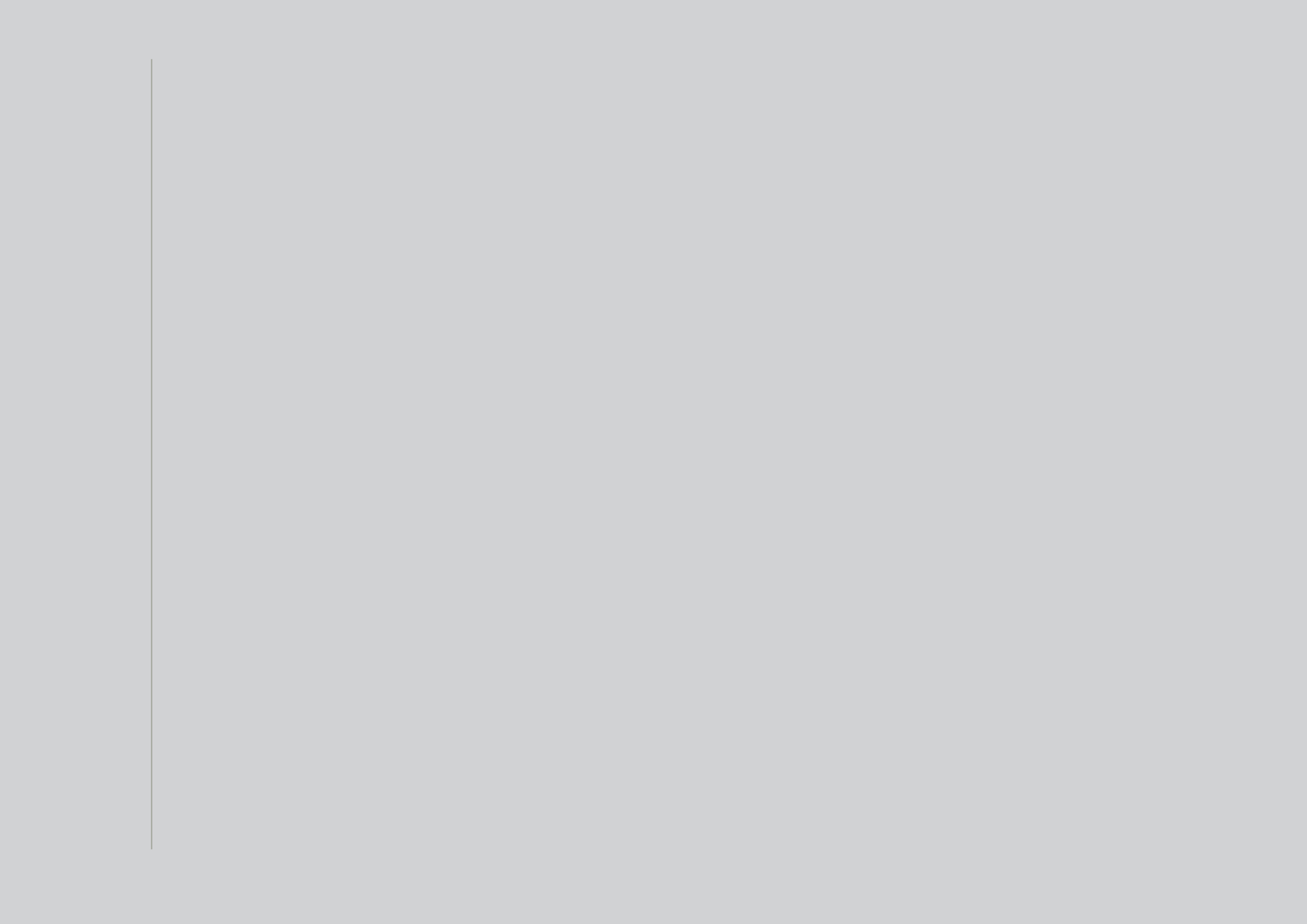




A Guide to the
Star Grading Scheme

**SERVICED APARTMENTS
ACCOMMODATION**



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1.0 Introduction

Having a quality product within Wales is seen as the most important factor in order for Wales to be able to offer a world class experience to its visitors and to be able to compete in the global market place. Visit Wales recognises this and is committed to working with the industry in order to ensure that our accommodation, whatever the type and style, remains competitive.

Consumers do consider a star rating important when choosing somewhere to stay or visit and through Visit Wales' range of Quality Grading Schemes, any consumer will be assured that any property that is proudly displaying an official recommendation from Visit Wales will have been visited to "check it out", before you check in or visit.

Raising standards is crucial to the future development of tourism in Wales, so we would encourage you to work with Visit Wales through whichever of our grading schemes best suits your style and type of property.

The Serviced Apartment grading scheme is similar to that of the self catering grading scheme in that there are 3 parts to the grading and has been produced in co-operation with VisitEngland.

However, there are facilities that are required at lower star grades compared with self-catering criteria and there are more service requirements.

Definition

Serviced apartments are often in purpose built blocks owned, partly owned or promoted by the serviced apartment operator. They will be situated in an urban location and the primary market is the corporate/business traveller although tourism can also be a key market.

Lettings may be available for short stays, but can and will often be primarily long stays. The apartments will offer home from home accommodation with an extended range of services such as concierge, daily cleaning if required, meals, secretarial service, laundry/dry cleaning depending on the star grade requirements.

In order to offer the services in the Serviced Apartments scheme it is unlikely that, normally, operators or agents with less than six serviced apartments can offer the services required.

N.B. Leaseholders should always have the permission of the Freeholder to use the property as a Serviced Apartment.

If your property cannot meet these requirements then please take a look at our [guide for self-catering accommodation – A Guide to the Self-Catering Accommodation Star Grading Scheme](#) – which may be more appropriate for your style of operation service. Details can be found on the grading section on the [Tourism page of the Business Wales website](#) – <https://businesswales.gov.wales/tourism>

The Grading Process

There are 3 parts to the grading and the lowest achieving part determines the final score;

- 1) **The overall percentage.** The minimum percentages for each star grade are gained by a score of 1-5.

Grade	Overall %	Cleanliness Overall %
★	35%	40%
★★	48%	50%
★★★	60%	65%
★★★★	75%	75%
★★★★★	87%	90%

- 2) **Sectional Consistency.** Cleanliness and the inner areas, living areas, bedrooms, bathroom(s) and kitchen all have to be of the grade desired, i.e. if a 4 star grade is required then all these areas would have to be of a 4 star grade with 75% minimum.
- 3) **The facility requirements.** There are minimum requirements and additional requirements at higher star levels.

1 Star

- A bathroom, WHB and WC for every 4 guests. 1:4 ratio and part thereof.
- If the apartment sleeps more than six the ratio of 1:4 to be maintained i.e. two guests use the en suite and a maximum of four for the other shared bathroom.
- Direct dial telephone provided Telephones displaying the apartment telephone number, the reception extension number and instructions on how to use any additional services such as telephone message services, apartment to apartment calls. Equivalent e.g. pre-paid mobiles and Skype accounts are acceptable.

3 Stars

- Washing machine provided in the apartment or central laundry facility (ratio of one machine to every five apartments) or 24 hour return laundry service (latter may be chargeable).

1.1 Exemptions

Visit Wales is aware that there are a small minority of types of buildings that simply cannot provide all facility requirements by virtue of their size or because they are "listed". Under such circumstances, a certain amount of flexibility will be allowed, **as long as the quality of the Star grade sought is provided and all sectional qualifier requirements are met**. All dispensations are given, "subject to consumer complaints." Your Quality Assessor will be happy to advise.

Where a Quality Advisor may draw your attention to examples of good practice – be it in a photo library or by mentioning examples on other neighbouring parks, these are intended to be helpful suggestions which you may decide to adopt. It is worth noting however they are only examples of where an item of provision has scored a high score, but other examples can score equally well. Sometimes being made aware of good examples can influence your own ideas.

1.2 Access Statement

What is an Access Statement? It is a clear, accurate and honest account of the services and facilities that disabled visitors can expect NOW, giving them the choice to be able to select the location that most suits their lifestyle.

NOTE: As a condition of being graded by Visit Wales, all businesses must develop an access statement and describe the levels of accessibility throughout the premises. It should be kept up to date to reflect changes that are made over time, and be available to potential guests. Making the Access Statement available on line is usually a good idea. For advice on how to write an Access Statement, please visit: www.visitbritain.org/business-advice/make-your-business-accessible/create-accessibility-guide

<http://www.visitengland.org/access>

1.3 Accessibility Good Practice – Introduction

While the Access Statement describes what is available at present, most businesses know that the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) places a legal obligation on accommodation providers to, "where reasonable" remove barriers and improve accessibility for visitors. In many of the sections on the quality aspect of the assessment we have included guidance

notes to assist you in this objective. While certain suggestions will be more relevant to some than others, we are confident that you will find some achievable, no matter what the size of your business. Hopefully our suggestions will provide you with some practical guidance on becoming more inclusive but please remember that they are by no means exhaustive.

The good practice guidance will be placed in the quality guidance part of this book, at the most appropriate part of the section to which it applies.

1.4 Sustainability Good Practice – Introduction

Protecting and preserving our planet from the destructive effects on the natural environment of our modern lifestyle, concerns a growing number of people. We want to invite you to consider (if you are not already doing so) how you might incorporate small changes in the way that you run your business so you can show visitors that you are adopting a sustainable management approach to green issues. Such an approach can help improve the experience of your paying guests and at the same time help the local economy in which you operate. It can make good business sense, by reducing your costs and increasing your profits.

As with the advice on access, this advice is not exhaustive and if you wish to benefit from further advice on this issue, please contact the Welsh Government's business advisory service using the enquiry form found at <https://businesswales.gov.wales/tourism/sustainable-toolkit> or telephone 03000 6 03000.

1.5 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 Minimum Entry Requirements

In order to be recognized within the Serviced apartments grading, an operator must meet all the minimum entry requirements listed. These are the equivalent of a 1 Star rating.

To obtain a higher quality grade it will be necessary to meet both the level of quality and condition specified in the quality indicators for that Star Level and any additional requirements specified. For example to obtain a rating of Three Star, all the minimum entry requirements for One Star and Two Star should be met along with any additional requirements for Three Star.

2.1 General Requirements

Minimum Entry Requirements

Statutory Obligations

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
- Water Supplies regulations
- Housing
- TV Licensing

Discrimination

- Sex Discrimination
- Race Discrimination
- Disability Discrimination
- Age Discrimination

Records

- Data Protection
- Immigration Hotel Records
- Consumer protection

Trade Descriptions

- Advertising
- Pricing
- Unfair contract terms

Operators 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.

General

- In assessing the acceptability of 'enclosed' floor area available, assessors will take account of usable space around furnishings and fittings. It is unlikely that the minimum requirements will be met where accommodation is less than the following: 18.60 sq m (200 sq ft) for a 2 person apartment plus 7.40 sq m (80 sq ft) for each additional person normally accommodated. Enclosed floor area includes living, sleeping, cooking and bathroom areas.
- Consideration should be given to freedom of movement, the ceiling height for the major part of the room to be sufficient for a person of 183 cm (6 ft) to move around without stooping. Sloping eaves and roofs are acceptable providing these do not restrict guests' movements to an unacceptable degree.
- Additionally, for a Star rating higher than the base level of One Star, floor area available will need to be greater with significantly more usable space around furnishings and fittings.
- There must be reasonable space for movement in bedrooms/sleeping and living room areas and for easy access to beds, doors and drawers.
- Doors and drawers to be fully openable. Account should be taken of space needed for convertibles, e.g. bed settees etc.
- All fixtures, furniture, furnishings, crockery and cutlery to be adequate for the maximum number of occupants, including any extra sleeping accommodation.

Self Contained

- All apartments must be totally self-contained*.

*What does Self-Contained mean?

A self-contained apartment must have its bedroom(s), bathroom(s), public areas and kitchen all contained behind one main door, where occupants have sole access.

2.2 Maintenance

Minimum Entry Requirements

- All electrical and gas or oil fired equipment must meet all relevant statutory obligations

(see previous page), be safely maintained, in good working order and serviced regularly and/or pat tested as appropriate.

