

# COVID-19 Tourism Impact Update



## Falkland Islands Tourism Sector Information and Guidance Concerning the Impact of COVID-19

*No. 17*

*March 5<sup>th</sup> 2021*

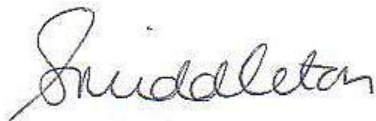
## INTRODUCTION

Last week we ran a quick survey to assess a few things that might shape tourism in the Falklands in the near and far future. The findings are included in this edition of *COVID-19 Update*.

It is clear that there is considerable support for a vaccine passport, and the requirement of travellers to the Islands having one before being allowed to visit. Bookings for next season are more down than up at this point compared to normal, however as research in the UK and USA shows, travellers are currently in a planning, not booking, phase.

Domestic tourism might have received a long-term boost from the pandemic. Around one half of you think that future years will generate more domestic trips than in the past, now holidaying closer to home has been given a good workout. This doesn't mean that it will replace international travel, but might be an additional trip or short break.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact the Falkland Islands Tourist Board for more details or any further assistance.



**Stephanie Middleton**  
**Executive Director**  
5<sup>th</sup> March 2021

*Next Update: Friday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2021*

## SNAP TOURISM SURVEY

A Snap Survey was undertaken over the period 26<sup>th</sup> February to 2<sup>nd</sup> March, and was essentially a straw poll with the aim of:

- Checking how bookings are looking for next season.
- Obtaining thoughts on how domestic tourism might change in future years after this “lockdown summer”.
- Assessing how key international tourism is for business survival.
- Obtaining views regarding the reopening of the Falklands for tourism.

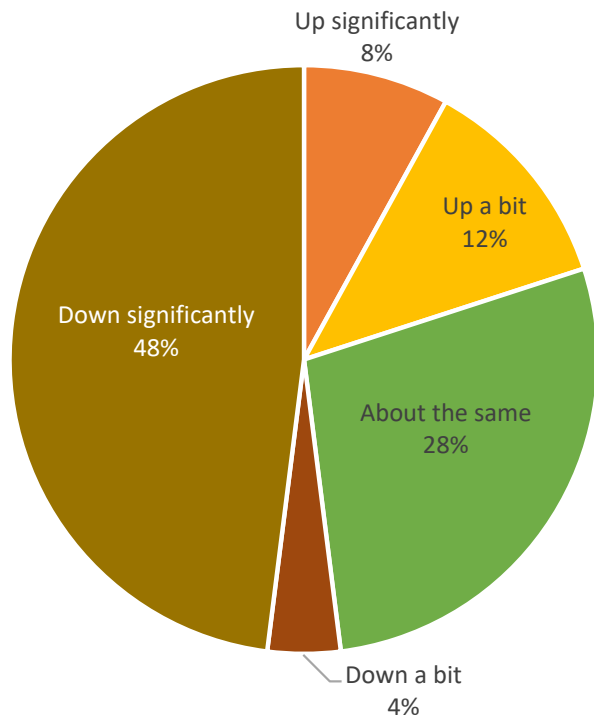
The survey was sent to a range of businesses, although there was considerable focus on the accommodation sector. A total of 25 responses were received. It was anonymous and so there is no segregation by business type – the aim was to get a general feel for where we are at.

### Bookings for next season...

We asked: “Compared to previous years, how are bookings looking for next season?”

Around one-half (48%) of all businesses said they were *down significantly*, and around a quarter (28%) said they were *about the same* as usual.

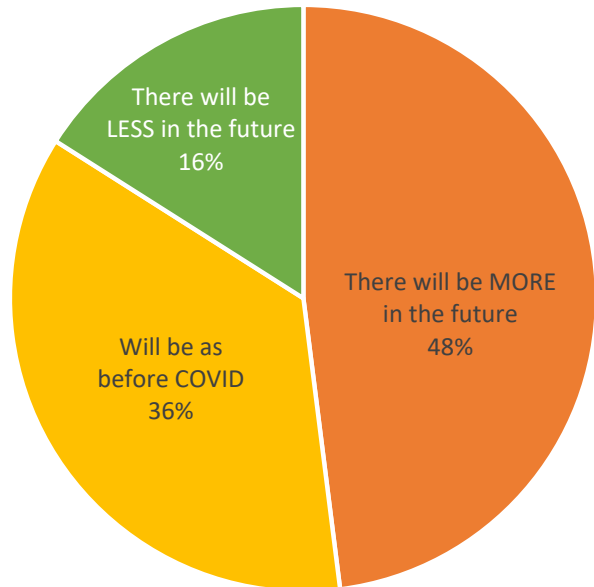
One in five (20%) businesses reported bookings to be *up a bit* or *up significantly*.



