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# **Visitor Information Service of the Year**

Recognises visitor information providers that offer an exceptional standard of service and information

**This sample application form is for information only and all applications must be made via the online application system.**

## Eligibility criteria

* Directly involved in tourism, making a contribution to the visitor economy with a significant proportion of business generated by people visiting from outside the local area
* Information must be available through face to face contact as well as via web and social media and must include responding to individual enquiries rather than merely information provision
* The business must be open during the judging period
* Businesses of all sizes can apply as this category is judged within the context and style of the business.
* Businesses will need to demonstrate the provision of information across the wider location rather than being restricted to an individual venue
* Only tourism businesses who directly serve the end-users are eligible (ie the tourist/ visitor/ guest). Business to business agencies or intermediaries eg that manage business to consumer (B2C) presence for tourism businesses; would not be eligible.
* Businesses that serve food must have a minimum food hygiene rating of three out of five. The competition organisers reserve the right to refuse an application if this minimum requirement is not met at any point prior to the awards ceremony. An exception is made for new businesses who have not yet been graded
* Businesses that have been trading for at least three months and up to two years when applications open are strongly recommended to apply to the New Tourism Business of the Year category before considering applying to any other categories
  + For the purpose of eligibility for this competition, ‘trading’ means serving customers. If the business has not been trading this long, then they will need to wait to apply to the competition in 2025/26
* Applications from a chain or group operator must relate to a single site and not multiple sites

## Applicant & business details

(not scored)

**Applicant’s name:**

Enter the applicant’s name here.

**Applicant’s job title:**

Enter the applicant’s job title here.

**Applicant’s phone number:**

Enter the applicant’s phone number here.

**Applicant’s email:**

Enter applicant’s email here.

**Visitor Information Service (VIS) name:**

Name of business application relates to. Give the name used to promote the business, as you wish it to appear in all publicity materials, on certificates, in presentations etc.:

Enter your business name here.

**VIS address:**

Enter your business address here.

**VIS phone number for visitor enquiries:**

Enter your business number here.

**VIS email for visitor enquiries:**

Enter your email address here.

**Closures during judging period** (the judging period runs from 1st June – 30th November 2024):

Enter closures during the judging period here.

**When did your VIS open?**

When did the business relating to this application start trading?

Note: For the purposes of eligibility 'trading' means welcoming customers.

**Promotional Description**

Provide a promotional description of your service.

* Focus on its strengths and stand out features
* Write your description with regard to this category
* This wording will be used in PR and awards literature
* Wording provided is subject to edit
* 120 words maximum

Enter the promotional description here.

**Promotional Images**

Provide up to three landscape high resolution photos.

* Photos should be of a high quality that showcase your service
* Photos should not be edited in any way eg embedded text or logos, a collage
* Only include photos that you own the copyright for
* If the photo requires a credit eg photographer, please provide details
* These photos will be used in PR and awards literature

## Background

(Not scored)

**Briefly outline the story of your business (250 words maximum).**

For example:

* Length of time business has been trading and time under current ownership
* Key milestones in developing the business
* Indication of size of business
* Number of staff employed, if any

Enter information on the background of your business here.

**List any awards, ratings and accolades received in the last two years. Include the title, awarding body, level and date achieved.**

For example:

* Successes in this competition and the VisitEngland Awards for Excellence
* TripAdvisor Accolades
* Green Tourism award
* VisitEngland quality assessment, local quality accreditation
* Business, quality or service awards

Enter information on any awards, ratings or accolades here.

**There is no requirement for your business to be quality assessed. However, if you have an independent quality assessment/mystery shopping report from the last two years, you might wish to upload it here (optional).**

Enter information on any quality assessments here.

## Online presence & reviews

(This section is 30% of the final score)

* Social Media & Website = 20%
* Online Reviews = 10%

**Provide links to your online presence relating to this category, which will be reviewed and scored by judges in addition to your answers to the four questions. Other sites may also be checked. As part of this review, judges will be looking for evidence of your commitment to Accessible and Inclusive Tourism and Ethical, Responsible and Sustainable Tourism in addition to your focus on providing visitor information.**

Enter the website URL here.

**Accessibility & inclusivity information**

Provide links to your accessibility and inclusivity information.

Enter the accessibility & inclusivity information URL here.

**Sustainability information**

Provide links to your sustainability information.

Enter the sustainability information URL here.

**Provide links to all business pages/profiles on Facebook, Instagram etc. and X (formerly Twitter) handles**

Enter the social media URL here.

**Online review sites**

Provide specific links to customer review listings for your business eg TripAdvisor, Facebook, Google, Euan’s Guide, UpFront Reviews etc

Enter the online review URL here.

