



Planning and short-term holiday lets

A short-term let is typically described as a property or room being rented out for a short period of time – ranging from one night to a few weeks – where the visitors are not using the property as their main or permanent house. There has been a recent rise in letting sites such as AirBNB, HomeAway and other holiday letting platforms that have increased the number of short-term lets in the Borough.

For visitors to Ards and North Down, short-term lets provide more accommodation choice offering a more personal experience than a serviced apartment or hotel. However, short-term letting can disturb neighbours, with visitors creating noise, sometimes during unsociable hours. Depending on the location and size of the property, it can also add pressure on the availability of parking in the area, further impacting on existing residents. The short-term letting of residential properties also reduces the availability of permanent housing stock and can impact on the surrounding area.

Is planning permission required?

Planning permission may be required to use a house, apartment, student accommodation or other premises for a short-term holiday let. The need for planning permission will depend on the extent to which the short-term holiday let changes the character of the property and the degree to which it impacts on its surroundings.

We advise you to seek advice as to whether planning permission will be required. However, you can ask the council for a legally binding decision as to whether planning permission is needed, by submitting an application for a Certificate of Lawfulness of Proposed Use or Development.

Certification by Tourism NI

All tourist accommodation providers in Northern Ireland (i.e. anyone offering overnight sleeping accommodation to tourists for a fee) must receive certification by Tourism NI before they can trade. This is irrespective of whether or not planning permission is needed. The governing legislation is The Tourism (Northern Ireland) Order 1992 and any person who provides, or offers to provide, tourist accommodation that does not have a valid certificate

issued by Tourism NI is guilty of an offence and may be liable, upon conviction, to a fine, imprisonment or both.

For further information, please visit www.tourismni.com/accommodation.