New ATT service aims to help tackle member issues with HMRC systems and processes

Briefings

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Despite some of its flaws, one benefit of HMRC's now-defunct Agent Forum was that it provided a route for agents to share experiences of difficulties they encountered when dealing with HMRC systems, services and processes.

An agent could post a Forum message about an issue they had encountered, which gave other agents the opportunity to confirm whether they too had experienced the same problem. The benefit to agents and HMRC alike was that it became easier to differentiate widespread or systemic problems from those that were agent- or client-specific.

The ATT has close links with HMRC via more than 30 working groups, which meet regularly and cover a number of areas of tax and HMRC services. You can find out

more about the HMRC working groups on our Working with HMRC webpage. Among other functions, these groups provide useful inroads for raising issues that members encounter when dealing with HMRC. However, unless we can provide real-life examples of where HMRC's systems and processes have gone wrong, HMRC is often unable to pinpoint and tackle those issues.

To address this problem, and to fill the gap left in agents' ability to compare experiences when using HMRC systems following the demise of the Agent Forum, the ATT has launched a new facility for members to raise issues with HMRC systems and processes with the ATT's technical team.

The objective is that members can submit evidence of issues with HMRC systems and processes to our technical officers, who can then seek input from the wider ATT membership as to whether they too have experienced the same issue. If enough members report encountering the same problem and can submit relevant evidence – for example, screenshots or tax calculations, and anonymised, except for a tax reference number such as a UTR or NI number – our technical team can then take that evidence to HMRC as real-life examples of issues with its systems. By working with HMRC, we hope to be able to share solutions or recommendations on how to manage the issue with our members and the wider tax profession.

A good example of the type of issue this facility aims to tackle was HMRC amending 2024-25 tax computations to incorrectly add Class 2 National Insurance contributions charges. While the issue was eventually resolved by working with HMRC, our technical team did so based on ad hoc contact with members. Our new process is intended to help members provide examples of issues such as this in a more organised way, so that our technical team can, where possible, raise systemic issues with HMRC more effectively.

To support the new process, we need members to tell us about problems encountered with HMRC systems which may be more than a 'one-off' client-specific issue. Members can find out what issues we have been made aware of via our Issues with HMRC systems and processes webpage, and submit their own evidence – whether they are experiencing one of those known issues or a new but potentially systemic problem.

Our technical officers will share issues reported to them via LinkedIn and the weekly members' email updates, so please follow ATT on LinkedIn and keep an eye out both there and in your weekly email updates for issues where evidence is needed before

we can raise a problem with HMRC.