



QUALITY ASSURANCE
CRITERIA FOR

BED & BREAKFAST

TOURISMNI.COM

 **TOURISM
NORTHERN
IRELAND**

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1. Introduction

In Northern Ireland, all tourist accommodation must be certified by Tourism Northern Ireland (Tourism NI) i.e. inspected by an officer of Tourism NI to ensure compliance with minimum standards set by the Tourism (Northern Ireland) Order 1992 and can only trade when issued with a certificate. Details of minimum criteria are available to view on tourismni.com/accommodation.

In addition to the requirements to meet minimum standards set by legislation, accommodation in Northern Ireland can choose to be graded by Tourism NI according to pre-set quality standards. To participate in the Tourism NI Quality Assurance Scheme, your property must first receive a certificate to trade as a Bed & Breakfast under the Tourism (Northern Ireland) Order 1992.

This booklet is your guide to the criteria to join the Quality Assurance Scheme for Bed & Breakfast accommodation, along with specific requirements at each star grade. It also outlines how Quality Scores are determined, providing advice and best practice.



What is a Bed & Breakfast (B&B)

In essence, a B&B offers comfortable overnight sleeping accommodation for visitors within the owner or host family's home and must provide a cooked breakfast. Guest bedrooms must be for guest use only, however lounge and dining may be shared.

B&Bs offer a more personalised experience and are known for their homely atmosphere. Most are run by people who have had no formal training but have a genuine flair for household management, good hygiene, simple cooking and good people skills – offering true Northern Ireland hospitality.



2. Quality is the key

Tourism Northern Ireland (Tourism NI) understands that quality is the key to success within the modern hospitality industry. For our B&B industry to be successful both nationally and internationally, it is important that quality standards are set high and continue to improve.

Our commitment to you

Our professional Quality Advisors will work with you to maximise the potential of your business. As a member of the Tourism NI Quality Assurance Scheme, you will receive an annual Quality Grading assessment. This will be in the form of an overnight mystery assessment in the first year, followed by either a day visit or an overnight from year two, depending on your star rating. The assessment will look at all customer facing aspects of your business, from the initial booking to checkout. Each visit will be followed by a verbal debrief and a detailed written management report, both designed to help you improve your business.

Quality across the star ratings

When a customer chooses accommodation, they will have an expectation of quality commensurate with the offer made in the property's marketing alongside their star grade. Our Quality Advisors will grade each aspect of your business to five levels based on these general expectations. In advance of their visit, the Quality Advisor will review your property's online presence as if they were a typical guest.

Service & Hospitality

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

Seamless and efficient service requires thought and planning. A small B&B can rely on the natural friendliness and hospitality of the owners, whilst a larger business will require a team of well-trained staff and this can present a different challenge.

Bedrooms & Bathrooms

Whatever the style or concept of the bedrooms and bathrooms, both quality and comfort is what guests and our Quality Advisors will be looking for, specifically:

- The quality, comfort and size of the bed.
- The quality of the bed linen.
- Attractive, well co-ordinated décor and soft furnishings.

- The quality of bathroom fittings, of towels and toiletries.
- Ease of use, being well designed without necessarily being large and spacious.
- Those extra touches that make the rooms more welcoming.

When assessing quality, the following are considered:

- **Intrinsic quality** – the inherent value of an item.
- **Condition** – the maintenance and appearance of an item. Is it fit for the purpose?
- **Physical and personal comfort** – does the quality 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 is special and of the same high standards for all.
- **Guests choice and ease of use** – the guest experience is enhanced through choice – be it the choice of beverages in the room or the choice of room temperature. This is further improved by how usable the guest finds the room and its contents.
- **Presentation** – the way the room and its contents are presented for guests' arrival and during their stay.

Cleanliness

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

Hints & Tips

Be objective and self-critical when thinking about quality:

- Do not over promise: don't be tempted to claim you offer luxury accommodation in your marketing unless your facilities are truly luxurious. Customers travel with expectations and it is better to exceed these than not to live up to them.
- Be a customer at your own business. Take time to use your website, sleep in your bedrooms and eat in your own dining room to experience what you are offering your guests.
- Adding a sense of place to the visitor experience will go a long way to make your guests' stay a truly memorable one. It can be something simple like adding artwork, interesting information about your area, or a feature to your property to add a touch of local flavour.

3. How do we measure quality?

During your visit, your Quality Advisor will make quality judgements across all areas of your customer facing business. When the scores are totalled you will have an overall percentage score that will place you within one of the five different star rating bands. However, to confirm a particular star rating, the scores awarded within each of the **five key areas** also need to fall within that band or higher. In this way we, and you, can be confident that the business is offering a consistent level of service at the star rating awarded. These key areas are:

- Cleanliness
- Bedrooms
- Bathrooms
- Hospitality & Friendliness
- Food Quality (Breakfast)

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

Assessment Example

In the example on the next page, the B&B provides all services and facilities required of a four-star property and is seeking a four star rating.

In order to be awarded four star, the property needs to meet the overall percentage required (at least 70%) as well as the percentages required in each of the key areas listed above. The business meets the overall percentage required for four star (with 74%) and achieves four star for Cleanliness, Bedrooms and Bathrooms. However, the property fails to meet the score required for Hospitality & Friendliness (scoring high three star). Although the property meets the four star score for Food Quality, this score is borderline.

The outcome is that a three star rating is awarded but with potential for four star. If wishing to increase the grade, advice will be provided as to how to improve the scores for Hospitality & Friendliness as well as Food Quality to meet a four star rating at the next assessment.

Scores

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

1 mark	Acceptable
2 marks	Good
3 marks	Very Good
4 marks	Excellent
5 marks	Exceptional

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

Hints & Tips

- Don't be afraid to do things your way. For example, locally sourced toiletries can be of equal quality to national brands.
- Remember that first impressions matter. Paying attention to the following critical areas will pay dividends:
 - Clean and tidy parking areas.
 - Well-tended grounds and gardens.
 - A welcoming smile.
 - Fresh flowers.
 - The final touches in bedrooms & bathrooms with care taken over the presentation of bedding, towels and toiletries.

Quality assessment example

CLEANLINESS

Bedrooms	4
Bathrooms	4
Dining Room	4
Public Areas	4
(Four star quality)	80%

SERVICE & EFFICIENCY

Booking & Arrival	4
Dinner & General Service	N/A
Breakfast Service	3
Departure Service	4
	73%

BEDROOMS

Decoration	4
Furniture, Fittings and Furnishings	3
Flooring	3
Beds & Bedding	4
Lighting, Heating & Ventilation	4
Bedroom Accessories	4
Space, Comfort & Ease of Use	4
(Four star quality)	74%

BATHROOMS

Decoration	4
Fixtures & Fittings	4
Flooring	4
Lighting, Heating & Ventilation	4
Towels & Toiletries	4
Space, Comfort & Ease of Use	3
(Four star quality)	77%

FOOD BREAKFAST

Quality & Provenance	4
Choice & Range	4
Presentation & Culinary Skills	3
(Borderline Four star quality)	73%

HOSPITALITY & FRIENDLINESS

Booking & Arrival	3
Dinner & General Service	N/A
Breakfast	3
Departure	3
(Three star quality)	60%

EXTERIOR

Buildings	4
Grounds, Gardens & Frontage	4
Car Parking	4
	80%

OTHER PUBLIC AREAS

Reception	4
Recreation/ Public WCs	N/A
Stairs, Corridors & Hallways	4
	80%

ALL PUBLIC AREAS

Decoration	4
Furniture, Fittings & Furnishings	3
Flooring	4
Lighting, Heating & Ventilation	4
Space, Comfort & Ease of Use	3
	72%

DINING ROOM

Decoration	4
Furniture, Fittings & Furnishings	3
Flooring	3
Lighting, Heating & Ventilation	4
Table Appointment	4
Space, Comfort & Ease of Use	4
	73%

OVERALL SCORE 74%

The outcome is a three star rating

NB – this scoresheet is an example. Marks and scoring thresholds may be subject to change in future.



4. Determining a Star Rating

A property will need to satisfy three elements to reach a particular star rating:

1. All relevant requirements must be met (detailed later in this booklet).
2. The overall percentage score for quality must reach the appropriate band (see quality bands below).
3. The overall percentage score for quality in the five key areas must also reach the appropriate threshold:
 - Cleanliness
 - Bedrooms
 - Bathrooms
 - Hospitality & Friendliness
 - Food Quality (Breakfast)

The remaining four areas are: exterior, public areas, dining room and service & efficiency. While these are important elements of the guest experience, the quality score is allowed to vary slightly.



OVERALL QUALITY BANDS					
	one-star	two-star	three-star	four-star	five-star
Overall	30%-46%	47%-54%	55%-69%	70%-84%	85%-100%
Cleanliness	40%	50%	65%	75%	90%
Bedrooms	30%	47%	55%	70%	85%
Bathrooms	30%	47%	55%	70%	85%
Hospitality & Friendliness	30%	47%	55%	70%	85%
Food	30%	47%	55%	70%	85%

Dispensations

Dispensations for certain individual requirements within these 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.



5. Tourism NI's Quality Advisors

Tourism NI's Quality Advisors are professionally trained and have extensive knowledge of the tourism sector. They are there to help you develop the quality of your business, improve guest satisfaction and make the best possible use of the opportunities available to you from Tourism NI.

Our Quality Advisors spend their working lives as professional guests. They experience best practice in all areas and can pass that knowledge on to you for the benefit of your business. They are your eyes and ears for the duration of their visit and they will assess the quality of your business honestly, with the objective of helping you to improve your operations.

Innovation

Don't be afraid to innovate. This document is a flexible guide to the minimum services required at each level. The hospitality industry is dynamic in the way it provides services to its customers. If your customers would appreciate a new way of doing things, do not dismiss the idea because it is not included in this document.

We are sure that you have many ideas for future delivery of your service. Talk to your Advisor. We are flexible and willing to accommodate new ideas wherever possible.

How to get the most out of your Advisor

The first time you meet your Advisor is likely to be when they arrive at your property for an overnight visit. Even then, they will not reveal their identity until the following morning. This allows them to experience your service as a customer would and begin to understand your business prior to your debrief meeting after breakfast.

Include as many staff as possible at the debrief. Constructive advice from the Advisor might help to inspire and motivate staff.

Ask questions. Your Advisor is there to help your business succeed, so make use of their knowledge and expertise. Their aim is to maximise the quality potential of your business, while allowing the character and uniqueness of your property to shine through.

Stay in touch. Quality Advisors are happy to answer your questions in between assessment visits. You might like to check in with them to ask about improvements you are



considering for your business. Your assessment in the second year is likely to be a day visit. If you believe you have a good chance of achieving a higher rating you can request an overnight visit.

Hints & Tips

- Your website is the first contact most customers will have with you. Make sure it is up to date, easy to use and engaging.
- Good quality photographs are the best way to show off your business. Modern smartphone cameras are often up to the task, and online tutorials are widely available.
- If you have the time for social media, it's a great way to engage with potential guests. Your Advisor can help with advice on how to get started.
- Traditional check-in or electronic check-in. Either can enhance or diminish the overall quality of the visitor experience, depending on how it is operated.

6. General Requirements

6.1 Statutory Obligations

Legislative Requirements

- The Bed & Breakfast must have in place a valid certificate under the Tourism (Northern Ireland) Order 1992.
- The Bed & Breakfast must comply with all other statutory requirements in force at that time.

For more information on your legal obligations scan here:



Accessibility Statutory Obligations

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 Disability Discrimination Act 1995 requires that service providers must think ahead and take steps to address barriers that impede disabled people. Providers should not wait until a disabled person experiences difficulties using a service, as this may make it too late to make the necessary adjustment.

- Make 'reasonable' changes to the way things are done - such as changing practices, policies or procedures where disabled people would be at a 'substantial disadvantage', e.g. amend a 'no dogs' policy.
- Make 'reasonable' changes to the built environment - such as making changes to the structure of a building to improve access e.g. altering or removing a physical feature.

- Provide auxiliary aids and services - such as providing information in an accessible format, or 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, the potential benefit it may bring to other customers, the resources a business has and how practical the changes are.

