Barometer Wave 1 – June 2021

Fáilte Ireland
Research

Headlines (1)

Fáilte Ireland Research

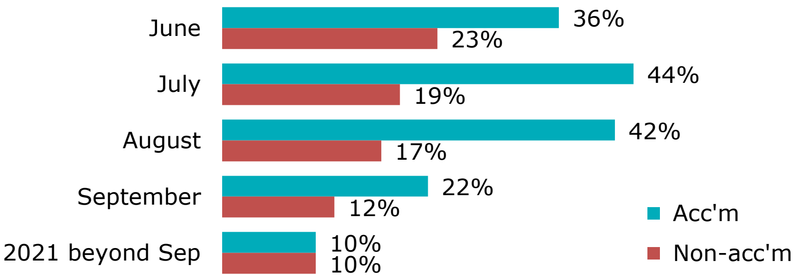
Barometer Wave 1 – June

Reopening and operating capacity

- 77% of accommodation businesses and 56% of non-accommodation businesses plan to be open in June
- 17% of acc'm and 5% of non-acc'm will operate at full capacity when open
- 46% of acc'm and 34% of non-acc'm will operate at 50 – 99% capacity
- 37% of acc'm and 61% of non-acc'm will operate at less than 50% capacity

Advance bookings

Approx. average % of available capacity booked per business taking bookings



- Available accommodation capacity in peak summer is currently slightly under half booked up
- Outside Dublin, available acc'm in August is 45% booked – in Dublin, only 12% is booked
- Self-catering and caravan parks fare much better than serviced acc'm

Headlines (2)

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

FULL REPORT

Most valued supports

- EWSS (Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme) and CRSS (Covid Restrictions Support Scheme) stand out as the most valued supports overall
- 38% cite EWSS as the most useful support when asked to single one out – more so hotels (82% cite EWSS) and businesses in Dublin (59%)
- 37% cite CRSS as the single most useful support – more so pubs / bars (73%) and outside Dublin (41%)
- Over half (53%) of coach operators and inbound tour operators cite Fáilte Ireland's Business Continuity Scheme as the single most valuable support

Surge in domestic bookings for some sectors, but how solid are the bookings come August?

- Some sectors are doing well out of domestic tourist bookings, including self catering, caravan parks, hotels, attractions and activity providers
- Families are noticeably very well represented among the bookers
- But enquirers are reluctant to book anything which is not fully cancellable
- Some operators expect the Irish to drop their domestic holiday last minute in favour of going abroad if the rules change in time

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

FULL REPORT

Business supports

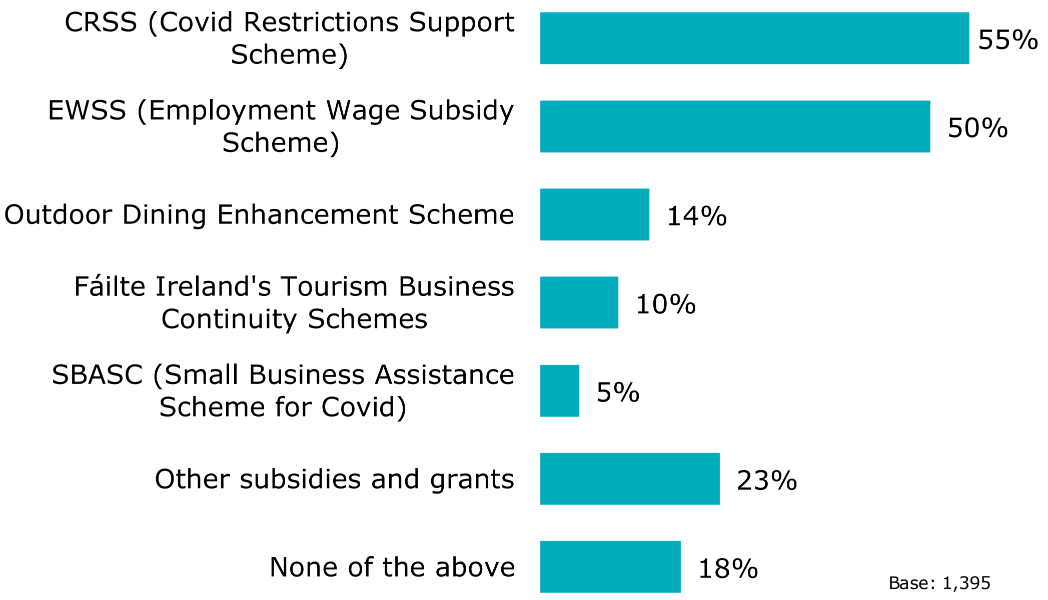
Cost supports

Fāilte Ireland
Research

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

FULL REPORT

"Since the pandemic began, has your business benefited from any of the following cost supports?"



