 and 2011/12. The increase in visits to urban parks particularly, made a considerable contribution to the overall increase in the volumes of visits across England between years.

**Table 4-2** Estimated volume of visits to the natural environment by detailed type of place  
*Q5 Which of the following list of places best describes where you spent your time during your visit? (Base: Random visit, weekly questions 2009/10 N=20,374; 2010/11 N=17,389; 2011/12 N=19,014)*

	Volume of visits (millions)		
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Allotment/ community garden	17.2	15.6	20.6
Village	176.0	157.5	194.4
Mountain/ hill/ moorland	61.1	63.9	76.3
Path/ cycleway/ bridleway	369.2	360.0	430.1↑
Playing field/ other recreation area	195.4	191.0	228.9↑
Another open space in a town/ city	226.3	188.7	221.6
Park in a town/ city	677.6	557.8↓	628.4↑
River/ lake/ canal	253.4	231.9	261.4
Country park	198.7	176.3	196.6
Woodland/ forest	316.8	325.6	358.3
Children's playground	82.2	75.8	80.2
Another space in the countryside	319.0	307.2	328.2
Farmland	209.0	233.0	241.2
Other coastline	98.2	91.3	90.0
Beach	174.1	159.1	151.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,857.8</b>	<b>2,493.8↓</b>	<b>2,726.5↑</b>

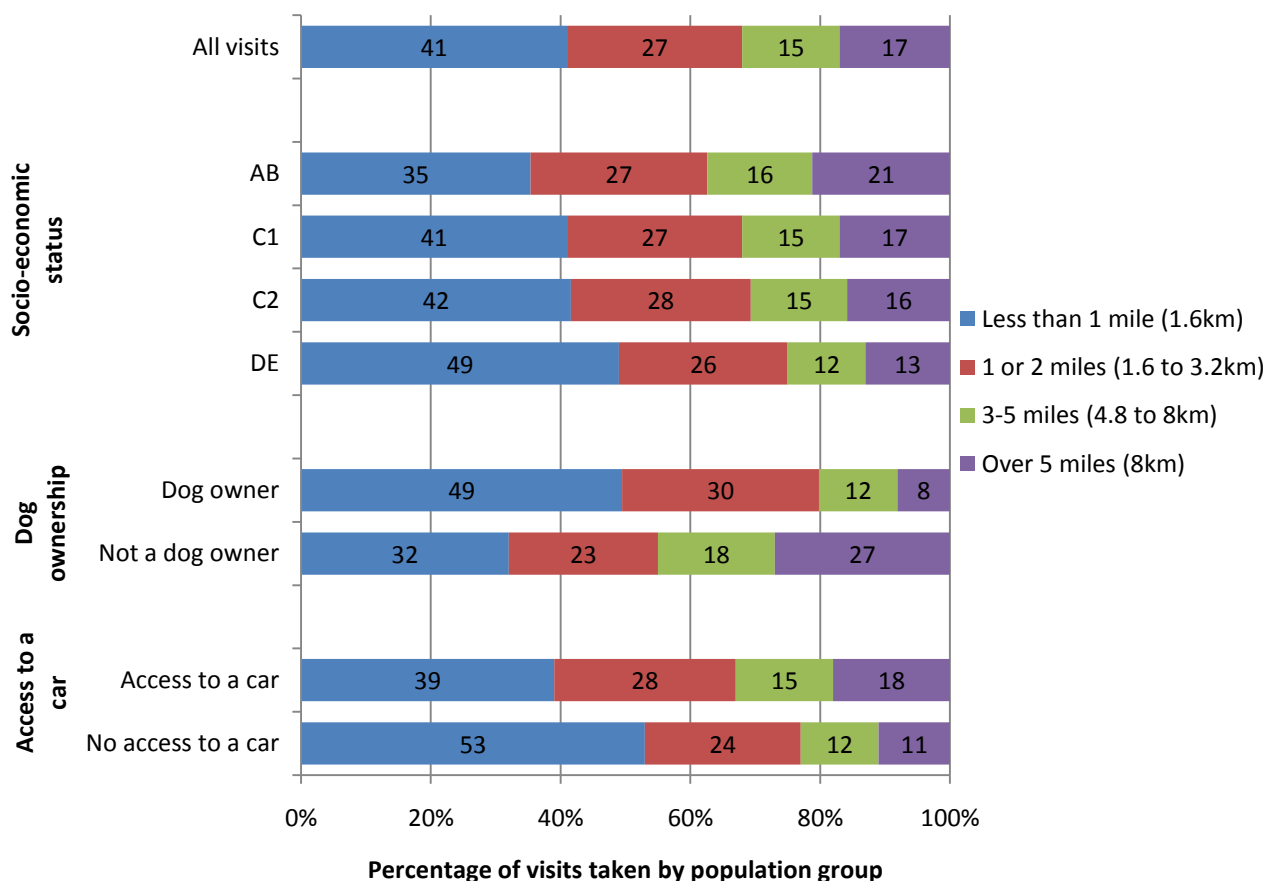
Notes: Sum of totals is more than 100% as visits could have included more than one type of place. Statistically significant year-on-year changes are highlighted by up or down arrows.

## Distance travelled to main destination

- 4.12 Respondents were asked how far they had travelled to reach their destination. Where more than one place was visited, or where there was no particular destination, respondents were asked about the place they spent most time, or the place that was their final destination.
- 4.13 The main visit destination was within one mile (1.6 km) of the respondent's home (or other start point) for 41 per cent visits. A further 27 per cent of visits took place within one to two miles (1.6 to 3.2 km). The majority of visits (83 per cent) took place within 5 miles (8 km) of

the start point of the visit - a proportion that does not vary significantly from the 2010/11 and 2009/10 surveys.

4.14 The majority of visits to the natural environment (94 per cent) started from the participant's home with the remainder being from someone else's home (two per cent), from holiday accommodation (two per cent) or from a workplace (one per cent).

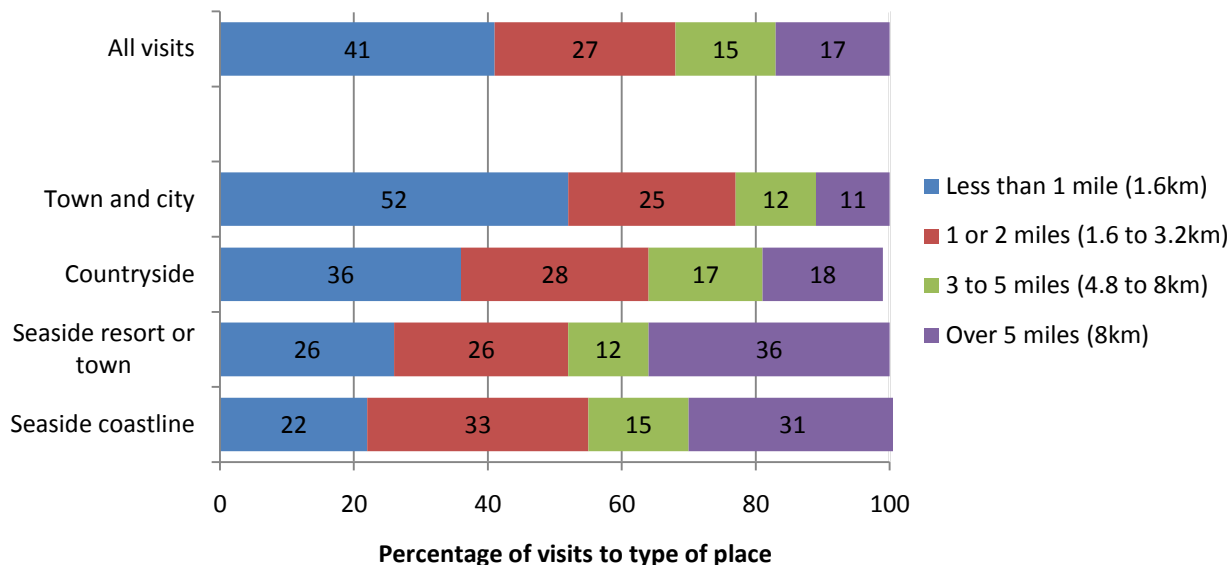


**Figure 4-3** Distance travelled by socio-economic status, dog ownership and car access (%)  
 Q8 Approximately how far did you travel to reach this place? (Base: Random visit, weekly questions 2011/12 N=19,014)

4.15 Just under half of visits taken by those in the DE social group were taken within one mile of their starting point (49 per cent), a significantly larger proportion than recorded amongst the more affluent AB social grades (35 per cent). Also 49 per cent of dog owners took visits within a mile of the start point compared to 32 per cent of people with no dog.

4.16 In total, 53 per cent of the visits taken by people with no access to a car were within a mile of the start point compared to 39 per cent amongst those with a car.

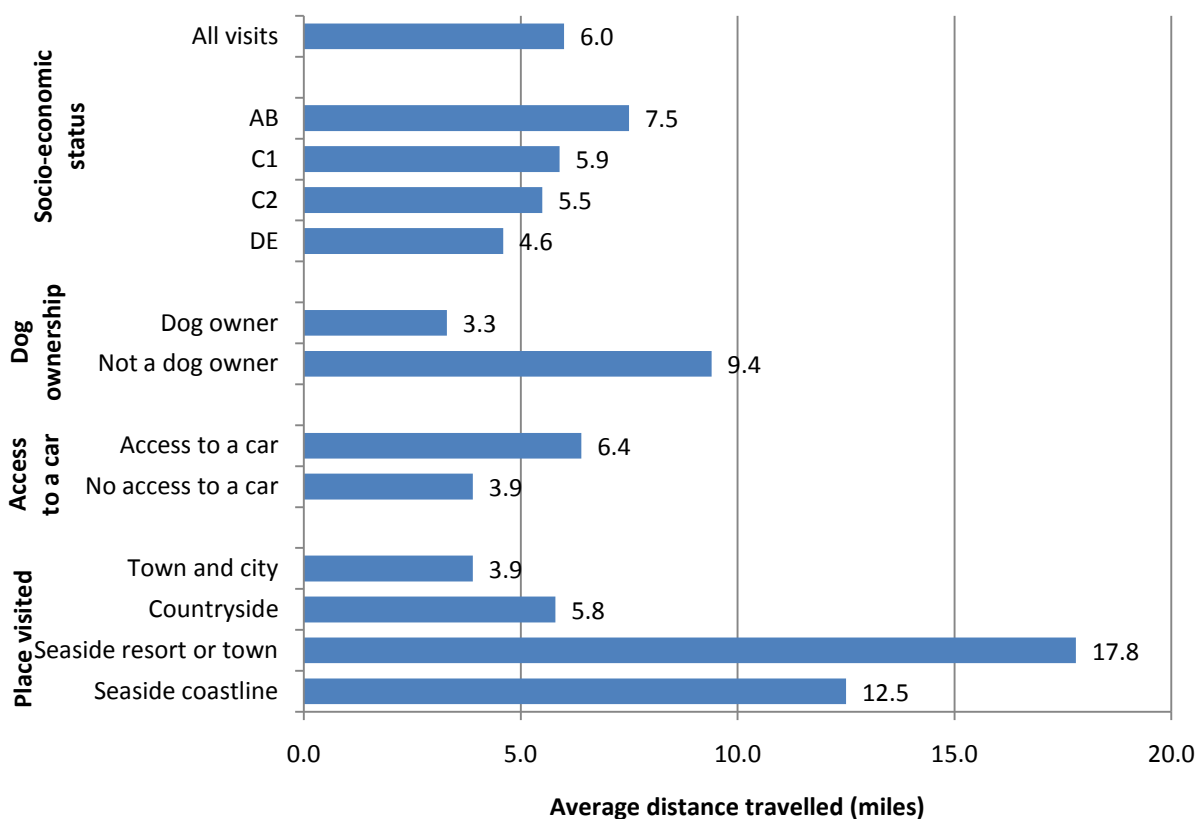
4.17 The distance of visits to the natural environment varied considerably according to destination (Figure 4-4). Around half of visits to green spaces in towns and cities involved journeys of less than one mile (52 per cent), while visits to coastal locations were more likely to involve a longer journey of 5 miles or more (36 per cent of visits to coastal resorts or towns, 31 per cent to other coastal areas).



**Figure 4-4** Distance travelled by place visited (%)

Q8 Approximately how far did you travel to reach this place? (Base: Random visit, weekly questions 2011/12 N=19,014)

4.18 Figure 4-5 below illustrates the average distances travelled. Overall the average was 6.0 miles but longer distances were travelled on visits taken by those in the AB socio-economic groups, those who did not own a dog and as might be expected, on visits to the coast.



