

Sadiq Khan - Mayor of London
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London
SE1 2AA

12th May 2021

Dear Sadiq,

I would like to congratulate you on your re-election as Mayor of London, and I am pleased that you have chosen to start your second term with the excellent Let's Do London campaign, a vital initiative which will hopefully kickstart the road to recovery for the culture and hospitality sectors.

You have been a fantastic champion for the thousands of arts and entertainment workers who have been excluded from Government support throughout the pandemic. Bectu thoroughly appreciate all the work you have done in supporting our members and we look forward to working with you in the development of the Freelancers Charter.

I know that you understand the value of ensuring that our freelancers and the creative industries are supported in this recovery, which is why I wanted to raise concerns that our members have about the way that the expansion of the Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) will affect freelancers working in the night time economy. I am concerned that elements of the ULEZ policy may have the unintended consequence of undermining the great work you have done in supporting freelancers.

Improving air quality in London is a necessary and important priority, and the ULEZ policy is a great way of tackling the problem. As it stands however, the ULEZ policy raises several key issues for freelancers and casual workers, particularly those working in London's night-time economy:

- **Midnight cut off:** Many workers in the cultural industries leave work after midnight and would therefore end up paying the charge twice per shift. A theatre worker for example, may enter ULEZ zones every day for the duration of a production, thus incurring high charges for an extended period of time. After a year of such financial hardship for London's arts freelancers, a double charge for simply going to work is an unfair burden.
- **Discounted rates:** The requirements of using a showman's vehicles in order to be eligible for discount are not considerate of the many freelancers, casualised and zero-hour contract workers who will be working in ULEZ zones and using their own cars. A workaround must be found so that they are also eligible to apply for discounted rates.
- **Safety:** For those who will return from work at midnight or later, a long walk from the bus stop to get home may be unsafe. Furthermore, many workers may not live on a night bus or night tube route, and therefore would have no choice but to drive at that hour. To face financial penalties for choosing a safer option when travelling late at night seems unfair.
- **Practicality of public transport:** For musicians and production workers who carry large equipment, getting public transport is impractical and unsafe. Using cars is much easier, yet when doing so, workers face city centre parking charges. When combining this with the daily fee, or double fee due to the midnight cut off, low paid casual workers are having to pay considerable sums of money to simply do their job.

The pandemic has inflicted great suffering onto the cultural industries, hitting it eight times as hard as the whole economy and leaving thousands of workers without work or an income. The night-time economy has been closed for over a year, and it needs support in its road to recovery. As Mayor, you have done a huge amount to campaign for the creative industries and its excluded workforce. Adding costs just as the industry is getting back to work will hinder a successful reopening of the sector and make it much more difficult for freelancers to get their individual livelihoods back on track.

Despite the important aim of cleaning up London, ULEZ expansion as a blanket policy does not work for freelancers and casual workers. It incurs unfair costs on individuals that have not worked for over 12 months and does not consider the nature of their careers.

I ask you to consider our statements and I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your team to discuss adjustments to the ULEZ so it becomes a policy that works for all Londoners.

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philippa Childs". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Philippa Childs
Head of Bectu, a sector of Prospect Union

Copied to Amy Lamé, Night Czar