



VisitBritain™

# Foresight Issue 113

March 2013

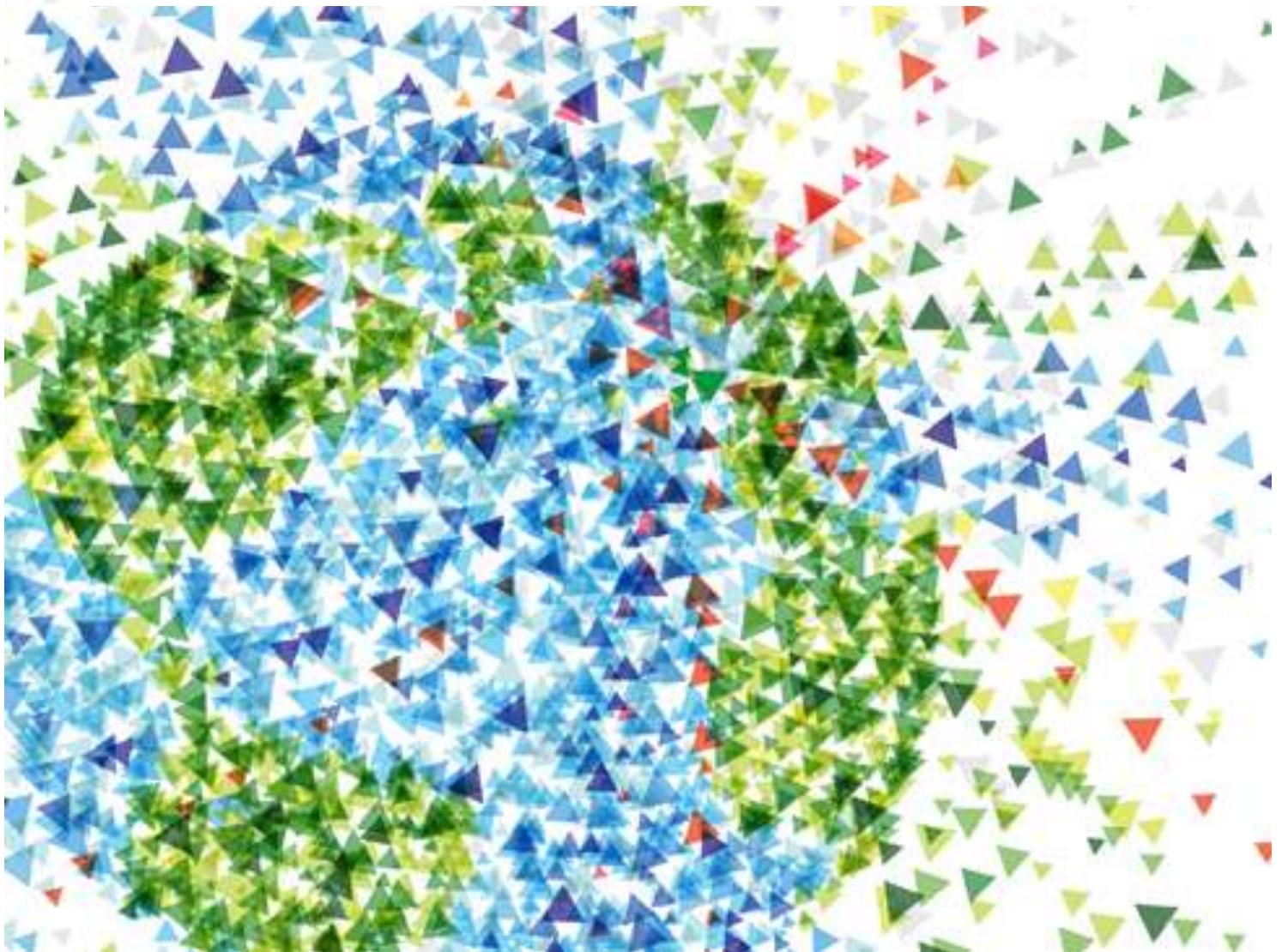
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Our market intelligence products provide an unrivalled source of information on inbound tourism. They paint a detailed picture of past, present and future inbound UK tourism trends, helping you gain an insight into how markets and segments are performing, as well as how Britain is perceived by prospective visitors.



