



VisitEngland™

VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

VisitEngland's Quality Standards for Visitor Attractions



Arundel Castle & Gardens

Welcome to the VisitEngland Quality Standards for Accreditation

At VisitEngland, we're passionate about raising England's profile, increasing the volume and value of tourism, and developing England's visitor economy by working with organisations of all sizes and specialities. These quality standards will help you become part of this mission.

A VisitEngland Accreditation gives potential customers a label they can trust. Highlighting your dedication to quality shows that your business has been independently verified by the national tourism agency as offering a consistently high standard of service.

Our Quality Standards are the building blocks that form the basis of what our assessors will be looking for when they visit you. By reading and applying these criteria carefully, you can be confident that your attraction will meet the high industry standards required to become recognised by VisitEngland. And remember, the assessment is not only of the physical product, but also of the experience that your attraction provides. It's not just a box-ticking exercise. We look forward to working with and promoting your property.

– VisitEngland

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Bodleian Libraries

Core Criteria

The VisitEngland Visitor Attraction Quality Scheme is a quality based assessment and the accreditation reflects the visitor experience and the quality of the product and services offered by the attraction and its staff. The assessment is underpinned by VisitEngland's National Code of Practice, a commitment to which is a requirement of participation in the scheme. This ensures that all attractions are operating to the minimum standards.

VisitEngland's National Code of Practice for Visitor Attractions can be found on page 6. This explains the criteria met by every attraction taking part in the quality scheme.

Statutory Obligations

These obligations will vary from attraction to attraction, dependent on the nature and scope of the attraction. All attractions need to have adequate public liability insurance or comparable government indemnities, and in addition comply with all applicable planning, health, safety and fire regulations.

Safety

- A wide range of health and safety legislation applies to the attraction industry due to the diverse nature of the attractions within it. Are you up-to-date and fully compliant?
- Are you aware of the rules that apply to your type of attraction?
- Do you have up-to-date fire risk assessments for the buildings within your attraction?
- Do food handlers receive training and appropriate supervision?
- Do you carry out regular health and safety audits?
- Be sure to cover yourself with a good public liability insurance policy.

National Code of Practice for Visitor Attractions

The owner and management have undertaken:

- 1** To provide in promotional materials an accurate description of the amenities, facilities and services of the Attraction.
- 2** To indicate on all such promotional materials any requirements for pre-booking and any significant restrictions on entry.
- 3** To welcome all visitors courteously and without discrimination in relation to gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or belief. To respect the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 by making 'reasonable' adjustments to improve service for disabled people and make available an Access Statement describing the accessibility aspects of a visit to the Attraction.
- 4** To describe accurately and display clearly:
 - a)** Any charges for entry including service charges and taxes where applicable and any additional charges for individual attractions or special exhibitions.
 - b)** Dates and hours of operation, both opening and closing.
- 5** To provide in promotional materials for visitor enquiries a postal address, an e-mail address, a telephone number and a website address from which the detailed information specified in 1, 2, 3 and 4 can be obtained.
- 6** To hold a current public liability insurance policy or comparable Government indemnity, and to comply with all applicable planning, health, safety, fire and other statutory requirements and regulations.
- 7** To provide signage and orientation information as appropriate to the Attraction to assist visitors in understanding and enjoying the Attraction.
- 8** To consider the needs of visitors for whom English is not their first language and, as appropriate to the Attraction, to make arrangements that enable them to be adequately informed to enjoy their visit.
- 9** To manage the Attraction in such a way as to ensure visitor safety, comfort and service by sustaining a high standard of maintenance, customer care, courtesy and cleanliness.

- 10** To ensure that all staff who meet visitors can provide information and guidance about the Attraction, and are readily distinguishable as staff, whether employees or volunteers.
- 11** To have regard to the need to manage and operate the Attraction in a sustainable way.
- 12** To provide, as appropriate to the nature, scale and location of the Attraction, coach, car, motorcycle and bicycle parking, adequate toilets, and catering facilities. If any of these requirements cannot be made available on site, to provide information at appropriate points on where they can be found locally.
- 13** To deal promptly and courteously with all enquiries, requests, reservations, correspondence and comments from visitors and try to resolve any complaints on site at the time of the visit.
- 14** To provide a facility on site for comments to be recorded and to advise clearly the name and contact details (address, telephone and e-mail) of the person to whom comments by visitors should be addressed.
- 15** To display prominently the National Code of Practice Certificate.



Quality is the Key

Our Commitment to You

Our professional assessors will work with you in order to maximise the potential of your business or organisation. As a member of the VisitEngland Visitor Attraction Quality Scheme you will receive a visit every year or every other year. This visit will look at all aspects of your visitor facing business, from viewing your website and social media channels through to visitor departure. Each assessment visit will be followed by a verbal debrief and a detailed written report. Both of these tools are designed to help you improve the visitor experience.

Prior to your assessment, your quality assessor will make contact with you. This is an opportunity for you to ask questions and to arrange your visit. The visit needs to be carried out without any of your staff or volunteers knowing that an assessor is on site. However, you might like to be sure that you are there at the time of the visit in order to take full advantage of the assessor's debrief. If your attraction is seasonal and you want the attraction to be seen when it is busy, then a suitable arrangement can be made.

At larger attractions, it might not be possible for the assessor to see and test every element of the site. If this is the case, they will discuss this with you before the visit and find out if there are any areas you would particularly like to be assessed, or any areas that you are happy for them to ignore. When on site, the assessor will do their best to follow this plan.

Your assessor will also be interested in finding out a little more about your attraction during the debrief. Are you as busy as you would like to be? Do you have quieter periods that you would like to promote? This information will allow your assessor to take a more focused approach and to offer suggestions that might benefit your business. We might also be able to offer other expertise from within VisitEngland.

Quality Assessment

Our assessors will grade each aspect of your attraction, based on visitor expectations of quality and best practice at attractions throughout England. The assessment is objective and judgement will not be made on any aspect of your attraction based on personal taste. The aim of the assessment is to add quality without taking away any of the character, style or uniqueness of your attraction.

What is Quality?

Whatever the type or theme of your attraction, a high quality experience and memorable visit is what your visitors and our assessors will be looking for.

Your assessor will be looking at areas such as those highlighted below with a critical eye, but always with the intention of helping you improve your attraction.

The Welcome

- The initial welcome at an attraction gives a very important first impression to visitors and can set the tone for the rest of their visit.
- As well as the welcome on arrival, the assessor will also check the welcome from other staff throughout the attraction, including those in the café, restaurant and shop.

Presentation of the Attraction

- The general presentation of the attraction, from entry to departure.
- In addition to the main attraction, think car parking areas, toilets, picnic areas etc. Are they kept clean and tidy throughout the day?

How You Tell Your Story

- Is the interpretation clear and easy to understand?
- Has the story been told in a way that visitors can easily understand?
- Is interpretation accessible to all? Are subtitles, British Sign Language and audio-description included wherever possible? Do you offer large print guides?

