

Statement of support for the Targeted Income Grant Scheme (TIGS)

The Authors' Licensing & Collecting Society (ALCS) is a not-for-profit organisation for the benefit of all kinds of writers and currently has over 110,000 members. We collect and distribute money due for licensed secondary uses of authors' works in the UK and internationally and, at Westminster, are proud to provide support for the work of the All-Party Parliamentary Writers Group (APWG).

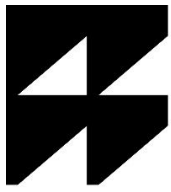
ALCS welcomed the swift set-up and continued renewal of both the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) and the Job Retention Scheme (JRS) by the Treasury throughout the pandemic. However, as we have made clear in previous submissions to several Parliamentary committees and Government departments, the strict and unchanging eligibility criteria have meant that many creative freelancers and writers have been unable to access this much needed support and security necessary to their livelihoods.

The House of Commons Treasury Committee requested, in its report on the economic impact of coronavirus in June 2020, that the Chancellor take time to “tackle these complexities”ⁱ of extending the support schemes. The Committee has now made clear, in its most recent report published on 15 February 2021, its disappointment at the lack of proactive work being done to deliver on this recommendation:

“The first version of the SEISS scheme had to be rolled out at speed in March 2020. Partly because of that haste, there were ‘hard edges’ which meant that some people lost out. Though regrettable this is understandable. However, there is scant justification for not having addressed them eleven months later.”ⁱⁱ

ALCS shares the frustration of the Committee and other creative organisations in this continued neglect. Therefore, we welcome the proposal for the Targeted Income Grant Scheme (TIGS) put forward by the APPG for Gaps in Supportⁱⁱⁱ, with full support. The scheme successfully tackles some of the ‘hard edges’ of SEISS referenced by the Treasury committee, in that it crucially aims to cover four specific groups that have been ineligible for existing support so far. TIGS has the potential to go a long way in helping our members and writers in general who, for example, have recently joined the profession and do not have the requisite tax returns to access SEISS or who have fallen prey to the 50/50 rule.

Authors' incomes have come under extreme pressure during the pandemic, with surveys conducted by the Society of Authors showing that 49% of respondents^{iv} expected a loss of more than a quarter of their income for the financial year 2020/21. This has exacerbated an already pressing problem; our own research has shown that without the current crisis, authors' earnings have fallen by 42% in real terms between 2005 to 2018^v. The TIGS proposal is a fully costed and considered programme of assistance that combats issues of fraud and administration which would help in halting the Government's contribution to the immense pressure on writers' incomes.



Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society

We have seen that in many areas of the economy Covid-19 has exacerbated and in some cases deepened inequalities. The creative sector has been no exception, the current worry being that the pandemic will have a real impact on the diversity of the workforce and retention of staff, especially in the writing field. The Royal Society of Literature's report *A Room of My Own*^{vi} in June 2019 made clear how geography, class and race were among a myriad of factors which had a significant effect on an individual's ability to access the publishing industry. The writers who were struggling to be appropriately remunerated for their work prior to this, who now find themselves without access to the SEISS or JRS, are at risk of being lost permanently from the industry. ALCS believes that, as authors and creative freelancers have continued to make vital contributions to UK culture and the economy throughout the pandemic, it is only fair and responsible to ensure that we support them in return. The TIGS scheme is a financially responsible method of doing so which we recommend the Government implement with immediate effect.

ⁱ House of Commons Treasury Committee, *Economic impact of coronavirus: Gaps in support*
<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/1446/documents/13238/default/>

ⁱⁱ House of Commons Treasury Committee, *Economic impact of coronavirus: gaps in support and economic analysis*
<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/4703/documents/47210/default/>

ⁱⁱⁱ All Party Parliamentary Group for Gaps in Support, *Targeted Income Grant Scheme: APPG publishes new proposal for government support*
<https://www.gapsinsupportappg.org/news/tigsproposal>

^{iv} The Society of Authors, *Authors in the Health Crisis*
<https://societyofauthors.org/News/News/2020/October/September-covid-19-survey-results>

^v Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society, *Authors' Earnings, A survey of UK writers*
https://allpartywritersgroup.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Authors_Earnings_Inquiry_Booklet.pdf

^{vi} The Royal Society of Literature's report, *A Room of My Own*
<https://allpartywritersgroup.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/RSL-A-Room-of-My-Own-Report-19-June-2019-1.pdf>