

# History, hills and hearing loops

## Your guide to accessible countryside breaks in England

Make planning a getaway much easier with our guide to some of the most accessible English breaks in the countryside. Thanks to VisitEngland's Access For All project a diverse selection of attractions and accommodation across the Peak District and rural Northumberland have undergone

an 'accessible reinvention.' The result is welcome news to the disabled traveller; warm, disability-savvy staff, mobility, hearing and visual impairment ratings for accommodation and improved accessibility to the best attractions in the area. Enjoy the alfresco ride...

# Grand, but grounded

The Peak District's roots lie in history and nobility, but its verdant open spaces and most iconic stately home are both inclusive and welcoming



Derwent Edge,  
Peak District  
National Park

There's something distinctly regal about the Peak District and Derbyshire. With stately homes as standard, prolific literary connections and eminent English history fused with rolling stretches of lush green space, it's quintessentially 'English'. And, as you'd expect from a place where beauty and tradition blend seamlessly with hospitality and innovation, a trip here is the perfect balance of heritage meets homely.

At the north of the county, sitting on the southerly hills of the Pennines, is the jewel in the Derbyshire crown; the Peak District National Park. As the country's original national park,

founded in 1951, today it's one of Europe's most popular. It also packs in serious amounts of dramatic natural features spanning valleys, gorges, lakes and wild moorland. And the best news is that it never feels crowded, thanks to its vast 555 square miles scale, so you won't be short of space. Get away from it all in this breathtaking landscape and its parks and forests, they're the perfect place for strolling, hiking, cycling, riding or climbing.

If you're a wheelchair user or have an accessibility requirement, don't dismiss climbing the hills and traversing the valleys. Hire a Boma 7 all terrain wheelchair and you can explore the terrain alongside the

walkers and hikers, no problem.

There is a real focus on accessibility in the Peak District and Derbyshire at the moment, with the charity Accessible Derbyshire also running their 'Big Push' campaign to make life easier for disabled people, their families and carers. Whether you are looking for a level stroll around a pretty village followed by afternoon tea in a quaint café or a sumptuous meal in a local pub, businesses are working hard to offer a friendly welcome to all.

The county's iconic historic address is **Chatsworth**. Known as "the palace of the peak", this baroque style stately home is in the heart of the Peak District. The house itself has over

## Need to know

**Under VisitEngland's Access for All campaign key staff members have completed disability awareness training.**

**Accommodation and attractions have been audited by a professional access advisor, and many have received a mystery visit from guests with accessibility requirements.**

**All venues listed display access statements on their websites giving detailed information on their accessibility.**



**Crich Tramway Village**



**Pavilion Gardens**

30 rooms including the magnificent Painted Hall. And the art collection is one of Europe's finest; spanning the old masters, Egyptian artefacts and modern sculpture. Outside, 105 acres of beautiful gardens abound. Trail routes help you navigate around the best water features such as the Squirting Willow Tree Fountain and the maze, rockery, rose and kitchen gardens. Chatsworth has a dedicated team to assist guests with any accessibility requirements. Eight wheelchairs and three scooters can be booked in advance, and with a Sensory Garden on site, it's clear the estate is serious about accessibility.

For retail therapy with a distinctive Derbyshire twist, there's **Peak Shopping Village** in Rowsley. Relaxed and set in a stunning rural area here you can shop, wander round the art gallery or visit an antique auctioneers, a far cry from your local outlet or mall. Parking is free for four hours, with plenty of places to park, including 16 accessible spaces. National names such as Pavers Shoes, Field and Trek and The Gift Company sit alongside local independents. Authentic Furniture stocks hand-crafted sofas and re-claimed baker's benches among lots more, and The Old Station Country

Store is a mecca for the green fingered. To make your shopping experience even easier, complimentary wheelchairs are available on request.

