

WEEKLY REPORT

22 April 2022



COVID-19 UPDATE

The number of people testing positive for COVID-19 in the UK has decreased in the last seven days, by 31%. Meanwhile, the number of patients admitted to hospital has also dropped, by 14.4%. In regard to the vaccination rollout, 92.3% of people aged 12 and above have received their first dose, 86.3% their second and a further 68% of the population have received their booster dose.

On Monday 18 April 2022, the legal requirement to wear face coverings in shops, hospitality venues and on public transport in Scotland came to an end. However, health experts and the Scottish government are strongly recommending the public continue to wear masks voluntarily. PCR tests will remain available to those with symptoms until 30 April 2022 and those who test positive must isolate for seven days.

The Welsh government announced its plans to spend another £36 million on the “test, trace, protect” system. The funding will allow the testing of those with symptoms, those on the treatment list and health and social care staff in order to protect the most vulnerable. From Monday 18 April, the legal requirement for businesses to take COVID-19 precautions was dropped. However, the legal requirement to wear masks in health and social care settings will remain until the end of June.

Latest figures show that all of Ireland’s key COVID-19 indicators have continued to drop this week, including number of cases, hospitalisations, people in ICUs, deaths and the PCR positivity rate. Since the end to all COVID-19 restrictions in March, the Irish government has maintained the guidance that face masks should be worn in enclosed spaces and health and social care settings where possible.

ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL UPDATE

Prime minister Boris Johnson fails to delay official inquiry into lockdown breaches

This week, the British Prime Minister was forced to abandon efforts to block an official inquiry into whether he misled MPs about lockdown parties. While the Conservatives were unable to block the inquiry by the Commons privileges committee, they hoped to delay it until the final publication of the 'Partygate' report by Sue Gray. Speaking on a flight to Gujarat, India, Boris Johnson stressed the importance of issues that "really change and improve the lives of voters".

Train ticket prices slashed to encourage green tourism across the UK

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps announced the first ever Great British Rail Sale. From 19 April, over one million rail journeys will be sold at up to half of their usual price on journeys from 25 April to 27 May. It is hoped the sale will help connect families and friends, encourage sustainable travel and boost UK tourism. The sale sees multiple operators come together to offer savings for the first time. The policy also reflects the government's aim to help the public dealing with the increasing cost of living.

TRADE UPDATE

Travel and tourism will be 'driving force' in global economic recovery

Travel and tourism is expected to create nearly 126 million new jobs within the next decade. The forecast by the World Travel & Tourism Council also shows the sector will be a driving force of the global economic recovery, creating one in three of all new jobs. The latest WTTC economic impact report shows travel and tourism's GDP is forecast to grow at an average rate of 5.8% a year between 2022-2032, outstripping the 2.7% growth rate for the global economy, to reach \$14.6 trillion – 11.3% of the total global economy. Global travel and tourism GDP could reach pre-pandemic levels by 2023 – just 0.1% below 2019 levels.

Flight bookings bounce back in pandemic recovery

A major increase in global international flight bookings has been forecast as worldwide travel resumes following the pandemic. The booking bounce back from the COVID-19 crisis was revealed at the World Travel & Tourism Council's global summit in Manila. Further evidence of the resurgence in travel is shown in arrivals in Europe, with a 350% surge in international arrivals in the first three months of 2022 compared to the same period last year.

Trade confident living costs will not derail summer holiday plans

Fears of large-scale cancellations in light of increased pressure on consumers'

personal finances have so far not materialised and may not hit this summer's bookings, according to the trade. Travel agents remain confident most clients will pay their summer balances, due over the coming weeks for this year's peak holiday period, despite the sharp rise in the cost of living.

Pata UK & Ireland chairman Chris Crampton hails the region's recovery

With the recent flurry of border reopenings in the Pacific Asia region, Pata is optimistic about the return of multi-centre holidays. The relaxation of COVID-19 entry requirements to many popular countries will see an increase in enquiries and bookings for multi-destination itineraries, as they are hugely popular ways to explore the region. Previously, the rules made multi-centre tours complicated for agents and were a barrier to selling. The latest countries to reopen to tourists without the need for quarantine are Vietnam, Bali, Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea. They join countries that had already scrapped quarantine rules such as Sri Lanka, Maldives, India, Oman, Malaysia, New Zealand, India, Australia, Cambodia and the Philippines.

Cyprus removes passenger locator form requirement

Cyprus has relaxed its COVID-19 rules, making it easier for international travellers to visit. The country removed the requirement for all travellers to fill in an online passenger locator form before arriving at the start of this week.

AIRLINE UPDATE

Air Canada - Air Canada is to resume a seasonal service between Manchester and Toronto this summer. Flights will operate five times a week between June 1 and September 30. The carrier is to deploy Airbus A330-300 aircraft on the route carrying 297 passengers in a three class configuration. Flights are being timed to allow connectivity to Air Canada's North American network, including 46 airports in the US.

