



## **ASSC TOURISM ACCOMMODATION BUSINESS SURVEY – SEPTEMBER 2021**

### **Introduction**

- The Association of Scotland's Self-Caterers (ASSC) is the leading source of knowledge on short-term letting and traditional self-catering in Scotland. The traditional self-catering sector alone is extremely important to the Scottish economy. A recently launched impact report by Frontline (Sept 2021) found that the self-catering sector contributed:
  - 17,794 properties
  - 2.4 million visitor nights
  - £867.1m total visitor spend
  - 23,979 jobs
  - £672m to the Scottish economy
- The ASSC has been working pro-actively and constructively with the Scottish Government on the introduction of regulations to the short-term let sector since 2017 and is pleased to provide more data to inform the ongoing process.
- On 3rd September the ASSC conducted a Tourism Accommodation Businesses Survey to gain further insights and additional data to further inform the Scottish Governments Short-Term Let (STL) Legislation Proposals.

### **Survey Overview**

- The ASSC ran an online survey consisting of 19 questions. This was publicised via ASSC newsletters, as well as on the ASSC's social media pages. It was shared with the Scottish Bed and Breakfast Association, Scotland's Best Bed and Breakfasts, Scottish Land and Estates, Regional Destination Marketing Organisations across Scotland and industry related social media groups.
- **In just 72 hours, the ASSC gathered 1484 responses** from accommodation businesses across Scotland, which includes traditional self-catering, bed and breakfasts, guest houses and small hotels plus, agri-tourism businesses, caravans and shepherd's huts and other glamping accommodation.
- Responses received were from both ASSC members (675) and non-ASSC members (809) alike, in each of the 32 local authorities.
- It is hoped that the survey results will inform greater discussion regarding the Scottish Government's short-term let legislation proposals.
- It is also hoped that the responses received provide an insight into the make-up of small tourism accommodation businesses across Scotland, which form the backbone of Scotland's vital tourism offer.
- The full list of questions and survey results are set out below.

### **Summary**

On the whole, small tourism accommodation businesses across Scotland are operating at a professional level<sup>1</sup>: **Three quarters (1089 respondents - 74%) consider themselves to be professional operators.**

**The professional standing on respondents is further justified as:**

- **97% have public liability insurance**
- **67% are ASSC members**
- **61% have their own website**

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<sup>1</sup> A professional operator / business is defined by the Scottish Government according to the criteria set out in the Support for Small Accommodation Providers Paying Council Tax Fund (SAP-CTF), which was designed to support small accommodation providers in Scotland that pay council tax, including B&Bs, guest houses and self-catering properties, and which were impacted by the coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions.



The majority of survey respondents (80%) operate self-catering businesses. Of the **1185 self-catering operators responded**,

- Almost three quarters (74%) consider themselves “professional operators
- 90% confirmed that their business meets the definition of a self-catering property as defined in The Council Tax (Dwellings and Part Residential Subjects) (Scotland) Regulations 1992. In addition, 84% pay non-domestic rates and let out their properties for more than 140 days per annum. 92% are occupied more than 70 days. These are both key indicators that they are operating as a business not just to generate additional income.
- 97% have public liability business insurance

Of the **338 B&B/Guest House operators responded**, 81% consider themselves to be professional operators and 80% state the accommodation business is their primary source of income.

- 45% are on the non-domestic rates roll while 54% pay council tax
- Of those that offer food, 90% can confirm that the business is registered and has been passed by the local authority's Food Hygiene Information Scheme (Food Standards Scotland)? OR the local authority has confirmed that this is not required for your business?
- 74% have a listing on VisitScotland
- 30% market their property through Airbnb amongst other platforms

### Location

When looking at specific locations, the following table summarises the key findings across a city, as well as urban, rural and island locations. From this we can infer that:

- Urban areas including cities have more “professional operators” most likely due to a higher proportion of respondents stating that their accommodation is their primary income source
- While island and rural locations have slightly less properties rented for 140 days or more (84% compared to 90% in urban location), a higher proportion pay NDR (84% compared to 71%)
- It is worth noting that many rural and island operators have diversified income streams with accommodation being a part of that portfolio.

Indicator of professionalism	Edinburgh (n=118)	Urban (n=216)	Rural/Semi rural (n=872)	Island (n=302)
Self-catering	88%	85%	80%	76%
Professional operators	82%	80%	74%	74%
Primary income source	69%	76%	54%	56%
Non-domestic rates	68%	71%	74%	84%
140 days of more rental	91%	90%	84%	84%
Public liability insurance	92%	94%	98%	96%
Rent a room scheme	2.5%	3%	5%	4.6%
Airbnb only listing	22%	17%	8%	10%



## Q1 WHERE IS YOUR BUSINESS BASED?

The vast majority of respondents are based in rural areas, with just 15% operating in cities across Scotland.

