

Natural England Commissioned Report NECR049

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

Annual Report from the 2009-10 survey

First published 06 September 2010

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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 Research International 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 own 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 2009-10.

Published alongside this report are:

- Summary data tables (as an annex to the annual report) which provide cross tabulations of all survey questions against standard socio-economic variables.
- A technical report (NECR050) providing full details of the survey methodology including approaches to sampling, grossing and weighting, and estimates of confidence intervals.

Further reports are planned from the 2009-10 survey and will be 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.

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

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Summary

This report summarises the headline findings from the first 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, focusing on visits to the natural environment. Fieldwork took place between March 2009 and February 2010.

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.

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

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

- Frequency of participation in visits to the natural environment varies greatly across the English population – whilst half of the adult population normally visited the natural environment at least once per week (54 per cent), 10 per cent of respondents stated they had not taken a visit in the previous 12 months and 8 per cent had made only one or two visits.
- The English adult population participated in an estimated 2.86 billion visits to the natural environment in the 12 months from March 2009 to February 2010. This equates to an average of 69 visits per adult.
- Due to differences in survey scope and methodology the results from MENE cannot be directly compared with results from the 2005 England Leisure Visits Survey (ELVS). A calibration exercise was undertaken to enable some results from ELVS to be adjusted to make them more comparable with results from MENE 2009-10. The results of this exercise suggest that there has been a real increase of 7 per cent in the volume of visits to the natural environment between 2005 and 2009-10. These findings should be treated as indicative rather than conclusive. No similar exercise has been undertaken to compare MENE 2009-10 results with the results of leisure day visits surveys prior to 2005.

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

- Levels of participation in visits to the natural environment were higher amongst people aged between 45 and 64, people in employment and people in the ABC1 socio-economic groups.
- Levels of participation were significantly lower amongst the oldest age groups (aged 65 and over), within the black and minority ethnic (BME) population and members of the DE socio-economic groups.

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

- Just under half of visits to the natural environment were taken to the countryside (48 per cent), 41 per cent were to green spaces such as parks within town and city locations, 7 per cent were to a green space in a seaside town or resort and 4 per cent to another coastal location.
- Visits by residents in the most deprived neighbourhoods, those in the lowest socio-economic groups and the BME population were more likely to be to urban destinations and to places closer to home.
- Almost a quarter of all visits included a visit to a park in a town or city. Forests and woodlands were visited on 11 per cent of visits.
- Two thirds of visits were taken within two miles of the starting point of the visit (66 per cent), highlighting the importance of accessible green space that is close to home.
- While coastal visits were more likely to be taken by car, the majority of countryside visits were taken on foot by people living locally in a rural or urban fringe area.

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

- The average visit to the natural environment lasted for just over 2 hours.
- Just under half of all visits (48 per cent) involved walking, accompanied by a dog. The majority of other visits involved walking (without a dog), playing with children, eating out or visiting attractions. Other popular activities included running, informal games and wildlife watching.
- Almost a half of all visits were taken by an adult on their own. The average party size was 2.5. Children were present in the party on 22 per cent of visits.
- Fewer than three in ten visits included any expenditure (25 per cent), with the average spend during these visits being around £28 per person.
- An estimated £20.4 billion was spent during visits to the natural environment taken in England in 2009-10 – the majority of this expenditure being on food and drink (53 per cent), fuel (13 per cent) and admission fees (10 per cent).

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

- 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.
- Men were more likely than women to be motivated by health benefits while women were more likely to want to spend time with family, to take visits to entertain children or exercise their dog.
- Over half of visits taken by those in the C2DE socio-economic groups were taken to exercise their dog (54 per cent compared to 43 per cent of ABC1s) while those in the AB socio-economic groups were motivated by the widest range of benefits including health and exercise, scenery, fresh air and pleasant weather.
- Infrequent visitors to the natural environment were most likely to indicate that a lack of time as a result of being busy at work or at home were their main reasons for *not* being able to take visits to the natural environment more often. People who never participate in such visits were most likely to state that old age, ill health or a long term illness or disability prevented them from doing so.

Enjoying and appreciating the natural environment (see Section 7 for more details):

- Most people engaged with the natural environment in some way at home or in their garden – 64 per cent enjoyed sitting or relaxing in their garden, 55 per cent took part in gardening and 53 per cent regularly or occasionally watched or listened to nature programmes on television or radio. Most of those people who never actually visit the natural environment participated in one or more of these other activities (73 per cent).
- The vast majority of the English adult population agreed that having green spaces close to where they live is important to them but slightly fewer have significant concerns about the state of the natural environment (36 per cent ‘agree strongly’ with the statement ‘*I am concerned about damage to the natural environment*’ while 52 per cent ‘agree’).
- People who visit the outdoors frequently are more likely to have concerns for the natural environment and to participate in pro-environmental activities such as buying seasonal or locally grown produce and becoming members of environmental or conservation organisations.

Acknowledgements

The TNS Research International project team would like to thank all the officers of Natural England who provided assistance in the development and administration of the first year of the Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) survey. In particular, many thanks to Hazel Thomas, Alison Darlow and Erica Wayman.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report summarises the headline findings from the first 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, focusing on visits to the natural environment. Fieldwork took place between March 2009 and February 2010.
- 1.2 The survey was undertaken by TNS Research International on behalf of Natural England, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Forestry Commission.

Background

- 1.3 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 on how and why people currently engage with the natural environment.
- 1.4 A series of previous 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. 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 Natural England, Defra and the Forestry Commission therefore commissioned TNS Research International to undertake the MENE survey.
- 1.6 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 such as gardening, watching wildlife and volunteering.

Survey aims and objectives

- 1.7 This survey has been commissioned to provide information about the relationship between people and the natural environment. Whilst the main focus of the survey is on visits to the natural environment, it also seeks to capture other ways of using or enjoying the natural environment.
- 1.8 The aims of the survey are to:
 - provide estimates of the number of visits to the natural environment by the adult (16 years and over) population in England;
 - measure the extent of participation in visits to the natural environment and find out 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
 - find out patterns in use and participation for key groups within the population and at a range of spatial scales.

Survey definitions

- 1.9 The survey focuses upon people's use and enjoyment of the natural environment. By natural environment we mean the green open spaces in and around towns and cities as well as the wider countryside and coastline. It does not include time spent in private gardens.

Structure of the report

- 1.10 This report presents the headline findings for 2009-10 under the following sections:

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 during 2009-10.

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, whether close to home or further afield. It includes an analysis of distance travelled and mode of transport.

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

Section 6: Why? Reasons for visiting or not visiting – this section explores findings on motivations for visits to the natural environment and benefits gained by visiting the natural environment. It also includes an analysis of the barriers which prevent participation.

Section 7: Enjoying and appreciating the natural environment – this section summarises findings on other ways of enjoying and appreciating the natural environment, drawing out key findings by population group.

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 – a summary of the definitions of socio-economic groups that are used in this report.

Further publications from the survey

- 1.11 This report summarises the headline findings from MENE for 2009-10. Published alongside this report are:
- **Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment Technical Report** – which provides full details of the survey methodology including approaches to sampling, grossing and weighting, estimates of confidence intervals and the full questionnaire; and
 - **Summary data tables** – which provide cross tabulations of all survey questions against standard socio-economic variables.
- 1.12 The survey provides a rich source of data on people and their relationship with the natural environment. A series of further outputs are planned from MENE 2009-10 and will be available from the Natural England website.

2 An overview of visits to the natural environment

2.1 This section of the report summarises key findings on overall participation in visits to the natural environment focusing on frequency of visits, the volume of visits (at national and regional level) and commenting on indicative trends since 2005.

Headline results in this section

- **Frequency of participation in visits to the natural environment** varies greatly across the English population – whilst half of the adult population normally visited the natural environment at least once per week (54 per cent), 10 per cent of respondents stated they had not taken a visit in the previous 12 months and 8 per cent had made only one or two visits.
- The English adult population participated in an estimated **2.86 billion visits to the natural environment in 2009-10**. This equates to an average of 69 visits per adult.
- Due to differences in survey scope and methodology the results from MENE 2009-10 cannot be directly compared with results from the 2005 England Leisure Visits Survey (ELVS). A calibration exercise was undertaken to enable some results from ELVS to be adjusted to make them more comparable with results from MENE 2009-10. **The results from this exercise suggest that there has been a real increase of 7 per cent in the volume of visits to the natural environment between 2005 and 2009-10**. These findings should be treated as indicative rather than conclusive. No similar exercise has been undertaken to compare MENE 2009-10 results with the results of leisure day visits surveys prior to 2005.

Frequency of visits

2.2 In 2009-10 just over half of the adult population of England (54 per cent) stated that they normally visited the natural environment at least once a week on average, 10 per cent doing so on a daily basis (see Figure 2-1). Ten per cent reported that they had taken no visits in the previous 12 months and a further 8 per cent had made only one or two visits.

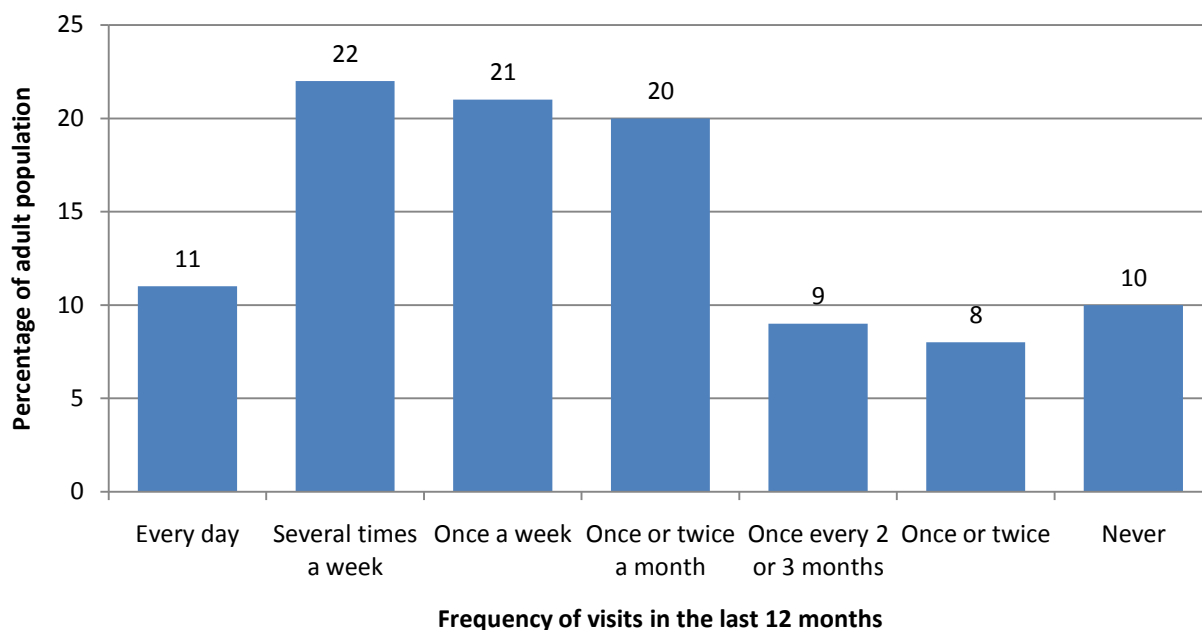


Figure 2-1 Frequency of visits to the natural environment (%)

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 (N=11,107)

- 2.3 The number of visits taken per adult during the last seven days was also recorded, allowing the production of estimates of the total volume of visits taken in each week of the survey period.
- 2.4 The survey found that in 2009-10 an average of 43 per cent of adults had visited the natural environment in the week prior to interview. 18 per cent had taken one visit while 9 per cent had visited twice (Figure 2-2). Overall 6 per cent took seven visits or more to the natural environment over previous week. This equates to an average of 69 visits across the year by every adult in England. Further details on the profile of participants and non-participants and variations within the population are provided in Section 3.

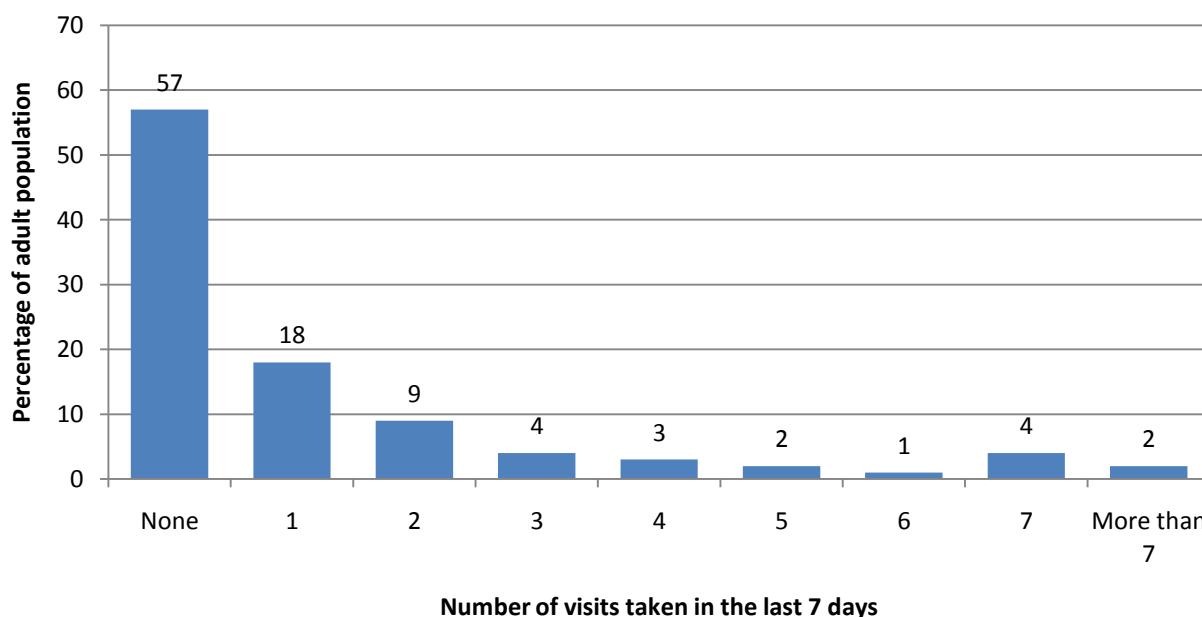


Figure 2-2 Number of visits to the natural environment taken in the previous seven days (%)

Q1 *How many times, if at all, did you make this type of visit?* Base: All respondents, weekly questions (N=48,514)

2.5 It should be noted that the percentage of the population recorded as taking visits in the week prior to interview (43 per cent) is lower than the percentage who stated that they 'normally' visited the natural environment once a week or more often (54 per cent). This difference suggests that some respondents may have overstated how often they normally take visits. This could be due to seasonal variations with some people normally taking visits once a week or more in the summer but participating less often at other times of year.

Estimated volume of visits in the last year

2.6 It is estimated that in 2009-10 the 41.4 million adults resident in England took a total of 2.86 billion visits to the natural environment¹. Just under half of these visits (48 per cent or 1.38 billion) were to places in the countryside and 41 per cent (or 1.16 billion) were taken to green spaces within a town or city. The remaining 11 per cent of visits were taken in a coastal setting – 7 per cent (or 0.21 billion) were taken to a green space in a seaside town or resort and 4 per cent (or 0.11 billion) to other seaside coastline (Figure 2-3). See Appendix 2 for details of the confidence intervals associated with these estimates.

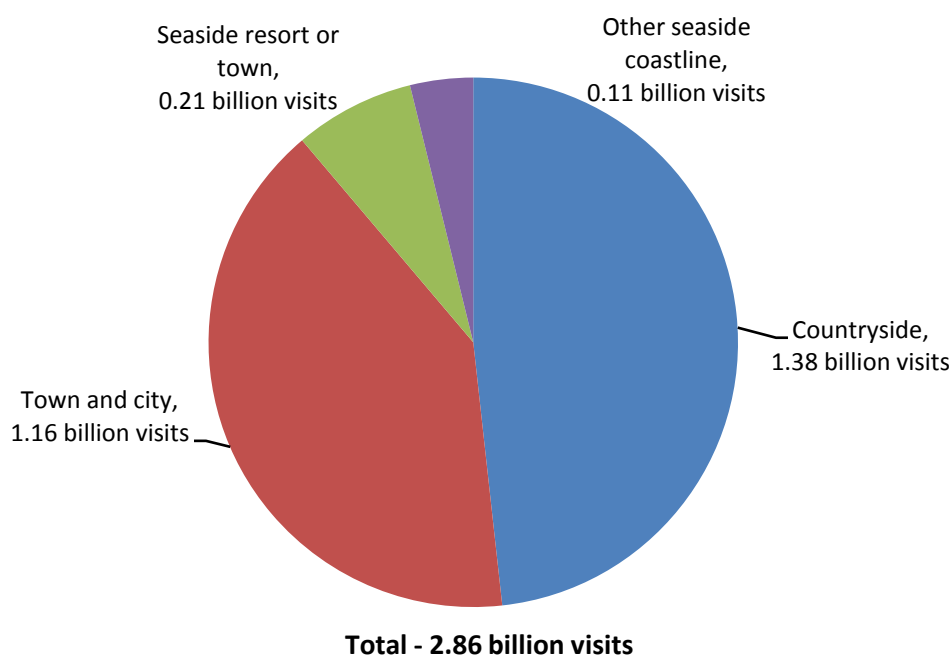


Figure 2-3 Volume of visits by main place visited (March 2009 to February 2010)

2.7 There is a broad seasonal variation in the volume of visits to the natural environment rather than significant variations on a month-by-month basis (Figure 2-4). For the six months, commencing in March 2009, including the Easter holiday period, through to August, the monthly volume of visits to the natural environment ranged between 257 and 284 million. In the remaining six months, from September 2009 to February 2010, the monthly volume of visits was at a lower level, between 187 and 226 million. Within that period, there were monthly totals of around 200 million visits to the natural environment during each of the main winter months of December to February.

¹ Taking account of margins of error, at the 95% confidence level estimated total visits range from 2.78 to 2.93 billion.

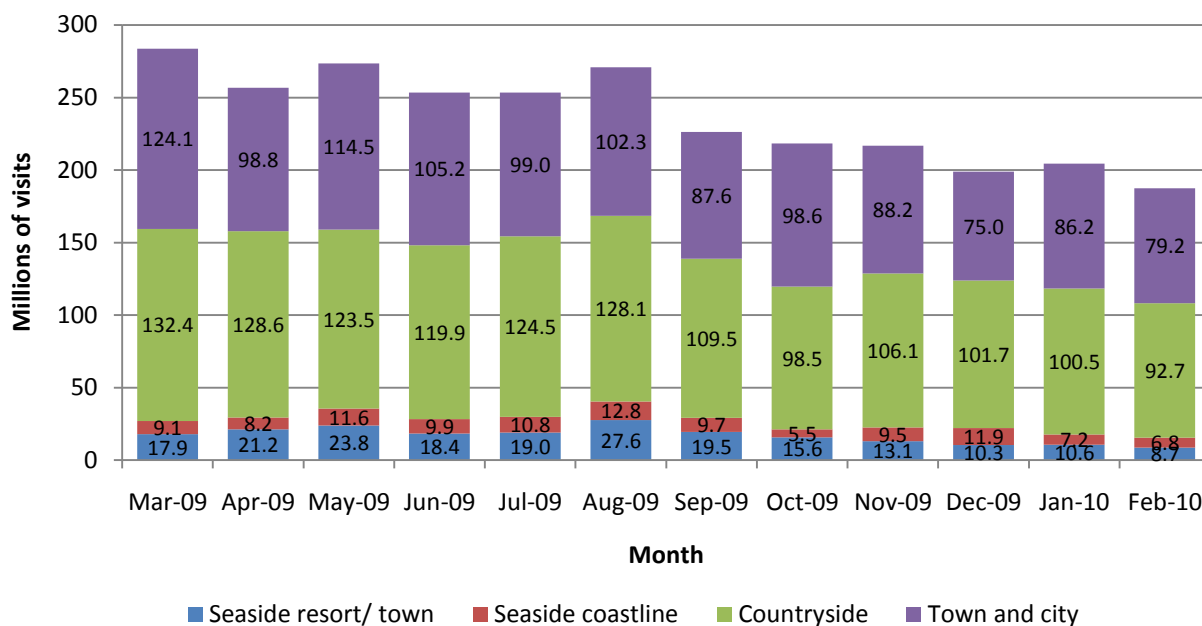


Figure 2-4 Volume of visits by month (millions, March 2009 to February 2010)

2.8 Figure 2-4 also illustrates seasonal variations in visitor numbers by the type of place visited. Of the various types of places visited the number of visits to green spaces in seaside resorts and towns was the most variable on a seasonal basis. The monthly volume of visits ranged from 8.7 million to 27.6 million with peaks in May and August 2009 (23.8 million and 27.6 million visits). A similar pattern is evident in the distribution of visits to coastline.

