

Welcome to Bournemouth

a staff handbook for our town

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A warm welcome to Bournemouth



We very much hope you will enjoy living and working here – tourism is a major industry to the town and we're delighted you've chosen to become part of it. Bournemouth's beautiful beaches and stunning gardens are a major draw, but visitors also return for our hospitality – a warm welcome from people like you.

It's the people that visitors interact with that make the difference to a visitor's experience, transforming an average holiday into a great one – a personal greeting or friendly smile can be pivotal in someone's day.

You're joining a very important part of the town, tourism is worth more than £479 million to Bournemouth and supports nearly 10,000 jobs. And it doesn't just impact hotels and tourist attractions, visitors spend in just about every sector – shops, pubs, restaurants, spas, transport and more. Without a healthy tourism industry many of the town's facilities and packed events programme simply wouldn't exist.

Customer service is very much at the heart of the National Coastal Tourism Academy, we hope you will find this booklet helpful in discovering what Bournemouth has to offer visitors and how to deliver top service to everyone. Enjoy working here!

Bournemouth as a tourist town

Bournemouth's town centre is ideal for shopping, with a pedestrianised shopping area, and a wide choice of one-off outlets, high street names and large department stores. The centre's impressive Victorian architecture is complemented by award-winning gardens that stretch down to the beach and right up to the border with Poole. Bournemouth Square is a central point, west is the Triangle shopping area, while Westover Road is lined with elegant shops and galleries, you'll also find the Tourist Information Centre and cinemas here. There are additional seafront information offices situated close to Bournemouth and Boscombe Piers. For night owls, there's no shortage of cafés and restaurants in the town centre, with nightclubs and bars that stay open well into the early hours of the morning.

Boscombe is approximately two miles east of Bournemouth's town centre. Its seafront is a magnet for watersport's fans, and home to the Coastal Activity Park which sits either side of Boscombe Pier. The seafront offers a number of popular restaurants and bars. Open air markets take place on Thursdays and Saturdays beside the Sovereign Centre in Boscombe, which also operates a Shopmobility scheme for visitors with disability.



Bournemouth!
(From Hengistbury Head)

Pokesdown sits between Boscombe and Southbourne and is known for its antiques shops. Its retro atmosphere makes it a draw for lovers of vintage clothing and artefacts. It offers good transport routes from Pokesdown railway station and a good bus network.

Southbourne is just over three miles from Bournemouth, the area is hugely popular with families who flock to its wide sandy beaches and seafront eateries. Southbourne Grove offers a number of tempting cafés and shops, many sell locally made Dorset produce. The clifftop is ideal for walkers offering panoramic views of the Isle of Wight and across to the Purbeck Hills. Further east is Hengistbury Head with an outstanding Visitor Centre.

Charminster offers a cosmopolitan mix of restaurants, cafés and bars with every cuisine from Lebanese to Thai.

Westbourne is a mile and a half to the west of the town centre, a chic suburb packed with upscale fashion boutiques, top class restaurants and trendy coffee houses. Lovely pine tree woods flank the path down to Alum Chine beach which boasts restaurants, ice-cream outlets and children's playground with splash pool.

Useful link
bournemouth.co.uk/things-to-do/shopping

Things to do & see

(all year round)



Bournemouth has four Blue flags awarded for the cleanliness of its beaches, Green flags for the quality of its parks and a Purple flag for its night time economy. It has seven miles of safe, sandy beaches, the town's greatest natural asset, and two piers, Bournemouth and Boscombe. Alum Chine, Durley Chine, Boscombe, Fisherman's Walk and Southbourne beaches surround the central beaches of East Cliff and West Cliff.

The new **Coastal Activity Park** at Boscombe offers a variety of water sports including kite-surfing, stand-up paddle-boarding, body-boarding, surfing and kayaking - with instructors on-hand if needed. The Coastal Activity Park stretches either side of Boscombe Pier and provides a huge choice of activities for every age and ability both on land and sea, many of which are free.

