Jailed fraudster ordered to hand back more than £120,000 after securing Covid loans in his wife’s name

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Bradford man obtained two of the three maximum-value Bounce Back Loans he applied for, with one refused

- Shohid Ahmed applied for three Bounce Back Loans worth £150,000 using his wife’s name, receiving £100,000 his restaurant was not entitled to
- He filed false documents with Companies House to make an innocent woman appear to be the director of his company
- Ahmed was jailed for two years last year and subsequent financial investigations by the Insolvency Service have resulted in the 41-year-old being handed a confiscation order of £123,000

A Bradford fraudster who was jailed after stealing Covid support funds during the pandemic has been ordered to repay £123,000.

Shohid Ahmed applied for three maximum-value Bounce Back Loans on behalf of Red Square Restaurants Limited, using his wife’s name because she had a better credit history.

The 41-year-old, of Bardsey Crescent, Bradford, received £100,000 of the £150,000 he applied for in 2020. In almost six years since the fraudulent applications, he has repaid just £15,000.

Ahmed attempted to conceal the fraud by filing false documents naming an innocent woman who simply rented a house from his father, as director of the company.

He also produced a fabricated invoice claiming £15,000 of the loan money had been spent on refurbishing the restaurant, which traded as Ruby’s Lounge on Huddersfield Road in Mirfield.

Ahmed was jailed for two years at Bradford Crown Court in May last year, having pleaded guilty to offences under the Fraud Act 2006, Companies Act 2006 and Insolvency Act 1986.

He was also disqualified as a company director for 11 years in December 2021 for the same misconduct.

Ahmed was ordered to pay £123,000, plus costs of £6,000, at a hearing at the same court on Thursday 12 March. He has three months to pay the confiscation order which takes into account the change in the value of money since 2020, or face an additional 15 months in prison.

Even if Ahmed fails to pay the order and is sent back to prison, he will still be required to make the payment.

Alexander Grierson, Head of Asset Recovery at the Insolvency Service, said:

> Bounce Back Loans were designed to help legitimate businesses survive one of the most difficult periods in recent memory. Shohid Ahmed abused that scheme through harmful

> and deceptive behaviour, which is why he was jailed last year.
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> This confiscation order sends a clear message that a prison sentence is not the end of the matter.
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> Those who steal from the public purse should be in no doubt that we will come for the fraudulently-obtained money.

Red Square Restaurants Limited was incorporated in May 2018 with Ahmed's wife as sole director. Ahmed was officially director for just one day, resigning on 10 February 2020.

Despite this, he made three Bounce Back Loan applications in his wife's name in May and June 2020, claiming the restaurant was actively trading.

This directly contradicted his own application to have the company struck off the Companies House register in April 2020, in which he stated it had not traded for three months.

The Bounce Back Loans were not used for the benefit of the business as required under the scheme.

Ahmed produced an invoice claiming £15,000 had been paid to an interior design firm in Stockton-on-Tees, but Insolvency Service investigators found the address was occupied by a cafe that had traded there for 37 years.

Neither the cafe nor the building's landlord had ever heard of the design company.

Shortly before a liquidator was appointed to wind up Red Square Restaurants in July 2020, Ahmed filed documents with Companies House falsely claiming a new director had been appointed on New Year's Day 2020.

The woman named had no connection to the business and confirmed she had simply rented a house from Ahmed's father. Ahmed nevertheless claimed she managed the restaurant, had taken out the loans, and controlled the bank accounts, while describing himself as a waiter on a £12,000 salary.

A restaurant now operates from the same address under a different name. Shohid Ahmed is not a director of that company.

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/jailed-fraudster-ordered-to-hand-back-more-than-120000-after-securing-covid-loans-in-his-wifes-name