

LET'S TALK RUBBISH

**A LOOK INTO PERCEPTIONS AND BEHAVIOURS
SURROUNDING LITTER AND WASTE**

Clean Cornwall, 2022



IN 2021 WE CARRIED OUT THE LET'S TALK RUBBISH SURVEY

A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN



&



**DR ISABEL RICHTER,
UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH**

The purpose of this survey was to inform Clean Cornwall campaigns so that they reflect the communities' views and wishes and to make sure we are investing time and money in the right places!

KEY OUTCOMES:

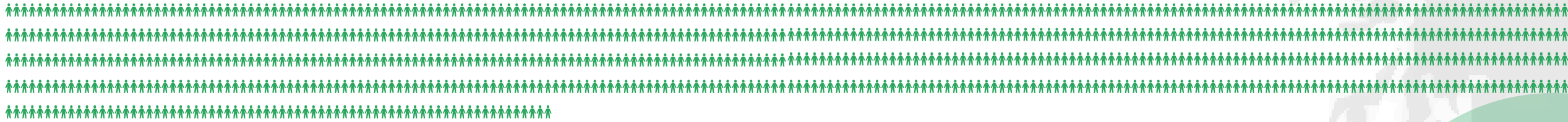
- UNDERSTAND TARGET AUDIENCES
- WHO IS BLAMING WHO?
- WHAT MOTIVATES PEOPLE TO TAKE ACTION?
- WHAT ARE THE MOST DISPOSED OF ITEMS IN DIFFERENT AREAS?
- BEHAVIOURAL CHARACTERISTICS AND DRIVERS



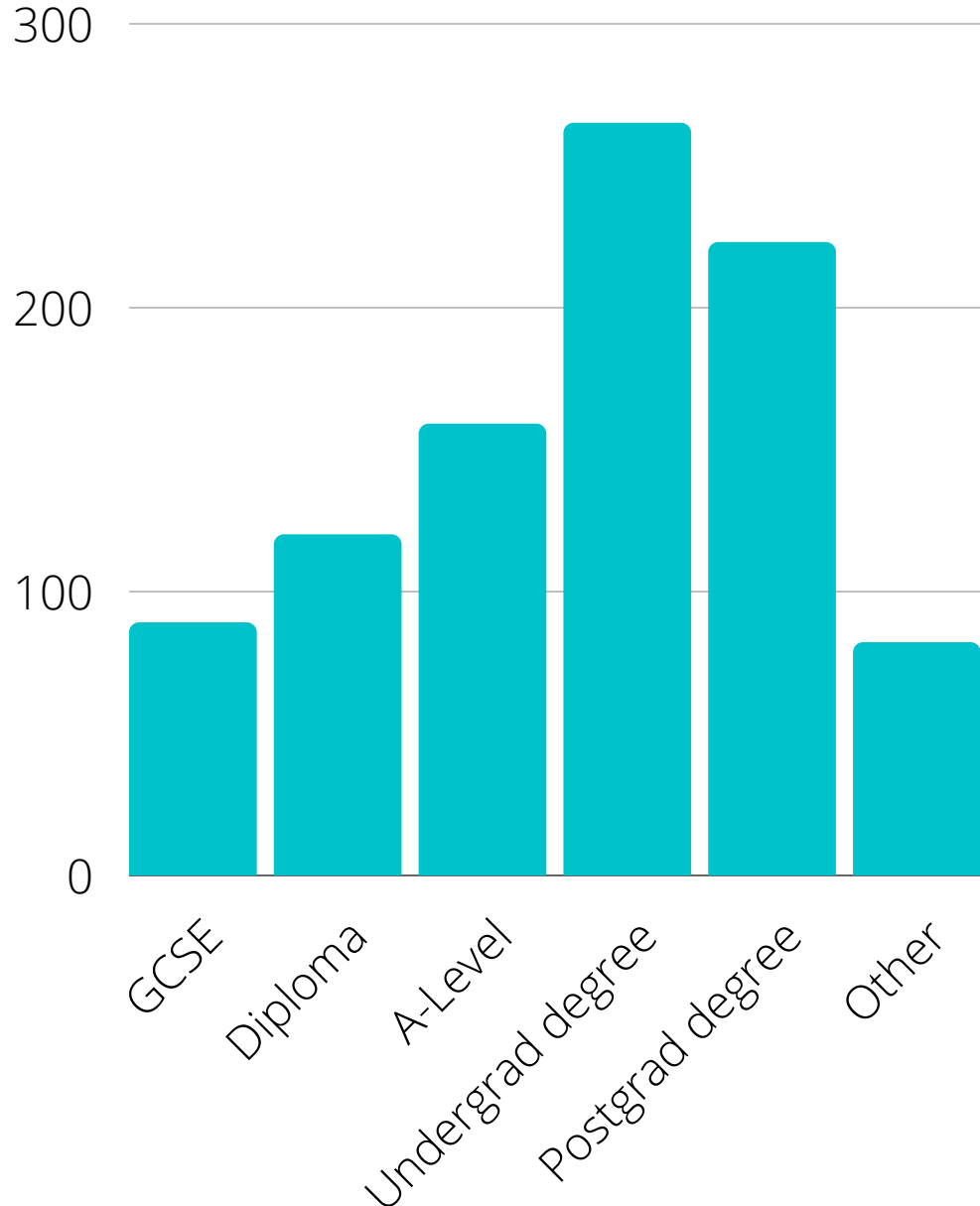
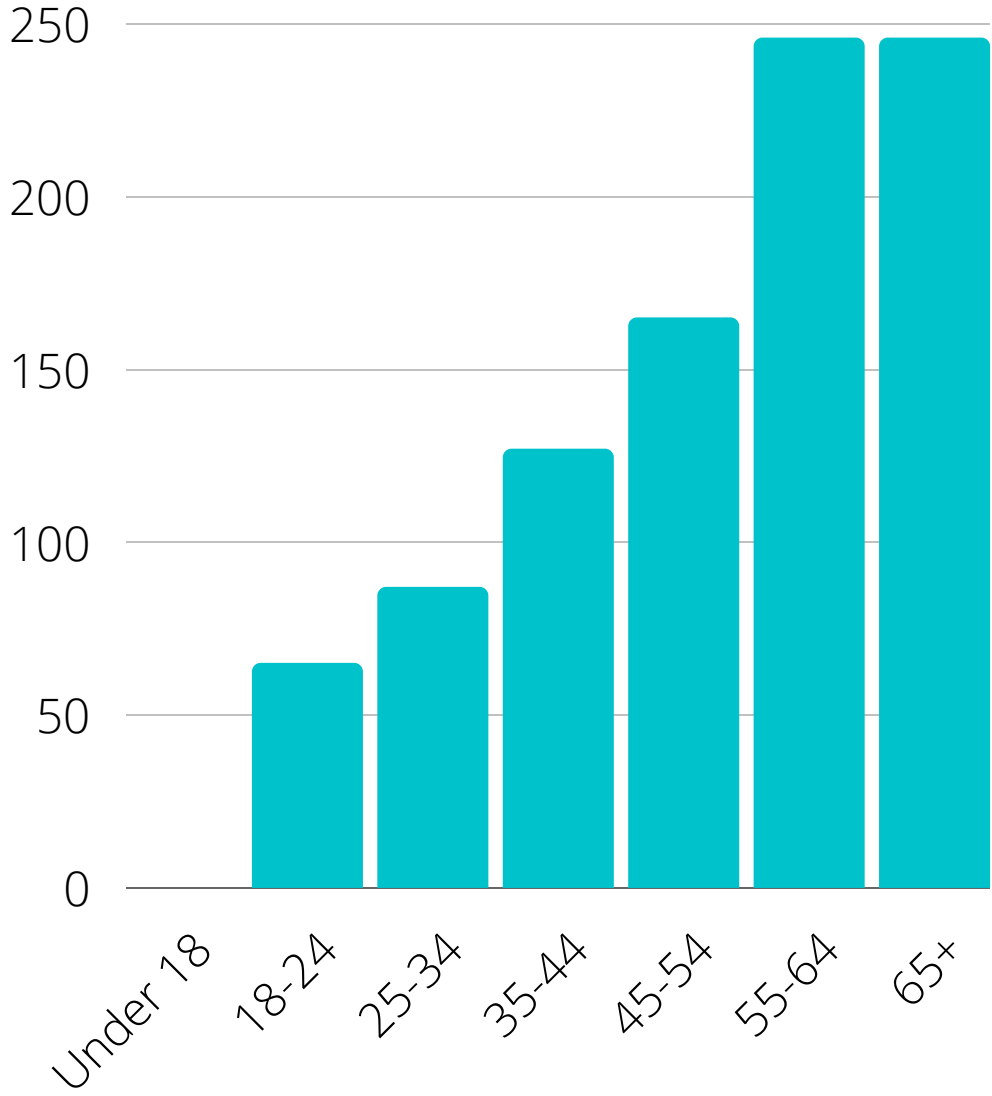
WHO TOOK PART

