

This category is to reflect: Guest House, Bed & Breakfast and Guest Accommodation



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1.0 General Overview

1.1 Introduction

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

In addition to the requirements to meet minimum standards set by legislation, accommodation in Northern Ireland can choose to be graded by Tourism NI according to pre-set quality standards. This booklet describes the requirements for the Quality Standards for Small Serviced Accommodation in Northern Ireland.

1.2 Serviced Accommodation

Serviced accommodation in Northern Ireland is broadly divided into four categories:

- Hotels formal accommodation with full service.
- Guest Accommodation informal accommodation with limited service All bedrooms must be en-suite.
- Budget Hotel (e.g. roadside, budget lodge style) uniform accommodation with limited service.
- **Guesthouse** must have at least 3 double bedrooms all of which must be en-suite and provide meals (including breakfast and dinner). May hold a Liquor License.
- Bed & Breakfast Accommodation must provide a cooked breakfast.

General Description

This document describes the requirements for the Quality Standards for Small Serviced Accommodation.

1.3 Categories / Designators

General Description

Category

Establishments in each of these sub categories should fulfil all Guest Accommodation/Small Serviced Minimum Entry Requirements.

category	deneral bescription	
B&B	Accommodation provided in a private house, run by the owner and provides a cooked breakfast.	
Farmhouse	$B\&B\ or\ guesthouse\ accommodation\ provided\ on\ a\ working\ farm\ or\ small holding.$	
Guest House	Must have at least 3 double bedrooms all of which must be en-suite and run on a more commercial basis than a B&B. Usually more services provided by staff as well as the owner may be licensed.	
Guest Accommodation	$In formal\ accommodation\ with\ limited\ service-All\ bedrooms\ must\ be\ en-suite.$	
Inn	Accommodation provided in a fully licensed establishment. The bar will be open to non-residents and provide food in the evenings.	

1.0 General Overview

1.4 Designators

We have developed Designators to help consumers understand the different types of accommodation available. These are optional.

Categories (mandatory) Designator (optional)

B&B Farmhouse

Guest House Inn

Guest Accommodation

1.5 Minimum Entry Requirements

To be recognised within the Small Serviced Accommodation' standard you must meet all the Detailed Requirements listed between page 4 and page 15 of this document.

Key Minimum Entry Requirements

The Key minimum entry requirements for achieving Small Serviced One Star rating are:

- · Guesthouses and B&B's -A cooked breakfast
- Guest Accommodation Be capable of making breakfast available to visitors.
- Proprietor and/or staff available for quests' arrival, departure and at all meal times.
- Once registered, resident guests have access to the establishment at all times unless previously notified.
- All areas of operation meet the minimum quality requirements for cleanliness, maintenance and hospitality as well as facilities and the delivery of services.
- · You must meet all the current statutory obligations and provide Public Liability insurance cover.

Key Requirements at Rating Levels

- Four Star 50% of guest bedrooms to be en-suite or with private facilities
- Five Star all guest bedrooms to be en-suite or with private facilities

1.6 Dispensations

Dispensations for certain individual requirements within the quality standards may be given as long as all the remaining requirements and quality levels for that rating are met or exceeded. This flexibility will be on a case-by-case basis and will have to be agreed by the Standards Review Group (SRG), which represents all the five organisations who operate the Common Standards - AA, VisitBritain, VisitScotland, Wales Tourist Board and Tourism Northern Ireland. Any exceptions will need a proportional increase in quality in other areas to compensate for the area where an exception is sought.

2.1 Statutory Obligations

You must fulfil all applicable statutory obligations. These may include:

- Tourism (NI) Order 1992 and all subordinate legislation
- Planning
- · Fire precautions
- · Price Display Orders
- Food Safety/Hygiene
- Licensing

- · Health and Safety
- Discrimination
- Trade Descriptions
- Data Protection
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended)
- · And all other relevant trading legislation

We may ask you to provide evidence that Public Liability Insurance Cover is being maintained and that the above requirements are being fulfilled.

2.2 Cleanliness

Cleanliness is of paramount importance to guests in every type of establishment so a high standard of cleanliness must be achieved and maintained throughout the property.

