



BRIEFING PAPER

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Tourism: statistics and policy

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Summary

This note includes statistics on inbound and outbound visitors to and from the UK, domestic tourism in the UK, the impact of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games on tourism, the contribution of tourism to the UK economy and the Government's tourism policy.

Visitor numbers:

- There were 36.1 million inbound visits to the UK in 2015. London was the most popular destination in the UK, attracting 51% of all visits.
- There were 65.7 million outbound visits from the UK. Spain was the most popular destination for UK tourists, attracting 20% of all visits.

There were 114.2 million domestic overnight trips made in Great Britain in 2014, a fall of 7% on the number of domestic visits made in 2013.

Economic impact:

- The tourism industry contributed £56 billion in economic output in 2013
- Tourism related industries employed 2.8 million people, 9% of all employment

Tourism policy

The UK Government's overall tourism strategy is summarised in its [Five Point Plan for Tourism](#):

- Change the "**tourism landscape**" in England
- Support the development of **skills and businesses** in tourism
- **Reduce regulation** which might hamper the growth of tourism businesses
- Support the growth of **transport networks** and hubs that enable tourism across the UK
- Improve **border services** so that arrivals are better managed, whilst retaining a "robust migration system"

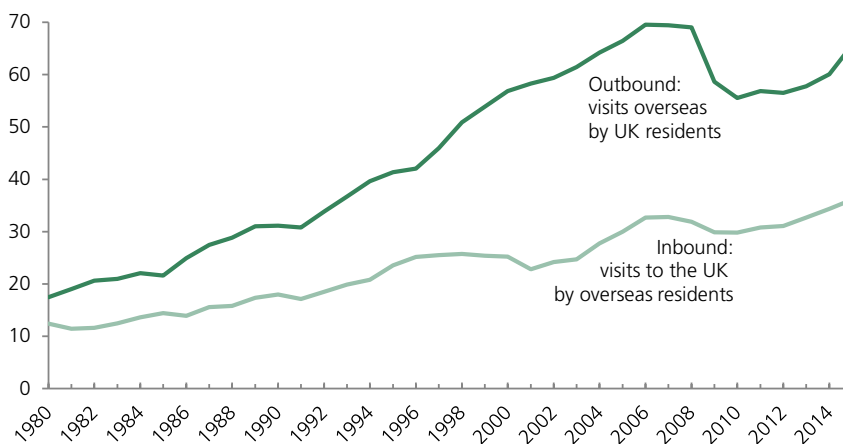
The policies that are being used to implement this in England are discussed, and tourism policy in the devolved nations is also summarised.

Responses from tourism industry bodies to the result of the EU referendum on 23 June 2016 are also summarised.

1. Overseas tourism – inbound and outbound visitors

In 2015, there were 36.1 million visits to the UK by people living abroad, the most since comparable records began. There were 65.7 million visits abroad by UK residents. The chart below shows the trend in inbound and outbound visits to and from the UK since 1980.¹

Visits to and from the UK
Millions, annual data



The 36.1 million inbound visits to the UK in 2015 was an all-time high

Rising prosperity and falling travel costs have led to a boom in overseas tourism since the early 1980s. Between 1980 and 2015, the number of inbound visits to the UK increased by 191%. The number of outbound visits from the UK increased by a greater proportion – 240% over the same period.

The financial crisis of 2008/09 had an impact on both inbound and outbound visitor numbers. The number of outbound visitors from the UK fell particularly steeply – from a peak of 69.5 million in 2006, to 55.6 million in 2010. The number of outbound visitors has yet to breach the 2006 peak.

Inbound visitor numbers were also affected by the financial crisis and its aftermath but to a lesser degree. Inbound visitor numbers fell from 32.8 million in 2007 to 29.8 million in 2010 – a fall of 3.0 million visitors or 9% in three years. The number of inbound visitors has since recovered steadily, and the 2015 figure was an all-time high.

Box 1: International tourism statistics: methodology in brief

Official data on international tourists visiting the UK and UK residents visiting foreign countries comes from the [International Passenger Survey](#) conducted by the Office of National Statistics.

This is a continuously conducted survey which consists of around 300,000 face-to-face interviews a year with people arriving and departing from the major UK airports, sea routes and the Channel Tunnel.

Data from this survey is also used in the provision of migration and population estimates.

International tourism data are published by the ONS annually in [Travel Trends](#) and monthly in [Overseas travel and tourism](#).

