



Professional Association of Self-Caterers UK NEWSLETTER 9 April 2024 Issue 206

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COMMENTARY

The focus this last week has almost entirely been on lobbying to try and prevent the abolition of FHL Allowances.

First Action this week, please sign this Petition if you have not already. It's doing better at 3,177 at time of writing but needs to get to 10,000 please. Thanks.

Here's the link: <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/658866>

The full update on FHL can be found below. The update starts with what we have been up to this last week and ends with a note about what you can do to help.

There is also a short Fire update below.

We said last week that we would include an update on the new Grading Scheme and updated Quality Schemes from Visit England and the AA. This will have to wait until next week sadly.

We have now pretty much caught up on emails so if Members have any that are outstanding as of this morning, please can you resend? We will attend to them as quickly as possible.

As always, any questions please let us know. Best regards

Alistair

ABOLITION OF FHL ALLOWANCES UPDATE 9 APRIL

For previous updates see past newsletters here: <https://www.pascuk.co.uk/newsletters/general-newsletters/>

Where are we?

Overall, we are making decent progress as you will see below. Lots of the feedback from MPs, especially those that are wavering from fully supporting the Abolition after pressure from Constituents, is to offer carve outs, concessions (such as properties that have planning consent only) or a bright line test to try and minimise the damage. The most frequently quoted bright line test is as follows:

- Minimum number of properties let
- Letting is on a short-term basis
- No personal use of the let
- Level of personal time devoted to the property letting and services provided

This would of course exclude about 99.95% of owners. We therefore believe that we should focus on a single outcome now, that is a full Consultation into what are significant tax changes which will have serious impacts on people's savings, pensions, and retirement plans, as well as causing a reduction in property values as many scramble to exit. Pretty much everything that follows is aligned to get that sector meeting and a full Consultation.

MPs letter to Treasury

We have got a decent sized group of supportive MPs, and we are going to try and see if we can get one of our leading Conservative MP supporters to lead on a letter to send to Treasury, signed by other supporting MPs asking for two things,

1. agree to a sector meeting, and to
2. agree to a full Consultation on the proposed abolition.

If we can secure this letter, we will then adapt the iParl Petition V2 below in terms of timing and content. We have several key MPs who may well consider leading on this letter.

Update on iParl Petition to MPs V1

This has just about run its course and is finally slowing down. 14,741 as of 0800 this morning. If we leave it live until launch of Iparl Petition V2 then we may get to the magical 15,000. Good to see Wales and Scotland featuring well. An astonishing result and huge thanks to all who have played their part in this. It has been gamechanger in support of our lobbying.

Just over 200 MPs have received 20 + Petitions and these have all received a tailored letter from us.

We have been encouraging owners who have received responses from MPs to respond to their MP suggesting what they might say if the MP has sent a standard central office response, or if they have indicated support.

When we are copied in that they have indicated any level of support we have written individually to them, provided a short one-page impact document.

This constant backwards and forwarding is getting MPs to change stance. It is also creating the opportunity for owners to meet in groups with MPs in Wales, Scotland and England. These groups have been assisted with phone, email, additional notes from PASC UK for the meetings. Significant further meetings for PASC UK with MPs have also been enable by this process.

(Please see in the 'What you can do to help' section below on tips on how to take part in this).

Owner Survey

This is now at 6665 business (representing nearly 11,000 properties). Remarkable, would have been delighted at under 3k. Propose just leaving this for at least the next week, as there are some partners who may have just sent it out and we don't want a survey closed notice for those trying to participate.

Please if you have not, take part in this survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5KMN6JY>

This is providing up to date data for the impact reports and we will publish headline stat from this next week. Once gain an astonishing result and huge thanks to all that have taken part in this.

Parliamentary Petition

This one is moving slowly and is now at 3177. Needs to get to 10,000. If any of you can share this it would be helpful. Link to the Petition is here: <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/658866>

New iParl Petition

As explained at the top of this section, this will have a short and single ask, for a full consultation.

