

ScotSpirit Holiday Voucher Scheme

Introduction and Business Guidance

1. Introduction

VisitScotland is introducing a new holiday voucher scheme aimed at supporting industry recovery and helping to create a responsible tourism industry which is more socially sustainable and inclusive. The key objectives of the scheme are :

- To stimulate off-peak domestic breaks and day visits for low-income families, unpaid carers and disadvantaged young people by offering subsidised breaks in Scotland.
- To support the tourism and hospitality sector to recover when the pandemic lockdown measures have lifted and offer new target group and marketing opportunities.
- To offer opportunities for improved well-being and greater participation in community life for the target groups.

The ScotSpirit Holiday Voucher Scheme (the Scheme) is funded by Scottish Government and forms part of the Scottish tourism recovery programme. The new Scheme will enable low income families, unpaid carers and disadvantaged young people to enjoy a two or three night subsidised break or day out in Scotland. The Scheme offers a contribution towards a holiday stay in hotels, campsites, bed and breakfasts, hostels and guest houses or day visit activities in Scotland from August 2021 to December 2022.

Funding for the overnight breaks is capped at £400 for a two or three night stay, but a higher capped amount of £500 is available to eligible families or carers who have children of school age and take a two or three night stay during school holiday periods (i.e. Easter, summer from June to August, October and Christmas and New Year).

Funding for day visits is capped at a maximum value of £200 for day tickets or passes both during the peak and off-peak season.

All of the figures above are inclusive of any VAT due on the relevant overnight break or day visit.

VisitScotland is working in partnership with Shared Care Scotland (<https://www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk/about-us>) working with the regional Carer Centre network, and Family Holiday Association (<https://www.familyholidayassociation.org.uk/about-us/>) to promote the availability of the vouchers to people in the greatest need.

These Charity partners (Scheme Partners) will identify the beneficiaries through their established application processes and book the break or day visit by using a directory of businesses, who have signed-up to participate in the Scheme managed by VisitScotland.

The Scheme is fully funded by the Scottish Government, and participating businesses will be reimbursed by VisitScotland or Scheme Partners. VisitScotland and Scheme Partners cannot guarantee a minimum or maximum number of bookings a business may receive through the Scheme.

2. Participation

Accommodation businesses and visitor attractions who would like to participate in the Scheme are asked to complete the [participation form](#) and are required to:

- Agree to 24 hour cancellation period.
- Accept minimum of two payment methods from three options offered – credit card, bank transfer and invoice.
- Accept and adhere to the scheme [terms & conditions](#)
- Accept online bookings, or advise of alternative booking process.
- Allow business details to be shared with Scheme Partners for the purpose of booking and payment.

VisitScotland will aim to review applications within two working days of submission and, if the application is accepted, the business will be added to the directory. Scheme Partners will then have access to the directory and business details enabling them to make bookings directly.

3. Booking Process and Payment

- Businesses are encouraged to offer online bookings where possible with confirmation directly emailed to Scheme Partners. If the business cannot offer online bookings, an alternative booking process must be provided in accordance with the arrangements advised by the business at the time it signed up for the Scheme.
- Businesses must offer their best available rate to Scheme Partners at the time of booking.
- The dates of the overnight stay or day visit must fall within the eligibility period for the Scheme (i.e. between 3 August 2021 and 31 December 2022).
- Businesses must agree to a minimum of two payment methods from three options - invoicing, bank transfer and/ or credit card.
- If payment is to be made by credit card, credit cards can be charged on the day of arrival. If payment is to be made by bank transfer, it will be paid within six days after the date of arrival. If payment is to be made by invoice, it will be paid within six days after the date of invoice (the invoice can be submitted by the business on the date of arrival).
- Scheme Partners are responsible for making individual bookings and ensuring beneficiaries receive confirmation and agree to the Scheme Partner's terms & conditions for beneficiaries.

The Scheme is supported by two Scheme Partners, Family Holiday Association (FHA) and Shared Care Scotland (SCS).

The FHA will directly make and manage individual bookings for low income families. Payments will be made to businesses by VisitScotland for bookings made by FHA in the method of payment selected by the business.

SCS will distribute and manage funding through Local Carer Centres across Scotland on behalf of unpaid carers. Identification of the beneficiaries, and bookings and payment will be managed by Local Carer Centres across Scotland. This will help ensure that the unpaid Carer is registered with their Local Carer Centre for additional support and funding if required. Local Carer Centres will make direct payment to businesses via one of the two payment methods selected by the business in the participation form.

4. Cancellation

Businesses must agree to a 24 hour cancellation period (i.e. that bookings can be cancelled without charge as long as notice of cancellation is given at least 24 hours before the date of arrival). Cancellations are the responsibility of Scheme Partners and beneficiaries.

