

## Northern Ireland Self-Catering Occupancy Statistics 2019

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### The key points are:

- There were an estimated 55,200 weeks sold at self-catering establishments during 2019.
- There was 4,600 certified self-catering units in 2019,
- Total arrivals were estimated to be 451,800 in 2019,
- The estimated annual self-catering unit occupancy in 2019 was 31%,
- The estimated peak season (April-September) unit occupancy was 42% in 2019,
- Around seven out of every ten weeks sold (69%) in self-catering establishments were to visitors from outside Northern Ireland.

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

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Full information on Northern Ireland self-catering accommodation can be found on the following link [Northern Ireland Self-Catering Occupancy Statistics Additional Tables](#)

## Introduction

This report provides statistics on self-catering occupancy rates in Northern Ireland during 2019 which are intended to provide an indication of how the self-catering sector is performing. The statistics are based on the results of a sample survey of establishments. The results derived from sample surveys are estimates and are subject to margins of error which can have an impact on how the estimates should be interpreted, especially regarding comparisons over the short term.

### What you can say....

**Whilst we cannot say there has been a statistically significant change in the average length of stay, sources point towards more short breaks since 2013**

### What you cannot say....

**There was a definite decrease of 1% in Northern Ireland Self-Catering annual occupancy rates, from 32% during 2018 to 31% during 2019**

This report should be read in conjunction with other tourism statistics reports for a full picture of Northern Ireland tourism. When looking at the full picture, sources point toward a general upward trend in Northern Ireland Tourism from 2013.

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

## Self-catering stock (Source: Tourism NI)

You must have a certificate from Tourism NI (TNI) to offer tourist accommodation in NI – this is referred to 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’. Table 1 shows Northern Ireland’s certified self-catering stock operating at the start of December 2019.

**Table 1: Northern Ireland self-catering accommodation stock 2019**

	2019	
Size	Establishments	Units
1 to 4 Units	3,451	3,828
5 to 9 Units	53	339
10 + Units	24	462
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,528</b>	<b>4,629</b>
<b>Classification</b>		
Unclassified	3,201	3,989
One Star	0	0
Two Star	1	4
Three Star	64	148
Four Star	205	395
Five Star	57	93
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,528</b>	<b>4629</b>

