



# nars

National Association of Racing Staff



# Racecourse Ratings 2024

**Covering:**

Overnight Accommodation

Day Facilities

Canteen

Stable Yard

# Introduction

**This annual publication continues to inform our members of the continued progress we make for our members at racecourses since our first edition in 2018.**

**This edition has a slightly different format to previous editions with the addition of two more categories. These are in the Day Facilities for staff where we have a focus on the relaxing room and shower/changing facilities.**

**We continue to use racing staff to judge the facilities from a staff and equine perspective. Their reports have changed from the original paper versions in 2018 to digital reports with pictures of areas of concern, but also improvements, all uploaded to Dropbox and sent to the NARS office. This allows us to accurately map every area of improvement and where a racecourse must make further improvements.**

A copy of every report is sent to the Clerk of the Course as well as to the General Manager. In 2024 NARS established monthly meetings with the Jockey Club and ARC to discuss our reports and highlight any concerns. The Jockey Club and ARC are represented by Nadia Powell and Rebecca Davis respectively. Jonjo Sanderson (small independents) and Alex Eade (large independents) have also made themselves available on an, as and when needed basis.

For 2025 we will have eleven Racecourse Inspectors, with Jaimie Duff (Lucinda Russell) and Mia Richardson (Nick Kent) joining the team. Kevin Parsons who manages the program will cover some of the more difficult to reach racecourses and Georgie Edgecombe (NARS Executive Assistant) will inspect Fakenham and Kempton.

In 2023 we had twenty-three racecourses achieve a 5-star rating and while that points to the improvements they have made, it has also become too achievable. Five stars should be outstanding, aspirational and difficult to achieve, while also being realistic. For 2024 you will see only eight racecourses achieved 5 stars. This isn't due to a drop off in standards but reflects the creation of the two new categories. Alongside this, any racecourse that simply stands still is being overtaken by the racecourses that have improved.

The logic and scoring matrix are on each page covering the four main headings, there are fourteen subheadings in total.

## Key Findings from 2024

- Newbury is the top-rated racecourse for staff to work at with a score of 128.8, this is the first time that our top-rated racecourse wasn't either Ascot or York.
- Eight racecourses achieved a 5-star rating.
- Ayr and Huntington both went up a massive forty-eight places, with huge improvements in the canteen and stable yard respectively.
- The lowest rated racecourse as judged by racing staff was Kelso, with the bottom two lowest rated racecourses being Scottish tracks. This is in stark contrast to Hamilton and Ayr who finished sixth and seventh overall.
- Newmarket is the fourth lowest rated racecourse to visit from a staff perspective, the home of the 1,000 and 2,000 Guineas in addition to multiple group 1s including the July Cup. Shameful.
- The highest rated Jockey Club racecourse is Carlisle finishing fifth, Newmarket is the lowest in fifty-sixth place.
- The highest rated ARC racecourse is Lingfield in third, the lowest ARC racecourse is Ffos Las in thirty-ninth place.

## Special Recognition

Whilst we work with some fantastic clerks across the country, who have continued to help improve facilities. This year George Hill is the MVP, heading up improvements with his team at Newbury, notably Pippa Eygelsheim, responsible for the stable yard and is much loved and respected by racing staff.

Huntington for their new excellent stable yard and to Ayr for their new canteen for the staff, both have made huge improvements.

## The Four Main Headings

### 1 Overnight Accommodation

### 2 Day Facilities

### 3 Canteen

### 4 Stable Yard

There are four main headings with fourteen subheadings, each with ten points available, that sees a total of 140 points available for each course.

- 125 points plus = 5 stars
- 115 – 124.99 points = 4 stars
- 105 – 114.99 points = 3 stars
- 95 – 104.99 points = 2 stars
- 94.99 points or less = 1 star

NARS and its members owe a great deal of gratitude to the NARS appointed racecourse inspectors, for 2025 they are as follows:

Julia Bennet, Angela Bramham, Jaimie Duff, Mark Ellwood, Sarah Guest, Helen Halliwell, Pete McCulloch, Mia Richardson, Mel Tingey, as well as Kevin Parsons and Georgie Edgecombe from the NARS office.

From 2024 we say goodbye to Fran Brown, Jo Meadowcroft, Sarah Peacock and Natasha Kent, thank you for all you have achieved for racing staff.

# Scoring Criteria

The criteria in four additional areas were brought in this year, decided by the racecourse inspectors and helping courses understand what a ten out of ten would be. Some areas will always be subjective depending on an individual's experience on any given day.

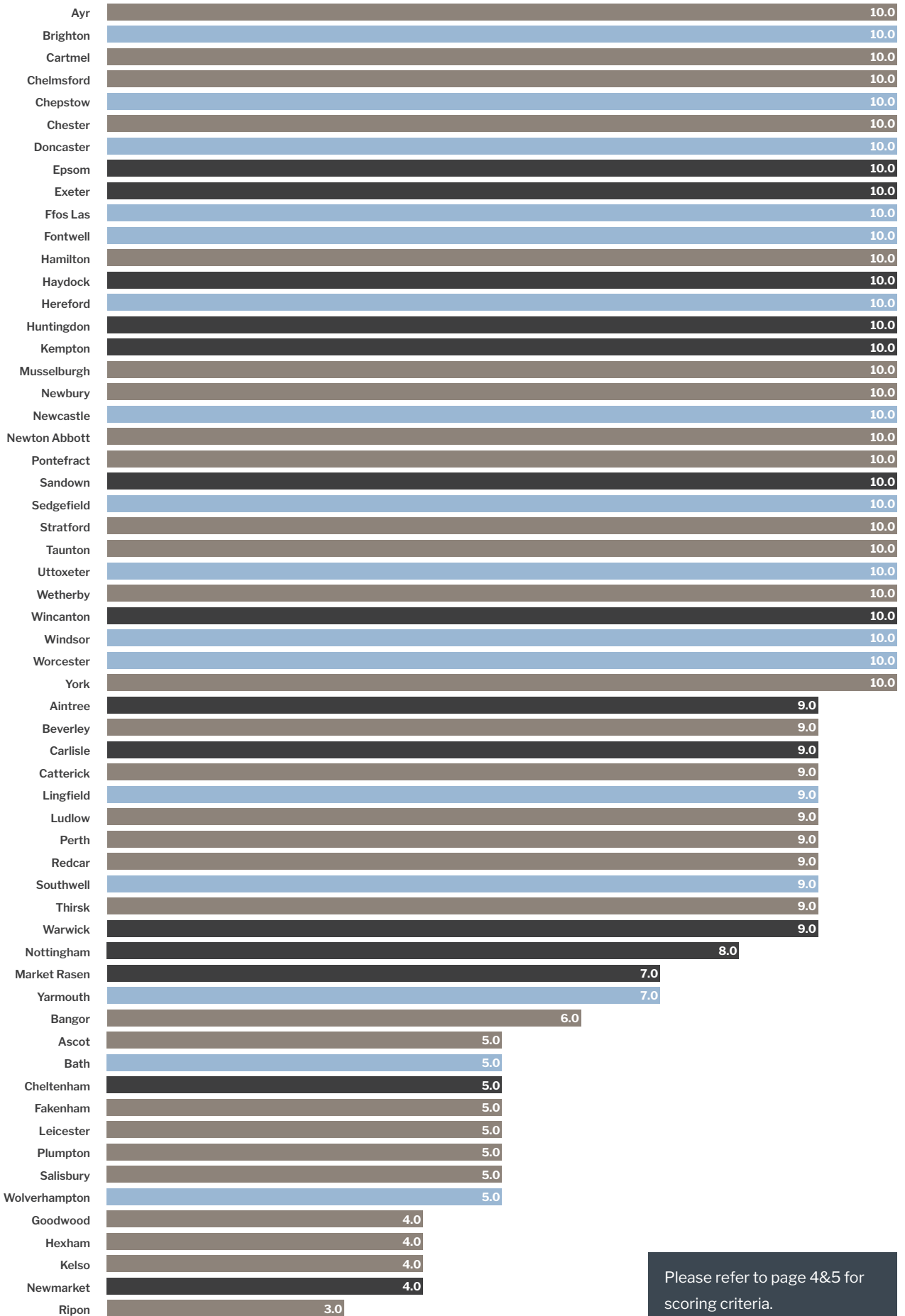
<b>Overnight Accomodation</b>		
<b>Quality</b>	En-Suite Bathroom	3
	TV	2
	Mirror	1
	Wardrobe (clothes hanger)	1
	Kettle (tea/coffee)	1
	Towels/Toiletries	1
	Single Occupancy	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Numbers to a Room</b>	Single room	10
	Any sharing whatsoever	0
<b>Cleanliness</b>	(subjective) Is the bedding clean and fresh? Is the room clean? Standard hotel cleanliness would be a 10.	/ 10

<b>Day Facilities</b>		
<b>Relaxing Area</b>	Separate Area	3
	Sofa	2
	TV	1
	Free Water (Cooler/Bottles)	1
	Microwave	1
	Tea & Coffee	1
	Fridge	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Cleanliness</b>	(subjective) How clean are these facilities? Are they cleaned regularly throughout the day?	/ 10
<b>Shower/Changing Facilities</b>	Cleaning Rosters	2
	Private Individual Lockable Shower Cubicle	2
	Private Individual Lockable Dry Changing Cubicle	2
	Toiletries	2
	Hairdryer	1
	Shower Mat	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Cleanliness</b>	(subjective) How clean are these facilities? Are they cleaned regularly throughout the day?	/ 10

