Keep It Real for Destinations

A guide to incorporating Wise Growth in your communications with visitors, residents and businesses by VisitEngland and Leeds Met University
This booklet is designed to share the different ways of communicating wise growth in tourism. It is a set of stories about the benefits of delivering visitor happiness. These stories form a narrative based on the remarkably simple idea of making common sense common practice and involving everybody in developing a common network to deliver the common benefits of great tourism. It’s about evolution not revolution.

It makes sense that visitors who are well informed before they visit, welcomed when they arrive and well cared for during and after their stay, tend to be happier visitors. Happier visitors will also tend to understand more, spend more, behave well and enjoy a better overall experience during their stay.

Having a better overall experience during their stay means visitors are more likely to respect and connect with the local culture, environment, residents and businesses, thereby getting more from the place they are visiting. It is also common sense that visitors who get more from the place they are visiting are more likely to invest in it, both emotionally and financially.

It follows that the emotional and financial needs of any local culture, environment, resident or business are more likely to be met by happy visitors. So it is therefore sensible to believe that these happy visitors will also be less demanding on the public purse during their stay and much more likely to promote the great experience they have just enjoyed to their family, friends, social media followers and review websites.

For Destination Managers, the wonderful outcome of these “Economics of Visitor Happiness” is that not only do “happy” visitors do all your marketing completely free of charge, they also target people like themselves, so creating a self perpetuating replenishment of the right visitors for the right place.

Within these pages you will witness the enthusiasm and energy of lots of different people in destinations around the country who are delivering common sense, by keeping it simple in developing English tourism. All too often we are told to stop dreaming so as we grow up our own dreams often become buried. If we do remember our dreams, we are frightened of damaging our relationships with those around us in the single-minded pursuit of them.

This is why sharing our stories together gives us courage, collective strength and a far better chance of success. This series of case studies demonstrates the variety of efforts to bring about a more consistent approach to communicating and delivering wise growth. We hope that these stories will help us all to learn from each other and inspire us to continue to take our individual and collective opportunities to realise the dream of great English tourism for all.

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**Foreword**

Anthony Climpson  
Chairman of the Wise Growth Action Plan Steering Group
Who is this for?

This toolkit is aimed at destination organisations and any other organisations that work in promoting and managing destinations.

The toolkit will help destination marketers understand how the principles of Wise Growth can be communicated to both residents and visitors alike.

Case studies are used throughout to illustrate the 8 Wise Growth principles.

This guide is not intended to tell you how to do your job, but to share good practice of good examples that are already being used.

Some of these may be things you are already doing, but hopefully you’ll find some new ideas and inspiration too.

This guide builds on the success of Keep it Real for Businesses, a toolkit to help tourism businesses sell sustainability as part of their offer.

If you want to share examples of your good practice please let us know. See page 58 for details.

### About this guide

### What’s it about?

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**What do I tell?**

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What do I tell?

THE WISE GROWTH PRINCIPLES UNPACKED

The 8 Wise Growth Principles in more detail.
A series of Action Plans have been developed by the industry to deliver on the Strategic Framework objectives for tourism in England 2010 - 2020. The Action Plans are the product of extensive consultation and collaboration with England’s tourism industry.

Wise Growth is the term used in place of sustainable tourism to link and balance the growth aspirations of the Strategic Framework with principles of sustainable tourism.

The 8 Wise Growth principles are outlined in the Wise Growth Action Plan and are defined in the following pages, under the headings of Inclusive, Engaging, Well-being, Caring, Distinctive, Fun and Appealing, Viable and Efficient.

Wise Growth is based on three fundamental components:

Responsible growth, in a finite world. Taking personal and collective responsibility with respect for the boundaries and priorities of all stakeholders.

Creating resilience. Tourism that is designed to last, that is flexible and responsive to the environment in which it takes place and which engages and respects the needs of all stakeholders.

Prosperity for all. Wise Growth results in long term sustained development for all. It is not necessarily quick growth or growth at all costs. Tourism is developed within our means and ensures that overall quality of life is improved.

THE VISION:
“Grow tourism responsibly in a finite world, creating resilience and prosperity for all, balancing the growth aspirations of the Strategic Framework with the principles of sustainability.”
**Wise Growth at a glance...**

**Inclusive:** visitor experiences are fun, inspirational, safe and accessible to all.

**Engaging:** local residents and businesses are involved in tourism development.

**Well-being:** tourism activities strengthen and sustain the quality of life of the communities in which they take place.

**Caring:** the cultural heritage of places, the authenticity and distinctiveness is protected or enhanced.

**Distinctive:** the quality of the environment is maintained or enhanced.

**Fun and appealing:** England’s natural and built environments, habitats and wildlife are enjoyed without being damaged in the process.

**Viable:** local businesses that operate successfully and responsibly are championed. Economic benefits for local residents are maximised.

**Efficient:** visitors and businesses use scarce and non-renewable resources wisely; minimise pollution and reduce waste.

“**It’s not about using the words “Wise Growth, sustainable or responsible” but what these words mean and understanding the principles that underpin them. It’s a lot of common sense; celebrating and taking into account the rich diversity of England, its people and places.**”

Jason Freezer, VisitEngland
Inclusive...

Visitor experiences are fun, inspirational, safe, open and accessible to all with no discrimination based on gender, race or disability.

Ride Yorkshire, riding for all.
Ride Yorkshire promote Yorkshire as a destination for horse-riding by providing information on riding holidays and days out for riders of all abilities and backgrounds. They also work with community groups to encourage disadvantaged children and adults to enjoy equestrian activities from horse-care and stable management to riding.

VisitBlackpool, proud to fly the rainbow flag.
The Rainbow Flag flies proudly from the top of The Blackpool Tower each June to mark the annual Pride festival. Marketing Blackpool actively promotes areas of interest to the Gay community through their website.

