



## Northern Ireland Annual Hotel Occupancy Survey 2016

Published 25 May 2017

### The key points are:

- during 2016 room occupancy in Northern Ireland hotels was an estimated 70%. Bed-space occupancy was an estimated 54%;
- there were an estimated 2.02 million rooms sold in Northern Ireland hotels during 2016;
- Belfast hotels saw the highest occupancy rates with an estimated 79% room occupancy and 64% bed space occupancy; and
- the figures point towards a positive year for hotels. Estimates suggest 2016 saw the highest hotel occupancy rates of any year from 2011 onwards.

### Lead Statistician:

Sarah McAuley  
Tourism Statistics Branch,  
NISRA,  
Colby House,  
Stranmillis Court  
BELFAST  
BT9 5RR

Telephone: 028 9052 9585

Email: [tourismstatistics@nisra.gov.uk](mailto:tourismstatistics@nisra.gov.uk)

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

### Contents:

Introduction	3
Hotel Stock	3
Stock Levels and Occupancy Rate	4
Hotel Room Nights Sold	5
Hotel Room & Bed Occupancy	5
Arrivals & Guests	6
Background Notes	7

## National Statistics Status

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Office for Statistics Regulation. The Office for Statistics Regulation considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is NISRA's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Office for Statistics Regulation. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.



## Introduction

This report provides statistics on Hotel occupancy rates in Northern Ireland during 2016. As occupancy statistics are survey based estimates the statistics provided are an indicator of how hotels are performing.

### What you can say....

Whilst we cannot say there has been a statistically significant change in hotel occupancy rates year on year, when looking at the full picture sources point towards a general upward trend since 2011

### What you cannot say....

During January to December 2016 there was a definite increase in Northern Ireland hotel room occupancy rates to 70% compared to 67% during 2015

This report should be read in conjunction with other tourism statistics reports for a full picture. When looking at the full picture, sources point toward a general upward trend in hotel occupancy rates since 2011, however, we cannot say that this is a statistically significant change. A full picture of all tourism activity can be found in the [Northern Ireland Annual Tourism Statistics Publication](#).

## Hotel Stock

To offer tourist accommodation in Northern Ireland, you must have a certificate from Tourism Northern Ireland (TNI) - TNI refers to this as certification. It is illegal to offer tourist accommodation in NI without a certificate from TNI. The list of certified accommodation in TNI is known as the 'stock'. The table below shows all the available stock as registered with Tourism Northern Ireland.

**Table 1: Northern Ireland Hotel Stock 2016**

Year	Hotels	Rooms	Bed Spaces
2011	139	7,765	17,382
2012	138	7,708	17,176
2013	138	7,893	17,661
2014	134	7,809	17,470
2015	135	7,822	17,545
2016	137	7,916	17,739
<b>Change 15/16</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>

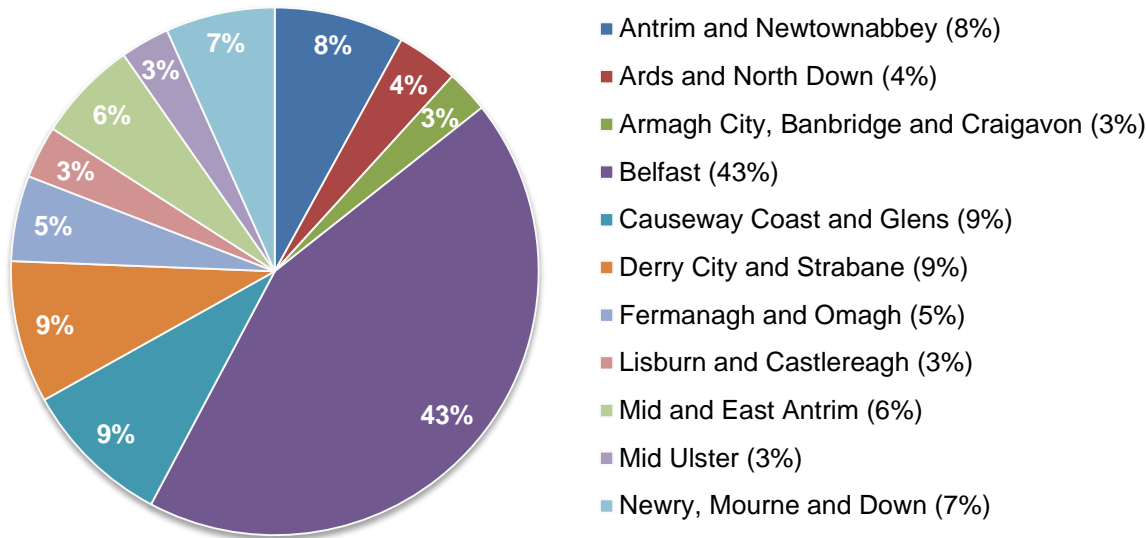
As of the end of December 2016 there were a total of 137 hotels, offering accommodation in Northern Ireland.