### Long-term effect of TRIP...

We asked: *“The TRIP scheme and the “lockdown summer” have boosted domestic tourism this season. However, how do you expect demand from domestic visitors to change in the future?”*

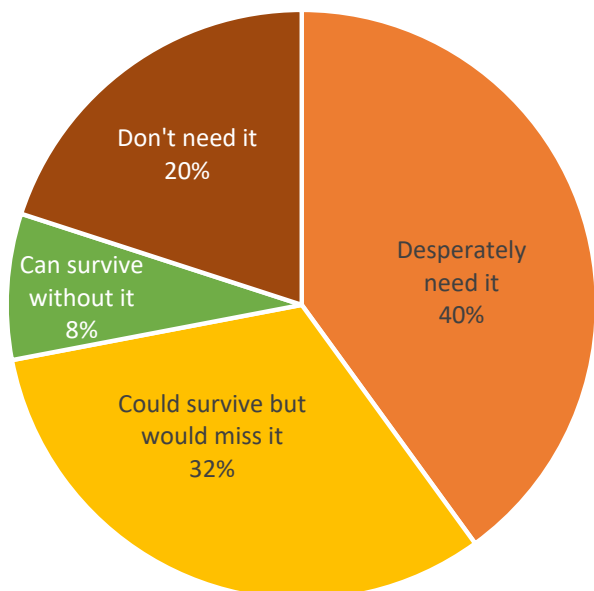
Almost one half of businesses think that TRIP will have a long term impact, and having experienced holidaying at home in 2020-2021, residents will continue to do so (albeit not necessarily at the expense of travelling abroad). Only 16% thought that Falklanders will holiday less now they have “done the Islands”.



### Importance of international tourism...

We asked: *“Is the survival of your business reliant on inbound tourism returning next season to a similar level as in the 2019-2020 season?”*

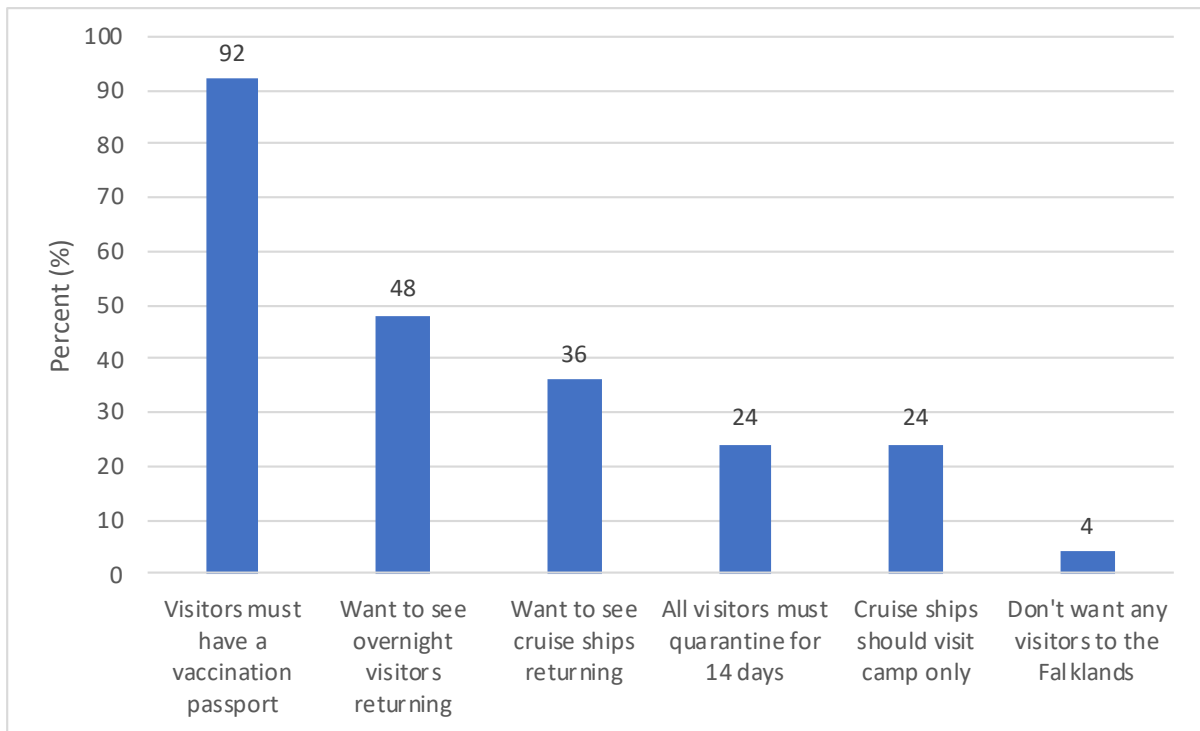
Almost three quarters (72%) of businesses said they needed international tourism, although 40% were very much reliant on it for survival. The 20% who do not need international tourism were probably self-catering properties that mainly serve the domestic market.



