

# Group Travel Partnership

After meetings with tourism businesses, Northumberland Tourism has put together a proposal for all businesses looking to attract groups. Over the past few years funding was lost for the group travel marketing activity, though we were able to contribute some funds towards keeping a presence at some trade shows. We are unable to continue doing this without the support of our tourism businesses, so we put together the Group Travel Partnership to give us the opportunity to continue to support the group market in Northumberland.

Through the Group Travel Partnership opportunity we hope to continue presence at key trade shows, have membership to national and international group travel associations, produce group travel literature for Northumberland and expand our website to offer a group travel microsite.

In the past, some businesses have paid for the Explore Northumberland group to take leaflets to the shows. This proposal would replace that payment for the shows the partnership supports, creating one group travel publication that can be given out at shows, (and used electronically) alongside other activity.

## Planned activity (dependent on funds)

- Attendance at the British Tourism & Travel Show (formerly BoBI) and Group Leisure & Travel Show (if budget allows).
- Northumberland Group Travel publication produced to be given out at the shows and available online.
- Northumberland membership to Associations, possibly with reduced individual business joining rates available too. (ETOA, UKInbound, GTOA are possibilities – tbc)
- Regular e-newsletters to our contact database.
- Expand the group travel section of visitnorthumberland.com to include group specific business listings, more information, itineraries etc.
- Possibility of a once a year organised familiarisation tour.
- Possible commission of a new stand for trade shows featuring Northumberland brand

The list above are realistic ideas that can be achieved if enough businesses become Group Travel Partners. There is, of course, the scope to do more – the more partners we have, the more we can do.

The plan is that 40% of income generated would be put towards the cost of attending 2 trade shows. Previously, businesses that want to personally attend pay part of the cost of the show, however it depending on budget we may be able to attend a show with impartial representatives selling Northumberland as a whole, rather than a group of attractions attending. There is also the option of having maximum 2 'sponsor' slots alongside impartial representation.

Out of the other 60% the literature will be produced, it will determine which/how many Associations we can join, impact on strategy for attending shows and could allow us to do extra marketing activity. There is also the option of putting any surplus money aside to try and attend a large event such as the World Travel Market once every 5 years, for example.

# Group Travel Partnership

There are 3 different options to become a Group Travel Partner.

## **Full Partnership - £295+VAT per year, per site (£50+VAT per additional site)**

Open to all (attractions, accommodation providers, tour/activity providers etc)

- Half page feature in the group travel publication
- Appear in at least one itinerary/town guide on [visitnorthumberland.com/grouptravel](http://visitnorthumberland.com/grouptravel)
- Group travel enhanced website listing on [visitnorthumberland.com/grouptravel](http://visitnorthumberland.com/grouptravel)
- Have the opportunity to submit content to the group travel e-newsletter
- Priority in familiarisation trip opportunities
- Opportunity to attend trade shows on the Northumberland stand as a key sponsor (at extra cost, max 2 per show)
- Potentially benefit from reduced rate to appear on Association websites, rather than having to pay the full joining fee.

## **Blue Badge Guide Partnership - £95+VAT per year**

This option is designed to give an affordable option to individual Blue Badge Guides for whom the full package isn't appropriate for their size of operation.

- Listing on the Guides page of the group travel publication
- Opportunity to submit itineraries to [visitnorthumberland.com/grouptravel](http://visitnorthumberland.com/grouptravel) with your contact details and website link included
- Group travel basic website listing on [visitnorthumberland.com/grouptravel](http://visitnorthumberland.com/grouptravel)
- Priority in familiarisation trip opportunities
- Opportunity to attend trade shows on the Northumberland stand as an impartial representative (potential extra cost/expenses, limited spaces)
- Potentially benefit from reduced rate to appear on Association websites, rather than having to pay the full joining fee.

## **Wider Region**

Often, groups are looking for a wider experience, so including places nearby that could increase the offer and therefore the likelihood that they will visit the North East Region is worth considering.

We want to keep the balance of ensuring the focus stays on Northumberland, whilst acknowledging the fact that many groups will come to tour the area and with the lack of availability and bedspace in Northumberland, that many will stay outside the county.

Therefore, if a relevant business outside of Northumberland wants to become a partner we will be open to that, especially for accommodation, but will assess it on a case by case basis.