



VisitEngland™

# HOSTEL ACCOMMODATION

VisitEngland's Quality Standards for Hostels  
(including Backpacker, Group and Activity accommodation)



YHA Cambridge

# Welcome to the VisitEngland Quality Standards for Accreditation

At VisitEngland, we're passionate about raising England's profile, increasing the volume and value of tourism, and developing England's visitor economy by working with organisations of all sizes and specialities. These quality standards will help you become part of this mission.

A VisitEngland Accreditation gives potential customers a label they can trust. Highlighting your dedication to quality shows that your business has been independently verified by the national tourism agency as offering a consistently high standard of service.

Over the years, our Quality Standards have evolved to keep pace with consumer expectations, and we've worked hard to ensure our accreditations are accurate, consistent and reliable. We also work closely with accommodation providers to ensure our standards are straightforward and realistic. This document is the result of an independently chaired Quality Advisory Board which included key stakeholders from across the hospitality industry, that was convened in 2023 to modernise and simplify the standards.

Our Quality Standards are the building blocks that form the basis of what our assessors will be looking for when they visit you. By reading and applying these criteria carefully, you can be confident that your establishment will meet the high industry standards required to become recognised by VisitEngland. And remember, the assessment is not only of the physical product, but also of the experience that your establishment provides. It's not just a box-ticking exercise. We focus on the quality of what you offer, and not on what you don't offer. We look forward to working with and promoting your property.

– VisitEngland

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## Quality is the key

VisitEngland understands that quality is the key to success within the modern hospitality industry. In order for your business to be successful both nationally and internationally, it is important that quality standards are set high and continue to improve.

### Our commitment to you

Our professional assessors will work with you in order to maximise the potential of your business. As a member of the VisitEngland Accreditation Standard you will receive an assessment visit every year. The visit will look at all aspects of your customer facing business from the initial booking to check out. Each visit will be followed by a full verbal debrief and a written management report. Both these tools are designed to help you to improve your business.

# General Overview

## Common Standards

VisitEngland, VisitScotland and Visit Wales, with the support the government, have worked together to agree, support and develop common standards for assessing the quality of hostel accommodation in Britain.

Each organisation is using these common standard requirements to determine the Star rating for your establishment. The rating will be the same whichever organisation has carried out the assessment. This will enable VisitEngland to more easily promote hostel accommodation across Britain.

## The Requirements

The requirements for the Star ratings have been based on the existing standards of all the organisations plus extensive research into the needs and expectations of visitors. We have also consulted widely with the industry.

The feedback received from the industry shows strong support for a common quality standard for hostel accommodation throughout the countries where the schemes operate. The aim for this revised common quality standard is to work continually with industry to raise quality standards in line with the ever-evolving expectations of consumers.

## Dispensations

Dispensations for certain individual requirements within the quality standards may be given as long as all the remaining requirements and quality levels for that rating are met or exceeded. This flexibility will be on a case-by-case basis and will have to be agreed by the Standards Review Group (SRG), which represents all the three organisations who operate the Common Standards - VisitEngland, VisitScotland and VisitWales. Any exceptions will need a proportional increase in quality in other areas to compensate for the area where an exception is sought.

## Hints and tips

- Be objective and self-critical when thinking about quality.
- Do not over promise. Do not be tempted to claim you offer luxury on your website unless the facilities you are selling are truly luxurious.
- Customers travel with expectations. It is better to exceed these rather than not to live up to them.
- Be a customer at your own business. Take time to use your own website, sleep in your own bedrooms and use the bathroom facilities in order to experience what you are offering your guests.
- Your website is the first contact most customers will have with you. Make sure it is up to date, easy to use and engaging.
- Good quality photographs are the best way to show off your business. Modern smartphone cameras are often up to the task, and online tutorials are widely available.
- If you have the time for social media, it's a great way to engage with potential guests. Your assessor can help with advice on how to get started.



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# The Quality Standard for Hostel Accommodation (This includes Backpacker, Group and Activity Accommodation)

## Quality Assessment

There are three levels of quality ranging from Three to Five Star. To obtain a higher Star rating a progressively higher quality of services and physical facilities should be provided across all areas with particular emphasis in six key areas - cleanliness, hospitality/service, bedrooms, bathrooms, public areas and kitchens. At the highest levels of quality, some additional and appropriate facilities and services are expected in addition to the very best in guest care.

## Quality Terminology

The phrases such as 'good', 'very good' etc. to signify ascending levels of quality are used in broad terms only. These standards indicate typical consumer expectations of each star level. They are neither prescriptive nor definitive because we recognise the wide variety of quality elements that can be included.

## What is Quality?

When we are assessing quality we take into account the following:

- Intrinsic quality - the inherent value of an item.
- Condition - the maintenance and appearance of an item.

## Is it fit for the purpose?

- Physical and personal comfort - does the quality or lack of an item detract in any way from the comfort of the guest?
- Attention to detail - the evident care taken to ensure that the guest experience is special and of the same high standards for all.
- Guest choice and ease of use - the guest experience is enhanced through choice. This is further improved by how usable the guest finds the room and its contents.
- Presentation - the way the hostel/property and its contents are presented for guests' arrival and during their stay.

## The Quality Score

When VisitEngland assessors visit your hostel property, they will evaluate and give a quality score to all aspects of the accommodation and service.

The total of all these scores establishes an overall percentage score for quality.

Based on this score, establishments will be given an overall potential quality rating on a scale of Three to Five Stars, based on the percentages below.

## Quality bands

THREE STAR	FOUR STAR	FIVE STAR
60-74%	75-86%	87-100%

## Determining the Star Rating

An establishment will need to satisfy three elements to reach a particular star rating:

- All relevant minimum entry requirements must be met for the Star rating aimed for.
- The overall percentage score for quality must reach the appropriate band (see above).
- The relevant standard of quality in the key areas of cleanliness, hospitality and service, bedrooms, bathrooms, public areas and kitchens must also be met.

Consumer research has shown that cleanliness is of paramount importance at any quality level and the minimum scores for this aspect at each Star grade reflects this need.

This research has also shown that guests expect a measure of consistency in all aspects of the property, meaning that each area of the property should be of a comparable standard to the overall Star grade awarded. To ensure this, in addition to the appropriate overall score, minimum quality levels of the key areas outlined above must be achieved for an award to be confirmed. This is called sectional consistency.

THREE STAR	FOUR STAR	FIVE STAR
60–74%	75–86%	87+
No area to score less than 54%	No area to score less than 67%	No area to score less than 80%
Cleanliness minimum score 64%	Cleanliness minimum score 76%	Cleanliness minimum score 88%

**Example A)** A hostel aiming for Four Star achieves an overall percentage of 78% and the following:

	THREE STAR	FOUR STAR	FIVE STAR
<b>CLEANLINESS</b>	68%		
<b>HOSPITALITY &amp; SERVICE</b>		80%	
<b>BEDROOMS</b>		80%	
<b>BATHROOMS</b>	72%		
<b>PUBLIC AREA</b>		78%	
<b>KITCHEN</b>		75%	

*This operation would achieve a Three Star rating as it fails to meet the required quality levels in bathrooms and cleanliness for Four Star.*

**Example B)** A hostel aiming for Three Star achieves an overall percentage of 82% and the following:

	THREE STAR	FOUR STAR	FIVE STAR
<b>CLEANLINESS</b>	68%		
<b>HOSPITALITY &amp; SERVICE</b>		80%	
<b>BEDROOMS</b>		84%	
<b>BATHROOMS</b>		82%	
<b>PUBLIC AREA</b>		82%	
<b>KITCHEN</b>		83%	

*This operation would achieve a Three Star rating as it fails to meet the required quality levels for cleanliness for Four Star.*

## VisitEngland’s assessors

All of our assessors are hospitality professionals and each has a proven background in the industry. More importantly, our assessors now spend their working lives as professional guests. They experience best practice in all areas and are able to pass that knowledge on to you for the benefit of your business. They are your eyes and ears for the duration of their visit. They will assess the quality of your business honestly, but always with the objective of helping you to improve your operation. Make use of your assessor.

**Your assessor is there to help your business succeed, so make use of their knowledge and expertise:**

- Their aim is to maximise the quality potential of your business, whilst allowing the character and uniqueness of your business to shine through.
- They are an industry professional with extensive knowledge of the accommodation sector, and they are there to share all of that knowledge with you, so be sure to ask plenty of questions.
- Stay in touch. Assessors are happy to answer your questions in between visits.
- The first time you meet your assessor is likely to be when they arrive at your property for a visit.
- You might be concerned that you have not yet provided or understood all of the requirements of the assessment standard. Do not worry, your assessor will discuss this with you and allow you time to add any items or services that might be missing.
- Beyond that, the assessment is about help and advice. The style and character of your property are what make it unique Your assessor is there to enhance that, not to change it.



