

COVID-19
WELCOME TO YORKSHIRE'S RECOVERY PLAN FOR THE TOURISM SECTOR
FULL REPORT

REOPEN
RECOVER
REBUILD

REOPEN, RECOVER AND REBUILD

**A collaborative response and recovery plan for Yorkshire's tourism industry
with respect to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic**

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Background, Aims & Objectives

The COVID-19 pandemic has decimated the tourism sector throughout the world, with huge implications for national and local economies as well as individual businesses, jobs and well-being.

In Yorkshire, tourism is worth over £9billion and almost 225,000 jobs are in tourism related roles, therefore we are already acting, researching, engaging, listening, formulating and delivering a plan that will help the sector, reopen, recover and eventually rebuild back even better.

As an organisation Welcome to Yorkshire (WTY) is ambitious, open and dedicated to Yorkshire, the people, the place and the economy. Therefore, at this time of the COVID-19 crisis WTY will take the lead and be a strong voice to represent Yorkshire in building a recovery plan to regenerate and support the whole of the Yorkshire tourism and hospitality sector.

Our approach from the start

Since the country went into lockdown WTY has been delivering ongoing practical, digital and social media promotion to the consumer audience which has focused on our '**Imagine now and discover later**' message in line with ongoing government guidance. We have also been at the heart of industry communications to the Yorkshire hospitality and visitor attraction sector to ensure businesses are up to date with the latest news. In addition, we have held a series of webinars and built a range of business resources for WTY members and the industry. We have been very active across regional and national media to amplify key industry messages, including the plight of thousands of small business and B&B owners that were in immediate need of government funding. This has predominantly been our **response** phase.

Our aims for the future

Our aim as we move out of the **response** phase is to support and work with sub-regional DMOs, national parks, local authorities, businesses and attractions across Yorkshire as they **reopen, recover** and **rebuild** for that 'first day back', whenever legally safe, ensuring organisations and attractions are prepared post-COVID-19. With a considered step by step plan of actions, the ultimate goal being to 'Welcome BACK to Yorkshire' visitors from across the county, as well as many first-time visitors from across the UK and eventually the world when the time is right.

We will approach this in a collaborative way with a shared ambition to develop joint new initiatives, bringing together the wide range of tourism partners across the county, **to** work together to champion the recovery and rebuilding of the tourism industry for Yorkshire. By agreeing a cohesive strategy and a joined-up approach we will be ready to welcome visitors back including the opportunity to attract new audiences (*web traffic in May 2020 – 91% first time visitors to yorkshire.com*) in a responsible, safe and sustainable way, whilst respecting restrictions and in a way that recognises we are all working within the new normal. #YorkshireTogether

Yorkshire is a diverse and incredibly vibrant county, therefore through joint working we can best consider the different needs of the county. This will be delivered together with our local authority partners, members and the wider tourism industry across the region, whilst being influenced and guided by government and **VisitBritain insights**.

Our remit will be to bring the industry together, **to confidently speak as a voice for tourism in our region**, signpost resources and coordinate and amplify the messages for Yorkshire through our platforms, both at a national and regional level.

Initially the actions that are present within the strategy are mainly those delivered by WTY. We hope in moving forward this strategy will be adopted by the industry as a whole and added to with deliverables from wider partners that make up the sector.

Relationships

For this recovery plan to work and to be mutually beneficial for sub-regional DMOs, national parks, local authorities and partners of WTY we recognise that the sharing of messages, data and intelligence will support the wider Yorkshire offer through recovery and rebuild, but will also meet the different challenges and opportunities faced by urban centres, rural communities and coastal resorts. We acknowledge that we all have limited budgets and resource to promote individual destinations, therefore we will work closely with our regional partners to better understand the needs of all areas of Yorkshire so we can be more efficient and have greater impact.

The strategy focuses on:

- A co-ordinated, cohesive approach across the industry both locally, regionally and nationally as a loud voice representing tourism in Yorkshire
- Providing a voice for all partners to amplify business views and messages to government
- An Industry support programme that will shape good practice and new ways of working across the sector
- Our ability to demonstrate value to our local authority, national park, sub-regional DMOs and private sector partners for the subscriptions they pay
- Delivering new and ongoing relevant business resources <https://industry.yorkshire.com/resources>
- Amplifying guidance, insights and resources from Government, VisitBritain, tourism bodies and industry experts through our platforms and connections
- Consumer campaigns - appropriate messages at the right time based on the right insights in a respectful way to the right audiences. From response, through reopen, recovery and rebuild. We will look at how we can differentiate our message to ensure we achieve traction and stand out for Yorkshire, to demonstrate the diversity of the county and to achieve a greater market share at the right time

