

RESOURCES NEXT STEPS GLOSSARY



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Resources



VisitAberdeenshire

Resources (A-Z)

This is a list of the resources and organisations we have mentioned throughout the Toolkit, in alphabetical order.

AccessAble

AccessAble is a website and app that provide detailed Access Guides for venues across Britain and Ireland, covering attractions, hotels, restaurants, shops and more. Each venue is assessed on a video call or surveyed in person by an auditor, and the access guides are available for free on their website and app, which was used by more than 1.8 million people in 2018.



Read more here: [AccessAble website](#)

They have joined forces with VisitScotland to provide an access guide service for tourism businesses in Scotland. You can learn more about this collaboration, including guideline rates for this service here: [VisitScotland Enhancing Information Provision](#)

They also offer AccessAble Consultancy, a service for businesses which can help develop access guides, provide access audits and best practice guidance, as well as training.

Read more here: [AccessAble Consultancy](#)

AccessAble also work with VisitScotland to offer a Disability Essentials eLearning course, to give you the skills to provide great customer service to disabled visitors.

You can sign up here: [Create AccessAble eLearning Account](#)

Adaptation Scotland

Adaptation Scotland is a Scottish Government funded programme that provides advice and support to help organisations, businesses and communities in Scotland prepare for, and build resilience to, the impacts of climate change.

Read more here: [Adaptation Scotland website](#)

Bike2Work

The Bike2Work Scheme is a free, government approved employee benefit aimed at encouraging more people to cycle to work and lead healthier lives.

Employers benefit from a healthier workforce and can include the scheme as part of their benefits package for employees and candidates. Employees can save up to 48.25% on the cost of bikes and equipment.

Read more here: [Bike2Work website](#)



Business Energy Scotland

Business Energy Scotland provide free, impartial support and funding opportunities to help SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) save energy, reduce carbon emissions, and cut costs. They offer local support covering all of Scotland, helping businesses identify and implement energy-saving projects.

They can help overcome challenges like time constraints and lack of knowledge and support, by offering:

- A dedicated advisor to support you.
- Access to a technical specialist if needed.
- Assistance with building a strong business case.

They also offer a range of free online resources, including:

- Energy saving tools and guides.
- Staff engagement toolkit.
- CPD-certified Green Champions training (available online or via webinars).
- Webinars, case studies, events, and training.

Read more about what they offer here: [Business Energy Scotland website](#)

In addition to the above, they also provide funding options, for example interest free loans for SMEs, to help cover the cost of energy and carbon-saving upgrades in your business.

Read more here: [SME loan information](#)

Energy Saving Trust

If you are considering switching to low emission or electric vehicles, or installing EV chargers, Energy Saving Trust may have funding available to support you.

Read more about their funding options here: [Energy Saving Trust grants and loans](#)

EnviroRental

If you manage vacation rentals and want to make them more sustainable, EnviroRental offer a wealth of free resources, including webinars, case studies, surveys, and data.

Sign up on their website to access these resources: [EnviroRental website](#)



Euan's Guide

Euan's Guide is a disabled access charity, best known for its review website, where people with disabilities and their family and friends can share their experiences and rate venues. The charity also works to make accessible toilets safer, and conducts an annual Access Survey, which offers valuable insights into access challenges and experiences from people with disabilities.



The charity was set up in 2013 when the founder realised how the lack of disabled access information made everyday experiences stressful for people with disabilities. Just one review from someone with similar access requirements can give someone else the confidence to visit a new place.

There are currently 71 businesses in Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen listed on their website (as of September 2024). We recommend searching for your business on their site and reading any feedback, to see if there are ways you can improve your experience.

You can also claim your business listing and add information for free: [Euan's Guide Claim Your Business Listing](#)

Read more here: [Euan's Guide website](#)

Hidden Disabilities Sunflower

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower is a simple tool for people with non-visible disabilities to signal that they may need additional support, patience, time or just a helping hand.