The number of hotels increased by 1% when compared to 2015. The number of hotel rooms and beds available also increased by 1% over the same period.

Full information on Northern Ireland hotel stock can be found at the following link [NI Hotel Occupancy Survey Additional Tables](#)

## Stock levels and Occupancy Rate by Local Government District

Figure 1: Hotel Room Stock 2016 by Local Government District

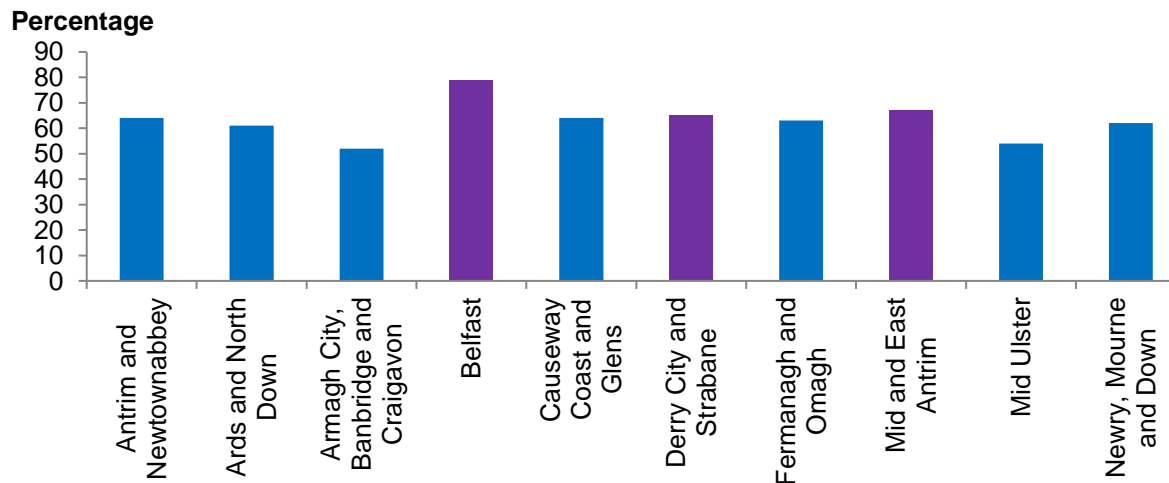


### Room Stock

**Belfast**  
**Causeway Coast and Glens**  
**Derry City and Strabane**

Belfast accounted for the highest share of accommodation rooms during 2016 with 43% of the hotel room stock in Northern Ireland. Causeway Coast & Glens and Derry City & Strabane accounted for the second highest hotel room stock both with 9%.

Figure 2: Hotel Room Occupancy 2016 by Local Government District



### Room Occupancy

**Belfast**  
**Mid and East Antrim**  
**Derry City and Strabane**

Belfast had the highest room occupancy during 2016 (79%). Mid & East Antrim experienced the second highest room occupancy rates during 2016 (67%) followed by Derry City & Strabane (65%).

