Welcome to the June Technical Newsdesk

Welcomes

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One thing which became apparent fairly quickly after I started working at the CIOT was the difference in focus between working in the Technical Team and working in practice. The majority of what the Technical Team does is ‘forward-looking’, considering and responding to consultations and proposals for future tax changes, and trying to make them as effective as possible (have a look at our charitable objectives on our websites, and how the technical functions pursue those objectives). Working in practice very much involves the ‘here and now’, helping clients navigate the complexities of the existing tax regime. This was brought home somewhat when we recently cancelled two proposed branch events on ‘current consultations’ due to insufficient delegate numbers.

This gives us challenges when new measures are proposed. The technical teams of CIOT, ATT and LITRG are relatively small, and members of the team (knowledgeable as they are) cannot know all aspects of the taxes they cover. Thank goodness, therefore, for the volunteers on our various technical and sub-committees – normal people (just like you) who work in practice, industry, or HMRC, and lend us their experience, helping shape our responses to consultations and our interactions with HMRC and other policymakers. We like to think that it’s not all one-way traffic, and volunteering also helps enhance technical knowledge, influence future tax measures, and gives access to a peer group (family, even) of individuals with the same professional interests.

This leads me to our first item in this month’s Technical Newsdesk, a spotlight on our Succession Taxes technical sub-committee. This is the fourth of such spotlights highlighting some of the work we undertake, so do also take a look at the previous spotlights on the sub-committees for Management of Taxes, Owner Managed Businesses, and Corporate Tax at taxadvisermagazine.com.

We then highlight some of the work we have carried out recently. Taxation of the digital economy is certainly flavour of the month at all levels – UK, EU and OECD – and Sacha Dalton provides a summary of recent developments and the work we have done in this area. Sticking with the largely corporate area, Sacha and Emma Rawson then summarise the recent CIOT and ATT responses to the joint HMRC and HM Treasury consultation on reforms to the corporate intangible fixed assets regime.

Our submissions and interactions with policymakers are to no avail if they go unheard, or receive little in terms of debate and scrutiny. One of our frustrations is the apparent lack of Parliamentary scrutiny once a measure reaches Finance Bill stage. George Crozier summaries our comments in relation to a recent House of Lords Constitution Committee inquiry into the legislative process, which also reiterates the importance of proper consultation and us 'getting in early' if we want to make a difference.

This takes us nicely into consultations which are currently open (and will still be open, hopefully, by the time you read this). Our engagement is not limited to tax administrations, and we highlight the call for evidence recently launched by the Charity Tax Commission around charity tax reliefs, on which we'd welcome your views. Then on more typical territory, we plug (sorry!) the recently published draft guidance on workplace charging tax exemptions for electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles.

We then turn to a different form of digital taxation. The Personal Tax Account has, according to HMRC, over 15 million users, but Gillian Wrigley explains one of the quirks of the PTA if you check your tax code online. Emma Rawson and I then provide the now regular update on Making Tax Digital – don't forget to participate in our webinar on 7 June! And if (or when) things go wrong, don't just cause yourself to top up the swear jar, report it on the HMRC Agent Forum. Helen Thornley tells you what sort of thing to report, and how.

It's probably at this point (or indeed earlier, you might think!) that I run out of themes. We have an important item from Jane Mellor, one of our Professional Standards team, highlighting the recent update to the engagement letters guidance. Jayne Simpson then updates us on the work the CIOT has been doing in relation to obtaining rulings on TOGCs, and its submission to HMRC highlighting uncertainties in the treatment of transfers of going concerns arising from the Intelligent Management Services Limited case. We finish across our domestic borders into

Scotland and Wales. Joanne Walker summarises the CIOT and LITRG submissions in relation to Land and Buildings Transaction Tax Group Relief and draft regulations in relation to Social Security appeals respectively, with Claire Thackaberry rounding off this month's Technical Newsdesk with a review of the Welsh Revenue Authority's recently published Charter of Standards and Values.