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In the know: tax edition

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Helping you prosper

The tax changes making the headlines

Welcome to the first edition of our new **In the know** series, where we'll be sharing timely insights and regulatory updates that could affect you or your organisation. We're kicking things off with a tax-focused issue, covering the latest developments shaping the UK tax landscape. Whether you're running a business or managing your personal finances, staying informed is key to remaining compliant and making confident decisions. From upcoming digital tax deadlines to major legislative changes, this update is here to help you stay ahead and stay compliant.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) regularly reports on how UK businesses feel about the economy, their concerns and assessment of their performance. For some time, economic uncertainty has topped the list of challenges. But a new trend is emerging, with a growing number citing tax as a key concern for the immediate future. After falling demand, tax is the most common headache reported by the businesses surveyed and it's been steadily rising up the rankings since summer 2024. It's no surprise, in view of developments like the increase in employer National Insurance costs which are now just beginning to bed in after 6 April 2025.

In today's climate, it pays to regularly assess what steps you can take - whether that's maximising business reliefs and incentives or ensuring your personal tax affairs are as efficient as possible. From structuring advice to using allowances wisely, we're here to support both individuals and organisations in making the most of what's available.

In this edition, we cover:

As always, our purpose, helping you prosper, remains at the heart of everything we do. Through our In the know series, we'll keep you up to speed on what's new and what's next, giving you the insight to plan ahead with confidence.

Making Tax Digital for Income Tax is going live

March 2025 marked 10 years since then Chancellor, George Osborne, laid the foundations to transform the UK's tax system with a promise to abolish the tax return altogether. This initiative, known as Making Tax Digital (MTD), aimed to redefine tax collection by using technology to simplify processes for both taxpayers and HMRC alike.

In the decade since its introduction, MTD has significantly reshaped how businesses and individuals manage their taxes. The journey began with MTD for VAT in April 2019, mandating digital record-keeping and submissions for VAT-registered businesses. Another MTD rollout had been originally planned for April 2018 and was to focus on income tax self assessment (ITSA). However, it was postponed and has been delayed several times in the years since. The latest plans and proposed dates are outlined in more detail below and is now re-badged as Making Tax Digital for Income Tax (MTD for IT).

What is MTD?

MTD is an initiative launched by the government as an attempt to modernise the tax system by requiring taxpayers to maintain digital records and submit updates to HMRC using compatible software.

It was established to reduce common mistakes in tax returns such as underpaying or overpaying tax as a result of human error. By moving to a digital system, the government hopes to make tax reporting a smoother, more transparent and accurate process.

MTD asks taxpayers to keep their records up to date throughout the year, including summaries of their income and expenses on a quarterly basis. This new digital approach aims to ensure a more accurate and timely picture of tax liabilities.

Will MTD affect you?

The implementation of MTD has been phased to give businesses and individuals the chance to prepare and adapt accordingly. At present, the following phased initiatives have been either launched or scheduled:

MTD for VAT

Since April 2019, MTD has been mandatory for VAT-registered businesses with a taxable turnover above the VAT threshold, which at the time was £85,000.

As of April 2022, MTD was extended to all VAT-registered businesses, regardless of turnover. This means that even smaller organisations must now keep digital records and submit their VAT returns using MTD-compatible software.

MTD for IT

MTD for IT won't apply to everyone straight away, but it will eventually impact a wide range of self-employed people and landlords.

The rollout will happen in stages:

- From 6 April 2026, MTD for IT will be mandatory for self-employed individuals and landlords with a total gross aggregated business and/or property income over £50,000 per year.
- From 6 April 2027, it will extend to those with gross income over £30,000.
- From 6 April 2028, it will extend to those with gross income over £20,000.

If your income falls below this, you won't need to follow MTD rules for now. However, the short answer to the question at the beginning of this section 'will MTD affect you?' is yes. Though it may not necessarily have a direct impact today, tomorrow, or even in a couple of years, the government is going to change MTD and extend to more taxpayers over time. We recommend staying informed and thinking about going digital early, planning for when it does impact you.

MTD timeline

April 2019

MTD was introduced for all VAT-registered businesses with a taxable turnover of £85,000 (the previous VAT threshold).

