



Visit
Wales

“Good Practice” Guidelines for Alternative Accommodation



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Wales can offer a less traditional or alternative-to-the-norm type of accommodation. This is being increasingly sought out by consumers looking for a different holiday experience. While this alternative accommodation is not considered suitable for a grading or classification scheme, visitors nevertheless have the right to expect that a certain standard be attained.

Anyone wishing to have Visit Wales recognise or promote this type of accommodation must annually apply and pay for an inspection and meet all of the following criteria. The definition for the kind of accommodation that can be inspected under this scheme is given under the relevant criteria heading within the document below.

1. **Minimum Criteria for “Alternative Accommodation”**

Alternative accommodation refers to certain self-catering based accommodation, which is perhaps more unusual. Many of the guests using this type of accommodation enjoy the ‘getting back to nature’ experience, which is enhanced by the more rural situation of the accommodation.

There is often a strong emphasis on sustainability with low energy and waste management initiatives and protection of the environment being at the heart of the business ethos.

Alternative letting accommodation can be provided in either ‘permanent’ or ‘non permanent’ structures such as:

- Wigwams, camping pods, geo domes
- Romany Caravans
- Nomadic structures (e.g. tipis, yurts, safari tents)
- Converted railway carriages, shepherds trailers/huts etc
- Tree houses, roundhouses, straw houses

Minimum entry requirements can be found at:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/tourism/grading/1/schemes/alternativetype/?lang=en>

2. **Good practice guidelines**

Most alternative accommodation regard at least part of what they offer as “unique”. Their product may be different and distinctive; this is why each business is assured individually on its own merits.

3. Areas of Assessment

3.1 Cleanliness

Cleaning will be of a good standard, and should involve regular or systematic deep cleaning of the site.

Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attention to flooring, soft furnishings, storage areas, floor mats at entrances etc. • Crisp, clean, well presented aired bedding and linen.
Campers Dining and Kitchen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good monitoring of cleanliness required, no blown bulbs / broken equipment / chipped crockery etc. • Well presented food storage areas, cooking equipment, clean overhead light diffusers, clean well presented fridge seals etc.
Site Grounds and Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site should be well monitored and litter free throughout.
Refuse and Recycling Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These areas should be regularly monitored and litter free, labelled bins would be useful. • Environmental / recycling policies could be presented on websites and information folders on site.
Toilet and Washing Facilities (Male and Female)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of a regular cleaning programme, gleaming surfaces, well stocked with hand wash, toilet paper etc.

3.2 Management efficiency – pre arrival and on site guest information

Welcome and Arrival Procedures / Site Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre arrival information – clear concise directions with satellite navigation details. • Information sheet on what to bring, such as sturdy walking boots, torches etc. should be provided on web site and again with the booking confirmation details. • An Access Statement should be available on the website. • Clear procedure for new arrivals should be available. Guests need to be registered. • Emergency information – may be just verbal information only and or supported by very good site plan held in reception, new arrivals escorted to pitch. • Additional information provided about local amenities / attractions and discounted / complementary / privileged admission tickets to local facilities or attractions may be available, thus encouraging partnership working and sustainability of local businesses in the area. • Guest hampers / welcome packs may be provided – this personal touch allows guests to feel welcome and at home.
--	--

Tourist information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive display of local / regional Information should be available, to include public transport information, places to eat, shop, taxi’s etc. • In addition to the usual brochure displays and recommendations for outdoor activity markets displays will often include personally prepared local information. This will normally contain advice and information not commercially produced or motivated but of interest to guests. • Environmental / recycling policies could be presented on websites and in guest information folders. Guest information folders should include fire safety advice and emergency evacuation procedures and meeting point.
----------------------------	--

3.3 Accommodation

Exterior / Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The general décor, maintenance of the structure must be in a good / sound condition, there should be no damage or wear evident.
Decor / Flooring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All aspects are to be presented to a good standard, all in a sound condition.
Lighting and Heating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective lighting, provided by any means i.e. mains power, solar, torches are all acceptable, operational and safe heating source / appliances, all equipment must be in a sound condition.
Furniture / Furnishings including Beds and Bedding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All furniture and furnishings are to be offering good comfort levels and appropriate for the style / type of accommodation. • Mattresses / sleeping platforms or equivalent to be provided.
Space / Comfort / Ease of use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good use of what could be “limited space” – storage of personal items need to be considered here.

3.4 Recreation sporting and leisure facilities

Equipment (indoors) / (outdoors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All aspects of equipment fixtures and fittings need to be well maintained and in sound condition.
Space / Comfort / Ease of Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment well located for use of the visitors.

