

Natural England Commissioned Report NECR122

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

Annual Report from the 2012-13 survey

First published 30 July 2013

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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

In 2009 Natural England, Defra and the Forestry Commission commissioned TNS to undertake the Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) survey.

In the four years since MENE was commissioned a wealth of information has been collected regarding visits taken to the natural environment and related behaviours and attitudes.

### The survey is 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 do Natural England and partners use the findings?

In relation to its remit for promoting public understanding, conservation and enjoyment of the natural environment, Natural England and its partners use the findings to:

- Inform their work, and that of other interested parties, to link it more closely to need.
- Evaluate the impact and effectiveness of this work.
- Measure the impact of and inform policy relating to the natural environment.

This annual report presents the headline findings for the fourth year of fieldwork from March 2012 to February 2013.

Published alongside this report are:

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

A number of further reports including the year one, two and three annual reports and the results of additional analyses of the MENE data are available from the Natural England website ([www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/research/mene.aspx#results](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/research/mene.aspx#results)).

### 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, activities, expenditure

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# Executive Summary

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This report summarises the headline findings from the fourth year of the Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) survey. The survey was undertaken by TNS on behalf of Natural England, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Forestry Commission.

The survey collects detailed information on the public's use and enjoyment of the natural environment, with particular emphasis on visits to the outdoors. 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.

Fieldwork took place between March 2012 and February 2013. Where appropriate, comparisons have been made with the third year of the survey undertaken between March 2011 and February 2012 and with previous year's survey data where appropriate.

Throughout this report, the following terminology is used to describe the timings of survey fieldwork:

- 2009/10, also written as “year one”, refers to the period March 2009 to February 2010.
- 2010/11, also written as “year two”, refers to the period March 2010 to February 2011.
- 2011/12, also written as “year three”, refers to the period March 2011 to February 2012.
- 2012/13, also written as “year four”, refers to the period March 2012 to February 2013.

Please note that any trends or variations between results highlighted in the text are statistically significant unless stated otherwise. This means that differences between results, for example when comparing two years or two population groups, are likely to be real differences at the 95 per cent confidence limits, as opposed to differences which are the result of sampling error or chance.

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

- Between March 2012 and February 2013, an average of 41 per cent of the English adult population visited the natural environment during the previous seven days. The proportion visiting the outdoors in the last seven days has remained at around two-fifths of the population since 2009/10.
- It is estimated that the average annual number of visits taken per adult during March 2012 to February 2013 was 67. This was significantly higher than the average of 60 recorded in 2010/11 but significantly lower than the 2009/10 average of 69.
- The English adult population participated in an estimated 2.85 billion visits to the natural environment between March 2012 and February 2013. While this estimate is higher than the estimated 2.49 billion visits taken in 2010/11 it is not significantly different to the volumes recorded in the other survey years.
- During the first two years of the survey, there was a significant seasonal variation in volumes of visits with the lowest volumes taken between December 2009 and February 2010 and December 2010 and February 2011. However in the more recent two years, seasonal variation has been much less apparent.

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

- Overall levels of participation in visits over the previous seven days were significantly higher amongst people aged 25 to 64, those in employment, those living in rural areas and those in the AB socio-economic groups<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> For further explanation of the socio-economic groups referred to in this report, see Appendix 3

- Conversely, overall levels of participation were significantly lower amongst those aged 65 and over, members of the Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) population, those living in urban areas and members of the DE socio-economic groups.
- In terms of place of residence, people living in the areas of greatest deprivation were least likely to have visited the natural environment in the previous seven days, whilst those living in the least deprived areas were significantly more likely to have made a visit.
- By region, levels of visits were highest in the South West, where almost half of the population had visited in the previous seven days across the year. In contrast, visits were lowest in London - where just under a third had visited over the previous seven days.
- During the four years of the survey, levels of visit participation have varied most amongst those groups who generally take fewer visits. Most notably participation by people in the DE socio-economic groups, those living in areas of greatest deprivation, members of the BAME population, those between the ages of 16 and 24 and those with no access to a car decreased significantly between the first and second years of the survey before showing some recovery during the third and fourth years.

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

- In total, 47 per cent of visits to the natural environment were taken to the countryside, 43 per cent were to green spaces within towns and cities while ten per cent were taken in coastal locations.
- The proportion of visits to the countryside significantly decreased from 52 per cent of all visits in 2011/12 to 47 per cent in 2012/13. Conversely, the proportion of visits to green spaces within towns and cities increased significantly from 38 per cent of all visits in 2011/12 to 43 per cent in 2012/13.
- More specifically, volumes of visits to urban parks increased significantly between 2011/12 and 2012/13. This increase in visits to urban parks made a considerable contribution to the overall increase in the volumes of visits taken in English towns and cities over this period.
- In total, 43 per cent of visits were taken to green spaces within towns and cities but for certain groups this type of place was more important. 82 per cent of visits taken by the BAME population were to this type of place, as were 66 per cent of the visits taken by those living in the most deprived neighbourhoods, 61 per cent of those taken by 16 to 24 year olds and 50 per cent of those taken by members of the DE socio-economic group.
- 66 per cent of all visits were taken within two miles of home, highlighting the importance of accessible local green space. This finding is consistent with that from previous MENE surveys.
- 45 per cent of visits to seaside/ coastal destinations involved travelling by car, while the majority of countryside and urban visits were taken on foot.

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

- Walking remained the most popular activity, undertaken on 76 per cent of all visits, or approximately 2.2 billion visits overall. Half of all visits - approximately 1.4 billion visits were taken with dogs, while walking without a dog featured in around 769 million visits.
- While the volume of visits significantly decreased for many of the activities between 2009/10 and 2010/11 subsequent increases during 2011/12 and 2012/13 mean that there was a net growth in participation in some activities between years one and four of the survey.
- 48 per cent of visits were taken by an adult on their own.
- 20 per cent of visits were taken with children present which, when applied to the 2.85 billion estimated outdoor visits, equates to around 568 million visits overall.

- In total 27 per cent of visits incurred expenditure, with an average spend during these visits of around £27 per person.
- An estimated £21 billion was spent during visits taken to the natural environment in the 2012/13 period. The estimated total expenditure has not varied significantly over the four years of surveying, remaining in the range £17 billion to £21 billion.
- The average visit to the natural environment lasted just over two hours (two hours seven minutes). This finding is not significantly different from that found in previous years of the survey.

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

- As in the previous three years, exercising dogs, personal health and exercise, relaxing and unwinding, enjoying fresh air and pleasant weather and enjoying scenery were the most frequently cited reasons for taking visits to the natural environment.
- As a person gets older they are more likely to take visits for health or exercise, for fresh air or pleasant weather, to enjoy scenery, and to enjoy wildlife.
- Between 2011/12 and 2012/13 the proportions of visits taken where the motivation was for health or exercise significantly increased from 37 per cent to 44 per cent.
- Visits to the natural environment have been consistently shown to offer a number of benefits to those taking visits, with agreement particularly strong for outcomes such as enjoying visits, feeling calm and relaxed and/or refreshed and revitalised.
- Those who had been on visits to mountain and moorland, woodland or the 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.
- Infrequent visitors to the natural environment were most likely to cite being busy at work or poor weather as their main reasons for *not* being able to take visits to the natural environment more often. In 2012/13 there was a significant increase in the proportion of people citing bad weather, from five per cent in 2011/12 to 11 per cent in 2012/13, as a main reason for not visiting the natural environment. Also cost has increased in significance as a barrier over the four years of the survey from four per cent of respondents to seven per cent.

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

- In addition to visits to outdoor places, MENE records other ways that people enjoy and appreciate the natural environment by asking about participation in other activities such as gardening and watching nature programmes. Relaxing in the garden, choosing to walk through parks/ green spaces en-route to other places and gardening were the most frequently undertaken of these activities.
- Participation in these activities generally increased with age. Also, those in the AB socio-economic grouping, those living in the most affluent, those living in rural areas and those in paid employment were more likely than other people to have undertaken one or more of the activities asked about.
- A general appreciation of natural places was evident with 48 per cent of the population strongly agreeing that it is important to have green spaces close to where they live and 43 strongly agreeing that they are glad that natural places exist even if they never visit them.
- Having green spaces close to home and spending time outdoors tends to be seen as more important for older people, retired people, those in the AB socio-economic group, and those of a White background.
- There is a correlation between how frequently people visit the natural environment and their likelihood to appreciate it and be concerned about environmental damage. Frequency of visit taking is also correlated to frequency of participation in pro-environmental behaviours such as recycling and preferring to buy seasonal and locally

grown food. These results are consistent with those recorded during previous survey years.

- Respondents were also asked about the extent to which they were willing or able to change their current behaviour to address environmental concerns. Over the past four years, the proportion of the population unwilling to change their lifestyle has increased from 26 per cent to 32 per cent. 15 per cent of the population expressed an intention to make changes to their lifestyle in 2012/13, with younger members of the population most likely to indicate a willingness to alter their lifestyle.
- In terms of pro-environmental behaviours, 78 per cent of the population said that they usually recycled items rather than throwing them away, while 43 per cent chose to walk or cycle instead of using a car. Furthermore, 39 per cent of people stated that they usually bought seasonal or locally grown food<sup>2</sup>.

## Acknowledgements

The TNS project team would like to thank all the officers of Natural England who provided assistance in the administration and reporting of the fourth year of the Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) survey. In particular, many thanks go to Hazel Thomas, Stephen Herbert and Erica Wayman for their support with the interpretation of the findings and steer of the project.

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<sup>2</sup> See Figure 7-4 for the statement wording used for this question



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# 1 Introduction

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- 1.1 This report summarises the headline findings from the fourth year of the Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) survey. Comparisons have been made with the third year of the survey undertaken between March 2011 and February 2012 and where appropriate, trends from all four surveys years have also been highlighted.
- 1.2 The survey was undertaken by TNS on behalf of Natural England, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Forestry Commission.

## Background

- 1.3 Prior to the start of MENE, there was growing evidence of the positive benefits that contact with the natural environment offers, however there was also a lack of information about how and why people engage with the natural environment. Natural England, Defra and the Forestry Commission therefore commissioned TNS to undertake the Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) survey.
- 1.4 In the four years since the survey commenced, a wealth of evidence on outdoor recreation behaviour and attitudes has been collected. In addition, the survey has provided a basis for specific analysis on areas such as how members of different societal groups and children engage with the outdoors.

## Survey aims and objectives

- 1.5 This survey aims to provide information about the relationship between people and the natural environment. Whilst the main focus of the survey is on visits, it also seeks to capture other ways of using or enjoying the natural environment such as time spent in the garden and watching nature programmes on television.
- 1.6 The objectives of the survey are to:
  - provide estimates of the number of visits to the natural environment by the English adult population (16 years and over);
  - measure the extent of participation in visits to the natural environment and identify the barriers and drivers that shape participation;
  - provide robust information on the characteristics of visitors and visits to the natural environment;
  - measure other ways of using and enjoying the natural environment; and
  - identify patterns in use and participation for key groups within the population and at a range of spatial scales.

## Survey scope

- 1.7 The survey relates to engagement with the natural environment. By natural environment we mean all green open spaces in and around towns and cities as well as the wider countryside and coastline.
- 1.8 The main focus of the survey is on visits to the natural environment. By visits we mean time spent outdoors in the natural environment, away from home and private gardens. The results in sections two to six relate to visits to the natural environment.

- 1.9 The survey also includes a smaller section of questions regarding engagement with the natural environment other than that experienced during visits. This includes activities such as time spent in private gardens, watching nature programmes on television and undertaking pro-environmental activities such as recycling. The results of these questions are included in section seven of this report.
- 1.10 Throughout this report, the following terminology is used to describe the timings of survey fieldwork:
- 2009/10, also written as “year one”, refers to the period March 2009 to February 2010.
  - 2010/11, also written as “year two”, refers to the period March 2010 to February 2011.
  - 2011/12, also written as “year three”, refers to the period March 2011 to February 2012.
  - 2012/13, also written as “year four”, refers to the period March 2012 to February 2013.
- 1.11 Please note that any trends or variations between results highlighted in the text are statistically significant unless stated otherwise. This means that differences between results, for example when comparing two years or two population groups, have been proven through statistical analysis as likely to be real differences at the 95 per cent confidence limits, as opposed to differences which are the result of sampling error or chance.

## Structure of the report

- 1.12 This report presents the headline findings from the 2012/13 survey under the following sections. Where appropriate, comparisons are made with the results from 2011/12 and the preceding years and statistically significant differences are highlighted. Results are also presented by key population groups.

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Appendices:

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

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



## Appendix 3: Definitions of socio-economic groups

### Further publications from the survey

- 1.13 This annual report forms one part of a larger family of outputs from the survey. Published alongside this report are:
- **Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment Technical Report**– providing full details of the survey methodology, including approaches to sampling, grossing and weighting, estimates of confidence intervals and a copy of the full questionnaire;
  - **Electronic data table viewer**– an interactive tool which allows detailed analysis of the MENE dataset at the England, Regional and County level from 2012/13, 2011/12, 2010/11 and 2009/10;
  - **Quarterly reports** - brief reports which summarise the key figures and messages from the survey each quarter.
- 1.14 A series of further outputs based on additional analysis of the MENE data are also available from the Natural England website<sup>3</sup>.

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

## 2 An overview of visits to the natural environment

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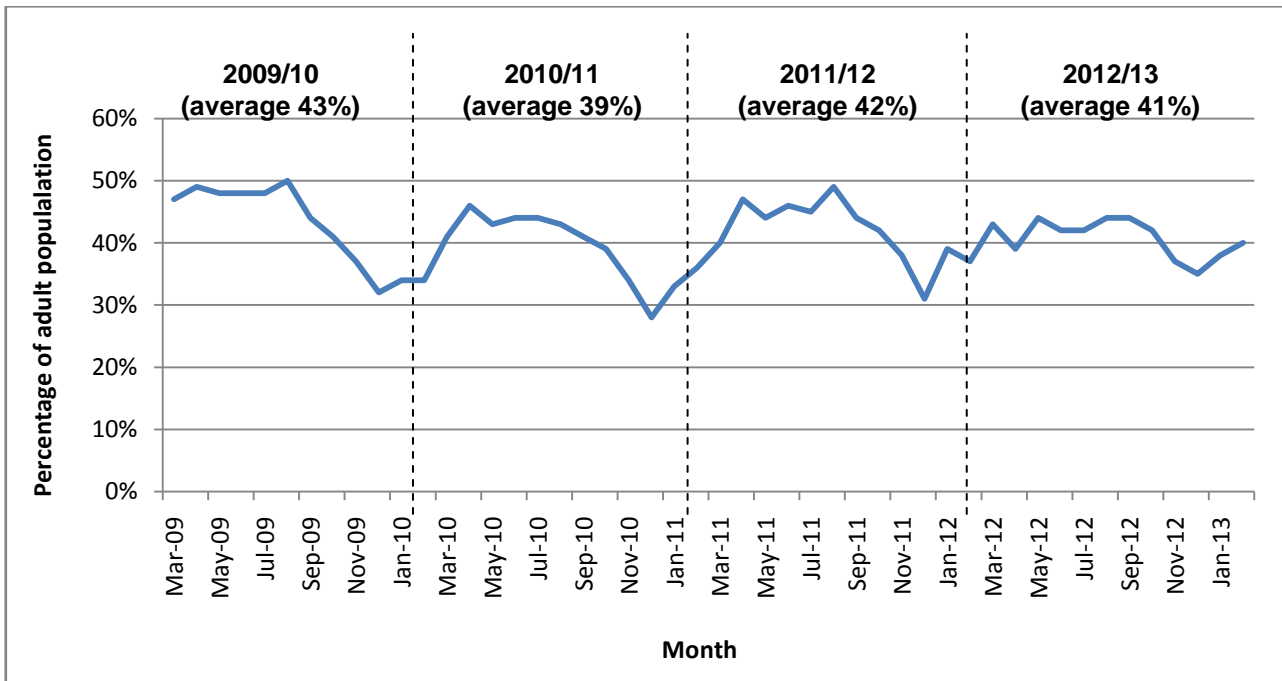
2.1 This section focuses on the frequency and volume of visits at the national and regional level between March 2012 and February 2013. Comparisons are made with the key results from the 2011/12 survey and trends from the last four survey years.

### Headline results in this section

- Between March 2012 and February 2013, an average of 41 per cent of the English adult population visited the natural environment during the previous seven days. The proportion visiting the outdoors in the last seven days has remained at around two-fifths of the population since 2009/10.
- It is estimated that the average annual number of visits taken per adult during March 2012 to February 2013 was 67. This was significantly higher than the average of 60 recorded in 2010/11 but significantly lower than the 2009/10 average of 69.
- The English adult population participated in an estimated 2.85 billion visits to the natural environment between March 2012 and February 2013. While this estimate is higher than the estimated 2.49 billion visits taken in 2010/11 it is not significantly different to the volumes recorded in the other survey years.
- During the first two years of the survey, there was a significant seasonal variation in volumes of visits with the lowest volumes taken between December 2009 and February 2010 and December 2010 and February 2011. However in the more recent two years, seasonal variation has been much less apparent.

### Frequency of visits

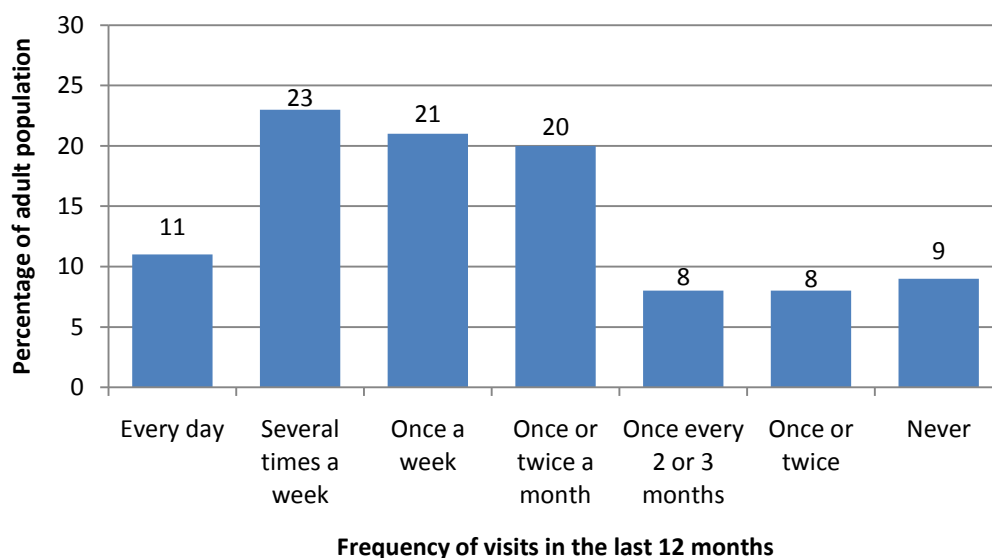
- 2.2 The survey records the number of visits taken per adult during the last seven days. This allows estimates of the total volume of visits taken in each week of the survey period to be calculated.
- 2.3 Between March 2012 and February 2013, an average of 41 per cent of the English adult population had taken any visits to the natural environment during the previous seven days, 17 per cent had taken one visit and eight per cent had visited twice. Overall, nine per cent had taken five visits or more over the previous week.
- 2.4 Figure 2-1 illustrates variations in the proportion of the population taking at least one visit in the last seven days over the four years of the survey. The annual average was lowest between March 2010 and February 2011 when an average of 39 per cent of the population had taken visits in the last seven days.
- 2.5 The proportion of the population taking visits has varied significantly over the four years, with a clear seasonal pattern of higher levels of participation in the spring and summer months but lower levels in the winter.



**Figure 2-1** Percentage of adult population taking visits to the natural environment in the previous seven days (%)

Q1 How many times, if at all, did you make this type of visit? (Base: All respondents, weekly questions 2009/10 N=48,514; 2010/11 N=46,099; 2011/12 N=47,418; 2012/13 N=46,749)

- 2.6 Using this data, it can be estimated that an average of 67 visits were taken per adult during the 12 months from March 2012 to February 2013. This was significantly higher than the average of 60 recorded in 2010/11 but significantly lower than the 2009/10 average of 69.
- 2.7 The survey also asks respondents how often they typically visited the natural environment during the last 12 months (Figure 2-2). The data collected from this question provides a useful, broad measure of participation levels and general propensity to visit the outdoors amongst the population as a whole. The results of this question have also been used to categorise the population into groups according to their frequency of engagement (see Section Three).
- 2.8 The frequency of visits taken to the natural environment varies greatly across the English population. While 55 per cent of the adult population stated that they normally visited the natural environment at least once per week, eight per cent had only made one or two visits and nine per cent claimed they had not taken a visit at all during the previous 12 months.



**Figure 2-2** 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 2012/13 N=10,544)

2.9 As shown in Table 2-1 below, the proportion of the population stating that they never visit the outdoors for leisure has not varied significantly over the past four years of MENE.

**Table 2-1** Proportion of population visiting the natural environment in the last 12 months (%)

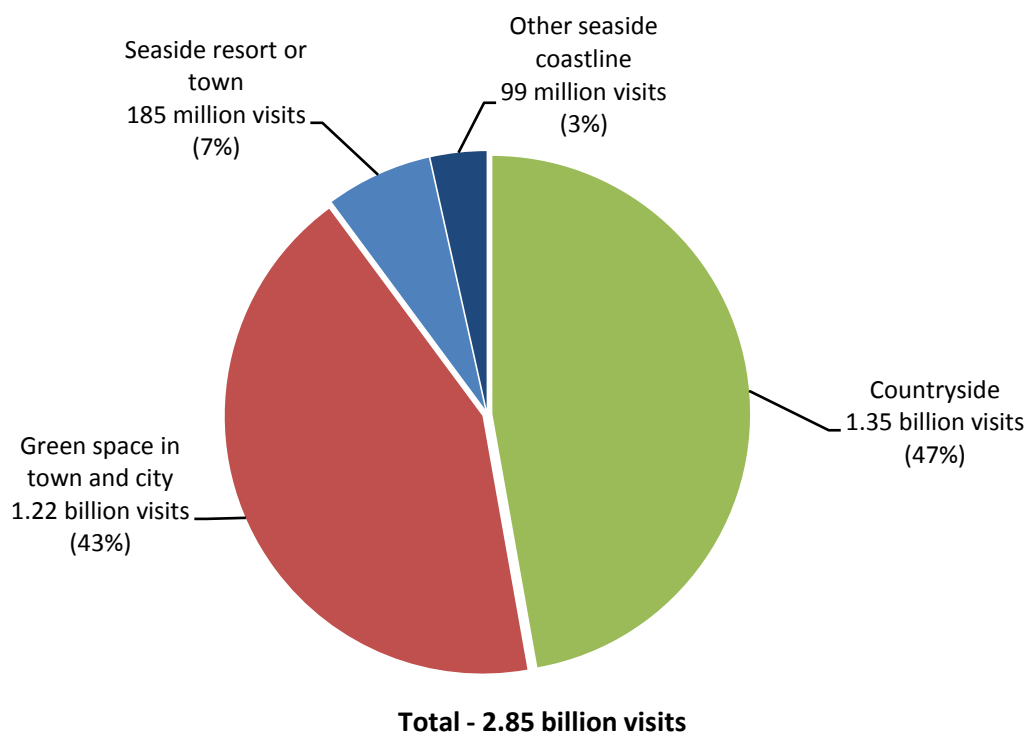
Q17 Thinking about the last 12 months, how often on average have you spent your leisure time out of doors, away from home? (Base: All respondents, monthly questions 2009/10 N=11,107; 2010/11 N=10,630; 2011/12 N=10,587; 2012/13 10,544)

	Proportion of population visiting natural environment in the last 12 months			
	2009/10 %	2010/11 %	2011/12 %	2012/13 %
Visited	90	91	92	91
Not visited	10	9	8	9

## Estimated volume of visits in the last year

2.9 It is estimated that between March 2012 and February 2013, the 42.4 million adults resident in England took a total of 2.85 billion visits to the natural environment<sup>4</sup>. 47 per cent, or 1.35 billion, of these visits were to places in the countryside, while green spaces within towns or cities accounted for 43 per cent, or 1.22 billion, visits. Seven per cent, or 185 million visits, were taken to a green space in a seaside town or resort and the remaining three per cent, 99 million visits, were taken to other seaside coastline areas (Figure 2-3).