Catering and Retail

- How attractive and enticing is the food and drink on offer in the café or restaurant?
- Is the café or restaurant easy for customers to move around?

Staff Efficiency, Customer Care and Knowledge

- How well trained and knowledgeable are your staff?
- Do they fully demonstrate their knowledge?
- Are staff customer focused and do they provide service with a smile?
- Have customer-facing staff been trained in disability and equality awareness?

The Assessment Process

- The assessment is about help and advice. The style, subject matter and character of your attraction are what make it unique. Your assessor is there to enhance that, not to change it.
- Ask your assessor questions, lots of questions! Our assessors see attractions of all shapes and sizes across England and they are able and willing to offer help and advice. They are also looking to identify and spread best practice within the industry.
- Stay in touch. Assessors are happy to answer your questions in between visits.



Bombay Sapphire Distillery

How do we Measure Quality?

During your visit, your assessor will make quality judgements across all aspects of your attraction and award a score from 0 to 5 for each element.

- 0 = unacceptable
- 1 = poor
- 2 = disappointing
- 3 = good
- 4 = very good
- 5 = excellent

At the end of the visit they can calculate a percentage score for the overall attraction and for each section of the attraction. In order to achieve VisitEngland Visitor Attraction accreditation, the overall percentage score has to reach 60% or above. Additionally, seven of the eight sectional scores must also reach 60% or above.

These seven key sections are:

- Arrival
- The Attraction
- Cleanliness
- Toilets
- Catering
- Retail
- Staff

By requiring a minimum score in each of the key sections, VisitEngland and your visitors can be sure that the attraction offers a consistent level of quality throughout.

We understand that not all attractions will provide all of the services and facilities listed above. Where this is the case, the relevant scoring areas will be removed from the assessment process with no detrimental effect on the overall outcome.

Assessment Example

In the assessment example, Attraction X provides all of the Core Criteria facilities and services and meets the percentage score requirements in order to be accredited by VisitEngland. Accreditation requires a minimum overall score of 60% and a minimum of 60% for each key section. These scores are met, but in two sections the scores are borderline and there is a concern that they might fall below the required level at the next visit if action is not taken.

The scores show that the weaker areas in the catering section are the first impressions and decoration, furniture and fittings, both of which are disappointing in terms of their quality. The assessor will detail the reasons for this at the verbal debrief and in the written report, with suggestions as to how the situation might be improved. The arrival section is also borderline, but all individual elements have been scored as good or above. Advice will be offered across the section about how the overall percentage score might be improved.

PRE-ARRIVAL			
	SCORE	PERCENTAGE	ACCREDITATION
Online presence	5		
Leaflet/Brochure	4		
Total	9/10	90%	Pass

ARRIVAL			
	SCORE	PERCENTAGE	ACCREDITATION
Car Park	3		
First Impressions	4		
Layout and Entry Point Management	3		
Visitor Information and Signage	3		
Total	13/20	65%	Pass but borderline

THE ATTRACTION			
	SCORE	PERCENTAGE	ACCREDITATION
Layout and Visitor Flow	4		
Range of Content vs Expectations	4		
Visitor Information and Signage	4		
Appearance of Grounds and Gardens	4		
Appearance of Buildings (exterior)	3		
Decoration and Maintenance (interior)	4		
Presentation of Displays	4		
Quality of Interpretation (fixed)	4		
Quality of Interpretation (other)	3		
Total	34/45	75%	Pass

CLEANLINESS			
	SCORE	PERCENTAGE	ACCREDITATION
Car Park and Arrival Areas	4		
The Attraction	4		
Toilets	5		
Catering Outlets	5		
Retail Outlets	5		
Total	23/25	92%	Pass

TOILETS			
	SCORE	PERCENTAGE	ACCREDITATION
Provision and Location	4		
Decoration and Maintenance	4		
Fixtures and Fittings	4		
Total	12/15	80%	Pass

CATERING			
	SCORE	PERCENTAGE	ACCREDITATION
Layout and Ease of Use	3		
Ambience and First Impressions	2		
Decoration, Furniture and Fittings	2		
Food: Menus and Range	4		
Food: Quality and Presentation	4		
Total	15/25	60%	Pass but borderline

RETAIL			
	SCORE	PERCENTAGE	ACCREDITATION
Ease of Use and Visitor Flow	4		
Display Units, Fittings and Lighting	4		
Presentation of Merchandise	3		
Range and Appropriateness of Merchandise	4		
Total	15/20	75%	Pass

STAFF			
	SCORE	PERCENTAGE	ACCREDITATION
Appearance of Staff	4		

ADMISSIONS			
Customer Care	4		
Efficiency	4		
Knowledge	4		

GUIDES, VOLUNTEERS, GARDENERS ET AL			
Customer Care	4		
Efficiency	4		
Knowledge	4		

CATERING			
Customer Care	3		
Efficiency	3		
Knowledge	3		

RETAIL			
Customer Care	3		
Efficiency	4		
Knowledge	4		
Total	48/65	73%	Pass

OVERALL SCORE			
	SCORE	PERCENTAGE	ACCREDITATION
Total	169/225	75%	Pass

Activities and Tours

The Visitor Attraction Quality Scheme offers accreditation to all types of attraction, including those that specialise in Activities or Tours. For those attractions that provide an activity as the primary focus of their business, such as a zip wire ride or a horse riding experience, an activity based assessment will be carried out by the assessor. A tour assessment is for those businesses that offer a tour as their primary or sole experience. Any type of tour can be scored, including bus tours, walking tours and boat tours.

The assessment process will be largely the same for activities and tours as it is for visitor attractions, and in all cases the assessor will check the elements relating to Pre-Arrival, Arrival, Cleanliness, Toilets, Catering, Retail and Staff as appropriate to the activity or tour. However, each type of attraction has its own scoring criteria in the Attraction section to ensure that the experience can be accurately assessed and relevant feedback can be given. For example, an activity will be assessed on the instruction and supervision given as well as the availability of equipment, whereas a tour will be assessed on the comfort and quality of transport and the quality and content of the commentary.

More details on the scoring criteria for visitor attractions, activities and tours can be found on the following pages.



Wembley Stadium Tours

Quality Assessment

What will your assessor be looking at?

Here we look in more detail at what your assessor will be taking into consideration when awarding each score that goes towards making up your overall total.

The information below is designed to give the attraction owner or manager an indication of what areas the assessors will be looking at when carrying out a visit, in order to assist in the preparation for the visit. It is important to note that all assessments are carried out within the context of the attraction being assessed. Expectations will be very different between a large and a small attraction, but the principles of visitor service, good interpretation of the subject matter, safe, fun activities, good food and well-presented, clean toilets remain the same.

Pre-Arrival

This section is about the accuracy and clarity of information on the website and social media and any other printed material, such as a leaflet or brochure, to which the visitor may refer before visiting.

