



Culture Beyond Covid

Heritage

February 2021



Culture Beyond Covid: Listening to visitors to adapt and thrive

- Culture Beyond Covid: A year long research programme across performing arts, visual arts and heritage audiences looking at the impact of Covid on people's lives and the role of arts, culture and heritage in their lives.
- 4 waves of research.
- Today looking at specifically heritage focused research which includes:
 1. CBC: Heritage survey with attenders to built and natural heritage
 2. Focus groups with heritage attenders

Funded by:



About the research

Online survey

- 559 responses across NI
- Heritage attenders
- November-December 2020
- Promoted on social media
- Sent directly to database of 5 organisations
- Survey in field before second lockdown kicked in late December

Focus groups

- 2 groups, heritage attenders
- February 2021
- Groups held during current lockdown and as vaccine is being rolled out

As you know:

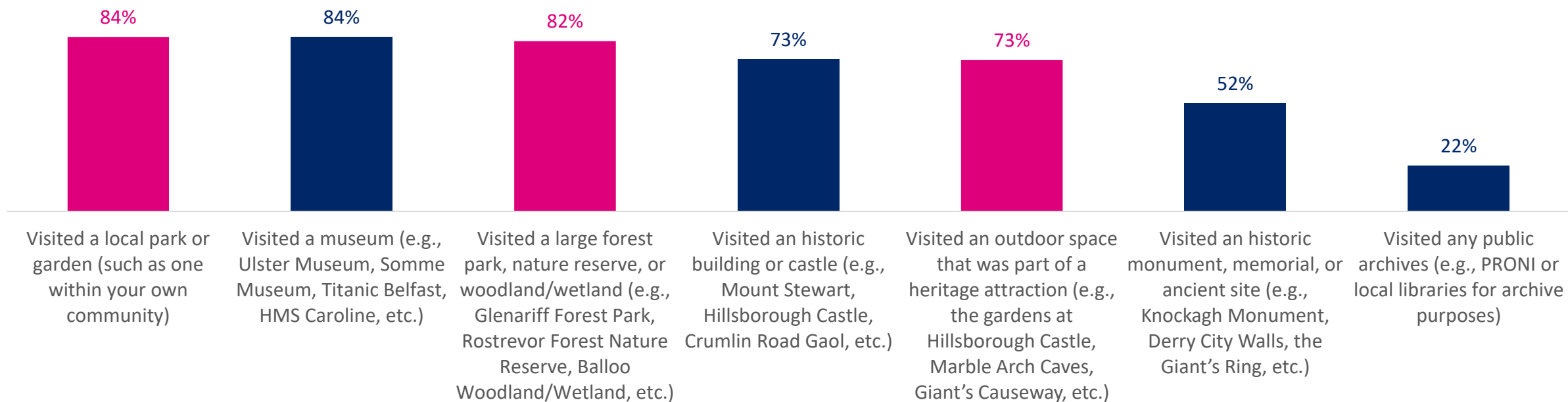
Built heritage – closed for much of the year

Natural heritage – mainly open but subject to rules on household mixing

What does heritage attending look like in
the **pre-Covid** world?

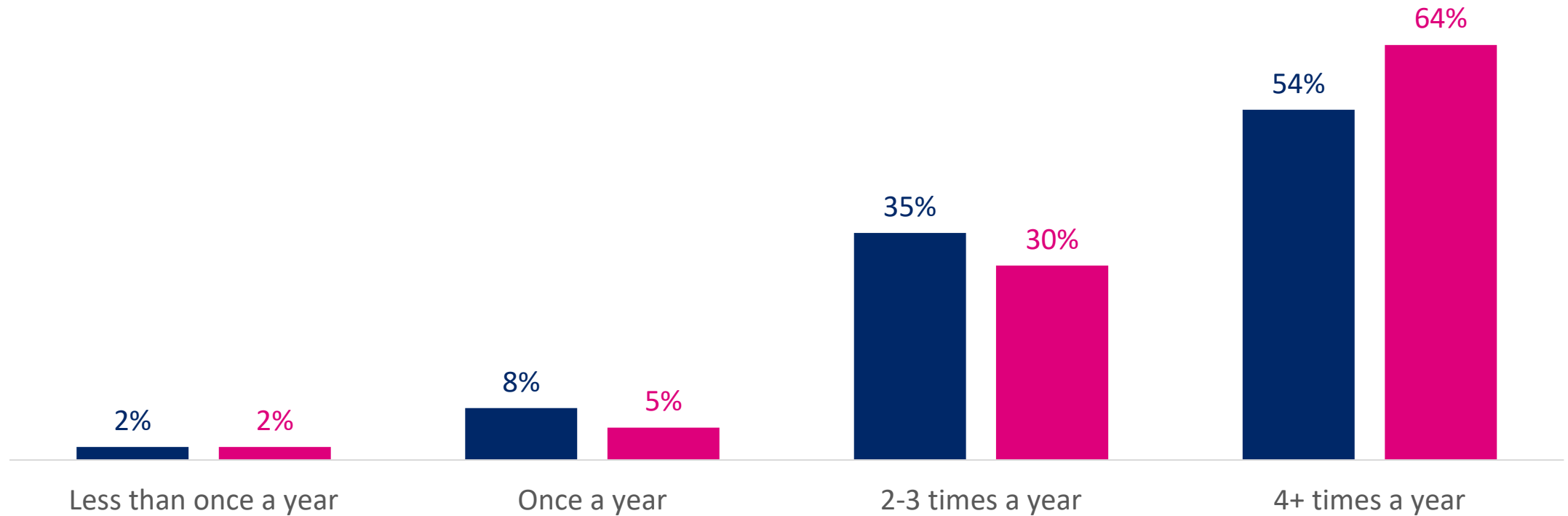
The survey respondents are heritage attenders with attendance across a variety of built and natural heritage