¹ ONS, [Travel Trends](#), 2016

2. Inbound visits

2.1 Reasons for visit

The table below shows the total number of visits to the UK by the reasons for the visit.

Of the 36.1 million visits to the UK in 2015 by people from foreign residents. Of these, 38% or 13.9 million were as part of a holiday; 10.5 million or 29% were made to visit friends or relatives resident in the UK; 8.9 million or 25% were for business reasons and a further 2.9 million were made for other reasons.

	Millions	% of total	<i>% change 2014 to 15</i>
Holiday	13.9	38%	2%
Friends/relatives	10.5	29%	7%
Business	8.9	25%	7%
Misc.	2.9	8%	6%
Total	36.1		5%

Source: ONS, International Passenger Survey, via *Travel Trends*, 2016

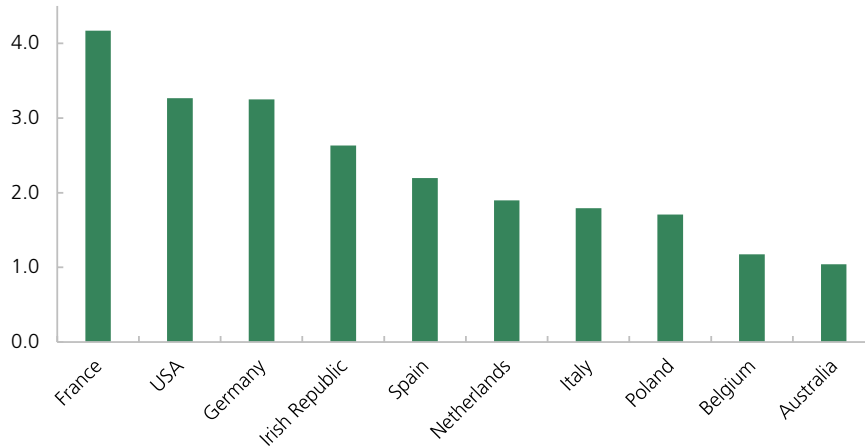
Notes: Based on survey responses so subject to some sampling error

Overall, there were 1.7 million or 5% more visitors in 2015 compared with 2014.

2.2 Inbound visitor origin

The chart below shows visits to the UK by country of residence in 2015.

Visits to the UK by country of origin
2015, millions



Residents of European countries accounted for three quarters of visits to the UK in 2015

Of the visitors to the UK in 2015, 73% were from Europe, 11% were from North America and 16% were from other countries. French visitors made 12%, US visitors made 9% and visitors from Germany also made 9% of visits to the UK.

In total, foreign visitors to the UK in 2014 spent £22.1 billion. Half of this was spent by visitor from the Europe.

Visits to the UK by country of residence
2015

	Visits (millions)		Total spend (£ billions)	Average stay (nights)
	Total	% of total		
Whole world total	36.1	100%	22.1	8
Europe	26.5	73%	11.1	6
North America	4.0	11%	3.5	9
Other Countries	5.7	16%	7.4	14

Top ten countries by total number of visits to the UK in 2015

France	4.2	12%	1.5	5
USA	3.3	9%	3.0	8
Germany	3.2	9%	1.4	6
Irish Republic	2.6	7%	0.9	4
Spain	2.2	6%	1.0	8
Netherlands	1.9	5%	0.7	4
Italy	1.8	5%	0.9	7
Poland	1.7	5%	0.4	8
Belgium	1.2	3%	0.4	3
Australia	1.0	3%	1.1	14

Source: ONS, International Passenger Survey, via *Travel Trends*, 2016

Notes: Based on survey responses so subject to some sampling error

2.3 Destination of inbound visits

The table below shows visits to the UK by destination in 2013.

Destinations of overseas visitors to the UK

2015

	Visits (millions)		Total spend (£ billions)	Average stay (nights)
	Total	% of total		
Total UK	36.1	100%	22.1	8
Total England	31.8	88%	19.4	8
Total Scotland	2.6	7%	1.7	8
Total Wales	1.0	3%	0.4	8
Total Northern Ireland	0.4	1%	0.2	5

Top ten areas of the UK visited by overseas residents in 2015

London	18.6	51%	11.9	6
Lothian (Edinburgh)	1.6	4%	0.7	5
West Midlands	1.4	4%	0.6	7
Greater Manchester	1.4	4%	0.6	8
Kent	1.1	3%	0.3	6
East Sussex	0.8	2%	0.4	8
Hampshire	0.8	2%	0.3	7
Greater Glasgow	0.7	2%	0.3	6
Oxfordshire	0.7	2%	0.4	7
Merseyside	0.7	2%	0.3	6