Thanks to those Agency Members who have already committed to support it. We anticipate knowing the date that this will need to be launched this week, as we are trying to get the MPs Letter sent to Treasury first.

Then follow up with this if it is needed to get more MP signatures or to provide more support to those have agreed to sign it. We will let you know as soon as possible, so please watch out for a PASC UK Newsflash which will be sent to all and on social media too, as that will be the **GO** button. We need another big number.

One pager for supporting MPs

This has been sent to all MPs that we have seen even the slightest level of support for halting abolition. Please feel free to use as you see fit. You can download it from the website here: <https://www.pascuk.co.uk/newsletters/general-newsletters/>

Information sheets on FHL Impact to DCMS, DLUHC

We have nearly finalised formal submissions on the impact of FHL Abolition to our contacts at these two Government Departments

Treasury.

We have seen the letter from the Treasury Minister Nigel Huddleston MP, that is sent to 'colleagues' who are sending in their concerns about abolition.

Our Treasury response will be to ask for a sector meeting to discuss the policy and to insist on a full Consultation, signed by the supporter's club, and to attach the impact report for them, which will include the information sent to DCMS and DLUHC and that answers questions raised in the Treasury Response.

We have already got MPs asking the Treasury Minister Nigel Huddlestone MP to meet with the sector.

Case Studies

We are working with Francis Clark on illustrative case studies for the various impacts that abolition will entail. These will be part of the tax advice below.

Labour Note

We have written to our contacts in the Labour Party to secure a sector Meeting.

General update

We have lots of MP meetings over the next two weeks resulting from Member/owner engagement.

Your Chair will be a Dinner with the Chancellor Jeremy Hunt MP at the Carlton Club on the 7th of May, The Chancellor is speaker. Only 30 will be in attendance and we all get to ask him questions and can provide him with a written document.

Your Chair has extended an invitation to their Liberal Democrat MP to come and meet with FHL Owners, so he can explain Liberal Democrats support for abolition.

Tax advice

We are at final stages of commissioning the tax advice and support necessary for our owners from FHL Experts Francis Clark. We anticipate closing this off tomorrow, we will then be publishing a series of papers and webinars to help you navigate through any potential changes. We would anticipate having this ready to announce next week.

Francis Clark have published an updated piece of FHL Abolition on their website and gives some useful further information. <https://www.pkf-francisclark.co.uk/fhl-regime-rules/>

Their Original piece is here: <https://www.pkf-francisclark.co.uk/restricted-use-holiday-lets/>

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP AND TO MAINTAIN THE PRESSURE?

The Government Petition

Please take part in this additional Petition. It has not been launched by PASC UK, but we are supporting it fully and it has already gained nearly 3200 signatures towards a target of 10,000. Upon hitting that target the Government is obliged to respond to the petition.

- Sign the petition. Here's the link: <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/658866>
- Share the petition with your friends, family, and anyone you know who supports your business.
- Share the petition across social media.

Write again to your MP

If you have not written to your MP yet, here's the link to do so: <https://pascuk.eaction.online/FHL>

Almost 15,000 of you have already written to your MPs using the PASC UK iparl link. This a truly astonishing result and huge thanks to all that have supported this and been spreading the word.

You should all have received responses from your MP by now. If not send in another email to them. It's easy to find your MPs email address. You can use this tool:

<https://members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP>

There are two kinds of response.....

If your MP is supportive

Write back, replying to their email, thanking them, and saying that many other MPs are also supporting businesses like yours, and that common phrases are that concessions are needed, carve outs need to be offered for real businesses, if you are limited by planning for holiday use only, say that too. Ask them to write to the Treasury Minister again and tell him of the impact that this will have on you.

If you can copy support@pascuk.co.uk into these emails it will tell us which MPs are either wavering or supporting and we will also follow-up directly sending them information on the impact of abolition.

If your MP is not supportive or has just been lazy and offered a standard 'Central Office' Response

Point out the following, you have done nothing wrong, you followed HMRC rules, the alleged loophole has been caused not by rules changes for FHL's but because the Government has come down too hard on Long Term lets.

