



NATIONAL TOURISM RECOVERY STRATEGY

A strategy to tackle the effects of the foot and mouth outbreak on the tourism industry across England, and on incoming tourism to Britain.

Updated 11 May 2001

Introduction

This strategy sets out the action being undertaken by Government, tourist boards, the tourism industry and others in the immediate future to tackle the effects of the foot and mouth outbreak on the tourism industry across England, and on incoming tourism to Britain as a whole. It does not attempt to address all the activity being undertaken across the country. Instead, it provides a high-level view of what is being done and is being planned to help tourism to recover.

This strategy is very much a living document - it is being developed over time and regular updates are being posted on www.culture.gov.uk. It has five key elements:

- **Facts, information and reassurance**
A consistent and comprehensive picture of what is open as well as a clear list of dos and don'ts for visitors.
- **Opening up attractions and footpaths**
How attractions and footpaths can be reopened safely where there is no risk of spreading the disease.
- **Help for affected businesses**
Measures to alleviate financial hardship in the tourism industry and other affected businesses.
- **Getting the message across overseas and at home**
How overseas visitors can be encouraged back to Britain and how to promote the message that it is OK in the UK.
- **Working together**
The best ways for all parties to work together to ensure everyone pools resources and expertise to help maximise efforts to get tourism back on its feet.

This strategy focuses on how the tourism industry can recover from the current significant downturn in activity caused by concerns over foot and mouth disease. The focus of this document is therefore not on the Government's strategy for eradicating foot and mouth disease itself, but on its effects on tourism and efforts to support it.

In the immediate future the focus must be on rebutting exaggerated or wrong impressions of the effect of the outbreak, and misplaced fears about food and public health, and on promoting more strongly in the domestic market the exciting things to do in unaffected areas.

The British Tourist Authority (BTA) has a continuing programme to provide accurate information in each overseas market to attract visitors to Britain, counteracting some of the false images they may have received. On 6 April the Government announced an initial package of £6 million of additional funding for the BTA and the English Tourism Council (ETC) to boost their efforts in areas such as information provision, PR and advertising (£3.8 million to ETC, £2.2 million to BTA). This money has now been supplemented by an additional £12 million of funding for the BTA, to fund further measures to restore confidence in overseas markets and aid the long term recovery of the industry as a whole.

In the meantime, Government, the tourist boards and the tourist industry will continue to do all they can to provide information, to promote tourist attractions and events, to help affected businesses and to further open up the countryside.

1. Facts, information and reassurance

The widespread coverage of the foot and mouth outbreak by British and overseas media has left many potential visitors uncertain about the extent to which the British countryside and its attractions are open; and about the safety of travelling to and around the country. There is thus a fundamental need to provide potential visitors with a consistent and comprehensive picture of what is open, and a clear list of dos and don'ts, and this information is being constantly updated. Guidance has also been given to those in the running tourist attractions and events to help them minimise any risks of spreading foot and mouth disease.

| <i>a. Guidance and information for the public</i> | <u>Timing</u> |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • England Visitor Hotline (0870 241 56 59) has been set up by ETC to reassure and redirect callers towards the people who can provide the most up to date local information on where to visit and what to do. Call centre handled well over 17,000 calls by mid-May. | Set up: 22 March |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Regional Tourist Boards (RTBs) have set up their own regional call centres or have appointed a single Tourism Information Centre to carry out this role. | Continuing |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BTA overseas offices, British embassies and the British Council are providing reassurance to potential visitors and giving accurate and up to date information through all available channels. | Continuing |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.openbritain.gov.uk launched and has received over 2.3 million hits. Linked to the BTA and ETC's websites (www.open.visitbritain.com and www.travelengland.org.uk) and others, this online guide gives visitors from home and abroad up to date information on where they can go and what they can visit; and advice on how to prevent the spread of FMD. It is being updated regularly and regional maps provide detailed browsing of the 15,000 events and attractions listed on the site. Information on those hotels and bed and breakfasts that are open and the special offers they are offering will now be added, as will a section on self-catering accommodation and youth hostels. | Launched: 4 April Maps launched on 11 April Accommodation section added: 30 April; self-catering information later |

