



VisitEngland™



Quality Standard

Hotel Accommodation

VisitEngland's quality standard for hotels

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Quality is the key

VisitEngland understands that quality is the key to success within the modern hospitality industry. In order for the English hotel 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 assessors will work with you in order to maximise the potential of your business. As a member of the VisitEngland star rating scheme you will receive an annual, overnight mystery assessment visit. This visit will look at all aspects of your customer facing business from the initial booking to check out. Each visit will be followed by a full verbal debrief and a detailed written management report. Both these tools are designed to help you to improve your business.

Quality across the star ratings

When a customer selects a hotel there will be an expectation of quality commensurate with the offer made by the hotel, in their advertising material, and the star rating. Our assessors will grade quality to five levels based on these general expectations. The assessors will not be making judgements about any aspect of your business based on style or personal taste.

In advance of their visit our assessors will review your property's website, as would a typical potential 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.

A small hotel might be able to provide excellent hospitality and friendly, efficient service with a very small number of staff. Larger hotels will require a team of well-trained staff and this presents a different challenge. At the four star level it is expected that staff will be highly trained and skilled, anticipating the needs of their guests and providing an efficient service in all areas.

Five star hotels in England should be offering a level of service excellence that would be universally recognised as five star by visitors from around the world.

Bedrooms & Bathrooms

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

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

Cleanliness

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

Hints & Tips

Be objective and self-critical when thinking about quality:

- Do not over promise: Do not be tempted to claim you offer luxury on your website unless the facilities you are selling are truly luxurious. Customers travel with expectations. It is better to exceed these expectations rather than not to live up to them.
- Be a customer at your own business: Take time to use your own website, sleep in your own bedrooms and eat in your own restaurant in order to experience what you are offering your guests.

How do we measure quality?

During your visit, your assessor 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, in order to confirm a particular star rating, the scores awarded within each of the **six key areas** also need to fall within that band or higher. In this way we, and you, can be confident that the hotel is offering a consistent service at the star rating awarded.

These key areas are:

- Cleanliness
- Bedrooms
- Bathrooms
- Service & Efficiency
- Food Quality
- Hospitality & Friendliness

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

Assessment Example

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

In order to be awarded four star, the hotel needs to meet the overall percentage required (at least 70%) as well as the percentages required in each of the key sections (listed above). The hotel meets the overall percentage required for four star (with 74%) and achieves four star for cleanliness, bedrooms and bathrooms. However, the hotel fails to meet the scores required for service & efficiency and hospitality & friendliness (both scoring high three star). Although the hotel 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. Advice is provided as to how to improve the scores in these two key areas as well as food quality in order to meet a four star rating at the next visit.

Scores

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

- 1 mark – Poor
- 2 marks – Disappointing
- 3 marks – Good
- 4 marks – Very good
- 5 marks – Excellent

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

Hints & Tips

- No need to follow the crowd, don't be afraid to do things your way. For example, locally sourced toiletries can be of equal quality to national brands.
- Remember that arriving at a hotel for the first time involves a series of first impressions. 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 Report

Cleanliness

Dining area	4
Public areas	4
Bathrooms	5
Other public areas	4
Bedrooms	4
	84%
	(high 4 star quality)

Bedrooms

Decoration	3
Furniture, fittings & furnishings	3
Flooring	4
Beds & bedding	4
Lighting, heating & ventilation	5
Bedroom accessories	4
Space, comfort & ease of use	4
	77%
	(safe 4 star quality)

Bathrooms

Decoration	4
Fixtures & fittings	4
Flooring	4
Lighting, heating & ventilation	4
Towels & toiletries	4
Space, comfort & ease of use	3
	77%
	(safe 4 star quality)

Service & efficiency

Booking service	3
Arrival service	3
Lounge service	3
Bar service	3
Other services (leisure etc.)	4
Departure service	3
Room service	3
Restaurant service	4
Restaurant wine & drinks service	4
Breakfast service	4
	68%
	(high 3 star quality)

Food quality

Dinner choice & presentation	4
Dinner quality	4
Room service	3
Breakfast choice & presentation	3
Breakfast quality	4
	72%
	(borderline 4 star quality)

Hospitality & friendliness

Booking service	3
Arrival service	3
Lounge service	3
Bar service	3
Other services (leisure etc.)	4
Departure service	3
Room service	4
Restaurant service	4
Breakfast service	4
	69%
	(high 3 star quality)

Dining room & restaurant

Decoration	4
Furniture, fittings & furnishings	4
Flooring	3
Lighting, heating & ventilation	4
Table appointment	4
Space, comfort & ease of use	3
	73%

Exterior

Building appearance	4
Grounds, gardens & frontage	4
Car parking	5
Leisure	4
	85%

All public areas

Decoration	4
Furniture, fittings & furnishings	4
Flooring	4
Lighting, heating & ventilation	4
Space, comfort & ease of use	4
Stairs, corridors, hallways & WCs	2
	73%

Overall score

74%

Outcome is a 3 star rating

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

Determining a star rating

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

- All relevant requirements must be met (detailed later in this booklet)
- The overall percentage score for quality must reach the appropriate band (see quality bands below)
- The relevant standard of quality in the six critical areas:
 - Cleanliness
 - Bedrooms
 - Bathrooms
 - Service & Efficiency
 - Food Quality
 - Hospitality & Friendliness

The star rating level across all of these six areas must be met in order to achieve a particular star rating. The remaining three areas are: exterior, public areas, dining room/restaurants. Where additional facilities are provided e.g. spa, these will also be assessed.

Dispensations

Dispensations for certain individual requirements within these VisitEngland 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 considered 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.

Hotel description

For the purposes of participation in the VisitEngland Hotel Quality Scheme, a hotel is defined as “a commercial establishment providing a minimum of five letting bedrooms and serving breakfast. The establishment will have a licence to serve alcohol and may serve lunch and/or dinner. Where no meal service is offered, this should be made clear to the consumer at the time of booking, be clearly advertised on the website and there must be a range of quality places to eat and drink within easy walking distance.

Overall quality bands

	1 Star	2 Star	3 Star	4 Star	5 Star
Overall	30%-46%	47%-54%	55%-69%	70%-84%	85%-100%
Cleanliness	40%	50%	65%	75%	90%
Hospitality & Friendliness	30%	47%	55%	70%	85%
Service & Efficiency	30%	47%	55%	70%	85%
Food	30%	47%	55%	70%	85%
Bedrooms	30%	47%	55%	70%	85%
Bathrooms	30%	47%	55%	70%	85%

Awards

VisitEngland's Gold & Silver Awards

VisitEngland's unique Gold and Silver awards are given in recognition of exceptional quality within a hotel's star rating. These awards help customers find those special places where the hotelier and team go the extra mile, whatever the size, style or star rating of the hotel. Hotels must demonstrate consistent levels of high quality in the six key areas identified by consumers as very important:

- Cleanliness
- Bedrooms
- Bathrooms
- Service & Efficiency
- Food Quality
- Hospitality & Friendliness

Eligibility for an award is triggered by the hotel's overall score meeting a minimum level plus a minimum score in each of the critical areas listed above (see separate sheet showing the percentages required).

Awards are confirmed with the written assessment report but Gold awards require confirmation by the Quality Assessment Area Manager and may involve a second 'mystery visit'. The assessment report will show the scores in all areas, so hotels can check how close they are to achieving an award and can ask the assessor's advice about the key improvements required to aim for a Silver or Gold award.

