

## Northern Ireland Annual Tourism Statistics 2019

Published 22 October 2020



**5.3m**  
trips



**16.6m**  
nights



**£1,044m**  
spent

### The key points are:

- In 2019 there were an estimated 5.3 million overnight trips in Northern Ireland. This includes trips by external visitors to Northern Ireland and domestic trips taken by local residents. Estimated expenditure associated with all overnight trips was £1.0 billion;
- External visitors were estimated to take 3.0 million overnight trips to Northern Ireland in 2019. Expenditure associated with these trips was £731m;
- An estimated 2.4 million nights were sold in hotel rooms in Northern Ireland during 2019. Hotel room occupancy was estimated to be 67% in 2019;
- A total of 167 cruise ships docked at Northern Ireland ports in 2019. This was a 30% increase from 128 in 2018 and a marked increase from 62 cruise ships in 2013; and
- When looked at together, tourism statistics point towards an upward trend in overall tourism activity in Northern Ireland between 2013 and 2019. While there is no statistically significant changes from the previous year, the headline statistics of trips and spend have significantly increased since 2017.

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Frequency: Annual  
Coverage: Northern Ireland  
Theme: People and Places

[Click here for definitions of tourism statistics common terms used in this report](#)

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## National Statistics status

National Statistics status means that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

These statistics were designated as National Statistics in May 2017 following a full assessment against the Code of Practice. Since the assessment by the UK Statistics Authority, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have also made improvements such as the following:

- Inclusion of statistics on hours worked and weekly earnings for those employed in tourism related industries have been included from this release
- Inclusion of deflated external expenditure by CPIH
- Increasing awareness of statistics by allowing users to sign up to a [mailing list](#) that means they can be informed of any new statistical releases.



## Tourism trend

Table 1 shows the trend in the three headline statistics (estimated overnight trips, nights and expenditure since 2013). Overnight tourism statistics are survey based estimates and, as such, they are subject to associated confidence intervals (see [background note](#) 9).

**Users should note that there were no statistically significant changes in the key variables in the table between 2018 and 2019.** However, there has been significant changes in trips and expenditure from 2017. The statistics point to an upwards trend longer term.

**Table 1: Estimated number of overnight trips, nights and expenditure in Northern Ireland 2013-2019**

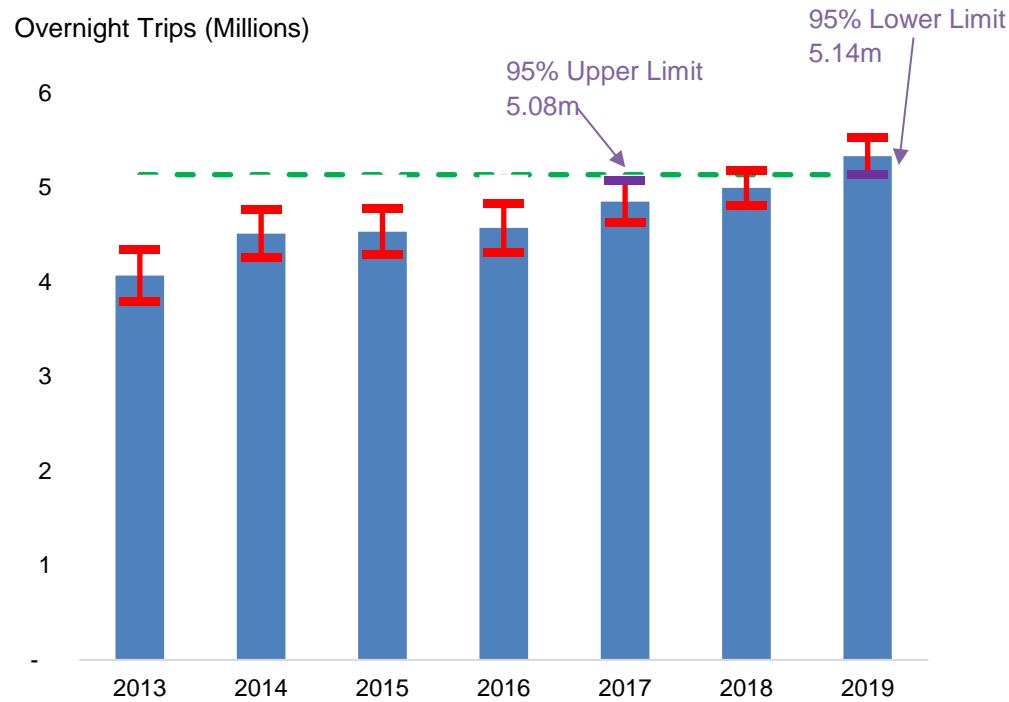
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	% Change (2018-19)
<b>Overall Trips (000s)</b>	<b>4,069</b>	<b>4,513</b>	<b>4,531</b>	<b>4,571</b>	<b>4,851</b>	<b>4,997</b>	<b>5,333</b>	<b>+7%</b>
<i>Domestic (000s)</i>	<i>1,980</i>	<i>2,335</i>	<i>2,230</i>	<i>1,984</i>	<i>2,193</i>	<i>2,188</i>	<i>2,332</i>	<i>+7%</i>
<i>External (000s)</i>	<i>2,089</i>	<i>2,179</i>	<i>2,301</i>	<i>2,587</i>	<i>2,658</i>	<i>2,809</i>	<i>3,001</i>	<i>+7%</i>
<b>Overall Nights (000s)</b>	<b>14,394</b>	<b>15,082</b>	<b>15,471</b>	<b>15,175</b>	<b>16,866</b>	<b>16,296</b>	<b>16,583</b>	<b>0%</b>
<i>Domestic (000s)</i>	<i>4,577</i>	<i>5,049</i>	<i>4,791</i>	<i>3,814</i>	<i>5,220</i>	<i>4,520</i>	<i>4,768</i>	<i>+5%</i>
<i>External (000s)</i>	<i>9,817</i>	<i>10,033</i>	<i>10,680</i>	<i>11,361</i>	<i>11,646</i>	<i>11,776</i>	<i>11,815</i>	<i>0%</i>
<b>Overall Expenditure (£M)</b>	<b>715</b>	<b>745</b>	<b>764</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>926</b>	<b>968</b>	<b>1,044</b>	<b>+8%</b>
<i>Domestic (£M)</i>	<i>192</i>	<i>238</i>	<i>219</i>	<i>237</i>	<i>270</i>	<i>299</i>	<i>313</i>	<i>+5%</i>
<i>External (£M)</i>	<i>524</i>	<i>507</i>	<i>545</i>	<i>613</i>	<i>657</i>	<i>669</i>	<i>731</i>	<i>+9%</i>

Figures derived from Northern Ireland Passenger Survey (NIPS) conducted by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), the Survey of Overseas Travellers (SOT) conducted on behalf of Fáilte Ireland, the Household Travel Survey (HTS) conducted by Central Statistics Office (CSO) and the Northern Ireland Continuous Household Survey (CHS) conducted by NISRA.

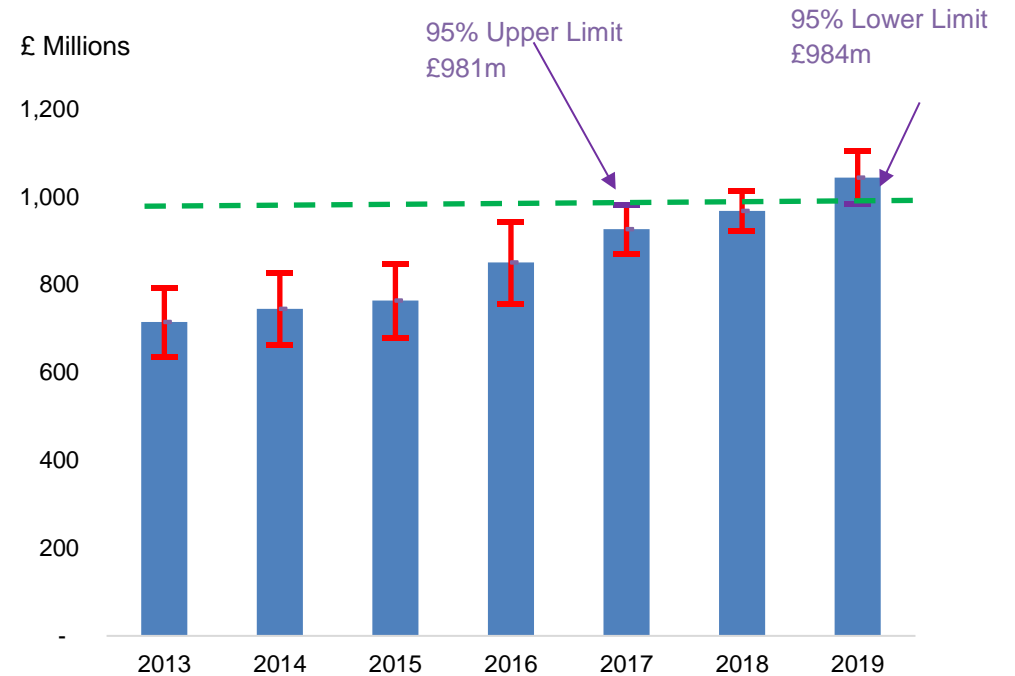
Full information on External overnight trips to Northern Ireland can be found at the following link: [External Visitors to Northern Ireland](#)  
 Full information on Northern Ireland domestic tourism can be found at the following link: [Domestic Tourism](#)