But there's also plenty of choice away from the beach, whatever the weather. The captivating Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum beside the Royal Bath Hotel is crammed with amazing works of art, the Oceanarium is also unmissable, showcasing sting-rays, sharks, otters and more. The Pavilion Theatre and Bournemouth International Centre provide a line-up of top entertainment year round, from the latest boy bands to Brahms and Beethoven.

Shopping is always a draw, both in the town centre and three miles beyond at Castlepoint, which offers an extensive choice and free car parking.

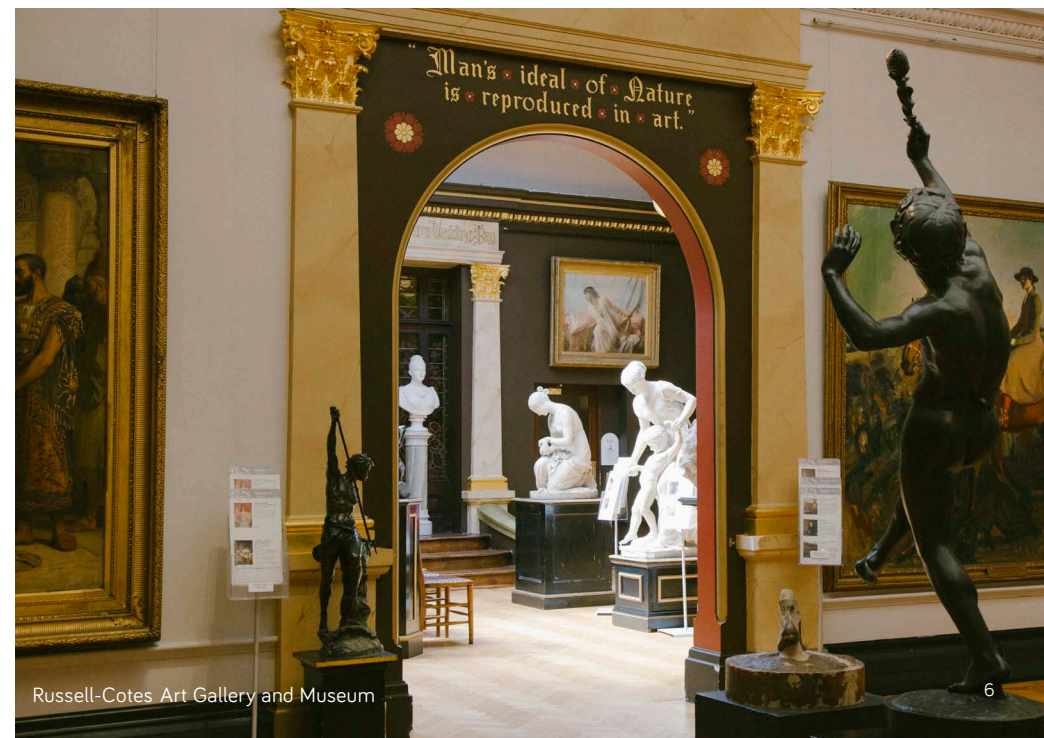


Bournemouth can be enjoyed at any time of year, and many activities can be enjoyed for free! The stunning Victorian Gardens - Lower, Central and Upper - lie between the town's shopping area and the seafront and include tennis courts, mini-golf, children's play areas and outdoor art exhibitions. Guided walks and tree trail guides are available from the Tourist Information Centre.

Water sports are popular throughout the year. But there's also a packed programme of events year round, see the events page (7). At Christmas dozens of market stalls brighten the Square, there's live music, food stalls, a German bar as well as an ice rink in the Lower Gardens. A traditional Christmas pantomime is staged at The Pavilion Theatre.

Top entertainment features at The Bournemouth International Centre (BIC), Pavilion Theatre and Lighthouse in Poole, with dance performances at Pavillion Dance. The Littledown Centre offers indoor sports facilities including a large pool with flume rides and Altitude High Ropes. Splashdown Waterpark, at Tower Park, Poole, is also a popular year-round attraction.

Useful link
bournemouth.co.uk/things-to-do
coastalactivitypark.co.uk



Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum

Bournemouth events

The Bournemouth Wheels Festival is a free festival for all the family over three days in May.

