



The keys to holiday letting success

A guide for maximising your property's potential



The road to holiday letting success starts here

No matter where your holiday property is located, how many bedrooms it has and what features complete it, we know you'll want to make sure you're making the most of its potential.

Don't worry - we can help! We support hundreds of property owners across Suffolk in getting the best from their investment, and in this guide we're sharing some of the best advice we've learnt along the way.

Whether you're just setting up your holiday let or are looking to make more from your existing one, we hope our tips will help to set your holiday home up to be a thriving success.



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Our Story

In 2017, our founder Harry set out to transform Suffolk's holiday letting market by launching 'Air Manage Suffolk' from a modest office in Gedgrave, near Orford. His vision was to help property owners tap into the growing potential of online booking platforms, and begin a new chapter in the region's holiday letting landscape.

Momentum quickly built, and by 2019, Harry took full control of the company under DHF Property Ltd. A pivotal partnership with Jake and Shaquille, founders of Suffolk Cleaners Limited, soon followed. The merger laid the foundation for a fully managed holiday letting service, offering hassle-free management and exceptional guest experiences.

In the years since then, we've adopted dynamic pricing, helped property owners boost their revenue throughout the pandemic, opened our first high street store (and then our second!) and surpassed 300 properties under management.

2024 marked a new chapter in our journey. As Suffolk's largest independent holiday letting agency, we became 'Stay in Suffolk', a name reflecting our shift towards enhancing guest experiences and promoting direct bookings. Around this time, we also acquired Cottage Tree Ltd, a small holiday letting agency with a similar ethos to our own. This thoughtful acquisition strengthened our portfolio and reinforced our commitment to working with like-minded partners who share our values.

We went on to launch Sizewell Accommodation, a new website that helps property owners increase occupancy rates further through our established partnerships with many contractors. Sizewell Accommodation offers short, medium and long term contractor stays and allows us to offer a hybrid of holiday letting guests and contractor stays to maximise owner revenue.

Today, we remain proudly independent, and make it our mission to enhance the holiday experience in Suffolk while sharing the best of the county with our guests and property owners alike.

Our Services

We offer our marketing and management solutions to property owners across Suffolk and the surrounding counties.

The majority of our owners opt for a fully-managed solution, where we take care of everything and they receive a rental payment each month.

Alternatively, we can offer a more bespoke solution. For example, if you want to use our marketing and management services but have your own house-keeping and maintenance providers, we can just as easily accommodate that.

Want to know more? Just get in touch:

Aldeburgh 01728 885262

Southwold 01502 819313

office@stayinsuffolk.com

Account Management

Your account manager will guide you through onboarding and remain your primary contact for all listing, pricing, and marketing matters. They'll have in-depth knowledge of your property, monitoring its performance and working with you to maximise its holiday let potential. From refining pricing and photography to suggesting property improvements, they're there to support you every step of the way.

24/7 Guest Support

Our fully managed services include round-the-clock guest support, 365 days a year, at no extra cost. Guests contact us directly with any queries, leaving you free from interruption.

Property Photography

We offer complimentary professional photography by our in-house photographer, ensuring your property is styled to attract your target audience. Additional services, such as virtual tours and aerial photography, are available for an extra charge.

All of the photos in this document were taken by our in-house photographer.

Dynamic Pricing

Our industry-leading dynamic pricing software uses real-time market data to adjust prices daily. With 365 unique prices per year, our system maximises occupancy and revenue by responding quickly to changes in demand, local events, and market trends. This adaptability proved invaluable during the pandemic, enabling rapid price adjustments that led to record revenue for owners.

Property Maintenance

Our team is available 24/7 for property maintenance, from emergency lockouts to larger jobs. Housekeepers serve as the 'eyes and ears' of the property, reporting maintenance needs before and after guest stays. Most fully-managed clients allow us to handle all maintenance under £150 without consultation, but you can choose how involved you'd like to be.

Guest Vetting & Security Deposits

We manage security deposits on larger properties to mitigate party risks. While most guests respect your property, we'll work with you to ensure its protection, including recommending suitable holiday lettings insurance. Airbnb bookings benefit from additional AirCover protection, including damage and liability insurance.

