

Written evidence from the Association of Scottish Genealogists & Researchers in Archives

Thank you for your response and request for further evidence.

The recent announcement by the Chancellor's statement on support for self-employed is welcome and will be of benefit to a number of our members.

The proposed grant will not be paid until June at the earliest so it could be that there are still some individuals who will suffer hardship in the interim period so any action that could be taken to enable an earlier payment would be beneficial. The alternative in the interim is for those who need funds to apply for Universal Credit, the relaxing of the minimum income floor is welcome. The application process for Universal Credit should be as straightforward and timely as possible as there is a 5 week waiting period for any payment but where there is eligibility it is understood that an advance payment can be made which will be paid back over a period of time.

The response of banks and other financial institutions has not been clear or consistent and some self employed are left wondering if they will incur late payment charges on loans or overdrafts, fees for returned payments where account funds are not available, or paying increased overdraft charges in light of the recent change in the way authorised/unauthorised overdraft charges are calculated. The Bank of England and FCA should take the direction and compel banks to be open, transparent and sympathetic to its customers. In the interim any issues that a business customer has with his/her bank should not result in any penalty or adverse credit rating.

Although we realise that determining the period on how long this situation will remain is not an absolute, we would welcome re-assurance from the Government that the grant payment covering 3 months will be extended above the 3 month period if our members are still prevented from working through reasons over which they have no control.

Going forward, our members' clientele will have also suffered financial loss and there will be some reluctance to make financial commitments to purchase our services which will have an effect on gaining new commissions when the situation returns to normal and business as usual can be resumed. We would welcome any consideration that the Government could give to helping self-employed to be able to access capital investment by way of grants, interest free loans, deferred tax payments and an extension to the cessation of the Universal Credit minimum income floor for an extended period for gainfully self-employed individuals.