



Association of
**Professional
Virtual Assistants**

1 April 2020

Dear All,

We are writing to you today on behalf of the virtual assistant and freelance business support industry in the UK. Our Association has recently launched following the success of VIPVA over the last 5 years and one of our missions is to ensure that our industry is supported and represented so that it can grow and develop professionally.

During these unprecedented times we would like to thank you for your work in providing a support package for those in self-employment, we know that many of our community will benefit from the grants that will be available in the coming months and it has provided reassurance to them during this crisis.

The VA industry is comprised of both sole traders (approx.. 70%) and limited companies (approx. 30%) is predominantly female, and many of our colleagues work from home around children. Since the closure of schools are industry is having to adapt their working practices to fit around having children at home which I'm sure you know is challenging. Alongside this many of our colleagues have seen a drastic drop in income as their target market niches have closed or reduced hours in order to cutback.

Over 50% of our industry work part-time from home and due to the growth in both the need for outsourced business support and the wish for flexibility a large proportion of VAs in the UK have been in business for less than 2 years.

Whilst we appreciate the complexities of putting in place support for the self-employed and are really pleased that some measures have been put in place, we do feel that there needs to be more clarity for those who have been self-employed for less than 2 years and also those who run limited companies.

Our community is asking for clarification and we would like to work with you on putting together more information for them, specifically directed to their industry and hope that this will be possible.

Some of the key questions at the moment are as follows:

- I've been in business for less than 2 years but did submit a tax return in 2018/19 am I eligible for a grant?

- If I haven't seen a drop in income now, but have clients who will reduce my hours post June 2020 due to the current lockdown can I still claim the grant?
- I am setup as a limited company and have a seen a drastic drop in my clients, however I still need to work with the clients I have, I take a very small salary and pay myself via dividends. Can I furlough myself to receive 80% of my salary and continue to work for the clients I have?
- I'm not eligible for a business loan because I work from home, are there any other options for me to access funding?

We hope that we can work together to provide clarity for our industry and to support your work in campaigning for fair support for the self-employed during the Coronavirus Crisis.

Best wishes



Charlotte Wibberley
Founder APVA

www.vipva.org

<https://vipva.org/about-apva/>