Which of the following have you done in the **12 months prior to Covid** (March 2020)?



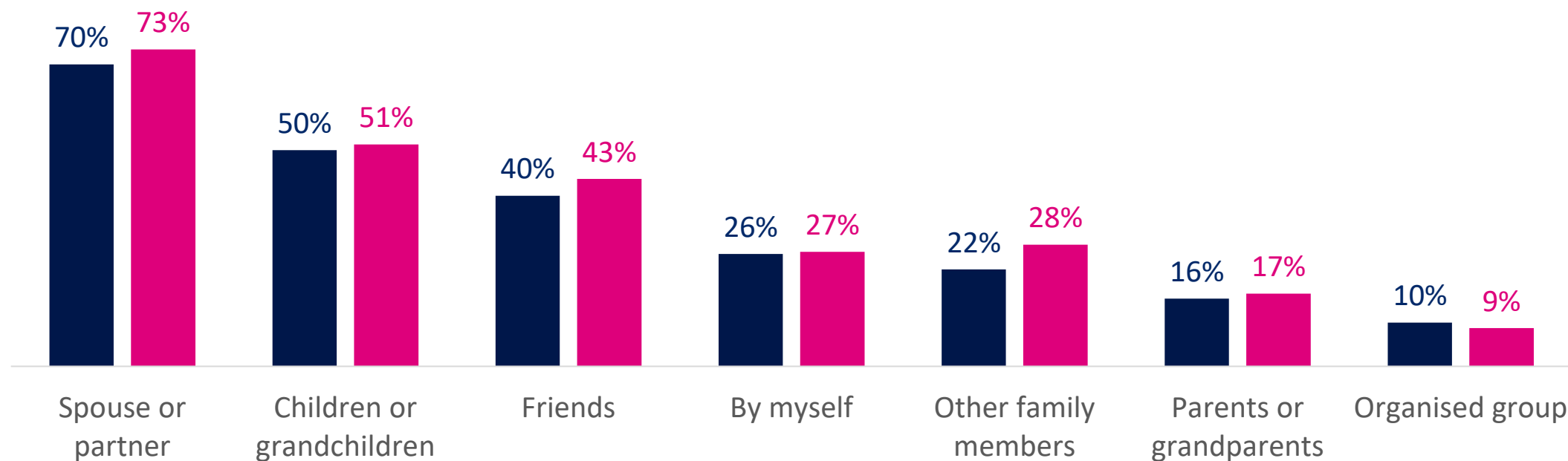
Respondents are frequent attenders, with a higher frequency than typical of the population – they are a core audience

How often would you say that you visited these types of places **before Covid**?



Attending heritage is social with over 80% attending with someone (other than their partner).

Before Covid, who did you typically visit with?