<sup>4</sup> Taking account of margins of error, at the 95% confidence level estimated total visits range from 2.79 to 2.91 billion



**Figure 2-3** Volume of visits by general place visited (March 2012 to February 2013)

2.10 While the estimated 2.85 billion visits taken between March 2012 and February 2013 is four per cent more than the 2.73 billion visits estimated to have been taken between March 2011 and February 2012 this difference is within statistical margins of error.

2.11 As shown in Table 2-2, the estimated volume of visits to green spaces in towns and cities was 1.22 billion in 2012/13 compared to 1.05 billion the previous year. This represents a significant increase of 16 per cent.

**Table 2-2** Volume of visits by general place visited by survey year

Q2 Which of the following best describes where you spent most of your time on this visit? (Base: All visits, weekly questions 2009/10 N=58,653; 2010/11 N=47,825; 2011/12 N=53,898; 2012/13 N=53,208)

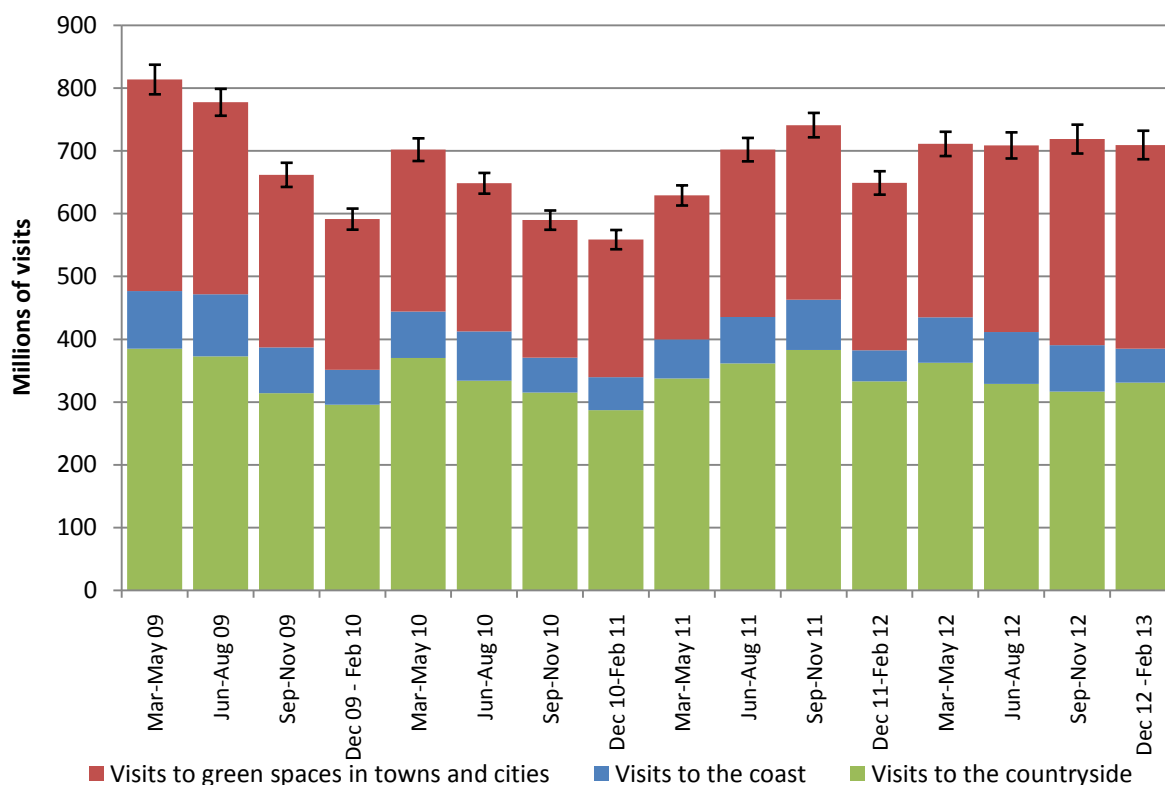
	Volume of visits (billions)			
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Countryside	1.38	1.31	1.41	1.35
Towns and cities	1.16	0.92↓	1.05↑	1.22↑
Seaside resort	0.21	0.17↓	0.16	0.19
Other coastal	0.11	0.09	0.10	0.10
<b>Total (billions)</b>	<b>2.86</b>	<b>2.49↓</b>	<b>2.73↑</b>	<b>2.85</b>

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

2.12 Overall, across the full March 2009 to February 2013 period, the English adult population participated in an estimated 10.93 billion visits.

## Changes by quarter

- 2.13 Figure 2-3 illustrates the volumes of visits taken by quarter. During the first two years of the survey, there was a significant seasonal variation in volumes of visits with the lowest volumes taken between December 2009 and February 2010 and December 2010 and February 2011. However in the more recent two years, seasonal variation has been much less apparent.
- 2.14 Throughout the survey, the overall pattern of visits to each of the main types of destination generally followed the same seasonal variations.

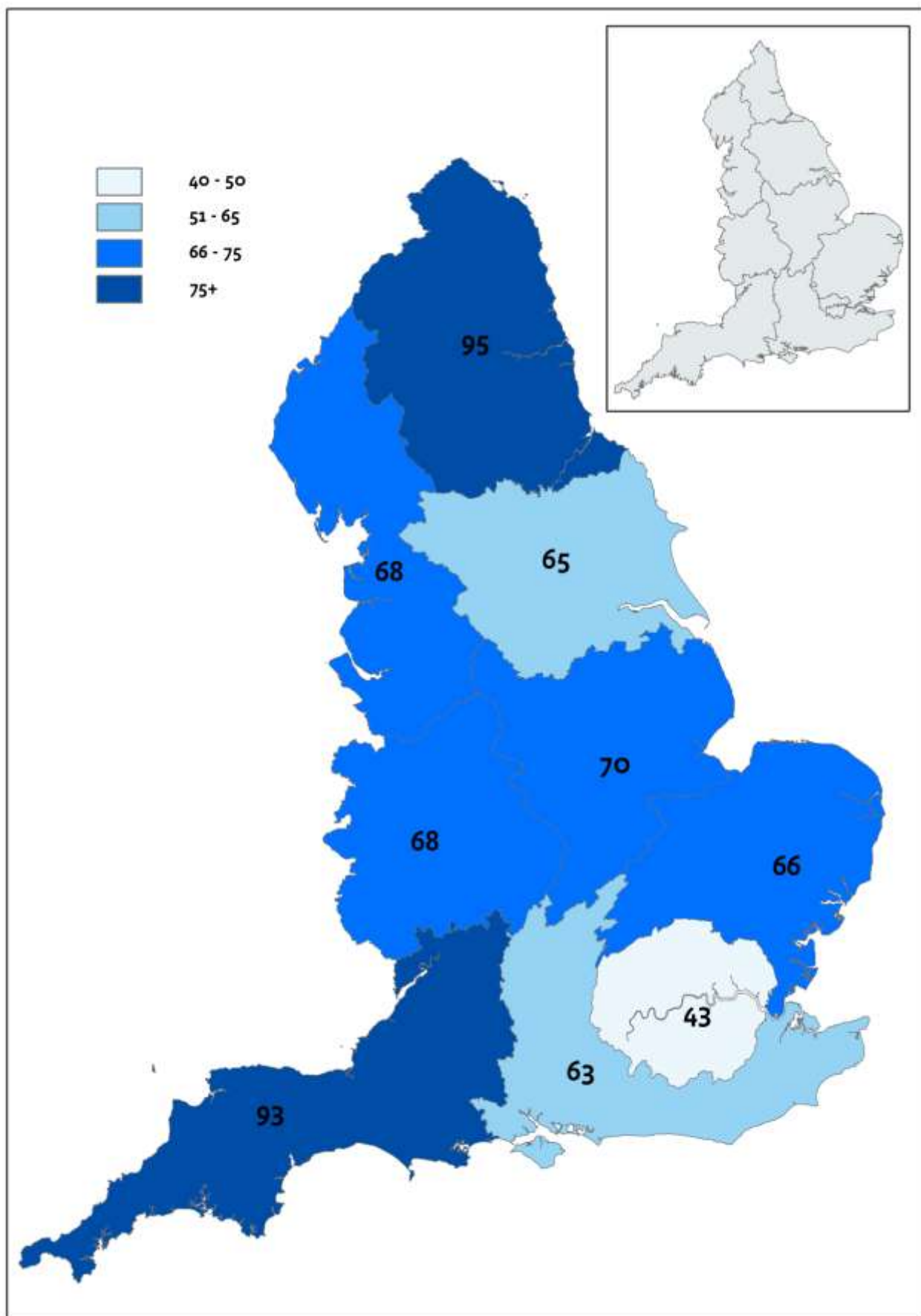


**Figure 2-4** Estimated quarterly volume of visits to the natural environment by general type of place visited (March 2009 to February 2013) (Quarterly base at least 10,200)  
 Note: Error bars relate to estimate of total visits as represented by the height of the bar

## Regional distribution of visits

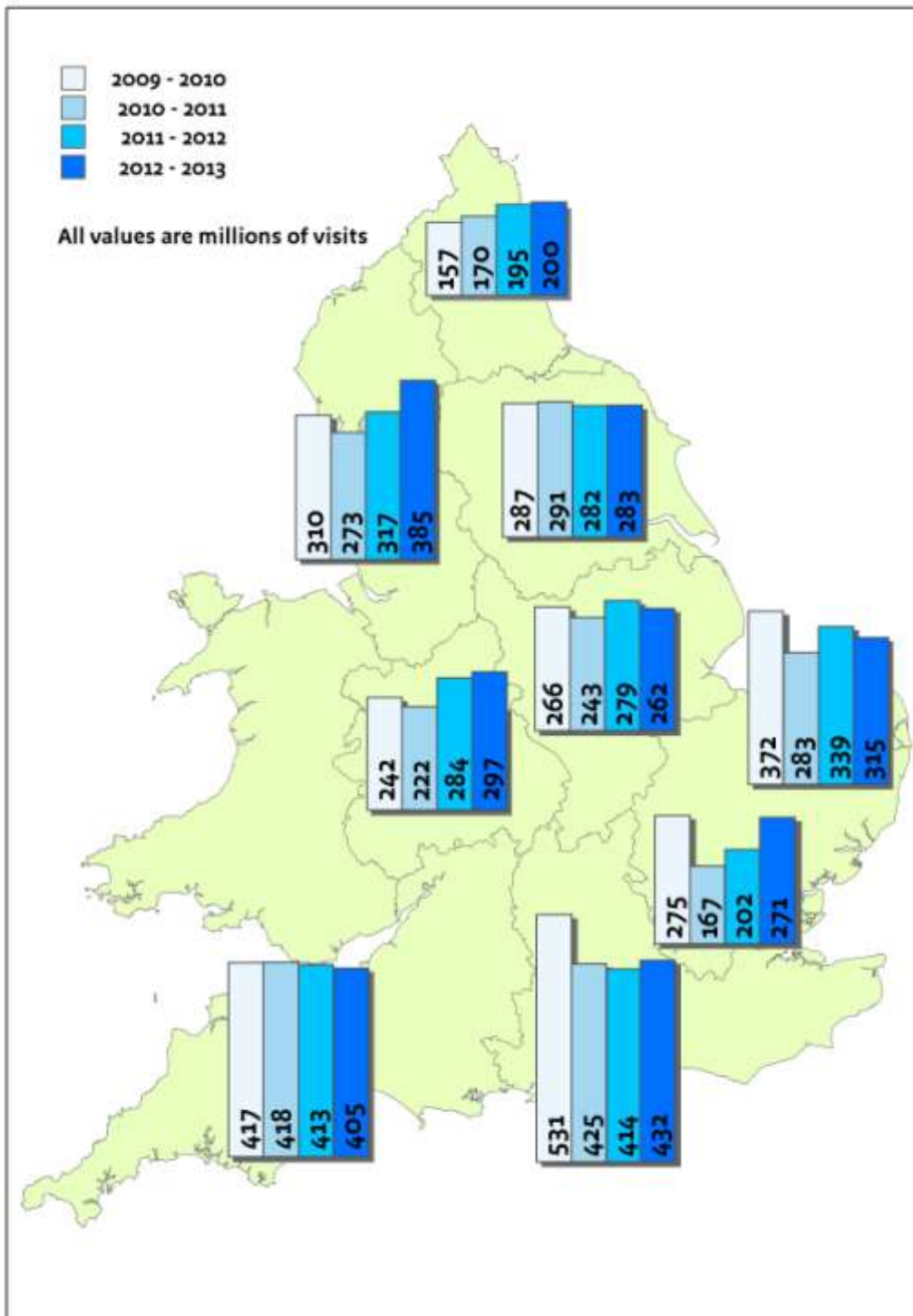
### Resident-based distribution

- 2.12 The following cartogram (Figure 2-5) distorts the geographical boundaries of each English region according to relative population size. Areas of greater population appear larger; areas of lower population appear smaller. Once the boundaries have been stretched they are reassembled such that the new map is a distorted reflection of the original. Cartograms are popular in human geography because the presentation favours population size, rather than area of land.
- 2.13 The average number of visits taken per adult for the English adult population over the 12 month survey period was 67. There was however considerable variation between regions – ranging from 95 visits by residents of the North East and 93 by those living in the South West, to 43 visits by London residents. The cartogram demonstrates how those regions with the largest populations tend to have the fewest visits per person.



**Figure 2-5** Average numbers of visits per adult by residents of each region (March 2012 to February 2013)

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



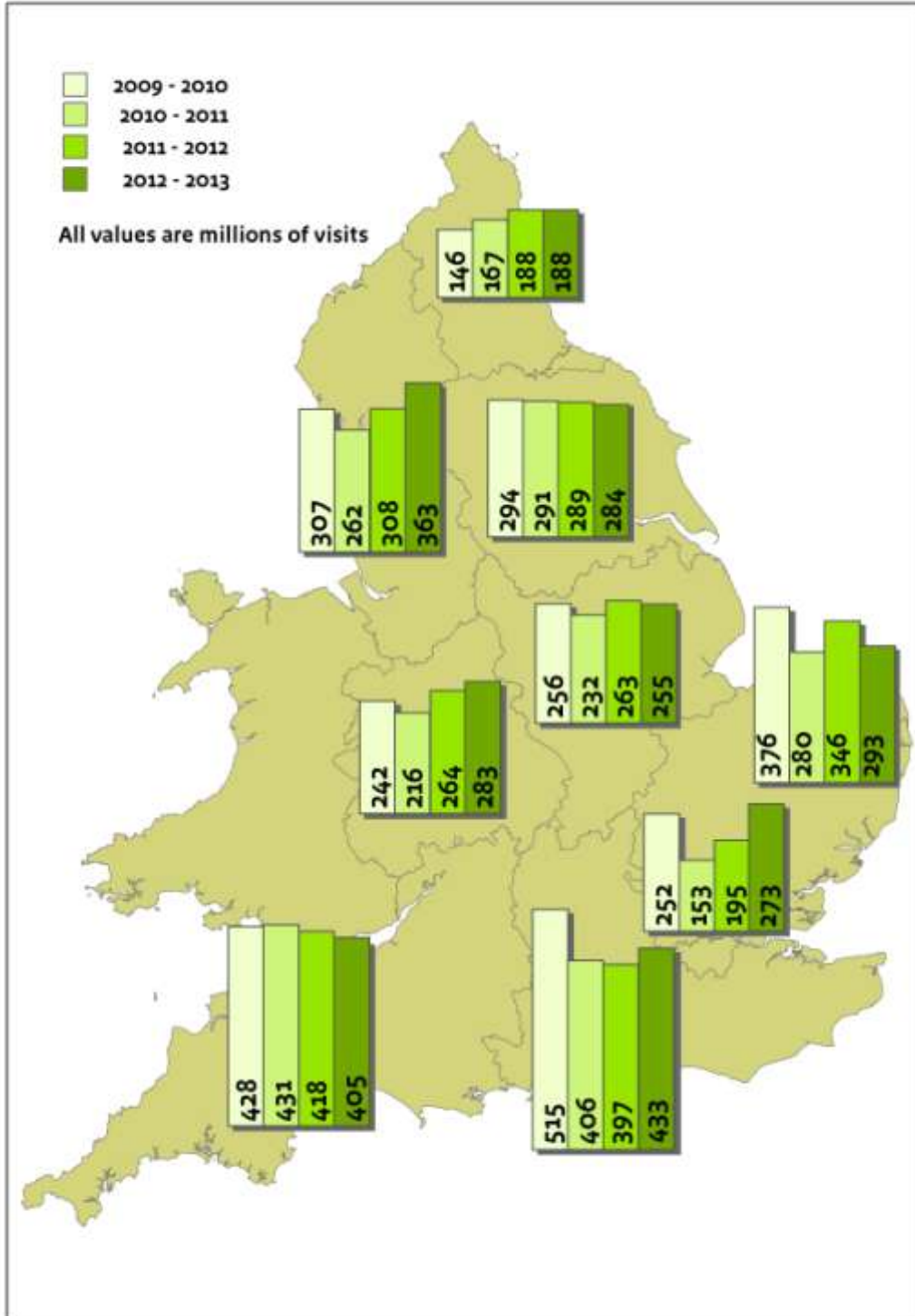
**Figure 2-6** Volume of visits taken by residents of English regions (March 2009 to February 2013)

2.15 Comparing the estimated volume of visits taken over the four survey years suggests a statistically significant increase between the 2009/10 and 2012/13 in the North East of England, but a more varied pattern with no clear trend in other areas.



## Destination-based distribution

- 2.16 In year 4 of the survey, 15 per cent of all visits were taken to destinations in the South East, 14 per cent were taken in the South West and 13 per cent were taken in the North West.
- 2.17 Comparing the 2011/12 and 2012/13 survey periods, the volume of visits taken to destinations in London and the North West increased most significantly.



**Figure 2-7** Estimated volume of visits taken to destinations in each region (March 2009 to February 2013)

*Note: The sum of the estimated volume of visits to England's regions (2.78 billion) is less than total volume of visits taken in England (2.85 billion) as the destination of 2% of visits could not be coded to a region.*

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

---

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

## Headline results in this section

- Overall levels of participation in visits over the previous seven days were significantly higher amongst people aged 25 to 64, those in employment, those living in rural areas and those in the AB socio-economic groups<sup>5</sup>.
  - Conversely, overall levels of participation were significantly lower amongst those aged 65 and over, members of the Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) population, those living in urban areas and members of the DE socio-economic groups.
  - In terms of place of residence, people living in the areas of greatest deprivation were least likely to have visited the natural environment in the previous seven days, whilst those living in the least deprived areas were significantly more likely to have made a visit.
  - By region, levels of visits were highest in the South West, where almost half of the population had visited in the previous seven days across the year. In contrast, visits were lowest in London - where just under a third had visited over the previous seven days.
  - During the four years of the survey, levels of visit participation have varied most amongst those groups who generally take fewer visits. Most notably participation by people in the DE socio-economic groups, those living in areas of greatest deprivation, members of the BAME population, those between the ages of 16 and 24 and those with no access to a car decreased significantly between the first and second years of the survey before showing some recovery during the third and fourth years.
- 3.2 When asked to recall the previous week<sup>6</sup>, 41 per cent of the English adult population stated they had taken at least one visit to the natural environment<sup>7</sup>.
- 3.3 In 2012/13, as in previous years, the survey data has shown a relationship between age and participation in visits. As Figure 3-1 (overleaf) shows, 44 per cent of those aged between 25 and 64 had taken a visit to the natural environment in the last seven days - a higher proportion than the 38 per cent of those aged 16 to 24 and the 33 per cent of those aged 65 and over who had done so.
- 3.4 The relationship between socio-economic status and participation also continues to be evident, with 52 per cent of those in the AB socio-economic groups visiting the natural environment in the previous seven days compared to 30 per cent of those in the DE groups.
- 3.5 Linked to socio-economic status, 44 per cent of those in paid employment had visited the outdoors in the last seven days compared to 38 per cent of those not in paid employment.