## Attitudes to opening up...

We asked: “With the assumption that everyone [in the Falklands] who wants the vaccine will have received it by August, how comfortable are you about the return of international tourism next season?”

92% of all businesses said that they wanted visitors to have been vaccinated before visiting the Islands. Almost one half (48%) want to see overnight visitors returning – so there are still some concerns about the arrival of visitors, however only one quarter (24%) think that visitors must quarantine for two weeks (presumably as there is little likelihood of leisure tourism returning whilst quarantine is in place).

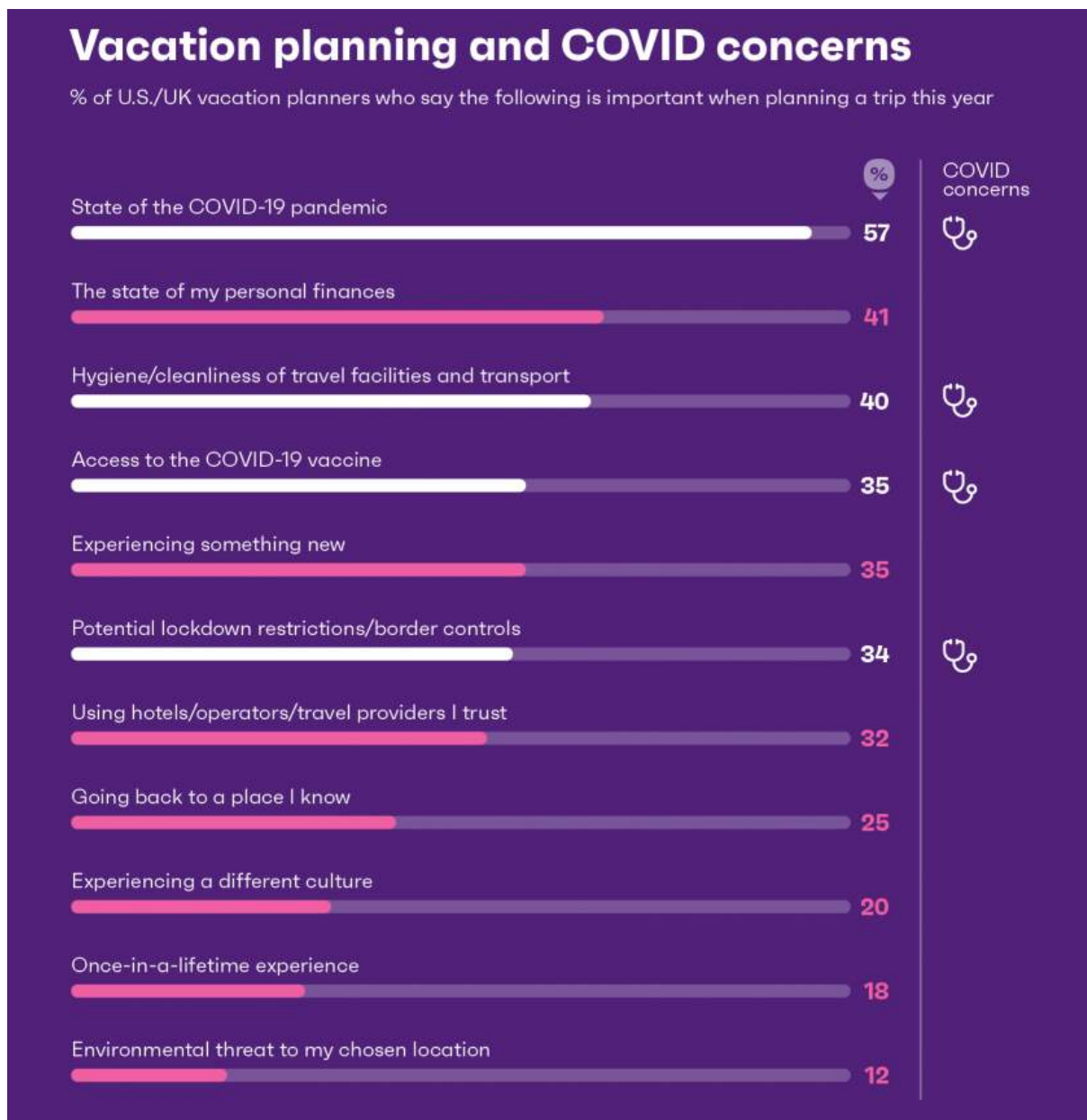


