



Holidaymaker Survey 2026

Key insights from the Simply Owners Holidaymaker Survey 2026

A word from our CEO, Rebecca Ward:

“As we head into summer 2026, holidaymakers are confident and on the move. More guests are planning trips beyond the UK this year, most plan to spend the same or more than they did in 2025, and very few are cutting back. What we’re seeing in our data is that many are waiting a little longer to book, so it pays to be patient.

This survey of 395 holidaymakers shows what turns a one-off direct booking into a habit: trust. It also reveals that the primary sources of trust are honest reviews and real conversations with the owner.

A lower price matters to guests, but price is not what brings them back. Instead, they return for the owner: a real person who knows the area and can answer their questions, like whether there are steps into the pool or if the barbecue is big enough for the whole family.”

Guests are ready to book direct. This report shows how owners can give them a reason to do so.

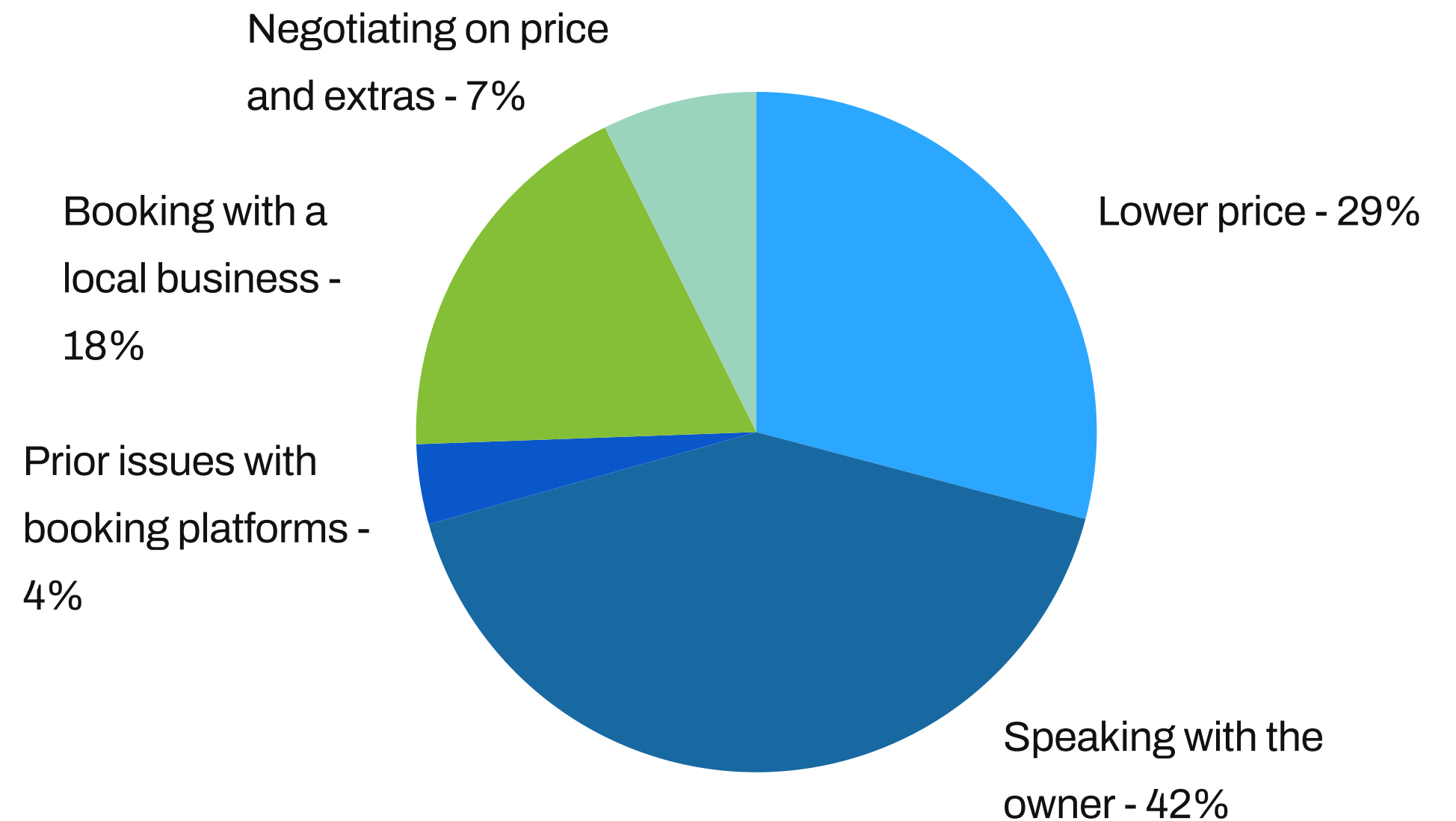


Why guests book direct: Communication comes first

The top reason guests choose direct booking over an Online Travel Agency (OTA) is the chance to speak with the property owner, cited by **42%** of respondents. Lower price came second at **29%**, and a preference for booking with a local business followed at **18%**.

Direct bookers want a real person behind the listing: a local homeowner who answers quickly and cares about their experience. Slow replies are a deterrent, with **13%** naming them as the single biggest reason not to book.

What is the main reason why you might choose to book direct?



Communication comes first

☆ Tips for owners:

- **Give a working phone number** or messaging option to guests.
- **Send a short note inviting questions** when an enquiry comes in.
- **Set expectations on timing**, for example "I typically respond within a few hours."
- **Send a pre-arrival message** so guests can raise anything before they travel. Restaurant recommendations and local tips make a big difference.

