

Guidance notes for self catering quality grading

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1. General Overview

1.1 Tourism quality

Quality is the key to success within the modern hospitality industry. For our Self-Catering sector to be successful both nationally and internationally, it is important that quality standards are set high and continue to improve.

Tourism NI's Quality Advisors will work with you to maximise the potential of your business.

As a member of the Tourism NI Quality scheme, you will receive an annual quality assessment. This visit will look at all customer facing aspects of your business. Each assessment is followed by a verbal debrief and a detailed management report. Both of these tools are designed to help you to improve your business.

2. The Star Grade

Tourism NI's Quality Assurance Scheme for tourist accommodation businesses is designed to give visitors a clear idea of the standard of accommodation and overall experience they can expect during their stay. Star grades are recognised around the world and are an important part of the decision making process for visitors. In a recent survey, 83% of respondents from Northern Ireland and 88% of respondents from the Republic of Ireland felt that seeing the grade of a hotel was important when booking, and we see similar figures around the world. They are an important part of Tourism NI's work in attracting visitors to Northern Ireland.

2.1 Determining a star grade

During a visit the Quality Advisor will assess quality in a range of areas across the business. These include all physical areas of the property, customer service and cleanliness. Not all areas will be applicable in all establishments, for example, in an apartment without a garden, no score will be given for 'grounds and garden's and there will be no penalty for not providing these facilities.

Quality Advisors will consider two main factors when making an assessment – quality and condition. For example, a piece of furniture might be of the highest quality manufacture but over time the condition has deteriorated. As a result, damage or wear and tear will reduce the mark given. Conversely, another piece of furniture, even when newly bought, may be of a lower intrinsic quality which would lower the mark awarded.

The information in this Guidance is not prescriptive or exhaustive. It is intended to give a broad impression of the areas which the Quality Advisor assesses and to illustrate some of the more frequently met situations that would determine the marks given.

In practice there are several factors which may affect the scores, reflecting the wide range and diversity of accommodation in Northern Ireland. As always these may be discussed with The Quality Advisor during the visit and will be considered in the assessment.

This document provides an indication of what is expected for each star grade, broken down by area of the property. Each criteria builds upon the last, so to achieve a five star grade, you will be expected to meet the criteria for grades one to four.

2. The Star Grade

2.2 Areas of assessment

The following aspects are considered as part of the quality assessment:

Exterior

- Appearance of buildings
- Grounds and gardens
- Environment and setting

Cleanliness

- Public areas
- Bedrooms
- Bathrooms
- Kitchen

Public areas (dining and lounge areas, hallways, stairs and corridors)

- Decoration
- Flooring
- Furniture, furnishings and fittings
- Heating and lighting
- Space, comfort and ease of use

Management efficiency

- Pre-arrival guest information including brochure
- Welcome and arrival procedure
- In-unit guest information and personal touches

Bedrooms

- Decoration
- Flooring
- Furniture, furnishings and fittings
- Heating, lighting and ventilation
- Beds
- Bedding and linen
- Space, comfort and ease of use

Bathrooms

- Decoration
- Flooring
- Fixtures, fittings and sanitary ware
- Heating, lighting and ventilation
- Space, comfort and ease of use

Kitchen

- Decoration
- Fittings and furniture
- Flooring
- Heating, lighting and ventilation
- Electrical and gas equipment
- Crockery, cutlery and glassware
- Kitchenware, pans and utensils
- Space comfort and ease of use

Additional features (where applicable)

- Laundry
- Recreation
- Reception, shop, bar, restaurant

2. The Star Grade

2.3 Star grading bands

In each of the above areas, the Quality Advisor will award a quality score of “exceptional” or “world-class” (5 marks), “excellent” (4 marks), “very good” (3 marks), “good” (2 marks), “acceptable” (1 mark) or “poor” (0 marks).

- ★★★★★ **87-100%**
Cleanliness minimum score 90%
- ★★★★ **75-86%**
Cleanliness minimum score 75%
- ★★★ **60-74%**
Cleanliness minimum score 65%
- ★★ **48-59%**
Cleanliness minimum score 50%
- ★ **34-47%**
Cleanliness minimum score 40%
- Fail - Less than 34%**
Cleanliness less than 40%; any score of 0

Consumer research has shown that guests expect consistency in all aspects of the property, meaning that each area of the property should meet the overall star grade awarded.

In other words, to achieve a Three-Star grade the quality of all internal areas of the property must reach at least a Three Star quality in public areas, bedrooms, bathrooms and kitchens, i.e., a minimum quality score of 60% in these areas. Consumer research has also shown that cleanliness is of paramount importance at any quality level and the minimum scores at each star grade reflects this need.



3. Exterior

3.1 Appearance of buildings

QUALITY GUIDANCE

The décor, maintenance and repair of the building will be assessed under this section. This includes stonework, woodwork, paintwork, gutters, pipes, external plumbing, chimneys and roofs.

External signage attached to the building (clarity and maintenance) and lighting is considered here.

Any outbuildings and storage areas e.g., refuse areas will be assessed here, as well as window boxes, tubs and hanging baskets attached to the building.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Exteriors maintained in a sound, acceptable and clean condition overall.
- Some signs of ageing may be present and small defects to the exterior.
- No evidence of recent freshening up.
- Ageing signage.
- Overall tidiness of immediate area including storage buildings/areas.

Mark 2 - For example:

- External fabric all in sound condition.
- Signs of ageing and defects should be limited to a small number of areas.
- No obvious structural defects or damage.
- Paintwork, pointing, window frames all in a good state of repair though not necessarily recently painted.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Well maintained exterior although light weathering may be present.
- No obvious structural defects.
- Evidence that the building is maintained in good condition.

Mark 4 - For example:

- High quality maintenance of buildings.
- Some additional external features to enhance appearance, which includes window boxes and planters, especially in properties without a garden.
- Property signage likely to be in place.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Exceptional standards of external maintenance including outbuildings.
- Fresh well-maintained paintwork, stonework and woodwork.
- Addition of features such as flower tubs and planters, or alternatives, where appropriate.
- Attractive architectural features may be in evidence.
- Illuminated and clearly signed.



3. Exterior

3.2 Grounds, gardens, driveways & parking

QUALITY GUIDANCE

Assessment of this area will include garden areas, garden furniture, hedges, paths, driveways, parking and all other areas within the boundaries of the property which are visible from the property or which guests have access to and which are under control of the owner.

If the property has no grounds, gardens or parking this section is not assessed.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Immediate surroundings maintained in sound condition, e.g. lawns not overgrown.
- Safe and adequately maintained parking. If parking not available, information about alternative arrangements provided.
- Driveways may have an uneven surface but no hazardous potholes.
- Little attempt at interesting design, but an adequate first impression.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Evidence of effort made to make gardens more attractive, tidy and litter free.
- No overgrown or tangled areas.
- Pathways without trip hazards.
- Some attempt to define parking area.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Well-maintained and tidy overall appearance of grounds, gardens, driveways and footpaths.
- Easy access to parking with well-maintained surface and clear definition.
- Effective lighting where required e.g. along driveway, path to the property, and at parking.
- Parking on a better surface and pot-hole free.