**Figure 4-5** Average distance travelled by socio-economic status, dog ownership, car access and place visited

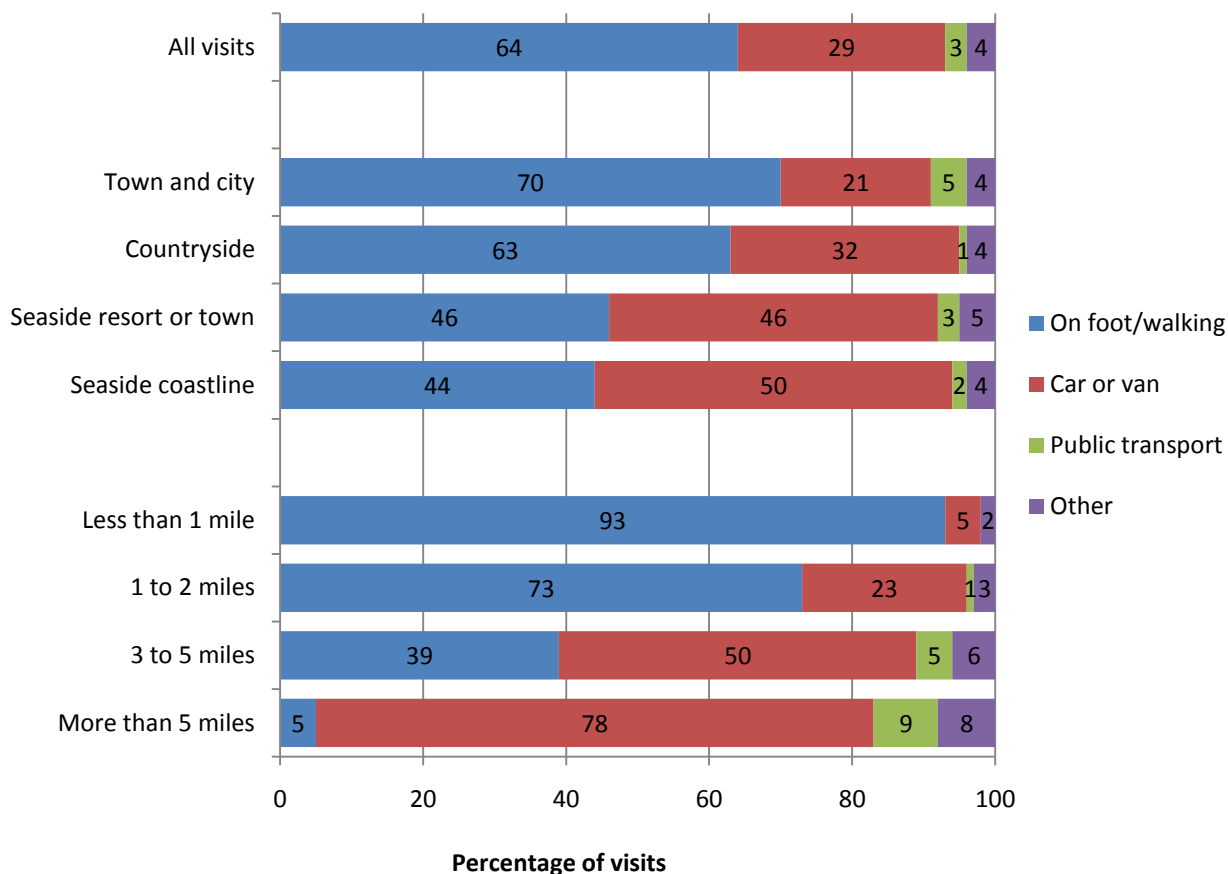
Q8 Approximately how far did you travel to reach this place? (Base: Random visit, weekly questions 2011/12 N=19,014)



## Mode of transport

4.19 Respondents were asked about the main mode of transport used for their journey. The largest proportion of visits involved walking (64 per cent). A car or van was used in 29 per cent of visits and public transport was used for only three per cent of visits (Figure 4-6).

4.20 The vast majority of visits involving a journey of less than one mile were taken on foot (93 per cent) while 78 per cent of visits where the journey was 5 miles or more used a car or van as the main mode of transport. Urban locations were most likely to have been visited on foot (70 per cent), while seaside resorts or towns and other coastal areas were the type of place most likely to involve travelling by car (46 per cent and 50 per cent respectively).



**Figure 4-6** Mode of transport used on journey by place visited and distance travelled (%)  
 Q11 What form of transport did you use on this journey? (Base: Random visit, weekly questions 2011/12  
 N=19,014)

# 5 What? A profile of visits

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5.1 This section of the report presents the characteristics of visits to the natural environment. This includes an analysis of visit duration, activities, group composition (including the presence of children) and money spent whilst on the visit to the natural environment.

## Headline results in this section

- The average visit to the natural environment lasted just under 2 hours (1 hour 58 minutes). This finding is not significantly different from that found in 2010/11 and 2009/10.
- Walking remained the most popular activity on visits to the natural environment and was a activity on just over three-quarters of all visits (78 per cent), or approximately 2.1 billion visits overall. Walking with a dog was undertaken on 51 per cent of all visits (approximately 1.4 billion visits). Walking without a dog was the second most frequent activity, featuring in 27 per cent or around 725 million visits.
- While the volume of visits significantly decreased for many activities between 2009/10 and 2010/11, the subsequent increases during 2011/12 means that the overall change between years one and three of the survey is small. This is most notably the case for visits involving horse riding and watersports.
- In total 54 per cent of visits were taken by an adult on their own, while 22 per cent of visits were taken with children present. This equates to around 597 million of the visits taken by adults.
- Around a quarter (26 per cent) of visits incurred expenditure, with the average spend during these visits being around £28 per person.
- An estimated £20 billion was spent during visits to the natural environment in 2011/12. This figure is not significantly different to that recorded during 2010/11 (£17 billion) and 2009/10 (£20 billion).
- In total, an estimated £58 billion<sup>9</sup> was spent on visits to the natural environment between March 2009 and February 2012.

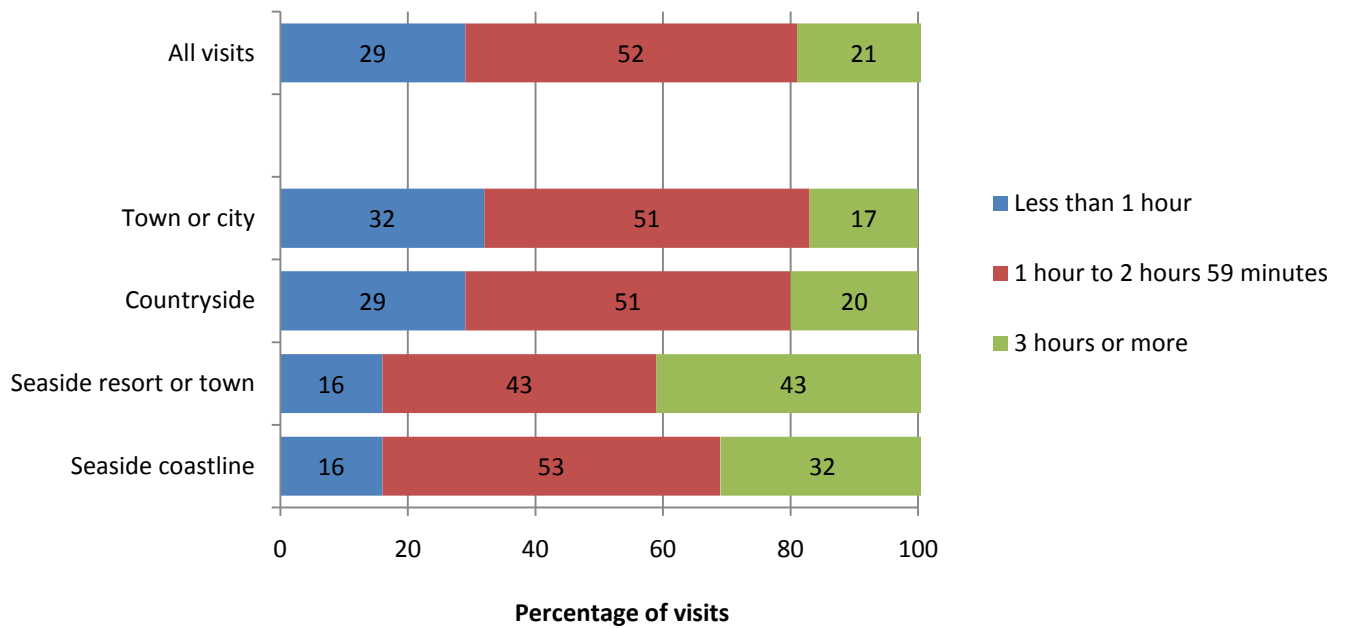
## Duration of visits

5.2 The average duration of a visit to the natural environment in 2011/12 was just under two hours (1 hour, 58 minutes). 29 per cent of visits lasted less than 1 hour, while just over a half lasted between 1 hour and 2 hours 59 minutes (52 per cent). The remaining 21 per cent of visits were reported as lasting for 3 hours or longer<sup>10</sup>. This finding is not significantly different from that found in 2010/11 and 2009/10.

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<sup>9</sup> Taking account of margins of error, at the 95% confidence level estimated total visits range from £55 billion to £67 billion

<sup>10</sup> Note that respondents often provided rounded estimates – such as, half an hour, an hour or two hours rather than a precise figure. These are then grouped into the categories described



**Figure 5-1** Duration of visits by place visited (%)  
 Q3 How long did this visit last altogether? (Base: All visits, weekly questions 2011/12 N=53,898)

5.3 The duration of visits varied by the type of destination. Urban and countryside destinations were more likely to last less than an hour (32 per cent and 29 per cent respectively). This corresponds with the shorter distances travelled on visits to these locations. In contrast, 43 per cent of visits to seaside resorts or towns and 32 per cent of visits to other coastline areas lasted 3 hours or more.

**Table 5-1** Distance travelled, mode of transport and activities undertaken by visit duration (%)  
 Q3 How long did this visit last altogether? (Base: All visits, weekly questions 2011/12 N=53,898)

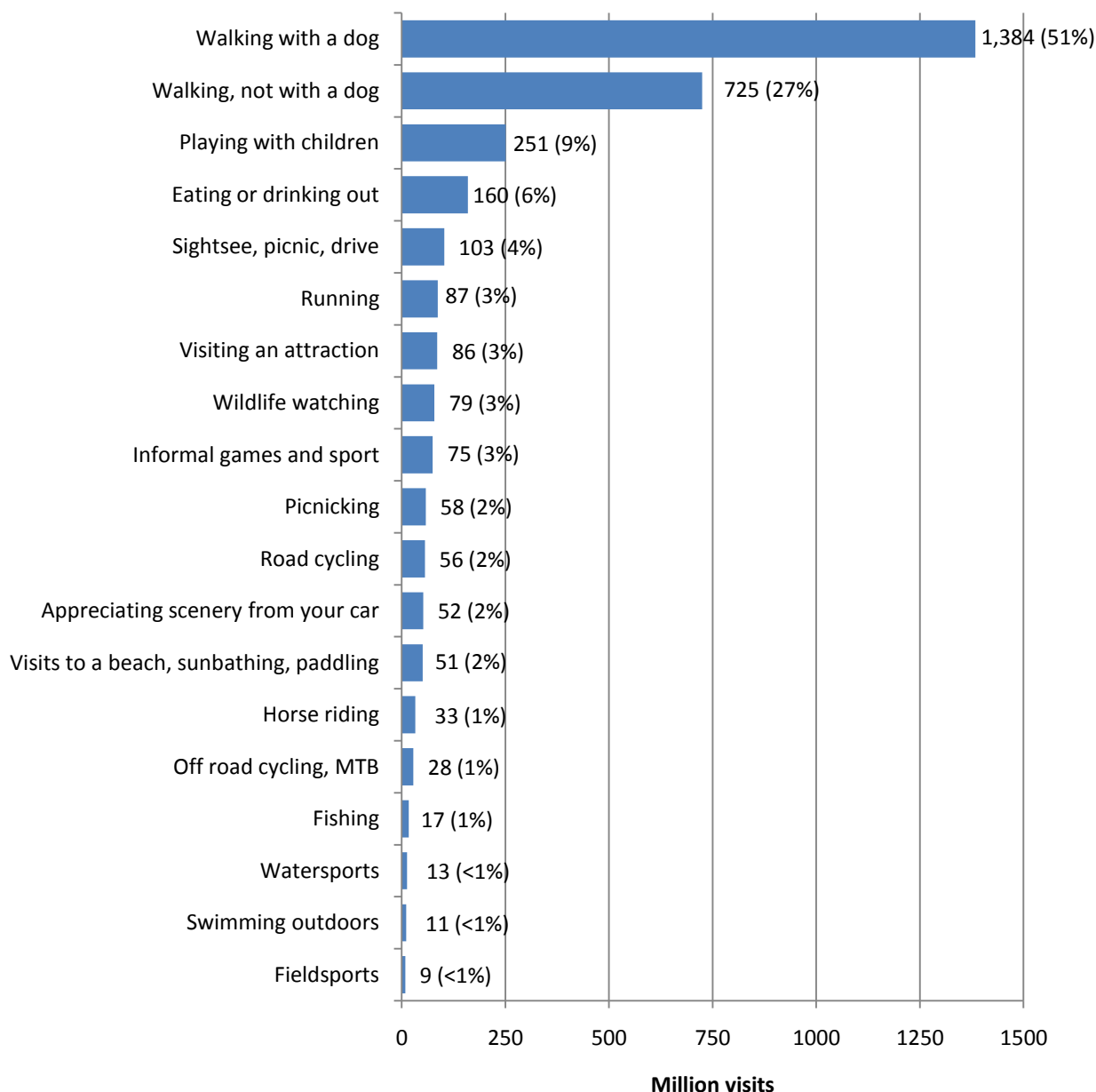
	Duration of visit		
	Less than 1 hour %	1 hour to 2 hours 59 minutes %	3 hours or more %
<b>Distance travelled</b>			
Less than 1 mile	63	40	13
1 or 2 miles	29	31	14
3 to 5 miles	6	18	20
Over 5 miles	2	11	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Transport used</b>			
On foot	87	67	23
Car or van	10	27	63
Public transport (rail or bus)	1	2	8
Other	2	4	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Activities undertaken*</b>			
Walking with a dog	74	53	13
Walking, not with a dog	18	27	39
Playing with children	3	10	16
Eating or drinking out	<1	3	21
Visiting an attraction	<1	1	12

\*Note: The sum of activities undertaken percentages is less than 100% as some visits involved none of the activities shown in this table

- 5.4 As shown in Table 5-1 above, higher proportions of those on a visit of less than an hour travelled less than 1 mile (63 per cent), travelled on foot (87 per cent) and/or took part in walking with a dog (74 per cent), compared to those who took visits of longer durations.
- 5.5 Conversely, higher proportions of those on a visit of 3 hours or more in duration travelled 5 miles or more (53 per cent), travelled by car/van (63 per cent), played with children (16 per cent), ate out (21 per cent) or visited an attraction (12 per cent).

## Activities undertaken on visits

5.6 Walking remained the most popular activity on visits to the natural environment and was an activity on just over three-quarters of all visits (78 per cent), or approximately 2.1 billion visits overall (Figure 5-2). Walking with a dog was undertaken on 51 per cent of all visits (approximately 1.4 billion visits). Walking without a dog was the second most frequent activity, featuring in 27 per cent or around 725 million visits<sup>11</sup>.



**Figure 5-2** Activities undertaken during visits (volume of visits March 2011 to February 2012 and % of total visits in this period)

Q4 Which of these activities, if any, did you undertake? (Base: All visits, weekly questions 2011/12 N=53,898)

Note: Sum of totals is more than 100% as visits could have included more than one activity

<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that respondents were asked to specify all of the activities undertaken during their visit and could select more than one of the answer options. Therefore, in some cases an individual visit is included in the total for more than one activity. This means that the sum of the percentages is more than 100 per cent.

