



More consultation is needed on latest changes to student visa rules, says English UK

News release

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The decision to cut permitted visa refusals from 20 to 10 per cent for Highly Trusted Sponsors is disappointing and will have a disproportionate effect on centres issuing low numbers of Tier 4 visas, says English UK.

The new rule, announced by Prime Minister David Cameron, means centres will be banned from issuing Tier 4 student visas if more than 10 per cent of those they sponsor are then refused by UK Visas and Immigration. This would also mean that even one refused visa could be a reason for removing smaller centres from the Register of Sponsors.

Eddie Byers, English UK's chief executive, said that while the organisation and its members fully supported the Government's drive to ensure that only genuine students entered the country, there were deep concerns about the workability of the new rule in conjunction with other aspects of the system.

"Currently, every visa refusal can count against the record of the individual language centre, regardless of the reason. So, if the process itself is faulty the sponsoring college or university is held accountable. We don't think that's fair, particularly now that the margin for error is being reduced so dramatically, and at such short notice. English UK wants to ensure that its member centres are not penalised for the mistakes of others.

"This is particularly difficult for those centres which only sponsor a few students. Potentially even one failure could put their Highly Trusted Status at risk. English UK cannot accept that our smaller members may be driven out of the market simply because of their size or the type of business they do."

English UK urges the Home Office to consult further with the sector to ensure that these measures are implemented as fairly as possible.

Notes to Editors

1. English UK is the world's leading language teaching association, with more than 470 accredited centres in membership. It covers university and further education college language departments, international study centres in independent schools, educational trusts and charities, and private sector colleges. English UK is a UK registered charity (www.englishuk.com)
2. All of English UK's members are fully accredited and rigorously inspected, but many chose not to become Highly Trusted Sponsors when the policy was introduced in 2010, or withdrew from the scheme since 2011 when changing regulations dramatically increased associated costs.

3. For more information, please contact Eddie Byers, Chief Executive of English UK, on Eddie@Englishuk.com