

Statistical First Release



Wales Tourism Performance Report January to December 2018

6 June 2019 SFR 41/2019

This report presents the results from the main official tourism surveys for Wales covering the period January to December 2018. Details of each survey including links to further information is provided in section 8 at the end of the report.

Main points

Top line results are summarised below and each survey is covered in more detail in the rest of the report. The results indicate a largely mixed year, with a higher volume of overnight visitor trips taken in Wales by GB residents, but lower numbers of international visitors.

Overnight visits by GB residents

- In the twelve months from January to December 2018, there were
 10.021 million overnight trips to Wales by GB residents, which was an
 11 per cent increase on the same period last year.
- During this period the expenditure in Wales was £1,853 million which was an increase on last year by 13.8 percent.
- There were increases in the levels of overnight holiday trips and increases in visits to friends and relatives and business trips in the twelve months between January and December 2018.

Day visits by GB residents

 There has been a slight decrease in the volume and expenditure of Tourism Day trips taken in Wales during 2018 compared to the same period last year, with 95.7 million trips taken and related expenditure of £4 billion.

International visitors

- During 2018 there were 941,000 trips taken in Wales by international visitors and expenditure of £405 million.
- This was a decrease in the volume of trips by international visitors to Wales (12.8%), compared to a 3% fall across the UK as a whole.
- Visitor expenditure increased by 9.7% to £405 million.
- Trips for all purposes, holidays and visits to friends and relatives and international business trips fell slightly compared to last year.

About this release

This is a comprehensive report that includes the most recent quarterly data from the main tourism surveys covering overnight domestic GB trips, international visitors, day visits by GB residents, **Accommodation Occupancy** rates and findings from the Wales Tourism Barometer. The aim of this report is to present the results from the individual surveys on the overall performance of the tourism industry in Wales. The report includes data for the whole of Wales and, where available, for Great Britain/UK for comparative purposes.

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Main points - [Continued]

Accommodation occupancy

- Average occupancy rates were on par with last year for most accommodation types.
 The average room occupancy for hotels in Wales in 2018 was 67 per cent, the same as the average for 2017, and 2015 and 2016.
- The average room occupancy for Guest Houses and Bed and Breakfast establishments in Wales during 2018 was 35 per cent, which is lower than the average of rate of 38 per cent for 2017.

Industry performance

- The Tourism Barometer, undertaken in late April (post Easter 2019), reported a positive Easter period. Eighty six per cent of the businesses surveyed reported a greater or equal level of visitors compared to last year with better weather cited as the most common reason.
- Following a very good season most businesses are confident for the summer season to come.

Outbound trips by UK residents

- There were 71.7 million trips taken abroad by UK residents in 2018 for all purposes a decrease of 1.4 per cent compared to last year.
- However, there were 47 million holidays taken abroad by UK residents in 2018, an increase of just under 1 per cent compared to 2017 and continuing the strong demand for overseas holidays. This contrasts with a fall in overseas business trips of 3 per cent and a fall in visits to friends and relatives of 5 per cent year on year.

1. Overnight visits by GB residents

All purposes of trips

Table 1.0: Volume of Trips and Expenditure by Overnight Domestic GB Visitors All Purposes of Trips

Source: GBTS

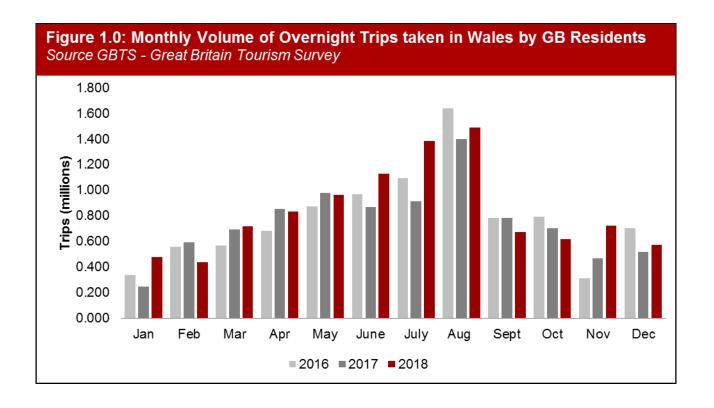
Trips taken in Wales			
	Jan to Dec 2018 (millions)	% change from year before	12 month total ending Dec 2017 (millions)
Trips	10.021	+11.1	9.023
Nights	35.638	+15.0	30.981
Spend (£)	£1,853	+13.8	£1,628
	Trips	s taken in Great Britain	

	Trips taken in Great Britain			
	Jan to Dec 2018 (millions)	% change from year before	12 month total ending Dec 2017 (millions)	
Trips	118.556	-1.8	120.678	
Nights	371.747	+0.6	369.454	
Spend (£)	£23,961	+1.2	£23,683	

