



HM REVENUE & CUSTOMS

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Payback time for payroll tax fraudster

A businessman from Reading, who stole more than £1 million from his workers' pay packets, has been ordered to repay criminal profits of £884,023, within six months, or remain in prison for a further six years.

Kenneth Crookes, 60, was jailed for four years in September 2015 for deducting Income Tax and National Insurance Contributions from his employees' wages, but instead of paying the tax to HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), he kept the money and used it to prop up his ailing business.

Kevin Newe, Assistant Director, Fraud Investigation Service, HMRC, said:

“It is crucial that we stop criminals profiting from their crimes and recover the money to fund public services. Crookes is already serving a prison sentence and if he doesn’t pay back what he owes, he will spend even more time behind bars - and still owe the money.

“If you know of anyone who is committing tax fraud you can report them by calling our 24-hour Hotline on 0800 59 5000.”

Each month Crookes ran the payroll for his ‘Reading Office Furniture’ business and sent the information to HMRC. However, he failed to hand the money over, ignoring all contact from HMRC. Crookes was arrested for the fraudulent evasion of Income Tax in February 2014.

He admitted that he was responsible for submitting payroll on behalf of his business and pleaded guilty at Reading Crown Court in August 2015. Crookes was jailed for four years at Reading Crown Court on 24 September 2015. The confiscation hearing took place at the same court on Friday, 18 March 2016.

Notes for Editors

1. Kenneth Crookes, DOB 16/02/56, previously of Caversham Road, Reading, Berkshire, was ordered to repay £884,023.26 of criminal benefit at Reading Crown Court on 18 March 2016.
2. There is no appeal against default jail sentences issued in confiscation orders. If the money isn’t repaid within set timescales the default prison sentence must be served, and the money is still due.
3. The sentencing news release can be found at <http://www.mynewsdesk.com/uk/hm-revenue-customs-hmrc/pressreleases/reading-businessman-who-stole-employees-tax-jailed-1224021>
4. Anyone with information regarding fraud is encouraged to contact the Hotline on 0800 59 5000 or via the website: <https://www.gov.uk/topic/dealing-with-hmrc/tax-compliance>
5. HMRC’s Flickr channel www.flickr.com/hmrcgovuk
6. Follow HMRC’s Press Office on Twitter @HMRCpressoffice.

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) is the UK's tax authority.

HMRC is responsible for making sure that the money is available to fund the UK's public services and for helping families and individuals with targeted financial support.

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