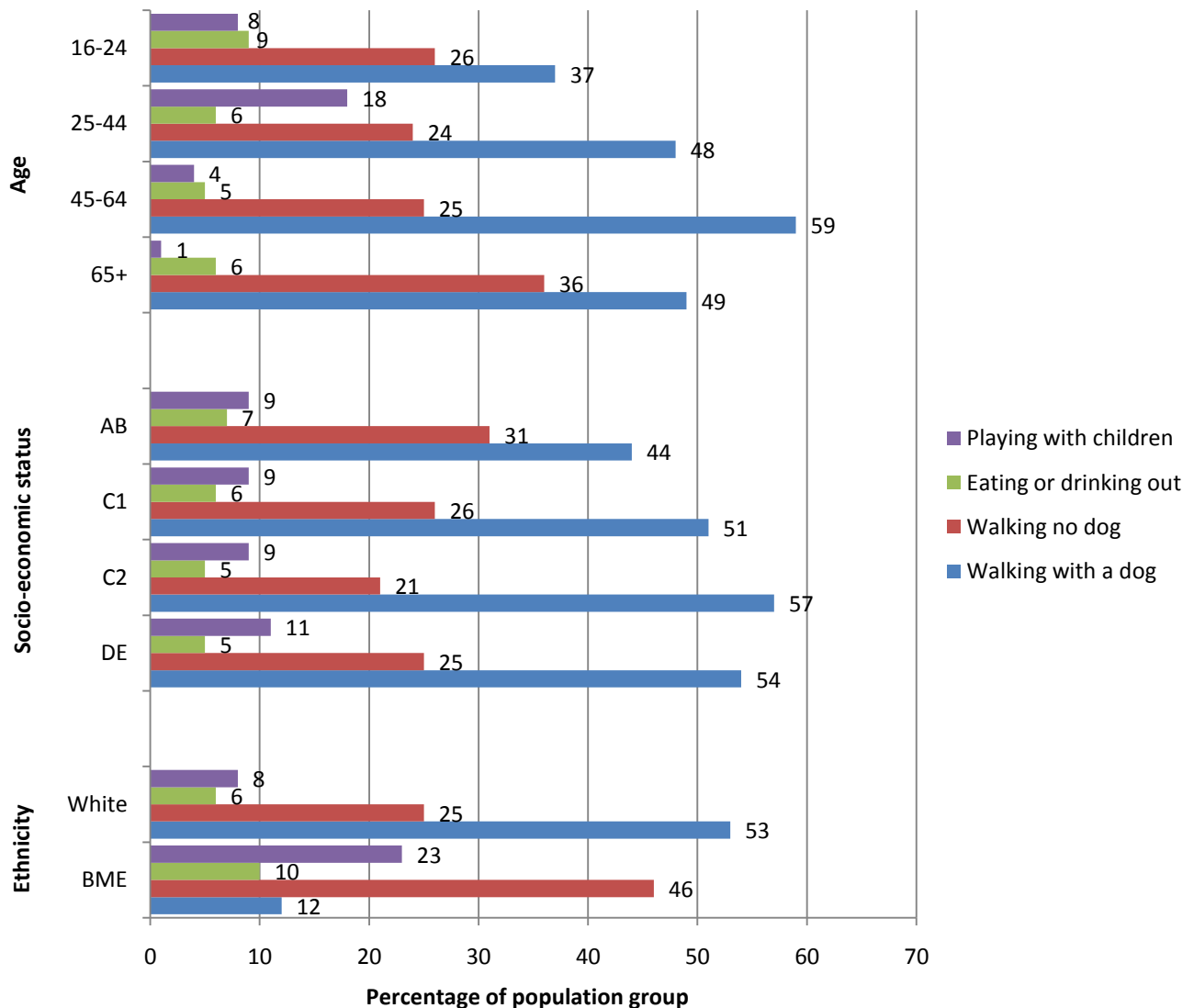
5.7 While the volume of visits significantly decreased for many of the activities between 2009/10 and 2010/11 (see Table 5-2), the subsequent increases in the most recent survey year means that the overall change between years one and three of the survey is small. This is most notably the case for visits involving horse riding and watersports.

**Table 5-2** Estimated volume of visits to the natural environment by activities undertaken  
 Q4 Which of these activities, if any, did you undertake? (Base: All visits, weekly questions 2009/10  
 N=58,653; 2010/11 N=47,825; 2011/12 N=53,898)

	Volume of visits (millions)		
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Picnicking	52.8	45.7	57.9↑
Horse riding	35.8	27.1↓	33.1↑
Playing with children	228.8	211.5	251.1
Running	79.8	74.0	86.7
Eating/ drinking out	181.5	142.0↓	159.8
Informal games and sport	85.2	66.1↓	75.2
Fishing	17.2	14.8	16.6
Wildlife watching	76.7	69.8	78.7
Road cycling	64.5	49.6↓	55.7
Walking, not with a dog	738.8	660.2	724.6
Walking with a dog	1,380.2	1,267.5	1,384.2
Off-road cycling/ mountain biking	34.3	26.3↓	28.2
Appreciating scenery from your car	52.8	48.3	51.5
Beach/ sunbathing/ paddling in sea	50.9	50.3	50.6
Visiting an attraction	109.4	88.6↓	85.5
Fieldsports	15.3	10.1↓	9.2
Watersports	16.1	10.9↓	13.3↑
Swimming outdoors	16.1	12.9	10.8↓
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,857.8</b>	<b>2,493.8</b>	<b>2,726.5</b>

Note: Statistically significant year-on-year changes are highlighted by up or down arrows

5.8 Further analysis highlights the variations in activities undertaken during visits taken by members of different population groups (Figure 5-3). Those aged 45 and over were more likely than other age groups to take visits that involved walking, particularly with a dog. Those in the BME population were more likely to have been on a visit that involved walking *without* a dog (46 per cent) or playing with children (23 per cent), while visits taken amongst the White population were more likely to have involved walking *with* a dog.



**Figure 5-3** Activities undertaken on visits by age, socio-economic status and ethnicity (%)  
 Q8 Which of these activities, if any, did you undertake? (Base: All visits, weekly questions 2011/12  
 N=53,898)

5.9 There are significant differences in the type of activities undertaken on visits to different types of destination (Table 5-3). Walking a dog is more popular in the countryside than in other areas while walking without a dog is more likely to be undertaken at coastal destinations. Of the other main activities, playing with children was more likely to feature in urban areas and seaside resort or town visits, while eating or drinking out was most likely to take place at a seaside resort or town.

**Table 5-3** Activities undertaken on visits by type of place visited (%)  
 Q8 Which of these activities, if any, did you undertake? (Base: All visits, weekly questions 2011/12  
 N=53,898)

	Type of place visited			
	Town or city	Countryside	Seaside resort or town	Seaside coastline
	%	%	%	%
Walking with a dog	44	58	34	45
Walking not with a dog	29	24	36	32
Playing with children	13	6	13	7
Eating or drinking out	7	4	16	9
Sightsee, picnic, drive	2	4	9	8
Visiting an attraction	3	3	6	3
Wildlife watching	1	4	3	7
Informal games and sport	3	3	2	1
Running	4	3	1	2
Picnicking	2	2	4	4
Road cycling	2	2	2	2
Appreciating scenery from your car	1	2	6	4
Visits to a beach, sunbathing or paddling in the sea	*	*	20	12
Horse riding	*	2	*	*
Off-road cycling or mountain biking	1	1	*	1
Fishing	*	1	1	1
Swimming outdoors	*	*	2	2
Watersports	*	*	2	3

Notes: Sum of totals is more than 100% as visits could have included more than one activity

\* Less than 0.5%. Table excludes activities undertaken in less than 0.5% of visits to all types of place.

## Party composition

5.10 Just over half of the visits to the natural environment (54 per cent) were taken by an adult on their own (Table 5-4). Children were present during 22 per cent of all visits. The overall average party size was 2.4.



**Table 5-4** Party composition (row %)  
 (Base: Random visits, monthly questions 2011/12 N=4,421)

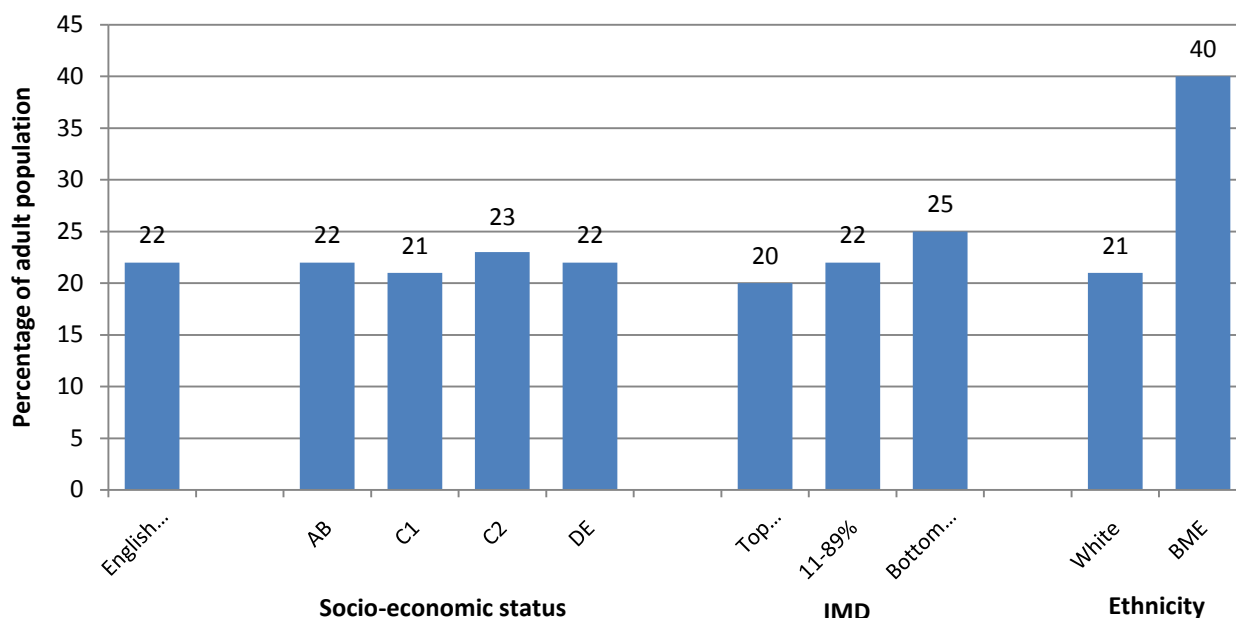
	None %	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 + %	Total %	Average
Adults (aged 16 and over)	-	54	33	4	8	100	2.0
Children (aged under 16)	78	9	8	3	2	100	0.5
Total party size	-	46	28	10	16	100	2.4

5.11 Visits which were more likely to be taken alone included those lasting for less than an hour (71 per cent), those involving walking with a dog (64 per cent), those taken within 1 mile of home (59 per cent), those where the destination was reached on foot (59 per cent) and those taken by people in the DE socio-economic groups (54 per cent). The average party size was largest on visits lasting more than three hours (4.0 people) and visits which involved a journey of over 20 miles (4.6 people).

### Visits taken with children

5.12 Adults were accompanied by a child under the age of 16 years during 22 per cent of visits. This equates to around 597 million of the visits taken by adults. In total 61 per cent of the visits taken by adults who have children in their household were taken with a child or children in the party compared to six per cent of visits taken by those with no children in the household.

5.13 As in previous years, children were more likely to be in the party on visits taken by members of the BME population, where a child was present during 40 per cent of visits compared to 21 per cent of those from a White ethnic background.



**Figure 5-4** Percentage of visits taken accompanied by children (aged under 16) by socio-economic status, Index of Multiple Deprivation and ethnicity (%)  
 Q13 How many children under 16 were on this visit? (Base: Random visits, monthly questions 2011/12 N=4,421)

- 5.14 The presence of children in a party appears to have an impact on visit characteristics (Table 5-5), for example parks in towns and cities and country parks were more likely to be visited when children were in the party.
- 5.15 Travelling to destinations with children was also more likely to involve the use of a car or van (44 per cent compared to 28 per cent in adult only parties). Correspondingly, visits where children were present also involved longer journeys - 24 per cent of visits with children had journeys of more than five miles compared to 17 per cent of visits without children.

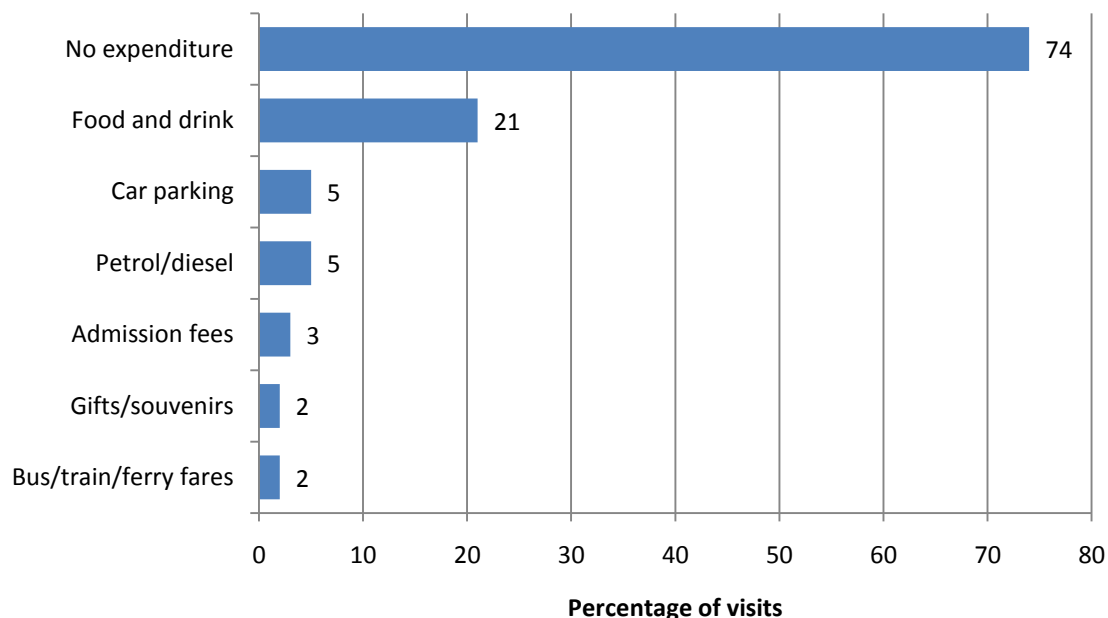
**Table 5-5** Activities undertaken, distance travelled, mode of transport and type of place visited by presence of children in party (%)  
(Base: Random visits, monthly questions 2011/12 N=4,421)

	Children under 16 in party %	No children under 16 in party %
<b>Activities undertaken*</b>		
Walking with a dog	28	52
Walking, not with a dog	31	26
Playing with children	40	8
Eating or drinking out	9	6
Visiting an attraction	7	3
<b>Distance travelled</b>		
Less than 1 mile	38	41
1 or 2 miles	24	27
3 to 5 miles	14	15
Over 5 miles	24	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Transport used</b>		
On foot	52	65
Car or van	44	28
Public transport (rail or bus)	2	3
Other	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Type of place visited – general</b>		
Town and city	45	38
Countryside	44	52
Seaside resort or town	8	6
Seaside coastline	3	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Type of place visited – specific*</b>		
Park in a town or city	30	2
Children’s playground	14	2
Woodland or forest	10	13
Country park	9	7
Beach	8	5
Paths, cycleway or bridleway	11	16

\*Note: The sum of activities and specific places percentages is less than 100% as some visits did not include the options shown on this table

## Expenditure during visits

- 5.16 Around a quarter of visits to the natural environment incurred expenditure (26 per cent). Expenditure was most likely to be incurred for food and drink (21 per cent of all visits), while spending on other categories, such as car parking and fuel was restricted to a smaller proportion of visits<sup>12</sup>. Overall, the profile of expenditure is not significantly different to that recorded in 2010/11 or 2009/10.