# Inbound Tourism during the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

## Summary

Between July and September 2012 the UK welcomed 8.9 million visits from overseas, with overseas visitors spending £6.4 billion in the UK. Amongst these visits

1. 470,000 visits (5% of all visits) were mainly for the purpose of participating in, watching or working at the London 2012 Olympic or Paralympic Games
2. 841,000 visits (9% of all visits) involved attending a Games related event - 604,000 to an official ticketed Games event, 260,000 to live, free to view events and 126,000 visits to went to cultural events / exhibitions related to the London 2012 Festival or Cultural Olympiad (with many going to more than one type of event).

These two groups are not mutually exclusive and so cannot be added together to provide a total. Just over half of the 841,000 visits which involved attending a Games related event were from those who reported their main reason for visiting Britain was the Games (to watch, work or participate), the remainder were from those visiting Britain for another reason, around 40% for leisure. However, not all those who reported the Games were their main reason for visiting actually attended a Games related event (e.g. media who came to Britain to work during the Games may not have actually been to an event).

So, to provide an overall total (and not double count those whose main reason was the Games and those who attended an event) we can divide visits into two categories.

### 'Prime' Games visits (blue in Figure 1 below)

- There were 685,000 visits which were either *mainly for the Games, or involved attending an official ticketed event* at the London 2012 Olympic or Paralympic Games.
- 470,000 of these visits were mainly to participate, watch or work at the London 2012 Olympic or Paralympic Games
- In addition 215,000 did *not* report the Games as their main reason for visiting but went to official ticketed Games event
- In total these 685,000 visits involved spending around £925 million in the UK, on average spending £1,350 per visit (double the £668 average spend of other Q3 visits).
- These visits lasted on average 11 nights, longer than other visits during Q3 (nine nights).

### 'Secondary' Games visits (green in Figure 1)

- There were a further 186,000 visits which involved going to either a live, free to view or cultural event/ exhibition related to the Games, but were not 'prime' Games visits (i.e. they were visiting for a reason other than the Games, for example a holiday, and did not go to an official ticketed event).

### All Games visits (red in Figure 1)

- Combining these two sets of visits overall there were 871,000 visits between July and September which were either *mainly for the Games, or involved attending a Games related event* at the London 2012 Olympic or Paralympic Games.
- In total these 871,000 visits involved spending around £1,087 million in the UK during their visit, on average £1,250 each.
- These visits were 9% of visits and 17% of spend in Q3 2012.

