



Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

By email

14 December 2021

Dear Chancellor

Supporting self-employed workers

We are writing to you about financial support for self-employed and freelance workers following the tightening of current COVID restrictions and potential for further restriction of the economy in the coming weeks.

While we clearly hope that further restrictions are avoided, given the Health Secretary's comments that they cannot be ruled out, workers and businesses will be concerned about the future. We need to give business stability and the support to be open and trading safely, but we must also contemplate what happens if the government imposes restrictions that actually or effectively closes them.

Businesses and workers across hospitality, events and creative industries and the night-time economy are rightly concerned about the impact of the latest restrictions on their ability to serve customers and protect jobs. While public health is the highest priority, further measures to restrict movements cannot be undertaken without matching support for businesses and workers.

There have been calls for business support and the return of flexible support for workers, and media reports suggest these are rightly under consideration by your department. At the same time there has been little commentary on the significant impact that economic restrictions have on self-employed workers.

We applauded the work the Treasury carried out last year when you declared proudly that "nobody will be left without hope". Yet many self-employed workers were excluded from the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme and other measures provided by government.

We are concerned that self-employed workers again appear to be at the back of the queue when it comes to planning for any further financial disruption to our everyday lives. Already, many Prospect members in the creative and events industries, represented by our Bectu sector, have expressed concerns about their economic prospects as projects face uncertainty and large parts of the economy feel anxious about what comes next.

We would strongly urge you to work with freelance unions and other interests to ensure that self-employed workers are at the heart of government plans to protect health, jobs and livelihoods.

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We have made it so far through this crisis by working together – business, unions, the voluntary sector and government. This spirit of social partnership has been about providing the broadest shoulders to carry people through these difficult times.

We look forward to your answer and ask once again that you act now to avert irreparable damage to personal finances and to our economy.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Clancy". The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Mike Clancy
General Secretary

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philippa Childs". The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Philippa Childs
Head of the Bectu sector of Prospect