



Booking Trends Analysis – February 2021

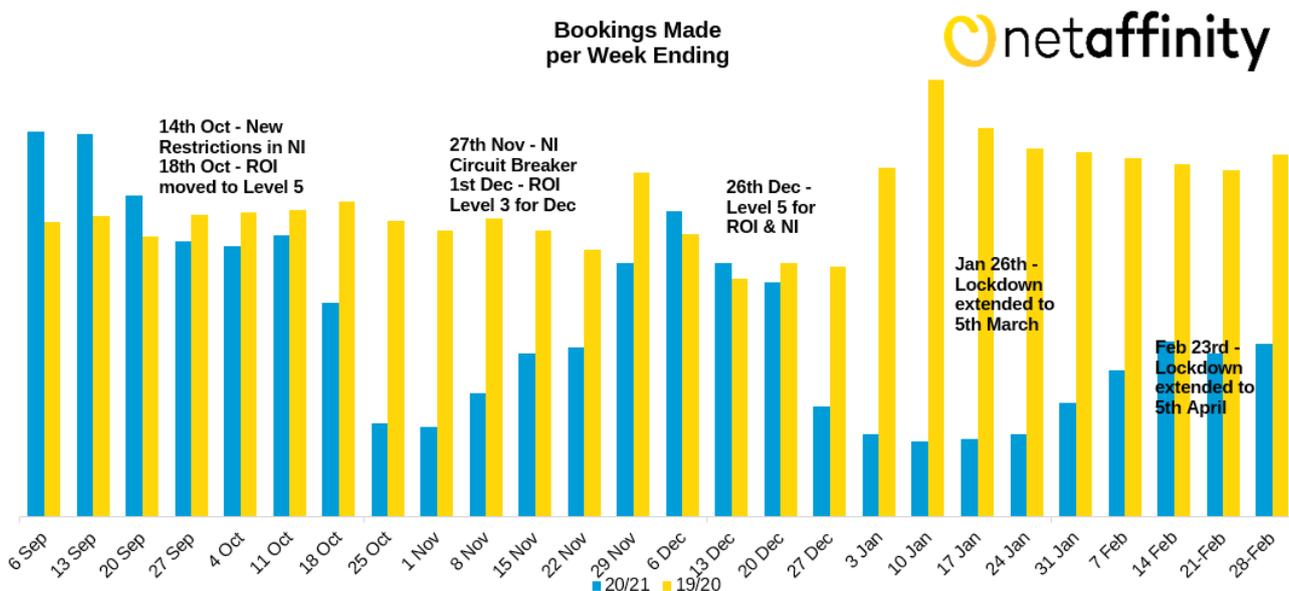
**Analysis by:
Helena Rowe Bradley**

This document is designed to highlight the dynamic changes to the booking patterns by guests in the Irish Hotel Industry because of COVID-19. Statistics are based on bookings made from 1st February 2021 until 28th February 2021 and compared with the same period in 2020.

February 2021's trends were very similar to those of January 2021. We spent the month in lockdown, so hotels were only open for essential workers with guests looking ahead and booking for summer months. Restrictions will remain in place for Republic of Ireland until April 5th and in Northern Ireland until April 1st. Children will be returning to school throughout March.

On February 23rd, the lockdown was extended from March 5th to April 5th, and so we saw an increase in cancellations made for March bookings.

General Bookings



Bookings made in the month of February 2021 were 52% behind on those made in February 2020. This is compared to a drop of 77% in Jan. This is due to a continuation of the trend that started in mid-Jan for summer bookings. In addition, January is traditionally a stronger booking month than February normally and we saw a 67% increase in bookings for Feb compared to Jan (80% in ROI and 19% in NI).

