

Limited Service Accommodation Standards



INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT AWARD



Introduction to Quality in Tourism

Quality in Tourism has been an offering quality assessment services to the hospitality and tourism industry for more than twelve years. We are no longer tied to over prescriptive standards, yet still committed to ensuring our members provide the necessary requirements to guarantee their guests safety and comfort. Quality in Tourism have created a standard which has taken into consideration that each style of accommodation provides its own individual character and rather than trying to make it conform and fit a common standard, we will recognise this and award your rating accordingly.

With years of experience, our assessment team are trained to provide an objective overview of your business, offering advice on current trends, and constructive feedback on how to improve your accommodation.

Legislation Effecting Self Catering and Limited Service Accommodation

- Health and Safety
- Fire - Risk assessment required
- Gas and Electrical Safety & Electrical Appliance Testing (which may be an insurance requirement)
- Product Safety
- Bunk Bed Regulations & British Standards applying to items such as cots, high chairs and play pens
- Planning Permission
- Private Water Supplies
- TV Licensing (other licenses also required if music or films are played or shown to the public areas)
- The Equality Act 2010 (accessibility and discrimination)
- Data Protection 1988 (due to be updated on 25th May 2018)
- Immigration Hotel Records (registration of guests)
- Consumer Protection Act

Additional Requirements for Quality in Tourism members

- **Public Liability** - Prior to assessment you will be asked to upload your certificate of insurance as evidence.
- **Access Statement** - You will be asked to provide an Access Statement – description of facilities and services offered, specifically in relation to accessibility.

Please note

You will be required to produce your fire risk assessment and public liability prior to the assessor booking your assessment.

Quality & General Guidance

- Whilst we do not measure your accommodation, it is unlikely that your accommodation will achieve the highest ratings if you are unable to provide appropriate dining and comfortable seating for the maximum number of guests in the living areas. We will take into account your guests reviews mentioning space, or lack of space. If your property is “cosy” or “compact” then use it as a selling point in your advertising. Be transparent and honest in your descriptions.
- At the highest levels there should be reasonable space for movement within the bedrooms and living areas, with easy access to beds and storage space. A double bed against a wall is not the end of the world, but you must mention it in your marketing, photographs are encouraged.
- Make the use of bed settees/sofa beds very clear in your accommodation descriptions.
- All furniture, fittings, furnishings, crockery and cutlery to be adequate for the maximum number of occupants, including any extra sleeping accommodation (consider storage space for clothes and luggage storage for the additional sleepers).
- General safety and security of your guests must be considered, including information on emergency procedures.
- Proprietor/Manager name, address and telephone number or agent, to be available.
- Provide details of how to summon local and emergency services e.g. doctor, dentist, location of nearest payphone and casualty unit and vets.
- All units to be provided with suitable refuse disposal arrangements. Arrangements for refuse collection should be specified, including information on recycling.
- At least one well positioned smoke detector per property. Your risk assessment will determine whether these should be linked/hard wired.
(If in doubt your local fire officers will visit and advise you by arrangement).
- Consider levels of lighting at night for safety and comfort in all living areas, including stairways, landings and external areas including car parks, paths and steps leading to the property. If your guests collect keys on arrival from a key safe please ensure there is sufficient lighting by key safe boxes too.
- Some forms of emergency lighting to be available, e.g. torch or night-lights.

Health and Safety

- Provide a carbon monoxide detector in every room where gas or oil are burnt. Also in rooms where there is an open fire or wood burner. A detector should always be placed in a kitchen unless all appliances are electric. Also in rooms where central heating boilers are housed.
- Are garden ponds fenced, if you accommodate children and pets?

External Areas

- All grounds, gardens and external ancillary areas falling under the owners control are maintained and in good order.
- Garden furniture to be provided where appropriate, and proportionate to the rest of the property.
- Barbeques are popular with guests. Ensure it is safe, make it high quality and easy to use. Clean between lettings, so ensure this is part of your cleaning schedule.
- Providing quality plastic crockery and glasses for outside dining is encouraged.

Housekeeping

- Cleanliness is of utmost importance to guests, they might forgive a little wear and tear but will not be forgiving of poor housekeeping standards. Attention must be given to areas inside and out and items involving direct contact with guests, such as bedding, linen, towels, baths, showers, washbasins, WCs, flooring, seating, crockery, cutlery and glassware should be cleaned and checked thoroughly between lets.
- Ensure that all properties are thoroughly cleaned throughout, before each new let, irrespective of whether the previous guests have left it looking spotless prior to departure. Broken or damaged items should be replaced.

Marketing, Pricing and Pre-Arrival Information

- All advertising and pre-booking information must make clear to guests exactly what is included in the prices quoted for the property including service charge, taxes and other surcharges, e.g. electricity, fuel, towels, cots, pets etc.
- Full details of accommodation, including sleeping arrangements (double, twin, bunk beds) and bathrooms (bath or shower, shared, private, en-suite) provided on the website or brochure in advance of booking. If bed settees, Z beds, camp beds etc., in addition to the bedroom accommodation are provided, the type, size and number of bed spaces must be clear. Any supplementary beds provided must be of a quality equal to the rest of the property.
- Any in-house policies, e.g. no smoking, no pets etc. must be communicated at the time of booking. Clear descriptions on the website or distribution sites is the best way to communicate this to potential guests.
- Website or printed information required. A floor plan is encouraged. Arrangements for entry on arrival must be communicated pre-arrival.
- Prospective guests should be made aware, prior to booking, of charges for additional services or facilities available, including cancellation terms, housekeeping and/or breakage deposits.
- Information provided prior to booking to include - Car parking arrangements near to the property; special arrangements for pets; distance to nearest shop, public transport links and eateries.
- A map and/or directions provided showing the location of the unit on booking (this may be provided in more detail after booking).

