

Visit Suffolk
Tourism Business Confidence Monitor

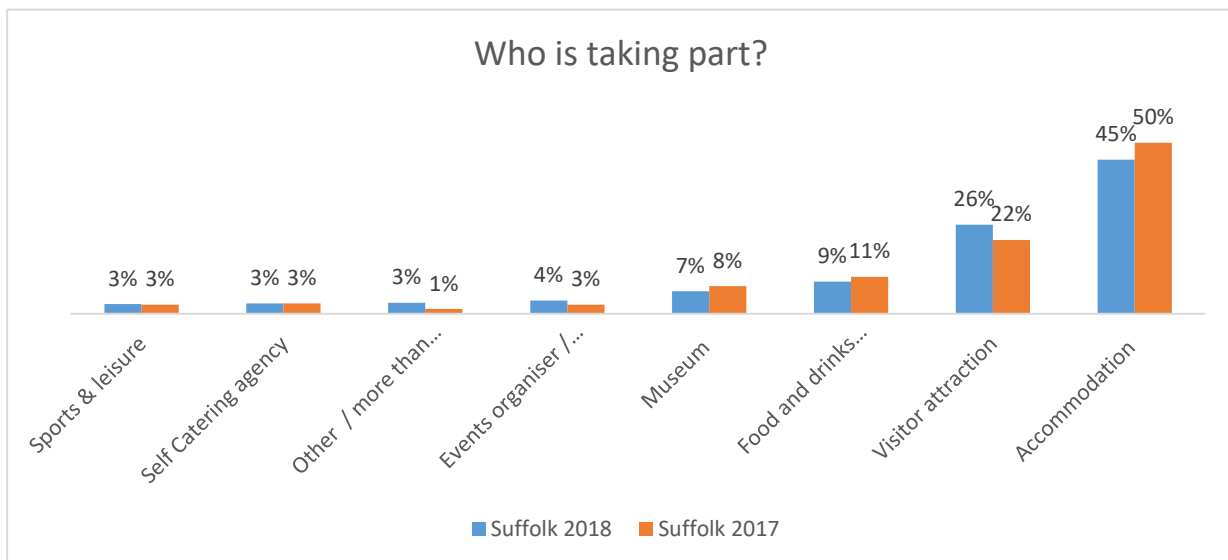


January 2019

Welcome

This business confidence monitor aims to provide the Suffolk tourism sector with an indication of recent business performance and an overview of 2018. Destination Research is commissioned by Visit Suffolk to conduct the survey, collate the results and publish this report. The sample size for this report is 108 businesses.

The results are based on an online survey conducted during December 2018. The survey was run concurrently with surveys for Visit Essex and Visit Norfolk. The combined regional sample for the three surveys is 333 businesses. This report covers performance from October Half Term and it provides an overall assessment of 2018. It also summarises topical views regarding the latest vote on the Brexit deal and the implications for the industry.



Summary

81%

were satisfied with their performance since October Half Term

57%

reported a positive performance over Christmas and New Year

50% reported an increase in visitors and 81% were satisfied with trade levels.

