

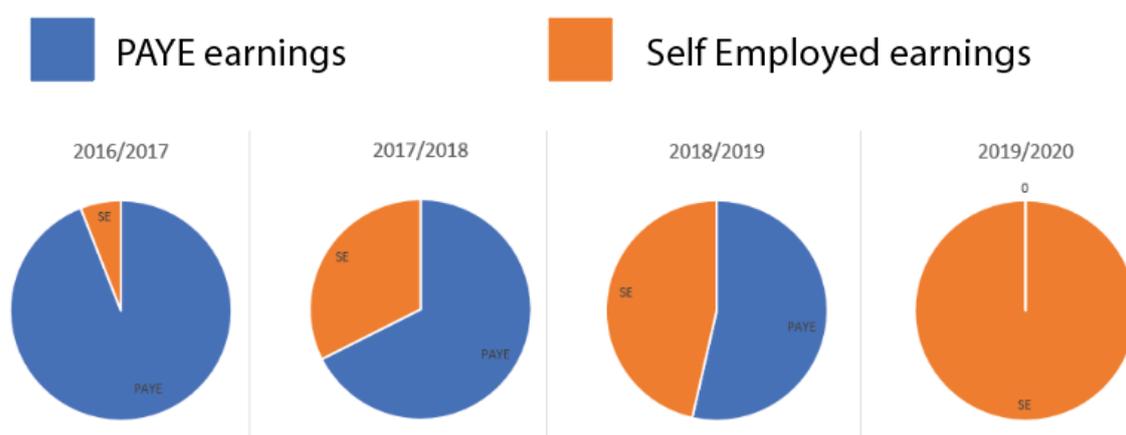
Written evidence submitted by Kevin Payne

I am submitting this evidence due to the fact that I am not eligible for any government support during the pandemic.

I was a primary school teacher for 17 years from 2001 to 2018 when I decided to leave to follow my dream career as a professional children's author and illustrator. When I made the decision to leave teaching, I did so gradually moving from full-time teaching to part-time teaching and then finally leaving completely in August 2018.

During the years 2016-2019 therefore my PAYE earnings as a teacher outweighed my earnings from self employment and this is the reason that I have not received any government support. The 50% rule has crippled me and left me out to dry. Even if I had been included, my self-employed earnings were only a very small fraction of what I had earned from teaching in 2016-2019. I wonder why it is that I would only be expected to receive 80% of 40% of my income when others workers are getting 80% of their whole income. Why can it not be the case that our entire earnings are taken into consideration?

This graph represents my issue:



Entitled to = £0

Are we all in this together?

At the moment that is not a problem as I have not received anything.

Having been self employed 100% since Sept 2018 my business has grown from strength to strength and this year was promising to be a successful one. A large portion of my income comes from school visits as a poet and illustrator where I take workshops with hundreds of children to help them improve their work. I had been due into a number of schools from March-July 2020 including trips to Slovakia and China which would have seen a return of over £7000. With these being cancelled and no government support this has left a huge gaping hole in my finances. I have a family to support and the stress of looking for work and the worries of the future have been a huge weight hanging above me.

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Government support would have meant I could focus on home schooling and providing for my children whereas the complete lack of support has meant I have been trying to look for work and I feel emotionally drained.

I believed it when we were told we were 'in this together' and then horrified when the message quickly became 'we can't help everybody'. I feel totally let down and undervalued for the contributions I have brought to society as a teacher and now as a creative worker.

As eluded to earlier with my graph, my hope would be that HMRC could provide a grant worth 80% of my average earnings from the tax years 2016-2019 including both PAYE and self-employment as I paid tax on both. They are equally important as income. 80% of 40% of your annual income is still insufficient.

Alternatively, my accounts for 2019-2020 have been drafted with my accountants and are ready for submission within the next week. I have been 100% self employed since Sept 2018! Ludicrous that now, nearly 2 years later, it means nothing.

Failing that, then a flat grant of £10,000 would be a fair way of compensating those who have missed out if it really is too complicated as we have been told.

I feel degraded, embarrassed and humiliated by the treatment I have received. I feel like my dignity has been stripped. The only thing that is helping me through this is belonging to ExcludedUK who have shown compassion, understanding and a determination to put this incredible injustice right.

I need help now, not in a few months, it is now. The Chancellor said 'sorry they didn't get what they wanted' – it is what we need not what we want. We need an income, we need consideration and we need a solution now.

June 2020