



Visit Wales  
Croeso Cymru

**Visitor Attraction  
Quality Assurance Service  
The Benefits of Participation  
VAQAS Cymru**



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

## VAQAS CYMRU

### VISITOR ATTRACTION QUALITY ASSESSMENT

The service provides a number of tools for attraction operators that can be used to enhance quality and spread best practice within the sector. It offers a consumer focused quality assessment helping to identify strengths and highlight developmental areas, based on industry examples. A wide range of attractions of all sizes, both large and small, throughout Wales, can benefit from participation in the service.

The broad theme of a visitor attraction can range from pure fun to high culture and it will be looked at within the context of the general sector that it sits in, which will include *for example*:

- Boat trips/voyages of discovery
- Churches & Cathedrals
- Industrial Premises
- Farm Based Attractions
- Wildlife Centres / Zoos / Aquaria
- Show Gardens
- Country Parks with fully serviced catering and visitor centre
- Historic Houses
- Narrow gauge railways/tramways
- Museums & Galleries
- Show caves/mines
- Theme parks
- Interpretation / Visitor Centres

All areas that impact on the quality of the visitor experience are included in a quality assessment, ranging from the enquiry through to the departure. The assessment will recognise areas that may be 'unique', as well as common areas. Where an attraction does not have a particular facility, such as a car park or catering, those aspects will not be included.

The service does not attempt to 'grade' attractions but will assess each on its own merits using objective quality benchmarks, provided by the industry.

## **VAQAS CYMRU**

### **THE QUALITY ASSESSMENT**

The assessment is an annual visit at any time when the attraction is open to the public by an experienced quality assurance assessor. The visit looks at all areas of the attraction and takes into account:

#### **The Visit**

- Pre-arrival, including telephone enquiries, leaflet and website design
- Arrival, including initial signage, car park and welcome and efficiency of staff
- Attraction, including range of content, quality of presentation and quality of interpretation
- Toilets, including layout, maintenance and cleanliness
- Catering, including layout and design, and appearance, attitude and efficiency of staff, range, presentation and quality of food
- Retailing, including design, presentation of merchandise and appearance, attitude and efficiency of staff.

#### **The Debrief**

Each assessment is followed by a one to one debrief. The objective advice is for consideration only and is based on examples of best practice drawn from the attractions industry.

The debrief:

- Provides 'live' feedback on the visitor experience
- Identifies quality strengths and highlights any areas for quality development
- Provides an opportunity to discuss other aspects of your operation; from activities that can increase secondary spend to brochure design.

#### **The Assessment Report**

Each visit is followed by an assessment report highlighting the main points discussed at the debrief.

#### **The Accreditation**

Visitor attractions receive the accreditation 'Accredited Attraction'.

## VAQAS CYMRU

### HOW WILL VAQAS BENEFIT YOUR ATTRACTION?

#### The Management Benefits:

- The Best Practice Guide: A practical guide providing examples of best practice drawn from all sectors of the attractions industry
- Self-Assessment Toolkit: A practical aid to identify strengths and plan quality developments at your attraction
- Quality assessment of your attraction: An in-depth assessment of all areas of your attraction that may impact on the quality of the visitor experience
- One to one debriefing: Providing instant feedback on the visit and allowing other aspects of your operation to be discussed
- Report: An important reference tool that highlights aspects of quality and any development issues which can then be used for internal and external operational planning.

#### The Marketing Benefits:

- Use of Visit Wales national quality marque with the accreditation of 'Accredited Attraction'
- Artwork of the accreditation for use in your brochure, promotional literature and website
- Enhanced national and international promotion on the official tourism websites:  
[www.visitwales.com](http://www.visitwales.com)  
and  
[www.visitbritain.com](http://www.visitbritain.com)
- Free plaque and e-artwork, and the opportunity to promote your business as an Accredited Attraction.

VAQAS Cymru, Visit Wales, The Old Junior School, New Street, Machynlleth Powys SY20 8AT  
Tel: 01654 702 584 Fax: 01654 703 081 E-mail: [quality.tourism@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:quality.tourism@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

Published by Visit Wales, 2 Fitzalan Road, Cardiff, CF24 0UY.

The text of this publication is reproduced under copyright licence from Visit Britain.

© Visit Wales 2008.