

ERBID How's Business Survey

July 2025



Published by The South West Research Company Ltd

September 2025



Sample and supporting information

This month's survey has a sample of 75 businesses, representing a minimum sample of approximately 83 businesses when respondents representing multiple businesses, outlets or sites are also considered.

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

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

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

At a glance – July 2025

Compared to July 2024 businesses reported that:

July 2025 Visitor levels:

Increased 47% / Stayed the same 20% / Decreased 33%

Estimated actual change in visitors +1%

July 2025 Turnover levels:

Increased 43% / Stayed the same 21% / Decreased 36%

Estimated actual change in turnover 0%

August 2025 Outlook is:

Better than last year 29% / Same as last year 15% / Not as good as last year 56%

September 2025 Outlook is:

Better than last year 18% / Same as last year 20% / Not as good as last year 62%

October 2025 Outlook is:

Better than last year 12% / Same as last year 21% / Not as good as last year 67%

Optimism:

Optimism score is 5.28 out of a possible 10

July 2025 Key results

In July 2025, 67% of businesses recorded increased (47%) or level (20%) visitor numbers, representing an 1% increase compared with July 2024. 64% of businesses said the same in terms of their turnover (43% increased and 21% level) resulting in a similar level of turnover compared with July 2024.

Looking ahead however, sentiment remains cautious with over half of businesses expecting a weaker performance in August (56%) and around two thirds saying the same for September (62%) and October (67%). However, at 5.28 out of 10.00 overall business optimism, whilst remaining modest, was at its highest level since September 2023 and has been experiencing a positive upward trend in recent months.

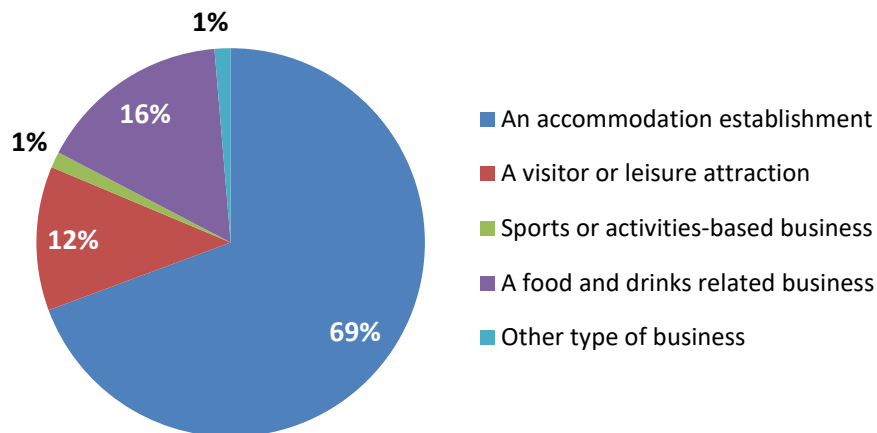
The most pressing concerns for businesses are currently increases in the cost of living generally (77%), followed by declining visitor numbers and bookings, flagged by 60% of respondents, and increases in other business costs like food and supplies, affecting 59% of businesses with all three concerns decreasing compared with last month. While energy costs, business rates and building and maintenance costs were also notable, the top three reflect a persistent squeeze on profitability and demand—key issues shaping business sentiment through the summer.

Despite the ongoing challenges, this months' performance is a very positive one for the English Riviera and several businesses' comments demonstrate resilience, adaptability and pockets of optimism within the sector. Some businesses have seen increased footfall, particularly where their opening hours were extended or niche offerings have attracted additional interest. Others noted that their July performance was better than 2024, albeit driven by discounts, and they remain hopeful that last-minute bookings and good weather at the end of the summer and into the early autumn may help to offset their shortfalls. Hopefully, these results are an indication that performance has declined to its lowest possible level with further deterioration unlikely and the improvement may have begun with the recent national marketing campaign for the resort over the summer having likely contributed towards this.

Of course, concerns remain amongst many businesses for Torbay's visitor economy moving forward with rising operational costs and shifting consumer behaviours as bookings become increasing last-minute and external factors such as anti-social behaviour and poor public realm maintenance continue to be an issue for many operators.

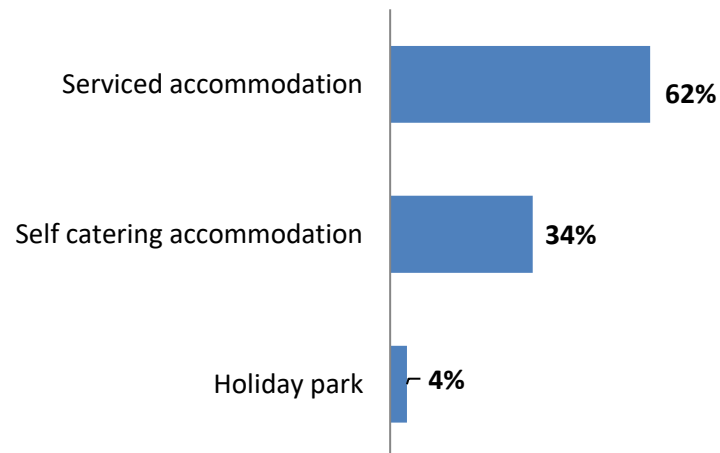
Sample profile, business location and status

