

Northern Ireland Self Catering Occupancy Statistics (2016)

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The key points are:

- estimated annual self catering unit occupancy in 2016 was 36%;
- estimated peak season (April-September) unit occupancy was 49% in 2016;
- of the estimated 36,500 weeks sold in self catering units, 70% (25,700) were during peak season (April-September);
- around two out of three weeks sold in self catering establishments were to visitors from outside Northern Ireland; and
- taken into account estimates from other sources, the figures point towards a positive year for self catering establishments.

Patrick O'Kane
Tourism Statistics Branch,
NISRA,
Colby House, Stranmillis Court,
BELFAST
BT9 5RR

Telephone: 028 9052 9585

Email: tourismstatistics@nisra.gov.uk

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Introduction

This report provides statistics on Self Catering occupancy rates in Northern Ireland during 2016.

As occupancy statistics are survey based estimates the statistics provided are an indicator of how the self catering establishments are performing. The results from sample surveys are always estimates and not precise figures. This means that they 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 Self Catering occupancy rates year on year, when looking at the full picture sources point towards a general growth in occupancy since 2011

What you cannot say....

During January to December 2016 there was an increase of 1% in Northern Ireland Self Catering peak season occupancy rates to 49% compared to 48% 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 Northern Ireland Tourism from 2011.

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’. See Table 1 below for more information on Northern Ireland’s certified self catering stock operating at the start of December 2016.

Table 1: Northern Ireland Self Catering Accommodation Stock 2016

Size / Classification of Establishment	Establishments	Units
1 to 4 Units	1,584	1,842
5 to 9 Units	37	239
10 + Units	22	449
Total	1,643	2,530
Unclassified	1,320	1,946
One Star	0	0
Two Star	2	4
Three Star	102	223
Four Star	167	291
Five Star	52	66
Total	1,643	2,530

