



A PRACTICAL WALK-THROUGH AUDIT

First-Impression Audit Checklist

For B&Bs, guesthouses, small hotels and a few well-run rentals.

Walk the stay from the guest's point of view - from the road outside to the final goodbye.

Audit the stay, not the décor

A guest does not experience your departments. They experience one continuous journey: finding the entrance, being welcomed, settling into the room, using the bathroom, sleeping, paying and leaving.

Set up the walk-through

- Choose one room that has just been released as ready.
- Begin at the road, parking area or drop-off point with ordinary luggage.
- Use the directions and check-in message a real guest receives.
- Do not warn the team which room or time you will inspect.
- Test the stay in daylight and, on another day, after dark.
- Write what you observed, not a general opinion.

Think like a guest

- Can I find it?
- Can I enter without confusion?
- Does everything I touch feel clean?
- Can I use the room without instructions?
- Can I sleep, wash and connect comfortably?
- Do I know what to do if something goes wrong?

2

Works well, clean and clear

1

Works, but feels inconsistent or awkward

0

Fails, confuses or is not ready

N/A

Not part of this property or stay

Immediate-action rule: any safety, security or hygiene failure becomes a priority even if the overall score is high. This is a practical self-audit, not a star rating or legal compliance inspection.

01

Approach and entrance

The first impression starts before the door. Audit whether a tired first-time guest can find, reach and enter the property without guessing.

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 1 | The map pin, street address and written directions lead to the correct guest entrance. | 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐ |
| 2 | The property sign is clean, readable and visible before the guest passes the turn or gate. | 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐ |
| 3 | Parking or drop-off instructions match the actual layout, access hours and restrictions. | 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐ |
| 4 | The route from arrival point to the door is clear, stable, unobstructed and usable with luggage. | 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐ |
| 5 | Steps, edges, ramps and paths are easy to see; after-dark lighting works along the full route. | 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐ |
| 6 | The entrance area is free of litter, dead plants, broken fittings and stored operational clutter. | 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐ |
| 7 | The front door, gate, bell, intercom or keypad works on the first attempt. | 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐ |
| 8 | Self-check-in instructions are in the right order and can be followed without calling for help. | 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐ |
| 9 | The first indoor area smells neutral and clean; fragrance is not being used to hide another odor. | 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐ |
| 10 | A clear contact method is visible if no one is present, and a test call or message gets an answer. | 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐ |

Top fixes from this section

1.

2.

3.

02

The welcome

A good welcome is human and efficient. Give the guest the few facts they need now, then let them settle.

1	A staffed arrival is acknowledged promptly; an unstaffed arrival has a clear, reliable alternative.	0 ☐	1 ☐	2 ☐	N/A ☐
2	The host or team confirms the booking discreetly and uses the guest's name naturally.	0 ☐	1 ☐	2 ☐	N/A ☐
3	Check-in steps are ready and brief; the guest is not left standing while forms or keys are found.	0 ☐	1 ☐	2 ☐	N/A ☐
4	The key, card, code or app works the first time and is explained before the guest reaches the room.	0 ☐	1 ☐	2 ☐	N/A ☐
5	Wi-Fi, breakfast, checkout time and key return are explained accurately in under two minutes.	0 ☐	1 ☐	2 ☐	N/A ☐
6	Payment, deposits, taxes and any hold are clear before money is taken or a signature requested.	0 ☐	1 ☐	2 ☐	N/A ☐
7	Help with luggage, mobility or orientation is offered without making assumptions about the guest.	0 ☐	1 ☐	2 ☐	N/A ☐
8	The route to the room is easy to follow; room numbers and directional signs are visible and consistent.	0 ☐	1 ☐	2 ☐	N/A ☐
9	Local recommendations are relevant to what the guest asks, not a long memorized speech.	0 ☐	1 ☐	2 ☐	N/A ☐
10	The after-hours contact method is stated clearly and has been tested from a guest phone.	0 ☐	1 ☐	2 ☐	N/A ☐

Top fixes from this section

1.

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03

The room

Do not inspect from the doorway. Enter, unpack, sit, plug in, close the curtains and use everything the guest is expected to use.

1	The room number is easy to see, and the door, lock, latch and handle work smoothly and securely.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
2	The first breath is neutral: no damp, drain, smoke, cooking or strong chemical smell.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
3	Temperature, fan and ventilation controls respond and can be understood without staff help.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
4	Every light works; a guest can enter safely, read in bed and switch off without crossing the dark room.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
5	Sheets, pillowcases and protectors are clean, dry, correctly fitted and free of hair, marks and odor.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
6	Curtains, blinds and any privacy screen close fully; outside light and sightlines are checked at night.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
7	At least one usable power outlet is reachable from the bed, and local adapter needs are addressed.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
8	Wi-Fi details are current; joining is straightforward and the connection works in the room.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
9	The remote, kettle, coffee setup, fridge, safe and other promised equipment are clean and working.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
10	There is practical space for luggage and clothing; shelves, drawers and hangers are clean and usable.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐

Top fixes from this section

1.