BUSINESS TYPE



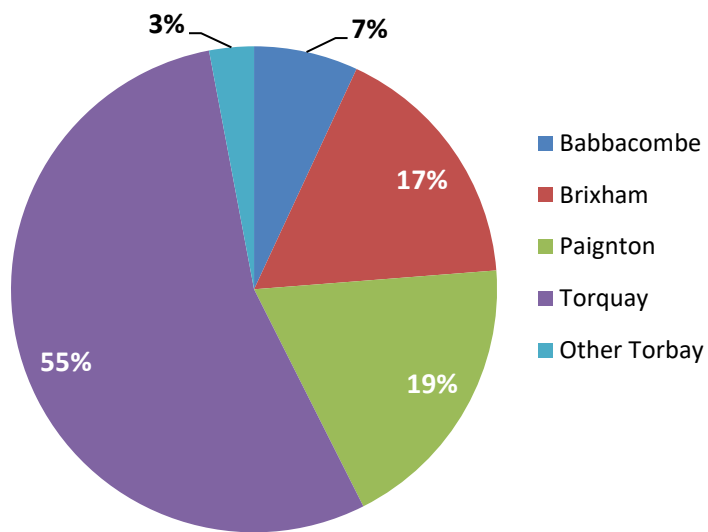
Base: 75

ACCOMMODATION TYPE



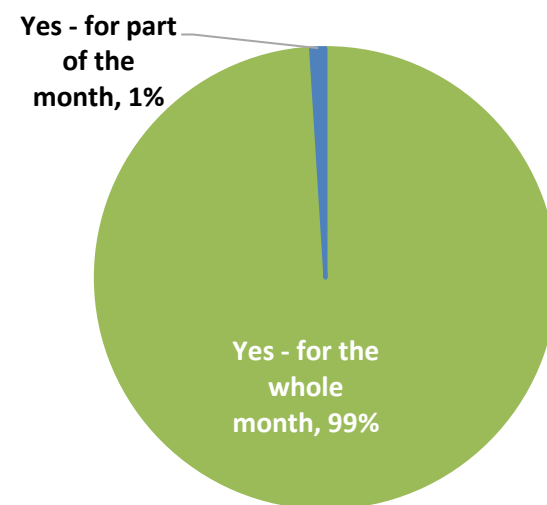