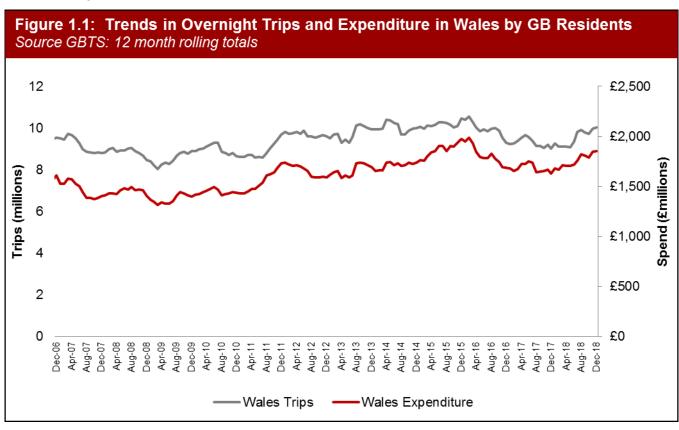
In 2018, there were 10.021 million overnight trips to Wales by GB residents, which is an 11 percent increase on 2017, which was 9.023 million trips. During 2018, there was a total expenditure of £1,853 million.

Figure 1.0 shows the number of trips taken in Wales were higher during the summer months of June - August 2018 compared to 2017.

In comparison, the volume of overnight trips taken across GB as a whole decreased slightly in 2018 compared to the previous year with number of trips falling by 1.8 percent. Related expenditure however increased slightly by 1.2 per cent compared to 2017.

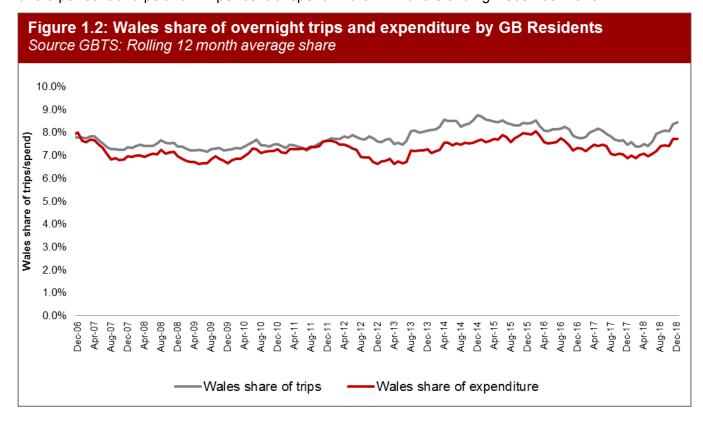


The longer term trend in figure 1.1 shows that annual trips and spend to Wales peaked in 2015 with around 10.5 million annual trips and £1,975 million in expenditure. There was a fall in trips taken in Wales during 2016 and 2017. However, the strong performance during 2018 has resulted in increases in trips taken in Wales of 11.1 percent and expenditure of 13.8 per cent during the 12 months ending December 2018.



Wales share of trips and spend

Figure 1.2 shows that Wales' share of overnight trips (any purpose) taken by GB residents peaked in 2014-2015 with an 8.8 per cent share of trips and 8 per cent share of spend. The share of trips and spend fell during 2016 and 2017 but have been increasing during 2018 with an average share of 8.5 per cent of trips and 7.7 per cent of spend in the 12 months ending December 2018.



Overnight holidays

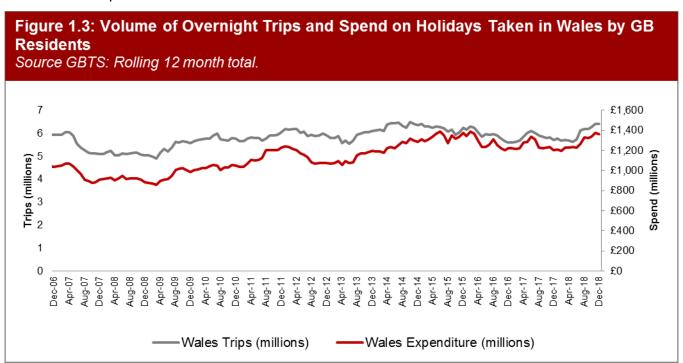
Table 1.1: Volume of Trip	s and Expenditure by Overnight Domestic GB
Visitors for Holiday Purpo	oses
Source: GBTS	

Holiday Trips taken in Wales				
	Jan to December 2018 (millions)	% change from year before	12 month total ending Dec 2017 (millions)	
Trips	6.412	+12.3	5.712	
Nights	24.487	+16.8	20.967	
Spend (£)	£1,363	+13.3	£1,203	

Holiday Trips taken in Great Britain				
	Jan to September 2018 (millions)	% change from year before	12 month total ending Dec 2017 (millions)	
Trips	57.893	-2.1	59.149	
Nights	200.251	-1.0	202.320	
Spend (£)	£14,292	+1.1	£14,132	

During 2018, there were 6.4 million overnight holiday trips to Wales by GB residents, which is an increase of 12.3 per cent on 2017, which was 5.7 million. During 2018, there was a total expenditure of £1,363 million. This is a record level of holiday trips taken in Wales.

