HMRC’s Clearance Service

General Features

01 November 2019

What are members’ recent experiences of dealing with HMRC’s Clearance Unit?

At its September meeting, members of the CIOT’s Owner Managed Business (OMB) technical sub-committee identified some recent issues they have been experiencing with the quality of HMRC’s Clearance Unit’s customer service. The sub-committee felt that the issues they have been seeing may be the result of changes that have taken place at the Clearance Unit, and therefore may resolve themselves once these changes have had time to bed in. It is understood that there is a new lead in charge of the unit and that there has also been a move to Birmingham with new personnel being appointed there, although the experienced members of the unit remain in London.

One particular issue that was identified by our OMB sub-committee was the timing of clearance responses, with some taking longer than 30 days to come through. Other issues identified included the failure by the Clearance Unit sometimes to read all the information provided, their approach to revised requests and supplementary applications where a minor change of circumstances is notified (which seems to be putting the application back to the back of the queue), inconsistency in granting clearances, and including caveats to clearances in responses.

It was agreed that the CIOT should wait and see how the new HMRC team develops and whether the issues raised around customer service and consistency improve. If the issues persist in the longer term, we will consider whether the CIOT should raise them with HMRC directly.

In order to build up a broader picture of the current situation, we are asking members to send us details of their recent experiences of dealing with HMRC’s Clearance Unit. Please send your comments to technical@ciot.org.uk.