

TOURISM ALLIANCE UPDATE 14th & 16th September & NO TIER Update

Tourism Alliance 14th September

- **Autumn and Winter Plan**

I've attached a copy of the Autumn and Winter Plan that was published today. The five key components of the plan are to:

- **Building our defences through pharmaceutical interventions:**
vaccines, antivirals and disease modifying therapeutics.
 - This includes including maximising vaccine uptake among those who are eligible and not taken up the offer yet, offering booster doses to those who received vaccinations in phase 1 of the vaccine programme, offering a first dose to those aged 12-15.
- **Identifying and isolating positive cases to limit transmission:**
Test, Trace and Isolate.
 - PCR testing for symptomatic and contacts of cases will be available free of charge. Regular asymptomatic testing will also continue, focused on those who are not vaccinated or are on front line settings. Contact tracing will continue. Support will remain in place for those forced to self-isolate.
- **Supporting the NHS and social care:**
managing pressures and recovering services.
- **Advising people on how to protect themselves and others:**
clear guidance and communications.
 - The Government will continue to provide businesses with up-to-date Working Safely guidance on how employers can reduce the risks in their workplace. They are encouraging the public to let fresh air in when meeting indoors, wearing a face covering in crowded and enclosed settings, getting tested and self-isolating, staying home if they feel unwell, washing hands regularly and using the NHS COVID-19 app.
- **Pursuing an international approach:**
helping to vaccinate the world and managing risks at the border.
 - The Government will set out a revised framework for international travel, in advance of the next formal checkpoint review which is 1 October.

Contingency Plan

It is hoped that by undertaking the five measures listed above, Covid levels can be controlled over the winter period. However, if this does not work and the NHS then the plan contains a series of contingency measures can be imposed. These include:

- Introducing mandatory vaccine-only COVID-status certification in certain settings.
- Legally mandating face coverings in certain settings.
- Changing the NHS COVID Pass to display full vaccination only (exemptions will continue to apply).
- The Government expects that mandatory vaccine-only certification would be introduced for visitors to the following venues:

- Nightclubs
 - Indoor, crowded settings with 500 or more attendees where those attendees are likely to be in close proximity to people from other households, such as music venues or large receptions;
 - Outdoor, crowded settings with 4,000 or more attendees where those attendees are likely to be in close proximity to people from other households, such as outdoor festivals; and
 - Any settings with 10,000 or more attendees, such as large sports and music stadia.
- There are some settings that will be exempt from requirements to use the NHS COVID Pass, including communal worship, wedding ceremonies, funerals and other commemorative events, protests and mass participation sporting events

Here's a copy of the Prime Minister's statement that accompanied the launch of the plan

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-at-coronavirus-press-conference-14-september-2021>

- **Vaccine Booster Plan**

The Government has announced a plan to provide vaccination booster jabs from next week. The programme will be rolled out to the same priority groups as previously. This means care home residents, health and social care workers, people aged over 50, those aged 16 to 49 years with underlying health conditions that put them at higher risk of severe COVID-19, adult carers, and adult household contacts of immunosuppressed individuals will be prioritised.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/most-vulnerable-to-be-offered-covid-19-booster-vaccines-from-next-week>

16th September

Attached is a copy of the DMO Review that has just been published. The recommendations in the report broadly follow the proposals set out in the Tourism Alliance submission in recommending that DMOs are grouped at a regional level through a lead organisation and provided with centrally funding for core activities that fit with Government priorities such as sustainability, skills, inclusive tourism and levelling up. VisitEngland would be charged with managing and supporting this new structure. The report also recommends that the Tourism Minister is elevated to a Minister of State position and either reallocating responsibilities from other departments or the activities of teams within multiple departments to provide greater policy support.

