



A Guide to the Star
Grading Scheme for
**SELF-CATERING
ACCOMMODATION**

Contents

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Quality is the Key
- 1.2 Our commitment to you
- 1.3 Quality across the Star ratings
- 1.4 What is Quality?
- 1.5 How do we measure Quality?
- 1.6 The Assessment Process
- 1.7 Determining the Star rating
- 1.8 Dispensations
- 1.9 Description
- 1.10 Sense of Place

2.0 Overall Standards

- 2.1 Additional Visit Wales Scheme Requirements
- 2.2 Health, Safety and Security
- 2.3 Booking and Prices

3.0 Exterior

- 3.1 Appearance of Buildings
- 3.2 Grounds, Gardens and Parking
- 3.3 Environment and First Impression

4.0 Cleanliness

- 4.1 General

5.0 Management Efficiency

- 5.1 Pre-Arrival Information
- 5.2 Welcome and Arrival Procedure
- 5.3 In-unit Guest Information and Personal Touches

6.0 Living and Dining Areas

- 6.1 General
- 6.2 Furnitures, Furnishings and Fittings
- 6.3 Privacy
- 6.4 Heating, Lighting and Ventilation

7.0 Bedrooms

- 7.1 Furniture, Furnishings and Fittings
- 7.2 Beds and Bedding
- 7.3 Heating, Lighting and Ventilation

8.0 Bathrooms & WCs

8.1 General

9.0 Kitchen

9.1 General

9.2 Kitchen Inventory

10.0 Additional facilities

10.1 General

11.0 Code of Conduct

12.0 Conditions for Participation

12.0 Change of Ownership

13.0 Signage

14.0 What to do if you disagree with the Star rating given

1.1 Introduction

1.1 Quality is the key

Visit Wales understands that quality is the key to success within the modern hospitality industry. For the Self-Catering sector to be successful and competitive both nationally and internationally, it is important that quality standards are set high and continue to improve. The Self-Catering standard is designed to help all businesses achieve success.

1.2 Our commitment to you

Our professional Visit Wales assessors will work with you to maximise the potential of your business. As a member of the star rating scheme you will receive a biennial assessment visit. This visit will look at all aspects of your customer facing business, from viewing your website through to customer departure. Each assessment visit will be followed by a verbal debrief and a detailed written report. Both these tools are designed to help you to improve your business.

1.3 Quality across the Star ratings

Our assessors will quality grade each aspect of your business to five levels, based on customer expectations of quality and current standards seen across the sector in the UK. The assessment is objective, and judgement will not be made on any aspect of your business based on style or personal taste. The aim is to add quality without taking away any of the character and style of the property. In advance of their visit your assessor will review your property's website, as would potential guests, to check that descriptions and images are up-to-date and a true reflection of the property.

1.4 What is Quality?

Whatever the style or concept of your Self-Catering property, both quality and comfort is what your guests and Visit Wales assessors will be looking for. The assessor will be looking at areas such as:

Living & Kitchen Areas

- The quality and comfort of furniture
- Attractive, well-co-ordinated décor and soft furnishings
- The space and comfort provided for the maximum number of guests catered for

- Extra touches that enhance a guest's stay such as the availability of Wi-Fi, modern TVs, sound/music systems and outdoor facilities
- Well equipped, easy to use kitchens with a range of modern appliances

Bedrooms & Bathrooms

- The quality and comfort of the bed(s)
- The quality of bed linen and the presentation of the bed(s)
- Attractive, well-co-ordinated décor and soft furnishings
- Those extra touches that make the rooms more welcoming
- The quality of bathroom fittings and towels
- Ease of use: bedrooms and bathrooms can offer good ease of use, if well designed, without necessarily being large and spacious

Welcome and Hospitality

Your assessor will be looking at the welcome that you provide for your guests, which can range from a personal welcome to a well organised remote arrival procedure. Welcome packs and guest information are also an important element of the assessment, as is an assessment of the owner or management's ability to deal promptly with any problems should they arise.

Cleanliness

Cleanliness is of paramount importance to all customers at all star levels. It is expected that all properties will be thoroughly clean throughout, for all new arrivals.

1.5 How do we measure Quality?

During your assessment visit, your assessor will make quality judgements across all aspects of your Self-Catering business, marking each sub-heading out of five. When the scores are totalled you will have an overall percentage score that will place you within one of the five star rating bands. However, to confirm a particular star rating, the scores awarded within each of the five key areas also need to fall within that band or higher. In this way you can be confident that your business is offering a consistent level of quality at the star rating awarded.

There are seven areas to be scored, plus an eighth, Recreation, for properties that have a pool or other leisure facilities or games areas. The only areas that must achieve the minimum score for the target star rating are the **key areas**. The score for the other areas help push up the overall score to the minimum required for the target star rating but are not crucial. These key areas are:

- Cleanliness
- Public areas
- Bedrooms
- Bathrooms
- Kitchen

Assessors are trained to award scores against national benchmarks in an objective and consistent manner.

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 expectations than not live up to them.
- Be a customer in your own business. Take time to use your website and to sleep in your bedrooms to experience what you are offering to your guests.
- No need to follow the crowd, don't be afraid to have your own style.
- First impressions: Arriving at any Self-Catering property for the first time involves a series of first impressions. Paying attention to the following critical areas will pay dividends:
 - The clean and tidy parking areas
 - Well-tended grounds and gardens
 - Fresh flowers and welcome baskets
 - Clean and well aired rooms
 - Beautifully presented beds

1.6 The Assessment Process

All our assessors are highly experienced within the Self-Catering sector. They experience best practice in all areas and can pass that knowledge on to you for the benefit of your business. They will assess the quality of your business honestly and always with the objective of helping you to improve your business. Make use of your assessor.

Hints and Tips

The assessment process:

- Ahead of your assessment, prepare your property as you would for guests on arrival. Make sure that the arrival pack and guest information is on display. Dress your beds and ensure the towels are in place. This will help the assessor experience your holiday home as a guest would.
- The first time you meet your assessor you might be concerned that you have not yet provided or understood all the requirements of the assessment

scheme. Do not worry, your assessor will discuss this with you. If you need more time, the rating can be put on hold until you have completed the work and allow you time to add any items or facilities that might be missing. A further visit may be required, in which case this may be chargeable.

- Beyond that it 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 change it.
- Ask you assessor questions, lots of questions!
- Stay in touch. Assessors are happy to answer your questions in between assessment visits.

1.7 Determining the Star rating

There are three main elements to the assessment process which will need to be satisfied to achieve a star rating:

- All statutory obligations must be met.
- All minimum entry requirements (MERs) need to be provided. These are listed at the beginning of each assessment section and within each section there are additional requirements, or 'qualifiers' for each star rating level.
- The minimum quality scores. Assessors score each separate element in each area out of five. The overall score is totalled and then divided by the maximum number achievable (usually 175) and then a percentage is obtained for each section and an overall percentage.