If your property has planning limitations, then raise that too. Explain how this will affect you, as a business and as individuals. The impact on your savings, pensions and retirement plans. If your property is never going to end up as an affordable home or a starter home for any reason point that out.

Why persecute businesses for a goal that will never be achievable? Ask for a meeting so that you can make your case.

Watch out for the next iParl Petition.

This will be asking MPs to ask Treasury to meet with the sector and to agree to a full Consultation on the impact of FHL Abolition. Watch out for this, it may be launched as a Newsflash, where you will all get a dedicated announcement on it, plus of course on social media.

Expert advice

We remain wary of trying to answer or advise owners on what to do, this is financial advice and just like legal and fire advice this needs to come from experts. Whilst owners are understandably keen to act quickly and agency Members keen to inform, we just really do not have that information yet.

The accountancy firms have no detail either, so we would caution any reader taking any premature action, until the impact would be understood. Lots of hopelessly inaccurate information on social channels and blogs, right now no one knows anything, no detail has been released beyond the 'ambition' to abolish FHL, and abolition is not in the Finance Bill.

One of the most common theories is that those of us that must charge VAT will no longer have to do so. This is entirely incorrect, if we pass the VAT threshold, we must still charge VAT whatever tax regime you operate your business under. Council Tax/Business Rates will still be the responsibility of ourselves the operators. This is just another example that this is not a levelling of the playing field with Long Term Lets.

We have commissioned Francis Clark (FC) in Exeter (Partner John Endecott is well known to us and recognised as the FHL expert) to assist on this. We meet with them regularly and will be able to share details as to what is possible when more detail emerges from Treasury.

Any suggestions?

Please let us have any feedback on the above and any questions also suggestions as to further actions welcome. Please send to support@pascuk.co.uk

SHORT FIRE UPDATE 9 APRIL

We had hoped to have some form of update this week on when there may be some further information on when 'open plan' guidance might be published. Sadly, there is not likely to be any announcement on this for a further few weeks.

Whilst we understand that this is unsatisfactory the Guidance does exist, in Sleeping Accommodation V2:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a818c58e5274a2e8ab54940/9281_Sleeping_Accommodation_v2.pdf

Qualified Fire Risk Assessors can determine Fire Mitigation for properties with exits through open plan areas with fire sources, more than two floors or sleep more than ten in four bedrooms.

PASC UK also have two free Guides to assist:

Fire Paper 3, Applying the Sleeping Risk Guide

This suggests 25 possible mitigations

And...

Applying the Sleeping Risk Guide to existing holiday accommodation

This was the first note that we published on this last June.

They can be found bottom right of the Fire Section on the website here:

https://www.pascuk.co.uk/fire_checks_and_safety/

Or buy using the search tool magnifying glass top right of the home page and typing in 'Fire Paper 3' or 'Applying the Sleeping' searches.

It is worth noting that the lack of any further Guidance from the Home Office does not mean that you do not have to comply in full now. The biggest risk is going to come from your insurance company.

Just as when you take out car insurance, the insurance only covers you if you are driving a car with an MOT. The same applies to us with property. When we take out insurance for our properties, we are agreeing that they will be compliant with all Health and Safety regulation.

Lastly, we are getting an increasing number of reports from Members that Fire and Rescue are either dropping by or making appointments to come and visit. Earlier this was primarily for larger properties and complexes but is random now. Where pre-Christmas they were flexible, now that more than a year has passed since all the Guidance came into clear view, they are being much stricter.

STATUTORY REGISTRATION & PLANNING CHANGES ENGLAND UPDATE 9 APRIL

Each week we publish a summary of any updates as we have them on both Statutory Registration and the proposed Planning Changes.

Rather than repeat, each week we will provide an update of that week only. You can refer to previous Newsletters here: <https://www.pascuk.co.uk/newsletters/general-newsletters/>

Both DCMS (the Govt Department that leads on Tourism) who lead on Registration, and DLUHC (the Govt Department that lead on planning) have both said that they expect the formal responses to last summer's Consultations into Registration and Planning to come out before the summer recess - so before 24 July this year.

