

## VisitBritain's ratings system - brief explanation

### Gold and Silver Awards

These are awarded to properties that not only achieve their overall rating but also exceed the expectations within their rating level. The awards recognise the high level of comfort, cleanliness, hospitality and service afforded.

**Silver** – this award recognises high quality in all areas of the business, with very good levels of customer care.

**Gold** – properties achieving a Gold award will demonstrate exceptional levels of quality, comfort, cleanliness, hospitality and attentive service.

### HOTELS

Hotels are given a rating from one to five Stars – the more Stars the higher the quality and the greater the range of facilities and level of services provided.

**★ One Star:** Tend to be smaller properties, privately owned and open seven days a week during operating season. Simple, practical style accommodation with limited range of facilities and services. All bedrooms will have en-suite or private bath/shower rooms. A dining room/restaurant or similar eating area serving a cooked breakfast seven days a week (except some designated Town House hotels) and evening meals at least five days a week (except some designated Town House hotels and Metro hotels). Licensed bar or lounge. Friendly and courteous staff offering efficient if limited levels of service.

**★★ Two Stars:** Tend to be smaller privately owned properties, resort and small commercial hotels. Well presented accommodation offering a fair degree of space and convenience. Décor and furnishings may be simple but well maintained. Evening meals will be available seven days a week in a dining room/restaurant or similar eating area. Services may be limited but efficient, provided by proprietor, management or well-trained staff.

**★★★ Three Stars:** A higher percentage of Group-style hotels will fall into this category, together with many high quality privately owned properties. More formal style of hotel, likely to be larger with greater range of facilities and services. Bedroom accommodation will be more spacious and designed for comfort and convenient use, e.g. writing desk/dressing table. Service will be relatively formal, with a staffed reception desk. Access will be available twenty-four hours. Lounge/Bar and Room Service serving hot and cold drinks and light snacks during daytime and evening. Provision of at least one room service meal, either continental breakfast or dinner.

**★★★★ Four Stars:** Usually larger, Group-style hotels where more formal levels of service would be expected. Accommodation of a very high standard, offering a wide range of facilities and services, with quality to match. All bedrooms will be designed and furnished for comfort and ease of use with very good quality furniture, beds and soft furnishings. All rooms en-suite with at least half offering a bath in addition to shower facilities. At least one suite available. Service will reflect the same quality and attention to detail. Access all day and night, facilitated by on-duty staff. Formal reception and porters desks with uniformed staff offering a proactive style of service. Catering standards will reflect a serious approach to food and drink, with table service provided in bar and/or lounge. At least one restaurant, open to residents and non-residents, for breakfast and dinner seven days a week. 24-hour Room Service including cooked breakfast, main meals and lighter snacks and beverages.

**★★★★★ Five Stars:** Accommodation of a luxury quality with services to match. Spacious bedrooms, suites and public areas. Selection of catering options all offering cuisine and service of the highest international quality. Open seven days a week, all year. All bedrooms with en-suite bathroom with bath and thermostatically controlled shower. A number of permanent luxury suites available. At least one restaurant open to residents and non-residents for all meals seven days a week. Enhanced services offered, e.g. valet parking, 24-hour reception and Room Service, concierge service, proactive table service in bars, lounges and at breakfast, full afternoon tea. Additional facilities available, e.g. secondary dining, leisure, business centre, spa, retail etc. Highly trained, professional staff providing exceptional levels of anticipatory service.

## **B&B**

Accommodation provided in a private house, run by the owner and with no more than six paying guests.

### **Guest House**

Accommodation provided for more than six paying guests and run on a more commercial basis than a B&B. Usually more services, for example dinner, provided by staff as well as the owner.

### **Farmhouse**

B&B or Guest house accommodation provided on a working farm or smallholding.

### **Inn**

Accommodation provided in a fully licensed establishment. The bar will be open to non-residents and provide food in the evenings.

#### **Restaurant with Rooms**

Destination restaurant offering overnight accommodation with the restaurant being the main business, open to non-residents. The restaurant will offer a high standard of food and service at least five nights a week. The establishment will have a liquor licence and a maximum of twelve guest bedrooms.

## **GUEST ACCOMMODATION**

Any establishment that meets the minimum requirements can be designated in this general sub category.

★ **One Star:** Simple, no-frills accommodation suitable for those on a tighter budget. Décor will be clean and furnishings fit for purpose. Beds will be made up with clean linen and bedding, towels and fresh soap provided. Bedrooms will have a form of heating, acceptable lighting levels and privacy. Bathroom facilities may be shared and hot water will be available at reasonable times.

As a minimum, breakfast will be provided – either a full cooked meal or, if advertised in advance, a substantial continental breakfast. Service levels may be limited.

★★ **Two Stars:** Accommodation offering a good overall level of quality together with some facility and service enhancements, e.g. in-room televisions, fitted heating. Décor will be in good condition, furniture sound and lighting well positioned. Flooring will provide adequate comfort underfoot. Bath or shower rooms may be en-suite or shared with other guests and/or proprietor, facilities being maintained in a clean and serviceable condition. Additional services may be provided, e.g. dinner. Meals may be simple with limited choice but will be freshly prepared.