Local Authority	Number of Respondents
Aberdeen City	8
Aberdeenshire	41
Angus	21
Argyll & Bute	172
Clackmannanshire	4
Dumfries & Galloway	77
Dundee City	1
East Ayrshire	3
East Dunbartonshire	1
East Lothian	10
East Renfrewshire	1
Edinburgh City	118
Eilean Siar	56
Falkirk	3
Fife	59
Glasgow City	18

Local Authority	Number of Respondents
Highland Skye & Lochalsh	168
Highland - other	314
Inverclyde	2
Midlothian	5
Moray	39
North Ayrshire	59
North Lanarkshire	4
Orkney	74
Perth & Kinross	90
Renfrewshire	4
Scottish Borders	44
Shetland	12
South Ayrshire	19
South Lanarkshire	6
Stirling	36
West Dunbartonshire	7
West Lothian	8

## Q2 HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE LOCATION OF YOUR PROPERTY?

Whilst 70% of respondents rely entirely on self-catering as income, others illustrate a diverse range of multiple income streams that make up their entire income, a common feature of many small businesses today. Interestingly, there was no mention of crofting or fishing as additional income streams.

Urban	216	14.56%	} Combined = 79.33%
Suburban	82	5.53%	
<b>Semi-Rural</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>18.13%</b>	
<b>Rural</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>40.63%</b>	
<b>On an Island</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>20.57%</b>	
Pan Scotland	6	0.40%	

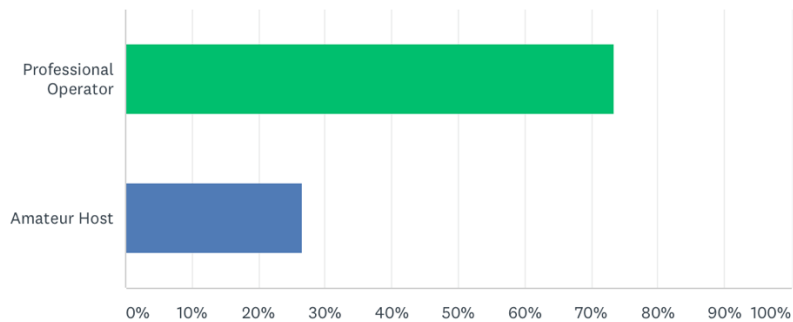


**Q3 DO YOU OPERATE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING?**

Self-Catering	1185	79.85%
B&B / Guest House / Small Hotel	338	22.78%
Farm / Agri Tourism Business	46	3.10%
Glamping / Shepherd’s Hut	52	3.50%
Caravan	23	1.55%
Home Share (in your primary residence)	46	3.10%
Property Management Agency	22	1.48%
Other Tourism Accommodation:	32	2.16%
Other includes:		

- Serviced Apartments
- Bothy
- Deer Stalking
- Accessible Cabins
- Wedding & Events
- Exclusive Use Venue
- Campervan
- Timeshare
- Car Hire
- Sea king Helicopter

**Q 4 DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR ACTIVITY TO BE PROFESSIONAL OR AMATEUR?**



Professional	1089	75.53%
Amateur	392	26.47%

**Q 5 IS YOUR ACCOMMODATION BUSINESS YOUR PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME?**

Yes	870	58.70%
No	612	41.30%



**Q 6 ARE YOU REGISTERED ON THE NON-DOMESTIC RATES ROLL (BUSINESS RATES)?**

Yes	1096	73.85%
No	388	26.15%

**Q 7 IF YOU LET OUT AN ENTIRE PROPERTY, IS IT OCCUPIED FOR MORE THAN 140 DAYS IN A FINANCIAL YEAR?**

Yes	1035	69.74%
No	168	11.32%
N/A	281	18.94%

**Q 8 IF YOU LET OUT AN ENTIRE PROPERTY, IS IT OCCUPIED FOR MORE THAN 70 DAYS IN A FINANCIAL YEAR?**

Yes	1131	76.21%
No	38	2.56%
n/a	315	21.23%

**Q 9 DO YOU BENEFIT FROM THE SMALL BUSINESS BONUS SCHEME?**

Yes	798	53.77%
No	540	36.39%
n/a	146	9.84%

**Q 10 IS YOUR PROEPRTY CONSIDERED TO BE A 'FURNISHED HOLIDAY LET' BY HMRC?**

(To qualify as a trading business under the Furnished Holiday Let (FHL) tax rules, a property must be available for let for 210 days and actually let for 105 days.)

