



## Cavendish School of English – Clarification of UKBA Status

**Press Release :**

**Date : 9<sup>th</sup> November 2011-11-09**

Cavendish School of English have issued a statement regarding their current UKBA status.

As our partners are aware, Cavendish School of English applied some years ago to be an A-rated sponsor and succeeded. The school was allowed to provide lessons to all students from all over the world. However adults from outside the EU who wanted to stay for more than 26 weeks needed to find a sponsor such as Cavendish School in order to successfully obtain a visa. This whole procedure was called 'Tier 4 sponsorship'.

Earlier this year the government changed the law once again. The law was changed so that adult students who came from outside the EU and who wanted to come to the UK to study for more than 11 months needed to come via the Tier 4 route. Under the new system it wasn't enough to be just an A-rated sponsor. Instead, the government wanted providers to obtain HTS status (Highly Trusted Sponsor). This is primarily aimed at universities as very few students come to study to a language school for more than 11 months. Students who do come for an extended period usually attend a university.

Although it wasn't strictly necessary for private language schools to become a Highly Trusted Sponsor, some decided it would be better to apply for it as it would look good on paper. Additionally it was felt that many agents who send students to the UK may not have understood the new UK system. Unlike Cavendish School, many other schools rely on the intake of Tier 4 students. Having already been inspected by ABLs Accreditation [www.ablsaccreditation.co.uk](http://www.ablsaccreditation.co.uk), the British Council and the UKBA, HTS would have meant that the school would also need to be inspected by an organisation called ISI (Independent Schools Inspectorate). ISI wanted to charge £10,000 per inspection which would usually take place annually. However in 2011 Cavendish School had a mere 11 students who came to the school via the Tier 4 route. All other students were either adults from within the EU, staying at the school for less than 11 months or were juniors. Therefore after careful consideration it was decided not to apply for HTS as it would not be commercially viable. Not applying for HTS meant losing the schools sponsor status. So the school voluntarily decided to opt out of the whole Tier 4 system. The UKBA therefore revoked our sponsor status some weeks ago, a move that was expected by Cavendish School.

Then, last week UKBA published a list of all language schools (422 in total) who had had their sponsorship revoked. The list was divided into schools that had voluntarily chosen not to renew their sponsorship status (like Cavendish School) and those who were "banned" due to certain legal considerations. Unfortunately, the UKBA made a grave error and listed 22 schools including Cavendish School of English who had voluntarily given up their sponsorship status within the section of banned schools. To make matters worse, some newspapers and websites took the information from the press release of UKBA and – without checking the accuracy of the data– published it within their newspapers or on their websites.

Cavendish School, with the help of EnglishUK, has now demanded correction of both the UKBA press release and an apology from all parties who published this incorrect information. Cavendish School is currently seeking legal advice with a view to suing for reputational damage.

In a statement, Managing Director Marcus Barber in response to the information released to the press by the UKBA stated "Cavendish School of English is extremely disappointed to have been so seriously misrepresented in this manner. The school undergoes vigorous, regular inspection by both the British Council and ABLs and has made a purely commercial decision not to proceed with obtaining HTS status due to the high inspection costs demanded by the ISI. We will take every measure available to us to repair the damage to our reputation resulting from this misleading information."