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Welsh Government

STATISTICS, DOCUMENT

# Domestic GB tourism statistics (overnight trips): April to September 2023 (revised)

Data on overnight trips by British residents to destinations throughout Britain for April to September 2023.

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# Introduction

This is a revised release of the main estimates for the volume and value of domestic overnight tourism trips taken by British residents in Wales and Great Britain for the period April to June 2023. This is also the first release of estimates for the period July to September 2023, and the report includes estimates covering the period January to September 2023.

Figures for April to June 2023 have been revised, after an error was identified in the data. This error meant that a number of respondents were mistakenly excluded from estimates. Revised estimates in this release include these respondents. Where data in a table or chart has been revised, this is noted in the title of the table or chart.

This report includes estimates for the main purpose of overnight trips; holidays, visits to friends and relatives (VFR) and business trips, with the definitions for each of these provided in the relevant section of this report.

The report includes estimates and details of overnight trips taken in Wales, and in Great Britain for comparative purposes. Detailed results for England and Scotland are being published by [VisitEngland](#) and [VisitScotland](#).

These statistics are used 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. Changes in survey methodology introduced in 2021, together with the interruption in data collection due to COVID-19, mean that results published in this release are not directly comparable with data published for 2019 and previous years. [Estimates of domestic overnight trips to Wales for 2021, 2022 and January to March 2023](#) have been published and are comparable with the results in this release. Please refer to the section on [comparability and coherence](#). Changes in expenditure should be considered

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in light of increased costs, as these estimates have not been adjusted for inflation.

The statistics are labelled as 'experimental' to enable testing and further modification to meet user needs. Further information on this is available on the [Office for National Statistics website](#). We are keen to check that the new tourism statistics meet user needs and invite you to provide feedback on the information in this output at [tourismresearch@gov.wales](mailto:tourismresearch@gov.wales).

## Main points

### Wales trips

- Between April and June 2023, Great Britain (GB) residents took 2.10 million overnight trips in Wales with 5.58 million nights and £493 million spent during these trips.
- Between July and September 2023, GB residents took 2.95 million overnight trips in Wales with 8.83 million nights and £723 million spent during these trips.
- From January to September 2023, GB residents took 6.79 million overnight trips in Wales with 19.46 million nights and £1.56 billion spent during these trips.
- 40% of overnight trips taken in Wales during the first nine months of 2023 were holidays. 32% were visits to friends and relatives, 5% were for business purposes and 23% were for miscellaneous purposes.
- Approximately 8% of all GB trips included an overnight stay in Wales, whilst the share of total GB nights and spend were lower at 7%.
- The average duration of Wales trips from January to September 2023 was 2.9 nights with an average spend of £229 per trip.
- Compared to the same period in 2022, the volume of trips taken in Wales from January to September 2023 was 4% higher, whilst expenditure was

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20% higher.

## Great Britain trips

- Between April and June 2023, GB residents took 29.72 million overnight trips in GB with 84.08 million nights and £8.01 billion spent during these trips.
- Between July and September 2023, GB residents took 35.66 million overnight trips in GB with 112.24 million nights and £9.56 billion spent during these trips.
- From January to September 2023, GB residents took 89.16 million overnight trips in GB with 264.66 million nights and £23.89 billion spent during these trips.
- 32% of overnight trips taken in GB during this period were holidays, 36% were visits to friends and relatives (VFR), 5% were for business purposes and 27% were for miscellaneous purposes.
- 85% of trips taken in GB included an overnight stay in England, 10% included an overnight stay in Scotland and 8% included an overnight stay in Wales.
- The average duration of GB trips from January to September 2023 was 3.0 nights with an average spend of £268 per trip.
- Compared to the same period in 2022, the volume of trips taken in GB from January to September 2023 was 1% lower, whilst expenditure was 2% higher.

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# Trips, nights and spend to GB nations, April to September 2023

**Table 1: Total volume of trips, nights and spend to the nations of Great Britain, (January to September 2023, revised) [Note 1]**

	England	Scotland	Wales
<b>Trips (millions)</b>	75.50	9.33	6.79
<b>% Great Britain trips</b>	85%	10%	8%
<b>Nights (millions)</b>	219.38	25.83	19.46
<b>% Great Britain nights</b>	83%	10%	7%
<b>Spend (£ millions)</b>	£19,924	£2,405	£1,557
<b>% Great Britain spend</b>	83%	10%	7%

Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS), January to September 2023

[Note 1] Percentages do not sum to 100% as some trips included visits to more than one nation.

In the period from the start of January to the end of September 2023, there were 89.16 million overnight trips taken in GB by British residents with a total of 264.66 million nights and a total expenditure of £23.89 billion. During the same

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period there were 6.79 million overnight trips taken in Wales with a total of 19.46 million nights and a total expenditure of £1.56 billion.

Approximately 8% of all domestic overnight trips by British residents were taken in Wales, compared to 85% taken in England and 10% taken in Scotland, similar to the share of trips reported for the same period in 2022. The share of both total GB nights and total GB spend in Wales was 7%. These figures are similar to the shares reported for the same period in 2022 (7% of total GB nights and 6% of total GB expenditure).

**Table 2: Trips to Wales by purpose of visit in millions, (January to September 2023, revised) [Note 1]**

	April to June 2023	July to September 2023	Year to date 2023
<b>All purposes</b>	2.10	2.95	6.79
<b>Holiday</b>	0.85	1.36	2.71
<b>VFR</b>	0.71	0.93	2.18
<b>Business</b>	0.06	0.12	0.33
<b>Miscellaneous/other</b>	0.48	0.53	1.57

Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS), January to September 2023

[Note 1] Low base sizes for business trips to Wales – data should be treated with caution.