Where an attraction has an entrance fee, information needs to be provided so that potential visitors can access this before arrival. It is most likely that this information will be provided via web based media. It should include opening times and entrance prices. Any supplementary prices for exhibitions or extra activities and tours should also be made clear, as should seasonal variations in pricing. The prices advertised should not be exceeded on arrival. An Accessibility Guide should be available as a downloadable document for disabled visitors and others with access needs.

Online presence

- The assessor will try different searches to see how easy the website is to find. When they have located the site, they will spend time testing all functions of the site.
- The assessor will read visitor reviews and feedback on prominent review sites and look at any linked content on social media sites.
- Information provided on the site will be used to plan the visit, such as directions, ticket information and details on how to book a tour.
- They will re-visit the site following the assessment. Did the attraction deliver what the website promised?
- Information on accessibility will be checked. Can an Accessibility Guide be downloaded as a word document?
- How accessible is the website?

Leaflet

- If a leaflet is available, the assessor will look at the clarity of font size, type and colour, as well as the weight and quality of the paper and the use and quality of photographs.
- They will assess the impact of the brochure when racked.
- The accuracy of the brochure will be checked, including promise vs. delivery, as well as contact details, opening times, prices and directions.
- Is reference made to the Accessibility Guide and alternative formats?

Hints and Tips

- Provide directions and maps to your attraction, but many people simply want the postcode or address to use with their Sat Nav. Is the postcode on your 'Contact Us' page the same as the postcode required to get the visitor to the front entrance?
- Pay regular attention to your website and social media content. Is it up to date? Is it refreshed regularly? Is it engaging and informative? A website is vital and a presence on social media sites becomes more important year on year.
- Ensure your website is as accessible to as many users as possible.
- Include sufficient information about the accessibility of your attraction. Use images where possible to ensure information is easy to understand for all users, especially those who may have additional needs.

Arrival

This area covers the overall visitor arrival, including signposting, parking and ease of access. Access roads, car parks, accessible parking bays, paths and steps must be appropriately surfaced and in sound condition. Where appropriate, areas must have adequate lighting to ensure the safety of visitors. Initial signage should be well maintained with the opening times, the full range of prices and any restrictions to entry clearly displayed either outside the entrance or at the entry point.

Car Park

- The assessor will review the quality and maintenance of the parking surface, irrespective of the type of surface.
- They will also check parking management, signage and traffic flows, as well as traffic calming measures and quality of implementation and separation of cars from pedestrians.
- Marking of bays will be looked at, including priority parking in suitable spaces and bays for disabled visitors and families.
- If parking charges are in place, how are these communicated and managed?
- Accessibility of parking barriers and ticket machines for disabled customers will be assessed.

First impressions

- The assessor will look at all areas of the grounds and gardens, from the entrance to pay points as well as all buildings seen before entering the attraction; the main frontage, gate house, barns etc.
- They will check the condition of paths and levels of lighting, if lighting is likely to be required.
- Storage and working areas will be looked at. Are bins visible that could be screened? Are maintenance areas tidy?

Layout & entry point management

- Is there clear freedom of movement? Think of visitors with pushchairs and wheelchair users.
- How is visitor flow managed? Are there one-way systems for entering and exiting, multiple entry points, turnstiles, a separate entrance for groups or other appropriate arrangements made? Where there are potentially longer queuing times, is there any form of queue “entertainment”, such as video screens to promote key features and activities to build up anticipation? Could queuing time be used to fill in Gift Aid forms, where applicable?
- Are there alternative entrance and exit routes for wheelchair users, particularly where there are rides?

Visitor Information and Signage

- Are visitor leaflets easy to read and can visitors easily orientate themselves using site maps and floor plans? Use of pictograms for facilities such as toilets, catering, retail and car parks simplifies locations and makes for ease of reference.
- Use of a standard and corporate style can be helpful and adds to the overall presentation. In smaller attractions, printed information of a good quality can be provided economically using in-house desktop publishing methods, but in a larger attraction, professionally printed material may be expected.
- In larger attractions, information points and leaflet dispensers may be needed at appropriate locations around the attraction. QR codes could also be used to help provide the visitor with additional information.
- Where possible, make use of whiteboards, chalkboards, clock faces for times or slatted information boards, so information can be easily and regularly updated.

Hints and Tips

- You might have put a great deal of time, money and effort into one particular aspect of your attraction and a website to support it, but don't forget that all important first impression.
- A visitor is not a visitor until they have bought their ticket, so don't allow a 'heart-sink' moment on arrival to turn them away or start the visit on a disappointing note.
- Is all of the external signage up-to-date and in good condition?
- Is the car park in good condition and are all areas clean and litter free?
- Are the grounds and gardens as good as the inside of the attraction?
- Are the external areas of all buildings in good order?
- Is the first impression excellent every time?

The Attraction

This section looks in detail at the visitor experience, covering everything from quality of presentation and interpretation to signage and visitor information. The layout of the attraction should be designed to allow practical access to all areas, whether by free or directed flow, and assisted by clear and well maintained signage. The range of content should be appropriate to the accepted broad theme of the attraction. Where applicable, all exhibits or features should be effectively presented with the use of appropriate media, ensuring accurate interpretation. All areas of the attraction should be in sound condition, with appropriate lighting to ensure a safe environment. Equipment needs to be safely maintained and working as intended. If a hearing loop is available, it should be in full working order and signage should be positioned where the loop is effective.

Layout & visitor flow

- How is visitor flow managed? It may be free flow, managed sequential flow or chronological flow. In all cases, it should be well thought out, without visitors being confused by the positioning of displays or exhibits.
- Where there is a storyboard or timeline presentation, clockwise flows may contribute to ease of reading. Footprint trails or similar flow markers may assist.
- Can the visitor move freely without any bottlenecks forming? Are there areas of restricted access or forced two-way flows which impede movement? Consider methods to alleviate flow, such as timed tickets.
- Does space allow for effective queue management?
- How are the needs of visitors met? Are there special trails for adults and children with a learning disability, children's trails, outdoor walks, farm trails? Are they way-marked to show distances and duration?
- Have steps been taken to ensure visitors can move around safely? Are pillars and glazed areas or doors clearly marked?
- Is a toilet area and water bowl provided for assistance dogs?
- Where lifts are available, are they accessible with visual floor indicators, audible announcements and emergency intercom compatible with hearing aids? Range of content vs. expectations

Range of content vs. expectations

- How relevant is the range of content within the overall context of the attraction?
- Are visitors' expectations met or exceeded, or could they be disappointed? Consider the information and promises made on the website and other advertising material.
- How wide a visitor market and range of interests and ages does it meet?
- Is the range adequate to reflect the subject or theme? If it is too sparse, it could detract from the quality of the visitor experience.
- How authentic is the content? Many enthusiasts may use the attraction as a reference source for information, such as at a steam railway, a bygones museum or a war museum.

The items displayed will need to be authentic and accurately interpreted; or if a replica then that must be clearly stated.

- Is there balance to the range? Does it allow a clear understanding of the relationship between exhibits or displays? This is especially important if a story or series of events is being related.
- How detailed is the content? If the attraction is specialised, such as a vintage car museum, the content would need to be sufficiently detailed to effectively cover the subject, but not so detailed that visitors become overwhelmed.
- How are areas of the attraction interpreted that may not be accessible for certain people? Are virtual tours available?