- Fixtures, furnishings, floor coverings and fittings must also meet all relevant statutory obligations, particularly in relation to fire safety (see general requirements). These must be maintained in a sound, clean condition and be fit for the purpose intended.
- The exterior should be free from hazards on roads and pathways and the building itself.

2.3 Health, Safety and Security

Minimum Entry Requirements

- A high degree of general safety and security maintained, including information on procedures in the event of an emergency.
- If the proprietor or appointed representative is not resident on the premises, his/her name, address and telephone number or that of his/her 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 and casualty unit and vets (if pets accepted) or 24 hour concierge service provided.
- All apartments to be provided with suitable refuse disposal arrangements. Dustbins, where provided, must have lids. Arrangements for refuse collection to be specified and prominently displayed.
- Occupiers to be provided with a key to the entrance door of their apartment, and where applicable a key giving access to the building and any other relevant facilities.
- At least one smoke alarm to be provided in all apartments, situated appropriately within a hallway or landing area. Larger apartments or those with a more unusual layout may require more than one alarm. (Advice may be sought from local fire prevention officer.)
- The operation must have fire fighting equipment and notices subject to the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005, which requires each property/business to have a fire risk assessment carried out by the owner/responsible person with subsequent action taken as appropriate to remove and reduce the risk.
- 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.

- All mains services should be available.
- An adequate number of power sockets to be provided, commensurate with the number of electrical appliances provided.
- Some form of emergency lighting to be available, e.g. torch or emergency lighting. Candles are not acceptable for fire safety reasons.
- A proprietary first aid kit must be readily available in accommodation.

2.4 Exterior

Minimum Entry Requirements

Appearance of Buildings

- Buildings maintained in a sound and clean condition.

Grounds and Gardens

- Gardens and/or open areas that are part of the unit maintained in good order.
- If the property has ancillary areas, the facilities provided will be taken into account in the assessment of the establishment, where under the control of the operator. They should be well surfaced, in good condition and adequately lit.

2.5 Cleanliness

Minimum Entry Requirements

- Cleanliness is of paramount importance to guests, so a high standard of cleanliness must be achieved and maintained throughout the property. Particular attention must be given to kitchens, bathrooms, shower rooms and toilets and items involving direct contact for guests, such as bedding, linen, towels, baths, showers, washbasins, WCs, flooring, seating, crockery, cutlery, glassware, kitchen utensils and equipment.
- It is the operator'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.
- Weekly cleaning service as a minimum.
- Daily cleaning service to be available, may be chargeable.

Additional Requirements

5 Stars

- Minimum 5 out of 7 days daily cleaning service included in the letting price.

2.6 Management Efficiency

Minimum Entry Requirements

Bookings and Prices Applicable to brochures and websites

- To 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, linen, towels, cots etc.
- The price agreed at the time of booking must not be exceeded.
- All agreed prices must include service charges and other surcharges.
- At all levels guests will be greeted and acknowledged in a friendly, efficient and courteous manner throughout their stay.

There should be an easy and efficient booking service that includes the following:

- Prospective visitors told clearly what is included in the prices quoted for accommodation, meals and refreshments, including service charge and other surcharges.
- Other information which may impact on the guests' stay, e.g. smoking policy, refurbishment work in progress, planned functions/events etc. provided. Where house policy dictates that certain facilities need to be pre-booked, e.g. spa treatments, dinner etc., these should also be mentioned at the time of booking.
- Full details of the cancellation policy if there is one. This especially includes information about charging credit cards for cancellation or changes to the booking.
- Information about deposits if required, including details of how the deposit is taken and whether or not it is refundable on cancellation.
- Clear explanation of charges for additional services or available facilities including cancellation terms.
- Information about any unacceptable types of payment e.g. credit cards, travellers cheques etc.
- Information and full details about any fees charged for the acceptance of credit cards.

- Full details of accommodation, including sleeping arrangements and bathroom (whether it is equipped with a bath or a shower) provided in writing or printed form in advance of normal 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
- Where bookings can be made in person the operator should display their prices/tariff for each type and size of apartment. These may be either "per person" or "per apartment".
- Printed (or type written) brochure or information leaflet to be available. A floor plan is encouraged. Arrangements for access to the property communicated pre-arrival.

The following information readily available prior to booking:

- Car parking arrangements near apartment.
- If pets are accepted or not and any costs involved.
- Distance of apartment from nearest shop(s), etc.
- Distance of apartment from nearest public transport.
- Types of energy supply if not electric.
- Electricity voltage, if not standard.
- A map and/or directions provided showing the location of the apartment on booking or with brochure. (This may be provided in more detail after booking).
- An Inventory on request.

Departure

- Visitors provided with details of payments due and a receipt if required. The receipt to be clearly presented and well laid out.

Guest and tourist information

- Tourist information to be available.
- See also section entitled Health, Safety and Security.

Additional Requirements

Arrival General

3 Stars

- Hot beverage making ingredients to be provided enough for one night at least.

3 Stars

An additional two items from the following list should be provided:

- Tumble drier

- Wifi or internet connection in the apartment
- Hi – Fi/stereo system
- DVD recorder

4 Stars

- Breakfast ingredients (continental as a minimum) to be provided for one night (may be chargeable).

5 Stars

- 24 Hour concierge/manned reception.
- Direct dial telephone to be provided in each apartment.

2.7 Communal Public Areas

Minimum Entry Requirements

General

- All areas with sufficient space to allow guests freedom of movement around all furniture and fittings.
- Easy chair and/or sofa seats provided, sufficient for all relevant purposes.
- No-smoking notices clearly displayed.

Lifts

- A lift is required where there is an apartment three or more floors higher or lower than the main entrance level floor.
- Dispensation may be possible at all star levels in older buildings and/or architecturally listed buildings where it can be shown that fitting a lift is impractical or not allowed.

Additional Requirements

3 Stars

- A lift is required when there is an apartment two or more floors higher or lower than the main entrance level floor.

4 Stars

- A lift is required when there is an apartment one or more floors higher or lower than the main entrance level floor.

5 Stars

- It is expected that a lift will be provided to all floors in the main building.

Minimum Entry Requirements

Décor and Flooring

- All rooms/areas, passages and staircases must have suitable decoration and flooring finishes or coverings.

Furniture, Furnishings and Fittings

- All furniture, flooring and fittings appropriate to the use and style of the apartments and kept in a well maintained condition.

Heating, Lighting and Ventilation

- Adequate means of heating must be available at all times.
- All living areas must be adequately lit and lights must have shades (unless bulbs are decorative e.g. candle). Minimum lighting levels acceptable are 140 watts (cumulative) or low wattage equivalent for living areas.
- Greater wattage and range of lighting will be expected in larger rooms/areas for safety and convenience.

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

- All public areas to be adequately ventilated so no residual cooking or other smells are evident.

2.8 Living and Dining Areas

Minimum Entry Requirements

General

- All rooms with sufficient space to allow guests freedom of movement around all furniture and fittings including sofa beds. Rooms may be small but careful planning ensures best use of space.
- The ceiling height for the major part of the room sufficient for a person of 6ft to move around without stooping. Sloping eaves and roofs acceptable provided they do not impinge on a major part of the room.
- When we assess the acceptability of room size, we will take into account the useable space available around furniture and fittings, including sofa beds. There should be no restriction of free movement.
- Dining table and seating facilities for the maximum number of occupants.
- 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 occupants. All easy seating to be provided in the main lounge/lounges.

- A digital colour TV to be provided where a digital TV signal is available.
- Direct dial telephone provided or equivalent e.g. pre-paid mobiles. Telephones displaying the apartment telephone number, the reception extension number and instructions on how to use any additional services such as telephone message services, apartment to apartment calls.
- Telephone rate information illustrating typical charges for local, long-distance, international, internet and connection to mobile phones to be available in each apartment.

Apartment operators are expected to provide, as a minimum, the following information to guests:

- The cost of one 5 minute local call at peak rate.
- The cost of one 5 minute local call at off-peak rate.
- The cost of one 5 minute long distance call at peak rate.
- The cost of one 5 minute long distance call at off-peak rate.
- The cost of one 5 minute international call at peak rates, e.g. USA.
- The cost of one 5 minute international call at off-peak rate, e.g. USA.

In addition, an explanation of what constitutes a local and long distance call should be given as well as a clear explanation of peak and off peak.

- Non-flammable waste paper bins provided in living areas.

Flooring

- All rooms/areas, passages and staircases must have suitable finishes or coverings.

Furniture, Furnishings and Fittings

- All exterior windows in living areas fitted with opaque curtains, blinds or shutters. Glass in exterior/interior 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 as sleeping accommodation).
- Where there is sleeping accommodation in living areas, there must be adequate storage for bedding and guests' clothes.

Heating, Lighting and Ventilation

- Adequate means of heating must be available at all times, which will mean heating will be provided in living areas. Extra heating available on request.
- All living room areas to have at least one window opening directly into the open air. Air conditioning provided where windows are not openable.
- All living areas must be adequately lit and lights must have shades (unless bulbs are decorative e.g. candle). Minimum lighting levels acceptable are 140 watts (cumulative) or low wattage equivalent for living areas.
- Greater wattage and range of lighting will be expected in larger rooms.

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

2.9 Bedrooms

Minimum Entry Requirements

General

- All bedrooms with sufficient space to allow guests freedom of movement around all furniture and fittings including sofa beds. Rooms may be small but careful planning ensures best use of space.
- The ceiling height for the major part of the room sufficient for a person of 6 ft to move around without stooping. Sloping eaves and roofs acceptable provided they do not impinge on a major part of the room.
- When we assess the acceptability of bedroom size, we will take into account the useable space available around furniture and fittings, including sofa beds. There should be no restriction of free movement.
- Family rooms should be more spacious.
- Doors and drawers fully openable without having to move furniture.

Flooring

- All rooms must have suitable floor finishes or coverings.

Furniture, Furnishings and Fittings

- A bedside table/shelf and light for each occupant, including bunk beds (twin beds

may share a table and light and top bunk to have light but a top shelf should be provided only where safe to do so).

- Non-flammable waste bins to be provided.
- A dressing table (or equivalent) with mirror, wardrobe or clothes hanging rail and adequate drawer space in each apartment (shelf space is an acceptable alternative to drawers), in at least one double or twin room, to be provided. Hooks on backs of doors etc are not acceptable, garments should be able to hang free.
- Six hangers per person. Wire hangers are not acceptable.

Beds and Bedding

- Minimum bed sizes, including sofa beds and bunks, as follows:
Single: 190cms x 90cms/6ft 3ins x 3ft
Double: 190cms x 137cms/6ft 3ins x 4ft 6ins
122cms/4ft beds to be designated as singles.
- 76cms/2ft 6ins beds are unacceptable, except in family rooms where they are clearly designated for children only.
- Sofa beds are not acceptable as permanent bed spaces.
- Bunk beds (permanent bed spaces) are acceptable for children only to sleep in. When bunk beds are used, guests told when they make the booking.
- Access to both sides of beds for double occupancy.
- At least one adult room without bunk beds.
- All mattresses sprung or foam or similar quality and in sound clean condition. Bedding must be clean and well aired.
- Bedding supplied in sufficient quantity i.e. bedspread and two blankets per bed or one duvet of suitable tog rating (minimum 10 tog), and two pillows per person. For winter, late or early season letting, the amount of bedding should be increased. Bedding clean and well aired.
- 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).
- All beds to be made up for guests arrival
- Bed linen provided and changed for all new occupants and weekly change offered during the letting period. Spare linen and bedding available on request. Sheets must be poly-cotton or cotton.

- Where a bedroom is accessed via another bedroom, then this must be clearly advertised in the brochure.
- Where a bathroom is accessed via a bedroom (not including enSuites), then these apartments must be designated, and advertised in the brochure, as only being suitable for single family occupation.

Additional Requirements

4 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).

5 Stars

- All beds are to be generously sized i.e. Double of 5' and singles all 3' including beds for children. (excludes 'Z' beds used on a temporary basis for children only).
- Digital television provided in the master bedroom.

