

Written evidence submitted by Adam Aiken

I have already submitted evidence to your inquiry on the impact of the coronavirus support packages. My reference number was XQSO47353.

I now have a follow-up comment I would very much like to be presented to the committee following the publication this week of your recommendations.

Thank you

First, I am extremely grateful for the committee's work. At times it has felt that no one was listening to us, but it's clear that our voices have been heard by the committee.

However, I am concerned about Paragraph 53 of the report, which states:

We call on the Government to recognise the impact of the coronavirus on PAYE freelance workers and establish a system of support which ensures that this group of people can access financial support during the crisis. We recommend it gives this group access to financial support that equates to 80 per cent of their average monthly income earned in the first 11 months of the 2019–20 tax year, based on their PAYE tax record in year. This support should be available up to a total of £2,500 per month (as for salaried employees).

That would help a lot of people, but it would still leave many people excluded.

In my case, I have been denied access to the self-employed support scheme because more than half of my freelance income over the past three years was paid via PAYE. But my PAYE contract ended in June 2019, so my PAYE income for 2019-20 was low.

(I received only a small amount of PAYE income in 2019-20 but even less through self-employment – it was a low-earning year for me all-round, as sometimes happens with freelancers.)

As a result, I don't qualify for the existing government scheme. And although I would qualify for some support under your Paragraph 53 recommendation, I would be entitled to only about £40 a week.

I don't understand why the recommendation in Paragraph 53 won't allow a three-year average to be used, as is the case with the existing scheme for the majority of the self-employed community.

June 2020