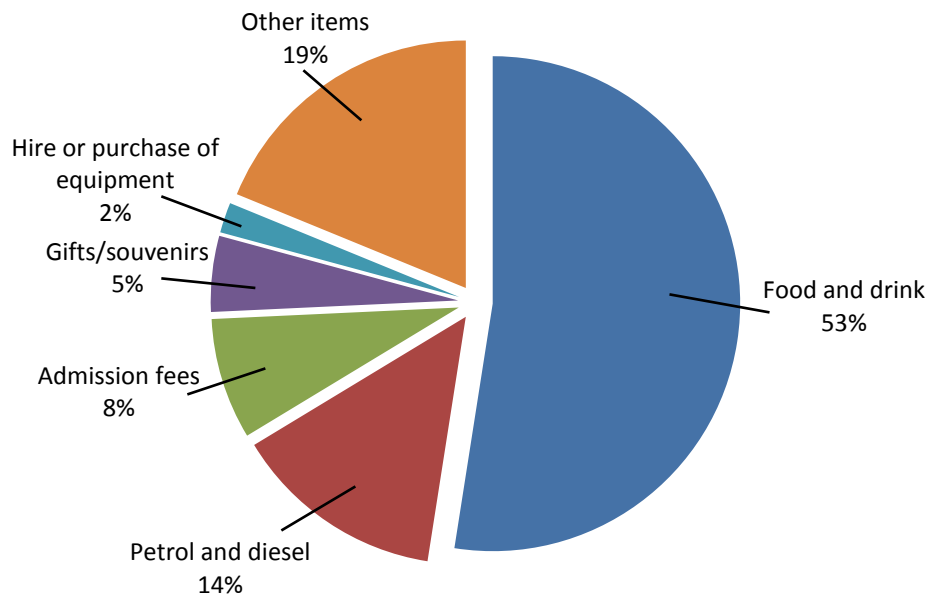
**Figure 5-5** Items purchased during visits to the natural environment (%)

Q15 During this visit did you personally spend any money on any of the items listed on the screen? (Base: Random visit, monthly questions 2011/12 N=4,421)

Note: Sum of totals is more than 100% as visits could involve expenditure on more than one item. No expenditure category includes 3% of don't know responses.

- 5.17 For every £1 spent on a visit to the natural environment, 53 pence was spent on food and drink with petrol and diesel accounting for 14 pence (Figure 5-6).

<sup>12</sup> Respondents were asked about any expenditure incurred during their visit. Therefore, any money spent for the visit but not actually during it (for example, purchasing petrol the day before in preparation for the visit) was not included. However money spent during the visit on fuel which continued to be used after the visit was recorded.



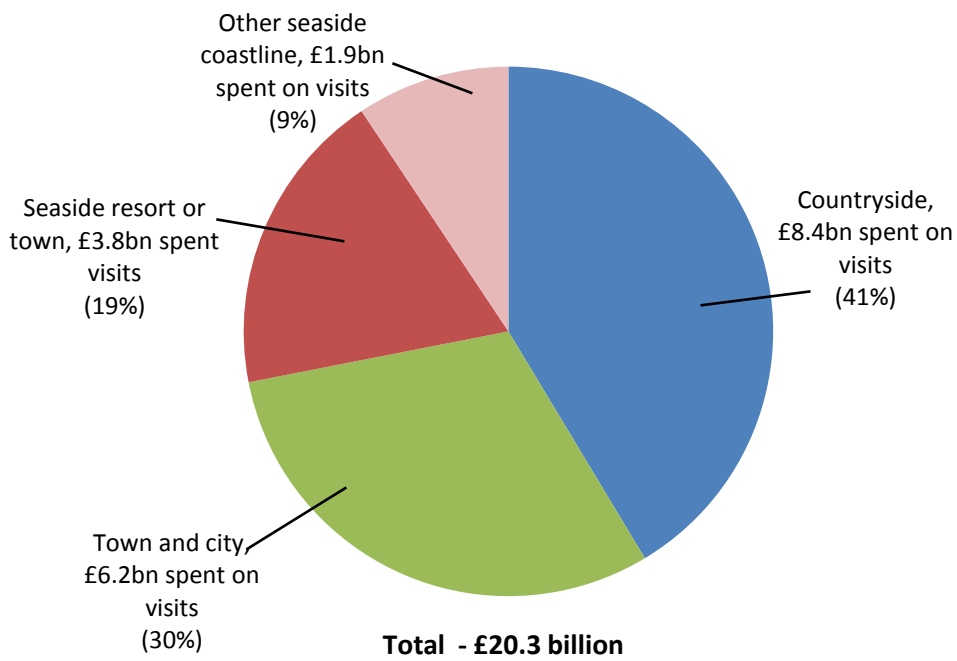
**Figure 5-6** Distribution of expenditure on visits by category of spend (%)

*Q15 During this visit did you personally spend any money on any of the items listed on the screen? (Base: Random visit, monthly questions 2011/12 N=4,421)*

- 5.18 For those visits that incurred expenditure, the average spend per person per visit was £28.16 – a figure that does not differ significantly from that recorded in 2010/11 (£29.69) or 2009/10 (£28.78).
- 5.19 When all visits are considered, including those where there was no expenditure, the average spend per person per visit during 2011/12 was £7.46, a figure that does not differ significantly from the average of £6.90 recorded in the 2010/11 or the average of £7.14 recorded in 2009/10.
- 5.20 With 713 million visits involving expenditure, it is estimated that a total of around £20.3 billion was spent by people on visits taken to the natural environment between March 2011 and February 2012<sup>13</sup>. In total, an estimated £58 billion<sup>14</sup> was spent on visits to the natural environment between March 2009 and February 2012
- 5.21 The higher number of visits taken during 2011/12 means that the estimated total expenditure on visits taken in this period was higher than in the previous year (£20.3 billion compared to £17.2 billion in 2010/11), but lower than in 2009/10 (£20.4 billion). However these differences are not statistically significant.
- 5.22 Certain types of visits were more likely than others to incur expenditure, particularly longer visits (64 per cent on visits of three hours or more); visits with children in the party (40 per cent); and those taken by infrequent visitors (51 per cent).
- 5.23 Visits to seaside resorts and towns were also significantly more likely to incur expenditure. In total, 50 per cent of visits to these places involved expenditure, that means that while only six per cent of visits were to seaside towns, this type of destination accounted for around a fifth (19 per cent) of all expenditure (Figure 5-7).

<sup>13</sup> Taking account of margins of error, at the 95% confidence level estimated total expenditure ranges from £16.9 billion to £23.3 billion

<sup>14</sup> Taking account of margins of error, at the 95% confidence level estimated total visits range from £55 billion to £67 billion



**Figure 5-7** Distribution of expenditure on visits by destination type (%)  
 Q15 During this visit did you personally spend any money on any of the items listed on the screen? (Base: Random visit, monthly questions 2011/12 N=4,421)

## 6 Why? Motivations and barriers

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6.1 This section of the report focuses on motivations for visiting the natural environment, and how the barriers that prevent or hinder participation vary between population groups.

### Headline results in this section

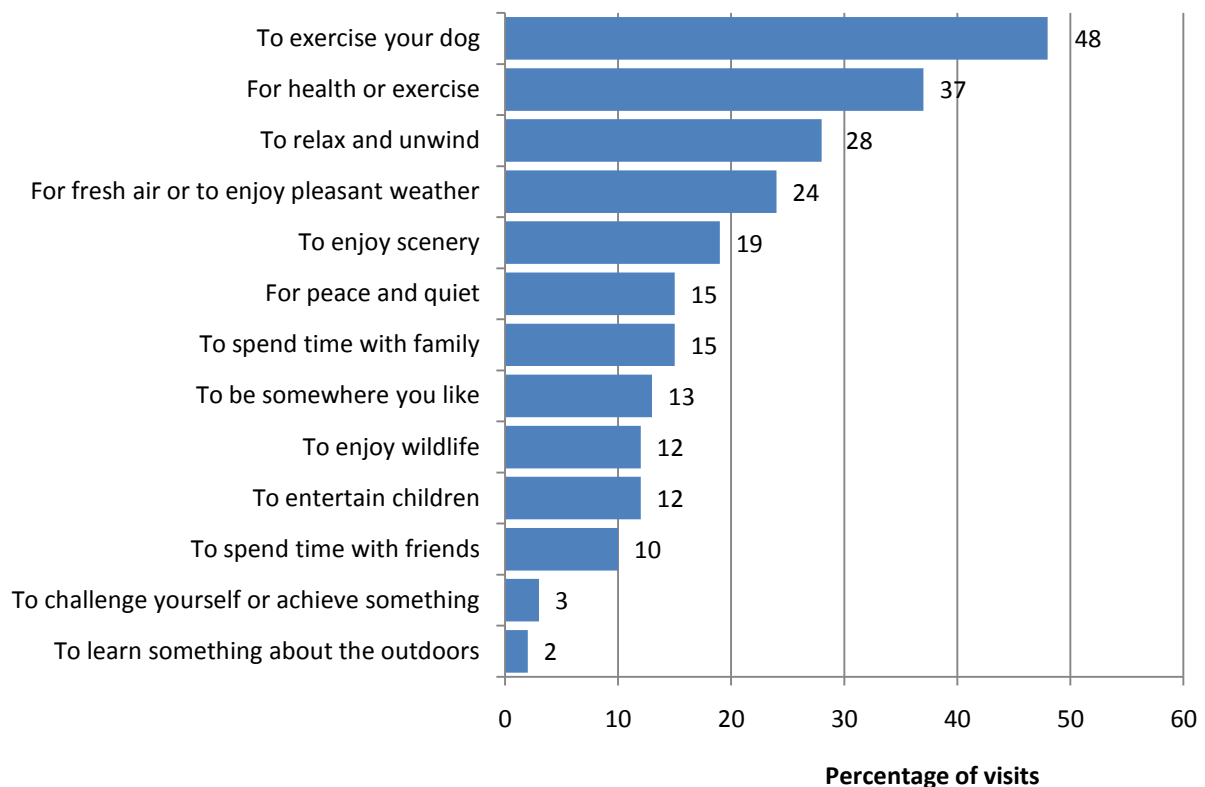
- As in the previous two years, exercising dogs, personal health and exercise, relaxing and unwinding, enjoying fresh air and pleasant weather and enjoying scenery were the most frequently cited reasons for taking visits to the natural environment.
- Motivations for visiting the natural environment were influenced by age - notably the likelihood that visits are taken for health or exercise, for fresh air or pleasant weather, to enjoy scenery, and to enjoy wildlife, increases as a person gets older.
- Those aged 25 to 44 were more likely to attribute their visit to the need to entertain children and/or spending time with family (23 per cent each). Spending time with friends was more likely to be mentioned by 16 to 24 year olds (25 per cent).
- A significant increase was recorded between survey years in the proportions of visits taken to the countryside where the motivation was for health or exercise (37 per cent in 2009/10 to 41 per cent to 2011/12).
- Those who had been on visits to the countryside and coast, particularly mountain and moorland or woodland areas were more likely to indicate that they had experienced a positive outcome than those who had been on visits to green spaces in urban areas.
- Infrequent visitors to the natural environment were most likely to cite being busy at work or poor weather as their main reasons for *not* being able to take visits to the natural environment more often. Poor health, old age or a disability were most likely to be mentioned by those who never visit the natural environment.

### Motivations for visits

6.2 As in 2009/10 and 2010/11, exercising a dog was the most frequently cited motivation for visiting the natural environment in 2011/12 (48 per cent of visits, see Figure 6-1). The other popular reasons for taking a visit were for health and exercise (37 per cent), to relax and unwind (28 per cent), for fresh air or to enjoy pleasant weather (24 per cent) and to enjoy scenery (19 per cent)<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that respondents were asked to specify all of the motivations for their visit and could select more than one of the answer options. Therefore, in some cases an individual visit is included in the total for more than one motivation. This means that the sum of the percentages is more than 100 per cent.



**Figure 6-1** Reasons for taking visits to the natural environment (%)

Q12 Which of the following, if any, best describe your reasons for this visit? (Base: Random visits, monthly questions 2011/12 N=4,421)

Note: Sum of totals is more than 100% as visits could have been taken for more than one reason.

