The Rt Hon John Healey MP,
Chancellor of the Exchequer,
HM Treasury,
1 Horse Guards Road,
London
SW1A 2HQ

24th November 2026

Dear Chancellor,

We are writing as a coalition of organisations representing freelance and self-employed workers across the UK. Recent BIST estimates suggest that freelance workers make up around one in seven workers in the UK and are integral to sectors that contribute hundreds of billions of pounds to the economy each year.

We recognise the Government's objective of helping taxpayers manage their liabilities more effectively and reducing the risk of large, unexpected tax bills. However, we remain concerned that the proposed Timely Payments reforms do not adequately reflect the realities of freelance and self-employed work and may create significant financial difficulties for our members.

Freelancers often move between PAYE employment, self-employment and periods without work, sometimes several times in a single year. Income is frequently irregular, with periods of intensive work followed by weeks or months without earnings. In these circumstances, historic income can be a poor predictor of future earnings.

A system built around forecasts risks requiring freelancers and self-employed workers to make tax payments based on income they may never receive. This concern is compounded by widespread late payment, project cancellations and fluctuating workloads. At a time when many continue to face financial insecurity, reforms must not increase cashflow pressures for those least able to absorb them.

We urge the Government to ensure that flexibility remains at the heart of the system as they take these proposals forward. Freelancers and the self-employed must be able to revise forecasts quickly, reduce or pause payments where income falls unexpectedly, and move easily between payment mechanisms as their circumstances change. Strong safeguards will also be needed to prevent overpayments and financial hardship. We ask the Government to pause the implementation of these changes until these safeguards can be put in place.

We are also concerned about the cumulative impact of introducing Timely Payments alongside Making Tax Digital for Income Tax. Taken together, these reforms risk

increasing administrative burdens for self-employed workers with irregular incomes and complex working arrangements.

The working lives of most self-employed and freelancers differ significantly from those in more conventional employment which is reflected in how tax is currently collected. We urge the Government to ensure that the final design of these reforms reflects that reality and does not inadvertently penalise workers for the very income volatility that characterises freelance work.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and discuss these concerns further as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely,

Vicks Rodwell, CEO, **IPSE - The Self-Employed Association**
Philippa Childs, Head of Bectu, **Bectu**
Alastair McCapra, CEO, **Chartered Institute of Public Relations**
Naomi Pohl, General Secretary, **Musicians Union**
Isabelle Doran, FRSA, CEO, **Association of Photographers**
Anna Ganley, CEO, **Society of Authors UK** and Chair of the **Creators' Rights Alliance**
Paule Constable, **Freelancers Make Theatre Work**
Matthew Dowling, CEO, **The Freelancer Club**
Paula Orrell, National Director, **Contemporary Visual Arts Network England**
Deborah Annetts, Chief Executive, **Independent Society of Musicians**
Ellie Peers, General Secretary, **Writers' Guild of Great Britain (WGGB)**
Laura Davidson, General Secretary, **National Union of Journalists**
Andy Harrower, CEO, **Directors UK**
Barbara Hayes, Chief Executive, **The Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society**
Julie Lomax, CEO, **Artists Now**