



# Business Sentiment Survey 2026

By Dartmouth & District Chamber of Commerce



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Chamber of Commerce

# Methodology & Sample



322 SURVEY INVITATIONS  
SENT OUT VIA EMAIL



45 RESPONSES RECEIVED  
14% RESPONSE RATE



3/4 FROM TOWN  
CENTRE



GOOD MIX OF RETAIL  
/ HOSPITALITY /  
SERVICE



GOOD MIX OF  
LENGTH IN  
DARTMOUTH



2/3 VISITOR FACING



# Looking back at 2025

Overall businesses felt their performance was no worse than 2025, although there has been a slight drop in the average response compared to 2024. Visitor Facing and Hospitality businesses recorded the weakest figures

**Average performance**  
Where 1=much worse than previous year / 5=much better

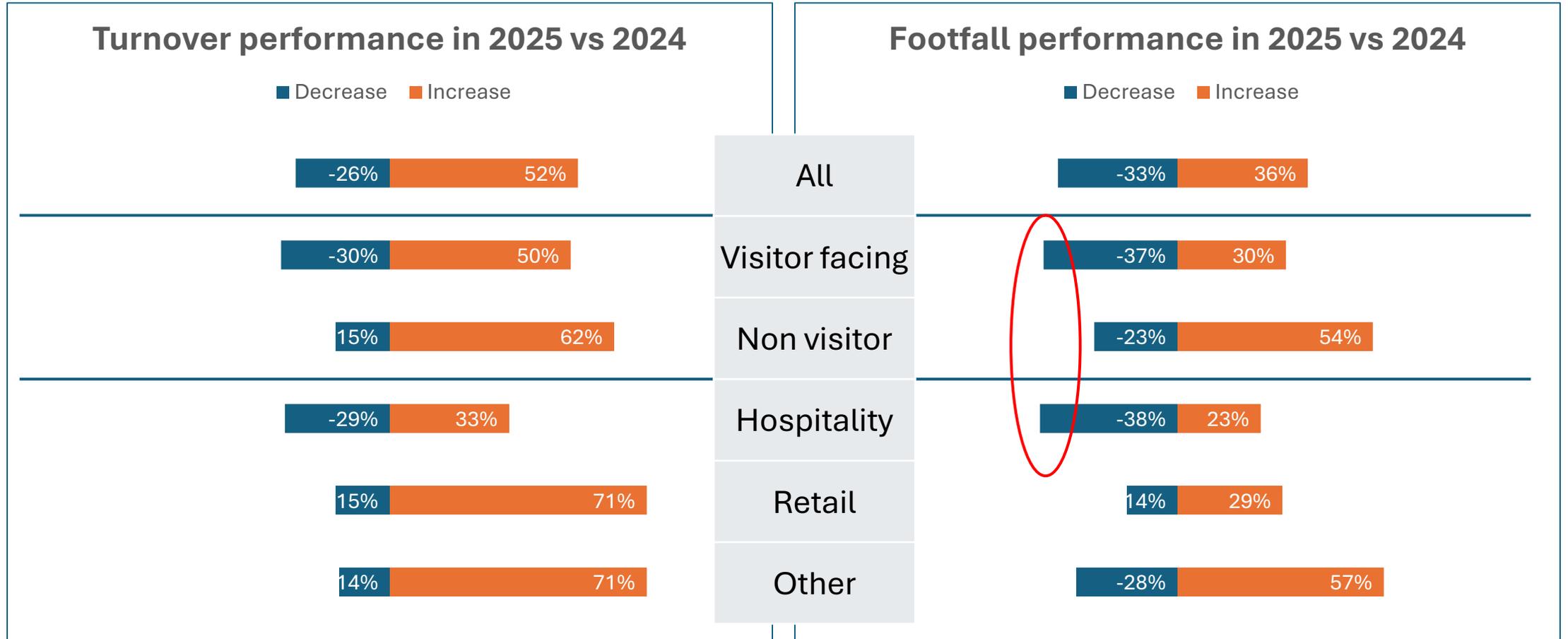




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# Looking back at 2025

Turnover improved for the majority of businesses in 2025, whereas footfall was more problematic. On both these measures the Hospitality sector has struggled, which is likely to have contributed to the weaker Visitor-facing scores

