

The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
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Dear Chancellor

The ISM, founded in 1882, is the UK's professional body for musicians, supporting 10,000 performers, composers and educators across all genres. In our long history, which spans two world wars, we have never seen the profession suffering in the way they are now due to COVID-19.

Our membership is virtually entirely freelance. As such they are not entitled to any notice or redundancy pay. They are entirely dependent on one-off engagements such as concerts, gigs, theatre shows and private teaching. If musicians do not work, they do not get paid. Due to the COVID-19 virus they have lost all their work overnight and now cannot cover basic living costs such as food and rent.

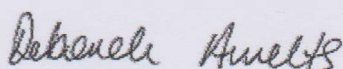
While the measures announced yesterday afternoon are welcome, particularly for employed workers, they do not address the issues facing the freelance music community, who have lost thousands of pounds' worth of work overnight as their engagements are cancelled as a result of government action.

The response of the Government is to ask this workforce to claim through the welfare system which is well known for its delays and poor rates of support. Even with an increase of £7bn through the welfare system, it is just not structured in a way which will support the vast number of musicians who are immediately out of work overnight.

Other countries, such as Italy and Canada, have put in place emergency funds to support the self-employed in these uncertain times. **The Government must urgently put in place a similar grant or emergency fund to assist freelancers with the loss of earnings.**

It is currently unclear how long the COVID-19 crisis will continue to impact the world. Freelance musicians need financial help now. Otherwise, this highly skilled and professional workforce which has spent years learning its craft - through no fault of its own - will not be able to survive.

Yours sincerely



Chief Executive
Incorporated Society of Musicians

Chief Executive:
Deborah Annetts