

United Kingdom Occupancy Survey

Serviced Accommodation Summary Report

March 2020

On behalf of VisitEngland, VisitScotland, Visit Wales and NISRA (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency)

UK Occupancy Survey

This study has been commissioned by the National Boards of England, Northern Ireland and Scotland and by Visit Wales (part of the Welsh Government) and supported by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

The results have been compiled by The Research Solution.

UK % Bedspace Occupancy*

2016 - 2020

Table 1: UK Bedspace Occupancy

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2016	37	45	46	50	53	56	61	62	59	53	48	46
2017	39	44	46	53	54	57	61	61	58	55	51	50
2018	44	50	52	54	57	58	60	63	58	57	53	50
2019	43	50	51	55	57	58	60	63	57	57	53	50
2020	45	52	25									

Percentage of available bedspaces which were occupied across the UK

* See methodological note on slide 8

UK % Bedroom Occupancy*

2016 - 2020

Table 2: UK Bedroom Occupancy

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2016	54	63	64	69	71	77	81	79	80	74	68	61
2017	54	61	64	69	73	80	83	81	83	78	75	68
2018	63	71	73	75	78	82	85	83	83	81	76	69
2019	63	70	73	75	78	80	84	82	82	80	76	68
2020	63	70	37									

Percentage of available bedrooms which were occupied across the UK

* See methodological note on slide 8

UK OCCUPANCY OVERVIEW

3,744 hotels, guesthouses and bed and breakfast establishments throughout the UK supplied data upon which the figures in this summary of results are based (see notes 2 and 3, on Slide 8 – sample sizes and calculation of rates).

Bedspace occupancy in the UK decreased dramatically during March 2020 with the closure of all accommodation businesses across the UK due to the COVID-19 Pandemic (excluding those providing accommodation to key workers). Bedspace occupancy fell from 51% in 2019 to 25% in March this year. Room occupancy followed the same pattern, falling 37 percentage points, from 73% in March 2019 to 37% in 2020.

N.B. Due to the Covid-19 outbreak in the UK, the serviced accommodation industry saw an unprecedented number of establishments temporarily close their doors from late March 2020. On a sector-wise level these proportions will be an inflation of the occupancy levels in relation to previous years as many more serviced accommodation providers will have been closed owing to the extraordinary circumstances.

Summary of Findings

Room occupancy in the UK fell dramatically by 37 percentage points during March due to the temporary closure of many businesses affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Bed occupancy was at 25%, a decrease of 26 percentage points when compared to the same month in 2019.

During March, room occupancy in **England** mirrored that of the UK with occupancy levels falling by 38 percentage points compared with the same period in 2019. Bed occupancy dropped by 27 percentage points from 52% in 2019 to 25% in March 2020.

Room occupancy in **Wales*** during March was slightly above that of the UK as a whole, with room occupancy at 40% and bedspace occupancy 26%.

Room occupancy levels in **Scotland** during March 2020 witnessed a downturn of 32 percentage points with bedspace occupancy falling by 18 percentage points.

Across the UK as a whole, bedspace occupancy by non-UK residents decreased by two percentage points to 5% when compared against the same period the previous year. Wales was at 1%. (Comparable figures for England and Scotland are no longer collected) – see notes 5b changes in data collected and 7 (methodological changes) Slide 8.

Please note, the closure of accommodation establishments in Northern Ireland has led to fewer recorded e-mail and postal returns resulting in lower than normal response rates since February and therefore individual results for Northern Ireland are not shown but are included in the UK figure.

**Due to a change in methodology during 2020, the Wales data shown within this report cannot be compared with previous years*

% Occupancy Levels: March 2018 – 2020*

Table3: Bedspace Occupancy

	2018	2019	2020
England*	53	52	25
N. Ireland**	42	36	**
Scotland	49	47	29
Wales***	40	38	26
UK	52	51	25

Table 4: Bedroom Occupancy

	2018	2019	2020
England*	75	75	37
N. Ireland**	58	52	**
Scotland	62	64	32
Wales***	53	50	40
UK	73	73	37

Table 5: Sample Size*

	2018	2019	2020
England*	3085	3183	3432
N. Ireland	197	244	**
Scotland	131	128	107
Wales	192	175	168
UK	3605	3730	3744

*See methodological note on slide 8

** Please note, the closure of accommodation establishments in Northern Ireland has led to fewer recorded e-mail and postal returns resulting in lower than normal response rates since February and therefore individual results for Northern Ireland are not shown but are included in the UK figure.

