



# Setting up an Accommodation Business in the Forest of Dean



## Contents & Checklist

There are many things to be considered when deciding to take the plunge and open an accommodation business, it can be a very daunting challenge. This information and checklist is designed to help you on your way with some useful contacts, publications and resources. For more detailed information, please contact the indicated authority.

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## Planning Permission & Building Control Regulations

Planning permission and building regulations are the essential first steps for individuals considering offering serviced or self-catering accommodation ('serviced accommodation' includes hotels, guesthouses, bed and breakfasts, farmhouses and inns). In addition, even if individuals are wishing to start offering bed and breakfast in their own home or to equip an existing building as a holiday cottage, 'change of use' planning permission may be required.

Advice should be sought from the Forest of Dean Planning Department at a very early stage by individuals considering either starting a new business or converting or extending an existing premises.

Generally speaking if you want to change the use of a building or alter or extend the building you will almost certainly require planning permission. The effects on neighbours, car parking facilities and the number of bedrooms offered for letting, are all types of issues that may be taken into consideration when considering a planning application.

Consent for any signs to be erected on a property may also be required. Structural alterations to a property or the construction of a new building will also be subject to building regulations. Even if individuals are not thinking of altering the property to accommodate bed and breakfast guests and planning permission is not required, some building work may be needed in order to meet building regulations requirements.

We always advise that you contact your local Planning Office before you start any work/open your business to receive a view on planning permission and to ensure you are not breaching any planning conditions on your property.

The Planning department welcomes informal, pre-application discussions, so please do contact them to discuss your proposed new business.

**It's always best to double check before starting any work to avoid future problems.**

### ***For further information:***

Planning Department  
Forest of Dean District Council  
High Street  
Coleford  
GL16 8HG  
Tel: 01594 812312

Email: [planning@fdean.gov.uk](mailto:planning@fdean.gov.uk)  
[www.fdean.gov.uk](http://www.fdean.gov.uk)

## Fire Safety

In 2006 a new law - the Regulatory reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 - came into force, replacing fire certificates and 78 other pieces of legislation.

The new law affects all forms of sleeping accommodation and includes everything in the guest accommodation scheme not previously covered, notably establishments sleeping one to six guests. In relation to self-catering properties; it does not affect single private dwellings, but does apply to a block of flats. This means that single properties remain unaffected while a house converted into holiday flats will need to comply.

The law states that operators must take responsibility for fire safety themselves, so all accommodation operators will have to carry out a fire safety risk assessment. In smaller and simple premises the operator can probably do their own assessment but in large, complex premises a trained professional is more likely to be needed.

Preventative or protective measures required following the risk assessment must be installed and maintained.

Fire officers will carry out spot checks and whoever performed the risk assessment is liable for anything found to be incorrect or if anything goes wrong. Magistrates will be able to impose fines of £5,000 for each offence, while a Crown Court can impose unlimited fines and up to two years in jail. From autumn 2006, Quality in Tourism assessors can also ask to see your risk assessment.

### ***For further information:***

#### **Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service**

Fire Service HQ  
Waterwells Drive  
Quedgeley  
Gloucester  
GL2 2AX  
Tel: 01452 753333

Email: [fire@glosfire.gov.uk](mailto:fire@glosfire.gov.uk)

[www.glosfire.gov.uk](http://www.glosfire.gov.uk)

[www.communities.gov.uk/fire](http://www.communities.gov.uk/fire)

## Health and Safety

As the person with control over the premises, you have responsibility for the safety of every person who comes onto those premises.

You will have a 'duty of care' to guests and must make sure that your premises are reasonably safe for the purpose for which guests are invited to use them. For example, you must make sure that floors are not slippery, passageways are clear, furniture is secure and guests are familiarised with emergency procedures.

You will also be responsible for the health and safety of your employees, whether you have one or one hundred, and you must ensure that they are supplied with adequate equipment and working conditions. Registration for a health & safety inspection will be required and this can be arranged easily with the Health & Safety team at the Forest of Dean District Council who also able to supply you with a range of leaflets and guidance documents.

***For further information:***

Environmental Health  
Forest of Dean District Council  
High Street  
Coleford  
GL16 8HG  
Tel: 01594 812418

Email: [environmental.health@fdean.gov.uk](mailto:environmental.health@fdean.gov.uk)  
[www.fdean.gov.uk](http://www.fdean.gov.uk)

The Health & Safety Executive  
Tel: 0845 345 0055  
[www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

## **Food and Drink**

If you are to supply food to your guests, you must comply with the requirements of the Food Hygiene Regulations 2006 regarding for example, temperature, food hygiene and labelling.

