

## Overnight visitor figures show continued growth for Welsh tourism sector

The Economy Secretary was responding to the latest Wales Tourism Accommodation Occupancy statistics, which show that occupancy levels across each of these categories increased between July 2016 and June 2017.

At 68% the occupancy rate for hotels rooms was the highest of all, increasing one percentage points when compared with the previous 12 months.

Guest houses and Bed and Breakfasts occupancy rates stood at 40%, a 2 percentage point increase over the same period, meanwhile self catering units increased by 4 percentage points to 56%, and hostel bed space increased by 3 percentage points to 52%.

The largest change in occupancy rates was seen in static caravans and holiday homes, which rose by 12 percentage points between July 2016 and June 2017 to 86%.

Ken Skates said:

“In what is an extremely competitive market place, these latest occupancy statistics show a strong picture for tourism in Wales and continue to reflect the success we have experienced over the last two years.

“We will continue with our campaign work to promote Wales to both domestic and foreign markets to ensure that we make the most of the opportunities to attract overseas visitors and those looking to holiday at home due to the weak pound.”

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## Pageant media creates 60 graduate level jobs with Welsh Government support

Pageant Media has an international reputation and reach within the financial and professional services industry and attracting this investment to Cardiff is seen as a strong endorsement of the City Region's growing status as a

location of choice for the sector.

Pageant Media chose Cardiff for this expansion having thoroughly researched a number of potential locations in the UK regarding the availability of expertise and talent.

The investment to create a central data gathering and research operation is supported by £300,000 from the Welsh Government's Business Finance Scheme and will create 25 jobs initially, increasing to 60 over a three year period.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

"I am delighted the company chose Cardiff above a number of other locations in the UK. It will be the first centre of its kind in Wales and is exactly the type of high profile, high quality investment we want to attract that will create a range of graduate level jobs.

"The decision to establish this world class business research centre in Cardiff is a real boost for our rapidly growing financial and professional services sector and speaks volumes for what the city can offer businesses working in this field."

Pageant Media's flagship office and global HQ is based in London while the company's activities span numerous global locations with their main hubs rooted in the financial centres of New York, Frankfurt and Hong Kong that serve the 'always on' information economy.

Chief Executive of Pageant Media, Charlie Kerr said:

"We're very excited to have set up this new research operation in Cardiff and it's a testament to the city's highly educated and dedicated workforce as well as to the first-rate educational institutions in the region. We're looking forward to further growth of the operation and continuing to partner with the Welsh government in the future."

An innovative and entrepreneurial company, Pageant Media offers a market leading portfolio of specialist information products across a range of financial services sectors including hedge funds, mutual funds, real estate and insurance. It provides market intelligence for banks, accountancy firms, insurance and asset management companies.

Through subscription and renewal, Pageant Media owns and manages a network of global information products and services to help members manage their businesses and make informed investment decisions.

It provides round the clock global insights and analysis, networking opportunities for members to identify the latest financial services trends

and collaborate and build consensus around decision making or charting new courses.

The business regularly expands its range of products and services to ensure it delivers high quality and relevant solutions for each of the sectors it serves and the new research centre in Cardiff will meet current and future requirements.

The business was started in 1998 by CEO Charlie Kerr, former publishing director of Business Age and Marketing Director of Sunday Business, with just two employees which has grown to 160 in the UK and 40 overseas, with staff speaking 17 different languages.

It currently has 2500 members – 14,200 of whom are based in 108 countries.

Pageant Media has already had a number of discussions regarding skills and recruitment with Cardiff University which has one of the leading business schools in the UK with expertise in banking and finance as well as one of the largest modern language faculties in the UK.

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## [Poultry keepers urged to take action now to prepare for winter avian flu threat](#)

Simple measures can help to keep flocks disease free. All keepers – whether they run a large commercial farm or keep just a few pet chickens in their back garden – can get ahead of the game and take these simple steps to reduce the risk of disease before autumn migration of ducks and geese begins again this winter:

- keep the area where birds live clean and tidy, control rats and mice and regularly disinfect any hard surfaces. Clean footwear before and after visits
- place birds' food and water in fully enclosed areas that are protected from wild birds, and remove any spilled feed regularly
- put fencing around outdoor areas where birds are allowed, and limit their access to ponds or areas visited by wild waterfowl
- in Great Britain, stay alert by signing up online to a free service to receive text or email alerts on any outbreaks of bird flu in the UK. You can also quickly and easily register your flock online. In Northern Ireland, visit the DAERA website for further information.

Last winter, the H5N8 strain of bird flu was found in 13 kept flocks in the UK – ranging in size from as few as nine to as many as 65,000 birds. We've

seen a decline in the number of new cases over the summer, but the disease is still circulating in kept poultry across Europe, with Italy the most recent country to suffer a series of outbreaks. It has also recently been confirmed in a dead mute swan in Norfolk.

Government is working with groups including NFUs, RSPCA, British Hen Welfare Trust, Poultry Club of Great Britain and UFU to highlight the importance of keeping up high biosecurity even though the immediate disease risk has dropped.

Together, the groups are also keen to highlight the impact of bird flu on the poultry industry, as a case in a backyard flock leads to the same trade restrictions in an area as an outbreak on a commercial farm – so protecting chickens in a back garden from the disease also protects farmers locally and nationally.

The UK's Chief Veterinary Officer, Nigel Gibbens, said:

“While it is undoubtedly good news we haven't confirmed a case in kept birds in the UK for two months, the disease remains a threat – particularly as we move again towards the colder months.

“For that reason we cannot afford to rest on our laurels and I want to remind keepers of flocks large and small to do everything they can to reduce the risk to their birds.