- ETC launched www.EnglandGetaway.com. It is linked into ETC's promotional campaign, contains numerous special offers and is linked to other key FMD sites. It is managed by the RTBs. Launched: 30 April
- The Countryside Agency site - www.countryside.gov.uk - has maps showing the status of footpaths and other rights of way and has links to other local and regional information sites. Continuing
- Major Government public information campaign on visiting the countryside. Full page adverts in national newspapers, encouraging people to visit and reminding them of the three important rules. Adverts: 6 April
- Regional and local public information leaflets (about 2 million in total) are providing detailed local information to potential and actual visitors; low cost but updated regularly; produced with endorsement of NFU and farming community. Underway

b. Guidance for the tourism industry and others Timing

- Guidance sent to attractions industry, brokered with other players including NFU, sent to 4,500 visitor attractions throughout England. It covers steps attractions should take to minimise the risk of spreading FMD, such as creating a "buffer zone" (where possible) between visitors and susceptible animals. Issued: 28 March
- Guidance issued for organisers on staging events (covering major sports events, concerts or any activities attracting large numbers of participants or spectators). Issued: 10 April
Further veterinary risk assessments on the staging of equestrian events, including guidance on the action to take to avoid any risk, available at www.maff.gov.uk Issued: 26 April
- Guidance from BTA to overseas travel trade Continuing
- DfEE have issued guidance to Chief Education Officers, covering issues that schools might wish to consider when planning pupil trips to the countryside. This will be revised shortly to ensure that schools and local authorities are able to make an informed and balanced decision about pre-booked and future visits. Guidance: 27 March. To be updated soon.

- Information on cancellation procedures has been obtained by the ETC and is available on its website. The information, which is not intended to be a substitute for detailed legal advice, covers the most commonly asked questions relating to cancellation. There are two versions of the text, one for accommodation providers and one for consumers.

Information for providers: 1 March; for customers: 17 April
- RTBs and Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) are playing a major role in disseminating information (to members and non-members) e.g. via regional hotlines, newsletters (e.g. Cumbria's *Business Survival Toolkit*), providing practical guidance on e.g. dealing with cancellations, handling financial hardship. All RTBs now have websites, where some did not before.

Continuing

2. Opening up key attractions, footpaths, etc

In the early stages of the foot and mouth outbreak many visitor attractions and footpaths were closed to the public for precautionary reasons. While there are clear reasons for some rights of way remaining closed, almost all key attractions are now open and many footpaths can and should be reopened. To facilitate this, the Government first issued new guidance to local authorities and others on access to the countryside and on the opening up of rights of way. Now that most attractions are open, this guidance has been supplemented by a three point plan that will help local authorities to act quickly and effectively.

| a. <i>Open Attractions</i> | <u>Timing</u> |
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| • 24 out of the top 25 English Heritage sites are now open, including Stonehenge. | Stonehenge opened: 10 April |
| • The National Trust is updating its website every day with news of further openings. 403 sites were open at last count. Over 60 per cent of high profile sites (those that attract over 50,000 visitors a year) will open for the summer season. | Continuing |
| • All of London's Royal Parks are open | Pedestrian access 11 April; opened to traffic on 12 April |
| • ETC updating their list of open sites daily. Latest figures show over 4,000 attractions to be open. | Continuing |
| b. <i>Getting footpaths open</i> | <u>Timing</u> |
| • Guidance issued by Government to local authorities on access to the countryside and opening up public rights of way. A veterinary risk assessment has now been carried out which shows that outside of infected livestock areas there is no veterinary justification for closing all footpaths and preventing all public access to land. The risk of <u>people not involved in livestock farming</u> spreading FMD is low, even when they are walking or riding on open rights of way across farmland, provided they follow government advice (available at www.maff.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/fmd and in leaflet form). | Guidance issued: 28 March Advice on MAFF website: 7 April |