<b>Canteen</b>		
<b>Quality of Food</b>	(subjective) How good is the food? Is there plenty to choose from? Hot and Cold? Is it fresh?	/ 10
<b>Cleanliness</b>	(subjective) Is the canteen clean? Regularly cleared and cleaned tables? Clean service area?	/ 10
<b>Cost</b>	Free meal/voucher	10
	Having to pay	0
<b>Service</b>	(subjective) Is the service good? Are the staff willing to cater for dietary requirements or requests?	/ 10

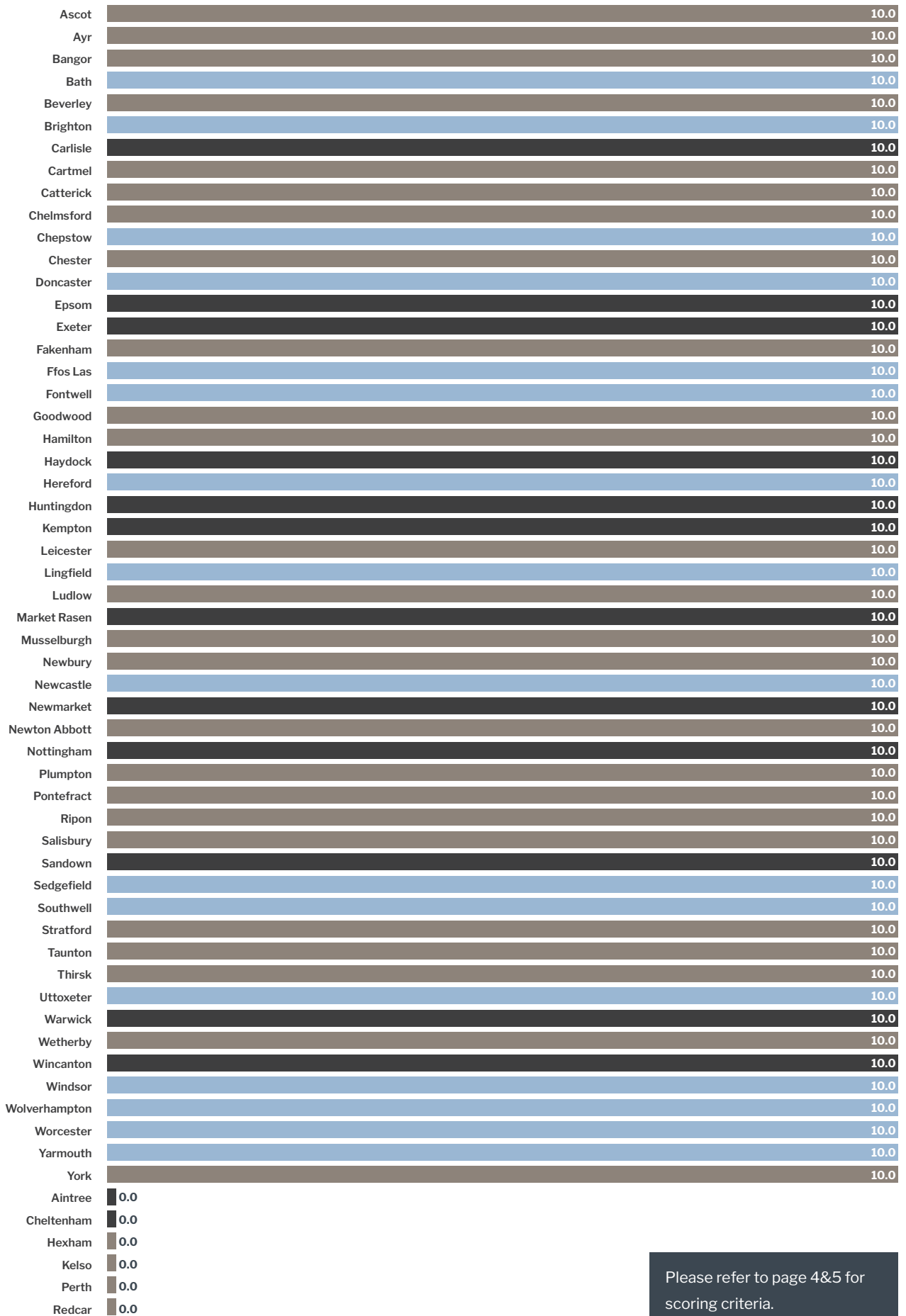
<b>Stable Yard</b>		
<b>Loading Ramp</b>	Partitioned sections (1 for small, 1 for large)	2
	Accessible	1
	Enough Lorries	1
	HGV Friendly	1
	Small Lorry Friendly	1
	Safe Surface	1
	Lighting	1
	Waste Bins	1
	Water Accessible	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Quality</b>	(subjective) Are the stables themselves up to a good standard and big enough? Enough bedding or more available if needed? Clean yard? Safe enough walkways for horses passing?	/ 10
<b>Water</b>	(subjective) Are there enough taps, hot and cold? Is there enough wash down boxes/hoses and quality of them? How good is the water pressure?	/ 10

# Overnight Accommodation: Quality



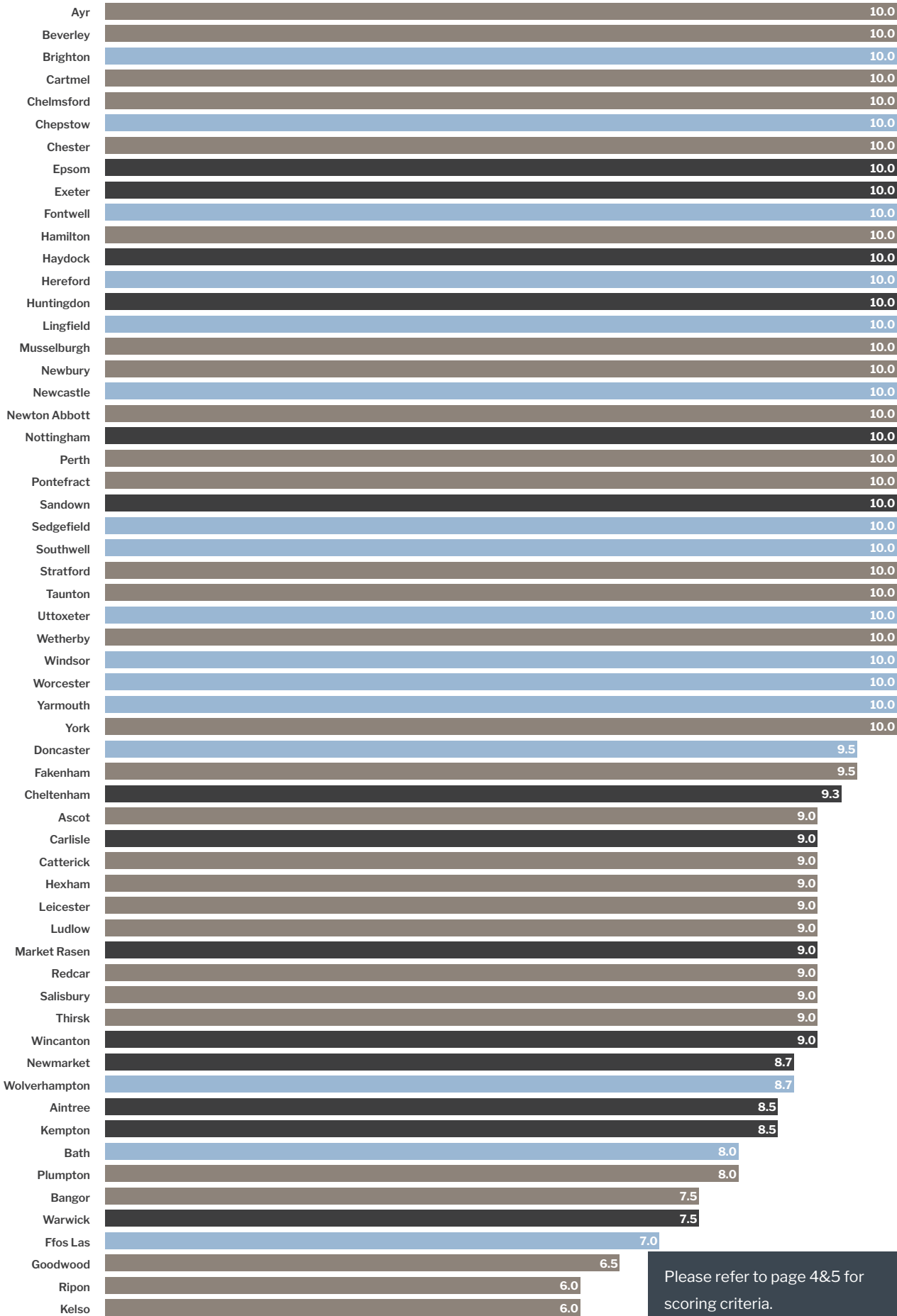
Please refer to page 4&5 for scoring criteria.

# Overnight Accommodation: Numbers to a Room



Please refer to page 4&5 for scoring criteria.