Hidden Disabilities Sunflower have identified more than 800 hidden disabilities and health conditions that someone would consider using the Sunflower for.

These hidden disabilities can include neurological, cognitive, physical, visual, sensory, auditory or processing difficulties, as well as chronic health conditions like diabetes, arthritis, chronic pain, respiratory or sleep disorders.

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower is an international company, and in the UK, they have a lanyard scheme, where people can buy a sunflower-patterned lanyard and an ID card that explains the wearer's hidden disability.

The Sunflower lanyard is meant to "make the non-visible visible", so if someone has chosen to wear the Sunflower lanyard, they want to be seen.

Businesses can become a member to access training and insights, and to be listed on their website as a hidden disabilities-inclusive business.

Read more here: [Hidden Disabilities Sunflower website](#)



North East Sensory Services

North East Sensory Services (NESS) is an independent, local charity delivering the first joint sensory services in Scotland.

Based in Aberdeen, NESS provide training to raise awareness of the practical and emotional impact of sight and / or hearing loss. Training can help businesses gain confidence to support customers living with a sensory impairment.

Read more here: [NESS Awareness Training](#)

Purple Tuesday

Purple Tuesday describes themselves as a global movement that is working to improve the disabled customer experience by providing businesses with insights into areas such as digital and physical accessibility.

They offer advice and resources, for example:

- Audits - digital accessibility and physical site accessibility.
- Training - sign language, customer service tutorials etc.
- Recruitment - they can help you audit your recruitment process, to make it more accessible.
- Listing on their website - opportunity to connect your brand to the disability community on their website.



Purple Tuesday have identified “the fear of unintentionally offending a disabled customer by saying or doing the wrong thing” as the biggest barrier for frontline staff. To address this, they have created a short guide to help you interact more confidently with disabled customers: [Hello, can I help you](#)

How to get involved

To be featured, you simply have to make one new commitment each year to improve the disabled customer experience, and get involved in the celebration day (Purple Tuesday) which is held on the first Tuesday of November each year.

Currently (2024), only 4 businesses in Aberdeenshire are featured on their map – consider registering with them online by submitting a form that only takes a few minutes to fill in: [Register with Purple Tuesday](#)

Read more about Purple Tuesday here: [Purple Tuesday website](#)

RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People)

The RNIB have free resources on their website, and they also offer an online shop that gives ideas and advice on how to provide support for visually impaired guests, and the kind of equipment you may consider buying: [RNIB shop](#)

Read more here: [RNIB website](#)



RNID (Royal National Institute for Deaf People)

The RNID offer advice on supporting people who are D/deaf or have hearing loss or tinnitus.

They also have a listing of different technologies and products that can help people who live with hearing loss, such as smoke alarms, smartphone apps etc: [Technology and products](#)

Read more here: [RNID website](#)

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals can help businesses improve their sustainability goals and communicate them using a common language.

You can use the goals to understand global issues and identify where you can have the most impact to form your sustainability strategy.

Read more here: [Sustainable Development](#)



VisitAberdeenshire

VisitAberdeenshire offers dedicated support to tourism and hospitality businesses in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. Our dynamic Tourism Development Programme blends the needs of local businesses with up-to-date market insights, to empower businesses to develop the skills needed to scale up and meet consumer demand.

We provide:

- [Promotion opportunities](#)
- [Business support](#)
- [Research and insights](#)
- [Industry events and training](#)

Growth programme for tourism businesses – Game Changer

Game Changer is our flagship growth programme, delivered by VisitAberdeenshire and Opportunity North East annually. This tailored, deep-dive course has taken over 50 businesses on a journey to identify target markets and understand consumer needs since it started in 2019.

To find out more about how to apply for this programme, please contact: industry@visitabdn.com



VisitScotland

VisitScotland offer a wide range of Responsible Tourism resources on their website: [VisitScotland Responsible Tourism](#)

For instance, they provide a Climate Action Guide to help you develop your own climate action plan: [VisitScotland Sustainable Factsheets](#)

VisitScotland also have an “Inclusive Tourism Manager” available to support your business. For support with any of the resources on VisitScotland’s industry website, contact them via email: customer.service@visitscotland.com

Additionally, they also offer regular webinars on Responsible Tourism - sign up for their travel trade newsletter to get notified of any upcoming webinars or training sessions.

