

Our new marketing strategy | Q&A with Vicki Miller, Director of Marketing, VisitScotland

25 June 2020

Welcoming visitors

Question: Do you think now is the right time to launch our own marketing campaigns or should we pause spend and activity until there is hopefully more consumer confidence in the next few weeks?

Answer: Our initial campaigns are very targeted and can easily be dialled up or down as we see how things develop. We'll then roll out in a careful and controlled way to support in the right way at the right time. Find out more about the strategy announced to aid industry recovery on [VisitScotland.org](https://www.visitScotland.org).

VisitScotland's role and influence

Question: Can VisitScotland commit to visually highlighting which businesses are open and available to book on their website?

Answer: We'll be writing out to all businesses next week advising them to update their descriptions on VisitScotland.com. Additionally, we're working on a solution that will provide businesses with a drop down in the extranet to advise if they are open and part of the Good to Go scheme so that this information can be displayed. We'll update on this next week.

Questions:

- Will the Year of Coasts and Waters theme be extended or is there an expected new theme for next year?
- Will there be extended funding for YCW? How does the theme extension affect potential funding for Year of Scotland's Stories?

Answer: Yes, our Year of Coasts and Waters Themed Year will now be extended into 2021.

There are still some details to be finalised, but detailed discussions with event organisers who were due to deliver the already announced programme of YCW2020 supported events will take place. Once we have further updates, including potential impact on The Year of Scotland's Stories in 2022, we'll share this as we have more information.

Find out more about the extension of our Themed Year on [VisitScotland.org](https://www.visitScotland.org).

Question: Will the VisitScotland Tourist Offices be open from mid-July? It is essential to reassure communities it is safe for visitors to return.

Answer: In light of government advice, our own staff are working from home and we took the difficult decision to close our iCentres to protect both our staff and customers. There's currently no set date for our iCentres re-opening, but we're closely following Scottish Government guidelines. We'll only re-open our premises when advised it's safe to do so. The safety of both our staff and customers is our priority. When our iCentre's are open once again, this will be announced on [VisitScotland.org](https://www.visitScotland.org). In the meantime, our staff are using digital channels to reply to visitor enquiries.

Question: How can we best supply news/content to VisitScotland on re-opening and new approaches?

Answer: We'll shortly be sending out an email to businesses with a VisitScotland.com web listing to explain how they can update their listing to reflect their most up-to-date opening details and other vital visitor information. This process will also allow businesses to flag if they're participating in the Good to Go scheme. In the meantime, you can reach out to our business advice team via the following email address: business.advice@visitscotland.com

Question: Have you got some examples of the community reassurance/visitor responsibility campaigns, please?

Answer: Yes, take a look at our case studies and helpful information which showcases how we and destination management organisations (DMO's) are [working with communities across Scotland](#).

Question: What level of investment is VisitScotland putting behind these activities and is it additional to "normal" spend?

Answer: The investment in the new marketing strategy is an initial investment of £3 million, targeting Scotland, the rest of UK and Republic of Ireland. This is significantly more than was invested in the UK last year and is a return to paid campaigns in Ireland for the first time in a number of years.

Question: Can you give any more information on what % of the marketing spend will be in Ireland? It could be of additional importance to the south of Scotland.

Answer: Initially 10% spend on Ireland, and we're looking to work in partnership with ferry companies to extend reach and impact.

Government advice

Question: Is there going to be any guidance about what happens if visitors get sick whilst staying in accommodation?

Answer:

According to [UK Hospitality guidelines in Scotland](#), if a guest presents themselves with

symptoms or Covid-19 or is asymptomatic but declares the need to self-isolate, they should be advised to check out and return home to self-isolate according to current government guidance. If the guest has acute symptoms, has breathing difficulties, or their life is at potential risk, seek medical help immediately. Businesses should refer to [NHS Inform](#) for further advice on what action to take in the event of a known or suspected case of Covid-19 within the premises.

Be aware that guidance can change, so please regularly check the government sites to stay up to date.

Question: What is capacity from airlines and ferry operators looking like? Is there a discussion ongoing to increase in line with the campaign?