All Grades

- Bathrooms and shower rooms should be clean and smell fresh with particular attention paid to fittings and sanitary ware, plug-holes, shower curtains, flooring, mirrors, extractor fans and towels.
- You also need to pay special attention to wherever guests have direct contact seating, crockery, cutlery, glassware, beds, bedding and linen.
- · All bedrooms and bathrooms should be cleaned and checked daily to ensure a very high standard of cleanliness.

2.3 Bookings and Pre-Arrival Information

- You should describe fairly to all guests and prospective guests the amenities, facilities and services that your establishment provides either by advertisement, brochure, word of mouth or any other means.
- You should make clear to guests exactly what is included in the prices you quote for accommodation, meals and
 refreshments. You must include service charges, taxes and other surcharges. Legally, you should not exceed the price
 you agree at the time of booking. You should explain in detail any charges for additional services or available facilities
 and cancellation terms, if applicable. If a deposit is required, you need to tell guests when they book and explain how
 it will be taken and whether or not it is refundable if they cancel.
- When you are taking a booking you should describe in detail any in-house policies, e.g. no-smoking policy, payment methods, access restrictions.
- If prospective guests ask to see the accommodation before they book, you must show them.
- · You must tell all prospective visitors about any major refurbishment work that might affect their stay.

2.4 Guest Arrival, Welcome and Access

- The proprietor or staff should be on duty during the main arrival and departure periods and during meal times. It is acceptable that the entrance may be locked and the guest may have to ring or knock for access.
- · Registration of all guests on arrival.
- Once guests have registered, they should have access to the establishment and to their bedrooms at all times unless they were previously told about any restrictions. A key or security code may be given for the main entrance.
- You should provide service that is appropriate to the style of accommodation, and deal promptly with all enquiries, requests, reservations, correspondence and complaints from guests.
- There must be an effective means for guests to call for the attention of the proprietor or staff, who need to be available at all reasonable times (as above). If the proprietor or staff live away from the property a telephone contact number needs to be provided and clearly displayed. If you have foreign guests, you need to consider the best ways of helping them understand this information, possibly by using symbols and/or diagrams.

2.5 Guest Departure

• You should provide written details of payments due and a receipt to any visitor who requests it. You need to clearly identify the VAT element of the bill where applicable.

2.6 Breakfast

General Requirement

- Guesthouses and B&B's A cooked breakfast
- Guest Accommodation Be capable of making breakfast available to visitors.

2.7 Safety and Security

- The main entrance should be clearly identified and the doorway illuminated.
- You should maintain a high degree of general safety and security. All information on emergency procedures should be kept up to date.
- In every bedroom there must be printed details explaining to guests how to summon help if there is an emergency during the night. If you have foreign guests, you need to consider the best ways of helping them understand this information, possibly by using symbols and/or diagrams to show the exit routes.
- You should take adequate measures to protect the security of guests and their property. In particular you need to consider the safety and security of guests staying in bedrooms on the ground floor.
- For the safety of guests, all car parks should be adequately lit.

2.8 Exterior and Condition of Buildings and Equipment

• Buildings, their fixtures, fittings and exterior décor must be maintained in a sound, clean condition and must be fit for the purpose intended. All electrical or gas equipment should be safely maintained and in good working order.

2.9 Annexes

- If you are offering guests accommodation in an unconnected annexe or with separate external access, you must tell them when they are booking. You must also advise them if there is any change to a booking that involves an annexe or separate external access. You should also tell them where the annexe is.
- · Paths or passageways to the annexe must be in good condition, well surfaced and adequately lit.

2.10 Bedrooms

2.10.1 Size and Spaciousness

- All bedrooms should have sufficient space for guests to move easily around the room.
- Bedrooms that are smaller than the following sizes are unlikely to meet the minimum requirements:
- Single 5.6sq.m / 60sq.ft
- Double 8.4sq.m / 90sq.ft
- Twin 10.2sq.m / 110sq.ft

When we assess bedroom size we take into account the usable space available around furniture and fittings. For a higher quality rating, rooms will be expected to considerably exceed these minimum sizes.

