



VisitEngland™



Quality Standard

Entry Level Accreditation

VisitEngland's Entry Level Accreditation for accommodation businesses

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Introduction

What is Entry Level Accreditation?

VisitEngland is committed to helping accommodation businesses offer a great experience for their guests. Visitors should be able to book any type of accommodation with confidence, from hotels and B&Bs to self-catering properties and holiday parks. They should be reassured that they will be warmly welcomed and that the accommodation is legally compliant with all relevant legislation, safe and clean.

VisitEngland's Entry Level Accreditation has been designed to provide accommodation businesses with a robust and dependable method to demonstrate that they are operating in a compliant, safe and clean way. Initially launched in 2010, VisitEngland's Entry Level Accreditation has been regularly revisited to ensure it covers the latest legislation.

VisitEngland works with destinations and local assessment organisations to offer this accreditation scheme on a local level. However, if a business is in an area without a local scheme, they can apply to VisitEngland directly.

How does Entry Level differ from other VisitEngland quality schemes?

VisitEngland's Entry Level Accreditation is not a substitute for a VisitEngland Star Rating, available through one of VisitEngland's range of quality assessment schemes.

Entry Level Accreditation offers reassurance that the accommodation is compliant, safe and clean, but does not include a star rating or quality accreditation.

Businesses participating in VisitEngland's Entry Level Accreditation Scheme can choose to apply for a VisitEngland Star Rating. Visit www.visitenglandassessmentservices.com for further information.

How will the assessment be carried out?

VisitEngland has a team of highly experienced assessors with in depth experience of the accommodation sector. They experience best practice in all areas and can pass that knowledge on to you for the benefit of your business. They will assess your business honestly and always with the objective of helping you to improve.

The criteria required to achieve Entry Level Accreditation are outlined later in this booklet. All elements of the criteria must be completed, any element not in place at the time of the assessment will mean that accreditation cannot be awarded.

Entry Level Accreditation is suitable for all accommodation types, including serviced and self-catering properties and holiday parks. Where a particular element relates to one specific type of accommodation only, this will be clearly outlined in the criteria.

For some criteria, evidence of compliance is required. Where this is the case, this is clearly outlined in the criteria.

After the visit, you will receive a written report confirming whether or not the accommodation met each criteria and the overall accreditation.

Legal responsibilities

Please note – all legal liabilities relating to accommodation businesses participating in this scheme are the sole responsibility of the business concerned.

Sustainability & Accessibility

Sustainability: Doing Business Even Better

Green tourism and sustainability practices in your business are one and the same thing; it's all about taking small steps that enable you to do business even better, not differently. 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. 'Going Green' does not have to be a chore and is just as applicable to properties in a city centre as a rural location.

VisitEngland Can Help

VisitEngland is committed to promoting the adoption of sustainability practices among all tourism businesses. It is our aim to ensure that a sustainable approach is complimentary to improving the overall visitor experience in England. Your help is needed in this aspiration.

For further information on how to enhance your business to be more sustainable, along with case studies on the benefits of adopting sustainable practices, please visit www.visitengland.org/green.

Improving your Accessibility – A Lucrative Market

Many people have accessibility requirements including disabled people, such as those with hearing loss and visual impairments, wheelchair users, older and less mobile people and people with pushchairs. The accessible tourism market is worth around £12bn to tourism businesses in England and is growing due to an ageing population.

By making some small adjustments to your facilities, providing information on your

accessibility and understanding the needs of disabled people, your business will appeal to a wider range of visitors and attract more business. Demand for accessible accommodation outstrips the current supply. Find out how other tourism businesses are benefitting from this loyal market at www.visitengland.org/access.

Legal Obligations

Tourism businesses have obligations under The Equality Act 2010, which replaced the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005 (DDA) on 1 October 2010. 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 not wait until a disabled person experiences difficulties using a service, as this may make it too late to make the necessary adjustment.

