

VISITSCOTLAND

QUALITY ASSURANCE

SCHEME CRITERIA FOR

SELF-CATERING

ACCOMMODATION



Why is Quality Important

Developed over the last four decades in partnership with the tourism industry and informed by visitor research, the Quality Assurance (QA) scheme is world leading. VisitScotland understands that quality is the key to success in the hospitality industry.

In order to perpetuate Scotland's international reputation for providing a friendly and warm welcome to visitors, it's crucial that we continue to support tourism businesses to remain competitive and improve their product offering; the QA scheme is designed to help businesses do just that.

Quality never goes out of style - your stars of excellence help visitors make informed decisions, give confidence in the level of service and quality you deliver and enable your business to truly shine with distinction.

A considerable number of tourism operators in Scotland already take part in the scheme. These businesses receive impartial and expert advice to inform their investment decisions – driving-up quality and creating jobs.

Our commitment to you

Our professional VisitScotland assessors will work with you to maximise the potential of your business.

As a participant of the QA scheme you will receive a regular assessment visit. This visit will look at all aspects of your customer facing business, from viewing your website through to customer departure.

Each assessment visit will be followed by a verbal debrief and a detailed written report. Both these tools are designed to help you to improve your business.

Quality across the star ratings

Our assessors will quality grade each aspect of your business to five levels, based on customer expectations of quality and current standards seen across the sector in the UK.

The assessment is objective, and judgement will not be made on any aspect of your business based on style or personal taste. The aim is to add quality without taking away any of the character and style of the property.

In advance of their visit your assessor will review your property's website, as would potential guests, to check that descriptions and images are up-to-date and a true reflection of the property.

How do we measure quality?

During your assessment visit, your assessor will make quality judgements across all aspects of your Self-Catering business, marking each sub-heading out of five. When the scores are totalled you will have an overall percentage score that will place you within one of the five star rating bands. However, to confirm a particular star rating, the scores awarded within each of the five key areas also need to fall within that band or higher. In this way you can be confident that your business is offering a consistent level of quality at the star rating awarded.

There are seven areas to be scored. See the sample report below for the sub-headings for each scoring area. The only areas that must achieve the minimum score for the target star rating are the **key areas**. The score for the other areas help push up the overall score to the minimum required for the target star rating but are not crucial. These key areas are:

- Public areas
- Bedrooms
- Bathrooms
- Kitchen
- Cleanliness

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

Assessment Example

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

In order to be awarded four star, the property needs to meet the overall percentage required (at least 75%) as well as the percentages required in each of the key sections (listed above). The property meets the overall percentage required for four star (with 79%) and achieves four star for cleanliness, public areas, bedrooms and the kitchen. However, the property fails to meet the score required for the bathroom. Although the property meets the four star score for the kitchen, the score is borderline.

The outcome is that a three star rating is awarded but with potential for four star. Advice is provided as to how to improve the scores in these two key areas in order to meet a four star rating at the next visit.

Things to consider

Be objective and self-critical when thinking about quality:

- Do not over promise. Do not be tempted to claim you offer luxury on your website unless the facilities you are selling are truly luxurious. Customers travel with expectations. It is better to exceed these expectations than not live up to them.
- Be a customer in your own business. Take time to use your website and to sleep in your bedrooms to experience what you are offering to your guests.
- No need to follow the crowd, don't be afraid to have your own style.
- First impressions: Arriving at any Self-Catering property for the first time involves a series of first impressions.

