

**NEWS RELEASE
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Sussex tourism businesses step closer to national glory

Two tourism businesses in Sussex have been announced as finalists in the annual Enjoy England Awards for Excellence it has been revealed today.

The Awards, organised by national tourism body VisitEngland, celebrate some of the very best tourism businesses in the UK, recognising businesses that demonstrate commitment to high quality, helping to make England a world-class destination.

The Sussex finalists were both winners at Tourism South East's Excellence Awards in October and have battled it out with tourism businesses across the UK to make it through to the national stage. The contenders will be judged alongside two other businesses in each category before the Gold winners are announced on St George's Day at a glittering awards ceremony to be held in the Corn Exchange at the Brighton Dome on 23 April.

They join 5 other finalists representing the South East at the Awards; no other region has achieved more finalists, making it the best year ever for the Beautiful South.

The South Lodge Hotel in Horsham will be vying for Gold in the the Large Hotel of the Year category and on home turf on the night, Brighton Festival in East Sussex will be hoping to be named Tourism Event of the year.

'We are delighted to be hosting the Enjoy England Awards for Excellence here in the Beautiful South' said Tourism South East Chief Executive Mike Bedingfield, 'the announcement of so many finalists in our region affirms the incredibly high-standard of entrants we had in our regional awards; and the quality of the tourism businesses in the South East. I wish both South Lodge Hotel and the Brighton Festival the very best of luck on the big night.'

More information about the Enjoy England Awards for Excellence can be found at www.enjoyengland.com/excellence

More information about Tourism South East can be found at www.tourismsoutheast.com

More information about Brighton Festival can be found at www.brightonfestival.org

More information about South Lodge Hotel can be found at

www.southlodgehotel.co.uk

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Note to Editors:

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Tourism South East is the official tourist board for South East England, covering Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East and West Sussex, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire and Surrey.

The South East is the largest region for tourism in Britain outside of London, worth in excess of £12 billion p.a. to the regional economy (7% of regional GVA) supporting over 300,000 jobs.