

ATT Welcome: A welcome sigh of relief

Welcomes



22 January 2025

The January panic to get all of our clients' income tax returns filed on time is over for another year. If only we could convince clients to send their information through earlier! It does always seem to be the usual suspects who are late year after year...

Before I retired, most of my clients were companies and charities so, apart from a couple of large religious charitable trusts, the only income tax return I have dealt with in recent years is my own. That is a relatively painless digital experience. Some of the information is already prepopulated (and correct), so that is a big tick for the digital approach. But I am ashamed to say that although I had all the information ready in the summer, it was once again a job I left until the week between Christmas and New Year!

One group who do not put things off until the last minute is the ATT's amazing (and award winning) technical team of Emma, Helen, Steven and David. In addition to commenting on consultations and draft legislation, producing technical articles and

being regular contributors to programmes such as Radio 4's Money Box, they have also produced a series of handy How to Guides which are available on the ATT website. In particular, their tax agent's guide on how to get ready for Making Tax Digital for Income Tax self-assessment (MTD ITSA) is worth a read. In October's Budget, the government confirmed its commitment to MTD ITSA, which will apply to some taxpayers from April 2026. That means there is just over 12 months to prepare and, just as importantly, to educate your clients.

Also coming in April 2026 is mandatory registration of tax practitioners who interact with HMRC on behalf of clients. HMRC will apply checks to all tax practitioners who register.

HMRC will soon be publishing a technical consultation on the necessary legislation to be introduced in Budget 2025. I would urge you all to look out for this and feed your comments back to the technical team. The government has said that it wants to ensure that taxpayers can confidently choose a tax practitioner who will help them meet their tax obligations and stop those in the market who give bad advice. I am sure we all support this but it needs to be introduced in the right way if it is to work properly, so your comments are vital.

Have you seen – or better still signed up for – ATT Mentor Match, the new ATT member and student mentoring programme? This online platform is open only to ATT members and students and is designed to support personal and professional growth through meaningful connections. Whether you are looking to develop new skills, gain insights or expand your network, this programme pairs experienced mentors with individuals seeking guidance and development. Full details can be found on the ATT website.

Mentor Match is just one of the many benefits of ATT membership. In addition to this august publication, your annual free copy of Whillans's Tax Tables is about to be sent to you. You also get an annotated copy of the Finance Act, a copy of Tolley's Annual Tax Guide, an option to request tax rate cards, a weekly technical newsletter, our 'Employer Focus' Newsletter and, of course, ATT's coveted mouse mat.

One other benefit of membership which I think is particularly useful is licensed access to barristers practising in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and to advocates practising in Scotland. This means that members may give instructions

direct to barristers or advocates without using the services of a solicitor. I have always found conferring with tax counsel a fascinating and worthwhile exercise when faced with a particularly complex or unusual situation. Writing instructions to counsel setting out the issues and your analysis of the situation is a brilliant way of flushing out the pros and cons, formulating the key questions and getting your thoughts in order.

Finally, the results of the November 2024 ATT examinations were published on 22 January. Huge congratulations to all of you who passed these challenging exams. I would encourage those of you who are now exam qualified to join as full members and proudly add ATT after your name. I look forward to meeting some of you at one of our admission ceremonies!

Until next month.