



Age Friendly Tourism Business of the Year

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Age Friendly Tourism Business of the Year Special Award in Somerset

[Age UK Somerset](#) is a local charity providing information, advice, support, activities and services to make later life better in Somerset and North Somerset. We support this 'Age Friendly Award' for tourism businesses that have considered the needs of older visitors and go out of their way to create a positive experience for those in later life.

What is a Tourism Business?

This could include any business whose core purpose is to operate as part of the visitor economy eg, restaurant/cafes, accommodation providers, visitor attractions, tourist information providers. (Retail outlets are not eligible).

[Click here for more information on who is eligible to enter this award.](#)

What we mean by “Later Life”

The age range covered by “Later Life” is very broad and the individuals in this group of 60 to 100+ year olds have such different experiences, lifestyles and motivations that they cannot be easily stereotyped!



What do we mean by Age Friendly?

We appreciate there is not a one-size fits all answer to being an Age Friendly tourism business and so this part of the entry form contains just [4 questions](#) which can be seen below along with some prompts to help you answer. Previous Gold winners of the Award have included Railway Cottage Holidays, Wiliton and Pickwicks Country Kitchen, Wells.

The benefits of being ‘Age Friendly’

Creating an enjoyable and accessible environment for older consumers pays dividends for businesses and the wider community especially with Somerset’s ageing population. Older adults tend to be loyal customers with strong purchasing power. Making your business Age Friendly will help you attract new customers young and old, retain customers and appeal to all.

Why enter?

Would you like:

- To stand out from the crowd?
- A raised profile with the media?
- To reward your team and boost morale?
- To network with other excellent businesses?
- To attract the best staff?
- A free mystery shopper report and business feedback?
- To raise the quality of your business?

Entering the awards is free. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain!

To enter visit:

<https://visitengland-chapters.secure-platform.com/a/organizations/SW-BBS/home>

The 4 Age Friendly related Questions on the entry form:

- 1) Tell us about up to five ways in which your business is impressive in meeting the needs of older visitors compared to your competitors.**

eg,

- Added extras that delight your older customers
- Staff with specialist skills specific to older visitors
- Use and promotion of local suppliers, including food & drink offer centred on locally sourced produce
- Innovative marketing to target an older demographic, including partnerships with other businesses
- Facilities and welcome for people with a range of accessibility requirements
- Managing and improving environmental, social and economic impacts
- Innovative adaption to restrictions, diversification and resilience building during the COVID-19 pandemic

2) Tell us about up to five ways in which you have developed your business and/or improved the customer experience for older visitors over the last two years.

eg,

- Innovative adaption to restrictions, diversification and resilience building during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Sustainability and accessibility improvements
- Promotional initiatives e.g. new website
- Improving the skills of you and your team to cater for older visitors
- Expansion, upgrade of equipment and facilities, enhancements to your services
- Reasons for making the improvements e.g. based on customer feedback
- Approximate date of improvement

3) Tell us about three successes from the last two years in attracting older visitors (these may relate to online activities), providing figures where relevant.

eg,

- 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/visitor numbers, sales and customer satisfaction
- Percentage increase in online bookings or activity
- Increase in repeat business
- Business generated from targeted marketing activity
- Growth of social media following and engagement

4) Tell us about three ways you will develop and promote your experience to meet the needs of older visitors over the next year and the reasons why.

eg,

- Continued adaption, diversification and resilience building as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Sustainability and accessibility improvements
- Expansion, upgrade of equipment and facilities, enhancements to your services
- Improving the skills of you and your team to cater for older visitors
- Marketing and PR, including partnerships with other businesses
- Operational efficiency

Some other thoughts on what Age Friendly can mean

Here are some things to think about which may help with your entry. Don't worry, we are not expecting you to be able to answer YES to all these questions!

Consultation

- Have you asked older customers for their views on how you could be more age-friendly?
- Do you actively seek feedback from older visitors? And do you act on this feedback?

Value

- Do you offer discounted prices for older visitors?
- Are prices clearly visible and easy to understand?
- Do you offer a loyalty card or similar?
- Are restrictions placed on the offers eg times or days?

Facilities/Environment

- Is your tourism business comfortable?
- Are areas inside and outside adequately lit, not too dark?
- Is it kept at a good temperature?