# Sustainability

## **Sustainability is becoming a business basic**

To meet growing expectations from consumers and address our twin challenges of climate change and nature loss, it is increasingly essential that your operations are run as sustainably as possible. Many organisations and businesses are going further than just preventing more damage being caused, and are aiming to have a positive impact on people and places, by implementing regenerative tourism practices. Both sustainable and regenerative tourism make business sense. See the VisitEngland Business Advice Hub for more details: [visitengland.org/businessadvice](https://visitengland.org/businessadvice)

## **Getting started**

The crucial thing is to take steps to start doing something: think measure, monitor, reduce. Look to measure how much gas, electricity, water and waste is used each month, monitor this to identify patterns and track where efficiencies could be made, and then use this information to implement changes and reduce consumption. This not only helps our environment but will also save you money.

## Taking things further

If you have gone beyond the basics and are already taking these and other steps to be more sustainable, you may wish to demonstrate this to the growing number of consumers factoring environmental and/or social criteria into their purchasing decisions by joining one of the sustainable tourism certification schemes that exist in England. See the VisitEngland Business Advice Hub for more information on how to choose the certification that's right for you: [visitengland.org/businessadvice](https://www.visitengland.org/businessadvice)

## Sustainability – easy wins

### PEOPLE:

- Think local to keep money in the community. Welcome packs or hospitality trays can include local produce (or Fair-Trade items, which benefit communities in developing countries). Make use of airtight containers rather than providing things individually wrapped. Waste plastic can cause litter and impact health.
- Display the work of local artists or photographers depicting local scenes and historical and heritage related images – it all adds to a visitor's enhanced sense of place.
- Make it easy for customers to do the right thing. For example, including public transport options for getting to your property in promotional and booking information to make it easier for guests to leave the car at home.

### PLACE:

- Better insulation and greater use of thermostatically controlled and zoned heating will save on energy use.
- Food waste is a major contributor to climate change. Weigh your food waste for a week and see where you could make changes to cut this down.
- Examine your stock order history and review the single-use plastic items your business consumes. How many are just ordered from habit? Can you eliminate any items by doing things differently?

## **PARTNERSHIP**

- Partner with other organisations looking to improve the local environment and support communities. For example, could you team up with a local college to provide work experience, or if you have space, can you work with a local wildlife trust to install bird or bat boxes.
- Consider creating a sustainability policy, setting out the environmental and sustainable management actions taken by your business. The VisitEngland Business Advice Hub has resources to help get you started. Ensure any staff are fully briefed on your sustainability policy and can articulate your progress to customers.

## **PROFIT**

- Make best use of local tourist information in your properties promotional literature, on the website and in any visitor information located in the accommodation. Or consider an online information system, such as 'Touch Stay'.
- Adding charging points for electric vehicles can help attract EV drivers to your business. See the VisitEngland Business Advice Hub for information on the grants available to support this.

Visit the VisitEngland Business Advice Hub for more information on all aspects of sustainability.



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# Accessibility

## Improving your accessibility – A valuable market

Many people have accessibility requirements including disabled people, such as those with hearing and visual impairments, wheelchair users, older and less mobile people and people with pushchairs. The accessible tourism market is worth around £14.6bn 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 [visitengland.org/access](https://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 sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, or age (this applies to those aged 18 or above), 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.

- 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' for example, amend a 'no dogs' policy.
- Make 'reasonable' changes to the built environment – such as making changes to the structure of a building to improve access for example, altering or removing a physical feature.
- 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 free guidance and resources to help increase engagement with the valuable accessible tourism market in the Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Toolkit for Businesses. Go to [visitengland.org/access](https://www.visitengland.org/access)

It is important to provide information on the accessibility of your facilities and services and this is a requirement for all scheme participants.

You can provide details of your venue's key accessibility features on your website and supply this information for inclusion on your [RatedTrips.com](https://wwwRatedTrips.com) venue listing by completing a new questionnaire produced by VisitEngland.

Today's guests also want detailed and factual descriptions of venue accessibility, in the form of an Accessibility Guide, to empower them to make personal choices.

Participants can book and pay for a Detailed Access Guide with AccessAble to provide robust accessibility information on your venue. To learn more and book either a Guided or On Site Assessment, go to [visitengland.youraccessibilityguide.co.uk](https://www.visitengland.youraccessibilityguide.co.uk) (not a requirement of scheme participation).



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# Standards

## Quality Guidance

The Quality Guidance section details all of the areas covered in the quality assessment and gives clear indications of what might be expected to obtain marks commensurate with Three to Five Star level.

These quality indicators describe typical guest expectations and may be provided in order to achieve a particular star rating.

They are however neither exhaustive nor prescriptive; that is to say, they are included to offer guidance and suggestions on how your quality could be improved or enhanced, but will not in themselves guarantee a higher quality grade.

# Minimum Entry Requirements - Hostel Hostel Accommodation

This also includes Backpacker, Group and Activity Accommodation.

## Statutory Obligations

Fulfilment of your statutory obligations including, but not limited to, those relating to:

### Minimum Entry Requirements

#### Safety

- Health and Safety at Work
- Fire, Gas and Electrical Safety
- Electrical Appliance Testing
- Product Safety
- Bunk bed regulations
- British Standards applying to items such as cots, high chairs and play pens

#### Premises

- Planning Permission
- Private Water Supplies
- Housing
- TV Licensing

#### Discrimination

- Sex Discrimination
- Race Discrimination
- Disability Discrimination

#### Records

- Data Protection
- Immigration Hotel Records
- Consumer Protection

#### Trade Descriptions

- Advertising
- Pricing
- Unfair Contract Terms

Proprietors will be asked to provide evidence that Public Liability Cover is being maintained and to provide a signed confirmation, at application and renewal of participation, that the above requirements are being fulfilled.

The following minimum entry requirements apply to accommodation which may describe itself in the following ways:

- ‘Hostel’
- ‘Backpacker’
- ‘Group Accommodation’
- ‘Activity Accommodation’

## General

### Minimum Entry Requirements

- Management to observe the VisitBritain ‘Code of Conduct’ and all hostels must fulfil their statutory obligations.
- Self-catering facilities provided. Exception to self-catering kitchen requirements may be made at the discretion of VisitBritain in respect of properties offering full catering in urban hostels only, where fully catered and serviced dining facilities are provided for breakfast and evening meals, these establishments will be exempt. However, this is conditional on the lack of self catering facilities being clearly advertised in marketing materials e.g. websites and brochures. Alternative budget eating establishment should be available within walking distance.

Provision required for bed spaces in excess of 100 will be determined at the discretion of the National Tourism Authority.

- Easy seating and dining areas to be available with appropriate furniture provided. Open plan or combined dining/kitchen/sitting areas are acceptable up to a 4 Star award standard. For a 5 Star standard a sitting/lounge area, separate from the kitchen (either by space or in a separate room) with appropriate easy seating will be required. Flooring should be safe and in sound condition.
- Provision for the hanging and drying of wet outdoor clothing to be available.
- Guests to have access to sufficient conveniently situated power sockets to allow for safe use of electrical equipment (e.g. hairdryers, mobile phone chargers etc.).  
*Exception may be made at the discretion of VisitBritain in respect of remote properties with restricted/no mains services.*
- All public areas, bedrooms, bathrooms and kitchens to be adequately lit for the safety and well being of guests. All lights to have shades or covers unless bulbs are decorative.

### Energy-saving light bulb conversion table

ORDINARY LIGHT BULB	ENERGY - SAVING LIGHT BULB EQUIVALENT
100 Watt	20 – 23 Watt
75 Watt	15 – 18 Watt
60 Watt	11 – 13 Watt
40 Watt	9 Watt

- Details of means to summon assistance, day or night, in the event of an emergency must be provided and clearly displayed to guests (e.g. staff/proprietor, doctor, dentist etc) Emergency services callout (i.e. 999) to be detailed.
- A first aid kit to be readily available and maintained.
- Provision to be made to ensure the security of guests and guests possessions i.e. controlled access to main entrance as a minimum via use of a key or other.
- All ground floor windows to have an effective closure device which prevents opening from the outside.
- If group bookings are accepted, crockery, cutlery and dining furniture provision must be at least sufficient to enable the maximum size of each group accommodated, to sit and eat together.
- All areas to be cleaned and checked daily to ensure a high standard of cleanliness.
- Where meals are served, all food must be properly cooked and carefully prepared.