Rental Payments & Statements

Your funds are securely held in a client account until after the booking date. We provide clear monthly rental statements, and our accounts team is always available to answer your queries.

Owner App & Unrestricted Owner Stays

We have an Owners App that allows owners to view their calendar, see the value of upcoming bookings, and make owner bookings. We also do not restrict the number of days that you can use your own property!



Housekeeping & Laundry

Housekeeping is one of the biggest challenges in holiday letting, so we offer several flexible options tailored to suit your property's needs.

We include a 'cleaning fee' in guest bookings to ensure your costs are always covered. This fee can match the rates of our cleaning service or your own housekeeper, offering you convenience and control.

Managed by Stay in Suffolk

Our in-house cleaning teams provide professional housekeeping and linen hire at competitive rates. We supply hotel-quality linen and all essential consumables (e.g., toilet rolls, dishwasher tablets, hand soaps), and can also arrange welcome gifts for guests. Our housekeepers use a digital app with checklists and photo reporting, ensuring high standards and effective maintenance tracking. All staff are fully vetted, trained, and insured for your peace of mind.

Managed by you

If you prefer to use your own housekeeper, we can seamlessly integrate them into our system. They'll receive booking notifications, have calendar access, and follow our procedures for guest management, including lost property handling. This ensures smooth coordination and consistent standards.



Getting Your Property Seen

To give your property the widest exposure possible, we market across an array of platforms and get bookings from many sources including our own website, our high street shops, and more online travel agents than any other local agency.



Our main website, offering Suffolk's finest holiday homes to help visitors discover the county.



Our contractor accommodation website, offering self-catering accommodation that is perfect for Sizewell workers.



Our high-street shops in Aldeburgh & Southwold are open 6 days a week. Window boards offer a constant attraction for passers by, with the more curious popping in to discuss your properties with our team. We also regularly sponsor local events, run print and digital marketing campaigns, and use outdoor advertising around the county.



10 Keys to Holiday Letting Success

There are some important things you can do to set your property up for success when it comes to driving interest, clicks and bookings. Here are our top 10.

- 1) Stunning Photography** – Photos of your property should stop people mid-scroll and make your listing stand out from the multitude of others on platforms like Airbnb & Booking.com. Choosing accessories for your space can be key here; consider introducing bold colours, eye-catching artwork, and unique elements that will grab attention, especially if your walls and furnishings are neutral.
- 2) Distinctive Theme** – Develop a cohesive style that flows throughout your property to make it appealing and memorable. Draw inspiration from your surroundings; why not try a subtle coastal or countryside theme, or even a nod to the house's historical period? Interior design magazines can spark ideas, or we can connect you with a professional designer who can bring your vision to life.
- 3) Unique Selling Points** – Identify that one special feature that will leave a lasting impression on your guests. It could be the location, a sea view, a feature fireplace, rustic beams, or a stunning claw foot bath. If your property lacks a natural USP, consider creating one (something like a statement piece of furniture can work wonders!). Of course, if you have a pool or hot tub, then you're already ahead of the game.
- 4) Invest in Quality** – Investing in quality furniture and equipment can make a significant impact, especially in your kitchen. Appliances from top brands like Smeg, Alessi, or KitchenAid subtly convey a sense of premium quality throughout your property, making it more appealing to potential guests.
- 5) The Personal Touch** – As long as you're mindful, there's no need to be afraid of decorating your property according to your own style. Your guests will likely appreciate the personal touch; just aim to strike a balance between making your property feel homely, without guests feeling like they are invading your privacy. A few personal items are fine, but we do recommend avoiding family photos and souvenirs.
- 6) Target Audience** – Consider who is most likely to book your holiday home based on its size and location, and tailor your decor accordingly. If you're targeting primarily adults (especially couples), opt for a more sophisticated style. For families, a casual, child-friendly approach may be more appropriate. If your property is not in a prime location, you may need to put in extra effort to attract visitors by focusing on comfort and attention to detail. For larger properties, appealing to both adults and families can help maximise bookings – a challenging prospect, but we're here to help!
- 7) First Impressions Matter** – The moment your guests arrive at your property sets the tone for their entire stay. Pay attention to your parking area, entrance, and the view that greets them when they first open the door. Creating an initial 'wow' moment or an instant sense of calm can go a long way!
- 8) Quality over Quantity** – Prioritise providing a luxurious experience for a comfortable number of guests, rather than trying to maximise occupancy at the expense of comfort. For example, bunk beds might seem like a way to accommodate more people, but in our experience they can limit your property's appeal.
- 9) Simplicity and Cleanliness** – Choose furnishings, fittings, and accessories that are easy to maintain, as the time between changeovers can be limited – plus, they wear better over time. Aim for simplicity in your design choices to ensure your guests have a seamless, enjoyable holiday.
- 10) Embrace Sustainability** – Many guests are increasingly environmentally conscious and will appreciate your efforts to reduce your property's carbon footprint. Sourcing eco-friendly products is a great start, and (top tip!) if you really want to make your property stand out from the crowd, consider installing an electric vehicle charger. They are in high demand but not yet widely adopted by hosts.