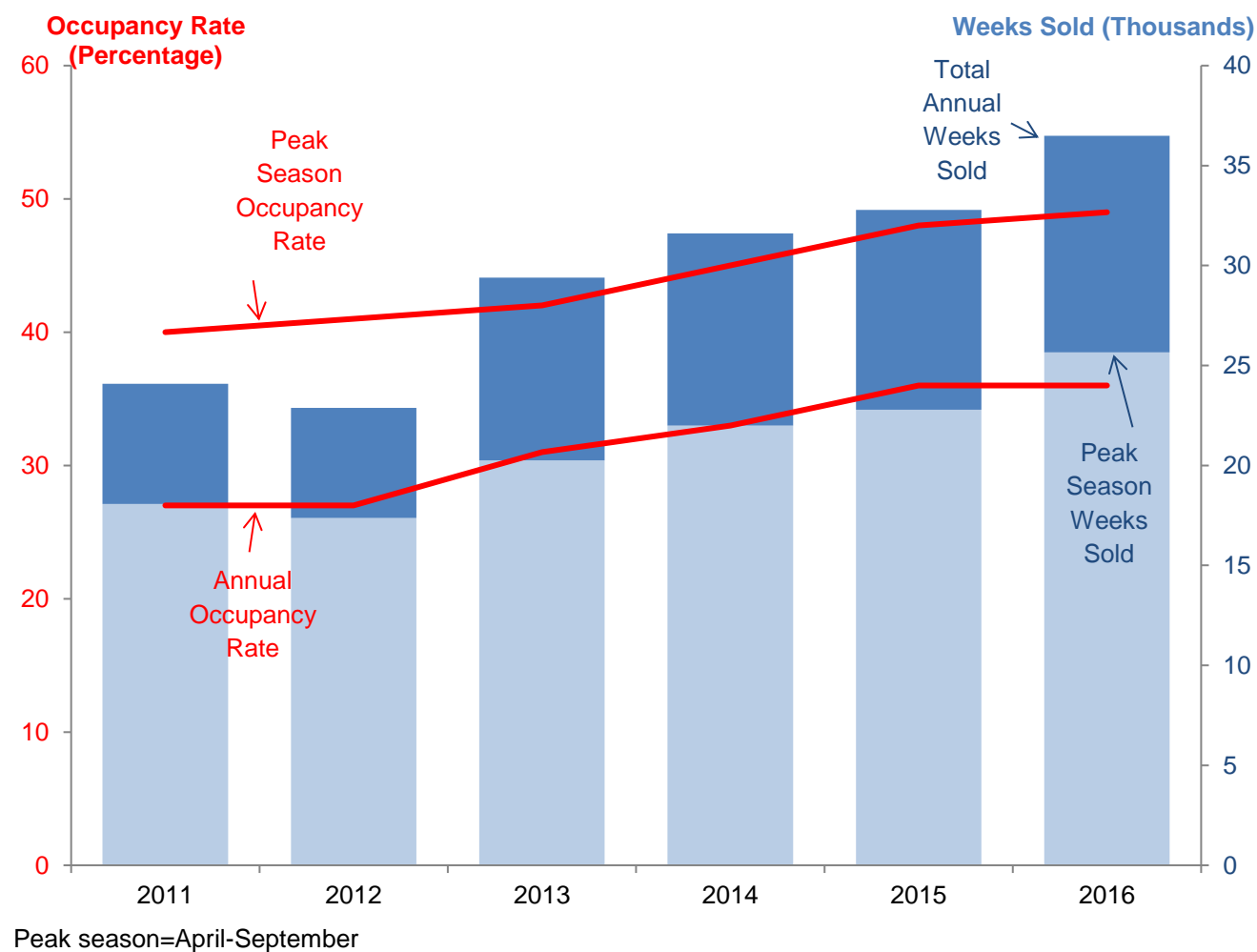
Source: Tourism NI

It should be noted that Self Catering stock remained relatively unchanged between 2011 and 2015 (with approximately 1,400 establishments and 2,200 units available). However, in 2016 these had increased to over 1,600 establishments and 2,500 units available. This can impact survey results as a greater number of units available can result in unit occupancy rates appearing to remain flat, yet the number of guests and weeks sold could have increased.

Full information regarding Self Catering stock from 2011 can be found in the [Self Catering Occupancy Statistics Additional Tables](#).