“We do a great deal with disadvantaged groups, for example children with learning and behavioural difficulties as well as children from disadvantaged and minority backgrounds. In fact, all the fun-rides we do are to raise money for these groups. We’re also trying out a programme for adults with mild learning disabilities, and we have facilitated riding for black and minority ethnic groups.”

Janet Cochrane,
Ride Yorkshire
Engaging...

Involving local residents and businesses in tourism development through working relationships, consultation and cooperation.

Forest of Bowland AONB, Sense of Place toolkit

The Sense of Place project started in 2005 with a consultation exercise facilitated by Pathways Consultancy from Manchester. This involved over 200 people including elderly people, parish councils, rangers, and visitors to the Hodder Valley Agricultural Show.

These people contributed their thoughts on Bowland, about their favourite places and personal memories. They talked about wildlife, history, farming and even the best ice creams.

All this information was then assimilated into the Sense of Place Toolkit which helps tourism businesses to understand more about the Forest of Bowland AONB, and to develop a Sense of Place for their own business. Enhancing this sense of place enables a businesses to promote the local area more fully and to retain the economic benefit in the area.

The toolkit is so popular it is now in its 3rd reprint.

“Over 100 businesses have attended sense of place training, to help them to utilise a sense of place in their own marketing. This has had a significant impact on the numbers of visitors who now identify the Forest of Bowland as a destination in its own right, something which wasn’t as apparent prior to this work”. 

Hetty Byrne, Forest of Bowland AONB, Sustainable Tourism Officer
Well-being...

Tourism activities strengthen and sustain quality of life of the communities in which they take place by improving access to local resources and amenities for residents.

Turner Contemporary, providing a rich resource for residents

The Turner Contemporary in Margate is promoted as a key visitor attraction in Kent with links on the Visit Kent website to accommodation and other attractions nearby.

The gallery is part of the exciting regeneration of the seaside resort and has helped revitalise the town and its image. It is an important resource for the community and aims to make art accessible, relevant and personally fulfilling for all members of the community. They do this through innovative and dynamic ways for people to engage with art and a rich programme of community projects and events details available here.

By creating a better place to live, the destination is also a good place to visit.

“Since opening in April 2011, Turner Contemporary has welcomed over 850,000 visitors in total. In 2012–13 383,000 people came to the gallery, 4% of visitors had never before visited a gallery and 18% of visitors come from our local area of Margate and Thanet. Over 200 schools in Kent have engaged with our learning programme”.

David Yard, The Turner Contemporary
Tourism South East, Great Country Pubs
The great British pub is a unique icon for residents and visitors alike and is an important feature of many local communities. Sadly many pubs are struggling to remain viable. In his recent budget speech George Osborne reported that 10,000 have closed in the last decade.

In order to sustain and promote the best character country pubs, Tourism South East, with the help of DEFRA funding and partner Pub is the Hub has developed the Great Country Pubs initiative.

Participating pubs must meet certain quality criteria such as a memorable location, high quality accommodation, great local ales and/or good, locally produced food.

Participating pubs pay a £150 joining fee and benefit from a range of PR, web and short break campaign activity. 90 pubs are now enrolled and feature on greatcountrypubs.com with plans to enrol further businesses within short break distance of London. The website suggests destinations, activities and days out that can be enjoyed around participating pubs.

Project Manager from TSE, Michelle Grant explains, “Character rural pubs are vital tourism assets that we are losing across the country at an alarming rate. Great Country Pubs aims to unite the very best of them, particularly those with great accommodation under a single inspirational brand to help them realise their tourism potential. We have started in the South East but the success of the campaign is encouraging us to think about a broader roll out.”

Caring...
The cultural heritage of places, the authenticity and distinctiveness is protected or enhanced through preserving traditions and local culture for both residents and visitors.
Blackpool, Comedy Carpet
Promoted by VisitBlackpool as a key visitor attraction, the carpet is a celebration of the work and humour of 850 comedians and writers and gives visual form to jokes, songs and catchphrases dating from the early days of variety to the present. The carpet is part of Tower Festival Headland – a brand new events space with a capacity of 20,000 and a new low-carbon-emission wedding venue.

The Comedy Carpet was commissioned by Blackpool Council as part of the multi-million pound regeneration of the sea front including vital sea defence works. It was funded by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment as part of its Sea Change programme.

Distinctive...
The quality of the urban, coastal and rural environment is maintained or enhanced without physical or visual degradation.
Keep it Real for Destinations

Fun and appealing...
Capitalise on the enjoyment of England’s natural and built environments, habitats and wildlife, but ensure these are not damaged in the process.

Northumberland Coast AONB, visitor guide
Northumberland Coast AONB have produced a detailed visitor guide which gives plenty of advice and information on enjoying the area’s natural and built environments and wildlife responsibly.

This includes listings for Green Tourism Business Scheme certified businesses, car free options, buying local produce, local insights on things to do, the seashore code, dog walking etiquette and safety. General information on geology, wildlife, heritage and local places of interest is also provided.

The guide is distributed at destination, and is also available as a download PDF from the Northumberland Coast AONB website. It is part-funded by selling advertising space.
Viable...

Champion local businesses that operate successfully and responsibly over the long-term. Create and strengthen the number and quality of local jobs supported by tourism activities, including salary, conditions and availability. Ensure local residents benefit from the tourism activity they host, especially by maximising visitor-spending retained in the local economy.

Cumbria Tourism, My Cumbria Card

MyCumbria is a new membership scheme run by Cumbria Tourism exclusively for residents of Cumbria and those who work within the county. The card entitles members to a range of deals, offers and discounts across the whole county for a year. The card costs £20 and entitles member to over 150 offers throughout the year.

The card helps to promote the use of tourism businesses out of season and can drive up the use of restaurants, tourism attractions, shops and even accommodation in the shoulder months. It was developed to increase the awareness and commitment of local communities to the County’s tourism industry. There are currently about 2000 cards in circulation.

