



Professional Association of Self-Caterers UK

NEWSLETTER

25 June 2024 Issue 217

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COMMENTARY

No headlines changes that we have seen in the Manifestos, or the detail behind policies that will impact our sector beyond that already reported, unless you have seen different? If you see or spot anything that you think is relevant, perhaps coming from a local Candidate to be your MP, please just drop us a note and we will follow up.

We have got some more data for you this week, comparing year on year how bookings for July and August looked at this point last year and more and how length of stay is gradually reducing across the sector.

Please also note that we have had to postpone the Webinar on the 27th June, about the new Visit England and AA Grading Scheme and Visitor Ready Scheme, as I will be attending a funeral that day. The new time and date are 1100 on the 10th July. Details below about these schemes. Apologies.

Best regards

Alistair

THE MAIN PARTY MANIFESTO'S

In order of release to the public domain.

LIBERAL DEMOCRATS MANIFESTO 2024

The LibDem manifesto was published yesterday and had a couple of points that are relevant to our sector.

You can read the document here: <https://bit.ly/LibDemManifesto24>

It includes the following....

A commitment to 'upgrade the status of Tourism in government with a dedicated Minister of State for Tourism and Hospitality.'

Other Key points are in section 14

Give local authorities new powers to control second homes and short-term lets in their areas, as set out in chapter 15.

And in section 15

Give local authorities new powers to control second homes and short-term lets in their areas by:

- Allowing them to increase council tax by up to 500% where homes are being bought as second homes, with a stamp duty surcharge on overseas residents purchasing such properties.
- Creating a new planning class for these properties.

PASC UK Comment

We welcome the ambition to have a dedicated Minister for Tourism and hope that other parties consider this too.

Not much detail, but once again this fatally flawed 'look tough' policy of increasing Council Tax for 'Second Homes'. (This would be an England only policy as we understand it currently). All this is likely to do is drive owners of second homes who have not let the property as a short term let to do so. They will only require 70 days of bookings and 140 days available to avoid this measure.

The impact is therefore owners opting to do short term lets as a tax mitigation measure not because they want to enter the hospitality market and offer great experiences for guests, so think reluctant owners, focus is days let, then stop, not guests or average daily rates, or occupancy across the year. They will target just 70 days, create further over supply and may even impact local pricing if too many come on board.

These are homes, not holiday lets, so once again, having a robust Registration Scheme is critical to limiting the damage here. The vast majority will not remotely be fire/gas/electric compliant, so ensuring that having at least a compliant Fire Risk Assessment to load up at Registration becomes even more important.

Another outcome if lots are seen to do this might be a call to abolish Small Business Rates Relief as covered in last weeks newsletter.

We don't have any more detail about what the New Planning Class or the powers to control both second homes and short term lets at local authority level would entail at this time. It is likely to be either through Article 4 Measures or similar.

CONSERVATIVE PARTY MANIFESTO 2024

Sadly, no specific commitments to support tourism and the visitor economy.

You can read the Manifesto in full here: <https://bit.ly/ConservativeManifesto2024>

A commitment to giving councils power to 'manage the uncontrolled growth of holiday lets'. While there are certainly hot spots that it's right to deal with, sadly, like with the Liberal Democrats, there is no recognition of the benefits that holiday accommodation brings to destinations and communities across the country.

Keeping the VAT threshold under review and 'explore options' to smooth cliff edge. Something that could be hugely beneficial to small businesses in the sector, and boost tourism industry productivity.

Launch a Seaside Heritage Fund (no further details yet).

PASC UK Comment

Disappointing to say the least. No mention of finishing off Statutory registration, which is on the Statute books and so close to implementation, no real plan for the proposed planning changes, and almost no mention of the wider tourism sector at all.

LABOUR PARTY MANIFESTO 2024

As with the Conservative manifesto there are no specific commitments to supporting tourism and the visitor economy however there is plenty that will be consequential for tourism.