(It is unlikely that where a bedroom or bathroom is accessed via another bedroom that this would ever achieve Five Star).

Galleried Bedrooms

- Where a property accommodates only two people, any rating can be achieved. The galleried bedroom must be advertised as such in the brochure finishes or coverings.
- Where the property accommodates more than two guests and there is a galleried bedroom, this must be clearly advertised in the brochure. The highest rating that could be achieved is Four Star. This is due to lack of privacy, light exclusion and noise interruption.

Heating, Lighting and Ventilation

- Means of heating must be available at all times which will, in most cases, mean heating to be provided in each bedroom.
- All bedrooms must be adequately lit and lights must have shades. Minimum lighting levels 140 watts. (Cumulative) or low wattage equivalent. Greater wattage and range of lighting will be expected in larger rooms.

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

- All bedrooms to have at least one window opening directly into the open air; windows to have opaque curtains, blinds or shutters. Air conditioning to be provided where windows are not able to be opened.

2.10 Bathrooms and WCs

General

- All apartments to have at least one bathroom and WC for every four guests. The bathroom to be equipped with a bath or shower, bathmat, towel rail (pegs and hooks are not acceptable), 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.
- Where there is not both a bath and shower, this must be indicated in the brochure and website.
- Unless ensuite, access through a bedroom to the bathroom is not acceptable, except where the apartment is for single family occupation.

What is an en suite?

- It consists of a bath or shower, WC and washbasin within a properly ventilated room, connected to a bedroom and entered directly from it.
- Washbasin in main bathroom to be a minimum of 36cm x 24cm (14" x 9") internal, although a standard size washbasin is always recommended where space allows. (Additional basins offered in ensuites or separate WC's where basin in main bathroom complies, could be of a smaller dimension.)
- A mirror above or adjacent to the washbasin.
- All apartments to have at least one WC. All WC;s equipped with toilet paper 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 WC's must also have opaque curtain or blind).
- A means to provide hot water available.
- A lock or bolt to be provided on all bathroom/WC doors which are not en-suite.
- A shaver point adjacent to mirror, preferably with light. An adapter elsewhere in the apartment is an acceptable alternative, providing it can be used close to a mirror.
- Towels (one hand and one bath towel per person) provided without extra charge and changed at least weekly and for each new guest.

- Fresh bar of soap for each new guest (liquid soap can be an alternative).

Additional Requirements

3 Stars

- Where more than four guests are accommodated a shower should be available. This must be hands free, but can be fitted over a bath e.g. mixer tap.
- Small range of toiletries and toilet paper provided for guests on arrival.

4 Stars

- If an apartment sleeps more than four guests, the Bathroom/WC ratio of 1:4 is to be maintained.
- If sleeping more than four guests, two bathrooms will be required with WC, washbasin and bath or shower. At least one of the bathrooms must have a bath and at least one must have a shower.

5 Stars

- Bath and shower available in the main bathroom. (Exceptions may be made for level entry showers built specifically for use by guests with mobility impairment).
- Where there is more than one bedroom, at least one should contain an en-suite bathroom.
- If the apartment sleeps more than six the ratio of 1:4 to be maintained i.e. two guests use the ensuite and a maximum of four for the other bathroom.
- Towels to be changed twice a week, subject to an environmental policy.
- Range of toiletries provided on arrival. They are to be topped up continually if requested. (May be chargeable).

Minimum Entry Requirements

Flooring

- All bathrooms/WCs must have suitable floor coverings. Consideration should be given to the suitability of floor coverings for hygiene and housekeeping reasons.

Heating, Lighting and Ventilation

- Heating to be provided in all bathrooms where there is an external window. A heated towel rail is acceptable.
- All bathrooms/WCs must be adequately lit and all lights must have shades or be suitably protected.

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

- All bathrooms and WCs to have an opening window or Local Planning Authority approved ventilation system.

Additional Requirements

5 Stars

- Heated towel rail or some way of providing dry towels on request.

2.11 Kitchen

Minimum Entry Requirements

General

- 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 people only are accommodated, then two boiling rings plus oven and grill must be provided. For any larger numbers i.e. six 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.
- Cookers to be clean and in sound condition and functioning properly.
- Microwave oven to be provided, and microwave cookware or compatible crockery.
- A refrigerator with an ice making compartment (unless a freezer is also provided). Larder 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.

- The operation must have fire fighting equipment and notices subject to the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005, which requires each property/business to have a fire risk assessment carried out by the owner/responsible person with subsequent action taken as appropriate to remove and reduce the risk.
- Storage space suitable for food.
- Where a dishwasher is provided, crockery, cutlery and utensils should be dishwasher safe. Extra crockery should also be provided, so 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.

Additional Requirements

3 Stars

- Washing machine provided in the apartment or central laundry facility (ratio of one machine to every five apartments) or 24 hour return laundry service (latter may be chargeable).

4 Stars

- Washing machine provided in the apartment. Laundry and dry cleaning services on request (may be chargeable). i.e. guests do not have to use a launderette.
- Freezer space available in the apartment (3*** icebox in a fridge is acceptable).
- Dishwasher or free of charge dish washing service provided within the apartment (consider size for number the apartment accommodates). Small supply of dishwashing tablets initially provided and advertised as such.

5 Stars

- Freezer provided within the apartment (icebox not acceptable at this level).
- Washing machine provided in the apartment. (24 hour return laundry service also acceptable – not chargeable).
- Dishwasher provided within the apartment (consider size for number the apartment accommodates).

Flooring

- All kitchens must have suitable floor finishes or coverings. Consideration should be given to the suitability of floor coverings for housekeeping and hygiene reasons.

2.12 Kitchen Inventory

Per person

All crockery must be matching.

Sets of glasses should also be matching.

- Bowl – cereal/dessert
- Plate – large and small
- Mug
- Tumbler
- Wine glass
- Knives* – table and side
- Spoons – soup, dessert and tea
- Forks* – table and dessert

*Knives and forks – it is acceptable to provide double the amount i.e. two of each.

All crockery must be matching; as should the set of glasses.

Consideration should be given to the number of items provided in respect of guest's visitors and the minimum and maximum number of occupants.

Per apartment

- Ashtrays (if smoking permitted) or no smoking information.
- Baking tray
- Bread bin/container
- Bread knife
- Carving knife
- Chopping Board
- Colander
- Condiment set (salt and pepper)
- Corkscrew and bottle opener
- Cutlery box, rack or drawer divider
- Dish cloth and or washing up brush
- Dustpan and brush
- Frying pan
- Ice tray
- Kettle – automatic – ideally cordless
- Kitchen scissors
- Mixing bowl
- Oven Cloth
- Place mats
- Potato peeler
- Saucepans (large, medium and small with lids). More if larger numbers than 6 accommodated in the apartment.
- Storage container for biscuits etc
- Table spoon
- Tea towels with hooks, rails or suckers
- Tin opener
- Toaster
- Tray

- Utensil storage e.g. rack. Pot or divided drawer
- Vegetable knife
- Washing up bowl
- Washing up liquid/dishwasher tablets
- Wooden spoon/plastic spoon
- Basic clothes drying facilities e.g. clothes horse or line or tumble dryer
- Broom
- Bucket
- Cafetiere or coffee maker
- Casserole dish with lid
- Teapot

To be in apartments or available on request from reception. If there is no reception then have to be provided in the apartments.

- Bread bin/bread storage container
- Cheese grater
- Egg cups
- Fish slice
- Iron and ironing board
- Measuring jug
- Oven cloth or mitts
- Spare light bulbs
- Vacuum cleaner
- Water jug
- Whisk

3.0 Guidance on the quality expected for achieving a specific quality score

Quality Grading

The sections in this part of the guide follow the order of the grading form and it tells you about what the Quality Assessor marks under each item on the form. It provides you with an indication of what is expected at the various levels of quality (level 1 equates to the minimum level, i.e. acceptable quality, level 5 – Excellent to Exceptional quality), as it applies to that aspect of the property. It should help you to understand what guides our Quality Assessor to give a particular score.

Please note that these Quality Indicators are representative, **but they are neither definitive nor prescriptive.**

Advice

At the end of some sections, you'll see a paragraph is included, giving overall advice on that aspect of the property. Its purpose is to offer suggestions on how quality can be

improved and enhanced, to help you either achieve or maintain a rating, but following it will not in itself guarantee a higher quality grade. Our Quality Assessors can if necessary, offer further advice, specific to your own property either during your grading inspection or in the follow-up report. The Quality Assessors are trained to not consider their personal tastes in style or design.

The 1 – 5 Star referred to here are not star requirements but are indicative of what level of quality might gain a certain score.

1 Star Quality (1 point)

Factors that indicate the minimum level of quality equivalent to One Star. Items may be described as acceptable. Everything must be safe, clean and in working order. There should be no outstanding need for immediate repair and maintenance.

2 Stars Quality (2 points)

Factors that indicate a quality level commensurate with Two Stars.

Items may be described as Fair to Good. At this level items may be limited in range but offer a good standard of cleanliness and be in good working order.

3 Stars Quality (3 points)

Factors that indicate a quality level commensurate with Three Stars. Items may be described as Good to Very Good. There may be some evidence of wear and tear but still displaying a well maintained standard of maintenance both in facilities and decoration.

4 Stars Quality (4 points)

Factors that indicate a quality level commensurate with Four Stars. Items may be described as Very Good to Excellent with no obvious signs of wear and tear in the facilities provided.

5 Stars Quality (5 points)

Factors that indicate a quality level commensurate with Five Stars. Items may be described as Excellent to Exceptional. The overall standard of the fabric of the building, both internally and externally will be very high, together with excellent standards of management.

3.1 Exterior

Appearance of Buildings

Quality Guidance

The décor, maintenance and repair of the building will be assessed under this section. This includes stonework, woodwork, paintwork, gutters, fall pipes, external plumbing, chimneys and roofs. External signage attached to the building (clarity and maintenance) and lighting is taken into account here. Any outbuildings and storage areas e.g. refuse areas will be assessed here as well. Window boxes, tubs and hanging baskets attached to the building will also be assessed under this heading.

One Star

- Exteriors maintained in a sound, inviting and clean condition, overall.
- Signage may be discreet to best suit the target market.
- Some signs of ageing may be present and small defects to stone or brickwork.
- Overall tidiness of immediate area including storage buildings/areas.

Two Star

- Signs of ageing and defects should be limited to a small number of areas.

Three Star

- Well maintained – weathering might be present.
- No obvious structural defects.
- Where displayed, signs to be maintained in good condition.

Four Star

- High quality maintenance of stonework and paintwork, some natural weathering may be present.

Five Star

- Excellent standards of external maintenance including: outbuildings and signs e.g. fresh well maintained paint work, no unsightly staining to stonework.
- Addition of features such as flower tubs and window boxes where appropriate.
- Attractive architectural features may be in evidence.
- Well illuminated generally and particularly at entrance.
- Entry phone system or similar expected.

Grounds, gardens, roadways and car parking

Quality Guidance

If the property has no grounds, gardens or parking this section is not assessed. Assessment of this area will include garden areas, hedges, paths, driveways, parking and all other areas within the boundaries of the property and which are visible from the property or guests have access to and which are under control of the owner.

One Star

- An adequate first impression, e.g. refuse bins discreetly positioned.
- Immediate surroundings maintained so as not to detract from overall appearance e.g. lawns and borders not overgrown.
- Dustbin areas not visible preferably screened.
- Parking to be on a hard surface and pothole and weed free.
- Some attempt to define parking area.
- Reasonably easy access, safe and adequately maintained parking. If parking not available, information provided for potential guests on where to park.

Two Star

- Evidence of more effort made to make gardens more attractive and tidy and litter free.
- Pathways without trip hazards.

Three Star

- Well maintained and tidy overall appearance of grounds, gardens driveways and footpaths etc.
- Easy access to parking with well maintained surface and clear definition.
- Effective lighting where required e.g. long driveway or path to the property. Parking area may also require light.
- Consideration given to the security of guests' cars.

