



A Guide to the
Star Grading Scheme

**HOSTELS,
BUNKHOUSES,
GROUP AND ACTIVITY
ACCOMMODATION**

Contents

1.0 General Introduction

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Common Standards Across Britain

1.1.2 The Requirements

1.1.3 Dispensations

1.1.4 How Does The Assessment System Work?
Sense of Place
Food and Drink

1.2 Sub Categories/Designators

1.3 Sustainability and Accessibility

2.0 Minimum Entry Requirements

2.1 Statutory Obligations

2.2 General

2.3 Bedrooms

2.4 Kitchen

2.5 Bath, WC and Shower Facilities

2.6 Minimum Entry Requirements for Group Accommodation

3.0 Quality Guidance Notes

3.1 Exterior

3.3.1 Appearance of Buildings

3.3.2 Grounds, Gardens and Parking

3.3.3 Environment

3.2 Hospitality and Service

3.2.1 Hospitality

3.2.2 Service and Efficiency

3.2.3 Personal Touches and Tourist Information

3.3 Cleanliness of all Areas

3.4 Food Quality and Service

3.4.1 Food Quality – Breakfast

3.4.2 Food Quality – Dinner

3.4.3 Meals – Service

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

3.5.1 Decoration

3.5.2 Furnishings, Furniture and Fittings

3.5.3 Flooring

3.5.4 Lighting and Heating

3.5.5 Space, Comfort and Ease of Use

3.6 Bedrooms

- 3.6.1 Decoration
- 3.6.2 Furnishings, Furniture and Fittings
- 3.6.3 Flooring
- 3.6.4 Lighting and Heating
- 3.6.5 Beds and Bedding
- 3.6.6 Space, Comfort and Ease of Use

3.7 Bathrooms and WCs

- 3.7.1 Decoration
- 3.7.2 Sanitary Ware and Fittings
- 3.7.3 Flooring
- 3.7.4 Lighting, Heating and Ventilation
- 3.7.5 Space, Comfort and Ease of Use

3.8 Self-Catering Kitchen

- 3.8.1 Décor and Flooring
- 3.8.2 Lighting, Heating and Ventilation
- 3.8.3 Furniture and Fittings
- 3.8.4 Cookers and Electrical Equipment
- 3.8.5 Kitchen and Dining Ware
- 3.8.6 Space, Comfort and Ease of Use

3.9 Other Facilities

- 3.9.1 Laundry and Drying Rooms
- 3.9.2 Recreation/Additional Facilities

4.0 Code of Conduct

5.0 Conditions for Participation

6.0 Change of Ownership

7.0 Signage

8.0 What To Do If You Disagree With The Star Rating Given

1.0 General Introduction

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Common Standards Across Britain

Following an extensive quality review involving all of the common standards partners, a new set of criteria has been developed.

Visit Wales will now use these new common standard requirements to determine the Star rating for your establishment.

1.1.2 The Requirements

We have based the requirements for the star ratings on the existing standards of all the organisations. We have also consulted with the hospitality industry. The feedback we received from the industry shows strong support for a common quality standard for serviced accommodation throughout the countries where we operate the schemes. Our aim for this revised common quality standard is to work continually with the industry and to strive together to raise quality standards in line with the ever-evolving expectations of consumers.

1.1.3 Dispensations

Dispensations for certain individual requirements within the quality standards may be given as long as all the remaining requirements and quality levels for that rating are met or exceeded. This flexibility will be on a case-by-case basis. Any exceptions will need a proportional increase in quality in other areas to compensate for the area where an exception is sought.

1.1.4 How Does The Assessment System Work?

Briefly, there are three elements to the process.

Step 1 – The Visit Wales Quality Advisor (QA) quality scores the whole business.

Step 2 – The QA then checks that certain elements of the business meets what are called 'Sectional Qualifiers' in terms of quality.

Step 3 – Finally, the QA checks that facility and service requirements, appropriate to the Star rating, are present and available.

Step 1

The visit begins with our Quality Advisor carrying out an objective, qualitative assessment of every aspect of your business from the condition of the building, the furniture, furnishings etc. to the services offered to the guests. Essentially, a numerical score is given to every aspect assessed and that score equates to a quality level description. A scale of 1 to 5 is used, so if something is of an excellent quality, it gets 5 points; if it's considered to be acceptable a score of 1 is given. In order to remove any bias, our Quality Advisors are trained and follow set guidelines. The different points value signifies ascending levels of quality, like this:

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

Once the report form is complete and scores have been allocated, they are totalled, and a percentage score for the quality of the whole business is calculated. By looking at the star banding percentage range, the Quality Advisor gets an indication at this stage of what the overall Star rating might be.

Star Rating	Entry Level Percentages
★	34 – 47%
★★	48 – 59%
★★★	60 – 74%
★★★★	75 – 86%
★★★★★	87 – 100%

However, before the final result is determined, there are two further steps.

Step 2

The QA must now check for consistency of quality, using what we refer to as 'Sectional Qualifiers'. The purpose of this approach is to ensure that one aspect of the business has not been scoring high marks, driven up the overall percentage mark into the next Star rating level giving a false impression to the guest of the overall quality, and research has shown to us that the quality of certain areas within a business are particularly important to guests. If these aspects fall below guests' expectations at any given Star rating, they are likely to be disappointed customers. It is therefore very important that the quality of these critical areas match the overall grade of the business.

The key areas are cleanliness, hospitality/ service, bedrooms, bathrooms, public areas and kitchens and scores achieved in these areas are used to confirm the final Star rating. Each one of these Qualifying areas has a minimum percentage score at each level but if the minimum score for 1 Star is not reached then no Star rating will be given.

