

Overseas Travel And Tourism, Q2 2013

Coverage: **UK**

Date: **10 October 2013**

Geographical Area: **Region**

Theme: **Travel and Transport**

Theme: **People and Places**

Latest Trends

Compared to a year ago, visits to the UK by overseas residents increased by 5.2% to 8.9 million in quarter 2 2013. The length of visit by overseas residents also increased, with the number of nights spent in the UK rising by 5.0%. In addition, the estimated earnings from these visits increased by 11.9% to £5.2 billion. These trends are a continuation of those observed for the [first quarter of 2013](#).

Visits abroad by UK residents in this quarter, compared to a year ago, increased by 2.7% to 15.9 million. The number of nights spent abroad by UK residents, also increased by 7.6% and expenditure during these visits increased by 7.0% to £9.2 billion, compared with quarter 2 2012.

Introduction

This report contains estimates of completed international visits to and from the UK and earnings and expenditure associated with these visits. The estimates are derived from the International Passenger Survey (IPS) conducted by ONS at all major air and Eurostar ports in the UK as well as on sea and Eurotunnel routes into and out of the UK.

About the estimates

- Estimates contained in this publication are produced from responses provided by international passengers arriving in and departing from the UK, sampled on the [International Passenger Survey \(127.8 Kb Pdf\)](#) conducted by ONS.
- Estimates are based on interviews conducted when passengers end their visit. Therefore any visits commencing in the reported quarter but not completed until later are not included in estimates for the reported quarter.
- Parts of the report refer to countries visited abroad. It should be noted that if a UK resident visited more than one country on a trip abroad, the country recorded as visited in this publication is the country that was visited for the longest period.

Accuracy of IPS estimates

The estimates produced from the IPS are subject to sampling errors that result because not every traveller to or from the UK is interviewed on the survey. Sampling errors are determined both by the sample design and by the sample size - generally speaking, the larger the sample supporting a particular estimate, the proportionately smaller is its sampling error. The survey sample size is approximately 70,000 per quarter.

Table 1 shows the 95% confidence intervals for the main quarterly estimates of the total number of visits, nights and expenditure for both overseas residents visiting the UK and UK residents going abroad. These represent the interval into which there are 19 chances out of 20 that the true figure (had all travellers been surveyed) would lie.


If, for example, the relative 95% confidence interval relating to an estimate of 10,000 was 5.0% there would be 19 chances out of 20 that the true figure (if all travellers had been surveyed) would lie in the range 9,500 to 10,500.

Table 1: Sampling Errors, Q2 2013

	Estimate	Relative 95% Confidence Interval (+/- % the estimate)
Overseas visitors to the UK		
Number of visits ('000s)	8,893	3.6%
Total earnings (£million)	5,218	4.6%
Number of visitor nights ('000s)	57,901	5.0%
UK residents going abroad		
Number of visits ('000s)	15,941	2.3%
Total earnings (£million)	9,203	3.5%
Number of visitor nights ('000s)	155,940	4.3%

Table source: Office for National Statistics

Download table

 [XLS format](#)
(26 Kb)

