



April 24 2020

LETTER TO THE UK BUSINESS SECRETARY PROMOTING THE 'RAISE THE BAR SCHEME'

Dear Mr Sharma,

On behalf of a national collective of industry bodies, we wish to present this letter to you and your office and colleagues within Central Government for consideration.

The retail, hospitality and leisure sector is vital to the UK economy and must be protected at all costs. The retail industry alone generated £394 billion worth of sales in 2019 with 306,655 units across the UK. The UK leisure sector has reached over £111 billion in sales. The UK hospitality employs over 3.2 million people, that is 11% of UK jobs, making it the third largest sector in the UK, accounting for £130 billion in revenue, 6% of all UK businesses and 5% GDP.

In total, the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors deliver a combined £635 billion to the national economy.

We are deeply concerned that businesses within the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors do not have the support they so desperately need at this time from the Government. In particular, the financial grant offered as part of the RHLG of £25k is only available to businesses in those industries with a rateable value of £51k or less. There is a significant number of businesses from across the UK that will not be able to access this grant simply because the threshold is too low.

At a time when businesses are doing all they can to support the greater cause, we ask central government to reconsider and amend the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant (RHLG):

- To expand the rateable value threshold for all retail, hospitality and leisure businesses from £51,000 to any business with a rateable value up to and including £150,000, allowing further businesses the opportunity to access the £25,000 grant

These are some of our most adaptable businesses and the economy will need them to stave off the threat of cessation, so that they can play their role in rejuvenating the economy and contributing to community wellbeing.

We acknowledge that by increasing the RHLG threshold up to and including £150,000 will increase the burden on central and local government. This is a price we believe is worth paying to ensure these businesses are supported to become part of the greater push to mobilise our economy, rather than leaving premises empty, growing unemployment and depleted high street and town centre communities.

Collectively with the support of UK Hospitality, Greater London Authority, Night Time Industries Association, British Beer and Pub Association, BID Foundation, British BIDs, ATCM, Music Venue Trust, Association of Convenience Stores, Cocktail Pub Company and Croydon Council, we implore

you and the Government to reconsider the threshold and to make the amendment so that businesses up to and including £150k can benefit from a £25k grant so that they have the same opportunity to survive and help rebuild our economy.

Yours sincerely



Richard Wilcox
Chair of South West BIDs group representing 17 BIDs across Devon, Cornwall and Somerset

The South West BIDs Group:

