

The self-employed hard hit by coronavirus crisis

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Credit: Leiden University

Self-employed workers' hours have significantly decreased during the coronavirus crisis. Their average hours worked decreased most at the start of the crisis, by more than five hours per week. And it was difficult to return to their pre-crisis hours in the quarters that followed. This is the conclusion of research published by economists Ron Diris, Egbert Jongen and Olaf van Vliet from Leiden University in the journal *Economisch Statistische Berichten*.

The figures for the self-employed are in stark contrast to the figures for the employed, for whom the effect of the coronavirus crisis has been

limited and short-lived since the start of the crisis. Even in periods in which the measures were relatively limited and there was no lockdown, self-employed workers' hours did not return to the pre-crisis level.

Self-employed workers in the culture and recreation sector hit hard and for the longer term

The research has also shown that self-employed workers in the cultural and recreational sector were hit hard and for the longer term. They worked 10 fewer hours per week in comparison with 29.9 hours per week in 2019.

The hours worked by the self-employed in [business services](#) decreased sharply at the start of the crisis but soon recovered in the subsequent months, possibly because it was easier for these workers to switch to remote working by working online. For semi-skilled and unskilled self-employed workers, however, it proved difficult to return to the number of hours they used to work.

In their analysis the researchers looked at figures until the end of June 2021. Figures for the present lockdown are not yet available. In contrast to earlier lockdowns during the crisis, self-employed workers are no longer eligible for Tozo (temporary support for the self-employed) to supplement their income.

Historically hard hit

Diris, Jongen and Van Vliet researched the actual hours worked using data from the Labour Force Survey by Statistics Netherlands (CBS). The drop in hours worked by the self-employed is greater than during the financial crisis (2008) and the subsequent euro crisis, say the researchers. Self-employed workers have been historically hard hit by

the coronavirus [crisis](#).

Provided by Leiden University

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