

Satisfaction with Public Transport in the UK

International Passenger Survey 2022

Published: 17th April 2026

VisitBritain Research



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Explore the quarterly IPS data in more detail on the [VisitBritain website](#) via the pivot tables (Excel) and interactive dashboards.



See additional analysis from the IPS survey covering [accommodation stayed in, states of residence, long term trends, subregional](#) and [towns](#) data.



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Background and methodology

VisitBritain sponsors a number of questions each year on the International Passenger Survey, to gain a greater understanding of the UK's international visitors. This study is conducted at dozens of ports of exit from the UK (air, sea, and rail). In 2022, VisitBritain asked about visitor satisfaction with public transport in the UK. The question wording was as follows:

1. *How satisfied were you with your visit to the UK for: Public Transport*

- ***1 - Very dissatisfied***
- ***2 - Quite dissatisfied***
- ***3 - Neither***
- ***4 - Quite satisfied***
- ***5 - Very satisfied***

Please note, 4% of the total sample were not asked the above question, and the question was not applicable to a further 29% of the sample, and therefore the analysis has been re-based to reflect the sample who answered the question. Regional data in this report refers to where visitors stayed overnight; and we have looked at those who stayed only in each region (so not staying in any other region). This gives a good proxy for satisfaction with public transport in a particular nation or region.

Important notice for interpreting data - 2022

2022 data in this report is based on the **estimates** from the International Passenger Survey (IPS) data released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on the morning of **26th May 2023**. Due to the impact of COVID-19, there are some notes to take into consideration when interpreting the results:

- The ONS were unable to restart interviewing at Eurotunnel (but continued at Eurostar) during January to June 2022 due to COVID-19 restrictions. The ONS has used passenger numbers to model the Eurotunnel data for Q1-Q2 2022 and restarted IPS interviews at all ports from July 2022. Therefore, the sponsored question was not asked to those travelling via the Eurotunnel for the first half of the year so results for this mode of transport only represent visits for the second half of the year.
- The visitor pattern for 2022 was different to a normal year as UK inbound travel was still recovering from the pandemic:
 - Visitor numbers were much lower than normal in Q1 but gradually returned throughout the year, although not to normal levels seen pre-COVID. This is likely to have skewed the data leading to higher satisfaction during the second half of the year.
 - Visits for different journey purposes also recovered at different rates. Holiday and VFR visits made up a similar proportion of visits when the former usually make up a larger proportion of the total (holiday visits were still well below 2019 numbers whilst VFR visits were just shy of 2019). Study and business visits were also down around two fifths vs 2019.
 - Whilst Europe and Long Haul in aggregate made up a similar proportion of visits compared to 2019, some markets/regions recovered at a quicker pace than others.
- Please refer to the [ONS website](#) for the official release and more information on IPS methodology and UK outbound travel.

Key insights

- 9 in 10 inbound visitors were satisfied with the UK's public transport
- Out of all journey purposes, holiday visitors had the highest satisfaction with public transport whilst on their trip to the UK.
- More than 8 in 10 in all selected markets were satisfied with public transport in the UK with the highest satisfaction coming from long haul markets India, the USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.
- Being 'very satisfied' with public transport increased with age from those aged 16+, whilst there were no significant differences by gender.
- Visitors staying in Scotland and London cited the highest satisfaction amongst the UK's nations and regions.



