

WEEKLY REPORT

28 October 2022



COVID-19 UPDATE

The number of people testing positive for COVID-19 has fallen by 15.3% between 15 October and 22 October to 47,058 cases. Meanwhile, the number of deaths within 28 days of positive test results has also fallen by 10.6%. As of 23 October, 69.7% of people aged 12 and over in England have received their first booster or third vaccination.

ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL UPDATE

Calls grow for general election after Rishi Sunak becomes Tory leader

Calls for a general election by voices ranging from Labour to Boris Johnson ultra-loyalists, such as Nadine Dorries, are growing louder after Rishi Sunak won the Tory leadership race. Sunak was accused by Labour's deputy leader, Angela Rayner, of "dodging scrutiny" as she called for voters to have a say after the former chancellor was officially declared the new Conservative leader on Monday.

Rishi Sunak criticised for skipping COP27 climate summit

Prime minister Rishi Sunak has been accused of "a failure of leadership" for not attending the COP27 climate summit next month. Opposition parties and environmental groups said the decision showed the government was not taking the climate crisis seriously enough. Downing Street said the PM had "other pressing domestic commitments including preparations for the autumn budget".

Environment secretary Therese Coffey has defended Rishi Sunak's decision to skip the summit, insisting the climate was "a priority" for the PM.

COP27 will take place in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, from 6 to 18 November - finishing the day after chancellor Jeremy Hunt is due to set out the UK's tax and spending plans.

GBP rises after delay to economic plan

The pound has risen against the dollar after the economic plan was delayed until 17 November. The currency has rallied in recent days as investors welcomed the appointment of Rishi Sunak as prime minister and the dollar fell.

Financial markets had been rattled by fears over the economy in recent weeks. Last month, sterling plunged to a record low against the dollar and government borrowing costs rose sharply in the aftermath of former prime minister Liz Truss's mini-budget. Investors were spooked after then-chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng promised major tax cuts without saying how they would be paid for - something Mr Sunak had warned about during this summer's Tory leadership contest.

TRADE UPDATE

Travel trade banks on new PM to bring stability to turbulent UK economy

Industry figures hope the appointment of Rishi Sunak as prime minister heralds a return of political and economic stability following the recent turmoil. Sunak warned of "a profound economic crisis" but pledged to "fix the mistakes" of his predecessor as he became the third prime minister in seven weeks after Liz Truss resigned last Thursday. The Advantage Travel Partnership chief executive Julia Lo Bue-Said hailed the news as "positive", saying: "We have an opportunity to get stability back."

UK airports led summer travel resurgence

The UK achieved the best summer traffic resurgence as passenger numbers across European airports rose by 61% over the equivalent 2021 peak period. Largely unrestricted cross border travel following the pandemic led to a boom in holiday and visiting friends and relations travel over three months to September, according to European airport trade body ACI Europe. International passenger traffic – up by 84% – drove the surge, while domestic levels grew at a lower rate of 14%.

Official stats reveal Covid impact on travel revenues and workforce

Travel sector revenues saw sustained recovery in the first half of 2022 after slumping to a quarter of pre-pandemic levels in 2020 and 2021. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures obtained by Travel Weekly sister title Travolution show that in 2020 and 2021 combined operator and agent sector annual revenue was about £9.5 billion – a quarter of the £37.5 billion recorded in 2019. Revenues in April, May and June 2020 were 7%, 6% and 8% of those in the equivalent months of 2019. Between April 2020 and December last year, the month-on-month revenues comparison hit 50% of 2019 just once in November 2021, before last winter's Omicron surge. However, revenue data for 2022 show a sustained month-on-month bounce-back for agents and operators with February revenues 63% of 2019, March 67%, April 77%, May 88% and June 86%.

Travel agencies continue to prioritise recruitment despite fears of slowdown

Travel agencies say staff recruitment remains a priority for businesses in the sector despite the forecast of a recession. Firms said they were forging ahead with hiring plans in contrast with other industries as the cost-of-living crisis has failed to dent travel bookings and in anticipation of a busy January sales period.

Travel firms urge Heathrow to avoid winter capacity limits

Virgin Atlantic has urged Heathrow not to impose capacity limits over Christmas after the airport admitted it was working on a "mechanism" to prevent winter flight cancellations. Heathrow is preparing to remove its summer capacity cap on Sunday, but confirmed yesterday that it was drawing up plans to manage high passenger volumes in partnership with airlines later this year.

