

# WEEKLY BRIEFING

25 June 2021



## HB HIGHLIGHTS

This week, Nashville and Vienna topped the charts in round-up on music cities which was featured in and syndicated across Reach plc titles, including the *Sunday People*, the *Sunday People (Ulster)*, [Daily Express](#) (print and online), the *Daily Mirror* and the *Daily Mirror (Ulster)*, as well as an additional piece in *MSN*. The round celebrated Nashville's vibrant music scene and mentioned the opening of the National Museum of African American Music whilst Vienna was honoured for its strong heritage in classical music.

Closer to home, the PR team organised an individual press trip for *The Sun* to Butlins. This resulted in a full page in print as well as [online coverage](#). The piece was also syndicated to The Scottish Sun and The Irish Sun. The PR team worked hand in glove with travel editor, Lisa Minot, to ensure that the Butlin's key messages of being an affordable and fun option for a British family holiday this summer were brought to the fore.

## COVID-19 UPDATE

A total of 43.4 million individuals in the UK have now had at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine accounting for 80% of the adult population. A further 31.7 million people have been fully vaccinated. The vaccination roll out has now opened to anyone over the age of 18.

This week saw some Covid-19 restrictions eased in England including the number of guests allowed at a wedding no longer limited to 30 and care home residents no longer having to self isolate if they go on a trip out of the home. Large event pilots also continue, allowing fans to attend the Euro 2020 games at Wembley. The UK government also announced that from 4am on 30 June 16 countries will be added to the green list including the Balearic Islands, Malta, Madeira and some Caribbean islands.

Wales has seen some modest changes made to their Covid-19 restrictions this week, before a four week pause to any more rule lifting. Covid-19 capacity rules in music and comedy venues have been slightly relaxed and are now "in line" with hospitality venues. The number of guests attending wedding receptions and wakes has also changed, allowing venues to host as many people as they can safely. This comes as First Minister Mark Drakeford said Wales was at the beginning of a third wave. Wales's next lockdown review will now be on 15 July.

Scotland currently has three levels of restrictions, however, it is now expected that all parts of the country will be in level zero from 19 July. It is then hoped that more restrictions can be removed on 9 August, including lifting the requirement to socially distance indoors. Nicola Sturgeon says this "major milestone" would signal a return to "almost complete normality". Currently, most of the country is in level one, but many parts of central Scotland remain at level two.

Ireland's Health Minister has said it is too early to say if the Covid-19 restrictions will ease on 5 July as currently planned. However, The Irish government intends to go ahead with reopening international travel from 19 July unless there is strong public health advice to the contrary, added the minister. Over 1 million people in Ireland have now been fully vaccinated.

## ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL UPDATE

### **Government borrowing eases in May**

Government borrowing fell in May compared with the same month last year, with the economy in recovery mode after lockdown measures eased. Official figures show for May 2021 the UK government borrowed £24.3billion, which was £19.4 billion lower than May 2020.

## TRAVEL AND TOURISM UPDATE

### **Balearic islands among countries added to green list**

Fourteen countries and territories have been added to England's green travel list. Spain's Balearic Islands, which include Ibiza, Menorca, Majorca and Formentera; Malta; Madeira; and some islands in the Caribbean - including Barbados - have been cleared for quarantine-free travel, Transport Secretary Grant Shapps has announced. It means those heading to some popular holiday hotspots after 4am on Wednesday 30 June will not have to quarantine on their return following the latest review of the travel traffic light system.

### **Quarantine for fully vaccinated amber list arrivals to be dropped**

Fully vaccinated British travellers will not be required to isolate when arriving back to the UK from amber list countries later this summer, transport secretary Grant Shapps has confirmed. In an update on Thursday, Shapps said that “thanks to our successful vaccination programme” the government was planning to allow double-jabbed UK residents to avoid having to isolate at home after returning from amber destinations. “We’ll set out further details next month,” he tweeted. In a statement, the Department for Transport said it expected the policy “to occur in phases”, starting with UK residents, who will still be required to take a pre-departure test and a test on day two of their return.

### **Travel Day of Action**

The travel industry came together at Westminster on Wednesday and around the country on a day of action to ‘speak up for travel’. More than 1,000 turned up outside Parliament with placards and banners despite numbers being limited officially to 400. ABTA chief executive Mark Tanzer hailed the success of the day, organised by the Save Future Travel Coalition. He said: “It’s great the industry came together – travel agents standing together with airline pilots. I hope we can carry on that level of collaboration.”

## **AIRLINE UPDATE**

**Air France** - There is growing momentum to replace short flights with train trips in Europe amid a renewed interest in reducing aviation emissions. France is using climate legislation to codify a ban on certain domestic flights, and politicians are debating similar plans in Germany and Spain. Air France wants to remove some of that complexity from its partnership with France’s national rail operator SNCF. The airline is testing a “new, fully digitalized service” that would allow travelers to check in on the Air France website or app for their entire trip. This would eliminate the need for them to stop at a train station for their rail tickets. If the trial is successful, the carrier hopes to roll out the digital offering to all 18 of its “Train + Air” destinations in France.

