Professional Association of Self-Caterers UK

NEWSLETTER

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COMMENTARY

Last week we gave evidence to the APPG (All Party Parliamentary Group) For Tourism and Hospitality on the Overnight Visitor Levy. A full report can be found below.

We also attended the Scale Conference in Brighton, where Alistair was on a panel with Fiona Campbell from the ASSC and Janet Uttley from the STAA answering questions about tax, regulations, futures and how to have a positive impact.

We really enjoy the Scale Conferences, we get a chance to meet an increasing number of Members face to face, plus meet Stakeholders and see at first hand some of the new technical developments that are available to the sector. Some of which we will be introducing you to over the coming weeks and months.

Over the next few weeks we will be focussing on 182 in Wales, the levy in England and Wales and getting the in-person Members meetings booked to cover as much of England and Wales as possible.

Your actions this week are as follows:

1/ Make sure you have signed the #VATsTheProblem Petition, 216,000 now have…
https://www.vatstheproblem.co.uk

2/ If you are in Wales, sign the Review 182 Petition, which is now at 927 Signatures…
https://petitions.senedd.wales/petitions/246949

3/ Book your place at the nearest PASC UK Members Meeting.
More next week to be announced next week!

Alistair and the team at PASC UK

POLITICAL UPDATE

The Prime Minister is facing a significant internal crisis following the resignations of Defence Secretary John Healey and Armed Forces Minister Al Carns over military funding. Opposition leader Kemi Badenoch has called for Starmer's resignation, though he has indicated he will fight any leadership challenge. Thursday's Makerfield by-election, where Andy Burnham is the Labour candidate and current polling favourite, is likely to shape what comes next, with a Burnham victory expected to accelerate the Government's fiscal devolution agenda, of which the levy is a central part.

Alison McGovern MP gave a keynote address in Liverpool, framing the levy as the opening move in a wider fiscal devolution programme. There was a clear message: the levy is a devolution mechanism first and a tourism policy second.

The APPG for Hospitality and Tourism held its second evidence session on the levy, with panellists including PASC UK's Chair Alistair Handyside, as well as David Pugh (Merlin Entertainments) and Joss

Croft (UKinbound). The third and final session takes place on 23 June, with Kate Nicholls (UKHospitality), Ben Spier (Sykes Holiday Cottages) and Eddy Leviten (Tourism Alliance).

On Written Questions, Rebecca Smith MP (Con, South West Devon) and Mims Davies MP(Con, East Grinstead and Uckfield) received answers to multiple written questions on economic modelling of the levy's impact on families, regions and UK competitiveness. These responses provided no informative update. Lord Mott asked MHCLG to assess the impact on rural and coastal communities and the self-catering sector, receiving the same answer to both questions: that the scope of the levy remains under development, including whether it will apply to camping and caravan pitches. Daisy Cooper MP asked DCMS when the mandatory national registration scheme for short-term lets will be introduced. Stephanie Peacock confirmed the Government's commitment but provided no implementation date.

Media Update

Concerns about where levy revenues will end up dominated coverage this week. The Local Government Chronicle reported widespread concern among councils that money raised in tourism-heavy areas could be redirected away from the sector, with North Yorkshire Council going furthest by calling for a constituent council veto. The LGA called for joint decision-making between mayors and councils, while London Councils wants boroughs to retain 50% of revenues raised locally.
The Bournemouth Echo captured the same tension at a local level, reporting a public disagreement between BCP Council and Bournemouth East MP Tom Hayes over ringfencing, with Hayes saying a government decision is expected very soon. This sits alongside reporting in the Guardian that ministers are considering devolving billions of pounds in business rates income to regional mayors as part of the Autumn Budget fiscal devolution package, with Local Government Secretary Steve Reed confirming that business rates are under consideration.

Opposition to the levy continued to build at a local level. Wales Online covered a new campaign group opposing Gwynedd's proposed 90p per night levy, warning it would fall disproportionately on domestic family visitors while longer-stay guests remain exempt. Devon Live and the Torbay Weekly reported that Devon's Liberal Democrat MPs are preparing to lobby ministers, with Torbay MP Steve Darling warning that the levy on top of existing VAT rates was "absolutely crazy."

On the wider economic picture, a Property Week opinion piece argued the levy could not come at a worse moment for London, noting that West End businesses have seen international spending fall 12% below pre-pandemic levels despite visitor numbers recovering, with tax-free shopping still absent since 2021.

PASC UK GIVES ORAL EVIDENCE ON TOURISM TAX

PASC UK gave oral Evidence at the APPGs (All Party Parliamentary Group) for Tourism and Hospitality Enquiry into the Overnight Visitor Levy on Tuesday 9th June at Portcullis House in Westminster.