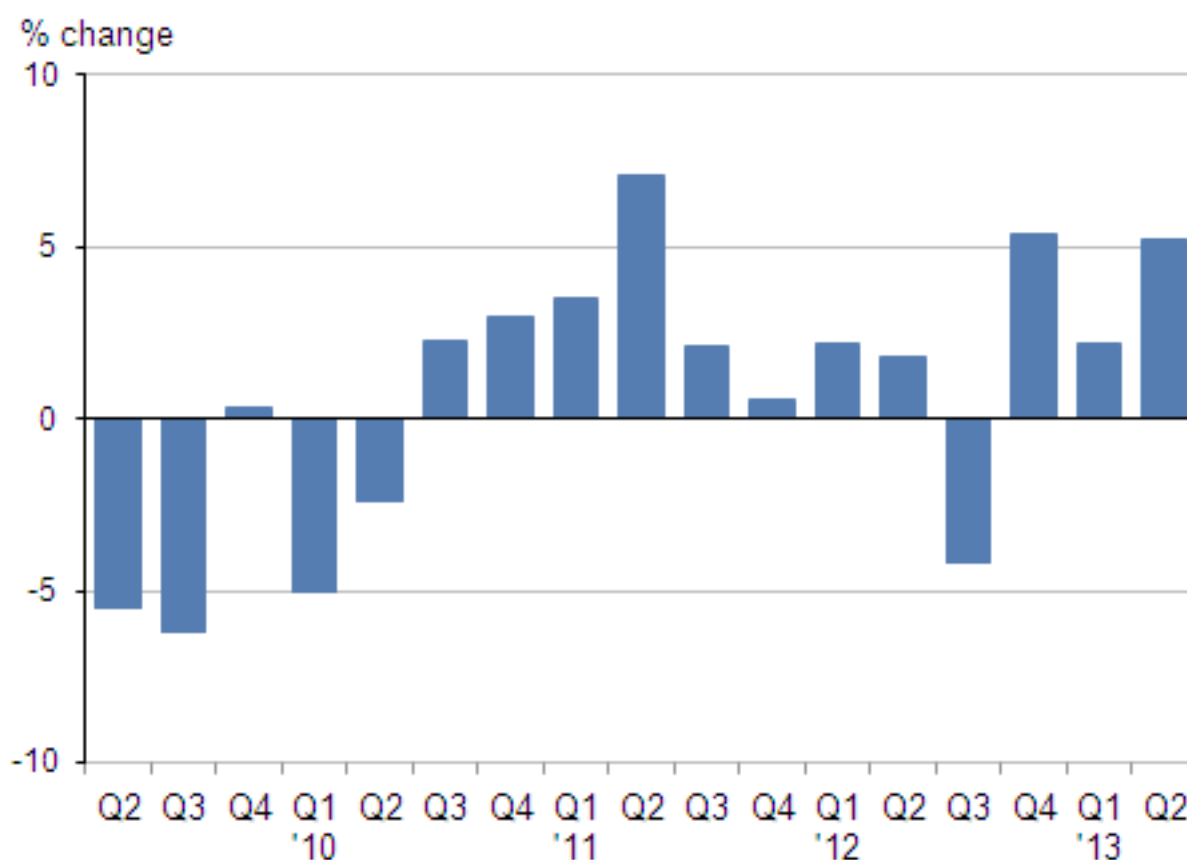
Sampling errors relating to visits, nights and expenditure across regions of the world and purpose groups together with countries visited / visits from and region of the UK visited are provided within the [Confidence intervals, Q2 2013 tables. \(39.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

Further guidance for readers is provided about the quality of [Overseas Travel & Tourism estimates \(404.8 Kb Pdf\)](#).

Visits to the UK by overseas residents

International visits to the UK by overseas residents continued to rise during quarter 2 2013, with an estimated 8.9 million visits made during the quarter, this represents a rise of 5.2% when compared with the 8.5 million visits made during the same period in 2012.

Figure 1: Quarterly change from a year earlier in visits to the UK from overseas residents



Source: International Passenger Survey (IPS) - Office for National Statistics

Download chart

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)
(29.5 Kb)