Visitor information & signage

- The assessor will look at the use of directional signs, finger post signs, orientation boards, plans and display boards.
- Do site plans include 'You Are Here' indicators? Are orientation plans fully aligned and tactile?
- Does signage follow a corporate style, mirroring the style of general signage from the arrival onwards?
- How practical and effective is the positioning of signage? Do buildings, vegetation or other signs obscure any signage?
- Are any signs confusing?
- Are signs well maintained and durable with up-to-date information and directions?
- How easy to read are the signs? Upper and lower case lettering, a clear font, no text over images and strong contrast between text and background tends to be most effective.
- Temporary signs or handwritten signs should be avoided if they present a poor impression, although in some instances handwritten signs may be the most appropriate means of providing up-to-date information, such as chalk boards at a farm attraction.
- Laminated signs may be useful in smaller attractions for temporary use, but do need to be mounted properly and not pinned or stapled.
- Are designated and recommended routes provided for disabled visitors and pushchairs?
- Are information terminals available and do these include audio, subtitled video or British Sign Language versions?
- Where an alternative accessible entrance or ramped access is provided, is it well signed?

Appearance of grounds & gardens

- The assessor will look at the general maintenance of all grounds and gardens within the attraction. Are lawns and flower beds well maintained? Consideration will be given to the time of year.
- Are pathways in good condition?
- Are fences and gates in good condition?

Appearance of buildings (exterior)

- The general maintenance of the exterior of the buildings on site will be looked at, including the main building or buildings and any outbuildings within the confines of the attraction.
- The assessor will look at exterior decoration, guttering and downpipes.
- This section also includes the condition of roadways and paths.

Décor & maintenance (interior)

- The internal fabric of all buildings will be assessed, whether modern structures or stately homes.
- The quality and condition of all decoration will be included, such as painting of walls and ceilings, woodwork, wallpaper and wall fabrics.
- If there is no decoration required, then the assessor will look at the quality and appearance of the materials from which the building is constructed.

Presentation of displays

- There is a wide range in the type and style of display that will be used in visitor attractions.
- The assessor will assess within the context of the attraction and its subject matter.
- Is the subject displayed to its best advantage?

Quality of interpretation – fixed

- Fixed interpretation applies to written interpretation on display boards around the attraction and any added written interpretation, such as leaflets and guide books.
- The assessor will look at the relevance of the information and how this flows around the attraction. Is it shown in a logical order to engage the visitor?
- Is the information easy to read and understand? For example, is a suitable font size used and is information written in an engaging style?
- If technical terms are used, are these explained for visitors?

Quality of interpretation - other

- Other interpretation covers all other forms of interpretation, including audio, transcript of audio, tactile, demonstrations and guided tours.
- Is the information engaging and relevant, helping to keep visitors interested in the subject?
- If technical terms are used, are these explained?
- Is the style of interpretation easy to use for all visitors? For example, if an audio guide is available, is it easy to work out which sections of the attraction relate to the commentary?

The Activity

Advice, guidance & instruction

- The assessor will look at and listen to all of the advice, guidance and instruction offered to participants.
- Is the guidance and instruction provided sufficient for participants to feel safe and comfortable before embarking on the activity?
- Are questions invited and answered?
- Is reassurance offered, if needed?
- Is information and guidance offered to members of the group who are not participating? This could include best places to view those participating or where to find refreshments and toilets.

Quality of apparatus

- The assessor will look at the main piece or pieces of apparatus required in order to carry out the activity offered. For example, for a Quad Bike experience, the apparatus is the vehicle.
- Is it well maintained and well presented?

Availability & provision of equipment

- This section is about the personal equipment required in order to participate. At the Quad Bike experience, this might include protective clothing, a crash helmet and goggles.
- Is there good availability of equipment for all participants in a range of sizes?
- Is the equipment in good condition and easy to use?

Ongoing supervision

- Here the assessor will look at what supervision is offered during the experience.
- If constant supervision is required, is this provided?
- If the activity is self-guided, are staff available to offer reassurance if required?

Visitor information & signage

- Is sufficient information and signage provided to participants during the activity? This could be information about the activity or information and signage to non-participants in order to enhance their enjoyment of the site and watching the activity.

Experience vs. expectations

- Once the activity has been completed, the assessor will return to the expectations raised about the activity by the website and other advertising material.
- Did the activity live up to and meet those expectations?

The Tour

Tour introduction & information

- The assessor will look at and listen to all of the information provided to visitors about the tour that they are about to embark on.
- This might be provided by staff as tickets are purchased or by the tour guide before departure.
- Information given might include how long the tour will take, where it will finish and whether there will be comfort and refreshment breaks en route.

Comfort & quality of transport

- Unless the tour is a walking tour, there will be some form of transport provided for visitors. This will be assessed for comfort and quality and the assessment will take into account the type of transport used.

Quality & delivery of commentary

- The commentary might be delivered in a variety of ways, but is it clear and accessible to all?
- The assessment will take into account the location and style of the tour when assessing the commentary. For example, it might be appropriate to deliver it in different languages or using visual aids.

Quality of content

- Content will vary greatly from one type of tour to another.
- The assessor will check that the tour delivers the content advertised and if there is sufficient content to keep visitors interested and engaged for the full duration of the tour.
- Are any stops at cafes, bars or restaurants appropriate to the tour and enjoyed by the visitors?

Tour conclusion

- The assessor will check how the conclusion of the tour is handled by staff.
- Are visitors dropped off where they expected to be dropped off?
- Is assistance offered to guests with additional needs?
- Is supplementary and onward information offered?
- Are questions answered?

Experience vs. expectations

- Once the tour has been completed, the assessor will return to the expectations raised about the tour by the website and other advertising material. Did the tour live up to and meet those expectations?

Hints and Tips

- Technology may not have a part to play within your attraction. For many attractions, the traditional way of presentation and interpretation works best and helps to set the scene. However, think about how people use technology within their lives and make use of that technology to reach and communicate with them.
- There are devices that can aid visitors with sight loss or hearing loss to interpret your story. Review how these might work for you.
- Do you offer Wi-Fi access? It may not be relevant to your attraction, but people want to be connected wherever they go these days. Wi-Fi gives the ability to use QR (Quick Response) codes within your attraction and will enable visitors to upload their own images to social media sites during their visit.

Cleanliness

This section includes a detailed assessment of the cleanliness throughout the attraction, from the car park to the catering and retail outlets. A high standard of cleanliness needs to be maintained at all times across the attraction and within all ancillary facilities.

Car park & arrival areas

- Are external areas kept litter free?
- When provided, are there sufficient bins? Are bins emptied regularly enough, especially at busy periods?
- Is external furniture, such as seating and car park ticket machines, kept clean?
- Are windows clean?
- Are internal floors clean? Is the internal space clean, tidy and dust free?