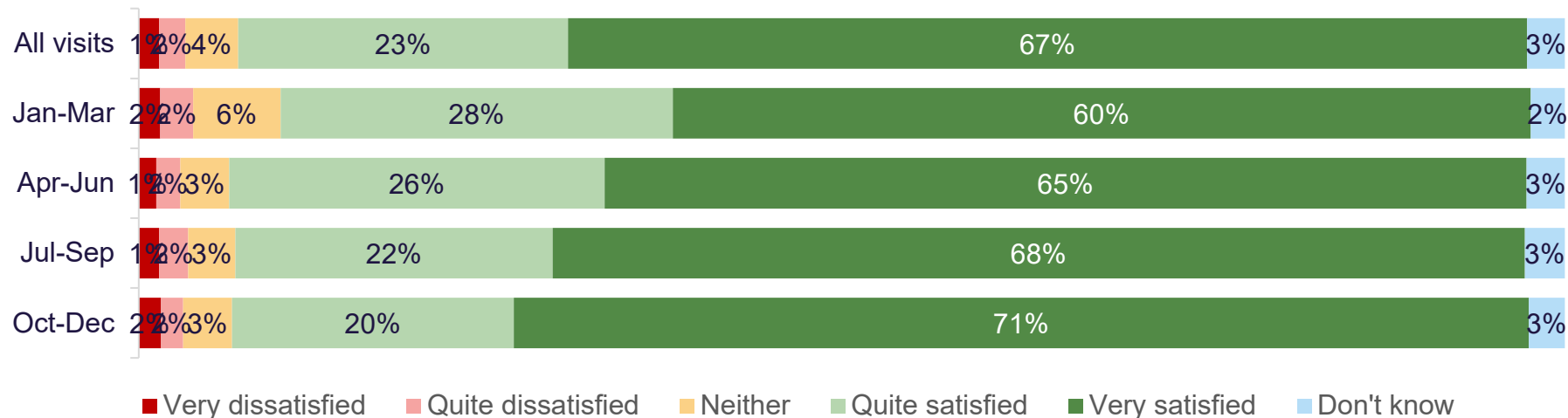
Overview of satisfaction with public transport in the UK



How satisfied were inbound visitors with public transport in the UK?

9 in 10 inbound visitors were satisfied with public transport in 2022

Satisfaction with public transport - % of visits, annual and by quarter



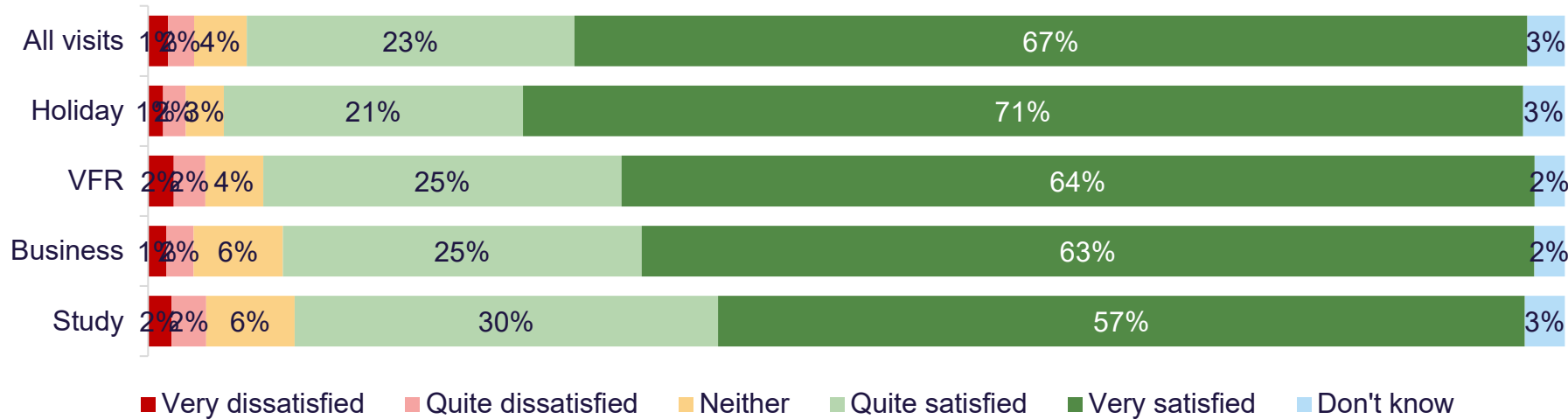
Top 2 box (very satisfied and quite satisfied)
90%
88%
91%
90%
91%

Across 2022, most inbound visitors to the UK were satisfied with the UK's public transport, with 90% saying they were very satisfied or quite satisfied. Visitors who visited from Apr-Dec were slightly more satisfied with public transport vs those visiting from Jan-Mar. When looking at the those who were very satisfied, there was more of a difference between quarters with 60% stating this in Q1 (Jan-Mar), increasing over the year to 71% in Q4 (Oct-Dec). Interviewing during Q1 and Q2 excluded those arriving by Eurotunnel due to COVID-19 restrictions which led to a reduced sample. This period was also unusual in terms of recovery from the pandemic and experience of public transport could have been different vs 'normal' experience pre-COVID or later on in the year.

