

Introducing

Our Promise To Visitors

The National Code of Practice for Visitor Attractions

For the purpose of the charter a visitor attraction is defined as:

"A permanently established excursion destination, a primary purpose of which is to allow public access for entertainment, interest or education; rather than being primarily a retail outlet or a venue for sporting, theatrical, or film performance. It must be open to the public, for published periods of the year, and should be capable of attracting day visitors or tourists, as well as local residents."

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The owner and management undertake:

1. To provide in promotional materials, an accurate description of the amenities, facilities and services of the Attraction.

For this purpose, promotional materials means any advertisement or brochure, in printed, electronic or other media. Pictorial images and descriptive text, if used, should accurately represent the subject, nature, extent and content of the Attraction.

2. To indicate on all such promotional materials any requirements for pre-booking, and any significant restrictions on entry.

Examples of "significant restrictions on entry" include: coach parties by appointment only, or where unaccompanied children are not admitted.

Where the nature of the Attraction, or elements within it, makes it unsuitable for people with disabilities and/or people with special needs, such as children, the elderly, or the infirm, this should be indicated. In large sites, the scale of the Attraction should be made evident, indicating distances between points of interest and, where appropriate, the likely time needed to move between them.

All charges for groups and other parties, negotiated in advance of arrival, should be confirmed in writing to the party organiser.

3. To make available an Access Statement, describing the accessibility aspects of a visit to the Attraction, and to respect the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act by making suitable provision, where reasonable and practicable, for people with disabilities and/or those with special needs.

Attractions are subject to the provisions of DDA. Advice concerning Accessibility is available from VAQAS and industry organisations.

An Access Statement is a written, clear, accurate, and above all, honest description of your facilities and the services you offer, to enable a potential visitor to make an informed decision as to whether your business meets their particular access needs.

The availability of the Access Statement should where possible be noted in all promotional materials. The Access Statement itself must be available on request: by post, email or via a website.

It may not always be practical to provide fully for the needs of disabled people. Where significant features or facilities are inaccessible, such as vehicles, or non-ambulant access in historic structures or natural sites, this must be clearly advised to enquirers by post or telephone, and in person at the point of entry.

Staff must understand the need for sensitivity when communicating with actual or potential visitors with disabilities. Staff who are authorised to exercise discretion in providing advice to visitors concerning access or participation, must be aware of the implications of so doing.

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.

The location(s) at which the defined information should be displayed will vary. Admission charges, with a description of the features to which they apply, and the related hours of operation, must be displayed at, or immediately prior to, admission payment points.

Attractions that have significant, well known and/or major features that are not covered by a basic admission charge, must display the related additional charges at the initial admission payment point(s).

Additional charges for less significant optional features need not be displayed at admissions payment point(s). However, the fact that specified optional features are subject to additional charges must be made clear.

At free access Attractions, operating hours and other essential information should be displayed at all official entry points. Where access to parts of an Attraction is free, and part is charged, "free access" to charged parts must not be implied.

The hours of operation of the whole Attraction, or differing operational times of principal features and facilities within an Attraction, and "last admission times" (where they apply), must be clearly stated. The hours of operation may be displayed on an annual or seasonal basis, or for specified dates. This information should be displayed at all admission payment points or entrances to the Attraction, and where practical in promotional material.

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5. To provide in promotional materials for visitor enquiries, a postal address, a telephone number (and where it exists, a website address) from which the detailed information specified in 1, 2, 3 and 4 can be obtained.

Information provided for visitors must be clearly and accurately expressed.

6. To provide signage and orientation information as appropriate to the Attraction, to assist visitors in understanding and enjoying the Attraction.

Adequate locational and directional signage, and at least basic orientation about the content and context of the Attraction, is desirable for all Attractions, but what is appropriate will depend on the nature, style, type and scale of the particular Attraction. The provision of signage should balance visitor needs with environmental or other justifiable constraints.

The potential use of the Attraction for educational visits should be considered, and efforts made to provide suitable information, access to resources and assistance to help visitors gain full benefit from their visit.

7. 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.

The proportion of non-English speaking visitors (actual and potential) and the languages they understand will condition what information and means of communication are practical at reasonable cost.

8. 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.

The way in which the Attraction is managed, whether the site is staffed or not, should ensure that at all times when it is open to the public:

- adequate safety information is displayed
- a high standard of cleanliness is maintained
- there is adequate provision for visitor guidance
- equipment and facilities are well maintained and fit for the purposes intended

9. 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.

All staff (full time and part time employees and volunteers) who may be required to instruct or respond to the public, acting on the authority of the owner - should

- be competent by training and/or experience to respond helpfully to visitors' enquiries.
- be identified by a badge and/or item of uniform. Where this is not appropriate, for example for staff wearing historical costumes or individual "room sitters" in heritage properties, the location or demeanour of the individual should make it quite clear that they are a member of staff

Wherever practical, all new staff should be given induction training to instil awareness of the Attraction's facilities and purpose.

10. To have regard to the need to manage and operate the Attraction in a sustainable way.

Sustainability is a broad topic. However, managing and operating an Attraction in a sustainable way can have economic, social and environmental advantages, assisting the viability of local communities. Owners and Managers should keep sustainability under constant review with particular attention to:

- a) maintaining an harmonious existence with the built and natural environment
- b) taking practical steps to minimise energy consumption and pollution
- c) sustaining local heritage, traditions and character
- d) wherever practical, benefiting the local and regional community by local sourcing of food and other supplies
- e) encouraging, where practical, the use of public transport
- f) making use of whatever reasonable recycling facilities are available

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- 11.** To provide, as appropriate to the nature, scale and location of the Attraction, coach, car, motor-cycle 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.

