



Northern Ireland Annual Tourism Statistics 2018

Published 06 June 2019



**5.0m
trips**



**16.3m
nights**



**£968m
spent**

The key points are:

- In 2018 there were an estimated 5.0 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 these trips was £968m;
- Overnight trips to Northern Ireland by external visitors was estimated to be 2.8 million. Expenditure associated with these trips was £669m;
- An estimated 2.2 million hotel room nights were sold in Northern Ireland. Hotel room occupancy was estimated to be 70% in 2018;
- A total of 128 cruise ships docked at Northern Ireland ports in 2018. This was an increase compared to 112 cruise ships in 2017 and a marked increase from 62 cruise ships in 2013;
- When all sources are considered together, the statistics point towards an upward trend in overall tourism activity in Northern Ireland between 2013 and 2018. The headline measures of trips and spend are the highest estimates on record, but there is no statistically significant change between 2017 and 2018. However, there have been statistically significant increases over the longer term.

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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:

- Improved quality of the data by boosting the sample size of the tourism module in the Continuous Household Survey (CHS) from April 2017. This improved the precision around headline estimates.
- The CHS and the Northern Ireland Passenger Survey (NIPS) have been made more accessible by improving the wording of questions and updating survey software to improve the presentation. This reduces the burden on respondents to improve response rates.
- 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.



Household Travel Survey 2018 data quality issue

Data from the 2018 Household Travel Survey (HTS), provided by Central Statistics Office (CSO) and relating to the number of visitors coming to Northern Ireland from the Republic of Ireland, should be considered as **interim data that may be subject to future revision**. In 2018 the HTS was suspended due to quality issues in the collected data. Against a backdrop of falling response rates, it was observed that there was a non-response issue affecting the survey estimates in 2018. In order to address the non-response bias in the 2018 HTS sample the CSO has adjusted the weights of respondents within the sample design, for all four quarters of 2018.

Following quality checks on the methodology change and the data itself, **NISRA feel the data provided by CSO is of suitable quality to report on. We ask users to be aware there is potential for future revision, but we don't feel this is likely to change the overall message of the publication or the key statistics. We advise users that are particularly interested in the number of visitors from ROI to use the figures with caution and look at the patterns over the last few years rather than focussing on short term changes.**

If a future revision occurs we will make users aware of any impact on the statistics in this publication.

More details can be found in point 16 of background notes section of this publication.

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 2017 and 2018. However, 'Indicator 30: Total Spend by External Visitors' of the draft Programme for Government shows a significant increase from the baseline year (2015) to 2018.

Table 1: Estimated number of overnight trips, nights and expenditure in Northern Ireland 2013-2018

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% Change (2017-18)
Overall Trips (000s)	4,069	4,513	4,531	4,571	4,851	4,997	+3%
<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>0%</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>+6%</i>
Overall Nights (000s)	14,394	15,082	15,471	15,175	16,866	16,296	-3%
<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>-13%</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>+1%</i>
Overall Expenditure (£M)	715	745	764	850	926	968	+5%
<i>Domestic (£M)</i>	<i>192</i>	<i>238</i>	<i>219</i>	<i>237</i>	<i>270</i>	<i>299</i>	<i>+11%</i>
<i>External (£M)</i>	<i>524</i>	<i>507</i>	<i>545</i>	<i>613</i>	<i>657</i>	<i>669</i>	<i>+2%</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.

Figure 1 and Figure 2 show the estimated number of overnight trips and associated expenditure in Northern Ireland from 2013 to 2018. The graphs also show margins of errors around the published estimates.

Figure 1: Estimated number of overnight trips in Northern Ireland 2013-2018

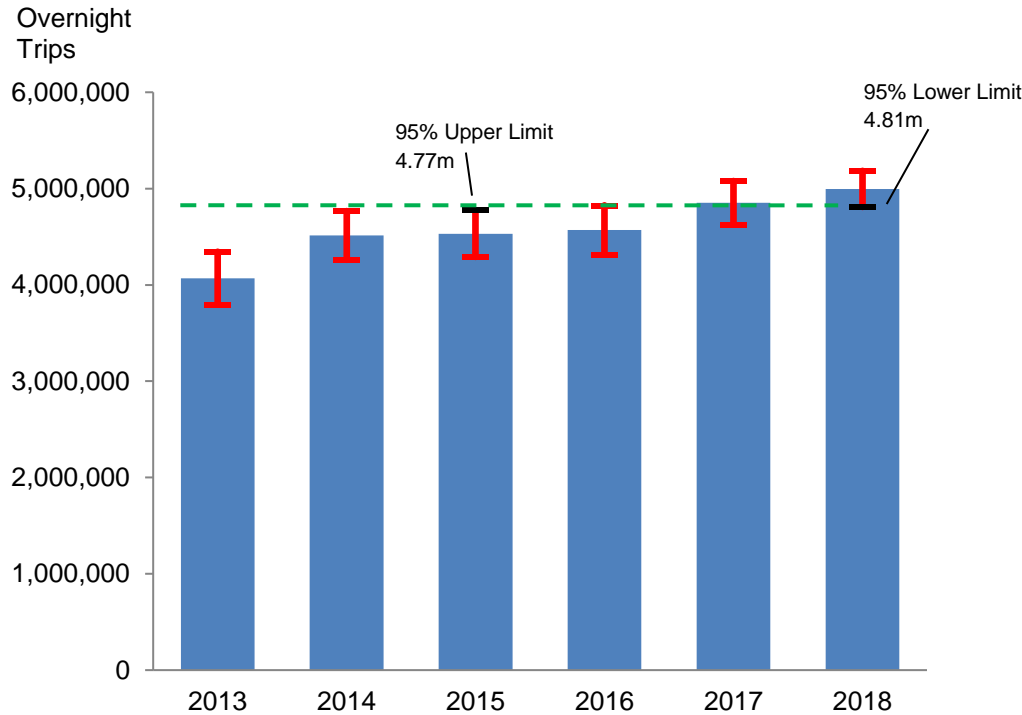
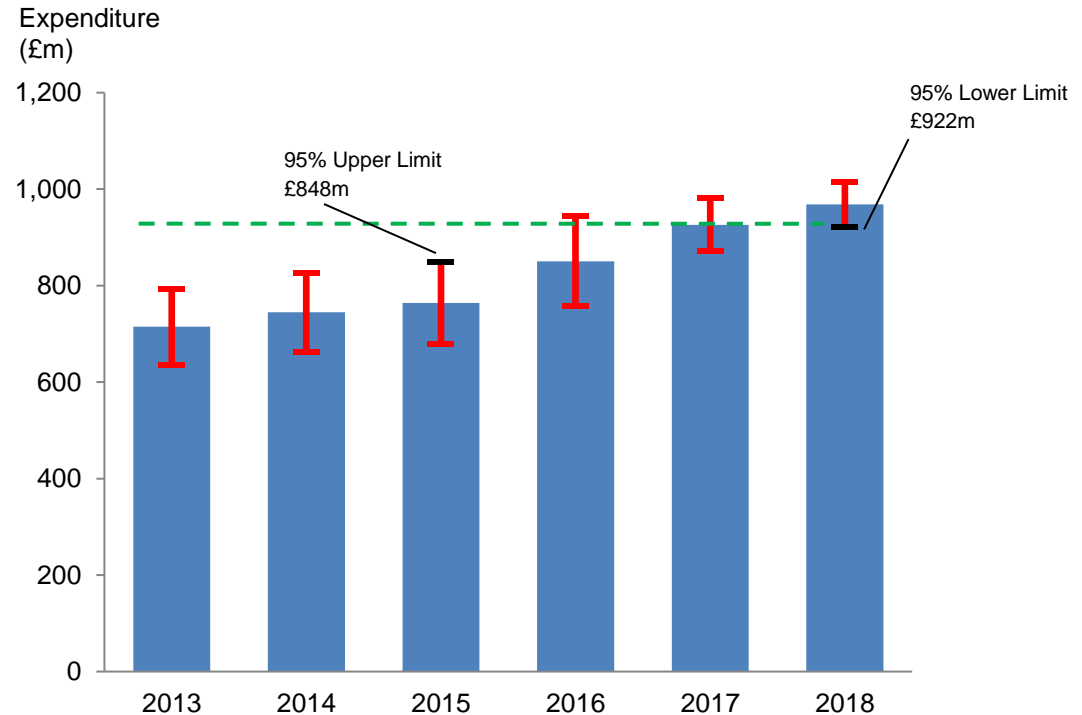


