

External Overnight Trips To Northern Ireland (January-December 2014)

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This report provides analysis of 2014 external overnight trips to Northern Ireland. The key findings are:

- there were 2.2 million overnight trips to Northern Ireland by external visitors in 2014. This is a 4% increase from 2013. These trips accounted for 10.0 million nights (up 1%) and £514 million expenditure (down 3%)



2.2m
trips



10.0m
nights



£514m
spent

- the top five places of origin for external visitors were England, Republic of Ireland, Scotland, United States of America and Germany;
- there were 0.7 million overnight trips by external visitors for holiday related purposes in 2014, an increase of 12% from 0.6 million in 2013;
- tourism in Northern Ireland appears to have recovered from the 2008-2009 Great Recession, with 2014 having the greatest number of external overnight trips on record.

Lead Statistician:

Patrick O’Kane

Tourism Statistics Branch,
Netherleigh, Massey Avenue,
BELFAST
BT4 2JP

Telephone: 028 9052 9585

Email: tourismstatistics@dfpni.gov.uk

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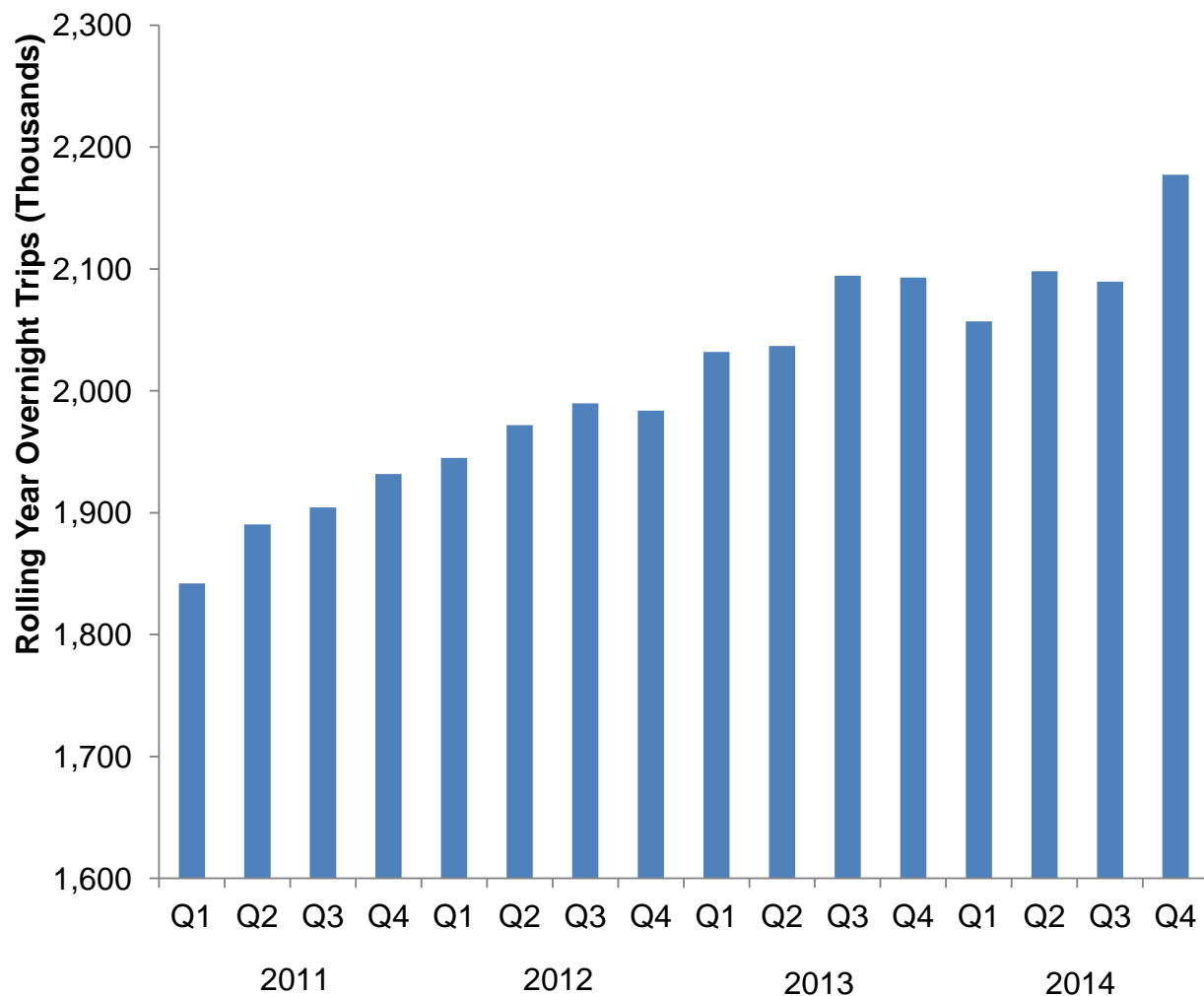
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Introduction

This report provides statistics on external overnight trips (tourists from Great Britain, Republic of Ireland and elsewhere) to Northern Ireland during 2014. A full picture of all tourism activity can be found in the Northern Ireland Annual Tourism Statistics Publication.

