



MEMO

To:

From: Kerrie Tripp

Date: June 22 - 26, 2026

Subject: UK & Ireland Sales Mission Report



Discover New England (DNE) hosted a sales mission to the UK & Ireland from June 22–26, 2026, with stops in London, Manchester, Belfast, and Dublin. The delegation included representatives from the Maine Office of Tourism, Sterling Ridge Resort, Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, Newport Mansions, and Revolutionary Valley. Throughout the week, delegates met with more than 107 travel trade and media representatives through one-on-one appointments, training sessions, networking events, and media meetings.

London & Manchester

The mission began in London with travel trade and media appointments focused on market updates and itinerary development. Operators Journeyscape, American Affair and America As You Like It confirmed continued interest in New England, particularly for authentic experiences, rail travel, wildlife, and destinations beyond traditional gateway cities. Similar interest was echoed by the several media desksides through the London and Manchester portion. The London program concluded with a reception at Gray's Inn for the Under Shared Skies partnership in collaboration with Southern Quebec. In Manchester, meetings with First Class Holidays, Carrier International Holidays, and Lusso Travel reinforced positive interest in New England while confirming that booking decisions continue to have longer lead times than in previous years. A training session with First Class Holidays' reservations team provided an opportunity to educate front-line sales staff on the region's newest products.

Discover New England hosted a table at the 2026 TravMedia Awards, one of the UK's premier travel media events. Michele Cota met with editors and freelance journalists representing leading travel publications, strengthening relationships, discussing story ideas, and presenting an award during the ceremony.



Belfast & Dublin

The Ireland portion of the mission began in Belfast with a program designed to combine targeted one-on-one meetings, education, and relationship building. Delegates participated in individual meetings with Travel Solutions and Rory's Travel Club, providing opportunities to discuss New England product, destination updates, and future programming. The delegation also hosted a luncheon and networking session followed by a formal workshop with Rory's Travel Club, bringing together influential travel trade professionals and media for destination presentations and discussion with the New England delegation.

In Dublin, the program continued with one-on-one meetings, including discussions with Aer Lingus and Travel Department, followed by a luncheon and travel trade workshop at the Iveagh Garden Hotel. These sessions provided delegates with additional opportunities to present new products and experiences, strengthen relationships with Irish travel partners, and discuss opportunities for future New England programming. The mission concluded with an intimate media reception for four journalists, allowing for more in-depth conversations and relationship building while identifying potential story ideas and opportunities for future media visits to New England.



Market Sentiment

Interest in New England remains strong across both the UK and Ireland markets. Operators reported continued demand for authentic experiences, rail travel, wildlife, and itinerary-based travel, while noting that booking decisions continue have longer lead times than in previous years.

Key Themes

- Authentic, experience-driven travel continues to outperform traditional sightseeing itineraries.

- Strong demand for rail itineraries and slow travel experiences.
- Wildlife, culinary tourism, and Dark Sky experiences generated strong interest.
- Boutique accommodations, cabins, inns, and unique lodging options continue to appeal to the market.
- Tour operators continue to seek destinations beyond traditional gateway cities, creating opportunities throughout New England.
- Sustainability and conservation stories remain important for both travel trade and media.

Conclusion

The 2026 UK & Ireland Sales Mission successfully strengthened relationships with key travel trade and media partners while introducing new tourism products and reinforcing Discover New England's presence in two of its most important international markets. The positive response to the Under Shared Skies initiative, combined with continued interest in authentic, experience-based travel, provides a strong foundation for future itinerary development, media coverage, and cooperative marketing opportunities

