

10 March 2023

**U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Fee Schedule and Changes to Certain Other Immigration Benefit Request Requirements**

**UK Music Response**

Introduction

1. UK Music is the collective voice of the UK's world-leading music industry. UK Music represents all sectors of the music industry – bringing them together to collaborate, campaign and champion music. A full list of UK Music members can be found in annex A.
2. The USA is the second largest market for touring UK artists (after the EU). Breaking into this market can be integral to a musician or band's career. The UK has a proud history of many artists from these shores going on to have great success in the USA. ranging from Harry Styles, Adele, and Ed Sheeran. Last year, the UK's overseas earnings from recorded music exports in the US was £228.7m – this was up 10.4% on the previous year and made-up 38.7% of all UK recorded music exports.
3. This submission is a response to the US Government's proposed visa fee increases and other changes that will have a significant impact on overseas artists touring the US. UK Music is calling on the US government to scrap these proposals which will be mutually damaging for both countries and will significantly impact creative professionals touring the US.

Increased Petition Fees

4. The proposals include an increase in filing/petition fees for certain types of touring visa fees for non-US citizens. Petition fees for the P visa – used for acts to perform temporarily in the US – will increase by 251% from \$460 (£385) to \$1,615 (£1,352). Meanwhile, the O visa – used for a longer-term working visit – would climb by 260% from \$460 (£385) to \$1,655 (£1,375). In both cases, these fees would each include a \$600 (£499) surcharge to support the US asylum process.
5. The Music Managers Forum (MMF) and Featured Artists Coalition (FAC), through the LetTheMusicMove campaign, have run a survey of artists, managers, and other touring musicians about this issue. 70% of those surveyed said that the increased costs associated with these visa changes meant they would no longer be able to tour the USA. For those still able to find a way to tour, the new visa costs are estimated to wipe out more than a third of profits they might make.

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6. According to the Musicians' Union, 96% of their members surveyed said that increased fees will impact the feasibility of future touring, and 23% noted that they will now make a loss on their tours because of this. Data from LIVE shows that these proposals will put 50% of all UK tours of the USA under threat.
7. In imposing these heightened charges, fewer British artists will be able to tour the US, meaning they will be unable to develop their audiences or connect with already established audiences. This will severely damage the cultural exchange that comes from having UK artists tour in the USA. Moreover, if touring the US is reduced because of exorbitant fees this will see a reduction in royalties flowing to both songwriters and composers, further negatively impacting musicians.
8. As well as being culturally damaging, the proposals will put US-based jobs at risk and have a negative economic ripple effect on communities supported by arts events. UK artists touring the US provide revenue to the cities they visit through ticket sales and audiences spending money in local businesses. Music is a great economic driver in states across America. Texas Music Office estimates it accounts for \$10.8 billion of economic activity in the state.
9. Moreover, these fee increases include a levy of \$600 to support the US asylum programme. We would question whether it is justified for international businesses to be funding US domestic policy.

#### Premium Processing

10. The proposed plans will also change the Premium Processing Service's guaranteed processing time from 15 calendar days to 15 business days. This service already costs \$2500 (£2,080) and the extension will create further delays for UK artists touring the US.
11. Due to delays in regular processing, many artists have no option but to pay for Premium Processing. Unless the timeframe for providing regular visas is addressed, artists will have to pay the premium processing fee as well as the proposed increase in petition fees.

#### Limits on the number of individuals on a single petition

12. The proposals are capping the total number of individuals on a single petition at 25 beneficiaries. This would require multiple petitions for larger ensembles. For example, under the proposals, a visiting orchestra comprising 110 musicians, plus a handful of accompanying support staff would require six visa petitions rather than two. This will result in many orchestras or larger ensembles being unable to tour the US due to the increased costs.
13. The two-way cultural exchange between the US and UK has brought huge social, cultural, and economic benefits to both our great countries – and ensuring that creative professionals can continue to travel between our two countries as easily as possible is integral to the special relationship we enjoy. We are therefore calling on US Government to scrap these proposals as a matter of urgency to avoid what would be a mutually damaging outcome for both countries.

## Annex A

Annex UK Music's membership comprises:

- The Association of Independent Music – the trade body for the independent music sector and community which make up more than a quarter of the UK's recorded music market. Representing 1000+ independent record labels and associated businesses, AIM's members range from globally recognised brands to the next generation of British music entrepreneurs.
- BPI - The British Phonographic Industry - The representative voice of the UK's recorded music sector. Their membership consists of approximately 500 music companies, ranging from hundreds of SME independent labels to the major global record companies Universal, Sony and Warner. They also organise the BRIT Awards, the Mercury Prize and administer the Music Exports Growth Scheme (MEGS).
- FAC – The Featured Artists Coalition - UK trade body representing the specific rights and interests of music artists. A not-for-profit organisation, they represent a diverse, global membership of creators at all stages of their careers and provide a strong, collective voice for artists.
- The Ivors Academy - An independent association representing professional songwriters and composers. As champions of music creators for over 70 years, the organisation works to support, protect and celebrate music creators including its internationally respected Ivors Awards.
- MMF – Music Managers Forum - representing over 1000 UK managers of artists, songwriters and producers across the music industry with global businesses.
- MPG - Music Producers Guild - representing and promoting the interests of all those involved in the production of recorded music – including music studios, producers, engineers, mixers, remixers, programmers and mastering engineers.
- MPA - Music Publishers Association - with 260 major and independent music publishers in membership, representing close to 4,000 catalogues across all genres of music.
- Musicians' Union - Representing over 32,000 musicians from all genres, both featured and non-featured.
- PPL licenses recorded music in the UK when it is played in public or broadcast and ensures that revenue flows back to our members. These include independent and major record companies, together with performers ranging from emerging musicians to globally

renowned artists. In 2021 we collected £252.8 million while also distributing money to 147,000 performers and recording rightsholders.

- PRS for Music is responsible for the collective licensing of rights in the musical works of 150,000 composers, songwriters and publishers and an international repertoire of 28 million songs.
- UK Music also has an informal association with LIVE (Live music Industry Venues & Entertainment), the voice of the UK's live music and entertainment business. LIVE members are a federation of 13 live music industry associations representing 3,150 businesses, over 4,000 artists and 2,000 backstage workers