★★★ **Three Stars:** A good level of quality in all areas. Bedrooms will offer a reasonable amount of space and comfort, e.g. access to both sides of double beds. Décor will show elements of coordination with the soft furnishings. Furniture will be more substantial and may provide additional facilities, e.g. writing desk. Conveniently positioned lighting and controllable heating. En-suite facilities, where provided, may be compact but will be clean and well maintained. Toiletries (e.g. shampoo, shower gel) are likely to be provided. All rooms will have a washbasin facility. A greater selection of items may be offered at breakfast, including choice of eggs cooked to order. Service throughout will be efficient and hospitable.

★★★★ **Four Stars:** Very good quality in all areas. Bedrooms will be more spacious with greater emphasis on quality of décor, furnishings, fixtures and fittings. Extra facilities and personal touches may be provided, e.g. hairdryer, radio. At least half the bedrooms will have en-suite facilities, which will be well fitted with quality sanitary ware, effective lighting and ventilation. Towels will be of a high quality and a range of toiletries will be provided.

A very good breakfast will be offered, with a wide selection of starter and cooked options. Local or homemade specialities may be featured, with an emphasis on fresh ingredients.

Service and guest care will be attentive, efficient and hospitable.

★★★★★ **Five Stars:** Excellent quality accommodation with exceptional levels of hospitality. Bedrooms will offer ample space with excellent comfort and elements of luxury. High quality décor, furnishings and fittings will feature in all guest areas. All bedrooms will be en-suite or have private facilities, which will be fitted out with high quality sanitary ware and fixtures. Luxury towelling, including bath sheets and a wide range of quality toiletries.

Public areas will offer the same high quality as the bedrooms and provide guests with additional space for comfort and relaxation.

Breakfast will offer a wide selection of produce such as freshly squeezed fruit juices, fruits in season, bakery items and homemade preserves. Cooked options will be numerous, possibly with some original or regional specialities.

Service and hospitality levels will be exemplary.

## SELF CATERING

Minimum entry requirements include the following:-

High standard of cleanliness throughout;

Pricing and conditions of booking made clear;

Local information to help you make the best of your stay;

Comfortable accommodation with a range of furniture to meet your needs;

Colour television (where signal available) at no extra charge;

Kitchen equipped to meet all essential requirements;

Serviced apartments provide self-catering accommodation with additional elements of service e.g. 24 hour concierge service, 5 out of 7 days cleaning service.

★ **One Star:** Simple style accommodation where all areas are safe and clean. Unlikely to be self-contained (e.g. might have a shared bathroom). All equipment provided will work and be fit for its purpose. The accommodation will be cleaned for guests' arrival.

Beds of at least standard adult size (unless advertised otherwise), provided with clean bedding in sufficient quantity. Linen may or may not be provided.

Potential visitors will be given advance details of accommodation, facilities and services available. Health, Safety and Statutory obligations complied with.

★★ **Two Stars:** All units will be self-contained. Generally good overall quality of décor, furnishings and fixtures, which may be of a practical or older style. Space may be limited, particularly in bedrooms. At least one bathroom and WC for up to eight guests.  
Limited additional facilities and services.

★★★ **Three Stars:** Quality of décor and furnishings will demonstrate greater attention to co-ordination and practicality. More spacious accommodation offering greater levels of comfort and freedom of movement, e.g. access to both sides of double beds. Good lighting provision, with each occupant provided with bedside table and lamp. Controlled heating.  
Wider range of appliances, including microwave oven and access to vacuum cleaner.  
Some leisure facilities e.g. boxed games, toys, barbecue, as appropriate.

★★★★ **Four Stars:** Comfortable accommodation, decorated to a high standard. Usually more spacious with very good quality furniture, soft furnishings, beds and floorings. Bed linen and towels provided, with or without an additional charge.  
More extensive range of appliances, including access to washing machine and tumble dryer (or 24 hour laundry service). Additional separate WC available if more than six guests can be accommodated.  
Additional facilities, e.g. leisure, sporting, may be provided. All equipment and facilities in good order.

★★★★★ **Five Stars:** Excellent quality accommodation, demonstrating the best of its type available. A high specification evident in all areas. Attention to detail shown in design, both internal and external, with exemplary standards of care and maintenance. Sleeping in designated bedrooms only, i.e. no sofa beds.  
Full range of appliances and equipment including freezer, dishwasher, in-house laundry facilities (or 24 hour service) and Video/DVD player. Telephone provided, capable of receiving incoming and making outgoing calls. Bed linen and towels available and included in hire charge. Extra bath or shower, WC and washbasin provided if more than six guests can be accommodated.  
Where leisure facilities are provided these will be in excellent order, under supervision, where appropriate and with extended opening hours to suit customer needs.  
Management organisation and levels of guest care will be exemplary.

## HOLIDAY PARKS

★ **One star:** Acceptable - to achieve this grade, the Park must have acceptable levels of cleanliness with acceptable standards of maintenance and customer care.

★★ **Two stars:** Good overall - all the above points plus an improved level of landscaping, lighting, refuse disposal