

Submission to the Treasury Select Committee by 245 West End & Orchestral Musicians

13 May 2020

Economic Impact of Coronavirus

Submission Authors

Please see Annex A.

Submission Remit

Further to the Treasury Select Committee's call for evidence this submission attempts to address the following questions in relation to the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme:

- Where has Government support been too generous and where has it not been generous enough?
- What gaps in coverage still remain and are changes required to increase their effectiveness?
- How should the Government prioritise which continuing sectors and groups to support as time goes on and ongoing support is needed?

Submission Summary

- There are substantial gaps in the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, leaving 1.2 million self-employed workers – around a quarter of the self-employed workforce – without any form of government help, including the country's leading West End and orchestral musicians who are suffering immense hardship;
- There is no basis for applying an eligibility past earnings "cap" of £50,000 for self-employed workers, without there being a similar cap for PAYE workers. We submit that it should be removed, tapered or at the very least raised to £200,000 so that it matches what the Chancellor set out when he announced the scheme;
- Live performance venues were the first businesses to shut their doors and will be the last to open, likely remaining out of bounds for many months given that the performance of live music and the gathering of audiences is the antithesis of social distancing. Therefore we submit that those who work in the music industry should be entitled to some very specific and targeted help so that we avoid decimating the British music industry;
- A lot of attention has been paid to UK sport but we must be equally vigilant when it comes to protecting our culture. Otherwise there will be no live music to return to at the end of the lockdown.

The Current Gap in the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme

On 26th March the Chancellor announced the above scheme but only made it available to those with a "trading profit of less than £50,000 in 2018-19 or an

average trading profit of less than £50,000 from 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19.”¹

The Chancellor claimed that, “Of the people [the scheme] does not cover, those last 5%, those above the income threshold we set, their average incomes are about £200,000.”²

First, the scheme was widely reported at the time, including by the BBC, to cover 3.8 million self-employed workers.³ According to the Office for National Statistics, “[b]y the fourth quarter (Oct to Dec) of 2019, there were more than 5 million self-employed people in the UK.”⁴

It is therefore difficult to get to the bottom of the Chancellor’s 5 per cent claim. In our view, this scheme provides coverage for far fewer self-employed workers than the government thinks, failing to provide any coverage for over 1.2 million self-employed workers – around a quarter of the self-employed workforce.

Second, self-employed musicians like us – who are not eligible under the scheme – do not have average earnings of more than £200,000 a year or anything close to that. As West End and orchestral musicians our average take home pay puts us just above the income threshold and as a result we, and many people like us in other professions, are receiving no help whatsoever.

We of course understand the complexities in all of this and realise how important it is that the British taxpayer does not foot the bill for those who simply don’t need the support. And we realise how many other pressing demands there are for public money.

But if the basis for excluding musicians like us from receiving government support is that we allegedly earn £200,000, there is a fundamental information gap at the heart of government policy.

Further, if the aim is to prevent those earning £200,000 from claiming government support, it makes very little sense to set the eligibility requirement at £50,000, rather than something closer to £200,000. If the cap is set at past earnings of £50,000, those with past earnings of £50,000 are quite obviously going to be affected. This may, of course, be the government’s aim but ministers should be honest about the effects of the policy so that it can be debated properly in the public domain.

¹ Chancellor gives support to millions of self-employed individuals, 26 March 2020, Government Website, [link](#)

² Self-employed to have 80% of average earnings paid for by the government to help with impact of coronavirus, ITV News, 26 March 2020, [link](#)

³ Coronavirus: UK government unveils aid for self-employed, BBC News, 26 March 2020, [link](#)

⁴ Coronavirus and self-employment in the UK, Office for National Statistics, updated 17 April 2020, [link](#)

We also cannot understand why there is an eligibility requirement of £50,000 for self-employed workers, but no similar cap for PAYE workers.

The government's scheme for PAYE workers says that if you were at risk of being fired, they will pay 80 per cent of your pay cheque up to £2,500 a month, whatever salary you are on – even if it was a six figure one. For the self-employed the government will do the same – except if at any point in the last three years you earned around £50,000 or more in a year.

The self-employed are being barred from receiving support to cover the basic necessities in life on the basis of what they earned as far back as April 2016, before the EU Referendum even took place! In the meantime, those with conventional jobs, and in some cases six figure salaries, are entitled to 80 per cent of whatever they earned in February 2020.