870

VALID
RESPONSES



OVER RANGE OF AGES



We had more than enough respondents to give meaningful and statistically valid results

All respondents were over 18. Next time we would like to do more to include the voice of those under 18

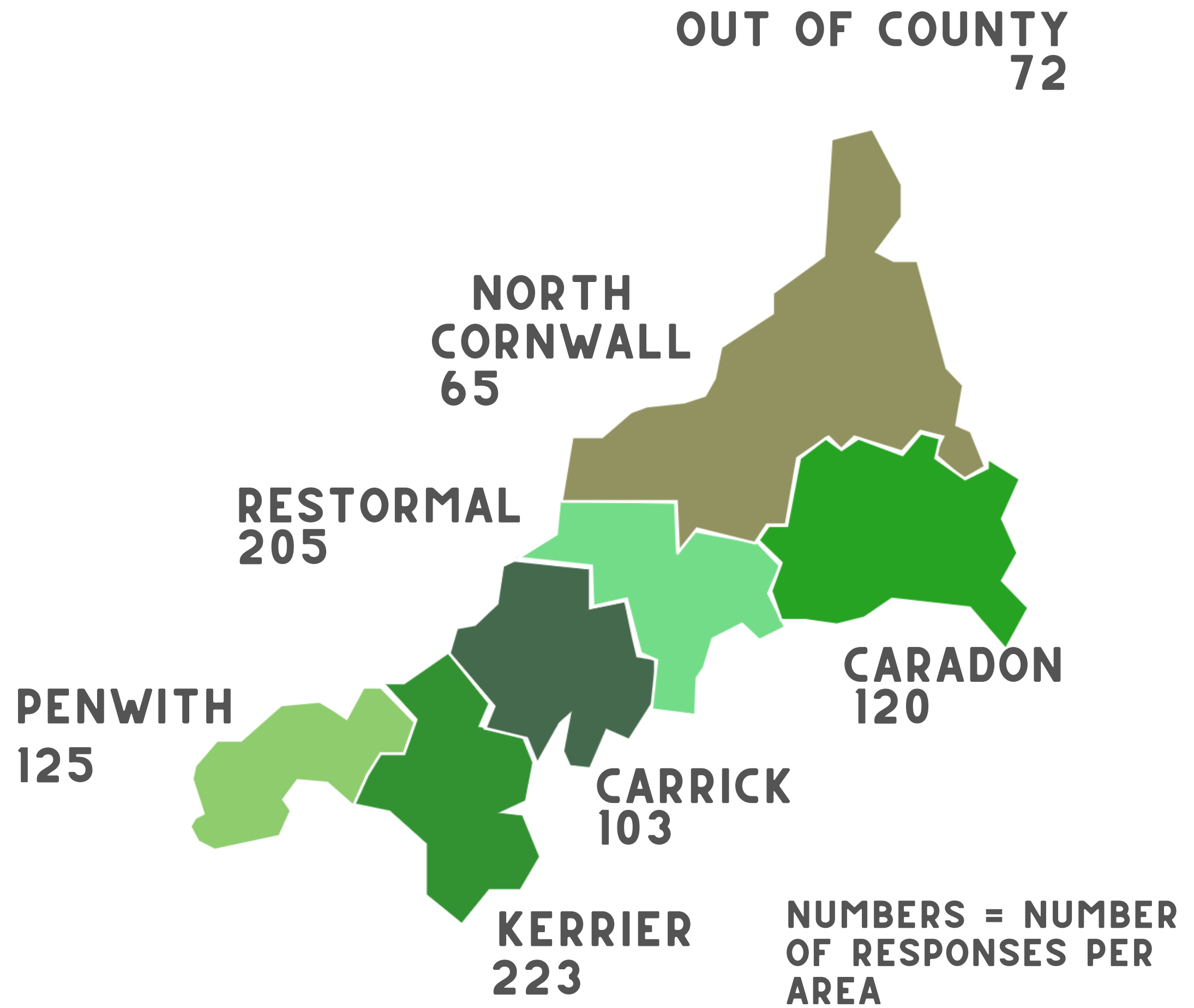


NUMBER OF RESPONSES PER AREA

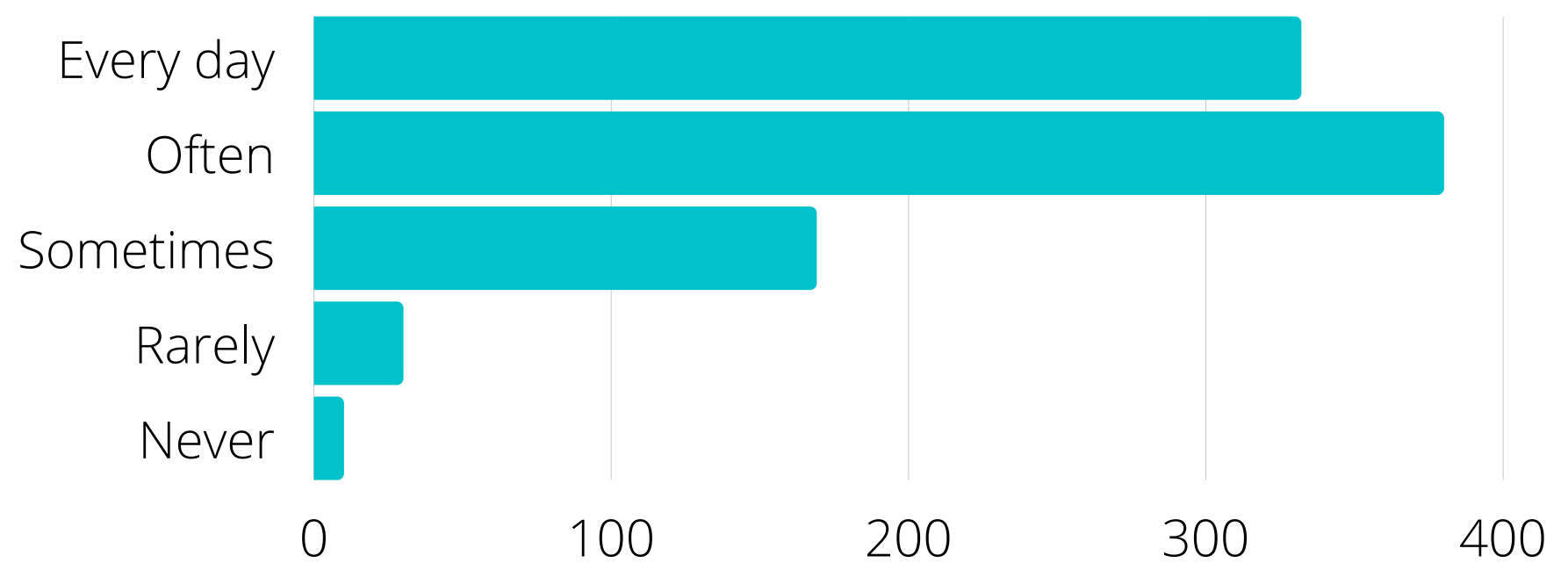
Majority of responses were from Cornwall, with 72 responses out of Cornwall.

