Statistical bulletin

Short-term lets through online collaborative economy platforms, UK: year to Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2024

Number of guest nights, nights, and stays for short-term lets offered via online collaborative economy platforms for the year to Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2024.

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1 . Main points

- There were 85.2 million guest nights spent in short-term lets in the UK, from July 2023 to June 2024.

- The percentage of guest nights varies by geographical area, with twelve local administrative units (LAUs) (out of 387) accounting for a quarter of the total number of guest nights in the UK from July 2023 to June 2024.

- There was most seasonal fluctuation on the Isle of Wight and the Orkney Islands, where the number of guest nights was 14 times higher in the August peak than in January, when guest nights were at their lowest.

- The LAUs with the highest proportion of guest nights from international visitors were Westminster, in England (where 87% of guest nights were by international visitors); Skye and Lochalsh (69%) in Scotland, Cardiff (25%) in Wales, and Derry City and Strabane (50%) in Northern Ireland.

2 . Guest nights, nights and stays

In this bulletin, "short-term lets" refers to rentals, such as apartments or rooms, booked through Airbnb, Booking.com and Expedia Group, excluding other forms of accommodation, such as hotels or campsites. We have more statistics about leisure and tourism on our website.

This analysis provides aggregated data from three large online collaborative economy platforms (Airbnb, Booking.com and Expedia Group) on the number of guest nights, nights and stays spent in short-term lets offered via online platforms during the twelve months to June 2024. This is the first time we are able to offer analysis of a twelve-month period.

The number of guest nights accounts for the number of nights spent during a stay multiplied by the number of visitors in the travel party. This can be influenced by guest group size and length of stay. For example, a group of four staying for two nights would be eight guest nights, but one guest staying for two nights would be two guest nights. The number of nights refers to the number of nights a property or room offered by the platforms was occupied during a stay; whereas the number of stays refers to the number of times a facility offered by the platforms was occupied by a single booking, regardless of length of stay.

This bulletin focuses on the number of guest nights, unless otherwise stated.

Table 1: Number of guest nights, nights and stays in short-term lets offered via collaborative economy platforms, UK, July 2023 to June 2024

Country Name	Number of Guest Nights	Number of Nights	Number of Stays
United Kingdom	85,157,810	30,390,840	8,769,790
England	66,114,750 (78%)	24,015,430 (79%)	6,750,980 (77%)
Wales	5,894,560 (7%)	1,882,170 (6%)	597,170 (7%)
Scotland	11,107,500 (13%)	3,836,600 (13%)	1,181,020 (13%)
Northern Ireland	2,041,010 (2%)	656,640 (2%)	240,610 (3%)

Source: Office for National Statistics analysis using data from Airbnb, Booking.com and Expedia Group

3 . UK headline trends

From July 2023 to June 2024, there were 85.2 million guest nights spent in short-term lets in the UK.

The distribution of guest nights across the year is strongly affected by the seasons. August was the most popular month for short-term lets across all four countries, with 11,146,260 guest nights in the UK spent in that month. January had the lowest number of guest nights, with 3,651,460 guest nights.

In Wales, Scotland and Northen Ireland around 15% of the total guest nights in the twelve months to June 2024 were in August. January was far less popular, with just 3% of guest nights falling in this month. Seasonality was slightly less pronounced in England: 12% of guest nights fell in August, versus 5% in January.

Figure 1: The percentage of guest nights in short-term lets was highest in August and lowest in January for all UK countries

Percentage of guest nights in short-term lets offered through collaborative economy platforms, by month and country, July 2023 to June 2024

4 . Subnational trends

The number of guest nights varies by geographical area. Just twelve local administrative units (LAUs) (out of 387) accounted for a quarter of the total number of guest nights in the UK in the twelve months to June 2024. These LAUs were:

- Westminster (3,520,450)

- Cornwall (3,292,250)

- City of Edinburgh (3,072,720)

- Kensington and Chelsea (1,749,390)

- Camden (1,704,470)

- Tower Hamlets (1,430,840)

- Liverpool (1,392,360)

- Gwynedd (1,080,520)

- South Lakeland (1,031,290)

- Brighton and Hove (1,028,080)

- Birmingham (1,019,650)

- Southwark (996,690)

Of these 12 LAUs, five are in London. Cornwall, Gwynedd, and South Lakeland are popular rural tourist spots, whereas the other nine are in urban settings.

On a monthly basis, the five LAU's with the highest number of guest nights were:

- Cornwall in August (710,860)

- Cornwall in July (565,700)

- City of Edinburgh in August (449,070)

- City of Edinburgh July (404,530)

- Cornwall in June (378,160)

The August figure for Cornwall was almost 25 times the UK average guest nights (28,730) at that time. Although Westminster had the highest total of guest nights across the twelve months, it did not feature in the top five highest months because guest nights were fairly evenly distributed across months.