Regional distribution of visits

Resident-based distribution

- 2.9 Figure 2-5 illustrates the estimated 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.

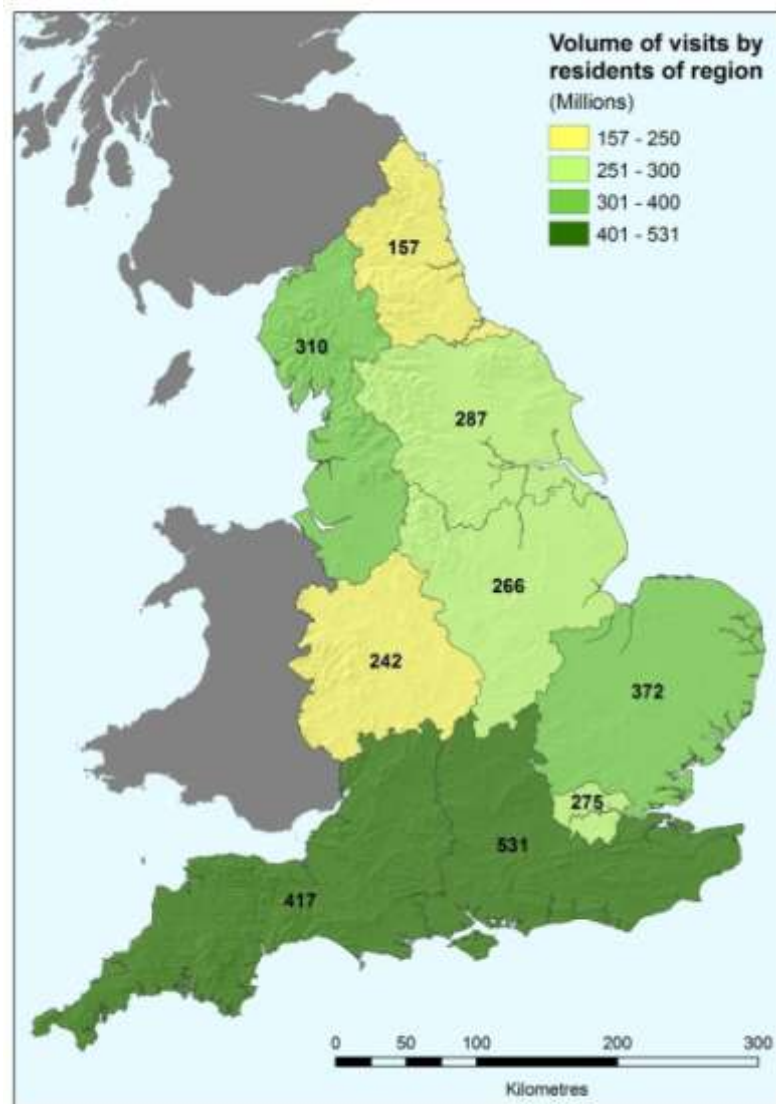


Figure 2-5 Volume of visits taken by residents of each Government Office Region (March 2009 to February 2010)

2.10 The average number of visits taken per adult over the 12 months' period was 69. There was however considerable variation in the average number of visits (Figure 2-6) ranging from 99 visits by residents of the South West to 45 visits by London residents. The other regions adjacent to London recorded relatively high figures for the average number of visits – 82 for residents of the East of England and 79 for residents of the South East.

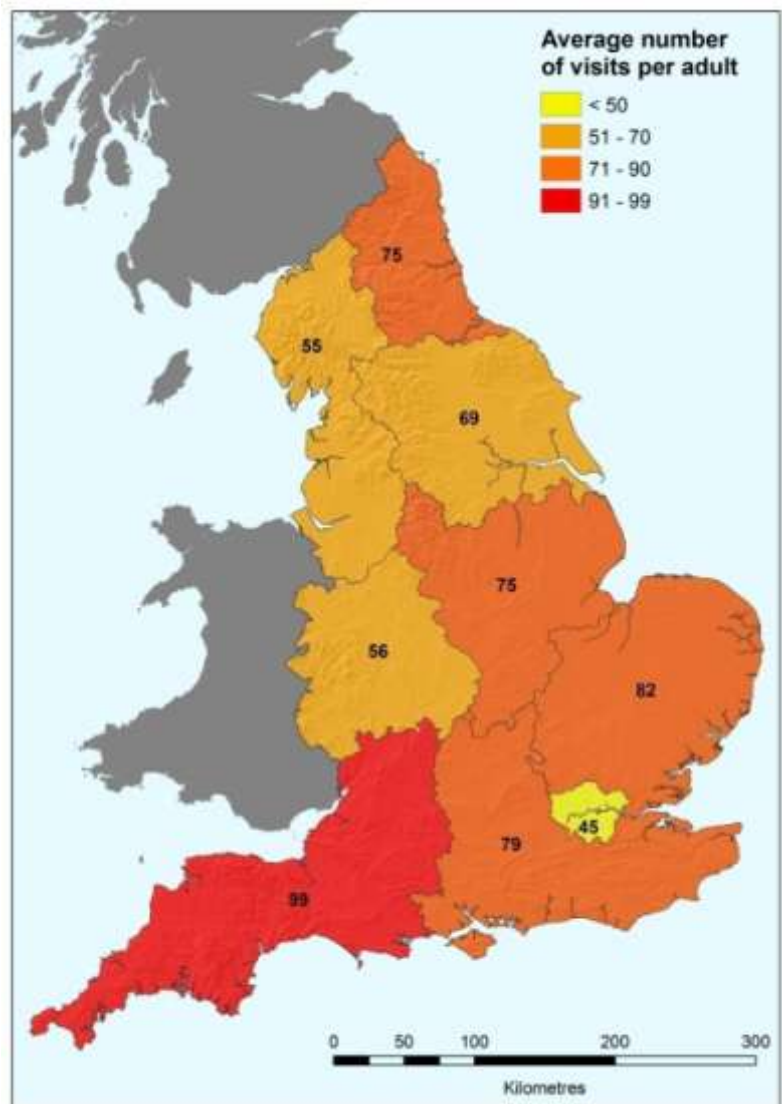


Figure 2-6 Average number of visits per adult by residents of each Government Office Region (March 2009 to February 2010)

Destination-based distribution

- 2.11 The South East (18 per cent of all visits) and the South West (15 per cent) are the main regional destinations for visits to the natural environment, followed by the East of England (13 per cent) (Figure 2-7). The North West and Yorkshire & Humber receive similar shares of visits – both around 10 per cent. The volume of visits to a regional destination will be influenced by the population living within that region but also the availability of natural environment to attract visitors from outside the region.

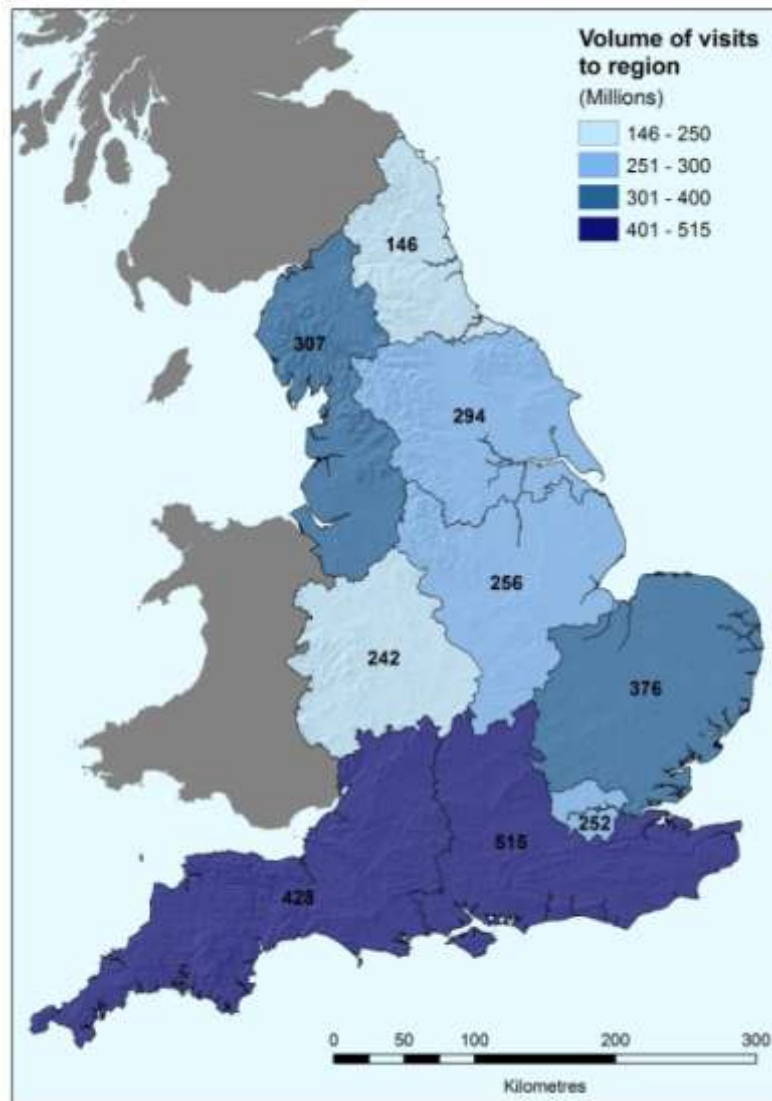


Figure 2-7 Estimated volume of visits taken to destinations in each Government Office Region (March 2009 to February 2010)

Note: The sum of the estimated volume of visits to England's regions (2.82 billion) is less than total volume of visits taken in England (2.86 billion) as the destination of 2% of visits could not be coded to a region.

Trends in volume and participation in visits

- 2.12 MENE recorded a total of 2.86 billion visits to the natural environment in 2009-10 while the previous England Leisure Visits Survey (ELVS) recorded 3.54 billion leisure day visits. The two surveys, however, are very different scope and methodology, meaning that the results cannot be directly compared. MENE (using a face to face approach) focuses upon visits to the natural environment, whereas ELVS (using a telephone approach) included all leisure days visits, including activities that would be considered out of the scope of MENE (including shopping, visits to the cinema and so on).
- 2.13 To be able to quantify changes since 2005 a calibration exercise was undertaken during 2009-10. This enabled some results from ELVS to be adjusted to allow them to be directly compared with the results from MENE 2009-10.
- 2.14 To take account of changes in survey methods and in the wording and structure of the questionnaire three parallel waves of surveying were undertaken on three occasions over the year as follows:
- Telephone interviewing using the original ELVS questionnaire.
 - In-home interviewing using the original ELVS questionnaire.
 - In-home interviewing using the MENE questionnaire.
- 2.15 An analysis of the data collected in each of these waves allowed measurement of the impacts of the change in method and in questionnaire wording. A series of calibration factors were used to adjust results from ELVS to make them more comparable with MENE results. It was only possible to compare levels of participation and the overall volume of visits for those outdoor activities which were covered in both ELVS and MENE. These include cycling (on and off road), walking without a dog, visits to a beach, visits to attractions, sightseeing/appreciating scenery and picnicking. These findings should therefore be treated as being indicative rather than conclusive.
- 2.16 The key findings from the analysis include:
- During 2009-10, an estimated 990 million visits to the natural environment involved one or more of the activities set out above. This represents a 10 per cent increase from the 898 million visits involving these activities recorded by ELVS for the period from February 2005 to January 2006. Taking account of population growth over this period (2.9 per cent), it is estimated that there has been a real increase in activity since 2005 of around 7 per cent.
 - MENE 2009-10 found that an average of 24 per cent of the English adult population took visits to the natural environment which involved one or more of these activities during the previous week. This represents an increase from the 20 per cent recorded in ELVS in 2005.
 - Much of the increase in the volume of visits taken relates to participation in walking and cycling (including mountain biking). In terms of demographic groups, participation amongst people aged between 16 and 24 and those aged 55 and over increased more significantly than amongst other age groups.
- 2.17 More details of the methodology and results from the calibration exercise are published in a separate report that will be available from the Natural England website. It is not possible to compare the MENE results with the results of leisure day visits survey prior to 2005 due to further differences in survey methods and scope. No similar calibration exercise has been undertaken to allow comparison with these earlier surveys.

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

3.1 This section of the report provides details on the types of people that do and don't visit the natural environment, focusing on key groups within the population, and drawing out differences by age, gender, ethnicity and socio-economic group.

Headline results in this section

- Levels of participation in visits to the natural environment were **higher amongst people aged between 45 and 64, people in employment and people in the ABC1 socio-economic groups.**
- Levels of participation were significantly **lower amongst the oldest age groups (aged 65 and over), within the black and minority ethnic (BME) population and members of the DE socio-economic groups.**

Participation in visits in the last 12 months

3.2 The English population may be divided into three broad groups according to their level of participation in visits to the natural environment:

- **Frequent visitors** – those who go on visits to the natural environment at least once a week (54 per cent or around 22 million adults).
- **Infrequent visitors** – those who visit once or twice a month or less often (37 per cent or around 15 million adults).
- **Non-participants** – those who have not visited the natural environment in the last 12 months (10 per cent or around 4 million adults).

3.3 Overall there is relatively little variation by gender in frequency of visits (Figure 3-1). Women are slightly more likely than men to never make visits to the natural environment.

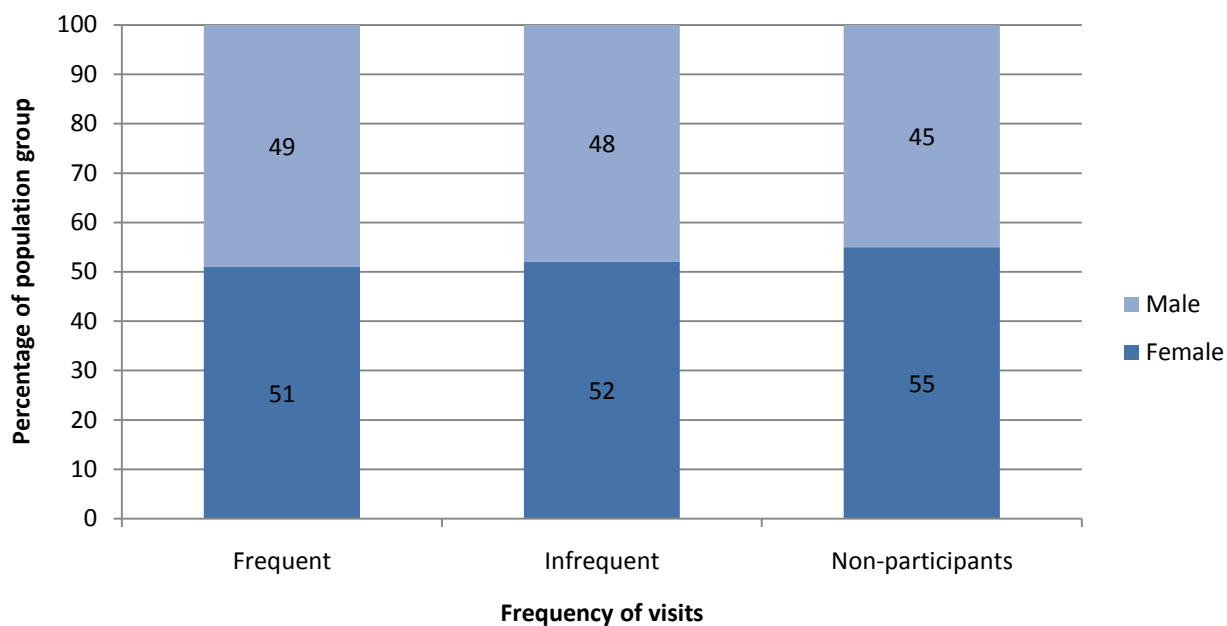


Figure 3-1 Gender profile by frequency of participation in visits to the natural environment (%)
 Q17 Thinking about the last 12 months, how often on average have you spent your leisure time out of doors, away from home? (Base: Monthly questions. Frequent N=5,844; Infrequent N=4,082; Non-participants=1,181)

3.4 This slightly higher level of non-participation from women may reflect that 36 per cent of those who did not take a visit to the natural environment in the last 12 months were in the age group of 65 years and over (Figure 3-2), despite this age group accounting for 19 per cent of the English adult population.

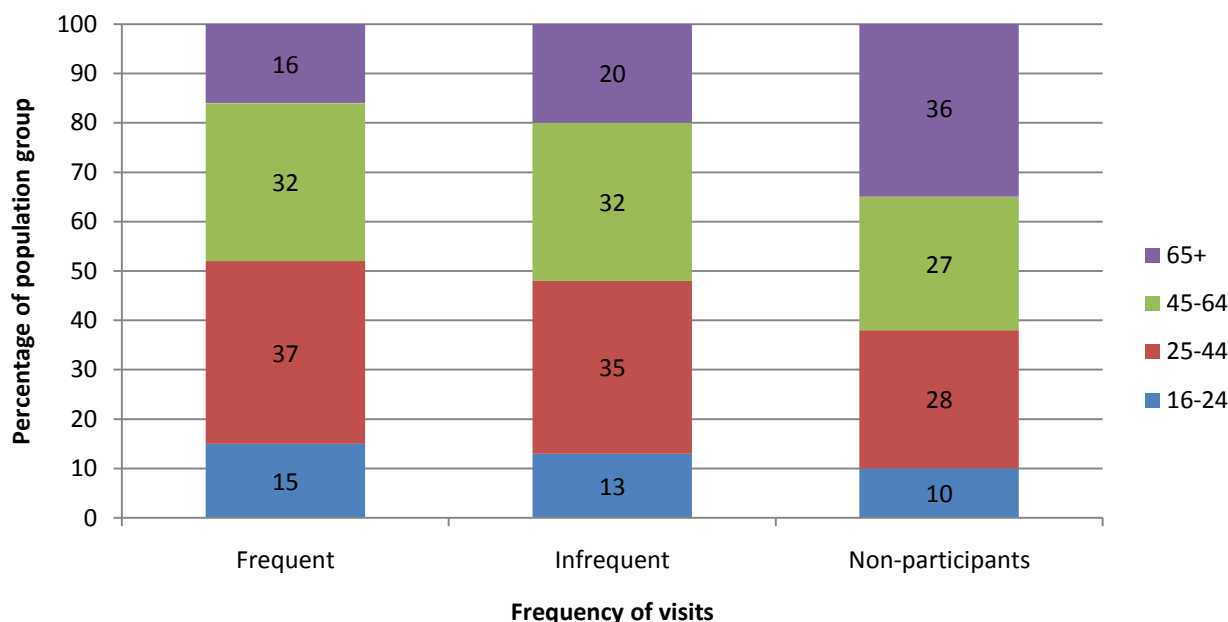


Figure 3-2 Age profile by frequency of participation in visits to the natural environment (%)
 Q17 Thinking about the last 12 months, how often on average have you spent your leisure time out of doors, away from home? (Base: Monthly questions. Frequent N=5,844; Infrequent N=4,082; Non-participants=1,181)

3.5 In terms of employment status, there is a higher proportion of retired people amongst those who never take a visit to the natural environment – 40 per cent compared to 21 per cent of those who take visits frequently, and 23 per cent of infrequent participants (Table 3-1).

Table 3-1 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. Frequent N=5,844; Infrequent N=4,082; Non-participants N=1,181)

	Frequency of visits		
	Frequent %	Infrequent %	Non-participants %
Working status			
Working full time (30+ hours per week)	47	49	33
Working part time (less than 30 hours per week)	12	11	8
Retired	21	23	40
At school or full time higher education	6	5	2
Unemployed/not seeking work	14	12	17
Long term illness and disability			
Any long term illness or disability	14	20	33
No long term illness of disability	86	80	67

3.6 Socio-economic status has been identified in previous studies as an important factor determining levels of participation with the natural environment. The results from MENE 2009-10 confirm this relationship. Amongst those who are frequent participants, 26 per cent are in AB socio-economic groups (compared to 22 per cent of the English population as a whole).

3.7 Those in DE socio-economic groups represent 29 per cent of the population but account for 47 per cent of those who never visit the natural environment. Older, retired people are more likely to feature in the DE categories and so this finding is closely related to the age distribution of those who never take visits to the natural environment.

