

## Vicarage House Norfolk

Vicarage House, Vicarage Road, GREAT HOCKHAM, Norfolk, IP24 1PE, England

### Summary

STAR RATING



*Gold Award*

SCHEME

Self-Catering

QUALITY SCORE

98%

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VISIT DATE

24 April 2024

VISIT TYPE

Day Assessment

CONTACT

Mrs Katharine Darby Proprietor

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Vicarage House Norfolk retains a Five Star Self Catering rating. Scoring is commendable.

The Gold Award is also recommended and recognises the excellent quality and attention to detail noted throughout.

Accommodation is split between Vicarage House and The Pool house which is completely self contained. Both are extremely well furnished and have that homely yet high quality feel. You really get a sense that they have thought of everything.

The visit and debrief was carried out with Richard and Katie Darby, the owners, who are delighted to achieve this rating and award.

Nothing ever stands still at Vicarage House with the owners proactive at maintaining and enhancing quality standards throughout. New artwork including new oil paintings noted to Vicarage House this year enhancing appearances and adding interest. The rear hall in Vicarage house has been redecorated with designer wallpaper, an antique card table and chair added, which has improved to look and feel of this area. The Pool House has been completely redecorated with new sofas added. General maintenance and upkeep ongoing. The gardens are presenting extremely well and are a fantastic feature where ever you look.

The owners are clearly pro active at investing helping to maintain quality and deliver high standards, as all areas are finished to an exceptional standard with an abundance of original features, that add bags of character to the property. The gardens and terraces along with the swimming pool are sure to bring enjoyment to all. Continual investment ensures guests can relax and feel comfortable from the moment they arrive.

# Quality Rating

## How the Overall Quality Rating is Achieved

When VisitEngland assessors visit your property, they will evaluate and give a quality score to all aspects of the accommodation and service.

The total of all these scores establishes an overall percentage score for quality.

Based on this score, establishments will be given an overall quality rating on a scale of One to Five Stars, based on the chart below, as long as all minimum entry requirements for the star rating are met.

1 STAR	2 STAR	3 STAR	4 STAR	5 STAR
34% - 47%	48% - 59%	60% - 74%	75% - 86%	87%-100%

There are five levels of quality ranging from One to Five Stars. To obtain a higher star rating a progressively higher quality and range of services and physical facilities should be provided across all areas with particular emphasis in the following five key areas:

### BEDROOMS

1 STAR	2 STAR	3 STAR	4 STAR	5 STAR
34% - 47%	48% - 59%	60% - 74%	75% - 86%	87%-100%

### BATHROOMS

1 STAR	2 STAR	3 STAR	4 STAR	5 STAR
34% - 47%	48% - 59%	60% - 74%	75% - 86%	87%-100%

### CLEANLINESS

1 STAR	2 STAR	3 STAR	4 STAR	5 STAR
60% - 64%	65% - 69%	70% - 79%	80% - 89%	90%-100%

### PUBLIC AREAS

1 STAR	2 STAR	3 STAR	4 STAR	5 STAR
34% - 47%	48% - 59%	60% - 74%	75% - 86%	87%-100%

### KITCHENS

1 STAR	2 STAR	3 STAR	4 STAR	5 STAR
34% - 47%	48% - 59%	60% - 74%	75% - 86%	87%-100%

	SCORE	PERCENTAGE	RATING
<b>Exterior</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>	
Appearance of Buildings/Kerb Appeal	5		
Grounds/Gardens/Parking	5		
Privacy/Peace & Quiet	5		
<b>Cleanliness</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5 Star</b>
Bedrooms	5		
Bathrooms	5		
Living/Dining Areas	5		
Kitchen	5		
<b>Management &amp; Efficiency</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>	
Pre-arrival Information	5		
Welcome & Arrival Procedure	5		
In-unit Guest Info & Personal Touches	5		
<b>Public Areas</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5 Star</b>
Decoration	5		
Flooring	5		
Furniture/Furnishings/Fittings	5		
Lighting/Heating/Ventilation	5		
Space/Comfort/Ease of use	5		
<b>Bedrooms</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>5 Star</b>
Decoration	5		
Flooring	5		
Furniture/Furnishings/Fittings	5		
Lighting/Heating/Ventilation	5		
Beds	5		
Bedding & Bed Linen	5		
Space/Comfort/Ease of use	4		
<b>Bathrooms</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>5 Star</b>
Decoration	5		
Flooring	5		
Furniture/Fittings/Sanitaryware	5		
Lighting/Heating/Ventilation	5		
Space/Comfort/Ease of use	4		
<b>Kitchen</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5 Star</b>
Decoration	5		
Flooring	5		
Furniture/Furnishings/Fittings	5		
Lighting/Heating/Ventilation	5		
Electrical & Gas Equipment	5		
Crockery/Cutlery/Glassware	5		
Kitchenware/Pans/Utensils	5		
Space/Comfort/Ease of use	5		
<b>Additional Facilities</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>	
Recreation	5		

## Exterior

The house is a stunning property and presents extremely well with clear signage from the road. Impressive electric gates open on to a long, well maintained driveway through well kept gardens. Ample parking is available for guests. Painted signage noted throughout the gardens. Extensive and attractive gardens including vegetable and herb gardens are immaculately kept. Both water features are stunning and add to the overall ambiance. The gardens wrap around the house and are extremely well tended with several outdoor seating areas with furniture noted, a fire pit and a BBQ available for guest use.