6.2 Safety & Security

Legislative Requirements

- The Bed & Breakfast shall be of substantial and durable construction, structurally safe, in good repair and of suitable design.
- Guests' bedrooms shall have a suitable locking device on any door opening onto a corridor.

All grades

- The main entrance should be clearly identified, and the doorway illuminated when it is dark.
- A high degree of general safety and security should be maintained. All information on evacuation procedures should be kept up to date and advertised in every bedroom.
- Printed instructions provided in the bedrooms explaining how to summon help in an emergency.
- Once registered, guests should have access to the accommodation at all reasonable times.
- Adequate levels of lighting for safety and comfort in all public areas, including sufficient light on stairways and landings at night.
- Adequate measures for the safety and security of guests and their property, particularly in car parks and ground floor bedrooms.
- For the safety of guests, all car parks should be adequately lit.

6. General Requirements

Accessibility Best Practice

- Ensure the fire evacuation procedures consider emergency exits for disabled people. Remember guests with hearing loss may not hear knocking at the door. Record their room location and any specific requirements.
- Welcome assistance dogs. Many disabled people rely on assistance dogs to provide independence. See the dog as being part of the person.

6.3 Maintenance

All grades

- Buildings, their fixtures, furnishings, fittings, exterior and interior décor should all be maintained in a sound, clean condition and be fit for the purpose intended.
- All electrical and gas equipment should be in good working order and be regularly serviced to ensure guest safety.
- A monitoring procedure should be in place for reporting broken or damaged items in guests' bedrooms.



7. Cleanliness

Legislative Requirements

- The establishment shall provide daily cleaning of bedrooms when visitors are resident.
- The establishment shall be in good decorative order and kept clean and well-maintained throughout, including outdoor areas, grounds and car parking areas.

All grades

As the cleanliness of a B&B at every star grade is of paramount importance to guests, a high standard of cleanliness must be achieved and maintained throughout the property. Particular attention should be given to items involving direct contact with guests, including:

- Bedding, linen and towels.
- Baths, showers, washbasins and WCs.
- Flooring and seating.
- Crockery, cutlery and glassware.
- Bathrooms to be spotlessly clean and fresh smelling.
- Particular attention paid to WCs, plugholes, shower curtains/screens, mirrors and extractor fans.
- All walls, ceilings, pipes, ledges, equipment and fittings, which are beyond reach from floor level, cleaned on a regular basis.
- All flat surfaces, equipment and furniture free from dust, dirt, grease and marks.

At 4 and 5 Star Level we expect to see:

- Clean and freshly polished surfaces. Soft furnishings and carpets regularly deep-cleaned.
- Greater attention to detail, with high overall standards.
- Hygienically stored spare blankets and pillows in bedrooms.
- Clearly a pristine finish.
- Gleaming surfaces. No smears or marks. Evidence of thorough cleaning.
- Spotless soft furnishings and carpets.
- Bedding is visibly crisp and clean.

SCORING - for example

Five ★★★★★

- Pristine standards of housekeeping. Attention is paid to all areas, sparkle and polish to all surfaces.

Four ★★★★★

- An excellent overall presentation and greater attention to detail, with only a few minor lapses. There will be evidence of regular deep cleaning. In public areas there will be evidence of early morning cleaning and vacuuming. Excellent standard throughout.

Three ★★★

- Happy to use the area. At this level, lapses may be numerous but not significant. Smears to mirrors, light dust to back of TVs, above wardrobes, carpet edges, etc. Very good standard overall.

Two ★★

- Superficially clean and tidy, but with lapses noted when looking closer. Neglect or lack of serious deep cleaning, but attention paid to guest contact areas. Good standard generally.

One ★

- A just acceptable approach to cleaning with little evidence of deep cleaning or attention to detail. Many minor lapses will generally indicate that there are issues which need to be raised. Any serious lapses to guest contact areas may well cause a score of zero.

Accessibility Best Practice

- Do not move furniture and personal items in the bathroom or bedroom as, in most cases, they are placed in positions that are accessible to the guest.
- Do not tie up alarm pull cords in accessible bedrooms and bathrooms.

Sustainability Best Practice

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

The following list shows the areas which are assessed:

Bedrooms	First Impression: Overview of whole room	Looking at/for: Well aired, clean look, tidy appearance
Furniture	Surfaces	Dust
	Drawers	Crumbs/hairs/lost property
	Inside/outside wardrobe	Dust/spare bedding
	Behind mirrors/TVs	Dust levels
	Under furniture	Objects from previous guests/dust
Beds	Sheets, duvet covers	Holes/stains/standard of laundering
	Pillows/cushions	Plumpness/stains
	Mattress protectors	Hairs/stains/frequency of laundering
	Mattresses	Stains/rotation of mattresses
	Headboard	Grease marks/hairs
	Behind/under bed	Levels of dust/debris/poor vacuuming
	Bed dressings/bedspreads	Check swags/canopies for dust/ valances for stains
	Spare linen	Wrapped and clean
Lamps	Lamp shades/bases	Dust/spillages from drinks
	Switches	Finger marks/dust
General	Above pictures/dado rails/ornaments	Levels of dust
	Behind radiators	Magazines/debris
	Mini-bars / chillers	Sticky drink spillages
	Ornaments	Dust from infrequent use
	Tea/coffee trays	Dust/drink spillages/cleanliness of crocery/ hygienic wrapping of items
	Telephone (if supplied)	Greasy marks on receivers/dirty key pad
	Room information	Presentation/rings from cups etc.
Carpet / Flooring	Pile	Frequency of shampooing and vacuuming/stains
	Edges	Vacuuming to edges
	N.B. Long term staining would be assessed under condition and quality, not cleanliness	
Walls	Light switches	Grubby finger marks
	Paintwork/Wallpaper	Scorch marks/spillages from drinks
Windows	Casements	Dust/dead insects
	Panes / Frames	Regularity of cleaning
Bins	Inside and out	Between bin & liner/debris/stains
Curtains/Window Coverings	Linings/blinds/pellets/swag	Water stains/frequency of laundering. Levels of dust/stains
Soft Furnishings	Upholstery	Stains/frequency of deep cleaning
	Under cushions	Money or other debris
	Sides/Arms	Grubby marks

Bathrooms & Ensuites	First Impression: Overview of whole room	Looking at/for: Clean, sparkling, neat towels in place, tidy, fresh smell
Toilet	Inside/outside bowl	Urine stains, hairs
	Under rim/seat	Scrubbed clean, no streaks/stains/hair
	Adjacent walls	Splashes
	Behind toilet/Pipework	Dust, dirt, toilet paper, hairs
	Toilet brush holder	Stagnant water, toilet paper residue
Bath/Shower	Plug holes	Hairs, sparkling chrome
	Behind taps	Scum/slime
	Sealant/Grouting	Mildew, stains, hairs
	Extractor fans	Levels of dust, noise
	Curtains	Mildew, hairs
	Screens	Smears, splashes, sealing strip
	Shower heads / hose	Limescale, mildew
Washbasin	Taps	Sparkling chrome, slime/scum
	Overflow	Hairs, other residue
	Underside/Pedestal	Hairs, splashes of toothpaste
	Mirror	Smears
Floor	Edges/ledges	Stains, smears, residue, hairs
Lights	Light coverings and switches	Dust, flies, fingerprints
Beakers	Stained glasses	Lipstick, toothpaste, smears
Towels	Freshness	Fresh smelling, plumpness
Public Areas (Dining room/Lounge)	First Impression: Overview of whole room	Looking at/for: Plumped cushions, fragrant smell, polished surfaces
General	Cleanliness of crockery/ cutlery	Water/food stains
	Ornaments/pictures	Dust, smears on glass
	Tables tops/mirrors	Presentation/rings from cups, sticky marks/ smears on glass
	Public toilets	Regular cleaning with constant attention
	Curtains	Levels of dust/stains
	Windows	Smears, flies, dust
	Menus	Food/drink stains, fingerprints
	Upholstery	Food debris, stains, grubbiness
Carpet/Floor Covering	Pile	Depth of pile/frequency of shampooing and vacuuming/stains
	Edges	Vacuuming to edges

8. Hospitality & Friendliness

Legislative Requirements

- The Bed & Breakfast shall be staffed by persons adequate in number and training to maintain the appropriate standards of service for visitors at all reasonable times.
- The Bed & Breakfast shall be under the supervision of the proprietor, trained or experienced in management of a Bed & Breakfast establishment.

What is assessed

The attitude and friendliness of all staff in the B&B including:

- Telephone manner on booking, cheerfulness and keen to help attitude.
- Welcoming, polite and courteous throughout.
- On departure, do staff offer help with onward journey?
- The impression of how friendly the staff were during the stay in the B&B.
- All enquiries, reservations and complaints from guests dealt with promptly and politely.
- Every effort made to take account of individual guests' needs.
- All staff demonstrate a positive attitude and willingness to help.

At all grades, guests should be greeted and acknowledged in a friendly, efficient and courteous manner throughout their stay.

SCORING - for example

Five ★★★★★

- Excellent social skills, helpful attitude. Anticipation of individual guests' needs to create unique and memorable experiences.
- Offer of refreshment on arrival, either brought to room or offered in public areas.
- Goes the 'extra mile' to ensure guests feel welcome, and this is the norm.
- Spontaneous acts of friendliness inspiring confidence in the guest that a high standard of service will follow.
- Excellent first and last impression.

Four ★★★★

- Very good social skills and anticipation of individual guests' needs evident.
- Proactive in providing guests with information. Attentive, more personalised service, use of guests' names once given.

- Friendly attitude either in person or on telephone. Spontaneous conversation unprompted. Cheerful demeanour and attitude.
- Guests feel confident that service delivery will be competent.
- Guests made to feel very much at home with a warm genuine welcome on arrival.



Three ★★★

- Staff have a helpful attitude, and guests dealt with promptly and politely, however more responsive than proactive.
- Pleasant if approached but dialogue limited to service needs.
- Some acknowledgement of guests and some occasional conversation with or without prompting.
- Reasonably friendly, welcoming smile. Cheerful demeanour and attitude but may not make immediate contact with guests.
- Guests have confidence that booking has been made.

Two ★★

- Neutral behaviour with no particular friendliness or enthusiasm.
- Some willingness to help when asked. Mechanical.

One ★

- Not surly or rude but may show some indifference to guests.
- Limited interest or effort.

9. Service and Efficiency

9.1 Bookings & Pre-Arrival Information

What is assessed

At all grades there should be a simple and efficient booking service that includes the following:

- Communication with prospective guests, whether verbal or written, should be prompt, efficient, professional and helpful. A good first impression is critical at all grades.
- You should describe fairly to all guests and prospective guests the amenities, facilities and services that your establishment provides – either by advertisement, brochure, word of mouth or any other means.
- You should make clear to guests exactly what is included in the prices you quote for accommodation, meals and refreshments. You must include service charges, taxes and other surcharges. Legally, you should not exceed the price you agree at the time of booking. You should explain in detail any charges for additional services or available facilities and cancellation terms, if applicable. If a deposit is required, you need to tell guests when they book and explain how it will be taken and whether or not it is refundable if they cancel.
- The means of payment must be clearly detailed to guests, i.e. how and where they pay. If payment is requested on arrival, then this should be made clear at the time of booking, especially if only cash is accepted.
- When you are taking a booking you should describe in detail any in-house policies, e.g. no smoking or vaping policy, payment methods, access restrictions.
- If prospective guests ask to see the accommodation before they book, you must show them.
- You must tell all prospective visitors about any major refurbishment work that might affect their stay.
- Where relevant, ascertain dietary requirements (vegetarian, vegan, coeliac, nut allergy, etc.).

SCORING - for example

Five ★★★★★

- Prompt response to booking enquiry, whether verbal or written.
- Excellent telephone skills and explanation of accommodation and bedroom facilities given. Provided

with some helpful additional information e.g. any leisure facilities available to guests, local attractions/ events, etc.

- Booking handled in a professional manner, repeated back and some form of written (electronic acceptable) confirmation along with directions sent.
- Enquiry concerning any special requests.
- Appropriate use of guests' names.