AIRLINE UPDATE

Tui certifies sustainability of its tours in 'industry-first'

Tui's tours and activities division has unveiled a scheme to certify the sustainability credentials of its experiences. Peter Ulwahn, Tui Musement chief executive, said the initiative, developed with the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), is a first in the industry. "We wanted to find a way to give customers sustainable choices for experiences and GSTC offers the best model," he said.

British Airways owner projects €1bn annual profit after strong summer

British Airways owner International Airlines Group expects annual operating profits to surpass €1 billion after returning to the black in the summer. The airline group reported a “significant step up” in profitability for all its airlines, which include Aer Lingus, Iberia and Vueling, in the three months to September 30. Recovery in the summer quarter saw a pre-tax loss of €714 million turn into a profit of more than €1 billion. Total revenue of €7.3 billion was 0.9% higher than in pre-pandemic 2019, despite restrictions imposed at Heathrow and the Asia Pacific network remaining substantially closed.

EasyJet holidays creates ‘Orange Friday’ promotion for agents

EasyJet holidays has created an ‘Orange Friday’ discount promotion to run from today (Friday) and throughout November. The operator will offer agents the opportunity every Thursday and Friday for four weeks to save customers up to £200 off packages to certain destinations. The £200 discount applies to bookings with a minimum spend of £2,000, while £100 if being offered off holidays costing £700.

TOUR OPERATORS, TRAVEL AGENCIES, OTA UPDATE**Princess Cruises’ new sales boss hails line’s best-ever UK season**

Princess Cruises’ new UK sales chief insists there are still opportunities to grow agent bookings after the line celebrated its best-ever UK season this year. Around 72% of the line’s UK business currently comes via travel agents, but Nick Hughes, who became Princess’ UK and Europe sales director this month, plans to increase that figure further.

This is despite the fact the UK agents make more Princess bookings than any other country’s agent community in the world.

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Attraction World Group (AWG) has partnered with Buyagift to enhance its catalogue of experiential products. The collaboration will give AWG’s customers the ability to access some of the gifting experience provider’s catalogue of 4,500 experiences.

Uncover Travel' theme of new Travel Network Group campaign

The Travel Network Group agents are to encourage travellers to discover new destinations around the world in a new marketing initiative. The aim of the 'Uncover Travel' campaign is to help broaden consumer horizons, encouraging them to consider new destinations and explore different cultures. TTNG, which represents more than 1,150 independent travel businesses, is providing members with campaign assets ranging from in-store window displays to social media content.

Leger Holidays unveils 18 new battlefield tours

Escorted tours operator Leger Holidays has released 18 new battlefield tours ahead of Armistice Day. The tours feature in the operator's 76-page 2023-24 Battlefield Tours brochure which is available in print or online. The new tours include The Somme Offensive, Wartime Paris: Spies, Resistance, and the Holocaust; and War Poets & War Literature.

SOCIAL UPDATE

Instagram announces new 'Creator Portfolio' option

Instagram has unveiled its upcoming new feature, 'Creator Portfolio', which will allow creators to make a media kit, showcasing their reach and previous work. This is intended to help creators to secure influencer marketing deals and is part of Instagram's efforts to stop its top creators moving to TikTok and Youtube. In addition, there are several other new features being introduced by the app such as a partnership inbox which will allow the streamlining of brand/creator relationships and a new code process intended to improve ad collaborations.

Elon Musk plans to close Twitter Deal

According to a new report from Bloomberg, Elon Musk has informed the banks that are helping to fund his \$44 billion Twitter acquisition that he plans to close the deal by the weekend. Though his strategy remains unclear for now, Musk has said he plans to turn Twitter from a languishing asset into a social media powerhouse. He has, however, already alluded to providing new subscription options, taking the company private, eliminating bots and open-sourcing feed algorithms.

MICE UPDATE

COP26 left a lasting legacy in host city Glasgow

Ahead of COP27, Glasgow Convention Bureau has evaluated the lasting legacy from hosting COP26 and the impact on the sustainability of the city. In the Bureau's 2022 Business Survey, 60% of city tourism businesses improved their sustainability credentials as a result of COP26, with a particular focus on reducing food waste and lowering energy consumption. The city was the first in the UK to join the Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDSI) in 2016 and the legacy of COP26 helped the city improve its ranking to one of the top five destinations worldwide by 2022. The event also had a positive impact on residents, with 40% believing COP26 had a positive impact on the city and 72% feeling it had raised Glasgow's profile internationally.

LIGHTER NOTE

Adorable footage of bees

Adorable footage shows bees rolling balls around with their friends, suggesting the insects 'play' just like humans. Watch [here](#).