When awarding a quality score out of five for an item, be it a floor covering, a piece of furniture or a kitchen appliance, our assessor will consider a number of factors.

- What is the intrinsic quality?
- What is the age and condition of the item?
- How well does the item perform the task for which it is intended?

An example of this might be a heating system for a cottage. Two cottages might have the same modern gas boiler and radiator system, but the mark of five is more likely to go to the cottage with thermostatic valves on each of the radiators and a wood burner in the living room, as this would give guests the most flexibility.

To achieve a rating of five stars and an overall score of at least 87%, the aim is to score 'five' (out of five) in as many areas as possible, and certainly no lower than four anywhere. Scores of five are given when the item has that level of 'special' quality.

A four-star rating is likely to be made up of mainly scores of four, with a few marks at three and perhaps a few at five.

Continual investment from operators and rising guest expectations mean that the benchmarks are regularly shifting upwards. A bathroom that scored mostly 'fives' five years ago may only score 'fours' now. The assessors will always advise and suggest when and where upgrading should be prioritised to retain a rating. It is a good idea to visit other properties to get ideas or review websites of similarly-priced and rated properties.

Scores

For each area included in the assessment, the assessor will decide whether to award a score of

- Excellent quality – 5 points
- Very good quality – 4 points
- Good quality – 3 points
- Quite Good quality – 2 points
- Acceptable quality – 1 point

Quality Bands (%)

Star Rating	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
Overall	34-47	48-59	60-74	75-86	87-100
Cleanliness	60	60	65	80	90
Public areas	34	48	60	75	87
Bedrooms	34	48	60	75	87
Bathrooms	34	48	60	75	87
Kitchens	34	48	60	75	87

After your visit you will receive a detailed written report on the customer experience with individual scores for each criteria. Positive aspects of your business will be outlined as well as areas for improvement. This will give you a benchmark for maintaining the quality of your services and facilities and will help you to prioritise and plan future developments.

1.8 Dispensations

Whilst most businesses can provide all the minimum entry requirements (MERs), it might not be possible for every business to provide every MER. This might be due to restrictions placed on a building by Listed Building status, for example.

Visit Wales operates a dispensation process to accommodate this type of problem and a dispensation can be sought through your assessor. This flexibility will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Dispensations will only be awarded if the website description has already been amended to

make it clear to prospective guests that the missing item/entry requirement is not found at the property. Ratings cannot be confirmed until the outcome of the dispensation is known.

1.9 Description

For the purposes of participation in the Visit Wales Self-Catering Quality Scheme, the property must be self-contained. A self-contained unit must have bedrooms, bathrooms, public area and kitchen all contained behind one main door where occupants have sole access.

1.10 Sense of Place

Whilst quality never goes out of style, adding a Sense of Place to the visitor experience will go a long way to make their stay a truly memorable one. It can be something simple, like adding signage, a product, or a feature to your business to add a touch of local flavour. Or discover some interesting information about your area that adds to your regional knowledge, and pass it on to your visitors. A simple 'Croeso' also makes a delightfully distinctive first impression. We've pulled together an overview on the Wales brand and some guidance on our sense of place. Hopefully these tools will provide you with some ideas on how to create an unforgettable visitor experience.

Visit <https://businesswales.gov.wales/tourism/other-useful-links> for further information

2.0 Overall Standards

Legislation Affecting Self-Catering Accommodation

Safety

- Health and Safety at Work
- Fire, Gas and Electrical Safety
- Electric 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
- TV Licensing

Discrimination

- The Equality Act 2010
- Records
- General Data Protection Regulations

Consumer Protection Act

- Advertising
- Pricing

2.1 Additional Visit Wales Scheme Requirements

Public Liability

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.

Accessibility Guide/Access Statement

Proprietors will be asked to provide evidence that they have written, and made publicly available, an Accessibility Guide – a description of facilities and services offered, specifically in relation to accessibility, to inform people with access needs.

2.2 Health, Safety and Security

- A high degree of general safety and security maintained, including information on procedures in the event of an emergency.
- If the proprietor is not resident on the premises, his/her name, address and telephone number or that of the agent, who must have a set of keys, to be prominently displayed, together with clear details of how to summon assistance in the event of an emergency.

- Prominently displayed printed details of how to summon the assistance of emergency services to be provided e.g. doctor, dentist, location of nearest payphone and casualty unit and vets (if pets accepted).
- All units to be provided with suitable refuse disposal and recycling arrangements as required by the Local Authority. Dustbins, where provided, must have lids. Arrangements for refuse collection to be specified and prominently displayed.
- Guests to be provided with a key to the entrance door of their unit, and where applicable a key giving access to the building and any other relevant facilities.
- A minimum of one well positioned smoke detector per property. Your fire risk assessment will determine whether these should be linked/hard wired.
- Adequate levels of lighting at night for safety and comfort in all public areas, including on stairways and landings and in car parks and paths/steps to the property at night, should be provided.
- Electricity should be available (not necessarily mains supply). Where it is not, this must be stated. Voltage to be stated if not on mains.
- Where electricity is available, an adequate number of power sockets to be provided, commensurate with the number of electrical appliances provided.
- Some forms of emergency lighting to be available, e.g. torch or night-lights. Candles are not acceptable for safety reasons. Rechargeable torches are useful, especially the type which flash in the event of a power cut.

Safety Essentials

- You have a duty of care to ensure that the property you are letting out is safe.
- Comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- Provide a Carbon Monoxide Detector in every room where gas or oil are burnt and in rooms where there is an open fire or wood burner. A detector should always be placed in a kitchen unless all appliances are electric and in any room where a central heating boiler is housed. People die every year in accidents caused by carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Regular Portable Appliance Testing (PAT Testing) will ensure appliances are safe, but don't forget that all aspects of the electricity supply need to be safe.
- An annual Landlord's Gas Certificate is required if you have gas in your property.
- Are garden ponds fenced, if you take children?

- Do you have a handrail fitted to stairways?
- If you plan to survey your guests after their stay, you could ask them if there is anything they thought unsafe or potentially dangerous.
- Finally, be sure to cover yourself with a good public liability insurance policy.

Accessibility Good Practice

- Consider fire safety for guests with hearing loss who may not hear the smoke alarm.
- Strobe light fire alarms or a domestic paging system may be appropriate.

Sustainability Good Practice

- Maintaining electrical, gas and oil fired equipment also helps ensure the equipment is working efficiently, keeping your fuel bills down as a result. When boilers are serviced, ask the engineer to carry out an efficiency test and provide an efficiency rating. If the rating is 'D' or lower you could make significant savings by replacing it with an 'A' rated boiler.

