

Serviced Accommodation Quality 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. No longer tied to over prescriptive requirements of an outdated common standard, Quality in Tourism has created a standard which has taken into consideration that each style of accommodation provides its own individual experience. We focus on what the end customer values.

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 the guest experience, combined with plenty of encouragement when your reviews and online reputation demonstrate that you are meeting and exceeding your guest's expectations.

Standards

The following standards relate to Hotels, Guest Accommodation which includes Guest Houses, Inns, Restaurants/Pubs with Rooms, and Bed and Breakfasts or any other property where a serviced experience is provided to guests.

Legislation Affecting Hotels and Serviced Accommodation

- Fire Risk Assessment required to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Food Safety / Hygiene
- Guest Registration
- Health & Safety
- Electrical Appliance Testing (PAT)
- Planning Permission / Change of use
- TV Licensing (other licenses also required if pre-recorded music or films are played or shown to the public)
- Licenses for serving alcohol to the public, live music, special events etc.
- Hotel Proprietors Act
- Data Protection Act 1988 due to be **updated from 25th May 2018**
- Pricing (no last minute hidden add on costs, charging more than quoted as an example)
- Cancellation Policy to be clearly communicated to guests at the time of booking verbally or by email
- Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (is your advertising completely transparent, truly reflecting the product on offer)
- Equality Act 2010 - (accessibility and discrimination)

Additional Requirements for Quality in Tourism members

- **Public Liability Insurance** – Evidence that Public Liability Cover is maintained, prior to assessment you will be asked to upload your certificate of insurance as evidence.
- **Access Information** - Accommodation providers are required to provide an Access Statement which includes a description of facilities and services offered, specifically in relation to accessibility.

You will be required to upload your fire risk assessment and public liability insurance prior to the assessor completing your assessment.

Housekeeping

Cleanliness is of upmost 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 and glassware should be cleaned and checked thoroughly.

Rooms should be serviced daily unless an alternative routine is clearly advertised.

For larger establishments consider a maintenance process in order to ensure any issues are resolved quickly.

Marketing, Pricing and Pre-Arrival Information

An accurate description of the amenities, facilities and services you provide should be available in all advertising, including websites, social media channels or other distribution channels.

Be clear to guests on what is exactly included in any pricing that you quote. Legally, you should not exceed the price that you agree at the time of booking.

Any in-house policies, for example, no-smoking, payment methods, access restrictions, should be readily available through websites, distribution channels or advertising and re-emphasized through booking processes.

External Areas

Grounds, gardens and external areas falling under the owners control are well maintained

Garden furniture to be provided as appropriate and of equal quality to the rest of the property.

Car parking areas to be well lit.

Bedroom Guidance

Bedding supplied in sufficient quantity i.e. duvet of suitable tog rating, at least two pillows per person

A mattress protector or under blanket fitted to all beds will help protect your mattress and provide additional comfort

Sufficient storage should be provided for guests clothing and luggage and consider the activities your core market will be undertaking when planning and designing your bedrooms.

Some examples are outlined below as a starting point:

- Business traveller, they will appreciate a desk with good lighting and a strong Wi-Fi connection;
- Wedding or attending a special event guests will want dressing mirror and a full length mirror, good hairdryers;
- Longer staying guests will appreciate higher quality tea/coffee and comfortable seating

City/town centre properties should consider light and noise exclusion with thick, lined curtains. Any ground floor bedrooms should consider guest's privacy and take suitable steps to address it.

A window that opens or ventilation system is a must. Consider ground floor bedrooms, these windows require some form of security to allow guests to leave windows ajar for ventilation when rooms are vacant or during the night. Heating required in all bedrooms, a higher quality mark will be given for heating which is fully controllable by guests.

Where possible, lots of sockets in convenient locations in the room.

- **Single beds** – 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.

- **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. At higher levels comfort could be improved for your guests with larger duvets i.e. Double duvet on single beds, king on double, super king on king. Consider having available a selection of suitable bedding for guests that have allergies so any request can be dealt with easily.
- **Consider comfort** for your guests; plastic or rubber mattress protectors are not acceptable for normal use. Where a rubber cover is provided for children, it should be as an optional extra in addition to the normal mattress protector.

Bathroom guidance

A quality mark will be achieved if all rooms are en-suite with ventilation system or window that opens.

Bathrooms with an external window or external walls will benefit from heating or heated towel rails.

A hand towel and bath towel should be provided as a minimum. A larger bath sheet for each guest and bathmat will enhance the guest stay.

Hospitality

Polite, friendly interaction, combined with good product and local knowledge of the where the accommodation is located is an expectation from guests today, this applies from the experience of booking through to departure. During your assessment your assessor will endeavour to find out the names of your team who failed to engage, met expectations or impressed them to feed back to you.

Services

An appropriate space to comfortably serve breakfast and dinner, where offered.

A bar or lounge provided with licence to serve alcohol, where appropriate.

Room service is often an expectation in hotels of three stars and above, however this is not an essential requirement. Dependant on your core market, which will be taken into consideration during your assessment, and if you have been transparent in your marketing when not offering this service (business travellers may want room service, hotels located near an airport will be expected to offer 24-hour room service etc.).

In hotels at most levels provision of an internal phone is helpful so that guests can contact reception, room service, bar etc. without having to leave their bedroom. Outside lines are particularly useful if the mobile signals are poor or, if you have a high percentage of international guests, the ability to connect direct to an operator for toll free calls.

Wi-Fi is not only expected but a super-fast speed is anticipated by most guests too. If you do not offer, or your hotel has poor connectivity in the rooms please ensure this is highlighted.

24-hour service offered at reception at the higher rating levels, although the style and necessity of this service at your hotel will be taken into consideration.

A greater range and higher quality of services might be an expectation at four star e.g. assistance with luggage, food/snacks served all day, possibly in the lounge, afternoon tea, extended hours for breakfast and dinner where appropriate. At Five Star an escort to your room, full concierge services offered, valet parking where appropriate, welcome drink and substantial food offering throughout the day and in some instance through the night. Night staff available.

To achieve the higher ratings an enhanced physical quality is expected throughout and public areas, bedrooms and bathrooms are more likely to be more spacious and well planned.

Dinner Guidance

If dinner is not provided ensure this is clearly communicated in marketing and on websites. Where dinner is provided advertise service times and publish sample menus.

Greater menu knowledge by your restaurant team is an expectation at the highest levels.

Breakfast Guidance

You can provide a full cooked breakfast, work on a room only, continental breakfast, grab and go take away option BUT whatever you offer must be transparent in your marketing information that guests access.

For guests not wishing to partake in a full cooked breakfast offer alternatives, including juices, cereals, locally or homemade bread and preserves, freshly prepared fruit, yoghurts, fruit compote when fresh fruit is not at its best. If your butcher has a special recipe for sausage, black pudding, sourcing locally is encouraged. House specials e.g. pancakes, waffles, muffins can be popular.

Do not forget to consider special diets and vegetarian options too.

Where a buffet style breakfast is provided make sure it will be of the quality your guest expects.

Other areas to build your assessment success

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.

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 (ask for details of this assessment).

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.