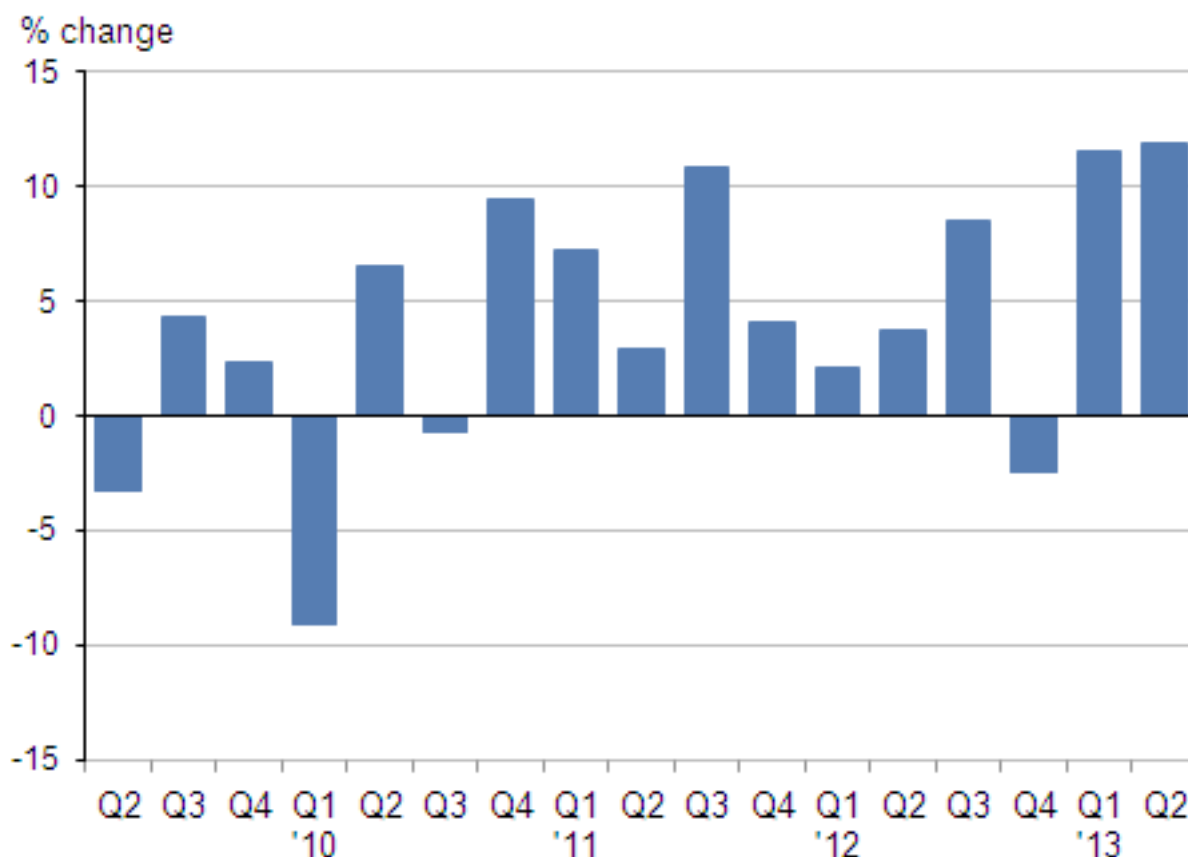
Among visits to the UK by overseas residents in quarter 2 2013 compared with the same quarter in 2012, holiday visits to the UK recorded an increase of 6.5%. Although holiday visits from North America were down 4.9%, compared to a year earlier, there were increases in both European visitors and visitors from other countries, up 6.7% and 15.7% respectively. Business visits also recorded an increase of 5.0% when compared to a year earlier, maintaining the upward trend seen since 2010.

Overall, an estimated total of 57.9 million nights were spent in the UK by overseas residents this quarter, up by 5.0% compared to quarter 2 2012. The number of nights spent in the UK by overseas visitors from Europe and 'Other countries' continued to increase in this quarter by 6.3% and 16.3% respectively. However, the number of nights spent in the UK by visitors from North America fell by 15.3% compared with the second quarter of 2012.

London saw a rise in the number of overnight visits, 10.3% higher than a year ago; this was due to an increase in visits from both European residents and visitors from 'Other countries' both up 13.7% and 12.7% respectively. Overnight visits to England recorded a growth (7.2%) as did overnight visits to Scotland (2.3%), however, overnight visits to Wales decreased (6.8%).

Estimated earnings from all visits to the UK grew by 11.9% from £4.7 billion (quarter 2 2012) to £5.2 billion (quarter 2 2013). Spending by residents from 'Other countries' was again a major contributor, spending £1.6 billion, up 37.2% from the same period in 2012. Earnings from European residents also grew by 4.5% to £2.7 billion. However, reflecting the fall in the number of visits, spending by residents of North America fell by 0.8% to £0.8 billion.

