Welcome to the May Technical Newsdesk

Welcomes

07 May 2021

There is a strange irony that this month's Technical Newsdesk is a short one, at a time when we are busier than ever. Like the proverbial buses, you don't see a fiscal 'event' for ages, and then three come at once (Budget on 3 March, Finance Bill on 11 March, and 'Tax Day' on 23 March). We provide a brief report on these events both below and in last month's edition.

Around 15 consultations and calls for evidence were issued on Budget Day and Tax Day and the three technical teams of CIOT, ATT and LITRG will be considering these in the usual way. You may have noticed in our Friday e-newsletters that we are individually highlighting these consultations, and requesting members' feedback. Please do contact us with your thoughts. Thank you to those members who have provided comments so far, particularly in relation to the HMRC Charter for our feedback as part of the Charter Stakeholder Group, where the 'real life' stories have been extremely illuminating (if also concerning).

In the meantime, we are preparing briefings for MPs to assist with their debates on the Finance Bill. We do this to assist opposition and backbench MPs in carrying out effective scrutiny of the legislation and obtaining (sometimes) answers and clarifications from ministers where these are needed. We have held meetings with the Labour and SNP Treasury Teams as part of this process, though I should emphasise that we are non-party political and don't raise concerns with opposition parties that we haven't first raised with the government.

Elsewhere, our substantial engagement with HMRC and other government departments continues. Hopefully, you will have seen the brief reports on these in the Friday e-newsletters, as well as more substantively where appropriate in these pages. I have previously mentioned that this engagement is at an all-time high, encompassing not only 'technical' discussions (such as in relation to the COVID-19 support schemes, Brexit-related matters, Making Tax Digital, etc.), but also more

‘administrative’ issues (such as the Agent Dedicated Line, HMRC performance, customer experience, etc.). The ability to do all this virtually is one of the few silver linings to the COVID-19 cloud.