April 2022

MTD for VAT compliance expanded to all VAT-registered businesses, regardless of turnover.

April 2026

MTD for IT will be mandatory for self-employed individuals and landlords with a total business or property income over £50,000 per year.

April 2027

MTD will extend to self-employed individuals and landlords earning over £30,000.

Preparing for MTD for IT

MTD for IT impacts the way you interact with HMRC and how often you interact with HMRC. It also revolutionises the yearly timetable for accounts preparation.

Switching to digital record-keeping may seem like a big change and you may be feeling like you don't quite know where to begin, but with the right tools and support, it will actually make your tax planning and administration much easier and more efficient.

At UHY, we're here to help, so you don't have to figure this all out on your own. Below we've compiled some tips and advice to get you started.

Decide how you are going to keep your digital records

The method you choose will depend on the needs of your business record keeping. Many larger trades and landlords will already be using some form of accounting software to keep their records. We recommend that you check with your software provider that the package you are on currently will be compatible with MTD for IT.

Many leading software packages are already certified as compliant such as Sage, Xero, QuickBooks, Dext etc.

There will be many smaller trades and landlords currently using spreadsheets to keep their records. You can continue using spreadsheets, but you will need to purchase separate 'bridging software' which can transmit the relevant figures to HMRC.

HMRC have a dedicated area of their website which contains a list of products that are already compatible with MTD for IT.

Choosing the right software can make your MTD compliance seamless and easy to follow, saving time and reducing the risk of errors.

Start keeping digital records

Once you've chosen the right software, you'll need to keep your records up to date by regularly uploading your income and expenses to avoid any last-minute rushes. Your expenses will need to be categorised in accordance with the categories currently on the self assessment tax return.

Get into the routine of quarterly updates

Rather than sending one big tax return at the end of the year, you'll submit quarterly updates.

Q1 06/04/2026 to 05/07/2026 **submit by 07/08/2026**

Q2 06/07/2026 to 05/10/2026 **submit by 07/11/2026**, and so on.

Please note that the quarters are cumulative. So if you omit an expense claim in Q1, you can add it in when you submit Q2. These submissions will give a snapshot of your income and expenses, while helping you to stay on top of your tax position throughout the year.

A summary of what you will need to do

Keep digital records	Send quarterly updates	File a final declaration (Tax Return)
Use HMRC-approved software to record your income and expenses throughout the year.	Submit a summary of your income and expenses to HMRC every three months.	This is where you adjust the quarterly updates for tax purposes, confirm any other income, calculate your final tax bill and pay what you owe.

What next?

In the coming years, MTD is set to shift how UK taxpayers report their income. While the transition might feel overwhelming at first, the goal of MTD is to simplify the process, reduce errors and help you to keep on top of your obligations all year round.

By preparing early, choosing the right software and understanding what's expected of you, you can make the transition smoothly and confidently. But don't forget, you're not alone. If you're unsure how MTD will affect you, speak to your usual UHY adviser or get in touch via our website. We're here to help you every step of the journey.

Off-payroll working: change to company size thresholds

The government is changing the thresholds that determine company size, in a bid to cut red tape impacting businesses. As company size plays a key role in compliance with the off-payroll working and IR35 rules, the change will also have a knock-on effect here.

New thresholds

The new rules alter the thresholds set out in the Companies Act 2006. The rules are expected to benefit up to 132,000 companies, by moving them into categories with lighter-touch accounting and reporting requirements. The new thresholds take effect from 6 April 2025.

Previously, a company was classed as being small if it met at least two of these tests for two consecutive financial years:

- it had turnover of not more than £10.2 million
- it had a balance sheet total of not more than £5.1 million
- it had an average of not more than 50 employees.

Under the new rules, a company is classed as small if it meets at least two of the following tests:

- it has turnover of not more than £15 million
- it has a balance sheet total of not more than £7.5 million
- it has an average of not more than 50 employees (unchanged).