Where toilet facilities are not available, this should be stated prominently at point(s) of admission and/or entry, and where practical mentioned in promotional material.

The location of the toilets within extensive sites should, in addition to being displayed at point(s) of entry, be appropriately signed within the site.

- 12.** 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.

All Attractions not covered under Government indemnity must ensure, by taking relevant professional advice, that the public liability risks covered by insurance, and the values assured, are appropriate to each location and/or responsible entity.

- 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.

Complaints should be investigated and a record, including a note of actions taken, should be kept for at least three years.

- 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.

The name and contact details (address, telephone and e-mail) of the person to whom any visitor's comments may be addressed (if not dealt with at the time of the visit) must be stated on the displayed copy of the National Code of Practice - as indicated.

A Comments Book or other record should be kept at the nearest staffed location to the point where this Code of Practice is displayed. Written comments should be considered by the owner/manager. The written comments, with a note of any actions taken, should be retained by the Attraction for a minimum of three years from the date of recording.

The owners or operators of unstaffed Attractions should maintain the record of comments at their offices.

- 15.** To display prominently this National Code of Practice.

The National Code of Practice shall be displayed in a prominent position, normally at the point where visitors pay for admission, where it can be seen and read easily by visitors.

The text of the Code of Practice (as shown opposite) may be displayed as printed; it must not be smaller than A4 but may be enlarged.

Additional Note Visitors' comments concerning this Attraction's Compliance with the National Code of Practice should ideally be made at the time of your visit, directly to an appropriate member of staff. If this is not possible, you should write to (or email) the Manager of the Visitor Attraction as soon as possible, giving all the necessary details. Subsequently, if your concerns have not been satisfactorily addressed and you wish to take the matter further, representation should be made in writing to: The Quality Department, VisitBritain, Thames Tower, Black's Road, Hammersmith, London W6 9EL, with a copy to the Visitor Attraction in question.

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Registration Form

(If you are responsible for more than one attraction, please copy and complete a separate form for each attraction).

Name of Visitor Attraction

Address (including postcode)

.....

.....

Contact name Contact e-mail

Annual visitor numbers
(actual or estimated)

Please provide a short
description of your attraction
(max 20 words)

.....

Please indicate membership of
any sectoral and/or tourism
trade association(s) of which
the attraction is a member:

.....

.....

design: sheard hudson

Declaration

I/ we wish to be registered as having undertaken to meet the requirements of the National Code of Practice for Visitor Attractions.

I/ we have received and read a copy of the National Code of Practice for Visitor Attractions and the associated notes and appeals procedure.

I/ we undertake:

- To observe the requirements of the National Code of Practice for Visitor Attractions and its appeals Procedure.
- To allow access to the visitor attraction(s) to VisitBritain or other tourist board representatives to verify observance of the Code of Practice, where this is deemed necessary
- To cease to use or display the Code of Practice (and any associated logo or certificate) in the event of the registered status of the attraction(s) being withdrawn.

Signed

Position

On Behalf

Date

Please send this completed form to **Quality Department, VisitBritain, Thames Tower, Blacks Road, Hammersmith, London W6 9EL** or fax: 020 8563 3133 (any queries can be sent to cop@visitbritain.org) VisitBritain abides by the Data Protection Act 1998 www.dataprotection.gov.uk and complies with its provisions to ensure that any data you provide is treated accordingly.

NATIONAL CODE OF PRACTICE FOR VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

Withdrawal of Registered Status & Appeals Procedure

Where VisitBritain has reason to believe that a Registered Visitor Attraction may not be conforming to the requirements of the Code of Practice, it will notify the proprietor, in writing, of the reason. A copy of the letter will also be sent to the appropriate regional tourism authority and industry sector association (where applicable).

If no satisfactory answer is received from the proprietor within 14 days, VisitBritain may, at its own discretion, elect to remove the Registered status of the attraction. In such cases, Visit Britain will notify the proprietor of its intention (again copying the regional tourism authority and industry sector association). The proprietor will have the right to appeal against the decision, provided the appeal is submitted to VisitBritain, in writing, within 14 days of receipt of such notification.

Consideration of an appeal will be subject to the payment of an Appeal Fee of £150, payable to VisitBritain. The purpose of the Appeal Fee is to defray the costs that might be incurred in visiting the attraction. The fee will be refunded in the event of the appeal being upheld.

Where an appeal is made, an Appeals Panel will be formed consisting of:

- a VisitBritain representative
- a representative of the relevant regional tourism authority
- two representatives of visitor attractions within the same region, one of whom may be replaced by a representative of the relevant industry sector association.

The Appeals Panel will meet as soon as is practicable, but in any event, no longer than 28 days after the submission of the appeal.

The Apellant, or his/her representative will be invited to a meeting of the Panel.

After hearing the evidence, the Panel may, at its discretion, decide to visit the attraction before arriving at its decision. In such cases, the proprietor or his/her representative, will be invited to accompany the visit.

The recommendation of the Appeals Panel will be notified to VisitBritain and the Apellant in writing. VisitBritain's decision, based on the recommendation of the Appeals Panel, will be final.

During the period of the appeal, the attraction's eligibility to participate in national and regional tourist board promotions will not be suspended.

Where the Registered status of an attraction has been withdrawn, it may re-apply to VisitBritain to be Registered again after one year. Applicants seeking to be re-Registered will be required to pay a fee of £150. Registered status will not be restored until the attraction has been inspected by VisitBritain and has been found to conform to the requirements of the National Code of Practice¹.

¹Footnote : Registered status does not automatically confer the right to membership of a regional tourism authority. It is entirely at the discretion of each regional tourist board whether a Registered visitor attraction is accepted or retained as a member.

