

Article

# Travel trends: 2016

Travel trends is an annual report that provides estimates and profiles of travel and tourism visits (those of less than 12 months' duration) and associated earnings and expenditure between the UK and the rest of the world. The International Passenger Survey (IPS) has been providing the source data for travel and tourism since 1961.



Contact:  
Giles Horsfield  
socialsurveys@ons.gsi.gov.uk  
+44 (0)1633 455731

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# 1 . Main points

- There was a record number of visits to the UK in 2016 and a record number of visits abroad by UK residents.
- There were 37.6 million visits by overseas residents to the UK in 2016, which was 4% more than in 2015.
- There were 70.8 million visits overseas by UK residents in 2016, which was 8% more than in 2015.
- UK residents spent £43.8 billion on visits overseas in 2016, which was 12% more than in 2015.
- Overseas residents spent £22.5 billion on visits to the UK in 2016, an increase of 2% compared with 2015.
- The most frequent reason for visits was for holidays, both for UK residents visiting abroad and overseas residents visiting the UK.

## 2 . Things you need to know about this release

Travel trends is an annual report that provides estimates and profiles of travel and tourism visits (those of less than 12 months' duration) and associated earnings and expenditure between the UK and the rest of the world. The [International Passenger Survey](#) (IPS) has been providing the source data for travel and tourism since 1961.

The information provided in this report is used in a number of ways, including:

- to track earnings and expenditure, as an important input to measuring balance of payments
- to understand how the volume of visits and earnings to the UK develops, which can be compared with statistics from other countries to assess how effective the UK is in attracting visits from main parts of the world, for different purposes and among different demographic groups
- to help understand how particular events held in the UK (for example, the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympics) link to visits and spending, which can aid future decision making
- to provide insights into how effective different parts of the UK are in attracting visits and earnings, in total and from different parts of the world and for different purposes
- to provide profiles of UK residents travelling to different parts of the world, to aid government and industry in developing policy and strategy

Estimates contained in this bulletin are produced from responses provided by international passengers arriving in and departing from the UK, sampled on the IPS.

Responses to the survey are scaled up to represent all passengers using information on total international passenger traffic for the reporting period.

The reported spend for visits include any spending associated (excluding fares) with the visit, which may occur before, during or after the trip.

Parts of the bulletin 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.

Estimates are subject to sampling error and confidence intervals are provided to help you interpret the estimates (see section 7 Quality and methodology). Further guidance is available about the quality of overseas travel and tourism estimates.

[Overseas travel and tourism monthly estimates](#) are revised during the processing of the [quarterly dataset](#) and again during the processing of the [annual dataset](#). This bulletin contains final estimates for 2016.

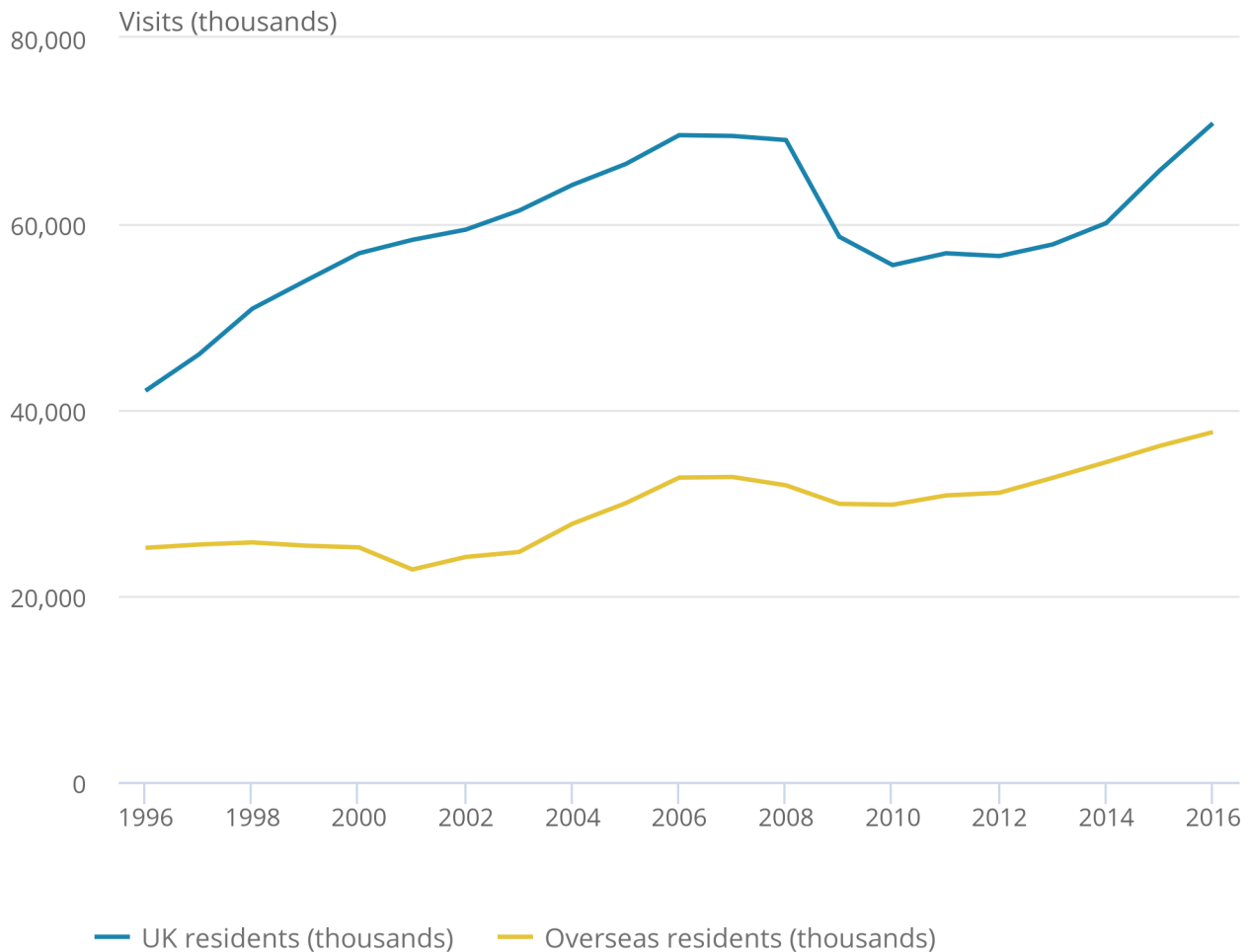
### **3 . Overseas trips reached record levels in 2016, both to and from the UK**

There were 70.8 million visits overseas by UK residents in 2016 (see Figure 1), an increase of 8% compared with 2015. This is a record figure, and the first time that visits have surpassed the 2006 figure of 69.5 million. In general, visit numbers have increased over time, from 42 million in 1996, although the number of visits fell sharply in 2009 in the wake of the economic downturn. Numbers have increased every year since 2012.

There were 37.6 million visits by overseas residents to the UK in 2016 (see Figure 1), 4% more than in 2015. This was the sixth successive increase and the highest figure recorded. Numbers of visits to the UK have increased over the years: 20 years ago there were 25.2 million visits.

**Figure 1: Visits to and from the UK, 1996 to 2016**

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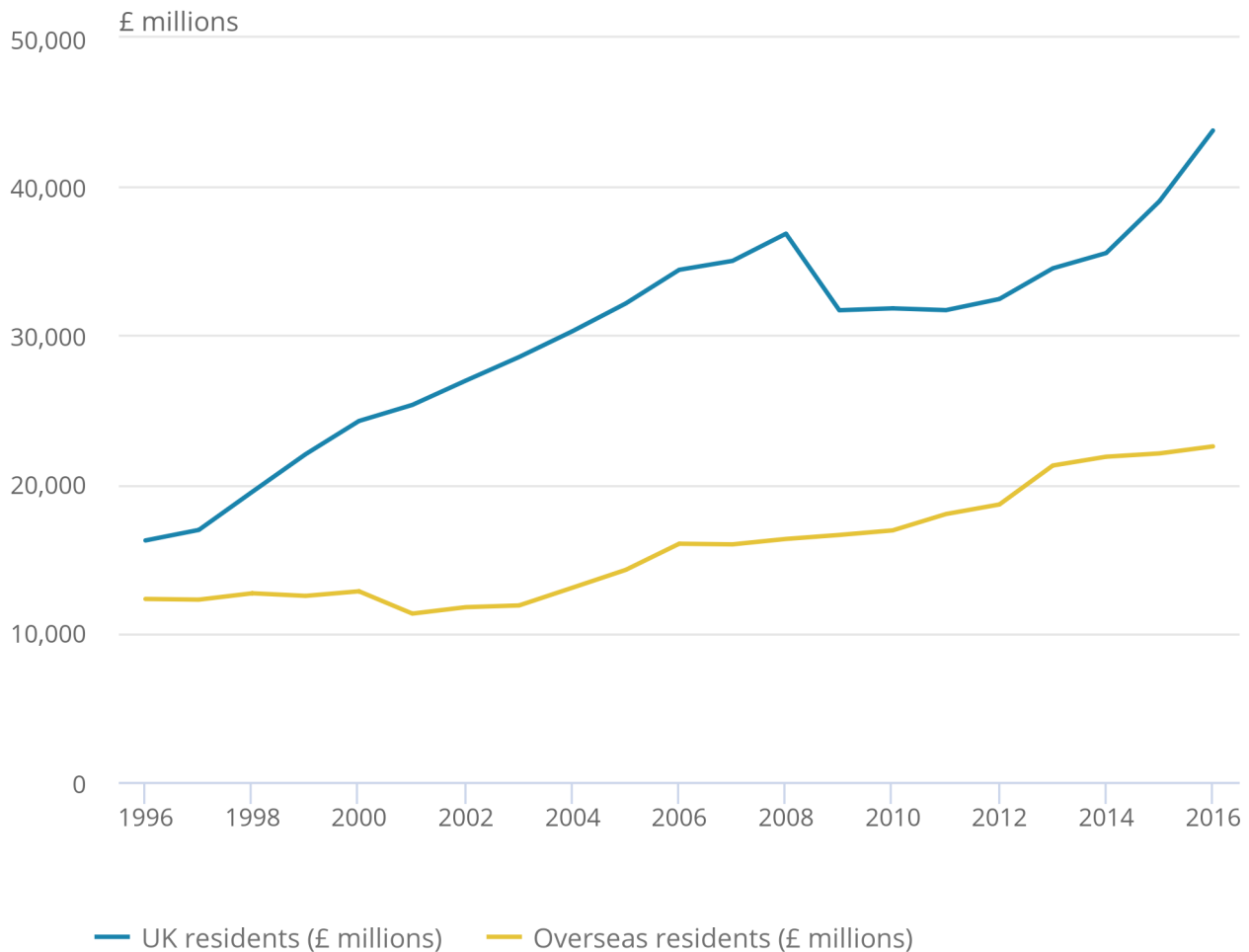
Source: International Passenger Survey (IPS), Office for National Statistics