Table 1 Trip characteristics during Q3 2012

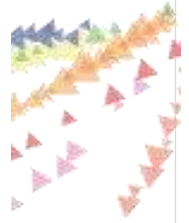
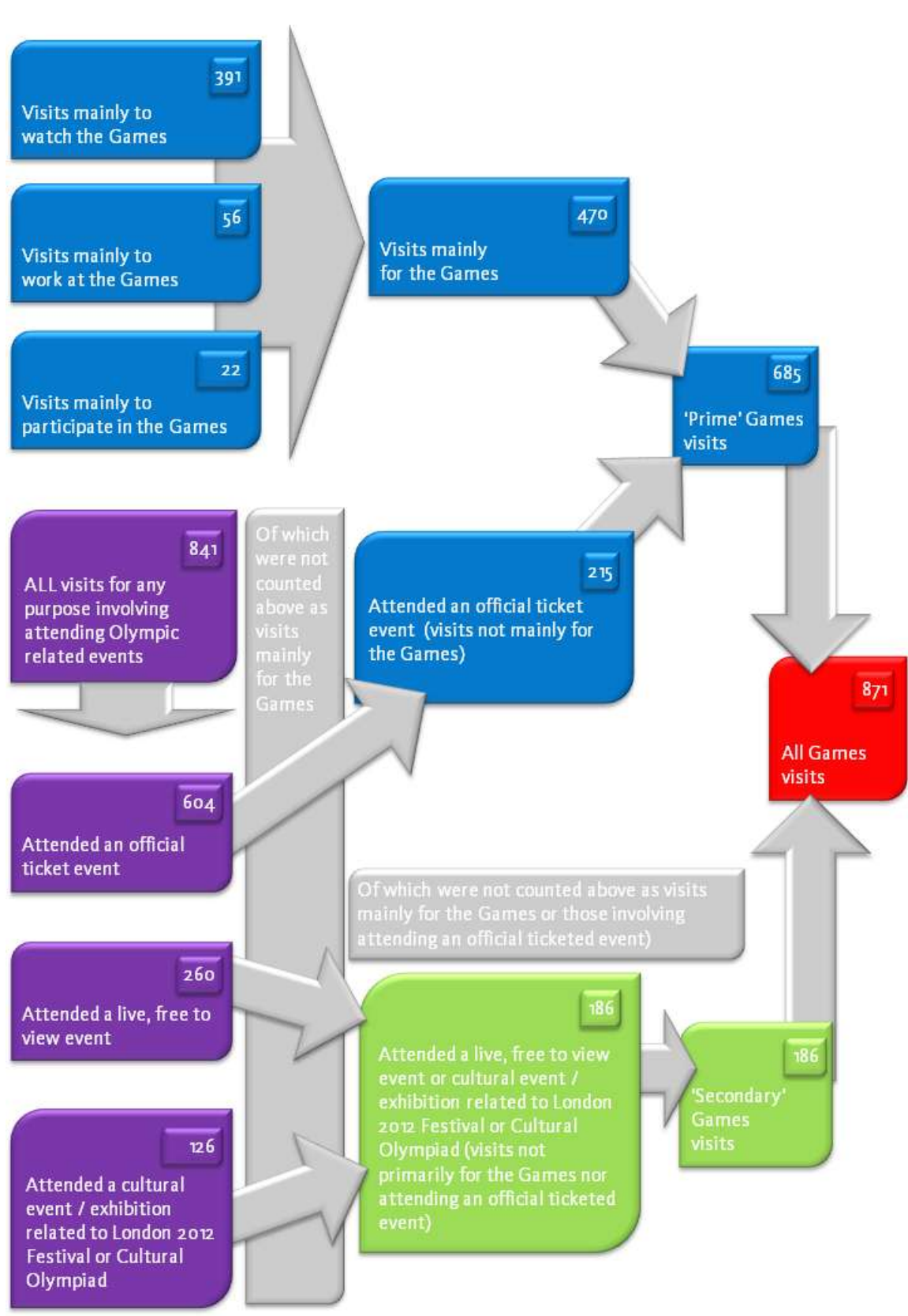
	Average spend per visit (£)	Average stay (nights)
All visits during Q3 2012	£720	9
'Prime' Games visits (mainly due to Games / involved attending official event)	£1,350	11
Other visits	£668	9

## Introduction

The global exposure that Britain enjoyed in 2012 provided an unprecedented opportunity for VisitBritain to ensure that the whole of the UK visitor economy benefited from the 2012 Games. It gave us a platform to promote the wider messages and interests of destination Britain, to deliver and showcase a world class welcome in 2012 and beyond, and to maximise the economic benefits of tourism across the UK.

Our mission was not just to promote the few weeks of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. It was to make full use of the opportunities to promote destination Britain before, during and after those few weeks, to reach new customers in emerging markets and to refresh our appeal in core markets. The January 2013 edition of Foresight highlighted increased interest in visiting Britain and how Britain's image had improved in many key markets around the world, especially for welcome.

Figure 1 Games time visits (ooo's of visits)



The visitors from overseas who came during Games time were different from those Britain usually welcomes. It includes those who came to participate (even Usain Bolt may have been interviewed as he left the country!) or work at the Games (such as team support staff, media and those on business connected with the Games) as well as those who came to watch.

Amongst those who came to watch the Games are three distinct groups

1. Those who came mainly for the Games (so probably secured their tickets before booking their transport and accommodation and may not have come if they hadn't had a ticket) – included as 'Prime' Games visit
2. Those who were visiting Britain for another reason (e.g. for a holiday, to visit friends and relatives, for business) but decided to also take advantage of timing and get a ticket for an official event – included as 'Prime' Games visit.
3. Those who were visiting Britain for another reason but decided to also go along to a free to view event (e.g. sections of the marathon) or a cultural event – counted as 'Secondary' Games visits

It can be seen that the Olympics was of importance to a greater degree in the decision to visit for the first group, and was probably a more important factor for the second group than the third. However, these more incidental visits are also those which may have had greater impact on the tourism industry – their visit was not focussed on the Games but more on visiting Britain.

The Games may also have been a factor in the decision of a wider group of visitors to come to Britain – both during Games time and afterwards. This is harder to quantify, but the overwhelmingly positive coverage of Britain around the world will certainly continue to benefit Britain's tourism industry in the long term, reminding those in established markets and building awareness in emerging markets of all Britain has to offer as a holiday destination.