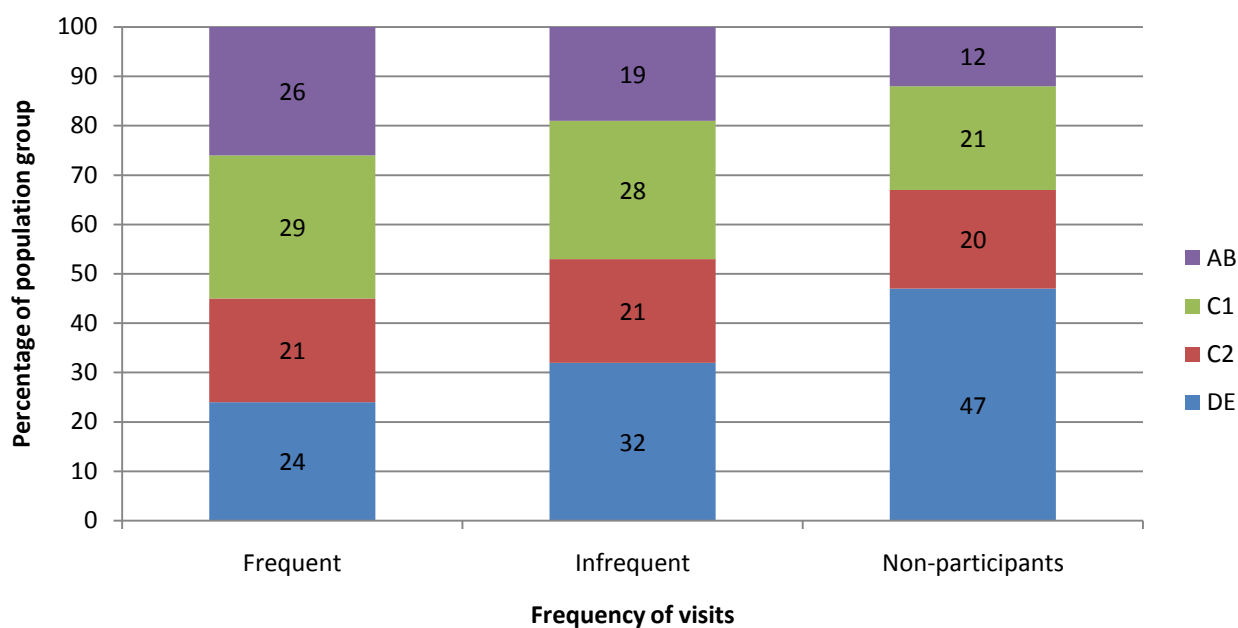


Figure 3-3 Socio-economic profile by frequency of participation in visits to the natural environment(%)

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. Frequent N=5,844; Infrequent N=4,082; Non-participants N=1,181)

- 3.8 In terms of ethnicity 20 per cent of those who never take a visit to the natural environment are from the BME population (Table 3-2). Amongst those who visit on at least a weekly basis, only 8 per cent are from the BME population, a slightly lower share than would be expected on the basis that they account for 12 per cent of the English population.
- 3.9 Table 3-2 also highlights the relationship between the environment in which people live and their level of participation. People who never visit the natural environment are more likely to live in deprived neighbourhoods. In particular 19 per cent of people that never visit the natural environment live in the bottom 10 per cent of the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007 (IMD), compared to 7 per cent of those that visit at least once a week².

² The IMD 2007 combines a number of social and economic indicators to give small geographic areas a single deprivation score. 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/

Table 3-2 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. Frequent N=5,844; Infrequent N=4,082; Non-participants N=1,181)

	Frequency of visits		
	Frequent %	Infrequent %	Non-participants %
Ethnicity			
BME	8	16	20
White	92	84	80
IMD			
Bottom 10%	7	12	19
Mid 11% to 89%	83	80	75
Top 10%	8	6	5

Note: The sum of percentages is less than 100% as a small proportion of respondent addresses (1%) could not be allocated to the IMD.

3.10 Finally, we have examined the relationship between people’s claimed levels of physical activity and participation (Figure 3-4). There is an association between those who did 30 minutes of physical activity between frequency of visits and levels of physical exercise. Just over a half (52 per cent) of those who visit the natural environment at least once a week, took part in physical activity for a minimum of 30 minutes per day on three or more days in the previous week. This compares with 21 per cent for non-participants.

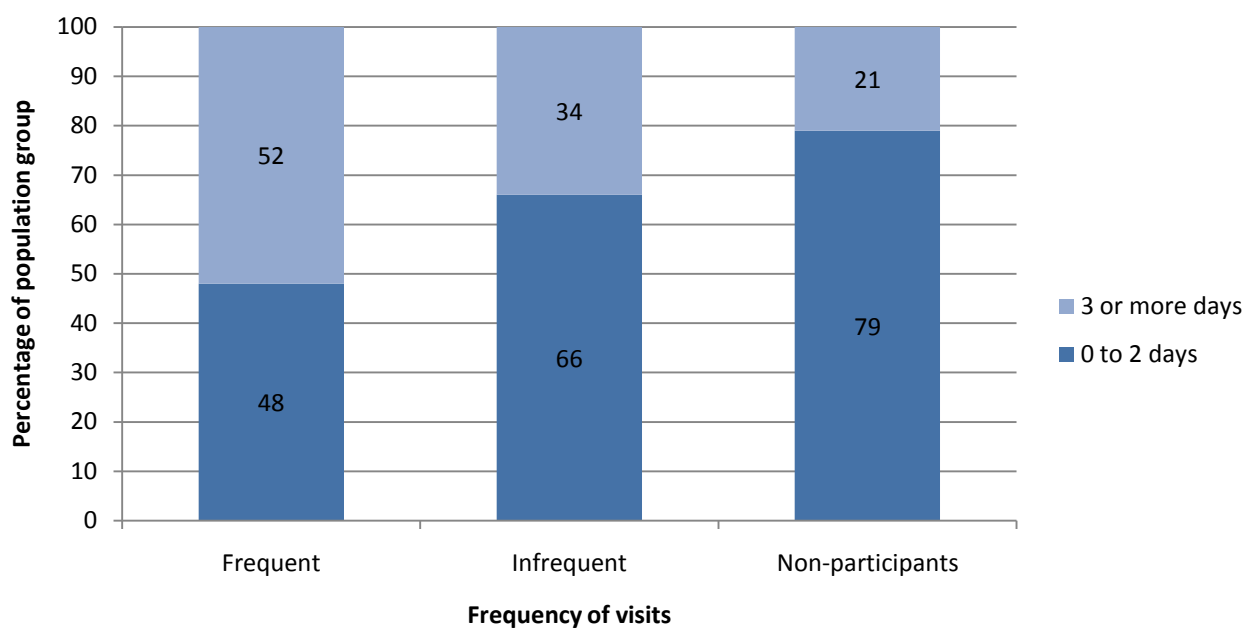


Figure 3-4 Number of days in last week undertook 30 minutes of more of physical activity by frequency of participation in visits to the natural environment (%)

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. Frequent N=5,844; Infrequent N=4,082; Non-participants N=1,181)

Participation in visits in the last seven days

- 3.11 Respondents were also asked about their visits to the natural environment in the week prior to being interviewed. This focus on the previous week meant that respondents were able to accurately recall the number of visits to the natural environment and the details of these visits.
- 3.12 Overall 43 per cent of the English population stated that they had taken at least one visit to the natural environment in the week prior to being interviewed (Figure 2-2 provides the detailed distribution of visits)³.
- 3.13 There are significant variations in participation by a number of demographic factors (Figure 3-5). For example, there is a clear relationship with age with 34 per cent of those aged 65 years and over having taken a visit to the natural environment in the last seven days. This compares to 46 per cent of those aged 45-64 years.
- 3.14 There is also a clear relationship between socio-economic status and participation. Amongst those in the professional and managerial occupations (ABs), 53 per cent had visited the natural environment in the previous seven days compared to 34 per cent of those in the DE grouping.

³ Taking account of margins of error, at the 95% confidence level the estimated percentage of the population taking visits ranges from 42.7 per cent to 43.9 per cent.

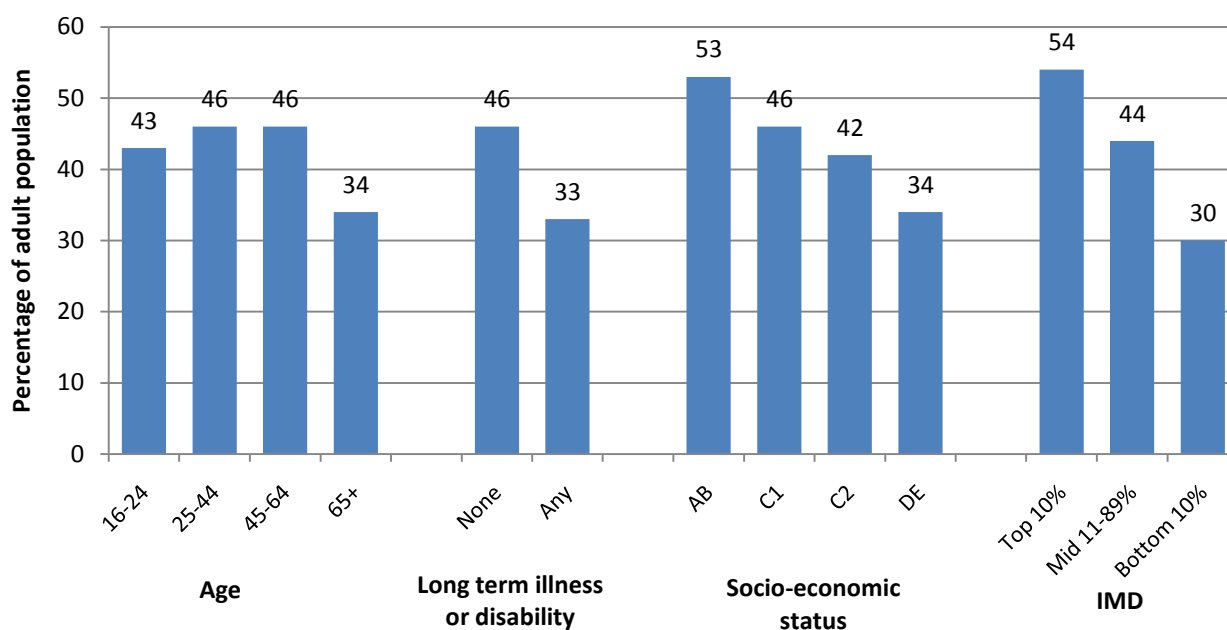


Figure 3-5 Participation in visits to the natural environment in last week by age, long term illness and disability, socio-economic status and Index of Multiple Deprivation (% reporting at least one visit in the last week)

Q1 *How many times, if at all, did you make this type of visit?* Base: All respondents, weekly questions (N= 48,514)

- 3.15 Variation in levels of participation based on where an individual lives is very evident. Over half of those people living in the top 10 per cent of areas in England (54 per cent), as defined by the IMD, had taken a visit to the natural environment in the previous seven days compared to 30 per cent of those living in the bottom 10 per cent.
- 3.16 Participation also varies by ethnicity with 37 per cent of those from the BME population having visited in the previous seven days compared to 45 per cent of those from a white ethnic background.
- 3.17 Access to a car is likely to reflect other demographic characteristics such as working status and socio-economic status. Some 48 per cent of those people who either owned or had access to a car had taken a visit to the natural environment in the week prior to interview compared to 31 per cent of those without such access.

3.18 Figure 3-6 sets out the variations in levels of participation in visits to the natural environment during the week prior to interview amongst residents of each region. Levels of participation were highest in the South West (54 per cent), East of England (49 per cent) and the South East (49 per cent). In contrast, London (36 per cent), the West Midlands (37 per cent) and the North West (39 per cent) record the lowest levels of participation.

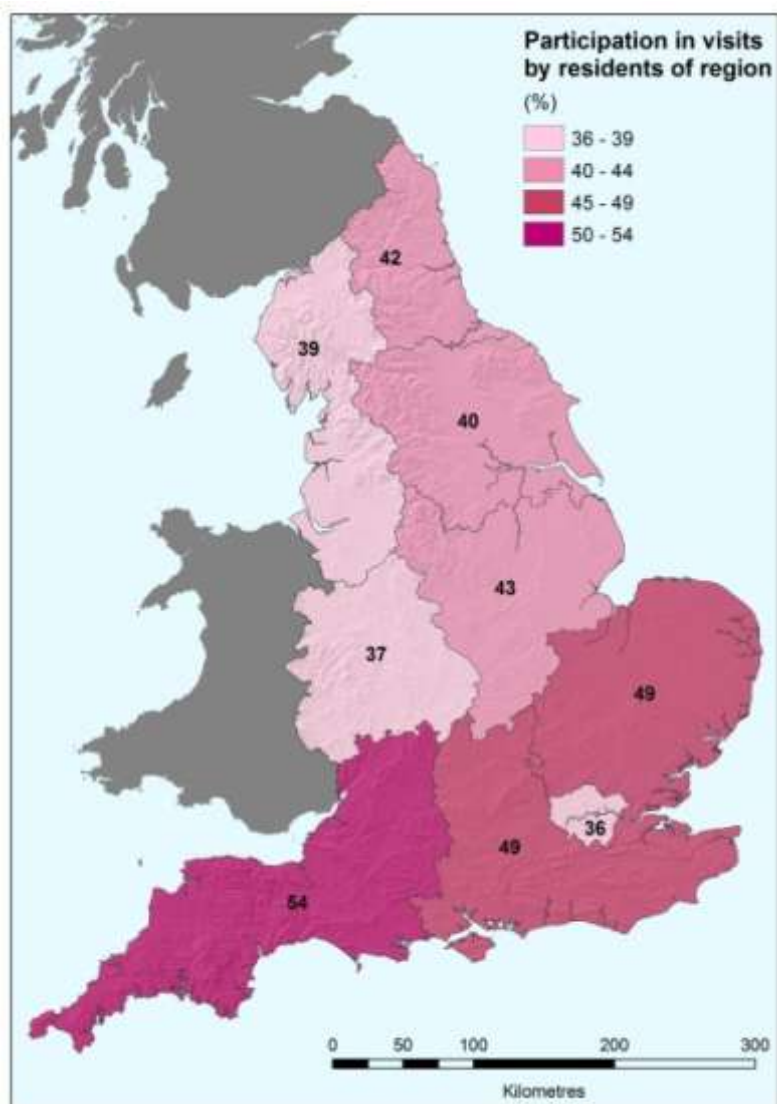


Figure 3-6 Participation in visits to the natural environment in week prior to interview by residents of each Government Office Region (%)

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 under half of visits to the natural environment were taken to the countryside** (48 per cent), 41 per cent were to green spaces such as parks within town and city locations, 7 per cent were to a green space in a seaside town and 4 per cent to another coastal location.
- Visits by residents in the most deprived neighbourhoods, those in the lowest socio-economic groups and the BME population were more likely to be to **urban destinations and to places closer to home.**
- **Almost a quarter of all visits included a visit to a park in a town or city.** Forests and woodlands were visited on 11 per cent of visits.
- **Two thirds of visits were taken within two miles of the starting point** of the visit (66 per cent), highlighting the importance of accessible green space that is close to home.
- While coastal visits were more likely to be taken by car, **the majority of countryside visits were taken on foot by people living locally in a rural or urban fringe area.**

Type of place visited

General type of place visited

- 4.2 Respondents were asked about the type of place that they visited during their visit to the natural environment – 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 Almost a half (48 per cent) of visits to the natural environment taken by the adult population in England in 2009-10 were to the countryside, equating to 1.38 billion visits. A slightly smaller volume of visits (1.16 billion) were taken to a green space in an urban location, representing 41 per cent of all visits. Coastal locations accounted for 11 per cent of all visits (0.32 billion visits), with 7 per cent to a green space in a seaside town and 4 per cent to another coastal location (0.21 billion and 0.11 billion visits respectively) (see Figure 2-3).
- 4.4 While there is little variation across the age groups in the volume of visits to coastal locations, there are significant differences in visits to countryside and urban locations (Figure 4-1). Those aged under 45 years and especially those aged under 25 years were more likely to go on visits to a green space within a town or city. In contrast, those aged over 45 years were more likely to favour a countryside location. This is likely to be the result of a number of factors such as available leisure time, preferred leisure activities, access to a car and area of residence.
- 4.5 Those in the lower socio-economic groups and resident in the more deprived neighbourhoods were also more likely to visit urban destinations. For those in the DE socio-economic groups, 48 per cent of visits were to green spaces in urban locations compared to 42 per cent to the countryside. In the bottom 10 per cent of areas ranked by the IMD, 64 per cent of visits were to urban locations compared to 24 per cent to the countryside.

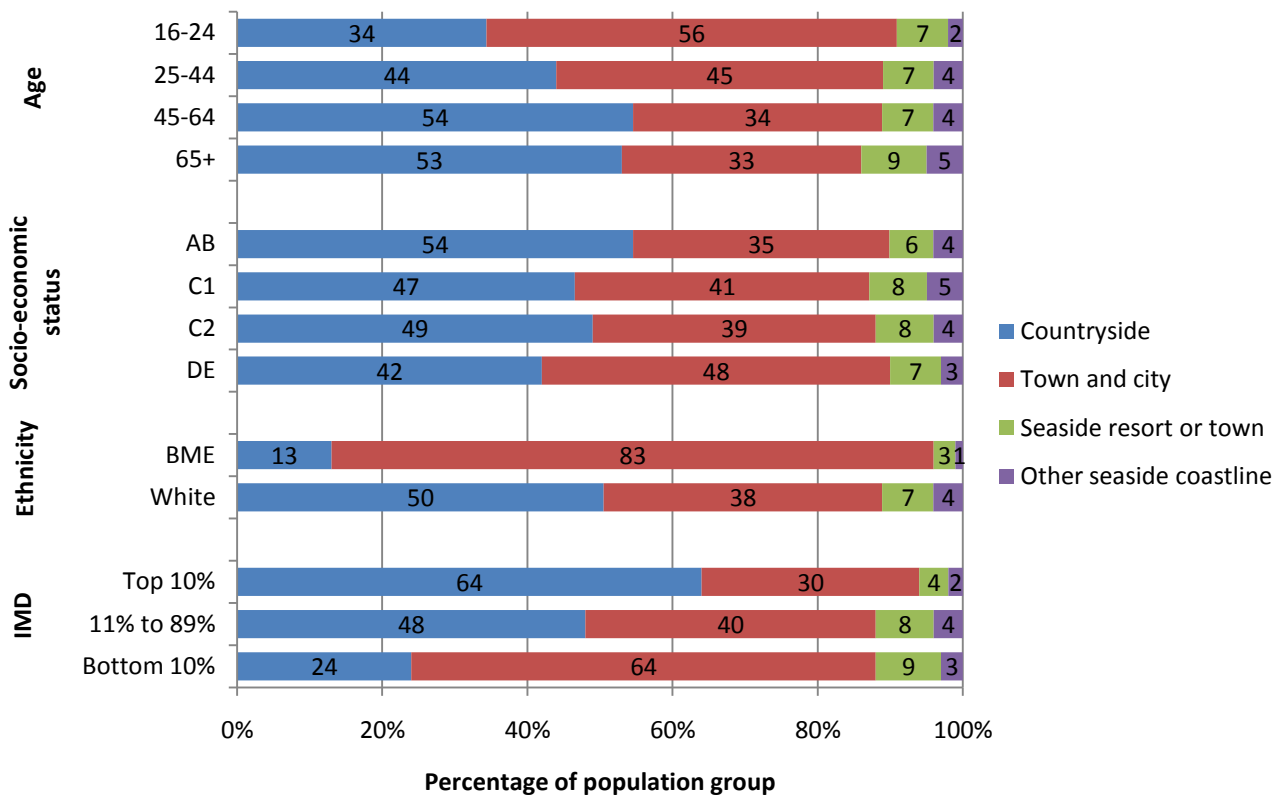


Figure 4-1 Type of place visited by age, socio-economic status, ethnicity and Index of Multiple Deprivation (%)

Q2 Which of the following best describes where you spent most of your time on this visit Base: All visits, weekly questions (N=58,653)

- 4.6 This use of urban locations was even more marked when analysis by ethnic origin was undertaken. Some 83 per cent of all visits to the natural environment by those from the BME population were to green spaces within towns and cities, while 13 per cent were to the countryside.
- 4.7 Visits to countryside locations were also more commonplace amongst those who were more active and took part in at least 30 minutes of exercise at least three days per week – 49 per cent of their visits to the natural environment were to the countryside compared to 43 per cent of those made by those less active, taking part in exercise less than three times per week.

Detailed type of place visited

- 4.8 As well as the general type of place visited, respondents were asked about the detailed type of destination for their visit. Figure 4-2 features all of the types of destination which accounted for at least 1 per cent of all visits to the natural environment. 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 and the sum of the percentages is more than 100 per cent.
- 4.9 Parks in towns and cities were the main destination, and were visited on 24 per cent of all visits to the natural environment. This is the equivalent to around 678 million visits during 2009-10.

