



Setting up an Accommodation Business in the Forest of Dean



Forest of Dean
— DISTRICT COUNCIL —

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
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

www.glosfire.gov.uk

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
www.fdean.gov.uk

The Health & Safety Executive
Tel: 0845 345 0055
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
www.fdean.gov.uk

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
www.fdean.gov.uk

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

email: westerngroup.vo@voa.gsi.gov.uk
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
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
www.tourismforall.org.uk

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
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

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 e.g. in the reception area or on the door
- Include all essential extra costs in the charge e.g. 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
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
www.qualityintourism.co.uk

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

www.theaa.com

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

email: tourism.industryadvice@wales.gsi.gov.uk
www.industry.visitwales.gov.uk

Services for your business in the Forest of Dean

Marketing and Promotion

The Forest of Dean District Council's Commercial Team, undertake a number of marketing and promotional initiatives throughout the year including the production of a range of publications, press and PR activities, maintaining the tourism website in partnership with the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism Association and organising events.

Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism Association (WVFDTA)

This is a membership organisation for over 350 private sector tourism businesses within the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley area who work in partnership with the Forest of Dean District Council.

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 entry on to the official tourism website www.visitforestofdean.co.uk that is hosted by WVFDTA, 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
www.wyedeantourism.co.uk

Forest of Dean Visitor Guide

The Visitor Guide is produced annually by the Commercial 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 40,000 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 the destination website www.visitforestofdean.co.uk.

Useful Contacts

Forest of Dean District Council Commercial Team

Forest of Dean District Council
High Street
Coleford
GL16 8HG

Paula Burrows

Commercial Services Manager

Tel: 01594 812389

Email: paula.burrows@fdean.gov.uk

Claire Cook

Commercial Services Officer

Tel: 01594 812384

Email: claire.cook@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
www.visitbritain.com

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

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