Base: 52

BUSINESS LOCATION



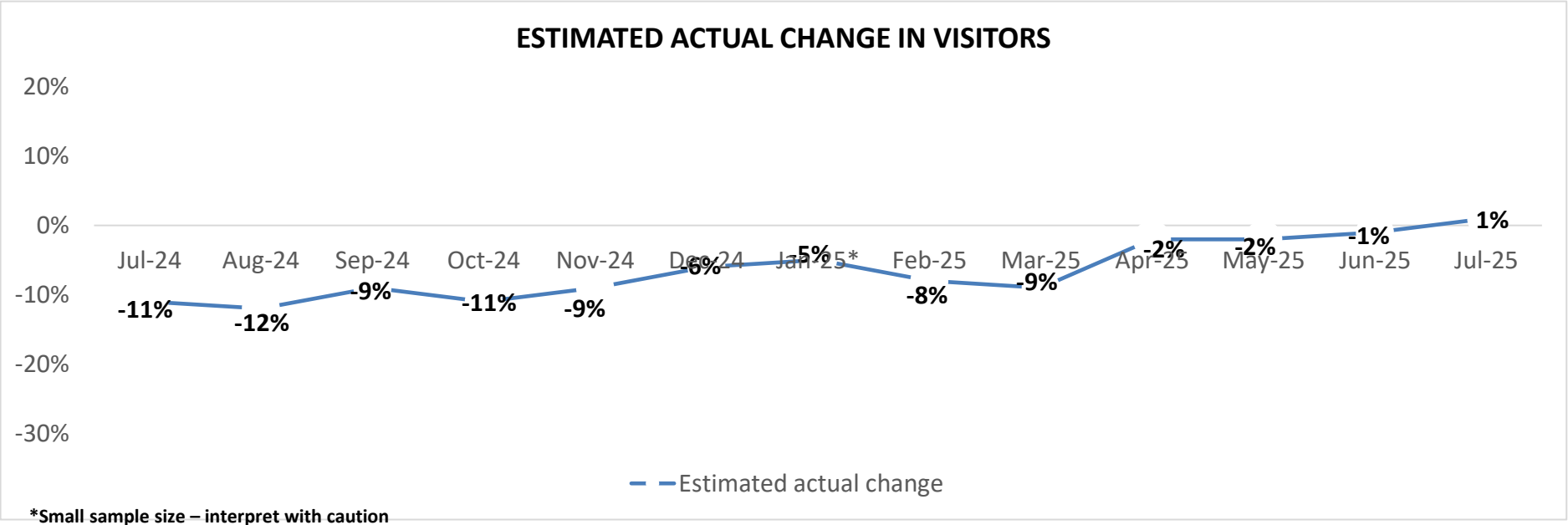
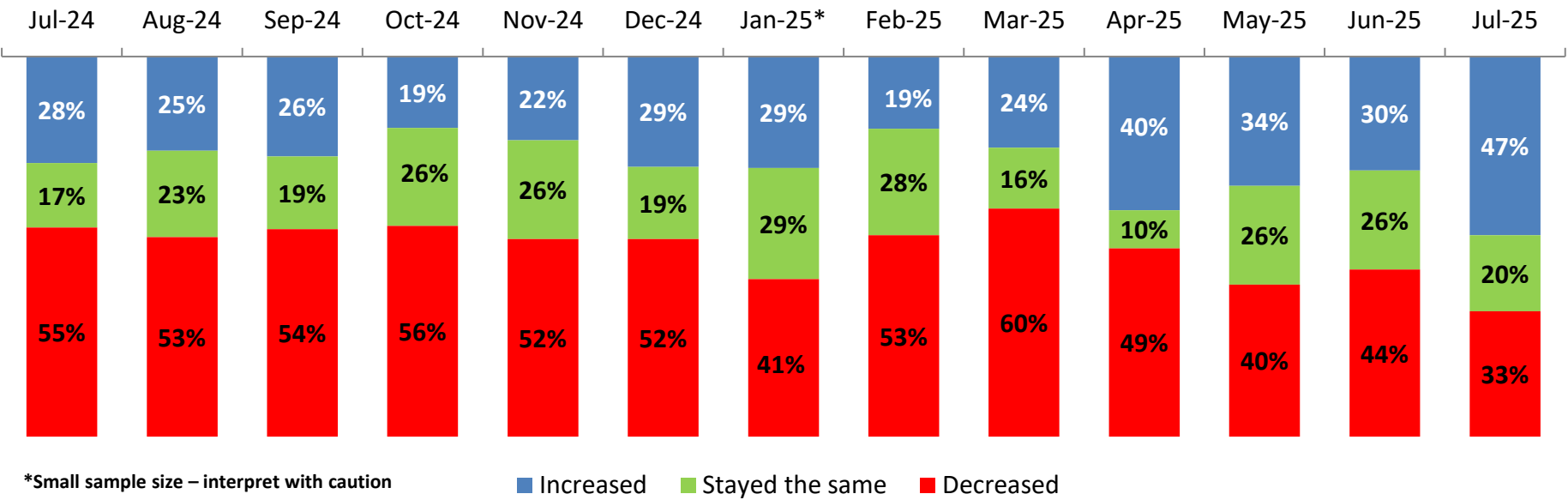
Base: 75

