ERBID How's Business Survey

October 2025

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December 2025





Sample and supporting information

This month's survey has a sample of 57 businesses, representing a minimum sample of approximately 64 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 – October 2025

Compared to October 2024 businesses reported that:

October 2025 Visitor levels:

Increased 20% / Stayed the same 25% / Decreased 55%

Estimated actual change in visitors -8%

October 2025 Turnover levels:

Increased 25% / Stayed the same 22% / Decreased 53%

Estimated actual change in turnover -5%

November 2025 Outlook is:

Better than last year 13% / Same as last year 20% / Not as good as last year 67%

December 2025 Outlook is:

Better than last year 19% / Same as last year 35% / Not as good as last year 46%

Christmas/New Year holidays 2025 Outlook is:

Better than last year 15% / Same as last year 54% / Not as good as last year 31%

Optimism:

Optimism score is 5.04 out of a possible 10

October 2025 Key results

October 2025 saw a return to decreases in both visitors/customers (-8%) and turnover (-5%) compared with October 2024 with over half of businesses in each case reporting decreased performance compared with the same time last year (55% and 53% for visitors/customers and turnover respectively). This is the first time in three months that businesses have reported a decrease year on year in their visitors/customers and the first time in 7 months that businesses have reported a negative increase in their turnover of more than -1% compared with the same time last year.

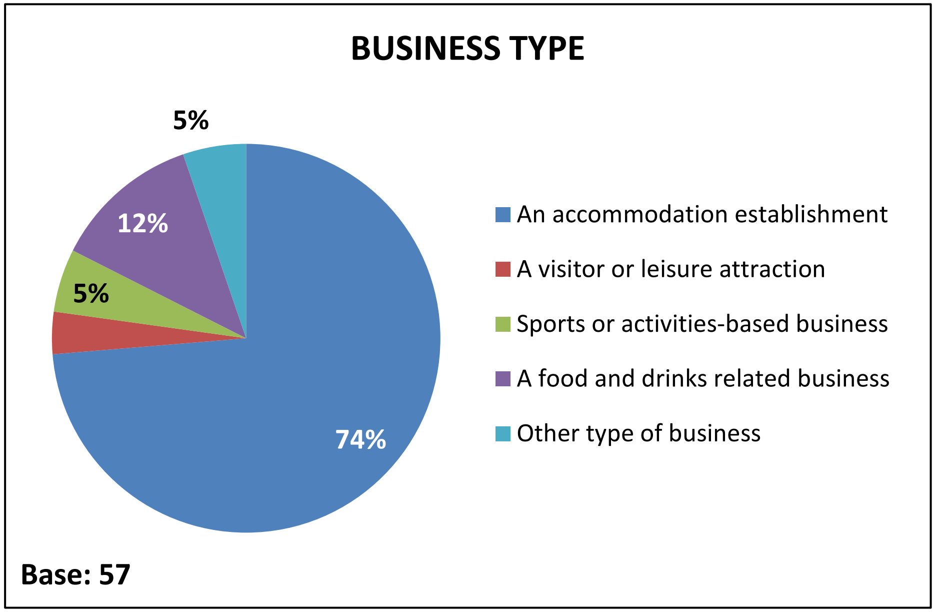
Looking ahead, business sentiment continues to remain cautious. For November 2025, 67% of respondents expect conditions to be worse than the previous year, although this pessimism decreases for December 2025 (46%) and even further for the Christmas/New Year holidays 2025 where 31% of businesses anticipate a weaker performance than the same time last year. The overall optimism score for the month was 5.04 out of 10, the lowest score since May 2025 (4.82).

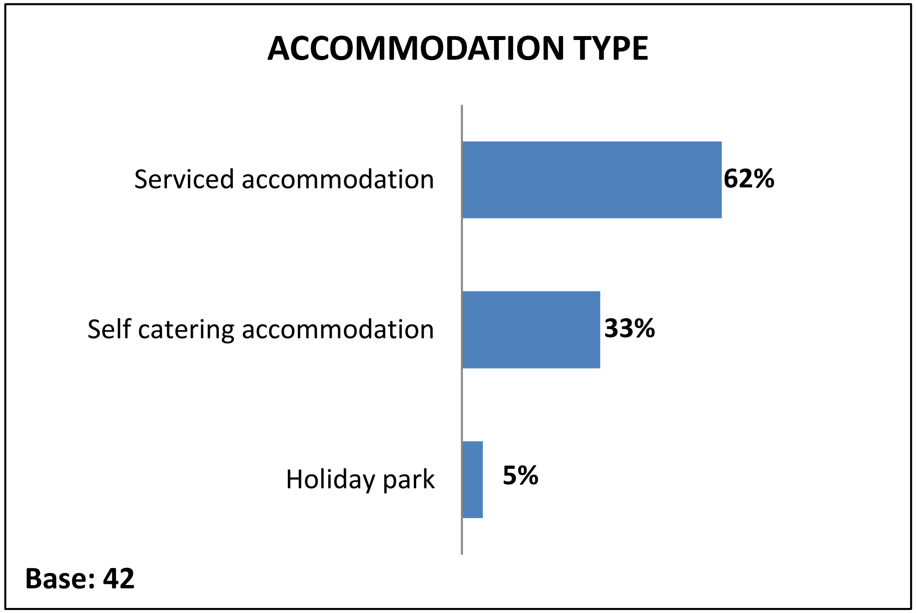
The general increase in the cost of living, cited by 72%, and a 2% increase compared with last month remains of the highest concern for businesses, followed by concern over rising energy/fuel costs (65%, compared with 61% last month) and declining visitor numbers (61% - a 2% increase compared with last month). Increases in other business costs such as food and supplies—at 54%, decreased substantially compared with last month (65%).

