

Written evidence submitted by Nadeen Khalifeh

I am writing to you as one of the many millions of self employed who seem to have fallen through every crack and am still getting no support. I have spoken to my local MPs office for what could must have been the 100th time since all this COVID situation started, but still with no return call from Scott Benton himself.. When workers were granted 80% pay on furlough and job security, us self employed thought we would have some security too. After the announcement that the SEISS grant would help us it soon became clear that many of us would fall through the cracks. I started my business in [2018](#), and like most self employed I heavily reinvested in my business for it to be able to grow. And only being able to use my [18/19](#) tax return for the SEISS calculation, I was granted a whole £19 on the scheme. I am still waiting for help. I have been told today that despite the fact that the Top up to local business fund grant is meant to help people like myself, I will not qualify as I do not have a regular trading pitch. I work at events all over the country. I like countless others are being pushed to the brink. My mental state is literally deteriorating day by day. My finances are suffering and in 3 months I will not be able to afford my home which is where I keep my stock and other business assets. I have been trying to work from home, but the income has not been enough to cover overheads and would have wiped out any Universal Credit I would have been entitled to if I had claimed for that instead of staying on Tax Crefits while I attempted to build a second, more locally focused business. After more than 150 job applications I got told by a prospective employer that they would never hire me because of my age, because its around [£5000](#) difference on their wages per employee every year. Jobs are hard to get under normal circumstances especially in an area like Blackpool where I live, and the majority round here are seasonal, hotels, bars etc. Which of course have all been closed. The announcement today that the SEISS scheme will continue brings little comfort to those in my situation, neither did the suggestion that markets can reopen from June 1st. Over £3000 worth of my show deposits have been rolled over to next year as these are annual events, and the idea of trying to sell my products which are handmade bath and home products from 2m away from the public and from behind a screen is just not feasible. My sales rely on customer interaction, of them being able to pick up and smell the products. Please find some sort of solution and support for those of us who are in a similar situation. There are many like myself who are looking at the very real possibilities of losing our homes and our businesses in the very near future if something is not done.

From and on behalf of the millions of self employed,

June 2020