Figure 2: Quarterly change from a year earlier in earnings from visits to the UK



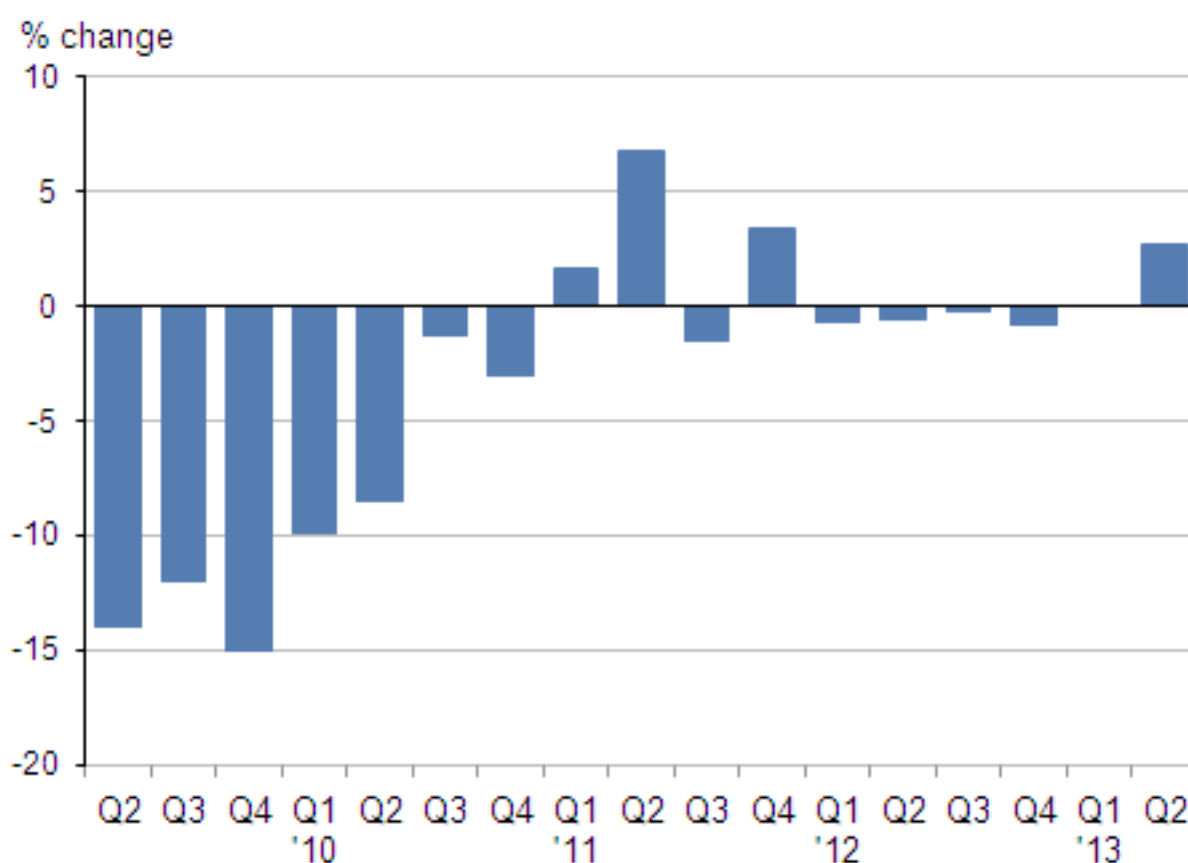
Source: International Passenger Survey (IPS) - Office for National Statistics

Download chart[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)

(30 Kb)

Visits abroad by UK residents

UK residents made 15.9 million visits abroad in quarter 2 2013, an increase of 2.7% from the same quarter in 2012. Both visits to Europe and to 'Other countries' rose during the quarter by 2.5% and 5.5% respectively, however, visits to north America fell by 0.6% continuing the downward trend in recent years.

Figure 3: Quarterly change from a year earlier in visits abroad by UK residents

Source: International Passenger Survey (IPS) - Office for National Statistics

Download chart[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)

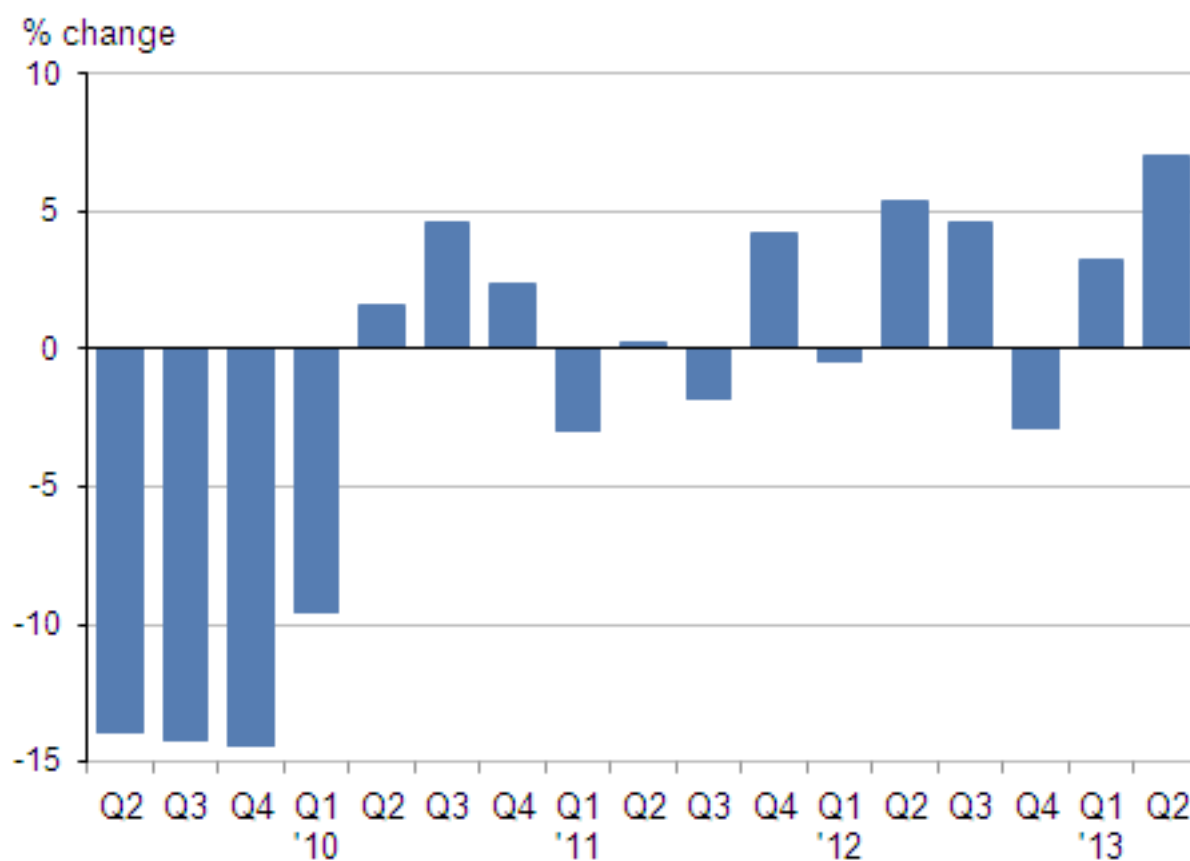
(29.5 Kb)

