



GBDVS Methodology and quality information

This document has been designed to accompany the April-December 2021 release of the Great Britain Day Visits Survey (GBTS) by VisitEngland (and the project partners VisitScotland and Visit Wales) on 22 December 2022, though some of this information will be relevant to future survey outputs.

The GBDVS survey is the main estimate for the volume and value of domestic day trips taken by British residents in Great Britain. From 2021 the statistics are based on an online survey that replaces the previous Great Britain Day Visits Survey, which ran until the end of 2019. Further information regarding the GBDVS prior to 2021 is available on our website.

Further information on the background of this project and methodology changes from 2021 are available in the following documents on our website:

- Background Quality Report (GBDVS 2021)

Please note as part of the redesign of the GBDVS survey and a move to an online methodology the survey was combined with the Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS). Results for the GBTS were released on 15 October 2022 with more information available on our website.

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Methodology

In 2019, the producers of the official domestic tourist statistics, VisitEngland, VisitScotland and Visit Wales, undertook a review of the requirements for producing the statistics to help future-proof the data collection methods, whilst maintaining the reliability and robustness of the information reported.

Substantial changes were introduced as part of a new combined online survey method collecting data on both domestic overnight trips (GBTS) and domestic day trips (GBDVS). This represents a fundamental change in the way data is collected for overnight trips moving from the previous in-home face to face survey methodology to an online survey methodology.

The sample for the combined online survey is a non-probability based sample design sourced from 4 ESOMAR accredited online panel providers and includes quotas for key demographic variables and region of residence to make the overall sample as representative as possible of the GB population. The target annual contact sample for the survey is 35,000 completed interviews, and includes all respondents whether they have taken a qualifying day visit or not.

Fieldwork for the survey started in April 2021. The number of GB respondents for the period April to December 2021 was 29,226. Not every person who is interviewed will have taken an eligible overnight trip and so the base sizes used for trip estimation is lower than the number of interviews. Trip base sizes are published in the Background Quality Report GBDVS (2021). In the future, trip base sizes will be published in the relevant annual Background Quality Report.

A revised weighting scheme has been introduced from 2021 to improve efficiency, whilst making the results as representative as possible of the GB population. However, the use of a non-probability online sample limits the extent to which the survey responses are truly representative of the full GB population, a limitation of all online sample surveys.

The new weighting scheme uses the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) mapped to approximated social grade for population statistics, for the purpose of quotas and weighting to the GB population. The change to using NS-SEC as the population statistics source will impact the estimation and reporting of trips compared to previous reporting of social grade used for GBDVS in 2019 and previous years. We are still assessing the impact of these changes and this may result in a re-release of statistics for 2021.

Comparability and coherence

Statistics for GB domestic day trips had been collected in a broadly similar way since 2011. However, the changes in survey methodology introduced in 2021, together with the interruption in data collection due to COVID-19, means that results published from April 2021 onwards are not directly comparable with data published

for 2019 and previous years.

The estimates of volume for 2021 included trips by GB adults and accompanying children, whereas the published day trip volumes for 2019 and previous years were estimates of adult trips only.

As part of the survey, respondents are asked about any day trips they have taken in the 7 days prior to their date of interview (reference period). Trip and expenditure estimates are reported for individual calendar months as well as for quarterly and annual periods. As the interview reference periods do not exactly correspond with calendar months an adjustment is made using a 'seasonal smoothing factor' to improve monthly comparisons within and between years.

The monthly estimates are subject to limitations on sample size and seasonal fluctuations in trip taking across the year. The monthly pattern of visits in 2021 will have also been influenced by any COVID-19 restrictions in place limiting travel at different times of the year, as well as by public confidence undertaking different leisure activities. Users are advised to be aware of these limitations when making monthly or quarterly comparisons.

Alternative sources

As GBDVS data collection was paused in periods due to the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020 to the end of March 2021 and due to the methodology and definition changes to GBDVS from 2021 there are limited opportunities to gain a complete picture of domestic day visits overtime from GBDVS alone.

To gain insight into the domestic tourism landscape during periods where GBDVS is unavailable and unable to do so VisitEngland publishes and makes available data from a number of different information sources including:

Domestic Sentiment Tracker

<https://www.visitbritain.org/domestic-sentiment-tracker>

The Domestic Sentiment Tracker is a tracking survey to understand domestic intent to take short breaks and holidays both within the UK and abroad. The survey has run in waves since May 2020. The survey addresses: the likelihood of UK residents to travel; when and where they plan to go; specific trip details such as accommodation type and activities undertaken and the type of reassurances they're seeking from the sector.

