



Last night on GBC's Direct Democracy (31/03/20) Jonathan Sacramento hosted questions from the public to the Chief Minister Fabian Picardo.

<https://www.gbc.gi/tv/programmes/direct-democracy-123>

Here is a snip-it of some of the more business related questions and answers:

Minute 23.55

Q. If you work for a company which is excluded from the BEAT COVID 19 financial measures but been asked to stay at home, consequently not get paid by the company, will they be eligible for any financial assistance from the Government?

A. So look I understand that there are excluded companies that feel they should be included and I have said we are reviewing both the class of excluded companies and indeed considering whether excluded companies should have a number of employees that could come inactive under the rules because we understand that in some companies you may have divisions which are more exposed to COVID than others.

So this is an issue am looking at in detail with the financial secretary and the director of employment, we have discussed this issue, in particular, this afternoon with the leader of the opposition and Mr Clinton, its a vexed issue. The Chamber of Commerce and the GFSB have made representation and I have written to everyone who has written to me about the subject to say we are looking at this and do understand that it is complex.

Frankly, a company can not tell you to stay at home and not pay you, the contract of employment provides that they must pay you, that's why we want to help individuals who are in that situation so their business can continue to pay their employees the BEAT COVID amount £1,155 a month so we avoid Unions having to take legal action against companies.

Look we are all in this together, we have to ensure that everyone in our economy is able to put food on the table and that's what we are trying to achieve with these measures.

Minute 29,30

Q. On the question of subsidy, is the Government willing to pay a subsidy to employees of a service industry if those employees are able to be re-deployed to sites not affected by the closure but refuse, in other words, 'I stay home and get paid anyway'.

A. That is not the position we are taking. The position we are taking is that an employer must say that the employee is inactive because he has no role for him to fulfil at this time. If the employer has a role for them to fulfil they must go under their employment contract to forkful that role subject to them not being at any genuine risk.



Being outside as long as you can keep the rules of social distancing, or being in an office as long as you can keep the rules of social distancing, is not a risk as far as we have been advised and therefore the employer would be under an obligation to comply with his contract of employment and the employer would not have to claim for them as an inactive employee in those circumstances.

Minute 32,20

Q. As far as the BEATs system is concerned, some companies have been excluded from allowing employees into the system. Why have these sectors been excluded and what methods have been used to determine them?

A. So when we looked at this issue with the Financial secretary we were looking at the areas we believed there was still activity for at least the month of April, and we know that we have some sectors we have identified the sector correctly as being excluded, but there are some companies in those excluded sectors and as an industrial sector which does not have an activity which continues and which are much more COVID exposed that is why I have said we are going to look in detail at each individual companies in the excluded sectors.

We are going to look at the sectors which are excluded and indeed we may even look inside a particular company where there is an area which is continuing to have economic activity and an area which is very exposed to COVID, so you may have a company which has some people working and some people not and can be declared inactive and be subject to the COVID measures.