****

# **Dog Friendly Business of the Year**

**This sample application form is for information only and all applications must be made via the online application system.**

## Useful information before you start your application

Before you start your application:

1. Read and accept the **Applicant Terms and Conditions** when prompted.
2. Make sure that you are eligible for the category you are considering applying for.
Read the **eligibility criteria** carefully, if you are deemed ineligible you may be moved to another category where you would be eligible, or your application may be discounted altogether. If you are not sure whether you are eligible, check with the competition organiser before completing your application.
3. To avoid duplication in your responses, read all the **questions** before you start. For most categories each question covers a different aspect of your business, e.g.
	1. Question 1 – **Top Qualities**
	e.g. unique selling points, strengths and the essence of the business
	2. Question 2 – **Recent Improvements**
	e.g. business developments and improvements over the last two years
	3. Question 3 – **Results**
	e.g. recent successes from across the business – providing figures where relevant
	4. Question 4 – **Future Plans**
	e.g. plans to develop and promote the business over the next year
4. Read the **guidance information** starting ‘judges will be looking for . . .’ for suggestions on what to include in your answers.
5. By setting up an **account** you can save your work and come back to it later – you don’t have to start and submit your application in one sitting.
6. Take your time but be mindful of the **closing date** for applications.
7. Be aware of the **word limits**, they are exact.
8. **Proof your entry** before submitting.

**Good luck!**

## Eligibility criteria

* 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 definition:

* 'Tourism product' covers a number of different categories including:
* Accommodation eg hotels, bed & breakfasts, guest houses, self-catering/serviced apartments, hostels, holiday boats, camping, caravanning, glamping, lodges, shepherds huts, chalets
* Hospitality ie a single food and beverage service business eg pub, restaurant, café, tea room, coffee shop, bistros, food and drink markets, kiosks & street food (in a regular location). [For these purposes the definition of a food and drink market is a collection of independent food and drink establishments with ancillary services (eg parking area, toilets, security, visitor information) and maintained by a management firm as an entity.]
* Guided tours & visitor experience that requires participation in an activity
* Cultural services, eg theatres, musical entertainment venues, sporting venues
* 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
* Businesses must promote dog friendly features and warmly welcome dogs
* The business must be open during the judging period
* Businesses of all sizes can apply as this category is judged within the context and style of the business
* Only tourism businesses who directly serve the end-users are eligible (ie the tourist/ visitor/ guest). Business to business agencies or intermediaries eg that manage business to consumer (B2C) presence for tourism businesses; would not be eligible
* 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
* Businesses that have been trading for at least three months and up to two years when applications open are strongly recommended to apply to the New Tourism Business of the Year category before considering applying to any other categories
	+ For the purpose of eligibility for this competition, ‘trading’ means serving customers. If the business has not been trading this long, then they will need to wait to apply to the competition in 2026/27
* Applications from a chain or group operator must relate to a single site and not multiple sites

## Applicant & business details

(not scored)

**Applicant’s name:**

Enter the applicant’s name here.

**Applicant’s job title:**

Enter the applicant’s job title here.

**Applicant’s phone number:**

Enter the applicant’s phone number here.

**Applicant’s email:**

Enter applicant’s email here.

**Business name:**

Name of business application relates to. Give the name used to promote the business, as you wish it to appear in all publicity materials, on certificates, in presentations etc:

Enter your business name here.

**Business address:**

Enter your business address here.

**Closures during judging period** (01 September 2025 – 30January 2026)

Enter closures during the judging period here.

**Age of Business**

For businesses trading for less than two years, what exact date did the business relating to this application start trading? For businesses trading for more than two years, what year did the business relating to this application start trading?

**No of staff**

Enter the number of staff employed (full time equivalent) here.

Enter the number of staff here.

**Promotional Description**

Provide a promotional description of your business.

* Focus on its strengths and stand out features
* Write your description with regard to being dog friendly
* This wording will be used in PR and awards literature
* Wording provided is subject to edit
* 120 words maximum

Enter the promotional description here.

**Promotional Images**

Provide up to three landscape high resolution photos.

* Photos should be high quality and relate to this category so should include dogs and doggie facilities or services
* Photos should not be edited in any way eg embedded text or logos, a collage
* Only include photos that you own the copyright for
* If the photo requires a credit eg photographer, please provide details
* These photos will be used in PR and awards literature

## Background

(Not scored)

**Briefly outline the story of your business (250 words maximum).**

For example:

* Length of time business has been trading and time under current ownership
* Target market(s) and typical customer profile
* Key milestones in developing the business
* Indication of size of business
* Number of staff employed, if any

Enter information on the background of your business here.