Figure 2: Estimated expenditure associated with overnight trips in Northern Ireland 2013-2018



What you can say....

Whilst there has been no statistically significant change in the estimated number of overnight trips and expenditure between 2017 and 2018; there has been a statistically significant increase since between 2015 and 2018.

What you cannot say....

There was a definite increase from 4.85 million to 5.00 million overnight trips in Northern Ireland from 2017 to 2018, with associated expenditure increasing 5% from £926m to £968m 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

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 2018. 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. **The report points towards 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 provide information on progress towards the Programme for Government tourism targets.

Tourism can be influenced by a number of factors. Initiatives from government, tourism agencies and events can have an impact on tourism. From March 2016, Ryanair started operating from Belfast International Airport and has since added numerous routes to various destinations in the UK and Europe, including a direct flight connecting with Germany. Additional routes and passenger capacity of such volume will provide for an inflow of external visitors whilst encouraging NI residents to take trips elsewhere.

Visitors may be influenced to come to Northern Ireland by local visitor attractions, such as the Giant's Causeway and Titanic Belfast. The local film industry with Game of Thrones showcasing local locations may also have an impact on tourism. However the legacy of the Troubles with less positive images around civil unrest can counter these positive pictures.

The economic situation also influences tourism expenditure. The value of sterling against foreign currency, which was very strong at the beginning of 2016 has decreased significantly in recent years. This will have influenced levels of tourism last year for local residents.

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



Giant's Causeway*



Titanic Belfast*



The Dark Hedges – Game of Thrones*

*Copyright, Tourism Northern Ireland

Overnight trips in Northern Ireland (Domestic & External)

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 2018, there were an estimated 5.0 million overnight trips in Northern Ireland;
- During 2018, estimated expenditure associated with all overnight trips was £968 million. To put this annual expenditure in context, the most recent estimate (2017) for Northern Ireland Gross Value Added stood at £39.6 billion indicating that in monetary terms spending on overnight trips broadly equates to around 2.5% of the local economy;
- Associated with the 5.0 million overnight trips, an estimated 16.3 million nights were spent in Northern Ireland; and
- Although none of the estimated overnight tourism statistics 2018 displayed statistically significant changes since 2017; 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 2018.

Figure 3: Estimated overnight trips by place of origin (2018)