- 6.3 Women were more likely than men to mention visiting the natural environment to entertain children as a motivation (16 per cent compared to nine per cent of men) while men were more likely to be motivated by relaxation and unwinding (30 per cent compared to 26 per cent of women).
- 6.4 As in previous years, motivations also seem to be influenced by age; 43 per cent of people aged 45 and over visited the natural environment for health or exercise, compared to 31 per cent of those aged 44 and under. A similar pattern was recorded in relation to enjoying scenery (23 per cent and 16 per cent respectively) and enjoying wildlife (14 per cent and 9 per cent respectively).
- 6.5 Those aged 25 to 44 were more likely to attribute their visit to the need to entertain children and/or spending time with family (23 per cent each). Spending time with friends was more likely to be mentioned by 16 to 24 year olds (25 per cent).
- 6.6 As was the case in 2010/11 and 2009/10, exercising a dog was mentioned as a motivation for 55 per cent of visits to the natural environment taken by those in the C2DE socio-economic groups (54 per cent).
- 6.7 Those in the ABC1 socio-economic groups were more likely to mention the following reasons as motivating factors for visiting the natural environment: health and exercise (41 per cent), to relax and unwind (30 per cent), and for fresh air or to enjoy pleasant weather (27 per cent).
- 6.8 Visits to seaside resorts or towns were most likely to be taken to relax or unwind (39 per cent), to exercise a dog (36 per cent) or for fresh air or to enjoy pleasant weather (30 per cent).



- 6.9 Other coastal areas generally shared the same main motivating factors as seaside towns. Visits to these areas were also more likely for peace and quiet than other destinations (21 per cent).
- 6.10 The main motivating factors for visiting the countryside were to exercise a dog (55 per cent) and for health and exercise (41 per cent). Exercising a dog (42 per cent) was also the main motivation mentioned for visits to green spaces in towns and cities.
- 6.11 A significant increase was recorded between survey years in the proportions of visits taken to the countryside where the motivation was for health or exercise (37 per cent in 2009/10 to 41 per cent to 2011/12).

**Table 6-1** Reasons for taking visits to the natural environment by type of place visited (column %) Q12 Which of the following, if any, best describe your reasons for this visit? (Base: Random visits, monthly questions 2011/12 N=4,421)

	Type of place visited			
	Town or city %	Countryside %	Seaside resort or town %	Seaside coastline %
To exercise your dog	42	55	36	27
For health or exercise	35	41	29	34
To relax and unwind	24	29	39	33
For fresh air or to enjoy pleasant weather	21	26	30	34
To enjoy scenery	12	23	26	33
To spend time with family	16	14	18	20
For peace and quiet	13	17	10	21
To be somewhere you like	8	15	22	18
To entertain children	15	10	11	11
To enjoy wildlife	7	17	7	19
To spend time with friends	11	8	12	11
To challenge yourself or achieve something	2	4	2	7
To learn something about the outdoors	1	3	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

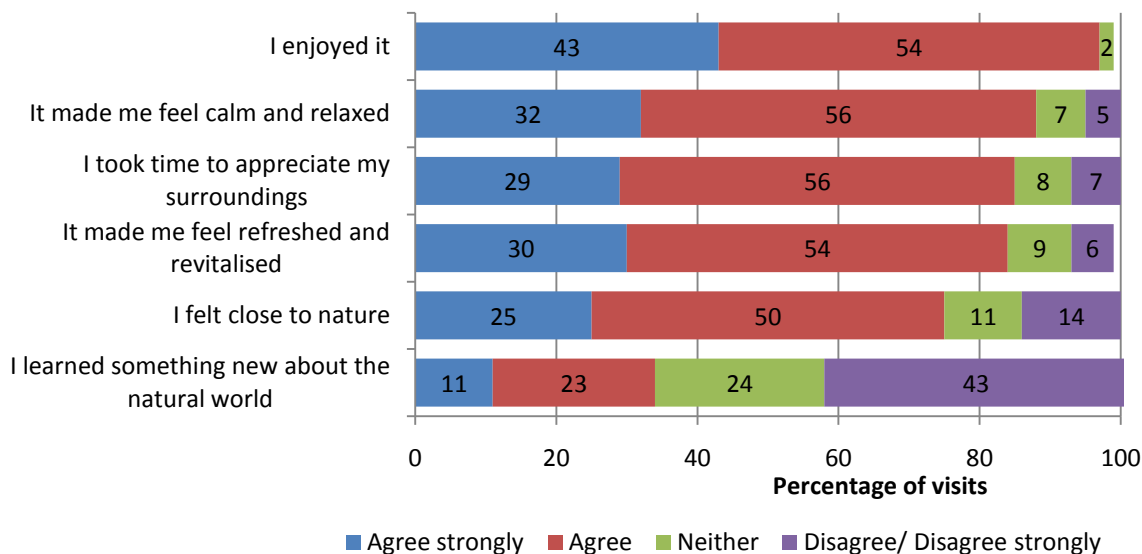
Note: Sum of totals is more than 100% as visits could have been taken for more than one reason

## Outcomes of visits

- 6.12 To explore some of the benefits or outcomes that people may experience from a visit to the natural environment, respondents were asked about the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> This question was included in the survey during one week of fieldwork per quarter. As such sample sizes are smaller than for other questions and results are subject to wider margins of error.

6.13 In total 97 per cent of people stated that they enjoyed their visit to the natural environment (Figure 6-2). More than four fifths of respondents agreed that it made them feel calm and relaxed (88 per cent), that they took time to appreciate their surroundings (85 per cent) and that they felt refreshed and revitalised (84 per cent) and three quarters agreed that they felt close to nature (75 per cent). In contrast, 34 per cent of respondents agreed that they had learned something new about nature while on the visit.



**Figure 6-2** Outcomes of visits to the natural environment (%)  
*E1 Thinking of this visit, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Base: Random visits, quarterly questions 2011/12 N=1,506)*  
*Note: Disagree and disagree strongly categories are aggregated as very small proportions provided the disagree strongly response.*

- 6.14 Further analysis focused on those ‘agreeing strongly’ with the various outcomes of visits to the natural environment, in order to establish whether there is variation within the population.
- 6.15 Those aged 55 and over were more likely than those in the younger age groups to indicate strong positive agreement for the outcomes: I took time to appreciate my surroundings (37 per cent and 24 per cent) and I felt close to nature (32 per cent and 12 per cent). A similar series of findings were recorded in previous survey years.
- 6.16 As shown in Table 6-2, those who had been on visits to the countryside and coast, particularly mountain and moorland or woodland areas were more likely to indicate that they had experienced a positive outcome than those who had been on visits to green spaces in urban areas (Table 6-2). In terms of activities undertaken, those who took part in wildlife watching or running were likely to report the most positive outcomes.

**Table 6-2** Outcomes of visits to the natural environment by place visited, activities undertaken and duration of visit (% agreeing strongly with each statement)

*E1 Thinking of this visit, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Base: Random visits, quarterly questions 2011/12 N=1,506)*

	I enjoyed it %	It made me feel calm and relaxed %	It made me feel refreshed and revitalised %	I took time to appreciate surroundings %	I felt close to nature %	I learned something about the natural world %
<b>All visits</b>	43	32	30	29	25	11
<b>General type of place visited</b>						
Town or city	39	27	25	24	19	8
Countryside	44	36	34	30	29	13
Seaside resort or town	58	39	41	45	34	10
Seaside coastline	38	30	29	30	19	9
<b>Specific type of place visited</b>						
Beach	49	34	38	33	23	4
Other coastline	46	30	30	44	23	16
Country Park	49	34	32	32	35	11
Farmland	51	30	40	36	21	10
Mountain or moorland	68	53	55	52	45	10
Other open space in countryside	52	44	39	40	39	15
Other open space in town	38	21	30	25	21	2
Park in town	34	29	21	21	16	7
Path, cycleway or bridleway	38	32	33	33	22	8
Children's playground	57	41	27	21	17	29
Playing field/other recreation area	41	20	23	13	20	8
River lake or canal	44	36	42	33	33	16
Village	42	33	34	27	20	7
Woodland/forest	56	43	45	47	33	16

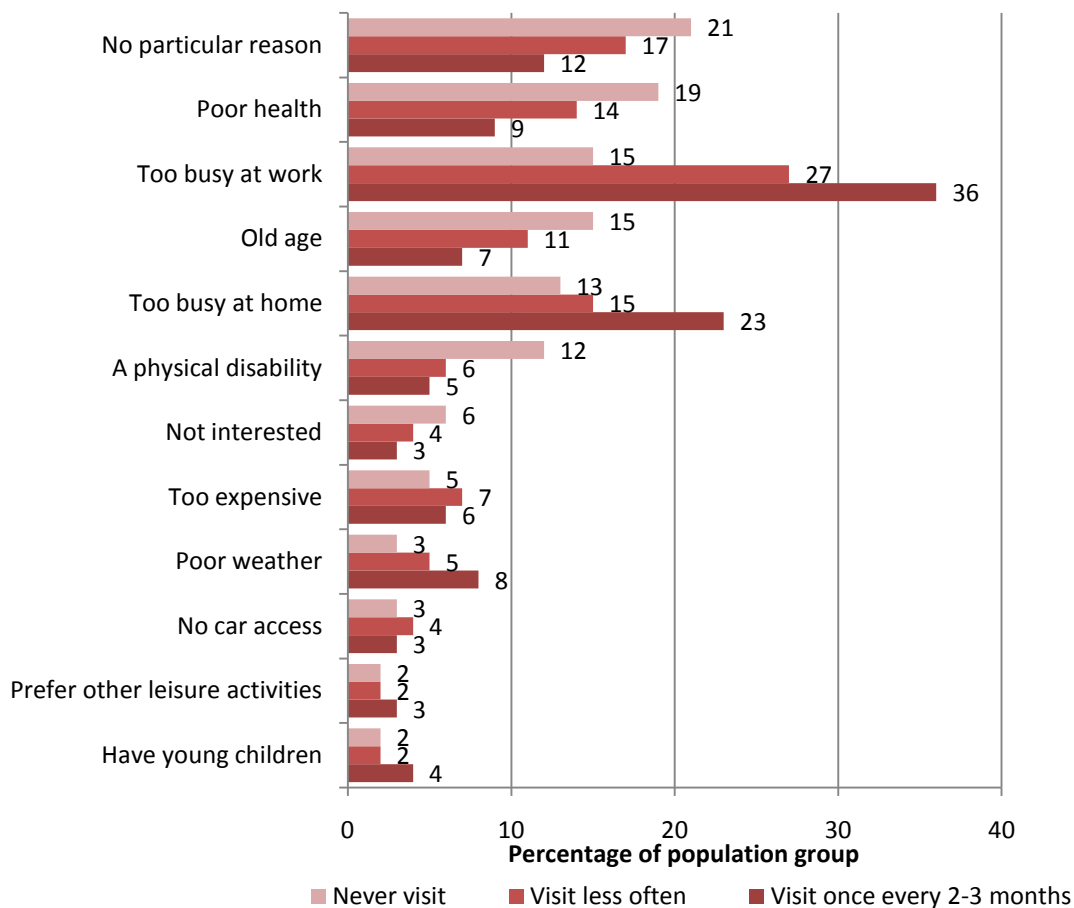
Table continued...

	I enjoyed it %	It made me feel calm and relaxed %	It made me feel refreshed and revitalised %	I took time to appreciate surroundings %	I felt close to nature %	I learned something about the natural world %
<b>Activities undertaken*</b>						
Wildlife watching	57	34	43	46	45	21
Running	61	40	47	38	27	13
Walking, not with a dog	47	33	32	32	26	7
Walking with a dog	40	34	31	28	27	14
Visiting an attraction	55	24	26	31	24	7
Informal games	53	40	31	22	19	2
Eating and drinking out	50	25	28	31	22	5
Playing with children	37	24	30	24	16	7
<b>Duration of visit</b>						
Less than 1 hour	39	30	28	24	25	12
1 hour to 2hrs 59 min	42	36	32	29	25	11
3 hours or more	48	28	30	34	26	10

Note: \* Activities with a base size of less than 100 visits are not included

## Reasons for not visiting

6.17 Respondents who had not taken any visits or who had only made infrequent visits to the natural environment were asked about their reasons for not participating. Those reasons provided by 3 per cent or more of respondents are included in Figure 6-3.



**Figure 6-3** Barriers to participation amongst infrequent and non-participants (%)

Q18 Why have you not spent any/more of your time out of doors? (Base: Infrequent and non-participants, monthly questions 2011/12 N=786 visit once or twice every 2-3 months, N=717 visit less often, N=777 Non-participants)

Note: Sum of totals is more than 100% as respondents could specify more than one reason.

6.18 Being too busy at work, or being too busy in the home continue to be the barriers most frequently given by infrequent participants, especially those who tend to take visits to the natural environment once every two or three months (36 per cent and 23 per cent respectively).

6.19 The main reasons expressed by those who never visit were poor health (19 per cent), being too busy at work (15 per cent) and old age (15 per cent).

**Table 6-3** Reasons for not visiting the natural environment more often by survey year (row %) *Q18 Why have you not spent any/more of your time out of doors? (Base: Infrequent and non-participants, monthly questions 2009/10 N=3,121; 2010/11 N=2,889; 2011/12 N=2,742)*

	Reason for not spending more time out of doors		
	2009/10 %	2010/11 %	2011/12 %
Too busy at work	27	24	26
Too busy at home	18	18	17
No particular reason	16	17	17
Poor health	14	15	14
Old age	12	12	11
Physical disability	8	8	8
Too expensive	4	3	6↑
Bad/poor weather	8	8	5↓
Not interested	6	6	5
No car access	3	3	3

Notes: Sum of totals is not 100% as the table does not include all of the reasons that could be provided and respondents could specify more than one reason. Statistically significant year-on-year changes are highlighted by up or down arrows.