Figure 1a: Rolling 12 months number of external overnight trips, Q1 2011 – Q4 2014 (non-zero axis)



Overall Volume/ latest trend

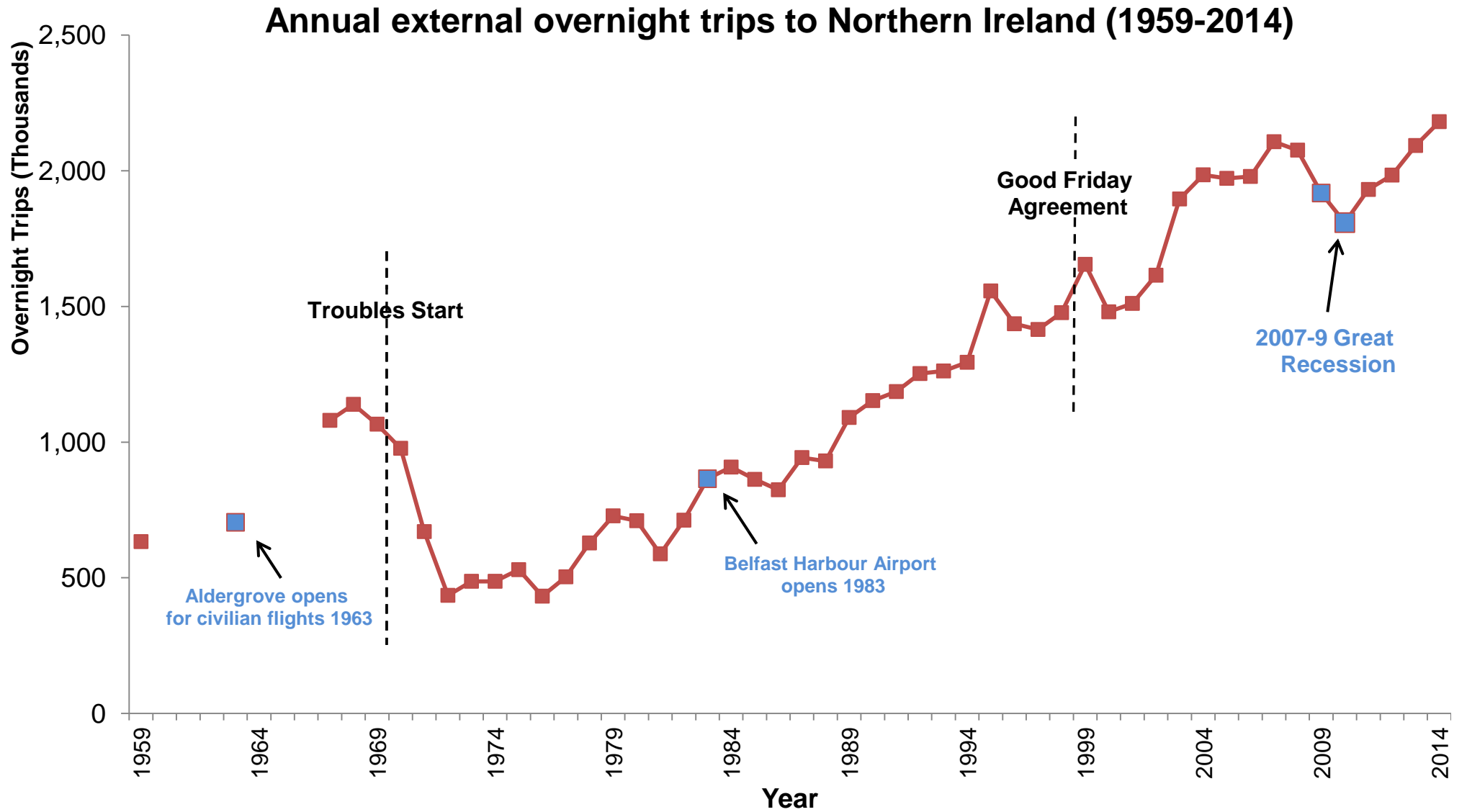
Figure 1a shows the rolling year (twelve month) external overnight trips from Quarter 1 2011 to Quarter 4 2014.

There has been a steady increase in the number of external overnight trips up to 2.2 million in 2014.

These figures should be seen in the context of the longer time series shown in Figure 1b (overleaf).

External overnight trips in Northern Ireland have shown a general upward trend over recent years. Periods such as The Troubles and The 2008-2009 Great Recession can be seen to have a negative impact. It should be noted 2014 had the greatest number of external overnight trips to Northern Ireland on record.

Figure 1b: Annual external overnight trips to Northern Ireland (1959-2014)