In Cornwall, Restormal and Kerrier had the most responses. Responses were quite well distributed across districts.

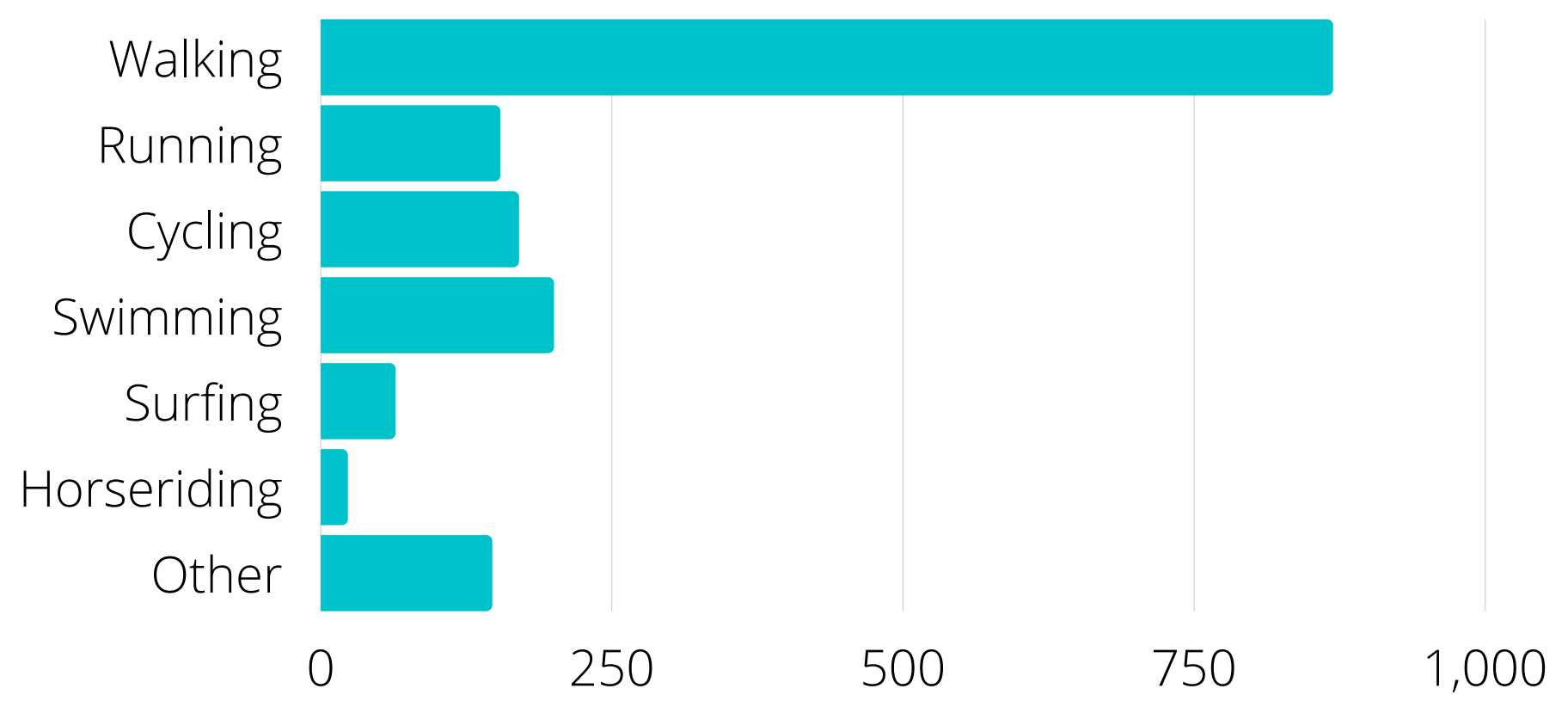
IOS
12



HOW OFTEN PARTICIPANTS GO OUTDOORS



MAIN OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES



Others included: gardening, stand up paddle boarding, golf, tennis, bird watching, and litter picking!

HOW DO PEOPLE USE THE OUTDOORS?

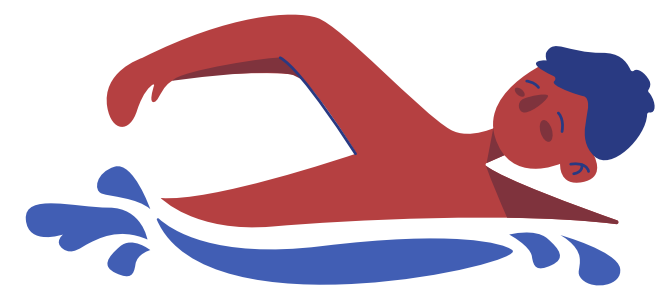
We wanted to test people's relationship with the outdoors and see how that affected their responses to the survey, as well as just seeing the demographic of who took part.



Lots of the participants go outdoors either every day or often, with very few participants rarely or never going outside.



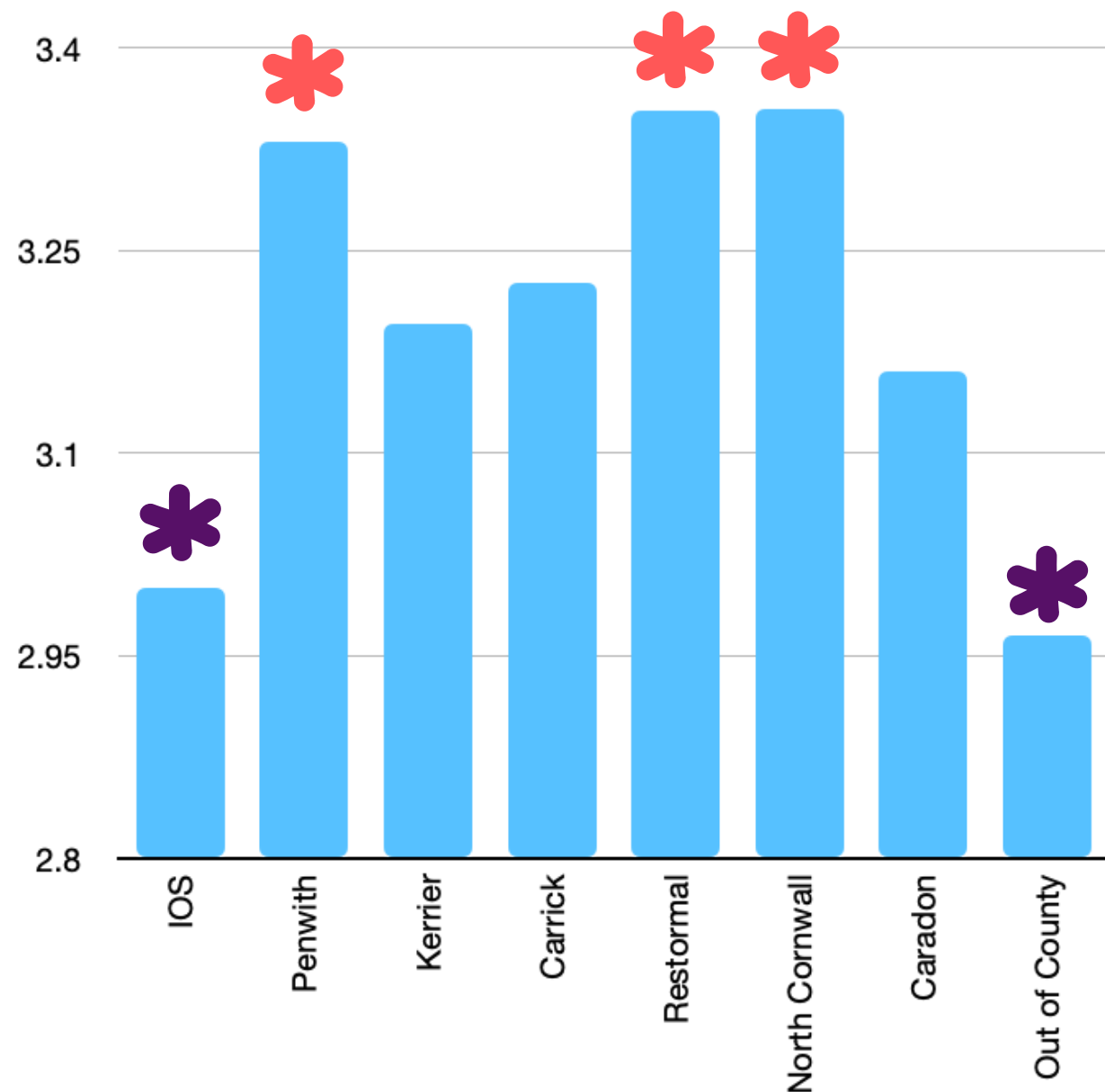
The main activity by far are: walking, people also enjoy running, cycling, swimming, surfing.