Welcome & Arrival Procedure

- Arrival and welcome procedures vary from a key in a key safe, to hampers of local produce, fresh flowers, home-made cake on arrival and a personal welcome.
- Remember, your guests have chosen a self-catering holiday. A personal welcome is good, but keep it short and informative and allow your guests to settle in, relax and enjoy their holiday. A personal welcome is some guest's idea of an intrusive nightmare; others will embrace it, be aware and try to gauge your customer's preference before arrival

The Little Things That Matter

- If you are unable to provide Wi-Fi or the area has no network coverage for mobiles, ensure your guests know it is not available. Make this a selling point for guests who may want to 'get away from it all'.
- If your property is near the beach, then providing picnic items will be appreciated (it will also prevent loss of your good cutlery and crockery on the beach). If your property is ideal for walkers, cyclists or birdwatchers then provide walking/cycling maps of the local area, binoculars, or books, games and toys for children etc.

Less is often more...

- Bedrooms need to be comfortable for the number of guests sleeping in them, ensure you provide ample clothes storage with good access to furniture required.
- Sofa beds can be used to provide extra sleeping space, but if you are looking to provide a high quality experience to all of your guests, then it might not be the best option.

Bedroom Guidance

- **Single beds**, a minimum size 183cm x 76cm/6' x 3'. Double beds – minimum size 183cm x 120cm/6' x 4'6". If single beds are smaller than 2'6" please ensure your advertising highlights this and mention that they are more suited for children's use. 'Glamping' units may have quirky designs or no beds at all (basic 1 and 2 star) and this should be clearly advertised, comfort is key.
- **Bedding supplied** in sufficient quantity i.e. duvet of suitable tog rating, at least two pillows per person. Consider seasons for all year round letting. An extra blanket or throw will be appreciated in the winter by some guests. If bedding is not supplied for Glamping the units would not achieve more than 2 Stars, this should also be clearly advertised as not being provided.
- **A mattress protector** or under blanket fitted to all beds will help protect your mattress and provide additional comfort for your guests (plastic or rubber mattress protectors are not acceptable for normal use).
- **At 3, 4 and 5-star bed linen provided and included** in the hire charge. Beds must be made up for guests' arrival after a long journey to the accommodation the last thing your guests want to do is make their beds, start with a positive impression.

Bathroom Guidance

- All units to have at least one bathroom and WC for every eight guests. If the base of the bath or shower is not anti-slip, then a non-slip mat should be available.
- If no bath is available this must be clearly advertised.
- Heating to be provided in all bathrooms where there is an external window. A heated towel rail is acceptable. With Glamping units this will be assessed on an individual basis.

At 3, 4 and 5 star Towels must be provided and included in the hire cost, a hand and bath towel per person (one of the most common complaints by guests that towels were not included or an additional cost was made for hire).

Kitchen Guidance for Self-Catering

- A cooker with an oven, with at least two shelves, a grill and at least four hob rings required. If only two guests are accommodated, then two hob rings plus oven and grill are acceptable. A combination microwave (oven, grill and microwave) is acceptable as a grill or oven, provided that a three-ring hob is also available separately.
- A refrigerator with an ice making compartment (unless a freezer is also provided). Larder fridges are acceptable but you must be clear in your marketing to guests.

- An opening window or extraction system provided for ventilation.
- A fire blanket to be readily available.
- Vacuum cleaner provided in each unit unless a daily cleaning service is provided.
- If a dishwasher is provided extra crockery, cutlery and glassware should also be provided, so the dishwasher does not have to be operated at each mealtime.

Additional Facilities

Laundry, recreation, reception, shop, bar, restaurant facilities. None of these are required, but where they are provided, their quality and condition will form part of the quality assessment.

Sustainable Tourism

Green tourism and sustainability practices in your business are one and the same thing. Small changes will not only save money, improve employee relations, enhance profitability and provide a richer experience for customers but over time you will also improve your business' impact on the local economy, community and environment.

Quality in Tourism is committed to promoting the adoption of sustainability practices among all tourism businesses. It is our aim to ensure that a sustainable approach is complementary to improving the overall visitor experience throughout the UK.

If your business is already a successful sustainable business and you wish to demonstrate this to your guests, you may wish to sign up to our REST (Responsible, Ethical, and Sustainable Tourism) assessment standard too. This will allow you to confidently promote your green credentials (keep an eye on our website details will be coming soon).

Accessibility

The Equality Act 2010, which replaced the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), October 2010 should be observed and met by all tourism providers. This states that tourism providers should treat everyone accessing their goods, facilities or services fairly, regardless of their gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religion or belief, and guard against making assumptions about the characteristics of individuals.

The Equality Act 2010 requires that service providers must think ahead and take steps to address barriers that impede disabled people. Providers should be proactive rather than reactive in making the necessary adjustments.

A service provider cannot legally justify failing to provide a reasonable adjustment. The only question is whether the adjustment is a 'reasonable' one to make. What is 'reasonable' will depend on a number of circumstances, including the cost of an adjustment, potential benefit it may bring to other customers, the resources an organisation has and how practical the changes are to make.