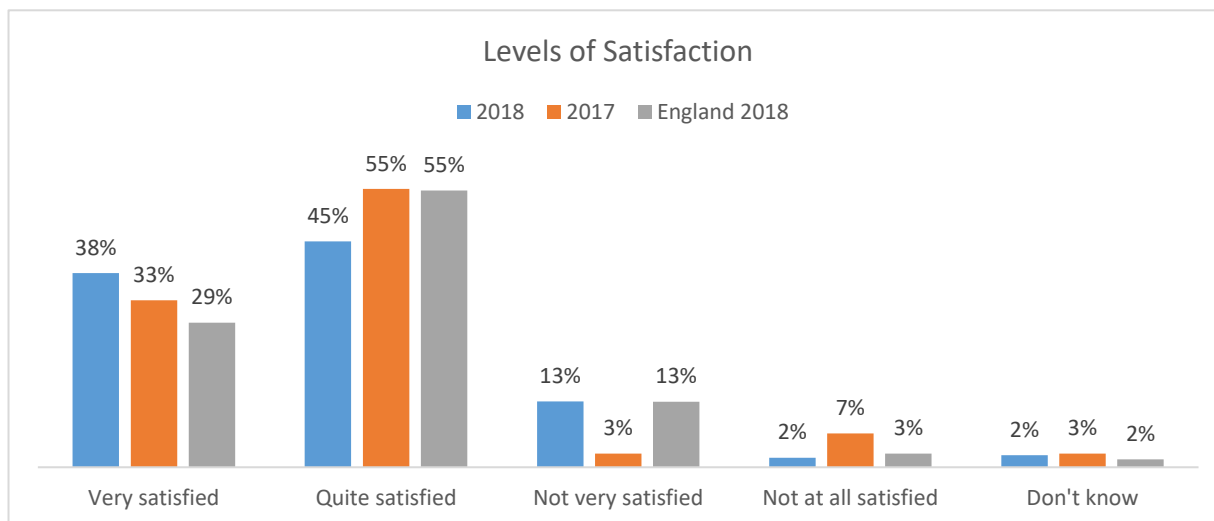
84% rated 2018's results as being at least as good as 2017. 20% said they were 'much better' than in 2017.

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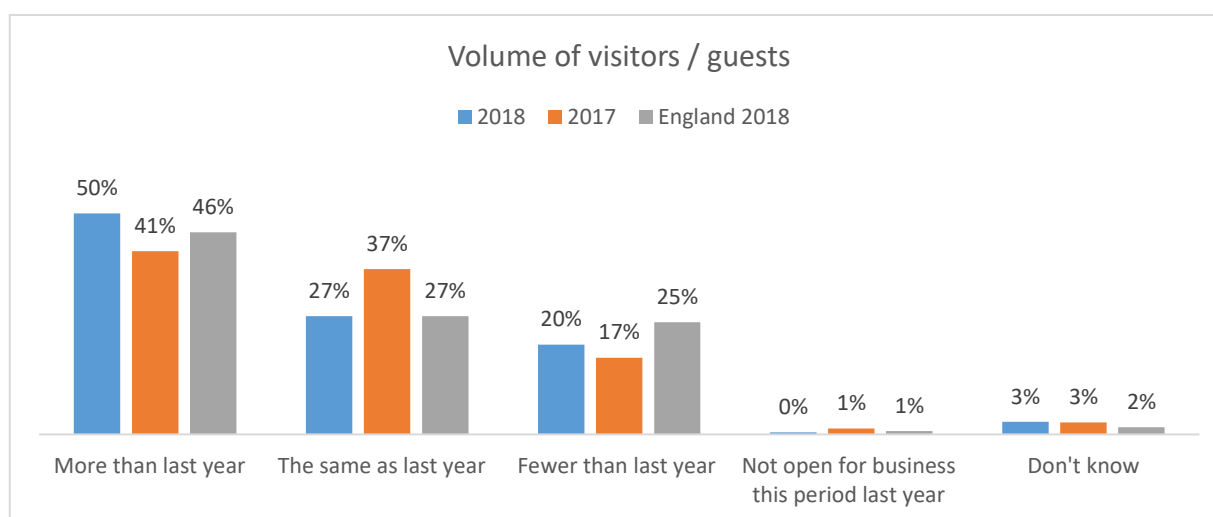
Recent past performance

Participants were asked to assess their performance for the final quarter of 2018. Almost two in five (38%) were 'very satisfied' with their recent performance, compared to 33% the previous year. The proportion of respondents who were 'quite satisfied' with their performance was lower than in 2017 (45% in 2018 compared to 55% in 2017). Satisfaction levels were slightly above the national average.