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

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

Award	Qualifiers
★ 34 – 47%	No area to score less than 34% Cleanliness minimum score 40%
★★ 48 – 59%	No area to score less than 40% Cleanliness minimum score 48%
★★★ 60 – 74%	No area to score less than 54% Cleanliness minimum score 64%
★★★★ 75 – 86%	No area to score less than 67% Cleanliness minimum score 76%
★★★★★ 87%+	No area to score less than 80% Cleanliness minimum score 88%

Step 3

Finally, a check must be made to ensure that any additional facilities/services required at each particular level are present and available, as well as those required at all preceding Star levels.

Example A

A hostel aiming for Three Star achieves an overall percentage of 65% and the following:

– Cleanliness	68%
– Hospitality & Service	80%
– Bedrooms	41%
– Bathrooms	43%
– Public areas	60%
– Kitchen	72%

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

Area	Level				
	1	2	3	4	5
Cleanliness			●		
Hospitality & Service				●	
Bedrooms		●			
Bathrooms		●			
Public Area			●		
Kitchen			●		

Example B

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

– Cleanliness	68%
– Hospitality & Service	80%
– Bedrooms	84%
– Bathrooms	82%
– Public areas	82%
– Kitchen	83%

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

Area	Level				
	1	2	3	4	5
Cleanliness			●		
Hospitality & Service				●	
Bedrooms				●	
Bathrooms				●	
Public Area				●	
Kitchen				●	

Use of this booklet

Minimum Entry Requirements:

All Minimum Entry Requirements (MERs) have to be present for a rating to be awarded. These are depicted in this booklet in the following way:

MER example

Further additional information requirements for higher rating levels are clearly shown, and these must also be present along with the commensurate quality to achieve a higher star rating.

Why is Quality important

Visit Wales understands that quality is the key to success in the hospitality industry. In order to perpetuate Wales's international reputation for providing a friendly and warm welcome to visitors, it's crucial that we continue to support tourism businesses to remain competitive and improve their product offering; the Quality Assurance scheme is designed to help businesses do just that.

Quality never goes out of style – your stars of excellence help visitors make informed decisions, give confidence in the level of service and quality you deliver and enable your business to truly shine with distinction.

A considerable number of tourism operators in Wales already take part in the scheme. These businesses receive impartial and expert advice to inform their investment decisions – driving-up quality and creating jobs.

When assessing quality, Visit Wales takes into account the following:

- Intrinsic quality – the inherent quality of an item.
- Condition – the maintenance and appearance of an item. Is it fit for purpose?
- Physical and personal comfort – does the quality of an item detract in any way from the comfort of the user?
- Attention to detail – the evident care taken to ensure that the guest experience exceeds expectations.
- Guests' choice and ease of use – the guest experience is enhanced by how useable the guest finds the room and its contents.
- Presentation – the way the room and its contents are presented for guests' arrival and throughout their stay.

Service and Hospitality

A smile, a warm and genuine interest and a willingness to please and serve customers is a common requirement and expected across all star ratings.

Bedrooms and Bathrooms

Whatever the style or concept of the bedrooms and bathrooms, both quality and comfort is what guests and our assessors look for, specifically:

- The quality and comfort of the bed.
- The quality of the bed linen.
- The controllability and usability of the lighting and heating systems.
- The quality of bathroom fittings, towels and toiletries.
- In-room technology and connectivity.

Cleanliness

Cleanliness is of paramount importance to all customers at all star levels. It is expected that all Guest Accommodation businesses will be clean in both front and back of house.

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.

Food and Drink

Food and drink go hand in hand with hospitality and tourism in Wales. More and more food is an important influence on people's decision to visit Wales. Visitors are more discerning now and take an interest in where their food comes from and what happens on its journey to their plate.

Combine quality seasonal food and local ingredients, interesting places to eat and stay, and some of the world's best chefs, and you define the hospitality sector in Wales with its deserved reputation for excellence.

To help businesses develop their food offer we have developed a simple to use toolkit.

The Food Tourism Toolkit – Hints, tips, sample menus and best practice that will be useful to your business.

Visit <https://businesswales.gov.wales/foodanddrink/sites/foodanddrink/files/Food%20Tourism%20Toolkit.pdf> for more information.

1.2 Sub Categories/Designators

Type of Sub Categories/Designators:

The following sub categories/designators have been developed to help consumers understand the different types of accommodation available.

- Hostel
- Group Accommodation
- Activity Accommodation
- Bunkhouse

General Description:

The criteria applies as appropriate to accommodation which may describe itself in the following ways:

Hostel

Star rated accommodation often in shared rooms with bunk beds, family rooms may also be available. Hostels normally welcome individuals, families and groups, many of whom are staying on a short-term basis. Hostels often have quite a formalised structure, which may

or may not include restricted access, meal service etc.

Group Accommodation

Star rated accommodation often in shared rooms with bunk beds. Predominantly group bookings only accepted. May be fully serviced or self-catering.

Activity Accommodation

Star rated accommodation normally provided on a group basis. Activity Accommodation establishments will be required to be in possession of a current AALA Certificate or other national body licence in respect of one or more outdoor activities based at the property. May be fully serviced or self-catering.

Bunkhouse

Rural accommodation, which can be booked by groups or individuals. Services and facilities may be limited, but will include a self-catering facility.

NB The above four types of accommodation will be star rated.