## Cleanliness

High standards of cleanliness creating a positive impression for arriving guests and a credit to all involved. High and low level ledges and fittings dust and cobweb free throughout with comparable attention to detail also evident to furniture, soft furnishings and lighting/heating fittings. Mixed flooring thoroughly vacuumed to skirtings and in to corners, care also taken around bases of bathroom fittings and kitchen units. Sanitary ware clean and bright, glazed surfaces and chrome fittings polished to a shine; grouting and silicon sealant also presenting to a high standard. Kitchen units clean and attention evident to drawer and cupboard interiors. White goods, tableware and cookware also demonstrating attention to detail.

## Management & Efficiency

All bookings are managed by Katie. Third party agents are used. Thorough property details and terms and conditions are sent to guests prior to arrival including bedroom layouts, recommendation of restaurants and arrival procedures. A Whatsapp message is now sent on the morning of arrival to the guest with key information such as gate codes etc. A personal welcome and guided tour is offered on arrival. An excellent welcome includes hot beverage making items, attractive fresh flowers from the garden, fresh fruit and prosecco. Guest information is comprehensive and extremely well presented, with WIFI codes now added to each bedroom, however upgrading to a digital platform such as Touch Stay could be considered at this level. Many books including the complete works of Charles Dickens, DVDs and high quality magazines noted. Smart TVs, Sky TV and Netflix are also available to guests. New 5G fibre optic superfast broadband has been installed this year.

The ethos of the house is that the owners want guests to feel 'friends have lent them their home'. They really have achieved this, the larder in the kitchen is always fully stocked for guests to help themselves to, very impressive!

Many additional services can be offered, which are discussed with guests prior to arrival, such as a private chef, hampers or Katie will provide a hot meal for when guests arrive.

## Public Areas

All public areas of the property are very grand and present to an extremely high standard with painted and wallpapered décor extremely well maintained. There are plenty of areas for guests to relax including the drawing room, TV room and extensive games room with a table tennis table. The large dining room with the grand dining table along with hand painted walls has the wow factor, with the table thoughtfully laid for arriving guests. All sofas and chairs are in keeping with the property and are in exceptional order. All areas of the property are full of character with the use of original features and open fireplaces along with excellent quality furnishings to really give each room a sense of luxury. Space is utilised extremely well to maximise comfort. Wooden, Karndean and carpet flooring is in excellent condition with attractive rugs well placed. Excellent natural and well positioned lighting and central and under floor heating seems efficient.

## Bedrooms

Bedrooms are again extremely well maintained and individual with immaculately painted and wallpapered décor. Carpets in all bedrooms are excellent quality and continue to wear extremely well. All furniture is in excellent condition, wardrobes and drawers provide ample storage space. Further mirrors have been added this year. The rooms feel light and airy, with well placed artificial lighting and central and underfloor heating. The beds have excellent firm mattresses, with toppers and plump pillows that are well protected. Beautiful furnishing and curtains are in all rooms and help give that homely feel. Professionally laundered quality linen dress the beds. A very good amount of usable space in all rooms.

## Bathrooms

All en-suites and bathrooms are in excellent decorative order with excellent tiled flooring throughout. Further artwork has enhanced appearances and added interest. Modern sanitary ware include large walk in showers and baths present extremely well with sealant and grouting immaculate. Centrally heated towel rails and underfloor heating and extraction seems in very good working order. Excellent task and ceiling lighting, new fittings would improve appearances. A selection of soft, high quality towels including flannels and bath sheets and Bramley toiletries are for guest use. The rooms have a very good amount of usable space for guests.

## Kitchen

Both the Vicarage kitchen and The Pool House kitchen present extremely well with the large utility and pantry giving guests more space. Space has been very well designed to provide an excellent amount with an open plan style ideal for entertaining. Painted décor and marble work surfaces continue to present extremely well. Wooden flooring is in extremely well maintained. Excellent immaculate storage units and drawers provide guests with ample storage. The new floating shelf in the Pool House helps offer further storage. Saucepans, equipment and utensils are of a very high quality and range.

Excellent heating, lighting and an extractor fan is noted. Crockery, tableware and new glassware are of a very good quantity and quality. Villroy and Boch crockery noted in the Pool House and Sophie Conran crockery noted in the Vicarage.

