

Written evidence submitted anonymously

I am the Director of a Limited Company that was established in 2008 and delivers interim consultancy services to both public and private sector organisations. My partner is a co-Director who delivers research/admin support. We have no other employees. Our company has been successful and operated, unsupported, as a viable entity until the outbreak of the pandemic.

We have published annual accounts that show our liquidity and the split of revenue/overheads/profit/PAYE/dividends/corporation tax/VAT etc.

Neither myself nor my partner hold any shares or investments whatsoever in any other businesses and we do not receive any income at all except from our own small business. This can easily be proven by my chartered accountant and I would be happy to pay for a statement to be created to demonstrate this to Treasury (even though they have access to company records).

I am submitting this evidence for Government to review and change its damaging and discriminatory policy towards small businesses such as ours.

The Government have put in place a number of schemes to support employed and self-employed people but have steadfastly refused to support people like us even though we can prove we are not serial investors living off the back of dividend returns.

We are fully paid up on VAT and, as well as our PAYE and National Insurance Contributions (which I accept are different to those on PAYE alone) but also pay additional Corporation Tax which is not paid by PAYE earners. Given our business is consultancy, our overheads and capital expenditure are minimal meaning our exposure to Corporation Tax is very high indeed. We are happy to pay this and have never defaulted.

I have been unable to work as I have two underlying health conditions which have required me to shield. Although official Government advice has recently changed regarding shielding, my Doctor has advised me to continue to do so until further notice. This action means I cannot generate sales leads or fulfil consultancy duties. My partner also has an underlying condition that prevents her taking up alternative employment (our work patterns are flexible which means she can operate hours to suit her condition).

Since March, we have been unable to invoice any work and the outlook is bleak until market confidence returns.

In the meantime, we have received meagre Government support, cannot access benefits and feel utterly marginalised by deliberate and planned Government policy that ignores our situation and isolates us from the support that most people access across the UK.

We have survived in our life savings which were exhausted last month. I was due to pay a lump sum into pension plans at the end of March 2020 but held back as a result of covid/lockdown. We are now cashing in our pensions to support ourselves.

I wrote to my local MP asking for his support in pressuring Treasury but he was very passive indeed. Astonishingly, he pointed me towards Government loans schemes even though I declared I foresaw

no means of repaying public money and face avoidable and needless bankruptcy as a result of being marginalised.

If we were able to access furlough as may millions of people can then we would receive £2500 each per month. This would be incredibly helpful and would cover our monthly costs meaning we could stay afloat. I calculate we have missed out on approximately £45,000 that eligible others have received.

If policy does not change quickly then I believe the following will occur:-

- 1) We will exhaust company monies and have to file for bankruptcy
- 2) Outstanding Corporation Tax will not be paid and the UK will lose money
- 3) Outstanding PAYE/Self-assessment tax will not be paid and the UK will lose money
- 4) Two people will lose their jobs and, subsequently, our house. We support four children.
- 5) Two people will have spent the majority of their pension investments making us vulnerable in years to come
- 6) Two people will then need to be supported by Government which will cost the UK taxpayer
- 7) Associated industries (accountants, lawyers, employment advisors etc) will lose revenue from our business
- 8) The UK economy will lose access to expert and flexible consultancy skills at a time when productivity needs to ramp up significantly

I can demonstrate that our business is entirely viable. I genuinely believe that the pandemic will be overcome in the short to medium term and that the UK will need businesses like ours to fix the damage caused by Covid and to get it into better shape to handle Brexit.

I implore the Government to change its cruel policy and to extend that help enjoyed by millions of other citizens to myself and my partner. We do not ask for anything more other than others, simply to be helped as equals.

We will all have to contribute to pay back the debt built as a result of covid yet we have not been able to access support that created the debt in the first instance. That is totally unfair and immoral.

I respectfully request that Government acknowledge that we must all be treated equally and humanely and, purely from an economic perspective, be smart and recognise that small businesses bring speed and flexibility to the marketplace.

Many people are 'in this together', however, we simply are not.

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