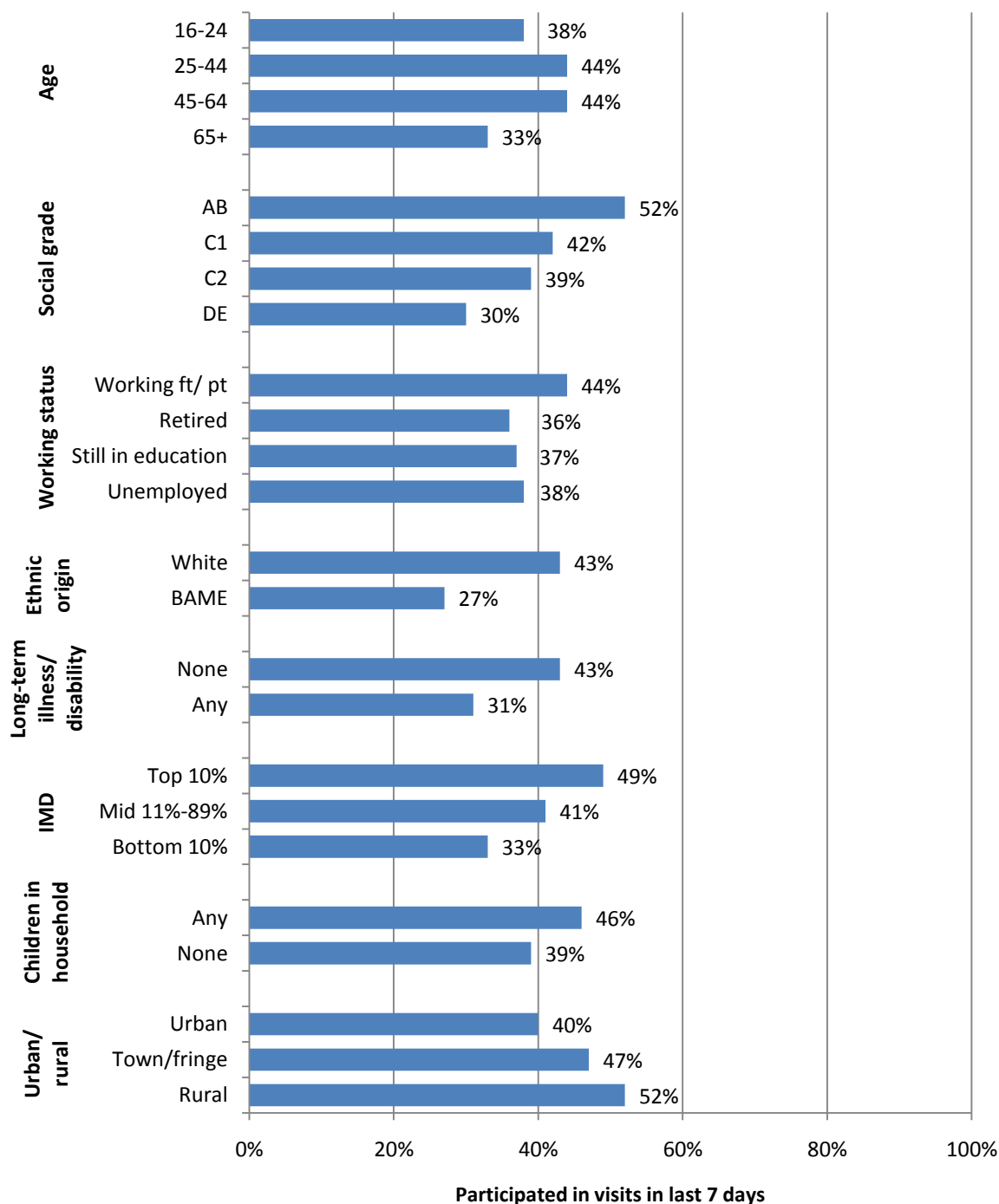
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<sup>5</sup> For further explanation of the socio-economic groups referred to in this report, see Appendix 3

<sup>6</sup> The focus on the previous week improves the likelihood of respondents accurately recalling details of the visits they have taken

<sup>7</sup> Taking account of margins of error, at the 95% confidence level the estimated percentage of the population taking visits ranges from 37.6 per cent to 44.3 per cent

3.6 Participation also varied by ethnicity; 27 per cent of those from the BAME population visited in the seven days prior to interview compared to 43 per cent of those of White ethnicity.



**Figure 3-1** Participation in visits to the natural environment in last week by key demographics (% 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 2012/13 N=46,749)

3.7 The data also shows variations in visits to the natural environment by the type of area people live in. For example, 52 per cent of those living in rural areas had visited the natural environment in the previous seven days compared to 47 per cent of those living in town/fringe areas and 40 per cent residents of urban areas.

- 3.8 Variations in visits were also recorded according to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)<sup>8</sup>. Only a third of those living in areas with the greatest deprivation had visited the natural environment in the previous seven days compared to 49 per cent of those in the least deprived areas.
- 3.9 As Table 3-1 overleaf shows, the proportion of each of these population groups taking visits in the last seven days has varied over the four years of the survey. The greatest variations have been recorded amongst those population groups which generally demonstrate a lower propensity to visit the outdoors anyway, including those in the DE socio-economic groups, those living in the areas of greatest deprivation, members of the BAME population, those between the ages of 16 and 24 and those with no access to a car.

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<sup>8</sup> The IMD combines a number of social and economic indicators to give small geographic areas a single deprivation score. The 2007 Index was used in 2009/10 and the 2010 Index for subsequent survey years. These scores are then ranked allowing the most and least deprived areas to be identified. For more details see URL: [www.communities.gov.uk/communities/neighbourhoodrenewal/deprivation/](http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/neighbourhoodrenewal/deprivation/)

**Table 3-1** Participation in visits to the natural environment in last week by key demographics (% reporting at least one visit in the last week)

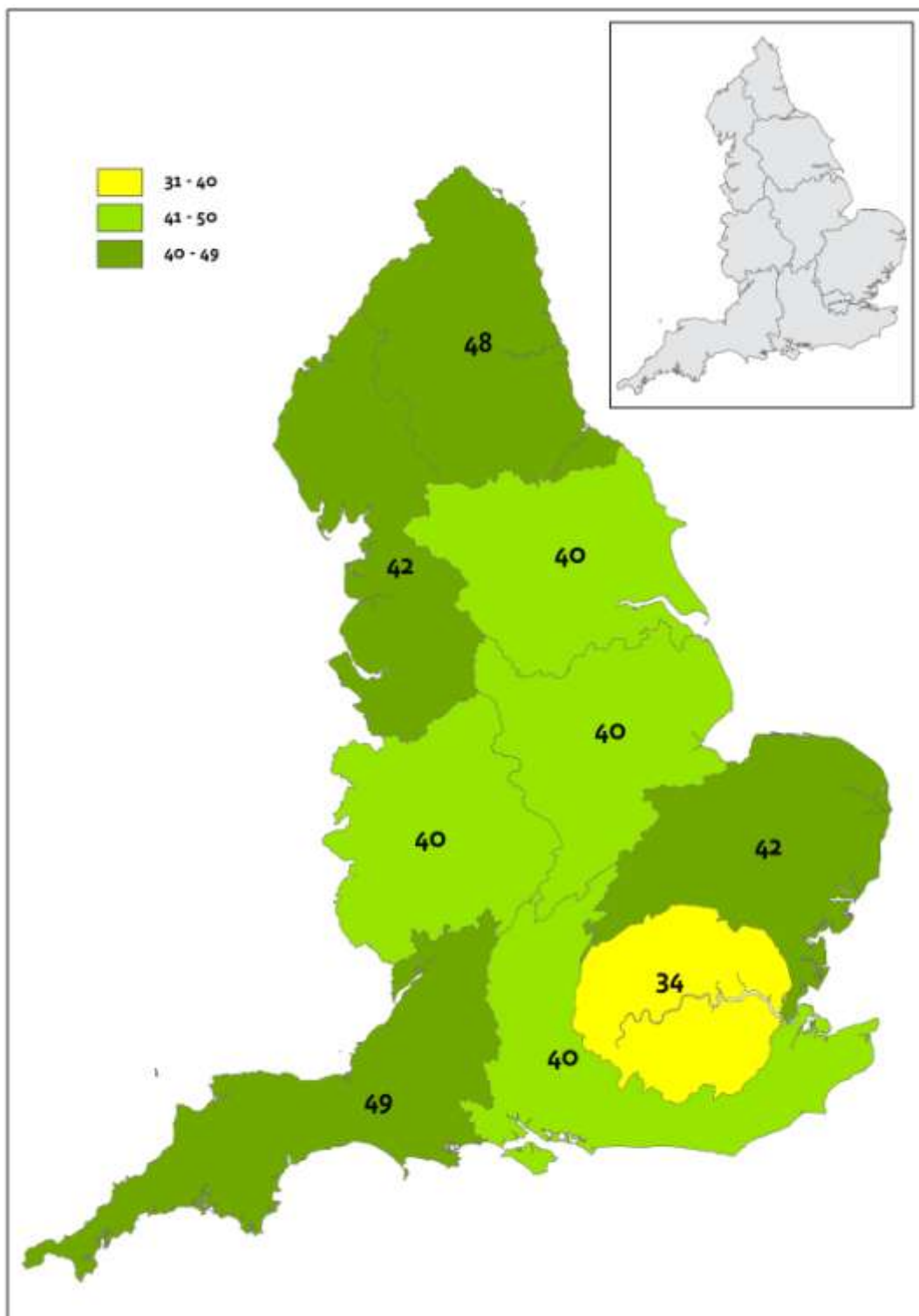
Q1 How many times, if at all, did you make this type of visit? (Base: All respondents, weekly questions 2009/10 N=48,514; 2010/11 N=46,099; 2011/12 N=47,418; 2012/13 N=46,749)

	Participated in visits in last 7 days			
	2009/10 %	2010/11 %	2011/12 %	2012/13 %
<b>Age</b>				
16-24	43%	36%↓	40%↑	38%
25-44	46%	42%↓	45%↑	44%
45-64	46%	43%↓	44%	44%
65+	44%	31%↓	33%↑	33%
<b>Socio-economic group<sup>9</sup></b>				
AB	53%	52%	52%	52%
C1	46%	41%↓	45%↑	42%↓
C2	42%	38%↓	39%	39%
DE	34%	28%↓	31%↑	30%
<b>Working status</b>				
Full/ part-time	46%	43%↓	45%↑	44%
Retired	37%	34%↓	36%↑	36%
Still in education	45%	36%↓	39%	37%
Unemployed	41%	36%↓	38%	38%
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
White	45%	42%↓	44%↑	43%
BAME	27%	22%↓	27%↑	27%
<b>Long-term illness/ disability</b>				
Any	33%	30%↓	32%↑	31%
None	46%	41%↓	44%↑	43%
<b>Index of Multiple Deprivation</b>				
Bottom 10%	30%	27%↓	29%	33%↑
Mid 11% to 89%	44%	40%↓	42%↑	41%
Top 10%	54%	49%↓	50%	49%
<b>Car access</b>				
Car access	48%	44%↓	46%↑	45%
No car access	31%	26%↓	28%↑	29%

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

<sup>9</sup> For definitions, see Appendix 3

- 3.10 Figure 3-2 uses a cartogram to display the variations in levels of participation in visits to the natural environment during the week prior to interview amongst the residents of each region. Levels of participation were highest in the South West with 49 per cent having visited the outdoors in the last seven days compared to 34 per cent in London.
- 3.11 Since 66 per cent of visits taken in England are taken within two miles of the starting point, participation in visits over the previous week by residents of each region is likely to be associated with the amount of locally accessible greenspace, and the frequency at which visits are taken for routine purposes (for example, dog walking).

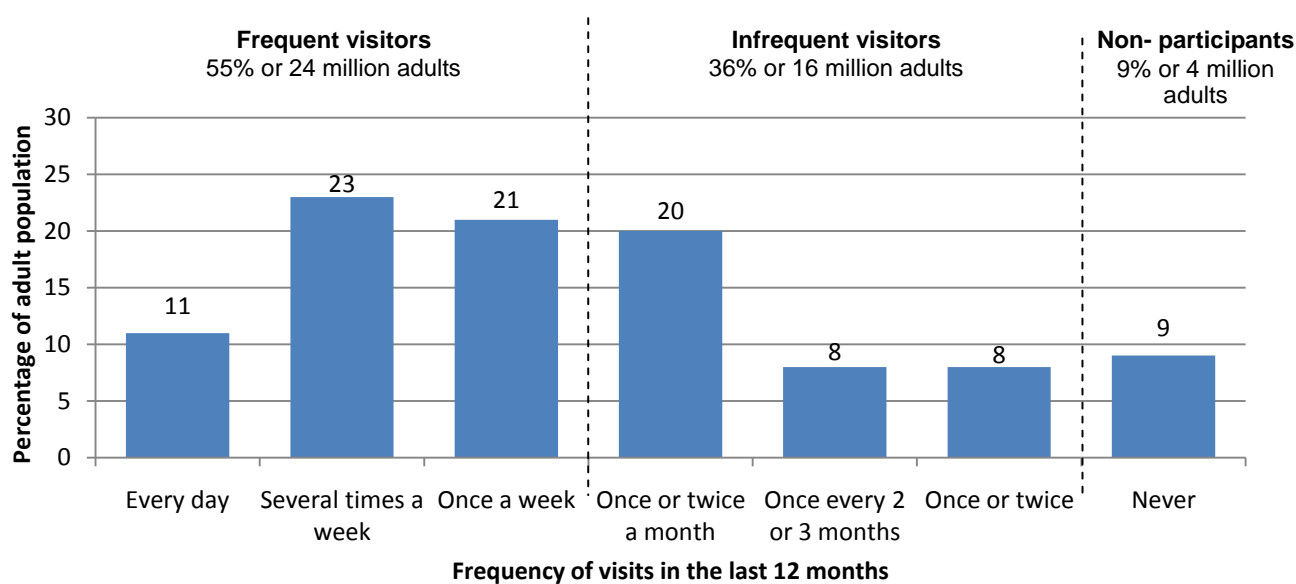


**Figure 3-2** Participation in visits to the natural environment in last week by residents of each region (%)

## Participation in visits in the last 12 months

3.12 As described in Section 2, MENE respondents were asked to provide details of their general propensity to take visits to the natural environment in the last 12 months. Responses to this question may be used to divide the English adult population into discrete groups according to their level of participation:

- **Frequent visitors** – those who state that on average they normally visit at least once a week.
- **Infrequent visitors** – those who state that on average they normally visit once or twice a month or less often.
- **Non-participants** – those who state that they have not visited in the last 12 months.

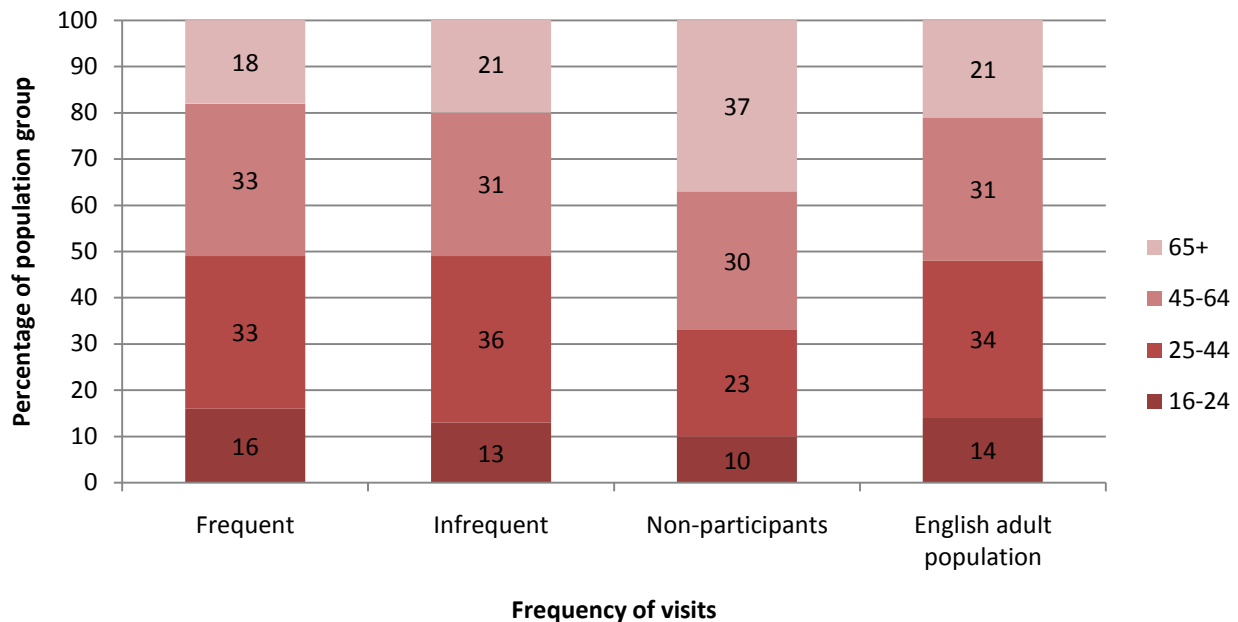


**Figure 3-3** Frequency of participation in visits to the natural environment (%)

Q17 Thinking about the last 12 months, how often on average have you spent your leisure time out of doors, away from home? (Base: 2012/13 N=42,400)

3.13 The charts and tables on the following pages compare the demographic profile of members of each of these three frequency bands, with statistically significant variations highlighted in the commentary.

3.14 Figure 3-4 compares the age profile of members of each of the three frequency bands. This comparison highlights the older age profile amongst non-participants, with 37 per cent of this group aged 65 and over compared to just 18 per cent of frequent participants, and 21 per cent of infrequent participants. These age profiles have not changed significantly over the past four years.



**Figure 3-4** 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 2012/13 Frequent N=5,596; Infrequent N=3,893; Non-participants N=1,055)

- 3.15 Table 3-2 shows that 39 per cent of non-participants were retired compared to 24 per cent amongst the population as a whole, while 39 per cent had a long-term illness or disability compared to 18 per cent of the population overall. These variations reflect the older age profile of non-participants more generally as shown above.
- 3.16 The presence of children in the household also has an association with visit taking. Just 18 per cent of non-participants had children in the household - a lower proportion than amongst the English adult population as a whole where 29 per cent of people have children in the household.



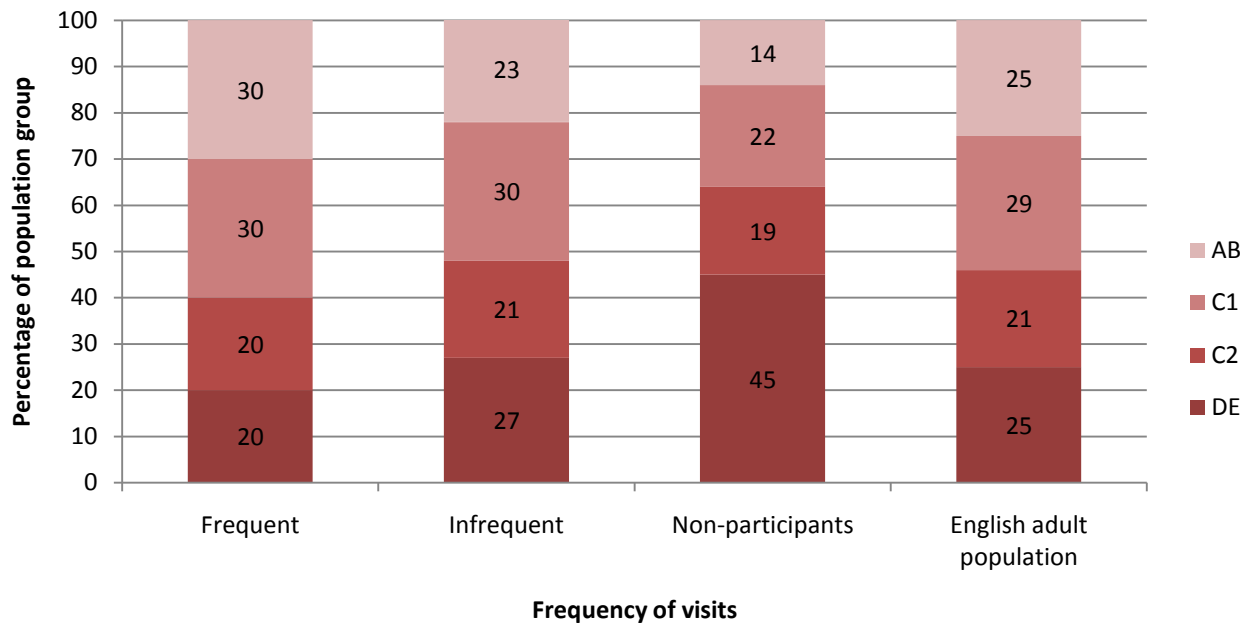
**Table 3-2** Working status profile, long term illness or disability and children in household by frequency of participation in visits to the natural environment (%)

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 2012/13 Frequent N=5,596; Infrequent N=3,893; Non-participants N=1,055)

	Frequency of visits			English adult population %
	Frequent %	Infrequent %	Non-participant %	
<b>Working status</b>				
Working full time (30+ hours per week)	45	47	32	44
Working part time (less than 30 hours per week)	14	11	8	13
Retired	21	24	39	24
At school or full time higher education	8	6	3	7
Unemployed/not seeking work	12	12	18	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Long term illness and disability</b>				
Any long term illness or disability	15	20	39	18
No long term illness or disability	85	80	61	82
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Children in household</b>				
Any children in household	30	27	18	29
No children in household	70	73	82	71
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

3.18 The relationship between socio-economic status and levels of participation with the natural environment also continues to be evident (Figure 3-5). The results from the 2012/13 survey confirm this pattern with 30 per cent of frequent visitors from the most affluent AB socio-economic groups compared to 25 per cent of the English population as a whole.

3.19 In contrast, 45 per cent of non-participants were in the least affluent DE socio-economic groups compared to 25 per cent of the population as a whole.



**Figure 3-5** 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. 2012-13 Frequent N=5,596; Infrequent N=3,893; Non-participants N=1,055)

- 3.20 Reflecting these socio-economic variations, analysis of participation using the Index of Multiple Deprivation has revealed that those in the most deprived areas are more likely to be non-participants (Table 3-3). In 2012/13, 15 per cent of non-participants lived in the most deprived areas in England, even though this group represents ten per cent of the English adult population.
- 3.21 Also 20 per cent of non-participants were from the BAME population, a significantly higher percentage than the 14 per cent found amongst the general population.

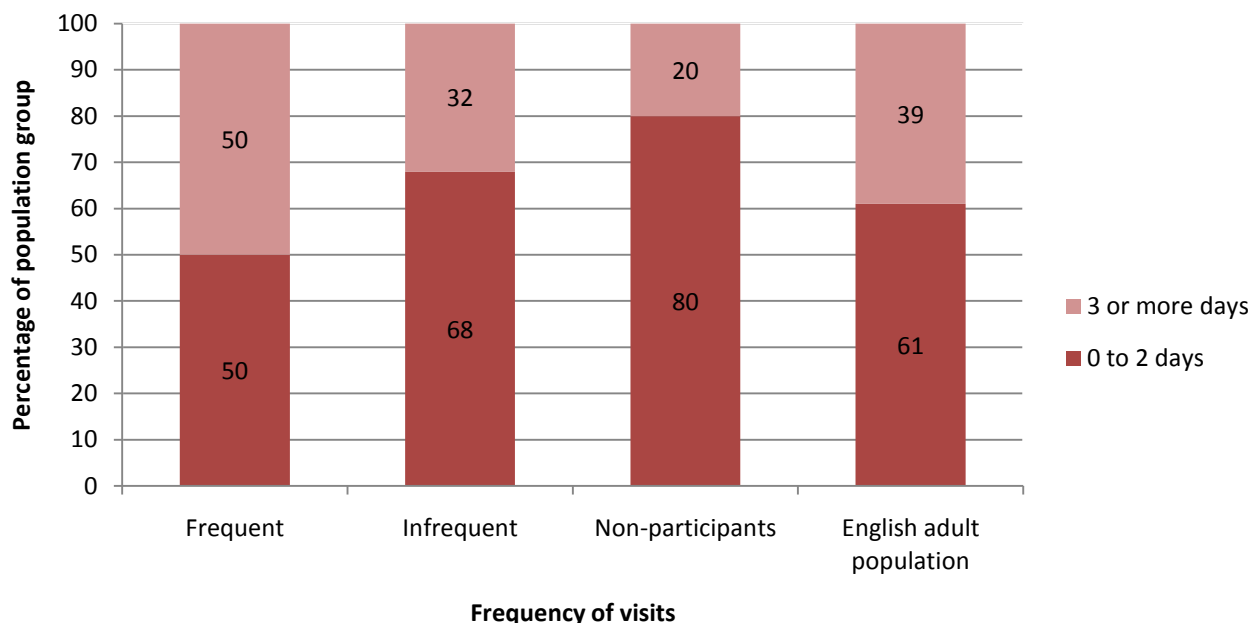
**Table 3-3** Ethnicity and Index of Multiple Deprivation by frequency of participation in visits to the natural environment (%)

Q17 Thinking about the last 12 months, how often on average have you spent your leisure time out of doors, away from home? (Base: Monthly questions. 2012/13 Frequent N=5,596; Infrequent N=3,893; Non-participants N=1,055)

	Frequency of visits			English adult population %
	Frequent %	Infrequent %	Non-participants %	
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
BAME	11	20	20	14
White	89	80	80	86
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Index of Multiple Deprivation</b>				
Bottom 10%	8	12	15	10
Mid 11% to 89%	82	79	77	79
Top 10%	9	7	5	9
Not classified	1	2	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: Not every respondent gave a postcode, therefore, some respondents are not classified according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation

3.22 Figure 3-6 highlights an association between frequency of visits to the outdoors and levels of physical exercise. 50 per cent of those who visited the natural environment took part in at least 30 minutes of physical activity at least three times a week, compared to just 20 per cent of those who did not take visits.