“We will need to see whether take up continues to increase or whether it tails off before deciding how the scheme is progressed. One year in the jury is out; the industry has been enthusiastic to get behind the project but purchase and use of the card by the resident community has been more cautious. Without a major marketing push we may find it difficult to significantly increase its take up and use”.

Richard Greenwood, Cumbria Tourism, Director of Policy and Performance
What do I tell?

**Efficient...**

Visitors and businesses use scarce and non-renewable resources wisely; visitors and businesses seek to minimise pollution, especially from transport, and reduce waste from all tourism activity.

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**Exmoor National Park, Keeping Exmoor Special**

Exmoor National Park was the first National Park in England to achieve the Europarc Charter for Sustainable Tourism in protected areas. They are keen to promote the message of sustainable tourism in their communication with their visitors and do so through a dedicated ‘Keeping Exmoor Special’ page on their main website.

The site encourages reduced energy use and promotes the benefits of switching off lights to enjoy dark night skies, highlighting Exmoor’s International Dark-Sky Reserve designation. Information is also provided on local produce, reducing and recycling, reducing car use, volunteering, visitor giving schemes, encouraging visits off peak and off season, promoting accredited providers and promoting the Countryside Code.

“The European Charter for Sustainable tourism has proved to be a really useful toolkit in ensuring all those involved in tourism are working together to conserve the special qualities of the National Park that form the bedrock of our tourism industry. However we also need to communicate with our visitors and we try to do this in a way that engages them, rather than preaches at them. In particular we try to highlight how acting sustainably can enhance their experience – a win win situation. We’re developing a toolkit to help businesses present this information direct to visitors themselves as part of a new National Park charter.”

Dan James, Sustainable Economy Officer, Exmoor National Park Authority
Who do I tell?

COMMUNICATING WITH DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS

The specific audiences for communicating the Wise Growth principles: these include visitors, residents and businesses.
Wise Growth occurs when the interests of all stakeholders—residents, environment, businesses, and visitors—are taken into consideration. Accordingly, it is the role of destination managers to work through partnership to:

- Welcome and involve by creating Visitor experiences
- Protect and enhance the local cultures and the Environment
- Engage and benefit Residents’ quality of life
- Achieve profitable and prosperous Businesses.

Wise communications campaigns, should seek to understand the specific needs of individual stakeholders and amplify their unique selling points to enhance that need rather than detracting from it.

It should be noted that stakeholder needs may flex depending on the life stage of a destination. An immature (growing) destination may focus more on business and visitors but a mature destination may focus on the environment and residents more.

Who do I tell?

Wise Growth occurs where these overlap, which is when everyone’s needs are taken into consideration. It should be noted that “growing” tourism is not restricted to economic terms. Growth in social capital or environmental benefits is also fundamental to improving the quality of all local life and visitors’ experience.
Brand New Forest

Brand New Forest (BNF) is a campaign to back local New Forest businesses by encouraging visitors and residents to support the local economy. Its 6 programmes have been designed to link consumer activity and spending with the needs of local businesses and develop local economic, social and environmental resilience.

“Doing Better Business Local” is a programme to improve local skills and especially improve the economic future of young people. “Eat & Grow Local”, “Shop & Buy Local”, “Enjoy Local”, “Exercise Local” and “Save Energy Local” are all programmes that seek to influence a wiser approach to how we all live our lives locally.

Experience has shown that visitors and residents are much more likely to connect with the delivery of the campaign through their daily activities rather than other more worthy and complex forms of “Green” promotion. Special offers and discounts offered by the BNF Card Scheme provide an excellent range of incentives for engagement.

Recent innovations include BNF Card-based itinerary building that links with the use of the BNF Twizy electric vehicle and chargepoint network, 3 different open top bus tours or over 100 miles of car-free cycle routes.

The campaign is supported by New Forest Business Partnership, New Forest Transition, New Forest District Council, New Forest Tourism Association, New Forest National Park Authority, Forestry Commission and many other local organisations and groups. It is part of a broader communications structure for better tourism which embeds the principles of Wise Growth via messages using the VERB (Visitors, Environment, Residents and Business) model of engagement underpinned by the Economics of Visitor Happiness (see Foreword).
Nurture Lakeland, Love Your Lakes

Love Your Lakes is an initiative funded through Windermere Reflections (a 3 year Heritage Lottery funded programme) supporting a wider programme of activity to improve water quality in lake Windermere and its surrounding catchments lakes, rivers and tarns.

Nurture Lakeland via Love Your Lakes is helping local businesses, residents and visitors to take simple steps to reduce the use of detergents containing phosphates. By reducing the amount of damaging phosphates entering the lakes, the incidents of blue green algae blooms is reduced and water quality will improve. Love Your Lakes allows everyone to do their bit to protect the future of one of Lakeland’s most beautiful destinations.

This campaign to protect the environment has been communicated to residents, businesses and visitors through a variety of messages. This includes bedroom browsers, pre-arrival information to inform visitors which phosphate free products to pack for their holidays, leaflets, fridge magnets distributed at events and community meetings and talks to schools and community groups.

The current phase of the Windermere Love your Lakes project is to create a ‘Property Pack’ outlining the changes in the industry and the actions both local people and local businesses can do to reduce the total phosphate levels of Windermere – mainly looking after septic tanks, choosing phosphate-free dishwashing tablets and powder, following sensible gardening practices, and making sure waste pipes are correctly plumbed into the sewer network. Nurture Lakeland are organising a launch event for this guide and aim to create PR around the event which will reach local people.

The campaign has simple and straightforward information on their website, targeting separately visitors, residents and businesses. This includes written information on the web and brief online videos which link to the positive attitudes people have toward the lake and therefore successfully encourages behaviour change. Nurture Lakeland previously delivered ‘Love Your Lakes’ in the Bassenthwaite area in 2010 and as a result 61% of the local community changed to phosphate free products.
Dales Tourism Business Network, enabling businesses to communicate the message
The Dales Tourism Business Network is an informal network of tourism and hospitality businesses co-ordinated on a voluntary basis by Susan Briggs at the Tourism Network, with the support of Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) and Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAONB).