Four Star

- High standards of maintenance of garden. Generally tidy beds, pathways and hedges and all trees and shrubs, well tended.
- Evidence of some attention to detail e.g. well surfaced, colourful borders and wide level pathways.
- Parking area to be on well maintained surface and preferable close to the property.

Five Star

- Maintained to an excellent standard e.g. well tended borders or shrubs, tidy pathways and edges in good condition and well cut, hedges trimmed and an overall attempt to maintain the appearance throughout the year.
- Attention to detail, including landscaping, driveways, the provision of garden furniture or architectural features, e.g. gazebo, pergola, summer house etc.
- Ample car parking spaces adjacent to unit to accommodate likely number of guests.
- Good, well positioned lighting.

Accessibility Good Practice

Keep paths clear of, debris, moss, ice and fallen leaves and ensure that path surfaces are firm and well-maintained. All routes to be free from obstacles unless securely fixed e.g. flower pots.

Make available grit/salt in winter months for treating hazardous areas.

Where the parking is shared with other apartments, provide a designated (or at least reservable) space for disabled people where possible, on a firm, level and well-maintained surface close to the person's accommodation. Alternatively, identify a drop-off or setting down point and a means for guests to contact you to signify their arrival and to let you know if they require assistance. Some people may be profoundly deaf so remember that they may not be able to hear you respond. Think about a visual means of acknowledging that you have heard them such as flashing a torch.

The route from the parking area to the accommodation or reception point, where present, should be a minimum 180cms wide and well illuminated.

At least one handrail should be provided on steps, with highlighted edges and where possible an alternative level or ramped route with at least a 1:15 gradient provided. The more shallow the ramp, the better for everyone, not just wheelchair users.

Whether visitors arrive directly at the apartment or at a reception point make sure that it is clearly identifiable and well illuminated. This will be reassuring and create a good first impression.

Where visitors have to let you know they have arrived, provide an external call button or entry telephone with large print instructions and sound amplification. Remember that some people may be profoundly deaf.

Sustainability Good Practice

For grounds, gardens and frontages, consider using materials that are in keeping with the local environment and physical characteristics of the local geography and geology.

3.2 Environment

Quality Guidance

A reflection of the positive or negative aspects of the location of the property and surrounding area that could affect the guests' comfort. Personal preference is avoided. Consideration will be given to efforts made to overcome a poor environment by screening or banking to reduce any unsightly outlook and noise e.g. double-glazing.

One Star

- Satisfactory first impression. Just about acceptable noise levels from traffic or industrial or rural sources.

Two Star

- At a road junction/roundabout on busy road in suburbs of a city. Close to industrial units with noise of manufacturers and traffic. Next door to busy social venue e.g. Bingo hall, football ground. In area of noticeable social deprivation. Within hearing distance of airport, where no attempt has been made to provide extra sound insulation. On a crowded site where units are close together.

Three 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 distant noise.
- In a secluded location, with difficult access e.g. steep, rough track. Pleasing first impression. No excessive noise levels. Parking quite a way from the property.

Four Star

- Possibly part of a complex or site of buildings in an otherwise excellent location. Close to desirable amenities but accessed by, for example, a rather busy one-way system, with some ambient traffic noise. Within walking distance of facilities, but where parking is freely available. Generally in location that would be considered excellent were it not for some factor of inconvenience that detracts from an excellent score.

Five Star

- Often a secluded situation in extensive grounds, or an elevated position with extensive views. Urban environment, close to center of social/cultural activity such as city centre, with excellent pedestrian access or public transport to restaurants, theatres, concert halls, galleries.

Advice

First impression is important, so grounds, gardens parking and driveways should be kept as weed free and tidy as possible. Consider the market your property serves; for families, formal flower beds and ponds may not be suitable and grass may need to be a more resilient variety. Couples however, may appreciate colourful, well-stocked gardens. Where properties are situated close together or close to the owner's property, guests may prefer some kind of screening in an attempt to provide privacy. Where wild and domestic animals are free to wander, guests may enjoy this aspect, but may not enjoy the mess they leave behind.

3.3 Cleanliness

Quality Guidance

Public areas (this includes common parts public areas and living and dining rooms within apartments etc)

Windows, flooring and skirtings, stair treads, dado/picture rails and pictures, under seat cushions, inside and outside of furniture, power points and light switches, light fittings ceiling edges and electrical goods.

Bedrooms

Inside and outside of furniture (tops and inside of wardrobes), light fittings and ceiling edges, flooring and skirtings, under beds, windows, bed heads, frames and mattresses.

Bathrooms

This includes wall finishes, flooring, equipment, shower curtains, light fittings, extractor fans, plug holes, taps and toilet brushes.

Kitchen

This includes flooring, walls, and tiling, inside of cupboards and drawers, equipment, crockery, pots, pans etc as well as cooker hoods, extractor fans, work surfaces, splash-backs and gaps between units.

One Star

- All surfaces and equipment clean and generally free from dust.
- All carpets vacuumed and floors cleaned.
- All areas smelling fresh and clean for guests' arrival.

Two Star

- Quite good standard overall although some areas overlooked e.g. cobwebs.

Three Star

- Evidence of attention to detail, particularly high and low level.
- Clean and fresh surfaces.
- Soft furnishings and carpets deep cleaned on a regular basis or as required.

Four Star

- Greater attention to detail, with high overall standards evident.
- Gleaming surfaces with evidence of thorough cleaning and a high level of attention to detail.

Five Star

- Excellent level of cleanliness.
- Pristine soft furnishings and carpets.
- A real sparkle in evidence everywhere.

Sustainability Good Practice

Consider using environmentally friendly and chlorine free cleaning products, such as micro fibre cloths that reduce the amount of cleaning liquid required.

3.4 Management Efficiency

Pre – arrival guest information including brochure

Quality Guidance

The procedures for dealing with guests during booking, pre-arrival, arrival and information provision for the guests to make the most of their stay are assessed here.

This also covers the information sent prior to booking which aims to inform the guest about the property and the locality. This may also include the operators and/or agents website for the property.

One Star

- Brochure/website may be a simple, typed sheet with basic information.
- Map/directions clear and easy to follow after booking.

- Confirmation letter sent by post.

Two Star

- Brochure/website may include more detail but could still be a single side.

Three Star

- Including one picture or sketch (may be black and white) with more detailed information.
- A letter of introduction may be included.

Four Star

- Brochure/website would contain photographs and usually be in colour, but may not be professionally produced.
- Well laid out informative brochure on quality paper.

Five Star

- Produced to a professional standard with extensive, clear information.
- Detailed, easy to follow directions sent after booking.
- Personal letter of introduction with accompanying tourist information.

Advice

A General indication of the properties location should be given, but detailed directions can be sent after the booking for security reasons.

Accessibility Good Practice

It is important to remember that people have different preferences for communicating and not every potential customer has internet access. Offer your guests the choice of how to book, e.g. by telephone, letter, email, fax, type talk and mini com, and it is always good practice to enquire of all visitors if they have any access requirements. This is even more important these days with on-line booking facilities resulting in bookings being able to be made without verbal contact between you and the guest.

Undertaking Disability Awareness Training will help make for a more responsive attitude to a guest's actual and perceived needs.

Information regarding additional services such as daily cleaning, meals, secretarial services and laundry/dry cleaning should be provided in a range of formats to satisfy different people's preferences, e.g. large print, Braille, photographs, MP3 downloads. Also, when you commission a new website or upgrade, make sure your designers are familiar with the web accessibility guidelines – www.w3.org

Sustainability Good Practice

Consider drafting your own environmental management policy, setting out the environmental and sustainable management actions taken; join a green tourism management scheme. Join or set up a voluntary visitor payback scheme where the business collects and donates funds to a local charity, alternatively, make a corporate donation to a local, environmental or educational charity.

Welcome and arrival procedures

Quality Guidance

This is the procedure used to welcome guests including arrangements for access e.g. key collection.

One Star

- It may not be possible to welcome guests personally so a key may be left securely for new arrivals.

Two Star

- Key could be obtained from key holder, but limited additional welcome activity.
- Welcome card inviting guests to contact owners or agent or representative at any time during the stay.

Three Star

- If a representative is on site to meet new arrivals, then they should be directed/ escorted to their apartment.

Four Star

- A personal welcome is given and also a welcome letter or a phone call or visit, some time after arrival to check all is well.

Five Star

- Guests greeted on arrival and a satisfaction check after 24 hours.
- Assistance automatically given with luggage.

Accessibility Good Practice

If there is no manned reception or concierge, consider providing a phone number or service phone to a contact point/key holder.

Where reception is manned, providing a well lit and uncluttered area will allow ease of access to the reception desk, and also consider providing seating for waiting guests – as space allows. It is also a good thing to provide a clipboard and pen and possibly a portable hearing loop to aid communication with those with hearing difficulties.

Where wheelchair users can access the premises, provide a low level portion to the reception desk or a separate table with a minimum clear space under tables of between 65cm and 75cm. A low pile carpet will help provide a quieter atmosphere for exchanging information and will aid mobility. Non-slip flooring and mats sunk into the floor will help prevent trips and slips.

Welcome pack or hamper

Quality Guidance

This includes the supply of beverage making ingredients and other provisions that will await guests on their arrival and tide them over for a short period of time.

One Star

- Basic beverage making ingredients i.e. tea, coffee, sugar, milk. May be in sachet form.

Two Star

- Better quality beverage making ingredients.

Three Star

- Wider range of hot drinks likely to be provided e.g. choice of teas and other drinks such as hot chocolate.
- Assistance automatically given with luggage.

Four Star

- Welcome pack to include for example cereals, juice, sufficient milk, sugar, bread and pastry items with butter and preserves to enable all guests to breakfast on their first morning.

Five Star

- Excellent quality foodstuffs and wider range of breakfast ingredients e.g. eggs, cheese, bacon, bread, butter etc. An extensive range of beverages all of high quality and may include a bottle of wine.

3.5 Guest and Tourist Information

In unit guest information and personal touches

Quality Guidance

This includes the provision and presentation of household information e.g. how to use the equipment, building information such as waste disposal and concierge hours, and also tourist information e.g. attractions leaflets.

Personal touches are those aspects which make the apartment more homely and welcoming such as plants, books, ornaments etc.

One Star

- Tourist Information for local and surrounding area. May be personal recommendations and could include nearest cash machines, restaurants, leisure centres, places of worship etc. Limited range of personal touches.
- Details provided of how to operate all equipment in the unit and refuse collection.

Two Star

- Reasonable selection of tourist information and not too out of date.
- Small range of items, e.g. books, DVDs, CDs etc.

Three Star

- Extended range of Tourist Information including places to eat, etc and normally up to date.
- Good standard of presentation for household information.
- Wider range including books, games and magazines.
- Detailed guest information e.g. local shops, pubs, leisure facilities, churches etc.

Four Star

- A wide selection of tourist information for local area and further a field. Some organisation of leaflets would be expected.
- Additional information compiled by owners more than commercially produced leaflets. This could include information on local sporting and leisure activities, business services, locality of banks, shops, restaurants, theatres etc. particularly those selling local produce. This should be displayed in a loose leaf binder or in a rack. 'Concierge' services could be out sourced.
- Very good range of personal touches including books, games, mending kit, barbeque, plants and magazines.

Five Star

- Comprehensive information may include local interest books, ordnance survey maps, walking information etc. Concierge to be proactive and very knowledgeable.
- Excellent range of items, could include e.g. cookbooks, telephone directories, CDs, DVD's. Including blanks for recording onto.
- Comprehensive details presented to highest standard.

Advice

Think what you would like to know if you were a stranger in the area and list personal

recommendations for things such as restaurants, pubs, shops, walks etc. Tourist Information leaflets could be indexed, e.g. child-friendly, rainy day activities etc. You need to let the guest know it will be worth them returning, as there is so much to see and do.

Where a DVD or CD player are provided then a selection of CD's and DVD's could be included. If a DVD recorder is provided then blank DVD's and or some entertainment DVD's could be provided. In some areas it may be possible to purchase videos, DVD's on the local area and attractions, which guests may enjoy.