The majority of inbound visits to the UK were to London in 2015

Source: ONS, International Passenger Survey, via *Travel Trends*, 2016

Notes: Based on survey responses so subject to some sampling error

Includes all visitors to the UK

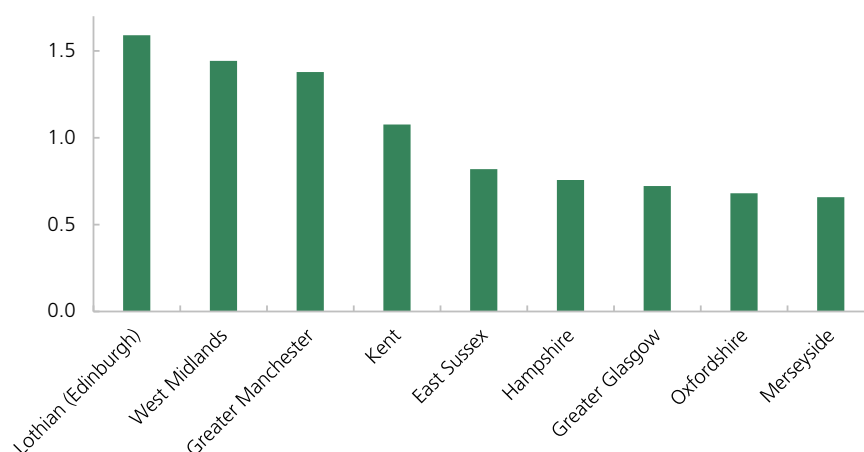
London was the most popular destination for overseas visitors to the UK in 2015. Half of all visits by overseas residents to the UK included London. There were four times as many visits to London than to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland combined.

41% of nights spent in the UK by inbound tourists were spent in London.

However, the average stay of people visiting London was 6 nights, compared to 8 nights for the UK overall.

Visits to the UK by destination (excluding London)

2015, millions, (London had 18.6 million visits in 2015)



3. Outbound tourism

3.1 Reasons for travel

The table below shows the total number of visits from the UK by the reasons for visit.

Outbound visits from the UK by reason for visit

2015

	Millions	%	% change 2014 to 15
Holiday	42.2	64%	9%
Friends/relatives	14.7	22%	11%
Business	7.1	11%	6%
Misc.	1.7	3%	10%
Total	65.7	100%	9%

Source: ONS, International Passenger Survey, via *Travel Trends*, 2016

Notes: Based on survey responses so subject to some sampling error

In total, 65.7 million visits were made from the UK to other destinations in 2015, 9% up on 2014 but still below the pre-recession peak in 2006 of 69.5 million.

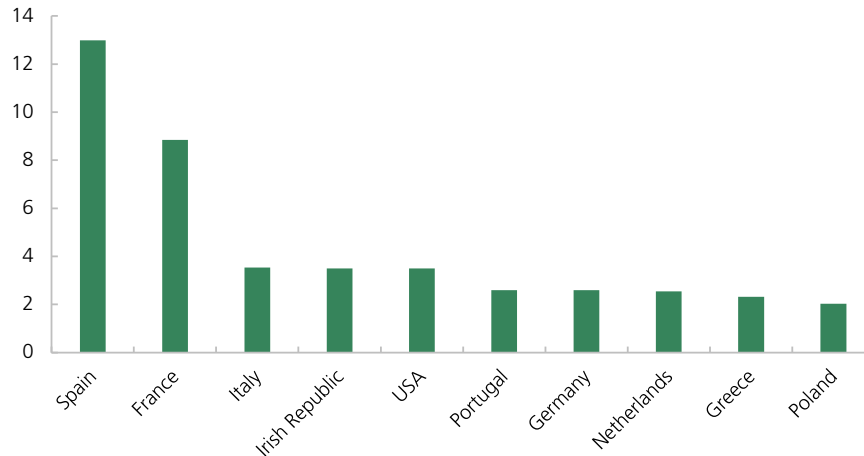
64% of visits abroad in 2015 were holidays. 22% were to visit friends or relatives and 11% were for business reasons.

3.2 Destination of outbound visits

The table below shows outbound visits from the UK by the country of destination.

Visits from the UK by destination

2015, millions



Almost 80% of overseas visits made by UK residents were to European destinations.