WelcoMe

WelcoMe is a cloud-based platform, designed to help you manage, understand and assist disabled visitors.

It allows visitors to plan their assistance in advance of arriving at the venue, ensuring a smoother operation for everyone involved.

The platform also offers staff training, to improve the relationship between your team and visitors, recognising that both sides benefit from preparation and support before your visitors’ arrival.

Learn more here: [WelcoMe website](#)

“Making face-to-face transactions between staff and disabled people as informed, anxiety-free and friendly as possible.”

Welcome to Excellence

Welcome to Excellence is a customer service training initiative. They have been operating since 1993, and more than 400,000 people have participated in their training courses.

They offer a training course called “Welcoming All Customers”, which provides training on customer service and accessibility. The course provides participants with practical advice to give them confidence in meeting the needs of all their customers.

Read more here: [Welcoming All Customers](#)

They offer scheduled courses in some locations (per person price) that individuals can book, but they also offer in-house courses (per session price), and train-the-trainer courses.



Next steps



Visit**Aberdeenshire**

Next steps

Once you have started on your Responsible Tourism journey and made your business more sustainable and inclusive, you might want to look for recognition for your hard work through certificates, accreditations or awards.

You may also want to expand your network by connecting with other businesses and joining relevant membership organisations and associations.



Awards, associations and accreditations

Scottish Thistle Awards

Suitable for:

All tourism businesses (accommodation providers, attractions, activity companies, tour operators, events, festivals, restaurants, pubs, etc).

Description:

The annual Scottish Thistle Awards are VisitScotland's way of celebrating excellence and recognising businesses in Scotland's tourism industry.

Responsible Tourism is central to these awards, so if you are committed to sustainability and inclusivity, you may want to consider applying. Each entry must provide evidence of responsible and sustainable practices and ambitions.

How to apply:

- Nominations usually open in March.
- If you are nominated by someone, you will receive an email with details of how to enter the awards.
- It's not essential to receive a public nomination to enter. You can still enter your chosen award categories directly online.
- There are a lot of different categories to choose from (see list below), so you may want to apply for more than one category.
- Take your time filling in the application, and really consider your answers.
- The Scottish Thistle Awards panel will consider the entries during May and June, and the shortlist is usually announced in July
- The regional awards take place in the autumn.
- Winners from each regional award ceremony advance to the national final which is usually held in November or December.
- The overall winner for each category is announced at the national final.



Categories:

- Best B&B or guesthouse experience
- Best bar or pub
- Best eating experience
- Best hotel experience
- Best outdoor and adventure experience
- Best self-catering accommodation experience
- Best visitor attraction
- Celebrating thriving communities
- Climate action award
- Inclusive tourism award
- Innovation in tourism
- Outstanding cultural event or festival
- Tourism and hospitality employer of the year
- Tourism individual of the year
- Rising star award



Regional awards:

- Aberdeen City and Shire Tourism Awards (ACSTA)
- Central and East Regional Final
- South of Scotland Thistle Awards
- The Highland and Islands Tourism Awards (HITA)
- West Regional Final

Read more here: [VisitScotland Scottish Thistle Awards information page](#)

Source: VisitScotland

Green Tourism certification

Suitable for:

All tourism businesses (accommodation providers, attractions, activity companies, tour operators, venues, etc).

Description:

Green Tourism is a world-leading sustainability certification for the travel, tourism and hospitality sectors. Their aim is to help embed responsible, sustainable and environmentally friendly practices across businesses and the wider tourism sector.

Despite being called “Green” Tourism, it’s not just about sustainability and green practices. They also cover communication, inclusivity and accessibility, all under three headings (people, places and planet – see below). Basically, everything we cover in this Responsible Tourism Toolkit.