2.3 Booking and Prices

- Make clear to guests exactly what is included in the prices quoted for the property, including service charge, taxes and other surcharges, e.g. electricity, fuel, towels, cots etc. Where VAT is applicable, all prices to be shown inclusive of VAT at standard rate.
- Full details of accommodation, including sleeping arrangements and bathroom (whether it is equipped with a bath or shower) provided on the website or printed form in advance of booking. Where sleeping accommodation is provided by means of bed settees, wall beds, "Z" beds, camp beds etc., in addition to the bedroom accommodation, the type, size and number of bed spaces to be clearly indicated.
- Details of any in-house policies, e.g. no smoking, no pets etc. must be communicated at the time of booking, for example, clearly stated on website. If requested, allow guests to see the property before booking (if property is occupied this may not be possible).
- Website or printed information required. A floor plan is encouraged. Arrangements for access communicated pre-arrival.
- Prospective guests should be made aware, prior to booking, of charges for additional services or facilities available, including cancellation terms,

- housekeeping and/or breakage deposits.
- Guests advised at the time of booking, or subsequently, in the event of any change in booking details.
- Prices quoted at the time of booking not exceeded.
- Guests provided with details of payments due and a receipt if required.
- The receipt to be clearly presented and well laid out.

The following information to be readily available prior to booking:

- Car parking arrangements near unit
- Arrangements for pets
- Distance of unit from nearest shop(s), etc.
- Nature of water supply, if not mains (water supply must meet all statutory regulations for drinking water)
- Types of energy supply if not electric
- Electricity voltage, if not standard
- A map and/or directions showing the location of the unit on booking or provided on website
- Distance of unit from nearest public transport

Accessibility Good Practice

- Offer your guests a choice of how to contact you e.g. telephone, fax, letter, email, text message and find out about Text Relay used by people with a hearing impairment at www.textrelay.org
- Always ask if an enquirer or any of the guests in the party have any specific access requirements. Promote your Accessibility Guide/Access Statement.
- Provide guest information in a range of formats e.g. large print, photographs, video, audio description and possibly Braille.
- Even if you don't accept pets, state that you welcome trained assistance dogs [legal obligation]. Many disabled people rely on assistance dogs to provide independence. See the dog as being part of the person.

Sustainability Good Practice

- If you have taken actions to improve your impact on the environment and local area, make sure this is mentioned on your website/leaflet – this will add to the appeal of your business.
- Include the full range of transport options for reaching your property in promotional and booking information. As well as providing greater

choice this will enable you to appeal to a wider range of customers.

- Pre-arrival information can promote options for local food delivery services and nearby shops so that guests do not feel the need to stock up before leaving home or ordering a supermarket delivery.

3.0 Exterior

3.1 Appearance of Buildings

- First impressions and kerb appeal are very important. Whatever the size of the property or the location, guests will be impressed if, on arrival, the property looks well cared for.
- Any signage should be prominent, well-maintained and cleaned regularly. Some owners prefer not to advertise that their property is let out, in which case the name or number of the property should be clearly visible from the road or the approach to the property. First-time guests will appreciate reassurance that they have arrived at their destination.
- Whatever the location of the property, it should look welcoming, with clean paintwork and windows, well-tended gardens all year-round and evidence of little extra touches, such as hanging baskets or window boxes to make it stand out from other properties in the road or area.
- Wherever possible refuse bins or oil tanks should be screened.
- Ensure any flower beds, porches, patio or parking area are completely litter free when guests arrive. Cigarette butts dropped by previous guests do not leave a good impression!

Assessors will award the highest scores in this area for properties where the owners' attention to detail and maintenance is exceptional and where the overall presentation of the exterior of the property suggests to guests they will not be disappointed when they go inside.

3.2 Grounds, Gardens and Parking

- Gardens and/or open areas that are part of the unit should be maintained in good order, whether for the sole use of the property or shared.
- Where gardens are available then garden furniture should be provided.
- If the property has ancillary areas, the facilities provided will be considered in the assessment of the establishment, where under the control of the

operator. They should be well surfaced, in good condition and adequately lit.

- Parking is a key consideration for guests that arrive by car. If parking is not available off-road, assessors will review the advice and steps taken by the property owner to assist guests in finding a parking space on their arrival and on their return to the property each day.
- On-site parking needs to be clearly marked to reduce stress for guests when they arrive and well-lit for late arrivals in the dark.

Assessors will award the highest scores for immaculate gardens and grounds that really 'wow' guests on arrival, whatever the size of the plot or the location.

If a property has no grounds, garden or parking, then assessors will not score this section, but mark as N/A.

3.3 Environment and First Impression

- Many customers choose self-catering accommodation instead of serviced accommodation as they want to relax and enjoy the company of their friends or family, without being disturbed by neighbours.
- Any outside space for guests' use should be screened from adjoining/neighbouring properties, where possible.
- In city centre locations, this is inevitably more difficult, but guests will appreciate the provision of double or triple glazing to reduce traffic noise, good blackout curtains or blinds and other measures to allow guests to enjoy a good night's sleep and minimal disturbance from the occupants of neighbouring properties. Air conditioning might even be installed in locations where opening windows at night is not conducive to a good night's sleep.

Assessors will reserve the highest scores in this section for those properties where the guests' privacy is undisputable and there is minimal risk of disturbance from neighbouring properties or unwelcome traffic noise. The steps taken by property owners to minimise noise or light intrusion will be taken into account in the scoring.

Hints and Tips

Don't forget the outside space:

- If you offer space, be it a garden or a balcony, treat it as part of the house and furnish and equip it to a similar standard.
- Be sure to have enough seating for all guests, unless you have a small balcony area.

- Guests at the higher star rating levels will expect something more than plastic garden furniture.
- Barbeques are very popular with guests. Ensure it is safe, high quality and easy-to-use. It should always be cleaned between lettings so factor this in to your cleaning schedule and your changeover day costs.
- If you welcome small children, consider enclosing at least part of the garden, where possible, to allow parents maximum opportunity to relax knowing their children can play safely.

Accessibility Good Practice

- Provide within the grounds of the property or identify nearby, a free run/spend area for assistance dogs.
- Ensure paths are kept clear of obstacles, debris, moss, ice and fallen leaves and have firm, well-maintained surfaces. Ensure that any permanent features are securely fixed e.g. flower pot arrangement.

4.0 Cleanliness

4.1 General

- Cleanliness is of paramount importance to guests, so a high standard of cleanliness must be maintained throughout the property, whatever the star rating. Particular attention must be given to kitchens, bathrooms, shower rooms and toilets and items involving direct contact with guests, such as bedding, linen, towels, baths, showers, washbasins, WCs, flooring, seating, crockery, cutlery, glassware, kitchen utensils and equipment.
- It is the proprietor's responsibility to ensure that all properties are thoroughly cleaned throughout, before each new let, irrespective of whether the guests have cleaned it prior to departure. Any broken or damaged items should be replaced.

Hints and Tips

Housekeeping

- It is, of course, essential that your holiday home is thoroughly cleaned and prepared for in-coming guests.
- There should be no evidence of the previous guests (no left-over food, clothes, rubbish, old newspapers and of course no hairs from the dog or human guests).
- Housekeeping is probably the single most important part of the holiday home letting

process; there are more customer complaints about cleanliness than any other area.