In comparison, the volume of overnight holiday trips taken across GB as a whole decreased slightly during 2018 compared to the previous year. However, the Wales share of GB holiday trips increased to 11 per cent over last 12 months from 9.7% in 2017.



Visits to friends and relatives

Table 1.2: Volume of Trips and Expenditure by Overnight Domestic GB Visitor	rs
Visits to Friends & Relatives (VFR)	
Source: GBTS	

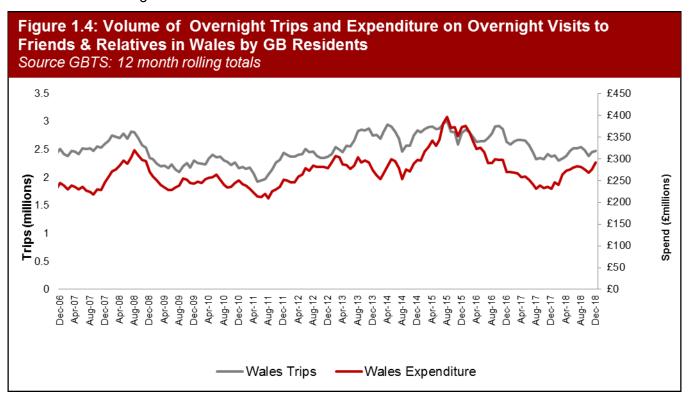
	•			
VFR Trips taken in Wales				
	Jan to December 2018 (millions)	% change from year before	12 month total ending Dec 2017	
			(millions)	
Trips	2.476	+4.6	2.367	
Nights	7.768	+12.4	6.908	
Spend (£)	£291	+25.4	£232	

VFR Trips taken in Great Britain				
	Jan to September 2018 (millions)	% change from year before	12 month total ending Dec 2017	
	,	•	(millions)	
Trips	41.050	-1.8	41.805	
Nights	122.552	+2.8	119.228	
Spend (£)	£4,706	+1.1	£4,652	

During 2018, there were almost 2.5 million overnight trips to visit friends and relatives in Wales by GB residents, which is an increase on 2017, which saw almost 2.4 million trips. During this period, there was a total expenditure of £291 million, which was a large increase compared to 2017.

Figure 1.4 shows that over the longer term, trips to visit friends and relatives in Wales have fluctuated but there was a peak in 2015 with around 3 million annual trips followed by a fall in the volume of VFR trips taken in Wales during 2016 and 2017. Although the visitor levels recovered somewhat in 2018 the overall trip levels taken in Wales are still well below their previous peak.

In comparison, there has been a slight decrease in overnight visits to friends and relatives across GB as a whole during 2018.



Business visits

Source: GBTS

Table 1.3: Volume of Trips and Expenditure by Overnight Domestic GB Visitors Business Visits

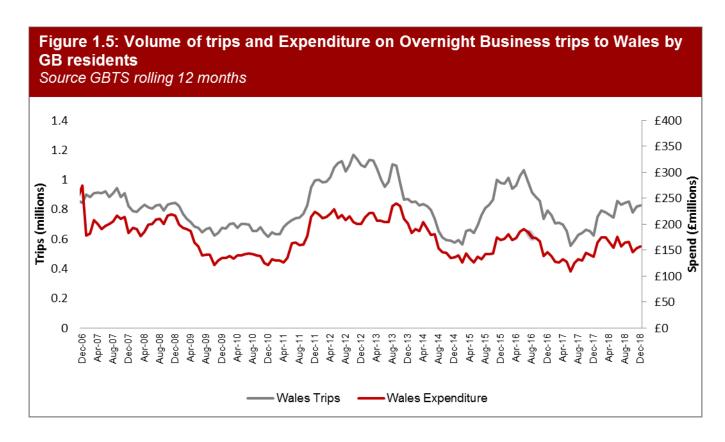
Business Visits taken in Wales				
	Jan to December 2018 (millions)	% change from year before	12 month total ending Dec 2017 (millions)	
Trips	0.827	+32.7	0.623	
Nights	1.958	+28.2	1.527	
Spend (£)	£157	+14.6	£137	

	Business Visits taken in Great Britain			
	Jan to December 2018	% change from year before	12 month total ending Dec 2017	
	(millions)		(millions)	
Trips	16.272	-1.6	16.530	
Nights	38.954	+2.6	37.978	
Spend (£)	£4,371	+3.0	£4,244	

During 2018 there were 0.8 million overnight business trips to Wales by GB residents, which is up almost 33% on 2017 which was 0.6 million trips. During 2018, there was a total expenditure of £157 million, which was also a large increase compared to 2017.

Figure 1.5 shows that overnight business trips taken in Wales by GB residents have fluctuated widely over time but there was a peak in 2012 with over 1.1 million annual trips. Trip volumes also reached over 1 million in early 2016 but then trip volumes fell in 2017. The trend for 2018, is a general increase in the overall level of business visits with 0.8 million trips taken this year.