It's All in the Details

A room-by-room look at how to make sure your property is set up to delight guests and gain those all-important five star reviews.



Property exterior

Make it easy for guests to find your holiday home with a clean, clear house sign in a prominent position. Outdoor lighting with a sensor is essential, particularly near the key safe, as some guests will arrive after dark, especially during the winter season.

For an extra touch (and a boost to your property's marketing), consider a branded property sign. Our *Stay in Suffolk* signs not only help guests locate your home but also feature a QR code that allows passers-by to book directly online.

We can assist you with producing one for your property to make sure it looks appealing and works hard for you.

Security

Install two police-approved key safes containing duplicate sets of house and garage keys. The first is for guests to use on arrival, and the second is a 'backup' with a different number which SIS will only provide in case of an emergency. Ensure the first safe is easily visible (guests will receive directions), but the second can be more discreet. We will only give directions when needed.

Making an impression

First impressions are key, so make sure the exterior of your property looks welcoming.

- Windows should be cleaned regularly
- Ensure gardens, paths, and outdoor areas are well-maintained, with ample seating for the number of guests you're accommodating
- If space allows, provide a charcoal BBQ. An initial supply of firelighters, a gas lighter, tongs, and a cleaning brush are good accompaniments!

Stairs

The staircase is an area often overlooked, but there are a couple of things to have in mind.

- Ensure the handrail is secure - a wobbly rail will be something guests remember
- A stair gate is a bonus for guests coming with young children (and/or dogs) to prevent them from going upstairs

Living and dining rooms

Make sure there's ample seating and table space in each room for the number of guests you're accommodating. Additional furniture should be both aesthetically pleasing and practical, such as coffee and side tables, lamps or floor lamps, and TV cabinets or stands.

We recommend including a flat-screen TV with Freeview or Freesat and a Bluetooth speaker as a minimum. Increasingly, guests also expect Smart TVs so they can log in to streaming services, but it's important to keep terrestrial live TV channels available too. While younger visitors often see streaming as essential, many older guests still prefer the familiarity of standard TV. Offering both ensures you cater to everyone!

Keeping connected

Wi-Fi is as essential as hot and cold water these days, so this should be a given in any holiday home. Internet speed is increasingly important, too, with more people streaming films and working remotely. Consider changing your Wi-Fi password to something simple for guests to enter, and stick the new password onto the router.

Homely touches

- If you have an open fireplace, please provide a fireguard. For a fireplace or wood burner, a set of fire irons is a good idea. Most owners supply enough logs, firelighters, and kindling for the first night, which guests should replace.
- Guests appreciate a small selection of high-quality books (particularly ones about the local area) and games or puzzles. A puzzle board is also a thoughtful addition.
- Invest in a smart Visitors Book – people love to fill these in, and they're interesting for future guests to read
- A basket, box, or mat for shoes by the door encourages guests to remove them (and protect your flooring)
- Coat stands or hooks are useful at the entrance unless there's a hall cupboard available.