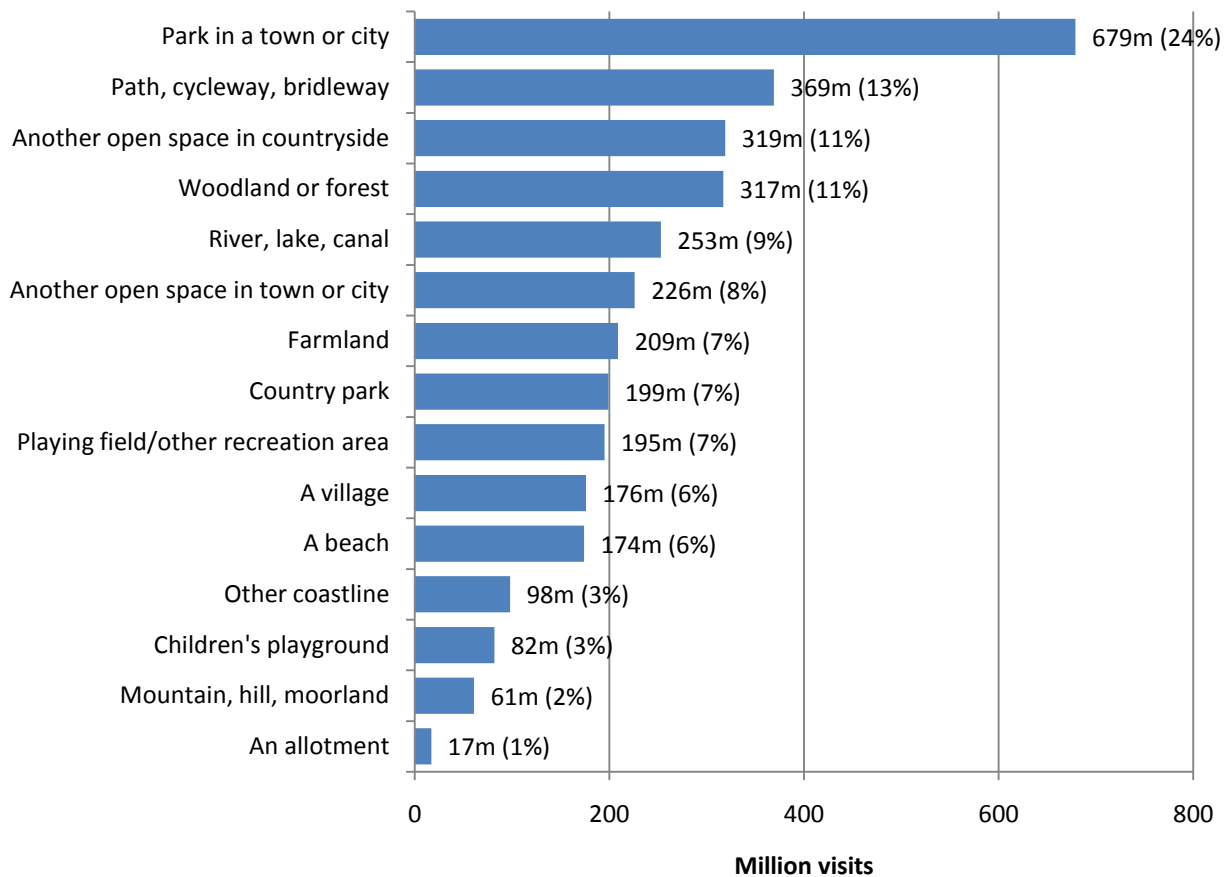


Figure 4-2 Type of places visited – specific (volume of visits March 2009 to February 2010 and percentage of total visits in this period)

Q5 Which of the following list of places best describes where you spent your time during your visit? Base: Random visit, weekly questions (N=20,374)

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

- 4.10 Woodlands or forests were visited on 11 per cent of all visits to the natural environment, representing 317 million visits. Both farmland and country parks were the destinations for 7 per cent of visits – just under 200 million visits to each. Beaches and villages were both the destinations for 6% of visits, accounting for around 175 million visits to each.
- 4.11 The important role which urban parks play in providing an accessible resource for visits to the natural environment is highlighted when further analysis is undertaken on the extent to which they are used for visits by different segments of the population (Figure 4-3). 35 per cent of all visits taken by those aged under 25 years were to urban parks compared 18 per cent of visits taken by those aged 65 years and older. For the BME population, urban parks can be regarded as their primary outdoors resource, accounting for over half of all visits taken (55 per cent).

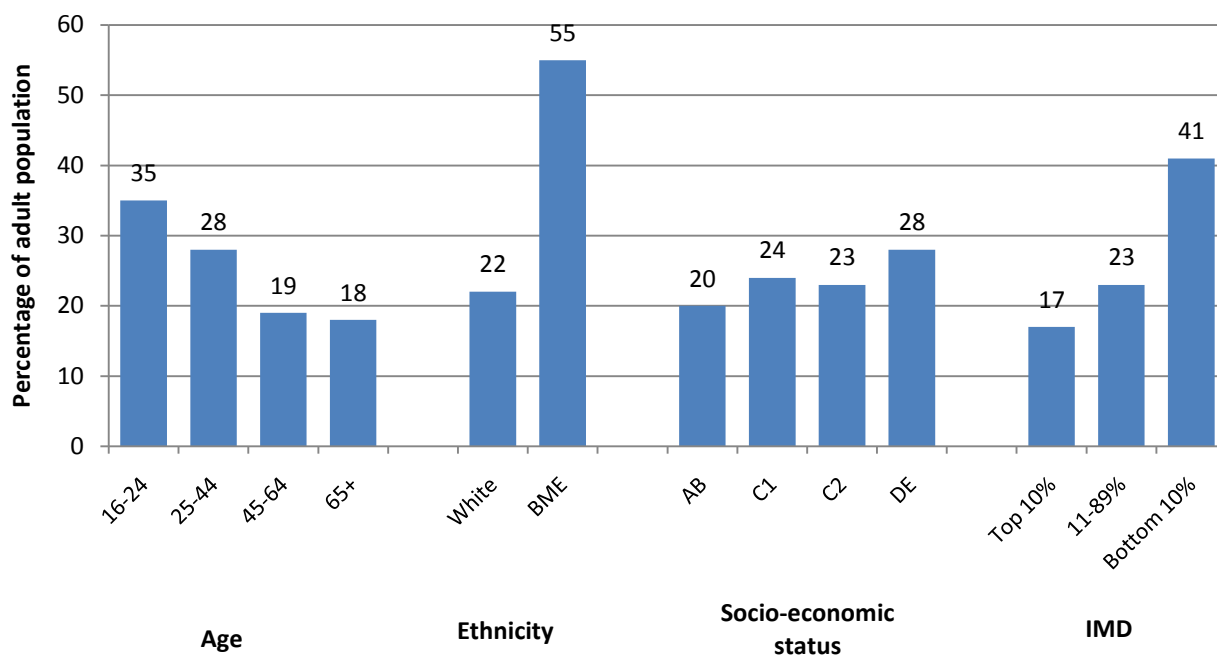


Figure 4-3 Proportion of visits taken to parks in towns and cities by age, ethnicity, socio-economic status and Index of Multiple Deprivation (%)

Q5 Which of the following list of places best describes where you spent your time during your visit? Base: Random visit, weekly questions (N=20,374)

4.12 The survey also collected detailed information on the exact location of the destination of the visit. With this information it will be possible to identify the volume of visits to different types of destinations and designated areas. Further spatial analysis is being undertaken and will be published as a separate report.

Distance travelled to main destination

4.13 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.

4.14 In 41 per cent of visits the main destination was within one mile (1.6 km) of the respondent's home (or other start point). A further 25 per cent of visits took place within a one to two mile catchment area (1.6 to 3.2 km). The majority of visits (81 per cent) took place within 5 miles (8 km) of the start point.

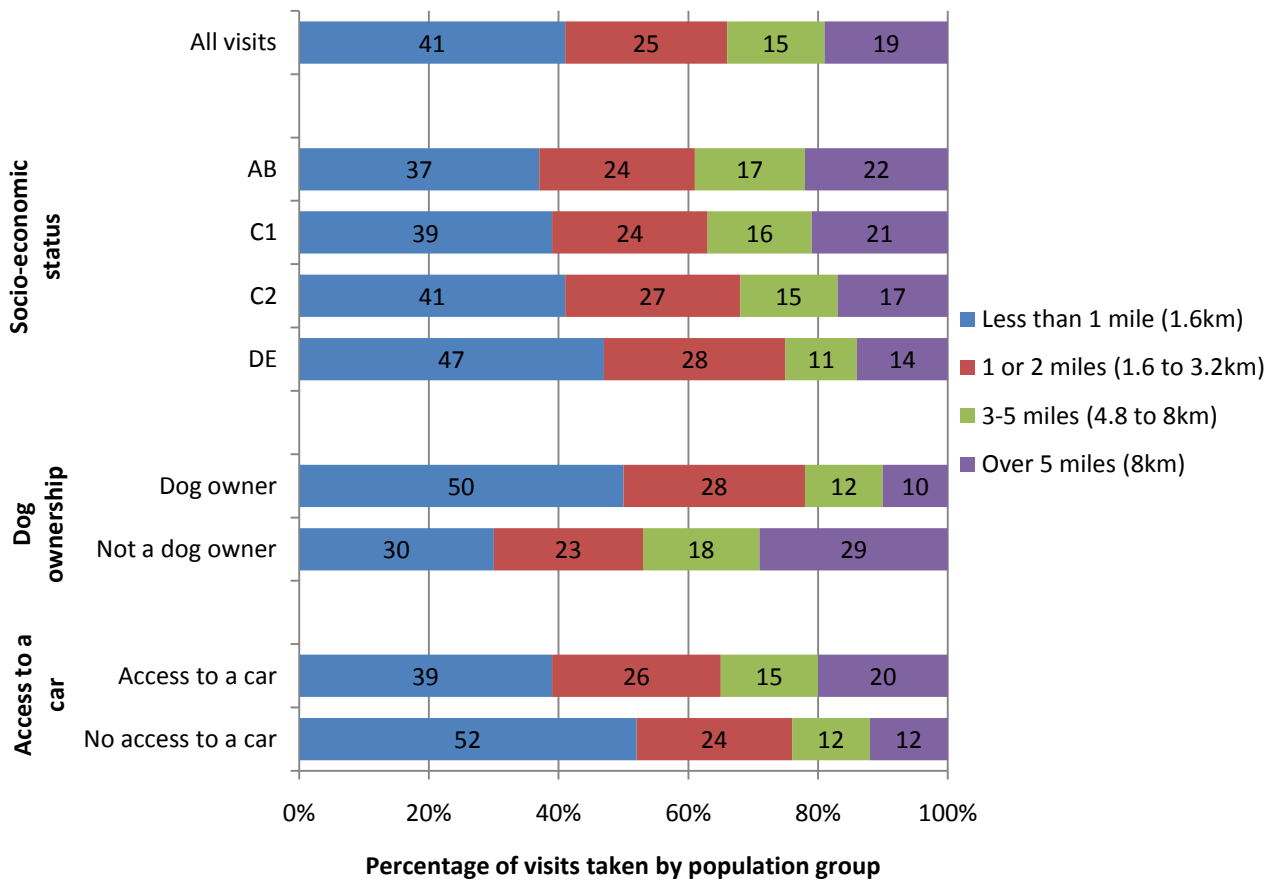
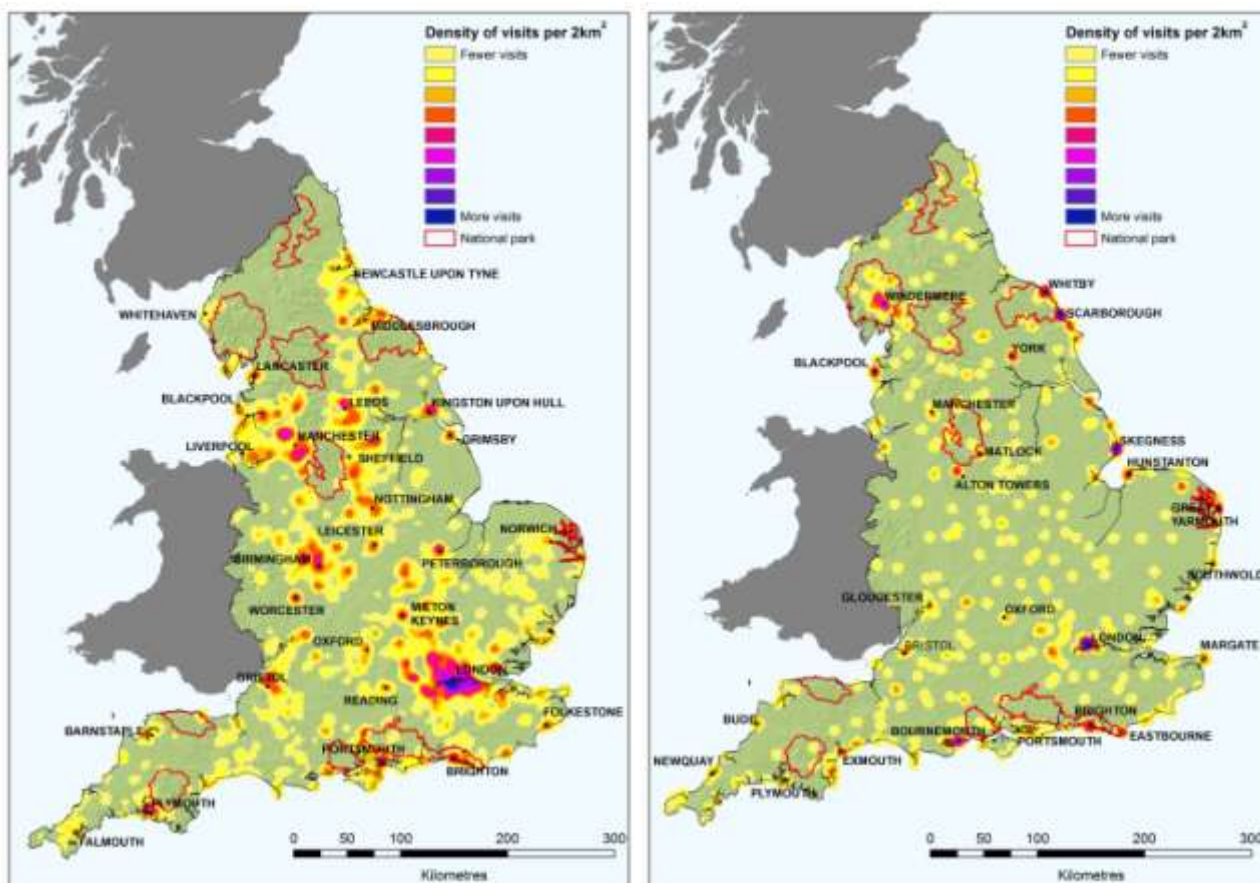


Figure 4-4 Distance travelled by socio-economic status, dog ownership and car access (%)
 Q8 *Approximately how far did you travel to reach this place?* Base: Random visit, weekly questions
 (N=20,374)

- 4.15 Visits undertaken by those in the lowest socio-economic groups were more likely to be closer to home – 47 per cent of the visits to the natural environment taken by those in the DE social classes were within 1 mile of their home. In contrast, 22 per cent of visits by those in the AB socio-economic groups were taken more than 5 miles from the start point.
- 4.16 Figure 4-5 illustrates the density of visit destinations, comparing those involving a journey of less than 5 miles, on the left-hand side, with those involving a journey of 60 miles or more. What is particularly evident is that the destinations of visits with shorter journeys are concentrated around the main population centres. In contrast longer journey destinations are clustered around traditional seaside resorts and popular inland destinations such as the Lake District, the Peak District and York.



Visits of 5 miles or less

Visits of 60 miles or more

Figure 4-5 Map of density of destination of visits to the natural environment (less than 5 miles and more 60 miles)

4.17 The distance involved in visits to the natural environment varied considerably between the various categories of destination (Figure 4-6). Almost half of all visits to green spaces within urban areas involved a distance of less than 1 mile. Visits to coastal destinations were more likely to involve longer journeys – around 33 per cent involved a distance in excess of 5 miles.

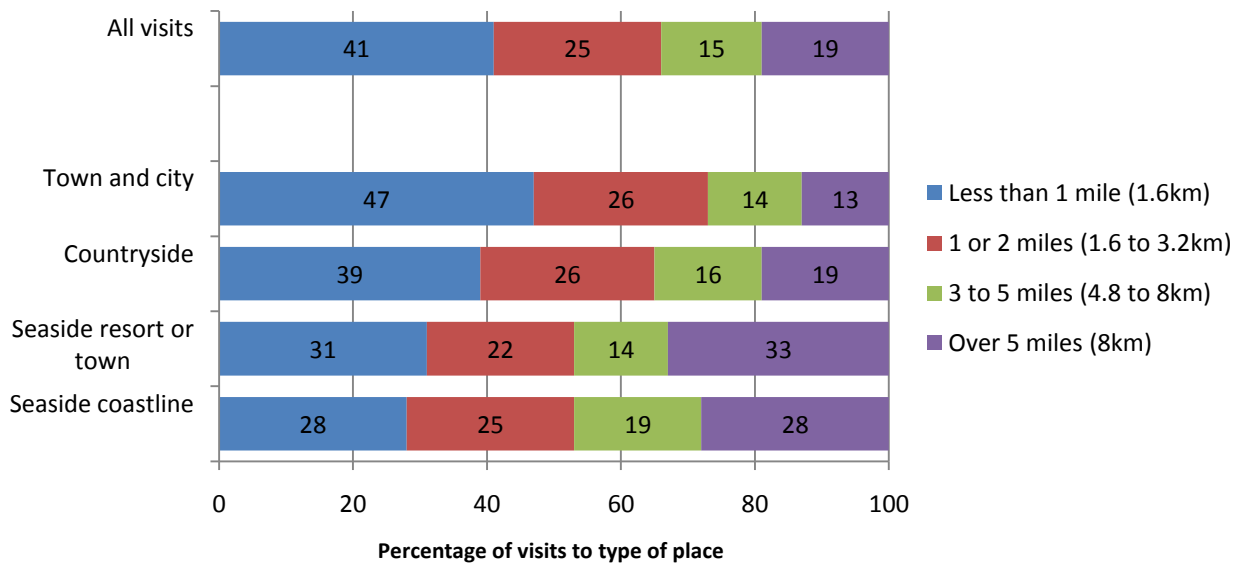


Figure 4-6 Distance travelled by place visited (%)
 Q8 *Approximately how far did you travel to reach this place?* Base: Random visit, weekly questions (N=20,374)

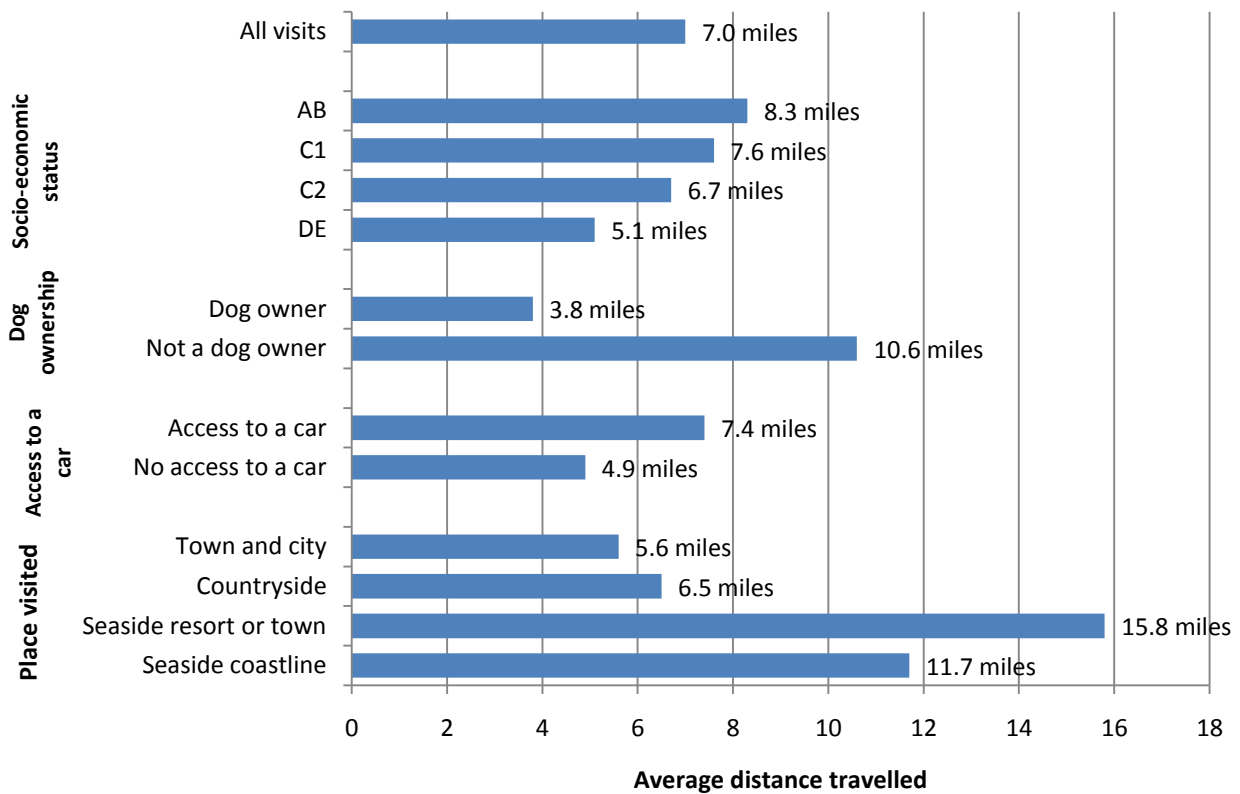


Figure 4-7 Average distance travelled by socio-economic status, dog ownership, car access and place visited
 Q8 *Approximately how far did you travel to reach this place?* Base: Random visit, weekly questions (N=20,374)

4.18 The majority of visits to the natural environment (95 per cent) started from the participant's home with the remainder being from someone else's home (2 per cent), from holiday accommodation (2 per cent) or from a workplace (1 per cent).