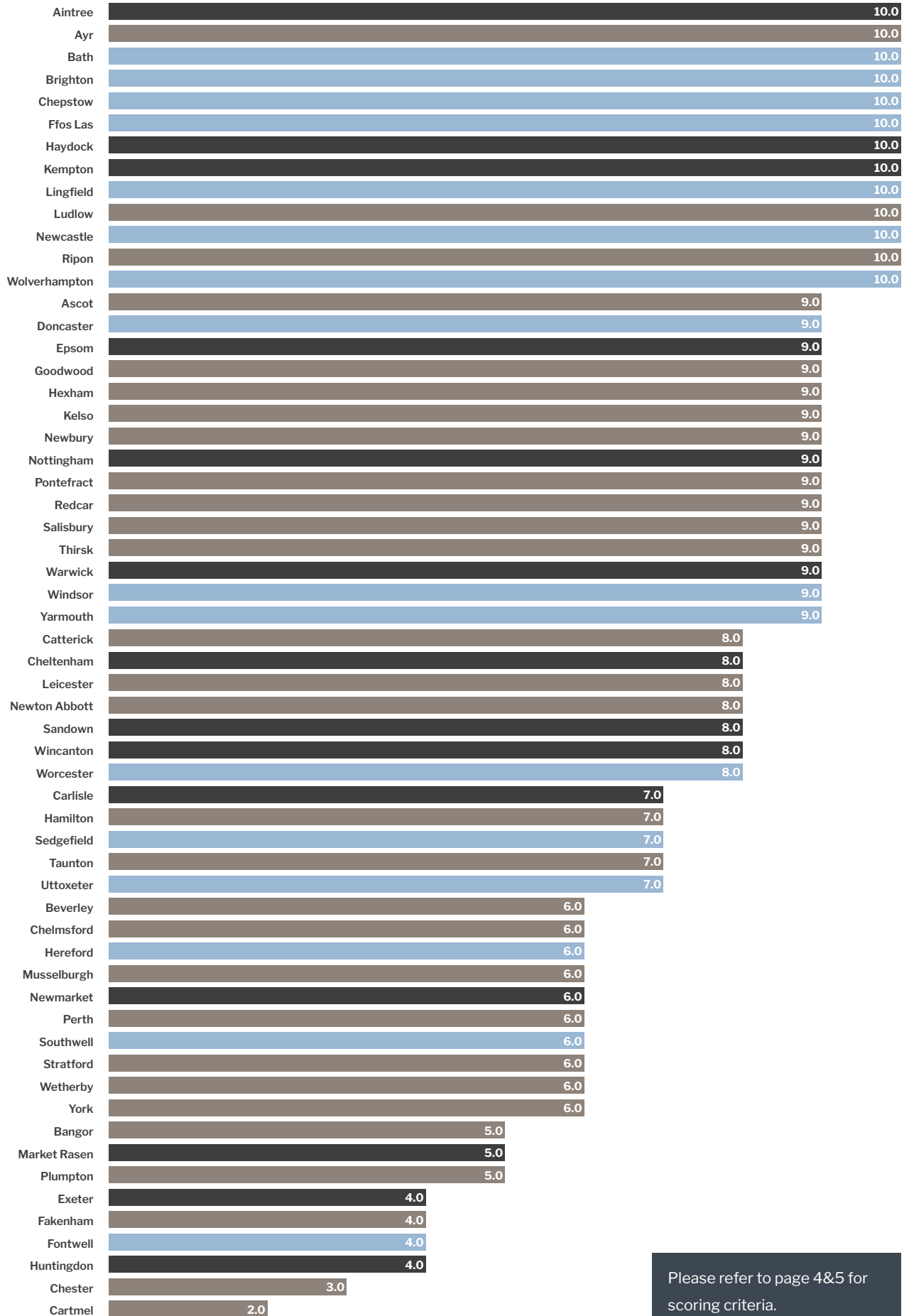
# Overnight Accommodation: Cleanliness



Please refer to page 4&5 for scoring criteria.

