**Eligibility and descriptors for each category:**

|  |
| --- |
| **Eligibility Criteria** |
| * Directly involved in tourism, making a contribution to the visitor economy with a significant proportion of business generated by people visiting from outside the local area.
 |
| * Meets the tourism product definition:

'Tourism product' covers a number of different categories including:* Accommodation e.g. hotels, bed & breakfasts, guest houses, self-catering/serviced apartments, holiday boats, camping, caravanning, glamping, lodges, shepherds’ huts, chalets
* Hospitality i.e. food and beverage service businesses e.g. pubs, restaurants, cafés, tea rooms, coffee shops, bistros
* Transport services e.g. rail, road, water, air networks and rental
* Sporting venues and theatres that have a tour, museum or exhibition element included
* Guided tours
* Travel agencies and other reservation services, including tour operators and destination management companies
* Sporting, adventure and recreational activities
* Retail i.e. a single retail outlet or shopping centre that attracts a significant number of people visiting from outside the local area
* Businesses providing supporting services to visitors e.g. visitor information providers, left luggage services
* Visitor attractions that meet the visitor attraction definition: a permanently established excursion destination, a primary purpose of which is to allow access for entertainment, interest, or education and can include places of worship; rather than being primarily a retail outlet or a venue for sporting, theatrical, or film performances. It must be open to the public, with or without prior booking, for published periods each year, and should be capable of attracting day visitors or tourists as well as local residents.

There are also specific categories where businesses operating in the following areas may be eligible to enter:* Producers of food and drink products grown or manufactured here in Lancashire, with or without a Visitor centre as part of their business.
* Spa and therapy services and venues
* Tour Guides offering guided experiences within the County

**With the exception of entrants to the New Business or Events categories, businesses must have been trading for a minimum of two years.** **All businesses MUST be based within Lancashire.**  |

***IMPORTANT : Those categories marked with VE are eligible to progress to the National awards***

**Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Award - VE**

**Recognises tourism businesses providing truly memorable visitor experiences for everyone, particularly those with accessibility requirements, and demonstrating excellence across every aspect of the business.**

Events and festivals are not eligible to apply to this category due to the likelihood of VisitEngland Awards for Excellence winners not being announced until one or two years after the event took place e.g. an event taking place in 2019 may not be recognised by VisitEngland until 2021; the event may have ceased or declined in quality since then.

Businesses of all sizes can apply as this category is judged within the context and style of the business.

**Business Events Venue of the Year - VE**

**Recongnises 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.**

Directly involved in tourism, making a contribution to the visitor economy with a significant proportion of business generated by people visiting from outside the local area

Any business that hosts business events (meetings, incentives, conferences, exhibitions) e.g. hotels, conference centres, exhibition venues. Clients may be exclusively from UK markets or also be from international markets

Events and festivals are not eligible to apply to this category due to the likelihood of VisitEngland Awards for Excellence winners not being announced until one or two years after the event took place e.g. an event taking place in 2019 may not be recognised by VisitEngland until 2021; the event may have ceased or declined in quality since then.

Businesses of all sizes can apply as this category is judged within the context and style of the business.

**Camping Glamping & Holiday Park of the Year - VE**

**Recognises holiday parks, sites and villages providing truly memorable guest experiences and demonstrating excellence across every aspect of the business.**

* Directly involved in tourism, making a contribution to the visitor economy with a significant proportion of business generated by people visiting from outside the local area.
* Businesses whose main offer is holiday parks, sites, villages, camping and glamping
* Holiday parks/sites with static vans, touring pitches, tent pitches, glamping and other accommodation such as shepherd’s huts, or any combination.
* Sites ranging from small static caravan parks with no added services and facilities, up to larger sites with many on-site facilities, some of which might be open to the public
* Holiday villages offering room only or self-catering accommodation e.g. lodges and chalets. A holiday village is typically a complex with a range of facilities and activities available.
* Holiday parks that consist entirely of units that are owned may apply if used by owners for holiday purposes only (not as a permanent residence)

**Cultural Venue / Organisation**

Recognises Culture & Heritage based experiences that engage with both residents and visitors. Any business can enter that provides an outstanding Culture based experience for its audience. Entries could be a one-off event or a body of work over a period of time.

Entries could include the following:

* Museums
* Galleries
* Heritage sites
* Dance
* Drama
* Visual Arts
* Music
* Film
* Theatre
* Religious venues and placed of worship
* Other cultural venues.

Judges will be looking for evidence of how you engage with audiences, how you reach new market segments, how you have developed over the last 3 years, how the organisation makes a valuable contribution to the local economy, diversity, continuity and a legacy.

**Dog Friendly**

**Recognises providers of truly memorable experiences for dogs and their human companions.**

Directly involved in tourism, making a contribution to the visitor economy with a significant proportion of business generated by people visiting from outside the local area.