## Bedrooms

### Minimum Entry Requirements

- A minimum floor space per bed (or bunk) of 4 square metres (44 square feet) to be provided e.g. 2 metres x 2 metres. This area will be calculated on the basis of the maximum dimensions of the room divided by the number of bed bases in the room.

Bed bases will be totalled as below:

Bunk bed = 1

Single bed = 1

Double bed = 2

The impact of furniture (lockers, bedside tables etc.) will not be considered in this calculation. However, it should be recognised that rooms just meeting or marginally exceeding this minimum requirement, are unlikely to achieve high marks in the quality assessment of 'Space and Comfort'.

- A minimum ceiling height of 2 metres (6'7"). Sloping eaves or coombed ceilings are acceptable, providing these do not restrict reasonable free movement through the major part of the room.
- All bedrooms to have an external opening window to provide natural light and ventilation. All windows to have opaque curtains or blinds for privacy and light exclusion.
- Bedrooms to be adequately lit for the safety and well being of guests.
- All properties to have the capability of providing separate sex sleeping accommodation areas, if not available, guests should be informed at the time of booking.
- Beds/bedspaces must be at least 1.9m (6'3") x 0.76m (2'6") (including alpine platforms).  
*Please Note: Full sized (6'3" x 3') single beds and bunks and (6'3" x 4'6") double beds are required at a 5 Star standard.*

- Bedrooms to be provided with beds or bunks and mattresses in a sound condition. Beds to have well maintained bases. Alpine platforms with mattresses are acceptable at a 3 Star rating. Alpine platforms with foam sleeping mats are not acceptable.
- The vertical distance between upper and lower beds in any bunk must not be less than 0.75m (30").
- Each bedroom to have adequate luggage storage space. As a minimum this could be provided by sufficient free floor space or under bed/bunk space.
- Each bedroom to have a non-flammable waste paper bin.
- Bedrooms to have hooks for hanging clothes (minimum one per guest).
- Blankets or duvets and clean bed linen including one pillow per person and clean pillow slip to be provided for each bed.  
Best practice would suggest a full change of linen, duvet covers and pillow cases between each new guest.
- Bed linen provided at no additional charge.

*Exception may be made at the discretion of the VisitBritain in respect of remote properties with restricted/no mains services. In such cases this should be clearly advertised.*

## Kitchen

### Minimum Entry Requirements

*Exception to self-catering kitchen requirements may be made at the discretion of VisitBritain in respect of properties offering full catering in urban hostels only, where fully catered and serviced dining facilities are provided for breakfast and evening meals, these establishments will be exempt. However, this is conditional on the lack of self catering facilities being clearly advertised in marketing materials e.g. websites and brochures. Alternative budget eating establishment should be available within walking distance.*

*Provision required for bed spaces in excess of 100 will be determined at the discretion of the National Tourism Authority.*

- The kitchen to be designated a non-smoking area with appropriate signage.
- A smoke alarm or heat detector to be installed.
- A fire extinguisher suitable for kitchen fires and a fire blanket to be provided.
- Kitchen to be properly equipped with an adequate number of utensils (pots, pans, food preparation knives etc.) which enables, as a minimum, 20% of the maximum number of guests to make food at the same time.
- A minimum of 4 cooking rings to be provided. Where the total number of bedspaces exceeds 32 an additional cooking ring is to be provided for every further 8 bed spaces, up to the first 100 guests.  
i.e. 32 beds: 4 cooking rings.  
40 beds: 5 cooking rings.  
48 beds: 6 cooking rings.  
56 beds: 7 cooking rings etc.
- An oven or microwave and grill to be provided. Each of these to be provided at a minimum ratio of 1 per 50 guests accommodated up to the first 100 guests.
- Where additional electrical equipment is provided, adequate electrical sockets must be available.
- Crockery and cutlery to be provided in sufficient range and quantity as to enable at least 25% of the first 100 guests to eat at the same time. (N.B. Group hostels should have sufficient crockery and cutlery for all guests to eat at the same time).
- Adequate refrigerated food storage space to be available.
- Facilities for boiling water to be provided e.g. kettle or geyser.
- Dry food storage facilities to be provided, appropriate for the number of guests accommodated, e.g. open shelving or cupboards.
- Kitchen area to have effective ventilation.
- A covered waste disposal bin and liners to be provided.
- Adequate washing up facilities with hot and cold running water and washing up liquid to be available.

- Adequate hygienic work surface to be provided.

## Bath, WC and Shower Facilities

### Minimum Entry Requirements

Shower, washbasins and WCs to bedspace ratios must meet or exceed minimum levels:

	RATIO	FOR EXAMPLE: NUMBER OF SHOWERS NEEDED IN A 100 BED SPACE HOSTEL
3 STAR	1:8	13
4 STAR	1:6	17
5 STAR	1:4	25

These ratios apply to the first 100 bed spaces, thereafter additional provision will be at the discretion of VisitBritain following discussion with the operator.

N.B.: External facilities will not be included in the count of any bathroom / shower room ratio. En-suite bathroom bed spaces and facilities will not be included in calculating these ratios. Bed spaces in all areas including tents, for example, will be included in this calculation, unless separately served by outdoor facilities.

*(Exception to these minimum requirements may be made at the discretion of VisitBritain in respect of remote properties with restricted/no mains services.)*

- There must be privacy between sexes for washing/showers and toilet facilities and wherever possible between members of the same sex.
- All changing/showering areas to have opaque window coverings for privacy.
- All bath, shower and WC rooms to be adequately ventilated.
- Hand drying facilities and soap required in all public WC facilities where used by non-residents.
- All WCs to be lidded with a toilet roll holder, toilet paper and sanitary disposal bin (where appropriate) provided.
- Bath/Shower facilities to have clothes hooks within each cubicle.
- A shelf and electric razor point (or adaptor available) with a mirror close by to be provided.

# Minimum Entry Requirements for Group Accommodation

## Minimum Entry Requirements

In addition to all of the 'Hostel' criteria; minimum 'Group Accommodation' criteria will also require:

- Normally, group bookings only to be accepted.
- Dining area must have sufficient space and furniture for the maximum number of guests to dine at the same time.
- Shower, washbasins and WCs to bedspace ratios must meet or exceed minimum levels:  
3 Stars: 1:10  
4 Stars: 1:8  
5 Stars: 1:6

*(Exception to these minimum requirements may be made at the discretion of VisitBritain in respect of remote properties with restricted/no mains services.)*

- Sufficient crockery, cutlery, glassware, food preparation and cooking utensils to be provided for the maximum number of guests to dine at the same time.
- Cooking equipment (pots, pans etc.) to include an appropriately sized range of catering equipment.
- A dedicated and appropriately sized drying room to be provided. Size and layout of the drying room should be appropriate for group arrivals.
- Suitable equipment storage facilities to be available.

# Minimum Entry Requirements for Activity Accommodation

In addition to all of the 'Hostel' and 'Group Accommodation' criteria, 'Activity Accommodation' establishments will be required to be in possession of a current AALA (Adventure Activities Licensing Authority) Certificate or other national body licence in respect of one or more outdoor activities based at the property.

**Note:** 'Group Accommodation' and 'Activity Accommodation' will not be required to provide self-catering facilities where a fully serviced (Dinner, Bed and Breakfast) package is the normal product. If lunches are not provided then facilities for preparing packed lunches should be available to guests.

# Minimum Entry Requirements for Camping Barns

## Building Structure

### Minimum Entry Requirements

All participants are required to fulfil their statutory obligations as outlined at the front of the hostels section.

- The building must be structurally sound, wind and watertight. Non-permanent structures e.g. wooden sheds or caravan holiday homes are not acceptable.
- All areas to be thoroughly cleaned on a regular basis.
- Adequate ventilation must be provided throughout the building.
- All internal wall, ceiling and floor finishes must be in a sound condition.
- An area for sleeping must be provided separately from the cooking area.
- A minimum floor space is to be provided of 4 square metres per sleeping space. This to be calculated on the basis of the maximum number of sleeping space divided by the total floor area in sleeping, dining and seating areas. (i.e. excluding WC/Shower facilities and cooking areas)
- If the cooking area is situated inside the building it must be separated from the sleeping area either by a partition wall or by space.

The cooking area may be provided, under cover, on the outside of the building.

- Details of means to summon assistance, day or night, in the event of an emergency must be provided and clearly displayed to guests (e.g. proprietor, doctor, dentist, emergency services callout (i.e. 999 ) to be detailed, together with the location of the nearest telephone.