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

UK residents spent £43.8 billion on visits abroad in 2016, which was 12% more than in 2015. Overseas residents spent £22.5 billion on visits to the UK in 2016, an increase of 2% from 2015. Over the longer-term, the amounts spent on visits have increased broadly in line with the increases in the numbers of visits (see Figure 2) both for visits to the UK and visits overseas by UK residents, although it should be noted that the spending is recorded at current prices and not adjusted for inflation.

**Figure 2: Spending on visits to and from the UK, 1996 to 2016**

Figure 2: Spending on visits to and from the UK, 1996 to 2016



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

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

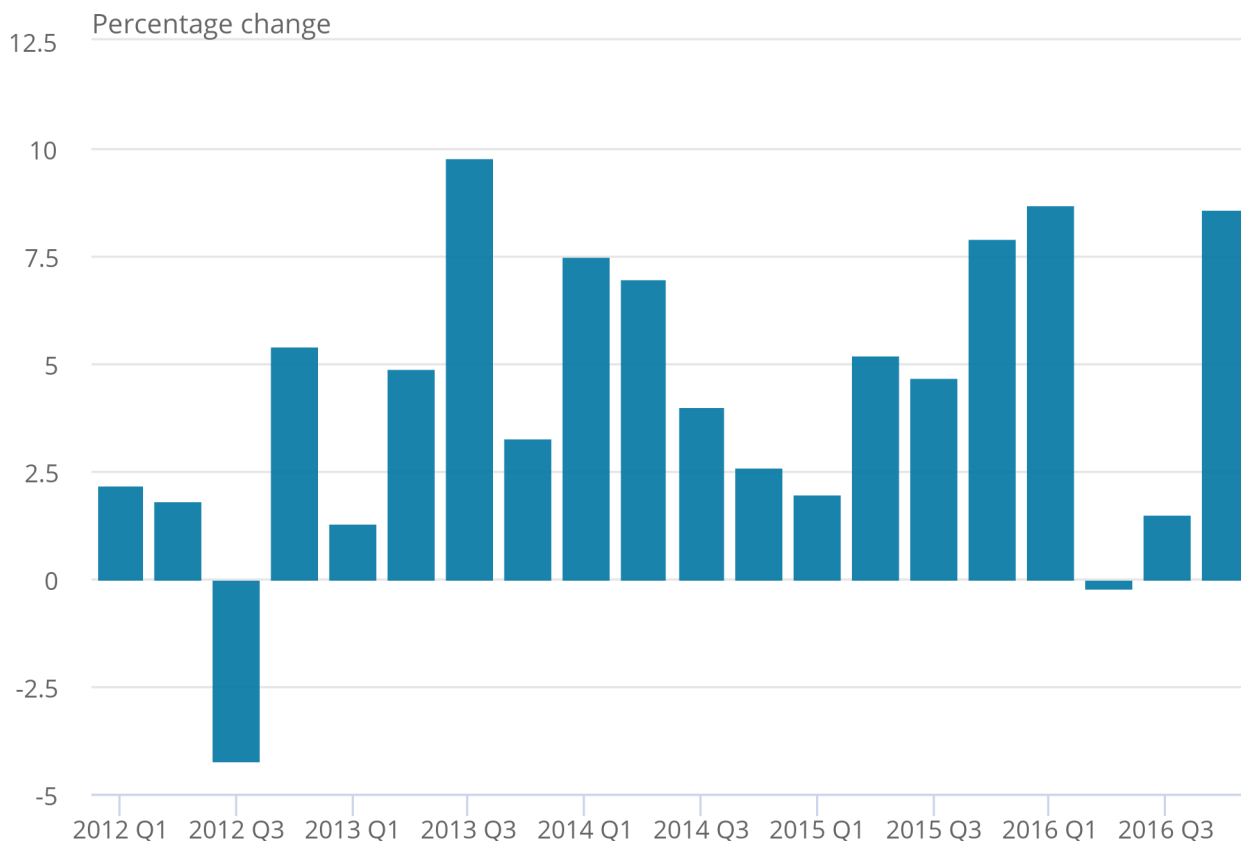
## 4 . Overseas residents' visits to the UK increased in line with recent trends

Comparing visit numbers (figure 3) by quarter with the corresponding period of the previous year, and the total amounts spent on these visits (figure 4), allows recent trends to be investigated with greater granularity.

Since the first quarter of 2012, there have generally been increases in numbers of visits to the UK, compared with the corresponding period a year earlier. This pattern continued for most quarters of 2016, with growth of more than 8% in Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) and Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) , but a small decrease and lower growth observed in Quarter 2 (Apr to June) and Quarter 3 (July to Sept), respectively.

**Figure 3: Percentage change from a year earlier in overseas residents' visits to the UK, 2012 to 2016**

Figure 3: Percentage change from a year earlier in overseas residents' visits to the UK, 2012 to 2016



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

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

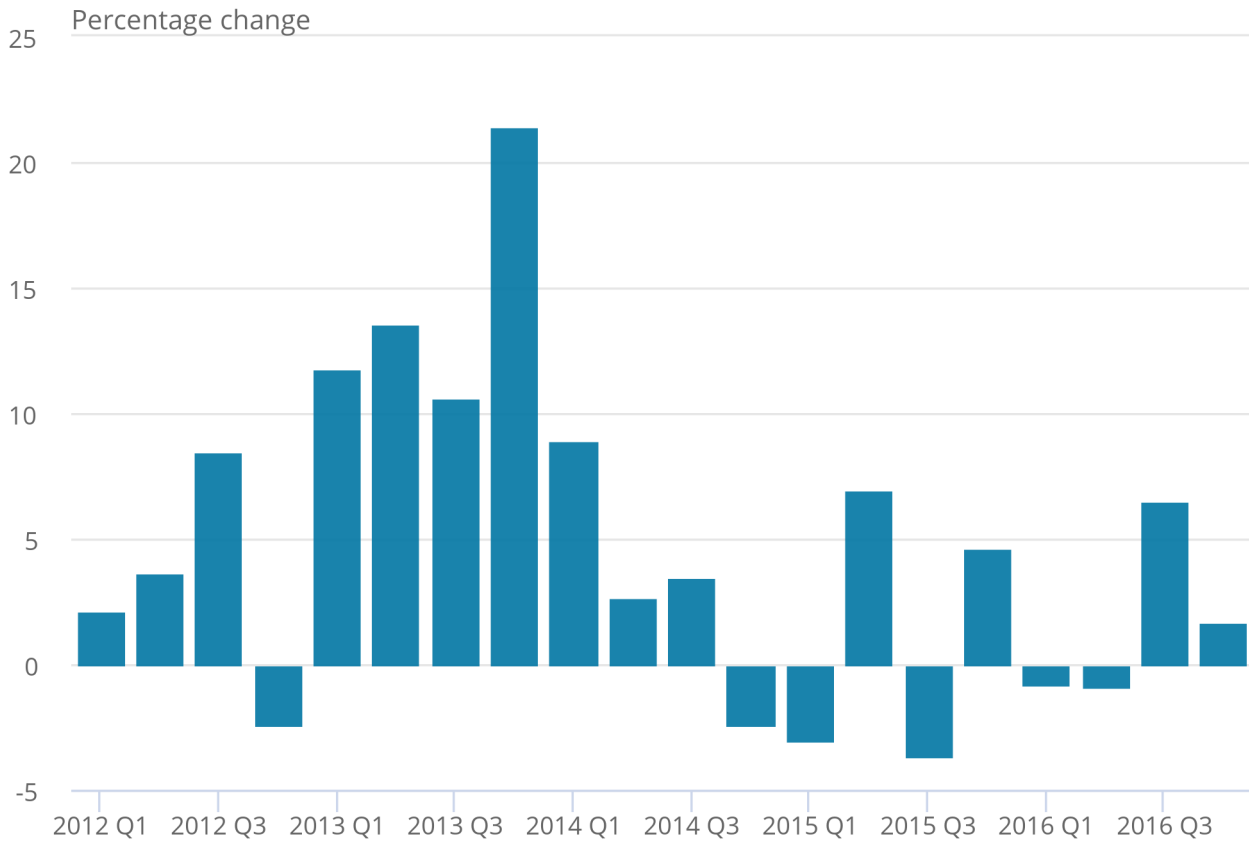
**Notes:**

1. Q1 refers to Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar), Q2 refers to Quarter 2 (Apr to June), Q3 refers to Quarter 3 (July to Sept) and Q4 refers to Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec).

