Professional Association of Self-Caterers UK

NEWSLETTER

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COMMENTARY

Please note date change for Members Meeting, it is no longer this Thursday as an important meeting has come up. Apologies, now rescheduled for Wednesday 31 July at 1100. Details below. Apologies.

Last week we had the Kings Speech, 40 bills and hardly a word about Tourism, so we continue to watch very closely, not least as what if anything the new Government does around FHL Allowances. That was left hanging with the announcement of an election with Treasury seemingly accepting that a sector Consultation was necessary. But not a mention since, it wasn't in the Party manifestos and we know that to restart it, it needs to go back into a Budget and Finance Bill.

We are getting numerous Members contacting us saying their accountants are already treating their affairs as if this has come into tax law. If your accountant suggests this, ask them where the tax law has changed and to point you to the relevant links. They will not be able to. Not one word about this got onto the Statute Books, and for now, it remains an 'ambition' of the previous Government, until see or hear anything different.

The Tourism Reception at the Senedd last week was affected due to all the Minister resignations from the Welsh Government that then led to the resignation of the First Minister. This in turn meant that the Tourism Minister, who was due to speak in the evening, was no longer available. Very disappointing, many of us are trying hard to find a way to get a more constructive dialogue with the Welsh Government and whilst great to catch up with colleagues and supportive MS's who were present, the main event is what the Minister has to say, and the tone and direction of their words.

Sir Chris Bryant, Tourism Minister England.

The next day in London we were present at the meeting, where Sir Chris Bryant told us that he had been appointed at Tourism Minister for England. He made a pretty rousing first speech, and like much of what is being announced by the new Government the word 'growth' loomed large. We manged a really good conversation with him on Statutory Registration, with more on that below.

There is also a note below about DCMS asking for volunteers to take part in phone interviews with them about the Statutory Registration scheme. Please do consider taking part. See details below, plus an 'aide memoir' about what benefits the scheme could bring if implemented correctly.

Finally for this week we can share with you the new Short Form VO6048's, which will make all those applying to get onto Business Rates or return to Business Rates after thresholds have been met much easier.

Best regards

Alistair

NEW TOURISM MINISTER IN ENGLAND

We have a new Tourism Minister in England. PASC UK were present at the meeting, where has been expecting at least senior officials from DCMS, When Sir Chris Bryant took the front and announced his new role. He talked passionately about the wider sector and talked positively about how he intended to engage with all of us in the room. 'These ears are here for you to lobby' being a memorable quote.

After his short speech we were able to talk to him and focussed on statutory Registration. He had clearly been well briefed on this, and said he was supportive and that there was DCMS team meeting on this on Wednesday of this week. As soon as we hear any more on that we will let you know.

It's highly likely that we will know the direction of travel on this sooner rather than later and will keep you up to date on that. The two sections below in this Newsletter suggest that this is being picked up quickly.

STATUTORY REGISTRATION IN ENGLAND UPDATE

We have been contacted by DCMS regarding the development of the Statutory Registration scheme's technology, which once again indicates that this is still going ahead.

The contract for the system has been awarded to MadeTech after a competitive tender. The work commences this month, and they are looking for feedback from a variety of organisations on the implementation of the software.

MadeTech also developed Homes for Ukraine initiative and MHCLG's Privately Rented Property Portal.

There are some key issues to iron out. How and who can access the data, what would need to be uploaded etc, and we will shortly be contacted by MadeTech to feed into this process.

It will be interesting to hear what questions they ask and how they propose to deal with the detail.

More information when we have it.

DCMS REQUEST FOR PHONE FEEDBACK ON SATAUTORY REGISTRATION

Yesterday we had a flurry of emails and phone calls to ask if a post on various Facebook Groups from DCMS was legit. We checked and it was, and they have asked us to share widely.

DCMS are asking for your feedback over the phone regarding the Statutory Registration scheme for short term lets. Please do volunteer to take part. If you have any questions, please either contact the team at DCMS whose details are below, or support@pascuk.co.uk

See their note below, and under that are our key thoughts on such a scheme.

From DCMS Research Team

> This is a post for all of the Short Term Lets owners in this group. I work as a User Researcher for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). As Short Term Lets owners you may already be aware that DCMS is exploring the introduction of a registration scheme for short-term lets, which was legislated for in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act.
>
> As part of developing a scheme we are very keen to speak to hosts of short-term lets to understand their needs and feelings around such a scheme, and how it might impact them. Unfortunately, we cannot offer any incentive for your time. As potential users of the scheme anything you can tell us will help to shape the policy and design of this service. As ethical researchers, we can promise that anything you tell us in these sessions will be anonymous and not be traced back to you.
>
> If this sounds like something you might be interested in, or if you have any questions at all, please either get in touch with myself Darren.horne@dcms.gov.uk or my colleague Richard.larsen@dcms.co.uk and we can provide you with more details.

FROM PASC UK

PASC UK have long argued for a level playing field for operators in our sector and founded the original 'Safe and legal' campaign in 2017.

They key reasons are as follows.

DATA

A Registration Scheme would provide the first really accurate data on the sector.. ever. We have seen where policy leads in both Scotland and Wales where policy interventions into our sector are decided without this, and the awful consequences of that. Good data for both Government and Councils will help steer better policy.

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

Sadly, there are still tens of thousands of properties that are let in our sector that are not 'safe and legal'. This may because they are still not aware of the Fire Regs for example on one hand, and on the other may think no one will ever check.

