



In this Bulletin: arrivals and visitor expenditure

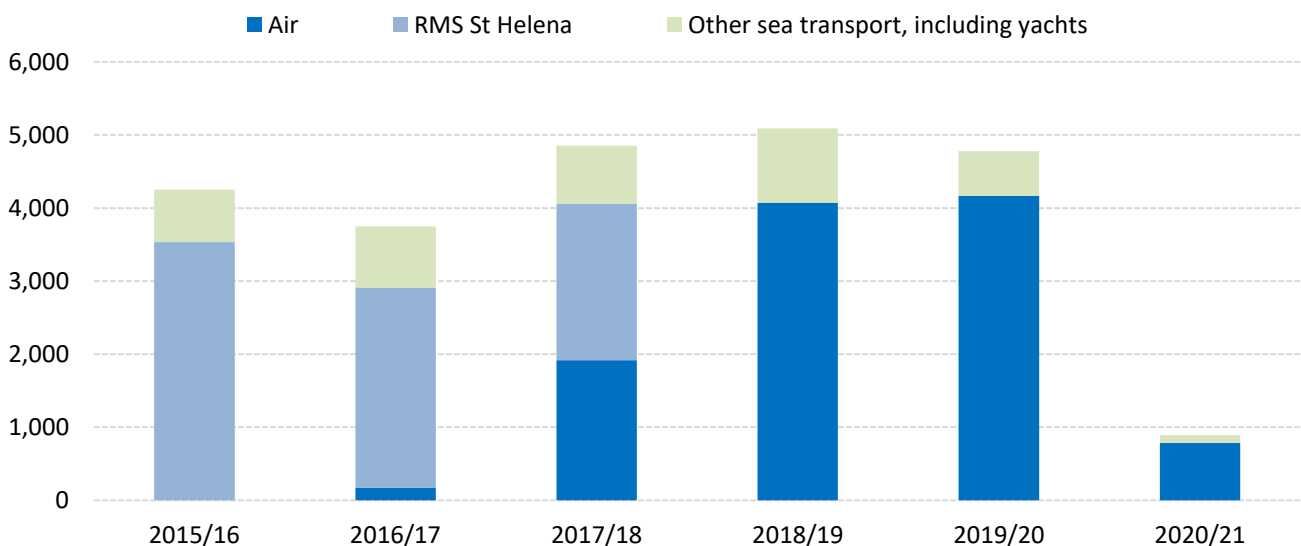
This Bulletin provides a brief analysis of the trends in arrivals to St Helena, and estimates of the expenditure of visitors. It uses the statistics on arrivals that are compiled and released by the St Helena's Statistics Office on a monthly basis, in the file 'Arrivals and Departures' on the St Helena Statistics website at: www.sainthelena.gov.sh/statistics-data.

In this Bulletin, annual figures are presented on a financial year basis; that is, from April to March, because this corresponds closely with the timing of the COVID-19 pandemic. Calendar year figures, or other time periods, can be calculated using the monthly series in the data file.

Arrivals to St Helena

The number of arrivals to St Helena in 2020/21 (excluding day visitors on cruise ships) was 893, an 81% drop on the number of arrivals in 2019/20, which was 4,777. This dramatic fall is due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused the regular scheduled weekly flight from South Africa to be suspended in April 2020 – the number of arrivals by air fell to 786 in 2020/21, from 4,167 in 2019/20. Chart 1 illustrates the drop in 2020/21, and the change in the mode of travel since 2015/16, as air travel replaced the RMS St Helena in 2017/18.

Chart 1. Arrivals to St Helena, 2015/16 to 2020/21 (excludes day visitors on cruise ships)