2.

3.

04

The bathroom

Bathroom confidence is fragile. Test cleanliness, water, drainage, privacy and the simple movements of washing and dressing.

1	No hair, residue, scale, mold, fingerprints or missed edges are visible on any guest-facing surface.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
2	Hot water arrives within a reasonable wait, stays stable and is easy to adjust without scalding.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
3	Shower and basin pressure are usable, and water drains without pooling or unpleasant drain odor.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
4	The toilet flushes properly; the seat is stable; paper is reachable and a spare roll is available.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
5	The correct number of towels is present; each is clean, dry, unstained and free of worn edges.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
6	The mirror is streak-free and the lighting is sufficient for shaving, makeup and contact lenses.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
7	Hooks, rails and a dry shelf are placed where guests can reach them from the shower or basin.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
8	Ventilation works, and the bathroom can be used without leaving the room damp or overheated.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
9	The floor remains reasonably dry during a normal shower; screens, curtains and seals contain water.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
10	Toiletries are full, clearly labeled and easy to dispense; the bin and privacy lock work properly.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐

Top fixes from this section

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

05

The details guests notice

Small misses signal neglect. Check the surfaces, sounds and information a guest encounters after the first quick look.

1	High-touch items - handles, switches, remotes, taps and controls - look and feel clean.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
2	Under the bed, behind doors, along skirting and above eye level show no dust, hair or old items.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
3	Cups, glasses, trays and the inside of the kettle are clean, dry and free of scale or residue.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
4	Doors close quietly; air-conditioning, fans, pumps and refrigerators do not create avoidable noise.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
5	From the pillow, corridor light, outdoor lighting and equipment noise do not interrupt rest.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
6	Room information, menus, prices, opening times and emergency contacts are current and agree.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
7	Amenities are complete and useful; empty holders, random leftovers and tired display pieces are removed.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
8	Breakfast timing, location and choices are clear; dietary requests are handled honestly and consistently.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
9	Shared spaces are guest-ready early and late, not only during the manager's usual inspection time.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
10	Two different team members give the same answer to basic questions about Wi-Fi, breakfast and checkout.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐

Top fixes from this section

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

06

Checkout and farewell

The departure is the last memory you control. Make it clear, accurate and warm, especially when the stay included a problem.

1	Checkout time is easy to find and matches the booking confirmation, room information and staff answer.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
2	The guest knows whether to stop at reception, leave a key, send a message or simply depart.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
3	The bill is ready, itemized and accurate; any charge likely to surprise the guest is explained first.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
4	Payment works with the methods promised, and the receipt is offered in the guest's preferred format.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
5	Luggage storage, transport or onward-direction help is offered when it is likely to be useful.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
6	A team member asks one specific question about the stay and gives the guest time to answer.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
7	If a problem is raised, it is owned and addressed before departure rather than defended or dismissed.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
8	The farewell uses the guest's name when known, thanks them sincerely and avoids pressure for a review.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
9	Any promised follow-up - receipt, refund, lost-property check or answer - has a named owner and deadline.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐
10	Lost property is logged promptly, stored securely and handled through a consistent contact process.	0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ N/A ☐

Top fixes from this section

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Turn observations into three fixes

Add only applicable items. The percentage helps you compare repeat audits; it is not an official rating.

SECTION	POINTS	APPLICABLE ITEMS	POSSIBLE POINTS
01 Approach and entrance			
02 The welcome			
03 The room			
04 The bathroom			
05 Details guests notice			
06 Checkout and farewell			
Total			

Your working score

Points earned ÷ possible points × 100

_____ ÷ _____ × 100 = _____ %

Red flags override the score

Fix safety, security and hygiene failures first, whatever the percentage.

90-100% Strong: protect consistency and fix the remaining misses.

75-89% Sound: guests will still notice repeated friction.

60-74% Uneven: choose the most visible and frequent failures first.

Below 60% Reset basics: safety, cleanliness, function and communication.

Repeat the same route. Use the same room type and time of day when you re-audit, so the next score shows whether the fixes held.



YOUR AUDIT IS ONLY USEFUL WHEN SOMETHING CHANGES

Fix the first three things a guest would notice.

Assign an owner, set a date, then walk the same route again. A smaller property can often improve the stay quickly because the person who notices the problem is close to the person who can fix it.

The next three actions

1. Fix _____ Owner _____ Due _____

2. Fix _____ Owner _____ Due _____

3. Fix _____ Owner _____ Due _____

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Practical help for small hotels and B&Bs, from Daniel Grau.

Reference note: The checklist reflects common inspection themes in [VisitEngland Hotel Quality Standards](#) and the [Tourism NI Guest Accommodation Inspection Checklist](#). The wording, sequence and scoring method here are original.