

Tourist Signing Applications

User Guidance Notes

Principles of tourist signing

- Tourist signs are an aid to safe and efficient navigation, to complement, but not to replace, pre-planning of a journey and the use of verbal instructions, maps, road atlases, websites, satellite navigation systems, and mobile phone applications.
- The primary purpose of tourist signing is to assist in the management of traffic and to ensure the safe operation of the road network.
- Generally only harder to find destinations will be signed. Destinations located on busier main roads (most A or B class roads) will not generally be eligible for signing as these roads are usually easier to find and better connected in terms of general directional signing. An exception may be permissible for enterprises attracting a larger volume of visitors or where it is considered that there are other traffic management or road safety issues.
- When signing is to be provided it will be from the nearest A or B road. The enterprise being signed will be expected to already have adequate signing which is compliant with planning requirements at the entry point to it.
- Signing cannot be provided for advertising purposes and signing will not be permitted where it could provide an advantage to one commercial enterprise at the expense of another.
- Only businesses in which a tourism element predominates as opposed to a commercial retail focus will be considered for white-on-brown signs.
- Utilities are deemed to be a place or service that would be of use to tourists but do not constitute a tourist attraction and are not eligible for tourist signing. Utilities are commonplace and would typically include shops, restaurants, sports facilities, art galleries and garden centres.
- The final decision as to whether a destination is signed will be made by TransportNI.

Costs

- The applicant has responsibility for bearing the total cost of all signs provided.
- Payment must be made to the Local Council in advance of any sign provision.

Eligible tourist facilities and attractions

- Tourism NI¹ funded tourism products.
- Visitor attractions that have received Tourism NI Quality Grading.
- Historic buildings.
- Museums.
- Zoos.

¹ Formerly known as the Northern Ireland Tourist Board

- Natural attractions such as nature reserves.
- Beaches and viewpoints.
- Scenic routes.
- Outdoor pursuits centres.
- Activity tourism centres.*
- Golf courses.*
- Areas providing fishing.
- Tourism NI approved tourist accommodation (7 categories).
- Caravan and camping parks.*
- Marinas.
- Public slipways.
- Boat/ cruiser hire.
- Aire de service/ motorhome service facilities.*
- Picnic sites.
- Tourist information centres and tourist information boards.

*Specific additional criteria apply.

General criteria

For any tourist destination to be signed it must be:

1. Permanently established.
2. Open to the public without prior booking. NB. this does not necessarily constitute free-entry. Entry fees may still apply.
3. Have adequate parking on site or close by.
4. Have adequate toilets onsite (where appropriate) including those for visitors with disabilities.
5. Have adequate publicity material (e.g. leaflets, featured within tourist guide books, websites or at visitor information centres).
6. Be of good quality, well-maintained and suitable for people with disabilities.
7. Be open continuously from Easter to October (inclusive) each year, at a minimum.
8. Be adequately identifiable in terms of the nature of the tourist destination at the point of entry.
9. Be a member of a Tourism NI approved quality assurance scheme for tourist accommodation (where appropriate).

Additional criteria

Golfing facilities

In addition to the general criteria outlined above, golfing facilities (which include golf courses, par three courses, driving ranges or pitch and putt courses) will be eligible for tourist signing provided that:

- Non-members can access the facilities on offer.
- There is clear evidence of promotion and marketing to the tourist market.
- The facility is a member of Tourism NI's Golf Quality Assurance Scheme or is recognised by Tourism NI as providing a tourism offering to visitors.

Equestrian facilities

In addition to the general criteria outlined above, equestrian facilities will be eligible for tourist signing provided that:

- The facilities are approved by the British Horse Society and Tourism NI.

Theatres / Arts Centres

Theatres/ arts centres approved by Tourism NI may receive tourist signing appropriate to their location due to their important role in presenting local culture. In addition to the general criteria outlined above, to be eligible for signing the venue must:

- Be of cultural significance.
- Be able to demonstrate that events attract substantial numbers of visitors from outside the local area.
- Have a minimum seating capacity of 150.
- Have performances scheduled for at least 9 months of the year.
- Meet visitor servicing requirements (e.g. provide refreshments).
- Provide event listings / promotional material and contact details.
- Have a physical box office and provide a messaging service when their box office is not open.

Theatres and arts centres that do not meet these criteria may instead be eligible for standard 'black-on-white' direction signing.

Gardens

For a garden to be signed it must meet the following additional criteria:

- It is of horticultural importance i.e. it specialises in rare, unique or traditional plant species.
- It has a visiting season in line with the main tourist season (Easter to October). Gardens that only open by appointment are not eligible for signing.
- It has clearly promoted opening arrangements.
- There is evidence of promotion to visitors.
- It has interpretation / information panels throughout the site and/or tours available.
- Has visitor facilities such as toilets, parking, etc.