

Written evidence submitted by Hamid Ghaffari (Owner at SP FOODS)

BACKGROUND

I purchased a catering business in Sutton in Ashfield on 28th February with 9 employees TUPEd over at that time. The February date is very significant as for a painful few weeks, the situation regarding the date of the Completion of the purchase seemed to be an obstacle to my staff qualifying for the CJRS assistance. The original "guidance" stated that "a Payroll Scheme would have needed to have been set up and an RTI submitted to HMRC on or before 28th February". But having completed on 28th February, no RTI had been submitted until finally the date of 28th February was changed to 19th March which meant I could, confidently, Furlough my staff and pay them from borrowed money until I was able to claim the payments back. All's well that ends well.

NEW ISSUE- SSP RECOVERY

Before I had Furloughed my employees, 2 of them felt it necessary to self-isolate for 2 weeks each, obtain isolation notes from NHS 111 and I paid them their £94.25 each for 2 weeks (RTIs submitted as normal), amounting to £377.00 (not an insignificant amount of money when the business has been closed from the day Mr. Johnstone "instructed" all non-essential businesses to close, having only traded for 16 days!). The problem is that having paid the monies there is no indication when it can be claimed back, nor is it clear that I can because the "guidance" refers to the same date criteria that was originally part of the "guidance" for qualifying for Furlough refund.

HOW CAN THE COMMITTEE HELP?

Please pose the question: is HMRC going to correct the "guidance" on who qualifies for the above (after a nudge and a reminder by your committee) in line with the Government Policy to refund 2 weeks' SSP claim due to self-isolation and change the 28th February date to 19th March date to match the main "guidance" on Furlough.

As a way of bringing forward and claim, it would also be a great financial help if we, as small business owners, would be allowed to recover this cost against any PAYE & Employee NI that we have to pay to HMRC, like the old days when all of SSP was recoverable? Yes, some of us have been in various businesses to remember that!

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