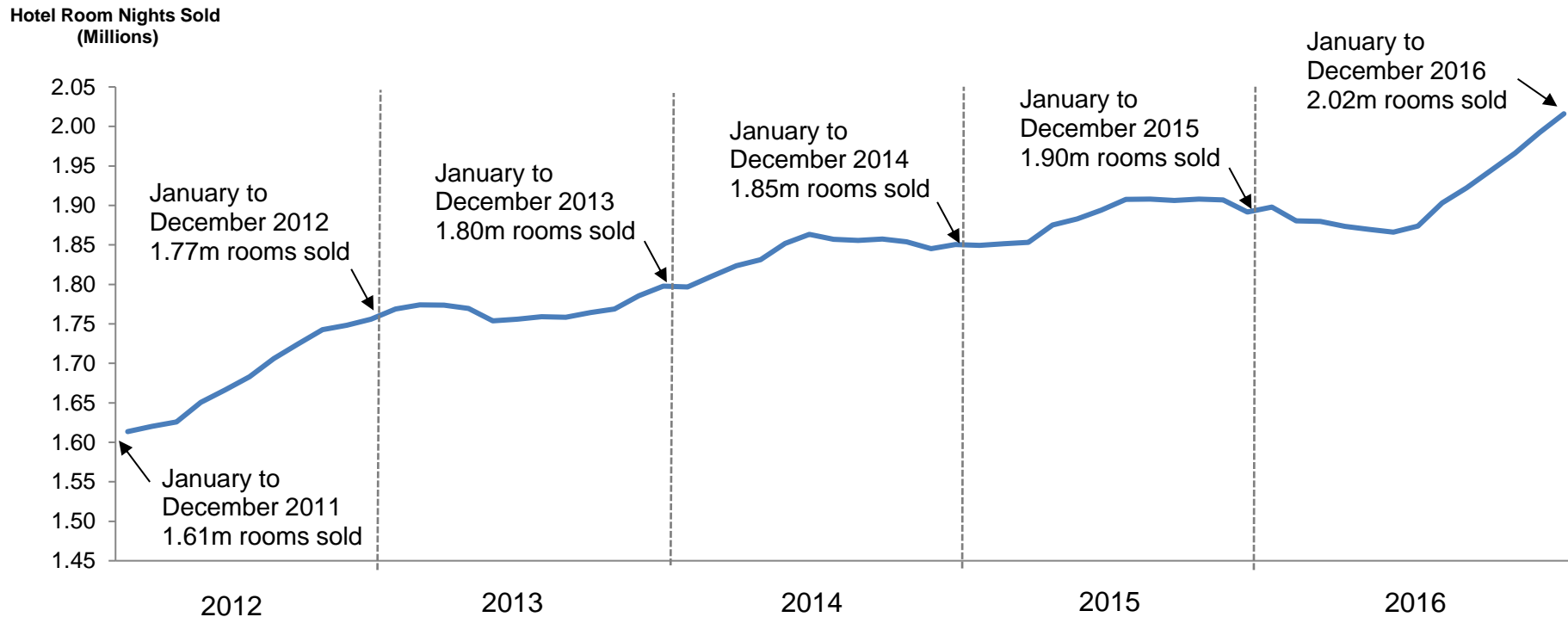
Full information on Northern Ireland hotel stock can be found at the following link  
[NI Hotel Occupancy Survey Additional Tables](#)

## Hotel Room Nights Sold

Figures for 2016 show the estimated number of hotel room nights sold was 2.02 million and an estimated 3.47 million bed spaces sold. According to the estimates there were an additional 118 thousand hotel room nights sold in 2016 compared to 2015.

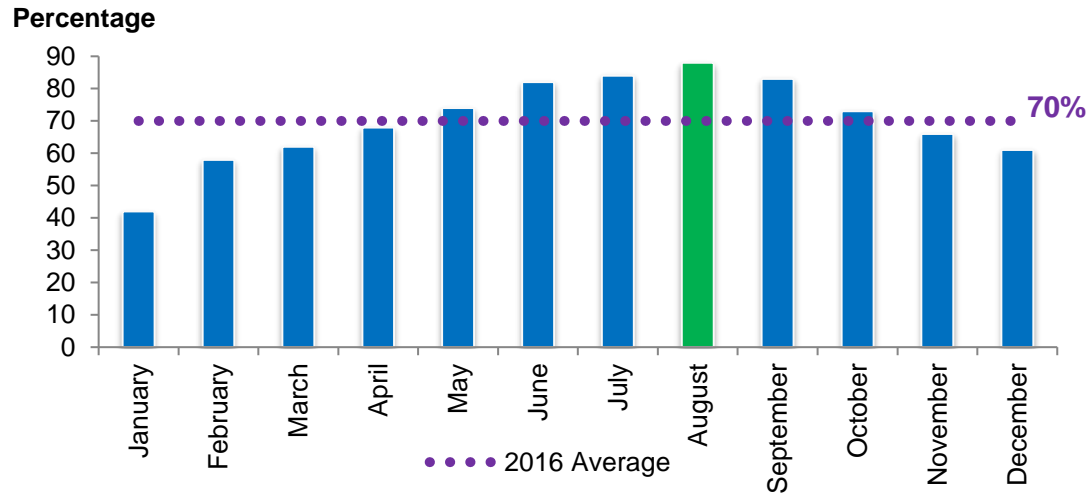
See Figure 3 for the rolling twelve month trend in hotel room nights sold from December 2011. The trend suggests an increase over the period in the estimated number of rooms sold in Northern Ireland hotels.

