Newcastle's Christmas Markets
People and Perceptions
2019
It all looks smashing! I like it and loads of other people do too because they've told me. It's definitely making an impact!

Christmas Markets' Visitor
Introducing the Research

In 2019, Newcastle’s Christmas Markets were organised for the first time by the Mellors Group, following the granting of planning permission by Newcastle City Council. Mellors Group worked alongside NE1 (the city’s Business Improvement District - BID) to provide an extended markets footprint not only based at Grey’s Monument, Grainger Street and Grey Street, but also extended to Blackett Street and Northumberland Street.

The Christmas Markets began on Saturday 16th November 2019, with over 80 shopping stalls and attractions remaining open until Tuesday 24th December 2019, while the street food and drink offering remained open until Tuesday 31st December 2019. New attractions included a 30m toboggan slide, a traditional Christmas carousel, a helter-skelter bar and a brand-new ski lodge themed bar, Après Ski, serving drinks throughout the festive period. Operating hours were 10am-9pm (Monday to Saturdays) and 11am-9pm (Sundays).

Accompanying entertainment, ranging from Christmas songs in the day time, to electric violins, musicians and artists in the evenings and weekends, skating at the Life Centre, the Christmas Lights switch on, Grainger Market festivities and the 24 Doors of Christmas, spanned a ‘Newcastle’s Christmas' trail (as shown below), designed to offer a complete Christmas experience to visitors throughout the city centre.
The Research Methodology

This research was designed to provide a baseline of information relating to Newcastle’s 2019 Christmas Markets. The research sought to quantify the total number of Christmas Markets visitors, explore reasons for visiting, perceptions of Christmas Markets stalls, rides and attractions, establish visit duration, frequency and time of visits, mode of travel, level of Christmas Markets and associated city centre spend, visitor satisfaction, and accompanying demographic information. The research was undertaken using a combination of primary and secondary data collection methods. These consisted of:

An on-site survey of 800 Christmas Markets’ visitors

Trained, locally-based market research interviewers undertook the on-site survey with a random sample of 800 visitors, face-to-face. A structured questionnaire was designed to enable results to be comparable in future years, enabling attitudes and perceptions to be tracked over time. The team worked a variety of shifts at agreed sampling points to ensure that the full range of day-time, evening and night-time Christmas Markets’ visitors could participate, including both weekends and weekdays. All fieldwork was undertaken between Monday 25th November and Sunday 15th December 2019, from 10am-9pm.

An online survey of over 800 Christmas Markets’ visitors

This online survey used identical questions to those included in the on-site survey and was publicised via social media platforms.

An on-site count

All 86 stalls and rides were subject to visitor counts undertaken across all hours of operation in the week commencing 16th December 2019. Due to the very open and expansive nature of the Christmas Markets (flanked by retail stores), it was not possible to identify any clear entrance and exit points which effectively excluded through-traffic (i.e. passing by, but not actually visiting), the Christmas Markets.

For this reason, counts were undertaken on a stall by stall, ride by ride, attraction by attraction basis - counting the number of people visiting each - within time periods sampled during all hours of operation. This count yielded average visitors per hour for each stall/ride/attraction, which were then aggregated to produce estimates for the entire duration of the Christmas Markets. This method produces ‘best fit’ findings, which can easily and effectively be benchmarked in future years.

Secondary research to compare economic impact

Extensive secondary research looking at comparative findings both within Newcastle and further afield was also undertaken.
The Quality and Reliability of the Data Collected

In considering the quality and reliability of the data collected, there are a number of salient points to bear in mind.

Firstly, the on-site data and count are both current, focused, robust and independently designed, analysed and reported upon. They provide not only key messages relating to 2019 Christmas Markets' performance, but also a benchmarkable set of findings from which future development and change can be measured.

Secondly, the online version of the research was self-selecting, and as such, the data should be regarded as an accompanying snap-shot of alternative opinion on the Christmas Markets, rather than a robust, systematically sampled data-set. This self-selection seems to have resulted in a bias of participation by those with a female and older demographic, and with particular views or concerns, skewing the representativeness of participants. For this reason, it is included (on pages 26 to 28) only for purposes of defining the detail of more critical comment received.