Company size and off-payroll working

Off-payroll working rules apply where the client of someone working through an intermediary, such as a personal service company, is in the public sector; or is classed as a medium or large-sized client in the private or voluntary sector. Under the off-payroll working rules, it is the responsibility of the client to make the employment status decision. Where it is decided that the worker is a deemed employee, the client is then likely to have responsibility for PAYE deductions and National Insurance contributions, unless the supply chain is such that another party is the deemed employer.

Where services are provided to what is defined as a small client, the IR35 rules apply instead and it falls to the worker's intermediary to make the employment status decision.

In all cases, it's the company size as set out in the Companies Act 2006 that is the measuring rod.

How the new rules impact this - and when

Those working through an intermediary may therefore find that some of their clients fall into a different size category in future. Where a client falls into the small company category, the responsibility for assessing employment status will also change, and the decision will pass to the worker's intermediary/personal service company.

Although the new company size rules take effect from 6 April 2025, their impact on off-payroll working will follow a slightly different timeline. This is because of the way the two sets of rules mesh together. Since off-payroll working rules kick in from the start of the tax year after the financial year end, the new rules on company size are in fact unlikely to bring change to off-payroll procedures until the year beginning April 2026, and in most cases, April 2027.

Client companies reclassified as small will be able to look forward to a reduction in the admin burden. However, those working through an intermediary need to be aware that change and new responsibilities could be on the horizon. Do talk to us to help prepare for what lies ahead.

"The government is changing the thresholds that determine company size, in a bid to cut red tape impacting businesses. As company size plays a key role in compliance with the off-payroll working and IR35 rules, the change will also have a knock-on effect here.

HMRC backtracks on employee data requirement

Plans requiring employers to provide more detailed information on the hours worked by employees in their Real Time Information PAYE reporting have now been cancelled.

The requirement to provide employee data was due to take effect from April 2026, and had already been postponed from April 2025.

Announcing the cancellation, HMRC said: 'The government has listened to businesses and acted on their feedback about the administrative burden the PAYE . . . data requirements would bring.'

Whilst the decision to abandon the proposal will undoubtedly come as welcome news for employers, it is, of course, important to remember that employers are already under an obligation to keep records of employee hours worked in order to satisfy their responsibilities under the minimum wage regime. With the latest increase to minimum wage rates in effect from 1 April 2025, it is all the more critical to be confident that working time is correctly paid and recorded.

We can help you review any aspect of your PAYE and minimum wage compliance, so please don't hesitate to contact us for advice.

New questions for Self Assessment tax return

The information required on the Self Assessment tax return will change for some taxpayers from 6 April 2025. This will impact tax returns for 2025/26 and future years.

The change affects taxpayers who begin or end self-employment and directors of close companies. Broadly speaking, a close company is a company controlled by its directors, or by five or fewer 'participators', such as shareholders. Most family or private companies are likely to fall within this category.

From April 2025, where a self-employed person begins or ceases trading during the tax year, it will be mandatory to report this, with relevant dates, on the tax return. Previously this was a voluntary requirement. This additional requirement will impact personal tax returns, partnership returns and trustees' returns.

For company directors, it becomes mandatory, rather than voluntary, to disclose close company directorships. Directors will also have to state the name and registered number of the close company; the value of dividends received from the close company for the year, declaring this separately from other UK dividends; and the percentage shareholding in that company for the year. If shareholding changes during the year, it's the figure for the highest percentage shareholding that is needed.

Neonatal care: new entitlement for employed parents

From 6 April 2025, there is a new statutory right to neonatal care leave and pay for employed parents. The new law applies in England, Scotland and Wales, but not in Northern Ireland.

The move is expected to benefit around 60,000 parents, helping them face the emotional and practical challenges of having a baby in neonatal care, without having to work or use up existing leave.

There are two elements to the new entitlement: neonatal care leave (NCL) which gives additional time off work as a day-one employment right; and neonatal care pay (NCP), for which a minimum period of employment and a minimum earnings test apply.

Conditions

The entitlement is available:

- to parents of a baby born on or after 6 April 2025
- where the baby is admitted into neonatal care up to the age of 28 days, and has a continuous stay of seven full days or more.

'Parents' in this context include adoptive parents, parents fostering to adopt, and the intended parents in surrogacy arrangements. The partner of the baby's mother is also eligible. Partner here is defined as someone living with the mother or adopter in a long-term family relationship, but who is not related to them. They must also expect to have responsibility for raising the child.

