

The next shift shouldn't have to guess.

A proposed operations reset for a fictional 30-bed boutique hostel. Built to show how scattered information can become clear tasks, responsibilities and working documents.

The starting point

Reception uses chat messages for handovers. Late-arrival instructions vary by shift. Housekeeping has no agreed priority list. New starters learn verbally. Complaint follow-ups sometimes carry over without an owner.

Operational gap	Proposed response
No shared handover record	One shift log with an owner, next action and due time.
Inconsistent late arrivals	An arrival checklist with a clear exception route.
Unclear room priorities	A room-status list confirmed by housekeeping and reception.
Training depends on memory	An observed-task checklist with supervisor sign-off.
Complaints passed between shifts	A named owner and agreed time for the next guest update.

What this pack contains

A shift handover template; late-arrival procedure; housekeeping priority checklist; new-starter checklist; complaint escalation steps; and a short trial plan.

Sample status: The business, people and records are fictional. This proposal has not been implemented or tested with a client; no improvement figures are claimed. A real hostel would adapt it to its staffing, approved policies and site-specific arrangements.

One shift ends. The work carries on.

SHIFT HANDOVER / Draft owner: reception lead / Used at every shift change

How to use it

The outgoing shift records only open actions, relevant changes and important exceptions. The incoming shift reads the log, confirms ownership and asks about unclear entries before the handover ends. Urgent issues need a direct conversation as well as a record.

Check	What to confirm
Arrivals and departures	Late arrivals, room changes and any agreed guest follow-ups.
Rooms and maintenance	Rooms awaiting inspection or unavailable; who can release them.
Guest concerns	Reference, promised next update and responsible colleague.
Open actions	A clear next step, named owner, due time and current status.

Example shift log

Date: 14 November 2026 | Outgoing: Alex | Incoming: Sam | Handover: 15:00. Use guest or booking references in the approved system; keep unnecessary personal details out of the log.

Reference / issue	Next action	Owner / due	Status
B014: late arrival	Confirm approved arrival instructions were received.	Sam / 18:00	Awaiting reply
Room 04: inspection	Housekeeping lead to inspect before reception releases it.	Jo / 15:30	Not ready
G021: noise concern	Update guest after checking the reported issue.	Sam / 16:00	Open

Reusable entry

Time: _____ Reference: _____ Issue: _____
 Next action: _____
 Owner: _____ Due: _____ Status: _____
 Completed by / time: _____

Close the handover: outgoing and incoming colleagues confirm that every open item has an owner. If no one is available to take ownership, contact the duty manager; do not mark it complete.

Late arrival. Same clear process.

RECEPTION SOP / Trigger: a guest expects to arrive after the normal reception window

Step	Action / completion check
1. Confirm the booking	Locate the booking in the approved system. Confirm the expected arrival time through the approved contact channel.
2. Check the arrangements	Confirm room readiness and the hostel's approved identity, payment and access arrangements. Ask the duty manager about exceptions.
3. Send approved instructions	Send the arrival message below, filled with approved details. Keep access credentials out of shared logs and public channels.
4. Record the plan	Add the booking reference, expected time, instructions-sent status and responsible colleague to the handover.
5. Confirm arrival	The responsible colleague updates the booking and closes the handover item once arrival is confirmed.
6. Handle exceptions	If access fails, the room is not ready or the booking cannot be verified, contact the duty manager through the approved route. Follow the hostel's emergency plan for immediate safety concerns.

Guest message template

Hi [first name], thanks for letting us know you'll arrive at around [time].

Here's what to do when you reach [hostel name]: [approved arrival instructions]. If you need help on arrival, use [approved contact route]. Please reply to confirm you've received this.

Safe travels,
[team member / hostel name]

Before use: the manager must approve the reception window, access process, out-of-hours contact and no-show procedure. No response from the guest is a pending item, not a completed arrival.

Which room first? Make it visible.

HOUSEKEEPING / Shift plan agreed with reception; rooms released only after the required check

Start-of-shift priorities

Reception and housekeeping confirm departures, expected arrivals, guest requests and unavailable rooms. Prioritise by the agreed ready-by time, rather than the order a message arrived. Keep occupied-room work within the hostel's access and privacy procedures.