For a unique taste of working history, **Crich Tramway Village** is the place to go. This museum and village tracks the story of the tram, propelling it out of the history books and offering first-hand experiences for visitors. Wander around the authentic Edwardian street and enjoy a pint at The Red Lion pub or buy a quarter of humbugs at Barnett's Sweet Shop. You can watch a live restoration of the working tram fleet, or take a woodland walk through to the Sculpture Trail. The designated Access Tram is a 1969 Berlin model, adapted for wheelchair users.

After all that history, it's time to feel the wind in your hair. **Parsley Hay Cycle Hire** is an excellent option if you're looking to explore the Peak District on a bike. You can hire hand crank cycles, tandem trikes, trikes, trampers and wheelchair accessible bikes. Situated eight miles south of Buxton, it's a hub for the High Peak and Tissington Trails giving access to over 30 miles of flat, traffic-free cycling. You can also join up with the White Peak Cycle routes.



**Parsley Hay Cycle Hire**

Stock up your panniers with local handmade cakes, waterproofs and guidebooks from the onsite shop.

**The Pavilion Gardens**, Buxton, contains 23 acres of beautiful manicured lawns and parkland. And don't be daunted by its extensive grounds - level access direct from the car park to the promenade and throughout The Conservatory, Café, Shop, Art Café and Octagon Hall mean it's easy to get around. The Conservatory houses botanical treasures from all over the globe, and, as a Grade II listed property, there's a tranquil, timeless quality to the ambience here. Relax with a picnic listening to a brass band play a nostalgic tune from the bandstand. Or immerse yourself in one of the eclectic events hosted here; from farmers markets to dances and fetes, classic car auctions, circuses or live music.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO**  
**VisitPeakDistrict.com/**  
**accessibility**

**CHATSWORTH**  
 chatsworth.org,  
 01246 565 300

**CRICH TRAMWAY VILLAGE**  
 tramway.co.uk,  
 01773 854 321

**PARSLEY HAY CYCLE CENTRE**  
 peakdistrict.gov.uk/visiting/  
 cycle/cycle-hire-centres,  
 0129 884 493

**PAVILION GARDENS**  
 paviliongardens.co.uk,  
 0129 823 114

**PEAK SHOPPING VILLAGE**  
 peakshoppingvillage.com,  
 01629 735 326

# Ancient Roots

Vast open spaces, a rugged national park and eminent history lend Northumberland its diverse cultural identity

From walls and walking to coasts and castles, this region's remote land and seascapes remain gloriously uncrowded. Home to England's most northerly national park, it's also steeped in natural beauty, so if you're lucky, you may just have a stunning sandy bay, mountain valley or lakeside lawn all to yourself.

History is also a huge part of the lifeblood here, with more castles than any other British county, it's a hotbed for film producers looking to shoot the next period drama or fantasy adventure - both *Harry Potter* and *Downton Abbey* were filmed here.

2000 year old Hadrian's Wall is arguably one of England's greatest historic landmarks. Once the boundary point, marking where the Roman

Empire couldn't venture, it stretches 73 miles from coast to coast. And today, it's dotted with intriguing archaeological sites and museums.

The fauna here is world-class too. Northumberland National Park is home to many rare species such as red squirrels, otters and black grouse.

At night the skies come alive in the Northumberland International Dark Sky Park. The largest dark sky park in Europe is one of the best places to enjoy the stellar wonders of the astronomical world.

The county is fully committed to making the diverse countryside terrain as accessible as possible. The local tourist information centres provide accessibility information when you're out and about. Plus, all the trains in the county run with ramps



for wheelchair access, designated spaces, accessible toilets, colour contrast and audible announcements.