- 6.20 As shown in Table 6-3, the proportion of infrequent visitors and non-participants mentioning most of the barriers to visiting the natural environment has not varied significantly over the three survey years. However, cost as a barrier increased from three per cent to six per cent between 2010/11 and 2011/12, while mentions of poor weather fell to five per cent in 2011/12 from eight per cent in the previous two surveys.
- 6.21 Amongst the groups recorded as visiting less often in 2011/12, those in the DE socio-economic group were more likely to cite poor health (19 per cent) or old age (16 per), while 24 per cent of those in the BME population mentioned being busy at home.
- 6.22 Men were more likely than women to cite being too busy at work as a reason for not visiting the natural environment more than they currently do or at all (32 per cent and 20 per cent respectively) in all three years of the survey. On the other hand, a higher proportion of women mentioned poor health or old age.
- 6.23 Younger respondents aged 16-24 were most likely to cite a lack of interest (38 per cent compared to 22 per cent of the population as a whole), while 25 to 44 year olds were most likely to mention being busy at work (42 per cent compared to 17 per cent of the English adult population). Unsurprisingly, a higher proportion (86 per cent) of those aged 65 and over mentioned poor health, old age or a disability than amongst the population as a whole (33 per cent).
- 6.24 Members of the BME population were more likely to mention a lack of interest (27 per cent), being busy at work (32 per cent) and being busy at home (24 per cent), while poor health, old age or a disability were more likely to be mentioned by members of the White ethnic population (38 per cent).

**Table 6-4** Reasons for not visiting the natural environment more often by sex, age, socio-economic status and ethnicity profile (row %)  
 Q18 Why have you not spent any/more of your time out of doors? (Base: Infrequent and non-participants, monthly questions 2011/12 N=2,742)

	Reason for not spending more time out of doors			
	Too busy at home %	Too busy at work %	No particular reason or not interested %	Poor health, old age or physical disability %
<b>Total</b>	26	17	22	33
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	15	32	24	29
Female	19	20	19	37
<b>Age</b>				
16-24	17	26	38	1
25-44	24	42	23	6
45-64	20	33	19	22
65+	6	2	17	86
<b>Socio-economic status</b>				
AB	17	34	19	29
C1	20	32	22	24
C2	19	33	20	25
DE	14	14	24	46
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
BME	24	32	27	13
White	15	24	20	38

Note: Sum of totals is not 100% as the table does not include all of the reasons that could be provided and respondents could specify more than one reason

# 7 Other engagement with the natural environment

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7.1 A series of questions were included in the survey to capture information about the other ways in which people enjoy and appreciate the natural environment, including attitudes towards the natural environment and questions about how people try to protect the environment. This section of the report summarises the key findings from these questions.

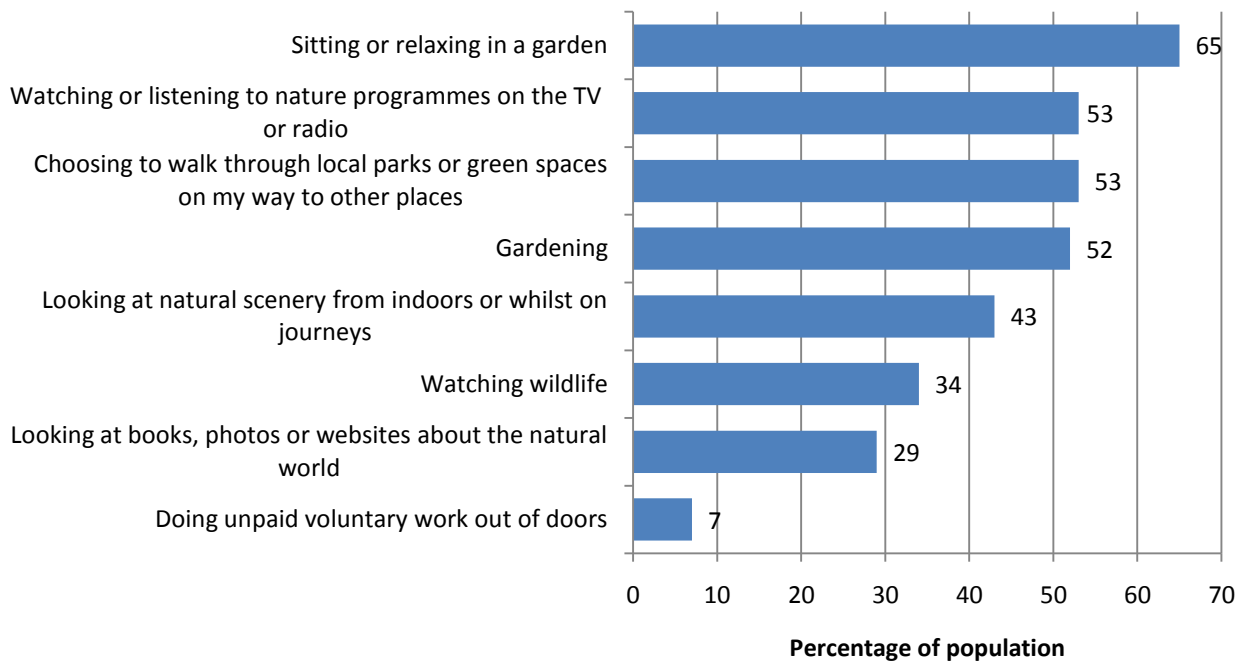
## Headline results in this section

- The vast majority of the population took part in one or more of the other engagement activities asked about in the survey, with sitting and relaxing in the garden and gardening the most frequently undertaken.
- Participation in these activities generally increased with age. Those aged 45 and older were especially likely to take part in sitting or relaxing in the garden (70 per cent compared to 59 per cent amongst younger age groups) and watching or listening to nature programmes on the television or radio (62 per cent compared to 43 per cent amongst younger age groups).
- Just under half (47 per cent) of the population strongly agreed that having open green spaces close to where they live is important, while 40 per cent strongly agreed that spending time out of doors was an important part of their life.
- The more frequently people visit the natural environment, the more likely they are to appreciate it and to be concerned about environmental damage. Frequent visitors are also more likely to engage in pro-environmental behaviours such as recycling and preferring to buy seasonal and locally grown food. These results are consistent with those recorded during 2010/11 and 2009/10.
- Respondents were also asked about the extent to which they were willing or able to change their current behaviour to address environmental concerns. Since the 2009/10 survey, the proportion of the population unwilling to change their lifestyle has significantly increased from 26 per cent to 32 per cent. Just 18 per cent of the population expressed their intention to make changes to their lifestyle.
- In terms of pro-environmental behaviours, over three quarters (77 per cent) said that they usually recycled items rather than throwing them away, while 42 per cent chose to walk or cycle instead of using their car. Furthermore, 39 per cent of people stated that they usually bought seasonal or locally grown food.

## Other activities involving the natural environment

- 7.2 Overall, 94 per cent of the population undertook one or more of the activities listed overleaf (Figure 7-1). This finding is not significantly different to the 2009/10 figure of 93 per cent but represents a statistically significant increase on the proportion that did so in 2010/11 (92 per cent).
- 7.3 In total, 65 per cent of the adult population engaged with the natural environment by sitting or relaxing in their garden (Figure 7-1), around half took part in gardening (52 per cent), while half walked through local parks or green spaces on their way to other places (53 per cent). These figures did not vary significantly from those recorded in either 2010/11 or 2009/10.
- 7.4 Many people also chose indirect or passive ways of enjoying the natural environment. In total 53 per cent listened to a nature programme on the radio or watched one on television, while 43 per cent looked at natural scenery from the indoors or on a journey. In addition, around a third of people (29 per cent) looked at books, photos or websites relating to the natural world.



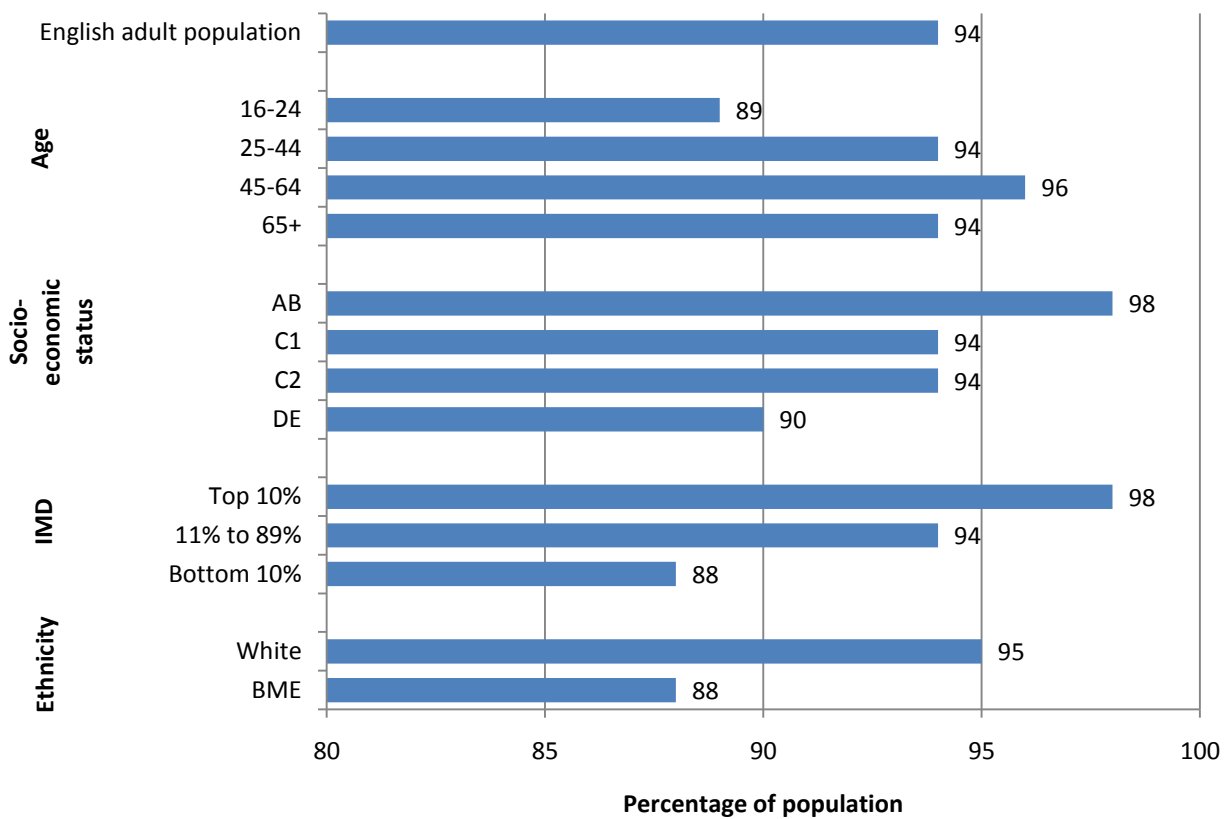


**Figure 7-1** Other activities involving the natural environment (%)

*E3 Which of the following activities involving the natural environment do you take part in? (Base: All respondents, quarterly questions 2011/12 N=3,544)*

*Note: Sum of totals is more than 100% as respondents could have undertaken more than one activity.*

- 7.5 Participation in any of the activities asked about in Figure 7-1 generally increased with age. Those aged 45 and older were especially likely to take part in sitting or relaxing in the garden (70 per cent compared to 59 per cent amongst younger age groups) and watching or listening to nature programmes on the television or radio (62 per cent compared to 43 per cent amongst younger age groups).
- 7.6 Members of the White ethnic population were more likely than members of the BME population to take part in all of these activities, with the greatest difference between these groups recorded for sitting or relaxing in the garden (67 per cent and 48 per cent respectively) and looking at natural scenery from indoors or while on a journey (56 per cent and 26 per cent).
- 7.7 The overall level of participation in one or more of the activities is significantly higher amongst members of the AB socio-economic groups (98 per cent), compared to the English adult population (94 per cent).
- 7.8 As figure 7-2 overleaf shows, those aged 16 to 24 (89 per cent), members of the DE socio-economic group (90 per cent) and members of the BME population (88 per cent) were less likely than the average amongst the English adult population (94 per cent) to be engaged with the natural environment through one or more of the activities in Figure 7-1 above.



**Figure 7-2** Participation in other activities involving the natural environment by age, socio-economic status, Index of Multiple Deprivation and ethnicity (%)  
*E3 Which of the following activities involving the natural environment do you take part in? Please choose everything you do, both regularly and occasionally. (Base: All respondents, quarterly questions 2011/12 N=2,742)*

- 7.9 Those who never visited the natural environment were also less likely to engage with the outdoors in other ways. However, around four-fifths (81 per cent) participated in one or more of the activities in Table 7-1, a significantly higher proportion than recorded in 2010/11 (76 per cent) and 2009/10 (73 per cent). Sitting or relaxing in the garden (46 per cent) and/or watching or listening to nature programmes (45 per cent) were the most frequently mentioned activities amongst non-participants.
- 7.10 The largest difference found between frequent and infrequent visitors related to walking through local parks and green spaces on the way to other places. This was mentioned by 65 per cent of frequent visitors, but only 43 per cent of infrequent visitors.
- 7.11 It should be noted that people who stated that they never normally spend their leisure time away from home in the outdoors, indicated that they sometimes chose to walk through local green spaces on their way to places or that they spent time wildlife watching.