WHETHER OPEN FOR BUSINESS FOR THE MONTH

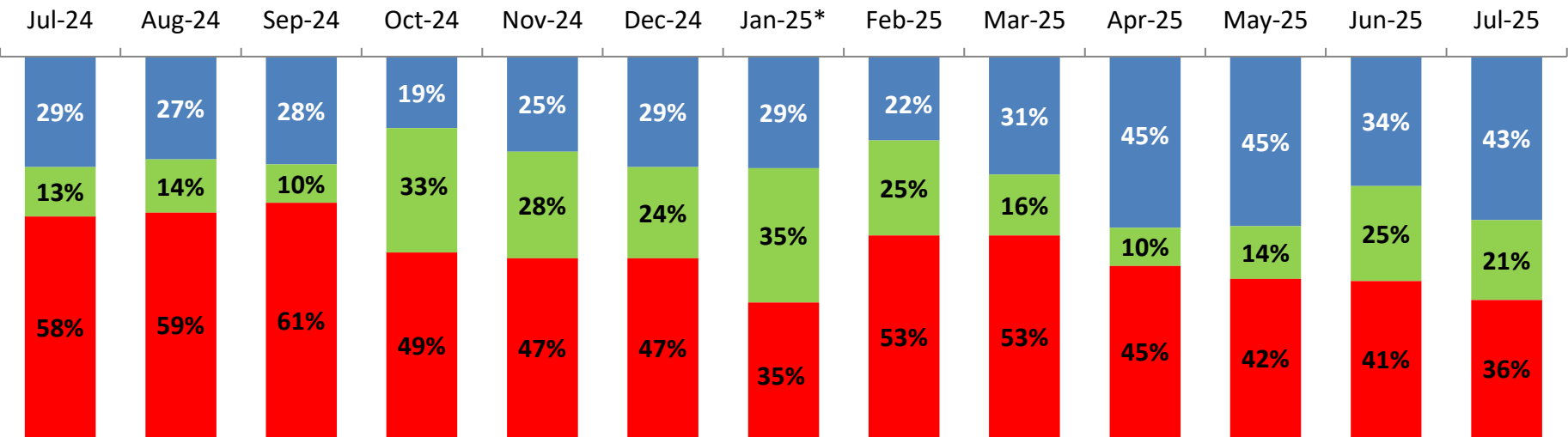


Base: 75

Performance – Number of visitors compared to previous year



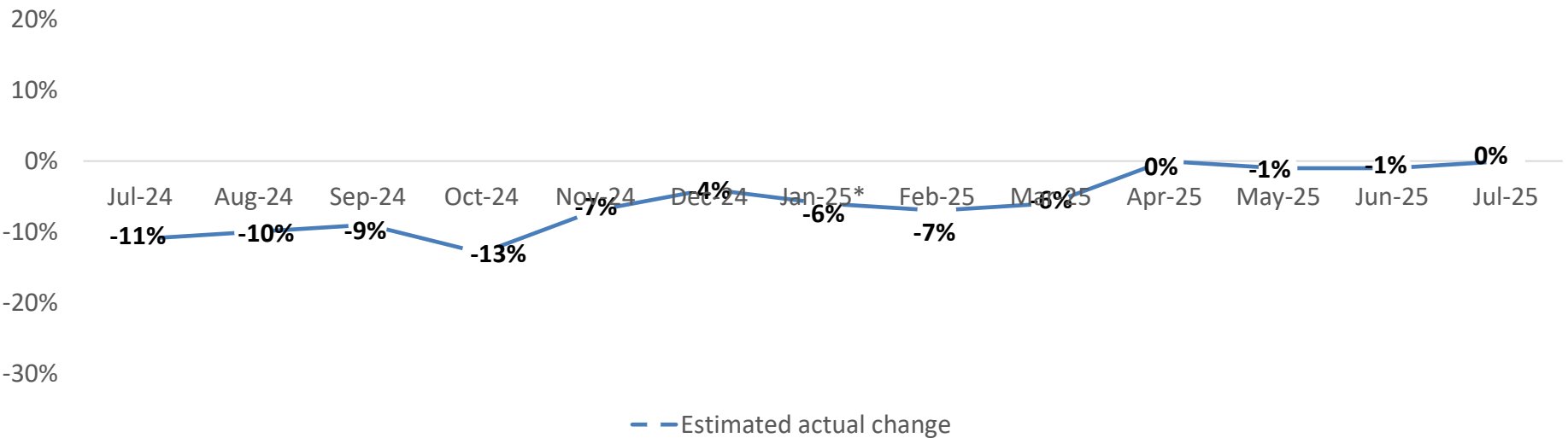