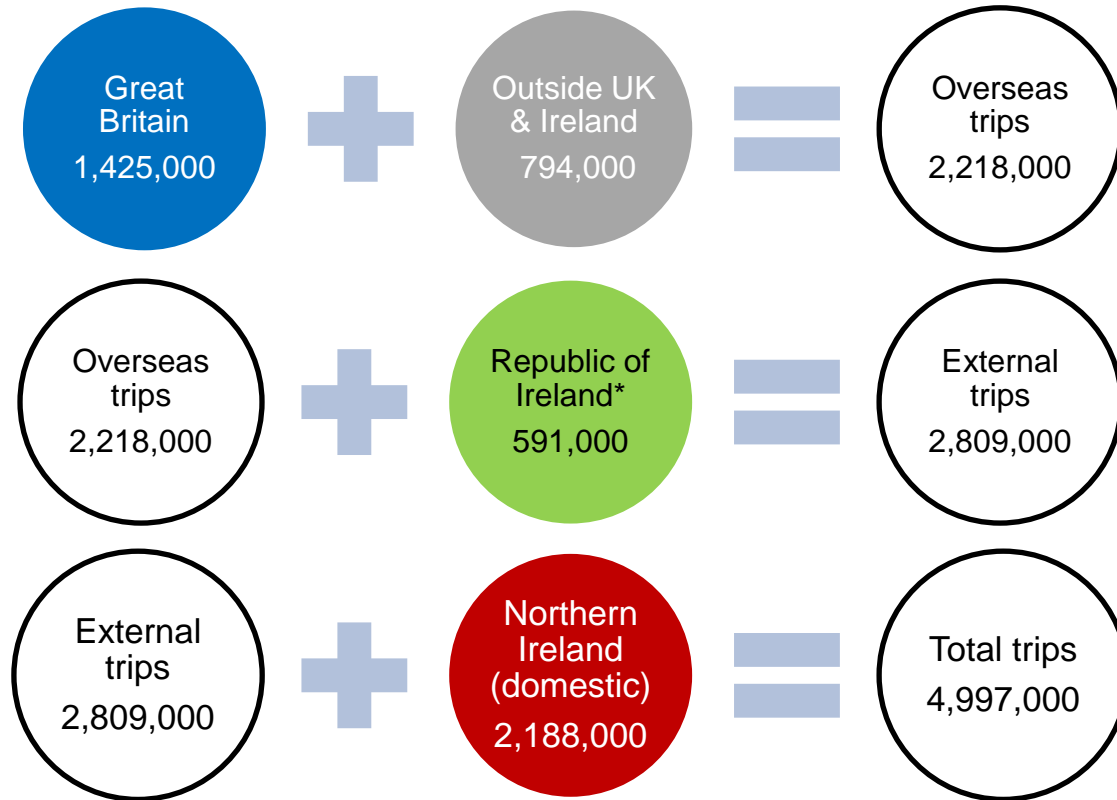
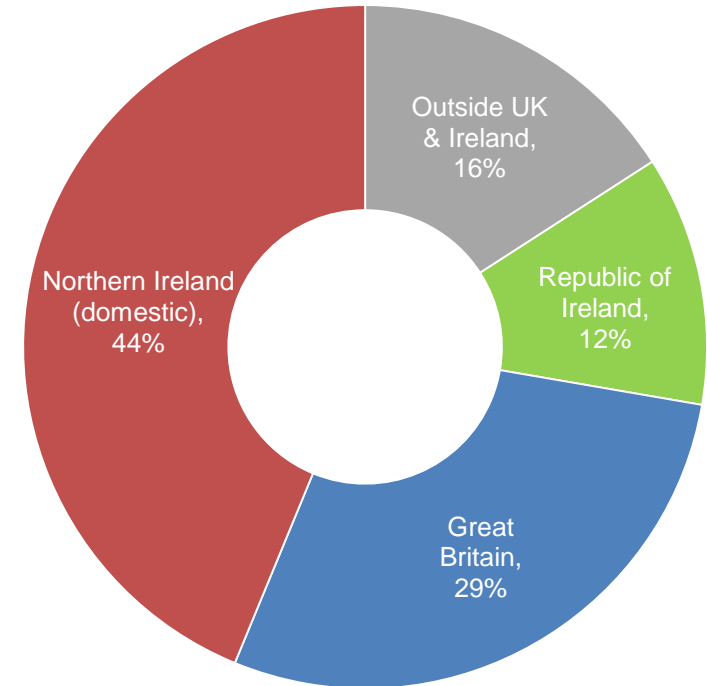


Figure 4: Trips by place of origin (2018)



Rounded to the nearest thousand

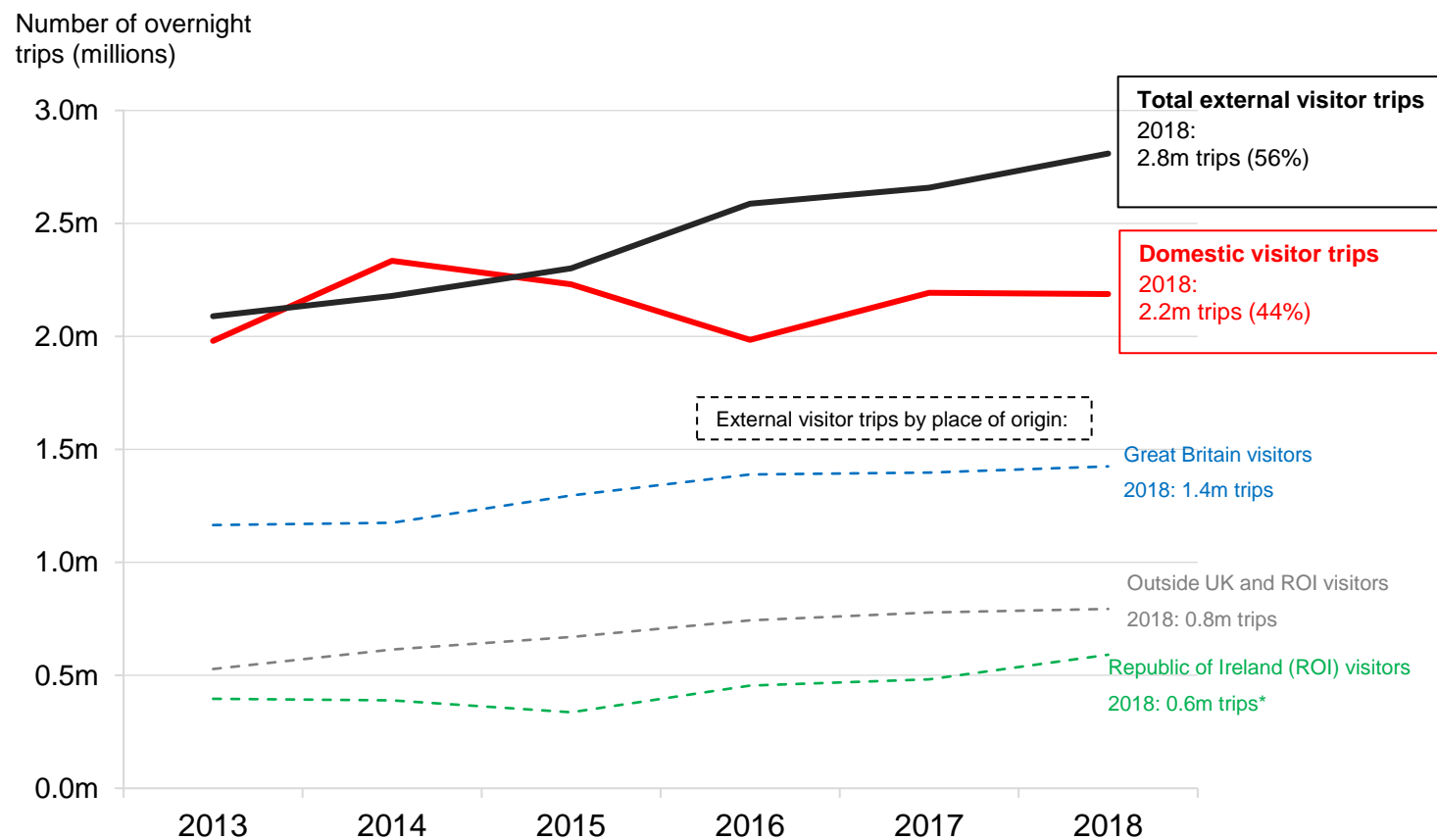
In total, it is estimated that, 44% of all overnight trips (2.2 million) were made by local residents (domestic trips), for example, someone from Belfast going to Fermanagh for the weekend either on holiday or to visit friends/relatives. A further 29% of overnight trips (1.4 million) were made by people living in Great Britain, 12% (0.6 million) by people from the Republic of Ireland and the remaining 16% (0.8 million) by people from outside the UK and Ireland.

