

Phase report

Add some text about the phase

What is your connection to Cambridge?

470/470 - Multiple choice - choose many - required

Resident 92.3% (434 choices)



Work in Cambridge 23.4% (110 choices)



Business owner 5.5% (26 choices)



Student 2.8% (13 choices)



Visitor 2.3% (11 choices)



In the last 12 months, have you seen people verbally touting for punt tours in the restricted areas?

470/470 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

Yes 52.8% (248 choices)



No 47.2% (222 choices)



Where did you see the touting take place?

248/248 - Short answer - required



English

The most commonly mentioned locations were King's Parade, especially outside King's College and Great St Mary's, followed by Bridge Street, Quayside and the Magdalene Bridge area. Silver Street/Silver Street Bridge was also mentioned frequently. Many respondents also reported touting at or near Cambridge railway station, suggesting it is not confined to the riverfront.

Overall, respondents described touting as spread across the main tourist routes and river access points, with repeated references to the city centre, market area, Jesus Green/boardwalk, Trinity Street and nearby streets. Several said it happens widely or "all over the city", including from the station into central Cambridge.

A smaller number gave extra detail about how it happens: one tour guide said touts operating from desks on King's Parade are disruptive when guiding clients. Another respondent described tourists being "leapt upon" at the station and one specifically called station touting aggressive. There were also isolated examples of misleading promotion, such as a "tourist information" stand outside John Lewis that was said to be advertising punting and one account of a tout acting territorially on Silver Street Bridge.

A few respondents could not remember the exact location or gave vague answers, but the dominant pattern is clear: reports cluster around King's Parade/Great St Mary's, Bridge Street/Quayside/Magdalene Bridge, Silver Street, and the railway station.

Did you report this to the council or police?

248/248 - Multiple choice - choose one - required



If you did report it, where did you do so?

248/248 - Short answer - required

Most respondents said they did not report it at all, usually answering "N/A", "no", "nowhere" or similar. A recurring issue was frustration with the survey design: many said the question was wrongly mandatory even though they had already indicated they had not reported anything, calling it confusing or badly designed.

Among those who gave reasons for not reporting, the main themes were that the issue was already well known or ongoing they did not think anything would be done they did not know it could be reported or were not aware of the ban. A small number objected in principle to the PSPO or to using police powers or said reporting was difficult.

Only a small minority had reported it. Where they did, this was mainly to the council or council-related teams, including online/email, council offices, the community safety team, enforcement staff on the street, or in meetings with council officers. A few mentioned reporting to the police.



English

If you didn't report it, what was the reason?

248/248 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

I didn't know I could report this type of behaviour 48.8% (121 choices)



I didn't think anything would happen 26.2% (65 choices)



I didn't know who to report it to 8.9% (22 choices)



I reported it elsewhere 0% (0 choices)



Other 16.1% (40 choices)



What do you think should happen to the PSPO?

470/470 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

It should continue 76% (357 choices)



It should be changed/varied 17.7% (83 choices)



It should end 6.4% (30 choices)



How do you think the PSPO should be changed/varied?

83/83 - Long answer - required



English

Most respondents want the PSPO strengthened and, above all, properly enforced. A very common view is that the current rules are not working in practice: touts are still widely visible, enforcement is rarely seen, and some operators are thought to ignore the rules because the rewards outweigh the risks.

A major theme is aggressive, persistent and misleading behaviour. Respondents frequently describe being repeatedly approached, followed after saying no, shouted at across the street, or pressured in ways that make the city feel unpleasant for residents and visitors. Several also mention touts pretending to offer general information, misleading tourists, or not displaying prices clearly.

Many responses focus on obstruction and safety. Touts, boards, barrows and groups of customers are said to block pavements and riverside paths, forcing pedestrians into roads or cycle routes, including wheelchair users and people with mobility issues. This is mentioned repeatedly for Silver Street, Bridge Street, Quayside/Magdalene Bridge, the boardwalk by Magdalene College, and King's Parade.

There is strong support for expanding the restricted area. The locations most often mentioned are Cambridge Railway Station/Station Square, Silver Street, Bridge Street, Quayside, Laundress Green, and other pinch points just outside current red zones. Several note that touting has simply shifted to the edges of the current controlled area.

Another recurring point is that the wording is too narrow and easy to dodge. Respondents say touts avoid specific words like "punting tour" while still selling the same product through images, signs, branded clothing, QR codes or by claiming to promote walking tours. Many want the PSPO rewritten to cover all commercial tour promotion, whether verbal, non-verbal, written or digital, and to include walking tours.

A number of respondents want tougher penalties and stronger controls: higher fines, confiscation of signs/boards, limits on numbers of touts, licensing or designated pitches/booths, and clearer codes of conduct.

