Regional and national marketing campaigns

Question: Will VisitScotland be doing Autumn and Winter campaign like they used to do? Are there any plans to promote winter travel to prolong the season?

Answer: Our marketing campaigns will look to promote visits through autumn and winter to the domestic and the UK market. We’re working closely with Scottish Government throughout this uncertain time, and we’ll be guided by the legislation. These campaigns are currently in planning phase. We’ll also liaise closely with Scottish tourism businesses to ensure we can share information about which areas and attractions remain open for the winter season. Ensuring seasonal and regional spread across our campaigns has always been our focus, and this will be even more important as we look to support the recovery of the industry in a responsible way. It won’t be a one size fits all approach, and we’ll be working with local communities and destination management organisations to ensure move at a pace that’s right for each of Scotland’s communities.

Question:

- Will VisitScotland be prioritising the younger audience who may be more likely to travel first?
- Will the campaigns focus solely on the domestic market and who will be your target audience?

Answer: Our Insight team continues to monitor ongoing trackers and research, which is shared via our weekly market intelligence updates on visitscotland.org. We’ll overlay these insights to our ‘traditional’ visitor profiles to monitor differences and inform the direction of our future campaigns. Currently, we know that visiting friends and relatives, and day trips are going to be early actions once restrictions begin to ease.

On our Covid-19 Marketing Response pages on VisitScotland.org, we’re working towards a clear, phased approach which encourages a return to tourism. During the current Reset phase, we’re communicating a dream now, travel later message. As we move to Restart, we will be encouraging very local day trips. This will be driven by Scottish Government travel restriction guidance (phases) and information about which communities are ready to welcome back visitors. We’ll then move to Scotland wide/North England day trips and then latterly, overnight stays as we move into Domestic Recovery phase. Initial promotion will be our owned channels and digital/social video and posts so we can quickly amend to change messaging should we need to.

Question: Will VisitScotland actively hold back on promoting city breaks?

Answer: As part of our recovery strategy, our teams will be working with businesses and organisations across the country, in both rural and urban areas to ensure we support them as
much as possible as we look to rebuild. Both urban and rural areas will continue to be an important part of our marketing campaigns going forward, and we’re committed to working with the communities across Scotland to ensure we only market them once they’re ready for visitors to return. We’re communicating with industry about measures they’re putting in place, opening times, capacity for physical distancing etc, which is critical so we can accurately inform and inspire potential visitors.

**Question:** Golf has been highlighted as one of the key activities where physical distancing is possible, will VisitScotland be doing any golf specific activity?

**Answer:** There will be specific marketing activity promoting golf as part of our recovery plans. We’re currently working on the detail of this, but all announcements and updates will be shared on our consumer website, VisitScotland.org.

**Question:**

- How will we know when VisitScotland has commenced campaign activity and where will we find updates on which phase of activity we are in?
- Will industry get to see any campaigns so we can support and piggyback with our own tactical activity?
- Where can I find out more information about the market segments?

**Answer:** We’ll share any news, research and updates to our corporate website VisitScotland.org, including any new marketing campaigns. This will include shareable assets to provide all you need to get involved in campaigns.

You can stay up to date with the progress of all our current marketing activities, and Covid-19 updates, through our dedicated Coronavirus advice page.

The research and insights section of our VisitScotland.org website contains more information about UK visitors to Scotland including our market segments, visitor survey results and the latest travel insights and trends.

**Questions:** Should we be using a specific hashtag to be involved in any campaign activity?

**Answer:** When posting or sharing content on social media, make sure you use #VisitScotland or #ScotlandIsNow hashtags for our social media team to view your post. Thousands of people use these hashtags every week so we can’t guarantee they’ll be able to share your post. However, it does increase the exposure of your post to thousands of others searching for Scotland inspiration through these hashtags. If your post has a tourism industry, media and business focus, when using Twitter be sure to tag @VisitScotNews, our corporate Twitter channel.

**Question:** How can businesses that are open and accepting business get involved?

**Answer:** We will be providing updates on VisitScotland.org Marketing Response page on our plans and how businesses can get involved.
**Question:** Do you have ‘specific areas’ promotional videos that VisitScotland members can use on their own social media? We are in Dundee and would love to post a short video highlighting the strengths of the city, local businesses & visitor attractions etc?

**Answer:** Our Digital Media Library is accessible to all and hosts a range of photo, video and creative content of Scotland which you can download and use free of charge (T&C’s apply). We’re looking to create additional regional films that will be available for sharing and these will be ready in the near future. In the meantime, there’s a wealth of collateral already available which we’d be delighted for you to use.

**Questions:**

- Will you be trying to spread out which regions are promoted to ease pressure on the communities of popular destinations? For example, The Highlands and re-direct to less-visited regions such as Dumfries and Galloway?
- The Outer Hebrides featured prominently in recent VisitScotland campaigns, given the reduced 18% ferry capacity and the strong anti-tourism approach from the Islands MP, will the islands be removed from future campaigns? Will this impact how the Outer Hebrides are promoted to re-attract visitors to our region?