It is likely that that is when we will know the full detail of what both interventions will contain. We will continue to have meetings with both departments and keep you abreast of any developments.

Updated comments on the Registration Scheme.

No further meetings with DCMS this week.

Updated comments on Planning Changes.

No further meetings with DLUHC this week.

Links to Government Announcements:

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/short-term-lets-rules-to-protect-communities-and-keep-homes-available?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=abcf45c0-6cb1-41e0-8fb3-addcbdd3400c&utm_content=immediately

and from DCMS:

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/delivering-a-registration-scheme-for-short-term-lets?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=57e40b2f-17ef-4143-b404-b80b0ae62c39&utm_content=immediately

Any questions to chair@pascuk.co.uk

1/ PASC UK MEMBERS WEBINAR WITH THE PASC UK BUYING CLUB

Date 1100 on Tuesday 16 April 2024

It's been a while since we had a dedicated PASC UK Buying Club meeting. Over 1200 of the 1750 Members have already joined and are getting the benefit of using this free service. In this webinar we will cover the following

- How the PASC UK Buying Club Works
- Key Benefits
- Fuel Discount Card
- Credit Card facility
- New Offers
- Q&A

Members Meetings are limited to 100 places, and are dealt with on a first come first served basis

To book you need to click on the link below to register and provide your business name please.

Register here: <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYlfuuqrDMoG9F0aPFj0iJfMdfcMtXGz4XZ>

PASC UK ON THE ROAD AND IMPORTANT MEETINGS AHEAD

Over the coming weeks PASC UK will be present at the following events:

- 23rd April. Global Short Term Rental Summit, London
- 23rd April. Shortyz Awards, London
- 24th April. PASC UK Members Meeting – Worcester (details below)

- 15th May. Tourism Alliance Board, London
- 16th May. Business Breakfast, Devon County Show

IN PERSON PASC UK MEMBERS MEETINGS UPDATE 2 APRIL

We are preparing to roll out in person Members meetings across England and Wales after the success of the meetings in Northumberland, Devon, Cornwall and Wales. The next meeting is below and after that most likely Norfolk.

PASC UK Members Meeting in Worcester:

Date: Wednesday 24th April 2024

Time: 1400-1700

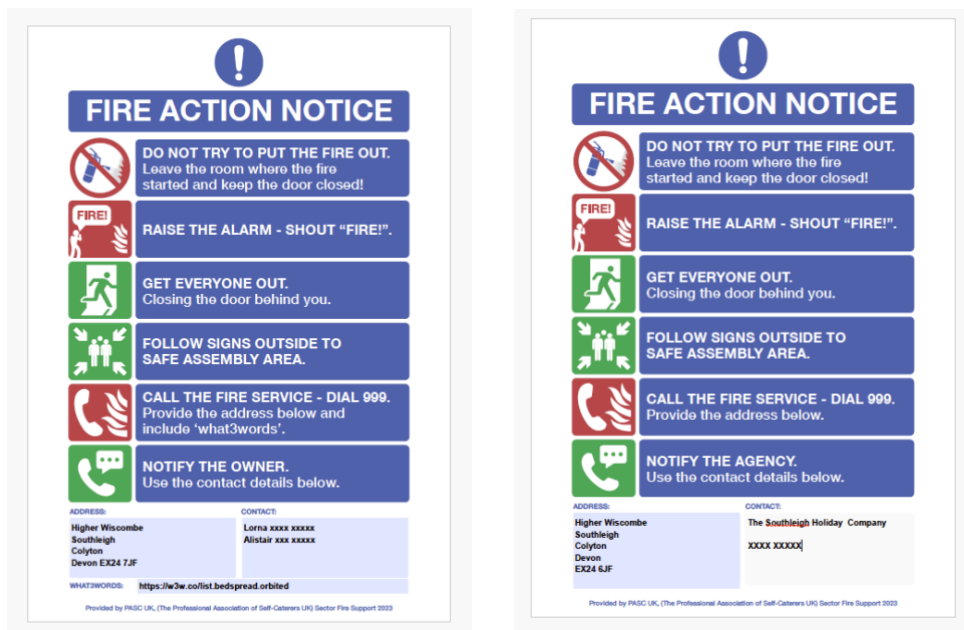
Venue: The Barn at Bennetts Willow Barn

Address: Manor Farm, Malvern Road, Lower Wick, Worcester. WRP 4BS

The Meeting is for PASC UK Members only and you can book a space here on Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/pasc-uk-members-meeting-worcester-april-2024-tickets-856790582697?aff=oddtcreator>

We will be serving teas, coffees and shortbreads.

