

My intervention during the debate on the Finance Bill, 01 July 2020

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): I agree with the right hon. Gentleman about the importance of jobs. Is he worried that the reform the Government have in mind might mean that a self-employed person working on their own in one of our constituencies could lose a contract to a foreign company, because the big company undertaking the contract might think that was safer?

Mr Pat McFadden (Wolverhampton South East) (Lab): I am not sure about the part of the right hon. Gentleman's intervention that referred to foreign companies, but the turbulence of the labour market right now does pose a danger to contractors. The Government have already recognised that to some degree in the delay announced for this measure.

Withdrawing support schemes at the same pace for all sectors does not recognise that some sectors are in far more difficulty than others, and that is particularly true for any sector based on the idea of people gathering closely together. Many sectors such as transport, aviation, sport, theatre, music, and others, are global British strengths, but right now they are on their knees.

Dropping the social distancing rule from two metres to one metre is not enough when, in some cases, any kind of social distancing is impossible. Let us take live music, for example, which is based on the very opposite of social distancing. The break-even point for many venues and events is often being 80% to 90% full, and the change to one metre will not make that much difference to them. We need an approach that takes into account the different impact on different sectors.