

Accommodation

Guidelines for publicans



Introduction

Pubs with accommodation have a long history, yet in recent years the perception is that many pubs no longer offer this service – or if they do it is confined to the larger managed companies or pubs in specific tourist locations. Yet a new report by RPBI has found that in fact available rooms in the pub sector (across managed, tenanted and free house) outstrip most major hotel chains.

5,700 pubs in the UK offer accommodation, with the largest proportion offering between 5 and 10 rooms in their pub. Available rooms across the sector stand at over 50,000 – just under the total rooms of the entire Premier Inn estate.

The below table shows that the majority of rooms are in freehouses, with tenanted and leased close behind. Interestingly, managed houses offer the least number of pubs and rooms – showing the opportunities for individual licensees and tenants to offer accommodation.

Type	Pubs	Rooms
Managed	524	10,295
Privately Owned	2,802	22,830
Tenanted/Leasehold	2,373	17,583
No of rooms	5,699	50,708

November 2013

All data taken from the 'Pub Accommodation Report 2013 – current trends and future prospects for the pub accommodation market' by RPBI reports

Why do it?

Offering accommodation – often converting unused space above the pub or in outbuildings – can have the potential to generate significant income for licensees, not just from the direct payment of rooms but the knock-on in terms of food and drink sales within the pub itself. After food, accommodation is the next growth area for some pubs.

“It’s a great growth market as business people prefer to stay in a pub than a faceless hotel; they get to chat to other customers at the bar rather than sitting in a big restaurant somewhere!”

Not every pub is suited to accommodation, but pubs that really invest in accommodation and get it right can reap the rewards – as increasingly people do want to stay in pubs. The RPBI survey of 700 people found that 86% had stayed in a pub before and for the same cost per night, over 40% would rather stay in a pub compared to 23% in a branded hotel and 8% in a budget hotel. Comments from customers are clear that the pub element is very important in why they decide to choose where they stay – good food, good beer and a comfortable drinking environment put pubs ahead of branded hotel chains in visitors’ preferences.

Licensees who currently offer accommodation clearly see the benefits. The same survey asked 400 licensees and managers a series of questions around the value of offering rooms. Two-thirds said they expected accommodation revenue to grow in the next 12 months. The use of the internet is proving to be key in how successful pubs with rooms are – 88% of those surveyed are listed on TripAdvisor and the comments left on this site have a big impact on whether customers choose a particular pub. Online booking systems are important with 60% of licensees using an online booking system – although those that didn’t use online booking reported that phone bookings worked effectively for them so online booking is not necessarily a barrier to offering pub rooms.

Just under half of those surveyed charged between £51 and £75 per night, with a third charging £76 to £100 for a room. Very few charged more than £100 per night.

Priorities for guests

The report also listed the most important things potential customers were looking for when deciding whether to stay in a pub which should be considered:

- 85% said the availability of an ensuite bathroom was essential in deciding;
- 68% said knowledgeable staff when telephoning was very important;
- 67% used TripAdvisor when choosing which pub to stay at;
- 62% said the cost and quality of food and drink was very important;
- 61% said a breakfast offer was very important.

“I love staying in characterful pubs with good food and real ales. Far better than branded sterile bedroom factories!”

“Free Wifi is an important facility, even more so in the business market. Friendly staff, good beer/food and cleanliness can mean the difference between a repeat customer and a one time visitor.”

Other main factors that customers take into account are clean rooms, child-friendly, security and Wi-Fi (see comments section). Existing premises should review their operating schedule on a regular basis to ensure the licensing objectives continue to be met. A number of preventative measures can be taken to assist in keeping premises secure and safe:



How do I do it?

Obviously, accommodation will not suit every pub. Space, design and style of operation will all determine whether an accommodation offer is feasible. Even if you offer rooms at present, it may be worth looking at how these are presented and promoted to the public.

“Pubs with accommodation have more to offer the customer than standard hotels and b&b’s.”

Significant amount of capital will need to be invested in developing an accommodation provision if it is to be successful, and initially it will take time to see a return on this investment. However, if done well, this can be a long-term revenue source. If you are in a partnership agreement with a pub company or brewer it is always worth contacting them to see if they could help you develop and accommodation offer.

Other organisations to consider contacting include your local tourist board and/or destination management organisation, or an accreditation group such as the AA or Visit England/Scotland/Wales star accreditation scheme.

If you are the leaseholder or tenant of a pub business, it is always advisable to discuss your plans for offering accommodation with your pub company/brewery first – if practical, they may be able to provide you with assistance in getting your accommodation offer up and running. Aside from the direct financial outlay in developing accommodation, you will also need to consider relevant health and safety and fire safety regulations (although as licensed premises your business may well have the majority of these covered anyway). VisitEngland have a comprehensive checklist of the relevant legislation [here](#).



**British Beer &
Pub Association**
Brewers' Hall
Aldemanbury Square
London EC2 V 7HR

T: 020 7627 9191

F: 020 7627 9123

E: contact@beerandpub.com

www.beerandpub.com

Registered in London

Company number: 1182734