Kitchen

Ample and well-maintained kitchen facilities are key to ensuring your guests feel at home. Essential appliances include a hob with at least four rings, a full-size oven, microwave, washing machine, and a fridge with a freezer (an ice box is acceptable for smaller properties). Other useful appliances include:

- Dishwasher (a slimline model is fine if space is limited)
- Quality kettle and toaster
- Iron and vacuum cleaner
- Tumble dryer or washer/dryer (if not available, provide an ailer)
- Consider a second fridge if you're accommodating more than six guests, so that they can stock up on food for their fully stay



Leave some empty cupboards for guests to store groceries. Durable work surfaces are a must, with trivets and quality chopping boards provided to prevent damage. Other essential kitchen features include:

- Sink with a draining board/drying rack
- Ironing board
- Washing-up bowl
- Covered metal waste bin and recycling bins (with bin bags)
- Fire blanket in a visible location to meet fire regulations
- Extractor fan if there isn't an opening window
- At least two clean tea towels and a pair of oven gloves per stay

If you're using Suffolk Cleaners (our sister housekeeping company), they will provide tea towels and oven cloths.



Additional Equipment

A well-equipped kitchen makes a big difference to a guest's stay. Consider providing:

- **Kitchen Tools:** Coffee machine or cafetiere, teapot, kitchen scales, potato masher, vegetable peeler, bottle opener, corkscrew, kitchen scissors, can opener, cooking and baking utensils, measuring jug, sieve, colander, cheese grater, sharp knives, bread knife, chopping boards, trivets.

- **Cookware:** Quality saucepans, frying pan, mixing bowls, casserole dish, roasting tin, baking sheet, serving dishes, milk jugs (small and large), salt and pepper mills, tray, flower vases.

As you can imagine, this list is non-exhaustive and really depends on the number of guests you're accommodating and the available storage space!

Crockery, Cutlery, and Glassware

Where space allows, provide two of most items per person to avoid guests needing to run the

dishwasher frequently. Keeping spare items accessible to the housekeeper will also ensure chipped or broken items are replaced quickly. You don't need to spend a lot – most supermarkets sell stylish and affordable options.

- **Crockery:** We recommend good-quality white sets for easy replacement. Include mugs (something fun or colourful), cups, saucers, bowls, side plates, dinner plates, and egg cups.

- **Cutlery:** Knives, forks, teaspoons (at least two per person), dessert/soup spoons, and serving spoons.

- **Glassware:** Tumblers (two per person), high-ball, white wine, red wine, champagne, and beer glasses, plus a glass jug.

Guests will appreciate the thought you put into making the kitchen both functional and welcoming. The right equipment and a little attention to detail can make all the difference!

Bedrooms



We all know the importance of a good night's sleep! Investing in quality beds with sturdy headboards and durable mattresses is worthwhile, as is using mattress protectors – a simple way to extend the life of your mattresses. Where space allows, opt for a king or super king-size bed and 3' singles instead of 2'6" for added comfort. Zip and link beds are an excellent flexible solution, accommodating couples during off-seasons and families during holidays.

Provide mid-range bedding with a 10-tog duvet and two pillows per person. Add cushions and a stylish throw or blanket to bring colour and warmth to the room.

Key bedroom features

- Bedside tables or shelves with lamps or wall lights that can be turned off from the bed
- As much storage as you have space for without cluttering the room
 - Minimum of six wooden trouser/skirt hangers per person
 - Chest of drawers and/or a dressing table
- A mirror (full-length if space allows)
- Non-flammable waste bin (with bag)
- Coat hook on the back of the door
- Chair or stool for convenience

If you welcome young children, a travel cot, highchair, and/or stair gate are a helpful addition. Guests will bring their own cot bedding.

Ensure there is one hand towel and one bath sheet (minimum 650gsm) per person. For bed linen, 100% cotton with a 400-thread count is ideal. Both towels and linen will be included in your costs if our partners Suffolk Cleaners are managing your housekeeping, offering a significant saving when setting up for your first guests.

Ground floor bedrooms and bathrooms are particularly appealing to elderly guests, offering ease of access and comfort.

