

# Quality Assurance Criteria for Hotels

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# 1. Introduction

This document is your guide to the minimum criteria to join the Quality Assurance Scheme for Hotels, and specific requirements at each star grade. There is an accompanying guide called 'Quality Assurance Guidance for Hotels' which provides advice on how Quality Scores are determined, with advice on best practice at each star grade.

## 1.1 Quality is key

Tourism Northern Ireland (Tourism NI) understands that quality is the key to success within the modern hospitality industry. For our 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

Tourism NI's professional Quality Advisors will work with you to maximise the potential of your business. As a member of the Quality Assurance Scheme, you will receive an annual Quality Grading assessment. This visit will look at all customer facing aspects of your business, from the initial booking to check out. Each visit will be followed by a verbal debrief and a detailed written management report. Both tools are designed to help you improve your business.

### Quality across the star grades

When a customer chooses a hotel, they will have an expectation of quality commensurate with the offer made in hotel marketing alongside their star grade. Our Quality Advisors grade quality 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 welcome and a willingness to help is a common requirement and achievable across all star grades. 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. For example, 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 should be offering a level of service 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, guests are looking for quality and comfort, specifically:

- The quality, comfort and size of the bed
- The size and spaciousness of the room
- The furniture and facilities
- Accessibility of lighting and heating systems
- The quality and size of the bath and shower
- The standard of bathroom fittings, towels and toiletries

### Cleanliness

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

### 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 unless your facilities are truly luxurious. Customers travel with expectations and it is better to exceed expectations 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 restaurant in order to experience what you are offering to guests.



## 1.2 How do we measure quality?

During your visit, your Quality Advisor will assess quality across all customer-facing areas of the hotel. When the scores are totalled, you will have an overall percentage score that will place you within one of five star grading bands.

In order to confirm a particular star grade, the scores awarded in 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 grade awarded. These key areas are:

- Cleanliness
- Bedrooms
- Bathrooms
- Service & efficiency
- Hospitality & friendliness
- Food quality

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 hotel provides all services and facilities required of a four-star hotel and is seeking a grade.

In order to be awarded four star, the hotel needs to meet the overall percentage required (70%) as well as the 70% in each of the key areas listed above.

The hotel meets the overall percentage required for four stars (with 74%) and achieves four stars for cleanliness, bedrooms and bathrooms. However, it fails to meet the scores required for service & efficiency and hospitality & friendliness (both scoring high three star).

Although the hotel meets the score for food quality, this score is borderline. The outcome is that a three star grade is awarded but with potential for four stars.

If wishing to increase the grade, advice will be provided as to how to improve the scores in these two key areas as well as food quality in order to meet the higher grade at the next assessment.

### Scores

For each area included in the assessment, the assessor 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 element.

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 own 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 personalised welcome
  - Great care taken over the presentation of bedding, towels and toiletries

## Quality Assessment Report Example

Cleanliness	
Dining Area	4
Public Areas	4
Bedrooms	5
Bathrooms	4
Other Public Areas	4
Bedrooms	4
<b>(high four star quality)</b>	<b>83%</b>

Bedrooms	
Decoration	3
Furniture, fittings & furnishings	3
Flooring	4
Beds & Bedding	4
Lighting, heating & ventilation	4
Bedroom accessories	4
Space, comfort & ease of use	4
<b>(four star quality)</b>	<b>74%</b>

Bathrooms	
Decoration	4
Fixtures & Fittings	4
Flooring	4
Lighting, heating & ventilation	4
Towels & toiletries	4
Space, comfort, ease of use	3
<b>(safe four star quality)</b>	<b>76%</b>

Service & efficiency	
Booking	3
Arrival	4
Lounge	3
Bar	3
Restaurant (food)	4
Restaurant (wine & drinks)	3
Room Service	3
Breakfast	4
Departure	4
<b>(high three star quality)</b>	<b>68%</b>

Hospitality & friendliness	
Booking	3
Arrival	4
Lounge	3
Bar	3
Restaurant (food)	4
Restaurant (wine & drinks)	3
Room Service	4
Breakfast	3
Departure	4
<b>(high three star quality)</b>	<b>68%</b>

Food quality	
Dinner quality	4
Dinner choice & presentation	4
Room service	3
Breakfast quality	3
Breakfast choice & presentation	4
<b>(borderline four star quality)</b>	<b>72%</b>

Dining room & restaurant	
Decoration	4
Furniture, fittings & furnishings	4
Flooring	3
Lighting, heating & ventilation	4
Table appointment	4
Space, comfort & ease of use	3
<b>(four star quality)</b>	<b>73%</b>

