

WEEKLY BRIEFING

23 July 2021



HB HIGHLIGHTS

The PR team generated coverage for Wightlink in [The Sunday Times](#) print and online this week, in a feature celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Spice Girls' debut single, *Wannabe*. Journalist, Katie Gatens stayed on the iconic Spice Girls' bus, currently stationed in the Isle of Wight, and took a trip down memory lane as she detailed Spice Girls references found in the interior of the bus and memorabilia on board.

The PR team has also secured multiple pieces of coverage in trade titles for Oceania Cruises, following the cruise line's launch of its new ship, *Vista's*, suite and stateroom designs. Coverage ran in *Aspire online*, *Travel Weekly online*, *Northern Ireland Travel News* and *Seatrade Cruise News online*.

The Visit Cambridge social media team took over Visit England's Instagram page on Thursday with their top '10 things to do' in the city. The take-over comprised two grid posts on Visit England's page and stories throughout the day, highlighting the different attractions throughout the city, from SUP on the River Cam, to visiting the university's 31 historic colleges. See our take-over [here](#).

COVID-19 UPDATE

The UK has seen a rise in the number of COVID-19 infections, up 24.2% in the last seven days. The number of patients being admitted to hospital as well as the number of deaths within 30 days of testing positive for COVID-19 has also increased; however, numbers still remain low.

The UK has also continued its vaccination roll out with 87.8% of the adult population having received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and a further 69.2% having had both doses. Children over 12 who are at higher risk of getting ill if infected with COVID-19 will be offered a vaccine under plans to extend the rollout, the vaccines minister has confirmed. Nadhim Zahawi said the vast majority of children, who are low risk, will not be offered the vaccine for now, but added that

young people who are almost 18, vulnerable to COVID-19 or living with people who are clinically vulnerable, would be offered the job. These three groups represent around 370,000 children across the UK.

On Monday 19 July, most legal COVID-19 restrictions eased in England as part of the final stage of the route out of lockdown. There are now no limits on how many people can meet or attend events, nightclubs reopened and table service will not be necessary in pubs and restaurants. Face coverings will be recommended in some spaces, but not required by law. Furthermore, supermarket depot workers and food manufacturers will be exempt from quarantine rules as the government tries to prevent food supply problems. The move comes after the rising number of retail workers being forced to self-isolate began to affect the availability of some products. The government said workers, regardless of vaccination status, could do daily COVID-19 testing instead of isolating. Up to 10,000 workers are expected to qualify for the scheme. The new daily contact testing measures are beginning on Friday at 15 supermarket depots, followed by 150 depots next week, but they will not apply to supermarket store staff.

All parts of Scotland also moved to level zero of COVID-19 restrictions on Monday 19 July. Level zero allows up to 10 people from up to four households to meet in a public indoor space such as a pub or restaurant and up to 15 people from up to 15 households can meet outdoors, whether in a private garden or public place. However, first minister, Nicola Sturgeon, said that there would be "modifications" to the previously announced rules due to the spread of the Delta variant of the virus. She said "sensible precautions" had to be maintained while the vaccine programme continued.

Wales has also moved to level one as part of the Welsh government's COVID-19 response, with the relaxation giving outdoor events "flexibility around social distancing". Six people can meet in private homes and a law limiting the number of people meeting outside has been scrapped. Organised indoor events can also start taking place with up to 1,000 people seated and 200 standing from Saturday. Wales currently has the lowest COVID-19 figures in the UK.

In Ireland, indoor service in bars and restaurants in the Republic of Ireland can resume on Monday 26 July for the fully vaccinated or those who have recovered from COVID-19. President Michael D Higgins signed the legislation on 21 July. Under the new guidelines, customers will not be subject to time limits and closing time will be set at 23:30. Up to six people will be allowed to sit at tables which must be kept one metre apart. The Irish government is developing an app to allow hospitality business owners to check customers' EU Digital Covid Certificates. Last week, more than two million people in the Republic of Ireland got their certificates, which

contains a QR code, by email and post.

ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL UPDATE

People splash out on food and drink for Euro 2020

Retail sales in the UK rose between May and June, boosted by demand for food and drink as millions watched the Euro 2020 football tournament. Sales rose 0.5% month-on-month following a drop in May, official figures showed. Growth came from "food and drink sales, boosted by football fans across Britain enjoying the Euros",

TRAVEL AND TOURISM UPDATE

Public confidence in agents rising due to pandemic

Public confidence in booking via a travel professional is rising owing to the pandemic, according to new research conducted on behalf of the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA). The poll found holidaymakers were 25% more likely to book with an agent or travel specialist now than they were before the pandemic. Half of the respondents cited the security offered by a package trip as their main motivation for booking with a professional. Another 48% said it was their trust in travel companies to look after them, while more than two in five respondents (42%) said they valued travel professionals' up-to-date advice. ABTA said the data "reinforced an ongoing trend seen throughout the pandemic for people seeking the security and reassurance of booking a package holiday with a travel professional". It also found consumer confidence in, and awareness of, the ABTA brand remained consistent with pre-pandemic levels; 74% of respondents said they associated the brand most strongly with reassurance, tied with expertise (74%), and followed by confidence (73%) and safety (also 73%).

Summer support for vaccinated UK tourists across key countries

A number of key European destinations and the U.S. support vaccinated UK travellers making visits this summer, according to new research. More than half of people in Germany (55%), Spain (55%), France (61%), Italy (74%) and U.S. (72%) support allowing at least vaccinated British tourists in without having to quarantine on arrival. The figures include 13%-17% in each country who are happy for even unvaccinated British tourists to gain entry, the YouGov poll shows. As many as two thirds of Britons (66%) support allowing at least fully vaccinated tourists into the UK from the five foreign countries.

WTM London opens registration for hybrid event

Registration has opened for WTM London 2021, which will take place at the ExCeL Centre and online. The event will run at the Docklands exhibition centre on 1, 2 and 3 November and virtually on 8 and 9 November. To access the physical event, pre-registration is required, as there will be no onsite registration this year. The organisers said: "This is one of the sector's first face-to-face shows, delivered safely and responsibly by a world exhibition leader, together with a brilliant online event."

Travellers looking for a global standard COVID-19 Travel Pass

A majority of travellers want a global standard for COVID-19 vaccines, testing and certifications, an International Air Transport Association (IATA) study has found. Among 4,700 travellers from 11 countries, 89% said governments must standardise COVID-19 travel procedures. The survey, carried out in May, found 70% thought rules and paperwork surrounding travel "were a challenge to understand" and two-thirds saw arranging testing "a hassle". "These responses should be a wake-up call to governments that they need to do a better job of preparing for a restart," said IATA director general Willie Walsh. He added: "Almost two thirds of respondents plan to resume travel within a few months of the pandemic being contained and borders opened. And by the six-month mark almost 85% expect to be back to travel. To avoid overwhelming airports and border control authorities, governments need to agree to replace paper-based processes with digital solutions like the IATA Travel Pass for vaccine and testing documentation."

AIRLINE UPDATE

Aer Lingus - Aer Lingus has increased its UK schedules after Ireland reopened to British travellers this week. Ireland is the first country in Europe where fully vaccinated British adults can visit without taking a COVID-19 test when entering or leaving. There is also no requirement to self-isolate if fully vaccinated. Aer Lingus is now operating 109 weekly scheduled services between the Republic and the UK.

Air Mauritius - Air Mauritius is to resume UK flights in October as it continues to restructure. The carrier will resume services to Heathrow from 3 October using a new Airbus A330-neo with 260 economy and 28 business class seats. The airline said it would operate from London on Saturday and Sunday. The statement said the carrier had achieved annual savings of £3 billion.

British Airways - British Airways customers can now check the travel restrictions and entry requirements of any destination the airline flies to on a new interactive

map on ba.com. The new page is in partnership with global tech company Sherpa, who has developed an online tool that provides travellers with the latest travel rules for inbound and outbound destinations. This tool brings together the latest information for over 100 countries, providing thousands of sources, and using millions of data points to stay up to date. The map, which the airline plans to further integrate into ba.com, will also help customers understand what is needed for their return to the UK. Visitors to the page will be able to explore the globe to see what travel restrictions each country has in place before booking a trip, searching visually by traffic light colour or by typing in their choice of destination. There is also a tab which allows customers to indicate whether or not they are vaccinated, which will adjust the results.

easyJet - easyJet is hopeful of operating at 60% of pre-pandemic capacity this summer as travel restrictions ease in the UK and continental Europe. Chief executive Johan Lundgren, though, said easyJet had “pivoted” capacity to Europe where demand has been stronger. Reflecting on the current travel landscape in a third-quarter (three months to 30 June) trading update on Monday (20 July), easyJet said uncertainty around UK government travel policy had offset the carrier’s usual 50:50 split in business between the UK and Europe. Lundgren said: “While our business is normally split 50:50 between the UK and Europe, at present, two-thirds of bookings are coming from Europe.”