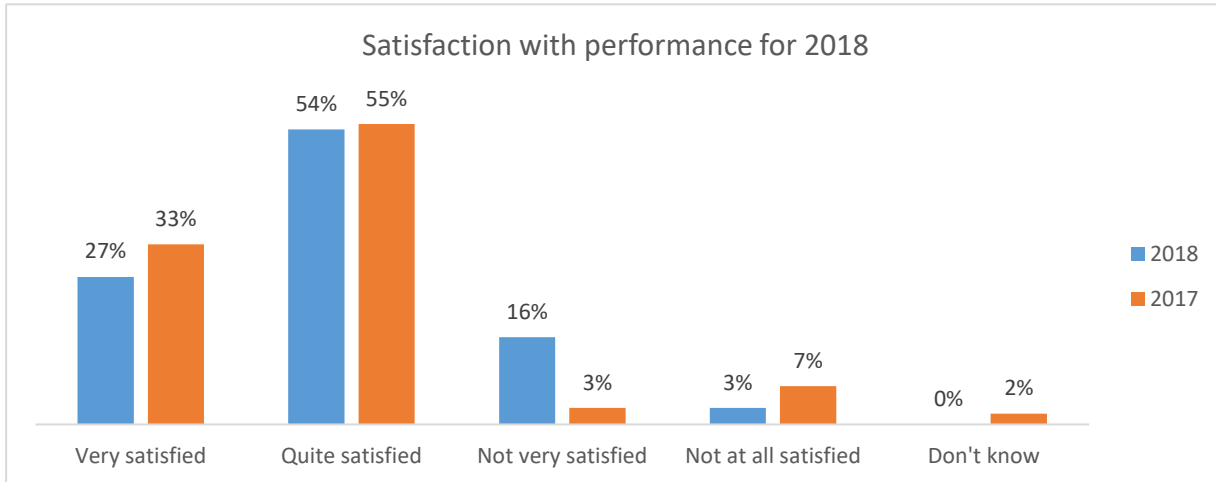
2018 Overview - Volume of visitors

Participants were asked to assess their performance for 2018 in terms of the volume of visitors. Half (50%) reported an increase in the volume of visitors / guests compared to the same period the previous year. A further 27% attracted 'the same volume of visitors' than in 2017. These results were better than the volumes achieved in 2017 and the national average.

