



Cruise & Conference tourism project boosts tourism for the ports of Southampton and Plymouth

Led by Southampton City Council the **Leisure Excursions for Cruise and Conference in Southern England** has made big strides to boost tourism for the ports of Southampton and Plymouth.



The partnership, which includes Associated British Ports, Southampton Cultural Development Trust, Visit Hampshire, Go Southampton, Destination Southampton and Destination Plymouth has worked to develop a range of itineraries for visiting cruise lines that will showcase all the cultural and historical attractions in and around the cities of Southampton and Plymouth.

The Leisure Excursions for Cruise and Conference in Southern England project is one of a number of successful projects to receive funding from the UK Government's £40 million Discover England Fund.

The Fund is administered by VisitEngland and involves a programme of activity to ensure that England

stays competitive in the rapidly growing global tourism industry, by offering world-class English tourism products to the right customers at the right time. The Fund is a central government funded programme of activity, supported by match funding by partners in the public and private sectors.

Research suggests that over 50% of passengers arriving on a transit call in Southampton leave and go on shore excursions outside of the local area. The **Leisure Excursions for Cruise and Conference in Southern England** project serves to increase visitor numbers for businesses and attractions local to Southampton and Plymouth by encouraging visitors to stay local for longer.

Laura Campbell, Project Manager, Leisure Excursions for Cruise and Conference comments: "Research has shown that each cruise call into Southampton generates an estimated £2 million for the local economy and approximately £55 is spent per person on a cruise itinerary. By promoting the regional options that are available for tourists close to the ports, businesses and the visitor economy will benefit."

Andrew Bateman, Tourism Manager, Visit Hampshire comments: "Visit Hampshire has been delighted with the opportunity that the project has provided to enhance promotion of the county's attractions for cruise shore excursions. We believe that we've got what the industry is looking for with food and drink attractions such as Bombay Sapphire distillery and Hambledon vineyard, through to world-class heritage attractions like The Mary Rose and Beaulieu in the New Forest. We are focusing on putting Hampshire on the map and persuading passengers that they don't need to head to London for a fantastic day-out."

Amanda Lumley, Executive Director of Destination Plymouth commented: "Plymouth is pleased to be a partner in the project building on initial cruise market activities to support the Mayflower 400 partnership over the past two years. Our insights show that there is a great appetite in the cruise sector for new products and this project is an opportunity for all the partners to leverage this with DEF grant funding support".

VisitEngland Chief Executive Sally Balcombe said: "This project showcases the outstanding locations packaged together on the South Coast, giving visitors the opportunity to discover more of England as they disembark from Southampton or Plymouth and explore the cultural and rural charm of the country."

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