

P-05-1013 Provide financial support for self-employed individuals within the Welsh live music industry, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 10.11.20

Thank you for the copy of Arglwydd Elis-Thomas' letter to the Petitions Committee dated 28 October. I respond as follows:

My petition was in respect of the Welsh Government failing to provide financial support for professionals working within the Welsh live music sector during the period that live music remains prohibited under the prevailing Coronavirus restrictions in Wales. These restrictions started in March and continue to date. Mr Elis-Thomas' letter appears to imply that the Freelancer Fund addresses the financial difficulties Welsh music industry professionals are currently facing. I would make the point that the Freelancer Fund falls woefully short of addressing these financial hardships for the following reasons:

- The Freelancer Fund is limited on a strictly first-come basis. This completely disadvantages people who were unaware of the fund and when applications opened.
- By the very fact that the Freelancer Fund will not be sufficient to cover the number of applications it is not fit for purpose.
- The maximum that can be claimed from the Freelancer Fund is £2,500. For the vast number of applicants this will fall considerably short of the income they have been deprived of since March.
- One qualification is that the applicant's work must have 'direct creative/cultural outcomes.' The danger here is the introduction of a huge element of subjectivity within the application process. Would the person or persons considering the application consider an Elvis Tribute Artist or a Wedding Singer as meeting that criteria?

It now appears that the UK Government have re-introduced the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme nationwide . This will go some way to assisting the music professionals who the Welsh Government have failed to support. However, there are a number of people who will not be supported by this scheme whilst the Welsh Government continue to prohibit live music.

In his letter Mr Elis Thomas says, inter alia, that his department is exploring options to provide further support to this sector in general. Accordingly I would urge the Welsh Government to think again in respect of how they are financially supporting all professionals within the live music industry during the period they continue to prohibit these people from working.

Yours Faithfully