A Gold or Silver award gives hotels a significant marketing advantage – they can feature the award logo on their website as well as display their award certificate at their property.

VisitEngland's Breakfast Award

Hotels achieving exceptionally high scores for the quality of their breakfast will qualify for the VisitEngland Breakfast award.

As part of the annual assessment the assessor will score the breakfast served based on the following criteria.

- Choice and range of dishes offered
- Presentation and culinary skills
- Quality of ingredients/produce
- Breakfast service/hospitality

The assessor will confirm during the assessment debrief if you have achieved the award.

The Breakfast award logo can then be used in your own marketing.

VisitEngland's assessors

All of our assessors are hospitality professionals and each has a proven background in the industry. The experience that they offer to you may include the management of country house, family-run or corporate hotels and many have a particular expertise in the food and beverage sector. More importantly, our assessors now spend their working lives as professional guests. They experience best practice in all areas and are able to pass that knowledge on to you for the benefit of your business. They are your eyes and ears for the duration of their visit. They will assess the quality of your business honestly, but always with the objective of helping you to improve your operation. Make use of your assessor.

Hints & Tips

Are some or all of your bedrooms or bathrooms on the small side? Don't despair, maximise their potential:

- Space is an important factor when assessing quality, but a well-designed smaller room can compensate in many respects.
- Don't think of these rooms as 'last lets'; decorate, furnish and equip them to the highest standard that you can.
- Think ergonomically; have you maximised the usability of the available space?
- Design your room so that there is good ease of use to all areas such as the bed, curtains/blinds, thermostats etc.
- Have enough clothes storage, but not too much. Look at space saving ideas in this area or ask your assessor for guidance.
- Use the room yourself. Ask yourself: can I plug in all of my electronic devices? Is the hospitality tray usable? Are mirrors accessible and usable in conjunction with a hairdryer?
- In this way you can maximise the quality potential of your business and your star rating.

Hints & Tips

- Do not be afraid to innovate: This standards book 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 benefit from, or appreciate a new way of doing things do not dismiss the idea because it is not included in this standards book.
- Traditional check-in or electronic check-in? Either is capable of enhancing or diminishing the overall quality of the visitor experience, depending on how it is operated and handled.
- We are sure that you have many ideas for future delivery of the service. Talk to your assessor. We are flexible and willing to accommodate new ideas wherever possible.

Hints & Tips

How to get the most out of your assessor:

- Ask questions, lots of questions!
- At the morning debrief include as many staff as possible. Remember, constructive criticism from the assessor might help to inspire and motivate staff.
- Stay in touch. Assessors are happy to answer your questions in between assessment visits. You might like to arrange an interim assessment visit in order to measure improvements made to your business, especially if you are aiming for a higher rating or a Silver or Gold award.

Sustainability & Accessibility

Sustainability: Doing Business Even Better

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

VisitEngland Can Help

VisitEngland is committed to promoting the adoption of sustainability practices among all tourism businesses. It is our aim to ensure that a sustainable approach is complimentary to improving the overall visitor experience in England. Your help is needed in this aspiration.

For further information on how to enhance your business to be more sustainable, along with case studies on the benefits of adopting sustainable practices, please visit www.visitengland.org/green.

Sustainable Tourism Certification

If your business is already a successful sustainable business and you wish to demonstrate this to new or existing consumers, you may wish to join one of the certification schemes that exist in England. These schemes are not operated by VisitEngland but by independent organisations which have been verified to ensure they are offering a rigorous and well-founded sustainable certification scheme that will allow you to confidently promote your green credentials. Visit

www.visitengland.org/green for more information.

Improving your Accessibility – A Lucrative Market

Many people have access needs including disabled people, such as those with hearing and visual impairments, wheelchair users, older and less mobile people and people with pushchairs. The accessible tourism market is worth around £12bn to tourism businesses in England and is growing due to an ageing population.

By making some small adjustments to your facilities, providing information on your accessibility and understanding the needs of disabled people, your business will appeal to a wider range of visitors and attract more business. Demand for accessible accommodation outstrips the current supply. Find out how other tourism businesses are benefitting from this loyal market at www.visitengland.org/access

Legal Obligations

Tourism businesses have obligations under The Equality Act 2010, which replaced the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005 (DDA) on 1 October 2010. Tourism providers should treat everyone accessing their goods, facilities or services fairly, regardless of their gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religion or belief, and guard against making assumptions about the characteristics of individuals.

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

may make it too late to make the necessary adjustment.

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

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

resources an organisation has and how practical the changes are.

We Can Help

VisitEngland provides tourism businesses with a range of guidance, tools and resources to help increase engagement with the valuable accessible tourism market. Go to www.visitengland.org/access.

It is important to provide information on the accessibility of your facilities and services. This can be achieved by producing an Accessibility Guide (an improved format that replaces Access Statements), which is a requirement for all scheme participants. To produce and publish an Accessibility Guide go to www.visitengland.org/accessibilityguides.

More detailed guidance and accessibility ratings are provided by the National Accessible Scheme (NAS): www.visitengland.org/nas.

1 Overall Standards

1.1 Statutory obligations

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

All Grades

- Public Liability Insurance: whilst not a statutory requirement, it is a requirement for participation in this scheme. Proprietors may be asked to provide evidence that Public Liability Insurance cover is being maintained and that the requirements are being fulfilled.

Fulfilment of all relevant statutory obligations including but not restricted to:

- Fire risk assessment: to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005; supply evidence that a fire risk assessment has been carried out annually (for guidance refer to www.visitengland.org/fire)
- Food safety/hygiene: register with the local Environmental Health department
- Health and safety: operate safely with due regard to health and safety legislation
- Planning: comply with local planning regulations
- Licensing: comply with all local licensing regulations
- Hotel Proprietors Act: comply with this act
- Data Protection Act / GDPR as of May 2018: comply with this act / these regulations
- The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008: comply with these regulations by describing accurately in any advertisement, brochure, or other printed or electronic media, the facilities and services provided
- Equality Act 2010: comply with this act. Welcome all guests courteously and without discrimination in relation to gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or belief. Make 'reasonable' adjustments to improve services for disabled customers. Produce an Accessibility Guide – information on the accessibility of your facilities and services. To produce and publish an Accessibility Guide go to www.visitengland.org/accessibilityguides

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- As minimum

Four Star

- As minimum

Five Star

- As minimum

1.2 Safety and security

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- Proprietor and/or staff to be on site and on call to resident guests 24-hours a day. Printed instructions, provided in the bedrooms, for summoning assistance during an emergency at night. If the proprietor lives away from the hotel, it is expected that a member of management or staff sleep on site and that their night-time contact details are clearly advertised in every bedroom.
- A high degree of general safety and security, including information on evacuation procedures in the event of an emergency, to be advertised in every bedroom. Multilingual emergency procedure notices or use of symbols/diagrams clearly displayed in every bedroom.
- Particular attention given to the safety and security of guests and their belongings in car parks, ground floor and annexe bedrooms including external paths and walkways.
- Once registered guests should have access to the hotel at all times.
- In the interests of safety, guests to be escorted to bedrooms if requested.
- The hotel entrance should be clearly identifiable and the doorway illuminated when it is dark. Adequate levels of lighting for safety and comfort in all public areas, including sufficient light on stairways and landings at night.
- A telephone accessible 24 hours a day, unless direct dial telephones provided in each bedroom.
- Adequate measures for the security of guests and their property. Means of securing bedroom doors from inside and out, and a key or key card provided. The issuing of a bedroom key to guests and charging of items to account always done discreetly to ensure guest security.
- Security fittings installed on any window which could be left open and access gained from outside, e.g. windows near fire escapes.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- As minimum

Four Star

- As minimum

Five Star

- As minimum

Sustainability best practice

- Use of energy efficient light bulbs.