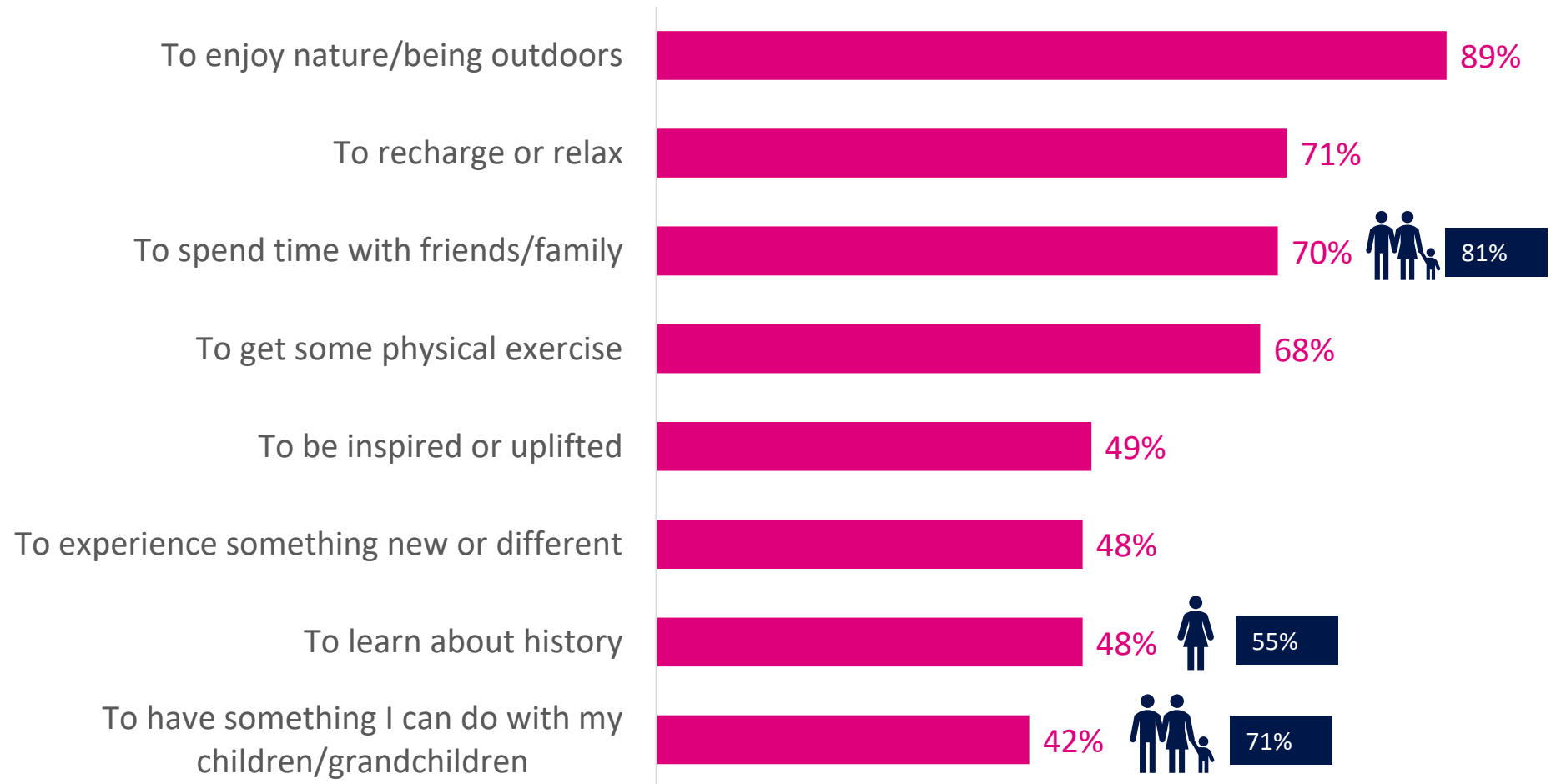
In the **pre-Covid** world why did people engage with heritage?

People with children attended built heritage as a social experience; those without children for knowledge/new experience. For both groups being outdoors/enjoying nature was a key factor.

	Have children (185)	No children (258)
To enjoy nature/ being outdoors	86%	74%
To increase my knowledge of a specific aspect of history	52%	71%
To experience something new or different	54%	66%
To learn something new or be challenged	43%	56%
To be inspired or uplifted	44%	51%
To spend time with friends/ family	74%	48%
To have something I can do with my children/grandchildren	72%	18%

Visiting outdoor heritage is primarily motivated by being outdoors along with wellbeing. For families it is a social experience. Learning about history is more important than learning about nature which indicates that the historical nature of sites is understood

What were your reasons for visiting **outdoor heritage spaces** in the past, before Covid?



Enjoying nature/being outdoors is a common motivation across built and natural heritage. Natural heritage has a stronger association as a social experience and built heritage with new/different experiences

