

# County Durham's Visitor Economy

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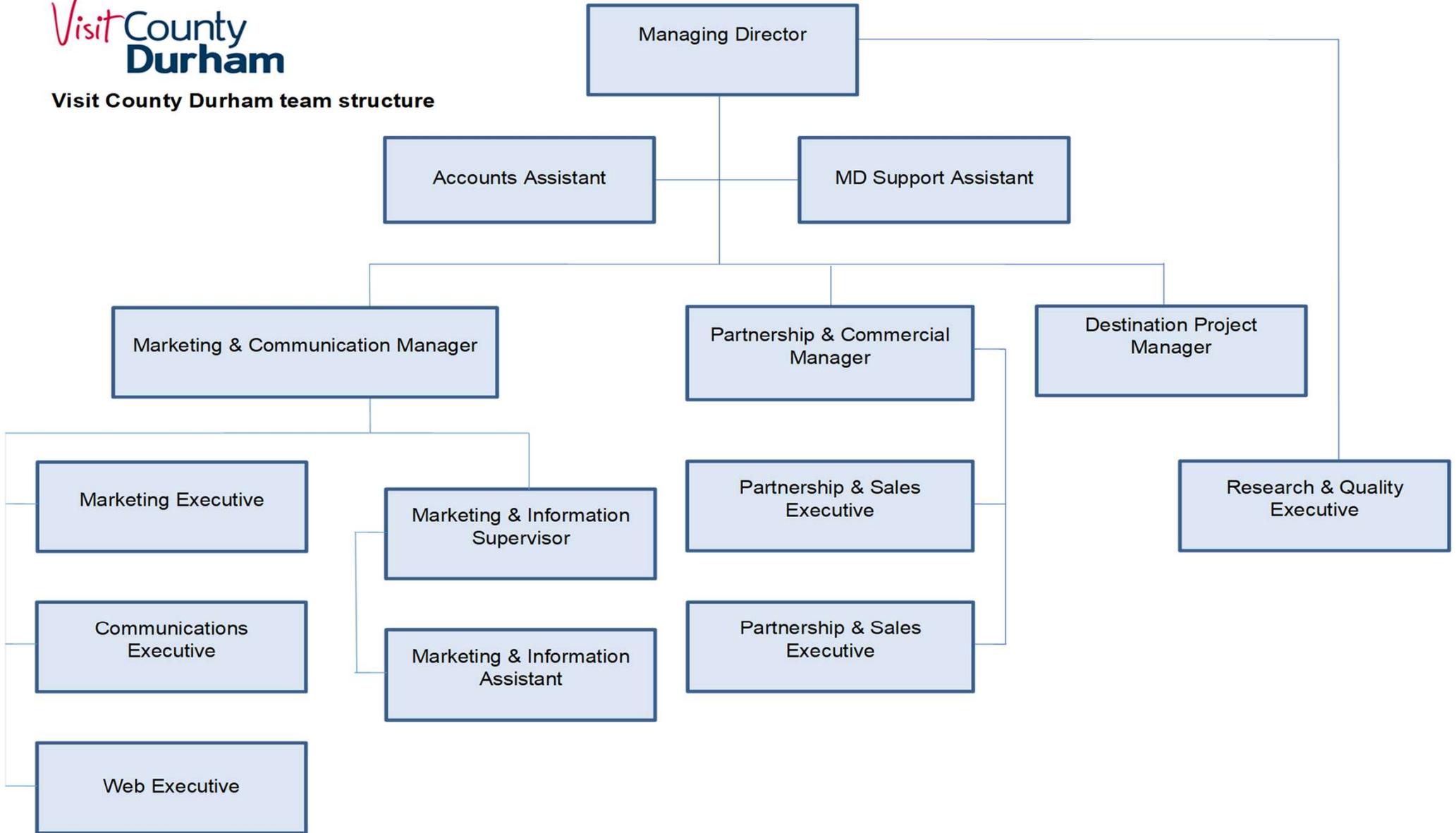
# Introduction – Visit County Durham



- Destination Management Organisation for Durham and the tourism team for Durham County Council
- Team of 14 FTE
- Core budget of £705k, an income contribution of £38,879
- Visit England and Visit Britain key partners
- Public and private sector key partners
- Promotion – live, work, study, invest and visit
- Main aim – grow the county’s visitor economy
- Main roles – destination management, destination marketing and place marketing



Visit County Durham team structure



# Strategy



Durham Tourism Management Plan  
2016-2020



- County Durham Vision for 2035 – **More and better jobs**
- Durham Tourism Management Plan since 2006 – translates national, regional and local research, strategy and planning into action
- Identifies destination priorities and specific actions for up to 5 years with longer term ambitions up to 10+ years ahead
- Durham Tourism Accelerator Strategy
- Food Tourism Strategy

## The vision for Durham as a visitor destination



Durham will offer a visitor experience that matches its outstanding natural landscapes and internationally famous built heritage. The visitor economy will support long term social, economic and environmental sustainability right across the county and be recognised by the county's residents as important to the quality of their lives.

