

HCIMA management guide

Hospitality Assured

What is it?

Hospitality Assured is *The Standard for Service and Business Excellence* in hospitality, championed by the Hotel and Catering International Management Association (HCIMA) and supported by the British Hospitality Association (BHA).

The standard is fully endorsed by the British Quality Foundation and the Quality Scotland Foundation as meeting the criteria in the EFQM Excellence Model, which is owned by the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM). It is the only standard within the Hospitality Industry that focuses on the customer experience.

The process for achieving Hospitality Assured recognition is rigorous. It takes into account customer opinion and considers all the aspects of service from the customers' point of view. This is an accreditation which is not achieved easily. It is an ongoing process that provides a series of performance indicators against which an organisation can continually judge and measure itself.

Hospitality Assured gives customers the opportunity to choose an organisation where high quality service is guaranteed. The hallmark of Hospitality Assured accredited organisations is a powerful desire to exceed customer expectations, within a climate of continuous improvement and business excellence. Customers can therefore be confident that they will be satisfied by any organisation that is Hospitality Assured.

The Standard for Service and Business Excellence comprises 10 steps.



The ten steps comprise 49 key requirements or criteria. These are all measurable objectives. The standard, however, is not prescriptive. It does not lay down precisely how objectives will be met – they will vary organisation by organisation, according to that organisation's customer promise. For example a customer promise in a conference centre will be different to a cruise ship, a pub or a care home.

Why become Hospitality Assured?

Hospitality Assured was created for the industry, by the industry and is based on best international practice. Hospitality Assured is owned and managed by the HCIMA.

Hospitality Assured 'accredited' organisations enjoy a number of significant advantages. These include:

- Being seen as one of the very best organisations in the hospitality industry by customers, employees, stakeholders and competitors.
- Being able to use powerful business tools and objective external assessment to stimulate and measure performance improvement in service delivery and business excellence.
- Being able to Benchmark the accredited organisation against the best in class.
- Using the Hospitality Assured mark to promote the accredited organisation to existing and new customers.
- Demonstrating that the accredited organisation is a quality employer.
- The most appropriate standard for the particular area of business.
- For Local Authorities, it helps significantly with preparation for 'best value' reviews, by demonstrating 'best value'.

- It helps to protect existing business.
- It proves that a catering service is reputable.
- The methodology used in the Hospitality Assured process demonstrates the importance placed on customers.
- The standard's criteria stands up to the external scrutiny of stakeholders.
- Improved listening to customers.
- Faster reaction to customer needs.
- It encourages staff motivation and team-building at all levels.
- It can create a new mission statement and service promise.
- It finds the gaps in service delivery.
- It highlights good practice.
- It underpins ongoing improvement.
- It facilitates target-setting and performance monitoring.

Who can become Hospitality Assured?

Any organisation – small or large, single or multi-unit in hospitality, leisure and tourism, with a desire to improve its service to customers and improve its operational and business excellence – is eligible.



In the meetings and conference sector, Hospitality Assured has partnered The Meetings Industry Association (MIA). Members of the MIA can seek to achieve Hospitality Assured-Meetings (HA-M), which is promoted to meetings buyers as a mark of Service and Business Excellence in the meetings industry (for the updated list of accredited organisations, visit www.hospitalityassured.com).

Who has achieved Hospitality Assured?

There are currently over 130 corporate organisations (for the updated list of accredited organisations, visit www.hospitalityassured.com) – representing some 3500 trading outlets and involving more than 50,000 staff in the following sectors – which have been successful in achieving Hospitality Assured accreditation by meeting the minimum requirements of the standard.

Hospitality Assured sectors

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| • Bars, Pubs and Inns | • Leisure |
| • Clubs | • Local Authority |
| • Colleges | • Meetings (MIA) |
| • Conference Centres | • Other |
| • Foodservice and Facilities Management | • Restaurants |
| • Healthcare | • Transport |
| • Hotels | • Universities |

Simple steps to achieving Hospitality Assured include:

- 1 Contacting Hospitality Assured.
- 2 Asking for a visit or attend an induction seminar.
- 3 Attending workshops – these are staged either at an organisation’s premises or publicly, providing managers and supervisors with a sound working knowledge of ‘The Standard for Service and Business Excellence’, evidential requirements, and how to use the Hospitality Assured ‘self-assessment’ business improvement tool.
- 4 Carrying out ‘Self-Assessment’ – a fast and dynamic process to check an organisation’s own strengths and weaknesses against the ten steps of the standard. This process should involve a cross-section of the operation’s managers, supervisors and front-line staff.
- 5 Getting ready for ‘Assessment’ – a period (typically 6–12 months) of building on strengths and addressing areas for improvement, highlighted by the self-assessment process. Help is now available from consultants during this period.
- 6 Booking an ‘External Assessment’ – when confident, an organisation can request Hospitality Assured to organise an external visit from the scheme’s assessment body, MQA. Assessment is mainly carried out by meeting and interviewing an organisation’s management team and staff, in order to gather evidence of processes in action. The assessment will be planned with you in advance by the assessment team from MQA.
- 7 Achieving ‘Accreditation’ – this will be awarded if an organisation is judged to have scored at least 60% against the ‘Standard for Service and Business Excellence’, with a minimum score of 50% in each and every one of the standard’s ten steps.
- 8 Planning for ‘Re-Assessment’ – to maintain accreditation, organisations must agree to be re-assessed annually and continue to meet the minimum requirement for accreditation. The focus in re-assessment is to measure positive change and continuous improvement.