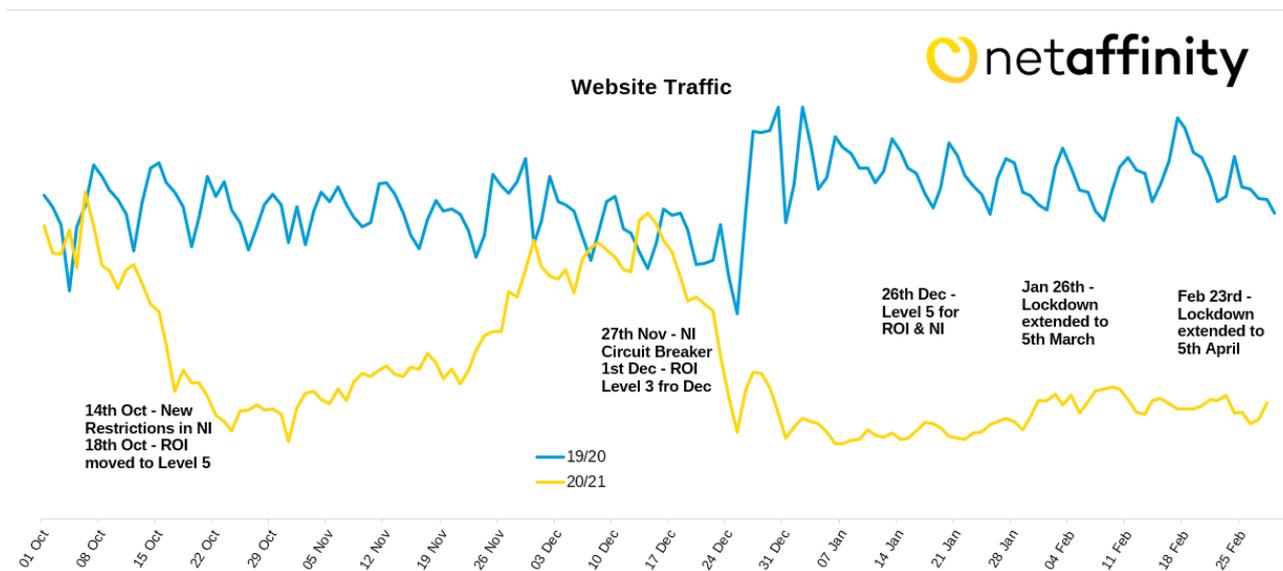
For ROI properties, we continued to see the same trend as the end of last month, with 10% of bookings for May arrival, 16% for Jun, 27% for Aug and 20% for Sept. this then drops to 6% for Sept. Demand is for the summer months, and following the news that it's unlikely restrictions will be lifted until mid-June, we saw a drop in the % of bookings for Jun and an increase for Aug.

NI remains more optimistic with 21% of bookings made for Apr stays, 20% for May and 14% for Jun and Jul respectively. We suspect that the progress made in NI compared with ROI on the vaccine rollout is helping this trend.

Cancellations

With the extension to lockdown restrictions in both jurisdictions, we saw an increase in cancellations around the dates of the announcements cancelling bookings that had been made for March and start of April. More hotels are now not taking bookings until dates in May and June until we are more likely open for leisure business.