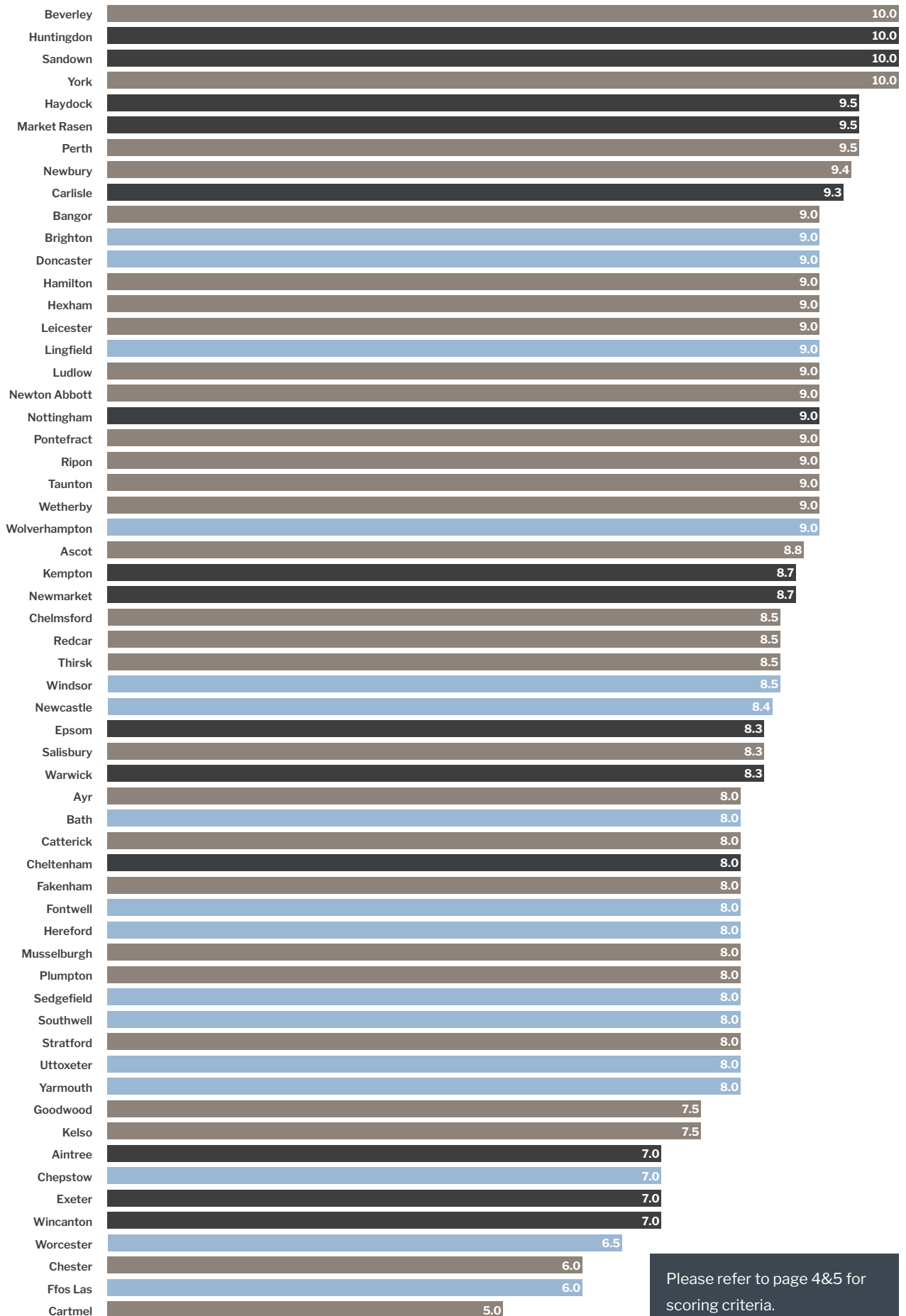


# Day Facilities: Relaxing Area



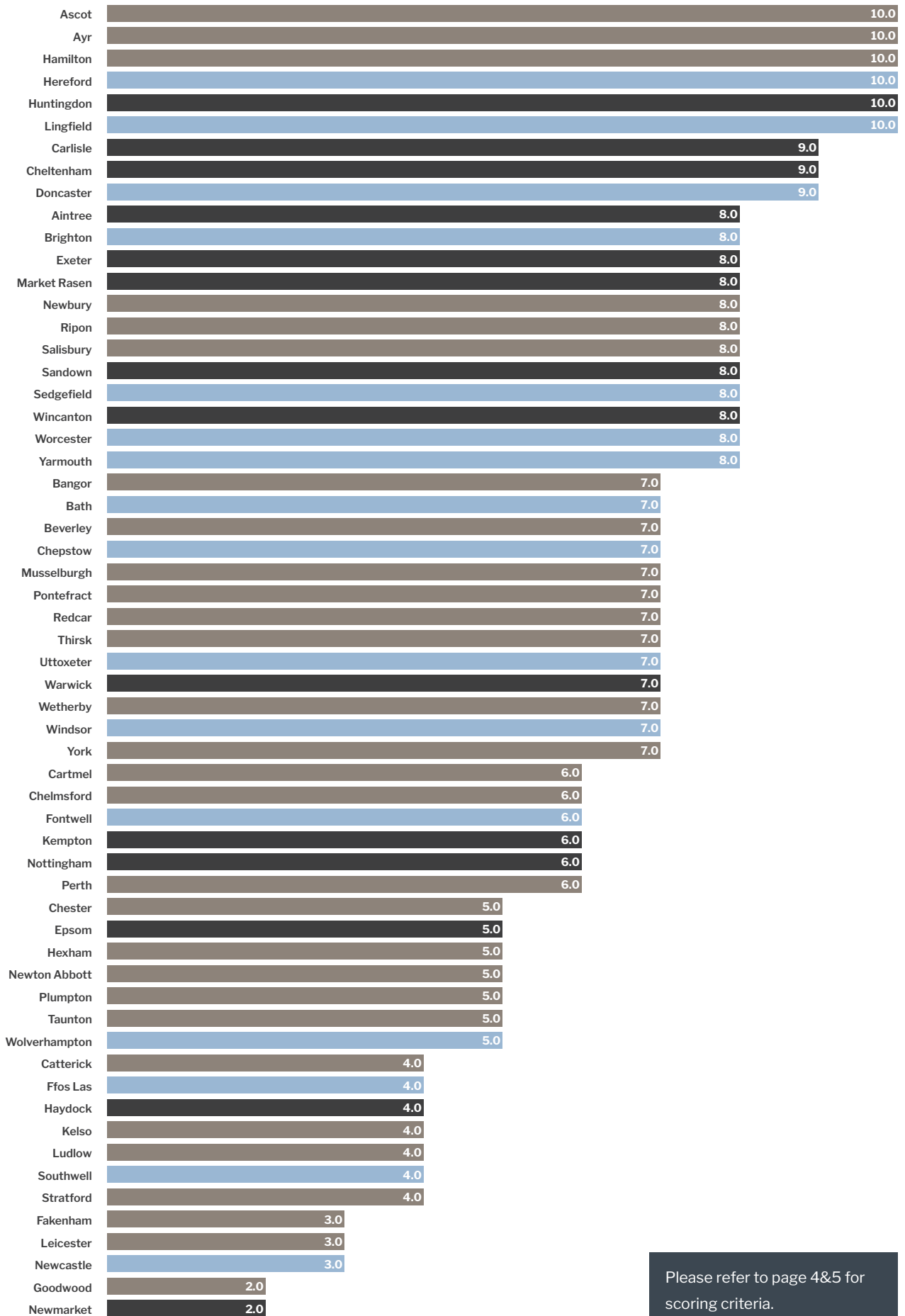
Please refer to page 4&5 for scoring criteria.

# Day Facilities: Relaxing Area, Cleanliness



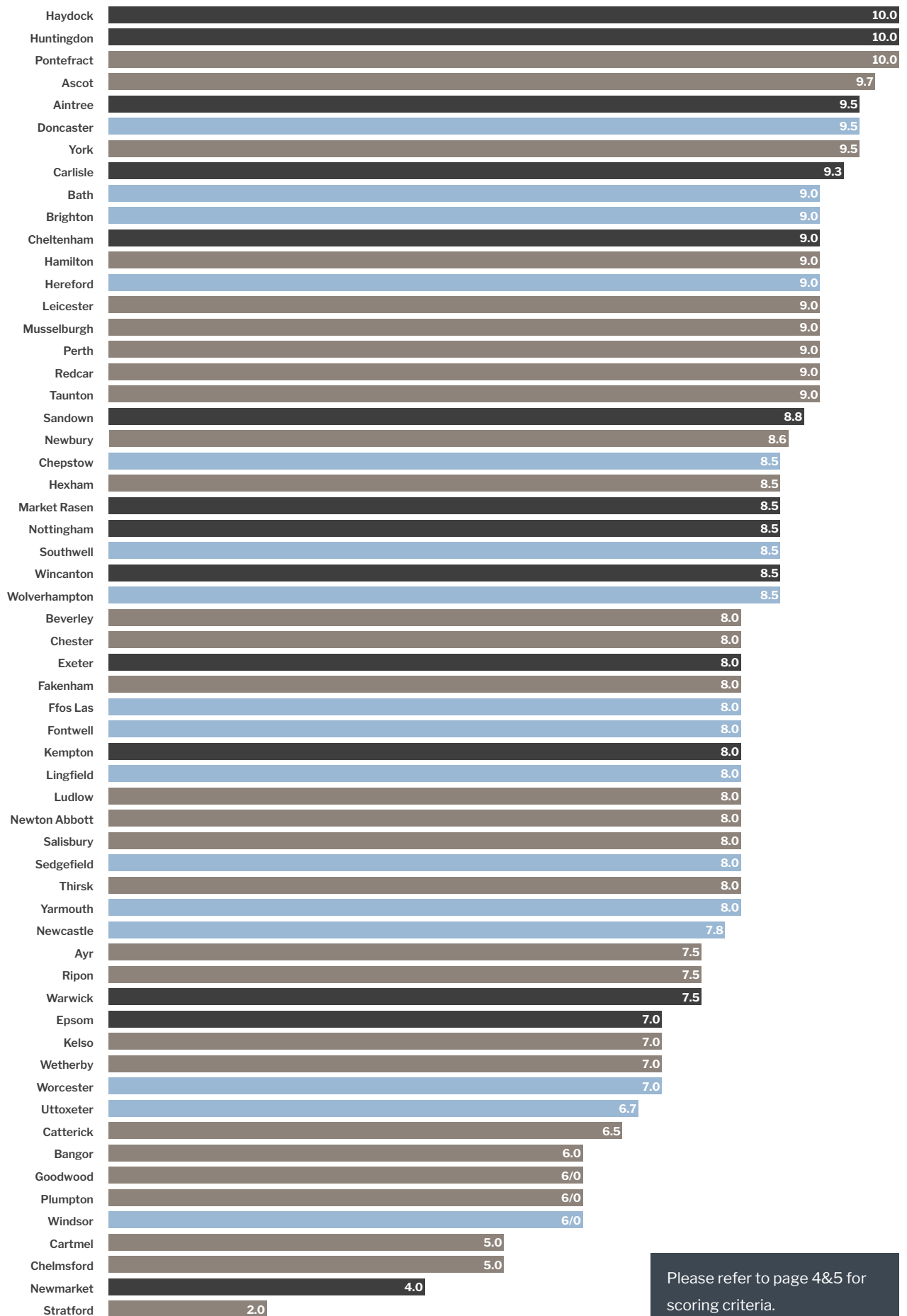
Please refer to page 4&5 for scoring criteria.

# Day Facilities: Shower/Changing



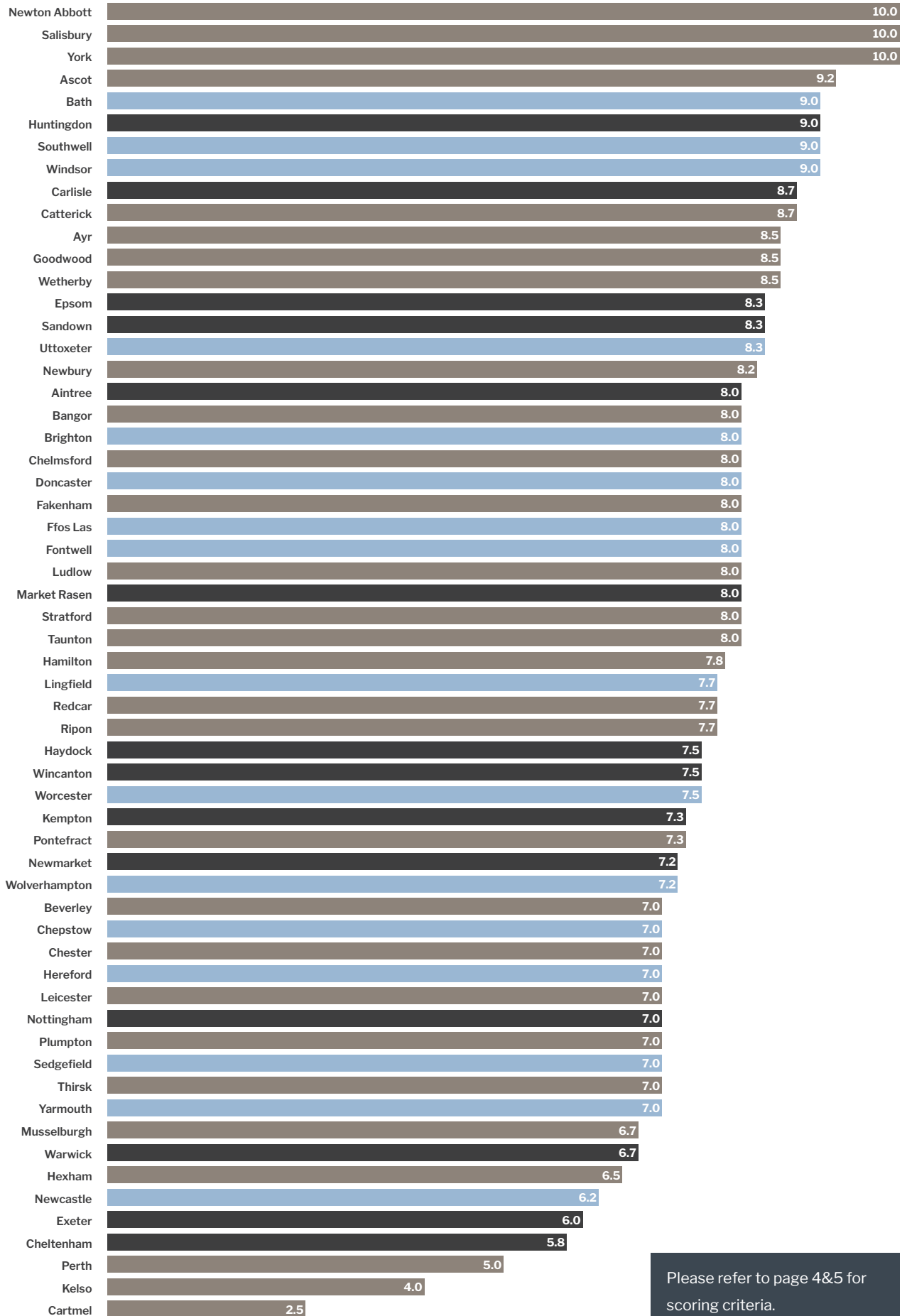
Please refer to page 4&5 for scoring criteria.