Performance – Turnover compared to previous year



*Small sample size – interpret with caution

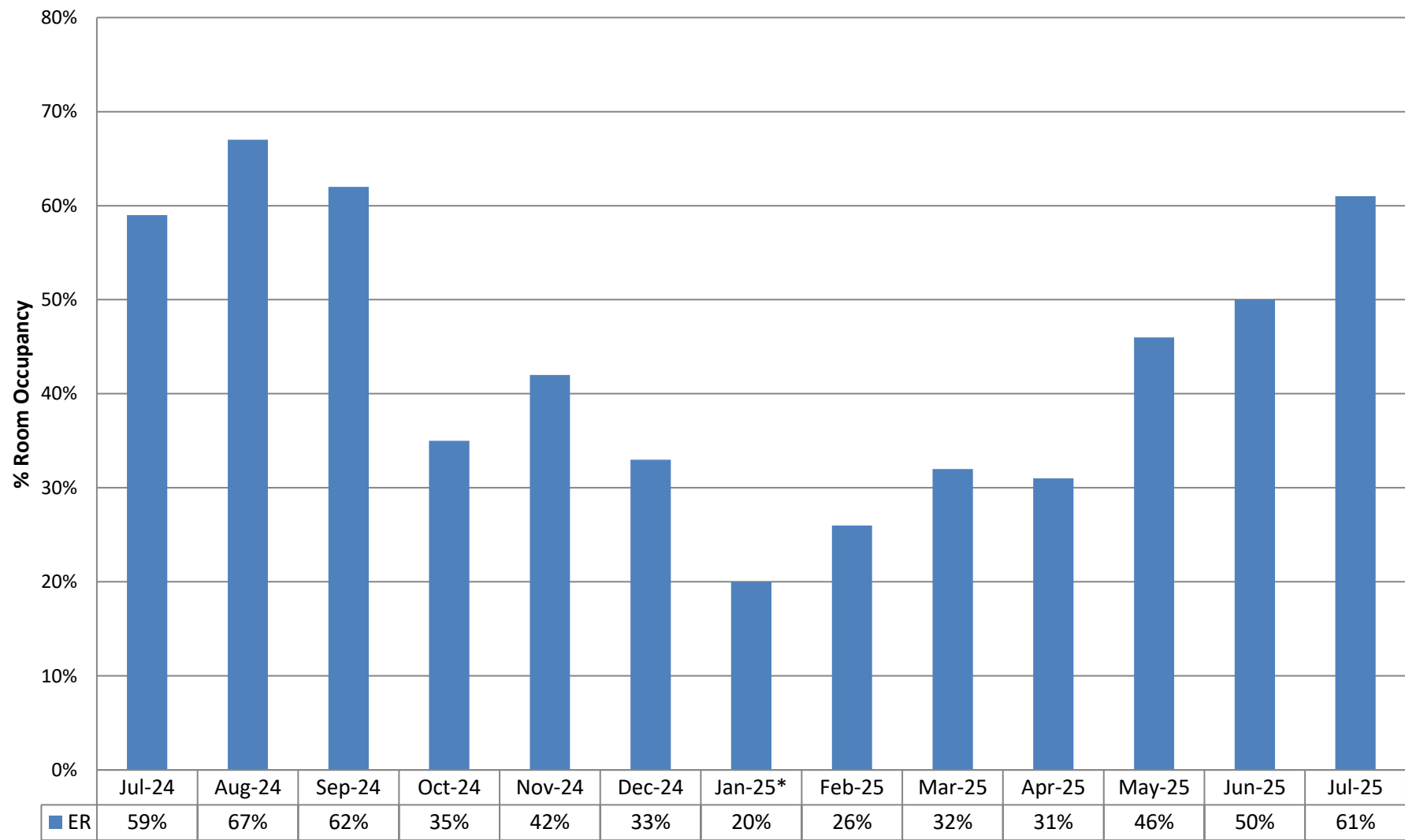
■ Increased ■ Stayed the same ■ Decreased