Commentary on the visitor count and subsequent economic impact calculations is included on pages 30 and 38.

To Note

- A copy of the on-site/online survey questionnaire is available on request.
- Percentages have been rounded and may therefore not total exactly 100.
- Percentages may exceed 100 when more than one response to a question was given by a respondent.
- Percentages have also been calculated excluding missing/declined responses and those where a respondent was unsure.
- In addition to the majority of quantitative questions, both the on-site and online surveys included five qualitative questions, which gave participants the opportunity to expand on their thoughts. All responses to these questions were read in full and relevant messages have been extracted and reported on.
- Data was sliced and analysed by a range of variables. Notable differences in the behaviours and attitudes of people with varying demographic characteristics have been highlighted throughout the report.
- Respondents have been quoted verbatim, but anonymously, to preserve confidentiality.
Executive Summary

- In the Autumn of 2019, Newcastle City Council and NE1 commissioned research into the volume, behaviour, attitudes, needs and demographics of Christmas Markets’ visitors. This research was in the context of newly expanded Christmas Markets’, spanning five streets within Newcastle city centre. The research was designed to quantify opinion and experiences of the Christmas Markets, alongside the broader consideration of footfall and economic impact. It was also intended to provide a set of highly benchmarkable data with which to measure future change.

- A face-to-face city centre survey, conducted over three weeks, focused on collecting the views of 800 members of the general public visiting the Christmas Markets (in, or close to, Blackett Street), together with an online (self-selection) survey and a visitor count.

- The research yielded robust, current and independently collected data, providing a raft of both interesting and useful findings to inform the future planning and development of the Christmas Markets.

- There were 2.78 million visits to the Christmas Markets, with a diverse range of visitors in evidence – many of whom (73%) were non-Newcastle residents.

- Around 20% of visitors had travelled into the city centre specifically to visit the Christmas Markets. For many visitors, both previous tradition and observation was the lure. However, the power of social media was also clearly evident in attracting visitors.

- Overall perceptions of the Christmas Markets were extremely positive – underpinned by the appeal of their extended size and duration, perceptions of increased variety and attractions, and the brighter, ‘wow’ factor of the decorations and aesthetics.

- However, note that there are some key improvements suggested. These focus on alleviating congestion, further increasing produce variety, incorporating more local traders and improving the quality and value for money of offerings.

- The economic impact of the Christmas Markets – including spend directly on-site and also spend in the city centre by those who visited specifically because of the Christmas Markets – is approaching £70 million.
12 Key Messages
1. **The research utilises a wealth of primary data to draw clear, benchmarkable conclusions**

   With a sound investment in visitor surveys and a visitor count, the 2019 Christmas Markets research yields information which is current, focused, independent and robust. This information can also be benchmarked in subsequent years – in the context of a relatively barren landscape of previously collected data.

2. **The Christmas Markets attracted around 2.78 million visits**

   This is a figure which has – alongside an extended Christmas Markets footprint and duration – significantly increased since the previous estimate of 1 million in 2016. Over half of all visits were made to stalls and rides on Northumberland Street, paralleling this the location as hosting around half of all stalls/rides.

3. **The Christmas Markets attracted a wide and diverse range of visitors**

   Females were particularly attracted to the Christmas Markets, as were younger adults (aged 16-39). Almost 20% were of a minority ethnicity – a figure which is notably higher than the 13% recorded in a previous city centre users' study (January 2017). Similarly, 10% were gay/bisexual/another sexuality – higher than the 6% recorded in the 2017 study.

4. **A comparatively high proportion of visitors were residents from outside of Newcastle**

   Again, using a comparison of the aforementioned 2017 study which recorded 59% of city centre users as non-residents of Newcastle, the Christmas Markets attracted a high percentage of non-Newcastle residents (73%), suggesting a wide, and typically regional appeal – drawing in a number of visitors from the surrounding Tyne and Wear, County Durham, Teesside and Northumberland areas, as well as further afield.