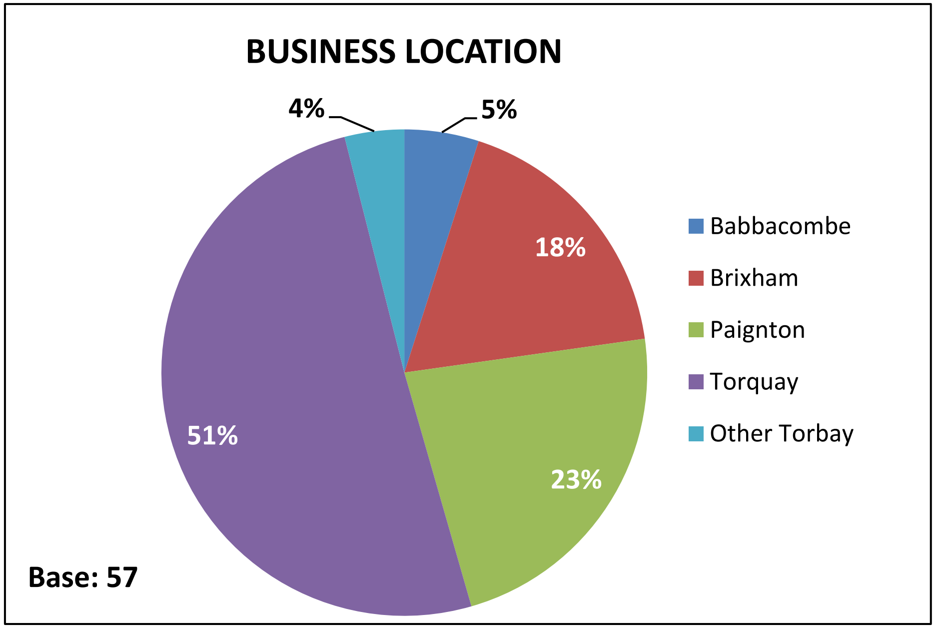
Just a handful of positive comments were provided by businesses alongside the wider challenges: October occupancy, while down year-on-year, turned out better than expected for some and September had been notably busy compared to the quieter months that followed.

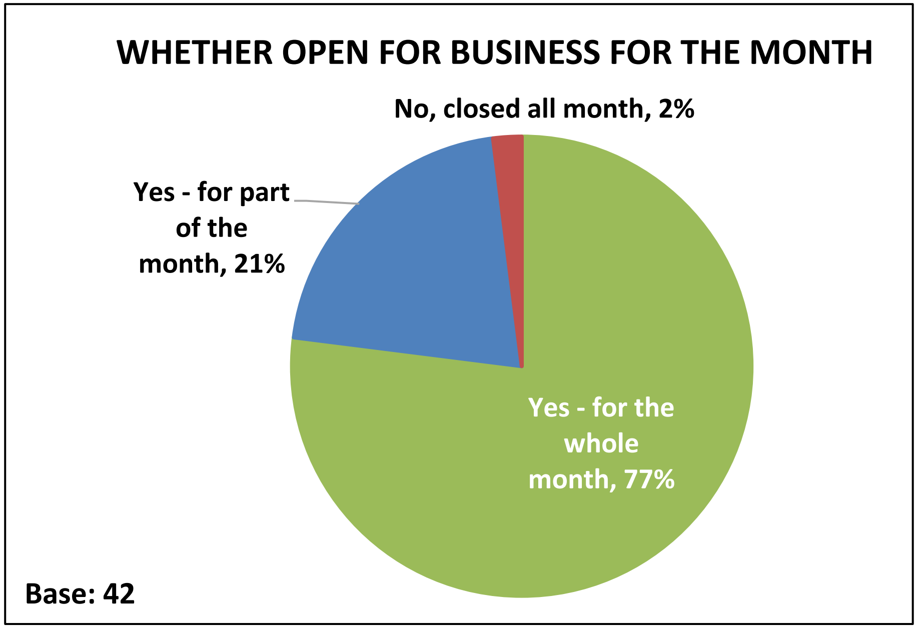
However, rising costs across business rates, insurance, utilities and staffing are crippling profitability for many businesses, while declining visitor numbers, exacerbated by poor weather, economic uncertainty and competition from large branded hotels, leave many operators struggling to survive. Businesses repeatedly voiced frustration with council policies and tolerance of antisocial behaviour that ultimately deters guests from visiting.