General Traffic

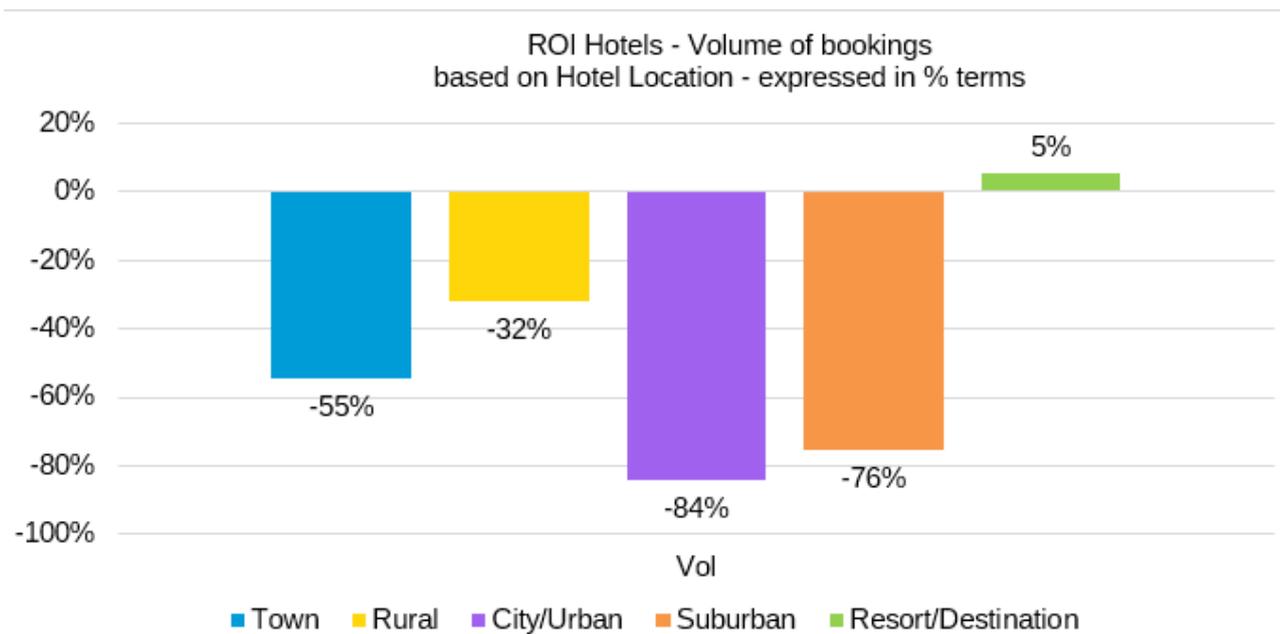


As with bookings, we saw the saw a pickup in traffic towards the end of Jan and into Feb. As we're not seeing any dining, leisure centre, spa traffic to hotels sites, the traffic that is coming to site is very qualified and has a high intent to book for the summer months especially. For hotels that are not seeing summer bookings, due to location, they are not seeing a pickup in traffic.

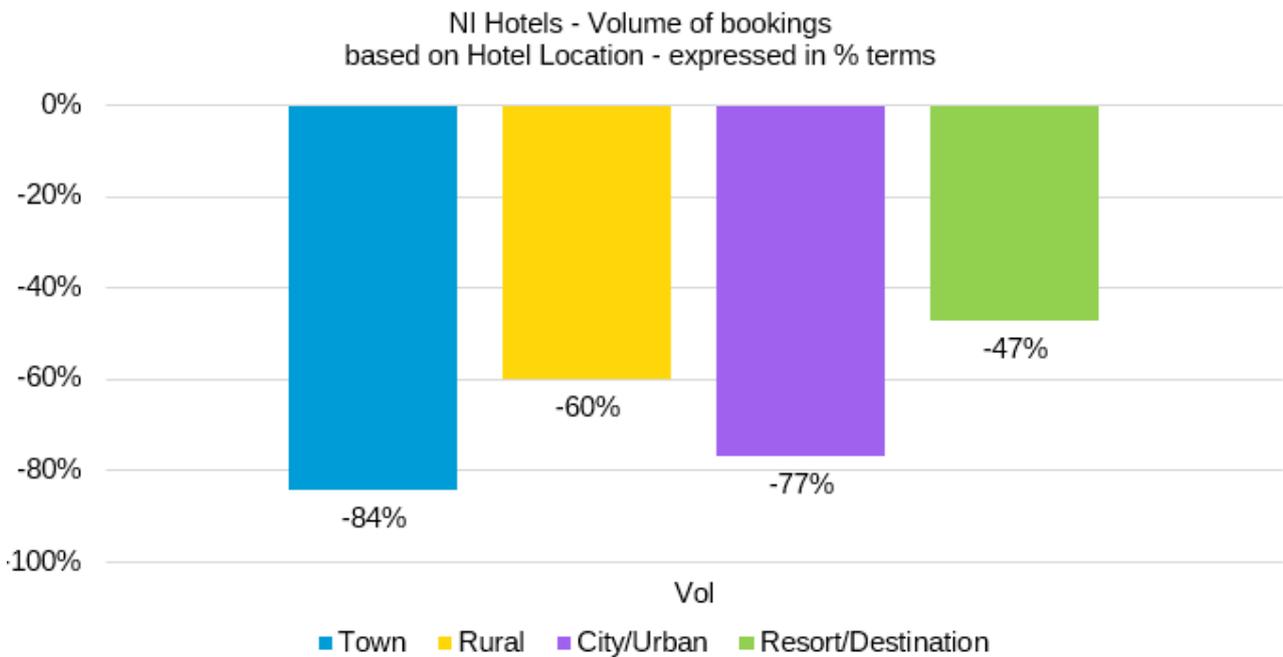
Hotel Type Demand - Booked Feb 21 v 20

Looking at the types of hotels booked in Feb 21 vs Feb 20, in ROI properties, Resort / Destination properties saw just a 5% increase in bookings made. As with last month, many of these offer self-catering options which make up the majority of these bookings. Rural properties saw the next smallest decline, albeit a large gap, of -32%. A number of these properties also offer self-catering, but in addition, we are seeing some bookings for summer for these hotel rooms, especially for the family market. City / Urban and Suburban saw the biggest drops YOY, as bookers are not planning city breaks, rather planning for domestic staycations, replacing foreign trips again for summer 2021.

