

Professional Association of Self-Caterers UK

OPENING GUIDELINES NEWSLETTER

27 June 2020

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WEEKLY NEWSLETTER GUIDELINES

PASC UK makes the weekly COVID-19 newsletter freely available to anyone in British self-catering. This newsletter now goes out to over 50,000 businesses and over 55,000 have downloaded the Protocols. This is a massive increase in circulation and PASC UK has very limited staff resources. The following guidelines will therefore need to apply.

- Paid members will receive telephone support
- Paid members will receive priority email support
- Guest newsletter subscriptions will receive email support where possible, subjects that are commonly asked will be answered in the weekly newsletter
- Anyone passing on information taken from this newsletter must credit PASC UK with a link to the website www.pascuk.co.uk

We are having to do this as we are still averaging 300+ emails and over 50 calls a day, seven days a week. Most questions relate to the information provided in the newsletters, **so please read the newsletter**, and check the links out before calling and emailing.

CHANGES TO INFORMATION BETWEEN NEWSLETTERS

Some changes are happening so quickly that they do not fit in to sending Newsletters once a week. This one has been brought forward to try and answer your questions in a timely fashion. Between newsletters the best thing to do is to follow PASC UK on Facebook and Twitter. I must have answered hundreds of calls and emails about subjects that had answers on these channels. If you only follow one, follow Facebook as there is not a character limit in that platform 😊

Please follow PASC on Twitter @PascUK
Please on Facebook @pascukltd

KEY ANNOUNCEMENTS REGARDING OPENING GUIDELINES

The key elements of this week's announcement are:

- Social distancing will be reduced from 2m to "1m+" on 4th July – 1m+ where 2m is not possible and providing that mitigated actions are taken to reduce risks
- Social distancing legislation is being replaced by guidance
- [2 households of any number of people are able to meet at the same time either indoors or outdoors provided that the two households maintain social distancing](#)
- Where people of more than 2 households meet, this is still limited to 6 people and must be outside
- Restaurants and pubs will be able to open on 4th July for seated customers only. All customers will have to provide personal details so they can be traced if necessary
- [Self-contained accommodation can open on 4th July. Accommodation with shared facilities can open provided that there are appropriate cleaning regimes in place for shared facilities.](#)
- Tourism Attractions will also be able to open on 4th July including museums, galleries, theme parks, cinemas and theatres without a live show, outdoor gyms and arcades, libraries, social clubs and community centres
- Indoors facilities and venues such as nightclubs, spas, indoor gyms, pools and water parks must remain closed

TOP QUESTIONS ARISING FROM THESE GUIDELINES

Key point: These are Guidelines NOT Law and many are seeing this as an opportunity to trade normally, Cottages.com and AirBnB to name names. No one is really likely to get prosecuted for breaching them. So, what's the problem if it's not law?

The problem is insurance. If you are operating outside the Guidelines and you need to make an insurance claim then the insurers are within their rights to refuse cover. This won't affect the agents gleefully selling properties without checking, as insurance is down to the owners.

Examples, you have a large holiday house sleeps twenty, just as ours does, and you allow a party of ten couples from different households to stay. A problem occurs, may not be related to the guests

themselves, so perhaps an electrical fault fire, and you claim on the insurance. Because you have broken the guidelines the insurers will have grounds to refuse cover. So, think very carefully about just grabbing the bookings and read on below about ways you may be able to mitigate this.

1/ What is a household?

This is the nub of the problem. There is no written definition, but it is going to look something like a group of people, not necessarily a family, who live together in a single dwelling. A household also includes all those living together in a single dwelling and anyone in their social bubble which is a single adult who can have children up to the age of 18.

The household could be someone living alone, so a household of one person, or a group of twelve students sharing a house or two families one of which is a single parent. So, as a rule it's utter tosh.

To make it worse, we can't take a booking of 24 people made up by 12 couples. A hotel can take 12 room bookings.

2/ What are shared facilities?

In our context, shared facilities will primarily mean swimming pools, both indoor and outdoor, and play areas. (Problem being that it could also include a shared games room, shared TV lounge, shared BBQ facilities – it is really unclear, you will need to Risk Assess every element that you want to consider opening).

Proceed with Caution with opening these facilities, properly Risk Assess and consider insurance implications if you breach Guidelines.

Swimming Pools

"For small pools where the swim session will be pre-booked for the use of a single household or linked households holidaying together, then providing, they do not use any changing rooms or shared toilets (i.e. change and shower in their accommodation) - then this is permissible with addition cleaning of high touch points such as access doors/key pads and is identified in a Covid risk assessment".

"For larger pools where the swim sessions will be pre-booked for guests only, then you will need to use the Swim England guidance to limit the number of group/people in the pool and ensure you can fully comply with the Swim England guidance on size of pool and number of swimmers etc. (It says pools should be closed but this refers to Public Pools). They should not be able to use any changing rooms or shared toilets (i.e. change and shower in their accommodation) - then this is permissible with addition cleaning of high touch points such as access doors/keypads identified in a Covid Risk Assessment along with management of numbers to ensure compliance at all times".

This should give most self-caterers the ability to safely operate their pools.

<https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/pool-return-guidance-documents/> This link is provided so you can see the limits of how many people should be in a pool at any one time. This is not about opening pools.

Play areas

Public play areas are allowed to reopen on the 4th July. Play areas come under shared facilities. This is the guidance from the BHHPA. British Holiday Homes and Parks Association

OUTDOOR PLAY AREAS AND OUTDOOR GYM EQUIPMENT

CONSIDERATIONS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
Preparing to reopen a play area	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• hand sanitiser stations at child-friendly height (adult height for outdoor adult gym equipment) could be installed at entrance(s) and exit(s) to the play area• clear signage should explain:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ parents are responsible for supervising their children including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ their hygiene routines (that hands are sanitised on entry to and exit from the play area)▪ to ensure they observe social distance○ parents should not permit children to enter the play area unaccompanied, or when it is already occupied such that social distancing cannot be observed○ how parents should report any contamination concerns to the parks' nominated contact [names and phone numbers]• availability of sanitiser should be regularly checked and topped up

What to do if groups are oversized?

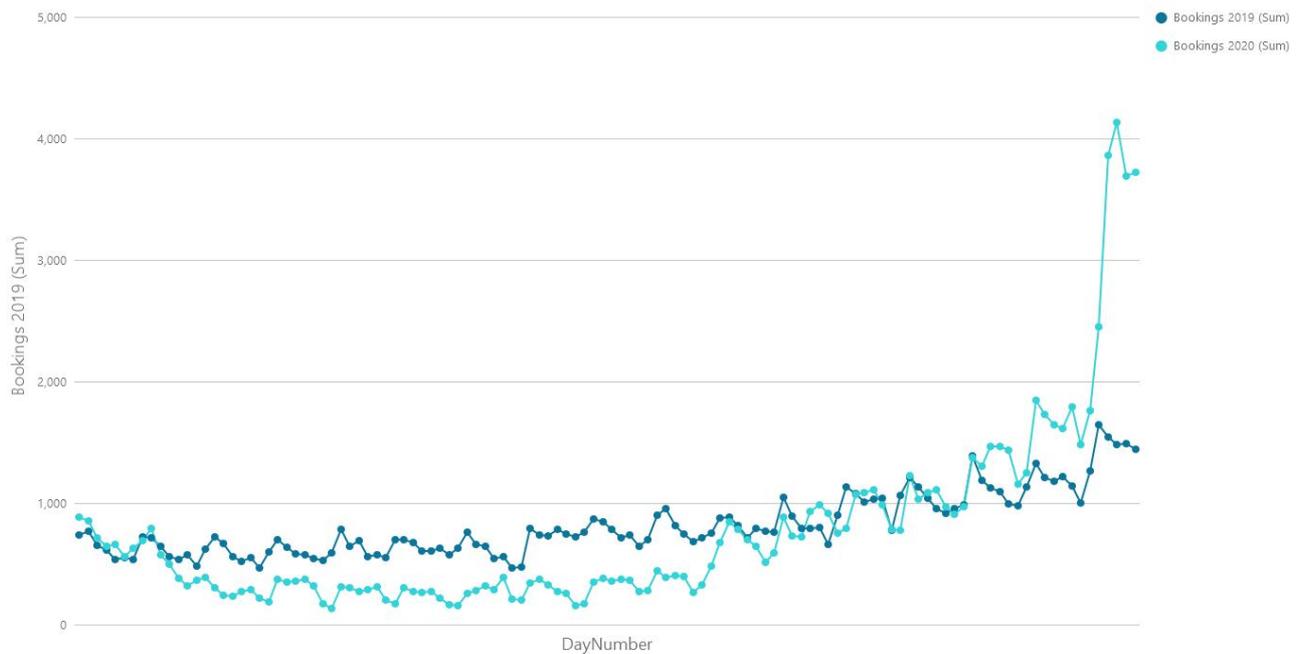
Currently the booking levels are at their highest ever recorded for self-catering. Post the Prime ministers announcement that England could holiday from the 4th July, and that this was limited to two households there was huge consternation amongst owners with larger properties, although it has also affected cottages of all sizes.

At our business, we promptly had three large July bookings cancel, they were of course, cancelling under Government guidelines as only two households can holiday together. July was as good as wiped out.

We got onto our marketing channels and within 24 hours had rebooked two of the three, at a higher price than the cancellation to customers that had not met the two-household rule. We are getting numerous enquiries even as I write this newsletter for the remaining July vacancies. The massive spike in enquiries and bookings is reported everywhere, most saying highest recorded level, ever. Have confidence.

Chart showing SuperControl bookings since PM announcement. We believe that this will sustain for some time.

Bookings 2019 (Sum), Bookings 2020 (Sum) by DayNumber



Our advice is to not risk your property, use the unprecedented demand to refill with parties that come within the guidelines.

Looking into August, no-one knows for sure, but best guess is that the two-household limit will go, it's a rubbish rule, and will be changed. Every lobby group we work with thinks it's a really stupid criteria, so that is what the Government is going to hear, time after time.

Best practice? Sort your July bookings to be within the guidelines and leave the August booking alone for now.

How?

Use your marketing channels to advertise for two household bookings. You most likely will not have to discount, properties are in short supply and demand will outstrip it. Late offers on your website and on websites you partner with will get seen by more people at any time before. Email your previous loyal customers, contact your local DMO (Destination Marketing Organisation) and see if they can post up an offer. For those of you active on social media, this is a huge opportunity as so many are looking at the moment, best photos, clearest text, make yourself easy to contact.

Pricing?

Only good old Sykes are going down the discount route, what a mess that fine company has become? Hold your prices, even increase your prices, demand outstrips supply. A situation like this does not last or come around very often. Many are not opening up in July. This is your chance to get some money back in your accounts after the bleak lockdown.

GUESTS DISPLAYING SIGNS OF COVID AT YOUR PREMISES

What can we say? The mega effort by so many of you getting your MP's to write to the Tourism Minister did the trick. We have much revised and much more workable guidelines from the Government. Well done and thanks from every one to those that contributed to this lobbying.

The new guidelines look like this. Definitely for England and Scotland and 99% will be for Wales too. Just waiting formal publication of UK Hospitality Wales version.

Updated guidance for accommodation providers if a guest displays symptoms of COVID-19

If a guest is displaying [signs of the Covid-19](#) virus while staying in overnight accommodation for a permitted reason, they should inform the accommodation provider, immediately self-isolate where they are to minimise any risk of transmission, and request a test. If they are confirmed to have Covid-19, they should return home if they reasonably can. If a guest cannot reasonably return home (for example because they are not well enough to travel or do not have the means to arrange transport), their circumstances should be discussed with an appropriate health care professional and, if necessary, the local authority. Guests should follow [government guidance](#) on dealing with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

When informing guest about this, it would be well worth adding that should they end up staying they will be liable to pay for all affected bookings as a result of their extended stay. (That covers other cancellations where other guests leave because of the presence of a COVID sufferer onsite).

HOW BEST TO COMMUNICATE ALL THESE CHANGES TO YOUR GUESTS?

It is going to be challenging to get our guests to translate between a headline in the Daily Mail saying we can all go on holiday, and the actual guidelines that we have tried to explain above. They will hear Guidance not law and will expect much to be the same. Those of us worried about running a legitimate business and keeping our insurance cover in place, might think about a sort of Guest Charter.

At our business we are going to do this, straight after signing off this newsletter. The objective of which is to try to reset the balance between host and guest and to clearly define responsibilities post opening up.

This is our suggestion:

Guest Charter

What we are doing to ensure that you have a great and most importantly safe stay at XXXXXX

Firstly, we are ensuring that the property xxxx that you have booked will be cleaned and sanitised to the Covid Ready Guidelines from PASC UK, the AA and Visit England. We have also undertaken the Gold Standard certification scheme, called 'Safe, Clean and Legal' from Quality in Tourism. We have produced a Risk Assessment that covers all aspects of our business and this can be seen on demand, and is also available on our website at www.lovelyscoopcottages.co.uk/riskassessment



We will be gathering all the information we can about where you can go out to eat, as booking in advance will be critical, as there will be limited capacity at Restaurants and Pubs and many Take-Aways need advance orders to allocate collection slots. This will be sent to you in regular updates prior to your arrival as more businesses open up. We will include attractions too.

We are preparing the shared facilities for your use. The main one is of course the heated outdoor swimming pool. This will be operated on the following basis. Each cottage will have two 90-minute slots per day, on a

rotating basis. There is no reason at all that you cannot swap slots with other guests in a socially distanced way. We will remove the pool furniture, and the changing room will be closed. The cover will be left off the pool and you will not be asked to replace it. We will turn up the heating to compensate. The pool ph and chlorine levels will be maintained daily. To enter the pool, you access through a security gate. There will be a sanitiser station by the gate.

The Games room will be closed. When there is fine weather we will take the Table-Tennis table outside and provide a cleaning station for you to wipe the table before and after use. We ask you to bring your own table tennis bats and balls.

The Common Play areas.

The games area and 52 acres of Devon countryside will still be available for you to roam and play freely, in a socially distanced way.

We would ask that you minimise asking us to enter the building during your stay. If, for example, a dishwasher doesn't work, we can try and sort it out over the phone in the first instance.

Our contact numbers are, Alistair 07771 0000000 and Lorna 07772 0000000.

We will pretty much always be around, in the farmhouse at the top of the courtyard. The front door is a stable door, if we are in this will be open at the top, so if you need us just call and we'll be there to answer your questions.

On arrival, the cottages will be open and ready for you and the cleaned keys will be in the cottage. Please try not to arrive before 1600 hours so that we can complete the enhanced cleaning under the cleaning protocols above.

What we are asking you to do to help us ensure that you have a safe and enjoyable holiday.

We ask that you socially distance from other guests please, especially relevant with small children.

Please follow the pool guidelines, vacate your slot in good time ready for the next session.

Be rigorous in following social distancing when out in public.

If you show any signs of having the virus then you must immediately go and get tested by contacting <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-an-antigen-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/>

The result must be shown to us. If positive, you will need to leave if any Member of your party can drive you. If that is not possible and you have to self-isolate here, then you will be have to pay for all bookings that have to be cancelled as a result.

We will need you to provide, names, telephone numbers and email addresses of everyone in the party, so that we can pass this onto the NHS if it is required. This information will not be used for any other purpose. This must be provided at the point of arrival or before.

We have HMG guidelines that only two households (which can include a bubble) can holiday together in July. We cannot police this and ask therefore that you risk assess your own party and decide for yourself if your group is appropriate.

Remember the best way to stay safe is to regularly wash hands thoroughly.

Thank you and look forward to welcoming you at XXXXXXX

VE GOOD TO GO UPDATE

The Visit England Good to Go Certification.

This went live on Thursday morning. It's simple to do, you don't need anything to upload, but it is worthwhile having your risk assessment to hand to check you have included everything that you are asked is included in it.

If you click that you are a PASC UK Member at the outset, you have less questions to answer, the downside being that it may take a few hours to get the certificate, not more than 24 hours. If don't click any Membership box at the beginning, you have many more questions to answer and then you get the certificate at the end. Your call...

Click here to start the process... <https://goodtogo.visitbritain.com/home>

AA COVID CONFIDENT

The AA scheme has been live for almost a week now and is more robust in that it asks to see the key documents. You need to have your Risk Assessment Ready to upload.

Just to make sure you are all prepped up to be in the first awards announced, can you please make sure you have ready and easily to hand...

1. A photograph for your entry
2. A copy of your risk assessment (not for publication)
3. A copy of your bespoke measures / cleaning protocols (not for publication)
4. Your staff training documentation (not for publication)
5. A list of any other measures that you have taken that you want published on your entry for the consumer to see

<https://www.ratedtrips.com/aa-covid-confident>

WHERE CAN YOU FIND ALL THE OFFICIAL STUFF?

Good advice from Kurt at the Tourism Alliance. Always check the links to the following rather than printed off copies. We know it's a pain, but lots changes all the time.....

- **Use Links – Not Downloaded Guidance and Protocols**
With businesses busy putting together their management systems to make sure that they operate in a Covid Safe manner from 4th July, it important to remember that the Government's guidance will invariably be updated as our knowledge of the disease increases and as Government policy changes. Businesses must keep checking that they are using the latest version of the guidance rather than simply relying on a downloaded copy which could soon be out of date.

To ensure that you always have the most up-to-date version, it pays to bookmark the appropriate links and regularly check for updates.

Visitor Economy

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/the-visitor-economy>

Hotels and other guest accommodate

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/hotels-and-other-guest-accommodation>

UKHospitality Protocols

<https://www.ukhospitality.org.uk/page/coronavirus>

Self-Catering Protocols

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

WHAT YOU CAN AND CANNOT DO AFTER 4TH JULY

The Government has produced Guidance and an FAQ for the public on what they can and can't do after 4th July.

What you can do is:

- you can meet in groups of up to two households (your [support bubble](#) counts as one household) in any location - public or private, indoors or outdoors. You do not always have to meet with the same household - you can meet with different households at different times. However, it remains the case - even inside someone's home - that you should socially distance from anyone not in your household or bubble. This change also does not affect the support you receive from your carers
- when you are outside you can continue to meet in groups of up to six people from different households, following social distancing guidelines
- additional businesses and venues, including restaurants, pubs, cinemas, visitor attractions, hotels, and campsites will be able to open - but we will continue to keep closed certain premises where the risks of transmission may be higher
- other public places, such as libraries, community centres, places of worship, outdoor playgrounds and outdoor gyms will be able to open
- stay overnight away from your home with your own household or support bubble, or with members of one other household
- It will be against the law to gather in groups larger than 30 people, except for a limited set of circumstances to be set out in law and unless all members of the group are exclusively from two households

Conversely, you should not:

- gather indoors in groups of more than two households (your support bubble counts as one household) - this includes when dining out or going to the pub
- gather outdoors in a group of more than six people from different households; gatherings larger than 6 should only take place if everyone is from just two households
- interact socially with anyone outside the group you are attending a place with, even if you see other people you know, for example, in a restaurant, community centre or place of worship
- hold or attend celebrations (such as parties) where it is difficult to maintain social distancing
- stay overnight away from your home with members of more than one other household (your support bubble counts as one household)

Gatherings of more than 30 people will be prohibited, apart from some limited circumstances to be set out in law.

Here is the Guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing-after-4-july>

And here is the FAQ

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do-after-4-july>

VISITING SECOND HOMES

I'm afraid we have got nowhere with this in England. HMG knows that if they give second home owners the right to visit it will be massively abused, and 50,000 holiday cottages will be occupied by the owner's families and their mates, which will wind up the pitchfork elements in local communities, who are still coming to terms with tourists coming back. Bear in mind an MP's inbox is equally full with businesses wanting to open, and locals want them to stay away. You can visit to carry out maintenance.

In Scotland, you may visit and carry out maintenance.

In Wales, we await further news.

RE-OPENING DATES BROUGHT FORWARD IN SCOTLAND

Scotland -Phase 2 and early Phase 3

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has [announced indicative dates](#) for moving through the remainder of Phase 2 and early Phase 3, on the condition that health and safety criteria are met. The amended timeline is as follows:

- **29 June** – Indoor (non-office) workplaces including factories, warehouses, labs and research facilities may reopen with relevant guidance implemented.
- **3 July** – Travel distance restriction is relaxed, permitting people to travel more than 5 miles from home. Visits to self-catering accommodations and second homes (without shared facilities) are permitted.
- **6 July** – Outdoor hospitality may reopen, subject to physical distancing rules and public health advice.
- **15 July** – All holiday accommodation, indoor hospitality, and tourist attractions including museums, galleries, cinemas, monuments and libraries may open in line with relevant guidance.

IMPORTANT SURVEY. ENGLAND AND WALES ONLY PLEASE

We are gathering data to see how effective Government support has been through this crisis. We also need an estimate of the damage done to your businesses to assist us with our lobbying. Please if you are in England or Wales, the ASSC (Association of Scotland's Self-Caterers) have already gathered this information, take 3 minutes to give us the data to lobby on your behalf for more support.

The survey link is here: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SGBFNFN>

NEW PASC UK MEMBERS LOGO



We are delighted to announce that we have a PASC UK Members logo. Many of you have been asking for this. Please only display if you are a fully paid up Member. You can get a copy by sending an email to admin@pascuk.co.uk Thanks.

WHAT CAN BE FOUND ON THE WEBSITE

Details of the following can be found on the website at:

<https://www.pascuk.co.uk/covid-19>

Under Government Information and Support (Downloadable pdf)

- Job Retention Scheme
- Extended Furlough
- Who can come and Stay?
- Financial Section
- Bounce Back loans
- Top Up Local Grants Scheme
- Childcare Support
- Sick Pay Schemes
- Child Care Schemes
- Update on FHL and Directors Dividends
- SEISS Self Employed Income Support Scheme
- Job Retention Scheme
- Quarantine Update
- Business Rate Grants
- Wales Resilience Fund
- Wales Business Rates and Discretionary Fund
- Insurance Section
- Scotland and Wales Updates
- Changes to Fire Regs

Under General information (Downloadable pdf)

- Key Guest question after lockdown
- Legionella The Big Risk
- Notes on Guest Questions as Lockdown extends
- Self-Catering Guests refunds
- Chargebacks
- Free Website advertising offer from Petrol Heads
- Samples of what to say to guests cancelling
- Problems with Newsletters
- CMA are back and why?
- Business interruption and Travel Insurance Update
- A week in the life of PASC
- And much more.....

SUPPORTING PASC UK

PASC UK only survives through the subscriptions paid by Members. Like all Associations of its kind, it exists on fumes. A little while ago PASC UK received a generous donation from a current Member, for which we are truly grateful and means that we can battle on. We would also like to welcome new Members, and thank them for joining to.

Please consider joining PASC UK formally, we will have an almighty battle with HMG as we go through the extended lockdown and beyond. You can join here:

<https://www.pascuk.co.uk/copy-of-become-a-member-1>

ABOUT PASC UK

PASC UK was formed three years ago. It had three principle objectives at that time.

1/ Reduce Business Rates for self-catering

2 Lobby for a 'level playing field', where all accommodation providers had to operate under the same rules, (think the 350,000 AirBnB properties). So that all have the same proportionate costs and regulations to operate under.

3/ Recover the right to Inheritance Tax Relief for legitimate business operating under FHL (Furnished Holiday Lettings rules).

And more.... See www.pascuk.co.uk

In January 2019, PASC UK succeeded in negotiating a reduction in Business Rates of up to 35% for most self-caterers in England and Wales. Despite a tortuous year with getting the Valuation Office to apply the new system, in January 2020 they switched the system to manual for Self-Caterers, (SCAT-131) and we now hear daily of Members getting great reductions and refunds. Guides on how to Check your Business Rates are available to Members.

After years of lobbying, giving evidence to all Party Parliamentary Groups and working with all the other major accommodation associations in the UK, we had finally got HMG to agree to a round-table on how to regulate the short-term accommodation sector. Our approach has been one of keeping the sector 'safe and legal'. This meeting has been delayed by the COVID-19 outbreak but will be high on the agenda post the virus restrictions being lifted.

We were also making good progress in our representations to HMG about the reinstatement of Inheritance Tax Relief to FHL businesses provided they complied with a basic business criteria. This is also on hold whilst we all deal with the COVID-19 challenge, but will be picked up as soon as practicable.

And much more....

PASC UK SOCIAL MEDIA

Please follow PASC on Twitter @PascUK

Please on Facebook @pascukltd

The more of you that do, then the more effective we can be. Please it only takes a second, and if everyone who received this free newsletter did so, we would have 12,000 followers and a much louder voice. Thanks.

Wishing each and every one of you all the best during these trying times, and please Stay Safe.

Best regards

Alistair Handyside MBE

Executive Chair

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DISCLAIMER

We are in completely uncharted territory here, and any suggestions that we make are merely that and you should carefully consider your own business policies, and if necessary consult with your Professional Advisors. PASC is your lobbying Association, not a legal service. In addition, please be very wary of some of the advice given on internet communities, blogs and social media. There appear to be thousands of experts out there where my understanding is that there are very few.

To that end, any information you get from any source you must double check. I will always try and put the actual link to the information in the newsletters so that you can read and assess yourselves. These are unprecedented times, please take exceptional care.