WDC Insights

providing insights on key issues for the Western Region of Ireland

Accommodation & Food Service Sector in the Western Region

Regional Sectoral Profile

March 2019

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1.0 Introduction

The Western Development Commission (WDC) is a state agency charged with promoting the economic and social development of the Western Region of Ireland.[1] To effectively deliver this remit the WDC carries out detailed analysis of a range of socio-economic issues of relevance to the region to inform policy debate and formulation.

This report forms part of a series of 'Regional Sectoral Profiles' analysing the most recent employment and enterprise data for the Western Region on specific economic sectors and identifying key policy issues.[2]

The two-page ***WDC Insights*****: Accommodation & Food Service Sector in the Western Region** summarises the main points from this report. It is available here.

1.1 Accommodation & Food Service

Accommodation & Food Service is the Western Region's fifth largest employment sector.[3] It includes all those working in hotels, guesthouses, camp sites, pubs, clubs, restaurants, takeaways, coffee shops, catering companies and mobile food / coffee vans. Essentially it is the hospitality industry and this term will also be used to refer to the sector in this report. Occupations in this sector cover a wide range of skill levels and include hospitality managers, catering and bar managers, chefs, kitchen and catering assistants, waiting and bar staff and housekeepers and cleaners.

Hospitality is widely dispersed and is present in all areas, from city centres to towns and villages. Demand for the sector's services comes from both local residents and tourists, overseas and domestic. The balance between tourist and local demand varies considerably in different areas. In tourism 'hotspots' such as Westport, Connemara or Bundoran it largely relies on tourism demand while in areas with low visitor numbers, local custom is most important. In all cases however, demand responds to economic conditions and drops considerably during periods of economic downturn, in Ireland and/or globally, when disposable income is reduced. Equally, it responds to periods of economic growth and increased consumer spending.

Compared with other sectors, Accommodation & Food Service is characterised by relatively low pay[4] and has a high share of part-time and seasonal jobs.[5] It is an important source of employment for young people, including students, as well as those with lower skill levels or experience. At the same time, hospitality offers a range of positions requiring high skill levels e.g. chefs, hotel managers, and is also characterised by considerable self-employment and a high level of entrepreneurship.

A number of factors will impact on future employment in the sector such as changing tourist demographics, economic activity levels, Brexit, the growth of Airbnb, the evolving role of town

[1] Counties Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon, Mayo, Galway and Clare.
[2] Previous Regional Sectoral Profiles examined the Wholesale & Retail, Health & Care, Education and Industry sectors and are available here https://www.wdc.ie/publications/reports-and-papers/
[3] After Industry, Wholesale & Retail, Health & Care and Education.
[4] In 2017 it had the lowest average hourly earnings of all economic sectors at €12.90. SOLAS and National Skills Council (2018), National Skills Bulletin 2018
[5] Across all sectors it has the second lowest average number of hours worked per week at 26.6 hours, nationally. SOLAS and National Skills Council (2018), National Skills Bulletin 2018

centres, regional tourism marketing e.g. Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Hidden Heartlands and the transition to a low carbon economy and its impact on air travel.

Following a description of the data that will be used, Sections 2 and 3 of this report outline the current employment and enterprise situation of Accommodation & Food Service in the Western Region. In Section 4, data on overseas and domestic tourist numbers and revenue is analysed, with key policy issues outlined in Section 5.

1.2 Data used

A number of data sources are used to examine the Accommodation & Food Service sector in the region.

Census of Population: The Census provides comprehensive data on employment by sector at both county and town level. No other data source provides this level of geographic breakdown. However there are a number of issues to bear in mind:

1. Most recent Census data is 2016.
2. Census data refers to where a person lives which may not be the same as where they work.[6] Data presented here on the number of people working in a sector in a specific county/town refers to the number of residents of that county/town working in the sector, even if they work elsewhere.
3. Census data does not give an indication of whether employment is full or part-time. Each person who works in the sector, regardless of how many hours per week they work, is counted the same. It only counts people who reported their main job as working in hospitality. It therefore underestimates the full employment impact of the sector e.g. a student working part-time/summer in the sector would not be recorded as they would have classified their status as 'student'.

Business Demography: Business Demography data gives the number of enterprises in each sector in each county. An enterprise is assigned to the county where it is registered with the Revenue Commissioners. Therefore a business with multiple locations e.g. a fast food chain, hotel group, is only counted once where it is headquartered (often Dublin), individual branches are not counted (though in the case of a franchise e.g. O'Briens, if the business is locally owned it would be registered in that county). As this data measures enterprises registered in a county, they may have stronger ties to the area.

Fáilte Ireland: Given the importance of tourists as a source of demand for Accommodation & Food Service, data on overseas tourist numbers and revenue, as well as domestic trips and revenue, for the western counties is analysed. This data is sourced from Fáilte Ireland's reports on regional tourism performance, which combine data from the CSO and Fáilte Ireland surveys. County data in these reports is based on a three-year rolling average and is not suitable for year-on-year comparison. Therefore comparisons are made between 2011 and 2016.

[6] See WDC (2018), Travel to Work and Labour Catchments in the Western Region: A Profile of Seven Town Labour Catchments 2018, for an analysis of travel to work patterns in the region.

2.0 Employment in Accommodation & Food Service

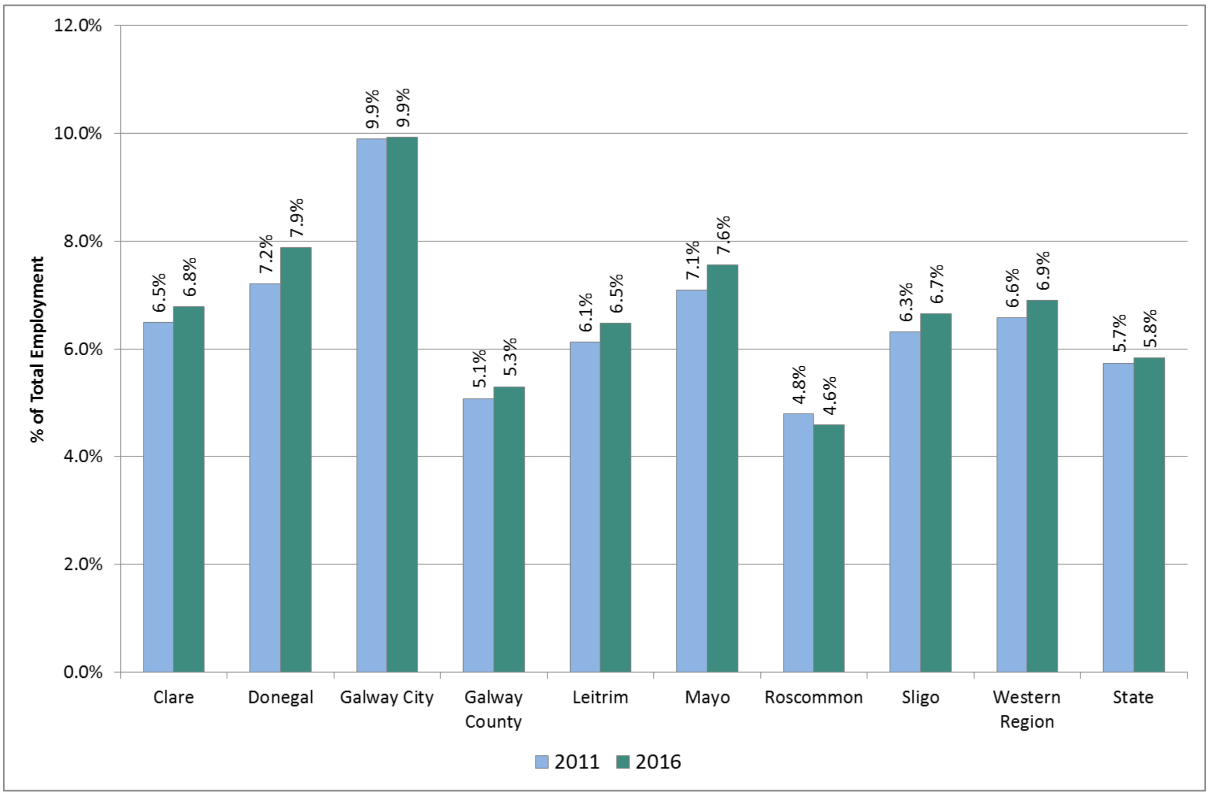
In this section we examine employment over time and by gender, as well as self-employment, in Accommodation & Food Service in the Western Region, western counties and towns. Employment in specific Accommodation & Food Service sub-sectors is also set out.

2.1 Employment in the Western Region and its counties

According to Census 2016, 23,038 people were employed in Accommodation & Food Service in the Western Region. Of everyone working in hospitality in Ireland, 19.7% of them live in the Western Region. In comparison, the Western Region is home to 16.6% of total employment which means it accounts for a greater share of national hospitality jobs, than it does of total jobs. **Accommodation & Food Service is the economic sector where the Western Region accounts for its third highest share of total national employment.**[7]

Accommodation & Food Service plays a greater role in the region's labour market than nationally (Fig. 1). In 2016 hospitality accounted for 6.9% of total employment in the Western Region compared with 5.8% nationally. It is the region's fifth largest employment sector.

Fig. 1: Percentage of total employment in Accommodation & Food Service in Western Region and state, 2011 and 2016



Source: CSO, Census 2016: Summary Results Part 2, Table EZ011

Among western counties, it is most important in Galway City accounting for 9.9% of all employment, followed by Donegal and Mayo. **Galway City and Donegal have the second and third highest shares working in Accommodation & Food Service in the country**[8] **with Mayo fifth highest nationally**. All

[7] After Agriculture (25.5%) and Industry (19.9%).
[8] At 10.5%, Kerry has the highest share.

western counties, except Roscommon and Galway County, have a higher share working in hospitality than the national average. At 4.6% of total employment, Roscommon has the lowest share working in hospitality in the region and is fourth lowest in the state.[9]

The importance of tourism is clear from hospitality's share of jobs in different counties, with Galway City, and counties along the western seaboard, having particularly high shares. Its significant role in the employment profile of most western counties is also partly due to lower levels of activity in some other sectors e.g. financial services, ICT, which leads to greater reliance on local service sectors.

Fig. 1 also shows that the share of total employment accounted for by Accommodation & Food Service increased everywhere, except Roscommon, between 2011 and 2016. In the Western Region the share rose from 6.6% in 2011 to 6.9% by 2016. Donegal saw the most notable growth from 7.2% of all employment to 7.9%.

Hospitality's share of total employment is determined both by the number of people actually working in the sector and total employment levels in the economy. If the number working in Accommodation & Food Service did not change but total employment grew or fell dramatically e.g. during the construction boom and bust, then its share of total employment would still change. The next section looks at changes in the actual number working in Accommodation & Food Service.

2.1.1 Change in employment in the Western Region and its counties

The number of people working in hospitality in the Western Region grew by 12.8% between 2011 and 2016 (Table 1), the same growth as nationally. In the region, growth in this sector was substantially greater than overall jobs growth (7.5%). This helps explain the increase in the sector's relative importance as an employer (see Fig. 1). Employment growth in the sector was driven by increased consumer spending as the economy recovered, as well as growing tourism activity from both overseas and domestic visitors (see Section 4).

Table 1: Number employed in Accommodation & Food Service in Western Region and state, and percentage change 2011-2016

County	Accommodation & Food Service			Total Employment
	2011	2016	% Change 2011-2016	% Change 2011-2016
Clare	2,960	3,360	13.5%	8.6%
Donegal	3,838	4,602	19.9%	9.5%
Galway City	3,123	3,470	11.1%	10.8%
Galway County	3,511	3,977	13.3%	8.5%
Leitrim	734	825	12.4%	6.3%
Mayo	3,481	3,889	11.7%	4.8%
Roscommon	1,168	1,184	1.4%	5.9%
Sligo	1,606	1,731	7.8%	2.2%
Western Region	**20,421**	**23,038**	**12.8%**	**7.5%**
State	**103,549**	**116,918**	**12.9%**	**11.0%**

Source: CSO, Census 2016: Summary Results Part 2, Table EZ011

[9] Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown (3.9%), Longford (4%) and Monaghan (4.4%) are lower.

Donegal experienced the strongest employment growth, with the numbers working in the sector increasing by 19.9%. This was double the growth in total employment (9.5%) helping to explain the notable increase in its role in Donegal's labour market. Clare and Galway County had the next highest hospitality jobs growth at over 13% and again this was above their average growth. While lower, growth in hospitality employment in Leitrim, Mayo and Sligo was around double that of total employment growth.

