

Virtual Communications Group
Digital Services Update
December 2020

Making Tax Digital (MTD)

- There are over 1.4m businesses signed up to MTD as of 30 November and over 7 million VAT returns have been successfully submitted through the service. Overall, an estimated 86.6% of all businesses mandated to join from April 2019 are now signed up to the MTD service.
- HMRC has published another two MTD case studies on GOV.UK. The first [case study](#) is of a local garage 'Tyr-Ex Ltd'. Their founder explained how MTD has helped the business by reducing the time spent on VAT returns. This brings the total to 16 case studies. The second [case study](#) is of an accountancy firm 'Turpin Barker Armstrong'. Dean Clark, a partner at the firm, explained how MTD has helped streamline the business.
- HMRC have set up a regular software supplier forum to help drive their partnership on Income Tax Self-Assessment, with the first meeting taking place on 17 December.
- On 26 November, MTD Programme Director Roy Wallace presented a session at Accountex's UK Virtual Summit. Over 1400 people registered to attend Roy's session, which focused on planned next steps for MTD and reiterated our commitment to continued engagement with the agent community.

Trust Registration Service (TRS)

Following customer feedback, we've updated the GOV.UK pages on trust registration and managing the trust details. This includes step by step guidance on the agent authorisation process and further detail on trust and estate closures.

Extension of the TRS

The Regulations bringing in an expansion to the Trust Registration Service were laid in Parliament on 15 September 2020 and came into force on 6 October 2020. This requires the registration of UK express trusts, and non-UK express trusts in certain circumstances, regardless of tax consequence.

It is not yet possible to register non-taxpaying trusts on TRS. We're currently in the development phase of extending TRS to include functionality to register Non-Taxable Trusts [and for all trustees of registered trusts to provide additional information on the trust's beneficial ownership]. To help HMRC in developing this aspect of the service, we'd like talk to people who've set up a trust or are a trustee for a Non-Taxable Trust. Do you or anyone you

know have a trust that falls into this category? We would also like to hear from agents who will be registering a trust that is non-taxable, on behalf of a client. If you're interested in participating in user research, now or in the future, please contact – serviceteam17.digital_ddcn@digital.hmrc.gov.uk.

We'll shortly be providing more information on GOV.UK about the extension of the TRS as a result of the fifth Anti Money Laundering Directive. This will include; an overview of the new rules, links to relevant documents, detail of the types of trusts that will be required to register, and what information will be needed to complete the registration process or update the details of trusts that have already been registered.

We're currently considering the most effective approaches for reaching unrepresented trustees to raise awareness of the new requirement to register express trusts. If you have any suggestions about how we might best do this or which channels would be most effective, please contact serviceteam17.digital_ddcn@digital.hmrc.gov.uk.

Digital Communication Services (DCS) – Agent Forum (November 20) Update for VCG

Agent Forum (AF)

As at the end of November 2020, the Forum had 1177 registered subscribers including Professional Bodies, of 1229 users signed up to its predecessor forum. We are separately inviting various customer groups with Capital Gains payment liabilities or Trust registration responsibilities to HMRC to join, including the Law Society and Society for Trust and Estate Practitioners (STEP).

Registrations are now getting close to the levels of its former platform and participation and issues traffic is increasing. We are also stepping up our recruitment of internal HMRC users.

To date during 2020/21 we have dealt with 354 widespread issues, across all Heads of Duty. We continue to support agents and their clients through the COVID-19 crisis and have a live dedicated panel to deal with related issues and publish guidance for all associated schemes including the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS), Job Retention Scheme (JRS) and Eat Out to Help Out scheme. We now also have two new boards, one for UK transition and one for Self-Assessment 2021.

We have, in conjunction with our Issues Overview Group (IOG) stakeholder colleagues, put in place procedures to identify high priority widespread issues to be taken forward for resolution with our internal technical specialist and communications partners. This is being monitored by the Agent Forum team and others.

We continue building our internal HMRC Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) capability, formalising recruitment from across HMRC to improve the quality and timeliness of issue resolution responses and to focus on Agent Forum operations.

Performance metrics thus far for 20/21 include over 25500k forum views and 304 resolved topics since April 2020, which are all moderated daily with appropriate responses given, as determined by subject matter, related traffic generated, and referrals provided by line of business. We have reviewed our performance metrics to more effectively manage our live 'aged cases' portfolio, given we better understand new functionality provided by the MS Dynamics platform.

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