5. **The visibility and tradition of Newcastle’s Christmas Markets is a key factor in attracting visitors**

   Simply seeing the Christmas Markets was undoubtedly the most typical factor inducing visits. However, note also the power of social media in spreading the word. Over a quarter of visitors had read online about the Christmas Markets – clearly eclipsing more traditional media sources (newspaper, radio, television, etc.) in both impact and reach.

6. **Around 1 visitor in 5 had travelled into the city centre specifically because of the Christmas Markets**

   This suggests that, for many, the Christmas Markets do not play a pivotal role in a city centre visit, but rather exist as an aside to a more fundamental activity.
7. **Once on-site, many visitors spent a significant amount of time at the Christmas Markets**

Almost 30% spent more than an hour on-site, suggesting that their attraction was sufficient to retain people’s interest. With an often extensive visit, taking in all the Christmas Markets had to offer, (and an average number of visits at around 3 per person) visitors were thus well-placed to both rate and comment on what they had experienced.

8. **Overall perceptions of the Christmas Markets were extremely positive**

Over 90% of visitors interviewed rated them in positive terms – with almost 60% rating them very positively. These are ratings which are consistently evident across demographic characteristics – suggesting majority applause across all visitor types.

9. **Three compliments emerged as themes underpinning this applause**

Firstly was the extended footprint of the Christmas Markets. The appeal of a bigger, longer and generally ‘super-sized’ approach was welcomed. Secondly, perceptions of increased variety – with more to see, do, buy and browse – held clear appeal. Thirdly, the appearance of the Christmas Markets was praised. Descriptions of a brighter, lighter, better decorated environment were given, felt to lend the streets a ‘Christmassy’ and ‘alive’ atmosphere and ambience which people clearly found appealing. Note also that visitors were often drawn to specific stalls, attractions and rides – of which the Après Ski Bar and toboggan slide had particular appeal.

10. **Comparatively, the Christmas Markets were felt to out-perform those of 2018**

Almost 90% of visitors interviewed felt that the 2019 Christmas Markets offer was better than that of the year before. 96% regarded them as important for the city – clearly emphasising their salience in the minds of visitors.

11. **However, note a number of suggested improvements to the Christmas Markets**

60% of visitors interviewed on-site requested at least one improvement to the Christmas Markets. There were also a number of critical feelings received online, which it’s useful to take note of. Together, they suggest the need for a reconsideration of layout in the context of the pedestrian congestion on Northumberland Street (due to the sheer footfall evident); a need to increase stall variety, incorporating fewer fast food and duplicated (for example, cheese) stalls; the inclusion of a greater number of local traders, selling more artisanal, craft based and ‘unique’ items, and an accompanying increase in the quality and value for money of produce.
12. The economic impact of the Christmas Markets can be calculated as almost £70 million.

This is a figure which includes all expenditure at the Christmas Markets themselves. It also includes city centre spend by those whose primary reason for being in the location was the Christmas Markets.

Other Christmas Markets visitors, journeying into the city centre primarily for other reasons, also spent money on retail/purchases and therefore overall total spend is higher at over £228 million.

If other sources of data were available (i.e. Market traders’ spend), then the economic impact could be observed to potentially increase further.

Detailed research findings are now presented.
On-Site Research Participants
800 Christmas Markets’ visitors were interviewed on-site.

Their demographic characteristics are presented below.

The Gender and Age of Respondents

39% of respondents were male and 61% were female.

The survey most frequently utilised the views of those aged 25-39 (30%). However, there was representation from both younger and older age groups.

The Ethnicity of Respondents

82% of respondents described their ethnicity as White British, with 18% of a minority ethnicity. The most frequent minority ethnicities were White Irish and White Other, accounting for 11% of the sample.

All other minority groups - including Asian, Caribbean, Mixed race, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black African, Chinese and other self-described ethnicities - collectively accounted for the remaining 7% of the sample.

Respondents Health Problems and Disabilities

12% of respondents indicated that they had a long-term health problem or disability which affected their mobility.