A fifth of UK residents' visits abroad were to Spain in 2015. A further 13% were to France.

The USA was the most visited non-European destination, with 5% of visits.

Of the 10 most popular destinations for overseas visits by UK residents, the longest average stay was in the USA (14 nights on average). Visits to Greece and Poland lasted for an average of 10 nights.

Outbound visits from the UK by main destination

2015

	Visits (millions)		Total spend (£ billions)	Average stay (nights)
	Total	% of total		
Whole world total	65.7	100%	39.0	10
Europe	51.7	79%	24.2	8
North America	3.9	6%	4.9	14
Other Countries	10.1	15%	9.9	21

Top ten countries by total number of visits from the UK in 2015

Spain	13.0	20%	6.5	9
France	8.8	13%	3.7	7
Italy	3.5	5%	2.0	8
Irish Republic	3.5	5%	1.0	5
USA	3.5	5%	4.5	14
Portugal	2.6	4%	1.6	9
Germany	2.6	4%	1.1	6
Netherlands	2.5	4%	0.8	4
Greece	2.3	4%	1.4	10
Poland	2.0	3%	0.7	10

Source: ONS, International Passenger Survey, via *Travel Trends*, 2016

Notes: Based on survey responses so subject to some sampling error

4. Domestic tourism

'Domestic tourism' in Great Britain is defined as residents taking trips of one or more nights within Great Britain. Note that one resident taking two trips would count as two trips.

In total, 114.2 million such trips were made in 2014, down 7% on the number made in 2013.²

Unlike the number of outbound visits by domestic residents and the inbound visits by foreign residents, which have both risen in recent years, the number of domestic trips in Great Britain has remained flat or has fallen since 2011.

However, there were almost twice the number of domestic trips compared with the number foreign trips taken by UK residents in 2014.

In 2014:

114 million domestic trips.

60 million foreign trips by UK residents.

4.1 Reasons for domestic trip

The table below shows overnight domestic tourism in Great Britain, broken down by reason for trip.

Domestic overnight tourism in GB by reason for trip
2014

	Millions	%
Holiday	52.9	46%
Friends/relatives	42.5	37%
Business	15.9	14%
Misc.	2.9	3%
Total	114.2	-

Notes: Based on survey responses so subject to some sampling error
Includes all trips by GB residents within the UK of one night or more

46% of all domestic tourism trips were made as part of a holiday in 2014. 37% of trips were to visit friends of relatives and 14% of trips were made for business-related reasons.

² Source: Visit England, [The GB Tourist](#), 2014

4.2 Destination of domestic tourists

The table below shows the destination of domestic tourist trips in 2014.

Destination of GB overnight domestic tourism

2014

	Trips		Spend	
	Millions	%	£ billions	%
England	92.6	81%	18.7	80%
Scotland	12.5	11%	2.9	12%
Wales	10.0	9%	1.7	7%
Great Britain	114.2	-	23.3	-

Source: Visit England, *The GB Tourist*, 2014, p10

Notes: Based on survey responses so subject to some sampling error

Includes all trips by GB residents within the UK of one night or more

Domestic tourists may be residents of the country they visit

England accounted for 81% of overnight domestic visits in Great Britain in 2014, compared with 11% in Scotland and 9% in Wales.

Expenditure by domestic overnight tourists in Great Britain totalled £23.3 billion in 2014, down 3% on 2013. 80% of all domestic tourism expenditure occurs in England.

Domestic tourists in Great Britain outnumbered foreign visitors by two to one in 2014, but spent similar amounts: £22.1 billion by foreign visitors compared with £23.3 billion by domestic tourists.

In 2014:

Domestic tourists
spent £23.1 billion

Foreign tourists
spent £22.1 billion

5. Tourism and the UK economy

Box 2: Calculating the economic impact of the tourism industry

The contribution of tourism to the economy is not straightforward to calculate. Several industries provide services to tourists. However, these industries might provide services to local people as well as tourists – for example, a country pub or a museum may serve local people as well as tourists. In addition, some non-tourist related industries provide services to tourists, such as parts of the retail industry.

These issues are addressed by the ONS Tourism Intelligence Unit which disentangles the *total* contribution of tourism related industries from the *direct* contribution made by tourism. The annual [Tourism Satellite Account](#) (TSA) publishes estimates of economic output related to tourism on this basis.

5.1 Economic output

In 2013, the economic output of the tourism industry in the UK was £56 billion.³

Over the past five years, output from the tourism industry has grown considerably in the UK, from £49 billion in 2008 to the current level, a 14% increase.