ESTIMATED ACTUAL CHANGE IN TURNOVER



*Small sample size – interpret with caution

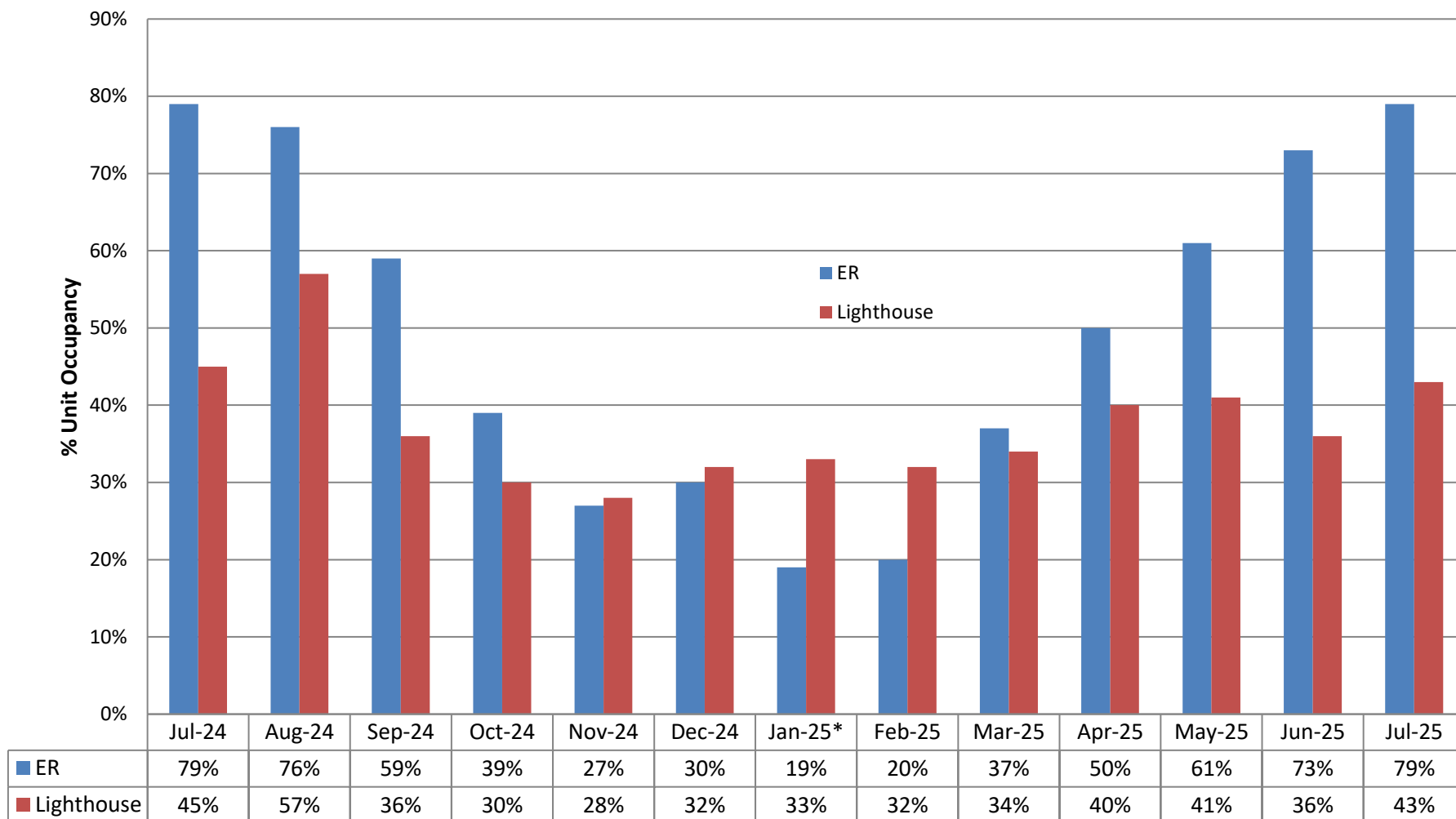
Performance – Serviced Room Occupancy



*Small sample size – interpret with caution

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

Performance – Self Catering Unit Occupancy



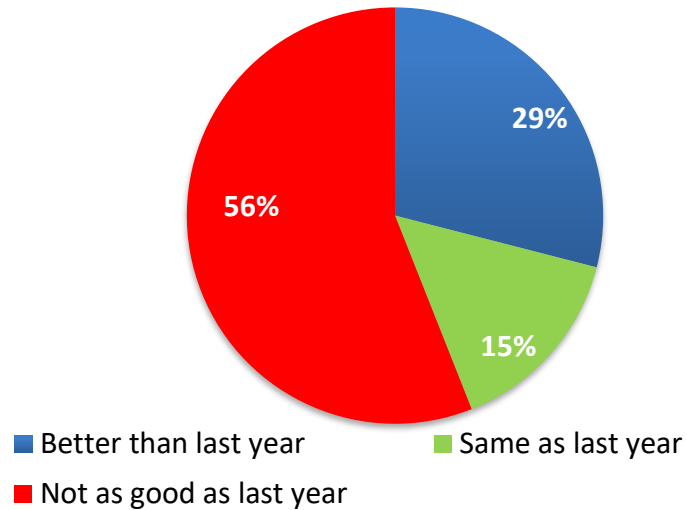
*Small sample size – interpret with caution

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

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

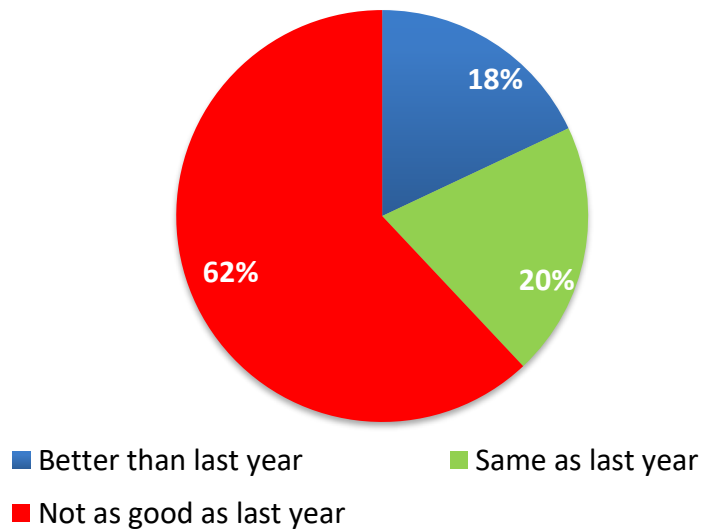
Outlook – Based upon forward booking levels