The Sexual Orientation of Respondents

Just over 90% of respondents described their sexuality as heterosexual, with 4% bisexual, 3% gay men, 2% gay women/lesbian and the remaining 1% self-describing as another sexuality.
Christmas Markets' Visitors from Across the North East of the UK and Beyond

The Christmas Markets attracted visitors from across the North East region of the UK and beyond. Here we see the density of the majority of visitors sampled (leaving aside those from further afield due to scale), with lower (grey shaded) to higher (red to yellow shaded) representation.

27% of visitors were residents of Newcastle.

A further 64% were from the wider North East region – including all other NE, DH, DL, SR and TS postcodes.

A further 7% were from other regions of the UK.

2% were from outside of the UK – with locations including France, Spain, Germany, Norway, Poland, The Netherlands, and North/South America.
Markets Visits
Total number of 2019 Christmas Markets visits: 2.78 million

This more than doubles the 2016 estimate of 1 million visits.

Northumberland Street stalls and rides attracted 55% of all visits.

The 2-6pm time period attracted the highest number of all visits (49%), followed by 10am-2pm (30%) and 6-9pm (21%).

A typical weekday attracted around 50,000 visits, compared to a typical weekend day which attracted around 117,000 visits.
Finding Out about Newcastle’s 2019 Christmas Markets

Having established the total number of visitors, and their residence, it’s useful to also consider how visitors found out about the Christmas Markets. Seeing the Christmas Markets when passing by dominated as the most usual method of finding out about them (53%). Social media (26%) and friends/family (15%) represent the most frequent other sources. More than one source was sometimes specified. * Other included radio, Citylife, email, websites and place of work.
Travelling to the City Centre

A majority of respondents had travelled to the city centre via public transport, typically on the bus (34%), or the Metro (22%). Just over 20% had travelled by car, with the remainder either walking (12%) or utilising other transport modes (10%).

- Bus: 34%
- Metro: 22%
- Car: 22%
- On foot: 12%
- Other (cycle, coach, taxi, train, van, motorcycle, moped and lorry): 10%
The Typical Duration of Christmas Markets Visits

The most typical Christmas Markets’ visit lasted up to 30 minutes (44%). However, note many visits which extended beyond this duration, with a further 27% spending between 30 minutes and an hour, and a further 19% spending 1-2 hours.
Main Reasons for Travelling to the City Centre

Just over 20% of respondents indicated that the Christmas Markets was the main reason for their visit to the city centre. However, for the majority (almost 80%) of respondents being in the City Centre was led by another reason – typically shopping, work, or meeting friends/family.

Typical Number of Visits to the Christmas Markets per Individual

The average number of visits to the Christmas Markets per individual was 3. Around 80% of respondents were visiting between 1 and 3 times for the duration of the Christmas Markets.

Associated Visits to the Grainger Market

Just over 30% of visitors to the Christmas Markets said that they would also visit the Grainger Market during their time in the city centre – typically to generally browse (8%), to buy fruit and vegetables or other food/drink (5-6%), to have a tea/coffee (4%), or buy other non-food items (4%).

Two interesting findings emerge in relation to the profile of those also visiting the Grainger Market. These relate to gender and residence – with males (37%) being more likely than females (28%) to visit the Grainger Market, and Newcastle residents (35%) being more likely than non-Newcastle residents (29%) to do so.

Over 70% of those who were also visiting the Grainger Market said that this was a factor underpinning their visit to the city centre.
Markets Perceptions
Rating the Christmas Markets

Perceptions of the Christmas Markets were overwhelmingly positive – with 92% of all those interviewed on-site rating them as very good (59%) or fairly good (33%). In contrast, just 8% felt that the Markets were poor.

Overleaf we consider how these overall perceptions vary by key demographic characteristics.
How Overall Ratings of the Christmas Markets Varied

It’s also useful to summarise how overall ratings of the Christmas Markets vary according to key demographic characteristics. This shows that across all demographic categories analysed there were very positive overall ratings of the Christmas Markets. These ratings peaked among those aged 16-24 (68% rating the Christmas Markets as very good, with a further 30% rating them as very good). White British visitors tended to be slightly more emphatic than minority ethnic visitors in their overall positive ratings, whilst non-Newcastle residents were slightly more likely than residents to rate the Christmas Markets very positively.