Roscommon had by far the lowest increase at only 1.4%. It was the only western county where employment growth in Accommodation & Food Service was lower than growth in total employment, explaining the decline in the sector's relative importance to the county's overall employment profile (see Fig. 1).

Section 2.5 examines employment in Accommodation & Food Service sub-sectors which illustrates which elements drove growth in different counties.

2.2 Employment in western towns

In 2016 there were 40 urban centres with a population over 1,500 in the Western Region. When considering towns, commuting can be particularly important and it must be remembered that this data refers to residents of the towns, although some may work elsewhere.

The relative importance of Accommodation & Food Service varies across these towns (Fig. 2). For five western towns – Clifden, Bundoran, Westport, Donegal town and Carrick-on-Shannon – it is their single largest employment sector.[10]

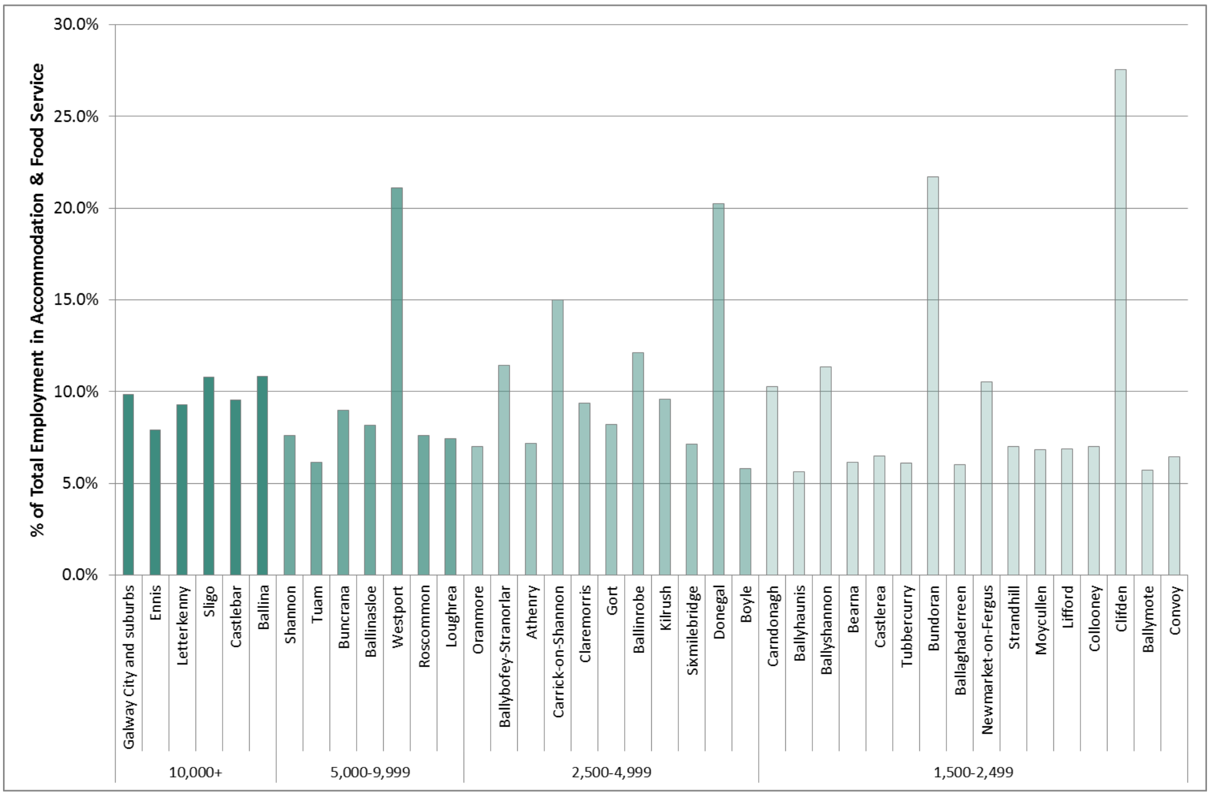
At 27.6% (188 people) of total employment, Clifden in Co Galway has the highest share working in hospitality of Ireland's 200 towns and cities (1,500+ population). Bundoran (21.7%, 162 people), Westport (21.1%, 600 people), Donegal town (20.3%, 219 people) and Carrick-on-Shannon (15%, 263 people), are all among the top 10 towns in Ireland in terms of the share of their employment in the hospitality sector. All of these towns are key tourism centres for both overseas and domestic visitors.

Among the region's six largest urban centres (10,000+), Sligo (10.8%, 769 people) and Ballina (10.8%, 392 people) have the highest shares working in Accommodation & Food Service. This could be influenced by their location on the Wild Atlantic Way, their role as local service centres for their wider hinterland and also perhaps lower diversity in their employment profile increasing the relative importance of hospitality.

At under 6%, Ballyhaunis (5.6%, 48 people), Ballymote (5.7%, 31 people) and Boyle (5.8%, 48 people) have the lowest shares working in the sector in the region. Low tourism activity in these locations, as well as their proximity to other centres with strong hospitality sectors e.g. Claremorris, Sligo, Carrick-on-Shannon, would be a factor. In addition the strength of other sectors e.g. Ballyhaunis has the highest share working in Industry in Ireland and Boyle has the highest share working in Wholesale & Retail in the Western Region, would reduce its relative importance.

[10] See Appendix 2 for more detailed data on Accommodation & Food Service employment in towns.

Fig. 2: Percentage of total employment in Accommodation & Food Service in towns in the Western Region, 2016



Source: CSO, Census 2016: Profile 11 – Employment, Occupations and Industry, Table EB030

2.2.1 Change in employment in western towns

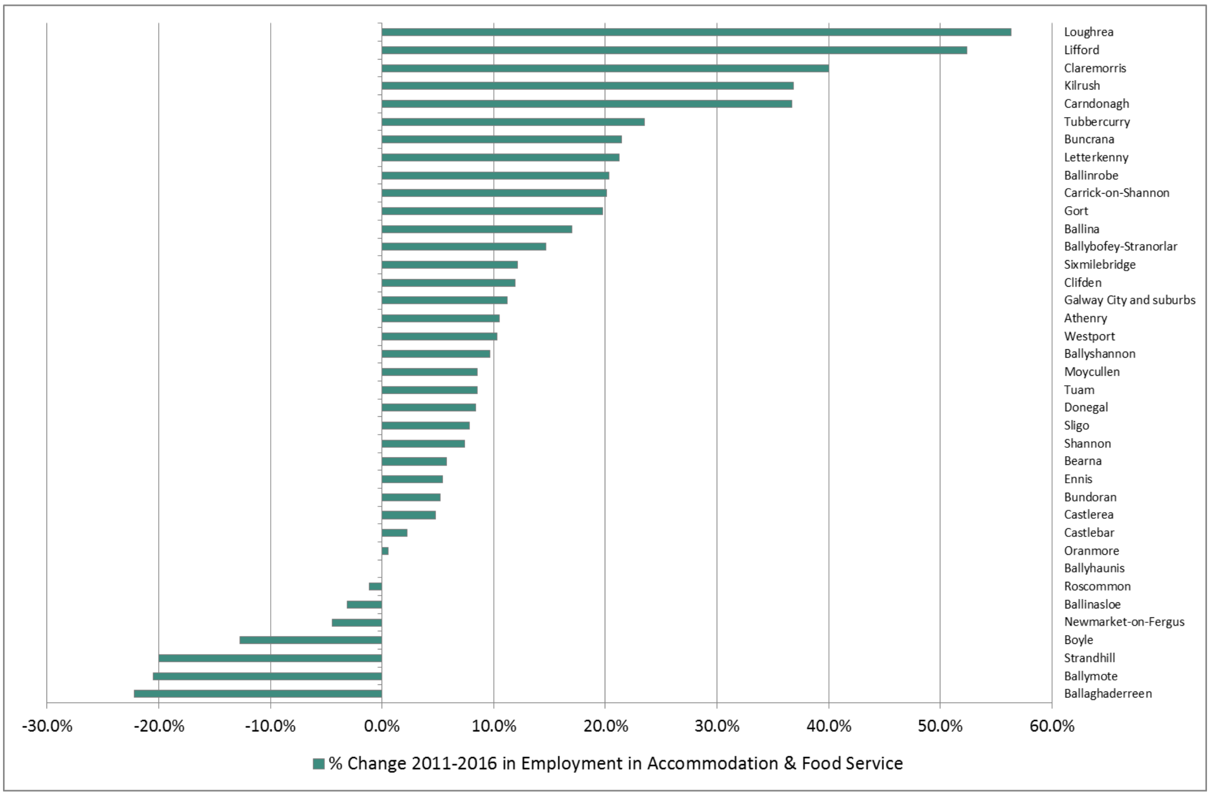
There are 38 towns in the Western Region which had a population above 1,500 in both 2011 and 2016.[11] Of these, 30 towns experienced an increase in the number of people working in hospitality between 2011 and 2016, seven had a decline, with one unchanged (Fig. 3).

Loughrea in Co Galway (56.4%, +62 people), Lifford in Co Donegal (52.4%, +11 people), Claremorris in Co Mayo (40%, +42 people), Kilrush in Co Clare (36.8%, +21 people) and Carndonagh in Co Donegal (36.7%, +22 people) had the most substantial percentage growth. These are mainly medium-sized towns serving relatively wide rural catchment areas and growth in the sector was likely due to some recovery in local spending. Growing tourism activity would also be a factor, particularly for Kilrush.

Ballaghaderreen in Co Roscommon (-22.2%, -10 people), Ballymote in Co Sligo (-20.5%, -8 people) and Strandhill in Co Sligo (20%, -14 people) had the largest percentage declines, though the actual numbers involved were quite low.

[11] Two towns with a population above 1,500 in 2011 (Portumna and Bunbeg-Derrybeg) dropped below in 2016. Two towns (Collooney and Convoy) rose above the 1,500 threshold in 2016. There were also town boundary changes between 2011 and 2016 for 15 of the 40 towns in the Western Region which has an impact when considering change over time. For most towns the impact was relatively minor, however there was a quite substantial change for Ballina.

Fig. 3: Percentage change in employment in Accommodation & Food Service in towns in the Western Region, 2011-2016



Source: CSO, Census 2016: Profile 11 – Employment, Occupations and Industry, Table EB030; CSO, Census 2011: Profile 3 – At Work, Table CD320.

Note: In the case of Ballina, a significant town boundary change reduced its population and the actual change in employment in this sector is likely less than it appears in Fig. 3.

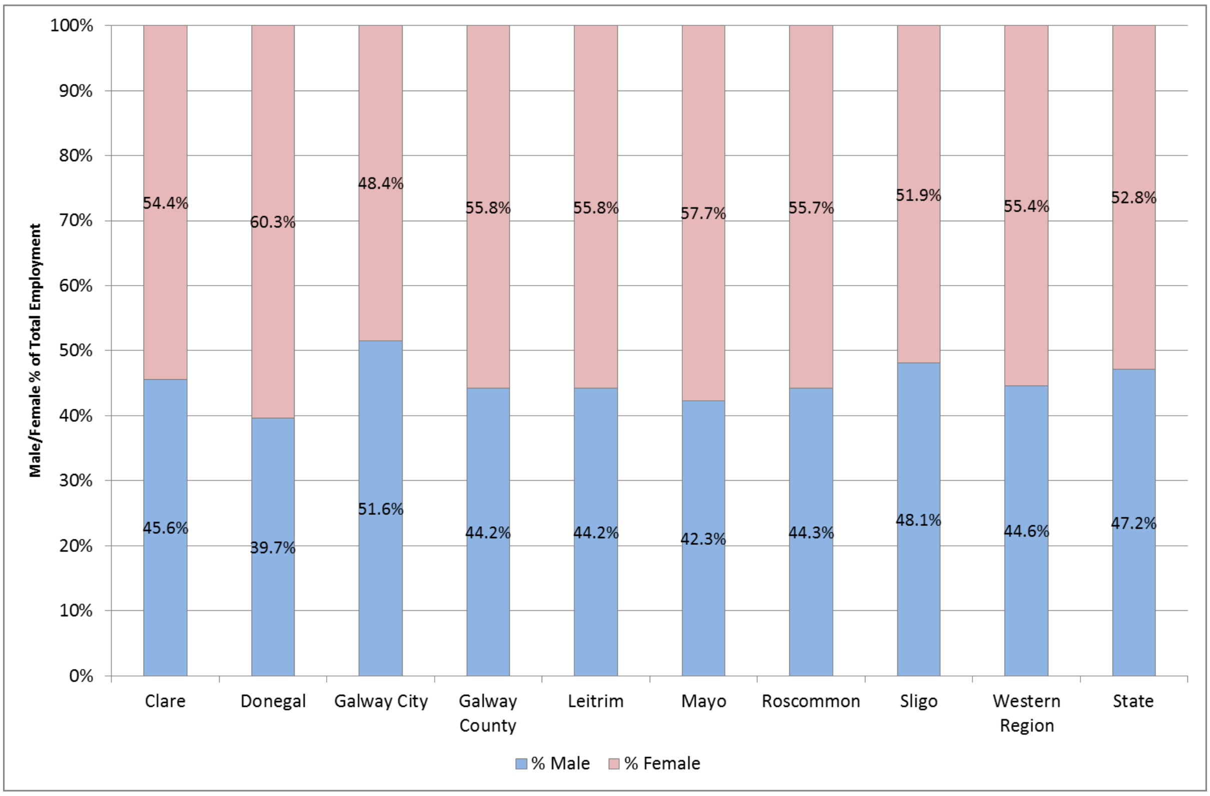
2.3 Employment by gender

In the Western Region 55.4% of people working in hospitality are female, a higher share than nationally (52.8%) (Fig. 4). The female share declined marginally since 2011, when it was 56% in the region and 53.7% nationally.