The network have developed a number of resources for businesses which facilitate wise growth communication to visitors.

These include:

- Marketing tools for businesses on local distinctiveness
- Key messages that businesses should be conveying to visitors
- Downloadable posters on shopping locally
- Copyright free images of the Dales
- Access to upload events to the National Park events database
- Seasonally themed download information sheets for visitors
- A compiled 100 rain-can’t-ruin recommendations for visitors.
National Trust, 50 things to do before you’re 11 3/4

In 2012, the National Trust launched the ‘50 things’ campaign to engage children with the outdoors. It produced a list of 50 activities to do before the age of 12.

Children and families can sign up online to see an interactive list of the best 50 things to do before turning 11 3/4. Members get to personalise how their virtual explorer looks by getting outdoors and winning rewards. The site suggests the best places to have each adventure, which could be a local park or a National Trust property.

The campaign has won numerous awards and has reached a wide audience:

- 278 participating National Trust places
- 350,000 ‘50 things’ scrapbooks distributed to children
- 39,969 registered users on the 50 things to do before you’re 11 3/4 microsite
- 13% awareness of the campaign in the UK.

“This campaign was developed in response to the worrying evidence that children are losing touch with nature. The list of 50 outdoor adventures reaches out to children and their families with a wide range of activities such as climbing a tree or hunting for bugs, to help them discover the great outdoors and develop a connection with nature.”

Julia Home, Marketing Campaign & Project Manager

Getting the kids engaged
(Pester power)
In summary...

Remember that there will be several audiences that you need to communicate with, for example:

- Visitors
- Residents
- Businesses.

Ensure you identify the specific needs of individual stakeholders and amplify a unique selling point that enhances that need rather than detracting from it.

Bear in mind that growth is not just measured in economic terms - social capital or environmental benefits are also an opportunity for wise growth.

Consider providing separate webpages for residents to provide information that is relevant to them and make your residents aware of special offers and opportunities available to them.

Action point:

Don’t forget that residents can be visitors too and also help to bring visitors to your destination.

Do you communicate with residents as well as visitors?

Can your messages for visitors be re-tasked for residents?
Why do I tell?

The Business Case for Destination Organisations to Promote Wise Growth

Some macro-trends which provide a compelling rationale to promote the Wise Growth principles
Being active
Consumers increasingly demonstrate a desire to be active and healthy which is driving an increase in active leisure trips.

According to Visit England 2013 trends research, active tourism is growing as a reaction to more sedentary lifestyles – people also ‘de-stress’ through adventure experiences.

The popularity of cycling has increased significantly as a result of the London 2012 Games. According to a London School of Economics report (2012) ‘The Olympic Cycling Effect’

- 25% of the sample indicated they were more likely to take a UK cycling holiday as a result of the Games
- This rises 45% for Frequent Cyclists
- In contrast, 11% and 5% of potential cyclists and those not inspired to cycle respectively indicated that they were likely to cycle for holidays.
- These results confirm the potential demand for cycling for holidays. The implication is that if policy makers, Local Authorities and other organisations can commence or continue to enhance cycling infrastructure and reduce the ‘fear to cycle’, an ever increasing group may take to their bikes to holiday in the UK.

Visit Oxfordshire, promoting cycle tourism
Visit Oxfordshire are promoting cycle tourism in Oxford and the surrounding area with a dedicated page on their website for cyclists.

The website provides information on:

- Accommodation that welcomes cyclists
- Cycle routes
- Guided cycle tours
- Bike hire
- Taking a bike on public transport.

Cycle tourism is promoted as an experience which is fun and as a great way to explore the destination.

“People do seem to have more active lives in both leisure and holidays. There’s an assumption that we should be active.”

Sarah Stewart, NGI
Going local
Research from the Future Foundation has found that consumers are demonstrating a preference for ‘De-Globalisation’. In practice this has resulted in consumer pressure to prioritise local concerns and local companies over distant alternatives. This is good news for the UK Staycation, and for locally grown, locally sourced produce with a known provenance. VisitEngland Staycation research also finds that there is a macro trend towards local, driving consumer behaviour.

“Invitations to Buy Domestic and proof of local engagement remain powerful commercial messages”.

Future Foundation (2012)

“Local food webs are essential to the character and attractiveness of towns and countryside across England. With around 50p in every £1 we spend in shops spent on food, it is a tremendous opportunity for businesses, from farms to retailers of all sizes, to engage shoppers in making a difference to the quality of their local area.

Local food is a powerful way to form our own connections to the land, landscape and nature.”

Campaign for Rural England
Marketing Manchester, promoting local food
In a project funded by DEFRA and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development Marketing Manchester have developed their food and drink offer both for the city and for the wider region.

The offer is promoted on the Visit Manchester website which highlights cookery courses, brewery tours, farm tours, rural restaurants, local produce listings, farmers and producers markets, Manchester street food and a recipe pack linked to seasonally available Greater Manchester food. The food and drink webpages are supported by a promotional video.

“The project has been successful in driving traffic to the website – targets for new unique visitors to the food and drink pages were 20,000 and were massively exceeded, in excess of 100,000. It has also been a success in establishing new contracts with buyers and producers.”

Paul Simpson, Managing Director, Visit Manchester
Derby City Council supporting and promoting local ales

Derby City Council support and promote local ales by featuring a selection of pubs which serve local beers on the Visit Derby website. There are 12 micro-breweries in the city and offers of brewery tours, ‘be a brewer for the day’ experiences and Beer festivals.

“In Derby we believe in promoting our local product as a way to attract visitors whilst building our profile as a destination. The Real Ale offer and local food, is not just a campaign for us, it’s a consistent theme, part of the city’s identity. Promoting local harnesses pride in the city and our selection of local ambassadors ensures that visitors will be greeted by knowledgeable, enthusiastic people who will promote not just about their own offer but each others.”