### **'Prime' Games visits (those visiting mainly for the Games or who attended an official Games ticketed event)**

There were 685,000 visits from overseas to the UK in July, August and September mainly for the London 2012 Olympic or Paralympic Games (to participate, watch or work at), or which involved attending a ticketed event, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2 'Prime' Games visits**

	Visits (000)	Spend (£m)	Average spend per visit (£)	Average stay (nights)
<b>All 'Prime' Games visits</b> (mainly due to Games /involved attending official event)	685	925	£1,350	11
<b>Mainly due to Games</b>	470	709	£1,510	8
<i>To watch</i>	391	486	£1,240	6
<i>To work</i>	56	183	£3,260	19
<i>To participate</i>	22	41	£1,830	16
<b>Not mainly due to Games but involved attending official event</b>	215	216	£1,010	17

In total £925 million was spent by these visitors. On average each visit lasted 11 nights and involved spending £1,350 (double the £668 average spend of other Q3 visits).

Around 60% of Olympics related visits were from Europe (mainly from countries in the EU15), just under 20% from North America and just over 20% from other world regions.

Looking by market, as shown in Table 3, it is clear that the USA followed by France, Germany and the Netherlands were the main markets from which these visitors came. The USA accounted for around one in seven visits mainly for the London 2012 Olympic or Paralympic Games (to participate, watch or work at), or which involved attending a ticketed event.

'Prime' Games visits from Australia involved a particularly high average spend (over £2,000) and long stays of around three weeks. Just over half of these visits were from those who visited for another reason, e.g. a holiday or to see family, but also attended a ticketed event. 'Prime' Games visits from US and Canada involved spending over £1,500 per visit and stays of a fortnight. Visits from European markets tended to be shorter.

**Table 3 'Prime' Games visits – Top Ten markets (mainly due to the Games or involved attending official ticketed event)**

From (country of residence)	Visits (000)	Spend (£m)	Average spend per visit (£)	Average stay (nights)
ALL	685	925	£1,350	11
USA	102	170	£1,670	13
France	70	107	£1,520	7
Germany	64	36	£560	5
Netherlands	54	39	£720	5
Australia	32	67	£2,060	21
Italy	31	23	£760	8
Canada	26	43	£1,640	14
Spain	26	15	£560	12
Irish Republic	24	13	£540	5
Belgium	20	11	£560	4

'Prime' Games visits from BRIC countries also generated high average spend (over £2,000 per visit, and stays of at least 10 nights), as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4 'Prime' Games visits from BRIC markets (mainly due to the Games or involved attending official ticketed event)**

From (country of residence)	Visits (000)	Spend (£m)	Average spend per visit (£)	Average stay (nights)
China including Taiwan, Macau & Hong Kong	13	31	£2,340	20
Brazil	13	26	£2,020	13
Russia	10	21	£2,030	10
India	4	3	£930	26

Around 8% of these 'Prime' Games visits were from British nationals who live overseas. The majority (76%) travelled by air, 13% used the tunnel and 11% came via ferry. The majority of 'Prime' Games visits were from men, accounting for 60%.

### Visits mainly due to the Games

Within the wider 'Prime' Games visit group there were 470,000 visits from overseas to the UK in July, August and September mainly for the London 2012 Olympic or Paralympic Games (to participate, watch or work at). In total these visits accounted for 3.86 million nights in the UK and £709 million was spent by these visitors. On average each visit lasted eight nights and involved

spending £1,510.

The majority of these visits (83%) were from those coming to watch the Games, with around 12% coming to work at the Games (this would include journalists) and the remaining 5% the participants themselves. Around 10,000 athletes were anticipated according to the BBC, others may have been officials or support staff.

Around 9% of visits from those coming to watch the Games were day trips.

The USA accounted for more visits mainly due to the Games than any other country, 67,000 visits meaning that one in seven (or 14%) of the overseas visits mainly due to the Games were from the USA, as shown in Table 5. In recent years the USA has been Britain's third largest market for visitors (behind France and Germany), although over the first three quarters of 2012 it overtook Germany as second largest. US visitors mainly here for the Games stayed for around ten nights on average, with a very high average spend of £1,970 per visit.

Following the USA the largest source markets for these visits mainly due to the Games were European (France, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and Italy) – these visits were typically shorter and involved a lower spend although those from France spent a high £1,800 on average.