There was little difference in the total amounts spent on visits to the UK in each quarter of 2016, compared with the corresponding quarter a year previously, except for Quarter 3, which recorded a 6% increase. This is broadly in line with the trends observed since 2012, although higher year-on-year increases in spending were recorded consistently in 2013.

**Figure 4: Percentage change from a year earlier in overseas residents' spending on visits to the UK, 2012 to 2016**

Figure 4: Percentage change from a year earlier in overseas residents' spending on visits to the UK, 2012 to 2016



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

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

**Notes:**

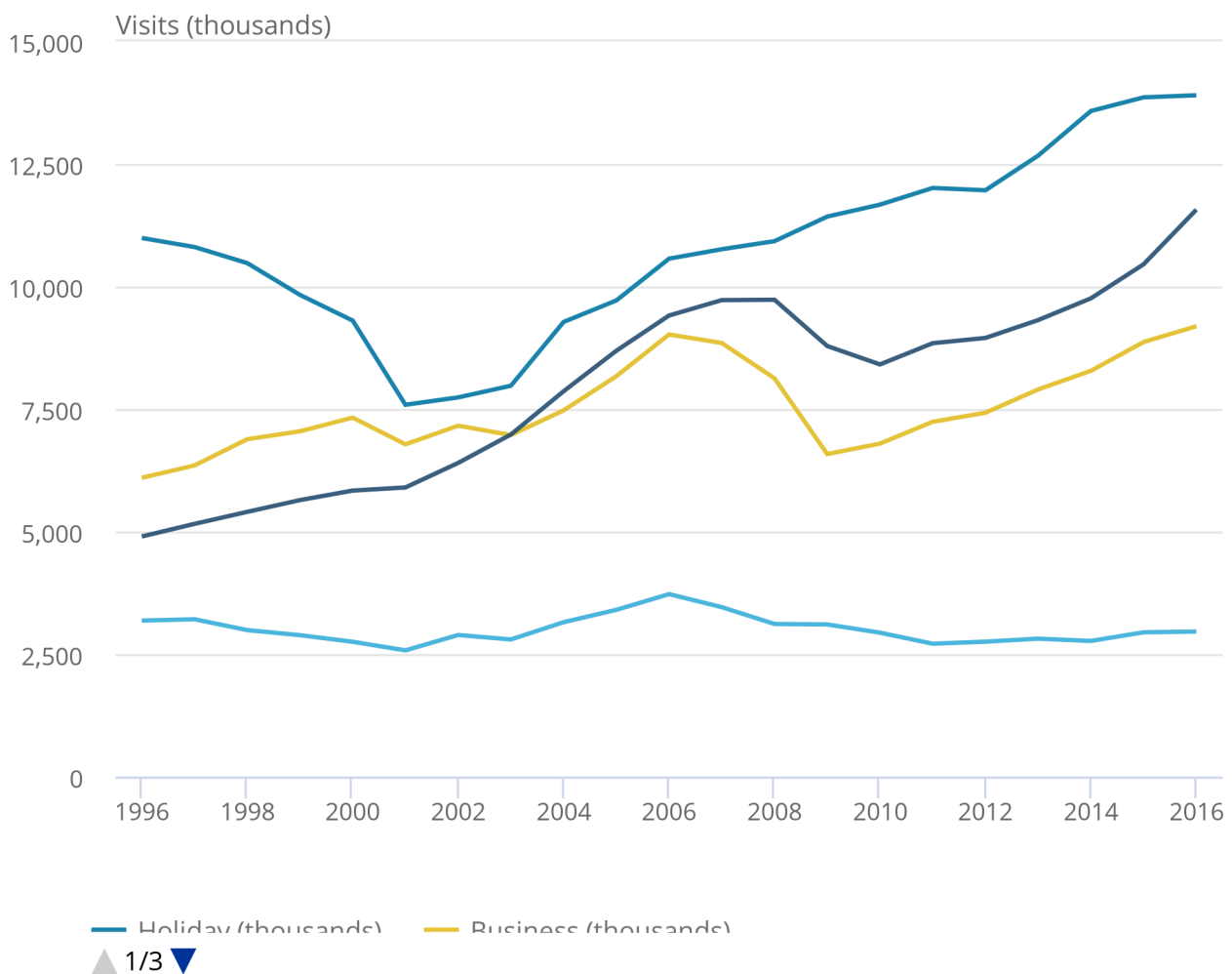
1. Q1 refers to Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar), Q2 refers to Quarter 2 (Apr to June), Q3 refers to Quarter 3 (July to Sept) and Q4 refers to Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec).

## Holidays are still the most common reason for visiting the UK

There were 13.9 million holiday visits to the UK in 2016, which were 37% of the total visits. This makes holidays the most common reason for visiting the UK. The number of holiday visits in 2016 was very similar to 2015. The next most frequent reasons for visiting were visiting friends and relatives (11.6 million) and business visits (9.2 million). There have been increases in visits to the UK overall since 1996 for all these reasons (see Figure 5), despite falls in some years, notably in 2001 (Foot and Mouth disease as well as the events of 11 September that year) and 2009 (following the start of the economic downturn).

**Figure 5: Overseas residents visits by purpose, 1996 to 2016**

Figure 5: Overseas residents visits by purpose, 1996 to 2016



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

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



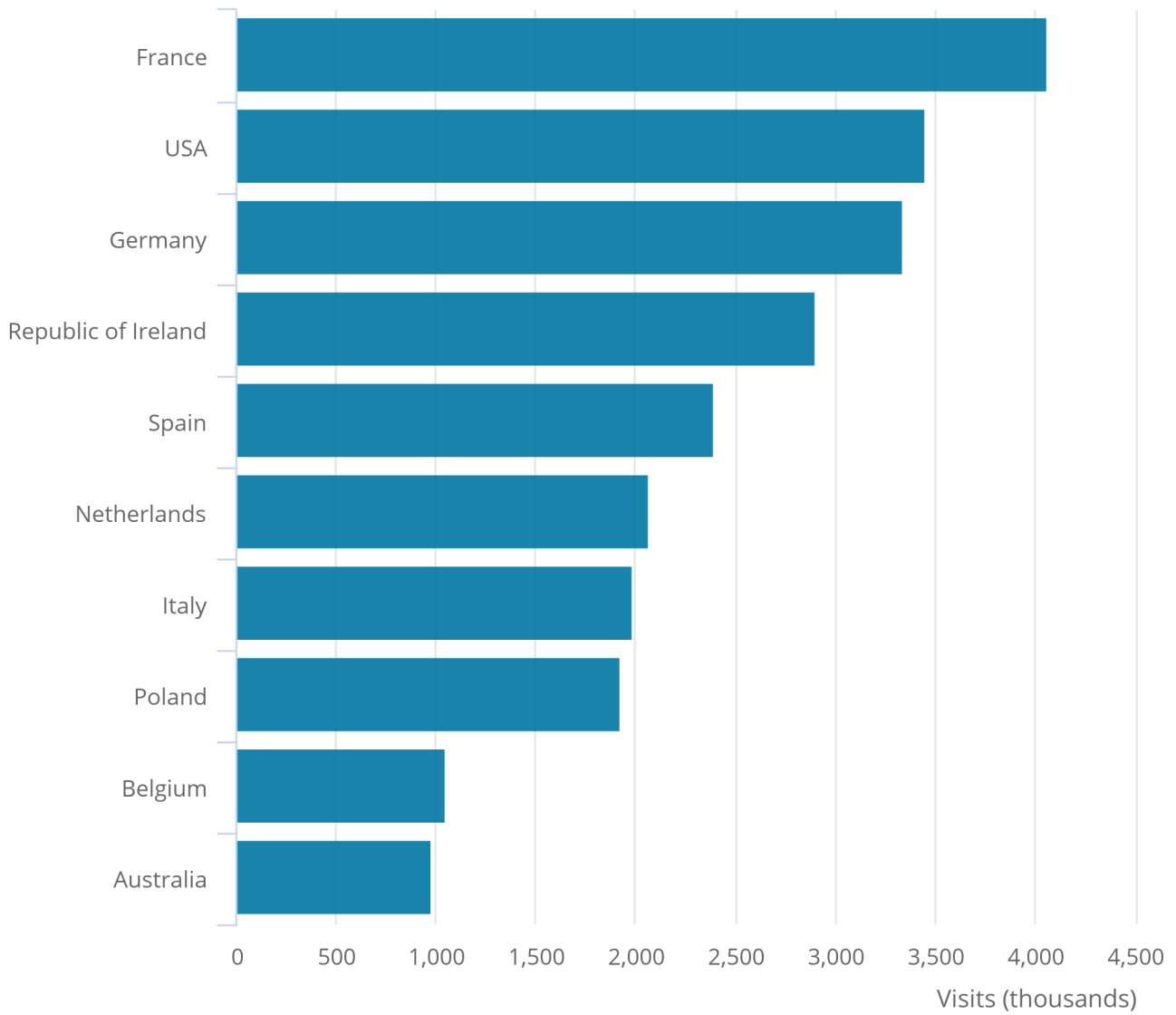
The average length of visits to the UK has stayed fairly consistent over the 5 years from 2012 to 2016: between 7 and 8 nights. Residents of “Other Countries” (countries outside Europe and North America) stayed the longest (13.7 nights on average in 2016), as might be expected since they have travelled the furthest. European residents stayed the shortest time on average, at 5.9 nights: the distance travelled is shorter and there are a relatively large number of business trips from this region. Business trips were the shortest type of visit, on average, at 4.0 nights.

