

## Virtual Communications Group Digital Services Update August 2019

### **Making Tax Digital for Business (MTDB)**

Many of the 1.2 million businesses affected by the MTD rules are already engaged with HMRC. Every day during July HMRC saw over 10,000 businesses sign up to submit MTD returns.

At 5 August 2019, over 900,000 businesses have signed up to submit their VAT returns digitally; as at 31 July 2019 we had received over 659,000 MTD submissions.

### **MTDB Communications**

We recently issued letters to monthly filers who we believe should have signed up to MTD telling them to sign up now. We are using feedback we have received from customers receiving these letters and agent stakeholders, to adjust the letters that we issue to 'Stagger one' filers.

We have also reinstated the 'How to sign up' YouTube video and updated our business and agent webinars to reflect improvements to the sign up and creation journey.

We are continuing to encourage businesses to sign up using a variety of methods, including the HMRC Twitter account. You may have seen a tweet from the FST this week that highlighted a new case study filmed in Orkney. This shows how a business located in a remote area of the UK can comply with MTD, and the benefits that it will bring to small businesses.

Where we hold an email address for customers, we continue to issue reminder emails to customers about the pre sign-up deadline.

### **Amendments to the Agent Service Account**

Reacting to stakeholder feedback, we have amended the Agent Services account journey to enable Agents to track the status of any requests they have made to authorise new clients in the last 30 days in the Agent Services account. Please note that to use this authorisation route, the business must already be signed up to MTD.

We have added the functionality for Agents to be able to see the number of clients copied over from each Government Gateway ID to their new Agent Services account.

As a result of user insight, we have changed the step in the ASA journey called linking to copying your clients over in order to reflect the actual process involved.

## VAT Reverse Charge on Building and Construction services

This reverse charge measure comes into effect on 1 October 2019. Further information on the scope of the reverse charge and how it will operate can be found in this updated [guidance note](#)

The key aspects are:

- It will apply to standard and reduced-rated supplies of building and construction services made to VAT registered businesses, who in turn also make onward supplies of those building and construction services.
- The scope of supplies affected is closely aligned to the supplies required to be reported under the Construction Industry Scheme but does not include supplies of staff or workers.
- The legislation introduces the concept of “end users” and “intermediary suppliers”. This covers businesses or groups of associated businesses that do not make supplies of building and construction services to third parties and as such are excluded from the scope of the reverse charge if they receive such supplies. Examples include landlords, tenants and property developers.

HMRC is running a series of webinars for businesses and Talking Points webinars for agents.

For business webinars, please [register here](#). If no dates are showing as available, the webinar recordings will be made available online.

Two Agent Talking Points webinars are currently available on 21 August and 10 September. If you would like to attend the registration links are:

[Talking Points - 21 August 12.00pm - 1.00pm](#)

[Talking Points - 10 September 10.00am - 11.00am](#)

If you have registered to do so, you will be notified if further Talking Points webinars are run.

More information on the Construction Industry Scheme can be found [here](#)

## Trust Registration Service

We have now extended the scope of the existing features in the Trust Registration Service and these are available for users to register in a controlled environment. Volunteers are being sought who have a new Will trust which falls within the following criteria and who would be willing to register this trust in a controlled environment:

- the lead Trustee is UK based
- Individuals or classes of beneficiaries exist
- Sole assets of the Trust are cash or shares

Registering in a controlled environment will enable the journey to be tracked through HMRC IT systems to successful completion, or identify any issues stopping submission.

Any users who would like to participate in this testing and have a trust that meets the above criteria, please email [the HMRC testing team](#).

## **Individuals PAYE API**

### **Recent changes**

Since July, the HMRC Virtual Communications Group have moved development work to a single team based in Newcastle and the handover from Shipley and Worthing is now complete.

### **What's next?**

Our priority is to act on the feedback we've received from our users about how the service works and its reliability. That means we're focusing on identifying, testing and correcting known errors within the service. Then we will move on to improving the quality and accuracy of the data.

Our work in the next few months will ensure the service is stable. Looking ahead to the Self-Assessment peak in December and January, we'll continue to support our users with the completion of the SA100.

### **Communications**

We'll continue to use this forum and our existing communications route, through the Software Developer Support (SDS) team, to update you on our progress.

## **Agent Forum (AF)**

As at the end of July 2019 the Forum has over 1197 Agent subscribers, up eight since the last progress report, with 153 contributing HMRC staff. We continue to both build our Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) capability, recruiting from across HMRC to improve the quality and timeliness of issue resolution responses and on building our Agent Forum platform upgrade. We are currently planning pre go-live, 'Test & Learn' and data migration activities.

Other performance metrics include over 125k views (up 6k), 5284 posted messages (up 203) on 1059 current topics (up 38), all since July 2017; which are moderated daily with appropriate responses given, as determined by subject matter, related traffic generated and referrals provided by line of business.

Our priority after delivering issue resolutions to agent enquiries, continues to be enlisting formal internal HMRC SME engagements and focusing on upgrading the existing platform, which is being developed as an agile project. The approved platform is Microsoft Dynamics. We are now entering the final commissioning stages of associated installation, training and data migration activities. Current 'Private Beta' go-live date is scheduled for w/c 30 September 2019.

We continue to publish our weekly digest email to all registered Agent forum members. It summarises traffic posted on the forum during the previous 7 days, with dedicated links to specific issues raised. System metrics show it continues to significantly increased agent engagement and forum views.

We also continue to work closely with the Issues Overview Group (IOG) on widespread queries and facilitated during July, a bespoke Class 2 NI and future issues escalations procedures meeting. A key responsibility of the IOG group will be to jointly determine what the 'widespread' issues priority classification should be for earliest resolution.

The Digital Customer Support Services (DCSS) Agent Team is staffed by a Service Manager and 2.5 FTE Issues Resolution Managers (IRMs), who moderate and run the forum.