

Dear

I hope that you are well and that you and your family can avoid the worst of the current health emergency.

I do not underestimate the economic impact that the crisis is having for our clients and I can only say that we must hope that these days will pass and that normality will return later this year.

Although prospects for earning money are bleak in the short term there is an acceptance in society as a whole that we must all be patient, support each other and accept that the payment of bills, etc. will be delayed.

I am hopeful that the Government will bring forward some concrete plans to support the self-employed in the arts, media and entertainment sectors. At present, the grants and loans being offered are open only to businesses operating from commercial premises – there seems to be little thought for the freelance worker operating from home.

Equity and the Musicians Union (as part of the Federation of Entertainment Unions) have asked the Government to consider paying self-employed people the “living wage” for the duration of the closure of theatres, concerts halls and other venues. Whether this is possible remains to be seen but clearly some form of support is needed.

Failing other measures, you can apply for Universal Credit or, if you have fallen ill or are self-isolating, the Employment and Support Allowance.

Clients who have employment income will, hopefully, still receive their monthly salaries if unable to work by virtue of the government pledge to underwrite employers’ wage bills.

One piece of good news for many clients is that if you had a tax payment due on 31 July 2020 you do not now have to pay this. The 2019/20 tax bill will be calculated when we prepare the next Tax Return. This Tax Return will set the sum due for payment in January 2021, at which time we can also look at recalculating interim payments for the 2020/21 tax year, taking the current inevitable decrease in earnings into account.

For VAT-registered clients there is also deferral for the VAT that would have been payable before 30 June. For most VAT-registered clients this means that the VAT payable for the quarter ended 31 March 2020 can instead be paid at a later date at any time before 31 March 2021.

Here are some links to information available on the Internet. If you would like to discuss any of these matters please do get in touch.

HM Government Business Support

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses>

Universal Credit

<https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/eligibility>

Employment and Support Allowance

<https://www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance/eligibility>

Musicians Union

<https://www.musiciansunion.org.uk/coronavirus>

Equity

<https://www.equity.org.uk/about/coronavirus-advice/>

Money Saving Expert

<https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/2020/03/uk-coronavirus-help-and-your-rights/>

Citizens Advice

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/health/coronavirus-what-it-means-for-you/>