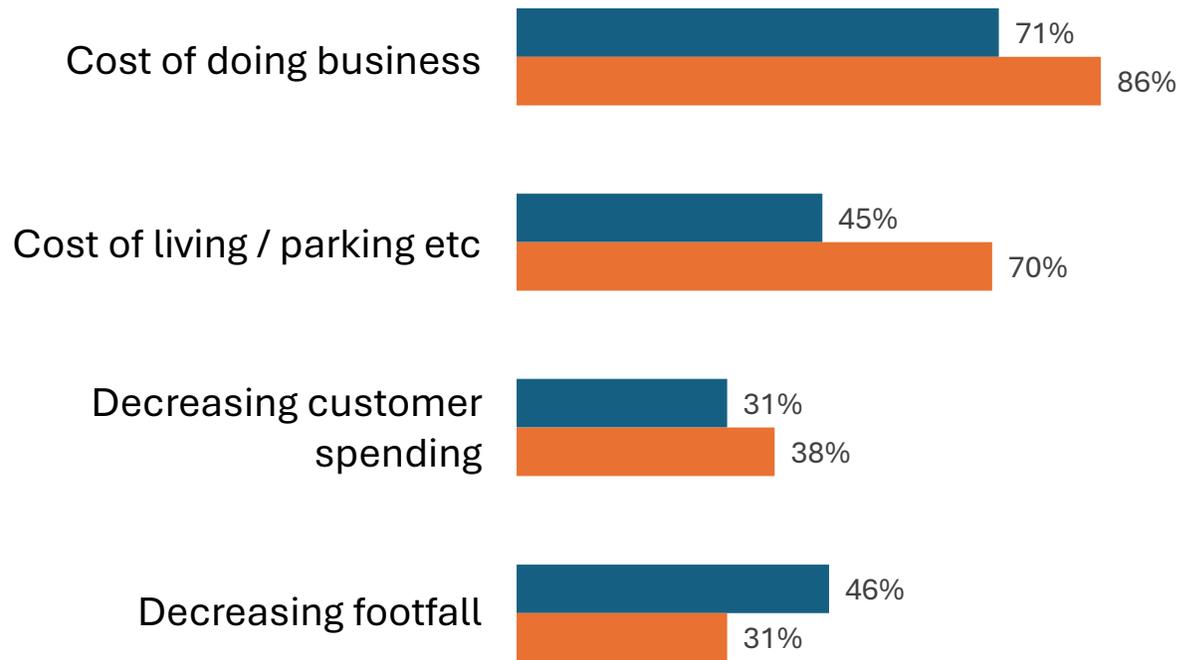




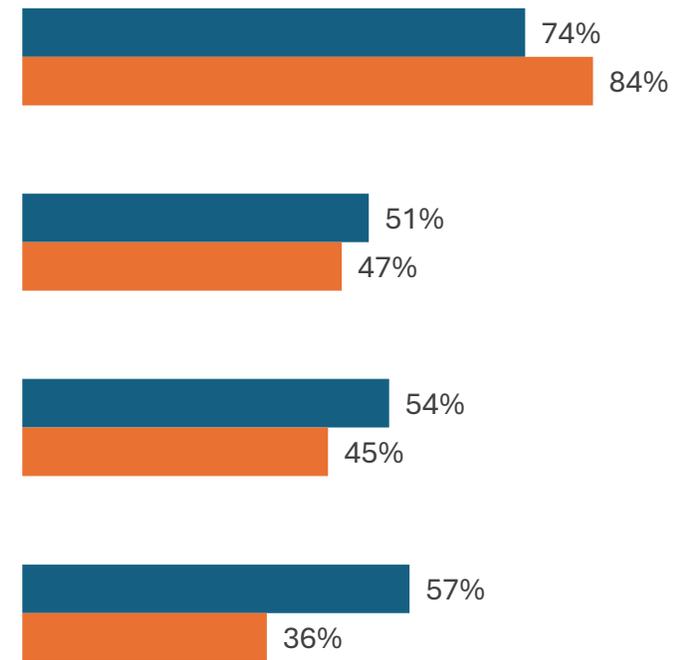
# Main Challenges - Summary

The increase in the cost of doing business was the main challenge in 2025, and is expected to be as at least as challenging in 2026. The Cost of Living Crisis was also a concern in 2025, overshadowing concerns with decreases in footfall and spending. These three factors are expected to be more evenly balanced in 2026.

### Main Challenges Last Year All Businesses



### Expected Challenges This Year All Businesses



■ 2024 ■ 2025



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# Confidence in the year ahead

Confidence levels have weakened slightly since 2024, and the much lower confidence in the Hospitality sector is a concern. It is important to note this reflects the trend observed nationally.