**Figure 3-6** Number of days over the last week that the respondent undertook 30 minutes of more of physical activity by frequency of participation in visits to the natural environment (%)  
 Q17 Thinking about the last 12 months, how often on average have you spent your leisure time out of doors, away from home? (Base: Monthly questions. 2012/13 Frequent N=5,596; Infrequent N=3,893; Non-participants N=1,055)

### Changes by population group

- 3.23 The volume of visits taken to the natural environment over the four year survey period also varied amongst demographic groups as shown in Table 3-4.
- 3.24 Comparing volumes of visits in the first and fourth years of surveying, the most notable net change was recorded amongst those in the most affluent AB socio-economic groups with a 23 per cent increase over this period. Conversely, over the same period there was a 22 per cent decrease in the volume of visits taken by members of the DE socio-economic groups. Between the first and fourth years of surveying there was also a 17 per cent increase in the volume of visits taken by members of the BAME population.

**Table 3-4** Estimated volume of visits to the natural environment by age, socio-economic group, working status and ethnicity  
 (Base: All visits in last 12 months, weekly questions 2009/10 N=20,374; 2010/11 N=17,389; 2011/12 N=19,014; 2012/13 N=18,185)

	Volume of visits (millions)			
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
<b>Age</b>				
16-24	313.3	258.8↓	303.7↑	312.3↑
25-34	406.3	350.0	383.8	436.2
35-44	612.7	528.6	570.0	495.3
45-54	543.4	501.0	530.0	581.3
55-64	501.8	448.1	481.5	483.6
65+	480.3	407.5	458.0	540.4
<b>Socio-economic group<sup>10</sup></b>				
AB	769.5	804.2	807.4	945.1↑
C1	828.6	708.9	813.3	797.4
C2	569.5	505.0	548.3	568.5
DE	690.1	475.7↓	557.5	538.0
<b>Working status</b>				
Full/ part-time	1,682.3	1,524.3	1,656.1	1,692.8
Retired	645.1	558.1	596.0	695.1↑
Still in education	123.7	96.5↓	121.1↑	129.7
Unemployed	406.3	314.9↓	353.3	331.4
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
White	2,706.7	2,377.5	2,564.3	2,668.8
BAME	145.5	110.0↓	153.8↑	170.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,858</b>	<b>2,494↓</b>	<b>2,726↑</b>	<b>2,849</b>

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

<sup>10</sup> For definitions, see Appendix 3

# 4 Where? The destination of visits

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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

- In total, 47 per cent of visits to the natural environment were taken to the countryside, 43 per cent were to green spaces within towns and cities while ten per cent were taken in coastal locations.
- The proportion of visits to the countryside significantly decreased from 52 per cent of all visits in 2011/12 to 47 per cent in 2012/13. Conversely, the proportion of visits to green spaces within towns and cities increased significantly from 38 per cent of all visits in 2011/12 to 43 per cent in 2012/13.
- More specifically, volumes of visits to urban parks increased significantly between 2011/12 and 2012/13. This increase in visits to urban parks made a considerable contribution to the overall increase in the volumes of visits taken in English towns and cities over this period.
- In total, 43 per cent of visits were taken to green spaces within towns and cities but for certain groups this type of place was more important. 82 per cent of visits taken by the BAME population were to this type of place, as were 66 per cent of the visits taken by those living in the most deprived neighbourhoods, 61 per cent of those taken by 16 to 24 year olds and 50 per cent of those taken by members of the DE socio-economic group.
- 66 per cent of all visits were taken within two miles of home, highlighting the importance of accessible local green space. This finding is consistent with that from previous MENE surveys.
- 45 per cent of visits to seaside/ coastal destinations involved travelling by car, while the majority of countryside and urban visits were taken on foot.

## Type of place visited

### General type of place visited

- 4.2 Respondents were asked about the general type of place that they visited – whether it was the countryside, a green space in a town or city, a green space in a seaside town or another coastal location.
- 4.3 It is estimated that between March 2012 and February 2013, the 42.4 million adults resident in England took a total of 2.85 billion visits to the natural environment<sup>11</sup>. 47 per cent, or 1.35 billion, of these visits were to places in the countryside, while green spaces within towns or cities accounted for 43 per cent, or 1.22 billion, visits. Seven per cent, or 185 million visits, were taken to a green space in a seaside town or resort and the remaining three per cent, 99 million visits, were taken to other seaside coastline areas.
- 4.4 The proportion of visits taken to the countryside significantly decreased from 52 per cent of all visits taken in 2011/12 to 47 per cent in 2012/13. Conversely, the proportion of visits taken to green spaces within towns and cities increased significantly from 38 per cent of visits in 2011/12 to 43 per cent in 2012/13.

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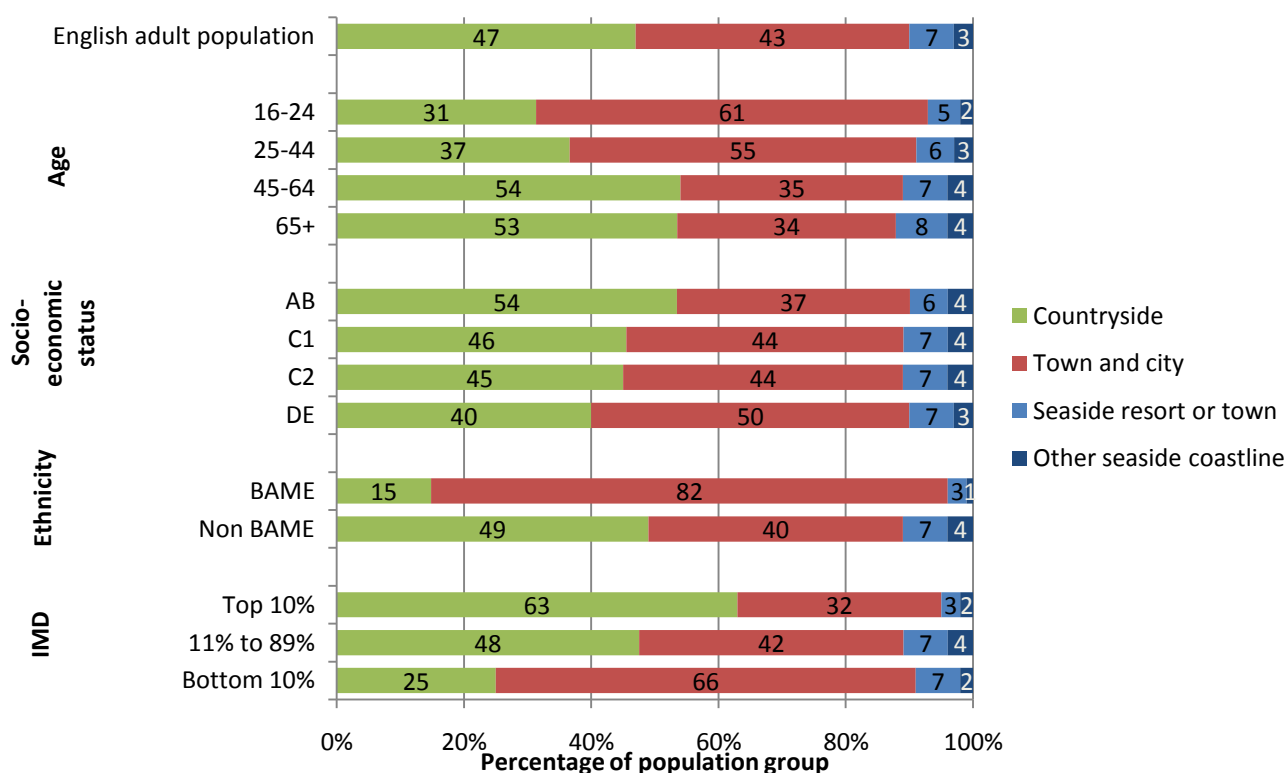
<sup>11</sup> Taking account of margins of error, at the 95% confidence level estimated total visits range from 2.79 to 2.91 billion

**Table 4-1** Proportion of visits by general place visited by survey year (%)  
 Q2 Which of the following best describes where you spent most of your time on this visit? (Base: All visits, weekly questions 2009/10 N=58,653; 2010/11 N=47,825; 2011/12 N=53,898; 2012/13 N=53,208)

	Proportion of visits			
	2009/10 %	2010/11 %	2011/12 %	2012/13 %
Countryside	49	53↑	52	47↓
Towns and cities	41	37↓	38	43↑
Seaside resort	7	7	6	7
Other coastal	4	4	4	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

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

- 4.5 As show in Figure 4-1, compared to other types of place, countryside locations were more likely to be visited by people aged 45 or over, those in the AB social groups, those of White ethnicity and those living in the least deprived areas.
- 4.6 Conversely, visits taken by those aged 16 to 24, those in the DE social group, members of the BAME population and those living in the most deprived areas were more likely to include green spaces in a town or city in their visits.



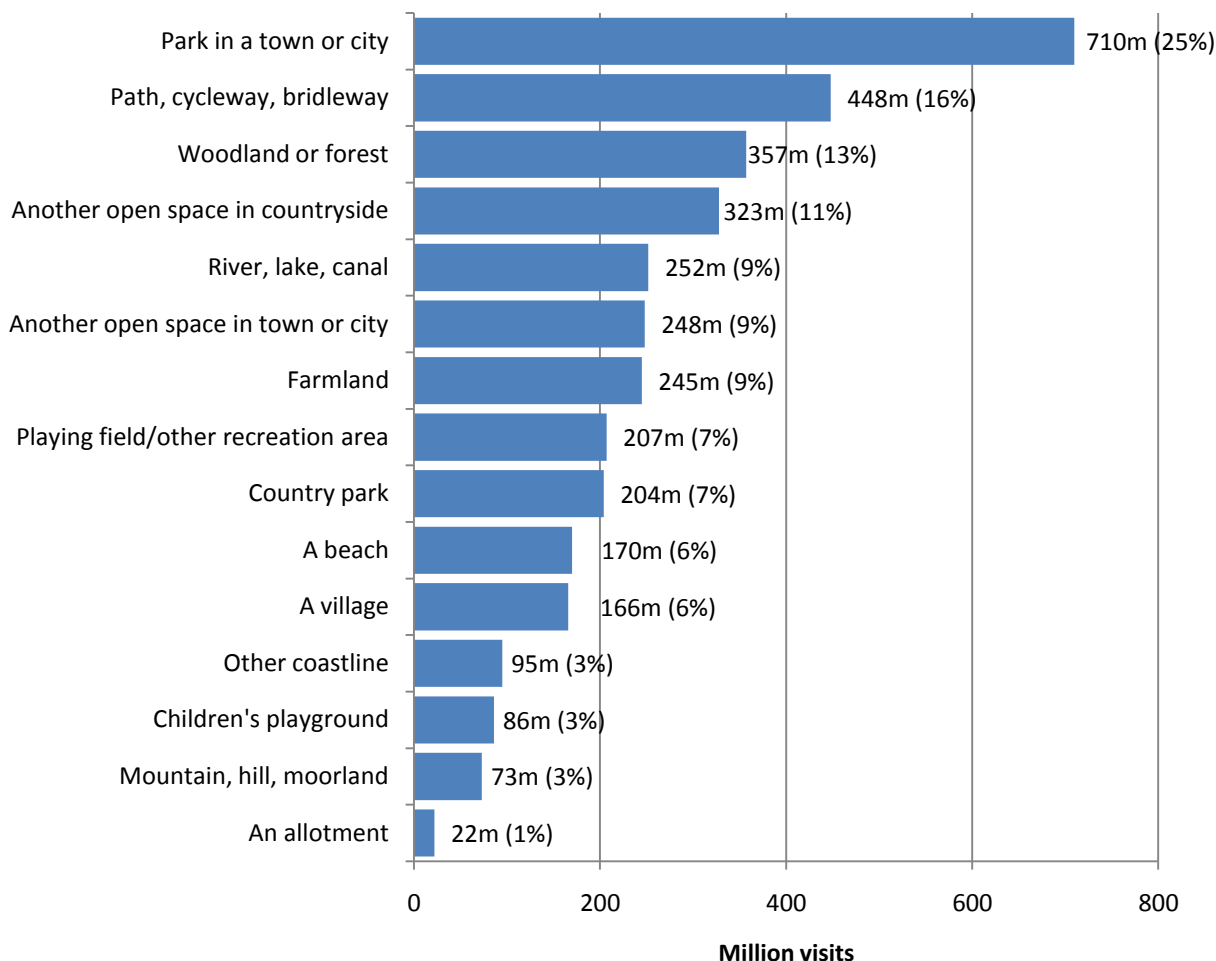
**Figure 4-1** Type of place visited by age, socio-economic status, ethnicity and Index of Multiple Deprivation (%)  
 Q2 Which of the following best describes where you spent most of your time on this visit (Base: 2012/13 All visits, weekly questions N=53,208)

- 4.7 Countryside visits were more common amongst those who owned a dog, with 55 per cent of visits taken by these respondents occurring within a countryside destination.

4.8 In contrast, 66 of visits taken by people with no access to a car and 52 per cent of those taken by unemployed people included a green space in a town or city.

### Detailed type of place visited

4.9 As well as the general type of place visited, respondents were asked to provide more specific details about the type of place visited. Figure 4-2 features all of the types of place which accounted for at least one per cent of visits<sup>12</sup>.



**Figure 4-2** Type of places visited – specific (volume of visits March to February 2012/13 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 2012/13 N=18,185)

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

<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that respondents were asked to specify *all* of the types of place included in their visit and could select more than one of the answer options. Therefore in some cases, an individual visit is included in the total for more than one type of place. This means that the sum of the percentages is more than 100 per cent.



**Table 4-2** Estimated volume of visits to the natural environment by detailed type of place  
 Q5 Which of the following list of places best describes where you spent your time during your visit? (Base: Random visit, weekly questions 2009/10 N=20,374; 2010/11 N=17,389; 2011/12 N=19,014; 2012/13 N=18,185)

	Volume of visits (millions)			
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Park in a town/city	677.6	557.8↓	628.4↑	709.9↑
Path/cycleway/bridleway	369.2	360.0	430.1↑	448.3
Woodland/forest	316.8	325.6	358.3	356.6
Another space in the countryside	319.0	307	328.2	323.2
River/lake/canal	253.4	231.9	261.4	251.8
Another open space in a town/city	226.3	188.7	221.6	247.7
Farmland	209.0	233.0	241.2	244.6
Playing field/other recreation area	195.4	191.0	228.9↑	206.7
Country park	198.7	176.3	196.6	204.3
Beach	174.1	159.1	151.8	170.4
Village	176.0	157.5	194.4	166.3
Other coastline	98.2	91.3	90.0	94.8
Children's playground	82.2	75.8	80.2	85.5
Mountain/hill/moorland	61.1	63.9	76.3	73.0
Allotment/community garden	17.2	15.6	20.6	22.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,858</b>	<b>2,494↓</b>	<b>2,726↑</b>	<b>2,849</b>

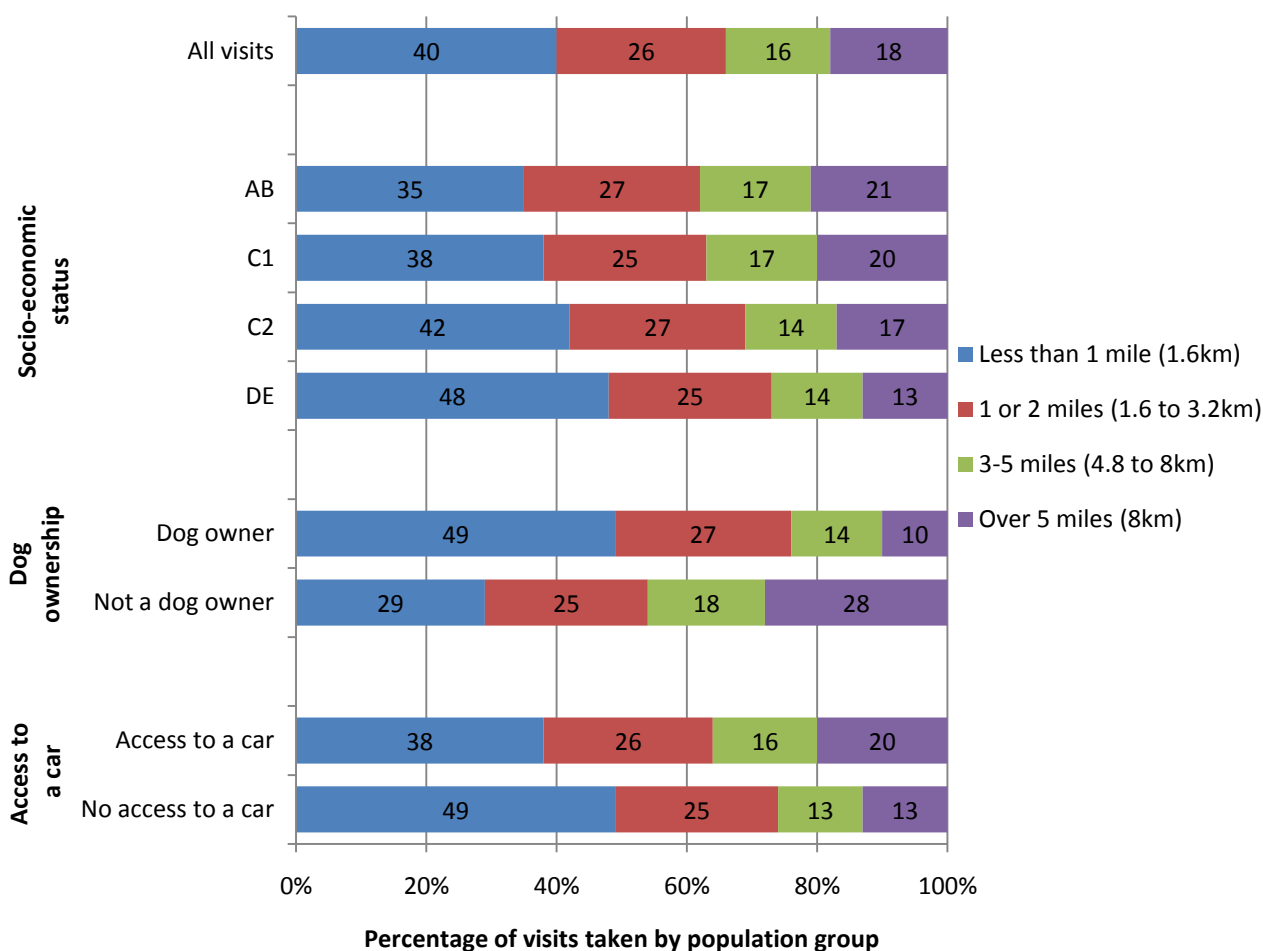
Notes: Sum of totals is more than 100% as visits could have included more than one type of place. Statistically significant year-on-year changes are highlighted by up or down arrows.

- 4.10 Parks in towns and cities continued to be the most visited type of destination, and were included in a quarter of all visits. In total there were 710 million visits to parks in town and cities during 2012/13, a 13 per cent increase on the 628 million visits taken during 2011/12.
- 4.11 Comparing volumes of visit taken to each type of place in the 2009/10 and 2012/13, the only statistically significant variation was an increase in the volume of visits to paths, cycleways or bridleways.

## Distance travelled to main destination

- 4.12 Respondents were asked how far they had travelled to reach their destination. Where more than one place was visited, or where there was no particular destination, respondents were asked about the place they spent most time, or the place that was their final destination.
- 4.13 The main visit destination was within one mile (1.6 km) of the respondent's home or other start point for 40 per cent of visits. A further 26 per cent of visits took place within one to two miles (1.6 to 3.2 km), and 82 per cent of visits took place within five miles (8 km) of the start point of the visit - proportions that do not vary significantly from previous surveys.

4.14 In total 95 per cent of visits to the natural environment started from the participant's home with the remainder being from someone else's home, from holiday accommodation or from a workplace.

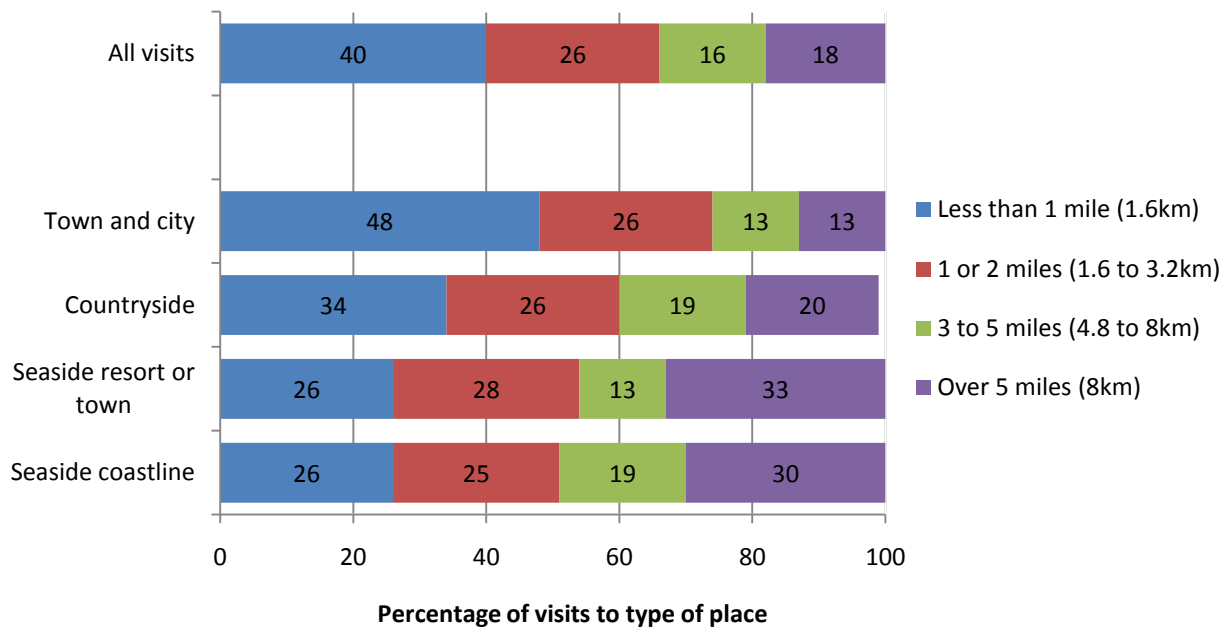


**Figure 4-3** Distance travelled by socio-economic status, dog ownership and car access (%)  
 Q8 Approximately how far did you travel to reach this place? (Base: Random visit, weekly questions 2012/13 N=18,185)

4.15 Groups most reliant on local green spaces included those in the lower socio-economic groups with 48 per cent of visits taken by the DE groups taking place within one mile of the starting point, and people with no access to a car, 49 per cent of whom took visits within a one mile radius.