1.3 Sustainability and Accessibility

Sustainability: Doing Business Even Better

Green tourism and sustainability practices in your business are one and the same thing; it's all about taking small steps that enable you to do business even better, not differently. Small changes will not only save money, improve employee relations, enhance profitability and provide a richer experience for customers but over time you will also improve your business' impact on the local economy, community and environment. 'Going Green' does not have to be a chore and is just as applicable to properties in a city centre as a rural location.

Improving your Accessibility

Many people have access needs including disabled people, such as those with hearing and visual impairments, wheelchair users, older and less mobile people and people with pushchairs.

By making some small adjustments to your facilities, providing information on your accessibility and understanding the needs of disabled people, your business will appeal to a wider range of visitors and attract more business.

Legal Obligations

Tourism businesses have obligations under The Equality Act 2010, which replaced the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005 (DDA) on 1 October 2010. Tourism providers

should treat everyone accessing their goods, facilities or services fairly, regardless of their gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religion or belief, and guard against making assumptions about the characteristics of individuals.

The Equality Act 2010 requires that service providers must think ahead and take steps to address barriers that impede disabled people. Providers should not wait until a disabled person experiences difficulties using a service, as this may make it too late to make the necessary adjustment.

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

A service provider cannot legally justify failing to provide a reasonable adjustment. The only question is whether the adjustment is a 'reasonable' one to make. What is 'reasonable' will depend on a number of circumstances, including the cost of an adjustment, potential benefit it may bring to other customers, the resources an organisation has and how practical the changes are.

2.0 Minimum Entry Requirements – Hostel

2.1 Statutory Obligations

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

Safety

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

Premises

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

Discrimination

- The Equality Act 2010
- Sex Discrimination
- Race Discrimination
- Disability Discrimination
- Complete an Access Statement/Accessibility Guide

Records

- Data Protection/General Data Protection Regulations
- Registration of guests
- Immigration Hotel Records
- Consumer Protection

Trade Descriptions

- Advertising
- Pricing & cancellation terms
- Unfair Contract Terms

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

2.2 General

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

- Hostel
- Group Accommodation
- Activity Accommodation
- Bunkhouse Accommodation
- Management to observe the VisitWales 'Code of Conduct' and all hostels must fulfil their statutory obligations.
- Self-catering facilities normally provided.
- Easy seating and dining areas to be available with appropriate furniture provided. Open plan or combined dining/kitchen/sitting areas are acceptable up to a 4 Star award standard. For a 5 Star standard a sitting/lounge area, separate from the kitchen (either by space or in a separate room) with appropriate easy seating will be required.
- Provision for the hanging and drying of wet outdoor clothing to be available. In group accommodation, a dedicated and

appropriately sized drying room to be provided. Size and layout of the drying room should be appropriate for group arrivals.

- Guests to have access to sufficient conveniently situated power sockets to allow for safe use of electrical equipment (e.g. hairdryers, mobile phone chargers etc.). *Exception may be made at the discretion of Visit Wales in respect of remote properties with restricted/no mains services.*
- All public areas, bedrooms, bathrooms and kitchens to be adequately lit for the safety and well-being of guests. All lights to have shades or covers unless bulbs are decorative.
- Details of means to summon assistance, day or night, in the event of an emergency must be provided and clearly displayed to guests (e.g. staff/proprietor, doctor, dentist etc.) Emergency services to be detailed.
- A first aid kit to be readily available and maintained.
- Provision to be made to ensure the security of guests and guests' possessions i.e. controlled access to main entrance as a minimum via use of a key or other. Where appropriate, provision for the security of guests' possessions, e.g. lockers, which can be chargeable.
- All ground floor windows to have an effective closure device which prevents opening from the outside.
- If group bookings are accepted, crockery, cutlery and dining furniture provision must be at least sufficient to enable the maximum size of each group accommodated, to sit and eat together. Cooking equipment (pots, pans etc.) to include an appropriately sized range of catering equipment.
- The hostel should be non-smoking throughout.
- Free of charge WiFi should be provided where possible.

2.3 Bedrooms

- A minimum floor space per bed (or bunk) of 4 square metres (44 square feet) to be provided e.g. 2 metres x 2 metres. This area will be calculated on the basis of the maximum dimensions of the room divided by the number of bed bases in the room.
- Bed spaces will be totalled as below:
Bunk bed = 1
Single bed = 1
Double bed = 2

- The impact of furniture (lockers, bedside tables etc.) will not be considered in this calculation. However, it should be recognised that rooms just meeting or marginally exceeding this minimum requirement, are unlikely to achieve high marks in the quality assessment of 'Space and Comfort'.
- A minimum ceiling height of 2 metres (6'7"). Sloping eaves or coombed ceilings are acceptable, providing these do not restrict reasonable free movement through the major part of the room.
- All bedrooms to have at least one external opening window to provide natural light and ventilation. All windows to have opaque curtains or blinds for privacy and light exclusion. Air conditioning or mechanical air ventilation must be provided where windows cannot be opened, and this must be clearly outlined in pre-booking information.
- Bedrooms to be adequately lit for the safety and well-being of guests.
- All properties to have the capability of providing separate sex sleeping accommodation areas, if not available, guests should be informed at the time of booking.
- Beds/bed spaces must be at least 1.9m (6'3") x 0.76m (2'6") (including alpine platforms). *Please Note:* Full sized (6'3" x 3') single beds and bunks and (6'3" x 4'6") double beds are required at a 4 Star standard.
- Bedrooms to be provided with beds or bunks and mattresses in a sound condition. Beds to have well maintained bases. Alpine platforms with mattresses are acceptable up to a maximum of 3 Stars.
- The vertical distance between upper and lower beds, and the upper beds and ceiling in any bunk must not be less than 0.75m (30"). Bunk beds must adhere to Bunk Bed regulations.
- Each bedroom to have adequate luggage storage space. As a minimum this could be provided by sufficient free floor space or under bed/bunk space.
- Each bedroom to have a non-flammable waste paper bin.
- Bedrooms to have hooks for hanging clothes (minimum one per guest).
- Blankets or duvets and clean bed linen including one pillow per person and clean pillow slip to be provided for each new guest. A mattress protector or equivalent to be provided on each bed. Exceptions are possible for very rural/remote camping barns and bunkhouses, where guests are expected to

provide their own bed linen. This must be clearly outlined in pre-booking information.