Other 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
<b>(four star quality)</b>	<b>73%</b>

Exterior	
Building Appearance	4
Grounds, gardens & frontage	4
Car parking	5
Leisure	4
<b>(five star quality)</b>	<b>85%</b>

**OVERALL SCORE** 74%  
**Outcome is a four star grade**

### 1.3 Determining a star grade

A hotel will need to satisfy six elements to reach a particular star grade:

- All relevant requirements in this booklet must be met.
- The overall percentage score for quality must reach the appropriate threshold (see quality bands below).
- The overall percentage score for quality in the six key areas must also reach the appropriate threshold:
  - Cleanliness
  - Bedrooms
  - Bathrooms
  - Service & efficiency
  - Hospitality & friendliness
  - Food quality

The remaining three areas are exterior, public areas and dining room/restaurants. While these are important elements of the guest experience, the quality score is allowed to vary slightly. Where additional facilities are provided e.g. spa, these will also be assessed.

#### 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 grade 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

To participate in the Tourism NI Quality Grading Scheme, the hotel must first receive a certificate to trade as a hotel under the Tourism (Northern Ireland) Order 1992.

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%
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%



## 1.4 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 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 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.

- 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.

We are sure that you have many ideas for future delivery of the 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

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

### Hints & tips: Bedrooms

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

- Space is an important factor, 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: design your room so that there is good access to all areas such as the bed, furniture, curtains/blinds, thermostats, sockets, etc.
- Have enough clothes storage, but not too much. Look at space saving ideas in this area or ask your Advisor 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 grade.



# 2. Overall Standards

## 2.1 Statutory obligations

### Legislative requirements

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

### All grades

Compliance with all relevant statutory obligations, including, but not limited to:

- Tourism (Northern Ireland) Order 1992.
- A fire risk assessment to comply with the Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010. For guidance, refer to [www.nifrs.org](http://www.nifrs.org)
- Food safety/hygiene: register with the Environmental Health department at your local council.
- Health and safety: operate with due regard to health and safety legislation.
- Guest Register: provide a register of all guests including full name, address, nationality, arrival date and departure date.
- Planning: comply with local planning regulations.
- Building: comply with local building regulations.
- Licensing: comply with all local licensing regulations.
- Hotel Proprietors Act (Northern Ireland) 1958.
- Data Protection Act 2018 / GDPR.
- The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008.
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
- Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976.
- Race Relations (NI) Order 1997.
- Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998.
- Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2006.
- 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.

### 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, potential benefit it may bring to other customers, the resources an organisation has and how practical the changes are.

## 2.2 Safety & security

### Legislative requirements

- The hotel shall be of substantial and durable construction, structurally safe, in good repair and of suitable design.
- Guests' bedrooms shall have two locking devices from within and a single locking device from without on any door opening onto a corridor.
- The establishment shall have in the bedrooms and public rooms an effective system for communicating with the management or staff.



### All grades

- Proprietor and/or staff to be on site and on call to residents and guests 24-hours a day.
- Printed instructions provided in the bedrooms for summoning assistance in an emergency.
- 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, 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 are 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 accessed from outside, e.g. windows near fire escapes.

### Accessibility best practice

- Consider fire safety for guests with disabilities e.g. visual & audible fire alarm system, evacuation chairs to assist with egress, vibrating pillows/vibrating pagers for guests with hearing loss, personal emergency egress plans for guests with disabilities etc.

## 2.3 Maintenance

### All grades

- 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 guest safety.
- Monitoring procedure in place for reporting of broken damaged items in guests' bedrooms.

## 2.4 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.

### One Star

As the cleanliness of hotels at every star grade is of paramount importance to the consumer, the highest standards of cleanliness are expected at all star grades. 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.

### Two Star

- As minimum.

### Three Star

- As minimum.

### Four Star

- As minimum, with a higher level of attention to detail in all areas.

### Five Star

- 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 staff do not tie up alarm pull cords in accessible bedrooms, bathrooms and public accessible toilets
- Ensure housekeeping trolleys do not obstruct corridors.

# 3. Hospitality & Services

## 3.1 General

### Sustainability best practice

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

### Legislative requirements

- The hotel shall be staffed by persons adequate in number and training to maintain the appropriate standards of service for visitors at all times.
- Staff shall be neat and clean in their appearance.
- Those employed in the management of the hotel shall be trained and experienced in hotel management and operate a routine which provides regular and direct supervision of all persons employed in the hotel.

### 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, can-do attitude.
- A straightforward range of services offered, often provided by the proprietor and family/staff.
- All enquiries, reservations 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

- A basic level of service, anticipating guests' needs.