Priority	Action
Unavailable / needs review	Keep blocked in the approved system. The manager decides the next step; do not put it back into sale just because cleaning is complete.
Next arrivals	Work to the agreed ready-by time. Flag any delay to reception as soon as it is known.
Other departures	Clean and inspect against the approved room checklist.
Stayovers / shared areas	Schedule around agreed guest access arrangements and the shift plan.

Example room-status list

Fictional entries. Each room needs one current status: awaiting clean, cleaning, awaiting inspection, ready or unavailable.

Room	Ready by	Assigned to	Status / next step
04	15:30	Jo	Awaiting inspection; Jo to confirm.
07	16:00	Alex	Cleaning; update reception if delayed.
09	Not set	Duty manager	Unavailable; maintenance review needed.

Completion checklist

- [] Required cleaning checklist complete.
- [] Missing items or maintenance issues logged through the approved route.
- [] Inspection complete where required; checker and time recorded.
- [] Reception told the final status.
- [] Only the authorised colleague changes availability in the booking system.

Handover rule: "Cleaned" and "ready for a guest" are different states. Record outstanding checks and who owns them. This sample does not replace the hostel's cleaning or safety procedures.

A new starter. A clearer first shift.

TRAINING CHECKLIST / Trainer demonstrates, starter practises, supervisor confirms

Before the shift

Assign a supervisor and prepare the required access to approved systems. Explain the shift plan, who to ask for help and the site's emergency arrangements before independent work begins.

Task	Evidence for sign-off	Trainer / date
Find the right information	Locate current procedures, shift log and duty-manager contact.	_____
Use the handover log	Read an open item; add a next action, owner and due time.	_____
Handle an arrival	Demonstrate the approved check-in process under supervision.	_____
Check room status	Explain what can and cannot be released to a guest.	_____
Respond to a concern	Practise acknowledging a concern and agreeing the next update.	_____
Know when to escalate	Explain the limits of their authority and who to contact.	_____

End-of-shift conversation

What felt clear? What needs another demonstration? Which tasks can the starter do independently, and which still need supervision?

Training record

Starter: _____ Supervisor: _____
 Shift / date: _____
 Tasks signed off: _____
 Tasks to practise again: _____
 Next review / owner: _____

Sign-off means observed, not simply discussed. The supervisor records only the tasks actually demonstrated. This checklist supplements the employer's required induction and training.

Own the next step. Then check it worked.

COMPLAINT FOLLOW-UP + PROPOSED TWO-WEEK TRIAL

Complaint follow-up

1. Listen and record a short factual summary in the approved system.
2. Acknowledge the concern and clarify what the guest needs.
3. Resolve only within your agreed authority. Ask the duty manager about refunds, exceptions or unresolved concerns.
4. Name the person responsible and tell the guest when they will hear back.
5. Record the action taken and confirm whether the issue is resolved. Carry open items into the next handover.

An acknowledgement that leaves room to act

"Thanks for telling me. I'm sorry this has affected your stay. I'm going to [next step], and [name / role] will update you by [time]."

For immediate safety concerns, use the site's emergency procedure rather than waiting for the next shift.

Trial stage	What I would check
Before starting	Manager approves ownership, terminology, escalation contacts and the working templates. Record the current gaps without inventing a baseline.
Days 1-3	Trial on agreed shifts. Check whether staff can find the log and understand the status labels. Record confusing or duplicate steps.
Days 4-7	Review unresolved handover items and late-arrival exceptions. Adjust the process with reception and housekeeping.
Days 8-14	Review whether actions have owners and due times, room status is clear, and starters can follow the documents. Agree what to retain.

Evidence to collect

Open handover items without an owner; overdue guest updates; room-status corrections; and tasks needing repeat explanation. Record dates and context, then compare like-for-like shifts where possible.

Expected benefit, not a measured result: fewer loose ends and more consistent handovers. The trial would establish whether the proposed changes actually help.