Women account for a majority of the hospitality workforce in all western counties, except Galway City where 48.4% are women. Donegal has a particularly high share, with women accounting for 60.3% of everyone working in Accommodation & Food Service, Mayo (57.7%) also has a high female share. Given the importance of tourism activity (see Section 4) and the 'Accommodation' sub-sector (see Section 2.5) to the economies of both Donegal and Mayo this pattern may indicate that women are more likely to be employed in those aspects of hospitality relying on tourist demand.

It is also possible there are fewer alternative job opportunities for women in these counties, along with other rural counties of Roscommon, Leitrim and Galway County which also have high female shares, increasing reliance on hospitality. Women's smaller share of hospitality jobs in Galway City could be due to greater diversity of options.

Fig. 4: Percentage of total employment in Accommodation & Food Service in Western Region and state by sex, 2016



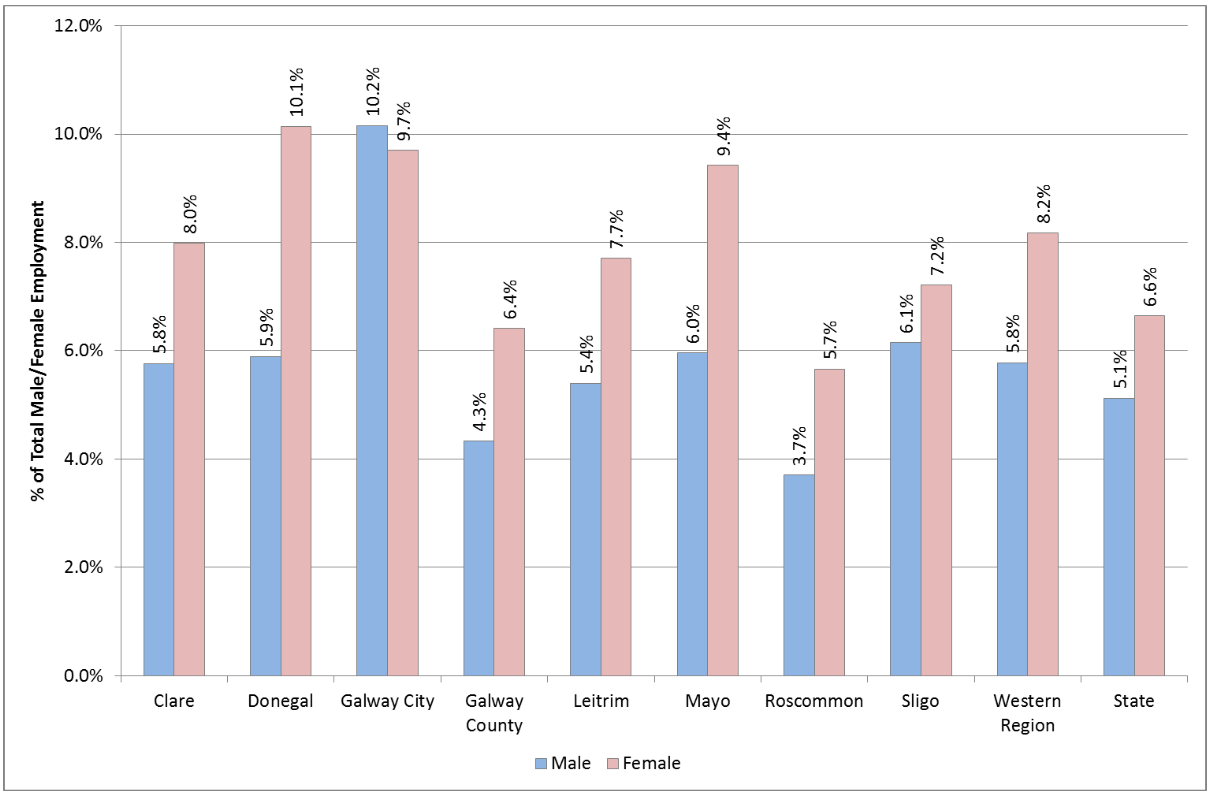
Source: CSO, Census 2016: Profile 11 – Employment, Occupations and Industry, Table EB027

In terms of the sector's relative importance to total male and female employment (Fig. 5), 8.2% of all working women and 5.8% of all working men in the Western Region work in Accommodation & Food Service. The sector plays a more significant role in both female and male employment in the region than nationally, with the difference greater among women.

As with total employment (see Fig. 1), Galway City (9.7%), Donegal (10.1%) and Mayo (9.4%) is where hospitality is most important for female employment. In the case of Donegal and Mayo the sector is far more important for women's jobs than men's (5.9% and 6% of men's jobs respectively) explaining why women make up a larger share of the total hospitality workforce in these counties. Again, this illustrates the importance of the hospitality sector in providing job opportunities for women in these large, quite rural counties. Roscommon is where it accounts for the lowest share of all female jobs and also male.

Galway City is the only area where hospitality is more important to total male employment than female. At 10.2% of all men's jobs, it is also where hospitality is most important for male employment, by a considerable margin. Sligo has the next highest share with the hospitality sector in Galway City and Sligo seeming to be more gender-balanced than elsewhere. As they also have the highest shares of total hospitality employment in the 'Restaurants & Mobile Food' sub-sector (see Section 2.5), it may be that this sub-sector employs more men. There may also be a greater range of female job options in these larger urban centres reducing reliance hospitality.

Fig. 5: Percentage of total male and total female employment that is in Accommodation & Food Service in Western Region and state, 2016



Source: CSO, Census 2016: Profile 11 – Employment, Occupations and Industry, Table EB027

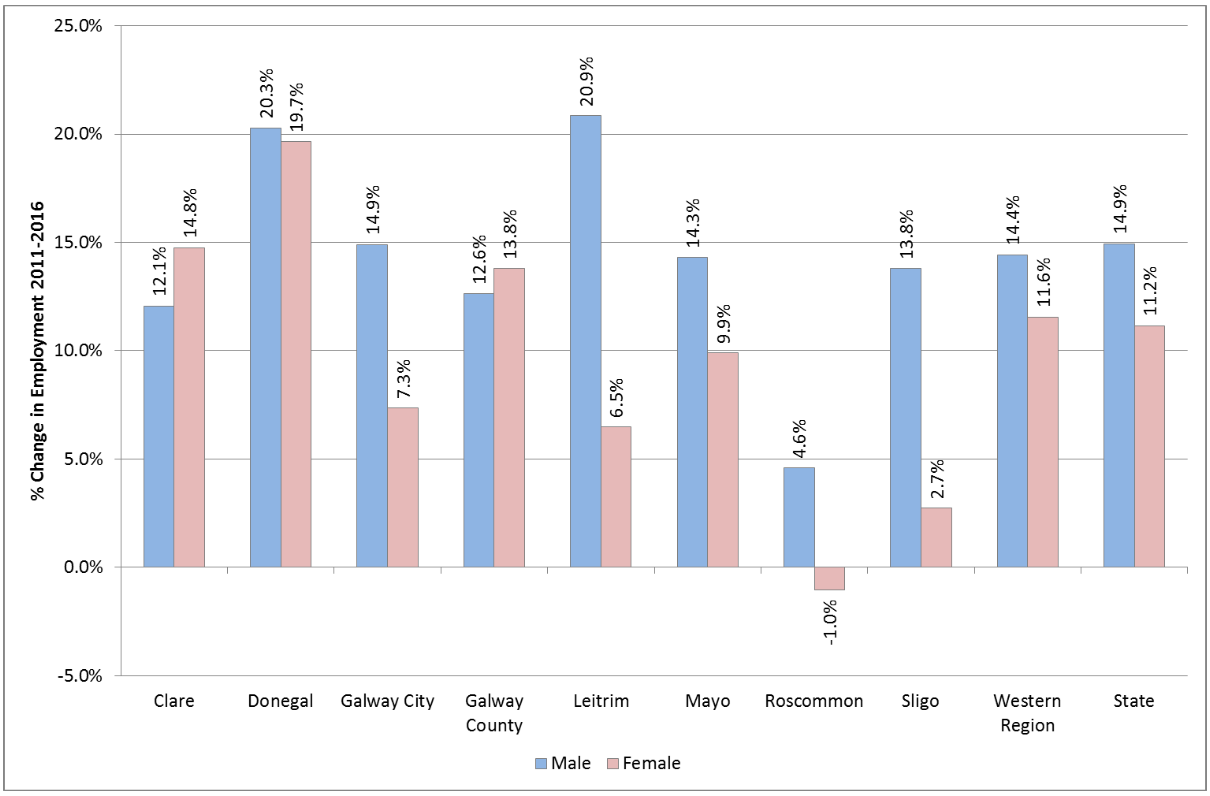
2.3.1 Change in employment by gender

The period 2011 to 2016 saw male employment in Accommodation & Food Service grow more strongly than female, 14.4% compared with 11.6% in the region (Fig. 6). The region had lower male employment growth than the state but higher female.

All western counties, except Clare and Galway County, also experienced stronger male than female jobs growth in this period. The difference was most striking in Leitrim with Sligo also seeing far stronger male jobs growth in hospitality. Roscommon actually saw a 1% decline in the number of women working in the sector over the period and had the region's lowest male growth leading to its overall weak employment performance.

Donegal had very strong growth for both men and women indicating quite gender-balanced jobs growth. The fact that Donegal had growth across all Accommodation & Food Service activities (except catering) and was the only western county to have an increase in 'Beverage Service' (see Section 2.5) helps explain this balance.