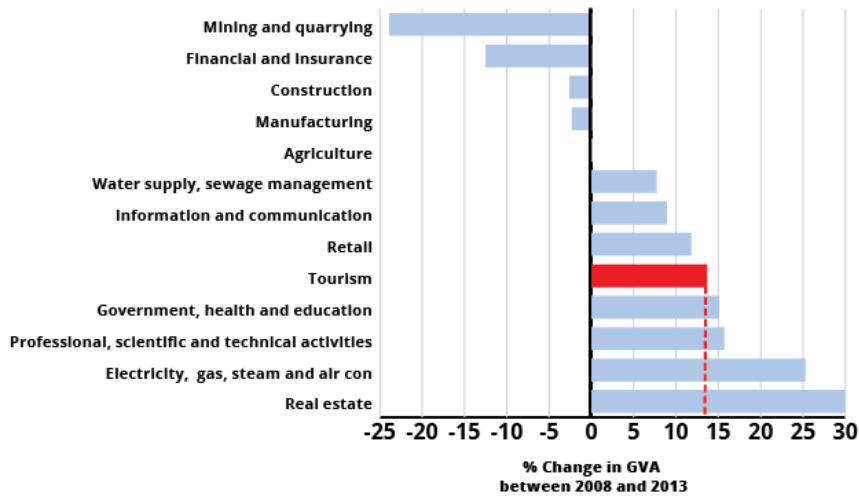
This growth mainly occurred in 2011 (9% growth compared to 2010) and 2012 (5% growth compared to 2011). This suggests a possible ‘Olympic effect’. The tourism industry barely grew at all in 2013 compared to 2012.

The parts of the tourism industry that have seen the biggest growth have been the food and drink serving industry, which contributed 1.3% growth out of a total of 4.9% growth in 2012 compared with 2011. Other sub-sectors which saw strong growth were the accommodation industry and the sports and recreational activities sector.

Tourism has grown more quickly than other industries since 2008. The following chart shows the change in the economic output of various industries, with tourism highlighted.

³ ONS, [Estimates of the economic importance of tourism 2008-2013](#), December 2014. This publication uses Gross Value Added (GVA) to estimate economic output. GVA is the value of goods and services produced by part of the economy such as an industry or region, minus any costs incurred in production.

% growth in economic output, 2008-2013, selected industries⁴



Over this period, economic output from tourism grew by 14%, more than retail (12%) but significantly less than the real estate industry which grew by 30%.

5.2 Employment

Data on employment in tourist industries is collected each year by the UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO).⁵

In 2014, there were 2.9 million employees in tourism industries in the UK. This was 9% of UK employees.

Employees in tourism related industries

UK, 2014

	<i>000s</i>
Food and beverage serving	1,604
Other tourism related	548
Accommodation for visitors	431
Travel agencies and transportation	319
<i>Tourism related total</i>	<i>2,902</i>
<i>% of all employees</i>	<i>9%</i>

Source: UNWTO, *Compendium of tourism statistics, data 2010 to 2014*, 2016, p417

Employees data ONS, Labour Force Survey four quarter average

The UK tourism industry employed 9% of employees in 2014

The biggest tourism related industry is the food and beverage serving sector, employing 1.6 million people in 2013, 55% of tourism related jobs.

The regional impact of tourism is examined in depth in the ONS article, [The regional value of tourism in the UK: 2013](#), published in May 2016.

⁴ ONS, [Tourism grows at a faster rate than other industries Estimates of the economic importance of tourism 2008-2013](#)

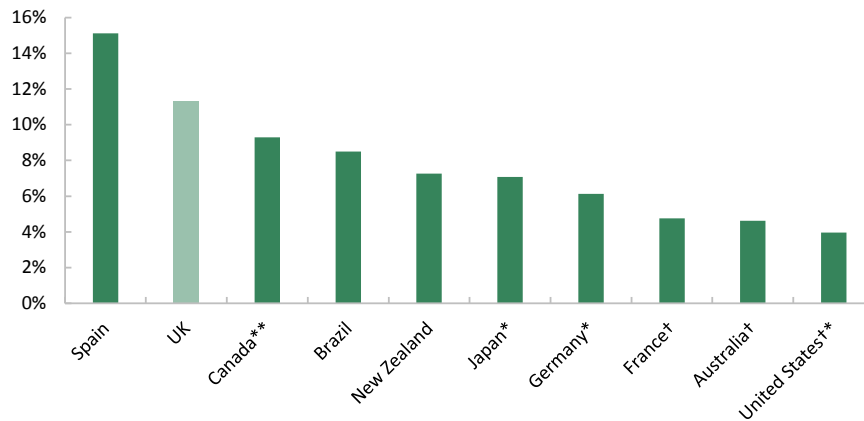
⁵ UNWTO, *Compendium of tourism statistics, data 2010 to 2014*, 2016, p417