DIFFERENCES ACROSS DISTRICTS

WHO PERCEIVED THE MOST LITTER?

- Residents of Penwith, Restormal and North Cornwall noticed the most.
- Residents of Isles of Scilly and out of county noticed the least.



"PUBLIC" VS. "PRIVATE"



Behaviour can be split into public and private action:

- Public action is behaviour such as taking part in a beach clean, sharing a post on social media or talking to a friend about waste.
- Private behaviour happens more at home, habits like recycling, reducing personal use of plastic.

700 people indicated they engage in private behaviours on a regular basis. Much less people perform Public behaviours - this could be because they are not as habitual.

WHO'S THE MOST LIKELY TO PERFORM "PUBLIC" ACTION.

MOST LIKELY:

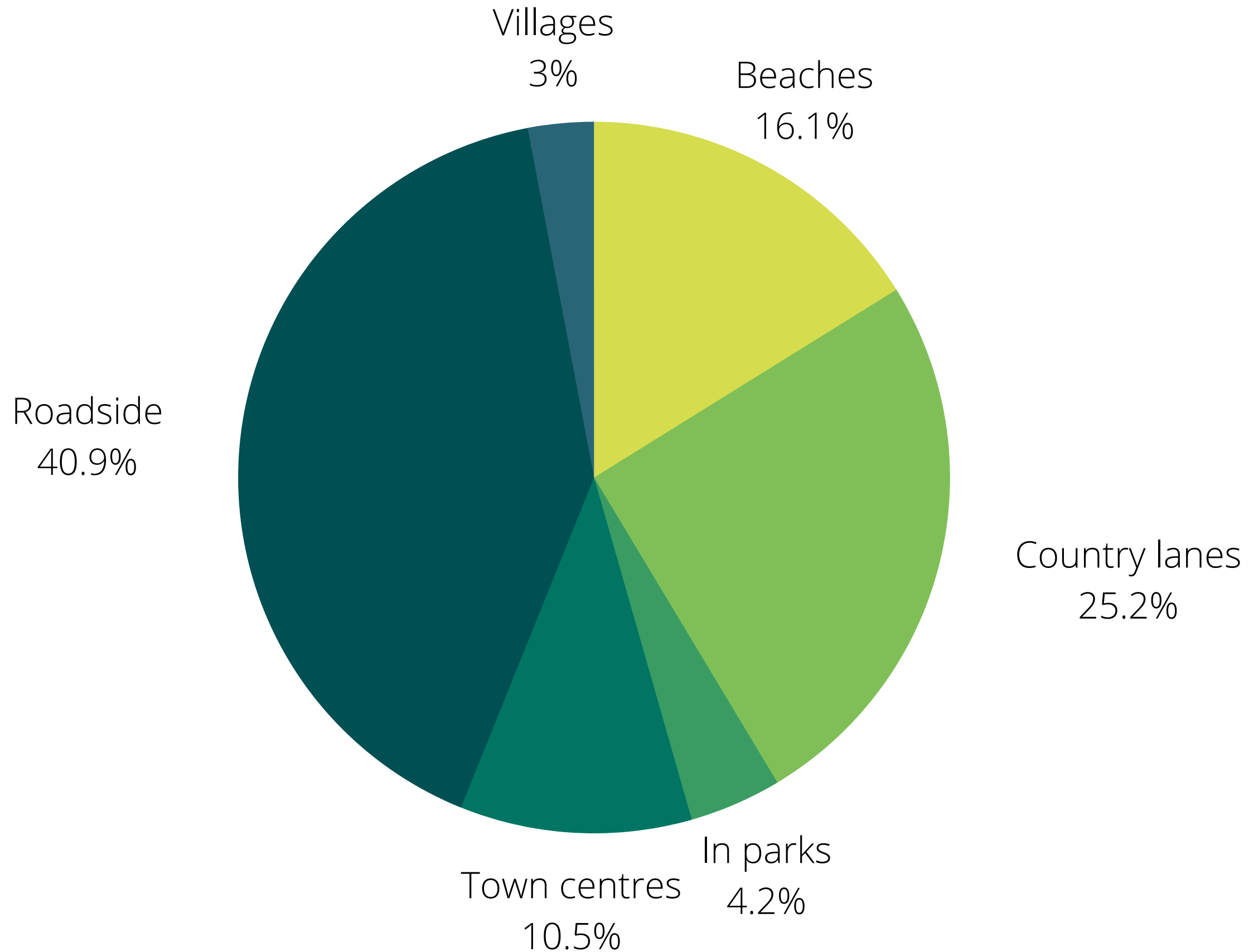
- ISLE OF SCILLY
- KERRIER
- CARRICK
- NORTH CORNWALL

LEAST LIKELY:

- RESIDENTS FROM OUTSIDE CORNWALL

We also found that people who perform one positive behaviour are more likely to do another one, therefore; you could target one specific action in campaigns and hope that it serves as gateway to other positive behaviours?

WHERE IS LITTER SEEN?



Majority of litter is seen on the roadside.

These results are seen across every district in Cornwall .

This was followed by beaches, with only 16.1% of people saying they felt this was where most litter is found.