Answer: Access to Scotland, as to elsewhere, has been severely curbed by both customer demand and Covid-19 restrictions. Airports and airlines suggest that it will take some time before we can hope to see the full capacity of 2019 return. That said, flight services within the UK have already begun their return, as well as from mainland Europe, although cautiously, but with the potential to ramp up through summer. Restrictions removed, the return of long-haul services is likely to be more focused upon late 2020 and into 2021.

This initial tranche of the campaign is targeted at Scotland and then rolling out to north England, the rest of UK and Republic of Ireland. Our tracking surveys indicate that people are likely to use private car initially, and then as confidence grows, and physical distancing restrictions possibly ease, more people will begin to use airlines and ferries. We are working closely with all of our airline and ferry partners to understand their forward bookings, where they have capacity and when, and many of them have indicated that they would like to work with us to jointly promote visits to Scotland.

Question: Does anyone know if multiple households can stay in one self-catering property. We get a lot of multi-generational bookings.

Answer: The advice from Scottish Government is that subject to phase 3 of the route map commencing, it will be possible to meet with people from more than one household indoors with physical distancing and hygiene measures. This also applies to self-catering accommodation.

We recommend that you keep up to date for the latest Scottish Government guidance as restrictions are gradually lifted and regularly reviewed. Here's the [latest guidance for households](#) from Scottish Government. [The ASSC FAQ's](#) also state that the number of households who can stay in self-catering accommodation is subject to the periodic reviews as informed by the science and public health evidence.

Question: Is there work being done with public transport providers to get visitors into city centres? We know confidence in using public transport is low, and a car into the city isn't an option.

Answer: We're maintaining an ongoing dialogue with public transport partners serving Scotland in order to understand the issues, not least relating to capacity and readiness to carry visitor traffic. We are also discussing our marketing programme with them, so that they can join in at the point they feel comfortable and able to do so.

Questions:

- When you go via VisitScotland's website link to Good to Go, it takes you to the VisitBritain accreditation. One of the questions asks if we are a member of an organisation, and then they will check your membership. It doesn't seem to offer ASSC just PASC as a membership. Can we not align with our Scottish counterparts on this questionnaire?
- On the Good to Go application, the ASSC and SLE are missing for organisations.

Answer: Continue as if you were not a member of a group. You will still be able to progress through the process - you will just have to answer a few more questions. We are working with sector groups to ensure their details continue to be added, as appropriate.

SLE opted not to be part of Good to Go, which is why they aren't listed in the menu of associated organisations.

Question: What timeframe (post 14-day quarantine) are you seeing from airlines to resume flights back into Scotland?

Answer: We work closely with all airlines with direct routes into Scotland and many of these have indicated plans to resume flights over the summer. To date, this information has been aspirational (initially some airlines expected to resume in May) but as restrictions start to ease, it's becoming more likely. We have plans to include this information in our market intelligence updates from mid-July, once we have more clarity on possible air corridors and self-isolation requirements.

Managing demand

Questions:

- This is great for venues, tourist attractions etc. however will there be guidance for private transport providers such as coach operators?
- I would be interested to know how private transport providers such as coach operators fit into the plan released today.

Answer: We're working with sector groups to include the guidance developed for businesses in their sector as soon as it's available.

Our activity continues to drive traffic to our VisitScotland.com website, where visitors to the site will continue to be provided with information on how to travel to and how to get around Scotland. Coach tour operators should keep in touch with their Industry Relationship Manager and keep us up to date on their offering. Product development activity for both group and individual travellers continues despite lockdown, working to help operators and intermediaries pull together their future Scotland programmes.

Miscellaneous

Question: Are tourism businesses able to use the assets or do you have any others we can use? For example, images of Scotland or #ScotlandIsNow assets?

Answer: We've got thousands of video and image assets which are available for free for businesses to download from our Digital Media Library. Terms and conditions do apply, and the relevant image credit must be used. Take a look through our [Digital Media Library today](#).

You can also link to videos on our [YouTube channel](#). We have several regional and product specific videos, as well as inspirational destination films.

Question: I'm a Scottish travel blogger and influencer and I'd be interested in hearing more about how you're working with bloggers and influencers. Who can I contact?

Answers: Please contact louise.Purves@visitscotland.com who manages our Scottish consumer media and influencers.