PAC Report: MPs back advisers' concerns over services

Briefings



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p>CIOT has welcomed a report from the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee which endorses the concerns of tax professionals about HMRC customer service levels.

The report, 'HMRC performance in 2022-23', quotes CIOT saying that HMRC's service levels are the 'single greatest concern expressed by its members, and that they are having a detrimental impact on cash flow, the costs of doing business, attitudes to tax compliance and trust in the tax system'. Drawing on this and other evidence, the committee concludes: 'HMRC's customer service levels are at an all-time low because of conscious choices made by HMRC and HM Treasury.'

The report notes that while HMRC 'insists' it has good quality digital services for customers, tax professionals felt that HMRC had 'implemented its digital services

poorly and with inadequate testing, and that they lacked the functionality needed for taxpayers and agents to use [them] effectively’.

The committee recommends: ‘HM Treasury and HMRC should ensure HMRC’s customer services are sufficiently resourced in the short as well as the longer-term so that it can meet its service standards until its digital services adequately address the needs of taxpayers and their agents.’

CIOT President Gary Ashford commented: ‘The committee has hit the nail on the head… Unless and until automated digital services can be radically improved, HMRC must be provided with the resources to provide all year round, well publicised help and advice to taxpayers from a human adviser over phone and webchat.’