### 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.
- The ability to personalise the guest experience is encouraged.

### Five Star

- Excellent social skills.
- 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.

- 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.

### Accessibility best practice

- Ensure staff ask if the guest has any accessibility needs.
- Assistance dogs must be welcomed (this is a legal requirement). Some guests will 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 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 on shift.
- Consider providing training for staff in basic in basic British Sign Language (BSL).
- Specific training is available for staff on how to welcome all types of guests e.g. WorldHost Customers with Disabilities.

## 3.2 Reservations, prices & billing

### 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.

### All grades

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 guest's stay, e.g. smoking policy, refurbishment work, 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 be mentioned at the time of booking.
- Where a limited meal service is provided, this should be made clear on your website and at the time of booking.
- 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 facilities, including cancellation terms.
- Information about any unacceptable types of payment, e.g. credit cards, etc.
- Confirmation provided on request, directly from the hotel, by email, text or letter.
- Prospective guests left confident that their booking was recorded accurately.
- 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).
- Online reservation and booking confirmation expected.

#### Five Star

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

#### Accessibility best practice

- Consider website accessibility e.g. ability to change text size, colour contrast options, audible indication etc.
- Provide an online option on your website to reserve an accessible bedroom.
- 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](http://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]. Many disabled people rely on assistance dogs to provide independence. See the dog as being part of the person.

#### Sustainability best practice

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

### 3.3 Reception & luggage handling

#### Legislative requirements

- The hotel shall have public entrances, exits and an entrance hall of sufficient size to cater adequately for the number of visitors who may be expected to use it at any time.
- An entrance hall suitably laid out and with appropriate furnishings, fittings and equipment of good quality and in good condition.
- A service entrance which is separate from any entrance for visitors and suitably located for the receipt of goods necessary for the operation of the establishment.

#### All grades

As reception is likely to be the guests' first and last point of contact with the 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 provided.

### Two Star

- As minimum

### Three Star

- As minimum

### Four Star

- A member of staff – possibly the night porter – available and able to perform duties between 11 pm and 7 am.
- 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.
- Where valet parking is 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.

#### Accessibility best practice

- Consider training staff to communicate in basic British Sign Language (BSL).
- Ensure guests identifying themselves as being disabled are offered a familiarisation tour of the hotel e.g. description of bedroom layout to a guest with visually impairments.
- Provide assistance with luggage and unpacking.

## 3.4 Other reception, concierge and housekeeping service

### All grades

- 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, walks, taxi firms, railway stations, ATMs, etc. available in bedrooms and in reception.

### Four Star

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

### Five Star

- 24-hour return laundry service.
- 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, travel, valet parking and other requests.

#### Accessibility best practice

- Provide a wheelchair for guest use.
- Provide hotel information in a range of formats, e.g. large print, photographs, Braille, audio 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.



# 4. Dining

## 4.1 General

### Legislative requirements

- The hotel shall provide breakfast, midday refreshments and evening meal.
- The hotel shall provide a dining area with floor area as follows:

No. of Bedrooms	Dining Area
<=50	50m <sup>2</sup>
51-60	60 m <sup>2</sup>
61-70	70 m <sup>2</sup>
71-80	80 m <sup>2</sup>
81-90	90 m <sup>2</sup>
91-100	100 m <sup>2</sup>
101-125	125 m <sup>2</sup>
>125	150 m <sup>2</sup>

- The dining area shall provide for the service of meals at tables and contain furniture, tables, seating (including high chairs) and equipment of good size, quality and condition, adequate for the number of visitors who may reasonably be expected to use the area at any one time.
- The hotel shall provide tables and seating of adequate size to enable diners to dine in comfort and be capable of easy and flexible arrangement to cater for individuals and groups and permit diners and staff to circulate easily in the dining area.
- Dining tables should be solidly made and either completely covered with suitable, good quality tablecloths, or surfaced with polished hardwood – or a good facsimile thereof – or with material of a comparable quality.
- There shall be sufficient crockery, cutlery, condiments, trays and other necessary table appointments, of good quality and condition, to serve the number of diners who may reasonably be expected to use the area at any one time.
- The dining area shall be suitably floored or carpeted, maintained in good decorative order and in a high state of cleanliness.
- The dining area shall be ventilated at all times so that no odour from the kitchen is perceptible.

### All grades

- Guests informed when they book if a limited meal service is provided on a particular evening.
- 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, 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

- At least one restaurant, open for dinner seven days a week, to residents and their guests.

### Four Star

- At least one restaurant, open to residents and non-residents, for breakfast and dinner seven days a week.