**Table 3: Nights in Wales by purpose of visit in millions, (January to September 2023, revised) [Note 1]**

	April to June 2023	July to September 2023	Year to date 2023
All purposes	5.58	8.83	19.46
Holiday	2.73	5.04	8.98
VFR	1.64	1.79	5.50
Business	0.16	0.48	1.28
Miscellaneous/other	1.04	1.51	3.69

Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS), January to September 2023

[Note 1] Low base sizes for business trips to Wales – data should be treated with caution.

**Table 4: Expenditure in Wales by purpose of visit in millions of pounds, (January to September 2023, revised) [Note 1]**

	April to June 2023	July to September 2023	Year to date 2023
All purposes	£493	£723	£1,557
Holiday	£247	£443	£805

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	<b>April to June 2023</b>	<b>July to September 2023</b>	<b>Year to date 2023</b>
<b>VFR</b>	£94	£134	£303
<b>Business</b>	£16	£29	£66
<b>Miscellaneous/other</b>	£136	£116	£381

Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS), January to September 2023

[Note 1] Low base sizes for business trips to Wales – data should be treated with caution.

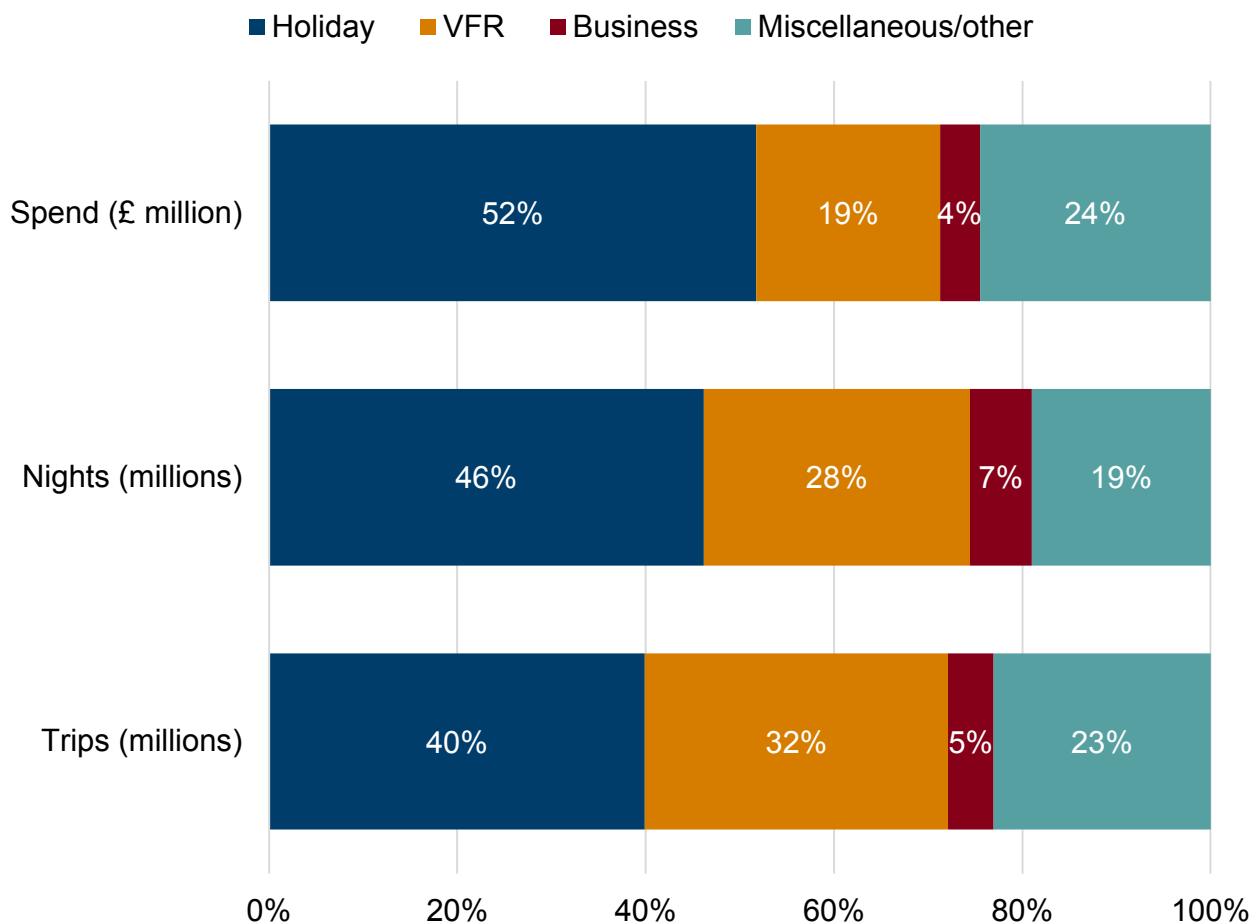
Compared to the same period in 2022, the volume of overnight trips taken in Wales between January and September 2023 has increased. There were also increases in the volumes of trips to visit relatives and friends and trips for miscellaneous/other purposes, although the volumes of holiday and business trips taken were lower, compared to the first nine months of 2022. Additionally, the number of nights spent in Wales from January to September 2023 for all purposes decreased slightly, compared to the same period in 2022. This decrease is driven by a lower number of nights spent in Wales on holiday trips. Expenditure on trips taken in Wales during the first nine months of 2023 has increased compared to expenditure during the same period in 2022, across all trip purposes.