- Bed linen to be available either free or for hire.

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

2.4 Kitchen

Exception to self-catering kitchen requirements may be made at the discretion of Visit Wales in respect of properties offering full catering. However, this is conditional on the lack of self-catering facilities being clearly advertised in pre-booking information. Alternative budget eating establishments should be available within walking distance.

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

- A smoke alarm or heat detector and a carbon monoxide detector to be installed in all appropriate rooms.
- A fire extinguisher suitable for kitchen fires and/or a fire blanket to be provided.
- Kitchen to be properly equipped with an adequate number of utensils (pots, pans, food preparation knives etc.) which enables, as a minimum, 20% of the maximum number of guests to make food at the same time, excluding group accommodation.
- A minimum of 4 cooking rings to be provided. Where the total number of bed spaces exceeds 32 an additional cooking ring is to be provided for every further 8 bed spaces, up to the first 100 guests.

i.e.	32 beds:	4 cooking rings.
	40 beds:	5 cooking rings.
	48 beds:	6 cooking rings.
	56 beds:	7 cooking rings etc.
- A toaster and oven or microwave and grill to be provided. Each of these to be provided at a minimum ratio of 1 per 50 guests accommodated up to the first 100 guests.
- Where additional electrical equipment is provided, adequate electrical sockets must be available.
- Crockery and cutlery to be provided in sufficient range and quantity as to enable at least 25% of the first 100 guests to eat at the same time, excluding group accommodation.

- Adequate refrigerated food storage space to be available.
- Facilities for boiling water to be provided e.g. kettle or geyser.
- Dry food storage facilities to be provided, appropriate for the number of guests accommodated, e.g. open shelving or cupboards.
- Kitchen area to have effective ventilation.
- A covered waste disposal bin and liners to be provided. Recycling facilities to be available.
- Adequate washing up facilities with hot and cold running water and washing up liquid to be available.
- Adequate hygienic work surface to be provided.

2.5 Bath, WC and Shower Facilities

- Shower, washbasins and WCs to bed space ratios must meet or exceed minimum levels:

Star Rating	Ratio	For example: number of showers needed in a 300 bedded hostel
★	1:10	30
★★	1:10	30
★★★	1:8	38
★★★★	1:6	50
★★★★★	1:4	75

- Dispensations may be awarded to existing 5 Star hostels which are unable to improve upon a ratio of 1:6.
- These ratios apply to the first 400 bed spaces, thereafter additional provision will be at the discretion of VisitWales following discussion with the operator.

N.B.: External facilities will only be acceptable at a 1 Star award. En-suite facilities will not be included in calculating these ratios. Bed spaces in all areas including tents, for example, will be included in this calculation, unless separately served by outdoor facilities.

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

- There must be privacy between sexes for washing/showers and toilet facilities and wherever possible between members of the same sex.
- All changing/showering areas to have opaque window coverings for privacy.

- All bath, shower and WC rooms to be adequately ventilated.
- Hand drying facilities and soap required in all public WC facilities where used by non-residents.
- All WCs to be lidded with a toilet roll holder, toilet paper and sanitary disposal bin (where appropriate) provided.
- Bath/Shower facilities to have clothes hooks within each cubicle.
- A shelf and electric razor point (or adaptor available) with a mirror close by to be provided.

2.6 Minimum Entry Requirements for Group Accommodation

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

- Dining area must have sufficient space and furniture for the maximum number of guests to dine at the same time.
- Sufficient crockery, cutlery, glassware, food preparation and cooking utensils to be provided for the maximum number of guests to dine at the same time.
- Suitable equipment storage facilities to be available.

3.0 Hostel Quality Guidance Notes

(This also includes Group, Activity and Bunkhouse Accommodation.)

The pages that follow include typical expectations at each star level. They are neither prescriptive, definitive nor exhaustive.

3.1 Exterior

3.1.1 Appearance of Buildings

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

One Star

Exterior may be in need of attention and showing some weathering in places, e.g. rusting

downpipes, flaking or stained paintwork, but will be in an overall acceptable and sound condition.

Two Star

Generally in quite a good condition, signs of ageing and defects should be limited to a small number of areas with no obvious significant structural defects. Woodwork generally in sound condition, though some areas of paint may be ageing/weathered or flaking. May be small defects, damage, cracks etc. to stonework. Heavy moss or lichen growths. Property in need of freshening up. Ageing signage.

Three Star

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

Four Star

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

Five Star

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

3.1.2 Grounds, Gardens and Parking

If the property has no clearly defined grounds, gardens or parking of any type, this section is not assessed.

Assessment of this area will include garden areas, hedges, paths, driveways, parking, lighting and all other areas within the clearly defined (i.e. fenced, walled or hedged) boundaries of the property and which are under control of the establishment.

One Star

Safe pathways, signs in reasonable condition, an acceptable first impression. Grounds reasonably neat, some areas may be in need of closer

attention. Acceptable quality and condition of parking where provided.