### 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 people with diabetes regulate their blood sugar.
- 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.
- Provide larger cutlery, plastic plates/cups, straws.

## 4.2 Meal service staff

### All grades

- 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 a 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, with 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 large print menu (minimum font size 16 point) in a clear font such as Arial.
- 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.



## 4.3 Breakfast provision

### All grades

- A cooked and substantial continental breakfast.
- Appropriate breakfast times where there is a specific market need, e.g. city centre hotels, airport hotels and rural hotels.
- Breakfast price on display for guests availing of a room-only rate.
- 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 should be 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. An additional option of high quality self-service machines is acceptable.

### Four Star

- Table service advertised and available on request.

### Five Star

- Table service offered as standard.

### 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.



## 4.4 Breakfast menu & range of dishes

### All grades

- A cooked and substantial continental breakfast provided.
- A choice of hot and cold items including healthy options, vegetarian options and other dietary requirements.
- A verbal explanation of dishes available is acceptable, but a menu is preferred.
- Continental offering to include as a minimum: cereal, yogurt, coffee, tea, toast and fruit juice.
- Cooked breakfast to include at least three hot items e.g. bacon, egg, sausage, mushroom and 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 poached, boiled, scrambled and fried.

### Four Star

- A menu detailing the full breakfast range provided.
- A superior and extended 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, cold meats and cheeses, free range eggs, local specialities, fish dishes, a range of bakery items and pastries, special dietary produce and a comprehensive range of appetising hot items.

### Accessibility best practice

- Provide menus in accessible formats e.g. a large print menu (minimum font size 16 point) in a clear font such as Arial.
- 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

- Where possible, source food and drink products locally, from free range and organic sources. 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.

## 4.5 Dinner provision

### All grades

- Dinner served at specific times, according to market need, and clearly advertised.
- Where a limited menu is provided, this must be clearly communicated to the guest. The hotel should provide further information as to alternative options.
- A self-service operation acceptable up to the three star level.

### Accessibility best practice

- Ensure dining tables are stable and provide sufficient knee space beneath.
- Ensure dining chairs provide support for people rising from their chairs.
- Offer guests assistance with self-service buffet where appropriate.
- Try to be flexible with meal times to help diabetic people regulate their blood sugar.



## 4.6 Dinner menu & range of dishes

### All grades

- 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.
- 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 for different dietary requirements, e.g. dairy-free, wheat-free, lactose-free, nut-free.
- Offer guests assistance with menus e.g. reading menu options to guests 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.

### 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.

## 4.7 Alcoholic drink services, licences & wine service

### All grades

- A current liquor licence.

### 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 a dedicated wine team and sommelier.

### Accessibility best practice

- Offer guests assistance with drinks menus e.g. reading menu options to guests 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.





## 4.8 Light refreshments, snacks, lunches & afternoon teas

### Legislative requirements

- The hotel shall provide meals, including breakfast, midday refreshments and evening meals.

### All grades

- Hot and cold drinks and midday refreshments 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.
- A vending option in the public areas may be acceptable, but 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 or alternative service to be available.
- 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.

### Accessibility best practice

- Offer guests assistance with menus e.g. reading menu options to guests 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.

## 4.9 Room service provision

### All grades

- Optional except in the case of illness.

### Two star

- As minimum.

### Three Star

- As minimum.

### Four Star

- Room service menu should be clearly advertised in bedrooms with prices.
- 24-hour room service of light snacks such as sandwiches and hot and cold drinks including alcoholic drinks.
- Provision of room service breakfast and a range of substantial hot and cold dishes during lunchtime and evening restaurant hours.
- Full room service menu, clearly promoted with prices.
- Must include provision of continental and cooked breakfast and a substantial dinner menu during restaurant hours.
- Hot and cold snacks should be available 24 hours, when restaurant is closed  
\*(Dispensations may apply)

### Five Star

- 24-hour room service of hot and cold snacks and drinks including alcoholic drinks.
- 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, layout and delivery method ensures the highest guest dining experience.

### Accessibility best practice

- Provide meals in rooms (on request) where appropriate, e.g. for guests with disabilities.
- Provide menus in accessible formats e.g. a large print menu (minimum font size 16 point) in a clear font such as Arial.



# 5. Bedrooms

## 5.1 Bedroom provision

### Legislative requirements

- The hotel shall provide overnight sleeping accommodation in not less than 15 double bedrooms, all of which must be ensuite (if certified for the first time on or after 11/11/09).
- Bedrooms shall have separate access from a corridor, lobby or another bedroom; and suitably numbered, lettered or otherwise designated so as to identify them and their position in relation to other bedrooms.
- All rooms shall be properly constructed with suitable sound-resistant walls, partitions, floors and ceilings separating them from other bedrooms, corridors, toilets and bathrooms.