They provide expert advice and manageable actions to help tourism businesses achieve a sustainability certification, which lets your customers know your business is invested in a healthy future.



You will have clear and practical actions to run a more sustainable business, embrace the circular economy, and reduce your carbon footprint. You might find that you are probably doing more than you realise already.

PEOPLE GOALS



Communication



Awareness



Community



Health & Well-being



Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity

PLACES GOALS



Destinations



Experiences



Travel



Food and Drink



Biodiversity

OUR PLANET GOALS



Energy



Water



Waste



Carbon



Chemicals

How to apply:

You can do a quick eligibility test on their website. If eligible, you can fill in an online application form and pay the membership fee.

You don't have to fill in all the information at once, the application is an online form, so you can save your progress and revisit the form as needed.

You will also need to submit evidence, such as photos, links to social media or screenshots. The Green Tourism team will support you throughout the application process.

Once your application is ready, submit it for assessment. The Green Tourism team will then review your assessment and award you a Green Tourism Award – Bronze, Silver or Gold.

Read more here: [Green Tourism website](#)

Other Green Certification schemes in Scotland

There are other Green Certification schemes available in Scotland, and you can read more about them here: [VisitScotland Green Certification Schemes](#)



Tourism Cares

Suitable for:

All tourism businesses who are ready to engage with the travel trade (Tourism Cares is a B2B website).

Description:

VisitScotland are working to support Scotland's Responsible Tourism objectives, and as part of that project, they have developed a partnership with Tourism Cares.

Tourism cares is a US non-profit who are closely aligned with USTOA (the US Tour Operator Association). USTOA is a major influencer in bringing North American visitors to Scotland.

Tourism Cares believes that tourism can be a real force for good, and they work with over 160 members (including travel advisors, tour operators and airlines) to reach millions of travellers worldwide who are planning and booking their holidays.

They have created an interactive [Meaningful Travel Map](#), allowing the travel trade to search for 'meaningful travel' providers across the globe.

Scotland is the first European destination to feature on the map, and VisitScotland aim to showcase as many responsible tourism products and experiences as possible, that meet the eligibility criteria.

How to apply:

To be considered, you need:

- 1) A tour, product or experience that is relevant to tourists (this includes accommodation, as well as attractions and activities).
- 2) To be visitor ready – i.e. have a website, social media, have all necessary permissions and licences and respond to enquiries.
- 3) The capacity to benefit from additional marketing (i.e. have room to grow your business).
- 4) To adhere to Tourism Cares' child safety and animal welfare policies.
- 5) To meet at least two of the eligibility criteria listed on their website.

Take a look at the criteria on the Tourism Cares website: [Tourism Cares Criteria](#)

If you believe you meet these criteria, you would need to complete an application form. The form takes about 20 minutes to fill in, but you may need more time to consider and write your submission texts. You will need to describe your experiences, write an impact statement, outline your mission / vision, and provide a couple of high-resolution images.

Read more here: [VisitScotland Tourism Cares](#)



Make Travel Matter® Experience

Suitable for:

Tourism businesses that offer experiences to the travel trade (B2B).

Description:

The Travel Corporation (TTC) is the parent company of tour operators such as Insight Vacations, Trafalgar, Contiki, Highland Explorer Tours and Brendan Vacations, as well as other tourism businesses such as The Red Carnation Hotel Collection and Evan Evans.

In 2020, they launched a 5-year sustainability strategy called **How We Tread Right (HWTR)** for its family of brands, based on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

This led to the creation of Make Travel Matter®, a tool to allow their brands to select experiences that benefit the people and communities they visit, with a clear social or environmental mission at the core of their operations.

Their brand teams identify experiences that are suitable for this programme. The experiences must meet the criteria of at least 1 of the 11 Global Goals they have selected from the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals ([see above](#)).

How to apply:

If your experience aligns with at least one of the Global Goals, reach out to your TTC contractor to be considered.