- For those owners who are not able to carry out their own housekeeping, it can present a real challenge. Good reliable cleaning services can be difficult to find, so think about who can carry out this task for you. It might be your letting agent, a contract cleaning company, or a local resident/ neighbour.
- Remember, it's not just about the cleaning. The general presentation of the property also needs to be good, including the beds and contents of the kitchen cupboards, for example.
- Be specific when instructing cleaners and housekeepers, to ensure that the extra touches are carried out to your requirements.
- Don't skimp on the hours allocated for the cleaning. If you are aiming for a four or five star rating, your housekeeping standards will need to be consistently 'very good' or 'excellent'. Allow enough time for those (hopefully) rare occasions when the outgoing guests leave the property very untidy. Most guests will leave the property tidy on departure, but don't expect them to thoroughly clean before they leave. They would not do this in a hotel or B&B.
- Do not leave anything to chance. Ask your customers for feedback to ensure that they are happy with the cleaning service.

Sustainability Good Practice

- Consider using low impact and chlorine free cleaning products, including microfibre cloths that reduce the amount of cleaning liquid required.

5.0 Management Efficiency

5.1 Pre Arrival Information

The procedures for dealing with guests during the booking, pre arrival are assessed here. This covers the information that is sent prior to the booking which aims to inform the guest about the property and locality. The website and/or brochure will need to contain clear accurate information about the property, an online booking option would be beneficial, location details, picture galleries and links to local tourism businesses are encouraged, an access statement/accessibility guide should be provided here.

5.2 Welcome and Arrival procedure

The assessor will ask questions about your check-in procedures and guest information provided prior to arrival. The highest scores will be reserved for those that demonstrate an excellent understanding of guests' needs, with a level of personalisation aiming for every guest to get the most out of their stay, going home with some lasting memories and experiences to talk about, relaxed and refreshed from their holiday.

Hints and Tips

- Arrival and welcome procedures vary greatly, and although a personal welcome may be considered the 'excellent', many owners and operators have developed alternative solutions and they can work very well.
- Remember, guests have chosen a self-catering holiday. A personal welcome is very good but keep it short and informative and allow guests to settle in to their holiday home. Calling back at the property, phoning or sending a text later in the day or the following morning is a good idea. This gives the guests time to have any questions ready.
- Many owners do not live near their holiday home, so will rely on a housekeeper or agent to meet and greet guests. However, if using a third party means a fixed time for guests to arrive, this may be a negative for some guests, as unexpected traffic can cause delays, or they may simply get lost on the way. This can be stressful for the guests.
- Key safes are increasingly used so guests can simply let themselves in at whatever time they arrive. For this to work well the property needs to be completely ready for the guests with the heating on in the winter or shoulder months and if there is an open fire it should be laid ready to light with a match. In summer the property must not be too hot on arrival. Think about how this can be managed if you do not live nearby and cannot check just before the guests arrive.
- Guests will often arrive in the dark, so ensure outside lighting is effective and guest parking is clearly marked.
- Consider the safety of guests arriving in the dark at an unfamiliar location. Ensure there are no hazards.
- The booking process for self-catering can often involve many queries from prospective guests and these emails and calls provide an opportunity for the owner to tailor the welcome to each party. Try and find out your guests' interests and what they want to do when they stay in your property. Highlight before they arrive, or on arrival, any

special local events or activities that may interest them, e.g. in cathedral cities, is there a choral evensong that your guests might enjoy? Where's the best picnic spot/best local place for a pint of beer, best pub to hear live music, best garden centre to buy plants, best bakery for bread etc.?

- Keep a record of interests of returning guests. If they like to eat out at the best local restaurants, offer to book a table for them, so they do not miss out.
- Think of what might surprise or delight your guests, e.g. box of toys by age, so only put out the toddler box when toddlers are booked in, newspaper delivery (does not need to be free – could be an optional chargeable extra), 'baking' box with all that families would need to make cakes on a wet afternoon.

Accessibility Good Practice

- Specific training is available on how to welcome all types of guests e.g. DisabledGo online training, Welcome All and WorldHost Customers with disabilities. Consider learning to communicate in basic British Sign Language (BSL).
- Ensure guests identifying themselves as being disabled, e.g. those with visual impairment, are offered a familiarisation tour.
- Provide a vibrating alarm clock for hearing impaired guests.

Sustainability Good Practice

- If you are showing guests around the property, time taken to familiarise them with the heating controls will help ensure they are comfortable and your business does not incur unnecessary expense.
- Consider providing an example(s) of local produce to welcome guests – providing information on where they can purchase it and other similar items.

5.3 In – Unit Guest Information and Personal Touches

To award the highest score in this section, the assessor will be looking for well-indexed information on how everything works in the property plus a range of local information that demonstrates the owner's local knowledge and a genuine appreciation of the interests of the different guests.

Hints and Tips

- A good house manual, with an index, is vital to ensure that guests feel comfortable living in a property with which they are unfamiliar. It is also essential if you want to reduce the number of calls from guests when they cannot locate something or cannot operate an appliance.
- All the instructions for operating the appliances need to be easy to locate, comprehensive and very easy to understand. Top of the list will be controls for the heating and hot water and how to operate the TV but knowing how to operate the timer on the oven might be important for some guests. If the manual is not that clear, re-write the information in your own words. Any idiosyncrasies about your property should be explained.
- Include how to contact the owner, housekeeper or agent in an emergency or with any questions or problems. If you are aiming for a high star rating, you should provide a contact number that will be answered 24/7, in case of a major emergency.
- Provide a list of local services, such as the nearest doctor, A&E, dentist, vet etc.
- Think about how easily guests will find items in the kitchen and consider having an inventory with the location of each item listed. Torches, matches, spare light bulbs and fuses etc. might be needed in a hurry. Will guests easily locate the switch for the heated towel rail? Will they know where to find the bedding for the sofa bed?
- Guests will need information on your recycling procedure and make sure you provide spare recycling bags if these are essential.
- Local information is just as important. As well as the usual tourist information leaflets you might also provide menus for local pubs, restaurants and takeaways. Consider including information on upcoming local events, especially at visitor attractions nearby. Providing maps for walking and cycling will be appreciated and you may wish to leave information on guided walks and local cycle hire. Tailor your information to suit your location and the interests of the guests you tend to attract. The more personal the service you can offer, the more appreciative your guests will be.
- A simple 'Guest Notebook' might also be provided. By making the first entry about how much you enjoyed a local restaurant or tourist attraction, you will soon find that many more recommendations follow.
- Consider buying a local Ordnance Survey map, which you could mount on the wall, even marking recommended places.

