

Organise

The key findings are:

- **94% of self-employed have lost 'a large chunk of income'**
- **Self-employed expect similar income protection as the employed - a minimum wage or 80% of previous income**
- **Universal Credit is not appropriate, as most self-employed people have their future taxes saved - but these are classed as savings so disqualify people from accessing financial support.**

And 59,400 people have signed this petition asking for an 'Emergency Minimum wage for freelancers and the self-employed'.

To the UK government,

Millions of us who are either self-employed or freelance are facing serious uncertainty in the face of Coronavirus (COVID-19). We're being forced into choosing between food and rent. It's even scarier for families or those with dependents.

Universal Credit takes five weeks and is nowhere near enough to support us. That's why we're asking for emergency legislation to:

1. Provide a minimum wage for freelancers and the self-employed.
2. Suspend tax payments for the self-employed and freelancers

You can see the running total of petition signers here:

<https://platform.organise.org.uk/campaigns/self-employed-minimum-wage>

"If the government could give us the same as they are giving the employed, plus extra time to pay our tax, then we may just make it!" - Lighting technician in live events (all work stopped now)

What impact is coronavirus having on your income?	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
It's wiping a large chunk of my income	8182	94
It's reducing my income a bit	399	5
It's making no difference	56	1
It's improving my income	10	0

"I'm a limited company, but my tax bill isn't huge. If we're talking about not paying corporation tax that would be a lifeline right now - it equates to about 8k, I've lost about that in gross work through March and April. It would probably see me through the 3 months of expected down time. But past that would then become a struggle if no work came in."

"Tax delays won't help much long term. 1. Most of the self employed save part of their earnings to pay tax. Most will now be spending that 'tax' money to live. It will be wiped out by

January 2021. 2. The Catch 22 problem is that if claiming universal credit the DWP will simply regard that hived away tax money as savings, and the claim will be rejected.”

“It feels important that there is parity for freelancers and PAYE employees. I appreciate that the mechanisms to help may be more complex, but nonetheless, we still pay the same taxes and have the same needs as employees. The government needs to find a way. Ideally, I would like to see a three month (or until the worst has passed) universal basic income for everyone during this period.”

If an emergency minimum wage was introduced for freelancers and the self-employed was introduced how much should it be per week?

“80% of the average for your last 3 years tax returns and/or P60's (if you haven't got 3 years worth of self assessment returns on file).”

“I would suggest something along the lines of what the Government is offering to those on PAYE ie. 80% of profit declared on recent self assessment tax return capped at the same level of £2500 per month which could easily be calculated and paid as a tax rebate.”

Is there anything else you want to add about what the government should be doing to help?

“If a minimum wage is not possible, I would like the government to guarantee the wages of self-employed people up to 80% of their reported HMRC net income (like Paye employees). £95 per week is inadequate and insulting considering how much tax we contribute to the economy.”

“I have no income now so anything that just allows me to survive during this time would help. Long term I want to ensure I can build my business up again.”

“I think the government are doing an amazing job in such difficult times. But finances as a self employed person, I can't afford no income coming in. Please help.”

“Unless the government treat us fairly we will have no option but to work, putting us and the NHS at risk. It's not fair. It is negligence for the government to put us in this financial position.”

Yours sincerely,

Nat Whalley
CEO of Organise