# Visitor economy performance and overview

STEAM Report  
2019

Economic value

**£955 million**

Visitors

**20.1 million**

Jobs

**12,133**

STEAM Report  
2020

Economic value

**£507 million**

Visitors

**11.4 million**

Jobs

**6,794**

VCD product  
database 2021

Accommodation

**624**

Attractions

**126**

Activities

**114**

Shopping

**100**

Entertainment

**16**

Eating out

**354**

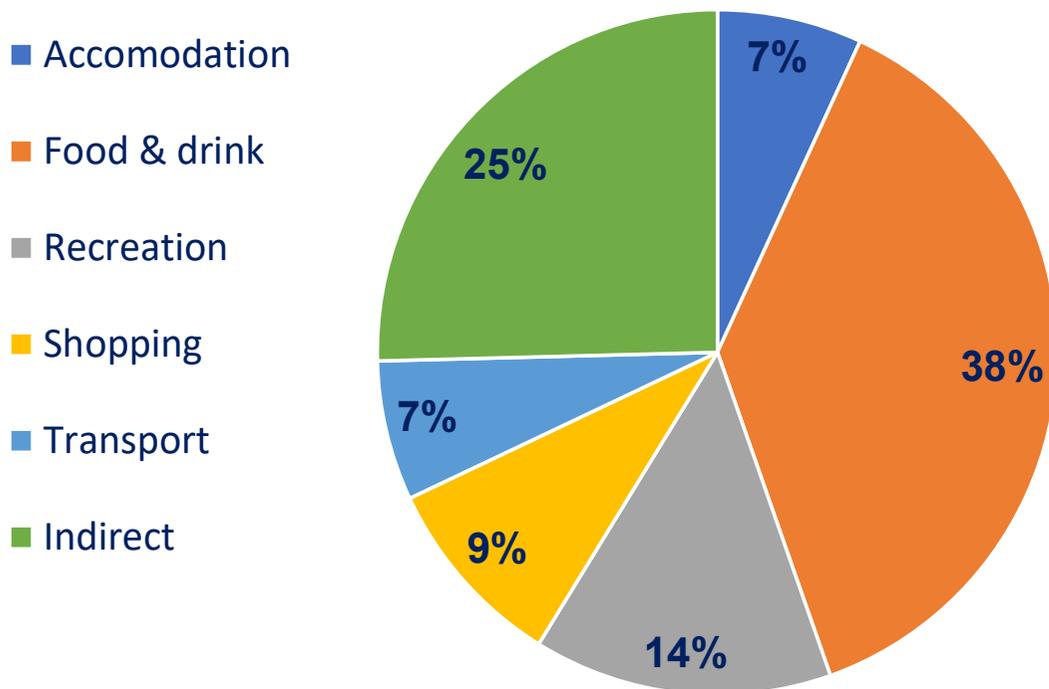
## Sub-county summary



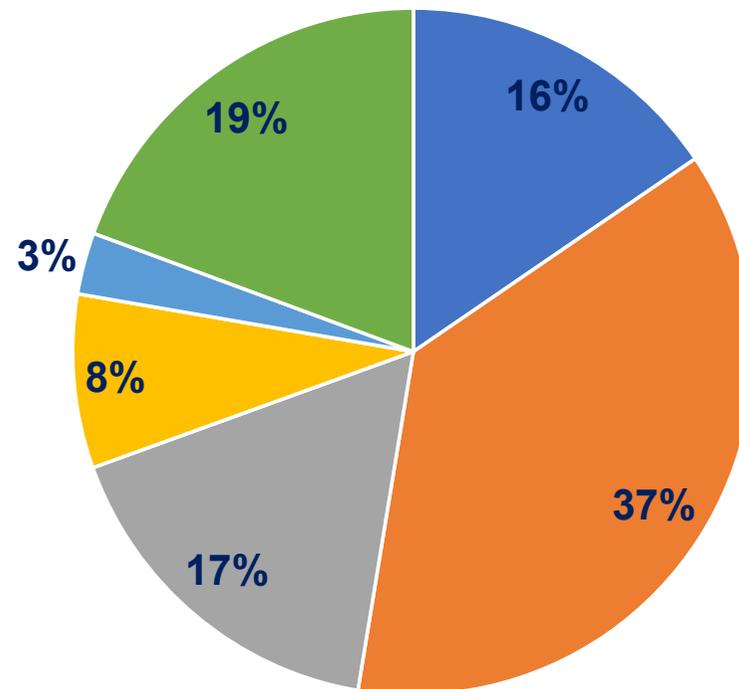
- **Durham City** – 25% visitor expenditure, employment 23% of county total  
Average length of stay 1.14 days, staying visitor 2.24 days
- **Vale of Durham** – 42% visitor expenditure, employment 42% of county total  
Average length of stay 1.09 days, staying visitor 2.37 days
- **Durham Dales** – 19% visitor expenditure, employment 21% of county total  
Average length of stay 1.3 days, staying visitor 3.86 days
- **Durham Coast** – 14% visitor expenditure, employment 14% of county total  
Average length of stay 1.1 days, staying visitor 2.84 days

# Sectoral distribution

### Economic Impact



### Employment (FTEs)



# Visitor economy performance 2015 to 2020



	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Expenditure (£ m)	885.21	904.63	948.65	962.19	980.72	506.75
Visitor numbers (m)	18.67	19.25	19.71	19.71	20.13	11.39
Employment (FTEs)	10,966	11,158	11,682	11,998	12,133	6,794

# Tourism Outlook

- The Tourism Recovery Plan: government support to help the UK's tourism sector recover as quickly as possible with a full return to pre-COVID numbers by 2023