Some respondents, particularly from the trade, stress fairness between operators. They argue the current situation rewards companies that break or stretch the rules while compliant businesses lose out; a few specifically name Scudamore's. A smaller minority take the opposite view, saying the focus should be less on restricting sellers and more on allowing legitimate, polite selling by approved companies.

Overall, the dominant message is: make the rules broader, cover more areas and more forms of tour selling, reduce obstruction and harassment, and enforce the PSPO consistently so public spaces are easier and safer to use.

Would you support the council or police taking action on touting for punt tours in a different way?

470/470 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

Yes 74.3% (349 choices)



No 25.7% (121 choices)



English

Currently, the only breach of a PSPO is if there is evidence of verbal touting. Do you agree that this should be extended to all forms of touting?

470/470 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

Yes 67.9% (319 choices)



No 32.1% (151 choices)



Please share any other comments you have about the Touting Public Spaces Protection Order

470/470 - Short answer - required



English

Most respondents support keeping the PSPO, often saying it has noticeably improved the city centre and reduced the worst aggressive touting compared with the pre-2016 period. Many say Cambridge is “much nicer”, “more pleasant” and less intimidating now, and want the order renewed, strengthened, or made permanent.

The dominant complaint is that touts are intrusive, persistent and sometimes aggressive: repeatedly approaching people, not taking “no” for an answer, getting in people’s faces, and making residents avoid certain routes or areas. Respondents frequently describe it as harassment, a nuisance, embarrassing for Cambridge, and bad for visitors’ first impressions. A common view is that people who want to punt can easily find the operators without being stopped in the street.

Blocking pavements and creating bottlenecks is another major theme. Many mention Bridge Street, Magdalene Bridge, Quayside, King’s Parade, Silver Street and the boardwalk/Jesus Green area as problem locations, with pedestrians, pushchairs, wheelchair users and disabled access affected. Some say people are forced into the road or that queues, signs, tables and boards obstruct footways.

A very common concern is weak or inconsistent enforcement. Many respondents say the PSPO only works if enforced properly, with requests for more patrols, on-the-spot fines, higher penalties, and action against companies and organisers rather than just individual touts. Several argue current fines are too low to deter breaches while others say enforcement officers or police are rarely seen.

Many want the restrictions extended beyond current areas, especially to the railway station, and also to Silver Street and parts of King’s Parade. Some also want walking-tour touting included, saying some operators appear to disguise punt sales as “official” tours or tourist information.

A smaller but recurring set of comments calls for clearer rules and tighter management in permitted areas: defining how far touts can stray from authorised locations, limiting numbers of touts, requiring fixed pitches or booths, clearer signage, ID badges, and keeping sales close to boarding points only.

Some respondents broadened the issue to the scale and impact of commercial punting itself, mentioning too many punts, pressure on the river, noise, wildlife impacts, and dominance by a few firms. A few raised concerns about misleading or variable pricing and tourists being overcharged.

A minority opposed the PSPO or thought the current situation was acceptable, arguing touting supports tourism and local jobs, is not a major problem if polite, or that the current balance is about right. A few described the measure as overreach or said enforcement should focus on serious crime instead. One company response argued the council should manage operator behaviour through leases and licences rather than a PSPO.

Demographic data

Respondents are invited to share some details about themselves as part of the registration process on our online engagement platform. This helps us better understand how representative the responses are of the people who live and work in Cambridge.

To ensure that the survey is accessible to as many people as possible, we do not make it compulsory to provide this data. The online engagement platform is continually working to improve how it presents this data.



