

# VISITSCOTLAND QUALITY STANDARD

## CRITERIA FOR SELF-CATERING



## Criteria for Self-Catering Classification

### INTRODUCTION

The following criteria will have to be met by establishments wishing to use the classification **SELF CATERING**.

The definition of **SELF CATERING** is as follows:

**A property which is let normally on a weekly basis to tenants, which requires no service elements during the time of the guests' stay.**

### MINIMUM ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

These are the minimum entry requirements for a One Star grade. To obtain a higher quality grade it will be necessary to meet the level of quality and condition specified in the quality indicators for the Star Level desired and any additional requirements specified. For example to obtain a rating of Three Star, all the minimum entry requirements for One Star and Two Star should be met along with any additional requirements for Three Star.

### 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 grade 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 organisations who operate the Quality Standards – VisitScotland, VisitWales, VisitEngland, Northern Ireland Tourist Board and AA. Any exceptions will need a proportional increase in quality in other areas to compensate for the area where an exception is sought.

### 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:

- **Fire Risk Assessment:** to comply with the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005. For guidance refer to: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/policies/police-fire-rescue/fire/FireLaw>
- Private Water Supplies (Scotland) regulations 2006
- Food safety / Hygiene
- Health and Safety: operate safely with due regard to health and safety legislation.
- Planning: comply with local planning regulations.
- Licensing: comply with all local licensing regulations.
- Data Protection Act
- The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008
- Provision of Services Regulations 2009
- Equality Act 2010

Should you require further advice on statutory legislation you may wish to consult the Trading Standards website: [www.tradingstandards.gov.uk](http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk)

## 2 GENERAL MISCELLANEOUS

In assessing the acceptability of 'enclosed' floor area available, assessors will take account of usable space around furnishings and fittings. It is unlikely that the minimum requirements will be met where accommodation is less than the following:

18.60 sq. m (200 sq. ft.) for a 2 person unit plus 7.40 sq. m (80 sq.ft.) for each additional person normally accommodated. Enclosed floor area includes living, sleeping, cooking and bathroom areas. Consideration should be given to freedom of movement, the ceiling height for the major part of the room to be sufficient for a person of 183 cm (6 ft) to move around without stooping. Sloping eaves and roofs are acceptable providing these do not restrict guests' movements to an unacceptable degree.

Additionally, for a Star Level higher than the base level of One Star, floor area available will need to be greater with significantly more usable space around furnishings and fittings.

There must be reasonable space for movement in bedrooms/sleeping and living room areas and for easy access to beds, doors and drawers.

Doors and drawers to be fully openable. Account should be taken of space needed for convertibles, e.g. bed settees.

All fixtures, furniture, furnishings, crockery and cutlery to be adequate for the maximum number of occupants, including any extra sleeping accommodation.

### **Additional requirements to meet:**

For non – self-contained units, the following would apply:

#### **One Star**

All facilities to be for the sole use of one unit.

#### **Two Star**

There should not be no more than one non self-contained unit on each floor.

#### **Three Star**

Non self-contained units where there is only one unit and guests have sole use of the upper floor are acceptable up to a Three Star level.

#### **Four Star**

All units must be totally self-contained. What does self-contained mean? A self-contained unit must have bedrooms, bathrooms, public areas and kitchen all contained behind one main door, where occupants have sole access.

#### **Five Star**

All Self Contained Properties:

No coin meters or smart card systems for fuel payment. However meter readings are acceptable.

An additional five items from the following list should be provided:

The list is not exhaustive and may include other items seen, if they are deemed 'special'.

- Tumble dryer
- Telephone
- DVD/(Video)
- Sound/music system
- Docking station
- Games consoles
- Internet access/Wi-Fi
- PC/laptop and possibly printer for guests' use
- Sauna (in unit)

- Spa bath
- Hot Tub (not shared)
- Outdoor cooking facility
- Additional TVs in some/all bedrooms
- Extensive library/local reference material
- Binoculars

### **3 MAINTENANCE**

All electrical and gas or oil fired equipment must meet all relevant statutory obligations (see general requirements), must be safely maintained, in good working order and serviced regularly, as appropriate.

Fixtures, furnishings, floor coverings and fittings must also meet all relevant statutory obligations; particularly in relation to fire safety (see general requirements). These must be maintained in a sound, clean condition and be fit for the purpose intended.