Mark 4 - For example:

- High standards of maintenance of garden.
- Tidy beds, pathways and hedges.
- All trees and shrubs, well-tended.
- Evidence of attention to detail e.g. well-surfaced driveways, colourful borders and wide pathways.
- Parking area on a well-maintained surface and preferably close to the property.
- Dustbin areas not obvious.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Maintained to an exceptional standard.
- Well-tended borders or shrubs, tidy pathways and edges in good condition and well cut, hedges trimmed and an overall appearance throughout the year.
- Where there are substantial grounds, evidence of a systematic programme of maintenance.
- Attention to detail, including landscaping, driveways, the provision of garden furniture or architectural features, e.g. gazebo, pergola, summer house etc.
- Ample car parking spaces adjacent to unit.
- Consideration given to the security of guests' cars.



3. Exterior

3.3 Environment & setting

QUALITY GUIDANCE

A reflection of the location of the property and the surrounding area that could affect the guest's comfort. Consideration will be given to efforts made to overcome a poor environment by screening or banking to reduce any unsightly outlook and noise.

The approach to the property from the road is also considered.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- May be situated at a busy road or close to industrial units.
- Substantial noise levels from traffic or industrial sources.
- Unfavourable first impression.
- On a working site, such as a farm, where access is muddy or obstructed by machinery.

Mark 2 - For example:

- May be situated on a crowded site where individual units are close together.
- In a town/city centre with some parking restrictions and busy traffic but close to all amenities.
- Some attempt at noise insulation e.g., double glazing.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Good first impression.
- Possibly part of a complex or site of buildings in an otherwise excellent location.
- Within walking distance of facilities, but where parking is freely available.
- No excessive noise levels.

Mark 4 - For example:

- May be in an excellent location, but in close proximity to other units or houses.
- In a secluded location, but access may be limited due to e.g., steep or rough track.
- In a city close to centre with good pedestrian access or regular public transport to major attractions and facilities such as restaurants and theatres.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Establishment is inviting.
- Attractive surroundings.
- Often in a secluded situation in extensive grounds perhaps by a river or in an elevated position in an area of outstanding natural beauty.
- Ready access to nearby leisure activities e.g. golf, mountains, fishing, seashore etc.
- In the city centre with excellent pedestrian access to major attractions and facilities such as restaurants, theatres, galleries etc.



4. Cleanliness

4.1 Public areas (Living & dining rooms etc.)

QUALITY GUIDANCE

Areas assessed are windows, flooring, skirting, stair treads, dado/picture rails, pictures, seat cushions, inside and outside of furniture, power points and light switches, light fittings, ceiling edges and electrical goods.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- All surfaces and equipment clean and generally free from dust but there may be limited signs of neglect.
- All carpets vacuumed and floors cleaned.
- All areas smelling fresh and clean for guests' arrival.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Good standard overall although some areas overlooked and some evidence of dust, cobwebs high and low or in inaccessible places.
- Untidy books/magazines/ games in cupboard.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Evidence of attention to detail, particularly high and low level, with only minor oversights.
- Clean fresh surfaces.
- Soft furnishings and carpets deep cleaned on a regular basis or as required.

Mark 4 - For example:

- Greater attention to detail.
- High overall standards evidence.

Mark 5 - For example:

- An exceptional level of cleanliness.
- No evidence of dust.
- Gleaming surfaces with evidence of thorough cleaning and a high level of attention to detail.
- Pristine soft furnishings and carpets.

4.2 Bedroom

QUALITY GUIDANCE

Inside and outside of furniture (tops and inside of wardrobes), light fittings and ceiling edges, flooring and skirtings, under beds, windows, bed heads, frames, mattresses and bed linen.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- All surfaces and equipment clean and free from dust.
- All carpets vacuumed and floors cleaned.
- All areas smelling fresh and clean for guests' arrival.
- Limited signs of neglect.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Quite good standard overall although some areas overlooked and some evidence of dust, cobwebs high and low or in inaccessible places.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Evidence of attention to detail, particularly at high and low level.
- Clean fresh surfaces.
- Soft furnishings and carpets deep cleaned on a regular basis or as required.

Mark 4 - For example:

- Greater attention to detail.
- High overall standards evidence.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Exceptional level of cleanliness.
- No evidence of dust.
- Gleaming surfaces with evidence of thorough cleaning and a high level of attention to detail.
- Pristine soft furnishings and carpets.

4. Cleanliness

4.3 Bathrooms

QUALITY GUIDANCE

This includes wall finishes, flooring, equipment, shower curtains, light fittings, fixtures, fittings, sanitaryware, extractor fans, plug holes, taps and toilet brushes.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- All surfaces and equipment clean and free from dust.
- All carpets vacuumed and floors cleaned.
- All areas smelling fresh and clean for guests' arrival.
- Limited signs of neglect.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Quite good standard overall although some areas overlooked and some evidence of dust, cobwebs high and low or in inaccessible places.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Evidence of attention to detail, particularly high and low level.
- Clean fresh surfaces.
- Soft furnishings and carpets deep cleaned on a regular basis or as required.

Mark 4 - For example:

- Greater attention to detail, with high overall standards evident.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Exceptional level of cleanliness.
- No evidence of dust.
- Gleaming surfaces with evidence of thorough cleaning and a high level of attention to detail.
- Pristine flooring and sanitary ware.

4.4 Kitchen

QUALITY GUIDANCE

This includes wall finishes, flooring, equipment, light fittings, extractor fans, plug holes, taps, inside drawers and cupboards, appliances, crockery, cutlery and all kitchenware.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- All surfaces and equipment clean and free from dust.
- All carpets vacuumed and floors cleaned.
- All areas smelling fresh and clean for guests' arrival.
- Limited signs of neglect.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Quite good standard overall although some areas overlooked and some evidence of dust, cobwebs high and low or in inaccessible places.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Evidence of attention to detail, particularly high and low level.
- Clean fresh surfaces.
- Soft furnishings and carpets deep cleaned on a regular basis or as required.

Mark 4 - For example:

- Greater attention to detail, with high overall standards evident.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Exceptional level of cleanliness.
- No evidence of dust.
- All drawers and cupboards clean and lined and contents tidily laid out.
- Gleaming surfaces with evidence of thorough cleaning and a high level of attention to detail.
- Pristine fittings and flooring.

5. Management efficiency

5.1 Pre-Arrival information

QUALITY GUIDANCE

The procedures for dealing with guests during booking, pre-arrival, arrival and information provision for the guests to make the most of their stay are assessed here.

This covers the information sent prior to arrival, which aims to inform the guest about the property and the locality. This may also include the operators and/or agents' website for the property.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Pre-arrival guest information may be a simple, typed sheet with basic information.
- Confirmation letter sent by email.
- Some information on property may be out of date.
- Map/directions clear and easy to follow after booking.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Guest information may include more detail.
- Efficient and effective procedures carried out but not with a high degree of professional polish.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Efficient and well organised information and booking procedures.
- Website link featuring images of the property. A letter of introduction may be included.
- Hand produced information folder, individually typed or photocopied.