Mode of transport

- 4.19 Respondents were asked about the main mode of transport used on their journey. Walking was the main means of transport used on 61 per cent of visits. A car or van was used in 31 per cent of visits and public transport was used for only 3 per cent of visits (Figure 4-8).
- 4.20 For 91 per cent of ‘close-to-home’ visits of less than 1 mile, walking was the mode of transport, decreasing to 70 per cent of visits involving a journey of 1 to 2 miles. For longer journeys of more than 5 miles, only 4 per cent were by foot and 78 per cent were by car.
- 4.21 Visits to coastal destinations were more likely to involve travel by car while most urban visits involved a journey on foot or the use of public transport. The pattern of mode of transport does not vary significantly between urban and countryside destinations – the share of visits taken on foot is very similar and the main difference would appear to be greater use of public transport for urban visits (7 per cent) and a commensurate increase in the use of the car for countryside visits – 33 per cent compared to 25 per cent for urban visits. This would suggest that the majority of visits in countryside destinations are undertaken by those living locally rather than by residents of cities travelling significant distances out into the countryside.

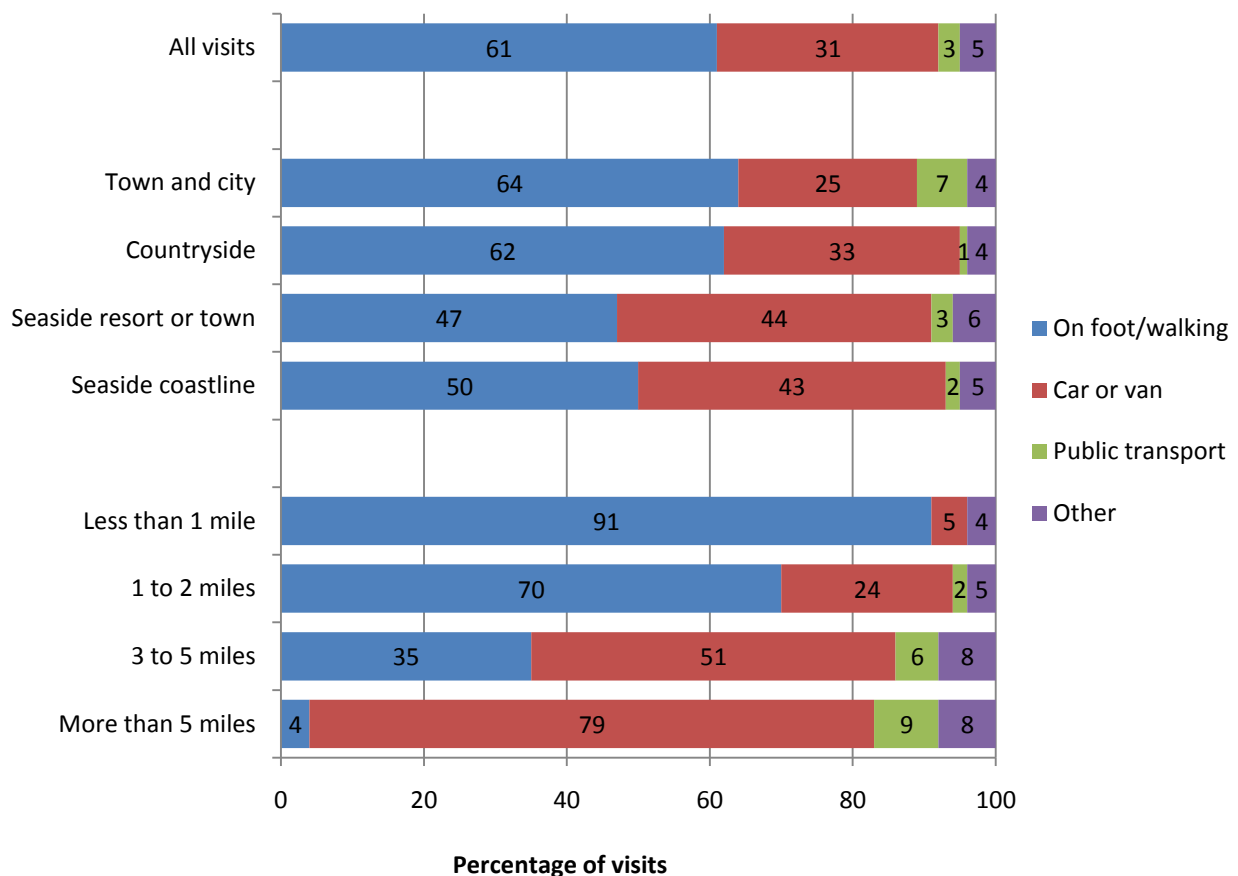


Figure 4-8 Mode of transport used on journey by place visited and distance travelled (%)
 Q11 What form of transport did you use on this journey? Base: Random visit, weekly questions (N=20,374)

5 What? A profile of visits

5.1 The characteristics of visits to the natural environment are considered in this section of the report. This includes an analysis of visit duration, the activities undertaken, 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 for just over 2 hours.
- **Just over a half of all visits (48 per cent) involved walking, accompanied by a dog.** The majority of other visits involved walking (without a dog), playing with children, eating out or visiting attractions. Other popular activities included running, informal games and wildlife watching.
- **Almost a half of all visits were taken by an adult on their own.** The average party size was 2.5. Children were present in the party on 22 per cent of visits.
- **Fewer than three in ten visits included any expenditure** (25 per cent), with the average spend during these visits being around £28 per person.
- In 2009-10, **an estimated £20 billion was spent during visits to the natural environment** – the majority of this expenditure being on food and drink (53 per cent), fuel (13 per cent) and admission fees (10 per cent).

Duration of visits

5.2 The average duration of a visit to the natural environment was just over two hours (2 hours, 1 minute). Over a quarter of visits were reported as lasting less than 1 hour (28 per cent) and a further 51 per cent lasted between 1 and 2 hours and 59 minutes. The remaining 22 per cent were reported as lasting for 3 hours or longer.

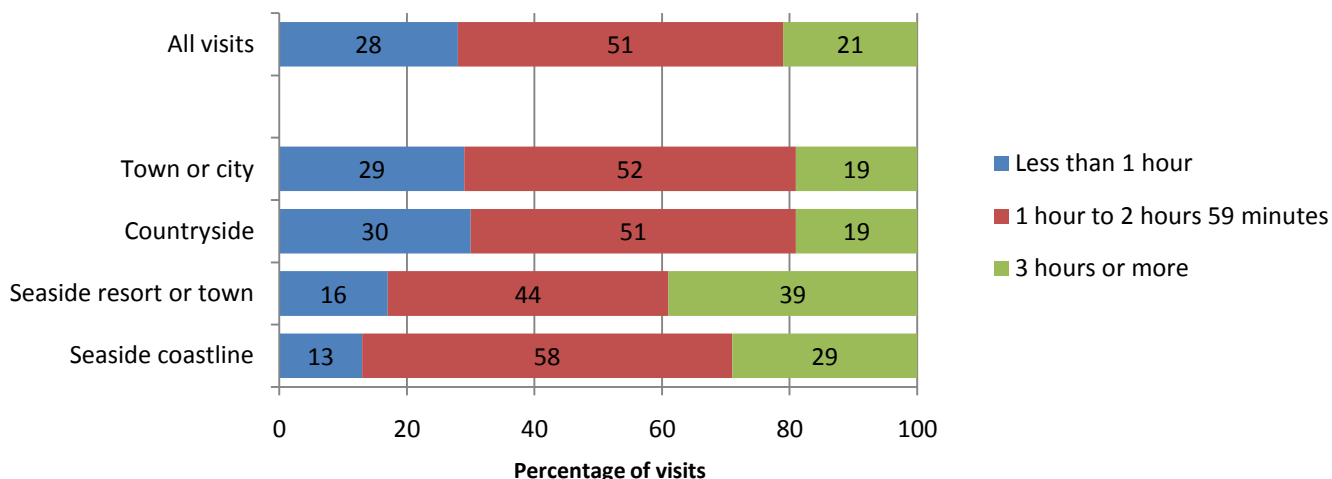


Figure 5-1 Duration of visits by place visited (%)
 Q3 How long did this visit last altogether? Base: All visits, weekly questions (N=58,653)

5.3 The duration of visits varied by the type of place visited. Visits to the coast were more likely to be longer in duration – 39 per cent of visits to green spaces in seaside resorts or towns and 29 per cent to other coastal areas lasted 3 hours or more compared with 19 per cent of visits to green spaces in towns and cities and 19 per cent of visits to the countryside.

5.4 It should be noted that when asked to specify the duration of their visit many respondents provided a rounded figure (for example, half an hour, an hour, two hours) rather than a precise response. For example, around two in five of responses in the 1 hour to 2 hours 59 minutes grouping presented in Figure 5-1 were recorded as lasting 1 hour.

Table 5-1 Distance travelled, mode of transport and activities undertaken by visit duration (%)
Q8 Which of these activities, if any, did you undertake? Base: All visits, weekly questions (N=58,653)

	Duration of visit		
	Less than 1 hour %	1 hour to 2 hours 59 minutes %	3 hours or more %
Distance travelled			
Less than 1 mile	61	40	16
1 or 2 miles	27	29	15
3 to 5 miles	8	18	18
Over 5 miles	4	14	51
Transport used			
On foot	85	64	24
Car or van	11	29	60
Public transport (rail or bus)	1	2	9
Other	3	4	7
Activities undertaken*			
Walking with a dog	71	50	12
Walking, not with a dog	19	27	32
Playing with children	3	9	13
Eating or drinking out	1	4	20
Visiting an attraction	1	2	13

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

Activities undertaken on visits

5.5 Walking emerged as the most popular activity on visits to the natural environment and was an activity on 74 per cent or 2.1 billion visits over the 12 months' period. (Figure 5-2) Walking with a dog was undertaken on 48 per cent of visits, representing around 1.4 billion visits. Other walking, without a dog, is the second most frequently undertaken activity, featuring in 26 per cent or around 740 million visits over the 12 month period.

5.6 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 and the sum of the percentages is more than 100 per cent.

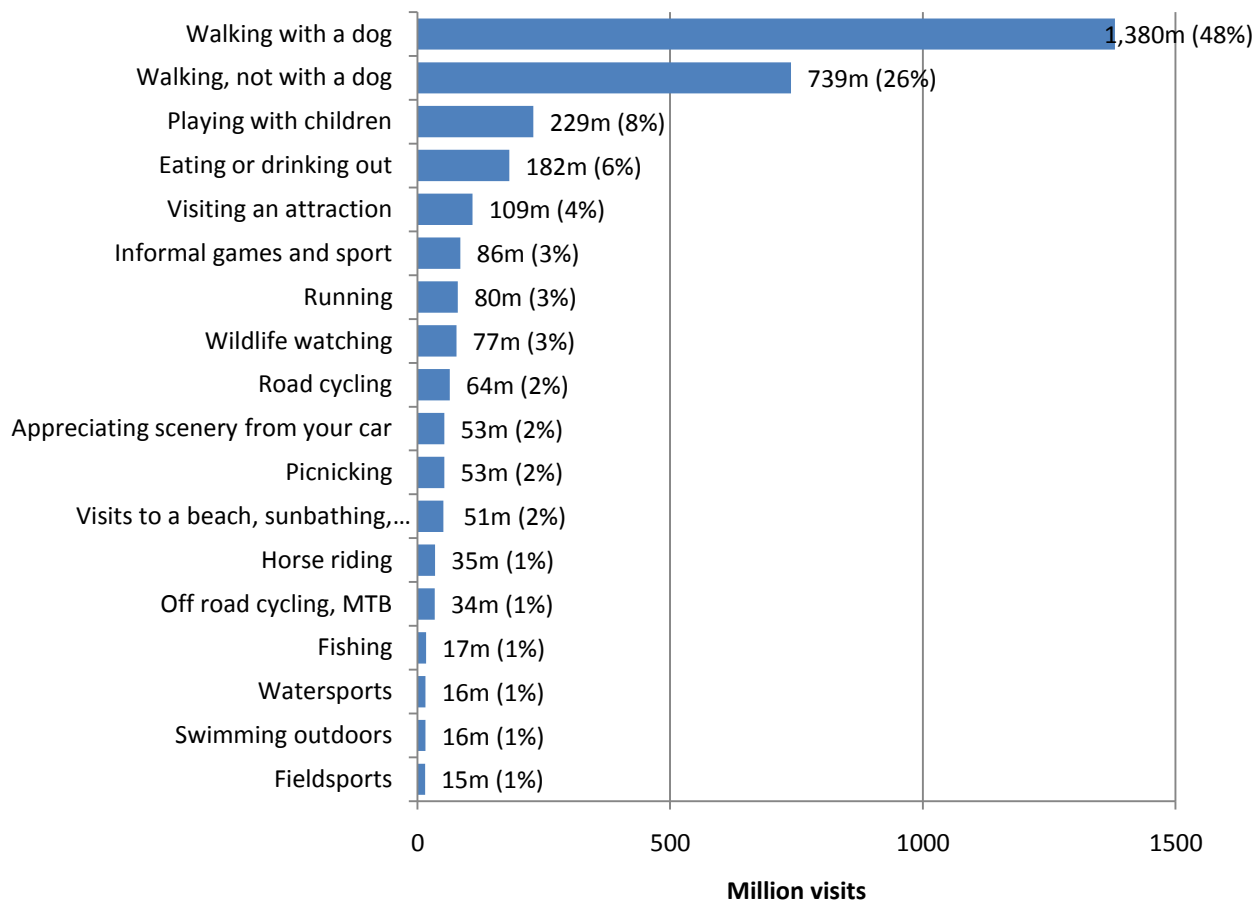


Figure 5-2 Activities undertaken during visits (volume of visits March 2009 to February 2010 and % of total visits in this period)

Q8 Which of these activities, if any, did you undertake? Base: All visits, weekly questions (N=58,653)

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

5.7 Further analysis highlights the variations in the pattern of activities undertaken on visits between different groups within the population (Figure 5-3). Walking (with or without a dog) was relatively more important for those in older age groups. There were also significant differences by socio-economic group, with walking with a dog relatively more important for respondents in groups C2DE. Walking without a dog, playing with children and eating out were relatively more important for the BME population.

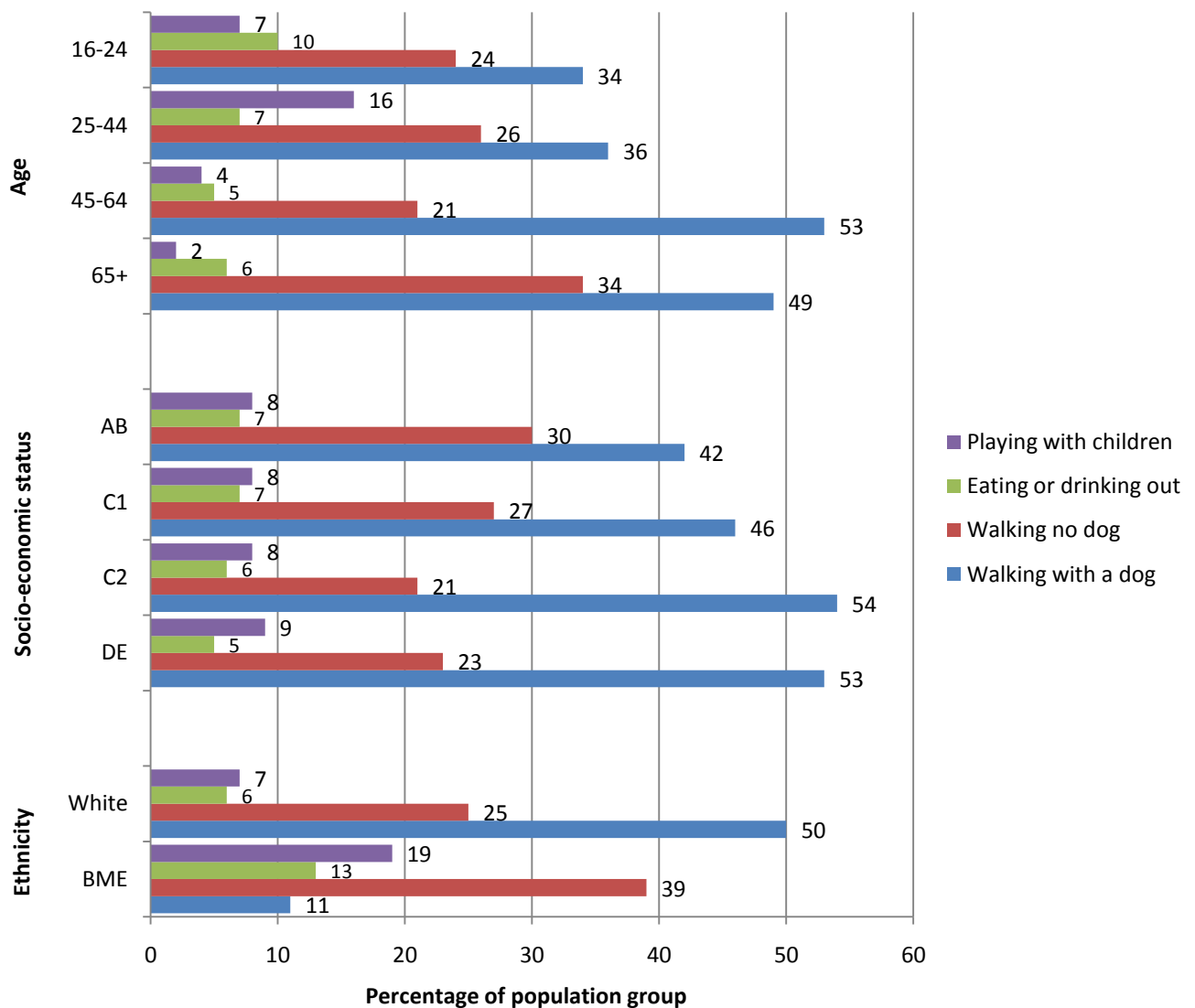


Figure 5-3 Activities undertaken on visits by age, socio-economic status and ethnicity (%)
 Q8 Which of these activities, if any, did you undertake? Base: All visits, weekly questions (N=58,653)

5.8 There are some significant differences in the type of activities undertaken on visits to the different types of destination (Table 5-2). Going for walks with a dog is relatively more popular in the countryside and in rural coastal areas than it is in urban areas. Walking without a dog is more of a feature on visits to the coast. Of the other main activities, playing with children tends to be more important on urban visits and going for something to eat or drink is relatively more common on visits to the coast, especially to seaside towns or resorts.

Table 5-2 Activities undertaken on visits by type of place visited (%)

Q8 Which of these activities, if any, did you undertake? Base: All visits, weekly questions (N=58,653). Note: Sum of totals is more than 100% as visits could have included more than one activity

	Type of place visited			
	Town or city %	Countryside %	Seaside resort or town %	Seaside coastline %
Walking with a dog	40	58	36	46
Walking not with a dog	28	23	31	31
Playing with children	11	6	9	6
Eating or drinking out	8	4	12	8
Sightsee, picnic, drive	3	3	7	6
Visiting an attraction	4	3	7	6
Wildlife watching	2	4	2	4
Informal games and sport	3	3	3	1
Horse riding	*	2	*	1
Off-road cycling or mountain biking	1	2	1	1
Picnicking	2	2	3	3
Road cycling	2	2	2	2
Running	3	2	2	2
Appreciating scenery from your car	1	2	4	3
Fieldsports	1	1	*	*
Fishing	*	1	*	2
Visits to a beach, sunbathing or padding in the sea	*	*	16	12
Off-road driving or motorcycling	1	2	1	1
Swimming outdoors	*	*	2	2
Watersports	*	*	2	3

Party composition

5.9 Almost half of visits to the natural environment (47 per cent) were taken by an adult on their own (Table 5-3) while in 31 per cent of visits, the party included two adults. Children were present on 22 per cent of all visits and the overall average party size was 2.5.

