CIOT President's page: The tax charities

Welcomes



18 November 2024

As we near the end of the year with the days getting shorter and colder, I’m reminded that we should think of the wellbeing of our neighbours and community. Perhaps it’s also the memory of my aunt, who always ‘did her charities at Christmas’.

And, if charity starts at home, we should think of the tax charities. Despite calls for simplification, our tax system gets ever more complex. More people are being drawn into the tax net as thresholds remain frozen, and access to support from HMRC can be difficult, so there is a growing need for the tax charities. The charities always need more funding and volunteers – if you can help, please do.

I’ve outlined the main tax charities below.

TaxAid

TaxAid assists people on low incomes (generally under £20,000) who cannot afford tax advice and who end up in difficulties, particularly with tax debt or those who do not know how to access their rights of appeal. It's a really important source of advice and support to those who have run into problems with their tax.

Tax Help for Older People

Tax Help for Older People grew out of LITRG but from an early stage there was such demand for its services that it became a separate charity. It provides advice to anyone over the age of 60 and on a low income (again, under £20,000).

For many people, their tax affairs become more complicated when they reach pensionable age. This can be due to changes to the state pension age, a lack of understanding about how pensions are taxed and the likelihood of having a number of sources of income (such as part time work, pensions and savings income). As a result, there are many older people who need help and advice with their tax affairs but have no access to affordable, trusted advice or to a social or family network they can turn to for help. They may be facing retirement, be confused by a tax demand or completion of complex forms, or suffering a recent bereavement.

All of these scenarios can cause unnecessary anxiety and stress and contribute to poor wellbeing. Tax Help for Older People offers a valuable service to such individuals – and I know it also provides a great source of satisfaction to our members who volunteer with the charity.

The Worshipful Company of Tax Advisers

This is a City Livery Company for tax professionals that has a number of roles, one of which includes supporting charitable causes. This is conducted by supporting the Tax Advisers' Benevolent Fund, which provides assistance by way of information, support and grants to members and former members of the CIOT and the ATT and their dependants who are in need. Sadly, no one can predict their circumstances or always provide for the future, and some of our fellow members or their families can fall on hard times.

The Fund also provides grants to CIOT and ATT students who are unable to afford the fees payable and certain other costs necessary in order to sit the examinations. I believe it is important that we do all we can to help widen the tax profession by

supporting those who cannot readily afford the exam fees. There is always a need for the Tax Advisers' Benevolent Fund and its work.

The Worshipful Company of Tax Advisers also supports the Tax Advisers' Charitable Trust, which is a general charitable fund that supports several tax-related and City causes, including education and the preservation of tax history, as well as supporting TaxAid and Tax Help for Older People.

CIOT

Being a member of a professional body means pulling together and the CIOT provides support and help to members. For instance the membership team have a programme 'Returning 2 Work', #R2W, with advice on what to think about or the options available about returning to employment or setting up in practice.

I've also seen some wonderful mentoring and help to fellow members as I've been out and about around our branches. It makes me very proud to be President of our Institute.

Last but not least, all the very best over the festive season, however you celebrate it – I'll have my dancing shoes on at Hogmanay.