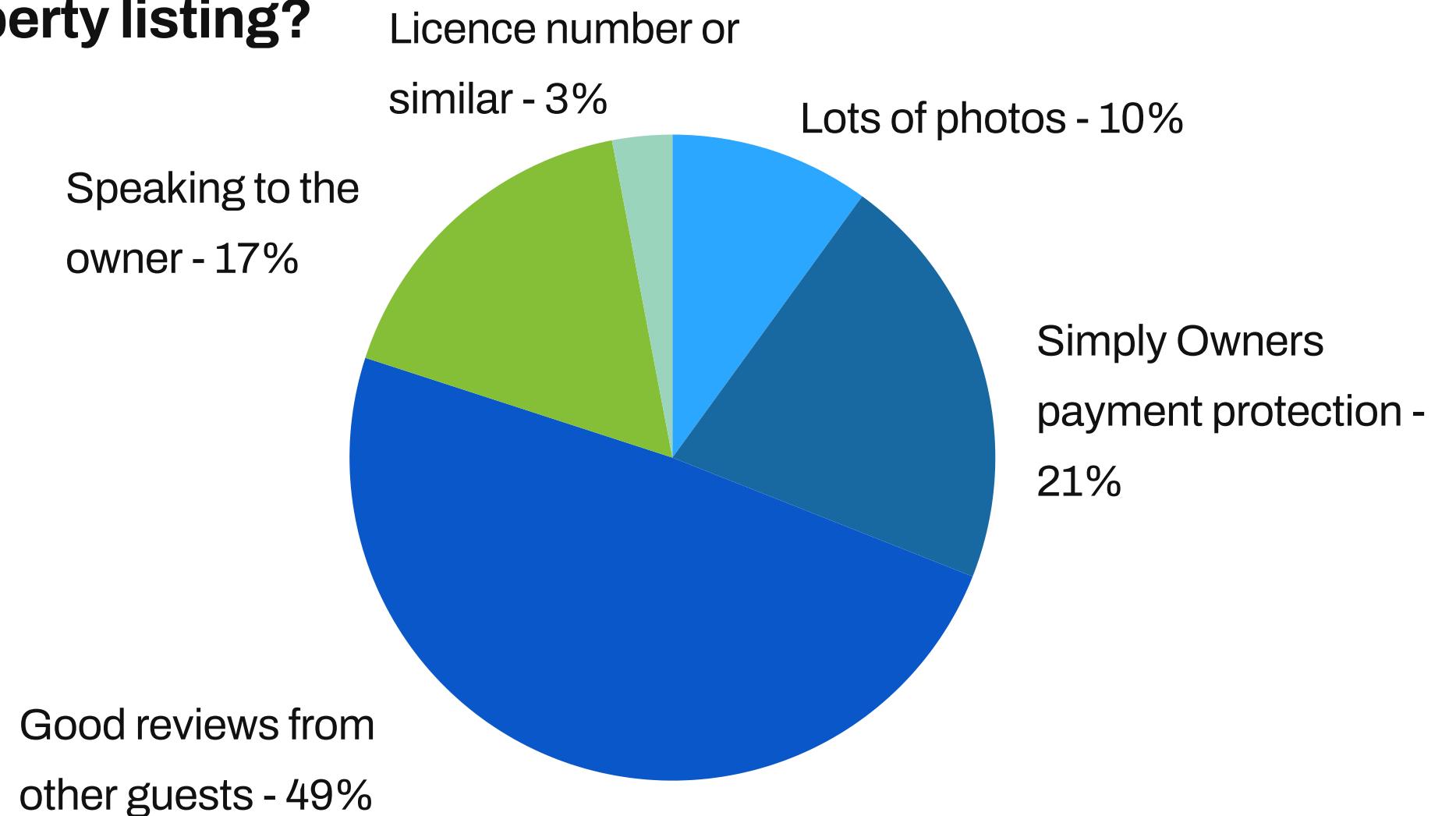


Reviews: The foundation of trust

Good reviews from other guests are the single biggest trust signal: **49%** of respondents named it as the green flag that makes them trust a listing. Simply Owners' payment protection guarantee came in next at **21%**.

The reverse is just as clear. **Bad or missing reviews** are the biggest red flag of all, putting off **45%** of respondents, ahead of being asked to pay by cheque or bank transfer at **19%**.

What is the biggest 'green flag' that makes you trust a property listing?