Four ★★★★★

- Competent and efficient booking procedure with directions offered and explanation of accommodation and bedroom facilities given. Provided with some helpful additional information, leisure and other facilities available to guests.
- Evidence of staff demonstrating excellent telephone skills.
- Written confirmation offered.

Three ★★★

- Very good telephone skills evident with an organised approach with booking procedure.
- Explanation of accommodation and bedroom facilities given. Provided with some helpful additional information e.g. directions.
- Confirmation provided on request.

Two ★★

- Could be informal in style. Answerphone acceptable if call returned promptly.
- Style and content of room only may be explained.
- Arrival time requested if access to rooms restricted by a time.

One ★

- Acceptable telephone skills and informal in style.
- Room type enquiry made together with a rate quoted.
- Name and contact telephone details requested as a minimum.
- Any deposit, booking conditions and cancellation policy clearly explained.

9. Service & Efficiency

Accessibility Best Practice

- Consider website accessibility e.g. ability to change text size, colour contrast options, audible indication etc.
- Highlight the accessible features of your premises on your website.
- Offer your guests a choice of how to contact you e.g. telephone, fax, letter, email, text message and find out about Text Relay used by people with a hearing impairment at www.textrelay.org.
- Always ask if the enquirer or any of the guests in the party have any specific access requirements.
- Even if you do not accept pets, state that you welcome trained assistance dogs [legal obligation].

Sustainability Best Practice

- Consider drafting and promoting a sustainability policy, setting out the actions currently taken by your business.
- Let guests know about the natural and cultural attractions and events in the local area, eg. walking and cycling trails, suggest itineraries on your website. This may encourage longer stays.
- Include public transport options not only for getting to the property in promotional and booking information, but also for getting around the area especially to popular attractions.
- For quieter times off season, provide special offers by creating packages with other local businesses, such as activity providers and attractions.

9.2 Guest Arrival and Welcome

Legislative Requirements

- The Bed & Breakfast shall have an entrance hall of sufficient size to cater adequately for the number of visitors for whom sleeping accommodation is provided.
- An entrance hall suitably laid out and contains appropriate furnishings, fittings and equipment of good quality and in good condition.

What is assessed

The arrival procedure from when the guest first arrives at the Bed & Breakfast.

All grades:

- The proprietor or staff should be on duty during the main arrival and departure periods and during mealtimes. It is acceptable that the entrance may be locked, and the guest may have to ring or knock for access or be provided with details of secure access.
- Registration of all guests on arrival.
- Guests informed of mealtimes, Wi-Fi code, etc.
- Once guests have registered, they should have access to the establishment and to their bedrooms at all times unless they were previously told about any restrictions. A key or security code may be given for the main entrance.
- You should provide service that is appropriate to the style of accommodation, and deal promptly with all enquiries, requests, reservations, correspondence and complaints from guests.
- There must be an effective means for guests to call for the attention of the proprietor or staff, who need to be available at all reasonable times (as above). If the proprietor or staff live away from the property a telephone contact number needs to be provided and clearly displayed.

SCORING - For example

Five ★★★★★

- Guests personally greeted on arrival and awareness of individual guests' needs evident.
- Pre-population of registration card would be expected and information such as dining options provided.
- Appropriate use of guests' names.
- Guests shown to rooms with luggage assistance and explanation of accommodation and bedroom facilities.
- Refreshments offered on arrival in lounge area or in-room.

9. Service and Efficiency

Four ★★★★★

- Attentive, personalised service with appropriate use of guests' names.
- Some pre-population of registration card would be expected and information such as dinner options would be suggested.
- Escort to the bedrooms and indication given of public areas.
- Luggage assistance offered.

Three ★★★

- Welcome would be less formal with proprietor or staff available to deal promptly and effectively with enquiries.
- Clear willingness to help guests on arrival.
- Information such as dinner availability or confirmation and table booking may be offered.
- A willing response to request for luggage assistance.

Two ★★

- Welcome would be less formal with proprietor or staff able to deal effectively with enquiries.
- Sound registration procedure.
- Information such as breakfast times offered.

One ★

- Clear indication of means to attract attention.
- Appropriate welcome offered, although the style may be more informal.
- Reception procedure in accordance with current statutory requirements and guests allocated their rooms.

Hints & Tips

Many people choose not to stay at a hotel because of the informal and friendly service available in a B&B. Greeting your guests is an opportunity to give a great impression of your business:

- Being friendly and welcoming might come naturally to you, but don't leave it to chance. The best welcomes are well planned and are delivered consistently.
- Guest registration is a legal requirement. Your Quality Advisor will have ideas as to how this can be carried out quickly and unobtrusively.

- Your welcome procedure might include assistance with luggage. Your paintwork is less likely to be damaged if you are carrying the bags!
- You might like to offer refreshments to your guests on arrival, but if they go straight to their room, fresh milk is always appreciated for that first cup of tea.

9.3 Breakfast

What is assessed

Assessment of breakfast service, appropriate skills including customer care and product knowledge. Efficient service with enough staff to cope at busy times.

All grades

- A proprietor and /or staff should be available at breakfast to respond to guests' needs, e.g. clearing of dishes, replenishing buffet and offering top-ups of tea and coffee.
- Tables laid appropriately for the meal being served.
- Competent service with helpful attitude, timely awareness of guests' arrival in the breakfast room.
- It is acceptable to offer a buffet style cooked breakfast.
- Where provided, breakfast buffets should be laid out and operated in a practical and customer-friendly manner with items replenished on a regular basis.
- Verbal or written explanation of available breakfast choices.
- Staff demonstrate knowledge of the dishes being served.
- Sufficient staff to ensure prompt service.
- It is acceptable to ask guests to pre-order breakfast the evening before to avoid waste.
- The price of any breakfast items carrying an additional charge clearly advertised.
- Where breakfast is served in the bedrooms, service should be of an equivalent or better level than if it were to be served in a breakfast room, this includes service of beverages.

SCORING - For example

Five ★★★★★

- Proprietors and/or staff demonstrate excellent service skills. Guests met, greeted and seated. Exceptionally competent and immaculately presented staff.
- Comprehensive descriptions of dishes available and good judgement in timing of serving the different courses. Guests offered clean and well-presented menus.
- Efficient service with high levels of technical skills and anticipation of guests' needs.
- Highly attentive service with the offer of fresh hot drinks, toast etc.

Four ★★★★

- Staff demonstrate high levels of product knowledge and service skills. Structured and well organised staffing at breakfast.
- Polite and courteous staff providing high standards of customer care and personal presentation.
- Attentive service with satisfaction checks throughout breakfast, offering more tea/coffee, toast etc. and prompt table clearing.

Three ★★★

- Staff demonstrate good product knowledge and service skills. Sufficient staff to ensure a well-paced breakfast service.
- General staff appearance would be expected to be very good.
- Tables correctly laid with appropriate cutlery, crockery and napery.
- Guests may be welcomed and shown to seat by a member of staff. Verbal or written explanation of available breakfast choices.
- Breakfast buffet items kept topped up.

Two ★★

- Service skills should be consistent and of a good level. Sufficient staff to ensure a well-paced breakfast service with some supervision evident.
- Reasonable product knowledge.
- Tables correctly laid with appropriate cutlery, crockery and napery.
- Guests directed to a seat by a member of staff. Good communication with guests.

One ★

- Staff demonstrate adequate levels of product knowledge and service skills.
- Sufficient staff to ensure a well-paced breakfast service.
- All staff appropriately dressed. Adequate communication with guests.

Accessibility Best Practice

- Try to be flexible with mealtimes to help people with diabetes regulate their blood sugar.
- Provide menus in accessible formats e.g. a large print menu (minimum font size 16 point) in a clear font such as Arial.
- Provide larger cutlery, plastic plates/cups, straws.
- Offer guests a choice of seating location.
- Offer guests assistance with menus e.g. reading menu options to guests with visual impairments.
- Offer guests assistance with self-service buffet where appropriate.

Sustainability Best Practice

- Staff dealing with food and drink service should be fully briefed on the source, characteristics and significance of local food and drink products that are being served.

9.4 Departure

What is assessed

The departure process including presentation of bill and accuracy, offer of luggage assistance and help with onward journey e.g. directions, taxi, etc.

All grades

- As this is likely to be the guests' last point of contact with the B&B, special attention should be given to providing a high standard of customer care.
- Provide written details of payments due and a receipt to any visitor who requests it. Clearly identify the VAT element of the bill where applicable.
- No undue delays for the guest on departure.
- Proprietors and staff are willing to assist if the bill is unclear or inaccurate.
- Efficient procedures are in place for handling guest departure.
- Proprietors and staff are well versed in all methods of payment where appropriate.
- Guests are asked if they enjoyed their stay.

SCORING - for example

Five ★★★★★

- Excellent levels of professionalism, social skills and attention to customer care.
- Awareness that departing guests are ready to pay, and proprietors or staff should make themselves available. Proprietor/ staff make very good use of guests' names.
- Bill pre-prepared, correct in all details and may be presented with a degree of privacy i.e. placed in an envelope or equivalent.
- Checkout procedure allowed to progress very quickly without any interruption from other duties.
- Customer satisfaction checks made prior to departure with offer of assistance with luggage, taxis and onward journey assistance.

Four ★★★★★

- Staff professional with excellent social skills and attention to customer care.
- Prompt attention when summoned. Good use made of guests' names (intermittent use).

- Bills pre-prepared and the checkout procedure allowed to progress quickly without interruption from other duties.
- Customer satisfaction checks made prior to departure with offer of assistance with luggage and taxi perhaps.

Three ★★★

- Staff well presented with very good social skills.
- Accurate bill prepared in advance and the checkout procedure allowed to progress without excessive interruption from other duties.

Two ★★

- Staff perhaps hesitant in dealing with guests. Good social skills.
- Bill partially made out for guest departure. System does not readily allow prompt checkout.

One ★

- Staff demonstrate acceptable social skills.
- Bill provided upon request. Adequate service on departure with limited guest contact.

Sustainability Best Practice

- Offer guests a digital copy of their invoice (where possible) to limit paper and ink usage.



10. External areas

Legislative Requirements

- The establishment shall be in good decorative order and kept clean and well-maintained throughout, including outdoor areas, grounds and car parking areas.

10.1 Buildings, Appearance and Condition

What is assessed

External appearance and condition of all buildings (including annexes, outbuildings and storage areas): stonework, woodwork, paintwork, gutters, fall pipes, external plumbing, chimneys, roofs, window boxes, tubs and hanging baskets, external signage attached to the building (clarity and maintenance), lighting. The Quality Advisor may make allowance for listed buildings, or those with a particular architectural style.

All grades

- Exterior of buildings maintained in a sound, clean condition and must be fit for the purpose intended.
- Overall tidiness, including window boxes, hanging baskets, tubs etc. where appropriate.
- Well-maintained property and outbuildings. Some natural weathering may be present.
- Where displayed, signs maintained in good condition.

SCORING - for example

Five ★★★★★

- Excellent standards of external maintenance including outbuildings and signs, allowing for the age of the building. Attractive architectural features may be in evidence.
- Property well illuminated and clearly signed.
- In a new building, no sign of any weathering, paintwork will be fresh and well-maintained. In older buildings, no unsightly staining to stonework.
- All fabric in a sound and clean condition. Well maintained paintwork, though some ageing may be apparent.
- Addition of features such as flower tubs and window boxes where appropriate.

Four ★★★★★

- Very good maintenance of stonework and paintwork, although some natural weathering may be present.
- All areas of paintwork to be in excellent condition.
- Some additional external features to enhance appearance, this includes window boxes, especially in properties without a garden.
- Any outbuildings or annexes to be of similar quality.

Three ★★★

- Well-maintained property and outbuildings, although light weathering or minor blemishes may be present.
- Paintwork, pointing and windows in very good state of repair, though not necessarily recent. Fabric all in sound condition. No obvious structural defects or damage.
- Attractive use of window boxes, hanging baskets and tubs where appropriate.
- Where displayed, signs have been maintained in good condition.