1. Make 'reasonable' changes to the way things are done – such as changing practices, policies or procedures where disabled people would be at a 'substantial disadvantage' e.g. amend a 'no dogs' policy.
2. Make 'reasonable' changes to the built environment – such as making changes to the structure of a building to improve access e.g. altering or removing a physical feature.
3. Provide auxiliary aids and services – such as providing information in an accessible format, an induction loop for customers with hearing aids.

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.

We Can Help

VisitEngland provides tourism businesses with a range of guidance, tools and resources to help increase engagement with the valuable

accessible tourism market. Go to www.visitengland.org/access.

It is important to provide information on the accessibility of your facilities and services. This can be achieved by producing an Accessibility Guide (an improved format that replaces Access Statements), which is a requirement for all scheme participants. To produce and publish an Accessibility Guide go to www.visitengland.org/accessibilityguides.

More detailed guidance and accessibility ratings are provided by the National Accessible Scheme (NAS): www.visitengland.org/nas.

Entry Level Accreditation Criteria

1. Statutory obligations

Comply with all relevant statutory requirements, including:

- a. Fire Risk Assessment, to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
Businesses must supply the assessor with evidence that an annual Fire Risk Assessment has been carried out. For more information and a free online tool designed specifically for tourist accommodation, see www.visitengland.org/fire
- b. Operate safely with due regard to health and safety legislation and with evidence of consideration for the safety of guests and the security of guests' property. Supply clear information on how to contact the proprietor/manager in case of emergency
A written health and safety risk assessment is required for businesses with more than five employees, and is considered best practice for all other businesses
- c. All local planning and licensing regulations
- d. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- e. Equality Act 2010
- f. Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008, describing the facilities and services provided accurately in any advertisement, brochure or other printed or electronic media
- g. All food safety legislation, and if food or drink is provided, ensure information on allergens is available to all guests
- h. Immigration (Hotel Records) Order 1972, keeping a register of the names and nationalities of all guests, as well as the passport number of all overseas guests
- i. Gas Safety (Installations and Use) Regulations 1998
Businesses must supply the assessor with evidence that all gas appliances have been checked annually by a Gas Safe registered installer
- j. Furniture & Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended)
NB – applicable to self-catering properties only
- k. Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 (as amended)
Businesses must supply the assessor with evidence of the site licence
NB – applicable to parks only

For more information on legislation, visit www.visitengland.org/pinkbookonline.

2. Public Liability Insurance

Provide Public Liability Insurance. While not a statutory requirement, this is a requirement for obtaining Entry Level Accreditation.

Businesses must supply the assessor with evidence of the insurance.

3. Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Fit carbon monoxide alarms where gas, oil, coal or wood are burned. One alarm should be fitted in each room, tent or van where these appliances or fires are situated. While not a statutory requirement, this is a requirement for obtaining Entry Level Accreditation.

4. Accessibility Guide

Complete and make available to guests an Accessibility Guide. To produce and publish an Accessibility Guide go to www.visitengland.org/accessibilityguides. While not a statutory requirement, this is a requirement for obtaining Entry Level Accreditation.

Businesses must supply the assessor with evidence of their Accessibility Guide.

5. Clean & Safe

Provide guests with clean, hygienic, safe and well-maintained accommodation at all times.

6. Welcome

Welcome all guests courteously and without discrimination in relation to gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or belief.

7. Prices

Make clear to visitors exactly what is included in all prices quoted for accommodation, including taxes and any surcharges. Details of charges for additional services and facilities should also be made clear.

8. Booking

Adhere to and do not exceed prices quoted at the time of booking for accommodation and other services.

9. Payment

Give each visitor details of payments due and a receipt, if required.

10. Cancellation

Communicate clearly to guests the cancellation policy at the time of booking.

11. Annexes

Advise visitors at the time of booking, and subsequently of any change, if the accommodation offered is in an unconnected annexe or similar, and indicate the location of such accommodation and any difference in comfort and/or amenities from accommodation in the main property.

12. VisitEngland access

Allow VisitEngland's representative access to the accommodation to confirm that these requirements are being met.