## LATEST FROM THE UK AND USA MARKETS

There have been some interesting surveys covering the UK and USA markets which, as they are our most important countries for visitors, we feel are worth showing here. They also tie in well with the survey findings in the previous section.

### Holiday concerns...

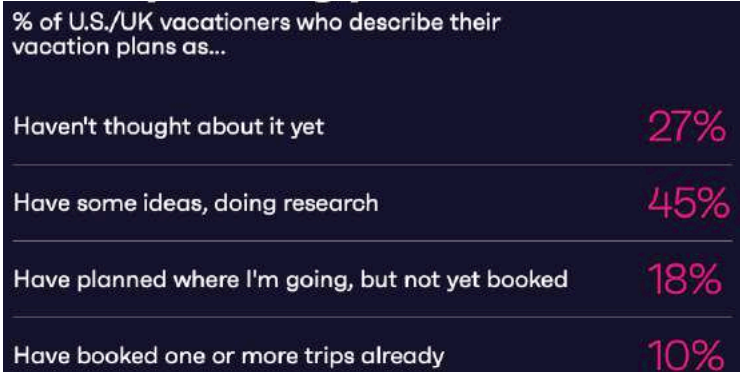
The chart below shows what holiday planners say are most important to them when planning a holiday. The lines in white represent the COVID-related concerns, and it is clear that COVID-19 is dominating traveller worries at the moment – the state of the pandemic is of more concern than their own finances when booking a holiday. Note how hygiene/cleanliness is high in the list of concerns.