- An immediate trend for domestic travel and staycations in the UK will drive short-term growth
- Our strategy, as we head towards recovery will consider how we:
  - Deal with a period of fluctuation of social distancing measures and travel restrictions
  - Deliver a long-term approach, driving seasonal opportunities, encouraging a spread of visitors to sustain recovery
  - Capitalise on the **£400+ million** visitor economy investment and development pipeline

# Wider Economic Development Plans

- County Durham Plan
- County Durham Economic Strategy
- Sustainable Transport Plan
- £3.6 billion Towns Fund
- £1 billion Future High Streets Fund, part of the Towns Fund
- £900 million Getting Building Fund
- £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund
- £220 million UK Community Renewal Fund
- Shared Prosperity Fund
- UK Tourism Recovery Plan
- Independent Review of Destination Management Organisations in England



# Northern Saints Trails



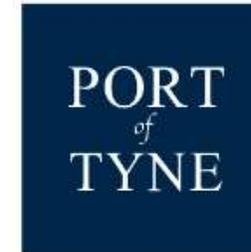
- Regional tourism product development
- Position the North East as the 'Christian Crossroads of the British Isles'
- Website showcasing 500+ attractions and places to eat, drink and stay overnight

# Partnership and industry engagement



- 850 core tourism business + 500 secondary visitor economy businesses
- Visit County Durham paid for partnership scheme
- Wednesday Grapevine weekly e-newsletter to c1,200 contacts
- Tailored training – social media, YouTube, golf, weddings, group travel, etc.
- Industry events – conferences & networking
- Partnership approach to encourage collaborative working for the benefit of the destination and businesses