Source: Tourism NI

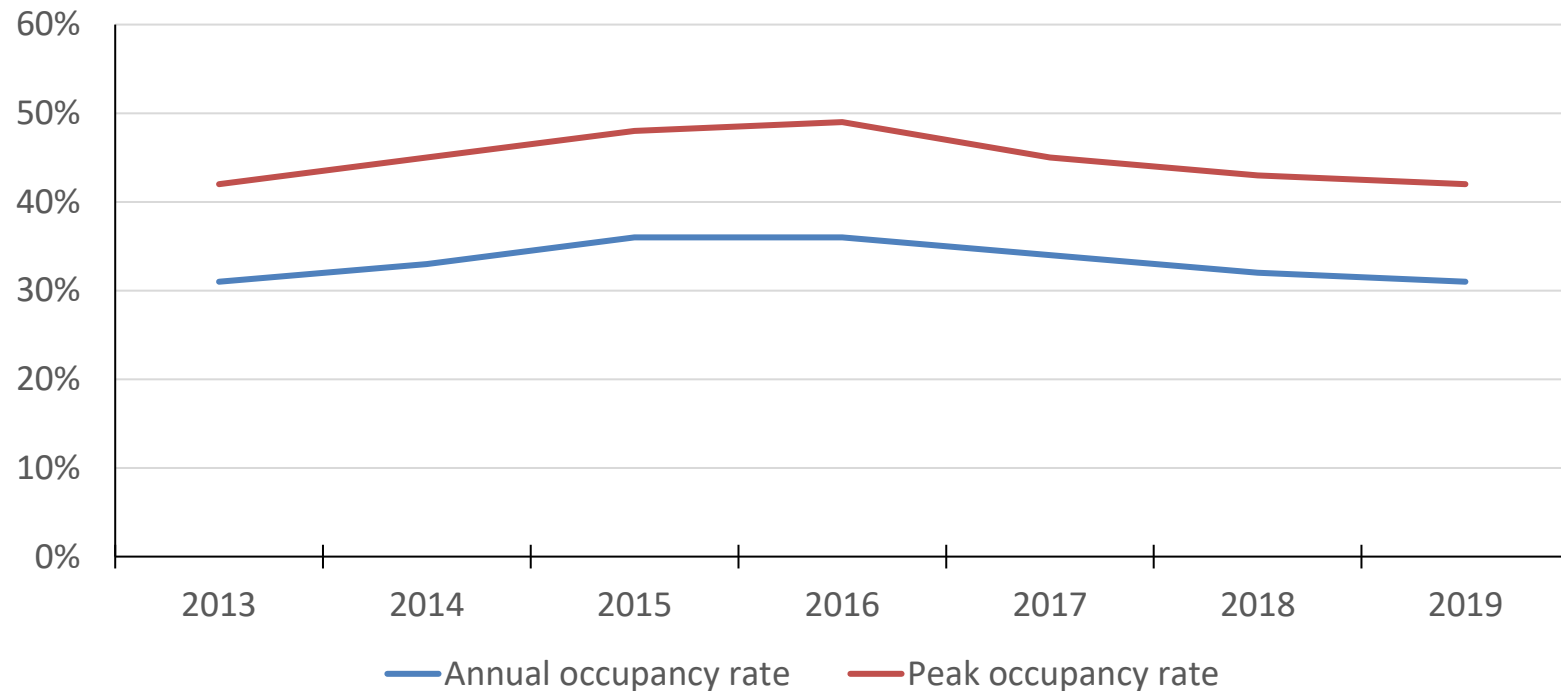
## Occupancy rates and weeks sold

**Figure 1: Self-catering weeks sold (annual and peak season) 2013-2019**

There were an estimated 55,200 weeks sold in self-catering establishments during 2019. Of the 55,200 weeks sold during 2019, 38,600 (70%) were during peak season.

The self-catering occupancy rate depends on the number of self-catering units available in Northern Ireland as well as the number of weeks sold. Stock has been rising over recent years and this can impact survey results as a greater number of units available can result in unit occupancy rates appearing to remain flat or even decrease, yet the number of guests and weeks sold could have increased. The self-catering unit occupancy rate was estimated to be 31% during 2019. During peak season, April to September, the occupancy rate was estimated to be 42%.

**Figure 1: Self-catering occupancy rates (annual and peak season) 2013-2019**



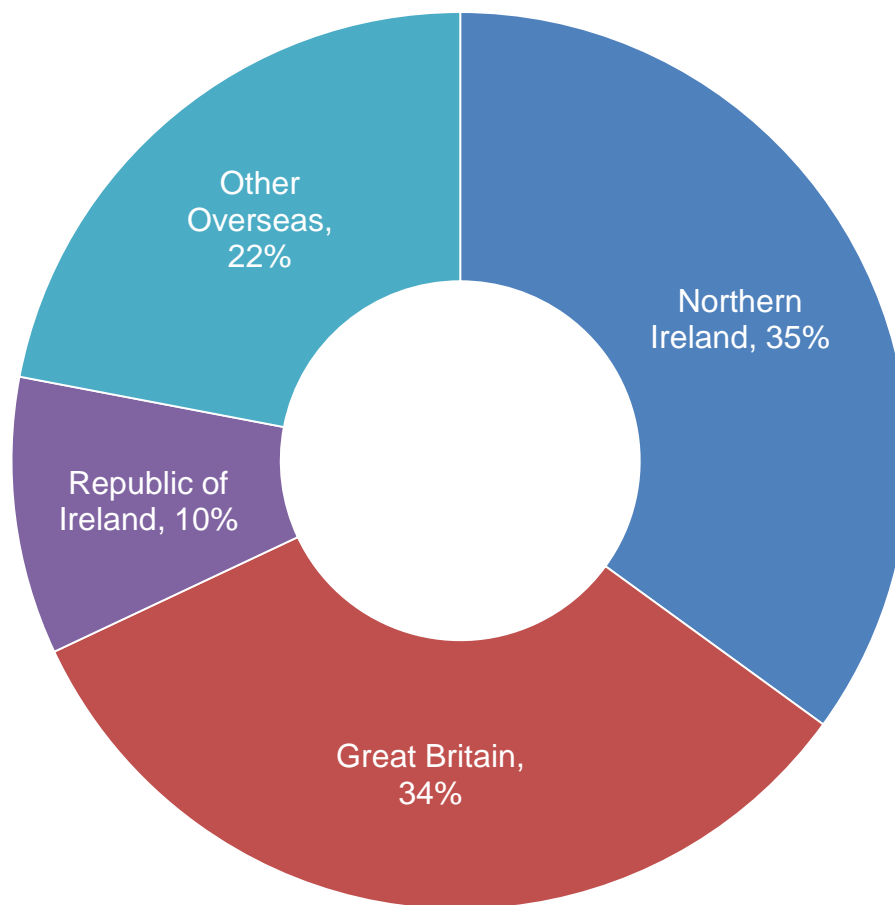
Full information on Northern Ireland self-catering accommodation can be found on the following link [Northern Ireland Self-Catering Occupancy Statistics Additional Tables](#)

## Arrivals by country of residence

An arrival does not take into consideration the length of stay, therefore a party of 5 staying for two weeks is treated as 5 arrivals, as would a party of 5 staying for 2 days.

