CIOT tells MPs of concerns over HMRC service levels

Briefings



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In a submission to the committee ahead of its hearing with HMRC bosses on 20 October, CIOT said it continued to be concerned about the difficulties that both advisers and taxpayers face getting timely responses and action from HMRC. The Institute added: ‘We are concerned that staff numbers within HMRC are being cut in anticipation of securing savings from digitalisation when these savings have not yet been realised.’

During the hearing, SNP MP Peter Grant challenged the HMRC officials over the decline in HMRC customer service levels, and asked when ‘efficiency savings’ become cuts in customer service levels.

In the submission, CIOT also told the MPs that:

- Proposed changes to R&D tax credits will prevent some genuine claimants from accessing the relief.
- Complexity and frequent changes to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme were the cause of many taxpayer errors in relation to the scheme.
- The government should take a more systematic approach to the evaluation of tax reliefs.
- There is an apparent lack of consistency in decision-making following time to pay arrangement requests.

The Institute’s comments on R&D credits were picked up by Conservative MP Olivia Blake, who put them to the officials. Responding, HMRC chief executive Jim Harra acknowledged that policing error and fraud risks while making sure that legitimate claimants can access them ‘is a balancing act’.

The short inquiry is expected to lead to a report in December or January.

SNP MP Peter Grant

Conservative
MP Olivia Blake