Fig. 6: Percentage change in employment in Accommodation & Food Service in Western Region and state by sex, 2011-2016



Source: CSO, Census 2016: Profile 11 – Employment, Occupations and Industry, Table EB027

2.4 Self-employment in Accommodation & Food Service

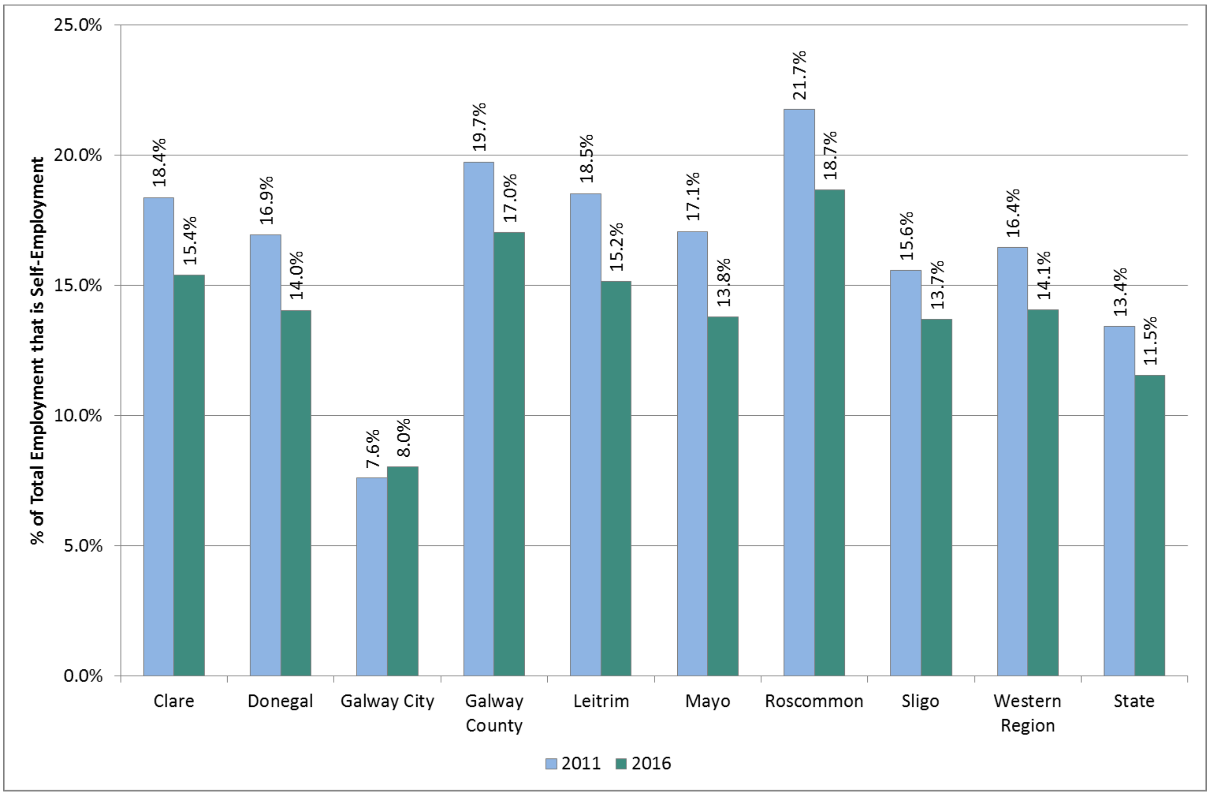
Of the 23,038 people working in Accommodation & Food Service in the Western Region in 2016, 14.1% (3,237 people) are self-employed (employer or own account worker). The Western Region has a considerably higher incidence of self-employment in hospitality than the national average (11.5%) (Fig. 7). This could indicate that hospitality operations in the Western Region tend to be smaller in scale with fewer employees and that owner-manager or family-run businesses are more common.

At 18.7%, Roscommon had the highest level of self-employment in hospitality in 2016, followed by Galway County. This indicates that Roscommon tends to have smaller scale operations and greater owner/manager involvement in this sector.

Galway City, at just 8% self-employed, has the lowest share and is the only western county below the national average. Large hospitality operations e.g. hotels, with considerable staff numbers are more common in the city, reducing self-employment's share. Galway City however was the only area where self-employment became more common between 2011 and 2016 rising from 7.6% to 8% of all employment.

All other areas saw considerable declines in the share of self-employment over this period, declining from 16.4% to 14.1% for the Western Region as a whole. One of the reasons may be that during the recession, many hospitality businesses closed and others scaled back their operations with reduced staffing. This resulted in an increase in the share of total employment that was self-employment, as owner-managers remained in the business. With the economic recovery and increased tourism activity, employee numbers grew again, reducing the share of self-employment. The increased prevalence of chains in this sector e.g. hotels, takeaways, cafés, would also reduce the share of self-employment in total employment. The next section shows that, as well as a declining share of self-employment, there was also a decline in the actual number of self-employed.

Fig. 7: Percentage of total employment in Accommodation & Food Service that is self-employment in Western Region and state, 2011 and 2016



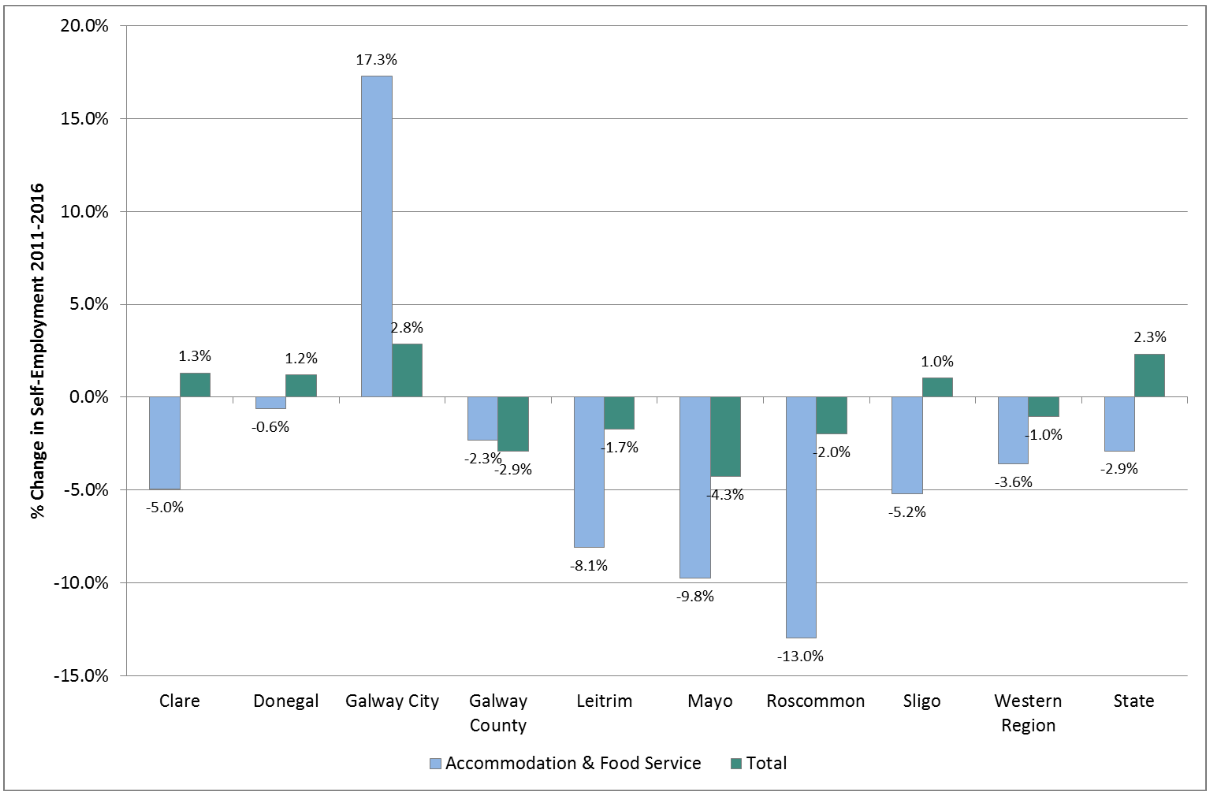
Source: CSO, Census 2016: Profile 11 – Employment, Occupations and Industry, Table EB033. Special run from CSO.

2.4.1 Change in self-employment

In the Western Region, the number of self-employed people working in Accommodation & Food Service fell by 3.6% between 2011 and 2016 (Fig. 8). This compares with a 1% decline in total self-employment over the same period, indicating greater decline in the incidence of self-employment in hospitality than elsewhere in the economy.

The decline in self-employment contrasts with the strong overall jobs growth in the sector. This could have resulted from a range of factors such as the closure of small owner-manager run businesses e.g. pubs, coffee shops, while larger operations, including chains, grew. Also hospitality businesses which were previously owner-manager run being purchased by larger companies e.g. hotels which went into receivership being purchased by large investors.

Fig. 8: Percentage change in self-employment in Accommodation & Food Service and self-employment in total employment in Western Region and state, 2011-2016



Source: CSO, Census 2016: Profile 11 – Employment, Occupations and Industry, Table EB033. Special run from CSO.

Self-employment in hospitality performed worse than total self-employment in all counties except for Galway City and County. In Roscommon, there was a 13% decline in Accommodation & Food Service self-employment compared with a 2% fall in self-employment generally. Other rural counties of Leitrim and Mayo had the next highest declines in hospitality self-employment which was considerably greater than declines in self-employment overall. This may indicate a changing structure to the sector in rural counties with reduced owner-manager involvement.

Galway City had a very different experience with 17.3% growth in hospitality self-employment, far greater than self-employment overall. This strong growth in the city may be due to the vibrancy of its hospitality and tourism sector creating opportunities for a diverse mix of businesses. Even with this growth however, the scale of the sector in Galway City means it still has the lowest share of self-employment in total employment.

2.5 Employment in Accommodation & Food Service sub-sectors

Census data on employment in Accommodation & Food Service is sub-divided into five separate activities.[12] The sub-division of activities within this sector however is somewhat less clear than in other areas e.g. the difference between Primary Education and Secondary Education. In hospitality there can be more 'overlaps' as hotels also include restaurants and bars, pubs also provide accommodation and food, coffee shops may be classified under 'beverage service' or 'restaurants'.

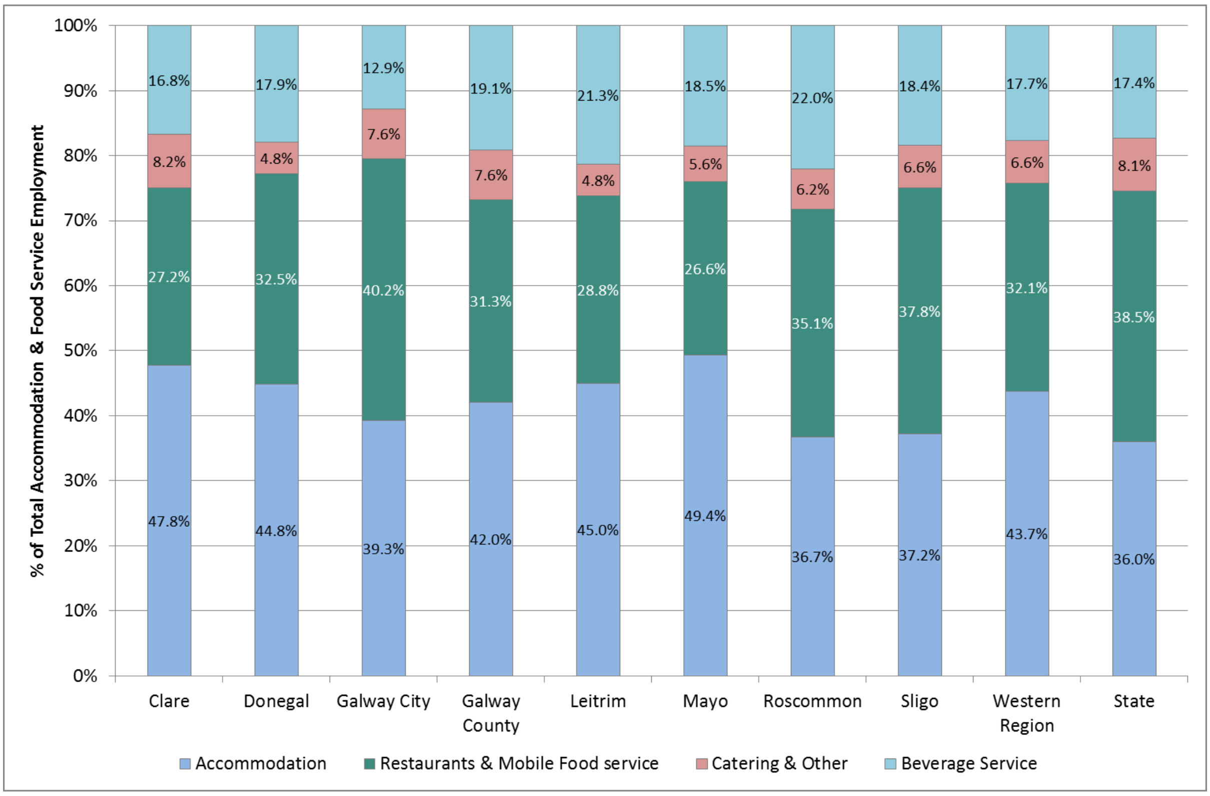
[12] The two accommodation categories of 'Hotels and similar accommodation' and 'Short-stay accommodation' have been combined here for ease of interpretation. Appendix 1 provides detailed data for all five activities for all western counties.

Therefore the divisions between the sub-sectors are somewhat blurred and some caution is required in interpreting trends for sub-sectors.

