

Public sector organisations support official star ratings



A star rating gives reliable information about quality including cleanliness, warmth of welcome, the range of facilities and the availability of food.

Responding to the quality challenge makes more sense than ever

Public sector organisations are agreeing to support the following policy statement:

All UK accommodation booked by staff on Agency business should normally be quality assured; that is, be part of one of the national 'star rating' schemes. This extends to conference and training events wherever practicable.

Make sure this huge market is aware of your business – get star rated

For more information and assistance contact Fran Wilson, Quality Development Manager at East Midlands Tourism on 0115 988 8425 or email: franceswilson@emd.org.uk

east midlands tourism



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Make sure you understand the implications and what it means for your business

Through business travel, conferences and training events, East Midlands public sector organisations collectively book thousands of rooms every year.

From the Regional Assembly to Local Authorities, the Regional Development Agency to the NHS – at different times they require bedrooms for staff, trainers and VIP guests. The people responsible for making these bookings are more aware of value for money; they can't automatically choose the nearest five star hotel but they want reassurance about quality. This means increased business opportunities for smaller accommodation establishments.



East Midlands Tourism's quality improvement programme is driving up standards across the region

East Midlands Tourism (EMT) is encouraging a policy that wherever possible, public sector organisations will only make bookings to accommodation with an official, star rating awarded by VisitBritain or the AA. Already the policy has been agreed with East Midlands Development Agency (emda), East Midlands Regional Assembly (EMRA) and Government Office for the East Midlands (GOEM), as well as several county economic partnerships. Additionally the region's five Destination Management Partnerships (DMPs*) will only promote star rated accommodation. This work is on-going and EMT intends to get the active agreement, participation and support for star ratings from each public sector organisation across the East Midlands.

* The region's five Destination Management Partnerships (DMPs) Explore Northamptonshire, Experience Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire Promotions, Lincolnshire Tourism and Visit Peak District and Derbyshire are responsible for promoting their destinations to visitors and delivering a focused Quality Improvement Programme to all tourism-related businesses.



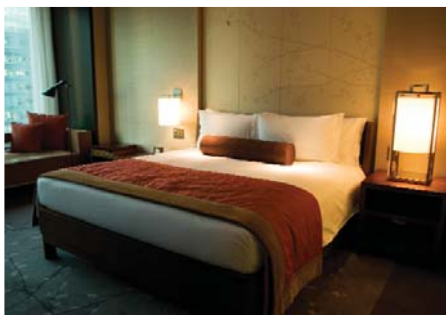
Explore Northamptonshire

Leicestershire Promotions



Visit PEAK DISTRICT & Derbyshire

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Internet websites offer increased choice yet with so much inaccurate information it's become confusing

Consumer recognition of the national standard (star rating) is growing and becoming more important. There is general awareness that a "five star hotel" means luxury and a "one star hotel" means simple, clean and comfortable. Understanding where on the scale from 1 to 5 you are booking is the important part. There is a need for all levels of accommodation quality relative to value and business type; not everyone wants or needs five star facilities.

Website listings can be out of date and reviews inaccurate. Consumers know this. There can be a gap between the accommodation promise and the reality. This hotel claimed to be 'three star standard' but actually has no official star rating.

What the promotion says...

Charming 16th century coaching inn with Tudor beams and log fire, magnificently extended to include 53 bedrooms and a leisure complex with swimming pool, sauna, steam room and gym. Enjoy historic public rooms, carvery restaurant, bars and terrace overlooking the surrounding countryside. The hotel offers the convenience of a prime historic town centre location with private parking.

What the customers say...

1. The room was filthy; I would not have wished my cat to stay in there. I went down for breakfast and found the only table available covered in tea stains, had no cutlery and crockery on it. I had to find my own utensils to eat and drink.
2. I had a look at the breakfast buffet, but decided I would like to survive the day. The hotel is in desperate need of refurbishment, however this should not stop the hotel being clean which should be a priority.
3. The carpet was filthy, the pink bathroom was mouldy with cracked tiles and we had one hot shower all weekend due to plumbing problems. The room was neither dusted nor vacuumed all weekend. Despite our complaints nothing improved.



Independent, professional assurance and a whole lot more...

Following research and discussion, public sector organisations throughout the East Midlands want reassurance about quality and are less inclined to take a risk and get it wrong. One welcome message of star ratings is that a lower number of stars does not mean poor standards. Quality sits alongside value for money; a key point when budget matters.

A star rating gives reliable information about quality including cleanliness, the warmth of welcome, the range of facilities and the availability of food. Those responsible for booking business accommodation want to reassure the member of staff concerned that they will get a good night's sleep on a comfortable mattress; that the area is safe; that there are good food choices available and that they will have good communications access – WiFi or in room internet connection.

Huge companies such as laterooms.com and TomTom satellite navigation systems are now working with VisitBritain and the AA to show star rated accommodation because they recognise that a star rating represents an independent, professional guarantee of quality, so important in today's increasingly consumer savvy world.

An official star rating is not a glowing review written by the proprietor or a scathing review from a disgruntled client with an axe to grind. From a business perspective a star rating denotes professionalism, a guarantee of minimum standards, a code of business practice and an independent means for resolving dispute.

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