The Attraction

- The cleanliness of the displays and exhibits will either enhance or detract from the overall appearance of the attraction.
- Are there regular and effective cleaning schedules?
- Is there close attention to detail, especially at eye level and at areas where dust may collect, such as light fixtures?
- Are grounds and gardens within the attraction litter free?

Toilets

- The assessor will look at all toilet facilities throughout the attraction and look for evidence of cleaning schedules, checking that they are being adhered to.
- Every element will be looked at in detail, including walls, floors, handles, sanitary ware, taps, wastes, extractor fans, toilet brushes and hazardous waste bins in designated accessible WCs.

Catering outlets

- The assessor will look at general cleanliness, including the floor covering and dusting of all high and low areas.
- Are dining tables and chairs cleared and cleaned in a timely manner as visitors leave?
- Areas where food is displayed and served, such as shelving, cold cabinets and hot plates, should be cleaned regularly.
- Crockery, cutlery, cutlery containers, drinking glasses and drink dispensers should be clean.

Retail outlets

- The assessor will look at general levels of cleanliness, including dusting of displays and floor cleaning.
- The merchandise, tables and shelving should be dust free and tidy.
- Payment areas should be regularly cleaned.

Hints and Tips

- Ensure litter is collected from around the site, as required.
- Do not allow bins to overflow and take care to screen refuse bins from customer view.
- Make sure a cleaning schedule is in place and that all staff are aware of this and adhere to it.

Toilets

The quality of toilets and range of facilities is an important element of the visitor experience, particularly for disabled visitors or visitors with young children. When provided, toilet facilities should be in a suitable location and adequate for the size of the attraction. Toilet facilities must include toilet roll holders, sufficient paper and adequate hand washing and hand drying facilities. All toilet facilities should be well maintained and have adequate ventilation. Accessible toilet facilities should be provided where possible, and should be as well maintained as the other toilet facilities. Turning space within accessible toilets should be kept clear and not be used for storage.

Provision, location & layout

- The assessor will look at the overall provision of toilets at the attraction. Are there enough to cater for the average numbers of visitors?
- There might be an ample supply of toilets overall, but are they well located? In larger attractions they would ideally be at more than one location. This will include toilets attached to catering or retail outlets as well as those within the main attraction or park. The assessor will take the type of attraction into account, for example a cathedral may be restricted on where facilities can be placed.
- The provision of baby changing facilities and designated accessible facilities will be checked.
- The layout and usability of the facilities will also be assessed.

Décor & maintenance

- The assessor will look at all areas of decoration and will assess the quality and condition of paintwork, tiles, grout, etc.
- The quality, condition and appropriateness of the flooring will be looked at.
- General maintenance of the facility should be in good order.

Fixtures & fittings

- The assessor will look at the quality of fixtures and fittings.
- When looking at fixtures and fittings, the assessor will consider more than just the toilets and washbasins. They will also look at the door locks, soap dispensers, bins, mirrors, hand dryers, paper towel dispensers, etc.

Hints and Tips

- Not all attractions will provide toilets, but if you do they will say more about you than you might think.
- The toilet will be the first port of call for many visitors. A shabby, poorly maintained and poorly stocked toilet facility might discourage visitors from using the café or paying a return visit to the attraction.
- Be sure that your toilets are well maintained, well stocked with soap, towels and toilet paper and are kept clean and fresh throughout the day.
- If you have a designated accessible toilet, provide good quality facilities which meet all access needs, rather than making it look like an afterthought or the poor relation of standard WCs.

Catering

The quality of the catering can be a crucial part of the visitor's enjoyment of the attraction. Décor, fixtures and fittings may be functional, but must be well maintained with all furniture in sound, stable condition and appropriate for the purpose intended. Where seating is provided, there must be adequate circulation space, free of obstructions. Indoor seating areas should have adequate heating, ventilation and lighting. The food and beverage operation must comply with all legal obligations. Menu descriptions should be accurate and all prices should be displayed clearly.

Layout & ease of use

- Is there well organised and effective queue management? This could be either forced flow or free flow, depending on the style and size of the attraction.
- Can the visitor manoeuvre comfortably around the facility, including between seating? Does the layout suit the target market, including families with pushchairs and older visitors? Is a buggy park provided?
- Does counter service have a logical layout? Are there clear menu item sections, e.g. cold food all together?
- Is the counter or a section of the counter accessible to people of short stature, wheelchair users and children?
- Are items on self-service counters clearly visible, priced and within the customer's reach?
- The café or restaurant should be able to cope with changes in visitor numbers with sufficient till points open at busy times.
- If there is outdoor seating, is it conveniently located?

Ambience & first impressions

- The assessor will look at the character and the atmosphere in each of the catering outlets.
- Is the facility themed?
- Is there music and does this enhance or hinder?
- Are there flowers on the tables?

Decoration, furniture & fittings

- The assessor will look at decoration within the main outlet and any ancillary rooms used by visitors, including the condition of the flooring and all of the dining furniture provided for customers, both inside the catering outlets and outside.
- Is there a choice of seating with and without armrests?
- Food display cabinets for both hot and cold food should be well maintained.
- Counters, payment desks, cutlery stations and menu boards should be in good condition.

Food: range & menus

- The assessor will look at the range of food outlets, from the main restaurant to the ice cream hut, and assess the full range of eating and drinking options.
- They will also check the range of options on the menu to see if there are healthy options, vegetarian options, dishes using local ingredients, children's food and allergen free alternatives, such as dairy free, wheat free, lactose free and nut free.
- Is the menu imaginative, unusual or themed?
- A large print menu should be available in at least 16 point and in a clear font, such as Arial.
- Staff should be available to offer assistance in a self-service outlet.

Food: quality & presentation

- The assessor will test as many outlets as they can, having a morning coffee in one outlet and lunch in another, for example.
- They will observe what is happening and being said by visitors.
- The presentation of food and drink in all areas will be checked, from cold drinks in fridges to hot food displays.
- Has attention to detail been demonstrated in the way cold food is displayed in self service outlets or served to the table?
- Does hot food look fresh? The assessor will take into account the colour of the vegetables and the consistency of gravy and sauces.
- Is hot food served hot and on a hot plate?
- Is the food served as described on the menu?
- The quality of ingredients, preparation and cooking will all be taken into account.

Hints and Tips

- It is likely that your café or restaurant will be an important part of the visitor experience and an important element of your revenue.
- Are visitors aware of the eating options and where to find them?
- Is the room well managed at busy times so as not to turn people away? Is there good queue management and are the dining tables being kept clean and tidy?
- Are the menus enticing with themed dishes and local food? If you do offer local food, then provide the provenance. People like to know what they are eating.
- If visitors choose to eat a picnic, do you provide tempting indulgences as an add on, such as a well-positioned ice cream hut, cakes or fruit?
- Visitors with dietary requirements are increasingly common. Ensure information and reasonable provision is made for visitors with a food allergy, intolerance or certain religious beliefs.
- If the dwell time at the attraction is less than a full day, are visitors encouraged to stay for lunch or arrive early with tempting offers on the website and within the attraction?
- Does your food offering compete with other options in the local vicinity, on price, quality and desirability? Check out the local competition.
- Is there cross selling between the retail and catering outlets? For example, can local foods that have been tried in some of the dishes on offer in the restaurant be purchased in the shop?
- If there is access to the café or restaurant to people not visiting the attraction, does it have its own identity rather than just being the café in the museum?