Stella Birks, Visitor Services Development Manager, Derby City Council

Going Local
The Staycation
Following the economic downturn of 2009, many British holidaymakers chose to stay in the UK, rather than risk the expense of travelling abroad.

VisitEngland data shows that these holidays were far from a ‘second best experience’ with the vast majority of staycationers finding their holidays engaging, involving and more emotionally profound than holidays abroad.

There is now a recognised market for increased UK domestic holidays, focussing on short and mid length trips.

Lancaster City Council, promoting the traditional ‘bucket and spade’ holiday
The Victorian seaside resort of Morecambe is embracing the appeal of nostalgia, and promote a Sandcastle Festival organised by Lancaster City Council and sponsored by a local business. The aim of the weekend is to generate spend and drive longer-term awareness of Morecambe as a destination for families with young children.

“Discovering the new and revisiting old favourite places are key messages to promote”.

“The lead tactic was to promote a world record attempt to build the most sandcastles. This was promoted through regional print distribution, customer relationship management, e-newsletter, Twitter and PR targeting magazine titles looking to feature the festival”.

Mark McTigue,
Tourism Marketing and Events Team Leader, Lancaster City Council

“Communications around the ideas of rediscovery and enjoyment are well-placed to make this happen.”

Olive Insights for VisitEngland
Differentiated demographics

- The UK population is aging. According to the Office for National Statistics 23% of the population will be over 65 by 2035.

- Families are shifting from being largely ‘flat’, with many members of a similar age, to families with a greater spread across the generations.

- There is an increasing number of ‘non-traditional’ family units (i.e. single parent families, families with step-siblings).

- Young people are staying at home longer and delaying marriage and parenting. The consequence is an increase in pre-family travellers.

- The delays in parenting also mean families are getting older (and more sophisticated and affluent).

- The market for accessible tourism is significant. In 2009, over 11 million overnight trips were made in England by UK residents who have a health condition or impairment (United Kingdom Tourism Survey 2009).

Marketing Birmingham, targeting niche markets

Marketing Birmingham have recognised the importance of understanding these niche markets. Based firmly on a researched evidence base, the Visit Birmingham website targets specific niche markets, including but not limited to, New Beats (interested in underground arts, ground-breaking music and a spontaneous culture scene), Kids and Young Adults and Students.
The lesbian, gay, bi and transgender (LGBT) community is seen by UNWTO as an emerging and significant market segment.

**Destination Bristol, Gay Bristol webpage**

Destination Bristol feature a dedicated Gay Bristol webpage on their Visit Bristol website with details of gay-friendly hotels, gay districts and nightlife, equality and diversity and shopping.

Every July Bristol also hosts a popular Pride event, promoted via a separate webpage.

Webstats show that /gaybristol received 4,547 unique page views in 2012.

“There’s no denying that LGBT travellers are a dynamic and influential segment within the tourism sector – one whose willingness to come out and be counted will continue to grow as society becomes more accepting and more human rights laws that promote equality are passed. Reaching out to LGBT travellers in an informed, authentic manner is essential.”

(UNWTO, 2012)
In summary...

There are a number of macro trends which will influence communications:
- Demand for active products
- Demand for local products
- Changes in demographics
- The ‘Staycation’ effect.

For specific information on the following subject, use these links to VisitEngland resources:
- Accessible tourism
- Staycation
- Sustainability
- Major tourism surveys
- The Pink Book – legislation for tourism accommodation
- Visit England Trends Research 2013

See also the Office for National Statistics
- Travel and Transport
- People and places

Action point:

Bookmarks these pages and keep up to date with VisitEngland intelligence.

For information on online trends see the chapter on Where do I tell?
How do I tell?

DIFFERENT WAYS OF GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

The process of developing these communications and how the message can be reinforced by partners and other stakeholders. Key tips to change behaviour through tried and tested persuasive communication.
Marketing Birmingham, collaborative marketing campaign
As part of an on-going strategy to build the 10 million visitors that come to Birmingham for arts and culture annually, Marketing Birmingham has mounted a new campaign designed to boost the region's cultural profile.

The ‘See More, Feel More’ integrated marketing campaign features national advertising, creative PR, digital and social media activity to engage with would-be visitors. The collaborative campaign aims to shine a spotlight on the variety of arts and culture found within Birmingham, the Black Country and Solihull.

Backed by the region’s cultural organisations 70 local artists and performers are profiled in the advertising and promotional material that uses Birmingham city centre as the backdrop.

Promotional activity is supported by the launch of the Birmingham Look Book, a media briefing pack containing facts, stats, case studies and event listings.

"By joining forces with Marketing Birmingham to launch its cultural campaign, we are pooling the best talent in the city region to attract a new audience and entice previous visitors back here. The campaign will provide us with a stronger collective voice to shout about the exciting work happening here.”

Stephen Maddock, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra
Broads Authority, Your Broads, Your Future

‘Your Broads, Your Future’ is a social inclusion project that uses the arts and media to engage, inspire and train young people and adults in Norwich and Norfolk. They have undertaken ‘Your Broads, Your Future’ - a community radio and multi-media project supporting the promotion of sustainable tourism in the Broads and increasing education and awareness of environmental issues, renewable energy and human impact on wetland environments.

Working alongside partners in the broads, and others such as the University of East Anglia, the project will produce 40 features, including on location features, programming on environmental issues and sustainability and tourism.

Future Radio will be broadcasting a multi-layered series of radio programmes, interviews and educational features about the Broads - speaking to key experts - promoting issues including: sustainable tourism, environmental issues, renewable energy, impact on wetland environments and sustainable management. These BROADScasts will also be made available as listen-again podcasts.

The project is funded from the Broads Authority’s Sustainable Development Fund.