If cancellation is received less than 24 hours before the date of arrival businesses can claim 100% of the agreed rate or fee (up to the relevant capped amount stated above). However, businesses are encouraged to allow Scheme Partners to rebook for a future date where possible, or the business may decide to waive the booking payment.

5. Varying or withdrawal of the Scheme

It may be necessary to vary the Scheme in response to external factors beyond our control. VisitScotland will do so as far as possible in collaboration with businesses and Scheme Partners.

In the event of a global pandemic and/or future lockdowns, local or national, VisitScotland will work with businesses to mitigate any potential negative impact on the Scheme and businesses as is reasonably possible. All breaks that have been booked prior to the date of any early withdrawal of the Scheme will be honoured by the business, VisitScotland and the relevant Scheme Partner and, unless the booking is cancelled by the relevant Scheme Partner in line with the cancellation terms outlined above, full payment for the agreed cost of the break (up to the relevant capped amount stated above) will be made.

6. Liability and Insurance

Beneficiaries are liable for any damages caused to venues. There is no liability to VisitScotland or Scheme Partners. Beneficiaries must agree to and sign terms & conditions with Scheme Partner in advance of the bookings being made.

Businesses are expected to have the relevant insurances in place to cover any damages.

7. Incidentals and Upgrades

Beneficiaries may book an overnight stay or attraction tickets of a higher value than the Scheme supports.

In such circumstances beneficiaries may utilise other funding streams and income sources to contribute to the additional cost of taking breaks, such as activities, meals and travel.

All additional costs, including incidentals and upgrades, will be paid by beneficiaries themselves or directly to the business from the Scheme Partner or by other funding sources. Additional payments for any incidentals or upgrades and who shall pay for these will be agreed at the time of booking. Any such additional payments for incidentals or upgrades will not be payable by VisitScotland.

8. Data Protection

In order for Scheme Partners to make bookings it is essential that the business directory is shared with them.

VisitScotland will manage a directory of participating businesses and the following business details will be shared with Scheme Partners:

- venue name
- address
- booking contact details
- website address
- VisitScotland web listing (if applicable)
- Quality Assurance Grading (if applicable)
- Good to Go status (if applicable)
- Access Guides (if available)
- Bank details for payment

Data will also be shared with the Scottish Government for reporting purposes. If you want to find out more about what we do with your data, please see our [privacy policy](#).

9. Freedom of Information

VisitScotland is subject to the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and may be obliged to release information about your application in response to any requests received.

Information on the funding provided under the Scheme will be published on VisitScotland.org and/or the UK subsidy control transparency database (if applicable).

10. Accessibility

If you require the participation form to be made available to you in another format for accessibility reasons, please email scotspiritbreaks@visitscotland.com.

11. Subsidy Control

This Scheme forms part of the COVID-19 recovery programme announced by the Scottish Government at the end of March 2021.

Any funding under this Scheme will be made subject to the subsidy control rules. The subsidy is granted under Chapter 3, Article 364.3 of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, to respond to a national or global economic emergency.

You may need to declare any amount received under this Scheme to any other aid awarding body who requests information from you on how much subsidy you have received.

12. Complaints

If you have any queries or complaints about the Scheme, please email us at scotspiritbreaks@visitscotland.com or you can complete the feedback and complaints form on our website, which can be found at www.visitscotland.org/about-us/our-policies/complaints-feedback

13. Frequently Asked Questions

	Question	Answer
Q1	What businesses can participate in the ScotSpirit Holiday Voucher Scheme?	Bed and breakfast (B&B), camping parks, guest houses, hotels, hostels and any visitor attraction in Scotland can participate.
Q2	Who are the Scheme Partners?	<p>The ScotSpirit Holiday Voucher Scheme is supported by two Charity partners, Family Holiday Association (FHA) and Shared Care Scotland (SCS).</p> <p>The FHA will directly make and manage individual bookings for low income families. Payments will be made to businesses by VisitScotland for bookings made by FHA in the method of payment selected by the business.</p> <p>Shared Care Scotland will work with Local Carer Centres across Scotland, who will identify the relevant beneficiaries and manage bookings and payments with businesses. This will ensure that the potential beneficiaries are registered with their local Carer Centre for additional support and funding if required. Carer Centres will make direct payment to business via one of two payment methods selected by the business.</p>

