



## **Alternative Accommodation Quality Standard**

### **Definition:**

Alternative style self-catering accommodation for letting, provided in non-permanent accommodation structures or mobile/travelling accommodation. This will include the following:

- Wigwams & camping pods
- Nomadic structures (e.g. tipis, yurts, safari tents, ready erected tents)
- Camper vans
- Treehouses
- Romany caravans
- Shepherds trailers
- Railway carriages

### **Code of Conduct for participation**

The operator/manager is required to undertake and observe the following Code of Conduct so that they may be eligible to participate in Cumbria Tourism's and their partners including TICs marketing and promotional activity:

#### **Prior to booking:**

- To describe accurately in any advertisement, brochure, or other printed or electronic media, the facilities and services provided;
- To make clear to guests in print, in electronic media and on the telephone exactly what is included in all prices quoted for accommodation, including taxes, and any other surcharges. Details of charges for additional services/facilities should also be made clear, for example showers, fuel etc;
- To provide information on the suitability of the premises for guests of various ages, particularly for the elderly and the very young;
- To allow guests to view the accommodation prior to booking if requested and possible.

#### **At the time of booking:**

- To clearly describe the cancellation policy to guests i.e. by telephone, fax, internet/email as well as in any printed information given to guests;

- To adhere to and not to exceed prices quoted at the time of booking for accommodation and other services;

**On arrival:**

To welcome all guests courteously and without discrimination in relation to gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or belief.

**During the stay:**

- To maintain good standards of guest care, cleanliness, and service appropriate to the type of establishment;
- To deal promptly and courteously with all enquiries, requests, bookings and correspondence from visitors.
- To Ensure complaint handling procedures are in place and that complaints received are investigated promptly and courteously and that the outcome is communicated to the visitor.

**On departure:**

To give each visitor, on request, details of payments due and a receipt, if required.

**General:**

- To give due consideration to the requirements of visitors with special needs, and to make suitable provision where applicable;
- To ensure the accommodation is prepared for the arrival of guests at all times when the operation is advertised as open;
- To hold current public liability insurance and to comply all statutory obligations including legislation applicable to health and safety, planning and fire;
- To advise guests, at any time prior to their stay, if there are any changes in what has been booked;
- To allow Quality Cumbria representatives reasonable access to the establishment, on request, to confirm the Code of Conduct is being observed;
- When a business is sold or ceases to trade, every effort should be made to inform Cumbria Tourism.

**Conditions for participation**

All businesses participating in the Quality Cumbria assessment scheme are required to:

- Meet or exceed the Quality Cumbria standards to be accredited;
- Observe the Quality Cumbria Code of Conduct;
- Be assessed annually, and in the event of complaints, by authorised representatives of Cumbria Tourism;
- Pay an annual participation fee.

## **Accessibility:**

### **The Law**

Under Part 3 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) service providers have a duty to consider and ensure that access to their facilities and services for disabled people is as close as reasonably possible to the standard offered to all guests. Since 1996, it has been illegal to discriminate against disabled customers by refusing service, providing a lower standard of service and/or providing the service on worse terms e.g. if reasonable, disabled guests should have access to your shower facilities, just as non-disabled guests do.

The law uses the phrase “reasonable adjustment” to allow different solutions in different situations. Service providers are required to make reasonable adjustments to policies and procedures that may otherwise make it difficult for disabled customers to use their service.

## **The quality standard for Alternative Accommodation**

### **General Requirements**

All operators must meet their **statutory obligation** as applicable including for example:

#### **Safety**

- Health & safety at work
- Fire safety, Gas and Electrical safety
- Electrical appliance testing
- Product safety

#### **Premises**

- Planning permission
- Private water supplies
- TV licensing

#### **Discrimination**

- Sex discrimination
- Race discrimination
- Disability discrimination

#### **Records**

- Data protection
- Immigration hotel records
- Consumer protection

#### **Trading standards**

- Advertising
- Pricing
- Unfair contract terms

Operators will be asked to provide evidence that public liability insurance cover is being maintained and to provide a sign confirmation at application and renewal that the aforementioned requirements are being fulfilled.

If necessary and on request, confirmation of planning consent/change of use for a particular parcel of land will need to be provided

All operators **must** carry out a fire risk assessment and act on findings to reduce or remove risk, then review assessment regularly, making changes where necessary.

## **2. General Miscellaneous**

### **All accommodation types:**

- A disability access statement to be available (preferably on the website). Please see <http://www.cumbriatourism.org/businesssupport/accessibility> for ideas and templates.
- Must describe fairly the accommodation and facilities on offer, this should include an indication of the size of the accommodation and number of guests it can accommodate, sleeping arrangements, and the availability of toilet and washing facilities.
- A fire blanket per unit will need to be provided (all equipment to be BS/CE Approved) or fire precautions as designated by the local authority to be in place.
- All fixtures, furniture, furnishings, crockery and cutlery to be adequate for the maximum number of occupants, including any supplementary sleeping accommodation.
- The accommodation will be fit for purpose, clean and well maintained.
- The accommodation and any accompanying toilet/washing/cooking facilities must be structurally sound, and well maintained both internally and externally.
- All grounds, gardens and parking areas to be well maintained, pathways and parking areas should be free from trip hazards.

