

Tourism in the UK is booming: the staycation trend has created increasing demand from UK residents to holiday at home, particularly for short breaks, and domestic tourism is forecast to continue to grow.

Why Durham?

- A limited supply of accommodation across all types
- Huge investment is going into the county's attractions and leisure offer to drive leisure market growth
- Demand for visits to friends and relatives and for weddings
- Business demand



Target markets

- Weekend Escapers – coming from the North East and beyond
- Short Break Basers – staying 3-4 days to explore different parts of Durham and the North East
- Touring Visitors (UK and overseas) – stopping off for a few days en-route to other areas
- Visitors to friends and relatives
- Parents visiting their children at Durham University
- People attending weddings
- People attending major events
- People visiting the area on business
- Special interest groups and tours



What the market is looking for?

A check of the customer reviews of the highest rated visitor accommodation shows clearly what customers are looking for and what makes an accommodation business stand out from the crowd:

- Exceptionally clean accommodation
- A good night's sleep
- Luxury bathrooms
- A warm welcome and great service
- Fantastic, locally sourced food
- Stylish, contemporary interior design
- A 'wow' factor
- Authenticity
- A view
- Environmentally sustainable accommodation
- Extra touches
- A memorable experience – not just a place to stay



What do visitors have to say about their stay?

Service was delivered by a very professional and helpful team

Ideally situated for a short stroll to the town centre

Clean, warm and comfy

Rooms are spotlessly clean and beds very comfortable

Friendly and very helpful staff, wonderful clean hotel rooms are great too

Great welcome

Excellent facilities, very clean and comfortable bed

What type of accommodation is needed?

There is a need for a wide range of different types of visitor accommodation in and around the county.

- High quality pub accommodation
- Restaurants with rooms
- Bed and Breakfast accommodation
- Hotels
- Self-catering apartments
- Holiday cottages
- Holiday lodges
- Glamping sites
- Touring caravan and camping sites
- Motorhome stopovers
- Pop-up glamping hotels to cater for the seasonal peak in demand;
- Bunkhouse and hostel accommodation



Visit County Durham Partnership brings benefits through promoting and developing any type or size of business.

The Partnership scheme is designed to encourage all tourism related businesses and organisations to work together for the success of our county and to grow the visitor economy. All Partnership fees are invested back into our work to help make Durham a premier county tourism destination.

Find out more at www.visitcountydurham.org/partnership-benefits/

Planning and Progressing Your Project

- **Defining your target market**

Everything starts with deciding which visitor markets you want to target. This will determine the type and quality of accommodation that you need to provide and how you will market it.

- **Checking out the competition**

Remember that you are going to be entering a very competitive marketplace. Make sure that you make time to look at what your competition is offering and think through how you can stand out from the crowd.

- **Defining your offer**

Make sure that the standard and style of accommodation that you will be offering meets the needs of your target visitor markets. Always go for quality at whatever level you decide to go for. Think about how you can achieve a competitive edge.

- **Assessing viability**

You will need to do your homework and run financial projections to ensure that your project will be financially viable. Think about the occupancy levels and prices that you will be able to achieve, taking account of seasonal, midweek and weekend variations in demand.

- **Funding your project**

If you need to borrow money to fund your project you will need to produce a clear business plan and cashflow projections.

- **Securing planning permission**

Check with Durham County Council's Planning Department to see if you will need planning or change of use permission www.durham.gov.uk/article/8280/Planning-advice-and-enquiries It is a good idea to use their pre-application service before you go too far with your project.

- **Legal requirements**

Visitor accommodation businesses are required to comply with a wide range of legal requirements. VisitBritain's Pink Book provides all of the information that you will need www.visitbritain.org/business-advice/know-your-legal-obligations

- **Access for all**

All visitor markets include people with some form of mobility, sensory or cognitive impairment, so it makes good business sense to ensure that you cater for visitors with such disabilities. It is also a legal requirement under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). Think about taking part in the National Accessible Scheme to give your disabled guests the access assurance that they need www.visitbritain.org/sites/default/files/vb-corporate/visitengland_national_accessible_scheme_served_standards.pdf

- **Environmental sustainability**

All visitor accommodation businesses need to play their part in addressing the climate crisis and eliminating their carbon emissions. Visitors are increasingly opting for visitor accommodation that demonstrates a strong commitment to environmental sustainability. There are various schemes that provide guidance and accreditation:

Green Tourism Green Check

www.green-tourism.com/pages/home

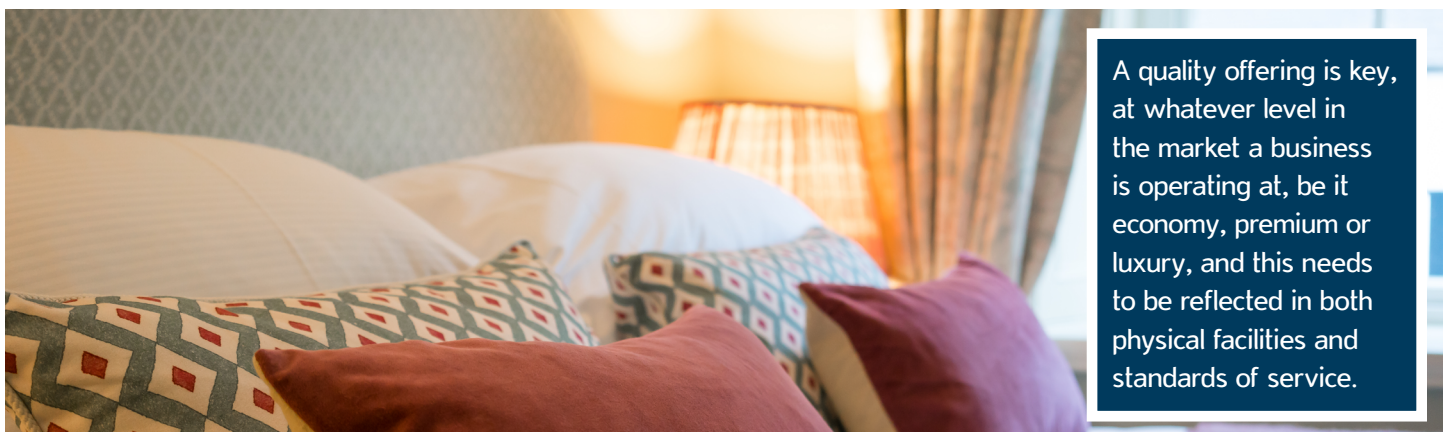
Quality in Tourism REST Accreditation

www.restourism.com/about-us

Green Key www.greenkey.global

Booking.com's Travel Sustainable accreditation

www.sustainability.booking.com/booking-travel-sustainable



A quality offering is key, at whatever level in the market a business is operating at, be it economy, premium or luxury, and this needs to be reflected in both physical facilities and standards of service.

Keys to success

Understand your target market and competitors

Everything starts from knowing who your customers are and how you are going to stand out.

Be distinctive

People love to stay somewhere different. They are generally looking for holiday accommodation that is a notch up from their own home. They want to be wowed by the places they are staying in.

Pay attention to detail

It's often the little things that people notice. Remember that you are providing an experience not just a place to stay.

Deliver great service

All visitors want a warm welcome and to be well looked after during their stay.

Effective marketing

You will need a great website and a strong digital and social media presence. Find out more at

www.visitcountydurham.org/partner-marketing-opportunities/

Build relationships with local businesses

You can only benefit from working together with local partners.

You can find more information about starting an accommodation business at
www.visitbritain.org/business-advice/start-your-business
www.visitcountydurham.org/business-support-toolkits/