# Day Facilities: Shower/Changing, Cleanliness



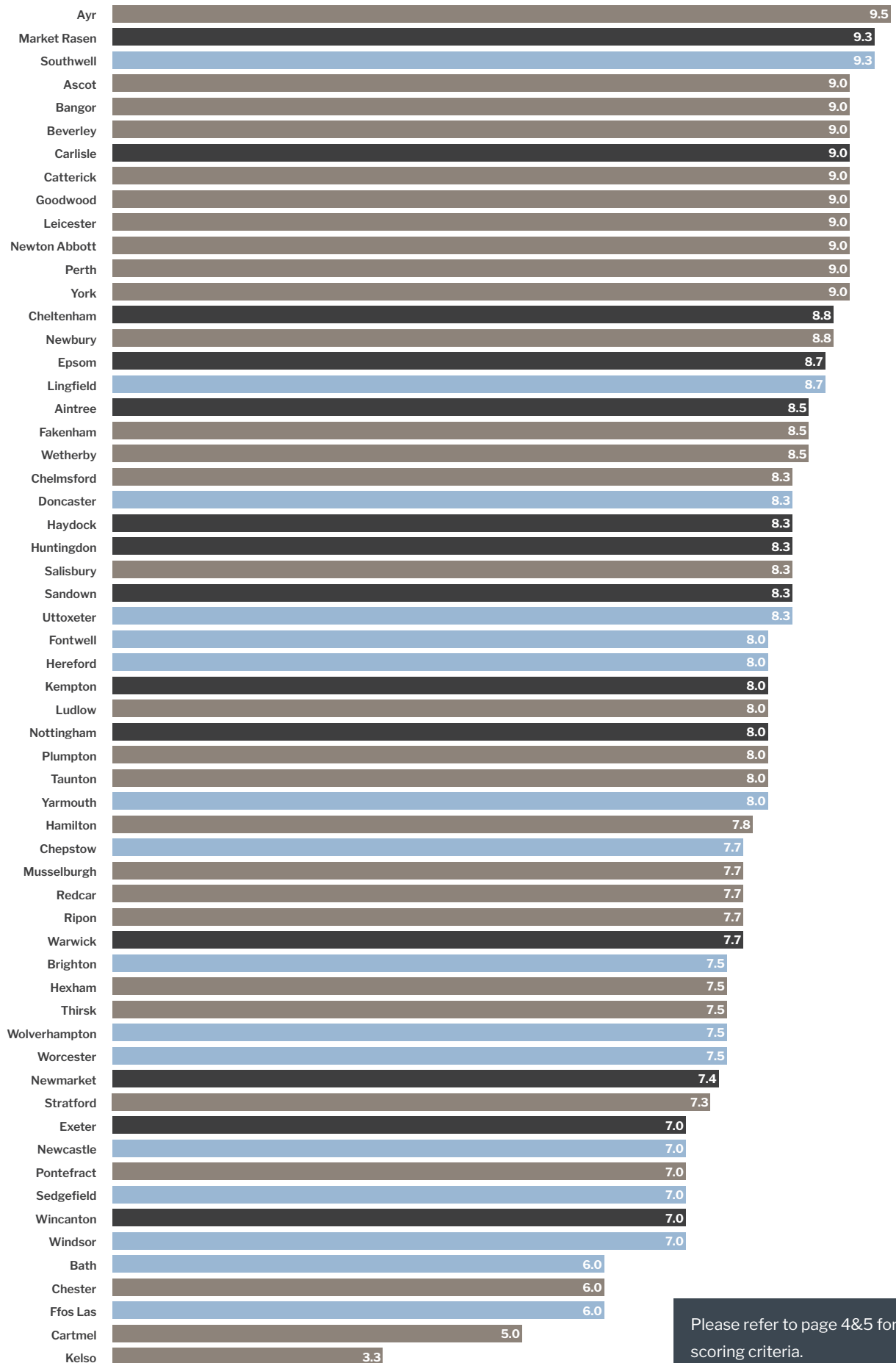
Please refer to page 4&5 for scoring criteria.

# Canteen: Quality



Please refer to page 4&5 for scoring criteria.

# Canteen: Cleanliness



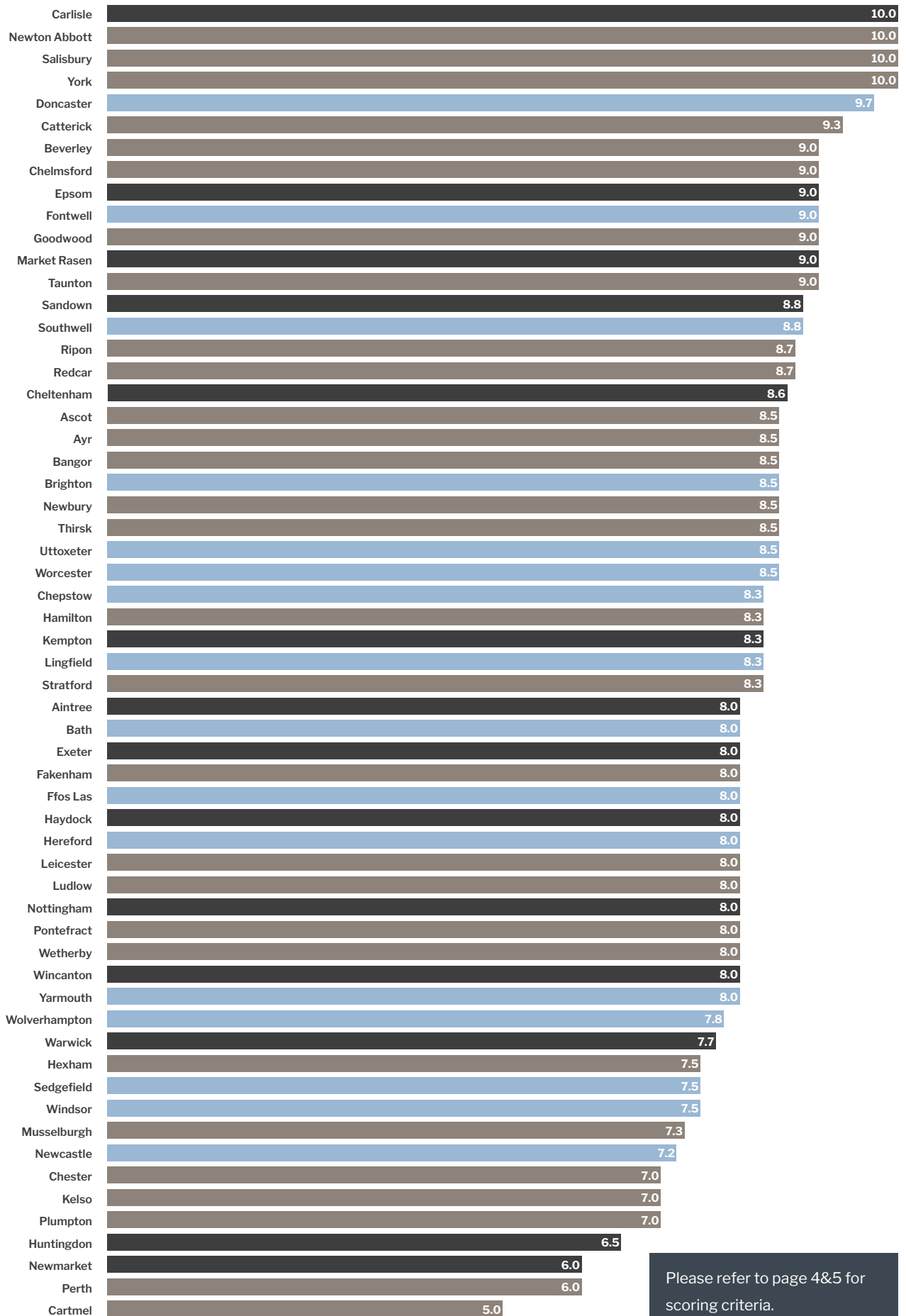
Please refer to page 4&5 for scoring criteria.

# Canteen: Cost



Please refer to page 4&5 for scoring criteria.

