

# Meeting the Best Practice/Legislation concerns of SMEs



## Publication Information

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## Background

VisitBritain's successful business to business publishing programme provides small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) with key business support in the form of easily updatable information and best practice advice. The service is designed to help SMEs make their business more efficient and to bring them in line with the latest legislative requirements and good practice guidance.

VisitBritain wanted to produce publications/platforms/formats, both off and on-line, that maximized compliance with the most relevant and useful legislative and best practice guidance information and help available. They wish to create them where they don't exist and develop the areas already covered.

VisitBritain surveyed SME/NOAS accommodation and attraction providers in England in order to identify and better understand what information (legislative and other) they want and/or need to be made available to them and how this might differ from provider to provider.

## Summary of Main Findings

### The Research

- The key objectives of the research were to find out;
  - What SME accommodation and attractions providers worry about or want to learn more about
  - How they want this information provided
- A secondary objective was to see if this varies by type of provider, grade or region.
- 1,004 Accommodation providers and 213 Attraction providers from across England were interviewed by telephone.
- The sample was reasonably representative of providers that are on the VisitBritain database

### Ratings of Concern/Interest

- Accommodation and Attraction providers were given 7 statements to rate for concern/interest and Accommodation providers were also given a further 10 statements to consider.
- Ratings were made on a scale of 1=Not at all Worried/Interested to 5=Very Worried/Interested.
- Mean scores were mostly in the range 2.5 to 3.5 and therefore considered 'neutral'. Very few were higher than 4.0 showing that providers were not greatly concerned or interested in any of the topics offered.
- Attraction providers were most concerned/interested in *Obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act* (3.8), *Information on Health & Safety* (3.7) and *Information on Liability* (3.5).

- Fifteen of the seventeen statements given to Accommodation providers were given a mean score of 3.0 or less.
- There were few differences by accommodation Type, Star/Diamond Grade or Regions
- Accommodation providers with No Stars/Not Yet Graded rated a wide range of legislative, practical and marketing statements as of quite high concern/interest, with scores being higher than Graded providers across the board.
- London particularly was concerned with *Obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act*, driven mainly by Attractions providers. This may be related to the nature of property and the scope for compliance and/or the compliance regime in the London area.

#### Importance

- Respondents were asked to say which of the statements that they were most worried about/interested in were most important.
- *Rights if Guest Won't Vacate*, *Pricing* and *Information on Health & Safety* are top 3 areas of importance for Accommodation providers.
- *Information on Health & Safety*, *Obligations Under the DDA* and *Pricing*, are top 3 for Attractions
- Accommodation providers with No Stars/Not Yet Graded nominated *Rights if Guest Won't Vacate*, *information on Liability* and *Discriminating Against Guests* as most important, but *Obligations Under the DDA* was not rated as important at all despite scoring highly under Concern/Interest.
- *Rights if Guest Won't Vacate*, *Pricing* and *Information on Health & Safety* are top 3 areas of importance across most regions – except London where *Pricing* had low importance.

#### Sources of Information – Preferred

- Respondents were asked how they would like to receive the information about the issues they rated as most important.
- The *Internet* was by far the most favoured source, with 24% nominating it overall. *VisitBritain's Pink Booklet* and *Quality Edge* followed with 16% and 10% respectively overall.
- The *Tourist Board* was only nominated by 2% of respondents as a preferred source for important information, despite being nominated by around 17-18% of respondents as a current source of legislation or best practice information.
- 56% of the sample said 'Other', of which 90% referred to some form of channel of delivery rather than source. Of these, three quarters would like to receive information *by post* and 20% *by e-mail*.
- Accommodation providers had a similar profile to the overall sample, with 24% nominating the Internet, 18% nominating VisitBritain's Pink Booklet and 11% VisitBritain's Quality Edge.
- No Stars/Not Yet Graded did not mention either *VisitBritain's Pink Booklet* or *Quality Edge* at all
- London respondents were much more likely and East and Midlands regions were much less likely than others to mention *Internet* as a preferred source of information.
- Around 22% of Attraction providers nominated the *Internet*, but only 9% nominated *VisitBritain's Pink Booklet* and 2% *Quality Edge*; less than half the level of Accommodation providers.

#### Sources of Information - Current

- Respondents were asked where they get their current information on legislation or on industry best practice.
- Accommodation providers tend to currently consult the *Local Council* and *VisitBritain's Pink Booklet* for Legislation, and the *Tourist Board* and *Local Council* for Best Practice information.
- The *Internet* is also a current source for Legislation and for Best Practice, but at much lower levels than those preferring to receive important information through the internet. This suggests that there is a lot of scope for developing this channel of information.
- The more Stars/Diamonds, the more likely Accommodation providers are to use *VisitBritain's Pink Booklet* for Legislation information.

- London appeared to make greatest use of *Local Council* for both Legislation and Best Practice.
- Attraction providers tend to currently consult the *Local Council* and the *Internet* for both Legislation and Best Practice information. They also make use of *Friends/Colleagues* for Legislation and the *Tourist Board* for Best Practice.
- *VisitBritain's Pink Booklet* and *Quality Edge* are currently used by only 3% of Attraction providers.
- East England and London based attractions do not use *VisitBritain's Pink Booklet* or *Quality Edge* for Legislation information, and North East, Yorkshire, East and London do not use them for Best Practice information.
- All regions make much more use of *Local Council* for Legislation than for Best Practice information.

#### Other Areas for Which Information Required

- Finally, respondents were asked if there were any other areas of compliance with legislation or industry best practice for which they required information; 14% responded yes.
- *Health & Safety* is the top issue, with 11% overall requesting more information on this topic.
- A further 8% nominated each of *Any (Relevant) New legislation*, *Disability* and *Fire regulations* and 7% wanted more information on *Liability*.
- Around 6% wanted to know more about the *Grading/ standards system* (this was the same amongst graded/non-graded accommodation purchasers).
- *Taxation* was also mentioned by around 5% of the sample overall.

### Recommendations

- Developing resources to deal with *Health & Safety* and *Obligations under the DDA* would be instantly beneficial, as these topics are more or less of universal interest.
- Accommodation providers are generally less concerned/ interested in the topics researched than Attraction providers. There is therefore an opportunity to show Accommodation providers the benefits of taking a greater interest. To the extent they are currently interested, it is in the more practical aspects of running their business, including marketing and handling guests.
- No Stars/Not Yet Graded are generally the most concerned/interested Accommodation providers, and don't currently use *VisitBritain's Pink Booklet* to any great extent and the *Quality Edge* even less so. This could be a group to target with these revised products or a suitable alternative.
- The results suggest that Attraction providers are more concerned about the risks associated with running their business than the marketing of it. Any information or guidance related to this will be of interest.
- About twice as many respondents expressed a preference for receiving important information via the *Internet* than say they are currently using it for Legislation or Best Practice information. This suggests an opportunity to develop a site as a source for information and to use the internet as a channel of communication. It may be necessary to promote by region.