Retail

Secondary spend is a vital source of income for an increasing number of attractions and a visitor shop, however small or large, is a key way to deliver additional revenue. Décor, furniture, fixtures and fittings should all be maintained in sound condition. All retail areas should be adequately lit. All prices should be clearly visible.

Ease of use & visitor flow

- How easily can customers browse, access merchandise and make purchases?
- Do carousels and higher units block sightlines? Do floor basket displays impede access?
- Retailing may be in a shared area, such as the entrance. If so, are there dedicated tills for each area? Does each function adversely affect the other?
- If space is restricted, are some visitors, such as those with prams or wheelchair users, deterred from browsing? Could more open aisles be a realistic consideration?
- Consider the location and positioning of items. Would some benefit from being separated, such as books and sweets? Would some benefit from being positioned low down, such as children's toys?
- Are shopping baskets or trugs provided?

Display units, fittings & lighting

- The assessor will look at the quality and condition of the display units and other fixtures and fittings within the retail outlets, such as counters, tills and general light fittings.
- The shopping environment should be easy to browse and welcoming for all customers.

Presentation of merchandise

- Are displays imaginative with the use of different display units or containers?
- How effective is display lighting? Does it illuminate the products and enhance overall appearance?
- Are stock levels maintained with shelf items pulled forward, stock rotated and perishables in date?
- Are plants laid out appropriately with items at an accessible height and clear labelling provided to show colours and growing habits?
- For some products, such as fragrances and hand creams, are testers available?

Range & appropriateness of merchandise

- The assessor will look at the range of merchandise in relation to the customer profile. Does it match the theme of the attraction? Does the product range reflect the current exhibitions?
- If it is a family or children's attraction, are there items at a range of prices, including pocket money items?

- How suitable is the range for the visitor mix? The assessor will consider the needs of children, adults, enthusiasts, specialists and overseas visitors. For example, are foreign format DVDs available for overseas visitors?
- In larger attractions the range may be more extensive, but does it suit the style of attraction and meet visitors' expectations, such as tree guides at an arboretum?

Hints and Tips

- Are staff conscientiously upselling to visitors on arrival, such as guidebooks, GiftAid, memberships and season tickets? Often this element of selling can be inconsistent.
- Is there cross selling between the retail and catering outlets? For example, can local foods that are for sale in the shop be tried in some of the dishes on offer in the restaurant?
- Are gifts and souvenirs relevant to the attraction and are they appropriate for the target visitors?

Staff

The staff at your attraction are a vital part of the visitor experience. All staff throughout the attraction will be taken into account, including those who proactively interact with visitors, such as staff in the main attraction, café and shop, as well as gardeners and technicians. Staff do not need to wear a uniform or name badge, but they should be easily distinguishable from visitors and deal promptly and courteously with all visitors.

Staff appearance

- This question takes into account all of the staff seen within the attraction; parking, visitor welcome, attraction staff, gardeners, catering and retail staff.
- Visitor facing staff should be easily recognisable.
- Staff should be dressed appropriately for the role they are carrying out.
- The style of clothes or dress code used is a decision for the attraction, but staff should be well presented and wearing appropriate clothing.

Customer care

- Customer care is about the attitude of staff when interacting with visitors, spending time with them, going the extra mile and making visitors feel welcome and special.
- Staff can know a lot about their subject, but should also be able to talk to visitors in a friendly, enthusiastic and welcoming manner.
- The assessor will give staff the opportunity to show they care about customers by asking questions as they proceed through the attraction. Assessors will also observe interaction between staff and other visitors.

Efficiency

- Are queues managed effectively?
- Are admissions dealt with efficiently?
- Do tours leave on time?
- Staff efficiency is about service being provided accurately and in a timely fashion.
- Inefficient service can be about poor staff, poor training or a lack of staff.
- Efficiency of service may be improved by the implementation of new technology, but staff need to be trained to use it effectively.

Knowledge

- Staff members should have a good level of knowledge of their own job as well as what is happening in the wider attraction.
- Some staff will have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge during talks and tours.
- The assessor will ask questions as they go around the attraction in order to assess staff knowledge, not only about their role, but also about the attraction as a whole.

Hints and Tips

- The appeal of the large theme park might be easy to see, with family fun across the generations and the ability to entice visitors back for more of the same.
- A smaller and more specialised attraction might have to work hard to broaden its appeal and the demographic of its audience.
- Your assessor will be able to assist with the analysis of your attraction and offer specific ideas.
- You can make use of VisitEngland's research and trend analysis available on the website: <https://www.visitbritain.org/research-insights> It is comprehensive, current and informative.
- Will your story only appeal to the true enthusiast or can it be given wider appeal by adding human interest, or other strands of social history?
- Do you offer anything to entertain the less enthused members of the visiting group, such as gardens, play areas or a good café, and are these extra facilities given sufficient prominence in your advertising?
- A specialist museum will have a limited appeal, but if the person interested can show the rest of the party that it is a good place to go for lunch and for the children to play, then it is more likely that they will visit.
- It is likely that your attraction will employ staff or have volunteers carrying out a range of jobs and tasks in order that the attraction runs smoothly. Some staff will be visitor facing and others not.

- It is, of course, essential that those staff who are visitor facing have excellent interpersonal skills. Spend time with these staff and ensure that they understand the ethos of the attraction and help to set the correct tone for them to act as your ambassadors.
- Those staff who are not primarily visitor facing might come into contact with visitors from time to time; the gardener, the member of the back office staff passing through the attraction, for example. Spend a little of your staff training time with them to ensure that they know what is happening within the attraction and empower them to engage with visitors as required. They can be your ambassadors too.
- The style of dress for staff and volunteers will vary greatly from attraction to attraction. Whatever the style, be sure that staff are easily recognised by visitors. Also, be sure that they are portraying the image that you want to project in the way that they present themselves.
- Ensure visitor facing staff are trained in disability and equality awareness.



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VisitEngland Accolades

In order to be an accredited visitor attraction and to use the VisitEngland logo on your website and other advertising media, you must offer a good level of quality across all of the services provided within your attraction. In addition to the accreditation, VisitEngland offers a range of accolades that are designed to reward excellence. This can be excellence across the attraction or excellence in one particular area of the attraction. Attractions can work towards and be awarded more than one accolade. Each accolade can be used as a badge of excellence with which to promote your attraction.



VisitEngland's Gold Accolade

Those attractions that demonstrate excellence across all areas can achieve the VisitEngland Gold Accolade. In order to achieve this accolade, an attraction will need to attain a high percentage score overall and in each section, and will need to maintain these high scores year on year.



