

Occupancy Survey Methodology

Sample

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'. At the beginning of the year, a sample of the guesthouses and bed & breakfasts in NI was drawn from the stock.

Details

Historically the random sample of guesthouses, B&Bs and guest accommodation drawn from the stock provided by Tourism NI was extended to include good responders and those with 5+ rooms. Since January 2013 Tourism Statistics Branch has been selecting respondents on a stratified random sample basis. Monitoring of the old and new systems has shown no bias. Having built up a two year time series Tourism Statistics Branch will now begin to publish on the new stratified random sample basis. Information for guesthouses, B&Bs and guest accommodation is therefore only available for January 2013 onwards due to these changes in the survey sampling methodology.

Each month, all Hotels and the sample of Guesthouses, Bed & Breakfasts and Guest Accommodation are invited to participate in the occupancy survey by completing a questionnaire. Over the month of April 2012 the response rate for the hotel sector was 45% and 32% of sampled Guesthouses, Bed & Breakfasts and Guest Accommodation. (This equates to approximately 17% of the full Guesthouse, Bed & Breakfast and Guest Accommodation stock.) The data is therefore based on 62 Hotel responses and 120 Guesthouses, Bed & Breakfasts and Guest Accommodation.

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

Data is weighted by the number of bed-spaces, number of rooms and district council. Due to different response rates to different parts of the survey, 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 as opposed to daily data).

Terminology

The main measures are bed-space occupancy and room occupancy.

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 over the months 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. 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.

$(\text{Total number of bed-spaces occupied} / \text{total number of bed-spaces available}) * 100$

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.

$(\text{Total number of rooms occupied} / \text{Total number of rooms available}) * 100$

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 for 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