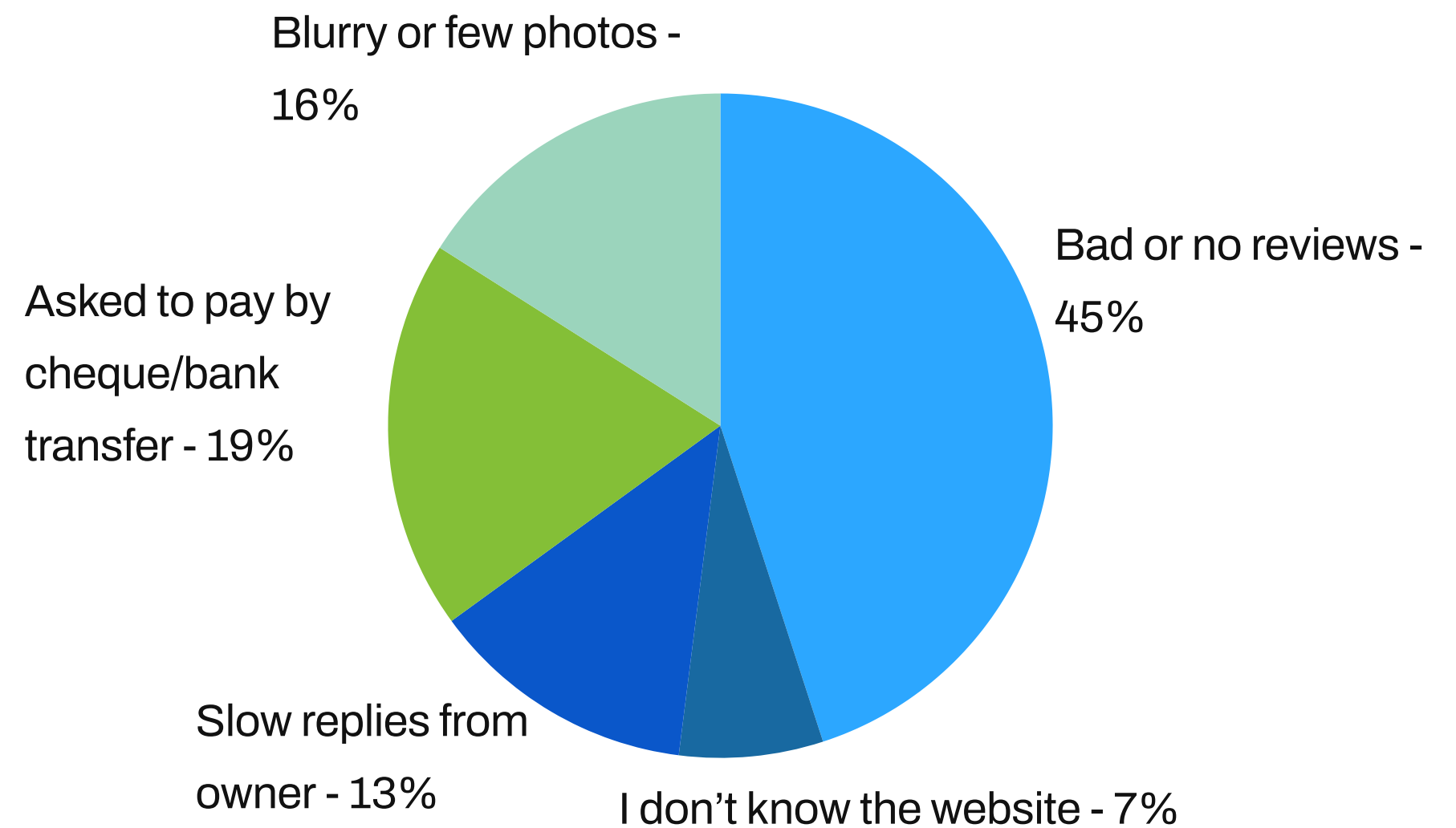
Pricing power and perception

☆ Tips for owners:

Make sure reviews work for, not against, you:

- **Prioritise good reviews from the beginning.** If your listing is new, offer friends and family a discounted stay in exchange for an honest review.
- **Ask at the right moment.** A warm, personal message at checkout increases response rates.
- **Respond to negative reviews promptly and politely** with a thank you and an acknowledgement. Disputing the details in public does more harm than the original review.

What is the biggest 'red flag' that would make you not want to book a listing?



Direct booking is a habit that builds

Direct booking isn't a one-off for most guests. **95%** of respondents have booked a holiday rental directly at least once, and most have done it several times: **57%** have booked between two and nine times, and **16%** have booked ten times or more.

Looking ahead, **75%** of respondents say they're likely or very likely to book direct again in the next 12 months. These are guests who already understand direct booking and are inclined to return. Reaching them again is mostly a matter of reminders, repeat-stay offers and giving them a reason to book.

★ Tips for owners:

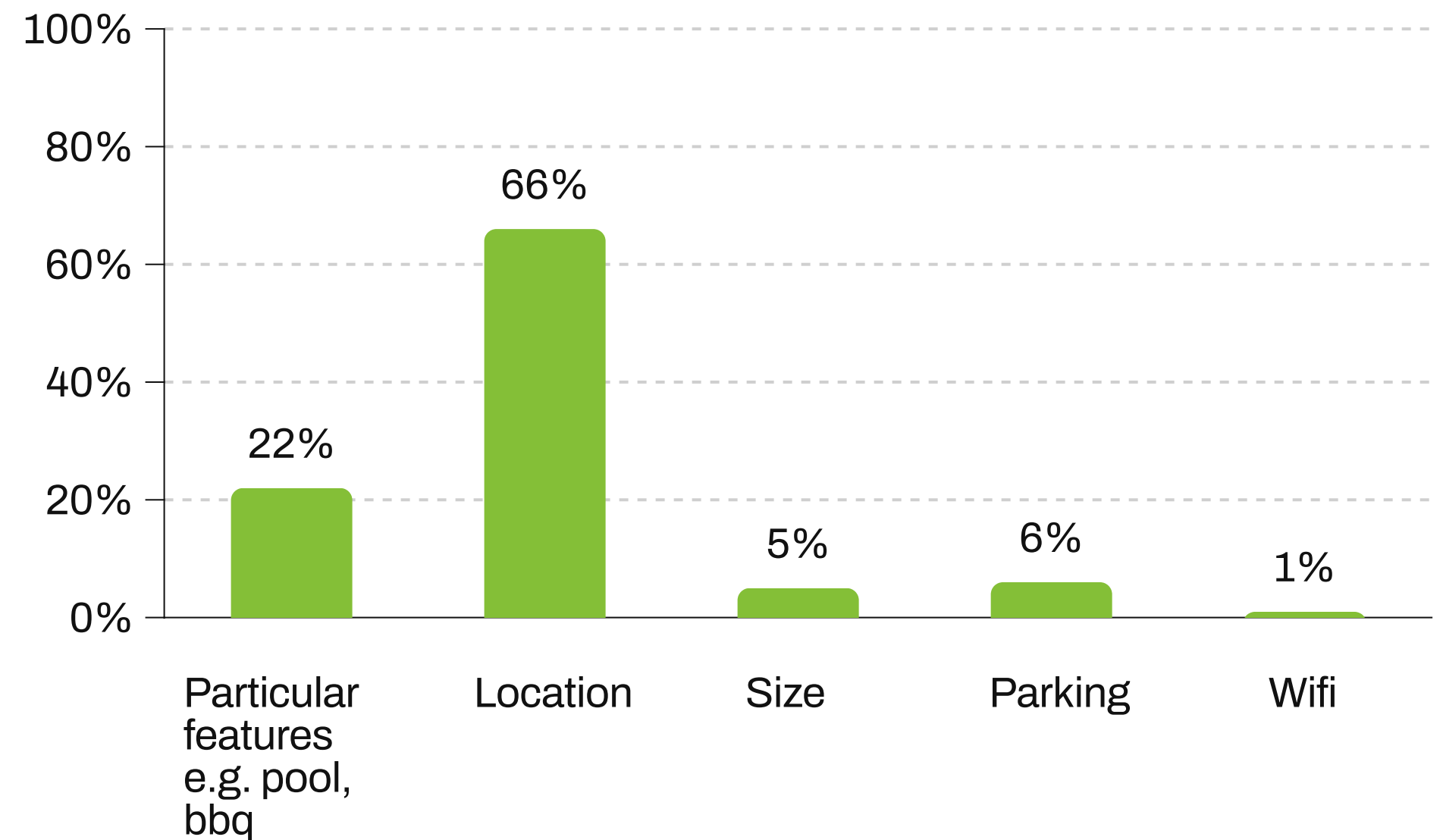
How owners can feed the loyalty loop:

- **Invest in the first stay.** A personal welcome and frictionless communication turn a single booking into a returning guest.
- **Capture guest data and follow up.** A friendly post-stay message ("We'd love to have you back, here's 10% off if you book directly next year") costs far less than any OTA commission fee.

What guests look for in a property

- **Location leads.** When choosing where to stay, location matters more than any feature, named most important by 66% of guests, ahead of specific amenities (22%), parking (6%), and size (5%). Consider adding photos of the surrounding area so guests can picture themselves there, and make sure to highlight what's nearby.
- **Swimming pools are the most sought-after amenity.** When asked which amenity matters most, more guests (around one in five) named a pool than anything else. If you have one, make it your lead photo.

What's most important for you when booking a stay?



