



**A summary of the evaluation
of Visit Pembrokeshire's
Open to All project**

This summary evaluation report is for Visit Pembrokeshire's [Open to All project](#) which ran from January to December 2022. The project was funded by the the UK Government's Community Renewal Fund.

The aim of the project was to make Pembrokeshire an exemplary destination offering great service and facilities to local visitors and tourists with visible and hidden disabilities.

The evaluation work was carried out by the project's external evaluator Dilys Burrell. This summary version of the evaluation was put together by the project manager Corinne Cariad.

For the full evaluation report email - admin@visitpembrokeshire.com



Pembrokeshire
SIR BENFRO

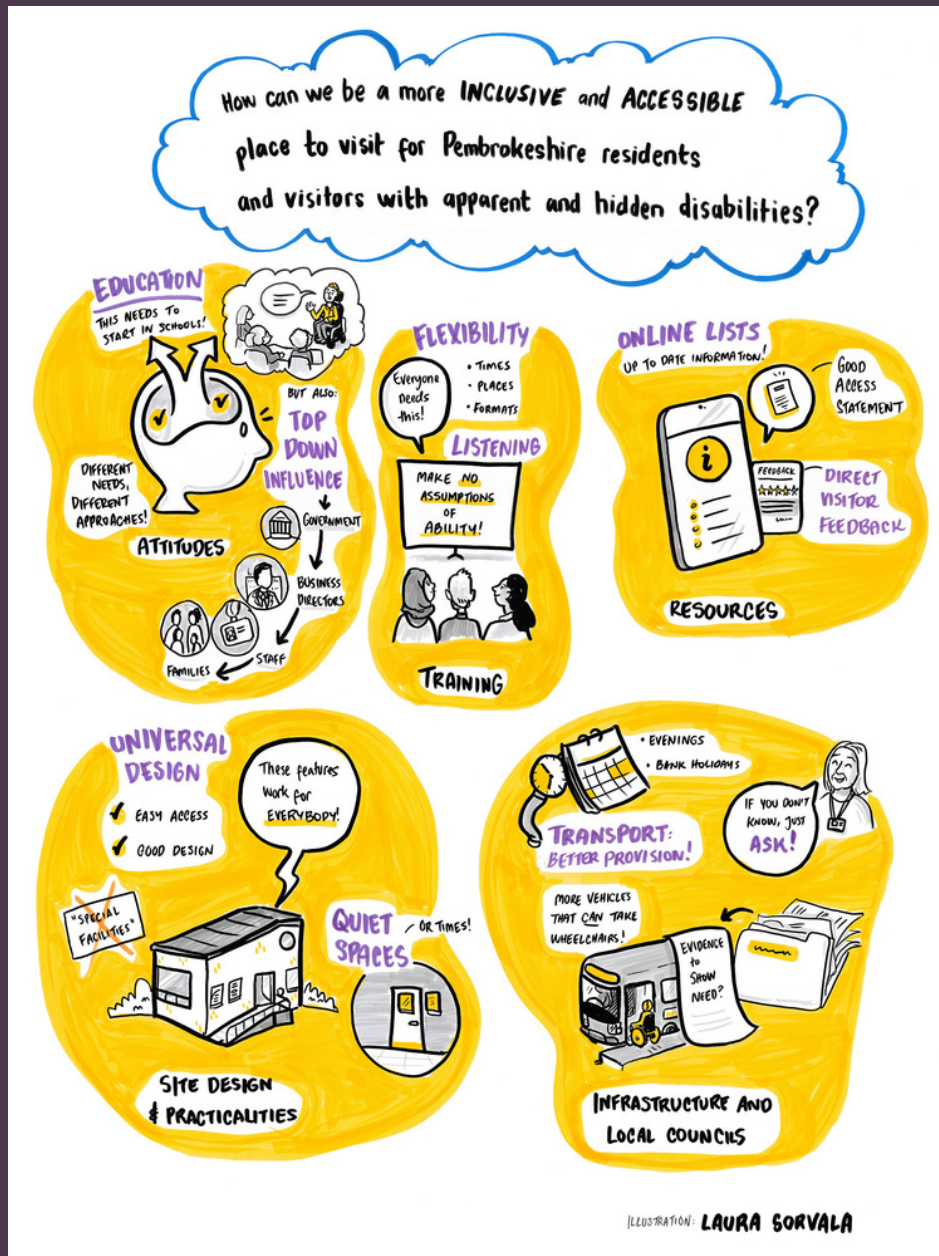


UK Government
Llywodraeth y DU

Title page photo available from Visit Pembrokeshire's [Image Library](#).