- The ceiling height for the major part of the room needs to be sufficient for a person of 6ft to move around without stooping. Sloping eaves and ceilings are acceptable as long as they do not restrict guests' movement to an unacceptable degree.
- It should be possible to fully open doors and drawers without having to move other furniture.
- Rooms for family occupation need to be significantly larger.

N.B. – where there is access to only one side of a double bed, a maximum rating of Three Star only if 4'6".

2.10.2 Beds and Bedding - Size and Quality

Minimum bed sizes:

- Single 190 x 90cm / 6ft 3ins x 3ft
- Double 190 x 137cm / 6ft 3ins x 4ft 6ins

Beds of 183×75 cm / 6ft x 2ft 6ins will only be acceptable for children and can only be used as part of a family room. Beds of 190×122 cm / 6ft 3ins x 4ft beds will be acceptable for single occupancy only.

- Rooms with bunk beds only are not acceptable for adult use. Bunk beds should have a minimum of 75cm / 2ft 6ins clear space between the mattress of the bottom bed and the underside of the top bed (Bunk Bed Regulations 1997).
- All mattresses should be comfortable and have mattress protectors, a sprung interior or be made of foam or similar.
 All mattresses should have a protector. Plastic or rubber mattress protectors are not acceptable except when used for small children.
- · All beds and mattresses should be of sound condition with a secure headboard or equivalent.

2.10.3 Bedding - Quality and Provision

- · All beds should be made daily.
- All bedding should be clean and in sufficient quantity, according to the season and the needs of guests.
- As a guide each bed should have either: a: two sheets, two blankets and a bedspread or b: a duvet with duvet cover and one or two sheets.
- There should be two pillows in individual pillowcases per person. If feather pillows or duvets are provided, a non-allergenic alternative should be available on request.
- All bed linen (sheets, pillow cases and duvet covers etc) should be fresh for each new guest. It should be changed
 once every four days, except where there is a clearly advertised environmental policy that invites guests to agree to
 less frequent changes of linen e.g. weekly.
- If duvets are provided, alternative bedding should be available on request.
- Spare blankets and pillows should be available on request.

For best practice, we suggest that you also use pillow protectors and that any spare pillows and bedding are clean, fresh and preferably wrapped. N.B. 100% manmade fibre sheets are not acceptable.

2.10.4 Furniture, Furnishings and Fittings

Each bedroom should have:

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

N.B. Where bedrooms are located on the ground floor, you should consider providing additional privacy with a net curtain or blind.

2.10.5 Windows and Ventilation

- Every bedroom must have at least one opening window with clear glass to provide natural light and adequate ventilation. Rooms without windows are not acceptable. If windows are sealed, a Local Planning Authority approved ventilation system should be provided.
- Windows should be well fitted, easy to shut and open and remain open.
- Security fittings installed on all bedroom windows where, when open, access could be gained from outside for example, patio or French doors, ground floor windows and windows overlooking fire escapes.
- You should make an effort to insulate against external noise.
- You should provide a pole for opening high "Velux"-style or skylight windows, where these are the only opening windows.

2.10.6 Lighting

- · Bedrooms should be well lit and there should be adequate natural light.
- As guidance, bedrooms should have overall lighting levels. A low energy light bulb equivalent is acceptable.
- The control switch for the main lights should be near the door.
- There should be adequate bedside lighting controllable from each bed. It is acceptable for twin beds to share a centrally situated light. 75cms / 2ft 6ins bunk beds are exempt from providing a light. All bulbs, unless decorative, should have a shade or cover.

ENERGY LIGHT SAVING BULBS CONVERSION TABLE



ENERGY SAVING LIGHT BULB

20 WATT - 23 WATT

15 WATT - 18 WATT

11 WATT – 13 WATT

9 WATT - 40 WATT



ORDINARY LIGHT BULB

100 WATT

75 WATT

60 WATT

2.10.7 Heating

- There should be adequate in-room heating provided at no extra cost.
- Additional heating should be available on request at no extra charge.

Free standing, radiant bar heaters are unacceptable.