Sample profile, business location and status

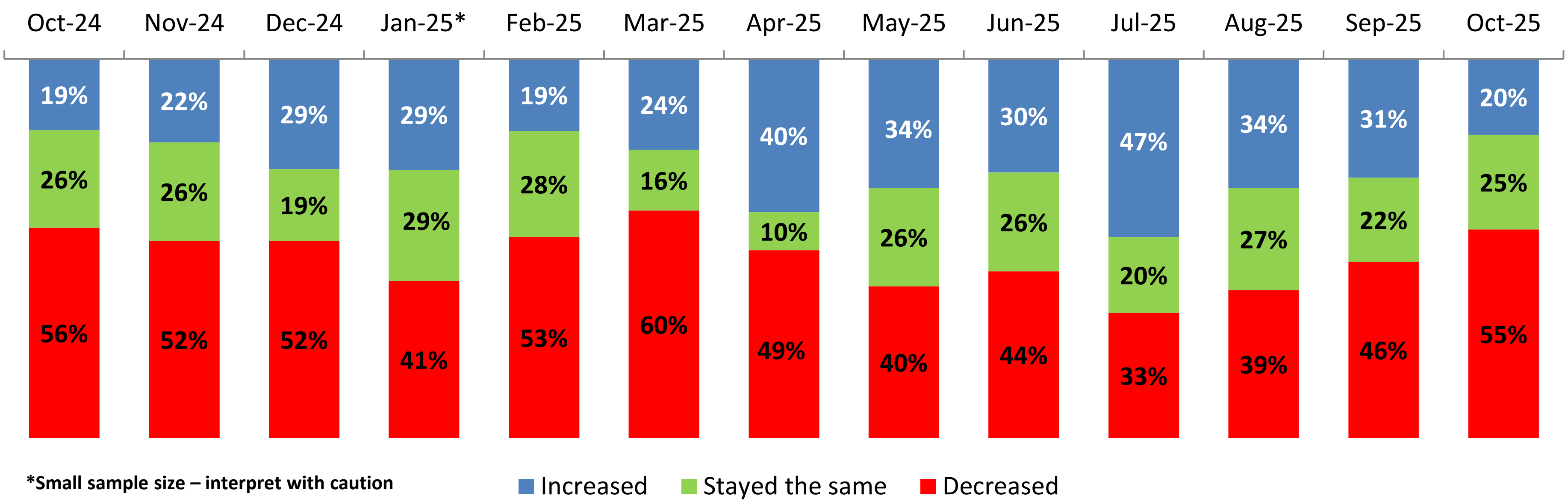




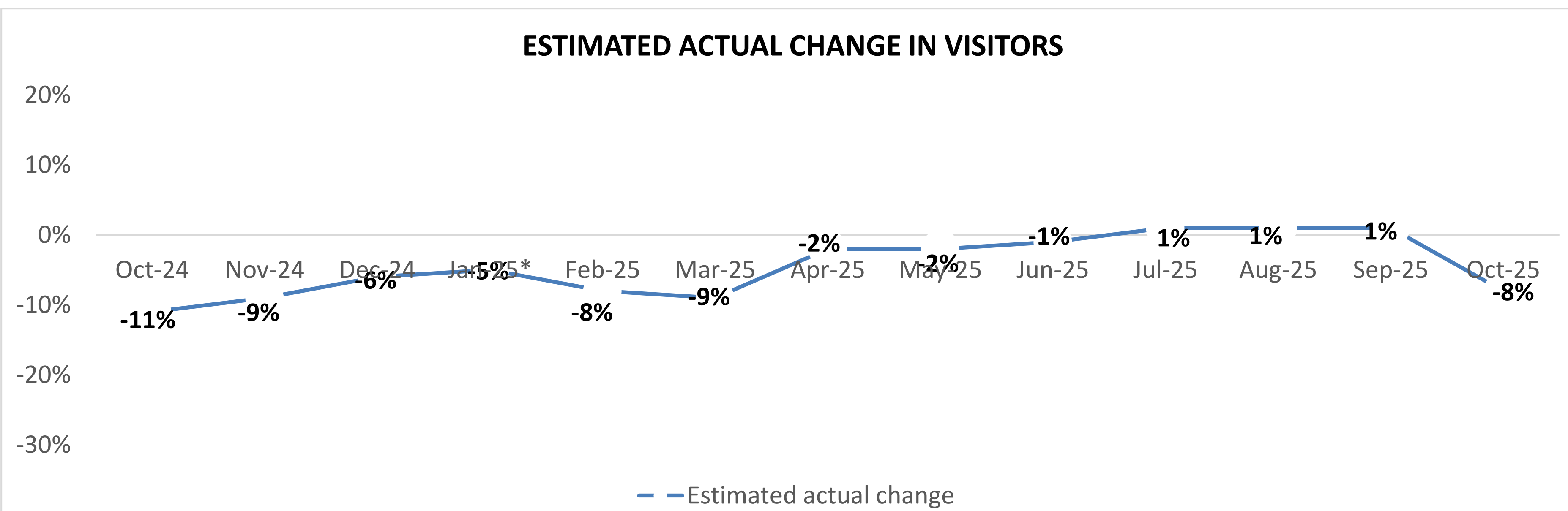




Performance – Number of