Dear Mr Sunak

Support for Self-employed freelancers in the creative industries

Yesterday, I co-hosted, along with Centre for London, a digital round table with freelancers in the creative industries, trade unions, creative organisations and others, to discuss the plight facing creative freelancers across the county, but particularly in London.

Half of the creative workforce in London is self-employed or freelance, and according to the Creative Industries Federation last week, at least 50% have seen all of their future work cancelled. This number is likely to be higher now. As you know, the majority of people working in creative jobs earn below the average salary in London, with some far below that. A freelance dancer, for example, earns only around £10,000 on average per annum.

For the cultural and creative sector, the devastation caused by the COVID-19 crisis will be deep and it will last a long time. Cultural and creative organisations rely on significant forward planning, convening audiences and a seasonality that is being devastated by the cancellation of whole seasons and large events such as Glastonbury. Support for the many freelancers and self-employed people working in this sector must last a long time, or many will leave the sector entirely once the crisis is over, and our world-leading cultural and creative industries may never recover.

I understand that your team are working on solutions for self-employed people and will announce measure on Thursday. I urge you to ensure that the support gets to those in most need immediately so that there is a safety net and no-one feels they must travel to work risking spreading the virus against Government advice.

We have identified three things that the Government can do to support creative self-employed workers. They are:

1. **Equal Rights**: Guarantee self-employed and freelancers and precariously employed people in the sector equal rights as those offered to employees under the Job Retention Scheme, and ensure that no-one falls through the cracks. We fully endorse the proposal a Temporary Income Protection Fund to support freelancers through the Coronavirus crisis put forward by IPSE and the Creative Industries Federation.
2. **Urgency:** Ensure that systems are in place to get money to freelancers and the self-employed as a matter of urgency, and remain for as long as the effects of this crisis continue.

3. **Long Term Reform:** Work with the industry to identify long-term solutions that address the systemic inequalities and insecurities faced by freelancers and the self-employed that this crisis has exposed.

Creative freelancers are ready and willing to step up to the challenges faced by the whole country. Many have already begun identifying how they continue to support the creative economy through digital platforms and provide solace and entertainment to the country, but to be clear, this will not provide replacement income.

The Mayor and I stand ready to do whatever we can to support creative self-employed freelancers, but they need financial help immediately to ensure they can pay the bills.

Yours sincerely,

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**Justine Simons OBE**  
Deputy Mayor of London, Culture and the Creative Industries

cc The Rt Hon Oliver Dowden MP, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Centre for London