Quality Assessment Report

Exterior	Appearance of buildings & kerb appeal	5		
	Grounds, gardens & parking	4		
	Privacy, peace & quiet	4	13/15 = 86%	
Management efficiency	Pre-arrival information	4		
	Welcome & arrival procedure	4		
	In-unit guest information & personal touches	4	12/15 = 80%	
Cleanliness	Living & dining areas	4		
	Bedroom	4		
	Bathroom	4		
	Kitchen	5	17/20 = 85% (4 star quality)	
Public areas	Decoration	4		
	Flooring	4		
	Furniture, furnishings & fittings	3		
	Lighting, heating & ventilation	5		
	Space, comfort & ease of use	4	20/25 = 80% (4 star quality)	
Bedroom(s)	Decoration	4		
	Flooring	4		
	Furniture, furnishings & fittings	4		
	Lighting, heating & ventilation	4		
	Beds	5		
	Bedding & bed linen	4		
	Space, comfort & ease of use	4	29/35 = 82% (4 star quality)	
Bathroom(s) & WC(s)	Decoration	3		
	Flooring	3		
	Furniture, fittings & sanitary ware	4		
	Lighting, heating & ventilation	4		
	Space, comfort & ease of use	4	18/25 = 72% (below 4 star quality)	
Kitchen	Decoration	4		
	Flooring	4		
	Furniture, furnishings & fittings	4		
	Lighting, heating & ventilation	4		
	Electrical & gas equipment	4		
	Crockery, cutlery & glassware	3		
	Kitchenware, pans & utensils	3		
	Space, comfort & ease of use	4	30/40 = 75% (borderline 4 star quality)	
				Overall

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

The assessment process

All our assessors are highly experienced within the Self-Catering sector. They experience best practice in all areas and can pass that knowledge on to you for the benefit of your business. They will assess the quality of your business honestly and always with the objective of helping you to improve your business. Make use of your assessor.

Determining the star rating

There are three main elements to the assessment process which will need to be satisfied to achieve a star rating:

- **All statutory obligations must be met.** These are listed in section 1.1 (see page 7)
- All minimum entry requirements (MERs) need to be provided. These are listed at the beginning of each assessment section and within each section there are additional requirements, or 'qualifiers' for each star rating level.
- The minimum quality scores. Assessors score each separate element in each area out of five. The overall score is totalled and then divided by the maximum number achievable (usually 175) and then a percentage is obtained for each section and an overall percentage. **See page 6 for percentages required at each star rating.**

When awarding a quality score out of five for an item, be it a floor covering, a piece of furniture or a kitchen appliance, our assessor will consider a number of factors.

- What is the intrinsic quality?
- What is the age and condition of the item?
- How well does the item perform the task for which it is intended?

An example of this might be a heating system for a cottage. Two cottages might have the

same modern gas boiler and radiator system, but the mark of five is more likely to go to the cottage with thermostatic valves on each of the radiators and a wood burner in the living room, as this would give guests the most flexibility.

To achieve a rating of five stars and an overall score of at least 87%, the aim is to score 'five' (out of five) in as many areas as possible, and certainly no lower than four anywhere. Scores of five are given when the item has that level of 'outstanding' quality.

A four-star rating is likely to be made up of mainly scores of four, with a few marks at three and perhaps a few at five.

Continual investment from operators and rising guest expectations mean that the benchmarks are regularly shifting upwards. A bathroom that scored mostly 'fives' five years ago may only score 'fours' now. The assessors will always advise and suggest when and where upgrading should be prioritised to retain a rating. It is a good idea to visit other properties to get ideas or review websites of similarly-priced and rated properties.

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 with individual scores for each area assessed. 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.

Dispensations

Whilst most businesses can provide all the minimum entry requirements (MERs), it might not be possible for every business to provide every MER. This might be due to restrictions placed on a building by Listed Building status, for example.

VisitScotland operates a dispensation process to accommodate this type of problem and a dispensation can be sought through your assessor. This flexibility will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Dispensations will only be awarded if the website description has already been amended to make it clear to prospective guests that the missing item/entry requirement is not found at the property. Ratings cannot be confirmed until the outcome of the dispensation is known.

Any exceptions will need a proportional increase in the quality of other areas to compensate for the area where the exception is sought.

Overall Quality Bands

	1 Star	2 Star	3 Star	4 Star	5 Star
Overall	34%-47%	48%-59%	60%-74%	75%-86%	87%-100%
Cleanliness	60%	60%	65%	80%	90%
Public areas	34%	48%	60%	75%	87%
Bedrooms	34%	48%	60%	75%	87%
Bathrooms	34%	48%	60%	75%	87%
Kitchens	34%	48%	60%	75%	87%

Self-Catering Description

For the purposes of participation in the VisitScotland Self-catering Quality Scheme, the property must be self-contained. A self-contained unit must have bedrooms, bathrooms, public area and kitchen all contained behind one main door where occupants have sole access.