## Facilities

### Minimum Entry Requirements

- A potable cold water supply must be provided either inside the building or adjacent to it.
- Sleeping accommodation must be provided, either alpine platforms, beds, bunks or suitable wooden floor surfaces (concrete floor with mattresses also acceptable). Bed spaces should be a minimum of 2'6" x 6' or equivalent in respect of platforms.
- All areas to be adequately lit for safe movement (electricity or gas lights). (Exception may be made at the discretion of VisitBritain in respect of remote or rural properties with no mains services.)
- Lounge/dining /common area to be provided with adequate heating. Any additional charge should be clearly advertised.
- The cooking area, whether inside or outside the building, must have an appropriate hygienic surface for preparing food, facilities if outside should be undercover.
- A sink for washing cooking utensils, plates, cutlery etc. must be provided with at least cold running water and suitable cleaning materials.
- A mop, bucket, sweeping brush, dustpan to be provided.
- If no fixed cooking appliances are provided, a suitable raised surface for guests to use their own stoves either inside or outside the building must be provided.
- At least 1 WC (flush or chemical) and washbasin must be provided either inside or outside the building for every 20 guests.
- An adequate number of tables and chairs or benches must be provided.
- A smoke alarm must be fitted and maintained in a fully operational condition.
- Appropriate fire extinguisher and a fire blanket must be provided and maintained in a fully operational condition.

# Minimum Entry Requirements for Bunkhouses

## Minimum Entry Requirements

### Facilities

All participants are required to fulfil their statutory obligations as outlined at the front of the hostels section.

- Hot and cold running water to be available.
- Electricity supply provided. (Exception may be made at the discretion of VisitBritain where properties are remote and have restricted or no mains services)
- All public areas/bathrooms/bedrooms are to be adequately lit for safety.
- Adequate heating should be provided, as a minimum, in the public areas.
- Self-catering facilities will be provided.
- A first aid kit to be available and maintained.
- Details of means to summon assistance, day or night, in the event of an emergency must be provided and clearly displayed to guests (e.g. staff/proprietor, doctor, dentist etc) Emergency services callout (i.e. 999) to be detailed.
- Provision for hanging wet outdoor clothing to be available.
- Reasonable provision for securing the building internally and externally should be available.
- All areas to be adequately maintained.
- A high standard of cleanliness to be maintained throughout the property.

## Bedrooms/Sleeping Areas

### Minimum Entry Requirements

- Bedrooms or sleeping areas to be physically separated from kitchen/dining/public areas.
- All sleeping areas to have at least one external window supplying ventilation and natural light. Curtain, blind or equivalent to be provided.
- A minimum floor space per bed or bunk space of 4 square metres (44 square feet) to be provided. This area will be calculated on the basis of the maximum dimensions of the room divided by the number of bed bases in the room. Bed bases will be totalled as below:
  - Bunk bed - 1
  - Double bed - 2
  - Single bed - 1
  - Alpine platforms - 1 per (min. 6' x 2'6") bedspaceThe impact of furniture (lockers, bedside tables etc.) will not be considered in this calculation.
- All sleeping provision must be in beds, bunks or alpine platforms and must be a minimum size of 6' x 2'6" or equivalent per person in respect of platforms. Beds and bunks to be provided with mattresses. Sleeping mat foam is acceptable on alpine platforms.
- If bed linen is provided or sheet sleeping bags are provided, one pillow and adequate blankets or duvet to be available, either free or for hire, for each guest. If this can not be provided, guests must be informed at the time of booking and the fact clearly stated on brochures/website.
- Adequate rucksack storage space to be provided in all sleeping areas. This may, as a minimum, be provided by sufficient free floor space or under bed/bunk space.

## Kitchen/Dining Area

### Minimum Entry Requirements

NB. Kitchen, dining and lounge areas may be 'open plan' or separate rooms. If these facilities are provided in an 'open plan' format it should be sufficiently spacious to enable all guests reasonable use at the same time.

- The kitchen should be of an adequate size to allow for a reasonable proportion of the guest capacity to prepare and cook meals at one time. Minimum cooking facilities/equipment to be available as listed:  
Hygienic food storage/preparation area/cooking equipment and sink area with hot and cold running water to be provided.  
A minimum of 4 cooking rings to be provided. Where the total number of bedspaces exceeds 32 an additional cooking ring is to be provided for every further 8 bedspaces.  
i.e.: 32 beds: 4 cooking rings  
40 beds: 5 cooking rings  
48 beds: 6 cooking rings  
56 beds: 7 cooking rings etc.
- Adequate refrigerated food storage space to be available.
- Kitchen to be properly equipped with an adequate number of utensils (pots, pans, food preparation knives etc.).
- Dining area with appropriate furniture available. There should be adequate facilities (furniture, crockery, cutlery etc.) for at least 20% guest capacity to eat at the same time. This should be increased to enable all guests to eat together if group bookings are accepted.
- A smoke alarm is to be installed and maintained in a fully operational condition.
- A fire extinguisher suitable for kitchen fires and a fire blanket to be provided.
- Kitchen area to be designated 'non-smoking' with appropriate signage.

## Bathroom

### Minimum Entry Requirements

- Shower, WC and washbasins to be provided at a minimum ratio of one each for every 20 bedspaces. (Exception to this minimum requirement may be made at the discretion of VisitBritain in respect of remote properties with restricted/no mains services)
- All WCs to be provided with toilet paper and (where appropriate), sanitary disposal bags and bins.
- There must be privacy between sexes for washing/shower facilities.



YHA Liverpool Albert Dock

## Hostel Quality Guidance Notes

(This also includes Backpacker, Group and Activity Accommodation)

The pages that follow include typical expectations at each star level. They are neither prescriptive, definitive or exhaustive.

# Exterior

## Appearance of Buildings

The décor, maintenance and repair of the building. This includes stonework, woodwork, rendering, paintwork, gutters, fall pipes, external plumbing, chimneys and roofs. External signage attached to the building (clarity & maintenance) and lighting is taken into account here. Any outbuildings and storage areas e.g. refuse areas will be assessed here as well.

### 3 Star

- Exterior in a generally good condition, principal aspects of the building are well maintained. Paintwork mainly fresh but some minor weathering or staining to external paintwork may be apparent. Doors and windows in good state of repair, though not necessarily new. External fabric all in sound condition. Where displayed, signs will be maintained in good condition.

### 4 Star

- Overall perhaps not pristine but still resulting in a very good first impression with no neglected aspects. High quality maintenance of stonework and paintwork, some natural weathering may be present. May be some additional external features to enhance appearance such as window boxes. Any outbuildings or annexes to be of similar quality.

### 5 Star

- Premises in an excellent condition. High quality paintwork with no damage or wear evident, door furniture and signage of high quality. All buildings on site maintained to the same high standard.

## Grounds, Gardens and Parking

If the property has no clearly defined grounds or gardens; or parking of any type this section is not assessed. Assessment of this area will include garden areas, hedges, paths, driveways, parking, lighting and all other areas within the clearly defined (i.e. fenced, walled or hedged) boundaries of the property and which are under control of the establishment.

### 3 Star

- A good standard overall. All areas will show evidence of regular attention i.e. no litter, grass cut and only minor weed growth in paths/driveways. Signage should be in good condition and effective. Parking areas to be in a safe and usable condition.

### 4 Star

- Very good standards of maintenance in garden areas. Tidy beds, pathways and hedges. All trees and shrubs well tended. Dustbin areas not visible preferably screened. Easy access to parking with well maintained surfaces and clear definition.

### 5 Star

- Thoughtful and imaginative landscaping, planting and design features, as appropriate to location and environment. May include barbecue/patio area and garden seating. May include effective external lighting. High quality signage in pristine condition. Obvious detailed care and attention given to all aspects. Car parking where provided will be well laid out and clearly signed with an appropriate well maintained surface. An excellent presentation overall.

## Environment

A reflection of the positive or negative aspects of the location of the property and surrounding area that could affect the guests' comfort.

### 3 Star

- In a city/town centre, with some parking restrictions and busy traffic but close to all amenities. On a working farm where access is muddy or there is some farm machinery close by. In a suburban area of a city where there is busy traffic and noise.

### 4 Star

- A very good environment would include rural properties which may be close to roads, but which have the benefit of open scenic views. Urban properties are likely to be central to main attractions and transport, some attempts e.g. double glazing, made to overcome traffic/street noise.

### 5 Star

- In an urban setting in the heart of the city with all amenities, attractions and transport links immediately accessible. In a rural location with open views in an area of outstanding natural beauty, ideally located for the pursuit of a range of outdoor activities.