Learn more here: [Make Travel Matter Experiences](#)

Wild Scotland

Suitable for:

Organisations and individuals that offer wildlife, adventure or activity tourism services to visitors in Scotland.

Description:

Wild Scotland is a membership organisation, committed to sharing best practices across the outdoor sector in Scotland. Every member is required to pledge their commitment through signing up to the Wild Scotland Code of Conduct and Best Practice Guidelines, focusing on 4 key principles: Care, Sustainability, Responsibility and Excellence.

How to apply:

Apply online on their website.

Read more here: [Wild Scotland](#)



Glossary



Visit**Aberdeenshire**

Glossary (A-Z)

Here is a list of some abbreviations and expressions you may come across in Responsible Tourism, in alphabetical order.

Accessibility software

Accessibility software refers to tools and programmes designed to help people with disabilities use computers, smartphones, and other digital devices.

This type of software includes features like screen readers for the visually impaired, voice recognition for those who can't use a keyboard, and magnifiers for people with low vision.

The goal of accessibility software is to make digital content and technology usable for everyone, regardless of their physical or cognitive abilities.

Anchor organisations

Anchor organisations (or institutions) are large, stable entities like hospitals, universities, or local councils that are deeply rooted in their communities. They play a vital role in the local economy by providing jobs, delivering services, and purchasing goods from local suppliers. Because they are unlikely to relocate, they are seen as "anchors" in the community, helping to support local development and improve social and economic wellbeing. Examples in Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen would be the NHS and the National Trust for Scotland.

B2B

Short for business-to-business.

In tourism, this means selling your products / services through another company, such as a tour operator, OTA, travel agent etc.

B2B2C

Short for business-to-business-to-consumer.

The end consumer often books a package with a tour operator or travel agent, who have booked the services that make up the package with a DMC, who will book with you. So, your product / service will be sold to a business, who are selling it to another business, who sells it to the end-consumer.

B2C

Short for business-to-consumer.

In tourism, this refers to tourism businesses selling their products / services direct to the end-consumer.

BAME

Short for Black Asian and Minority Ethnic.

While there is no legal restriction on using this acronym, it is widely acknowledged that the term is no longer considered acceptable. The advice is to avoid using it as a replacement for directly naming a specific ethnic group or individual.

BPOC

Short for Black People and People of Colour.

This term is acceptable as a general reference in certain contexts, such as when discussing data or making comparisons with the white population in the UK. It usually reflects a common way of gathering and presenting statistics.



BSL

Short for British sign language.

Buyer

In a travel trade context, the person working for a DMC, tour operator or wholesaler who sources and negotiates the contracts to buy products from the tourism supplier. They can have varying job titles – business development manager, product development manager, contracting manager, sourcing manager, product manager etc.

Climate quitting

This term refers to the growing trend of employees choosing to leave their jobs or decline job offers because they believe their employer is not doing enough to address climate change or lacks meaningful sustainability practices. It highlights a rising demand among workers, particularly younger generations, for employers to take serious action on environmental issues.

D/deaf

There is a difference if someone is described as Deaf or deaf.

Deaf with an upper case D generally refers to people who have been deaf all their lives, and are engaged with the Deaf community. This is sometimes referred to as culturally Deaf.

Deaf with lower case d is for people with hearing loss, who are predominantly oral and may not engage or identify with the Deaf community.

DMC

Short for destination management company.

A UK based operator that works exclusively B2B, providing ground handling services (booking accommodation, transfers, attractions etc) and local expertise to international tour operators and travel agents.

Examples of DMCs in Scotland: Abbey Ireland & UK, JacTravel, ASA, AC Group

DMO

Short for destination marketing organisation.

Basically, what we used to refer to as local tourist boards. Usually a non-profit organisation, dedicated to the promotion of their region and driving inbound tourism to a destination.

Example of a DMO: VisitAberdeenshire

ESG

Short for environmental, social and governance.

