ATT Welcome: Brace for the Budget

Welcomes

October 2026

22 September 2026

Hello and welcome to this month’s Deputy President’s page. After one of the hottest summers on record, we have finally reached autumn, my favourite time of the year! Summer is typically a quieter time for us tax professionals before the busy period really sets in from September to January, so I hope that our readers were able to get a good rest with their families.

By the time this article is published, there will only be a few weeks until Andy Burnham’s first Autumn Budget. A little history lesson on the Budget: it was traditionally held in March so that tax changes could be announced prior to the beginning of the new tax year on 6 April. In 1997, Gordon Brown introduced a pre-Budget statement, thus leading to two fiscal events annually, although greater emphasis was placed on the March Budget.

In November 2016, it was decided that the UK would move to a single Autumn Budget, whereby policy would be announced in the Autumn Budget and followed by a period of consultation over the coming months.

Fast forward to today and speculation is already rife about what may be on the horizon, particularly when it comes to taxes. With ongoing geopolitical tensions and bond yields soaring, the Prime Minister and Chancellor will likely have little financial room to manoeuvre in their first Budget as our cost of borrowing and inflation continue to rise beyond initial predictions. At least in the short term, the public should brace themselves for tax levers to be pulled that may be unpalatable, but I know that our dedicated technical team will be working tirelessly to digest any potential changes and let our members know what they mean for them and their clients.

We are extraordinarily lucky to have such a talented technical team. Although the Budget will keep them particularly busy for a short period, they are generous with their time all year round. In mid-September, the ATT held its first in a series of regular online drop-in sessions for ATT members working in industry or in-house, as it recognises that tax practitioners who work in-house can face very different challenges to those who act as agents in practice.

These sessions give members the chance to speak to their peers about the issues they are facing and share tips and advice, as well as providing an opportunity to engage with members of the ATT technical team and raise relevant issues with them directly. If you weren't able to make the first session, I would highly recommend signing up for the next one!

The technical team will also be giving a personal taxes refresher and an update on small company taxation on Thursday 26 November, when the ATT is bringing back its popular Sharpen Your Tax Skills Conference in conjunction with the AAT. This online session is interactive and practical, combining essential technical updates with real-life case studies, and we'll also be hearing from our President Barry Jefferd on a range of tax updates.

Keeping up to date with technical knowledge is a key part of our roles as tax advisers and isn't limited to our core day-to-day work. With that in mind, and although I'm slightly biased as it's very close to my heart, the ATT has launched a new online ATT qualification – the Award in R&D Tax Relief Essentials. This is designed for those working in tax who want to learn more about R&D relief, and this concise, practically focused qualification is delivered and assessed entirely online. The course itself is pitched at an introductory level and is ideal if you are not an R&D specialist but would like to understand more about the rules. The rules are complex and have changed a lot over the past few years, so it is well worth taking the time to either refresh your existing knowledge or to start from scratch if you’ve not come across the rules before.

I started by mentioning that we’re about to enter a busy, pressure-filled period, which can be very stressful. It can be all too easy at this time of year to become caught up in deadlines, so do remember to make time for yourself and those around you as well. I will always remember the first partner I ever worked for reminding me that working in tax is never life or death, so take care of yourselves.

Next stop: Christmas!