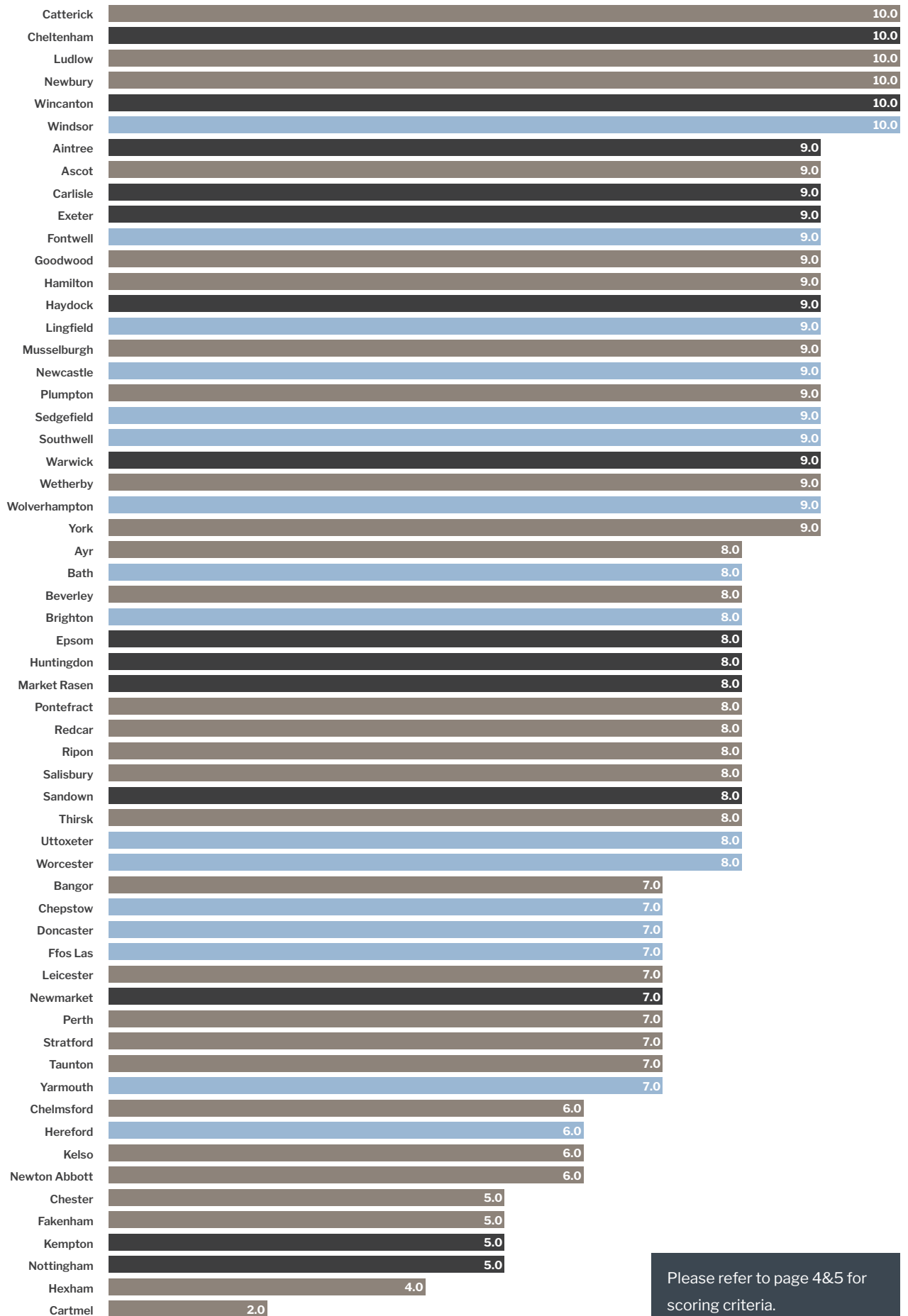
# Canteen: Service



Please refer to page 4&5 for scoring criteria.

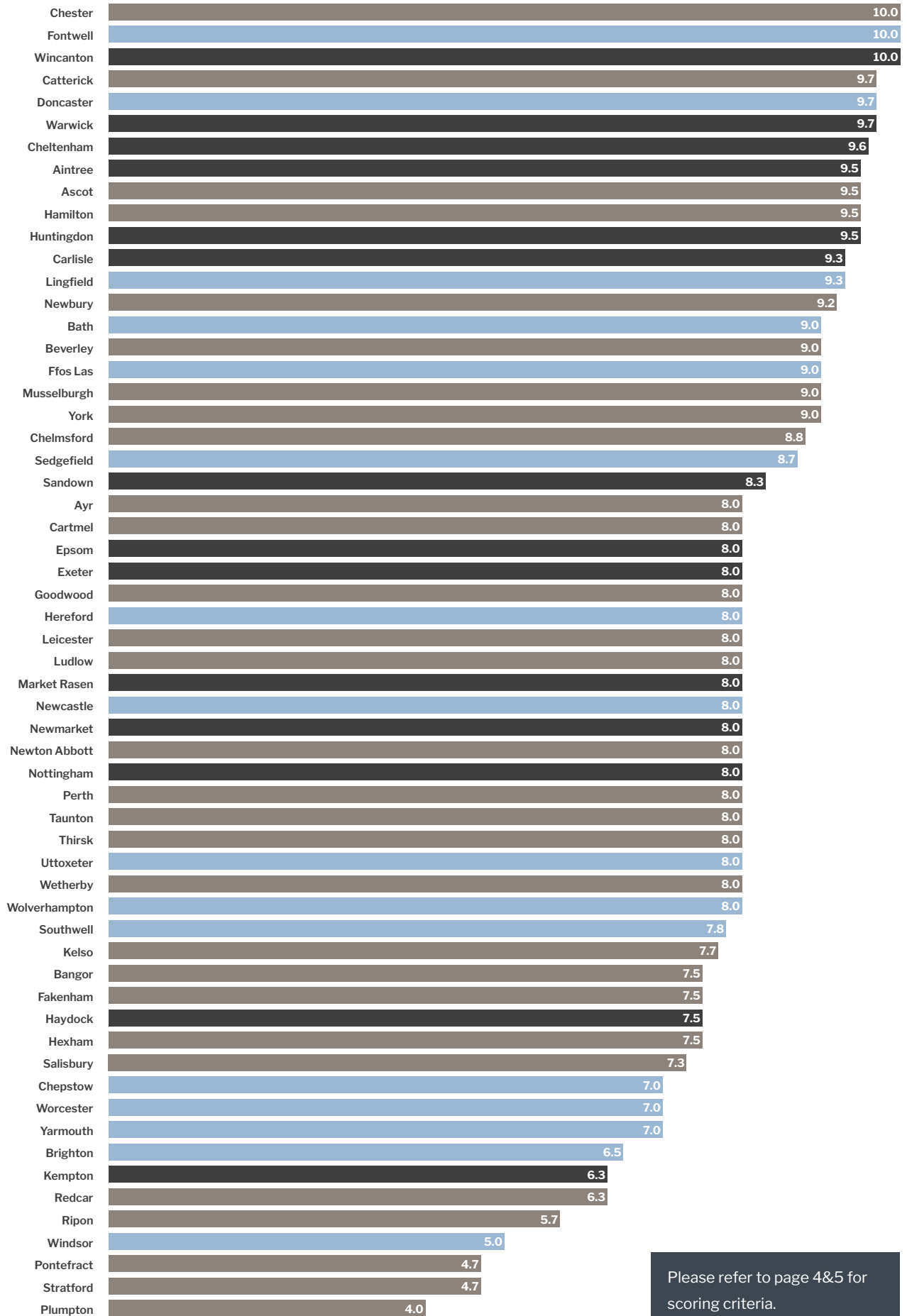


# Stable Yard: Loading Ramp



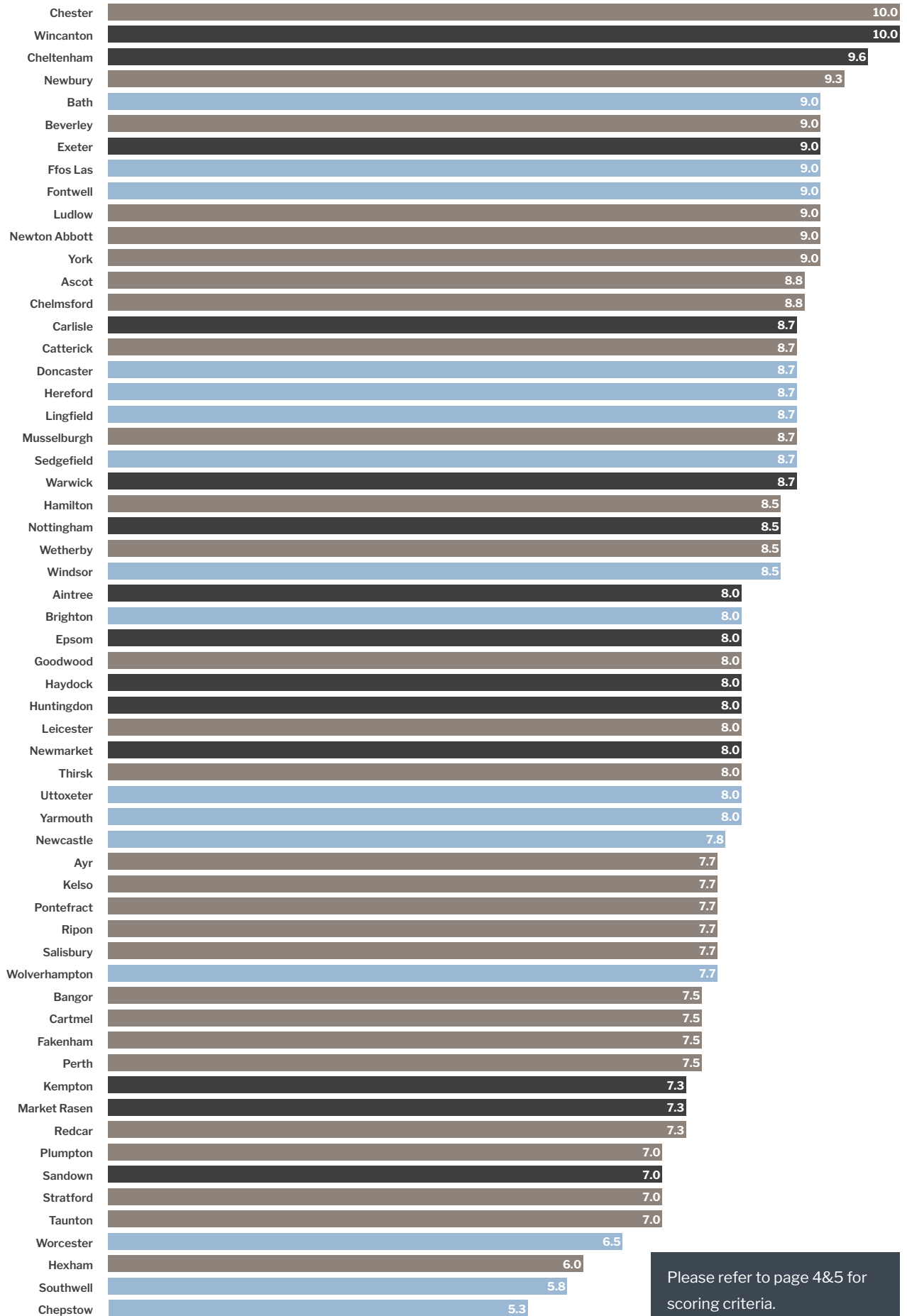
Please refer to page 4&5 for scoring criteria.