Q3	Why are VisitScotland only working with two Charity partners?	<p>The Scheme is supported by two Charity partners who, directly or indirectly, support the Scheme beneficiaries. This enables us to use existing methods and processes to reach those individuals most in need of a break.</p> <p>FHA already supports low income families through the ScotSpirit Breaks project where they are the sole delivery partner. This new programme will further strengthen the partnership with FHA, SCS and VisitScotland increasing opportunities and reaching new beneficiaries.</p> <p>SCS is a Government-funded organisation and are experts in distributing and managing funding for unpaid carers in Scotland to take breaks from caring. SCS work with Local Carer Centres across Scotland and are best placed to ensure all regions are represented.</p>
Q4	Who are the beneficiaries of the Scheme?	Unpaid carers supporting someone else to maintain an independent life, disadvantaged young people and low income families are the beneficiaries and will be identified through Scheme Partners.
Q5	How will businesses be paid?	<p>Businesses can be paid by credit card, bank transfer or by invoice. A minimum of two payment methods must be accepted by businesses.</p> <p>Credit cards can be charged on the day of arrival. Payment will be made by bank transfer within six days of arrival or by invoice six days after receipt of invoice (which invoice can be issued on the date of arrival).</p>
Q6	Why is VisitScotland not making all payments to businesses?	We want to ensure that the Local Carer Centres are able to handle the application and booking process without undue administrative burden being placed on them. By transferring a specific voucher budget allocation to them to manage in line with other short break programmes they operate, we are reducing the administrative burden and maximising the impact of the budget.
Q7	Can my business make a free donation for an overnight stay or day visit?	If you would like to make a donation or waive the rate/ fee for the overnight stay or attraction tickets please contact scotspiritbreaks@visitscotland.com .
Q8	What if I cannot accept online bookings?	If online bookings are not feasible, businesses can advise of an alternative booking contact or process at the time of applying to take part in the Scheme.

Q9	What if I am unable to commit to the full period of the Scheme, or can only offer specific dates for participation?	<p>Businesses are asked to commit to the full Scheme period, from August 2021 to December 2022. This offers beneficiaries choice with day trips and overnights stays throughout the year and stimulates the demand over a longer period.</p> <p>All booking requests made by Scheme Partners are subject to availability. There is no guarantee made that participating businesses will be able to offer overnight stays or day visits on specific dates requested.</p> <p>Businesses are not expected to block out dates. There are no guarantees in place that preferred dates will be available, and Scheme Partners and beneficiaries are advised bookings are subject to availability.</p>
Q10	Do I need to be part of the Good to Go scheme or Safe Travels?	Businesses that are certified under the Good to Go Scheme or Safe Travels showing that a COVID-19 risk assessment has been carried out and that the business is working hard to follow government and public health guidance will be highlighted within the directory of participating business. This is not a condition of participation but is highly recommended.
Q11	Do I need to create an accessibility guide?	Participating businesses are encouraged to create an Accessibility Guide . This will be available to view on individual VisitScotland business listings and a link will be available in your directory listing.
Q12	Who do I contact if I have any queries?	If you have any questions or queries please email us at scotspiritbreaks@visitscotland.com
Q13	What marketing and promotional materials are available to promote participation in the Scheme?	VisitScotland will provide a toolkit with relevant marketing and promotional materials which businesses can use to promote their participation in the Scheme.
Q14	What is the cancellation period?	Bookings can be cancelled up to 24 hours before the date of arrival for accommodation and 24 hours before date of arrival for attractions.
Q15	What is the value of the overnight stay or attraction day visit?	<p>Vouchers under the Scheme have a maximum spend value of £400 per overnight stay during the shoulder months or off-peak season and £500 per overnight stay during the peak season.</p> <p>Vouchers for day trips are capped at a maximum of £200 per trip.</p> <p>All of the figures above are inclusive of any VAT due on the relevant overnight break or day visit.</p>

Q16	What does the value of the voucher cover?	Vouchers cover the cost of the overnight stay or attraction tickets/ passes only. Additional costs, such as other activities, incidentals, upgrades, meals and travel are not included in the voucher.
Q17	Why are you not asking accommodation businesses to set a specific rate for the scheme?	To ensure the ScotSpirit Holiday Voucher Scheme benefits as many individuals and families as possible and that we help the tourism sector to recover from the pandemic, we are not asking businesses to set a fixed or minimum rate however, we ask that the most competitive rate is offered at the time of booking to maximise the funding available.
Q18	Why are self-catering businesses not included in the Scheme?	<p>For the moment we have not included self-catering businesses in the Scheme. Our charity partners felt that the demand and their ability to match beneficiaries to self-catering accommodation was deemed to be low during the initial launch period in the Autumn.</p> <p>Self-catering accommodation also offers a different holiday experience, whereby beneficiaries would be on their own in the property without serviced facilities or other guests.</p> <p>If, however after the Scheme has opened to applicants, and we see demand from beneficiaries for this type of accommodation we will consider the inclusion of self-caterers in the Scheme later in the year.</p>
Q19	Can holiday parks also sign-up to participate in the scheme?	Yes, Holiday Parks with permanently sited caravan holiday homes for hire can participate by ticking the Camping Park venue type.