Natural heritage	70%
Built heritage	58%

Spend time with friends/family

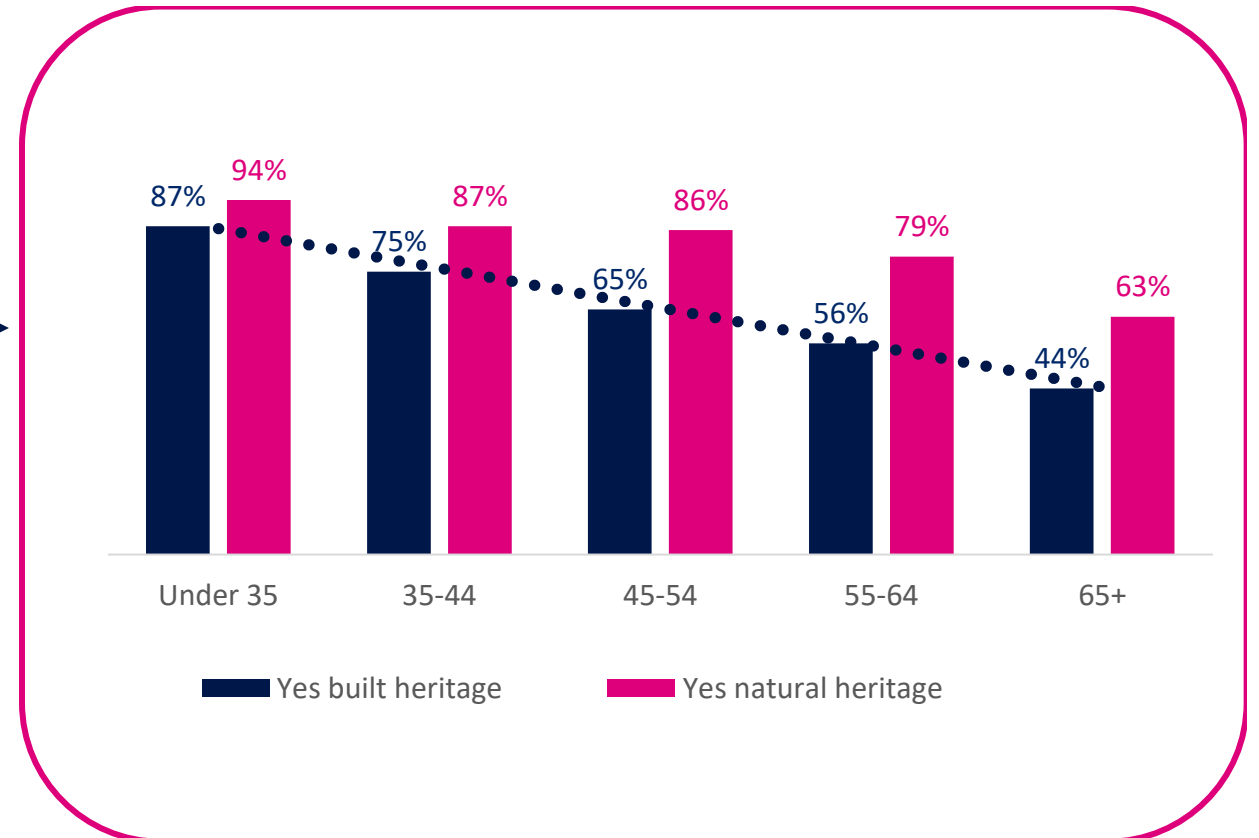
Built heritage	60%
Natural heritage	48%

Experience something new/different

What does attendance at heritage look
like **since Covid?**

There is higher attendance at natural heritage than built heritage. This will partly relate to the closure of heritage properties but also (as indicated by the age profile) by greater safety fears around indoor attractions

Have you visited (in person) since March 2020?

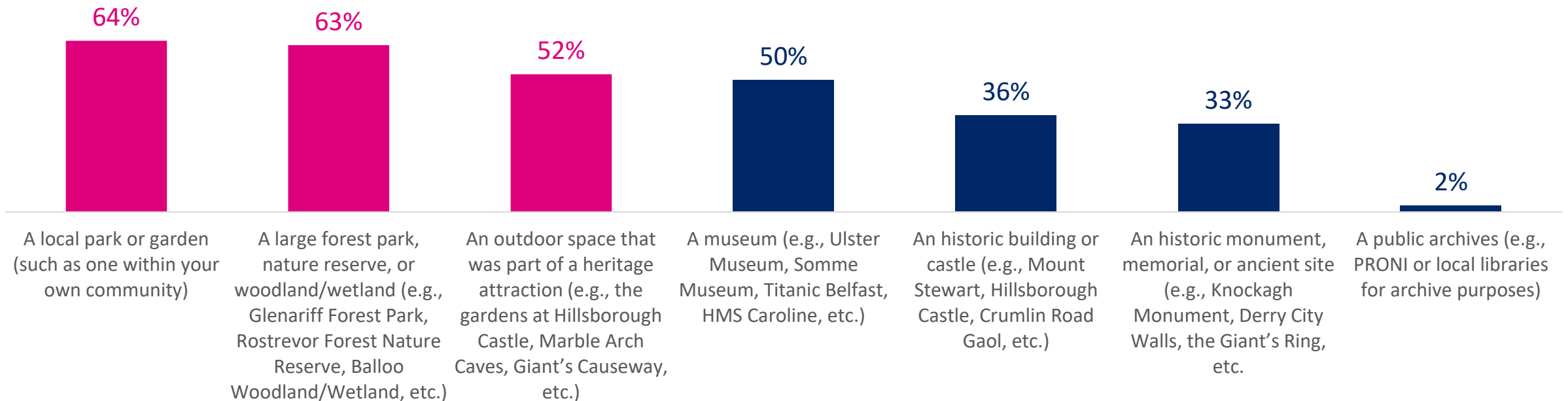


This can include local museums (e.g., the Somme Museum, Ulster Museum), heritage buildings or castles (e.g., Mount Stewart, Hillsborough Castle), and public archives.

This can include the gardens of grand houses, forests and parks across NI, heritage monuments or sites, and local places to access nature

Over half of all people have visited a museum since March 2020. Although this reflects the impact of closure, remember this is the most frequent attenders

Which of the following have you visited **since March 2020**?