*See background note 16 in relation to the quality of ROI visitor estimates

An estimated 2.8 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').

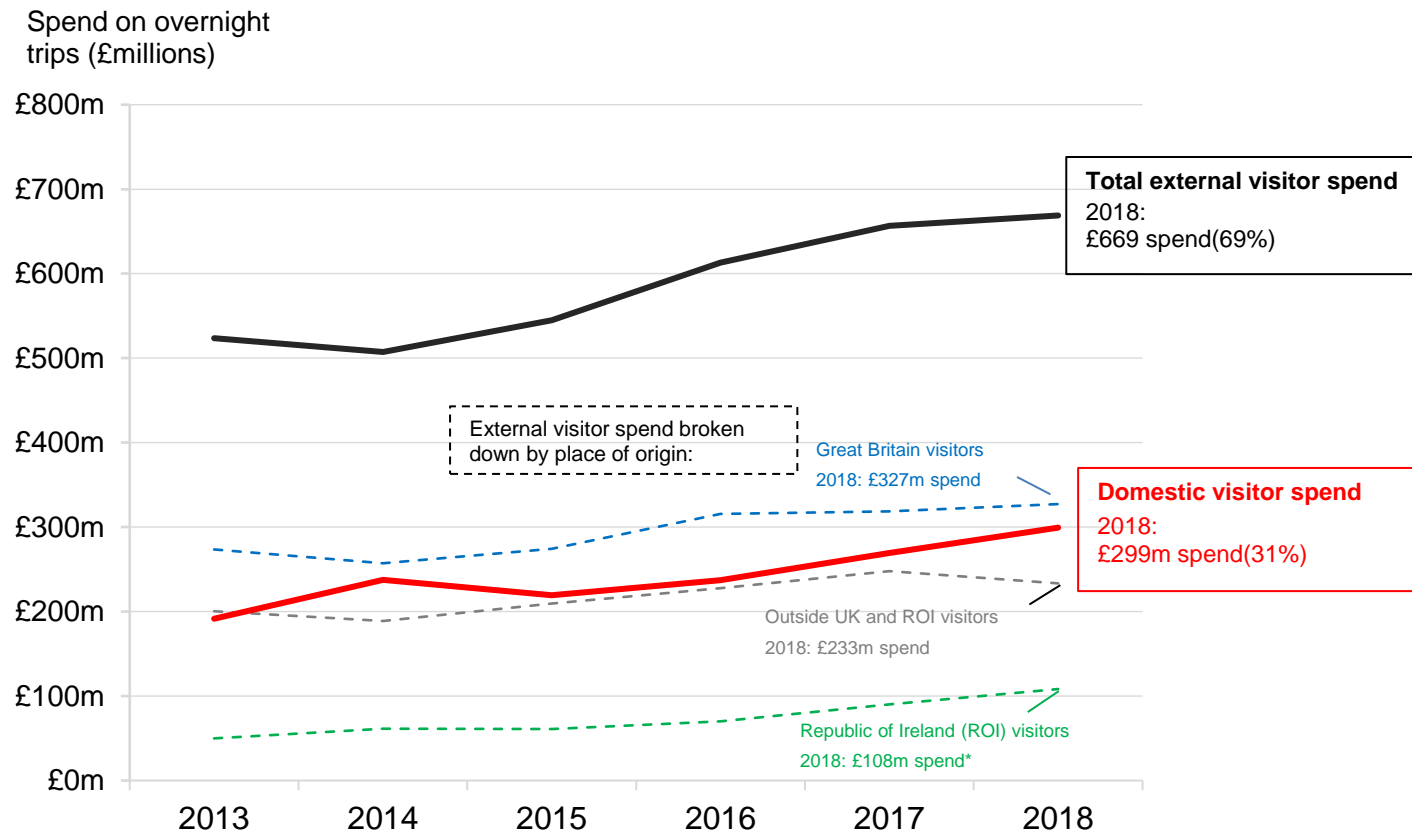
Figure 5: Estimated number of overnight trips by place of origin 2013-2018



*Note: Annual changes are generally not statistically significant. Therefore comparisons should be made over the longer term.
See background note 16 in relation to the quality of ROI visitor estimates

Expenditure on overnight trips on overnight trips has generally been increasing since 2013 for both external and domestic visitors. External visitors make up over two thirds (69%) of the total spending on overnight trips, illustrating the importance of these visitors to the local economy.

