**About the Awards**

Visit County Durham (VCD), in association with The Northern Echo, is seeking to showcase the best in customer service offered to visitors to the county with the annual Durham Tourism Superstar initiative.

The award recognises the dedication and passion of those working in Durham’s tourism industry, and will be awarded to an individual or team who go above and beyond the call of duty to ensure visitors to Durham have a memorable experience.

The winner of Durham Tourism Superstar will be nominated for the VisitEngland National Tourism Superstar competition for 2026. Since 2014 Durham has had 3 national superstar winners from Beamish Museum and Durham Cathedral as well as 4 finalists from Auckland Castle, Hall Hill Farm and Walworth Birds of Prey Centre and most recently Kynren, representing the quality of the sector in Durham

**Nominations**

We are asking for nominations for an individual or group working in any part of the visitor economy, who are able to represent their profession. As well as their day job the nominee(s) should be knowledgeable and passionate about the destination.

**Nominations for Durham Tourism Superstar 2025 must:**

* Work for a tourism business or organisation in Durham
* Must represent Durham – be knowledgeable and passionate about the destination and happy to talk about the destination outside of their work remit
* Go above and beyond the call of duty to make an experience to remember for visitors
* Be aware that they have been nominated and happy to participate in any related PR and media opportunities during or post the announcement of the winner
* Be available and willing for their image to be used for publicity by Visit County Durham and The Northern Echo
* Be willing to take part in publicity for VisitEngland’s national awards should they be shortlisted.

**Timescale**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Durham Tourism Superstar 2024 launch | May 2025 |
| Closing date for nominations | Friday 6th June 2025 |
| Shortlist announced | w/c Monday 9th 2025 |
| Online voting open | w/c Monday 9th June until Tuesday 24th June 2025 |
| Winner announcement | w/c 30 June 2025 |

**Why should I nominate?**

By simply taking part the awards process can deliver significant benefits to applicants, finalists and winners and to the businesses they represent.

**Employee motivation** – A positive opportunity to recognise and reward the hard work and achievements of your employees – a boost to staff morale and motivation as it acknowledges their contribution to your business success. Increase team pride.

**Publicity** – Winning can generate significant amounts of publicity and this can have a direct impact on your business. Just being shortlisted can improve awareness of your organisation. You have the opportunity to gain extensive media attention and valuable publicity (local, regional and possibly national) as the awards will be talked about in the press, social media and online.

**A sign of quality** - A great way of differentiating your company from competitors and send out positive signals to customers highlighting a commitment to excellence and quality standards

**An assessment tool** – Entering an award is a valuable opportunity to properly appraise your business – the research process can help you think about ways you could be doing things better.

**Tips for completing the nomination form**

When completing the nomination form, remember the judges will be looking at many other nominations so make sure yours stands out from the rest! Here are some tips to help you improve your chances of putting together a great application and winning.

* Don’t be shy; shout about how your nominee excels. How do they go above and beyond the call of duty to make an experience to remember for visitors? What really sets them apart from the competition?
* Provide examples of how the nominee(s) have an effect on the business and its visitors – are there comments from visitors? Do visitors ask for them? Are there events which demonstrate their excellence? Has the nominee achieved positive results and if so what are they?
* Remember, the award is for the impact that the nominee(s) have on visitors and not the business in general.
* If referring to a particular event, campaign, project or activity, show how the nominee(s) contributed directly to its success
* Specify any training undertaken, awards received or practical examples of improved experience of visitors
* Include the little things that that make a difference
* Keep the information recent, what have they achieved in the last couple of years?
* Please note that by entering the awards, nominees agree to be part of the publicity if selected as a finalist / winner. The winner(s) must be comfortable being in the spotlight.

**Frequently asked questions**

* **Who can nominate?** Nominations can be submitted by managers and business owners nominating their employees, or individuals wishing to recognise their colleague’s efforts.
* **How do I nominate someone?** Submit your nomination by completing a nomination submission form which can be downloaded from www.visitcountydurham.org/durham-tourism-superstar
* **Is there a limit on how many entries we can submit?** No, businesses are encouraged to submit as many entries as they like. Please note that you will need to complete separate entries for each entry
* **Can I nominate a team or group of people?** Yes, Durham Tourism Superstar is awarded to an individual or a team who go above and beyond the call of duty.
* **What is the deadline for entries?** The deadline for entries is Friday 6th June 2025 at 23.59pm
* **How will the nominations be judged / shortlisted?** A panel of judges will decide a shortlist of up to 5 finalists based on evaluation of the written applications. The panel will comprise of industry representatives. The winning entry will be selected by an online public vote hosted on the Northern Echo website.

**Nominate your Durham Tourism Superstar today!**

Fill out your nomination form at www.visitcountydurham.org/durham-tourism-superstar

If you have any queries relating to Durham Tourism Superstar please contact Lucy Wearne on lucy.wearne@visitcountydurham.org