People are attending built heritage less often than before Covid and natural heritage the same/more often than before. Some people are visiting new places especially for natural heritage

Natural heritage	38%
Built heritage	12%

Are visiting these places more often than before Covid

Outdoor places are fine and can socially distance. It may be a case of going to smaller places off the beaten track. The Ulster Museum I wouldn't feel comfortable going as its large and there could be a lot of people because it is well known and I don't want to be there if it is so busy.

Natural heritage	54%
Built heritage	44%

Have visited new places they wouldn't normally visit before Covid

How are people feeling about attending
built heritage **during the pandemic?**

Safety is the biggest factor in **non attendance** to built heritage but there are also a group of people who have other priorities. Communication is important.

Safety related

72% trying to avoid crowds
32% reluctant to travel

Communication

39% not sure if open
17% not enough opportunity

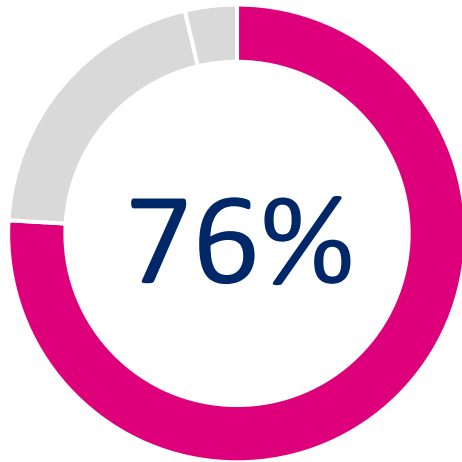
Interest

12% not looking
12% not priority

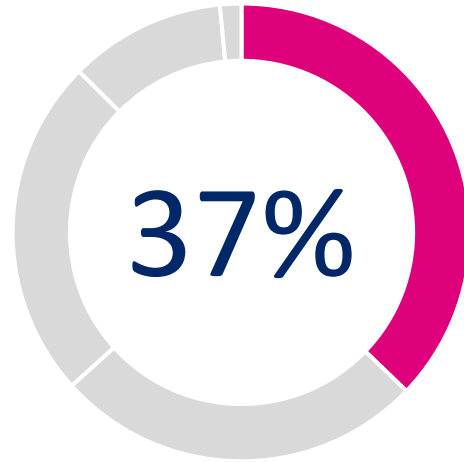
Gardens and open-air places are fine, but wouldn't be keen to go indoors. A lot of them we have already seen so don't have the compulsion to go. We love the Ulster Orchestra but won't go until we are given the all clear. I am very sorry about that but it's how I feel.

I would certainly go to gardens. However at this stage would not go indoors, I'd only think about returning after two vaccines. I like the National Trust properties as you can visit the gardens. I'm fine with gardens but not in the houses with other people

Communicating about safety measures will encourage more people to attend and make visitors feel more comfortable



Of people who **have** visited built heritage since March feel comfortable returning. 20% could feel more comfortable



Of people who **haven't** visited built heritage since March would consider going if confident that social distancing and hygiene measures were in place

80% of all people would be comfortable with limits on numbers, masks & one way system

While people are confident in their safety, they don't feel as well informed. Does being well informed drive people to visit?

82% are confident that museums/heritage buildings are doing everything possible to keep them safe

Have visited	91%
Not visited	68%

56% are confident that museums/heritage buildings have kept their visitors informed of their plans

Have visited	81%
Not visited	50%

The focus groups confirm the importance of safety measures, enforcing them and communicating about them

I'm happy to go to outside places...Inside spaces as long as measures are in place and not too small or not too crowded. **Need to find information before and know that the building is organised well and large.** Needs to be personal responsibilities applied as well. **If I went somewhere and had a bad experience it would put me off going somewhere else.**

Organisations which were badly organised before I wouldn't go to. **But organisations which were always well organised, echoed this with their Covid experience.** If I got there and it was too busy, I would leave even if it would upset the children as not worth staying if its unsafe.

Given all the **precautions** the houses and museums have put in place, I would feel comfortable going

Mum has bad asthma so always makes sure book somewhere that **describes the measures in place.** If it wasn't a mask wearing zone then I wouldn't book it. You rely on other people to use the soap so need **staff to enforce it,** to use the soap and wear a mask properly.

The focus groups confirm the importance of safety measures, enforcing them and communicating about them

I am getting vaccine tomorrow so feeling reasonable ok after the second one in middle of April as long as social distancing is in place. Fine with outdoor ones, ok with indoor museums **if they are organised properly and facilities needed are provided and effort to maintain the safety measures.**

People need to **feel safe** and it needs to be very clear that they are doing things to make us safe. This needs to be **described clearly.**

it is important to look after peoples comfort and they need **access to a toilet.** Can be a make or break to going somewhere

I rely on public transport as I don't have a car so sometimes I don't feel safe if the trains are packed and people aren't wearing masks. So for other people who don't have cars, **the distance to somewhere will impact as well as the transportation is another thing to think about in terms of safety.**

Most people are happy to pre book (with caveats on systems and a preference for flexibility) but there is a difference between people who have visited since March. Does this reflect familiarity post-visit?