Base: 1,395

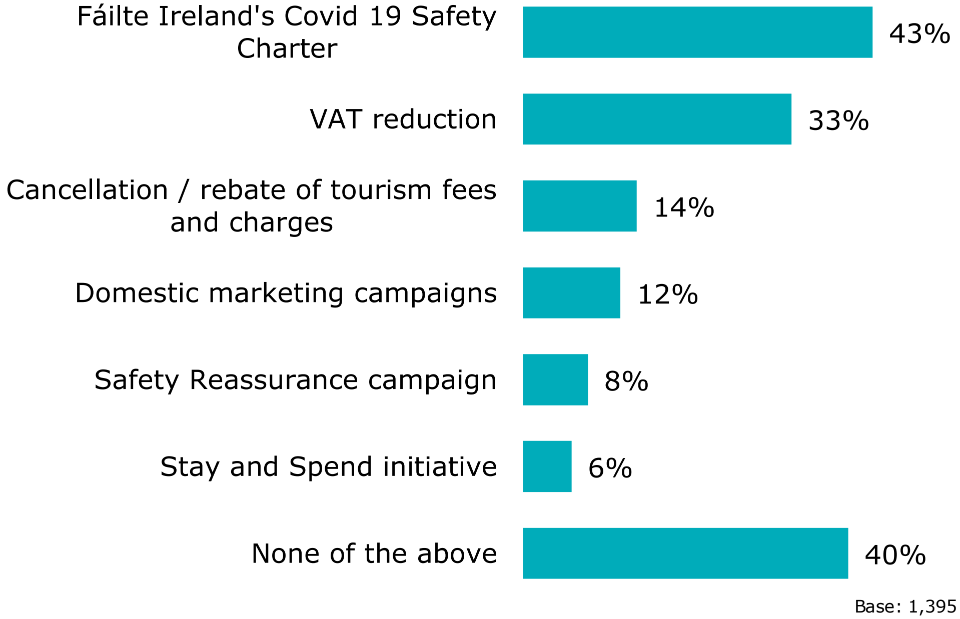
- CRSS and EWSS have been the most widely used prompted cost supports
- CRSS usage has been highest among pubs / bars (91%) and hotels (79%)
- EWSS highest among golf clubs (100%) and hotels (94%)
- 70% of coach and inbound operators have used Fáilte Ireland's Continuity Schemes
- 'Other subsidies and grants' include many sources, mostly local authorities; PUP has been specified in 'other' by 1% of respondents

Non-cost supports

Fáilte Ireland
Research

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

"Since the pandemic began, has your business benefited from any of the following non-cost supports?"



- **Hotels** have felt the benefits of every support more than any sector, including:
  - VAT reduction (77%)
  - Safety Charter (72%)
  - Rebates (46%)
  - Domestic marketing campaigns (43%)
  - Safety Reassurance campaign (32%)
  - Stay and Spend Initiative (24%)