Mark 4 - For example:

- Website link with high quality images of the property.
- Well laid out informative brochure on quality paper.
- Hand produced information folder, individually typed or photocopied, with a high level of attention to detail.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Owners thoroughly organised and professional.
- Well-planned and exhaustive booking procedures.
- High quality website with extensive, clear information.
- Comprehensive information regarding cancellation policy.
- Detailed, easy to follow directions sent after booking.
- Welcome card with tourist information.
- Comprehensive guest information and tourist information, produced to a professional standard.



5. Management efficiency

5.2 Welcome & arrival

QUALITY GUIDANCE

This is the procedure used to welcome guests including a personal welcome or arrangements for access | e.g., key collection.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- It may not be possible to welcome guests personally.
- A key may be left for new arrivals.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Key could be obtained from key holder, but limited additional welcome information or provisions.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Welcome beverages provided e.g., tea and coffee, perhaps set on a tray.
- Welcome card inviting guests to contact owners or caretaker at any time during stay.
- All beds made up in advance of guest arrival.

Mark 4 - For example:

- Where no personal welcome given, a tea tray with welcome letter or a phone call or visit, sometime after arrival to check all is well.
- A "Welcome Pack" should be provided and may include tea, coffee, milk, bread and cake, etc.
- It is expected that the house will be warmed and illuminated as appropriate to the season.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Personal welcome from owner or representative and/or satisfaction check after 24 hours.
- More generous and detailed "Welcome Pack" provided with e.g., fruit, flowers, artisan breads, eggs, wine, etc.
- House warmed and illuminated, as appropriate to the season.

5.3 Guest & tourist information

QUALITY GUIDANCE

In-unit guest information and personal touches. This includes the provision of tourist information and household information such as how to use the equipment. Personal touches are those aspects which make the

property more homely and welcoming such as plants, books, local artwork, magazines, games, etc.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Selection of tourist information for local and surrounding area. Limited presentation.
- Limited range of personal touches.
- Details provided on how to operate all equipment in the unit along with refuse collection information.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Reasonable selection of tourist information (some might be out of date).
- Small range of items, e.g. books and magazines.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Extended range of up-to-date tourist information including places to eat, visitor attractions, etc.
- Good standard of presentation for household information.
- Wider range of personal effects including books, games and magazines.
- Detailed guest information e.g. local shops, pubs, leisure facilities, cafes, etc.

Mark 4 - For example:

- A wide selection of tourist information for the local area and further afield. Well-organised leaflets would be expected.
- Additional information compiled by owners, more than commercially produced leaflets.
- A range of information about local visitor attractions, walks, shops and restaurants, etc. This should be neatly displayed in a loose binder or in a rack, for example.
- An excellent range of personal touches including books, games, barbecue, torches, plants and magazines.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Comprehensive information may include local interest books, ordnance survey maps, walking information etc.
- Guest and tourist information displayed in loose-leaf folder or similar.
- Excellent range of items could include e.g. cookbooks, baking box, dog treats (pet friendly units), coffee machine, etc.

6. Public areas

Includes halls, stairs and landings as well as lounges, conservatories and separate dining rooms. Where bars and restaurants are on site these will be marked under 'Additional Facilities'.

6.1 Decoration

QUALITY GUIDANCE

As well as walls and ceilings, the provision and quality of pictures, prints and all wall decorations are assessed here. The assessment of the decoration of walls, ceilings and woodwork looks at the quality application and condition.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Functional décor with limited coordination.
- Limited use of pictures and wall hangings.
- Some slight damage and signs of wear and tear.
- Basic application of wallpaper or paint, with some deficiencies.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Standard domestic style and quality of décor.
- Competently applied and of a quite good quality with a few blemishes.
- Some signs of ageing but no major wear and tear.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Good interior, with co-ordinated design.
- Well finished, good quality wall coverings and paintwork.
- More moderate quality materials, but executed to a professional standard.
- Use of pictures and prints on plain walls.

Mark 4 - For example:

- Use of high quality wall coverings though not necessarily in pristine condition.
- A professional standard of finish in excellent condition with appropriate level of adornment as befits the style.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Exceptional interior design creating a very positive impression.
- High quality wall coverings in exceptional condition; professional finish to all aspects of decoration.
- Attractive use of pictures prints and other decorative relief where appropriate.
- Interesting architectural features, objects of interest, artwork and eye-catching objects d'art.



6. Public areas

6.2 Flooring

QUALITY GUIDANCE

This includes all types of flooring such as carpets, laminate, ceramic, natural wood or vinyl floor coverings. Assessment covers quality, condition and fitting.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Typically a limited quality flooring, with adequate comfort.
- Some signs of wear and tear may be evident but no holes or bald patches.
- May be some slight discolouration.
- May not be professionally fitted.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Quite good quality, but carpets may have a high manmade fibre content.
- Flooring may not necessarily be new but should be well fitted and show few signs of wear and tear.
- Tiling should have little damage.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Good quality flooring in sound condition and comfortable under foot. Underlay is expected for carpets.
- Wood on floors to be in good condition, well-polished and provided with smaller rugs/mats as appropriate.
- Tiling to have clean grouting.

Mark 4 - For example:

- High quality flooring, but not necessarily new.
- If more moderate quality, it should be in pristine condition.
- Normally professionally fitted.
- High quality rugs would be anticipated on wood or laminate flooring.

Mark 5 - For example:

- High quality flooring in exceptional condition.
- Carpets with deep pile and substantial underlay.
- Hardwood flooring or equivalent quality.
- No sign of wear and professionally fitted.

6.3 Furniture & furnishings

QUALITY GUIDANCE

This includes the quality and condition of dining and lounge furniture including seating, scatter cushions, occasional furniture, curtain poles, curtains, light fittings, heating appliances, television etc.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- An adequate provision of furniture, furnishings and fittings. Limited co-ordination or a mismatch of styles.
- Furniture may show marks and some limited wear.
- Curtains may be unlined, but should meet in the middle; blinds should run free.
- Lighting and heating fittings could be lacking intrinsic quality.

Mark 2 - For example:

- A greater provision of furniture which may be dated or have wear but will be in sound condition.
- No great degree of comfort for the guest.
- Curtains to be of better quality, clean and easy to draw.
- Light and heating fittings of quite a good standard.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Good quality furniture showing little sign of wear and tear.
- More substantial lined curtains.
- Good use of co-ordination.

Mark 4 - For example:

- High quality furniture, not necessarily new.
- May be more moderate quality but in excellent condition.
- Excellent quality lighting and heating.
- Fittings maintained to a high standard.

Mark 5 - For example:

- High quality furniture in exceptional condition irrespective of style.
- No sign of wear.
- Professionally fitted window coverings.
- Attractive co-ordinated extras such as high quality cushions.
- Decorative occasional pieces along with high quality lighting/heating fittings.

6. Public areas

6.4 Space, comfort and ease of use

QUALITY GUIDANCE

This considers the use of space and how the room layout is planned to offer maximum convenience and ease of use for guests. Can guests all sit and watch TV in comfort? Does the furniture have to be moved for the facilities to be used? The use of sofa beds will be taken into account here as this affects the comfort and ease of use.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Acceptable comfort and range of furniture.
- Space for reasonably free movement.
- Large or over provision of furniture may mean it dominates the room and normal usage.
- Should be free from disturbing external noise, smells, etc.
- Minimal intrusive noise from plumbing, corridors or street-noise.
- Little thought given to layout.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Quite good levels of comfort.
- A limited range of seating.
- Environment free from external noise and smells, etc.
- Easy use of facilities.