Featuring historic classic cars, world-class BMX stunts, Monster Truck parades and supercars, there are four grandstands along the beach to watch demonstrations, plus evening live entertainment, shopping, food and fireworks.

The Bournemouth Marathon Festival takes place in October.

Featuring events for all ages and abilities, from children running 1.5k to professional runners doing the full marathon! The route runs along the sea and around the town, a stunning setting for anyone who loves running.

Every Sunday afternoon from mid-April to September. Classic Cars on the Prom line the hill just behind the BIC on the clifftop.

Useful link

bournemouth.co.uk/whats-on



A packed events programme brings thousands of visitors into the town each year.

The biggest event is the famous Bournemouth Air Festival, held each year in August.

A dazzling aeronautical display fills the skies above the beach, highlight of which is the Red Arrows, but the entertainment lasts long into the night with thrilling dusk air displays, live music and family entertainment. The event is free and transforms the town for four days.

Free family entertainment takes place in August in the Lower Gardens and at Bournemouth Seafront, featuring magicians, puppet shows, clowns, music and more.

The annual Bournemouth Arts by the Sea Festival is staged across the town during September and October.

This multi arts festival attracts international artists as well as showcasing some of the best local talent.

The town also holds a Christmas Festival from mid-November to early January.

Yule-tide visitors can shop for seasonal gifts and buy hot food from the market stalls. A temporary stage showcases local bands and performers while a Victorian carousel adds to the seasonal atmosphere.



Bournemouth by night

Bournemouth is renowned as one of the most exciting places to enjoy a night out and is a proud recipient of the prestigious Purple Flag National Award for its Night Time Economy. The BIC and Pavilion feature plenty of variety, from classical concerts to children's shows and West End musicals; there are also several cinemas showing the latest films.

The Triangle area has bars and gay venues, central Bournemouth also has a range of all-night entertainment in its lively bars and hi-energy nightclubs. Licensed taxis are easily found anytime, while the Night Bus service is a great and affordable way to get home.

As well as classic British restaurants from fish and chips to pub favourites, international cuisine is also well represented. The suburbs of Winton and Charminster, located just a couple of miles from Bournemouth town centre, have a wide range of offerings including Italian, Indian, Lebanese, Mongolian, Mexican and Indonesian food.

Worth Matravers, Nr Swanage

Beyond Bournemouth

With more than 250 hotels, guesthouses and B&Bs, Bournemouth is the ideal base to stay. And there's enormous choice for great days out right on the doorstep.

Salisbury and Stonehenge

Less than an hour away from Bournemouth, Salisbury has some of England's finest historic houses, a great shopping centre and the majestic Salisbury Cathedral, boasting Britain's tallest spire. Just outside is Stonehenge – the world famous ancient stone circle and World Heritage Site and a must-see for visitors.

New Forest National Park

Lying just outside Bournemouth, the New Forest has remained largely unaltered throughout its 1,000 year history. Acres of ancient landscapes, heathland and woodland allow ponies and deer to roam freely. It offers miles of cycle and horse-riding tracks, the National Motor Museum, Palace House, Beaulieu Abbey and the popular Peppa Pig World at Paulton's Park, a great draw for families.

Poole and Christchurch

To the West, Poole features Europe's largest natural harbour. Visitors can enjoy water sports, beaches, historic pubs and restaurants on the bustling Quay and spectacular views. Poole Pottery and Poole Museum are great free attractions, and the Old Town features quirky shops and a clutch of renowned restaurants. Just outside Poole, Compton Acres is one of the finest gardens in Europe, while Tower Park leisure complex has a galaxy of activities for all ages. Christchurch, on the shores of its own spectacular natural harbour, is an historic town with a beautiful coastline and fascinating heritage, including the famous Priory. It's perfect for shopping and eating out.

Wimborne

The beautiful and historic market town of Wimborne features a 1300 year-old Minster, the Priest's House Museum, a beautifully detailed model village for children, and plenty of cosy pubs, shops and restaurants.

