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The Outdoor Education & External Visits website is at  
<https://www.somerset.org.uk/sites/sccoea/SitePages/Home.aspx>.

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## SELECTION AND CHECKING OF RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION

Selecting the right accommodation plays a major role in the success or failure of a residential or exchange visit. There have been serious incidents in the past where hostel or hotel accommodation used by British groups has been insecure against intrusion by outsiders or has been used by individuals or parties at the same time and in the same location as a school group, putting the group at security and safeguarding risk.

Visit leaders must ensure that appropriate checks and security arrangements have been made through the residential provider or by the appointed tour operator. Written assurances should be obtained and retained with other documentation relating to residential trip or activity. A pre-visit to the chosen accommodation is strongly recommended.

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## GUIDELINES: SELECTING ACCOMMODATION

When selecting accommodation in this country or abroad, the following guidelines must be followed:

- The requirements for privacy and child protection must be stressed and checked with the accommodation manager.
- All fire exits checked as clear and fire alarm/evacuation procedures from the bedrooms and building are understood by all. An evacuation 'test' is conducted on the first evening.
- An accommodation plan/room layout should be obtained.
- Staff with designated responsibilities for young people/participants must have access to their rooms at all times.
- Teachers' rooms should be on every floor used and adjacent to the young peoples' rooms.
- Single rooms for young people are not appropriate as it could put them at risk.
- The accommodation area should be as discrete to the group as possible and where 24-hour reception staff is not available, security arrangements should be in force to safeguard the group and deter unauthorised visitors.

- Other existing planned or possible use of the accommodation should be clarified
- Visit leaders should be particularly alert to the dangers posed by balconies - these have led to a number of serious incidents in the past where young people have fallen while attempting to climb onto a balcony, or where a balcony is not designed/constructed to withstand people.
- A pre-visit by a visit leader is essential to help assess accommodation standards, the building layout and basic security checks, such as ensuring there are working locks on windows and shutters, etc.
- Visit leaders should also consider the suitability of accommodation for young people with special needs i.e. wheelchair use/specialist equipment and dietary requirements if food is provided by the accommodation.
- Visit leaders to remind the group of their responsibility to respect other occupants and the rules set by the accommodation owners (see the [Roles and Responsibilities](#) guidance).

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## ACCOMMODATION CHECKLIST

### *Questions to Ask*

This guidance can be applied to the selection of any accommodation, including an outdoor education centre or accommodation used by a group even when the trip is organised through a tour operator.

Whether a school/establishment is booking their own accommodation or a professional agency are making arrangements for them, the questions listed in the Checklist for Accommodation below should be asked. The party leader may not regard all arrangements as necessary, but he/she should be aware of conditions in order to inform parents/guardians and young people.

Some of these questions will be part of the planning at the school/establishment; some questions can be answered by local representatives, or by telephone, facsimile or electronic mail. Best practice though would be to organise a pre-visit to the accommodation before the residential. This will give you sufficient time to assess the accommodation, and discuss with the residential provider any concerns you have or changes you consider to be necessary, or to give sufficient time to find an alternative location if the accommodation is deemed unsuitable.

See the Checklist for Accommodation overleaf. *(Please note that this Checklist is also available as a separate download from the [Templates and Forms](#) page in the [Start Here](#) section of the Outdoor Education and External Visits website.)*

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# Checklist for Accommodation

<b>Proposed Accommodation</b>			
<b>Visit Leader</b>		<b>Date of Visit</b>	
<b>Accommodation</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Is the accommodation suitable? (Overseas accommodation may not be built or designed to UK or EU standards)			
Is accommodation in one building? (This is preferable.)			
If more than one building, has the ratio of young people to staff been adjusted appropriately?			
Is there a floor plan available, so that pre-designated rooms can be planned?			
If a mixed group, are there appropriate numbers of male and female staff?			
Are any young people accommodated on the ground floor? (This should be avoided if possible.)			
Do staff have separate rooms, adjacent to the young people? (preferable on the same floor)			
Is access from staff to young peoples' rooms available at all times?			
Are there separate female and male sleeping and bathroom facilities, for young people and the staff?			
Is there adequate storage for clothes, cases, equipment and other resources?			
Are there drying facilities?			
<b>Health and Safety</b>			
Does the accommodation have clear emergency exits, fitted with smoke, fire and carbon monoxide alarms?			
Does everyone know what these alarms sound like are arrangements for emergency evacuations, exits and muster points including the use of pictograms (EU legislation) understood by everyone?			
Are all balconies safe, and all windows secure, with working locks?			
Is the heating and ventilation safe, and has it been checked recently?			
Is there provision for young people or staff who have a disability requiring use of particular equipment (e.g. a PEEP for anyone that may require one)?			
Do all lifts have inner doors, are they in good working order, and do they comply with with the regulations in the country concerned?			
Do all electrical connections conform to BSI standards, or if abroad, to regulatory standards in that country?			
Is there adequate car parking and is it situated away from busy pedestrian areas?			
Where you have organised self-catering accommodation have you considered arrangements for food hygiene including storage, preparation, cooking and serving?			
Have you considered suitable menus including provision for those with dietary requirements?			
Have you put in place suitable dining/cleaning arrangements for self-catering residential? Are young people involved in this process?			
<b>Security</b>			
Are there adequate and proper security arrangements, at reception, 24 hours a day?			
If 24-hour security is unavailable, are there arrangements in place to ensure unauthorised visitors are deterred?			
Have the staff at the accommodation been vetted for their suitability to be working			

around young people?		
Are there locks on all bedroom doors?		
Will there be staff members on emergency stand-by during the night?		
<b>Miscellaneous</b>		
Have you considered accommodation needs for young people where issues of religion, gender or disability have been raised?		
Is there a suitable function room available for carrying out written work associated with the activity or visits?		
Is there other exclusive daytime leisure and recreational accommodation for the young people?		

**Notes/comments:**