## **French residents visited the UK more than residents of any other country**

There were 4.1 million visits to the UK by French residents in 2016, more than any other country. This was similar to the number of visits in 2015 (4.2 million). Of the 10 countries whose residents visited the UK the most frequently in 2016, eight were EU countries (see Figure 6). The non-EU countries were the USA (3.5 million visits, the second highest total) and Australia (1.0 million visits, the 10th highest total). The top 10 list was unchanged from 2015 and has remained stable over recent years.

**Figure 6: Top 10 visiting countries: number of visits, 2016**

Figure 6: Top 10 visiting countries: number of visits, 2016



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

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

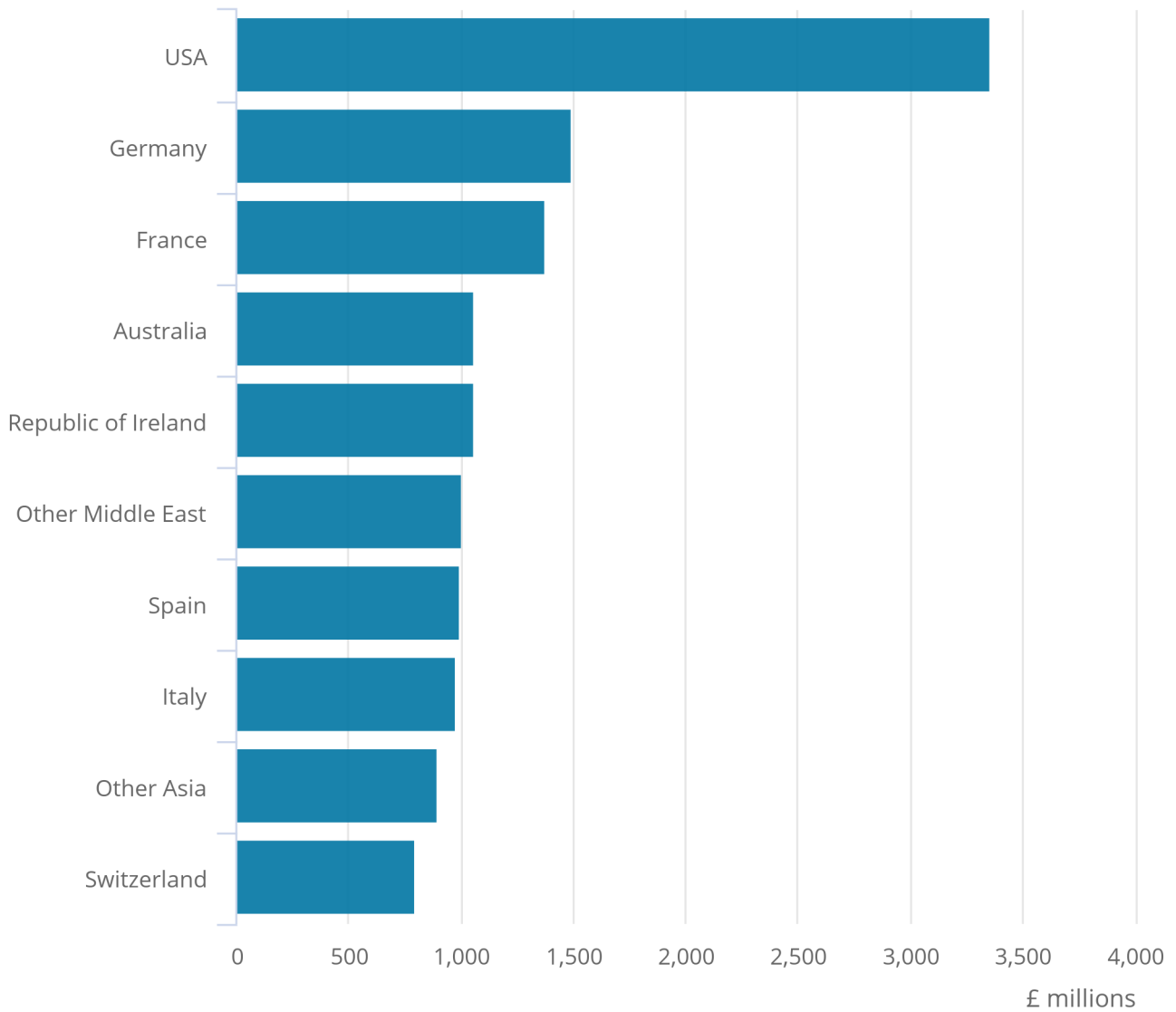
## USA residents spent the most on visits to the UK

The average amount spent on visits to the UK in 2016 was £596, slightly less than the £608 spent per visit in 2015. Visitors from “Other Countries” spent the most per visit, an average of £1,240. The higher spend recorded by residents of these countries was driven partly by their longer stays. The average spend per day in 2016 for all countries was £81; the highest spenders per day were residents of North America (£109), followed by residents of “Other Countries” (£90) and Europe (£70).

USA residents spent more on visits to the UK than residents of any other country, a total of £3.4 billion and an increase of 11% on 2015 (see Figure 7). This reflects their relatively high spending per visit (£969) combined with the number of visits. The amount spent by French and German residents (the second and third highest) largely reflected their high numbers of visits, as did the spending by visitors from the Republic of Ireland. Over £1 billion was spent in the UK by visitors from each of these countries, as well as residents of Australia and “Other Middle East” countries (see Geographical areas for countries included here). Visitors from “Other Middle East” countries were among the highest spenders per visit, averaging £2,103.

**Figure 7: Top 10 spending countries: expenditure in the UK, 2016**

Figure 7: Top 10 spending countries: expenditure in the UK, 2016



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

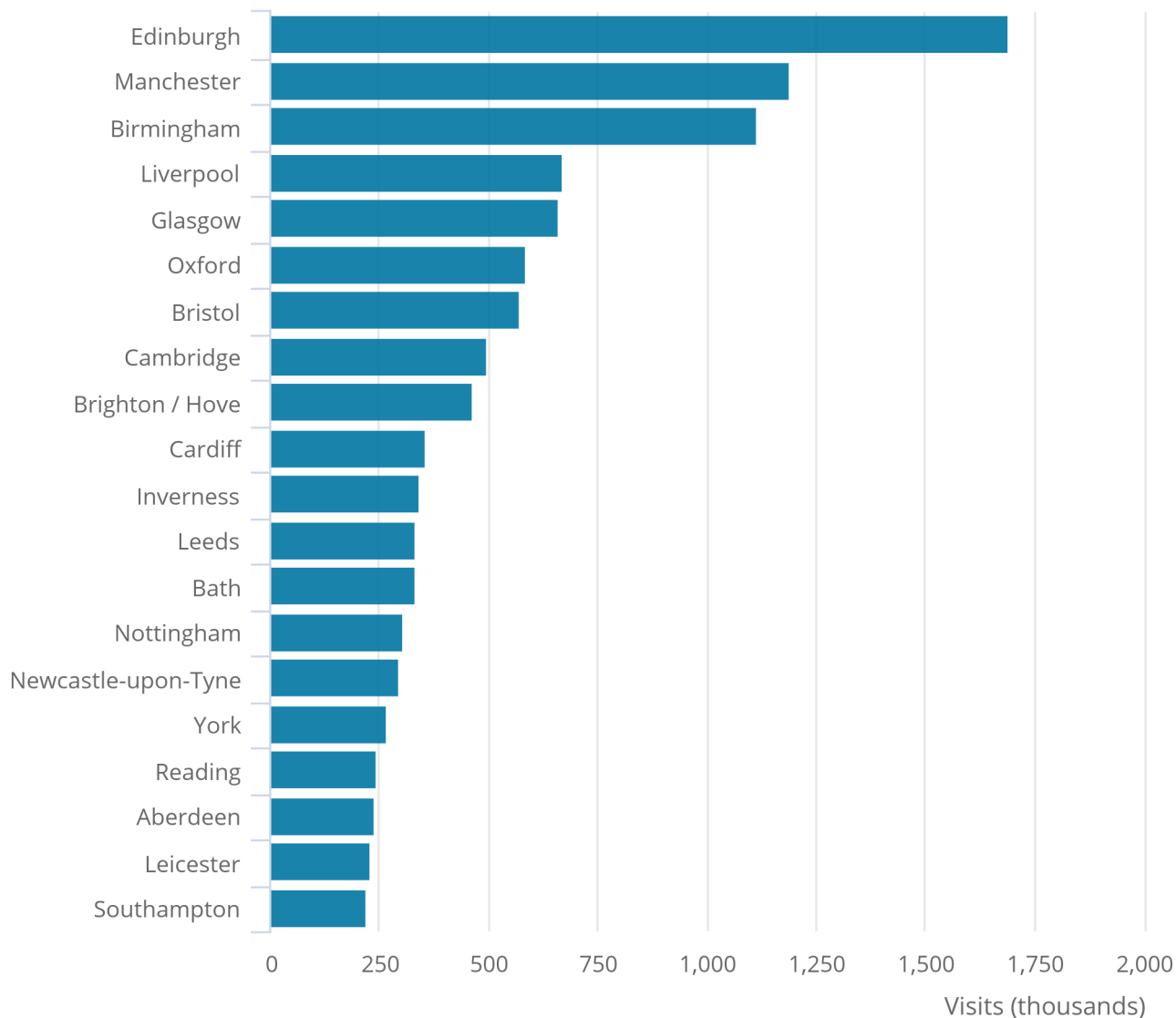
Source: International Passenger Survey (IPS), Office for National Statistics

## **London, Edinburgh, Manchester and Birmingham each attracted over 1 million stays from overseas visitors**

London attracted 19.1 million overnight visits in 2016, far more than any other town or city. More than half of visits to the UK included a trip to London. Overnight visits to cities other than London are shown in Figure 8. Edinburgh (1.7 million), Manchester (1.2 million) and Birmingham (1.1 million) each received more than 1 million overnight visits.

