



**ASSOCIATION of
ILLUSTRATORS**

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Additional evidence on COVID-19: THE ASSOCIATION OF ILLUSTRATORS

About the Association of Illustrators (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.

Response to the Governments support of the Self Employed

5. We welcome the Governments unprecedented support and recognition of the freelancers who are a vital engine to the UK's economy and way of life. The majority of illustrators are freelance, contributing to globally recognised brands and initiatives across the creative industries including publishing, editorial, advertising, packaging, gaming and more.
6. The Creative Industries Federation notes that many of the creative freelances have had 100% of their work cancelled overnight due to Covid-19.
7. While we applaud the support that has been offered, we urge the Government to make it fully comprehensive. In particular;
 - 7.a **Timeline.** Many of our members cannot wait until June. The stop gap of Universal Credit that has been suggested is simply not enough to cover living and business expenses. It is understandable that it will take time to build a system, however freelancers must receive a **temporary income protection** allowance without delay until the system is in place.
 - 7.b **Those not covered.** There are significant groups of freelancers that this scheme does not apply to due to their circumstances. It is imperative that the aim of this scheme is achieved in practice by recognising the diversity of working practice within the industry. For example:

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



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7. b. i **Flexi Self Employed.** As is common accosts the creative industries, many of our members balance freelance work with PAYE employment, often in uneven proportions, sometimes more than 50%, depending on the ebb and flow of work, and also often on zero hours contracts. We are asking that the total of PAYE and self employment income is considered in these instances.

7.b. ii **Graduates.** The next generation of illustrators and creatives must be enabled to achieve the potential their educational investment has provided them. Currently without a tax return graduates are not covered. Graduates need to receive the **temporary income protection** in the same way as established freelancers in anticipation of future earnings.

7.b. iii **Micro-Business.** Our members who run a micro businesses (ie a small limited company with themselves as sole directors), and paid in a combination of PAYE and dividends, are not covered by this support. Often the salaries paid are nominal, but the dividiends are relatively high. 80% of both PAYE and dividend income, up to the agreed limit should be provided.

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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Sir Peter Blake
Quentin Blake
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