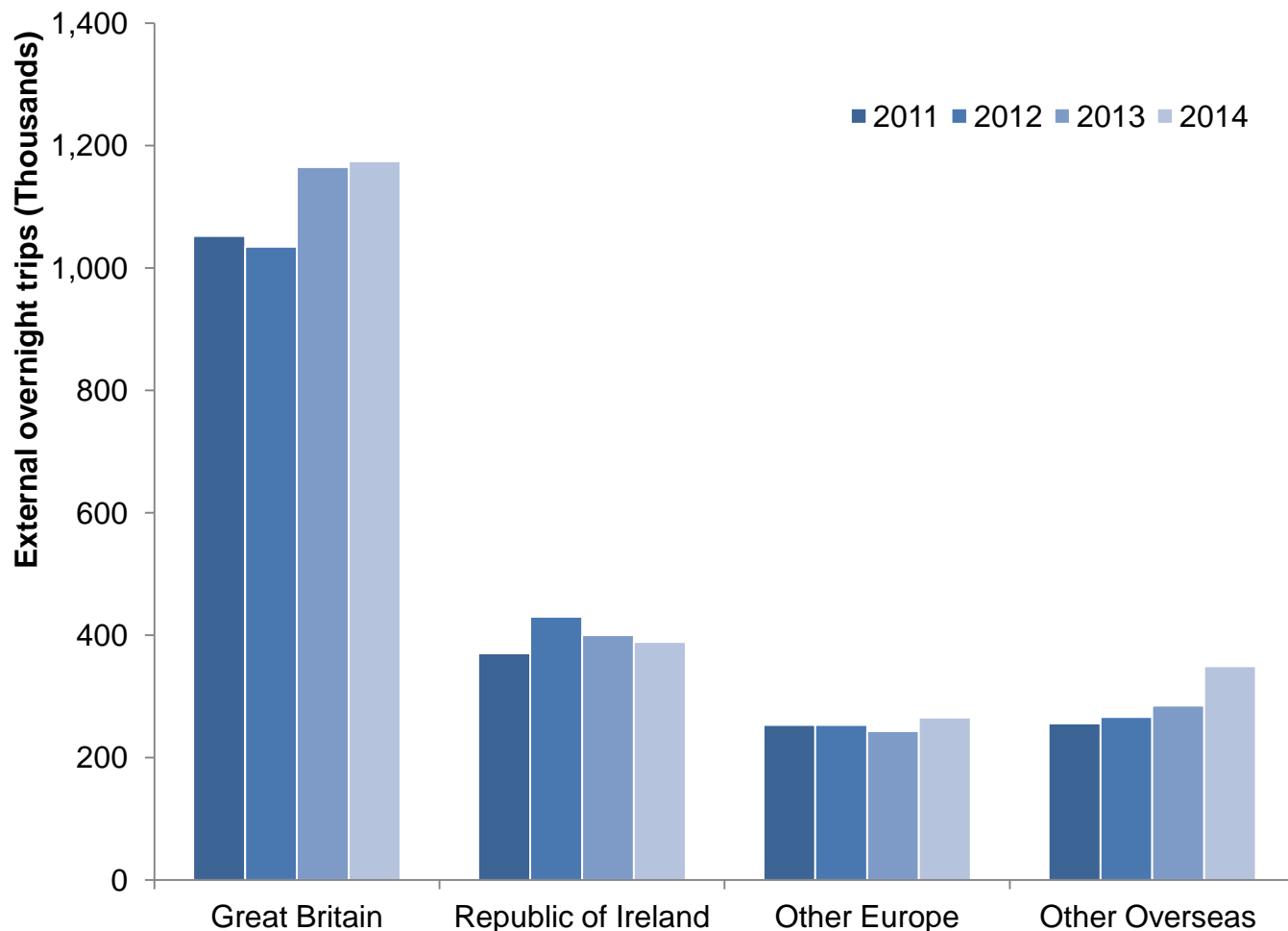
Sources: 1959-2010 Northern Ireland Tourist Board; 2010 onwards Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
 Note: Figures for residents of the Republic of Ireland have been included from 2000 onwards (Source: Central Statistics Office)

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

External overnight trips to Northern Ireland by main market

For this publication information regarding external overnight trips to Northern Ireland (NI) will be broken out into main markets which are Great Britain (GB), the Republic of Ireland (RoI), Other Europe and Other Overseas.

Figure 2: External overnight trips to Northern Ireland by main market 2011 – 2014



During 2014, there were 2.2 million external overnight trips in NI, an increase of 4% from 2.1 million in 2013 (Figure 2).