VisitEngland's Best Told Story Accolade

Whatever type of interpretation or commentary is used, this accolade will go to those attractions or tours which tell their story effectively. It might be technical innovation, but could just as easily be enthusiastic and well trained staff and volunteers. However the story is told, visitors will leave the attraction having thoroughly enjoyed an interesting and entertaining experience. The narrative will leave no loose ends and the experience will be accessible to all.



VisitEngland's Welcome Accolade

This accolade will be awarded to those attractions that give visitors a genuinely excellent welcome to their attraction. This will go to those teams who go the extra mile to ensure their visitors are really well looked after and get the most out of their visit.



VisitEngland's Hidden Gem Accolade

Hidden Gem is an accolade for those smaller attractions that offer a very good visitor experience. This accolade will be based on the overall VisitEngland experience of the attraction and will highlight those smaller Hidden Gems within the attraction industry.



VisitEngland's Quality Food and Drink Accolade

The food offering is an important part of any day out and some attractions run successful cafes and restaurants that appeal to people who are not visitors to the main attraction. In order to be considered for this accolade, the catering operation will be managed and run in a professional manner, with skilled and friendly staff. Menus will be interesting and innovative and might be themed to the attraction. The provenance of local food will be strong. Overall it will be an enjoyable and memorable experience that visitors will be eager to repeat. The VisitEngland accolade is achievable, however small the café.

For those attractions that are not quite meeting the scoring criteria for any of the accolades, but would like to work towards one, your assessor will be able to suggest ways in which the gap can be bridged.

Hints and Tips

- Many attractions have a story to tell and whatever the story to be told, visitors will be at your attraction in order to learn about and engage with that story.
- There are many ways in which a story can be told, with technology opening up new possibilities all the time. The important issue is to be sure that you have interpreted the story at a level that your visitors understand. Offering a variety of levels of interpretation ensures you have met the needs of the researcher as well as all visitors.
- Is there a good narrative flow to the story?
- Are all strands in the story followed through?
- Are there any missing connections?
- Can the story-telling easily be adapted to suit different audiences, such as school parties?
- Visitors should not leave with the sense of disappointment or frustration at a story not fully told.
- Be sure to gather visitor feedback on this aspect of your service. Did your visitors enjoy the attraction and did it live up to their expectations? Did visitors with access needs feel that the story was told in a way which they could engage with? Do social media and customer review sites have any feedback? Use the expertise of your assessor to find out how to improve.



Sustainability

Far from being an optional 'bolt on' to your attraction, attractions that 'build in' a sustainable approach find that as well improving their impact on the environment, local community and economy, it also helps to control costs and add appeal to visitors.

While the suggestions made in these standards are not compulsory, they are included because they provide an opportunity to improve the impact, efficiency and appeal of your attraction.

VisitEngland Can Help

Taking a sustainable approach makes business sense as well as improving the impact of the tourism sector. As well as the introductory advice you will find here, we have developed a detailed Regenerative Tourism Guide <https://www.visitbritain.org/business-advice/regenerative-tourism>

Take Control

It's important to avoid a scattergun approach, but instead adopt a strategic approach that makes best use of limited time and money. Understanding your current impact is essential:

- Measure to Manage - You may read, or even record, the costs of your energy, water and waste bills, but developing a monitoring system will be invaluable to help.
- Make comparisons with previous periods and establish progress.
- Identify the priorities that should be targeted for management and reductions.
- Alert you to unusually high use so you can take immediate action before costs build.
- Equip you with information when you are next negotiating your energy or waste contract.
- Sub-metering can be invaluable in better understanding how different areas are performing. Don't forget to combine with visitor numbers and spend to create figures that you will use as benchmarks, such as energy cost per visitor or litres of water used per visitor.
- Get a second opinion – It's impossible to implement a sustainable approach single-handedly.
- Get staff views – through a questionnaire, team meetings, designated 'green' teams etc. What do they notice that you might not? Ensure senior staff lead by example to create a culture.
- Make use of existing visitor feedback mechanisms to get their views and ideas.

Heating

Generally the largest consumer of energy in buildings, it is also critical to visitor comfort and can affect the condition of what is being displayed.

Priorities should include:

- **Insulation** – Keeping heat in reduces the amount that needs to be generated and is among the most cost effective investments. Prioritise roofs and walls, but don't forget pipework.
- **Boilers** – Less visible but among the most critical pieces of equipment for your attraction's bottom line and footprint:
 - Service regularly, asking for an efficiency test. If below 80%, consider replacement.
 - Get to know the heating controls to maximise efficiency and invest in more sophisticated controls that ensure the boiler is working only when, and to the level, needed.
- **External doors** – Often split over multiple buildings, attractions generally have multiple external doors opened and closed multiple times each day:
 - Consider adding automatic controls or adding draught lobbies to reduce heat loss.
 - A door with a 3mm gap will let in as much cold air as a missing brick in a wall (Carbon Trust) so ensure draught proofing seals are kept in good condition.

Lighting

Creating the correct lighting condition is critical for effective displays, creating atmosphere and enabling visitors to read interpretation. Achieving these aims with the minimum energy consumption means focussing on:

- **Free lighting** – Maximise free daylight by keeping windows and roof lights clean and clear of obstructions and consider installing sun tubes.
- **Enlightened choices** – Brightness is measured in lumens. Look to achieve the brightness you need for the minimum number of watts (lumens per watt). Colour temperature is measured in kelvins – 1,000 being very ‘warm’ and 10,000 being very ‘cold’. If you are looking to create the warm light effect of traditional incandescent bulbs, look for something around 2,700 k.
- **LED lighting** – Capable of producing bright, instant light and available in various formats, LED lighting uses significantly less energy and lasts significantly longer than other lighting types. Despite costing more this means payback periods of three to five years are typical.
- **Prioritise** – Focus investment on the lights that are on for longest, not forgetting external lighting.

Travel

The first and last part of the visitor experience and a significant part of your attraction’s impact on the environment and local community, how people reach your attraction should be a priority. Providing excellent information on the widest range of choices will also widen your appeal:

Promoting alternatives:

- Offer practical advice, such as frequency of services, how long it takes to walk or which bus service to get from the train station. For bus services, let visitors know which stop to ask for and roughly how much the fare will be.
- If you use Google Maps, highlight that you can search for public transport on it, or visit the traveline.info website, which provides door-to-door information on public transport, car, and walking options.
- Promote these options in the car park for return visitors to be aware.
- **Arriving by car** – Provide links to Highways Agency tools to be aware of and avoid the worst traffic conditions (www.trafficengland.com).

Incentives & Facilities:

- Consider joint ticketing with public transport and offer discounts or bonus features for those arriving by alternatives.
- Providing bike racks and electric charging points is only helpful if they can be easily found. Making them prominent will also make others aware of what you offer.
- **Staff travel** – Encourage or incentivise alternatives to the car, particularly if you have younger staff who may not have access to one. Car sharing can be a particularly good option.