# Hospitality and Service

## Hospitality

Assessment of hospitality and friendliness will consider the following aspects: Staff attitude, customer care skills, welcome and all guest contact.

### 3 Star

- A good standard of hospitality with obvious warmth of welcome. Staff readily available and forthcoming with advice, information and assistance for guests when requested.

### 4 Star

- A very good standard of hospitality. Staff demonstrating a commitment to customer care. Staff proactive in offering advice and assistance to guests, being clearly available and willing to help at all reasonable times.

### 5 Star

- Excellent hospitality with a personal welcome. Proactively ensuring guests comfort and well-being throughout their stay. May include positive, knowledgeable input and assistance with guest's plans and activities. Staff should be evident, but not intrusive and remain respectful of guest's privacy if appropriate.

For Group Accommodation, Activity Accommodation, Camping Barn Accommodation and Bunkhouse Accommodation, no overnight stay is possible; therefore, this section will be omitted from the assessment.

## Service and Efficiency

Service and efficiency will assess the competency, speed and capability of staff in dealing with guests and their requirements. This will include the initial enquiry, booking, arrival and departure, as well as general contact during a guest's stay, general management effectiveness, guest information.

### 3 Star

- A good standard of service. Clear and well organised booking and reservations procedures. Staff or management easily contacted to make reservations with little if any, reliance on telephone answering machines. Staff should freely offer additional useful information (directions, public transport, etc.) on request. Guests fully confident in the reservations system.

### 4 Star

- A very good standard of service. Clear and easy booking procedures should be available via varied channels (telephone, email, internet, direct booking etc.) All enquiries through whatever channel should be responded to quickly and efficiently.

### 5 Star

- Exceptional service standards. Exemplary booking procedures through varied channels which all incorporate a positive and proactive approach to ensuring guests have all necessary information quickly provided in a welcoming and useful manner.

## Personal Touches and Tourist Information

Assessment of Personal Touches and Tourist Information will take into consideration the following: Range and quality of additional personal touches, artifacts, collections, books. Tourist Information provided and available for guests.

### 3 Star

- A good level of provision which will certainly include current area information and local / regional public transport information. May also include information on networked hostels in other areas with reciprocal arrangements. A clear attempt to provide a welcoming and personalised atmosphere.

### 4 Star

- Expert specialised knowledge may also be provided by some Hostel proprietors or staff recommendations and advice for walking/climbing routes, current climbing conditions, a well maintained guests comment book recommending local pubs/clubs/restaurants/ attractions etc. Strong evidence of personal touches - flowers, plants, collections, displays.

### 5 Star

- An exemplary level of provision which, in addition to the usual brochure displays and recommendations for outdoor activity markets, will often include personally prepared local information. This will normally contain advice and information not commercially produced or motivated but of interest to guests. Additional guest facilities such as TV, video, books, magazines etc. are likely to be provided.

# Cleanliness of all Areas

## Public Areas

Assessment of cleanliness will include consideration of housekeeping standards in all aspects of public and dining areas.

### 3 Star

- Good standards of cleanliness, regular attention paid to all aspects and consistent standards maintained. Systematic approach with evidence of clear standards being set and monitored throughout.

### 4 Star

- A very good overall standard with obvious close attention to detail in most areas but not quite achieving an excellent standard in every respect.

### 5 Star

- Immaculate throughout with a professional approach and detailed thoroughness apparent in every aspect. Particular attention to detail in respect of soft furnishings, flooring in heavily used areas such as corridors and staircases. Gleaming surfaces, no smears or marks, no blown bulbs or broken equipment. Careful and consistent attention to even relatively minor details resulting in a standard that is effectively without fault.

## Bedrooms

Assessment of cleanliness will include consideration of: Housekeeping standards in all aspects of bedrooms, bedroom corridors and upper stairways.

### 3 Star

- Good standards of cleanliness. Regular attention paid to all aspects and consistent standards maintained. Systematic approach with evidence of clear standards being set and monitored throughout.

### 4 Star

- A very good overall standard with obvious close attention to detail in most areas but not quite achieving an excellent standard in every respect.

### 5 Star

- Immaculate throughout with a professional approach and detailed thoroughness apparent in every aspect. Well presented beds and bedding, gleaming surfaces, no smears or marks, no blown bulbs or broken equipment. Careful and consistent attention to even relatively minor details resulting in a standard that is effectively without fault.

## Bathrooms

Assessment of this aspect will normally include consideration of: Housekeeping standards in all aspects of bath/shower rooms and WC's.

### 3 Star

- Regular attention paid to all aspects and consistent standards maintained. Systematic approach with evidence of clear standards being set and monitored throughout.

### 4 Star

- A very good overall standard with obvious close attention to detail in most areas but not quite achieving an excellent standard in every respect. Relatively minor omissions such as some extractor vents not cleaned or discoloured grouting in a few places may differentiate a 'very good' from an 'excellent' standard.

### 5 Star

- Immaculate throughout with a professional approach and detailed thoroughness apparent in every aspect. Gleaming surfaces, no smears or marks, no blown bulbs or broken equipment. Careful and consistent attention to even relatively minor details resulting in a standard that is effectively without fault.

## Self Catering Kitchen

Assessment of this aspect will consider: Housekeeping standards in all aspects of self catering kitchen facilities.

### 3 Star

- Regular attention paid to all aspects and consistent standards maintained. Systematic approach with evidence of clear standards being set and monitored. This standard will represent a fundamentally good level of cleanliness. Whilst being generally of a good standard, closer attention to detail may be recommended in some areas e.g. extractor fans, inside ovens, fridges, within drawers and cupboards or under sinks.

### 4 Star

- A very good overall standard with obvious close attention to detail in most areas but not quite achieving an excellent standard in every respect. Relatively minor omissions such as difficult to access i.e areas behind cookers or in overhead light diffusers may detract from an otherwise excellent standard.

### 5 Star

- Immaculate throughout with a professional approach and detailed thoroughness apparent in every aspect. Highest standards of cleanliness to all surfaces including kitchen fixtures, cupboard and drawer interiors and all electrical equipment. Rubbish areas should also be kept clean and rubbish regularly removed. Gleaming surfaces, no smears or marks, no blown bulbs or broken equipment. Careful and consistent attention to even relatively minor details resulting in a standard that is effectively without fault.

# Food Quality and Service

Meals Service, Breakfast and Dinner quality will only be assessed when meals are offered at an alternative 'all inclusive' rate to self catering or are separately charged for 'as taken'. Food provided and available to all guests as a 'free' facility on a self catering basis will not be assessed.

## Food Quality - Breakfast

Assessment of Breakfast will take into consideration the following: Quality and range of items offered. Standard of presentation.

### 3 Star

- A good range of choice which is likely to include a cooked option. Menu choices likely to be of a standard quality with little effort to provide any unusual or locally sourced items.

### 4 Star

- A very good range of choice which will include a full cooked option. All menu choices will be well prepared, attractively and freshly presented.

### 5 Star

- An extended range of menu choices including a variety of cereals, full cooked breakfast and continental options. Ingredients will be of high quality and where possible or appropriate locally sourced.

## Food Quality - Dinner

Assessment of Dinner will take into consideration the following: Quality and range of items offered. Standard of presentation.

### 3 Star

- A two course meal should be available which may not normally offer a range of choice (although vegetarian options should always be available on request). All dishes should be competently prepared and attractively presented.

### 4 Star

- A very good range of menu choices one of which should be vegetarian. Ingredients will be of high quality and where possible or appropriate fresh and locally sourced. All menu choices will be well prepared, attractively and freshly presented.

### 5 Star

- A three course meal should be available with an excellent range of choices at each course. A reasonable range of vegetable, potato and salad choices, as appropriate, should also be available.

## Meals Service

Assessment of meal service will take into consideration the following: Efficiency of meals service, appropriate professional skills levels, design ergonomics of self service facilities.

### 3 Star

- Service will be friendly throughout and efficient. Self-service facilities should be of a reasonably effective ergonomic design and layout. Staff should have a reasonable level of product knowledge particularly in respect of the suitability or otherwise of menu items for vegetarian or other common specific dietary requirements. This may, in a self-service environment, be offered in part by appropriate signs and information at the point of service. All staff involved in food service should be appropriately dressed for handling food.

### 4 Star

- Proactive and knowledgeable staff with a friendly and caring attitude. Staff should have a high level of product knowledge. In self-service situations this could be achieved in part by clearly labelling the food on offer.

