

### **Written evidence submitted anonymously**

I am a small business owner / Ltd Co Director

I have been running a successful little consultancy for 13 years

Switched from sole trader to Ltd Co in Dec 2019 on advice of accountants and therefore fall between the gaps.

I paid an average of circa £40k tax annually over that 13-year period.

Billed 10% of normal billings for period March – October 2020 against previous years – most of our clients postponed or cancelled bookings and work.

We are a business culture & engagement consultancy with a focus on events and conferences (bringing people together), we have not been able to operate normally and this is reflected in revenue.

We have zero pipeline of orders that we can rely on because of uncertainty (usually average of 70k – 100k rolling pipeline)

We don't qualify for grants, only debt i.e. All we are able to access is VAT Q1 deferral, Tax deferral or allowed to apply for BBL – basically all debt with very little or no revenue. We can't access universal credit either.

To add insult to injury the tone is changing at HMRC and we are being almost means tested and pushed into payment plans that are unrealistic. The irony being we are being asked for tax to pay the bill for support packages. We certainly require a far more conciliatory tone here and support, not blindly pushing for collection and not listening to our situations.

We are completely at our wits end and we just seem to be getting nowhere. The government do know we are out here because there are hundreds of thousands of us but seem to be ignoring us. It's just been put into the "too difficult box". To see yet more grant increases and furlough extensions and still only debt as help is soul destroying. We appreciate the need at the start to get the monies to those who need it the most but we are now 8 months in and something must be done now to help us as we are desperate.

All we hear is the same bog standard answers about the huge support package offered but the reality is , as you are aware , the only support package here is debt. All of this is debt is mounting up every month when we have little or no income! More and more debt every month and no view of being able to pay it back which is terrible to have hanging over you.

It just seems so grossly unjust. I realise its really tough at the moment for the Government and I actually think the Chancellor is doing a really good job but the number of us concerned here isn't just a few businesses ("we cant help every business") there are hundreds of thousands of us.

Surely HMRC can at least look at us as either individuals, sole traders and companies or directors and see our tax records for the past 3 years, 5 years, 10 years. Surely something other than just debt can be offered based on what people have paid in?

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It's also destroying mental health and relationships and we won't be here to help the economy bounce back. We need help before we end up folding , this just isn't sustainable.

Please be as creative with us as you have with others and come up with a way of backdating some support that isn't debt.

Thank you

*November 2020*