Two ★★

- Woodwork generally in good, sound condition, though some areas of paint may be ageing and rather weathered.
- Small defects, damage, cracks etc. to stonework, or heavy moss and lichen growths.
- No evidence of recent freshening up.
- Signage showing signs of ageing.

One ★

- Exteriors maintained in an acceptable and clean condition, overall.
- Some signs of ageing may be present and small defects to stone or brickwork.



10. External areas

10.2 Grounds, Gardens and Frontage

What is assessed

- If no grounds and gardens, only frontage will be assessed.
- Is there a strong first impression? A “wow”?
- Grounds and gardens also include areas under the management of the Bed & Breakfast such as recreational facilities, or outdoor seating.
- This section includes any small decorative planting or landscaping at the front of the property.
- The Quality Advisor will take into account seasonal adjustments such as falling leaves or storms.

SCORING - for example

Five ★★★★★

- Attractively maintained, well-tended borders or shrubs, tidy pathways and edges; lawns in good condition and well cut; hedges trimmed and an overall attempt to maintain attractive appearance throughout the year.
- Attractive features such as flower tubs, window boxes or awnings where appropriate.
- Styles and degree of formality will differ according to location.
- There may also be deliberate provision of “wildlife” habitat.
- Dustbin areas should be hidden and no evidence of litter.
- Provision of garden furniture or architectural features (gazebo, pergola, summer house etc.). Excellent, well positioned lighting and signage.

Four ★★★★

- High standards of maintenance in any formal garden, though outlying areas may be more “natural”.
- Generally tidy beds, pathways and hedges and all trees and shrubs, well-tended.
- Dustbin areas not visible and preferably screened.
- Evidence of some attention to detail e.g. well-surfaced, pothole free driveways, colourful borders and wide level pathways.



Three ★★★

- Well maintained and tidy grounds, driveways and footpaths etc. Attractive overall appearance.
- No overgrown tangled areas. Immediate grounds kept tidy and weeds under control. Lawns, if any, cut regularly through the season and edges trimmed.
- Evidence of some attempt to produce a pleasing effect, possibly by low maintenance planting.
- Effective lighting where required e.g. long driveway or path to the property. Easy access. Well maintained surface.

Two ★★

- Evidence of effort made to make gardens attractive, tidy and litter free. Pathways without trip hazards.
- Grass is not allowed to become out of hand. Any wind damaged trees or bushes are trimmed, and affected areas kept free of debris.
- Refuse bins and storage areas kept discreetly positioned.

One ★

- 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.
- No major neglect. Safe pathways and adequately maintained driveway.

10. External areas

10.3 Car Parking (where provided)

What is assessed

- If there is no car park then this score is not applicable.
- We will take into account the condition of surface, size and delineation of spaces, overall ease of manoeuvrability, illumination, security, ease of route to entrance of the B&B, garaging/ undercover.
- Landscaping is part of grounds and gardens.

All grades

- For the safety of guests, all car parks should be adequately lit.

SCORING - for example

Five ★★★★★

- Parking on excellent surface, ample parking spaces, clearly signed.
- Good, well-positioned lighting both for security and unloading purposes.
- Consideration given to the security of the guests' cars.
- Any paths and steps are well-lit at night.

Four ★★★★★

- Easy access to parking with well-maintained surface and clear definition of parking area or spaces.
- Effective lighting where required.
- Signage prevents confusion for guests on arrival.

Three ★★★

- Good, easy access to parking with signage as appropriate.
- Adequate lighting where required.
- Parking on an appropriate surface and pothole free.

Two ★★

- Some attempt to manage parking arrangements.
- Drive may have uneven surface, but no hazardous potholes.
- Weeds may be evident.

One ★

- Reasonably easy, safe and adequately maintained parking.
- Spaces on rough or uneven ground, may have unclear/ no signage and be poorly lit.

Accessibility Best Practice

- Where feasible provide a drop off point close to the entrance.
- Accessible parking bays should be located as close as possible to the main entrance and clearly signposted and illuminated.
- Accessible parking bays should provide an area of 2400 mm x 4800 mm with side and rear transfer zones of 1200 mm.
- Provide within the grounds of the property - or identify nearby - a free run/spend area for assistance dogs.
- Ensure paths are kept clear of obstacles, debris including moss, ice and fallen leaves, and have firm well maintained surfaces. Ensure that any permanent features en-route are securely fixed e.g. flowerpot arrangements, statues.

Sustainability Best Practice

- For grounds, gardens and frontages, establishments could consider the use of materials which are in keeping with the local environment and physical characteristics of the local geography, geology and age of the buildings.
- Consider using local varieties of flowers, plants etc.
- Consider installing EV charging stations in the parking area and providing bike stores.

11. Public Areas

**Includes - lounges, dining areas, hallways, stairs, corridors, landings and Public WCs (if applicable).
Minor or one-off recreational rooms are scored here.**

Legislative Requirements

- The Bed & Breakfast shall be in good decorative order and kept clean and well-maintained throughout.
- The Bed & Breakfast shall have a means of heating capable of maintaining, when required, a room temperature of 18.5 degrees Celsius.
- The Bed & Breakfast shall have one or more lounges which shall be of adequate size to cater for the number of visitors for whom sleeping accommodation is provided. Each such lounge shall contain sufficient furniture, fittings and equipment of good quality and condition to cater for such number of visitors.
- There should be a dining area which contains furniture, fittings and equipment of good quality and condition, and provides adequate space for the number of diners which may reasonably be expected to use it at any time.

All grades

- Where televisions are not provided in the bedrooms, there should be access to a lounge that has comfortable easy seating and a colour television at no extra charge. If you have a Peace and Quiet policy that is clearly advertised in your brochure and on your website/online listing, and guests are advised of this at the time of booking, a dispensation may then be made at the discretion of the assessing body.
- Guests should, on request, be able to make or receive phone calls on the proprietor's own telephone. A charge may be made for this facility.
- Corridors and stairs should be in good repair and free from obstruction.
- The levels of lighting in all public areas should be adequate for safety and comfort. Stairways and landings should also have sufficient light at night. All public areas should have an adequate level of heating.

11.1 Decoration

What is assessed

The quality and condition of ceiling, plasterwork, walls, skirting, window frames, door frames, doors, door handles, adornments on walls (e.g. pictures and mirrors). If breakfast is served to guests in several rooms, all are assessed.

SCORING - for example

Five ★★★★★

- Excellent interior design, with high attention to detail. Thoughtful coordination of patterns, colours and textures.
- High quality wall coverings in pristine condition, with professional finish to all aspects of decoration.
- Attractive use of pictures, prints and other decorative relief as appropriate.
- Historic or heritage dispensation if the quality elsewhere is exceptional.

Four ★★★★

- Very good standard of decoration with use of high quality pictures and prints where applicable.
- Use of high quality wall coverings though not necessarily in pristine condition. Alternatively, wallcovering of a slightly lower standard but which has been professionally hung.

Three ★★★

- Good interior, with evidence of coordinated design. Well finished, good quality wall coverings and paint work.
- Wall and ceiling coverings well applied.
- Use of pictures etc. where appropriate, particularly on plain walls.

Two ★★

- Good quality and style of décor. Competently applied of a good quality with few obvious blemishes.
- Some signs of ageing but no major wear and tear. No obvious seams, blisters or patches.

One ★

- Functional décor and limited coordination. Basic quality wall coverings with little attention to detail.
- Limited use of pictures and wall hangings.
- Some slight damage and noticeable signs of wear and tear.
- Amateurish application of wallpaper or paint.

11. Public Areas

11.2 Furniture, Fittings and Furnishings

What is assessed

The quality and condition of all tables, chairs, light fittings (wall mounted or free standing), heating fittings, ventilation units, curtain rails, curtains/ drapes, cushions. Bar counters, reception desks, service stations, if applicable.

SCORING - for example

Five ★★★★★

- Exceptional quality and condition of furniture and fittings whether it be modern, reproduction or antique.
- A more extensive range of furniture offering a greater choice of seating in the lounge area. Curtains denoting a degree of luxury and with ample drape and width.
- Excellent coordination of soft furnishings of high intrinsic quality.
- Excellent quality light fittings of various types. Shades add to the overall theme of the decoration.
- Heating fittings such as radiators should be in excellent condition.

Four ★★★★

- High quality furniture, furnishings and fittings – not necessarily new, but still offering substantial comfort. Or good quality furniture in excellent, new condition.
- Coordinated lined drapes.
- Light fittings varied and of very good quality and condition.

Three ★★★

- Good quality, functional furniture which is matching and where an attempt has been made to coordinate. Range of good quality sofas and/or armchairs in lounges.
- Substantial, lined curtains with good use of coordination.
- All areas are in good, sound condition with minimal blemishes.
- Good quality light fittings with appropriate shades.
- Some personal touches, for example, books, magazines, local historical information, etc. available in lounges.

Two ★★

- Furniture in generally good condition with some slight wear and tear. Furniture may be dated but will be sound and fit for purpose.
- An attempt has been made to coordinate all areas.
- Adequate and comfortable seating, generally good quality curtains which may not be lined.

One ★

- Basic furniture with noticeable wear and tear, providing a minimal level of comfort.
- Basic light fittings, scorched light shades, not matching. Thin unlined curtains.
- Limited quality, range and coordination evident.



11. Public Areas

11.3 Flooring

What is assessed

The quality and condition of all flooring. Consider the quality of fitting and possible coordination with décor.

SCORING - for example

Five ★★★★★

- Highest quality flooring expertly fitted with good attention to detail applied to comfort and coordination.
- Professionally fitted, high quality carpeting, for example, high percentage wool content, in excellent condition with substantial underlay.
- Polished floorboards or high quality laminate, etc. with rugs.
- Excellent levels of maintenance evident in all areas with only minimum wear evident.

Four ★★★★★

- High quality flooring, possibly not new and may show signs of wear. Or more moderate quality but in pristine condition.
- Normally professionally fitted.
- Condition of carpet pile should be taken into consideration with no excessive wear evident.

Three ★★★

- Flooring should be appropriate, of a very good quality with underlay providing additional comfort where appropriate.
- Good attention applied to fitting and overall coordination.
- Condition of carpet pile should be taken into consideration with reasonable wear evident only.

Two ★★

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

One ★

- Adequate comfort to flooring. Some signs of wear and tear may be evident.
- Possibly not professionally fitted.

11.4 Lighting, Heating and Ventilation

What is assessed

Lighting – ability to see, natural and artificial light, overall amount, table and buffet lighting; atmosphere. **Heating** – overall temperature. **Ventilation** – extraction; air-conditioning.

SCORING - for example

Five ★★★★★

- Variety of types of lighting giving good levels of illumination for all practical purposes such as reading, etc. Lighting is part of the overall ambience of the public areas and so creates a unique style.
- Consideration given to means of excluding bright sunlight that might be uncomfortable for diners.
- A positive effort made to ensure that heating meets the guests' needs. Likely to be automatic, thermostatically controlled heating. Some older storage heaters may not meet this requirement.
- Backup source for heat for very cold weather, which may include open fires where appropriate, or coal/gas/log effect fires.

Four ★★★★★

- Very good levels of light with easy access to controls.
- Different types of lighting may be used for practical, aesthetic or ambience reasons, for example, halogen downlighters, standard lamps or picture lights.
- Properly fitted, automatic heating which is possibly thermostatically controlled.

Three ★★★

- Well-positioned lights giving good levels of illumination. Ample natural light. Well-lit stairs, landings and corridors.
- Room temperature meets the needs of customers and can be altered quickly if required. Cool air in the summer; warmth in winter. Forced air circulation could be provided by extractor fans or ceiling fans.
- Properly fitted, thermostatically controlled heating.

11. Public Areas

Two ★★

- Quite good levels of lighting. Some consideration given to using lighting to create an atmosphere.
- Heating may be free standing but might be automatic or thermostatically controlled.
- Fresh atmosphere may be provided just by opening windows.

One ★

- Adequate lighting levels in all areas for the style, size and shape of the rooms.
- Effective heating in rooms at all reasonable times. Heating levels appropriate to the size of the room. Possibly not automatic or fixed.
- Fresh atmosphere may be provided just by opening windows.