In comparison, there has been a slight decrease in overnight business trips taken across GB as a whole during 2018, and overall volumes remain lower than their peak from over 18.9 million trips in 2012 to 16.2 million trips taken in 2018.

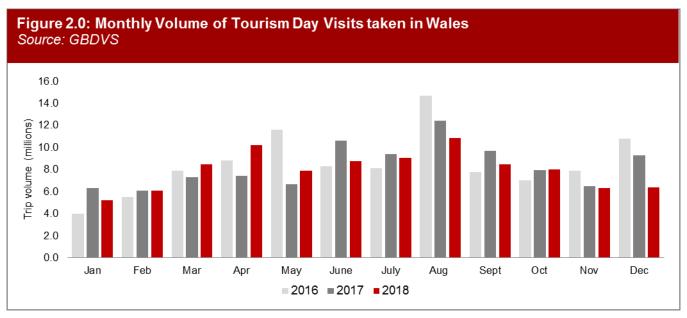


2. Domestic GB tourism day visits

Table 2.0: Volume of Trips and Expenditure on Tourism Day Visits by GB residents Source: GBTS

	Tourism Da	y visits taken in Wales	
	Jan to December 2018 (millions)	% change from year before	12 month total ending Dec 2017 (millions)
Trips	95.7	-4	99.7
Spend (£)	£4,009	-7	£4,332
Tourism Day Visits taken in Great Britain			
	Jan to December 2018 (millions)	% change from year before	12 month total ending Dec 2017 (millions)
Trips	1,703	-5	1,793
Spend (£)	£63,782	+2	£62,447

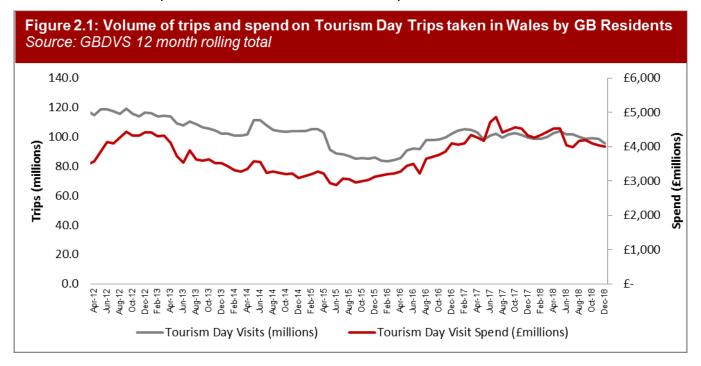
There has been a slight decrease in the volume of tourism day visits taken in Wales during 2018, compared to the same period in 2017, with some 95 million trips taken which is a decrease of 4 per cent. The overall spend fell by 7 per cent in 2018 with an expenditure of £4,009 million.



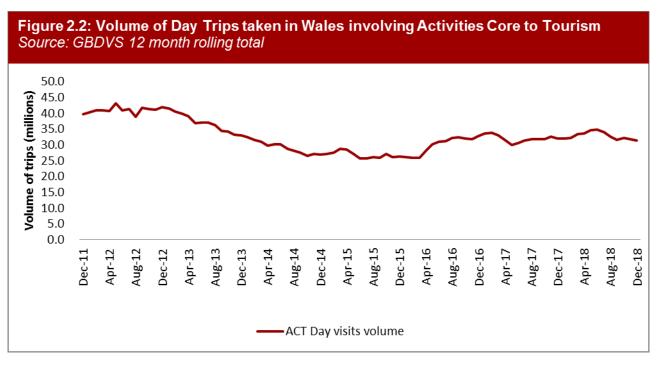
The lower levels of day visits over the summer period in 2018 shown in figure 2.0 coincide with higher levels of overnight holidays so this may be a sign of people switching to overnight visits to take advantage of the good weather.

Figure 2.1 shows that Tourism Day Visits taken in Wales by GB residents fell from a level of around 117 million annual trips in 2011 to 86 million trips in 2015. Trip volumes have however increased over the last 2 years to their current level of around 96 million trips. Expenditure on tourism day visits taken in Wales has followed a similar pattern to the volume of visits with expenditure falling between 2011 and 2015. However, spend has been increasing at a faster rate than visits in 2016 and 2017. The average spend on trips taken during 2018 was £42 which is above the average spend across GB as a whole (£37 per trip) but below the average of £44 in Wales in 2017.

Tourism Day visits across Great Britain as a whole have also fallen from a peak level in 2012 of 1,969 million annual trips to a low of 1,703 million annual trips in 2018.



Activities Core to Tourism (ACT) Day Visits are a subset of Tourism Day Visits where the main activity is going out for entertainment, watching live sports, trips to visitor attractions, going to special public events, undertaking outdoor leisure activities or going on general days out. In 2018, there were 31 million day visits taken in Wales that involved activities core to tourism. This was a decrease of 2 per cent compared to the total of 32 million trips in 2017. The months of May to July in 2018 had well above average levels of trips involving activities core to tourism. During 2018, day visits including activities core to tourism comprised an average of 33 per cent of all tourism day visits taken in Wales.



