

Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
Horse Guards Road
Westminster
London
SW1A 2HQ

11 March 2019

Dear Chancellor,

We the undersigned are members of the 96 member strong All-Party Parliamentary Group on Music. We bring together all Parliamentary parties in both Houses of Parliament with a shared interest in supporting the growth of our £4.5 billion music industry.

We ask you to use the opportunity of your Spring Statement on 13 March to ensure grassroots music venues are added as a separate category as specifically qualifying for the business rates retail discount scheme, as announced in the Autumn Budget 2018.

This existing scheme discriminates against grassroots music venues by stating that they “are not similar in nature” to pubs and clubs.

Grassroots music venues are a vibrant and vital part of many towns, cities, and even villages. Many are situated on the high street generating business and contributing to their local economies. They often operate throughout the day and into the evening, supporting the epicentre of the night time economy by providing entertainment whilst also generating revenue through the sale of drinks.

Grassroots music venues have been closing at an alarming rate. 35 per cent have closed over the last decade. Rising business rates are a key reason behind this. The 2017 revaluation has amounted to a 31 per cent increase in payable business rates at these venues with rateable values growing by 25 per cent.

Small grassroots music venues gave our biggest musical exports, including Ed Sheeran, Adele, Sam Smith and The 1975, their start. Our ability as an industry to develop future talent is put at risk if they have nowhere to nurture their talent.

The modest change to the guidance that we are asking for would cost just over £1 million over two years, benefiting 124 venues in the process, and would provide much needed help to grassroots music venues that operate at very low margins.

By protecting music venues we protect our rich musical heritage as a nation, and plan for a future where UK music will only grow in popularity and remain the envy of the world.

Yours sincerely,

APPG ON MUSIC

David Warburton MP (Chair)
Sharon Hodgson MP (Co-Chair)
Kevin Brennan MP (Co-Chair)
Andrea Jenkyns MP (Treasurer)
Conor McGinn MP (Secretary)
Nigel Evans MP (Vice-Chair)
Lord Clement-Jones (Vice-Chair)
Kerry McCarthy MP (Vice-Chair)
Valerie Vaz MP (Vice-Chair)
Alex Sobel MP (Vice-Chair)
Lord Watts (Vice-Chair)
Chris Matheson MP
Stephen Morgan MP
Jeff Smith MP
Ed Vaizey MP
Lord Jones of Cheltenham
Lord Bassam of Brighton
Lord Storey
Lord McNally
Ian Paisley MP
Baroness Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury
Mark Tami MP
John Spellar MP
Lord Wood of Anfield
Sir Greg Knight MP
James Frith MP
Tonia Antoniazzi MP
David Hanson MP
Baroness Jolly
Louise Haigh MP

Ian Austin MP
Ruth Smeeth MP
Ian Lucas MP
Thangam Debbionaire MP
Lord Aberdare
Sir David Amess MP
Anna Turley MP
Dr Paul Williams MP
Angus MacNeil MP
Bambos Charalambous MP
Anna McMorrin MP
Lord Teverson
Lord Redesdale
Mike Gapes MP
Kevan Jones MP
Rachel Reeves MP
Tom Watson MP
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Lord Roy Kennedy
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Lord Foster of Bath
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Baroness Garden of Frognall