**Answer:** We’re working closely with communities through our Regional Directors and Partnerships team who have many contacts through Local Councils, Scottish Natural Heritage, Forestry & Land Scotland etc. They’re working to identify which areas are ready to welcome visitors, and we will then share this information as widely as we can. We are keen that people have a positive visitor experience as we take these first steps to recovery and information sharing is key.

In our initial stages of promotion, our messaging will be highly targeted and relevant to different areas of Scotland, featuring different creative content to promote each region. For example, different unique creative content will be available for promotion of different areas once we know they’re able and willing to welcome back visitors. We’ll continue to extend this as we are able to, working with local communities, tourism businesses and destination management organisations to ensure an area is only promoted at the appropriate time for their local tourism industry.

**Preparing for the return of visitors**

**Question:**

- Has promotion of staycations in self-catering properties in your own region (as opposed to travelling from central belt to the Highlands for example) been considered?
- Does the phase three approach not depend on distance travelled as a pre-requisite for booking of activities or overnight stays with accommodation providers, as restrictions are lifted?

**Answer:** Once we’re able to promote overnight stays, in line with Government guidance, we will encourage people to ‘stay local’ and will remind people of the great short break experience they can enjoy on their own doorsteps.
At all times we will be guided by Scottish Government in terms of what we’re allowed to promote. If ‘distance travelled’ guidance is updated, this will be reflected in our messaging and advise us on appropriate imagery to share with different regions.

**Question:** Does phase three include gardens or is that for inside attractions only?

**Answer:** Gardens and outdoor attractions can open in phase two if physical distancing measures can be implemented. However, there will be restrictions on cafes (take away only, with physical distancing measures) and gift shops cannot open.

**Question:**
- How can attractions inform visitors about limited offering and closed exhibits without putting visitors off?
- How can even gardens open without toilet facilities?
- Do you think visitors will still be keen to visit an attraction if we are forced to reduce the experience (say closing rooms that are too small for physical distancing) as long as we reduce the price to reflect this?

**Answer:** It’s important to showcase what you do have and can offer, as well as being transparent and informing visitors about what’s not going to be available or open for them. For example, be clear that toilet facilities are closed, to allow visitors to make their own judgement about whether a day trip is feasible for them.

Use positive language and highlight the things that will make their visitor experience a memorable one for all the right reasons.

Ensure your website home page, e-communications, and on-site arrival signage all display clear and accurate information for visitors about what to expect at your attraction, as this will help to set their expectations. You and your team will then be able to focus on ways to exceed these expectations once the visitors are on site at your attraction.

If certain parts of your attraction must remain closed, consider how it could be brought to life in other ways. Could tour guides share insight / stories about the closed elements through photography / video? People can then make their own value judgements about whether it’s worthwhile making the trip.

Letting visitors know what to expect prior to the trip is essential: ‘Know before you go’. Every business should be aiming to share information about what facilities are open in their area. For example, which cafes and restaurants are offering take away services; are farm shops able to deliver hampers; what shops and delis are open in the area to be able to buy supplies, etc.

We’ll adjust our messaging and marketing to inform visitors as best we can.
**Question:** Isn’t it making it difficult to plan the "how" tourism will return when the leader of the Scottish Govt at Westminster is tweeting "Scotland is Closed" signs at the border with England?

**Answer:** From our research and insights, we know that there’s strong interest in visiting Scotland from across the UK. It’s important that we continue to position Scotland as a welcoming destination and we’re working with industry partners, business owners and communities to ensure that visitors will be welcomed when tourism reopens.

**Regional communities**

**Questions**

- How is VisitScotland working with local communities?
- How will VisitScotland ensure the product and regions that you are promoting are ready to receive visitors?
- How will I know when my local area is ready and able to accept visitors?

**Answer:** Nationally, Scottish Government will make clear what can and cannot happen as the easing of lockdown is rolled out. There will be different issues and opportunities in different parts of the country. We think the impetus for this should come from local communities, perhaps led by destination organisations in partnership with VisitScotland, local agencies, councils and community groups.

Our local team members have been specifically tasked with gathering information on community concerns to allow us an accurate picture on a Scotland-wide basis. It should be recognised that whilst there are, for obvious health-related reasons, concerns about the potential negative impacts of visitor influxes, there are members of communities that rely on tourism for their livelihood and a balanced view must be taken to reflect local circumstances.

We’re working to make sure that we include Scotland’s communities in our activity, when the time is right to manage things responsibly, as this is not a one-size-fits-all scenario. We’ll be working to ensure that before any promotional activity is launched, that the area is ready to receive visitors into their community. It’s understandable that some communities may be nervous about opening to visitors, however we'll continue to encourage visitors to follow government guidance, as well as work with local businesses to ensure all health and safety measures are put in place to be able to welcome visitors once again.