Neonatal care is defined as medical care in hospital; medical care received elsewhere on discharge from hospital, given under the direction of a consultant; and palliative or end of life care.

Leave

Parents can take anywhere from between one to 12 weeks of leave, depending on how long their baby is in neonatal care. Leave must be taken in full weeks. Employers should be aware that each parent has their own entitlement to leave: it doesn't have to be shared between partners. Note also that NCL is in addition to any right to maternity, paternity or shared parental leave.

Leave must be taken within 68 weeks of the birth. Given that a parent qualifying for NCL is already likely to be on some type of family leave, it is likely that NCL will be added to the end of this.

Pay

To qualify for NCP, someone must have worked for at least 26 weeks for their employer, ending with the relevant week. They must also earn over the Lower Earnings Limit, £125 per week from April 2025. Eligible employees will be entitled to NCP for up to 12 weeks.

Other requirements

Leave is referred to as being in one of two categories: Tier 1 and Tier 2. Tier 1 leave is taken when the child is still receiving neonatal care, and up to a week after discharge, and can be taken in non-continuous blocks of at least a week at a time. Tier 2 leave is taken at any other time, up to the end of 68 weeks from the child's birth, and must be taken in a continuous block.

The notice periods for each Tier are different, and only for Tier 2 must an employee give notice in writing. As well as giving the employer notice, the employee also needs to provide certain information to the employer, such as the child's date of birth.

What employers need to do

Employers will need to update their policies and make sure that employees are aware of the new rules. Payroll systems will also need adjustment.

Research and Development claims: what's new?

To deal with high levels of error and fraud, the Research and Development (R&D) tax relief regime has been significantly reshaped since 2023 and HMRC risk assessment is now much sharper.

Claimant support packages

As part of its drive to make sure that companies understand the rules, HMRC is starting to email some claimant companies, on a random basis, on receipt of the R&D Claim Notification and Additional Information Form (AIF). Applicant companies may now receive a 'guidance package' by email, with links to online guidance or other HMRC information sources. HMRC advises that there is no need for recipients to respond or take any specific action as a result.

In the past, there have been instances where fraudulent R&D claims have been submitted without the knowledge of the company involved. HMRC's new guidance packages are partly meant to ensure that companies are aware that an R&D claim is being made in their name.

Dealing with errors

A recurrent theme in HMRC compliance activity is the number of incorrect and spurious R&D claims submitted by rogue firms in the past. This is something that sometimes only comes to light when a company changes its professional adviser.

To address the position where past inaccuracies in an R&D claim emerge, HMRC now has an online disclosure facility, allowing companies to report historic inaccuracies and to upload relevant calculations. There is also a letter of offer that can be submitted to HMRC as part of a contract settlement.

Use of the facility is voluntary and is only appropriate where:

- the company is out of time to amend the Corporation Tax return
- too much R&D tax relief has been claimed
- there is therefore a need to pay Corporation Tax or repay overclaimed tax credits for R&D relief
- the incorrect claim did not arise from deliberate behaviour.

Using the disclosure facility should usually qualify as making an unprompted disclosure to HMRC, and this in turn should lessen any penalty involved. However, care is advised where there is a need for disclosure of any kind, and we would strongly recommend professional advice before taking any action.

Keeping up to date

R&D tax relief is a specialist area, and keeping up with the rules is demanding. HMRC has, for example, recently revised its guidance, following two recent decisions at the First-tier Tax Tribunal. These involved technical issues on what counts as subcontracted work and subsidised expenditure for R&D tax relief under the small and medium-sized enterprises scheme which applied before 1 April 2024. In addition, the Spring Statement 2025 announced a consultation on a facility to apply for advance clearance for R&D claims.

We are on hand to advise on the detail of the rules such as these, to give you confidence that you know which expenses can correctly be included in any claim for R&D. Do please contact us for a discussion.

