

Written evidence submitted by Rhys Thomas

I am a Self Employed Production and Tour Manager in the Theatre and Live Events industry. I haven't been eligible for Government Support in the form of the SEISS due to an average income of just over £50,000 over the three years taken into account. This represents my entire household income well over two years ago, for example last year's income was £35,000. I've used savings, tax savings and am currently selling possessions to meet established financial commitments such as mortgage etc. and to pay bills and food.

This has put a huge mental strain on myself and my family over the course of the pandemic. From Rishi Sunak's promise that 'no-one will be left behind', through the realisation that we, and 2.9m others, would be left behind, having only further forms of debt to fall back on. If it weren't for the support of ExcludedUK, I would have taken an even larger mental hit - as it is I understand that I'm part of a huge group, but this doesn't address the day-to-day mental impact from the Government's decision to exclude me from support.

The longer lockdown continues, the more infeasible the Government's suggestion that I should have sufficient savings to carry me through the Pandemic, currently I should have had 9 months of expenditure saved from 10 years trading, irrespective of what my savings may have been for over that period. This also ignores the fact that other groups aren't asked to rely on their savings. A Self-Employed couple earning £25k each would be supported - but my household income of £50k isn't. Casting aside those who worked a few less hours or a little less hard over that period and earned £49k, who are supported to the fullest extent available. There is also no comparison to the £50k cap within the Furlough scheme. My Employed peers are able to be supported to the maximum of £2500 per month. Those earning a few hundred pounds less than me are able to be supported to the maximum of £2500 per month. I am not, and have had to resort to limited industry grants in order not to lose my house, and to piling on debt in the form of mortgage holidays, bounce back loans and selling personal and business equipment that must be bought back again so as not to have a massive impact on the earning potential of myself and my business during any recovery period and beyond. Again the mental stress and it's impacts on family life, relationships and all aspects of my current pandemic experience cannot be understated. Alongside ExcludedUK and many other groups, I simply ask for parity - to be treated fairly.

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