



Basic guide to starting a guesthouse business

The following guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Tourism Northern Ireland booklet 'Basic guide to starting a Bed & Breakfast business.'

Information contained in this insert section relates to additional or different requirements for Guest Houses, and is supplementary to the statutory criteria, Tourism Northern Ireland recommendations and procedural matters outlined in the B&B Guide.

The Guide's sections on certification and marketing etc apply, in the main, to the Guest House category (including the scale of fees for statutory inspections) and are not repeated here.

What is a Guest House?

A Guesthouse differs from a B&B establishment in a number of important respects:

- **It must provide sleeping accommodation in not less than three double bedrooms all of which must be ensuite.**
- **Meals must be made available, including evening meal and breakfast.**
- **Additional or enhanced facilities, furnishings and fittings are required** (see Criteria section).

Criteria for Guest Houses

The criteria and recommendations listed in the B&B Guide also generally apply to Guest Houses eg signage; car parking; display of charges; visitors' register; tourist literature, etc.

The most important requirements and recommendations relating to the facilities, furnishings and fittings of a Guest House, as they differ from those which apply to a B&B establishment, are outlined in the sub-sections overleaf.

It must be emphasised that these are minimum requirements. The Board's recommendation is that all facilities should be enhanced where possible with the aim of offering all-round excellence.

Entrance Hall

The entrance hall should afford easy access, by means of internal or enclosed corridors and stairways, to all public rooms and bedrooms. The entrance hall should be of sufficient size to cater for the number of visitors who may be reasonably expected to use it at any one time.

Dining Area

The dining area or areas of a Guest House must provide for the serving of meals at separate tables.

Kitchen Area

The kitchen should be located adjacent to the dining area. A separate laundry/utility room must also be provided.

Lounge Area

A Guest House should have one or more lounges, *physically separated* from the dining area(s). Furniture should include comfortable chairs, armchairs, sofas or settees of good quality; occasional tables; carpet or, if the floor surface is of suitable design or treatment, rugs.

Visitors' Bedrooms

Each room should have two power outlets for a heater, electric cleaner etc.

It is recommended that Guesthouse bedrooms are not less than 20 square metres (inclusive of ensuite facilities).

Memorable Meals

Always strive to make every meal memorable. Make a point of catering to individual preferences, and always offer a choice of hot and cold dishes prepared with flair from local produce. Little touches, such as providing freshly baked scones and cakes when your guests fancy a cup of tea, will help promote your establishment as a home-from-home.

Contact details for further information:

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact any of the following staff in the Quality and Standards Department:

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