Happy to pre-book a time slot for built heritage

Have visited

67%

Not visited

53%

Focus groups identify the importance of good systems and a preference for greater flexibility in pre-booking

I don't like prebooking as have to book at midnight ... very annoying so we gave up ...you cant book day before so this is hard as don't know the weather or how you will feel next week

the systems have to be good. For [organisation] you can book on the same day, so it is very flexible while [organisation] it is very difficult to book for and you have to book over a week in advance

We've turned up to places and not been able to get in and pre booking wasn't an option so very frustrating

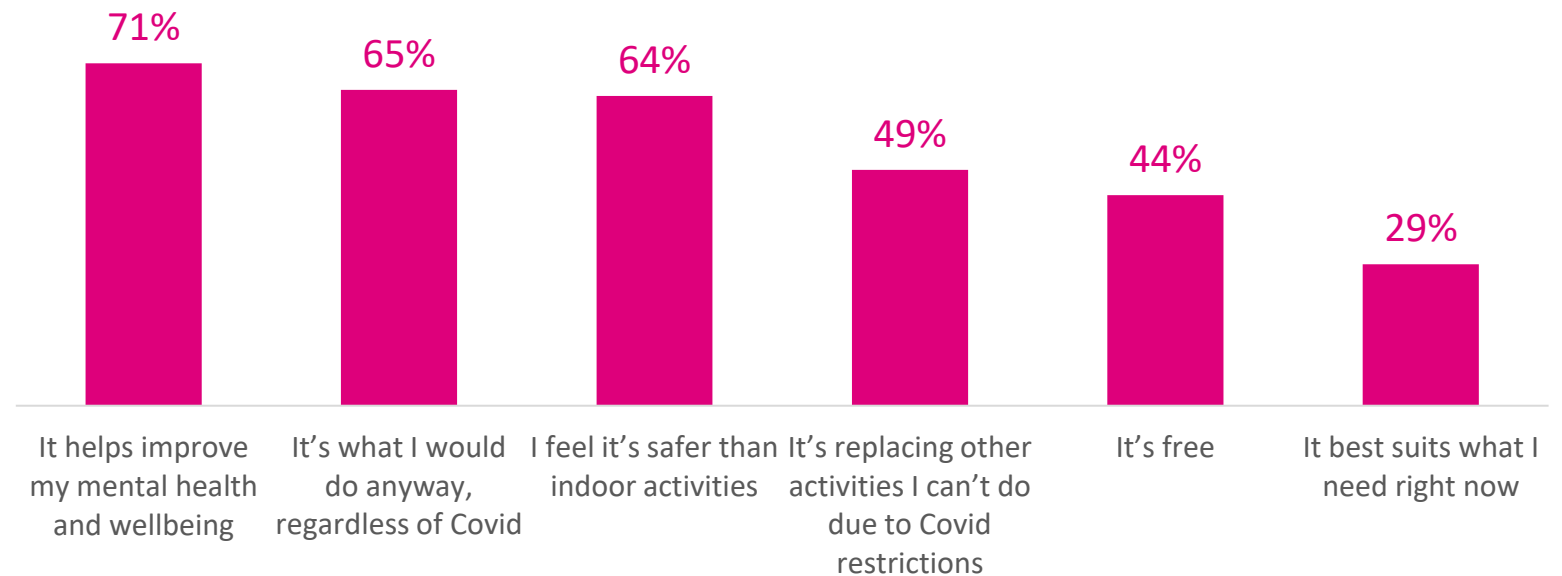
Prebooking is really good idea. When restrictions where lifted slightly we booked every weekend. It means the crowd were restricted compared to parks which were bunged especially at the weekends. Going forward, when things start to open, indoor places should be booking as. When you have small children you have to play your days anyways so its easy enough to book.

Engaging with natural heritage during the pandemic

Visiting natural heritage has become more important with associations to mental health, wellbeing and safety. How can these associations be developed and sustained going forwards?

68% agree visiting outdoor heritage spaces has become more important to them since March