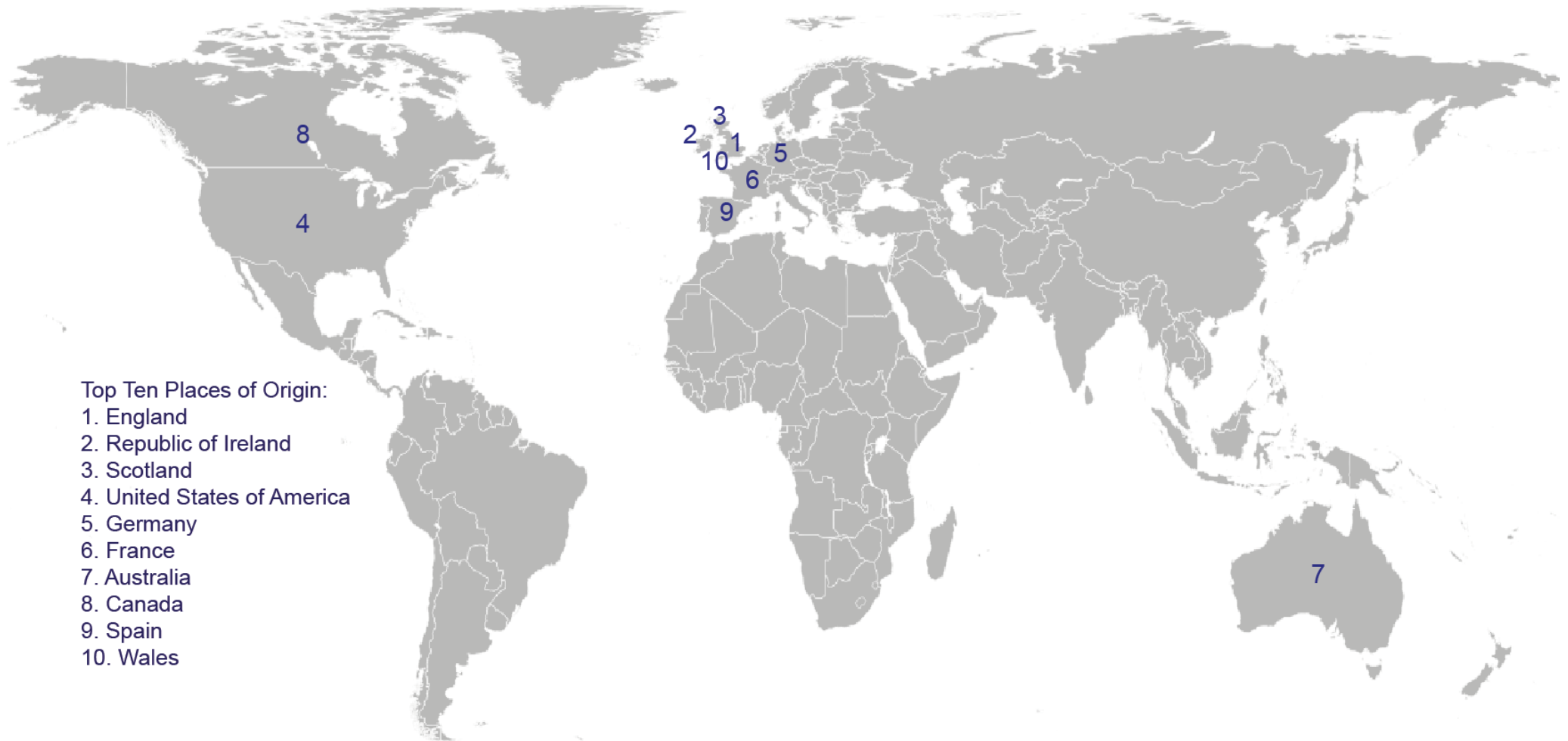
There was a particular growth in the Other Overseas and Other Europe markets, increasing by 23% and 9% respectively. There was also a marginal increase in the GB market (1%). However, the Republic of Ireland market showed a small decrease of 3% in the number of overnight trips in NI.

These figures should however be seen in context with the overall confidence intervals of +/- 5% on trip numbers. Therefore elements of these changes may be due solely to sampling variation.

Top ten places of origin of external overnight visitors to Northern Ireland 2014

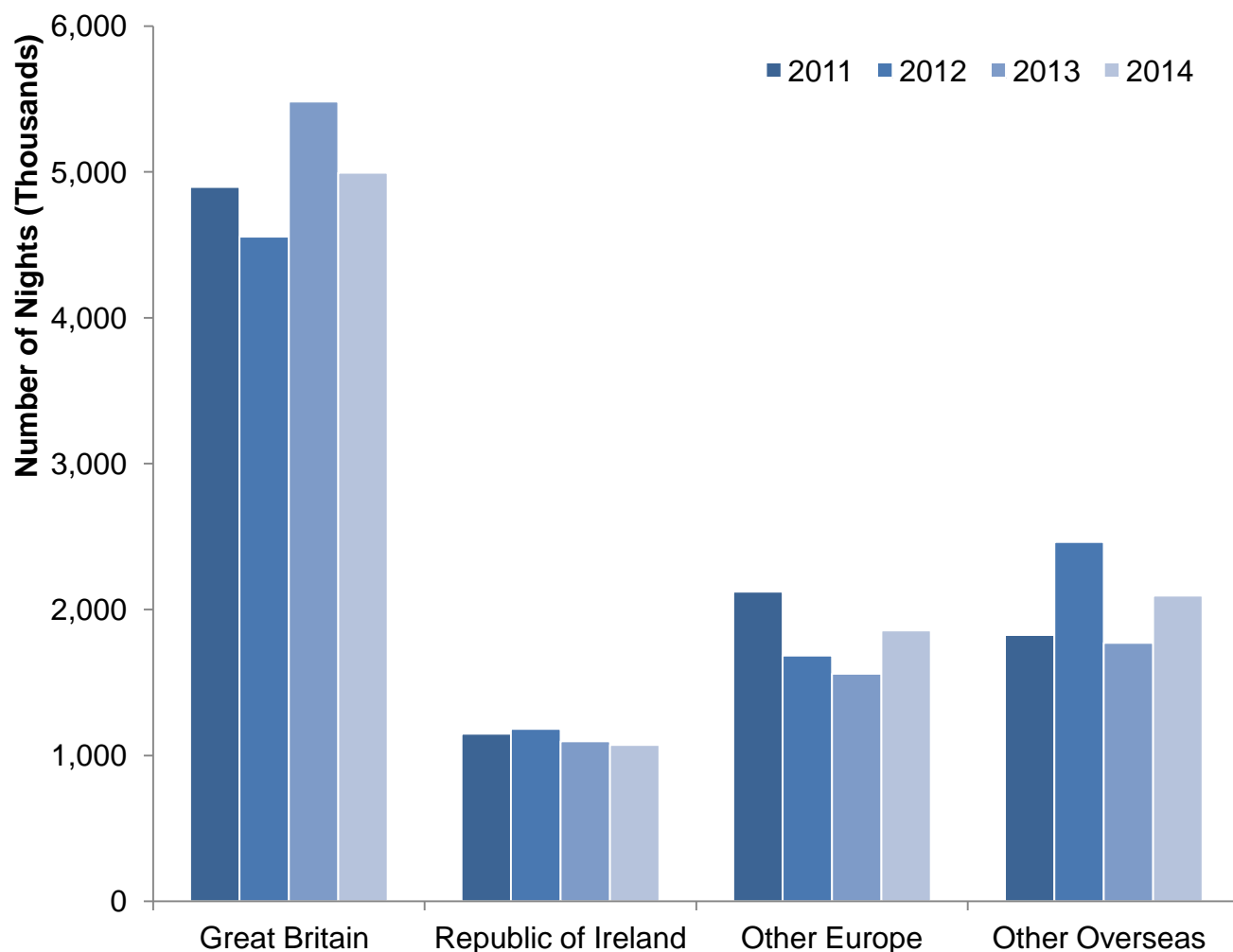
Figure 3 shows the origin of the ten most popular places of external visitors taking overnight trips to Northern Ireland during 2014, with the most popular being England, followed by the Republic of Ireland and Scotland. Although these are neighbouring Northern Ireland, places as far as USA, Canada and Australia are also in the Top Ten.

