

The Sibson Inn Hotel Refund and Compensation Policy

Purpose

This policy outlines the circumstances under which refunds or compensation may be provided to guests and the process by which claims are assessed. It ensures fairness to guests while protecting the business from unreasonable demands.

1. Cancellation and Modification Policy

- 1.1. **Free Cancellation:** Guests may cancel without charge up to 24 hours before scheduled arrival.
- 1.2. **Late Cancellation:** Cancellations within 24 hours of arrival are charged one night's accommodation.
- 1.3. **No-Show:** Guests who do not arrive and do not notify the hotel are charged the full booking amount.
- 1.4. **Modifications:**
 - 1.4.1. Room and date changes must be made at least 24 hours prior to arrival and are subject to availability.
 - 1.4.2. Changes requested within 24 hours of arrival are treated as new bookings.

2. Post-Arrival Refund and Compensation

2.1. Qualifying Circumstances for Full or Partial Refund

Refunds or compensation may be offered in the following situations, depending on the severity and impact of the issue:

- 2.1.1. **Room Unavailable Due to Overbooking:** If a guest cannot be accommodated due to an internal booking error, and no suitable alternative is provided.
- 2.1.2. **Serious Health or Safety Issues that cannot be rectified within 4 hours:** This includes, but is not limited to:
 - 2.1.2.1. Presence of mould or strong chemical odours in the room
 - 2.1.2.2. Infestation of pests such as bedbugs or rodents
 - 2.1.2.3. Exposed or faulty wiring creating a fire or shock risk

2.1.2.4. **Structural damage** such as ceiling leaks or broken windows that affect room safety

- 2.1.3. **Room Significantly Different from What Was Advertised:** For example, the room was advertised as having an en-suite bathroom but none was provided, the bed type or number of beds differs materially from the booking.
- 2.1.4. **Hotel Closure or Inaccessibility:** If the hotel is forced to close or becomes inaccessible due to a power outage, flood, or other emergency outside the guest's control.
- 2.1.5. **Extended Loss of Essential Amenities:** Wi-Fi, hot water, electricity, or toilet facilities are unavailable for more than 4 hours and cannot be restored in a reasonable timeframe.
- 2.1.6. **Major Disruption Due to Undisclosed Construction or Maintenance:** Significant noise, dust, or blocked access directly affecting the guest's comfort, when not communicated before arrival.
- 2.1.7. **Room Uninhabitable Due to Cleanliness or Hygiene Issues:** E.g. dirty bedding, strong odours, pests, or an unclean bathroom that cannot be rectified within 2 hours of reporting.
- 2.1.8. **Repeated Service Failures Over the Course of the Stay:** A series of issues (e.g. multiple maintenance faults, recurring housekeeping problems, unaddressed guest concerns) where the cumulative effect significantly impacts the guest's comfort or confidence.

Each case will be assessed individually, and compensation will be determined based on the severity, duration of the issue, and the guest's willingness to allow a resolution.

2.2. Non-Qualifying Circumstances

Refunds or compensation will not be issued for:

- 2.2.1. **Subjective Preferences:** Disliking the room's decor, layout, colour scheme, or furnishings, provided they match descriptions and photos.
- 2.2.2. **Accurate but Misunderstood Descriptions:** Complaints about room size, layout, or features when the room matches the booking description.
- 2.2.3. **Noise and External Factors:** Sounds from other guests, traffic, or regular hotel operations (e.g. breakfast service, maintenance), unless excessive and not addressed when reported.
- 2.2.4. **Weather or Travel Disruption:** Delays, cancellations, or changes to travel plans due to poor weather, traffic, or transport strikes.

- 2.2.5. **Minor Operational Errors Corrected Promptly:** Incorrect meal, forgotten drink, missed wake-up call, or staff miscommunication that is promptly resolved or corrected during the stay.
- 2.2.6. **Dissatisfaction with the Local Area or Amenities:** Issues outside hotel control, such as nearby roadworks or lack of tourist attractions.
- 2.2.7. **Complaints Raised After Departure:** Refunds will not be provided for issues that were not reported during the stay unless they involved serious and undisclosed health or safety risks.
- 2.2.8. **Refusal of Reasonable Remedies:** When guests are offered reasonable alternatives (e.g. room change, service correction) and decline them.
- 2.2.9. **Restaurant or Bar Service Issues Unrelated to Room Booking:** Complaints about meals or service in the restaurant/bar that do not relate to accommodation quality.

