London 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games attracted 680,000 overseas visitors

In July, August and September 2012, the period of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, 680,000 overseas residents completed visits to the UK either for the purpose of watching, participating in or working at the London 2012 Games, or attended a ticketed London 2012 event while visiting the UK primarily for a different purpose.

There were 90,000 Games related visits in September, which is in addition to the Office for National Statistics’ announcement in October, that 590,000 overseas residents completed visits to the UK in July and August in relation to London 2012 Games. This figure for July and August excluded a large period of the Paralympic Games, which concluded 9 September, and any visitors that did not complete their visit to the UK until September, as data is only recorded when an overseas resident leaves the UK.

In September, overseas residents completed 2.6 million visits to the UK, 1 per cent higher than September 2011.

In the three months July to September 2012 there were 4 per cent less visits to the UK by overseas residents than in the same period in 2011. However, associated spending on these visits was 6 percent higher than the previous year, with a total figure of over £6 billion.

The total number of overseas residents’ visits for 2012 (year to date) is comparable to 2011, at 23.5 million visits. Spending was again higher, having received 5% growth and a total figure of over £14 billion for the year to date.

The number of visits abroad by UK residents in September 2012 was 6.5 million, 5 per cent higher than the same month in 2011.

During the period July to September, UK residents made 1 per cent more visits abroad than in the corresponding period in 2011, and spent 7 per cent more on these visits.

UK residents have spent £26.5 billion on visits abroad in 2012, an increase of 5 per cent from 2011.

Read the full report.

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Background notes

1. The London 2012 Olympic Games took place from 27 July to 12 August. The London 2012 Paralympic Games opened 29 August and closed 9 September.

2. The estimates contained in the report are based on interviews completed on the International Passenger Survey conducted by ONS. A visit is recorded when a traveller finishes the visit. Therefore any visits commencing in August but not completed until September or later are not included in the estimates.

3. Earnings relates to overseas-sourced money spent by travellers (and earned by the UK) in relation to this visit. It includes any money spent before or after the visit and as such includes Olympics ticket sales regardless of when they were purchased.

4. As outlined in ONS's Special Events Policy, it is not possible to make an estimate of the full effect of the Olympics and Paralympics on total visits to the UK because other factors may have influenced visit patterns.

5. It has been possible to produce estimates of number of visits to the UK that were associated with the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympics. This is because ONS expanded questionnaire coverage of the International Passenger Survey in 2012 and expanded sample coverage in the first half of August.

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

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