Dorchester and North Dorset

Dorchester, the county town of Dorset, is 28 miles west of Bournemouth and home and inspiration for Dorset author Thomas Hardy, whose novel The Mayor of Casterbridge was based on the town. Travelling further into the countryside of North Dorset are several market towns including Blandford Forum, Gillingham and Shaftesbury, with its famous beauty spot Gold Hill.

Swanage and the Purbecks

The Swanage Railway runs for six miles through the Purbeck Hills from Norden, past the ruins of Corfe Castle, to Swanage, where the world-famous Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site begins. Walkers can travel the South West Coast Path, passing the stunning geological landmarks of Old Harry Rocks, Lulworth Cove and Durdle Door. Swanage has its own Blue Flag beach, wildlife lovers should head to the Studland National Nature Reserve.

Useful link

bournemouth.co.uk/explore-the-area

Making Visitors Happy



You are now part of the tourism industry in Bournemouth, an industry that is essential to the economy of the town. Good customer service is one of the best ways of encouraging customers to return to a business, or area, time and time again – which in turn helps businesses to grow and secures jobs.

So whenever you are in contact with a customer or visitor to the town, remember five easy things – A E I O U!

A
E
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U

Can you **anticipate** the customer's needs, and give what they need before they ask?

Can you go the extra mile and **exceed their expectations**, making sure they have a positive experience?

Try to make an **instant connection** with the customer – put yourself in their shoes!

If there is a problem, take **ownership** of it and try to solve it

Think of everyone as **unique** – there is no such thing as a standard customer!

So how can you make sure your customer is happy?



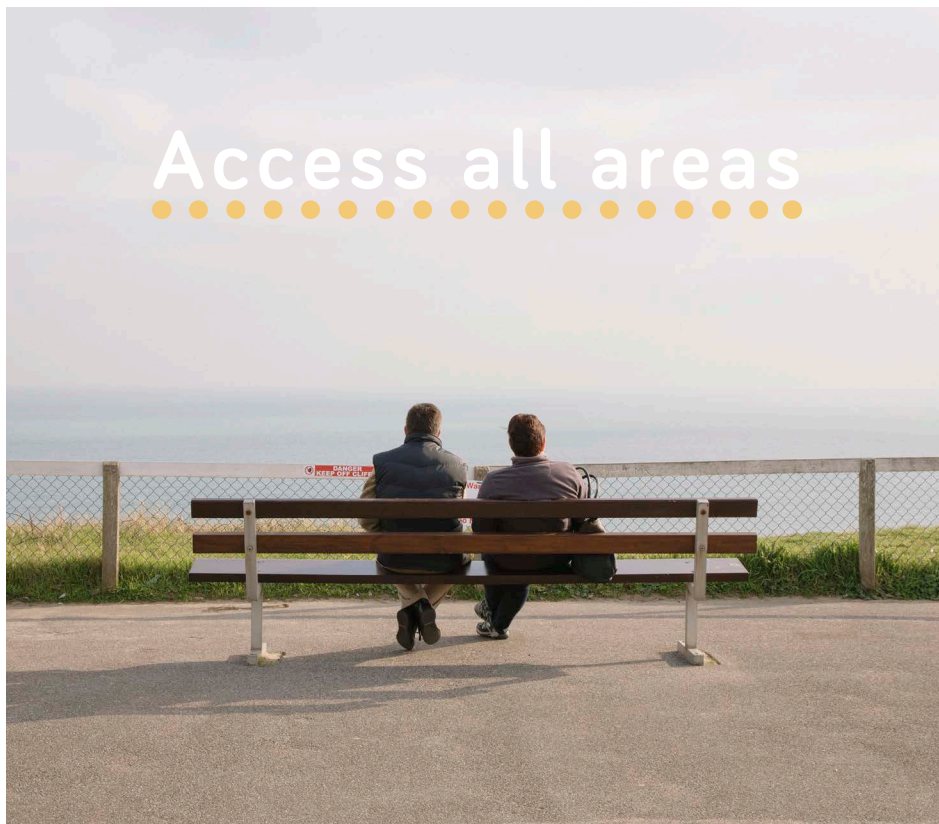
If you demonstrate the importance of good customer care in your business, you will help show the positive impact it can have on staff, customer relationships - and profits.

