



# Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Service

The Benefits of Participation

For a quality service you can trust



## THE VISITOR ATTRACTION QUALITY ASSURANCE SERVICE (VAQAS)

The service has been developed to provide a number of tools for attraction operators that can be used to enhance quality and spread best practice within the sector. The service offers a consumer focused quality assessment helping to identify strengths and highlight developmental areas, based on industry examples. A wide range of attractions of all sizes, both large and small, throughout England have benefited from participation in the service.

The broad theme of a visitor attraction can range from pure fun to high culture and it will be looked at within the context of the general sector that it sits in, which will include:

- Castles
- Monuments
- Churches & Cathedrals
- Industrial / Craft Premises
- Farm Based Attractions
- Wildlife Centres / Zoos / Safari Parks
- Gardens
- Country Parks / Estates
- Historic Houses
- Transport
- Museums & Galleries
- Theme Parks
- Interpretation / Visitor Centres
- Nature Reserves



All areas that impact on the quality of the visitor experience are included in a quality assessment, ranging from the enquiry through to the departure. The assessment will recognise areas that may be 'unique', as well as common areas. Where an attraction does not have a particular facility, such as a car park or catering, those aspects will not be included.

The service does not attempt to 'grade' attractions but will assess each on its own merits using objective quality benchmarks, provided by the industry.



## THE QUALITY ASSESSMENT

The assessment is an annual visit at any time when the attraction is open to the public, by an experienced quality assurance assessor. The visit looks at all areas of the attraction and takes into account:

### The Visit

- **Pre-arrival**, including telephone enquiries, leaflet and website design
- **Arrival**, including initial signage, car park and welcome and efficiency of staff
- **Attraction**, including range of content, quality of presentation and quality of interpretation
- **Toilets**, including layout, maintenance and cleanliness
- **Catering**, including layout and design, range, presentation and quality of food and appearance, attitude and efficiency of staff
- **Retailing**, including design, presentation of merchandise and appearance, attitude and efficiency of staff

### The Debrief

Each assessment is followed by a one to one debrief. The objective advice is for consideration and is based on examples of best practice drawn from the attractions industry.

The debrief:

- provides 'live' feedback on the visitor experience
- identifies quality strengths and highlights any areas for quality development
- provides an opportunity to discuss other aspects of your operation; from activities that can increase secondary spend to brochure design.

### The Assessment Report

Each visit is followed by an assessment report highlighting the main points discussed at the debrief.

### The Accreditation

Visitor attractions receive the accreditation 'Quality Assured Visitor Attraction'.

## HOW WILL VAQAS BENEFIT YOUR ATTRACTION?

### The Marketing Benefits:

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- Use of the English Tourism Council's national quality marque with the accreditation of 'Quality Assured Visitor Attraction'
- Artwork of the accreditation for use in your brochure, promotional literature and website
- Enhanced national and international promotion on the official tourism website [www.visitBritain.com](http://www.visitBritain.com)
- Free window stickers and opportunity to display signs promoting your attraction as a 'Quality Assured Visitor Attraction'.

### The Management Benefits:

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- **The Best Practice Guide:**  
A practical guide providing examples of best practice drawn from all sectors of the attractions industry
- **Quality assessment of your attraction:**  
An in-depth assessment of all areas of your attraction which may impact on the quality of the visitor experience
- **One to one debrief:**  
Providing instant feedback on the visit and allowing other aspects of your operation to be discussed
- **Report:**  
An important reference tool that highlights aspects of quality and any development issues which can be used for internal and external operational planning.

## REGIONAL TOURIST BOARDS

### Cumbria

Cumbria Tourist Board  
Ashleigh  
Holly Road  
Windermere LA23 2AQ  
Tel: (015394) 44444  
Fax: (015394) 44041

### Cleveland, Durham, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear

Northumbria Tourist Board  
Aykley Heads  
Durham City  
Durham DH1 5UX  
Tel: (0191) 375 3000  
Fax: (0191) 386 0899

### Derbyshire, Gloucestershire, Hereford & Worcester, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands

Heart of England Tourist Board  
Larkhill Road  
Worcester WR5 2EF  
Tel: (01905) 763 436  
Fax: (01905) 763 450

### Greater London

London Tourist Board and Convention Bureau  
1 Warwick Road  
London  
SW1E 5ER  
Tel: (020) 7932 2000  
Fax: (020) 7932 0222

### Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Eastern Dorset, Hampshire, Oxfordshire and the Isle of Wight

Southern Tourist Board  
40 Chamberlayne Road  
Eastleigh  
Hampshire SO50 5JH  
Tel: (023) 8065 2000  
Fax: (023) 8061 0286

### Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Merseyside

North West Tourist Board  
Swan House  
Swan Meadow Road  
Wigan Pier  
Wigan WN3 5BB  
Tel: (01942) 821 222  
Fax: (01942) 820 002

### Yorkshire

Yorkshire Tourist Board  
312 Tadcaster Road  
York YO24 1GS  
Tel: (01904) 702 000  
Fax: (01904) 701 414

### Cornwall, Devon, West Dorset, Somerset Wiltshire and the Isles of Scilly

South West Tourism  
Woodwater Park  
Pynes Hill  
Exeter EX2 5WT  
Tel: (0870) 442 0830  
Fax: (0870) 442 0840

### Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk

East of England Tourist Board  
Toppesfield Hall  
Hadleigh  
Suffolk IP7 5DN  
Tel: (01473) 822 922  
Fax: (01473) 823 063

### East Sussex, Kent, Surrey, West Sussex

South East England Tourist Board  
The Old Brew House  
Warwick Park  
Tunbridge Wells  
Kent TN2 5TU  
Tel: (01892) 540 766  
Fax: (01892) 511 008

For enquiries about the Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Service  
contact **Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Service (VAQAS)**  
Helpline on: **01473 825 633** or your Regional Tourist Board.