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# **Dog Friendly Business of the Year**

Recognises providers of truly memorable experiences for dogs and their human companions

**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

Meets the tourism definition:

* 'Tourism product' covers a number of different categories including:
* Accommodation eg hotels, bed & breakfasts, guest houses, self-catering/serviced apartments, hostels, holiday boats, camping, caravanning, glamping, lodges, shepherds huts, chalets
* Hospitality ie a single food and beverage service business eg pub, restaurant, café, tea room, coffee shop, bistros, food and drink markets, kiosks & street food (in a regular location). [For these purposes the definition of a food and drink market is a collection of independent food and drink establishments with ancillary services (eg parking area, toilets, security, visitor information) and maintained by a management firm as an entity.]
* Guided tours & visitor experience that requires participation in an activity
* Cultural services, eg theatres, musical entertainment venues, sporting venues
* Visitor attractions that meet the visitor attraction definition: a permanently established excursion destination, a primary purpose of which is to allow access for entertainment, interest, or education and can include places of worship; rather than being primarily a retail outlet or a venue for sporting, theatrical, or film performances. It must be open to the public, with or without prior booking, for published periods each year, and should be capable of attracting day visitors or tourists as well as local residents.
* Businesses must promote dog friendly features and warmly welcome dogs
* 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.
* 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.

**Business 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.

**Business address:**

Enter your business 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 the business start trading?**

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

**Promotional Description**

Provide a promotional description of your business.

* Focus on its strengths and stand out features
* Write your description with regard to being dog friendly
* 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 high quality and relate to this category so should include dogs and doggie facilities or services
* 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
* Target market(s) and typical customer profile
* 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
* Specific Dog Friendly accoladres
* TripAdvisor Traveller's Choice Award
* Green Tourism award
* VisitEngland quality assessment, local quality accreditation

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 that relate to your dog friendly business 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 actively welcoming dogs and their owners.**

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 URLs here.

**Online review sites**

Provide category specific links to customer review listings for your dog friendly business eg TripAdvisor, Facebook, Google, Euan’s Guide, UpFront Reviews, Booking.com, Trustpilot, or you might feature on dog friendly websites that feature reviews eg edogadvisor, dogfriendly.co.uk, etc

Enter the online review URLs here.

**Question 1 - Your Top Qualities**

(This question is 20% of the final score)

**Tell us about up to five ways in which your business is impressive compared to your competitors in meeting the needs of customers visiting with their dogs. Why are you the best, most dog friendly business? (500 words maximum).**

Describe the unique selling points, strengths and essence of your business for dog owners. 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
* How you have adapted your business offering to warmly welcome dogs
* Added extras that delight dogs and their owners eg facilities, services, information
* How you care for your team and ensure they have the skills specific to welcoming dogs
* Use and promotion of local suppliers, including food & drink offer centred on locally sourced produce - do you provide for dogs too eg have a doggie menu?
* Innovative marketing and PR including partnerships with other relevant businesses
* Innovative adaption, diversification and resilience building
* How you consider what dog owners need to ensure they have a fantastic visit/stay eg if you are an foodie/accommodation business where can you eat with your dog?
* 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 or charitable initiatives 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 business and/or improved the customer experience for dog owners and their dogs 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.)

* Promotional initiatives eg new website, social media campaign etc specific to this category
* Improving the skills of you and your team to cater for visitors with dogs
* Expansion, upgrade of facilities, enhancements to your services, information provided specific to dogs eg health and safety, walks, attractions, places to eat, visit etc
* 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 or charitable initiatives 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 dog friendly related successes from the last year (these may relate to online activities), 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 occupancy levels/visitors travelling with their dogs, sales, customer satisfaction etc
* Percentage increase in online bookings from dog owners
* Increase in repeat business from dog owners
* Business generated from marketing activity
* Growth of social media following and engagement relating specifically to dogs
* 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 business to meet the needs of visitors with dogs 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 with 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 and you may have more:

* Continued adaptation, diversification and resilience building focusing on attracting visitors with their dogs
* 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 and responsible purchasing
* Expansion, upgrade of dog friendly facilities and equipment, enhancements to your services and information provision
* Improving your welcome and the skills of you and your team to cater for dogs and their owners
* Marketing and PR to dog owners, including partnerships with other 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.