

Quality Assessment Guidance – Shopping Centre

Includes: Shopping Centres which offer a collection of different outlets within

ASVA Quality is a scheme designed to support the Scottish Visitor Attractions industry in providing high-quality and memorable experiences for visitors.

The design of this scheme and the associated assessment parameters is unique: We have incorporated extensive industry consultation, as well as a first-of-its kind visitor survey, to ensure that ASVA Quality looks at what matters most to both you and your visitors. Please use the following document in conjunction with the [Terms & Conditions](#) which covers commitments and statutory obligations.

How do we measure Quality

One of our advisors will conduct a Quality assessment visit every year or every other year based on your membership option. Within the visit, they will evaluate each aspect of your experience as an incognito visitor, based on visitor expectations of quality and best practices. During the assessment, your advisor will carefully evaluate key areas, always with the goal of helping you enhance and refine your experience. You will then receive comprehensive feedback and advice to enhance quality standards even further!

The assessment is entirely objective—no judgments are made based on personal preferences.

The goal of the assessment is to enhance quality while preserving the unique character, style, and individuality of Scottish Attractions.

Scoring Breakdowns

During your visit, your advisor will evaluate all aspects of your attraction and assign a score from **0 to 10** for each element assessed:

0-5	Unacceptable
5-6	Satisfactory
7	Good
8	Very Good
9-10	Excellent

At the end of the visit, an overall percentage score is calculated for the centre, as well as for each individual section. This percentage score relates to a Star rating and to achieve

a Quality Scheme Star rating, your attraction must achieve an overall percentage of 66% or above (2 Star band):

No Grade Awarded	1 – 65%
2 Star Award	66 – 71%
3 Star Award	72 – 78%
4 Star Award	79 – 85%
5 Star Award	86 – 100%

Scoring sections

For Shopping Centres, there are 5 possible key scoring areas which will contribute to your overall star award outcome, as per the diagram below. Note that where a scoring section or individual scoring element is not relevant to your attraction, this will not be scored and will **not** negatively impact your overall award potential.



***Staff Attitude / Efficiency / Knowledge** – staff interactions at any point during the visitor journey are incredibly important in ensuring a positive experience. As such, staff interactions will be assessed wherever encountered (Note: this will be a full assessment of any centre or information point staff, and an observed staff assessment within a sample retail or F&B outlet where appropriate). Assessment of staff interactions across all areas of your centre will include your advisor considering a range of factors around attitude and efficiency / knowledge to arrive at an overall staff score per scoring section. Further information around what your advisor will look for within staff interactions is detailed later within this guidance.

***Cleanliness** – housekeeping and cleanliness standards across all areas of your centre are also incredibly important in ensuring a positive experience. As such, cleanliness will be assessed within the relevant main scoring areas (Arrival, Shopping Experience, Food & Beverage, and Toilets).

We know that not all centres provide every service or facility as above. If a section is not applicable to your centre, it will be excluded from the assessment process, and this does not negatively impact your overall score/Star rating.

What the advisor assesses

This section provides a detailed overview of the factors your advisor will consider when awarding scores that contribute to your overall Star grading.

All assessments are conducted within the context of the specific attraction.

Expectations will vary based on the size and nature of the attraction; however, **the fundamental principles remain consistent** and regardless of whether your attraction is large or small, these core principles guide the assessment to ensure a memorable and satisfying visitor experience. Key themes should be in evidence such as excellent visitor service, safe and enjoyable activities, and well-presented, clean facilities.

Cleanliness – assessed within each relevant section (Arrival, Shopping Experience, Food & Beverage & Toilets)

A **clean and well-maintained environment is essential** to delivering a high-quality visitor experience. Attention to detail and consistency in cleanliness standards reflect the professionalism and dedication of your centre.

- Bin provision, usage, and any litter evident around the centre.
- Evidence of regular and effective cleaning schedules. Evidence of regular checks in all areas throughout the day.
- Evidence of attention to detail, including touchpoints
- Cleanliness of windows and window fixtures
- Cleanliness of internal floors and tidiness of internal spaces
- F&B areas - crockery, cutlery, cutlery containers, drinking glasses, and drink dispensers' cleanliness and hygiene. Cleanliness of food display/service areas and seating areas.
- The cleanliness of toilet facilities is a key area for visitors - Walls, floors, handles, sanitary ware, taps, wastes, extractor fans, toilet brushes, and waste bins.

Pre-Arrival

This section evaluates ease of use of the website, and the accuracy and clarity of information provided to visitors before their visit. This includes details shared through

your **website, social media channels, and any printed materials** such as leaflets or brochures.

- Depth and accuracy of visitor information
- Functionality and ease of use of website and/or app
- Accessibility of website and provision of Access & Inclusion guidance for attraction
- How to find you
- Foreign language provision

Arrival

This section assesses the **overall visitor experience upon arrival**.

