

The Association of Scotland's Self-Caterers



## A Guide to Quality in Self-Catering



The ASSC Charter and Code of Practice  
[www.assc.co.uk](http://www.assc.co.uk)

### The ASSC

Formed in 1978, The Association of Scotland's Self-Caterers is an organisation of owners of holiday properties ranging from cottages and chalets to flats, lodges and castles.

The ASSC demands high and consistent standards of self-catering from its members who are thoroughly committed to the principles of *comfort, cleanliness, courtesy* and *efficiency*.

The ASSC is an influential member of the committee governing VisitScotland's 'Quality Assurance Scheme' and represents the self-catering industry in Scotland's official tourism bodies.

### Advantages of a self-catering holiday in Scotland

- Beautiful, natural surroundings, scenery and environment.
- Access to the history and culture of Scotland.
- Opportunities to enjoy a wide range of activities.
- Value for money – easy to budget.
- Easy to book.
- Independence and Freedom.
- Quality Assured properties have quality guaranteed by annual national inspection.

### Self-Catering

A house, cottage, apartment, chalet or similar accommodation which is let, normally on a weekly basis, where facilities are provided to cook for yourselves.

A wide range of quality accommodation is available including: Castles, Crofts, Chalets, Cottages, Bungalows, Converted Steadings, Flats and University campus accommodation in holiday periods.

A self-catering holiday is an excellent way to enjoy the natural beauty of Scotland and the friendliness of the people.

## ASSC Ideals and Principles of Service

Members of the ASSC are dedicated to providing a high standard of accommodation and service to the public. The following are the Ideals of the Association which all members must embrace in order to become, and remain, Members.

1. A general commitment to **cleanliness, comfort, courtesy** and **efficiency**.
2. More specifically, they offer :
  - a. An efficient booking system and administration.
  - b. A true and clear description of what is offered.
  - c. Clear travel directions, arrival instructions and a warm welcome.
  - d. Plenty of local (and emergency) information available.
  - e. Truly comfortable and pleasing accommodation, especially beds, bedding and soft furnishings.
  - f. Plenty of water, whenever required.
  - g. More than adequate space heating for all times of year.
  - h. As much information as possible, but with the minimum of "**Dos**" and "**Don'ts**".
  - i. Prices charged to be consistent with standards of service and accommodation provided.
  - j. Sensitive attention to safety and security for guests, including alertness to problems that may arise. Compliance with appropriate Fire and Building regulations.
  - k. Accommodation must be, in all respects, above VisitScotland's "Minimum Requirements for Self-catering Accommodation".

## Quality

### *The STB/VisitScotland Quality Assurance Scheme*

The ASSC provides the self-catering representative in the Trade Overseeing Committee which governs this scheme. The STB's QA scheme is a world first and advances quality of facilities as its most important principle. The scheme uses stars to indicate the quality of the welcome, the service and the condition of the accommodation.

The Standards You Can Expect:

*****	EXCEPTIONAL, WORLD CLASS
****	EXCELLENT
***	VERY GOOD
**	GOOD
*	FAIR AND ACCEPTABLE

### *The Green Tourism Business Scheme*

The Green Tourism Business Scheme, launched in April 1998, has been devised to enable businesses working in the hospitality sector to address their environmental responsibilities. There are 3 standards.

BRONZE	'Good Practice' environmental measures
SILVER	A Commitment to Continuous Improvement
GOLD	A rigorous level, requiring purchasing and supply screening

The three-tiered approach promotes an opportunity for continual development, rewarding progress as well as recognising each operator's commitment to the environment. The Association is keen to maintain the natural surroundings enjoyed by all. Members and their guests are asked to be as 'Green' as practicable in areas such as energy, water, waste and transport. The Association is committed to encouraging members to work towards the environmental standards set in the new STB 'Green Tourism Business Scheme'.

### *Welcome Host*

Look also for the 'Welcome Host' sign for a commitment to quality service.

## Booking Procedure

It is very easy to find ASSC Members – just call for our brochure, go online to [www.assc.co.uk](http://www.assc.co.uk), or look in VisitScotland brochures and Tourist Information Centres for properties displaying our logo. Or consult publications in book shops like FHG Guides/ or VisitScotland's 'Where to Stay' Self-Catering guides.

