**2025/26**

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# **Entertainment Venue of the Year**

Recognises business events venues that demonstrate an excellent understanding of the market, exceeding the expectations of their clients and have a strategic plan for future development within this area, with clear goals.

**This sample application form is for information only and all applications must be made via the online application system.**

## Useful information before you start your application

Before you start your application:

1. Read and accept the **Applicant Terms and Conditions** when prompted.
2. Make sure that you are eligible for the category you are considering applying for.
Read the **eligibility criteria** carefully, if you are deemed ineligible you may be moved to another category where you would be eligible, or your application may be discounted altogether. If you are not sure whether you are eligible, check with the competition organiser before completing your application.
3. To avoid duplication in your responses, read all the **questions** before you start. For most categories each question covers a different aspect of your business, e.g.
	1. Question 1 – **Top Qualities**
	e.g. unique selling points, strengths and the essence of the business
	2. Question 2 – **Recent Improvements**
	e.g. business developments and improvements over the last two years
	3. Question 3 – **Results**
	e.g. recent successes from across the business – providing figures where relevant
	4. Question 4 – **Future Plans**
	e.g. plans to develop and promote the business over the next year
4. Read the **guidance information** starting ‘judges will be looking for . . .’ for suggestions on what to include in your answers.
5. By setting up an **account** you can save your work and come back to it later – you don’t have to start and submit your application in one sitting.
6. Take your time but be mindful of the **closing date** for applications.
7. Be aware of the **word limits**, they are exact.
8. **Proof your entry** before submitting.

**Good luck!**

## Eligibility criteria

**Entertainment Venue of the year - Eligibility Criteria**

Open and actively operating between 1 June 2024 and 31 May 2025

* Must be based in Nottinghamshire and demonstrate a contribution to the visitor economy, with a notable proportion of audience attendance coming from outside the immediate local area.
* Must offer a regular entertainments programme that attract and engage a broad or specific target audience.

Judges will be looking for

* Quality of Visitor Experience,
* Innovation and Distinctiveness,
* A demonstrated contribution to the local visitor economy (e.g., overnight stays, local spend) and how the venue supports or engages with the local community.
* Effective marketing and promotional strategies used to attract visitors, including digital reach, collaborations, and campaigns to target out-of-area audiences.
* Efforts made to ensure the venue is welcoming and inclusive to all demographics, including accessibility for disabled visitors, diverse programming, and family-friendly offerings.
* Evidence of environmentally responsible practices in venue operations or events programming.
* Round 1 judging will determine a shortlist of festivals and events are open to a public vote.
* Round 2 judging will be a public vote which will determine the Gold, Silver and Bronze winner.

## Applicant & business details

(not scored)

**Applicant’s name:**

Enter the applicant’s name here.

**Applicant’s job title:**

Enter the applicant’s job title here.

**Applicant’s phone number:**

Enter the applicant’s phone number here.

**Applicant’s email:**

Enter applicant’s email here.

**Business name:**

Name of business this application relates to. Give the name used to promote the business as you wish it to appear in all publicity materials, on certificates, in presentations etc.:

Enter your business name here.

**Business address:**

Enter your business address here.

**Closures during judging period** (20th May – 30th October 2025)

Enter closures during the judging period here.

**Age of business**

For businesses trading for less than two years, what exact date did the business relating to this application start trading?

For businesses trading for more than two years, what year did the business relating to this application start trading?

Note: For the purposes of eligibility 'trading' means serving customers.

**No of staff**

Enter the number of staff employed (full time equivalent) here.

Enter the number of staff here.

**Promotional Description**

Provide a promotional description of your business.

• Focus on its strengths and stand out features

• Write your description with regard to this category

• This wording will be used in PR and awards literature

• Wording provided is subject to edit

• 120 words maximum

Enter the promotional description here.

**Promotional Images**

Provide up to three high resolution photos.

• Photos should relate to this category

• Photos should not be edited in any way e.g. embedded text or logos, a collage

• Only include photos that you own the copyright for

• If the photo requires a credit e.g. photographer, please provide details

• These photos will be used in PR and awards literature

## Background

(not scored)

**Briefly outline the story of your business (250 words maximum).**

For example:

• Length of time business has been trading and time under current ownership

• Target market(s) and typical customer profile

• Key milestones in developing the business

• Indication of size of business

• Number of staff employed, if any

Enter information on the background of your business here.