4.16 Also it is notable that 49 per cent of dog owners took visits within a mile of the start point compared to 29 per cent of people with no dog.

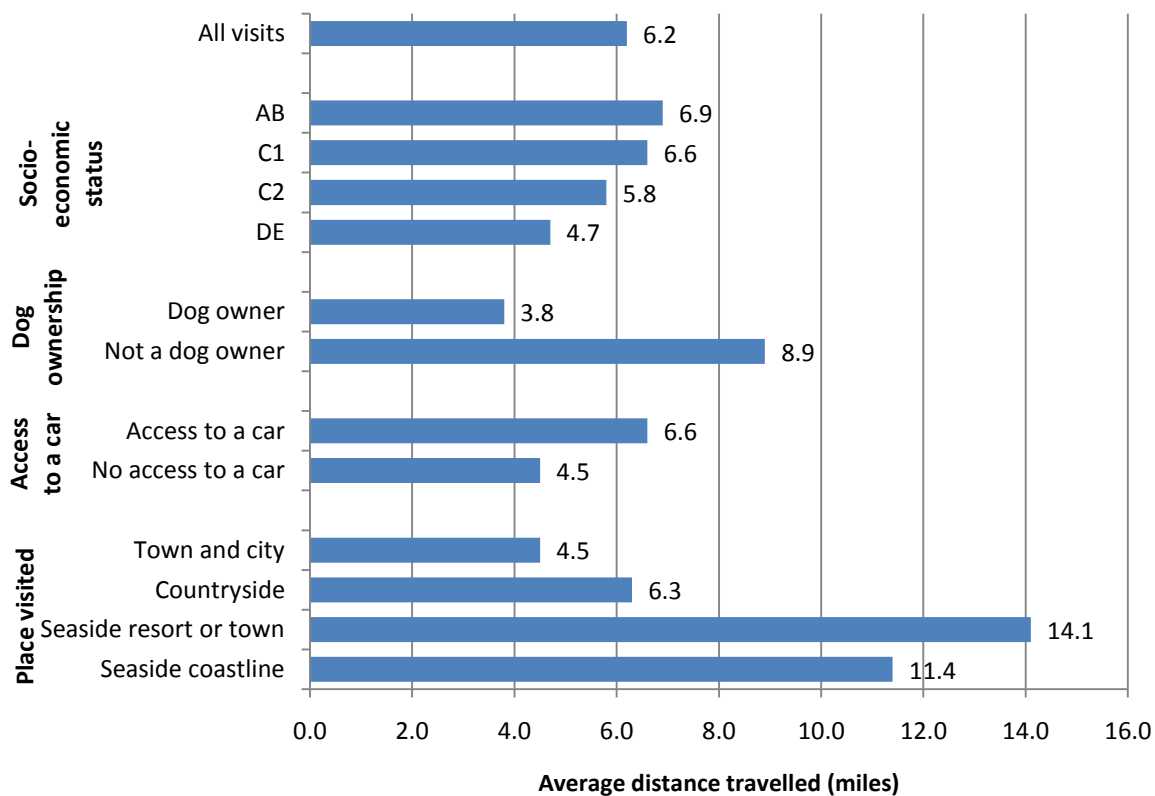
4.17 The distance of visits to the natural environment varied considerably according to destination (Figure 4-4). For example 48 per cent of visits to green spaces in towns and cities involved journeys of less than one mile, while a third of visits to seaside resorts or towns involved a longer journey of over 5 miles.



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

Q8 Approximately how far did you travel to reach this place? (Base: Random visit, weekly questions 2012/13 N=18,185)

4.18 Figure 4-5 illustrates the average distances travelled for different population groups and destination types. Across all visits the average was 6.2 miles but longer distances were travelled on visits taken by those in the AB socio-economic groups, those who did not own a dog and on visits to the coast.



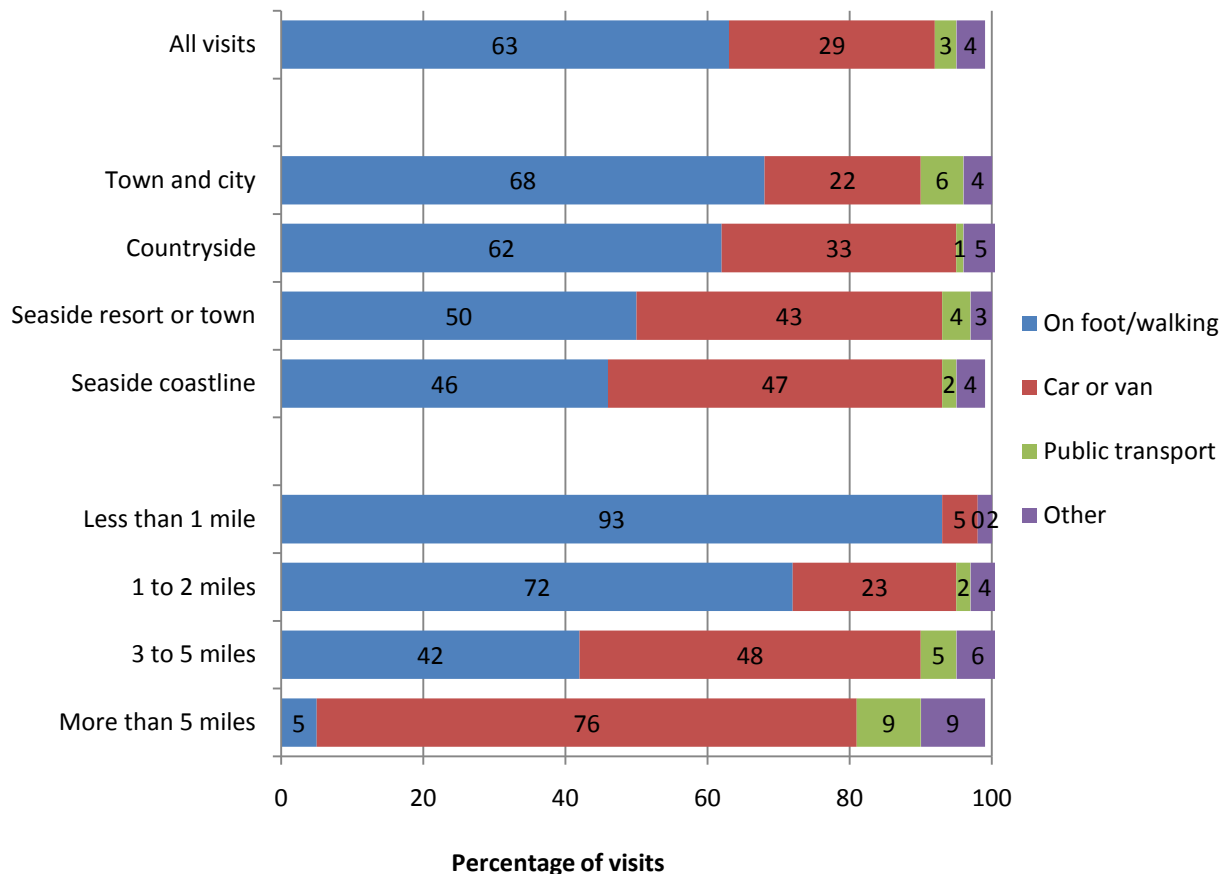
**Figure 4-5** Average distance travelled by socio-economic status, dog ownership, car access and place visited

Q8 Approximately how far did you travel to reach this place? (Base: Random visit, weekly questions 2012/13 N=18,185)

## Mode of transport

4.19 Respondents were asked about the main mode of transport used for their journey. 63 per cent of visits involved walking, a car or van was used in 29 per cent of visits, and public transport was used for three per cent of visits (Figure 4-6).

4.20 As seen below, the vast majority of visits involving a journey of less than one mile were taken on foot while 76 per cent of visits where the journey was five miles or more used a car or van. In addition, 68 per cent of visits taken to urban locations were on foot compared to just 46 per cent of visits to seaside coastline.



**Figure 4-6** Mode of transport used on journey by place visited and distance travelled (%)  
 Q11 What form of transport did you use on this journey? (Base: Random visit, weekly questions 2012/13  
 N=18,185)

# 5 What? A profile of visits

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

## Headline results in this section

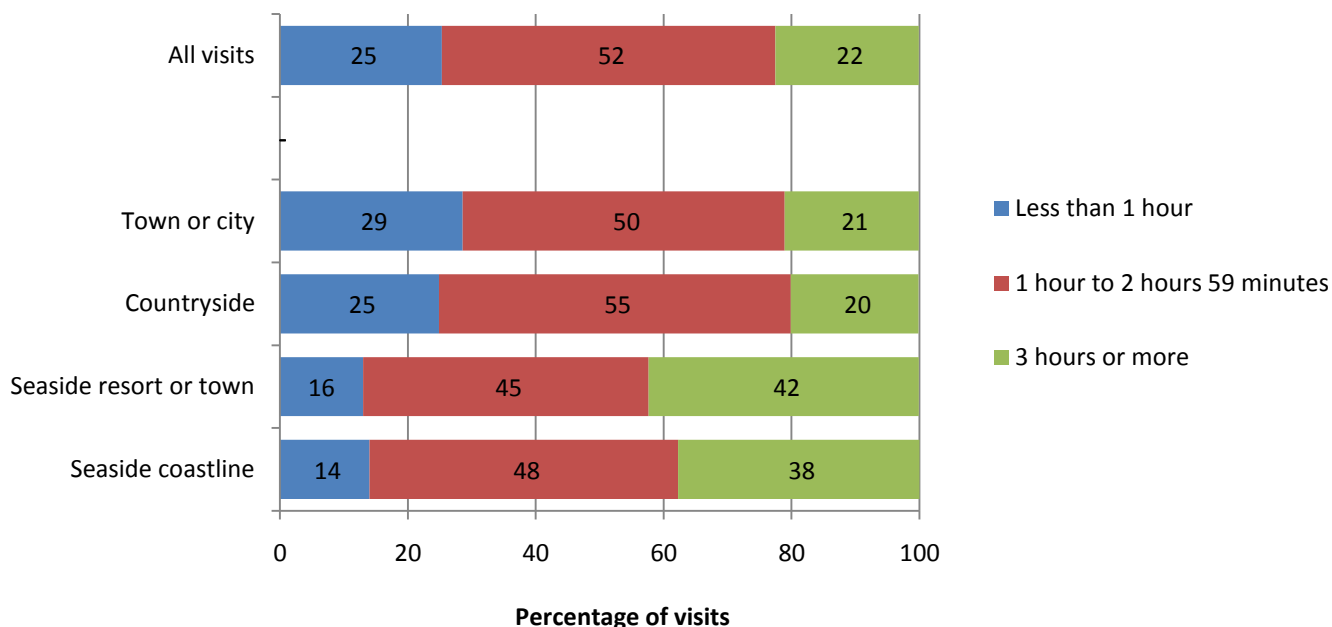
- Walking remained the most popular activity, undertaken on 76 per cent of all visits, or approximately 2.2 billion visits overall. Half of all visits - approximately 1.4 billion visits were taken with dogs, while walking without a dog featured in around 769 million visits.
- While the volume of visits significantly decreased for many of the activities between 2009/10 and 2010/11 subsequent increases during 2011/12 and 2012/13 mean that there was a net growth in participation in some activities between years one and four of the survey.
- 48 per cent of visits were taken by an adult on their own.
- 20 per cent of visits were taken with children present which, when applied to the 2.85 billion estimated outdoor visits, equates to around 568 million visits overall.
- In total 27 per cent of visits incurred expenditure, with an average spend during these visits of around £27 per person.
- An estimated £21 billion was spent during visits taken to the natural environment in the 2012/13 period. The estimated total expenditure has not varied significantly over the four years of surveying, remaining in the range £17 billion to £21 billion.
- The average visit to the natural environment lasted just over two hours (two hours seven minutes). This finding is not significantly different from that found in previous years of the survey.

## Duration of visits

5.2 The average duration of a visit to the natural environment in 2012/13 was just over two hours (two hours, seven minutes). A quarter of visits lasted less than one hour, while 52 per cent lasted between one hour and two hours 59 minutes. The remaining 22 per cent of visits were reported as lasting for three hours or longer<sup>13</sup>. These findings are not significantly different from those obtained in previous years.

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<sup>13</sup> Note that respondents often provided rounded estimates – such as, half an hour, an hour or two hours rather than a precise figure. These are then grouped into the categories described



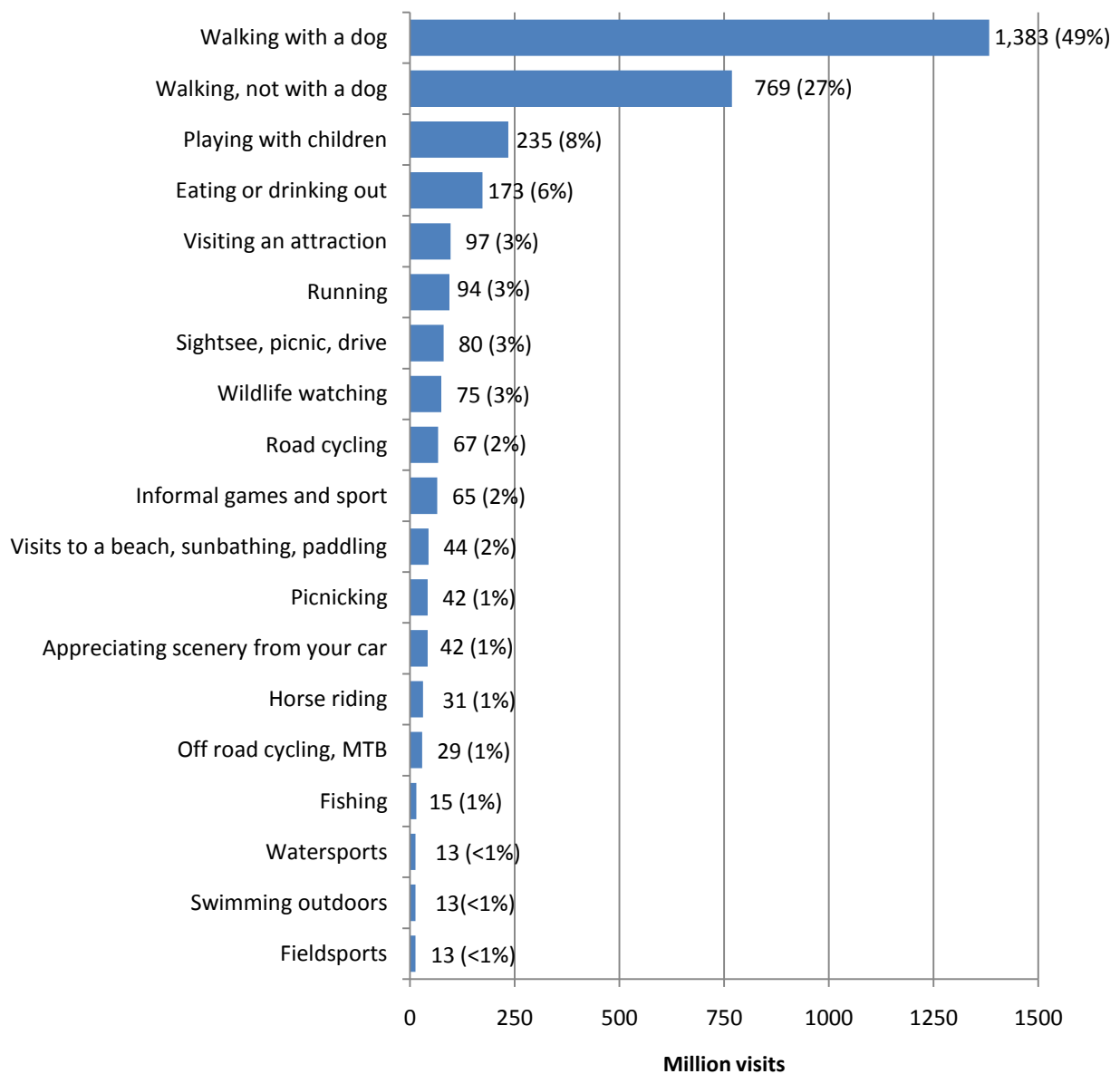
**Figure 5-1** Duration of visits by place visited (%)  
*Q3 How long did this visit last altogether? (Base: Random visit, weekly questions 2012/13 N=18,185)*

5.3 The duration of visits varied by the type of destination, notably that 29 per cent of urban visits and 25 per cent of visits to countryside destinations lasted less than an hour. This corresponds with the shorter distances travelled on visits to these locations. In contrast, 42 per cent of visits to seaside resorts or towns and 38 per cent of visits to other coastline areas lasted 3 hours or more.

## Activities undertaken on visits

5.4 Walking remained the most popular activity, undertaken on 76 per cent of visits to the natural environment, or approximately 2.2 billion visits overall. More specifically, 49 per cent of all visits involved walking with a dog - approximately 1.4 billion visits - while walking without a dog featured in 27 per cent of all visits or around 769 million visits<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> It should be noted that respondents were asked to specify all of the activities undertaken during their visit and could select more than one of the answer options. Therefore, in some cases an individual visit is included in the total for more than one activity. This means that the sum of the percentages is more than 100 per cent.



**Figure 5-2** Activities undertaken during visits (volume of visits March 2011 to February 2013 and % of total visits in this period)

Q4 Which of these activities, if any, did you undertake? (Base: All visits, weekly questions 2012/13 N=53,208)

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

5.5 While the volume of visits significantly decreased for many of the activities between 2009/10 and 2010/11 (see Table 5-1), subsequent increases during 2011/12 and 2012/13 mean that there has been a net growth in participation in a certain activities between years one and four of the survey. For example, the volumes of visits involving running have increased significantly.

**Table 5-1** Estimated volume of visits to the natural environment by activities undertaken  
 Q4 Which of these activities, if any, did you undertake? (Base: All visits, weekly questions 2009/10  
 N=58,653; 2010/11 N=47,825; 2011/12 N=53,898; 2012/13 N=53,208)

	Volume of visits (millions)			
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Walking with a dog	1,380.2	1,267.5	1,384.2	1,382.6
Walking, not with a dog	738.8	660.2	724.6	768.6
Playing with children	228.8	211.5	251.1	235.0
Eating/ drinking out	181.5	142.0↓	159.8	173.1
Visiting an attraction	109.4	88.6↓	85.5	96.7
Running	79.8	74.0	86.7	94.3
Wildlife watching	76.7	69.8	78.7	75.2
Road cycling	64.5	49.6↓	55.7	67.0↑
Informal games and sport	85.2	66.1↓	75.2	65.2
Beach/ sunbathing/ paddling in sea	50.9	50.3	50.6	43.7
Appreciating scenery from your car	52.8	48.3	51.5	41.9↓
Picnicking	52.8	45.7	57.9↑	41.8↓
Horse riding	35.8	27.1↓	33.1↑	31.0
Off-road cycling/ mountain biking	34.3	26.3↓	28.2	29.4
Fishing	17.2	14.8	16.6	14.8
Watersports	16.1	10.9↓	13.3↑	13.2
Swimming outdoors	16.1	12.9	10.8↓	12.7↑
Fieldsports	15.3	10.1↓	9.2	12.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,858</b>	<b>2,494↓</b>	<b>2,727↑</b>	<b>2,849</b>

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

- 5.6 Further analysis highlights the variations between population groups in the proportions of visits involving the 'top four' activities (Table 5-2 overleaf). Most notably, over half of the visits taken by people aged 45 to 65, members of the C2 and DE socio-economic groups and residents of town/fringe and rural areas involved dog walking.
- 5.7 Playing with children was more likely to feature in visits taken by people aged 25 to 44 and members of the BAME population.



**Table 5-2** Activities undertaken on visit by demographics (% of visits taken by each group including top four activities)  
 Q4 Which of these activities, if any, did you undertake? (Base: All visits, weekly questions 2012/13 N=53,208)

	Walking with a dog %	Walking, not with a dog %	Eating/ drinking out %	Playing with children %
<b>All visits</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>By age</b>				
16 – 24	37	26	9	7
25 – 44	44	24	7	17
45 – 64	57	25	5	4
65+	47	36	5	2
<b>By socio-economic group</b>				
AB	45	29	6	8
C1	46	28	7	7
C2	53	22	5	8
DE	53	26	5	9
<b>By working status</b>				
Working full time	50	24	6	10
Retired	48	35	5	2
Still in education	29	31	10	5
Unemployed	49	27	5	15
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
White	51	26	6	8
BAME	9	44	12	19
<b>Long term illness/ disability</b>				
Any	53	27	6	8
None	48	27	12	19
<b>Children in household</b>				
Any	44	24	6	22
None	50	28	6	3
<b>Place of residence</b>				
Urban	46	28	7	9
Town/ fringe	58	22	5	5
Rural	59	22	4	4

5.8 There were also significant differences in the types of activities undertaken on visits to different types of destination (Table 5-3). Walking a dog was most popular in the countryside while walking without a dog was more likely to be undertaken at coastal destinations. Eating and drinking were more likely to feature in visits to seaside resorts or towns.

**Table 5-3** Activities undertaken on visits by type of place visited (%)  
*Q4 Which of these activities, if any, did you undertake? (Base: All visits, weekly questions 2012/13 N=53,208)*

	Type of place visited			
	Town or city %	Countryside %	Seaside resort or town %	Seaside coastline %
Walking with a dog	41	58	33	45
Walking not with a dog	29	23	39	34
Playing with children	11	5	11	8
Eating or drinking out	8	3	13	7
Sightsee, picnic, drive	2	3	7	6
Visiting an attraction	4	3	5	3
Wildlife watching	1	4	2	5
Informal games and sport	3	2	1	1
Running	4	3	2	2
Picnicking	1	1	3	4
Road cycling	2	3	1	1
Appreciating scenery from your car	1	2	4	3
Visits to a beach, sunbathing or paddling in the sea	-	-	15	11
Horse riding	-	2	-	-
Off-road cycling or mountain biking	1	2	1	1
Fishing	-	1	1	2
Swimming outdoors	-	-	2	2
Watersports	-	-	1	4

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

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

## Party composition

5.9 Children were present during 20 per cent of all visits, while 48 per cent of visits were taken by an adult on their own (Table 5-4). The overall average party size was 2.4.