FIRE GUIDANCE WHERE TO FIND IT ALL?



They can be found here: https://www.pascuk.co.uk/fire_checks_and_safety/

There are short docs that summarize the current situation with Fire Regs in self-catering in England and Wales. They signpost you to all the regulations, the Government produces Guidance, the additional PASC UK papers and more.

They can be found here: https://www.pascuk.co.uk/fire_checks_and_safety/

If you are looking for information on why the regs are now law in England, and coming in Wales, or what a Responsible person is, please refer to recent Newsletters.

<https://www.pascuk.co.uk/newsletters/>

Main Home Office Papers

Home Office Guidance on Making your small paying guest accommodation safe from fire 2023

This paper covers small units, without open plan downstairs, not more than four bedrooms, sleeping no more than twelve in two storey buildings.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1147723/A_guide_to_making_your_small_paying-guest-accommodation_safe_from_fire.pdf

Fire Safety Risk Assessment Sleeping Accommodation

This paper goes some way to helping with larger properties, but is an old paper, published in 2006 and is currently being updated by the Home Office. Earliest date expected is around the end of the year.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/422192/9281_Sleeping_Accommodation_v2.pdf

Additional PASC UK Supporting Papers

To help owners navigate through this, and to supplement the Government Papers mentioned above, we have commissioned three initial papers from our Fire expert, Paul Bray, GFireE, Fire Safety Consultant.

The papers are number 1,2 and 3. They can be found here: <https://www.pascuk.co.uk/reports/> and also here: https://www.pascuk.co.uk/fire_checks_and_safety/

Paper One: The Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005

This is a background paper explaining the legal background of the Fire Regs and the Fire Regs.

Paper 2: Additional Notes to the Home Office Guidance on Making your small paying guest accommodation safe from fire 2023

This paper provides additional notes to use in conjunction with the Home Office Guidance on Making your small paying guest accommodation safe from fire paper.

Paper 3: Applying the Sleeping Risk Guide to existing holiday accommodation

This paper provides the first paper on providing additional information for larger properties.

Fire Checks at Changeover, Routine maintenance and Testing V1

This provides a guide to fire checks at changeover, and a testing regime.

How to find a Competent Fire Risk Assessor?

This provides the websites where you can find authorised fire experts.

Updated Fire Risk Assessment

Suitable for use with the 'Small' guide from the Home Office and Welsh Fire, with the addition of a 'Review Date' box.

Train as a Competent Fire Risk Assessor

Lots of request about how to become a Competent Fire Risk Assessor. This is probably only feasible and of interest to those with multiple properties or agencies.

Additional Fire Safety Notices (without What3Words)

We have produced some further Fire Safety Notices without a space at the bottom for What3Words. We really do recommend that you include creating a What3Words reference for your property as most emergency services all over the country use it.

What3 Words explained

What3Words is and how to use it.

FAQ's

We have published the first sets of FAQ's, the most asked fire questions. This will be regularly updated and when updates are made, they will also appear in the newsletter.

These can all be found at https://www.pascuk.co.uk/fire_checks_and_safety/

Members questions are welcome on any issues that they have with their Fire Risk Assessments, and we will answer as best we can. We are not ourselves fire safety experts and will do our best to try and offer solutions or signposts to solutions. We are afraid that we cannot answer non-Members questions on fire issues.

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 £80
- 2 – 4 Units £140
- 5 – 10 Units £220
- 11 + Units £320.

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 every one of you all the best.

Best regards

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