Figure 6: Estimated spend on overnight trips by place of origin 2013-2018



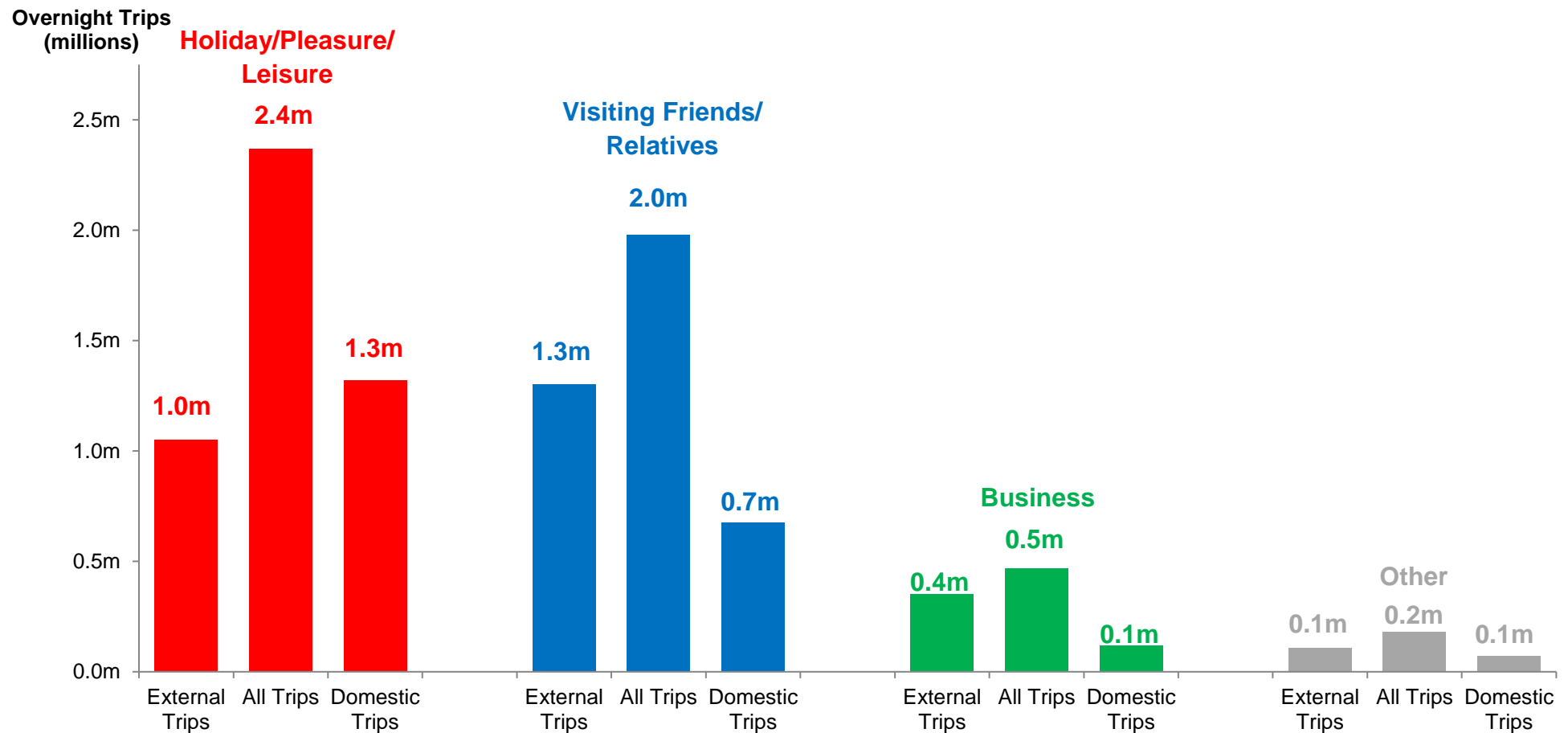
Note: Annual changes are generally not statistically significant. Therefore comparisons should be made over the longer term.

*See background note 16 in relation to the quality of ROI visitor estimates

Reason for Overnight Trip

Survey respondents are also asked the reason they stayed overnight. Figure 7 shows estimated overnight trips split by reason for overnight trips. The two main reasons to take an overnight trip in Northern Ireland are 'holiday/pleasure/leisure' and 'visiting friends or relatives', accounting for an estimated 2.4 million and 2.0 million of all overnight trips respectively in 2018. The chart also shows the variation in reason for visit between the external and domestic markets.

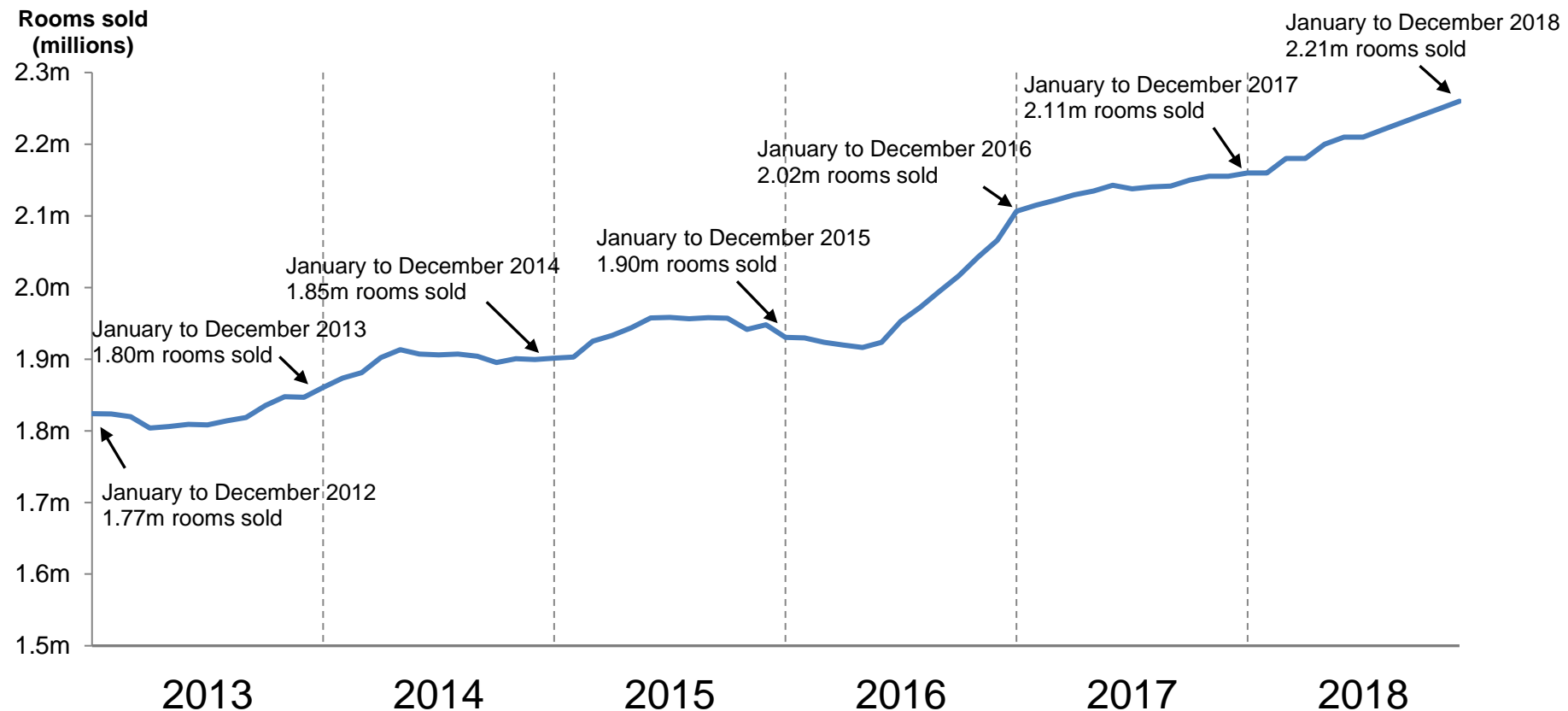
Figure 7: Reason for Overnight Trip, 2018



