An update for our members and students

General Features

01 April 2020

The COVID-19 outbreak has caused all of us all to change how we live and work, and this includes the CIOT and ATT

Impact on members and students

We know COVID-19 is having a huge impact on our members, students and volunteers. Things are moving fast and official government guidance is obviously the first place to look for advice on managing your business and working life in the face of COVID-19 related challenges.

Please be assured that we are working incredibly hard to continue to support you all at this difficult time. If you have work-related personal problems, please contact our Members Support Service on 0845 744 6611 to be put in touch with a volunteer member of the Support Service. An independent, sympathetic fellow practitioner will listen in strictest confidence and give support, but they cannot offer advice of a technical nature.
Additionally, the Charity Committee of the Worshipful Company of Tax Advisers considers applications for hardship grants from CIOT and ATT members in financial need. Please email almoner@tabf.org.uk for an application form. There is a piece with further information about the **Tax Advisers' Benevolent Fund** on page 50 of this issue.

Public information and support

We are both very aware of our public benefit obligations at a time like this. Our Low Incomes Tax Reform Group (LITRG) has already **published guidance** on tax and related benefits in the context of COVID-19. Areas covered include tax bills, sick pay and benefit entitlement for the self-employed during the pandemic, and tax credit

and universal credit impacts. Do help us publicise this if you can. LITRG's guidance is aimed at the general public, but **ATT** and **CIOT** technical teams are also publishing updates on our websites for members and other tax professionals.

At time of writing (18 March), a number of tax changes and relaxations have already been made by government in response to COVID-19 and we are in the process of writing to the government identifying more that our members have suggested could be done to help businesses and other taxpayers get through this challenging time.

Our staff and offices

The wellbeing of our staff, members, students, volunteers, business partners and stakeholders remains our utmost priority. As such, all our employees are now working from home until further notice, in line with the latest government advice. Our offices in Monck Street, Westminster are now closed for the duration of the outbreak.

We are trying to maintain as normal a service as possible, however response times may be longer than usual. There may be limitations on our ability to manage phone calls so if you wish to contact us, please do so by email (**ATT** / **CIOT**) in the first instance.

We will be replacing our face to face meetings that would have taken place in Monck Street by online alternatives or conference calls until further notice.

Our events

The latest government advice is to avoid large gatherings and non-essential contact more generally so we have taken the difficult and unprecedented decision to cancel the CIOT's Spring Residential Conference in Cambridge on 27-29 March. This is a huge disappointment as we know how many people look forward to it, and how much work our presenters in particular have put into preparing for it.

We have also cancelled the CTA and ATT Admission Ceremonies that would have taken place in April and May, and our latest debate held jointly with the Institute for Fiscal Studies, which was to have taken place on 30 March.

The CIOT AGM was scheduled for 19 May but, as set out elsewhere in the Briefings section of this issue of Tax Adviser, we are postponing it by up to three months. Members will be contacted at least 21 days before the new date, once it has been

set. The CTA Address and reception, which normally take place on the same day as the AGM, are being rescheduled.

We will be replacing our face to face ATT Conferences in May and June with online alternatives. Details for specific events will be issued as soon as we have them. Please look out for updates on our website and social media channels.

By the time you read this, a decision will have been taken on whether the May **ATT** and **CTA exams** will go ahead as planned.

Our computer based exams are continuing, though some test centres have been closed and candidates booked in to these are having to rearrange. All the test centres have put in place rigorous hygiene procedures.

For regular updates on all our events, please visit both of **our websites**.

Branches and CPD

Our branch programme has been hit hard by this situation too. We are postponing all face to face branch events unless there are very compelling reasons to proceed. This is until further notice.

We are making every effort to ensure CPD for our members continues and wherever we can, we intend to replace cancelled face to face meetings **with digital content** to help our members to stay apprised of important technical issues.

Members and non-members who have booked and paid for face to face CPD will be credited where an online provision can be found, and refunded where a digital equivalent is not available.

We are working through these plans. Please bear with us whilst we adapt and do get in touch if you have any questions. Email us at branches@tax.org.uk providing your telephone number and the nature of your enquiry, and a member of the team will call you back as soon as possible.

We have no doubt we will get through this together and come back better than ever. There are a lot of exciting things on the horizon for both ATT and CIOT. We are all about promoting education and improving the UK tax system and seeking to ensure that, for the general public, it is workable and as fair as possible and that is what we will continue to do.

As this situation evolves, we will continue to keep you updated through our weekly newsletter, social media channels and website. Please take care of yourselves, your family and friends.