International comparisons of tourism employment

The UNWTO data used above can also be used to compare tourism employment in different countries. Note that the data here is tourism *employment* not *employees*. This means that it includes self-employed people such as some B&B owners.

% of employment in tourism in selected countries

2014



*2013 data; **2012 data; †Employees

Compared to many major economies, the UK has a higher proportion of employment in tourism. Around 11% of employment is in tourism in the UK, compared to 14% in Spain and only 4% of employees in the US.

6. Tourism policy

6.1 Overall direction

The Government seeks to encourage tourism in a sustainable way to enhance the UK's reputation around the world and because of the economic benefits it brings to the country

Tourism is a **devolved policy area**, so Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have differing tourism policies. This note mainly focuses on the situation in England, but also includes summaries of tourism policy in each of the devolved nations.

After the 2015 General Election, and largely following recommendations from the Culture Media and Sport Select Committee⁶, the Government published its tourism strategy for the UK: [*Backing the tourism sector: a five point plan*](#).⁷

The strategy has five overall aims:

- Change the “**tourism landscape**” in England
- Support the development of **skills and businesses** in tourism
- **Reduce regulation** which might hamper the growth of tourism businesses
- Support the growth of **transport networks** and hubs that enable tourism across the UK
- Improve **border services** so that arrivals are better managed, whilst retailing a “robust migration system”

The last four of these aims are ongoing Government priorities that are not covered in any detail in this note. Their impact will be felt on many sectors as well as the tourism sector.

The remainder of this section focuses on the bodies and initiatives intended to encourage the growth of tourism in the UK, known as the ‘tourism landscape’.

6.2 The tourism landscape in England

The new tourism landscape in the UK is discussed in detail in the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) paper, [*The tourism landscape*](#).⁸

The central measures which the Government has taken to “strengthen coordination and collaboration across the tourism landscape” are:

- Change the arrangements governing **VisitBritain and VisitEngland**
- Establish an **Inter-Ministerial Group on Tourism** to hold meetings with between Ministers involved with tourism policy.
- Re-vamp the **Tourism Industry Council** to bring together Government and industry leaders.

The “tourism landscape” is composed of the bodies that market and seek to encourage growth in the value of tourism in the UK

⁶ Culture, Media and Sport Committee, [*Tourism*](#), 26 March 2015, HC 614 2014/15

⁷ DCMS, [*Backing the tourism sector: a five point plan*](#), July 2015

⁸ DCMS, [*The tourism landscape*](#), May 2016

- Establish an **Events Industry Board** to enhance UK major events planning and delivery.
- Create a **Discover England fund** to encourage collaboration between 'destination organisations' in England

VisitEngland and VisitBritain

VisitEngland and VisitBritain are both parts of the British Tourist Authority, which was established by the [Development of Tourism Act 1969](#).

Following the 2015 Spending Review, the Government clarified the distinction between VisitEngland and VisitBritain and established separate ring-fenced budgets for each organisation.⁹

- **VisitBritain** is responsible for the promotion of Britain as a tourism market (including England, Scotland and Wales) to overseas markets. In 2016/17, its total budget is £51 million.¹⁰
- **VisitEngland** is responsible for developing tourism in England, including through closer working between local destination organisations. VisitEngland budget in 2015/16 is £17 million.¹¹

VisitBritain's budget is £51 million

VisitEngland's budget is £17 million

Box 3: GREAT Britain campaign

The GREAT campaign is a marketing campaign to encourage foreign visitors to Great Britain. A number of government agencies are involved in this campaign, including VisitBritain, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, UK Trade and Investment, UK Visas and Immigration and the British Council. The GREAT campaign budget allocated to VisitBritain from DCMS is £20 million in 2016/17, 39% of VisitBritain's total income.¹²

Inter-ministerial group on tourism

DCMS is the department with principle responsibility for tourism policy and a tourism minister (currently Tracey Crouch MP).