Body language represents as much as 55% of a person's first opinion of you - so make sure you smile positively with direct eye contact, try to personalise the conversation and above all listen and make your customer feel special.

The way you speak is also important. You should sound enthusiastic and interested, and be confident! Even simple things like not speaking too fast will help customers.

Using positive words like 'good value, family friendly, convenient, easy' will help you build a happy relationship with a customer, try to avoid 'can't', 'don't know' or 'maybe'.

Project positive first impressions when customers walk into your business. You will find that others around you will catch your enthusiasm, consider you a professional in the field, and value your advice.



Bournemouth welcomes all visitors, regardless of physical ability. Disability covers a wide range of issues – mobility, deafness, visually impairment, learning disabilities – so be prepared to think about how you can make their experience the best it can be.

This is an important group of visitors in tourism, and treating these visitors appropriately is as much about the attitude of employees, as access.

Begin with a positive approach, treat everyone as an individual and make sure you know what practical knowledge you may need - for example where they will be situated in the building in case help is needed with evacuation procedures.

Do you know which attractions in the area have good disabled access or which parts of the seafront are best suited to their requirements? Boscombe has the UK's first fully accessible beach huts and there are also specially adapted wheelchairs available for use on the beach.

An Accessible Guide is produced by Bournemouth Tourism that covers many of the facilities and services available in the resort. 0845 051 1700 or info@bournemouth.gov.uk

Getting around

Bus Services

Bournemouth is well served by a comprehensive bus network which offers regular routes across the conurbation to Poole and Christchurch, and further afield to Salisbury, Swanage and the Purbecks.

Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch Councils produce an Area Bus Map detailing all routes. Copies are available from Bournemouth Rail and Coach Station or from highways@bournemouth.gov.uk

Bus services are provided by Yellow Buses, Wilts and Dorset/Go South Coast including More buses, Damory and Discover Dorset (Bournemouth Airport Shuttle and City Sightseeing), Shaftesbury and District, Gard Bus and Charlie Browns Buses.

Trains, coaches and bus services feed into the main Bournemouth Rail and Coach Station, known as the Travel Interchange. An information office (01202 317581) is staffed there seven days a week from 8am to 5pm. In addition to supplying bus tickets and passes, the office provides tourist information and an accommodation booking service.

The Getting About one day ticket offers great value, allowing unlimited travel for most buses in Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch. Adult tickets cost £5.80, under 18's £3.60.

Ferry

A fast ferry service operates from Poole, Weymouth and Portsmouth to the Channel Islands, France and Spain.

Taxis

Taxis are readily available at the Rail and Coach Station and also in the town centre, outside the Tourist Information Centre on Westover Road and at Pier Approach, The Square, The Triangle and Lansdowne in the town centre. Local taxi operators include Streamline Warrens Taxis and United Taxis.

Cycling

Bournemouth is one of the easiest towns in the UK to get around by bike. It boasts two National Cycle networks and a network of on-road, off-road cycle lanes.

Front Bike Hire, located just east of Bournemouth Pier, offers cruisers, tandems and tag-alongs for cycling along the promenade, either east to Henigstbury Head or west to Sandbanks and the chain ferry to the Purbecks.

Kool Cycles on the West Cliff provides a choice of bikes for cycling in town and beyond!





Become a Bournemouth Ambassador

Bournemouth Ambassador

is a free online training module for everyone who comes into contact with visitors to Bournemouth.

There's plenty of information on the area's tourist attractions, and additional customer care tips to help you ensure they enjoy the best experience possible.

The course takes under an hour to complete and you can return to it as often as you like, whenever it's convenient.

Once you have completed this first module successfully you can print out a certificate; and go on to take free online courses on additional topics. Or perhaps go on to take a half-day Welcome Host Bournemouth course!

So take the module today – an asset on any CV!



**BOURNEMOUTH
AMBASSADOR**

bournemouthambassador.co.uk