![Bar chart showing how overall ratings of the Christmas Markets varied according to demographics.](chart.png)
What Underpins Overall Ratings of the Christmas Markets?

There were three key elements which underpinned the largely positive ratings of the Christmas Markets – size, variety and appearance. In combination, they represented the most frequent compliments about the Markets (shown below in blue), eclipsing more critical considerations (shown below in grey) which included perceptions of insufficient variety, associated congestion and a proliferation of food stalls.

![Bar chart showing the percentage of compliments and concerns about the Christmas Markets.](chart.png)
Comparisons with the 2018 Christmas Markets

89% of those interviewed felt that this year’s Christmas Markets were BETTER than last years.

The Importance of the Christmas Markets to the City

96% of those interviewed felt that the Christmas Markets were IMPORTANT for the city.
The Very Best of the Christmas Markets

Three aspects dominated perceptions of the very best of the Christmas Markets – specific stalls/attractions and rides (32%), appearance (29%) and the increased size of the Markets (25%). Within the first category, the Après Ski bar, the toboggan run and the on-site food stalls were frequently mentioned. In terms of appearance, the quality and quantity of lights and decorations, together with the Alpine-style wooden chalets were applauded, as was the increased size of the market and the variety this afforded. ‘Atmosphere’ was often described as the ‘Christmassy feel’ which the markets brought to the city, whilst others included additional city centre visitors/revenue generation, the extended duration/opening hours of the Christmas Markets and the accompanying pedestrianisation of Blackett Street. More than one response was sometimes given.
Thoughts on the Very Best of the Christmas Markets

“It's so much bigger - there are stalls everywhere!”

“There are more things to do, definitely!”

“The atmosphere is great”

“It looks better and shinier...more wow!”

“There's more variety compared to last year”

“I love the decorations and the added bits of lights”

“It's well-organised and designed”
Improving the Christmas Markets

60% of respondents suggested improvements to the Christmas Markets. These improvements tended to focus on a perceived need for increased diversity in stalls, and particularly in expanding the number of non-food stalls, together with those selling items able to be gifted, and Christmas-based goods.

Increased diversity of stalls

- More non-food stalls (27%)
- More stalls selling items suitable to gift (15%)
- More stalls selling Christmas-based items (15%)
- More variety in food to eat on-site (7%)
- More vegan /healthier food (2%)

Other requests

- More local produce/suppliers (6%)
- Cheaper prices (5%)
- Better quality of food (this/the following all less than 5%)
- Congestion issues addressed
- Information boards/signposts
- Places to sit
- Increased toilet provision
- Increased live music/Christmas music
- Stalls remaining open to advertised times (i.e. 9pm)
- Father Christmas/grotto
- Ice rink

Newcastle’s Christmas Lights

Over two-thirds (67%) of visitors to the Christmas Markets felt that the 2019 Christmas lights in the city centre were better than those of 2018. An overwhelming majority (98%) felt that these lights are important to the city centre.
Additional Findings from an Online Survey

A further 856 people participated in an online version of the on-site survey.

As the online version of the research was self-selecting, as such, the data should be regarded as an accompanying snap-shot of additional opinion on the Christmas Markets, rather than a robust, systematically sampled data-set (which the on-site survey represents). This is due to potential self-selection bias.

Self-selection bias very often results when survey respondents are allowed to decide entirely for themselves whether or not they choose to participate in a survey. This frequently results in biased data, as those who have chosen to participate may well not be a fair reflection/representation of the entire target population. In this instance, there was a bias of participation by those with a female and older demographic than was evident in the on-site random sample survey. It should also be acknowledged that a significant slice of critical opinion as a response to the social media survey invitation, may have effectively also set the tone for a snowball of critical opinions emerging from this source.
Nevertheless, it’s both useful and inclusive to consider this opinion, set against the more robust findings yielded by the on-site survey.

There were two key differences in findings in relation to perceptions of the Christmas Markets.

