

Evaluating Stockton Borough Council Events



Bluegrass Research
September 2020



THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Since 2015, Bluegrass Research has been working with Stockton Borough Council to provide visitor research across a programme of yearly events



We have a flexible framework to facilitate benchmarking over time, and across events, to give vital insight when reviewing their performance

The key objectives of the research are to:

- Provide an understanding of event audience profiles
- Measure satisfaction with and perceptions of various aspects of the events
- Understand how the events impact on perceptions of Stockton amongst residents and non-residents
- To provide an estimation of visitors' expenditure and the Direct Economic Impact on Stockton

OUR APPROACH

Interviews are conducted at each event (typically around 15 six hour shifts per event)

- These are scheduled in agreement with the Council to reflect the nature of the events, with a mix of times / days / sampling points to ensure a representative sample of visitors to each event is achieved
- Interviewing is undertaken at locations of high footfall, but where no bias could be inferred
- Experienced market research interviewers approach visitors to take part in a face-to-face interview
- The interview lasts approximately 8 minutes and follows a set questionnaire, pre-loaded onto a tablet
- A standardised question set is used across the events programme to facilitate comparisons, with some tailored, event-specific questions which are designed alongside the client team in advance of each event

The minimum sample target is 300 interviews per event, with the number of interviews achieved per shift closely monitored throughout the fieldwork period

Where an event includes a ticketed element, an online version of the survey can be dispatched post-event to the database of attendees

OUR EXPERIENCE

Bluegrass Research is a North East- based full-service Marketing Research agency, working extensively on visitor economy projects, including events, visitor attraction and economic impact research



HOW WE ENSURE QUALITY

Quality is of utmost importance - we work to the Market Research Society Code of Conduct, a framework to safeguard standards, promote confidence and champion professionalism

We ensure high quality and ethical research through the following measures:

- All data handling is in accordance with GDPR and Bluegrass are registered with the Information Commissioner's Office as data controllers
- Participation is at the discretion of individuals and information is processed anonymously
- Interviews are only undertaken with individuals aged 16 or over
- A random sampling approach is taken with care taken to interview a cross section of visitors i.e. every Nth person, regardless of age, gender, appearance, disability or ethnicity
- All interviewers are fully briefed prior to fieldwork on project objectives and methodology; protocols for engaging with the public; and reporting to event organisers
- 10% of interviews are quality checked by an external moderator, to monitor accuracy and ensure that interviews have been conducted in a professional and appropriate manner
- Bluegrass is now working with COVID-safe methodologies with clients to continue to deliver research in a flexible and responsible way

THE DELIVERABLES

Bluegrass quality checks and tabulates research data in SNAP Surveys software

Statistical testing is undertaken to a 95% confidence level, to identify differences in results between this and previous years' results and demographic subgroups within the data

The following deliverables are provided post-event:

- **Headline findings within 1 working week**
- **Full report within 3 working weeks, which includes an executive summary, followed by charts, tables and narrative outlining the research findings:**
 - *Audience profiles, with specific reference to socio-demographics, visitor origin and visit history*
 - *Motivations, evaluating key drivers and triggers for attendance*
 - *An overview of the event experience, considering perceived strengths and weaknesses of the event and the extent to which expectations were met*
 - *The impact of the event on perceptions of Stockton and Stockton Borough Council and the likelihood of visiting the event / Stockton again*
 - *Spend data across key expenditure areas, calculating the economic impact following **eventIMPACTS** principles*

59	51	4	3	1
18.27%	19.69%	10.00%	15.79%	25.00%
33	26	6	1	0
10.22%	10.04%	15.00%	5.26%	0
77	59	10	5	2
23.84%	22.78%	25.00%	26.32%	50.00%
53	46	5	2	0
16.41%	17.76%	12.50%	10.53%	0
26	19	3	4	0
8.05%	7.34%	7.50%	21.05%	0
c		a		
75	58	12	4	1
23.22%	22.39%	30.00%	21.05%	25.00%
1	0	16	23	17
25.00%	0	27.59%	20.00%	14.78%
	cd		a	
0	0	5	11	1
0	0	8.62%	9.57%	12.17%
2	1	10	25	29
50.00%	100.00%	17.24%	21.74%	25.22%
	d			
0	0	6	20	23
0	0	10.34%	17.39%	20.00%
0	0	3	8	12
0	0	5.17%	6.96%	10.43%
1	0	18	28	20
25.00%	0	31.03%	24.35%	17.39%
59	51	4	3	1
18.27%	19.69%	10.00%	15.79%	25.00%
33	26	6	1	0
10.22%	10.04%	15.00%	5.26%	0
77	59	10	5	2
23.84%	22.78%	25.00%	26.32%	50.00%
53	46	5	2	0
16.41%	17.76%	12.50%	10.53%	0

CALCULATING ECONOMIC IMPACT

In calculating Direct Economic Impact of the events, Bluegrass follows the principles of 'eventImpacts', a methodology endorsed by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) and UK Sport among others, applying the following process:

- Allowing for standard economic measures such as additionality, leakage and displacement, calculating the proportions of the audiences whose expenditure 'qualifies' to be included in the impact - not all expenditure by the audience can be included, as some of it:
 - *Would have occurred anyway (only residents who would actively go out of the region to another event in the absence of the given event qualify for inclusion)*
 - *Is not attributable to Stockton Sparkles (only non-residents whose presence is specifically attributable to the given event qualify for inclusion)*
- Applying accurate proportions of audience type (from the primary research) to the actual audience size (from the organisers), to arrive at an approximation of the numbers of each type occurring in the actual crowd
- Multiplying these numbers of each type occurring in the actual crowd by the average individual spend to provide an estimated expenditure by audience type
- Adding other known expenditure in the Stockton area attributable to the event (e.g. staff bed nights) to the audience expenditure figures to arrive at an estimate of Direct Economic Impact