AUGUST 2025



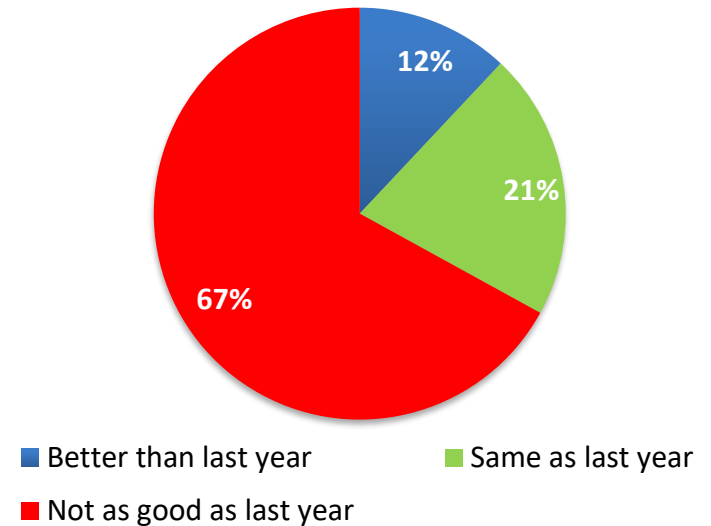
Base: 52

SEPTEMBER 2025



Base: 50

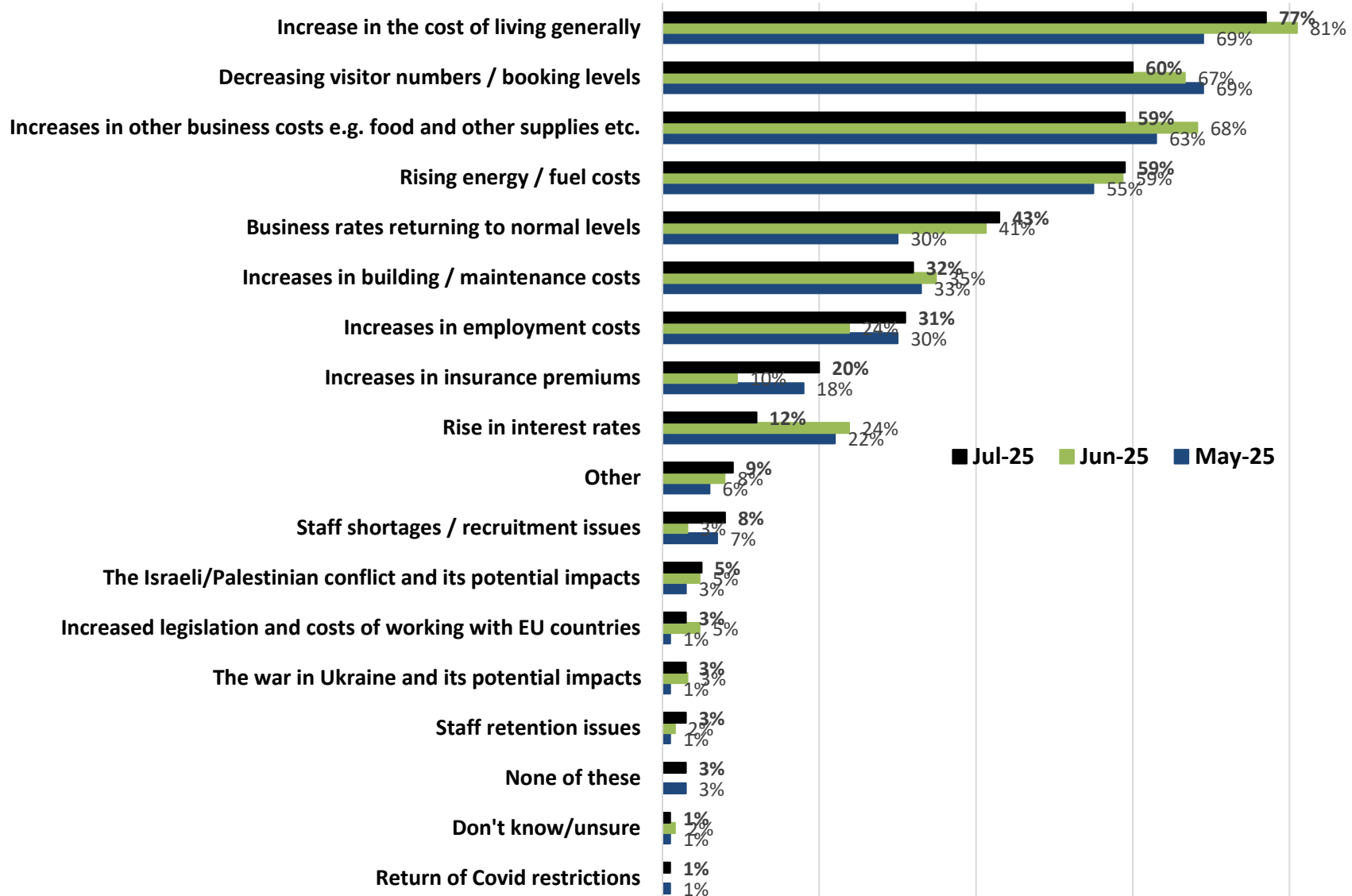
OCTOBER 2025



Base: 42

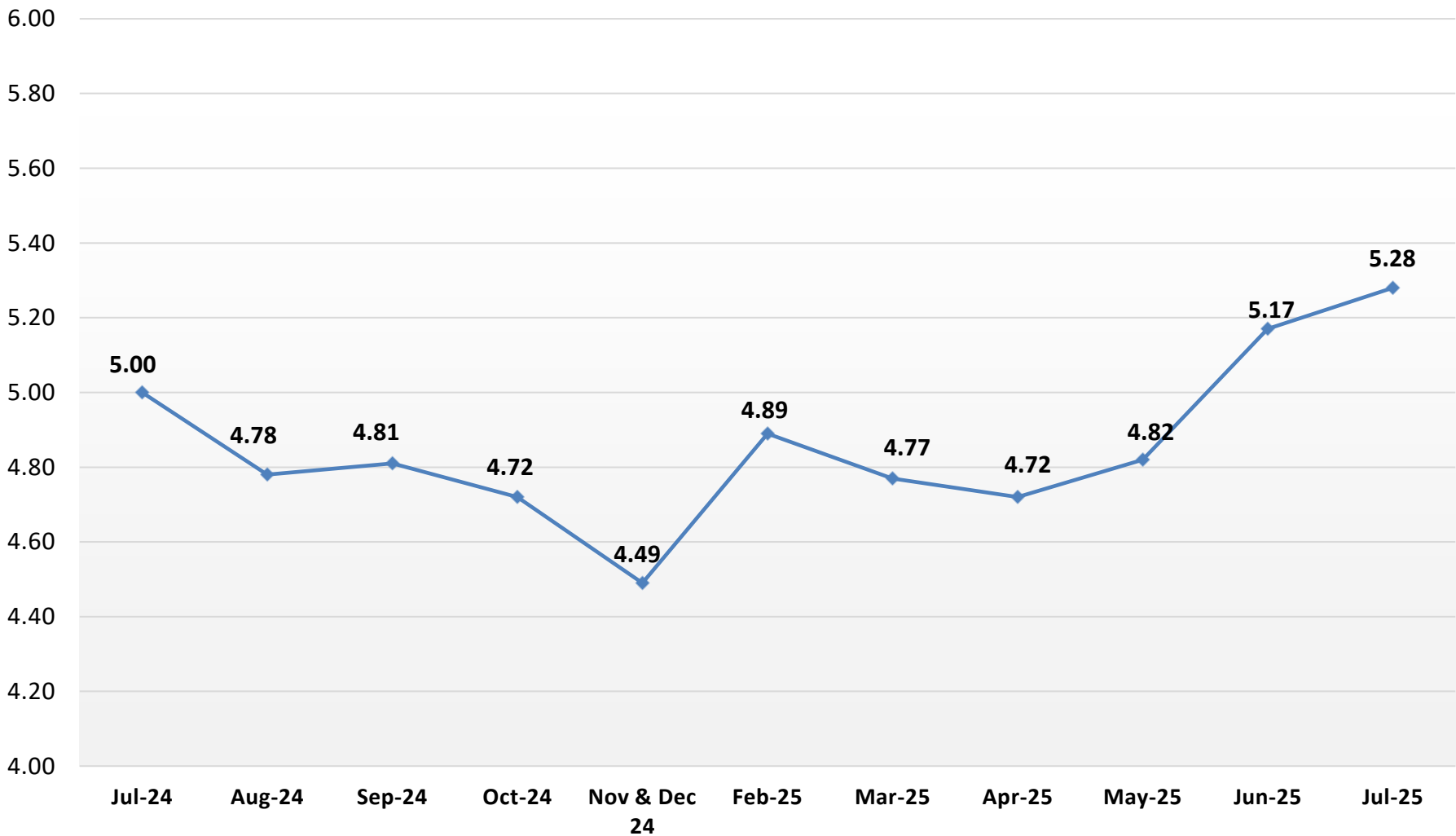
Top 5 business concerns (pre-defined list)

TOP 5 MOST CONCERNING FACTORS FOR BUSINESSES IN THE COMING MONTHS



Business optimism

BUSINESS OPTIMISM (MAXIMUM SCORE OF 10)



Key results – Sample of other comments on impacts

This year has been very hard to predict; we will likely end up quite significantly down on previous years overall, but it is evident that bookings are becoming more last minute, for shorter stays and with quite striking price consciousness. If the pattern of last-minute bookings continues into the autumn, then we may yet reduce the shortfall compared to previous years, but it all feels more transient, and stressful than in previous years.

The footfall is up and the spend is there.
Great to see.

The beach in Paignton being full of seaweed on a bank holiday weekend did not help our business. Swissco did not attempt to clear it! This is a major holiday resort and there were loads of comments/complaints on Facebook.

VAT needs to be lowered business rates abolished or reduced massively.

The appalling deterioration of Torquay, and its terrible national reputation, have adversely affected business in the rest of Torbay.

Exceeding expectations.