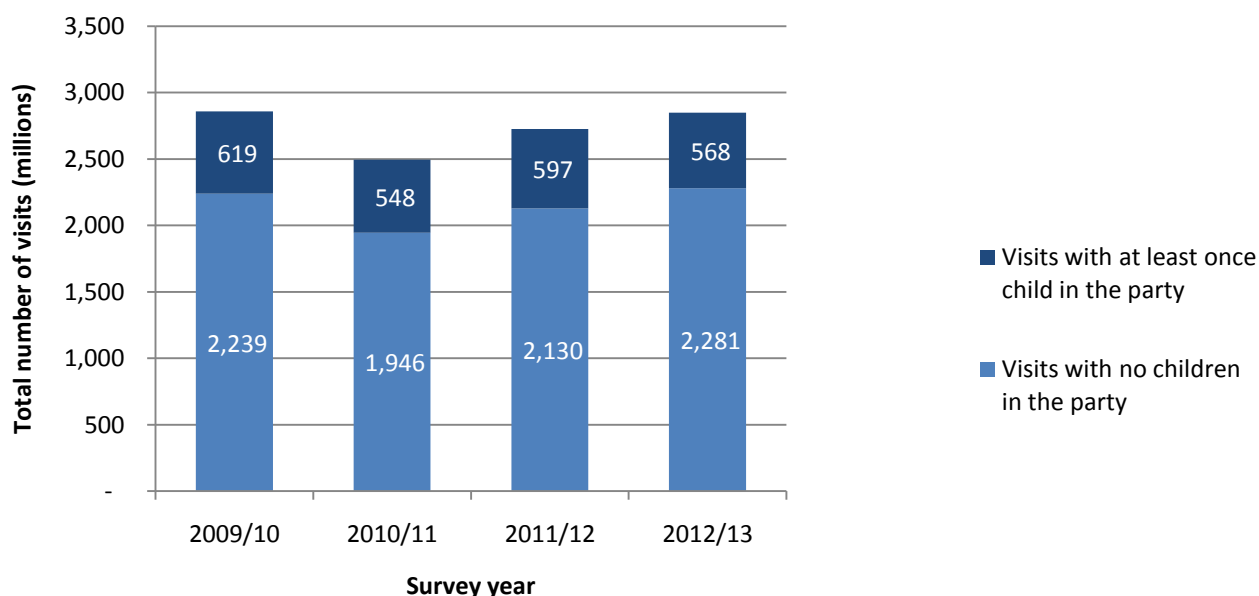
**Table 5-4** Party composition (row %)  
 (Base: Random visits, monthly questions 2012/13 N=4,034)

	None %	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 + %	Total %	Average
Adults (aged 16 and over)	-	56	32	5	8	100	2.0
Children (aged under 16)	80	9	7	3	2	100	2.1
Total party size	-	48	27	9	15	100	2.4

5.10 While fewer than half of all visits to the natural environment were taken alone, this proportion increased to 71 per cent if the visit was taken within one mile of home, 71 per cent if the visit was taken with a dog and 70 per cent if the visit was taken on foot. The average party size was largest on visits which involved a journey of over 20 miles (4.0 people).

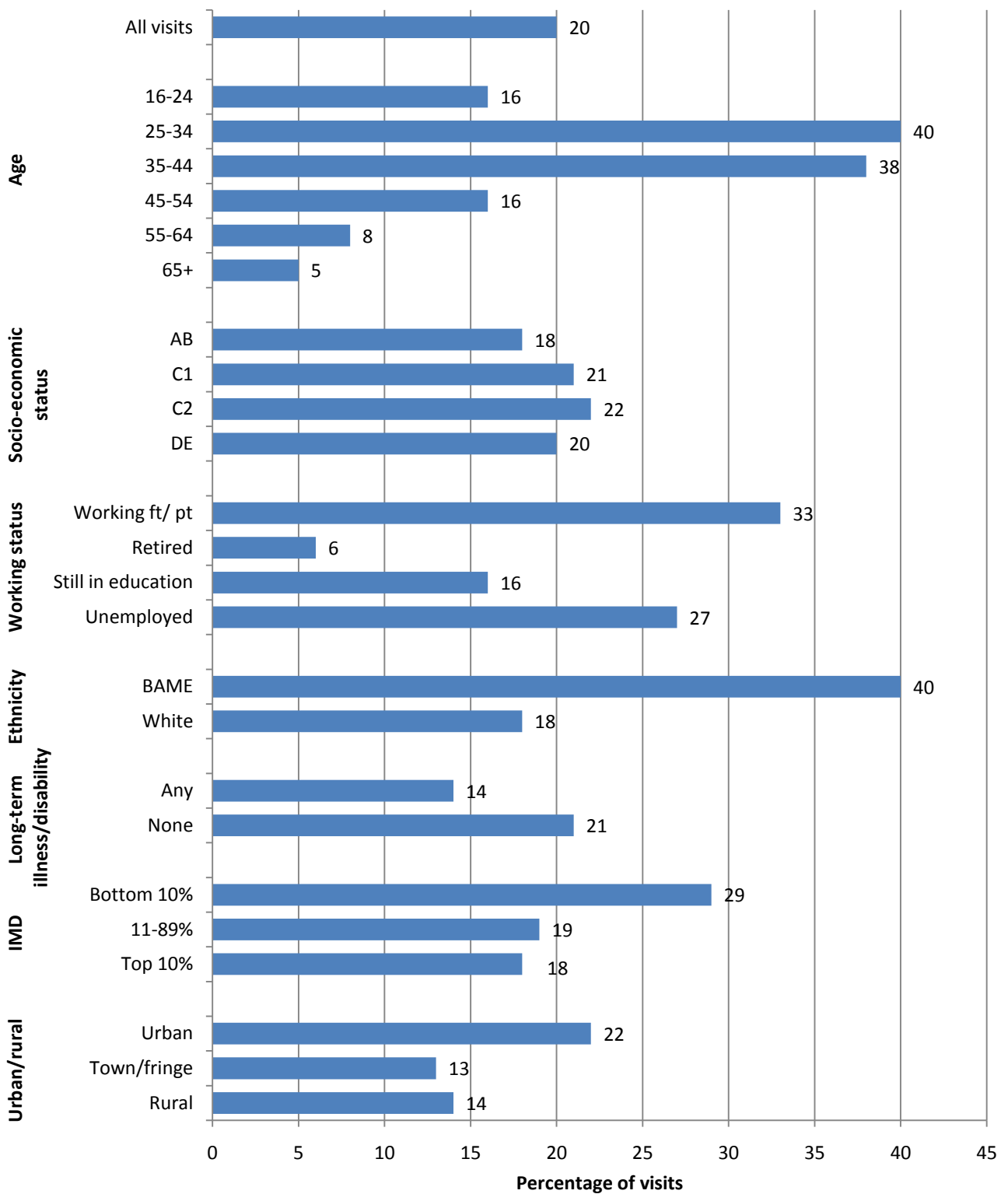
### Visits taken with children

5.11 As shown in Figure 5-3, in 2012/13 at least one child was in the party in 20 per cent of the 2.85 billion visits taken by adults. This equates to 568 million visits taken with children present. This estimate is lower than the estimated 619 million visits taken in 2009/10 but is not significantly different to the volumes of visits taken with children recorded in the other survey years.



**Figure 5-3** Estimated volume of visits taken with children under 16 in party (millions)  
 (Base: Random visits, monthly questions 2009/10 N=4,755, 2010/11 N=3,973, 2011/12 N=4,421, 2012/13 N=4,034)

5.12 While 20 per cent of all visits taken by adults included one or more children in the party, this proportion increased to 54 per cent amongst people with children living in their household. Also, as shown in Figure 5-4, a higher proportion of the visits taken by people aged between 25 and 44, people working full or part time, members of the BAME population, residents of the most deprived areas and urban areas included children.



**Figure 5-4** Percentage of visits taken accompanied by children (aged under 16) by socio-economic status, working status, ethnicity disability, Index of Multiple Deprivation and if urban/rural (%)

Q13 How many children under 16 were on this visit? (Base: Random visits, monthly questions 2011/12 N=4,034)

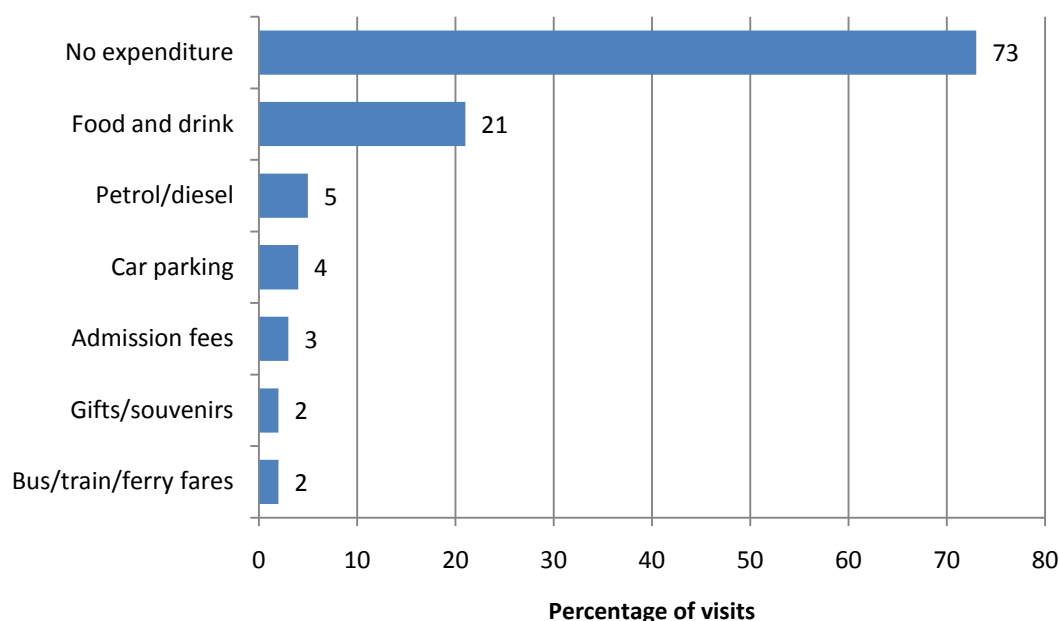
5.13 The presence of children in a party has an impact on visit characteristics (Table 5-5 below), for example parks in towns and cities and country parks were more likely to be visited when children were present. Visits with children were also more likely to be taken by car but less likely to be taken on foot.

**Table 5-5** Activities undertaken, distance travelled, mode of transport and type of place visited by presence of children in party (%)  
(Base: Random visits, monthly questions 2012/13 N=4,034)

	Children under 16 in party %	No children under 16 in party %
<b>Activities undertaken</b>		
Walking with a dog	23	50
Walking, not with a dog	34	27
Playing with children	37	7
Eating or drinking out	9	6
Visiting an attraction	7	3
<b>Distance travelled</b>		
Less than 1 mile	38	40
1 or 2 miles	23	26
3 to 5 miles	14	16
Over 5 miles	25	18
<b>Transport used</b>		
On foot	52	64
Car or van	41	29
Public transport (rail or bus)	4	3
Other	3	4
<b>Type of place visited – general</b>		
Town and city	53	42
Countryside	35	48
Seaside resort or town	8	6
Seaside coastline	4	3
<b>Type of place visited – specific</b>		
Park in a town or city	35	24
Children's playground	13	3
Woodland or forest	9	13
Country park	11	7
Beach	9	6
Paths, cycleway or bridleway	9	16

## Expenditure during visits

5.14 27 per cent of visits to the natural environment incurred expenditure. Money was spent on food and drink in 21 per cent of all visits while spending on other categories, such as car parking and fuel, was restricted to a smaller proportion of visits<sup>15</sup>. Overall, the profile of expenditure is not significantly different to that recorded in previous years of the survey.



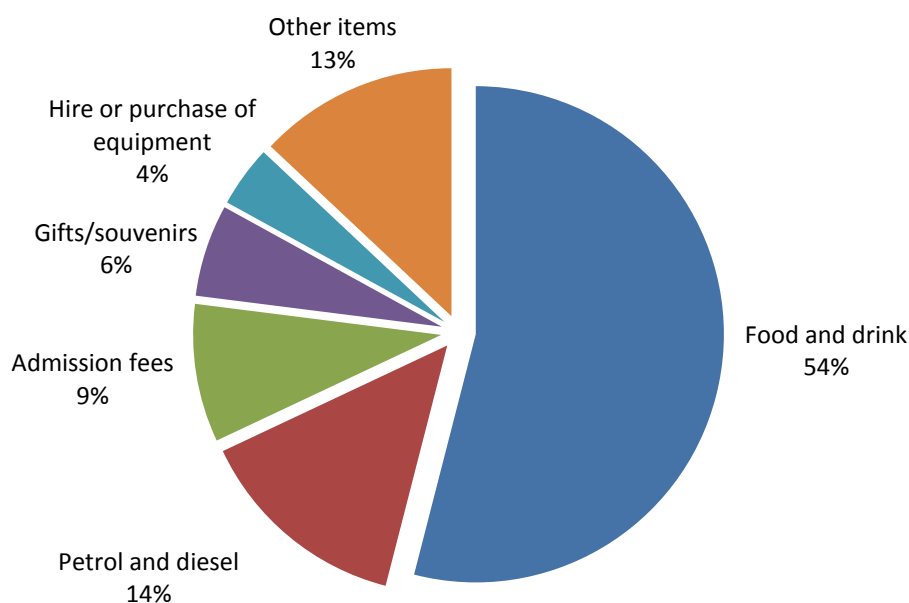
**Figure 5-5** Items purchased during visits to the natural environment (%)

Q15 During this visit did you personally spend any money on any of the items listed on the screen? (Base: Random visit, monthly questions 2012/13 N=4,034)

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

5.15 For every £1 spent on a visit to the natural environment, 54 pence was spent on food and drink with petrol and diesel accounting for 14 pence (Figure 5-6).

<sup>15</sup> Respondents were asked about any expenditure incurred during their visit. Therefore, any money spent for the visit but not actually during it (for example, purchasing petrol the day before in preparation for the visit) was not included. However money spent during the visit on fuel which continued to be used after the visit was recorded.



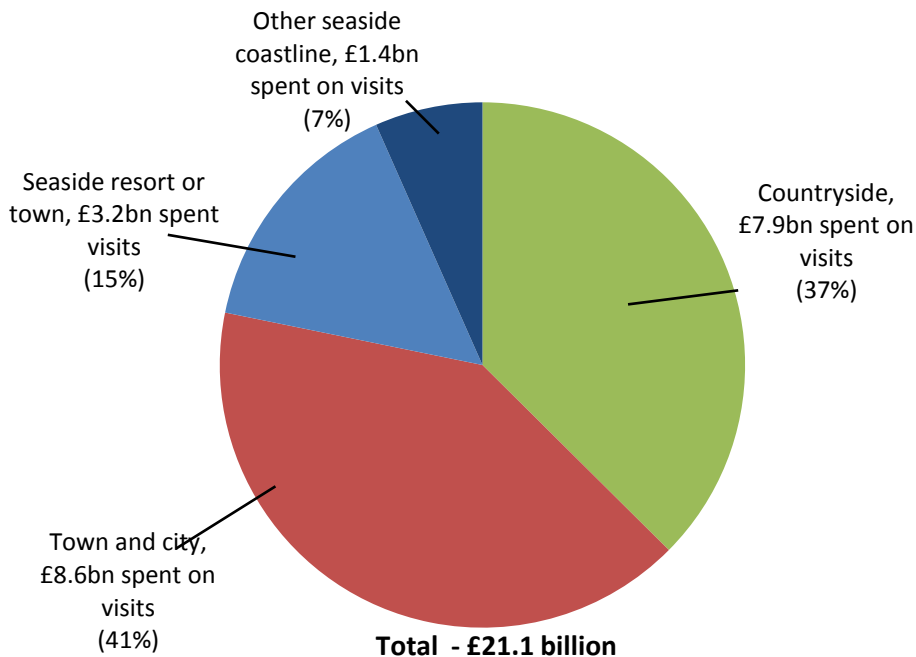
**Figure 5-6** Distribution of expenditure on visits by category of spend (%)

*Q15 During this visit did you personally spend any money on any of the items listed on the screen? (Base: Random visit, monthly questions 2012/13 N=4,034)*

- 5.16 Average levels of expenditure have not differed significantly between survey years
- 5.17 In 2012/13, for those visits that incurred expenditure, the average spend per person per visit was £27.23 – similar to the spending levels recorded in 2011/12 (£28.16)
- 5.18 When all visits are considered, including those where there was no expenditure, the average spend per person per visit during 2012/13 was £7.40.
- 5.19 With 760 million visits involving expenditure, it is estimated that a total of around £21 billion was spent during visits to the natural environment between March 2012 and February 2013<sup>16</sup>.
- 5.20 The estimated total annual expenditure has not varied significantly over the four years of surveying, remaining in the range of between £17 billion and £21 billion over this period.
- 5.21 Certain types of visits were more likely than others to incur expenditure. Most notably, 80 per cent of visits where the visit destination was over 20 miles away incurred spending, as did 60 per cent of those taken by people who normally took visits to the natural environment on an infrequent basis.

<sup>16</sup> Taking account of margins of error, at the 95% confidence level estimated total expenditure ranges from £17.6 billion to £24.5 billion

5.22 Visits to seaside resorts and towns were also significantly more likely to incur expenditure. In total, 50 per cent of visits to these places involved expenditure, which meant that while only seven per cent of visits were to seaside towns, this type of destination accounted for 15 per cent of all expenditure (Figure 5-7).



**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 2012/13 N=4,034)*



## 6 Why? Motivations and barriers

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

### Headline results in this section

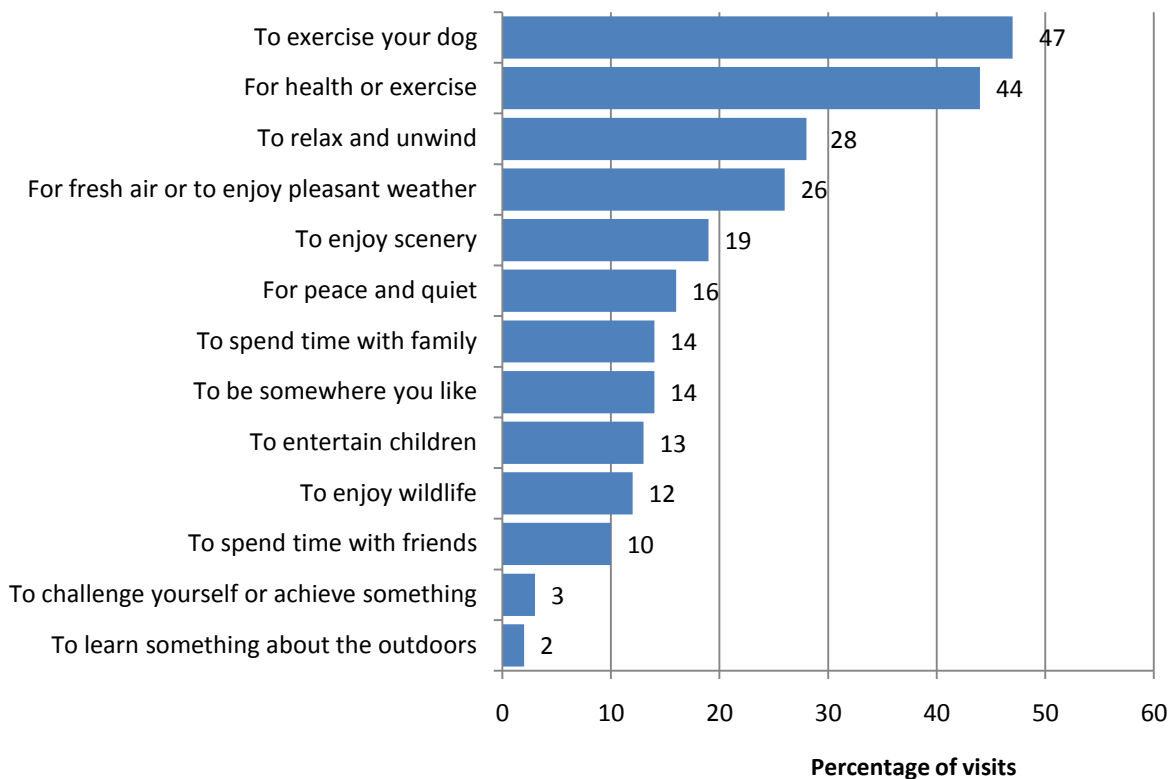
- As in the previous three years, exercising dogs, personal health and exercise, relaxing and unwinding, enjoying fresh air and pleasant weather and enjoying scenery were the most frequently cited reasons for taking visits to the natural environment.
- As a person gets older they are more likely to take visits for health or exercise, for fresh air or pleasant weather, to enjoy scenery, and to enjoy wildlife.
- Between 2011/12 and 2012/13 the proportions of visits taken where the motivation was for health or exercise significantly increased from 37 per cent to 44 per cent.
- Visits to the natural environment have been consistently shown to offer a number of benefits to those taking visits, with agreement particularly strong for outcomes such as enjoying visits, feeling calm and relaxed and/or refreshed and revitalised.
- Those who had been on visits to mountain and moorland, woodland or the 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.
- Infrequent visitors to the natural environment were most likely to cite being busy at work or poor weather as their main reasons for *not* being able to take visits to the natural environment more often. In 2012/13 there was a significant increase in the proportion of people citing bad weather, from five per cent in 2011/12 to 11 per cent in 2012/13, as a main reason for not visiting the natural environment. Also cost has increased in importance as a barrier over the four years of the survey from four per cent of respondents to seven per cent.

### Motivations for visits

6.2 As in previous years, exercising a dog was the most frequently cited motivation for visiting the natural environment. In 2012/13, 47 per cent of visits were taken for this reason (see Figure 6-1). Other popular reasons for taking a visit included 44 per cent for health and exercise, 28 per cent to relax and unwind, 26 per cent for fresh air or to enjoy pleasant weather and 19 per cent to enjoy scenery<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> It should be noted that respondents were asked to specify all of the motivations for their visit and could select more than one of the answer options. Therefore, in some cases an individual visit is included in the total for more than one motivation. This means that the sum of the percentages is more than 100 per cent.