Summary

Visit Pembrokeshire's Open to All project has started something that "could be really good". Training has been developed and delivered, resources have been created, and like-minded businesses and individuals have been connected and inspired to work together to make Pembrokeshire a leading destination for accessible and inclusive tourism. Disabled people, social enterprises and



Open Space discussion, Open to All Conference

charities have been central to the project and paid to deliver services.

The individuals that helped to make the Open to All project happen should be very proud of their role in doing so, and the businesses and people that have come together to support and inspire each other as part of the project, equally so. Feedback on the project collected as part of the evaluation has been overwhelmingly positive.

The 2022 Open to All project was funded by



Familiarisation visit to Folly Farm

the UK Government through the UK Community Renewal Fund. All the businesses and organisations involved want the work to continue.

Visit Pembrokeshire, Pembrokeshire County Council and the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority could play a leading role in making this happen. Businesses and organisations want to support further Open to All activity and are willing to provide resources to do this.

It is now important to start planning activity in 2023 and beyond. Once the next phase of activity is agreed, personal connections, and business friendly timings and offers, are likely to be important to maximise reach and impact.

Developing and supporting our tourism professionals

The Open to All project has helped to develop skills and support professional development in the tourism industry in Pembrokeshire.

Many of the individuals involved praised the project for:

- offering a friendly, non-judgemental and welcoming learning environment
- bringing people together to support their professional learning
- 'vibrant' activities
- making them feel proud of Pembrokeshire
- opportunities to hear what other businesses are doing

Quotes from businesses and organisations involved

It is great to see
Pembrokeshire leading the way
on this

To stop now
would be so
frustrating

You don't need to
spend big bucks to be
accessible and inclusive
- small things can make
a big difference

We're on the
verge of
something
good, we
could make
it amazing

Context

The Open to All project was delivered in 2022, the first year that things started to 'go back to normal' after two and a half years of pandemic restrictions.

The restrictions hit the tourism and recreation industries particularly hard. Although the 2020 and 2021 summer seasons were very busy in Pembrokeshire, winter restrictions made trading in many businesses very difficult, and the industry has lost many staff and struggled with staffing since the pandemic.

Set against this backdrop were rising energy prices and a 'cost of living' crisis in 2022. Many businesses are struggling just to stay open. The project team and organisations involved would have liked to have seen more people attend training events.

However, set against the context above, the figures and achievements of the project are commendable. The project has made an excellent start and put many things into place that will allow further development of Open to All activity over the coming years.

Training and familiarisation visits

Training was offered free of charge online and in-person. There were 19 training and familiarisation events and an Open to All conference.

Training offered:

- Deaf and hard of hearing awareness
- Disability equity and awareness
- Supporting blind and partially sighted customers
- Digital inclusivity
- Learning disabilities and autism awareness





97 individuals working in the
tourism sector from

43 businesses &
organisations

attended a training session
or familiarisation visit.



Familiarisation Visits with:

- Asheston Eco Barns
- Coastal Foraging with Craig Evans
- Beach wheelchairs (PCNPA)
- Folly Farm
- St Brides Spa Hotel
- The Wheelabout, Penally (Harriet Davis Trust)
- Twr y Felin Hotel

100% would recommend the event they attended to other tourism businesses

90% said they had learnt how to attract more customers

Expert collaborators

Adhering to the principal of 'nothing about us without us', disabled people and disabled led organisations were commissioned for much of the advisory, training and services work.

Social enterprises, charities and the School of Management at Swansea University were supported through commissioning and collaborative working.

Charities

- Pembrokeshire People First
- Sign and Share Club
- RNIB
- Harriet Davis Trust

Social enterprises

- Vere Enterprises
- Comments: Disabled
- Lifeseeker CIC
- Dilys Burrell Projects
- Haverhub

Open to All Resources

A Pembrokeshire Open to All 'product' was created, including:

- An interactive map for disabled visitors
- Open to All podcast – visiting Pembrokeshire as a blind person
- Open to All vlog – holidaying in Pembrokeshire as independent people with learning disabilities
- Image Library photos featuring disabled visitors

Training and reports

- Recorded training sessions – video and audio-only options
- Open to All Conference report
- Digital Accessibility guide
- Focus groups report

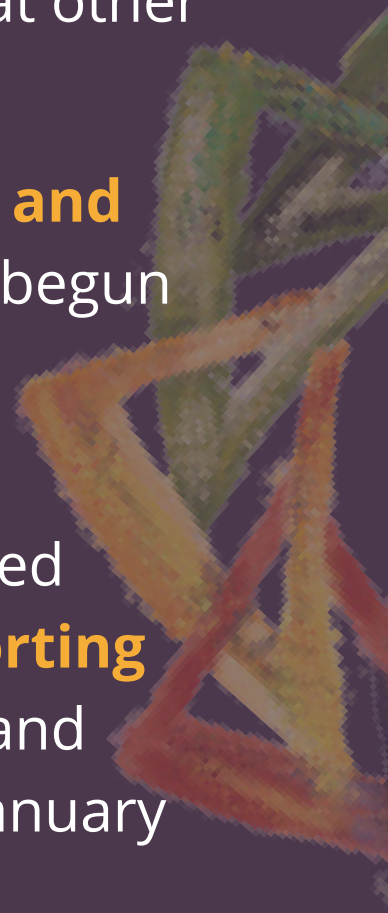
More details on the [Open to All webpage](#).