Sustainability Good Practice

The in – unit tourist information is your opportunity to list nearby outlets that sell locally sourced food, drink and local crafts, together with some information about those local producers. You could provide suggestions for car free days out and give details of public transport timetables and contact numbers to encourage this. Give information on walking and cycling routes and details of any local cycle hire facilities.

3.6 Communal Public Areas (Reception, lobby, stairways, corridors, lifts)

Decoration

Quality Guidance

As well as wall and ceilings, the provision and quality of pictures and prints and all wall decorations are assessed here. The assessment of the decoration of walls, ceilings and woodwork looks at the quality, application and condition. The assessor's personal tastes of style or design are not considered.

One Star

- Functional décor and limited co-ordination.
- Limited relief and adornment.

Two Star

- Competently applied décor of a quite good quality. Limited obvious blemishes.

Three Star

- Good interior, with evidence of co-ordinated design.
- Well finished, good quality wall coverings and paint work.
- Use of pictures etc., where appropriate, particularly on plain walls.

Four Star

- A professional standard of finish in very good condition with appropriate level of adornment as befits the style.

Five Star

- Excellent interior design and overall impression.
- High quality wall coverings in excellent condition; professional finish to all aspects of decoration.
- Attractive use of pictures, prints and other decorative relief where appropriate.

Sustainability Good Practice

Use can be made of local artists' work, prints or photographs of images depicting local scenes, historical and heritage related images as it all adds to the visitor's sense of place.

Flooring

Quality Guidance

This includes all types of flooring such as carpets, laminate, ceramic, natural wood or vinyl. Assessment covers quality, condition and fitting.

One Star

- Adequate comfort to flooring, some signs of wear and tear may be evident. It should however, be professionally fitted.

Two Star

- Quite good quality, but carpets may have a high man made fibre content.
- Tiling should have little damage.

Three Star

- Good quality flooring in sound condition and comfortable under foot. Tiling to have clean grouting.
- Wooden floors in good condition.

Four Star

- High quality flooring, but not necessarily new, may show signs of wear or more moderate quality, but in pristine condition.
- If rugs are provided these should be high quality.

Five Star

- High quality flooring in excellent condition, No real signs of wear.

Furniture, furnishings and fittings

Quality Guidance

This includes the quality and condition of furniture including reception desk, occasional

tables, seating, scatter cushions, curtain poles, curtains, light fittings, heating appliances etc.

One Star

- A sparing but adequate provision of furniture, furnishings and fittings, in terms of quality and quantity.
- Some attempt at co-ordination.

Two Star

- Better use of occasional furniture.
- Curtains to be a better quality.

Three Star

- Good quality furniture.
- Good use of co-ordination.

Four Star

- High quality furniture which offers substantial comfort.
- Curtains likely to have additional embellishments such as tiebacks.

Five Star

- High quality modern, reproduction or antique furniture. Reception desk should be in keeping with this.
- Excellent co-ordination of furniture and fabrics.
- High degree of comfort.
- High quality soft fabrics.

Space, comfort and ease of use

Quality Guidance

This takes into account the use of space and how the building is planned to offer maximum convenience and ease of use for the guests. Is there somewhere in reception for guests to wait? Assessment covers quality, condition and fitting.

One Star

- Sufficient space for guests arriving with their luggage.
- Corridors and stairways in good repair and free from obstruction.
- Particular attention given to the maintenance of door handles, apartment numbers, brassware and glass panels.
- Clear directional signage to apartments and to lifts/exit as appropriate.

Two Star

- As One Star, but better quality.

Three Star

- Obvious reception desk with space for guests to check in.

Four Star

- Greater amount of space and comfort perhaps including seating for arriving and departing guests.

Five Star

- A clearly designated reception area.

Heating, lighting and ventilation

Quality Guidance

This relates to the quality and provision of lighting and heating and whether it is sufficient for the size of the area and the number of guests using that area. There should be a balance of natural and artificial light where appropriate.

One Star

- Adequate levels of lighting 24 hours a day, appropriately positioned (including stairs, landings and corridors).
- Heating levels appropriate to size of the space.
- All areas well ventilated.

Two Star

- Quite good levels of lighting.

Three Star

- Good levels of lighting in all areas including stairs, landing and corridors etc. There is likely to be more than one source of lighting in sitting areas e.g. wall, standard lamps. Ample natural light.
- Effective levels of heating providing overall uniform temperature.

Four Star

- Very good levels of lighting. There should be several forms of alternative lighting in sitting areas e.g. table lamps wall lights, picture lights etc.

Five Star

- Excellent lighting which creates a good effect and shows off the interior to its best advantage.
- Light should be practical for all purposes such as registration of guests etc.

Accessibility Good Practice

It is to everyone's benefit to screen exposed surfaces of heating equipment to protect occupants from burns.

Sustainability Good Practice

Improved insulation and greater use of thermostatically controlled heating and zoned heating can help save on energy use, and try to make as much use of natural light as possible.

Lifts

Quality Guidance

This includes all lifts which can be accessed by guests. If guests and service staff share lifts then this will also be taken into account.

One Star

- Assistance with luggage available on request when there is no lift to some floors.
- Where there is no lift to some floors, this should be made clear at the time of booking.

Two Star

- As One Star.

Three Star

- At this level, it is not only the provision of a lift that is important, but also the size, comfort, quality and speed.

Four Star

- As Three Star.

Five Star

- Where lifts are shared between guests and staff, priority should be given to guests at this level.

Accessibility Good Practice

Where lifts are provided it is not always economically or structurally possible to fit one to best practice guidelines but it is possible to retrospectively fit lifts with audible messages and raised letters and numbers on control panels. When a new lift is fitted, the preferred internal dimension is 120cm wide x 140cm deep with an 85cm door opening. A mirror on the rear wall assists a wheelchair user manoeuvre in and out.

3.7 The Apartment

Public areas (sitting and dining areas). Includes lounges, sitting rooms, conservatories and separate dining rooms.

Decoration

Quality Guidance

As well as wall and ceilings, the provision and quality of pictures and prints and all wall decorations are assessed here. The assessment

of the decoration of walls, ceilings and woodwork looks at the quality, application and condition. The assessor's personal tastes of style or design are not considered.

One Star

- Functional décor and limited co-ordination.
- Limited relief and adornment.

Two Star

- Competently applied décor of a quite good quality. Limited obvious blemishes.

Three Star

- Good interior, with evidence of co-ordinated design.
- Well finished, good quality wall coverings and paint work.
- Use of pictures etc., where appropriate, particularly on plain walls.

Four Star

- A professional standard of finish in very good condition with appropriate level of adornment as befits the style.

Five Star

- Excellent interior design and overall impression.
- High quality wall coverings in excellent condition; professional finish to all aspects of decoration.
- Attractive use of pictures, prints and other decorative relief where appropriate.
- Interesting architectural features, objects of interest, artwork, and objects' d'art.

Sustainability Good Practice

Use can be made of local artists' work, prints or photographs of images depicting local scenes, historical and heritage related images as it adds to the visitor's sense of place.

Flooring

Quality Guidance

This includes all types of flooring such as carpets, laminate, ceramic, natural wood or vinyl. Assessment covers quality, condition and fitting.

One Star

- Adequate comfort to flooring, some signs of wear and tear may be evident. Should be professionally fitted.

Two Star

- Quite good quality, but carpets may have a high man made fibre content.

- Tiling should have little damage.

Three Star

- Good quality flooring in sound condition and comfortable under foot. Tiling to have clean grouting.
- Wooden floors in good condition.

Four Star

- High quality flooring, but not necessarily new, may show signs of wear or more moderate quality, but in pristine condition.
- If rugs are provided these should be high quality.

Five Star

- High quality flooring in excellent condition. No real signs of wear.

Furniture, furnishings and fittings

Quality Guidance

This includes the quality and condition of dining and lounge furniture including, seating, scatter cushions, curtain poles, curtains, light fittings, heating appliances, televisions etc.

One Star

- A sparing but adequate provision of furniture, furnishings and fittings, in terms of quality and quantity.
- Some attempt at co-ordination.
- Curtains may be unlined, but should meet in the middle, blinds should run free.

Two Star

- A greater provision of furniture which may be dated or have wear but will be sound.
- Curtains/blinds to be a better quality, clean and run freely.

Three Star

- Good quality furniture. Cushions would be expected to enhance comfort and presentation of seating.
- Dining furniture to have some degree of padding.
- More substantial, lined curtains.
- Good use of co-ordination.
- Where separate dining area is provided, provision for maximum number of guests to dine in comfort.

Four Star

- High quality furniture, but which offers substantial comfort.
- Curtains to be full and may have additional embellishments such as tiebacks. Material blinds to be lined and easy to use.

Five Star

- High quality modern, reproduction or antique furniture. Where drop leaf table provided, able to be used with minimum inconvenience.
- Excellent co-ordination of furniture and fabrics.
- Excellent quality and well-fitted window covering with ample drape and width as appropriate.
- High quality soft fabrics.

Space, comfort and ease of use

Quality Guidance

This takes into account the use of space and how the room layout is planned to offer maximum convenience and ease of use for the guests. Can guests all sit and watch TV in comfort? Is there enough room for the maximum number of guests to all dine together? Does furniture have to be moved for the facilities to be used? The use of sofa beds will be taken into account here as this affects the comfort and ease of use.

One Star

- An acceptable range of furniture offering a degree of comfort.
- Reasonable space for free movement.
- Large or over provision of furniture may mean it dominates the room and normal usage.
- Rooms should be free from external noise disturbance and the provision of double glazing may be necessary to ensure this in urban locations.
- Minimal intrusive noise from plumbing, corridors etc.

Two Star

- Quite good levels of comfort and a limited range of seating.
- Easy use of all facilities.

Three Star

- Range of sofas and/or armchairs.
- Ample space for freedom of movement with convenient layout of furniture for practical use.

Four Star

- Well planned layout of furniture to maximise use of free space.
- Guests should be able to dine together in comfort in one location.
- Generous free space.

- Where there is an open plan kitchen/living area, there should be adequate ventilation e.g. forced extraction to ensure minimal intrusion in the living area from steam and cooking odours.

Five Star

- A lounge; generally separate from dining room or combined lounge/dining room both with excellent spacious layout.
- Excellent range of comfortable seating.
- Easy and convenient use of facilities, e.g. use of surfaces and access to power points etc.
- No intrusive noise.

Accessibility Good Practice

Aim for an uncluttered environment with clear space to move around without bumping into furniture. Keep all routes clear and well lit to allow safe passage when carrying luggage or using a walking frame or wheelchair.

Where wheelchair users have access to your property, try to provide a variety of chairs, some with arms and some without and clear space under tables-65 to 75cm.

Crockery that contrasts in colour to the table linen or surface will assist visually impaired guests.

A short pile carpet will provide a quieter atmosphere for exchanging information with a person who is hearing impaired and will be easier for a wheelchair user than deep pile carpet. Wheelchair users will almost always prefer a firm surface.

Try to avoid deep pile carpets that may cause trips or make it difficult for a wheelchair user to manoeuvre.

Non-slip flooring and mats sunk into the floor will prevent trips and slips.

On each step or change of level, provide a nosing strip that contrasts in colour to the floor.

At least one continuous handrail should be provided on steps and where changes in levels occur.

Ensure that all guests know how to display subtitles on the TV via the remote control. This will benefit not only the hearing impaired but also foreign language speaking guests.

Enable lighting levels to be adjusted using a dimmer switch and/or make additional table lamps available. It will benefit everyone if radiator surfaces are protected by casings to prevent burns.

Lighting and heating

Quality Guidance

This relates to the quality and provision of lighting and heating and whether it is sufficient for the size of the unit and the number of guests accommodated. There should be a balance of natural and artificial light where appropriate.

One Star

- Adequate levels of lighting appropriately positioned.
- Heating levels appropriate to size of rooms, this may not be automatic or fixed.

Two Star

- Quite good levels of lighting, may be main light and one other light, higher wattage than the minimum of 140 watts.
- Heating might be free standing and may be automatic or thermostatically controlled.