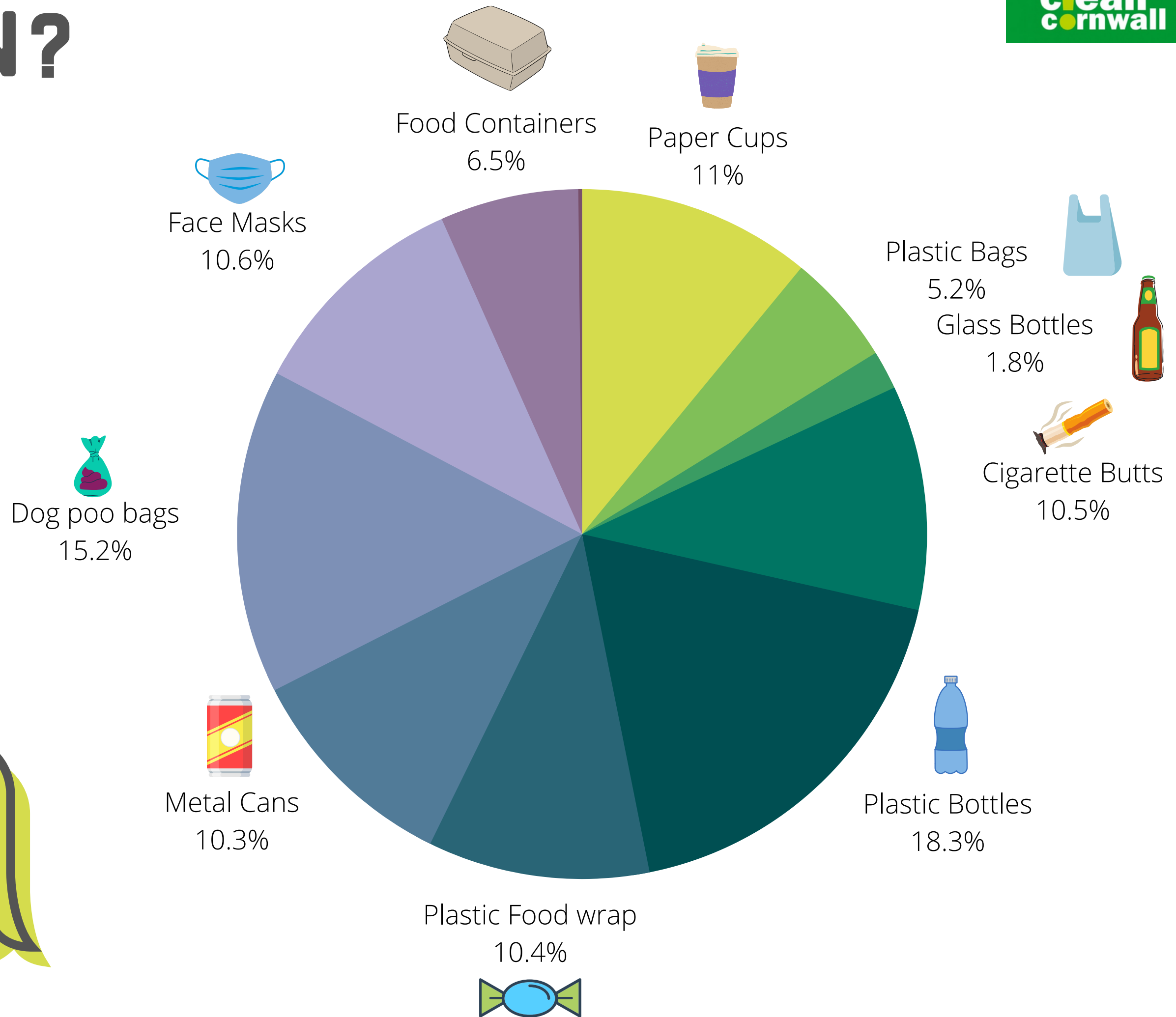
10.5% said town centres were litter hotspots, followed by parks and least of all, villages.

Recommendation, use this data to target campaigns towards roadsides and lanes

WHAT IS SEEN?

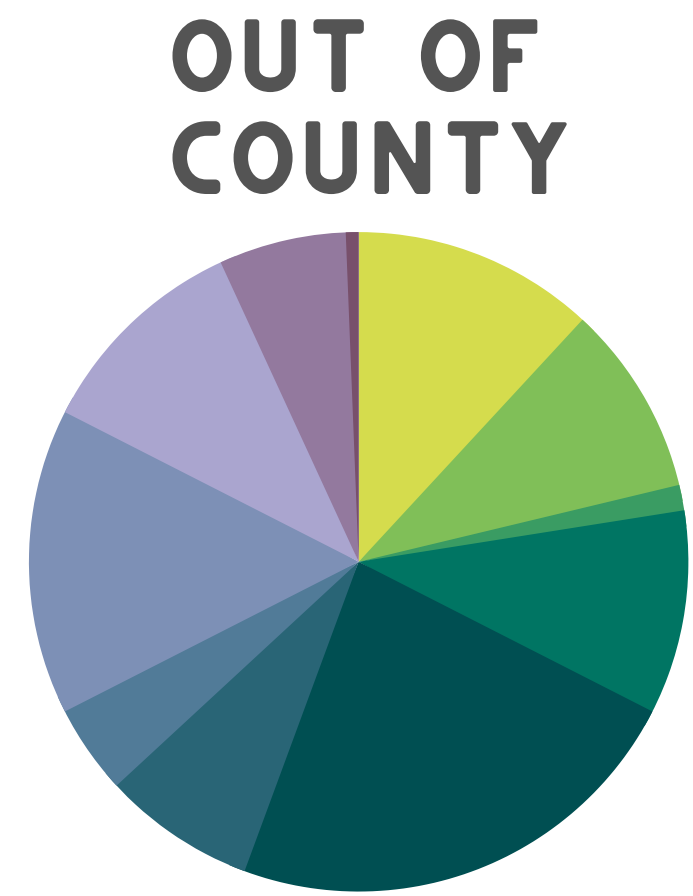
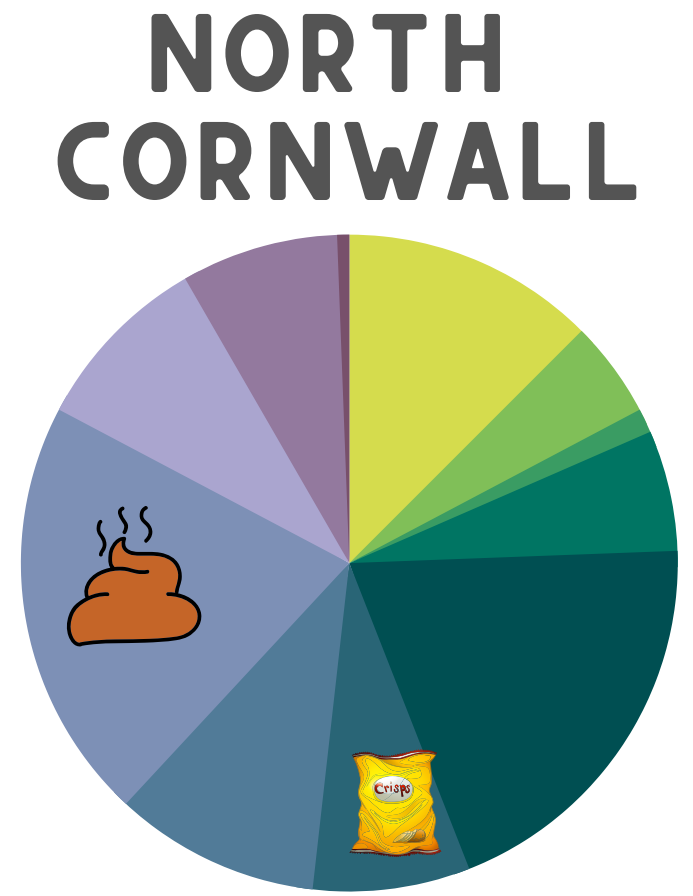
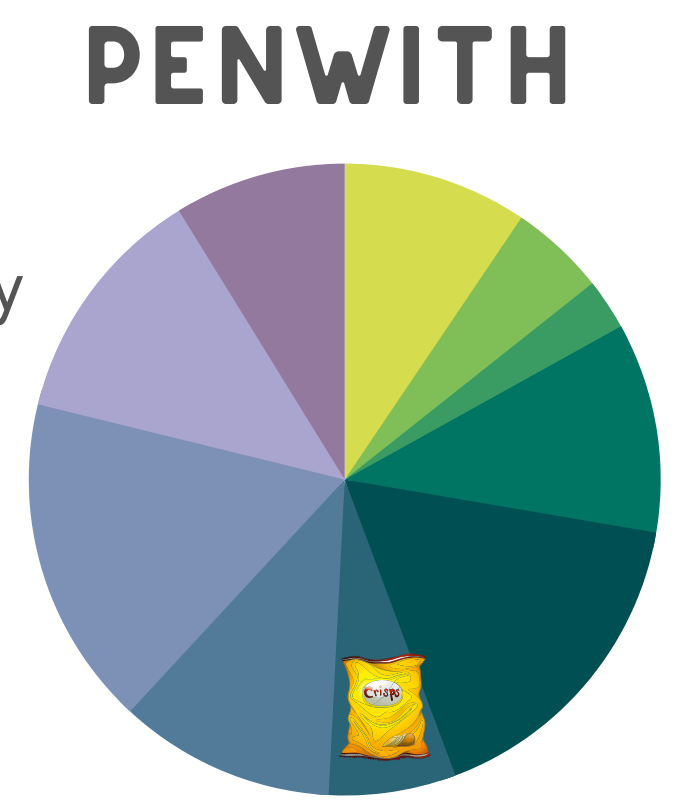
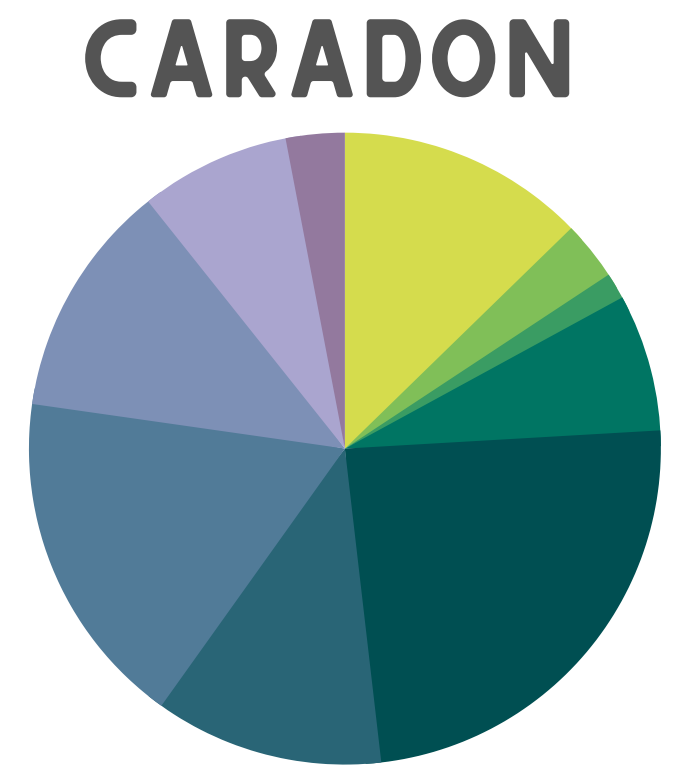
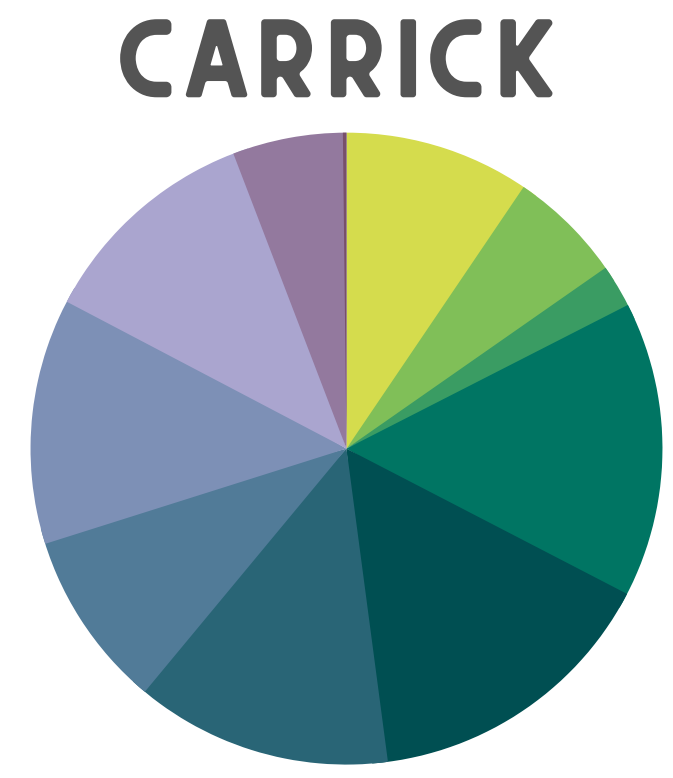
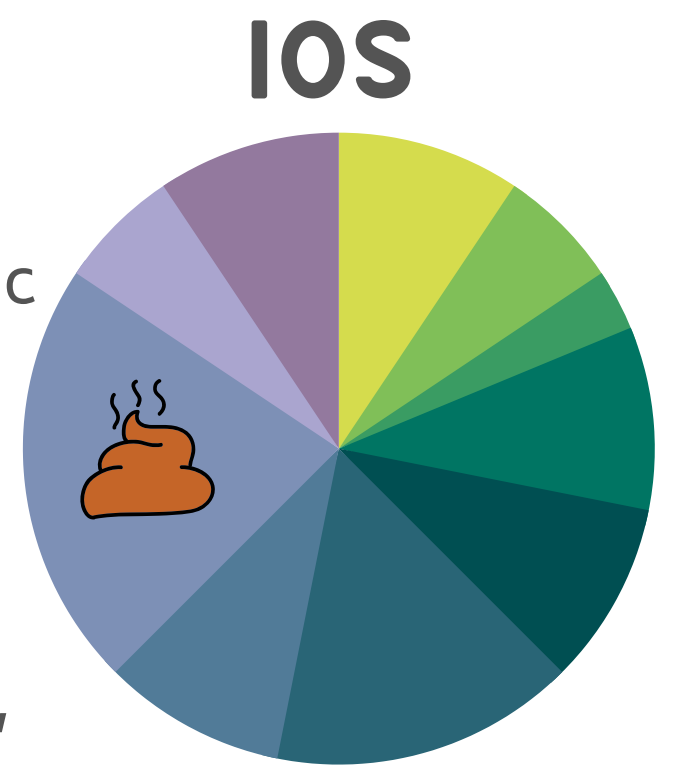
- Plastic bottles are the most noticed item, followed by dog poo bags.
- Nappies were considered the least littered of the options given.
- There were some regional differences (see overleaf).