Yes	925	62.37%
No	215	14.50%
I don't know	207	13.96%
n/a	136	9.17%

**Q 11 DO YOU BENEFIT FROM THE RENT A ROOM SHCEME (with tax free income up to £7500)?**

Yes	68	4.58%
No	1182	79.65%
n/a	234	15.77%



**Q 12 CAN YOU CONFIRM THAT THE BUSINESS MEETS THE DEFINITION OF A SELF-CATERING PROEPRTY AS DEFINED IN THE COUNCIL TAX (DWELLINGS AND PART RESIDENTIAL SUBJECTS) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 1992?**

Yes	1088	73.32%
No	126	8.49%
n/a	270	18.19%

**Q 13 IF YOU OPERATE A B&B OR GUEST HOUSE, IS THE PREMISEES CLASSED AS A RESIDENTIAL OR HOTEL IN PLANNING TERMS?**

Of those 338 B&B/Guest Houses who responded:

Use Class Order 9 – Residential	173	51.18%
Use Class Order 7 – Hotel / Hostel	44	13 .02%
I'm not sure	106	31.36
n/a	15	4.44%

**Q 14 IF YOU OPERATE A B&B OR GUEST HOUSE, DO YOU HAVE A LICENCE TO SERVE ALCOHOL UNDER THE LICENSING ACT 2005?**

Of those 338 B&B/Guest Houses who responded:

Yes	26	7.69%
No	297	87.87%
n/a	15	4.44%

**Q 15 IF YOU OFFER FOOD, CAN YOU CONFIRM THAT THE BUSINESS IS REGISTERED AND HAS BEEN PASSED BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY'S FOOD HYGINE INFORMAITON SCHEME (FOOD STANDARDS SCOTLAND)? OR THE LOCAL AUTHORITY HAS CONFIRMED THAT THIS IS NOT REQUIRED FOR YOUR BUSINESS?**

Of those 338 B&B/Guest Houses who responded:

Yes	241	71.30%
No	26	7.69%
n/a	71	21.01%

**Q 16 IF YOU OPERATE A GLAMPING BUSINESS, DO YOU HAVE A CARAVAN SITE LICENCE?**

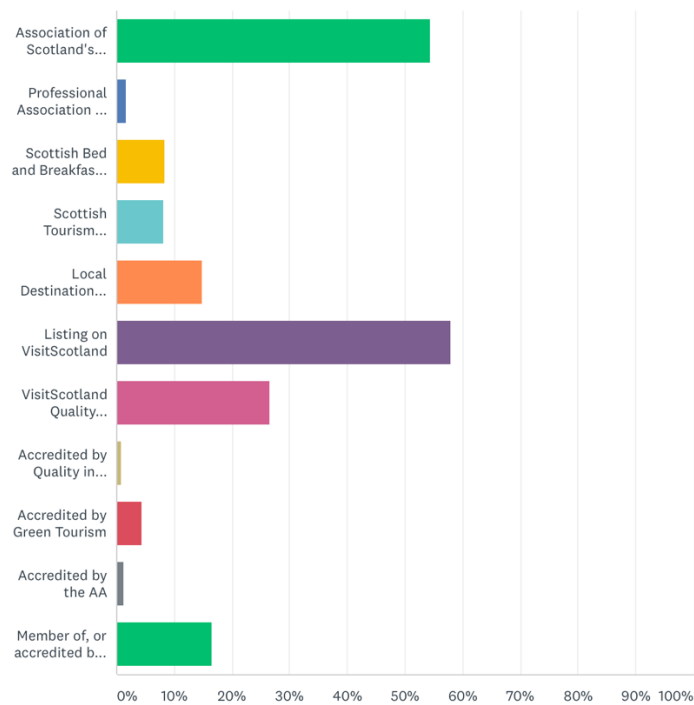
Yes	14	7.69%
No	73	87.87%
I have been told that I am exempt	6	0.40%
n/a	1389	93.72%



