

Written evidence submitted by Allison Gruner

I'm writing on behalf of my husband and myself as we are part of the freelance PAYE workforce in the UK Film and Television industry. We have found ourselves, like so many, out of work due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to our work schedule, we have also slipped through the cracks to qualify for most public aid packages.

My hope is this description of our situation sheds light on the specific circumstances that are affecting so many freelancers trying to maintain their finances in these difficult times.

I will outline in bullet points for clarity

- My husband works as an Assistant Location Manager and I take work as a Production Assistant or Music Supervisor depending on the production.
- We work primarily in The Northwest of England. Combining both our incomes, we make around £45,000 a year before taxes.
- We both finished very long contracts at the end of January 2020 with my husband due to start his next contract March 22nd and my next one April 7th. Both of these jobs were delayed due to the outbreak, as were the start dates of our contracts.
- Because our previous jobs had ended before February and we had not started our new contracts by the cut off point, we do not qualify for employee furlough through either company.
- I was denied Universal Credit due to my immigration status (I am American and my spousal BRP card permits me to work but with no access to public funds). My husband is a British citizen and we are still waiting on his Universal Credit results, due to come in April 27th.
- I don't believe my husband's Universal Credit payments will cover our mortgage let alone bills and food. We have a bit of family assistance but cannot rely on it.
- We are currently living off our savings and looking for part time work with grocery stores and farms however with the uncertainty of when our TV contracts will start up, it's been difficult to decide the best course of action.

I hope this will be helpful as I know we are not the only ones unable to utilize assistance and not feeling able to make informed decisions.

Please feel free to contact me with any clarifications or questions.