### Accessibility legislative requirements

- At the time of writing, at least one guest bedroom out of every 20 bedrooms should be wheelchair accessible and meet with the minimum requirements within Part R Building Regulations NI.

### 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.
- 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.



## 5.2 Size & spaciousness

### Legislative requirements

- Bedrooms shall have a floor area (excluding the ensuite bathroom) of not less than 7.5m<sup>2</sup> for a single bedroom and not less than 13m<sup>2</sup> for a double bedroom.
- Bedrooms shall have at least two electrical outlets suitable for the attachment of electrical equipment.

### Accessibility legislative requirements

- Accessible bedrooms to meet with the minimum requirements within Part R Building Regulations NI.

### All grades

- When assessing bedroom size, we take into account the usable space available around furniture and fittings.
- All bedrooms should have sufficient space for guests to move easily around the room.
- 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 the tea tray or TV; access to power points etc.

### Two Star

- As minimum.

### Three Star

- All bedrooms with a 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.

## 5.3 Suites

### One - Four Star

- Not required. Provision will depend on market need.

### Five Star

- A minimum of one permanent luxury suite. N.B. A suite consists of at least three separate rooms: bedroom, bathroom and sitting room, with clear separation between each area.

## 5.4 Bed size & access

### 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, 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 provided for children only.
- Sofa beds are not acceptable as permanent bed spaces.
- Bunk beds are acceptable for child use only. When bunk beds are used, guests must be told when they make the booking. 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 Beds Regulations 1997).
- All beds including supplementary beds (such as folding beds, sofa beds etc.) to be of good quality and in good condition. They should have a sound base and a high 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.
- Sofa beds must meet 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 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.

## 5.5 Bedding requirements

### All grades

- 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.

### 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.

## 5.6 Heating & temperature control

### Legislative requirements

- The hotel shall have a means of heating capable of maintaining room temperatures of at least 18.5 degrees Celsius.

### All grades

- 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.

### 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.

### Accessibility best practice

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

## 5.7 Lighting

### All grades

- Bedrooms well lit.
- At least one light controlled from the door.
- A bedside reading light for - and controllable by - each person, in addition to the light controlled by a switch near the door. 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 provided 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 wide range of lighting options, fully controllable by the guest.

#### Accessibility best practice

- Enable lighting levels to be adjusted using a dimmer switch and provide additional bedside lamps or desk lamps.

#### Sustainability best practice

- Signs can be used to request that guests 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.
- Use of energy efficient light bulbs.

## 5.8 Windows & window coverings

### Legislative requirements

- The hotel shall contain effective means of natural lighting and ventilation and have sufficient general lighting in all areas.

### All grades

- At least one window 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 open and shut, and remain open.
- A pole provided to open any Velux-style windows or skylights.

- 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, with appropriate privacy considerations. 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 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.

#### Accessibility best practice

- Ensure windows and curtains can be reached by guests and are easy to open and close.
- Consider automatic openings for curtains/blinds.

## 5.9 Flooring

### All grades

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

#### Accessibility best practice

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



## 5.10 Furniture

### Legislative requirements

- The hotel shall provide furniture, fittings and equipment, of good quality and condition, for sleeping and toilet purposes and for the storage and hanging of guest's clothing.
- This includes: wardrobe or cupboard; shelf or drawer space for clothes; dressing table; bedside chairs and tables; mirror; luggage racks; waste baskets; window curtains or blinds sufficient to provide privacy and light exclusion; and carpet or suitable flooring.
- Bedrooms well lit.
- At least one light controlled from the door.

### All grades

- Writing table or equivalent, such as a substantial flat surface or desk providing sufficient free space for practical use.
- One chair or stool to be provided, with a degree of comfort.
- At least one mirror in the bedroom, preferably full length, and adjacent to the desk and sockets.
- Mirror adjacent to the desk.
- Adequate lighting and 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).

### Two Star

- As minimum.

### Three Star

- One comfortable chair. Where this is the only chair, consideration should be given for ease of use at the desk, otherwise an additional chair provided.
- A dedicated area for unpacking luggage.
- At least two mirrors in the bedroom, one of which must be full-length and one at the dressing table.

### Four Star

- One substantial, comfortable chair provided, with an additional chair positioned at the writing desk.
- Occasional/dining tables of appropriate height for dining – unless trolleys are used.