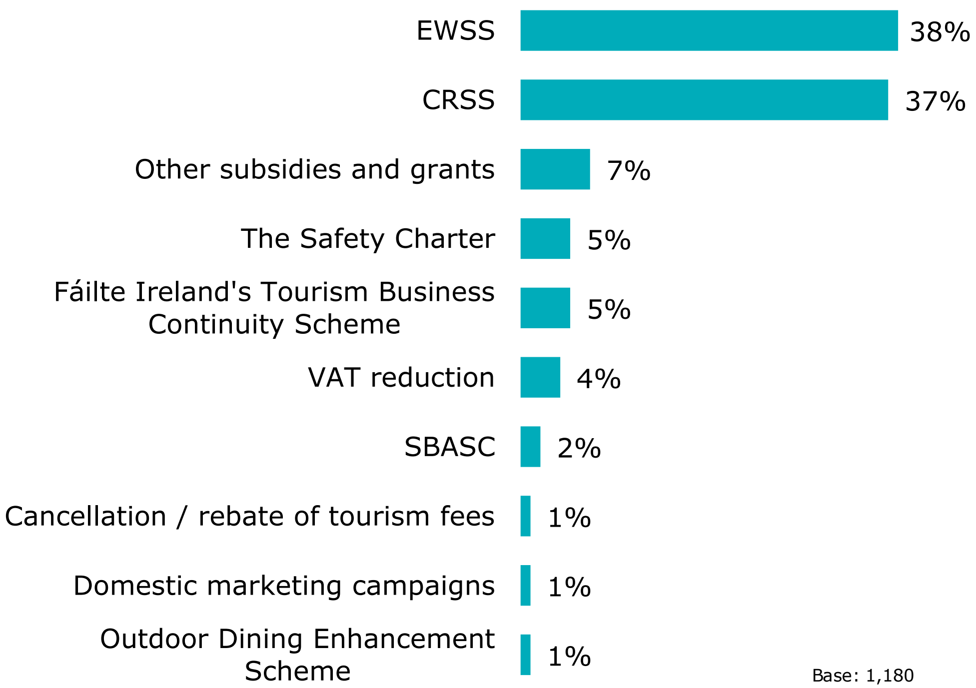
Most beneficial support

Fāilte Ireland Research

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

FULL REPORT

"Which one support has your business benefited from the most?"



Base: 1,180

- EWSS and CRSS stand out as the most valued supports overall
- EWSS cited in particular by hotels (82%) and businesses in Dublin (59%)
- CRSS cited in particular by pubs / bars (73%) and businesses outside Dublin (41%)
- Over half (53%) of coach operators and inbound tour operators cite Fáilte Ireland's Business Continuity Scheme as the single most valuable support

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

FULL REPORT

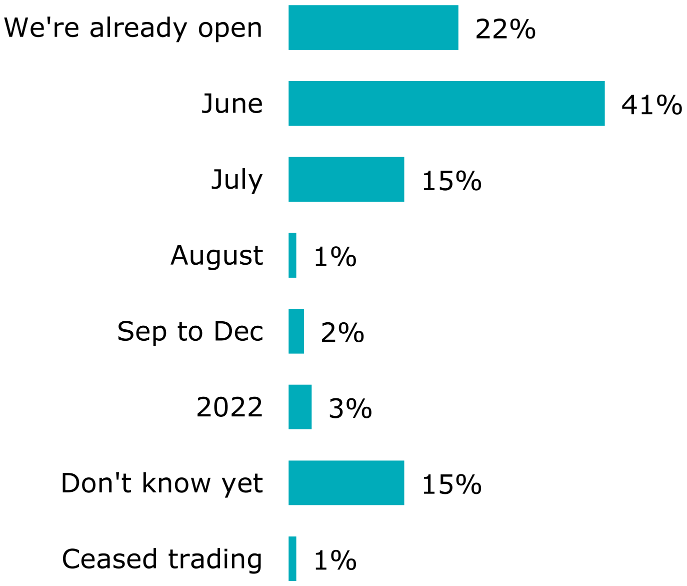
Booking, capacity and staff levels

Timing of reopening

Fāilte Ireland Research

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

"When do you plan to reopen?"



Base: 1,395

- 77% of accommodation businesses and 56% of non-accommodation businesses plan to be open in June
- Within accommodation, all caravan parks and 94% of hotels expect to be open in June – but only 52% of B&Bs
- Greatest uncertainty among businesses relying on inbound tourism

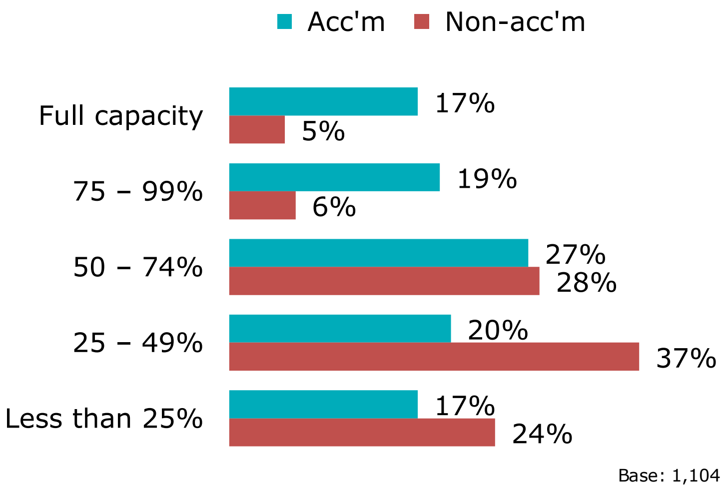
Operating capacity

Fāilte Ireland Research

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

FULL REPORT

"At what level of normal capacity will your business operate when your sector can reopen … ?"