Bathrooms

Clean, practical, and well-equipped bathrooms contribute significantly to a guest's comfort. Essential features to include are:

- Lidded waste bin (sanitary style with a bag)
- Toilet brush and holder
- Toilet roll holder
- Coat hook, towel rails, and a shelf or cupboard for storage

Heated towel rails or radiators and an extractor fan (if there isn't an opening window) are highly recommended. Ensure plentiful hot water, as guests may become frustrated if they have to wait for each other to shower.

Good lighting and a mirror are important. If the bath or shower doesn't have a non-slip surface, provide a clean non-slip mat. Regularly maintain grouting and silicone seals to avoid mould and limescale, as this not only improves the appearance but also helps protect your bathroom.

Avoid Saniflo or macerator toilets if possible, as they are prone to breakdowns due to misuse, even with clear instructions provided to guests.

Setting up your Bathroom

For guest convenience, leave a bath sheet and hand towel per person on the beds, a towelling mat in each bath/shower room, and an extra hand towel in cloakrooms. Also, provide shower gel, shampoo, and hand soap. Suffolk Cleaners will supply these if they are your housekeepers.

A well-thought-out bathroom setup not only ensures comfort but also helps prevent potential issues, offering a smooth and enjoyable experience for your guests



Safety & Compliance: Fire Safety Essentials

Looking after your guests' safety isn't just good hospitality, it's a legal responsibility. Below is a simple checklist to help you cover the basics for smaller holiday lets (two storeys or fewer, sleeping up to 10 guests).

Remember: this is only a starting point. Owners should always consult the official government guide, Making your small paying-guest accommodation safe from fire, and we strongly recommend a professional fire risk assessment for peace of mind.

Fire Protection

- ☐ Interlinked smoke alarms in every room and corridor (ideally hardwired).
- ☐ Carbon monoxide alarms wherever there's a potential source (e.g. gas hob, fireplace).
- ☐ Emergency lighting in hallways (plug-in nightlights or torches are fine).
- ☐ Thumbturn locks on external doors so guests can exit without needing a key.
- ☐ Fire blanket in the kitchen (preferred over extinguishers, which require training).

Testing & Records

- ☐ Fire alarms tested on each changeover, with results noted in the property log.
- ☐ A fire risk assessment carried out by a competent person (ideally a professional firm).
- ☐ A maintenance and testing log kept in the property for inspection.
- ☐ Risk assessment reviewed regularly, and updated if anything in the property changes.
- ☐ All certificates and logs stored together in the property file.

Ceritification & Services

- ☐ Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) – renewed every 5 years.
- ☐ Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) – carried out annually.
- ☐ Gas Safety Certificate – renewed every year (if applicable).
- ☐ Chimney swept annually (if applicable).

For larger properties (over 10 guests or more than two storeys): fire safety requirements are stricter, and a comprehensive risk assessment is essential. We can help arrange this for you if needed.

Comfort and practical items: a checklist

Get in touch when you are ready to proceed. What stage you are in the project, depends on what your next step will be. Whether that is appraising a property you are looking to purchase, helping you put those finishing touches on your let, or getting your photos booked in to get you listed – our onboarding team is ready to assist!

- ☐ First aid kit
- ☐ Hair dryer
- ☐ Vacuum cleaner and spare bags
- ☐ Spare light bulbs
- ☐ Plastic bucket & mop
- ☐ Dustpan & brush
- ☐ Dusters/cleaning cloths
- ☐ Cleaning products under sink(s) for guests to clean up for themselves

The finishing touches

While not essential, we'd also suggest fuel for any open fires and wood-burning stoves. This is always greatly appreciated by guests!

Likewise, a welcome gift is a nice gesture for longer stays and always goes down well. A welcome gift needn't be anything complicated or expensive; a decent bottle of wine and a good packet of crisps or box of biscuits is an excellent way to welcome guests to your property. Something from a local company is particularly apt!

Ready to get started?

Whether you need help with appraising a property you are looking to purchase, putting those finishing touches on your let, or getting your photos booked in to get you listed, our onboarding team is ready to assist.



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