Objective & core principles

- We want all local authority partners, sub-regional DMOs, national parks, WTY members, residents of Yorkshire, the wider tourism industry and stakeholders to feel reassured and safe in the knowledge that we are working together, to ensure appropriate steps are being taken so that we can start to welcome visitors back to Yorkshire in a controlled and managed way
- It is envisaged that all elements of this plan will be deployed when required
- It will be flexible and reviewed on an ongoing basis
- This will be a recovery plan for Yorkshire and the wider visitor economy

1. Response & Resilience

- **March 2020 onwards and for the period that social distancing and travel restrictions are in place for certain sectors.**

Industry Support

In leading this strategy, we will deliver an extensive engagement programme with key strategic partners both across Yorkshire and at a national level to ensure we are able to take advantage of **ALL** opportunities for the sector. **The setting up of a recovery task group will be significant in driving the recovery for Yorkshire forward.**

Our activity will focus on supporting businesses connected to the tourism industry. This will continue throughout the reopen phase as restrictions start to slowly lift and businesses return to a ‘new normal’ over the coming months. **Pre-lockdown membership fees were suspended for three months. We have been in touch with Government and Yorkshire MPs on issues such as financial support for B&Bs and this will continue as required.**

Ongoing at Welcome to Yorkshire

- Creation of a recovery working group to lead and drive the recovery forward.
- Engagement with VisitBritain to ensure Yorkshire is represented well at a national level to take advantage of all opportunities.
- Business support resources (industry) <https://industry.yorkshire.com/resources>
- An ongoing programme of webinars across local authorities and industry consultation
- Weekly industry email updates and ongoing social updates through WTY’s industry social channel
- Work with partners to support and reinforce messages around destinations and visitors throughout May and early June (in line with government guidance)
- Ongoing press and PR to communicate plans in Yorkshire
- The creation of working groups to support specific destinations that have shared priorities (coast, city, rural)

Destination Management

It is important that as a sector we work collaboratively to create a tourism offering in Yorkshire which visitors feel reassured in visiting. In this phase we will explore what safe tourism means and encourage collaboration and the sharing of best practice across the industry, **to** ensure the sector is prepared and ready to reopen when the time is right.

Promotion, Creative Direction and Destination Messages

Our focus in this phase has been to champion the '**Imagine now, visit later**' message through our consumer channels. This has been aligned to Government guidance whilst restrictions have been in place. The aim being to continue to keep the Yorkshire brand front of mind whilst visitors have been unable to visit.

- **Yorkshire Days In** – content rich marketing for things to do at home inspired by Yorkshire
- **Voucher Scheme** – to invest now in the economy of Yorkshire
- **This is Y Digital** – a platform to continue to promote Yorkshire and Yorkshire businesses in an appropriate way, showcase the tactical things WTY have delivered through lockdown and promote business resources
- **Social engagement** - World Cup of Yorkshire – ongoing to drive engagement, provide business support and keep Yorkshire front of mind

2. Reopen – ongoing from May and early June 2020 onwards

- to be initiated to coincide with the reopening of retail and some hospitality businesses in line with Government's social distancing and travel restrictions –

Industry Support

We will continue to engage regularly with the industry, sharing resources and insights to influence key decisions. We plan to look at further guidance relevant to the tourism sector and create new business toolkits and campaigns to attract staycation visitors throughout 2020 and into 2021.

We will continue to work with VisitBritain to support and champion the roll-out of the new industry standard to encourage all businesses to join. We want Yorkshire to have the highest take up in the UK, so the message is clear - Yorkshire is an amazing county and we are ready to welcome visitors BACK. This initiative **will** provide businesses with the confidence to open their doors knowing the **rights** measures are in place and in turn will give visitors the confidence to walk through the doors. This is an initiative that we feel the sector should embrace and we will take the lead on communicating the positive reasons to sign up through our industry-wide communications. We do also recognise that other schemes are available to businesses and where possible will offer information on the wider schemes available.

During the period of reopen and rebuild we will continue to be a regional voice for the industry and we will continue to help raise the profile of issues the region is facing, alongside reporting back and lobbying any issues that local authorities, sub-regional DMOs or our national park partners are raising around the financial needs of the sector during a phased reopening.

New Membership

To support the industry, we will be launching several new membership schemes for businesses and individuals which will include many new features to ensure we can work with and support more businesses in the future.

