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Businesses seeking to overturn crippling rises in rates will be forced to wait an extra month before their appeals are considered, it has emerged.

The Scottish Government has changed the legislation to state firms must now wait at least 105 days before a decision is made on their rates bill.

Previously, the limit was just 70 days, meaning those affected will have an additional 35 days of being out-of-pocket.

It's the latest set-back for the SNP as it struggles to address the business rates fiasco.

Earlier this week, it emerged finance secretary Derek Mackay's 12.5 per cent cap on increases was in fact a 14.75 per cent one, as he'd forgotten to factor in inflation.

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:

"This is yet more evidence of the SNP's business rates fiasco unravelling.

"Not only was the cap announced by Derek Mackay found to be misleading, but now firms are being forced to wait more than a month extra to get their appeals heard.

"Considering finances for many of these organisations affected will already be tight, they can hardly afford to wait an additional 35 days.

"This is just another indication of an anti-business SNP government, that would rather hit firms in the pocket than help them boost growth, jobs and the economy."

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- An appellant can request that the Valuation Appeal Committee hear the appeal within a time period that the appellant requests, but this cannot be less than 105 days (previously 70 days) from the date they make the

request in question.

- The “70 day” mentioned was changed very recently (16 March and coming into force on 1 May 2017) when The Valuation Appeal Committee (Procedure in Appeals under the Valuation Acts) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2017 was laid (*Legislation.Gov.UK, Scottish Statutory Instruments, [link](#)*).
- Previously, Section 8 (4 and 7) of The Valuation Appeal Committee (Procedure in Appeals under the Valuation Acts) (Scotland) Regulations 1995 stated (*LegislationGov.UK, Scottish Statutory Instruments, [link](#)*):

‘(4) The secretary shall give to each party not less than 70 days’ notice of the date, time and place set for the hearing of the appeal.’

‘(7) If an appellant considers that his appeal has not been or is not to be heard within a reasonable period of lodging it, he may request the Committee to hear the appeal within such a period as he may specify, being a period not less than 70 days from the date of his request, and if the Committee declines to hear the appeal within such a period-

- (a) It shall state its reasons for so declining; and
- (b) The Secretary shall notify both parties accordingly’.

- The Valuation Appeal Committee (Procedure in Appeals under the Valuation Acts) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2017 “70” for “105” in both these paragraphs 4 and 7 of regulation 8. It states: (*Legislation.Gov.UK, Scottish Statutory Instruments, [link](#)*)

‘(4) In regulation 8 (arrangements for hearing by the Committee)-

- (a) in paragraphs (4) and (7), for “70” substitute “105”;
- (b) in paragraph (5)([6](#)), for “giving such information” to the end substitute “to be published on an appropriate website”; and
- (c) in paragraph (6), for “name a place” to the end substitute “include a list of the appeals to be heard at that hearing”.’

- Therefore as of 1 May 2017 the period covered by these sections will no longer be 70 but 105 days. Therefore the minimum time that an appellant can ask is 105 days, and if the Committee declines to hear the appeal within such a period, it must state why and notify both parties that this is the case.

“Culture of steady and sustained

improvement in NHS Wales” – NHS Wales Chief Executive Dr Andrew Goodall

Every year in the NHS:

- there are 30,000 births
- one million A&E attendances
- three million outpatient appointments
- an estimated 18 million contacts in GP practices, community clinics and other primary care settings

The report describes some of the improvements and innovations in the health service in the last year, as well as highlighting areas for future improvement.

Innovations detailed in the report include:

- A unique form of plastic surgery is helping to improve quality of life for lymphoedema patients. Wales is the only UK nation to offer the procedure, funded through the Welsh Government’s Health Technology fund. The surgery means patients no longer require compression garments, reducing costs to the NHS.
- Over 150 new staff have been recruited and new services created to improve Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services across Wales. New crisis intervention teams are now operating outside of normal working hours and early intervention in psychosis teams are caring for 15 to 24 year-olds experiencing severe mental illness.

NHS Wales Chief Executive Dr Andrew Goodall said:

“We have seen several years of sustained improvement in diabetes outcomes for children and young people. Cancer survival rates continue to improve despite increasing numbers of people requiring treatment. Waiting times to access diagnostic services continue to fall and we have seen a steady decline in people experiencing delays in their hospital discharge thanks to improved links between hospitals and social care.

“Our new clinical response model has vastly improved ambulance response times and has attracted interest from across the UK and the world.

“Passionate and committed NHS staff are leading improvements in healthcare services across Wales, services used by thousands of people every week; the Annual Quality Statement takes a look at just some of these improvements, but also looks at what we need to do next.

“I want to challenge the NHS to keep on improving; to work to

provide care that is truly centred on the individual patient, and to ensure health and care are delivered to the same high standards consistently across Wales.”

Press release: Facilities management company director disqualified for 6 years

Natalie Rimondi, director of Full Circle Facilities Management Limited, has been disqualified from acting as a company director for 6 years after transferring company funds of £103,600 to an associated company when she was aware the company was insolvent.

On 1 August 2014, a County Court Judgement was made against the company, and on the same day HM Revenue & Customs wrote to warn the company of potential winding-up proceedings.

Full Circle operated two bank accounts. On 4 August 2014 Natalie Rimondi authorised payments from each of these accounts, for £94,400 and £9,200, to an associated company. Following these payments there was less than £50 left in each of the accounts.

Three days later, on 7 August 2014, the company formally appointed a liquidator. In taking this action, Natalie Rimondi deprived Full Circle's creditors of funds that should have been available for the Liquidator to distribute.