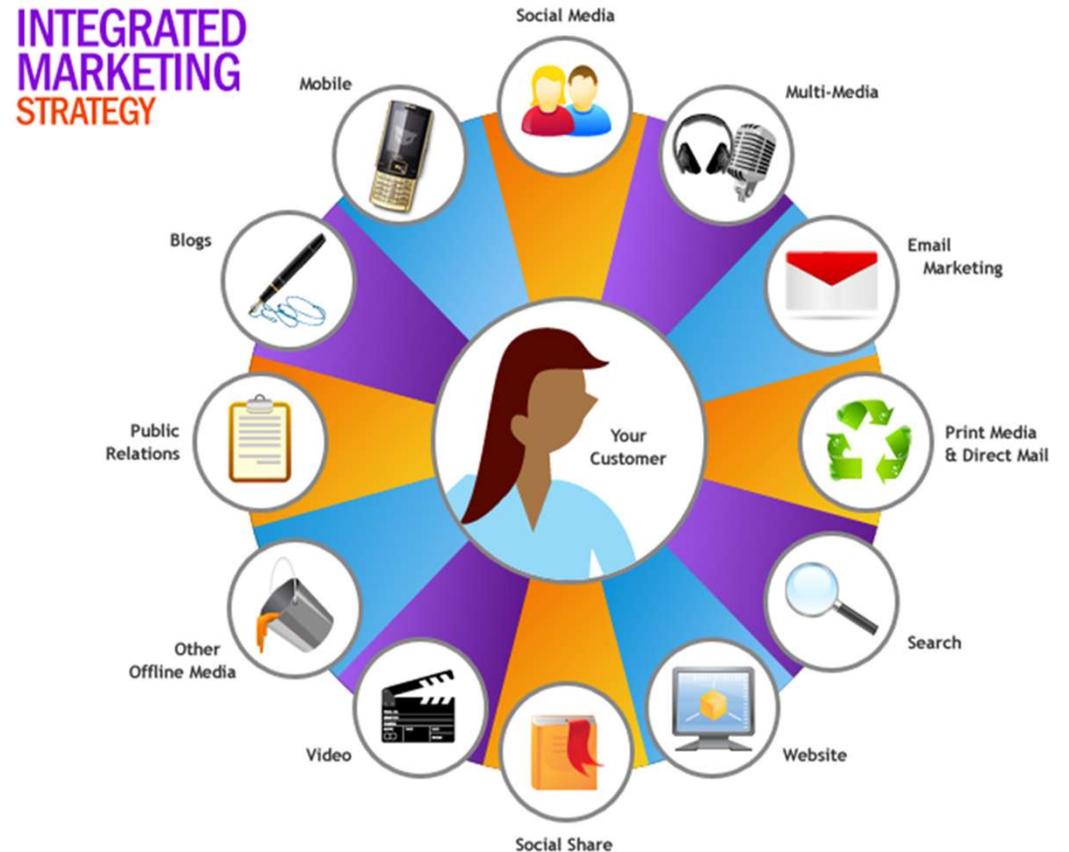


# Destination marketing

- Work in partnership with strategic partners and tourism businesses

Main aims are to:

- raise the national profile & appeal of the county encourage overnight stays – stay longer and spend more
- raise shoulder season occupancy
- raise awareness of a distinctive Durham experiences



# Campaigns

- Escape the Everyday – day visit and staycation campaign:
  - June-July 2021
  - maximum £80k from VisitEngland’s DMO Recovery Marketing Fund
  - amplify the national campaign at local level
  - benefit from halo campaign activity
- Digitally-led campaign, with paid media including:
  - VOD ITV Hub and Channel 4: All 4
  - radio digital channel partnership
  - digital display adverts
  - sponsored online content with targeted titles
  - influencer commissions
  - 4.5m people reached



## ESCAPE THE EVERYDAY



## Media activity

- Generated or supported over £400k worth of media coverage this year to date
- National Walking Month – May 2021:
  - generated over £50k worth of coverage
  - 60 feature inclusions
- Attendance at the Travmedia IMM international media marketplace event
- Media and influencer visits:
  - Britain Magazine
  - Wanderlust Chloe
  - Daily Mail
  - Mini Travellers



**The  
Guardian**

**Wanderlust**<sup>®</sup>  
Taking The Road Less Travelled Since 1993

**The  
Telegraph**

# Lumiere Breaks

- Dedicated campaign to maximise the ability of Lumiere to attract out of county visitors
- Encourage longer stays and short breaks
- Supporting the new county-wide artworks through itineraries to increase dwell time and spend
- Enhanced stay longer content on Lumiere channels
- Joint media visit and Instameet



Manchester  
Evening News

The  
Guardian



## Northern Saints Trails

- Media call 16 September
- 20 pieces of regional and national coverage over £70k value – over 3.4m reach
- September feature in the Guardian:
  - syndicated across Yahoo and MSN
  - £87k value - 10.3m reach
- Online feature on the Group Leisure & Travel magazine website

# What's next...



## New national destination marketing campaign to run November to Spring 2022 :

- ongoing recovery marketing to support the sector
- building on the profile we have achieved over the last 12 months
- campaigns to date have focussed on encouraging people to reconnect with the county new campaign will target those that may not have considered Durham as being for them
- video and web portal in production
- paid media to run from early 2022 to support shoulder season

## Other activity underway:

- Influencer commission – Kate Stanforth
- Loved by Locals UGC campaign
- Interactive online marketing tool for Christmas
- Collaboration with Visit Northumberland on the 20th anniversary of the first Harry Potter film

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UK CITY OF CULTURE  
BIDDING CITY

**20  
25**

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**Durham.  
No ordinary  
county.**

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