Beat the increase in employer's NIC with an electric vehicle salary sacrifice scheme

For those unfamiliar, an Electric Vehicle (EV) salary sacrifice scheme is a straightforward arrangement. An employee agrees to give up a portion of their gross salary in exchange for a non-cash benefit - in this case, an EV. This arrangement not only helps employees gain access to a new or used car without the upfront costs of buying or leasing, but it also substantially reduces the amount of income tax and National Insurance they pay, as their taxable income is lowered.

From an employer's perspective, the scheme can deliver significant savings. Because the employee's salary is reduced, the employer pays less in National Insurance contributions on that lower salary. Given the increase in employer's National Insurance, these savings are now even more valuable.

Paying Benefit in Kind

EV salary sacrifice schemes aren't entirely tax-free. Employees are still required to pay tax on what's called a Benefit in Kind (BiK). This is essentially a tax on the personal benefit they receive from having the car. For instance, the 2025/26 BiK rate for a fully electric car is just 3%, and this is set to remain relatively low over the next five years. Even with the increases planned, EVs will still offer substantial tax savings compared to traditional petrol or diesel vehicles.

Alignment with ESG goals

EV salary sacrifice schemes also align neatly with many companies' sustainability goals. By promoting the use of EVs, businesses can play a direct role in reducing carbon emissions. This helps companies meet their sustainability targets and demonstrates a commitment to environmental responsibility - something that is increasingly important to stakeholders, clients and employees alike.

Given the dual advantage of cost savings and ESG alignment, it's likely that more businesses will explore the potential of EV salary sacrifice schemes in the coming years.

If I won £1 million how much would the taxman get?

This is the kind of tax-planning problem we would all like to have. Given that winning or, more likely, accumulating one million pounds is not so rare these days, what steps should you take to keep as much of it as possible out of the hands of HMRC? For the purpose of this article, we will assume you are a longstanding UK tax resident and will remain so.

Keep the paperwork

If you have just come by a large sum of money unexpectedly, the paperwork might not be the first thing on your mind. Of course, if you are lucky enough to be one of the only two premium bond holders per month who win a million pounds, your win will be well-documented. Success in the National Lottery should equally be independently verifiable. In the event that it came from betting or gaming, you need to keep third-party evidence to be able to defend yourself against any unwanted accusations of tax fraud or even money-laundering. Digital and cyber receipts need to similarly be well documented.

Is it taxable?

Lottery wins and premium bond prizes are not taxable. Winnings from betting are also free of tax. If your windfall is a legacy from a deceased person's estate, the executors should have sorted out the tax before distributing the funds. In terms of you being subjected to UK taxation, you need to be concerned if the million pounds is either attributable to the disposal or deemed disposal of a capital asset or right, or if there is some sort of 'trade taint', that is a receipt correctly attributable to your trade, profession or work.

Spend, spend, spend

In our experience, the population is divided evenly into spenders and savers. If you are a spender, we can assume that the million pounds will find its way back into the economy relatively quickly, yielding many opportunities for the taxman to take a share. For example, if you buy a brand-new Lamborghini, expect it to set you back about £600,000 (standard trim!). HMRC will collect £100,000 in VAT and the DVLA will get £5,000 plus in vehicle excise duty. Alternatively, supposing you use all the money to buy a house, your first and only home - stamp duty land tax, payable by you, will amount to £43,750.

The rainy-day fund

Some will decide to put the money aside for old age or unforeseen emergencies. Opportunities to shelter it from tax are limited though. The most you can invest in an ISA in any one year is £20,000 (for now, please check rates at the time you make the investment), and if you are considering pension contributions, you can only pay the equivalent of your annual earnings up to a maximum of £60,000. Please note that you should always seek professional advice before making investment decisions, including paying into a pension fund.

The philanthropist

You may be moved or persuaded to share your good fortune with others. Gifts to registered charities fall outside the scope of Inheritance Tax (IHT) and where they are made of taxable income by Gift Aid, their value is enhanced from the recipient's point of view, plus the donor gets higher rate tax relief.

If, for you, charity begins at home, you will no doubt consider making gifts to family members. Such generosity will consequently reduce the value of your assets and therefore reduce the IHT liability on your estate when you die. There is currently no IHT liability on lifetime gifts to individuals but if you die within seven years of making a gift it will be added to your estate for IHT purposes. The percentage of the gift added to your estate reduces gradually over the seven years.