How does satisfaction with public transport vary by journey purpose?

Holiday visitors had the highest satisfaction with public transport in the UK

Satisfaction with public transport - % of visits by journey purpose



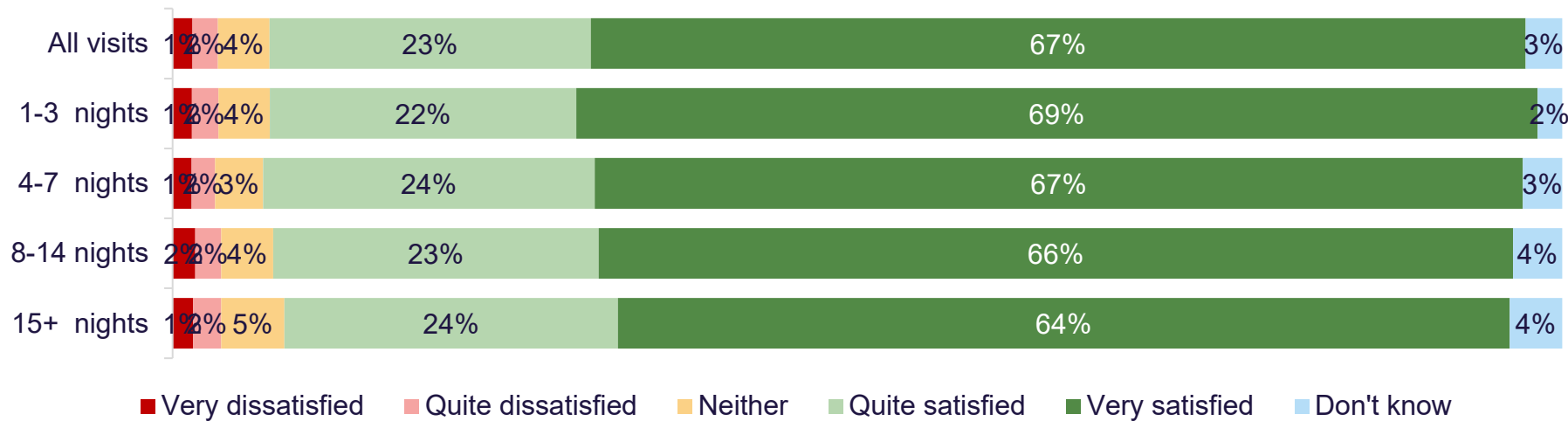
Top 2 box (very satisfied and quite satisfied)
90%
92%
90%
88%
87%

Holiday visitors were most likely to be satisfied with public transport in the UK (92%), followed by those visiting friends and relatives (90%). Business and study visitors had slightly lower satisfaction scores at 88% and 87% respectively and were also slightly more likely to feel neither satisfied or dissatisfied with public transport (both 6%). Study visitors tend to stay for longer and potentially had more interaction with public transport vs other journey purposes.

How does satisfaction with public transport vary by trip duration?

Visitors coming for shorter stays were slightly more likely to be satisfied with public transport

Satisfaction with public transport - % of visits by trip duration



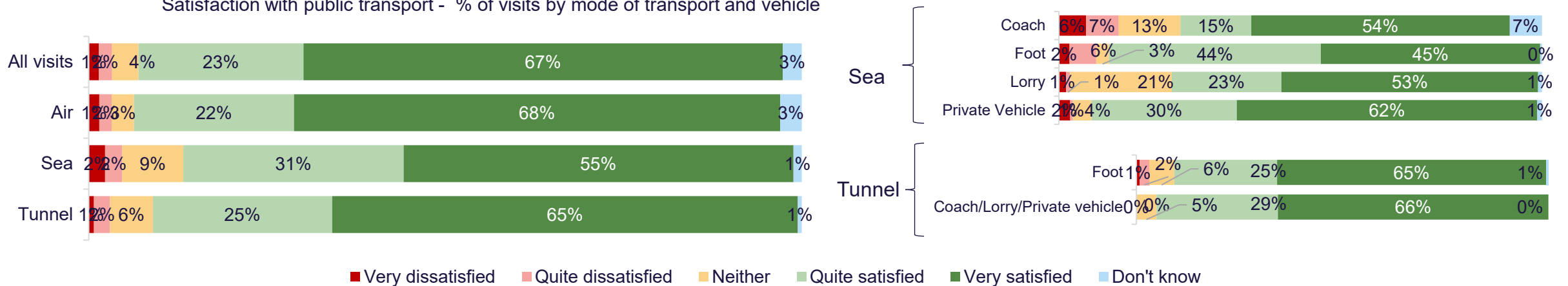
Top 2 box (Very satisfied and quite satisfied)
90%
91%
91%
89%
88%

Although satisfaction is high across the board, visitors coming for shorter stays of 1-7 nights tended to have slightly higher satisfaction with public transport (91%) vs those who stayed for 8+ nights (averaging at 89%).

How does satisfaction with public transport vary by mode of transport to the UK?

Visitors travelling to the UK by air and tunnel were most satisfied with public transport in the UK

Satisfaction with public transport - % of visits by mode of transport and vehicle

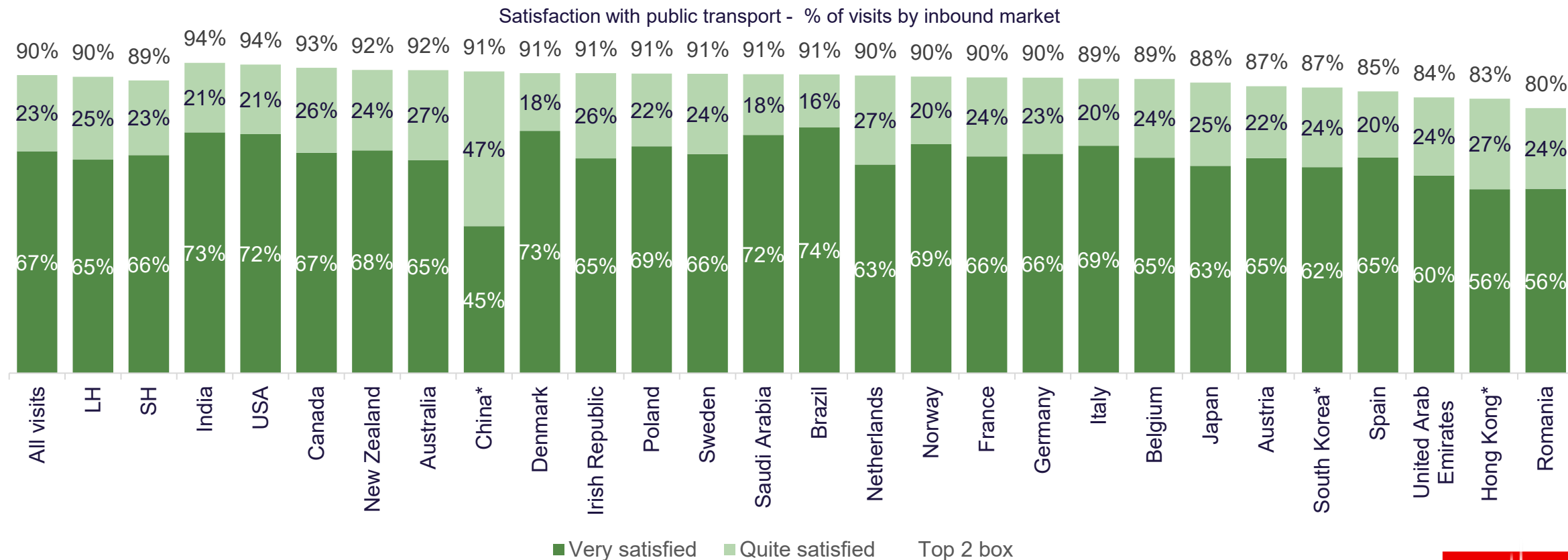


	Top 2 box (Very satisfied and quite satisfied)
All visits	90%
Air	91%
Sea	86%
Tunnel	90%

Visitors coming to the UK by air and tunnel were most likely to be satisfied with public transport in the UK (91% and 90%). Those travelling via the Eurotunnel* (by coach, lorry or private vehicle) were more likely to have higher satisfaction by those arriving by foot (Eurostar); 95% vs 90%. 86% of visitors coming to the UK by sea said they were satisfied with public transport with 9% also saying they did not feel either way. Looking at vehicle type for sea passengers, those travelling by private vehicle or foot had the highest satisfaction, followed by those arriving by lorry and coach. Please note, analysis is for satisfaction with public transport within the UK, rather than mode of transport to/from the UK.