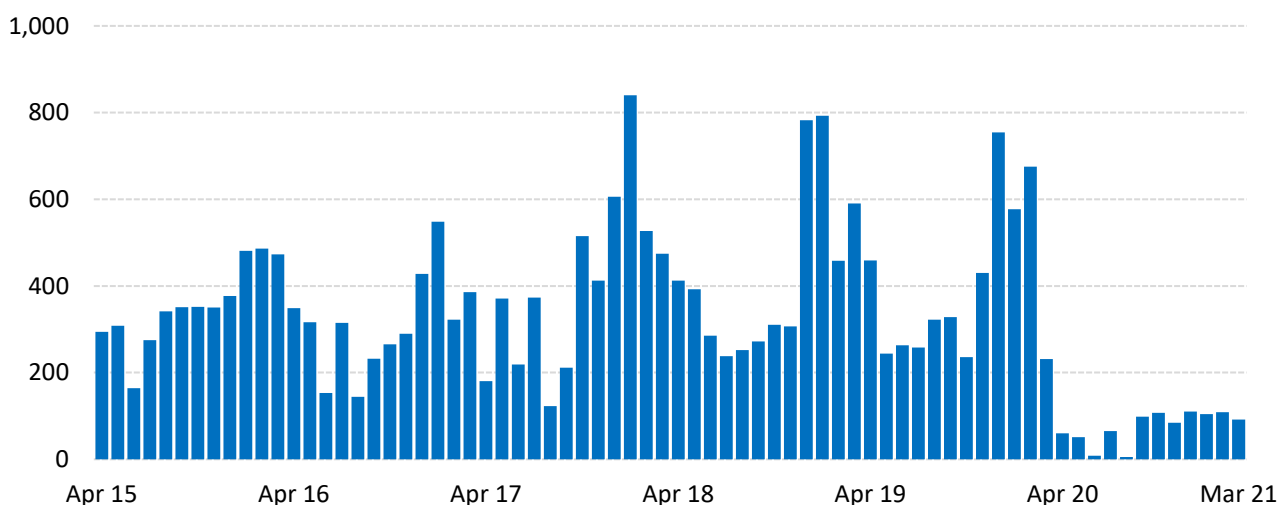
Passenger arrivals to St Helena are very seasonal, due to friends and family of residents visiting the Island around Christmas each year, and to the increase in the number of tourists visiting the island in the warmer months, between around December and May (Table 1 and Chart 2). The fall in the

number of arrivals from March/April 2020 is the result of the COVID-19 pandemic – in the first six months following the start of the pandemic (April to September 2020) the number of arrivals per month averaged just under 50, with an average since then of around 100. This is substantially lower than the average between 2017/18 and 2019/20 of around 400 arrivals per month.

Table 1. Monthly arrivals in 2015/16-2020/21 (excluding day arrivals from cruise ships).

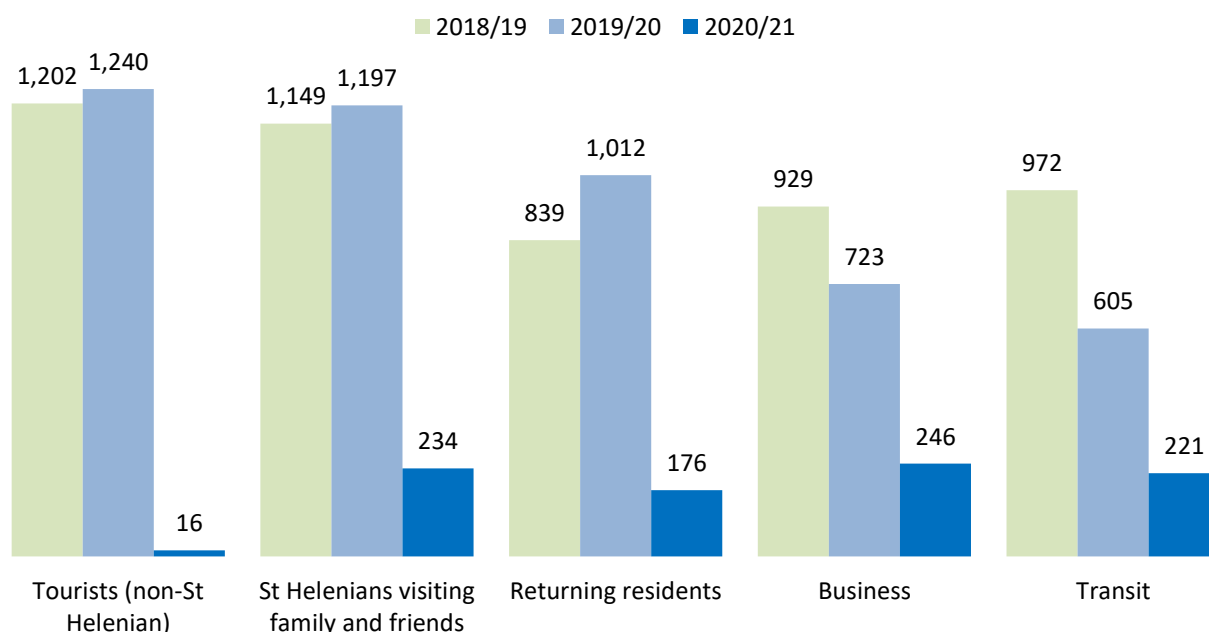
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Apr	294	349	180	412	459	60
May	308	316	371	392	244	51
Jun	164	153	219	285	263	8
Jul	275	315	373	238	258	65
Aug	341	144	123	252	322	5
Sep	351	232	211	272	328	98
Oct	352	265	515	310	236	107
Nov	350	290	412	307	430	84
Dec	377	428	606	782	754	110
Jan	481	548	840	793	577	104
Feb	486	322	527	458	675	109
Mar	473	386	474	590	231	92
Total	4,252	3,748	4,851	5091	4,777	893
Average per month	354	312	404	424	398	74