visitors compared to previous year

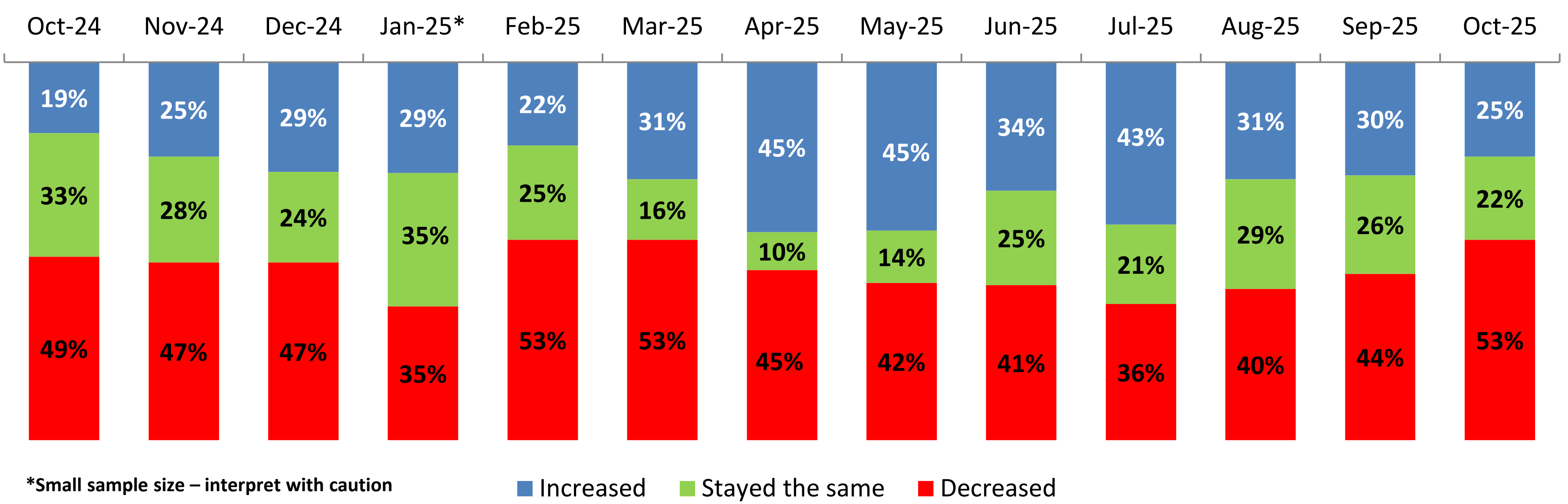


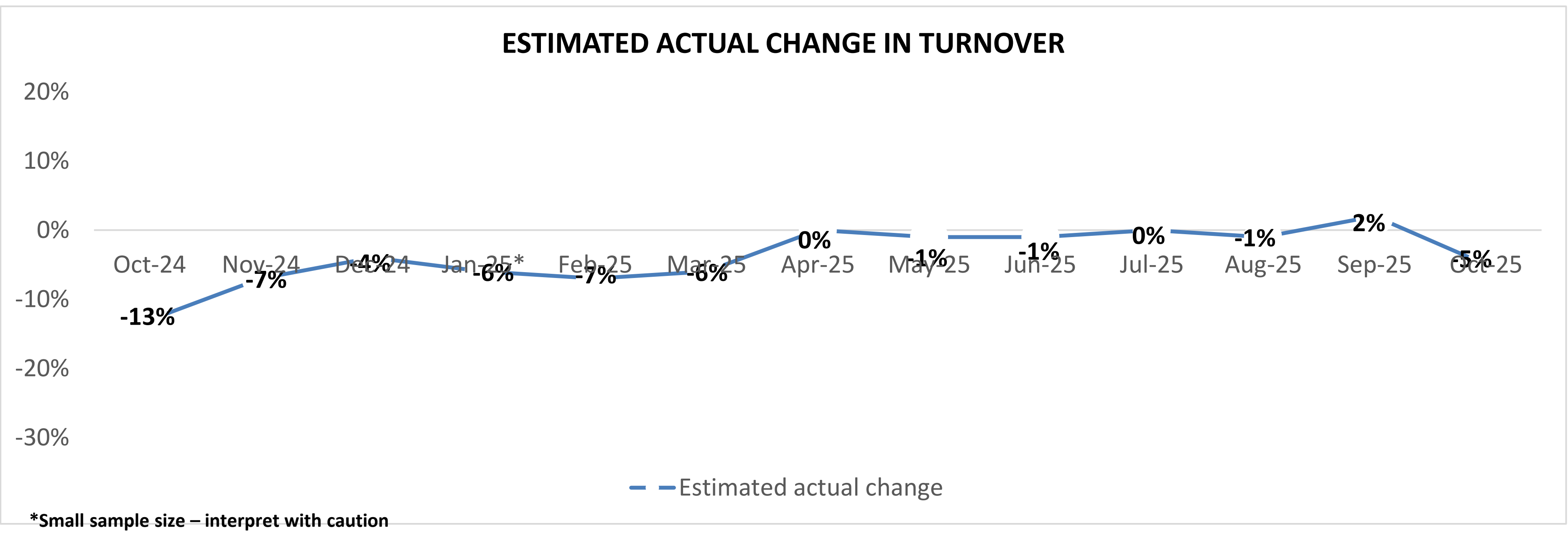
*Small sample size – interpret with caution