Occupancy rates and weeks sold

Figure 1: Unit Occupancy and Weeks Sold (Annual and Peak Season) 2011-2016



Self catering unit occupancy rate was estimated to be 36% during 2016. Generally, there has been a steady rise in the self catering unit occupancy rate over recent years. During peak season, April to September, self catering unit occupancy rate was estimated to be 49%. The peak season (April to September) occupancy rate reflects the same steady rise over time as the annual rate (Figure 1).

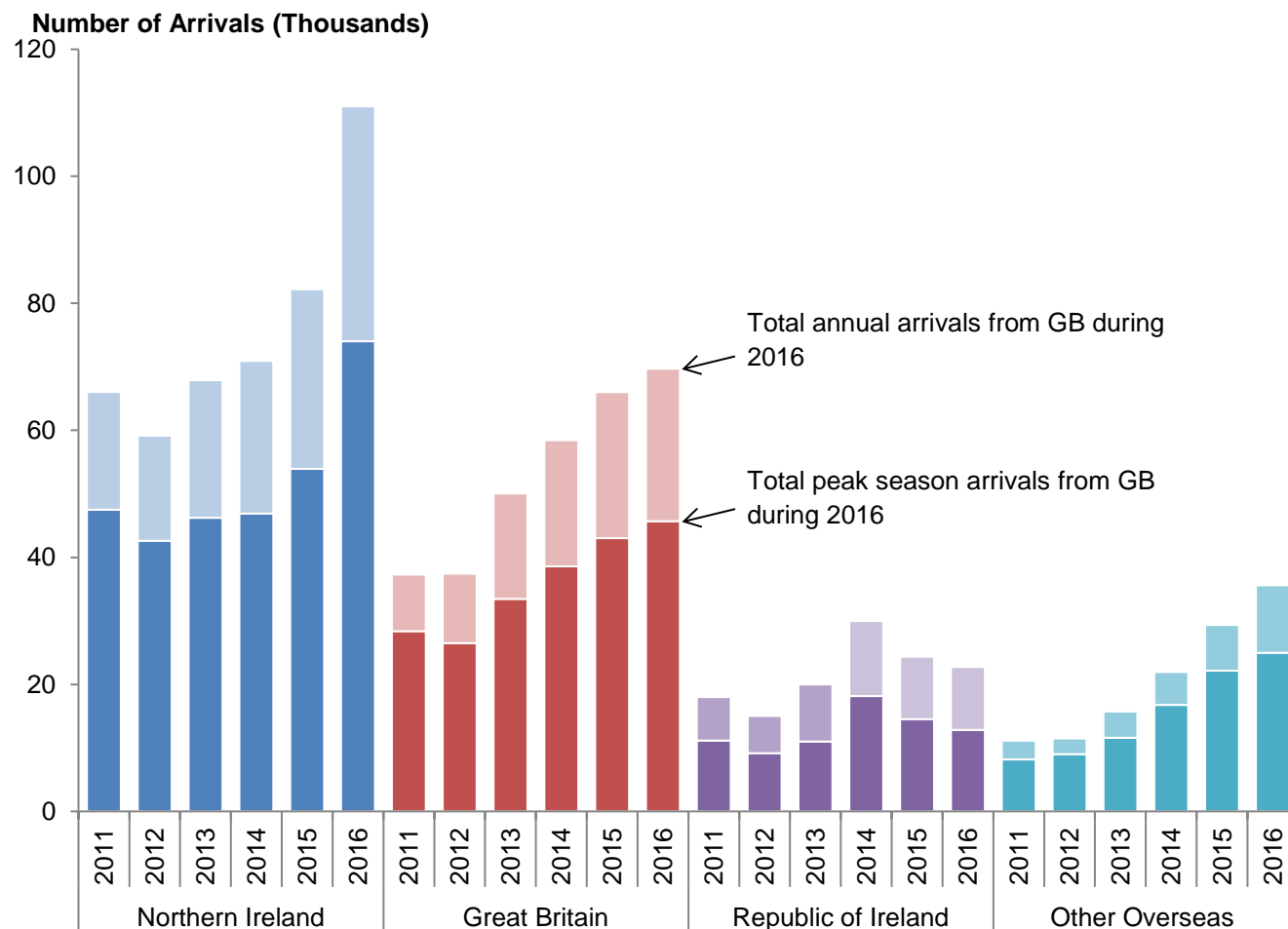
There was an estimated 36,500 weeks sold at self catering establishments during 2016.

