



THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION

The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP  
Chancellor of the Exchequer  
HM Treasury  
1 Horse Guards Road  
London  
SW1A 2HQ

10 December 2020

Dear Chancellor,

### **Introduction of a Freelance Commissioner and Future Workforce Commission**

I wrote to you earlier this year welcoming the introduction of the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme as a vital means to maintaining the businesses and livelihoods of self-employed workers. A third of the conservation sector's workforce is self-employed; our freelance members work alongside their public sector colleagues to ensure the long-term survival of cultural heritage. As a sector we support economic prosperity and growth, contributing to business, industry and employment.

The Institute of Conservation (Icon) continues to believe that freelancers and cultural entrepreneurs have an important role to play in the UK's post-pandemic recovery. However, as recently confirmed by the National Audit Office, many of these self-employed and freelance workers, such as sole directors of limited liability companies and the recently self-employed, have been left ineligible for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and SEISS.

Research by Museum Freelance Network showed that over a quarter of museum freelance professionals are now considering to move out of the cultural sector. These workers have enabled the UK to be a world leader in tourism, heritage management and the creative industries. The risk of losing their skills and expertise threatens the sector's operational capacity and the UK's standing on the world stage. I therefore call on your Government to urgently rethink support measures for all freelancers.

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Icon is aware that IPSE, the Creative Industries Federation, the Federation of Small Businesses and Prospect have written to you with the request that your department establishes a Freelance Commissioner and Future Workforce Commission. Icon wholeheartedly supports this recommendation. This simple non-fiscal proposal would be an important step towards building more resilience into the workforce and ensuring no one falls through the gaps in support.

Existing industry councils such as the Professional Services Council and Creative Industries Council offer an effective model for the Commission, with Government ministers convening industry representatives to collaborate on implementing ideas. By working closely with representatives from the freelance workforce across UK nations and sectors, the Commission could ensure Government and business collectively promote and support entrepreneurialism and strengthen the UK's position globally.

With a significant number of freelance and self-employed members, we recognise our responsibility to support this vital part of the UK workforce. We therefore offer our full support for the proposal to establish a Freelance Commissioner and Future Workforce Commission and would be delighted to explore how we can best contribute to this important work.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sara Crofts". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sara Crofts BArch (Hons) MSc IHBC FRSA  
Chief Executive