Dear ,

As you are aware the visitor economy and tourism sector is hugely significant to the [add area]

Tourism is worth over £?? billion annually to the [add local visitor economy figure] and accounts for ?? jobs Each year. [add region]  is visited by ?? million staying visitors and a further ??-million-day visitors. In the South East the visitor economy, in a normal year, is worth £12bn. It is integral to the county, its communities, and its way of life.

In a year that recovery of the tourism and hospitality industry is so important, and the staycation market offer such potential, businesses are now facing extreme issues in recruiting in order to meet the demand for this year.

We recognise the change in immigration legislation now limits the available workforce as recruiting EU workers is no longer an option.

Therefore, The industry now has three requests, and ask that you consider these a matter of urgency to prevent further decline in one of the largest employment sectors in the UK:

1. They ask that you (the government) introduce the same approach to that of Defra which would be to consider exemptions from the new immigration rules for the hospitality sector facing worsening worker shortages.  We will work with you to look at how this can be achieved. There are several options including 6-month or two-year working visas and potentially a cap on the numbers entering the UK on either visa.

*Similar schemes were once offered to South Africans and Australians providing fantastic opportunities for them to enter the UK, work and contribute to local economies.*

1. The second request is to add the role of Chef to the shortage list of workers. Despite what many think, working in hospitality is a skilled profession and no more so than as a chef. Whether it is as a commis or head chef we had a national shortage prior to the changes to the immigration policy and this has been escalated further because of the pandemic.

1. The third request is that the Government fund an urgent recruitment drive, highlighting the career opportunities the sector offers and dispelling some of the negative myths that can be associated with an industry such as low pay.

**Place examples here**

This is not an issue that can wait. Without support, many businesses the Government has helped to survive the pandemic will only go on to fail as they do not have the capacity to service the demand. In turn, the South East will fail to meet customer expectations and lose the opportunity the staycation boom offers to create repeat custom and support economic recovery.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Yours Sincerely