Consumer Confidence & Perceptions around the Impact of COVID-19

North West Research & Strategy are bringing you regular updates on the key points coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic through our weekly review of research and intelligence from the visitor economy sector. This week we have used the COVID-19 – Attitude Tracker from BVA BDRC & Alligator Digital which looks at UK consumer and business confidence, as well as VisitBritain's COVID-19 Consumer Sentiment Tracker. We hope these consumer and business insights help assist with your current business resilience and planning for recovery post-COVID-19. Don't forget, you can also get further information on Government support and sector specific advice on the Growth Platform website.

Some highlights from the COVID-19 – Attitude Tracker report include:

- For the first time, the majority of respondents feel that it will be 2021 before we can expect normality again.
- Younger consumers (under 35 years) are almost twice as likely than over 65s to 'splurge' when life is closer to normal. Overseas holidays, restaurants and pubs are likely to be the focus of their spending.
- Most are wanting a return to their social lives, with 'meeting friends/family' and visiting restaurants or pubs the most missed leisure activities. We see under 35s missing these activities the most, with 41% missing eating at a restaurant 'a lot' (compared with just 25% of those aged 36-64 without children).
- 29% intend to visit an attraction in the next 3 months, which is the highest since research began in late March. This is likely linked to the announcement that zoos can now join parks and gardens in opening to the public.

- Despite declining average lead times, intention to go on a summer UK holiday remains relatively low (32%) and has not increased for three weeks.
- For the second week in a row, the proportion who intend to book a hotel in the next 3 months has decreased (13%, compared to 18% 2 weeks ago).
- The proportion of those who plan to visit a restaurant in the next 3 months has only increased by 1% from the week before (to 34%), whilst the proportion who plan to go shopping in the next 3 months has decreased to 41% after jumping to 47% in the previous week. This suggests that after the initial excitement of shops reopening, some may have had second thoughts.
- Intention to travel by train in the next 3 months has decreased by 6% to 22% after a week of active campaigning to consider alternative modes to public transport.

Main points from VisitBritain's Consumer Sentiment tracker include:

- This week's 'appetite for risk' score is 2.33 out of 4 (4 representing 'absolute comfort'), which is only a marginal increase from last week (2.25). The only activity that hasn't shown any kind of increase since week 1 is travelling by public transport.
- As was the case last week, 'restrictions on travel imposed by government' is the leading reason cited for lack of confidence in taking trips in the UK between June and August. However, from September onwards, the main reason cited is 'I have concerns about catching COVID-19'.
  - 40% of respondents have either already planned or intend to plan a UK short break or holiday, while for booking this figure is 35%. Just 23% anticipate actually going on a UK short break or holiday by this September, which is only 1% higher than last week's figure.

- In terms of where respondents plan on staying in the UK for an overnight trip between June and September, the North West ranks 3rd out of 10 options (compared to being 2nd last week), only behind the South West and Scotland.
- 26% of respondents indicated that a 'city or large town' would be their main type of destination for a trip in June-September, which is slightly lower than the 28% who stated this last week.
- Once again, we see that outdoor areas are most likely to attract more visitors/engagement than normal, whereas entertainment and events and indoor attractions are likely to attract fewer visitors/engagement than normal.

Help us help you by completing our Business Recovery Survey

In response to the outbreak of COVID-19, Growth Platform are currently undertaking a short survey aimed at Visitor Economy businesses in the Liverpool City Region to help identify specific initiatives that will be needed for recovery, and ensure your views are represented. You can access this survey here. The deadline to submit your response is 1st July 2020.

Growth Platform

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