Bank Holiday Trip Tracker

<https://www.visitbritain.org/bank-holiday-trip-tracker>

This survey is more specific to major bank holidays, but focuses on trip intention during these periods since 2007

Visits to Visitor attractions

<https://www.visitbritain.org/annual-survey-visits-visitor-attractions-latest-results>

An audit of English visitor attractions, recording visitor numbers since 2000.

Accommodation Occupancy

<https://www.visitbritain.org/accommodation-occupancy-latest-results>

Every month, the England Occupancy Survey (EOS) measures bedroom and bedspace occupancy across the serviced accommodation sector, including mostly hotels, with a very small proportion of serviced apartments and larger B&Bs/guesthouses. Data is available back to 1997.

Further data sources available to users may also be available from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) or other specific government departments such as the Department for Transport.

Accuracy

The statistics produced from the Great Britain Day Visits Survey in 2019 and previous years have been designated as official statistics, which provides reassurance to users that the statistics are produced to the very highest professional standards of trustworthiness, quality and value, set out in the [Code of Practice for Statistics \(Office for National Statistics\)](#). Due to the changes in methodology and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the survey results for 2021 have been labelled as [‘experimental statistics’ \(Office for National Statistics\)](#). The new survey and statistics have undergone a comprehensive programme of quality assurance including piloting of the survey, analysis of changes to the trip definitions, testing the impact of the new weighting scheme and a review of caps and imputation rules. Changes to the survey methodology and estimation have taken account of a review and advice provided by the Methodology Advisory Service of the Office for National Statistics.

As the statistics are produced using a non-probability online survey method, they are subject to the limitations and potential sources of bias and error associated with such surveys. These include:

- coverage error due to part of the GB population not having online access
- sampling error by using a sample to measure the behaviour of the full GB population
- sample bias by including differences between people with online access and who are online panel members compared to those who are not
- measurement error due to respondents entering incorrect values
- non-response error including survey refusals and drop-outs and the availability of ‘don’t know’ and ‘prefer not to say’ options

The GBDVS data is weighted to correct for any imperfections in the achieved sample that might lead to bias and to rectify any differences between the sample and the target GB population. The survey uses a mix of accredited online panels to mitigate for possible panel specific biases, and the mix of panels is kept consistent over time. Demographic quotas are used to align the sample with the GB population. The survey script and data processing include bespoke checks to verify the accuracy of responses. Imputation is used to cover missing data and caps are used to minimise the impact of extreme values that are entered. It is not possible to measure standard sample errors due to the non-probability sample being used, but base sizes are reported for eligible trip takers and users are advised to consider and be cautious of small base sizes, particularly for monthly data and lower-level geographies, when drawing inferences from the statistics.

Further details of quality assurance and trip base sizes are provided in the GBDVS Background Quality Report 2021.

Relevance

These statistics are used both within and outside the UK Government (and devolved administrations) to monitor domestic tourism demand and measure the contribution and impact of domestic tourism on the visitor economy. A key purpose of these statistics is to uncover insights into market trends over time.

The estimates released for 2021 will provide insights on the impact of COVID-19 on visitor levels and provide a baseline to measure performance across subsequent years. The full data set provides additional information on visitor profiles and trip characteristics that is relevant for tourism planning, policy making and marketing.

Some of the key potential users are:

- tourism businesses and industry representative bodies
- local authorities
- professional tourism consultants and organisations
- students, academics and universities
- individual citizens and private companies
- national and local media
- International statistical authorities

We are planning to engage with users of the statistics to check the new survey information meets their needs and we encourage users of the statistics to contact us to let us know how they use the data.

As far as possible, the new combined GBTS and GBDVS survey provides consistency with previous information collected, but new questions capture enhanced information on activities undertaken and responder profiles including protected characteristics. It is envisaged that this additional information will be of value for the various users of the survey. The current questionnaire is included in the GBDVS 2021 Background Quality Report.

Timeliness and punctuality

All outputs adhere to the Code of Practice (2009) produced by the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) by pre-announcing the date of publication through the upcoming calendar. We aim to publish data as soon as possible after the relevant research time period.

Disruption to the new combined GBTS and GBDVS survey due to COVID-19 and the need for comprehensive testing and quality assuring of the new experimental statistics have resulted in the reporting of 2021 statistics to be later than normal. 2022 data is expected in the Spring of 2023. It is anticipated that future results will be published on a monthly basis with a time lag of up to c **7-8 weeks** reflecting the 4 weekly reference period used to ask about trips taken and to allow for quality assurance checks and reporting timescales.

As per the Code of Practice, VisitEngland releases data under pre-release access to a small group of people 24 hours ahead of publication. These individuals are listed on our website.