**Table 5 Visits mainly due to the Games (to watch, participate in or work at) – Top ten markets**

From (country of residence)	Visits (000)	Spend (£m)	Average spend per visit (£)	Average stay (nights)
ALL markets	470	709	£1,510	8
USA	67	132	£1,970	10
France	54	97	£1,800	2
Germany	47	30	£650	4
Netherlands	46	34	£750	4
Belgium	19	9	£500	3
Italy	18	15	£800	7
Canada	17	34	£1,980	11
Australia	15	38	£2,440	19
Irish Republic	14	10	£730	4
Switzerland	14	15	£1,080	6

Large numbers also visited Britain mainly for the Games from Canada, Australia, the Republic of Ireland and Switzerland. Visits from Australia lasted 19 nights on average, resulting in a high average spend of £2,440 per visit.

These top ten markets accounted for two thirds of all visits mainly for the Games, with no other individual country accounting for more than 3%.

Around 4% of these visits mainly for the Games were from British nationals who live overseas. The majority (74%) travelled by air, 14% used the tunnel and 12% came via ferry. The majority of visits mainly for the Games were from men, accounting for 63%.

### Visits mainly for a non-Games related reason but involved attending official ticketed events

In addition to these visits which were mainly for the Games a further 215,000 visits from overseas in July, August and September involved attending an official, ticketed Olympic or Paralympic event. These visitors were coming for another reason (e.g. a holiday, to visit friends or relatives, for business) but decided to buy a ticket and so the timing of their visit may well have been decided on the basis of the Games.

In total these visits accounted for 3.69 million nights in the UK and £216 million was spent by these visitors. On average each visit lasted 17 nights and involved spending £1,100. These visits lasted almost twice as long as those which were mainly for the Games discussed above.

**Table 6 Visits mainly for a non-Games related reason but which involved attending a ticketed event – Top ten markets**

From (country of residence)	Visits (000)	Spend (£m)	Average spend per visit (£)	Average stay (nights)
ALL markets	215	216	£1,010	17
USA	34	37	£1,080	18
Australia	17	29	£1,720	23
Germany	17	6	£330	8
France	16	11	£640	20
Spain	14	7	£520	17
Italy	12	9	£710	9
Irish Republic	9	2	£260	5
Canada	9	9	£990	19
Netherlands	8	5	£570	7
Switzerland	5	7	£1,380	13

Breaking down by market visits which were not mainly for the Games but which involved attending an official, ticketed event the USA is again the top market, accounting for around 16% or more than one in seven visits, as shown in Table 6

Australia (17,000 visits) and Canada (9,000) visits are the other long haul markets in the top ten. Australia was the only market

where there were more 'prime' Games visits which were mainly for another reason (e.g. to visit friends / family in the UK) and involved attending a ticketed event (17,000 compared to 15,000 visits mainly for the Games). All other markets in the top ten were European. There was notably high spend from those visiting from Switzerland, benefitting from a favourable exchange rate. Average length of stay amongst these markets was higher than usual for visit to the UK.

### 'Secondary Games visits' (*attended Games related events*)

Stepping aside from the main reason for visits it is also useful to consider the total numbers of visits which involved attending Games related events. Some of these visits will have been mainly for the Games and others from those visiting Britain mainly for a holiday, business or other reason during Games time.

Overall 841,000 visits involved going to either an official ticketed event, a live free to view event or a cultural event or exhibition related to the London 2012 Festival or Cultural Olympiad as shown in Table 7. Overall 9% of visits from overseas throughout July, August and September included at least one Games related event.

**Table 7 Visits involving Games related events**

Type of event	Visits (000)
Any Games related event	841
Official ticketed event	604
Live, free to view event	260
Cultural event / exhibition related to London 2012 Festival	126

186,000 were not 'prime' Games (they were not here mainly for the Games nor did they attend an official ticketed event) but did include a live, free to view event or cultural event / exhibition.

These are classed here as 'secondary' Games visits.

### By journey purpose

Looking across those who went to any of the three event categories almost half (47%) were those who had reported watching the Games was their main reason for visiting. However, over one in five (21%) were visiting Britain for a holiday and a further 16% were here to visit friends or relatives. Around 6% were visiting Britain for business and a further 4% were here to work at the Games.

- The majority of those who went to an official ticketed event (58%) reported that their main reason for visiting Britain was indeed to watch the Games. A sizeable group though were visiting Britain for leisure but also had tickets, with 15% on holiday and 12% visiting friends or relatives. Around 6% were

visiting to work at the Games, and a further 4% were other business visitors. The remaining 4% were either Games participants or visiting for study or another 'miscellaneous' reason.

