

## Written evidence submitted by Matt Norman

- What has been the immediate impact of Covid-19 on the sector?
- How effectively has the support provided by DCMS, other Government departments and arms-length bodies addressed the sector's needs?
- What will the likely long-term impacts of Covid-19 be on the sector, and what support is needed to deal with those?
- What lessons can be learnt from how DCMS, arms-length bodies and the sector have dealt with Covid-19?
- How might the sector evolve after Covid-19, and how can DCMS support such innovation to deal with future challenges?

### Overview:

I am a self-employed individual, working in the events and conferencing industry. I provide technical service and equipment hire to my clients. As such I run a (micro) small business, I have fixed cost overheads including Business vehicle (van) costs, insurance, accountancy fees, rent (non-rated, self-store type) to name a few. (These costs are usually met from the turnover of the business, before taxable profit is calculated).

### The Immediate Impact of Covid-19 on my sector:

Total loss of all revenue generating work as events were cancelled en-mass around the second week of March.

### How effectively has the support provided by DCMS, other Government departments and arms-length bodies addressed the sector's needs?

Currently (24/4/2020) none of the support provided has addressed my area of the sector's needs:

- Self-Employment help: Still waiting on this, no guarantee I will be eligible for until contacted by HMRC, does not address the loss of revenue that goes towards fixed costs that still need paying month on month, does not reflect last tax years taxable income.
- Rate relief package: Does not help the micro business with rent of lower cost non-rated premises e.g. self storage (suitable for a micro business).
- The events and entertainment industry has been almost completely shut down, but none of the help reflects the micro self-employed business that has business costs beyond the individual's taxable earnings. As an industry that uses a lot of self-employed skilled labour, help going to the larger companies that sub-contract self-employed 'free-lancers' does not filter down, it stops at their own PAYE employees.

**What will the likely long-term impact of Covid-19 be on the sector, and what support is needed to deal with those:**

In my opinion, currently, I think Covid-19 will cause the sector to shrink as events are not held or scaled back due to social distancing. I think there needs to be help in place to 'weather the storm' beyond the short term 'lock-down' period, to keep skilled people in the industry for when it properly recovers.

**What lessons can be learnt from how DCMS, arms-length bodies and the sector have dealt with Covid-19? :**

Covid-19 is a new and unprecedented crisis, I think it is too soon to be judging what lessons need to be learnt. The problems in the short term are by virtue (potentially) of this nature, the longer term impact on the sector needs (in my opinion) looking at and assessing to see what lessons can be learnt, but we are not that far down the road.

**How might the sector evolve after Covid-19, and how can DCMS support such innovation to deal with future challenges? :**

A very good question!

To support innovation and future challenged the DCMS, in my opinion, should be getting to know the different areas of this sector, most importantly the small and micro business that make up the core of it, to be better placed and informed for the future, and to be able to advise core government better (I currently feel the self-employed person, running a micro business has been very much forgotten about with the half-assed self-employed help and the lack of access to shorter term help such as universal credit, as been self-employed and running a micro business, not just been a disguised employee as a lot of labour only self-employed are, funds for business activities (tax, vat, capital spending etc) is all lumped in to the one with no legal separation, thus exceed criteria like savings. Three months to even find out if one invited to receive help is a long time without any income coming in, add to that the help on offer does not address turnover and business costs that are still mounting while all this is going on).