

British Dance Council

Limited by Guarantee Registered in England No. 502695 - Established 1929

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Member of: The World Dance Council - The Sport and Recreation Alliance

Rt Hon Matt Hancock
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

17th March 2020

Rt Hon Matt Hancock
Secretary of State for Health and Social care

Dear Sir,

British Dance Council – Self-Employed and Small Business

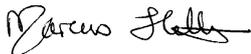
I am writing to voice on behalf of our member's great concern to the government for our freelance self-employed members that run dance schools as small businesses. These dance schools are now in a particularly vulnerable situation during the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). The British Dance Council is the governing body for many dance teachers throughout the United Kingdom and following the Prime Ministers statement, which included "close social contact" earlier this week many now face serious financial concerns. It was of interest and concern that the statement did not include an order for the businesses to close. If the public follows the guidance, the dance schools will lose their customers and many will not survive.

The recent budget included some measures aiming to make it quicker and easier for self-employed workers to access benefits including Contributory Employment and Support Allowance and Universal Credit. However, I am deeply concerned that the government's action to protect small businesses did not go far enough and is not comparable to the scale of assistance being offered to employees or to larger businesses. This puts small businesses in a particularly vulnerable situation during this pandemic. Many work in ways that mean that even small disruptions to their working patterns can cause real financial hardship. In addition they may have just faced a tax bill that will have reduced their ability to manage a period without work. The result means many large numbers of Dance Schools with premises won't be able to trade and won't be able to claim on their business disruption insurance due to the way the statement was worded.

The way our members have been asked to rely on the welfare system, either through Universal Credit or Employment and Support Allowance, is simply inadequate. I urge the government to put in place a more resilient safety net for freelance workers and small businesses, suggesting this could be in the form of a dedicated fund, loans or mortgage or rent holidays.

I await your comments.

Yours sincerely,



MARCUS HILTON MBE
President and Chairman



NICHOLAS MILES
Vice President and Vice Chairman

