



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

1st April 2020

Dear Rishi,

Re: Fairness for the Self-Employed and Freelancers in the Creative Industries throughout Coronavirus Crisis

I want to convey my thanks to and your team for the work you are doing to protect people and our economy throughout this unprecedented Coronavirus crisis and for the important schemes you've already introduced to support employed and self-employed people.

I am writing to ask what further provision you are considering for those self-employed people who fall between the two schemes, and to register my backing of [Equity's proposals to address this issue](#).

I've been contacted by a number of desperately anxious constituents working in theatre, TV, film and other creative industries.

While I welcome your announcement that the government will pay 80% of employees' salaries kept on by their employer, I am concerned that many self-employed people, those working on a series of fixed term PAYE contracts and those operating as limited companies are not eligible.

This will disproportionately hit those in the creative industries.

The reality is they are now facing many months without work or sufficient income support as venues close and contracts halt to adhere to government guidance on social distancing.

One woman freelancing in theatre told me she is self-employed now but worked over 50% PAYE during 2016-19 so is not entitled to either scheme. Current government advice is for her to sign up to Universal Credit which doesn't cover her monthly rent, let alone bills or food.



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Another man working on short term contracts in the TV industry told me that he and his colleagues were furloughed last week, however as he joined the team on a short term PAYE contract after 28th February he is not entitled to any support.

I appreciate that developing a scheme to cover the complex and varying circumstances of self-employed people is more difficult, but there can be no justification for self-employed workers to not receive the same level of support as the employed throughout this Coronavirus crisis.

Could you let me know what further measures you are considering to ensure these people are not left behind, and could you look at allowing those who are newly self-employed to submit their 2019/20 tax return early and have their income assessed on this basis?

The creative industries contribute over £100bn to the UK economy and are vital to our culture and global identity. When this crisis is over we will need this industry to be strong and at the forefront of our economic recovery.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harriet Harman".

Harriet Harman

Yours sincerely

Harriet Harman MP

RT. HON. HARRIET HARMAN Q.C. M.P.
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR CAMBERWELL AND PECKHAM
MOTHER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS



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