ERBID How’s Business Survey

May 2026

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July 2026





Sample and supporting information

This month's survey has a sample of 56 businesses, representing a minimum sample of approximately 60 businesses when respondents representing multiple businesses, outlets or sites (4) 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 South West region 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 three major short-term rental platforms are tracked: Airbnb, Booking.com and Vrbo. Listings data is deduplicated when the same property is advertised on more than one platform.

From September 2025 onwards, Lighthouse has made a change to their methodology. Since November 2024, Tripadvisor has stopped supporting direct bookings for short-term rental properties, instead redirecting users to other platforms. This firstly means that some listings remained searchable but not bookable, and additionally, redirects to other platforms have created duplicates in Lighthouse's supply database. Therefore, Tripadvisor listings have been removed from all historical data, retaining only Airbnb, Booking.com and Vrbo ensures a more reliable view of the bookable short-term rental market. The occupancy data provided in this report has been updated accordingly as a result.

** 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 – May 2026

Compared to May 2025 businesses reported that:

May 2026 Visitor levels:

Increased 25% / Stayed the same 24% / Decreased 51%

Estimated actual change in visitors -4%

May 2026 Turnover levels:

Increased 33% / Stayed the same 24% / Decreased 44%

Estimated actual change in turnover 0%

June 2026 Outlook is:

Better than last year 31% / Same as last year 29% / Not as good as last year 40%

July 2026 Outlook is:

Better than last year 24% / Same as last year 21% / Not as good as last year 55%

School summer holidays 2026 Outlook is:

Better than last year 3% / Same as last year 33% / Not as good as last year 63%

Optimism:

Optimism score is 5.63 out of a possible 10

May 2026 Key results

In May 2026, 51% of all businesses reported decreased visitor/customer numbers compared to May 2025, whilst 57% said their turnover had increased or stayed the same during the same period. The overall decrease in visitors/customers was estimated at -4%, whilst there was no change in turnover compared with May 2025.

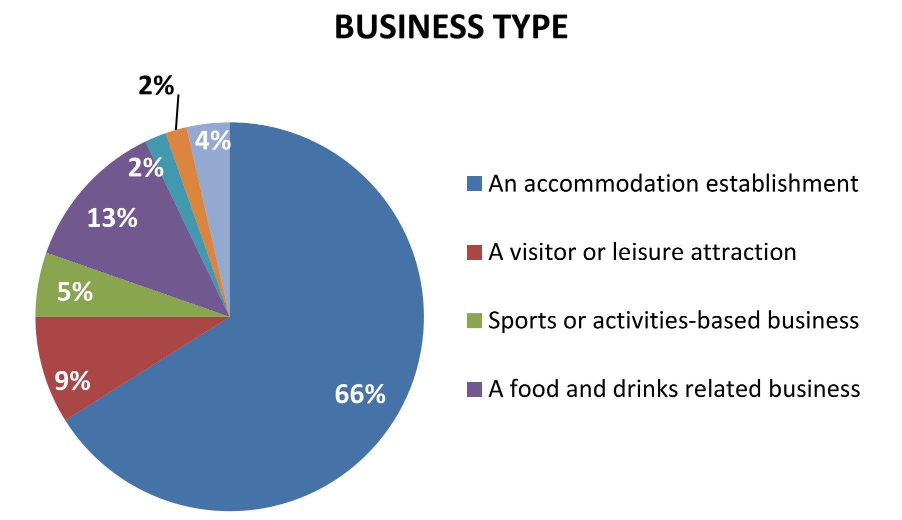
For June 2026, 60% of respondents expect their booking levels to be level or better than June 2025, whilst for July and the school summer holidays 2026 55% and 63% of businesses respectively expect their booking to decrease compared with the same month/period last year. At 5.63 out of 10.00 the overall optimism score however, increased compared to last month.

Concerns over rising energy/fuel costs (66%, no change compared with last month), was the number one concern amongst businesses this month. This was followed by increases in the cost of living generally (64%, an increase of 2% compared with last month), decreasing visitor numbers / booking levels (55%, a decrease of 5% compared with last month) and business rates returning to normal levels (48%, an increase of 17% compared with last month).