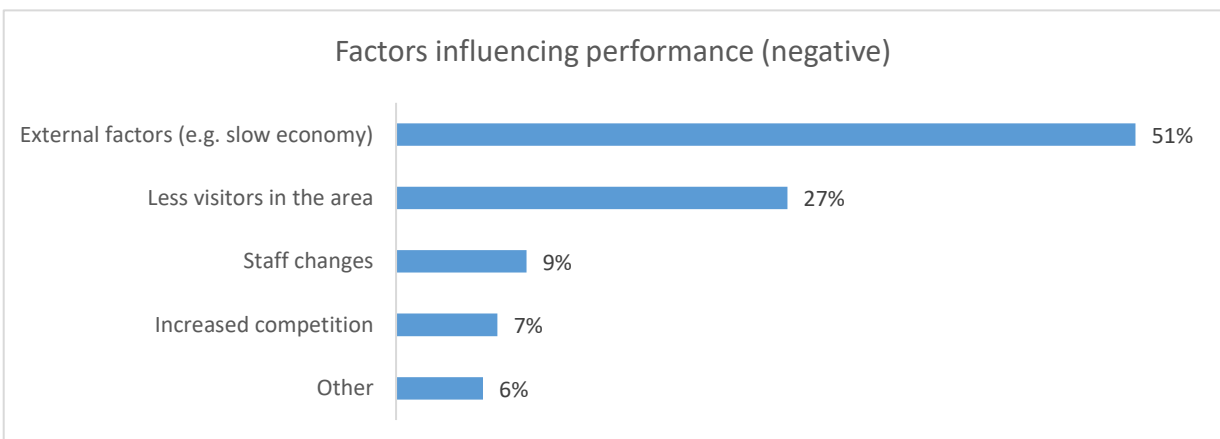
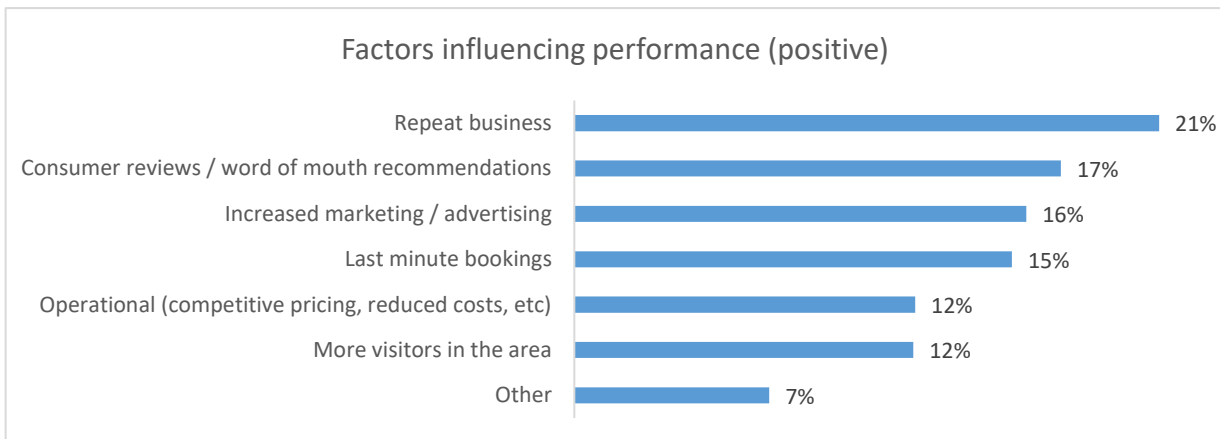


2018 Overview - Business performance

An assessment of the 2018 performance shows that 81% of respondents are either 'very satisfied' (27%) or 'quite satisfied' (54%) with their levels of trade over 2018. This is a bit below 2017 levels, when 33% of businesses said they were 'very satisfied' and a further 55% 'quite satisfied'. However, at the time 7% stated there were 'not satisfied at all' compared to only 3% in 2018.