**List any awards, ratings and accolades received in the last two years. Include the title, awarding body, level and date achieved.**

For example:

* Successes in this competition and the VisitEngland Awards for Excellence
* Specific Dog Friendly accoladres
* TripAdvisor Traveller's Choice Award
* Green Tourism award
* VisitEngland quality assessment, local quality accreditation

Enter information on any awards, ratings or accolades here.

**There is no requirement for your business to be quality assessed. However, if you have an independent quality assessment/mystery shopping report from the last two years, you might wish to upload it here (optional).**

Enter information on any quality assessments here.

## Online presence & reviews

(This section is 30% of the final score)

* Social Media & Website = 20%
* Online Reviews = 10%

**Provide links to your online presence relating to this category, which will be reviewed and scored by judges in addition to your answers to the four questions. Other sites may also be checked.**

**As part of this review, judges will be looking for evidence of your commitment to Accessible and Inclusive Tourism and Regenerative Tourism in addition to your focus on actively welcoming dogs and their owners.**

Enter the website URL here.

**Accessibility & inclusivity information**

Provide links to your accessibility and inclusivity information.

Enter the accessibility & inclusivity information URL here.

If information on your approach to accessibility and inclusivity is not available online, outline the details here (max. 300 words)

Enter the accessibility & inclusivity information URL here.

**Regenerative Tourism information**

Regenerative Tourism champions that tourism should leave a place better than it was before. The main goal is for visitors to have a positive impact in the destination or place they visit. Through this we wish to champion actions of suppliers, staff and local stakeholders in supporting the entrant on their delivery to the visitor.

We are looking for actions that support some or all of the below to a standard that could inspire visitors, suppliers and staff in positive actions:

* Climate – actions to decarbonise energy/mobility towards Net Zero
* Circular Economy – clear examples of management of suppliers, waste, recycling, sustainable products and efficient use of resources
* Biodiversity – actions to protect and restore nature
* Place based – respect for local area/communities, tourism that does no harm

Provide links to your regenerative tourism information.

Enter the regenerative tourism information here.

If information on your approach to regenerative tourism is not available online, outline the details here (max. 300 words)

Enter the regenerative tourism information here.

Provide links to all business pages/profiles on Facebook, Instagram and X, LinkedIn and TikTok etc.

Enter the social media URL here.

**Online review sites**

Provide category specific links to customer review listings for your dog friendly business eg TripAdvisor, Facebook, Google, Euan’s Guide, UpFront Reviews, Booking.com, Trustpilot, or you might feature on dog friendly websites that feature reviews eg edogadvisor, dogfriendly.co.uk, etc

Enter the online review URLs here.

**Question 1 - Your Top Qualities**

(This question is 20% of the final score)

**Tell us about up to five ways in which your business is impressive compared to your competitors in meeting the needs of customers visiting with their dogs. Why are you the best, most dog friendly business? (500 words maximum).**

Describe the unique selling points, strengths and essence of your business for dog owners. Judges will be looking for detailed examples of quality from across the business. One or more of the following example areas may be relevant to address in your answer (it is not mandatory to cover every area) and you may have more:

* Quality of your core product and dog friendly experience
* How you have adapted your business offering to warmly welcome dogs
* If applicable to your type of business, what information do you provide for dog owners before and during their visit eg where dogs can and can’t go - rules, local dog friendly facilities, services, walks, things to see do, places to eat etc
* How you care for your team and ensure they have the skills specific to welcoming dogs
* Use and promotion of local suppliers, including food & drink offer centred on locally sourced produce - do you provide for dogs too eg have a doggie menu?
* Innovative marketing and PR including partnerships with other relevant businesses
* Innovative adaption, diversification and resilience building
* How you consider what dog owners need to ensure they have a fantastic visit/stay eg if you are an foodie/accommodation business where can you eat with your dog?
* Sustainable practices that align to regenerative tourism, this may include:
* Climate – actions to decarbonise energy/mobility towards Net Zero
* Circular Economy – clear examples of management of suppliers, waste, recycling, sustainable products and efficient use of resources
* Biodiversity – actions to protect and restore nature
* Place based – respect for local area/communities, use of local suppliers, tourism that does no harm
* Inclusive facilities, experience and welcome, this may include:
* how you attract a diverse audience
* how you provide for visitors with access needs and
* what you have in place to ensure all visitors are welcomed, supported and encouraged to take part or enjoy their stay with you

Enter answer to question 1 here.

Links to relevant supporting evidence online (optional):

It is not a requirement to submit supporting evidence; however, if you do, ensure that the focus is on the quality and relevancy of the evidence submitted to this question rather than quantity.

Any written answers that are included within the supplementary evidence, attempting to circumvent the question word counts, will be disregarded.