You can read the Manifesto in full here: <https://bit.ly/LabourManifesto2024>

A new industrial strategy including a sectoral approach. This could be an opportunity to revisit principals involved in developing the previous sector deal for tourism. The party is at pains to say it will create a pro-business environment.

One fiscal event per year - stability for businesses.

A roadmap for business taxation.

Replace business rates with a new system which would raise the same amount of revenue but in a fairer way.

PASC UK Comment

Once again little on tourism directly, or our sector, but will watch as more detail emerges. We welcome the review of Business Rates but would remind readers that all parties have had this in Manifestos previously and we have seen little change to a broken and unfair system.

IF YOU HAVE A PROPERTY IN WALES, PLEASE TAKE PART IN THIS SURVEY



For readers of this Newsletter who have a self-catering/short-term rental property in Wales please can you take a few minutes to take part in this important Survey?

We are once again gathering comparable data to add to the 'body of evidence' that we need in our advocacy to try and get a review of the 182-day threshold in Wales.

Please take part if this affects you and share the link to the survey with other operators you know in Wales.

Here's the link to the Survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/K9Q6WVH>

We will share results with you.

There is also a dedicated Wales 182 PASC UK Members meeting in the Webinar section below.

THE SIMPLIFICATION OF THE QUALITY STANDARDS AND VISITOR READY

Please see details of free webinar on these schemes on 10th July at 1100.

The AA and VisitEngland have modernised their accommodation assessment schemes and quality standards, making it easier than ever for hospitality businesses to showcase their quality. The new-look assessment schemes feature three distinct levels:

Scheme Modernisation

Your Benchmark for Brilliance



- Quality Star Rated (3 to 5 stars),
- Quality Assessed, and
- A new compliance accreditation called Visitor Ready.

This simplification provides enhanced clarity and understanding for businesses when deciding to be assessed.

Most importantly, the quality schemes will be all about quality in context, assessing what businesses offer to guests, not what they don't. Physical quality and quality of the guest experience will be of equal importance and relevance.

Quality Star Rated

Three Star requirements will become the new minimum requirements for this scheme. The standards themselves have been fully updated to reflect the market place, the ever-increasing diversity of product in the industry and a greater flexibility in service provision that acknowledges the growing use of technology and other innovations in the guest experience. Properties with a star rating may be eligible for awards such as VisitEngland Gold or the ROSE award.

Quality Assessed

This level of accreditation will promote businesses where they have been fully inspected and assessed against the quality standards but prefer to be marketed without a star rating.

Read the revised AA and VisitEngland quality standards here: <https://bit.ly/VisitEnglandSchemes>

Visitor Ready

This new digital scheme is free and will be open to all types of hospitality and tourism businesses across the three key consumer activities of eat, stay and visit.

It enables businesses in the UK hospitality, leisure, and tourism sectors to seamlessly showcase their commitment to operating safely within current industry standards and legislation. It has been created to make compliance accessible for all. The baseline accreditation will help businesses know the key safety and cleanliness requirements that today's visitor expects.

Businesses can check eligibility at [VisitorReady.com](https://www.visitorready.com), upload evidence, confirm key requirements and finish the application in just 20 minutes.

Approved businesses will benefit from:

- a secure wallet for key documents,
- automatic reminders when documents need to be renewed, and
- a digital badge for their marketing channels.

Find out more about Visitor Ready: <https://bit.ly/AAVisitorReady>

PASC UK WEBINAR AND MEETINGS PROGRAMME FOR JULY 2024 UPDATED 25 June

We will shortly be announcing further webinars and meetings for the June programme. These will include the following:

- Election and Manifesto updates
- Fire Update (Open plan Guidance, subject to update from Home Office)
- Sustainability and our sector
- And more.....

We are just getting availability for the speakers and expect to announce these dates next week.

Previous webinars and meetings can be viewed on the PASC UK Website at: <https://www.pascuk.co.uk/webinars/> Members only recordings are in the Members area..