Your establishment will need to be registered with the Forest of Dean District Council at least 28 days before starting the business. Registration is free, and easily done by filling in a simple form. The Food Safety team can provide you with a Safer Food Better Business pack to help you comply with food legislation, as well as a range of other useful information and guidance.

***For further information:***

Environmental Health  
Forest of Dean District Council  
High Street  
Coleford  
GL16 8HG  
Tel: 01594 812418

Email: [environmental.health@fdean.gov.uk](mailto:environmental.health@fdean.gov.uk)  
[www.fdean.gov.uk](http://www.fdean.gov.uk)

[www.foodstandards.gov.uk](http://www.foodstandards.gov.uk)

## Insurance

You need to ensure that you have adequate insurance cover. Most household policies will not cover the use of your premises for business purposes, your liability to employees and guests, or any damage caused by guests.

Some insurance companies offer special packages for accommodation providers including Public Liability Insurance, Employers Liability Insurance and property and contents insurance.

Alternatively, you may be able to add extra cover to an existing policy.

Contact your insurance company to find out what additional cover will be required.

## Business Rates

Businesses such as B&Bs and self-catering accommodation are liable to pay business rates. Generally speaking however, as long as you meet all the following criteria, you may not have to pay business rates (you simply pay council tax on your property):

- You intend to accommodate no more than six people at any one time in the coming year
- The property is your sole or main residence
- B&B is only a subsidiary use

The decision on whether or not a business will be subject to a rate charge is made by the Valuation Office and not by the district council. If the Valuation Office decides that a business is liable for a business rate charge, then it is possible that you will be entitled to a reduction of up to 50% off the charge through the small business rate relief scheme.

### ***For further information:***

Business Rates  
Forest of Dean District Council  
High Street  
Coleford  
GL16 8HG  
Tel: 01594 812579

Email: [busrates@fdean.gov.uk](mailto:busrates@fdean.gov.uk)  
[www.fdean.gov.uk](http://www.fdean.gov.uk)

Valuation Office Agency  
Ley Court  
Barnett Way  
Gloucester  
GL4 3RT  
Tel: 01452 360200

Email: [westerngroup.vo@voa.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:westerngroup.vo@voa.gsi.gov.uk)  
[www.voa.gov.uk](http://www.voa.gov.uk)

## Disabled Facilities

The Disabled Discrimination Act (DDA) aims to help to end the discrimination many disabled people experience day to day.

From October 2004, companies and organisations that provide services to the public were required by the Disability Discrimination Act to ensure that those services are reasonably accessible to people with a disability. This is the first time that the law has required businesses to consider whether their buildings are accessible and it presents a new challenge for many of them. However, focusing on the needs of disabled people can also provide an opportunity to gain from a significant consumer market. It is estimated that 20% of the Adult population (11.7 million) have a form of 'disability' - which constitutes an estimated £40 billion annual spend.

The act will affect you in the following ways:

### Employment

You must treat any disabled staff or applicants for jobs in the same way you would treat anyone else. This includes recruitment, employment terms, training and dismissal.

### Access to Services

Disabled visitors must be treated in the same way as other guests, and have the same opportunities (within reason). This means that they should not be offered a service or product below that of your other guests. To accommodate disabled visitors, you may need to make some **reasonable** adjustments. This means that you may need to change some of your policies and procedures, consider alternative access points (eg. French windows, side doors), provide large print menus and price guides or change the layout of your rooms.

Please note – any changes made should be **within reason**. If you have a small B&B, you would not be expected to provide the same service and equipment for the disabled as a large hotel.

If you would like recognition for your facilities, you may think about joining the National Accessible Scheme. Your establishment will be graded according to the accessibility to those with little mobility. To find out more, contact Quality in Tourism.

### ***For further information:***

Quality in Tourism  
Farncombe House  
Broadway  
Worcestershire  
WR12 7LJ  
Tel: 0845 3006996

Email: [qualityintourism@gslglobal.com](mailto:qualityintourism@gslglobal.com)  
[www.qualityintourism.co.uk](http://www.qualityintourism.co.uk)

Tourism for All  
The Hawkins Suite  
Enham Place

Enham Alamein  
Andover SP11 6JS  
Tel: 0845 124 9974

Email: [info@tourismforall.org.uk](mailto:info@tourismforall.org.uk)  
[www.tourismforall.org.uk](http://www.tourismforall.org.uk)

[www.disability.gov.uk](http://www.disability.gov.uk)

## Caravan Licensing

All caravan and camping sites must have a site valid licence to operate. A licence is required for all permanent residential, holiday or touring sites and for sites of a temporary nature. The site licence is designed to protect the health, safety and welfare of caravan occupants and covers such issues as fire.