Chart 2. Monthly passenger arrivals to St Helena, April 2015 to March 2021 (excluding day visitors on cruise ships)



The drop in arrivals was highest in the tourist category (Chart 3); there have been less than 20 tourist arrivals in the 2020/21 financial year, compared to over 1,200 the year before. Business arrivals were the highest category in 2020/21, although there were still far fewer than in 2019/20; this category includes all persons arriving for a work purpose, including Technical Cooperation Officers and their families returning from overseas leave. The Transit category includes most yacht arrivals, but the number of people arriving by air in transit to another destination increased to 145 in 2020/21 from 29 in 2019/20, mainly because the special flight arrangements used during the pandemic mean that persons travelling between Ascension Island and the UK via St Helena require an overnight stay on the Island.

Chart 3. Purpose of arrivals to St Helena, 2018/19 to 2020/21 financial years



Visitor spending

When people visit St Helena they spend money, mostly on services like accommodation, transport, and meals in restaurants. Visitor spending is a significant part of St Helena's economy, and is considered an export, since it is spending by non-residents and money comes into the economy from abroad – in the same way that exports of St Helena's coffee and fish also bring money into the economy from abroad.

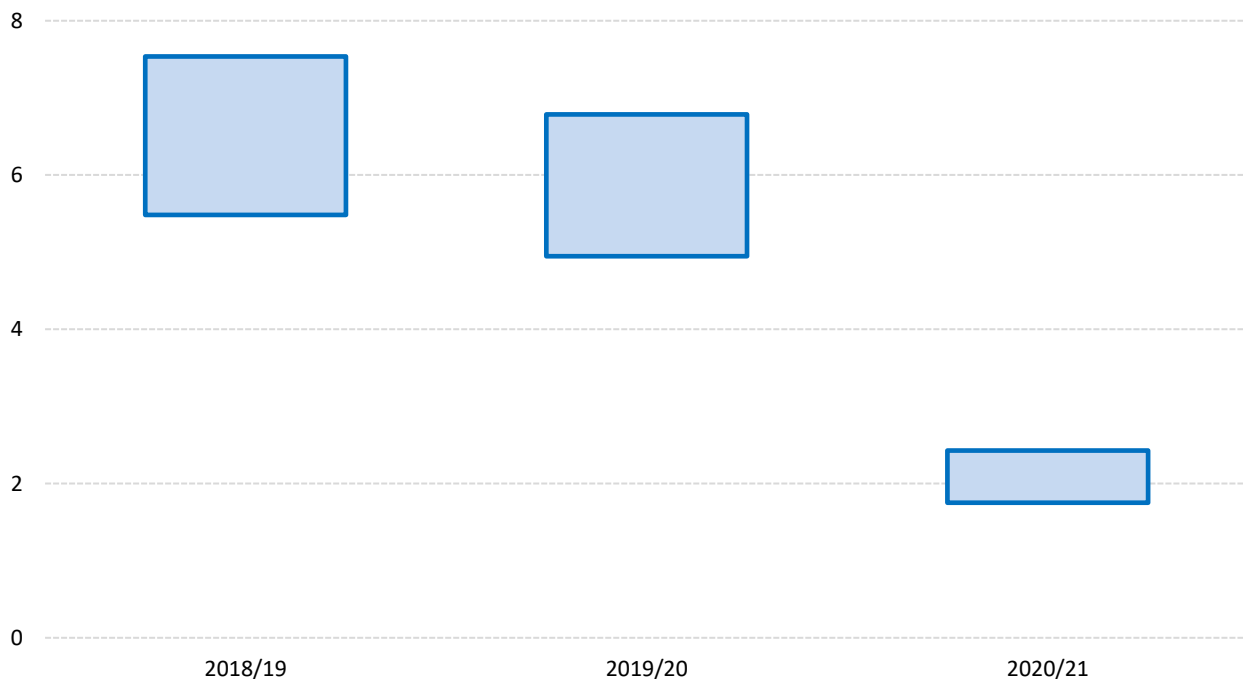
To estimate the total amount spent by visitors, the daily expenditure of visitors in different categories (calculated from surveys) is multiplied by the estimated number of nights spent by those visitors on St Helena (calculated from immigration records). Table 2 and Chart 4 provide range estimates for visitors that have departed the Island. Please note that because the surveys for estimating visitor expenditure are still quite new and relatively small, all estimates are provisional, and will be improved as more data becomes available.