Mark 3 - For example:

- A very good range of sofas and/or armchairs.
- Ample space for freedom of movement.
- Convenient layout of furniture for practical use.
- A fresh and airy atmosphere.

Mark 4 - For example:

- Well planned layout of furniture in order to maximise space.
- Generous free space.
- Where there is an open plan kitchen/living area, there should be adequate ventilation e.g., forced extraction to ensure minimal intrusion in the living area from steam and cooking odours.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Lounge is generally separate from dining room. Where a combined lounge and dining room, this will have a well planned and exceptionally spacious layout.
- Exceptional range of comfortable seating.
- Large amount of free space, which may include more than one reception room.
- Easy and convenient use of facilities, e.g., use of surfaces and access to power points etc.
- No intrusive noise.



6. Public areas

6.5 Heating, lighting & ventilation

QUALITY GUIDANCE

This relates to the quality and provision of lighting and heating and whether it is sufficient for the size of the unit and the number of guests accommodated. There should be a balance of natural and artificial light where appropriate.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Adequate levels of lighting appropriately positioned for practical use but little more (including stairs, landings and corridors).
- Heating levels appropriate to size of rooms; may not be automatic or fixed.
- Some areas colder than others.
- Uncontrolled heat, either too hot or cold.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Quite good levels of lighting maybe main light and one other light.
- Heating might be free standing and may be automatic or thermostatically controlled.
- May be a mixture of heating systems, some fixed some moveable.
- Maintains good background temperature which can be boosted when required.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Good levels of controllable lighting in all areas including stairs, landings and corridors.
- There is likely to be more than one source of lighting e.g., wall, standard lamps. Ample natural light.
- Effective levels of heating providing overall uniform temperature.
- Properly fitted, automatic fixed heating, which may be thermostatically controlled.

Mark 4 - For example:

- Excellent levels of controllable lighting, which may include use of dimmers in rooms.
- There should be several forms of lighting e.g., table lamps wall lights, picture lights etc.
- Automatic heating will be fixed and thermostatically controlled.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Exceptional lighting which creates a good effect and shows the rooms to best advantage.
- Light should be practical for all purposes such as reading etc.
- Heating levels fully controllable at all times of day/night by the guest: some old storage heaters unlikely to meet this requirement.



7. Bedrooms

7.1 Decoration

QUALITY GUIDANCE

As well as wall and ceilings, the provision and quality of pictures and prints and all wall decorations are assessed here. The assessment of the decoration of walls, ceilings and woodwork looks at the quality, application and condition. The assessor's personal tastes in style or design are not considered.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Functional décor and limited co-ordination.
- Limited use of pictures and wall hangings.
- Some slight damage and signs of wear and tear.
- Poor application of wallpaper or paint.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Standard domestic style and quality of décor.
- Competently applied and of a quite good quality but with few with a few minor blemishes.
- Some signs of ageing but no major wear and tear.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Good interior.
- Evidence of co-ordinated design.
- Well finished, good quality wall coverings and paintwork.
- More moderate quality materials but executed to a professional standard.
- Use of pictures or prints where appropriate, where appropriate, particularly on plain walls.

Mark 4 - For example:

- Use of high quality wall coverings though not necessarily in pristine condition.
- A professional standard of finish in excellent condition with appropriate level of adornment as benefits the style.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Exceptional interior design creating an excellent impression.
- High quality wall coverings in exceptional condition; professional finish to all aspects of decoration.
- Attractive use of artwork or prints and other decorative relief where appropriate.

7.2 Flooring

QUALITY GUIDANCE

This includes all types of flooring such as carpets, laminate or natural wood.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Adequate comfort to flooring.
- Some signs of wear and tear may be evident but no holes or bald patches.
- May be some slight discolouration.
- May not be professionally fitted.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Quite good quality, but carpets may have a high manmade fibre content.
- Flooring may not necessarily be new but should be well fitted.
- Few, if any, signs of wear and tear.
- Tiling should have little damage.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Good quality flooring in sound condition.
- Comfortable under foot, with some underlay expected for carpets.
- Tiling to have clean grouting.
- Wood on floors to be in good condition, well-polished.
- Wood or laminate floors provided with smaller rugs, as appropriate.

Mark 4 - For example:

- High quality flooring, but not necessarily new. May show limited signs of wear.
- More moderate quality coverings may be awarded a mark of 4 if in pristine condition and professionally fitted.
- High quality rugs would be anticipated on wood or laminate flooring.

Mark 5 - For example:

- High quality flooring in exceptional condition.
- Carpets to have substantial underlay.
- No real sign of wear.
- Flooring professionally fitted throughout.

7. Bedrooms

7.3 Furniture, furnishings & fittings

QUALITY GUIDANCE

This includes fitted and freestanding furniture, curtains and rails, scatter cushions, heating appliances and light fittings.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- A sparing but adequate provision of furniture, furnishings and fitting. Limited coordination.
- Some slight damage may be apparent but all items capable of use.
- Curtains may be unlined but should meet in the middle. Blinds should run free.
- Lighting and heating fittings could be lacking intrinsic quality.

Mark 2 - For example:

- A greater provision of furniture.
- Furniture and furnishings may be dated or have light wear but will be in sound condition.
- Excellent quality furniture, but through age and use shows light signs of wear and tear.
- No damage to surfaces or upholstery and no stains or fraying.
- Curtains to be a better quality and run freely.
- Light and heating fittings of a good standard.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Ample provision of furniture in each room.
- Good quality fittings and furniture in a sound and useable condition.
- Good use of co-ordination.
- Curtains to be full and effective in retaining heat/ excluding light.
- Consideration given to the amount of furniture in proportion to the space available.

Mark 4 - For example:

- High quality furniture, not necessarily new, but which offers substantial comfort and space.
- Curtains to be full and may have additional embellishments such as quality curtain poles, holdbacks or tie-backs.
- Excellent quality lighting and heating fittings maintained in a very good condition.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Exceptional quality modern, reproduction or antique furniture of sound construction.
- Some exceptional antique furniture may show signs of 'distress' which does not detract from the overall quality.
- Well thought out co-ordination of furniture and soft furnishings.
- Additional features e.g., scatter cushions etc.
- Exceptional quality and well-fitted window covering with ample drape and width.
- High quality lighting and heating fittings in pristine condition.



7. Bedrooms

7.4 Beds

QUALITY GUIDANCE

This includes the quality and condition of headboards, bed bases, mattresses and frames.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Acceptable quality headboard, bed bases, mattresses and frames.
- Little sagging and no uneven legs or wobbly headboards.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Beds of a quite good quality but mattresses may be thin and bases shallow.
- Some limited signs of wear and tear.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Good quality comfortable bed, firm mattresses and sound base.
- Headboards and bed frames may be of older style, but in good condition.

Mark 4 - For example:

- Excellent quality bed, e.g. sprung mattress and high quality base.
- Bed sizes may be larger than standard size.
- Mattress toppers may be seen at this level.
- Headboard offered a good degree of comfort.
- Headboard and frame in excellent condition.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Exceptional quality bed with deep, sprung mattress and high quality base.
- Bed sizes are usually larger than the standard size, e.g. king beds for double occupancy.
- Mattress toppers are expected at this level.
- Headboard offers a high degree of comfort.
- High quality zip and link beds often in place.