Key considerations include:

First Impressions / ‘Kerb Appeal / Car Park’

- Roads, car parks, accessible parking bays, paths, grounds, and steps.
- Quality and condition of surfacing, and ease of navigation.
- Lighting provision
- Buildings maintenance, quality, and ‘Kerb Appeal.’

External Signage

Includes assessment of initial signage externally on and around the building.

- Range of information including opening times, any pricing, and indication of on-site facilities such as cafes or toilets
- Quality and condition of signage

Design & Flow / Ease of Use

When assessing ‘Ease of Use’ within the arrival area, it is important to **consider the needs of all visitors - including pushchairs and wheelchair users**.

Key questions include:

- Is the Arrival area **easily navigable** for all visitors, including those with mobility aids?
- How is the **flow of visitors managed**? Are there effective operational management arrangements in place, such as revolving doors, one-way

entrances and exits, accessible entrances etc which help create a comfortable and accessible arrival experience for all visitors.

Visitor Information/Signage (Internal arrival areas)

Includes internal signage within the arrival area (provision, quality, and condition), and any orientation tools used by the centre upon arrival, including:

- Directional waymarking in arrival area.
- Site maps (static, digital, or handout), 'You are here' tools.
- Staff guidance and support in commencing the experience.
- Branding and Quality of signage
- Clarity of signage to direct visitors to the information desk, toilets etc.
- Use of clear fonts and accessible colours/use of pictograms
- Orientation of site offered (all formats assessed)

Access and Inclusion

An assessment of all provisions in place to ensure the centre is accessible and inclusive to all, catering to a variety of requirements. Considerations such as (but not limited to):

- Foreign language provision
- Accessibility of physical spaces, particularly for wheelchair/buggy users.
- Social inclusion policies
- Partner with local transport authorities to create access routes. Readily available accessible parking conveniently located.
- Accessible facilities
- Any community or youth activities / policies

Shopping Experience

This section assesses key aspects of the main experience within the centre. This includes all elements within the main centre thoroughfare and connecting areas such as corridors. A hugely important aspect of the shopping experience will be the variety, quality, and presentation of business units, as well as the overall centre presentation. Consider that today's visitors are increasingly informed and discerning, often comparing their experiences with those offered by top international attractions. As a result, centres should deliver a well-rounded, engaging, and up-to-date offering to truly satisfy and inspire.

Design & Flow / Ease of Use

Visitors tell us they want to feel confident in exploring a shopping centre without the need for assistance. **48% of visitors surveyed told us** that they wanted the freedom to be able to self-navigate their experience, meaning that the design and flow is of vital importance.

This scoring element will include an evaluation of how the centre works for visitors/the volume and movement of visitors throughout the experience. Have you done all that you can to assist in the movement of visitors?

- Assessment of the design of the space, and any visitor flow management measures in place (including review of any pinch points)
- Implementation of thoroughfare vendors – does this impact the usable space?
- Ensure layouts are coherent - **Visitors tell us** if the layout is confusing this negatively impacts their visit.
- Capacity management

Visitor Information/Signage

- The advisor will look at the use of directional signs, finger post signs, orientation boards, plans and display boards.
- Route through the centre should be clear in terms of signage and/or verbal guidance.
- With the benefit of all the above a visitor can view all areas of the centre and feels comfortable that all areas have been viewed. **Visitors tell us** that clear signage is valued, it allows visitors to orientate themselves and feel in control of their experience.
- An assessment of how practical and effective the positioning of signage is. Signs should be well-maintained, durable, and consistently updated with accurate information and directions. Signs should be easy to read, a clear font, and sharp contrast between text and background.
- Temporary or handwritten signs should be avoided if they create a poor impression.

Range & Quality of Retail Outlets

Advisor assessment will include:

- Range of retail & leisure businesses within the centre and the scope of needs and tastes covered.

- Quality of businesses
- Appropriateness of businesses
- Any specialist/exclusive businesses.
- Any local/Scottish businesses/products represented.
- Consideration of any empty units and their effect on visitor perception

Presentation – Centre & Retail units

- Standard of presentation & maintenance of all main centre areas
- Standard of presentation & maintenance of individual retail and leisure business units - frontage, fixtures & fittings
- Use of design and style / theme throughout shopping centre
- Lighting, Heating and Ventilation
- Provision and quality of street/thoroughfare furniture, ambient music, and any other enhancements
- Standard of presentation of any empty units
- Décor

Staff- Information point & centre staff - Attitude / Efficiency

This will include an assessment of information point staff primarily, and any incidental centre staff in passing:

- Staff should be visible within the centre, and clearly available if assistance is required. They should demonstrate an awareness of varying visitor needs and abilities and should tailor engagement to suit the visitor.
- Any relevant additional information should be offered – aid the visitor in engaging with all that is on offer, adding value for the visitor, be open and receptive to visitor enquiries/engagement.
- Further onward journey and area Tourism advice may be offered.
- As standard, staff should present a positive demeanour and show genuine enthusiasm for the attraction.

