

Click to see the [Quality Assurance guidance and criteria](#) notes for Hostels.

Click to view current [Scottish Government Guidelines](#) for reopening and operating your business.

## **Considerations from the VisitScotland Quality Assurance Grading Scheme for Hostels**

*The following guidance refers to additional considerations for Hostel businesses, **specifically** with regards to achieving high standards within the Quality Assurance Scheme for this designator whilst implementing temporary Covid19 measures. Please remember to advertise your [Quality Assurance](#) logo and [We're Good to Go](#) mark – both are ways to reassure the visitor and show that you adhere to national standards.*

### **Pre-Arrival: Booking and Information Provision**

- The information you provide for your hostellers pre-arrival during Covid-19 is vital, as it will give them reassurance you are a hostel operating safely during this time
- Best practice during this time would be to have the following information on your website: clear and concise information about the Covid-19 safety procedures you have put in place; information about any changes to your normal operating procedures; and information about the additional cleaning procedures you are implementing
- Having a simple and user-friendly booking system is important. Encourage potential guests to visit your website to familiarise themselves with the information mentioned in the point above. Also include this information in confirmation e-mails
- Personalise the guest experience and help guests to plan and make the most of their visit by finding out the following at the pre-arrival stage: how they are travelling to the hostel; what they are interested in; the reason for their visit; and what they hope to see. This gives the opportunity to personalise the information provided at this time
- Due to physical distancing requirements at this time, some of the hostel accommodation normally offered and some of the communal facilities guests usually have access to may not be available. Manage guest expectations by providing clear pre-arrival information about which facilities are available and those that are not
- Reassure guests by providing clear pre-arrival information about the accommodation they will be staying in: what the bathroom arrangements will be; the extra cleaning measures you have undertaken; and the physical distancing measures you have in place
- Set guest expectations whilst still offering a warm and welcoming first impression

### **Reception: Check-In, Check-Out & Guest Enquiries**

- Ensure safe physical distancing is observed at check-in and try to reduce contact time with your guests, to avoid queues or people having to wait and gather at reception
- Make the check-in process as easy and straightforward for your guests as possible. Invite guests to share essential check-in details ahead of their arrival, to minimise time at reception. Consider options for contactless check-in, check-out & payment

- Providing guests with fulsome personalised information at the pre-arrival/booking stage of their journey means that they will only need helpful reminders at check-in
- Consider single-use welcome letters, highlighting your Covid-19 procedures, which could be personalised and adapted for guests whose first language is not English
- Look at alternative ways to communicate and engage with your guests during their stay, speaking with them on the phone, via text, or a mobile app such as WhatsApp. If your hostel has an app, this is great way to communicate and engage with guests
- Consider a room key/card deposit box at reception for key collection and disinfection

### **Hospitality and Service**

- Ensure that your guests receive a cheerful, warm, friendly, reassuring welcome on arrival
- Preempt hostellers needs; be proactive; anticipate problems; be patient; keep a safe distance but still engage with guests; make guests feel wanted and never a burden; ensure guests are enjoying their stay and make their stay memorable
- These are all aspects of first class service and hospitality which we can and should be offering visitors even in light of Covid-19

### **Dispensation/Allowances**

*In order to comply with Government Guidance, some temporary Covid-19 measures will appear to be contrary to certain criteria elements and quality scoring considerations under normal operation of the Quality Assurance (QA) Scheme. Please note that **dispensation will be given for any QA elements which would be out-with Government guidance, and these elements will be obsolete until such time that normal operation can resume.** The main aspects which will be affected are: -*

### **Food and Beverage**

Hostels that have food & beverage operations should follow the Government guidelines for restaurants. For hostels with communal guest kitchens which are currently not open, ensure that guests are aware of this prior to arrival and provide information on places to eat out. For hostels which normally offer breakfast but are temporarily not able to, or have made changes to normal breakfast service, this should be communicated to guests pre-arrival and at the time of booking.

If you have any questions about Quality Assurance, or would like to speak to one of our expert Quality & Tourism Advisors, please make contact via [business.advice@visitscotland.com](mailto:business.advice@visitscotland.com)