Enter links to supplementary evidence here.

## Question 2 - Your Recent Improvements

(This question is 20% of the final score)

**Tell us about up to five ways in which you have developed your business and/or improved the customer experience for dog owners and their dogs over the last two years (500 words maximum).**

Explain your reasons for making the improvements and indicate which parts of the business are impacted. Judges will be looking for examples of improvements from across the business. One or more of the following example areas may be relevant to address in your answer (it is not mandatory to cover every area) and you may have more:

(Only include examples of improvements undertaken in the last two years.)

* Promotional initiatives eg new website, social media campaign etc specific to this category
* Improving the skills of you and your team to cater for visitors with dogs
* Expansion, upgrade of facilities, enhancements to your services, information provided specific to dogs eg health and safety, walks, attractions, places to eat, visit etc
* Sustainable practices that align to regenerative tourism, this may include:
* Climate – actions to decarbonise energy/mobility towards Net Zero
* Circular Economy – clear examples of management of suppliers, waste, recycling, sustainable products and efficient use of resources
* Biodiversity – actions to protect and restore nature
* Place based – respect for local area/communities, use of local suppliers, tourism that does no harm
* Inclusive facilities, experience and welcome, this may include:
* how you attract a diverse audience
* how you provide for visitors with access needs and
* what you have in place to ensure all visitors are welcomed, supported and encouraged to take part or enjoy their stay with you
* Innovative adaption, diversification and/or resilience building
* Use of digital technologies such as automated services, robotics and artificial intelligence (AI)
* Approximate date of improvement

Enter answer to question 2 here.

Links to relevant supporting evidence online (optional):

It is not a requirement to submit supporting evidence; however, if you do, ensure that the focus is on the quality and relevancy of the evidence submitted to this question rather than quantity.

Any written answers that are included within the supplementary evidence, attempting to circumvent the question word counts, will be disregarded.

Enter links to supplementary evidence here.

## Question 3 - Your Results

 (This question is 15% of the final score)

**Tell us about three dog friendly related successes from the last year (these may relate to online activities), providing figures where relevant (300 words maximum).**

Judges will be looking for detailed examples of successes from across the business. One or more of the following example areas may be relevant to address in your answer (it is not mandatory to cover every area) and you may have more:

* 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/visitors travelling with their dogs, sales, customer satisfaction etc
* Percentage increase in online bookings from dog owners
* Increase in repeat business from dog owners
* Business generated from marketing activity
* Growth of social media following and engagement relating specifically to dogs
* Effectiveness of marketing and PR campaigns relating to dog owners
* The significance of the level of impact on your business

Enter answer to question 3 here.

Links to relevant supporting evidence online (optional):

It is not a requirement to submit supporting evidence; however, if you do, ensure that the focus is on the quality and relevancy of the evidence submitted to this question rather than quantity.

Any written answers that are included within the supplementary evidence, attempting to circumvent the question word counts, will be disregarded.

Enter links to supplementary evidence here.

## Question 4 – Your Future Plans

(This question is 15% of the final score)

**Tell us about three ways you will develop and promote your business to meet the needs of visitors with dogs over the next year and the reasons why (300 words maximum).**

Judges will be looking for detailed examples of future plans from across the business with a clear rationale. One or more of the following example areas may be relevant to address in your answer (it is not mandatory to cover every area) and you may have others too and you may have more:

* Continued adaptation, diversification and resilience building focusing on attracting visitors with their dogs
* Sustainable practices that align to regenerative tourism, this may include:
* Climate – actions to decarbonise energy/mobility towards Net Zero
* Circular Economy – clear examples of management of suppliers, waste, recycling, sustainable products and efficient use of resources
* Biodiversity – actions to protect and restore nature
* Place based – respect for local area/communities, use of local suppliers, tourism that does no harm
* Inclusive facilities, experience and welcome, this may include:
* how you attract a diverse audience
* how you provide for visitors with access needs and
* what you have in place to ensure all visitors are welcomed, supported and encouraged to take part or enjoy their stay with you
* Expansion, upgrade of dog friendly facilities and equipment, enhancements to your services and information provision
* Improving your welcome and the skills of you and your team to cater for dogs and their owners
* Marketing and PR to dog owners, including partnerships with other businesses
* Operational efficiency
* Use of digital technologies such as automated services, robotics and artificial intelligence (AI)

Enter answer to question 4 here.

Links to relevant supporting evidence online (optional):

It is not a requirement to submit supporting evidence; however, if you do, ensure that the focus is on the quality and relevancy of the evidence submitted to this question rather than quantity.

Any written answers that are included within the supplementary evidence, attempting to circumvent the question word counts, will be disregarded.

Enter links to supplementary evidence here.