

Domestic Tourism Methodology

Data on overnight trips, day trips and flights taken by NI residents are collected through the Continuous Household Survey. Further information on the survey methodology is available from the Central Survey Unit, NISRA ([Continuous Household Survey \(external link\)](#))

Sample Size

The CHS is carried out to a systematic random sample of 4,500 addresses drawn each year from the Pointer list of domestic addresses. All adults (aged 16 and over) in the selected household are asked to complete the survey. In the year April 2015-March 2016, 3,300 individuals were interviewed. From these interviews, information was gathered on 1,026 overnight trips of which 347 trips were in Northern Ireland.

From April 2015, NISRA changed the methodology of the collecting data to move the questions on overnight trips from the 'individual' section of the CHS to the 'household' section. So rather than interviewing everyone in the house on their overnight trips taken within the last 4 weeks, the first person interviewed (household reference person) was asked about overnight trips that everyone in the household took. The reasons NISRA moved this were to increase the sample size (that is to capture more information on trips to provide more robust estimates) and also to capture information on overnight trips taken by children (those under 16 who are not interviewed).

This meant that for the year April 2015-March 2016, information was captured for 1,362 overnight trips (an increase of 33%), of these 460 were in Northern Ireland (also an increase of 33%). NISRA have not included the data on children on trips in publications yet while exploring the impact of the changes to see if a backseries may be gathered.

Testing – NISRA is still testing the change in methodology of moving the tourism module from the individual section to the household section of the survey by continuing to ask a number of limited questions in the individual section to compare responses. Throughout the year April 2015-March 2016, NISRA has found an under reporting of 8% in the number of NI overnight trips. While continuing to investigate this, NISRA has grossed results by 8%.

Weighting and Grossing

In order to estimate the value and volume of overnight trips (and day trips and flights) taken by NI residents, it is necessary to gross the findings from the survey to the NI population.

The respondent data is weighted to the NI population by age group and sex on a monthly basis. This is carried out within Tourism Statistics Branch as the host (CHS) is not weighted. The monthly weighting means that the weights sum across the sex by age group categories to the adult population of NI for each month.

The age groups used are 16-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65-74 and 75+ (there will be additional group of those under 16 when NISRA includes children within the estimates). Due to small cell sizes within the youngest age groups, males and females are merged to form one weighting cell in the 16-24 (and under 16s) age groups, resulting in 13 weighting cells each month.

Respondents are asked to report any overnight trip from which they have returned in the last four weeks. As the data are weighted to monthly population totals, this will bias down the total number of trips taken. To compensate for this, the individual trip counts are multiplied by a factor of $365/(12*4*7)+1.086$. For day trips, respondents are asked to report any outings or trips which they have taken in the last seven days, and as the data are also weighted to monthly population totals, the overnight trip weight is used and multiplied by four.

Dealing with missing expenditure

Total expenditure is requested from all respondents and for those taking trips in NI, the expenditure is collected within categories, e.g. accommodation, travel and food&drink. In cases where expenditure is missing, coded 0 when there should be a cost (for example in commercial accommodation, or a trip when the person has been shopping but there is no cost), a mean value is calculated and applied to the missing cases. Where available, a mean value is calculated within quarterly expenditure categories using the previous years values.

Precision of estimates

The Continuous Household Survey is a multi-stage sample where all members of a household aged over 16 are interviewed, estimates obtained are subject to sampling variability. The standard error and 95% confidence interval for the estimates of trips to NI stands at approximately 9% for the year. Information on confidence intervals in the NI tourism statistics can be accessed at this [link](#).

Analysing and reporting expenditure

Total expenditure is collected for the respondent's travelling party or for individual themselves. The survey is set up to ask how many people expenditure covers. It also asks if anyone from outside the house was on the trip so the costs can be allocated appropriately. Expenditure per adult is calculated using these variables.

Data revisions

Tourism estimates are produced to provide timely data to the tourism industry and Government policy makers. The estimates may be subject to revision due to improvements to the survey/analysis methodology or the inclusion of data returned after the publication date. Details on revisions policy can be found at this [link](#).

Overnight trips

Information on overnight trips is reported based on the month of departure on the trip. A domestic overnight trip includes any trip away from home for at least one night in Northern Ireland by a Northern Ireland resident.

A link to the CHS Questionnaire is provided - [Continuous Household Survey Questionnaire](#)