3. International visits

The results reported in this section are from the International Passenger Survey (IPS) and cover 2018.

Table 3.0: Volume of Trips and Expenditure by Inbound International VisitorsSource: International Passenger Survey

January – De Trips (00		% change from year before	Spend (£ millions)	% change from year before
Wales	941	-12.8	£405	9.7
Scotland	3,538	10.2	£2,206	-3.1
London	19,090	-3.7	£12,329	-9
Rest of England	15,708	-4.8	£7,463	-4.5
Total UK	37,905	-3.3	£22,897	-6.6

There were almost 38 million international trips to the UK during 2018, which was a fall of 3.3 per cent compared to 2017. Inbound visitor spending was £22.9 billion, a fall of 6.6 per cent compared to 2017.

During 2018, there was a fall in the volume of inbound holiday trips taken in the UK of 1.6 per cent and a fall of 4 per cent in inbound business trips. There was a fall of 1.9 per cent in the volume of visits to friends and relatives.

During 2018, there was a fall of 12.8 per cent in the volume of international trips to Wales year on year with 941,000 trips taken. The visitor expenditure, however, increased by 9.7 percent to £405 million year on year.

Figure 3.0 shows that the overall fall in trips taken in Wales during 2018 is due to a fall in the volumes of all forms of trips - holiday trips, trips to visit friends and relatives and business trips. (NB: the chart below does not contain the numbers for international students in Wales and therefore the total does not add up to the total visitor number shown in the table above)

Figure 3.0: Volume of International Trips to Wales during 2018 by main purpose of visit compared with previous years

Source: International Passenger Survey

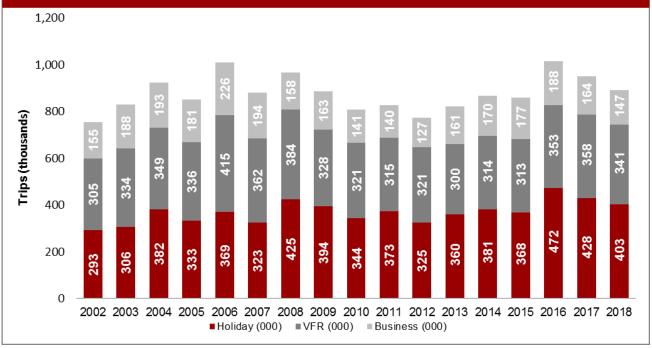
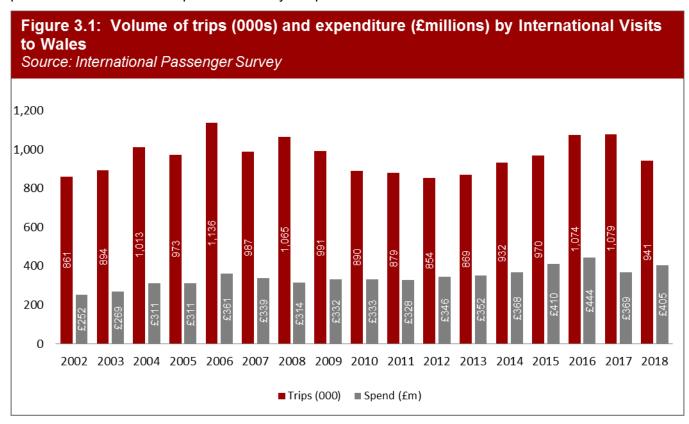


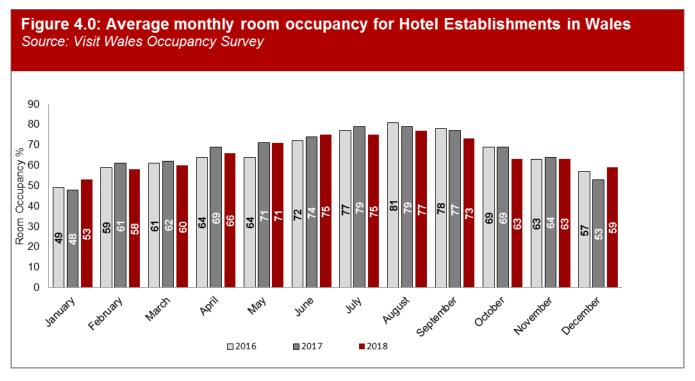
Figure 3.1 shows the longer term trend in international visits to Wales. The volume of trips taken in Wales by international visitors remained above 1 million visits in 2017, the second highest recorded level of visitors. However, the volume of trips fell by 12.8 per cent in 2018 to 941,000. There has been a longer term growth in international visits to the UK which have grown by an average of 5 per cent per annum since 2012 and reached a record of 39.2 million trips in 2017 and a record expenditure of £24.5 billion. However, in 2018 the level of international visits fell by 3.3 percent and the level of expenditure fell by 6.7 per cent.