Full Circle entered liquidation on 3 September 2014 owing £236,871 to creditors.

Commenting on the disqualification, Sue Macleod, Chief Investigator at the Insolvency Service, said:

By 4 August 2014, Natalie Rimondi was aware that insolvency proceedings were inevitable. In transferring the majority of the company's funds to an associated company she deliberately put these monies out of the reach of creditors.

Her disqualification will prevent a repeat occurrence of this and act as a deterrent to any other directors who are thinking of putting their own interests before that of their company's creditors.

Notes to editors

Full Circle Facilities Management Limited was incorporated on 22 March 2013 and traded from Full Circle House, Lakeside, Llantarnam Business Park, Cwmbran, South Wales NP44 3XS.

Natalie Rimondi was appointed as a director from 15 April 2014 to 3 September 2014, the date of liquidation.

Natalie Rimondi is of Newport and her date of birth is January 1984.

On 28 February 2017 Deputy District Judge T D C Jowett sitting at the County Court at Cardiff ordered that Natalie Rimondi should be disqualified from acting as a director for 6 years from 15 March 2017.

A disqualification order has the effect that without specific permission of a court, a person with a disqualification cannot:

- act as a director of a company
- take part, directly or indirectly, in the promotion, formation or management of a company or limited liability partnership
- be a receiver of a company's property

Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of other restrictions](#).

Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is [available](#).

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[News story: Chief Constable's contract extended](#)

The Civil Nuclear Constabulary (CNC) CEO/Chief Constable appointment usually runs for a five year term and Mike's contract was due to finish in September 2017; however, due to the ongoing Infrastructure Policing programme and several other large projects that are close to fruition, his contract has now been extended until September 2019.

The Civil Nuclear Police Authority (CNPA) Senior Appointments Committee had recommended to the Authority that the CEO be offered a continuation of contract for a further two years. The recommendation was endorsed by the Authority and approved by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Minister, Jesse Norman, MP.

Vic Emery, CNPA Chairman, said: "I am very pleased that Mike has agreed to be

the CNC's CEO/Chief Constable for these extra two years and look forward to continuing to work with him. I am sure my colleagues are as pleased about the extension as I am."

Chief Constable Mike Griffiths said: "The CNC has risen to every challenge it has had given to it, growing in size, capability and operational credibility. It has been a great privilege to be part of that success and I am delighted to have two more years at the CNC as we look to consolidate our gains and plan for the future."

Mike joined the CNC as Chief Constable in October 2012 after a career in the army spanning more than 30 years. As CEO/Chief Constable, he is responsible for the operational performance of the CNC and for improving, developing and maintaining effective strategic partnerships with the CNPA, site license companies, the Office for Nuclear Regulation (Civil Nuclear Security), Home Office and Police Scotland forces and the Ministry of Defence Police. He is also the Accounting Officer for the Civil Nuclear Police Authority and the CNC, ensuring demonstrable financial efficiency and effectiveness.

Press release: Director of Colchester restaurant receives 8-year disqualification

Mr Khan was the director of Colne Valley Restaurant Limited, which traded as Colne Valley Indian Restaurant in Earls Colne, Colchester.

He has been disqualified from acting as a company director for 8 years after an investigation by the Insolvency Service found he had employed an illegal worker, understated profits for tax purposes, and failed in his duty to ensure the company either maintained or preserved adequate accounting records.

Mr Khan's disqualification from 11 April 2017 means that he cannot promote, manage or be a director of a limited company until 2025.

Prior to the cessation of its trading in February 2014, officers from HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) had visited the premises and discovered that some of the restaurant takings were excluded from its takings records. Further investigations undertaken by HMRC also found that some of the restaurant's sales had been underpriced, while some ingredients had been overpriced, leading to understatements of profits for Corporation Tax purposes.

Officers from Home Office Immigration Enforcement (HOIE) also visited the restaurant premises on 4 October 2013 when the company was found to be employing an illegal worker. Mr Khan was as a result served with a

Notification of Liability for a Civil Penalty of £5,000. The fine was not paid and Mr Khan took steps to place the company into Creditors Voluntary Liquidation, which took place on 19 May 2015.

Robert Clarke, Head of Insolvent Investigations North at the Insolvency Service, said:

The Insolvency Service rigorously pursues directors who fail to deal properly with a company's taxation affairs and to pay fines imposed for breaking employment and immigration laws. We have worked closely in this case with our colleagues at HM Revenue & Customs and the Home Office to achieve this disqualification.

The director sought unfair advantages over his competitors by failing to ensure that profits were properly recorded and by employing individuals who did not have the right to work in the UK, in breach of his duties as a director.

The public has a right to expect that those who break the law will face the consequences. Running a limited company means you have statutory protections as well as obligations.

If you fail to comply with your obligations, then the Insolvency Service will investigate you.

Notes to editors

Colne Valley Restaurant Limited (CR0 No. 06527924) was incorporated in 2008. The company's trading address was 110 High Street, Earls Colne, Colchester, Essex, C06 2QX.

Colne Valley Restaurant Limited entered liquidation on 19 May 2015 with no assets and liabilities of £38,514. Moulana Mohammed Abdul Goffar Khan is from Halstead and his date of birth is June 1973.

The disqualification undertaking was accepted by the Secretary of State on 21 March 2017 and will come into force on 11 April 2017.

A disqualification order has the effect that without specific permission of a court, a person with a disqualification cannot:

1. act as a director of a company
2. take part, directly or indirectly, in the promotion, formation or management of a company or limited liability partnership
3. be a receiver of a company's property

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings.

Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of other restrictions](#).

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