**Calvert Trust Kielder** is one of the standout highlights of Northumberland's accessibility story. This outdoor adventure centre is the place to go if you want high-octane fun and don't want to be restricted by your impairment. Expert instructors will guide you through activities spanning kayaking, sailing, zip wiring,

geocaching, canoeing, abseiling, archery and laser clay shooting. The equipment lets you embrace new challenges and with many options available to reserve before you check in, you won't miss out on new adventures. Climbers can benefit from climbing supports and adaptive equipment, plus paddle grips and archer's arm supports are readily available. The ten three bedroom log style self-catering chalets can be adapted to suit many accessibility requirements. There are two further luxury chalets and the unique Sky Den - a tree house with a spectacular sliding roof, featured on CH4's George Clarke's Amazing Spaces.

If you prefer adventures of the historic kind then the **Roman Army Museum** is one to add to your Northumbrian wish list. Taking history and bringing it to life, quite literally, is what this attraction does so well. Fully immerse yourself in the Roman empire and walk in the shoes of a Roman soldier. The Museum sits directly next to Hadrian's Wall at the site of the Carvoran Roman Fort and adjacent to Walltown Crags; one of the highest standing sections of the

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Kielder Water & Forest Park Milkyway





**Vindolanda  
Roman Fort**

wall itself. Learn about the role of the army in the Roman Empire and view the only Roman helmet crest ever to be discovered. Watch the Eagles Eye Film, which includes an aerial view of Hadrian's Wall as it is today, and then transports you back 2000 years to Roman times; it's memorable and evocative. Hearing loops are fitted throughout the museum, and there is easy access for visitors with mobility impairments.

The sister site to the Roman Army Museum is the **Roman Vindolanda Museum and Fort**. This archaeological site on Hadrian's Wall has been active for over 40 years and is arguably one of the country's finest. Hard standing paths surrounding the site allow wheelchair access to a vast 75% of the remains and you can watch a live excavation from April to September. The physical remains include a large Pre-Hadrianic bath house and a beautifully preserved third century bath house, several Roman army commanding officer's barracks and a Roman Celtic temple built to

an unknown Roman Celtic God.

The dedicated museum houses an array of personal belongings lost, abandoned or scattered by the Romans including pottery, jewellery, textiles, coins, shoes and of course, their notable writing tablets.

#### **CALVERT TRUST KIELDER**

[calvert-trust.org.uk/kielder](http://calvert-trust.org.uk/kielder),  
01434 250 232, Self-catering  
chalets from £225 – based  
on a four night stay.



#### **ROMAN ARMY MUSEUM**

[vindolanda.com](http://vindolanda.com),  
01434 344 277

#### **VINDOLANDA ROMAN FORT**

[vindolanda.com](http://vindolanda.com),  
01434 344 277

#### **Bradbury chalet, Calvert Trust Kielder**

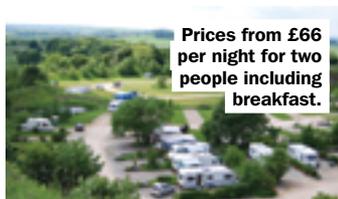


**FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO**  
**[VisitNorthumberland.com/](http://VisitNorthumberland.com/)**  
**access-for-all**

# Where to Stay

Check in with confidence – these rural addresses offer great accommodation and are committed to offering you a warm welcome. Some even let you reconnect with nature...

## The Peak District



### RIVENDALE CARAVAN AND LEISURE PARK

This new generation camping park is the place to book if you fancy getting up close and personal with nature. Choose from camping pods, yurts, touring caravans or holiday lodge rentals. The Tissington cycle trail is just 100 metres away and there's fly-fishing on site. Accessible pitches for tents and caravans are available, while the accessible Pine Lodges are more luxurious.

[Rivendalecaravanpark.co.uk](http://Rivendalecaravanpark.co.uk),  
01335 310 311/310 441



### EAST LODGE COUNTRY HOUSE HOTEL AND RESTAURANT

This elegant country retreat of just twelve rooms is set in ten acres of landscaped water gardens, very close to Chatsworth. A former hunting lodge with noble connections, the ambience here is refreshingly unstuffy. The accessible guest bedroom can be accessed via an alternative entrance. It has recently been extended and refurbished and includes a bathroom with automatic push-button sliding doors and wheel in shower.