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 2018 show the estimated number of hotel room nights sold was 2.2 million; or 70% of all hotel rooms were occupied – see Figure 8 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 8: 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 2018 there were an estimated 454,000 rooms sold in guesthouse, bed & breakfasts and guest accommodation, compared with an estimated 423,000 in 2017;
- estimated room occupancy for guest houses, bed & breakfasts and guest accommodation for 2018 was 37%;
- there were an estimated 45,100 weeks sold at self-catering establishments during 2018. This compares to an estimated 39,000 in 2017;
- the estimated annual self-catering unit occupancy in 2018 was 32%. There was a large increase in the number of certified self-catering units with 3,500 in 2018, compared to 2,800 in 2017.

Visitor attraction survey – Official statistics

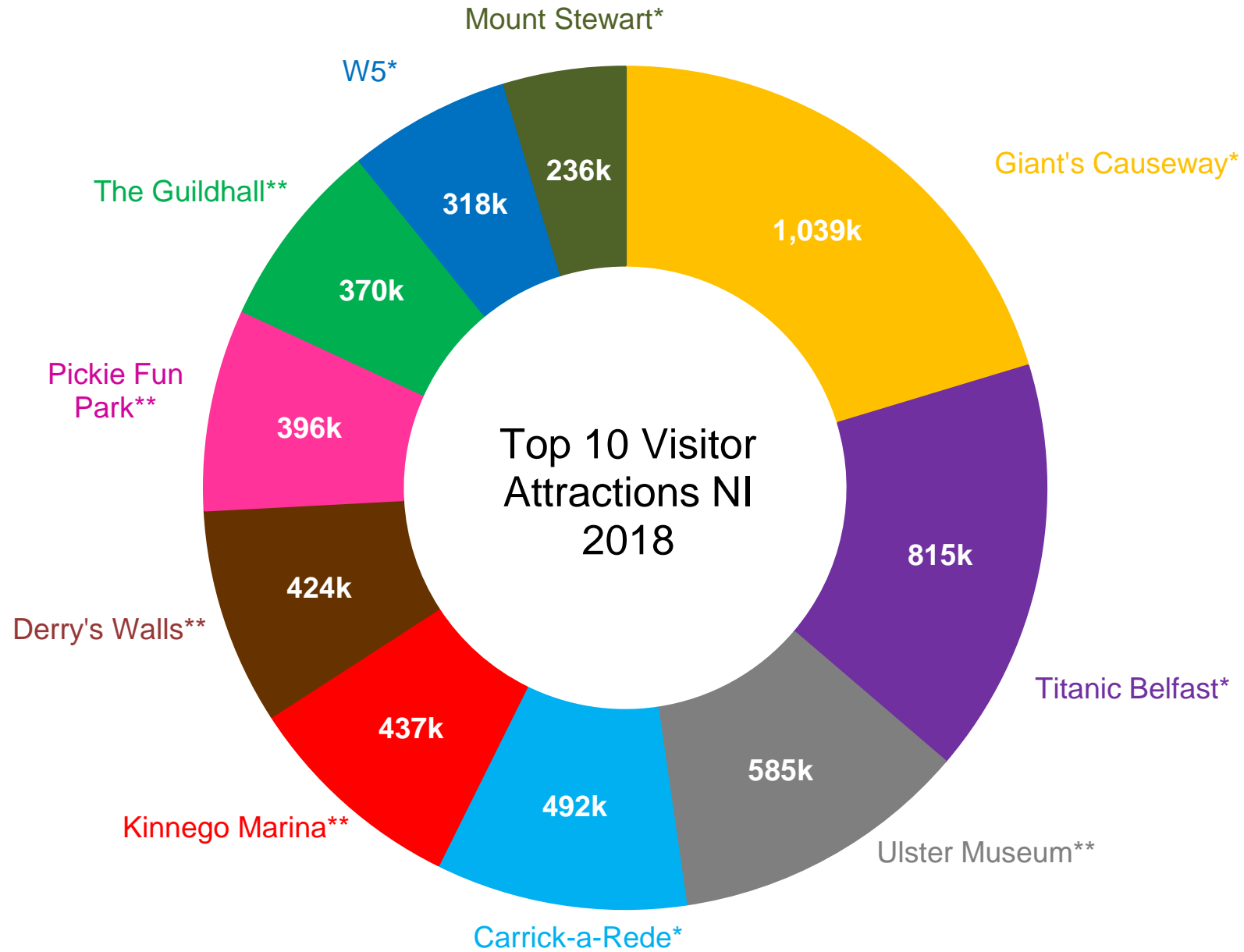
To provide a further picture of tourism in Northern Ireland, NISRA run an annual survey to collect information on visits to all visitor attractions in Northern Ireland. Over 400 visitor attractions were surveyed at the end of December 2018, with 259 providing data for analysis. The key findings from these 259 responses are:

- The top three responding attractions (excluding parks & gardens) during 2018 were Giant's Causeway, Titanic Belfast and Ulster Museum;
- visits to the headline attractions (Giant's Causeway and Titanic Belfast) increased by 5% between 2017 and 2018;
- there were a reported 21.1 million visits to visitor attractions in 2018 by respondents to the survey;
- A reported 40% of visits were made by visitors who lived outside of Northern Ireland; and
- Country Parks/Parks/Forests accounted 42% of all visitors reported in 2018.

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 9: Top ten visitor attractions 2018 (excluding country parks/parks/forests/gardens)



*Estimates are based on ticket sales

**Estimates are based on other counting methods

Cruise ships docking in Northern Ireland ports

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

In 2018, there were 128 cruise ships docked in Northern Ireland ports. This compares with 62 cruise ships docked in Northern Ireland in 2013. Of these ships, 118 docked in Belfast, 8 in Londonderry and 2 in other ports. (Figure 10)

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 doubled since 2013 (see [background](#) note 11 for further information).