'Accommodation' is the largest employer among the sub-sectors accounting for 43.7% of all hospitality jobs in the region (Fig. 9). Its share in the region is far higher than nationally (36%) indicating that hotels and other accommodation providers play a more significant role in the region's hospitality industry. **Tourism would seem to be a more important source of demand for the sector in the region than nationally**.

In contrast, 'Restaurants & Mobile Food service' accounts for a greater share of hospitality jobs nationally. As demand for this sub-sector would rely more on local consumer spending than 'Accommodation', this pattern shows that local demand is more important nationally than in the region, perhaps due to lower disposable income in several western counties.[13] The region's smaller share of employment in 'Catering & Other' would again suggest a smaller role for local consumer and corporate demand.

Fig. 9: Percentage of total Accommodation & Food Service employment in each sub-sector in Western Region and state, 2016



Source: CSO, Census 2016: Summary Results Part 2, Table EZ011

The share of total hospitality employment in 'Accommodation' ranges from a low of 36.7% in Roscommon to 49.4% in Mayo; with Clare, Leitrim and Donegal also having high shares. This pattern is consistent with the relative importance of the tourism sector across counties (see Section 4). All western counties have a higher share engaged in 'Accommodation' than the national average.

[13] https://wdcinsights.wordpress.com/2018/03/16/how-are-we-doing-county-incomes-in-the-western-region/

‘Accommodation’ is the largest sub-sector in all western counties except Galway City where it is ‘Restaurants & Mobile Food Service’ (40.2%). It is the only western county above the national average in this activity. Galway City’s population, its role as a key regional service centre and strong tourism activity contribute to the greater importance of restaurants as employers. Sligo, another key regional service centre, has the next highest share in ‘Restaurants & Mobile Food’ and, similar to Galway City, has a lower share in ‘Accommodation’.

Within the region, Mayo (26.6%) and Clare (27.2%) is where ‘Restaurants & Mobile Food service’ plays its smallest employment role. Both are counties where ‘Accommodation’ is particularly important. As hotels are categorised under ‘Accommodation’, even though they also provide food service, it may be that hotels supply a greater share of total food service activity in these two counties compared with Galway City and Sligo where restaurants play a larger role.

‘Catering & Other’ ranges from only 4.8% of total hospitality employment in Leitrim and Donegal to 8.2% in Clare and 7.6% in Galway. As this sub-sector is partly driven by corporate clients and events, greater enterprise activity in the south of the Western Region would increase its importance.

‘Beverage Service’ (pubs, bars, clubs, coffee shops, juice bars) is most important as an employer in the most rural counties of Roscommon (22%) and Leitrim (21.3%) pointing to the important role of bars and pubs in their hospitality sectors. It may also be that, given their rural nature, a greater share of total food service activity in these counties is accounted for by businesses that are primarily pubs, as opposed to stand-alone restaurants, which may be more common in larger urban centres. All western counties, except Galway City and Clare, have greater employment in ‘Beverage Service’ than the national average.

2.5.1 Change in employment in Accommodation & Food Service sub-sectors

Across the Western Region, and nationally, the strongest jobs growth in the hospitality sector between 2011 and 2016 was in ‘Restaurants & Mobile Food service’ (Table 2). It increased by 26.5% in the region, slightly below national growth. In Donegal employment grew by 35.1%, with close to 30% growth in Sligo and Galway City and County. As noted above, Clare and Mayo are the western counties with the lowest share engaged in ‘Restaurants & Mobile Food service’. This is partly due to them having the lowest jobs growth in this sub-sector.

In contrast to food service, ‘Beverage Service’ saw employment declines in every western county, except Donegal. Employment in ‘Beverage Service’ declined particularly strongly in Sligo, Roscommon and Leitrim, though remaining more important as an employer in these areas (see Fig. 9). The closure of pubs in small towns and rural areas would be a factor in the decline. It is also possible that some of the growth in ‘Restaurants & Mobile Food service’ and the decline in ‘Beverage Service’ was due to businesses being restructured. For example a person may have worked for the same business in 2011 and 2016 but whereas it was classified as a pub in 2011, by 2016 it had shifted focus and was instead classified as a restaurant. Clare and Mayo, which had the smallest growth in restaurant employment, also saw the smallest declines in pubs/bars.

Table 2: Percentage change in employment in Accommodation & Food Service sub-sectors in Western Region and state, 2011-2016

County	% Change in Employment 2011-2016				
	Accommod-ation	Restaurants & Mobile Food service	Catering & Other	Beverage Service	Total
Clare	21.5%	17.5%	-0.7%	-3.1%	13.5%
Donegal	17.0%	35.1%	-10.8%	14.3%	19.9%
Galway City	4.3%	28.8%	-0.4%	-4.3%	11.1%
Galway County	11.8%	28.8%	18.8%	-4.5%	13.3%
Leitrim	26.2%	22.1%	0.0%	-14.1%	12.4%
Mayo	17.3%	19.7%	-13.3%	-1.6%	11.7%
Roscommon	1.6%	21.6%	-14.1%	-16.9%	1.4%
Sligo	12.6%	29.0%	-8.1%	-20.8%	7.8%
Western Region	**14.2%**	**26.5%**	**-2.4%**	**-3.5%**	**12.8%**
State	**13.2%**	**28.7%**	**-4.5%**	**-5.3%**	**12.9%**

Source: CSO, Census 2016: Summary Results Part 2, Table EZ011

The region's largest sub-sector of 'Accommodation' saw the second strongest jobs growth, up 14.2% in the region. Leitrim and Clare saw growth of over 20%, pointing to strong tourism growth (see Section 4) while Roscommon's low jobs growth again points to lower tourism activity. This period saw the closure of a number of hotels in the county (some of which have since reopened). Galway City also saw low growth in 'Accommodation', but in this case it may have been due to the sector having remained strong in the city throughout the recession with limited capacity for further expansion.

Except for people living in Galway County (who may also be commuting to work in the city), employment in 'Catering & Other' declined everywhere and most strongly in more rural counties of Roscommon, Mayo and Donegal.

3.0 Accommodation & Food Service Enterprises

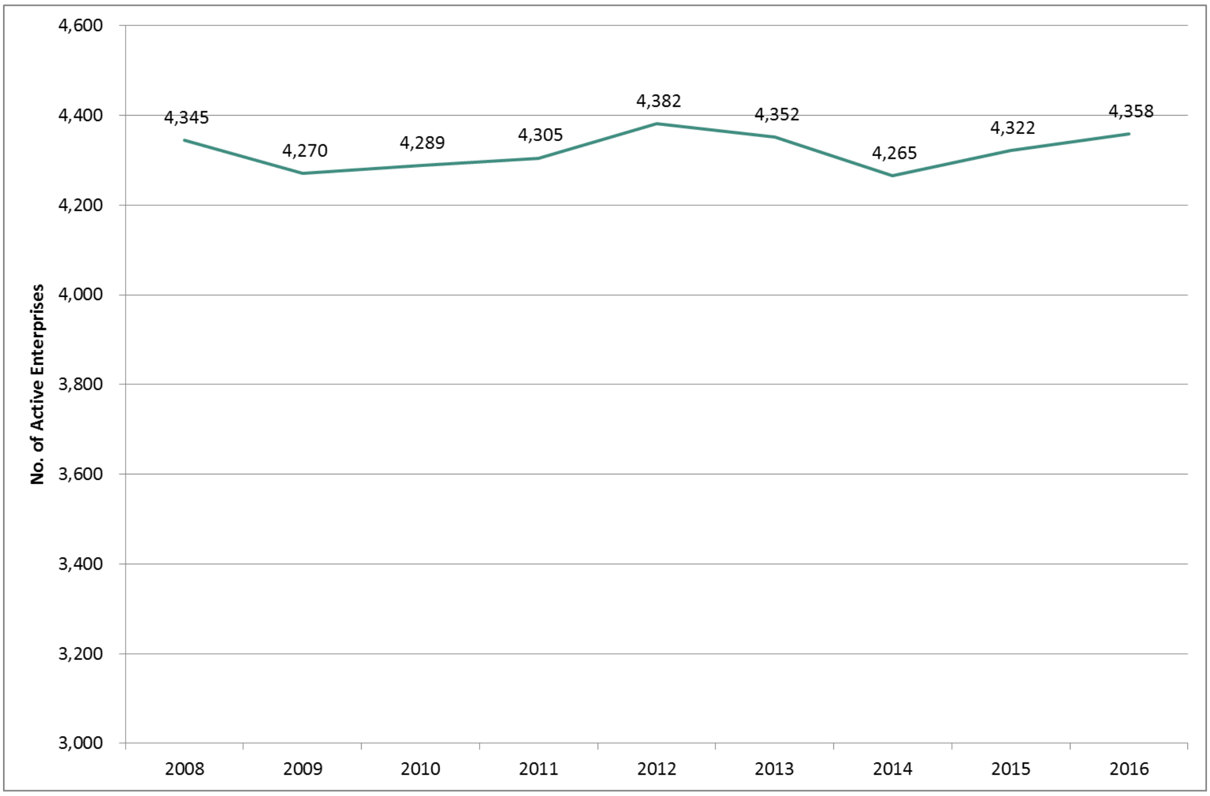
In this section we examine enterprise numbers in Accommodation & Food Service in the Western Region and counties. This data is from the CSO Business Demography and includes all Accommodation & Food Service enterprises such as hotels, B&Bs, coffee shops, takeaways, event catering companies, pubs and nightclubs which have a registration address (with the Revenue Commissioners) located in the Western Region.

3.1 Number of Accommodation & Food Service enterprises in the Western Region

In 2016[14] there were 4,358 Accommodation & Food Service enterprises registered in the Western Region (Fig. 10). The number of such enterprises fluctuated somewhat between 2008 and 2016, initially declining and recovering in 2012 before declining and recovering again to reach a similar level in 2016 as eight years earlier.

In 2016, the Western Region was home to 23.7% of all hospitality enterprises in the state, this was far higher than the region's share of total enterprises (17.4%) and **Accommodation & Food Service is the sector where the region accounts for its highest share of national enterprises**.

Fig. 10: Number of active Accommodation & Food Service enterprises registered in the Western Region, 2008-2016



Source: CSO, Business Demography 2016, Table BRA18.

Note: For ease of interpretation, the vertical axis begins at 3,000

[14] Most recent data available.

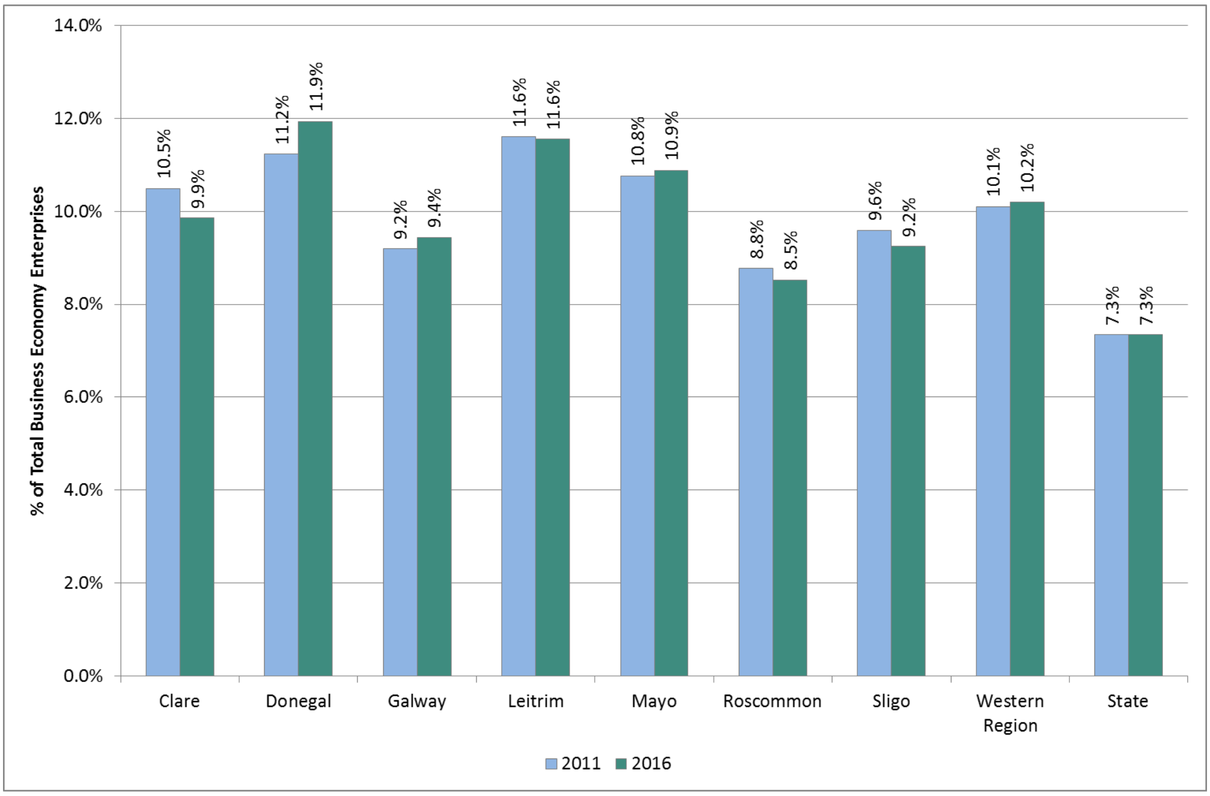
3.2 Enterprises in the Western Region and its counties

10.2% of all business economy[15] enterprises registered in the Western Region in 2016 were engaged in Accommodation & Food Service (Fig. 11). This was considerably greater than the 7.3% share the sector accounted for nationally, again reinforcing the fact that hospitality plays a more significant role in the regional economy. In addition to the region's significant tourism activity, this is also partly due to a less diverse enterprise mix with fewer enterprises involved in other areas such as knowledge intensive services (e.g. IT, professional and financial services) which in turn increases the relative importance of sectors such as hospitality.

