

# Wellbeing the focus for Scottish staycation site

**Private House Stays, one of Scotland's most popular staycation booking sites, is to focus on holidaymakers' wellbeing in its bid to breathe new life into the tourism sector.**

The company lists hotels, B&Bs, glamping sites and private and self-catering houses with rooms to let all over Scotland.

Owner Cassie Bouverie is expanding her selection of properties as the lockdown restrictions ease and the East Lothian-based businesswoman plans to enhance the Scottish portfolio by partnering with pilates and yoga studios, masseurs, reiki and mental health practitioners.

"There is no doubt the nation is in need of nurturing after suffering through the pandemic," she said.

"To try to help as many people as possible get the most from their holidays, wellbeing is going to be our focus. When people book to stay in certain places, the plan is to have partnerships with facilities offering the likes of yoga and counselling so that visitors can get the most out of their break.



Cassie Bouverie

"We are a bespoke tourism business and are all about the people and creating a memorable experience for our guests. I

genuinely think we can help the hospitality industry get back on its feet by offering something different to holidaymakers from what's already out there on the market.

"We want to work more closely with local attractions around the country to make the visitor experience even better. We'd love to hear from local businesses and practitioners who specialise in improving wellbeing, which is something many guests want to experience while they're in Scotland.

"We all need as much healing as possible. I'm hoping Private House Stays can play a proactive part in the recovery of the tourism sector whilst at the same time helping the recovery of our visitors."

To help extend her offering to visitors, Cassie has invested in a state-of-the-art booking platform as part of an innovative new website – [www.privatehousestays.com](http://www.privatehousestays.com) – which allows her to charge the lowest rate of commission to her properties, saving them thousands of pounds in the process.

As she gears up for an anticipated increase in activity post-lockdown, Cassie has successfully applied to the government Kickstart scheme through the Midlothian Chamber of Commerce for two placements.

She said: "The exciting thing we're doing is letting accommodation providers take back control, without having to pay huge amounts of commission to online travel agents, while at the same time providing a brilliant, easy to navigate tool for visitors wanting to plan their visit to Scotland around what interests them.

"I am really excited about what the future has in store after such a depressing year for the sector. I am very excited to see how the coming weeks evolve and it is imperative that we all work together towards a brighter future."

Becoming one of the first to partner with the HIT Scotland

Tourism and Hospitality Talent Development Programme has helped Cassie with her new business strategy.

The ten-week course is funded by the Scottish Government and is designed to motivate and develop top talent in the sector as it looks to bounce back from the crippling effects of the pandemic.

HIT Scotland is helping 1000 tourism businesses in the country and chief executive David Cochrane MBE said: "We have been delighted with the uptake of the Talent Development management modules.

"Forward-thinking organisations, such as Private House Stays, have used this most challenging of times to immerse themselves with skills and updated knowledge to be better prepared for the recovery. People are always at the core of great hospitality and investing now will pay dividends later."

Private House Stays partners with Visit Scotland and Jim Clark, Regional Leadership Director (West), said: "With restrictions still in place for both UK and international travel, it is unclear what the upcoming tourism season will look like. However, as restrictions ease, we anticipate the domestic market will be the first to emerge albeit subject to travel constraints.

"It is extremely positive to hear about Cassie and Private House Stays' expansion plans with a new website which can help generate business for B&Bs, private and self-catering houses and glamping sites.

"This project is a great example of digital innovation and collaboration across our industry, two elements which are going to be vital to help tourism and events businesses survive and recover in the wake of the pandemic."