“Since the project has been launched we’ve seen a significant increase in first time visitors from within a 3 mile radius. It’s a measure of success that this approach has helped bring these deprived areas closer to the broads.”

John Ash,
Sustainable Development Fund Administrator
Newcastle Gateshead, My Kind of Toon

In order to promote the city, NewcastleGateshead Initiative has developed a series of testimonials from visitors and residents which discuss what makes the destination special for them; they are hosted on the destination’s visitor website, NewcastleGateshead.com.

The testimonials allow potential visitors to identify with the people who are featured which include, for example, a mother, a student and people with particular interests in music, food and arts and culture.

Each profile has live links to the activities and places that they like to visit in NewcastleGateshead.
All marketing is about influencing behaviour and a lot has been written on ways in which communication can effectively change behaviour. This section looks at some of the ways in which messages can be promoted to visitors, without them feeling pressured into behavioural change.

Dr Robert Cialdini, is one of the world’s most quoted social psychologists whose research identifies key reasons that drive people to comply with requests to alter behaviour. His work identifies six core principles that have been shown to be effective:

1. **Reciprocation** - People tend to return a favour, hence the commonplace marketing technique of offering free samples.

2. **Commitment and Consistency** - If people commit, to an idea or goal, they are more likely to honour that commitment.

**Staffordshire Enjoy Card: Reciprocation**

Staffordshire are encouraging customer loyalty with their Enjoy Card. Members can get discounts, deals and benefits such as ‘2 for 1’, ‘Kids go free’ or money off at participating tourism businesses in and around Staffordshire.

Participating businesses include theme parks, gardens, stately homes, museums, and events as well as accommodation, restaurants and shopping.

The application allows for data collection, of applicants contact details, and some profiling, such as group composition, motivation and interests.
3. **Social Proof** - People will do things that they see other people are doing. The ‘I will if you will’ approach.

**Visit London: social proof**
On their homepage, Visit London clearly show how many people ‘like’ Visit London.

4. **Celebrity** - People are easily persuaded by people that they like, hence the commonly used advertising practice of celebrity endorsement.

**Shropshire Tourism: celebrity**
Have compiled a webpage which contains highlights from celebrity interviews which feature Shropshire. These include Harrison Ford, Julian Lloyd-Webber, David Bellamy and Derek Jacobi.

5. **Authority** - People tend to trust authority figures, think ‘scientist in a white coat’.

6. **Scarcity** - Perceived scarcity will generate demand. The most obvious example of this is saying that offers are available for a ‘limited time only’ to encourage sales.

**Visit Manchester: authority**
The Visit Manchester website uses the authority of a well-respected restaurant critic to make his recommendations for the Top 5 restaurants in the city.
“Effective imagery is possibly the most important aspect of tourism promotion”.

Tourism Insights

Show it, don’t say it

Images can say much more than words. Use quality images to show local distinctiveness, unique places, beautiful environments, local food and drink, quirky events, seasonal variations and real people enjoying themselves in your destination.

Make good quality images available to your stakeholders which help to sell the images and propositions that you are trying to promote.

Hampshire County Council, photo library
Hampshire County Council provide a tourism photo library. Images are royalty-free and high resolution and are available to anyone promoting tourism in Hampshire.

Images are available under a number of thematic headings including activities, attractions, countryside, families, literary, military heritage, shopping, museums, Hampshire Highlights, the Solent, towns, cities and villages.

Photos can be requested by completing an online form which has a 48 hour turnaround.
“Validation is the process of ensuring the certification bodies operate to high standards… The process of validation ensures that the certification programmes that VisitEngland endorses are fit for purpose, and that claims of sustainability and environmental friendliness are genuine. It helps provide clarity to businesses on what schemes are the best, confidence to consumers that they are booking genuinely sustainable product and allows us and our partners to avoid claims of greenwash”.

Certification schemes are a very effective way to ensure visitors know which businesses are acting sustainability. However, with so many schemes on offer it is difficult to tell which are credible and which are not. You can help consumers through these choices by promoting validated schemes.

VisitEngland promotes the following schemes, all of which have undergone a rigorous validation process:

- **Green Tourism Business Scheme** (nationwide and the largest scheme in the world)
- **ISO20121 certified by SGS** (the international standard in sustainable events)
- **Environmental Quality Mark** (present in the Peak District and Staffordshire)

For more information on the validation process see [here](#).

“...The process of validation has improved the practices and transparency of certification programmes that passed and those that didn’t, by improving their organisational systems, reviewing criteria, improving verification practices and membership benefits”.

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Xavier Font,
Leeds Metropolitan University and the International Centre for Responsible Tourism
In summary...

There are lots of ways of getting the message across. Working with stakeholders is crucial in both developing the message and then in communicating them to different audiences.

Much has been written on how to influence consumer behaviour. Cialdini’s 6 principles of influence have been highlighted in this chapters. You can read more about it [here](#).

**Action point:**

Think of ways in which you can apply the 6 principles of influence to be more persuasive in your communications.
Where do I tell?

WHICH CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION TO USE

Various ways of communicating with visitors and residents, including websites, social media, print, and other face to face communication.
According to the European Travel Commission’s website, the New Media Trendwatch:

- 84.1% of the UK population use the internet
- 74% of UK consumers use Facebook
- 59.9% of internet users in the UK will use social media by 2014
- Social media sites such as TripAdvisor and Facebook have increased their importance to holidaymakers when deciding where to go over the past 12 months
- 40% of holiday makers refer to social media when planning their holidays.

**Lancashire Wildlife, nature blog**

As part of their Green Business Accreditation process, owners were encouraged to set up a blog to let visitors know about the unique wildlife right on their doorsteps. Visitors to the participating businesses are asked to engage by reporting any noteworthy nature spots. This insight has been harnessed through an aggregate site where visitors can search for nature related updates in Lancashire via businesses’ blogs, by Twitter Feeds, YouTube or Flickr.

