



Professional Association of Self-Caterers UK
PASC UK NEWSLETTER
JUST THE URGENT STUFF
11 October 2023

COMMENTARY

Just three urgent things today.

1/ PASC UK English Members meeting at 1100 next Wednesday, 18th October. Details below.

2/ Those that have not done the Petition to lobby MPs in support of our self-catering sector, or the Survey to support the lobbying, can you please do so? We would like to close these off and publish the evidence. Thanks.

3/ Please respond the Fake Reviews Consultation. Close on Sunday at midnight. Details below.

Many thanks. Alistair

PASC UK ENGLAND MEMBERS MEETING

Wednesday 18 October 2023

1100-1200

This meeting will be recorded

This meeting is to update Members of PASC UK activities in England, and to answer any questions that Members may have. Limited to 100, first come first served.

Register here:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZElf-utpz4pHdcppPLTq4A1w4LIBsnN9YrR>

Once have checked that you are a Member, we will send you a link to join the meeting.

PETITIONS AND SURVEYS

The Petition to English MP's in support of that campaign here:

<https://www.greatbritishholiday.org/help-our-campaign/>

(You can modify the petition letter) 1190 sent so far

In England, please take part in this Survey, now at 1691, target 1750:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/B59L2ZT>

URGENT GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION INTO FAKE REVIEWS AND DRIP PRICING

THE PAPER ON HOW TO RESPOND TO THIS IS NOW AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE

IT CAN BE FOUND HERE: <https://www.pascuk.co.uk/reports/>

This is the new Government consultation on fake reviews and drip pricing. This is part of a wider agenda on what the Government terms Smarter Regulation. This has a ludicrously short deadline for such a complex issue as the consultation closes this Sunday, the 15th October.

It is though a chance for you to have your say, particularly as regards fake reviews, one of the most contentious aspects of our sector.

It's called: **Smarter Regulation: Improving Price Transparency and Product Information for Consumers**

The main areas covered in this consultation are:

- display of pricing information
- hidden fees and drip pricing
- fake and misleading reviews
- online platforms
- protection from unfair trading
- online interface orders

The two areas that are probably of most interest to our Members are drip pricing/hidden fees, and fake reviews.

PASC UK is concerned about this from two sides:

Our guests can suffer from fake reviews, but also Members often fall victim to fake reviews on sites such as Trip Advisor and Google, where people who have not stayed are able to post reviews although they have never stayed, which are then incredibly difficult to take down.

Drip pricing, where consumers are shown an initial price at the beginning of a buying journey, but then face additional mandatory fees, can affect the way our properties are priced and compared with others, online, so it is not just guests that are affected. Whilst we are not keen on headline booking prices bearing no relation to the checkout price, we need to ensure that genuine additional charges are allowable, e.g. Dogs and EV Charging being two prime examples.

This consultation may feed into the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers (DMCC) Bill.

Deadline for responses: Sunday 15 October 2023 at midnight, so imminent.

If you wish to respond, you'll need to do so quite quickly.

We will have our response Guidance up on the website this afternoon at <https://www.pascuk.co.uk/reports/>

You could adapt the Word Doc provided to help with your response. If you have particular experiences with fake reviews for example, the more evidence the better.

You can find several documents relating to the consultation here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/smarter-regulation-improving-price-transparency-and-product-information-for-consumers>

SUPPORT LOBBYING BY JOINING PASC UK

There is a huge amount of work and lobbying to do to help support you all in the self-catering sector. We don't ask very often, however, if we are to fight on so many fronts, we simply need more funds. There are thousands of you that have had the benefit of this newsletter and the lobbying done on behalf of the sector.

We are now asking that as many of you as possible join PASC UK. The fight is on so many fronts, and we get much better results when we engage proper legal advice and proper PR firms to assist with campaigns. Memberships to other organisations that provide common lobbying, information feeds and support also cost many thousands of pounds a year.

Membership fees are as follows: All per annum.

- Single cottage £70
- 2 – 4 Units £125
- 5 – 10 Units £200
- 11 + Units £300

For companies like cleaning firms, or industry support companies, Trade Membership is £200, and you will get a listing in the Trade Directory on the new website.

Members get telephone support and priority email support.

You can join here, simple form, takes 2 mins, and you'll get an invoice, payable by BACS or Credit Card. Just click on this link to go to the joining page: <https://www.pascuk.co.uk/join-pasc-uk/>

Wishing each and every one of you all the best.

Best regards

Alistair Handyside MBE

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