Do you want to help?

General Features



07 June 2021

National Volunteers’ Week takes place from 1 to 7 June to celebrate the invaluable contributi on that volunteers make in all walks of life. Tax Adviser examines the different ways you can share your skills and experiences

In 2020, there were at least 681 volunteers across CIOT and ATT Committees, Steering Groups and Councils who contributed at least 19,719 hours of their time. We are continually looking for volunteers to contribute to the success of the

organisations.

If you want to help to shape the future of the CIOT or ATT and the tax profession, volunteering is a way to make a real difference.

CIOT and ATT's Council, Steering Groups and Committees and the branch network are all run by our members – volunteers who offer their time and expertise to provide essential direction, leadership, guidance and support to the organisations.

Volunteering is a great way to enhance and develop new skills, gain valuable experience and make a contribution to the wider profession, government and public as a whole.

Whether you are a student, newly qualified, a longstanding member or retired, it's never too early or too late in your career to volunteer. We have exciting opportunities for you to join our Branch and National Steering Groups, Council and Committees.

What does being a volunteer mean? We offer a wide range of opportunities to suit all levels of skills and experience, both in the Branch network and Steering Groups and Committees of Council. The role and level of personal commitment will vary according to the activity and your other commitments but you should be prepared to:

- Attend meetings and contribute to the work of whichever Steering Group or Committee you join. Most of our Committees and Steering Groups meet four times a year at our Head Office in London but increasingly we are making use of online facilities.
- Contribute to the development of the group's activities by offering professional comment and advice on current issues and developments from your own perspective and sharing practical experiences.
- Read meeting papers in advance of meetings.

Benefits of volunteering

Volunteering has many benefits, both personal and professional. These include:

- gaining new skills and valuable experience;
- opportunities to establish professional relationships with the tax authorities and government departments;

- opportunities to exchange views and experiences with fellow tax professionals, further developing your personal and professional networks;
- early access to information on key developments and innovations in the field of taxation;
- excellent additional material for your CV; and
- opportunities for continuing professional development.

Next steps

Details of our Steering Groups and Committees are on our websites at www.tax.org.uk/networking and www.att.org.uk/about-us/steering-groups-committees

If you are interested in getting involved, please contact Jane Ashton (ATT) at jashton@att.org.uk or Emma Barklamb (CIOT) at ebarklamb@ciot.org.uk, who will give you any further information you need.

Once you know more and are happy with the commitment you will need to make, we will ask you to submit a brief CV so that we can learn a little more about you before we invite you to attend a meeting.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Image

MY EXPERIENCES ON THE ATT COUNCIL

Richard Freeman
Senior Tax Professional at HMRC



As an ATT Council member, I'd like to share a few of my thoughts around my (positive!) experiences of volunteering for both ATT and CIOT.

I started volunteering for the West Midlands joint ATT/CIOT branch to get to know fellow members of the tax profession across all sectors and professions. Through organising numerous educational and social events, our committee worked well together and enabled many people to both keep up to date with CPD and build really strong networks.

I enjoyed chairing the branch for a number of years, and continue to act as chair of my current branch – HMRC. In 2015, I joined ATT Council and have sat on various Steering Groups in the last six years. Being part of this group is personally really satisfying. The ability to utilise and develop further skills is fantastic and a great addition to your CV.

I'm currently chair of our nominations committee, which is looking to appoint four new Council members – this is a great opportunity for members to get involved who can bring their skills to assist in the successful running of the organisation.

Over the course of my many years of volunteering, I've met many people and enjoyed being an integral part of the diverse tax community we have in the UK. There are endless opportunities to add value and feel valued, both helping the organisation for whom you are volunteering, and also helping you to practise and develop other skills which are transferable to your day job. I would most definitely recommend that you consider getting involved in your Association or Institute. Saying yes to opportunities is always a great way to learn and develop!

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SUPPORTING TAX CHARITIES

Alice Devitt, Director of Fundraising at TaxAid and Tax Help for Older People, shares the benefits of getting involved with their valuable work.

As part of our Volunteers' Week celebrations, we want to recognise the extraordinary contribution made by tax professionals who volunteer. Expert volunteers enable TaxAid and Tax Help for Older People to reach thousands of vulnerable people with tax crises. Two tax professionals who have volunteered for us explain why they volunteer and why they think it's important.

TaxAid offers free, confidential advice on tax to those on low incomes and Tax Help for Older People provides free, independent and expert help and advice for older people on lower incomes. If you would like to learn more about their work, or find out how you can volunteer, please contact Alice at bridgethegap@taxvol.org.uk.



Jill Crawley

Jill volunteers for Tax Help for Older People. She is originally from Essex but went to university in Manchester and didn't 'go home'. She now lives in Marple, Cheshire with her husband. They both work in the accountancy profession but actually met playing badminton.

I am a Chartered Accountant and Chartered Tax Advisor. I gained a wide variety of accounting and tax knowledge whilst employed by Big Four firms in Manchester. My focus, now that I run my own accounting and tax practice, is on owner managed companies and individual taxpayers.

I noticed an advertisement for volunteers to help at Tax Help for Older People in the technical press about 15 years ago and applied to become a volunteer. I had helped my parents with their tax affairs for a number of years and felt I should give something back to society and make use of my expertise.

I have a real sense of achievement and satisfaction when the clients I see are given impartial and practical assistance to resolve their tax issues. For so many, the burden of dealing with tax matters causes them to worry, and lifting that burden is really worthwhile.

Most of the problems arise from multiple sources of income, multiple tax codes, foreign pensions, brown envelope phobia and having to deal with such issues on an infrequent basis with little knowledge. I often deal with a widow or widower whose spouse had dealt with all the family's financial matters, so they are faced with both a knowledge and emotional challenge.

Impartial and compassionate advice is needed by older people who often had been taxed under PAYE. All of a sudden, in retirement they are faced with strange tax codes for pensions and no one to really ask, as any support that was given during employment has ceased in retirement.

If you enjoy working in tax, interacting with people and have time to spare 'off the clock' you will be amazed how much you learn and the peace of mind you give to those that need Tax Help for Older People.

Image



Chris Moody

Chris volunteers for TaxAid. He trained and qualified as a chartered accountant many years ago with Spicer & Pegler (now Deloitte) and also took the CIOT exams. He lives in the Thames valley with his wife and a number of cats. He recently became a grandfather for the fourth time.

I first became a volunteer adviser at TaxAid 19 years ago when I was self-employed. I had always found the training that TaxAid offered very good value and I approached someone at a conference.

Our volunteer work gives us all a great sense of satisfaction when we can help someone to resolve a tax issue. Among other things, we're often called upon to help with situations where there is a backlog of tax returns to submit where the client has buried their head in the sand.

TaxAid is needed because the tax system is so wretchedly complicated. Increasingly, computers are taking over and I often struggle with the technology, as well as the law – even though I'm supposed to be an expert.

I would recommend anyone thinking of using their tax skills to volunteer to go for it. It is so rewarding.