### Five Star

- A fully fitted or freestanding wardrobe. Open alcoves are not acceptable.
- Illumination inside the wardrobe.
- A generous amount of clothes storage.
- A wide range of quality hangers provided.

- A substantial writing table with excellent free space.
- Two substantial, comfortable chairs plus an additional chair providing use at the desk or dressing table.

### Accessibility best practice

- Provide low level hanging rail and shelves in wardrobes,
- Ensure vanity unit provides a maximum height of 760mm with minimum knee space of 500mm.

## 5.11 Beverage making facilities

### All grades

- Tea and coffee making facilities available and accessible 24-hours either in bedrooms or in public areas (a self-service/vending option in public areas is 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 of an excellent standard, e.g. chinaware, teapot, cafetière, 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 either provided in-room or available on request.
- Provide a fridge in the bedroom for storing medication.

### 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 do not need to be in single use plastics – consider airtight containers for dried goods or reusable glass bottles for water.

## 5.12 In-room information

### All grades

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 during 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 room service menu, where provided.
- Details on connecting to the Wi-Fi.
- Local tourist information to be included within the room information, or a reference to where this is available within the establishment.
- Instructions on 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, room service or booking a spa treatment, 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 comprehensive guest directory.
- Where technology allows, the guest directory may be shown on the room TV, a tablet device, or similar, including the room service menu, spa availability (if applicable), examples of local visitor attractions, recommended nearby restaurants and public transport information.

### Five Star

- Consideration given to multilingual and visually enhanced material.

### Accessibility best practice

- Provide in-room hotel information in accessible formats and at an accessible height e.g. a large print menu (minimum font size 16 point) in a clear font such as Arial.
- Consider providing door notices for guests with disabilities as part of your emergency evacuation procedures.
- Include information on the accessibility of the hotels facilities and services with in-room information.

### Sustainability best practice

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

- Information on local heritage and culture.
- Details of related visitor attractions and special events.
- Information about 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, and details about the hotel's green scheme, if applicable.
- If the business is part of a visitor payback scheme or charitable foundation, information should also be included.

## 5.13 In-room entertainment

### All grades

- 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.

### 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 are 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.

## 5.14 General connectivity & telephones

### Legislative requirements

- The hotel shall have in the bedrooms and public rooms an effective system for communicating with the management or staff.

### One Star

- Where a telephone is not provided, an alternative means of in-room communication with staff in the event of an emergency must be provided, and clearly advertised in the bedroom.
- Telephones, where provided, displaying the hotel telephone number together with the bedroom extension or telephone number.
- Telephones should have instructions on how to use any additional services such as telephone message service and room-to-room calls.
- Where telephones with external dialling are provided, a rate card should be displayed in bedrooms illustrating typical charges for local, long distance, international, mobile and internet. Sample call charges required. In addition, an explanation of any peak and off-peak times.

### Two Star

- As minimum

### Three Star

- 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.

### 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.

### Accessibility best practice

- Provide a telephone with flashing light to assist people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Provide a text phone, e.g. minicom in at least one bedroom, to benefit profoundly deaf guests.

## 5.15 Miscellaneous

### All grades

- A drinking tumbler per guest.
- 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, which may 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 and fresh drinks provided.

### Accessibility best practice

- Consider the following aids and equipment for guest use e.g. hoist, height adjustable bed, vibrating alarm clock, vibrating pillow, vibrating pagers.

### Sustainability best practice

- Local artist's work or photographs of local scenes. This all adds to a visitor's enhanced sense of place.



# 6. Bathrooms

## 6.1 General

### Legislative requirements

- Each ensuite bathroom shall contain a bath or shower, a WC and a wash hand basin of good quality and in good condition, fitted with a mirror, wash light and accessories for holding toilet equipment, and a continuous supply of hot and cold running water and the disposal of wastewater.
- All bathrooms shall have an effective system of direct or mechanical ventilation and shall be equipped with mirror, towel rail, clothes hooks, bath mat and a clean and ample supply of requisites including towels, soap and toilet paper.

### Accessibility legislative requirements

- Accessible ensuite bathrooms to meet with the minimum requirements within Part R Building Regulations NI.

### All grades

- 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 should provide a higher degree of free space together with more generously-sized equipment such as larger bath, double shower and large basin.

## 6.2 Provision of ensuite

### All grades

- All bedrooms to have ensuite bathrooms. Private bath or shower rooms are permitted for hotels certified for the first time on or before 11/11/09 if holding a valid certificate for their use.

### Two Star

- As minimum.

### Three Star

- All bedrooms to have ensuite bathrooms or shower room.
- All ensuites to have WC and thermostatically controlled showers, either separate or over the bath.