Table 5-3 Party composition (row %)

Q13 How many adults aged 16 or over, including yourself, were on this visit? How many children aged under 16 were on this visit? Base: Random visits, monthly questions (N=4,755)

	None	1	2	3	4 +	Average
Adults (aged 16 and over)	-	55	31	6	7	2.0
Children (aged under 16)	78	9	7	3	3	0.6
Total party size	-	47	26	10	17	2.5

5.10 Those visits which were more likely to be taken alone included those which involved walking with a dog (63 per cent) and, consequently, those taken within 1 mile of home (59 per cent). In contrast, the average party size was largest on visits to seaside towns (3.6), on visits lasting more than three hours (4.5) and visits which involved a journey of over 20 miles (4.5), where children were more likely to be present.

Visits taken with children

5.11 A child aged under 16 years was present in the party in 22 per cent of adult visits to the natural environment. This equates to around 619 million of the visits taken by adults. A child or children were present in 62 per cent of the visits taken by adults with children in their household.

5.12 Children were more likely to feature in visits to the natural environment taken by certain groups within the population. While the socio-economic status of the household did not appear to be a particular influence, there was a clear relationship with those areas designated as being in the bottom 10 per cent of the IMD, where 33 per cent of all visits were taken in the company of a child(ren).

5.13 Children were more likely to be present in visits amongst the BME population where a child(ren) were present on 37 per cent of visits compared to 21 per cent of those from a white background.

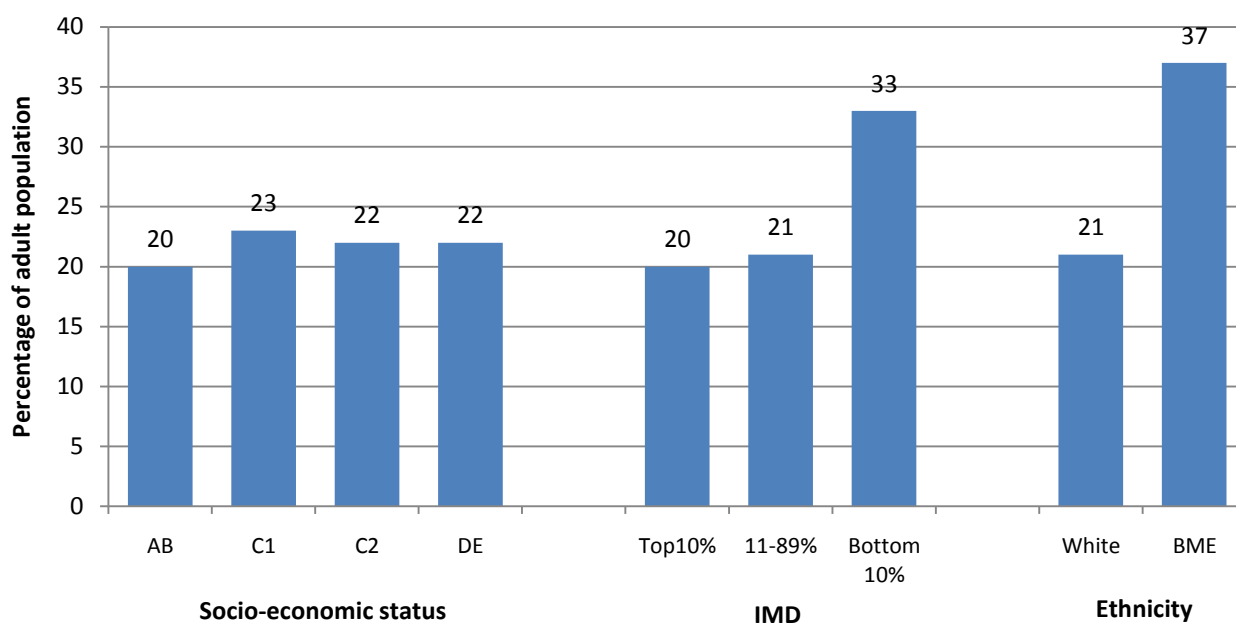


Figure 5-4 Percentage of visits taken accompanied by children (aged under 16) by socio-economic status, Index of Multiple Deprivation and ethnicity (%)

Q1 How many children under 16 were on this visit? Base: Random visits, monthly questions (N=4,755)

- 5.14 The characteristics of those visits to the natural environment where children were present varied in a number of ways to those visits where the only participants were adults (Table 5-4). For example walking with a dog was less significant as an activity on those visits which involved children.
- 5.15 On those visits where children were present, it was more likely that the visit would include going out for something to eat and/or drink and also to involve a visit to an attraction. Consequently, where children were involved in visits to the natural environment, there was a greater chance that some expenditure would be incurred – 42 per cent of visits involving children compared to 24 per cent without children.
- 5.16 Certain destinations featured more prominently as destinations on visits involving children such as urban parks, country parks and children’s playgrounds. This preference for specific destinations rather than just going ‘outdoors’ on visits involving children meant that such visits were more likely to involve the use of a car rather than travelling by foot – 42 per cent of visits with children compared to 30 per cent of those without children.
- 5.17 This also resulted in children tending to be on visits which involved longer initial journeys – travelling to a specific destination. Around a quarter of visits with children had journeys of more than five miles (26 per cent) compared to just under a fifth (18 per cent) of visits without children. In contrast, children featured in a smaller proportion of the shorter journeys of less than two miles – 58 per cent compared to 67 per cent of those taken without children.

Table 5-4 Activities undertaken, distance travelled, mode of transport and type of place visited by presence of children in party (%)

Base: Random visits, monthly questions (N=4,755)

	Children under 16 in party %	No children under 16 in party %
Activities undertaken		
Walking with a dog	31	49
Walking, not with a dog	27	26
Playing with children	35	-
Eating or drinking out	9	6
Visiting an attraction	7	4
Distance travelled		
Less than 1 mile	36	41
1 or 2 miles	22	26
3 to 5 miles	16	15
Over 5 miles	26	18
Transport used		
On foot	50	62
Car or van	42	30
Public transport (rail or bus)	4	3
Other	4	5
Type of place visited – general		
Town and city	48	40
Countryside	40	49
Seaside resort or town	8	7
Seaside coastline	5	4
Type of place visited – specific*		
Park in a town or city	35	23
Children’s playground	12	-
Woodland or forest	9	11
Country park	10	7
Beach	8	6
Paths, cycleway or bridleway	7	13

*Note: The sum of specific places visited percentages is less than 100% as some visits did not include time spent in any of the places shown on this table.

Expenditure during visits

5.18 Fewer than three in ten visits to the natural environment involved any expenditure (25 per cent). As shown in Figure 5-5, the main category of spending was on food and drink which occurred on 20 per cent of all visits. Spending on other categories, such as car parking, fuel and so on was restricted to a very small proportion of visits⁴.

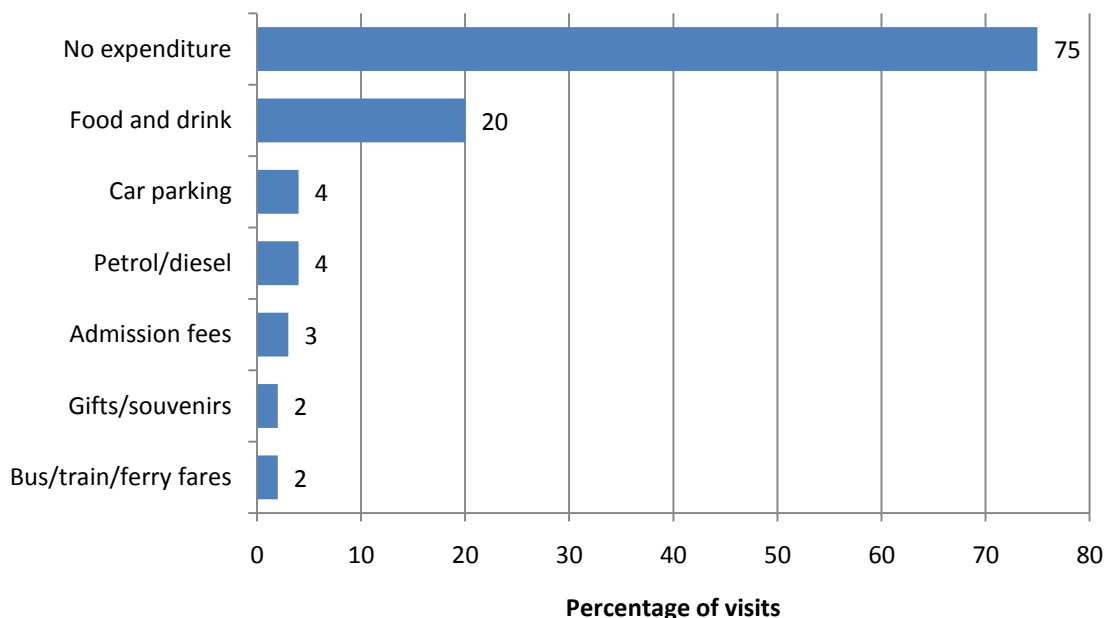


Figure 5-5 Items purchased during visits to the natural environment (%)

Q15 *During this visit did you personally spend any money on any of the items listed on the screen?* Base: Random visit, monthly questions (N=4,755)

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.

5.19 For every £1 spent on a visit to the natural environment, 53 pence was spent on food and drink with fuel accounting for 13 pence (Figure 5-6).

⁴ 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.

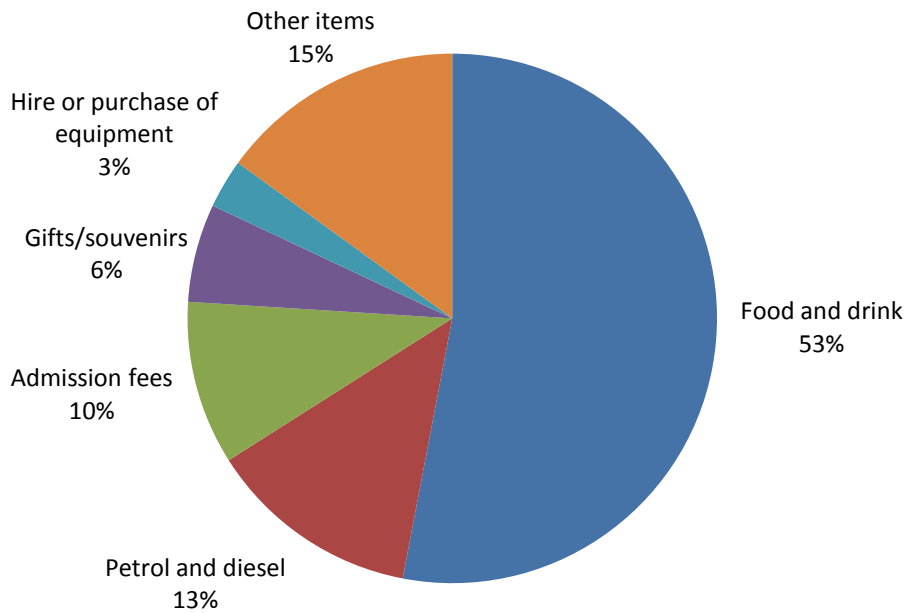


Figure 5-6 Distribution of expenditure on visits by category of spend (%)

Q15 *During this visit did you personally spend any money on any of the items listed on the screen?* Base: Random visit, monthly questions (N=4,755)

- 5.20 During those visits which involved expenditure, the average spend per person was £28.78. Therefore with an estimated 709 million visits involving expenditure, it is estimated that a total of around **£20.4 billion** was spent by people on visits taken to the natural environment between March 2009 and February 2010⁵.
- 5.21 Taking all visits as a whole including those where there was no expenditure, the average spend per person per visit was £7.14.
- 5.22 Certain types of visits to the natural environment were more likely than others to incur expenditure. These included visits to seaside resorts and towns, just over half of which involved some spend (53 per cent) (Figure 5-7). Longer visits in general were, not surprisingly, more likely to incur expenditure (66 per cent) as were visits where children were in the party (40 per cent.) Although only 7 per cent of visits were to seaside towns, this type of destination accounted for a quarter of all expenditure on visits.

⁵ Taking account of margins of error, at the 95% confidence level estimated total expenditure ranges from £17.4 billion to £23.5 billion.

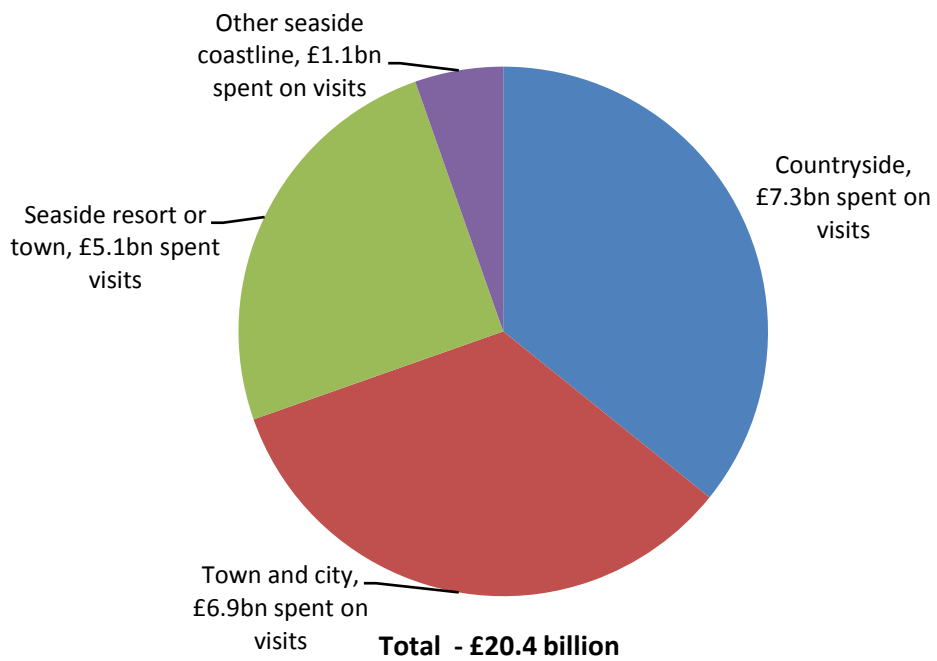


Figure 5-7 Distribution of expenditure on visits by destination type (%)
 Q15 *During this visit did you personally spend any money on any of the items listed on the screen?* Base: Random visit, monthly questions (N=4,755)

6 Why? Motivations and barriers

6.1 While men and women both claimed to be ‘too busy’ to visit the natural environment (more often), this was more often a result of paid employment for men and home commitments for women. Women were also more likely to cite health and age-related factors as being a barrier to visiting the natural environment. In addition those in the youngest age groups had a much higher level of disinterest in visiting the natural environment than the rest of the population (35 per cent were not interested or had no particular reason for not visiting).

Headline results in this section

- **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.
- **Men were more likely than women to be motivated by health benefits** while women were more likely to want to spend time with family, take visits to entertain children or exercise a dog.
- **Over half of visits taken by those in the C2DE socio-economic groups were taken to exercise their dog** while those in the AB socio-economic groups were motivated by the widest range of benefits including health and exercise, scenery, fresh air and pleasant weather.
- **Infrequent visitors to the natural environment were most likely to indicate that a lack of time as a result of being busy at work or at home** were their main reasons for *not* being able to take visits to the natural environment more often. People who never participate in such visits were most likely to state that old age, ill health or a long term illness or disability prevented them from doing so.

Motivations for visits

6.2 Exercising a dog was a motivation on 47 per cent of visits to the natural environment (Figure 6-1). The other most frequently provided reasons for taking a visit were ‘for health and exercise’ (34 per cent), ‘to relax and unwind’ (25 per cent), ‘for fresh air or to enjoy pleasant weather’ (21 per cent) and ‘to enjoy scenery’ (20 per cent).

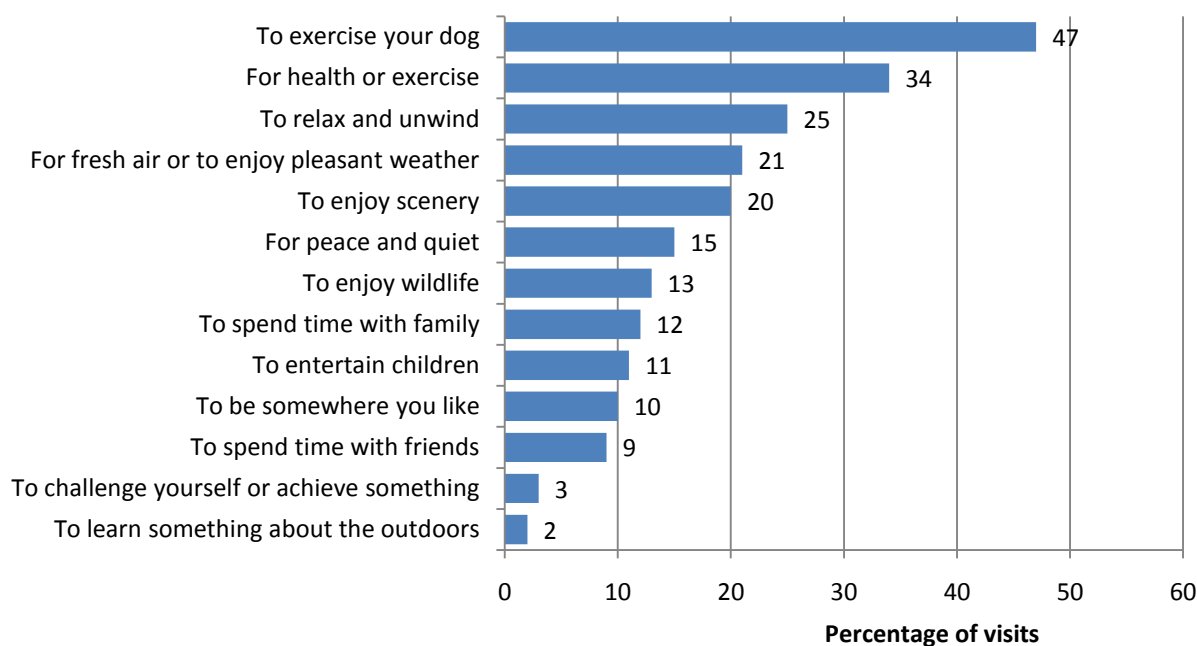


Figure 6-1 Reasons for taking visits to the natural environment (%)

Q12 Which of the following, if any, best describe your reasons for this visit? Base: Random visits, monthly questions (N=4,755)

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

- 6.3 Men were more likely to be motivated to take a visit for health and exercise (36 per cent compared to 32 per cent of women). In contrast, women were more likely to take visits to exercise their dog (52 per cent vs. 43 per cent of men), to spend time with family (14 per cent vs. 10 per cent of men) and to entertain children (13 per cent vs. 8 per cent).
- 6.4 There was considerable variation between the different age groups in terms of their motivations for taking visits to the natural environment. Amongst those aged under 25 years, spending time with friends was an important reason for going on visits while spending time with family was more important to those aged 25 to 44. For those aged 45 to 64 years, being able to relax and unwind was an important motivation while taking a visit for health and exercise reasons emerged as increasingly important with advancing age.
- 6.5 Exercising a dog was considered to be a motivation for 53 per cent of visits to the natural environment taken by those aged 45 to 64 years but was less important for visits taken by those in the younger and older age bands. Dog walking was also a key motivation amongst those in the C2DE socio-economic groups.
- 6.6 Those in the ABC1 socio-economic groups were also more likely to be motivated to take visits to the natural environment for health and exercise (37 per cent) and to relax and unwind (27 per cent).
- 6.7 Different motivations were also likely to feature for visits taken to different types of destinations (Table 6-1). Reflecting the seasonal patterns of visits to seaside resorts or towns, the main motivations were to relax and unwind (34 per cent) and for fresh air and to enjoy pleasant weather (29 per cent). Visits to this type of destination were also more likely to be taken to spend time with friends (16 per cent) or to entertain children (15 per cent).
- 6.8 Other coastal areas shared the same main motivations as seaside towns. Other significant motivations included to exercise a dog (45 per cent), for health and exercise (38 per cent), to enjoy scenery (34 per cent), for peace and quiet (24 per cent) and to be somewhere you like (18 per cent).

6.9 The main motivations for visits to the countryside were to exercise a dog (57 per cent) and 'for health and exercise' (37 per cent). Visits to green spaces within towns and cities were taken for a more restricted range of reasons than those taken to other types of place.

Table 6-1 Reasons for taking visits to the natural environment by type of place visited (column %)

Q8 Which of the following, if any, best describe your reasons for this visit? Base: Random visits, monthly questions (N=4,755)

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

	Type of place visited			
	Town or city %	Countryside %	Seaside resort or town %	Seaside coastline %
To exercise your dog	39	57	27	45
For health or exercise	32	37	25	38
To relax and unwind	23	25	34	34
For fresh air or to enjoy pleasant weather	15	23	29	33
To spend time with family	14	10	18	19
To enjoy scenery	13	23	25	34
To entertain children	13	8	15	10
To spend time with friends	11	7	16	8
For peace and quiet	11	16	14	24
To enjoy wildlife	9	16	9	14
To be somewhere you like	7	12	15	18
To learn something about the outdoors	2	2	2	4
To challenge yourself or achieve something	2	5	2	5
<i>Average number of reasons per visit</i>	<i>1.9</i>	<i>2.4</i>	<i>2.3</i>	<i>2.9</i>

Outcomes of visits

6.10 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 about their visit.