Representations were made by the following Panellists:

- David Pugh, Global Corporate Communications and Public Affairs Director, *Merlin Entertainment*
- Joss Croft, Chief Executive, *UKInbound*
- Lauren Goodwin, Hotel Sales and Revenue, *Greene King*
- Andrew Clarke, Commercial Director, *The Business Travel Association*
- Kate Shane, Managing Director of *Blackpool Tourism Limited*
- Alistair Handyside MBE, Executive Chair, *The Professional Association of Self-Caterers UK*
- Allen Simpson, CEO of *UKHospitality*

Each of us had a four-minute slot to make our key points. PASC UK had the penultimate slot so was able to just say how we agreed on some key points already made and enabled more detail to be provided on other issues.
Alistair's words were as follows, if anyone has suggestions or comments, please send support@pascuk.co.uk

> Firstly, we thank the APPG for Hospitality and Tourism for the opportunity to give oral evidence, it is much appreciated. PASC UK are the largest by membership Trade Association representing the self-catering sector in the UK. I am an operator myself and have been trading for over twenty years. We are active and collaborative Members of both UK Hospitality and the Tourism Alliance and thank them for their work on the Overnight Visitor Levy.
>
> We echo what others have said about scheme simplicity, one national framework, the ringfencing of funds to support tourism and the positive alternatives that are Tourism Bids, and the lessons to learn from Scotland.
>
> The self-catering sector provides the critical bed-stock in rural and coastal areas, supporting the ecosystem that is pubs, cafes, restaurants etc - all totally interdependent on each other, as local spend is simply not enough to sustain local visitor economies.
>
> Unlike many other sectors, tourism creates flexible economic opportunities across all parts of the UK, supporting 1 in every 15 jobs. Introducing a visitor levy would add to existing pressures on the sector and risk deterring visitors, with knock-on impacts for employment. Government should therefore be cautious about measures that could weaken job creation, particularly in rural and coastal communities where alternative economic opportunities are more limited.
>
> Our sector owner profile is primarily female and over sixty, living onsite or nearby the properties, and are micro, micro businesses.
>
> In rural and coastal areas, alongside farming, the visitor economy is a key provider of economic activity and employment. It is hugely price sensitive.
>
> Reports from Visit England, New Economics Foundation and many more highlight a serious decline in overnight stays in rural and coastal areas.
>
> The self-catering sector, made up of micro businesses is already facing an overwhelming burden of tax and regulatory impacts, what we term 'Cumulative Impacts'. (We handed out Cumulative Impact cards).

The increasing costs burden - NI, Minimum wage and Business Rates increases have already hit the sector hard, UKH hospitality will have provided key statistics on those impacts, with 100,000 plus jobs lost. On top of that hospitality inflation is way above the published inflation rate. Our member surveys indicate inflation at almost 10% for the services and support that they have to buy in. It will be more for hospitality providers that offer food and drink. A levy will exacerbate this.

A visitor Levy will be a very regressive tax, hitting lower income families the hardest. For example, a £2 per person per night levy adds £84 to a family holiday.

In off peak and winter many breaks are priced super competitively in order to fill these periods, and to retain staff all year round, and keep the properties in use. It is not uncommon to offers from below £100 to £300.

The self-catering sector will be the most numerous visitor accommodation providers having to report and remit the levy funds. The administrative burden would therefore fall on tiny micro businesses at a time when the Government is calling for a 25% reduction in regulatory burden. Look again if you will at the Cumulative Impacts cards.

The Levy reporting in Wales will require quarterly reporting to the Welsh Revenue Authority, creating a huge burden on both the Visitor Accommodation Provider (VAP) and the Tax authority. This cost burden on VAPs and HMT must form a significant part of any economic impact assessments as they will be significant and will impact the very viability of any levies. We understand that HMT will not be doing an overall EIA, and that will be down to Mayors and authorities to do their own. There must be strict guidance on ensuring that this work is robust and accurate.

If the government wants to fully harness the economic benefits of tourism across the whole country, then support for the long-term viability of the visitor accommodation sector is critical, overnight stays have around 6.5x the economic value than day trips.

Tourism taxes are often introduced to reduce activity or are where VAT or other taxes are considerably less – the UK already ranks 113/119 for price competitiveness according to the WEF. The sector needs growth, the Government needs growth and this is the wrong tax at the wrong time. If introduced will do considerable harm to our Members, the wider self-catering sector, and to local visitor economies across England.

If anyone requires the detail to any of the data that supports our evidence, we would be more than happy to provide it. Thank you once again for the opportunity to give evidence.

Summary of meeting:

Unsurprisingly all evidence given opposed the tax. 6 MPs attended, and all were against the introduction of the tax.
They were:

- Chris Webb, MP for Blackpool South (Chair)
- Damian Hinds, MP for East Hampshire (Vice-Chair)
- Alison Griffiths, MP for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton
- Nigel Huddleston, MP for Droitwich and Evesham

- Joe Roberston, MP for Isle of Wight East
- Adam Dance, MP for Yeovil

It would have been much more useful had some MPs who are supporting the introduction had been there to argue the evidence. However, the APPG will now publish a summary of the evidence submitted which as a cross-party group, will carry considerable weight.

A couple of key points emerged from the cross examination at the end, one was that the supportive MPs said that there was little hope that the Tourism Tax receipts would be hypothecated (that is ring-fenced) for tourism, and that whilst the arguments for a single system are strong, Mayors will want to come up with their own schemes.

There is one final Evidence Session, on the 23rd of June, where we have Ben Spier, PASC UK Board Member and from Forge Holidays, will be giving evidence from a platform perspective.

No single meeting or session will change or mitigate the impact of this tax, but if we all keep pushing back, we can limit the damage that this unwelcome tax will cause.

PASC UK HEADING OUT ON THE ROAD FOR IN-PERSON MEETINGS

One of the best bits of the job here at PASC UK is getting out on the road and seeing you, the Members, in person!

We've run these meetings before and they're a great opportunity for you to hear about the work we're doing, meet other Owners and to input into our future work.
We'll be on the road through the summer and into the autumn to make sure we avoid the worst of the weather and look forward to seeing as many of you as possible!

We've secured the first batch of venues, and have some dates locked in for you to pop in your diaries ☺

We've also added a section to these meetings that we haven't done previously – non-members are warmly welcomed to come and meet us before the Members meeting, to hear about the work we're doing, ask questions, and meet the team. If you've been thinking about joining us, this is a great opportunity to come and find out more!

But, we need your help! Below is a list of the areas that we're planning to visit – if you have a venue, or know of a suitable venue that is easy to get to, has free parking, and does good cake (very important!) please email support@pascuk.co.uk with the subject line "Members Meetings"

If you think we've missed somewhere, please let us know – we'll keep adding to the below with more details as we get the confirmed ☺

Anglesey
Alnwick – SAVE THE DATE – 22nd July
Cotswolds
Cornwall – 28th July – The Alverton Hotel, TR1 1ZQ - Non Members Book Here. Members Book Here.
Devon – 2nd July – Higher Wiscombe, EX24 6JF – Non Members Book Here. Members Book Here.
Isle of Wight – SAVE THE DATE – 16th September

South West Wales
Kendal – SAVE THE DATE – 23rd July
Peak District
North Norfolk
York

Tickets are £10 per head, with all proceeds going to the PASC UK Charity, chosen by our Members – The Family Holiday Charity.

Thank you in advance and look forward to getting to catch up with many of you in person!

NEW CALL FROM DCMS FOR STAUTORY REGISTRATION TESTERS – ENGLAND (INCENTIVE OFFERED!) – FINAL CALL!

PASC UK is looking for Members and operators in England to help test the proposed DCMS Statutory Registration Scheme system.

This is your opportunity test and contribute to the development of the forthcoming Statutory Registration Scheme and to make sure the system is tested by genuine operators before wider rollout.

DCMS is particularly looking for operators that fit into any one or more of the categories below:

- Providers/managers with more than 10 properties (this could include small Agencies & Property Managers)
- Providers letting individual rooms within properties
- Businesses with more complex letting arrangements or overflow accommodation
- New providers with less than 1 year in the sector
- Businesses operating as limited companies, partnerships, trusts or charities
- Urban operators, especially London
- Overseas providers operating as companies
- Management agents operating individually or as companies (this includes Self-Catering Agencies)

As a thank you for your time, a £40 gift card will be provided to anyone who is invited and completes the testing of the service. The voucher can be redeemed across a wide range of retailers.

We know many of you are already battling a tsunami of change across tax, fire regulations, and registration proposals. That is exactly why it is vital the sector engages now.

If you are willing to help, email support@pascuk.co.uk with the subject line "Testing" and the category which best describes you.

Now is the time to make sure the voice of professional self-catering operators is heard!

PASC UK WEBINAR PROGRAME FOR 2026

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.

We will shortly be announcing some more Webinars!

PASC UK ON THE ROAD AND IMPORTANT MEETINGS AHEAD

PASC UK will be present at the following events:

- 3 June. Visit England Awards. Bristol
- 9/10 June. Scale Brighton
- 17 June. Tourism Alliance AGM. London
- 5 September. Reform Conference
- 19 September. Liberal Democrats Conference
- 22 September. Tourism Alliance Council Meeting
- 27 September. Labour Conference
- 4 October. Conservative Party Conference
- 11 October. Premier Cottages Conference
- 24 October. Scale Barcelona
- 29 October Visit Wales Awards

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:

- Single cottage £90 plus VAT
- 2 – 4 Units £150 plus VAT
- 5 – 10 Units £235 plus VAT
- 11 + Units £335 plus VAT

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

Alistair Handyside MBE
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