Figure 2: Number of guest nights for each local administrative unit, UK, July 2023 to June 2024

There was most seasonal fluctuation on the Isle of Wight and the Orkney Islands. In these areas, the number of guest nights was 14 times higher in the August peak than in January, when guest nights were at their lowest. Cornwall also saw strong seasonality, with the August high of 710,860 guest nights just over 10 times higher than in January (66,810). There was relatively little fluctuation in Westminster, where guest nights were consistently high throughout the year: the June high of 362,870 was only 1.7 times higher than the January low of 210,880.

Gwynedd had the most seasonal variation in Wales, with the highest number of guest nights in August being 6.9 times the January figure. In Northern Ireland, Causeway Coast and Glens fluctuated the most, with August guest nights 9.1 times higher than in January.

5 . Guest nights by country of origin

Proportion of international and domestic guest nights

In the 12 months to June 2024, 35% of all guest nights were by international visitors and 64% were by UK domestic visitors (1% of records are missing the origin country). This is similar to the splits we have reported in our previous [Short-term lets through online collaborative economy platforms, UK bulletins](#), suggesting little variation between the origin of guests throughout the year, regardless of season. The highest proportion of international guest nights was in July (39%) and the lowest was in February (30%).

International guest nights follow a similar seasonal trend to domestic guest nights. The summer months have the highest number of guest nights. However, they slightly differed: July was the most popular month for international guest nights, whereas August had the most domestic guest nights. The least popular month was January for both domestic and international guest nights.

Figure 3: Wales had a smaller proportion of international guests compared with the other UK countries in the twelve months to June 2024

Number of guest nights in short-term lets offered through collaborative economy platforms, by guest origin and country, July 2023 to June 2024

International guest nights are not evenly distributed across the UK. In Scotland, 46% of guest nights were by international guests, making it the largest proportion in the UK. In comparison, only 12% of guest nights in Wales were by international visitors. In England, 35% of guest nights were by international visitors. In Northern Ireland 41% of guest nights were by international guests (a third of these international guests were from the Republic of Ireland).

The LAUs with the highest proportion of guest nights coming from international visitors were:

- Westminster (87%) in England

- Skye and Lochalsh (69%) in Scotland

- Cardiff (25%) in Wales

- Derry City and Strabane (50%) in Northern Ireland

In London, which had almost half of the UK total number of international guest nights (48%), there were seven LAUs where the proportion of guest nights coming from international visitors was above 80%. These were:

- Westminster

- Kensington and Chelsea

- Camden

- City of London

- Islington

- Southwark

- Hammersmith

The large concentration of international guest nights in London can be seen in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Proportion of guest nights by country of origin, by local administrative unit, UK, July 2023 to June 2024

Proportion of international guests by country of origin

International guests using the short-term lets booking platforms can be separated into smaller categories or individual countries of origin. In the 12 months to June 2024, the top three categories or countries of origin were:

- the US, where visitors accounted for 20% of international guest nights

- the "Asia other" country-of-origin category, including Malaysia, Thailand and India (10% of total international guest nights)

- Germany, where visitors accounted for 9% of international guest nights

More information about the "Asia other" country-of-origin category used in this release, is available in Section 7: Glossary.

Figure 5: Visitors from the USA had the highest number of guest nights in Great Britain in the 12 months to June 2024

Top 10 countries of origin for guest nights in UK countries

The month with the highest number of guest nights varied by the guest's country of origin. However, the highest number of guest nights fell in the summer months across all country-of-origin categories. International guest nights from the US were the highest in June (962,690), from the "Asia other" category in July (413,690), and from Germany in August (428,810).

While guest nights were typically more concentrated in the summer months for international visitors, some countries had the highest level of guest nights booked in UK short-term lets in the winter. Guests from Portugal, Greece, Cyprus and Malta all had the most guest nights in December, while Romanian guest nights were highest in November. We do not collect information on the reason for stays in short-term lets, but the differences may partly reflect the reasons people travel to the UK in different seasons, such as for tourism, business purposes or to visit family.

6 . Data on short-term lets through online collaborative economy platforms

[Guest nights, nights and stays for short-term lets, quarterly, UK](#)
Dataset | Released 13 November 2024
The number of guest nights, nights, and stays for short-term lets offered through online collaborative economy platforms (Airbnb, Booking.com and Expedia Group).

[Guest nights, nights and stays for short-term lets by country of origin of international guests, quarterly, UK](#)
Dataset | Released 13 November 2024
The number of guest nights, nights, and stays by country of origin of international guests for short-term lets offered through online collaborative economy platforms (Airbnb, Booking.com and Expedia Group).

[Guest nights, nights and stays for short-term lets, monthly, UK](#)
Dataset | Released 13 November 2024
Number of guest nights, nights and stays in short-term lets offered via online collaborative economy platforms, by month.

[Guest nights, nights and stays for short-term lets, by country of origin of international guests, monthly, UK](#)
Dataset | Released 13 November 2024
Number of guest nights, nights and stays in short-term lets offered through online collaborative economy platforms, by country of origin of international guests.

7 . Glossary

Short-term lets

Refers to rentals, such as apartments or rooms, booked through three online booking platforms (Airbnb, Booking.com and Expedia Group), excluding other forms of accommodation, such as hotels or campsites.