# Stable Yard: Quality



Please refer to page 4&5 for scoring criteria.

# Stable Yard: Water

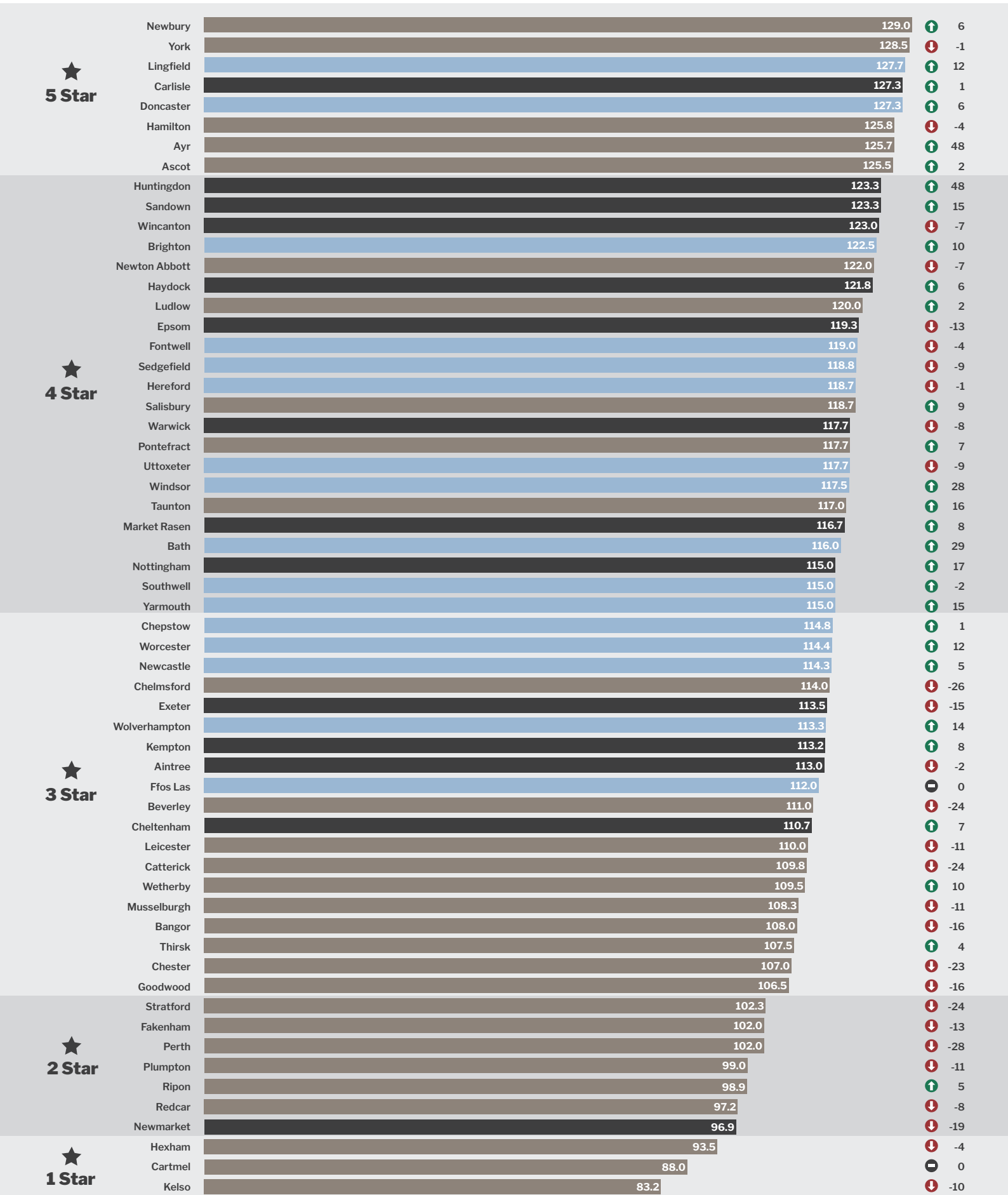


Please refer to page 4&5 for scoring criteria.