## Planning a holiday...

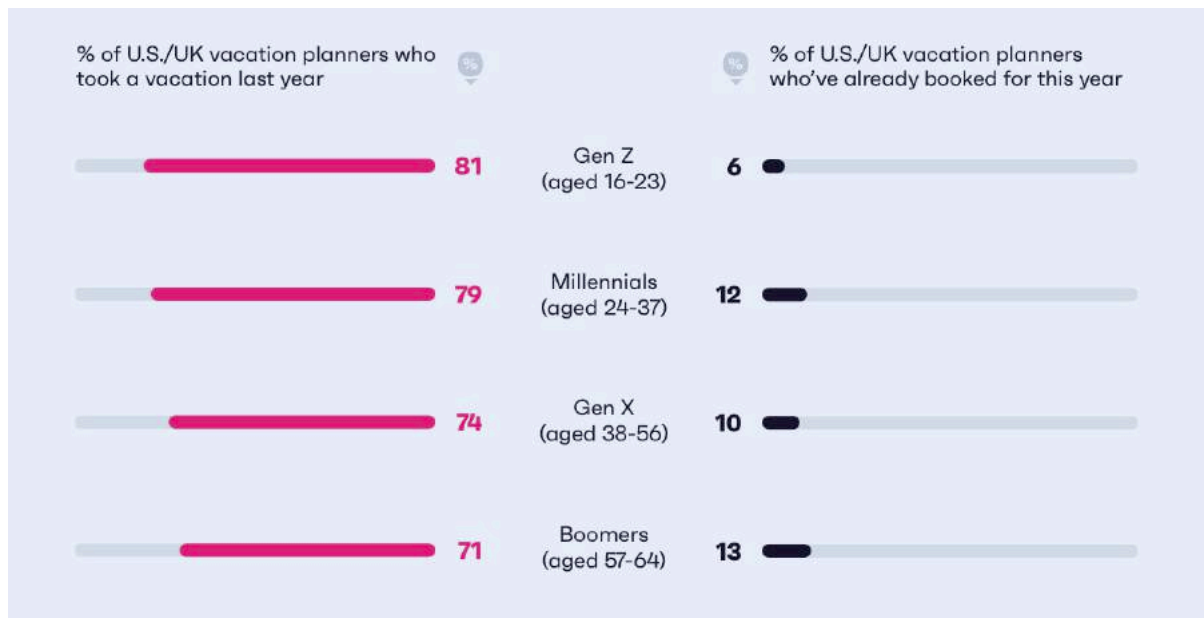
While vaccines appear to signal light at the end of the COVID tunnel, concerns about it still govern consumers' holiday plans. For this reason the vast majority of vacation planners remain in the research phase (hence many Falklands businesses reporting bookings down at this stage).

45% of holiday planners in the UK/US are researching right now, and an additional 18% know where they are going but are yet to book.



## How age groups dictate planning...

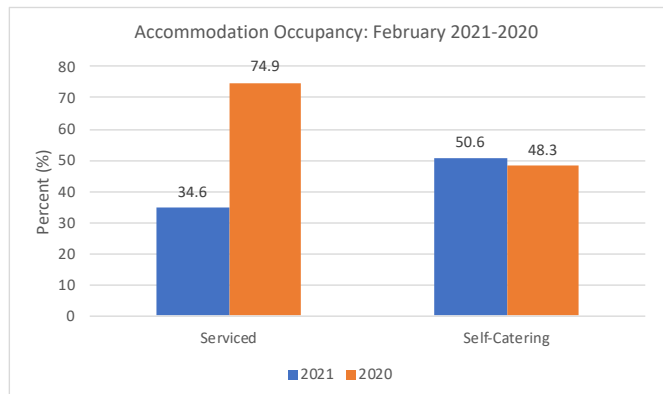
Understandably older, more at risk people were less likely to have taken a holiday last year. But with vaccine rollouts they are showing a greater desire to book a trip right now. This is not surprising given the importance of access to a vaccine, as a consideration when booking a trip, increases with age. This is broadly good news for the Falklands as our key age group are the older ones (Gen X and Boomers).



## UPDATE ON THIS SEASON

The FITB Accommodation Occupancy survey shows that February was another difficult month for many serviced accommodation establishments, achieving a room occupancy rate of almost 35%, which is down from 75% in February last year.

However, self-catering continues to do well from domestic travel and the TRIP scheme, edging ahead slightly on the occupancy achieved last year.



## Flights Update

There has been no change on the last update on South America flight resumption. Both LATAM flights, from Punta Arenas and Sao Paulo, remain suspended until **at least** 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

## Southbound Travel

From 1<sup>st</sup> March passengers travelling south from the UK on the Airbridge will be required to provide evidence of a negative PCR COVID-19 test, that is dated no more than five days prior to travel. More details are available at: <https://www.fig.gov.fk/covid-19/travel/southbound>

## FURTHER INFORMATION

### Tourism Recovery Incentive Programme

TRIP is a domestic tourism stimulus scheme that is open to everyone who is ordinarily resident in the Falkland Islands and will run from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020 until 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021. More details can be found at:

<https://www.fig.gov.fk/covid-19/tourismscheme/trip-scheme>

### FIG Guidance and Information

For guidance and information for individual businesses operating in a COVID-19 environment, including restaurants, public houses and retail, as well as frequently asked questions see:

<https://fig.gov.fk/covid-19/>

<https://fig.gov.fk/covid-19/information/general-information>

<https://fig.gov.fk/covid-19/faq>