

Written evidence submitted by Colleen Pearson (Specialist Dyslexia Assessor)

I'm totally self employed and have been so for 10 years. I am an assessor for specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyspraxia. This involves spending an average of 3 hours with a student or individual carrying out a variety of tests, and cannot be done reliably or safely with social distancing or wearing a mask. I do assessments for various clients and individuals. One of my clients is a University but they suspended assessments at the beginning of lockdown. I also do assessments for access arrangements for examinations for a local college, but this work dried up when exams were cancelled. I am **not** an employee - I have no contract, no security, no guaranteed work, no holiday pay and no pension. They refer students to me and provide a room. I supply all test materials and have to pay for my professional registration and CPD. I invoice the university for assessments carried out. The university then pays me via payroll and deducts tax as PAYE. They started doing this a few years ago - I don't know why as I had previously just been paid without deductions, and I had no choice in the matter. Unfortunately, HMRC are treating this as 'non-trading income' and as this, combined with a small occupational pension, is more than 50% of my total income, they have said that I am ineligible for SEISS. I have been through a review and have not been successful. I think this is unfair. My status at the University is **not** employment, as explained above. I have always explained this on my tax return. Classing it as employment is, frankly, perverse. I have not been furloughed - I have asked about this but have been refused.

I am nearly 63 and have worked for all of my adult life apart from a few months on two occasions during the 70s and 80s. I have paid my tax and national insurance. I feel totally let down. I do not qualify for universal credit. The last few months would have been a busy time of year and I have lost thousands. Although I now have some much reduced income from online assessments, I have lost a lot of income. I have savings and a small pension and am aware that I am better off than some people, but this is not the point. The self employed scheme is not means tested so my financial position is irrelevant. Boris Johnson said the Government would put its "arms around every single worker" during the coronavirus crisis as he promised to help the self-employed. I, and others in my position (including other assessors), have not been helped. I feel totally abandoned by this government and am very angry.

June 2020