

Checking your scores for 'Gold' potential

- 3 star: an overall score of at least 80% plus a minimum of 75% in public areas, kitchen, bedrooms, bathrooms and cleanliness
- 4 star: you need an average of 84% or more overall, plus a minimum of 85 % for cleanliness and a minimum of 80% in the key areas listed above
- 5 star: an overall score of 91% or above, plus a minimum of 95% for cleanliness and 85% for the key areas listed above.

Study your report for hints and tips on what you might be able to improve/upgrade to pull up a score in a particular area.

In each section there will be several marks – good (3/5 or 60%), very good (4/5 or 80%) and excellent (5/5 or 100%). The overall score for each section is an average of the marks in the section, so look for areas where you might consider improvements to pull up the overall score and/or a particular section. You may be able to pull up your scores with some small improvements, avoiding 'big ticket' items like a new kitchen or a new bathroom, or even new beds. However, the assessor will advise you if the kitchen or bathroom is looking 'tired' and whether this is affecting the overall score.

Ideas include:-

- Upgrading the bed linen
- New pillows
- Bigger towels
- Improve quality of toiletries (or start to offer)
- New saucepans/frying pans
- New sharp knives
- Plenty of chopping boards
- A few unusual kitchen gadgets, e.g. pestle and mortar
- Home-made bread/cake/jams – for sale or as part of welcome hamper
- Larger operations might consider an honesty fridge/freezer with range of locally-sourced items for sale
- Cookery books
- Better quality cutlery
- Greater choice of reading material – magazines, local maps, 'coffee table' local history books, Radio Times, etc
- Improve restaurant/pub information – menus, guide books e.g. Good Pub Guide etc

- New toys/books for children – relatively low cost and bound to please your repeat visitors! e.g. fishing nets, bucket and spade, colouring books etc
- Install wi-fi
- New garden furniture and/or bright new cushions
- Garden games for children and adults
- Plant a herb garden
- Improve outside lighting (for winter lets and for summer outdoor eating)
- Consider bicycle hire/loan options

When deciding what areas to upgrade, think about what would impress your guests, what would surprise them or get them talking to friends and relatives on their return. Sometimes it's the low-cost items that make a big difference.

Think about any muddles or misunderstandings that have arisen in the past and review the information on your website, on your booking form, confirmation letter to make things clearer.

Remember to tell your assessor if you have made any changes since his/her last visit. The assessor will also be interested to hear about any special facilities or services that you offer your guests to make their stay even more comfortable or memorable.

Any 'deficiencies' listed at the front of your report do not generally affect the quality scores. These refer to the minimum entry requirements and the assessor will simply expect these missing items to be in place at his/her next visit, in order to stay in the scheme.

Since October 2009, following feedback from owners, we have reviewed the original policy of issuing the self-catering Gold awards on an annual basis only. The Gold awards are triggered automatically with the publishing of the assessment report.

If you have any questions, please call our Quality in Tourism Helpline on 0845 300 6996 or email:

QualityInTourism@uk.g4s.com.