3. Compensation Types

3.1. Monetary Refunds

- 3.1.1. **Full Refund:** 100% of charges for affected nights.
- 3.1.2. **Partial Refund:** 25-50% depending on issue severity.
- 3.1.3. **Processing Time:** 5–10 working days for card payments.

3.2. Goodwill Gestures (Discretionary)

In situations where the issue does not meet refund criteria but we acknowledge that we fell short of expectations, we may offer a goodwill gesture at management's discretion. This may include:

- 3.2.1. Room upgrade (subject to availability).
- 3.2.2. Credit for future stay (e.g., 20% discount).
- 3.2.3. Complimentary amenities (e.g., breakfast, late checkout).
- 3.2.4. Small partial refund.

4. Claims Process

To ensure fairness and consistency, the following process must be followed when a guest raises a refund or compensation claim:

- 4.1. Immediate Notification: Guests must report the issue to reception as soon as it is discovered, ideally during their stay. This allows the hotel an opportunity to investigate and resolve the problem.
- 4.2. Documentation: Staff must record the complaint, guest details, time reported, and the action taken. If possible, photographic or written evidence should be collected. An internal incident log should be completed for any complaints involving guest dissatisfaction, dispute, or behaviour.
- 4.3. Opportunity to Resolve: Guests are required to give the hotel a reasonable chance to correct the issue before compensation is considered. This may include room changes, repairs, or other remedies.
- 4.4. Escalation: If the issue cannot be resolved at the reception level, it will be escalated to the Hotel Manager or Operations Manager within 2 hours. A formal assessment will be conducted.
- 4.5. Time Limits:
 - 4.5.1. All refund or compensation claims must be submitted before check-out or within 24 hours of departure.
 - 4.5.2. Claims submitted outside this window will only be considered for serious and verifiable service failures.
- 4.6. Resolution: A final decision will be communicated to the guest within 48 hours of claim submission. Guests will be informed in writing of the outcome and any compensation offered.

5. Early departure requests

If a guest wishes to leave early due to dissatisfaction, the following conditions apply:

- 5.1. The guest must notify reception and provide a clear reason for their dissatisfaction.
- 5.2. Hotel staff will assess the issue and offer a reasonable remedy (e.g., room change, correction of service, or other accommodation).
- 5.3. If the guest refuses the offered resolution and still chooses to leave, a refund may be considered only if the issue qualifies under Section 2.1.
- 5.4. If the concern does not meet refund criteria and the guest declines corrective action, the hotel reserves the right to charge for the full or partial stay, based on services provided.
- 5.5. The hotel reserves the right to charge for any food, drink, or services already consumed or prepared at the time a guest chooses to leave.

- 5.6. Any compensation provided in such cases is strictly at the discretion of the Hotel Manager or Operations Manager.

6. Appeals

- 6.1. Guests may request a review of the outcome by submitting a written appeal within 7 days.
- 6.2. Appeals are reviewed by the Operations Manager and completed within 5 working days.

7. Authority to Issue Refunds

- 7.1. Front Desk: No refunds.
- 7.2. Hotel Manager: Refunds up to £50.
- 7.3. Operations Manager: Final authority on all cases.

8. Abuse of Policy

We reserve the right to decline refund requests where there is evidence of:

- 8.1. Unreasonable or abusive behaviour toward staff
- 8.2. Attempts to use dissatisfaction to avoid payment for services received
- 8.3. Frequent or repeated complaints without valid grounds

9. Chargebacks and Disputes

If a guest initiates a chargeback without first attempting to resolve the issue with us, we will provide supporting documentation to our payment processor, including records of services delivered, communications, and any agreed-upon resolutions.

10. General Notes

- 10.1. Refunds issued as goodwill do not imply admission of fault or set a precedent.
- 10.2. Guests who refuse offered remedies (e.g., room change) may forfeit refund eligibility.
- 10.3. All refund requests and documentation are retained for two years.