Three Star

- Good levels of controllable lighting in all areas.
- There is likely to be more than one source of lighting e.g. wall, standard lamps. Ample natural light.
- Effective levels of heating providing overall uniform temperature.
- Properly fitted, automatic fixed heating which may be thermostatically controlled.

Four Star

- Very good levels of controllable lighting which may include use of dimmers in rooms.
- There should be several forms of alternative lighting e.g. table lamps wall lights, picture lights etc.
- Automatic heating will be fixed and thermostatically controlled.

Five Star

- Excellent lighting which creates a good effect and shows off rooms to best advantage.
- Light should be practical for all purposes such as reading, working etc.
- Heating levels fully controllable at all times of day/night by the guest.
- Storage heaters may not meet this requirement.

Sustainability Good Practice

Improved insulation and greater use of thermostatically controlled heating and zoned heating can help save on energy use, and try to make as much use of natural light as possible.

3.8 Bedrooms

Decoration

Quality Guidance

As well as wall and ceilings, the provision and quality of pictures and prints and all wall decorations are assessed here. The assessment of the decoration of walls, ceilings and woodwork looks at the quality, application and condition. The assessor's personal tastes as to style or design are not considered.

One Star

- Functional décor and limited co-ordination.
- Limited relief and adornment.

Two Star

- Competently applied décor of a quite good quality. Limited obvious blemishes.

Three Star

- Good interior, with evidence of co-ordinated design.
- Well finished, good quality wall coverings and paint work, applied to a professional standard.
- Use of pictures etc., where appropriate, particularly on plain walls.

Four Star

- A professional standard of finish in very good condition with appropriate level of adornment as befits the style.

Five Star

- Excellent interior design and overall impression and in excellent condition.
- Professional finish to all aspects of decoration.
- Attractive use of pictures, prints and other decorative relief.
- Interesting architectural features, objects of interest, artwork, objects d'art, floral arrangements.

Sustainability Good Practice

Use can be made of local artists' work, prints or photographs of images depicting local scenes, historical and heritage related images as it all adds to the visitor's sense of place.

Flooring

Quality Guidance

This includes all types of flooring such as carpets, laminate, natural wood or vinyl.

One Star

- Adequate comfort to flooring.
- Finishes may include carpets, solid flooring, wood, vinyl etc.

Two Star

- Quite good quality, but carpets may have a high man made fibre content.
- Tiling should have little damage.

Three Star

- Good quality flooring in sound condition and comfortable under foot.

Four Star

- High quality flooring, but not necessarily new, may show signs of wear or be of a more moderate quality, but in pristine condition.
- Where rugs are provided these should be of a high quality.

Five Star

- High quality flooring in excellent condition, No real signs of wear and professionally fitted.

Advice

High quality underlay for carpet is encouraged. Even a high quality underlay under a lesser quality carpet can help and comfort and prolong life.

Furniture, furnishings and fittings

Quality Guidance

This includes fitted and freestanding furniture, curtains and rails, scatter cushions, heating appliances and light fittings.

One Star

- A sparing but adequate provision of furniture, furnishings and fittings, in terms of quality and range; limited co-ordination.
- Curtains may be unlined, but should meet in the middle, blinds should be run free.
- Lighting and heating fittings could be of a modest quality.

Two Star

- A greater provision of furniture which may be dated or have wear but will be sound.
- Curtains to be a better quality clean and run freely.
- Light and heating fittings of a quite good standard.

Three Star

- Ample provision would include dressing table and stool, drawers, etc., in each room.

- Clothes hanging space within a wardrobe or designated curtained area in each bedroom.
- Good quality fittings, in a sound and useable condition.
- Good use of co-ordination.
- The amount of furniture in proportion to the space available.

Four Star

- Dressing table facility, wardrobe and drawer space should be available in each bedroom.
- High quality furniture, not necessarily new, but which offers substantial comfort and space.
- Curtains to be full and may have additional embellishments such as tie backs.
- Very good quality lighting and heating fittings maintained in a very good condition.

Five Star

- Excellent quality modern, reproduction or antique furniture of sound construction.
- Excellent co-ordination of furniture and soft furnishings of high intrinsic quality.
- Additional features may be in evidence e.g. scatter cushions etc.
- Excellent quality and well-fitted window covering with ample drape and width.
- High quality lighting and heating fittings in pristine condition.

Beds

Quality Guidance

This includes the quality and condition of headboards or equivalent, bed bases, mattresses and frames.

One Star

- Acceptable quality beds and mattresses may or may not include a headboard.

Two Star

- Beds of a quite good quality but mattresses may be thin and bases shallow.

Three Star

- Good quality comfortable bed, supportive mattresses and sound base.
- Bed bases and headboards, where provided, may be of older style, but in good condition.

Four Star

- Very good quality firm mattresses with quality sprung base.
- Bed bases and any headboards in very good condition.

Five Star

- Excellent quality bed e.g. sprung mattress and high quality base.
- Headboards if fitted, perhaps offering a high degree of comfort.

Advice

Sagging mattresses should be replaced. It is advisable to turn and rotate mattresses in order to prolong their life.

Galleried bedrooms:

- Where a property accommodates only two people, any grade can be achieved. The galleried bedroom must be advertised as such in the brochure.
- Where the property accommodates more than two guests and there is a galleried bedroom, this must be clearly advertised in the brochure. The highest grading that could be achieved is Four Stars. This is due to lack of privacy, light exclusion and noise interruption.

Bedding and linen

Quality Guidance

This looks at the quality and condition of pillows, duvets, blankets and sheets, pillow and mattress protectors, valances and bedspreads.

One Star

- Beds presented with acceptable quality of clean linen and bed covers in good repair.
- Adequate range of bedding, including sufficient blankets and/or duvets.
- If additional bedding is provided, it should be clean and fresh, preferably wrapped to retain cleanliness.
- Pillows may contain less filling and offer less support and be predominantly man made fibre.

Two Star

- Bedding may be well used but still hole and tear free and should be matching.
- Pillows to be plumper.

Three Star

- Well presented beds, with ample, good quality, pressed, co-ordinated linen and bedding.
- Valances may be present on divans.
- Extra pillows and bedding available.
- Pillows should be substantial.

Four Star

- Very good quality linen co-ordinated with bedding and room. Choice of pillows may be offered e.g. feather or hollow fibre.

- Pillow protectors may be anticipated at this level.
- Valances may be high quality and pleated.

Five Star

- Co-ordinated and crisply laundered linen. A choice of bedding available e.g. thickly quilted, or similar quality bedspreads and blankets, or duvets with appropriate tog rating. All of a high quality and co-ordinated with bedroom décor and other soft e.g. single beds having double duvets.
- Quality padded mattress covers and pillow protectors would be anticipated.
- A pillow menu may be available as a way of offering a choice of plumpness and filling types of pillows.
- Where duvets are used, then generosity of size should be considered.

Sustainability Good Practice

Blankets to be stored in sealed, dust proof bags and stored appropriately.

Lighting, heating and ventilation

Quality Guidance

This relates to the quality and provision of lighting and heating and whether it is sufficient for the size of the room and requirements e.g. reading in bed, making up, using a hairdryer at a dressing table.

There should be a balance of natural and artificial light where appropriate.

Heating needs to be sufficient for the size of the room and to cope with different guest's requirements.

One Star

- Adequate lighting appropriately positioned for practical use.
- Heating levels appropriate to size of room, may not be automatic or fixed.

Two Star

- Quite good levels of lighting, may be main light and one other light, higher wattage than the minimum of 140 watts.
- Heating may be automatic or thermostatically controlled.

Three Star

- Well positioned lights giving good levels of illumination which is easily controllable at night.
- Effective levels of heating providing overall uniform temperature.

Four Star

- Very good levels of light with easy access to controls especially for bedside lighting.
- Different types of lighting may be used e.g. wall lights and lamps.
- Properly fitted automatic fixed heating which may be thermostatically controlled.

Five Star

- Well positioned, excellent quality lighting, giving excellent levels of illumination for various purposes, e.g. reading and at the dressing table.
- Would be desirable to have main light controlled by door and bed.
- Heating levels fully controllable at all times of day and night by the guest. Some older storage heaters may not meet this requirement. Aircon would allow temperature control in all seasons.

Advice

Bedside lamps with hidden controls could prove difficult to locate in the middle of the night, as could small shades with restricted space to reach the switch. If beds are heavily draped e.g. four poster beds, then the light from the bedside lamp could be obscured, so more thought may need to be given to positioning.

Higher marks will be given where care had been taken to provide light in every part of the room where it may be needed, e.g. at the dressing table and by or inside the wardrobe.

Lights for bunk beds should be hard wired for safety.

Space, comfort and ease of use

Quality Guidance

This takes into account the use of space and how the room layout is planned to offer maximum convenience and ease of use for the guests. Does furniture have to be moved for the facilities to be used? Is there somewhere to store luggage?

One Star

- Reasonable free movement not to be unduly restricted by intrusive low beams and ceiling.
- Large furniture may dominate a room and make it less usable.
- Rooms should be free from external noise disturbance and the provision of double glazing may be necessary to ensure this in urban locations.

Two Star

- Quite good levels of comfort and a limited range of furniture.
- Easy use of facilities with an uncluttered appearance.

Three Star

- Sufficient space to allow free movement and a good degree of comfort.
- Easy use of facilities.
- Convenient layout of furniture for practical use.
- Good access to both sides of double beds.

Four Star

- Well planned layout of furniture to maximise use of generous free space. Rooms may be smaller, but considered planning means it is just usable.
- Very good access to both sides of double bed.

Five Star

- Bedroom should be of a sufficient size to allow the provision of all appropriate bedroom furniture and still allow an easy access when using these facilities.
- Area available for luggage storage without cluttering the room and obstructing access. This need not be in a bedroom
- Easy and convenient use of facilities, e.g. access to power points etc.
- Generous access to both sides of a double bed.
- No intrusive noise.

Advice

When planning a bedroom, consider carefully whether installing too many beds will compromise the space for the guests. Perhaps by taking fewer guests overall, you create a higher quality experience, as they can fully use the rooms in comfort.

Consider guests may not always unpack and/or may need somewhere to store their suitcases.

Galleried bedrooms in units for more than 2 occupants are unlikely to score highly in this section due to lack of privacy and intrusive noise, light and smells.

There should be plenty of sockets strategically placed for all possible uses. This will include power points for lights, bedside alarm clocks and one located by a mirror for use with hairdryers etc. These should be easily accessible and negate the use of adapter plugs and extension leads, which could be a safety hazard.

Lights for bunk beds should be hard wired for safety.

Accessibility Good Practice

Non feather pillows and bedding to be available on request if not provided.

Freestanding furniture and zip and link beds allow for greater flexibility of the room layout which is sometimes needed to accommodate, a carer travelling with a disabled person or to suit a visually impaired person's navigation of the room.

Try to avoid deep pile carpets that may cause trips or make it difficult for a wheelchair user to manoeuvre.

Have some blocks available so that bed heights can be adjusted.

Ensure the bedroom provides clear space to walk around without bumping into furniture. Can the windows and curtains be reached by your guests and are they easy to open and close?

Enable lighting levels to be adjusted using a dimmer switch and/or make additional bedside/dressing table lamps available.

To assist visually impaired people consider having the door frames in a contrasting colour to the wall. Avoid high gloss finishes.

Ensure that all guests know how to display subtitles on the TV via the remote control. This will benefit not only the hearing impaired but also foreign language speaking guests.

A bedroom should be available on the ground floor where possible.

3.9 Bathrooms and WCs

Decoration

Quality Guidance

This refers to the quality and condition of décor of the walls and ceilings, including tiling, grouting and sealant.

One Star

— Functional décor and limited co-ordination.

Two Star

— Quite good quality and condition of décor but may have some signs of wear.

Three Star

— Well maintained, practical décor; wall and ceiling covering well applied. All in good condition.

Four Star

— May be recently redecorated but not highest quality or may be excellent quality with slight ageing.

