

The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP,
Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
London,
SW1A 2AA.

19 March 2020

Dear Prime Minister

Temporary Income Protection Fund for the self-employed and freelancers

We are writing to you as a collective group of organisations representing the UK's five million self-employed and freelance workers, regarding the support available to them during the coronavirus crisis.

In recent days, our members and the wider self-employed community across the country have contacted us in huge numbers about their work and projects being delayed or cancelled altogether. From the construction sector to our world-leading creative industries, where freelance talent including designers, writers and developers is abundant, it is evident that many self-employed people are already feeling the impact. We have also heard concern from those self-employed professionals whose work involves entering homes and premises, such as cleaners, carers and tradespeople, that they face a choice between losing their income and risking the health of themselves and others.

We understand the government is due to announce a further employment support package in the coming days. We are calling on the government to implement a **Temporary Income Protection Fund** specifically for the self-employed as part of this package.

This should be time-limited and carefully targeted to ensure support goes to those self-employed people who need it most. Although this will require a large financial commitment, we believe this is the right approach. In recent days, other countries have taken such steps. In Norway, for instance, the government has committed to pay the self-employed 80 per cent of their average income over the past three years.

We are grateful for the package of measures that have been announced in recent days, however we are concerned these will not be sufficient to meet the scale or pace of the problem. Universal Credit and Employment Support Allowance are both less generous than Statutory Sick Pay, which the self-employed cannot access, and difficult to navigate – they are not well-suited to deliver rapid financial support. Similarly, the government's bold set of business support measures will undoubtedly help many small and large firms but they are not well-tailored to the self-employed, who need fast cash flow support and not long-term debt liabilities.

As you have recently stated, this is not just a health crisis but an economic crisis. The income of freelancers up and down the country is at immediate risk, threatening their ability to keep their businesses alive and cover basic living costs like rent, bills and food.

We wish to help in any way we can to inform government policy making in these extremely challenging circumstances and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this proposal with you at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

Additional signatories

Musicians'
Union



Enterprise
Nation



Centre
forpreneurs



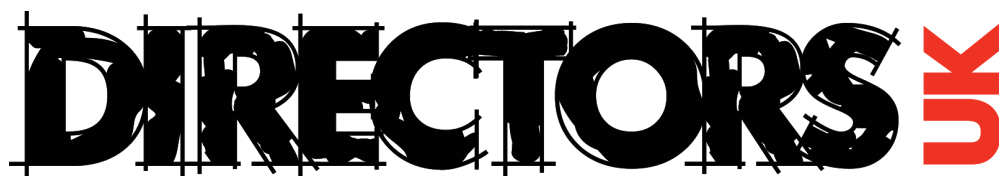
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