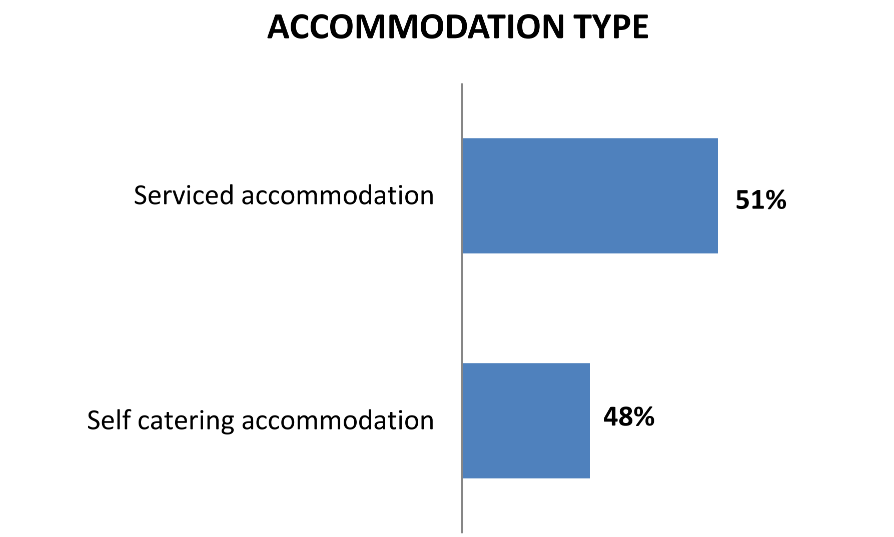
Despite the difficult trading environment, some businesses reported that periods of good weather, particularly during half-term and the Spring Bank Holiday, provided a significant boost to their visitor numbers during the month and helped recover what had otherwise been a slow start to the season. Some operators noted that bookings improved substantially towards the end of the month, allowing them to achieve results similar to or only slightly below the previous year. Repeat customers continue to provide an important source of resilience, while successful destination events such as the Air Show attracted strong visitor interest. bookings are helping some businesses maintain confidence for the peak summer season.

Overall, however, there remains widespread concern about the current state of the tourism sector, with many businesses reporting lower visitor numbers, weaker forward bookings and reduced customer spending compared with previous years. Rising operating costs—including employment costs, food, fuel, supplies and VAT—continue to place significant pressure on profitability, with several respondents stating that turnover increases are being achieved only through price rises rather than higher demand. Many businesses are caught between raising prices to cover costs and discounting to maintain occupancy, resulting in squeezed margins either way. There are also concerns about the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on consumer confidence, leading to fewer bookings and greater caution among potential visitors.

Sample profile, business location and status



Base: 56



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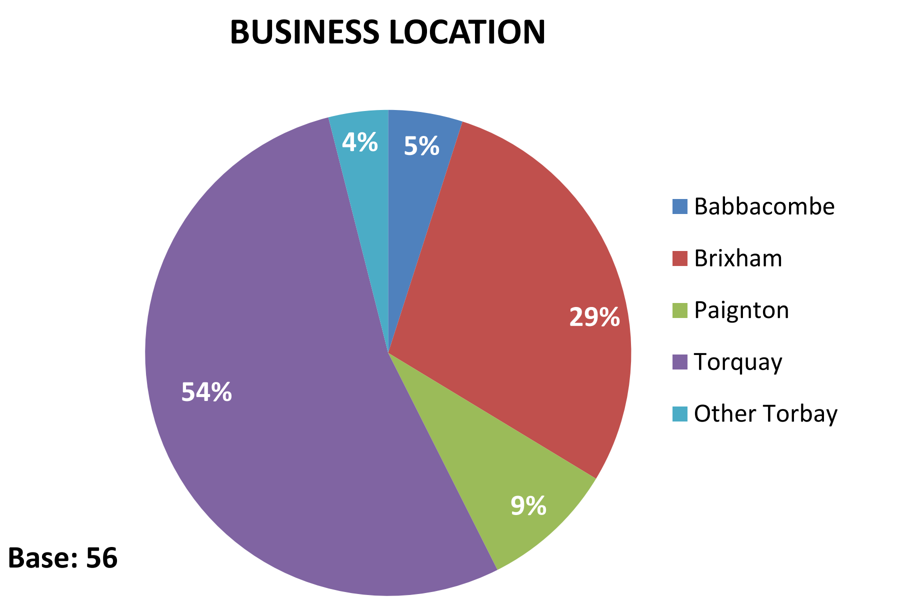