11.5 Table Appointment: Dining Area - Quality and Condition

What is assessed

Quality and condition of table linen, napkins, mats, crockery, cutlery, glassware and table adornments (e.g. cruets, flower vases, butter dishes, flowers).

SCORING - for example

Five ★★★★★

- Emphasis on high quality and style of all tableware. All pieces matching and coordinated.
- High quality cloths and napkins or well-presented wood tables with mats. Equally high quality accessories e.g. preserve containers etc.
- Table enhancements of high quality, for example, fresh flowers as appropriate.
- Attractively presented menus using clear, informative layout and helpful descriptions.

Four ★★★★

- Very good quality of crockery, cutlery and glassware.
- Cloth or high quality paper napkins and tablemats and/or tablecloth.
- No signs of wear and tear or damage.
- Some additional features such as bud vase, or other appropriate decoration on tables.

Three ★★★

- Well-laid tables with matching cutlery and crockery. Some items may be of excellent quality but more limited in range e.g. fewer glasses.
- Good quality paper napkins. More likely stainless steel cutlery.
- Menus, where provided, are clean and well presented.

Two ★★

- Generally good quality tableware.
- Matching cutlery but may be thin and lightweight.
- Tea/ coffee pots of good quality but do not pour easily.

One ★

- A variety of styles of crockery of modest quality and a mixture of glassware. Some signs of damage or wear and tear e.g. fading of pattern or glaze of crockery.
- Basic quality, lightweight cutlery, possibly not all the same style. Basic single-ply paper napkins.
- No accessories or table adornment.
- Menu, where provided, possibly handwritten on card, giving basic information.



11. Public Areas

11.6 Space, Comfort and Ease of Use

What is assessed

Space – amount of space, table sizes, chair sizes, space between tables taking account of typical market use.

Comfort /ease of use – seating comfort, traffic flow, room layout.

SCORING - for example

Five ★★★★★

- A spacious, well-planned room with furniture in suitable, convenient places. High degree of comfort, well-spaced chairs, spacious tables.
- Table and seating arrangements show that the comfort of guests has been fully considered. No intrusive noise.
- High degree of comfort with generous flat surface for guests to register and pay their bills. Fresh and clean atmosphere in the area where guests are received.
- Recreational facilities, where provided, are in excellent condition.

Four ★★★★★

- Well-planned layout of tables and furniture to maximise use of free space. Generous free space. Seating at this level would be expected to provide excellent levels of comfort.
- Space allows for a small reception desk/ area where guests can register and pay their bills easily.
- Recreational facilities, if any, are in very good condition.

Three ★★★★★

- Ample space for freedom of movement. Convenient layout of tables and furniture for practical use.
- Appropriate table and chair heights. Practical, comfortable chairs.
- Fresh and airy atmosphere.

Two ★★★★★

- Good levels of comfort and a limited range of table sizes. Seating is comfortable for the purpose.
- Environment free from disturbing external noise, smells etc.

- Sufficient space allowing guests to register and settle bills.
- Any recreational facilities in a well-maintained condition.

One ★★★★★

- Acceptable comfort and range of furniture. Space for reasonably free movement. Room large enough to contain all necessary furniture, but little thought given to layout.
- Normal usage should be free from disturbing external noise, smells etc.

Sustainability Best Practice

- Use could be made of local artists' work, prints and/or photographs of images depicting local scenes, historical or heritage related images. It all adds to a visitor's enhanced sense of place.
- Energy saving lightbulbs could be used throughout the property. Make best use of natural light where possible.
- Improved insulation and greater use of thermostatically controlled and zoned heating will save on energy use.

Accessibility Best Practice

- Consider an automatic opening device on the door leading to dining areas.
- Ensure dining tables are stable and provide sufficient knee space beneath.
- Ensure dining chairs provide support for people rising from their chairs.
- Provide a variety of seating: low, high, firm, soft, with and without arms.
- Ensure crockery contrasts with table linen or surface to assist visually impaired guests.
- On each step or change of level, provide a nosing strip that contrasts in colour to the floor.
- Avoid deep pile carpets that may cause trips or make it difficult for a wheelchair to manoeuvre.
- Provide suitable colour contrast between floors, skirting, walls, doorframes, fixtures and fittings and avoid high gloss finishes to aid people with visual impairments.
- Provide menus in accessible formats e.g. a large print menu (minimum font size 16 point) in a clear font such as Arial.

12. Bedrooms

Legislative requirements

- Bedrooms shall have separate access from a corridor, and be suitably numbered, lettered or otherwise designated so as to identify them.

Accessibility best practice

- Where there is more than one wheelchair accessible bedroom provided, they should be positioned within the building to give a range of locations, not just on ground floor where possible.
- Consider an automatic opening device on the door to accessible bedrooms.
- Link the bedroom emergency alarm to a permanently staffed area.
- Ensure that emergency alarm pull cords are accessible and not tied back.
- A second door viewer should be provided between 1050 mm and 1500 mm above floor level.
- Provide suitable colour contrast between floors, skirting, walls, doorframes, fixtures and fittings and avoid high gloss finishes to aid people with visual impairments.
- Provide low-level hanging rail and shelves in wardrobes.

All grades

- All bedrooms should have sufficient space for guests to move easily around the room. Bedrooms that are smaller than the following sizes are unlikely to meet the minimum requirements:
 - Single 5.6sq m (60sq ft)
 - Double 8.4sq m (90sq ft)
 - Twin 10.2sq m (110sq ft)
- When we assess bedroom size, we consider the usable space available around furniture and fittings. For a higher quality rating, rooms will be expected to considerably exceed these minimum sizes.
- The ceiling height for the major part of the room needs to be sufficient for a person of 6ft to move around without stooping. Sloping eaves and ceilings are acceptable if they do not restrict guests' movement to an unacceptable degree.
- It should be possible to fully open doors and drawers without having to move other furniture.
- Rooms for family occupation need to be significantly larger.

N.B. – where there is access to only one side of a double bed, a maximum rating of Three Star can be awarded.

12.1 Space, Comfort and Ease of Use

What is assessed

Space – the overall size of the room, height of ceiling, access to both sides of bed (double occupancy), access to furniture.

Comfort – seating comfort, height of chair to desk, lighting levels and temperature. Noise intrusion.

Ease of use – usability of desk/dressing table, access to drawers and wardrobe, sight of full length mirror, viewing of TV from all chairs, socket height, proximity of sockets to electrical facilities. At any level where room service is advertised consider ease of dining, ie. where a hot cooked breakfast is required, then the need for proper height dining should be considered.

SCORING – for example

Five ★★★★★

- Bedroom should be of 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. use of surfaces without moving tea tray, access to power points, etc. Comfortable easy chairs.
- Appropriate levels of flat, clear surface to suit the market, for example, establishments attracting business travelers may need to provide working space.
- Generous access to both sides of a double bed.
- Ample space for room service dining in comfort (where provided).
- No intrusive noise.

12. Bedrooms

Four ★★★★★

- Well-planned furniture layout to maximise use of the free space. Rooms could be smaller, but considered planning means free space is just as usable.
- Very good access to both sides of double bed.
- Access to the wardrobe should not require movement of furniture.
- One chair per guest possibly provided.
- Spare and accessible sockets that are well placed for all uses.
- Minimal noise.

Three ★★★

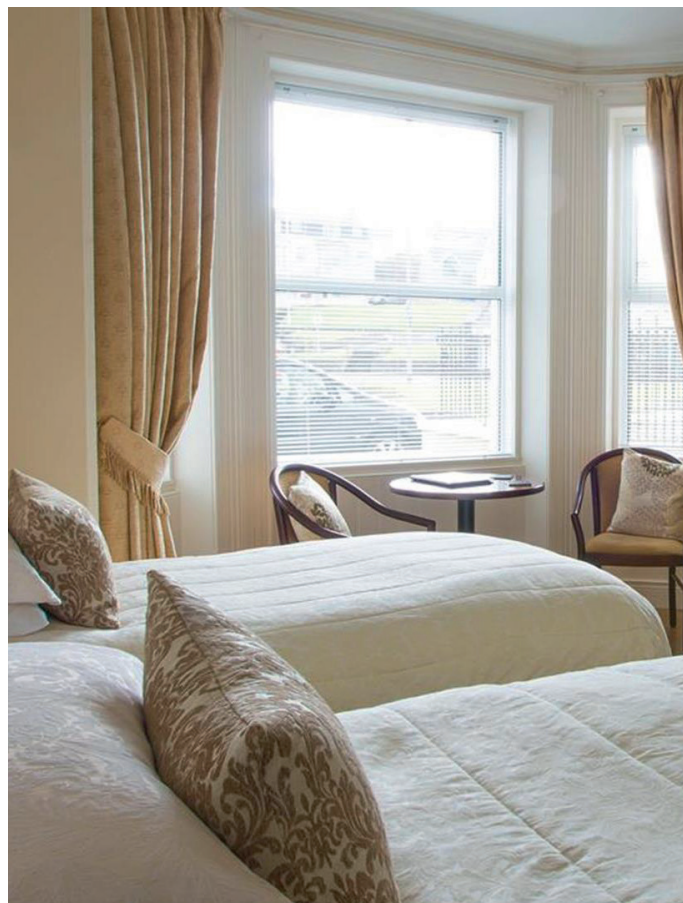
- Very good space and comfort, with restrictions clearly minimised. Sufficient space to allow free movement and a good degree of comfort. Easy use of all facilities.
- Convenient layout of furniture for practical use. TV, where provided, visible from sitting area or bed.
- Good access to both sides of double beds.
- Guests should be able to access most things such as sockets, wardrobe, bed etc. easily without having to move things.
- Practical, comfortable chairs.
- Ample socket provision for all provided equipment.

Two ★★

- Sufficient space to use furniture, sockets, etc. Good levels of comfort but a limited range. Satisfactory seating for style of accommodation.
- Easy use of facilities with an uncluttered appearance.

One ★

- Room large enough to contain all necessary furniture, but little thought given to layout. May be described as limited space overall.
- Provides reasonable free movement not unduly restricted by intrusive low beams and ceiling.
- Large furniture may dominate the room, making it less useable.
- Reasonable sound insulation with minimal intrusive noise from plumbing, corridors etc.



12. Bedrooms

12.2 Beds and Bedding – Quality and Provision

Legislative Requirements

Bedrooms shall contain a bed or beds for each visitor the room is intended to hold, complete with interior sprung mattress or suitable equivalent, along with a supply of clean linen, blankets or duvets, and pillows.

All grades

- Minimum bed sizes:
 - **Single** 190 x 90cm (6ft 3ins x 3ft) Beds of 183 x 75 cm (6ft x 2ft 6ins) will only be acceptable for children and can only be used as part of a family room.
 - **Double** 190 x 137cm (6ft 3ins x 4ft 6ins) Beds of 190 x 122 cm (6ft 3ins x 4ft) will be acceptable for single occupancy only.
- Rooms with bunk beds only are not acceptable for adult use. Bunk beds should have a minimum of 75cm (2ft 6ins) clear space between the mattress of the bottom bed and the underside of the top bed (Bunk Bed Regulations 1997).
- All mattresses should be comfortable and have mattress protectors, a sprung interior or be made of foam or similar. All mattresses should have a protector. Plastic or rubber mattress protectors are not acceptable except when used for small children.
- All beds and mattresses should be of sound condition with a secure headboard or equivalent.
- All beds should be made daily.
- All bedding should be clean and in sufficient quantity, according to the season and the needs of guests.
- As a guide each bed should have either: a) two sheets, two blankets and a bedspread or b) a duvet with a duvet cover and one or two sheets.
- There should be two pillows in individual pillowcases per person. If feather pillows or duvets are provided, a nonallergenic alternative should be available on request.
- All bed linen (sheets, pillowcases and duvet covers etc.) should be fresh for each new guest. It should be changed once every four days, except where there is a clearly advertised environmental policy that invites guests to agree to less frequent changes of linen e.g. weekly.

- Spare blankets and pillows should be available on request. For best practice, we suggest that you also use pillow protectors and that any spare pillows and bedding are clean, fresh and preferably wrapped.