How does satisfaction with public transport vary by inbound market?

More than 8 in 10 in all selected markets are satisfied with public transport in the UK. Long haul markets were slightly more likely to cite higher satisfaction with transport than short haul markets. The markets with the highest overall satisfaction were India, the USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. Those from Brazil, Denmark, India, USA and Saudi Arabia cited the highest proportion saying they were 'very satisfied' with the UK's public transport.

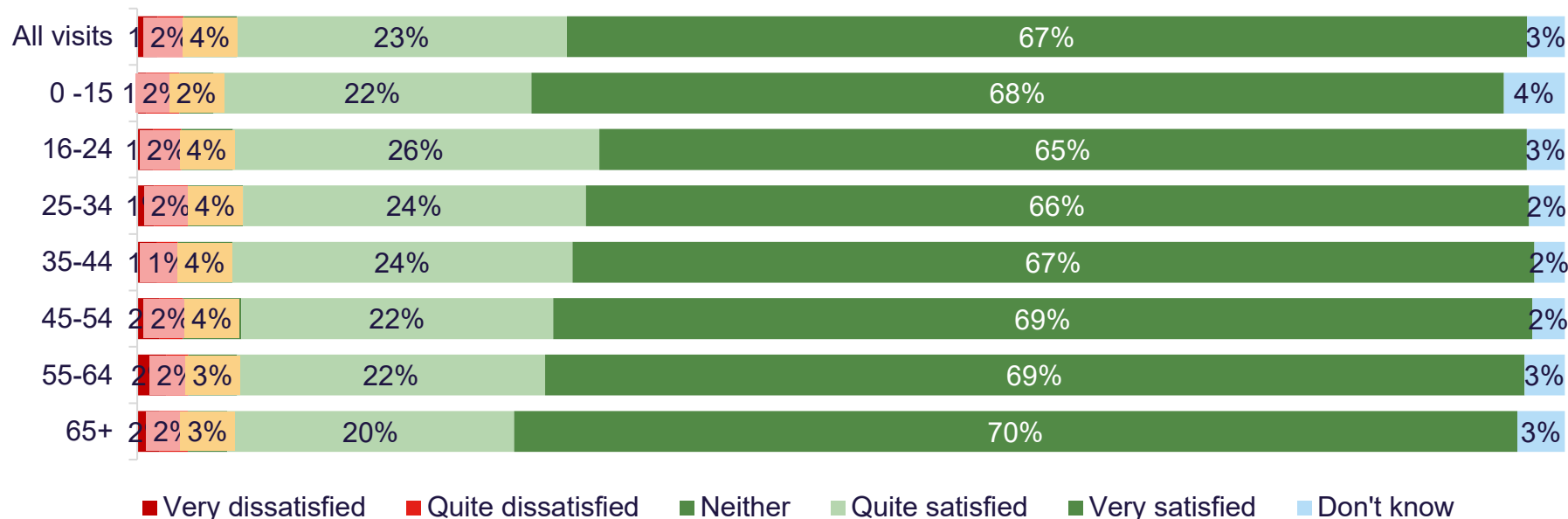


International Passenger Survey 2022 by the ONS/VisitBritain analysis. Base: visitors staying 1+ nights in the UK, excluding UK nationals
 *Sample below 100, indicative data only. Sample=26,146.

How does satisfaction with public transport vary by age and gender?