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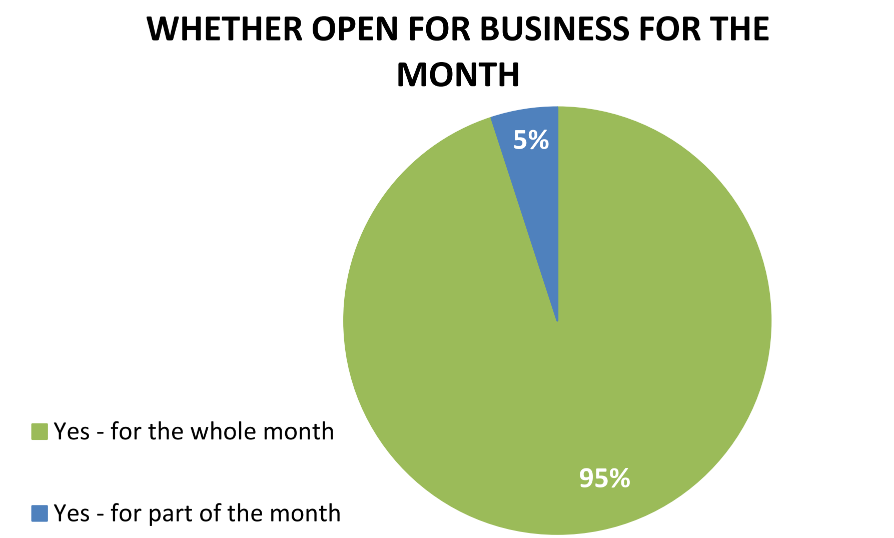
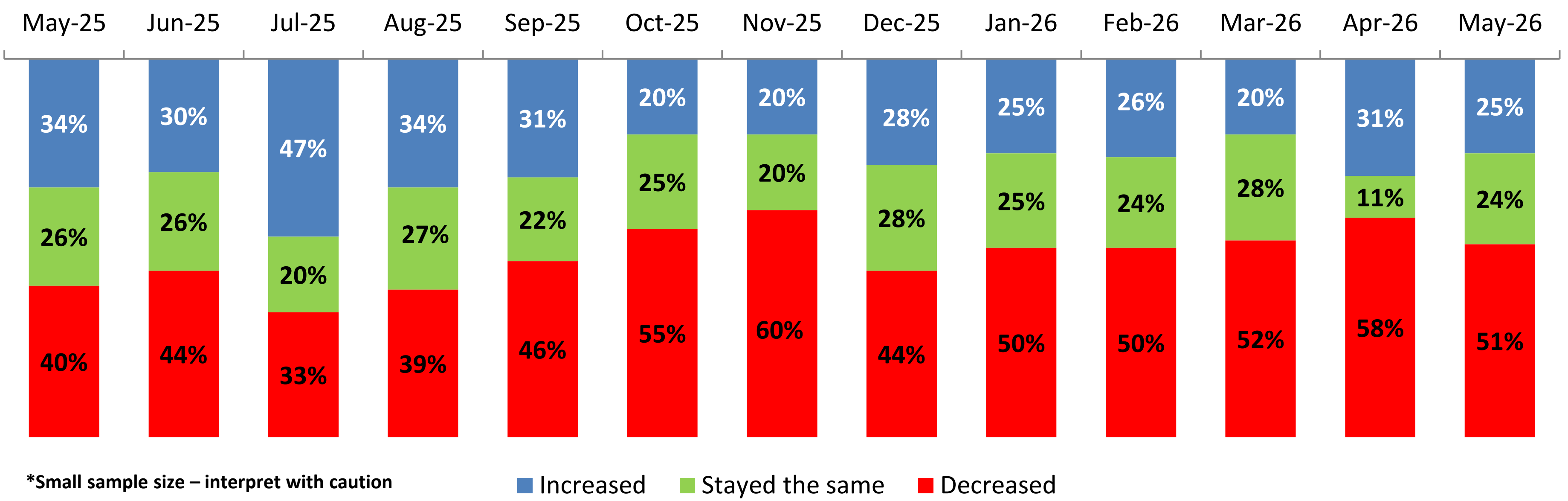
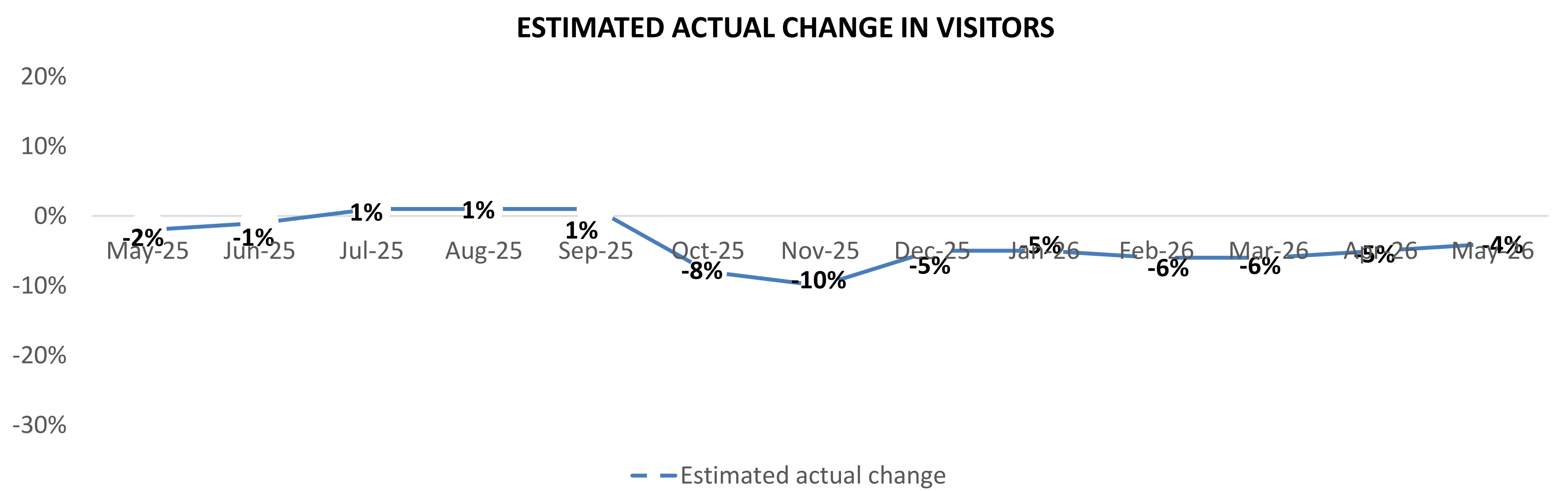