Holiday visits remain the main purpose for UK visits abroad. In quarter 2 2013 there were 10.4 million holiday visits, an increase of 1.9% from the same period last year. Visits to friends or relatives also grew in this period (by 4.5%) as did business trips, which saw an increase of 3.3%.

In quarter 2 2013 the number of nights spent abroad by UK residents was 155.9 million, this was an increase of 7.6% compared to the same period last year. This was driven by increases in the number of nights spent in both Europe and 'Other countries', up 7.1% and 10.8% respectively. North America saw a small drop in the number of nights spent there by UK residents, down 0.2% compared to quarter 2 2012.

UK residents spent £9.2 billion on visits abroad in quarter 2 2013, an increase of 7.0% on the £8.6 billion spent in the same period of 2012. Expenditure in North America was down by 4% while spending in Europe and 'Other countries' increased by 7.7% and 10.9% respectively.

Figure 4: Quarterly change from a year earlier in expenditure from UK residents visits abroad



Source: International Passenger Survey (IPS) - Office for National Statistics

Download chart

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)

(30 Kb)

Other Overseas Travel and Tourism releases

Further analysis of overseas travel and tourism trends are provided in the publications:

- [Monthly Overseas Travel and Tourism](#), latest publication August 2013 published 10 October 2013; next release September 2013 to be published on the 14 November 2013

- [Travel Trends](#), latest publication Travel Trends 2012 published April 19 2013, next publication Travel Trends 2013 to be published April 2014. This publication provides more detailed analysis of visits and spending, including analysis by demographics, towns in the UK visited and countries visited by residents of different parts of the UK.
- [Travelpac](#) is a data set which allows users to conduct their own analysis of quarterly and annual data on key variables. The datasets are provided in SPSS and Excel, latest publication Quarter 2 2013 published 10 October 2013.

Contact Details

General IPS queries & requests

For general questions about IPS and requests for ad hoc data analysis (a service governed by the ONS Income and Charging policy):

Tel: Data Advice Relations Team: +44 (0)1633 455678

Email: socialsurveys@ons.gsi.gov.uk

Other customer enquiries

Media enquiries Tel: +44 (0)845 601 3034

ONS Customer Contact Centre Tel: +44 (0)845 604 1858

Statistical contact

For information about the content of this publication:

Tel: +44 (0)1633 455296

Email: socialsurveys@ons.gsi.gov.uk

Copyright and reproduction

©Crown copyright 2013

You may re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence.

To view this licence, go to the [National Archives](#) or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU. Email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Background Notes: Publication tables

Notes to tables

Table 5: Overseas earnings and expenditure at constant (1995) prices - includes estimates for the Channel Islands.

Table 7: Nights spent abroad by UK residents includes cruises allocated to 'Other Areas' (see note 8 under 'sample methodology').

Table 11: Spending by overseas residents by area and purpose of visit. See notes 10, 11 and 12 under 'Definitions'.

Exclusions

Trippers who cross the Channel or the North Sea but do not alight from the boat.