In 2013 the cruise ships who docked carried 103,000 passengers and crew on board. In 2018 this increased to 203,000 passengers and crew on board. (Figure 11)

Figure 10: Number of cruise ships docking in Northern Ireland ports

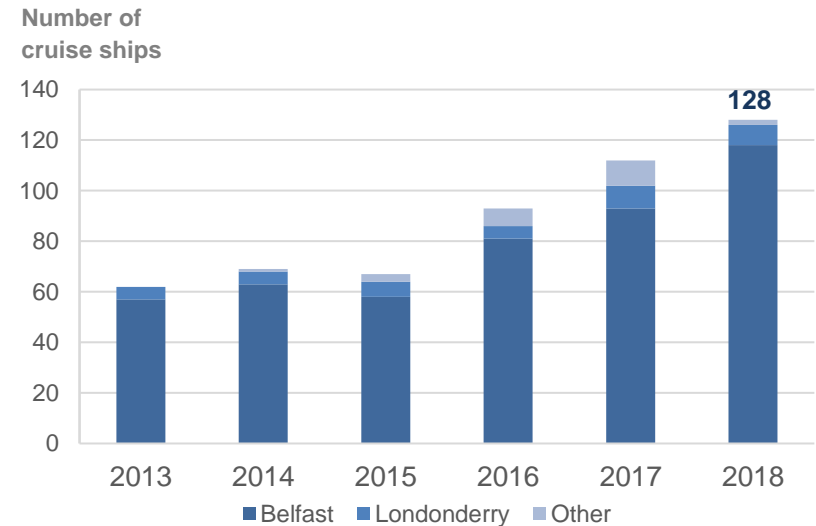
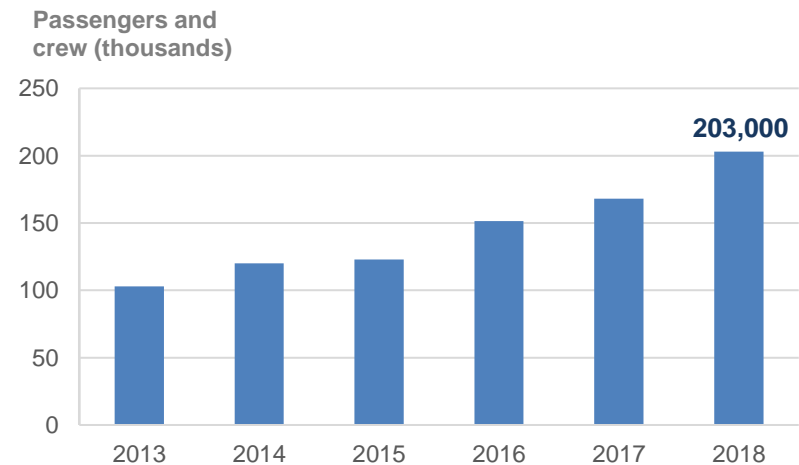


Figure 11: Number of passengers and crew on cruise ships docking in Northern Ireland ports



Jobs in tourism related industries

The most recent NI Business Register and Employment Survey (2017) figures estimate 64,856 employee jobs in tourism related industries in 2017 (Table 2). Around one in ten of all employee jobs are in tourism related industries. A breakdown of these 64,856 jobs is given in Figure 12.

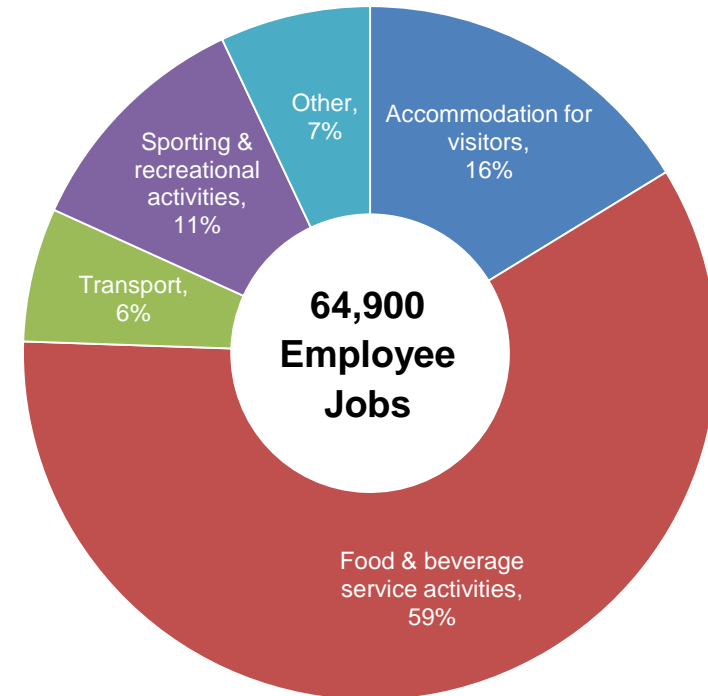
Table 2: Employee jobs in tourism related industries 2017

Broad Tourism Sector	Full-Time	Part-Time	Total
Accommodation for visitors	5,192	5,356	10,548
Food & beverage serving activities	13,466	24,979	38,445
Transport	2,888	1,156	4,043
Sporting & recreational activities	3,683	3,591	7,274
Other	2,363	2,183	4,546
Total	27,591	37,265	64,856

Rounded to the nearest hundred

Source: NI Business Register and Employment Survey (2017)