Two Star

Evidence of some effort made to make gardens attractive, tidy and litter free. Pathways in quite good order, without trip hazards. Reasonably easy access, safe and quite well maintained parking.

Three Star

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

Four Star

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

Five Star

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

3.1.3 Environment

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

One Star

In a less favoured urban area, some distance from public transport but by no means rural, could be good except for a particular feature of the immediate environment or outlook.

Two Star

In a location reasonably convenient for some limited public transport. In an urban location perhaps some distance from the centre of town. In a rural location perhaps at main roadside or with restricted views.

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 noise.

Four Star

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

Five Star

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

3.2 Hospitality and Service

3.2.1 Hospitality

Assessment will consider staff attitude, customer care skills, welcome and all guest contact.

One Star

Hospitality generally of a minimal acceptable standard. Warmth of welcome could be improved, guests' contact with staff or owners minimal.

Two Star

Hospitality of a quite good standard with some warmth of welcome. Likely to include some positive customer contact from staff.

Three Star

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

Four Star

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

Five Star

Excellent hospitality with a personal welcome.

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

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

3.2.2 Service and Efficiency

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

One Star

Service generally of an acceptable standard. May be difficult to contact staff to make a reservation. Casual approach to booking resulting in a lack of clear confirmation that reservations are secure. Effective booking and reception procedures, but staff contact minimal.

Two Star

Service of a quite good standard. Restricted reception hours may make contact for booking difficult. Where there is reliance on telephone answering machines, any enquiries left on these should be responded to promptly. All bookings handled effectively in a manner that leaves guests confident that their reservation is secure and properly recorded.

Three Star

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

Four Star

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

Five Star

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

3.2.3 Personal Touches and Tourist Information

Assessment will take into consideration the range and quality of additional personal touches, collections, books. Tourist Information provided and available for guests.

One Star

Minimal tourist information, tired out of date leaflets etc. Little evidence of personal touches.

Two Star

Brochures and information will be current, neatly and conveniently displayed. A limited range of information, likely to only represent local services or attractions. Very few personal touches.

Three Star

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

Four Star

A very good level of information on all local amenities. Strong evidence of personal touches – flowers, plants, collections, displays.

Five Star

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

3.3 Cleanliness of all Areas

Assessment of cleanliness will include consideration of housekeeping standards in all aspects of public and dining areas, bedrooms, corridors, stairways, bathrooms, WCs and self-catering kitchen facilities.

One Star

Standards seen at this level are likely to be effectively the minimum acceptable and will almost certainly require significant and systematic improvement for an award to be sustained on future assessments. Lack of attention in some areas, e.g. behind furniture, doors or WCs, light fittings, extractor fans, skirting boards etc. Food storage and preparation areas in particular will need close monitoring.

Two Star

This standard will represent quite a good level of cleanliness, probably with some areas that could potentially be improved, but no aspect giving concern.

Three Star

Good standards of cleanliness, regular attention paid to all aspects and consistent standards maintained. Systematic approach with evidence of clear standards being set and monitored throughout. Closer attention to detail may be recommended in some areas, e.g. extractor fans, inside ovens and fridges, within cupboards and drawers or under sinks.

Four Star

A very good overall standard with obvious close attention to detail in most areas but not quite achieving an excellent standard in every respect. Relatively minor omissions such as some extractor fans not cleaned, discoloured grouting, behind ovens or inside light fittings.

Five Star

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

3.4 Food Quality and Service

Food provided and available to all guests as a 'free' facility on a self-catering basis will not be assessed.

3.4.1 Food Quality – Breakfast

Assessment will take into consideration the quality and range of items offered and the standard of presentation.

One Star

A minimal range which may be simply a very limited continental choice. Economy 'bulk catering' quality ingredients offered in their original containers.

Two Star

An adequate range of continental choices, but may not include a cooked option.

Three Star

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

Four Star

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

Five Star

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

3.4.2 Food Quality – Dinner

Assessment will take into consideration the quality and range of items offered and standard of presentation.

One Star

May consist of only one or two courses with no choice, vegetarian options only available by prior arrangement. Pre-prepared meals simply heated up on the premises with little effort at presentation. Small portions, edible and adequate.

Two Star

Meals could be of a good quality but restricted in menu choice or number of courses. Menus could show a reliance on pre-prepared or frozen ingredients.

Three Star

All dishes should be competently prepared and attractively presented.

Four Star

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

Five Star

An excellent range of choices at each course.

3.4.3 Meals – Service

Assessment will take into consideration the efficiency of meal service, appropriate professional skill levels and design ergonomics of self service facilities.

One Star

In a serviced or self-service facility, staff will be basically pleasant and will respond in a reasonably helpful way to requests. All staff involved in food service should be appropriately trained for handling food.

Two Star

Service staff showing some degree of skill and interest. There should be sufficient staff available to serve and/or clear tables as required. Staff should display a willingness to help and be attentive. In a self-service dining facility, the range and availability of menu choices may be variable through service periods.

Three Star

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

Four Star

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

Five Star

Service should be delivered with a considerable degree of proactive friendly and professional skill. The full range of menu choices should be available throughout the service. Self-service

facilities will be of an excellent ergonomic design.

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

3.5.1 Decoration

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

One Star

Basic quality décor which may show some wear, although overall still of an acceptable standard.

Two Star

Quite a good standard of décor but may find that some areas are in need of attention.

Three Star

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

Four Star

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

Five Star

High quality décor with well considered use of colour, pictures, prints (e.g. local scenes) and other decorative relief. Original architectural features restored or maintained to an excellent standard and used to good effect.

