Tax Awareness Week: a collective success

General Features

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The ATT and CIOT Tax Awareness Week brought the profession together to educate, bust myths and spark engaging conversations about tax and careers nationwide.

Key Points

What is the issue?
The ATT and CIOT launched the first Tax Awareness Week to tackle low public understanding of tax, challenge common myths and raise awareness of the profession and its value.

What does it mean to me?
The week demonstrated strong engagement across the profession, with members, firms and volunteers actively contributing content and helping to amplify key

messages to the public.

What can I take away?

Tax Awareness Week was a successful first step in improving visibility and dialogue, with clear momentum to build on through future campaigns and continued outreach.

Image



Tax can be a confusing, or even scary, topic for the general public. Myths and misunderstandings abound, and many people remain unaware of the important role that tax practitioners play. To address this, the ATT and CIOT launched the first ever Tax Awareness Week, which took place from 9 to 13 March this year.

The week aimed to demystify tax, showcase careers and champion professional advice. To help structure the conversation, it focused on five themed days, each tackling a key aspect of tax awareness.

As with all new ventures, it was uncertain whether Tax Awareness Week would be a success. We were therefore delighted to see #TaxAwarenessWeek trending across social media during the week, with volunteers, members and firms all getting involved.

Why Tax Awareness Week?

Despite affecting everyone's lives, public knowledge and awareness of tax remain low.

Research conducted by Tax Policy Associates in July 2024 showed that half of the British public thought that, once you reach the income tax higher rate threshold, the 40% higher rate applies to all of your earnings (see tinyurl.com/yj3r76fk).

And the more complicated the rules get, the less they are understood. Research carried out by the CIOT in 2023 showed that only one in five Scottish taxpayers know that income tax is a shared responsibility of the Scottish and UK parliaments (see tinyurl.com/esersf4n).

This lack of understanding makes it hard for people to know whether their tax position is correct. It can lead to errors, costly mistakes and stress. It can also cause disengagement with the system as a whole. If the public do not fully appreciate the important role that tax plays in society, this can lead to a reluctance to pay, in turn driving evasion and the hidden economy.

Turning to tax as a profession, many members of the public are unaware that tax advice is not a regulated activity. As a result, they may not appreciate the importance of selecting a suitably qualified and experienced adviser. This can lead to them receiving poor advice or, in more extreme cases, getting caught up in avoidance schemes.

When it comes to careers, alongside unhelpful and misleading stereotypes, there is a wider issue around awareness. Young people may say they are interested in law or accountancy, but how many have considered tax as an alternative?

The aim of Tax Awareness Week was to highlight all these issues, increase dialogue between the public and the profession, and shine a spotlight on both the people working in tax and the opportunities it offers.

What happened over the week?

As set out below, on each day of Tax Awareness Week we published a range of website content and social media posts on our LinkedIn, TikTok and YouTube accounts, focusing on that day's theme. All of this content can be accessed from the dedicated pages on the ATT and CIOT websites.

We also encouraged members, students and firms to get involved and make their own content, providing a range of supporter resources.

Day One: Why you need to be tax aware

We began the week with the basics: setting out our plans and highlighting the fundamentals of tax, including why it matters and the benefits of being tax aware.

On LinkedIn, professionals emphasised that being tax aware is essential for everyone, highlighting that 'I didn't know the rules' is no defence against penalties, and urging taxpayers to ask questions before problems escalate.

Day Two: Debunking myths

Day two was all about tackling common misconceptions about tax.

In the run-up to Tax Awareness Week, the ATT published a number of polls on its TikTok channel. The results were then used as the basis for myth-busting articles and social media posts, covering topics from higher rate income tax to tax evasion and the perennial favourite, the VAT treatment of Jaffa Cakes. We were pleased to see our myth-busting TikTok videos get over 3,500 views during the week.

Meanwhile, professionals shared the tax myths that they encounter time and again on LinkedIn and other social media channels.

Day Three: Understanding your taxes

Mid-week, the focus shifted to practical support, ensuring that those who need help most know exactly where to find it.

At the ATT, we took the opportunity to promote our wide range of short, easy-to-follow YouTube videos, which are designed to explore key tax topics clearly and simply (see www.youtube.com/@ourATT). These cover issues such as side hustles, self-employment, Making Tax Digital (MTD) and taxation of the state pension – and much more. We also published a new guide covering the 2026-27 tax year updates and key actions for individuals.

The CIOT signposted the valuable resources produced by its Low Incomes Tax Reform Group (LITRG), which are available on its website – and which are a must-read for the unrepresented (and a handy resource for agents too).

Day Four: Volunteering and careers in tax

On Thursday, we celebrated the human side of tax. We highlighted that a career in tax is rarely just about numbers; it's a blend of law, technology and problem-solving.

At the ATT, we showcased how we can support members to get involved in delivering schools and careers sessions. We also featured members who shared their 'why I chose tax' stories.

A joint CIOT and ATT 'Leaders in Tax' webinar brought together senior figures from across the profession to share personal reflections on their careers and leadership journeys. These stories demonstrated that the profession offers a dynamic career with the chance to make a real difference. A recording is available for those unable to attend on the day.

Day Five: The benefits and value of using a qualified tax adviser

The final day highlighted an important message: why taxpayers should choose an adviser who is qualified, insured and subject to professional body oversight. We shared new guides for the public on choosing and working with tax advisers, as well as the benefits of using a CIOT or ATT-qualified adviser.

Testimonials from practitioners helped to reinforce the dangers of bad advice and the security and reassurance that comes from working with a qualified professional.

Invaluable input from the profession

Although Tax Awareness Week started as an ATT and CIOT project, it quickly became clear that if it was to achieve its full potential, it would need to be a collective effort involving the wider profession.

We were therefore delighted to see not only our staff and volunteers active during the week, but also the wider membership. Several firms took part, using Tax Awareness Week as a platform to showcase the great work they do and the opportunities that a career in tax can bring. Content ranged from videos sharing individual career paths, to myth-busters and even the odd office party!

We are incredibly grateful to those students, members, employers and supporters of ATT and CIOT who helped to make Tax Awareness Week a reality. It was heartening to see such a wealth of stories and opinions shared throughout the week. At the end of the day, Tax Awareness Week didn't just raise awareness; it also highlighted the breadth and value of the entire profession. So a big thank you to everyone who got involved.

What comes next?

The first ever Tax Awareness Week was an undoubted success in terms of visibility. However, Rome wasn't built in a day, and low levels of tax awareness can't be fixed in a week.

We hope to make Tax Awareness Week an annual event, so please do get in touch with me if you have any comments, feedback or suggestions on how we can build on this year's momentum. In the meantime, the ATT and CIOT will continue our work to raise awareness across these important areas, and we will see you again at the same time next year!

You can find more information about this year's Tax Awareness Week at www.att.org.uk/tax-awareness-week and www.tax.org.uk/tax-awareness-week.

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