

Written evidence submitted by Deloris Collins

I am writing to you to ask you to do everything in your power to make sure that freelancers and the self employed are supported by the Government and that none of us are left to fall through the cracks of the support offered.

I writing to you because I have fallen through the cracks of support.

The jobs that would have started this year were all cancelled. I had a commercial in March and a Feature film booked to start on the 1st of April. All my work has been cancelled which means I just lost weeks of work costing me over £10000 because of the corona virus. Yet I am not eligible for any Government support schemes because of a loophole.

Despite paying tax for over a decade like other full time employees. with no money coming in and no help, I will lose everything I have worked so hard for. Yet I am penalised just because as a freelancer I earn through doing many short term contracts instead of 1 long PAYE contract.

It is because of the governments own rules that I am falling between the cracks of the two schemes on offer, as I and many other Freelancers have been following their guidance as to which situations we come under PAYE and in which situations we come under Self -Employed. Why do I have to eat into my savings when PAYE people don't?

- I am not eligible for SEISS because more than half my income was taxed via PAYE between 2016 to 2019 tax years.
- I can't claim furlough because I, like thousands of other Freelancers, are being penalised through no fault of our own, just because the majority of my work falls under newly self employed bracket in the year 2018/2019.
- Why is the Chancellors support for freelancers based on a timing's lottery? I am excluded from help merely because I seem to be both PAYE and Self Employed at the wrong time?
- I can't claim SEISS because the Government have said that they only count Tax years from 2016 to 2019 for which the majority of those years I was on casual termed PAYE contracts. But I cannot be furloughed because all of my last jobs were Self-Employed.

As a freelancer we do not get sick pay, we do not get pensions, we often look like we have high savings, but this is often for buying equipment essential to my business, my tax bill, my pension and my dreams for saving for a home of my own. I had also planned and hoped I could get my own place this year and start a family but that dream has been absolutely devastated.

This is the savings I worked all my life for. The savings that without being included in any government schemes I am expected to live off during this pandemic. And yet we are the forgotten ones will be expected to pay the price of the financial support put in place for others, via tax in the coming years whilst getting nothing back.

I on average around 30 thousand a year. If I was eligible for either scheme I would be getting £2500 a month. Instead I get £0. The loss of my savings leaves me vulnerable, and has a negative impact on my mental health. My savings are my only lifeline should I become ill or unable to work. without these I will be in a state of constant anxiety as a freelancer.

I am asking you to help because the chancellors support scheme is incredibly flawed.

- My proposal is the government identify those of us who have become self Employed during this tax year of 2019 to 2020 for of which cannot claim Furlough or SEISS and

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help support us.

- And when looking at our tax records over 2016 - 2019 to include all earnings, both from PAYE and self-employed as one when determining support.

If the government can tax both income equally from our mixed PAYE and Self-employed, there is no reason they can't use the same information on our Self Assessment forms to calculate our support.

I am a BAME member of the film Industry not only has the lack of support impacted my mental health. I am the only black female Digital Film Technician that I know of in the Film Industry and without support from this government I am seriously consider leaving the film Industry. Which directly undermines any previous work done to increase diversity in this country.

Please help to honour the promise that we are all in this together with action to help me and the 3 million others who have fallen between the gaps.

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