N.B. 100% man-made fibre sheets i.e. nylon, polyester, are not acceptable.



What is assessed

The quality and condition of all aspects of the bed: the bed, base, mattress, headboard (or equivalent), bedding, pillows, duvets, blankets, bedspreads, bed linen, mattress and pillow protection, valances/bed wraps and any cushions on the bed, for signs of wear and tear, stains, holes, general quality etc. Size, quality, condition and comfort of beds. Also, any spare bedding and appropriate storage.

12. Bedrooms

SCORING - for example

Five ★★★★★

- Excellent quality bed, for example, sprung mattress and high quality base. Bed sizes may exceed minimum sizes.
- Clean headboard offering a high degree of comfort.
- Quality of bed linen and mattress protection would be of a high quality standard e.g. Egyptian cotton and immaculately laundered. A range of pillows could be available to guests and a choice of bedding type e.g. duvets with appropriate tog rating or thickly quilted or similar bedspreads and blankets.
- High standard of overall presentation and coordinated with bedroom décor and other soft furnishings. Appropriate use of bed wraps and cushions.

Four ★★★★★

- Beds and mattresses should be of excellent quality e.g. pocket sprung and base with high comfort levels.
- Headboards should provide very good comfort levels.
- Obvious effort made with regard to coordination between fabrics and colours.
- Quality of bed linen and mattress protection would be of an excellent quality standard e.g. Percale.
- Well-dressed beds with high standard of laundry presentation.
- Good use made of accessories such as scatter cushions and throws when appropriate. Additional bedding provided in guest rooms to be wrapped.

Three ★★★

- Good quality, comfortable bed. Firm mattress and sound base. Bed frames may be of older style but in good condition.
- Headboards would normally provide reasonable comfort levels e.g. wooden with padding. Well-presented beds with good quality, crisp and well laundered bed linens. Pillows to be plump and clean.
- Some obvious effort made to coordinate between fabrics and colours (with regard to bedding).
- Additional bedding provided in guest rooms to be wrapped.

Two ★★

- Beds and bedding of quite good quality.
- Well-maintained beds and mattresses.
- Some attempt made to coordinate between fabrics and colours.

One ★

- Standard sized beds of acceptable quality, but mattresses may be thin and bases shallow. Clean secure headboards or equivalent may provide minimum comfort levels e.g. wooden without padding.
- Adequately presented beds with clean linen and bed covers in good repair. Pillows should be plump and clean, though the odd stain might be there.
- Quality of bed linen and mattress protection may be practical rather than luxurious.
- Limited extra bedding available.

Accessibility Best Practice

- Provide zip and link beds and interconnecting rooms so that a guest and their partner or a guest and their carer can be accommodated, particularly in accessible bedrooms.
- Bed height to be between 450mm and 500mm and a clearance of 300mm beneath the bed to allow space for hoist feet and/or wheelchair footrests.
- Provide blocks so that bed heights can be adjusted.
- Provide a 1500 mm x 1500 mm wheelchair turning space to the transfer side of bed.
- Provide hypoallergenic bedding.

Sustainability Best Practice

- Bedrooms need to be warm when guests arrive but consider how much heat is required and when to turn it on. Lights can be turned on at the time of arrival.
- Spare bedding does not need to be wrapped in disposable plastic bags; its freshness can be indicated by placing in a reusable cotton or fabric bag.
- Have a towel and linen policy in place, so guests can agree to less frequent changes. This can reduce the use of energy, water and detergent and thus costs, as well as environmental impact.

12. Bedrooms

12.3 Furniture, Furnishings and Fittings

Legislative Requirements

- Each bedroom shall contain furniture, fittings and equipment, of good quality and condition, for sleeping and toilet purposes and for the storage of guests' clothing.

All grades

Each bedroom should have:

- A bedside table, cabinet or shelf for each bed although twin beds may share and 75cm (2ft 6ins) bunk beds are exempt.
- A dressing table or equivalent, with a mirror adjacent.
- A chair or a stool.
- If a lounge is not available, a comfortable easy chair should be provided in the bedroom for guests to use whilst reading etc.
- A wardrobe or clothes hanging space. An alcove with a rail is acceptable but coat stands, hooks on walls or behind doors are not. Wire hangers are not acceptable.
- Adequate drawer or shelf space. The drawers should run freely.
- Opaque curtains, blinds or shutters on all windows, including glass panels to doors, fanlights and skylight windows so that guests have privacy and can exclude any light from outside the room. N.B. Where bedrooms are located on the ground floor, you should consider providing additional privacy with a net curtain or blind.

What is assessed

The quality and condition of wardrobe including clothes hangers, all tables, chairs/stools, dressing table, luggage storage, light fittings (wall mounted or free standing), heating fittings, ventilation units, curtain rails, curtains/ drapes, cushions.

SCORING - for example

Five ★★★★★

- Excellent quality, modern reproduction or antique furniture.
- Some excellent antique furniture may show signs of distress which does not detract from its excellence (depending on the degree of deterioration).
- A more extensive range of furniture offering a greater degree of comfort and higher quality, including at least two comfortable chairs.
- High quality wooden and padded hangers.
- Excellent co-ordination of soft furnishings of high intrinsic quality with additional features such as scatter cushions.
- Curtains denoting a degree of luxury with good use of pelmets and tiebacks, ample drape and width. Curtains to be fully lined so as to retain heat and keep out light.
- Excellent quality light fittings of various types. Shades add to overall theme of the decoration.
- Heating fittings such as radiators should be in excellent condition and may be disguised by painting or radiator covers.

Four ★★★★★

- High quality furniture, furnishings and fittings. Not necessarily new, but furniture still offering substantial comfort.
- Full curtains, possibly with additional embellishments such as tiebacks.

Three ★★★★★

- Good quality furniture, in a sound and usable condition.
- Good use of coordination.
- Size and amount of furnishings in proportion to the space available.
- Substantial lined curtains of a very good quality.
- Good quality light fittings with appropriate shades.

12. Bedrooms

Two ★★

- Sufficient provision of furniture, which may be dated but will be sound and fit for purpose. Alternatively, furniture may have been excellent quality but now showing signs of age, wear and tear.
- No great degree of comfort for the guest.
- Good quality curtains that are clean and easy to draw.

One ★

- A limited range of furniture, furnishings and fittings in terms of quality and provision with limited coordination.
- Scratches, marks, stains and blemishes on furniture and drapes may be evident.
- All window coverings correctly fitted, with sufficient width and height to draw completely across the window however, drapes thin and unlined.

12.4 Decoration

What is assessed

This section assesses the quality and condition of walls, ceiling, plasterwork, skirting, window frames, door frames, doors, door handles, adornments on walls (e.g. pictures and mirrors) coving and ceiling roses.

SCORING - for example

Five ★★★★★

- Excellent interior design and overall impression, with high attention to detail. Thoughtful coordination of patterns, colours and textures.
- High quality wall coverings in pristine condition; professional finish to all aspects of decoration.
- Attractive use of pictures, prints and other decorative relief where appropriate.
- Consideration may be given to historic properties and listed buildings.

Four ★★★★

- Very good standard of decoration with use of high quality pictures and prints where applicable.
- Some effort made to hide surface-mounted pipes and wires.

Three ★★★

- Co-ordinated interior decoration.
- Well finished, good quality wall coverings and paint work.
- Wall and ceiling coverings, well applied.
- Use of pictures etc., where appropriate, particularly on plain walls.

Two ★★

- Standard quality wall coverings with little attention to detail.
- Limited use of pictures and wall hangings.
- Some signs of ageing but no obvious seams, blisters or patches.

One ★

- Functional décor and limited coordination.
- Signs of wear and tear, damage, etc.

12.5 Flooring

What is assessed

The quality and condition of all flooring and possible coordination with décor.

SCORING - for example

Five ★★★★★

- Professionally fitted, high quality flooring, expertly fitted with good attention to detail applied to comfort and coordination, (e.g. carpet of high percentage wool content with substantial underlay, or oak floorboards with quality rugs).
- Excellent levels of maintenance evident with only minimum wear evident.
- Polished floorboards or high quality laminate with rugs.

Four ★★★★

- High quality flooring, but not necessarily new and may show signs of wear. May also be of more moderate quality but still be in pristine condition.
- Normally professionally fitted.

12. Bedrooms

Three ★★ ★

- Flooring should be appropriate, of good quality, in sound condition and comfortable underfoot.
- Good attention applied to fitting and overall coordination.
- Some underlay for carpeting. Condition of pile should be taken into consideration with reasonable wear evident only.

Two ★ ★

- Quite good quality flooring, but carpets may have a high man-made fibre content.
- This score might indicate higher quality flooring, but which has been poorly looked after, with perhaps stains or marks.

One ★

- Adequate comfort to flooring. Signs of wear and tear are evident.
- Not necessarily professionally fitted.

Accessibility Best Practice

Avoid deep-pile carpets that may cause trips or make it difficult for a wheelchair to manoeuvre.



12.6 Lighting, Heating and Ventilation

Legislative Requirements

- The establishment shall contain effective means of natural lighting and ventilation and have sufficient general lighting in all areas.
- The establishment shall have a means of heating capable of maintaining, when required, a room temperature of 18.5 degrees Celsius.

All grades

- Bedrooms should be well lit.
- All bulbs, unless decorative, should have a shade or cover.
- At least one light should be controlled from the door.
- There should be a bedside reading light for each person, controlled from the bed, in addition to the light controlled from the door. However, twin beds may share a central bedside light.
- There should be adequate in-room heating provided at no extra cost.
- Additional heating should be available on request at no extra charge. Free standing, radiant bar heaters are unacceptable.
- Every bedroom must have at least one opening window with clear glass to provide natural light and adequate ventilation. Rooms without windows are not acceptable. If windows are sealed, a Local Planning Authority approved ventilation system should be provided.
- Windows should be well fitted, easy to shut and open and remain open.
- Security fittings installed on all bedroom windows where, when open, access could be gained from outside – for example, patio or French doors, ground floor windows and windows overlooking fire escapes.
- Effort should be made to insulate against external noise.
- You should provide a pole for opening high “Velux”-style or skylight windows, where these are the only opening windows.

12. Bedrooms

Accessibility Best Practice

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

Sustainability Best Practice

- Consider checking windows for draughts to ensure that heat is not lost.
- Signs could be used to ask guests to switch off lights when not in use.
- If it is policy to prepare guests' rooms in anticipation of their arrival by leaving lights on, consider doing this later in the day or via a timer switch.
- Using energy saving light bulbs is one of the easiest ways to reduce your energy bills. It might also be possible to make greater use of natural light in some rooms.
- Improved insulation and greater use of thermostatically controlled and zoned heating will save on energy use.
- Fit thermostatic valves to your bedroom radiators.

What is assessed

Lighting – ability to see; natural and artificial light; overall amount; task lighting; controllability; atmosphere. Fit and thickness of curtains.

Heating – overall temperature; localised areas; on arrival; controllability by guest.

Ventilation – fresh air availability and control; air-conditioning; fan.

SCORING - for example

Five ★★★★★

- Variety of quality lights, well positioned and effective for all purposes, e.g. reading and at the dressing table.
- Guests able to control the intensity (dimmer), giving variable levels of light as appropriate. This may include a main bedroom light controlled by door and bed. Controls very accessible and understandable.

- Individual thermostatically controlled heating. Some older storage heaters might not meet this requirement.
- Fans (or other means of providing forced air circulation) should be available on request.

Four ★★★★★

- Very good levels of light with easy access to controls. Different types of lighting may be used for practical or aesthetic reasons e.g. halogen downlights, standard lamps or picture lights. All task areas properly lit.
- Properly fitted automatic heating which may be thermostatically controlled.

Three ★★★

- Well-positioned lights (right height giving a clear pool of light) giving good levels of illumination. Easily controllable at night.
- Ample natural light.
- Effective levels of heating providing overall uniform temperature.
- Properly fitted thermostatically (but not necessarily automatic) controlled heating.

Two ★★

- Quite good levels of lighting. Possibly a main light and one bedside light. Writing/dressing table may not have specific lighting.
- Heating may be free standing but might be automatic or thermostatically controlled.

