

Written evidence submitted by Paul Singh

I accepted a job in January for a new higher paid role of £45k at a large construction company as an accountant. As I was on a 3 month notice period with my current company (KPMG, one of the Big Four) I handed in my notice so that I could start in April. I agreed with KPMG that my final day of work would be the 20th March (this was agreed in January). When the 20th March arrived, I handed all my belongings back to KPMG and later that afternoon the Coronavirus Job Retention scheme was announced. My start date at the new job was 15th April and I then had doubts regarding what would happen. A week or so later I was contacted by my prospective employer and told my start date had to be delayed due to coronavirus.

I was told to contact KPMG to ask to be furloughed as I was eligible under the scheme Rishi Sunak had created. KPMG declined to furlough me even though it would have resulted in me receiving a significant additional amount of money compared to the benefits system. I have repeatedly asked to be furloughed but this has fallen on deaf ears. I have applied for new style job seekers allowance and universal credit which in total so far has resulted in less than £1k to cover nearly 3 months off work. This is in contrast to the £7.5k I would have received from furlough or if I was working.

I have found this time very tough and my mental health has been severely affected. There are ways available to cover the element of fraud that Rishi Sunak has mentioned. I have found that online via the HMRC website I can see how much I was paid over the previous year and therefore this could have been used to create a scheme in a similar manner for self employed.

I find it frustrating that I have been given minimal help by the government in this situation and there are many others in the same situation who have been simply ignored. Despite this, we will no doubt be expected to pay additional amounts in tax to cover such schemes. Rishi Sunak has ignored pleas and deemed that the scheme would be open to fraud however there are so many ways that this can be reduced to a minimal amount. There are other ways that the scheme is open to fraud but it seems strange that Rishi has decided that new starters is where he draws the line.

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