Yorkshire Gift Card

To support the Yorkshire economy WTY will be launching a scheme encouraging support from all over the world to invest in Yorkshire through the purchase of a gift card. All tourism, hospitality and retail businesses across Yorkshire can sign up to the scheme for free.

Our industry support strategy around reopen will:

- Facilitate support and distribution of the Industry standard (via VB) whilst appreciating other schemes are available
- Consider new and innovative ways we can launch to rebuild the tourism industry
- Consider staffing in the hospitality sector, both now and in the future, and how COVID- 19 and Brexit will affect this

Destination Management

As the sector begins to reopen, there will be many different experiences and learnings in how the sector is adapting and responding safely. It is important that we support the industry in continuous improvement and strive for best practice whilst ensuring that these learnings continue to be shared. We will work with local authorities and sub-regional DMO partnerships to encourage product development and innovation to make Yorkshire the destination of choice.

Regional Support Service for local authorities, national parks and DMO partners

We are aware that each village, town and city in Yorkshire is best placed to feed into us their own challenges and opportunities. As such we will dedicate resource and staff to work with colleagues in such destinations to amplify their localised messages and campaigns.

Promotion, Creative Direction and Destination Messages

Throughout this period, we will continue to promote responsible and appropriate tourism messages and build consumer confidence with local audiences as businesses start to reopen their doors post-July 2020.

We recognise that when social distancing restrictions are reduced and eventually lifted, and it becomes safer to travel, the market will be flooded with tourism messages. Therefore, the focus will be to plan a strong but carefully considered Welcome BACK to Yorkshire campaign in the reopen, recovery and rebuild phase. Whilst it is important to welcome visitors back to Yorkshire, it is also important that we consider reductions in supply of the offer to ensure the county isn't overwhelmed by the level of visitors. We will also consider Yorkshire residents as part of our initial reopen roll out messages.

With the focus on domestic travel, alongside the initial focus of local and microlocal tourism as a result of the need to reconnect and enjoy tourism on your doorstep message, we will be looking at ways to reconnect with the simpler more sustainable tourism messages for a local audience. We will move to a wider audience in the 2-hour drive time of Yorkshire when the time is right.

Our promotional strategy around Reopen will:

- Consider the changing landscape around restrictions and how this will affect our messages
- Consider the quality of the experience in the short-term as businesses adapt to the changes required to reopen, managing customer expectations
- Consider the impact on traditional beauty hotspots around the county and the impact on residents and reputations
- Consider the different challenges faced by various parts of the industry, for example urban destinations v countryside, large attractions v small attractions, indoor v outdoor, hotels v self-catering etc
- Consider the opportunity around new audiences in Yorkshire and how to communicate with them
- Consider changing the footprint of a typical tourism week, extending the tourism season and looking beyond for new reasons to visit to revive sustainability in the short and long-term
- Consider all parts of the county, all 4 corners, North, South, East and West – the coast, the cities, the towns, the villages – big and small
- Consider and remember our role to move people around Yorkshire, staying longer and spending more – when the time is right
- Consider new and innovative ways we can support the tourism industry

3. Recovery & Rebuild

- to be initiated to coincide with the lifting of the Government's social distancing and travel restrictions

Our strategy around recovery and rebuild will continue to focus on support for businesses in their journey of rebuilding their offering and in turn their customer base. The preservation of jobs will also be key in the economic recovery of the sector.

Our marketing messages will continue to align to government guidance and ongoing social distancing implications. Working with our partners we will consider the landscape of the sector, to ensure our messages are appropriate and representative of the experience visitors can enjoy in Yorkshire.

We recognise that the domestic market, microlocal, local and regional will be the focus for 2021 and the new staycation markets.

Success in the future for Yorkshire will be about ‘place’ marketing. We will go back to communicating the experience and making it exciting and relevant to a broad range of people so that everyone; people who live, people who work, people who study and people who visit can enjoy Yorkshire. Our future marketing strategy will be less about traditional tourism and more about messaging, great content, digital innovation and audience engagement coupled with inspirational imagery and exciting, truly innovative products and services.

We look forward to welcoming everyone back to Yorkshire in a responsible way. We are focused on the opportunity to reconnect with local visitors now and look forward to the future potential of new visitors and visitors from further away enjoying a holiday in Yorkshire.

