



VISA UPDATE 17/12/18

The HPA has now received confirmation that the Immigration Minister has agreed to extend the 2018 criteria for players and grooms for the 2019 season. Consequently, the HPA is now able to provide endorsements for the forthcoming season.

In brief, this means that:

- (1) Non-EEA players with a handicap of 4-goals or higher may play 15 goal and above (medium and high goal) subject to the tournament conditions which remain the same as 2018.
- (2) Non-EEA grooms may work for those playing in the 15-goal and above.
- (3) Non-EEA grooms may work in polo below 15-goals (low goal), but only for those sponsors who employed non-EEA grooms in 2018 (limited to a maximum of two).

In all cases, those bringing in a non-EEA player or groom on a visa have to agree to and then meet certain criteria which are set out within the application process for an HPA endorsement.

This concession would not have been achieved without the formation of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG), which consists of Members of Parliament who are supportive of polo and willing to promote and advance the interests of our sport, and the extensive cooperation between the HPA and the Federation of International Polo (FIP) in working with Ministers and influential Members of Parliament.

We intend in the New Year to have further discussions with the Home Office to seek a more flexible arrangement for players and coaches consistent with the aims we recently set out in a joint press release with the AAP and the Argentine and British player associations. <http://www.hpa-polo.co.uk/hpa-news-latest/> . In the short term, it is recognised that there is a mood in the Home Office that until they have a clearer view of the Brexit “deal” they are reluctant to make any change which might be subject to a further change after 29 March. Nevertheless, they have agreed to discuss players playing for their employers at levels below the 15 goal, and coaches. The HPA and FIP supported by the AAP and player associations will continue with their considerable efforts to achieve progress in these objectives.