1.3 Maintenance

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- Buildings, their fixtures, furnishings, fittings, exterior and interior décor maintained in a sound, clean condition and fit for the purpose intended.

- All electrical and gas equipment in good working order and regularly serviced to ensure guests' safety.
- Monitoring procedure in place for reporting of broken/damaged items in guests' bedrooms.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- As minimum

Four Star

- As minimum

Five Star

- As minimum

1.4 Cleanliness

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

A high standard of cleanliness maintained throughout the property.

As the cleanliness of hotels at every star grade is of paramount importance to the consumer, the highest standards of cleanliness are not expected to vary between star gradings.

Particular attention should be given to bathrooms, shower rooms and toilets especially items involving direct contact with guests, including:

- Bedding, linen and towels.
- Baths, showers, washbasins and WCs.
- Flooring and seating.
- Crockery, cutlery and glassware.
- All bathrooms and shower rooms cleaned daily and checked to ensure very high standards of cleanliness.
- Bathrooms and shower rooms clean and fresh smelling. Particular attention paid to WCs, plug-holes, shower curtains, 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.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- As minimum

Four Star

- As minimum

Five Star

- A pristine and immaculate presentation

Accessibility best practice

- Ensure housekeeping staff 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.
- Ensure housekeeping trolleys do not obstruct corridors.

Sustainability best practice

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

2 Hospitality & services

2.1 General

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- At all grades, guests should be greeted and acknowledged in a friendly, efficient and courteous manner throughout their stay. Staff should have a helpful attitude.
- A relatively straightforward range of services offered – often provided by the proprietor and family/staff.
- All enquiries, requests and reservations, correspondence and complaints from visitors dealt with promptly and politely.
- Every effort made to take account of individual guest's needs.
- The style of the hotel may dictate how staff dress – from formal uniforms to informal and casual outfits.
- Service, efficiency and technical skills of a very good standard.
- All staff demonstrate a positive attitude and willingness to help.

Two Star

- Basic guest service, anticipating guests' requirements.

Three Star

- Good guest service, with ample numbers of staff to provide a prompt, courteous and efficient service.

Four Star

- Very good social skills and anticipation of individual guest's needs evident. The ability to personalise the guest experience encouraged.

Five Star

- Excellent social skills and anticipation of individual guest's needs to create unique and memorable experiences.
- Service and efficiency of an exceptional standard without detriment to other service areas at any time delivered by a structured team of staff with a management and supervisory hierarchy.
- Where there is a market need some consideration should be given to having multilingual staff.
- Staff impeccably presented.

Sustainability best practice

- Consider drafting and promoting an environmental policy, setting out the environmental and sustainable management actions taken by your business. Ensure all staff are fully briefed and updated on the hotel's sustainability policy.

Accessibility best practice

- Ensure staff ask if the guest has any accessibility needs.
- Assistance dogs must be welcomed (this is a legal requirement). Many disabled people rely on assistance dogs to provide them with independence. See the dog as being part of the person.
- Ensure guests identifying themselves as being disabled, e.g. those with visual impairments, are offered a familiarisation tour.
- Ensure the fire evacuation strategy details emergency exit procedures for disabled people. Remember, guests with hearing impairments may not hear knocking at the door. Record room location and any specific requirements and pass to staff at change of shift.
- Consider learning to communicate in basic British Sign Language (BSL).
- Specific training is available for staff on how to welcome all types of guests e.g. Welcome All and WorldHost Customers with Disabilities.

2.2 Reservations, prices and billing

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

There should be a simple and efficient booking service that includes the following:

- Prospective visitors told clearly what is included in the prices quoted for accommodation, meals and refreshments, including service charge, taxes and other surcharges.
- Ability to make a prompt and effective reservation during the day and evening.

Communication with prospective guests, whether verbal or written, should be prompt, efficient, professional and helpful. A good first impression is critical at all grades. Therefore:

- The price agreed at the time of booking must not be exceeded.
- All agreed prices must include service charges, taxes and other surcharges where applicable.
- Every endeavour should be made to advise guests in advance about the hotel location, any car parking restrictions and the location of their room if it is in an annexe.
- Other information which may impact on the guests' stay, e.g. smoking policy, refurbishment work in progress, planned functions/events etc. provided. Where house policy dictates that certain facilities need to be pre-booked, e.g. spa treatments, dinner etc., these should also be mentioned at the time of booking.
- Where no or limited meal service is provided this should be made clear at the time of booking and on your website to avoid disappointment.
- Full details of the hotel's cancellation policy. Information about charging credit cards for cancellation or changes to the booking is particularly important.
- Information about deposits if required, including details of how the deposit is taken and whether or not it is refundable on cancellation.
- Clear explanation of charges for additional services or available facilities including cancellation terms.
- Information about any unacceptable types of payment, e.g. credit cards etc.
- Confirmation provided on request by hotel (not only from third party booking site) by e-mail, text or letter.
- Prospective guests left confident that their booking was recorded accurately.
- As a minimum, name, address, and/or contact telephone number recorded at the time of booking.
- All bookings handled in a friendly and courteous manner, even if there is no dedicated reservations department.
- Provide each guest with printed or clearly written details of payment due and a receipt on request.

- Presentation of accounts ensuring that purchases are clearly detailed.
- The VAT element of the account (where applicable) should be clearly identified.

Two Star

- As minimum.

Three Star

- Guests should be able to charge all account services to one main account.

Four Star

- Confirmation provided by email/text or letter from hotel (not only from third party booking site).

Five Star

- Ability to make a prompt and effective booking, 24 hours a day.

Accessibility best practice

- Offer your guests a choice of how to contact you, e.g. telephone, fax, letter, email and find out about Text Relay used by people with hearing impairments at www.textrelay.org
- Always ask if the enquirer or any of the guests in the party have any specific access requirements.
- Promote your Accessibility Guide.

Sustainability best practice

- Include public transport options for getting to the property in promotional and booking information.

2.3 Reception and luggage handling

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- As reception is likely to be the guests' first and last point of contact with a hotel, special attention should be given to providing a high standard of customer care.
- Direct guest contact given priority over other reception duties.
- Guests clearly directed to their room and given a brief explanation of location of hotel facilities.
- Assistance with luggage available on request throughout the day and evening.
- Once registered, resident guests have access to the hotel at all times. Proprietor and/or staff to be on site and on call to resident guests 24-hours a day.
- It is acceptable for a front door key or security code to be issued.
- Guests informed of meal times, bar opening times etc.
- Secure short term luggage storage.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- As minimum

Four Star

- Reception services available and at least between 7am and 11pm.
- Consideration should be given to providing 24 hour reception where there is a market need.
- Assistance with luggage offered on arrival and advertised as available for departure.

Five Star

- 24 hour reception to be provided where there is a market need for example city centre hotels.
- Where valet parking offered, guests greeted outside the hotel without delay.
- Guests are shown to their room and given a full orientation of hotel and bedroom facilities.
- Hotel staff taking control of luggage from guest's arrival outside to prompt delivery in bedroom. The same quality of service repeated on departure.

