

Rt. Hon.

MP

**House of Commons**

**- Your urgent help is needed -**

As my local MP I wish to elicit your help in addressing a specific cause of skills shortage affecting my industry sector and in turn having a dire effect on my business. I run a specialist cuisine restaurant in your constituency. As you'll be aware there's an acknowledged shortage of highly skilled Chefs throughout UK's hospitality and catering industry. Due to limitations inherent within my local labour market, and the nationwide supply and demand equation in general, I have no choice but to seek skilled personnel from outside the EU. This letter is an urgent plea for removal of barriers from that are preventing me from accessing skilled professional Chefs from outside EU

**I am prevented from accessing non EU skilled Chefs by discriminatory government policy**

Though the government claims to 'welcome' Chefs through the official shortage occupation criteria framework business like mine are prevented from recruiting under this criteria as it cites collection and home delivery of our menu items (i.e take away services) as NOT being skill based and therefore failing to meet criteria rules. Only if I cease to provide take away do I meet skills eligibility, however that would mean substantial loss of revenue and risk of business failure

**How can there be a skill difference?**

According to government policy as devised by the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) complex specialist food prepared by a professional Chef and served inside a restaurant has skill necessity and input, however if the SAME food is for home dining it FAILS to meet the skills criteria. As well as take away, buffet and banqueting / event catering services and any form of large scale output DISQUALIFIES my business from recruiting non EU Chefs, even though these require considerable skill and dexterity.

**The shortage occupation rule is being misapplied and is therefore unlawful**

The government says my business can only meet the official skills criteria if my Chef cooks a complex made to order dish from scratch using fresh raw ingredients. This is what we do!. Every aspect of our catering meets the official skills criteria, how it is restricted to table dining, whilst other service modes are misconceived as being skill deficient.

### **The government says take away is NOT associated with quality establishments**

This is a gross misrepresentation. Like almost every a la carte fine dining / high end restaurant in the country I provide a collection and delivery service to my customers. This has been a mainstay business function for decades, and an increasingly growing trend in advent of ordering apps and gig economy delivery systems. The government wrongly perceives my business as being a fast food outlet and ineligible for non EU Chefs. This is highly inappropriate and a damaging barrier to vital recruitment

### **I have NO need for unskilled workers from outside EU, I need skilled specialists only, and on temporary non settlement work visa basis only**

I only seek to bring in one or two highly skilled professionals with the experience and specialist skills vital for my business. We do NOT wish to use the immigration system for basic staffing needs and nor to facilitate settlement in UK. I only seek to meet immediate skill needs and to help me create home grown Chefs through training initiatives I aim to partake in.

### **I need experienced skilled professionals on formal employment terms**

Non EU Chefs are subject to transparent taxable gross salary employment terms as per UKVI guidance with no access to public funds, and will therefore not demand concealed employment on inflated tax free 'cash in hand' wages, as is frequently the case within the resident labour market

### **The shortage of skilled Chefs and barriers to non EU recruitment is damaging my business and personal welfare in the following ways**

- Stress, overwork, and potential danger to mental and physical health
- Unable to deliver customer satisfaction and function effectively
- Family and work life balance in turmoil
- Unable to grow and develop
- Unable to recruit local unemployed and interested new entrants to partake in training & skills development
- Worry and uncertainty about future sustainability of livelihood

### **The shortage occupation criteria for Chefs is misconceived, wholly inappropriate and unjustified**

As my MP I would urge you to raise this matter with Rt Hon Minister of State of Immigration and MAC and press for a realistic understanding of the skills equation and workable parameters. Please therefore press for immediate amendment of Home Office SOC code 5434 by way of removal of take away, event catering and large scale food production restrictions

Yours sincerely,