**Figure 3: Estimated rolling twelve month hotel room nights sold December 2011- December 2016 (non zero axis)**



## Hotel Occupancy

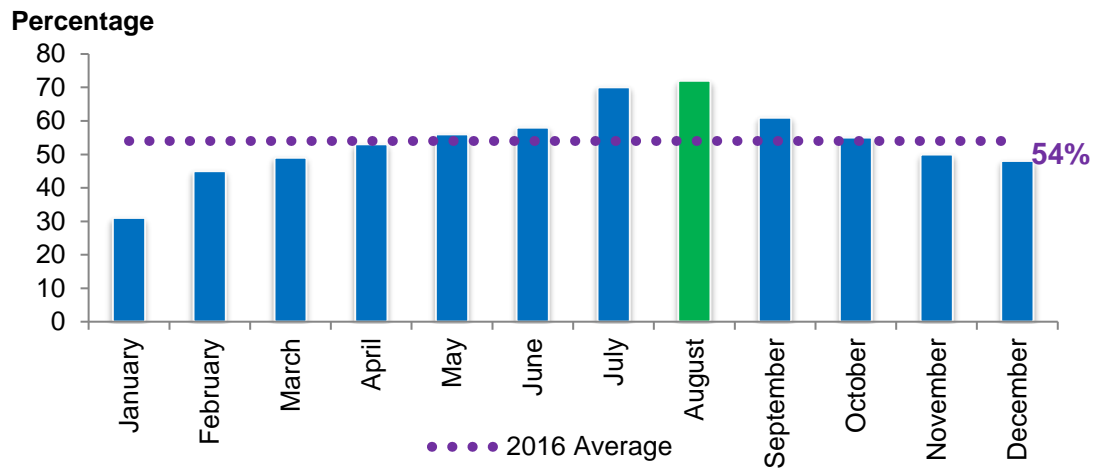
**Figure 4: Northern Ireland Hotel Room Occupancy by Month 2016**



During January – December 2016 room occupancy rates in Northern Ireland hotels were 70%. Bed space occupancy rates were 54%.

Room and bed-space occupancy rates vary from month to month. Hotel monthly room and bed space occupancy during 2016 was highest in the month of August (88% and 72% respectively). January saw the lowest monthly occupancy rates of 42% room occupancy and 31% bed space occupancy.