What guests look for in a property



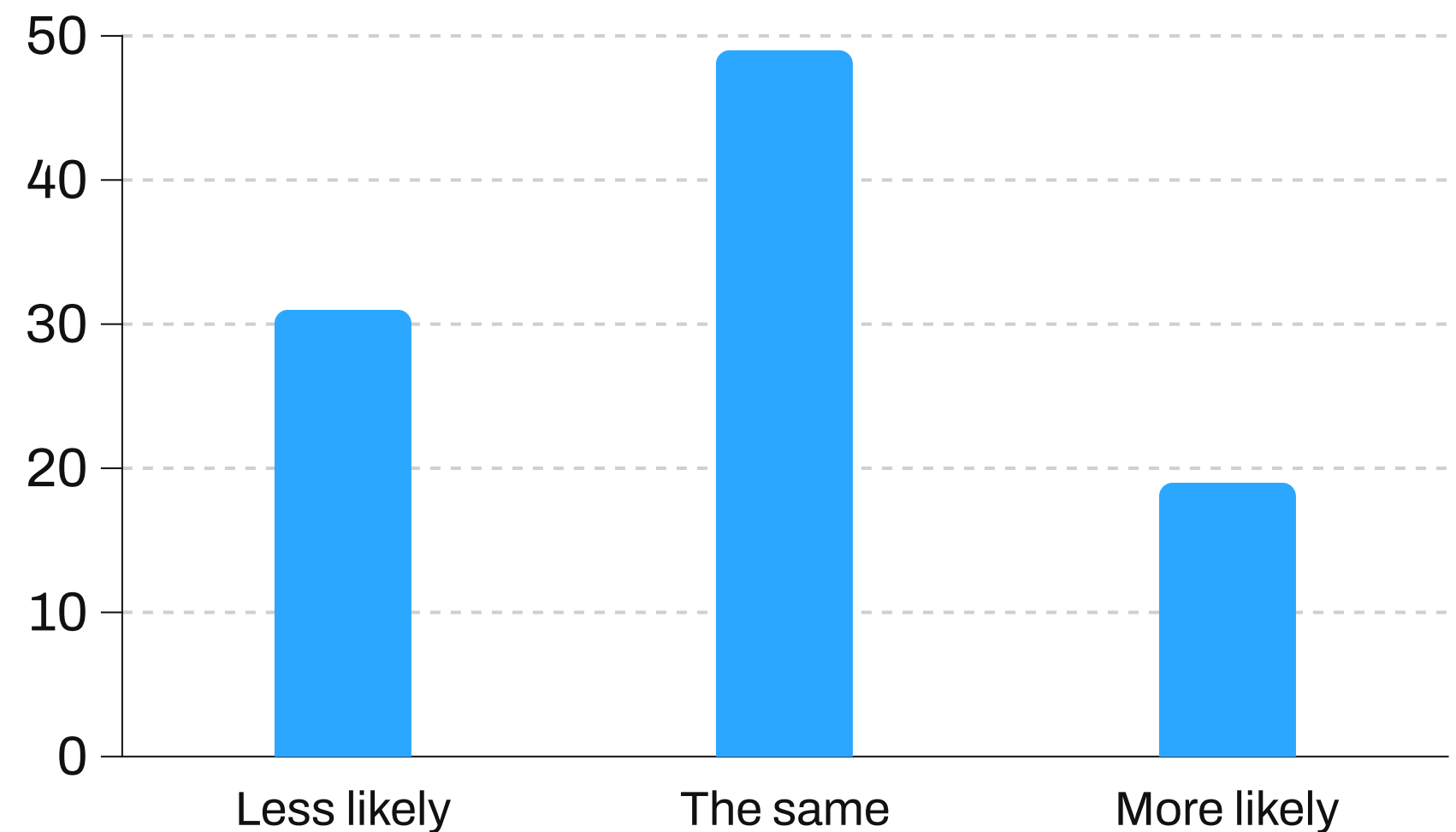
- **Pet-friendly opens up a whole new market.** Around one-fifth of guests have a dog, and for them, an enclosed, secure garden is a deciding factor. Simply Owners' pet-friendly tag helps these listings stand out, and make sure to show any particularly dog-friendly features in photos and the description.
- **Accessibility is a real need.** Roughly one in sixteen guests named accessibility as their primary concern, from step-free entryways to pool handrails. Clear, accurate details win bookings, and several guests warned that vague or misleading accessibility information dissuades them.

The 2026 travel outlook

Appetite for UK holidays is softening. **31%** of guests say they are less likely to stay in the UK this summer than last year, while only **19%** are more likely and **49%** expect no change. That suggests interest in travelling abroad is growing.

On budgets, **55%** expect to spend about the same as last year, **36%** plan to spend more, and only **9%** plan to spend less.

Compared to last year, are you more/less likely to stay in the UK for your holiday this summer?

