



# BLACKWATER

LODGE RETREAT

## YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE

TO RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL HOLIDAY LETTING BUSINESS



POTENTIAL  
RETURN OF  
UP TO 10%  
ANNUALLY!\*

## *Earn Extra Income*

Did you know that your holiday home could be earning you money when you're not here?

You can have the best of both worlds here at Blackwater Lodge Retreat – a beautiful waterside escape when you need to get away from it all, and a valuable source of income when you don't, from those who are looking for the exact same thing.

We know the idea of running your own business can be daunting, but don't worry – we're happy to advise and support you.

In fact, we've put together this handy guide that will give you all the starting information you need to develop your very own successful holiday letting business – from hints and tips on how to get the most return from your lodge through to a step by step guide on the legalities of renting out a holiday home that you may not have thought about just yet.

Just follow our steps today and you could be well on your way to earning an extra income!

\*Based on 38 weeks rental of a 3-bedroom hot tub lodge





# Get the best possible return

It's important to make your lodge as welcome and inviting as possible for your holiday guests – they're looking for an escape from everyday life and if you get it right, you could have a customer for life.

Our lodges are unique to us and have bespoke builds that you won't find anywhere else. All feature beautiful interior designs and high-quality integrated appliances, but it's always nice to add some personal touches – we've put a few ideas below to help you get started!

## Family Fun

With British weather being what it is, it's always a great idea to have a selection of board games, DVDs and even a games console to beat the rainy-day blues.



## REMEMBER: ACCIDENTS HAPPEN

Consider charging a refundable "damage deposit" to take care of any issues that may occur.

## Showcase the Area

Essex and the surrounding areas have so much going for them – it's helpful to put together a small guide of the local area, attractions, restaurants and days out available for them to visit.



## THINK ABOUT WEAR & TEAR

It's a good idea to put aside a small portion of income from each rental for anything that may need replacing at a later date, such as flooring or furniture.

## Don't Skimp on Necessities

There's nothing worse than arriving somewhere and realising you have to nip back out for essentials such as tea, coffee, milk, toilet roll or washing up liquid - stock up on the basics.



## Keep it clean

Put together a basic cleaning pack that includes items such as dish cloths, dusters and a dustpan and brush – this will encourage your guests to clean up after themselves.



## CONSIDER THE LAUNDRY

Not all holiday lodges offer a linen service, so think about whether you'd like your holiday guests to bring their own or if you're happy to make the beds beforehand.

# Inventory list

Although this list doesn't include any personal touches you may have, we've detailed our recommendation below for the minimum inventory to have in your lodge below.

Inventory Item	No.	Inventory Item	No.
Dinner Plate	6	Serving Tray	1
Side Plate	6	Kettle	1
Cereal Bowl	6	Toaster	1
Mugs	6	Microwave	1
Tea Cup	6	Gas BBQ	1
Tea Saucer	6	Steel Non Stick 5pc Saucepan (Set)	1
Table Knife	6	Chopping Board	1
Table Fork	6	Knife Block	1
Dessert Spoon	6	Corkscrew	1
Tea Spoon	6	Scissors	1
Table Spoon	6	Placemats (Set 4)	2
Wine Glasses	6	Coasters (Set 4)	2
Glass Tumbler	6	Casserole Dish	1
Egg Cups	6	Roasting Dish	1
Glass Jug	1	Oval Roaster	1
Tea Pot	1	Washing Up Bowl	1
Milk Jug	1	Washing Up Rack	1
Sugar Bowl	1	Bucket	1
Salt Pot	1	Draining Rack	1
Pepper Pot	1	Broom	1
Butter Dish	1	Dustpan Set	1
Toast Rack	1	Toilet Brush Set	1
Cafetiere	1	Waste Bin	1
Peeler	1	Doormat	1
Can Opener	1	Superdry Mop	1
Flat Grater	1	Two Fold Airer	1
Slice/Turner	1	Coat Hangers	20
Tubular Slotted Spoon	1	Vacuum Cleaner	1
Tubular Solid Spoon	1	Carbon Monoxide Detector	1
Ladle	1	Smart TV	1
Masher	1	Hairdryer	1
Colander	1	One Bounce Back Pillow (Per Bed)	4 or 6
Fruit Bowl	1		

# How to market your lodge

## A not-quite comprehensive list

There are quite a few things to consider when you're looking to market your lodge for rental – and there are so many ways to do it!

