

CEO's welcome: Achieving our objectives

Welcomes

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23 November 2022

In our last column, we said that the government would announce their budget plans on 31 October. As we all know, that date was pushed back to 17 November when Jeremy Hunt issued his first Autumn Statement, indicating an aspiration for stability, growth and an investment in the public services. With none of the headline tax rates being changed, the Chancellor has had to look at allowances, exemptions and temporary taxes as a means of raising additional revenue, whilst indicating that spending cuts will be required across government departments (other than defence, education, and health and social care).

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Good tax administration depends both on its efficiency and on the quality of the interaction between the public and the tax department. If HMRC are to address their current customer service challenges, as well as deliver an ambitious programme of technological reform and enhancement, it is imperative that the department has the necessary resources. Some (but not all) of the current customer service issues are the result of HMRC cutting back on staffing, assuming that digitalisation would dramatically reduce telephone and postal interaction with taxpayers. Those reductions in demand are yet to happen because digitalisation has not progressed as far or as swiftly as anticipated – but the reduction in supply has.

For HMRC to achieve its objective of building a trusted modern tax administration, it needs the resources to build on the progress already made on the Personal Tax Account. It also needs the resources which will enable all the Charter principles to be translated from words into experience. We would therefore urge the government to ensure that HMRC are adequately resourced so they can fulfil their task of effectively collecting revenue.

On the day of the Autumn Statement, all our technical officers were busy digesting the information and issuing press releases which can be found on the ATT, CIOT and LITRG websites. Following this, the ATT secured appearances on Radio 5 Live and Radio Cumbria to explain to the public what the Autumn Statement meant for them; and ATT, CIOT and LITRG were featured in the Financial Times, The Times and the Telegraph over the weekend.

The CIOT President Susan Ball was delighted to launch the new Diploma in Tax Technology (DITT) at a tax technology panel debate on 21 November. The diploma reflects the way in which tax advice and the demands on tax professionals have changed immeasurably over the last two decades – partly because of technology. The DITT is a welcome and relevant addition to the learning and development offering from the CIOT. It offers learning which is accessible online through 10 modules, and includes two routes for consideration depending on the area of tax digital focus required. You can read more about the DITT on page 61, and visit

www.tax.org.uk/ditt

For those wanting standalone qualifications, the ATT also offers Foundation level qualifications in Personal Taxation, Business Taxation, VAT Compliance and Transfer Pricing. These provide self-directed study, allowing students to take responsibility for their own study – and at a time that suits them because the exams are available online. There is no need to book; students simply sit the exams when they are ready. These are ideal for people who are new in tax or wish to increase their knowledge in a particular area. For more information, visit www.att.org.uk/online-courses-att-foundation-qualifications

Finally, we would like to thank Paul Benton and the Sheffield Branch for the warm welcome they extended to us at their 50th Anniversary dinner. It was lovely to once again meet in person and we hope to meet more of you in the New Year.

Best wishes for the Festive season and the New Year!