Base: 56

Performance – Number of visitors compared to previous year

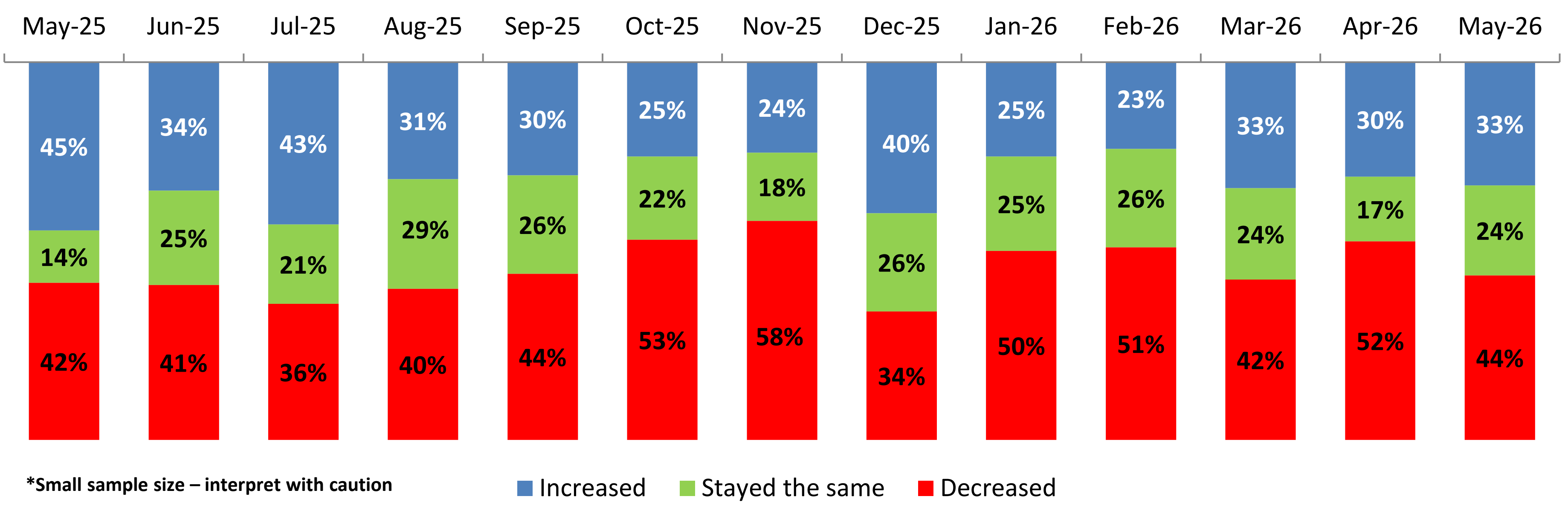


*Small sample size – interpret with caution

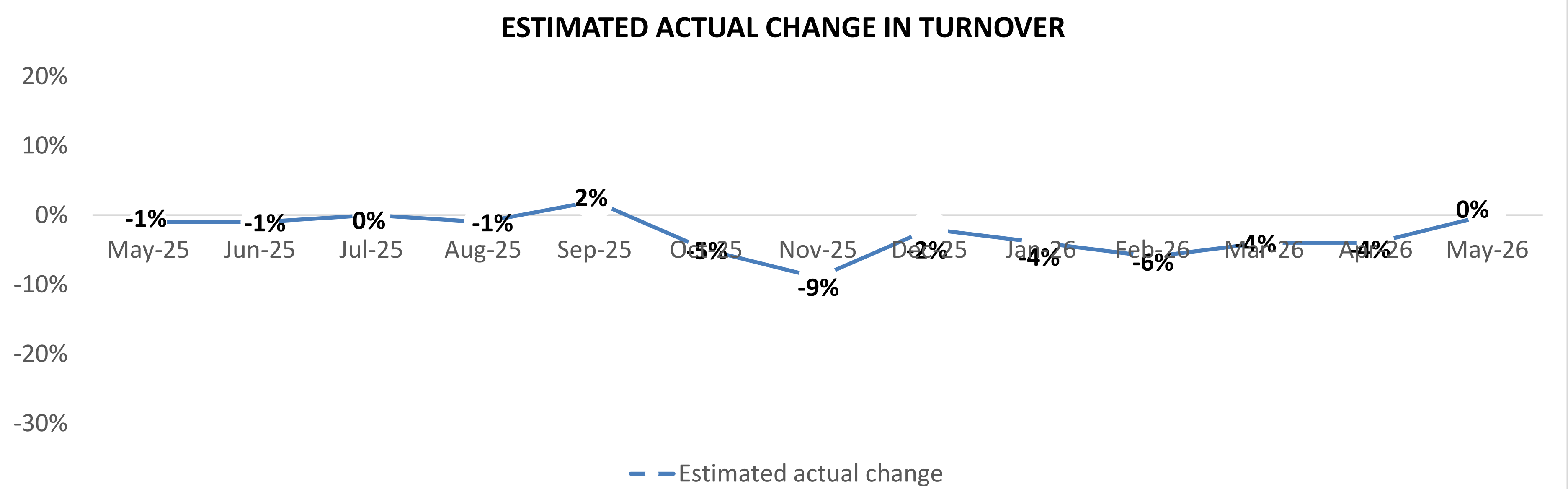


*Small sample size – interpret with caution

Performance – Turnover compared to previous year

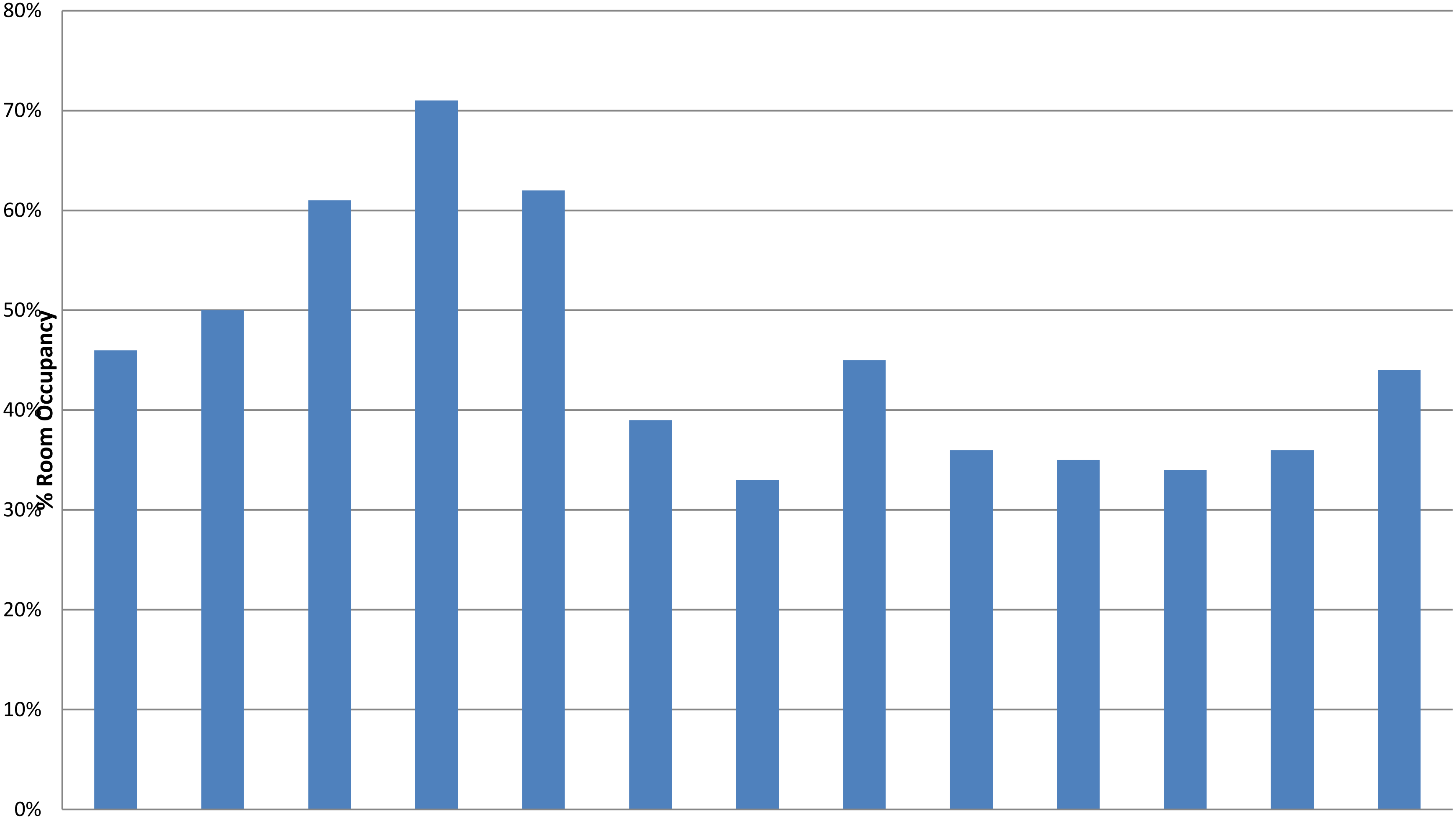