**List any awards, ratings and accolades received in the last two years. Include the title, awarding body, level and date achieved.**

For example:

**Successes in this competition and the VisitEngland Awards for Excellence**

**Successes in local/regional/UK wide award schemes**

Enter information on any awards, ratings or accolades here.

There is no requirement for your business to be quality assessed. However, if you have an independent quality assessment/mystery shopping report from the last two years, you might wish to upload it here (optional).

Enter information on any quality assessments here.

## Online presence & reviews

(this section is 30% of the final score)

* Social Media & Website = 20%
* Online Reviews = 10%

**Provide links to your online presence, which will be reviewed and scored by judges in addition to your answers to the four questions. Other sites may also be checked.**

**As part of this review, judges will be looking for evidence of your commitment to Accessible and Inclusive Tourism and Regenerative Tourism.**

Enter the website URL here.

**Accessibility & inclusivity information**

Provide links to your accessibility and inclusivity information.

Enter the accessibility & inclusivity information URL here.

If information on your approach to accessibility and inclusivity is not available online, outline the details here (max. 300 words)

Enter the accessibility & inclusivity information URL here.

**Regenerative Tourism information**

Regenerative Tourism champions that tourism should leave a place better than it was before. The main goal is for visitors to have a positive impact in the destination or place they visit. Through this we wish to champion actions of suppliers, staff and local stakeholders in supporting the entrant on their delivery to the visitor.

We are looking for actions that support some or all of the below to a standard that could inspire visitors, suppliers and staff in positive actions:

* Climate – actions to decarbonise energy/mobility towards Net Zero
* Circular Economy – clear examples of management of suppliers, waste, recycling, sustainable products and efficient use of resources
* Biodiversity – actions to protect and restore nature
* Place based – respect for local area/communities, tourism that does no harm

Provide links to your regenerative tourism information.

Enter the regenerative tourism information URL here.

If information on your approach to regenerative tourism is not available online, outline the details here (max. 300 words)

Enter the regenerative tourism information here.

Provide links to all business pages/profiles on Facebook, Instagram and X, LinkedIn and TikTok etc.

Enter the social media URL here.

**Online review sites**

Provide specific links to customer review listings for your business e.g. TripAdvisor, Facebook, Booking.com, Google, Euan’s Guide, UpFront Reviews

Enter the online review URL here.

## Question 1 - Your Top Qualities

(this question is 20% of the final score)

**Tell us about up to five ways in which your business is impressive in meeting the needs of your audience compared to your competitors (500 words maximum).**

Describe the unique selling points, strengths and essence of your business.

Judges will be looking for detailed examples of quality from across the business.

One or more of the following example areas may be relevant to address in your answer (it is not mandatory to cover every area):

* Describe the overall visitor experience at your venue. What makes it memorable or unique for guests?
* How do you ensure high-quality service and comfort for all audiences before, during, and after events?
(e.g., front-of-house experience, customer care, feedback mechanisms)
* How do you gather and respond to visitor feedback to improve your venue and programming?
* Innovation and Distinctiveness
* What innovative approaches have you introduced in the past year (June 2024–May 2025) to enhance programming, audience engagement, or operations?
* How does your venue stand out from other entertainment venues in the region or beyond?
* **How does your venue ensure it is inclusive and welcoming to all visitors, including disabled people, diverse communities, and families?**
* **Targeted programming for specific communities (e.g. neurodiverse audiences, LGBTQ+, minority ethnic groups, older or younger audiences)**
* F**acilities, services, or staff training introduced to improve accessibility and inclusion.**

Enter answer to question 1 here.

Links to relevant supporting evidence online (optional):

It is not a requirement to submit supporting evidence; however, if you do, ensure that the focus is on the quality and relevancy of the evidence submitted rather than quantity.

Any written answers that are included within the supplementary evidence attempting to circumvent the question word counts will be disregarded.

Enter links to supplementary evidence here.

## Question 2 - Your Recent Improvements

(this question is 20% of the final score)

**Tell us about up to five ways in which you have developed your business and/or improved the audience experience over the last two years (500 words maximum).**

Explain your reasons for making the improvements and indicate which parts of the business are impacted.

Judges will be looking for examples of improvements from across the business.

One or more of the following example areas may be relevant to address in your answer (it is not mandatory to cover every area):

(Only include examples of improvements undertaken in the last two years.)

