Spotlight on the Customer Services for Tax Agents and Representative Bodies Working Group

Briefings



24 April 2025

The Customer Services for Tax Agents and Representatives Bodies Working Group (CSTARB) was initially formed in 2024 to focus on HMRC agent dedicated customer service for personal tax.

The CSTARB Working Group was set up by HMRC in late 2024 in response to the continuing issues around declining HMRC customer service. Membership of the group includes HMRC (from Personal Tax Operations), the ATT, the CIOT, other professional bodies and tax agents in practice. The group currently meets every two months but there is opportunity for more regular informal discussions with HMRC if required.

The main aim of the group is to provide a regular opportunity for tax agents and professional bodies to provide feedback on current service levels and work

collaboratively to suggest improvements to HMRC agent dedicated services. The activities of this group include the following:

- **Monitoring the operational performance of agent dedicated services:** There is an opportunity for attendees to provide feedback on performance to HMRC, as well as for HMRC to share current or emerging risks to services, and to gather insight as to the impact to tax agents and their taxpayers.
- **Improve and develop customer services for tax agents:** One of the main objectives of this group was to share the challenges and experiences of HMRC agent customer services. It seeks to develop mutual understanding of the issues between HMRC, professional bodies and tax agents, and to identify potential opportunities for improvement. The group will then work collaboratively to explore these potential ideas for improvement, both during design and post-implementation.
- **Insight, feedback and other opportunities:** Beyond feedback on current performance, there is an opportunity to share insight, ideas and feedback with HMRC to help shape new strategies in agent services. There is the opportunity for this group to be used for bespoke tasks and to identify opportunities for digital and technical training for tax agents and HMRC advisors.

The group has recently been working collaboratively with HMRC on the introduction of a dedicated escalation route for agents with Self Assessment and Pay as You Earn queries that are over four weeks old. The CIOT welcomed the introduction of this service on 31 March, which was one of our ten key recommendations from our joint CIOT/ICAEW report 'Tackling HMRC's customer service challenge'.

This service can be accessed via the Tax Agents Handbook on GOV.UK at tinyurl.com/askydx3r (under 'Check progress and service levels'). It currently operates via a dedicated email mailbox, although this may be updated and changed in the future.

The service is currently focused on PAYE and Self Assessment queries but may be extended in the future.

We welcome member feedback on this new escalation service, and any other aspect of HMRC customer service, to feed into our ongoing work in this area and with the CSTARB group.

Please send any feedback to us at
CIOT: technical@ciot.org.uk or
ATT: atttechnical@att.org.uk.