Welcome from the editor-in-chief, March 2017

Welcomes

01 March 2017

Ja Bloc Disc!

Do you use *Roy G Biv* to remember the colours of the rainbow? I do! Mnemonics can be a very helpful way to remember something and I'm sure that many of our students use them. As they start to study the latest version of the Professional Conduct in Respect to Taxation (PCRT), which became effective on 1 March 2017, I wonder if any will use *Ja Bloc Disc* to help them remember some of the key elements.

At the heart of previous versions has been the five Fundamental Principles (Integrity, Objectivity, Competence (professional competence and due care), Confidentiality and Behaviour (professional behaviour) – and form the I, O, C, C and B of my mnemonic!) which set the ethical standards of tax advisers. The latest PCRT has introduced developed further Standards that members must observe when advising on UK tax planning, The Standards of Tax Planning (Specific (Client Specific), Lawful, Disclosure and transparency, Arrangements (tax planning arrangements) and Judgement (professional judgement and appropriate documentation) – and form the S, L, D, A and J of my mnemonic!).

Considerations of the new standards now need to be documented by tax advisers, a point illustrated by Michael Steed and Marion Hodgkiss in their examination of the tax challenges created by the gig economy. They note that Advisers will need to be able to cope with a workforce in a state of flux, where many of them will be classed as self-employed and tax advice will need to be tempered in the light of the new working practices, government review and possible PCRT implications.

Optional remuneration

New legislation will be introduced from 6 April 2017 under ‘optional remuneration’ to limit the tax and NIC advantages currently available under existing salary sacrifice arrangements. Vaneeta Khurana and Tony Nevin explain what optional remuneration (or salary sacrifice) means for employers.

The right path

The vast majority of clients wish to reduce their inheritance tax exposure but making large gifts can present a variety of tax and other challenges. There is no single strategy that will suit all, but trusts will need to be considered when gifting. Stephanie Parker and Robert Pullen consider the challenges presented by clients wishing to reduce their IHT exposure by making gifts.

Simple VAT?

The OTS has been asked by Ministers to review the UK VAT system to see how it fits the modern context and to make proposals for simplification. The review provides an opportunity for you to highlight any areas where you consider the VAT system can be simplified, improved or is outdated. Nigel Mellor outlines the current OTS project on VAT and invites input from readers on their experiences.