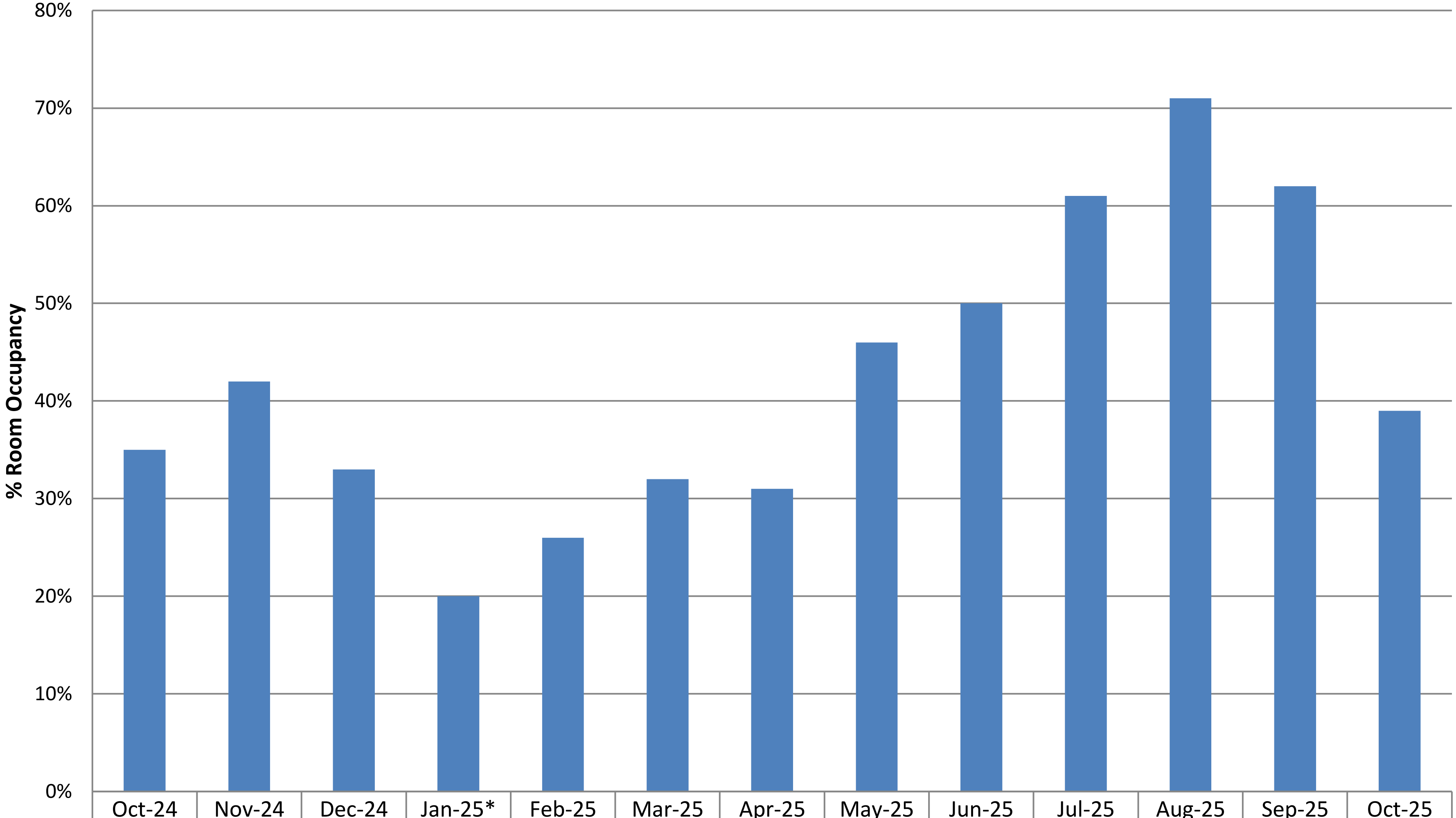
*Small sample size – interpret with caution