Number of stays

The number of times a short-term let offered via the platforms was occupied.

Number of nights

The number of nights a short-term let offered via the platforms was occupied.

Number of guest nights

The number of nights spent during a stay, with a night counted per individual member of the visiting group. This can be influenced by guest group size and length of stay. For example, a group of four staying for two nights would be eight guest nights, but two nights and one stay.

"Asia Other" country-of-origin category

The "Asia Other" country-of-origin category includes all countries within Asia, except China, Japan and Korea.

Domestic guest nights

Guest nights spent by tourists who are residents in the United Kingdom.

International guest nights

Guest nights spent by tourists who are not residents in the United Kingdom.

Local administrative unit

Local administrative units (LAUs) are maintained by Eurostat to meet the demand for statistics at a local level. LAU1 areas form the component parts of the International Territorial Level (ITL) geographies, which are an internationally comparable regional geography for the UK.

LAUs are broadly comparable to local authority districts in the UK, however, there are some differences. While in Northern Ireland and Wales, LAUs and local authorities are the same, for England and Scotland, some local authorities are split up further as LAUs. For example, the single local authority of Cumberland is three separate LAUs.

8 . Data sources and quality

Data from three online collaborative economy platforms (Airbnb, Booking.com and Expedia Group) provide data on short-term lets to the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Data from Vrbo, Expedia, Hotels.com, Orbitz, Ebookers, CheapTickets, Trivago and others under the Expedia Group umbrella are included as part of Expedia Group. The ONS then aggregates the data for these statistics.

Data includes information on the number of guest nights, nights and stays, as well as information on the country of origin of visitors in the UK. Data is provided at the local administrative unit (LAU) level in the United Kingdom, which is also aggregated to form international territorial levels (ITLs), countries and the United Kingdom as a whole.

The data has a strong seasonal tread. Therefore, changes over time should generally be compared year-on-year, rather than month-on-month or quarter-on-quarter.

Strengths and limitations

The article is based on data provided to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) by three international platforms (Airbnb, Booking.com and Expedia Group). The data covers short-stay accommodation in the UK, offered by service providers via one of these three online collaborative economy platforms.

Only accommodation offered through the three platforms is included in this bulletin and dataset. It cannot be added to other tourism statistics on holiday rentals or other types of accommodation, such as hotels, because of potential overlaps. Only the merged data for the three platforms is available; individual data on each platform will not be disclosed.

While we believe these statistics cover a large proportion of short-term-lets activity in the UK, they do not cover all activity, as data from other providers and platforms are not included.

The data we receive cannot be de-duplicated across the three platforms, which means we cannot calculate the number of unique hosts or visitors.

The Scottish Government introduced licensing for short-term lets in October 2022, with existing short-term let operators having until October 2023 to apply for a license from their local authority. They publish Short Term Lets Licensing Statistics, with the latest data available as of 31 December 2023.

There will be differences between the Scottish Government data and our Hosts, listings, and bed spaces of short-term lets, UK dataset for a few reasons. Firstly, the Scottish Government publish data on the number of short-term let license applications that were validated by local authorities as of 31 December 2023. Because of the large volume of applications received by the October deadline for existing hosts and some applications being incomplete, some applications were not validated in time to be reflected in their published data. Data is subject to revision in future releases.

Secondly, the data that we have released on hosts, listings and bedspaces refer to the number of hosts and visitors of short-term let accommodation listed by one of the three online collaborative economy platforms in 2023. The number of unique hosts cannot be identified, as there will be duplication because of hosts advertising their property on more than one platform. Consequently, we would generally expect the number of hosts in the data accompanying this release to be higher than the number of licenses in Scottish Government data.

In Northern Ireland, it is a legal requirement that all tourist accommodation providers must receive certification from Tourism Northern Ireland before they are allowed to begin operating.

In January 2024, the Welsh Government announced plans to introduce a statutory registration and licensing scheme for visitor accommodation in Wales.

In February 2024, the previous government's proposal to introduce a mandatory, national register of short-term lets in England was announced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (known at the time as the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities).

The House of Commons Library published a paper examining the growth in short-term lettings and measures to strengthen regulation in England. It also provides a brief overview of the regulatory approaches in other countries.

9 . Related links

Overseas travel and tourism, provisional
Statistical Bulletin | Released 18 October 2024
Estimates for overseas travel and tourism, including visits, spending, number of nights, and purpose of visit.

Travel trends estimates: overseas residents in the UK
Dataset | Released May 2024
Annual estimates of overseas residents' visits and spending. Also includes data on nights, purpose, region of UK visited and mode of travel. Breakdowns by nationality and area of residence are covered.

UK short-term rentals
Report | Released October 2024
This report, published by Visit Britain, provides monthly insights on the overall supply of short-term rental properties across the UK, as well as a selection of performance metrics.

The growth in short-term lettings in England
Research Briefing | Released May 2024
Briefing from the House of Commons Library which examines the growth in short-term lettings and measures to strengthen regulation of the sector in England.

10 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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