



NUBSLI
Unite the Union
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To Whom It May Concern

We are the National Union of British Sign Language Interpreters and Translators (NUBSLI), and represent the Sign Language interpreting profession across the UK.

Most interpreters work on a self-employed basis and pay tax and national insurance. In the majority of cases, the current crisis has seen their income plummet to zero.

The government measures to pay 80% of salary for employed workers is welcome and reassuring for those in such positions. However, the situation for self-employed freelancers is drastically different, unfairly discriminatory and cannot be ignored.

The measures offered to the self employed thus far are:

- Universal Credit at a rate equivalent to statutory sick pay for employees, e.g., £94.25 per week
- Deferring of self-assessment tax payments on account until 2021

The figure of £94.25 represents a woefully low percentage of interpreters' usual earnings and it is unacceptably inequitable when compared with the measures for employees. The result will be a devastating impact on the lives of these people and their families as they find themselves no longer able to pay their day-to-day living expenses including, rent, mortgages, utility and food bills. In addition, they will still have to cover costs associated with their profession and self-employment; registration fees, insurance and mobile phones in order to ensure they can work again once the crisis comes to an end.

Many Sign Language Interpreters provide services in all areas of health care, social care, education and legal and judicial settings but they are not able to work now due to the mass cancellation of appointments and closing of public buildings. Furthermore, those interpreters who continue to work alongside professionals that are classed as 'key workers' in the current crisis should, where necessary, also be deemed to be 'key workers' and should be permitted access to the services that have been made available to said workers.

NUBSLI (National Union for British Sign Language Interpreters)
Standing up for interpreters; standing with the Deaf community.

In the longer term the lack of support to this group of workers could impact the future of the profession as a whole which would in turn have implications for the statutory obligations public and private service providers have for ensuring their services are accessible to the Deaf BSL using community.

We demand on behalf of our profession and those we work with that the government introduce measures to provide parity to self-employed people and guarantee 80% of their income to these vital workers.

Yours faithfully,

The NUBSLI Committee