However, tourism cuts across a wide range of policy areas, and so the Government have created the Inter-Ministerial Group on Tourism to facilitate discussions between relevant Ministers from BIS, Home Office, DCLG, DfT, HMT and DEFRA. The group meets quarterly and ministers from the devolved administrations are also invited when relevant matters are discussed.

Tourism Industry Council

In common with other economically significant industries (such as the [automotive industry](#) and the [construction industry](#)) the tourism industry has a high level council which facilitates discussions between Government and industry leaders.

⁹ VisitBritain, [Minutes of Board meeting](#), held on 8 December 2015

¹⁰ VisitBritain and VisitEngland, [2016/17 Business Plan](#), p8

¹¹ *Ibid*

¹² VisitBritain and VisitEngland, [2016/17 Business Plan](#), p8

The [Tourism Industry Council](#) seeks ways of implementing the Five Point Plan, and enables industry leaders to raise concerns and issues directly with Ministers.

Events Industry Board

The Events Industry Board was set up to implement the [Business visits and events](#) strategy published in March 2015.

The [Events Industry Board](#) is tasked with promoting the UK as a destination for major events such as sporting events, major business conferences and international meetings.

Discover England Fund

Tourism in England is promoted by VisitEngland and also a substantial network of Destination Management Organisations (DMOs), such as the [Cumbria Tourism](#) or [Visit Kent](#). The Culture Media and Sport Select Committee stated that there are “200+” such organisations in England and they come in a “variety of shapes and sizes.”¹³

DMOs rarely have a significant role in the management of their destination, but rather provide information to potential visitors and market the destination.

The new [Discover England Fund](#) is designed to encourage closer cooperation between these organisations. The Fund will be used to develop projects that encourage tourists to visit England, including digital projects that are well integrated with other such projects, widening the choice of destinations presented to tourists.

The Discover England Fund will operate over three years from 2016 to 2019. Funding will be phased over these three years, with £6.5 million awarded in 2016/17, followed by £11.76 million in 2017/18 and £22 million in 2018/19.¹⁴

¹³ Culture, Media and Sport Committee, [Tourism](#), 26 March 2015, HC 614 2014/15 p11

¹⁴ VisitBritain and VisitEngland, [2016/17 Business Plan](#), p7

7. Tourism policy in the devolved nations

This section briefly summarises tourism policy in the devolved nations.

Scotland

The Scottish Government views tourism as “of vital importance to the Scottish economy.”¹⁵

[VisitScotland](#) is the national tourism agency for Scotland, charged with marketing Scotland as destination for domestic and international visitors.

The [Scottish Tourism Alliance](#) is an independent trade body representing the Scottish tourism industry. This body is charged with facilitating the strategic growth of tourism in Scotland, including the development of the Scottish tourism strategy, [Tourism 2020](#).

The strategy aims to grow visitor spending by £1 billion by 2020, compared to the 2012 level. 2015 figures show that visitor spending in Scotland had risen by £500 million since 2012.

The strategy involves the following key policies to achieve this overall aim:¹⁶

- Strengthen Digital Capabilities
- Strengthen Industry Leadership
- Enhance the Quality of the Visitor Experience
- Influence Investment (specifically flight access & transport connectivity, built infrastructure, digital connectivity and business growth finance)

Data and analysis of tourism in the Scottish regions can be found in the VisitScotland publication [Tourism in Scotland's regions](#).

Wales

[VisitWales](#) is the Welsh Government's tourism body. It is a body of the Department for Economy, Science and Technology.¹⁷

The central aim of VisitWales is to increase spending by tourists in Wales by 10% compared with the 2013 level.¹⁸

VisitWales hopes to achieve this aim by prioritising the following policies:¹⁹

- Develop tourism activity and specialist markets and secure maximum benefit from major events in our high profile venues.
- Promote Wales as a destination by making a high quality tourism offer.

¹⁵ Scottish Government, [Tourism is everyone's business](#), 2016

¹⁶ Scottish Tourism Alliance, [Mid-term review 2016](#), May 2016

¹⁷ Welsh Government, [Tourism strategy: partnership for growth 2013-2020](#), 2013, p5

¹⁸ Welsh Government, [Tourism policy webpage](#), 2016

¹⁹ Welsh Government, [Tourism strategy: partnership for growth 2013-2020](#), 2013, p5

- Work to extend the tourism season and associated benefits.
- Identify funding opportunities to improve the visitor infrastructure and product in Wales.
- Support investment in staff training and management to support a high quality tourism industry.