The first relates to overall ratings of the Christmas Markets. The following graph again shows a marked difference of opinion between the (mainly positive) responses randomly sampled on-site and the (mainly critical) responses self-selected online.

The second relates to comparisons between the 2019 Christmas Markets and those of 2018. The following graph again shows a marked difference of opinion between the (mainly positive) responses randomly sampled on-site and the (mainly critical) responses self-selected online.
Each of these graphs effectively illustrates the strongly critical weight of opinion collected online via the self-selecting survey. However, this cannot be considered to be a representative reflection of Christmas Markets’ visitors in the context of the on-site survey findings, which were significantly less critical. Nevertheless, we can draw some useful conclusions from it. In addition to the weight of critical opinion emanating from the online survey, it’s useful to focus also on the detail and range of this opinion. Here, there are a number of clear reasons as to why the Christmas Markets were viewed so critically by some. Interestingly, whilst these are much stronger in their emphasis, compared to the on-site survey, they nevertheless reflect very similar concerns.

### Congestion issues (44%)

- Pedestrian congestion/bottle-necking/overwhelming sensory overload as a result of the extended Christmas Markets and excessive cramping of stalls in a small area. Particular issues on Northumberland Street, with narrow walkways restricting movement/access to employment/fixed retail premises, and prompting health and safety concerns. Traffic, public transport and parking congestion as a result of increased footfall and closure of Blckett Street.

### Quality issues (25%)

- Perceptions of low quality produce - described as ‘cheap’, ‘tacky’, ‘tat’ and ‘downmarket’. Negative comparisons to other markets, including those in Edinburgh, Manchester, Leeds, York, Birmingham and overseas. Concerns that produce is mass-produced and generic rather than unique and individual.

### Dominance of fast food (23%)

- Concerns that there are simply proportionately too many outlets selling fast food, accompanied by predominantly unhealthy (meat and sugar heavy) food choices and overbearing smells.

### Lack of local traders/feel (21%)

- Concerns that local traders are not adequately represented, together with the view that the Christmas Markets offerings do not reflect the unique North East culture, nor help established city centre traders.

### Lack of variety (16%)

- Duplication of certain stalls throughout the Markets (for example, cheeses, chocolates, hats/scarves, German sausages and crepes), giving a false representation of scale.

### Expensive (16%)

- Perceptions of children’s rides and also produce (particularly fast food) being over-priced and out of kilter with established city centre comparisons.

Other concerns most frequently included perceptions of a lack of a clear Christmas theme/gifts, artisanal and craft items (each 4-5%).
Economic Impact
Calculating Economic Impact

We have used the approach suggested by Getz (1994) to assess the economic impact of the Christmas Markets by identifying:

- Total attendance at the Markets
- Expenditure of people attending the markets.

No multipliers or econometric models have been used – if they were to be applied, then the actual benefit the Christmas Markets bring to the city would be higher than the figures identified below.

The data available for the analysis has been sourced solely from the quantitative information acquired via the on-site survey (designed with this purpose in mind and including various spend-related questions) and on-site footfall counts.

Other sources of data that could typically be used to support an economic impact analysis were considered but were not available. For example, interviews with traders were outside the scope of the survey. Similarly, other data such as a Retail Sales Tracker, or footfall information from street cameras, were not available at the time of producing this report.

The charts overleaf consider average expenditure:

- On-site at the Christmas Markets
- Elsewhere in the city centre.
Average Per Person Single Visit Christmas Markets Expenditure

Respondents were asked to indicate Christmas Markets expenditure across three categories, relating to their visit during which they were interviewed. These categories consisted of shopping, food and drink (consumed on-site) and rides/attractions.

Almost 60% of respondents made a purchase (within any category) whilst visiting the Christmas Markets. As shown in the following chart in blue, the average spend across all people (including those who did not spend anything) was £11.80. Shopping showed an average of £5.90, followed by food/drink at an average of £5.22 and rides/attractions at £0.66.

