



Professional Association of Self-Caterers UK

COVID GUIDELINES NEWSLETTER

8 January 2021

Issue 40

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WEEKLY NEWSLETTER GUIDELINES

The following guidelines need to apply as PASC UK has limited resources.

- Paid members will receive telephone support
- Paid members will receive priority email support
- Free 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

Since Lockdown 1 came into effect we have dealt with over 66,000 emails, and thousands of calls during the crisis and we thank you all for your patience during these unprecedented times.

However, it still remains the case that the vast majority of emails and calls relate to the information provided in the newsletters and the updates on Facebook, so please read the newsletter and follow on Facebook, and check the links out before calling and emailing. We are really stretched as this crisis continues. Thanks for your co-operation.

PASC UK SOCIAL MEDIA

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

It is really important to follow PASC UK on Facebook and Twitter. This is not a vanity project, this is the quickest way to get news to you during the week, which is then consolidated in the newsletter that is written on Friday.

Even though we are into the tenth month of this terrible crisis new developments are happening daily, and sometimes hourly.

It is also true to say that, the more of you that do follow us on Social Media, 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 thousands of followers and a much louder voice. Thanks.

COMMENTARY

The first newsletter of 2021 finds all of us in lockdown, with a high possibility that this will continue beyond February and into March. The Government and the tourism sector are now pinning pretty much everything on a combination of the vaccine roll-out and warmer weather in the Spring to see a return to trading. This is issue 40 of Covid newsletters, it now seems certain that we will reach issue 52.

We have not been idle over the break and have planned and set out a new PASC UK Website, which should be ready in February, this will serve Members better and be a much better resource than the old one, with a private members area.

We have also joined as full Member to both UK Hospitality and to the Wales Tourism Alliance as we look to spread the lobbying reach to further benefit the self-catering sector.

There is also a survey for you to fill in if you are in the South West of England. Please fill this in, it really does make our job of lobbying easier to have up to date hard data at our fingertip's, thanks 😊

This all represents a substantial financial commitment and we would ask that if you have not joined yet, please do so now. An Association like PASC UK is entirely dependent upon your support to make things happen, details of how to join are lower down in this newsletter.

However, in the world of lobbying, it is always two steps forward and one step back. We have just heard that our brilliant contact at DCMS (the Government department where Tourism sits) Stephen Darke, Head of Tourism is moving departments next Friday. Stephen has been our key contact for nearly four years, and really does understand the issues. Any replacement will require a huge amount of education into the nuances of our sector. For now, though, our thanks go to Stephen.

In conversation with Government departments it appears that there is a much clearer understanding that the Tiers REALLY don't work for hospitality. We know from our side that being in T1 or T2 when most of the country is in T3 or T4 means either zero business or the wrong kind of business, with guests trying to come from areas from which they should not travel. Secondly, this means that those T1 and T2 businesses cannot claim grant support, despite being heavily affected by the restrictions.

This is not to say that as we emerge from Lockdown that we will do it evenly, but that there is considerable support for this to happen because of the impacts described, and yes, it even has a name, it's called 'Tier Tourism', when people pop over the border from a T3 to go to dinner in a T2 pub or restaurant. Fingers crossed sense prevails.

Whilst we welcome the support recently announced, it is still pitiful and we will continue to lobby for more, particularly for those that have been excluded from support so far.

We have also been active in the media, trying to help boost bookings from Easter onwards, see below

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/dec/27/the-chateauxs-shut-will-a-yurt-do-staycations-keep-millions-at-home>

<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2021/jan/04/wed-rather-hit-the-virus-hard-now-than-lose-easter-say-uk-tourism-chiefs>

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/01/07/travel-news-covid-test-holidays-flights-uk-restrictions-ban/>

Whilst these are grim times, we are beginning to see the chance of a road map back to trading. We cannot wait to be writing in Newsletters 45 onwards about how restrictions might be lifted. We will work flat out for that.

SURVEY TO AID GOVERNMENT LOBBYING

If you are in Isles of Scilly, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset or Somerset can we please urge you to fill in this survey. This will help shape the ask for continuing support for the sector from Government.

<https://survey.sogosurvey.com/r/UYeOP5>

The more of you that take the time to fill this in mean that we can properly reflect the support that is needed by illustrating the impact that the crisis has had on all our businesses. Please, please take the time to fill it in if you are in the SW of England.

LOCKDOWNS

All of the UK is in Lockdown and self-catering throughout the UK is closed. The earliest that we can realistically expect notification of any change will be in February, and our view is the very earliest we can hope to come out of meaningful Lockdown is during March and most likely a late announcement about Easter opening. It's going to be a long winter.

WHO CAN STAY?

The Guidance in England says...

Staying Away from Home:

- You cannot leave your home or the place where you are living for holidays or overnight stays unless you have a reasonable excuse for doing so. This means that holidays in the UK and abroad are not allowed. This includes staying in a second home or caravan, if that is not your primary residence. This also includes staying with anyone who you don't live with unless they're in your support bubble.

However, the list of permitted stays still remains:

For self-catering accommodation

The restrictions for accommodation businesses in Lockdown are that all accommodation has to close but is able to provide accommodation to a person who:

- needs the accommodation for work
- is unable to return to their main residence
- uses that accommodation as their main residence
- needs accommodation for the purposes of a house move
- needs accommodation to attend a funeral or following a bereavement of a close family member or friend
- needs accommodation to attend a commemorative event to celebrate the life of a person who has died
- needs accommodation to attend a medical appointment, or to receive treatment
- is a carer of a vulnerable person or a person who has a disability and needs respite
- is isolating themselves from others as required by law
- is an elite athlete or the coach of an elite athlete and needs accommodation for the purposes of training or competition or, where an elite athlete is a child, their parent
- needs accommodation to visit a person who is dying
- is homeless or seeking refuge

The key question that we are getting is can we accept bookings from someone who wants to book a property, so that they can work from it? For example, bring their PC and relocate to a cottage overlooking the sea. This would not be regarded as a legitimate work reason under the guidance and would most likely be seen as you taking an illegal booking with all the impacts that can have.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home>

CAN YOU VISIT YOUR PROPERTY?

(England, Scotland and Wales).

Because you can travel for work and stay for work reasons it is possible to visit your property to carry out maintenance. Owners who are clearly only at the property to do essential maintenance should be OK and able to explain to Councils and curtain twitchers why they are there. However, basking outside in the Winter Sun having a barbeque with the Family is not going to work 😊

It may be worth arming yourself with a copy of your relevant insurance policy clause, just in case (most holiday cottage insurance requires regular inspection of the premises).

One complication for owners of properties in Scotland who live in England or vice versa, is that you should not enter or leave Scotland....

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tier-4-stay-at-home#going-to-work>

WHAT ADDITIONAL SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE IN ENGLAND?

The Chancellor announced a one-off top-up grants for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses who are on the Business Rates list.

- £4,000 for businesses with a rateable value of £15,000 or under
- £6,000 for businesses with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000
- £9,000 for businesses with a rateable value of over £51,000

There will be funds available for Businesses not on the Business Rates list through another £594 million discretionary fund. This fund is likely to be similar to the recent Additional Restrictions Grants (ARG) and the eligibility criteria will beset by your local Council.

These Grants are in addition to the LRSB or ARG support featured below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/46-billion-in-new-lockdown-grants-to-support-businesses-and-protect-jobs>

WHAT ADDITIONAL SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE IN SCOTLAND?

At the same time the Chancellor announced that Scotland would receive £375 million in support for the same sector. Sadly, this has become embroiled in a row about whether it is extra money or not and no details of how this might get to businesses were available at time of writing. The Scottish Government has been slow with announcing these schemes.

WHAT ADDITIONAL SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE IN WALES?

At the same time the Chancellor announced that Wales would receive £227 million in support for the same sector. No details of how this might get to businesses was available at time of writing.

NEW PASC UK WEBSITE

PASC UK has commissioned a new website and work has already commenced on this. The current one has taken a beating during 2021 and some of you, with high levels of security, are finding downloads difficult. This will be resolved by the new website.

If you cannot download anything, just drop us an email in the interim, saying what you need, and we will email it to you. Send to chair@pascuk.co.uk

There will be changes made, to reflect what PASC UK is in 2021, so there will be a Members only area so that we can provide additional value to those that pay Membership fees. We anticipate the launch being in February.

THE NEXT PASC UK WEBINARS

We have two Webinars planned for January.

Option 1: On Cancellation Policies, which will feature a few short presentations on the key issues, followed by a Q&A from you.

Option 2: On “Changing Agents or Going the Direct? Pros and Cons. This will feature a reputable agent and the PASC UK Chair highlighting pros and cons of both models, followed by a Q&A from you.

You can indicate your preference by sending an email to chair@pascuk.co.uk with Option 1 or Option 2 in the subject line, or you can make a comment on the Facebook post on <https://www.facebook.com/pascukltd>

JOINING WALES TOURISM ALLIANCE

We have enjoyed a long relationship with the team at the Wales Tourism Alliance (WTA) and as of the 1st January 2021 we have been accepted as a full Member.

The WTA helped contribute to the Cleaning protocols in the summer and collaboration with them goes back years, so we are delighted to be an official Member of the team, and this will boost our lobbying for Members in Wales.

FURTHER NEWS FOR WELSH MEMBERS

On Thursday next week PASC UK has been invited by the Wales Tourism Alliance (WTA) to join a call with senior Government Minister including the First minister Mark Drakeford. This call is for 30 minutes and there will be about 15 people on the zoom. So, time for lobbying will be short and we will have to have our elevator pitch ready and clear.

To that end, could those of you in Wales please send an email to chair@pascuk.co.uk with Wales in the subject line with your top 3 asks from the Government in Wales.

Feedback this week suggested that these might be the key issues, but we will be led by your feedback.

- No grants for self-caterers on Council Tax, who have been effectively excluded
- Grants to self-caterers that pay Business rates limited by 50% income rule, or by local criteria making them ineligible
- An extension to the 5% VAT rate until at least 31 December 2021
- An extension to the Business Rates Holiday until March 2022

KATE NICHOLLS OBE

We are delighted to pass on the news that Kate was awarded an OBE in the New Year's Honours List for all her hard work and leadership of the industry through the Coronavirus outbreak this year which, I'm sure everyone will agree, is very much deserved.

JOINING UK HOSPITALITY

Our relationship with UK Hospitality (UKH) has been a long one, ever since the newly formed UKH came into being. UKH is headed up by Kate Nicholls OBE who is also the chair of the Tourism Alliance, of which PASC UK have always been a Member and I am an elected Board Member.

We have always wanted to join UKH as a full Member, however the fees are not inexpensive for an organisation our size. Before Christmas we negotiated being able to pay in quarterly instalments and are now a full Member of UKH.

We believe that this will broaden the support and lobbying for the self-catering sector and we look forward to working with them even more closely during the coming critical months.

INSURANCE AND COVID

Those of us that have been wrestling with renewed T's and C's over the Christmas period may be interested to know what insurances there are out there that guests can buy to protect their holiday.

This is an incredibly fluid situation at the moment. On the Which? Website subscribers can see which policies cover which aspect of Covid cover a policy may cover. For example, Lockdowns, catching Covid, self-isolation etc.

Five policies offered Lockdown cover in October, and that is what shows on the Which? List.

When contacted none of these companies currently cover Lockdown or Restrictions on Travel because of Covid cover. Either they've been reading the CMA Ruling or there are just too many lockdowns. The effect is the same.

Many that said that they covered self-isolation, now they don't.

Many of us will want to try to encourage our guests to take out insurance, (we cannot make it a condition of booking, but we can strongly recommend).

It may still though be the case that the insurance policy does not cover much at all, and in some cases makes it entirely clear, that in the event of travel restrictions for instance, the guest contacts us for a refund. See from Axa below

I have a UK holiday booked, what will I be covered for? ^

Customers must check their local restrictions carefully, as travelling either in the UK or overseas while UK Government or Devolved Government restrictions are in place could invalidate your policy. Please see specific guidance for [England](#), [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#).

If your accommodation is in an area of the UK which the UK Government or a Devolved Government have imposed stricter restrictions (such as tier 4), then the accommodation owner or booking agent must provide a refund. If you have any other unrecoverable costs, please contact our [claims team](#).

If the accommodation is an area where travel is allowed, however you are in a restricted area, you should first contact the accommodation provider to postpone your trip or arrange a refund. If you paid by credit card contact the card issuer or PayPal for advice on how to claim a refund, if you can't obtain a refund from any other source then please [register a claim](#) with us.

Depending on where you live, you may not be restricted from travelling outside of your home, therefore your trip may be able to go ahead. However, please check the current restrictions in your local area before travelling.

Straight back into chargeback territory. Again from Axa below, if you cannot travel for medical reasons it's back onto us. So, all policies need checking out before even suggesting to guests. Bear in mind we cannot recommend, just give examples of what might be available.

I am not to travel due to my medical conditions. What should I do? ^

You should first ask your airline or travel provider to postpone your trip or arrange a refund. Once you have done this please [log your claim online](#) if you are a Lloyds, Halifax or AXA Direct customer, or contact our [customer service team](#) for any unrecovered costs subject to standard terms and conditions.

This is the kind of advice on the Which? Website.....

Your credit card provider

If you can, pay for your holiday with a credit card.

If you pay with a credit card for services costing more than £100 and less than £30,000 that aren't provided as advertised, you can claim the money back from your card supplier if the seller (i.e the holiday company) won't refund you.

■ Find out more - [Section 75](#)

Your bank

Banks have similar schemes to help you recover money for services that haven't been fulfilled as paid for. These are known as 'chargeback'.

Chargeback can be used to recover debit and prepaid card payments, as well as credit card payments below £100.

Banks aren't legally bound to do this in the same way credit card providers are under Section 75, so you should always pay for amounts over £100 with a credit card if possible.

In the Draft Cancellations Policies Paper, we mentioned J P Hayman, that policy now covers Covid as an illness, but not self-isolation. So, we need to update the paper.

Currently this insurance does cover self-isolation.

<https://www.coverwise.co.uk/Travel-Insurance/corona-virus.aspx>

However, you must keep checking if this is part of the route you are taking, no point in 'suggesting' a policy that does not cover what you are trying to exclude in your T's and C's.

The PASC UK view is that catching Covid, having to self-isolate, bringing a shielding member of the party on holiday are known risks that is reasonable to expect the customer to insure against, if of course they can find the insurance as long as your overall Terms and Conditions for guest cancellations are fair and reasonable.

TEST AND ENTER

We have covered before that we are working Public Health to see if schemes that would enable the testing of schoolchildren on a daily basis, or to allow us to enter care homes to visit loved ones could be tailored to work in hospitality. This work is ongoing, but the results of the lateral flow testing from Liverpool were pretty underwhelming. The accuracy was from 50-78% depending upon how well the test was carried out. This clearly is not reliable enough. We have further meetings planned in January to see what might be possible, but at least this is no longer just a scheme to open Public Sector facilities. If it can work for them, it can work for us.

We have got Covid prepped accommodation ready and waiting and must keep working hard to maintain these standards.

To give you examples have a look at these two links, one for care homes and one for schools. If they can do it in these high-risk areas imagine the possibilities? Any scheme needs to be workable for even the smallest business.

https://www.aoc.co.uk/sites/default/files/Schools_Colleges_Testing%20Handbook_FINAL%20Dec%202020.pdf?dm_i=26BG,768RQ,W9YT99,T1VZH,1

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-lateral-flow-testing-of-visitors-in-care-homes>

NEW LOCKDOWN POSTER

As mentioned in previous newsletters these posters are subject to change, so always download from the website itself.

The Posters with the rules and restrictions that apply in Lockdown and have been updated to incorporate all the new changes. As mentioned previously, these are an excellent quick reference guide for keeping both staff and customers aware of the rules in their area.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/england-lockdown-stay-at-home-posters>

ENGLAND LOCKDOWN

STAY AT HOME

THE NEW VARIANT OF CORONAVIRUS IS SPREADING FAST.
WE ALL NEED TO PLAY OUR PART TO STOP THE SPREAD.

▶ LEAVING HOME

You must not leave, or be outside of your home or garden, except for a very limited set of exemptions e.g. to shop for basic necessities, exercise, go to work if you cannot do so from home, or to escape risk of harm.

▶ MEETING OTHERS

You cannot leave your home to meet socially with anyone, except with your household or support bubble (if eligible to form one). Stay 2 metres apart from anyone not in your household or support bubble.

▶ EXERCISE

You may exercise on your own, with your household or support bubble, or with one person from another household (when on your own). Stay 2 metres apart from anyone not in your household or support bubble.

▶ BARS, PUBS AND RESTAURANTS

Hospitality closed aside from sales by takeaway (until 11pm), click-and-collect, drive-through or delivery. Alcohol cannot be purchased through takeaway or click-and-collect from hospitality venues.

▶ RETAIL

Essential shops can open. Non-essential retail must close and can only run click-and-collect and delivery.

▶ WORK AND BUSINESS

Everyone must work from home unless they are unable to do so.

▶ EDUCATION

Early years settings open. Primary and secondary schools and colleges move to remote provision except for vulnerable children and children of critical workers. Most university students to move to remote learning.

▶ LEISURE AND SPORTING FACILITIES

Closed, with limited exceptions.

▶ ACCOMMODATION

Closed, with limited exceptions.

▶ PERSONAL CARE

Closed.

▶ ENTERTAINMENT

Closed.

▶ OVERNIGHT STAYS

You must not stay overnight away from home. Limited exceptions apply e.g. to stay with your support bubble.

▶ WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS

Funerals of up to 30 people permitted. Weddings up to 6 people permitted in exceptional circumstances. Wakes and other linked ceremonial events of up to 6 permitted.

▶ PLACES OF WORSHIP

Places of worship can remain open and communal worship is permitted, but you must not mix with those outside your household or support bubble.

▶ TRAVELLING

You must stay at home. If you do leave home for a very limited set of exemptions, you should stay local in the village, town, or part of the city where you live where possible. Do not travel abroad unless an exemption applies.

▶ CLINICALLY EXTREMELY VULNERABLE

Shielding reintroduced across England. You should not travel to work, school, college or university and should limit the time you spend outside the home. You should only go out for medical appointments, exercise or if it is essential.

▶ CARE HOME VISITS

Visits can take place with arrangements such as substantial screens, visiting pods, or behind windows. Close-contact indoor visits are not allowed. No visits will be permitted in the event of an outbreak but end of life visits are permitted in all circumstances.

STAY HOME ▶ PROTECT THE NHS ▶ SAVE LIVES

For more information go to:
[gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

GRANTS UPDATE ENGLAND

We have had a huge amount of feedback about the Grant support in England.

LRSB Grants (Business Rates Properties)

It has turned into something of a postcode lottery particularly if the period you are trying to claim for was in Tier 2. If you are trying to claim for the period before Lockdown 2, then very few Councils have put self-catering on the eligibility list.

If you are trying to claim post Lockdown 2 and were still in Tier 2, many more Councils are allowing self-catering to claim, and each day we get more confirmations that this support is coming through.

If you were in Tier 3 post Lockdown 2 you really should get the grant support, we have heard of very few who are refusing grants whilst closed.

Please do get in touch if you have successes or failures, as we continue to lobby Government for a level playing field for Grant support, not the postcode Lottery we all face currently, closed by law must equal support.

Going into Lockdown.

All should get the Grant support (LRSB Closed V2) payments in lockdown, once again, it IS possible that a local council can apply its own eligibility criteria and exclude support for self-catering. Some will I'm afraid. Please let us know and we'll get on and lobby at our end to try and resolve this.

The Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) (Council Tax Properties)

This is the one for you if you are on Council Tax. We are hearing that those Councils and Billing Authorities that have opened this Grant are currently under-whelmed, so get onto your local Councils and Billing Authorities websites and check the local eligibility criteria and if possible, get a claim in.

The ARG Grant criteria are decided by local councils and Billing Authorities. As a result, many of these Grants are not open yet.

A short piece of guidance on eligibility for the ARG has been published which stated that Local councils have the freedom to determine the eligibility criteria for these grants. However, the government expects the funding to help those businesses which – while not legally forced to close – are nonetheless severely impacted by the restrictions.

This could include:

- businesses which supply the retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors
- businesses in the events sector
- business required to close but which do not pay business rates

Each local Council or Billing Authority will set the final eligibility criteria and amounts that can be claimed. As with the Discretionary Grants earlier in the crisis some will support tourism businesses better than others according to local priorities. You will have to check your local websites for information and eligibility criteria and priorities as set by Local Government.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-youre-eligible-for-the-coronavirus-additional-restrictions-grant>

THE LOCAL RESTRICTIONS SUPPORT GRANT (LRSG) FUNDING AMOUNTS

These amounts have been set by the Treasury:

- For properties with a rateable value of £15k or under, grants to be £1,334 per month, or £667 per two weeks;
- For properties with a rateable value of between £15k-£51k grants to be £2,000 per month, or £1,000 per two weeks;
- For properties with a rateable value of £51k or over grants to be £3,000 per month, or £1,500 per two weeks.

THE ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS GRANT (ARG) FUNDING AMOUNTS

Local Authorities can determine how much funding to provide to businesses from the ARG funding provided, and exactly which businesses to target.

This inevitably means that this Grant will be a Postcode Lottery as there is not enough in the fund to give all businesses a Grant. Familiarise yourself with your local scheme (check your Local Council or Billing Authority website) and get ready to apply the moment the funds open.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-restrictions-support-grants-lrsg-and-additional-restrictions-grant-arg-guidance-for-local-authorities#history>

PICRIGHT THREAT, CHECK YOUR WEBSITES

We have been contacted this week by a member who has been contacted by PicRights. Just the name probably tells most of you enough. They are trying to charge a huge sum of money for allegedly using an unlicensed photo, almost £2000 if they pay up promptly.

This is the company website <https://picrights.com/en-gb/>

This is a commentary about them.

https://medium.com/@shannonrawlins_50256/picrights-ltd-the-shady-company-hounding-journalists-over-historic-cases-of-copyright-infringement-a169685eede6

What they're doing appears legal, but unscrupulous. We have advised the Member to contact an IP Solicitor that we know and will try and keep abreast of developments.

In the meantime, check your websites to make sure that you have the right to use all images. Technology to scan a picture and see where else it is appearing on the internet is freely available.

FREE IMAGES

In the light of the above, it is worth repeating that there are good free picture sites out there. One we use at Higher Wiscombe is a great free image library called www.pxhere.com especially useful for social media on here.

If any of you have found similar that you would recommend, please send the website link to chair@pascuk.co.uk and we'll include in future newsletters.

THINGS TO DO IN LOCKDOWN

Here's a list of things to do during lockdown

- Update your Terms and Conditions
- Make sure your Covid cancellation terms are clear
- Update and refresh your photos and text on your websites (Google has always liked 'active' sites)
- Check you have the rights to use all images on your website, if in doubt, remove and replace with one that you do
- Check your prices
- Display your prices for 2022 and 2023
- Walk through your properties with a note pad with an open eye, and make notes for repair or improvement

VISIT ENGLAND 'GOOD TO GO' ADDITIONAL UPDATE

We have received an update from Visit England about this scheme, and from Tuesday next week we will be able to login and make a change to our certificates so that they display our business name. We will all receive an email giving us the details of how to do this.

Doubtless we'll be scrabbling to try and remember our logins and passwords. So far almost 500 PASC UK Members have signed up for Good to Go.

MAINTAINING COVID STANDARDS

As said in the commentary we are providing Covid secure hospitality and we have to maintain standards to continue to pressure Government to let us trade more sustainably.

A very visible way of doing this is to use these schemes to display your Covid protocols.

Quality in Tourism's Safe, Clean and Legal Scheme:

This is the Gold Standard for Covid accreditation and involves a fully trained assessor supporting offline and in person, helping you complete a risk assessment and deliver a best in practise standard, every property is checked. Recognised as the most robust scheme from Which? magazine, Safe, Clean & Legal evolved with the support of Environmental Health Officers; it covers the whole hospitality and tourism industry and will put both you and your clients mind at rest.

To find out more: <https://www.qualityintourism.com/quality-assessment/safe-clean-and-legal>

AA Covid Confident:

The AA COVID CONFIDENT scheme is FREE and open to all hospitality establishments that pass the AA's stringent criteria, including hotels; restaurants; pubs; B&Bs and guest accommodation; camping, glamping and holiday parks; self-catering accommodation; hostels; serviced apartments; attractions; and golf courses. The scheme is free to establishments.

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

Good to Go Standard:

The Good to Go standard initiative is a FREE self-certification scheme developed by VisitEngland in partnership with VisitScotland, VisitWales and Tourism Northern Ireland. It is directly linked to national and sector specific public health and safety guidelines and aims to give confidence to businesses, visitors and communities of high standards of compliance and hygiene in tourism establishments. It will operate through an online portal, backed up by process checks and supported by a call-centre facility to answer more detailed questions from businesses.

England - <https://goodtogo.visitbritain.com/your-business-good-to-go-england>

This is how we display ours at Higher Wiscombe.

<https://www.higherwiscombe.com/covid-confident/>

WORK IN PROGRESS SECTION

WIP. ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING AT SELF-CATERING PROPERTIES PAPER

Getting lots of great feedback and input into this. Please keep it coming. We already have some great stuff but more always useful. We would like to try and complete this in January, so, please, if you have any feedback at all on this send it in. Thanks.

- Grants that may be available
- Good and bad EV maps to be featured on
- Any safety legislation that any of you have come across
- Any data on how much a charge actually costs
- Any issues anyone has come across with insurance
- Anything else you think is relevant

We will of course be doing our own research, but it would speed up the process if any of you have any information to share. Send to chair@pascuk.co.uk

WIP. IHT RELIEF FOR SELF-CATERING PROPERTIES

We got a lot of feedback on this subject so asking anyone who has an interest in this topic, or who may be in the process of challenging HMRC on IHT Relief this to please get in touch.

We have some Members who are at an advanced stage on this and it would be brilliant if we tried to coordinate where applicable. All responses in confidence to chair@pascuk.co.uk

WIP.CHARGEBACKS

A Chargebacks paper will follow the Cancellations paper. This is for two reasons, one, you have to have fair Terms and conditions to defend chargebacks, and second, getting the Chargeback policies from the Credit Card providers is proving very difficult.

If anyone has any updated feedback or information in this subject, please send it in to chair@pascuk.co.uk

WIP. BUSINESS RATES

An update on the next steps with the Valuation Office will appear in the next Newsletter on 15th January.

- Will cover next Revaluation
- Getting the PASC UK discounts for units of 1-3.

PAT TESTING?

Lots of questions about this, what is the law, how often do we have to do it etc?

As we have all got used to during the Covid crisis it's as clear as mud when you look at the guidance and FAQ's.

Basically, it does not state how frequently you should do it, nor that you should keep a copy of the testing. Completely bonkers.

So why should you even think about it?

- 1/ We have a moral and legal responsibility to do our best to keep our guests safe.
- 2/ As it's HSE guidance we are obliged to follow it to maintain insurance
- 3/ If you look around it doesn't cost much
- 4/ New equipment does not need testing, a visual check when installing is sufficient

This is what it actually says...

Is Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) Compulsory?

No. The law simply requires an employer to ensure that their electrical equipment is maintained in order to prevent danger. It does not say how this should be done or how often. Employers should take a risk-based approach, considering the type of equipment and what it is being used for. If it is used regularly and moved a lot e.g. a floor cleaner or a kettle, testing (along with visual checks) can be an important part of an effective maintenance regime giving employers confidence that they are doing what is necessary to help them meet their legal duties. HSE provides guidance on how to maintain equipment including the use of PAT.

We do it each year at Higher Wiscombe. We use the same contractor each year. He sits in the garage with the testing equipment, and each portable appliance is brought in turn. For us, it is bedside light's, toasters, kettles, microwaves and food mixers.

For 3 cottages, 16 bedrooms it takes a morning.

Why do we do it each year? Because every year at least one or two items are faulty, they don't look faulty, but they are. We keep the records; our contractor keeps a record. If we had any kind of insurance claim, we can present these instantly.

Making PAT testing a part of your Risk Assessment and updated annually would be good practice.

PAT - Portable appliance testing FAQs:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/electricity/faq-portable-appliance-testing.htm>

Maintaining portable electric equipment in low-risk environments -

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg236.pdf>

CANCELLATIONS POLICY PAPER

The Cancellations Paper (Draft 1) is now complete and can be downloaded from the website at

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

(Just a note, if you have the Avast anti-spam system it does not like the PASC UK website. We can assure you that the site is not insecure, but to make it as easy as possible for you, and you have the Avast system, please email chair@pascuk.co.uk and put Cancellations in the subject line and we'll email you a copy).

Please have a read and let us have your feedback on it, we will then update the paper, and republish. This will be followed by a Webinar with a Q and A.

Once again huge thanks to Beth Bailey and Nick Clayson at Premier Cottages, Robert Kennedy at SuperControl for their contributions and Lorna Handyside and Linda Winstanley the ace proof-readers. 😊

UPDATED PROTOCOLS

The work to update the Cleaning Protocols is complete. These are available on the website at

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

(Just a note, if you have the Avast anti-spam system it does not like the PASC UK website. We can assure you that the site is not insecure, but to make it as easy as possible for you, and you have the Avast system, please email chair@pascuk.co.uk and put Protocols in the subject line and we'll email you a copy).

The revision has a short section at the beginning of the main protocols in green that highlights changes, the Christmas decorations addendum is also included

If you have any questions arising from these, or have any suggestions for future changes, please let us know by contacting chair@pascuk.co.uk

ONLINE TOOL FOR FINDING GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

The online tool for finding out what support is available for your businesses has been updated to reflect recent changes:

<https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder>

UPDATED PASC UK MEMBERS LOGO



We have had some feedback that the logo does not actually say 'Professional Association of Self-Caterers' on it. Good point. We have had it modified and it is now available. 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.

PASC UK AWARDS

There will be a further delay in finalising these. We haven't had any time to look at this this week. Further nominations welcome. We will try to do this over Christmas as a bit of fun. Goodness knows we need some, further suggestions to chair@pascuk.co.uk

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 haven't directly asked before, 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, proper PR firms to assist with campaigns such as the #justpayit (which we will shortly need to run again, more on that later) and Memberships to other organisations that provide common lobbying, information feeds and support.

Membership fees are as follows: All per annum.

- Single cottage £70
- 2 – 4 Units £125
- 5 – 10 Units £200
- 11 + Units £300

For companies like cleaning firms, or industry support companies, Associate Membership is £200.

Members get telephone support and priority email support.

You can join here, simple form, takes 2 mins, and we'll send an invoice, payable by BACS.

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

MEMBER RENEWALS

Huge favour to ask of regulars, when you get your renewal through please pay it. The logistics of chasing waste hugely valuable time that could be spent doing far more useful things for all. If you don't want to renew, all you have to do is say so.

PASC UK CLOSING AT WEEKENDS

PASC UK is now closed at the weekends for phone and email. We have a self-catering business as well to run and manage through all the same issues that you all have. Many thanks.

ABOUT PASC UK

PASC UK was formed three years ago. It had three principle objectives at that time. The overriding purpose of PASC UK is to help make your business more profitable.

- 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 roundtable 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....

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
The Professional Association of Self-Caterers UK
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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.