You certainly don't need a degree or even a huge amount of know-how to get it right – but we have put together some things you should always keep in mind.



## Advertise... ONLINE

There are a lot of options when it comes to getting the word out there, but one of the most effective is to get yourself online! Platforms such as Facebook, Airbnb and Google make it so easy for you to connect your lodge to people looking to escape to the coast outside of London. We'd suggest starting with these:

**Facebook:** With over 1 billion users, Facebook is the largest, free advertising platform on the internet. Check out local holiday groups, people in the local area and further afield and other UK holiday rentals – just make sure you check with the Admin of the page that they're happy for you to promote your lodge.

**Websites:** You can reach a huge number of people for a very low cost on a number of holiday-specific websites – you couldn't ask for a better audience than those who are actively looking to get away for a while. We've put together a list of some of the most popular letting websites for you to take a look at:

[UKcaravans4hire.co.uk](http://UKcaravans4hire.co.uk)  
[Directholidayhomes.co.uk](http://Directholidayhomes.co.uk)  
[Holidaylettings.co.uk](http://Holidaylettings.co.uk)  
[Justlodgeholidays.com](http://Justlodgeholidays.com)  
[Airbnb.com](http://Airbnb.com)



## Advertise... LOCALLY

Get a couple of flyers or postcards made up – there are plenty of design services around that will do it for a small fee.

Then take them everywhere! Local shops, restaurants, schools and community notice boards are a great place to start, or even take a walk around a different neighbourhood and post them through letterboxes to reach people you may not otherwise come in contact with.



## Advertise... BY TALKING

Shout about your beautiful lodge from the metaphorical rooftops! Spread the word to your family, friends and everyone in between.

The best thing about word of mouth is that it's more likely to be trusted – if you've had friends stay at your holiday home, they will in turn rave about it to their friends and family... the possibilities are endless.

## Make your Lodge stand out from the crowd

You have a beautiful holiday home in a fantastic location. Not only do you want to list all the amazing benefits your holidaymakers will get by booking your lodge and what the local area offers, but you want to ensure you SELL it to people – and the best way to do that, is by taking some amazing pictures. Use bright imagery, make sure your lodge is looking it's best and try and to capture a sunny day if possible!



## Do your research

You need to know what else is being advertised in the local area. What amenities do other rentals offer, who seems to be booked all year round and why? Do your homework and see what other places are charging during both peak and non-peak seasons you can even consider letting your lodge for short lets during the off-peak season: Monday to Friday and Friday to Monday – this can work out better than solid weeks and is particularly good for Bank Holidays.



## Special offers sell

Repeat customers are an effective way to keep advertising costs down. Maybe offer an incentive for holidaymakers to rebook with you later in the year – 10% discounts or low deposits to rebook when they leave can be effective.



## Securing Bookings

Now that you have some ideas of how to market your lodge, there are a few things to consider when it comes to actually renting your holiday home out.

1. **Take a deposit:** Not only does this secure the booking, it's a good way to ensure that people are serious in their interest.
2. **Don't be afraid to be selective:** Request details about who will be staying at your lodge and what they're looking to get out of their time away. If you don't want same sex groups, such as stag or hen parties, this is when you find out.
3. **Confirm beforehand:** It's recommended you send your guests a booking confirmation which highlights any terms and conditions. Not only does it act as a receipt, but it's helpful to keep on file if the HMRC ever needs a copy.
4. **Key handling:** Firstly, make sure you have the full amount paid and cleared in your account before you hand over any keys.

We've also helpfully supplied an example copy of a booking confirmation that you may wish to use.