Creating Your Own Water & Power

Rising utility costs and increased incentives mean that capturing and generating your own energy and water supplies can be a wise investment. The main options for generating energy are solar (photovoltaic or 'pv'), wind and hydro. For generating heating there is also solar (thermal), biomass (wood) and heat pumps (air, ground or water).

Each technology has its own characteristics which will make it more or less suitable for an individual attraction and location.

The key points to consider are:

- **Efficiency first** – Energy efficiency actions will often pay back more quickly and will reduce the size of renewables required.
- **Location** – It's essential to find the technology that best suits the characteristics of the property and its location, whether it is the orientation of the roof or the space needed for the installation.
- **Matching to need** – Make sure the technology type matches the size, type and pattern of your use.
- **Installers** – Ask an installer that covers a range of different technologies to carry out a feasibility survey so that they will recommend the technology most suitable to your attraction.
- **Rain and grey water** – From simple water butts to full rainwater harvesting systems, there are a range of options to reduce your use of mains water. The energy required for rainwater systems means that they will only be suitable when there are larger demands and careful thought must be given to the appropriate use of the rain and grey water.

Waste

You pay twice for waste – the purchase price and the disposal price – so minimisation is essential. Priority should be given to reducing and reusing before recycling.

- **Food** – The average cost of avoidable food waste to businesses in the sector is £0.46 per meal, with potatoes and bakery the most significant items. Focus on better management of short life items, offering different portion sizes and choice of sides and doggy bag options and clear separation for food waste. www.wrap.org.uk ('Leisure' sector) has excellent resources and your attraction can sign up to the 'Hospitality and Food Service Agreement' which aims to reduce packaging and the proportion of food-related waste that is recycled, composted or sent to Anaerobic Digestion (AD).
- **To Separate or Not** – Involving visitors in separating waste reinforces good habits for recycling and using well-labelled, attractive bins will help encourage participation. However, some attractions are now taking advantage of waste collections services where separation happens offsite, which can maximise the waste that avoids landfill, especially if waste to energy or anaerobic digestion is used.
- Be sure to explain your waste disposal policy to visitors so they can appreciate your commitment to this important area.

Water

As with waste you pay twice – for supply and disposal. Consider both efficient use of water and what goes back into the water system.

- **Washrooms** – Basin taps on sensors or fitted with push and/or aerated taps will reduce wasted water. Ensuring urinals are on a presence detector or using waterless models will also make savings while encouraging the use of bins for sanitary products will help the marine environment.
- **Kitchens** – Ensure that dishwashers are efficient and full and use trigger guns for pre-wash rinsing. Choose environmentally friendly cleaning products and use dosage control to keep costs down and impacts on the natural environment down.
- **Grounds** – Consider the choice of plants in terms of extreme weather conditions and use water butts and other water-saving techniques to reduce use of your paid supply.

Telling Your Story

Your actions can add appeal and interest so think creatively to maximise the potential:

- **Weave in** – Rather than a single, separate display on sustainable initiatives, integrate actions within existing displays or add an extra one in the relevant place as an extra point of interest. Build it in as a component of educational resources or even have a specific 'green' themed trip offer for schools. Can you use a brand or character to highlight this strand in your various communications?
- **Social media** – Sustainability is often made up of multiple small actions which can be difficult to list in one place, but can be effectively communicated through the 'drip feed' of social media.
- Certification demonstrates the credibility of your credentials to customers. A number of independent organisations operate schemes which have been verified as offering robust standards that visitors can trust and give you confidence to promote your actions. Visit <https://www.visitbritain.org/business-advice/regenerative-tourism>



Accessibility

Improving your accessibility – A valuable market

Many people have accessibility requirements including disabled people, such as those with hearing and visual impairments, wheelchair users, older and less mobile people and people with pushchairs. The accessible tourism market is worth around £14.6bn to tourism businesses in England and is growing due to an ageing population.

By making some small adjustments to your facilities, providing information on your accessibility and understanding the needs of disabled people, your business will appeal to a wider range of visitors and attract more business. Find out how other tourism businesses are benefitting from this loyal market at visitengland.org/access

Legal obligations

Tourism businesses have obligations under The Equality Act 2010, which replaced the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005 (DDA) on 1 October 2010. Tourism providers should treat everyone accessing their goods, facilities or services fairly, regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, or age (this applies to those aged 18 or above), and guard against making assumptions about the characteristics of individuals.

The Equality Act 2010 requires that service providers must think ahead and take steps to address barriers that impede disabled people. Providers should not wait until a disabled person experiences difficulties using a service, as this may make it too late to make the necessary adjustment.

- Make 'reasonable' changes to the way things are done – such as changing practices, policies or procedures where disabled people would be at a 'substantial disadvantage' for example, amend a 'no dogs' policy.
- Make 'reasonable' changes to the built environment – such as making changes to the structure of a building to improve access for example, altering or removing a physical feature.
- Provide auxiliary aids and services – such as providing information in an accessible format, an induction loop for customers with hearing aids.

A service provider cannot legally justify failing to provide a reasonable adjustment. The only question is whether the adjustment is a 'reasonable' one to make. What is 'reasonable' will depend on a number of circumstances, including the cost of an adjustment, potential benefit it may bring to other customers, the resources an organisation has and how practical the changes are.

We can help

VisitEngland provides tourism businesses with a range of free guidance and resources to help increase engagement with the valuable accessible tourism market in the Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Toolkit for Businesses. Go to visitengland.org/access

It is important to provide information on the accessibility of your facilities and services and this is a requirement for all scheme participants.

You can provide details of your venue's key accessibility features on your website and supply this information for inclusion on your RatedTrips.com venue listing by completing a new questionnaire produced by VisitEngland.

Today's visitors also want detailed and factual descriptions of venue accessibility, in the form of an Accessibility Guide, to empower them to make personal choices.

Participants can book and pay for a Detailed Access Guide with AccessAble to provide robust accessibility information on your venue. To learn more and book either a Guided or On Site Assessment, go to visitengland.youraccessibilityguide.co.uk (not a requirement of scheme participation).

How does it work

- **Step 1** - Join a scheme on the [VisitEngland Assessment Services](#) site. Fill out your details using the form on the Join page. You will then be contacted about the next steps.
- **Step 2** - We receive and process your payment.
- **Step 3** - We assign an Assessor, once your payment has cleared.
- **Step 4** - The Assessor books the assessment.
- **Step 5** - The Assessor completes the assessment.
- **Step 6** - We complete a report which is sent to you within 14 working days.
- **Step 7** - Your attraction is now officially accredited under the VisitEngland Visitor Attraction Quality scheme. You can proudly feature the VisitEngland Quality Rose Marque at the front of your attraction, website, and marketing materials. This instantly reassures visitors that the attraction meets the nationally recognised high standards set by VisitEngland.

Displaying the Quality Rose Marque not only enhances your reputation and credibility, but also helps to build visitor trust and distinguish your attraction as a destination of exceptional quality — one that consistently delivers a memorable and enjoyable experience.

CONTACT

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