Performance – Turnover compared to previous year





Performance – Serviced Room Occupancy

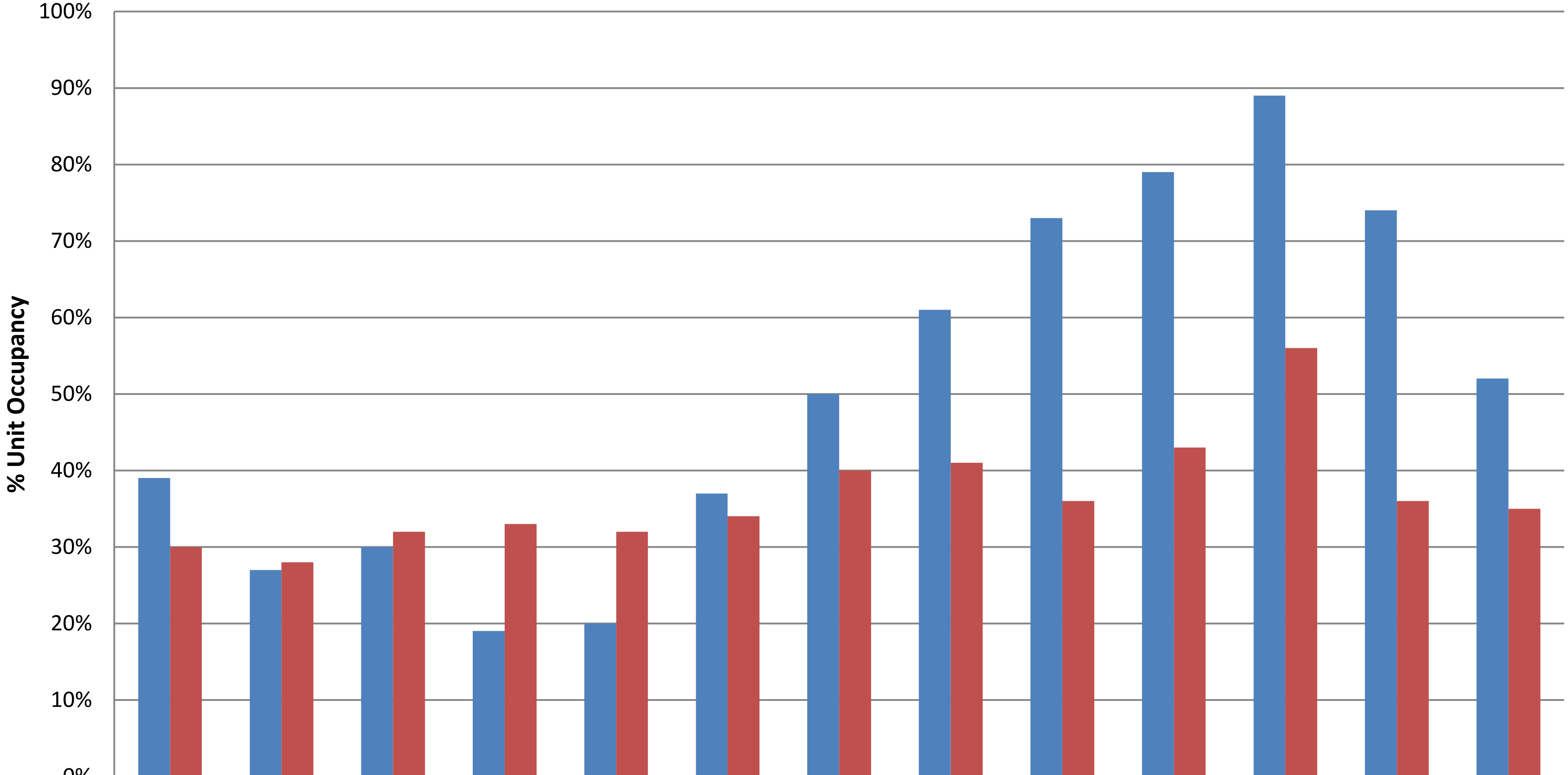


	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25*	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25
ER	35%	42%	33%	20%	26%	32%	31%	46%	50%	61%	71%	62%	39%

***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



	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25*	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25
ER	39%	27%	30%	19%	20%	37%	50%	61%	73%	79%	89%	74%	52%
Lighthouse	30%	28%	32%	33%	32%	34%	40%	41%	36%	43%	56%	36%	35%

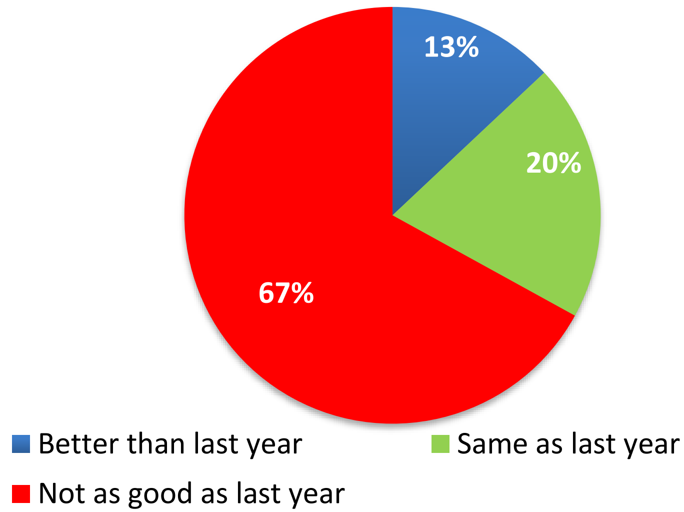
***Small sample size – interpret with caution**

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.

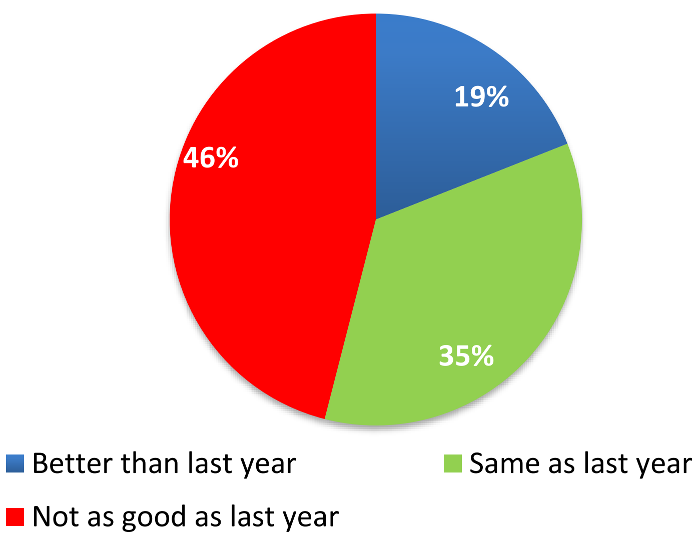
Outlook – Based upon forward booking levels

