

**Campaign for Broadcasting Equality CIO evidence to The Treasury Committee re “Is the Government's financial response to: Is the Government's financial response coronavirus sufficient? Are there areas where more support is needed?”**

1. Campaign for Broadcasting Equality CIO (CBE) is a charity which addresses issues of inequality in broadcasting and film.
2. The Creative Industries Federation has written to the Chancellor saying:
3. “Your package of support for employers and employees was unprecedented and welcome. However, it creates a worrying inequity between those who now have their income secured and the UK's five million self-employed workers who are left despondent.”
4. The Treasury minister Stephen Barclay has said it would be "operationally" hard to protect self-employed incomes.
5. HMRC knows the individual earning histories of the self-employed and has mechanisms for returning overpayment to individual tax payers. It is therefore well placed to confirm the basis of claims by self-employed individuals and make appropriate payments.
6. Others, including Neil O'Brien OBE MP, formerly Special Adviser to Prime Minister Theresa May on the Economy and Industrial Strategy, have proposed a pay-out to self-employed people who apply for some kind of temporary hardship support, roughly linked to the tax they have paid in previous years. There could be a cap and floor on payments, or even a flat rate for those with previous income above a certain threshold. People who apply and who have not seen a genuine income drop off could be subject to having the money clawed back later.
7. Some, including Directors UK advocate the level of support for freelancers should be calculated using the last years earnings to establish average monthly income. That would make sense.
8. **At the very least, the Chancellor's proposal that the Government will pay 80% of salary for staff who are kept on by their employer, covering wages of up to £2,500 a month should apply to freelancers and self-employed workers as well.**
9. This evidence is not intended to address comprehensively the problems faced by freelancers and the self-employed. It is merely intended to point to one potential existing mechanism. CBE claims no expertise in these matters but no expertise is required to see that potential role that might be played by HMRC. It is submitted in the knowledge that other will submit longer, more sophisticated and comprehensive evidence and proposals.

Simon Albury, Chair, Campaign for Broadcasting Equality CIO

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