Figure 3: Top ten places of origin of overnight visitors to Northern Ireland 2014



Number of nights spent by external visitors in Northern Ireland

Figure 4: Number of nights spent by external visitors in Northern Ireland by main market 2011 – 2014



Associated with the number of external overnight trips is the amount of nights spent in Northern Ireland through these trips, which was just over 10 million nights in 2014 an increase of 1% from 2013 (Figure 4).

On a market level there was significant growth on the number of nights spent in NI by those from Other Europe (19%) and Other Overseas (18%). This mirrors the external overnight trips statistics presented above.

In contrast there were decreases in the number of nights spent in NI by those coming from GB and RoI, by 9% and 2% respectively.

The average number of nights spent in NI has fallen each year from 2011 (5.2) to 2014 (4.6) suggesting that although there are more external overnight trips being taken in NI, visitors are staying for shorter periods of time.

Expenditure of external overnight trips in Northern Ireland

Figure 5: Rolling 12 months expenditure of external overnight trips to Northern Ireland Q1 2011 – Q4 2014 (non-zero axis)

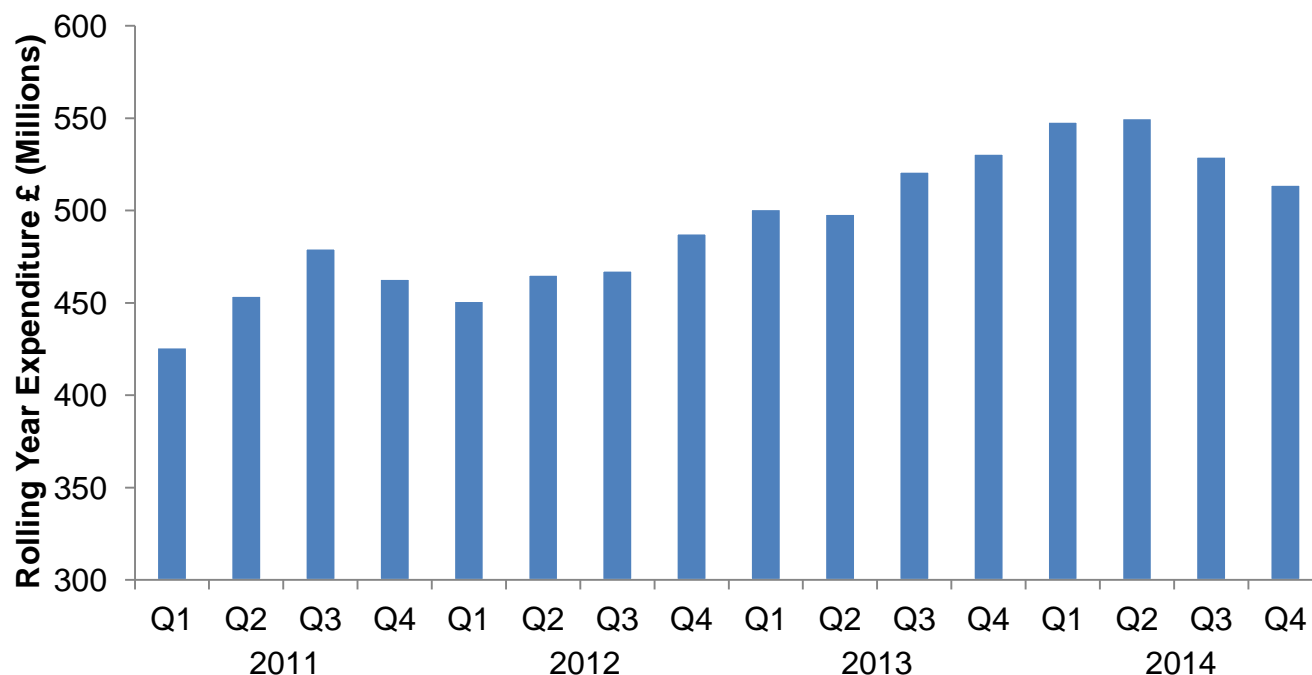


Figure 5 shows the rolling year (twelve month) expenditure of external overnight trips from Q1 2011 to Q4 2014. In 2014 total expenditure of external overnight trips was £514 million, a fall of 3% from £531 million in 2013.

The RoI was the only market to experience an increase in expenditure in 2014 (up 19% to £68 million). Expenditure fell by 1% in overnight trips from Other Europe to £72 million, 8% from Other Overseas to £117 million and 6% from GB to £257 million in 2014.