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**Figure 1: Proportion of trips, nights and spend in Wales by main purpose of trip (January to September 2023, revised)**



Description of Figure 1: A stacked bar chart showing that, from January to September 2023, holidays were the most common type of trip taken to Wales by GB residents, followed by visits to friends and relatives.

Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS), January to September 2023

During the first nine months of 2023, holiday trips were the most common type of

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trip taken in Wales (40%), followed by visits to friends and relatives (32%). Trips for miscellaneous and business purposes accounted for 23% and 5% of trips taken, respectively. The volume of trips taken for all purposes in Wales between January and September 2023 is 4% higher than during the same period in 2022.

**Table 5: Trips to Great Britain by purpose of visit in millions (January to September 2023, revised)**

	April to June 2023	July to September 2023	Year to date 2023
<b>All purposes</b>	29.72	35.66	89.16
<b>Holiday</b>	9.99	13.24	28.96
<b>VFR</b>	10.43	11.73	32.13
<b>Business</b>	1.37	1.42	4.41
<b>Miscellaneous/other</b>	7.93	9.26	23.66

Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS), January to September 2023

**Table 6: Nights in Great Britain by purpose of visit in millions (January to September 2023, revised)**

	April to June 2023	July to September 2023	Year to date 2023
<b>All purposes</b>	84.08	112.24	264.66

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	April to June 2023	July to September 2023	Year to date 2023
<b>Holiday</b>	36.02	51.55	105.30
<b>VFR</b>	25.87	33.77	89.75
<b>Business</b>	3.77	4.52	13.42
<b>Miscellaneous/other</b>	18.42	22.39	56.19

Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS), January to September 2023

### **Table 7: Expenditure in Great Britain by purpose of visit in millions of pounds (January to September 2023, revised)**

	April to June 2023	July to September 2023	Year to date 2023
<b>All purposes</b>	£8,010	£9,559	£23,885
<b>Holiday</b>	£3,255	£4,481	£9,548
<b>VFR</b>	£1,854	£1,798	£5,524
<b>Business</b>	£443	£465	£1,594
<b>Miscellaneous/other</b>	£2,457	£2,815	£7,219

Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS), January to September 2023

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In contrast to Wales, the volume of overnight trips taken in GB from January to September 2023 was slightly lower, compared to the same period in 2022. While the volumes of visits to friends and relatives and miscellaneous/other trips were higher in the first nine months of 2023, the volumes of holiday and business trips were lower, compared to the first nine months of 2022. Similar to Wales, the number of nights spent in GB from January to September 2023 was lower compared to the same period in 2022. Nights spent in GB were lower for all trip purposes, except miscellaneous/other trips. Expenditure on trips taken in GB during the first nine months of 2023 has increased compared to expenditure during the same period in 2022, across all trip purposes except holiday trips, which saw a decline in expenditure.

## Characteristics of GB and Wales trips

**Table 8: Average spend per trip in Great Britain and Wales by main purpose of trip, (January to September 2023, revised) [Note 1]**

	Great Britain	Wales
All purposes	£268	£229
Holiday	£330	£297
VFR	£172	£139
Business	£362	£202

Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS), January to September 2023

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[Note 1] Low base size for business trips to Wales – data should be treated with caution.

**Table 9: Average spend per night in Great Britain and Wales by main purpose of trip, (January to September 2023, revised) [Note 1]**

	Great Britain	Wales
All purposes	£90	£80
Holiday	£91	£90
VFR	£62	£55
Business	£119	£52

Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS), January to September 2023

[Note 1] Low base size for business trips to Wales – data should be treated with caution.

**Table 10: Average number of nights per trip in Great Britain and Wales by main purpose of trip, (January to September 2023, revised) [Note 1]**

	Great Britain	Wales
All purposes	3.0	2.9

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	Great Britain	Wales
<b>Holiday</b>	3.6	3.3
<b>VFR</b>	2.8	2.5
<b>Business</b>	3.0	3.9

Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS), January to September 2023

[Note 1] Low base size for business trips to Wales – data should be treated with caution.

The average duration of trips taken in Wales from January to September 2023 was 2.9 nights, slightly below the average for GB of 3.0 nights. The spend per trip and spend per night on trips taken in Wales are lower than for GB as a whole, consistent with the findings for 2022. Between January and September 2023, the average spend per night is highest for holiday trips taken in Wales, whereas it is highest for business trips for GB as a whole.

The average spend per trip for Wales in the first nine months of 2023 is well above the level for the same period in 2022, continuing the overall trend of increasing spend on trips taken. This is consistent for trips taken in Wales and trips taken in GB as a whole, and across all types of trips. Changes in expenditure should be considered in light of increased costs, as these estimates have not been adjusted for inflation. The average length of trips taken for all purposes during the period January to September 2023 has decreased, compared to the same period in 2022, for both trips taken in Wales and trips taken in GB as a whole. The average length of holiday trips taken during the first nine months of 2023 has decreased compared to the same period in 2022, for both trips taken in Wales and in GB, by 12% and 4% respectively.