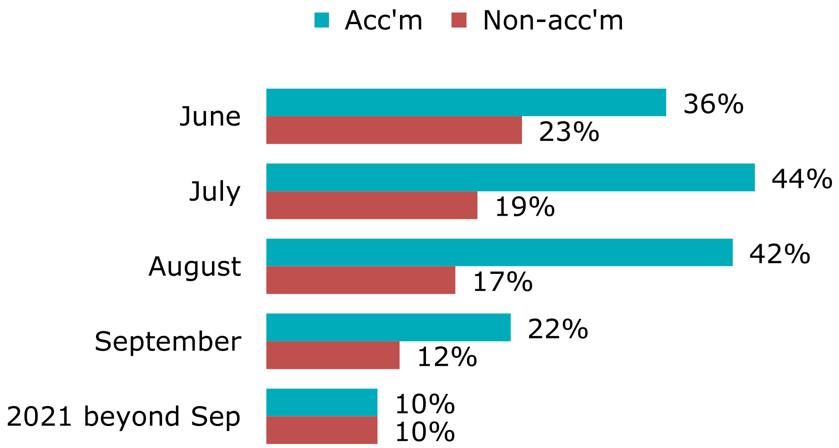
- Expected operating capacities vary considerably
- Self catering operators are the most 'fortunate' with their self-contained units, meaning 39% can operate at full capacity
- Most significant challenges are faced by businesses which normally handle groups
- Approximately half of DMCs, inbound tour operators, chauffeurs and tour guides will be operating at less than 25% capacity

Advance booking levels

Fáilte Ireland Research

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

Approx. average % of available capacity booked per business taking bookings



Base: 546 – 636

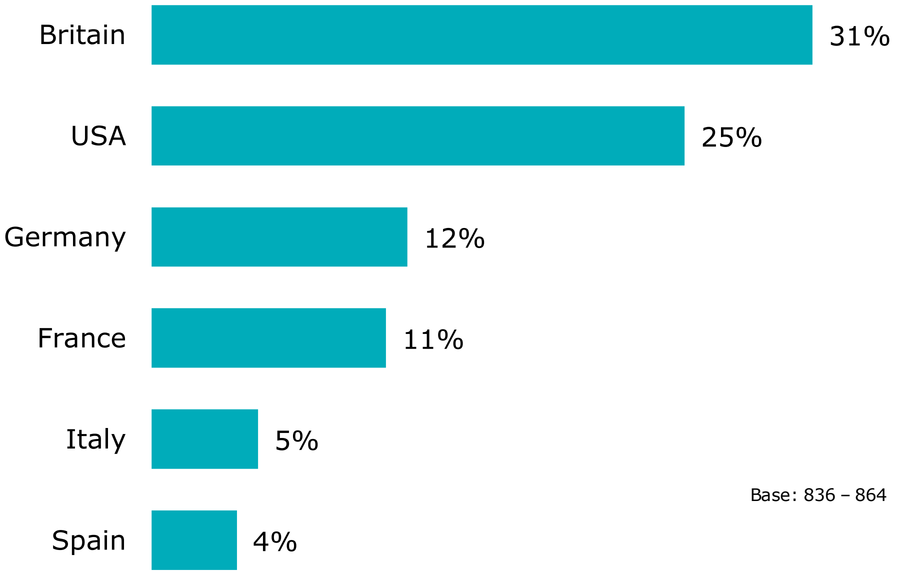
- 91% of acc'm and 40% of non-acc'm operators are taking bookings
- Available accommodation capacity in peak summer is currently slightly under half booked up
- Outside Dublin, available acc'm in August is 45% booked – in Dublin, only 12% is booked
- Self-catering and caravan parks fare much better than serviced acc'm
- 74% of available self-catering and 62% of caravan capacity for Aug is booked up
- This compares to 40% for hotels, 24% for guesthouses and 20% for B&Bs

Enquiries by market

Fāilte Ireland Research

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

"Apart from bookings, are you getting any enquiries for 2021 from … ?"