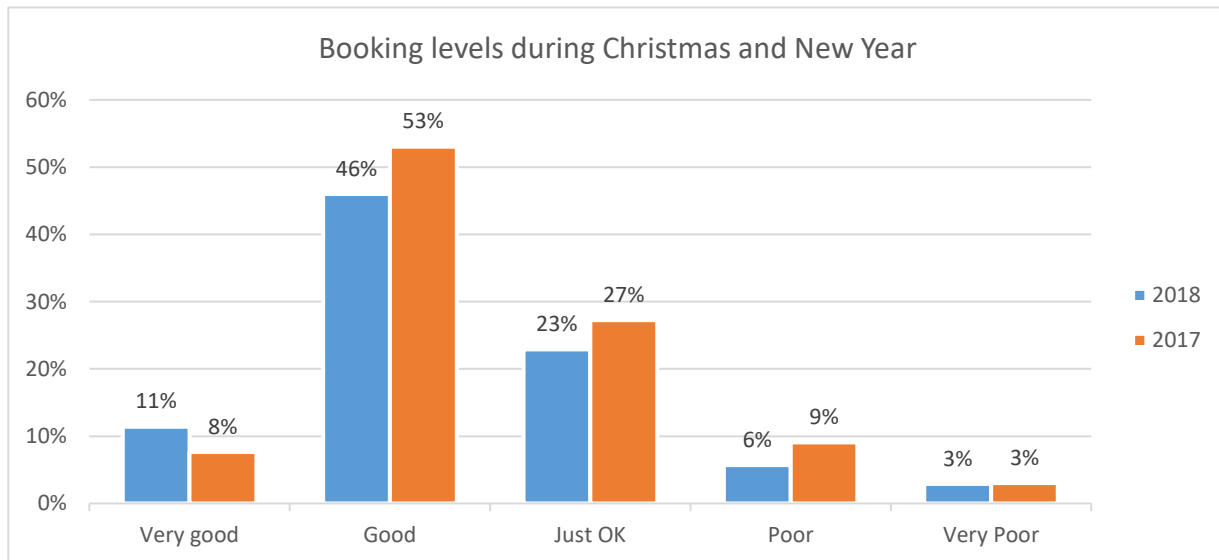


Repeat business, consumer reviews, increased marketing and last minute bookings were seen as the most influential factors for a positive performance during 2018. Those less satisfied with their 2018 performance quoted 'external' factors as a key influencer.



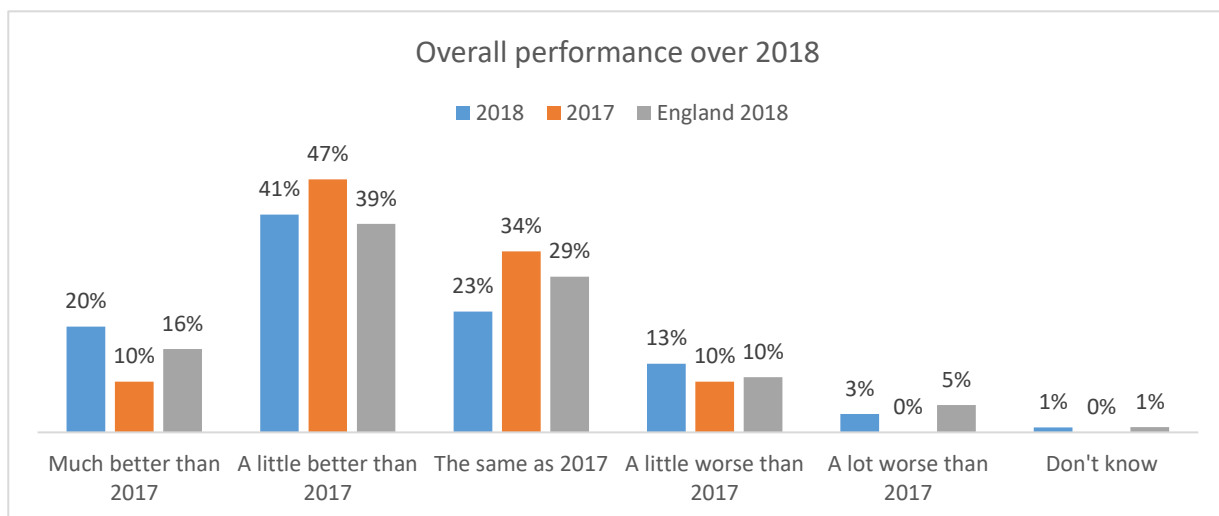
2018 Overview - Christmas and New Year Period

Almost three in five businesses (57%) reported 'good' (46%) or 'very good' (11%) booking levels over the Christmas and New Year period, slightly below the levels achieved in 2017.