Figures 1 and 2 show the estimated number of overnight trips and associated expenditure in Northern Ireland from 2013 to 2019. The graphs also show margins of errors around the published estimates.

**Figure 1: Estimated number of overnight trips in Northern Ireland 2013-2019**



**Figure 2: Estimated expenditure during overnight trips in Northern Ireland 2013-2019**



**What you can say....**

**Whilst there has been no statistically significant change in the estimated number of overnight trips and expenditure between 2018 and 2019; there has been a statistically significant increase between 2017 and 2019.**

**What you cannot say....**

**There was a definite increase from 5.0 million to 5.3 million overnight trips in Northern Ireland from 2017 to 2018, with associated expenditure increasing 8% from £968m to £1.0billion over the same period**

Further information regarding confidence intervals can be found at this [link](#).

Full information on External overnight trips to Northern Ireland can be found at the following link: [External Visitors to Northern Ireland](#)

Full information on Northern Ireland domestic tourism can be found at the following link: [Domestic Tourism](#)

## Introduction

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Due to the complexity of tourism, no single statistic can provide a definitive measure on how the tourism industry is performing. This report tries to give an overall picture of Northern Ireland tourism in 2019. A variety of statistics are presented, such as estimates of the number of people staying overnight in Northern Ireland, rooms sold in local accommodation, cruise ship visits and visits to Visitor Attractions and information on those working in “tourism related industries”. **The report points towards continued steady growth in overall tourism from 2013.**

The report informs the Assembly and Executive, tourism bodies, the tourism industry and the public on data relating to tourism in Northern Ireland. A primary aim is to monitor indicator 30 for the [Draft Northern Ireland Programme for Government \(PFG\)/NICS Outcomes Delivery Plan \(ODP\)](#).

Tourism can be influenced by a number of factors. Initiatives from government, tourism agencies and events can have an impact on tourism. During 2019, the Open Championship (golf) was hosted in Portrush. It was also another big year for Northern Ireland Screen with three popular dramas of the year – Game of Thrones, Derry Girls and Line of Duty being recorded locally. Visitors may also be influenced to come to Northern Ireland by local visitor attractions, such as the Giant’s Causeway and Titanic Belfast.

Having said that, the legacy of the Troubles, the economic situation, the value of sterling against foreign currency, the collapse of local providers (both tour operators and airlines) and, more generally, the global move and associated challenges for airlines to be more environmentally conscious are also factors that have influenced tourism trips and expenditure.

All these factors will influence the volume, type and nature of local tourism.

It is also worth reminding the reader that everything in this report was before the COVID19 pandemic which will have numerous impacts on tourism in 2020.



NI Open\*



Thomas Cook airplane\*\*



Game of Thrones –Dark Hedges\*

\*Copyright, Tourism Northern Ireland

\*\*Image by [Kelvin Stuttard from Pixabay](#)

## Overnight trips in Northern Ireland (Domestic & External)

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Two key measures of tourism activity are the number of overnight trips and the associated expenditure. To estimate these measures two sets of rolling annual sample surveys of passengers and households are undertaken.

- (i) Firstly, **sample surveys of passengers** at air and sea ports in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are undertaken to identify overnight trips to Northern Ireland by people living outside the island of Ireland.
- (ii) Secondly, **household sample surveys** in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are undertaken to identify Northern Ireland based overnight trips of Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland residents.

**Overnights:** Headline overnight trip statistics are measured using standard UN definitions. The UN use the concept of “overnighting”. This is broadly defined as staying away from your usual place of residence for one night or more. This does not need to be for holiday, it can also relate to visiting relatives, business etc. As well as overnighting of visitors to Northern Ireland, the statistics also include overnights of local residents within NI. Note overnighting excludes day trips, which will be a significant part of the local tourism market.

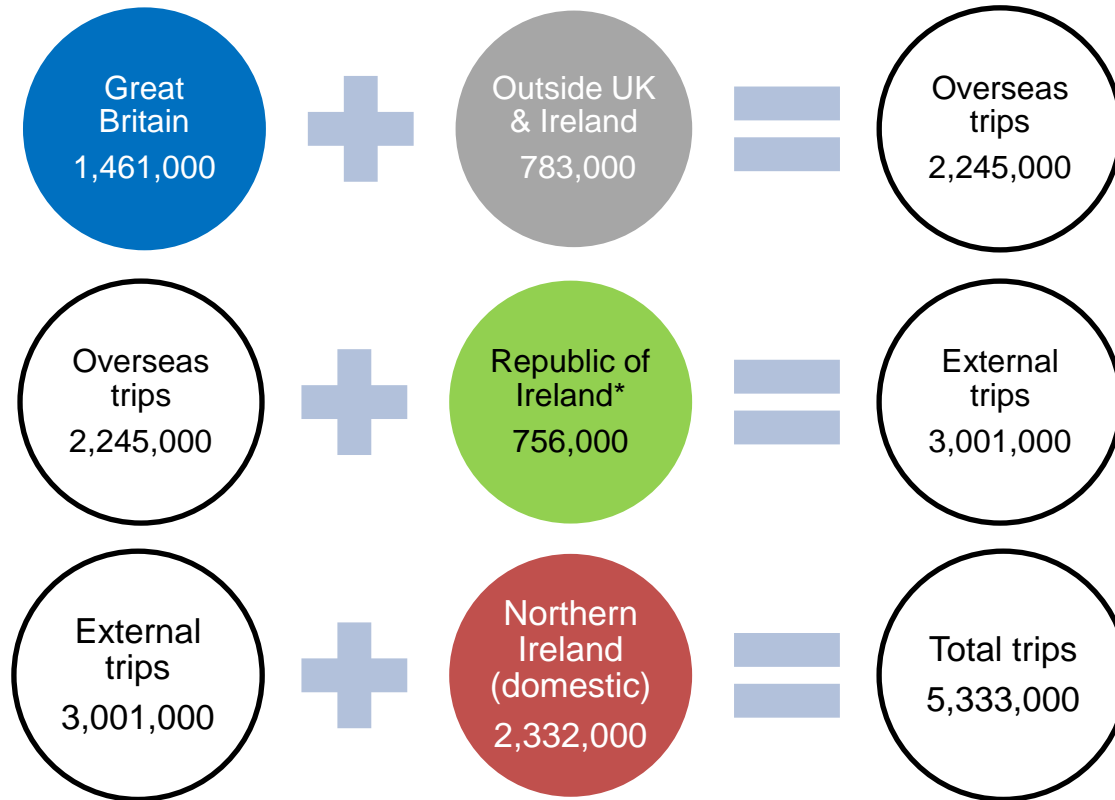
The **headline statistics** for overnight trips are:

- In 2019, there were an estimated **5.3 million overnight trips** in Northern Ireland;
- Through 2019, estimated expenditure associated with all overnight trips was **£1.0 billion**. To put this annual expenditure in context, the most recent estimate (2018) for [Northern Ireland Gross Value Added](#) stood at £42.2 billion indicating that in monetary terms spending on overnight trips broadly equates to around **2.5% of the local economy**;
- During the 5.3 million overnight trips, an estimated 16.6 million nights were spent in Northern Ireland; and
- Although none of the estimated overnight tourism statistics for 2019 displayed statistically significant changes since 2018; taken together, the data sources point towards an upward trend in tourism activity in Northern Ireland.

