

## Tourism Intelligence Update – March 2019

The timing of Easter in 2018 and 2019 has had an impact of the headline performances measures this month (Easter 2018 fell on 30 March to 2 April, Easter 2019 fell on 19 to 22 April), with very few schools on holiday in March 2019 and so Easter events and offers were launched later this year. However, the weather was a positive factor for the month, especially when compared to the extreme winter and the Beast from the East seen March 2018. The April Intelligence Update will address the Easter discrepancy.

Footfall through the city centre went down by 2% compared to March 2018, however overall year to date footfall is on par with the last year as a result of changing school holidays, city centre events and much improved weather compared to Winter 2018. The Visit York Information Centre saw an 11% decrease in visitors through the doors vs March 2018, but also equal numbers for the year to date.

The number of hotel room nights sold grew by 8% compared to March 2018, with almost 6,000 additional room nights sold. The proportion of hotel rooms occupied has also gone up, by 6%, which is the biggest monthly gain recorded in over a year, and saw the percentage of hotel rooms' occupied reach 74.2%. The average room rate remained on par with March 2018, at £96.24.

Similarly to previous months this year, the number of visits to attractions were very polarised – the attractions with an outdoor offer benefitted hugely from the good weather, whereas the family friendly ones saw a drop due to the later school holidays. High profile exhibitions in 2018 has also lead to an inevitable drop this year compared to the excellent numbers drawn last year.

Visits to the big attractions are 7% down overall vs March 2018, however, small attractions continue to attract more visitors with a year-on-year increase of 20%, with the Merchant Adventurer's Hall reporting their highest March visitor numbers ever and other small attractions having a similarly successful month.

Visits to attractions made with a York Pass increased by 3% vs March 2018, which is a turnaround in the long term trend and a result of increased sales.

The new [visityork.org](http://visityork.org) website continues to show great results since its launch in April 2018. March saw an increase of over 50% in web sessions year-on-year with the York Easter Festival pages drawing traffic to the site. Social media has mixed results compared to March 2018 with a 17% decrease in new followers but with 80% more impressions; year-on-year both figures are on the increase.

### Visit England's Annual Survey of Visits to Attractions:

VisitEngland continue gather data for the Annual Survey of Visits to Visitor Attractions, with invitations sent out from the end of February. The deadline for the participation is **7 May 2019**, so please do respond as soon as possible.

We strongly encourage all attractions to take part as it is the only source of data for benchmarking destination and attraction performance across the country, and so is equally useful to both attractions and to local DMO's. The study generates large amounts of publicity in both the national and regional press, and is classified as an official statistic, providing insights into the performance of the attractions sector in England.

All participating attractions will receive their own copy of the report, allowing you to benchmark with many other attractions across England. Last year, more than 1,500 attractions participated. If you think you haven't received a copy of the survey, or have any other questions about taking part, please contact [annualattractionssurvey@visitengland.org](mailto:annualattractionssurvey@visitengland.org)

### Summary of tourism performance indicators for March 2019:

- 74.2% of hotel rooms occupied
- £96.24 average hotel room rate
- 76,597 hotel room nights sold
- 221,742 visits to attractions
- 4,497 visits to attractions using a York Pass
- 111,691 sessions on [www.visitengland.org](http://www.visitengland.org) (including on the mobile site)
- 1,100 new followers across Visit York social media channels (FB, IG, TW)
- 844,248 impressions on social media (FB, IG, TW)
- 23,982 customers through the Visit York Information Centre

To find out any more about our Research and Insights or to discuss your specific tourism intelligence queries, contact Make It York's Senior Research and Insight Executive, Zoe Rawson  
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