Five Star

— Excellent interior design.
— Professional finish to all aspects of decoration.
— Highest quality finish to walls; well fitted, high quality tiles, grouting and sealant.
— Attractive use of decorative enhancements, where appropriate.

Advice

Walls do not have to be fully tiled (or equivalent), but areas likely to come into contact with water should be.

Always maintain grouting and sealant to stop it becoming discoloured and unsightly. Use of a sealant, which guarantees long-term mould resistance, is recommended.

Where possible, pipes should be boxed in for ease of cleaning and aesthetic reasons.

Flooring

Quality Guidance

This includes the quality and condition of carpet, vinyl flooring, wood flooring, laminate and ceramic tiles. Non-slip flooring is always advisable in bathrooms.

One Star

— Practical, non-slip flooring with adequate comfort under foot.

Two Star

— Quite good quality flooring. Tiling should have little damage.

Three Star

— Good quality flooring in sound condition and comfortable under foot.

Four Star

— High quality flooring, but not necessarily new. Some signs of wear or more moderate quality in pristine condition.

Five Star

— Excellent quality flooring, in excellent condition. No real signs of wear and professionally fitted.

Advice

Carpeting whilst providing warmth underfoot may not always be the best flooring for hygiene reasons and water damage may also occur.

Fixtures, fittings, sanitary ware

Quality Guidance

This includes the taps, plugs, showerheads, mirrors, shower screen/curtains, towel rails, shaver points, lighting and heating fittings, extractor fans, sanitary ware (bath, shower, WC, basin and bidet), towels curtains and blinds.

One Star

- Fittings of an acceptable quality.
- Correctly fitted, appropriate window covering.
- Sufficient water pressure and satisfactory drainage for practical use of facilities.
- Flat surface available for guest belongings.

Two Star

- Fittings of a quite good quality but may be dated or worn.
- Cast iron baths may have lost their gloss, but enamel is still in sound condition.

Three Star

- Solid, matching, good quality and well-fitted appliances.
- Co-ordinated sanitary ware and bath or shower tray.
- Well fitted window covering, with sufficient width and height to draw completely across the window.
- Good shelf space for guest belongings.
- Fixed razor point and light adjacent to mirror.

Four Star

- Generally high quality fittings throughout, slight wear only. Good sized baths. Shower screen or heavy, high quality curtain.
- All sanitary ware in good order, no cracks, crazing or dull finishes.

Five Star

- Provision of bath and shower, with high quality fixtures and fittings, e.g. shower cubicles or shower screens, and thermostatically controlled showers. Full size washbasin in bedroom or en suite. Easy to use appliances.
- Excellent quality and well fitted window covering with ample drape and width.
- Ample and convenient shelf space for guest belongings.

Advice

Assessment of bathroom fittings will cover their intrinsic quality and condition. Flimsy plastic towel rails or shelves will score less than

high quality wooden, metal or ceramic fittings. Matching or co-ordinated fittings will usually attract a higher score than a mixture of different styles.

A sturdy well-fitted shower screen will score higher than a thin plastic curtain that tends to “stick” to the guest when taking a shower. If a shower screen is ill fitting or awkwardly positioned so that access to the taps or shower controls, is difficult then the mark will be reduced accordingly. A sturdy cast iron bath would attract a higher score than a cheap plastic bath that creaks and moves about. If the bath surface is dull, scratched or stained it will score less.

Credit will be given in the assessment for the provision of good quality hooks on doors, shelves or other conveniently placed surfaces for toiletries and equipment. Thought must be given to shelf space and towel rail space where larger numbers are accommodated. Extra towel rail space can be provided in bedrooms. Position of mirrors should be appropriate for guests of most heights.

Where a shower is positioned over a bath, then the provision of a shelf/soap dish at standing height, as well as at bath sitting height is preferable. Consider the size of shower cubicles – can they accommodate larger guests.

Lighting, heating and ventilation

Quality Guidance

This relates to the quality and provision of lighting and heating and whether it is sufficient for the size of the bathrooms. Lack of sufficient heating and/or ventilation will give rise to condensation. There should be a balance of natural and artificial light where appropriate.

One Star

- Heating levels appropriate to size. This should be fixed for safety.
- Adequate lighting appropriately positioned for practical use.
- Window only may be provided.

Two Star

- Heating to offer a good level of heat and may be automatically controlled.
- Quite good levels of lighting. Higher wattage than minimum (140 watt).

Three Star

- Effective levels of heating providing overall uniform temperature.
- Well positioned lights giving good levels of illumination to the face.

Four Star

- Properly fitted, thermostatically controlled heating.
- Normally an extractor and an opening window would be expected.
- Very good levels of lighting, especially over or adjacent to a mirror. Different types of lighting may be evident.

Five Star

- Heating levels fully controllable at all times. Storage heaters may not meet this requirement.
- Extractor fan fitted as well as window.
- Well positioned excellent quality lighting, giving excellent levels of illumination.

Advice

It is important to have lighting in the right place, the area around the washbasin and mirror should be well illuminated. If the bathroom is an unusual shape then thought should be given to placement of lights.

Lighting over the bath and/or shower is extremely useful and adds to safety of use.

For the highest marks heating should be automatic and thermostatically controlled.

Guests cannot be relied upon to open bathroom windows, particularly in colder weather, therefore the addition of an extractor fan is best. Condensation and mildew is caused by a combination of a lack of heat and ventilation, and the provision of background heating and an extractor fan will help overcome this, especially one with a built in humidistat (as the humidity rises the fan comes on).

Towels and toiletries

Quality Guidance

This includes all personal towels and any toiletries supplied for guest use. This could be anything from a bar of soap to a full range and extras such as shower cap, cotton wool balls and buds etc.

One Star

- Paper mats not acceptable.
- Towels may be small and thin, but should still be in a useable condition.
- Particular attention paid to the cleanliness and hygiene of liquid soap dispensers where provided.

Two Star

- As One Star.

Three Star

- Generously sized, co-ordinated towels of good quality and condition.
- Good quality soap, shampoo and bath/shower gel provided.
- Emergency toiletries such as toothbrush, and disposable razor available, possibly for a charge.

Four Star

- A range of very quality towels, absorbent and soft and a good range of quality guest toiletries.

Five Star

- A range of towels which includes bath sheets, robes and face cloths of excellent quality and condition.
- An excellent range of luxury guest toiletries (for example hand soap, bath soap, shampoo, gels, body lotion, tissues etc).

Space, comfort and ease of use

Quality Guidance

This takes into account the use of space and how the room layout is planned to offer maximum convenience and ease of use for the guest's freedom of movement; with safety being a prime consideration. Ease of use is likely to be affected by too many guests sharing one bathroom, particularly where the WC is within the bathroom or where there is only a bath provided.

One Star

- Adequate space and layout such as to allow for practical use of all facilities.
- Minimal noise from plumbing.

Two Star

- Quite good levels of comfort and a limited range of fittings. Easy use of facilities.
- Convenient access to bath, shower and WC.

Three Star

- Sufficient space to allow easy access to, and use of the facilities.

Four Star

- Well planned layout of sanitary wear and fittings to maximise convenience and ease of use.

Five Star

- Ample space to allow free movement and easy access to the facilities.
- Convenient layout with Generous free space.

Advice

Consider the number of guests, length of stay and their toiletries in relation to the amount of shelf space provided – is it adequate for the job?

Accessibility Good Practice

Providing equipment such as bath seats, toilet seat height raisers and shower chairs can be beneficial to many guests as can support rails for the toilet and bath/shower.

To assist visually impaired people, the toilet, sink and bath should be a contrasting colour to the bathroom walls and floor and the towels should also contrast in some way. Also consider having the door frame in a contrasting colour.

When refurbishing your bathroom, hot water supply should have at each fitting a mixer valve, limiting water to a maximum of 41C to prevent scalding.

Also provide lever taps or lever attachments on the wash basin and bath and ideally the shower too. For the benefit of all users it is important that bathroom floors are non-slip.

Sustainability Good Practice

Use can be made of water saving devices such as “Hippos” in toilet cisterns and providing shower facilities can help reduce water consumption.

To save on packaging, consider providing guests with liquid soap in a dispenser instead of wrapped bars.

3.10 Kitchen

Decoration

Quality Guidance

The assessment of the decoration of walls, ceilings and woodwork looks at the quality of wall finishes their application and condition This includes splash backs, tiling, grouting and sealant. The provision and quality of pictures and prints and all wall decorations is also assessed here. In a kitchen hygiene is of prime importance, and some account of appropriateness of materials and finishes will have to be taken into consideration. The assessor’s personal tastes as to style or design are not considered.

One Star

- Functional décor including walls and ceilings.
- Minimal marks, splashing, grease or other signs of cooking.

Two Star

- Décor of good quality and in good condition, it may have some signs of wear.

Three Star

- Well maintained, practical décor.
- Well co-ordinated with suitable, durable finishes such as tiling in working areas.
- All décor should be applied to a good standard.

Four Star

- May be recently redecorated but not of highest quality or may be excellent quality with slight ageing.

Five Star

- Excellent standard of décor, professionally applied.
- Co-ordinated interior design.
- Highly durable surfaces, showing negligible wear and tear.
- Freshly maintained grouting in tiled areas.

Advice

Use materials appropriate for a kitchen e.g. kitchen and bathroom paint which will resist stains and moisture. Splash-backs of some type are encouraged especially by cookers sinks and to the rear of work surfaces.

Flooring

Quality Guidance

This includes the quality and condition of carpet, vinyl flooring, wood flooring, laminate and ceramic tiles. Account will be taken of the quality of fitting especially around units and white goods.

One Star

- Well fitted flooring.
- Some signs of wear and tear may be evident. Should be professionally fitted.

Two Star

- Quite good quality flooring, free from tears, stains or burns.

Three Star

- Very good degree of maintenance even in heavy traffic areas.
- Very durable flooring.
- Tiling to have clean grouting.
- Wooden floor in good condition.

Four Star

- Could be high quality flooring, but not necessarily new and may show some signs of

wear or could be of a more moderate quality in pristine condition.

Five Star

- Flooring of highest quality in excellent condition.

Furniture and Fittings

Quality Guidance

This includes all kitchen fittings in terms of quality and condition to include kitchen units and cupboards, work surfaces, curtains and blinds, lighting and heating fittings, extractor fans and any free standing furniture such as kitchen table and chairs and light fittings.

One Star

- Work surfaces and storage may be limited but adequate, with at least one cupboard or shelving for food storage.
- All surfaces sound and cupboard doors properly functioning.

Two Star

- Sufficient work surfaces and cupboards for practical use.
- Units of quite good quality.

Three Star

- More than adequate cupboard and work surface space.
- Well fitted and co-ordinated units of good quality.
- Where the dining area is part of the kitchen, tables and chairs of good quality with seat padding, where appropriate.
- Provision for maximum number of guests to dine in comfort.

Four Star

- Very good amount of work surface free from clutter and equipment.
- Very good quality and well maintained units.
- Ample storage space for guest's food etc.

Five Star

- Generous work surfaces of high quality finish, plentiful storage space including floor and wall mounted units.
- Professionally fitted units of excellent quality.
- Where the dining area is part of the kitchen, tables and chairs of excellent quality with seat padding, where appropriate.

Lighting, heating and ventilation

Quality Guidance

This relates to the quality and provision of lighting and heating and whether it is sufficient

for the size of the kitchen. There should be a balance of natural and artificial light where appropriate and it should be adequate for safe use of the cooker and work surfaces.

Lack of sufficient heating and/or ventilation will give rise to condensation. Ventilation is an important aspect in kitchens and air change should be provided to ensure removal of steam and cooking odours particularly in open plan units. An opening window, if it operates satisfactorily, can provide adequate ventilation.

One Star

- Practical levels of artificial and/or natural lighting for safety.
- Heating may be borrowed where open plan, but nevertheless of a satisfactory level.
- Adequate ventilation perhaps via opening windows.

Two Star

- Quite good levels of lighting. Higher wattage than minimum of 140 watt.
- Heating to offer a good level of heat and may be automatically controlled.