# The Legal Bits

## Things You Need to Know

Sadly, there are always regulations – and there are certain ones that you'll need to follow before you can rent out your holiday lodge to paying guests, and we've provided a non-comprehensive list below.



### You need a Landlord Gas Safety Certificate

Your property must have an annual gas safety test carried out by a Gas Safe Registered Engineer every 12 months. The certificate should be displayed inside your lodge and a copy given to Park.



You must ensure electrical items have PAT Testing. Any electrical items that you have plugged in to your lodge need to be PAT tested on an annual basis. This includes items such as DVD players, kettles and toasters.



### You need a Fixed Electrical Installation Certificate.

Your lodge's electrical wiring system will need to be tested every 3 years to receive a fixed electrical installation certificate, with a copy provided to Park.



### Fire Safety Measures

You must have a fire alarm, fire extinguisher, fire blanket & carbon monoxide detector. It's a legal requirement to have the above items in your holiday home and they all should be in working order.



### You must have Property Owners' and Public Liability Insurance

Good insurance is a must and the sum insured for these liabilities must be at least £5 million as stated in your Purchase Agreement. Copies of your insurance details must be provided to Park annually.



### It's best to have a TV Licence

There is some debate as to whether a TV Licence is needed – theoretically your own TV Licence can cover this if a TV at home is never in use at the same time as the TV in the holiday home. But to be on the safe side and to avoid fines, it's worth purchasing.



# Tax Benefits

## A Furnished Holiday Let (FHL)

If you are letting out your holiday lodge, you'll need to inform the HMRC for tax purposes, regardless of whether you're working or retired, as any rent will be classed as income.

As far as they're concerned, your lodge is what's known as a Furnished Holiday Let (FHL). The good news is, a surprising amount of items can be classed as expenses and you receive a far more favourable tax treatment than a residential buy to let property or other commercial lettings – while also qualifying for capital allowances which helps towards the cost of items needed for running your letting business.

There are certain criteria you need to meet in order to claim any tax breaks however, and individual circumstances do affect this, so we recommend seeking independent expert advice from a tax specialist in this area – they can offer initial recommendations free of charge and can manage the tax treatment of your lodge income for you.



# Faqs

We've answered a few of the common questions we get when it comes to you letting your lodge out - we're sure you'll have more though, so please just ask a member of staff and we'll be happy to help!

## Q. What tariffs should I be charging?

A. We have provided a potential tariff guide that will be helpful when it comes to working out what you should charge for letting out your holiday lodge.

It's always a good idea to work out your running costs however - if you find that the cost of renting will be greater than a projected income, it may be better to have it for your own use. Consider electricity use, cleaning and general wear and tear costs, as well as how much you want to spend on advertising.

## Q. How much will I pay to sublet my lodge?

A. As an Owner, you'll be responsible on an ongoing basis for the following items: annual safety testing, utilities, cleaning and laundry, as well as the Park-specific costs, such as site fees.