### Four Star

- As three star

### Five Star

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

### Accessibility best practice

- Consider an automatic opening device on the door to the accessible bathroom. .
- Provide suitable colour contrast between floors, skirting, walls, doorframes, fixtures and fittings and avoid high gloss finishes to aid people with visual impairments.
- Hot water supply should have a mixer valve, controlled to a maximum temperature to prevent scalding.

### Sustainability best practice

- Use thermostatically controlled settings for hot water.

## 6.3 Equipment

### All grades

- Internal lock or bolt on all private bath or shower rooms (not necessary for ensuites).
- A mirror with good lighting situated above or adjacent to the washbasin.
- Adequate storage - including private 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.
- Towel rail or equivalent, sufficient for the number of guests in the room.
- Conveniently located electric shaver point, with voltage indicated. An adaptor is acceptable.
- Toilet paper and holder plus spare toilet paper.
- A lidded sanitary disposal bin and sanitary bags.
- Windows fitted with opaque coverings such as curtains, blinds or shutters to ensure privacy.
- Provide a selection of equipment such as bath seats, toilet seat height raisers and shower chairs. Provide a support rail by the shower attachments.



### Accessibility best practice

- Level entry showers are preferable.
- Provide suitable colour contrast provided between floor, skirting, walls, doorframes, fixtures and fittings to assist visually impaired guests.
- Provide aids and equipment for guest use e.g. grab-rails, hoist, bath seat/board, bath step, shower chair, toilet seat riser.
- Link the ensuite emergency alarm to a permanently staffed area.
- Ensure that emergency alarm pull cords in the ensuite bathroom 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 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.

## 6.4 Lighting, heating & ventilation

### Legislative requirements

- The hotel shall have a means of heating capable of maintaining room temperatures of at least 18.5 degrees Celsius.

#### One Star

- Adequate covered lighting.
- Adequate heating.
- 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 energy consumption.

## 6.5 Towels & toiletries

#### All grades

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

#### Two Star

- As minimum.

#### Three Star

- Shampoo and bath wash provided.

#### Four Star

- A wider range of towels and toiletries to include conditioner and body lotion.
- Bath sheets, robes and slippers generally expected at this level.

#### Five Star

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

### Sustainability best practice

- Use could be made of a towel agreement sign.
- Large, refillable toiletries to minimise waste.

### Accessibility best practice

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



# 7. Public areas

## 7.1 Reception areas & lobby

### Legislative requirements

- The hotel and its surroundings shall be in good decorative order and kept clean and well-maintained.
- The hotel shall have a means of heating capable of maintaining room temperatures of at least 18.5 degrees Celsius.

### All grades

- A clearly designated reception facility with an appropriate flat surface. A dedicated 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 are 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

- Consider automatic opening entrance doors or an automatic opening device on the main entrance doors to the hotel.
- Provide a well-lit and uncluttered reception area with desk clearly visible when entering the hotel.
- Reception desk should have an area with a maximum height of 760mm and a clear, minimum knee space of 500mm.
- Provide a hearing enhancement system at the reception to facilitate customers who are hard of hearing.
- Provide a pen and paper at reception.
- Clear directional signage should be provided within the reception area.
- Provide a variety of seating: low, high, firm, soft, with and without armrests.
- Provide suitable colour contrast between floors, skirting, walls, doorframes, fixtures and fittings and avoid high gloss finishes to aid people with visual impairments.
- Avoid long-pile carpets that may cause trips or make it difficult for a wheelchair to manoeuvre.

### Sustainability best practice

- The hotel's environmental policy, if there is one, or details about any green scheme 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.

## 7.2 Bar, lounge & sitting areas

### All grades

- 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 may be combined and providing the only seating area in the hotel's public areas.

### Two Star

- As minimum.

### Three Star

- Suitable seating layout and a range of furniture appropriate for meeting the market needs of certain hotels, e.g. hotels where business meetings take place may differ from a leisure or resort hotel.

### Four Star

- As three star.

### Five Star

- A variety of seating styles expected.
- Seating areas are not necessarily all lounges, but are provided across a range of environments,

### Accessibility best practice

- Consider an automatic opening device on the door leading to the bar, lounge and sitting areas
- Provide a variety of seating: low, high, firm, soft, with and without armrests
- Provide suitable colour contrast between floors, skirting, walls, doorframes, fixtures and fittings and avoid high gloss finishes to aid people with visual impairments
- Avoid long-pile carpets that may cause trips or make it difficult for a wheelchair to manoeuvre.