Many thousands of readers of this Newsletter have gone through the financial pain and disruption of fire compliance over the last year. From October last year, we all have to have a recorded Fire Risk Assessment that by law has followed the Fire Guidance. Since we all have to have this document, we believe that this document should be uploaded as part of the Registration process. Without one, no registration number and no longer able to advertise.

REASONABLE COST

We have always understood that the cost of such a scheme would need to be borne by the sector itself, and Government finances suggest that this may be the only way that this will happen. However, we have seen extremely expensive 'licences' in Scotland running into many thousands of pounds. In all our meetings with Members, Official and Ministers we have argued for a low-cost scheme, around £100 per business per annum.

CONSUMER CONFIDENCE

A well implemented Statutory Registration Scheme will also increase consumer confidence.

Finally, do try and find the time to take part in this survey and help shape the Registration Scheme in England, thanks.

NEW SHORT FORM VO6048's

We have been working closely with the Valuation Office for some time now, and this week a new 'short form' VO6048 has been released for use when applying to get onto, or back onto Business Rates.

This is what the Valuation Office have said.....

> **VOA introduces new self-catering questionnaire**
>
> The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) has published a new questionnaire to make it easier for you to tell the VOA that your self-catering property has met the criteria to be assessed for business rates.

There are different questionnaires for England and Wales. You should use this new, shorter form if:
.....your self-catering property is currently valued as domestic and liable for Council Tax, but now meets the criteria to be valued for business rates
.....you have a new self-catering property that has met the criteria for the first time in the past 12 months.

You should only complete a longer VO6048 form when requested to do so by the VOA.

The English Forms are here: https://bit.ly/ShortFormVO6048England

The Welsh forms are here: https://bit.ly/ShortFormVO6048Wales

PASC UK says..

We welcome this development, especially the clarification of which VO6048 form you need to fill in.

We continue to work with them on continuing to improve the forms, and our next ambition includes trying to get agreement to make the VO6048 forms available as editable pdfs, so that you can fill them in on screen, save, and email directly to the VOA.

It is strange that such a key document that this sector has to fill in by law, still requires a pen, an envelope and a stamp. It's hard to imagine the post room at the VOA on a busy day.

CONNECTING WITH THE NEW GOVERNMENT PART 3

All the letters in the handwritten envelopes have been despatched and we are already getting responses from new MPs. This include agreeing to meet to discuss the sector, to saying that they have written to the Secretary of State to push on with Statutory Registration.

With Recess looming we are trying to link up with as many new MPs as follows, both to help arrange MP visits to sector businesses and to arrange to meet them at the Party Conferences in the Autumn. We will have PASC UK presence at the three main Party Conferences. More on that in future Newsletters.

How You Can Help

We would like to encourage PASC UK Members to host their local MP during the summer months. This would be an opportunity for our elected representatives to see and hear for themselves the value of the holiday let sector in their constituency and across the country.

In advance of the Summer Recess, we will be producing a **PASC UK MP Visit Toolkit** to make doing this as easy as possible. This almost complete and will be ready later this week or early next on the website.

If you would like to get involved as a Member, and invite an MP to come and visit your business, please drop an email to support@pascuk.co.uk with MP visit in the Subject line, and your Business name and Constituency in the text. Thanks

NEXT STEPS FOR THE NEW GOVERNMENT

Summer Recess DATES NOW OFFICIAL

The Leader of the House of Commons, Lucy Powell MP, has announced the following recess dates.

The House will rise for the summer recess at the conclusion of business on Tuesday 30th July and return on Monday 2nd September.

Subject to the progress of business, the House will rise for the Conference recess on Thursday 12th September and return on Monday 7th October.

Summer recess is usually a time when MPs get some downtime and go on holiday. However, this year it is expected that MPs, particularly newly elected members, will remain active in their constituencies throughout the summer holidays.

A Labour Budget

Whilst the King's Speech will give some indication as to the Government's priorities, details about the economy, taxation and spending will be unveiled at the Autumn Budget.

The new Government could move to deliver an Emergency Budget, but Labour has previously said that they would not deliver one without forecasts from the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR). It takes 10 weeks for the OBR to assess the economic impact of policy announcements and produce a report. It is therefore most likely that a Budget will be delivered in mid-late September, possibly October.

PASC UK WEBINAR AND MEETINGS PROGRAME FOR JULY 2024 UPDATED 15 July

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

- Election and Govt Policy 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 Members Meeting

PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGE.

Members Only
(This will be recorded and placed in the Members area of the website)

Wednesday 31 JULY 2024 at 1100

Please join us for a Members Meeting where we will cover the following:

There are some significant changes coming ….

- New Government
- New Staff at PASC UK
- New Newsletters
- Updated Website
- And more changes at PASC UK…

Please register using this link: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_4hgkAgSJT26-fGYMRR3K_A

Once verified as a members you get a link by email to use to join the Meeting. Meetings are restricted by Zoom to 100, so first come first served.

PASC UK ON THE ROAD AND IMPORTANT MEETINGS AHEAD UPDATE 23 JULY

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

- 4/5 October, Property Investor Show, Excel London
- 6/7 November: Scale UK, The Oval London.

IN PERSON PASC UK MEMBERS MEETINGS UPDATE 23 JULY

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, this will now be after the summer.
- Followed by the Brighton area

FIRE GUIDANCE WHERE TO FIND IT ALL? UPDATE 23 JULY

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. Not likely until the end of July earliest, if then.

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_Accomodation_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, GIFireE, 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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