During peak season, April to September 2016, an estimated 25,700 weeks were sold. Of the total weeks sold during 2016, 70% were during peak season (Figure 1).

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 one week.

Figure 2: Total arrivals (Annual and Peak Season) by Country of Residence 2011-2016



It is estimated that there were 239,000 arrivals to self catering establishments during 2016. Looking at the estimated arrivals over time (2011 – 2016) the trend suggests that there has been a general upward trend in those from Northern Ireland, Great Britain and Other Overseas.

Approximately 66% of all arrivals came during peak season (April to September); this proportion has remained the same from 2011. Reflecting the trends in annual arrivals; during peak season there were increases in arrivals from Northern Ireland, Great Britain and Other Overseas in 2016.

Guests by Country of Residence

During 2016, an estimated 36,500 weeks were sold in self catering establishments. Reflecting arrivals, when looking at the longer trend over time (from 2011) estimates would suggest that there has been growth in guests from Northern Ireland, Great Britain and Other Overseas, as seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Total weeks sold (Annual and Peak Season) by Country of Residence of guests 2011-2016

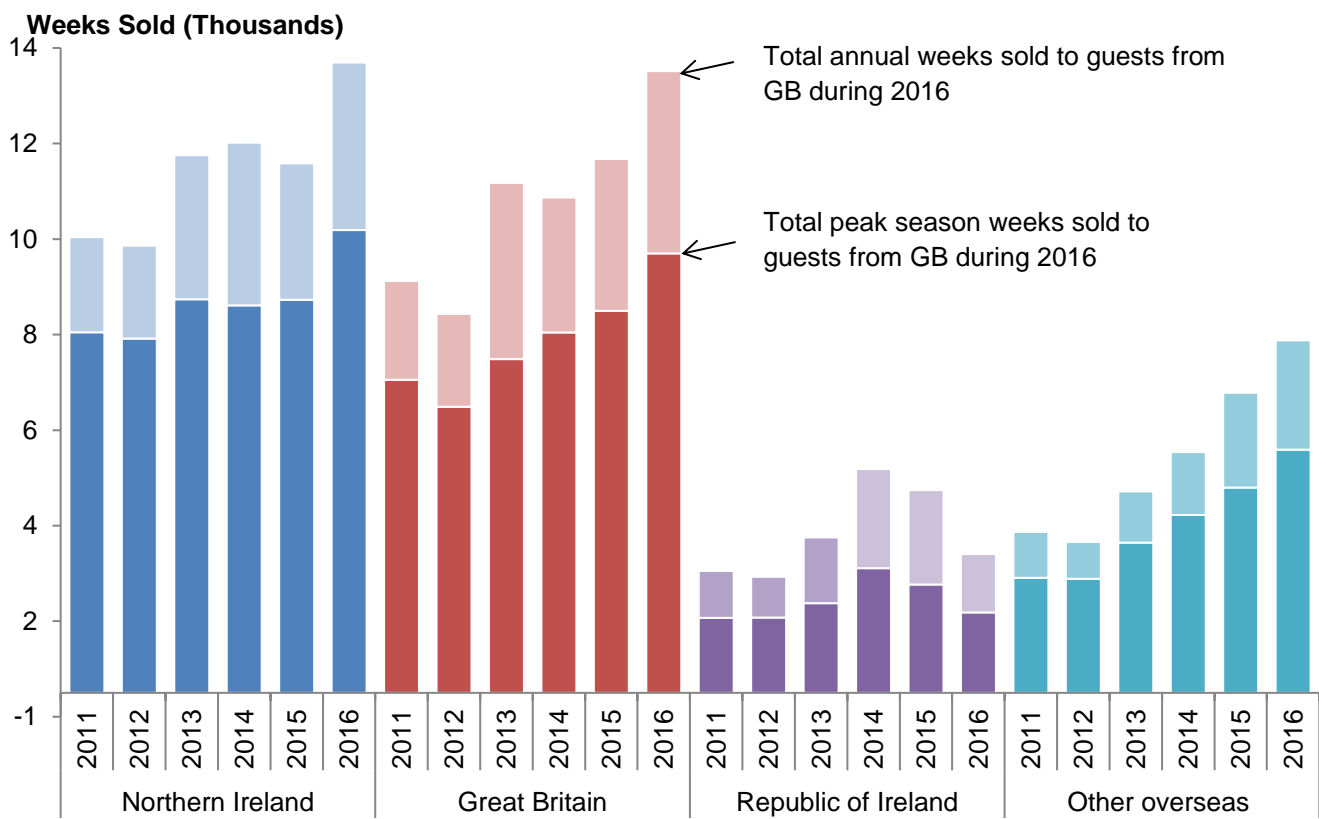
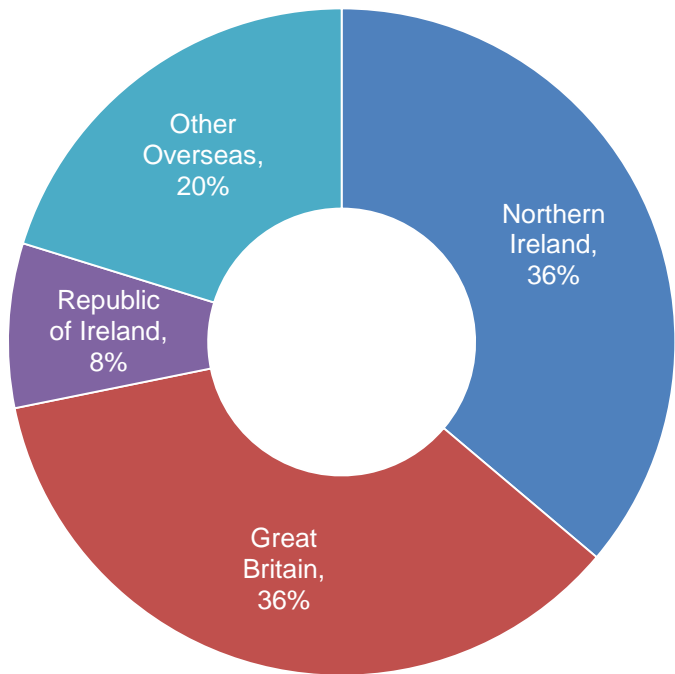