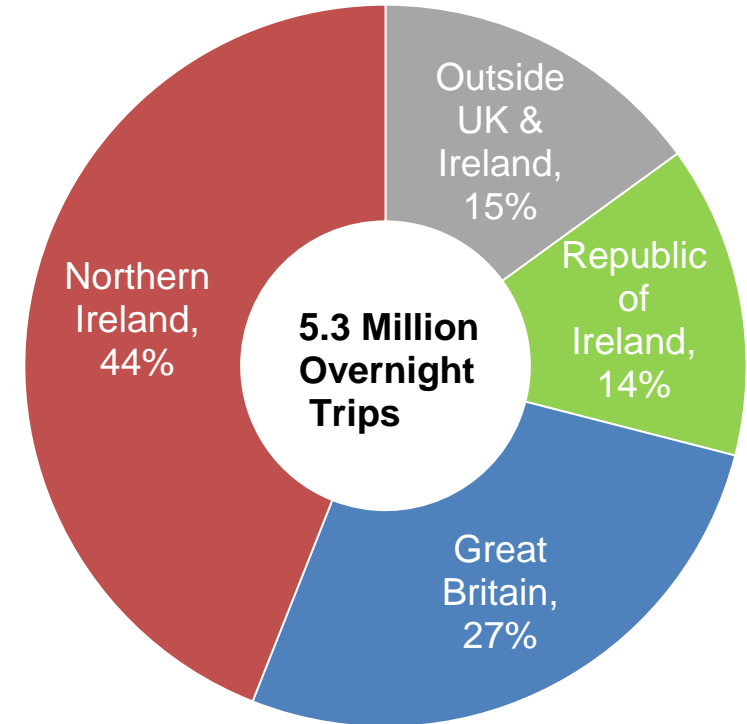
## Place of origin

A further important part of the assessment of tourism is the place of origin of visitors to Northern Ireland. Figures 3 & 4 give some detail on this for 2019.

**Figure 3: Estimated overnight trips by place of origin (2019)**



**Figure 4: Trips by place of origin (2019)**



Rounded to the nearest thousand

In total, it is estimated that, 44% of all overnight trips (2.3 million) were made by local residents (domestic trips), for example, someone from Lisburn going to Portrush for the weekend either on holiday or to visit friends/relatives. A further 27% of overnight trips (1.5 million) were made by people living in Great Britain, 14% (0.8 million) by people from the Republic of Ireland and the remaining 15% (0.8 million) by people from outside the UK and Ireland.

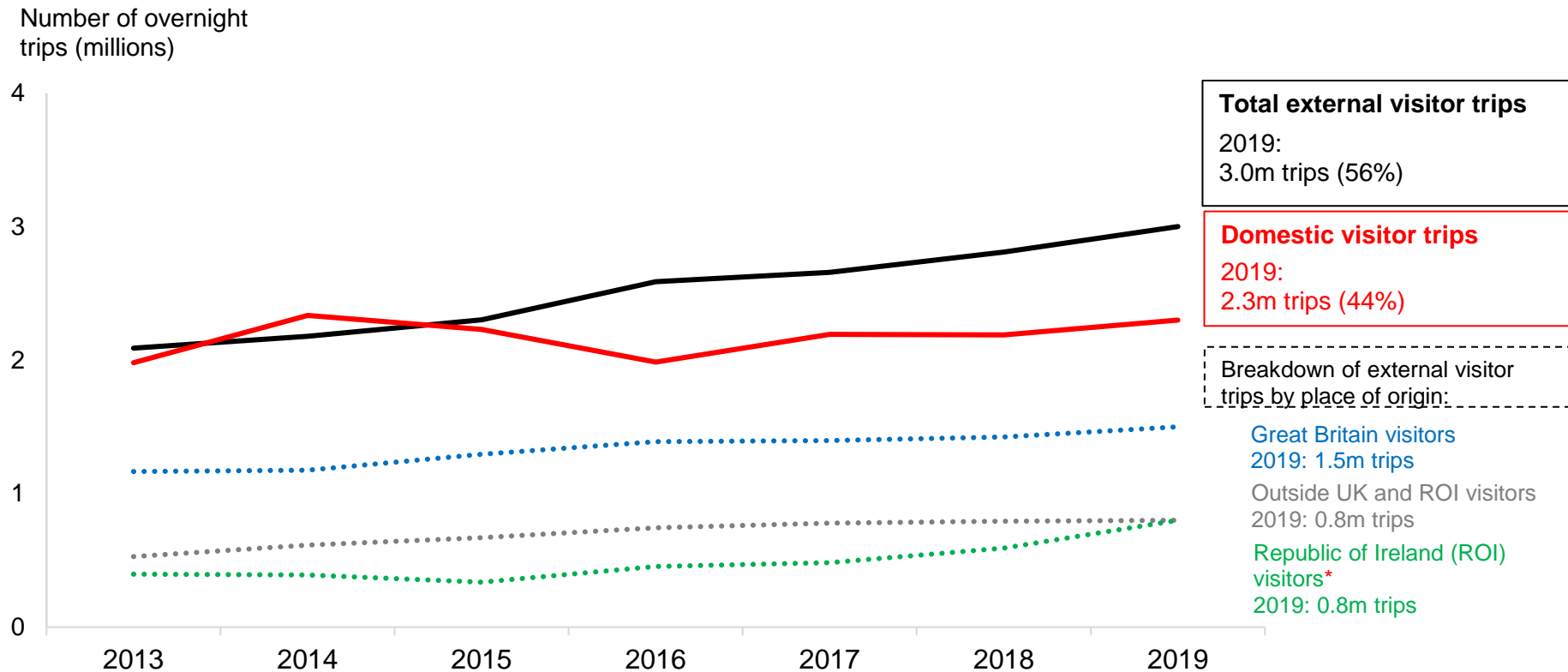
\*See [background note 18](#) in relation to the quality of ROI visitor estimates



An estimated 3.0 million overnight trips were made in total by external visitors, which accounted for 56% of all overnight trips. Figure 5 shows the change in estimated overnight trips taken by domestic and external visitors.

Looking over the longer term, the estimated number of external visitors has been increasing since 2013. The breakdown of external visitor trips also shows an upward trend for visitors from each area (Great Britain (GB), Republic of Ireland ROI and 'Outside UK and ROI').