### Sustainability best practice

- Décor: use could be made of local artist's work or photographs of local scenes. This will add to a visitor's enhanced sense of place.

## 7.3 Other public areas, including corridors & staircases

### 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 panelling.
- Clear, directional signage to bedrooms and reception (where needed).

### Two Star

- As minimum.

### Three Star

- As minimum.

### Four Star

- Corridors normally wide and spacious, with lighting provided at each bedroom.

### 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.
- Consider replacing internal steps along corridors with ramps where feasible.
- Provide clear directional signage throughout, with consideration given to those with access needs.
- Provide suitable colour contrast between floors, skirting, walls, doorframes, fixtures and fittings and avoid high gloss finishes to aid people with visual impairments.
- Avoid long-pile carpets that may cause trips or make it difficult for a wheelchair to manoeuvre.
- Provide hold-open devices linked to the fire alarm system to doors crossing corridors.

## 7.4 Lift requirements

### Legislative requirements

- The hotel shall have a service entrance, which is separate from any entrance for visitors, and suitably located for the reception of goods necessary for the operation of the establishment.

### All grades

- It is expected that a lift will be provided to all floors in the main building.
- Where there is no lift, this should be made clear at the time of booking.
- Assistance with luggage is required when there is no lift.

### Two Star

- As minimum.

### Three Star

- As minimum.

### Four Star

- As minimum.

### Five Star

- A lift is provided to all floors in the main building and assistance with luggage offered.

#### General best practice

- Dispensation may be possible in older buildings and/or architecturally listed buildings where it can be shown that fitting a lift is impractical or unacceptable to building control and planning authorities.

#### Accessibility best practice

- Provide visual and audible indication of the lift arrival and its location in the lift lobby and within the lift car.
- Lift car should have a minimum internal width of not less than 1100 mm and a depth of not less than 1400 mm
- Control panel to be positioned between 900mm and 1200mm and have raised letters and numbers.
- Provide a handrail to at least one side of the lift car to assist ambulant users
- Provide a mirror on the rear wall to assist a wheelchair user to manoeuvre in and out of the lift.
- Provide assistance with luggage to guests with disabilities.

## 7.5 Communication

### All grades

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

## 7.6 Public area WCs

### Legislative requirements

The hotel shall provide public toilets which:

- Are provided separately for men and women.
- Adjacent to and easily accessible from the entrance hall or any public areas.
- Contain suitable WC units, in separate compartments and capable of being locked, and fixed wash hand basins with a continuous supply of hot and cold running water and the disposal thereof.
- Equipped with mirrors, clothes hook and a clean and ample supply of toilet requisites, which include hand-drying facilities, soap, toilet paper, sanitary disposal bins and other necessary accessories.
- Are well ventilated, kept in a clean and hygienic condition, and under proper supervision.
- Are provided in the following ratios:

No of Bedrooms	Toilets for Men	Toilets for Women
Up to 20	1 WC, 1 urinal, 1 WHB*	1 WC, 1 WHB
21- 50	1 WC, 2 urinal, 1 WHB	2 WC, 2 WHB
51 – 100	2 WC, 2 urinal, 2 WHB	3 WC, 3 WHB
101 - 200	3 WC, 3 urinal, 3 WHB	4 WC, 4 WHB
201 – or more	4 WC, 4 urinal, 4 WHB	5 WC, 4 WHB

\*WHB = Wash hand basin.

### Accessibility legislative requirements

- Unisex wheelchair accessible compartment(s) to meet with the minimum requirements within Part R Building Regulations NI.
- Ambulant accessible compartments to be provided within separate sex sanitary accommodation and meet with the minimum requirements within Part R Building Regulations NI.

### Accessibility best practice

- Door to wheelchair accessible and ambulant toilets to open outwards.
- Ensure the transfer side of the accessible toilet is kept free from obstructions.
- Provide suitable colour contrast between floors, skirting, walls, doorframes, fixtures and fittings and avoid high gloss finishes to aid people with visual impairments
- Ensure housekeeping staff do not tie up alarm pull cords in public accessible toilets and the alarm is linked to a permanently staffed area.

# 8. External areas

## All grades

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.

## 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 2400mm x 4800mm with side and rear transfer zones of 1200mm.
- 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.
- 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.



# 9. Annexes

## Legislative requirements

- Provided that the hotel has at least 15 double bedrooms in the main building, the hotel may also provide bedrooms outside, but adjacent to the main building. All such bedrooms must be ensuite.

## All grades

- Where a hotel has an annexe, the facilities provided will be taken into account when determining the overall grade of the hotel.
- 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.