2.4 Other reception, concierge and housekeeping services

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- Iron and ironing board available.
- Appropriate tourist, travel and/or local information available suitable to market needs.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- Well-presented travel and/or local information such as details of visitor attractions, taxi firms, banks, churches, railway stations etc. available in bedrooms.

Four Star

- Laundry and possibly dry cleaning service provided and advertised with prices.
- Newspapers can be ordered and delivered to guests' bedrooms.

Five Star

- 24-hour return laundry service.
- A shoe-cleaning service advertised and available.
- A full concierge service provided where appropriate to market. This may vary depending on location and style of the hotel but may include some or all of the following: theatre bookings, sightseeing trips, taxi bookings, valet parking, travel and other requests.

Accessibility best practice

- Provide a vibrating alarm clock for hearing impaired guests.
- Provide hotel information in a range of formats, e.g. large print, Braille, photographs, MP3 downloads and audio description on websites.

Sustainability best practice

- Make best use of local tourist information in both the hotel's promotional literature, on the website and visitor information located in the bedrooms.

3 Dining

3.1 General

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- Guests informed when they book if dinner is not available.
- Provision is made for a variety of dietary requirements.
- Where dinner is served in a restaurant which is separate to the hotel or contracted out, the hotel guests must be informed at the time of booking.
- There is a facility for guests to charge meals and drinks to their hotel account.
- Individual tables available for each guest or party.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- As minimum

Four Star

- As minimum

Five Star

- At least one restaurant open to residents for all meals during hotel opening hours.
- Restaurant tables should have sufficient space around them to allow a high degree of privacy and freedom of movement.

Accessibility best practice

- Try to be flexible with meal times to help diabetic people regulate their blood sugar.
- Ensure tables are stable and provide support for people rising from their chairs.
- Ensure crockery contrasts with table linen or surface to assist visually impaired guests.

3.2 Meal service staff

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- Sufficient staff to ensure prompt service at all meals served.
- Polite and courteous staff providing a basic standard of customer care.
- Staff demonstrating knowledge about the dishes being served.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- Staff providing a good standard of customer care and demonstrating very good levels of food, beverage and wine product knowledge and service skills.

Four Star

- Unobtrusive, polite and courteous staff providing an very good standard of customer care and demonstrating very good levels of food, beverage and wine product knowledge and service skills.
- Staff demonstrate proactive service, anticipating customer requirements.

Five Star

- Unobtrusive, polite and courteous staff providing an excellent standard of customer care. Highly trained, professional and pro-active staff.
- A personalised welcome and guests escorted to their table in all areas where food and drinks are served.
- Staff demonstrating excellent levels of food, beverage and wine product knowledge and service skills.

Accessibility best practice

- Offer guests a choice of seating location. Provide a selection of chairs with and without arm rests.

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.

3.3 Breakfast provision

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- A cooked and/or continental breakfast provided.
- Appropriate breakfast times where there is a specific market need, e.g. city centre hotels, airport hotels and rural hotels.
- Breakfast price on display when a room-only rate option is available.
- The price of any breakfast items carrying an additional charge clearly advertised.
- Self-service buffet style is acceptable. However, buffets should be replenished on a regular basis. Where provided, buffets laid out and operated in a practical and customer friendly manner.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- A cooked and continental breakfast provided in a designated eating area on the premises and advertised as such.
- Hot beverages are served at the table but the additional option of high quality vending machines is acceptable.

Four Star

- Table service advertised and available on request.

Five Star

- Table service proactively offered.

Accessibility best practice

- Offer guests assistance with self-service buffets where appropriate.
- Try to be flexible with meal times to help diabetic people regulate their blood sugar.

3.4 Breakfast menu & range of dishes

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- A set menu is acceptable.
- A choice of hot and cold items, including vegetarian options and other dietary requirements and healthy options.
- A verbal explanation of dishes available is acceptable.
- Continental offering to include as a minimum: fruit juice, cereal, yogurt, coffee, tea and toast. Cooked breakfast to include at least three hot items e.g.: bacon, egg, sausage, mushroom, baked beans plus coffee, tea and toast.

Two Star

- A clean and well-presented menu provided for breakfasts served from the kitchen.

Three Star

- A good range of hot and cold items, together with a choice of good quality accompaniments. Examples include preserves, ground and decaffeinated coffee, teas, butters and spreads.
- Guests offered a choice of how their eggs are cooked to include fried, poached, boiled and scrambled.

Four Star

- A menu detailing the full breakfast range provided.
- A superior range of hot and cold items.

Five Star

- A menu, presented to the highest standard, detailing the full breakfast range provided.
- A comprehensive range of excellent quality hot and cold dishes. Examples might include freshly squeezed juices, a variety of fresh fruits in season and ripe, cold meats and cheeses, free range eggs, local specialities, fresh fish, range of bakery items and pastries, special dietary produce and a comprehensive range of appetising hot items

Accessibility best practice

- Provide a large print menu (minimum font size 16 point) in a clear font such as Arial.
- Provide for different dietary requirements, e.g. dairy-free, wheat-free, lactose-free, nut-free.

Sustainability best practice

- Where possible, source food and drink products locally. Build up relationships with local producers and traders.
- Menus highlighting local specialities can really help differentiate your offering from that of your competitors. Incorporate a short 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.

3.5 Dinner provision

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- Dinner served at specific times according to market need and clearly advertised.
- Where dinner is not provided this must be clearly communicated to the guest. Hotel should provide further information as to alternative options.
- A self-service operation e.g. carvery or buffet-style, is acceptable.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- As minimum

Four Star

- As minimum

Five Star

- All courses served to the guest at their table.

Accessibility best practice

- Offer guests assistance with self-service buffet where appropriate.
- Try to be flexible with meal times to help diabetic people regulate their blood sugar.

3.6 Dinner menu & range of dishes

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- It is acceptable instead to offer a verbal description of the dishes available.
- A set menu available, this can be a limited choice.
- More than one course available. The main course should be a substantial hot dish.
- Acceptable, clean and well-presented written menus, with accurate descriptions. However, it is acceptable instead to offer a verbal description of the dishes available.
- The price of dinner should be displayed if the accommodation tariff does not include dinner.
- Clearly advertised price for any surcharge made for a particular dish.
- Additional charges, such as VAT, service, and cover charge, clearly identified on the menus.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- A choice of substantial hot and cold dishes.
- Quality written menus with prices clearly displayed.

Four Star

- As three star.

Five Star

- An extensive choice of food.
- A broad range of dishes of outstanding quality.
- Immaculately presented menus.

Accessibility best practice

- Provide a large print menu (minimum font size 16 point) in a clear font such as Arial.
- Provide for different dietary requirements, e.g. dairy-free, wheat-free, lactose-free, nut-free.

Sustainability best practice

- Where possible, source food and drink products locally. Build up relationships with local producers and traders.
- Menus highlighting local specialities can really help differentiate your offering from that of your competitors. Incorporate a short 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.

3.7 Alcoholic drink services, licences and wine service

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- A current residential liquor licence or equivalent.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- Staff demonstrate good knowledge of drinks, including wines and spirits.

Four Star

- A very good range of drinks offered.
- An informative and detailed wine list.

Five Star

- Excellent range and quality of drinks offered.
- Staff demonstrate excellent drinks knowledge and service skills. Likely to involve dedicated wine team (sommelier).