**Figure 5: Estimated number of overnight trips by place of origin 2013-2019**



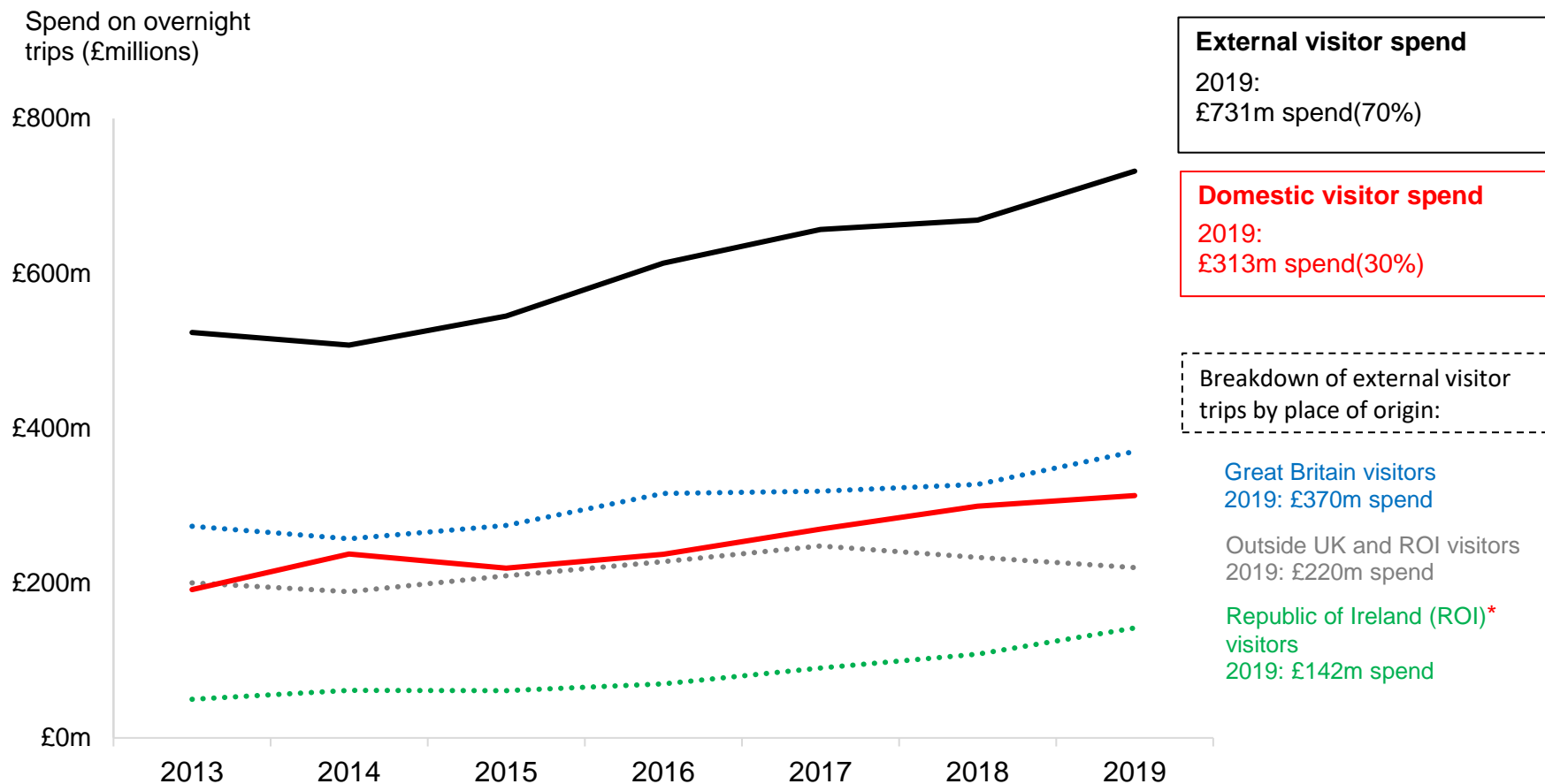
*Note: Annual changes are generally not statistically significant. Therefore comparisons should be made over the longer term.*

*\*See [background note 18](#) in relation to the quality of ROI visitor estimates*



Expenditure on overnight trips has generally been increasing since 2013 for both external and domestic visitors. External visitors make up 70% of the total spending on overnight trips, illustrating the importance of these visitors to the local economy. Figure 6 shows that GB visitors (35%) account for the most spend during overnight trips-accounting for the same spend during overnight trips by the rest of the external visitors combined.

**Figure 6: Estimated spend on overnight trips by place of origin 2013-2019**



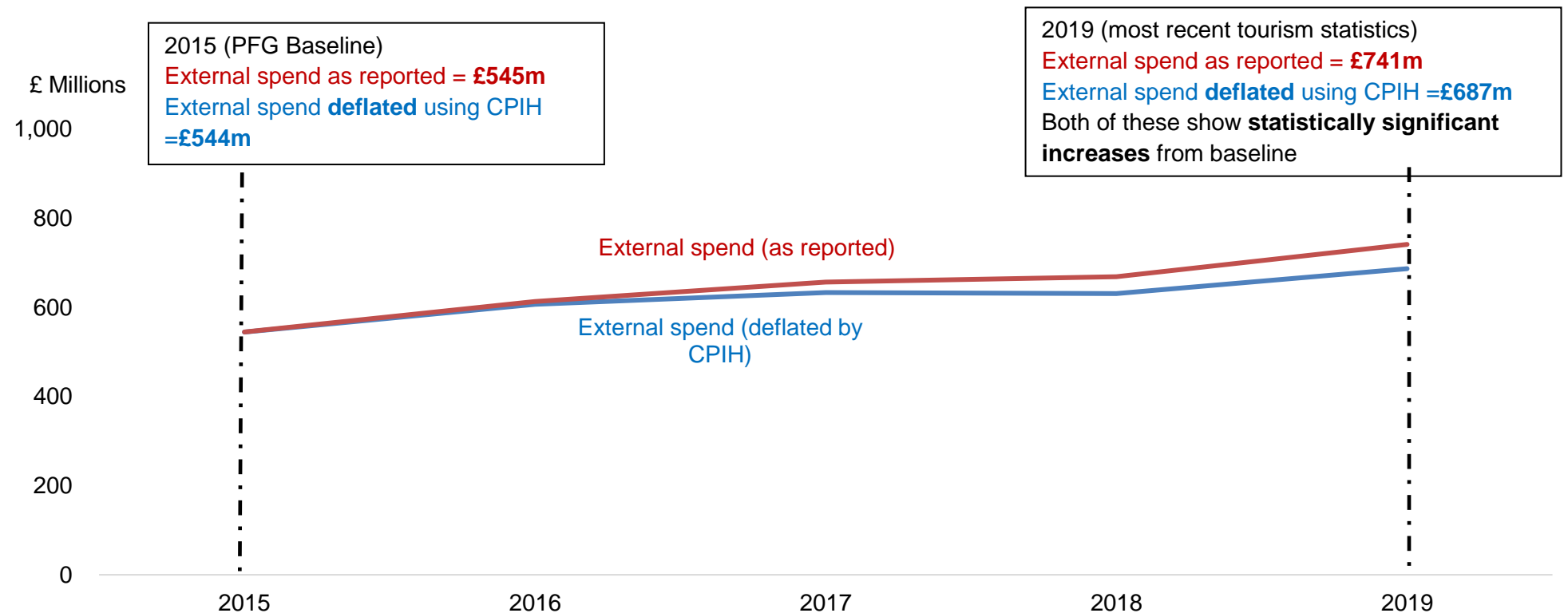
Note: Annual changes are generally not statistically significant. Therefore comparisons should be made over the longer term.

\*See [background note 18](#) in relation to the quality of ROI visitor estimates

## Draft Programme for Government

Tourism Statistics are used to help monitor the [Draft Northern Ireland Programme for Government](#). Indicator 30 “**Total Spend by external visitors**” is one of the five indicators falling under Outcome 10 “**we have created a place where people want to live, and work, to visit and invest**” of the Outcomes Delivery Plan. Indicator 30 uses the UK Consumer Price Index (CPIH) to take account of inflation and shows a statistically significant increase from a deflated value of £544m in the baseline year (2015) to a deflated value of £687m in 2019. (Further PfG detail in [background notes 19](#)).