Though previously funded through RDA money and from the goodwill of the web designer (himself a nature enthusiast), participating businesses have recently been asked if they would be willing to contribute £50.00 a year to the cost of the project. All have agreed.
According to the European Travel Commission’s website, the New Media Trendwatch:

- 37.8% of the population in the UK use a Smartphone
- 20% of destination organisation website traffic comes from mobile, that compares with almost 11% in late 2011
- Destination organisations can expect at least a 90% increase in mobile traffic in 2013
- 42% of travellers who use a smartphone to access a destination organisation site are looking for things to do in destination, 34% event information, 11% contact information and 5% accommodation
- Nearly 70% of all mobile traffic to destination organisation sites comes from iOS devices.

Avalon Marshes, starling hotline
The Avalon Marshes in Somerset are famous for starling murmurations where thousands of starlings form into sweeping ball like shapes before flying down and roosting in the trees. The starlings are a key draw for visitors to the area. The phenomenon has been documented by programmes such as Countryfile and visitor numbers have been increasing.

With this increase in visitors numbers come problems of parking and traffic congestion. The Starling Hotline can be accessed by visitors on the go. It is regularly updated and directs visitors to the most appropriate viewing places. However, before visitors hear this information, they are given advice on parking, on dog control and on best times to visit to try and encourage off-peak visits.
“Video is likely to be the key destination tool for creating awareness and projecting brand values. Done well, it is powerful, emotive, personal and persuasive.”
(UNWTO, 2008)

For example, the YouTube clip which promotes the Jurassic Coast Bus takes visitors on a visual bus ride following the route of the X53 service. The video stops along the way, to give some information about which tickets to buy and about the Jurassic Coast itself.

The project works in partnership with Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership and First Great Western trains. A poster promotes the idea at various First Great Western stations with a QR code to the introductory video.

**The South West Tourism Alliance, Spectacular Journeys**

The South West Tourism Alliance consumer website VisitSouthWest hosts a series of videos which are part of an initiative called Spectacular Journeys. The project is intended to encourage greater sustainable visitor travel and the videos show visitors how easy and appealing it is to use different services.

“Showing is often more powerful than telling.

Neil Warren, Centre for Business and Climate Solutions, University of Exeter

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YouTube

- Over 800 million unique users visit YouTube each month
- Over 4 billion hours of video are watched each month on YouTube
- 72 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute
- In 2011, YouTube had more than 1 trillion views or around 140 views for every person on Earth
- The concept is about selling the journeys as an experience in their own right rather than trying to persuade people to switch from one mode of transport to another. The environmental goals of this initiative are never highlighted – it just happens that all the journeys involve some form of public transport.”
Face to face

The focus so far in this chapter has been on online information.

However, for many visitors, hearing about the destination they are visiting first hand from people who really know the place is the best way for them to appreciated the destination’s unique environment, history or culture.

Visit Kent, Kent Greeters

Inspired by the Big Apple Greeters of New York, Visit Kent is leading an initiative for Kent which sees local, friendly and enthusiastic volunteers welcoming visitors to the area.

A large pool of volunteers were trained as Games Time Greeters for the London 2012 Olympic. Independent research has shown that the visitor experience significantly improved when they came into contact with a Games Time Greeter.

The volunteering is a great way to involve local residents and a good way to ensure a warm visitor welcome. This pool of volunteers will be deployed in three ways:

- Event Greeters at venues and attractions to meet and greet, hand out information and give specific event and local Kent information
- Information Greeters at strategic locations during busy holiday times, such as on-board ferries, specific main line stations and town centres
- Kent (Welcome) Greeters are friendly locals who love where they live, and have specific local knowledge. They can be pre-booked by visitors.
Suffolk, The Curious County
Suffolk County Council have worked in partnership with local districts and representatives from the private sector totalling 39 corporate sponsors to develop a unique and compelling marketing campaign for the county.

The campaign is intended to tempt the lucrative London staycation market to Suffolk, to persuade them that there is more to the county than its traditional attractions. It emphasises cultural experiences, interesting places, exploration and fun.

Multiple channels of communication were used:

- 50,000 postcard packs designed to entice families, young couples and empty-nesters with disposable incomes were sent to homes in London via The Guardian newspaper
- Posters were put up at London's Liverpool Street Station
- The campaign also includes a strong social networking element, with the following success:
  - The Facebook page average weekly reach is around 0.5 million
  - The Twitter campaign has 920 followers
  - Hashtags are being strategically used: #curiouscounty have achieved a reach of approx 130,000 and #proudtobecurious 378,823.

“The website has received equally positive results ... people are seeing something they like and are coming back time and time again to take a look at the experiences on offer.”

Keith Brown, Visit East Anglia

Using multiple channels
The focus in this section has been primarily on online trends as this communication channel is becoming so influential.

Don’t forget other channels which will appeal to different markets. Face to face communication can be particularly compelling and, if done well, can increase visitor satisfaction.

Campaigns which use a variety of combined channels can also embed Wise Growth principles.

See for example the multiple channels used by the Curious County campaign or the Love Your Lakes campaign in Chapter 2.

**Action point:**

For more information on new media see VisitEngland resources here.

You can also keep up to date through the New Media Trend Watch, a website developed by the European Travel Commission to inform European tourism marketing professionals on trends in internet usage by tourism consumers.

**In summary...**
When do I tell?

COMMUNICATING AT DIFFERENT POINTS IN THE CONSUMER JOURNEY

Following the consumer journey to illustrate how Wise Growth principles can be communicated at each stage of the Consumer.
The consumer journey is a helpful framework for understanding the experience of the customer, from first thinking about a holiday or business trip through to research, conversion, post rationalisation, visiting and sharing the experience. Customers can be encouraged to make Wise Growth decisions and choices at any point in the journey.

“Whilst it is important to engage with the customer throughout the consumer journey, the priority for resource allocation and marketing effort must be the point of inspiration during the decision-making process”.