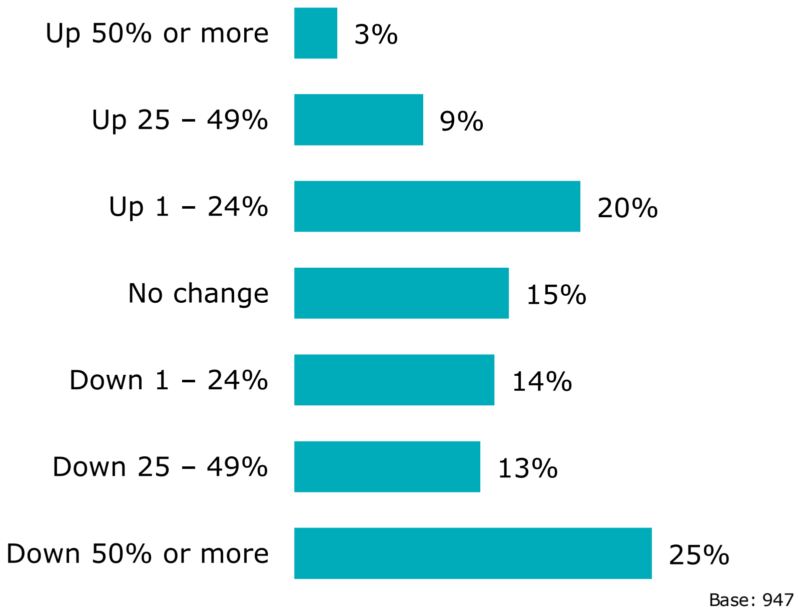
This question has been asked to businesses taking bookings. 'Don't know / not applicable' answers have been excluded from the results.

- Britain and USA got off to a much quicker start with vaccinations than EU countries, and this seems to show in enquiry levels
- Over half of hotels, self-catering and caravan operators taking bookings are getting enquiries from Britain – this compares to 21% of B&Bs
- 48% of Dublin businesses taking bookings are getting enquiries from Britain – this compares to 28% outside Dublin
- 46% of hotels taking bookings are getting enquiries from USA

Cost base

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

"What is your cost base compared to normal years?"



- On balance, cost base for the industry has reduced significantly as businesses have not been allowed to open
- But the hotel industry is finely balanced, with 47% citing a lower cost base and 44% citing a higher one

Booking trends

Fāilte Ireland Research

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

FULL REPORT

"Are there any booking trends you're noticing for 2021 that are different from normal?"

Nearly all domestic market; very little overseas

- The most significant and perhaps the most obvious current booking trend is that nearly bookings are coming from Irish holidaymakers
- Some sectors are doing well out of domestic tourist bookings, including self catering, caravan parks, hotels, attractions and activity providers
- There are noticeably more families among the domestic bookers
- Sectors which rely heavily on inbound tourism will not see significant booking levels until overseas tourists return to Ireland
- More detailed sector by sector analysis is covered later

"All bookings to date are domestic tourists"
Hotel

"Families who would normally go abroad"
Activity provider

Longer stays, but booked more last minute

- Domestic tourists are tending to book for longer than in a 'normal' year, except in self catering, where stays seem to be shorter than normal
- Booking behaviour at the moment is also more last minute

"Longer stays … new customers who would normally only holiday abroad"
Hotel

Booking trends different from normal

Fáilte Ireland Research

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

FULL REPORT

What is your cancellation policy?

- Businesses are getting scrutinised by enquirers on their cancellation policies
- Potential customers seem very reluctant to book anything that they couldn't cancel with no strings attached
- Some operators say this is because of Covid, but another view is that Irish holidaymakers are hedging their bets on being allowed to travel abroad
- This gives some operators fear that they face a wave of cancellations in August if Irish holidaymakers find they can drop their domestic holiday in favour of an overseas one

"Cancellations are coming in as quickly as bookings"
B&B

"Cancellation queries are more common"
Hotel

"A lot of scheduled bookings could be cancelled so a lot of uncertainty"
Self catering

"Are there any booking trends you're noticing for 2021 that are different from normal?"

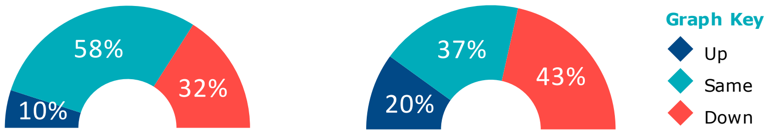
Employment levels

Fāilte Ireland Research

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

FULL REPORT

No. of staff employed this summer compared to summer 2020



Base: 853

Permanent staff

Base: 806

Seasonal staff

'Don't know' and 'not applicable' answers have been excluded from the results

About a quarter of staff employed this summer are expected to be new to the tourism industry

