



VisitAberdeenshire

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM TOOLKIT



Version 1 – October 2024

Introduction

Welcome to the VisitAberdeenshire Responsible Tourism Toolkit

This guide is made for tourism businesses in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, to help you adopt sustainable and inclusive tourism practices.

Why this Toolkit was created

VisitAberdeenshire created this Toolkit to address inclusive tourism and sustainability as areas for your business, to build resilience and achieve growth, while minimising negative impacts.

By using the tips and strategies in this guide, you can enhance the sustainability of your business, improve your reputation, be more inclusive, and help preserve Aberdeenshire and the city of Aberdeen's beautiful nature and rich cultural heritage.

The content is in line with VisitScotland's four Responsible Tourism objectives:

1

Support Scotland's transition to a low carbon economy – Scotland target net zero greenhouse gases (GHG) by 2045

2

Ensure tourism contributes to thriving communities

3

Ensure tourism in Scotland is inclusive

4

Support the protection, considerate enjoyment of Scotland's natural and cultural heritage

How to use the Toolkit

The Toolkit has been set up in two formats – there is a PDF version of all the content, so you can easily download it and save it on your computer or mobile device, and access it whenever you need. There is also an online version, with six different PDFs to access online or download.

We recommend using it as a handy reference guide, checking different sections as needed to help with your business decisions and daily operations. We encourage you not to print the full Toolkit, to reduce the environmental impact.



The Toolkit covers key areas such as accessibility, biodiversity, reducing carbon emissions, and circular economy, under two main headings – Inclusive Tourism and Sustainable Tourism.

There are simple steps towards responsible tourism practices, and we have provided action lists throughout the Toolkit to help you. We have also created two handy checklists – one for inclusive tourism, and one for sustainability. These checklists include quick wins as well as more advanced actions. You can tick off each action as you complete it, making it easy to track your progress.

We have included a list of resources and next steps, as well as a handy glossary for any jargon or terminology you are not yet familiar with.

Businesses that have already started on their Responsible Tourism journey have kindly shared their experiences in some case studies, which will hopefully inspire you.

At the bottom of each page throughout the Toolkit, there are two symbols:



If you click on the arrow on the left, it will take you back to the contents list.



If you click on the list symbol on the right, it will take you to the glossary.

Any words that are **bold, underlined pink**, will take you to the relevant Toolkit section. And any words that are underlined green, will take you to an external website. We have also included Contents lists, with hyperlinks to navigate the Toolkit.

This toolkit will be reviewed annually, and we would love to hear from you if there is anything you think should be improved or included in the Toolkit. Please contact industry@visitabdn.com with any feedback.

Why Responsible Tourism matters

Responsible Tourism is not just a box-ticking exercise, it is crucial for the future of the tourism industry. There are benefits to Responsible Tourism - for the environment and your community, but also commercially and reputationally.

By practicing Responsible Tourism, your business can:

- Help protect the region's natural beauty and cultural heritage for future generations.
- Reduce its environmental impact and help fight climate change.
- Support local communities and economies.
- Attract eco-conscious travellers and stand out in the market.
- Be more welcoming by being inclusive and accessible.
- Become more resilient to environmental and economic challenges.

Committing to Responsible Tourism means you're not just securing the future of your business, but also contributing to the sustainable development of the North-east as a destination of choice for UK and inbound visitors.

We hope this Toolkit becomes a valuable resource for you on your responsible tourism journey.



Links to the other sections

[Inclusive Tourism](#)

[Sustainable Tourism](#)

[Telling Your Responsible Tourism Story](#)

[Resources](#)

[Next Steps](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Glossary](#)



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