- Provision of Wi-Fi is considered essential for most guests and then a whole extra layer of information is available to your guests. If you don't offer any Wi-Fi, do you offer a range of up-to-date guide books and maps? If you are in a rural area and the service is variable, make this clear to your guests and manage their expectations.
- If mobile coverage is variable at your property, make sure guests are aware of this and which networks tend to provide a usable signal. If you have neither Wi-Fi nor a strong mobile signal, then a payphone may be required, otherwise guests will struggle to contact you in an emergency. In rural areas it is important to make clear in all booking and confirmation information the connectivity at the property.

Accessibility Good Practice

- Remember to include basic accessibility information for local pubs and attractions or Accessibility Guides where available.

Sustainability Good Practice

Each property could contain, where possible, an up-to-date visitor information folder including:

- A range of places to visit and events – placing an emphasis on those within a short distance, and, if feasible, information on reaching them by public transport.
- Don't forget the property and any grounds – highlight points of interest or opportunities to explore.
- Information covering a variety of means of exploring the area – cycling, walking, horse-riding, public transport. Rather than simply providing timetables and maps, provide examples of the potential experiences to enjoy, including options for stopping points.
- Details of places nearby to buy local food, drink and gift products.
- Promote any actions being taken by the business to improve the impact of guests' stays and ideas for how they can join in to make a difference.

Hints and Tips

Backup in the event of a problem

- Guests will expect a response if they have a problem at any point during their stay. You can minimise the risk with a robust cleaning and maintenance regime, but it is inevitable that appliances might fail during a stay, so think about how the guest can report a problem and how you will be able to respond. Guests will not be satisfied

- if they can only leave an answerphone message with no idea when they will hear back from you.
- Any shortcomings in housekeeping should be avoidable. Best practice is to have a second person to check over the property before guests arrive. If you have multiple properties on site and more than one person in this role, consider checking each other's cottages before signing off.
- What back-up plan do you have in place in the event of guests leaving the property in a very poor state? Can you pull in extra assistance at short notice?
- Encourage guests to report back any minor issues before they leave, perhaps by emailing them the evening before they leave. This might give you time to replace any broken or faulty items before the next guests arrive.
- Put in place a good support network of tradespeople for plumbing or electrical problems so you can be sure that they will prioritise fixing problems for your guests. It is not good enough to tell a guest that you cannot get hold of a plumber, for example.
- Build into your annual maintenance budget a realistic figure for replacing 'worn' items of equipment, especially the relatively low-value items, such as frying pans and towels.
- If you manage your own property, you will still need cover for holidays, sickness or your own family emergencies. Train up someone who is reliable and who will look after your guests well in your absence.
- Owners of multiple units should keep onsite spares of items that are most likely to fail.
- Remember, it's how you deal with a problem or crisis that matters. Guests will be understanding, if you are genuinely sympathetic when they are disappointed or frustrated by any delay in fixing the problem.

6.0 Living and Dining Areas

6.1 General

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- Dining table and seating facilities for the maximum number of guests.
- Where there is a functional open fireplace, a fireguard, poker, hearth brush, tongs, shovel, fuel container and ashes bucket provided.
- Easy chair and/or sofa seats provided, sufficient for the maximum number of advertised guests.

- A TV to be provided where a TV signal is available. Where terrestrial TV channels are not available, every effort should be made to provide an alternative such as cable or satellite TV.
- Non-flammable waste paper bins provided in living areas.

Hints and Tips

The Extra Touches

- Some of your guests might book your holiday home to 'get away from it all'. Others will want some technology to hand, and those that do not, will not turn it on. So, think about providing Wi-Fi, docking stations and games consoles.
- There are many other extra touches that can be added to make your holiday home more comfortable and to encourage repeat business. These range from walking maps of the local area, binoculars, books and games to larger items such as hot tubs.
- Guests will appreciate the extra effort that goes in to providing the extra touches but try to avoid personal clutter. Personal items should be stowed away in locked cupboards and containers.

Accessibility Good Practice

- Provide a variety of seating: low, high, firm, soft, with and without arms.
- Ensure TVs can provide subtitles to benefit hearing impaired and foreign language speaking guests.
- On each step or change of level, provide a nosing strip that contrasts in colour to the floor.
- Avoid deep pile carpets that may cause trips or make it difficult for a wheelchair to manoeuvre.

6.2 Furniture, Furnishings and Fittings

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- All exterior windows in living areas fitted with opaque curtains, blinds or shutters. Glass doors will also require covering where the lounge is used for sleeping or where lack of privacy could be an issue (the apex of an 'A' framed window and roof light windows need to be curtained only where the lounge is used in sleeping accommodation).
- Where there is sleeping accommodation in living areas, there must be adequate storage for bedding and guests' clothes.

6.3 Privacy

- Beautiful views might be one of the main selling points for your holiday home, but always be mindful of the privacy of your guests.
- Quality is partly about choice and the option as to whether to pull a curtain or blind adds to that personal choice.
- Bathrooms without opaque window covers will make guests feel uncomfortable and a well fitted blind helps to dress and finish a room. Indeed, all windows within the property should be fitted with a curtain or blind.

Accessibility Good Practice

- Consider having the door frames a contrasting colour to the wall and avoid high gloss finishes to assist visually impaired guests.

Sustainability Good Practice

- Make sure that furniture or furnishings are not blocking heat from circulating into the room.
- When an item has come to the end of its life in your property remember that it may still have a useful life elsewhere. You could make use of Freecycle or offer to local community facilities. For electric appliances, remember to choose energy-saving models with low running costs (check for an energy rating or consult www.sust-it.net)
- Use could be made of local artists' work, prints, or photographs depicting local scenes, historical and heritage related images – it all adds to a visitor's enhanced sense of place.

6.4 Heating, Lighting and Ventilation

- Adequate means of heating must be available at all times and guests must be able to override a time switch for the heating and hot water. If storage heaters are the means of heating the property, additional supplementary heaters must be provided. Free standing paraffin and Calor gas heaters are not acceptable. Coin meters not acceptable (except for a washing machine in laundries).
- All living room areas to have at least one window opening directly into the open air.

Accessibility Good Practice

- Ensure windows and curtains can be reached by your guests and are easy to open and close.
- Enable lighting levels to be adjusted using a dimmer switch.

Sustainability Good Practice

- Achieve comfort and efficiency by maximising insulation, ensuring that any radiators have thermostatic radiator valves (TRVs) and guests are confident in how to use heating controls. Properties need to be warm ready for guests' arrival but consider when to start bringing the property up to the required temperature so that energy is not used unnecessarily.
- As lights in these areas are likely to be on the longest, make these a priority for low energy options such as LEDs for halogen down lighters and low energy bulbs (CFLs) for standard incandescent bulbs. Providing a number of lights and light switches helps to avoid an 'all or nothing' situation.

7.0 Bedrooms

7.1 Furniture, Furnishings and Fittings

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- A bedside table/shelf and light for each permanent bed, including bunk beds (twin beds may share a table and light and top bunk to have light, but a shelf should only be provided where safe to do so).
- Non-flammable waste bins to be provided.
- A dressing table (or equivalent) with mirror, wardrobe or clothes hanging rail/space and adequate drawer space ideally in each bedroom (shelf space is an acceptable alternative to drawers) to be provided.
- Sufficient hangers per person. Wire hangers are not acceptable.