The exterior should be free from hazards on roads and pathways and the building itself.

### **4 HEALTH, SAFETY AND 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.

Occupiers 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.

### **5 CLEANLINESS**

Cleanliness is of paramount importance to guests, so a high standard of cleanliness must be achieved and maintained throughout the property. Particular attention must be given to kitchens, bathrooms, shower rooms and toilets and items involving direct contact for 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.

## **6 APPEARANCE OF BUILDINGS**

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

## **7 GROUNDS AND GARDENS**

Gardens and/or open areas that are part of the unit maintained in good order.

Where gardens are available then 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.

## **8 BOOKINGS AND PRICES**

To 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, linen, 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 a shower) provided in writing or printed form in advance of normal 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 must be communicated at time of booking. If requested, allow guests to see the property before booking. If property is occupied, this may not be possible.

A printed (or type written) brochure or information leaflet to be available. A floor plan is encouraged. Arrangements for access communicated pre-arrival.

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.

Visitors advised at the time of booking or subsequently in the event of any change in booking details.

Prices quoted at time of booking not exceeded.

Visitors provided with details of payments due and a receipt if required.

The receipt to be clearly presented and well laid out.

The following information readily available prior to booking:

- **Car parking arrangements near unit**
- **Arrangements for pets**
- **Distance of unit from nearest shop(s), etc.**
- **Distance of unit from nearest public transport**
- **Nature of water supply, if not mains (or water supply meets all statutory regulations for drinking water)**
- **Types of energy supply if not electric**
- **Electricity voltage; if not standard**
- **A map and/or directions provided showing the location of the unit on booking or with brochure. (This may be provided in more detail after booking)**

## **9 GUEST AND TOURIST INFORMATION**

Tourist Information to be available.

## **10 GENERAL**

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 terrestrial TV channels are not available every effort should be made to provide an alternative such as satellite TV.

Nonflammable waste paper bins provided in living areas.

### **Four Star:**

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

### **Five Star:**

Please refer to requirements under general miscellaneous.

## **11 FLOORING**

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

## **12 FURNITURE, FURNISHINGS AND FITTINGS**

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.

## **13 HEATING AND VENTILATION**

Adequate means of heating must be available at all times which will mean heating will be provided in living areas. (Free standing paraffin and Calor gas heaters are discouraged for safety reasons)

Heating should normally be under guests' control.

All living room areas to have at least one window opening directly into the open air.

## **14 LIGHTING**

All living areas must be adequately lit and lighting levels appropriate to the size of the room. Low energy light bulbs are encouraged. Lights must have shades (unless bulbs are decorative e.g. candle).

## **15 FLOORING**

All rooms must have suitable floor finishes or coverings.

## **16 FURNITURE, FURNISHINGS AND FITTINGS**

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 and adequate drawer space in each unit, in at least one double or twin room, to be provided. Hooks on backs of doors etc. are not acceptable; garments should be able to hang free.

Sufficient coat hangers per person. Wire hangers are not acceptable. (Shelf space is an acceptable alternative to drawers).

**Also required for Three Star:**

Bedside table or shelf and light for each occupant (twin beds may share). For bunk beds a light per occupant is required and a shelf for the top bunk should be provided, except where it is not safe to do so. A hairdryer to be provided.

**Also required at 5 star:**

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

**17 BEDS AND BEDDING**

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 i.e. bedspread and two blankets per bed, or one duvet of suitable tog rating, and two pillows per person. For winter, late or early season letting, the amount of bedding should be increased. Bedding clean and well aired.

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).

Where linen is provided, it 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 that where bed linen is provided beds should be made for guests on arrival.

Where a bedroom is accessed via another bedroom, then this must be clearly advertised in the brochure

Where a bathroom is accessed via a bedroom, then these units must be designated, and advertised in the brochure, as only being suitable for single family occupation.

**Additional requirements to meet:****Two Star**

All beds to be full size (except those clearly specified in brochures etc. 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.

Bed linen available with or without extra charge. (Cot bedding not included).

#### **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).

Bed linen provided and included in the hire charge. Beds must be made up for guest's arrival.

#### **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.

#### **18 GALLERIED BEDROOMS**

Where a property accommodates only two people, any grade can be achieved. The galleried bedroom must be advertised as such in the brochure.