An extensive range of equipment is provided, including an ice maker in The Pool House and built in and free standing Nespresso machines. All excellent quality branded appliances including two dishwashers, large fridge/freezer several washing machines and tumble dryers are all in very good order.

## Additional Facilities

Large, well kept grounds give guests the opportunity to go exploring. There is an outdoor heated swimming pool with new pool cover noted. Guests can also enjoy croquet, tennis 5 a side football, badminton and cricket to name a few. Bikes are also available for use.

## Units Seen

Vicarage house kindly shown by Richard and Katie.

# Website Feedback

Website reviewed [www.vicaragehousenorfolk.com](http://www.vicaragehousenorfolk.com)

The website is mobile compatible. The attractive website is easy to navigate with clear property description and stunning photos reflect they style of accommodation. Very good use of floor plans. Good prominent tariff and availability guide. Great list of things to do, including private chef, eating out and different attractions and activities. Supercontrol online booking platform added this year. The 'VisitEngland' logos are well placed.

Very good reviews from guests on the website along with excellent online reviews.

Instagram and Facebook are utilised well.

It is recommended, if not already done so, to provide updated photos and text by logging in to the customer portal (Access details emailed separately to allow this) or email details to [visitenglandassessmentservices@aamediaigroup.co.uk](mailto:visitenglandassessmentservices@aamediaigroup.co.uk) to enable your establishment listing to be populated correctly on [ratedtrips.com](http://ratedtrips.com)

Further business and marketing advice as well as member benefits can be found by visiting the Rated Trips Business Support Hub at the following link:  
<https://business.ratedtrips.com/user/member-login>

## Potential for Improvement

Very little to suggest.

Suggest fitting some USB/USB-C ports.

New bathroom light fittings are suggested.

## Highlights

Caring owners and team who continually invest and work hard to maintain the property to an extremely high level.

Excellent levels of housekeeping.

Stunning property, beautifully furnished.

Beautiful well maintained ground and gardens.

# Minimum Entry Requirements

For a rating to be awarded by VisitEngland, a property must meet all Minimum Entry Requirements and any additional requirements appropriate for the star rating level.

**Name** Vicarage House Norfolk

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**Standard** Self-Catering

**Designator** Self-Catering Unit

**Rating** 5 Star Gold Award

At the time of our visit, all of the Minimum Entry Requirements and Additional requirements/Key Requirements were provided.

# Specialities (optional)

These have not been awarded or assessed.

## Useful Numbers

### Customer Support

All property enquiries, including assessments, reports, ratings, signage, training, and logo requests

01256 338350

[VisitEnglandAssessmentServices@aamediaigroup.co.uk](mailto:VisitEnglandAssessmentServices@aamediaigroup.co.uk)

### Assessment Services Accounts

All financial and payment enquiries

01733 207324

[VECreditControl@aamediaigroup.co.uk](mailto:VECreditControl@aamediaigroup.co.uk)

## Useful Links

### Online Details Portal

Change your online information on RatedTrips.com; add up to 20 photographs and showcase your facilities.

<http://www.ratedtrips.com/update-your-profile>

### Business Support

Advice and support for your business, including training opportunities and discounts.

[www.ratedtrips.com/business-support](http://www.ratedtrips.com/business-support)

### Participant Benefits

Exclusive offers and discounts to help your business

[www.ratedtrips.com/participant-benefits](http://www.ratedtrips.com/participant-benefits)

## Participant offers and discounts



Discover more at [www.ratedtrips.com/participant-offers](http://www.ratedtrips.com/participant-offers)

Got a question? – email us at [contact@ratedtrips.com](mailto:contact@ratedtrips.com)

# VisitEngland Inspection Appeals Procedure

Proprietors who wish to appeal against the results of a VisitEngland assessment carried out at their establishment must follow the procedure outlined below:

1. Any appeal must be made in writing to VisitEngland Assessment Services within 21 days of the original report being received.
2. The Appeal should detail the main reason for the appeal.
3. Should the appeal be about the level of star rating proprietors should ensure that their establishment meets all the necessary minimum requirements outlined in the Quality Standards booklet (a PDF or hard copy may be requested from Customer Services).
4. Appeals will be formally acknowledged within 7 working days of receipt of the appeal together with a form to organise an appeal visit on a day basis.
5. The appeal visit will be subject to a non-refundable fee which will not be organised until full payment had been received.
6. Once the application and fee is received, an appeal visit from a member of the senior assessor team will take place within 4-6 weeks of receipt (Subject to the establishment's availability).
7. The findings of the appeal visit will be fed back in the normal way of both discussions and a report following the visit.
8. The outcome of this report will supersede the previous visit and will be final.

Appeal Visit Fees (non-refundable) are available on request from Customer Services.