When targeting campaigns look at what is the biggest perceived culprit for the local area. Generally the worst offending litter items are similar across the county (county wide campaigns).



REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

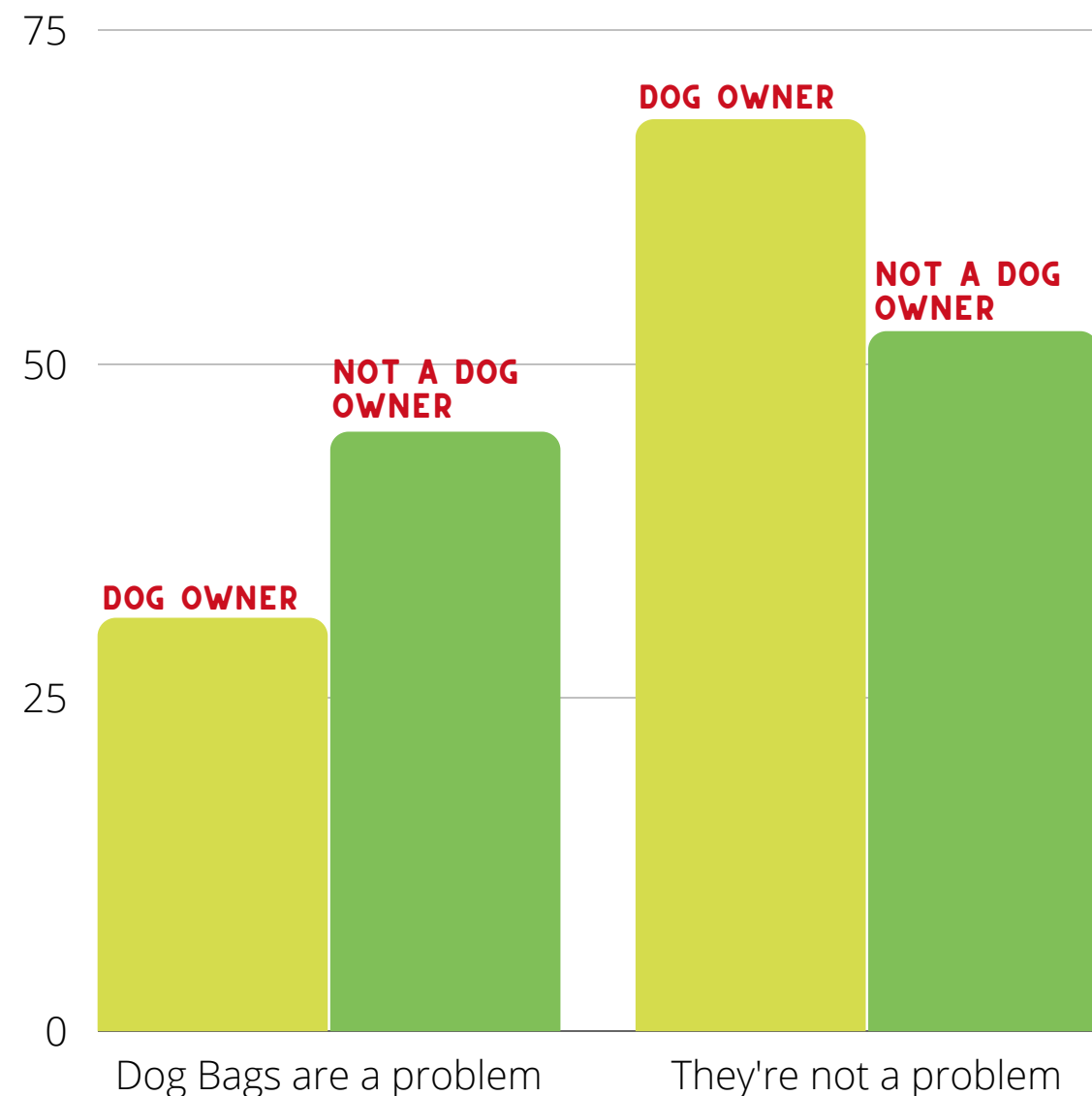
- Across different regions, people noticed different amounts of: cig butts, plastic bottles, plastic wrappers, drinks cans and poo bags.
- If we are targeting a campaign in a specific area, it will be useful to consult this to see what problems people perceive in their local area.
- IOS and North Cornwall say they see the most dog poo bags.
- Penwith and North Cornwall see the least plastic food wrap.