Eva Air - Eva Air is to continue its partnership with Premier League football club, West Ham United. The deal follows a four-year collaboration between the Taiwan airline and the football club and includes multiple branding opportunities and fan initiatives. The airline first joined forces with the club in 2018 in a partnership which has featured special offers, flight giveaways and fan experiences.

Jet2 - The UK's second-largest operator will offer extra flights to the Canary Islands, Turkey, mainland Spain and the Algarve, in time for the early May bank holiday and Platinum Jubilee holiday in June. Jet2 has expanded capacity several times this year, with levels now exceeding those in 2019, according to chief executive Steve

Heapy. In addition, Jet2 and Jet2CityBreaks are extending new services to Athens into the winter. Flights from Manchester and Birmingham airports will run in November 2022 and February and March 2023 with up to two flights a week from each airport on Thursdays and Sundays. The company's first services to the Greek capital for the summer took off a week ago.

TOUR OPERATORS, TRAVEL AGENCIES, OTA UPDATE

Ambassador Cruises - Ambassador Cruise Line have named their first ship, Ambience, with godmother Sally Gunnell OBE. The former British athlete and Olympian named the first ship in Ambassador's fleet at a special ceremony at London Tilbury on April 19 2022. Ambassador is the first British cruise line to launch in over a decade. Sailing from London Tilbury, the no-fly itineraries provide a premium-value, authentic cruise experience predominantly aimed at the 50-plus traveller. Ambience has an average guest capacity of 1,400.

Dnata - Ailsa Pollard, UK and Europe CEO for dnata Travel Group, has joined ABTA's Board while John Bevan, who joined ABTA's Board in 2018, has stepped down. Alistair Rowland, Chair of ABTA – The Travel Association, said: "Ailsa will bring a wealth of experience, knowledge and insight as the travel sector continues its recovery from the impact of the pandemic. She will be an excellent addition to the Board. I'd like to give my sincere thanks to John Bevan for his invaluable contribution over the past four years and wish him well as he focuses on his global role for dnata.

Hotelbeds - An initiative to help Ukrainian refugees find work and temporary accommodation in neighbouring Poland has been created by Hotelbeds. The bed bank is working with Polish NGO, the MaYa Foundation to jointly support people who have fled the war to Poland.

Prestige Holidays - Prestige Holidays has changed its name to Prestige Travel, adopted a fresh logo and further increased its commitment to the trade under a new managing director. The operator is also overhauling its website and travel agency portal as part of a wholesale review of the business under new owners, Embrace Travel Group.

Travolution - Travel Weekly technology and digital commerce sister publication, Travolution has opened its annual European summit registration for agents and operators to attend for free. This year's event, which will be held on May 4 in London, is matchmaking technology and digital services suppliers with travel industry buyers for introductory one-to-one meetings. A diverse range of 26 suppliers will be

at the day-long conference, showcasing their expertise in areas like booking tech and product supply, marketing and data analytics, loyalty, reviews and customer feedback, payments, merchant acquiring and trust accounts.

SOCIAL UPDATE

TikTok launches 'Interactive Add-Ons'

TikTok is adding a range of new ways to encourage engagement with in-stream ads. These new add-ons incorporate interactive elements into video promotions through a range of engagement features, which prompt users to take action on an ad. This could be a good way to spark response and boost brand recall, with a range of interesting options to consider from pop ups, stickers and other visual elements inviting users into the experience.

YouTube announces updates to Shorts

YouTube is rolling out Shorts tabs on desktop, tablet and the web, to provide more ways for users to engage with Shorts clips. As it works to lean into the short-form video trend, YouTube has also announced the addition of a new Shorts Shelf display on the Trending page, which will highlight the best performing Shorts clips in a location, at any given time. This will put a more specific focus on the most popular Shorts clips and help to drive more traffic to the top content. It will also assist in research efforts to understand what people in a target market are watching on Shorts.

MICE UPDATE

Seven out of 10 say UK venues need to do more on accessibility

The 'Accessibility in Hospitality' survey, unveiled to the public by Robin Sheppard, founder of the Blue Badge Access Awards and president of Bespoke Hotels, found that 71% of customers want more to be done to address the lack of accessibility in the industry. The survey, which was distributed to a large database of HGEM's mystery guests, both non-disabled and disabled between the ages of 18 to 66+, also revealed almost a third of guests (30%) would leave a venue immediately if access for disabled people was inadequate, while more than half of participants (53%) said they would not return to a venue where access was difficult.

On a more positive note, hotels were found to have a good reputation for adhering to disabled people's needs (58%), but the results for other hospitality sectors painted a more concerning picture, with leisure scoring just 16%, restaurants (14%), pubs (7%), and quick service, a shocking low 5%.

LIGHTER NOTE

Sir David Attenborough has been named by the UN's Environment Programme as a Champion of the Earth. See more [here](#).