**Figure 8: Top 20 UK towns (excluding London) visited for at least one night, 2016**

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

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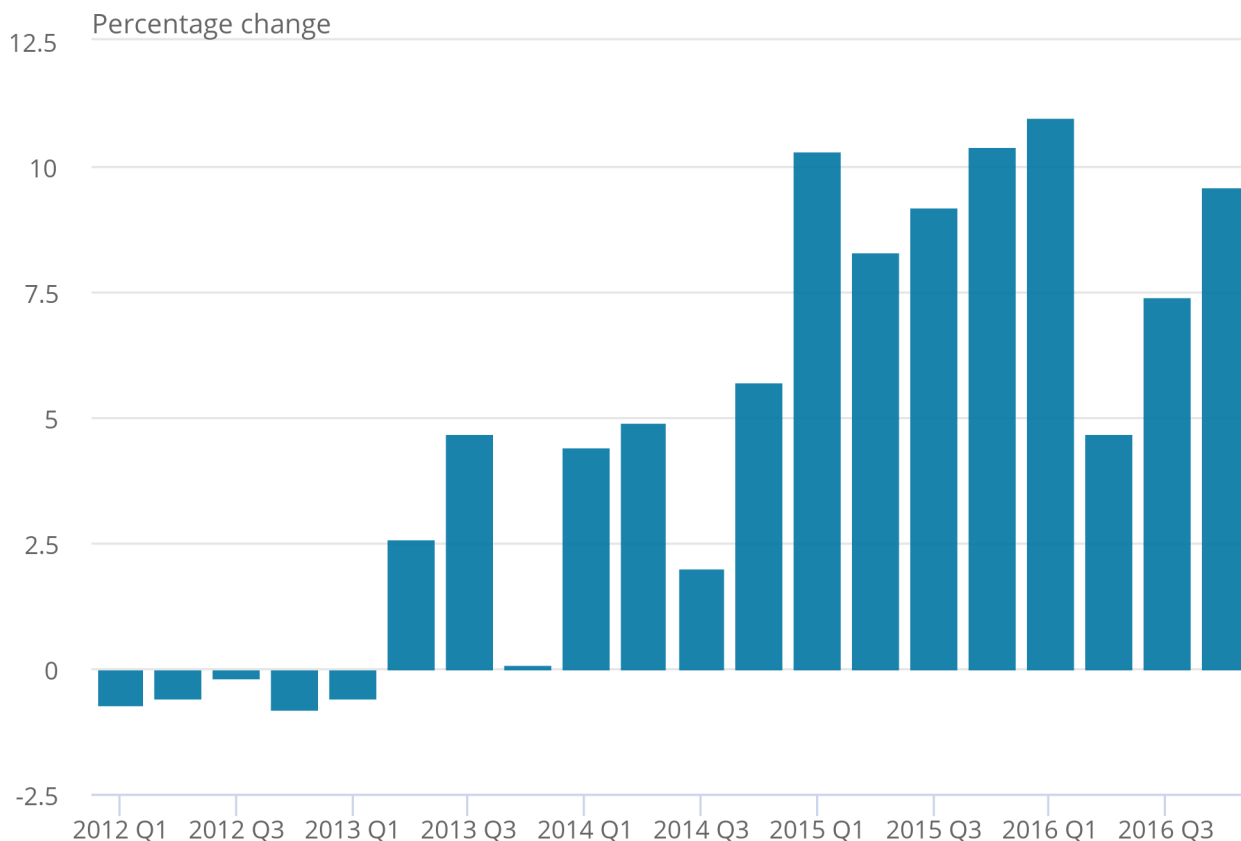
The most common reasons for visits varied among the cities. Nearly half of London's visits (49%) were for holidays, while holidays accounted for two-thirds of Edinburgh's visits (68%). More than half (53%) of Birmingham's visits were business trips, while Manchester's visits were more evenly spread between holidays (23%), business trips (33%) and visiting friends and relatives (28%).

## **5 . UK residents' visits abroad continued to increase throughout 2016**

There were 70.8 million visits overseas by UK residents in 2016, the highest figure recorded by the IPS. Visit numbers for each quarter of 2016 and preceding years are compared with the corresponding period one year earlier in figure 9. The year-on-year quarterly growth in 2016 varied between 11% (Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar)) and 4.7% (Quarter 2 (Apr to June)). This was slightly lower than the growth in numbers of visits seen in 2015 but higher than in 2014 and 2013.

**Figure 9: Percentage change from a year earlier in UK residents' visits abroad, 2012 to 2016**

Figure 9: Percentage change from a year earlier in UK residents' visits abroad, 2012 to 2016



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

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

**Notes:**

1. Q1 refers to Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar), Q2 refers to Quarter 2 (Apr to June), Q3 refers to Quarter 3 (July to Sept) and Q4 refers to Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec).

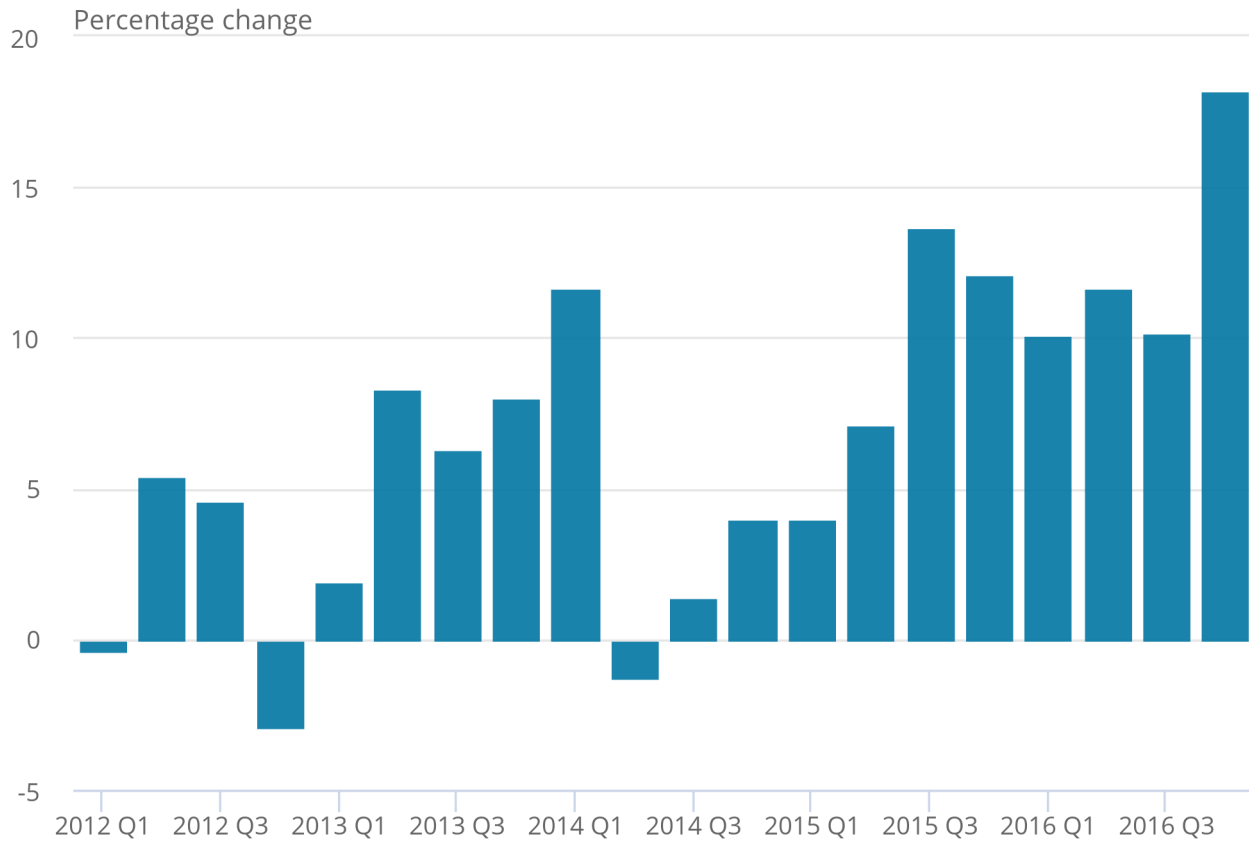
### **UK residents spent more abroad in the last quarter of 2016**

The total amounts spent by UK residents visiting abroad compared with the corresponding quarter of the previous year, are shown in Figure 10. In the period between the third quarter (July to Sept) of 2015 and the third quarter of 2016, year-on-year spending increased by between approximately 10% and 14%. This was higher than the growth in spending seen in the preceding 3 years, when it exceeded 10% only in Quarter 1 2014. Spending increased in the final quarter on 2016: it was 18% higher than in the final quarter of 2015.