2.10.8 Flooring

• Bedrooms should have fully fitted carpets or hard flooring.

2.10.9 Beverage Making Facilities

- If there are no facilities for making hot drinks in the bedroom and they are not available on request, a service of hot drinks should be available morning and evening.
- Where in-room facilities are provided, for safety reasons it is unacceptable for kettles to be boiled on the floor.
- Fresh milk should be available on request and ingredients for making hot drinks should be wrapped or kept in lidded containers.

2.10.10 Telephones in Bedrooms

- When telephones are provided, all the call charges must be clearly indicated.
- It is generally expected that you will provide, as a minimum, the following information to quests:
- The cost of one 5 minute local call at peak rate
- The cost of one 5 minute local call at off-peak rate
- The cost of one 5 minute long distance call at peak rate
- The cost of one 5 minute long distance call at off-peak rate
- The cost of one 5 minute international call at peak rates, e.g. USA
- The cost of one 5 minute international call at off-peak rate, e.g. USA
- In addition, an explanation of what constitutes a local and long distance call should be given and a clear explanation of peak and off-peak.

2.10.11 Miscellaneous Requirements

Each bedroom should have:

- A means of securing bedroom doors from inside and out, and a key should be available.
- A waste paper container. It should be non-flammable if smoking is permitted.
- · An ashtray if smoking is permitted.
- A drinking tumbler per guest. This should be glass or a wrapped disposable.
- · Sufficient, conveniently situated, power sockets to allow for the safe use of all electrical equipment provided.
- Printed advice on how to obtain emergency assistance at night. This needs to be clearly displayed somewhere
 within the bedroom.
- Iron and ironing board available on request and advertised in the bedroom.
- Early morning calls available on request or an alarm clock.
- For bedrooms without en-suite or private bathroom, a towel rail or equivalent should be provided with one hand towel and one bath towel per person. There should be fresh soap for each new letting. If you provide liquid soap dispensers, you need to pay particular attention to their cleanliness and hygiene.

As a matter of best practice, all establishments are encouraged to display clear fire instructions where appropriate. An emergency evacuation notice or diagram should be clearly displayed in all bedrooms.

2.10.12 Accessories

• There are some facilities and accessories that are not requirements but which may be provided in the bedroom. If they are provided, their quality, range, presentation and ease of use will all be taken into account in the quality assessment. Examples include fresh fruit, flowers, radio, hairdryer, sweets, mineral water and hot water bottles.

2.11 Bathrooms, Shower Rooms and Ensuite Facilities

2.11.1 General

• All establishments must provide hot water at all reasonable times.

When an establishment has four or less bed spaces for paying guests, it is acceptable for a bath or shower room to be combined with a washbasin and WC.

- If there are any guest bedrooms without washbasins, there should be a hand washbasin in the WC.
- Additionally, where the maximum number of guests resident within an establishment, including proprietors, is no more than six, it is acceptable that facilities are shared between guests and proprietors. However this will limit the achievable rating to Two Star.
- Where a shared arrangement exists, proprietors and their family should avoid prolonged use of the bathroom during the early to mid-morning period. They should also remove their personal belongings from the bathroom.

2.11.2 En-Suites

What is an en-suite?

An en-suite facility consists of a bath or shower, WC and washbasin connected to a bedroom and entered directly from it. The WC is in its own properly ventilated room. If the shower cubicle is situated in the bedroom then additional ventilation should be added to take account of this.

It is acceptable for the washbasin and shower to be in the bedroom, as long as the WC is contained within a room of its own, within the bedroom. Bedrooms with shower cubicles sited in them are unlikely to achieve a high quality rating.

If the bath or shower cubicle is located in the bedroom, quests must be told when they book.

2.11.3 En-suite Provision

- One to Three Star there is no minimum requirement for en-suite facilities. However, where they are provided their quality will be assessed as part of the bathroom quality assessment.
- To achieve a Four Star rating, you will need to provide at least 50% of bedrooms with an en-suite or a private bath / shower facility.
- To achieve a Five Star rating, every bedroom must have an en-suite or a private bath and/or shower facility.