NOVEMBER 2025



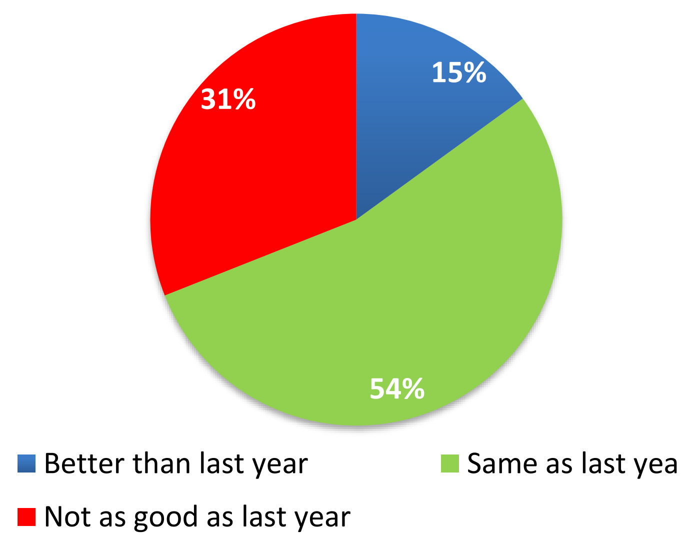
Base: 30

DECEMBER 2025



Base: 26

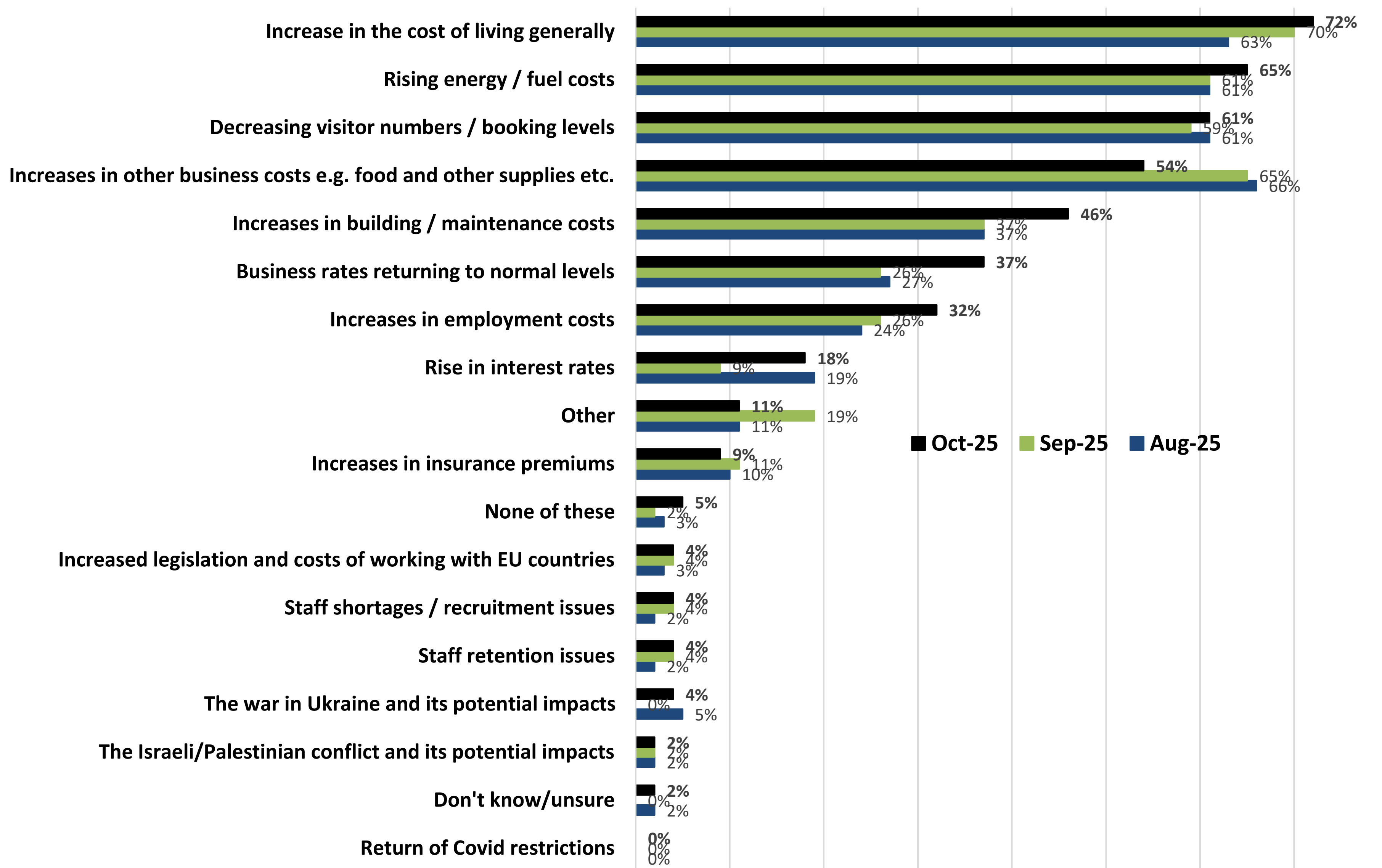
CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS 2025