- Among businesses planning to be open this summer who would normally employ staff, employment levels of both permanent and seasonal staff are expected to be down
- On the whole, results are reasonably consistent by region and sector where sample sizes are large enough to make comparisons
- But Dublin may be a particularly hard place to find a seasonal job in tourism this summer – only 9% expect to employ more seasonal staff this summer, and 61% expect numbers to be down

Individual sector reports

Fāilte Ireland Research

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

FULL REPORT

Click sector name to find individual report
Click to return to this page

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

FULL REPORT

Slow reopening, and slow booking

- B&Bs may be a little slower to reopen than other acc'm sectors
- 21% will wait until July, and 18% don't yet know when to reopen
- 79% of B&Bs are taking advance bookings, but this is much lower than other acc'm sectors (96% combined)
- Among those taking bookings, booked-up available capacity for August is 20% – the lowest of any acc'm sector
- Lack of overseas tourists seems to be a key reason behind slow bookings
- In general, when they make a booking, Irish families seem to be staying for longer than normal
- Cancellations are rife

"Very poor. The B&B is mainly overseas tourists so it is very empty."

"I'm getting families booking my accommodation and they are staying mostly for a week at a time."

"We are receiving cancellations daily"

Base: 164

Caravan parks

Fáilte Ireland Research

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

FULL REPORT

Irish seeking holidays in caravan parks

- All 24 responding caravan parks expect to reopen in June
- The sector benefits from having a generally more self-contained nature than serviced accommodation
- Capacity levels will be better than other acc'm except self-catering – 6 sites will operate at full capacity, and all but 2 will operate at over 50% capacity
- On average, about 62% of available capacity for August is booked – much higher than in serviced acc'm
- The domestic market is expected to boom this summer, as Irish holidaymakers seek alternatives to going abroad, especially families

"Lots of families who have bought caravans, tents and motorhomes this year … people are not travelling around but staying with us for their whole holidays"

"More southern Irish visitors to Donegal than usual"

"Huge repeat business from 2020 from people who were using this type of holiday initially for the first time in 2020 as it's very good value as well as a great experience for families"

Base: 24

Guesthouses

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

FULL REPORT

Base: 31

Struggling with operating capacity and to attract domestic market

- 75% of guesthouses expect to be open in June
- Operating capacity is the most challenged of any acc'm sector – around two thirds will operate at less than 50% normal capacity
- On average, 24% of available capacity for August is booked – the lowest level among acc'm sectors apart from B&Bs
- Some are attracting domestic bookings, but those in major cities are struggling without the overseas visitors

"We are not getting the staycation market because we are a city [Dublin]. International tourism is still on hold … we will again struggle."

"There is no demand for city based staycation holidays – nothing to lure people to come to our city. No nice shopping, dining, socialising opportunities."

"Practically all Irish – mainly middle aged and older people"

Hotels

Fāilte Ireland Research

Barometer Wave 1 – June

FULL REPORT

Long domestic bookings for now, but mass cancellations may be on the cards if overseas travel is allowed this summer

- 94% of hotels plan to be open in June
- Like other serviced acc'm, operating capacity is a major challenge – two in five expect to operate at less than 50% normal capacity
- On average, 40% of available capacity in August is booked – much better than smaller serviced acc'm, but well behind non-serviced
- 46% are getting enquiries from USA – much higher than other acc'm
- Common booking trends among hotels are: mostly Irish tourists staying for longer, very short lead times, very little corporate or function business, people only want to make cancellable bookings
- Some hotels also feel that bookings for August are slow because Irish holidaymakers are holding out hope for overseas travel being allowed

"August is still quiet. People are waiting to see if international travel will open up."

"Cancellation policies are important to people. I'm concerned that if foreign holidays are allowed from August, we will get cancellations"

"Short lead because people are so unsure and left in the dark"

"More families even than last year leading to a pronounced increase in bed occupancy"

"Non-refundable business is completely gone well into Q3 of 2022"

Base: 159

Self-catering

Fáilte Ireland
Research

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

FULL REPORT

High operating capacity and domestic bookings

- 88% expect to be open in June
- The sector benefits greatly from being self-contained
- 39% expect to operate at full capacity
- On average, 74% of available capacity for August is booked – far higher than for serviced acc'm
- The sector is enjoying a flurry of domestic bookings, especially from families
- However, the outlook is not all certain as stays generally seem to be shorter, and some operators fear cancellations

"Huge increase in family bookings. Shorter stays."