- An additional three point package of support that will help local authorities to open up rights of way: Announced 25 April
 1. £3.8 million for the **Countryside Agency**, to support risk assessments, practical measures such as fencing, and local publicity for the reopening of paths
 2. A new **risk assessment framework** to help local authorities judge when footpaths and access sites can safely be opened, and which need to remain closed for the time being
 3. The extension of the **Bellwin scheme of emergency financial assistance** to local authorities incurring extraordinary expenditure dealing with foot and mouth. This will reimburse authorities so that they can continue to deliver key services such as education and social services.

| c. <i>Measures to encourage the public to visit attractions</i> | <u>Timing</u> |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ETC promotional campaign aims to minimise short-term damage to rural and regional urban economies and to improve their chances of longer-term viability by encouraging people to travel within England on short breaks and day visits over the late Spring period, with particular emphasis on the Easter and May bank holiday periods. Consisting of advertising, newspaper supplements, press briefings and 1.25 million leaflets distributed through BP, Tesco, McDonalds and Tourist Information Centres, the campaign aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (mainly in its first, Easter phase) address misconception that the countryside is closed; • (in the second phase, in May) convince people to take trips and short breaks in the countryside; • provide factual information, via hotlines and websites, on areas to which there is public access, attractions that are open and events that are running; • include great value 'incentive' offers from the trade, for instance via the partnership advertising that will precede the May bank holidays. | <p>Launched: 5 April Continually adapted and updated.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many major tourism companies are developing special packages to help restore demand. | <p>Continuing</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local and regional operators are also being encouraged to provide special offers on travel and attractions | <p>Continuing</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTBs can energise wider industry to deliver on similar good value campaigns. To give only one example, South West Tourism has arranged a 16 page supplement to six regional newspapers, providing information about what is open which will inform visitors to the area. Further supplements are planned for late April and May. | <p>Continuing</p> |

3. Support for affected businesses

Since the foot and mouth outbreak has taken hold, the Government has devoted considerable resources to the targeting of financial and other help on the many businesses in tourism and other industries which have been adversely affected. In total, over £200 million of benefit to business is available as a result of Government expenditure, and the Government will continue to look at whether further help can be given. Meanwhile, tourist boards and other agencies are addressing the needs of their members and others - both for tailored packages of further financial assistance and for information on the help that is available from the Government and others. Further details of the help available to businesses are available from the *Assistance to Tourism Businesses* fact sheet that can also be found on the DCMS website.

| | <u>Timing</u> |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help with rates bills <p>Hardship relief of up to 100 per cent on rates bills to all businesses seriously affected by foot and mouth</p> <p>A three month deferral of the deadline for business rate appeal in rural areas</p> <p>A temporary reduction in rateable value</p> | <p>Announced: 20 March</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help with tax and National Insurance contributions <p>Where the Revenue agrees to the deferral of tax or National Insurance contributions because a business is in serious financial difficulty due to foot and mouth, neither interest nor surcharges will be payable on deferred tax or National Insurance contributions over the period they are deferred. Contact the Inland Revenue/Customs and Excise helpline on 0845 300 0157</p> | <p>Possibility of deferral announced: 20 March.</p> <p>Clarification on interest: 18 April</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cash flow and financial problems <p>Major banks have agreed to look at extending lines of credit and other measures. Customers in difficulty should contact their manager as soon as possible to discuss possible options.</p> | <p>Announced: 20 March</p> |

Rural tourism businesses in difficulty can apply for loans of up to £250,000 from the Small Firms Loan Guarantee Scheme. Further information is available from the Small Business Service Business Link helpline (see below). The major banks will treat all applications for loans from affected businesses with urgency.