Two Stars

- As minimum.

Three Stars

- As minimum.

Four Stars

- As minimum.

Five Stars

- A hairdryer to be available.

Hints and Tips

How many guests should I be catering for?

- There is no hard and fast rule here, but always be aware of space, comfort and usability in all areas of the property.
- Gone are the days of squeezing as many beds as possible into the available space; today's guests are expecting more.
- Bedrooms need to be comfortable for the number of guests sleeping in them and you need to provide ample clothes storage and ease of use to all items of furniture.
- Do not be tempted to accommodate more guests than can comfortably use the lounge dining and kitchen areas.
- Sofa beds might provide that extra sleeping space, but if you are looking to provide a high-quality experience to all your guests, then it might not be the best option.

Accessibility Good Practice

- Avoid deep pile carpets that may cause trips or make it difficult for a wheelchair to manoeuvre.
- Providing a ground floor bedroom may increase the property's appeal to older couples, extended family groups and people with broken limbs and other impairments that limit mobility.
- Consider having the door frames a contrasting colour to the wall and avoid high gloss finishes to assist visually impaired guests.

Sustainability Good Practice

- Thermally lined curtains will not only help to keep the bedroom warm but will help to block out light and reduce noise, leading to better sleeping conditions.

7.2 Beds and Bedding

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- Single beds – minimum size 183cm x 76cm/6' x 2'6". Double beds – minimum size 183cm x 120cm/6' x 4'. If minimum size only, then this must be made clear in all advertising and booking confirmation.
- At least one bed for adults which is not a bunk bed.
- A mattress protector or under blanket fitted to all beds (plastic or rubber mattress protectors are not acceptable for normal use. Where a rubber cover is provided for children, it should be as an optional extra in addition to the normal mattress protector). Pillow protectors also required.

- All beds (excluding sofa beds) should be made up on arrival with freshly laundered linen and fresh linen should be supplied (at least weekly) for guests that stay more than one week.
- Spare linen and bedding available on request. Sheets must be poly-cotton or cotton.
- Linen must be included in the rental fee.
- Where a bedroom is accessed via another bedroom, then this must be clearly advertised.
- Where a bathroom is accessed via a bedroom (not including en-suites), then these units must be designated, and advertised, as only being suitable for single family occupation.

Two Stars

- All beds to be full size (except those clearly specified in brochures etc. as being for children's use; or bed settees. Size of bed settee mattress to be clearly shown on website).
Adult single – minimum size 190cm x 90cm/6'3" x 3'
Adult double – minimum size 190cm x 137cm/6'3" x 4'6"
Child size – minimum size 183cm x 76cm/6' x 2'6"

Three Stars

- As two star.

Four Stars

- All advertised sleeping spaces are to be in bedrooms only (where studio flats are clearly advertised as such, an exemption will be made to this).

Five Stars

- All beds to be full sized proper beds including beds for children (exclude 'Z' beds used on a temporary basis for children only).

Bed Access

Where there is only access to one side of a double bed, a maximum rating of Three Star can be awarded and guests must be made aware at the time of booking.

Galleried Bedrooms

Where a property has a galleried bedroom, this must be clearly advertised.

Sofa Beds

Sofa beds may be counted in the maximum number of sleepers up to Three Stars.

At Four Stars any sofa beds in the property (bedrooms or public area) must **not** be counted in maximum number of sleepers in any description on any website. Any search results should not include the sleepers accommodated on sofa beds. They can, however, be mentioned in descriptions.

At Five Stars any sofa beds must **not** be counted in maximum number of sleepers (whether in bedrooms or public areas) and must not be mentioned in any descriptions on any websites. A sofa bed may be left in the property, but if not as comfortable as a regular sofa, the 'Comfort' score may be reduced.

Hints and Tips

- Beds are one of the most important items you will purchase.
- Always buy the best quality that you can afford.
- Increasingly, guests will expect double beds to be 5ft wide and even 6ft ('zip and link' combined), especially at the highest star ratings. It is likely that this will soon be a requirement at Five Stars.
- A good quality bed will last longer, if the mattress is turned regularly.
- Consider high quality mattress options.
- Match quality of the bed with high quality bed linen and dress it well to give the best first impression.

Accessibility Good Practice

- Provide zip and link beds so that a guest and partner or a guest and carer/personal assistant can be accommodated.
- Provide blocks so that bed heights can be adjusted.
- Provide hypoallergenic bedding.

Sustainability Good Practice

- Blankets do not need to be wrapped; freshness can be indicated by tying the folded blankets with a re-useable ribbon, or other tie, or simply by folding neatly. Alternatively, they could be placed in a re-useable bag.

7.3 Heating, Lighting and Ventilation

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- Means of heating the unit must be available at all times, which means guests should be able to override a time switch. If storage heaters are the main means of heating, freestanding electric heaters should be available to supplement the storage heating.
- All bedrooms to have at least one window opening directly into the open air, windows to have opaque curtains, blinds or shutters.

Accessibility Good Practice

- Ensure windows and curtains can be reached by your guests and are easy to open and close.
- Enable lighting levels to be adjusted using a dimmer switch and/or make available additional bedside/dressing table lamps.

Sustainability Good Practice

- As bedrooms can be left unoccupied for long periods, encourage guests not to leave power on unnecessarily. Check windows are draught-proof and that heating appliances are not blocked by furniture or curtains.
- Choose good quality low energy light bulbs to avoid the frustration of long warm-up times (Which? provide online reviews of low energy lighting and other appliances) and make use of multiple lights/switches to provide guests the choice of how much lighting is required.

8.0 Bathrooms and WCs

8.1 General

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- One bathroom (with bath and/or shower) and WC is required for every six guests*.
- The bathroom to be equipped with a bath or shower, bathmat, towel, shelf or flat surface and wash basin. Where the base of the bath or shower is not anti-slip then a non-slip mat must be available. Soap dish to be provided in showers.
- If any bedrooms have an en-suite bathroom, then the ratio of other bathroom(s) to other bedrooms must meet the minimum of 1:6 guests. Where no shower is available this must be clearly advertised.
- Unless en-suite and the unit sleeps only two people, access through a bedroom to the only bathroom in the unit is not normally acceptable.
- The washbasin in the main bathroom is minimum 36cm x 24cm/14" x 9" internal, although a standard size wash basin is always recommended where space allows (additional basins offered in en-suites or separate WCs where the basin in the main bathroom complies, could be of smaller dimensions).
- A mirror above or adjacent to the washbasin.
- All units to have at least one WC equipped with a full toilet roll and holder, toilet brush and disposal bin with sanitary bags or a lidded bin.