One ★

- Adequate levels of light for the style, size and shape of the room.
- Effective heating at all reasonable times, appropriate to the size of the room, possibly may not be automatic or fixed. Central heating should normally be operable, at a minimum, from 4 pm to midnight and from 6 am to 10 am. A means of providing heat in rooms outside these times at guest request.

12. Bedrooms

12.7 Bedroom Accessories

All grades

These are NOT requirements but, if they are provided, their quality, range, presentation and ease of use will be taken into account in the assessment. Examples include: ingredients and equipment for making hot drinks, digital TV, Bluetooth speakers, Wi-Fi access, radio, hairdryer, in-room information, telephone, fruit, sweets, complimentary bottled water, fresh flowers or plants, reading material, clothes brushes, mending kits, biscuits, hot water bottles, fridge, tissues etc.

- If there are no facilities for making hot drinks in the bedroom and they are not available on request, a hot drinks service should be available morning and evening.
- Where in-room facilities are provided, for safety reasons it is unacceptable for kettles to be boiled on the floor.
- Fresh milk should be available on request and ingredients for making hot drinks should be wrapped or kept in lidded containers.
- Where telephones are provided, a rate card must be displayed in bedrooms illustrating typical charges for local, long-distance, international, internet, use of phone card and connection to mobile phones.
- Sample call charges are required, priced by minute, not unit.
- Wi-Fi should be provided free of charge, where feasible.

SCORING - for example

Five ★★★★★

- Excellent range of high quality accessories.
- In-room facilities, where provided, of an excellent standard, for example, chinaware, choice of hot drinks including a range of speciality teas, fresh milk and freshly ground coffee.
- May feature bespoke coffee machines in room.
- High Speed Broadband available to guests, where connectivity allows.
- Adoption of the latest innovation in entertainment technologies expected e.g. smart TVs.

Four ★★★★★

- A substantial range of very good quality accessories.
- Tea/coffee making facilities available and accessible 24 hours either in bedrooms or in public areas.
- Free Wi-Fi and/or internet connection available in all bedrooms and public areas where connectivity allows.
- Guests able to watch TV in comfort from both a chair and the bed.

Three ★★★

- Good range and quality of accessories.
- Tea/coffee making facilities available and accessible 24 hours either in bedrooms or in public areas.
- Free Wi-Fi and/or internet connection available in all bedrooms and public areas where connectivity allows. A conscious effort to strengthen any weak spots should be evident.
- Digital TV with remote control available in bedrooms.
- Televisions in bedrooms can be safely mounted on a wall bracket. Ease of viewing and safety taken into account when positioning television.

Two ★★

- Small range of quite good quality accessories.

One ★

- Very limited range and quality of accessories.

Accessibility Best Practice

- Ensure hospitality trays are at a height accessible to all guests. The kettle should be cordless and a variety of drinking cups and mugs either provided or available on request.
- Ensure TVs can provide subtitles to benefit guests with hearing loss.
- Provide all information in a clearly legible font at a height accessible to all guests.
- Consider providing door notices for guests with hearing loss as part of your emergency evacuation procedures.

12. Bedrooms

Sustainability Best Practice

- For items on hospitality trays, locally produced goods, like biscuits, or Fair Trade products (e.g. tea, coffee, sugar, hot chocolate) could be sourced.
- Items on hospitality trays, such as sugar and biscuits, do not need to be individually wrapped – use can be made of airtight containers for dried goods.

Visitor information folders help guests to find out more about your local area. They could include:

- Details of nearby outlets supplying local food, drink and gifts.
- Local visitor attractions and cultural information, including details of special events.
- Options for car-free travel, such as walking and cycling routes and public transport timetables.
- Suggestions for car-free days out.
- Your environmental policy, if you have one, or details about any green scheme you are affiliated with.
- Information asking guests to turn off all electrical appliances fully when not in use.

- For bedrooms without en-suite or private bathroom, a towel rail or equivalent should be provided with one hand towel and one bath towel per person. There should be fresh soap for each new letting. If you provide liquid soap dispensers, you need to pay particular attention to their cleanliness and hygiene.
- As a matter of best practice, all establishments are encouraged to display clear fire instructions where appropriate. An emergency evacuation notice, or diagram should be clearly displayed in all bedrooms.

Hints & Tips

When planning your bedrooms, remember that quality is the key to success.

- Beds are very important. Buy the best quality you can afford. If you have room for a 5 ft double, choose this instead of a 4 ft 6 ins bed. Zip and link is another good option if space allows.
- Choose good quality bed linen and pillows. Washable mattress protectors are essential and ideally pillow protectors too. Your guests will appreciate a comfortable night sleeping in well-laundered fresh linen.
- When selecting a carpet, aim for high quality but easily washable in case of stains or marks.
- Do not be tempted to cram too many beds into a room. If you are looking for flexibility of sleeping options, then a 6 ft zip and link bed will give you a super king double or twin beds. This will take up less space in your room than a permanent double and single bed.
- Most guests stay for only a few days, so if space is short, do not provide any more storage space than is necessary. Look for good quality space saving solutions.
- The easiest way to check the quality of your bedrooms is to sleep in them yourself. Find out how comfortable the beds are, whether there are enough power points and if they're in the most convenient places, if the blinds or curtains block out enough light and whether the heating and lighting are sufficiently effective.

12.8 Miscellaneous Requirements

Each bedroom should have:

- A means of securing bedroom doors from inside and out, and a key should be available.
- A non-flammable waste paper container to be provided.
- An ashtray if smoking is permitted.
- A drinking tumbler per guest. This should be glass or a wrapped disposable.
- Sufficient, conveniently situated, power sockets to allow for the safe use of all electrical equipment provided.
- Printed advice on how to obtain emergency assistance at night. This needs to be clearly displayed somewhere within the bedroom.
- Iron and ironing board available on request and advertised in the bedroom.
- Early morning calls available on request or an alarm clock provided.

13. Bathrooms and En-Suites

Legislative Requirements

- Where the establishment contains bedrooms for visitors which do not have an ensuite bathroom, it shall provide at least:
 - One bathroom for every six visitors (with bath or shower, WC, wash hand basin).

13.1 Provision of En-Suite, Private and Shared Facilities

- Access to the bath and/or shower rooms from the bedrooms through a lounge, dining room, etc. is not acceptable.
- One to Three Star – there is no minimum requirement for en-suite facilities. However, where they are provided their quality will be assessed as part of the bathroom quality assessment.
- To achieve a Four Star rating, you will need to provide at least 50% of bedrooms with an en-suite or a private bath/shower facility.
- To achieve a Five Star rating, every bedroom must have an en-suite or a private bath/shower facility.

What is an en-suite?

An en-suite facility consists of a bath or shower, WC and washbasin connected to a bedroom and entered directly from it. The WC is in its own properly ventilated room. If the shower cubicle is situated in the bedroom then additional ventilation should be added to take account of this. It is acceptable for the washbasin and shower to be in the bedroom, as long as the WC is contained within a room of its own, within the bedroom. Bedrooms with shower cubicles sited in them are unlikely to achieve a high quality rating. If the bath or shower cubicle is located in the bedroom, guests must be told when they book.

What is a private facility?

A private bathroom is one in which the bath or shower, WC and perhaps a washbasin are allocated for the sole use of the occupants of one particular bedroom. The bathroom should be on the same floor and be reasonably close to the bedroom. It should be lockable with a key provided. If there are any guest bedrooms without washbasins, there should be a hand washbasin in the WC.

What is a shared facility?

A shared facility is one that may be shared by the occupants of more than one bedroom and perhaps the proprietors or their family. Where the maximum number of guests resident within an establishment, including proprietors, is no more than six, it is acceptable that facilities are shared. However, this will limit the achievable rating to Two Star. Where a shared arrangement exists, proprietors and their family should avoid prolonged use of the bathroom during the early to mid-morning period. They should also remove their personal belongings from the bathroom.

13.2 Decoration

What is assessed

The quality and condition of: ceiling, plasterwork, walls, tiling, respatex, skirting, window frames, door frames, doors, door handles, adornments on walls (e.g. pictures).

SCORING - for example

Five ★★★★★

- Excellent interior design and overall impression, with considerable attention to detail and everything in pristine condition.
- Professional finish to all aspects of decoration and tiling. Sealant and grouting immaculate.
- Attractive use of pictures, prints and other decorative relief where appropriate.

Four ★★★★★

- Very good standard of decoration, possibly recently re-decorated but not of highest quality. Or excellent quality with some slight ageing.
- Some effort made to hide surface-mounted pipes and wires.

Three ★★★★★

- Well finished, good quality wall coverings and paint work. Some evidence of coordinated design.
- Wall and ceiling coverings well applied.

13. Bathrooms and En-Suites

Two ★★

- Competently applied and of a good quality with few obvious blemishes.
- Some signs of ageing but no major wear and tear.

One ★

- Functional décor and limited coordination.
- Some slight damage and signs of wear and tear.
- Amateurish application of wallpaper or paint.
- Broken, cracked or mismatched tiles may be apparent.

13.3 Fixtures and Fittings for all Bath/ Shower Rooms (Public, Private or En-Suite)

All grades

Regardless of bathroom type, all should have:

- A bath or shower.
- A lidded WC. A toilet roll holder with toilet paper.
- Fresh soap provided for each new guest. If liquid soap dispensers are used, you need to pay particular attention to their cleanliness and hygiene. If washbasins are provided in bedrooms, soap should be available.
- A covered bin/open bin with sanitary disposal bags.
- An internal lock/bolt. Separate private bathrooms need a lock and key so that the guest has sole use and can confidently leave their belongings in the bathroom.
- Appropriate flooring. Washable flooring is more hygienic than carpeting.
- Opaque window curtains or blinds for privacy and comfort where the bathroom has a window.
- An extractor fan for adequate ventilation or a window that opens.
- Adequate heating. All bathrooms with an external window must have heating.
- A hook for clothes.
- A non-slip bathmat should be available on request when shower trays and baths are not nonslip.
- A towel rail or equivalent. A radiator is not acceptable, but a towel ring or a hanging rack on a radiator is.
- A clean hand and bath towel for each guest. In public bathrooms, these should be in the guest's bedroom. Unless there is a clearly advertised environmental policy, they should be changed at least every three days.
- A clean bathmat for each new let.
- A suitably sized and located mirror.
- An electric razor point or adapter available within easy reach of the mirror. This may be located in a bedroom or bathroom.
- All bathrooms need to be well lit by a covered light.
- Hot water for bathing should be available at all reasonable times.



13. Bathrooms and En-Suites

What is assessed

The quality and condition of: Bath, taps, plugs, soap holders, support rails and handles. Shower cubicle, door, tray, soap holders, screen, curtain, shower head, hose, controls. WC, lid, seat, cistern, toilet roll holder. Basin, taps, plug, soap dish. Mirrors, towel rail, shelves, light and heating fittings, extractor fans.

SCORING - for example

Five ★★★★★

- High quality, solid, well-made fittings in excellent order, all in matching style.
- Sturdy cast iron or steel and enamel bath. High quality shower cubicles or screens.
- Power showers or high quality fittings which are responsive, thermostatically controlled and easy to use.
- Plenty of hot water at all times.
- Generous amount of towel rail space.
- Heated towel rail, or towel rail fitted above radiator.

Four ★★★★

- Good sized bath and washbasin. Shower screen or high quality shower curtain.
- Very good quality bath and shower trays – probably ceramic/ enamel or composite.
- Generally high quality fittings throughout with only slight wear. All sanitary ware in good order, no cracks, crazing or dull finishes.
- High quality taps and showers with strong and refreshing flow of water that is easy to control.

Three ★★★

- Solid, matching, good quality and well-fitted appliances. Coordinated sanitary ware.
- No small baths or undersized showers with awkward access.
- Good quality light fittings.
- Well-fitted window covering, with sufficient width and height to draw completely across the window.
- Good shelf space for guests' belongings.

Two ★★

- Fittings of a quite good quality but may be dated or worn.
- Sanitary ware may not be matching and may include plastic washbasins, shower trays, etc.