- Is music and noise kept to a minimum?
- Do you offer seating at regular intervals?
- Do chairs have arms to aid getting up?
- Are your doors easy to open?
- Do you regularly check for any potential trip hazards?
- Do you have handrails on the stairs?
- If you have a customer toilet, is it clearly signposted, regularly cleaned and with easy-to-use fittings?
- Are any products available displayed at a visible and reachable height?
- Are pavements and walkways outside your business kept clear and free of any trip hazards?

Meeting needs

- Do you recommend times to visit that may be quieter both in terms of number of visitors, and/or in terms of noise?
- If you are an attraction, do you advise visitors in advance of potential health risks that may be associated with any planned activity such as a fairly long steep walk, uneven or slippery footpaths?
- If you offer activities that are moderate or strenuous is there also an easy option?
- If older visitors are in a mixed-age group and unable/unwilling to take part in an activity, is there an alternative so older visitors can still participate and do not feel deprived or singled out as different?
- Is there an opportunity to take things more slowly for those who may be less active? Do you put measures in place to mitigate for inclement weather, heat and cold?
- If there are refreshments available, do you tailor these to the needs of older visitors eg, half portions, special diets?

Information

- Website - Is your website easy to navigate and easy to read?
- Does it answer the questions most likely to be asked by older people?
- Are your contact details including your telephone number visible and clear?
- Are opening hours and prices clearly visible?
- Remember that not all older people are online. Do you offer alternatives to those without website access – eg leaflets, information by phone, etc
- Telephone - Is your phone service easy to navigate with a live person option available?

- Are details about parking and public transport clearly visible?
- Is your signage (interior and exterior) in a prominent position, easy to see and read?
- Is the information you produce and display or send, eg, menus, posters, letters, leaflets, suitably designed, in font size 12 or bigger, to be clear and easy to read?
- Are noticeboards kept uncluttered?
- If a guided tour is offered, do you provide Whisper (Bluetooth) headsets or similar so visitors don't miss out if they have trouble keeping up?

Transport

- Is there parking close to the entry of the building?
- Do you have clearly marked drop off/pick up zones?
- Are there special parking spaces for older visitors?
- If you have public transport nearby are the directions, to and from, clearly signed?

Customer service

- How do you make older visitors feel welcome?
- Do you have any older members of staff? Are older visitors welcomed when they enter your business, and offered assistance?
- Are older visitors treated with dignity, respect and courtesy?
- Are your staff friendly and chatty but in a respectful way?
- Do staff offer help reaching products which aren't within easy reach?
- Are staff mindful of and sensitive to older visitor's potential needs (eg hearing, vision, mobility, reaching, and seating)?
- Are they ready to help people to sit down or get up again?
- Are they able to provide information on other local services or activities that may be of interest to older visitors?
- Could they provide directions to the nearest bus stops? To the closest accessible or disabled toilet? Would they offer to call for a taxi using a reliable firm?
- Are staff kept up to date of any discounts or special offers for older visitors?
- If you offer guided tours, are your guides clever enough?! An older person may have built up years of knowledge and experience – are your guides able to recognise this knowledge and build on it to provide a more stimulating and rewarding experience? Do staff know what to do with medical incidents and emergencies?
- Are any of your staff "Dementia Friends"?
- Are complaints/concerns are addressed promptly and courteously?

Eligibility Criteria:

- Businesses should operate in Somerset, Bristol or Bath
- Businesses must actively work to attract older visitors and go above and beyond to ensure their visitors have a memorable experience
- Entrants should be 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 product definition:
 - Accommodation e.g. hotels, bed & breakfasts, guest houses, self-catering/serviced apartments, hostels, holiday boats, camping, caravanning, glamping, lodges, shepherds huts, chalets
 - Any visitor experience that requires participation in an activity that may involve a host/teacher/instructor/guide or may be undertaken independently. It is likely to be immersive and interactive and will typically be learning, adventure or relaxation based
 - Hospitality i.e. food and beverage service businesses e.g. pubs, restaurants, cafés, tea rooms, coffee shops and bistros
 - 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
- The business must be open during the judging period
- A business' main offering must have been open for a period of at least eight weeks since the introduction of COVID-Secure operating guidelines (after July 2020) and this period must be reflected within the application. Businesses where the main offering has remained closed since April 2020 may consider applying to the Resilience and Innovation Award
- 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.