



**VisitEngland** 

**Self Catering Common Standard Review**

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## Self Catering Common Standard

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Changes to the Self-catering common standard have been approved by the Standards Review Group and signed off by all common standard partners and the changes include:

### Changes to the Self Catering Common Standard

- **Scoring**

**One small change to cleanliness/housekeeping scores – Level Four change from min 75% to 80%**

Rest unchanged:

Level One - 40% to 49%

Level Two - 50% to 64%

Level Three – 65% to 79%

Level Four - 80% to 89%

Level Five - 90% and above

- **Bath at five-star**

Previously, a dispensation could only be applied when a property had a shower only and no bath at five-star on the grounds of its sustainability policy or because the property was designed around the needs of disabled guests. Now dispensations will be considered for any potential five-star property, providing that the shower is of an excellent quality, is in excellent condition and the shower room(s) offers excellent ease of use and spaciousness. The lack of a bath must be clearly advertised in all electronic and printed media.

- **Freezer at four-star**

Access to a freezer at four-star is now a requirement at four-star (and not just a 3\* icebox within a freezer), but it could be in a shed/garage etc. Assessors should use their judgement on appropriate size, depending on the occupancy of the unit. Dispensations would be considered if the unit slept only two people. Access to a shared freezer would be acceptable.

- **Ratio of bathrooms to guests**

The current ratios are maintained, with the exception of five-star, where the new requirement is **one** bathroom/shower room to **four** guests. (Additional WC/cloakroom is not required). Existing participants will have until Dec 2013 to comply. *This does not mean that new bathrooms would necessarily need to be created, as reducing the occupancy from say five to four would be an alternative solution.*

- **Kitchen inventory**

The 'essential' list has been reduced in length and includes some additional 'suggested' items. (see separate list) The assessor will then award additional marks for the range and quality of additional items, taking into account the market that the business targets.

- **Double bed against the wall**

A dispensation may be sought up to (and including) three-star. (Currently only up to two-star)

- **Hairdryer**

This is now a requirement **from three-star** and at five-star a hairdryer should be supplied in each guest bedroom (except bedrooms designated for children only).

- **Headboards**

A headboard (or equivalent) should be provided with all permanent beds, as for Hotel and Guest Accommodation schemes.

- **Coat hangers**

The standard no longer stipulates a specific number of coat hangers – simply “sufficient coat hangers”. Assessors will take into account the quality of the coat hangers when scoring bedroom furniture, fittings and furniture.

- **Rugs on wooden/laminate floors**

As with Hotel and Guest Accommodation schemes, these are no longer required.

- **Additional items at 5-star**

The list of ‘Additional Requirements’ has been updated and a minimum of **five of the fifteen** items listed below are required **in the unit**. (The list is not exhaustive and an assessor may include other items seen, if they are deemed ‘special’.) These items will all need to be of excellent quality and in excellent condition at five-star level.

- **Tumble dryer**
- **Telephone**
- **DVD/(Video)**
- **Sound/music system**
- **Docking station**
- **Games consoles**
- **Internet access/Wi-fi**
- **PC/laptop and possible 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/telescope**

- **Beds made up on arrival**

This is retained as a requirement at four-star and above. However, VisitEngland ‘strongly recommends’ that beds should always be made up when bed linen is provided.

- **Toilet rolls**

Operators should provide at least one full toilet roll in all bathrooms and cloakroom/WCs.

- **Lighting**

Minimum lighting levels are no longer specified, following the introduction of low-energy bulbs.

- **Management Efficiency**

This section will now concentrate on Welcome and Hospitality, along with the procedures/back-up in place for dealing with unexpected problems, such as a broken appliance or boiler failure. The assessor will ask questions about how problems are handled, as well as looking for evidence within the property. 'Welcome' would include not just hampers or welcome notes, but the quality and clarity of the appliance information folder and advice on recycling etc. Ensuring the property is well-presented when the guests arrive, with the correct ambient temperature for the season is another important area, especially when keys are collected from a key safe box. References to the TV, DVDs etc. will be removed from this section and scored in the Public Areas section.