The main recommendations for Government coming out of the review are:

- **Recommendation 1:**
The Government should bring coherence to England's DMO landscape via a tiering approach, using an accreditation process to create a national portfolio of high performing Destination Management Organisations that meet certain criteria. I would also suggest a move away from the confusing 'DMO' term and call these nationally accredited Tourist Boards.
- **Recommendation 2a:**
The national portfolio should then be split into two tiers – a top tier of accredited Tourist Boards acting as 'Destination Development Partnerships' or as leaders of them (these could

be described as ‘hubs’) and a second tier of accredited Tourist Boards acting as members of these Partnerships (‘spokes’). Destination Development Partnership status could be awarded to either an individual accredited Tourist Board covering a large enough geography (e.g. a city region) or to a coalition of willing accredited Tourist Boards within an area that come together under a lead Board.

- **Recommendation 2b:**

The Government should then provide core funding to each Destination Development Partnership. The funding should be focused on activities that ensure their destination remains sustainable, competitive and responsive to high level strategic challenges identified by the Government such as those around sustainability, skills, inclusive tourism and levelling up. The Destination Development Partnership would be expected to pass down a degree of funding to accredited Tourist Boards amongst its coalition and work collaboratively with them to deliver a shared vision.

- **Recommendation 3:**

DMOs that do not meet the national accreditation criteria should be automatically considered as part of a ‘third tier’. These are likely to be small, localised Destination Marketing Organisations and the Government should minimise its engagement with them.

- **Recommendation 4:**

As it is England’s National Tourist Board, with the statutory responsibility for growing tourism at an England level, the Government should charge VisitEngland with responsibility for creating, maintaining and supporting this new tiered structure. It should receive sufficient funding and resources to do this.

- **Recommendation 5:**

The Government must also change its approach, in order to maximise the success of the new system. There is currently insufficient appreciation of the importance and promise of the visitor economy at the top of government, leading to unfilled potential in DMOs and the wider tourism landscape. In practice, responsibility for tourism policy cuts across multiple departments, creating a confusing picture. Practical measures to address these issues could include elevating the Tourism Minister to a Minister of State position and either reallocating responsibilities from other departments to sit under that Minister or making the Minister responsible for the activities of teams within multiple departments – this latter suggestion is an established practice already in other policy areas which cut across Whitehall departments

- **Recommendation 6:**

In order to help DMOs and Local Authorities take decisions on how best to develop the visitor economy in their local area, the Government should improve access to quality data by introducing the proposed Tourism Data Hub as a matter of urgency.

The main recommendations for DMOs coming out of the review are:

- **Recommendation 7:**

DMOs must accept that they also have a role to play in driving forward change; it cannot just be left to the Government. To maximise the success of the new structure I have outlined, DMOs will need to take a less territorial approach, have a greater focus on collaboration, and recognise that the current fragmentation is holding them back from acting as effective advocates for the visitor economy.

- **Recommendation 8:**
DMOs should seek to diversify their income streams, and should share and learn from examples of best practice. This will enable them to best leverage the core funding I propose and I would expect a commitment to diversification as being an accreditation criterion.
- **Recommendation 9:**
DMOs should have a rigorous focus on keeping the skill sets and expertise of their own staff up-to-date, particularly with respect to digital skills, so as to ensure their destination's offer continues to be sustainable and competitive.
- **Recommendation 10:**
DMOs should have more diverse boards that fully represent their communities as well as their businesses and visitors.
- **Recommendation 11:**
Local Enterprise Partnerships must realise the value of tourism, ensure the visitor economy is fully integrated into their economic strategies and play their full role as partners in the activities of their local accredited Tourist Board and Destination Development Partnerships. They should recognise that DMO type organisations are best placed to drive growth in regional tourism and they should actively support them.
- **Recommendation 12:**
Local government – be that a District Council, County Council, Mayoral Combined Authority or any other formulation – must also realise the value of tourism and should strive to play their part in supporting their accredited Tourist Board and Destination Development Partnership. They should accept that for DMOs to be at their best, they need to be public/private/community partnerships, not based solely in a Local Authority but working in close partnership with them. They should also involve their DMO in any policy decision-making affecting the visitor economy.

The next step in the process is that the Government will respond to the findings and decide whether to adopt and implement any, some or all of the recommendations. It would be expected that this response will be published ahead of the CSR as the recommendations include funding implications