**Q 17 CAN YOU CONFIRM THAT THE BUSINESS IS COVERED BY PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE?**

Yes	1426	96.09%
No	58	3.91%

**Q 18 ARE YOU A MEMBER OF, OR ACCREDITED BY ANY OF THE FOLLOWING?**



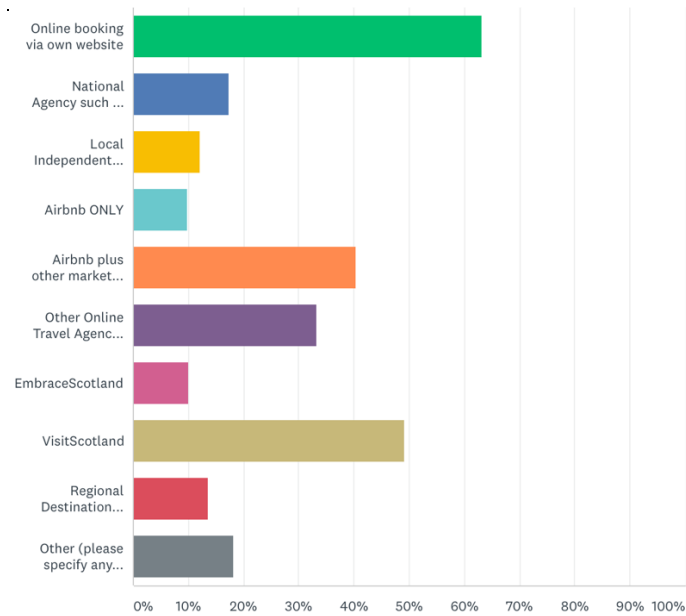
ASSC	654	54.32%
PASC	19	1.58%
Scottish B&B Association	100	8.31%
Scottish Tourism Alliance	97	8.06%
Local DMO or Tbid area	180	14.95%
Listing on VisitScotland	697	57.89%
VisitScotland quality assurance – Star rated	319	26.50%
Accredited by Quality in Tourism	11	0.91%
Accredited by Green Tourism	52	4.32%
Accredited by the AA	15	1.25%
Member of, or Accredited by another organisation	199	16.53%

**Other Organisations include:**

Scotland's Best B&Bs	NFUS
National Trust for Scotland	Scottish Land & Estates
Agri Tourism / GoRural	Wild Scotland
Good Hotel Guide	Scottish Landlords Association
Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere	FSB



## Q 19 HOW DO YOU MARKET YOUR PROEPRTY/IES



Online Booking via own website	938	63.21%
National Agency	259	17.45%
Local Independent Agency	180	12.13%
Airbnb Only	145	9.77%
Airbnb plus other marketing platforms	599	40.36%
Other Online Travel Agent (OTA)	494	33.29%
EmbraceScotland	150	10.11%
VisitScotland	731	49.26%
Regional DMO	201	13.54%
Other	271	18.26%





## SEGMENTED SURVEY DATA

### BUSINESS TYPE

**Of the 1484 respondents:**

**1185 operate self-catering businesses:**

Of these...

- Three quarters (**74%**) of these self-caterers consider themselves as **Professional Operators**
- with 84% being on the Non-Domestic Rates Roll.
- 84% Let out their entire property for more than 140 days per annum and 92% over 70 days per annum
- 62% benefit from the small business bonus scheme.
- 90% of respondents can confirm that the business meets the definition of a self-catering property as defined in The Council Tax (Dwellings and Part Residential Subjects) (Scotland) Regulations 1992
- **97%** of operators have confirmed that their business is covered by **public liability insurance**.
- 634 (67%) are members of the ASSC and 515 (54%) have a listing with VisitScotland
- **61% of operators have their own website**
- **44% market their property through AirBnB amongst other platforms**
- Only 9% market their property/ies through AirBnB ONLY

**Of the 1484 respondents:**

**338 (23%) of respondents operate a B&B, Guest House or Small Hotel**

Of these...

- 37% also operate self-catering, agri-tourism, glamping or some other accommodation.
- **81%** consider themselves as **professional operators**
- **80%** state the accommodation business is their **primary source of income**
- **83%** are **rural or semi-rural**
- 45% pay non-domestic rates while **54% pay council tax**
- 51% are use class order 9 residential while 13% are use class order 7 Hotel/Hostel
- Less than 8% have an alcohol licence.
- Of those that offer food, **90% can confirm that the business is registered and has been passed by the local authority's Food Hygiene Information Scheme (Food Standards Scotland)? OR the local authority has confirmed that this is not required for your business?**
- **98%** confirm that their business is covered by **public liability insurance**
- 74% have a listing on VisitScotland with 32% part of the VS Quality Assurance Scheme
- 80% of operators have their own booking website
- 30% market their property through Airbnb amongst other platforms
- Only 3.5% market their property through Airbnb ONLY



## MARKETING

**Of the 1484 respondents:**

**Only 145 (10%) market their business on Airbnb ONLY**

Of these:

- 25% urban, **49% rural & semi rural**, 12% on an island
- 77% self-catering, 21% home sharing, 8% B&B/Guest House
- 42% professional / 58% amateur
- 39% of respondent's business is their primary source of income

**Of the 1484 respondents:**

**725 (61%) respondents take bookings via their own website**

Of these...