Impact and next steps

The 43 businesses and organisations involved in the Open to All project now understand more about the **potential of the disabled market** (but many of those understood the potential or wanted to support the disabled market already). We need to find out what other businesses know, and how we can help them.

The project has created **a network of supportive businesses and organisations**. At least 15 businesses and organisations have begun to collaborate in some way. There is potential to involve more businesses to maximise impact.

59 tourism staff attended training sessions delivered by disabled people and now have more **experience of welcoming, supporting and communicating with disabled people**. Equity, diversity and inclusion training could be offered by Visit Pembrokeshire in January






to March each year to increase the number of tourism staff who have the experience to be able to welcome, support and communicate with disabled people well.

Things that **people said they want to learn more about** in event feedback forms have been recorded. More businesses and organisations could be asked about what they need or want to know to invest in and make improvements to accessibility and inclusion.

Focus groups with the Sign and Share Club and Pembrokeshire People First, a review of the Visit Pembrokeshire website by the RNIB, and a visitor survey have helped us to know more about **what disabled customers want and how to do it.**



An interactive map will make it easier for disabled people to **find out about accessible facilities.** It will also help businesses to find out what is available for their disabled customers.

The interactive map, a podcast and vlog, and an image library for businesses, are part of a new **'Pembrokeshire – Open to All' product**. An 'Open to All' page should also be created on the Visit Pembrokeshire customer facing website.

Businesses have made **improvements to accessibility and inclusion** as a result of the project. Information should now be collected from a wider range of businesses about accessibility and inclusion measures that they have put in place.

Travel for events has been monitored, and businesses and organisations think the project has been delivered **responsibly and sustainably**. Visit Pembrokeshire should consider how it can measure and share information on how it is meeting the 'responsible and sustainable' objective of the Destination Management Plan.

Disabled people often receive **great customer service** in

Pembrokeshire, but there are examples of some difficulties. Difficulties should be monitored and acted upon.

Over 600 clicks on social media and email newsletters. An **Open to All section** has been **added to the Visit Pembrokeshire Trade newsletter**. This should continue so that information and updates about accessibility and inclusion continue being shared with businesses. An Open to All section could also be added to the consumer newsletter to share updates with visitors.

Social media posts and reach could have been better during the project. As with the newsletter, Visit Pembrokeshire should continue to share posts related to improving accessibility and inclusivity on their trade and consumer facing social media channels.

Awareness of the 'Pembrokeshire Open to All' product could be measured informally as part of conversations with visitors and local communities.

Final Aim

"Pembrokeshire is a leading destination for accessible and inclusive tourism"

Pembrokeshire already has some great accessible and inclusive tourism businesses and organisations. Many of these are winners of either the former Pembrokeshire Tourism Award or the new Visit Pembrokeshire Croeso Awards' Inclusive Tourism category. Some Pembrokeshire businesses have received national recognition for their work to improve inclusivity and accessibility.

Other accommodation and activity operators are keen to learn and do more. It will be important to reach out to food and drink operators and retail businesses, amongst others, to ensure there is a full package of inclusive and accessible services available for visitors and the local community.

The Open to All project, funded by the UK Government through the UK Community Renewal Fund, has got the conversation started and delivered some positive work towards achieving the final goal.

Conversations as part of the evaluation of the project have highlighted that Pembrokeshire could:

- become a “trend setter” and a UK or even international leader in accessible and inclusive tourism
- continue to involve and pay disabled people fairly to support the development of an accessible and inclusive tourism offer.

Businesses and organisations want to work together to make this happen. Further ‘Open to All’ work could result in more disabled visitors, more visitors in quieter periods, a more responsible and sustainable tourism industry and greater employment of disabled people.

Conclusion

The Open to All project, funded by the UK Government through the UK Community Renewal Fund, has started many positive conversations, made important connections, and delivered activities to support inclusive and accessible tourism in Pembrokeshire.

If these conversations and connections continue, and businesses and organisations collaborate together, then there is real potential for Pembrokeshire to become a leading destination for accessible and inclusive tourism.

Find out more or get involved:

<https://www.visitpembrokeshire.com/open-to-all>

Email - admin@visitpembrokeshire.com