- Turning to those who went to a live, free to view event only 35% reported their main reason for visiting was to watch the Games (presumably many also had tickets to official events), whilst 28% were visiting Britain on holiday and 19% to see friends or relatives. 7% were on business and a further 5% here to work at the Games.
- Holiday visitors were the largest group who reported going to a cultural event or exhibition related to the London 2012 Festival or Cultural Olympiad, making up nearly a third (32%) of overseas visits. Almost a quarter (24%) of those who came to Britain mainly to watch the Games also went to such a cultural event or exhibition. Those mainly here to visit friends or relatives made up 22% of overseas visits to these events / exhibitions and 11% were those in Britain on business whilst 6% were here mainly to work at the Games (e.g. media).

### By market

Looking across those who went to any of the three event categories the USA was the top market, accounting for 15% of visits involving at least one type of Games related event, followed by France (10%), Germany (9%), the Netherlands (9%), Australia (5%) and Italy (5%). Visitors from the USA were the most likely to go to ticketed events as well as including a London 2012 cultural event or exhibition during their trip with visitors from the Netherlands as likely to have been along to live, free to view events.

- The top markets for visits to official ticketed Games events were the USA (16%), France (11%), Germany (10%), the Netherlands (8%), Australia (5%), and Italy (5%).
- The top markets for visits to live, free to view events were the Netherlands (11%), USA (11%), Germany (9%), Australia (6%), Italy (6%) and France (5%).
- For visiting cultural events or exhibitions related to the London 2012 Festival or Cultural Olympiad the top markets were the USA (18%), Australia (9%), Italy (7%), France (6%) and Germany (6%).

### Games visits to London and other areas of the UK

Due to the structure of the IPS questionnaire it is not possible to definitively report where in the UK overseas visitors went to a Games event. Visitors reported where they spent each night in the UK, and then separately whether they attended an event or not. Please note that as visits can of course involve staying in more than one area of the UK the visits 'over-add'.

As would be expected London welcomed the bulk of the 685,000

'prime' Games visits (those mainly to participate in, watch or work at the Games, or which involved attending an official ticketed event), as shown in Table 8. Almost three quarters (74%) of these 'prime' Games visits involved at least one night in London, with visits lasting on average 11 nights. Correspondingly almost three quarters (73%) of the total spent in the UK by these 'prime' Games visits was spent in London.

**Table 8 Visits mainly due to the Games or involved attending official ticketed event – UK area**

UK area (at least one night stay)	Visits (000)	Spend (£m)	Average spend per visit (£)	Average stay (nights)
ALL	685	925	£1,350	11
London	510	677	£1,330	10
Rest of England	202	144	£720	11
Total England	657	821	£1,250	11
Scotland	24	8	£350	6
Wales	16	11	£700	12

However, with events happening around the country visits were not limited to London - although these visits may have involved seeing an event in London and then staying elsewhere before or afterwards. The rest of England saw 202,000 visits, Scotland 24,000 and Wales 16,000 which were 'prime' Games visits. In total these visits involved spending over £160 million outside London.

### Comparison with previous Olympic host nations

A multitude of factors impact the flow of inbound tourism, so performance does not solely reflect that the Games took place – the wider economic and geopolitical environment matters too.

However, Britain has seen the best performance during a Summer Olympic year since Australia in 2000. The Sydney Games took place in the southern hemisphere winter which is not peak time for travel thereby helping to bolster Australia's performance by avoiding displacement over the peak season.

Table 9 below shows the annual change in the number of inbound visits to the various countries that have hosted the Olympic Games since 1996 during the year in which the Games were staged. The figures all relate to visits to the country rather than the host city itself. China on the other hand suffered a major earthquake in 2008 and this was also the year in which the global economic crisis commenced, denting the volume of international business and leisure tourism.



**Table 9 Inbound tourism during the year in which Olympic Games was hosted (UNWTO data)**

Year	Host	Year on year inbound growth
1996 (summer)	USA (Atlanta)	+7.2%
1998 (winter)	Japan (Nagano)	-2.7%
2000 (summer)	Australia (Sydney)	+10.6%
2002 (winter)	USA (Salt Lake City)	-7.1%
2004 (summer)	Greece (Athens)	-4.7%
2006 (winter)	Italy (Turin)	+12.0%
2008 (summer)	China (Beijing)	-3.1%
2010 (winter)	Canada (Vancouver)	+2.3%
2012 (summer)	UK (London)	+1.1%

Among recent host countries London is far more dominant in its share of the country's inbound tourism than many of the other recent host cities – for example just more than one-third of visits to Australia are to New South Wales but London accounts for about half of all inbound tourism to Britain.