4. Accommodation occupancy rates

Hotels

The average room occupancy for hotels in Wales in 2018 was 67 per cent, the same as the average for 2015 and 2016 and 2017. The room occupancy rates for the months of January, June and December were above average, but the occupancy rates during the summer holiday months were slightly lower than the 2017 levels.



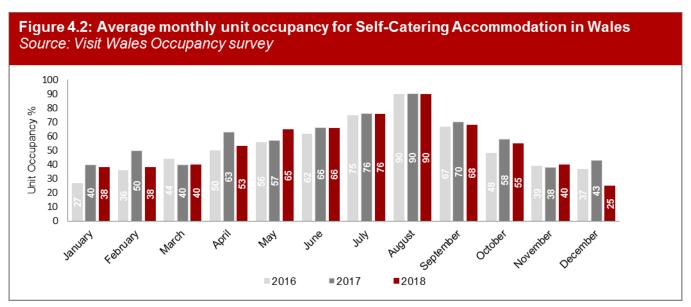
Guest houses and bed & breakfast

Figure 4.1 shows the average room occupancy for Guest Houses and Bed and Breakfast establishments in Wales during 2018 was 35 per cent, which is lower than the average rate of 38 per cent for 2017. Apart from June, August and December the monthly occupancy rates in 2018 have been lower than in the equivalent months of 2017.

Figure 4.1: Average monthly room occupancy for Guest House and Bed and Breakfast Establishments in Wales Source: Visit Wales Occupancy Survey 70 60 Occupancy % 50 40 30 20 10 0 POII september Mue Mul August Nay Hovember January **February** October December 2016 ■2017 ■2018

Self-catering cottages and apartments

The average unit occupancy for self-catering establishments in Wales in 2018 was 56 per cent, lower than the average rate of 58 per cent for 2017. The occupancy rates were lower for the first four months of the year, with April notably lower, but probably attributable to Easter falling in April in 2017. The occupancy rates strengthened in May and June and were roughly on par with 2017 over the summer.

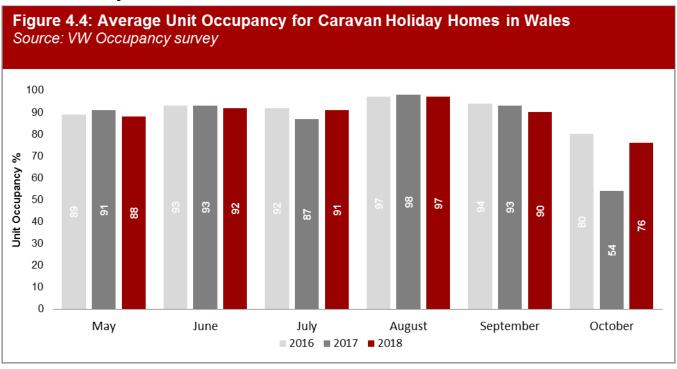


Hostels & bunkhouses

The average unit occupancy for hostels and bunkhouses in Wales in 2018 was 53 per cent, the same as for 2017. The occupancy rates were lower during the start of the year, most notably in April, but strengthened in May and June, kept up over the summer months and increased year on year in the two last months of the year.

Figure 4.3: Average monthly Bedspace Occupancy for Hostels & Bunkhouses in Wales Source: Visit Wales Occupancy Survey 80 70 60 Bed Occupancy % 50 40 65 63 30 53 20 49 20 10 0 September Movember February APril MIN August october March June January 404 December 2016 ■2017 **2018**

Caravan holiday homes



As highlighted in previous quarterly reports, the reported unit occupancy levels for Caravan Holiday Homes in 2017 did not include a couple of larger accommodation providers and the difference in occupancy rates to 2016 and 2018 would mainly have been due to sample differences. However, this issue has been resolved and the data in Figure 4.4 above includes the larger agencies for all of the three years. The monthly occupancy levels are very similar year on year (apart from October 2017), and the May to October average was 91 per cent in 2016, 86 per cent in 2017, and 89 per cent in 2018.

Touring caravan and camping parks

Figure 4.5: Average Pitch Occupancy for Touring Caravan and Camping Parks in Wales Source: Visit Wales Occupancy Survey 70 60 % pitch occupancy 69 63 28 49 8 ₽ 20 34 32 10 0 July May June August September October ■ 2016 ■ 2017 ■ 2018

The 2018 average May to October occupancy for touring caravan and camping parks was 42% compared to 40% for the same period in 2017. The pitch occupancy levels for touring caravan and camping parks were higher in the period May to August 2018 compared to the previous two years.

