

BACK IN CONTROL

Jack's case study

Jack (name changed) is originally from Poland. He came to ICOS with limited knowledge of English and he needed help with applying for National Insurance Number. Our colleague helped him with NIN application and after 4 weeks he received his number. Unfortunately, it wasn't the end of his problems. Jack had been working for a car wash for the last 3 years, In September 2022 he became ill, and he wasn't able to go to work. He contacted a GP and the doctor decided that he was not fit for work, so he issued him a sick note. When Jack delivered a sick note to his employer, he said he would not accept it and that he needed to go back to work as soon as possible. Because Jack was not able to work, he refused it, and stayed at home, as the doctor had advised him to do. When she was on sick leave, his employer didn't pay him Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), so he didn't have any income at all. He was struggling financially – that was why ICOS project worker helped him with the Universal Credit claim. Unfortunately, the Universal Credit team rejected his application for benefits, because he didn't pass the habitual residency test. When ICOS contacted HMRC's Statutory Payment Dispute Team to find out why his employer thought that Jack was not entitled to SSP, he found out that they could not find any of Jack's employment records. HMRC told him that it looked like he had not been working legally, and his employer had not paid his National Insurance Number contribution and income tax. He thought this had been a legal job because he was receiving payslips from his employer. Our project worker decided that the best solution is to refer Jack to Welfare Rights at Sunderland City Council (who can also help with employment law issues), and he assisted him during a meeting with them. As of January 2023, and they still dealing with it, because there are numerous issues. It looks like Jack has been exploited at work: he's been working long hours every day, without any days off and without any holidays.

When Jack started feeling better, he started to look for another job. At the moment, he is working and he is very happy with his new job. He still receives help from ICOS when she needs interpreting, or to be in touch council, GP, or employer. ICOS is also working closely with the Welfare Rights Service

He said: "I would like to thank my support worker and ICOS for the help which I received. They are making big difference!"