Over this period a stronger pound may have had an impact on tourism expenditure (i.e. tourists from Europe and Other Overseas may have spent less due to poorer exchange rates).

Reason for visit of external overnight trips to Northern Ireland

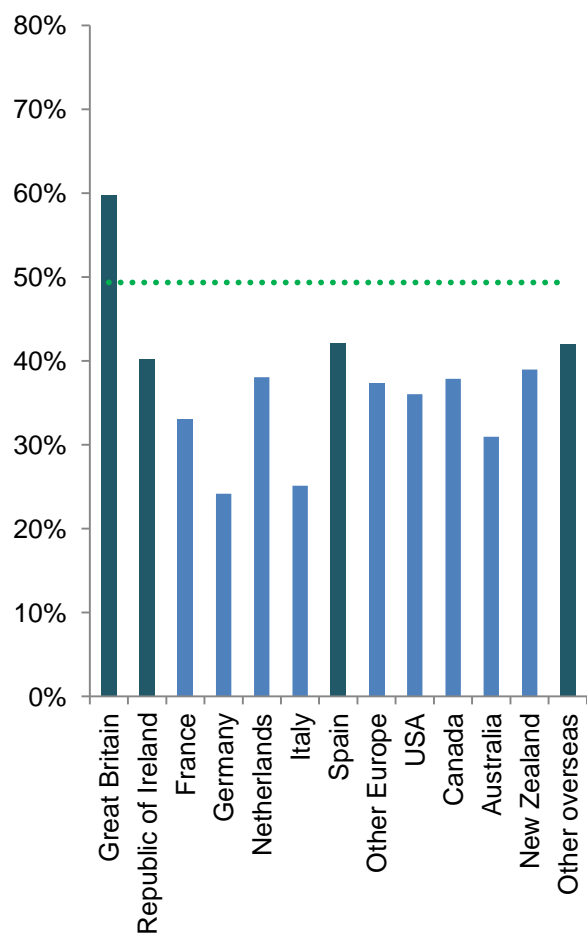
External overnight trips for **visiting friends and relatives** were up 2% in 2014 to 1.07 million, from 1.05 million in 2013. Of all external overnight trips in NI during 2014, 49% were for this reason with the majority of overnight trips from GB (60%) being to visit friends and relatives. Following GB, 42% of overnight trips from Spain and Other Overseas, and 40% of those from RoI were here to visit friends and relatives (Figure 6a).

External overnight trips for **holiday / pleasure / leisure** purposes increased 12% between 2013 (0.63 million) and 2014 (0.71 million) with 32% of all external overnight trips for holiday / pleasure / leisure purposes. The majority of places of origin were above this level, with 71% of all overnight trips from Italy, 67% of all overnight trips from Australia and 63% of all overnight trips from Germany to NI for this purpose (Figure 6b).

Whilst external overnight trips for visiting friends and relatives and holiday / pleasure / leisure purposes both increased, external overnight trips for **business** purposes fell by 5% from 0.32 million in 2013 to 0.30 million in 2014. Of all overnight trips from GB and the Netherlands, both had 19% coming to Northern Ireland for business purposes (Figure 6c).

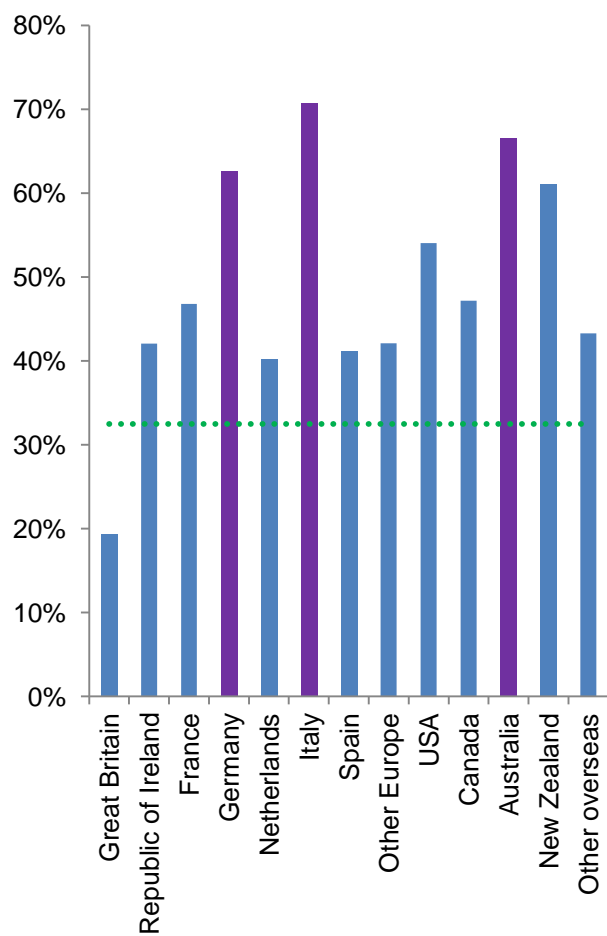
Figures 6a – 6c: Reason for External Overnight Trip in Northern Ireland by Place of Origin 2014

