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:

- 85% of respondents believe that that the UK will experience a second wave of coronavirus leading to a new lockdown. This is reflected in the fact that the proportion of adults who believe that the 'worst is still to come´ has risen for the 5th consecutive week (43%).
- In terms of businesses, most believe that 'things are going to stay the same' (45%). However, the proportion who believe the 'worst has passed' has decreased from 20% to 17%.
- The proportion of British adults who fall into the three 'concerned' segments of the market ('COVID Cautious', 'COVID Impacted' and 'Anxious Appreciator Hermits') has decreased by 3% to 44% this week. The proportion of 'Pragmatic Policy Supporters' has increased to 22% (compared to 20% last week), while the proportion who fall into the 'Life Goes On' has increased by 1% from last week, to 34%.
- The proportion of those who plan to go to a visitor attraction by the end of August has decreased to 29% this week, after peaking last week

at 35%. Lead times for visiting remain shortest for country parks or scenic areas, and longest for theme parks.

- The proportion who intend to visit a zoo by the end of September has increased to 19% (compared to 15% last week), whilst the proportion who intend to visit a museum or gallery by the end of September has increased for the second week in a row, to 21% (compared to 24% last week).
- 24% of respondents plan to go on a UK holiday by the end of August (compared to 21% last week) – the highest since tracking began. Intentions to take a trip later in the year have declined, however, perhaps reflecting fears of a second wave and an upcoming recession.
- Levels of intention to go shopping by the end of August has risen for a second week in a row (from 45% to 48%), despite the compulsory wearing of face masks in shops in England.
- The proportion intending to visit a restaurant by the end of July has increased dramatically from 14% to 26%, while the proportion intending to by the end of August has increased from 33% to 42%. This is likely a reflection of VAT reductions, and the August launch date of the 'Eat Out to Help Out' scheme.

Main points from VisitBritain's Consumer Sentiment tracker include:

- This week's 'appetite for risk' score stands at 2.5 out of 4 for the third week in a row. 'Appetite for risk' for all activities remain unchanged this week, with the exception of travelling by train which has seen a 0.1 increase in comfort levels.
- Fewer than 1 in 10 UK adults believe life will return to 'something close to normal' by September and just under a quarter believe so by December, sentiment on both declining slightly compared to last week.

- Confidence in the ability to take a trip between October and December has decreased slightly this week (50%, 3% lower than last week), whilst 67% are confident they will be able to from January 2021 onwards and 71% (compared to 71% last week).
- 'I have concerns about catching COVID-19' remains the leading reason respondents give for not being confident about travelling, both between June and September and from October onwards. This is then followed by 'fewer opportunities to eat/drink out' in July to September, and 'fewer things to do/places to visit' from October onwards.
- Compared to normal, the public still anticipate taking 20% fewer short breaks (compared with 18% last week) and 27% fewer holidays of 4+ nights (compared to 23% last week) in the UK between now and the end of 2020. This may reflect concerns around a second wave later in the year.
- In terms of where respondents plan on staying in the UK for an overnight trip between June and September, the North West now ranks 3rd out of 10 options for the second week in a row, with 11% stating it as their preferred destination. From October onwards, the North West ranks 4th out of 10.
- 20% indicate that a 'city or large town' would be their main type of destination for a trip July-September, ranking it 4th out of 5 options. However, from October onwards, 'city or large town' is the most popular option, with 34% stating it as their preferred destination type.

Growth Platform

29 July 2020