



A guide for new tourism businesses in West Sussex

Understanding your local DMO
and what it can do for you

EXPERIENCE
WEST SUSSEX

All on Board

Launching and running a tourism business can be daunting but your local destination management organisation (DMO) is here to help. Here's a quick guide to West Sussex's DMOs and how they can help your business grow and thrive.



What is a destination management organisation anyway?

A DMO is an organisation that develops a long-term strategic approach to managing a destination's tourism offer, for the benefit of the local visitor economy.

For visitors, the DMO is often the gateway to a destination, offering up-to-date, reliable and inspirational information about a place's attractions, accommodation, events and infrastructure. For tourism businesses, a DMO serves as a supportive organisation that unifies, improves and markets local tourism product and experience.

DMOs vary enormously in size, structure, funding, responsibilities and the range of support they offer to local tourism businesses. Some are funded by local authorities, others by membership or local businesses. Responsibilities could include strategic leadership, coordinating marketing activities, providing networking and training opportunities or sharing best practice, insights and industry expertise.

Connect with as many of your local and regional DMOs as possible to benefit from the various activities offered by each. Bear in mind that some DMOs relevant to your tourism business may be based outside West Sussex, such as VisitBrighton or Visit Hampshire.

Experience West Sussex is the county's DMO, currently core-funded by West Sussex's local authorities. It's a forward-thinking tourism destination collaboration that supports tourism organisations big and small across the county.

Experience West Sussex is a partnership with eight local tourism partners:

- West Sussex County Council
- Adur & Worthing District Councils
- Arun District Council
- Chichester District Council
- Crawley Borough Council
- Horsham District Council
- Mid Sussex District Council
- Coastal West Sussex Partnership

They collaborate under the Experience West Sussex umbrella to increase the value of tourism to the local area, reduce seasonality, encourage stays and longer stays, provide tourism business support and coordinate creative marketing campaigns – all for the benefit of West Sussex's visitor economy.

To maximise impact, Experience West Sussex also works closely with regional and national stakeholders and tourism partners, including [Sussex Chamber of Commerce](#), [VisitEngland](#), [Tourism South East](#), [South Downs National Park](#), [Gateway Gatwick](#), [England's Coast](#) and neighbouring DMOs.

Interesting. But let's cut to the chase. What can Experience West Sussex do for me and my new tourism business?

Essentially, Experience West Sussex's aim is to grow the local visitor economy in a sustainable way, and a large part of that involves helping local tourism businesses of all sizes to thrive – including yours.

Experience West Sussex can help plug you into your local tourism network and all the benefits that come with it, such as marketing, networking, collaboration and funding opportunities.

In a nutshell, what's Experience West Sussex's wider role?

1

Provide strategic leadership to strengthen and grow the West Sussex visitor economy. It does this by:

- Ensuring a coherent approach to destination management by minimising any duplication of effort and identifying local tourism businesses' needs
- Ensuring that West Sussex gains and maximises the benefits of any potential international, national and regional funding opportunities or projects
- Feeding back to government and ensuring that the voice of West Sussex tourism businesses is heard at all levels

2

Support the creation and promotion of a truly memorable visitor experience in West Sussex, to ensure West Sussex is a top choice for visitors, with an emphasis on visitors from London and international visitors. It does this by:

- Developing and implementing creative marketing campaigns, building brand awareness and ensuring West Sussex features in national and international marketing opportunities, such as those offered by England's Coast and VisitBritain
- Publishing www.experiencewestsussex.com, which includes a sub-sector business directory, guides and itineraries, all designed to attract, inform and inspire visitors
- Directly engaging consumers with inspirational and informational content in fortnightly consumer emails, social media and paid-for digital marketing
- Organising press trips and releases

3

Promote growth, collaboration and a sense of togetherness among West Sussex tourism businesses, from major attractions to cosy B&Bs. It does this by:

- Supporting local businesses to collaborate on, develop and improve tourism product and experiences
- Providing networking opportunities
- Sharing industry intelligence, insights and best practice
- Connecting tourism businesses with their local DMO within West Sussex



DMOs sound useful! Now what do I do?

Here are 7 ways you can get involved with Experience West Sussex and your local tourism body now.



1. Use the Experience West Sussex [Explore map](#) to find your local tourism body and connect with them via the contacts listed in the Delve Deeper section



2. [Get involved](#) with the Experience West Sussex business community. It's free for local tourism and hospitality businesses and you'll gain access to marketing opportunities on www.experiencewestsussex.com and Experience West Sussex's social media channels and consumer emails



3. Sign up for the [Experience West Sussex business newsletter](#). You'll get monthly updates on the latest funding opportunities, tourism news, upcoming plans and how to get involved with seasonal campaigns



4. [Submit your event](#) to the Experience West Sussex website



5. Take advantage of Experience West Sussex's [online support services for local tourism businesses](#). You'll find webinars and workshops, business resources such as toolkits for tourism SMEs and resources from local and national tourism sector specialists.

Follow your local tourism body and Experience West Sussex on:



@experiencewestsussex



@ExpWestSussex



@experiencewestsussex



Experience West Sussex

And follow Experience West Sussex on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#) for the latest business news and updates.



6. Use relevant hashtags when you post about your business. These include [#YourWestSussex](#) [#WestSussexWishList](#) [#RediscoverWestSussex](#) [#ShopSussex](#) [#SummerInWestSussex](#) [#PawfectWestSussex](#) and [#WatersportsWestSussex](#).

Experience West Sussex can share and help amplify your message to its audience:



132,000 website users in 2020

(that's a 174% increase on 2018)



34,000

Facebook Followers



3,400

Twitter Followers



5,900

Instagram Followers



18,000

YouTube views of the [#WestSussexWishList](#) video so far, plus numerous social media views and shares



62,000 consumer emails sent in 2020



with a 30% average open rate

(double the industry average)



8% click through to West Sussex businesses

(considerably higher than the industry average of 1.6%)

Finally, this is a two-way relationship, so keep Experience West Sussex and your local tourism body up to date with the latest news from your tourism business – fill out this [form](#) or email info@experiencewestsussex.com.

And if you have any queries, just get in touch: getinvolved@experiencewestsussex.com



Jargon buster

Destination: A place that people can visit and experience – it can be anything from a city or a collection of villages to a district, a coastline or a range of hills to a county or a region that encompasses any or all of these.

DMO: Go back to the beginning and read this guide again!

Tourism sector: Tourism as a sector is hugely varied. As well as the more obvious accommodation providers, heritage and cultural attractions, it includes hospitality, food and drink outlets, outdoor activities and watersports. It is not limited to leisure travellers either. Business events and tourism is also a big part of the sector. Tourism is vital for West Sussex. It sustains numerous small and micro businesses whose activities draw visitors to the region and enhance their experience of a place.

Visitor economy: This goes beyond the economic benefits of core tourism and hospitality businesses to take into account the broader economic value of visitors' activities to a destination, such as jobs, wages and taxes.

