

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

3 April 2020

Dear Chancellor,

Further support for the self-employed and freelancers

I am writing on behalf of our members who are self-employed and freelancers who are facing the difficult impacts Covid-19 has created on their livelihoods and incomes.

We welcome the extensive lengths the Government have gone to in providing support for employees and the self-employed. The self-employed income support scheme in particular, will provide significant support to the incomes of those who are self-employed and eligible for the payment.

However, there are several gaps in the scheme, and we are concerned that our self-employed and freelance members, and the wider workforce, may not be protected by the scheme and suffer hardship through the current crisis as a result.

I therefore ask you to consider filling the gaps in the scheme and ensure those who desperately need the income support receive it. Thousands of self-employed people still need to know that they can get through the months ahead without additional stress and anxiety.

1. Ensure the systems to deliver the self-employed income support scheme are ready and in place as soon as possible to ensure cash gets into the pockets of freelancers and the self-employed urgently. Having to wait until June for payments to be made will be too long for many of the self-employed who are already struggling to make ends meet.
2. Provide support for those who have become self-employed in the past 12 months by giving self-employed people 4 weeks from the 6th April to fill in their 2019-2020 tax return so they can qualify for the payment.
3. Ensure women who have been on maternity leave are not discriminated against in financial support, as well as those who have taken parental leave. This could be done by averaging their incomes while excluding the maternity and parental leave period.
4. Include those who are self-employed and run as limited companies and pay themselves in dividends in the self-employed income support scheme.
5. The £50,000 cap should be re-assessed and increased. Those who earn just above the £50,000 cap will receive no financial support and no equivalent gap exists for those who are employed.

We are keen to continue engaging constructively with you on support for the self-employed and I hope you consider addressing the gaps in the scheme and concerns raised by our members.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Rickhuss". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Roy Rickhuss

General Secretary, Community Union