WHEREVER YOU LOOK, LOOK FOR THE ASSC LOGO.

When you contact your chosen self-catering business, the operator will tell you more about the property, the surrounding area and what to see and do nearby. They will explain to you the preferred method of payment, provide clear details of costs and expenses and then take a provisional booking which will be held for an agreed length of time.

When making the provisional booking please have the following details available:

- Your name, address and telephone number.
- Preferred dates.
- Type of accommodation required.
- Number in party.
- Any Pets.
- Smoking/non-smoking preferences.
- Any special needs.

The information you receive should give an honest account of the properties, site and associated facilities. You should also, at this stage, be made aware of any additional charges for fuel, hire of cots, high chairs, cleaning surcharges, etc. Please read the brochure and/or online information carefully and clarify any points before confirming your booking.

The policy on cancellation should be clearly stated. By completing the booking form you are entering into a legal agreement and you are strongly advised to consider cancellation insurance for your holiday.

## **Pets**

Some operators welcome pets, others are not able to have them, often for health reasons or because of other livestock. If you have agreed with the operator that your pet will be welcome please observe the following points.

- After a long journey make sure dogs are walked before entering the property.
- Always take the pet's own bedding and eating utensils.
- Keep your pet off beds and furniture.
- Keep your pet under control at all times.
- Never leave your pet alone in the property.

- Keep lawns clear of fouling.
- Never take a dog on a self-catering holiday with you until it is fully house-trained.

REMEMBER – OTHER GUESTS MAY NOT LOVE YOUR PET AS MUCH AS YOU DO.

## **Arrival**

Unless previously agreed, please do not arrive earlier than the normal entry time. Unlike hotels, most self-catering businesses do not operate a 24 hour reception system, so please contact the operator if you are likely to be delayed or would like to arrive early. If your host or manager lives on site they will give you a warm welcome and will show you to your accommodation and explain how to find things, how equipment works and give you any local information you may require.

If your host cannot welcome you personally, they will have made arrangements for you to gain access to the property and you will be contacted to check everything is satisfactory.

## **Your Stay**

During your stay your host will want to make sure that everything is satisfactory, that you can find everything you might need, and will do their best to ensure that all is as you would like. Should you have any problems with your accommodation, let your host know at the first available opportunity so that they can be attended to. Serious difficulties should be reported at once. Report breakages as soon as possible.

Please assist the operator to meet their environmental obligations by helping with waste disposal and recycling as requested.

## **Departure**

The success of a self-catering holiday is invariably the result of a partnership between the operator and their guests. ASSC members will do their best to provide you with good

accommodation at reasonable prices. For many, an independent holiday would be impossible were it not for the option of self-catering accommodation giving, as it does, the freedom to come and go as you please, without encroaching on other people or having your privacy broken by cleaning staff. For that reason, it does take time to prepare the properties for other guests.

Self-catering owners would like you to leave the property clean and tidy and in as good a condition as when you arrived. If you have not cleaned up at the end of your stay, you should speak to the owner about any additional cleaning charges which should be outlined in your Conditions of Let, and agree the payment. Please also make sure that you leave at the agreed time in order to allow staff to prepare the property for the next party.

Please remember to settle any bills before departure and to leave the key with the owner. If your host lives on site they will do their best to meet you before departure to wish you a safe onward journey.

## Complaints

We sincerely hope you have a trouble free holiday, but in the event of any problem, always speak to your host first – never leave your complaint until you get home. Where possible, the operator will do their best to set matters right as soon as they can.

If however, you feel the complaint is not dealt with to your satisfaction you may wish to take your complaint further.

Firstly, make sure your host is a member of the ASSC and, if this is so, write to the ASSC Secretary at:

The Secretary  
ASSC  
P.O. Box 23  
Taynuilt  
Argyll  
PA35 1WX

The Secretary will follow standard ASSC procedure and, if the complaint is felt to be justified, it will be acted upon and a report will be prepared with a view to meeting customer satisfaction.

If the operator was not a member of the ASSC, complaints should be addressed to VisitScotland at:

VisitScotland  
Thistle House  
Beechwood Park North  
INVERNESS  
IV2 3ED