- All windows to have opaque curtains, blinds or shutters (glass doors to bathrooms and WCs must also have opaque curtain(s) or blind(s)).
- Heating to be provided in all bathrooms. A heated towel rail is acceptable. Heated bulbs are discouraged.
- A means to provide hot water available at all times (i.e. ability for guests to turn on boiler or immersion at any time).
- A lock or bolt to be provided on all bathrooms/WC doors, including en-suites.
- Shaver point adjacent to the mirror, preferably with light. An adapter elsewhere in the unit is an acceptable alternative, providing it can be used close to a mirror.

Two Stars

- As minimum.

Three Stars

- One bathroom (with bath and /or shower) and WC is required for every 6 guests*.
- Where 3 or more guests are accommodated a shower must be available. This must be hands-free but can be fitted over a bath e.g. mixer tap.
- Towels – (one hand and one bath towel per guest) to be provided at no extra cost.

Four Stars

- As 3 star.
- If the property sleeps 5 or more guests, an extra WC and washbasin is required. The shower must be hands free.

Five Stars

- One bathroom (with bath and shower and WC is required for every four guests.*
- If no bath in the unit, showers should be of exceptional quality and the shower room spacious with top quality fittings (e.g. rain shower, second shower head, etc.), and this must be clearly highlighted in pre-booking information.
- At 5 stars the bath /shower should have high quality fixtures and fittings e.g. shower cubicles or shower screens and thermostatically controlled showers.
- There must be a means of drying towels in the bathroom all year round (e.g. towel rail with electric element).

*Bath /Shower/WC and wash hand basin ratios to be maintained as occupancy increases.

Hints and Tips

Bathroom Ratios

- The provision of en-suite bathrooms in holiday homes is growing and growing quickly.

- When setting up your holiday home consider the ratio of bathrooms to guests. The Visit Wales standard looks for different ratios at the different star rating levels, but try to exceed these, as customer demand will move that way over time.
- That extra bathroom might be a greater value to you than a third or fourth bedroom. Think of the two or even three couples wanting to holiday together (or two or three single guests).

Accessibility Good Practice

- Hot water supply should have at each fitting a mixer valve, controlled to a maximum 41 degrees celsius to prevent scalding.
- Provide a selection of equipment such as bath seats, toilet seat height raisers and shower chairs.
- Provide a support rail by the shower attachments.
- Provide towels that contrast in colour to the walls and floor to assist visually impaired guests.
- Ensure windows and curtains can be reached by your guests and are easy to open and close.

Sustainability Good Practice

- Although providing shower facilities can help reduce water consumption, remember that power showers can use more water than a bath. Where water pressures are not low, aerated shower heads, which mix air with the water to provide power with less water, can be used to improve water efficiency. Aerated basin taps mix air with the water to provide a 'foamy' flow of water which is more efficient than a standard tap fitting.
- In older toilet cisterns, which have a larger capacity, water saving devices (often available free from water supply companies) can be fitted easily to reduce water use.
- Larger, pump action dispensers (topped up at all times to ensure they are well-presented) can replace the need for individually wrapped soaps and toiletries. Assessors will look at the contents and style of presentation. Alternatively, make use of locally produced individual soaps.
- There is no need for the spare drinking cup/glass to be either plastic or wrapped.
- Heated towel rails can enhance the visitor experience but ensure that they can be controlled so that they are not left on unnecessarily throughout the whole day.
- Halogen down lighters are popular in bathrooms but can now be replaced with LED equivalents that use up to 10 times less energy and last 10 times longer.

9.0 Kitchen

9.1 General

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

All Grades

- A cooker with an oven, with at least two shelves, a grill and at least four boiling rings that may be used simultaneously with the oven or grill. If two guests only are accommodated, then two boiling rings plus oven and grill must be provided. For any larger numbers i.e. twelve or more, accommodated, it is anticipated that additional cooking facilities will be provided. A microwave is an acceptable alternative for one boiling ring. A combination microwave (oven, grill and microwave) is acceptable as a grill or oven, provided that a three-ring hob is also available separately.
- Microwave oven to be provided, and microwave cookware or compatible crockery.
- A refrigerator with an ice making compartment (unless a freezer is also provided). Larger fridges are not acceptable if no freezer is provided.
- A sink equipped with a draining board, dish drying rack, hot water and cold drinking water supply to be provided.
- At least one hygienic work surface.
- An opening window or Local Planning Authority approved ventilation system. Opaque curtains, shutters or blinds on external glass doors and windows.
- A covered waste disposal bin to be provided, with liner.
- A fire blanket to be readily available. This should be between the cooker and the door, and wall mounted. Storage in a cupboard or over the cooker is not acceptable. It could be sited outside the kitchen provided it is quickly and easily accessible (further advice can be sought from your local fire prevention officer).
- Storage space suitable for food.
- Vacuum cleaner provided in each unit (may be compact type), unless a daily cleaning service is provided.
- Where a dishwasher is provided, crockery, cutlery and utensils should be dishwasher safe. Extra crockery should also be provided, so the dishwasher does not have to be operated at each mealtime for smaller numbers of guests.
- Sufficient storage space for crockery, cutlery, kitchen and cleaning equipment provided.

Two Stars

- As minimum.

Three Stars

- As minimum.

Four Stars

- Access to washing machine if not provided in the unit. Ratio of one machine to every five units. 24-hour return laundry service also acceptable.
- Access to a freezer (or a 3* icebox within a fridge). Assessors will use their judgement on appropriate size, depending on the occupancy of the unit. Access to a shared freezer is acceptable but must be clearly advertised.
- If owners choose to put in a dishwasher instead of a washing machine, where space is limited, a dispensation may be requested. It must be clear on the website which appliances are in the unit and which are not.

Five Stars

- Freezer provided within the unit.
- Dishwasher provided within the unit (consider size for the number the unit accommodates).
- Washing machine provided in the unit (may be provided in an exterior purpose-built laundry room on multi-unit sites but must have 24-hour access). Ratio maximum of one machine to every five units. Use of property owner's washing machine is not acceptable (24-hour return laundry service also acceptable).

Hints and Tips

Equipping the Kitchen

- Guests expect all the modern conveniences of home, even if they are not intending to use them.
- Your property might be in an area surrounded by restaurants, but not all guests want to or can afford to eat out all the time; therefore it needs to be fully equipped.
- If you have the space, then a dishwasher, washing machine, dryer and separate freezer should all be considered, in addition to the other essential equipment.
- Provide double the amount of crockery, cutlery and glassware, particularly if you do provide a dishwasher.
- Add extra touches, such as champagne flutes.

Accessibility Good Practice

- Ensure crockery contrasts with table surface to assist visually impaired guests.

Sustainability Good Practice

- Most guests will now be familiar with separating at least some of their waste, but systems do vary around the country so providing a simple, clear system is essential to gaining participation. Clean, well-presented and labelled/colour-coded containers are essential.
- Given that fridges and freezers will be on for long periods, then it is essential to consider their running costs as well as their purchase cost by choosing an energy efficient model. Where there is going to be a gap of several days between guests, consider switching off the fridge and leaving the door open to ensure there is ventilation.
- Halogen down lighters are popular in kitchens but can now be replaced with LED equivalents that use up to 10 times less energy and last 10 times longer.

