

EVENT ROUNDUP:

Navigating the Longevity Tourism Landscape

Capitalising on the Growing Market and Opportunities



Globally, the spending power of consumers aged 60+ is poised to reach £15 trillion by the end of the decade, with the 50+ population contributing £120 billion annually to the tourism sector and the rise in global travellers aged 65 and over is projected to go from 210 million in 2019 to 250 million by 2024.

What might appear like a mundane statistic is in reality, an incredibly exciting opportunity for economic growth and job creation in our region and could be a game changer for the North East economy.

On the 28th of November, we held our Longevity as a Destination Event to engage with the region's key businesses and stakeholders to discuss together how to best capitalise on the opportunities that longevity tourism brings to the table.

What do we mean by Longevity Market and what is IoCT?

Our Programme Lead, Jennine Jonczyk, introduced the Internet of Caring Things® (IoCT™) programme, emphasising its crucial role in the expanding Longevity market, valued at \$25 billion globally. IoCT's impact spans every touchpoint of life, influencing everything from diet and travel to access to green spaces and education.

Tourism's Vital Role in Longevity

Prof Lynne Corner shed light on why the tourism industry is integral to the Longevity market. She explored opportunities for businesses, emphasising the significance of travel for learning, behavioural change through engaging experiences, and the potential within specific niches like multigenerational tourism, solo travel, soft adventure trips and food tourism. Notably, she highlighted that designing for an ageing population should avoid stereotyping experiences as "for the old."

City of Longevity Initiative and IoCT Applications

Lynne provided updates on the progress of the City of Longevity initiative, with several cities joining the Trailblazing Network. IoCT's real-world applications were showcased through partnerships, including Telraam for data collection and EMOTIV's smart headphones for measuring brain activity. These technologies offer insights into human behaviour, essential for the growth of the longevity and tourism sectors.

Challenges and Opportunities for North East England's Visitor Economy

Ian Thomas, Director of Visitor Economy at Destination North East England, highlighted the challenges faced by the region in terms of lower domestic and international visitation and spending compared to other areas. He emphasised the importance of the visitor economy, outlining strategies to double its value in ten years. Key opportunities include the development of The Sage arena, luxury market product offerings, and attracting new transportation routes.

DNEE's commitment to sustainability, as demonstrated through its subscription to the Global Destination Sustainability Index, was discussed. Ensuring accessibility for the 27% of North East residents with disabilities was emphasised not just as a social responsibility but as a driver of additional demand and revenue.

Innovation in Hospitality: Role of Robotics

Eric Guo from Spark EPOS showcased the potential of robotics in the hospitality sector, focusing on cloud computing, IoT, and AI. The CoBots, including GITA robots (as photographed above), were presented as tools that enhance operational efficiency, safety, and workforce satisfaction.

Panel Discussion: Building Inclusive and Innovative Visitor Economy

The panel, including Helen Shieber from Spanish City, explored the role of regional attractions as hubs for health and wellness activities. The discussion covered topics such as the impact of robotics on cleanliness reassurance, opportunities for businesses and citizens to facilitate these hubs, and the need for a more inclusive visitor economy.

Future Developments and Collaboration

The event concluded with a focus on future developments, urging collaboration, breaking silos, and fostering innovation. The potential for the North East to become an international City of Longevity, by leveraging its attractions, combined with an increased awareness of the region's assets, cannot be understated.

We would, once again, like to thank all of our panellists and attendees, and invite anyone interested to keep an eye out for details of our forthcoming workshops in collaboration with Destination North East England, where we will explore the potential of IoCT technologies for innovative businesses and the overall wellbeing of the region.