



United Kingdom Tourism Survey 2004

Following an extensive review of tourism data, UKTS moved to a new methodology for measuring the volume and value of domestic overnight trips: face-to-face interviews. This required an increased investment in domestic data that VisitBritain, VisitScotland, Wales Tourist Board and Northern Ireland Tourist Board committed to making from May 2005.

The methodology used in 2004 (and since 2000) was telephone interviewing. Over 50,000 people were interviewed a year in order to get a suitable level of reliability in the data at regional level. However, in 2004 there appeared to be a growing problem with a changing demographic profile of the sample interviewed. Changes in the relationship between the public and the telephone survey industry appears to have skewed the sample so that each month there was a greater proportion of DE and low income respondents to the survey, and AB's and higher income earners appeared to be more likely to screen calls or refuse outright to take part in the interview.

Owing to the concerns about the telephone methodology not delivering a truly representative sample of the UK population in 2004, we advise caution in using and interpreting the 2004 data.

The New Methodology

TNS was appointed to run the survey for 2006 - 2010. The Boards concluded the approach proposed by TNS would yield a more representative sample of the UK population by using a proven face-to-face interview approach instead of the previous random digit dialing telephone approach.

There is now:

- 103,000 face-to-face interviews per annum, more than twice the number of the previous survey methodology;
- a weekly sample size of around 2,000 adults aged 16 or over - representative of the UK population in relation to various demographic characteristics including gender, age group, social class, and geographical location.

The questions were added to TNS's RSGB Omnibus on 4th May 2005 and the survey provided data from April 2005 for total number of trips, nights spent on each trip by destination by purpose, and for the most recent trip: breakdown of expenditure, accommodation used and party composition.

If you require further information on the usage of the 2004 data or the new methodology please contact England Research at VisitBritain on 020 8563 3317 or 020 8563 3320.