**Table 7-1** Other activities involving the natural environment by frequency of participation in visits (column %)

*E3 Which of the following activities involving the natural environment do you take part in? Please choose everything you do, both regularly and occasionally. (Base: All respondents, quarterly questions 2011/12 N=3,544)*

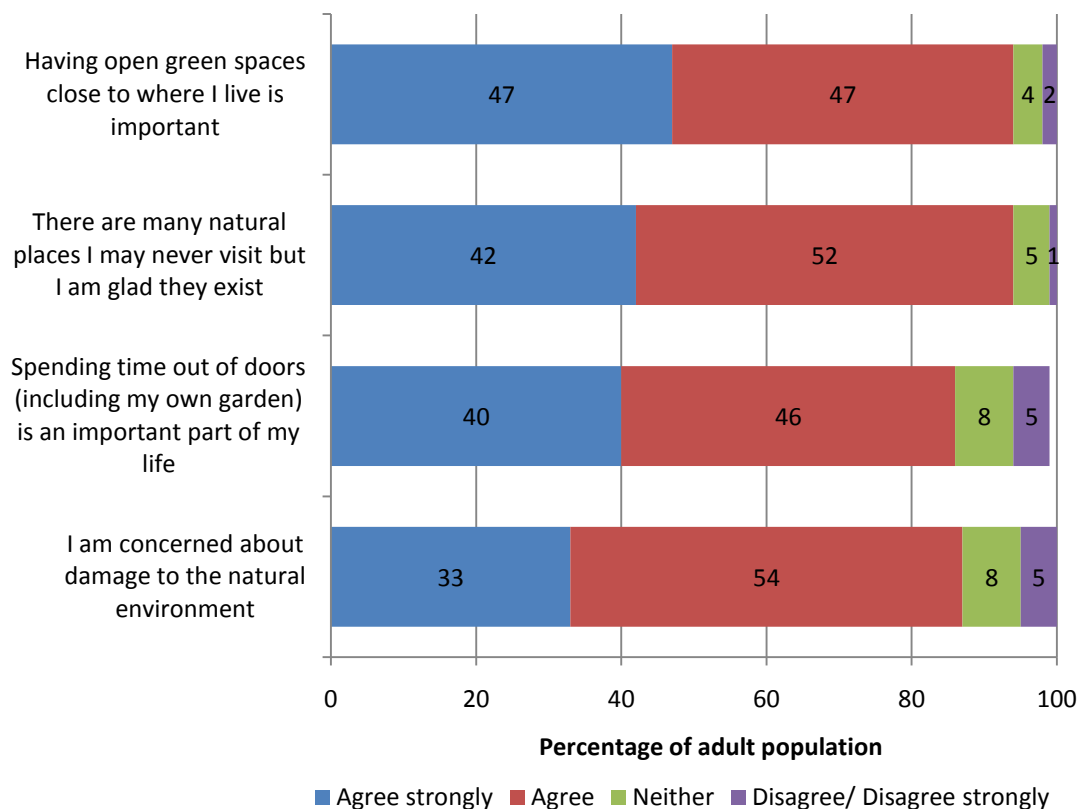
	Frequency of natural environment visits		
	Frequent %	Infrequent %	Non Participants %
Any undertaken	96	93	81
Sitting or relaxing in a garden	68	63	46
Choosing to walk through local parks or green spaces on my way to other places	65	43	14
Gardening	57	47	40
Watching or listening to nature programmes on the TV or radio	55	51	45
Looking at natural scenery from indoors whilst on journeys	49	40	23
Watching wildlife (including bird watching)	38	30	25
Looking at books, photos or websites about the natural world	34	25	18
Doing unpaid voluntary work out of doors	9	6	4

7.12 Only two per cent of the English adult population indicated that they never visited the natural environment and that they had also not undertaken any of the other forms of engagement with the natural environment featured in Table 7-1. This is similar to the proportion recorded in 2010/11 and 2009/10.

## Attitudes to the natural environment

7.13 To provide further insight, respondents were presented with a series of statements which were designed to elicit their general attitudes towards the environment and its relative importance in their lives. For each statement, a five-point scale from 'agree strongly' to 'disagree strongly' was used. In Figure 7-3 below the 'disagree' and 'disagree strongly' categories have been combined because of the relatively small proportions selecting these options.

7.14 The highest level of agreement was with the statement 'having green spaces close to where I live is important', where 47 per cent of the population agreed strongly and a further 47 per cent agreed with this statement.



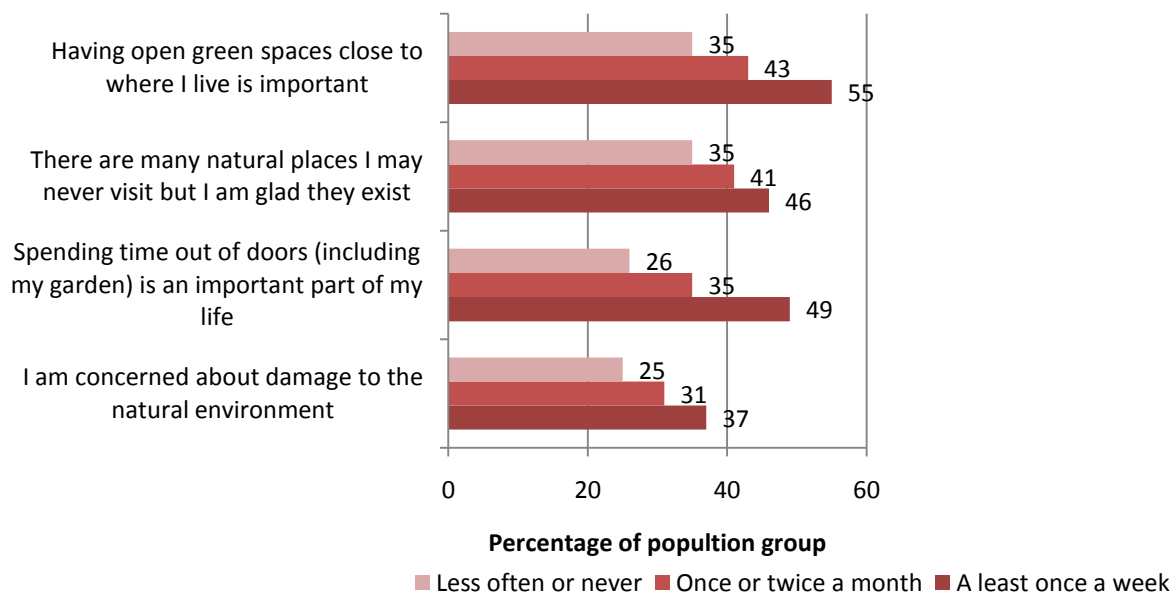
**Figure 7-3** Attitudes to the natural environment (%)

*E2 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Base: All respondents, quarterly questions 2011/12 N=3,544)*

*Note: Disagree and disagree strongly categories are aggregated as very small proportions provided the disagree strongly response.*

7.15 While agreement with ‘I am concerned about damage to the natural environment’ was high (87 per cent), the proportion agreeing *strongly* was lower than for any of the other statements (33 per cent).

7.16 As in 2010/11 and 2009/10, the proportions agreeing strongly with all of the statements were generally higher amongst older age groups, those in higher socio-economic groups and amongst those with a White ethnic background. In addition, the more often a person visited the natural environment, the more likely they were to express agreement with the various statements shown in Figure 7-4. In particular those who visited the outdoors at least once a week were more likely to agree strongly with the statements: ‘spending time out of doors is an important part of my life’ (49 per cent) and ‘having green spaces close to where I live is important’ (55 per cent).

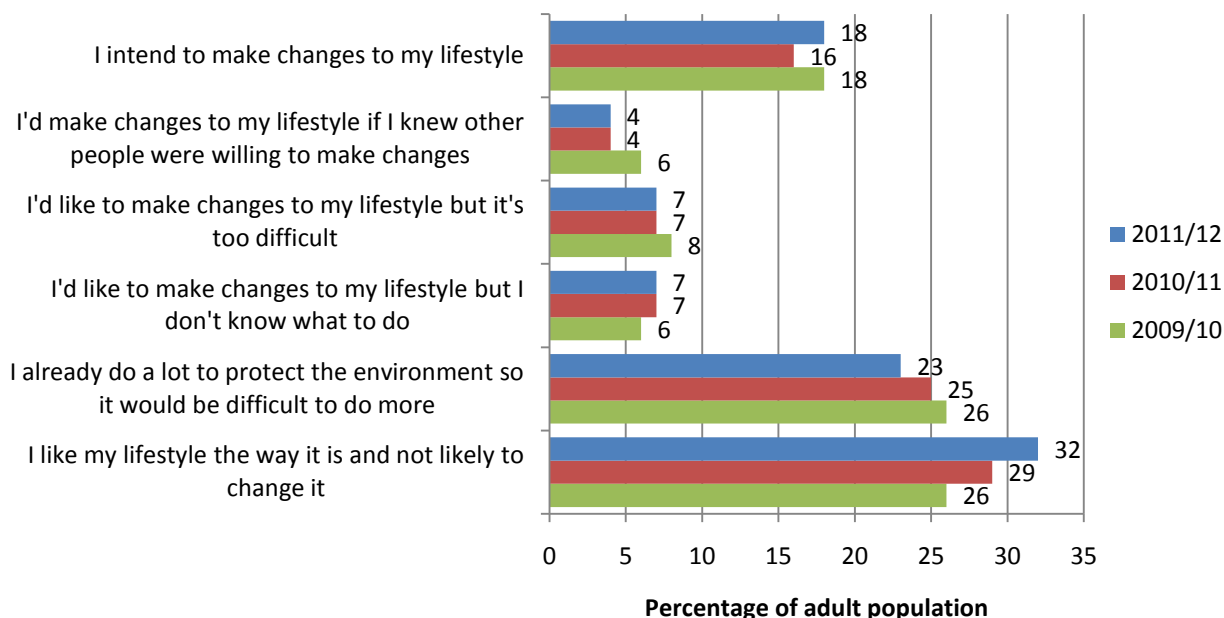


**Figure 7-4** Attitudes to the natural environment by frequency of visits to the natural environment (% agreeing strongly with statements)

*E2 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Base: All respondents, quarterly questions 2011/12 N=3,544)*

7.17 Respondents were also asked about the extent to which they were willing or able to change their current behaviour to address environmental concerns (Figure 7-5, overleaf). Just under a quarter (23 per cent) felt that it would be difficult for them to do more to protect the environment, while almost a third (32 per cent) indicated that they liked their lifestyle and were unwilling to change. Just 18 per cent of the population expressed their intention to make changes to their lifestyle.

7.18 Notably since the 2009/10 survey, the proportion of the population unwilling to change their lifestyle has significantly increased from 26 per cent to 32 per cent. In 2011/12, those aged 65 and over (43 per cent) and retired people (42 per cent) were more likely than the average to be unwilling to make changes to their lifestyle, as were men (34 per cent) when compared to women (29 per cent).



**Figure 7-5** Changing lifestyle to protect the natural environment (%)

*E5. Which of these statements best describes your intentions? (Base: All respondents, quarterly questions 2009/10 N=3,549; 2010/11 N=3,586; 2011/12 N=3,544)*

7.19 Those aged 65 and over were more likely than those aged 16 to 24 to believe they are doing as much as they can for the environment (31 per cent and 14 per cent respectively) or to state that they were happy with their lifestyle and did not want to change it (43 per cent and 27 per cent). By comparison, respondents aged below 35 were more likely than those in the older age groups to indicate that they intended to make changes to their lifestyle (23 per cent and 13 per cent).

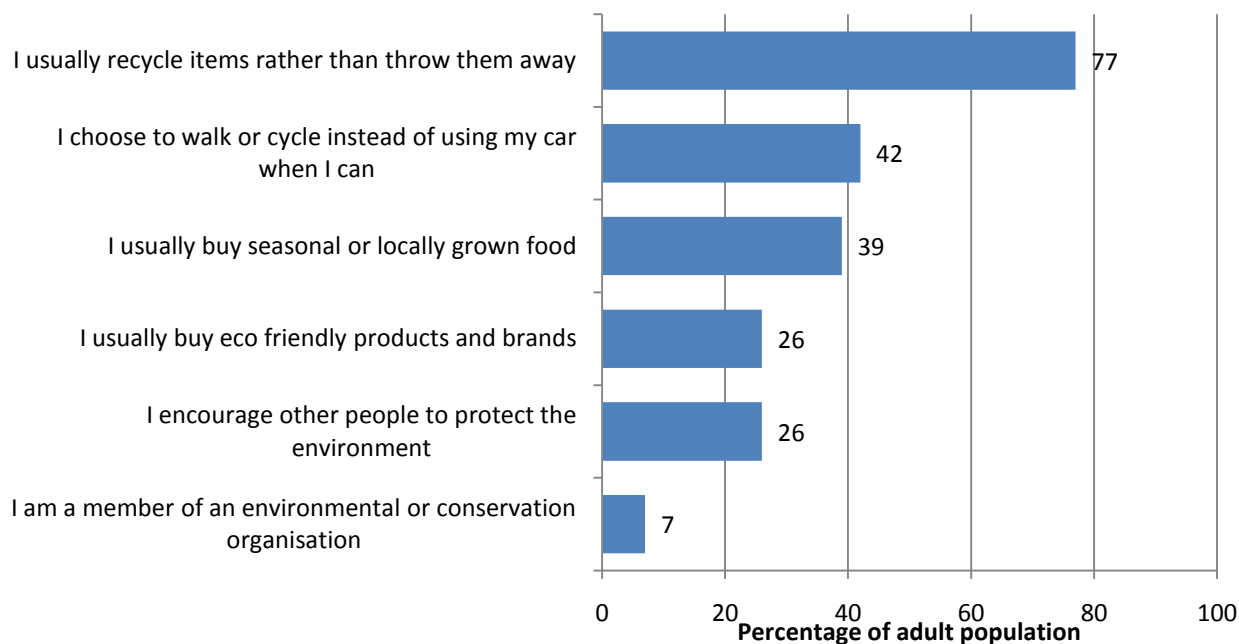
7.20 Variations by ethnicity were evident with members of the White population more likely than members of the BME population to intend keeping their lifestyle as it was (33 per cent and 26 per cent respectively) and/or to be of the opinion that they already did enough for the environment (25 per cent and 11 per cent). Over a quarter of the BME population (29 per cent) intended to make changes to their lifestyle compared to just 16 per cent of the White population. These findings did not vary significantly from those recorded in the 2010/11 and 2009/10 surveys.

**Table 7-2** Future intentions by sex, age, socio-economic status and ethnicity (row %)  
*E5. Which of these statements best describes your intentions? (Base: All respondents, quarterly questions 2011/12 N=3,544)*

	Like lifestyle the way it is and not likely to change %	Would like to make changes but don't know what to do or too difficult %	Would make changes if other people were willing to make changes %	I intend to make changes to protect the natural environment %	Already do a lot – would be difficult to do more %	Don't know %
<b>Total</b>	32	14	4	18	23	9
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	34	12	4	19	22	9
Female	29	17	4	17	24	10
<b>Age</b>						
16-24	31	16	5	21	14	13
25-44	25	17	5	23	19	10
45-64	32	12	4	17	27	7
65+	43	10	2	5	31	9
<b>Socio-economic status</b>						
AB	29	16	4	20	26	4
C1	32	13	5	20	20	10
C2	32	14	4	14	27	9
DE	33	15	3	15	20	13
<b>Ethnicity</b>						
BME	26	19	3	29	11	13
White	33	14	4	16	25	9

## Pro-environmental behaviours

7.21 The survey also investigated whether people were actively engaged in pro-environmental behaviours.



**Figure 7-6** Pro-environmental behaviours

*E4 Which of the following environment related activities do you do? (Base: All respondents, quarterly questions 2011/12 N=3544)*

*Note: Sum of totals is more than 100% as respondents could have undertaken more than one activity*

7.22 In total, 90 per cent of the population undertook one or more of the pro-environmental behaviours specified in Figure 7-6. Over three quarters (77 per cent) said that they usually recycled items rather than throwing them away, while 42 per cent chose to walk or cycle instead of using their car. Furthermore, 39 per cent of people stated that they usually bought seasonal or locally grown food. The proportions undertaking each of the pro-environmental behaviours did not vary significantly from the 2010/11 and 2009/10 surveys.