Announced: 6 April

• Recovery help in worst hit areas

£24 million of Government funding for **Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)** to help small businesses in badly affected areas to restructure, refocus and plan for recovery.

Announced: 7 May

£15 million provided to RDAs in the four areas hit worst by the disease - Cumbria, Devon, the North East and the Welsh borders. The money will be tailored to local economies and will include funding for tourism promotion, help for local businesses and local regeneration in the longer term. An additional £10 million for RDAs has been generated through the reallocation of budgets.

Announced: 11 April

DfEE's new **Rural Skills Action** service will give special training to workers in Cumbria and Devon to help them improve their prospects of returning to work in tourism.

Announced: 11 April

The ETC is advancing payments to **RTBs** enabling them, in turn, to offer tourism businesses deferred payment terms for membership and accommodation scheme fees. RTBs are offering their own lines of support, for example:

Continuing

- Advantage West Midlands has developed an extensive guide for businesses and individuals on how to deal with the effects of foot and mouth disease;
- the Northumbria Tourist Board has established a business-to-business extranet (e-northumbria.net) to provide advice on the assistance that is available;
- South East and Southern Tourist Boards have launched a 'Business Survival Kit' (available at www.tourismsoutheast.com) which acts as a signposting service for businesses affected by FMD, detailing key contacts and information.

Continuing

- Social Security**

The leaflet *Foot and Mouth - financial help you may get if your employment has been disrupted* offers advice on the help available from the social security system for people and businesses affected by foot and mouth. This includes the Working Families Tax Credit for people who are working more than sixteen hours a week and who are responsible for one or more children. Details are available from Job Centres and Benefits Agencies.

Leaflet published: 5 April
- The national **Business Link helpline** (0845 600 9 006) has been expanded to provide specific advice to rural businesses on Foot and Mouth and the financial assistance that is available. Business Link have also made information available in leaflet form.

Announced: 23 March

4. Getting the message across overseas and at home

With the foot and mouth outbreak under control it will be possible to begin a more proactive campaign to encourage visitors from abroad and at home. The most urgent need has been to correct the current misperceptions, especially those of overseas citizens whose desire to visit Britain has been seriously affected by news of the disease. The World Travel Leaders' Summit of 17-20 April has gone some way towards achieving this. Now that further funding has been made available, and the disease appears to be receding, the campaign will be stepped up.

During the General Election campaign, Ministers will cease to act as the focal point of this campaign, although if they are on official business they may restate the facts of the case.

| | <u>Timing</u> |
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| • Ministers have been briefing the UK and foreign media extensively to rebut misleading impressions | Won't take place during election campaign |

a. Getting the message across overseas

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| • Intense activity around the world by British Embassies and BTA to counter myth and overreaction in overseas media. | Continuing |
| • Ministerial visits overseas to support this activity and raise its profile, eg. | Won't take place during election campaign |
| Tourism Minister Janet Anderson visited New York with industry representatives when it became clear how misleading the coverage in the US had become | Delegation visited from 20 to 22 March |
| Foreign Office Minister Brian Wilson has briefed the Ambassadors from Britain's nine most important overseas tourism markets. | Done: 11 April |
| Chris Smith visited Canada | 24-27 April |
| Overseas visits by Ministers have been fully integrated with the BTA's wider programme of action and tailored to the specific country being visited. | |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BTA organised a World Travel Leaders' Summit that toured leading overseas tourism executives around Britain and showed them that the countryside was still open and accessible. The visits are being followed a series of press conferences and media briefings in the executives' home countries. | <p>Visits from 17 to 20 April Follow up continuing</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To attain immediate bookings for Summer 2001, BTA are targeting the 11 key markets that have been most affected by foot and mouth with tactical advertising campaigns, in partnership with commercial operators. | <p>Continuing</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A further campaign will sell Summer 2002 | <p>To begin this Autumn</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Cross-Government Tourism Information Group - see section 5 - is coordinating a series of "third-party endorsements" by celebrities and other notables to promote the message that Britain is open for business. | <p>Continuing</p> |