Migrants and persons travelling overseas to take up prearranged employment, together with military/diplomatic personnel, merchant seamen and airline personnel on duty.

Overseas residents passing through the UK en route to other destinations (often known as transit passengers) but who do not stay overnight (however any spending whilst here is included in the figures for earnings).

Symbols

P = Provisional,

R = Revised,

- = Not available or no sample,

0 = visits less than 500 or spending less than £50,000,

VFR = Visiting friends or relatives,

Please Note: Due to rounding, constituent items in the tables may not add exactly to totals.

Background Notes: Definitions

1. The figures relate to the number of completed **visits**, not the number of visitors. Anyone entering or leaving more than once in the same period is counted on each visit. The count of visits relates to UK residents returning to this country and to overseas residents leaving it.
2. **Day-visits** (that is trips that do not involve an overnight stay) abroad by UK residents as well as day trips to the UK by overseas residents are included in the figures for visits and expenditure. Details of such visits are shown separately in Tables 8-11 and 19-22 under the heading 'day visits'. Please note they do not cover day visits to or from the Irish Republic across the land border, although they are included in total visits. For overseas residents in transit through the UK see note 9.
3. An **overseas visitor** means a person who, being permanently resident in a country outside the United Kingdom, visits the UK for a period of less than 12 months. UK citizens resident overseas

for 12 months or more coming home on leave are included in this category. Visits abroad are visits for a period of less than 12 months by people permanently resident in the UK (who may be of foreign nationality).

4. When a resident of the UK has visited more than one country the entire visit, expenditure and stay are allocated to the **country stayed in for the longest time**.
5. Visits for **miscellaneous** purposes include those for study; to attend sporting events; for shopping; health; religious; or for other purposes; together with visits for more than one purpose when none predominates (for example visits both on business and on holiday). Overseas visitors staying overnight in the UK en route to other destinations are also included in miscellaneous purposes.
6. Estimates relating to tourist flows across the **land border** between the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland are, for convenience, included in the figures for sea. Where not shown separately, flows through the Channel Tunnel are also included under the figures for sea.
7. Regional Analysis (Table 13). The information relating to visitors using the land border from the Irish Republic is not collected and so is excluded from the table. Also excluded (except from the 'Total' section) are all visits that did not include an overnight stay in the UK. Visits by overseas residents to Northern Ireland although included in the 'total' column are not separately analysed. More than one region can be visited by an individual whilst in the United Kingdom and so the total of the visits to all regions will therefore sometimes be greater than the total number of visits to the UK.
8. Adjustments are made to the reported cost of an **inclusive tour** so that only the amount earned by the country of visit (for example accommodation costs, car hire, etc.) is included. This estimate is then added to an individual's spending to give the total spending in the country of visit (see also note 10).
9. **Length of stay** for UK residents cover the time spent, including the journey outside the UK, whilst for overseas residents it refers to the time spent within the UK.
10. **Earnings and expenditure** figures cover the same categories of travellers as do the number of visits, except that in addition the earnings figures include the expenditure by same day transit passengers, and the foreign exchange earnings and expenditure due to travel relating to the Channel Islands. They exclude payments for air, sea and rail travel to and from the UK. For any traveller on an inclusive tour an estimate of the return fare is deducted from the total tour price.
11. Earnings do not include the personal export of cars that have been purchased in the United Kingdom by overseas residents. Similarly spending excludes the personal import of cars by UK residents.
12. An estimate for purchases by overseas visitors at airport **duty free** shops is included in the figures for earnings. Such purchases on British carriers are still excluded.

Background Notes: Geographical Areas

1. **North America:** Canada (including Greenland and St Pierre at Miquelon), USA (including Puerto Rico and US Virgin Islands).
2. **Europe:** All countries listed under EU27 plus other central and eastern Europe; North Cyprus; Gibraltar; Iceland (including Faroe Islands); Norway; Switzerland (including Liechtenstein); Turkey; the former USSR; and the states of former Yugoslavia.
3. **EU15:** Austria; Belgium; Denmark; France (including Monaco); Finland; Germany; Greece; Irish Republic; Italy (including San Marino and Vatican City); Luxembourg; Netherlands;

Portugal (including Azores and Madeira); Spain (including Canary Islands; and the Balearic Islands and Andorra); and Sweden.

