

National Martial Arts Governing Body calls for financial assistance for self-employed, freelance and sole traders in the wake of Coronavirus

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The National Association of Karate and Martial Art Schools (NAKMAS) is concerned that a large group of workers are being left out of the financial assistance that the Government is offering in the wake of Coronavirus.

Most of the teachers and instructors all over the UK are self employed and do not qualify for statutory sick pay. Most do not have business premises and therefore do not qualify for business rates' help. Teachers and instructors of martial arts, dance, yoga, and other leisure activities hire halls in schools, leisure centres, churches, and teach groups of children and adults.

NAKMAS instructors give so much to their communities, providing often a consistency in the lives of children and adults, especially those with disabilities. With the isolations currently sweeping the country (and the world), communities will lose out on this expertise and instructors will lose their income. For many, this is their career, and not a part-time hobby as some would believe.

NAKMAS National Chair, Joe Ellis said: 'All of us who offer an individualised educational service to our communities have been affected already and our clubs now need to be closed. This means an instant loss of income. We have no idea when we can reopen, and will our students still be there then? We have spent years building our businesses and reputations and then nothing... it is essential that the Government take notice of this group of workers and offer some financial assistance.

Self-employed people who get sick have never been compensated with SSP, we get no paid holiday or compassionate leave. We are dedicated to our chosen careers and are law abiding; we don't usually complain, but no one could foresee this current situation we find ourselves in and we need help.'

NAKMAS has always encouraged students of all ages, genders, and disabilities. Many of the instructors specialise in teaching students with autism and associated conditions; indeed, both the National Chair, and National Director of Operations, Dr Sandra Beale-Ellis, are autistic themselves. Indeed Beale-Ellis was awarded a Prime Minister's Points of Light Award for services to autistic students.

Beale-Ellis said: 'we are worried with the closure of the clubs that the students with disabilities will be badly affected by the interruption to their routines. If instructors don't get some financial assistance now, the clubs might not exist in the future, and the disabled community especially will suffer because of it.'

NAKMAS is encouraging its many instructors, who are DBS checked regularly, to join forces with charities across the country including Age UK and local food banks to help their local communities.

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EDITORS' NOTES

Find out more about NAKMAS at <https://nakmas.org.uk>

NAKMAS has secured the Equality Standard: A Framework for Sport. To find out more about Equality Standard: A Framework for Sport at <http://equalityinsport.org>

The National Association of Karate and Martial Art Schools (NAKMAS) National Governing Body is a non-funded national governing body and is a member of Sport & Recreation Alliance (formerly known as the CCPR). With its Head Office based in Kent, NAKMAS governs all forms of traditional and modern martial arts and has over 65,000 members.

NAKMAS is an approved insurance provider by XL Catlin and holds a National and International Quality Standard Certificate, BS EN ISO 9001:2015, via the BSI (British Standards Institution).

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