

# **Calls for more help for freelancers**

**Liberal Democrat politicians, Mike Rumbles MSP and Christine Jardine MP, have today written to both the Scottish and UK Governments calling for freelancers to get help.**

**They would like those freelancers who pay their taxes through PAYE (even though they have multiple employers throughout the year) to be able to access the same support as the self-employed.**

**This particularly affects the oil and gas industry and the film and TV industry.**

**The government have agreed to pay 80% of the average earnings of the self-employed over March, April and May last year using the records held by HMRC, the very same information held by HMRC on freelance workers, who are not currently eligible for payments.**

**Mike Rumbles said: "While financial assistance is being given to employees through the furlough scheme, to businesses and to the self-employed, freelancers have been completely forgotten.**

**"The UK government encouraged many freelancers to move out of self-employment into becoming employees and to pay their taxes through PAYE even though they would have multiple employers throughout the year and not just one employer. These people will not be eligible for government support as things currently stand.**

“This is particularly impacting on the North Sea Oil and Gas supply industry, which relies heavily on freelance contractors who work for many firms across a year but pay tax on a PAYE basis.”

Ms Jardine said: “The energy industry is vital to keeping the country running and those working in the supply chain are a crucial part of ensuring that we can keep the lights on through this crisis.

“For anyone in that sector to be treated differently or not have the support that others are getting because they are on contracts is just reprehensible.

“Surely it cannot be beyond the wit of HMRC to come up with a solution not just for this sector but for all self-employed people.”

The Scottish Government has help for self-employed [here](#).

The letter to Energy Minister Kwasi Kwarteng and Scottish Finance Secretary Kate Forbes is as follows:

Dear Kate and Kwasi,

We write this joint letter to both governments because while we very much welcome the financial assistance being given to employees through the furlough scheme, to businesses and to the self-employed, there is another sector of workers in the economy who have been completely forgotten. The very many freelancers particularly involved in the North Sea Oil and Gas supply industry and in Scotland's very successful film and tv industry.

The UK government in particular encouraged these freelancers to move out of self-employment into becoming employees and to pay their taxes through PAYE even though they would have multiple employers throughout the year and not just one employer. Since they had multiple employers they still had to submit self assessment tax returns and just like the self-employed these tax receipts are all held on record by HMRC. There surely cannot be any justification for not including freelance workers in the financial aid packages in the same way that the self-employed are included. The government have agreed to pay 80% of the average earnings of the self-employed over March, April and May last year using the records held by HMRC, the very same information held by HMRC on freelance workers.

We seek your help in addressing this injustice which can be so easily rectified. I am sure we do not need to outline the very great hardship so many freelancers are facing in Scotland as their incomes have disappeared overnight. If we are truly all in this together then our governments must surely work together to put this situation right. HMRC have all the information needed, equal treatment with the self-employed is all that we ask.

Yours sincerely,

Christine Jardine MP

Mike Rumbles MSP