

Consultation Response: Proposed Licensing Scheme for Visitor Accommodation in Wales

5th November 2025

North Wales Tourism Ltd has been proudly operating for 35 years, representing over 1,300 business members across the region of North Wales. As the collective voice of one of North Wales's most vital economic sectors, we have actively consulted with our members to gather diverse perspectives on the Welsh Government's proposed licensing and registration scheme for the visitor accommodation.

Their views, including professional tourism and hospitality operators, small-scale providers, seasonal businesses, and stakeholders, the feedback has been integrated into this report to ensure a balanced, evidence-based response.

Our members overwhelmingly recognise the potential benefits of a well-designed scheme, including improved guest safety, raised quality standards, and a more professional sector. Mandatory requirements for fire risk assessments, smoke and CO alarms, electrical and gas inspections, and public liability insurance would enhance visitor confidence and level the playing field, particularly for established businesses already complying with such standards.

A centralised public directory with verified listings and registration numbers could promote compliant providers, while training obligations and a best-practice code (covering accessibility, sustainability, and Welsh language/culture) support long-term professionalism and sustainable tourism growth.

However, significant concerns persist regarding the cumulative regulatory burden on an industry already facing unprecedented challenges. In the last 36 months, tourism businesses have navigated multiple new stipulations amid a cost-of-living crisis, with hospitality in areas like Caernarfon reporting at least 30% downturns compared to previous years.

Members describe the sector as being **"bled dry"** to fund other priorities without reinvestment, deterring investment and prompting some to consider relocating to competitor destinations such as Ireland, France, or Spain.

Additional red tape, particularly for small, family-run, or seasonal operators, risks reducing accommodation supply, especially in rural areas, and driving informal providers out of the market.

Key member feedback includes:

- Support for registration, with licensing dependent on fair, proportionate details.
- Calls for consistent application across all accommodation types (e.g., hotels, B&Bs, campsites, restaurants) to avoid uneven burdens.
- Opposition to annual licences, which are seen as impractical for seasonal sites; longer terms with tailored campsite conditions are preferred.
- Emphasis on equal scrutiny for spare-room lets and purpose-bought holiday properties, including fire safety, taxation, and environmental standards.
- Warnings against future reinterpretation of legislation and the need for robust impact assessments, given poor government data on holiday let numbers and economic contributions.
- Disappointment over the absence of minimum accessibility standards for Welsh accommodation.
- Doubts about the public directory's effectiveness, as guests rely on online reviews rather than government platforms (e.g. Visit Wales accounts for <1% of web traffic for some operators).

While a properly enforced scheme could remove non-compliant operators and increase occupancy for professional providers, the current proposals risk overreach without addressing how the industry truly operates from a consumer perspective.

We would like the Welsh Government to slow down, regulate reasonably, and engage in ongoing consultation to balance safety and growth.

North Wales Tourism remains committed to collaborative solutions that protect guests, support businesses, and sustain tourism as North Wales's success story.

Jim Jones
CEO

North Wales Tourism
9 Wynnstay Road | Colwyn Bay | Conwy | LL29 8NB
Twristiaeth Gogledd Cymru
9 Ffordd Wynnstay | Bae Colwyn | Conwy | LL29 8NB
Phone | Ffôn 01492 531731
E-mail | E-bost croeso@nwt.co.uk

Visitor Website | Gwefan Ymwelwyr
www.gonorthwales.co.uk
Trade Website | Gwefan Diwydiant
www.northwalestourism.co.uk
Distribution Website | Gwefan Dosbarthu
www.northwalesdistribution.co.uk

