



30<sup>th</sup> November 2009

To : Suzanne Barnes,

UK Border Agency

Dear Ms. Barnes,

I am writing to you to express the concern of all the accredited English Language schools, colleges and universities in the South West of England.

I am Chair of English UK (South West) and we have 19 member organisations across Bristol, North Somerset, Somerset, Wiltshire, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall. All of our members are accredited by the British Council and all are members of the professional association, English UK.

Our members are very much concerned about the **Tier 4 PBS Review Proposals**. I have to say that the proposals contain many areas which seem, with respect, ill thought-out. There is one particular topic which seems illogical and would also cause great damage to educational institutions across the south west of England, were it to become law. The proposal to raise the level of English language competence from CEF A2 to B1 would have a hugely detrimental effect on the numbers of long-stay visa nationals coming to the UK in general and the south-west in particular.

1. These students attending accredited schools provide valuable income during the times of year when other, shorter stay students do not come. This means that the viability of many of our member institutions would be threatened.
2. The income generated by these English language students is worth £61 million to the south-west alone. In addition, the spin-off income to accommodation providers, restaurants, pubs, tourist attractions, transport companies and many retail outlets multiplies that figure several-fold.
3. There is no logic to a proposal that suggests that students may only come to the UK to study English if they already speak English at B1 level, at least. This would prevent most of our own children taking part in French exchanges at GCSE level, for example, were the argument to be made on linguistic grounds.

We understand the need to reduce illegal migrants and we have accepted the big changes which have already been put in place by the UKBA. We have all been inspected and our documentation has been scrutinised. We do not work with "migrants". We provide education for genuine, hard-working students who study language in order to return to their own countries and aid the growth of internationalisation or stay on to study at Higher Education establishments, continuing to add to the export income of the UK.

By proposing this change, you are threatening the viability of many institutions in the south west who are accredited, bona-fide, high-quality establishments. You are hurting the wrong people!

May I, on behalf of all accredited organisations in the south west of England, add my voice to the many already raised in protest and urge you not to adopt this proposal in particular and to look more closely at the others, too, before causing more damage to a quality industry which is already seeing its business head to other countries.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Waistell', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Mark Waistell  
Chairman  
EnglishUK (South West)