**Question:** Are day trips applicable to remote Highland villages? Your slides showed 58% interested in coming to the Highlands but most day visits are within 40 miles.

**Answer:** During the very early stages of day trips, we’ll encourage people to ‘stay local’ but as restrictions ease, and communities indicate they are ready to welcome visitors, we’ll start to promote areas that are a little further afield. Whilst many day trips are within 40 miles, we also have information about day trips of 3+ hours duration. People will make longer trips for certain locations, but it’s key we (all) provide information about what is and isn’t open.
**VisitScotland’s role and influence**

**Question:** How can businesses re-set and what will VisitScotland market when we’re not sure if businesses will be open at all this season?

**Answer:** We know Scotland is high on many people’s lists to visit when we’re able to resume travel, so it’s vital that we all maintain communications with our potential visitors with Dream Now, Travel Later messaging. We will liaise closely with Scottish tourism businesses to ensure we can share information about which areas and attractions are open, and convey the appropriate messaging, whether focussed on local day trips, or overnight stays – as and when the time is right for individual areas.

It won’t be one size fits all however, we need to move at a pace that will be right for each part of Scotland depending on the demographic of each region and how they’ve been affected by the pandemic.

**Question: How is VisitScotland messaging to take the more environmental route back to sustainability?**

**Answer:** Even before the Coronavirus pandemic, our strategy focused on promoting Responsible Tourism in the broadest sense – social, environmental and economic – and this hasn’t changed. Liaising with communities and keeping visitors informed will be central to our roadmap to recovery. Tourism is more than a holiday experience, it sustains communities socially and economically and contributes to the health and wellbeing of the population.

**Safety and physical distancing**

**Question:** I normally get a lot of groups what do I do?

**Answer:** Research suggests that large group travel may take longer to recover. Small groups and the family market (multi-generational groups) may offer more opportunity. It’s also worth considering direct promotion to consumers.

**Question:** How much will safety and hygiene feature as part of marketing messaging in domestic activity?

**Answer:** We know from research, safety and hygiene are key considerations post-Covid for UK consumers. For that reason, it will feature as part of our recovery messaging, alongside inspirational messaging to raise awareness and inspire visits. It’s important for businesses to also convey safety/hygiene message at an individual level to provide reassurance.

**UK Hospitality** has undertaken a large piece of work which focuses on guidance for businesses around physical distancing, including health and hygiene. This paper has gone to the World Health Organisation, key health authorities and officials, and has been put to Scottish Government.
Emerging Trends

**Question:** Is there any data on specific times people will visit? If our market is local and people are back at work and school, will the weekends be the focus? Will there be any point opening during the week?

**Answer:** We haven’t specifically researched when people will be planning to visit attractions as in ‘during the week’ or ‘weekend’ but we have asked them in a recent study which included measuring of booking intentions. This would be dependent on your previous visitor demographic (i.e. families, empty nesters etc.) as the latter are more likely to take short breaks during the week as they know it may be less busy.

On our VisitScotland.org website, we have research into domestic visitor demographics which has information to help you understand the needs of different visitor demographics.

Miscellaneous

**Question:** Will you be looking to work with transport partners, or will the focus be on self-drive?

**Answer:** Research is showing that car will be the preference for travel initially due to the ability to implement physical distancing and the flexibility it allows around travel plans. This isn’t a change in visitor behaviour, as the 2019 Conversion Study indicates 70% of English visitors travel to Scotland by car. We’re also still working closely with transport partners (covering rail, air and sea) to ensure that we can reset tourism in a responsible way.

**Question:** How can I update my product listing on VisitScotland.com about my specific opening times which are different to normal?

**Answer:** Your VisitScotland listing can be updated as many times as required so we would urge you to keep this updated with your latest opening times using your online login details. If you’re experiencing any problems with this, please get in touch with our Customer service team who can assist you.

**Question:** If a significant second wave of the virus breaks out, what is the plan B for VisitScotland?

**Answer:** We will follow Government advice, as we have throughout this pandemic and follow the recommended guidelines in terms of a potential return to restrictions for the tourism industry.

For the latest updates on Coronavirus, please visit our dedicated Coronavirus advice page on VisitScotland.org.

**Question:** The Coig Five routes one great adventure launched earlier this year and applied for growth fund to undertake a major marketing campaign when will this fund reopen
Answer: Given the unprecedented nature and impact of COVID-19 on tourism, the Growth Fund programme is currently on hold. We are currently reviewing the funding opportunity to ensure that it is aligned to best support tourism groups in the current situation and an update will be available in the coming weeks. The Fund Manager will continue to be in regular contact with applicant groups to provide the relevant advice regarding next steps.