### ***For further information and an application form:***

Environmental Protection & Licensing  
Forest of Dean District Council  
High Street  
Coleford  
Glos GL16 8HG  
Tel 01594 812442

Email: [environmental.health@fdean.gov.uk](mailto:environmental.health@fdean.gov.uk)  
[www.fdean.gov.uk](http://www.fdean.gov.uk)

## Data Protection

The Data Protection Act is concerned with protecting people's privacy. If you hold personal information you must ensure that:

- The information is gained fairly and lawfully
- Guests are informed of the information you intend to keep and why
- Personal information is not kept without that persons consent
- Information is kept up to date and relevant
- The information is used only for the purpose for which it was collected
- The information is kept only for as long as is necessary for that purpose
- You have explicit consent if you wish to pass the information to a third party
- If you are asked by a person for their personal information to be erased from your records, you do so
- Any guest can see the personal information you hold about them if they wish

Remember – The Data Protection Act also applies to those records kept about your staff.

### ***For further information:***

The Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire SK9 5AF  
Tel: 08456 306060

[www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

## Display of Charges

It is a criminal offence to mislead guests about the prices charged in your establishment.

To avoid this, it is suggested that you:

- Display prices prominently eg in the reception area or on the door
- Include all essential extra costs in the charge eg VAT and service charge and state the amounts
- State any optional extra charges as clearly as other prices
- Do as much as possible to ensure that any changes in prices are made on all leaflets, publications and websites.

### ***For further information:***

Trading Standards Service  
Gloucestershire County Council  
Hillfield House  
Denmark Road  
Gloucester  
GL1 3LD  
Tel: 01452 426201

Email: [tradstds@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:tradstds@gloucestershire.gov.uk)  
[www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/glos](http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/glos)

## Registration of Guests

To comply with the Immigration (Hotel Records) Order, you must keep a register of all guests that stay at your establishment.

You must record:

### *For all guests on arrival:*

Full name and nationality of all guests over the age of 16

### *For all non-British, Irish or Commonwealth guests on arrival:*

Passport number and place of issue (or another ID document showing nationality)

### *For all non-British, Irish or Commonwealth guests on departure:*

Details of your next destination (including address if known)

## Quality Assurance

Having an inspection and receiving a grading is an ideal way to assure prospective guests of the quality of your establishment. You will also need to be inspected and graded to be able to promote your establishment via the Forest of Dean District Council Tourism & Marketing Service.

You can be inspected by the AA, Quality in Tourism (on behalf of VisitBritain), VisitWales or a combination of these.

Each organisation works to the same standards and criteria but may charge a different fee, so it is worth contacting each of them to find these out in advance. Discounts for South West Tourism members apply to Quality in Tourism inspections.

### ***For further information:***

Quality in Tourism  
Security House  
Alexandra Way  
Ashchurch  
Tewksbury  
GL20 8NB  
Tel: 0845 300 6996

Email: [qualityintourism@gslglobal.com](mailto:qualityintourism@gslglobal.com)  
[www.qualityintourism.co.uk](http://www.qualityintourism.co.uk)

AA Hotel Services  
Fanum House  
Basingstoke  
RG21 4EA  
Tel: 01256 844455

[www.theaa.com](http://www.theaa.com)

Visit Wales  
Brunel House  
2 Fitzalan Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 0UY  
Tel: 0845 010 8020

Email: [tourism.industryadvice@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:tourism.industryadvice@wales.gsi.gov.uk)  
[www.industry.visitwales.gov.uk](http://www.industry.visitwales.gov.uk)

# Services for your business in the Forest of Dean

## Marketing and Promotion

The Tourism Team undertake a number of marketing and promotional initiatives throughout the year including the production of a range of publications, attending national exhibitions, press and PR activities, maintaining the tourism website and organising events. In addition, the team supports the local tourism industry through regular e-newsletters, the Tourism Development Grant and organising familiarisation trips.

## Membership of Forest of Dean Tourism

Cotswolds and Forest of Dean Tourism is all about working in partnership across the county to achieve joined up thinking, planning, marketing and ultimately to increase the value and profitability of tourism in the Cotswolds and Forest of Dean. Membership is only available for Quality Assessed Accommodation. For more information please contact the Tourism Team.

## Forest of Dean Visitor Guide

The Visitor Guide is produced annually by the Tourism Team at the Forest of Dean District Council, and contains details of inspected accommodation, as well as attractions, events and other general information about the area.

Circulation is 50,000 and distribution is to national Tourist Information Centres, important places of public interest and in response to the many enquiries received from both domestic and overseas visitors. It is also available to order direct from our website and is given out at many exhibitions.