3.5.2 Furnishings, Furniture and Fittings

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

One Star

Furniture, furnishings and fittings of basic quality, still in a serviceable condition. Maybe showing signs of wear.

Two Star

Furniture, furnishings and fittings in quite a good condition, possibly more modest in quality, may be showing some evidence of wear.

Three Star

Furniture and furnishings all of a good standard, though age and use beginning to show some minor signs of wear and tear.

Four Star

Furniture and furnishings must offer a high degree of comfort and allow ample seating for the number of guests. All items to be of a high quality, well maintained and in an excellent condition.

Five Star

Furniture to offer an excellent degree of comfort and quality. Solid dining furniture, offering high levels of comfort, well-spaced chairs of appropriate height for tables. Bench seating could be excellent if of a high standard and generously proportioned.

3.5.3 Flooring

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

One Star

Flooring in an overall adequate condition, some wear evident but not extensive. May be very modest quality, e.g. thin cord carpet with little/no underlay. May be wood flooring in a serviceable and safe condition, could also be painted concrete.

Two Star

Flooring of an overall quite good condition and/or quality. May be of a good quality, but now showing wear or flattening and some marks. Vinyl flooring or wooden floors in reasonable condition may typically be considered to be of this standard.

Three Star

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

Four Star

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

Five Star

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

3.5.4 Lighting and Heating

Assessment of these aspects will normally include level, distribution and controllability of lighting and heating provision, as well as range of lighting.

One Star

Adequate lighting and heating in all living areas to include corridors, staircases and landings. Acceptable levels of illumination, possibly just a minimum wattage provided. Heating may be less than effective for the full room during colder periods. Likely to be modest quality appliances with limited output or free-standing heaters. Solid fuel fires will have an adequate and accessible fuel supply.

Two Star

Quite good levels of lighting, but perhaps not reaching all parts of the room. All bulbs, unless decorative, to have appropriate shade or cover. Lighting is likely to be effective for general purposes but not be capable of providing task or ambient lighting should it be required. Heating available and effective, but only at certain times, such as basic model night storage heaters without boost facility or central heating system on restricted timing.

Three Star

Likely to be more than one source of lighting giving sufficient light for all practical purposes. Dining areas suitably well lit. A good level of heating which maintains a comfortable background temperature in all areas. Fully effective and available at appropriate times. May be a more modern and effective style of storage heater, but without boost facility or wet central heating system with flow controls only and radiators of minimal effective size and

distribution for the room. Where appropriate, heating may be very effectively provided or enhanced by traditional stove or open fires.

Four Star

Effective lighting to all parts of the room, may include some supplementary lighting (table lamps, standard lamps etc.). May see separate controllability of lighting over the dining area etc. Highly effective and responsive heating system in all rooms. Well positioned appliances or radiators, available at all reasonable times and fully controllable.

Five Star

High quality effective lighting, giving sufficient illumination to all parts of the room for all practical purposes. This will typically include supplementary, occasional or task lighting for reading/dining etc. Lighting levels may be controllable. Responsive heating system, with back up. Could be central heating with 24hr availability and thermostatically controlled. Solid fuel fires, where provided, will have a generous supply of fuel ready for use and easily available to guests.

3.5.5 Space, Comfort and Ease of Use

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

One Star

Limited space, restricted range and availability of seating. An acceptable environment without disturbing levels of noise, etc.

Two Star

Overall a quite good standard which may represent otherwise well laid out room(s) that are not really big enough for normal levels of use. Could be room(s), which contain enough seating for normal levels of use but where this has been achieved at the expense of reasonable free movement and comfort. Ambience and comfort may be compromised by a combined kitchen/dining/lounge area in relatively small room.

Three Star

Good sized rooms with sufficient space for free movement. Rooms should be adequately sized and furnished to accommodate normal levels of use. Lounge areas are likely to be comfortably separated from kitchen/dining areas at least by space.

Four Star

An overall very good standard.

Five Star

A well planned room offering high levels of comfort for all users, furniture/TV's/lighting all positioned in suitable and convenient places. Seating, both dining and easy, should be available.

3.6 Bedrooms

3.6.1 Decoration

Assessment of this aspect will include all wall coverings, finishes, pictures, etc.

One Star

Basic quality décor, may show some wear, although overall still of an acceptable standard.

Two Star

Quite good décor although may find that some areas are in need of attention.

Three Star

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

Four Star

A very good standard of décor throughout. Pictures/photos or other artwork could be used to enhance presentation. High standards should be maintained throughout all the public areas. Very little, if any, visible marks or damage.

Five Star

High quality décor with well considered use of colour. Paint will be in excellent condition, evenly and professionally applied.

3.6.2 Furnishings, Furniture and Fittings

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

One Star

Likely to see just hooks, some shelving for storage. Furniture and fittings may show wear but still in a serviceable condition. Blinds/curtains etc. of basic quality, possibly unlined or ill-fitting. Basic quality light fittings, heating equipment will be safe and functional but may show marks, rust or damage to finishes.

Two Star

Furniture/fittings in quite a good condition, only slight evidence of wear. Lockers where provided may be old 'industrial' style metal units with damage/wear apparent. Furniture provision could be of a good quality and condition but provided at minimal levels.

Three Star

May be modest quality. Good quality properly fitting curtains or blinds or well-maintained shutters where appropriate. Good quality heating fixtures and fittings but showing some marks or wear.

Four Star

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

Five Star

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

3.6.3 Flooring

The assessment of this aspect will normally include floor finishes and coverings in bedrooms.

One Star

Flooring in an overall adequate condition, some wear evident but not extensive.