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

Q12 Which of the following, if any, best describe your reasons for this visit? (Base: Random visits, weekly questions 2012/13 N=16,429)

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

- 6.3 Variations by gender are apparent, with 16 per cent of women mentioned entertaining children as a motivation for visits compared to just nine per cent of men. However, health and exercise was more likely to motivate the visits taken by men with 46 per cent providing this reason compared to 42 per cent of women.
- 6.4 As in previous years, motivations also seem to be influenced by age; 53 per cent of people aged over 65 visited the natural environment for health or exercise, compared to 37 per cent of those aged 16 to 44.
- 6.5 A similar pattern was recorded in relation to enjoying scenery and wildlife. 24 per cent of those aged 55 and over visited to enjoy scenery compared to 16 per cent of those under 55, while 16 per cent of those aged 55 and over visited to enjoy wildlife compared to ten per cent of those aged under 55.
- 6.6 Family related activities were particularly likely to be important for people aged 25 to 44 with 22 per cent mentioning 'entertaining children' as a motive and an equal proportion citing 'spending time with family'. However younger people aged 16 to 24 were more likely to state that they were motivated to take visits by the chance to 'spend time with friends' with 24 per cent providing this reason.
- 6.7 Exercising a dog was a motivation in 51 per cent of visits taken by those in the C2DE socio-economic groups while visits taken by members of the more affluent ABC1 socio-economic groups were more likely to be driven by a range of other factors. This included 47 per cent taking visits for health and exercise, 30 per cent to relax and unwind and 30 per cent for fresh air or to enjoy pleasant weather.
- 6.8 Table 6-1 illustrates variations in the reasons for taking visits during the four survey years. The most notable change over this period is an increase in the proportion of visits where motivated by health and exercise.

**Table 6-1** Reasons for taking visits to the natural environment by year (column %)  
 Q12 Which of the following, if any, best describe your reasons for this visit? (Base: 2009/10 N=4,755, 2010/11 N=3,973, 2011/12 N=4,421, 2012/13 N=16,429)

	2009/10 %	2010/11 %	2011/12 %	2012/13 %
To exercise your dog	47	48	48	47
For health or exercise	34	38↑	37	44↑
To relax and unwind	25	26	28	28
For fresh air or to enjoy pleasant weather	21	24↑	24	26
To enjoy scenery	20	22	19↓	19
For peace and quiet	15	16	15	16
To be somewhere you like	10	12↑	13	14
To spend time with family	12	13	15	14
To entertain children	11	11	12	13
To enjoy wildlife	13	14	12	12
To spend time with friends	9	9	10	10
To challenge yourself or achieve something	3	4	3	3
To learn something about the outdoors	2	2	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Notes: Sum of totals is more than 100% as visits could have been taken for more than one reason  
 Statistically significant year-on-year changes are highlighted by up or down arrows

- 6.9 Table 6-2 compares the reasons given for taking visits to different types of destinations during 2012/13.
- 6.10 In total 56 per cent of visits taken to the countryside were taken to exercise a dog, 49 per cent were taken for health or exercise reasons and 20 per cent were taken for peace and quiet. These proportions are higher than those recorded for visits taken to the other types of place.
- 6.11 By comparison, the motivations for visits to the coast related to escaping and enjoying a change of scene - with 39 per cent taken to relax and unwind, 38 per cent taken to enjoy fresh air and pleasant weather and 33 per cent taken to enjoy scenery.
- 6.12 Visits taken to urban places were largely motivated by a desire to exercise a dog or for health or exercise but these visits were much less likely to be driven by factors related to scenery, relaxation or seeking peace and quiet.
- 6.13 Reflecting the change shown in Table 6-1, a significant increase was recorded between survey years in the proportions of visits taken to the countryside where the motivation was for health or exercise. 37 per cent of visits were taken for this purpose in 2009/10, a figure which rose to 49 per cent in 2012/13.

**Table 6-2** Reasons for taking visits to the natural environment by type of place visited (column %) Q12 Which of the following, if any, best describe your reasons for this visit? (Base: Random visits, March 2012 monthly questions, April 2012 – February 2013 weekly questions 2012/13 N=16,429)

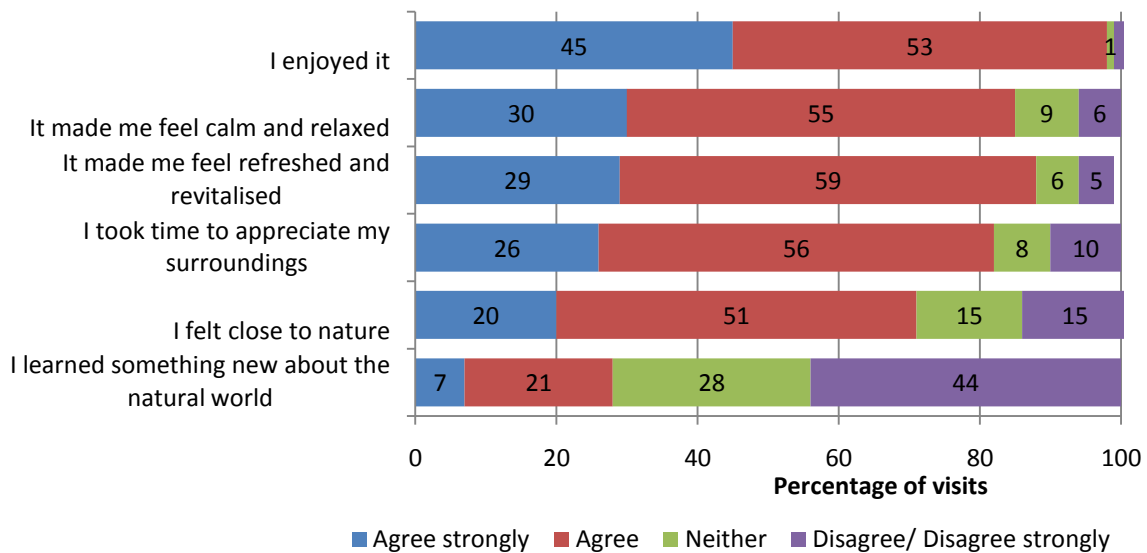
	Type of place visited			
	Town or city %	Countryside %	Seaside resort or town %	Seaside coastline %
To exercise your dog	40	56	33	37
For health or exercise	39	49	43	39
To relax and unwind	25	30	34	39
For fresh air or to enjoy pleasant weather	20	30	35	38
To enjoy scenery	11	25	29	33
To spend time with family	14	13	22	22
For peace and quiet	12	20	17	17
To be somewhere you like	10	16	22	22
To entertain children	16	9	16	15
To enjoy wildlife	6	17	8	17
To spend time with friends	12	8	12	14
To challenge yourself or achieve something	2	4	3	5
To learn something about the outdoors	1	2	2	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

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

## Outcomes of visits

- 6.14 To explore some of the benefits or outcomes that people may experience from a visit to the natural environment, respondents were asked about the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements<sup>18</sup> relating to a visit they had taken over the previous seven days.
- 6.15 In general responses were positive with 98 per cent of people stating that they enjoyed their visit to the natural environment (see Figure 6-2). 85 per cent agreed that their visit made them feel calm and relaxed, 82 per cent took time to appreciate their surroundings, 88 per cent felt refreshed and revitalised and 71 per cent agreed they felt close to nature.
- 6.16 However a lower proportion – only 28 per cent of respondents - agreed that they had learned something new about nature while on the visit.

<sup>18</sup> This question was included in the survey during one week of fieldwork per quarter. As such sample sizes are smaller than for other questions and results are subject to wider margins of error.



**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 2012/13 N=1,328)*

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

- 6.17 The analysis shown in Table 6-3 focuses on those ‘agreeing strongly’ with the various outcomes of visits to the natural environment, in order to highlight any variations in responses.
- 6.18 Visit outcomes varied by type of place visited. In general, visits taken to a mountain and moorland or coastal environment had the most positive outcomes while those taken in parks in towns or cities, or green spaces in villages were less positive.
- 6.19 In terms of motivations, visits taken to enjoy scenery were generally most positive while those taken to exercise a dog or for health and exercise reasons were less likely to have such positive outcomes.

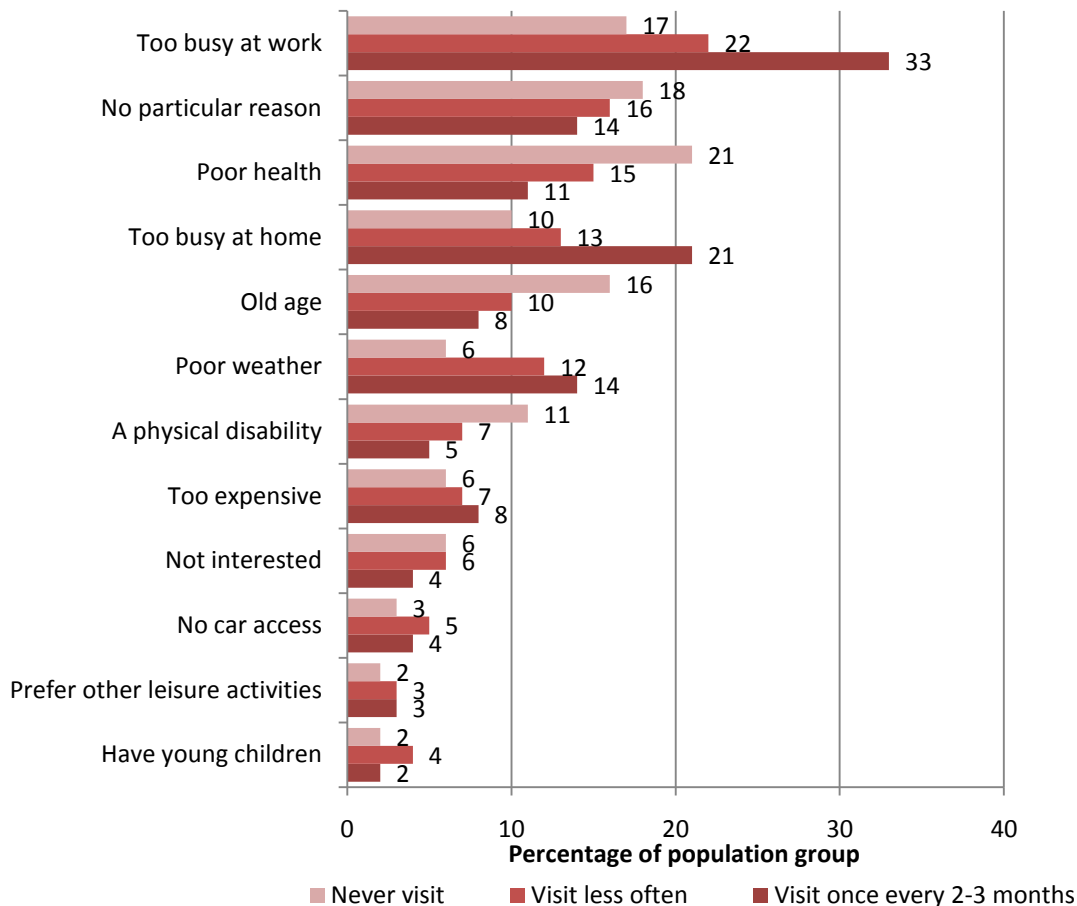
**Table 6-3** Outcomes of visits to the natural environment by place visited and visit motivations (% agreeing strongly with each statement)  
*E1 Thinking of this visit, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Base: Random visits, quarterly questions 2012/13 N=1,328)*

	I enjoyed it	It made me feel calm and relaxed	It made me feel refreshed and revitalised	I took time to appreciate surroundings	I felt close to nature	I learned something about the natural world
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>All visits</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Specific type of place visited</b>						
Beach	50	25	31	25	23	5
Other coastline	55	49	48	28	18	12
Country Park	43	32	35	18	27	3
Farmland	63	32	28	30	29	12
Mountain or moorland	85	65	52	62	46	23
Other open space in countryside	58	45	31	20	26	8
Other open space in town	45	27	27	23	12	5
Park in town	37	26	22	20	11	5
Path, cycleway or bridleway	46	38	33	22	21	6
Children's playground	49	44	24	24	37	6
Playing field/other recreation area	42	26	29	22	19	4
River lake or canal	49	28	31	28	25	5
Village	37	19	16	18	12	3
Woodland/forest	69	37	38	36	29	10
<b>Visit motivation*</b>						
To exercise your dog	46	33	31	27	22	6
For health or exercise	49	20	32	25	22	8
To relax and unwind	57	42	33	32	26	12
For fresh air or to enjoy pleasant weather	54	44	34	34	27	10
To enjoy scenery	56	48	37	37	33	11

Note: \*Top 5 motivations shown

## Reasons for not visiting

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



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

Q18 Why have you not spent any/more of your time out of doors? (Base: Infrequent and non-participants, monthly questions 2012/13 N=908 visit once or twice every 2-3 months, N=901 visit less often, N=1,055 Non-participants)

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

- 6.21 Being too busy continues to be the barrier most often cited by infrequent participants. A third of those who take visits to the natural environment once every two or three months cited being busy at work as a barrier and 21 per cent felt restricted by being busy at home.
- 6.22 Amongst those who typically never visit the natural environment, issues relating to health and age continue to be given as the main constraints to taking more visits. Poor health was specifically mentioned as a barrier by 21 per cent of this group while 16 per cent mentioned old age. Also 18 per cent of those who never visit stated that they had 'no particular reason' for not visiting the outdoors.

**Table 6-4** Reasons for not visiting the natural environment more often by survey year (%)  
 Q18 Why have you not spent any/more of your time out of doors? (Base: Infrequent and non-participants, monthly questions 2009/10 N=3,121; 2010/11 N=2,889; 2011/12 N=2,742 2012/13 N=2,864)

	Reason for not spending more time out of doors			
	2009/10 %	2010/11 %	2011/12 %	2012/13 %
Too busy at work	27	24	26	24
Too busy at home	18	18	17	15
No particular reason	16	17	17	16
Poor health	14	15	14	16
Old age	12	12	11	12
Physical disability	8	8	8	8
Too expensive	4	3	6	7
Bad/poor weather	8	8	5	11↑
Not interested	6	6	5	5
No car access	3	3	3	4

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

- 6.23 As shown in Table 6-4, the proportion of infrequent visitors and non-participants mentioning most of the barriers has not varied significantly over the four survey years. However, cost as a barrier continued to increase (from four per cent to seven per cent between 2009/10 and 2012/13), while mentions of poor weather rose to 11 per cent in 2012/13 from just five per cent in the previous year.
- 6.24 As shown in Table 6-5, 51 per cent of those in the DE socio-economic group cited poor health, old age and/or a long-term illness or disability as a reason for not participating more often, while 24 per cent of those in the BAME population mentioned being busy at home.
- 6.25 When asked about the barriers to visiting, 30 per cent of men mentioned being too busy at work, a higher proportion than the 19 per cent of women who mentioned this reason. The higher proportion of men citing this barrier has been a consistent finding throughout all four years of the survey.
- 6.26 Conversely poor health or old age was mentioned as a barrier by 43 per cent of woman compared to just 27 per cent of men.
- 6.27 Comparing responses by age, a lack of interest or 'no particular reason' was provided as a response by 40 per cent of those aged 16 to 24 compared to 16 per cent of the population as a whole. In addition, 39 per cent of 25 to 44 year olds mentioned being busy at work compared to 24 per cent of the English adult population overall.



**Table 6-5** Reasons for not visiting the natural environment more often by demographics (row %) *Q18 Why have you not spent any/more of your time out of doors? (Base: Infrequent and non-participants, monthly questions 2012/13 N=2,864)*

	Reason for not spending more time out of doors			
	Too busy at home %	Too busy at work %	No particular reason or not interested %	Poor health, old age or physical disability %
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	14	30	23	27
Female	16	19	21	43
<b>Age</b>				
16-24	14	24	40	2
25-44	19	39	23	4
45-64	20	32	21	24
65+	7	2	14	87
<b>Socio-economic status</b>				
AB	17	31	18	33
C1	17	30	21	27
C2	14	27	24	22
DE	13	15	22	51
<b>Working status</b>				
Working ft/ pt	19	48	22	5
Retired	8	1	15	84
Still in education	15	15	47	1
Unemployed	18	3	26	31
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
BAME	24	36	23	10
White	13	21	21	42
<b>Long-term illness/ disability</b>				
Any	7	7	12	89
None	19	32	26	11
<b>Children in household</b>				
Any	25	33	21	6
None	12	22	22	43
<b>Urban/ rural</b>				
Urban	15	25	22	34
Town/fringe	11	16	22	58
Rural	14	20	17	42

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

# 7 Other engagement with the natural environment

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

## Headline results in this section

- In addition to visits to outdoor places, MENE records other ways that people enjoy and appreciate the natural environment by asking about participation in other activities such as gardening and watching nature programmes. Relaxing in the garden, choosing to walk through parks/ green spaces en-route to other places and gardening were the most frequently undertaken of these activities.
- Participation in these activities generally increased with age. Also, those in the AB socio-economic grouping, those living in the most affluent, those living in rural areas and those in paid employment were more likely than other people to have undertaken one or more of the activities asked about.
- A general appreciation of natural places was evident with 48 per cent of the population strongly agreeing that it is important to have green spaces close to where they live and 43 strongly agreeing that they are glad that natural places exist even if they never visit them.
- Having green spaces close to home and spending time outdoors tends to be seen as more important for older people, retired people, those in the AB socio-economic group, and those of a White background.
- There is a correlation between how frequently people visit the natural environment and their likelihood to appreciate it and be concerned about environmental damage. Frequency of visit taking is also correlated to frequency of participation in pro-environmental behaviours such as recycling and preferring to buy seasonal and locally grown food. These results are consistent with those recorded during previous survey years.
- Respondents were also asked about the extent to which they were willing or able to change their current behaviour to address environmental concerns. Over the past four years, the proportion of the population unwilling to change their lifestyle has increased from 26 per cent to 32 per cent. 15 per cent of the population expressed an intention to make changes to their lifestyle in 2012/13, with younger members of the population most likely to indicate a willingness to alter their lifestyle.
- In terms of pro-environmental behaviours, 78 per cent of the population said that they usually recycled items rather than throwing them away, while 43 per cent chose to walk or cycle instead of using a car. Furthermore, 39 per cent of people stated that they usually bought seasonal or locally grown food<sup>19</sup>.

## Other activities involving the natural environment

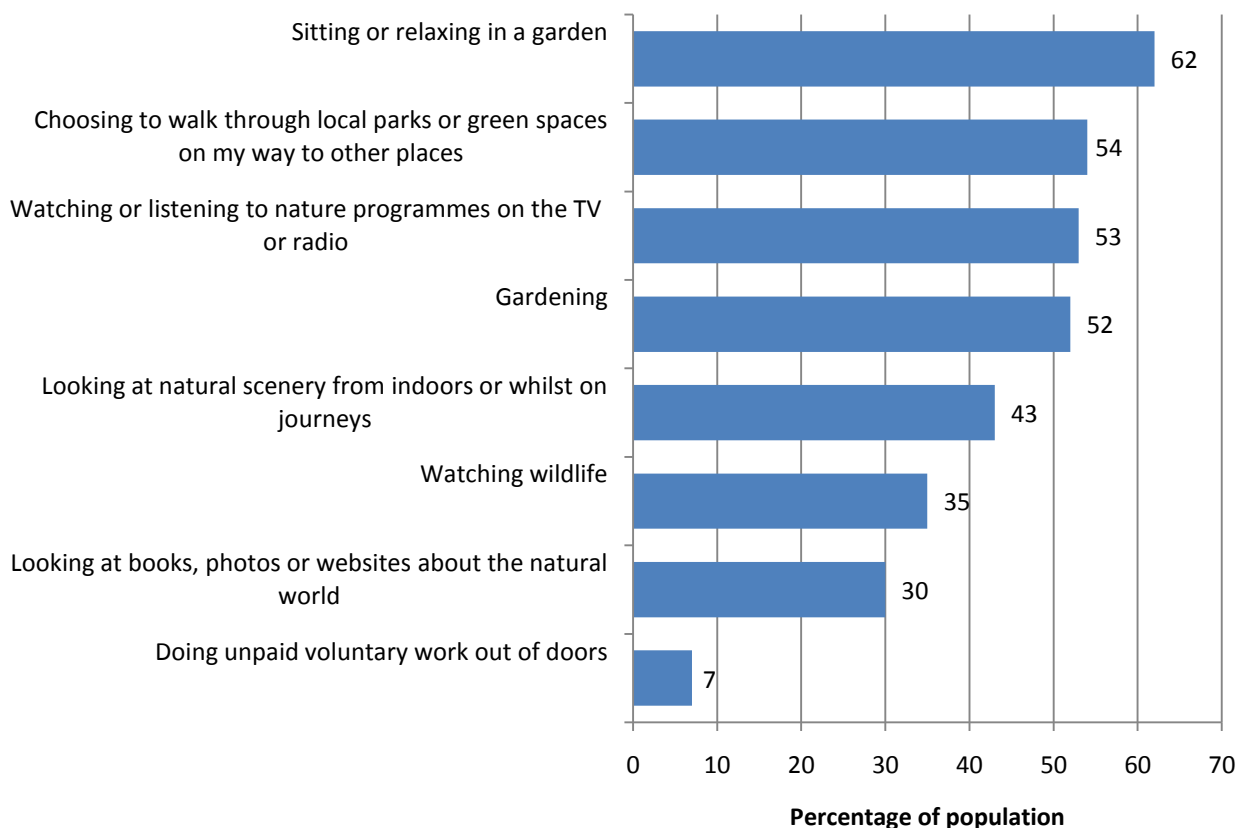
- 7.2 Overall, 94 per cent of the population undertook one or more of the activities shown in Figure 7-1, equal to the proportion recorded in 2011/12.
- 7.3 Sitting or relaxing in a garden was undertaken by 62 per cent of the population, while 54 per cent walked through local parks or green spaces on their way to another destination, and 52

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<sup>19</sup> See Figure 7-5 for the statement wording used for this question

per cent took part in gardening. These figures have not varied significantly over the survey years.

7.4 Many people also chose indirect or passive ways of enjoying the natural environment. In total 53 per cent listened to a nature programme on the radio or watched one on television, while 43 per cent looked at natural scenery from the indoors or on a journey. In addition, 35 per cent watched wildlife and 30 per cent looked at books, photos or websites relating to the natural world.



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

*E3 Which of the following activities involving the natural environment do you take part in? (Base: All respondents, quarterly questions 2012/13 N=3,528)*

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

7.5 Participation in any of the activities asked about in Figure 7-1 generally increased with age. 63 per cent of those aged 55 and over watch or listen to nature programmes compared to 41 per cent of those aged 16 to 34. Likewise, those aged 55 and over were more likely to sit or relax in the garden - 66 per cent compared to 56 per cent of 16-34 year olds.

7.6 Members of the BAME population were less likely than the rest of the population to take part in any of these activities. Here, 42 per cent of those in the BAME population indicated that they sit or relax in the garden compared to 65 per cent of those of White ethnicity. Similarly a smaller proportion took part in gardening - 32 per cent of the BAME population compared to 56 per cent of those of White ethnicity.

7.7 In total 97 per cent of those in the AB socio-economic groups participated in one or more of the activities shown in Figure 7-1 compared to 90 per cent of those in the DE socio-economic groups.

7.8 Those living in the least deprived areas of England were also more likely than those living in the most deprived areas to have taken part in any of these activities. For example, 73 per

cent of those in the least deprived areas indicated that they took part in sitting or relaxing in the garden compared to 51 per cent of those living in the most deprived areas. Likewise, 66 per cent of those living in the least deprived areas took part in gardening compared to 36 per cent of residents of the most deprived areas in England.