ON THE TOPIC OF POO BAGS...

POO BAGS ARE CONSIDERED THE SECOND MOST LITTERED ITEM IN CORNWALL

THERE WAS A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PERCEPTIONS OF DOG OWNERS VS NON DOG OWNERS ABOUT WHETHER DOG POO BAGS WERE A BIG LITTER ISSUE



THE SURVEY SAW A TREND IN PEOPLE FROM CORNWALL BLAME VISITORS FOR LEAVING RUBBISH BEHIND WHEREAS THERE WAS A TREND FROM VISITORS SAYING "IT'S DOG WALKERS LEAVING POO BAGS"

General comments within the survey on the dog poo issue came under the following themes:

- People felt we need more enforcement as a deterrent for people that do not pick up after their dogs.
- People have commented that there are not enough dog poo bins, especially in 'hot spots'.
- Respondents feel confident that the reason we see dog poo bags hanging in trees, off fences etc is that they genuinely feel they will biodegrade if left behind and that there needs to be more education around misleading packaging.

"I have noticed that the dog poo problem on our walk to school is particularly bad. Teach children with dogs as pets how unsafe dog poo is and they might spread the message to their families."

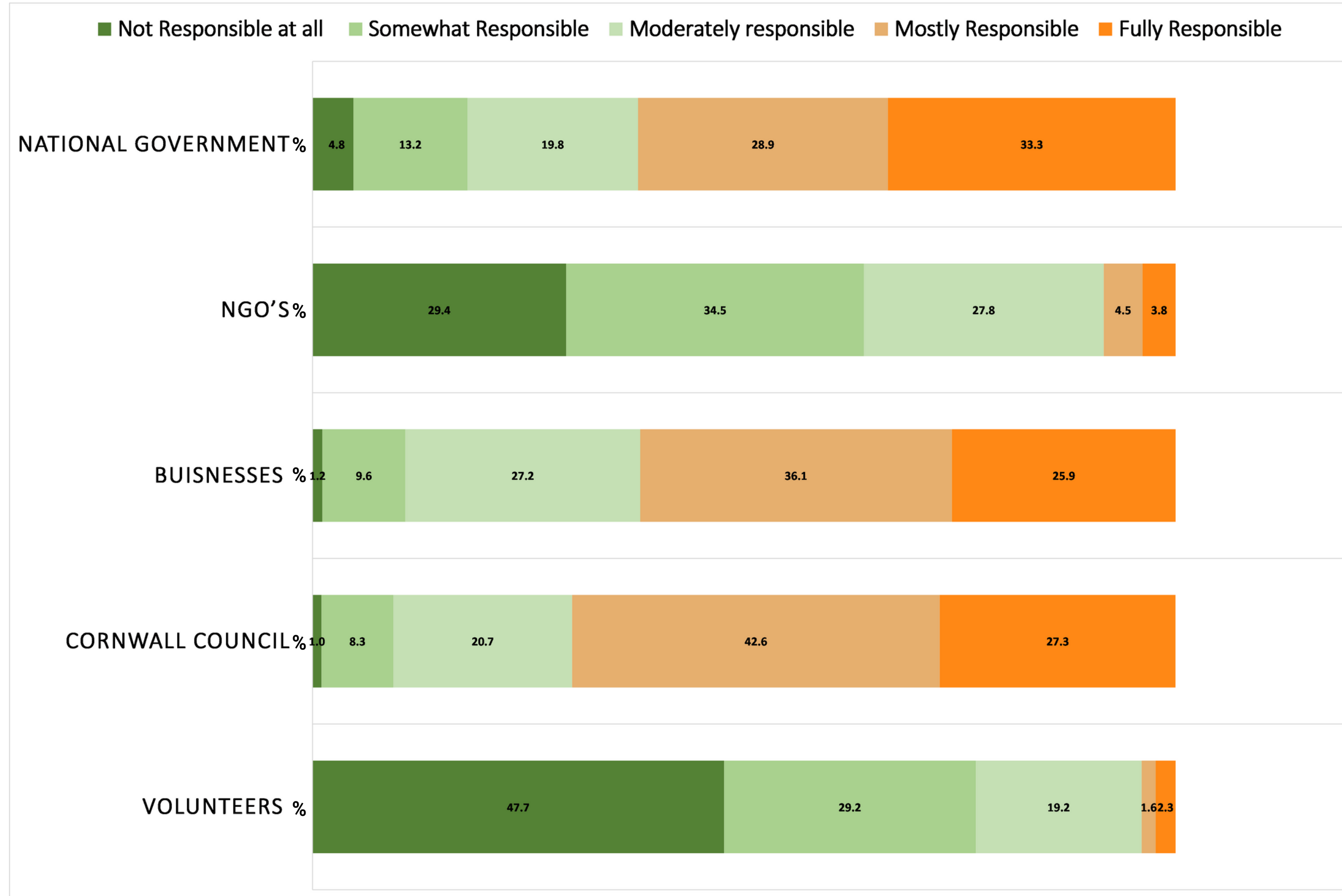
WHO'S TO BLAME?

We asked respondents which organisations they felt were most responsible for reducing litter and waste in Cornwall.

The National Government, Cornwall Council and Businesses were considered most responsible.

Volunteers and NGO's had the least amount of responsibility.

In 2019 the Cornish Plastic Pollution Coalition report accounted for a total of 103509 volunteer hours across the year. This resulted in the removal of 7.995 sackfuls of rubbish, equivalent to 80,000 kg or 80 tonnes.



WHO'S TO BLAME?

Further analysis suggested that in general:

- Younger people see responsibility falling to the National Government
- Older people see the responsibility lying more with in volunteers and NGO's than younger people did
- People who have a higher level of education think the responsibility lies more with businesses
- People who think it's normal to use plastic, also think it is cheap to use them AND don't know about the alternatives available.
- Dog owners don't think dog poo bags are a problem 'it's not me'

People don't like to feel a part of the problem - the blame game doesn't work in campaigns and messaging

VOLUNTEERS?

