

WEEKLY REPORT

20 May 2022



COVID-19 UPDATE

Between 13 May 2022 and 19 May 2022, 58,786 people in the UK had a confirmed positive COVID-19 test result. This shows a decrease of -16.6% compared to the previous seven days. Between 9 May 2022 and 15 May 2022, 5,072 people went into hospital with coronavirus. This shows a decrease of -16.5% compared to the previous seven days. There were 6,879 patients in hospital with coronavirus on 18 May 2022.

In regard to the vaccination rollout, 92.7% of the UK population aged 12 and over have received their first dose, 86.7% have received their second dose and 68.6% have received a booster or third dose of the vaccine. Estimated infections have returned to levels last seen before the first Omicron variant (BA.1) became widespread, data gathered by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) shows.

ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL UPDATE

Well-off Britons splash out on trips of a lifetime

High-end travel agency Kuoni has revealed that wealthy people are spending as much as £100,000 on extravagant holidays as a means of celebrating the easing of COVID-19 restrictions on travel. After having to halt travel plans for almost two years, people have found themselves with more spare cash and a desire to finally go on the trip of their dreams, a key trend noted in research conducted by ABTA. Trips including the whole family from children to grandparents have also been popular as families begin to appreciate sharing experiences all together.

Met Police end Partygate inquiry with more fines

The inquiry into breaches of COVID-19 rules in and around Downing Street has been closed by the Met Police with a total of 126 people being issued with fines. Beginning in January of this year, the inquiry has seen 28 of the 126 facing between two and five fines, with prime minister Boris Johnson paying one fine already. It is understood that the Cabinet Office hopes the full report into illegal lockdown gatherings by senior civil servant Sue Gray will now be published in the coming

weeks.

EU reveals its plans to stop using Russian gas

With sanctions against Russia still in place amid the continuance of the war in Ukraine, the European Commission reveals more detailed plans on ending Europe's dependence on Russian fossil fuels. At present, Russia supplies 40% of the EU's natural gas and 27% of its imported oil, receiving roughly €400 billion a year in return. Also outlining how to negotiate the immediate gas crisis, the proposed strategy focuses on improving energy efficiency, securing non-Russian suppliers of oil and gas, and expanding renewable energy sources.

TRADE UPDATE

UK leads way in Florida visits for Q1

The UK has topped the list of overseas visitor numbers to Florida in the first quarter of 2022. More than 157,000 Britons visited Florida in the first three months of this year, restoring the country's position as the state's number one overseas market. The UK dropped to Florida's eighth highest overseas market in 2021. Despite this year's rise, visitor numbers remain 30% lower than they were for the same period in 2019.

Historic long-haul volumes 'unlikely to return until 2023'

Historic sales volumes of long-haul holidays are unlikely to return to the market until 2023, Travel Weekly's Future of Travel Spring Travel Forum was told. Kuoni product director Claire Ross said that while 2022 sales were strong there was a "definite lag" in sales of Asia destinations due to slower reopenings post-COVID-19. NCL President Eamonn Ferrin added: "The market has been recovering strongly. We are seeing huge pent-up demand. Every month is better than the previous month, which is encouraging."

AIRLINE UPDATE

Easyjet - EasyJet says it faces summer 2022 "with optimism" as it has trimmed its half-year losses and bookings pass 2019 levels. It reported a half-year headline loss before tax of £545 million for the six months to the end of March, compared to a £701 million loss in the same period last year. In the last 10 weeks, bookings have been 6% above the same period in 2019, and the Easter holidays saw load factors of 90%.

Ryanair - Ryanair aims to surpass pre-COVID-19 carryings and return to "reasonable profitability" this financial year. The projection came as Europe's largest low cost carrier reported a reduced loss of €355 million for the 12 months to March 31 against €1.015 billion the previous year. Passenger numbers recovered to

97 million from 27.5 million during the height of the pandemic. Group chief executive Michael O'Leary said the airline planned to grow traffic to 165 million passengers in the year to March 2023, above the 149 million achieved before COVID-19 hit.

Air Transat - Air Transat launched the UK's first-ever direct scheduled service to Quebec City, Canada from London Gatwick on 12 May. The launch of the Quebec route means London Gatwick passengers are now able to choose from 50 weekly services to six destinations across Canada this summer.

TOUR OPERATORS, TRAVEL AGENCIES & OTA UPDATE

EasyJet Holidays - The operator will carry more than 1.1 million passengers in the current financial year, making it the third-largest Atol-holding tour operator only two years after formation. EasyJet Holidays confirmed it was 70% sold for the current year "and on track to deliver its medium-term target of £100 million-plus profit before tax". The figures were revealed in EasyJet PLC's interim results for the six months to 31 March.

TUI - Holidays will be "scarce" and prices "strong" this summer, with demand surging despite the rising cost of living, according to TUI chief executive Fritz Jousen. Europe's biggest holiday group revealed an average sales price for summer 2022 bookings 20% up on 2019 and UK sales 11% ahead of 2019. Jousen argued: "Customers are spending 20% more [and] this almost all relates to longer holidays ... Instead of an average holiday of 8.5 days before the crisis, the average is 9.5 days." The Bank of England has warned inflation will hit 10% this year and Jousen acknowledged: "Historically, inflation influences demand." But he insisted: "Capacity will be scarce and prices strong this summer".

SOCIAL UPDATE

TikTok launches new creator monetisation process

TikTok's looking to make it easier for creators to make money from their clips via a new programme that it's calling 'Branded Mission'. This programme will enable brands to post challenges which creators with over 1k followers can take part in. The brand is then able to select from the submitted clips for their promotional campaigns and chosen creators will then receive payment. This option will broaden creative options for brands and with organic-styled content performing best on the platform, could open up major new possibilities for marketers looking for ways to tap into the app.

MICE UPDATE

Pandemic forces event planners to work harder to attract delegates

The COVID-19 pandemic and its lasting effect on the meetings industry is forcing planners to work harder to get delegates to their events, according to a survey from Conferli. The study revealed that 90% of respondents said they were expanding their efforts with flexible cancellation policies and with increasing partnerships with destinations to attract delegates and market awareness.

The 'Insider's Perspective' study also revealed that the delegates' decision making has changed since the pandemic. 42% of respondents only decide whether to attend a conference one to three months before it takes place, with those respondents only booking transport and accommodation to the conference one month before.

The study also revealed that health and safety, sustainability credentials and legacy-building remain a priority for event planners. Respondents also confirmed a preference for a shorter conference format and a strong educational programme; as networking opportunities and knowledge-sharing are recognised as important factors in attendance. Planners revealed that travel distance and budgets are strong factors in destination and venue selection.

LIGHTER NOTE

On a lighter note...

Giraffe with backward knees is moving forward at last – watch him [here](#).