

For
Immediate release

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Clear picture of overseas spending displayed: Holidaymakers pack their payment cards as £26 billion spent abroad

For the first time annual overseas card spending figures have been published that do not include transactions from UK internet retailers made in pound sterling but processed abroad, giving a clearer picture of how people spend their money when overseas.

Last year UK holidaymakers spent £26.4 billion using their cards overseas making almost 14 transactions every second, according to figures from The UK Cards Association.

In total UK issued debit, credit and charge cards were used to make 440 million purchases abroad in 2014, as people took advantage of the benefits of security and ease of using their cards overseas.

While in the UK four-fifths (80 per cent) of all card purchases were made using debit cards; transactions abroad were more evenly split with 51 per cent (224 million) made on credit and charge cards.

By total value, credit and charge card spending overseas outstripped debit last year, suggesting consumers preferred credit cards for more expensive items such as hotel bills and car hire, as well as the benefit of consumer protection on purchases. In total £15.8 billion was spent on credit and charge cards abroad, compared to £10.6 billion on debit cards.

Richard Koch, Head of Policy at The UK Cards Association, said:

“With UK consumers spending £72 million every day on their cards overseas, it’s clear that holidaymakers are making sure they pack their cards when they go abroad. Not only is it a secure, convenient and often cheaper way to pay when on holiday, cards also make it easier to keep track of exactly what you’re spending.”

UK consumers also used their cards to withdraw £6.02 billion in cash while abroad last year, making a total of 53 million visits to overseas ATMs and bank counters. The vast majority (88% or £5.33 billion) of these cash withdrawals were made using debit cards. The average debit card cash withdrawal overseas was £114, much higher than the average in the UK of £69.

Consumers benefit from using their cards overseas through competitive exchange rates, additional legal protection on purchases and the convenience of not having to exchange Travellers Cheques or currency. In addition, unlike cash, if a card is lost or stolen and the customer is a victim of card fraud, they will get your money back.

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For further information contact the press office on 020 3217 8436 or Press@ukcards.org.uk

Notes to editors:

About The UK Cards Association

The UK Cards Association is the trade body for the card payments industry in the UK, representing financial institutions which act as card issuers and acquirers. Members of the Association account for the vast majority of debit and credit cards issued in the UK - issuing in excess of 56 million credit cards and 95 million debit cards - and cover the whole of the payment card acquiring market.

The Association promotes co-operation between industry participants in order to progress non-competitive matters of mutual interest; informs and engages with stakeholders to shape legal and regulatory developments; develops industry best practice; safeguards the integrity of the card payments industry by tackling card fraud; develops industry standards; and co-ordinates other industry-wide initiatives such as those aiming to deliver innovation. As an Association we are committed to delivering a card payments industry that is constantly focused on improved outcomes for the customer.

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