### **Additionally, for all accommodation types except camper vans:**

- A first aid kit to be provided on site.

## **3. Maintenance**

### **All accommodation types:**

- 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. Clear written instructions for use to be available.
- 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.

## **4. Health and Safety**

### **All accommodation types:**

- A high degree of general safety and security maintained, including information on procedures in the event of an emergency (may be posted at a central location).
- Electricity may be available (not necessarily mains supply e.g. solar). Where it is not mains supply or not available, this must be stated along with voltage.

### **Additionally for all accommodation types except camper vans:**

- Printed details of how to summon the assistance of emergency services to be provided e.g. doctor, dentist, location of nearest phone/payphone, casualty unit and vets (if pets accepted).
- If the operator is not resident on the site for yurts, tipis, wigwams, railway carriages, ready-erected tents and tree houses etc. then, his/her name, address and telephone number or that of his/her agent must be prominently displayed.
- All accommodation sites to be provided with suitable refuse disposal arrangements as required by the Local Authority. Arrangements for refuse collection to be specified and prominently displayed.

### **Additionally for camper vans:**

- Vehicle must be safe and in good condition with an up-to-date MOT to be available for each vehicle.
- All vehicles to be fully insured and fully comprehensive insurance to be available to all hirers.
- Each vehicle should have breakdown cover, so visitors are not stranded in the event of a breakdown occurring.

## **5. Management Efficiency**

### **5.1. Guest Information - Website and/or brochure**

#### **All accommodation types:**

To make clear to guests exactly what is included in the prices quoted for the accommodation including 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:

- the numbers each accommodation sleeps and whether in beds or futons etc.
- the bathroom/toilet facilities provided.
- cooking arrangements.
- car parking arrangements on site.
- any restrictions e.g. no children or pets.

*Additionally for camper vans*

- any mileage limits.
- details of maximum number of occupants and all facilities on board.
- it must be made clear what is provided and/or included in the cost in terms of cookware, gas, bedding and fuel.

### **5.2 Booking processes and information**

### **All accommodation types:**

- Prospective guests should be made aware, prior to booking, of charges for additional services or facilities available, including cancellation terms, cleaning 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.
- A map and/or directions provided showing the location of the site/pickup point on booking or with brochure. (This may be provided in more detail after booking.)

### **Additionally for all accommodation types except camper vans:**

The following information readily available prior to booking, may be on website or in brochure/leaflet:

- Arrangements for pets if accepted.
- Distance of site 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).
- Electricity voltage, if not standard or if electricity not available.

## **6. Cleanliness**

### **All accommodation types:**

- It is the operator's responsibility to ensure that all accommodation is 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.
- Cleanliness is of paramount importance to guests, so a high standard of cleanliness must be achieved and maintained throughout the accommodation and facilities. Particular attention must be given to kitchen equipment, baths, showers and toilets and items involving direct contact for guests, such as bedding, towels, flooring, seating, crockery, cutlery, glassware etc.

## **7. The Accommodation**

### **7.1 General**

#### **All accommodation types:**

- Adequate ventilation must be available throughout the accommodation and associated facilities.
- Sleeping surfaces must not be in direct contact with the ground, i.e. a substantial groundsheet, decking, sleeping platform or bed base must be provided.
- If provided, all bedding is to be clean and well presented.
- Facilities specifically for washing cooking utensils, plates, cutlery, etc, must be provided e.g. dishwashing sink or washing-up bowl for use in the accommodation.
- If provided, all cooking equipment (incl BBQ's, gas stoves etc) to be clean and functioning properly.
- Emergency lighting to be provided as back-up i.e. a torch of some kind or guests advised in advance to bring their own.

**Additionally for all accommodation types except camper vans:**

- A potable cold water supply must be provided in close proximity to the accommodation (not applicable with mobile/travelling accommodation).
- All interior areas to be adequately lit for safe movement. (Exception may be made at the discretion of Quality Cumbria in respect of remote or rural properties with no mains services). Lighting can be solar powered or wind-up or battery-powered.
- If no fixed cooking appliances provided, a suitable raised surface for guests to use their own cooking equipment outside of the accommodation must be provided. Where cooking facilities are provided adequate pans, cookware, utensils and crockery and cutlery to be provided (this may be in a central location).

**7.2 Shower and toilet facilities****All accommodation types except camper vans:**

- At least 1 toilet facility and washbasin with running water on site (including soap) must be provided for every 30 guests. Composting toilets are acceptable.
- At least 1 bath or shower must be provided on site for every 25 guests.
- Lock on bathroom/WC doors, or alternative means of indicating the facility is in use for all shared WCs, showers or bathrooms.
- Sanitary disposal facilities available in all ladies toilet blocks and preferably in each cubicle.
- Best practice suggests interior lighting for WCs or hook for hanging guests' torches during the hours of darkness is useful.