### 5 Star

- Service should be delivered with a considerable degree of proactive friendly and professional skill. The full range of menu choices should be available throughout service. Self-service facilities will be of an excellent ergonomic design.

# Public Areas (includes all stairs, landings, corridors, dining and restaurant areas)

## Decoration

Assessment of this aspect will normally include consideration of: All wall coverings, finishes, pictures, posters etc. on public area walls and ceilings. Includes guest lounge, dining, restaurant areas, reception, stairways and corridors providing access to general use facilities.

### 3 Star

- Good quality décor with minimal wear. May be functional but fresh looking and well maintained, DIY effectively done but without a 'professional' finish. Likely to be some pictures, photos or other artefacts used to enhance décor.

### 4 Star

- A very good standard of décor throughout. May be relatively simple finish e.g. emulsion but executed and maintained in an excellent condition. Pictures/photos or other artwork could be used to enhance presentation. High standards should be maintained throughout all the public areas. Very little, if any, visible marks or damage.

### 5 Star

- High quality décor with well considered use of colour, pictures, prints (e.g. local scenes) and other decorative relief. Original architectural features restored or maintained to an excellent standard and used to good effect. May be of an intrinsically functional nature but additional features and immaculate condition still define an excellent standard. Where used, wallpaper will be of a high quality and excellent condition with no open seams, wear or damage. Plain painted walls will have a properly finished plaster or plasterboard surface that has been skimmed and/or paper lined before painting. Paint will be in excellent condition, evenly and professionally applied.

## Furnishings, Furniture and Fittings

Assessment of these aspects will normally include consideration of: All public area furniture including dining tables and chairs, seating, coffee/occasional tables, curtains. Light fittings and heating equipment/fittings in these areas.

### 3 Star

- Furnishings and Furniture all of a good standard, though age and use beginning to show some minor signs of wear and tear. Good quality curtains or blinds, well maintained shutters (where fitted). Well maintained heating and lighting appliances with little or no rust, marks or staining.

### 4 Star

- Furniture and furnishings must offer a high degree of comfort and allow ample seating for the number of guests. Light fittings & heating appliances/radiators etc to be of a high quality, well maintained and in an excellent condition.

### 5 Star

- Furniture to offer a high degree of comfort and quality standard. Solid dining furniture, offering high levels of comfort, well spaced chairs of appropriate height for tables. Bench seating could be excellent if of a high standard and generously proportioned. Wooden seating will often have tie on cushions or similar for added comfort.

## Flooring

Assessment of this aspect will normally include consideration of: Floor finishes and coverings in all lounge, reception, and public areas. Stairways to first floor and corridors providing access to general use facilities.

### 3 Star

- Of a good overall standard, perhaps some signs of wear but not significant, some flooring may be better than others but all will be reasonably well maintained.

### 4 Star

- A very good standard of flooring throughout the public areas. Carpets may be of a good 'contract' quality but well fitted with no obvious marks, wear or damage. Wooden floors will be sealed and and well maintained.

### 5 Star

- Flooring of a uniform excellent standard, carpets will be professionally fitted, free of obvious signs of wear or any damage and with good quality underlay. Other finishes or natural alternatives e.g. laminate flooring, polished wood floors, parquet flooring could be of an excellent standard if of a high innate quality and well maintained.

## Lighting and Heating

Assessment of these aspects will normally include consideration of: Level, distribution, range and controllability of lighting provision. Level, distribution and controllability of heating provision. Aspects of Lighting and Heating will be separately assessed and then a composite mark, not necessarily a mathematical average, will be determined. For clarity, these aspects are individually considered in the following tables:

### Lighting

#### 3 Star

- A good level of illumination overall, in addition there is likely to be more than one source of lighting giving sufficient light for all practical purposes. Dining areas suitably well lit.

#### 4 Star

- Effective lighting to all parts of the room may include some supplementary lighting (table lamps, standard lamps etc). May see separate controllability of lighting over the dining area etc.

#### 5 Star

- High quality effective lighting, giving sufficient illumination to all parts of the room for all practical purposes. This will typically include supplementary, occasional or task lighting for reading/dining etc. Lighting levels may be controllable e.g. dimmer switches, etc.

### Heating

#### 3 Star

- Good level of heating which maintains a comfortable background temperature in all areas. Fully effective and available at appropriate times. May be more modern (i.e. more effective) style of storage heaters but without boost facility or wet central heating system with flow controls only and radiators of minimal effective size and distribution for the room. Where appropriate, heating may be very effectively provided or enhanced by traditional stove or open fires, which will have an adequate and accessible fuel supply.

#### 4 Star

- Highly effective and responsive heating system in all rooms. Well positioned appliances or radiators, available at all reasonable times and fully controllable.

#### 5 Star

- Responsive heating system, with back up. Could be central heating with 24hr availability and thermostatically controlled. Solid fuel fires, where provided, will have a generous supply of fuel ready for use and easily available to guests.

## Space, Comfort and Ease of Use

Assessment of this aspect will normally take into consideration: spaciousness, layout, comfort and ambience in relation to normal levels of use. Space is generally anticipated to be less in city centre environments than in more rural or remote properties.

### 3 Star

- Good sized rooms with sufficient space for free movement. Rooms should be adequately sized and furnished to accommodate normal levels of use.

### 4 Star

- An overall very good standard which may represent some variation between 'excellent' and other 'good' standards seen in a range of rooms. Could be of an excellent size with a full range of furniture but laid out in a formal way which compromises the ambience of the room.

### 5 Star

- A wellplanned room offering high levels of comfort for all users, furniture/TV's/lighting all positioned in suitable and convenient places. Seating, both dining and easy, should be available to accommodate a significant proportion of the maximum number of guests. A 'significant' proportion is likely to be less in a city centre location, where use may be limited, than in a rural property with a high level of use.

# Bedrooms

## Decoration

Assessment of this aspect will include consideration of: All wall coverings, finishes, pictures, posters, borders etc. on all bedroom walls and ceilings.

### 3 Star

- Good quality décor with minimal wear. May be functional but fresh looking and well maintained, DIY effectively done but without a 'professional' finish.

### 4 Star

- A very good standard of décor throughout. May be relatively simple finish e.g. emulsion but executed and maintained in an excellent condition. Pictures/photos or other artwork could be used to enhance presentation. High standards should be maintained throughout all the public areas. Very little, if any, visible marks or damage.

### 5 Star

- High quality décor with well considered use of colour, pictures, posters or themes. May be of an intrinsically functional nature but additional features and immaculate condition still define an excellent standard. Plain painted walls will have a properly finished plaster or plasterboard surface that has been skimmed or paper lined before painting. Paint will be in excellent condition, evenly and professionally applied.

## Furnishings, Furniture and Fittings

The assessment of these aspects will normally include consideration of the quality and condition of all bedroom furniture, chairs, lockers, shelving, clothes hanging, curtains, heating and lighting fittings/equipment.

### 3 Star

- May be modest quality 'flat pack' self-build furniture. Good quality properly fitting curtains or blinds or well-maintained shutters where appropriate. Good quality lighting and heating fixtures and fittings but potentially showing some marks or wear.

### 4 Star

- Lockers where provided may be relatively new metal/wood cabinets in very good condition or higher innate quality wooden units. Well co-ordinated furnishings. High quality light and heat fittings in excellent condition. Ample hanging and storage space.

### 5 Star

- High quality furniture, individually made by craftsmen to an excellent standard, or could be commercial quality. Lockers where provided are likely to be high quality wooden units of a style which co-ordinates with other furniture in the room. Will probably include other occasional furniture e.g. easy seating, tables etc. Co-ordinated soft furnishings of a high standard. Curtains/blinds of excellent quality often fully lined with thermal/blackout material. Lighting and heating fittings or equipment will be of a similarly excellent quality and condition. No blown bulbs or broken equipment.

## Flooring

The assessment of this aspect will normally include consideration of: Floor finishes and coverings in bedrooms.

### 3 Star

- Flooring of a good overall standard. Some carpets may be better than others but all will be reasonably well fitted. Wooden floors will be sound and have had an appropriate finish (varnish, sealant etc).

### 4 Star

- A very good standard of flooring throughout the bedroom areas. Carpets may be of a very good 'contract' quality but well fitted with no obvious marks, wear or damage. Wooden floors will be well finished and maintained.

### 5 Star

- Flooring of a uniform excellent standard, carpets will be properly fitted, free of obvious signs of wear or any damage and with good quality underlay. May be higher quality loop pile carpets, laminate flooring or high quality finish and condition of original floorboards with additional non-slip bedside rugs or carpet squares.