- Roll-out of a carefully considered Welcome BACK to Yorkshire campaign
 - Differentiate Yorkshire through carefully designed creative messaging – achieve standout

- Relevant product – outdoor space/coast/urban
- Relevant activities – Walking/cycling
- Relevant messages – reconnect with tourism on your doorstep
- Reconnect with Yorkshire
- Mindful of residents, overcrowding hotspots, national insights
- Mindful of not duplicating the work of other tourism bodies across the county – amplify not duplicate
- We will work with local authority partners and sub-regional DMOs to preserve jobs across the industry and where possible provide insights to enable them to track recovery and progression as we move forward
- Continue to review research and insights into visitor thoughts and likely behaviours – to influence appropriate messages (in line with visitor sentiment and insights)
- Continue to promote the VB Industry standard
- Continue to review existing audiences and potential new audiences to the region as the campaign evolves
- Look to encouraging people to explore their local attractions, restaurants, close by to support their local economy, providing an immediate boost to local businesses and to the recovery of the tourist industry
- Look at ways we can collaborative further partners with more external links across Yorkshire.com to provide greater visitor information
- Next steps – extending the reach of the campaign to audiences beyond the local audiences when appropriate
- Look at what new research WTY can deliver in partnership to help educate the sector better going forward
- Continue to work with VisitBritain on the pan-UK recovery campaign in Yorkshire and support the ongoing roll-out of industry mark

COLLABORATION

If our role at Welcome to Yorkshire, is to work with and champion the industry, to support members and partners to promote Yorkshire as the UK's leading destination we will need support. The needs now are to ensure Yorkshire is safe and that we are all responsible for delivering this message in an effective way at the right time to the right audience.

To achieve our aims and objectives, we cannot do this alone. We need a **#YorkshireTogether** attitude from all our partners to bring the very best of Yorkshire tourism expertise to one place to rebuild and recover for the future of the sector. We need:

- Trade associations to provide best practice guidance for your sector
- **Local Authorities** to develop trading standards advice, training for staff, grants, financial support and enforcement of guidelines.
- **Local Enterprise Partnerships** to lead on governmental support and further financial relief for the industry
- Business associations, such as **FSB and Chambers** to lead on entrepreneurship, legal advice and operational support
- **Tourist trade associations** and providers to share best practice
- **All businesses to share our common messages** and make use of our digital assets and hashtags to provide a consistent message to the consumer
- Working within our campaign guidance together we can have a shared voice across all sub-regions of the county, towns, cities, coastal destinations and national parks. We can celebrate the diversity of the county and the offer for the future

Appendix 1 Action Plan - Response

Action	Lead Partner
Tourism Industry Support	
Strategic Tourism Industry Engagement	
Creation of a recovery working group to lead and take ownership of the recovery strategy	WTY
Develop regular programme of engagement with local authority and strategic partners	WTY
Ensure significant engagement with VisitBritain and that Yorkshire is represented well at a national level to take advantage of all opportunities	WTY
Work with the LEPs to agree a significant business support programme for the tourism sector	WTY
Engagement with tourism businesses and tourism associations in the direction of the recovery strategy	WTY
Engagement with UK destinations in sharing of best practice	WTY
Ensure we have regular and ongoing press and PR to communicate our recovery plans to the industry	WTY
Creation of working groups to support specific destinations that have shared priorities (city, coastal, rural etc)	WTY/LAs/National Parks
Business Engagement & Support	
Signpost businesses to relevant support, best practice, data and insights and advice via newsletters, yorkshire.com/industry, social media	WTY/Partners
Redevelopment of yorkshire.com/industry to support recovery information provision for businesses	WTY
Introduce new weekly business bulletins featuring latest Covid-19 news and information	WTY
Amplify and represent business views, issues and priorities when speaking to government	WTY
Collect data and insight via business surveys and programme of industry webinars	WTY
Programme of business webinars providing advice and opportunities to engage and share best practice	WTY
Rebrand of 'WTY membership' Twitter and Facebook channels to 'WTY industry' allowing for engagement with a wider audience	WTY
Continued promotion of WTY member businesses still in operation through lockdown	WTY
Encourage all businesses in Yorkshire to sign up to our free industry newsletter to access support and advice	WTY
Champion the roll-out of the new industry standard and support businesses in signing up to ensure we have the highest possible number of businesses participating and meeting the standard	WTY/LAs/National Parks/LEPs
Continue to promote the #yorkshiretogether message and the need for a collaborative approach across the sector towards recovery	WTY
Investigate and lobby for support for training of people in the industry, specifically identifying those skills most necessary at this time	WTY/training provider
Investigate and lobby for financial support for the industry	WTY