Tourism businesses may include, but are by no means exclusive to hotels, self-catering accommodation, guest accommodation, holiday parks, visitor attractions, pubs/inns and cafés/tearooms.

Businesses of all sizes can apply as this category is judged within the context and style of the business.

**Ethical, Responsible and Sustainable Tourism Award - VE**

**Recognises tourism businesses committed to being sustainable, responsible and ethical in how they operate and interact with customers, the wider community and the environment.**

Directly involved in tourism, making a contribution to the visitor economy with a significant proportion of business generated by people visiting from outside the local area.

Events and festivals are not eligible to apply to this category due to the likelihood of VisitEngland Awards for Excellence winners not being announced until one or two years after the event took place e.g. an event taking place in 2019 may not be recognised by VisitEngland until 2021; the event may have ceased or declined in quality since then.

Businesses of all sizes can apply as this category is judged within the context and style of the business.

**Large Event (15,000 + Visitors)**

**Recognises providers of truly memorable and immersive tourism events which attract a wide range of visitors or appeal to a niche market bringing substantial benefits to the local visitor economy.**

Directly involved in tourism, making a contribution to the visitor economy with a significant proportion of business generated by people visiting from outside the local area

This award covers Events and Festivals of a substantial nature attracting 15,000+ visitors. The event can be for either a paid entry or free audience/attendance event. The event can be a one off or an annual event with a proven track record. It should be noted that the supporting evidence in the submissions for this category are particularly important as any final assessment is likely to be retrospective.

Judges will be looking for evidence of innovation and a sense of distinctiveness that adds to an event’s appeal to the visitor. Please also provide evidence of the profile this brings to the local community and the contribution the event makes to Lancashire.

**Small Event (Less than 15,000 visitors.)**

**Recognises providers of truly memorable and immersive tourism events which attract a wide range of visitors or appeal to a niche market bringing substantial benefits to the local visitor economy.**

Directly involved in tourism, making a contribution to the visitor economy with a significant proportion of business generated by people visiting from outside the local area

This award covers smaller events and festivals attracting fewer than 15,000 visitors.

The event can be for either a paid entry or free audience/attendance event. The event can be a one off or an annual event with a proven track record. It should be noted that the supporting evidence in the submissions for this category are particularly important as any final assessment is likely to be retrospective.

Judges will be looking for evidence of innovation and a sense of distinctiveness that adds to an event’s appeal to the visitor. Please also provide evidence of the profile this brings to the local community and the contribution the event makes to Lancashire.

**Experience of the Year - VE**

**Recognises providers of truly memorable and immersive activities for visitors to participate in.**

Any visitor experience that immerses the visitor in either an active or passive state.

The experience may involve a host/teacher/instructor/guide or may be undertaken independently.

Likely to be immersive and interactive.

Typically experiences will be learning, adventure or relaxation based

Likely to fall under one of these themes:

* Wellness and well-being (e.g. spa)
* Sporting and active (e.g. caving)
* Environment (e.g. beach cleaning, dry stone walling)
* Arts & culture (e.g. pottery making)
* Culinary (e.g. cookery courses)
* Guided activity

Events and festivals are not eligible to apply to this category due to the likelihood of VisitEngland Awards for Excellence winners not being announced until one or two years after the event took place e.g. an event taking place in 2019 may not be recognised by VisitEngland until 2021; the event may have ceased or declined in quality since then.

Food service experiences are not eligible for this category and should consider the Taste of England Award category, which assesses the quality of food and drink served to the visitor.

Experiences (including guided tours) that are offered by visitor attractions will be eligible if they are standalone activities i.e. can be purchased separately, and not in addition to, general admission.

Businesses of all sizes can apply as this category is judged within the context and style of the business.

**Lancashire Perfect Stay – VE Small serviced accommodation**

**Recognises small hotels as well as bed & breakfasts and guest house businesses providing truly memorable guest experiences and demonstrating excellence across every aspect of the business.**

Directly involved in tourism, making a contribution to the visitor economy with a significant proportion of business generated by people visiting from outside the local area.

This is a broad category for all types and styles of small serviced accommodation except large ‘full service’ hotels, as these have their own category.

For small hotel style properties:

* Offers a selection of hotel services, which are likely to include some or all of: reception, restaurant, bar, dinner and breakfast
* Usually offers up to 35 bedrooms. However, serviced accommodation businesses with more than 35 bedrooms can apply if they consider themselves appropriate for this category

For bed & breakfast and guest house style properties:

* Proprietor considers their business to be a bed & breakfast or guest house and promotes it as such
* Proprietor lives on site
* Breakfast is provided
* Located in a domestic property, often the proprietor’s home
* Most likely to be run by the owner with few or no additional staff
* Guests are likely to have direct interaction with proprietor

Serviced accommodation businesses may consider this category or the Large Hotel of the Year category – choosing the one that best suits their business and only entering one.