Sustainability best practice

- Where possible, source drink products (alcoholic and non-alcoholic) locally or regionally and highlight this on your menu.
- Staff dealing with food and drink service should be fully briefed on the source, characteristics and significance of local food and drink products.

3.8 Light refreshments, snacks, lunches & afternoon teas

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- Hot and cold drinks available to residents and their guests in the public areas during the day and evening. Guests may be required to order at reception or at the bar. Vending option in the public areas may be acceptable. (Referral to in-room facilities is not acceptable).

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- Light refreshments of at least hot and cold drinks and sandwiches available to residents and their guests in the public areas during service times. This service is to be clearly advertised.

Four Star

- Light refreshments and hot and cold snacks available to residents and their guests in the public areas during service times.
- Guests able to order and be served at their table.

Five Star

- Full afternoon tea to be available where there is a market need.
- A superior brasserie/bistro/bar is acceptable for lunches, providing that guests are able to eat in comfort, and order and be served at the table.

3.9 Room service provision

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- Optional except in the case of illness.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- As minimum

Four Star

- Room service should be provided and delivered to the room where there is a market need during service hours (including breakfast and dinner). It is acceptable to have a central area where guests can help themselves to a range of food and drink.

Five Star

- 24-hour room service of hot and cold snacks and drinks including alcoholic drinks where there is a market need.
- Guests able to choose from the full dinner menu during restaurant hours.
- For breakfast a wide choice of substantial hot and cold dishes.
- Room size and layout, and delivery method ensures the highest guest dining experience.

Accessibility best practice

- Provide meals in rooms (on request) where appropriate, e.g. for disabled guests.

4 Bedrooms

4.1 Bedroom provision

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- Minimum of five letting bedrooms.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- As minimum

Four Star

- As minimum

Five Star

- As minimum

Accessibility best practice

- Try to provide a ground floor bedroom.

4.2 Size & spaciousness

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- All bedrooms should have sufficient space for guests to move easily around the room.
- When we assess bedroom size we take into account the usable space available around furniture and fittings.
- 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.
- Easy and convenient use of facilities, e.g. use of surfaces without moving tea tray or TV, access to power points etc.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- All bedrooms with good degree of spaciousness.

Four Star

- All bedrooms with a higher degree of spaciousness, allowing ample ease of use for guests and considerably exceeding the minimum entry requirements.

Five Star

- The significant majority of bedrooms very spacious, allowing generous ease of use for movement, comfort, dining and relaxation.

4.3 Suites**Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)**

- Not required.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- As minimum

Four Star

- As minimum

Five Star

- A minimum of one permanent luxury suite/superior luxury room available. N.B. A suite consists of at least three separate rooms – bedroom, bathroom and sitting room, all with a door.

4.4 Bed size & access**Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)**

- Minimum bed sizes, including sofa beds and bunks, as follows:
 - Single: 190cm x 90cm/6ft 3ins x 3ft
 - Double: 190cm x 137cm/6ft 3ins x 4ft 6ins (122cm/4ft beds to be designated as singles).
- 76cm/2ft 6ins beds are unacceptable, except in family rooms where they are clearly designated for children only.
- Sofa beds are not acceptable as permanent bed spaces.
- Bunk beds (permanent bed spaces) are acceptable for child use only. When bunk beds are used, guests must be told when they make the booking. N.B. Bunk beds should have a minimum 75cm/30ins clear space between the mattress of the bottom bed and the underside of the top bed. (Bunk bed regulations 1997).
- All beds including supplementary beds (such as z-beds, sofa beds etc) to be of acceptable quality and in good condition. They should have a sound base and sprung interior, foam or similar quality, modern, comfortable mattress.
- Secure headboard or equivalent on all permanent beds.
- Access to both sides of beds for double occupancy.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- All children's beds to be full adult size. Single: 190cm x 90cm/6ft 3ins x 3ft.
- Sofa beds meeting the bed size requirements for permanent beds.

Four Star

- A choice of larger sized beds.

Five Star

- Bunk beds are not acceptable.
- Beds for single occupancy to exceed 90cm (3ft.) width.
- Beds for double occupancy to be at least 153cm (5ft.) in width.

Accessibility best practice

- Provide zip and link beds so that a guest and partner or a guest and carer can be accommodated, particularly in accessible bedrooms.
- Provide blocks so that bed heights can be adjusted.

4.5 Bedding requirements**Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)**

- Adequate bedding and bed linen provided suitable for the season. Additional bedding available on request.
- Sufficient quantity of linen provided for each guest.
- All beds made daily. Bed linen changed at least once in every week and for each new guest.
- Where feather duvets or pillows are used, a non-allergenic alternative to be available on request.
- A mattress protector provided for each bed. Plastic or rubber mattress protectors are not acceptable except for children's beds.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- As minimum

Four Star

- As minimum

Five Star

- As minimum

Accessibility best practice

- Provide hypoallergenic bedding.

Sustainability best practice

- Spare bedding does not need to be wrapped in plastic bags; it can be placed 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.

4.6 Heating & temperature control

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- Fixed heating provided, and controllable (on/off) by the guest.
- Supplementary heating provided in rooms on request when heating levels are not within the control of the guest, e.g. some central heating systems.

Two Star

- As minimum.

Three Star

- Individually controlled thermostatic heating.

Four Star

- Individually controlled thermostatic heating operable 24-hours.

Five Star

- Air conditioning, mechanical ventilation or ability to cool the room with fresh air that doesn't allow noise or pollutants in the room.

Sustainability best practice

- Use of thermostatically controlled radiators helps to manage your energy consumption.

4.7 Lighting

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- Bedrooms well lit.
- At least one light controlled from the door.
- Bedside reading light for and controllable by each person, in addition to the light controlled by a switch near the door. However, twin beds may share a central bedside light.

Two Star

- As minimum.

Three Star

- Lighting specifically provided to illuminate the writing desk/dressing table.

Four Star

- Lighting specifically for the lobby area, wardrobe area, dining area and easy seating.
- Two bedside lights in a twin-bedded room.
- Room lighting controllable from the bedside.

Five Star

- A range of lighting options controlled by the guest.

Accessibility best practice

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

Sustainability best practice

- Signs can be used to request 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 much later in the day.

4.8 Windows & window coverings

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- At least one window that can be opened safely to provide good levels of direct natural light and ventilation. Air conditioning or mechanical air ventilation provided where windows cannot be opened.
- Windows well fitted, easy to shut and open and remain open. A pole provided to open any Velux-style windows or skylights.
- Rooms without windows are acceptable, but must have air-conditioning and pass all building regulations. The lack of window needs to be clearly communicated to the guest before booking.
- Security fittings installed on all bedroom windows where, when open, access could be gained from outside, e.g. patio doors and windows near fire escapes.
- It is acceptable for a bedroom to overlook a large internal atrium. The bedroom should be air-conditioned and naturally illuminated.
- Opaque curtains, blinds or shutters provided 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. All window coverings to be properly fitted or hung.
- Curtains should be reasonably substantial – with or without lining. Curtains large enough to draw easily and completely across the width and height of the window.
- In ground floor bedrooms additional privacy provided by means of a net curtain or blind.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- As minimum

Four Star

- As minimum

Five Star

- As minimum

Accessibility best practice

- Ensure windows and curtains can be reached by your guests and are easy to open and close.

4.9 Flooring

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- All flooring, carpets, rugs, hard wood flooring etc. properly fitted and of an acceptable quality and condition.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- As minimum

Four Star

- As minimum

Five Star

- As minimum

Accessibility best practice

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

4.10 Furniture – tables, mirrors & clothes storage

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- Writing table or equivalent such as substantial flat surface or desk providing sufficient free space for practical use with mirror adjacent.
- Lighting adequate for use. Conveniently positioned power sockets at desk height.
- A bedside table or equivalent provided for each person. Twin beds may share a bedside table.
- Wardrobe or clothes hanging space.
- Sufficient good quality hangers (not wire).
- At least one mirror in the bedroom preferably full length and to be close to sockets and/or hairdryer.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- Dedicated area for unpacking luggage.
- At least two mirrors in the bedroom, one of which must be full-length mirror and one at the dressing table area.

Four Star

- As three star.

Five Star

- A fully fitted or freestanding wardrobe. N.B. Open alcoves not acceptable.
- A generous amount of clothes storage.
- A wide range of quality hangers provided.
- Illumination inside the wardrobe expected.
- A substantial writing table with excellent free space.

4.11 Furniture – seating**Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)**

- Single/Double/Twin - one chair or stool to be provided with a degree of comfort.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- Single /Double/Twin – one easy chair. Where this is the only chair, consideration given for ease of use at the dressing/writing table, or an additional chair provided.

Four Star

- Double/Twin – one substantial easy chair with another chair positioned at the writing desk.

Five Star

- Single – one substantial easy chair plus an additional chair providing comfortable use at the dressing/writing table.
- Double/Twin – two substantial easy chairs plus an additional chair providing comfortable use at the dressing/writing table.

4.12 Beverage making facilities**Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)**

- Tea/coffee-making facilities available and accessible 24-hours either in bedrooms or in public areas (Self-service/vending option in public areas acceptable).
- Where only room service is provided, the availability of a hospitality tray at no extra charge to be advertised to guests.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- A wider range of hot drinks and snacks likely to be provided, e.g. choice of teas, biscuits, and other drinks such as hot chocolate.
- Tea/coffee making facilities to be provided in the room

Four Star

- As three star.

Five Star

- In-room facilities, where provided, of an excellent standard, e.g. chinaware, teapot, choice of hot drinks including a range of speciality teas, fresh milk and freshly ground coffee.
- May feature bespoke coffee machines in room.

General best practice

- Self-service ingredients for making hot drinks kept wrapped or in lidded containers.
- Fresh milk available on request.

Accessibility best practice

- Ensure hospitality trays are at a height accessible to all guests. Kettles should be cordless and a variety of drinking cups/mugs either provided or available on request.

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.

4.13 In-room information**Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)**

Hotel services and facilities advertised in all bedrooms possibly in a folder of room information or via in-room technology. This should include the following where applicable:

- How to summon assistance in a night-time emergency.
- Multilingual instructions or diagram for fire evacuation. Consideration given to providing multi-lingual information materials where relevant to the customer base.
- Meal times and menus including rooms service menu where provided.
- Details on connecting to the WiFi.
- Local tourist information or a reference to where this is available within the establishment to be included within the room information.
- How to use TV, radio and other technology in the room.
- Iron and ironing board advertised as available (if not already provided in the bedroom).
- Where Apps are available for service elements such as ordering of newspapers or additional items, such as rooms service, or booking a spa treatments, full details to be given during check in and information to be available in the room information.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- As minimum

Four Star

- A more comprehensive guest directory.
- Where technology allows, the guest directory likely to be shown on the room TV or a portable device (i.e. a tablet), including examples of the local visitor attractions, recommended nearby restaurants and public transport information.

Five Star

- Consideration given to multilingual and visually enhanced material.

Accessibility best practice

- Ensure all information is in clear print at a height accessible to all guests. Consider providing door notices for hearing impaired guests as part of your emergency evacuation procedures.
- Include a copy of your Accessibility Guide with in-room information

Sustainability best practice

Each room should contain, where possible, an up-to-date visitor information folder, which may include:

- Information on local heritage and culture, including details of related visitor attractions and special events.
- Details of nearby outlets supplying local food, drink, craft and gift products.
- Options for car-free travel such as walking and cycling routes, public transport timetables and contact numbers and websites.
- Suggested itineraries for car-free days out.
- The hotel's environmental policy if there is one, and details about any green scheme with which the hotel is affiliated.
- If the business is part of a visitor payback scheme, information regarding this scheme should also be included.

4.14 In-room entertainment**Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)**

- Digital TV available in bedrooms.
- All available channels properly tuned in.
- Televisions in bedrooms can be safely mounted on a wall bracket. Ease of viewing and safety taken into account when positioning television.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- TV remote control provided.
- Guests able to watch TV in comfort from both a chair and the bed.

Four Star

- Televisions with generously-sized screens – greater than 61cm/24ins.

Five Star

- Adoption of the latest innovation in entertainment technologies expected.

Accessibility best practice

- Ensure TVs can provide subtitles to benefit hearing impaired and foreign language-speaking guests.

Sustainability best practice

- Where appropriate, ensure televisions and other entertainment equipment is not left on standby. Notices could be used to request that guests completely turn off all equipment when not in use, rather than leave it on standby. Staff could also be trained to turn entertainment equipment completely off when cleaning the room if guests have left it on standby.

4.15 General connectivity & telephones**Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)**

- Bedroom telephone optional.
- Where not provided, a means of communication with staff in the event of an emergency must be provided, and advertised in the bedroom.
- Telephones, where provided, displaying the hotel telephone number together with the bedroom extension or telephone number.
- Telephones, where provided, with instructions on how to use any additional services such as telephone message service and room-to-room calls.

Where telephones are provided, rate card displayed in bedrooms illustrating typical charges for local, long-distance, international, internet, use of phone cards and connection to mobile phones. Sample call charges required.

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

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- Free WiFi 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.

Four Star

- An effective means of internal communication should be provided.

Five Star

- Guests able to call individual hotel departments directly.
- High Speed Broadband available to guests, where connectivity allows.
- Excellent in-room communication technology with best available connectivity and good support to resolve any problems.

General best practice

- Notepad with pen or pencil provided.

Accessibility best practice

- Provide a textphone, e.g. minicom in at least one bedroom, to benefit profoundly deaf guests.

4.16 Miscellaneous

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- A drinking tumbler per guest, in clear glass, or scratchless plastic.
- Sufficient and conveniently situated power sockets allowing for the safe use of all electrical equipment provided. Power adapters acceptable, but not overloaded.
- A hairdryer provided in every bedroom.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- As minimum

Four Star

- Easily accessible plug sockets to also include continental sockets or adapters, along with USB sockets
- A superior quality hairdryer.

Five Star

- An in-room safe or facility for the storage of valuables.
- An evening housekeeping service provided or on request – possibly including some of the following services: bed turn-down, bins emptied, curtains drawn, towels tidied, room service trays removed.

Sustainability best practice

- Décor – use could be made of local artist's work, prints and/or photographs of images depicting local scenes and historical and heritage related images – it all adds to a visitor's enhanced sense of place.

5 Bathrooms

5.1 Size & spaciousness

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- All rooms should have sufficient space for guests' comfort and ease of use. Guests should be able to move easily around the room.
- When we assess the size of the bath, shower and WC rooms, we take into account the usable space available around furniture and fittings. For a higher quality grade, rooms will be expected to afford a higher provision of free space together with more generously-sized equipment, i.e. larger bath, shower and basin.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- As minimum

Four Star

- As minimum

Five Star

- As minimum

5.2 Provision of en suite

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- All bedrooms to have en suite or private bath/shower room.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- All bedrooms to have en suite bathrooms or shower room. All en suites with WC and thermostatically controlled showers, either separate or over the bath.