As not everyone made a purchase, the chart also shows (in purple) the average spend in each category only among those who did make a purchase.
How Average Per Person Single Visit Christmas Markets Expenditure Varied

It’s also useful to summarise how average per person single visit spend at the Christmas Markets varied according to key demographic characteristics. This shows that the biggest spenders were those aged 25-49 (average £13.81). Those from outside of the city were also likely to spend a higher average amount (£12.91) compared to city residents (£8.79).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Average Expenditure (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>£11.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>£10.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>£12.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-24</td>
<td>£10.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-49</td>
<td>£13.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50+</td>
<td>£10.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White British</td>
<td>£12.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority ethnic</td>
<td>£10.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Newcastle resident</td>
<td>£12.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle resident</td>
<td>£8.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Average Per Person Single Visit City Centre Expenditure

Respondents were also asked to indicate *city centre expenditure* (excluding the Christmas Markets) across seven categories, relating to the visit during which they were interviewed. These categories consisted of shopping, eating out/drinking, services, entertainment (cinema, theatre, concert, leisure facility, etc.), accommodation, public transport/taxis/parking and other expenditure. 88% of respondents made a purchase (within any category) within the city centre. As shown in the following chart in blue, the average expenditure across all people (including those who did not spend anything) was £70.34. Shopping showed an average of £49.70, followed by food/drink at an average of £11.45 and all other categories at a much lower level. As not everyone made a purchase, the chart also shows (in purple) the average spend in each category only among those who did make a purchase.
How Average Per Person Single Visit City Centre Expenditure Varied

It’s also useful to summarise how average per person single visit spend at in the city centre varied according to key demographic characteristics. This shows that the biggest spenders were females, those aged 50+ and those from outside of the city.

![Bar chart showing how per person single visit city centre expenditure varied according to demographics. The biggest spenders were females, those aged 50+, and those from outside of the city.](chart.png)
Calculating Total Christmas Markets Expenditure

With an average per person single visit spend at the Christmas Markets of £11.80, the total spend for the estimated 2.78 million visitors would be:

£32.81 million

Calculating Total City Centre Expenditure

With an average per person single visit city centre expenditure (excluding the Christmas Markets) of £70.34, the total spend for the estimated 2.78 million visitors would be:

£195.59 million

However, it is prudent to believe that a significant portion of this spend would happen even if the Christmas Markets were not operating. Hence an alternative view of the city centre spend is to look at the amount spent by only those visitors who indicated that the Christmas Markets were the main reason for their visit to the city. Just over 20% of the survey sample indicated that this was the case. Whilst the overall city centre spend per visitor was £70.34, the average for those indicating the Christmas Markets were the main reason for their visit was slightly lower at £66.25, giving a total spend in this category of:

£36.61 million

Calculating Aggregate Expenditure

From the collected data, the average person spent £82.13 during their visit to the city centre. This spend included purchases associated with the Christmas Markets and also the remainder of the city centre.

If we estimate the gross economic impact to the city as simply the average spend per person multiplied by the number of visitors (2.78 million) this gives a total figure of

£228.35 million

However, this figure again includes spend that would be incurred if the Christmas Markets were not in operation.
A more prudent estimate of the economic impact would therefore be to look at spend directly in the Christmas Markets, and in the city centre by those people who visited specifically because of the Markets – a total of:

**£69.42 million**

**Growth Since 2016**

To validate and justify the above figures, we sought to compare the data for 2019 with sources from previous years. The benchmark used was the Local Government Association report “Festive Cheer: The local impact of Christmas Markets”, 2018. This report included comparative figures available from Newcastle’s 2016 Christmas Markets.

Before comparing the revenues generated, it is worth noting the growth in size of the Christmas Markets from 2016 to 2019, both in terms of duration and footprint:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Days open</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Stalls</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, we understand that the hours of opening have been extended since 2016, although the exact 2016 hours are not available. In 2019 there were almost double the number of stalls, open for over 50% more days and for longer hours each day.