*Small sample size – interpret with caution



*Small sample size – interpret with caution

Performance – Serviced Room Occupancy

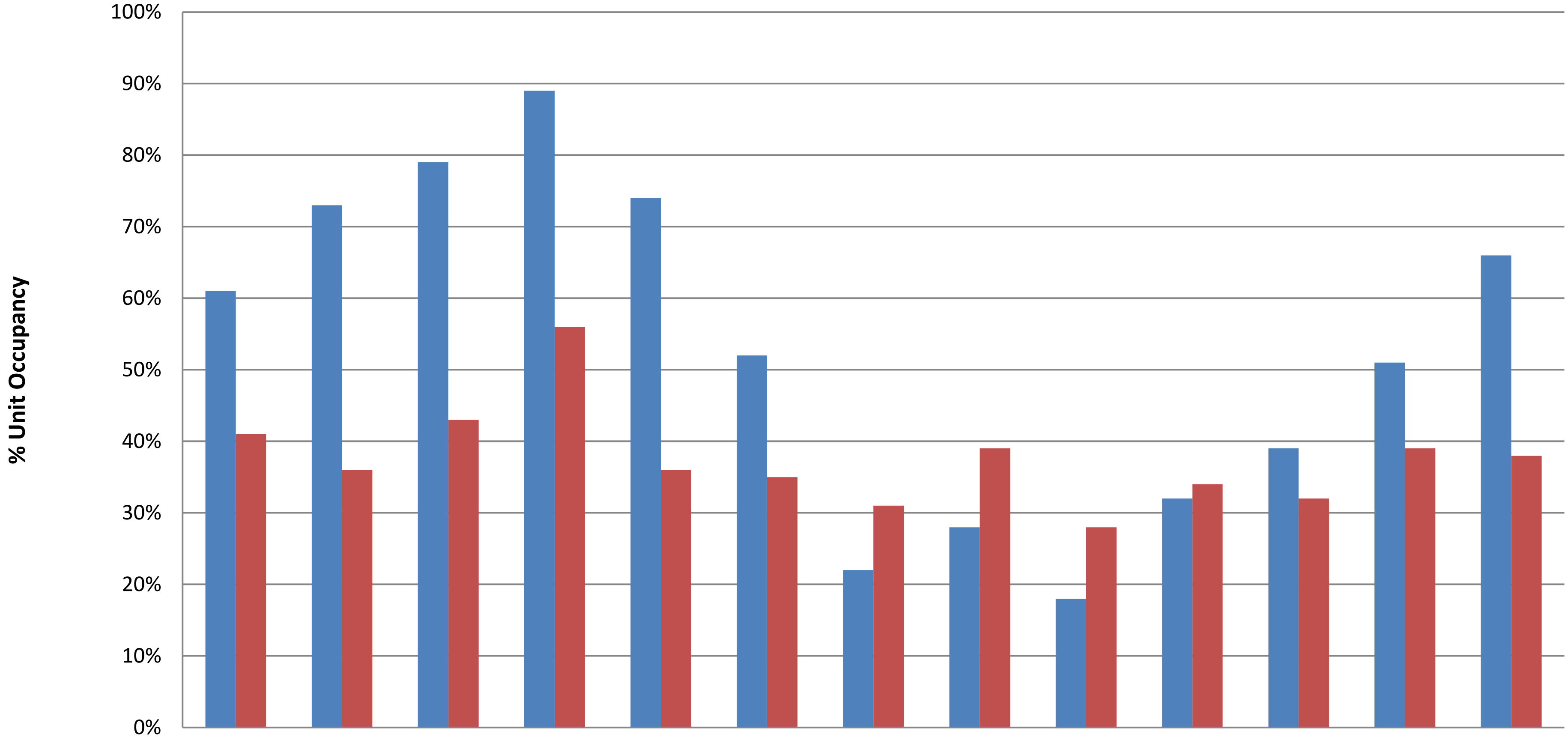


	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26
ER	46%	50%	61%	71%	62%	39%	33%	45%	36%	35%	34%	36%	44%