Two Star

Flooring of an overall quite good condition and/or quality. May be of a good quality but now showing some wear. Vinyl flooring or wooden floors should be in reasonable condition.

Three Star

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

Four Star

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

Five Star

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

3.6.4 Lighting and Heating

The assessment of these aspects will normally include level, distribution and range of lighting provision, heating appliances and level of provision/controllability of heating.

One Star

Adequate lighting within the main bedroom, may be just a single pendant. Adequate heating should be effective for the full room during colder periods. Some form of free standing heating should be available for the colder months if the bedrooms do not have fixed heating.

Two Star

Quite good lighting levels, sufficient for most practical purposes. All bulbs, unless decorative, to have appropriate shade or cover. Fluorescent tubes with diffusers. Heating available but only at certain times, e.g. older night storage heaters or central heating system on restricted timing. Small free-standing heaters showing age or wear.

Three Star

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

Four Star

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

lighting where appropriate. Fixed heating, fully responsive to customers' needs. Well positioned heating appliances.

Five Star

High quality effective lighting, giving sufficient controllable and appropriate illumination to all parts of the room e.g. task lighting at wash hand basins, shelving and mirrors and occasional lighting where appropriate. May also include provision of separate low wattage night light. Responsive, thermostatically controlled source of heat in all rooms. Available 24 hrs a day, e.g. central heating with individual thermostatic valves. May be combined heating/ventilation or air conditioning system.

3.6.5 Beds and Bedding

Assessment of these aspects will normally include bunks, beds, alpine platforms, frames, bases, and mattresses, duvets, duvet covers, blankets, sheets, sheet sleeping bags, pillows and pillowcases.

One Star

Beds and bunks solid and movement free, secure and safe access to upper bunks, beds to an acceptable quality – some may show some signs of wear but still be in a serviceable condition. Some marks, damage or wear on finishes to bed/bunk frames or bases. Narrow (2' 6") width beds still in use. Adequate range of bedding and linen to include sufficient blankets/duvets and sheets or sheet sleeping bags.

Two Star

Beds/bunks or sleeping platforms generally to a quite good standard, some of an older/more basic style and showing some signs of wear. Clean and well-presented bed linen/sheet sleeping bags. Tog ratings on duvets (where provided) appropriate to climate.

Three Star

Good quality bed/bunk frames and firm mattresses. Well-presented bedding and linen, all in good condition, pillows should be substantial, good quality pillow and mattress protectors in use.

Four Star

All, beds and bunks to be full sized (i.e. 3' or 4' 6" width) and in very good condition, usually with full depth sprung mattresses. High quality linen and pillows in very good condition. Linen may well be co-ordinated with other aspects of the soft furnishings.

Five Star

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

3.6.6 Space, Comfort and Ease of Use

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

One Star

Bedrooms of an adequate size in relation to number of beds. Little space for storage or free movement. Access to windows, heating and lighting controls and/or electrical sockets may be restricted.

Two Star

An overall quite good standard of room size and layout. Some rooms may be of a very good standard but others more restricted. Although minimum spaciousness requirements will have been exceeded, the impression is likely to remain that the maximum possible number of beds have been put into rooms, affecting guests' comfort.

Three Star

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

Four Star

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

Five Star

Spacious bedrooms, well laid out with clear emphasis on guests' comfort and convenience. At the highest standard some (if not all) bedrooms can be expected to be well furnished, possibly including for example, lockers, well

organised storage space, bedside or occasional tables and easy seating.

3.7 Bathrooms and WCs

3.7.1 Decoration

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

One Star

Décor in an acceptable condition, some aged or damaged décor with marks or wear evident, some flaking paint but mostly sound.

Two Star

Quite good quality and condition of décor, but may show signs of wear.

Three Star

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

Four Star

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

Five Star

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

3.7.2 Sanitary Ware and Fittings

Assessment of this aspect will normally include all shower units, sanitary ware, shower trays, shower cubicles, shower curtains/doors, shelving, mirrors, room curtains/blinds, clothes hooks, towel rails, soap dishes, disposal bins, washbasins and taps, lighting and heating fittings and equipment.

One Star

Fixtures and fittings may be dated but will still be in a serviceable condition. There should always be a reasonable hot water supply.

Two Star

Fixtures and fittings presented to quite a good standard, may see undersized wash hand basins, basic quality shower heads and trays. All fittings should be in sound working order, easily used and responsive. There should be plenty of hot water at all times. Heating and lighting fixtures and fittings may show some wear.

Three Star

Efficient showers with properly set temperature or effective controls, standard sized washbasins in good condition. Standard size/quality ceramic shower trays or non-slip shower floor tiles. Heating and lighting appliances well maintained. Fresh looking shower curtains of a good quality or effective shower doors.

Four Star

Very good quality well made fixtures and fittings. Showers with a powerful flow and fully controllable. Shower curtains of a good quality in a very good condition or good quality shower doors. Towel rings/rails and hooks of a high quality with no evidence of wear.

Five Star

Bathrooms will be well co-ordinated and thoughtfully designed. The facility should create an excellent overall impression, with matching sanitary ware.

3.7.3 Flooring

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

One Star

Practical domestic non-slip flooring in an acceptable condition. All floors should be properly prepared and sealed.

Two Star

An overall quite good standard. May be of a modest quality but in very good condition. Flooring may be showing some wear but all intact and secure. May be of an intrinsically higher quality but not well fitted or now showing some wear.

Three Star

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

Four Star

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

Five Star

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

3.7.4 Lighting, Heating and Ventilation

Assessment of these aspects will normally include level and distribution of lighting provision, heating appliances and level of provision/controllability, efficiency and maintenance of ventilation/extraction systems.