We would therefore expect to see this growth reflected in the revenues generated by the Christmas Markets.
Spend Comparison

In 2019 data was captured regarding spend in different categories, which can be directly compared with 2016 as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016 £ million</th>
<th>2019 £ million</th>
<th>Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.55</td>
<td>2.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating Out</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>31.84</td>
<td>2.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>170.98</td>
<td>2.97</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>6.84</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6.15</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross economic impact</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>228.35</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As there was no category of “other” spend in 2016, this cannot be compared. It is possible, however, that some of the spend categorised here in 2019 was included as “Entertainment” in 2016, which could explain the only category where spend has fallen.

Spend on Transport has not risen in line with other categories. But for all these other categories, including the gross economic impact, the increase is consistently within the range of 2.39-2.97.

Of further significance is the fact that the estimated number of Christmas Markets’ attendees in 2016 was 1 million. In 2019 this was 2.78 million, so the increase by a factor of 2.78 is firmly in the middle of the range of spend increases and very close to the increase in the economic impact.

In summary, the consistent range of spend increases, in line with the attendance increase, gives confidence in the accuracy of these figures.

Furthermore, they can be explained by the growth in the size and duration of the Christmas Markets and supported by the rigorous data collection methodologies used in interviewing visitors regarding their spend and counting the number of Christmas Markets attendees.
Contextual Data

We were unable to access the source data supporting the Local Government Association report “Festive Cheer: The local impact of Christmas Markets” report. However, this report noted that:

- The research has highlighted that there is limited data captured from these markets
- Even the larger case studies which have been running for a number of years have only captured limited information
- The data available is extremely limited and can be inconsistent
- It is clear that there is a lack of information being gathered.

Furthermore, the report by NABMA and ROI Team “Christmas Markets – Bringing Markets Alive For New Supporters”, 2015, which looked at five large UK Christmas Markets over the period 2012-2014, noted that:

- Surprisingly, no study indicated a dedicated footfall count, instead footfall was either extrapolated from counting systems located elsewhere in the town, or was estimated
- Definitions used in reports (for example measures of aggregate spend or spend in the town centre) vary widely
- Some measures are based on an element of projection or estimation – in particular footfall figures.

In conclusion, with no standard benchmark ways of collecting footfall and spend data, or categorising and analysing this data, it is difficult to compare the economic impact of the Newcastle Christmas Markets with other markets and ensure that we are comparing like with like. However, the approach used in this report, together with the sample size (people interviewed), is robust in comparison to figures quoted for other studies. For example, the 5 Christmas Markets described in the NABMA report utilised data based on interviews with between 270 and 828 visitors to these markets.

Effect on Existing Retailers

Typically, a Christmas Market may have a positive or negative effect on existing shops or retailers in the vicinity. In the absence of any data from these other retailers, we are unable to definitively identify the impact here. There was some anecdotal feedback during interviews that Grainger Market traders were suffering negatively, but this cannot be established. However, what was identified by the data collected was that:

- 31% of visitors said that they would also visit the Grainger Market
- Visitors to the Christmas Markets are spending an average of £70.34 in the city outside the Christmas Markets, with £49.70 spent on shopping at other retailers.
Local Traders and Suppliers

Some Christmas Markets will have a positive economic impact by having:

- Stalls operated by local businesses
- Stalls selling local produce
- Traders sourcing their products or other raw materials locally
- Non-local traders staying in the area and generating spend on food and accommodation.

In the absence of any data from traders, we are not able to establish whether any of these benefits apply. Any activity in these areas would further increase the income generated in the Newcastle area by the markets. For example, it was noted in the Local Government Association report “Festive Cheer: The local impact of Christmas Markets” that “As an example, traders at one Christmas market with around 20 international street food traders spent approximately £130,000 across 19 local suppliers of fresh food products such as eggs, flour, cheeses, milk, oils and so on”.

Main Reasons for Travelling to the City Centre

As previously reported, just over 20% of respondents indicated that the Christmas Markets was the main reason for their visit to the city centre. This figure remains consistent (19-20%) across most of the locations where visitors reside. However, a significantly larger proportion of overseas visitors identified the Christmas Markets as being the main reason for their visit to Newcastle (although this should be treated with caution as the data forms a small sample size).

In terms of economic impact, this analysis shows that the Christmas Markets attracted a large number of visitors to Newcastle who otherwise may not have visited the city.

END