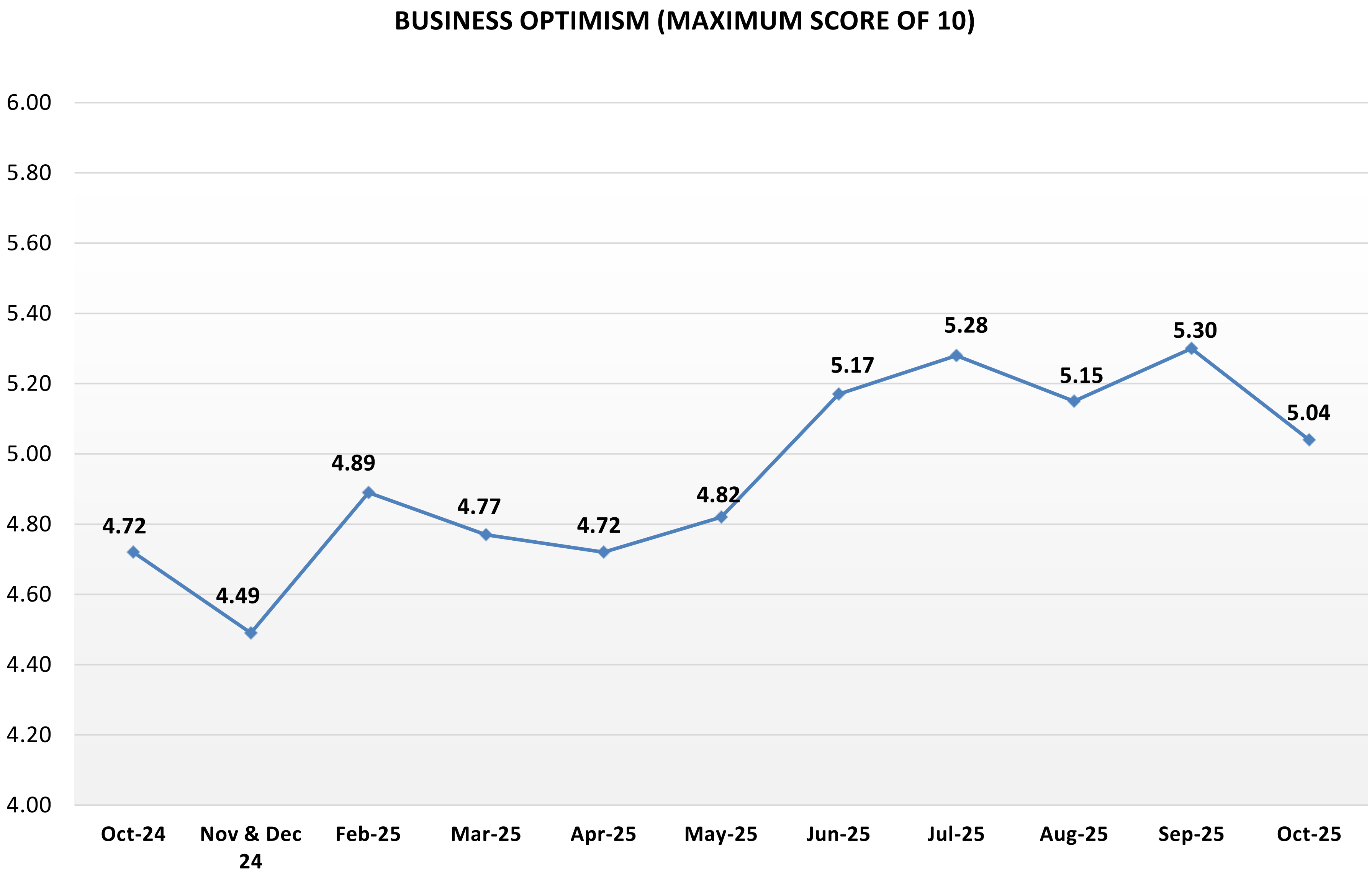
Base: 26

Top 5 business concerns (pre-defined list)

TOP 5 MOST CONCERNING FACTORS FOR BUSINESSES IN THE COMING MONTHS



Business optimism



Key results – Sample of other comments on impacts

Only to repeat the usual - rising costs - less people - less viable businesses - unable to sell as interest rates too high - another winter unable to put heating on - hoping we get enough advance deposits just to get us to Easter. If the attractions are struggling - what chance for sole traders or partnerships.

A low mark with the anticipation of increased costs following the government November budget!

We are about to close our doors after 17 years....we have maintenance to carry out we cannot afford and dwindling visitor numbers (& the building of larger hotels) which have made the business untenable.

Very short lead times for bookings and tempting guests with rate reductions simply not working anymore. This is our first Christmas in 11 years we have no bookings at this stage. Very disheartening.

October was very quiet compared to last year and following a very busy September.

30% booked for 2026

The area is not attractive for younger generations as a holiday destination, hence we can see decline in tourism in overall. Also the streets are dirty, houses are not painted... the whole area is just not appealing.

We have discounted our prices more than we have in the past to encourage guests to book a holiday. We are finding guests are retiring to their accommodation earlier than previously and are not spending as much money on food and drink as they have in the past. Also, guests are not staying in our clubhouse in the evening to watch the entertainment.

The illogical threat of EPC's looming over us is soul destroying.

Overall performance was down 10% on last year in October, but this masked a very significant downturn in the B&B side of our business in October (which continues into November). To echo comments from others in last month's report, the Council's policies seem to suggest a belief that branded hotels offer a better vibe for the Bay than smaller family run B&Bs and guest houses. The encouragement of large hotels in a weak domestic hospitality market is driving us B&Bs out of business. We believe we offer a far superior product - in many ways - than the big brands but we cannot compete on their prices. A quick survey of customer reviews of the new hotels in the bay suggests that customers are not that impressed. We think the council should be more vocally and practically appreciative of what smaller establishments bring to the atmosphere of the Bay; not least in paying some attention to the anti-social behaviour that is plaguing the main tourist areas.

Our decrease in visitors and turnover was simply driven by the awful weather.

Business rates are crippling us, footfall is down, buildings insurance has doubled

We are having to be very careful with our ordering and staff expenses as these costs are only increasing and our profit margin reducing. We have had to pass some increases to our customers, but they are also feeling the cost of living pressures and so worry about the year ahead. A VAT reduction for smaller VAT deficit businesses would be nice...

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