Satisfaction was high across all age groups but being 'very satisfied' increased with age from 16+

Satisfaction with public transport - % of visits by age group



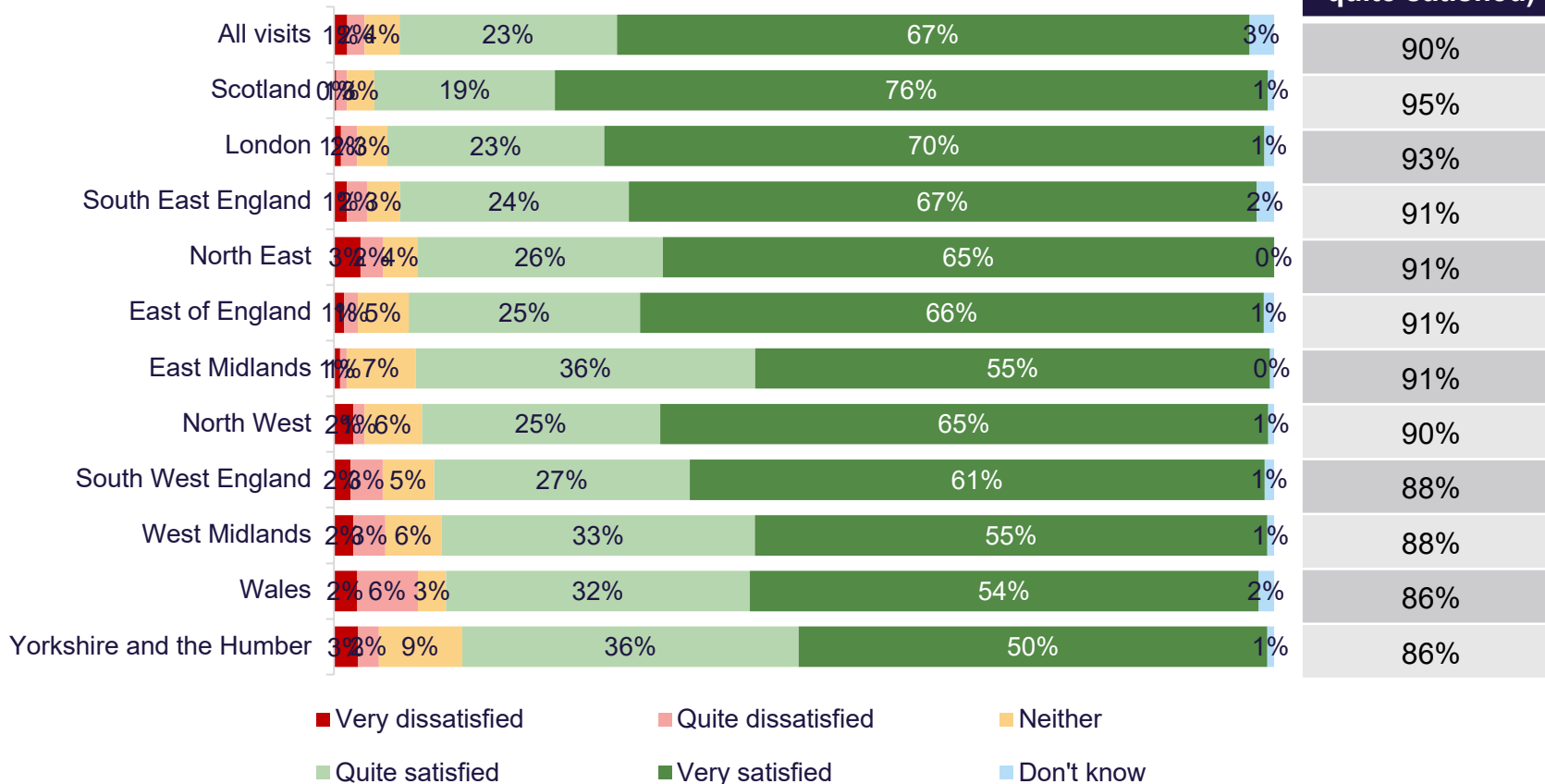
Top 2 box (Very satisfied and quite satisfied)
90%
90%
91%
90%
91%
90%
90%
90%

Satisfaction with public transport was similar across all age groups when looking at overall satisfaction. Apart from children aged 0-15 (who are interviewed by the accompanying adult), visitors who were 'very satisfied' with the UK's public transport increased with age. There was minimal difference when looking at satisfaction by gender (<1% for each option).