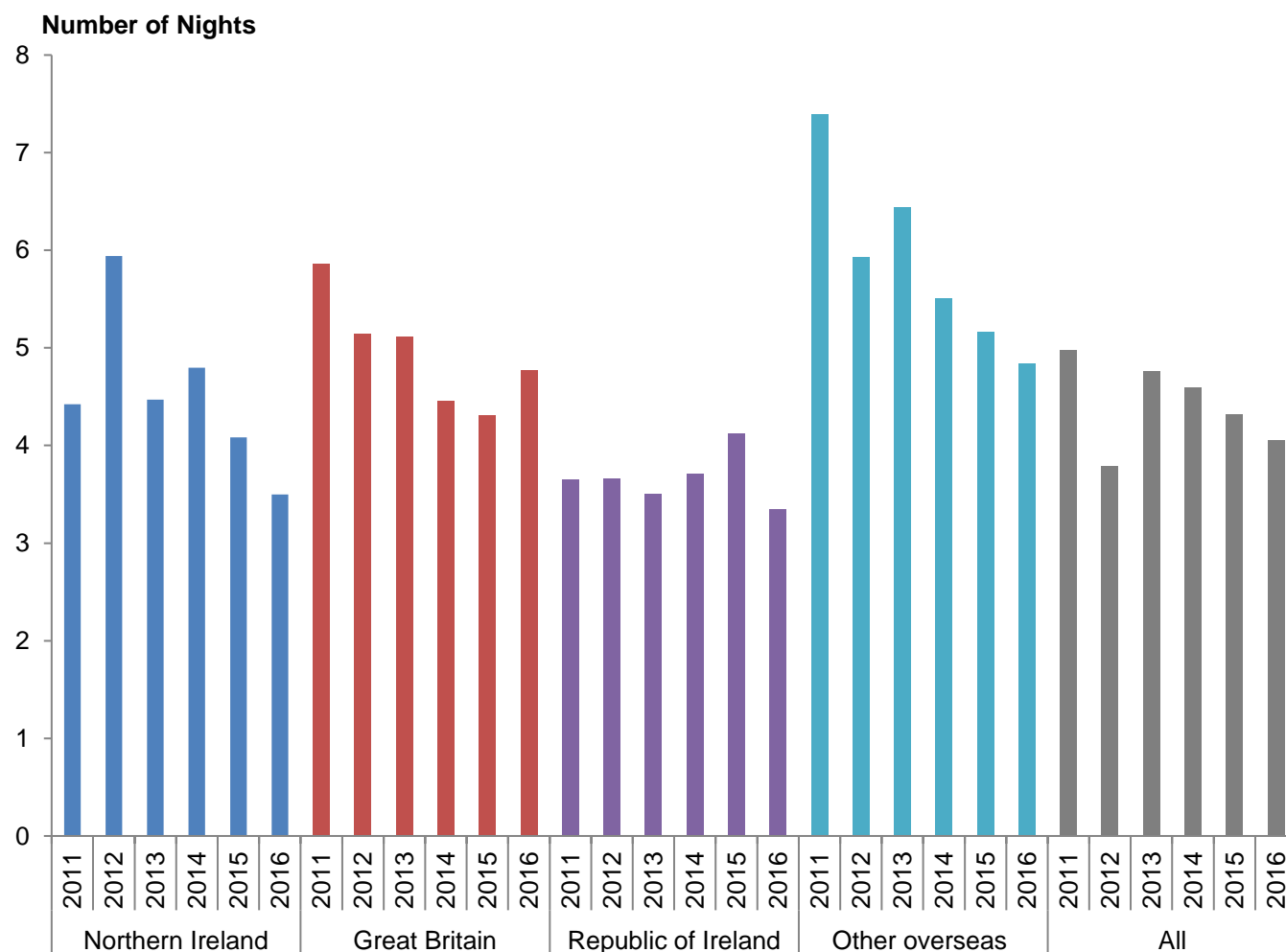
Figure 4: Proportion of total annual weeks sold by Country of Residence of guests 2016



Guests from both Great Britain and Northern Ireland each made up an estimated 36% of all guests at self catering establishments during 2016, with a further 20% of guests were from Other Overseas and 8% from the Republic of Ireland, see Figure 4.

Average Length of Stay

Figure 5: Average Length of Stay by Country of Residence 2011 – 2016



During 2016 the average length of stay in self catering accommodation was 4.1 nights. Looking at the longer trend, estimates would suggest that the average length of stay has slightly fallen.

Figure 5 shows that from 2011 the average number of nights spent in self catering accommodation in Northern Ireland has been declining for those guests from Northern Ireland, Great Britain and Other Overseas. This may be explained by a greater rate of increase in the total number of guests from this market compared to the total number of nights spent in self catering accommodation.

During 2016, the estimated average number of nights spent in self catering accommodation ranged from 3.3 nights for guests from the Republic of Ireland to 4.9 nights for guests from Other Overseas.

Background Notes

Occupancy Survey - Methodology

Sample

To offer tourist accommodation in NI, you must have a certificate from Tourism NI (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'. Table 1 in the report showed the stock when the self catering survey was issued.

The 2016 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; 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 2016, there were a total of 1,643 establishments in the self catering stock (Table 1). Of these, 288 returned completed forms. Additionally, 42 were closed (temporary closure) or shut (cessation of trading) and a further 60 either refused or could not complete the form. The resultant response rate is 23%. Data was analysed by season and visitor's country of origin.

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

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|-------------------------|---|
| “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](#).