

## Written evidence submitted by Stuart Blake

### Support to businesses and Financial services

- What gaps are there for businesses within the schemes?

I am submitting this evidence both as an individual and as a director of my own company. I work within the creative industries, one of the UK's most important sectors. The live events part of that industry has been severely impacted. It relies on large gatherings of live audiences and so will probably be one of the last to emerge from lockdown.

The sector relies heavily on its freelance talent and many of these, like me, have been encouraged to set up their own limited companies. This means that I pay myself minimal wages and survive largely on dividends paid to myself by my own company.

There are currently over 2 million freelancers in the UK, the vast majority of whom operate like this through their own companies. **At the moment there is zero government support for us. This is more than 'a gap', it's a gaping hole!**

While the self-employed have received a grant, we get nothing. If we furlough ourselves we receive minimal payment in lieu of wages and cannot take on any work that might emerge.

The government claims it is too difficult to differentiate between unearned dividends and dividends paid by directors to themselves. I cannot see why this should be the case we have to submit annual returns.

I thank you for your attention,

Stuart Blake

*May 2020*