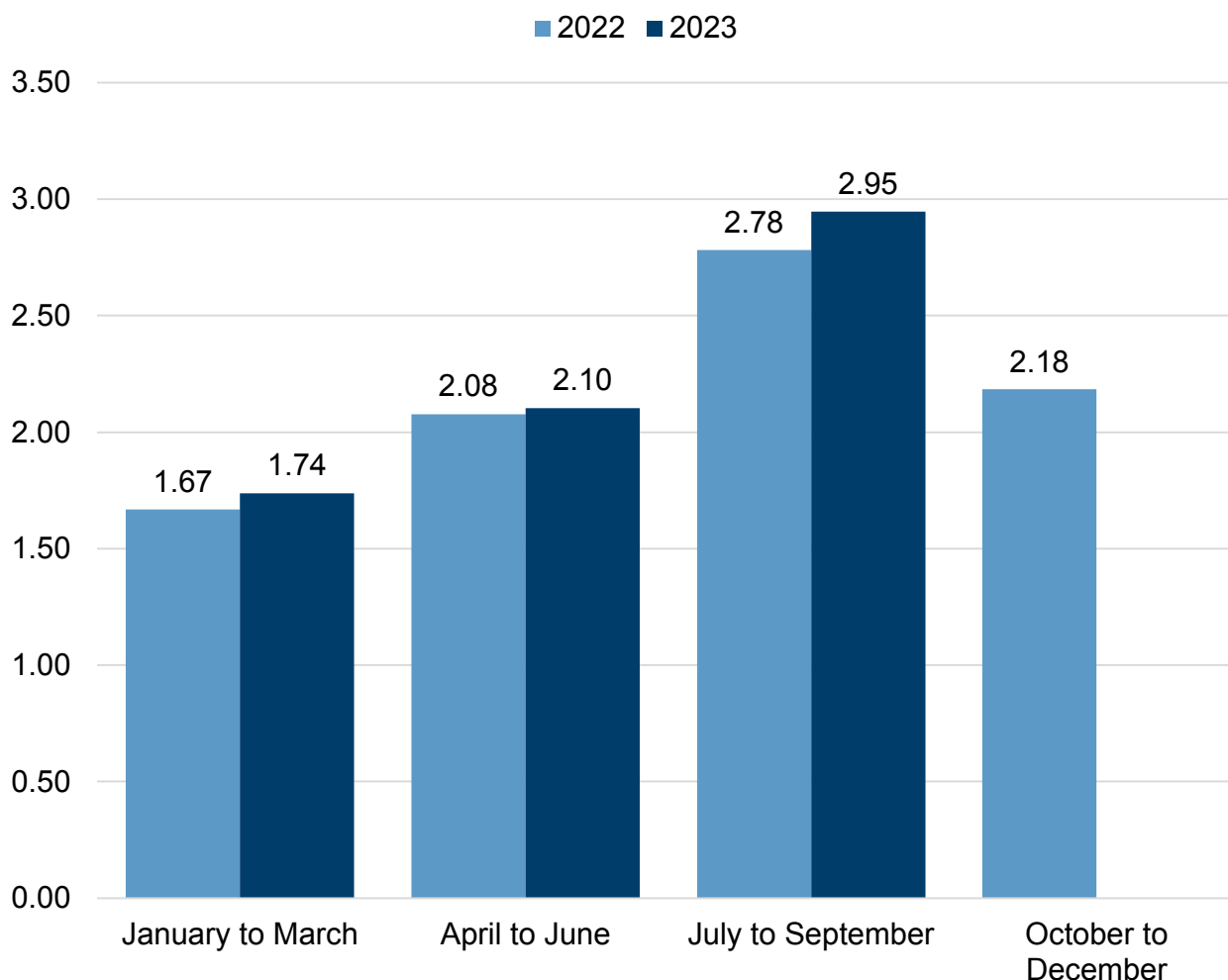
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## Trip trends for Wales and GB

**Figure 2: Volume of trips to Wales in millions by quarter of visit (January 2022 to September 2023, revised)**



Description of Figure 2: A clustered column chart showing the volume of trips taken in Wales for each quarter, with trip levels during the first nine months of 2023 increasing compared to trip levels for the same period in 2022.

Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS), January 2022 to September 2023