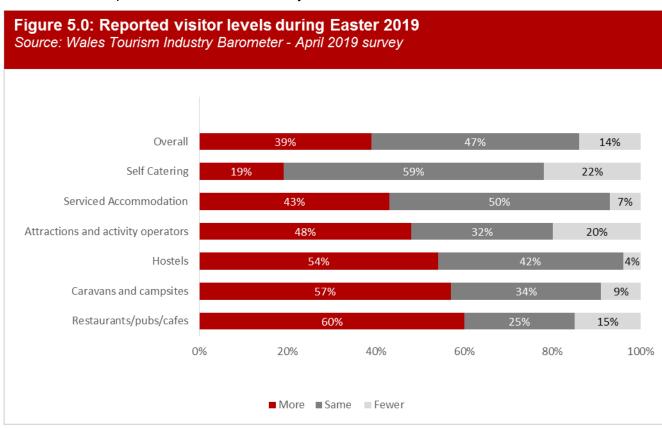
5. Business performance

This section provides the results from the Wales Tourism Business Barometer¹ which is based on a survey of around 800 tourism businesses, reflective of different parts of Wales and different sectors in the visitor economy. The survey is designed to give quick feedback on how the tourism industry in Wales is performing at key times during the year.

Easter performance

The Business Barometer undertaken at the end of April, after the Easter holiday, reported a positive Easter 2019:

- Most (86%) businesses have increased or maintained their visitor levels this Easter. Among
 the 39% increasing their visitors, 'better weather' is the most common reason cited by two
 thirds of these respondents. Easter falling late this year also increased the chance of
 having good weather, as one third of those increasing their visitor numbers cite 'late Easter'
 as a positive factor.
- South West Wales enjoyed a particular good Easter with 44% of businesses increasing their visitor levels. However all regions of Wales are up from the previous year. Sectors where visitors don't have to book far in advance or at all have performed particularly well.
- The increase in visitor levels has boosted profitability with 40 per cent of businesses reporting increases in profitability and 46 per cent similar levels of profitability in Easter 2019 compared to the same time last year.

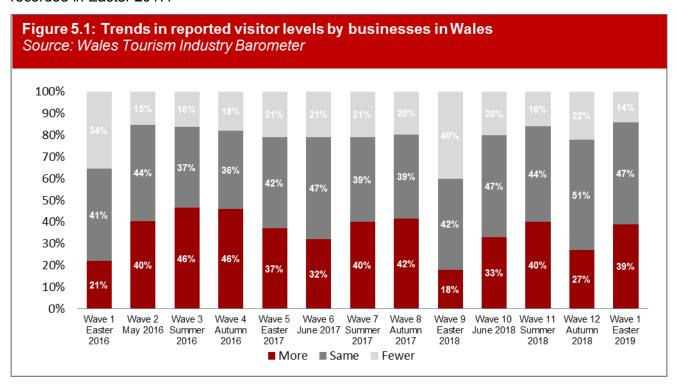


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¹ This source is not designated as an official statistic but is presented here for completeness for the benefit of users of this release

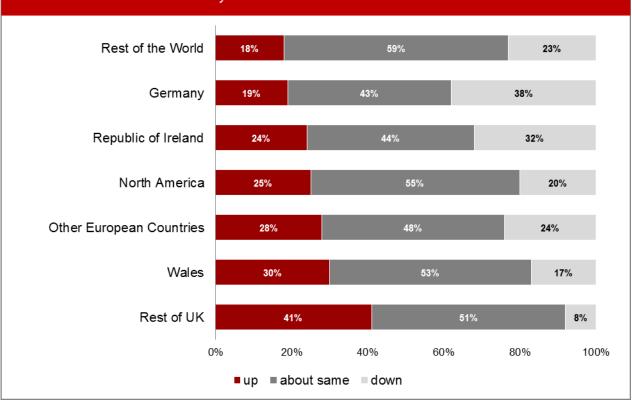
The best performing sectors were restaurants/cafes/pubs with 60 per cent reporting more visitors. The majority of other sectors also reported more or the same level of visitors over Easter. Serviced accommodation is often booked spontaneously, whereas in the self -catering sector, bookings tend to be made further in advance, as stays tend to be longer. This might explain why this sector has been steady, when other sectors are significantly up

Following a very good Easter, most (85%) businesses are now confident for the summer season 2019, although this varies with performance. The level of confidence for the summer correlates quite closely with Easter performance. Confidence for the coming summer is very similar to results recorded in Easter 2017.



Visitors from the UK market (outside of Wales) have increased for 41% of businesses. Given its importance to the Welsh tourism industry, this is very encouraging to see. This market is up for every sector and region of Wales. The levels of visitors from European markets is mixed, but the key market of Germany is down.