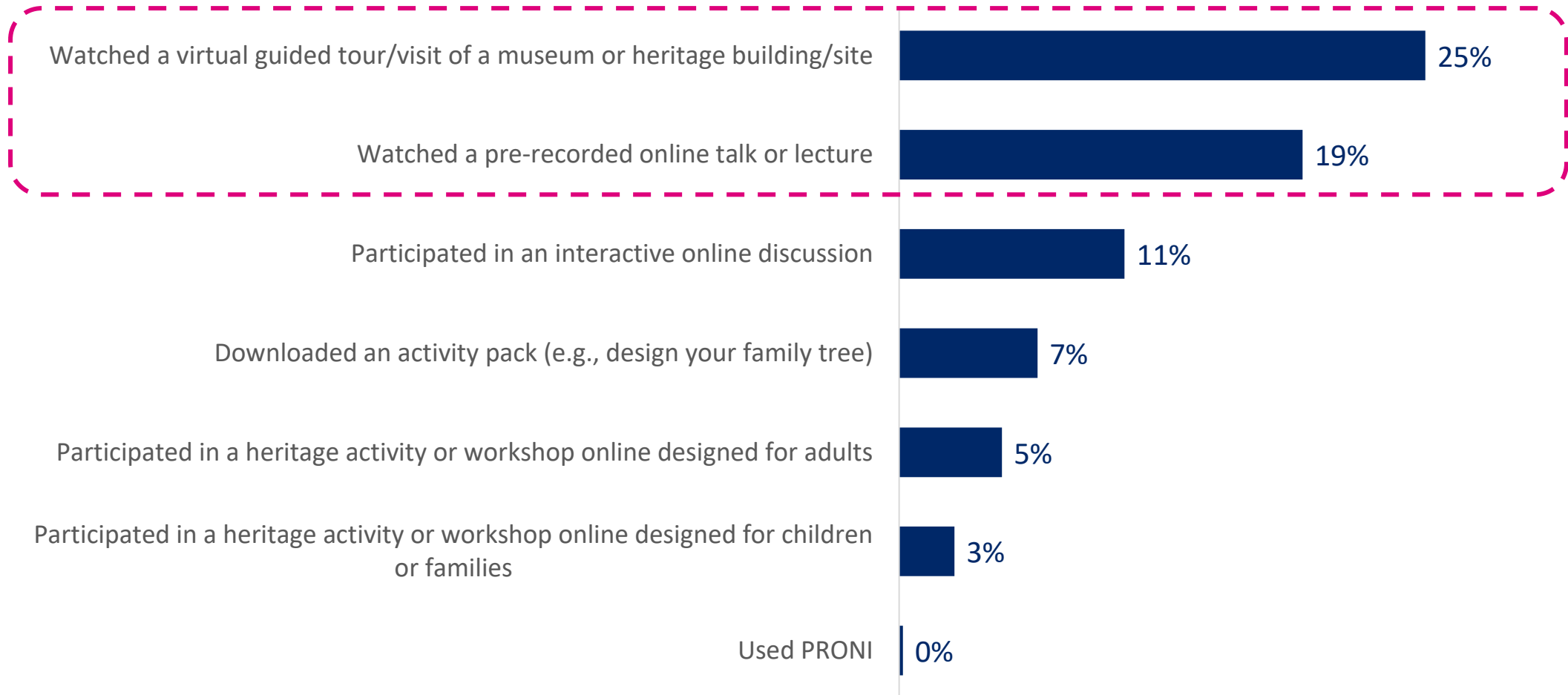
I chose to visit outdoor heritage spaces since March because...



Engaging with **online** built heritage experiences

The top two online activities were watching a tour or lecture. These passive experiences were significantly higher than the options for active engagement. This is the same as CBC:Arts

Which of the following types of heritage-related online activities have you viewed or participated in for pleasure **since March?**



Less than 1 in 5 people have started engaging with heritage online since March with 1 in 4 doing heritage activities more often. People with children are engaging less online.



44% 'engaged' with built heritage online since Covid

17% started 'engaging' online since Covid



24% all people doing online activities more often than pre-Covid



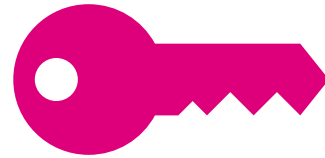
79% did not pay to take part in online activities

Online heritage helps people to learn but doesn't connect people to their local area to the same extent. What do online heritage experiences aim to achieve?

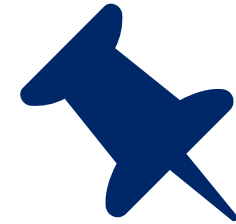
Accessing heritage online...