Other fairly small gifts are exempt from IHT and annual gifting to utilise these is a sensible IHT strategy to adopt. But the bigger exemptions/reliefs worthy of more comment here are as follows:

- regular gifts out of your surplus income
- payments to assist with an elderly relative or dependent child's living expenses
- gifts to charities and political parties
- efficient use of nil rate bands.

More IHT planning

Let's assume that you don't spend or give away the money you have won so that it remains part of your estate when you die. All gifts on death to your UK-domiciled spouse are outside IHT. For other transfers, the first £325,000 of your net assets is not taxed (nil rate band) and often, if your spouse has died before you without using his or her nil rate band, that can also be claimed - meaning that the first £650,000 of transfers on death by you is tax-free. If the value is in residential property (maybe that is how you spend the £1 million), then the nil rate band can be increased by a further £175,000 per spouse if you leave your family home to your children or grandchildren and provided the value of your estate is less than £2 million. This relatively simple 'life-planning' is worth £400,000 of IHT so should not be missed.

Investing your £1 million into the qualifying family business or farm will in most cases eventually still secure a relatively favourable IHT rate (nil for the first £1 million, 20% for the excess) when compared with other investments, but this is clearly well short of the 100% relief that was available prior to the restricted reliefs imposed from 6 April 2026 (earlier for certain transfers).

Having claimed the above reliefs, the balance of your estate is taxed at 40%. Of course, at that point, it will be your children's problem, not yours. However, there are steps you can take during your lifetime to maximise the amount you pass on to your children. Even if you haven't just won a million pounds, it would be a good idea to ask us to review your affairs and advise you on planning for the inevitable.

Key tax rates and allowances for 2025/26

Our tax card provides a summary of the key tax rates and allowances for the 2025/26 tax year, for those resident and permanently settled in the UK.

We have highlighted upfront which areas of the summary are most relevant to you based on your personal situation, making it easier to navigate. You can download the summary on our **website here**.

Tax compliance: much more than common sense

Keeping up to date with tax isn't always as simple as it seems, as one taxpayer, Mr Hammant, recently found to his cost.

