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Description automatically generated **** *Association House*

*18c Moor Street*

*Chepstow NP16 5DB*

*Tel: 01291 636338*

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP

Prime Minister

10 Downing Street

LONDON SW1A 2AA

17th June 2021

Dear Prime Minister

**Regarding- Labour Shortages Across UK Industry**

We are writing collectively to ask if your Government can help to resolve the critical labour shortages that are now starting to cripple large parts of the UK economy, including many parts of the food and drink sector that we depend upon to feed the nation.

Our organisations collectively represent a wide diversity of businesses from hospitality, retail and manufacturing to distribution and events, all of which are now being seriously affected by staffing shortages. The industry sectors represented by the signatories to this letter account for more than £350 billion of UK economic activity.

The matter of labour shortages is hampering the ability of many businesses to recover, exacerbating supply chain challenges, and creating some very real risks to public safety. For example, there is a significant shortfall expected in trained security staff who protect publicly accessible locations and events.

Whilst the overall picture is complex, one short term solution with immediate benefit would be to temporarily ease immigration requirements for the large numbers of workers, particularly from the EU, who have returned to their homelands during the lockdowns. This has contributed greatly to the shortfalls.

Indeed, a study in 2020 by the UK’s Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence (ESCoE) estimated that 1.3 million migrants left the UK between July 2019 and September 2020. This figure was based on UK labour statistics, and represents over 4% of the UK workforce.

Unfortunately, evidence suggests that those unemployed within the UK workforce seem unwilling to take on many of the jobs where there are vacancies in the industries we represent.

To help resolve this we ask that all those who have worked in the UK over the last 3 years are given the freedom to return to work here with less restrictive immigration regulations on a short-term basis.

A relaxation of the rules does not need to be open ended but it needs to happen quickly if we are to support the recovery of the UK economy.

We believe this is an action that Government could easily take and without cost. Such a move would help businesses to recover, which will in turn result in greater tax revenues to help the UK economy.

We would welcome an opportunity to discuss with you or a member of your Cabinet in the near future.

This letter is supported by all the Trade Organisations listed below.

Yours sincerely

Jim Winship

Director

M: 07850 104034

E: [jim@sandwich.org.uk](mailto:jim@papa.org.uk)

Cc The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer

The Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP, Secretary of State, BEIS

The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP, Secretary of State, Home Office

The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP, Secretary of State, Transport

The Rt Hon Oliver Dowden MP, Secretary of State, DCMS

The Rt Hon George Eustice MP, Secretary of State, DEFRA

The Rt Hon Liz Truss MP, Secretary of State for International Trade and President of the Board of Trade

**Signed on behalf of the following organisations:**

ActSmart

Association of Circus Proprietors

Association of Cycle Traders

Association of Festival Organisers

Association of Independent Festivals

Association of Independent Meat Suppliers

The Association of Show and Agricultural Organisations (ASAO)

British Air Display Association

British Frozen Food Federation

British Independent Retailers Association

British Poultry Council

British Soft Drinks Association

British Takeaway Campaign

Chilled Food Association

Concert Promoters Association

Council for Responsible Nutrition UK

Craft Bakers Association

Event & Visual Communication Association

Fresh Produce Consortium

HBAA

LIVE ((Live music Industry, Venues & Entertainment)

Made Up Textiles Association

Major Events International

National Craft Butchers

National Outdoor Events Association

Newbury Bid/Visit Newbury

Portable Sanitation Europe

Scotland Food & Drink

Scottish Wholesale Association

The British Sandwich & Food to Go Association

The Café Life Association

The Events Industry Forum

The Event Services Association

The Federation of Wholesale Distributors

The International Meat Trade Association

The Nationwide Caterers Association

The Pizza Pasta & Italian Food Association

The Showman’s Guild of Great Britain

UK Crowd Management Association

We Are The Fair