- **50% market their property on Airbnb plus other platforms**
- 44% use other OTAs
- 67% have a VisitScotland listing
- 16% use a national agency
- 12 % use a local agency
- 19% use their DMO
- 82% of these consider themselves as professional operators
- (66% the accommodation is their primary source of income)
- 78% on NDR

## LOCATION

**Of the 1484 respondents:**

**118(23%) of respondents operate their business in Edinburgh**

Of these...

- 88% are self-catering operators, 9% B&B or Guest House, 6% home share
- **82% consider themselves as professional operators**
- **69% state the accommodation business is their primary source of income**
- 68% pay non-domestic rates while 31% pay council tax
- Of those self-catering 97% let out their entire property for more than 70 days per year & 91% for more than 140 days per year
- Of those self-catering 98% can confirm that the business meets the definition of a self-catering property as defined in The Council Tax (Dwellings and Part Residential Subjects) (Scotland) Regulations 1992
- Only 3 operators (2.5%) benefit from the rent a room scheme
- 92% can confirm that their business is covered by public liability insurance
- 43% of operators have their own booking website
- 54% market their property through Airbnb amongst other platforms
- 22% Airbnb only
- 26% have a VisitScotland listing



**Of the 1484 respondents:**

**216 (15%) of respondents operate their business in an urban location**

- 85% are self-catering operators, 16% B&B or Guest House, 5% home share
- **80%** consider themselves as **professional operators**
- **67%** state the accommodation business is their **primary source of income**
- 71% pay non-domestic rates while 29% pay council tax
- Of those self-catering 94% let out their entire property for more than 70 days per year & 90% for more than 140 days per year
- Of those self-catering 95% can confirm that the business meets the definition of a self-catering property as defined in The Council Tax (Dwellings and Part Residential Subjects) (Scotland) Regulations 1992
- **Only 7 operators (3%) benefit from the rent a room scheme**
- 94% can confirm that their business is covered by public liability insurance
- 49% of operators have their own booking website
- 57% market their property through Airbnb amongst other platforms
- 17% Airbnb only
- 35% have a VisitScotland listing

**Of the 1484 respondents:**

**872 (59%) of respondents operate their business in a rural or semi-rural location**

- 80% are self-catering operators, 22% B&B or Guest House, 3% home share, 5% agri-tourism & 5% glamping
- **74%** consider themselves as **professional operators**
- **56%** state the accommodation business is their **primary source of income**
- 74% pay non-domestic rates while 26% pay council tax
- Of those self-catering 93% let out their entire property for more than 70 days per year & 84% for more than 140 days per year
- Of those self-catering 95% can confirm that the business meets the definition of a self-catering property as defined in The Council Tax (Dwellings and Part Residential Subjects) (Scotland) Regulations 1992
- **Only 43 operators (5%) benefit from the rent a room scheme**
- 98% can confirm that their business is covered by public liability insurance
- 67% of operators have their own booking website
- 39% market their property through Airbnb amongst other platforms
- 8% Airbnb only
- 53% have a VisitScotland listing



**Of the 1484 respondents:**

**308 (21%) of respondents operate their business on an Island**

- 76% are self-catering operators, 30% B&B or Guest House, 2% home share, 1% agri & 4% glamping
- **70%** consider themselves as **professional operators (30% amateur hosts)**
- **59%** state the accommodation business is their **primary source of income**
- 84% pay non-domestic rates while 16% pay council tax
- Of those self-catering 93% let out their entire property for more than 70 days per year & 86% for more than 140 days per year
- Of those self-catering 95% can confirm that the business meets the definition of a self-catering property as defined in The Council Tax (Dwellings and Part Residential Subjects) (Scotland) Regulations 1992
- **68 operators (4.6%) benefit from the rent a room scheme**
- 96% can confirm that their business is covered by public liability insurance
- 63% of operators have their own booking website
- 40% market their property through Airbnb amongst other platforms
- 10% Airbnb only
- 49% have a VisitScotland listing