

## FEU calls for an income guarantee to protect workers in the arts and media

The Federation of Entertainment Unions represents more than 100,000 people working in the entertainment and creative industries. We are actors, journalists, theatre workers, musicians, writers, entertainers, production crew, directors, designers and many other professions.

Theatres have gone dark, music venues are silent and film and TV productions have closed. Freelance journalists and photographers are finding their work diaries are being cleared out.

We don't know for how long our workplaces will be closed or how many will re-open. A huge number of us are freelance and self-employed workers and have no prospect of alternative employment in the coming months. The majority of freelancers are not eligible for statutory sick pay if they are unable to work because of the virus and have recourse only to Employment Support Allowance and Universal Credit. These welfare benefits are for those on low or zero incomes, and unsuitable for those who make a living from self-employment. The system is complex and time-consuming, and as it is means-tested those with savings are ineligible. Most freelancers keep money aside to pay for their tax bill and other contingencies.

We urgently need the Government to step in and help us at this time. The UK's creative industries are a massive success story and have been a key driver of economic growth, contributing £100bn-plus to the UK economy.

**We call on the Government to introduce an income guarantee for freelance and self-employed workers for the duration of the COVID-19 outbreak.**

*The Federation of Entertainment Unions comprises the BECTU section of Prospect, Equity, the Musicians Union, the National Union of Journalists and the Writers' Guild of Great Britain.*