**Question 1 - Your Top Qualities**

(This question is 20% of the final score)

**Tell us about up to five ways in which your service is impressive compared to other visitor information providers in meeting the needs of visitors to your area (500 words maximum).**

Describe the unique selling points, strengths and essence of your business. Judges will be looking for detailed examples of quality from across the business. One or more of the following example areas may be relevant to address in your answer (it is not mandatory to cover every area) and you may have more:

* Quality of your core product and customer experience
* Added extras and how you and your team go above and beyond to ensure your visitors have an excellent experience in your destination
* How you care for your team and training with specialist skills specific to the changing needs of visitors
* Use and promotion of local businesses, suppliers and produce ie retail, displays, artwork, food and drink etc
* Innovative marketing and PR, including partnerships with other local tourism and hospitality businesses
* Innovative adaption, diversification and/or resilience building
* Facilities and welcome for people with a range of accessibility requirements eg this may include information provision, adapted customer experiences, accessible facilities for people with a range of impairments, employing disabled staff and staff disability awareness training
* Managing and improving environmental, social and economic impacts eg this may include a carbon reduction plan, energy and waste monitoring, green transport, community and charitable initiatives, promotion of sustainable tourism products and responsible purchasing

Enter answer to question 1 here.

Links to relevant supporting evidence online (optional):

It is not a requirement to submit supporting evidence; however, if you do, ensure that the focus is on the quality and relevancy of the evidence submitted to this question rather than quantity.

Any written answers that are included within the supplementary evidence, attempting to circumvent the question word counts, will be disregarded.

Enter links to supplementary evidence here.

## Question 2 - Your Recent Improvements

(This question is 20% of the final score)

**Tell us about up to five ways in which you have developed your service and/or improved the visitor experience over the last two years (500 words maximum).**

Explain your reasons for making the improvements and indicate which parts of the business are impacted. Judges will be looking for examples of improvements from across the business. One or more of the following example areas may be relevant to address in your answer (it is not mandatory to cover every area) and you may have more:

(Only include examples of improvements undertaken in the last two years.)

* Have your improvements been based on customer feedback or staff suggestions
* Promotional initiatives eg new website, partnership working, campaigns etc
* Improving the skills of you and your team
* Expansion, upgrade of facilities, enhancements to your services
* Improving facilities and welcome for people with a range of accessibility requirements eg this may include information provision, adapted customer experiences, accessible facilities for people with a range of impairments, employing disabled staff and staff disability awareness training
* Managing and improving environmental, social and economic impacts eg this may include a carbon reduction plan, energy and waste monitoring, green transport, community and charitable initiatives, promotion of sustainable tourism products and responsible purchasing
* Innovative adaption, diversification and/or resilience building
* Use of digital technologies such as automated services, robotics and artificial intelligence (AI)
* Approximate date of improvement

Enter answer to question 2 here.

Links to relevant supporting evidence online (optional):

It is not a requirement to submit supporting evidence; however, if you do, ensure that the focus is on the quality and relevancy of the evidence submitted to this question rather than quantity.

Any written answers that are included within the supplementary evidence, attempting to circumvent the question word counts, will be disregarded.

Enter links to supplementary evidence here.

## Question 3 - Your Results

(This question is 15% of the final score)

**Tell us about three successes from the last year in meeting the needs of your visitors, providing figures where relevant (300 words maximum).**

Judges will be looking for detailed examples of successes from across the business. One or more of the following example areas may be relevant to address in your answer (it is not mandatory to cover every area) and you may have more:

* Whether you are able to attribute success directly to any of the improvements that you’ve made (mentioned in Question 2)
* Percentage increase in visitor numbers, sales, customer satisfaction, turnover etc
* Wastage reduction and improvement in environmental impact, savings made
* Business generated from marketing activity
* Growth of social media following and engagement
* The significance of the level of impact on your business

Enter answer to question 3 here.

Links to relevant supporting evidence online (optional):

It is not a requirement to submit supporting evidence; however, if you do, ensure that the focus is on the quality and relevancy of the evidence submitted to this question rather than quantity.

Any written answers that are included within the supplementary evidence, attempting to circumvent the question word counts, will be disregarded.

Enter links to supplementary evidence here.

## Question 4 – Your Future Plans

(This question is 15% of the final score)

**Tell us about three ways you will develop and promote your service to meet the needs of visitors over the next year and the reasons why (300 words maximum).**

Judges will be looking for detailed examples of future plans from across the business wihth a clear rationale. One or more of the following example areas may be relevant to address in your answer (it is not mandatory to cover every area) and you may have others too:

* Continued adaptation, diversification and resilience building
* Facilities and welcome for people with a range of accessibility requirements eg this may include information provision, adapted customer experiences, accessible facilities for people with a range of impairments, employing disabled staff and staff disability awareness training
* Managing and improving environmental, social and economic impacts eg this may include a carbon reduction plan, energy and waste monitoring, green transport, community and charitable initiatives, promotion of sustainable tourism products and responsible purchasing
* Information provision, upgrade of facilities, enhancements to your services
* Improving the skills of you and your team
* Marketing and PR, including partnerships with other local businesses
* Operational efficiency
* Use of digital technologies such as automated services, robotics and artificial intelligence (AI)

Enter answer to question 4 here.

Links to relevant supporting evidence online (optional):

It is not a requirement to submit supporting evidence; however, if you do, ensure that the focus is on the quality and relevancy of the evidence submitted to this question rather than quantity.

Any written answers that are included within the supplementary evidence, attempting to circumvent the question word counts, will be disregarded.

Enter links to supplementary evidence here.