4. **EU25** As for EU15 plus Cyprus (see * below); Czech Republic; Estonia; Hungary; Latvia; Lithuania; Malta; Poland; Slovakia; and Slovenia. * Only the south of Cyprus is a member of the EU, but the IPS is unable to separate North and South Cyprus for the period before May 2004, and so all of Cyprus is included in the EU27 and EU25 section until May 2004. From May 2004, only southern Cyprus is included in the EU27 and EU25 figures. Where Cyprus is shown separately in a table, the figures relate to the whole island.
5. **EU27:** As for EU25 plus Bulgaria and Romania.
6. **North Africa:** Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Sudan.
7. **Other Middle East:** Bahrain; Iran; Iraq; Jordan; Kuwait; Lebanon; Oman; Qatar; Saudi Arabia; Syria; and the Yemen.
8. **Central and South America:** Argentina; Belize; Bolivia; British Antarctica; Brazil; Chile; Colombia; Costa Rica; Ecuador; El Salvador; the Falkland Islands; French Guiana; Guatemala; Guyana; Honduras; Nicaragua; Panama (including Canal Zone); Paraguay; Peru; Surinam; Uruguay; and Venezuela.
9. **Other Caribbean:** Antigua; Bahamas; Bermuda; British Virgin Islands; Cayman Islands; Cuba; Dominica; the Dominican Republic; Grenada; Haiti; Martinique; Montserrat; St Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla; St. Lucia; St. Vincent and the Grenadines; Trinidad and Tobago; Turks and the Caicos Islands.

Background Notes: Sample Methodology

1. The International Passenger Survey (IPS) produces estimates that are based on interviews with a stratified random sample of passengers entering and leaving the UK on the principle air, tunnel and sea routes. The main features of the stratification are: mode of transport (that is air, tunnel or sea), port and time of day.
2. The frequency of sampling within each stratum depends mainly on the variation of tourist expenditure and on the volume of migrants, for which the survey is also used to collect statistics. To collect Overseas Travel and Tourism information, travellers passing through passport control are randomly selected for interview and in all some 295,000 interviews were conducted in 2012. Only interviews carried out at the end of a visit are used to generate estimates of expenditure and stay. Of these interviews around 45,000 provided the published information on foreign visitors to the UK and around 59,000 were used for the estimate of UK residents travelling abroad. The interviews were conducted on a purely voluntary and anonymous basis.
3. Despite the introduction in April 1999 of interviewing on air and sea routes to and from the Irish Republic the results from the IPS are still supplemented with estimates of travel between UK and the Irish Republic over the land border where no IPS interviewing takes place. Estimates for travel by land are based on information provided by the Central Statistics Office of the Irish Republic. Estimates of earnings and expenditure are also supplemented with figures from the Economic Advisor's Office of the States of Jersey, who provide information about the Channel Islands.
4. Over 95% of passengers entering and leaving the UK (excluding those travelling by land to and from the Irish Republic) travel on routes covered by the survey. The remainder are either passengers travelling at night when interviewing is suspended, or on those routes too small in volume to be covered. For those passengers, estimates are made and input into the main results of the survey.

5. At the major airports a sample of half days is taken and a fixed proportion of passengers are interviewed, whilst the smaller airports are sampled occasionally with the number of visits depending on the number of international passengers.
6. On the sea routes either particular cross-channel sailings are sampled and a fixed proportion of passengers interviewed on board, or a sample of days is taken and the passengers interviewed on the quay side.
7. In all, approximately 295,000 travellers (0.2% of the total travellers) were interviewed in 2012; this proportion varies from port to port.
8. UK residents who left a cruise boat at a foreign port and returned home on a scheduled air or sea service (e.g. fly-cruises) are included in the IPS. Information on the number of passengers on cruises finishing in the UK is estimated in terms of the number of visits, length of stay and expenditure. These estimates are added to the cruise data collected from the IPS and included under the headings for 'other areas', 'holiday', and 'sea'. In 2010 a review took place of the methodology used to estimate the number of such visits. This review has led to more accurate methodology for estimating these visits and has resulted in an annual increase from the approximately 20,000 to 200,000 of such visits. The new estimates have been included since the publication *Travel Trends 2010*, published in late July 2011.
9. A complex weighting procedure is used in the survey results taking account of passengers movement statistics produced by the BAA plc and the Civil Aviation Authority for air traffic by the Department for Transport for sea traffic. For Heathrow, Gatwick and Manchester allowances are made for passengers in transit who do not pass through passport control and hence do not cross the IPS counting line.
10. For further information please read the [IPS Methodology Report](#).