Sense of place is increasingly important in creating an inspiring image in the minds of potential visitors.

The customer is considering a holiday. They may have an idea of when they will travel, for how long and how much they might spend.

However, they have not decided where they will go or what they will do. They will be looking for inspiration, ideas and recommendations.

Welcome to Yorkshire’s Rhubarb Crumble and Custard garden
The Welcome to Yorkshire, Rhubarb Crumble and Custard garden won the people’s choice at the 2010 Chelsea Flower Show. The garden used traditional and natural materials to celebrate Yorkshire produce, craftsmanship and its famous landscape.
The customer may have a clearer idea of where and what they want. They will be looking for further, specific information about their choice such as transport and accommodation options, things to do, ‘must sees’, events, the weather, and bad weather options.

**Greater Yarmouth Tourist Authority, accessible tourism**

Greater Yarmouth Tourist Authority has a dedicated [accessibility page](#) on the main Greater Yarmouth website which can be searched under categories of hotels and B&Bs, self-catering and attractions. Each can be searched for various criteria such as access, parking, public areas, bedrooms etc. Details are also provided on the beach accessible wheelchairs, which can be booked in advance from the TIC.

“2 in 3 people looking for access information say they are much less likely to visit a destination if they can’t find the information they need… 3 in 4 say they would be ‘a lot more likely to choose the destination offering the best information.’”

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**Research**

*VisitEngland, Winning More Visitors*
The customer may make comparisons of best values – price may be the main priority followed by convenience and security, but there may be options to choose these services on ‘green’ credentials.

**Bath Tourism Plus, promoting the GTBS**
Bath Tourism Plus enable visitors to search for and book accommodation on the VisitBath website which has been accredited by the Green Tourism Business Scheme. Links to the Green Tourism Business Scheme Participants are prominently displayed on the Green Accommodation landing page, allowing visitors to choose Green Businesses as their primary search criteria.

See [here](#) for further information on validation.
This is the stage at which the visit is experienced and will include transport to and arrival at the destination as well as every aspect of the visitors stay once they have arrived.

Poole Tourism, promoting car free tourism
Poole Tourism promote days out without the car on their website, both with a dedicated page to car free ideas and activities and providing detailed information on walking, cycling, catching the bus and taking the train. The pages provide guidance on how to use alternative forms of transport and suggest circular routes and itineraries.
The customer will recall their journey and will assess whether it was good or bad. The experience at every step of the journey will inform this decision. If the experience was good, then the customer may recommend to others, or return themselves. If the overall experience was bad then the customer will not return, will not recommend to others, and may well speak badly of the destination.

Many of these conversations will take place online, and more than half of today’s travelling population (52%, according to MDG Advertising) relies on social media for inspiration when planning a holiday. We all know how important word of mouth is in informing inspiration and this is now ‘morphing into word-of-mouth-and-image.’

**England’s National Parks, sharing visitor reflection**
England’s National Parks, are enabling visitors to reflect visually on their visits through various social media channels.

Visitors are encouraged on the National Parks [website](#) to submit photographs of National Parks to the annual Photo Competition. Less formally, there is further encouragement to submit photographs on the National Parks Facebook page.

Both approaches enable visitors to recollect and share their recent experiences and provides inspiration for future visits and visitors.

**Post Rationalise to Share**
“Whilst the majority of our resources should be applied at the earliest stage of the buying cycle, all marketing effort should provide a clear consumer call to action and the ability to purchase”.

In summary...

The consumer journey is a useful way of tracking the experience of the customer from looking to booking to recommending and remembering.

Action point:

Ensure you embed Wise Growth communications at every point in the Consumer Journey, but with priority at the point of inspiration.

Next steps

WHAT WILL YOU DO AFTER READING THIS TOOLKIT?
In compiling this toolkit we have heard about a number of interesting projects which were being developed at the time of publication, the following is an example.

**The North York Moors National Park Authority, developing local distinctiveness**

The North York Moors National Park Authority is working on a local distinctiveness project. Funded through LEADER the Moors & More project is intended to help businesses increase revenue from higher spending visitors.

The project will focus on helping tourism, creative and food & drink businesses to develop their own products and improve their marketing, using insider knowledge about what makes the area distinctive and worth visiting.

**The project has three distinct phases:**

1. Marketing workshops for tourism businesses on the special qualities of the North York Moors. These events will identify heritage gems, local legends, quirky, interesting or just favourite places.

2. Collate workshop findings and develop a library of images, films and other promotional resources to produce a toolkit for participating businesses.

3. The development of a North York Moors Tourism Network, to make it easier for businesses to work together.
What will you do after reading this toolkit?

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We want to hear about your own communications that promote Wise Growth.

**Action point:**

Email Davina Stanford (d.j.stanford@leedsmet.ac.uk) with your 150 – 200 word case study. Explain what you are doing and how it incorporates Wise Growth and any measures of success. Please also send an accompanying high res image. The next time this toolkit is updated we will try and incorporate as many of these cases as possible.

*Keep on sharing your best practice...*
Thank you.....
To the organisations that provided information for this document:

Avalon Marshes Landscape Partnership
Bath Tourism Plus
Broads Authority
Cumbria Tourism
Dales Tourism Business Network
Derby City Council
Destination Bristol
Exmoor National Park
Forest of Bowland AONB
Greater Yarmouth Tourist Authority
Hampshire County Council
Lancashire Wildlife
Lancaster City Council
Leeds Metropolitan University
Marketing Birmingham
Marketing Blackpool
Marketing Manchester
National Trust
New Forest District Council
North York Moors National Park Authority
Northumberland Coast AONB
Nurture Lakeland
Poole Tourism
Ride Yorkshire
Shropshire Tourism
South West Tourism Alliance
Suffolk County Council
Tourism South East
Turner Contemporary
UK Association of National Park Authorities
Visit Kent
Visit Oxfordshire
Visit London
Welcome to Yorkshire