

# GUIDANCE NOTES FOR TOURISM BUSINESSES

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**Navigating visitor  
reservations,  
deposits and  
payments**



**The following document aims to provide guidance to tourism businesses looking for guidance on how to navigate future reservations impacted by the border restrictions and visitor deposits during the current COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent visitor restrictions.**

Visit Isle of Man is committed to upholding the reputation of our beautiful Island as a visitor destination during this difficult time. The Visit Agency appreciates your cooperation to help achieve this. It is important for us to work together and to continue to look after our visitors to the best of our ability by being as flexible as possible and by providing helpful guidance in order to maintain our warm Island hospitality that we are all so very proud of.

The Visit Agency is delighted to hear that a number of tourism businesses have gone above and beyond to help visitors by being flexible with their policies and operating models to ensure that a positive image of the Island is maintained.

Following the recent announcements concerning the cancellation of the [2021 TT Races](#), the [Manx Grand Prix/Classic TT](#) and the release of the [Exit Framework](#) explaining the intention towards the gradual lifting of the border restrictions, the Agency is aware that some businesses are unsure how to navigate their future reservations and have yet to confirm arrangements with visitors.

The Agency is unfortunately not in a position to offer legal advice or instruct but has provided some guidance which we hope will help you through the situation.

# FAQ'S - IN RELATION TO THE EXIT FRAMEWORK

## What do I do with bookings in my diary between now and the end of April 2021?

If your bookings are from off-island visitors, you may wish to contact the visitors to see whether they would like to move their booking to after August or to the same equivalent period in 2022.

If your bookings are from on-island 'staycation' residents and are impacted by the current circuit breaker restrictions, you may wish to remain in contact with the residents and rearrange bookings for when the restrictions allow staycations to take place.

## What do I do with bookings in my diary between now and the end of August 2021?

If your bookings are from off-island visitors, you may wish to contact the visitors to understand their situation. If they are 'visiting friends and relatives' they may wish to keep their booking in the hope that they will be able to visit, exercising flexibility until nearer the time. You may wish to see whether they would like to move their booking to after August or to the same equivalent period in 2022.

If your bookings are from on-island 'staycation' residents you may wish to remain in contact with the residents and assess the situation nearer to their visit dates as the Island moves towards lifting restrictions.

## What do I do with bookings in my diary for Manx Grand Prix / Classic TT 2021?

You may wish to contact the visitors to see whether they were visiting the Island for the races specifically. If so, they may wish to move their bookings to the same equivalent MGP/Classic TT period in 2022. Or, they may wish to visit the Island regardless of the races taking place and wish to move their booking to after August and visit the Island for leisure at a later date..

## When will we know definitively when the border restrictions are fully lifted?

The Isle of Man Government will continue to review the position and aim to provide around three months notice ahead of any lifting of border restrictions for leisure visitors in order to allow the sector, together with Government, to sufficiently prepare for re-opening once again.

# CONSIDERATIONS TO HELP LOOK AFTER OUR VISITORS

Please note that this is guidance and you may need to speak with your insurers, Isle of Man Office of Fair Trading or legal experts to understand your position before implementation.

When making a decision about your refund policy we suggest you also consider the following:

- If you wish to retain deposits or full payments consider how this may affect future bookings and relationships with visitors
- If your visitors are 'regulars', how may the handling of the booking affect your relationship?
- If you have a corporate contract with a client, what may be the best option for your business in the long term?
- How may your management of a situation affect the Island's reputation as a visitor destination?

You may wish to consider the following approaches:



## Talk with your guests...

You may wish to contact your guests to explain the current situation and to understand what their preference would be. This initial conversation may help you come to a mutually agreeable solution.



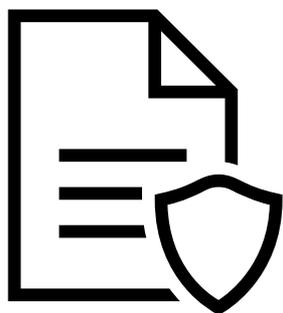
## Be more flexible with your bookings...

If you have 'strict' booking policies in place, you may wish to consider making them a little more flexible by amending bookings for a later date or rolling bookings over to the same period in the following year. This may be a consideration if you are unsure what to do with existing bookings between now and August 2021.

# OTHER CONSIDERATIONS...

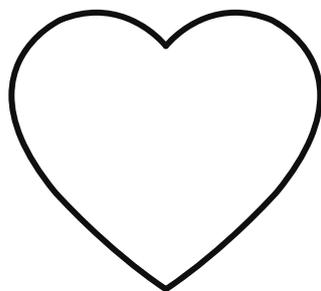
- Rather than declining a deposit refund, suggest the guests may wish to come at another time in the year, or in the future...
- You may wish to reimburse the visitors through a voucher to the value of the visit, tour, activity or attraction. The voucher could be used across your business at another time. You may wish to put a generous extension on the voucher.
- To encourage visitors to keep a future booking, consider offering incentives such as a 'discount' or 'voucher' to spend across your business during their stay.

You may wish to consider the following approaches:



## Consider third party and booking agents' cancellation policies...

Your cancellation policies may differ across different booking channels. You may need to check your arrangements directly with third party suppliers (e.g. Viator, Booking.com, Trip Advisor, Airbnb) and booking agents (travel agents) to understand the details of the cancellation policy you currently have in place. You may wish to see if it is possible to amend the policy you currently have in place for future bookings.



## Look after your loyal customers...

Do you have 'regulars', 'repeat visitors', 'frequent users' or 'loyalty' programmes? If so, you may wish to consider:

- enhancing the benefits
- upgrades
- adding additional points to accounts over the next few months

This can be seen as a good will gesture from your business to show that you understand the impact that the current situation is having on their ability to travel and stay with you, but appreciate their support and look forward to welcoming them when the lifting of the border restrictions allow.

# KEY TIPS

## 1. Follow your business's terms and conditions

In the first instance, it is important to check what booking and cancellation policies your business has in place and implement these accordingly, unless you decide to offer increased flexibility to accommodate visitor requests (e.g. rolling over bookings or moving to alternative dates) in this instance.

## 2. Contact the Isle of Man Office of Fair Trading (OFT)

You may wish to make contact with the Isle of Man Office of Fair Trading to understand your position.

Isle of Man Office for Fair Trading  
Head Office  
Thie Slieau Whallian  
Foxdale Road  
St John's  
IM4 3AS

Telephone: +44 (0) 1624 686500  
Email: [iomfairtrading@gov.im](mailto:iomfairtrading@gov.im)

## 3. Seek legal advice

You may wish to seek your own legal advice to understand your legal position.

These are unprecedented times; however the tourism industry is resilient and will bounce back. The Visit Isle of Man Agency encourages all tourism businesses to take the opportunity to deliver the best service possible to your guests, ensuring they have a positive experience with our Island-based businesses.