Just as with a PAYE job, a self-employed worker's past earnings have already been spent on mortgage and rent payments, utility and food bills. So we struggle to understand why we are being treated so differently.

Thousands of self-employed contractors like us are suffering immense hardship and we don't see why we are any less deserving of support when our workplaces have been completely shut down.

We realise that this scheme is not there to replace lost income, but to ensure basic survival needs are met. But doesn't the maximum take home pay under both the PAYE and self-employed scheme of £2,500 already do all the necessary capping to ensure that everyone has enough to survive whilst running up the lowest possible bill for the British taxpayer?

In our view the £50,000 eligibility requirement should be removed or at the very least the Treasury should examine options to taper the support for those who have previously earned £50,000 if this historic level of earnings is seen as relevant in any way. This will ensure that musicians receive the vital financial cover they and their families so desperately need over the next difficult few months.

The Future of the Music Industry

It's becoming increasingly clear that life will not be returning to normal any time soon.

Last week the First Secretary of State, Dominic Raab, talked of a "new normal" and whilst we may be just beginning the early stages of a phased approach to opening our economy, this "new normal" won't involve us getting our social lives back. For musicians that means no work.

At the weekend the Prime Minister suggested some parts of the hospitality industry could re-open "at the earliest by July" subject to "a series of big ifs", including the need to "enforce social distancing". But in the follow up document, *Our Plan To Rebuild, The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy*, it is clear that this only applies to "food service providers, pubs and

accommodation” and specifically rules out those venues that are “by design, crowded and where it may prove difficult to enact distancing”.⁵ For musicians, it is doubtful that large indoor events will be possible for the rest of 2020 as social distancing is here to stay.

By its very nature, live musical performance requires musicians to stand or sit together in close proximity – partly because staging areas limit distancing but also because musicians need to be able to see and hear each other as part of a live performance. And having people sitting alongside each other in rows of seats will be impossible to reconcile with the two-metre rule. So live performance venues are likely to be out of bounds for many months.

Concert halls, theatres, jazz clubs and other live music venues were the first businesses to shut their doors (with many closing and cancelling shows and performances before the official lockdown) and will be the last to open them. They will be at the bottom of the government’s priority list and given that it will be such a long time before people are willing to congregate as an audience, given the power and consistency of the government’s “stay at home” message, venues and producers are likely to be extremely cautious about investing and encouraging people back to work.

The music industry is unlike any other. Whilst a pub, hotel or restaurant may ultimately find ways to comply with the rules, it will be impossible for the live music industry to do so.

So it is our view that, unless we want to see a decimation of the UK music industry, there needs to be some very specific and targeted help for those who work in it, especially for the musicians who have received no help whatsoever under the current scheme.

Conclusion

We are not criticising the government’s choices when it comes to public health and protecting the population from the scourge of coronavirus. And there is no doubt that British workers have been given an incredible amount of support during the coronavirus crisis.

Everyone has been affected by the coronavirus, with no part of the economy left untouched or unaffected by it. As the Chancellor has often said, the government cannot protect every business and every household. But that should not prevent him from trying and nor should it prevent him from adapting in the face of injustice or the near annihilation of an entire industry.

One violinist (and signatory to this submission) - a mother of three with elderly parents in need of support – said that she felt “absolutely hopeless” when the terms of the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme were announced, adding that “my family will be broken”.

⁵ Our Plan To Rebuild, The UK Government’s COVID-19 recovery strategy, page 31-32

Another said that she did not understand “why I am somehow less important than others who earn under £50k”. It is unclear as to why the government is treating self-employed musicians so harshly.

Nobody wants to get through the coronavirus only to find that we’ve got no live music to dance to, sing to or watch at the end of it all – but that’s exactly where we’re heading. A lot of attention has been paid to UK sport – and rightly so – but we’ve got to be equally vigilant when it comes to protecting our culture.

The West End contributes billions to the UK economy and we have some of the finest and most talented musicians in the world here in the UK, generating huge tax revenues for public services. They will be instrumental not only in getting our country back on its feet again, but in reminding us what life is supposed to be about.