"Shorter stays, just enquiries about weekends"

"No groups of golfers, walkers etc, it is all families"

"Domestic market is completely unreliable. 7 weeks of July and August have been cancelled within the last few weeks."

Base: 75

Activity providers

Fáilte Ireland Research

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

FULL REPORT

Lots of caution and last minute booking behaviour

- 70% expect to be open in June
- 88% are taking advance bookings
- Operating capacity varies greatly according to type – 16% will operate at full capacity, but many (42%) will operate at less than 50% capacity
- On average, 23% of available capacity for August is booked
- Domestic visitors, especially families, are replacing overseas customers
- But there are lots of queries about cancellation policies, with some people holding off booking, and bookings which do get made are coming in very last minute

"A lot shorter time frame in booking. We used to be 6 weeks in advance to book out. Now it is the Monday prior to the following weekend before we book out. People are not sure of their plans yet."

"Caution is the key word. People are waiting."

"Lot of last minute bookings as people want certainty before they commit to spending"

Base: 84

Attractions

Fáilte Ireland Research

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

FULL REPORT

Domestic families and younger couples, but missing group business

- 75% plan to be open in June
- 55% are taking advance bookings
- Capacity is a challenge – close to half expect to operate at less than 50% normal capacity
- Attractions are seeing more Irish families & couples but are missing certain key groups such as school trips and tour groups
- Combined challenges of limited capacity and lack of schools & tour groups mean that some types of attraction are struggling for income on weekdays, while not being able to take full advantage of demand at weekends
- A number of attractions are surprised by the lack of older visitors

"The demand is high but our capacity indoors is low"

"No school tours, no group business"

"Very few school tour bookings. Normally May and June are our two busiest months of the year."

"Not seeing any visitors from the senior segment – I'm surprised as they have been vaccinated"

Base: 112

Coach operators

Fāilte Ireland Research

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

FULL REPORT

Missing international travel, but support for this sector has helped

- 11 of the responding 21 coach operators say they are already open for business, in compliance with Government regulations
- However, 7 do not know when they can start operating again
- Operating capacity is a challenge in this sector because of the confined environment – 9 out of 12 expect to operate at less than 50% capacity
- Among the 8 operators taking bookings for August, on average 12% of available capacity is booked
- The sector is badly missing events and incoming travel
- Those with business are seeing smaller groups and more individuals
- Business Continuity Scheme has helped this hard-hit sector
- 15 out of 21 operators have benefited from it, of which 9 cite it as the most valuable support of all

"Reduced airport travel; reduced intercounty travel as no large events taking place"

"Too early to tell. We are still awaiting clarity on international visitors."

"Lots of single travellers"

Base: 21

Destination management companies

Fāilte Ireland Research

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

FULL REPORT

Too soon to say what business will happen in 2021

- 8 of the responding 15 DMCs do not yet know when they can 'reopen' – they are working behind the scenes but do not know when incoming trips can feasibly take place
- DMCs know they have to be very flexible with their clients on cancellation policies
- Without offering free cancellations, it is hard to get clients to commit to paying a deposit, which gives DMCs much needed income
- One DMC brings more positive news of increased interest from UK MICE agencies

"A reluctance to pay deposits unless there are government updates or supplier assurances that refunds are available if cancelled due to Covid"

"Important to offer very flexible booking terms & conditions allowing 100% postponement or cancellation policy"

"Greater interest from UK MICE agents"

Base: 15

Golf clubs

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

FULL REPORT

Quite busy courses, but not necessarily because of tourism

- 16 of the 20 responding golf clubs say they are already open, and the remainder plan to reopen in June or July
- 75% are taking advance bookings, and the average booked available capacity for August is 50% – the highest of any non-acc'm sector
- However not all bookings are necessarily coming from tourists, but also from local members
- Event business, groups and international visitors are all lacking

"No foreign visitors. No new groups."

"Increase in memberships from U-35 age group and older age groups. Junior Golf at U-12 age has grown exponentially. Society and visitor green fee bookings are slow."

"We have lost all our event business."