Grading Criteria and Advice

1. Overall Standards

1.1 Statutory Obligations

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

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

- Safety
 - Health and Safety at Work
 - Fire Risk Assessment: to comply with the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005. For guidance refer to: <https://www.gov.scot/policies/fire-and-rescue/non-domestic-fire-safety/>
 - Gas and Electrical Safety

- Electric Appliance Testing
- Product Safety
- Bunk Bed Regulations
- British Standards applying to items such as cots, highchairs and play pens

- Premises
 - Planning Permission
 - Private Water Supplies (Scotland) Regulations 2006
 - TV Licensing

- Discrimination
 - The Equality Act 2010
 - Records
 - GDPR

- Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008
 - Advertising
 - Pricing
 - Unfair Contract Terms

1.2 Health, Safety & Security

- A high degree of general safety and security maintained, including information on procedures in the event of an emergency.
- If the proprietor is not resident on the premises, his/her name, address and telephone number or that of his/her agent, who must have a set of keys, to be prominently displayed, together with clear details of how to summon the assistance of the emergency services.
- Prominently displayed printed details of how to summon the assistance of emergency services to be provided e.g. doctor, dentist, and location of nearest payphone and casualty unit and vets (if pets accepted).
- All units to be provided with suitable refuse disposal arrangements as required by the Local Authority. Dustbins, where provided, must have lids. Arrangements for refuse collection to be specified and prominently displayed.
- Guests to be provided with a key to the entrance door of their unit, and where applicable a key giving access to the building and any other relevant facilities.
- At least one smoke alarm (battery or hard wired) to be provided in all units, situated appropriately within a hallway or landing area. Larger units or those with a more unusual layout may require more than one alarm.
- Adequate levels of lighting at night for safety and comfort in all public areas, including on stairways and landings and in car parks and paths/steps to the property at night, should be provided.
- Electricity should be available (not necessarily mains supply). Where it is not, this must be stated. Voltage to be stated if not on mains.

- Where electricity is available, an adequate number of power sockets to be provided, commensurate with the number of electrical appliances provided.
- Some form of emergency lighting to be available, e.g. torch or nightlights. Candles are not acceptable.

1.3 Booking & Prices

- Prospective guests should be made aware, prior to booking, of charges for additional services or facilities available, including cancellation terms, housekeeping and/or breakage deposits.
- Make clear to guests exactly what is included in the prices quoted for the property, including service charge, taxes and other surcharges, e.g. electricity, fuel, towels, cots etc. Where VAT is applicable, all prices to be shown inclusive of VAT at standard rate.
- Full details of accommodation, including sleeping arrangements and bathroom (whether it is equipped with a bath or shower) provided on the website or printed form in advance of booking. Where sleeping accommodation is provided by means of bed settees, wall beds, "Z" beds, camp beds etc., in addition to the bedroom accommodation, the type, size and number of bed spaces to be clearly indicated.
- Details of any in-house policies, e.g. no smoking, no pets etc. must be communicated at the time of booking, for example, clearly stated on website. If requested, allow guests to see the property before booking (if property is occupied this may not be possible).
- Website or printed information required. A floor plan is encouraged. Arrangements for access communicated pre-arrival.
- Guests advised at the time of booking, or subsequently, in the event of any change in booking details.
- Prices quoted at the time of booking not exceeded.
- Guests provided with details of payments due and a receipt if required.
- The receipt to be clearly presented and well laid out.
- The following information to be readily available prior to booking:
 - Car parking arrangements near unit
 - Arrangements for pets
 - Distance of unit from nearest shop(s), etc.
 - Nature of water supply, if not mains (water supply must meet all statutory regulations for drinking water)
 - Types of energy supply if not electric
 - Electricity voltage, if not standard
 - A map and/or directions showing the location of the unit on booking or provided on website
 - Distance of unit from nearest public transport

2. Exterior

2.1 Appearance of Buildings

Minimum Entry Requirements

- Buildings maintained in a sound, clean condition and fit for the purpose intended.
- Entrance adequately lit.

2.2 Grounds, gardens & parking

Minimum Entry Requirements

(If a property has no grounds, garden or parking, then assessors will not score this section, but mark as N/A.)

- Gardens and/or open areas that are part of the unit maintained in good order.
- Where gardens are available the garden furniture should be provided.
- If the property has ancillary areas, the facilities provided will be taken into account in the assessment of the establishment. They should be well surfaced, in good condition and adequately lit.