***Due to a change in methodology during 2020, the Wales data shown within this report cannot be compared with previous years

Methodology

1. The figures in this summary are based on data available within eight weeks of the end of the month. In some cases the boards will re-run the monthly analysis later in the year to include data which was received too late for inclusion in this summary. These later figures will be used in the 2020 Annual Summary.
2. The minimum target sample size for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales is 200 open establishments per month while in England the target minimum sample size is 750. Larger sample sizes may be used in some areas in order to enable Boards to undertake further analysis based on geographical sub-divisions of the data.
3. In the calculation of occupancy rates for the UK, occupancy rates from each country have been weighted using the number of bedspaces known to be available in the area.
4. *Occupancy rates:*

Bedspace occupancy:	Percentage of available bedspaces which were occupied
Room occupancy:	Percentage of available rooms which were occupied
Non-UK bedspace occupancy:	Percentage of available bedspaces which were occupied by non-UK guests
Percentage of non-UK guests:	Percentage of arrivals which were non-UK guests
Percentage of non-UK bednights:	Percentage of occupied bedspaces which were occupied by non-UK guests
5. It should be noted that:
 - a) because of changes in the data collected, it is no longer possible to provide UK/non UK figures for Scotland and England or figures relating to arrivals for Wales.
 - (b) from June 2010, English occupancy data includes additional occupancy information for the 100+ room hotel sector supplied by STR Global. Given the change in the structure of the sample, care should be taken in the interpretation of year-on-year changes.

6. Accuracy of the results: The statistical accuracy of the results depends upon the size of the sample, the variation in occupancy rates between establishments and (to a smaller extent) the size of the survey population. As the sample is self-selecting, it is not possible to calculate true statistical margins of error. However, it is likely that the results are accurate to between $\pm 5.9\%$ (sample of 50) to $\pm 1.6\%$ (sample of 650). As there continues to be a substantial core of survey participants providing data every month, the trends which are identified by the survey are believed to reflect accurately overall trends in the use of serviced accommodation.
7. * **Methodological note:** From June 2017, the England Occupancy estimates are collected using a different methodology. Using this data makes the survey more robust but has caused a break in trends for England and the UK. From June 2017, the new methodology is based on the STR occupancy estimates which are continuously collected whereas prior to June 2017 the England Occupancy estimates were collected through a bespoke panel. This methodological change has affected trends. Meaningful comparison between estimates collected from June 2017 onwards and estimates collected prior to June 2017 cannot be conducted for England and the UK. Data for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland remains unaffected by the change.

Background

As part of the EU Directive on Tourism Statistics adopted in January 1995, the UK is required to submit monthly occupancy rates for hotels and similar establishments (i.e. serviced accommodation) to Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Community. The responsibility for providing this data lies with the National Tourist Boards for England, Scotland and Northern Ireland and with Visit Wales (part of the Welsh Assembly Government), each of whom is responsible for the implementation of an occupancy survey in their area, carried out according to a common specification and standard, thus ensuring the production of comparable occupancy data for the whole of the UK.

The types of accommodation included in the survey are defined as *tourist accommodation which is arranged in rooms and where bed-making and cleaning services are provided*. This includes:

Hotels, motels, inns, guest houses, farm guest houses, bed and breakfast establishments

The types specifically excluded are:

Youth hostels and University accommodation

This summary has been compiled by The Research Solution (UK Survey Co-ordinator for 2019) from figures supplied by (or on behalf of) the National Tourist Boards of England, Northern Ireland (working with NISRA (the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency), Scotland and Visit Wales (part of the Welsh Government).

Further information about the surveys in individual areas may be obtained from the relevant organisations:

VisitEngland (020 7578 1400)

Northern Ireland Tourist Board (02890 231 221)

VisitScotland (0131-472-2222)

Visit Wales (029 2047 9909)