7.23 As shown in Table 7-3 overleaf there is a relationship between the frequency of visit to the natural environment and the practice of pro-environmental behaviours. Frequent visitors are significantly more likely to undertake these activities than non visitors.



**Table 7-3** Pro-environmental behaviours by frequency of natural environment visits (column %)  
*E4 Which of the following environment related activities do you do? (Base: All respondents, quarterly questions 2011/12 N=3,544)*

	Frequency of natural environment visits			
	All adults %	Frequent %	Infrequent %	Non-participants %
<b>Any undertaken</b>	90	94	89	75
Usually recycle items rather than throw them away	77	81	76	59
Choose to walk or cycle instead of using my car when I can	42	52	32	17
Usually buy seasonal or locally grown food	39	43	37	24
Encourage other people to protect the environment	26	31	20	17
Usually buy eco-friendly products and brands	26	31	22	11
Member of an environmental or conservation organisation	7	10	4	2
Volunteer to help care for the environment	5	7	4	2

Note: Sum of totals is more than 100% as respondents could have undertaken more than one activity

# Appendix 1 Summary of survey scope and methods

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## Survey scope

The main focus of the survey is on time spent visiting the natural environment. MENE collects details of both visits to the natural environment such as days out to the coast and countryside and more routine trips taken close to home for purposes such as dog walking or exercise, including those visits to urban green spaces.

The methods used in MENE were developed through a scoping study undertaken in 2007. This study involved consultations with users to ensure that their information needs were taken into account; qualitative research with members of the public to test their understanding of potential questionnaire wording options; and the piloting of a range of quantitative data collection approaches using online, telephone and face-to-face methodologies.

The scoping study informed the wording of the introductory text used in the survey (see below).

*Now I am going to ask you about occasions in the last week when you spent your time out of doors.*

*By out of doors we mean open spaces in and around towns and cities, including parks, canals and nature areas; the coast and beaches; and the countryside including farmland, woodland, hills and rivers.*

*This could be anything from a few minutes to all day. It may include time spent close to your home or workplace, further afield or while on holiday in England.*

However this **does not include**:

- routine shopping trips; or
- time spent in your own garden.

This description aims to ensure that survey respondents are clear that visits to the natural environment taken in both urban and rural locations are of interest and that there is no upper or lower time limit on the duration of the visit. Respondents are informed that routine shopping trips and time spent in the garden are not included in the definition of a visit. Interviewers are also provided with further guidance to offer respondents who may be uncertain of what is and is not included within the definition of “a visit”.

In comparison to previous leisure visits surveys, the broader scope of this survey provides a more complete picture of engagement with the natural environment including an accurate representation of levels of activity in close to home, informal visits, other forms of engagement with nature at home and pro-environmental behaviours. Collecting this data provides numerous opportunities for analysis and the development of a more informed understanding of how the population of England uses and enjoys the natural world.

## Survey method

The 2007 scoping study aimed to identify the most appropriate survey methods to adopt in a study which aimed to measure participation in visits to the natural environment amongst the English adult population. Pilot surveys were undertaken using online, telephone and face-to-face approaches, allowing a direct comparison of the results obtained using each method. The study concluded that an in-home survey method was the most appropriate and that the inclusion of a series of questions

on a weekly basis in a face-to-face consumer omnibus survey would represent the most cost effective approach for a study.

The survey involves weekly waves of interviewing on the TNS in-home Omnibus Survey with respondents asked about visits taken in the seven days preceding the interview. In each wave, interviews are undertaken with a representative sample of the English adult population (aged 16 and over) with a sample of at least 800 achieved across 100 sample points.

The number of visits taken in each of the seven days and key details of these visits (type of place visited, duration of visit, activities undertaken) are recorded<sup>17</sup>. One of the visits taken is then randomly selected and the respondent is asked to provide more details on this single visit including type of place visited, specific location visited, distance travelled, where the visit started from and modes of transport used.

While the majority of survey questions are included in every weekly wave of the survey, some are asked on a monthly basis. In addition, a series of questions regarding other forms of engagement with the natural environment, such as watching nature programmes on television and engagement in pro-environmental activities such as recycling, are asked on a quarterly basis.

## Fieldwork

Fieldwork for Year 1 of MENE commenced in March 2009 and ran until February 2010. Year 2 fieldwork continued immediately without any break, running from March 2010 to February 2011 and Year 3 continued from March 2011 to February 2012. Year 4 started in March 2012 and is on-going.

During the 2011/12 survey period, 47,418 interviews were undertaken allowing the key details of 53,898 visits to be collected, and more detailed information from 19,014 visits to be gathered. By comparison, the 2010/11 survey involved 46,099 interviews, with key details collected for 47,825 visits and more detailed information for 17,389 visits. The 2009/10 survey involved 48,514 interviews, with key details taken for 58,653 visits and further detailed information taken for 20,374 visits.

## Analysis

Sample sizes are much larger than those obtained in previous leisure visits surveys, offering the opportunity to analyse results at both a national level and at smaller geographic areas. Results can also be analysed for key groups within the population such as specific age groups, members of ethnic minorities and residents of particular types of geographic areas (for example, urban or rural). Also, the large sample of visits recorded in the survey facilitates analysis of results on the basis of a wide range of visit characteristics such as activities and places visited. The application of grid references (geocodes) to visit destinations provides opportunities for the mapping of results and the identification of visits taken to different types of place including designated areas.

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<sup>17</sup> The number of visits a respondent could be asked about was capped at 10 to avoid excessively long interview durations. Over the course of the year, 1% of respondents reported taking more than this maximum number of visits. Weighting procedures have taken account of this maximum allowance - see technical report for further details.

## Presentation of results

It should be noted that in some of the figures and tables included in this report the results do not total to 100 per cent. This can be due to a number of reasons as follows:

- Results are rounded to the nearest whole number. Therefore in some cases the totals of the rounded results may equal 99 per cent or 101 per cent.
- In some questions respondents could provide more than one response (“multiple choice” - for example, the activities undertaken during a visit). In these cases the total of percentages may be well over 100 per cent.
- In some figures and tables results relating to only some of the answer options are included. In these cases the percentages illustrated will total less than 100 per cent.

It should also be noted that all of the averages included in the report are calculated as mean scores.

A Technical Report is available from the Natural England website providing full details of survey methods including the full questionnaire.

## Appendix 2 Accuracy of survey results

The following provides a summary of the margins of error associated with certain key results and 'rules of thumb' to apply when interpreting the survey findings.

Between March 2011 and February 2012 a total of 47,418 interviews were completed, and key details were collected for 53,898 visits, with additional details were collected on 19,014 selected visits.

The table below illustrates the **design effect** associated with each of these samples. This is an indication of how much larger the sample variance is with the complex survey design used in MENE than it would be if the survey was based on the same sample size but selected randomly (i.e. a Simple Random Sample).

The table also includes the **design factor** which is an inflation factor for the standard errors obtained using a complex survey design. The overall design factor at the all respondent level of 1.35 indicates that standard errors for the 12 months' data are 1.35 times as large as they would have been had the design been a Simple Random Sample.

The design factor is used to obtain the **effective sample size** which gives, for a complex survey design, an estimate of the sample size that would have been required to obtain the same level of precision in a Simple Random Sample. The estimated effective sample size for respondent based results after twelve months of interviewing is 25,769 - around 54 per cent of the actual achieved sample.

**Table A** Sample design effect and design factor

	Total sample	Design effect	Design factor	Effective sample
Respondent based results	47,418 respondents	1.84	1.35	25,769 respondents
All visit based results	53,898 visits	1.84	1.35	29,245 visits
Selected visit based results	19,014 visits	2.40	1.55	7,925 visits

These design factors may be used to obtain an indication of the levels of accuracy of results obtained from MENE.

For example with a Simple Random Sample, a result of 50 per cent with the total respondent sample of 47,418 would have a margin of error of +/-0.45 percentage points at the 95 per cent levels of confidence. Multiplying this value by 1.35 provides us with the margin of error when taking account of the MENE sample design i.e. +/-0.61 percentage points.

Taking this approach the following margins of error may be estimated for certain key results from the third year of data collection:

- 41.6 per cent of the population had visited the natural environment in the last seven days. This result ranges from 41.0 per cent to 42.2 per cent.
- 54.9 per cent of the population stated that they normally visited the natural environment at least once a week. This result ranges from 53.6 per cent to 56.2 per cent.

The following provides an indication of the general levels of accuracy of MENE results when applying the design factors described above.

## Respondent based results

- Where the sample size is in excess of 40,000 respondents, the data will generally be accurate to around  $\pm 0.6\%$  at the 95% confidence level.
- When the sample size is around 10,000 respondents, the data will generally be accurate to around  $\pm 1.3\%$  at the 95% confidence level.
- Where the sample size is around 5,000 respondents, the data will generally be accurate to around  $\pm 1.8\%$  at the 95% confidence level.
- Where the sample size is around 1,000 respondents, the data will generally be accurate to around  $\pm 4.1\%$  at the 95% confidence level.

## All visit based results

- When the sample size is around 50,000 visits, the data will generally be accurate to around  $\pm 0.6\%$  at the 95% confidence level.
- When the sample size is around 20,000 visits, the data will generally be accurate to around  $\pm 0.9\%$  at the 95% confidence level.
- When the sample size is around 10,000 visits, the data will generally be accurate to around  $\pm 1.3\%$  at the 95% confidence level.
- Where the sample size is around 5,000 visits, the data will generally be accurate to around  $\pm 1.8\%$  at the 95% confidence level.

## Selected visit based results

- When the sample size is around 20,000 visits, the data will generally be accurate to around  $\pm 1\%$  at the 95% confidence level.
- When the sample size is around 10,000 visits, the data will generally be accurate to around  $\pm 1.5\%$  at the 95% confidence level.
- Where the sample size is around 5,000 visits, the data will generally be accurate to around  $\pm 2.1\%$  at the 95% confidence level.
- Where the sample size is around 1,000 visits, the data will generally be accurate to around  $\pm 4.6\%$  at the 95% confidence level.

## Estimates of total visits

One of the outputs of MENE is a series of estimates of the total number of visits taken by adults in England between March 2011 and February 2012. Estimates of visits have been produced for all visits and for visits taken to particular types of place.

The table below illustrates the upper and lower confidence limits associated with these estimates. These estimates take account of two sources of variation: the uncertainty associated with respondent based results and the sample variation in terms of the number of visits respondents report to have taken in the 7 days prior to interview.

**Table B** Total number of visits taken by adults

	12 month visit estimate '000s visits	Lower confidence limit '000s visits	Upper confidence limit '000s visits
<b>All visits</b>	<b>2,726,476</b>	<b>2,655,216</b>	<b>2,797,749</b>
<b>By specific place visited</b>			
A playing field or other recreation area	228,865	209,810	247,921
Allotment or Community Garden	20,600	14,962	26,239
Another open space in a town or city	221,587	202,061	241,113
Another open space in the countryside	328,169	299,141	357,198
Beach	151,792	138,448	165,137
Children's Playground	80,171	71,052	89,291
Country Park	196,595	180,542	212,649
Farmland	241,213	216,984	265,443
Mountain, hill or moorland	76,343	64,823	87,864
Park in town or city	628,383	600,050	656,719
Path, cycleway or bridleways	430,117	399,777	460,458
River, lake or canal	261,436	241,053	281,821
Village	194,448	173,998	214,899
Woodland or forest	358,314	331,431	385,198
<b>By general place visited</b>			
Town or city	1,048,624	1,009,654	1,087,598
Seaside resort or town	162,241	148,367	176,115
Seaside coastline	101,002	89,252	112,752
Countryside	1,414,610	1,357,302	1,471,925

## Estimates of expenditure during visits

MENE also collects data on the amounts spent during visits to the natural environment. This data is then applied to estimates of the total volume of visits taken to obtain an estimate of the total amount spent on all visits taken over a 12 month period. The table below illustrates the confidence limits associated with these estimates.

**Table C** Expenditure during visits

	<b>12 month visit estimate</b>	<b>Lower confidence limit</b>	<b>Upper confidence limit</b>
<b>Average spend per visit (excluding visits with no spend)</b>	£28.16	£23.65	£32.67
<b>Average spend per visit (including visits with no spend)</b>	£7.46	£6.27	£8.65
<b>Estimated total spend all visits over 12 month period</b>	£20.1 billion	£16.9 billion	£23.3 billion

A Technical Report is available from the Natural England website providing full details of the survey accuracy.



# Appendix 3 Definitions of socio-economic groups

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## **A UK: 3% of the population**

These are professional people, very senior managers in business or commerce, or are top-level civil servants.

Retired people, previously grade A, and their widows/ widowers.

## **B UK: 18% of the population**

Middle management executives in large organisations, with appropriate qualifications.

Principal officers in local government and civil service.

Top managers or owners of small business concerns, educational and service establishments.

Retired people, previously grade B, and their widows/ widowers.

## **C1 UK: 27% of the population**

Junior management, owners of small establishments, and all others in non-manual positions.

Jobs in this group have very varied responsibilities and educational requirements.

Retired people, previously grade C1 and their widows/ widowers.

## **C2 UK: 24% of the population**

All skilled manual workers, and those manual workers with responsibility for other people.

Retired people previously grade C2, with a pension from their job.

Widows/widowers, if receiving pensions from their late spouse's job.

## **D UK: 16% of the population**

All semi skilled and unskilled manual workers, and apprentices and trainees to skilled workers.

Retired people, previously grade D, with a pension from their job.

Widows/widowers, if receiving pensions from their late spouse's job.

## **E UK: 12% of the population**

All those entirely dependent on the state long term, through sickness, unemployment, old age or other reasons.

Those unemployed for a period exceeding 6 months (otherwise classified on previous occupation).

Casual workers and those without a regular income.

Only households without a chief wage earner are coded in this group.