**Figure 10: Percentage change from a year earlier in UK residents' spending abroad, 2012 to 2016**

Figure 10: Percentage change from a year earlier in UK residents' spending abroad, 2012 to 2016



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

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

**Notes:**

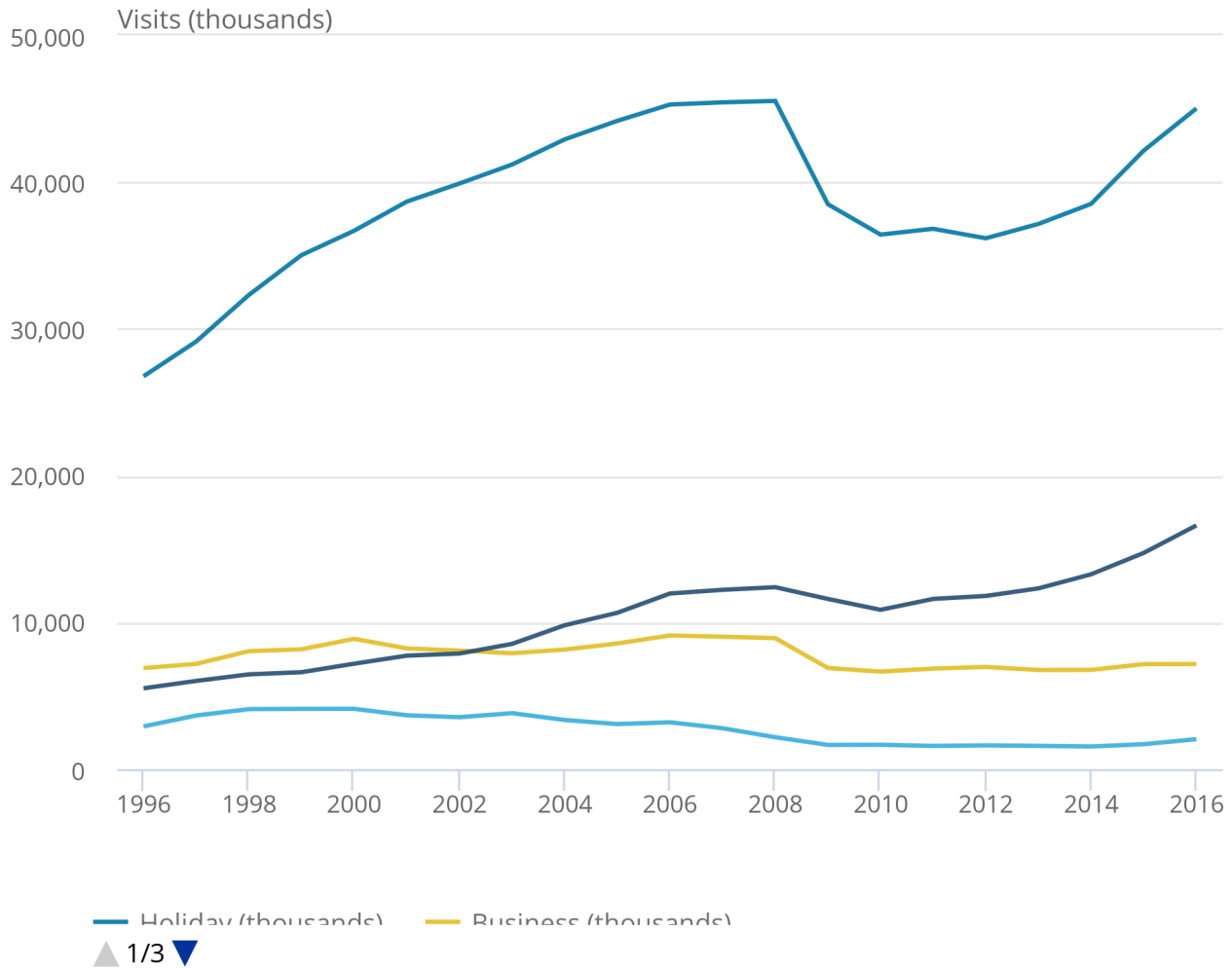
1. Q1 refers to Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar), Q2 refers to Quarter 2 (Apr to June), Q3 refers to Quarter 3 (July to Sept) and Q4 refers to Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec).

**Holidays were the most common reason for travel abroad in 2016**

Figure 11 shows that the most common purpose for travelling abroad was for holidays, with visiting friends or relatives as the second most popular reason. The underlying trend for business and miscellaneous purposes for travel is fairly flat but numbers are increasing for holidays and visiting friends or relatives. For example, there were 26.8 million holiday visits and 5.5 million friends and relatives visits in 1996 compared with 45.0 million and 16.6 million respectively in 2016.

**Figure 11: UK residents' visits abroad by purpose, 1996 to 2016**

Figure 11: UK residents' visits abroad by purpose, 1996 to 2016



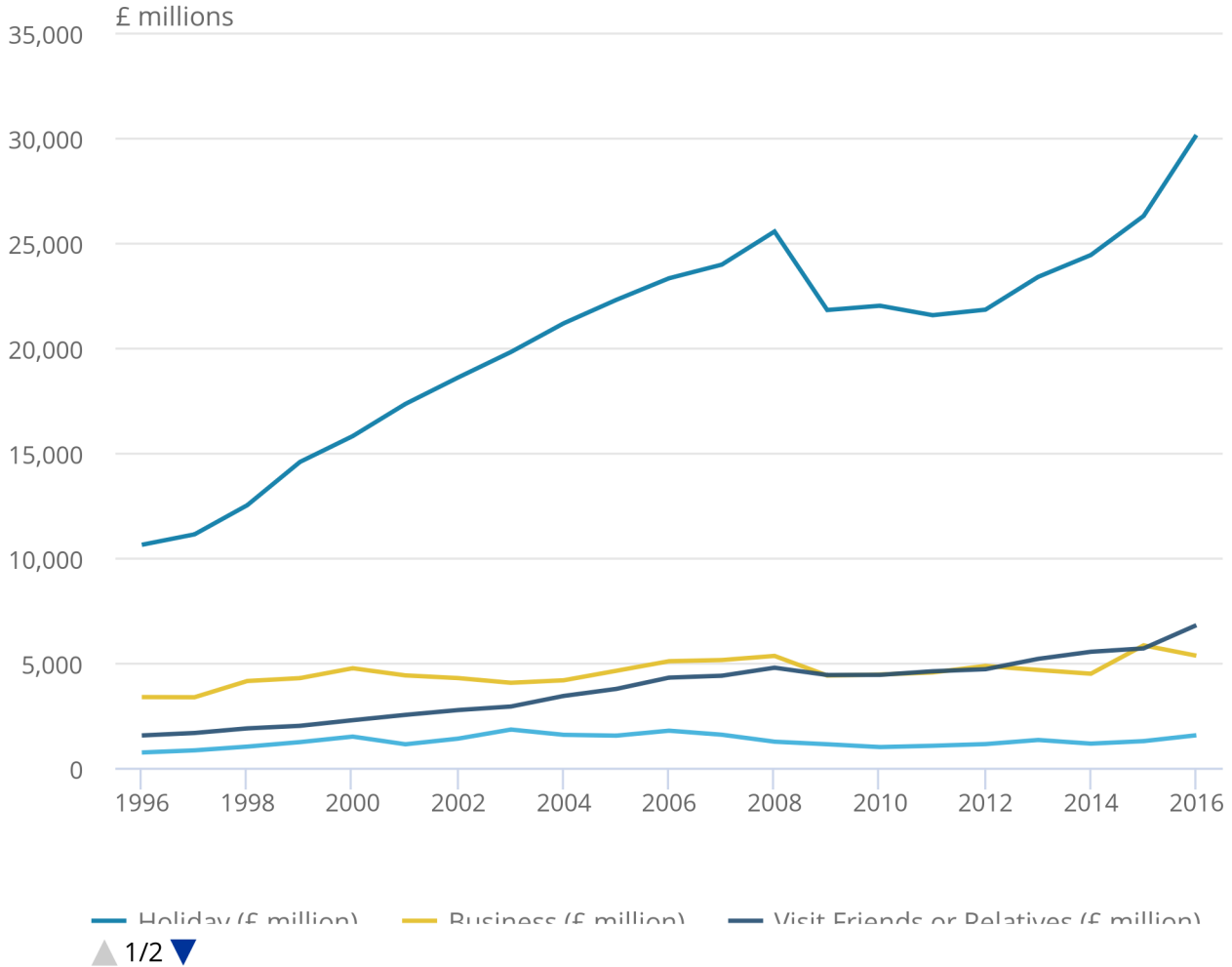
Source: International Passenger Survey (IPS), Office for National Statistics

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

Figure 12 shows that spending abroad increased for all purposes of visit in 2016 except business trips, which showed an 8% fall compared with 2015. UK residents travelling abroad for holidays spent the most, while those travelling for miscellaneous purposes spent the least. A total of £30.1 billion (69% of the total) was spent on holidays abroad compared with £26.3 billion in 2015.

**Figure 12: UK residents' spending on visits abroad by purpose, 1996 to 2016**

Figure 12: UK residents' spending on visits abroad by purpose, 1996 to 2016



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

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

### Visitors from the UK spent nearly three-quarters of a million nights abroad in 2016

UK residents spent 731 million nights abroad in 2016, a 7% increase from 2015. The average length of stay has remained constant since 2011 at about 10 nights. The average length of visits to EU15 countries was 8 nights, but this varied greatly among EU countries. Countries where visits tended to be shorter included Belgium (3 nights) and the Netherlands (4 nights); holidays were the most frequent reason for visits to both these countries. Visits were much longer, for example, to Bulgaria (14 nights, driven by holidays) and Romania (14 nights, mainly visiting friends and relatives).

On average, visits to North America were longer than to Europe (13.7 nights) and longest in “Other Countries” outside of Europe and North America (21.1 nights). UK residents visiting “Other Countries” spent an average of £51 per day and spent £1,077 on an average stay overall. This compared with European trips where the average spend per visit was £484 (with an average spend per day of £60).

