



**ASSOCIATION of
ILLUSTRATORS**

Call for evidence – Economic impact of coronavirus/COVID-19

Somerset House
Strand
London
WC2R 1LA

About the AOI

1. The AOI is a membership organisation founded in 1973 to support and sustain illustrators and the illustration industry. The AOI is based in London, with members across the UK and a small percentage globally.
2. The AOI has 2,700 members which is a significant proportion of the working illustration community.
3. The majority (est. 98%) of illustrators are freelancer **operating as sole traders or limited companies**. Our members work across the creative industries- in publishing, editorial, advertising, gaming, animation, medicine and research etc. They are sought by commissioners in the UK and worldwide and many are recognised as leaders in their field.
4. As you will no doubt be aware, **one-third** of the UK's creative workforce are self-employed – much higher than the national average of 15%. This is even higher for our members.

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Financial Impact of Covid 19 on our Members

5. We welcome the steps the government has taken so far to support the economy, employed people's wages, and the protection and support of key workers.
6. However, current provision does not begin to address the severity of the situation that our members who work as self employed or micro limited companies are already finding themselves in. This is not just a health crisis, but an income crisis for our members and for all self-employed people.
7. A recent survey by the Creative Industries Federation showed that 60% of self-employed creatives predicted their income will more than halve in 2020, and over 50% of self-employed who responded to a poll carried out by them, have already had 100% of their work cancelled. This is devastating for them and access to Statutory Sick Pay and Universal Credit is in no way an adequate substitute for the income they have lost.
8. Our members, indeed the whole of the self-employed and freelance community, require government assistance on a similar scale to the support already provided for those qualifying businesses, employers and employees in other sectors. Please remember that the Creative Industries is a UK success story and contributes a massive £111bn to the UK economy.

Patrons

Glen Baxter
Sir Peter Blake
Quentin Blake
Raymond Briggs
Chloe Cheese
Marion Deuchars
Carolyn Gowdy
Brian Grimwood
Sir John Hegarty
David Hughes
Shirley Hughes
Sue Huntley
Mick Inkpen
Oliver Jeffers
Donna Muir
Ian Pollock
Tony Ross
Paul Slater
Ralph Steadman
Peter Till
Janet Woolley

Cont'd



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What Government can do

5. We echo the calls from other organisations and we urgently need a **temporary Income Protection Fund** to provide all self-employed people with a monthly income that equates to their average existing earnings over the past three years, capped at average UK earnings after the basic rate of income tax, and no lower than the minimum monthly of the Real Living Wage.
12. There is already precedent for this across Europe.
13. The self-employed community is at severe risk and this support is urgently required to allow our economy to be in a position to rebuild itself, once we have navigated our way through these waters.

We welcome the opportunity to work with you to support our members and the freelance community.

Yours sincerely

Ren Renwick
CEO

Patrons

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