7.5 Bedding & linen

QUALITY GUIDANCE

This looks at the quality and condition of pillows, duvets, blankets and sheets, pillow and mattress protectors, base wraps, valances and bedspreads.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Beds dressed with acceptable quality, clean linen, in good repair.
- Bed linen may be a lower quality polyester mixture, which may be thinning or faded.
- Adequate range of bedding, including sufficient blankets and/or duvets.
- If additional bedding is provided, it should be clean and fresh, preferably wrapped to retain cleanliness. Pillows may be flatter and manmade fibre filled.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Bed linen of a more moderate quality, but in good condition.
- Some attempt at coordinated design.
- Sheets well-ironed and neatly presented.
- Pillows to be in good condition and plump.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Well-presented beds, with good quality, pressed, co-ordinated linen and bedding.
- Bed wraps or valances are expected on divans.
- Extra quality pillows and bedding available.
- Pillows should be substantial.

Mark 4 - For example:

- Excellent quality linen co-ordinated with bedding and room.
- Choice of pillows available e.g., feather, hypoallergenic or Hollow fibre.
- Coordinated bed wraps or valances used on bases of beds.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Co-ordinated and crisply laundered linen.
- A choice of bedding available e.g., thickly quilted or similar quality bedspreads and blankets, or duvets with appropriate tog rating for season of year.
- All bedding and linen of high quality and coordinated with bedroom décor and other soft furnishings.
- Where duvets are used, the generosity of size should be considered, e.g., single beds having double duvets.
- High quality padded mattress covers are expected.

7. Bedrooms

7.6 Heating, lighting & ventilation

QUALITY GUIDANCE

This relates to the quality and provision of lighting and heating and whether it is sufficient for the size of the room and requirements e.g. reading in bed, applying make-up, using a hairdryer at a dressing table. There should be a balance of natural and artificial light where appropriate.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Adequate levels of lighting appropriately positioned.
- Enough lighting for practical use but little more.
- Heating levels appropriate to size of rooms, may not be automatic or fixed.
- Some areas colder than others.
- Uncontrolled heat, either too hot or cold.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Quite good levels of lighting, which may include main light and one other light.
- Heating might be free standing and may be automatic or thermostatically controlled.
- May be a mixture of heating systems, some fixed some moveable.
- Maintains good background temperature which can be boosted when required.

Mark 3 - For example:

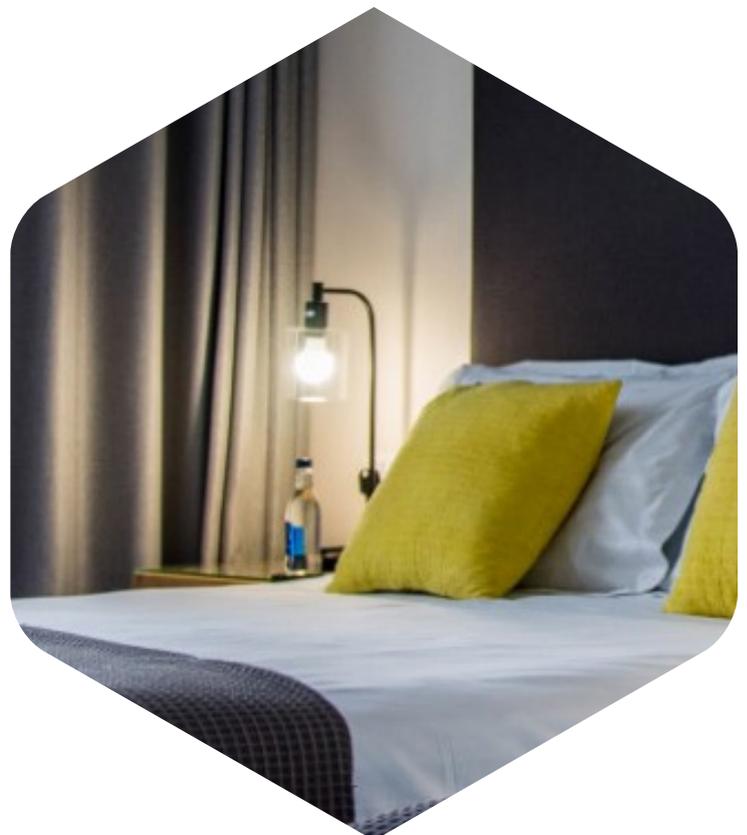
- Good levels of controllable lighting in all bedrooms.
- There is likely to be more than one source of lighting.
- Ample natural light.
- Effective levels of heating providing overall uniform temperature.
- Properly fitted, automatic fixed heating which may be thermostatically controlled.

Mark 4 - For example:

- Excellent levels of light with easy access to controls.
- Different types of lighting may be used e.g., wall lights and lamps.
- Properly fitted automatic fixed heating which may be thermostatically controlled.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Well positioned, high quality lighting, giving exceptional levels of illumination for various purposes, e.g., reading / at the dressing table.
- It would be desirable to have the main light controlled from door and bed, and lighting may be dimmable.
- Heating levels fully controllable at all times of day and night by the guest. Some older storage heaters may not meet this requirement.



7. Bedrooms

7.7 Space, comfort & ease of use

QUALITY GUIDANCE

This considers the use of space and how the room layout is planned to offer maximum convenience and ease of use for the guests. Does furniture have to be moved for the facilities to be used? Is there somewhere to store luggage?

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Reasonable free movement not to be unduly restricted by intrusive low beams and ceiling.
- Large furniture may dominate a room and make it less usable.
- Little thought given to layout.
- Minimal intrusive noise from plumbing, corridors etc.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Quite good levels of comfort and a limited range of furniture.
- Easy use of facilities with an uncluttered appearance.

Mark 3 - For example:

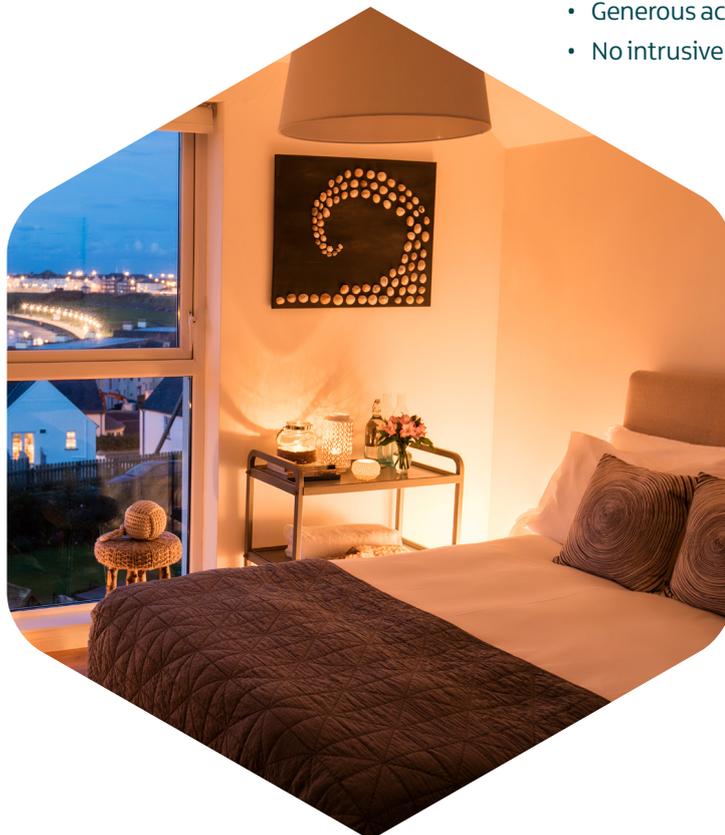
- Sufficient space to allow free movement and a good degree of comfort.
- Easy use of facilities.
- Convenient layout of furniture for practical use.
- Good access to both sides of double beds.