**Large Hotel of the Year (35 bedrooms or above) - VE**

**Recognises full service hotels providing truly memorable guest experiences and demonstrating excellence across every aspect of the business.**

Directly involved in tourism, making a contribution to the visitor economy with a significant proportion of business generated by people visiting from outside the local area.

A full-service hotel – that must include a reception, restaurant, bar, dinner and breakfast

Offers a minimum of 35 bedrooms. However, a business with fewer than 35 bedrooms can apply if it is a full-service hotel with extensive facilities.

Any serviced accommodation businesses may consider this category or the Small Hotel of the Year or B&B and Guest House of the Year categories – choosing the one that best suits their business and only entering one.

**New Tourism Business Award - VE**

**Recognises high performing new tourism businesses, demonstrating excellent understanding of their market, exceeding the expectations of their customers with clear plans for future development.**

Directly involved in tourism, making a contribution to the visitor economy with a significant proportion of business generated by people visiting from outside the local area

Meets the tourism product definition:

'Tourism product' covers a number of different categories including:

* Accommodation e.g. hotels, bed & breakfasts, guest houses, self-catering/serviced apartments, holiday boats, camping, caravanning, glamping, lodges, shepherds huts, chalets
* Hospitality i.e. food and beverage service businesses e.g. pubs, restaurants, cafés, tea rooms, coffee shops, bistros
* Transport services e.g. rail, road, water, air networks and rental
* Sporting venues and theatres that have a tour, museum or exhibition element included
* Guided tours
* Travel agencies and other reservation services, including tour operators and destination management companies
* Sporting, adventure and recreational activities
* Retail i.e. a single retail outlet or shopping centre that attracts a significant number of people visiting from outside the local area
* Businesses providing supporting services to visitors e.g. visitor information providers, left luggage services
* Visitor attractions that meet the visitor attraction definition: a permanently established excursion destination, a primary purpose of which is to allow access for entertainment, interest, or education and can include places of worship; rather than being primarily a retail outlet or a venue for sporting, theatrical, or film performances. It must be open to the public, with or without prior booking, for published periods each year, and should be capable of attracting day visitors or tourists as well as local residents.

**Has been trading for at least six months and up to two years when applications open (for first applicable local/regional competition)**

**An existing business that has diversified by adding a new product at the same location or a different location may only apply if the new product is marketed as a standalone operation, and is available independently to the other products offered by the business**

Events and festivals are not eligible to apply to this category due to the likelihood of VisitEngland Awards for Excellence winners not being announced until one or two years after the event took place e.g. an event taking place in 2019 may not be recognised by VisitEngland until 2021; the event may have ceased or declined in quality since then.

Businesses of all sizes can apply as this category is judged within the context and style of the business.

**Taste Lancashire Pub - VE**

**Recognises pubs that make a significant contribution to tourism in their area, with a food and drink offering that includes quality locally sourced produce.**

Directly involved in tourism, making a contribution to the visitor economy with a significant proportion of business generated by people visiting from outside the local area

A single pub site from an independent, chain or group operator

Offers food and the option to drink and not dine

Does or does not offer accommodation (accommodation not judged)

Has a unique selling point that might be food, theme or entertainment

**A pub may consider this category or the Taste Lancashire Restaurant category – choosing the one that best suits their business and only enter into one.**

**Retail experience**

**Recognises retail businesses that contribute to the tourism offer through a distinct or unusual product offer and / or create a unique experience for visitors to Lancashire.**

Open to any business that is either a standalone retail unit (e.g. a single shop or a unit that is part of a chain), a retail experience made up of a number of concessions (e.g. market hall), a shopping destination (e.g. retail park / outlet / town centre) or an element of a bigger visitor experience (e.g. farm shop at a visitor attraction or gift shop at an attraction).

Pop up retail experiences or temporary markets are not eligible to enter this category. The retail experience must be in a permanent structure.

**Self Catering Accommodation of the Year - VE**

**Recognises self catering accommodation businesses providing truly memorable guest experiences and demonstrating across every aspect of the business.**

Directly involved in tourism, making a contribution to the visitor economy with a significant proportion of business generated by people visiting from outside the local area

* Businesses whose main offer is *s*elf-catering accommodation including cottages, houses, historic properties (or part thereof), holiday boats, barn conversions, apartments and serviced apartments etc.
* A single self-catering property or a collection of self-catering properties in one location owned by the same proprietor and of a similar quality
* A business with multiple properties across different locations is not eligible to apply in its entirety. However, an application may be completed for a specific location if it is clearly identified within any marketing e.g. website
* Large self-catering accommodation complexes (e.g. with chalets and lodges) with a range of facilities and activities available should apply for the Camping, Glamping and Holiday Park of the Year category