We expect this trend to continue until we have a date that hotels will reopen, and at that stage expect a surge in short lead bookings, again for the costal / resorts / self-catering first, then more urban properties once these are full.



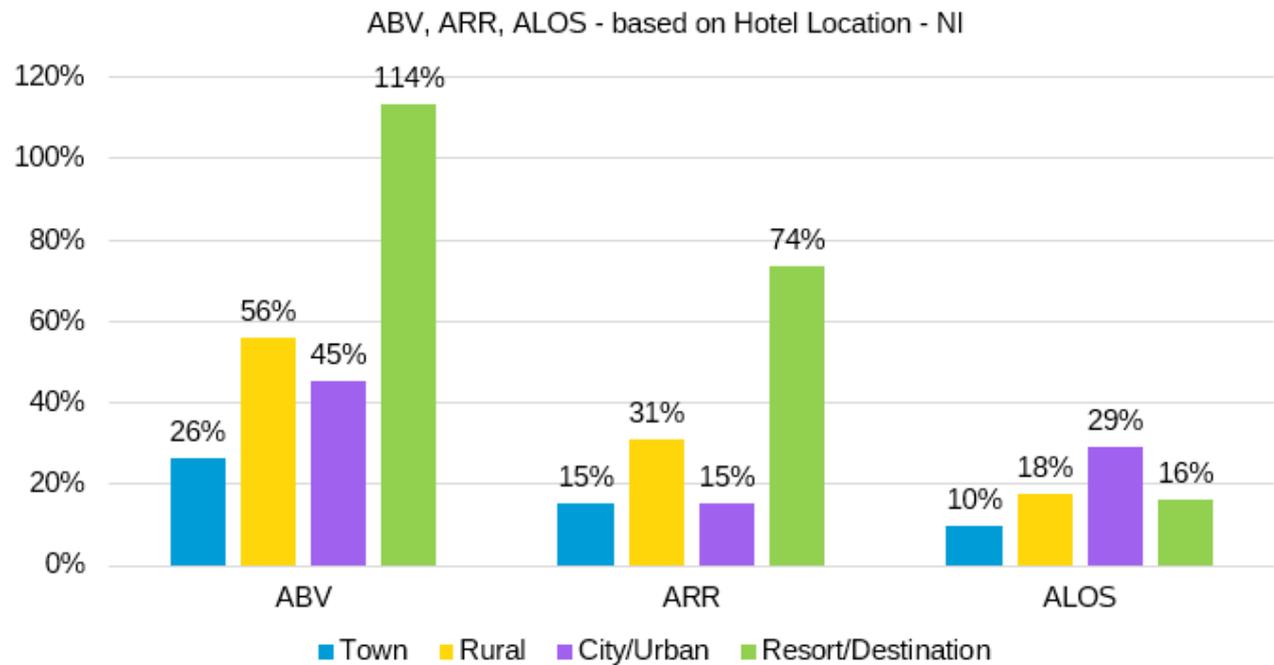
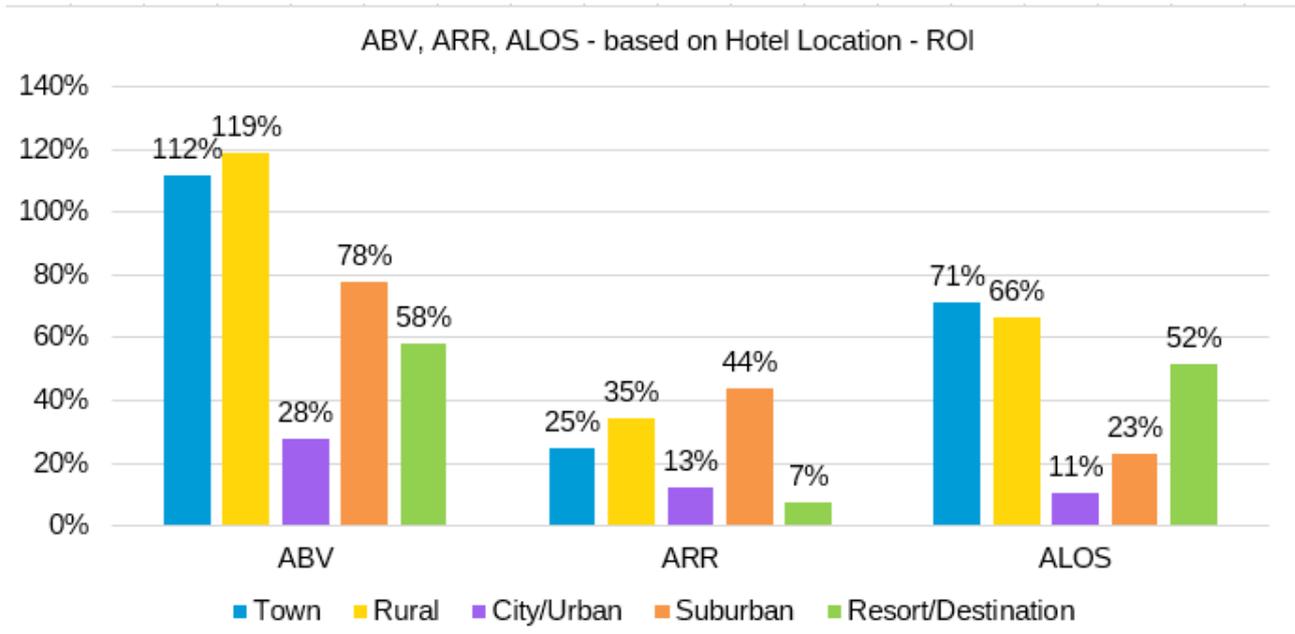
In Northern Ireland, as mentioned above, we are not seeing the same level of bookings for staycations yet, so Resort / Destination properties, even with self-catering did not see this uptick in bookings in Feb and all types of properties saw significant drop in bookings made YOY.