6a. Visiting Friends / Relatives



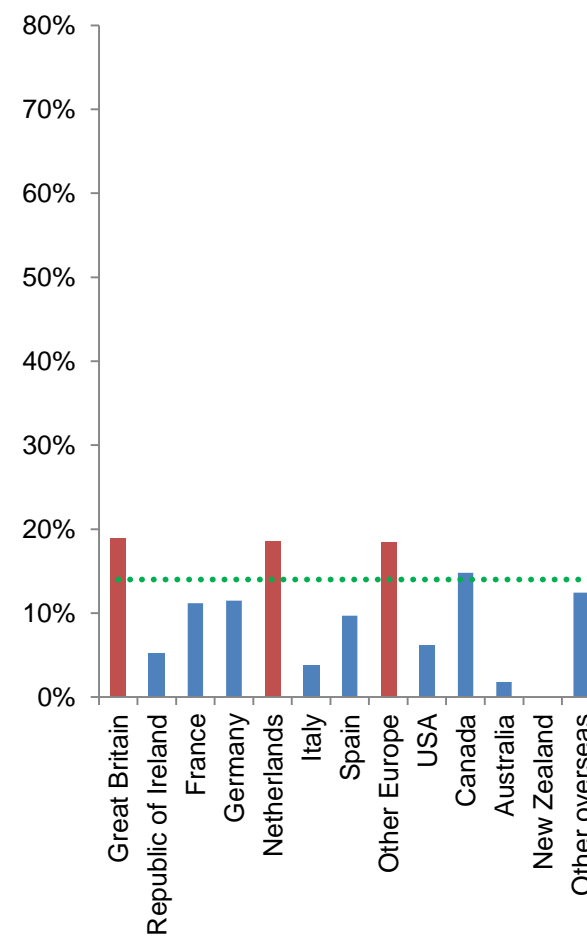
**Great Britain,
Spain and Other Overseas,
Republic of Ireland**

6b. Holiday / Pleasure / Leisure



**Italy,
Australia,
Germany**

6c. Business



**Great Britain,
Netherlands,
Other Europe**

..... External Overnight Trips Average

External Overnight Trips to Northern Ireland for Holiday / Pleasure / Leisure Purposes

The number of external overnight trips to Northern Ireland for holiday / pleasure / leisure purposes has increased year on year from 532,000 external overnight trips in 2011 to 707,000 external overnight trips during 2014 – an increase of 33% over this period. The number of nights and value of expenditure associated with these external overnight trips have also shown a strong increase (+20% and +45% respectively) from 2011 to 2014.

There are many things that may influence someone making an overnight trip for holiday / pleasure / leisure purposes to come to Northern Ireland (for example the Giro D'Italia in 2014). This may be reflected in the large proportion of overnight trips from Italy (71%) coming to NI in 2014 for such purposes.

Other factors that may have influenced external overnight visitors coming to NI for holiday / pleasure / leisure purposes include the Giant's Causeway (number one visitor attraction in NI 2014), Titanic Belfast (number two visitor attraction in NI 2014) and Game of Thrones.

Some information is captured on factors that influence people to come to Northern Ireland (Figure 7). Reflecting the Visitor Attraction Survey, the Giant's Causeway was the most influential factor for external overnight visitors for holiday / pleasure / leisure purposes during 2014 (29%), followed by Titanic Belfast (27%).

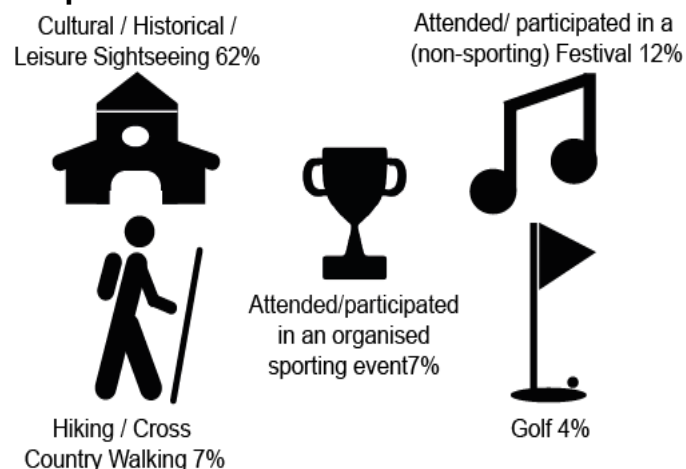
Figure 8 shows the top activities that external overnight visitors to NI for holiday / pleasure / leisure activities participated in whilst in NI.

Almost two thirds (62%) participated in cultural / historical / leisure sightseeing activities, with the next most popular activity being to attend / participate in a (non-sporting) festival (12%).

Figure 7: What influenced external overnight visitors for holiday / pleasure /leisure purposes to come to NI 2014?