**Taste Lancashire Café / Tearoom – VE (Taste of England)**

**Recognises businesses within the tourism industry that offer food, beverage and service innovation and excellence with a clear focus on quality Lancashire sourced produce.**

* Directly involved in tourism, making a contribution to the visitor economy with a significant proportion of business generated by people visiting from outside the local area.
* Food service businesses including cafés, tea rooms, coffee shops, etc.
* Offers the option for table service
* Access to toilet facilities is available
* Does not require payment of an admission fee to access the eatery
* A single site from an independent, chain or group operator

Pop up Cafes or those as part of an event or festival are not eligible to apply to this category due to the likelihood of VisitEngland Awards for Excellence winners not being announced until one or two years after the event took place e.g. an event taking place in 2019 may not be recognised by VisitEngland until 2021; the event may have ceased or declined in quality since then.

Businesses of all sizes can apply as this category is judged within the context and style of the business

**Taste Lancashire Producer**

**Recognises Lancashire businesses that create local Lancashire food or drink contributing to the visitor experience by championing Lancashire distinctiveness.  They will either have a visitor offering and/or demonstrate a dedicated promotion of Lancashire through their product and routes to market.  The judges will be looking for creativity in the use of quality local ingredients, materials and/or methods**

**Taste Lancashire Restaurant – VE (Taste of England)**

**Recognises businesses within the tourism industry that offer food, beverage and service innovation and excellence with a clear focus on quality Lancashire sourced produce.**

Directly involved in tourism, making a contribution to the visitor economy with a significant proportion of business generated by people visiting from outside the local area.

* Food service businesses including restaurants, hotel restaurants, and bistros etc.
* Offers the option for table service
* Access to toilet facilities is available
* Does not require payment of an admission fee to access the eatery
* A single site from an independent, chain or group operator

Pop up Restaurants or those as part of an event or festival are not eligible to apply to this category due to the likelihood of VisitEngland Awards for Excellence winners not being announced until one or two years after the event took place e.g. an event taking place in 2019 may not be recognised by VisitEngland until 2021; the event may have ceased or declined in quality since then.

Pubs may consider this category or the Pub of the Year category – choosing the one that best suits their business and only enter into one.

**Large Visitor Attraction of the Year - VE**

**Recognises larger visitor attraction businesses providing truly memorable visitor experiences and demonstrating excellence across every aspect of the business.**

Directly involved in tourism, making a contribution to the visitor economy with a significant proportion of business generated by people visiting from outside the local area.

Meets the visitor attraction definition:

“…a permanently established excursion destination, a primary purpose of which is to allow access for entertainment, interest, or education and can include places of worship; rather than being primarily a retail outlet or a venue for sporting, theatrical, or film performances.

It must be open to the public, with or without prior booking, for published periods each year, and should be capable of attracting day visitors or tourists as well as local residents.”

Attracts 75,000 visitors or more per year, **or** employs more than 10 full-time equivalent members of staff

* Is capable of attracting day visitors, tourist and local residents
* May occasionally require pre-booking for a visit or activity
* Retail outlets, sporting venues and theatres are not eligible to apply unless there is also a tour, museum or exhibition element included
* Guided tours that are not based within a visitor attraction should apply for the relevant Experience of the Year category

**Small Visitor Attraction of the Year - VE**

**Recognises small visitor attraction businesses providing truly memorable visitor experiences and demonstrating excellence across every aspect of the business.**

Directly involved in tourism, making a contribution to the visitor economy with a significant proportion of business generated by people visiting from outside the local area

* Meets the visitor attraction definition:

“…a permanently established excursion destination, a primary purpose of which is to allow access for entertainment, interest, or education and can include places of worship; rather than being primarily a retail outlet or a venue for sporting, theatrical, or film performances. It must be open to the public, with or without prior booking, for published periods each year, and should be capable of attracting day visitors or tourists as well as local residents.”

Attracts 75,000 visitors or fewer per year **or** employs 10 or fewer full-time equivalent members of staff

* Is capable of attracting day visitors, tourist and local residents
* May occasionally require pre-booking for a visit or activity
* Retail outlets, sporting venues and theatres are not eligible to apply unless there is also a tour, museum or exhibition element included
* Guided tours that are not based within a visitor attraction should apply for the relevant Experience of the Year category

**Wedding Venue**

**Recognises wedding venues that demonstrate an excellent understanding of the market, exceeding the expectations of their clients and contribute to the wider visitor economy.**

* Any business that hosts weddings.
* Judging will take account of all aspects of the wedding service provision, including the venue itself and other services offered to wedding guests.
* Businesses of all sizes can apply as this category is judged within the context and style of the business.
* Special attention will be given to those demonstrating an innovative approach to the traditional wedding experience, who have developed new market opportunities or to those who have adapted, upgraded or created new facilities linked to this specific market.