Four Star

- As three star.

Five Star

- It is acceptable for 100% of en suite bathrooms to have a shower only, if size and quality are excellent.

Accessibility best practice

- Hot water supply should have at each fitting a mixer valve, controlled to a maximum 41°C to prevent scalding.

Sustainability best practice

- Use thermostatically controlled settings for hot water.

5.3 Equipment

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

All private and en suite bathrooms or shower rooms equipped with:

- Internal lock or bolt on all private bath or shower rooms (not necessary for en suites)
- A mirror with good lighting situated above or adjacent to the washbasin.
- Adequate storage, with space for guests' own toiletries.
- Soap and soap dish (can be pump action dispenser).
- Hook for clothes.
- Non-slip surface or mat for use in baths or showers to be available on request.
- Towel rail or equivalent sufficient for the number of guests in the room.
- Conveniently located electric shaver point, with voltage indicated or adaptor.
- Toilet paper and holder plus spare toilet paper.
- A lidded sanitary disposal bin and sanitary bags.
- Windows fitted with curtains, blinds or shutters to ensure privacy.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- As minimum

Four Star

- As minimum

Five Star

- As minimum

Accessibility best practice

- Provide a selection of equipment such as bath seats, toilet seat height raisers and shower chairs. Provide a support rail by the shower attachments.

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. Assessors check the quality of the products offered and the style of presentation.
- There is no need for the drinking cup/glass to be either 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 shower heads or gravity-fed showers where possible.

5.4 Lighting, heating & ventilation

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- Adequate covered lighting.
- Adequate heating. N.B. All bathrooms with an external window require dedicated heating. A heated towel rail is acceptable.
- Adequate ventilation and extraction (window or extractor fan).

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- A means of providing guests with additional dry towels on request.

Four Star

- A heated towel rail or equivalent.

Five Star

- As four star.

Sustainability best practice

- Use of thermostatic controls on radiators helps to manage your energy consumption.

5.5 Towels & toiletries

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- A clean, absorbent, hand and bath towel provided for each new guest.
- Bathmat. N.B. Paper mats not acceptable.
- Fresh soap provided for each new guest.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- Shampoo and bath gel provided.

Four Star

- A very good range of towels & toiletries.

Five Star

- A range of towels which includes bath sheets, robes and face cloths.
- A wider range of luxury guest toiletries and bathroom accessories.

General best practice

- Emergency toiletries such as toothbrush and disposable razor available, possibly for a charge.

Accessibility best practice

- Provide towels that contrast in colour to the walls and floor to assist visually impaired guests.

Sustainability best practice

- Use could be made of a towel agreement sign.

6 Public areas

6.1 Reception areas & lobby

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- A clearly designated reception facility with an appropriate flat surface. A clearly designated area at one end of a bar counter is acceptable.
- A bell or internal telephone provided to summon attention when staff not present.
- Acceptable space and comfort for guests, relative to the number of bedrooms.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- Dedicated reception area with desk, counter or table, unless alternative, well-managed procedures in place to check in guests in lounge or in guest bedroom.

Four Star

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

Five Star

- A clearly designated reception area or a bespoke check in/out process.

Accessibility best practice

- Provide a well lit and uncluttered area allowing ease of access to the reception facility with seating for guests.
- A hearing loop or clip board and pen will assist communication with hearing impaired guests.

Sustainability best practice

- The hotel's environmental policy, if there is one, or details about any green scheme with which the hotel is affiliated, could be promoted in the lobby or reception area.
- Heating – improved insulation and greater use of thermostatically controlled and zoned heating will save on energy use.

6.2 Bar, lounge & sitting areas

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- A bar or lounge with adequate comfortable seating for resident guests accessible throughout the day and evening.
- Provision of further seating where there is a market need, e.g. in resort hotels, leisure and business hotels and where non-residents dine or visit the bar.
- The bar and lounge possibly combined and providing the only sitting area in the hotel's public areas.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- Suitable seating layout and range of furniture appropriate for meeting the market needs of certain hotels, e.g. hotels where business meetings take place or where refreshments are offered in the lounge.

Four Star

- As three star.

Five Star

- A variety of seating styles expected.
- Sitting areas not necessarily all lounges but certainly offering a range of environments.

Accessibility best practice

- Provide a variety of seating: low, high, firm, soft, with and without arms.

Sustainability best practice

- Décor – use could be made of local artist's work, prints and/or photographs of images depicting local scenes and historical and heritage-related images – this will add to a visitor's enhanced sense of place.

6.3 Other public areas, including corridors & staircases

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- Corridors and stairs in good repair and free from obstruction.
- Adequately lit 24-hours.
- Particular attention given to the maintenance of door handles, numbers, brassware and glass panels.
- Clear, directional signage to bedrooms and reception (where needed).

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- As minimum

Four Star

- Corridors normally wide and spacious.

Five Star

- Corridors and staircases wide and spacious allowing freedom of movement for guests and service trolleys.

Accessibility best practice

- On each step or change of level, provide a nosing strip that contrasts in colour to the floor.
- Provide at least one continuous handrail on steps and where changes in levels occur.
- Provide clear signage. See Sign Design Guide: www.signdesignsociety.co.uk.

6.4 Lifts**Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)**

- Optional.
- Assistance with luggage required when there is no lift.

Two Star

- Where there is no lift, this should be made clear at the time of booking.

Three Star

- A lift is required when there is a guest bedroom more than two floors higher or lower than the ground floor, e.g. on the third floor.

Four Star

- As three star.

Five Star

- It is expected that a lift will be provided to all floors in the main building and assistance with luggage offered.

General best practice

- Dispensation is possible in older buildings and/or architecturally listed buildings where it can be shown that fitting a lift is impractical or unacceptable to planning authorities.
- A separate lift for hotel services, such as luggage, laundry and room service.

Accessibility best practice

- Ensure lifts provide audible messages and have raised letters and numbers on the control panel. A mirror on the rear wall assists a wheelchair user to manoeuvre in and out.

6.5 Communication

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- A telephone accessible 24-hours a day unless direct dial in-room facilities are provided (payphones, house phones or mobile handsets).
- Free WiFi available in public areas for the use of email checking and light internet browsing. Charges are acceptable for downloading of music, films and other heavy internet usage.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- As minimum

Four Star

- As minimum

Five Star

- As minimum

6.6 Public area WCs

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

Where open to non-residents:

- A toilet facility conveniently situated to cater for public areas.
- All toilets well maintained, regularly cleaned, checked and adequately ventilated.
- The following facilities provided as a minimum: washbasin with soap, handdrying facilities, covered light, mirror, hook on door, lidded sanitary bin and bags, toilet roll holder with toilet paper.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- As minimum

Four Star

- More generous provision of toilets.

Five Star

- As four star.

Accessibility best practice

- Provide appropriate support rails at urinals, toilets and washbasins.

7 External areas

7.1 External areas (as applicable)

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

External areas include the appearance of the building, grounds and gardens, pathways, drives and any car parking:

- All areas to be maintained in sound condition and must be fit for the purpose intended.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- As minimum

Four Star

- As minimum

Five Star

- As minimum

Accessibility best practice

- Provide within the grounds of the property or identify nearby, a free run/spend area for assistance dogs.
- Ensure paths are kept clear of obstacles, debris, moss, ice and fallen leaves and have firm well-maintained surfaces. Ensure that any permanent features en route are securely fixed, e.g. flower pot 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.
- If possible and where available, provision should be made in the car park for a clearly marked public transport pick up and drop off point for taxis, buses and coaches.

8 Annexes

8.1 Annexes

Minimum Entry Requirements (One Star)

- Where a hotel has an annexe, the facilities provided will be taken into account when determining the overall grade of the hotel.
- Annexe accommodation may be situated in a separate unit or units within the hotel grounds or within easy walking distance of the main building. Paths or passageways to the annexe must be in good condition, well surfaced and adequately lit.

Two Star

- As minimum

Three Star

- As minimum

Four Star

- As minimum

Five Star

- Undercover access to any accommodation separate to the main building. This could include chauffeured transport or escort with umbrella provided.

Appendix: Code of conduct & conditions for participation

Code of Conduct

The operator/manager is required to undertake and observe the VisitEngland Code of Conduct:

Prior to booking

- To describe accurately in any advertisement, brochure, or other printed or electronic media, the facilities and services provided;
- To make clear to guests in print, in electronic media and on the telephone exactly what is included in all prices quoted for accommodation, including taxes and any other surcharges. Details of charges for additional services/facilities should also be made clear, for example breakfast, leisure etc.;
- To provide information on the suitability of the premises for guests of various ages, particularly the elderly and the very young;
- To allow guests to view the accommodation prior to booking if requested.

At the time of booking

- To clearly describe the cancellation policy to guests i.e. by telephone, fax, internet/email as well as in any printed information given to guests;
- To adhere to and not to exceed prices quoted at the time of booking for accommodation and other services;
- To make clear to guests if the accommodation offered is in an unconnected annexe or similar, and to indicate the location of such accommodation and any difference in comfort and/or amenities from accommodation in the establishment.

On arrival

- To welcome all guests courteously and without discrimination in relation to gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or belief.

During the stay

- To maintain standards of guest care, cleanliness, and service appropriate to the type of establishment;
- To deal promptly and courteously with all enquiries, requests, bookings and correspondence from guests;
- To ensure complaint handling procedures are in place and that complaints received are investigated promptly and courteously and that the outcome is communicated to the guest.

On departure

- To give each guest, on request, details of payments due and a receipt, if required/requested.

General

- To give due consideration to the requirements of guests with accessibility requirements, and to make suitable provision where applicable;
- To ensure the accommodation is prepared for the arrival of guests at all times when the establishment is advertised as open;
- To advise guests, at any time prior to their stay, if there are any changes in what has been booked;
- To have a complaints handling procedure in place to deal promptly and fairly with guest complaints;
- To hold current public liability insurance and to comply with all relevant statutory obligations including legislation applicable to fire, health and safety, planning and food safety;
- To allow VisitEngland representatives reasonable access to the establishment, on request, to conform that the Code of Conduct is being observed or in order to investigate any complaint of a serious nature notified to them.

Conditions for Participation

All establishments participating in the VisitEngland national quality assessment schemes are required to:

- Meet or exceed the VisitEngland minimum entry requirements for a rating in the relevant accommodation sector;
- Observe the VisitEngland Code of Conduct;
- Be assessed annually, and in the event of complaints, by authorised representatives of VisitEngland;
- Pay an annual participation fee and agree that the annual participation fee, however payable, whether made in one payment or by direct debit, is non-refundable by VisitEngland, and relates to and is payable for the VisitEngland national quality assessment scheme participation, services and benefits that you and your establishment receive throughout the applicable participation year. The VisitEngland national quality assessment scheme participation will automatically renew on 1 April each participation year and an invoice for the participation fee will be despatched accordingly, unless VisitEngland receives at least 28 days' notice in writing from you that you no longer wish to participate in the VisitEngland national quality assessment scheme before the 1 April of the new participation year. VisitEngland shall be entitled to charge you interest on any overdue sum from the date when payment is due until the date of actual payment (as well as before judgement) at a rate per annum of 4% above the base rate from time to time of Barclays Bank Plc. Such interest shall accrue from day to day and shall be paid subject to any withholding tax;
- You give permission to VisitEngland or its representatives to enter your establishment site at any time to take and create photographs of your establishment. The copyright and all other intellectual property rights, title and interest in and in respect of such photographs shall vest in VisitEngland;
- On termination of participation, howsoever caused, you shall immediately, and no later than within 28 days, at your own expense, remove all references to the VisitEngland rating from websites promoting your establishment and from all other media channels utilised by you to promote your establishment and remove all signs displaying the VisitEngland logo from your establishment site and return to VisitEngland's sign manufacturer Alpen Signs, Central House, Marlow Road, Leicester, LE3 2BQ. If, after 28 days following termination of the VisitEngland recognition for your establishment, you have not complied with its obligations to removal of signage, you shall allow the employees, agents or representatives of VisitEngland such access as they require to your establishment site to remove all signs displaying the VisitEngland logo displayed on your establishment. You shall pay to VisitEngland all costs and expenses thereby incurred;
- Any participant disqualified from the VisitEngland national quality assessment schemes for whatever reason will not be allowed to re-join for a minimum period of one year from the date of disqualification. Re-application at an earlier stage may be considered by VisitEngland where it is felt special circumstances apply. In all cases, acceptance of re-application will be at the sole discretion of VisitEngland. Application to re-join the scheme will always incur an additional fee. If disqualification was on the basis of quality or the level of complaints, then it must be demonstrated that the areas of concern have been addressed. This may be done in the form of an advisory visit by a VisitEngland representative, for which an additional charge is likely to be made.

Anti-Corruption & Anti-Bribery

- You shall not, and shall procure that your directors, employees, agents, representatives, contractors or sub-contractors shall not engage in any activity, practice or conduct which would constitute an offence under any anti-bribery and anti-corruption laws, regulations and codes, including but not limited to the Bribery Act 2010, as may be amended or replaced from time to time.
- You shall have in place adequate procedures designed to prevent any person working for or engaged by you or any other third party in any way connected to this agreement, from engaging in any activity, practice or conduct which would infringe any anti-bribery and anti-corruption laws, regulations and codes, including but not limited to the Bribery Act 2010, as may be amended or replaced from time to time.
- Breach of this Clause shall entitle VisitEngland to terminate this agreement by written notice with immediate effect.

Change of Ownership

When an accommodation business is sold or the method of operation changes, e.g. contracted out, and the new owner does not continue participation in the VisitEngland national quality assessment scheme, the existing rating cannot be transferred. If a property is sold as a going concern, for continued use to accommodate guests and details of the new owners are provided to VisitEngland, the rating may be continued under the following circumstances:

- The current (outgoing) owners have made all payments due to date for the current participation year. If payment is made by Direct Debit this should remain active until the change of ownership process is completed.
- The current (outgoing) owners provide forwarding details for themselves along with full contact details for the new (incoming) owners to VisitEngland's appointed assessment contractor.
- The current (outgoing) owners provide the expected completion/transfer date to VisitEngland's appointed assessment contractor.
- The new (incoming) owners apply and pay for participation in the VisitEngland national quality assessment scheme within 28 days of the completion/transfer date.

If all these criteria are met then the current (outgoing) owners may be entitled to a pro-rata refund for any complete remaining months paid for in the current participation year.

Hotel Accommodation