b. *Getting the message across at home* Timing

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reinforce the message that Britain is still very open to tourists, Ministers from across Government have attended a series of high profile events nationwide. Although such Ministerial activity will cease during the election campaign, major events going ahead in May will still themselves be able to promote this message, potentially including: | |
| <p>Brighton Festival</p> | <p>5-27 May</p> |
| <p>B&H International Open Golf tournament</p> | <p>10-13 May</p> |
| <p>FA Cup Final, Cardiff</p> | <p>12 May</p> |
| <p>1st Test England vs Pakistan</p> | <p>17-21 May</p> |
| <p>Chelsea Flower Show</p> | <p>22-25 May</p> |
| <p>Bath International Music Festival</p> | <p>18 May - 3 June</p> |
| <p>Sunday Times Hay Festival of Literature</p> | <p>25 May - 3 June</p> |
| <p>2nd Test England vs Pakistan</p> | <p>31 May - 4 June</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chris Smith has written articles for the trade press setting out the Government's response to the foot and mouth crisis; how it is working in partnership with tourist boards and industry leaders; and what the trade itself can do to help. | <p>Articles on 12 and 19 April.</p> |

- Government funding to the ETC will also provide RTBs with resources to tackle numerous media enquiries each day; and to promote to them and to travel media positive messages on things to see and do. Continuing

5. Working together

Since the outbreak of foot and mouth outbreak many Government departments and other agencies have been battling to counteract its effect on tourism. Much good work has been done but a coordinated strategy is needed. A number of inter-agency groups have thus been established to promote a coordinated campaign of action.

| | <u>Timing</u> |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Rural Task Force set up by DETR is at the centre of the attempt to co-ordinate the response to Foot and Mouth across Government. Tourism is well represented on the task force: the English Tourism Council, the British Tourist Authority and the British Hospitality Association are all members, in addition to the Minister for Tourism. It will continue in being as long as it is needed. | First report of Task Force: 20 March Continuing Parliamentary announcement: 23 April |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Ministerial-led Foot and Mouth Tourism Summit was convened to canvass opinion from the highest levels across the industry on strategic priorities. That opinion was fed into the DETR and much of it emerged in the Statement made by Michael Meacher on behalf of the Rural Task Force on 20 March (in particular the proposals for advertising, for relief on Rates and VAT for businesses and for bank leniency). A second meeting of the Summit was instrumental in the design of this strategy itself. Meetings will continue at regular intervals. | First meeting: 15 March Second meeting: 5 April Third meeting: 25 April |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ETC has put together a Cabinet that is composed of representatives from government and industry, as well as former officials. It meets weekly to monitor the situation on the ground and to put forward new proposals for action. | Weekly, continuing |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BTA's British Tourism Development Committee meeting to coordinate activity. | Meetings: 5 April 25 April, late May |

- Cross-Government Tourism Information Group (consisting of representatives of government departments, the BTA, the ETC and English Heritage) established to plan and coordinate the Government's tourism promotional activities and to provide a link with the National Communications Centre.

Group set up on 7 April and now meeting weekly.
- At a regional level, the Regional Tourist Boards are setting up forums for those involved in the tourist industry to give local businesses in particular difficulties a single focus, for example South West Tourism has been holding weekly meetings with the NFU, RFA, Association representatives, etc, in order to keep abreast of the situation and ensure that they are cohesive in their messages and their actions.

Continuing
- In support of all this activity, ETC is carrying out regular omnibus surveys to track representative consumer perceptions about tourism in the countryside, with a view to keeping itself, RTBs and Government fully informed about changing attitudes in the context of the FMD outbreak over time. The results are also of use for the planning of effective and non-wasteful advertising campaigns by the ETC, RTBs and industry, and will help to track the impact that Government measures are having. This research is being supplemented by qualitative advice obtained in the light of specially convened consumer focus groups.

Continuing