Mark 4 - For example:

- Well planned layout of furniture to maximise use of generous free space. Rooms may be smaller than for five-star, but well-planned positioning of furniture would make them more usable.
- Excellent access to both sides of double bed.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Bedroom should be sufficient size to allow the provision of all appropriate bedroom furniture and still give easy access.
- Area available for luggage storage without cluttering the room and obstructing access.
- Easy and convenient use of facilities e.g., access to power points, USB points etc.
- Generous access to both sides of double bed.
- No intrusive noise.



8. Bathrooms & WCs

8.1 Decoration

QUALITY GUIDANCE

This refers to the quality and condition of décor of the walls and ceilings, including tiling, grouting and sealant.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Functional décor with limited co-ordination.
- Lower quality materials with signs of ageing or evidence of DIY.
- Décor may be in good condition, but tired or dated style.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Quite good quality and condition of décor but not necessarily recently decorated.
- May show some signs of wear.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Well maintained, practical décor.
- Wall and ceiling covering well applied and all in good condition.

Mark 4 - For example:

- May be recently decorated, but not using the highest quality materials.
- May be excellent quality with slight ageing.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Exceptional interior design.
- Professional finish to all aspects of decoration. Highest quality finish to wall coverings; well fitted, high quality tiles, grouting and seals.
- Attractive use of decorative enhancements, where appropriate.

8.2 Flooring

QUALITY GUIDANCE

This includes the quality and condition of carpet, vinyl flooring, wood flooring, laminate and ceramic tiles. Non-slip flooring is always advisable in bathrooms.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Practical, non-slip flooring with adequate comfort under foot.
- Flooring may be of slightly lower quality or showing signs of wear.
- Some light stains and marks.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Quite good quality flooring with no stains or marks.
- Tiling should be in good condition, with little or no damage and grouting not discoloured.

Mark 3 - For example:

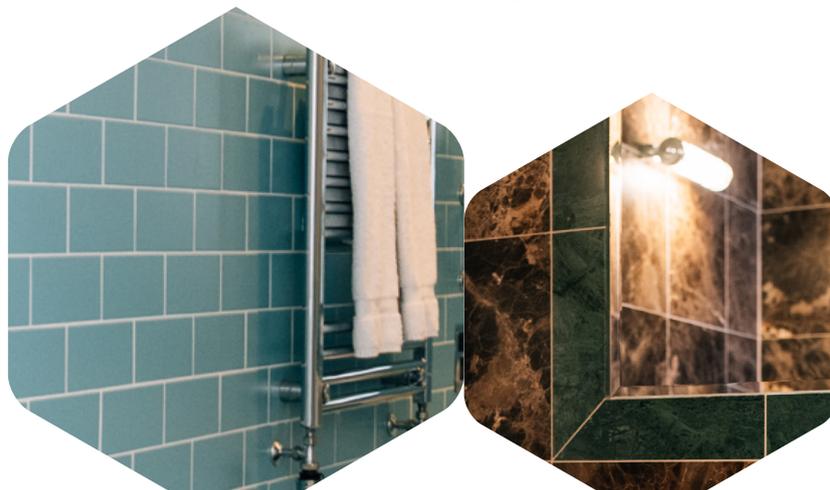
- Good quality flooring in sound condition.
- Comfortable under foot.

Mark 4 - For example:

- High quality flooring.
- Flooring may not necessarily new, but in excellent condition.
- If flooring is of a moderate quality, it should be in pristine condition.

Mark 5 - For example:

- High quality flooring, in exceptional condition.
- No material signs of wear, damage or discolouration.
- Flooring is professionally fitted.



8. Bathrooms & WCs

8.3 Fixtures, fittings, sanitary ware

QUALITY GUIDANCE

This relates to the quality and provision of lighting and heating and whether it is sufficient for the size of the room and requirements e.g. reading in bed, making up, using a hairdryer at a dressing table. There should be a balance of natural and artificial light where appropriate.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Fittings of an acceptable quality.
- Fittings may not be matching.
- Some fittings may be ageing, with dull finish to porcelain or chrome wearing off.
- Correctly fitted, appropriate window covering.
- Sufficient water pressure and satisfactory drainage for practical use of facilities.
- Flat surface provided for guests' belongings.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Fittings of a quite good quality.
- Minimal signs of ageing or wear.
- No small baths or undersized showers with awkward access.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Good quality, matching and well-fitted appliances.
- Co-ordinated sanitaryware and fixtures.
- Well-fitted window covering, with sufficient width and height to draw completely across the window.
- Good shelf space for guests' belongings.

Mark 4 - For example:

- Generally high quality fittings throughout with no wear and tear.
- Good sized baths.
- Dual shower heads may be seen at this level.
- Shower screens are expected, although high quality shower curtains may be acceptable.
- All sanitaryware in excellent order with no wear and tear or dull finishing.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Provision of high quality bath and showers.
- High quality shower fixtures and fittings, including cubicles and screens.
- Larger than average baths and/or shower cubicles.
- Full size wash hand basin and ample shelf space for guest belongings.
- Thermostatically controlled overhead and handheld showers.
- Easy-to-use, responsive controls.
- Exceptional quality and well-fitted window covering.



8. Bathrooms & WCs

8.4 Heating, lighting & ventilation

QUALITY GUIDANCE

This relates to the quality and provision of heating and lighting and whether it is sufficient for the size of the bathroom. Lack of sufficient heating and/or ventilation will give rise to condensation. There should be a balance of natural and artificial light where appropriate.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Heating levels appropriate to size. This should be fixed for safety.
- Adequate lighting appropriately positioned for practical use.
- Window only may be provided.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Heating to offer a good level of heat and may be automatically controlled.
- Quite good levels of lighting.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Effective levels of heating providing an overall uniform temperature.
- Well-positioned lighting giving good levels of illumination to the face.
- Possibly supplementary lighting in addition to main light and shaver light.

Mark 4 - For example:

- Properly fitted, thermostatically-controlled heating.
- An extractor fan and an opening window are usually expected at this level.
- Excellent levels of lighting, especially over or adjacent to a mirror.
- Different types of lighting may be evident.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Heating levels controllable at all times. Some older storage heaters may not meet this requirement.
- Additional heating in the form of a heated towel rail would be ideal.
- Extractor fan fitted with a humidistat might be provided as well as a window.
- Well-positioned excellent quality lighting, giving excellent levels of illumination, which is effective for all purposes.
- Illuminated mirrors might be fitted with heat pad to prevent misting.

