

Hospitality set for ‘turbulent’ 2022 – what it means for eventprofs



Jane Pendlebury - CEO of HOSPA

Hospitality was badly hit by Covid, Brexit and a staffing crisis in 2021 – with serious knock-on effects for the meetings and events sector. Here Jane Pendlebury, CEO of HOSPA, give us a heads up about hospitality trends for the coming 12 months and what it means for event professionals...

Despite our continued resilience and 2022 being a new year, many of the same problems within hospitality will remain.

Staffing, a primary issue, will continue — it's something that's only been accelerated by factors such as changing lifestyles, Brexit and, of course, the pandemic. As people reassess their priorities, many continue to seek a more rural lifestyle outside the confines of the urban environment, and this is something that could spell a decline in casual dining within cities – especially as more and more business is conducted remotely. On the flipside, of course, this could be a great opportunity for the hospitality climate of towns and villages to embrace newcomers.

With people continuing to work from home, and many business meetings continuing to be conducted online, routine trade for independent businesses who rely on people being out and about, such as sandwich shops, cafes and more, will continue to be affected and once again the industry as a whole must show continued resilience.

Many of the issues we face are largely down to the influence of Covid and it's simply become impossible to ignore. As much as we'd like this to be over, it's very much set to be a theme of 2022 and likely beyond. Uncertainty leads to reduced confidence, which in turn leads to reduced business for hospitality. So with this in mind, it's vital that businesses continue their commitment to providing the most Covid-secure service possible.

With continued restrictions on international travel, we may see another bumper summer of staycations, providing much needed trade for some of the UK's fabulous coastal and rural locations. But, of course, for those properties that rely on corporate bookings, this is a further problem. With reduced international business visitors continuing to impact trade, 2022 will be another tough year – so they will have to continue in the need to strike a balance between leisure and corporate. Something that's easier said than done in an ever-changing hospitality landscape.

In-person conferences and events will likely be another key talking point of this year and are largely influenced by attendee confidence and mobility. During the height of the pandemic, our annual HOSPACE event highlighted the power of technology to deliver a successful online and hybrid event. However, in 2021, our in-person conference also highlighted just how powerful face-to-face interaction can be, especially when we'd all been apart for two years.

As for this year, I believe we will see an increase in in-person events, but with the added security of technology to accommodate both the turbulent hospitality climate and those still nervous to mingle face to face.

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