

Music students face deportation in visa row

Immigration crackdown means students at music college attended by Leona Lewis may have to leave UK midway through their courses

Adam Barnett

Foreign students at a music college in Hackney are facing deportation after a decision by the UK Border Agency.

Point Blank Music School had its licence to sponsor visas revoked in March by the UKBA, which says the college broke the rules when offering places.

The college says 30 to 40 students may have to leave the UK despite being half way through their course.

Jules Brookes, Managing Director of Point Blank, said: "It is most unfortunate that Point Blank, an upstanding, bona fide learning institute has been included in an apparent cull aimed at reducing illegal immigration.

"We are not a 'bogus language school' and have been Highly Trusted Sponsors for over ten years for good reason. We passed the necessary inspection as recently as January 2013 and received highest marks in all categories."

Mr Brookes said the UKBA turned down a number of the college's suggestions for people wishing to study with them last year, and revoked Point Blank's licence for this reason.

He continued: "This is not about Point Blank and our losses as a local Hackney business. It is about our current students who are halfway through their courses having been

issued visas already prior to entering the country.

"It is unnecessarily punitive of UKBA to treat our current students as if they had done something wrong and to threaten them with forcible removal from the country."

The students have 60 days to find another visa sponsor, such as different college. Point Blank is speaking to other music schools to allow the students to finish their studies with them. It has also arranged for the students to be able to complete their courses online. Point Blank Music School, whose former students include singer Leona Lewis, will reapply for a visa licence to accept foreign students.

The college received a message of support this week from Radio 1 DJ Pete Tong. He said: "Point Blank Music School is an excellent learning institution and is something we should be proud of in the UK."

'We should be applauding Point Blank as a fine example of UK education'

"Far from revoking its licence, we should be applauding Point Blank as a fine example of UK education in the creative and media field."

A spokesperson for the UK Border Agency said: "Point Blank Music College's licence to sponsor non-EU students has been revoked because it offered too many places to students who failed to meet the rules.

"Education providers who bring in overseas students must provide high quality education and take their immigration responsibilities seriously.

"The government will continue to do everything possible, working with the education sector, to assist genuine students who have been affected."

Women entrepreneurs given boost to gain global scope

University-led project provides women in enterprise with expertise to 'make it global'

Mike Cobb

Hackney's women entrepreneurs are being offered the opportunity to take their ideas out of the borough and onto international markets in a business project led by the University of East London (UEL).

Make it Global, launched by UEL in partnership with Newham College of Further Education and Kingston University, aims to help local small and medium sized enterprises run by women get access to expertise in international markets.

The project was launched after UEL ran a series of workshops aimed at helping female entrepreneurs get their businesses off the ground. Staff at UEL discovered that a number of companies taking part had products and services that they could market abroad.

"Businesses aren't aware of the opportunities out there, they think locally, we want them to think more globally," explains Linsey Cole, UEL's Head of Business Partnerships.

Make it Global will help develop the



Make it Global: supporting enterprising women. Photograph: UEL

links between businesses in Hackney and those overseas to give products exposure in different markets. Miss Cole said: "We've found in Hackney that the media and arts companies in particular have a product that will sell overseas - they just aren't always aware that it will."

Sanna King, owner of Hackney based textiles business SannaPanda, has already seen the benefits the project can bring. "There's only so much that you can sell to your local peers, I want to take my business global online, the project will help, it helps you be a bit more confident.

"I definitely recommend it for businesswomen, it's worth doing. It covers a wide range of products and services and really helps you get out there."

When the project ends in the

summer of 2014, it is hoped that Make it Global will have reached 250 female-led businesses, giving their products and services global scope by using the expertise and contacts of UEL and its partners.

Businesses taking part will be able to access a full network of expertise and contacts from the university and beyond, over a six stage process which includes mentoring and international placements.

Make it Global is open to any company with majority ownership by women that has 250 employees or fewer and a turnover of less than €50 million (£43 million). The project will run until August 2014 and anyone interested in taking part should contact UEL directly on 0208 223 2311 or via makeitglobal@uel.ac.uk

Teachers call for resignation of Sir Michael Wilshaw

Former headteacher of Mossbourne Academy should resign as Chief Inspector of Schools says teaching union

Annalies Winny

The founding headteacher of Mossbourne Academy in Hackney Downs, Sir Michael Wilshaw, ought to resign as Ofsted chief inspector, says a leading teaching union.