1/ PASC UK & AA Visit England New Grading Schemes and Visitor Ready Scheme

THIS WEBINAR HAS HAD TO BE POSTPONED DUE TO CHIAR ATTENDING A FUNERAL. A REVISED DATE WILL BE OFFERED NEXT WEEK AND ALL THAT HAVE REGSITERED WILL BE CONTACTED. APOLOGIES FOR ANY INCONVENIENCE.

ANY SELF-CATERING/SHORT TERM LET BUSINESS CAN ATTEND

~~1100 on 27 June 2024~~

NOW 1100 ON 10 JULY 2024

Please join us for a Webinar where will introduce you Simon Numphud, Managing Director of the AA and lead on the overhaul of the Visit England and AA Quality Grading Schemes that has taken place over the last year.

PASC UK took part in the self-catering part of this review. Simon will explain the changes, and how the scheme can work for you, plus introducing a new free scheme called Visitor Ready. This webinar is open to all in the sector

We will cover the following:

- What are the Quality Grading Schemes?
- Who runs and manages them?
- What's changed?
- What is Visitor Ready?
- How to get take part?
- Q&A

Please register using this link:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_QXkbEnpPR66P1kylfgxiw

Upon registration you will automatically get a link by email to use to join the Webinar.

PASC UK ON THE ROAD AND IMPORTANT MEETINGS AHEAD UPDATE 25 JUNE

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

- 16th July, Wales Tourism Week, Senedd Reception
- 4/5 October, Property Investor Show, Excel London
- 6/7 November: Scale UK, The Oval London.

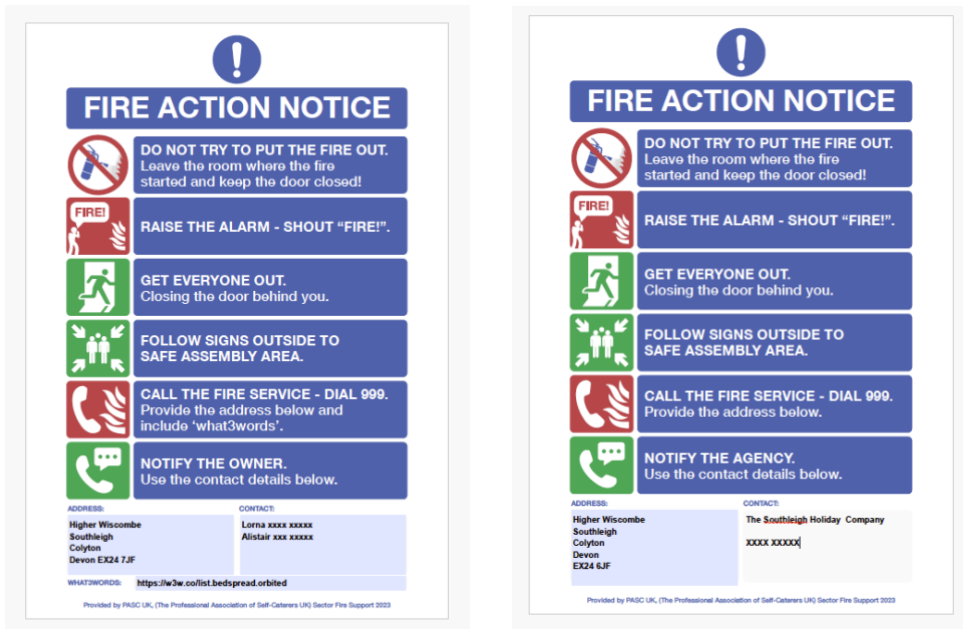
IN PERSON PASC UK MEMBERS MEETINGS UPDATE 25 JUNE

We are preparing to roll out further in person Members meetings across England and Wales after the success of the meetings in Northumberland, Devon, Cornwall, Wales and Worcestershire.

- The next meeting will be in Norfolk, we are just checking final dates
- Followed by the Brighton area

FIRE GUIDANCE WHERE TO FIND IT ALL? UPDATE 25 JUNE

We have been told by the Home Office that no updates will be issued until we are clear of Purdah and the Election process is complete.



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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