3.5 Site grounds

Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads, pathways, ramps, steps and exterior of buildings need to be well lit, consider that the site may have no light provision, and then torches should be provided, albeit for safety reasons. • Key areas such as the service facilities, toilets, showers and cooking areas should have some form of light provision.
Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any internal and external notices and signage, including entrance signs, directional, instructional and facility signage should be well maintained and in good order.
Fire Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All fire point facilities including for example fire extinguishers, hoses, hydrants, fire notices and fire warning bells etc. should be in a good condition. • There should be clear signage highlighting the location of these points, all equipment should be well mounted and appropriately secure.
Road Surfaces and Paths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road access / paths to the site should be in an overall good condition, free of trip hazards with well maintained road surfaces and good drainage.
Refuse Disposal (including recycling facilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The presentation and maintenance of compounds to include refuse / re cycling disposal, to include wheelie bins, dustbins, skips and 'Sulo' type containers. Must be well maintained.
Picnic Tables, BBQs and Campers Kitchen etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose built BBQs and campers kitchens for use by customers. • Locations of barbecues are to be considered in case they are too close to other pitches and may be disturbed by smoke or noise. • Picnic tables are sturdy and well maintained. • Cooking shelters of a good standard, spacious, well designed and attractive to use.
Landscaping and Grounds Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear evidence of effective, continual upkeep and maintenance of grounds throughout the site. • Consider the presentation and maintenance of grassed areas, benches and fencing / storage and maintenance compounds.

Site Layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider pitch spacing including the car park. • Assessment of efforts made to allow for privacy and space between pitches. • The use of effective natural screening and imaginative positioning other than serried rows should also be considered. • Pitches should be located to clearly maximise guest’s enjoyment of views or privacy. • All pitches should optimise view / ambience.
Pitch and Service Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and condition of all service connections may include power, water, sewage and drainage. • All service connections to all units have been made, maintained and screened to a good standard wherever possible.

3.6 Toilet and washing facilities

Exterior and Frontage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well maintained buildings, exterior condition well presented clean and fresh.
Decor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wall and ceiling covering well applied and all in good condition, all paintwork in a sound and fresh condition.
Flooring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flooring of a uniform standard, non slip would be ideal, flooring should be professionally fitted and well maintained.
Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good levels of lighting throughout all facilities. • Sufficient lighting in most areas for comfortable use, task lighting would be useful.
Heating and Ventilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of heating and ventilation aspects, and their efficiency, throughout all facilities. • Effective general ventilation, where heating is provided equipment must be well maintained and in good working order.
Fixtures, Fittings and Sanitary Ware / Showers (WC, Showers, Basins) and Compost Toilets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality and condition of all sanitary ware should be in a good condition, well fitted and well maintained and in good working order. • Sufficient water pressure and satisfactory drainage for practical use of facilities. • Everything within the shower cubicles are included here, shelves, seating, bases etc, including the partitions / shower curtains if applicable. • Instructions on how to use composting toilets, etc could be provided in the guest information folder.
Space / Comfort / Ease of use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and layout of the facilities, there should be ample space for changing, well positioned fixtures and fittings for ease of use.

3.7 Campers and dining kitchen

Washing Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good layout enabling comfortable use. Well maintained buildings, exterior condition well presented clean and fresh. • The provision of formal ‘pot washing’ areas in terms of quality, presentation and ease of use would be beneficial. • Fully enclosed facility, typically represented by features such as, covered and partially enclosed shelter / open on two sides, good task lighting. • There should be an obvious effort to make the facility attractive and user friendly.
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality equipment serviceable and in a safe condition i.e. stainless steel wash ups, good draining facility etc. • Quality fixtures and fittings, well maintained storage storage units. • Electrical appliances, geezers, cookers, hobs etc in good condition.
Decor / Flooring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waterproof wall boarding or tiled splash back if appropriate is encouraged, the floor area should be washable and easy to keep clean.
Lighting and Heating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well lit e.g. fluorescent tubes and diffusers or recessed down lighters, task lighting would be useful.
Crockery / Cookware	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good range of equipment, cookware varying in sizes especially of the site caters for the groups market. • Utensils / equipment should all be in a good condition.
Space / Comfort / Ease of Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good layout, rubbish and recycling areas adjacent. • Good space for number of persons using the facility, generous storage in fridges etc. • The dining/ kitchen areas should be well designed with a generous allowance for the ease of movement and work for all guests. • Sufficient areas for food preparation, storage and cooking.

4 Conclusion overall impression

In order to gain a “quality assurance” award for “Alternative accommodation” the **overall** aspects of the business must be of a “**good**” standard of quality.

The information in this publication is given in good faith and every effort has been made to ensure its accuracy. Visit Wales can accept no responsibility for any error or misinterpretation. All liability for loss, disappointment, negligence or other damage caused by reliance on the information contained in this publication is hereby excluded.