***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



	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26
ER	61%	73%	79%	89%	74%	52%	22%	28%	18%	32%	39%	51%	66%
Lighthouse	41%	36%	43%	56%	36%	35%	31%	39%	28%	34%	32%	39%	38%

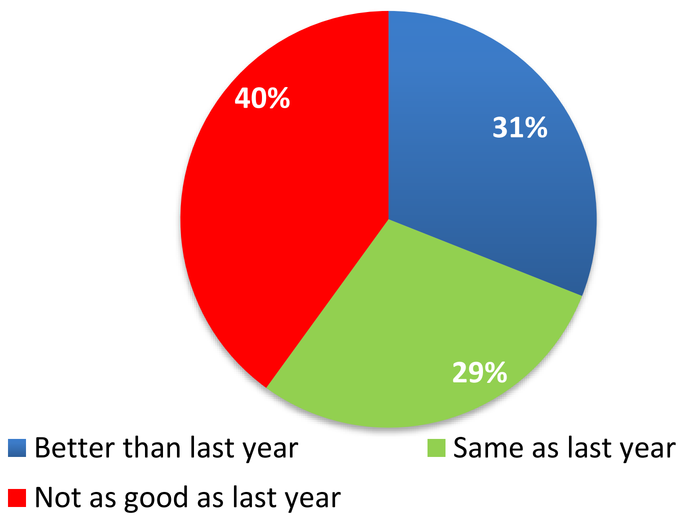
***Small sample size – interpret with caution**

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.