2.3 Privacy, peace & quite

Minimum Entry Requirements

- Many customers choose self-catering accommodation instead of serviced accommodation as they want to relax and enjoy the company of their friends or family, without being disturbed by neighbours.
- Any outside space for guests' use should be screened from adjoining/neighbouring properties, where possible.
- In city centre locations, this is inevitably more difficult, but guests will appreciate the provision of double or triple glazing to reduce traffic noise, good blackout curtains or blinds and other measures to allow guests to enjoy a good night's sleep and minimal disturbance from the occupants of neighbouring properties. Air conditioning might even be installed in locations where opening windows at night is not conducive to a good night's sleep.

3. Management Efficiency

Minimum Entry Requirements

Please refer to 1.2 Health, Safety & Security and 1.3 Booking & Prices.

4. Public Areas

4.1 General

Minimum Entry Requirements

- Dining table and seating facilities for the maximum number of occupants.

- Where there is a functional open fireplace, a fireguard, poker, hearth brush, tongs, shovel, fuel container and ashes bucket provided.
- Easy chair and/or sofa seats provided, sufficient for the maximum number of advertised occupants.
- A TV to be provided where a TV signal is available. Where not available, this should be clearly advertised.
- Non-flammable wastepaper bins provided in living areas.

Additional requirements to meet:

Four Star:

- All easy seating to be provided in the main lounge/ lounges

4.2 Flooring

Minimum Entry Requirements

- All rooms/areas, passages and staircases must have suitable finishes or coverings.

4.3 Furniture, Furnishings and Fittings

Minimum Entry Requirements

- All exterior windows in living areas fitted with opaque curtains, blinds or shutters. Glass in exterior/interior doors will also require covering where the lounge is used for sleeping or where lack of privacy could be an issue. (The apex of an 'A' framed window and roof light windows require to be curtained only where the lounge is used as sleeping accommodation).
- Where there is sleeping accommodation in living areas, there must be adequate storage for bedding and guests' clothes.

4.4 Heating, Lighting and Ventilation

Minimum Entry Requirements

- Adequate means of heating must be available at all times and guests must be able to override a time switch for the heating and hot water. If storage heaters are the means of heating the property, additional supplementary heaters must be provided. Free standing paraffin and Calor gas heaters are not acceptable. Coin meters not acceptable (except for a washing machine in laundries).
- All living room areas to have at least one window opening directly into the open air.
- All living areas must be adequately lit and lighting levels appropriate to the size of the room.

5. Bedrooms

5.1 Furniture, Furnishings and Fittings

Minimum Entry Requirements

- A bedside table/shelf and light for each permanent bed, (twin beds may share a table and light) including bunk beds and top bunk to have light, but shelf provided only where safe to do so.
- Non-flammable waste bins to be provided.
- A dressing table (or equivalent) with mirror, wardrobe or clothes hanging rail/space and adequate drawer space ideally in each bedroom (shelf space is an acceptable alternative to drawers) to be provided. Hooks on backs of doors etc. are not acceptable.
- Sufficient coat hangers per person. Wire hangers are not acceptable.

Additional requirements to meet:

Three Star:

- A hairdryer to be provided.

Five Star:

- Each guest bedroom to be provided with a hairdryer (except bedrooms designated for children only)

5.2 Beds and Bedding

Minimum Entry Requirements

- Single beds: 183 x 76 cm/6' x 2'6" Min size
- Double beds: 183 x 1200cm/6' x 4'
- At least one adult room without bunk beds, i.e. one bed for adults which is not bunk beds.
- Bunk beds should have a minimum 75cm/30ins clear space between the mattress on the bottom of the bed and the underside of the top bed. (Bunk bed regulations 1997).
- Secure headboard or equivalent on all permanent beds.
- All mattresses sprung or foam or similar quality and in sound condition.
- Bedding supplied in sufficient quantity with two pillows per person.
- Linen must be included in the letting fee.
- A mattress protector or under blanket fitted to all beds. (Plastic or rubber mattress protectors are not acceptable for normal use. Where a rubber cover is provided for children, it should be as an optional extra in addition to the normal mattress protector).
- Linen should be changed for all new occupants and weekly change offered during the letting period. Spare linen and bedding available on request. Sheets must be poly cotton or cotton.
- It is strongly recommended beds should be made for guests on arrival.
- Where a bedroom is accessed via another bedroom, then this must be clearly advertised.