- 7.9 Differences were also recorded by working status. With 59 per cent of people who were in paid employment choosing to walk through local parks and green spaces on their way to other places, a larger proportion than recorded amongst people who were retired or not in employment. This could include walking to work or other routine journeys taken on foot.
- 7.10 On the other hand, reflecting some of the differences seen by age, retired people were more likely than those working full time to undertake other activities – most notably 65 per cent took part in gardening and 65 per cent in sitting or relaxing in the garden.
- 7.11 As shown in Table 7-1 the groups least likely to be engaged with the natural environment in any way included those aged 16 to 24, members of the DE socio-economic group, those living in the most deprived areas and members of the BAME population.

**Table 7-1** Participation in other activities involving the natural environment by age, socio-economic status, ethnicity, disability, Index of Multiple Deprivation, children in household (%)  
*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 2012/13 N=3,528)*

	Percentage of population (%)			
	2009/10 %	2010/11 %	2011/12 %	2012/13 %
<b>Age</b>				
16-24	84	84	89	89
25-44	94	92	94	94
45-64	96	96	96	95
65+	95	95	94	95
<b>Socio-economic group</b>				
AB	98	96	98	97
C1	95	94	94	94
C2	92	93	94	94
DE	89	88	90	90
<b>Working status</b>				
Full/ part-time	94	94	95	94
Retired	95	95	95	95
Still in education	83	81	88	91
Unemployed	91	87	89	92
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
White	94	95	95	95
BAME	88	79	88	87
<b>Long-term illness/ disability</b>				
Any	94	93	92	93
None	93	92	94	94
<b>Index of multiple deprivation</b>				
Top 10%	98	96	98	96
Mid 11% to 89%	93	93	94	94
Bottom 10%	90	84	89	90
<b>Children in household</b>				
Any children in household	94	93	94	94
No children in household	93	92	95	94

7.12 As shown in Table 7-2, those who never visited the natural environment were also less likely than frequent visitors to undertake other activities.

**Table 7-2** Other activities involving the natural environment by frequency of participation in visits (column %)

*E3 Which of the following activities involving the natural environment do you take part in? Please choose everything you do, both regularly and occasionally. (Base: All respondents, quarterly questions 2009/10 N=3,549; 2010/11 N=3,568; 2011/12 N=3,544; 2012/13 N=3,528)*

	Frequency of natural environment visits		
	Frequent %	Infrequent %	Non Participants %
Any undertaken	97	94	88
Sitting or relaxing in a garden	68	58	43
Choosing to walk through local parks or green spaces on my way to other places	67	44	21
Gardening	58	48	37
Watching or listening to nature programmes on the TV or radio	57	49	42
Looking at natural scenery from indoors whilst on journeys	48	40	23
Watching wildlife (including bird watching)	38	33	22
Looking at books, photos or websites about the natural world	34	27	18
Doing unpaid voluntary work out of doors	9	6	3

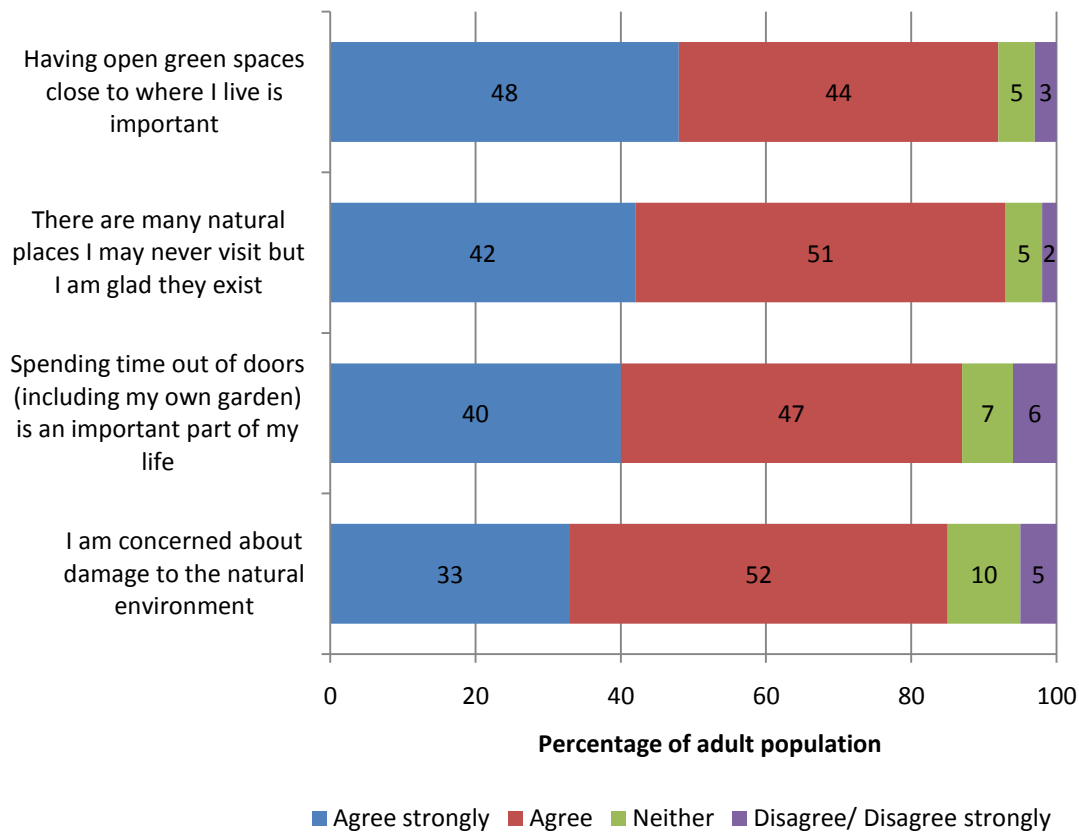
7.13 Only two per cent of the English adult population indicated that they never visited the natural environment and that they had also not undertaken any of the other forms of engagement with the natural environment featured in Table 7-2. This is similar to the proportion recorded in previous years.

## Attitudes to the natural environment

7.14 To provide further insight, respondents were presented with a series of statements which were designed to elicit their general attitudes towards the environment and its relative importance in their lives. For each statement, a five-point scale from 'agree strongly' to 'disagree strongly' was used. In Figure 7-2 the 'disagree' and 'disagree strongly' categories have been combined because of the relatively small proportions selecting these options.

7.15 The strongest level of agreement was with the statement relating to the importance of close to home green spaces with 48 per cent of the population agreeing strongly.

7.16 A general appreciation of natural places was evident with 42 per cent of the population agreeing strongly that, while they may never visit them, they are glad that natural places exist.

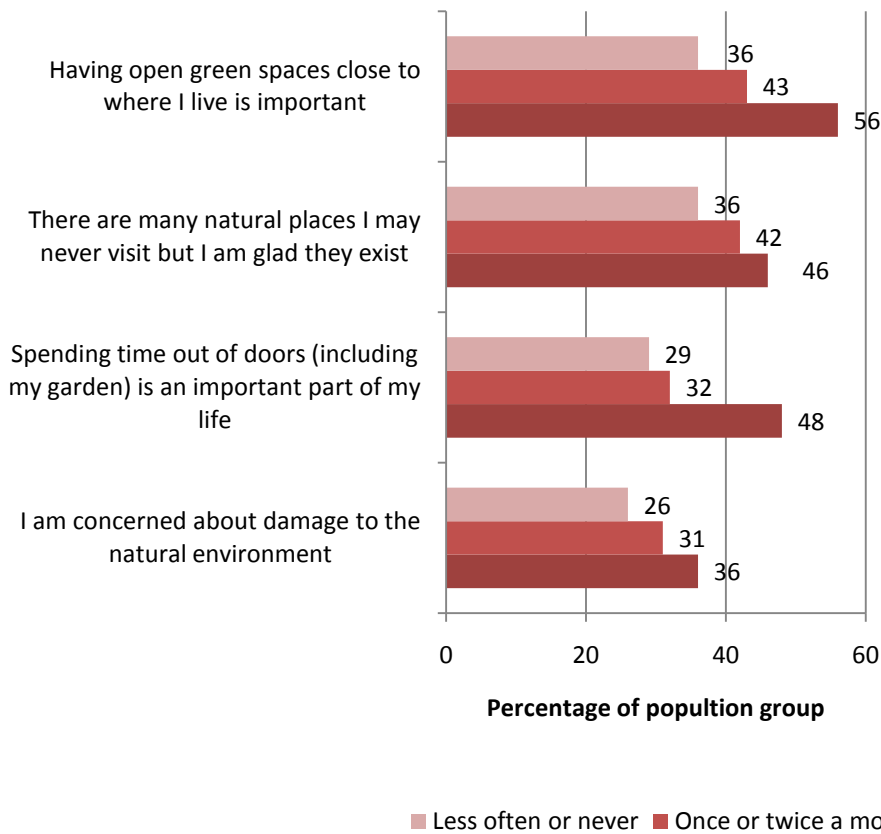


**Figure 7-2** Attitudes to the natural environment (%)

*E2 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Base: All respondents, quarterly questions 2012/13 N=3,528)*

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

- 7.17 In total 85 per cent of the population agreed that they were concerned about damage to the natural environment. However as in previous years the proportion agreeing *strongly*, 33 per cent, was lower than for any of the other statements.
- 7.18 Strong agreement with all of the statements has consistently been higher amongst older age groups, those in higher socio-economic groups, those living in the most affluent areas of England and amongst those with a White ethnic background.
- 7.19 In addition, as shown in Figure 7-3, the more often a person visited the natural environment, the more likely they were to express agreement with the various statements. In particular, 48 per cent of those who visited the outdoors at least once a week agreed strongly that spending time out of doors is an important part of their life and 56 per cent agreed strongly that having green spaces close to where they live is important.



**Figure 7-3** 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 2012/13 N=3,528)*

7.20 When asked about the extent to which they were willing or able to change their current behaviour to address environmental concerns (Table 7-3). 24 per cent of respondents felt that it would be difficult for them to do more to protect the environment, while 32 per cent indicated that they liked their lifestyle and were unwilling to change. Only 15 per cent of the population expressed an intention to make changes to their lifestyle.

Notably since the 2009/10 survey, the proportion of the population unwilling to change their lifestyle has increased significantly from 26 per cent to 32 per cent.



**Table 7-3** Changing lifestyle to protect the natural environment (%)

E5. Which of these statements best describes your intentions? (Base: All respondents, quarterly questions 2009/10 N=3,549; 2010/11 N=3,586; 2011/12 N=3,544; 2012/13 N=3,528)

	Percentage of population (%)			
	2009/10 %	2010/11 %	2011/12 %	2012/13 %
I intend to make changes to my lifestyle	18	16	18	15↓
I'd make changes to my lifestyle if I knew other people were willing to make changes	6	4↓	4	4
I'd like to make changes to my lifestyle but it's too difficult	8	7	7	7
I'd like to make changes to my lifestyle but I don't know what to do	6	7	7	6
I already do a lot to protect the environment so it would be difficult to do more	26	25	23	24
I like my lifestyle the way it is and not likely to change it	26	29	32	32

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

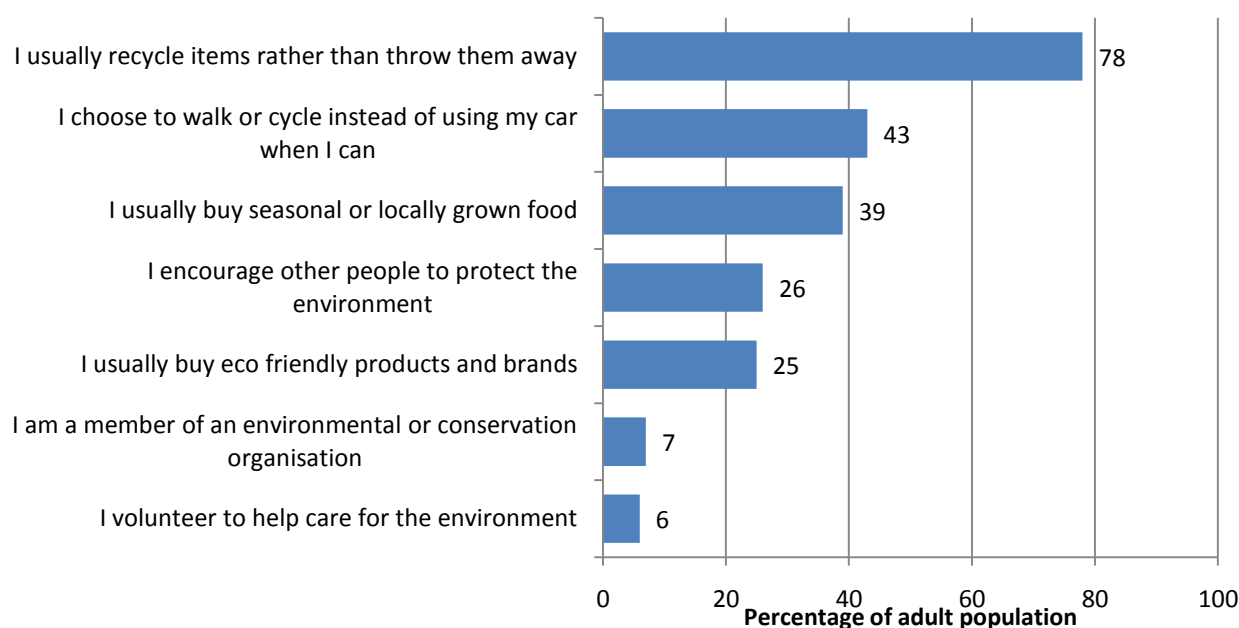
- 7.21 The results presented in Table 7-4 indicate that older people are more likely than those in younger age groups to believe that they behave in the best interests of the environment and could not do more. For instance, 35 per cent of people aged 65 and over believe they are doing as much as they can for the environment, compared to just 12 per cent of those aged 16 to 34. Also 21 per cent of respondents aged below 35 indicated that they intended to make changes to their lifestyle to protect the environment compared to just four per cent of those aged 65 and over.
- 7.22 In terms of differences relating to ethnicity, 23 per cent of the BAME population intend to make changes to their lifestyle compared to just 14 per cent of the rest of the population - who are more likely to indicate that they already do enough for the environment. These findings are consistent with those recorded in previous years.
- 7.23 Intention to make lifestyle changes also varies by socio-economic grouping. When asked about their intention to make changes to their lifestyle to protect the environment, 17 per cent of those in the AB socio-economic groupings responded that they would, compared to 11 per cent of those in the DE groupings.

**Table 7-4** Future intentions by age, socio-economic status, working status, ethnicity, long term illness/disability and rural/urban place of residence (row %)  
*E5. Which of these statements best describes your intentions? (Base: All respondents, quarterly questions 2012/13 N=3,528)*

	I intend to make changes to protect the natural environment %	Would make changes if other people were willing to make changes %	Would like to make changes but don't know what to do or too difficult %	Already do a lot – would be difficult to do more %	Like lifestyle the way it is and not likely to change %	Don't know %
<b>Total</b>	15	4	13	24	32	10
<b>Age</b>						
16-24	21	5	17	12	31	13
25-44	21	5	17	21	25	11
45-64	14	5	12	25	35	8
65+	4	2	8	35	41	10
<b>Socio-economic group</b>						
AB	17	4	13	27	32	6
C1	18	4	16	24	28	10
C2	14	5	12	24	33	12
DE	11	5	14	20	36	14
<b>Working status</b>						
Full/ part-time	18	5	15	22	30	10
Retired	6	3	8	33	40	10
Still in education	25	6	17	13	28	12
Unemployed	18	5	18	21	27	12
<b>Ethnicity</b>						
BAME	23	5	17	14	29	12
White	14	4	13	26	33	10
<b>Long-term illness/ disability</b>						
Any	10	4	14	29	33	10
None	17	5	14	23	32	10
<b>Urban/ rural</b>						
Urban	16	5	14	23	32	10
Town/fringe	15	1	13	25	37	10
Rural	9	4	12	37	31	7

## Pro-environmental behaviours

7.24 The survey also investigated whether people claim to be actively involved in pro-environmental behaviours.



**Figure 7-4** Pro-environmental behaviours

*E4 Which of the following environment related activities do you do? (Base: All respondents, quarterly questions 2012/13 N=3,528)*

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

7.25 In total, 90 per cent of the population undertook one or more of the pro-environmental behaviours illustrated in Figure 7-4, a proportion that has not varied significantly since 2009/10.

7.26 78 per cent said that they usually recycled items rather than throwing them away, while 43 per cent chose to walk or cycle instead of using their car and 39 per cent of people stated that they usually bought seasonal or locally grown food. The proportions undertaking each of these activities have not varied significantly over the course of the survey.

7.27 As shown in Table 7-5, there is a correlation between the frequency of visit to the natural environment and pro-environmental behaviours, with frequent visitors significantly more likely to undertake these activities than non-participants.

**Table 7-5** Pro-environmental behaviours by frequency of natural environment visits (column %)  
*E4 Which of the following environment related activities do you do? (Base: All respondents, quarterly questions 2012/13 N=3,528)*

	Frequency of natural environment visits			
	Frequent %	Infrequent %	Non-participants %	All adults %
<b>Any undertaken</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>90</b>
Usually recycle items rather than throw them away	82	76	60	78
Choose to walk or cycle instead of using my car when I can	53	35	20	43
Usually buy seasonal or locally grown food	45	34	26	39
Encourage other people to protect the environment	29	24	15	26
Usually buy eco-friendly products and brands	29	23	14	25
Member of an environmental or conservation organisation	9	6	4	7
Volunteer to help care for the environment	7	5	5	6

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

# Appendix 1 Summary of survey scope and methods

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## Survey scope

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

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

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

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

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

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

*However this **does not include**:*

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

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

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

## Survey method

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

an in-home survey method was the most appropriate and that the inclusion of a series of questions on a weekly basis in a face-to-face consumer omnibus survey would represent the most cost effective approach for a study.

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

The number of visits taken in each of the seven days and key details of these visits (type of place visited, duration of visit, activities undertaken) are recorded<sup>20</sup>. One of the visits taken is then randomly selected and the respondent is asked to provide more details on this single visit including type of place visited, specific location visited, distance travelled, where the visit started from and modes of transport used.

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

## Fieldwork

Fieldwork for Year 1 of MENE commenced in March 2009 and ran until February 2010. Year 2 fieldwork continued immediately without any break, running from March 2010 to February 2011, Year 3 continued from March 2011 to February 2012 and Year 4 ran from March 2012 to February 2013.

During the 2012/13 survey period, 46,749 interviews were undertaken allowing the key details of 53,208 visits to be collected, and more detailed information from 18,185 visits to be gathered. As shown in Table A, similar sample sizes were achieved in each of the preceding years.

**Table A** Annual sample sizes

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Respondents	48,514	46,099	47,418	46,749
Visits	58,653	47,825	53,898	53,208
Selected visits	20,374	17,389	19,014	18,185

## Analysis

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

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<sup>20</sup> The number of visits a respondent could be asked about was capped at 10 to avoid excessively long interview durations. Over the course of the year, 1% of respondents reported taking more than this maximum number of visits. Weighting procedures have taken account of this maximum allowance - see technical report for further details.

## Presentation of results

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

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

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 2012 and February 2013 a total of 46,749 interviews were completed, and key details were collected for 53,208 visits, with additional details were collected on 18,185 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).

Dividing the sample size by the design effect provides the **effective sample size** which, for a complex survey design, is an estimate of the sample size that would have been required to obtain the same level of precision in an SRS. In MENE the estimated effective sample size for respondent based results following the fourth year of interviewing is 22,837- 49 per cent of the actual achieved sample.

The table also includes the **design factor** which is an inflation factor for the standard errors obtained using a complex survey design. The design factor is calculated as the square root of the design effect. In Year Four the design factor at the all respondent level of 1.43 indicates that standard errors for the 12 months' data are 1.43 times as large as they would have been had the design been an SRS.

**Table B** Sample design effect and design factor

	Total sample	Design effect	Design factor	Effective sample
Respondent based results	46,749 respondents	2.05	1.43	22,837 respondents
All visit based results	53,208 visits	2.05	1.43	26,020 visits
Selected visit based results	18,185 visits	2.05	1.43	8,893 visits

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

For example with a Simple Random Sample, a result of 50 per cent with the total respondent sample of 46,749 would have a margin of error of +/-0.45 percentage points at the 95 per cent levels of confidence. Multiplying this value by 1.43 provides us with the margin of error when taking account of the MENE sample design i.e. +/-0.64 percentage points.

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

- 40.9 per cent of the population had visited the natural environment in the last seven days. This result ranges from 37.6 per cent to 44.3 per cent.
- 54.7 per cent of the population stated that they normally visited the natural environment at least once a week. This result ranges from 53.6 per cent to 56.2 per cent.

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



## **Respondent based results**

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

## **All visit based results**

- When the sample size is around 50,000 visits, the data will generally be accurate to around +/-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% at the 95% confidence level.
- When the sample size is around 10,000 visits, the data will generally be accurate to around +/-1.5% at the 95% confidence level.
- Where the sample size is around 5,000 visits, the data will generally be accurate to around +/-2.1% at the 95% confidence level.
- Where the sample size is around 1,000 visits, the data will generally be accurate to around +/-4.6% at the 95% confidence level.

## Estimates of total visits

One of the outputs of MENE is a series of estimates of the total number of visits taken by adults in England between March 2012 and February 2013. The table below illustrates the upper and lower confidence limits associated with these estimates.

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

	12 month visit estimate '000s visits	Lower confidence limit '000s visits	Upper confidence limit '000s visits
<b>All visits</b>	<b>2,849,081</b>	<b>2,791,653</b>	<b>2,906,509</b>
<b>By specific place visited</b>			
Playing field or other recreation area	206,731	186,869	226,593
Allotment or Community Garden	22,420	16,638	28,203
Another open space in a town or city	247,703	227,374	268,033
Another open space in the countryside	323,155	294,967	351,344
Beach	170,437	154,715	186,160
Children's Playground	85,516	77,084	93,948
Country Park	204,311	187,647	220,946
Farmland	244,610	220,124	269,097
Mountain, hill or moorland	73,009	62,170	83,844
Park in town or city	709,861	675,438	744,287
Path, cycleway or bridleways	448,256	414,988	481,525
River, lake or canal	251,803	230,389	273,217
Village	166,294	147,243	185,346
Woodland or forest	356,575	328,194	384,956
<b>By general place visited</b>			
Town or city	1,218,141	1,182,142	1,254,140
Seaside resort or town	185,341	173,844	196,838
Seaside coastline	98,967	89,750	108,184
Countryside	1,346,632	1,303,947	1,389,317

## 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 D** Expenditure during visits

	<b>12 month visit estimate</b>	<b>Lower confidence limit</b>	<b>Upper confidence limit</b>
Average spend per visit (excluding visits with no spend)	£27.23	£22.80	£31.66
Average spend per visit (including visits with no spend)	£7.40	£6.20	£8.60
Estimated total spend all visits over 12 month period	£21.1 billion	£17.6 billion	£24.5 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

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

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

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

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

Middle management executives in large organisations, with appropriate qualifications.

Principal officers in local government and civil service.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Casual workers and those without a regular income.

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