At its annual conference last weekend, the National Union of Teachers (NUT) also called for the resignation of the education secretary Michael Gove.

Jamie Duff of Hackney NUT, which represents 1,800 teachers in the borough, said: "[Sir Michael] Wilshaw made his name as the head of Mossbourne so we at the Hackney NUT are more than familiar with his dubious methods."

Wilshaw's high-profile tenure at Mossbourne, which the Guardian has called "the strictest school in Britain", made him a national mascot for the academies programme.

His hard-nosed approach to education

has won him praise and scorn in Hackney and around the country. Fans appreciate his strict discipline model, while critics rail at his 'boot camp' management style.

"He continues to demoralise teachers, which will only further undermine the profession," says Duff.

"His use of negative rhetoric about schools and teachers is deplorable. We (the Hackney NUT) fully support the vote of no confidence in the head of Ofsted and call on Michael Wilshaw and Michael Gove to resign."

The annual teachers' union conference season has brought a wave of criticism of Wilshaw and Gove.

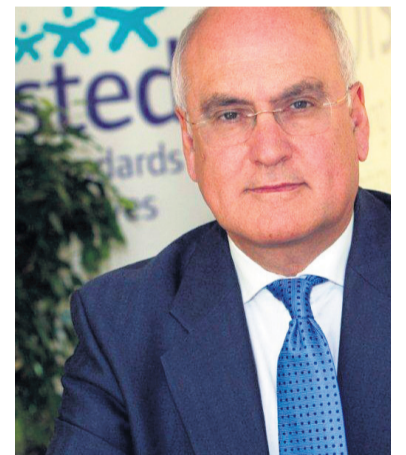
The pair were branded "blood brothers" at another teachers' union conference last month. And at their annual event, the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) voted that Wilshaw himself should be put in "special measures".

A survey of the ATL's 996 members found that 91 per cent rated Wilshaw's and Gove's respective tenures a 'fail'.

The votes of no confidence passed by the NUT and the ATL are the first of their kind in a century.

The two Michaels (Wilshaw and Gove) were criticised by the ATL for an "abject failure to improve education or treat teachers, parents and pupils with respect". And this was from a union known for being moderate.

The National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women



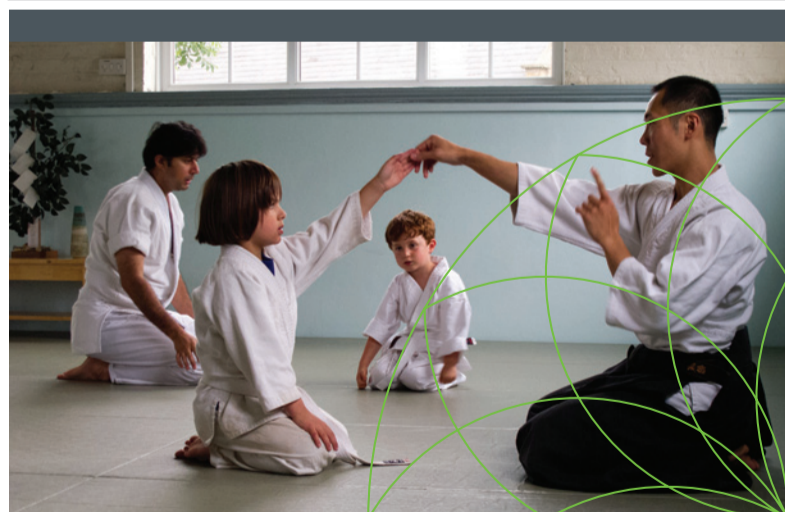
Sir Michael Wilshaw

Teachers (NASUWT), at its annual gathering, called for either reform of Ofsted or, failing that, its abolition.

Back in 2011, whilst head of Mossbourne, Wilshaw called for Ofsted reform too. He told the Guardian that too many schools were rated 'good' and 'outstanding', and that Ofsted needed to be 'sharper'.

Two years later, as head of the education watchdog, he has banned the 'satisfactory' rating altogether and, as Chief Inspector, has expanded his repertoire from one flagship school to the entire country.

Failing an agreement on pay, pensions and workload, the NUT and NAWUWT have jointly promised teacher strikes across the country starting this summer.



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