Three Star

- Good overall lighting preferably including lighting directly over food preparation and cooking areas.
- Good ventilation may include forced extraction.

Four Star

- Very good levels of lighting.
- Different types of lighting may be evident e.g. under unit lighting in addition to main lighting.
- Properly fitted, thermostatically controlled heating.
- Extractor fans as well as opening windows might be anticipated.

Five Star

- Excellent lighting to all areas.
- Easily controllable heating e.g. thermostatic valve fitted to radiators.
- Forced extraction may include a humidistat.

Advice

Guests cannot be relied upon to open kitchen windows, particularly in colder weather, therefore the addition of an extractor fan is best. Condensation and mildew is caused by a combination of a lack of heat and ventilation and the provision of a background heating and an extractor fan will help overcome this especially one with a built in humidistat (as the humidity rises the fan comes on).

Electrical/gas equipment

Quality Guidance

All electrical and gas equipment provided in the kitchen will be assessed in this section including cookers, hobs, refrigerators etc. All small electrical equipment such as food mixers and hand whisks etc are also considered here. Appliances such as washing machines, freezers etc., which are not located in the kitchen, but in another part of the property such as a utility room or the owners property, will be included here.

One Star

- Minimal or no provision beyond the basic requirement.
- Although some items may be older, all should be in sound and working condition.

Two Star

- Some additional items of equipment may be provided, but may show signs of wear and tear or be dated.

Three Star

- All equipment in good order and very well maintained e.g. items free from signs of damage, marks, etc.

Four Star

- May be excellent quality, but not in pristine condition. A very good range of equipment provided.

Five Star

- Wide range of excellent quality items which may include, e.g. food processors etc.
- May include split level cookers for ease of use.
- Highest standards of equipment throughout.

Crockery, cutlery and glassware

Quality Guidance

This includes the quality, condition and range of crockery, cutlery and glassware for dining purposes It does not include glass cookware for example.

One Star

- Minimal provision of acceptable quality.
- Crockery may be of heavy practical quality, all the same pattern.
- Cutlery may be thin, low quality and mismatched.
- Small range of glasses. May not be matching.

Two Star

- Crockery should have no signs of mismatch, chips, stains or crazing.
- Cutlery may be lightweight but should all be matching.

Three Star

- Heavier styles of cutlery free from any signs of wear.
- More than ample supply for the number of guests of cutlery, crockery and glassware. A reasonable selection of glassware, of good quality.

Four Star

- Very good quality cutlery matching throughout.

Five Star

- Very good quality in pristine condition or excellent quality in less than perfect condition.

Kitchenware, pans and utensils

Quality Guidance

This section looks at the quality, range and condition of pans, baking trays, cooking and serving bowls and dishes as well as utensils. Range and quantity at a basic level should be commensurate with the number of guests i.e. larger numbers will require larger pans and serving dishes etc.

One Star

- Limited range of pans of acceptable quality. Handles all secure and well fitting lids.
- Minimum range of utensils. Some items may be lighter weight or of more basic intrinsic quality. Might not be matching set.

Two Star

- Pans of a heavier quality.
- May have wide range of utensils, but not all of matching design.

Three Star

- Pans in a range of sizes, all of good solid weight.
- No old plastic utensils which are misshapen.
- Wide range of knives, wooden spoons, etc.

Four Star

- Pans may be high quality but showing signs of age or wear and tear or could be pristine/new but of a lighter quality.
- Greater range of utensils and cookware of various sizes and uses.

Five Star

- All cookware and pans of the highest quality standard. Range of pans should be greater than the minimum.
- Wide range of additional items, all coordinated, e.g. wok garlic press, kitchen scales, juicer, splatter guard, slotted spoon, etc.

Space, comfort and ease of use

Quality Guidance

This section will cover the design and layout of the kitchen taking into account the important aspect of space. It could be possible to have too much space to the detriment of the practical use of the kitchen e.g. The layout precludes ease of use. Account will be taken of the maximum occupancy of the unit and the space in the kitchen for that number especially if the dining area is located in the kitchen, with safety being a prime consideration.

One Star

- Limited space throughout, which includes storage, work surfaces and free space. Adequate space to wash and drain dishes.

Two Star

- Adequate space and layout such as to allow for practical use of facilities.
- Convenient access to refrigerator, cooker/oven and hob.
- Evidence of more thought given to the various tasks carried out in a kitchen.

Three Star

- Sufficient space to allow easy access to, and use of the facilities.
- Good amount of storage space for foodstuffs.

Four Star

- Very good ease of use with plenty of space especially around dining tables if located in a kitchen.
- Very good access to all units with thought given to the working triangle – cooker, fridge and sink.
- Additional space would be anticipated where larger units may have more than one person using the kitchen at the same time.

Five Star

- Ample space to allow free movement and easy access to the facilities.
- Very convenient layout with plenty of space.
- There should be very generous space for storage, food etc.

Accessibility Good Practice

Kettles should be cordless and a variety of drinking cups/mugs available – this will help those people who may have difficulty holding a cup.

In order to assist wheelchair users, as much of the work surface and equipment as possible should be accessible from a seated position, e.g. hob, fridge, freezer and oven.

Position wall cupboard door handles at the lower edge of the door.

Provide large print instructions for the use of electrical equipment, e.g. washing machines and dryers. Crockery that contrasts in colour to the table linen or surface will assist visually impaired guests.

Sustainability Good Practice

Remind guests of your management commitment to save energy by asking them not to use the dishwasher until it is full. This can be done when telling guests about the local authority's arrangements for recycling that is appropriate for this type of accommodation, and the part that they need to play in helping you comply with that.

When purchasing white goods, try to get those that have an EU label showing either A or B energy efficiency rating and when supplying washing products, get those that are identified as being environmentally friendly.

3.11 Additional facilities

These are facilities that may be provided as part of the facilities available to apartment guests. They are optional requirements, but if provided the quality, presentation and ease of use will be taken into account in the assessment of the quality score. If they are not provided, there will be no negative effect on rating awarded.

Laundry

Quality Guidance

This is where there is a specific laundry room located outside the property (includes owners laundry room) itself with equipment for washing, drying and ironing clothes, it may be shared with the owners or other self-catering properties.

One Star

- All equipment to be in working condition.
- Practical working environment.
- Simple instructions for use of equipment.

- Opening hours may be limited.

Two Star

- Some evidence of wear and tear may be noted.
- Walls and floors finished to a reasonable standard.
- Equipment of a more domestic quality.
- Instructions may be more detailed.

Three Star

- Sufficient equipment for convenient use.
- Premises in good decorative order. Good housekeeping and free from unsightly storage.
- Equipment may be professional or domestic standard.
- Opening hours appropriate to type of facility and functions e.g. size and style.

Four Star

- Very good and ample provision of equipment exceeding the ratio's of machines to units.
- Could include indoor hanging area for wet coats and boots.
- May have 24 hour access – which may be via a key etc or extended opening hours to suit customer needs.

Five Star

- Well equipped premises in excellent decorative order and a high standard of cleanliness evident.
- Well organised layout with consideration for ease of use of all equipment.
- Provision of excellent quality equipment and clear instructions for use. Range of equipment may include: Washing machine, tumble dryer, spin dryer, ironing facilities, hand wash facilities etc.
- 24 hour access – which may be via a key etc.

Accessibility Good Practice

Access can be improved by providing a level/ ramped entrance with a minimum 80cm door opening and non-slip flooring materials and cleaners.

Sustainability Good Practice

When buying a washing machine or dryer, try to get an appliance with an EU energy rating of A or B.

Recreation

Quality Guidance

Examples might include a swimming pool, gym or sauna. There is no requirement for any of these to be provided and operators will not be penalised for not having them, but where they are they will form part of the assessment.

One Star

- Limited availability of recreational facilities and access.
- All equipment maintained in safe condition.

Two Star

- Facilities should be of a quite good quality and maintained in working order.

Three Star

- May specialise in one major type of activity to good standard.
- All facilities and equipment in good order.
- Opening hours appropriate to type of facility.

Four Star

- Wider selection of facilities.
- Facilities of a very good standard, clean and well maintained.
- May include changing rooms where appropriate.

Five Star

- Facilities provided to an excellent standard and equipment in excellent order.
- Extended opening hours to suit customer needs.

Shop/Bar/Restaurant

Quality Guidance

There is no requirement for these to be present, but where they are provided e.g. self-catering properties located on caravan parks, they will form part of the assessment.

Shop

One Star

- Opening hours to suit customer needs. May be a partial facility with reception. All in sound condition with a good standard of cleanliness.

Two Star

- Limited stock and size of shop. Quite good facility overall with a tidy appearance.

Three Star

- Generally well positioned, good stock of consumer items.

- Fabric and décor in good order and good housekeeping standards.
- Opening hours appropriate to type of facility and functions e.g. range and type of merchandise.

Four Star

- Very well kept interior and equipment. Evidence of attention to detail regarding cleanliness.

Five Star

- Shop well stocked with comprehensive range of goods, spotlessly clean, tidy and in excellent decorative order.
- Extended opening hours to suit customer needs.

Bar/restaurant

One Star

- Facility for purchase of meals/snacks/drinks at specified times.
- May be limited seating.
- Limited range of food and drinks available.

Two Star

- Sufficient seating to accommodate most guests. Quite good overall condition and quality.

Three Star

- Good decorative and housekeeping standards.
- Sufficient seating to accommodate all likely number of users.
- Good range of food and drinks available.
- Opening hours appropriate to type of facility and function e.g. size and style.

Four Star

- Well designed, convenient premises. Decorated to very good standard and in sound condition.
- Very good housekeeping standards.
- Comfortable seating for all guests and appropriate height for dining.
- Very good choice of food/drinks available.

Five Star

- Spacious, well designed, convenient premises. Decorated to excellent standard and in excellent condition.
- Excellent housekeeping standards.
- Wide choice of food/drinks available.
- Extended opening hours to suit customer needs.

4.0 Code Of Conduct

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

- To have Public Liability insurance or a comparable arrangement and to comply with all applicable planning, safety and other statutory obligations in force.
- To maintain acceptable standards of guest care and service appropriate to the type of establishment.
- The business must achieve a high standard of cleanliness which must be consistent throughout all areas of the property.
- To accurately describe in any advertisement, brochure or other printed or digital marketing content/media the facilities and services provided.
- To make clear to guests exactly what is included in all processes and procedures quoted including taxes and any other surcharges. Details of charges for additional services/facilities must also be made clear at time of booking.
- To give a clear statement of policy on cancellations to guests at the time of booking i.e. by telephone, 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, entry fees and other services.
- To advise guests 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 guests on request details of payments due and a receipt, if required.
- To deal promptly and courteously with all enquiries, requests, bookings and correspondence from guests.
- Ensure complaint handling procedures are in place and that complaints received are investigated promptly and courteously and that the outcome is communicated to the guests.
- To give due consideration to the individual requirements of guests with disabilities and to make suitable provision where applicable.

5.0 Conditions for Participation

Establishments participating in Visit Wales schemes are required to:

- Observe the Visit Wales Code of Conduct.
- To allow a representative from or on behalf of Visit Wales to have reasonable access to the business, on request, to ascertain that the requirements of “Assessed” status and “Code of Conduct ” are being fully observed.
- Provide an access statement/accessibility guide.
- All businesses must meet their Statutory Obligations.
- Any business offering accommodation to Department for Work and Pensions residents or operating as a refuge hostel cannot participate in the scheme.

6.0 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.

7.0 Signage

Signage, Certificates and Electronic Logos. Where an establishment, for whatever reason, ceases to participate in the Visit Wales Quality grading scheme applicable to their type of business, then all relevant display signs/ certificates and Visit Wales associated logos and text on printed material must be removed immediately. Failure to observe these conditions will result in the establishment becoming ineligible to display or use the Visit Wales endorsement in anyway whatsoever.

8.0 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 Department
Visit Wales
Welsh Government
Rhodfa Padarn
Llanbadarn Fawr
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion, SY23 3UR

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E-mail: quality.tourism@gov.wales