

KEEP SELF EMPLOYED INCOME SUPPORT AT 80%

#80%4selfemployed

Join The Campaign

From 1 November, Self Employed Income Support is due to drop from 80% of monthly trading profits to 20%. Puppeteers UK believes that this will cause acute financial distress for many in our sector and will lose us the skills and knowledge we will need to rebuild.

We are asking the government to keep the current level of support to ensure that the puppetry community is able to survive through the COVID 19 crisis.

What We Are Doing?

We have written to Rishi Sunak, The Chancellor, to ask that he keep Self Employed Income Support at the current level (letter at the end of this document). We are writing to MPs and campaigning on social media to encourage more people to join this campaign and make their voices here.

How To Join The Campaign

Write to your Member of Parliament asking them to support this campaign.

Find Your Member of Parliament here

UK Parliament <https://members.parliament.uk/members/commons>

Scottish Parliament <https://www.parliament.scot/msps.aspx>

Welsh Parliament <https://business.senedd.wales/mgFindMember.aspx>

Join Us On Social Media

We will be campaigning via our social media feeds, please share, comment and like to help spread the word.

#80%4selfemployed

Facebook www.facebook.com/pukpuppeteers

Twitter www.twitter.com/puppeteersuk

Instagram www.instagram.com/puppeteersuk



PUPPETEERS UK

The united voice of UK Puppetry

14 October 2020



Dear Mr Sunak,

PLEASE KEEP SELF EMPLOYED INCOME SUPPORT AT 80%

We are writing to express our deep concern over the impact that the changes to the Self Employed Income Support Scheme will have on the UK puppetry sector.

In 2019, the UK puppetry sector was global in its reach and reputation, reaching audiences in the 10s of millions and creating activities and events in the streets, onstage, on screen, at museums and in hospitals: this all generated an estimated £58 million in 2019. However, this success was built on a fragile infrastructure: in the puppetry sector, the majority are self employed (over 65%) and with low earnings (30% lower than equivalent average real wage). Organisations are small and with limited capacity (all SMEs and many micro-businesses).*

Beyond the economic impact and global reputation is the emotional and cultural benefits of this activity: children's imaginations sparked by a workshop, a dementia patient, who was otherwise silent, interacting and talking with a puppet, a family able to talk about grief for the first time, a group of friends buzzing with laughter after seeing a show. It takes skill, ingenuity and experience to do this work and do it well. After all, these are the activities that show us we are human and help glue our communities together.

However, the fragility of our infrastructure and that of many of our colleagues in the wider arts sector means there is no spare capacity, and scant resources to absorb global disasters such as the COVID 19 pandemic.

While funding initiatives such as the Cultural Recovery Fund from Arts Council England are welcome and much needed lifelines, the reduction in support offered via the Self Employed Income Scheme from 80% of monthly trading profits to 20% is a cause for grave concern. There are many in the arts and puppetry sector who will not benefit directly from grants such as the Cultural Recovery Fund and the SEIS should be

there to support them as individuals, and to ensure that the UK puppetry and arts sector as a whole does not lose the talent, skills and experience that have made our global reputation.

We urgently request that you review the support offered through SEIS. We want to know that people are able to support themselves and their families, and maintain their occupations and professions which are currently on hold through no fault of their own.

Yours Sincerely

Rachel McNally
Chair - Puppeteers UK

Brian Hibbit
Treasurer - Puppeteers UK

Mervyn Millar
Chair - Puppet Centre

Robert Styles
Chair - The Punch & Judy College

Chris Pirie
Trustee - Puppet Place

Michael Dixon
Chair - British Puppet & Model Theatre Guild

Ian Wood
General Manager - Norwich Puppet Theatre

Samantha Lane
Director - Little Angel Theatre

Dawn Taylor
Director - Puppet Animations Scotland

Malcolm Knight
Director - Scottish Mask & Puppet Centre
Secretary - Puppeteers UK

*Source Puppeteers UK Survey 2019