Introduce a new Yorkshire Gift Card offering free sign up to all businesses in the county.	WTY
Destination Management	
Working collaboratively to develop safe tourism practices	
Encourage collaboration and sharing of best practice around safe tourism practices and ways businesses can adapt their offering	WTY/partners
Introduce a new section of Yorkshire.com/industry where best practice can be shared widely with the industry	WTY/partners
Organise webinars which allow for sharing of best practice	WTY/partners
Work with landowners and understand their challenges and where support can be offered	LA's/NP's
Promotion, Creative Direction and Destination Messages	
Promote stay at home message	
Support government in the promotion of the stay at home message via social media, PR and digital	WTY
Work with partners to support relevant messages around destinations and visitors throughout May and early June	WTY
Keeping the Yorkshire message and brand front of mind and build brand loyalty	
Creation of new 'Imagine Now, Explore Later' messaging to feature across all promotional activity at this time	WTY
Themed campaigns to promote the county and the tourism offering whilst people are at home: Yorkshire Days In Give a Yorkshire Voucher World Cup of Yorkshire	WTY
Introduce new films and virtual technology to allow visitors to experience Yorkshire at home	WTY
Planning of promotion and marketing messages in reopen phase	
Review visitor intelligence including changes in consumer behaviour to inform marketing campaigns	WTY
Agree key visitor segments that are more favourable to attract in the reopen phase - day trips etc.	WTY
Utilise data and intelligence to begin to create a full tourism recovery marketing plan	WTY

Appendix 2 Action Plan – Reopen

Action	Lead Partner
Tourism Industry Support	
Strategic Tourism Industry Engagement	
Continued engagement with local authorities, DMOs, VisitBritain, LEPS and wider strategic partners	WTY
Weekly meetings of the recovery working group to ensure the recovery plan is regularly reviewed and is moving forward with industry data and insight to back this up	WTY
Engagement with UK destinations, specifically to lobby government in additional support for DMOs whilst private sector income is low	WTY
Ongoing press and PR to communicate recovery plans and progress made to the industry	WTY
Business Engagement & Support	WTY
Continue to signpost and provide businesses with the most relevant support, best practice, data and insights and advice	WTY
Regular engagement with businesses during the reopening phase to gain necessary insight on progress and challenges - via webinars, industry surveys etc.	WTY
Continued amplification of tourism industry views, issues and priorities when speaking to government	WTY
Support more businesses in achieving the industry standard to ensure that Yorkshire is continuously striving for the highest possible number of businesses participating and meeting the standard	WTY/LAs
Launch a new WTY membership scheme for businesses to ensure the greatest level of engagement with the industry and provide enhanced support and marketing benefits at a time when it is most needed	WTY
Work with businesses that open in accurately promoting their newly updated offering	WTY
Encourage support for the sector through the launch of a Yorkshire gift card which all businesses can sign up to for free	WTY
Destination Management	
Working collaboratively to develop safe tourism practices	
Continue to share best practice around safe tourism	WTY/partners
Encourage businesses to share their experiences and learnings for the benefit of the wider sector	WTY/partners
Residents and Community	
Engage with residents, communities, landowners in the reintroduction of tourism and visits to the area to ensure minimal impact on these groups	

Promotion, Creative Direction and Destination Messages	
Promote a safe and responsible tourism message & build consumer confidence in visiting Yorkshire	
Creation and roll-out of a carefully considered welcome back to Yorkshire message focused initially on residents of Yorkshire and the day visitor market	WTY
Campaigns and promotion with the aim of extending the tourism season and visits into Autumn and Winter to recoup some of the loss of income for the sector	WTY
At the appropriate time, deliver a campaign that focuses on encouraging visits from outside of the county and extending the average length of stay	WTY
Ensure accurate promotion of the tourism offer that is open to avoid over supply and overcrowding in areas	WTY
Marketing activity to instil consumer confidence in the offering	WTY
Continue to raise awareness of safety in the offer and raise consumer confidence	WTY
Keeping the Yorkshire message and brand front of mind and build brand loyalty	
Continue to keep the Yorkshire message and brand front of mind for those visitors unable to travel to the county via targeted campaigns	WTY
Engage with VisitBritain's pan-Britain Campaign	WTY
Planning of promotional marketing campaign to launch as part of WTY's recover stage	
Continue to review visitor intelligence and changes in consumer behaviour to inform marketing campaigns in recovery and rebuild stages	WTY
Planning of promotional marketing campaign to launch as part of recover and rebuild phase	WTY