Where the property accommodates more than two guests and there is a galleried bedroom, this must be clearly advertised in the brochure. The highest grading that could be achieved is Four Stars. This is due to lack of privacy, light exclusion and noise interruption.

#### **19 HEATING AND VENTILATION**

Means of heating must be available at all times which will, in most cases, mean heating to be provided in each bedroom. All bedrooms to have at least one window opening directly into the open air; windows to have opaque curtains, blinds or shutters.

#### **20 LIGHTING**

As point 14 for public areas.

#### **21 GENERAL**

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 bath is available, this must be indicated in the brochure.

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.

### **22 FLOORING**

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

### **23 HEATING AND VENTILATION**

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 Local Planning Authority approved ventilation system.

### **24 LIGHTING**

All bathrooms/WCs must be adequately lit and all lights must have shades or be suitably protected.

### **25 GENERAL**

A cooker with an oven, with at least two shelves, a grill and at least 4 boiling rings that may be used simultaneously with the oven or grill. If 2 people only are accommodated then a 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.

A microwave is an acceptable alternative for one boiling ring. A combination microwave (oven, grill and microwave) is acceptable as a grill or oven, provided that a three ring hob is also available separately.

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.

Freezer space available (\*\* icebox in a fridge is no longer acceptable). A shared freezer is acceptable on a multiunit site however thought should be given to security of each property's food items.

##### **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.

#### **26 FLOORING**

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

#### **27 HEATING AND VENTILATION**

Adequate means of heating must be available at all times which will, in most cases, mean heating provided in the kitchen, if large or separate. There should be an opening window or local planning authority approved ventilation system.

#### **28 LIGHTING**

As point 14 for public areas.

#### **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.

##### **Per Person**

Matching crockery

Bowl – cereal or soup

Plate – large and small

Egg cup

Mug

Teacup and saucer

Tumblers – large and small

Wine glass

Knives – table and side

Forks – table and dessert

Spoons – soup, dessert and tea

(It is acceptable to provide double the amount i.e. two of each rather than table and or side/dessert)

**Per Unit**

Ashtrays – if smoking permitted  
Baking tray or tin  
Basic clothes drying facility – line or rack  
Biscuit or cake tin or storage container  
Bread board or chopping board  
Bread bin Bread knife  
Broom  
Bucket  
Butter dish  
Cafetiere Coffee maker  
Casserole dish with lid  
Carving knife, fork and dish  
Cleaning agents including washing up liquid – appropriate to equipment supplied  
Clothes pegs – at least 24  
Colander  
Condiment set  
Corkscrew and bottle opener  
Cutlery box or drawer divider  
Dish cleaning cloths (changed for each new let)  
Door mat at exterior doors  
Duster  
Dustpan and brush  
Fish slice  
Floor cloth and/or mop  
Frying pan  
Grater  
Ice making tray  
Iron and ironing board (1:5 in multiple units and readily available)  
Kettle – automatic electric  
Kitchen scissors  
Ladle  
Measuring jug  
Milk jug  
Mixing bowls – large and small  
Mug rack  
Oven cloth or mitts  
Oven roasting tray  
Pie dish  
Potato masher  
Potato peeler  
Saucepans – large, medium, small with lids  
(Two additional large saucepans if 8 or more guests are accommodated)  
Serving dishes x 4 (to include salad bowl and vegetable dishes  
Sieve  
Spare light bulbs (at least one for each type used)  
Sugar basin  
Table cloth (or one place mat per person)  
Teapot

Tea towels with hooks, rail or suckers  
Tin opener  
Toast rack  
Toaster  
Tray  
Vacuum cleaner  
Vegetable knife  
Washing up bowl with brush or sponge  
Water jug  
Whisk  
Wooden/plastic mixing spoon

## **SUSTAINABILITY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE**

Recognising the business benefits of operating in a sustainable way, and that **93% of self-catering businesses** are already implementing 10 or more sustainability actions, **we are including sustainability actions as a minimum standard in our Quality Assurance schemes from Jan 2015 onwards.**

Self-catering business will be required to undertake 10 out of 30 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.

It is important to note that the number of sustainability actions undertaken will not affect your quality grading in any way. Our focus has been, and will continue to be, on providing advice and support on sustainability actions and the benefits of becoming more sustainable.

For more details and a list of the 30 sustainability actions that will be reviewed, please see the [Sustainability and QA page](#) on [visitscotland.org](http://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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