It is estimated that there were 451,800 arrivals to self-catering establishments during 2019. During 2019 approximately 67% of all estimated arrivals came during peak season (April to September).

**Figure 2: Proportion of total annual arrivals sold by country of residence of guests 2019**

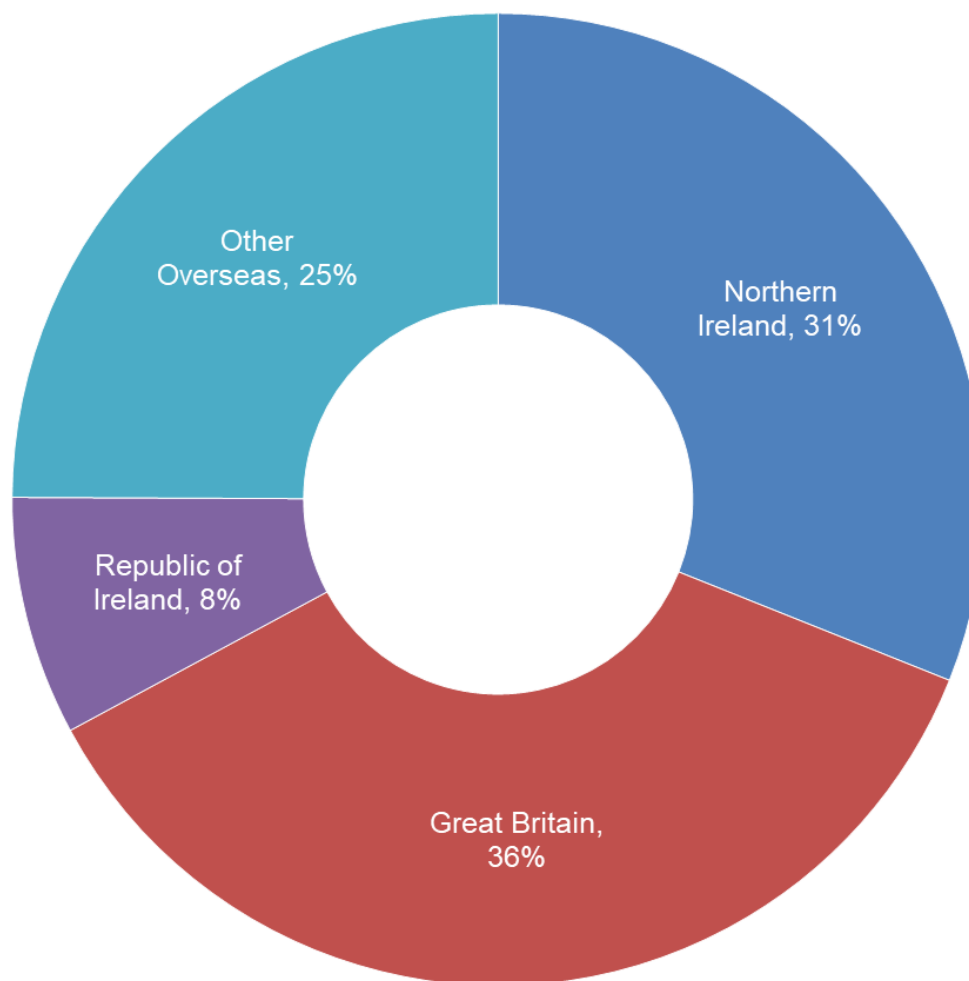


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## Guests by country of residence

During 2019, an estimated 55,200 weeks were sold in self-catering establishments. Guests from both Northern Ireland and Great Britain each made up the largest proportions of all guests at self-catering establishments during 2019 with an estimated 31% from NI and 36% from GB