Base: 20

Inbound tour operators

Fāilte Ireland Research

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

FULL REPORT

Lifeline from Fáilte Ireland's Continuity Scheme

- 16 of the responding 23 inbound tour operators have benefited from Fáilte Ireland's Tourism Business Continuity Scheme, and 10 cite it as the most valuable support of all
- This has helped to mitigate the considerable continued uncertainty over when incoming tours can resume
- 11 out of 15 are receiving enquiries from US clients, who are asking for certainty over when their customers can travel
- When they can resume, operating capacity will be a significant challenge – 7 out of 12 operators expect to operate at less than 25% normal capacity
- Cancellation policies are also a particular big issue in this sector, with clients unwilling to pay deposits unless they have a significant level of flexibility

"More fearful in making bookings and questioning cancellation policy"

"Americans can't understand why we're not fully opened yet, as they are"

"Cancellation policy queries are commonplace, with potential customers unwilling to book unless they can cancel and obtain a refund at relatively short notice. As a result, we have amended our policy to take a much smaller booking deposit and shorten the time to arrival for payment of the balance."

Base: 23

Pubs / bars

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

FULL REPORT

Benefiting from CRSS

- 91% have benefited from the Covid Restrictions Support Scheme, and 73% cite it as the most valuable support – far more than any other sector
- 49% plan to be open in June, and a further 26% in July
- 22% don't yet know when they will reopen
- Some say they are seeing younger clientele, who would normally go abroad, in place of previously older customers

"More home visitors and much younger, who would normally have travelled abroad"

"Definitely fewer older people"

Base: 365

Restaurants

Barometer Wave 1 – June

FULL REPORT

Challenges of capacity and weather for outdoor dining

- 63% plan to be open in June, followed by a further 23% in July
- 32% are taking advance bookings
- Operating capacity is a challenge, with over half expecting to operate at less than 50% normal capacity
- The weather poses challenges as to whether to take outdoor bookings
- Those who are seeing bookings are not receiving overseas tourists, and possibly not domestic tourists either, but locals

"People are dying to get back into restaurants! They want to book outdoor dining for June but we're not taking bookings because we can't rely on the weather."

"More local people who prefer not to travel. Normally throughout the summer months these guests would go abroad."

"All regulars that are booking – no one from outside the county"

Base: 164

Tour guides

Fāilte Ireland Research

Barometer
Wave 1 – June

FULL REPORT

Not feeling the benefit of cost supports

- 18 of the 22 responding tour guides say they have not benefited from any cost support – the highest proportion of any sector
- As with other sectors which depend heavily on overseas visitors, reopening and bookings are slow and very uncertain

"Numerous enquiries but few firm bookings"

"Too few bookings to show a trend"

Base: 22

Venues

Fāilte Ireland Research

Barometer Wave 1 – June

FULL REPORT

Promising booking levels later in the year

- 10 out of 19 venues plan to be open in June
- 10 out of 14 with planned reopening this summer expect to operate at less than 50% normal capacity
- Booked space improves with time: in Oct–Dec 2021, on average 35% of available capacity is booked – the highest booked occupancy for that time period of any sector
- Venues which host weddings are having a difficult time, as are their customers, with greatly restricted numbers allowed compared to usual

"All our bookings are weddings and without any visibility on what allowable guest numbers will be into the future, couples are cancelling & postponing. At 25 guests our business is not viable."

"More cancellations & postponements after guidelines are announced and clients are disappointed with numbers allowed for weddings."

Base: 19

Appendix: Background & Methodology

06
Background & Methodology

FULL REPORT

Background and Objectives

The Irish Government recently announced its reopening initiative 'Resilience and Recovery: The Path Ahead'. Fáilte Ireland has been making every effort to support enterprises to reopen and recoup what they can in 2021 while adhering to official guidelines.

The purposes of this wide reaching survey are to:

- Understand planned reopening by sector
- Measure expected operating capacity and advance booking levels
- Uncover any booking trends different from the norm
- Identify the most useful business supports which have been available during the Covid crisis

Methodology

An online survey was issued to relevant subscribers to Fáilte Ireland's ezine on 27th May 2021. Fáilte Ireland and Strategic Research and Insight worked together to produce the questionnaire.

A total of 1,395 responses have been received.

Strategic Research and Insight (SRI), is an independent research agency working on behalf of Fáilte Ireland consulted in the questionnaire design, scripted the online survey and authored the report.

Sector	Total Sample Size
Hotels	159
Guesthouses	31
B&B	164
Self-catering	75
Caravan & camping	24
Other acc'm	17
Attractions	112
Activity provider	84
Golf	20
Restaurants	164
Chauffeur service	25
Pub / bar	365
Inbound tours	23
Event organiser	21
Coach operator	21
Tour guide	22
DMC	15
Venue	19
Other non-acc'm	34
Total	**1,395**