The country where visits averaged the longest was Australia, at 39 nights. Spend per visit was also greatest in Australia, at £1,957, with an average spend per day of £50. The highest spend per day was for visits to Austria, at £104, with an average spend per visit of £757.

## **Spain is still the most visited country by UK residents**

There were 14.7 million visits to Spain by UK residents in 2016, an increase of 13% from 2015 and a record total. Visits to Spain were mainly for holidays (88% of the total). Visits to Poland increased by 19% from 2.0 million to 2.4 million, of which 71% were to visit friends and family. On the other hand, trips to France and Turkey decreased from 8.8 million to 8.5 million and from 1.5 million to 1.1 million, respectively.

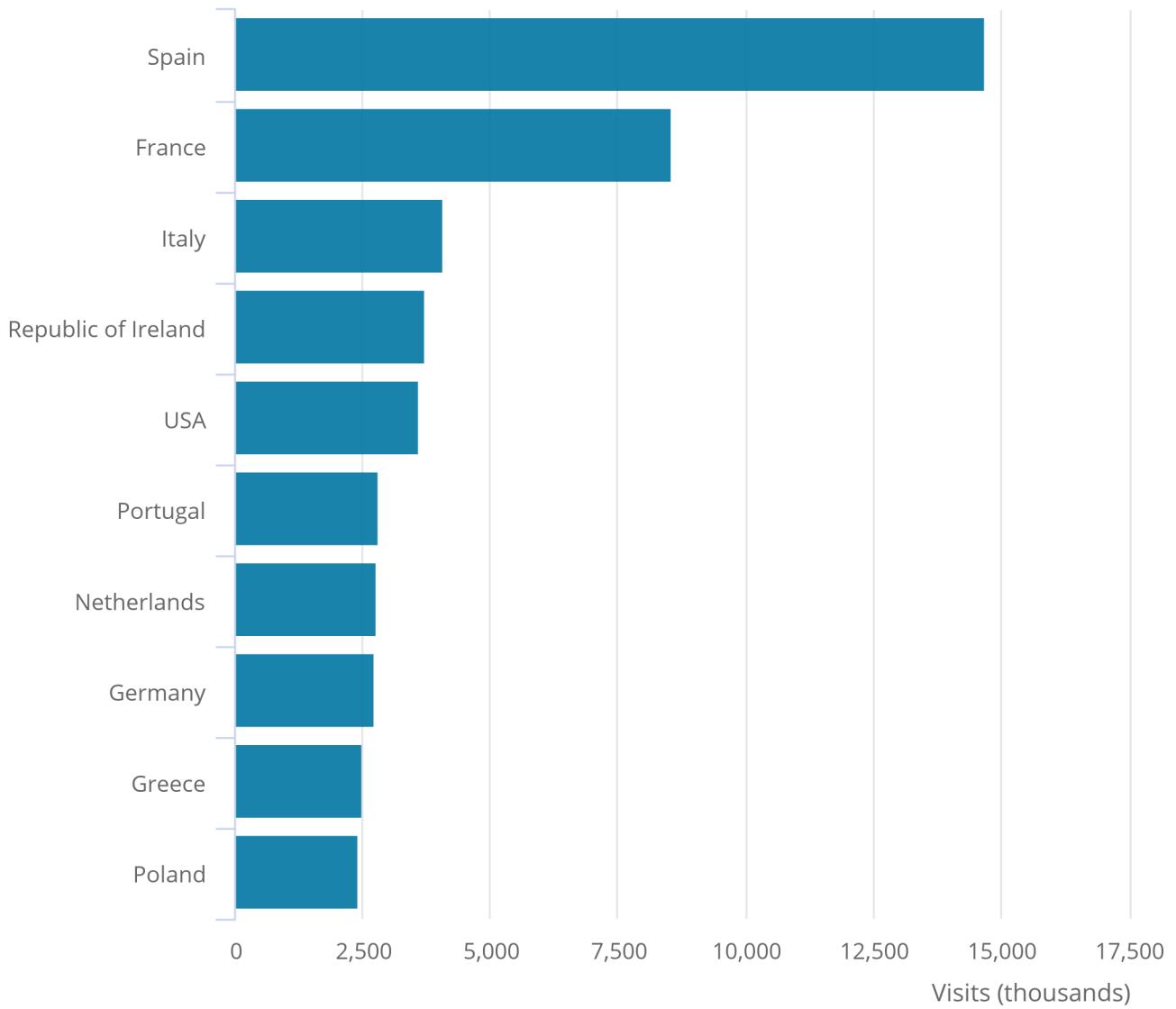
Spain, France, Italy, the Republic of Ireland and the USA, in that order, remain the top five most popular countries for UK residents to visit (see Figure 13), accounting for 49% of all visits abroad and approximately 46% of total spend abroad.

Poland is in the top 10 most visited countries by UK residents (2.4 million visits), and nearly three quarters (72%) of those visits were made by Polish nationals living in the UK. Other countries show a similar pattern, with a high proportion of visits by UK residents being by nationals of the country visited. Examples include Lithuania (86%), Romania (83%) and Slovakia (65%), but the number of visits to these countries was much smaller (0.3 million, 0.8 million and 0.2 million respectively).

Overall, 75% of visits were to EU countries, compared with 73% in 2015.

**Figure 13: Top 10 countries visited by UK residents, 2016**

Figure 13: Top 10 countries visited by UK residents, 2016



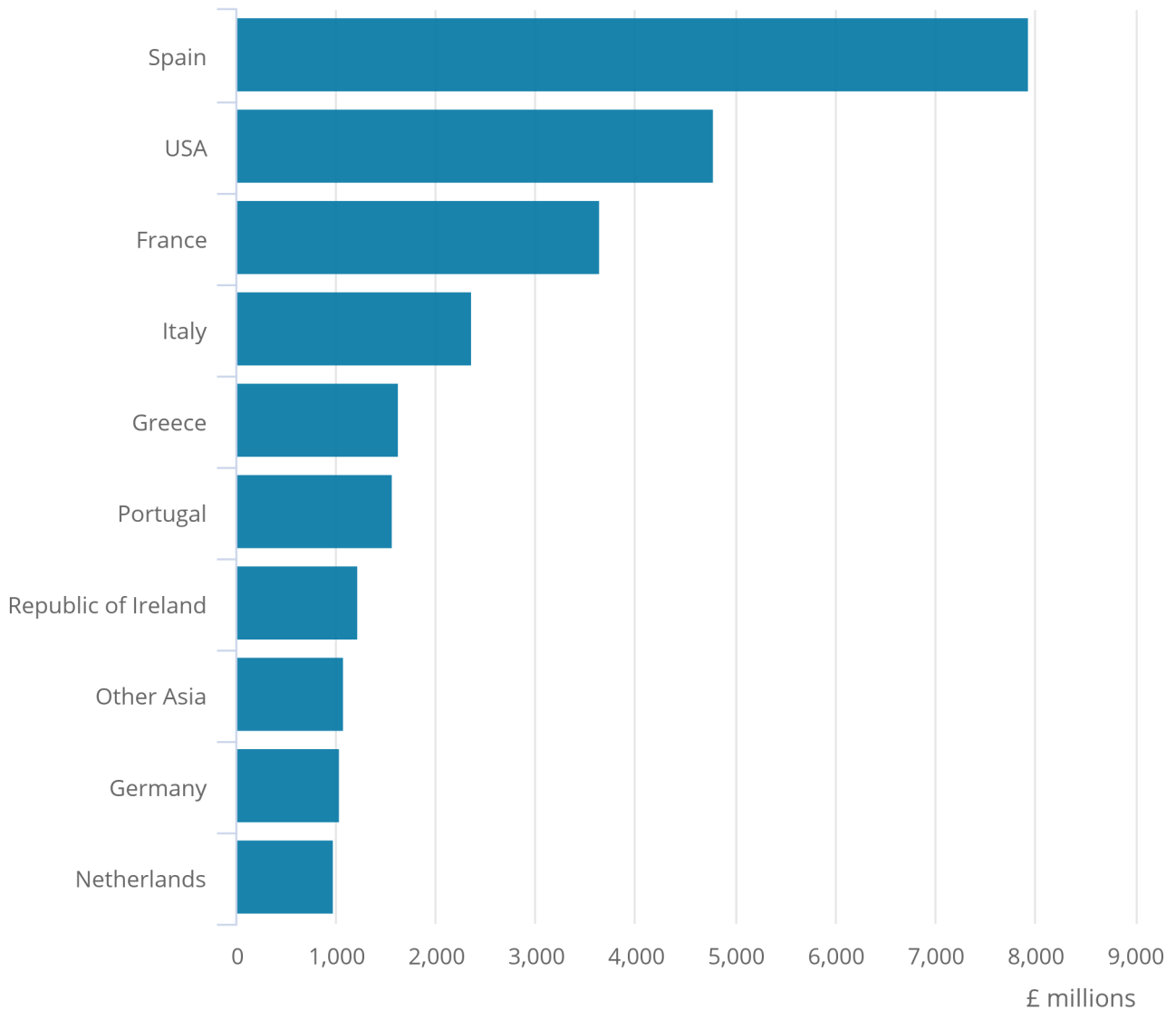
Source: International Passenger Survey (IPS), Office for National Statistics

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

The five countries with the highest total expenditure by visitors from the UK were almost the same as the five most-visited countries (Figure 14), with the exception of the Republic of Ireland being replaced by Greece. This is because a higher proportion (40%) of visits to the Republic of Ireland was to visit friends and family and these visits tend to record lower spending. Spain continued to be the top country for expenditure. UK residents spent £7.9 billion in trips to Spain in 2016, which accounts for 18% of all spending by UK residents abroad. Total spend in Spain increased by 23% when compared with 2015; More than half (55%) was spent by those aged over 45. The USA had the next highest total in 2016 at £4.8 billion, an increase of 5% from 2015.

