

Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance – what's Involved?

How do you qualify to be an assessor?

You have to be invited by VisitBritain to be a quality assessor. Usually you are only asked after you have been in the leisure industry for more than 25 years, so all of the assessors are very qualified and experienced. Assessors are self employed and are regularly assessed themselves to ensure their certification is of the highest calibre. Some assessors carry out up to 100 inspections a year, anywhere in the country.

How often are attractions assessed?

Assessments are carried out annually, by agreement with the organisation that manages the site or attraction .

Is it just for heritage sites?

No. The scheme takes in all kinds of attractions, from pure fun to high culture and can include everything from farm-based attractions to zoos and wildlife parks, theme parks to castles.

Is the attraction warned of the visit?

The assessor will contact the senior management team and let them know when the assessment is likely to take place and will ask them not to alert the staff as this might affect the credibility of the review. Usually the assessors are so experienced they can tell when staff have been forewarned and will mention this in the debrief. The aim is to make the visit as realistic as possible.

What does the assessment involve?

The assessor tries to 'experience' the attraction from an initial phone call asking for information to how interesting or exciting the main exhibits are. Everything is scrutinised including parking, signage, welcome and facilities such as catering and toilets.

Does everyone pass?

No. Where there are some minor issues these can usually be dealt with in the debrief and certification can still go ahead. However, some attractions do not pass and they would usually have to wait a full year for re-assessment.

What is the advantage of the scheme?

Visitors know they can expect a certain standard of attraction when it has been assessed by VisitBritain. Our criteria and standards are high and when an attraction passes the test, it can be very valuable from a marketing point of view. It also helps the attraction maintain a programme of investment and improvement to ensure they keep on passing!