Hospitality's share of all enterprises in the region (10.2%) is higher than its share of all employment in the region (6.9%). This implies the sector includes a large number of quite small operations.

At 11.9% of all business economy enterprises, Donegal had the highest share in the sector in 2016 followed by Leitrim and Mayo. The sector forms a significant element of the enterprise profile of these, quite rural, counties. Similar to employment, Roscommon has the lowest share of its enterprises in the sector, with Sligo next lowest. The sector also accounts for quite a low share of enterprises in Galway[16] despite high employment. This is due to its having larger hospitality enterprises as well as a more diverse enterprise mix.

Fig. 11: Accommodation & Food Service enterprises as a percentage of total business economy enterprises in Western Region and state, 2011 and 2016



Source: CSO, Business Demography 2016, Table BRA18.

[15] Business economy includes all economic sectors except Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing, Public Administration & Defence, Education, Health & Social Work and Other Services.
[16] Business Demography data does not distinguish between Galway City and Galway County.

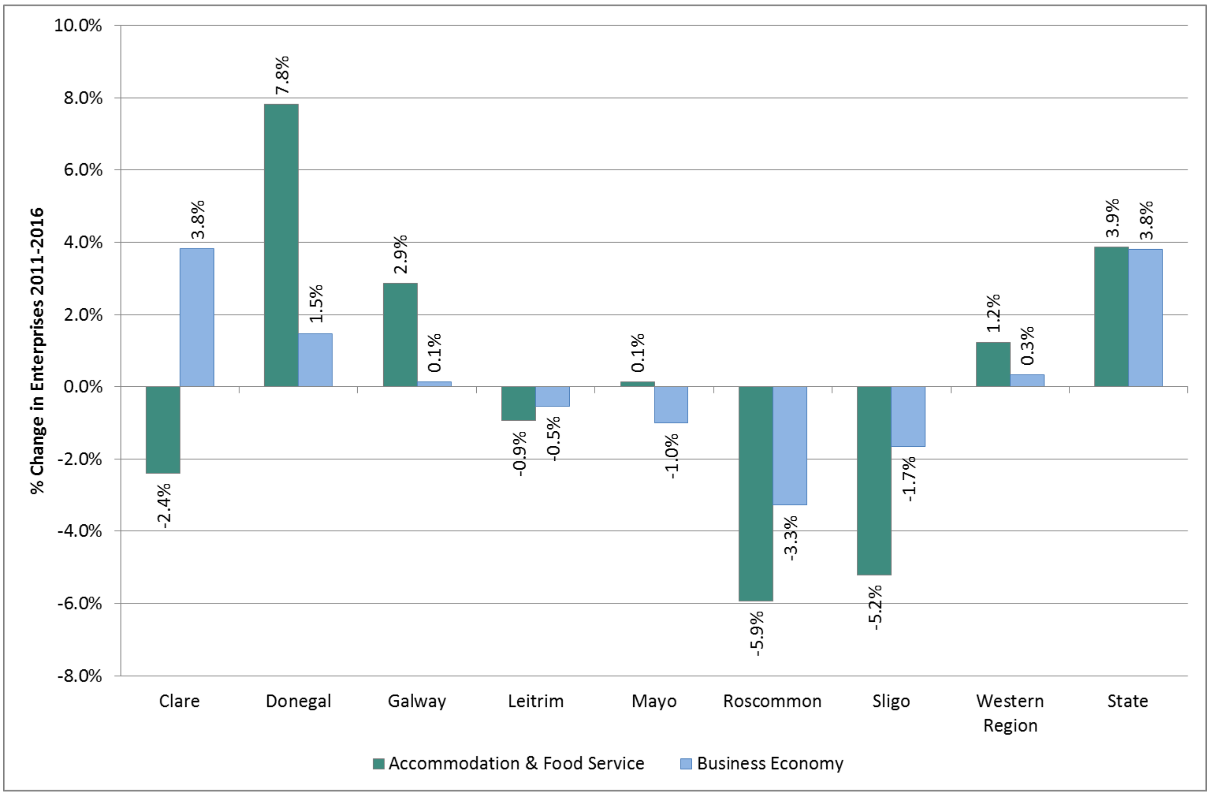
The sector's share of enterprises remained steady in the region and state between 2011 and 2016. There was a mixed experience across counties, with Clare, Sligo and Roscommon seeing a fall in the sector's relative importance to their enterprise profile, while it increased notably in Donegal.

Changes in a sector's share of total enterprises is due both to changes in the actual number of enterprises in that sector and also how this compares with changes to the total number of enterprises.

3.2.1 Change in enterprises

There was a 1.2% increase in the number of hospitality enterprises registered in the Western Region between 2011 and 2016, less than the 3.9% growth nationally (Fig. 12). In the state, growth in this sector was the same as for enterprise numbers overall. In the region however, the sector performed better than total enterprises, 1.2% compared with 0.3%.

Fig. 12: Percentage change in the number of Accommodation & Food Service enterprises and total business economy enterprises in Western Region and state, 2011-2016



Source: CSO, Business Demography 2016, Table BRA18.

The number of hospitality enterprises in Donegal grew by 7.8% between 2011 and 2016, the strongest growth in the region and almost double the national average. At 2.9%, Galway was the only other western county with notable enterprise growth, consistent with previous findings on the strength and performance of hospitality employment in these two counties. Both had considerably stronger enterprise growth in this sector than overall.

Roscommon (-5.9%) and Sligo (-5.2%) had large declines in the number of hospitality enterprises, contributing to the sector's low share of total enterprises in these counties (see Fig. 11). The performance of Accommodation & Food Service was weaker than total enterprises in both. They also showed the lowest jobs growth in the sector over the period (see Section 2.2.1) raising some concerns over the performance of the sector in these two counties. Clare and Leitrim also saw declines in the number of hospitality firms, for Clare this contrasted with quite strong overall enterprise growth.

4.0 Tourist Numbers and Revenue

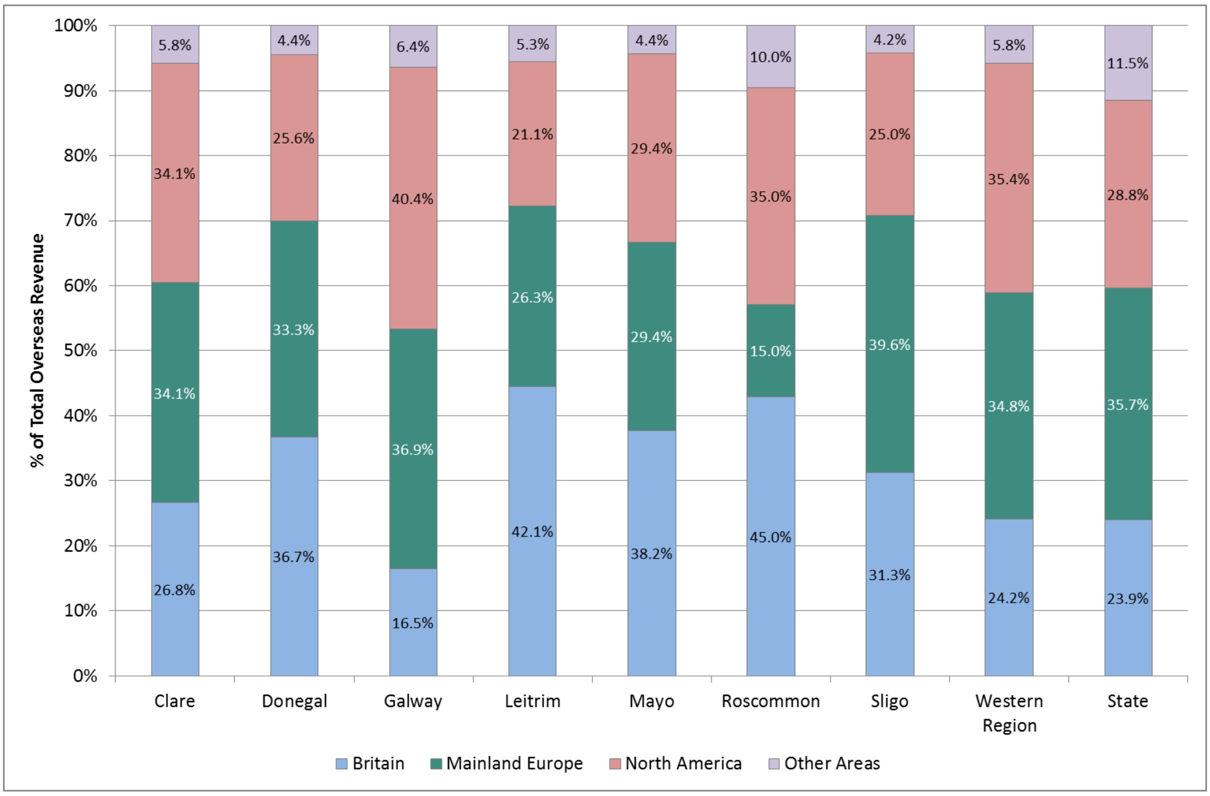
Tourism is one of the main sources of demand for Accommodation & Food Service and this employment is very sensitive to changes in the level of tourism activity. Therefore this section outlines data on visitor numbers and revenue from both overseas and domestic tourists visiting the Western Region. The data is from Fáilte Ireland's reports on regional tourism performance. It should be noted that the balance between tourist and local demand varies considerably across the region.

4.1 Overseas tourist revenue in western counties

In 2016[17] overseas tourists visiting the Western Region generated total revenue of €838 million. This was 18.1% of total overseas tourism revenue[18] generated in the state in that year.

The largest source of overseas tourism revenue for the Western Region is North America which accounts for 35.4%, considerably higher than this market's share nationally (Fig. 13). The next largest is Mainland Europe (34.8%) which accounted for a somewhat lower share in the region than nationally. The region differs considerably from the state in the share coming from 'Other Areas' (e.g. Asia, Australia) with visitors from these emerging and long-haul markets less likely to visit the region than elsewhere in Ireland.

Fig. 13: Percentage of total overseas tourism revenue by market in Western Region and state, 2016



Source: Fáilte Ireland, Regional tourism performance in 2016 (revised March 2018); Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Facts 2016 (August 2017)

17 Latest data available. While some topline county data is available for 2017, it does not include a breakdown by market.
18 Not including revenue from Northern Ireland, carrier receipts (payments to Irish airlines/ferry companies by tourists coming into the country) or overseas same-day visits.

The relative importance of different markets varies across counties.[19] Britain is the largest source of overseas tourism revenue for Roscommon, Leitrim, Donegal and Mayo. This is influenced by their large diasporas in the UK as well as direct UK flights to Ireland West Airport Knock, Donegal Airport and City of Derry Airport. For Roscommon and Leitrim it may also reflect their lower profile among visitors from the US or Europe. The hospitality sector in these four counties is therefore quite exposed to the impact of Brexit.

North American visitors are the largest source of revenue for Galway and Clare (jointly with Mainland Europe) reflecting these counties' position as international tourist destinations, with direct flights to Shannon Airport playing an important role.