## Long term impact on inbound tourism

### Coverage, welcome and recommendations

As discussed in a previous edition of Foresight (issue 111, January 2013) post Olympics there is evidence of changes in perceptions and improvements in Britain's image in many important markets, as well as plenty of positive media coverage. Improvements in perceptions have been particularly positive from emerging growth markets such as China.

There was also indication that visitors during Games time were made to feel particularly welcome (83% reported feeling very or extremely welcome during Q3 2012, a statistically significant increase on the proportion reporting this in Q3 2011). Visitors who feel welcome are far more likely to recommend visiting Britain to others, indeed if 83% of all visitors during Q3 did recommend visiting Britain to just two friends or relatives that would be over 15 million recommendations for Britain.

### Inbound tourism 2012 - 2013

VisitBritain forecast that visits in 2012 would be in-line with 2011. Provisional data shows visits in 2012 were 1% higher than in 2011, with spend up by 4% (in nominal terms). There were 31.15 million visits, making 2012 the best year for inbound tourism since 2008.

- Holiday visits almost equalled the 2011 record whilst VFR and business visits both showed the best year since 2008
- There were record numbers of visits from 'Rest of World' (markets outside Europe and North America), and from non

EU European markets. Visits from North America and A12 European markets were both at their highest since 2008.

- Visits from the high volume EU15 markets were 1% lower than in 2011

For 2013 VisitBritain's official forecast is for visits to increase by 3% and spend by 2.5%.

## Further information and research

### Methodological note - Measuring visits to Britain from overseas

This report is based on data from the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) International Passenger Survey (IPS), the UK Government's official measurement for inbound tourism. VisitBritain is a member of the IPS Steering Group.

IPS is a very large, continuous survey conducted across the UK in all major ports (covering air, sea and tunnel routes) and typically involves interviewing over 40,000 departing overseas residents each year. Interviewing schedules are carefully arranged to ensure there is a high chance of visitors from each market using each route being interviewed, and in 2011 there was a 95% chance of being interviewed. During Games time the 'flow' of passengers was unusual, and the Olympic 'family' checked in at a special temporary Heathrow terminal – interviewing was increased and adapted to ensure these changes were accounted for in the data. As with all non-census surveys there are 'confidence' levels within which the figures lie, they could be a little lower or higher than stated, although it is most likely they are the figure given. ONS has published the bands within which the figures lie on their website.

The Olympic Games opening ceremony was on 27th July and the closing ceremony on 12th August. The Paralympic Games opening ceremony was on 29th August and the closing ceremony on 9th September. The data in this report reflects that captured from departing visitors during Q3 2012 (July, August and September), it therefore excludes long visits which may have begun during Games time but ended on or after 1st October.

IPS records the main purpose of the visit (i.e. if it was Olympics related or not), and in addition VisitBritain co-funded the inclusion of extra questions to ascertain whether the visitor had been to an official, paid for ticketed event, a free to view event or a cultural event or exhibition related to the London 2012 exhibition or Cultural Olympiad.

IPS counts all visits from overseas residents, regardless of nationality, as a visit from overseas (as is standard in tourism statistics). Therefore British 'ex pats' who have lived overseas for a year or longer and are returning overseas when interviewed would be counted as overseas visitors. Accordingly a non-UK national

who had lived in the UK for at least a year would not be counted as an overseas visitor.

### Links to more information

VisitBritain makes International Passenger Survey data available to download from our website. You can view visits, nights and spend by quarter (including Q3 2012) broken down by market, journey purpose and where in the UK visitors stayed here, [Inbound visitor statistics](#). Full year 2012 data will be available here in late April 2013.

For more information about the International Passenger Survey including methodology and weighting please see [About the Survey](#), or for further details and confidence intervals for Olympic estimates please visit the [ONS website](#).

The January 2013 edition of Foresight covered changes in perceptions and improvements in Britain's image post Olympics, [Foresight issue 111](#)

Also see [VisitBritain Games Time Achievements](#) and [VisitBritain Olympic Strategy](#)

For information about domestic visits to the Games see the websites of / contact [London & Partners](#) and [VisitEngland](#).



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