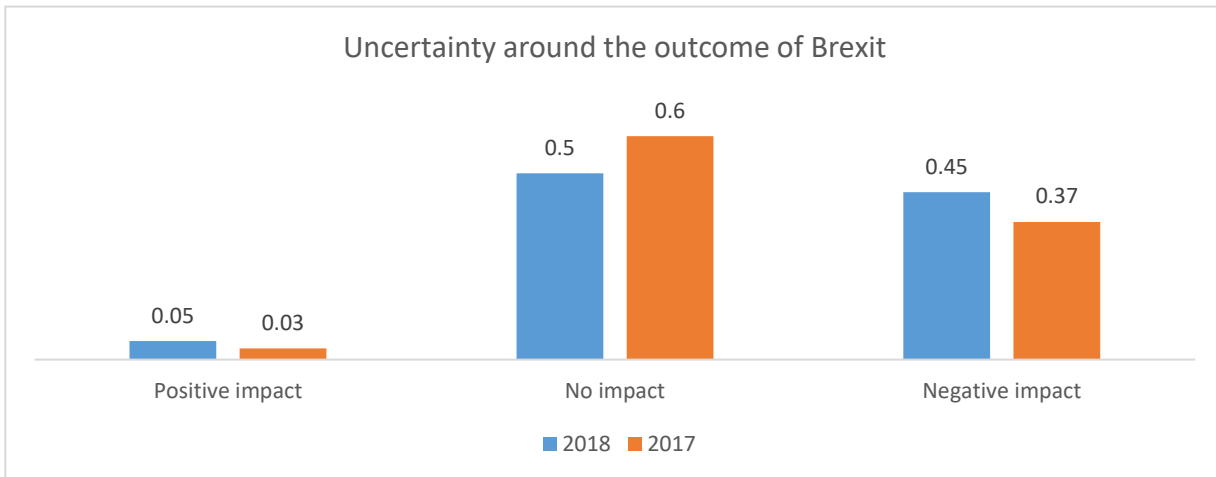
2018 Overview - Overall assessment

Taking everything into account, three in five respondents (61%) rated their 2018 performance as being a little better (41%) or much better (20%) than in 2017. These results are significantly more positive than the assessment made this time last year and above the national average.

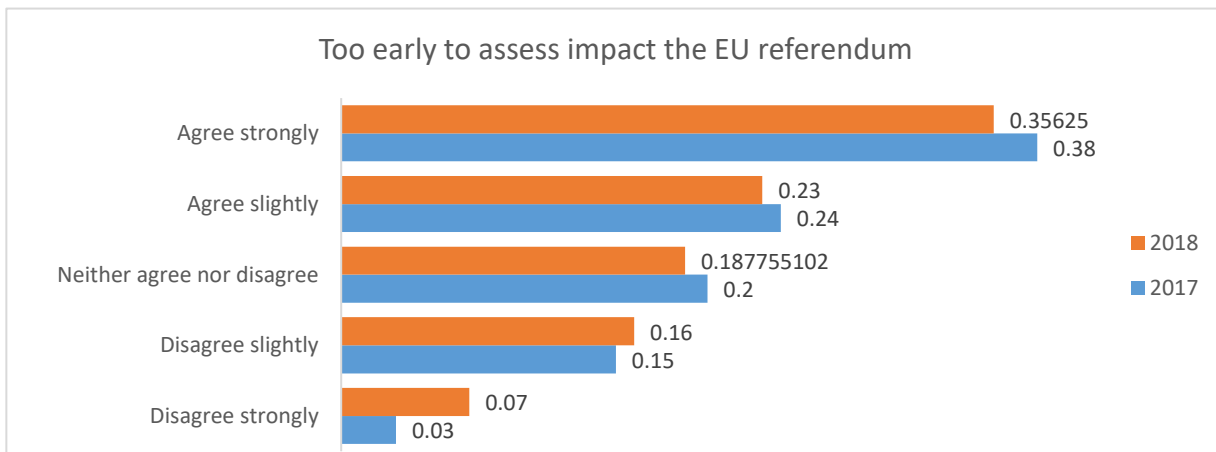


Topical Questions - Brexit

Our topical question focussed on the ongoing Brexit negotiations. We posed the same question already asked 12 months ago - *Do you think the delays in the Brexit negotiations will affect your business in the future?*. There has been a shift in responses with increases to the proportion of respondents who believe there will be a negative impact (45%, up from 37% a year ago) and those (a minority) who feel the impact will be positive (5%, up from 3% a year ago). The share of those who believe there will be no impact is more in line (5% difference) with those who predict a negative outcome, compared to a 23% percentage points difference a year ago.



Nonetheless, three in five agree strongly (36%) or slightly (23%) with the statement 'It is too early to say what impact the EU referendum will have on my business'. The proportion who disagree strongly with the statement have increased from 3% to 7% in twelve months.



In partnership with:

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