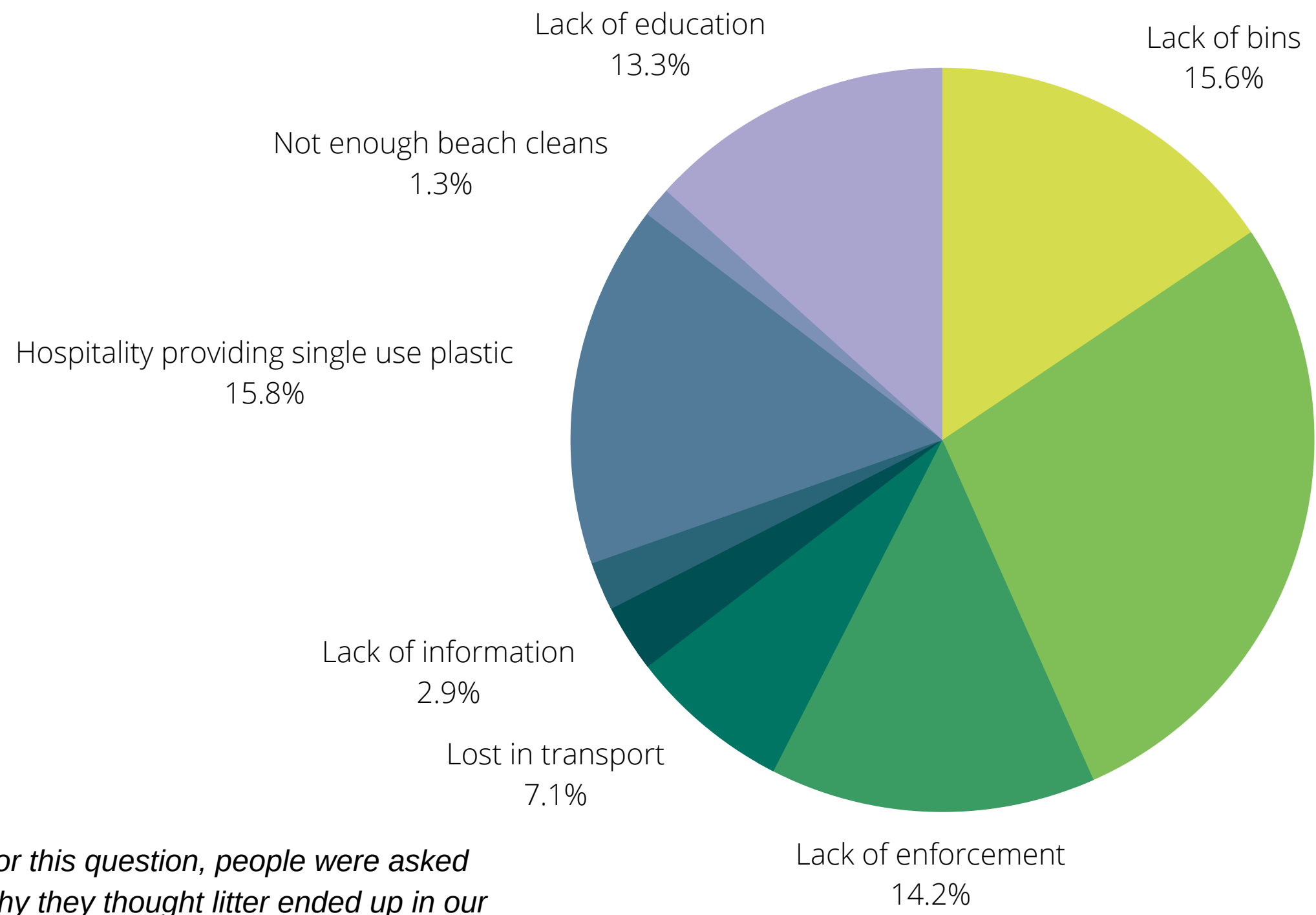
CORNWALL COUNCIL?

BUSINESSES?

NGO'S?

NATIONAL GOVERNMENT?

WHY IS IT LITTERED?



For this question, people were asked why they thought litter ended up in our environment. Respondents could put numerous answers, the pie chart shows the cumulative result.

94.3%

OF RESPONDERS PUT "PEOPLE BEING INCONSIDERATE AND CARELESS" AS ONE OF THEIR REASONS FOR LITTER BEING LEFT BEHIND

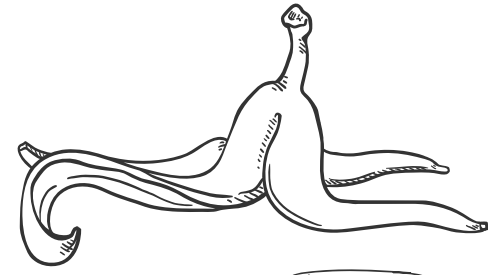
EQUAL NUMBERS THINK IT IS DUE TO A LACK OF BINS, LACK OF EDUCATION AND THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR PROVIDING SINGLE USE PLASTIC AND NOT ENOUGH MEANS TO RESPONSIBLY DISPOSE/RECYCLE THESE ITEMS

THERE ARE REGIONAL DIFFERENCES PEOPLE BLAMING 'A LACK OF BINS', 'INCONSIDERATE PEOPLE' AND 'TRANSPORT LOSS'

WHY IS THERE LITTER?

IT IS:

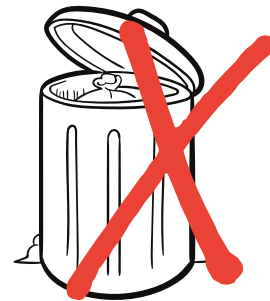
PEOPLE BEING
INCONSIDERATE



TOURISM SECTOR
SELLING SINGLE-
USE ITEMS

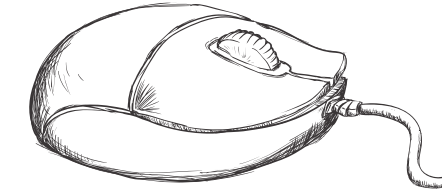


LACK OF BINS

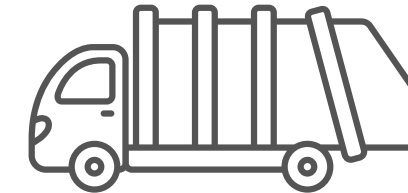


IT IS NOT:

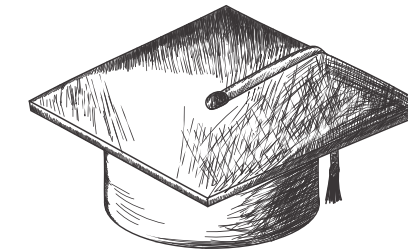
A LACK OF
INFORMATION



NOT ENOUGH
COLLECTIONS



A LACK OF
EDUCATION



THEY BELIEVE IT IS PREDOMINANTLY **BEHAVIOURAL** REASONS AND SO MORE ATTENTION MUST BE GIVEN TO BEHAVIOUR CHANGE CAMPAIGNS

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Distinguish between public and private behaviours and target one specific action
- No matter which approach, always strengthen people's perceived self-efficacy (I am part of the solution, I know what to do; my action has an effect)
- Behavioural approaches rather than structural seem to be desired
- No blame game (people don't like feeling part of the problem and it does not motivate them to act). Use positive language instead.
- Check drivers for next campaign; be as specific as possible (Instead of helping to stop plastic pollution, identify region and item e.g. poo bags in North Cornwall)
- In future surveys, we could target a particular area, for a particular issue in order to gather more information
- Roadside and lanes litter campaign seems to be needed
- Visitors want better alternatives to packaging, focus on business interventions



WHAT NEXT

- To use this information to shape Clean Cornwall's action plan for 2022/23 – alongside the partnership and community steering group
- Repeat this survey in two years, after focussed interventions. We would hope to see a change in people's perception towards litter and waste and a measurable improvement to litter levels in Cornwall thanks to the work of Clean Cornwall
- Use this information to tell stories! Social media and press content that will help highlight the problem of litter and promote the work of Clean Cornwall

And questions please contact
clean.cornwall@cornwallrcc.org.uk