**Figure 14: Top 10 countries by expenditure of UK residents whilst visiting abroad, 2016**

Figure 14: Top 10 countries by expenditure of UK residents whilst visiting abroad, 2016



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

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

Holidays accounted for 68% of visits from residents of England (excluding London), 68% of Scottish and 78% of Welsh residents, however, only 48% of visits overseas by London residents were for holidays.

London's residents were more likely to travel to visit friends or relatives or for business purpose than those from other regions, with 35% and 14% of visits for those reasons respectively in comparison with 20% and 9% visits from residents of England (excluding London). These 5.5 million friends and relative visits and 2.2 million business trips accounted for 24% and 18% of the money spent abroad by Londoners (£2.2 billion and £1.6 billion).

Visits overseas by London's residents were more likely to be to countries outside Europe or North America than residents of other UK regions; 18% of visits by Londoners were to these areas of the world compared with between 11% and 14% from the rest of England and other UK countries.

## 6 . What's changed in this release?

### Country definitions

In order to harmonise the International Passenger Survey (IPS) country definitions with other government departments some country groupings have been changed for 2017. These mainly effect the definition of European areas.

Before 2017, definition of the EU included the small countries of Monaco, San Merino, Andorra and the Vatican City. These are not members of the EU but do have an agreement with the countries they are contained within which are full members of the EU. These countries will now be defined as "Europe".

From January 2017 countries that have historically been part of Europe for the IPS publication such as Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have been moved to "Other Countries". This is in line with the [National Statistics Country Classifications](#) (NSCC).

### Sample

Changes to the sample were made during 2016 after an optimisation exercise was carried out on the data. This has resulted in a smaller number of shifts at some sites (from October 2016) and the removal of others. The following sites were removed in April 2016: Bournemouth and Prestwick airports, Ebbsfleet and Ashford Eurostar stations and the port of Plymouth.

### Town visited by overseas residents

Changes have been made to the detail of the towns visited by overseas residents. This has been improved to include all cities and a larger number of towns in the UK. This is likely to show inconsistencies between previous published tables.

## 7 . Quality and methodology

The [International Passenger Survey Quality and Methodology Information](#) document contains important information on:



- the strengths and limitations of the data and how it compares with related data
- uses and users of the data
- how the output was created
- the quality of the output including the accuracy of the data

The estimates contained in Travel trends (as well as our other [Overseas Travel and Tourism statistics](#)) are subject to sampling errors, which are driven by the fact that IPS is a survey. It is important to understand the factors that dictate the [quality of the estimates](#). Confidence intervals relating to a wide range of estimates are provided under the 'Accuracy of overseas travel and tourism estimates' section.

## The collection of the IPS data

The key to producing reliable results from the IPS lies initially in the way the data are collected. Great emphasis is therefore placed upon the IPS interviewers to ensure they are able to capture data efficiently and accurately.

Nationally, IPS data are collected by a team of over 200 interviewers who are recruited and trained specifically to work on the IPS. Interviews are carried out on all days of the year, apart from Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

Almost all IPS interviews take place on a face-to-face basis with the responses being initially recorded on paper forms. In recent years "self-completion" questionnaires have been used at times where an interviewer has been unable to conduct an interview because of language difficulties.

Due to the layout and facilities at some seaports it is not always possible to interview passengers as they arrive. In such cases, IPS staff travel to seaports in France to select their subject and then conduct interviews, which take place either at the overseas ports of departure, or on board the vessels returning to the UK.

Shortly after the interview has taken place, the data are transferred to a computer system in which electronic checks are made of the data being input and the data is then transmitted to ONS headquarters where a series of further quality and accuracy checks are made on the data before processing and analysis.

More information about the collection of IPS data can be found in the [IPS Overseas Travel and Tourism User Guide \(Volume 1\): Background and Methodology](#).

## IPS response rates

Sample surveys such as the IPS depend on achieving high levels of response from the public. Non-respondents often have different characteristics of travel and expenditure compared with those who do respond and this can lead to biases being introduced into the results.

The response rates for the air, sea and the Channel Tunnel samples are shown in Table D.1. These response rates relate to complete and partial interviews. The overall response rate in 2016 was 78.4%. Information about the construction of the IPS overseas travel and tourism response rates can be found in the [IPS Overseas Travel and Tourism User Guide \(Volume 1\): Background and Methodology](#). For information about the 2016 response rates contact [socialsurveys@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:socialsurveys@ons.gsi.gov.uk).

**Table D.1: IPS response rates for 2016 and 2015 estimates: % of complete and partial responses**

		2015 Q1	2016 Q1	2015 Q2	2016 Q2	2015 Q3	2016 Q3	2015 Q4	2016 Q4	2015	2016
Total IPS Response Rate	Arrivals	78.3	78.9	79.1	78.3	75.5	74.0	77.3	76.7	77.5	76.8
	Departures	81.9	80.5	81.5	80.8	78.6	78.0	79.4	79.7	80.3	79.7
	Total	80.2	79.8	80.4	79.7	77.2	76.3	78.5	78.4	79.1	78.4
IPS Response Rate (Air)	Arrivals	78.0	78.4	78.3	77.7	74.2	73.0	76.4	76.2	76.7	76.1
	Departures	81.4	80.0	81.0	80.3	77.4	77.4	78.9	79.7	79.6	79.3
	Total	79.9	79.3	79.8	79.2	76.0	75.5	77.9	78.3	78.4	77.9
IPS Response Rate (Sea)	Arrivals	87.5	84.0	89.5	88.8	84.1	82.1	84.5	84.6	86.2	84.7
	Departures	89.7	84.0	89.3	87.2	86.9	79.6	87.4	78.0	88.1	81.9
	Total	88.7	84.0	89.4	87.9	85.6	80.7	86.2	80.7	87.2	83.2
IPS Response Rate (Tunnel)	Arrivals	76.1	79.8	77.5	74.3	77.4	74.6	80.6	75.8	77.9	76.0
	Departures	82.6	85.3	79.0	79.2	82.7	84.2	79.0	80.8	80.8	82.3
	Total	78.9	82.4	78.3	76.7	80.0	79.3	79.8	78.1	79.3	79.0

Source: Office for National Statistics

**Accuracy of overseas travel and tourism estimates**

1. Annual figures shown in this publication are final estimates, previous estimates provided in the monthly and quarterly publications are provisional and subject to revision in light of additional passenger data obtained at the end of each year.

IPS estimates are revised in line with the IPS revisions policy. The revisions policy is available in the IPS Quality and Methodology Information report to assist you in the understanding of the cycle and frequency of data revisions. You are strongly advised to read this policy before using this data for research or policy-related purposes.

Planned revisions usually arise from either the receipt of revised passenger traffic data or the correction of errors to existing data identified later in the annual processing cycle. Those of significant magnitude will be highlighted and explained.

Revisions to published quarterly IPS estimates can be expected in the publication of the annual overseas travel and tourism report (Travel trends).

All other revisions will be regarded as unplanned and will be dealt with by non-standard releases. All revisions will be released in compliance with the same principles as other new information. Please refer to the ONS guide to statistical revisions.

2. The main series are seasonally adjusted. This aids interpretation by identifying seasonal patterns and calendar effects and removing them from the unadjusted data. The resulting figures give a more accurate indication of underlying movements in the series.
3. 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 E1 shows the 95% confidence intervals for the 2016 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 E1: IPS confidence intervals for 2016 estimates**

	Estimate	Relative 95% Confidence Interval (+/- % the estimate)
Overseas visitors to the UK		
Number of visits ('000s)	37,609	2.2%
Total earnings (£million)	22,543	3.6%
Number of visitor nights ('000s)	277,295	3.2%
UK residents going abroad		
Number of visits ('000s)	70,815	1.4%
Total expenditure (£million)	43,771	2.2%
Number of visitor nights ('000s)	730,633	1.9%

Source: Office for National Statistics

The confidence intervals dataset for 2016 shows estimates relating to various purposes for visit and region of the world, together with regions of the UK visited. Relative confidence intervals are also shown for estimates relating to individual country of visit to and from the UK.

Further guidance for readers is provided about the quality of [Overseas Travel and Tourism estimates](#).

One indication of the reliability of the main indicators in this release can be obtained by monitoring the size of revisions. The [monthly statistical bulletin](#) provides information about the size and pattern of revisions to the quarterly IPS data, which have occurred over the last 5 years to the following main seasonally adjusted estimates:

- the number of visits by overseas residents to the UK (GMAT)
- the number of visits abroad by UK residents (GMAX)
- earnings made from overseas residents in the UK (GMAZ)
- expenditure abroad by UK residents (GMBB)

## Access to IPS data and analysis

IPS results published by ONS

In addition to Travel trends, we also publish provisional [monthly](#) and [quarterly](#) results from the IPS that are available free of charge from our website.

The website also provides more information about the [International Passenger Survey methodology](#) including the current IPS questionnaire and interviewer instructions.

## Accessing datasets

1. To enable easier examination of the IPS data, a simplified version of the IPS dataset called [Travelpac](#), comprising 14 of the most widely used variables, is available on our website. Data are available online for each year from 1993 onwards, in both SPSS and Excel formats.
2. Larger IPS datasets are available through the Data Archive at Essex University. Contact details are as follows:

Telephone: +44 (0) 1206 872143

Web: [Data Archive Homepage](#)