One Star

Adequate wattage offering acceptable lighting levels. Ventilation available e.g., may just be an opening window. Little or no effective heating provision. A centre light, but no or minimal effective lighting at the washbasin or mirror. Usually some limited mechanical ventilation.

Two Star

A centre light but no or minimal effective lighting at the wash hand basin or mirror. Usually some limited mechanical ventilation. Some heating available within the bathrooms.

Three Star

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

Four Star

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

Five Star

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

3.7.5 Space, Comfort and Ease of Use

Assessment of this aspect will normally include spaciousness, layout, ease of use and degree of privacy.

One Star

Adequately sized facilities but perhaps rather restricted in places. Consideration needs to be given to the privacy of guests when changing or drying.

Two Star

Quite good spaciousness overall.

Three Star

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

Four Star

A very good overall standard.

Five Star

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

3.8 Self-Catering Kitchen

3.8.1 Décor and Flooring

Assessment will include all wall coverings, finishes and floor coverings.

One Star

Acceptable quality décor, some wear evident i.e. around the cooking areas, although overall of an adequate standard. May show some wear to the flooring in heavy traffic areas but otherwise of an acceptable condition.

Two Star

Décor and flooring overall of a quite good standard, perhaps some signs of wear but not significant.

Three Star

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

Four Star

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

Five Star

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

3.8.2 Lighting, Heating and Ventilation

Assessment of these aspects will normally include level and distribution of lighting provision, level and controllability of heating provision, efficiency and maintenance of ventilation and extraction systems.

One Star

Adequate lighting in all main areas, single bare fluorescent tubes should have covers. No mechanical ventilation available e.g., may just be an opening window. Little or no effective heating provision.

Two Star

Adequate wattage but may result in some work areas being less than effectively lit. Fluorescent tubes should be fitted with diffusers. No mechanical or only marginally effective mechanical ventilation.

Three Star

All work areas reasonably well illuminated. Effective ventilation, typically via extractor fan and opening window. Appropriate heating levels.

Four Star

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

Five Star

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

3.8.3 Furniture and Fittings

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

One Star

Furniture and fittings may show some wear but still in a serviceable condition. May be basic open shelving with worktops above or old domestic units. Worktop surfaces may be damaged or worn in places.

Two Star

Kitchen furnishings overall of a quite good standard. May be standard quality domestic fitted units showing some age and wear.

Three Star

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

Four Star

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

Five Star

High quality furniture and fittings, to an excellent standard. Units may or may not have doors. Kitchens equipped to this standard may well incorporate stainless steel work/food preparation surfaces or shelving.

3.8.4 Cookers and Electrical Equipment

Assessment of these aspects will normally include cooking appliances (including microwave ovens, grills, hobs and conventional ovens) and white goods (including fridge, freezer, kettle, toaster, water boiler). Quality and range will also be considered.

One Star

Well used equipment but serviceable and in a safe condition. Basic range of equipment e.g. fridge space very limited in relation to number of guests accommodated. Cookers and hobs properly installed and safe to use but may show some wear.

Two Star

Equipment overall of a quite good standard which may reflect some considerable variation in quality/condition of different items. Likely to be domestic quality equipment with some wear or damage evident.

Three Star

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

Four Star

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

Five Star

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

3.8.5 Kitchen and Dining Ware

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

One Star

Very mixed crockery and utensils, some showing wear. Aluminium utensils oxidizing, some handles burnt or otherwise worn.

Two Star

Largely free of damage or significant signs of wear. It is recommended to include some of bulk catering size where group bookings are accommodated.

Three Star

Utensils and crockery in a good condition and enabling appropriately full table settings to be made.

Four Star

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

Five Star

An extended range of utensils, crockery and glassware, all in an excellent condition,

usually considerably in excess of minimum requirements. Additional items may be provided.

3.8.6 Space, Comfort and Ease of Use

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

One Star

Adequate work and storage space. May be rather restricted in respect of the normal level of use or with particularly poor ergonomic design.

Two Star

Quite good size and layout of kitchen although may become a little tight for space during peak use periods. Sufficient but less than generous provision of convenient work and food preparation surfaces.

Three Star

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

Four Star

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

Five Star

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

3.9 Other Facilities

With the exception of a drying room, additional facilities may or may not be provided, but where they are, they will form part of the assessment.

3.9.1 Laundry and Drying Rooms

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

One Star

Ageing equipment, either commercial or domestic, showing some signs of wear. Insufficient provision of hanging and storage space for all potential users. Drying room with minimal equipment for hanging clothing and only marginally effective equipment for ensuring equipment and clothing is dried. This standard may also reflect where an otherwise good facility is being used as a storage area to the detriment of its intended use or a facility that is good but restricted in size relative to its potential use.

Two Star

Clean and well presented facility, perhaps quite basic or limited in its provision, but generally of a quite good standard.

Three Star

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

Four Star

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

Five Star

An excellent standard will be most often demonstrated in these areas by the provision of an extended range of high quality equipment, spin dryers, iron, ironing board, laundry baskets etc.

3.9.2 Recreation/Additional Facilities

Assessment of this aspect will normally include the quality and maintenance of any additional recreational facilities provided for guests' use, such as pool table, game machines, internet

access, table tennis, library, shop, games room, leisure facilities, specialist equipment storage provision e.g. canoes/bikes/climbing gear.

4.0 Code of Conduct

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

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

5.0 Conditions for Participation

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

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

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

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

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

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 03000 622418 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

Tel enquiries: 03000 622418
Fax: 03000 622081
E-mail: quality.tourism@gov.wales