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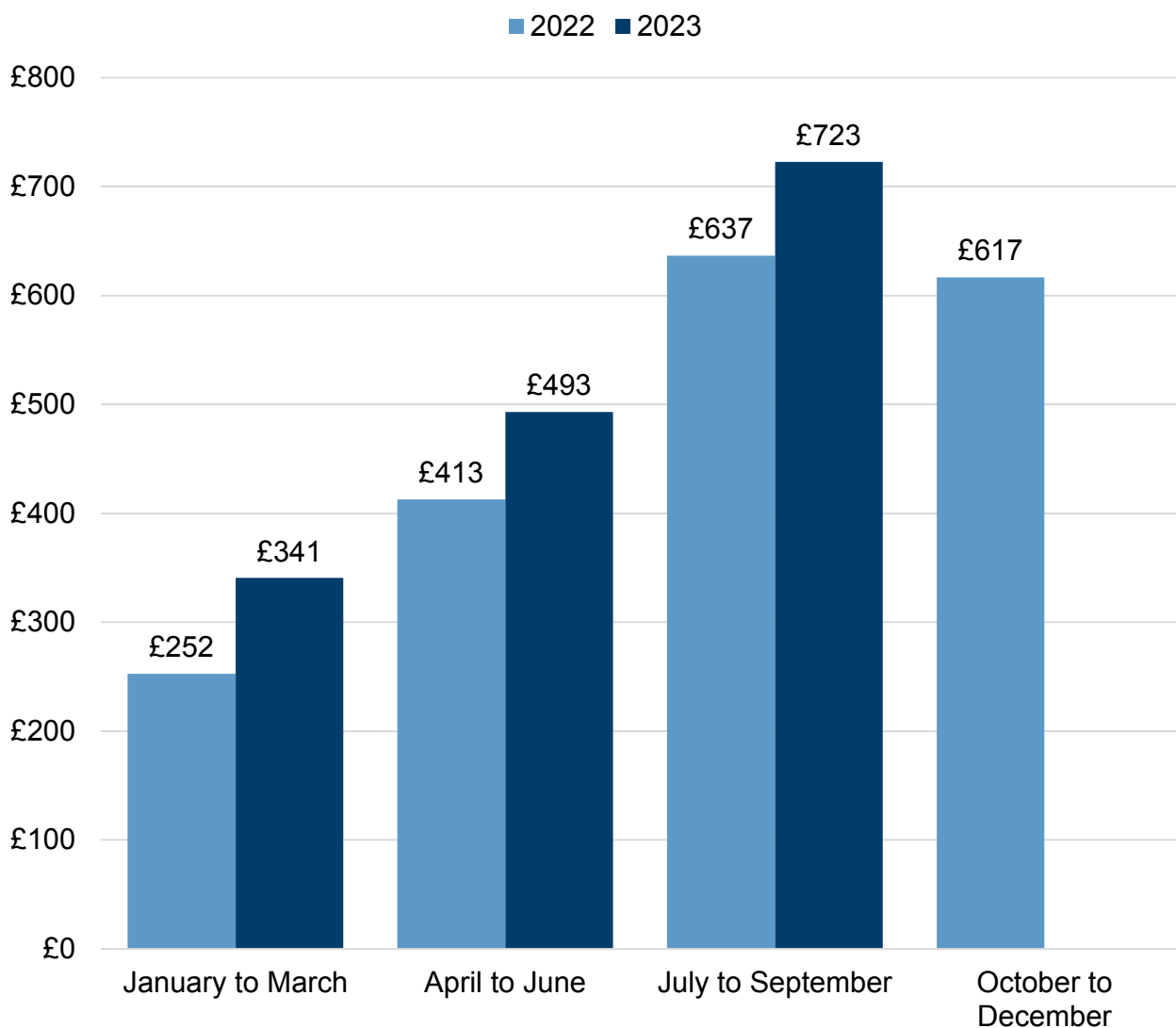
There was an increase of 1% in the volume of trips to Wales from April to June 2023, with 2.10 million trips taken in Wales, compared to 2.08 million during the same period in 2022. The volume of trips taken in Wales from July to September 2023 was 6% higher than during the same period in 2022, with 2.95 million trips taken in Wales. From January to September 2023, 6.79 million trips were taken in Wales, an increase of 4% compared to the same period in 2022.

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**Figure 3: Total expenditure on trips taken in Wales in millions of pounds by quarter of visit (January 2022 to September 2023, revised)**



Description of Figure 3: A clustered column chart showing the expenditure on trips taken in Wales for each quarter, with spend higher for the first three quarters of 2023, compared to the same period in 2022.

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Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS), January 2022 to September 2023

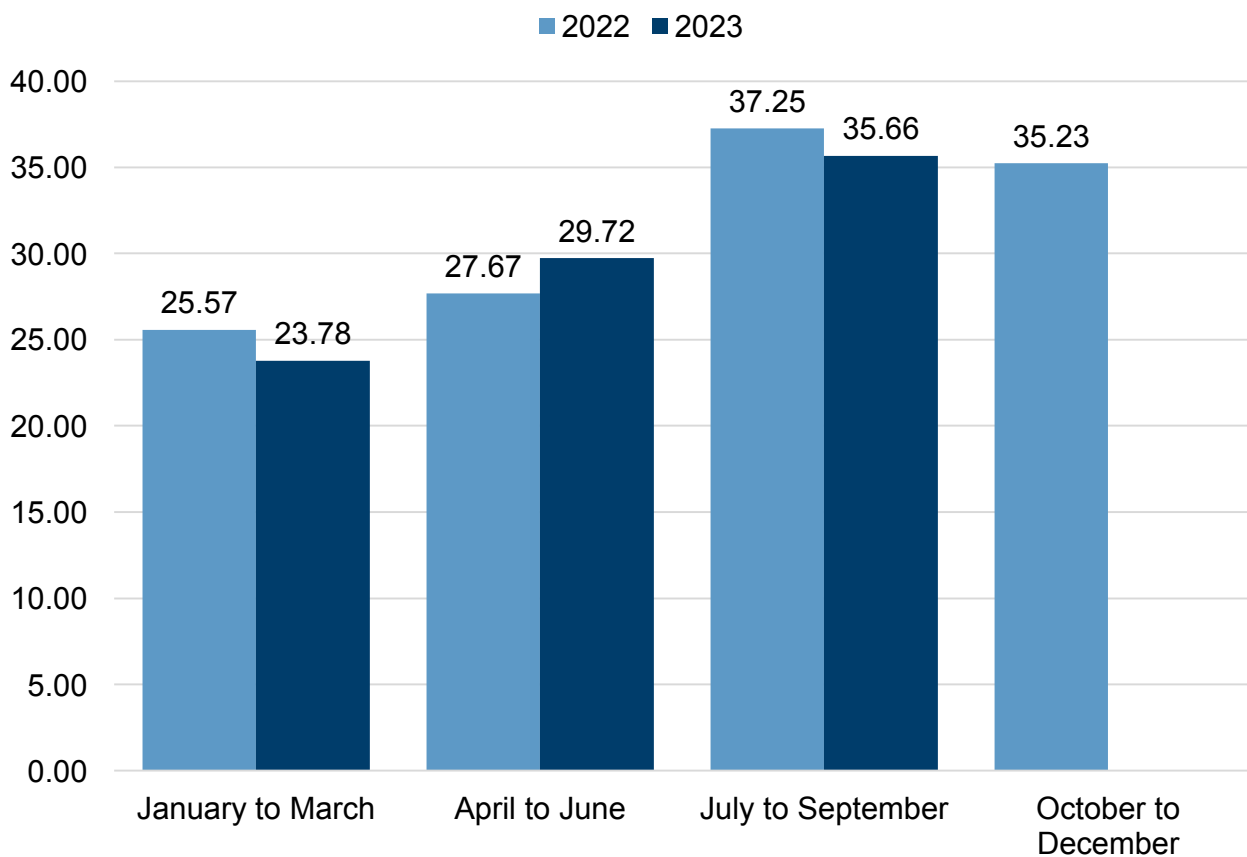
There was an increase of 20% in spend on overnight trips taken in Wales between April to June 2023, with £493 million spent, compared to £413 million during the same period in 2022. From July to September 2023, expenditure on trips taken in Wales was 13% higher than during the same period in 2022, with £723 million spent during these trips. Expenditure on trips taken in Wales from January to September 2023 was 20% higher compared to the same period in 2022, at £1.56 billion. Changes in expenditure should be considered in light of increased costs, as these estimates have not been adjusted for inflation.