ANNEX A

This submission has been written by 245 of the UK’s top West End and orchestral musicians, including:

- almost all the musicians from the following West End show bands: Mamma Mia, 9 to 5, Hamilton, Tina Turner The Musical, & Juliet, Les Miserables, The Lion King, Pretty Woman, Waitress, Phantom of the Opera, Dear Evan Hansen, The Book of Mormon, Matilda, Only Fools and Horses, Aladdin, The Prince of Egypt, Motown The Musical, Wicked, Mamma Mia, City of Angels, Mary Poppins, Miss Saigon, Billy Elliot, Dreamgirls, Adrian Mole, Kinky Boots, Evita, The Boyfriend, Back to the Future, School of Rock and The King and I;
- dozens of musicians from the following orchestras: London Sinfonietta, London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia, BBC Symphony Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic, BBC Opera Orchestra, Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, The Academy of St Martin in the Fields, Birmingham Royal Ballet Orchestra, City of London Sinfonia, London Chamber Orchestra, London Metropolitan Orchestra and Britten Sinfonia;
- and musicians that have played for the artists such as Sam Smith, Ariana Grande, Jamie Cullum, Paul McCartney, Eric Clapton, Elton John, Liam Gallagher, Michael Nyman, Michael Buble, Mark Knopfler, Van Morrison, the Ronnie Scott's Jazz Orchestra and London Brass.

The full list of names are as follows:

- Abigail Young, Violin
- Adam Martin, Guitar, Mamma Mia
- Adrian Bradbury, Cellist, London Sinfonietta
- Alex Maynard, Trumpet, 9 to 5
- Alex Yates, Percussion, Hamilton

- Alf Clewlow, Keyboards & Assistant Conductor, Tina - The Tina Turner Musical
- Alice Angliss, Drums
- Alison Dods, Violin
- Alison Gordon, Violin, & Juliet
- Amy May, Viola, Hamilton
- Amy Shaw, Guitar
- Andrew Barclay, Principal Percussion, LPO
- Andrew Gathercole, Trumpet, Les Mis
- Andrew Sunnucks, Chairman & Founder, Audio Network
- Andy Massey, Piano, The Lion King
- Andy Wood, Trombone, Film/TV/Pop sessions
- Anna Bastow Viola, LSO
- Anna Douglass, Horn
- Anna Noakes, Flute
- Anthony Pike, Clarinet
- Barry Clements, Bass Trombone, Les Mis
- Ben Woodgate, Clar/Sax/Flute
- Bill Lockhart
- Bryan Smith, Guitar, & Juliet
- Bryony Mycroft, Viola, Pretty Woman
- Byron Fulcher, Trombone, Philharmonia, BBCSO, ROH
- Callum Au, Trombone
- Caroline Dearnley, Cellist
- Carrie Grant, MD, Waitress
- Catherine Bradshaw, Viola
- Catherine Musker, Viola
- Chris Bain, Flute & Piccolo, Phantom of the Opera, BBC & Royal Opera
- Chris Fish, Cello, Hamilton
- Chris Laurence, Double Bass
- Chris Ma, Associate MD, Dear Evan Hansen
- Chris Tombling, Violin
- Chris Traves
- Chris Worsey, Cellist
- Christopher Cowie, Principal Oboe, Royal Opera House
- Claire McInerney, Saxes, flutes, clarinets
- Clare Duckworth, Violin, LSO
- Corin Buckeridge, Keys/MD, The Book of Mormon, Matilda and Juliet
- Corrina Silvester, Percussion, Tina, The Tina Turner Musical
- Daf Lewis, Electric and Double Bass, Wicked
- Dan Day, Drums, Dear Evan Hansen
- Dan West, Trombone, Phantom of the Opera
- Dan Wilkinson, Associate MD, Only Fools and Horses
- Daniel Marsden
- Dario Cortese
- Dave Bishop, Saxes
- Dave Elliott, Drums, Aladdin