“Simple actions you can take now, such as regularly cleaning and disinfecting the area where you keep your birds and signing up for free disease alerts, could really help to reduce the risk of your birds becoming infected this winter.”

The Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales, Christianne Glossop said:

“While I am sure this lack of new outbreaks will be welcomed by poultry and other captive bird keepers of both large and small flocks I would remind everyone it is vital they continue to be vigilant for signs of disease and maintain excellent biosecurity practices.

“If you are concerned about the health of your birds you should seek advice from your veterinary surgeon and if you suspect that your birds have AI, you should report it to your local Animal and Plant Health Agency office.”

The Chief Veterinary Officer for Scotland, Sheila Voas, said:

“Given the constant risk of bird flu in the UK from wild birds, I would urge bird keepers to take some simple actions now to help reduce the chance of their birds becoming infected. These could include steps to reduce contact with wild birds, particularly on

ponds and other water bodies.

“One of the main challenges government faced during last year’s avian influenza outbreak was being able to contact bird keepers with small numbers of birds. To stay up to date with the latest situation I would encourage bird keepers – including those who are already on the GB Poultry Register – to sign up for the Animal and Plant Health Agency free text alerts service.”

Northern Ireland’s Chief Veterinary Officer, Robert Huey, said:

“While I welcome the lack of new outbreaks across the UK, the risk of avian influenza remains a real and constant threat. That is why it is essential that bird keepers maintain effective biosecurity all year round, not only when a prevention zone is in place.

“Poultry and other bird keepers in Northern Ireland are also reminded that their birds must be registered with the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs. This will ensure they can be contacted quickly in an avian disease outbreak, enabling them to protect their flock at the earliest opportunity.”

Given the recent outbreaks in wild birds in Norfolk and on the continent, there is every likelihood disease will return this winter. Last year’s outbreak is believed to have been transmitted via migratory wild birds, which means keepers need to be aware of the danger of contact between wild and kept birds and take action now.

All keepers in GB can stay up to date with the latest situation by signing up for the Animal and Plant Health Agency [alerts service](#). Signing up is quick and free.

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## **[One month left to have your say on the future of quality and governance of health and social care services in Wales](#)**

Proposals, which are currently out for consultation until the 29 September, are part of a White Paper, [Services Fit for the Future](#), Quality and Governance in Health and Care in Wales.

The White Paper is designed to support and encourage more integrated ways of working and better decision-making, putting the interests of people at the heart of service planning and delivery.

The proposals include common standards and joint complaints handling; better decision-making across health boards including a new Duty of Quality for the Population of Wales and a clearer process for service change; as well as further promoting a culture of openness in the health and social care system through a new Duty of Candour.

There are also proposals for strengthening the boards of NHS organisations and involvement of the public across health and social care, and for regulation and inspection.

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said:

“The innovative and progressive proposals we have put forward will ensure our health and social care services are fit for the future.

“The White Paper looks at a number of key aspects of the health and care system and suggests some changes which we believe could make a real difference by putting people at the centre of service delivery. It will also enable health and social care organisations to work together and across boundaries to ensure they deliver the very best care for people across Wales.

“With one month to go until the consultation closes, I encourage anyone with an interest in health and social care services to have your say on our White Paper consultation before it’s too late.”

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## **Fintech company ActiveQuote to create 70 jobs with Welsh Government support**

ActiveQuote has achieved significant growth over the past three years and is one of the leading suppliers of online health insurance products. This latest investment will allow ActiveQuote to develop an enhanced online comparison experience using artificial intelligence to help customers through the quote process.

The investment, backed by around £400,000 from the Welsh Government Growth and Prosperity Fund, ensures the expansion takes place in Wales and will create up to 70 jobs, taking the ActiveQuote headcount to around 190.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“Three of the most prominent UK FinTech companies – GoCompare, Confused.com & MoneySupermarket.com – are indigenous companies headquartered in Wales, and ActiveQuote is a long-term partner of these Welsh business success stories.

“Wales has a growing reputation as a prime location for the FinTech sector and on a pan-European level, Wales is a key player and recognised as an exemplar for financial aggregator site technology.

“ActiveQuote is a strategically important and valued member of our FinTech cluster and has seen significant growth through continually investing and innovating. I am pleased that Welsh Government support will ensure ActiveQuote continues to grow here in Wales.”

Rob Saunders, Managing Director of ActiveQuote, said:

“We are very grateful to the Welsh Government for its continued support in what we are aiming to achieve at ActiveQuote.

“This is a very exciting time in the world of FinTech, and ActiveQuote aims to be at the forefront of these developments. I joined the company two months ago and have been really impressed with the ambition and drive that our team has in leading the way for digital innovation in the insurance market. This investment means we can make our exciting plans of creating the next-generation of insurance comparison a reality.”

The company began as a team of two and since its inception in 2009, ActiveQuote has been at the cutting edge of online insurance broking for consumers, evolving its service for the digital world.

It pioneered one of the first price comparison solutions for health insurance, providing accurate comparisons of policies and benefits that help customers find the cover that most closely meets their needs and budget.

It is now one of the UK’s leading comparison sites, and brokers mainstream insurance products including health, income protection, life insurance and critical illness, whilst its technology powers some of the UK’s leading price comparison websites.

ActiveQuote is developing a new advisory system using cutting edge technology for its online insurance products, which will provide easier access, quicker comparison and more choice for customers.

In 2014, Welsh Government supported ActiveQuote by providing £600,000 of business finance to create 74 jobs at its Cardiff Bay headquarters.