United Airlines - United Airlines expects to be back in profit in the next three months as travel demand rebounds more quickly than forecast. In an upbeat statement, the airline said it expected to achieve pre-tax profits in the third and fourth quarters of the year, but did not give predictions. United will fly “roughly 80%” of its full schedule in July 2021 compared to July 2019. It predicted capacity in July, August and September would be down 26% compared to the same period in 2019, but up 39% on the previous three months.

TOUR OPERATOR UPDATE

Jet2holidays - Jet2.com and Jet2holidays have recommenced flights and holidays to amber list destinations, since travel rules were relaxed on Monday. Those returning to England from amber countries who are fully vaccinated, and children travelling with them who are under 18, do not have to quarantine upon arrival. The sister brands said more than 60 flights were due to depart on 19 July, from Belfast International, Birmingham, Bristol, East Midlands, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds Bradford, Stansted, Manchester and Newcastle airports. Flights took off to popular destinations including the Balearic and Canary Islands, mainland Spain (Malaga and Alicante), Portugal and Greece.

Riviera Travel - Riviera has launched a new discount campaign on its summer cruises across Europe. The cruise line is offering up to £200 per person off a number of sailings around mainland Europe throughout April 2022. All 2022 bookings include free-of-charge amendments until 31 December 2021.

Scenic - Scenic has unveiled two new itineraries with the release of its Canada, Alaska and United States 2022/23 collection. The 23-day America's National Parks and Rockies to the Red Rocks land tour will take guests on a journey from Calgary to Denver. While the 32-day Majestic Rockies & the Colours of Eastern Canada travels from Calgary to Boston, taking in lakes, mountains and cosmopolitan cities along the way. To accompany the launch, Scenic is offering a guaranteed £1,000 per person saving, along with complimentary private door-to-door chauffeur-driven transfers, on new bookings made before 31 August 2021.

TUI - TUI has launched its winter 2022/23 holiday programme four months early, offering 45 destinations, including the Canaries, Egypt and Mexico, as well as Senegal for the first time. Departures are available from 1 November 2022 through to 30 April 2023. Deposits start from £75pp for short and mid-haul destinations, and £125pp for long-haul destinations, with select £0 deposits. The airline and operator said the decision to bring the launch forward, its earliest ever, owed to "customer desire to book earlier".

SOCIAL AND DIGITAL UPDATE

WhatsApp looks to join the audio social trend with group calls update

With group audio social tools on the rise, WhatsApp has added a new feature which ties into this trend, while also remaining true to the privacy-first ethos of the app. Users will be able to join a group call in the app, even after the call has begun. Given WhatsApp's privacy focus, it can't open up public group chats in a similar vein to Clubhouse. But it does have similar options available limited to friends and connections. It could also be used for business, with the capacity to hold private, members-only product preview sessions or similar. It would be another way for businesses to reach key segments and facilitate new brand info sessions among selected groups.

Instagram tests new option that would enable users to partner up on posts and reels

Instagram has launched a new test of a feature that would enable users to post collaborative updates, both in the main feed and in reels clips. The new 'Collab' posts would be displayed to followers of both accounts in the photo grids and profiles of both users. While the focus is on individual creators, and facilitating

personal connection, it could also be a valuable tool for influencers and brands, with the capacity to partner up on content that could then be displayed to a wider audience.

MICE UPDATE

Hosted buyer registration opens for IBTM World

In a move signalling confidence in a return to live global events in 2021, IBTM World has opened registration for the in-person element of this year's hybrid instalment of IBTM World. The business events tradeshow will take place live at Fira, Barcelona from 30 November-2 December 2021, with a virtual element following from 7-9 December. The theme of the show will be 'New Business, New Tech, New World'. Alongside one-to-one business meetings and networking opportunities, IBTM World will offer educational sessions and a knowledge programme aimed at giving event professionals the tools they need to succeed in the future meetings market.

LIGHTER NOTE

Give Wally a wide berth! Tourists are told to avoid famous walrus off the Isles of Scilly because the heatwave is making him tetchy. See it [here](#).