- Where a bathroom is accessed via a bedroom, then these units must be designated and advertised.

Additional requirements to meet:

Two Star

- All beds to be full size (except those clearly specified in advertising as being for children's use; or bed settees)
- Adult single 190 x 90 cm/6'3" x 3' Min size
- Adult double 190 x 137 cm/6'3" x 4'6" Min size
- Child size 183 x 76 cm/6' x 2'6"

Three Star

- All double beds to have access to both sides.

Four Star

- All advertised sleeping spaces are to be in bedrooms only. (Where studio flats are clearly advertised as such, an exemption will be made to this).

Five Star

- All beds are to be full sized beds including beds for children (excludes 'Z' beds used on a temporary basis for children only.)
- It is unlikely that where a bedroom or bathroom is accessed via another bedroom that this would ever achieve Five Star.

5.3 Galleried Bedrooms

- Where a property accommodates only two guests, any rating can be achieved (the galleried bedroom must be advertised as such).
- Where the property accommodates more than two guests and there is a galleried bedroom, this must be clearly advertised.

5.4 Sofa Beds

- Sofa beds may be counted in the maximum number of sleepers up to Three Stars.
- At Four Stars any sofa beds in the property (bedrooms or public area) must **not** be counted in maximum number of sleepers in any description on any website. Any search results should not include the sleepers accommodated on sofa beds. They can, however, be mentioned in descriptions.
- At Five Stars any sofa beds must **not** be counted in maximum number of sleepers (whether in bedrooms or public areas) and must **not** be mentioned in any descriptions on any websites. A sofa bed may be left in the property, but if not as comfortable as a regular sofa, the 'Comfort' score may be reduced.

5.5 Heating, Lighting and Ventilation

Minimum Entry Requirements

- Heating must be available at all times.

- All bedrooms to have at least one window opening directly into the open air.
- Windows to have opaque curtains, blinds or shutters.
- All living areas must be adequately lit and lighting levels appropriate to the size of the room.

6. Bathrooms & WCs

6.1 General

Minimum Entry Requirements

- All units to have at least one bathroom and WC for every eight guests. The bathroom to be equipped with a bath or shower, bathmat, towel rail (pegs and hooks are not accepted), shelf or flat surface and washbasin. Where the base of the bath or shower is not anti-slip then a nonslip mat must be available. Soap dish to be provided in showers.
- Where no shower is available, this must be clearly advertised.
- Unless en-suite, access through a bedroom to the bathroom is not normally acceptable, except where the unit is for single family occupation.
- Washbasin in main bathroom is a minimum of 36cm x 24cm internal (14" x 9"), although a standard size wash basin is always recommended where space allows (additional basins offered in en-suites or separate WC's where basin in main bathroom complies, could be of a smaller dimension).
- A mirror above or adjacent to the wash basin.
- All units to have at least one WC equipped with toilet paper holder, toilet brush, and disposal bin with sanitary bags, or a lidded bin. At least one full toilet roll to be provided in all bathrooms / WCs.
- All windows to have opaque curtains, blinds or shutters (Glass doors to bathrooms and WCs must also have opaque curtain or blind).
- A means to provide hot water available at all times.
- A lock or bolt to be provided on all bathroom/WC doors.
- Shaver point adjacent to mirror, preferably with light. An adapter is acceptable alternative provided elsewhere in the unit, providing it can be used close to a mirror.

Additional requirements to meet:

Three Star

- Where more than six guests are accommodated a shower should be available. This must be hands free but can be fitted over a bath e.g. mixer tap.

Four Star

- Extra WC and washbasin (which may be in another bath/shower room) to be provided if the unit sleeps more than six. Bathroom ratio of 1:6 to be provided.
- Towels (one hand and one bath towel per person) available with or without extra charge.

Five Star

- Bath and shower available (exceptions may be made for level entry showers built specifically for use by guests with mobility impairment.)
- Extra bath or shower, toilet and washbasin, if more than 4 guests accommodated. Ratio of 1:4 to be maintained e.g. 5 guests require 2 bath or shower rooms with WC and basin (one may be en-suite).
- Towels provided and included in the hire cost.