**Figure 5: Northern Ireland Hotel Bed Space Occupancy by Month 2016**

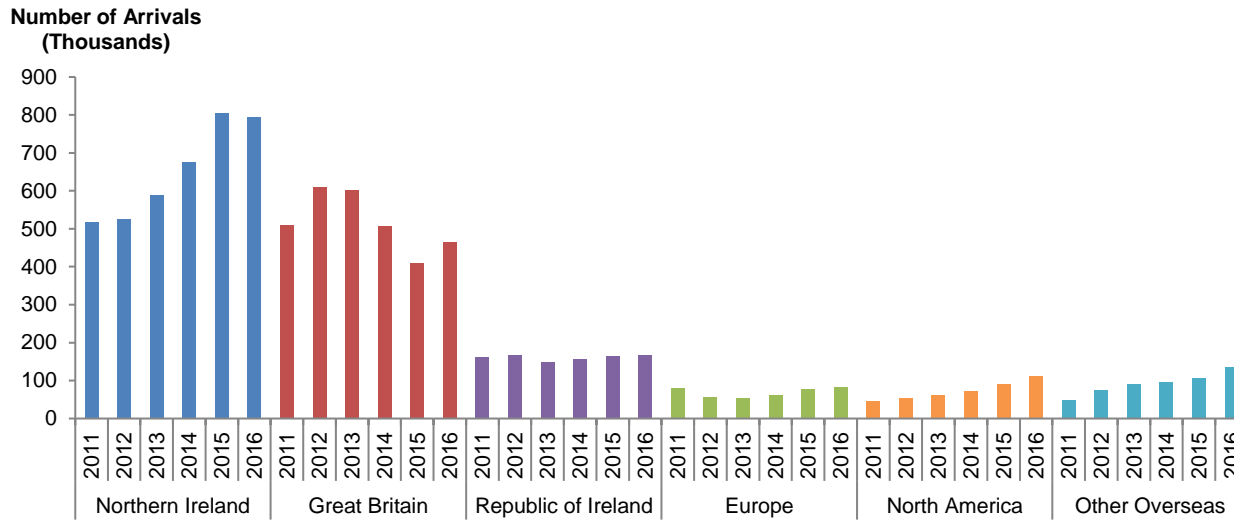


Estimated occupancy rates during 2016 were highest in larger hotels (78% room occupancy) and those in the higher price band of £60 plus (72% room occupancy).

Full information on Northern Ireland Hotel Occupancy Statistics can be found at the following link [NI Hotel Occupancy Survey Additional Tables](#)

## Arrivals and Guests

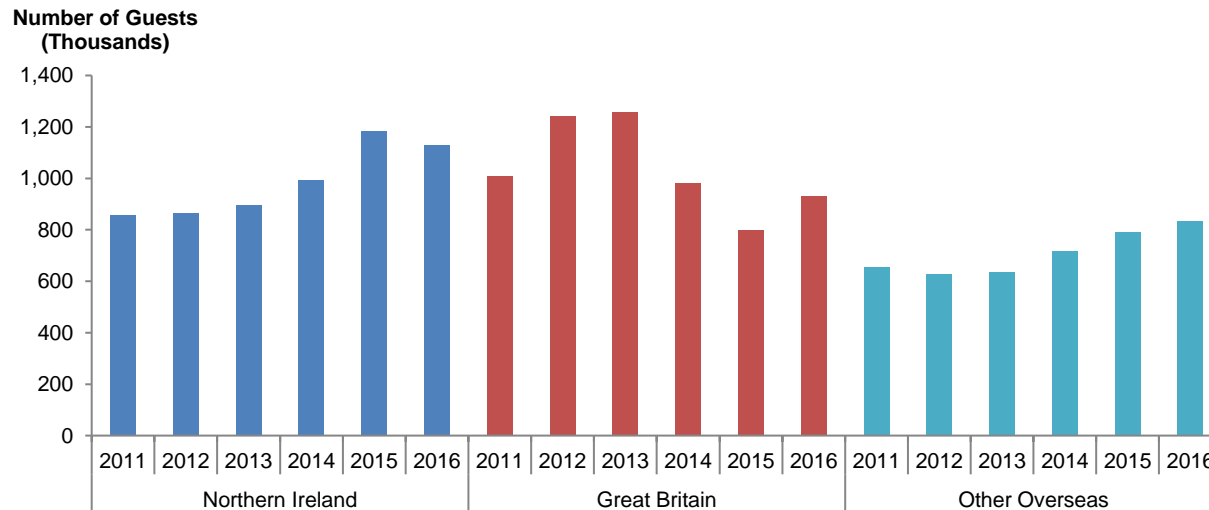
**Figure 6: Arrivals to Northern Ireland Hotels 2011 - 2016**



It is estimated that there were 1.76 million arrivals to Northern Ireland hotels during 2016. There were an estimated 794,200 thousand arrivals from Northern Ireland residents, accounting for almost half (45%), of the total arrivals for the year. Arrivals from Great Britain made up just over a quarter (27%) of all arrivals with around 466,400 arrivals during 2016 (Figure 6).

When looking at the estimated number of arrivals to Northern Ireland hotels from 2011 onward the figures suggest an upward trend rising from an estimated 1.37m in 2011 to 1.76m in 2016.

**Figure 7: Guests to Northern Ireland Hotels 2011 - 2015**



During 2016 there were an estimated 2.89 million guests staying in Northern Ireland hotels. Around 61% of hotel guests were from outside Northern Ireland (1.76 million).

