

WEEKLY REPORT

6 June 2025



ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL UPDATE

Winter fuel payment U-turn in place this year, says chancellor

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves, has stated that more people will qualify to receive the winter fuel payment this winter under changes to the allowance. The allowance is a payment worth up to £300 to help with energy bills during colder winter months. Last year, it was only paid to those on pension credit, meaning 10 million fewer pensioners received the money in 2024, sparking concern amongst charities and MPs that those whose income was slightly too high to qualify for the payment still suffered as energy costs remained expensive. The prime minister has not confirmed who would be eligible for the revised policy, but under the current system, eligible pensioners are required to claim pension credit to top up the state pension for those on low incomes.

Source: [BBC](#)

Free school meals to be extended to 500,000 more children

The UK government has announced that any child in England whose parents receive Universal Credit will now be able to claim free school meals, regardless of parents' income. At present, their household income must be less than £7,400 a year to qualify but this will change from September 2026. The change is said to make 500,000 more pupils eligible, helping "families who need it most" said the prime minister, and "lift 100,000 children out of poverty" said education secretary Bridget Phillipson. Up to £1 billion has been set aside by the department for education to fund the change up to 2029, though it has not been declared where the money would come from. The government has also pledged £13m to a dozen food charities across England to "fight food poverty" and said there will be a review of standards so that school meals are healthy.

Source: [BBC](#)

UK MPs call for ban on bottom trawling in protected marine areas

The UK parliament's environmental audit committee have called on ministers to ban bottom trawling for fish in marine protected areas due to the devastating destruction being caused to the seabed and marine life. The practice includes dragging immense and heavy nets across the seabed to scoop up all things in their path. Prized fish such as sole, cod and haddock can be found this way, but most material scooped is discarded; a fishing method with a high rate of bycatch. Though campaigners have been calling for a ban for years, public outrage has intensified in the past month with the release of Sir David Attenborough's new film about industrial fishing, where he warns of "modern day colonialism at sea".

Source: [The Guardian](#)

TRADE UPDATE**Cybersecurity Experts Warn of Increased Threats to Travel Sector This Summer**

Cybersecurity experts have issued a warning to the travel industry about heightened risks of cyberattacks during the summer months. The surge in travel activity makes the sector an attractive target for cybercriminals, who may exploit increased online transactions and potential vulnerabilities in booking systems. Travel companies are advised to strengthen their cybersecurity measures, ensure systems are updated, and provide staff training to mitigate potential threats. Implementing robust security protocols can help protect both company data and customer information during this peak travel period.

Source: [Travel Weekly](#)

Hays Travel Acquires Spear Travels to Boost High Street Expansion

Hays Travel, the UK's largest independent travel agency, has acquired The Spear Travels Group, a well-established network of 12 high street travel agencies known for its personalised service and over 40 years of industry experience. This acquisition continues Hays Travel's strategy of expanding its high street presence, following previous acquisitions such as Bath Travel in 2013, Thomas Cook's retail estate in 2019, and Miles Morgan Travel in 2024. The integration of Spear Travels into Hays Travel's network is expected to enhance the company's reach and service offerings, while maintaining the personalised customer service that both brands are known for. This move underscores Hays Travel's commitment to strengthening its position in the UK travel market through strategic acquisitions and a focus on customer-centric services.

Source: [TTG Media](#)

One in Four Consumers Opt for Package Holidays, Says Barclays

Barclays' 10-year review reveals that 25% of UK travellers now book package holidays, with demand rising due to cost control and ease of planning. Economic uncertainty has made the all-in-one model more appealing, especially among younger holidaymakers seeking value and simplicity. Travel agent spending grew nearly 8% in 2024, alongside a 14% rise in bookings, showing increasing trust in expert-led travel planning. Dynamic packaging and personalised deals are also boosting the sector's appeal.

