

## More people cruising to the UK's South West Coast than ever before

During 2017 the 10 ports in the South West, represented by the marketing organisation Destination South West (DSW), will welcome 156 cruise ships, a growth of over 35% in just 3 years.

This is a substantial increase on the 45 cruise calls that visited the area when DSW was first launched in 2002 as the first regional initiative in the UK to market direct to the Cruise Industry.

With both Portland and the Isles of Scilly looking forward to record breaking years for both the size and number of cruise ships, it's little wonder that confidence and investment in the Region's ports has grown. Portland Port's cruise berth extension will be completed in time for their 2017 cruise season, allowing them to compete for the business of the larger cruise ships. Poole Harbour has announced its own £10 Million Cruise berth extension to be completed later this year which will provide alongside accommodation for cruise ships up to 220 metres.

DSW Chair Ian McQuade from Portland Port commented "The investment in a new berth extension enables us to handle ships in excess of 340m LOA, putting us in a very unique group of ports along the English Channel that continue to serve an ever increasing range of cruise line customers."

There are also further investment plans for 2 new state-of-the-art attractions for the region. Plymouth's dynamic new History Centre will transform its museum and art gallery with a £14.8 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Ilfracombe is investing in a new purpose built Watersports Centre which will include a teaching space and café.

Mike Reynolds from ABP Plymouth, one of the founding members of DSW and now it's Vice Chair commented "The UK is becoming increasingly popular as a cruise destination and it is fantastic to see such substantial growth in the South West as cruise lines continue to recognise the many diverse and unique attractions that our region has to offer."