CIOT and ATT welcome new tax minister

Briefings

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The Presidents of CIOT and ATT have welcomed the new Financial Secretary to the Treasury to his role. Paul Aplin and Barry Jefferd used the opportunity to highlight to James Murray MP their priorities for the tax system in the coming years.

James Murray MP was appointed Financial Secretary to the Treasury by new Prime Minister Andy Burnham in July, marking a return to the department where he served as Exchequer Secretary and then Chief Secretary to the Treasury in the first two years of the Labour government. In a switch of responsibilities, Murray will resume responsibility for tax policy from Dan Tomlinson MP, who remains in post as Exchequer Secretary, albeit with a reorganised portfolio.

CIOT priorities

In a letter to the minister CIOT President Paul Aplin expressed serious concerns about the new ‘sanctionable conduct’ rules for tax advisers in the government’s plan for raising standards in the tax advice market.

Aplin wrote that the new powers were widely drawn and potentially career ending, a situation that could result in reputable advisers withdrawing from giving certain types of tax advice. This scenario would, he said, be to the detriment of their clients, HMRC’s workload and the tax gap.

Aplin welcomed assurances from ministers that these powers would be used ‘with great care’, but told the Exchequer Secretary that ‘safeguards should be in law, not just a ministerial statement’.

CIOT’s letter also addressed the digitalisation of the tax system, with Aplin calling on the government to work alongside taxpayers and agents in a process of ‘co-creation’ to improve tax administration.

While HMRC customer service levels have shown signs of improvement, in part due to the implementation of new measures announced by Murray in 2025 following the publication of CIOT’s joint report with ICAEW, *Tackling HMRC’s Customer Service Challenge*, Aplin warned that members faced continuing challenges. He said that CIOT remained committed to working with HMRC to ensure service improvements that are ‘sustained and responsive to agent and taxpayer needs’.

CIOT also proposed ways to make the tax system simpler, including bringing back an annual update to Parliament on the government’s progress towards simplification, and adding a section to Tax Information and Impact Notes explaining how tax policies support this agenda.

Aplin also expressed concern about an apparent ‘dilution’ of previous commitments around tax policy engagement and the tight timeframes associated with recent consultations, which he said limited the ability of bodies like CIOT to consult, engage and respond.

One area where CIOT has identified fixes to legislation is the government’s proposal to bring pensions within the scope of inheritance tax. Aplin told Murray that CIOT had identified ‘practical flaws’ in the legislation that could lead to unfair tax bills and increased administrative burdens for taxpayers and HMRC. He stated that these require urgent ministerial attention, and that CIOT would be raising these with HMRC

and ministers separately.

ATT priorities

In his letter to the new Financial Secretary ATT President Barry Jefferd stressed the importance of improving tax education so that young people can better understand the important role tax plays in society.

In addition Jefferd highlighted ATT's top 10 'asks' for the tax system, a series of proposals designed to improve compliance, reduce error and ease pressure on taxpayers and tax professionals. Among the measures put forward by ATT are a review of 'outdated' allowances that have been eroded by inflation. ATT also argued that taxpayers in Self Assessment should have the opportunity to remain there, even when they no longer meet formal filing thresholds.

The association has also called for simplification of the taxation of the state pension, and improvements for agents when dealing with HMRC, such as giving them the same access to information and online services as their clients and making it possible for multiple agents to be authorised where appropriate.

The letter from CIOT President Paul Aplin to the FST can be read here.

ATT President Barry Jefferd's letter is available here.