2.11.4 Private Bathroom and Shower Room Facilities

What is a private facility?

A private bathroom is one in which the bath or shower, WC and perhaps a washbasin are allocated for the sole use of the occupants of one particular bedroom. The bathroom should be on the same floor and be reasonably close to the bedroom. It should be lockable with a key provided. Access to the bath and/or shower rooms from the bedrooms through a lounge, dining room etc is not acceptable.

What is a public facility?

A public facility is one that may be shared by the occupants of more than one bedroom and perhaps the proprietors or their family. Access to the bath and/or shower rooms from the bedrooms through a lounge, dining room etc is not acceptable.

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

All bath and/or shower rooms should have:

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

2.11.6 Public Bathrooms

- Access to bath/shower rooms from a bedroom through a lounge; dining room etc is not acceptable.
- No charge should be made for the use of these facilities.

In addition to the requirements listed before under 2.5.5 Fixtures and Fittings for all Bath/Shower Rooms, all public bathrooms and/or shower rooms should have:

- Heating.
- · A bathmat that is changed daily.
- Soap as well as the soap provided in the bedrooms.
- · Hand drying facilities.
- · All public bathrooms need to be well lit.

2.11.7 Guest Toilets

Access to quest toilets from a bedroom through a lounge, dining room etc is not acceptable.

Fixtures and Fittings

All guest toilets need to have:

- · A lidded WC.
- A toilet roll holder and toilet paper.
- A covered bin/open bin with sanitary disposal bags.
- A hand washbasin (not necessarily a washbasin) and hot water, soap and hand towel/drying facilities if all guest bedrooms do not have a washbasin.
- · A covered light.
- An extractor fan for adequate ventilation or a window that opens.
- An opaque window curtain or blind for privacy and comfort.
- · An internal lock or bolt.

2.11.8 Washbasins in Bedrooms

• To achieve a Three Star rating all bedrooms require a washbasin – either free standing or in a vanity unit.

Fixtures and Fittings

- The bowl must measure at least 36 cm x 24 cm/14 ins x 9.5 ins. Its suitability will depend on its shape, position of taps etc. Where a washbasin is provided in a bedroom there should be:
- A mirror with a light above or adjacent.
- A towel rail or equivalent. A radiator is not acceptable, but a towel ring or a hanging rack on a radiator close by is.
- Shelf space close to the washbasin, safely positioned.
- · Hot and cold water.
- A clean hand towel or hand drying facility.
- Fresh soap. A liquid soap dispenser is acceptable.

2.12 Guest Meals

2.12.1 Breakfast

- All food must be properly cooked and carefully prepared and presented.
- A full cooked breakfast or a substantial continental breakfast should be available. You must offer a minimum of two
 hot cooked items. Offering only boiled eggs is not acceptable as a cooked breakfast. If a cooked breakfast is not
 available, you must make guests aware at the time of booking. A substantial continental breakfast must include
 a selection of the following: cold meats, cheese, fresh fruits, fruit compotes, preserves, cereals, juices, yoghurts,
 bakery items and a choice of freshly brewed hot drinks, usually tea and coffee.
- A proprietor and / or staff available at breakfast for responding to guests needs, e.g. clearing of dishes, checking sufficiency etc.
- Where breakfast is served in the bedrooms, service should be of an equivalent or better level than if it were to be served in a breakfast room, this includes service of beverages.

- It is acceptable to offer a buffet style cooked breakfast.
- Ordering breakfast the evening before is acceptable at all star levels.

2.12.2 Dinner - Where Provided

- All food must be properly cooked and carefully prepared and presented.
- If requested at the time of booking there must be at least one vegetarian option available.

2.13 Public Areas

2.13.1 Lounges, Bars, Dining Areas, Restaurants, Hallways, Stairs, Corridors and Landings

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

2.14 Other Facilities

There is no requirement to provide these, but we will take into account the quality, range, presentation and ease of use of any optional amenities and services you provide. Optional amenities and services might include a swimming pool, nature trail, indoor and outdoor sports and games, farm visits, a craft shop, tourist information, additional food and beverage facilities, TV lounge or room service.