9.2 Kitchen Inventory

Matching crockery and cutlery

- Sufficient for number of guests unit sleeps. Extra if dishwasher in unit. Plenty of teaspoons essential, nothing chipped or cracked. Egg cups should be included.
- Greater range of items, e.g. different sizes of plates and bowls and mugs/cups & saucers. Not essential to offer cups and saucers but aim for very good quality and range. Guests will expect small knives and forks and soup spoons at higher star ratings.

Glassware

- At least tumblers and wine glasses. A water jug might be appreciated.
- Possibly champagne flutes or greater range and quality of glasses to suit target market.

Serving dishes

- To suit target market – possibly salad bowl, platter, fruit bowl, bread basket etc. Consider small containers/dishes for serving crisps and nuts.
- Greater range and quality expected at higher levels.

Serving spoons

Teapot, milk jug and container for sugar. Condiments (salt and pepper)

- Cafetiere or coffee maker might be included, depending on target market.
- At higher star ratings guests may expect different sizes of teapots, cafetieres and jugs.

Useful containers for bread, items etc.

- Some airtight lidded plastic in different sizes worth including, especially if can go through dishwasher.

Bread knife, carving knife and other sharp knives

- Larger capacity units would need greater range so if group all cooking together, they have sufficient.

Chopping board(s), bread board etc.

Range of kitchen utensils

- e.g. tin opener, potato peeler, grater, fish slice or similar, potato masher, ladle, kitchen scissors, wooden spoons, whisk etc.
- At higher star ratings more gadgets would be expected, e.g. food processor, bread mixer, pasta maker, electric whisk etc. and pestle and mortar.

Range of kitchen bowls, measuring jugs etc.

- Kitchen scales should be considered, depending on target market.
- At higher star ratings, guests may expect bakery items, such as cake tins, cooling racks, rolling pin, cutters, pie dishes, casserole dish etc.

Roasting tin(s) and other oven-proof trays, dishes etc.

Electric kettle and toaster

Range of saucepans (including one non-stick) and at least one frying pan

- Ensure adequate provision of large saucepans and frying pans if unit takes larger groups. Omelette pan might be appreciated.
- Ensure frying pans in very good condition.

Colander or sieve

Corkscrew and bottle opener

Tray(s)

Ice-making tray (unless ice making unit)

Vase(s)

Ashtrays (if smoking permitted)

Matches/lighter

Facility to dry clothes (airer or clothes line with pegs)

- Plastic/wicker laundry basket might be appreciated.

Vacuum/broom, floor mop & bucket, dustpan and brush, as appropriate depending on flooring

Basic supply of cleaning materials, washing-up liquid, toilet roll for each WC

- Guests might appreciate starter supply of dishwasher powder/tablets.

- At higher star ratings, operators might consider leaving kitchen roll, foil, cling film etc.

Iron and Ironing board

Oven Glove or Mitts

Supply of clean tea towels/kitchen towel

Spare light bulbs

Torch(es)

Tablecloth or place mats, as appropriate

- Consider plastic cloth(s) for dining table if you welcome families.
- Linen/cloth napkins may be appreciated by some guests.

Washing-up bowl with new sponge/disposable cloths/clean brush

Door mat at exterior door(s)

10.0 Additional Facilities

10.1 General

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

Sustainability Good Practice

- Laundry – washing machines and, in particular, dryers, can use significant quantities of energy. When replacing equipment choose an energy efficient model with lower running costs. Some businesses also invite guests to make a donation towards a local charity when making use of dryers as a means of moderating use without being prohibitive.
- Reception/shop/bar/restaurant – Use the opportunity to stock a range of the best locally produced food and drink (e.g. bacon, sausage, eggs, jams) and local crafts which can act as souvenirs and gifts.

11.0 Code of Conduct

The proprietor/management is required to undertake and observe the following Code of Conduct:

- To maintain standards of guest care, cleanliness and service appropriate to the type of establishment.
- To accurately describe in any advertisement, brochure or other printed or electronic media, the facilities and services provided.

- To make clear to visitors exactly what is included in all process quoted for accommodation, including taxes and any other surcharges. Details of charges for additional services/facilities should also be made clear.
- To give a clear statement of policy on cancellations to guest at the time of booking i.e. by telephone, fax, email as well as information given in a printed format.
- To adhere to, and not to exceed prices quoted at the time of booking for accommodation and other services.
- To advise visitors at the time of booking and subsequently of any change, if the accommodation is offered in an unconnected annex or similar and to indicate the location of such accommodation and any difference in comfort and/or amenities from accommodation in the establishment.
- To give each visitor on request details of payments due and a receipt, if required. To deal promptly and courteously with all enquiries, requests, bookings and correspondence from visitors.
- Ensure complaint handling procedures are in place and that complaints received are investigated promptly and courteously and that the outcome is communicated to the visitor.
- To give due consideration to the requirements of visitors with disabilities and visitors with special needs, and to make suitable provision where applicable.
- To provide Public Liability insurance or comparable arrangement and to comply with all applicable planning, safety and other statutory obligations in force.
- To allow a Visit Wales representative reasonable access to the establishment, on request, to confirm that the Code of Conduct is being fully observed.

12.0 Conditions for Participation

All establishments participating in the Visit Wales grading schemes are required to:

- Meet or exceed the Visit Wales minimum entry level requirements both in Facilities, Services and quality.
- Observe the Visit Wales Code of Conduct.
- Be assessed, and in the event of complaints by an authorised representative of Visit Wales.
- Pay an annual participation fee.
- Provide an access statement/accessibility guide.

13.0 Change of Ownership

When an establishment is sold, the existing rating cannot be transferred to the new owner. The new owner is required to make an application for participation in the Visit Wales star grading scheme.

14.0 Signage

Where an establishment, for whatever reason, ceases to participate in the Visit Wales grading scheme, all relevant display signs and print material must be removed immediately.

Use of all Star ratings should always be accompanied by the appropriate Visit Wales logo and the Visit Wales official designator.

Failure to observe these conditions may result in the establishment becoming ineligible to display or use the Visit Wales endorsement in any way whatsoever.

15.0 What to do if you disagree with the Star rating given

If you feel you have reason to disagree with the Star rating given to your property, or disagree with certain aspects of the Quality Assessor's report, then please get in touch with us as soon as possible after you receive your written report.

You can telephone our Aberystwyth team on 0845 0108020 or email us at quality.tourism@gov.wales and we will try to resolve your concerns.

Alternatively, you may wish to write to us at:
Quality Assurance Department, Visit Wales,
Welsh Government, Rhodfa Padarn,
Llanbadarn Fawr, Aberystwyth, SY23 3UR.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Quality Assurance
Visit Wales
Welsh Government
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