It refers to a set of criteria used to evaluate a company's performance and practices in three key areas: environmental impact, social responsibility, and corporate governance.

EV

Short for electric vehicle.

GHG

Short for greenhouse gas.

Greenhushing

A practice where companies intentionally under-communicate or avoid publicising their environmental initiatives and sustainability efforts.



This is often done to avoid scrutiny, criticism, or accusations of greenwashing, even if their efforts are genuine and impactful. By not promoting their green practices, companies aim to steer clear of potential backlash or the challenges of proving their environmental claims.

Greenwashing

This is a deceptive practice where a company or organisation falsely promotes its products, services, or overall operations as environmentally friendly or sustainable, often through misleading information or superficial actions.

This tactic is used to attract environmentally conscious consumers and create a positive public image without making substantial efforts to reduce their actual environmental impact.

LED

Short for light emitting diode.

LED lighting products produce light up to 90% more efficiently than traditional light bulbs.

ME

Short for myalgic encephalomyelitis.

ME is also known as chronic fatigue syndrome and is a long-term condition that can affect different parts of the body. The most common symptom is extreme tiredness.

MICE

Short for meetings, incentives, corporate and events.

It's often used to describe a type of DMC or travel agent, who specialises in organising events, conferences or team activities for companies.

NTO

National tourist organisations, what we used to refer to as national tourist boards.

Example of an NTO: VisitScotland

OTA

Short for online travel agent.

An online travel agent (OTA) is a digital platform that allows consumers to research and book travel services, such as flights, hotels, car rentals, tours, and attractions, in one place online.

OTAs serve as intermediaries between travel service providers (suppliers) and customers, offering a convenient way to compare prices, read reviews, and make reservations from a variety of providers in one place.

Some OTAs specialise in accommodation, while some specialise in attractions and activities.

Examples of OTAs: Viator, GetYourGuide, Trip.com, Expedia

Protected characteristics

Specific characteristics that are protected against discrimination in the UK, under the Equality Act 2010. These include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Purple pound

The collective spending power of disabled people and their households.

RNIB

Short for Royal National Institute of Blind People.



RNIB is the leading sight loss charity in the UK, and they offer support and advice to people in the UK with sight loss.

RNID

Short for Royal National Institute for Deaf People.

The RNID is a charitable organization working on behalf of people who are D/deaf or have hearing loss in the UK.

Screen reader

Also known as text-to-speech software.

A screen reader is a software tool, used by people with visual impairments, to be able to “read” online. It basically reads aloud the text on a computer screen (websites, documents, apps etc). The screen reader converts text, buttons, and other visual elements into spoken words or braille, allowing users to interact with digital content using a keyboard or touch commands.

SITE

Short for Society for Incentive Travel Excellence.

SITE is a professional association for people who work in incentive travel (MICE).

SMEs

Short for small and medium-sized enterprises.

The UK government definition of SMEs (amounts in Euros to align with the EU):

- Micro - less than 10 employees and an annual turnover under €2 million
- Small - less than 50 employees and an annual turnover under €10 million
- Medium-sized - less than 250 employees and an annual turnover under €50 million

Travel Trade

“Travel Trade” is a term that covers all intermediaries that book and sell your products (B2B), rather than direct bookings from the general public (B2C).

Intermediaries could be tour operators, wholesalers, destination management companies (DMCs), travel agents or online retailers / marketplaces such as OTAs (online travel agents).

There is sometimes a misconception that travel trade = groups, but these intermediaries would also book individuals and small groups with you. Any individuals they book are usually referred to as FIT.

The Travel Trade usually have a wide client base, both domestically and internationally. Some of them sell exclusively B2B, while some of them sell both B2B and B2C, and some sell just direct to consumers (B2C).

UX

Short for user experience.

Basically, how a person feels when interacting with a system, for example a website or an app.

UX covers all aspects, such as ease of use, accessibility, and how enjoyable the experience is.

Good UX design aims to create websites and apps that are intuitive and meet the needs of users effectively.



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