8.5 Space, comfort & ease of use

QUALITY GUIDANCE

This considers the use of space and how the room layout is planned to offer maximum convenience and ease of use for the guest's freedom of movement; with safety being a prime consideration.

Ease of use is likely to be affected by too many guests sharing one bathroom, particularly where the WC is within the bathroom or where there is only a bath provided.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Adequate space and lay-out such as to allow for practical use of facilities.
- Minimal noise from plumbing.
- Slightly restricted space.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Quite good levels of comfort and a limited range of fittings.
- Easy use of facilities with no awkward access.
- Convenient access to bath, shower and WC.
- Limited space.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Sufficient space to allow guests easy access to and use of facilities.

Mark 4 - For example:

- Well-planned layout of sanitaryware and fittings to maximise convenience and ease-of-use.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Ample space to allow free movement and easy access to the facilities.
- Convenient lay-out with generous free space.



9. Kitchen

9.1 Decoration

QUALITY GUIDANCE

The assessment of the decoration of walls ceilings and woodwork looks at the quality of wall finishes, their application and condition. This includes splash backs, tiling, grouting and sealant.

The provision and quality of pictures and prints and all wall decorations is also assessed here.

In a kitchen, hygiene is of prime importance, and some account of appropriateness of materials and finishes will have to be taken into consideration.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Functional décor including walls and ceilings.
- Some light wear and tea, stains, or discolouration might be seen.
- Minimal marks, splashing, grease or other signs of cooking.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Good quality and condition of décor.
- May have some limited signs of wear.
- Some attempt at coordinated design.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Well-maintained, practical décor.
- Well-coordinated with suitable, durable finishes, applied to a good standard.

Mark 4 - For example:

- May be of excellent quality but not necessarily new.
- Alternatively, may use more moderate quality materials but in pristine condition.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Superb standard of décor professionally applied.
- Very well co-ordinated interior design.
- Highly durable surfaces, with no wear and tear.
- Freshly maintained grouting in tiled areas.
- Free from discolouration, cooking marks, splashes, etc.

9.2 Flooring

QUALITY GUIDANCE

This includes the quality and condition of tiling, laminate, vinyl and wood flooring, or suitable equivalent. Account will be taken of the quality of fitting especially around units and white goods.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Well-fitted flooring.
- Some signs of light wear and tear may be evident.
- May not be professionally fitted.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Quite good quality flooring.
- Free from substantial wear and tear, stains or burns.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Very good quality, durable flooring.
- A good degree of maintenance even in heavy traffic areas.
- Tiling to have clean grouting.

Mark 4 - For example:

- High quality flooring, but not necessarily new.
- Alternatively, a more moderate quality of flooring which is in pristine condition.
- Professionally fitted throughout.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Flooring of highest quality and in as-new condition.



9. Kitchen

9.3 Heating, lighting & ventilation

QUALITY GUIDANCE

This section is related to the quality and provision of heating and lighting and whether it is sufficient for the size of kitchen. There should be a balance of natural and artificial light where appropriate and it should be adequate for safe use of the cooker and work surfaces. Lack of sufficient heating and/or ventilation will give rise to condensation.

Ventilation is an important aspect in kitchens and air change should be provided to ensure removal of steam and cooking odours particularly in open plan units. An opening window, if it operates satisfactorily, can provide adequate ventilation.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Practical levels of artificial and/or natural lighting for safety.
- Heating may be borrowed where open plan, but nevertheless of a satisfactory level.
- Adequate ventilation perhaps only provided by opening windows.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Quite good levels of lighting.
- Heating to offer a good level of heat and may be automatically controlled.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Good overall lighting. May include lighting directly over work surfaces.
- Good ventilation may include forced extraction.

Mark 4 - For example:

- Excellent levels of lighting especially directly over work surfaces.
- Different types of lighting may be evident.
- Properly fitted, thermostatically controlled heating.
- Extractor fans as well as opening windows might be anticipated.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Exceptional lighting to all areas.
- All areas very well illuminated including work surfaces and hob/cooker.
- Easily controllable heating e.g., thermostatic valve fitted to radiators.
- Forced extraction may include a humidistat.

9.4 Furniture & fittings

QUALITY GUIDANCE

This includes all kitchen fittings in terms of quality and condition to include kitchen units and cupboards, work surfaces, curtains and blinds, light and heating fittings, extractor fans and any free-standing furniture such as kitchen table and chairs.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Work surfaces and storage may be of limited quality but adequate, with at least one cupboard or shelving for food storage.
- Some signs of wear and tear with drawers which do not slide smoothly.
- All surfaces sound and cupboard doors properly functioning.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Middle of the range quality fittings.
- Doors and drawers fitted correctly.
- High quality fittings that have deteriorated through long use.
- Sufficient work surfaces and cupboards for practical use.

Mark 3 - For example:

- High quality kitchen fittings, which may not be new but are all in sound condition.
- Well-fitted and co-ordinated units of good quality.
- More than adequate cupboard and work surface space.
- Where the dining area is part of the kitchen, tables and chairs of good quality with seat padding, where appropriate.

Mark 4 - For example:

- Excellent quality and well maintained units.
- A substantial work surface free from clutter and equipment.
- Ample storage space for guests' food and personal items.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Professionally fitted units of exceptional quality.
- Generous work surfaces of high quality finish.
- Plentiful storage space including floor and wall mounted units.
- Co-ordinated or matching designs.

9. Kitchen

9.5 Electrical/Gas Equipment

QUALITY GUIDANCE

All electrical and gas equipment provided in the kitchen will be assessed in this section including cookers, hobs, refrigerators etc. All small equipment such as food mixers and hand whisks etc. are also considered here. Appliances such as washing machines, freezers etc. which are not located in the kitchen, but another part of the property such as a utility room or the owner's property, will be included here.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Minimal or no provision beyond the basic requirement.
- Although some items may be older, all should be in sound and working condition.
- May be showing minimal signs of wear and tear.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Mixture of old and new equipment showing some limited evidence of wear.
- Generally of higher specification than basic.
- Some additional items of equipment may be provided.

Mark 3 - For example:

- All equipment in good order and very well maintained.
- Items free from signs of damage, marks, etc.
- Excellent range of equipment of mixed ages.
- Possibly a small range of high quality equipment but all brand new.

Mark 4 - For example:

- May be excellent quality, but not necessarily new.
- An excellent range of equipment provided.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Wide range of exceptional quality items, which may include food processors, coffee machines, etc.
- May include split level cookers for ease of use.
- Highest standards of equipment throughout.

9.6 Crockery, cutlery & glassware

QUALITY GUIDANCE

This includes the quality, condition and range of crockery, cutlery and glassware for dining purposes.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Minimal provision of acceptable quality.
- Crockery may be of heavy practical quality, all the same pattern for one set.
- Cutlery may be thin, low quality or mismatched.
- Small range of glasses. May not be matching.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Crockery should have no signs of mismatch, chips, stains or crazing.
- Some higher quality items showing evidence of considerable use.
- Cutlery may be lightweight but should all be matching.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Heavier styles of cutlery free from any signs of wear.
- More than ample supply for the number of guests of cutlery, crockery and glassware.
- A reasonable selection of glassware, of good quality.