Average confidence  
Where 1 = Extremely worried / 10 = Extremely confident

■ 2024 ■ 2025

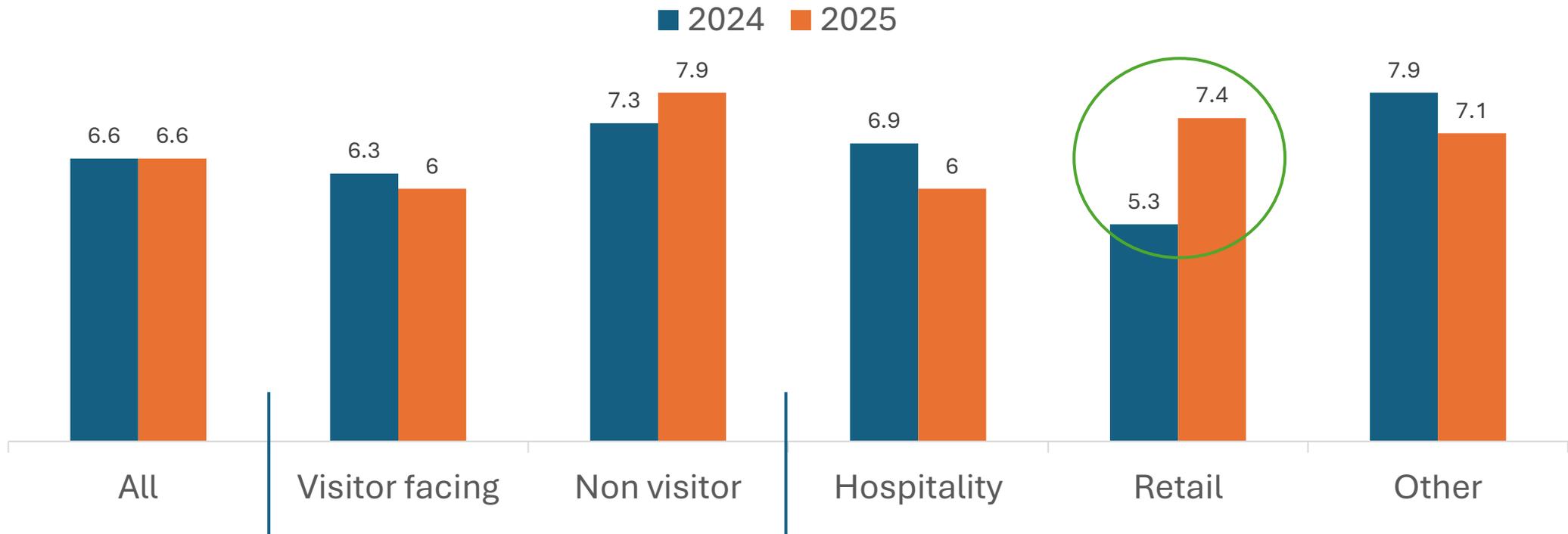




# Satisfaction with Dartmouth as a place to do business

In general businesses are reasonably satisfied with Dartmouth as a place to do business. Satisfaction among our retailers has bounced back considerably compared to a year ago.