## Lighting and Heating

The assessment of these aspects will normally include consideration of: Level, distribution and range of lighting provision. Heating appliances and level of provision/controllability.

### Lighting

#### 3 Star

- Effective lighting to all parts of the room. May include some bedside lighting. All bulbs, unless decorative, to have appropriate shade or cover. Fluorescent tubes with diffusers.

#### 4 Star

- Thoughtful provision of high quality effective lighting reaching all parts of the room, this should include bedside lights per person in some rooms and some occasional or task lighting where appropriate.

#### 5 Star

- High quality effective lighting, giving sufficient controllable and appropriate illumination to all parts of the room e.g. task lighting at wash hand basins, shelving and mirrors and occasional lighting where appropriate. May also include provision of separate low wattage night light.

### Heating

#### 3 Star

- Good level of heating which maintains a good background temperature. Effective and available at appropriate times. May be more modern (i.e. more effective) style of storage heaters but without boost facility or wet central heating system with flow controls only and radiators of minimal effective size and distribution for the room.

#### 4 Star

- Fixed heating, fully responsive to customers needs. Well positioned heating appliances.

#### 5 Star

- Responsive, thermostatically controlled source of heat in all rooms. Available 24 hrs a day. E.g. Central heating with individual thermostatic valves. May be combined heating/ventilation or air conditioning system.

## Beds and Bedding

Assessment of these aspects will normally include consideration of: Bunks, Beds, Alpine platforms, frames, bases, and mattresses. Duvets, duvet covers, blankets, sheets, sheet sleeping bags, pillows and pillowcases.

### 3 Star

- Good quality bed/bunk frames and firm mattresses. May be high quality foam mattresses but more likely to be internally sprung. Well presented bedding and linen, all in good condition, pillows should be substantial, good quality pillow and mattress protectors in use.

### 4 Star

- Most, if not all, beds and bunks to be full sized (i.e. 3' or 4' 6" width) and in very good condition, usually with full depth sprung mattresses. High quality linen and pillows in very good condition. Linen may well be co-ordinated with other aspects of the soft furnishings.

### 5 Star

- Top quality (may often be commercial quality) full sized (i.e. 3' or 4' 6" width) beds or bunks with internally sprung full depth mattresses. Co-ordinated and crisply laundered bed linen/sheet sleeping bags. High quality duvets or weighty blankets with spares available.

## Space, Comfort and Ease of Use

This assessment will normally include consideration of: Spaciousness, layout, access to storage units, light and heat controls. The impact (negative or positive) of additional furnishings, coombed ceilings, narrow or awkwardly shaped rooms and access to beds will also be considered in assessment of this aspect.

### 3 Star

- Good-sized bedrooms with sufficient space for free movement; good access to windows, lighting and heating controls. Some bedrooms may be slightly small, but well laid out. Some coombed ceilings but not over the majority of floor space. May be very good sized bedrooms but with no additional furniture.

### 4 Star

- Very good sized rooms with ample free floor space and no restrictions on access to windows, power sockets or heating controls. Likely to have some items of additional furniture which enhance visitors comfort and use of the room.

### 5 Star

- Spacious bedrooms, well laid out with clear emphasis on guest's comfort and convenience. At the highest standard some (if not all) bedrooms can be expected to be well furnished, possibly including for example, lockers, well organised storage space, bedside or occasional tables and easy seating. Minimum criteria floor space requirements can be anticipated to be exceeded by at least 50%.

# Bathrooms and WCs

## Decoration

Assessment of this aspect will normally include consideration of: All wall coverings, finishes, pictures, posters, borders etc. on all bath/shower room and WC walls and ceilings.

### 3 Star

- Good quality décor with minimal wear. May be functional but fresh looking and well maintained. May see DIY effectively done but without a 'professional' finish. Tiling will be basically sound throughout although perhaps not pristine.

### 4 Star

- A very good standard of décor throughout. May be a relatively simple finish e.g. emulsion or bathroom paint but executed and maintained in an excellent condition. Tiling may be extensive and uniformly of a very good standard. Standards maintained through all bathroom areas. Very little, if any, visible marks or damage.

### 5 Star

- All of excellent quality and condition. May be fully lined with bathroom wall panelling or a combination of more traditional finishes. Attractive tiling (and grout) in excellent condition.

## Sanitary Ware and Fittings

Assessment of this aspect will normally include consideration of: All shower units, sanitary ware, shower trays, shower cubicles, shower curtains/doors, shelving, mirrors, room curtains/blinds. Clothes hooks, towel rails, soap dishes, disposal bins, wash basins and taps. Lighting and heating fittings and equipment.

### 3 Star

- Efficient showers with properly set temperature or effective controls, standard sized washbasins in good condition. Standard size/quality ceramic shower trays with a non-slip surface or the provision of non-slip mats or non-slip shower floor tiles. Heating and lighting appliances well maintained. Fresh looking shower curtains of a good quality or effective shower doors. There should be plenty of hot water at all times.

### 4 Star

- Very good quality well made fixtures and fittings. Showers with a powerful flow and fully controllable. Generously sized ceramic, high quality composite or stainless steel shower trays. Shower curtains of a good quality in a very good condition or good quality shower doors. Towel rings/rails and hooks of a high quality with no evidence of wear.

### 5 Star

- Bathrooms will be well co-ordinated and thoughtfully designed. The facility should create an excellent overall impression, with matching sanitary wear. All ancillary fittings, curtains/blinds etc. will be of a similarly excellent quality and condition.

## Flooring

Assessment of this aspect will normally include consideration of: Floor finishes and coverings in all bath/shower rooms and WCs.

### 3 Star

- Flooring of a standard quality in good condition. Well sealed edges and seams.

### 4 Star

- High quality bathroom flooring, well fitted and in very good condition. May be of excellent innate quality but perhaps no longer in pristine condition.

### 5 Star

- Contract quality non-slip flooring or high quality floor tiles, professionally fitted and in an excellent condition.

## Lighting, Heating and Ventilation

Assessment of these aspects will normally include consideration of the following: Level and distribution of lighting provision. Heating appliances and level of provision/controllability. Efficiency and maintenance of ventilation/extraction systems.

### 3 Star

- Effective lighting and ventilation in all areas, often supplemented with shaver lights/sockets. Effective mechanical ventilation appropriate for the size of facilities. Heating which maintains a good background temperature and which is effective and available at appropriate times.

### 4 Star

- Well positioned lighting effective for all purposes, may see lights set on timers. Ventilation systems will be fully effective and capable of maintaining a fresh environment during periods of heavy use. Fully effective and controllable heating provision, e.g. central heating with individual thermostatic valves.

### 5 Star

- High quality lighting often with dedicated lighting in each shower and toilet cubicle, shaver lights and sockets. Ventilation system may incorporate individual extractors over each shower cubicle, perhaps coupled to humidity/movement sensors, a remote fan and/or timing devices. Controllable fully effective heating available 24hrs.

## Space, Comfort and Ease of Use

Assessment of this aspect will normally include consideration of: Spaciousness, layout, ease of use and degree of privacy.

### 3 Star

- Good-sized bathrooms, sizeable shower cubicles, ample space and privacy for changing, well positioned fixtures and fittings for ease of use.

### 4 Star

- A very good overall standard which in many properties is likely to represent a mix of some excellent facilities with others being more restricted and of a 'good' standard.

### 5 Star

- Generously sized and well planned facilities. Shower cubicles will be of a size and layout that enables privacy for changing within the cubicle in a dry area separate from the shower tray. Wash basins should be well spaced to allow ease and comfort of use at busy periods.

## Self Catering Kitchen

### Décor and Flooring

Assessment of these aspects will normally take into consideration: All wall coverings, finishes and floor coverings.

### 3 Star

- Good quality décor with minimal wear. May be functional but fresh looking and well maintained. Tiling grouting and sealant to be in a good clean condition. Domestic quality vinyl flooring or floor tiling, all in good condition.

### 4 Star

- Décor throughout the kitchen areas of a very good standard with only some relatively minor blemishes or weaknesses differentiating from an otherwise excellent standard. Flooring likely to be of a very good domestic quality, free of any marks or damage and professionally fitted.

### 5 Star

- Décor to be high quality & durable with consideration given to both practicality and visual impression. Likely to include some commercial quality aspects such as fitted stainless steel splashbacks or use of appropriate quality wall-boarding, Flooring of a uniform excellent standard. May well be heavy contract quality non-slip vinyl flooring.

## Lighting, Heating and Ventilation

Assessment of these aspects will normally take into consideration: Level and distribution of lighting provision. Level and controllability of heating provision. Efficiency and maintenance of ventilation and extraction systems.