## **Background Notes**

To offer tourist accommodation in NI, you must have a certificate from Tourism Northern Ireland (TNI) - TNI refers to this as certification. It is illegal to offer tourist accommodation in NI without a certificate from TNI. The list of certified accommodation from TNI is known as the 'stock'.

The survey uses a census of all hotels in Northern Ireland. Each month, all Hotels are invited to participate in the occupancy survey by completing a questionnaire. The survey is issued both by post and electronically by email. Responses are also accepted by telephone in an effort to boost response rates.

The information is presented in terms of room and bed-space occupancy, and rooms and bed-spaces sold. The room and bed-space occupancy can be influenced by an establishment adding new rooms or bed-spaces which have not been certified or closing rooms for refurbishment throughout the year and can change monthly. Occupancy rates can also be influenced by seasonality.

## **Questionnaire**

Establishments are asked to record the following in the questionnaire:

- The total number of rooms let out each night
- The total number of guests staying in the establishment each night
- The total number of guests checking in as new arrivals each day
- The daily number of new arrivals by area of residency (Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Great Britain, Europe, North America and other countries)
- The daily number of guests by area of residency (Northern Ireland, Great Britain and other countries)

## **Weighting**

The data has been weighted for non-response assuming no non-response bias and also weighted by local authority and size. Due to different response rates to different parts of the questionnaire, there are different weights for arrivals, guests and weekend/weekday splits (some accommodation providers do not provide information on the country of residence of their arrivals/guests and others provide monthly data rather than daily data).



## **Terminology**

The main measures are bed-space occupancy and room occupancy. Definitions of tourism statistics common terms can be found at the following [link](#).

### **Bed-space occupancy rates**

Refer to the proportion of all bed-spaces available at any given time that are occupied by paying guests. In calculating these figures, the total number of bed-spaces available is allowed to vary from month to month to take account of any changes in the number of beds offered by individual establishments through the use of extra beds or withdrawal of some rooms from use.

The bed-space occupancy rate calculation =  $(\text{Total number of bed-spaces occupied} / \text{total number of bed-spaces available}) * 100$ .

Bed-space occupancy rates exclude those who have not provided the appropriate breakdown of information i.e. those who have not provided information on the number of guests.

### **Room occupancy rates**

Refer to the proportion of rooms available at any given time that are occupied by at least one paying guest. These rates differ from bed-space occupancy rates in that the room may be occupied whilst all the bed-spaces in the room are not.

The room occupancy rate calculation =  $(\text{Total number of rooms occupied} / \text{Total number of rooms available}) * 100$ .

## **Rooms and Bed-spaces sold**

### **Rooms Sold**

Applies the calculated room occupancy rate to the number of rooms available from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board stock. This does not take into account any known differences between the stock file and the actual number of rooms available as there may be a delay in updating the stock file to enable the process of re-certification.

## **Bed-spaces Sold**

Applies the calculated bed-space occupancy rate to the number of beds available from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board stock. This does not take into account any known differences between the stock file and the actual number of bed-spaces available as there may be a delay in updating the stock file to enable the process of re-certification. Bed-spaces sold exclude those who have not provided the appropriate breakdown of information i.e. those who have not provided information on the number of guests.

## **Stock**

Stock is provided by Tourism Northern Ireland. Stock levels used are as of month's end of the previous month.

## **Geographic Referencing**

Information is presented for Northern Ireland and local government districts as follows:

Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council  
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council  
Belfast City Council  
Causeway Coast & Glens District Council  
Derry City & Strabane District Council  
Fermanagh & Omagh District Council  
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council  
Mid & East Antrim Borough Council  
Mid Ulster District Council  
Newry, Mourne & Down District Council  
Ards & North Down Borough Council

Further information on the survey methodology can be found at this [link](#).

A full picture of all tourism activity can be found in the [Northern Ireland Annual Tourism Statistics Publication](#).

## **Further Information**

Tables containing data used in this publication can be found at: [NI Hotel Occupancy Survey Additional Tables](#).

For more information relating to this publication or if an alternative format is required, please contact us at [tourismstatistics@nisra.gov.uk](mailto:tourismstatistics@nisra.gov.uk)

More information on the data quality of tourism statistics can be found at [Data Quality Report](#).

Information on the data quality of administrative sources can be found at this [link](#).

## **Copyright**

This publication is Crown copyright and may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium. Any material used must be acknowledged, and the title of the publication specified.