Background Notes: Accuracy of the results

Accuracy of the results

1. As the information is collected by a sample survey, the estimates of the number of visits, length of stay and expenditure are subject to a sampling error. Generally speaking, the larger the sample supporting a particular estimate, the smaller its sampling error. However, as the intensity of the sampling varies at each port, figures of a similar magnitude will not necessarily have the same percentage sampling error.
2. The IPS has a clustered sample design. The full effects of this complex sample design upon each of the main estimates is calculated, and it is these calculated 'complex' sampling errors which are quoted.
3. The sampling errors of IPS estimates are given in terms of an interval in to which there are 19 chances out of 20 that the true figure will fall. This is known as a 95% confidence interval; the estimate plus or minus the percentage quoted gives the appropriate interval.

Background Notes: Important change in IPS sampling

Traffic at all airports and seaports is monitored regularly to assess if they should be included in the IPS sample. As a consequence Liverpool and Prestwick airports were introduced into the sample at the beginning of 2005. Between 2000 and 2004, traffic through Liverpool had quadrupled to 'over two and a half million' international passengers, while at Prestwick there was a fivefold increase

to nearly 'one and a half million' passengers over the same period. The inclusion of these ports in the IPS sample were shown to cause a discontinuity in regional results and methodology was modified to account for this. Similarly in early 2008 each of Doncaster, Bournemouth, Southampton and Heathrow Terminal 5 were added to the sample and in 2009 Aberdeen and Belfast International airports were added.

Background Notes: Changes to the IPS in 2009

1. From January 2009 certain elements of the IPS have been revised to address recommendations put forward by the Interdepartmental Task Force on Migration Statistics, 2006. The changes involve revision to sample design, weighting and imputation methodology. These changes resulted in some discontinuity in estimates. An analysis was conducted and published in 2009. More details are available from the IPS team.
2. The model used to produce seasonal adjustment estimates is reviewed approximately every two years. A review was conducted in late 2009 and the new model was used for the first time to produce the seasonally adjusted estimates used in the December 2009 'Statistical Bulletin' publication. Details of the seasonal adjustment model can be obtained from the IPS team using the contact details attached.

Background Notes: Special Events

Statistical series are affected by special events. However, as explained in ONS's special events policy, it is not possible to make an estimate of the effect of particular events only on the basis of information collected in those series. However, ONS publishes a [special events calendar](#) which may help the reader put some context on reported estimates.

There were a number of special events in 2012. The Diamond Jubilee celebrations saw changes to the normal pattern of Bank holidays in May and June, and an additional day's holiday in June; all of these changes affected estimates for quarter 2 of 2012, and an [article](#) gave more information on how estimates were compiled over this period. The Olympics took place from 27 July to 12 August 2012 (with a few events starting on 25 July), and Paralympics from 29 August to 9 September. The direct effect of the Olympics and Paralympics were reflected in the estimates for the months of quarter 3 of 2012. More details of how certain series were expected to be affected were given in an [Information Note](#). A detailed [article \(229 Kb Pdf\)](#) describing possible effects on GDP and comparing with earlier Olympic Games was published by ONS on 25 October. Wider effects, for example the presence of the Olympics influencing the number of non-Olympic tourist visits, may of course have affected any of the summer months.

The result of these special events in 2012 has been to introduce additional uncertainty in the interpretation of movements between Q2 and Q3 and between Q3 and Q4. Users should therefore consider all information available when interpreting the statistics.

Background Notes: Further Statistics & Other Analyses

IPS data files

IPS data for the years 1993 onwards are available online from www.ons.gov.uk. Travelpac is a free and simple to use dataset for those wishing to make further analyses of IPS data. It contains files provided in Excel and SPSS formats. More details can be found at [Travelpac, Q2 2013](#).

Monthly figures of Overseas Travel and Tourism

These are published in the [Overseas Travel and Tourism Statistical Bulletin](#) available from:

Office for National Statistics, Government Buildings, Cardiff Road, Newport, NP10 8XG.

Telephone: +44 (0)1633 455296 or from the ONS website at www.ons.gov.uk.

Further statistics

More detailed statistics covering 2002 to 2012 may be found in the 2012 annual report, Travel Trends which is produced by the ONS. A copy can be downloaded at [Travel Trends, 2012](#).

Other analyses

For general questions about the IPS and requests for ad hoc data analysis (a service governed by the ONS Income and Charging policy):

Telephone: +44 (0)1633 455678

E-mail: socialsurveys@ons.gsi.gov.uk

Background notes

1. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html or from the Media Relations Office email: media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk

Copyright

© Crown copyright 2013

You may use or re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/ or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This document is also available on our website at www.ons.gov.uk.