6.2 Flooring

Minimum Entry Requirements

- All bathrooms/WCs must have suitable floor coverings. Consideration should be given to the suitability of floor coverings for hygiene and housekeeping reasons.

6.3 Heating, Lighting and Ventilation

Minimum Entry Requirements

- Heating to be provided in all bathrooms where there is an external window. A heated towel rail is acceptable. Heated light bulbs are discouraged.
- All bathrooms and WCs to have an opening window or appropriate ventilation system.
- All bathrooms/WCs must be adequately lit and all lights must have shades or be suitably protected.

7. Kitchen

7.1 General

Minimum Entry Requirements

- A cooker with an oven, with at least two shelves, a grill and at least four boiling rings that may be used simultaneously with the oven or grill. If two guests only are accommodated then two boiling rings plus oven and grill must be provided. For any larger numbers i.e. 12 or more, accommodated, it is anticipated that additional cooking facilities will be provided.
- Cookers to be clean and in sound condition and functioning properly.
- A microwave oven to be provided and microwave cookware or compatible crockery provided.
- A refrigerator with an ice making compartment (unless a freezer is also provided).

- A sink equipped with a draining board, dish drying rack, hot water and cold drinking water supply to be provided.
- At least one hygienic work surface.
- An opening window or local Planning Authority approved ventilation system. Opaque curtains, shutters or blinds on external glass doors and windows.
- A covered waste disposal bin to be provided, with liner.
- A fire extinguisher designated as suitable for kitchen fires or fire blanket to be readily available. This should ideally be between the cooker and the door, and wall mounted. Storage in a cupboard or over the cooker is not acceptable. It could be sited outside the kitchen, provided it is quickly and easily accessible.
- Storage space suitable for food.
- Vacuum cleaner provided in each unit, unless daily cleaning service provided.
- Where a dishwasher is provided, crockery and utensils should be dishwasher safe. Extra crockery should also be provided, so dishwasher does not have to be operated at each mealtime.
- Sufficient storage space for crockery, cutlery, kitchen and cleaning equipment provided.

Additional Requirements to meet:

Four Star:

- Access to washing machine if not in the unit. Ratio of 1 machine to every 5 units. 24-hour return laundry service also acceptable.
- Access to a freezer (not just a 3* icebox within a fridge), but it could be in a shed/garage etc. Assessors will use their judgement on appropriate size, depending on the occupancy of the unit. Dispensations may be considered if the property sleeps up to four guests, as long as the lack of a freezer is clearly highlighted in pre-booking information. Access to a shared freezer would be acceptable.

Five Star:

- Freezer provided within the unit.
- Dishwasher provided within the unit (consider size for number the unit accommodates).
- Washing machine provided in the unit or 24hour return laundry service with uplift and delivery.

7.2 Flooring

Minimum Entry Requirements

- All kitchens must have suitable floor finishes or coverings. Consideration should be given to the suitability of floor coverings for hygiene and housekeeping reasons.

7.3 Heating, Lighting and Ventilation

Minimum Entry Requirements

- Heating to be available in the kitchen at all times.
- There should be an opening window or appropriate ventilation system.
- Kitchens must be adequately lit and lighting levels appropriate to the size of the room.

7.4 Recommended Kitchen Inventory

Consideration should be given to the number of items provided in respect of guest's visitors and the minimum and maximum number of occupants. The following list is for guidance only.

Items	Notes	Higher Star Ratings
Matching crockery and cutlery.	Sufficient for number of guests the unit sleeps. Extra if dishwasher in unit. Plenty of teaspoons essential, nothing chipped or cracked	Greater range of items, e.g. different sizes of plates and bowls and mugs/cups & saucers. Not essential to offer cups and saucers but aim for very good quality and range. Guests will expect small knives & forks and soup spoons at higher star ratings.
Glassware At least tumblers and wine glasses.	A water jug might be appreciated.	Possibly champagne flutes or greater range and quality of glasses to suit target market.
Serving dishes	To suit target market – possibly salad bowl, platter, fruit bowl, bread basket etc. Consider small containers/dishes for serving crisps & nuts.	Greater range and quality expected at higher levels.
Serving spoons		
Teapot, milk jug & container for sugar. Condiments (salt & pepper)	Cafetière or coffee maker might be included, depending on target market.	At higher star ratings guests may expect different sizes of teapots, cafetières & jugs.
Useful containers for bread, items etc.	Some airtight lidded plastic in different sizes worth including, especially if can go through dishwasher.	
Bread knife, carving knife & and other sharp knives.	Larger capacity units would need greater range so if group all cooking together, they have sufficient.	
Chopping board(s), bread board etc.		
Range of kitchen utensils	e.g. tin opener, potato peeler, grater, fish slice or similar, potato masher, ladle, kitchen scissors, wooden spoons, whisk etc.	At higher star ratings more gadgets would be expected, e.g. food processor, bread mixer, pasta maker, electric whisk etc.
Range of kitchen bowls, measuring jugs etc.	Kitchen scales should be considered, depending on target market.	At higher star ratings, guests may expect bakery items, such as cake tins, cooling racks,