**Figure 7 Estimated expenditure during Overnight Trips – deflated using CPIH**

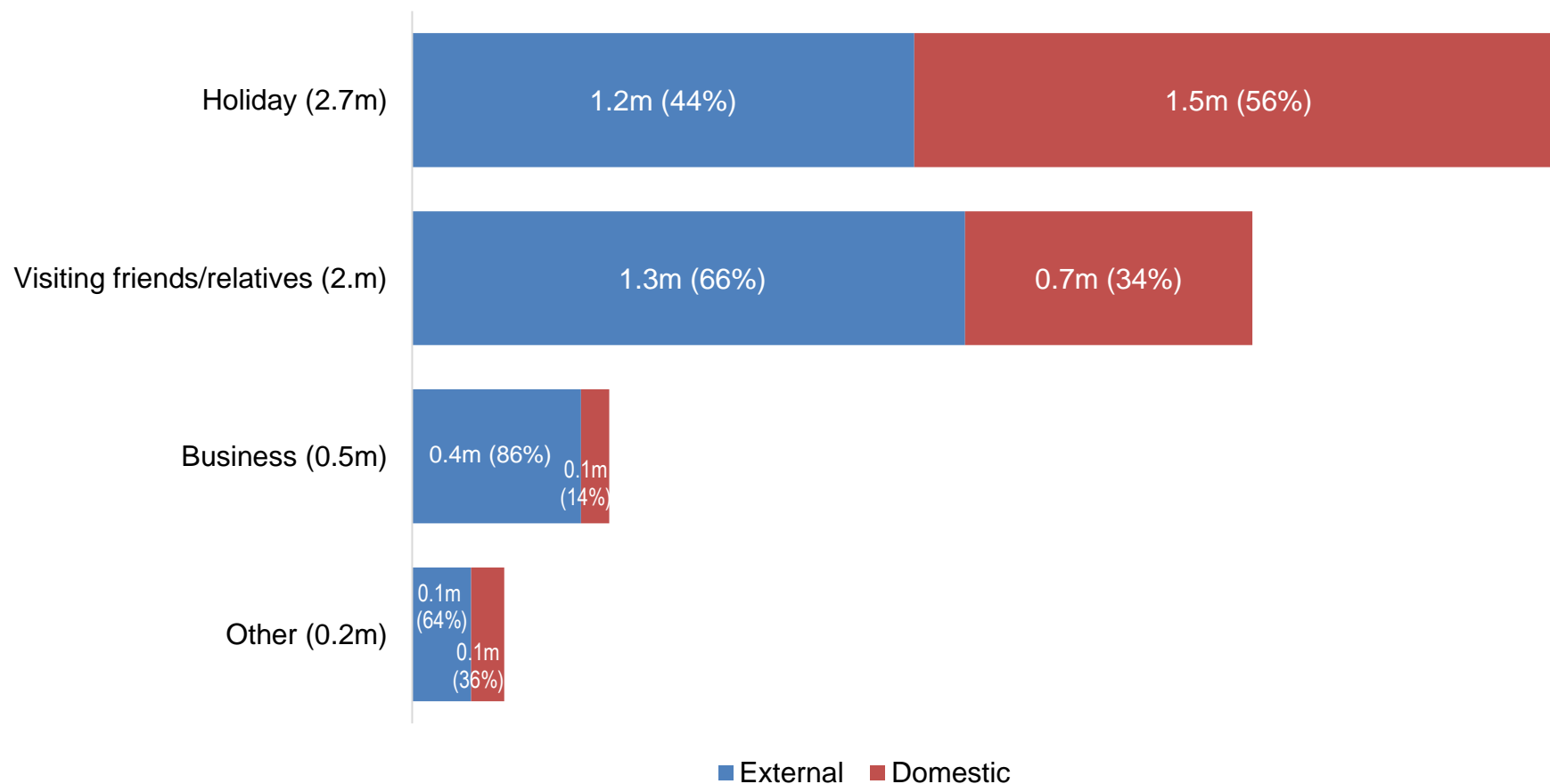


Full information on External overnight trips to Northern Ireland can be found at the following link: [External Visitors to Northern Ireland](#)  
Full information on the Consumer Price Inflation time series can be found at the following link: [CPIH Index](#)

## Reason for Overnight Trip

Survey respondents are also asked the reason they stayed overnight. Figure 8 shows estimated overnight trips split by reason for overnight trips. The two main reasons to take an overnight trip in Northern Ireland are 'for holiday/pleasure/leisure' and 'visiting friends or relatives', accounting for an estimated 2.7 million and 2.0 million of all overnight trips respectively in 2019. The chart also shows the variation in reason for visit between the external and domestic markets.

**Figure 8: Reason for Overnight Trip, 2019**

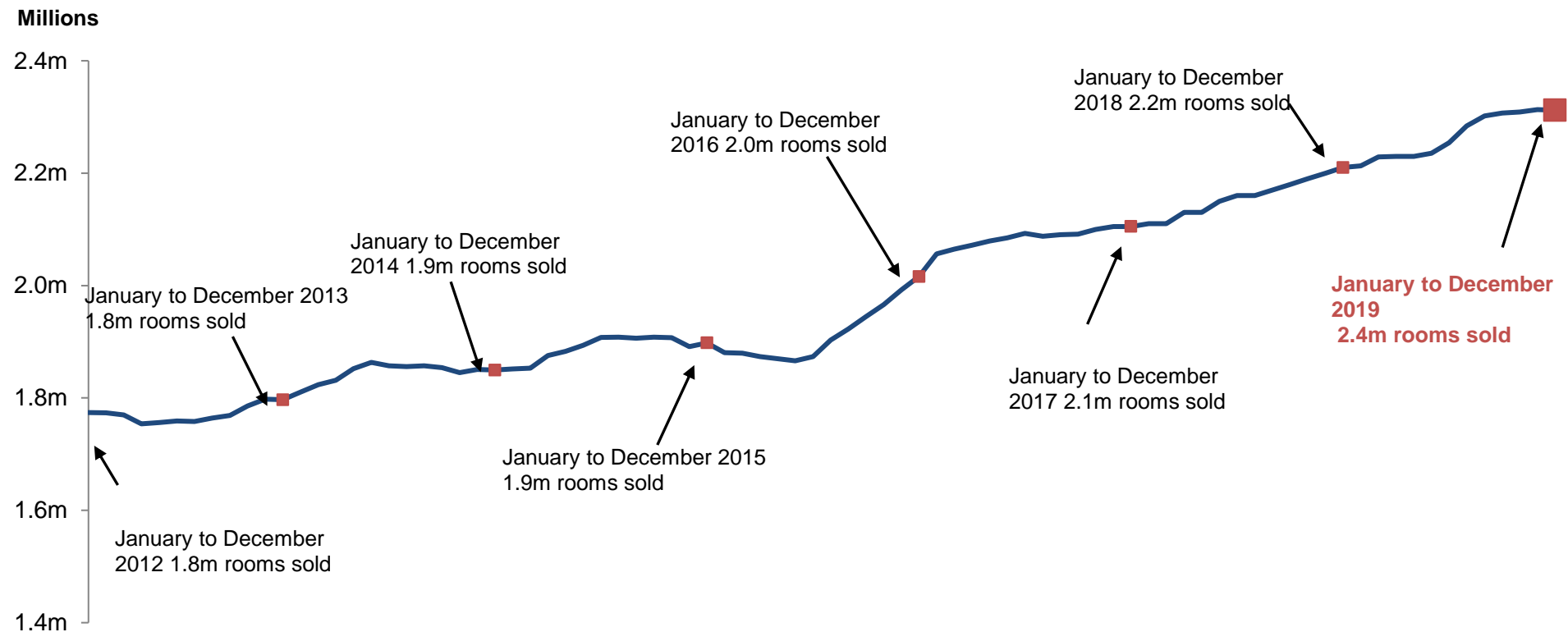


Rounded to the nearest 100,000

## Hotel accommodation occupancy

Alongside passenger and household surveys, NISRA conducts a monthly occupancy survey of local hotels (and commercial accommodation e.g. bed & breakfasts, guest houses and guest accommodation). Figures for 2019 show the estimated number of hotel room nights sold was 2.4 million; or 67% of all hotel rooms were occupied – see Figure 9 for the rolling twelve month trend in this market from December 2012. The trend suggests an increase over the period in the estimated number of rooms sold in Northern Ireland hotels.

**Figure 9: Estimated annual hotel room nights sold (rolling 12 months) (non-zero axis)**



## Guest House, B&B & Guest Accommodation Occupancy Survey and Self-Catering occupancy survey

### – Official statistics

To provide a further picture of tourism supply in Northern Ireland, NISRA run monthly occupancy surveys of guest houses, bed & breakfasts and guest accommodation and an annual survey regarding the occupancy of self-catering establishments.

Response rates to these occupancy surveys can be low - more information can be found in the full [satellite reports](#).

Results from these surveys are classed as Official Statistics, further information on [Official Statistics](#) can be found on the [NISRA website](#).

The results of the occupancy surveys show that:

- during 2019 there were an estimated 456,000 rooms sold in guesthouse, bed & breakfasts and guest accommodation;
- estimated room occupancy for guest houses, bed & breakfasts and guest accommodation for 2019 was 33%;
- there were an estimated 55,000 weeks sold at self-catering establishments during 2019;
- the estimated annual self-catering unit occupancy in 2019 was 31%.
- There were large increases in stock in the supply side of tourism between 2018 and 2019. There was an extra 10% in both rooms and beds available in Guest Houses, B&Bs and Guest Accommodation. There was an additional 32% in self catering units available between 2018 and 2019. It is important to note that 39% of these were unclassified.