Source: [TTG Media](#)

AIRLINE UPDATE

EasyJet - EasyJet has announced the addition of a new route from London Luton Airport to Madeira, increasing its total destinations from Luton to 74. The new service to Funchal, Madeira's capital, will commence on June 4, 2025, with flights operating twice weekly on Mondays and Fridays. This expansion enhances easyJet's presence at Luton, its headquarters, and offers travellers more options to explore the popular Portuguese island known for its volcanic landscapes and subtropical climate.

Source: [Travel Weekly](#)

Ryanair - Ryanair carried over 19 million passengers in May 2025, marking a new monthly record for the airline. This surge reflects strong travel demand across Europe, despite ongoing challenges such as aircraft delivery delays from Boeing. Due to these delays, the airline has adjusted its full-year passenger forecast to 206 million, down from the initial 215 million. Nevertheless, Ryanair anticipates robust summer bookings and continues to expand its network, including new routes from London Stansted.

Source: [Travel Weekly](#)

TOUR OPERATORS, TRAVEL AGENCIES & OTA UPDATE

Intrepid - Intrepid Travel has added two new properties to its global hotel portfolio: a 17-room riad in Marrakech and a 20-room eco-resort in Coles Bay, Tasmania. The Marrakech riad, opening in July, will support local women's training via the Amal Association. The Tasmanian resort will offer nature-based experiences in partnership with Greening Australia. This move supports Intrepid's goal of growing to 20 boutique, sustainability-focused properties within three years.

Source: [TTG Media](#)

Jet2holidays - Jet2holidays has partnered with Channel 4 to co-fund a new prime-time travel series, marking a significant move into television advertising. The show, set to air in late 2025, will showcase a range of holiday destinations and experiences, aiming to inspire viewers and promote Jet2holidays' offerings. This collaboration underscores the brand's commitment to innovative marketing strategies and expanding its reach to a broader audience.

Source: [Travel Weekly](#)

SkyLord Travel - Seven former Jetline Travel staff have joined Skylord Travel to launch a new cruise and holidays division, Skylord Cruise and Holidays. Led by ex-Jetline director Andrew Todd, cruise head Martin Tanner, and Manish Suchde from Forever Cruises, the team aims to offer bespoke packages to both consumers and agents. They plan to expand Skylord's cruise and holiday offerings, starting with mainstream ocean cruises and adding specialist and river brands.

Source: [TTG Media](#)

SOCIAL UPDATE

Creators with more than 100,000 followers on Instagram can now access new comment filters

Instagram has introduced new comment filtering options for accounts with over 100,000 followers which will now have access to additional filters, including 'Follower Count', 'Newest First' and 'Top Comments'. All creators can also use the tabs to filter comments by 'People You Follow', 'Verified Users Only', and 'Subscribers Only'. These tools can help creators prioritise interactions with key followers and could potentially boost subscriptions by focusing on replying to those users.

Source: [Social Media Today](#)

TikTok introduces more control options for content preferences

TikTok has introduced 'Manage Topics', enhanced controls that allow users to further tailor their 'For You' feed by selecting content preferences across topics such as food & drinks, travel, and health & fitness. These preferences help influence the type of content shown to users, personalising their experience based on individual interests. While changing preferences does not completely remove a topic from the feed, it will impact the frequency of related content being recommended.

Source: [Lifehacker](#)

MICE UPDATE

Association meetings contribute record £350m to Scottish economy

More than 146,000 delegates visited Scotland in the 2023/2024 financial year, contributing an 'unprecedented economic contribution' of nearly £350 million to the Scottish economy. These findings were published in the latest edition of the annual Scottish Association Survey, which also found that the association conference sector supported more jobs than ever before. The Scottish Association Survey covers the 2023-2024 financial year and gathers contributions from convention bureaus, conference venues, and hotels to monitor the performance of high-value inbound association conference events.

Source: [\(AMI\) Association Meetings International](#)

LIGHTER NOTE

Two brown bear cubs thought to be war refugees have travelled hundreds of miles across borders to reach a forever home in a Devon zoo.

Read more [here](#).