- Dave Holmes, Guitar, Tina - The Tina Turner Musical
- David Burrowes, 1st cello, Phantom of the Opera
- David Cohen, Cello
- David Fuest, Clarinet
- David Jackson, Percussion, LSO
- David McQueen, Horn, The Prince of Egypt & Les Mis
- David Rose, Double Bass, Phantom of the Opera
- David Rose, MD, The Prince of Egypt
- Deborah Preece, Violin, Phantom of the Opera, Philharmonia
- Dom Pecheur, Cello, Pretty Woman
- Dominic Moore, Violin, Phantom of the Opera
- Ed Barker, Saxophone/Clarinet
- Ed Bussey, Assistant MD, Motown The Musical & Assistant MD Motown The Musical
- Edward Tarrant, Tenor and Bass Trombones, Wicked
- Elaine Cocks, Clarinet, Phantom of the Opera
- Emily Meredith, Clarinet, LPO, RPO, ASMF
- Emlyn Singleton, Violin
- Everton Nelson
- Fabio Di Oliviera, Drums, Waitress
- Francis Kefford, Violist
- Frank Schaefer, Cello
- Frosty Beadle, Drums, Mamma Mia
- Gareth Davies, Flute, LSO
- Gareth Weedon, MD/Piano, Pretty Woman
- Gary Kettel, Percussion
- George Carter, Keys, Pretty Woman
- Gillianne Haddow, Viola
- Glyn Matthews, Percussion
- Gordon Buchan, Violin, Phantom of the Opera
- Graeme Blevins, Saxes, flutes and clarinets
- Graham Justin, Trumpet
- Greg Hagger, Bass
- Hannah Dawson, Violin
- Harry Robinson, Cellist, Sam Smith
- Helen Kamminga, Viola
- Howard McGill, Saxophone, City of Angels
- Hugh Webb, Harp
- Huw Davies, Guitar
- Ian Thomas, Drums
- Ild Jones
- Jackie Dennett, Violin, Lion King
- James Draisley, Wicked
- James Pusey, Guitar, Pretty Woman
- Jason Evans, Trumpet, Principal of Philharmonia
- Jenny Sacha, Violin, Birmingham Royal Ballet Orchestra
- Jeremy Cornes, Timpanist & Percussionist
- Jo Archard, Violin, Dear Evan Hansen

- Joe Evans, Drums, & Juliet
- John Coney, French Horn
- John Gregson, Guitar, The Prince of Egypt
- John Hutchins, Trumpet, Phantom of the Opera
- Jon Aspital, Keys/Associate MD, The Lion King
- Jon Carnac, Clarinet
- Jon Stokes, Trombone, Mary Poppins
- Jonathan Aspital
- Julian Fairbank, Keys, Mamma Mia
- Julian Poole, Percussion
- Justin Shaw, Drums, Pretty Woman
- Karen Jones, Principal Flute, City of London Sinfonia and London Chamber Orchestra
- Kate Robinson
- Katharine Woolley, MD, Waitress
- Katy Richardson, Keys/MD
- Kay Baywater, Sax/FI/CI, Matilda
- Keith Marshall, Oboe/Cor Anglais, Phantom of the Opera
- Laura Melhuish, Violin, Book of Mormon
- Laurence Ungless, Double Bass & Guitar
- Laurie Perkins, MD, Matilda The Musical
- Lewis Osborne, Guitar
- Lilly Howard, Piano/Assistant MD, & Juliet
- Lizzie Ball, Violin, Ariana Grande
- Llinos Richards, Cello & Juliet
- Louise Hunt, Piano
- Loz Garratt, Double Bass, Jamie Cullum, Waitress
- Lucy Wilkins, Violin
- Lyndon Meredith, Bass Trombone, London Philharmonic Orchestra
- Malcolm Moore, Bass, Mamma Mia
- Marcus Bates, French Horn, Wicked
- Marianne Haynes, Violin, Miss Saigon
- Mark Collins, Piano/Keys/Conductor/MD, Billy Elliot, Dreamgirls, Adrian Mole & The Prince Of Egypt
- Mark Smith, Associate MD, Matilda
- Mark Templeton, Principal Trombone, London Philharmonic Orchestra
- Mark Vines, Co-Principal Horn, London Philharmonic Orchestra
- Mark Wraith, Guitar, Dear Evan Hansen
- Martin Burgess, Violin, City of London Sinfonia
- Martin Williams, Saxophone
- Martyn Jackson, Violinist
- Mary Scully, Double Bass
- Matthew Cooke, Principal horn, Phantom of the Opera
- Matthew Dickinson, Percussion, Phantom of the Opera
- Matthew Gunner, French Horn, Les Mis
- Max Baillie, Violin/Viola
- Maxine Kwok-Adams, Violin, LSO
- Mike Dixon, MD