6.11 There was high level of agreement that people had enjoyed their visit (Figure 6-2). It made them feel calm and relaxed, refreshed and revitalised. During the visit, they had taken time to appreciate their surroundings and felt close to nature. However, there was less consensus that they had learned something new about the natural world – 34 per cent agreed that they had and 43 per cent disagreed that this was the case.

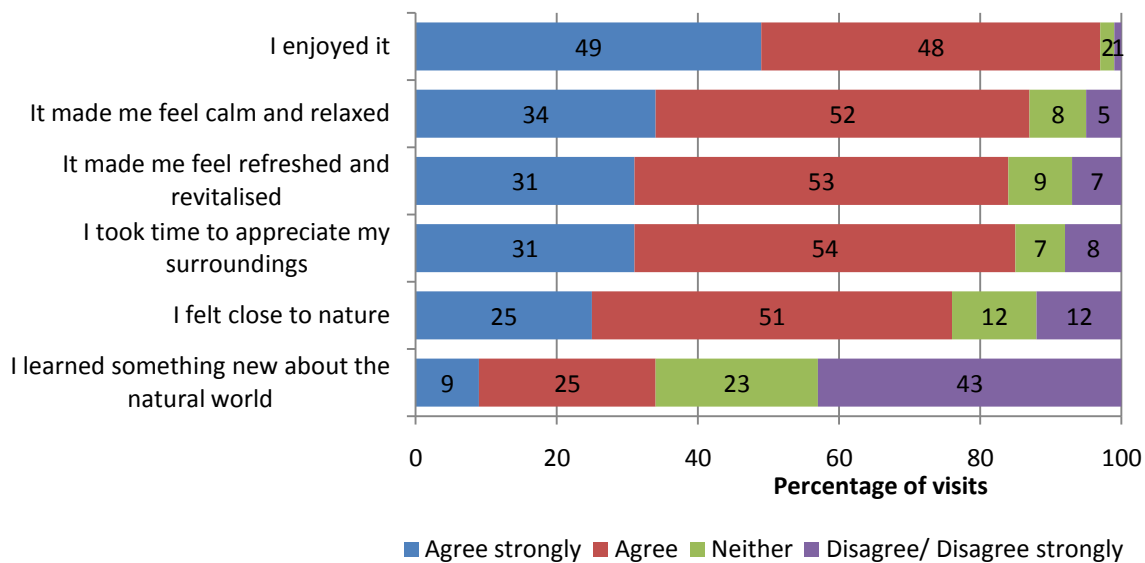


Figure 6-2 Outcomes of visits to the natural environment (%)
E1 Thinking of this visit, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: Random visits, quarterly questions (N=1,452)
 Note: Disagree and disagree strongly categories are aggregated as very small proportions provided the disagree strongly response.

- 6.12 Further analysis has been undertaken which has focused on those ‘agreeing strongly’ with the various outcomes of visits to the natural environment to establish the extent to which there are variations within the population.
- 6.13 Women are more likely to be positive than men about their experience of visits, with higher levels of agreement on all of the outcomes, with the exception of the one relating to ‘learning’. There was also a relationship between increasing age and a positive experience of the visit with higher levels of agreement amongst those in the older age groups. This was particularly the case for two of the outcomes, namely ‘I took time to appreciate my surroundings’ and ‘I enjoyed it’.
- 6.14 Socio-economic status is also related to the extent to which visitors had a positive experience. Those in the ABC1 socio-economic groups were more likely to record this as a positive experience than those in the C2DE groups.
- 6.15 There was also clear variations in experience by ethnicity. The BME population was less likely to indicate that they had enjoyed the experience – 31 per cent ‘agree strongly’ compared to 50 per cent of those with a white background. In addition, there were lower levels of agreement on each of the outcomes amongst those who had visited the natural environment from the BME population.
- 6.16 Those who took such visits on at least a monthly basis were much more likely to have enjoyed the experience – around a half compared to a quarter of the less frequent participants (Figure 6-3). Those who took visits at least once a month were also more than twice as likely as the less frequent participants to obtain benefits relating to feeling calm and relaxed or refreshed and revitalised. The cause and effect relationship between the frequency of visits taken to the natural environment and positive outcomes is complex. While it is likely that people who have positive experiences are encouraged to visit more often by these experiences, it may also be the case that frequent visitors to the natural environment are more ‘open’ to positive experiences such as enjoyment and relaxation.

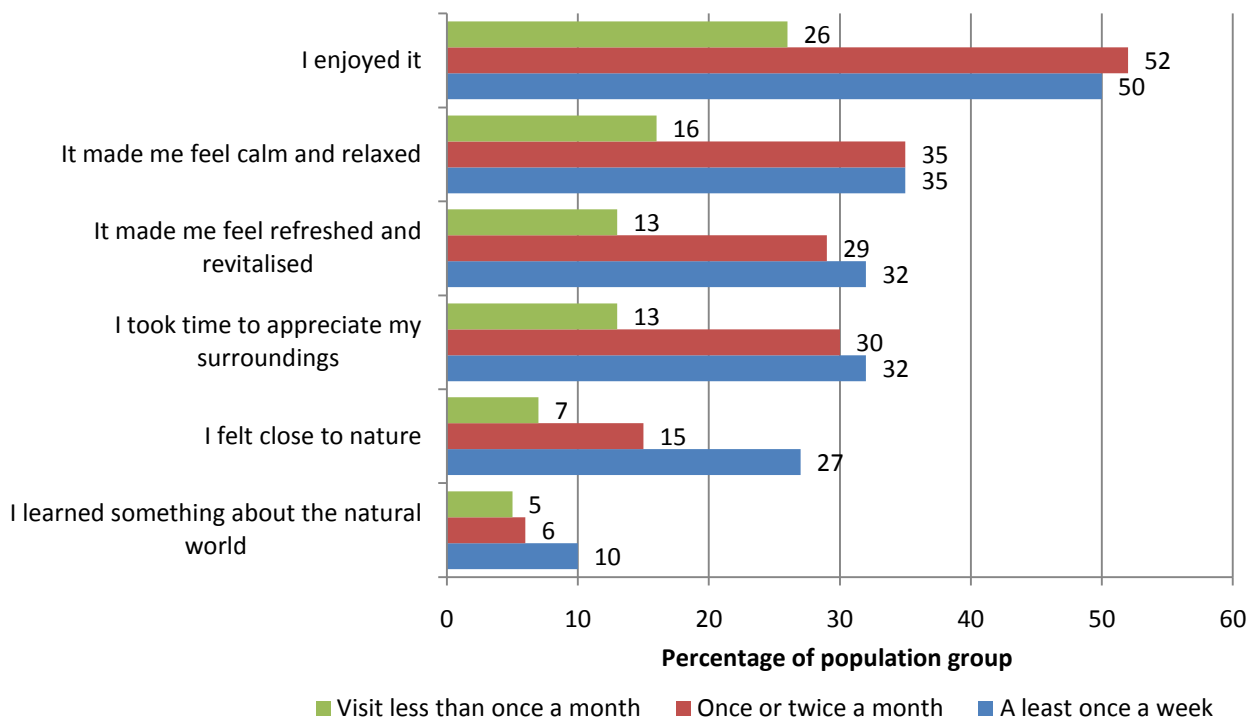


Figure 6-3 Outcomes of visits to the natural environment by normal frequency of visits (% agreeing strongly with statements)

E1 Thinking of this visit, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: Random visits, quarterly questions (N=1,452)

- 6.17 Those who had been on visits to the countryside and coast 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). Visits to seaside coastline were particularly likely to have had positive outcomes with 44 per cent of visitors agreeing strongly that their visit had made them feel calm and relaxed and 47 per cent that it had made them feel refreshed and revitalised. Visits to seaside coastline were also more likely than visits to other types of destination to result in the visitor learning something about the natural world.
- 6.18 Visits with longer durations of three hours or more were more also likely to be enjoyed than shorter visits. The main variation was between visits of less than one hour’s duration and longer visits, where the latter tended to generate a more positive experience.

Table 6-2 Outcomes of visits to the natural environment by place visited 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 (N=1,452)

	I enjoyed it	It made me feel calm and relaxed	It made me feel refreshed and revitalised	I took time to appreciate my surroundings	I felt close to nature	I learned something about the natural world
All visits	49	34	31	31	25	9
Type of place visited						
Town or city	42	32	27	26	21	10
Countryside	53	37	33	34	27	8
Seaside resort or town	54	25	34	32	23	7
Seaside coastline	61	44	47	47	42	20
Duration of visit						
Less than 1 hour	44	29	25	23	20	8
1 hour to 2hrs 59min	49	37	34	35	28	10
3 hours or more	57	35	33	33	21	10

Reasons for not visiting

6.19 Respondents that had not taken any visits or only infrequent visits to the natural environment were asked about their reasons for not doing so (more often). Figure 6-4 illustrates the range of reasons provided for either not having taken any visits to the natural environment in the last 12 months or for not doing so more often for infrequent participants. Those reasons provided by 3 per cent or more of respondents are included in the chart.

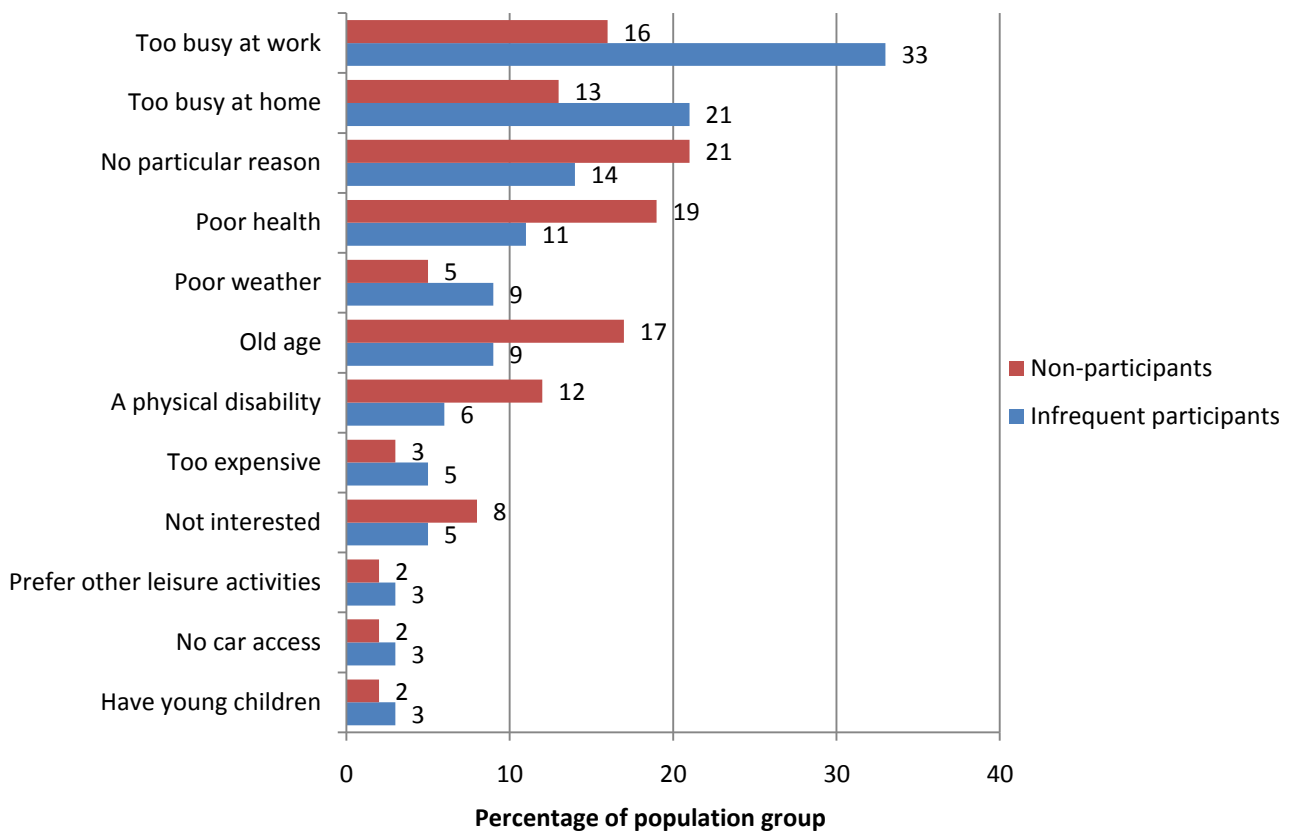


Figure 6-4 Barriers to participation amongst infrequent and non-participants (%)

Q18 *Why have you not spent any/more of your time out of doors?* Base: Infrequent and non-participants, monthly questions (N=1,940 & 1,181)

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

- 6.20 Infrequent participants were most likely to state that they have not visited the natural environment more often because they were either too busy at work (33 per cent) or too busy at home (21 per cent). A significant proportion indicated that they had no particular reason for not participating more often (14 per cent).
- 6.21 The main reasons expressed by these non-participants were related to poor health (19 per cent), old age (17 per cent) or a physical disability (12 per cent). Combining these various ‘health’ related reasons suggest that just over a third of non-participants (35 per cent) regarded these as a barrier to visiting the natural environment. A fifth (21 per cent) stated that they had no particular reason and 8 per cent claimed that they were not interested in visiting the natural environment. Combined together, this suggests that 29 per cent had no particular motivation to visit the natural environment.
- 6.22 While men and women both claimed to be ‘too busy’ to visit the natural environment (more often), this was more often a result of paid employment for men and home commitments for women. Women were also more likely to cite health and age-related factors as being a barrier to visiting the natural environment. In addition those in the lower socio-economic groups had a much higher level of disinterest in visiting the natural environment than the rest of the population (45 per cent were DEs).

Table 6-3 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 (N=3,121)

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.

	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 %
Sex				
Male	15	32	25	22
Female	21	22	20	30
Age				
16-24	19	29	35	2
25-44	23	43	24	4
45-64	24	35	21	19
65+	7	2	17	64
Socio-economic status				
AB	24	35	20	24
C1	22	35	21	21
C2	21	33	21	19
DE	13	16	24	33
Ethnicity				
BME	17	25	30	7
White	22	34	20	31

7 Enjoying and appreciating the natural environment

7.1 Within the population, those aged over 65 years were more likely to be set in their ways and unwilling or unable to make changes to their lifestyle or indeed, of the opinion that they already do enough to protect the environment. Those aged under 45 years were more open to change in their lifestyle but appeared to be looking for advice and guidance on what they should do.

Headline results in this section

- **Most people engaged with the natural environment in some way at home or in their garden** – 64 per cent enjoyed sitting or relaxing in their garden, 55 per cent took part in gardening and 53 per cent regularly or occasionally watched or listened to nature programmes on television or radio. Most of those people who never actually visit the natural environment participated in one or more of these other activities (73 per cent).
- **The vast majority of the English adult population agreed that having green spaces close to where they live is important to them** but slightly fewer have significant concerns about the state of the natural environment (36 per cent ‘agree strongly’ with the statement *‘I am concerned about damage to the natural environment’* while 52 per cent ‘agree’).
- **People who visit the outdoors frequently are more likely to have concerns for the natural environment and to participate in pro-environmental activities** such as buying seasonal or locally grown produce and becoming members of environmental or conservation organisations.

Other activities involving the natural environment

- 7.2 Those in the ABC1 socio-economic groups were more likely than those in the C2DE groups to express the opinion that they already do as much as they can do to protect the natural environment and also, to consider implementing changes to their lifestyle to protect the environment.
- 7.3 64 per cent stated that they enjoyed sitting or relaxing in a garden and 55 per cent took part in gardening. Around a half claimed that they choose to walk through local parks and greens spaces en route to their final destination (51 per cent).
- 7.4 Many people also choose more indirect or passive ways of enjoying the natural environment. Just over a half of respondents watch or listen to nature programmes on television or radio (53 per cent), 44 per cent enjoy looking at natural scenery whilst indoors or on journeys and 29 per cent enjoy looking at books, photos or websites about the natural world.

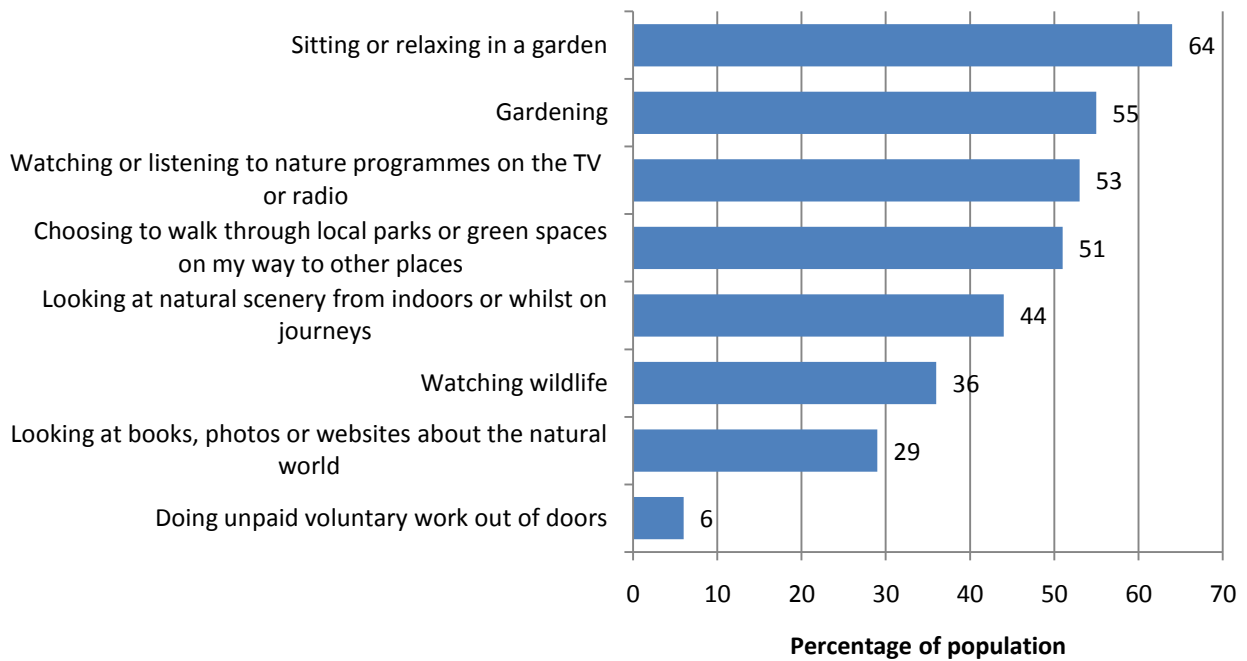


Figure 7-1 Other activities involving the natural environment (%)

E3 Which of the following activities involving the natural environment do you take part in? Base: All respondents, quarterly questions (N=3,549)

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

7.5 Overall 93 per cent of the population undertook one or more of the activities. Levels of participation were highest amongst those aged 45 to 64 (96 per cent), members of the AB socio-economic groups (98 per cent) and residents of rural areas (98 per cent). While still at a high level, those aged 16 to 24 (84 per cent), members of the DE socio-economic group (89 per cent) and members of the BME population (88 per cent) were less likely to be engaged with the natural environment through these activities (Figure 7-2).