**Average confidence**  
Where 1 = Extremely worried / 10 = Extremely confident

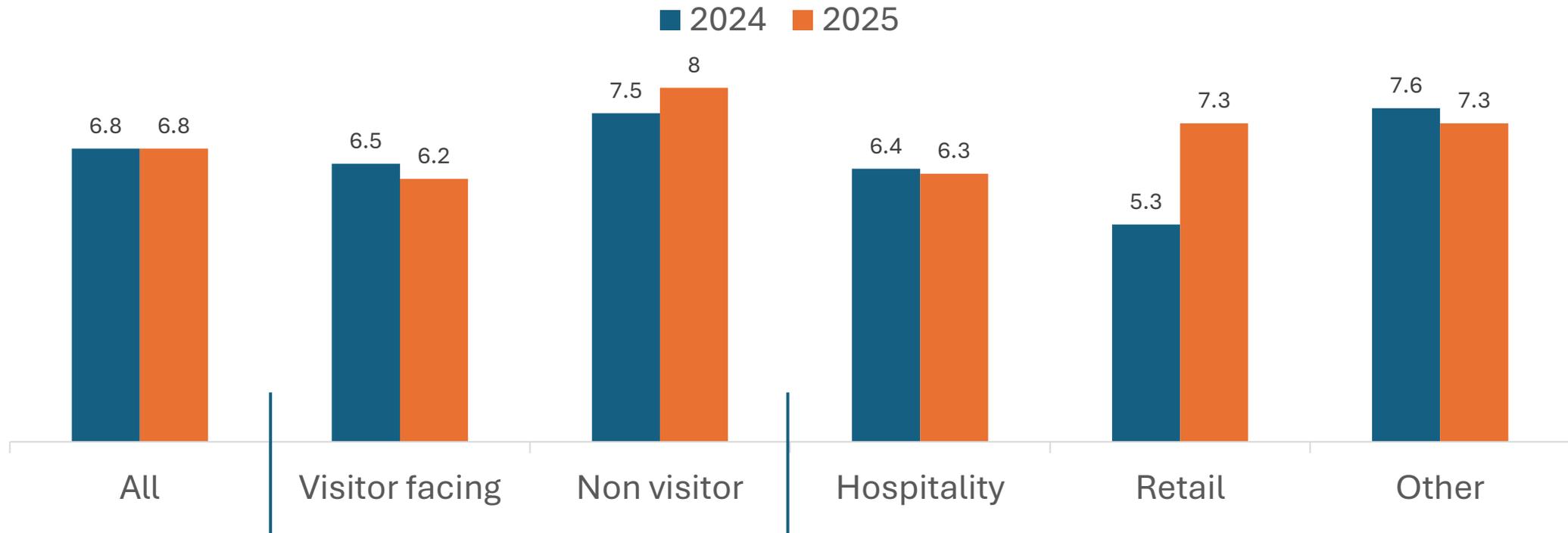




# Likelihood to recommend Dartmouth as a place to do business

In general businesses are ready to recommend Dartmouth as a place to do business – more so those who are not reliant on visitors. Even with the weaker performance figures, the Hospitality sector continues to endorse Dartmouth.

**Average confidence**  
Where 1 = Not at all likely / 10 = Extremely likely





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# Marketing support that would be beneficial

Marketing Dartmouth as a destination is the crux of what businesses are looking for when they ask for 'marketing support'.

69%

- BETTER MARKETING OF DARTMOUTH AS A DESTINATION (EXPLORE DARTMOUTH)

53%

- TRAINING OR ADVICE ON HOW TO BETTER MARKET YOUR BUSINESS (CHAMBER OF COMMERCE)

35%

- MARKETING / SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER

20%

- OTHER E.G. MARKET ALL BUSINESSES



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# Feedback on The Chamber

Specifically lobby for improved gutters down pipes and pavements in the centre of town

All businesses in the area that pay business rates for the year should be reduced as we trade from Easter to October. Can we put a petition to South Hams. Maybe discuss it at the next meeting.

I think it works really hard. Local Authorities/MP's should take greater notice to the collective business voice.

Dartmouth is A WONDERFUL place and needs an injection of life, positivity fun and dynamic forward thinking !

Put pressure on the local MP to support the high street

Close market street on Friday, Saturday, Sunday

Anything that can be done to promote Dartmouth as a holiday and visitor destination to bring more people into the area would be extremely beneficial.

Promote all businesses more than the select few

Keep people talking and focus on representing the interests of the business community. Collaborate as much as possible with other groups. Community, charity, business groups. Help people build business relationships in the town and foster Dartmouth's community feel.

Help fight the issue of business rates

"With all due respect, I only found out about the DDCC through word of mouth. I don't think the DDCC is very visible on social media for example "

I feel the meetings would appeal to more members if they were more like an event, for example Kingsbridge and Salcombe do sit down meal events



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# Summary & Conclusions

- **In summary:**

- Business performance was marginally up on 2024, which should be considered a positive situation given the external factors impacting on tourism across the UK
- Visitor facing and hospitality businesses have recorded weaker results across the board, whereas the retail sector came back well after a tough 2024
- Footfall was felt to be weaker, whilst turnover was more resilient in 2025. The increased cost of business, however, was the biggest challenge by far, and continues to be the standout concern for 2026
- Confidence overall is holding – although weaker for the hospitality sector
- Dartmouth is still considered a good place to do business

- **Conclusions:**

- Despite a tough year for business across the UK, Dartmouth has held up well enough
- The Chamber will continue to:
  - Advocate for businesses, to make sure the business voice is heard
  - Drive initiatives to improve connections and collaboration
- Explore Dartmouth is the team actively marketing Dartmouth as a destination. But as there is no government funding for tourism, **we all** need to invest in this work in order to maximise the opportunity they represent
- By working together, and building confidence, Dartmouth can be the thriving commercial centre we want it to be