Figure 5.2: Visitor levels from international markets compared to same time last year Source: Wales Business Industry Barometer - Easter 2019

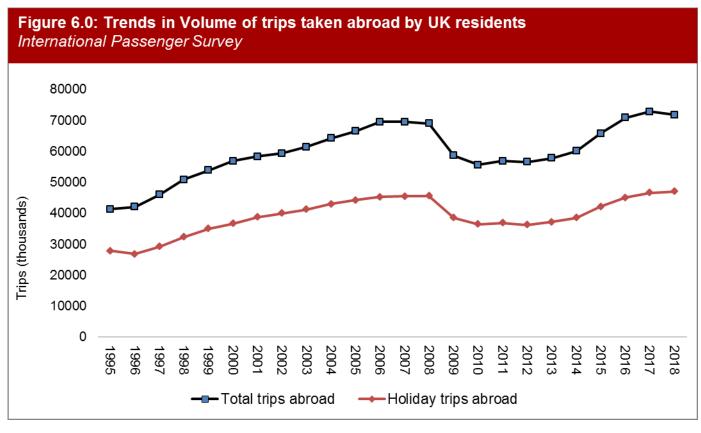


6. Overseas travel by UK residents

During 2018, there was a total 71.733 million trips taken overseas by UK residents for all purposes. This is 1.4 per cent lower than for 2017, but trip volumes still remain much higher since the dip between 2009 and 2014. There were 47 million holidays taken abroad by UK residents in 2018, an increase of just under 1 per cent compared to the same period in 2017 and continuing the demand for overseas holidays. This contrasts with a fall in overseas business trips of 3 per cent and a fall in visits to friends and relatives of 5 per cent year on year.

Trips taken overseas by UK residents fell sharply with the onset of the economic downturn in 2009, but have gradually recovered since 2013 with strong growth of 9 per cent and 8 per cent in 2015 and 2016. There was continued growth in 2017 with outbound trips reaching a record level of 72.8 million, but the rate of annual growth slowed to 3 per cent. In 2017, there was a record level of expenditure of £44.8 billion on trips taken abroad by UK residents, which increased to £45.4 billion in 2018.

Holiday trips taken abroad by UK residents have followed a similar pattern with strong growth in 2015 and 2016. Although there was slower growth of 4 per cent in 2017, the total number of holidays taken abroad reached a record level of 46.6 million trips, which continued growing in 2018 to 47 million trips.



7. Key Quality Information

The report includes data from the following surveys:

Great Britain tourism survey

This is a continuous survey of the GB population that is the source of official statistics measuring the volume and value of overnight trips taken by British residents throughout Britain.

Great Britain day visits survey

This is a continuous survey of the GB population that is the source of official statistics measuring the volume and value of tourism day trips taken by British residents throughout Britain.

International passenger survey

A survey undertaken by the Office for National Statistics that collects information about overseas passengers entering and leaving the UK and is the main source of statistics on the volume and value of international visits to Wales.

Wales tourism accommodation occupancy survey

This is a survey of a sample of tourism businesses in Wales that is the source of official statistics on occupancy rates and other performance measures for different types of accommodation used by visitors to Wales.

Wales tourism industry barometer

This is a survey of a sample of tourism businesses in Wales that has been set up to provide 'snapshots' of industry performance after important points in the tourism calendar.

The reported surveys are all sample surveys and the results subject to normal sampling errors. Sample errors will be larger for the 6 monthly estimates as they are based on smaller samples and for this reason, results relating to just the 6 month period should be treated with caution.

Relevance

What are the potential uses of these statistics?

These statistics will be used in a variety of ways. Some examples of these are:

- to make publicly available data on tourism in Wales
- · advice to Ministers
- to inform debate in the National Assembly for Wales and beyond.

Who are the key potential users of this data?

These statistics will be useful both within and outside the Welsh Government. Some of the key potential users are:

- tourism businesses
- Ministers and the Members Research Service in the National Assembly for Wales
- visit Wales and other areas of the Welsh Government

- local authorities
- professional organisations
- the research community
- students, academics and universities
- individual citizens and private companies.

Timeliness and punctuality

All outputs adhere to the Code of Practice by pre-announcing the date of publication through the upcoming calendar. Furthermore, should the need arise to postpone an output this would follow the Welsh Government's Revisions, Errors and Postponements arrangements.

We publish data as soon as possible after the relevant time period.

Accessibility and clarity

This statistical release is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics section of the Welsh Government website.

Comparability and coherence

This report presents estimated data for 2018 and previous calendar years. The annual estimates are comparable between years, subject to specific sample margins for each individual survey. Further details of each survey methodology and sample limitations are published on the tourism statistics section of the Welsh Government website.

Since 2016 there have been changes to the data processing system of the <u>Great Britain Tourism Survey</u>. A <u>technical document</u> has been published separately on the Welsh Government website which explains what these changes are, why they were made, how this affects the data collected as well as what implications this has when comparing data from 2016 onwards with previously published figures.

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators ("national indicators") that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the well-being goals and associated technical information is available in the <u>Well-being of Wales report</u>.

Further information on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

Further details

The document is available at:

https://gov.wales/wales-tourism-performance

Next update

The next Wales Tourism Performance report will be published in August 2019 (final date to be confirmed) and will include statistics for the first quarter of 2019 from each of the main surveys.

We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to tourism.research@gov.wales

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