[Eastlodge.com](http://Eastlodge.com), 01629 734 474



### HOE GRANGE HOLIDAYS

Four contemporary self-catering log cabins set on a farm in the Peak District. This is a 'home from home' with special touches such as fresh-from-the-farm free-range eggs and a Swedish log-fired hot tub. As the only holiday accommodation in the country to provide hire of a Boma 7 off-road wheelchair and a previous VisitEngland Access for All award-winner, the accessibility credentials are first-class.

[Hoegrangeholidays.co.uk](http://Hoegrangeholidays.co.uk), 01629 540 262

A full access statement giving detailed information on accessibility can be downloaded from each accommodation's website.

## Northumberland



### THE HYTTE

The Hytte (pronounced "hutta") is a Norwegian inspired traditional timber mountain lodge with grass roof. It sleeps eight and has been fully adapted to suit disabled guests including wheelchair users (in fact, it was a previous VisitEngland Access for all award-winner). Take in the spectacular Bingfield sunset from the hot tub, accessible by mobile hoist.

[Thehytte.com](http://Thehytte.com),  
01434 672 321



### GRINDON FARM - THE OLD FARMHOUSE

One of two properties on this working farm just a short walk from Hadrian's Wall, The Old Farmhouse is a cosy, natural stone farmhouse, sleeping up to four guests. In terms of its accessibility, this self-catering gem is first-rate, too. Local carers can be arranged, the shower is equipped with vertical handrails and lever control and a self-propelled shower wheelchair is available.

[Grindonfarm.co.uk](http://Grindonfarm.co.uk),  
01434 684 273



### MATFEN HALL HOTEL

A grand country house, set in 300 acres of parkland with a 27 hole golf course and spa. Just eighteen miles from Newcastle in the village of Matfen, this is the ancestral home of Lord and Lady Blackett. But despite the estate's sprawling size, there are just 53 bedrooms. Choose from three accessible bedrooms.

[Matfenhall.com](http://Matfenhall.com),  
01661 886 500

# The Accessibility Key: Decoded

## Understanding VisitEngland's National Accessible Scheme

Use this handy, at-a-glance guide to decipher if a hotel is likely to meet your level of accessibility needs. Accommodation that displays any of the official logos have been independently assessed against demanding criteria. Assessed properties may have facilities such as handrails, ramps, level-access showers, hearing loops and colour contrast. Ratings are split into three categories; mobility impaired and older people, visually impaired and blind people and hearing impaired and deaf people.



### Older and less mobile guests

**Suitable:** If you can climb a flight of stairs, but banisters or grip handles would make it easier.



### Part-time wheelchair users

**Suitable:** If you have problems walking or can walk a maximum of three steps, or need to use a wheelchair some of the time.



### Assisted wheelchair users

**Suitable:** If you're a wheelchair user and travel with a friend or family member who helps you with everyday tasks.



### Independent wheelchair users

**Suitable:** If you're a wheelchair user and travel independently.



### Access exceptional

This is awarded to places that meet the more demanding requirements of independent wheelchair users or assisted wheelchair users.



### Guests with hearing loss

**Suitable:** If you have a slight hearing difficulty, are deaf, wear a hearing aid or have hearing loss.

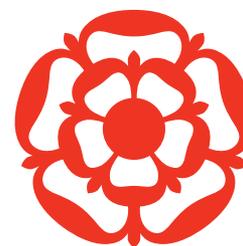


### Visually impaired guests

**Suitable:** If you have difficulty reading small print, are registered blind, have poor sight or are visually impaired.

As everyone's accessibility needs are unique, please do check your individual requirements can be met before booking.

Rolling hills.  
Winding lanes. Hearing loops.



VisitEngland™

GO TO

[VisitEngland.com/AccessforAll](https://www.visitengland.com/AccessforAll)

to download more guides to accessible breaks in England