* Measures taken to operate your venue more sustainably or reduce environmental impact.
* Climate – actions to decarbonise energy/mobility towards Net Zero
* Circular Economy – clear examples of management of suppliers, waste, recycling, sustainable products and efficient use of resources
* Biodiversity – actions to protect and restore nature
* Place based – respect for local area/communities, use of local suppliers, tourism that does no harm
* Promotional initiatives e.g. new website
* Improving the skills of you and your team
* Expansion, upgrade of facilities, enhancements to your services
* Inclusive facilities, experience and welcome, this may include:
* how you attract a diverse audience
* how you provide for visitors with access needs and
* what you have in place to ensure all visitors are welcomed, supported and encouraged to take part or enjoy their stay with you
* Innovative adaption, diversification and/ or resilience building
	+ For example, this may include how the venue has adapted to host hybrid events
* Use of digital technologies, such as automated services, robotics and artificial intelligence (AI)
* Reasons for making the improvements e.g. driven by customer feedback
* Approximate date of improvement

Enter answer to question 2 here.

Links to relevant supporting evidence online (optional):

It is not a requirement to submit supporting evidence; however, if you do, ensure that the focus is on the quality and relevancy of the evidence submitted rather than quantity.

Any written answers that are included within the supplementary evidence attempting to circumvent the question word counts will be disregarded.

Enter links to supplementary evidence here.

## Question 3 - Your Results

 (this question is 15% of the final score)

**Question 3 - Your Results**

**Tell us about three successes from the last year in meeting the needs of your audience, providing figures where relevant (300 words maximum).**

Judges will be looking for detailed examples of successes from across the business.

One or more of the following example areas may be relevant to address in your answer (it is not mandatory to cover every area):

* Whether you able to attribute success directly to any of the improvements that you’ve made (mentioned in Question 2)
* Percentage increase in conversion of enquiries, sales, customer satisfaction
* **What proportion of your audience comes from outside the immediate local area, and how do you attract these visitors?**
* **How does your venue encourage local economic benefit.**
* **Collaboration with local businesses, hospitality providers etc - Please provide examples.**
* **What marketing strategies have you used to reach new audiences, especially from outside Nottinghamshire?**
* **Campaigns or initiatives that specifically drove visitor growth or brand awareness. Outcomes/evidence.**
* Sustainable operation of venue and reduction in environmental impact – Initiatives/evidence.

Enter answer to question 3 here.

Links to relevant supporting evidence online (optional):

It is not a requirement to submit supporting evidence; however, if you do, ensure that the focus is on the quality and relevancy of the evidence submitted rather than quantity.

Any written answers that are included within the supplementary evidence attempting to circumvent the question word counts will be disregarded.

Enter links to supplementary evidence here.

## Question 4 – Your Future Plans

(this question is 15% of the final score)

**Tell us about three ways you will develop and promote your business to meet the needs of your audnece over the next year and the reasons why (300 words maximum).**

Judges will be looking for detailed examples of future plans from across the business, with a clear rationale.

One or more of the following example areas may be relevant to address in your answer (it is not mandatory to cover every area):

* What are your top three strategic priorities for the next 12 months, how will these enhance the overall experience for visitors to your venue?
* Plans to expand or diversify your events programme?
* How will you further attract visitors from outside your immediate local area.
* What improvements (physical, digital or service-based) are planned to make your venue more accessible and inclusive for a broader range of visitors?
* How will you evolve your marketing strategy over the next year to stay competitive and increase awareness of your venue as a regional or national destination?
* Do you have any plans to improve operational efficiency or invest in new technologies
* What training or development opportunities do you plan to offer staff to support excellent service, innovation, or inclusivity?
* What specific sustainability initiatives are you planning to introduce or expand upon in the next year?
* How will your future plans strengthen your venue’s role within the local community or contribute to Nottinghamshire’s wider visitor economy?
* Looking ahead, how will you measure the success and impact of these future developments on your venue’s performance and visitor satisfaction?

Enter answer to question 4 here.

Links to relevant supporting evidence online (optional):

It is not a requirement to submit supporting evidence; however, if you do, ensure that the focus is on the quality and relevancy of the evidence submitted rather than quantity.

Any written answers that are included within the supplementary evidence attempting to circumvent the question word counts will be disregarded.

Enter links to supplementary evidence here.