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**Figure 4: Volume of overnight trips taken in Great Britain in millions by quarter of visit (January 2022 to September 2023, revised)**



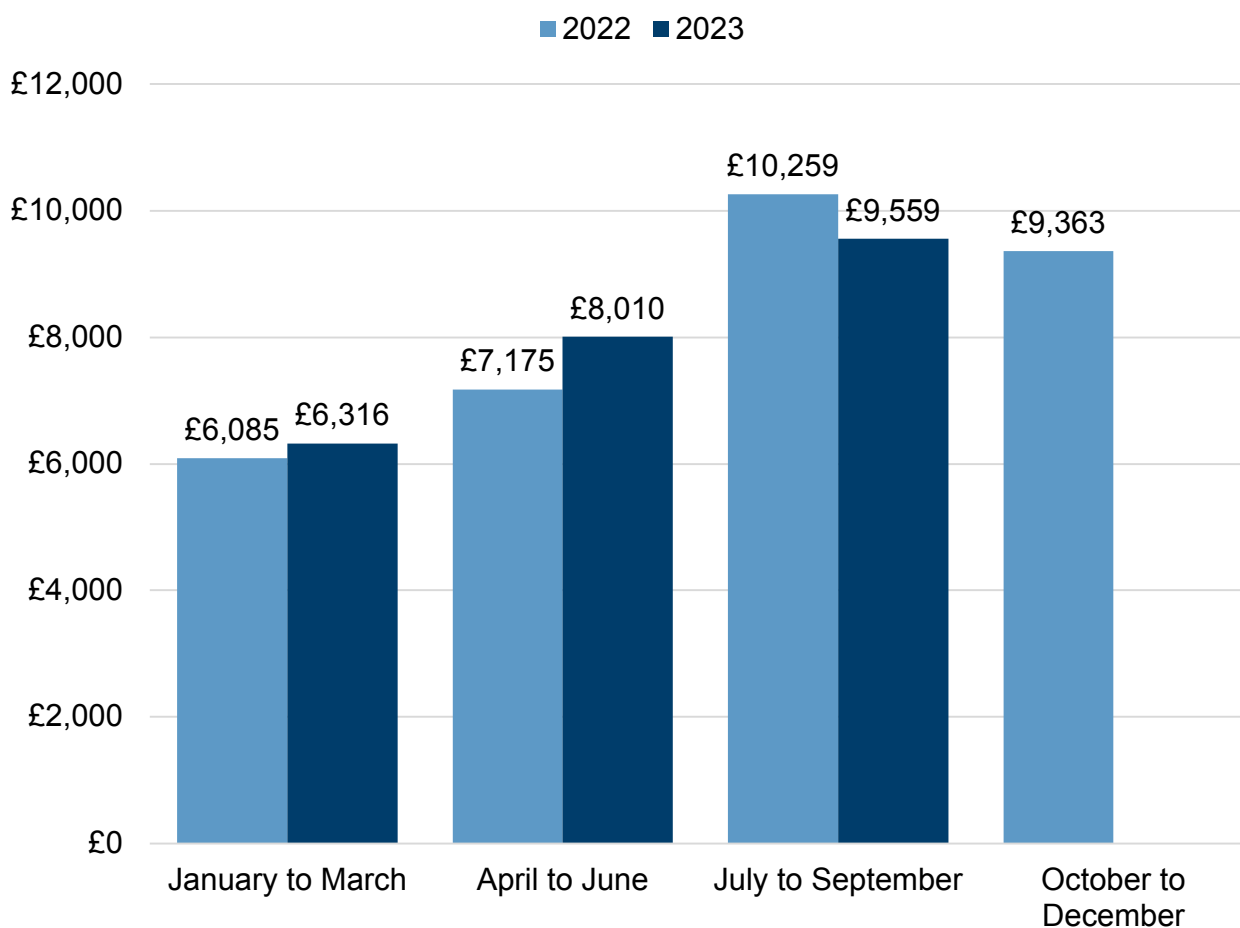
Description of Figure 4: A clustered column chart showing the volume of trips taken in GB for each quarter, with trips higher for the second quarter of 2023, but lower in the first and third quarters of 2023, compared to 2022.

Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS), January 2022 to September 2023

There was an increase of 7% in the volume of trips taken in GB from April to June 2023, with 29.72 million trips taken in GB compared to 27.67 million during the same period in 2022. However, the volume of trips taken in GB during the

period July to September 2023 was 4% lower, compared to the same period in 2022, with 35.66 million overnight trips taken during the third quarter of 2023. From January to September 2023, the volume of trips taken in GB was 1% lower compared to the same period in 2022, with 89.16 million trips taken during the first nine months of 2023.

**Figure 5: Total expenditure on trips taken in Great Britain in millions of pounds by quarter of visit (January 2022 to September 2023, revised)**



Description of Figure 5: A clustered column chart showing the expenditure on

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trips taken in GB for each quarter, with spend higher for the first six months of 2023, but lower in the third quarter of 2023, compared to 2022.

Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS), January 2022 to September 2023

There was an increase of 12% in spend on overnight trips taken in GB between April to June 2023, with £8.01 billion spent, compared to £7.18 billion during the same period in 2022. However, expenditure for trips taken in GB between July and September 2023 was 7% lower compared to the same period in 2022, with £9.56 billion spent during these trips. From January to September 2023, expenditure for trips taken in GB was 2% higher compared to the same period in 2022, with £23.89 billion spent during the first nine months of 2023. Changes in expenditure should be considered in light of increased costs, as these estimates have not been adjusted for inflation.

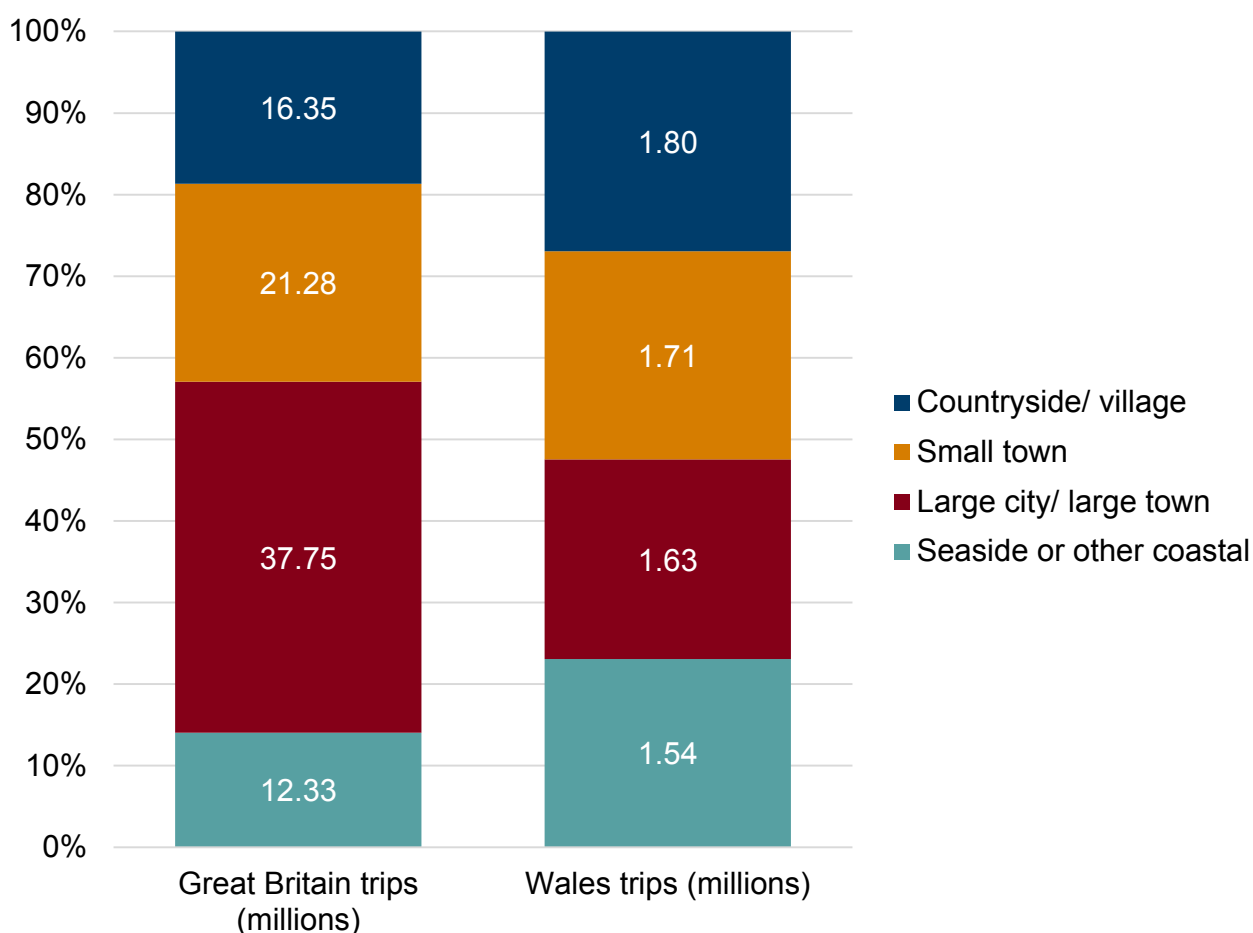
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## Profile of trips taken in Wales and GB

**Figure 6: Volume and proportion of trips taken in Great Britain and Wales by main location visited (January to September 2023, revised) [Note 1]**



Description of Figure 6: A stacked column chart showing that while trips to Wales were evenly distributed across different types of locations, trips to large cities/large towns made up the largest proportion of trips taken in GB during the first nine months of 2023.