Figure 12: Employee jobs in tourism related industries 2017

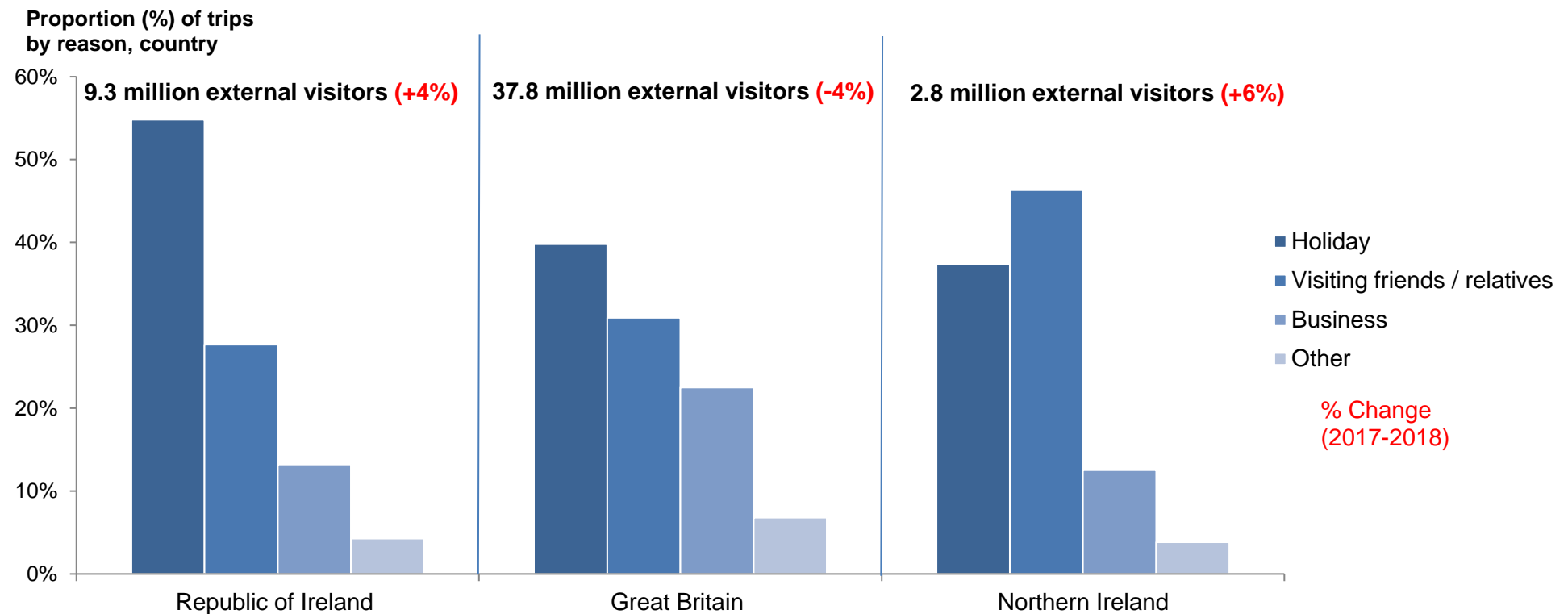


Comparisons

According to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, international tourist arrivals across the globe grew by an estimated 6.0% to reach a total of 1.4 billion in 2018. The Middle East (+10%) led growth in absolute and relative terms. There was also growth in Africa (+7%), Asia and the Pacific (+6%), Europe (6%) and the Americas (+3%).

It is informative when assessing tourism to compare Northern Ireland to the rest of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. Figure 13 shows the proportion of external overnight trips in 2018 by country and reason for visit. Between 2017 and 2018, the estimate for the number of external visitors to NI increased by 6%, slightly higher compared to the RoI (+4%), with a decrease estimated for Great Britain (-4%).

Figure 13: Estimated proportion of external overnight trips by reason in Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, 2018



Background Notes

1. This report presents a summary of tourism statistics. More detailed data are available at this [link](#). The next tourism statistics release will be in August for the year ending March 2019; users should note that it is recommended estimated tourism statistics should be looked at over a twelve month period to give a more robust picture of tourism in NI over a period including all four quarters of the year to the latest statistics available. These results will be made available online in a tabular format only.
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.

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](#).
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.
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 (2017) results published at this level can be found at this [link](#). The 2018 Local Government results will be published in summer 2019.
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 +/- 5%). 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](#).
10. This report includes estimates from Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) on the number of jobs in 'tourism characteristic industries'. 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 2017. More information on the BRES, including details of its release schedule and the associated methodology 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 has also started to 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 (that is Northern Ireland residents spending a night away from their home within NI) is estimated have remained at similar levels between 2017 and 2018. However, there was an increase of 4% in the number of overnight trips taken by Northern Ireland residents overseas.
13. External overnight trips figures from January 2012 to December 2015 were revised on 12th 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](#).

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

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

15. 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.

16. Household Travel Survey 2018 data issues

Data from the 2018 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.**

Background

In 2018 the Household Travel Survey (HTS) was suspended due to quality issues in the collected data. Against a backdrop of falling response rates, it was observed that there was a non-response issue affecting the survey estimates in 2018. The percentage of HTS survey respondents who did not take overnight trips was much lower than in the equivalent quarters of 2017 and previous years. As a result, the survey weights assigned to those who took overnight trips were much higher than before, which would have led to unprecedented increases in the survey estimates of domestic trips, nights and expenditure.

Changes to methodology

In order to address the non-response bias in the 2018 HTS sample the CSO has adjusted the weights of respondents within each of the 112 cells of the sample design (region, sex and age class), for all four quarters of 2018. The effect of the adjustment procedure is to change the percentage breakdown between people who did and did not take overnight trips, and align it with a forecasted percentage of respondents with and without trips, based on data from the previous six years of the survey.

In this way, the percentage of people in the sample who have taken overnight trips follows a broadly similar, though not identical, pattern to previous years. This has the effect of addressing the non-response bias issue in the sample by reducing the weight assigned to those who took overnight trips. This further has the effect of reducing the estimates of trips, nights and expenditure arising from the HTS compared to the pre-adjustment estimates for 2018.

The estimates arising from this adjustment to the 2018 Household Travel Survey will be reviewed again in the context of the 2019 data. Therefore, the 2018 data should be considered interim and may be subject to future revision.

NISRA quality assessment

NISRA Tourism Statistics has been in liaison with CSO since the issue with the 2018 data became known. Having looked at the issues faced with the underlying data, we have taken the view that the adjustments CSO have made to correct the issue are reasonable and appropriate.

We have looked at past trends as well to assure ourselves that the patterns look correct. For example, the 23% increase in the estimate for trips between 2017 and 2018 compares with a recent 35% increase in trips between 2015 and 2016. The estimate for expenditure has increased by 20%, which compares with an increase of 29% between 2016 and 2017.

Whilst the data has no direct equivalent, we considered results from the 2018 hotel occupancy and found that arrivals from ROI visitors increased by 18% between 2017 and 2018, also indicating a similar increase, albeit for a subsection of visitors.

We also considered the relative importance of the data to overall estimates. Visitors from ROI represent about only 12% of all trips in NI and therefore we have taken this context into account.

Conclusion

Following quality checks NISRA feel the data provided by CSO is of suitable quality to report on. We ask users to be aware there is potential for future revision, but we don't feel this is likely to change the overall message of the publication or the key statistics. We advise users that are particularly interested in the number of visitors from ROI to use the figures with caution and look at the patterns over the last few years rather than focussing on short term changes.

If a future revision occur we will make users aware of their impact on the statistics in this publication.

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