4.1.1 Overseas tourist numbers in western counties

In terms of actual visitor numbers (Table 3), the largest number of overseas visitors to the state come from Britain (41.5%) followed by North America (35.5%). Britain also accounts for the largest number of visitors to Roscommon and Leitrim, where they were also the largest revenue source.

North American tourists account for the majority of overseas tourists visiting Galway, Sligo, Mayo and Donegal. As they were not however the main source of revenue for Sligo, Mayo or Donegal (see Fig. 13), this indicates lower spend/shorter duration per North American visitor to these counties, compared with British or European visitors.

Table 3: Number of overseas tourists and share of total by market in Western Region and state, 2016

County	Britain		North America		Mainland Europe		Other Areas	
	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%
Clare	141	22.2%	219	34.5%	235	37.0%	40	6.3%
Donegal	84	29.7%	113	39.9%	62	21.9%	24	8.5%
Galway	259	17.9%	666	46.0%	422	29.1%	102	7.0%
Leitrim	22	44.9%	12	24.5%	10	20.4%	4	8.2%
Mayo	85	27.5%	125	40.5%	86	27.8%	14	4.5%
Roscommon	25	48.1%	10	19.2%	14	26.9%	3	5.8%
Sligo	52	28.3%	83	45.1%	38	20.7%	11	6.0%
State	**3,632**	**41.5%**	**3,102**	**35.5%**	**1,477**	**16.9%**	**531**	**6.1%**

Source: Fáilte Ireland, Regional tourism performance in 2016 (revised March 2018); Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Facts 2016 (August 2017)

Note: As the same visitor may visit more than one county, a total figure for the Western Region cannot be calculated.

4.1.2 Change in overseas tourist revenue and numbers

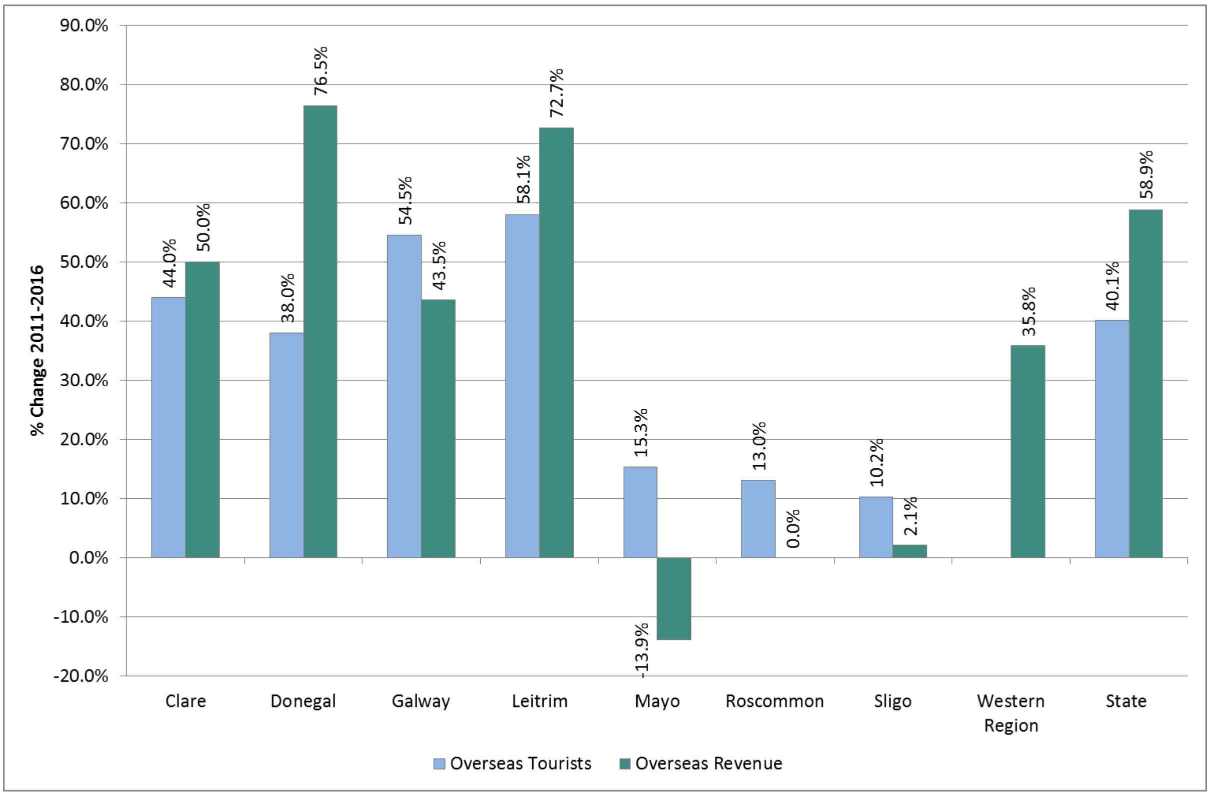
Between 2011 and 2016, total overseas tourism revenue generated in the Western Region grew by 35.8% compared with 58.9% nationally (Fig. 14). While it is not possible to calculate total overseas tourist numbers for the Western Region as a whole, all western counties also experienced growth in visitor numbers.

[19] County data is based on a three-year rolling average so the figures for a particular year represent their 'average' performance for the previous three years.

Overseas visitor numbers grew by 38%-58% in Donegal, Clare, Galway and Leitrim[20] and they also showed the strongest revenue growth. These four counties had the strongest hospitality jobs growth over the same period (see Section 2.1.1) clearly illustrating the strong link between overseas tourism and hospitality employment.

Donegal experienced substantially greater revenue growth than numbers growth indicating that each visitor spent more per trip (perhaps by staying longer) with particularly strong revenue growth from European and North America visitors. Leitrim and Clare also saw higher spend per overseas visit. In contrast, Galway had lower growth in revenue than numbers with its growing popularity as a 'city-break' destination leading to more, but shorter, visits.

Fig. 14: Percentage change in overseas tourism revenue and overseas tourist numbers in Western Region and state, 2011-2016



Source: Fáilte Ireland, Regional tourism performance in 2016 (revised March 2018); Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Facts 2016 (August 2017); Fáilte Ireland, Overseas Visitors to Counties in 2011 and Associated Revenue (revised July 2013); Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Facts 2014 (revised February 2016)

Mayo was the only county to experience a fall in overseas tourism revenue (-13.9%) despite growth in tourist numbers, indicating that average spend per visit declined. The ageing of the large Mayo diaspora in the UK, reducing revenue from 'visiting friends and relatives', could be a factor. Roscommon and Sligo also saw a decline in spend per visit. The substantial reduction in average hotel prices during this period would have contributed and this may have been more prevalent in these counties.

[20] As county data for any year is based on a three-year rolling average, it is not possible to compare county data year-on-year. However comparison of 2011 and 2016 is meaningful.

4.2 Domestic tourist revenue and numbers in western counties

As economic conditions improved and disposable income recovered, the number of domestic trips taken in the state grew by 30.5% between 2011 and 2016 with the revenue generated by such trips increasing by 27%, indicating some reduction in spend per trip (Table 4). Except for Mayo, all western counties had the opposite pattern with greater revenue growth than growth in domestic trips with higher spend per trip. Clare, Leitrim & Cavan[21] and Sligo in particular had notably higher revenue than numbers growth.

Roscommon & Longford had the strongest growth in both numbers (70%) and revenue (75%), though from a very low base.[22] This growth was far stronger than the performance of overseas tourism over the same period in Roscommon[23] (see Fig. 14) meaning Irish tourists now play a larger role in the county's tourism activity.

Galway and Mayo had the next strongest growth in tourist numbers influenced by Wild Atlantic Way marketing, initiatives such as the Mayo Greenway and the popularity of Galway City and Westport in particular for short breaks. For Mayo, domestic trips out-performed overseas, again indicating an increased role for the Irish market while Mayo's lower revenue growth is consistent with the pattern for overseas tourists where spending per visit also declined.

Table 4: Number of domestic trips and revenue in Western Region and state, 2011 and 2016

County	2011		2016		% Change 2011-2016	
	No. of Trips (000s)	Revenue (€m)	No. of Trips (000s)	Revenue (€m)	No. of Trips	Revenue
Clare	376	89	423	122.1	12.5%	37.2%
Donegal	272	70	374	99.9	37.5%	42.7%
Galway	686	128	1,019	193.9	48.5%	51.5%
Leitrim & Cavan	161	26	221	38.7	37.3%	48.8%
Mayo	348	80	508	105.5	46.0%	31.9%
Roscommon & Longford	80	10	136	17.5	70.0%	75.0%
Sligo	193	35	222	45.3	15.0%	29.4%
State	**7,169**	**1,415.90**	**9,359**	**1,797.70**	**30.5%**	**27.0%**

Source: Fáilte Ireland, Regional tourism performance in 2016 (revised March 2018); Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Facts 2016 (August 2017); Fáilte Ireland, Regional tourism performance in 2014 (February 2016); Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Facts 2014 (revised February 2016)

[21] Due to small numbers, data for some counties is combined this includes Roscommon (combined with Longford) and Leitrim (combined with Cavan)

[22] Roscommon & Longford had the lowest number of domestic trips and lowest revenue of all counties in Ireland in both 2011 and 2016.

[23] This was also the case for Longford.

5.0 Key Policy Issues for the Western Region's Hospitality Sector

As the fifth largest employer in the Western Region, Accommodation & Food Service plays a central role in the regional and rural economy. Some of the key issues for the region's hospitality sector are discussed below.

Hospitality plays a larger role in the region's labour market

Hospitality employs a greater share of the workforce in the Western Region than nationally (6.9% compared with 5.8%) with Galway City, Donegal and Mayo having among the highest shares in Ireland. Higher reliance on hospitality jobs is particularly true for women and it employs close to one in ten women in these counties.

Any changes in demand for the sector, for example reduced disposable income resulting from an economic downturn, declining numbers of UK tourists due to Brexit or increased visitors due to highly successful marketing campaigns, will have a substantial impact on the region's labour market. Hospitality can play a particularly important role in small and medium-sized towns and rural areas where there may be fewer job options. **Hospitality must therefore be identified as a priority sector in national, regional and county strategies aimed at sustaining and revitalising the regional and rural economy**.

Western Region makes a significant contribution to Ireland's hospitality industry

Of everyone working in Accommodation & Food Service in Ireland, almost 1 in 5 live in the Western Region. It is home to five of the top ten towns in Ireland, in terms of hospitality employment and to nearly 1 in 4 of all hospitality enterprises; the region's highest share of enterprises across all sectors.

The Western Region makes a substantial contribution to Ireland's hospitality sector and it is a key regional strength. **National policy to support development of the sector needs to recognise the region's significant contribution and address its specific issues**. These would include increased direct international air access, as well as improved road, rail and public transport accessibility, for the region to facilitate visitor access, addressing the challenges faced by rural hospitality businesses reliant on local demand and mitigating the potential impact of Brexit especially in border counties.

The region has smaller scale hospitality businesses, especially in rural areas, but self-employment is declining

Hospitality enterprises in the Western Region tend to be smaller in scale than the national average. This is particularly the case in the quite rural counties of Donegal, Leitrim and Mayo. Smaller scale operations may find it more difficult to adapt to emerging trends e.g. Brexit, digital transformation, dietary requirements and regulations. However smaller businesses may be able to offer a more personal and distinctive service, with close and long-standing relationships developing between owners and their customers.

While the extent of self-employment in the sector in the region remains higher than elsewhere, it is declining. While there has been a general decline in self-employment as the economic recovery provides more job opportunities, there has been an even greater decline in this sector and it has been particularly strong in more rural counties. This has resulted in a change to the composition of the sector, with fewer family or owner-manager run hospitality businesses. This may impact on efforts to maintain or enhance the local distinctiveness of the hospitality offering, as well as the level of embeddedness of the sector in local areas. Galway city was the only area to see growing self-employment, contributing to growing diversity in its hospitality offering.

Continuation of existing and the development of new initiatives and soft supports for hospitality entrepreneurship, as well as for succession planning for family-run businesses, is important to maintain and grow the diversity of the hospitality offering, particularly in smaller urban centres and rural areas.

