



Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society

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

24 March 2020

Dear Rishi Sunak

Re: Our work and what more can be done for authors, writers and freelancers

At this time of great difficulty, I am writing from the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS) to let you know what we are doing to support authors and writers right now, and what we hope you might be able to do to help freelance workers, as most of our members are.

ALCS distributing money to authors

Every year, as a not-for-profit-organisation, ALCS pays out millions of pounds collected for use of their works to our membership of over 100,000 authors in every constituency in the country. This money derives from the provision of copyright licences enabling access to essential materials for the education, business and public administration sectors. ALCS payments provide authors with critical, additional funding at a time when overall levels of authors' earnings have seen a steady decline. For authors, many of whom work on a freelance basis, the economic impact of the current health crisis will exacerbate an already precarious financial situation.

These payments are managed in twice-yearly instalments, and the distribution due **this month** is going ahead with nearly **£24 million** being paid out to around 90,000 authors. We have also moved our office to remote-working now to ensure we can safely send out these funds at a time when many will need them more than ever.

The Authors' Emergency Fund

In addition to the above, ALCS has now contributed significantly to the **Authors' Emergency Fund**, which was launched last week in response to the growing health crisis. We are proud to join the Society of Authors, the Royal Literary Fund, the T S Eliot Foundation in partnership with English PEN and Amazon UK in creating this fund to support writers in real financial hardship right now.

We are sharing details of this programme through multiple channels including [our website](#) and [social media](#), and the grant application process is being managed by [the Society of Authors on their website](#).

What the Government can additionally do

The recently announced support for people in employment is, of course, very welcome, but we also need to make sure that freelancers are included in plans for an income guarantee.

Many authors and writers – who form the bedrock of our successful creative industries – subsist on low incomes, whilst often doing second or third jobs to make ends meet, sources of work which have also widely dried up.

Freelancers have lost huge amounts of income now as a result, and while current plans are generous to full time employees, there is no equity for the self-employed. They also have themselves and their families to feed and, while we understand that this may be a huge and difficult group to reach, as our efforts above show, something can be done to help.

We hope that you can take action on this, and if you have any questions or if we are able to support your efforts at this time in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We would also like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for your measures in the budget to remove VAT from electronic publications. This is a measure we have long advocated as a matter of fairness to many readers and we are happy to see this positive action taken.

More information on our efforts on behalf of our many members can be found on our website at: alcs.co.uk.

With best wishes and yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara Ann Hayes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'B'.

Barbara Ann Hayes

Deputy Chief Executive, Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society