## Visitor attraction survey – Official statistics

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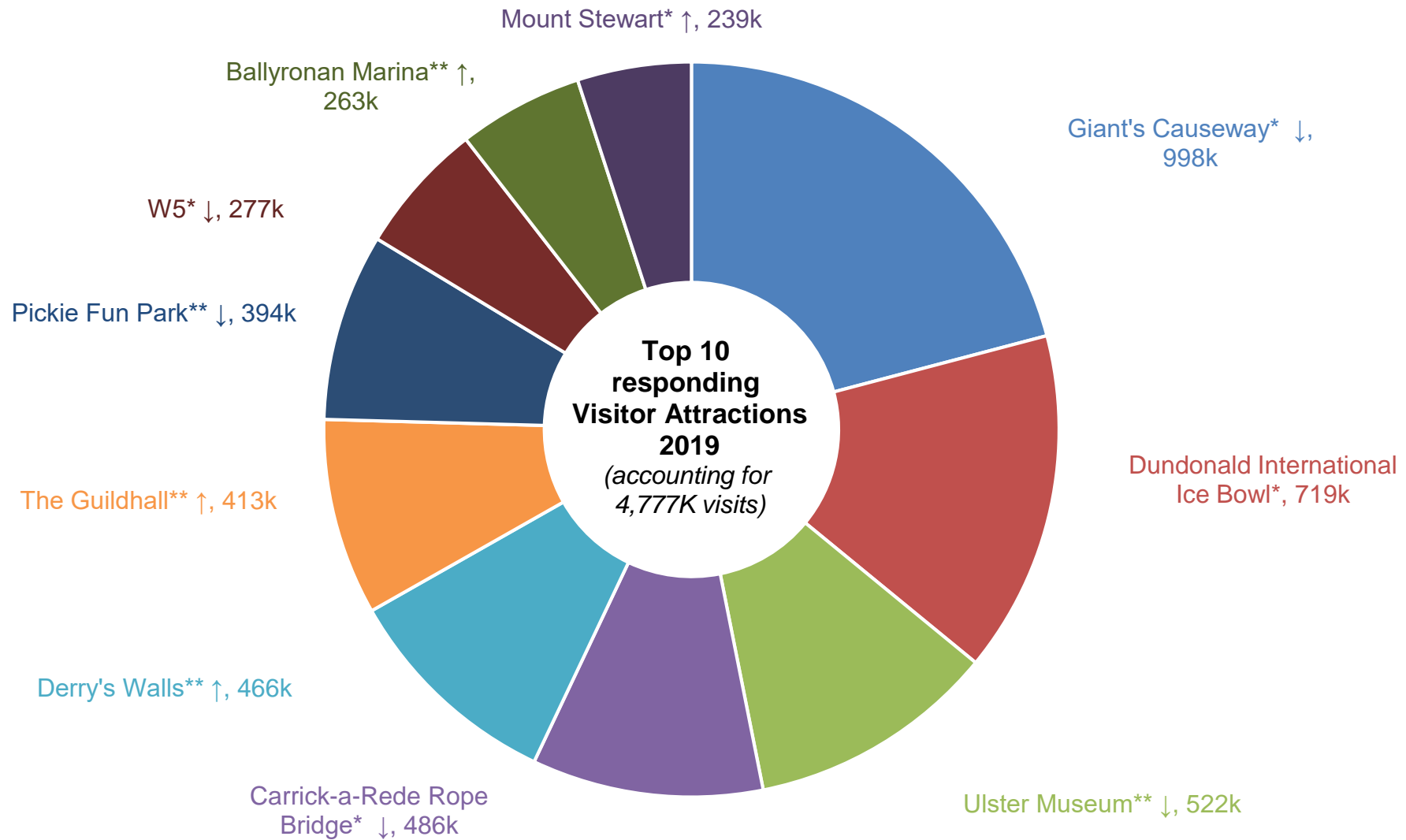
To provide a further picture of tourism in Northern Ireland, NISRA run an annual survey to collect information on visits to all visitor attractions in Northern Ireland. It is important to note that the response rate fell significantly in 2019-most likely due to COVID and the businesses being closed when NISRA usually chase up responses. At time of print there were 135 responses out of the 400 plus who were contacted at the end of December 2019 (this is approximately half of usual response rates). The key findings from these 135 responses are:

- The top three responding attractions (excluding parks & gardens) during 2019 were Giant's Causeway, Dundonald International Ice Bowl and Ulster Museum;
- Five of the top 10 participating visitor attractions in 2019 had indicated that visitor numbers had decreased between 2018 and 2019;
- there were a reported 12.9 million visits to visitor attractions in 2019 who responded to the survey;
- A reported 31% of visits were made by visitors who lived outside of Northern Ireland; and
- Country Parks/Parks/Forests accounted 39% of all visitors.

Collection methods for the estimated number of visits in the Visitor Attraction Survey differ - more information can be found in the [Visitor Attraction Survey](#) satellite report.

Results from this surveys are classed as Official Statistics, further information on [Official Statistics](#) can be found on the [NISRA website](#).

**Figure 10: Top ten visitor attractions 2019 (excluding country parks/parks/forests/gardens)**



\*Estimates are based on ticket sales

\*\*Estimates are based on other counting methods

↑=increase since 2018

↓=decrease since 2018

Due to COVID 19, NISRA have had issues with the response rate as attractions remain closed. NISRA recognise that this is not a complete list.



## Cruise ships docking in Northern Ireland ports

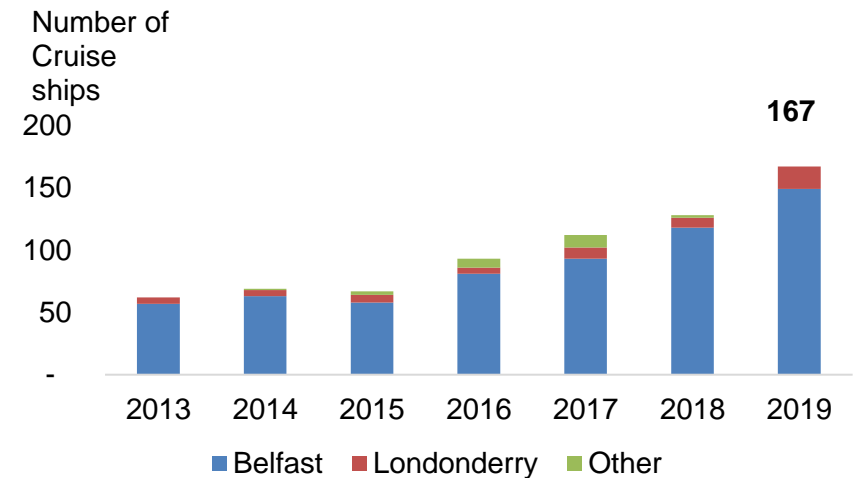
The number of cruise ships docking in Northern Ireland has increased markedly over time.

In 2019, there were 167 cruise ships docked in Northern Ireland ports. This compares with 62 cruise ships docked in Northern Ireland in 2013. Of these ships, 149 docked in Belfast and 18 in Londonderry. (Figure 11)

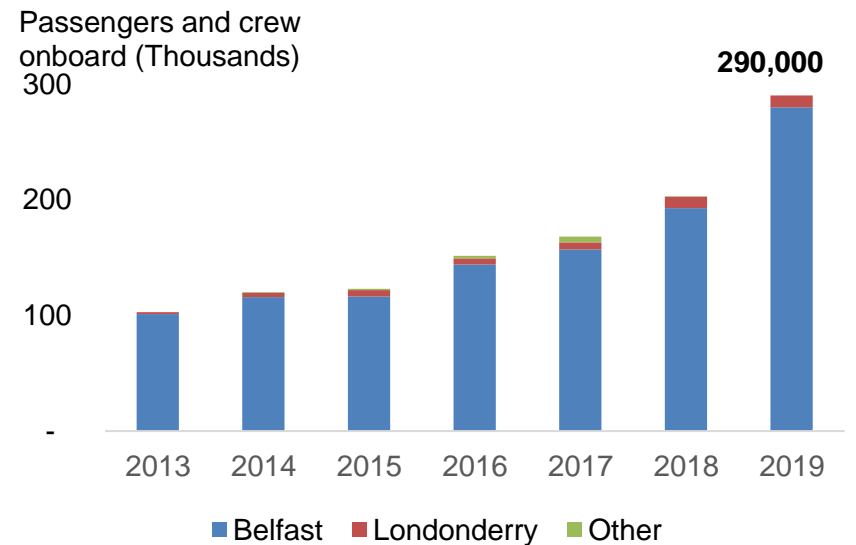
There is no data available on the number of passengers or crew who disembark, or their associated expenditure. However, the total number of passengers and crew on board has nearly trebled since 2013 (see [background](#) note 11 for further information).

