



**Authors'
Licensing and
Collecting
Society**

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

4 June 2020

Dear Chancellor

Re: Extension of the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS)

Following my letter of 18 May, I am writing to thank you for the extension announced on 29 May to the SEISS which will clearly be of further benefit in these difficult times to freelance workers in the creative sector, including authors and writers among ALCS' 100,000 plus members.

We look forward to the further guidance on 12 June, which we will publicise. As you will be aware, the self-employed in the creative industries have already been hard-hit, with multiple sources of income drying up and the future desperately uncertain. This has been evidenced by several membership surveys across the sector so far, including from the Society of Authors, Directors UK, the Musicians' Union and the Association of Illustrators.

While welcoming the extension, we are concerned that the eligibility criteria remain the same, leaving many without support or the fairest of treatment. We would continue to urge you, therefore, to consider these concerns by:

- Removing the 50% of income from self-employment threshold and taking previous earnings from other part-time sources into account, as people have in any event to show that they have been adversely affected by the crisis;
- Taking gross income into account, not net profits, given the monthly caps of £2,500 and £2,190 for each of the grants, as the scheme disadvantages freelancers with fixed ongoing expenses, such as workspace or equipment rent;
- Allowing all the recently self-employed to benefit, on the basis of expedited 2019/20 tax returns, as HMRC has already now been sending these out for submission;
- Tapering the scheme, so that there is no £50,000 'cliff edge', as many in the creative industries living in high cost areas such as London and the South East are not super-wealthy and may not have substantial savings to draw on;
- Extending the scheme to the self-employed operating through personal service companies and taking income through dividends, given again that there is a monthly cap on the grants available under the scheme; and
- Matching the time period covered by the SEISS extension to that under the Job Retention Scheme (JRS), to the end of October, not August, so that freelancers and the self-employed are again treated similarly to employees.

Clearly, the creative sector will be one of several which will take time to recover from this crisis, so we would urge you, too – in co-operation with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport – to consider further support for the future, including additional funding to the Arts Council, as urged recently by the DCMS Select Committee.

With best wishes and yours sincerely

Barbara Ann Hayes

Deputy Chief Executive, Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society