

P-05-1013 Provide financial support for self-employed individuals within the Welsh live music industry, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 31.12.20

Thank you for the copy of the Deputy Minister's reply to your request for further information in respect of the Freelancer Fund.

In his letter of 22 December the Deputy Minister basically repeats the points made in his letter of 28 October. Accordingly, I have to repeat the points made in my email response of 9 November; notably the Freelancer fund is simply not fit for purpose due to the following reasons:

- The amount of the most recent fund again fell woefully short of the applications received.
- The maximum that successful applicants received fell significantly short of the average loss of income suffered by professionals working within the Welsh live music sector as a result of restrictions placed on the industry by the Welsh Government.
- The qualification criteria for the Freelancer Fund is completely subjective insofar that the applicant's work must have 'direct creative/ cultural outcomes.' I repeat the point I made in my previous response. Would the person or persons considering the application consider Pub Singers as meeting that criteria?

In his letter of 28 October the Deputy Minister stated that the Welsh Government were exploring options to provide further support in the context of competing demands on finance. In his letter of 22 December the Deputy Minister states that the Welsh Government continues to press the UK Government to support those who fall through gaps. As his letter is in response to my original petition, the assumption has to be made that he is referring to professionals working within the Welsh live music industry. As a result of the Welsh Government's Covid restrictions in respect of live music these people were disadvantaged for many months compared to their peers in England. For the Deputy Minister to now be relying on the UK Government to support these Welsh professionals is either naively misguided or an abdication of the problem. Accordingly, returning to my original petition, I would urge the Committee to compel the Welsh Government to provide direct financial support to the self-employed individuals in Wales who make their living in the live music industry.

In addition, given where we are now compared to when I originally launched the petition last August, I would now also urge the Welsh Government to launch some sort of 'bounce back' fund designed to assist the Welsh live music industry as and when Covid restrictions permit this sector to return to work. If they were minded to launch this fund I would further urge them to tailor the money to assist the sub-

sectors in that industry who have tended to be overlooked to date by funding for the arts.

Yours Faithfully