Scheme Pack – Brilliant Business Improvement Tool

The Hospitality Assured Scheme Pack is the starter kit for Hospitality Assured. It contains the *standard*; *guidelines* as to the evidence required to meet the standard; and, importantly, a *self-assessment business improvement tool*. The cost is £100, or £75 to HCIMA members, available from hospitalityassured@hcima.co.uk or mia@meetings.org.

Quotes from Hospitality Assured accredited organisations

Hotels

One of the world’s most famous hotels – the 133-bedroom The Ritz, London – became the first five-star hotel in the capital to achieve Hospitality Assured when it was initially assessed in 2001. Former Managing Director Luc Delafosse said: “The Ritz London has greatly benefited from participation in Hospitality Assured – it has been the right catalyst for the hotel. You cannot deliver good service unless you have happy employees. For our guests, it is the staff who make the difference, and this is where Hospitality Assured has had a major role to play in our success. I wanted an officially recognised organisation that could assess the service we offer, and take time to listen to

the management and staff. Since the Hospitality Assured standard is industry specific, it fitted the bill perfectly. The process leading to accreditation has proved highly motivating for everyone concerned, and we have taken, and will continue to take, on board all the assessors' comments and recommendations."

Food and Service Management

Linda Halliday, Partner and HR Director in contract caterers Wilson Storey Halliday, says that the company was initially accredited with Hospitality Assured five years ago, and the key steps of the standard could be applied to all aspects of the business. "With an annual turnover of £55 million and 1,600 staff, our vision is to be the best independent food-service provider in the UK," she states. "The essential ingredients of our business are people, food and communication. People are the most important aspect in helping to cope with growth in the business, so recruiting the right staff is vitally important, as is a thorough induction to the business. It is crucial that employees feel they are part of the business – a factor that underpins the Hospitality Assured process. I am passionate about good customer care. I would recommend Hospitality Assured because it enables you to benchmark your performance; and discover your strengths and weaknesses, helping you to continuously develop the weaker areas of your business and further build upon the areas where you are doing well. You should not get too hung up over Hospitality Assured scores; instead concentrate on your people, be innovative and take risks!"

Healthcare

Anchor Trust is the largest not-for-profit provider of housing and support for older people in England. Bob Bird, Head of Lifestyle Services, Anchor Homes, says of Hospitality Assured: "Anchor Homes is delighted at being given Hospitality Assured accreditation. We were impressed at the professionalism and thoroughness of the assessing team who went into great detail to understand the ethos and culture of our organisation. The extremely constructive observations and recommendations made, will without doubt, enable us to further improve our service delivery to our customers in the next few months."

Leisure

West Ham United Hospitality Ltd scored a remarkable double by gaining both the HCIMA-led Hospitality Assured accreditation for its hospitality facilities and the MIA-led Hospitality Assured-Meetings (HA-M) accreditation for its conference and banqueting facilities. Director of West Ham United Hospitality, David Thorpe-Tracey MHCIMA, said: "We are delighted that all our efforts have been recognised with the HCIMA- and MIA-led Hospitality Assured awards. Our success will not go to our heads! My team and I have assured the Football Club that we will not be resting on our laurels and will be continuing to strive to achieve excellence."

Local Authorities

Irene Carroll, General Manager of City Catering at Southampton City Council, says she and her team are delighted at being awarded Hospitality Assured for school

catering, civic hospitality, meals-on-wheels and a sixth-form college. "We are now building on the lessons learnt from achieving Hospitality Assured to formulate a strategy to ensure that continuous improvements are made to the whole service. Due to the accreditation, we have become far more focused on detailed business planning, strategic development and benchmarking. Embarking and working our way through the Hospitality Assured process was the best 'wake up' call City Catering could have had. We had every reason to be proud of what we had achieved in a very short space of time for a new organisation, but now we can achieve even more while working within the guidelines of Hospitality Assured. I would recommend it to any organisation!"

Lord Thurso, MP FHCIMA

Quality and profits have
always been inextricably linked.
Hospitality Assured is the
Simplest and the most cost
Effective method I have come across
for improving quality. It is
clearly a benchmark for our industry's future.

For further Information

To find out more about Hospitality Assured, contact: Tony Lainchbury MHCIMA, Hospitality Assured General Manager; or Steven Bulloch, Hospitality Assured Administrator, at: HCIMA, Trinity Court, 34 West Street, Sutton, Surrey SM1 1SH – on telephone: 020 8661 4918; fax: 020 8661 4901; email: hospitalityassured@hcima.co.uk or stevenb@hcima.co.uk. The website is www.hospitalityassured.com.

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