Staff- Sample Retail Outlets - Attitude / Efficiency

- Sample conversation with staff from one or two retail or leisure outlets.
- As standard, staff should present a positive demeanour and show genuine enthusiasm for the outlet and centre.

Staff Appearance

Staff are the 'face' of your centre and therefore should be well presented and wear appropriate clothing and present themselves in a manner that aligns with the image you

wish to project. **85% of visitors tell us** that staff appearance/quality of outfits worn is an important marker for their overall impression of the attraction.

- While staff are not necessarily required to wear uniforms, they should be easily identifiable and distinguishable from visitors in a busy experience setting. This might be accomplished by staff simply all wearing the same colour (uniform in look) and using branded name badges. Can your staff be easily spotted as such by visitors?

Access and Inclusion

Your advisor will assess how inclusive the centre is and/or what plans are in place to move forward with this. Not all actions are appropriate for all centres, but some considerations should be:

- Inclusion across all visitor types and requirements
- Staff accessibility and EDI training and confidence
- Foreign language provision.
- Accessibility & comfort for a range of needs
- Digital inclusion / Wi-Fi availability on-site/Charging stations
- Children's activities/area
- Sensory friendly designs
- Cultural and social outreach policies and activities
- Youth & Education Outreach

Food & Beverage

For Shopping Centres, it will primarily be the presentation and range of F&B outlets available which will impact scoring for this element.

Visitors tell us having a Food & Beverage offer on site is important to their experience. (73% deemed it either extremely important, or very important).

Range & Quality of F&B outlets

- Number and range of restaurants and café/coffee shop/outlets located onsite.
- Scope of meeting variety of needs, tastes, budgets, appetites, and dietary requirements.
- Quality across restaurants and cafes with regards to their offer, range, and provenance.

- Quality of businesses.
- Appropriateness of businesses.
- Any specialist/exclusive businesses.
- Any local/Scottish businesses/products represented.

Staff Attitude / Efficiency

This will be an observed staff score, based on a F&B outlet sampled during the visit. The advisor will endeavour to rotate F&B units sampled each visit – although purchases will not be made, the advisor will ask leading questions and allow the staff member the opportunity to display excellent visitor service.

- Advisors will look for positive body language, eye contact, genuine enthusiasm, smiles and genuine warmth from staff.
- Staff should display excellent menu and/or service knowledge when asked a question.

Presentation of Catering Units

- Standard of external presentation & maintenance of individual F&B business units - frontage, fixtures & fittings
- Use of design and style (fitting to the individual brand, and in fitting with the centre)
- Lighting and embellishments
- External menu presentation
- Standard of presentation of any empty units
- Décor

Access and Inclusion

- Do the range of menus cater to a range of dietary requirements.
- Are allergens clearly identified, and are staff sufficiently trained in providing accurate information to customers.
- Are the F&B space easy to navigate for those with mobility aids or pushchairs?
- Provision for babies and toddlers – e.g. highchairs and ability to warm bottles
- Menus should have appropriate text to background contrast, and attractions should consider large print options.

Toilets

A Key Part of the Visitor Experience

While not every attraction provides toilet facilities, those that do should recognise the considerable influence toilets have on a visitor's overall experience.

- **First Impressions Count:** For many visitors, the toilet is their first stop. A poorly maintained, understocked, or unclean facility can set a negative tone for the rest of their visit—and may discourage them from visiting the café or returning to the attraction altogether.
- **Maintain High Standards:** Cleanliness, freshness, and consistent restocking are essential. Toilets should be checked regularly throughout the day to ensure soap, hand towels, and toilet paper are always available.
- **Accessibility Matters:** Accessible toilets should be high-quality, thoughtfully designed spaces that fully meet a range of needs. They should never feel like an afterthought or be noticeably inferior to standard WCs.

The advisor will look at:

Location /Design & Flow/ Ease of use of toilet facilities

- Where are the facilities located?
- How many locations toilets are located throughout the centre.
- How the facilities work for the visitor in terms of ease of movement within cubicles, at basins and dryers, are there hooks and shelving for visitor belongings.

Décor, fixtures & Fittings

- Assessing all décor, fixtures & fittings for the quality, condition and appropriateness of the wall décor and flooring and general maintenance of the facility.
- When looking at fixtures and fittings, the advisor will consider more than just the toilets and washbasins. They will also look at the door locks, soap dispensers, bins, mirrors, hand dryers, paper towel dispensers, cubicles etc.

Access & Inclusion / Provision

- Accessible toilets availability, baby change availability, lowered facilities for children, Changing Places, gender neutral facilities.
- Facilities should meet demand. **73% of visitors surveyed told us** that sufficient numbers and availability of toilets within an attraction was either extremely important or very important to the experience.