Important sector for young and lower skilled workers but they need to be protected

While there has been strong recent jobs growth in hospitality, job churn is a significant factor with frequent job changes. Nationally there does not seem to be any labour or skills shortage except for chefs.[24] The hospitality sector includes high quality, skilled occupations but is also an important source of employment for younger and lower skilled workers, as well as those seeking flexible and/or part-time working hours e.g. for child care. It is also characterised by low pay having the lowest average hourly earnings of any sector in 2017.[25]

The past number of years has witnessed an increase in precarious work. This can have a negative impact on people working in the sector and reduces its attractiveness as a job option. Recent legislation has sought to address this issue to some extent,[26] however **improving the quality and security of employment for those working in hospitality must remain a priority, not only to protect worker's rights but also for the sector's future viability and ability to attract staff**.

Hospitality is becoming a more important reason for people to visit town centres

Towns of all sizes are having to adapt to a changing function as their traditional role as retail centres is reduced. As more people shop online, the reason for them to visit their local city or town centre is increasingly to access services which have to be consumed in person, with hospitality a key element of this. This local custom is a core market for the hospitality sector and particularly in areas with lower tourism activity.

Taking a broad approach to town centre renewal, addressing issues of accessibility, attractiveness of the public realm, safety and local distinctiveness is critical to making towns more attractive as service destinations for local residents and tourists alike. A Framework for Town Centre Renewal sets out an Action Plan for Town Centre Renewal particularly targeting towns which have experienced increasing vacancy or a shift of economic activity out of the town centre and are struggling to reverse this trend.

The hospitality sector, particularly the quality and variety of the offering, is central to attracting people to visit and remain in town centre locations. **Supporting the growth and expansion of the hospitality sector should be integral to any strategies or local plans for town centre renewal**.

Local tailored approaches to developing the hospitality sector are needed

The importance of the hospitality sector varies substantially across the region's counties and towns. For tourist 'hotpots' such as Clifden and Bundoran the local economy is highly dependent on the sector and its performance. **Strengthening the hospitality sector in established tourism hotspots,**

[24] SOLAS and National Skills Council (2018), National Skills Bulletin 2018
[25] €12.90. SOLAS and National Skills Council (2018), National Skills Bulletin 2018
[26] http://www.welfare.ie/en/pressoffice/Pages/pr040319.aspx

through tailored approaches building on the area's assets, aiming to extend the tourism season year-round and also identifying ways to adapt to emerging tourism trends, is vital to the sustainability and viability of their local economy and employment.

Other areas of the region, such as towns like Ballyhaunis, Ballymote and Boyle, have very low shares working in Accommodation & Food Service and depend more on local demand. At a county level, the sector is relatively weak in Roscommon.

Areas which currently have a weak hospitality sector require a different approach. For example, as local demand is more important in such areas, **increasing the overall level of economic activity** through stimulating enterprise and job creation, including remote working, will increase demand for, and employment in, the hospitality sector. Other approaches to increasing local demand could include **improving the attractiveness and accessibility (e.g. car parking, public transport) of town centres and the organisation of local festivals/events**. The potential to further develop tourism in such areas by **identifying local strengths and assets, as well as potential new niche markets** e.g. outdoor recreation, slow tourism, would also be important.

Tourism marketing brands are critical to attracting domestic and overseas visitors, as well as targeting new markets

'Accommodation' is the largest hospitality sub-sector in the Western Region and is more important than nationally. Tourism is therefore a more important source of demand for the region's hospitality industry. The Wild Atlantic Way marketing brand has increased tourist numbers and hospitality employment in counties along its route with Donegal, Clare and Galway seeing particularly strong growth. **The continuation, strengthening and extension of the WAW marketing brand is important for sustaining and growing the sector along the western seaboard**.

The 2018 launch of the new Ireland's Hidden Heartlands marketing brand is hoped to increase tourist numbers and revenue to the more inland areas of the Western Region. While Leitrim has performed well in recent years with strong employment and visitor growth, Roscommon has performed quite poorly; both rely heavily on the UK market**. Careful monitoring of the impact of the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands marketing will be required to judge its effectiveness, with adjustments made as needed**.

As a notably lower share of the region's overseas tourism revenue comes from 'Other Areas' (e.g. Asia, Australia), greater targeting of markets beyond the UK, US and Europe is important. A key part of this is access. **As international air carriers from these locations fly in to Dublin Airport, increasing road, rail and bus accessibility from Dublin to the region is vital to growing visits from these new markets.**

Rural and border counties are particularly exposed to Brexit

Britain is the largest source of overseas tourism revenue for the rural counties of Roscommon, Leitrim, Donegal and Mayo. Northern Ireland is a particularly important market for Donegal and other border counties. These areas are therefore particularly exposed to Brexit. Recent research by Fáilte Ireland[27] found that 80% of operators of 'paid serviced accommodation' in counties in the northern half of the country[28] are worried about the impact of Brexit, compared with 67% in the rest

[27] Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Barometer, December 2018
[28] Including Mayo, Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal, along with Cavan, Monaghan, Louth and Longford.

of the country. Half of operators in northern counties anticipated a downturn in visits from the Northern Irish market after Brexit.

Increased diversification and the targeting of niche markets in Europe and 'Other Areas', along with continued domestic marketing, will be important to help counteract the impact of Brexit, especially in more rural and border counties. The extent of the actual impact of Brexit is of course difficult to judge when the nature of the future relationship is not yet decided.

Need to adapt to tourism trends

A number of trends will impact on the future of tourism and hospitality employment in the Western Region. For example the emergence of **'sharing economy' models such as Airbnb** is already having an impact. This can facilitate visitors to stay in more rural areas where there may be insufficient demand for other types of accommodation but where visitors can bring benefits to the wider hospitality sector. This trend however may also impact on the employment levels of accommodation providers.

Changing demographics such as the ageing profile of the European market as well as the UK and US based Irish diaspora, alongside strong global tourism growth from Asian markets, will alter the profile, nature and requirements of overseas tourists to the Western Region and its hospitality sector will need to adapt.

The **transition to a low carbon economy** will also impact on tourism with potential reduction in air travel, increased focus on the use of public transport by tourists and a demand for higher environmental standards within the sector.   The Western Region's 'green' image provides an important marketing tool, however Ireland's island location and reliance on air access means that any reduction in air travel to mitigate its negative climate impacts could have a significant impact on tourism in the region.

6.0 Conclusion

Accommodation & Food Service plays a key role in the Western Region's economy, in terms of its employment profile and enterprise base. As it is quite widely distributed, the hospitality sector helps to sustain the regional and rural economy. It is an important source of jobs for those with lower skills or limited experience, as well as providing highly skilled occupations and considerable opportunities for entrepreneurship.

Hospitality however is highly sensitive to changing economic conditions which influence both the level of disposable income of local residents and overseas and domestic tourism activity. The balance between local and tourist demand in sustaining the hospitality sector varies considerably across the region and policy aimed at strengthening the sector needs to be tailored to the specific circumstances of different areas. What is required in key tourism 'hotspots' is very different to what is needed in small rural towns relying on local custom.

Download **Accommodation & Food Service Sector in the Western Region: Regional Sectoral Profile** and ***WDC Insights*: Accommodation & Food Service Sector in the Western Region** here

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Appendix 1: Population aged 15 years and over by detailed industrial group in the Accommodation & Food Service sector NACE Rev 2 in Western Region 2011 and 2016

Detailed industrial group	Clare			Donegal			Galway City		
	2011	2016	% Change	2011	2016	% Change	2011	2016	% Change
Hotels & similar accommodation	1,260	1,526	21.1%	1,675	1,974	17.9%	1,273	1,292	1.5%
Short-stay accommodation	61	79	29.5%	86	87	1.2%	34	71	108.8%
Restaurants & mobile food service	779	915	17.5%	1,106	1,494	35.1%	1,084	1,396	28.8%
Event catering & other food service	279	277	-0.7%	249	222	-10.8%	266	265	-0.4%
Beverage serving activities	581	563	-3.1%	722	825	14.3%	466	446	-4.3%
Total Accommodation & Food Service	**2,960**	**3,360**	**13.5%**	**3,838**	**4,602**	**19.9%**	**3,123**	**3,470**	**11.1%**

Detailed industrial group	Galway County			Leitrim			Mayo		
	2011	2016	% Change	2011	2016	% Change	2011	2016	% Change
Hotels & similar accommodation	1,442	1,618	12.2%	287	357	24.4%	1,586	1,858	17.2%
Short-stay accommodation	52	52	0.0%	7	14	100.0%	51	62	21.6%
Restaurants & mobile food service	965	1,243	28.8%	195	238	22.1%	864	1,034	19.7%
Event catering & other food service	256	304	18.8%	40	40	0.0%	249	216	-13.3%
Beverage serving activities	796	760	-4.5%	205	176	-14.1%	731	719	-1.6%
Total Accommodation & Food Service	**3,511**	**3,977**	**13.3%**	**734**	**825**	**12.4%**	**3,481**	**3,889**	**11.7%**

Detailed industrial group	Roscommon			Sligo			Western Region		
	2011	2016	% Change	2011	2016	% Change	2011	2016	% Change
Hotels & similar accommodation	413	418	1.2%	540	613	13.5%	8,476	9,656	13.9%
Short-stay accommodation	14	16	14.3%	32	31	-3.1%	337	412	22.3%
Restaurants & mobile food service	342	416	21.6%	507	654	29.0%	5,842	7,390	26.5%
Event catering & other food service	85	73	-14.1%	124	114	-8.1%	1,548	1,511	-2.4%
Beverage serving activities	314	261	-16.9%	403	319	-20.8%	4,218	4,069	-3.5%
Total Accommodation & Food Service	**1,168**	**1,184**	**1.4%**	**1,606**	**1,731**	**7.8%**	**20,421**	**23,038**	**12.8%**

Source: CSO, Census 2016: Summary Results Part 2, Table EZ011

Appendix 2: Population aged 15 years and over employed in Accommodation & Food Service in western towns 2011 and 2016

Towns	2011		2016		% Change 2011-2016
	No. Employed	% of Total Employment	No. Employed	% of Total Employment	
Galway City and suburbs	3,148	9.8%	3,501	9.8%	11.2%
Ennis	793	8.0%	836	7.9%	5.4%
Letterkenny	594	8.2%	720	9.3%	21.2%
Sligo	713	10.1%	769	10.8%	7.9%
Castlebar	453	9.5%	463	9.6%	2.2%
Ballina	335	8.6%	392	10.8%	17.0%
Shannon	297	7.5%	319	7.6%	7.4%
Tuam	188	6.2%	204	6.2%	8.5%
Buncrana	177	8.5%	215	9.0%	21.5%
Ballinasloe	191	8.6%	185	8.2%	-3.1%
Westport	544	21.6%	600	21.1%	10.3%
Roscommon	174	8.2%	172	7.6%	-1.1%
Loughrea	110	5.6%	172	7.5%	56.4%
Oranmore	180	7.1%	181	7.0%	0.6%
Ballybofey-Stranorlar	164	10.7%	188	11.4%	14.6%
Athenry	124	7.4%	137	7.2%	10.5%
Carrick-on-Shannon	219	13.2%	263	15.0%	20.1%
Claremorris	105	7.5%	147	9.4%	40.0%
Gort	86	8.2%	103	8.2%	19.8%
Ballinrobe	113	10.4%	136	12.1%	20.4%
Kilrush	57	7.0%	78	9.6%	36.8%
Sixmilebridge	74	7.2%	83	7.1%	12.2%
Donegal	202	20.3%	219	20.3%	8.4%
Boyle	55	6.5%	48	5.8%	-12.7%
Carndonagh	60	9.4%	82	10.3%	36.7%
Ballyhaunis	48	5.8%	48	5.6%	0.0%
Ballyshannon	83	10.6%	91	11.3%	9.6%
Bearna	52	6.4%	55	6.2%	5.8%
Castlerea	42	6.5%	44	6.5%	4.8%
Tubbercurry	34	5.1%	42	6.1%	23.5%
Bundoran	154	22.0%	162	21.7%	5.2%
Ballaghaderreen	45	8.5%	35	6.0%	-22.2%
Newmarket-on-Fergus	89	12.1%	85	10.5%	-4.5%
Strandhill	70	9.4%	56	7.0%	-20.0%
Moycullen	47	6.6%	51	6.8%	8.5%
Lifford	21	4.8%	32	6.9%	52.4%
Collooney	N/A	N/A	46	7.0%	N/A
Clifden	168	18.8%	188	27.6%	11.9%
Ballymote	39	7.0%	31	5.7%	-20.5%
Convoy	N/A	N/A	31	6.5%	N/A

Source: CSO, Census 2016: Profile 11 – Employment, Occupations and Industry, Table EB030