**Easyjet** - EasyJet has put more than 50,000 extra seats on sale to new European green list destinations this summer. The budget carrier expects to have around one million seats available to European green list destinations this summer from the UK. New routes from Bristol to Malta will start on July 9 and from Luton on July 11, while the island will see more capacity on existing routes from Gatwick and Manchester. Thousands of additional seats will also be available from the UK to the Balearic islands this summer. The airline plans to serve Palma up to 82 times a week from ten

UK airports – Gatwick, Luton, Belfast, Glasgow, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester and Liverpool – with fares starting at £28.99 one-way.

**United Airlines** - United Airlines said on Tuesday it would mandate full vaccination for crew members flying to countries with high COVID-19 cases at the beginning of August. The rule would apply for flights to India, Brazil, Chile, Peru, Colombia and Argentina, the company said. The list may extend to China and Taiwan based on potential accommodations received from local governments. Pilots undertaking flights to these countries need to be fully vaccinated from August 1 and the same rule will apply to flight attendants from July 31. "We hope that countries come off the list, rather than having to add more countries," the airline said.

## TOUR OPERATOR UPDATE

**Carnival** - Carnival Corporation has reported booking volumes soaring by 45% in the past three months compared to the first quarter. The world's largest cruise company ended the second quarter with \$9.3 billion cash and chief financial officer David Bernstein said: "We believe we have sufficient liquidity to get us back to full operations." In the first half of 2021, the parent company of brands such as P&O Cruises, Cunard and Princess Cruises, reported a monthly cash burn rate of \$500 which was better than forecasted partly due to earnings generated from ship sales. Booking volumes for all future cruises were 45% higher in the second quarter of the year than during the opening three months of 2021. As of May 31, advanced bookings for next year are ahead of "a very strong 2019" at the same point, said the company as it announced its latest financial results. Speaking on a results call, Bernstein said: "We're seeing strong bookings on both sides of the pond as things continue to rebound."

**Jet2holidays** - Jet2holidays has moved to put flights and packages on sale to Ibiza, Majorca, Menorca, Madeira and Malta from July 1. The destinations were among the additions to the green list alongside some Caribbean islands and British Overseas Territories, from 4am Wednesday. The UK's second biggest tour operator, which restarted its operations to Jersey today, has added 70 additional flights. An update on amber list destinations will be given to customers 'in due course', the company added.

**Newmarket Holidays** - Newmarket Holidays has launched its latest Holidays and Tours Collection, with departures from 2021 to late 2023. Released on Monday, the brochure features escorted tours across the UK and Ireland, Europe, North America, India and Africa, with 15 new holidays. Richard Forde, head of trade sales, said: "Our

agent partners respond quickly when we expand our date ranges. To meet their changing customer needs in the last year, we started by adding more capacity to 2022 and going deeper into the year. "That same trend is pushing through now so we have come to market early with dates through to the end of 2023. It is a really positive move by the company." Although question marks remain about overseas travel in 2021, the operator is seeing strong bookings for 2022 and the first half of 2023.

**Responsible Travel** - Responsible Travel has begun selling its holidays via travel agents, with one thousand holidays to more than 80 countries now on offer via the trade. The activist holiday company has a total portfolio of more than 6,000 trips across more than 190 countries. Agents can book via the Responsible Travel website and on-the-phone assistance from the company's travel advisers is also available. Responsible Travel is so far working with 75 partners and offers agents 10% commission. Tim Williamson, director of customer services, said: "This year we celebrate our 20th anniversary – a fitting time to launch our travel agent collection. "For 20 years we've been pioneers in responsible tourism, offering inspiring holidays that are better for customers; and for the planet and local communities too.

## SOCIAL AND DIGITAL UPDATE

### **Instagram tests new content recommendations**

After seeing a positive response to its past iterations of suggested posts for users based on their interests, Instagram is now looking to take this a step further with a new test of suggested posts and topics in user feeds. It's likely that suggested posts will be mixed throughout a user's primary feed, sometimes ahead of photos and videos from people they follow. This move mimics the basics of the TikTok feed which pulls from a much broader variety of content in order to populate. It's less about who someone follows and more about what's getting the most engagement, which in turn boosts time spent on the app.

### **Twitter announces full iOS launch of tweet sharing to Instagram stories**

After launching an initial test of the option at the end of last year, Twitter is now giving all iOS users the capacity to share tweets directly to Instagram Stories, providing another way to interact with Twitter content. When a user goes to share a tweet, they will see Instagram Stories as an option, which, when tapped, will add the chosen tweet into a blank Instagram camera frame, which can then be edited and published.

## MICE UPDATE

### **Legal challenge mounted to pressure government into releasing ERP data**

The live music and theatre industries launched legal action against the government to force the publication of the Events Research Programme (ERP) data from the pilot scheme for live events. The action is taken in response to the restrictions still in place on the theatre, music and live events industry while high-profile sporting events are given the go ahead. Nine events were piloted in total, including a 500-person business event, the FA Cup final in front of 21,000 fans at Wembley, a live audience of 4,000 at the Brit awards, a nightclub in Liverpool which hosted 3,000, as well as three 10km outdoor runs for 6,000 athletes and spectators. The Government has released a number of findings from the data, including that just 15 cases of Covid-19 were recorded out of 58,000 attendees in the events that took place prior to 25 May, but the results of the pilot events have not yet been published in full.

## LIGHTER NOTE

Twins, 92, reunited a year after Covid lockdown separated them for the first time. See the heart-warming moment [here](#).