Table 2. Nights spent and expenditures of different categories of visitor departing in FY 2018/19 to FY 2020/21

Financial Year (April to March)	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Estimated average daily expenditures (range)			
Visiting family and friends	£80-110	£80-110	£80-110
Tourists	£140-190	£140-190	£140-190
Short-term business visitors, including government	£80-110	£80-110	£80-110
Arrivals by yacht or for transit	£50-75	£50-75	£50-75
Nights spent by people departing in year	59,495	52,869	21,880
Visiting family and friends	33,109	30,799	11,628
Tourists	14,574	13,175	1,891
Short-term business visitors, including government	6,819	6,454	4,653
Arrivals by yacht or for transit	4,993	2,441	3,708
Estimate of total expenditures (range)	£5.6-7.6m	£5.0-6.9m	£1.8-2.4m
Visiting family and friends	£2.6-3.6m	£2.5-3.4m	£0.9-1.3m
Tourists	£2.0-2.8m	£1.8-2.5m	£0.3-0.4m
Short-term business visitors, including government	£0.5-0.8m	£0.5-0.7m	£0.4-0.5m
Arrivals by yacht or for transit	£0.2-0.4m	£0.1-0.2m	£0.2-0.3m

Note: Estimates in this table are provisional

Chart 4. Range estimates of annual visitor spending on St Helena (exports of services to non-residents), 2018/19 to 2020/21 financial years, £ millions



Methodology

The classification of arrivals and departures into purpose of visit or departure is based on the records created by Immigration Officers at points of entry to St Helena.

For arrivals, tourism/holiday includes short-term visitors or departures (i.e. less than six months) for tourism or holiday purposes, and it includes St Helenians making short-term visits to St Helena to see family and friends, both those that live permanently abroad and those who are away for a period of overseas employment. Day visitors arriving on cruise ships are not included in either arrivals or departures. Business and employment includes short-term and long-term arrivals who arrive for work purposes, including those employed by St Helena Government on contract (and their families). Returning residents are people who are returning to their normal place of residence (this excludes those returning for the purpose of business or employment, who are classed as business). It also includes people returning permanently from periods of overseas employment. Transit includes those for whom St Helena is not their final destination; it includes most arrivals by yacht and any people transiting to or from a ship via air.

For departures, the reason for leaving St Helena is categorised into tourism or holiday, medical treatment overseas (including persons accompanying patients), emigration or employment of St Helenians and their families (usually in the UK or on Ascension Island or the Falkland Islands), to return to a place of residence, or for other reasons (such as business, training, or transit).

The St Helena financial year used in this Bulletin and represented by FY runs from April to March.

The primary data source for the statistics in this Bulletin is the arrival and departure records maintained by the Immigration Office of the Safety, Security and Home Affairs Portfolio, supplemented by surveys conducted by staff in the Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development Portfolio. Estimates are provisional, and may be revised in subsequent months.

Have questions or comments?

Please get in touch: we are Neil Fantom, Statistical Commissioner, Kelly Clingham and Justine Joshua, Senior Statistical Assistants, and Bertina Benjamin, Statistical Assistant. You can find us in person at the Statistics Office on the **first floor of the Castle**, Jamestown, at the back of the main courtyard. You can also contact us by telephone: our direct line is **22138** or via the Castle switchboard on 22470. If calling from overseas, the international dialling code for St Helena is +290. Our general office e-mail address is **statistics@sainthelena.gov.sh**, or you can email team members directly (the format is `firstname.lastname@sainthelena.gov.sh`).