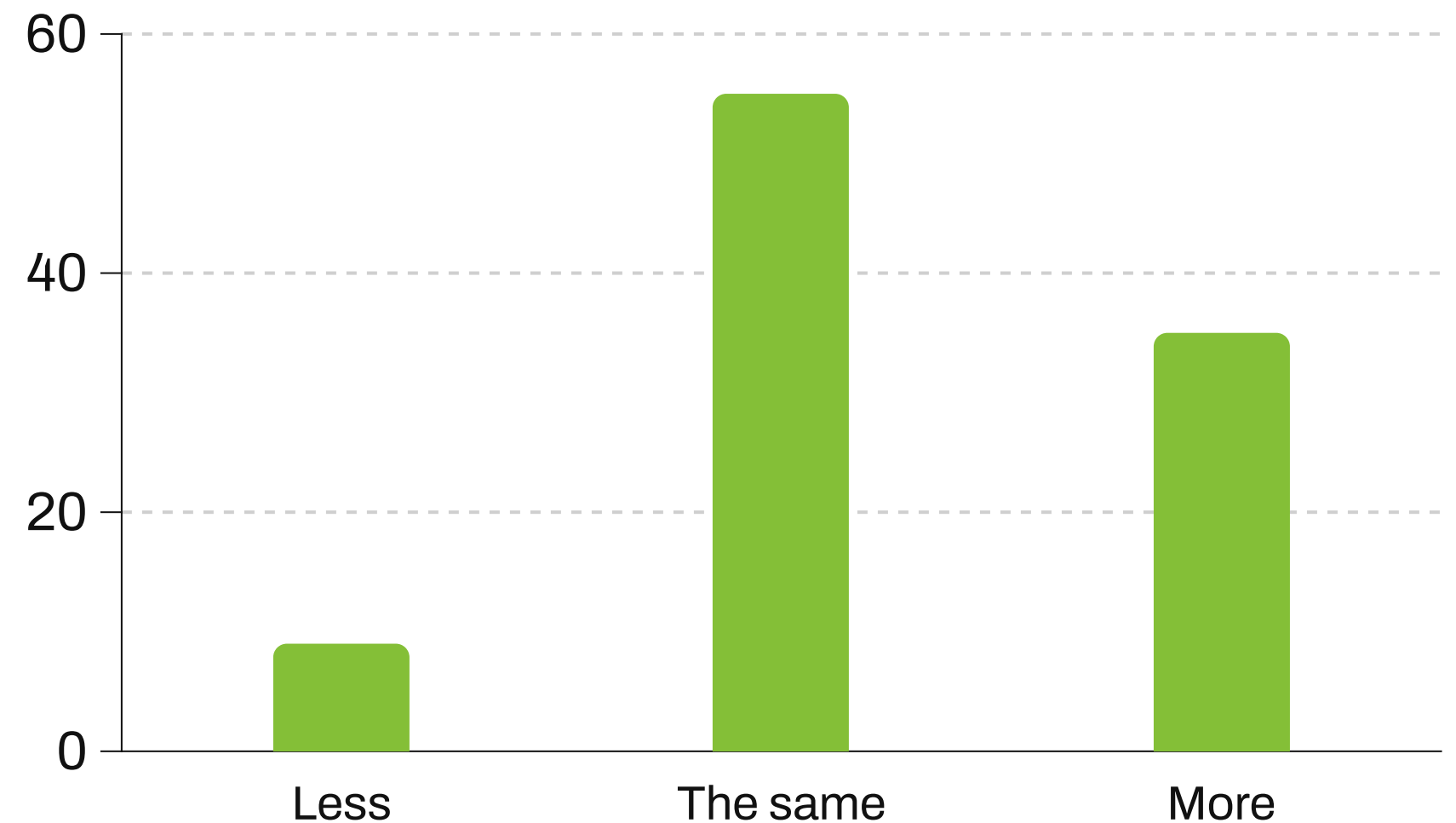


Challenges and guest experience

★ Tips for owners:

- **International interest is increasing.** If you have properties abroad, keep your listings current, with excellent photos of the location and competitive pricing.
- **Guests will pay for quality.** Nearly four times as many guests plan to spend more this year as plan to spend less, so there's no need to race to the bottom on price. Instead, focus on the quality of experience your property offers.

Compared to last year, how much are you expecting to spend on your holidays this year?



Methodology

Simply Owners surveyed **395** verified holidaymakers from its network across the UK in June 2026.

For more information

Visit SimplyOwners.net or contact us at enquiries@simplyowners.net or on [01623 343 343](tel:01623343343)