70% agree:
helps me **learn** in my
own time

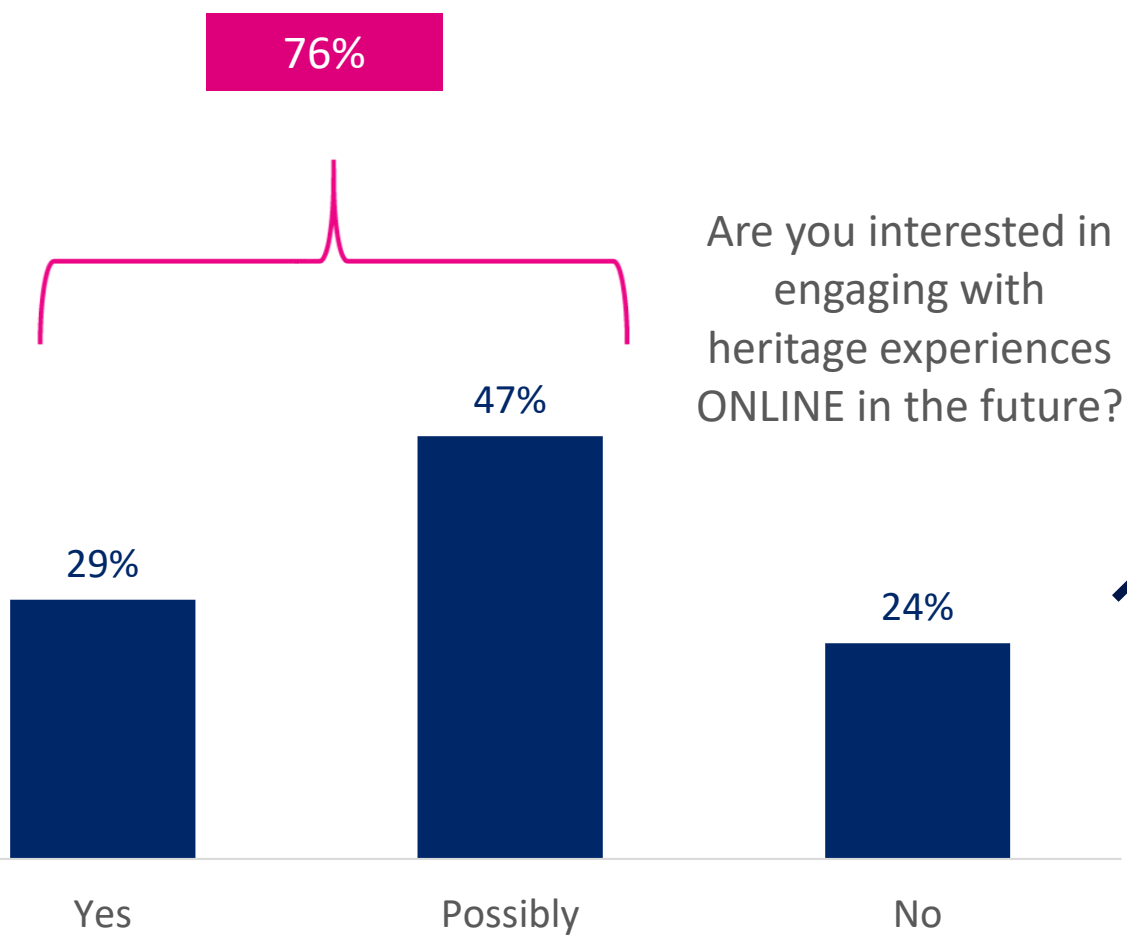


65% agree:
makes it more
accessible for me



60% agree:
helps me feel more
connected to my local
history or area

There is interest in engaging online in the future; it is important to consider what people value about the online experience and what puts them off



Which of the following reasons explains why you are NOT interested in engaging with heritage experiences online?



People identify the benefit of online heritage experiences to engage wider audiences

They have huge collections which have never been on display so they should have shown pictures and art that has never been seen before. Things you cannot see if you go to the museum, a sneak preview

[Online content] could open up to an international audience. I wouldn't watch that for local museums as I can just wait to it opens and go then but if you can do something of things you cannot access easily, I seen a tour of the pyramids in Egypt and thought that was great

You often hear people saying 'I didn't know that was there!' even in the local community so using the power of social media you can share the word with the local community and show people what is there and to engage the local audience and see what they want and what needs to be developed. People needs encouraged to comment on what they want from their local museum.

How do people feel about
heritage?

What do people want from
heritage moving forwards?

Continuing to develop and evolve the offer for heritage is important to attenders

You have been enforced to **innovate** the past year so keep doing this, don't go back to your old ways.

Offer more interactive experiences, people to take tours and tell you stories. **Tell the story of why that place is special.**

You need an incentive for children to go - like there is a playpark or café. During COVID-19 play parks and cafés were closed and they didn't want to go for just walks but nature trails or something to **interest the children** and keep them going and willing to get into a car for a walk

I lived in Boston and our museums had happy hours and got **new people** in and they associated it with good times so when you grew up out of this experience then you felt comfortable to go again outside of the happy hour

I do like to be told what's happening. In a house you get a tour in person or in earphones then make it more enjoyable so more of this **personal touch.**

Accessibility and engaging more people is also important to attenders

Post COVID-19 it would be a good idea for museum to **open up more** and bring people in from the community to use the space and see the space. Something more active rather than passive. such as arts or drawing something

Looking forward I want them to be more accessible and get into the community. Break the middle-class overview that people have. **Take a risk**, offer a wider range of products.

Please do reopen. One of my big fears is big funding cuts after COVID-19. I know theatres have closed for good in England so don't want that over here. So please don't rush to open but do open as we **need heritage more than ever**

[I want to see] **accessibility** for all and the timings that places are open. It doesn't suit working people - they need to open at least one day a week with extended opening hours

Summing up

Summing up & looking forwards

- Attenders as core audience in re-opening
- Key differences between built heritage & natural heritage
- Safety measures, good systems and delivery important in immediate term and throughout 2021 as transition back to 'new normal'
- Effective communication vital
- Looking forward challenges are sustaining interest and building back better

Discussion

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