

UK and Ireland

1. Market overview

- **Travel to the USA from the UK:** The UK remains the number one international source market (after Canada and Mexico) for travel to the USA, with the USA being the most popular long-haul destination for British travelers.
- **Exchange rates:** Since the UK population voted to leave the European Union in June 2016, the GBP has lost value in relation to the USD and is now worth more than 15% less. This is making travel to the USA more expensive and is likely to effect in-market spending in the short term. It is also making other worldwide destinations like South Africa and South America a more affordable option.
- **US Elections:** President Trump's office has generated a lot of negative media attention in the UK which has been largely focused on the travel ban and his healthcare program. It is not yet clear whether this will have a long-term effect on travel to the US, however tour operators have reported a slower start to the year when compared to previous years. US city breaks and Florida appear to have suffered the most. New England is a more 'considered' holiday destination for discerning British travelers who are less likely to let negative 'noise' affect their travel plans.
- **Increase in airlift:** The last year has seen further increase in the number of flights into the region from the UK and Ireland, making travel to New England easier from regional airports:
 - Aer Lingus: Dublin to Hartford
 - Virgin Atlantic: Manchester to Boston
 - Norwegian: Edinburgh to Providence, Edinburgh to Hartford, Belfast to Providence, Cork to Providence; plus additional services to Stewart International in New York State

2. Key initiatives or recent results

- **Virgin Atlantic inaugural fam trip:** Escorted seven tour operators on the inaugural Virgin Atlantic Manchester to Boston flight. The fam trip targeted luxury tour operators and those within close proximity to Manchester Airport. Participants included representatives from DNATA, Eden Luxury Travel, Elegant Resorts, First Class Holidays, Lusso, Round the World Experts and Virgin Holidays. The group spent four days focusing on the lesser known areas of Cape Ann in Massachusetts and the New Hampshire coastline.
- **Consumer activities:** UK tour operators carry considerable New England product providing consumers with a wide range of opportunities to buy. To raise awareness of the region directly to the UK consumer we have:
 - Introduced a new quarterly consumer newsletter which is sent to 4,000 contacts
 - Exhibited at Destinations, the UK's largest consumer show with a footfall of more than 45,000 visitors over the four days of the show

- **Co-op marketing:** Undertaken joint marketing activities with nine UK and Irish tour operators. Most notably with Titan, Travelsphere and Virgin Holidays who all attended Summit last year and introduced new product to New England as a result.

3. Outlook/Trends

- **Experiential travel:** Continues to be the 'buzz' word as Brits look to experience more while they are on holiday; this could be activities, fine dining, micro brews or culture
- **Canadian boom:** Travel from the UK to Canada is on a high at the moment. As a result of the country's 150th anniversary it is receiving a lot of profile among UK media and tour operators. Current exchange rates are making it more affordable for British travelers at the moment. However, Canadian suppliers have recognized this and we are seeing significant price increases.
- **Escorted touring:** As the UK population ages but remains active, demand for escorted tours has changed. Many operators have recognized this and are updating their product and/or introducing new tours to keep loyal customers and attract a younger demographic.
- **Family travel:** New England is becoming more popular with the UK family market as it offers the opportunity to stay in two or three different places and hub and spoke from a central base. The increase in the number of activities available also appeals to the family market.