- Mike Stanley, Keyboard, Piano, Conductor, Phantom of the Opera
- Miranda Dale, Violin
- Morgan Goff, Violist, Les Mis
- Natalia Bonner, Violin
- Neal Wilkinson, Drums
- Neil Crossley, Sax, clarinet & flute, Kinky Boots, Evita & The Boyfriend
- Nerys Richards, Cello, Dear Evan Hansen
- Nicholas Korth
- Nick Dawson, Keys, Mamma Mia
- Nick Finlow, Piano/MD/Music Supervisor, Book of Mormon, Mamma Mia & Back to the Future
- Nick Kendall, Guitar, Waitress
- Nick Moss, Woodwinds
- Nicko Powell
- Nico Sabatini, Guitar, Hamilton
- Nigel Thomas, Timpani/Percussion, LSO
- Odile Ollagnon, Violin
- Ollie Hannifan, Guitar, Back to the Future
- Ollie Poschmann, Bass, Pretty Woman
- Olly Buxton, Bass, Dear Evan Hansen
- Owen Slade, Tuba
- Pat White, Trumpet, Book of Mormon
- Patrick Hurley, Piano/MD, & Juliet
- Patrick Kiernan, Violin
- Patrick Savage, Violin, Hamilton
- Paul Clarvis, Drums & Percussion
- Paul Richards, Bass Clarinet, LPO
- Paul Spong, Trumpet
- Paul Willey, Violin
- Pauline Lowbury, Violin
- Penny Filer, Viola, Phantom of the Opera
- Perry Montague-Mason, Violin
- Pete Dawson Drummer, Public Service Broadcasting
- Pete Venn, Keys, Mamma Mia
- Pete Walton, Guitar, Matilda The Musical
- Pete Whinnett, Keys, Wicked
- Pete Wilson, Assistant MD, Mamma Mia
- Peter Fry, Percussion, Philharmonia
- Peter Lale
- Peter Lond, MD, Ronnie Scott's Jazz Orchestra
- Peter Seivewright, Piano
- Phil James, Guitar, Pretty Woman
- Phil Mulford
- Rachel Simms, Bassoon/contrabassoon
- Ralph de Souza, Violin
- Ralph Salmins, Drums
- Rebecca Larsen, Flute, Piccolo and alto flute, Wicked
- Reiad Chibah, Viola, London Metropolitan Orchestra

- Richard Ashton, French Horn, Back to the Future
- Richard Coughlan, Bass, & Juliet
- Richard Edwards, Trombone, London Brass, Matilda
- Richard George, Violin
- Richard Pryce, Double Bass
- Richard Shackleton, Keys/Conductor, Wicked
- Richard Steggall, French Horn, Phantom of the Opera
- Rita Manning, Violin
- Rob Levy, Bass, City of Angels
- Roger Chase, Principal Viola, English Chamber Orchestra
- Roland Palmer, Guitar/Cello, Waitress
- Ron Crocker, MD, Book of Mormon
- Rowland Sutherland, Flute
- Ruth Holden, Harp, Phantom of the Opera
- Sam Walton, Co-Principal Percussion, LSO
- Sarah Quinn, Violin, LSO
- Seb Rudnitzky, Violin, The Prince of Egypt
- Shelley Britton, Violin, Hamilton, Pretty Woman
- Simon Baggs
- Simon Baker, Trombone, Kinky Boots
- Simon Chamberlain
- Simon Cheney, Trumpet, Phantom of the Opera
- Simon Heeley
- Simon Tappin, Cover Conductor, Hamilton
- Skaila Kanga, Harp
- Sonia Slany, Violin
- Sonya Fairbairn, Violin, The Prince of Egypt
- Sophie Harris, Cellist
- Spencer James, Keyboards/MD, Matilda
- Stephen Ridley, MD/Music Supervisor, School of Rock/The King and I
- Stephen Williams, Double Bass
- Steve Mair, Double Bass
- Steven Holness, Piano/Assistant MD, Back to the Future
- Steven Wilkie, Violin
- Sue Dench, Viola, City of London Sinfonia
- Susan Briscoe, Violin, LMO
- Susana Dias, Bassoon, Phantom of the Opera
- Terri De Marco, Bass
- Terry Johnston, Guitar, Mamma Mia
- Thomas Gould, Violin, Britten Sinfonia (Leader)
- Thomas Kemp, Conductor & Violinist
- Tim Goodyear, Drums, Hamilton
- Timothy Gill, Principal Cellist London Sinfonietta
- Timothy Grant, Principal Viola, Phantom of the Opera
- Tom Clare, Drums/Percussion, Mary Poppins
- Tom Goodman, Double Bass, LSO
- Tom Pigott-Smith
- Tom Stone, Sax

- Tom Walsh, Trumpet, Film/TV/Pop sessions
- Tommy Emerton, The Book of Mormon
- Vicci Wardman, Violist
- Vicky Matthews, Cellist
- William Cooper, Trumpet, Matilda
- Yukiko Ogura, Principal Viola, Philharmonia