English

Age

0-9



10-19

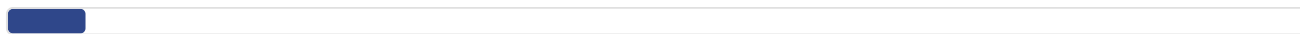


20-29



1%

30-39



6%

40-49



7%

50-59



13%

60-69



13%

70-79



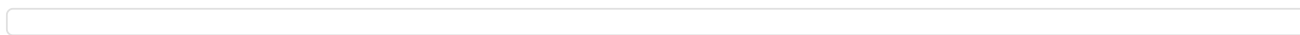
10%

80-89



4%

90+



Unknown

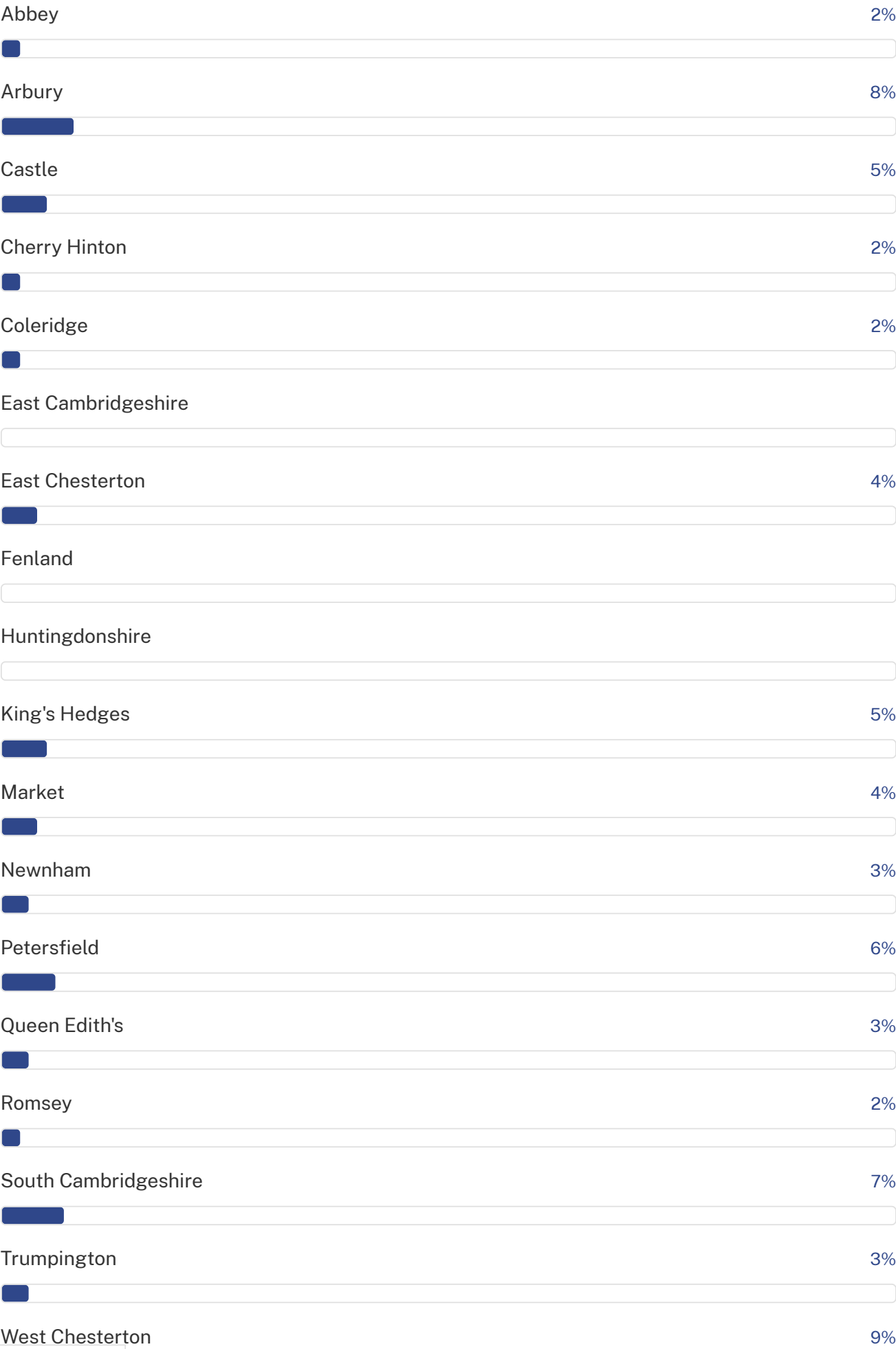


46%



English

Place of residence

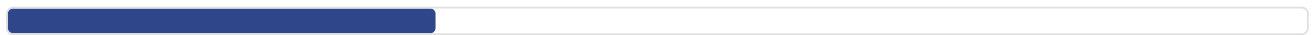


English

Somewhere else 2%



Unknown 33%

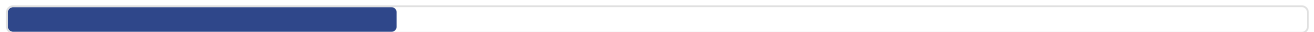


Which of the following describes how you think of yourself? (please select one response from the following)

Male 37%



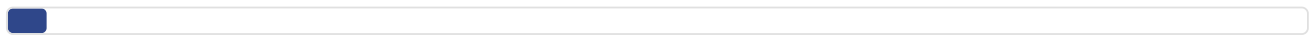
Female 30%



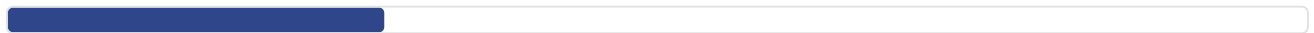
In another way 1%



Prefer not to say 3%



Unknown 29%



English