

# Tourism industry gears up for busy half term

The Economy Secretary, Ken Skates, said:

“The tourism Industry in Wales is in very good shape. And the fact that we saw record breaking spend from overseas visitors last year and crossed the million visitors for the first time in 8 years is excellent news. We fully recognise how competitive the market is and the challenges facing the industry. Our future vision – especially in light of the EU Referendum result – is to do more again to build on this sense of confidence and to internationalise our reputation and approach.”

The ONS International Passenger Survey for 2016 shows that trips to Wales are up nearly 11% compared to 2015, while spend on trips to Wales is up by over 8%. The number of international visits to Wales in 2016 was 1.074 million, and the associated spend was a record £444 million.

The first of Wales’ themed years was a great success – Visit Wales’ marketing activity for 2016 generated an additional £370 million for the Welsh economy – which is an 18% increase on 2015. This is based on those definitely influenced by Visit Wales marketing before taking a trip to Wales. The Economy Secretary recently announced the continuation of the themed years with a new ‘Year of Discovery’ in 2019 which will build on the three themes of adventure, culture and great outdoors.

The Economy Secretary, continued:

“Although most of our performance indicators look good and feedback from the industry is positive, overnight GB figures are showing a fall in 2016 compared with the record year of 2015, in line with reductions for Britain as a whole. However, the overall picture for Wales – taking into account tourism day visits, international visitors as well GB overnights visits – suggests that Wales will see a substantial increase in overall tourism volumes compared with 2015 the total of visits across all three categories was 16% up over the first nine months – which builds on the previous two record-breaking years.

“Campaign work now continues to convert interest and opportunities arising from the weak pound into bookings for the summer. A boost to the Visit Wales budget means that there is £26.3m available to invest in marketing and product development this year this increase

has enabled us to pull together a more ambitious programme than ever before for 2017.”

Innovative projects are key to future success. £2 million had been approved for a total of 38 projects across Wales under the Tourism Product Innovation Fund and Regional Tourism Engagement Fund. This funding will enable the private and public sectors to develop innovative projects that will stimulate demand and improve the visitor offer through supporting the Year of Legends campaign while also looking forward to the Year of the Sea.

The number of overnight trips made to Wales from Great Britain in the 12 months ending November 2016 was 9.56 million. The number of visits made to Wales from Great Britain in the first 11 months of 2016 was 8.62 million, 9.3% down compared to the first 11 months of 2015.