

Covid-19: Update on tax policy documents

- three month extension to many consultation deadlines to give stakeholders time to submit their views
- extension will ensure those facing Covid-19 disruption will have a chance to have their say on possible tax changes
- despite the extension of publication deadlines, due to Covid-19, the government remains committed to all planned reforms

HMT and HMRC are today setting out new timelines for tax policy consultations and other work in the light of the current Covid-19 crisis.

The government is extending deadlines to ten consultations and calls for evidence currently underway by three months – including the Plastic Packaging Tax, a call for evidence on Vehicle Excise Duty and a consultation on the HMRC Charter – and also a short delay to the publication of other documents announced at Budget 2020.

The extension will give all stakeholders, who are facing disruption due to COVID-19, more time to submit their views and allow them to fully engage with these documents and contribute to the tax policy making process.

The government is grateful for responses already received, and would welcome further early responses from stakeholders where possible, to support its continuing consideration of these issues.

Consultations on duty-free and tax-free goods carried by passengers and on the VAT treatment of overseas goods will continue to the existing timetable. This is to provide businesses with clarity as early as possible on the policies that will apply from the end of the transition period, and enough time to prepare.

The government is confirming too that it is going ahead with its fundamental review of Business Rates, and a call for evidence will be published in the coming months.

Financial Secretary to the Treasury Jesse Norman said:

Consulting on tax policy is crucial to good tax law. And a good consultation makes sure everyone with an interest in the subject has an opportunity to have their say.

That is why we are extending these deadlines. The government is very grateful to the stakeholders who have already responded to these documents. But it is also acutely aware that there may be others who want to contribute but cannot do so because of the current situation with Covid-19. This extension should help them to do so.

Alongside the consultation extensions, the publication of some documents announced at Budget 2020, including work on tax conditionality and a consultation on stronger penalties for tobacco tax evasion, will be pushed back until the Autumn.

And the government will set out in due course when it will publish other tax policy documents, including the consultation on aviation taxation and a call for evidence on disguised remuneration schemes.

The government's position on publication of tax policy documents will be kept updated through the public [consultations tracker](#).

Chair of the Tax Professionals Forum and EY Head of Tax Policy Chris Sanger said:

Acting now to extend the deadlines for consultation is a welcome decision, as these consultations cover important issues that taxpayers need time to consider. Given the current environment, attention will naturally and rightly be focused elsewhere.

An extra three months should allow sufficient time for engagement, whilst still enabling the government to deliver important tax policy changes within the current fiscal timetable.

Full List of Extensions

The deadlines for responses to the following tax policy documents will be extended for three months, to allow stakeholders to engage fully with these documents and to contribute to the tax policy making process. However, the government encourages early responses from stakeholders where possible, to support its continuing consideration of these issues:

Further information

In the light of Covid-19, the Government has considered the publication of remaining expected tax policy documents on a case by case basis. For further information on all individual tax policy documents, please see the Financial Secretary to HM Treasury's [Written Ministerial Statement](#).

[Government response to Law Commission report on the Sentencing Code](#)

The Law Commission published its report on the Sentencing Code in November 2018 alongside a draft Sentencing (Pre-consolidation Amendments) Bill, an essential paving measure for the Sentencing Code, and a draft Sentencing

Bill, which will create the Sentencing Code.

In its interim response to the Report, published in May 2019, the government accepted the main recommendation of the Report to enact both pieces of legislation.

The final response to the report, published in April 2020, sets out the government's consideration of the further recommendations for the reform of sentencing law that are set out in the report.

Coronavirus (COVID-19): ministerial direction for the support fund for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

Sellafield Ltd donates £10,000 to provide food to the vulnerable

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Further support for children affected by domestic abuse

Organisations supporting children affected by domestic abuse have been given a £3 million funding boost.

Today (Tuesday 28 April) the Home Office has announced £3.1 million will go to specialist services for children who have both been directly and indirectly affected by domestic abuse. This can include one-to-one and group counselling sessions to improve the mental health of children affected and early intervention schemes.

It comes as the ground-breaking Domestic Abuse Bill will be debated by MPs at the Bill's second reading today.

The new funding will be split between local authorities, children's charities and Police and Crime Commissioners across England and Wales.

Minister for Safeguarding Victoria Atkins said:

It is unacceptable that some children have to witness appalling abuse carried out in their home by those they should trust the most.

This funding will go towards supporting these children, healing their emotional scars, and ensuring they can move forwards and have a positive future.

Recipients of the funding include Barnardo's, Cambridgeshire County Council and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria.

Sarah Crawley, Director of Barnardo's Cymru, said:

We are delighted that funding for our Opening Closed Doors service will continue for another year. Domestic abuse is an epidemic with devastating effects on children and their families. It leaves families in a state of trauma, with significant impact on their emotional and mental health.

Sadly the pandemic has seen incidents of domestic violence escalate still further and has highlighted the importance of support for families.

The Domestic Abuse Bill will introduce a wide range of measures to support

victims and survivors of domestic abuse as well as ensure perpetrators are punished. Some of the measures included in the Bill include:

- create a statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising it can be more than just physical violence
- establish the role of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner in law
- provide police with new Domestic Abuse Protection Orders and Domestic Abuse Protection Notices
- place a statutory duty on local authorities to provide support to victims of domestic abuse
- prohibit perpetrators from cross examining witnesses in family courts in England and Wales
- ensure victims of domestic abuse receive special measures in criminal courts, such as allowing them to provide evidence by video link

In addition to the funding and measures in the Bill, the government has provided additional support to help those at risk of domestic abuse during the coronavirus outbreak.

Earlier this month, [the Home Secretary launched the #YouAreNotAlone domestic abuse public awareness campaign](#) which has reached more than 120 million people online, and pledged a further £2 million to bolster domestic abuse charities online support services.

Further measures include: