



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

22.10.18

Dear Caroline,

I am writing along with other Members of Parliament, concert promoters, venues and musical artists to express our concern at changes to arrangements around Certificates of Sponsorship.

For many years, work permits—and then Certificates of Sponsorship—were used for US entertainment acts as well as Canadians, Brazilians and others when performing in the UK. Then, in August 2017, the UKVI altered a piece of guidance for foreign nationals so that visas are required if the certificate holder arrives through the Irish Republic. This change was not announced, nor proper consultation with the sector undertaken, so it was virtually unknown across the industry until very recently. The Common Travel Area (UK/Ireland) policy team at the Home Office have amended their guidance to say that all people who perform in the UK now require visas if they arrive through the Republic of Ireland.

This change will have a hugely detrimental effect on musicians and entertainers including participants in world-leading events such as Glastonbury, Edinburgh, Glyndebourne, Reading and Leeds Festivals. The changes will also impact sportsmen and women taking part in competitions, expert witnesses in trials, researchers and journalists. What was previously a simple system now asks visitors to acquire UK visas which take weeks to obtain, cost hundreds of pounds each, and involves a complex application process.

The entertainment industry is uniquely impacted by these changes because there are thousands of entertainment personnel who, for instance, perform or work at a show in Dublin the day before coming to the UK. They work on very tight schedules and sometimes very tight budgets. It's possible many hundreds of acts will be forced to cancel the Irish leg of their tour because it complicates their UK tour or vice versa.

We are calling on you to keep the Certificate of Sponsorship system and prevent any further damage to the UK's position as a leading cultural centre in Europe.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alex Sobel".

Alex Sobel MP



Angus MacNeil MP  
Annaliese Dodds MP  
Anna McMorrin MP  
Anna Turley MP  
Bambos Charalambous MP  
Barbara Keeley MP  
Catherine West MP  
Chris Elmore MP  
Daniel Zeichner MP  
David Hanson MP  
Diana Johnson MP  
Diane Abbott MP  
Gavin Robinson MP Ged  
Killen MP  
Harriet Harman MP  
Ivan Lewis MP  
James Frith MP  
Jared O'Mara MP  
Jeff Smith MP  
Jo Stevens MP  
Jo Swinson MP  
Jon Cruddas MP  
Kate Green MP  
Kerry McCarthy MP  
Liz McInnes MP  
Lloyd Russell-Moyle MP  
Luciana Berger MP  
Mark Tami MP  
Martin Whitfield MP  
Mike Hill MP

Patrick Grady MP  
Paul Farrelly MP  
Paul Sweeney MP  
Paul Williams MP  
Pete Wishart MP  
Ronnie Campbell MP  
Ruth George MP  
Sandy Martin MP  
Sharon Hodgson MP  
Stephen Morgan MP  
Thelma Walker MP  
Tommy Sheppard MP  
Tracey Brabin MP  
Valerie Vaz MP

Baroness Bonham-Carter  
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Lord Kennedy of Southwark  
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Lord Wood of Anfield

Association for Festival Organisers  
Association for Independent Festivals  
Association for Independent Music  
British Phonographic Institute  
Brudenell Social Club  
Coda Agency  
Concert Promoters Association  
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Music Venue Trust  
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