



VisitEngland's 2023 attractions survey shows slow growth in visitors with numbers remaining below 2019 level

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Overall visits to attractions in England continued to increase and were up 11% in 2023 compared to 2022 with the rate of growth slower than in the previous two years and with numbers down 28% on 2019 (see slide 7 of [full trends report](#)).

VisitEngland Director Andrew Stokes said:

"It's good to see continued growth in visits to our wonderful attractions and this survey underlines what we know from the industry, that there remains ground to be covered to get our sector back to pre-pandemic levels and that the cost-of-living crisis continues to bite.

"Our exceptional attractions remain vitally important to our tourism offer and it's no surprise international and domestic tourists are returning to our first-class museums and galleries and our world-beating castles and historic houses.

"With the summer holidays fast approaching I urge everyone to show your support, boost local economies through tourism and make magical memories in England's high quality and varied attractions."

Chief Executive of Historic England Duncan Wilson said:

"These statistics give us a window into the challenges that many of England's attractions are still facing, but it's encouraging to see that numbers of visits are slowly climbing. We know that visiting heritage attractions can do so much for our mental health and wellbeing, so we want to see visitor numbers continue to grow. Everyone deserves to access, and learn from, the places and spaces which helped to shape who we are."

The survey, which gathered information from 1,513 English attractions, shows that growth was fuelled by the return of overseas visitors and an increase in school trips in 2023. International visits to England's attractions were up 80% last year compared to 2022. Domestic visits to attractions in 2023 meanwhile saw a decrease of 2% on the previous year.

Most regions saw admissions grow between 4-8% with London the exception seeing growth of 26% largely driven by international visitors. Despite the high percentage increase the volume of attraction visits in London remains well below 2019 levels, at -22%.

The Tower of London was again in the top spot last year as the most visited 'paid for' attraction in England, with 2.8 million visitors, up 38% on 2022, although down 6% on 2019. Kew Gardens also retained second place with 2.0 million visitors, up 1% on 2022 and Chester Zoo came in third with 1.9 million, up 6% on 2022.

The British Museum also regained poll position in the list of 'free attractions' in England in 2023, with 5.8 million visitors, up 42% on 2022 although still down 7% on 2019. Second was the Natural History Museum with 5.7 million visitors, up 18% on 2022. The third most visited free attraction in England in 2023 was the Tate Modern with 4.7 million visitors, up 22% on 2022.

The highest levels of growth were seen in the 'Museum/Art Galleries' category, which suffered one of the sharpest declines in visitors because of COVID-19, with a 20% increase in visits in 2023 compared to 2022. 'Places of Worship' saw the second largest increase, up 19% on the previous year, and 'Visitor/Heritage Centres' showed recovery in visitor numbers last year, up 14% on 2022. 'Historic Houses/Castles' also saw good growth with a 13% increase in 2023 on the previous year.

Tourism is one of England's largest, most valuable industries, supporting 200,000+ businesses, employing about 2.6 million people and, in 2023, generating £70.2 billion in domestic visitor spending.