Backing for mandatory membership – many unanswered questions

Briefings



21 June 2024

Both ATT and CIOT have backed mandatory membership of a professional body as the preferred option from those in the ‘raising standards’ consultation, but both bodies have sounded warnings and sought greater clarity from the government about its objectives.

Senga Prior, chair of ATT’s technical steering group, explained: ‘Requiring all tax practitioners to register with HMRC is a good first step towards a strengthened regulatory framework… However, the changes this consultation envisages could profoundly impact the ability for some tax practitioners to legitimately remain within the tax advice market… The government and HMRC must be clear what the problems in the tax market are that the proposals are seeking to address and understand who is perpetrating them.’

For CIOT, Ellen Milner, Director of Public Policy, said: ‘We’re broadly supportive of approach one [mandatory membership] as the system which could beset up in the

least amount of time and at the lowest overall cost. However, this is not a silver bullet and our support is subject to a need for further detail as the policy develops.' She added that HMRC's expectations on what regulation means in practice are, as yet, unclear.

A survey of ATT and CIOT members in April found that 84% thought regulation of the tax profession would improve professional standards, with 54% believing professional bodies should regulate the profession, compared to just 2% for HMRC.

See Technical News desk (page 44) for more on the ATT and CIOT responses to this consultation.