

the  
SCONE  
WITCH  
TAKING ISSUE WITH  
THE CURRENT REGULATION  
ON STATUTORY HOLIDAY PAY



I am the owner of a small business with three locations.

The concept is working well and we have a great crew of workers, 34 to be exact, 20 of whom are full time.

Two are cafes and one is our central kitchen with a take-away counter. We make and sell scones. It is a high quality product which is perishable so we have all of the challenges that this implies.



Payroll is our biggest expense and we are struggling to keep it in proportion to sales as scones are labour intensive and even though they're made with butter and cream the price point for such a product is what it is. We can't sell them for double the price of the competition just because I refuse to compromise on quality.

The secret is to sell a LOT OF SCONES !

We have the usual business challenges; adverse weather, equipment breakdown, employee illness, etc. which are generally thought to be bad luck when they occur so we do what we can to minimize the impact.

The business challenge that I have no control over, however, is the way that the statutory holiday pay regulations disproportionately impact my type of business.

If I was selling insurance, for example, or dispensing legal advice, my employees would likely be on salary and my clients would be aware of the holiday and arrange their visit for the day before or the day after . My staff would probably have to work a little harder to make up for the lost time, but heck, they had a day off and likely returned refreshed.

I would not lose business and therefore money because of the holiday.

If I was running a grocery store my customers would stock up on extra food and as many of the holidays are feasting occasions they go nuts buying groceries. We've all been in that line-up.

Giftware ! I was in that business for many years and didn't mind at all paying the stats because most holidays come with a gift-giving component and we all needed the day off to recover from being so busy making money !

In my category of business, however, the losses are great. No one eats twice as much the day before or the day after the holiday to help my bottom line.



There is no way to make up the loss. And, insult to injury, business is always slow for the days following a holiday, especially the feasting holidays, (Christmas, New Year's, Easter, Thanksgiving).

We would all love a day off but given the nature of the overhead costs incurred in the restaurant business this is hard to do. We are permitted to open on these days which means paying our full-time staff double time and a half and with any luck we will almost break even. No profit and no holiday. It makes us a class of worker that just doesn't count.

I think that there should be a sliding scale of rebates for the different types of businesses dependent on how negatively they are impacted by stat pay. I can't think of any other practical way to deal with it.

A government worker recently came in for a scone and coffee on her way to the office. She slammed her purse down on the counter, rooted angrily in the bag to find her money while exclaiming ...

"Do you believe it ? I have to work on a Saturday !"

"Well" said I, "You're not going to get much sympathy around here."

Imagine if that woman had had to work on the 24th of May, or heaven forbid, the ironically named "FAMILY DAY"...

**We have families too!**

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