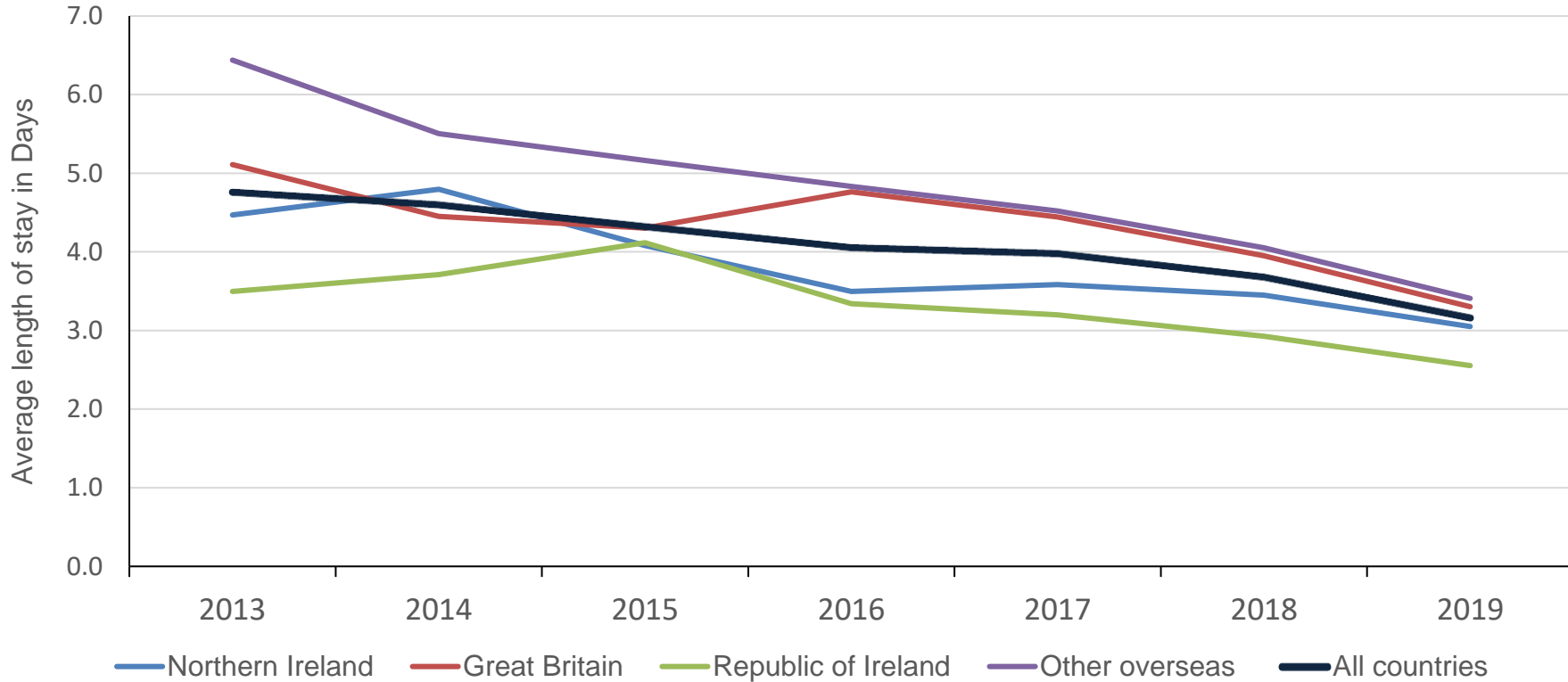
**Figure 3: Proportion of total annual weeks sold by country of residence of guests 2019**



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## Average length of stay

Figure 4: Average length of stay by country of residence 2013 – 2019



During 2019 the average length of stay in self-catering accommodation was 3.2 nights.

Figure 4 shows that from 2013 the average number of nights spent in self-catering accommodation in Northern Ireland has generally been declining for guests from each region.

During 2019, the estimated average number of nights spent in self-catering accommodation ranged from 2.6 nights for guests from the Republic of Ireland to 3.4 nights for guests from other overseas.

Full information on Northern Ireland self-catering accommodation can be found on the following link [Northern Ireland Self-Catering Occupancy Statistics Additional Tables](#)

## Background Notes

### Occupancy Survey - Methodology

#### Sample

All tourist accommodation providers in Northern Ireland must receive certification by Tourism NI in order to operate. 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'. Table 1 in the report showed the stock when the self-catering survey was issued.

The 2019 self-catering survey was conducted by means of a postal questionnaire covering the period January-December of that year. The questionnaire was issued in December 2019; it was also emailed to any establishments that had an email address and an option for returning it through the same method. All owners (a full census) were asked to provide the length of stay, number of arrivals and country of residence for each arrival for each booking throughout the year.

In 2019, there were a total of 4,629 establishments in the self-catering stock (Table 1). While this survey is a full census it has historically had a low response rate affecting confidence intervals in the estimated figures. Collection of self-catering data occurred during February, March and April 2020. However due to the Covid-19 restrictions staff were working remotely meaning reminder calls could not be conducted leading to a slightly reduced response rate. While the number respondents increase from 481 in 2018 to 519 in 2019 the response rate reduced from 14% in 2018 to 11% in 2019 due to increase in stock.

#### Weighting

All the analysis was carried out on weighted data. The data was weighted for non-response assuming no non-response bias and also weighted by local authority and number of units.

#### Terminology

The following definitions are employed throughout the report

- “establishment”**: refers to the total property of self-catering chalets/houses/flats
- “units”**: refer to the actual number of chalets/houses/flats within an establishment
- “seasonal”**: refers to the period “April-September” which in tourism is deemed to be peak season

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



Please note staff are currently working from home, so it would be quicker to contact via email rather than post.

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