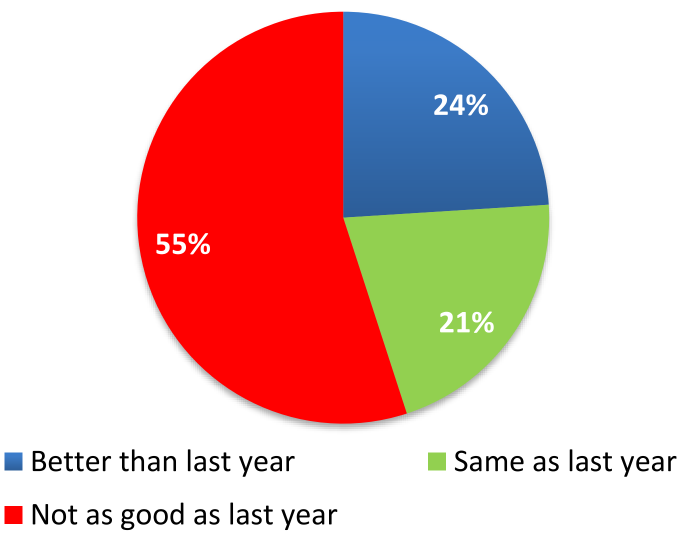
Outlook – Based upon forward booking levels