## Forest of Dean Tourism Website

The main tourism website - [visitforestofdean.co.uk](http://visitforestofdean.co.uk) – is becoming increasingly popular with over 600,000 unique visits received during 2008. It features a whole range of information for visitors to the area and is a very effective way for tourism businesses to reach potential customers.

Through the 'Guestlink' facility, accommodation providers are able to update their availability direct so that it appears on the website. Accommodation bookings can then be made direct to the provider from customers. The information also feeds through to the VisitBritain website. In 2008, around £80,000 worth of accommodation bookings were made via the website and, for many providers it is one of their most effective advertising methods.

***To discuss the benefits and prices of advertising in the guide and on the website, along with other marketing initiatives, please contact the Tourism Team.***

## Useful Contacts

### Forest of Dean Tourism Team

Tourism  
Forest of Dean District Council  
High Street  
Coleford  
GL16 8HG

#### **Paula Burrows**

Tourism Marketing Manager  
Tel: 01594 812389  
Email: [paula.burrows@fdean.gov.uk](mailto:paula.burrows@fdean.gov.uk)

#### **Claire Evans**

Tourism Officer  
Tel: 01594 812384  
Email: [claire.evans@fdean.gov.uk](mailto:claire.evans@fdean.gov.uk)

### Tourism Organisations

Tourist Boards and Destination Management Organisations (DMO) carry out a wide range of activities at a regional and local level to promote and develop tourism for the long-term benefit of the region such as:

- Marketing opportunities (domestic and overseas)
- Business support and advice
- Training
- Information
- Market intelligence
- Signposting to other organisations

**Visit Britain** is the organisation responsible for marketing the whole of the UK as a tourist destination to domestic and overseas markets.

VisitBritain  
Industry Relations  
Thames Tower  
Black's Road  
Hammersmith  
London W6 9EL  
Tel: 0208 846 9000  
Email: [industry.relations@visitbritain.org](mailto:industry.relations@visitbritain.org)  
[www.visitbritain.com](http://www.visitbritain.com)

**South West Tourism** is the main tourist board for the Forest of Dean, which covers the whole of the South West and includes: Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall.

South West Tourism  
Woodwater Park  
Exeter EX2 5WT  
Tel: 01392 360050  
Email: [post@swtourism.co.uk](mailto:post@swtourism.co.uk)  
[www.swtourism.co.uk](http://www.swtourism.co.uk)

**The Cotswolds and Forest of Dean Destination Management Organisation (DMO)** is a public/private partnership that has been established to effectively manage tourism in Gloucestershire. The DMO provides a unified voice for tourism across the county and offers a number of advantages of working together to combine resources, save money and achieve sustainability. The DMO marketing team, consisting of tourism officers from the 7 district and county councils, undertake a number of campaigns and initiatives throughout the year including joint exhibiting at national trade and consumer shows, public relations campaigns, promotional literature production, and lots more.

Chris Dee  
Tourism Manager  
Cotswolds and Forest of Dean DMO  
Gloucestershire First  
Chargrove House  
Main Road  
Shurdington  
Cheltenham  
GL51 4GA  
Tel: 01242 864172  
Email: [chris.dee@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:chris.dee@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

**Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism Association (WVFDTA)**

This is a membership organisation for around 300 private sector tourism businesses within the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley area.

Membership to this organisation brings strength of a large and respected organisation to small businesses and is an ideal network for sharing ideas with others.

Benefits include free listings in WVFDTA publications, advertising discounts with Forest of Dean District Council tourism initiatives, participation in monthly meetings, often featuring guest speakers plus updates of news and developments affecting tourism.

Caroline Anderson  
Co-chair WVFDTA  
Lea House  
Lea  
Herefordshire  
HR9 7JZ  
Tel: 0845 053 1173

Email: [info@wyedeantourism.co.uk](mailto:info@wyedeantourism.co.uk)  
[www.wyedeantourism.co.uk](http://www.wyedeantourism.co.uk)

## Further Information

The notes on this checklist are for guidance only and are by no account comprehensive. For further details regarding legislation, employment, marketing, dealing with guests and lots more, Visit Britain's 'Accommodation Know-How site contains a wealth of information and is available in both hard copy and online versions. There are also 2 publications available to order from Enjoy England which are written by tourism experts at East of England Tourist Board and offer the very latest in research, legislation and practical advice, enabling you to learn "how to run", and equally importantly, "how not to run" a successful accommodation establishment.

VisitBritain  
PO Box 6009  
Thatcham  
Berkshire  
RG19 4TT  
Tel: 01635 588897  
[www.accommodationknowhow.co.uk](http://www.accommodationknowhow.co.uk)

The "**How to run quality bed and breakfasts**" and "**How to run quality self catering accommodation**" publications can be purchased online at [www.visitbritain.org](http://www.visitbritain.org)