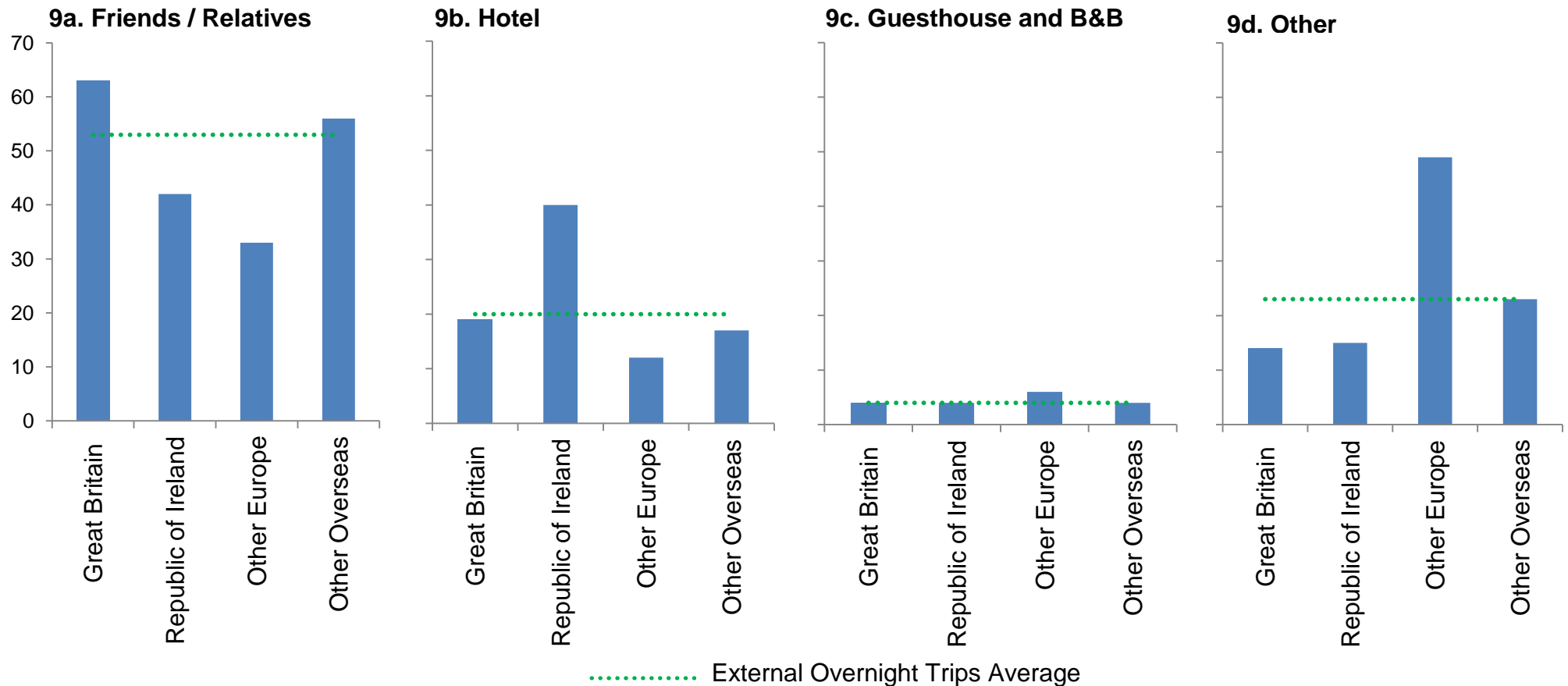
Figure 8: What activities did external overnight visitors for holiday / pleasure / leisure purposes participate in when in NI 2014



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

Accommodation Type used for External Overnight Trips in Northern Ireland

Figure 9a-9d: Proportion of nights spent in accommodation type by external overnight visitors to Northern Ireland and main market 2014



Of all external overnight trips to NI during 2014, staying with friends and relatives was the most popular choice of accommodation type. In total, the majority of nights (53%) were spent staying with friends and relatives; ranging from 33% of Other Europe to 63% of Great Britain staying with friends and relatives (Figure 9a).

The second most popular accommodation type used was hotels, with 20% of total nights being spent in a hotel; ranging from 12% by visitors from Other Europe to 40% by visitors from the Republic of Ireland (Figure 9b).

Passenger Activity at Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland Air and Sea Ports

The Civil Aviation Authority collects passenger information from NI Airports (Belfast International, Belfast City and City of Derry). Port authorities in Belfast and Larne collect data on sea passengers. Similar figures are also available for the air ports and sea ports in the Republic of Ireland.

Whilst passenger numbers in Northern Ireland air and sea ports has remained flat from 2011 to 2014; there has been a significant increase in the number of passengers at air ports and sea ports in the Republic of Ireland.

During 2014, of all overnight visitors that came to Northern Ireland that were not resident to the island of Ireland (non resident to NI and/or RoI) 28% used a port in the Republic of Ireland.

Sampling Variability

The NIPS is a sample survey and estimates obtained from it are subject to sampling variability. Table 9 details the confidence intervals of the visitor and expenditure estimates by country of residence.

Table 9 Confidence intervals for external overnight visitors to Northern Ireland 2014 (Northern Ireland Passenger Survey).

Country of Residence	95 % Confidence Interval	
	Visitors	Expenditure
Total	+/-5%	+/- 7%

Source: NI Passenger Survey (NISRA)

Rounding

Figures in the tables have been rounded to the nearest thousand and may not add to the totals. Year on year percentage change is calculated using unrounded figures.

Data Revisions

Tourism estimates are produced to provide timely data to the tourism industry and Government policy makers. The estimates may be subject to revision due to improvements to the survey / analysis / methodology or 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.

Single year estimates from the Survey of Overseas Travellers have been replaced with three year rolling averages following consultation with users. Further information can be found on the background notes of the Northern Ireland Annual Tourism Statistics publication.

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

Survey Methodologies

For survey methodologies of the surveys used to compile this report click on the respective link below:

[Northern Ireland Passenger Survey](#) (NISRA)

[Survey of Overseas Travellers](#) (Fáilte Ireland)

[Household Travel Survey](#) (Central Statistics Office)

Further Information

Tables containing data used in this publication can be found at: [External Visitors to Northern Ireland](#). For more information relating to this publication or if an alternative format is required, please contact us at tourismstatistics@dfpni.gov.uk

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