



Visitor Attractions

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Definition

Britain has over 6,000 visitor attractions, the greatest variety and density in the world. Some of the principal categories are: theme and leisure parks and piers; zoos and animal attractions; historic transport; landmark attractions; parks and gardens; science and discovery centres; workplace attractions.

The normal business of a visitor attraction is to admit the public and provide safe and secure access and activities throughout their managed areas.

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Learning opportunities

Most visitor attractions are potentially rich learning resources, accustomed to hosting groups of children and young people and actively seeking your 'business'. The number and spread of attractions makes it certain that a great variety of educational opportunity is available within easy reach of every school and setting. Furthermore, many attractions are intrinsic to local history, culture and social change. A visit can add appreciation and depth to awareness of local and community heritage.

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Range of provision

The scale of visitor attractions in terms of popularity and numbers of visits varies greatly. The majority of attractions are small enterprises. Ownership is divided roughly equally between public (government and local authority), charitable, and private sector. Just under half of attractions are free, but many more educational visits are made to charged-access attractions, which tend to have better facilities.

Information on local visitor attractions is available from Tourist Information Centres, Town Councils and Chambers of Commerce. On a wider scale, the most comprehensive, impartial and easiest way to identify potential visit locations is through the Attractions section of the websites

<http://www.visitbritain.co.uk/> or <http://www.enjoyengland.com/> Some attractions are very busy. To find



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out the quietest time to visit, it is worth consulting the attraction's staff whenever possible before fixing the date and timing of a visit, even when the pre-booking of facilities is not required.

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Learning support

Most attractions can successfully be used as educational resources, but the nature of educational provision varies greatly. It is important to check that any venue can provide the range of services you require.

The larger and better-funded attractions are likely to have dedicated staff responsible specifically for education visits, often as part of a wider range of duties.

Many attractions have staff who may not have formal training, but have considerable experience of hosting school and college groups. At some attractions there are re-enactors, interpreters and demonstrators who can provide specific services as part of the visit.

Most attractions offer documentation such as illustrated guides, explanatory and orientation materials and other information as part of their offer to all visitors; these are always of use as educational resources. Many attractions have also developed additional publications to provide further subject and topic depth, especially relating aspects of the attraction to the national curriculum. Educational materials may be available online, including pre-visit information.

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Visitor Attraction Web resources

www.alva.org.uk

Members of the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA) comprise the majority of Britain's biggest and best known attractions. Between them they welcome over 100 million domestic and overseas visitors each year – some 25 per cent of the visits made annually in the United Kingdom. To qualify for membership, the attractions must host over a million visitors per year at their singly or centrally managed sites and be in accord with ALVA's mission statement and quality standards. Current members include many of the UK's most famous museums, galleries and heritage sites.

www.visitbritain.co.uk/things-to-see-and-do/attractions-and-events

The Visit Britain website – search for details of over 15,000 attractions and events.

www.enjoyengland.com

The official tourist board for England – find out more about local attractions, activities, shows and events.

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