Rates & ALOS - Booked Feb 21 v 20

When reviewing the rates and LOS booked for Feb 21 compared with Feb 20, we need to remember that this year, the bookings are mainly for summer months replacing foreign holidays, whereas the bookings made in Feb 20 were for stays during spring months last year - 56% Feb, 39% Mar & 21% Apr in ROI and 35% Feb, 49% Mar and 24% Apr in NI.

This has led to an increase in Average Rate and Length of Stay and subsequently ABV across the board as the summer business is for longer and higher rates than the spring bookings would have been.



Arrivals 2021

(as of 1st Mar 21)

Mar-21				Apr-21				May-21			
Vol	ABV	ARR	ALOS	Vol	ABV	ARR	ALOS	Vol	ABV	ARR	ALOS
-92%	45%	30%	14%	-76%	25%	22%	4%	-59%	23%	24%	3%
-72%	45%	53%	-10%	-49%	53%	49%	-1%	-24%	44%	42%	-1%
-95%	43%	2%	44%	-81%	30%	5%	17%	-56%	35%	11%	24%
-96%	7%	-1%	4%	-92%	-6%	26%	-9%	-84%	-22%	15%	-30%
-94%	-2%	-4%	8%	-58%	13%	8%	9%	-44%	29%	26%	-2%
-93%	21%	-2%	25%	-74%	29%	14%	13%	-64%	41%	20%	19%
-83%	51%	34%	15%	-60%	26%	14%	11%	-29%	24%	21%	7%
-96%	29%	9%	25%	-75%	31%	21%	9%	-54%	29%	21%	12%
-95%	28%	8%	15%	-89%	30%	14%	14%	-80%	-2%	-8%	9%

We can see looking ahead to Mar & Apr & May arrival stats a reiteration of the theme discussed above – ROI properties are not seeing any significant booking for Mar or Apr, despite that fact that we have no clear indication that there will be a lockdown in these months yet, whereas the North is a little more optimistic when it comes to April and May We will only know more once we have announcements of the easing of restrictions.

Vouchers

February was a mixed month for properties in regard to voucher sales. Some properties saw good performance year on year, whereas other saw very little pickup, despite running campaigns. The best-selling type of voucher were for associations offering the voucher for use in numerous properties.

Many hotels were hoping to see a pickup in voucher sales for Valentines since meals out and overnight stays were not options to celebrate this year. Overall for the month, volume of voucher sales were behind 7% for EUR properties and ahead 10% for GBP. However, this is considering the extra day of sales in Feb 20 with the leap year. Comparing the 28 days only, EUR were back 4% and GBP ahead 15%.

Mother’s Day is the next holiday where vouchers can be purchased as gifts. We have similar recommendations for Mother’s Day – it may not be worth doing a full marketing campaign around, but ensure you’re using organic posts on social, and consider boosted posts for your local area to help push sales. For Mother’s Day have options for Afternoon Tea and Dining vouchers, where they can be purchased at a lower price point.