



Personal Managers' Association

23rd March, 2020

Dear Treasury Committee,

We write on behalf of the Personal Managers' Association, a membership organisation comprised of over 180 leading UK talent agencies representing actors, writers, directors, directors of photography, editors, production, make-up, costume, sound designers and others in the UK creative industries, most of whom are freelance.

While we appreciate there are a huge number of freelance and non-PAYE workers across the country in difficult circumstances, we are writing specifically with regard to our industry, which is a vital part of the UK's economy.

In 2018 the then Secretary of State for BEIS, the Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, said: "The creative industries... are an undoubted strength of our economy; indeed, they are at the heart of the nation's competitive advantage." And he pointed to the "£92bn of Gross Value Added (GVA), two million jobs and [growth] twice as fast as the economy as a whole." And he talked of his determination to "build on the UK's position as a global leader and strengthen its advantage as a creative nation by increasing the number of opportunities and jobs in the creative industries across the country, improving their productivity, and enabling us to greatly expand our trading ambitions abroad." This position is even stronger in the subsequent period.

You will be aware that in the past week theatres across the country have closed and most television productions and many films have shut down, immediately putting a majority of freelancers out of work and without any income for potentially many months. As has been pointed out in a letter to Treasury from television production companies, global success and reputation would be utterly impossible

without [freelancers]: “These are not optional or peripheral roles, but some of the most important jobs and some of the most talented people in the sector...Many are facing real economic distress and personal hardship at an already deeply unsettling time. Swift measures to bring financial aid to those who have lost income are vital – both on a human level and to ensure that this part of the country’s creative industries stands a chance of recovery once the crisis has passed.”

We understand that in Germany the means to pay freelance workers is already in place as an act of parliament, so they receive the amount they would have earned according to their filed accounts for the same period in the previous year.

Most of the UK freelance workers as described above have contracts in place, defining the fees due which have suddenly stopped, as contracts have been terminated with immediate effect (or possibly a week’s notice). It would be quite straightforward to apply the same rationale as with PAYE workers in the UK, so the freelancer with contract could be paid on the basis of the contracted fees, perhaps similarly to the value of 80% and with a limit of £2,500 (or whatever is put in place for PAYE workers).

Apart from the dreadful personal hardship foisted upon these people, the UK must protect the ability of this industry to be ready to get back into production as soon as possible. With the nation at home in front of their televisions, the value and necessity of this freelance work has never been more evident.

Kind regards,

Charlotte Knight, David Marsden and Fiona Williams
Co-Chairs, PMA Council