Mark 4 - For example:

- Excellent quality cutlery matching throughout.
- Excellent quality crockery in pristine condition or high quality in less than perfect condition.
- Higher quality glassware.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Exceptional standard of china or other high quality pot or stoneware.
- Highest quality stainless steel or silver plate cutlery.
- Well matched high quality glassware in a larger range of sizes.
- Numbers of each item well in excess of the likely number of occupants.
- A number of ancillary items, e.g., ramekins.

9. Kitchen

9.7 Kitchenware, pans & utensils

QUALITY GUIDANCE

This section looks at the quality, range and condition of pans, baking trays, cooking and serving bowls and dishes as well as utensils. Range and quantity at a basic level should be commensurate with the number of guests i.e., larger numbers will require larger pans and serving dishes etc.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Acceptable quality but a limited range of pots, pans and other kitchenware.
- Minimum range of mismatched utensils.
- Some items may be lighter weight or more basic intrinsic quality.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Pans of a heavier quality. Handles all secure and wellfitting lids.
- May have a wide range of utensils, but not all matching design.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Pans in a range of sizes, all of good solid weight.
- Mixed range and quality of utensils.
- No old plastic or misshapen utensils.
- Wide range of good quality knives, wooden spoons, etc.

Mark 4 - For example:

- Pans may be high quality but showing some signs of age wear and tear.
- Greater range and quality of utensils and cookware of various sizes and uses.

Mark 5 - For example:

- All cookware and pans of the highest quality standard. Range of pans should be greater than the minimum.
- Wide range of additional items, all coordinated, e.g., wok, garlic press, kitchen scales, juicer, slotted spoons, etc.
- Range of items suitable for microwave.

9.8 Space comfort & ease of use

QUALITY GUIDANCE

This section will cover the design and layout of the kitchen considering the important aspect of space. It could be possible to have too much space to the detriment of the practical use of the kitchen e.g., the layout precludes ease of use. Account will be taken of the maximum occupancy of the unit and the space in the kitchen for that number especially if the dining area is in the kitchen, with safety being a prime consideration.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Limited space throughout, which includes storage, work surfaces and free space.
- Adequate space to wash and drain dishes.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Adequate space and lay-out such as to allow for practical use of facilities.
- Convenient access to refrigerator, cooker/oven and hob.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Sufficient space to allow easy access to and use of the facilities.
- Good storage space for foodstuffs.

Mark 4 - For example:

- Excellent ease of use with plenty of space especially around dining tables if located in a kitchen.
- Easy access to all units with thought given to the working triangle – cooker, fridge and sink.
- Additional space would be anticipated where larger properties may have more than one person using the kitchen at the same time.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Ample space to allow free movement and easy access to the facilities.
- Convenient lay-out with plenty of space.
- There should be very generous space for storage, food preparation etc.

10. Additional facilities

These are facilities that may be provided as part of a self-catering package. They are optional requirements, but if provided, the quality, presentation and ease of use will be considered in the assessment of the quality score. If they are not provided, there will be no negative effect on grade awarded.

10.1 Laundry

QUALITY GUIDANCE

This is where there is a specific laundry room located outside the property (includes owner's laundry room) itself with equipment for washing, drying and ironing clothes: it may be shared with the owners or other self-catering properties.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- All equipment of modest quality, but in good sound, working condition.
- Practical working environment.
- Simple instructions for use of equipment.
- Opening hours may be limited.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Equipment of a more domestic quality.
- Limited evidence of wear and tear.
- Walls and floors finished to a reasonable standard.
- Instructions may be more detailed.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Equipment may be professional or domestic standard.
- Sufficient equipment for convenient use.
- Premises in good decorative order. Good housekeeping and free from unsightly storage.
- Opening hours appropriate to type of facility and functions e.g., size and style.

Mark 4 - For example:

- Excellent and ample provision of higher quality equipment exceeding the ratios of machines to units.
- Could include indoor hanging area for wet coats and boots.
- May have 24-hour access –which may be via a key etc. or extended opening hours to suit customer needs.

10.2 Recreation

QUALITY GUIDANCE

Examples might include a swimming pool, barbecue, table tennis, gym, nature trail or sauna. There is no requirement for any of these to be provided and operators will not be penalised for not having them, but where provided, they will form part of the assessment.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Limited availability of recreational facilities and access.
- All equipment maintained in safe condition.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Facilities should be of a quite good quality and maintained in working order.
- Several activities catered for with good quality equipment.

Mark 3 - For example:

- May specialise in one major type of activity to very good standard.
- All facilities and equipment in good order.
- Opening hours appropriate to type of facility.

Mark 4 - For example:

- Facilities of an excellent standard; clean and well maintained.
- Wider selection of facilities.
- May include changing rooms where appropriate.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Facilities provided to an exceptional standard and equipment in excellent order.
- Extended opening hours to suit customer needs.

10. Additional facilities

10.3 Reception, shop, bar, restaurant

QUALITY GUIDANCE

There is no requirement for these to be present, but where they are provided - e.g. self-catering properties located on caravan parks - they will form part of the assessment.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Mark 1 - For example:

- Reception: may not be in a dedicated room, but part of overall administration room or building. Opening hours may be limited.
- Shop: to suit customer needs. May be a partial facility with reception. All in sound condition with a good standard of cleanliness.
- Bar and restaurant: facility for purchase of meals, snacks, drinks at specific times. May be limited seating. Limited range of food and drinks available.

Mark 2 - For example:

- Reception: décor, flooring and furnishing in sound condition of a good quality. Opening hours may be limited.
- Shop: Quite good facility overall with a tidy appearance. Limited stock and size of shop.
- Bar/restaurant: sufficient seating to accommodate most guests. Quite good overall condition and quality.

Mark 3 - For example:

- Reception: size sufficient for ease of use and comfort for number of guests. Good range of site and local information available. Fabric and décor in good order, with good housekeeping. Opening hours appropriate to type of facility and functions e.g., tourist information.
- Shop: generally well positioned, good stock of customer items. Fabric and décor in good order and good housekeeping standards. Opening hours appropriate to type of facility and functions e.g., range and type of merchandise.
- Bar/restaurant: good decorative and housekeeping standards. Sufficient seating to accommodate all likely number of users. Good range of food and drinks available. Opening hours appropriate to type of facility and function.

Mark 4 - For example:

- Reception: very well decorated reception area with conveniently located desk. High levels of cleanliness with attention to detail evident.
- Shop: very well-kept interior and equipment. Evidence of attention to detail regarding cleanliness.
- Bar and restaurant: well designed, convenient premises. Decorated to a high standard and in sound condition. Excellent housekeeping standards. Comfortable seating for all guests and appropriate height for dining. Excellent choice of food/drinks available.

Mark 5 - For example:

- Reception: conveniently sited and well signed facility.
- Spotlessly clean, tidy and in exceptional decorative order. Extended opening hours to suit customer needs.
- Shop: well stocked with comprehensive range of goods, spotlessly clean, tidy and in excellent decorative order. Extended opening hours to suit customer needs.
- Bar and restaurant: spacious, well-designed, convenient premises. Decorated to exceptional standard and in excellent condition. Excellent housekeeping standards. Wide choice of food/drinks available. Extended opening hours to suit customer needs.