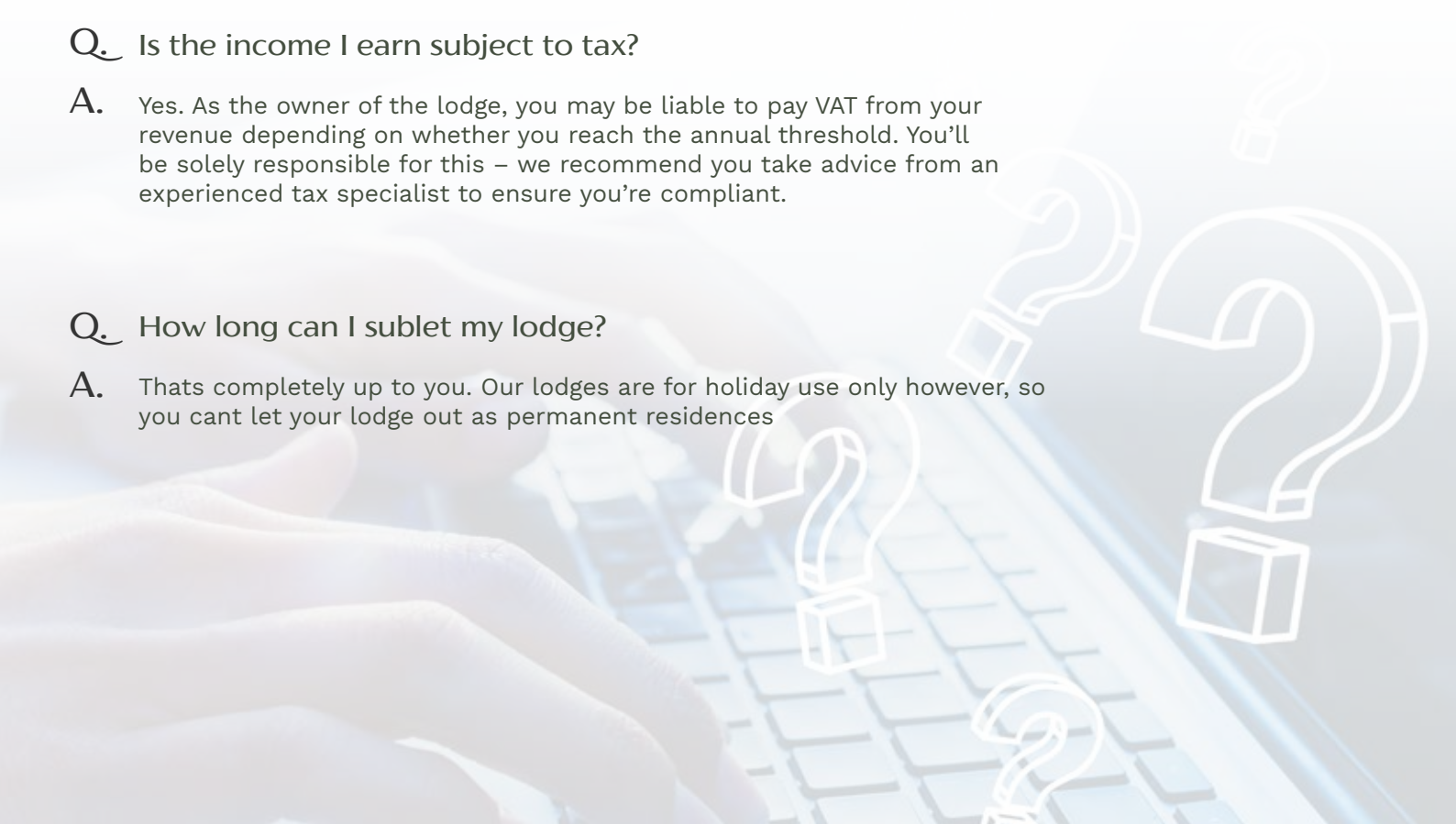
As you're privately letting, Blackwater Lodge Retreat do not charge any commission or fees for rentals.

## Q. Is the income I earn subject to tax?

A. Yes. As the owner of the lodge, you may be liable to pay VAT from your revenue depending on whether you reach the annual threshold. You'll be solely responsible for this - we recommend you take advice from an experienced tax specialist to ensure you're compliant.

## Q. How long can I sublet my lodge?

A. That's completely up to you. Our lodges are for holiday use only however, so you can't let your lodge out as permanent residences



# So, what happens next?

Now that you've decided to give private letting a go, simply follow the step-by-step instructions below:

1. Carry out all the mandatory "Legal Bits" and provide copies of the certificates to Park
2. Take some photography of the interior and exterior of your lodge
3. Decide on pricing and set up a tariff for yourself
4. Start advertising and speaking to local businesses, friends and family
5. Create a booking confirmation from our template provided
6. Start taking bookings!



**AND THAT'S IT ... GOOD LUCK!**



## We're happy to help

If you have any questions around what's been laid out in this leaflet or you want some more information, please just contact us on the details below

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