# Scores Overview

Course	Overnight Accommodation			Day Facilities				Canteen				Stable Yard			Scores	
	Quality	Numbers	Cleanliness	Relaxing	Cleanliness	Changing	Cleanliness	Quality	Cleanliness	Cost	Service	Loading	Quality	Water	Total2024	Diff2023
Aintree	9.0	0.0	8.5	10.0	7.0	8.0	9.5	8.0	8.5	10.0	8.0	9.0	9.5	8.0	113.0	17.5
Ascot	5.0	10.0	9.0	9.0	8.8	10.0	9.7	9.2	9.0	10.0	8.5	9.0	9.5	8.8	125.5	22.0
Ayr	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	8.0	10.0	7.5	8.5	9.5	10.0	8.5	8.0	8.0	7.7	125.7	42.0
Bangor	6.0	10.0	7.5	5.0	9.0	7.0	6.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	8.5	7.0	7.5	7.5	108.0	10.0
Bath	5.0	10.0	8.0	10.0	8.0	7.0	9.0	9.0	6.0	10.0	8.0	8.0	9.0	9.0	116.0	35.4
Beverley	9.0	10.0	10.0	6.0	10.0	7.0	8.0	7.0	9.0	0.0	9.0	8.0	9.0	9.0	111.0	8.8
Brighton	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	9.0	8.0	9.0	8.0	7.5	10.0	8.5	8.0	6.5	8.0	122.5	22.2
Carlisle	9.0	10.0	9.0	7.0	9.3	9.0	9.3	8.7	9.0	10.0	10.0	9.0	9.3	8.7	127.3	23.8
Cartmel	10.0	10.0	10.0	2.0	5.0	6.0	5.0	2.5	5.0	10.0	5.0	2.0	8.0	7.5	88.0	13.0
Catterick	9.0	10.0	9.0	8.0	8.0	4.0	6.5	8.7	9.0	0.0	9.3	10.0	9.7	8.7	109.8	9.0
Chelmsford	10.0	10.0	10.0	6.0	8.5	6.0	5.0	8.0	8.3	10.0	9.0	6.0	8.8	8.8	114.3	9.5
Cheltenham	5.0	0.0	9.3	8.0	8.0	9.0	9.0	5.8	8.8	10.0	8.6	10.0	9.6	9.6	110.7	20.2
Chepstow	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	7.0	7.0	8.5	7.0	7.7	10.0	8.3	7.0	7.0	5.3	114.8	17.8
Chester	10.0	10.0	10.0	3.0	6.0	5.0	8.0	7.0	6.0	10.0	7.0	5.0	10.0	10.0	107.0	7.5
Doncaster	10.0	10.0	9.5	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.5	8.0	8.3	10.0	9.7	7.0	9.7	8.7	127.3	18.5
Epsom	10.0	10.0	10.0	9.0	8.3	5.0	7.0	8.3	8.7	10.0	9.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	119.3	10.0
Exeter	10.0	10.0	10.0	4.0	7.0	8.0	8.0	6.0	7.0	10.0	8.0	9.0	8.0	9.0	114.0	13.5
Fakenham	5.0	10.0	9.5	4.0	8.0	3.0	8.0	8.0	8.5	10.0	8.0	5.0	7.5	7.5	102.0	6.0
Ffos Las	10.0	10.0	7.0	10.0	6.0	4.0	8.0	8.0	6.0	10.0	8.0	7.0	9.0	9.0	112.0	18.0
Fontwell	10.0	10.0	10.0	4.0	8.0	6.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	10.0	9.0	9.0	10.0	9.0	119.0	16.5
Goodwood	4.0	10.0	6.5	9.0	7.5	2.0	6.0	8.5	9.0	10.0	9.0	9.0	8.0	8.0	106.5	10.4
Hamilton	10.0	10.0	10.0	7.0	9.0	10.0	9.0	7.8	7.8	10.0	8.3	9.0	9.5	8.5	125.8	13.8
Haydock	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	9.5	4.0	10.0	7.5	8.3	10.0	8.0	9.0	7.5	8.0	121.8	21.3
Hereford	10.0	10.0	10.0	6.0	8.0	10.0	9.0	7.0	8.0	10.0	8.0	6.0	8.0	8.7	118.7	17.7
Hexham	4.0	0.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	5.0	8.5	6.5	7.5	10.0	7.5	4.0	7.5	6.0	93.5	7.5
Huntingdon	10.0	10.0	10.0	4.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	9.0	8.3	10.0	6.5	8.0	9.5	8.0	123.3	43.3
Kelso	4.0	0.0	6.0	9.0	7.5	4.0	7.0	4.0	3.3	10.0	7.0	6.0	7.7	7.7	83.2	-5.8
Kempton	10.0	10.0	8.5	10.0	8.7	6.0	8.0	7.3	8.0	10.0	8.3	5.0	6.3	7.3	113.2	22.0
Leicester	5.0	10.0	9.0	8.0	9.0	3.0	9.0	7.0	9.0	10.0	8.0	7.0	8.0	8.0	110.0	12.6
Lingfield	9.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	9.0	10.0	8.0	7.7	8.7	10.0	8.3	9.0	9.3	8.7	127.7	25.3
Ludlow	9.0	10.0	9.0	10.0	9.0	4.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	10.0	8.0	10.0	8.0	9.0	120.0	18.5
Market Rasen	7.0	10.0	9.0	5.0	9.5	8.0	8.5	8.0	9.3	10.0	9.0	8.0	8.0	7.3	116.7	20.7
Musselburgh	10.0	10.0	10.0	6.0	8.0	7.0	9.0	6.7	7.7	0.0	7.3	9.0	9.0	8.7	108.3	12.3
Newbury	10.0	10.0	10.0	9.0	9.4	8.0	8.6	8.2	8.8	10.0	8.5	10.0	9.2	9.3	129.0	23.7
Newcastle	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	8.4	3.0	7.8	6.2	7.0	10.0	7.2	9.0	8.0	7.8	114.4	19.4
Newmarket	4.0	10.0	8.7	6.0	8.7	2.0	4.0	7.2	7.4	10.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	8.0	96.9	1.7
Newton Abbott	10.0	10.0	10.0	8.0	9.0	5.0	8.0	10.0	9.0	10.0	10.0	6.0	8.0	9.0	122.0	15.5
Nottingham	8.0	10.0	10.0	9.0	9.0	6.0	8.5	7.0	8.0	10.0	8.0	5.0	8.0	8.5	115.0	23.8
Perth	9.0	0.0	10.0	6.0	9.5	6.0	9.0	5.0	9.0	10.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	7.5	102.0	2.0
Plumpton	5.0	10.0	8.0	5.0	8.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	10.0	7.0	9.0	4.0	7.0	99.0	7.0
Pontefract	10.0	10.0	10.0	9.0	9.0	7.0	10.0	7.3	7.0	10.0	8.0	8.0	4.7	7.7	117.7	18.9
Redcar	9.0	0.0	9.0	9.0	8.5	7.0	9.0	7.7	7.7	0.0	8.7	8.0	6.3	7.3	97.2	6.2
Ripon	3.0	10.0	6.0	10.0	9.0	8.0	7.5	7.7	7.7	0.0	8.7	8.0	5.7	7.7	98.8	32.8
Salisbury	5.0	10.0	9.0	9.0	8.3	8.0	8.0	10.0	8.3	10.0	10.0	8.0	7.3	7.7	118.7	19.9
Sandown	10.0	10.0	10.0	8.0	10.0	8.0	8.8	8.3	8.3	10.0	8.8	8.0	8.3	7.0	123.3	23.7
Sedgefield	10.0	10.0	10.0	7.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	7.0	7.0	10.0	7.5	9.0	8.7	8.7	118.8	14.8
Southwell	9.0	10.0	10.0	6.0	8.0	4.0	8.5	9.0	9.3	10.0	8.8	9.0	7.8	5.8	115.0	16.0
Stratford	10.0	10.0	10.0	6.0	8.0	4.0	2.0	8.0	7.3	10.0	8.3	7.0	4.7	7.0	102.3	3.3
Taunton	10.0	10.0	10.0	7.0	9.0	5.0	9.0	8.0	8.0	10.0	9.0	7.0	8.0	7.0	117.0	24.0
Thirsk	9.0	10.0	9.0	9.0	8.5	7.0	8.0	7.0	7.5	0.0	8.5	8.0	8.0	8.0	107.5	19.5
Üttoxeter	10.0	10.0	10.0	7.0	8.0	7.0	6.7	8.3	8.3	10.0	8.5	8.0	8.0	8.0	117.7	14.7
Warwick	9.0	10.0	7.5	9.0	8.3	7.0	7.5	6.7	7.7	10.0	7.7	9.0	9.7	8.7	117.7	15.2
Wetherby	10.0	10.0	10.0	6.0	9.0	7.0	7.0	8.5	8.5	0.0	8.0	9.0	8.0	8.5	109.5	25.7
Wincanton	10.0	10.0	9.0	8.0	7.0	8.0	8.5	7.5	7.0	10.0	8.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	123.0	14.0
Windsor	10.0	10.0	10.0	9.0	8.5	7.0	6.0	9.0	7.0	10.0	7.5	10.0	5.0	8.5	117.5	31.0
Wolverhampton	5.0	10.0	8.7	10.0	9.0	5.0	8.5	7.2	7.5	10.0	7.8	9.0	8.0	7.7	113.3	24.4
Worcester	10.0	10.0	10.0	8.0	6.5	8.0	7.0	7.5	7.5	10.0	8.5	8.0	7.0	6.5	114.5	23.2
Yarmouth	7.0	10.0	10.0	9.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	7.0	8.0	10.0	8.0	7.0	7.0	8.0	115.0	23.5
York	10.0	10.0	10.0	6.0	10.0	7.0	9.5	10.0	9.0	10.0	10.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	128.5	13.3

# Overall Scores & Star Rating



# Most Improved 2023 – 2024

**1st** Huntingdon, improved by 43.3 points

**2nd** Ayr, improved by 42.0 points

**3rd** Bath, improved by 35.4 points

In each individual area, the most improved were

Area	Category	Course	Improved Points
Overnight Accommodation	Quality	Ffos Las	+4.0 to 10.0
	Numbers	Ascot	+1.3 to 10.0
	Cleanliness	Wetherby	+2.0 to 10.0

Day Facilities	Relaxing Room Quality	N/A	N/A
	Relaxing Room Cleanliness	N/A	N/A
	Shower/Changing Quality	N/A	N/A
	Shower/Changing Cleanliness	N/A	N/A

Canteen	Quality	Ayr	+5.5 to 8.5
	Cleanliness	Ayr	+5.2 to 9.5
	Cost	N/A	N/A
	Service	Ayr	+4.5 to 8.5

Stable Yard	Loading Ramp	Huntingdon	+6.0 to 8.0
	Quality	Huntingdon	+6.5 to 9.5
	Water	Huntingdon	+3.5 to 8.0

# Conclusion

The ratings we have published are the culmination of a years work by our NARS appointed Racecourse Inspectors. We work off the reports received with every racecourse inspected twice (there are a few exceptions with some meetings abandoned and others with very few fixtures). We then have an all-day meeting with all our Racecourse Inspectors, usually in November to go through every heading and subheading on all fifty-nine racecourses.

In 2024 the team met at Doncaster. We had the company of Nadia Powell from the Jockey Club and Rebecca Davies from ARC. Their presence is welcome, but the capacity in which they attend is that of an observer to understand how we arrive at our scores, they are not permitted to influence the RCIs. In addition to Nadia and Rebecca, we had the pleasure of Roderick Duncan; a NARS trustee and Alex Eade from the large independents.

From our first publication in 2018 we have seen great improvements in the overall standards of human and equine facilities at racecourses.

It isn't just the racecourses that are improving, the Racecourse Inspectors and their work is also closely monitored every year. They have made important suggestions and worked closely with the Clerks of the Courses' to be able to obtain these improvements for both staff and equines.

For 2024 onward the NARS Executive have instructed the Racecourse Inspectors to allocate a score of zero for any racecourse that allocate shared overnight rooms. Six courses still did in 2024. This is to further our drive to see all staff that are staying overnight at the employer's direction have single en-suite accommodation. It is a minimum standard that NARS expects on behalf of its members.

There are still seven racecourses that do not provide a complimentary meal for racing staff. They are Beverley, Catterick, Redcar, Ripon, Thirsk, Wetherby and Musselburgh. I have asked the BHA to look into this with a view to the provision of a complimentary meal becoming a BHA general instruction.

We are very grateful for the co-operation of the Clerks of the Courses up and down the country, the canteen staff and all those unsung heroes that work tirelessly at racecourses to provide for and support our staff. We look forward to 2025, once again working with racecourses and the RCA for the better of all in racing.



**George McGrath**, NAORS Chief Executive



**nars**

National Association of Racing Staff