July was better than 2024, but it did require discounts to get the rooms filled. Meanwhile our costs have gone up quite considerably. We were in the fortunate position to have fixed our energy bills until end of August 2024 (negotiated pre-energy crisis). Therefore this is the first summer of the higher rates and we have AC in our bedrooms, ouch!. Forward booking wise, August is still c20% lower, whilst September is 40% down at the moment, but am still hopeful of the last minute booking trend continuing along with the good weather. Cooler nights though, so the AC gets switched off (LOL)

Our bookings have pretty much dried up and are 50% down for the next 3 months compared with last year and no real reason as our prices are pretty much the same, if anything slightly lower, whilst at the same time facing increased costs.

We are currently down 30% on August bookings with lots of availability still left for August - last year we were turning people away, this year it's very quiet.

What I say every month - spiraling costs - less visitors - people can't afford to come - so many businesses failing. Unless the government / Bank of England does something to boost the power in people's pockets, many more of us are doomed this winter. Our bank balance at the end of July is what it normally is at the end of April! Having already endured one winter with no heating, doubt we will survive this one financially :(

Worst year in the last 10 years. Will need to remortgage to survive the winter at this rate.

We are a free entry attraction, relying heavily on donations from our visitors. We have recorded increased footfall every month of 2025 since seasonal opening in March. However, our donations haven't increased exponentially. My feeling is that people are carefully guarding their disposable income.

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