One ★

- Fittings of an acceptable quality, not necessarily coordinating.
- Correctly fitted, appropriate window covering.
- Adequate, but sparing towel rail provision.
- Limited set-down space for guests' belongings.

Accessibility Best Practice

- Level entry showers are preferable.
- Provide appropriate support rails at showers, baths, toilets and wash basins.
- Provide a selection of equipment, such as bath seats, toilet seat height raisers and shower chairs, as well as a support rail by the shower attachments.
- Ensure that emergency alarm pull cords are accessible and not tied back.

Sustainability Best Practice

- There is no need for soaps and other complimentary products to be individually wrapped or in small containers – these can be presented in suitable attractive refillable dispensers. Quality Advisors will check the quality of the products offered and the style of presentation.
- There is no need for the drinking cup or glass to be either single use plastic, or wrapped.
- Although providing shower facilities can help reduce water consumption, remember that power showers can use more water than a bath. Therefore, consider using reduced flow showerheads or gravity-fed showers where possible.

13. Bathrooms and En-Suites

13.4 Flooring

What is assessed

The quality and condition of all flooring. The quality of fitting and coordination with décor.

SCORING - for example

Five ★★★★★

- Highest quality flooring (carpeting, tiles, vinyl or laminate), expertly fitted with good attention to detail applied to comfort.
- High levels of maintenance evident.
- Where the flooring is tiled, grouting and sealant is in excellent order.

Four ★★★★★

- High quality flooring, but not necessarily new and may show signs of wear. Or more moderate quality but in pristine condition.
- Normally professionally fitted.

Three ★★★★★

- Well-fitted, good quality flooring in sound condition and comfortable under foot.
- Wooden floors in good condition.
- Some underlay for carpeting.

Two ★★★★★

- Quite good quality flooring, but any carpets may have a high man-made fibre content.
- Vinyl flooring or tiles should have little damage.

One ★★★★★

- Adequate comfort to flooring, some signs of wear and tear may be evident.
- Possibly not fitted professionally.

13.5 Lighting, Heat and Ventilation

What is assessed

Lighting – ability to see, natural and artificial light, overall amount, task lighting, controllability.

Heating – overall temperature, localised areas, especially mirror, controllability by guest. Borrowed heat for bathrooms is acceptable where internal bathrooms do not have specific heating.

Ventilation – fresh air availability and control, extraction system; air conditioning.

SCORING - for example

Five ★★★★★

- Well-positioned, good quality lights giving good levels of illumination for various purposes, e.g. shaving, applying make-up etc.
- Responsive, thermostatically controlled, automatic heating. Some older storage heaters possibly don't meet this requirement. Heating source possibly a heated towel rail or underfloor heating.
- Where there is a window, an extractor fan as well as the window will be expected.

Four ★★★★★

- Very good levels of light especially over or next to the mirror.
- Different types of lighting possibly used for practical or aesthetic reasons, e.g. halogen down lighters.
- Properly fitted, automatic, thermostatically controlled heating.

Three ★★★★★

- Well-positioned lights giving good levels of illumination, particularly by the mirror. Ample natural light.
- Comfortable heating levels, appropriate to the room size and providing overall uniform temperature.

13. Bathrooms and En-Suites

Two ★★

- Quite good levels of lighting. Possibly main light only.
- Heating offering a good level of heat which might be automatic or thermostatically controlled.

One ★

- Adequate lighting levels for the style, size, and shape of the bathroom.
- Adequate heating for size of room at all reasonable times may not be automatic, but should be fixed for safety.
- Effective ventilation. Possibly window only.

13.6 Towels and Toiletries

What is assessed

Towels – the quality and condition of all towels, robes, flannels, bathmats and any spare towels.

Toiletries/accessories – the quality and range offered.

SCORING - for example

Five ★★★★★

- Greater range of quality towels, e.g. bath sheets, bathrobes and flannels.
- Towels changed every two days, except where, as part of an environmental policy, guests are invited and agree to a less frequent change.
- Luxury toilet paper and a good range of well presented, quality toiletries, e.g. high quality soap, shampoo, shower gel, conditioner, tissues, cotton wool balls, cotton buds etc.

Four ★★★★★

- High quality, soft and fluffy towels, smelling clean and fresh. Face cloth may be included.
- Toiletries of a higher quality with better packaging and presentation - perhaps all part of the same range.

Three ★★★

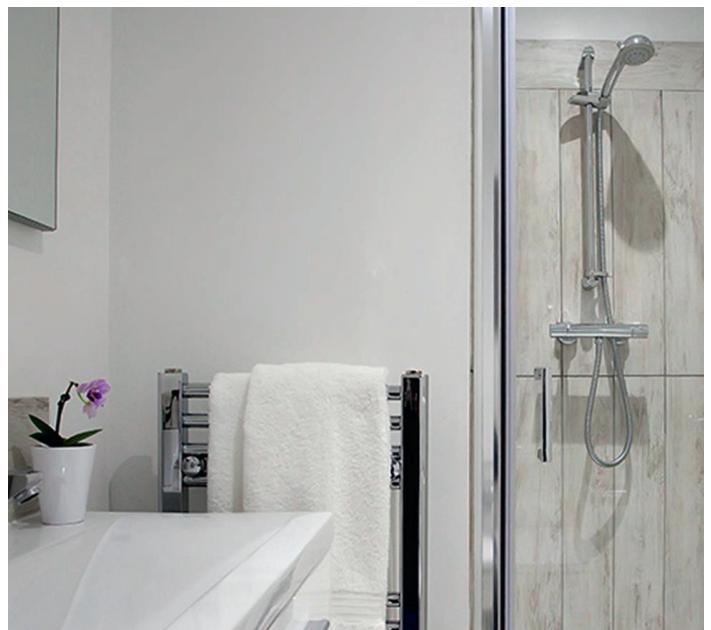
- A good range of good quality absorbent towels.
- Towels changed at least every three days except where, as part of an environmental policy, guests are invited and agree to a less frequent change.
- Good quality toilet paper and a range of quality toiletries including wrapped soap, shampoo etc. Large bottles of proprietary brands are acceptable but should be kept topped up.

Two ★★

- Standard size towels generally of good quality, or towels of higher quality and size now showing signs of ageing and losing condition.
- Soap may be of average quality but possibly wrapped. Additional accessories - if any - possibly of basic quality and presentation.

One ★

- Satisfactory quality, with minimum range and size of towels.
- Limited toiletries, restricted to soap only. Possibly unwrapped or in a dispenser of acceptable quality.
- No evidence in public/ shared bathrooms of proprietors' personal belongings.



13. Bathrooms and En-Suites

13.7 Space, Comfort and Ease of Use

What is assessed

Space – overall size of the room, height of ceiling, size of bath, size of shower, size of basin.

Comfort /ease of use – amount and layout of storage space, access to bath, shower, toilet, access to controls, height of mirror, usability of hairdryer, usability of the shower.

SCORING - for example

Five ★★★★★

- Generous space to allow free movement and easy access to the facilities.
- Plenty of provision for laying out toiletries, shaving equipment and hanging up clothes. Convenient layout.
- Minimal noise from plumbing.

Four ★★★★★

- Well-planned layout of sanitary ware and fittings to maximise convenience and ease of use.
- Very good provision of shelf space for guests' toiletries etc.

Three ★★★★★

- Sufficient space to allow easy access to, and use of the facilities.
- Good storage for guests' toiletries.

Two ★★★★★

- Quite good levels of comfort. Possibly limited space but guests should be able to use facilities comfortably with convenient access to bath, shower and WC.
- Storage space provided but may be limited.

One ★★★★★

- Adequate space with satisfactory layout and sufficient free movement.
- Adequate water pressure and satisfactory drainage.
- Flat surface available for guests' belongings.



Hints & Tips

Bathrooms are expensive to build and set up and will probably need to last longer than any other part of the business between major refurbishments, so it is important to get it right first time:

- If you have room for a bath and a shower, provide both if possible. If not, a shower only is acceptable to most guests.
- Always try to fit a thermostatically controlled shower. Mixer taps can be fiddly, unpredictable and potentially dangerous.
- Good quality hard flooring might be easier to clean and more hygienic than a carpet.
- Ensure lighting is adequate throughout, particularly in the shower cubicle, over the bath and above the mirror.
- Large, soft towels will be appreciated by guests.
- If providing toiletries, aim for a high quality national or local brand. Larger, refillable containers are acceptable and will reduce waste.

14. Food

Legislative Requirement

- A Bed & Breakfast must provide a cooked breakfast.

All grades

- All food must be properly cooked and carefully prepared and presented.
- A cooked breakfast should be available. You must offer a minimum of two hot cooked items. Offering only boiled eggs is not acceptable as a cooked breakfast. If a substantial continental breakfast is also offered this must include a selection of the following items – cold meats, cheeses, fresh fruits, fruit compote, preserves, cereals, juices, yoghurts, bakery items and a choice of freshly brewed hot drinks, usually tea and coffee.
- To achieve the higher star ratings, a greater choice and quality is expected.
- If breakfast is served off site, guests must be made aware of this when booking.
- It is acceptable to offer a buffet style cooked or continental breakfast.

14.1 Breakfast

What is assessed

Choice – the range of dishes available to the guests, the detail of the menu. **Presentation** of individual dishes and any buffet. Temperature of plates. The **quality** of the cooking of breakfast.

SCORING – for example

Five ★★★★★

- A menu, presented to the highest standard detailing the full breakfast range should be provided.
- High quality, fresh ingredients and a comprehensive range of hot and cold dishes. Examples might include freshly squeezed juices, freshly ground coffee, choice of teas, home prepared muesli, cheeses and cold meats, free range eggs, a fish option, dry cured bacon, meaty sausages, high quality bakery items and home-made preserve.

- Regional specialities and/or home-made items.
- Good use of fresh local/home-grown produce where available.

Four ★★★★★

- A menu detailing the full breakfast range should be provided.
- A superior range and wider variety of hot and cold items, possibly including house specials.
- Obvious use of fresh ingredients cooked and presented with a high level of care and attention to detail.

Three ★★★

- A choice of good quality items available, e.g. fruit, choice of cereals, sausage, tomato, brown or white toast and a range of preserves.
- An attractive buffet (if provided).
- Freshly cooked items served at the correct temperature. Eggs cooked to order.
- Particular attention to food quality rather than an extensive choice.

Two ★★

- Food served at the correct temperature, on a hot or cold plate as appropriate.
- Limited choice available.
- Food prepared with a quite good level of care.

One ★

- Possibly a set menu with modest quality items, for example, juice, cereal, bacon and egg, toast, coffee and tea.
- All hot food properly cooked and presented.
- Care taken to ensure that juices are chilled, toast is crisp and tea and coffee are freshly made.

14. Food

Hints & Tips

A traditional Irish breakfast or Ulster fry is what most guests are expecting in a Northern Irish B&B, but how do you make your breakfast stand out? Perhaps consider the options and ideas below and pick out those that are right for you and your customers:

- Serve good quality local produce wherever you can, and shout about it on your menu. Look for fresh local eggs, locally produced bacon and sausages, locally baked bread and pastries.
- Rather than just orange juice, offer a selection of juices, including freshly squeezed options and a smoothie. You can increase choice and reduce waste by keeping individual bottles or cans of less popular juices, such as tomato or grapefruit.
- Fresh fruit salad or a fruit platter can be very popular, accompanied by natural or fruit yoghurts.
- Dried or fresh fruit compote and pastries are other popular options for the menu or buffet table.
- Consider a speciality dish that will make your business stand out, possibly a local or regional dish.
- Offer options for vegetarians, vegans and those with other special diets.
- Keep the high quality theme throughout the meal, with good tea and coffee, preserves, butter and healthy options.

Sustainability best practice

- Where possible, source food and drink products locally. Build relationships with local producers and suppliers.
- Menus highlighting local specialties can really help differentiate your offering from that of your competitors, so highlight the connection with local producers wherever possible. Incorporate a description of where ingredients are sourced, who the producer is, and why you have chosen them.
- Staff dealing with food and drink service should be fully briefed on the source, characteristics and significance of local food and drink products.



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