Northern Ireland

Within the Northern Ireland Executive, tourism policy is the responsibility of by [the Department for the Economy](#).

The national tourist board in Northern Ireland is [Discover Northern Ireland](#).

The Hunter Review (published in 2013) sought to review and refresh tourism structures in Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Executive accepted all of these recommendations (with some minor amendments). As of May 2016, 22 of the 33 recommendations had been implemented, with action on the remainder “ongoing”.²⁰

A useful summary of tourism policy in Northern Ireland has been produced by the Research and Information Service of the Northern Ireland Assembly: [Northern Ireland tourism: structures](#)

²⁰ Northern Ireland Executive, Department for the Economy, [Developing tourism strategy and policy in Northern Ireland](#), 2016

8. Industry response to the EU referendum result

The Tourism Alliance (the trade association for tourism related businesses), has collected together [a range of industry responses](#) to the result of the EU referendum on 23 June 2016.²¹ A summary of these responses is presented below.

InboundUK, the inbound tourism industry's trade association, said that the decision was "disappointing" and that it would "inevitably have far reaching consequences" for the industry.

KPMG, a consultancy, stated that the decision would impact the hospitality industry, a key part of the tourism industry:

Not only are there vast numbers of EU nationals working in the hospitality sector, but EU supplier and commercial contracts will need to be reviewed, and there will also be concerns over foreign visitor numbers within the industry

The attractions management firm, Continuum, argued that although it disagreed with the decision, it believed the UK was "resilient enough to survive and thrive due to the strength of UK plc and its blue chip brand which has robust value across all sectors."

The British Hospitality Association convened its members on the 27th July to discuss the decision. The Association stated that they would be "framing a plan to ensure that we have a seat at the table on all negotiations including taxation, immigration and regulation..."

The Tourism Alliance itself stated that although the decision may depress outbound visitor numbers from the UK, it might encourage "staycation 2", a repeat of the situation following the financial crisis of 2008 when many UK holiday makers decided to take their holiday in the UK rather than go abroad.

The Tourism Alliance also commented that the weak pound could attract more foreign visitors (a point echoed by Merlin Entertainment), and that the increased international media coverage of the UK could also help to attract foreign holiday makers.

²¹ Tourism Alliance, [Leisure industry reacts after UK votes to leave EU](#), 24 June 2016

9. Annex: Impact of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games on tourism

In July to September 2012, London hosted the Olympic and Paralympic Games. The ONS published an [analysis of the impact of this event on tourism to the UK](#).²²

Overall, 471,000 people visited the UK in 2012 for an Olympic or Paralympic related reason. Roughly two thirds of these visits took place in August. The table below shows the total spend, length of average stay and top ten origin countries of visits to the UK for Olympic and Paralympic reasons.

Olympics/Paralympics as main reason for visits - overseas visitors to the UK 2012

	Visits (millions)		Total spend (£ billions)	Average stay (nights)
	Total	% of total		
Whole world total	471	100%	731	8
Europe	301	64%	301	5
North America	83	18%	168	11
Other Countries	86	18%	262	16

Top ten countries by total number of visits to UK for Olympics/Paralympics

USA	66	14%	135	11
France	54	12%	99	2
Germany	46	10%	31	4
Netherlands	46	10%	34	4
Belgium	19	4%	9	3
Italy	19	4%	16	7
Canada	17	4%	34	11
Australia	15	3%	38	19
Irish Republic	14	3%	10	4
Switzerland	14	3%	15	6

Source: ONS, International Passenger Survey, via *Travel Trends*, 2012

Notes: Based on survey responses so subject to some sampling error

Visitors from Europe accounted for 64% of all Olympic or Paralympic related visits. The USA accounted for 14% of visits. People visiting for Olympic or Paralympic related reasons spent £731 million and stayed for 8 nights on average (longer than the average stay in the UK – 7 nights in 2012).

As well as people who visited for Olympic or Paralympic related reasons, the Olympics may also explain the increase in the proportion of overnight stays in London in 2012 compared with 2011. In 2011, 39% of all nights spent in the UK by overseas visitors were in London compared with 41% in 2012. There was also a fall of 300,000 in the number of UK residents making visits abroad in 2012 compared to 2011 which may be partly explained by an increased interest in staying in the UK due to the Olympics or Paralympics.

Visitors from the USA to see Olympic/Paralympic events were the most numerous of any individual country

²² ONS, [Visits to the UK for the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympics](#), 2013

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