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Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS), January to September 2023

[Note 1] The numbers within the coloured segments are the number of trips taken to each main location in millions. For instance, from January to September 2023, there were 1.80 million trips to a countryside/village location taken in Wales.

Just under half of trips (49%) taken in Wales from January to September 2023 were to a city, large town or small town. In comparison, trips to these urban destinations made up 66% of trips taken across GB as a whole. Trips to the countryside or a village made up 26% of trips taken in Wales, whilst 23% were taken to the seaside. Compared to the same period in 2022, the proportion of trips taken from January to September 2023 in Wales to urban and countryside destinations has remained stable. The proportion of trips taken to the seaside in Wales has increased slightly, from 22% during the period January to September 2022.

## Quality and methodology information

### Definitions

To qualify as an eligible GB Domestic Overnight Trip the following criteria must be met:

- The trip involved a stay of at least one night in one or more of the GB nations; England, Scotland or Wales.
- The trip is not taken on a frequent basis (less often than once a week).
- For GB Domestic Overnight Holiday Trips; the main purpose of the trip was for holiday, pleasure or leisure.
- For GB Domestic Overnight VFR Trips (VFR); the main purpose of the trip was for visiting friends and relatives, including VFR trips that were combined

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with a holiday.

- For GB Domestic Overnight Business Trips; the main purpose of the trip was for business.
- For GB Domestic Overnight Miscellaneous/Other Trips; the main purpose of the trip was for another type of trip taken not covered by the above classifications including personal events, public events, or for study, medical, religious purposes, or any overnight stay in GB as part of an overseas trip.

## **Other definitions used in this publication**

### **Volume**

An estimate of what the grossed-up number of overnight trips undertaken by the population would be if the survey sample is representative of the whole GB population. The reported volume of trips is an estimate of trips by individuals, so that a travel party of two people would count as two individual trips.

### **Value**

An estimate of what the total expenditure relating to the volume of overnight visits undertaken by the population would be if the survey sample is representative of the whole GB population.

### **Bednights**

An estimate of what the grossed-up number of nights spent on overnight trips undertaken by the population would be if the survey sample is representative of the whole GB population.

These definitions and the associated qualifying criteria have been revised as

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part of the new combined GBTS/GBDVS survey to align with agreed international standards. These changes impact the comparability of the published domestic overnight tourism estimates for 2021, 2022 and 2023 with 2019 and previous years.

## Methodology

In 2019, Visit Wales, VisitScotland and VisitEngland, undertook a review of the requirements and methods for producing the official GB domestic tourist statistics, to future-proof the data collection methods, whilst maintaining the reliability and robustness of the information reported. As a result, substantial changes were introduced as part of a new combined online survey collecting data on both domestic overnight trips as well as domestic day trips. This represents a fundamental change in the way data is collected for overnight visits including moving from the previous in-home face to face survey method to a new combined online survey covering both domestic overnight trips and day trips.

The sample for the new combined online survey is a non-probability-based design sourced from 4 ESOMAR accredited online panel providers and includes quotas for key demographic variables to make the overall sample as representative as possible of GB population. The target annual sample size for the survey of overnight visitors is 60,000 completed interviews. Not every person who is interviewed will have taken an eligible overnight trip and so the base sizes used for trip estimation are lower than the number of interviews.

As part of the survey changes, a revised weighting scheme has been introduced 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 similar online sample surveys. The new weighting scheme uses the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) mapped to approximate social grade for population statistics, for the

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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 the previous reporting of social grade used for GBTS in 2019 and previous years. We are planning to introduce a new question in the survey during 2023 that captures household income that will be used to analyse and report on trips taken by different household income bands from 2023 onwards.

Further details of the changes to survey method, sample design, estimation approaches and the effects of applied caps and recalibration are available in the [GBTS Background Quality Report 2022](#).

## Comparability and coherence

Statistics for domestic overnight tourism have been collected in a broadly similar way since 1989. 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. Results for [2021](#), [2022](#) and [January to March 2023](#) are available, and are comparable with the results in this report.

As part of the survey, respondents are asked about any overnight trips they have taken in the 4 full weeks 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.

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## Accuracy

The statistics produced from the Great Britain Tourism 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: using a sample to measure the behaviour of the full GB population
- sample bias: 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 GBTS data are 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

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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.

## Relevance

These statistics are used both within and outside the Welsh Government 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.

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, booking methods 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 [GBTS Background Quality Report 2022](#).

The survey sponsors are planning to engage with the priority users of the statistics to check the new survey information meets their needs and we encourage users of the statistics to provide feedback on the data and this output at [tourismresearch@gov.wales](mailto:tourismresearch@gov.wales).

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## Timeliness and punctuality

All outputs adhere to the Code of Practice by pre-announcing the date of publication through the upcoming calendar. Furthermore, should the need arise to postpone an output this would follow the [statement on revisions, errors and postponements](#). We aim to publish data as soon as possible after the relevant research time period. It is anticipated that future results for Wales will be published on a quarterly basis, to ensure estimates are supported by robust trip base sizes. Specific publication timings will be notified on the WG website, but the aim is to publish quarterly statistics for Wales approximately 9 to 10 weeks after the end of each quarter based on the 4 week survey trip taking reference period and to allow for quality assurance and reporting timescales.

## Further information

[GBTS Background Quality Report 2022](#)

[Estimates for domestic overnight tourism in England are available from VisitEngland](#)

[Estimates for domestic overnight tourism in Scotland are available from VisitScotland](#)

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