

DIRECTORS UK

The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
Chief Secretary's Office
1 Horse Guards Road
London SW1A 2HQ

Chair

Steve Smith

23 March 2020

Board Members

Bill Anderson

Ed Bye

Nic Guttridge

Lotus Hannon

Jessica Hobbs

Morgan Hopkins

Anna Thomson

Susanna White

Dan Zeff

Chief Executive

Andrew Chowns

Dear Chancellor,

Further to our letter of 19th March, Directors UK is calling again on the government to put in place further financial measures to support freelance and self-employed workers during the COVID-19 crisis.

We appreciate the important steps you took last week to put unprecedented packages in place to support businesses and specifically employees during this challenging time. However, there is rising concern that similar measures have not yet been made available to freelance and self-employed workers, who make up 15% of the UK workforce, or 5 million people, who are feeling extremely vulnerable to the financial impacts of COVID-19. We understand that the Government is reviewing the support for freelancers and the self-employed and we are at your disposal to give you any assistance we can in order to devise an appropriate and practical solution.

Our members, who are working television and film directors, are sending us a clear message about the immediate and direct impact COVID-19 has already had on their employment and there is significant concern around our members' ability to support themselves and their families. Over the weekend Directors UK conducted a survey of our members which received the highest number of responses from our working membership to date.

Results from the Directors UK member survey taken over the weekend:

- 96% of respondents say their work has already been restricted by COVID-19.
- Only 9.5% of respondents are continuing to get paid, and 3.5% say they are being paid at a reduced rate.
- Only 14% of respondents are still working.
- 75% of respondents feel they only have enough means to support themselves for a maximum of 2-3 months, with 9% of those in immediate financial difficulty.
- 81% of respondents have reported that they have already lost income.



- The top 3 things that respondents were most concerned about are:
 - loss of work
 - securing future work
 - managing their household bills.

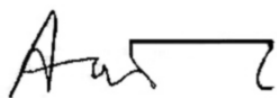
The most popular proposal for dealing with a loss of income is payment of a **“replacement income” for the crisis period, equivalent to a proportion of their average income across the last 3 years.**

Our findings also indicate that there is a real need for government to give a clear message as to how the creative industry workforce will be supported through this crisis. Despite the challenges they are facing, respondents rated their confidence in the industry’s ability to recover and in their securing of work in the future as 6 out of 10. Government action now is vital to ensuring that current confidence levels are maintained so that the industry is able to bounce back and make significant contributions to the economy once the crisis has passed.

It is crucial that government support for freelancers and the self-employed is as clear, consistent and as bold as it is for other parts of the workforce.

Guilds, unions and professional bodies are seen as trusted intermediaries by their members, and we welcome the government’s continued commitment to work with us on finding practical solutions. Directors UK will continue to support and contribute to the design and delivery of industry based solutions and is happy to share its member insights and findings.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Chowns', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Andrew Chowns
CEO, Directors UK