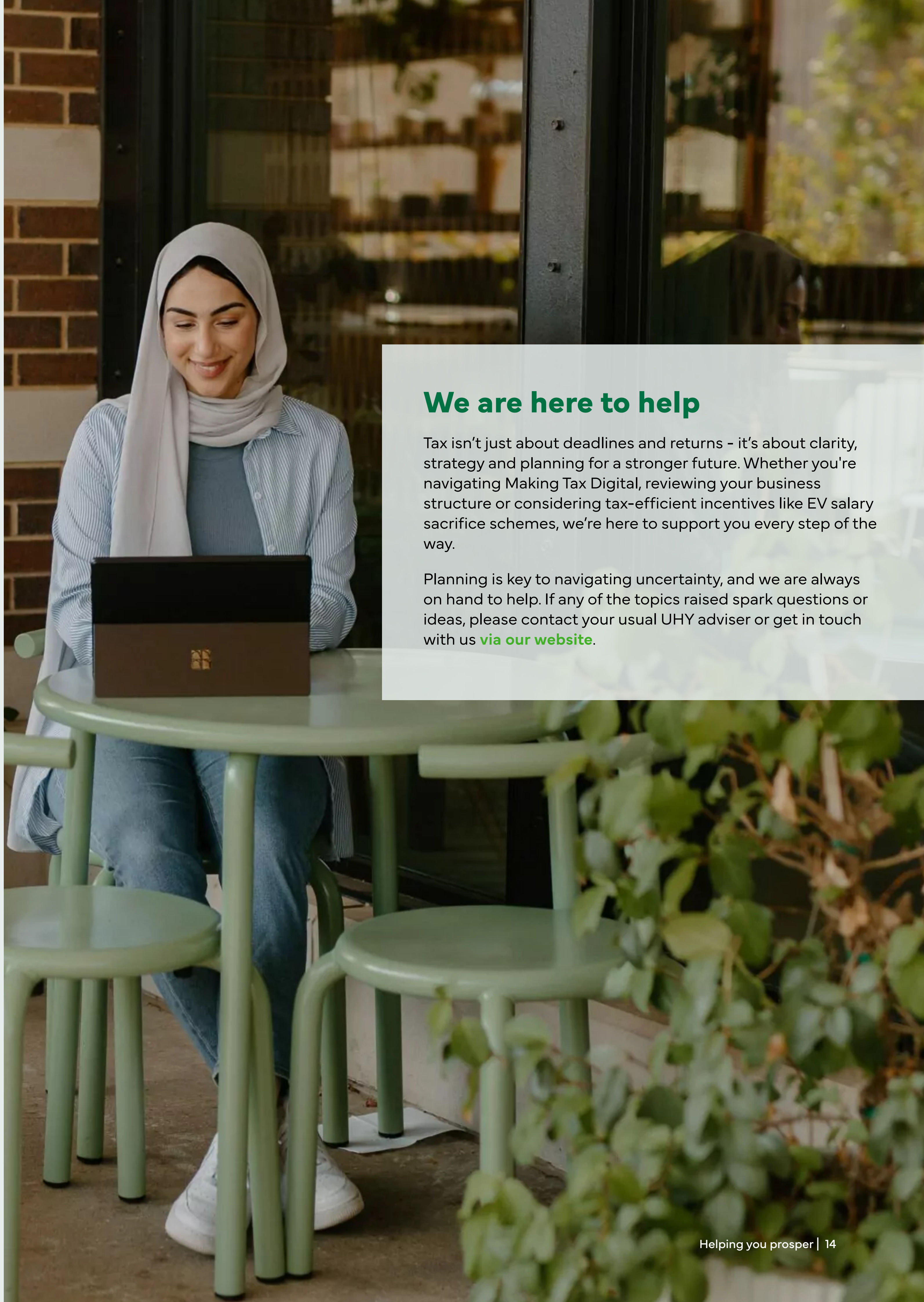
The cost was in fact £1,200, and the expensive bill arose because Mr Hammant thought he had filed his Self Assessment tax return online, and didn't discover that it hadn't been submitted correctly until over a year later.

Mr Hammant had signed up for paperless communication from HMRC and not realising that anything had gone wrong with the tax return filing, hadn't seen the need to check his personal tax account for some time. He also mistakenly believed that 'important' communications from HMRC would be sent in the post. This meant that penalty notices, reminders and statements were clocking up in his personal tax account, unnoticed. And in the meanwhile, £1,200 accrued in penalties - despite no tax being due on the return itself.

When Mr Hammant finally realised what had happened, he acted at once. The tax return was filed, and he made an appeal against the penalties. But the appeal was not allowed, and the penalties stuck.

It comes as a shock to many people to realise just how inflexible the tax system can be. HMRC did not give up the penalties in this case: and indeed, it has only limited discretion to do so. The First-tier Tax Tribunal weighed up the law but it, too, has only a certain amount of wriggle room.

The best plan is always to get it right first time: to be on top of the deadlines, and to know how to meet your tax responsibilities. That is what we are here to help with. Please don't hesitate to contact us at any time.



We are here to help

Tax isn't just about deadlines and returns - it's about clarity, strategy and planning for a stronger future. Whether you're navigating Making Tax Digital, reviewing your business structure or considering tax-efficient incentives like EV salary sacrifice schemes, we're here to support you every step of the way.

Planning is key to navigating uncertainty, and we are always on hand to help. If any of the topics raised spark questions or ideas, please contact your usual UHY adviser or get in touch with us **via our website**.

Combining national expertise with a tailored local service

Our UHY Hacker Young experts across our 20 offices nationwide provide the best advice because we understand both local needs and the national picture.

Whether you are looking for advice on your personal finances, or want support and guidance in navigating the future for your business, our team of experts are ready to help.

If you are looking for general audit, accounts or tax support, our advisers are always on hand to explain how we can provide assistance to you and your team in our commitment and dedication to **helping you prosper**.

For further information or to arrange a meeting with your local specialist, please contact us at **enquiries@uhy-uk.com** or on **+44 20 7216 4600.**

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