### 3 Star

- All work areas reasonably well illuminated. Effective ventilation, typically via extractor fan and opening window. Appropriate heating levels. Fluorescent tubes should be fitted with diffusers.

### 4 Star

- Effective lighting reaching all parts of the room. Kitchens should be well ventilated; cookers will usually have extractor hoods and integral lighting. Thermostatically controlled heating.

### 5 Star

- A high standard of illumination, shadow free 'task' lighting over all work surfaces, hobs and cookers (e.g. under unit lighting). Excellent ventilation system, larger kitchens are likely to be equipped with commercial extractor systems.

## Furniture and Fittings

Assessment of these aspects will normally include consideration of: All kitchen furniture, fitted units, shelving, dry storage, tables etc. Light and heating fittings and equipment, curtains or blinds.

### 3 Star

- Good standard of furnishings, possibly domestic in quality but in good condition with only slight evidence of wear. May be DIY construction but executed to a very good standard. Cupboard, drawer and shelf interiors all in a good condition with only minor damage or wear.

### 4 Star

- A very good standard throughout which is likely to be represented by standard quality domestic fitted units all in excellent condition. Very little, if any, noticeable signs of wear or damage.

### 5 Star

- High quality furniture and fittings, may be craftsman made to an excellent standard, could be commercial quality kitchen furnishings or domestic quality of a higher than usual standard. Units may or may not have doors. Kitchens equipped to this standard may well incorporate stainless steel work/food preparation surfaces or shelving.

## Cookers and Electrical Equipment

Assessment of these aspects will normally take into consideration: cooking appliances including microwave ovens, grills, hobs and conventional ovens. 'White' goods including fridge, freezer, kettle, toaster, water boiler. Quality and range will also be considered.

### 3 Star

- Equipment may show some wear but not extensive, being of a generally good condition. Fridge interiors all sound, seals all complete and effective. Cookers and hobs often of a standard domestic quality but in very good condition. May be second hand/refurbished catering equipment in good condition.

### 4 Star

- A very good overall standard which may be differentiated from an otherwise excellent standard by a restricted range of equipment or by individual items being of a noticeably lower standard. Fridge space provision will be generous in respect of the number of guests accommodated with clear facility for hygienic food separation.

### 5 Star

- Full size cookers and hobs of top domestic quality or, often, commercial catering quality in excellent condition. A wide range of high quality electrical equipment, all in excellent condition. May include 'luxury' items such as a food processor, air fryer, blenders, coffee machine etc. A freezer would normally be provided. Likely (especially in larger properties) to include at least some commercial quality equipment, e.g. water boilers or toasters.

## Kitchen and Dining Ware

Assessment of these items will normally include consideration of: All pots, pans, cooking utensils, cutlery, crockery, glassware.

### 3 Star

- Utensils and crockery in a good condition and enabling appropriately full table settings to be made. It is recommended to include some of bulk catering size where group bookings are accommodated.

### 4 Star

- A very good range of cutlery, crockery and glassware available. Full range of utensils all in a very good condition.

### 5 Star

- An extended range of utensils, crockery and glassware, all in an excellent condition, usually considerably in excess of minimum requirements. Additional items may be provided e.g. Range of items suitable for microwave or specialist knife sets.

## Space, Comfort and Ease of Use

Assessment of this aspect will normally consider: Spaciousness, layout, ergonomic design. Level of provision and space relative to level of use.

### 3 Star

- Sufficient space for food preparation and cooking, appropriate for the number of guests and normal level of use. Plentiful power points functionally placed. A provision of individual food storage space should be available for a significant proportion of the maximum number of guests.

### 4 Star

- A very good size and layout of the kitchen and food preparation areas. May be less generous in terms of space or size for the level of peak potential use than an excellent standard, but not to a point which could be reasonably expected to cause any major inconvenience.

### 5 Star

- The kitchen should be ergonomically designed with generous allowance for ease of movement and work for all guests. Individual food preparation areas are recommended in larger kitchens. Kitchen space at this standard would not be anticipated to be compromised by dual use as a dining area.

# Other Facilities

These may or may not be provided, but where they are, they will form part of the assessment.

## Laundry and Drying Rooms

Assessment of these facilities will normally consider: Quality of facility and equipment, maintenance and cleanliness.

### 3 Star

- A good sized facility relative to the number of guests. Standard domestic or commercial laundry equipment might be showing some signs of wear, but generally be in good order. Drying room equipped with hanging/rail and boot rack facilities. The drying room will be fitted with fully effective and controllable equipment to ensure clothing and equipment can be dried in reasonable timescales (e.g. overnight) under normal circumstances.

### 4 Star

- Laundry and drying facilities will be well designed, spacious and equipped to a high standard. In respect of the laundry this will usually require commercial coin or token operated machines. There should be sufficient equipment to ensure that normal guests' requirements for use can be met. In respect of the drying room this standard will usually be achieved by a facility equipped with comprehensive drying facilities and very effective drying systems. This will most often be achieved by a combination of de-humidifiers, background heating and ventilation. Both facilities will be well maintained and show excellent standards of cleanliness.

### 5 Star

- An excellent standard will be most often demonstrated in these areas by the provision of an extended range of high quality equipment, spin dryers, iron, ironing board, laundry baskets etc. in addition to meeting all the expectations of a 'Very Good' standard.

## Recreation / Additional Facilities

Assessment of this aspect will normally include any additional recreational facilities provided for guests use. This may include, for example only and not definitively or exclusively: Quality, range and maintenance of additional recreational facilities such as. Pool table, game machines, internet access, table tennis, library, shop, games room, Internet café, leisure facilities, specialist equipment storage provision e.g. canoes/ bikes/ climbing gear.

# Code of conduct

All Quality Scheme participants must agree to comply with the following VisitEngland code of conduct:

## Prior to booking:

- To describe accurately in any advertisement, brochure, or other printed or electronic media, the facilities and services provided.
- To make clear to guests in print, in electronic media and on the telephone exactly what is included in all prices quoted for accommodation, including taxes and any other surcharges. Details of charges for additional services/facilities should also be made clear, for example breakfast, leisure etc.
- To anticipate the needs of disabled guests and make reasonable adjustments to improve the premises and business practices.
- To allow guests to view the accommodation prior to booking if requested.

## At the time of booking:

- To clearly describe the cancellation policy to guests such as by telephone, internet/email as well as in any printed information given to guests.
- To adhere to and not to exceed prices quoted at the time of booking for accommodation and other services.
- To make clear to guests if the accommodation offered is in an unconnected annexe or similar, and to indicate the location of such accommodation and any difference in comfort and/or amenities from accommodation in the establishment.

## On arrival:

- To welcome all guests courteously and without discrimination in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (Equality Act 2010).

## During the stay:

- To maintain standards of guest care, cleanliness and service appropriate to the type of establishment.
- To deal promptly and courteously with all enquiries, requests, bookings and correspondence from guests.
- To ensure complaint handling procedures are in place and that complaints received are investigated promptly and courteously and that the outcome is communicated to the guest.

### **On departure:**

- To give each guest, on request, details of payments due and a receipt, if required/ requested.

### **General:**

- To ensure the accommodation is prepared for the arrival of guests at all times when the establishment is advertised as open.
- To advise guests, at any time prior to their stay, if there are any changes in what has been booked.
- To have a complaints handling procedure in place to deal promptly and fairly with all guest complaints.
- To hold current public liability insurance and to comply with all relevant statutory obligations including legislation applicable to fire, health and safety, planning and food safety.
- To allow VisitEngland representatives reasonable access to the establishment, on request, to confirm that the Code of Conduct is being observed or in order to investigate any complaint of a serious nature notified to them.
- When a business is sold or ceases to trade, every effort should be made to inform VisitEngland.

## **How does it work**

- **Step 1 - Join a scheme on the [VisitEngland Assessment Services](#) site.** Fill out your details using the form on the Join page. You will then be contacted about the next steps.
- **Step 2 - We receive and process your payment.** For new applicants, the data received from you will be used to create a record for your property as 'awaiting grading'.
- **Step 3 - We assign an Assessor, once your payment has cleared**
- **Step 4 - The Assessor books the assessment**
- **Step 5 - The Assessor completes the assessment.**
- **Step 6 - We complete a report which is sent to you within 14 working days.**
- **Step 7 - Your establishment is now **Assessed** and you are entitled to unlimited use of your quality rating in all your promotional activity together with the internationally recognised Quality Rose Marque.**

# CONTACT

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