JUNE 2026



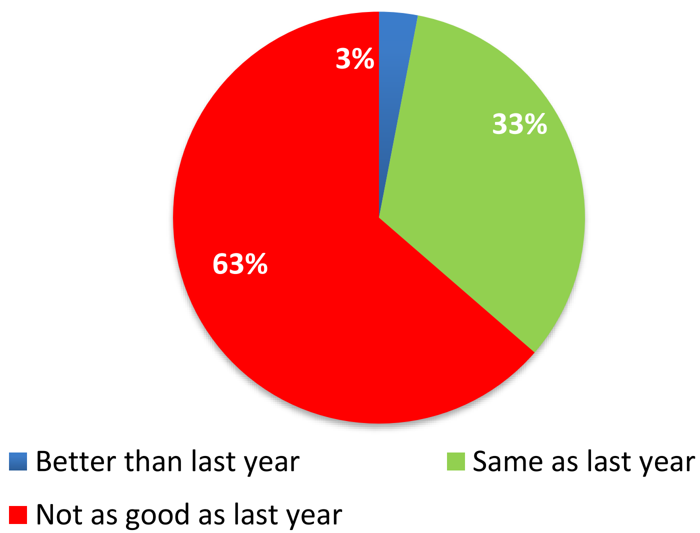
Base: 35

JULY 2026



Base: 33

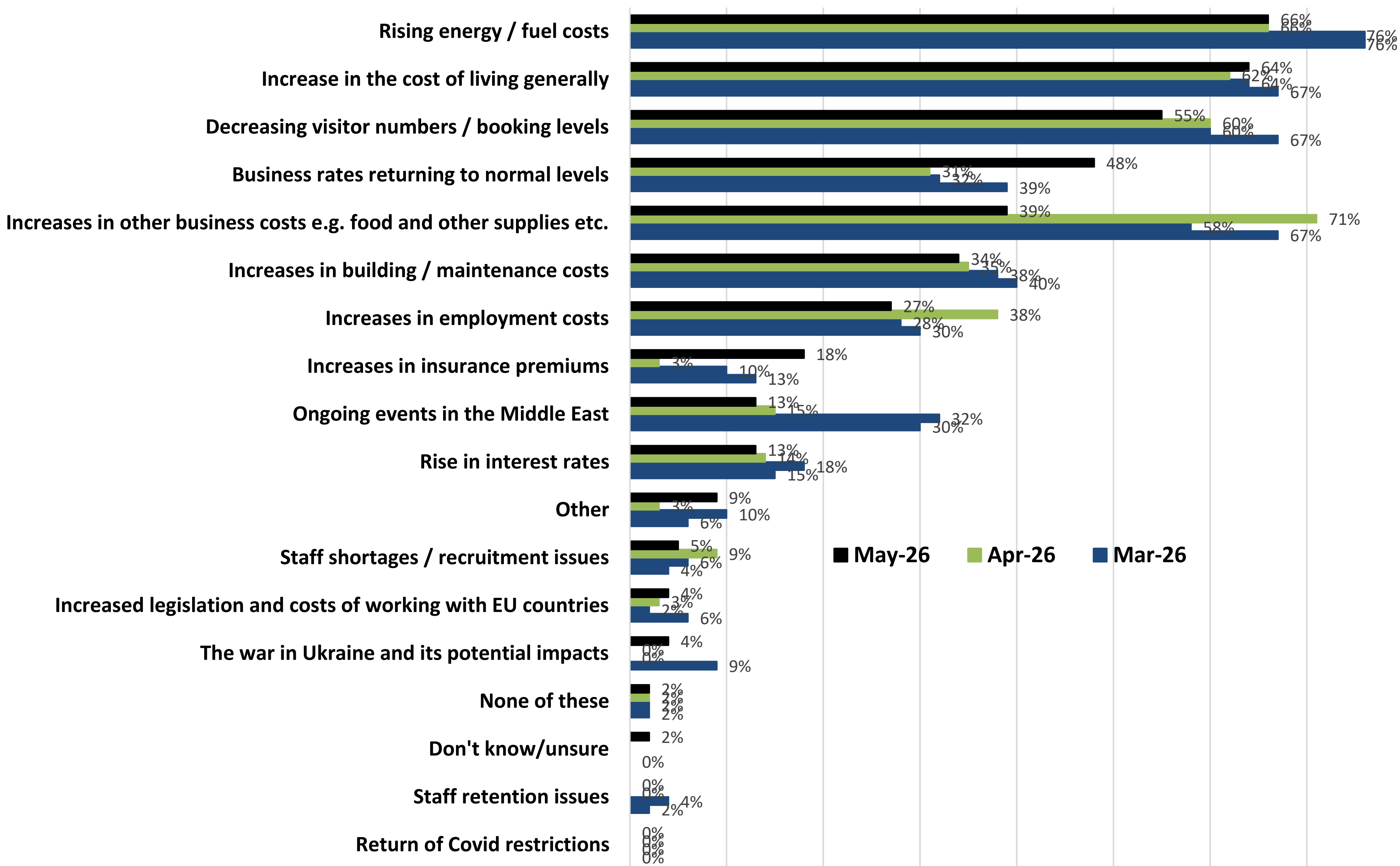
SCHOOL SUMMER HOLIDAYS 2026



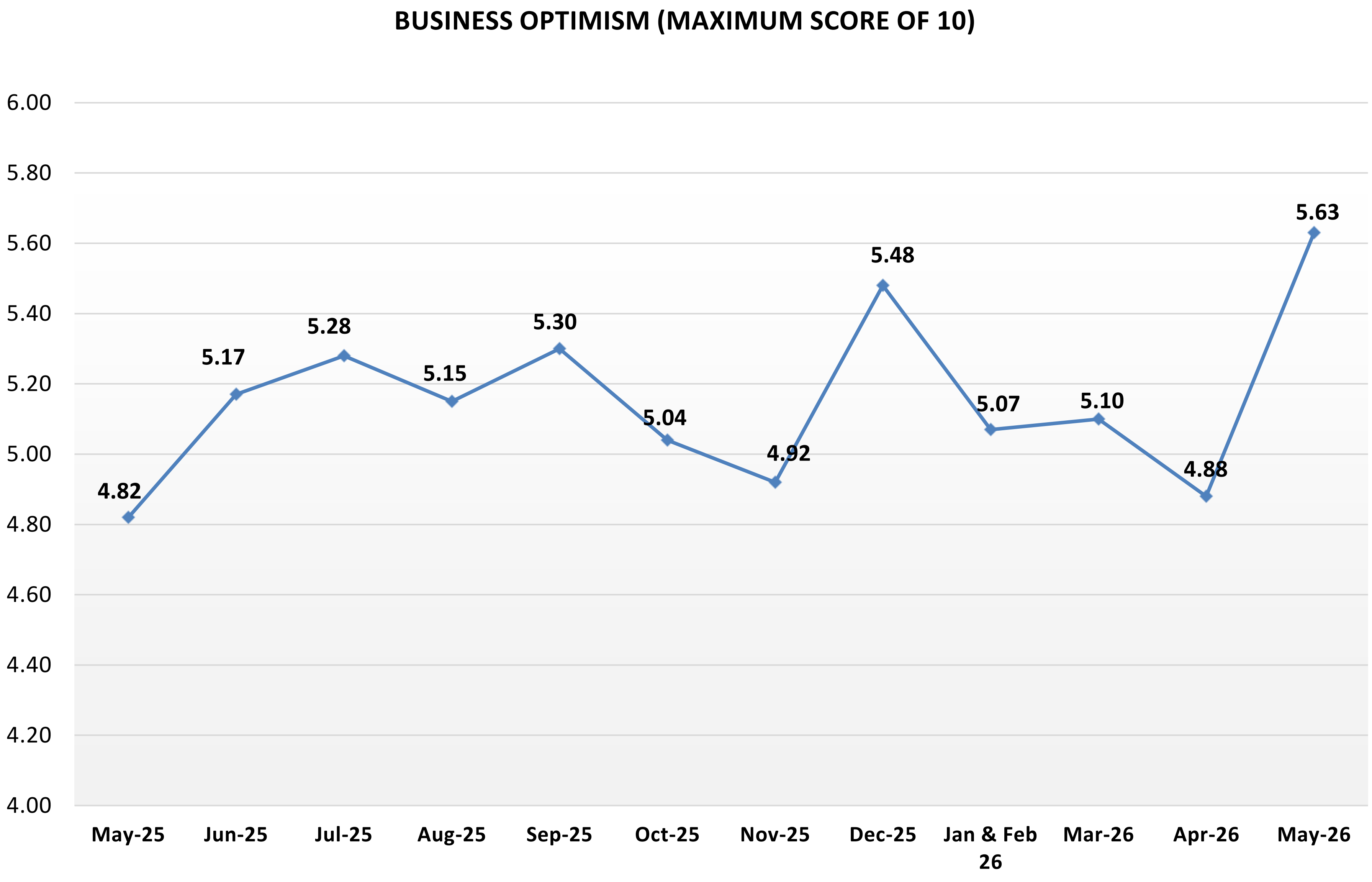
Base: 30

Top 5 business concerns (pre-defined list)

TOP 5 MOST CONCERNING FACTORS FOR BUSINESSES IN THE COMING MONTHS



Business optimism



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