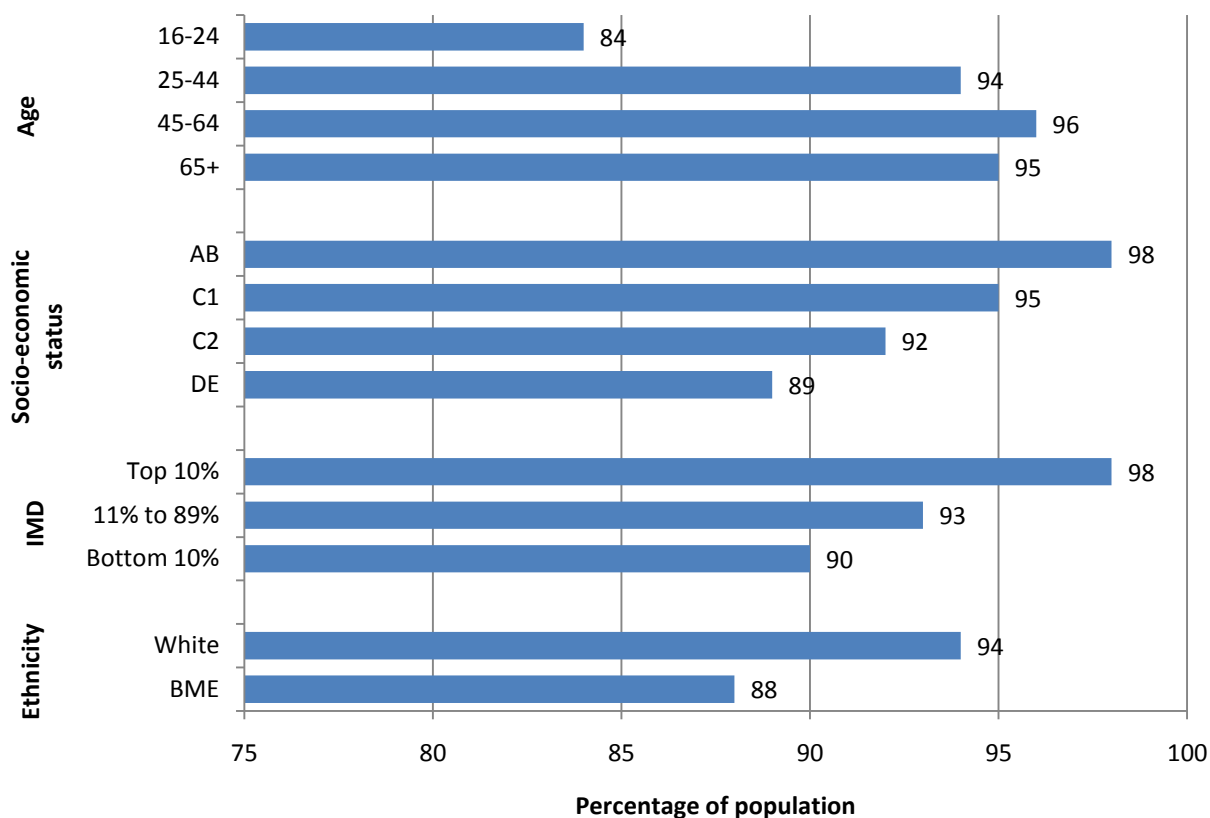


Figure 7-2 Participation in other activities involving the natural environment by age, socio-economic status, Index of Multiple Deprivation and ethnicity (%)

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 (N=3,549)

- 7.6 Those who never go on visits to the natural environment were also less likely to participate in these other activities (Table 7-1). Nevertheless, 73 per cent of this group did participate in one or more of these other activities. Garden-related activities and watching or listening to nature programmes on television or radio were the main activities likely to be undertaken by those who did not go on visits to the natural environment but these were at a much lower level than those who do visit the natural environment outside of their home.
- 7.7 It should be noted that some of those who stated that they never normally spent their leisure time out of doors, away from home indicated that they sometimes choose to walk through local green spaces on their way to places or that they spent time wildlife watching. It may be that this participation occurs outside of leisure time (for example passing through a park when walking to work) and wildlife watching could be undertaken from the individual's garden or even from indoors. Similarly, the 3 per cent of those who never visit the outdoors for leisure who stated that they did unpaid voluntary work out of doors may perceive this participation as work rather than leisure.

Table 7-1 Other activities involving the natural environment by frequency of participation in natural environment 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 (N=3,549)

	Frequency of natural environment visits		
	Frequent %	Infrequent %	Non-participants %
Any undertaken	96	95	73
Sitting or relaxing in a garden	69	62	45
Choosing to walk through local parks or green spaces on my way to other places	63	43	13
Gardening	60	53	38
Watching or listening to nature programmes on the TV or radio	57	52	36
Looking at natural scenery from indoors whilst on journeys	50	42	18
Watching wildlife (including bird watching)	40	34	20
Looking at books, photos or websites about the natural world	34	27	13
Doing unpaid voluntary work out of doors	8	4	2

7.8 Only 3 per cent of the English adult population indicated that they never visited the natural environment and had also not undertaken any of the other forms of engagement with the natural environment featured in Table 7-1. These people tended to be younger, aged under 35 years and from the DE socio-economic groups.

Attitudes to the natural environment

7.9 To provide further insight into engagement with the natural environment, 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 the following chart (Figure 7-3), the 'disagree' and 'disagree strongly' categories have been combined because of the relatively small proportions selecting these options.

7.10 The highest level of agreement was with the statement '*having green spaces close to where I live is important*' with around half of the population agreeing strongly (49 per cent) and a further 44 per cent agreeing – an overall level of agreement of 94 per cent.

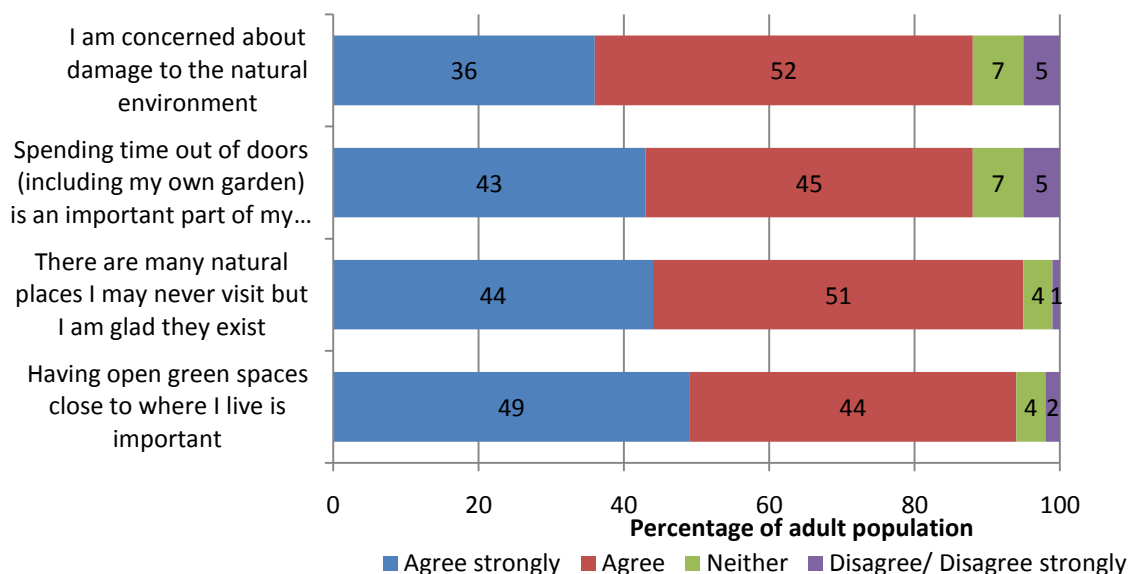


Figure 7-3 Attitudes to the natural environment (%)

E2 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: All respondents, quarterly questions (N=3,549)

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

- 7.11 Just over a third of the population selected the ‘agree strongly’ option in response to the statement ‘I am concerned about damage to the natural environment’ suggesting that it a particular concern for these people but less of a direct issue for others.
- 7.12 Levels of agreement are generally higher amongst women, older age groups, those in higher socio-economic groups and amongst those with a White ethnic background (Figure 7-4). In addition the frequency of visiting the natural environment had a clear influence on attitudes to the natural environment. The more frequent the visits, the more likely they were to express agreement with the various statements (Figure 7-4).

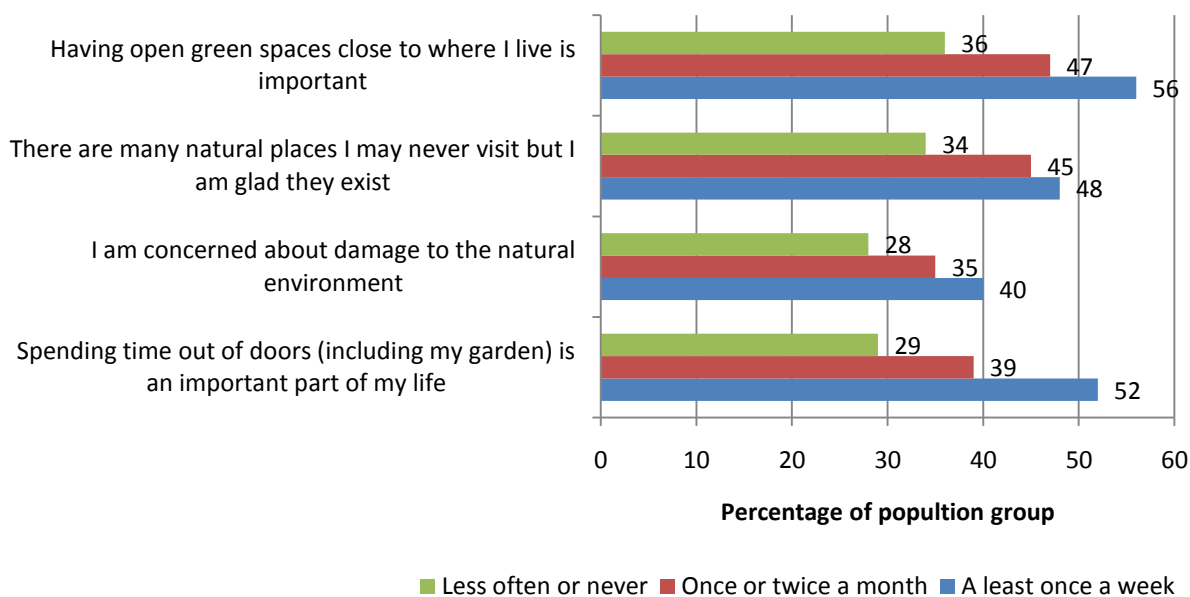


Figure 7-4 Attitudes to the natural environment by frequency of visits to the natural environment (% agreeing strongly with statements)

E2 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: All respondents, quarterly questions (N=3,549)

7.13 Respondents were also asked about the extent to which they were willing or able to change their current lifestyle and behaviour to address any environmental concerns they may have (Figure 7-5). Around a quarter (26 per cent) expressed the belief that they already do things to protect the natural environment and would find it difficult to do any more. A similar proportion appear unwilling to make any compromises on their current lifestyle. At the other end of the spectrum, 18 per cent claimed that they would make changes to their lifestyle as a contribution to protecting the environment with a further 6 per cent stating that they would do so provided that others did likewise.

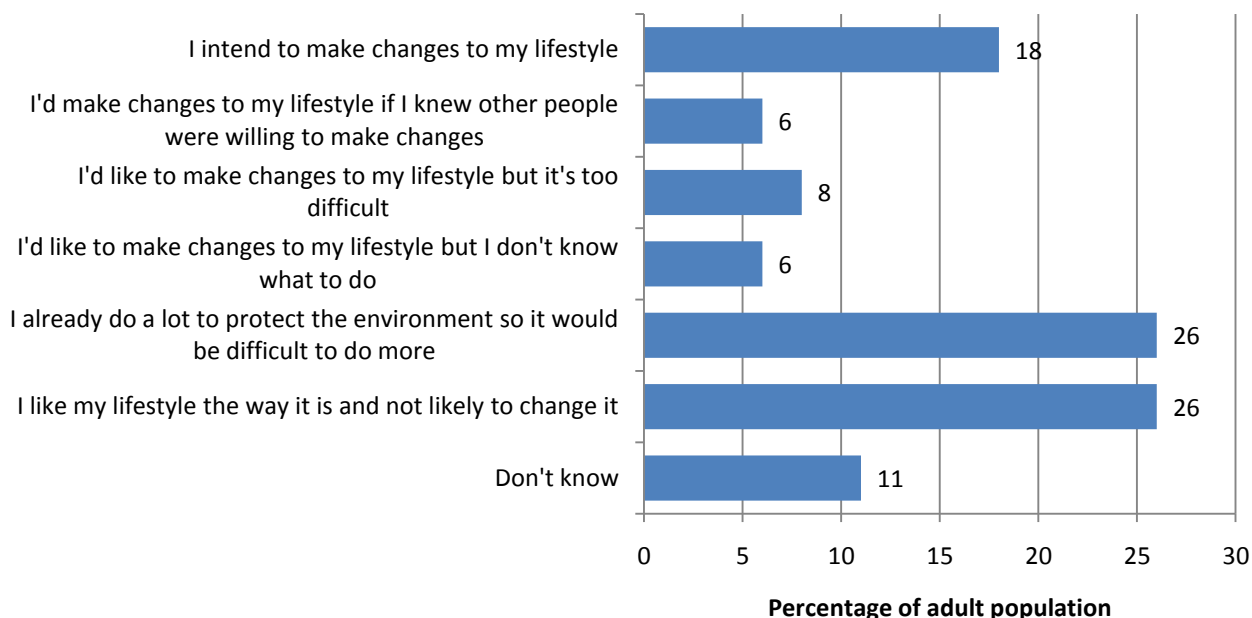


Figure 7-5 Changing lifestyle to protect the natural environment (%)

E5. Which of these statements best describes your intentions? Base: All respondents, quarterly questions (N=3,549)

7.14 There were three categories which reflected positive intentions but had real or perceived barriers – 6 per cent who would change if others did, 8 per cent stating that they want to do something but that it is too difficult and 6 per cent looking for some advice on what to do.

7.15 There is a considerable gap between the majority of the population (80 per cent) who expressed concern about the natural environment and the much smaller proportion (18 per cent) planning to make changes in their lifestyle to protect the environment and the quarter (26 per cent) who consider that their current lifestyle is in keeping with protecting the natural environment and they would find it difficult to do any more.

7.16 Within the population, those aged over 65 years were more likely to be set in their ways and unwilling or unable to make changes to their lifestyle or indeed, of the opinion that they already do enough to protect the environment. Those aged under 45 years were more open to change in their lifestyle but appeared to be looking for advice and guidance on what they should do.

7.17 Those in the ABC1 socio-economic groups were more likely than those in the C2DE groups to express the opinion that they already do as much as they can do to protect the natural environment and also, to consider implementing changes to their lifestyle to protect the environment.

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 (N=3,549)

	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 knew other people were willing to make changes %	Intend to make changes to protect the natural environment %	Already do a lot – would be difficult to do more %	Don't know
Sex						
Male	27	13	6	19	24	12
Female	25	15	5	18	28	10
Age						
16-24	22	18	9	24	13	16
25-44	21	16	5	24	23	10
45-64	26	11	6	16	30	9
65+	35	10	3	6	34	12
Socio-economic status						
AB	24	12	4	20	33	7
C1	24	14	7	20	27	8
C2	27	13	5	18	25	13
DE	27	15	6	15	21	16
Ethnicity						
BME	18	16	4	29	15	17
White	27	13	6	17	28	10

Pro-environmental behaviours

- 7.18 A further area of investigation is to understand the extent to which people were actively involved in certain pro-environmental behaviours as opposed to merely expressing their agreement with the principle.
- 7.19 The majority of the population undertook one or more of the specified activities (89 per cent) (Table 7-3). Three quarters usually recycled items rather than throwing them away (74 per cent). Similar proportions chose to walk or cycle instead of using their car (40 per cent) and/or usually bought seasonal or locally grown food (38 per cent).
- 7.20 There is a relationship between the frequency of taking visits to the natural environment and the adoption of pro-environmental behaviours. The results of further analysis of the relationships between visiting the natural environment and pro-environmental behaviours will be reported separately.

Table 7-3 Pro-environmental behaviours (column %)

E4 Which of the following environment related activities do you do? Base: All respondents, quarterly questions (N=3,549)

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

	Frequency of natural environment visits			
	All adults %	Frequent %	Infrequent %	Non-participants %
Any undertaken	89	92	90	66
Usually recycle items rather than throw them away	74	79	74	49
Choose to walk or cycle instead of using my car when I can	40	50	32	14
Usually buy seasonal or locally grown food	38	44	34	21
Encourage other people to protect the environment	27	32	24	16
Usually buy eco-friendly products and brands	25	29	22	11
Member of an environmental or conservation organisation	7	10	6	2
Volunteer to help care for the environment	5	6	4	2

Appendix 1 – Summary of survey scope and methods

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 taken in urban green spaces.

The methods used in MENE were developed through a scoping study undertaken in 2007. This study involved consultations with end 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 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 provide to 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 accurate representation of levels of activity in close to home, informal visits, other forms of engagement with nature at home and pro-environmental behaviours. The collection of this data provides numerous new opportunities for analyses and developing a more informed understanding of how the population of England uses and enjoys the natural environment.

Survey method

The 2007 scoping study also 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 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 future study.

The survey involves weekly waves of interviewing on the TNS-RI 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 recorded⁶. 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 while 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.

During the 2009-10 survey period some 48,514 interviews were undertaken allowing the key details of 58,653 visits to the natural environment to be collected and further more detailed information to be gathered on 20,374 visits.

Analysis

Sample sizes are much larger than those obtained in previous leisure visits surveys, which provides the opportunity to analyse results at both a national level and for smaller geographic areas, and also 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 undertaken 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.

⁶ The number of visits a respondent could be asked about was capped at 10 to avoid excessively long interview duration. 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 (for example, the activities they have done 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 area calculated as means. Median results are available in the data tables.

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 2009 and February 2010 a total of 48,514 interviews were completed, key details were collected for 58,563 visits and more details were collected on 20,374 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 (SRS)).

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 1.32 indicates that standard errors for the 12 months’ data are 1.32 times as large as they would have been had the design been an SRS.

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 an SRS. The estimated effective sample size for respondent based results after twelve months of interviewing is 27,813 - around 58 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	48,514 respondents	1.74	1.32	27,813 respondents
All visit based results	58,653 visits	1.74	1.32	33,700 visits
Selected visit based results	20,374 visits	2.26	1.50	9,024 visits

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

For example with an SRS, a result of 50 per cent with the total respondent sample of 48,514 would have a margin of error of +/-0.44 percentage points at the 95 per cent levels of confidence. Multiplying this value by 1.32 provides us with the margin of error when taking account of the MENE sample design i.e. +/-0.58 percentage points.

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

- 43.3 per cent of the population had visited the natural environment in the last seven days. This result ranges from 42.7 per cent to 43.9 per cent;
- 53.5 per cent of the population stated that they normally visited the natural environment for leisure at least once a week. This result ranges from 52.9 per cent to 54.1 per cent;
- 48.3 per cent of visits were taken to the countryside. This result ranges from 47.8 per cent for 48.8 per cent at the 95 per cent confidence level;

- 11.2 per cent of visits were to the coast. This result ranges from 10.9 per cent to 11.5 per cent at the 95 per cent confidence level; and
- 40.5 per cent of visits were to green spaces such as parks within town and city locations. This result ranges from 39.6 per cent to 41.4 per cent at the 95 per cent confidence level.

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 +/-0.6 per cent at the 95 per cent confidence level.
- When the sample size is around 10,000 respondents, the data will generally be accurate to around +/-1.3 per cent at the 95 per cent confidence level.
- Where the sample size is around 5,000 respondents, the data will generally be accurate to around +/-1.8 per cent at the 95 per cent confidence level.
- Where the sample size is around 1,000 respondents, the data will generally be accurate to around +/-4 per cent at the 95 per cent confidence level.

All visit based results

- When the sample size is around 50,000 visits, the data will generally be accurate to around +/-0.6% at the 95% confidence level.
- When the sample size is around 20,000 visits, the data will generally be accurate to around +/-0.9% at the 95% confidence level.
- When the sample size is around 10,000 visits, the data will generally be accurate to around +/-1.3% at the 95% confidence level.
- Where the sample size is around 5,000 visits, the data will generally be accurate to around +/-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 +/-1 per cent at the 95 per cent confidence level.
- When the sample size is around 10,000 visits, the data will generally be accurate to around +/-1.47 per cent at the 95 per cent confidence level.
- Where the sample size is around 5,000 visits, the data will generally be accurate to around +/-2.1 per cent at the 95 per cent confidence level.
- Where the sample size is around 1,000 visits, the data will generally be accurate to around +/-4.6 per cent at the 95 per cent 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 2009 and February 2010. 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
All visits	2,857,759	2,785,840	2,929,678
By specific place visited			
A playing field or other recreation area	195,411	168,693	222,129
Allotment or Community Garden	17,205	11,923	22,487
Another open space in a town or city	226,280	198,148	254,412
Another open space in the countryside	319,011	288,213	349,809
Beach	174,137	159,038	189,236
Children's Playground	82,157	73,116	91,198
Country Park	198,630	182,662	214,598
Farmland	208,953	187,641	230,265
Mountain, hill or moorland	61,126	53,172	69,080
Park in town or city	677,631	647,689	707,573
Path, cycleway or bridleways	369,187	341,782	396,592
River, lake or canal	253,373	230,815	275,931
Village	175,968	157,276	194,660
Woodland or forest	316,825	292,431	341,219
By general place visited			
Town or city	1,157,932	1,113,597	1,200,945
Seaside resort or town	207,101	190,725	223,237
Seaside coastline	112,820	97,830	127,684
Countryside	1,379,905	1,325,345	1,432,896

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

	12 month visit estimate	Lower confidence limit	Upper confidence limit
Average spend per visit (excluding visits with no spend)	£28.78	£24.48	£33.04
Average spend per visit (including visits with no spend)	£7.14	£6.08	£8.20
Estimated total spend all visits over 12 month period	£20.4 billion	£17.4 billion	£23.5 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

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.