		rolling pin, cutters, pie dishes, casserole dish etc.
Roasting tin(s) and other oven-proof trays, dishes etc.		
Electric kettle and toaster		
Range of saucepans (including one non-stick) and at least one frying pan	Ensure adequate provision of large saucepans and frying pans if unit takes larger groups. Omelette pan might be appreciated.	Ensure frying pans in very good condition
Colander or sieve		
Corkscrew and bottle opener		
Tray(s)		
Ice-making tray (unless ice making unit)		
Vase(s)		
Straws (for children and disabled guests) NB – paper straws are a widely available and more environmentally friendly alternative to plastic.		
Ashtrays (if smoking permitted)		
Matches/lighter		
Facility to dry clothes (airer or clothes line with pegs)	Plastic/wicker laundry basket might be appreciated.	
Vacuum/broom, floor mop & bucket, dustpan & brush, as appropriate depending on flooring.		
Basic supply of cleaning materials, washing-up liquid, toilet roll for each WC.	Guests might appreciate starter supply of dishwasher powder/tablets.	At higher star ratings, operators might consider leaving kitchen roll, foil, cling film etc.
Iron and ironing board		
Oven glove or mitts		
Supply of clean tea towels/ kitchen towel.		
Spare light bulbs		
Torch(es)		
Tablecloth or place mats, as appropriate.	Consider plastic cloth(s) for dining table if welcoming families.	Linen/cloth napkins may be appreciated by some guests.
Washing-up bowl with new sponge/disposable cloths/clean brush.		
Door mat at exterior door(s)		

8. Additional Facilities

For example: laundry, recreation, reception, shop, bar, restaurant facilities. None of these are required, but where they are provided, their quality and condition will form part of the quality assessment.

9. Cleanliness

9.1 General

Minimum Entry Requirements

- Cleanliness is of paramount importance to guests, so a high standard of cleanliness must be maintained throughout the property, whatever the star rating.
- Particular attention must be given to kitchens, bathrooms, shower rooms and toilets and items involving direct contact with guests, such as bedding, linen, towels, baths, showers, washbasins, WCs, flooring, seating, crockery, cutlery, glassware, kitchen utensils and equipment.
- It is the proprietor's responsibility to ensure that all properties are thoroughly cleaned throughout, before each new let, irrespective of whether the guests have cleaned it prior to departure. Any broken or damaged items should be replaced.

10. Sustainability

Recognising the business benefits of operating in a sustainable way we have included sustainability actions as a minimum standard in all our Quality Assurance schemes since 2015.

As part of your Quality Assurance visit the Quality & Tourism Advisor reviews which sustainability actions you are already undertaking. Up to 38 actions are reviewed covering a range of areas, such as:

- energy efficiency
- water efficiency
- waste management
- sustainable purchasing
- customer engagement
- travel and transport
- natural and cultural heritage
- sustainable management
- inclusive tourism

Self-catering business will be required to undertake 16 out of the 38 sustainability actions, recognising that a very high proportion of businesses are already achieving this minimum standard.

Please note that it will be taken into account if certain aspects of the business (e.g. the nature of the building, set up, or location) do not allow for certain actions to be undertaken.

For more details and a list of the sustainability actions that will be reviewed, please refer to the [current sustainability actions document](#) on visitscotland.org. For more information on actions you could undertake, case studies, and further advice and support please see [VisitScotland's Sustainable Tourism](#) web pages.

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