How does satisfaction vary by UK nation and region stayed in?

Visitors staying in Scotland and London cited the highest satisfaction with public transport

Satisfaction with public transport – % of visits by region stayed in



Those staying in **Scotland** cited the highest satisfaction with public transport at 95%, followed closely by those staying **London**, both of which have extensive public transport systems. Around 1 in 9 staying in the **South East, North East, East of England, East Midlands** and the **North West** were satisfied with public transport. The **South West, West Midlands, Wales** and **Yorkshire** had the lowest satisfaction (albeit still above 85%) indicating potential opportunities to enhance the travel experience. There was only a 1% difference in satisfaction between those who stayed in one region only vs more than one region.

International Passenger Survey 2022 by the ONS/VisitBritain analysis. Base: visitors staying 1+ nights in the UK, excluding UK nationals. Nations/regions refer to where visitors stayed overnight; and we have looked at those who stayed only in each region (so not staying in any other region). This gives a good proxy for satisfaction with public transport in the particular nation or region. Sample=26,146.

Further information



Sample size guidance

Overall sample	
26,146	

Quarter	Sample
Q1	4,526
Q2	7,536
Q3	6,932
Q4	7,152

Age	Sample
0-15	328
16-24	3,021
25-34	6,554
35-44	5,714
45-54	5,176
55-64	3,532
65+	1,790

Duration	Sample
1-3 nights	9,248
4-7 nights	9,118
8-14 nights	4,063
15+ nights	3,134

Mode	Sample
Air	22,662
Sea	764
Tunnel	2,720

Purpose	Sample
Holiday	11,572
VFR	8,663
Business	3,487
Study	362

Market	Sample
Australia	853
Austria	250
Belgium	491
Brazil	303
Canada	1,015
China*	45
Denmark	427
France	2,013
Germany	1,947
Hong Kong	97
India	499
Irish Republic	2,061
Italy	839
Japan	108
Netherlands	1,201
New Zealand	142
Norway	488

Market	Sample
Poland	698
Romania	300
Saudi Arabia	142
South Korea	62
Spain	1,328
Sweden	623
United Arab Emirates	239
USA	5,082

Nation/Region	Sample
East Midlands	266
East of England	780
London	13,642
North East	166
North West	1,213
Scotland	1,561
South East England	1,715
South West England	789
Wales	187
West Midlands	659
Yorkshire and the Humber	308

Sample Size
Figures for a number of countries or other breakdowns are based on small sample sizes (i.e. low numbers of this type of visitor were interviewed).
Danger! If sample size is less than 30 it will appear red - it is not recommended to use this data
Caution If sample size is between 30 and 100 it will appear amber - it is recommended to only use this data as indicative, it is not very reliable
OK If sample size is over 100 it will appear green - this is the recommended level of data to use

International Passenger Survey 2022 by the ONS/VisitBritain analysis. Base: visitors staying 1+ nights in the UK, excluding UK nationals. Nations/regions refer to where visitors stayed overnight; and we have looked at those who stayed only in each region (so not staying in any other region). This gives a good proxy for satisfaction with public transport in the particular nation or region.

Other data sources

VisitBritain publish a range of different data on the website covering inbound tourism performance and data for inbound travellers to the UK:

Tourism performance:

[UK](#) and [Nations and Regions](#) level data for inbound tourism performance.

[State of the Nation report](#): regularly monthly update providing a high-level snapshot of tourism in Britain

[Card spending to Britain](#): data from Visa provides regular insights on visitor spending in Britain, by origin, card type, merchant category and more

[Aviation data](#): explore our flight searches and air traffic data to the UK via monthly reports and interactive dashboard

[Short-term lets](#): monthly insights on overall supply of short-term rental properties across the UK as well as performance metrics

Additional IPS analysis can be found below on the:

[UK webpage](#): states of residence for select inbound markets, accommodation trends

[Regional webpage](#): county and subregional trends, county and subregional accommodation trends

[Towns webpage](#): see the number of visits to UK towns

[Activities webpage](#): see the types of activities inbound visitors are taking part in within the UK

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