In 2013 the cruise ships that docked had capacity of 103,000 passengers and crew on board. In 2019 this increased to 290,000. (Figure 12)

**Figure 11: Number of cruise ships docking in Northern Ireland ports (2013-2019)**



**Figure 12: Number of passengers and crew on cruise ships docking in Northern Ireland ports (2013-2019)**



## Jobs in tourism related industries

The most recent NI Business Register and Employment Survey (2019) figures estimate 70,803 employee jobs in tourism related industries in 2019 (Table 2). 56% of those working in tourism related industries work part-time. A breakdown of these 70,803 jobs is given in Figure 13.

**Table 2: Employee jobs, pay and hours worked in tourism related industries 2019**

Broad Tourism Sector	Number Employed*	Gross weekly median pay (£)**	Average Hours worked**
Accommodation for visitors	10,829	320.1	35.8
Food & beverage serving activities	41,819	182.0	23.3
Transport	4,773	x	x
Sporting & recreational activities	8,206	367.3	36.0
Other	5,176	329.0	34.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>70,803</b>	<b>261.0</b>	<b>30.0</b>

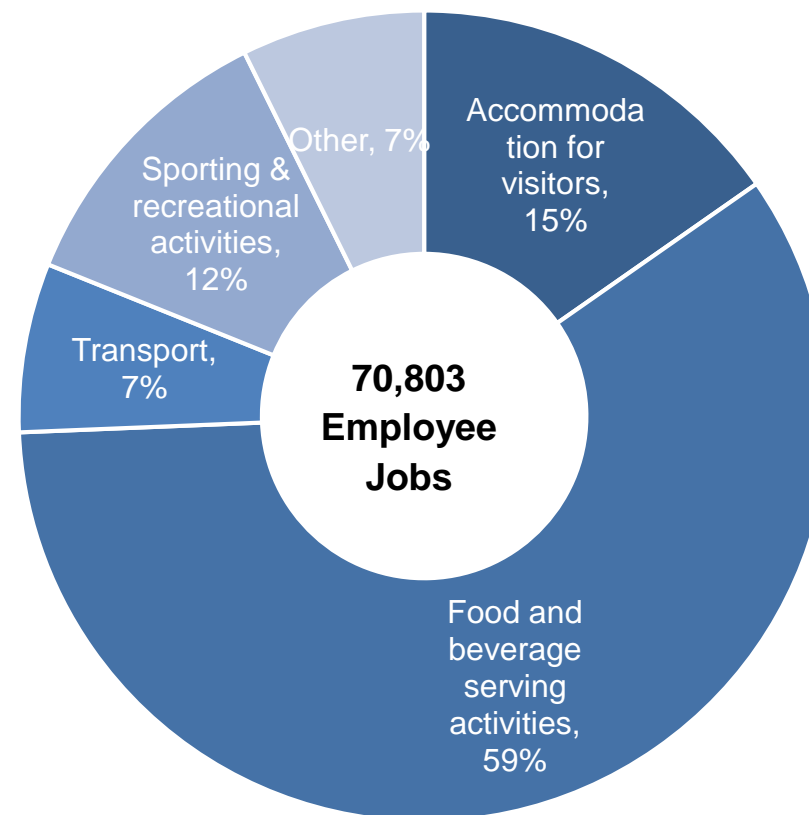
Rounded to the nearest hundred

x= sample size too small to provide a reliable estimate

**Sources:** \*NI Business Register and Employment Survey (2019)

\*\*NI Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (2019)

**Figure 13: Employee jobs in tourism related industries 2019**



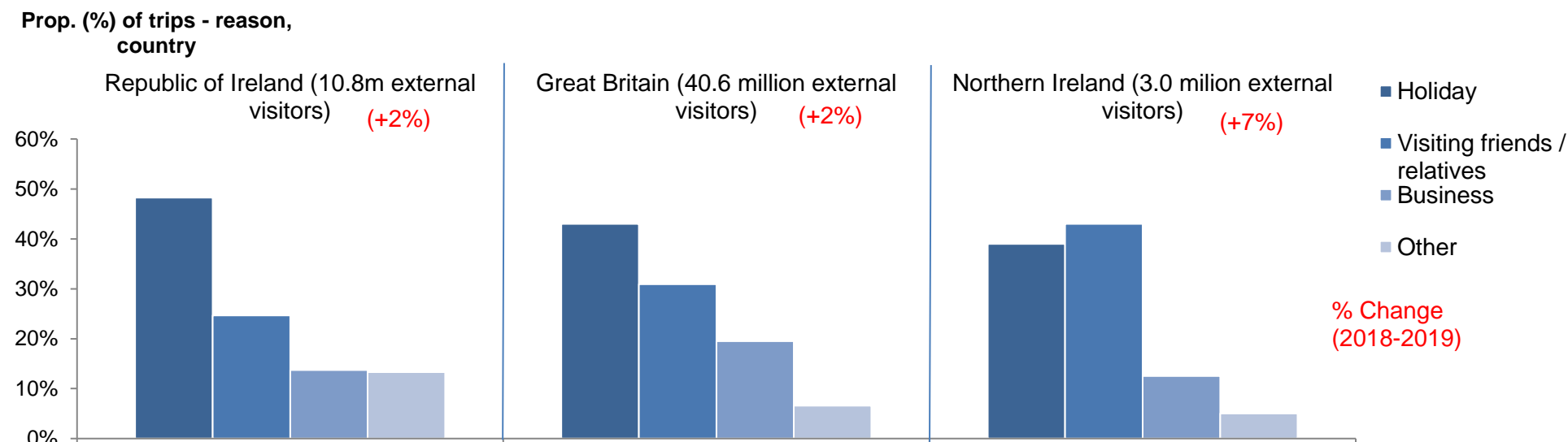
**Source:** NI Business Register and Employment Survey (2019)

## Comparisons

According to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, international tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) worldwide grew 4% in 2019 to reach 1.5 billion. All regions enjoyed an increase in arrivals. The Middle East (+8%) led growth, followed by Asia and the Pacific (+5%). International arrivals in Europe and Africa (both +4%) increased in line with the world average, while the Americas saw a growth of 3%. Although 2019 was another year of strong growth (4%), it has been slower compared to higher levels of growth in 2017 (+6%) and 2018 (+6%). Uncertainty surrounding Brexit, geopolitical and trade tensions, and the global economic slowdown were reasons given for the slowdown in growth.

It is informative when assessing tourism to compare Northern Ireland to the rest of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. Figure 14 shows the proportion of external overnight trips in 2019 by country and reason for visit. Between 2018 and 2019, the estimate for the number of external visitors to NI increased by 7%, higher when compared to the RoI (+2%) and Great Britain (+2%).

**Figure 14: Estimated proportion of external overnight trips by reason in Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, 2019**



## Background Notes

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1. This report presents a summary of tourism statistics. More detailed data are available at this [link](#). It should be noted that this publication uses data collected before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Since then, COVID-19 has impacted all face to face interviews and they stopped on the 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020. The pandemic also saw the closure of much of the hospitality sector. This has impacted on response rates to all “supply” tourism surveys (occupancy surveys, self catering and visitor attraction) as establishments have been closed with no way to contact and chase up responses to the 2019 surveys.

The next tourism statistics release is usually for the year up to March 2020. As a result of the COVID-19 impact, NISRA’s next published tourism figures will be released in December 2020 and will cover up only the period to 17<sup>th</sup> March with a suspended National Statistics badge (see background note 4). Users should note that even though quarterly statistics are available and published, it is recommended that tourism statistics should be looked at over a twelve month period to give a more robust picture of tourism in NI.

2. Tourism data is derived from a variety of sources, more information on these sources can also be found at this [link](#). Tourism estimates are designed to provide timely data on tourism activity in Northern Ireland. The estimates may be subject to revision due to improvements to the survey/analysis methodology or the inclusion of data returned after the publication date. The figures in this document are the most up-to-date available at the time of publication. Northern Ireland Tourism statistics have undergone a series of organisational changes and revisions to methodology. Information on the sources, the data quality of each source and any revisions or changes in methodology can be accessed at this [link](#).
3. The production of tourism statistics is conducted in line with the UK Statistics Authority [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#). This means that the statistics
  - a. meet identified user needs,
  - b. are well explained and readily accessible,
  - c. are produced according to sound methods, and
  - d. are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.
4. Tourism statistics have undergone assessment by the UK Statistics Authority. In May 2017 the Office for Statistics Regulation completed their review and confirmed the designation of new National Statistics on:
  - Northern Ireland Annual Tourism Statistics*
  - Northern Ireland Quarterly Tourism Statistics*

*External Overnight Trips to Northern Ireland*

*Northern Ireland Domestic Tourism*

*Northern Ireland Hotel Occupancy*

*Northern Ireland Local Government District Tourism Statistics*

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and value. Due to an issue with one of the sources (see background note 18), the quarterly statistics published for quarters 2 and 3 did not have this badge and were published as Official statistics excluding RoI residents. However, this current publication incorporates a complete picture of all 2019 data again and includes updated quarterly statistics.

5. NISRA uses the Survey of Overseas Travellers run by Fáilte Ireland to gain information on the visitors who took overnight trips in Northern Ireland and exited through Republic of Ireland ports. Information on Northern Ireland overnight trips is also now collected through a separate survey carried out by Central Statistics Office Ireland. NISRA researched the two sources and presented and agreed the findings at the All-Ireland tourism statistics meeting with all relevant providers and users of the data. The findings can be accessed at [link](#). By way of an update, CSO have informed NISRA that they did begin to trial face to face data collection in the Passenger Card Inquiry at the start of 2020, however due to COVID this has stopped again from March 2020. This trial had only started in one port so will not provide enough of a sample to explore this at this stage.
6. Due to the nature of household surveys in Northern Ireland, users should be aware that statistics on overnight trips in Northern Ireland residents aged under 16 are excluded. NISRA has also increased the sample size of the underlying survey used to measure domestic tourism from April 2017.
7. While the statistics are produced in as timely a way as possible, it is realised that early indicators would be useful. Early tourism indicators are published at this [link](#) and are updated monthly. This includes numbers of departing passengers through air and sea ports, cruise ship data and occupancy in hotels, guesthouses, guest accommodation and bed&breakfast.
8. Tourism statistics systems are designed to collect information for Northern Ireland as a whole. However, respondents do indicate where they stay during these overnight trips allowing for some analysis at Local Area level. The most recent (2018) results published at this level can be found at this [link](#). The 2019 Local Government results will be published during November 2020.
9. The estimates in this bulletin are derived from sample surveys and are therefore subject to sampling errors. Sampling errors are determined both by the sample design and by the sample size. Generally speaking, the larger the sample supporting a particular

estimate, the smaller the associated sampling error. Confidence intervals around the estimates of all overnight trips in Northern Ireland stands at +/- 4% for the year (associated expenditure at +/- 6%). Note: based on the survey design confidence intervals for domestic tourism trips stands at +/-7% and external trips at +/-4%. Information on confidence intervals in Northern Ireland tourism statistics can be accessed at this [link](#).

As background note 1 also indicated, users should be aware of response rates to all the “supply” side of tourism statistics, i.e. occupancy surveys, Visitor Attraction survey and self-catering as it has proven difficult to chase up responses when establishments are closed and NISRA are unsure if people are furloughed who may usually supply figures.

10. This report includes a section on “**Jobs in Tourism Related Industries**”. The definition of tourism related industries can be found at this [link](#).

Estimates on the number of jobs is from Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES). The BRES is carried out annually but can only produce estimates for tourism jobs every 2 years due to changing sample sizes. Therefore the latest tourism characteristic industries breakdown available is for 2019. More information on the BRES, including details of its release schedule and the associated methodology can be accessed at this [link](#).

Information on weekly earnings and hours worked in the tourism related industries has also been included for the first time in this release. The data is from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) which is carried out annually. The latest data is for 2019 which was published in October 2019. More information on the ASHE can be accessed at this [link](#).

11. The vast majority of cruise ships visit Northern Ireland on a single day basis, docking in the morning and then leaving in the evening. Thus under UN definitions cruise ship visits are considered day-trips and excluded from the overnight trips figures outlined in section 1. To address this statistics from [Visit Belfast](#), [Cruise North West](#) and Newry & Mourne Council relating to Warrenpoint port are included. Cruise ships can also drop anchor and tender passengers ashore at other parts of Northern Ireland (Bangor & Portrush).
12. NISRA can use the Continuous Household Survey to measure the number of trips Northern Ireland residents take outside Northern Ireland. These statistics are not presented in detail in this report but they do give some context. As noted in Table 1 the number of domestic overnight trips or staycations (that is Northern Ireland residents spending a night away from their home within NI) is estimated to have increased by 7% between 2018 and 2019. There was also an increase of 5% in the number of overnight trips taken by Northern Ireland outside of NI. More information can be found in the Domestic tourism report and extra tables.

13. External overnight trips figures from January 2012 to December 2015 were revised on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2016 due to a revised weighting mechanism for the Household Travel Survey, conducted by Central Statistics Office regarding overnight visitors to Northern Ireland from the Republic of Ireland. The HTS data for 2016 was revised in 2017 due to a weighting revision. This caused minimal change which was less than 1%.

Full information on the revision of tourism statistics can be found at [Tourism Statistics Branch Revision Policy](#).

14. A quality report on Tourism Statistics can be found at this [link](#).

It should be noted that NISRA are aware that due to COVID-19, response rates have been lower in all surveys as staff were unable to work from the office. (background note 1 and 9). It is also important to note that NISRA were unable to get the ferry passenger numbers for December for one of the sources. NISRA have estimated this figure using previous years data (and as this was pre COVID are confident in this estimation). NISRA will revise the overall trends of trips/nights/spend when the data on ferry passengers is available but it is unlikely to impact on the overall trend.

15. Follow NISRA on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

16. If you would like to be kept up to date on NISRA tourism statistics please join our [mailing list](#).

When you are join the list, we will notify you by email of:

- new NI tourism statistical publications that have been released
- any delays or changes being made to tourism statistical publications
- user engagement exercises

You can be removed from the list at any time.

17. Data from the 2018 and 2019 Household Travel Survey (HTS), provided by Central Statistics Office (CSO), relating to the number of visitors coming to Northern Ireland from the Republic of Ireland (ROI), should be considered as interim data that may be subject to future revision. They are based on a statistical adjustment of the data which began in 2018, and therefore may be subject to revision in the future. For more information on this adjustment, please refer to the Methodology Note on Review of Household Travel Survey 2018 at this link. NISRA have assess that the quality of this data is comparable to the historic series.

18. Tourism Statistics in Northern Ireland are used to help monitor the [Draft Northern Ireland Programme for Government \(PFG\)](#). The NI Civil Service Outcomes Delivery Plan (ODP) sets out the actions put in place with the objective of improving wellbeing for all by



tackling disadvantage and driving economic growth. The most [recent](#) update to this was published in December 2019.

Outcome 10 states that “**we have created a place where people want to live, and work, to visit and invest**”. Five indicators fall under this outcome and are used to assess whether this has been achieved. One of these uses tourism statistics - Indicator 30 “**Total Spend by external visitors**”. In order to truly assess if there has been a change in tourism spend, the UK Consumer Price Inflation including owner occupiers’ housing costs (CPIH) is used to take effect of inflation.

Readers of this report may also be interested in the Nation Brands Index which is another indicator under Outcome 10. The Executive Office in Northern Ireland use the Anholt Ipsos Nation Brands Index. The most recent results for 2019 were published at this [link](#). They showed that Northern Ireland’s international reputation remains stable, achieving a mid-level ranking of the 50 nations included. The reputation is strongest within the UK and European nations. “Natural beauty” was the attribute with the highest score in 2019 (and has been in all previous years).

**Please note staff are currently working from home, so it would be quicker to contact via email rather than post.**

**Responsible Statistician:**

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