

HEADLINES

- Disciplinary Review
- Online Filing Failures
- Golf Day 2007
- Preferred Supplier Services

Enclosed with this Newsletter:

- Qdos Taxwise leaflet

Institute Jumps the Gun - Disciplinary Hearings to be held in Public from 1.1.2008



Although seemingly part of the as yet unreported review of the ICAEW disciplinary process, in open session on May 2nd Council sought to adopt POBA guidelines for transparency of administrative tribunals. After considerable debate, Council voted by 53 votes to 13 to adopt 1 January 2008 as the starting date for public hearing of all disciplinary and appeal cases.

Peter Mitchell's address to Council against this motion has been added to 'Reports' in the Press & PR section of the SPA website along with an extract from the public Council papers. Within his subsequent exchange of emails with the Institute Secretariat and Office Holders Peter Mitchell noted that:

"I hope that within the review some guidelines will be provided to tribunal chairmen what is or isn't in the public interest and, on SPA's part, we will continue to advise our members how best to avoid becoming embroiled in the disciplinary process. Going forward we will monitor those cases where members are not treated with the degree of privacy or dignity requested to determine whether any 'fine tuning' may be required."

SPA remains concerned that wide damage to a defendant member's reputation and position in his or her community may arise from insensitive press reporting of non public interest cases - we can only wait to see what happens.

There is now even more reason for SPA members to contact the SPA office for guidance or legal support at the earliest stage should they receive intimation of any potential disciplinary action against them.

TO ACCESS THE MEMBERS AREA OF THE SPA WEBSITE – ENTER YOUR MEMBERSHIP NUMBER AND YOUR POSTCODE - WITH A SPACE IN THE MIDDLE OF YOUR POSTCODE

ONLINE FILING FAILURES AND SPURIOUS PENALTIES ABOUND FOR 2005/6

We recently carried out an email 'mini-survey' with our members to discover their experiences with filing online ... and thank you for your many responses.

On the whole online filing of 2005/6 Tax and PAYE Returns (and early 2006/7 PAYE Returns) appears to have been a generally acceptable process with most software packages performing well – high marks were awarded to PTP, Drummhor, Digita, Sage Payroll, Quickbooks, Moneysoft and TAS.

An exception was IRIS, where a software glitch caused many of you problems - there was confusion at the Revenue with some successful Tax Return submissions arriving as 'test' transmissions, and where confirmation of filing was not provided, so filers were unsure whether returns were 'in' or not.

The Inland Revenue 'helpline' didn't live up to its name with unacceptable delays – one member reported being told he was 'number 82 in the queue!' such was the level of enquiries and complaints.

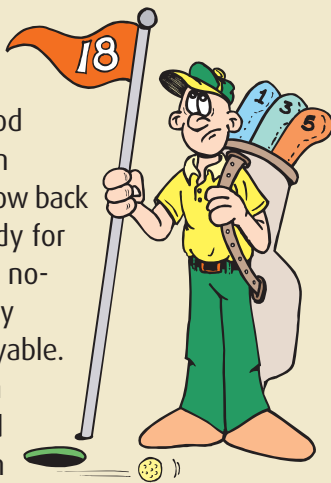


A second area of concern was the issue of many - and mostly spurious - penalty notices for late or non-filing of P35s for 2005/6 – sent nine months after the statutory filing date – with a £900 fine attached!

When SPA discussed these findings with Richard Shooter (of 'Working Together') it was learned they reflected other widely reported shortcomings, which elicited an apology from the Inland Revenue – 'Test' transmissions will be recognised and spurious P35 penalty notices will be withdrawn on appeal (remember, you can recover your client costs from the Inland Revenue if caused by Revenue error).

SPA Golf Day - 21 June 2007

We are pleased to report that a lengthened Harewood Downs Golf Course in Buckinghamshire is now back in condition and ready for SPA to play. This is a no-pressure, friendly day which is always enjoyable. You will mingle with fellow members and representatives from our Preferred Suppliers.



For those who have not received a booking form by email, please ring the office for one to be sent to you. We hope many of you can come – handicap certificates are not required!

'Newsflash' Summary

- 27.2.07** Standards Letters (see article in this newsletter)
- 12.4.07** Mini survey on HMRC online filing experience
- 4.5.07** Institute Jumps the Gun – disciplinary hearings to be held in public (see lead article in this newsletter)
SPA Refutes Smaller firms "crisis" claim – copy of article on web
- 10.5.07** Notification of Golf Day and Booking Form

If you do not currently receive email newsflashes and would like to, then please send an email to mail@spa.org.uk and we will add you to our list.

Three great services for our members from SPA's Preferred Suppliers



Qdos Taxwise bespoke Tax Enquiry Insurance

As a service to our members, SPA has been working in conjunction with Qdos Taxwise to create a bespoke Tax Enquiry Insurance Scheme. The scheme covers formal enquiries by HMRC and includes Full Enquiries, Aspect Enquiries, VAT, PAYE or NIC disputes. Previously members may have insured against Full Enquiries, however the Inland Revenue now open many very detailed Aspect Enquiries, which annoyingly - and expensively for the client - were not then covered.

Members will see from the enclosed leaflet that they can choose to cover their whole practice or just selected clients – all at economic cost to their clients. There are other benefits to your practice which are detailed in the leaflet - and please don't dismiss it as an onerous administrative task - Qdos can do all this for you.

Peter Mitchell uses this insurance and has, through Qdos' Scheme, been providing this cover to selected clients (the scheme is not necessary for very small or retired clients). He says "We're all aware how expensive and long lasting these Aspect Enquiries can be – this scheme provides peace of mind for clients at very reasonable cost." (Ed: And Qdos will provide SPA with a small annual contribution towards our running costs).



Preferred Medical - Economic Travel Insurance

With the holiday season approaching we thought it was worth reminding you of a great Travel Insurance deal available through Preferred Medical. Book online through www.gotravelinsurance.co.uk/preferred-medical - all you do is put in Europe or Worldwide and how many days and the quote is instant. Kate in the office has used it a few times and really recommends it – much cheaper than other quotes for comparable cover.



SBJ – PII cover

In the Winter newsletter we featured an article on SBJ Professional, our Preferred Supplier for PII. One member, David Hill from Colby in the Isle of Man, rang them for a quote and subsequently sent us the following email:

"... a big 'THANK YOU' for introducing me to SBJ Professional for my PII renewal. They have been so helpful and my renewal has resulted in a reduced premium of 79% on last year ... yes 79% with a reduced excess and based on increased fees. A quality service to be recommended to all members."

The next GREAT news could be from you, so, if you haven't had a quote, call them now:

Rebecca Kiermasz - 0117 908 4016 Lisa Ward - 0117 908 4084
 Rebecca Cunningham - 0117 908 4088
 email: spa@sbj-pi.com www.sbj-pi.com/spa

STANDARD LETTERS

We have recently reviewed our Standard Letters, which are freely available for download from our Members Area of the SPA website. The potential list of Standard Letters is virtually endless with limitless permutations. SPA believes it has a reasonable selection available for the general requirements of members.

We would stress that in many cases it will be necessary for those using them to make deletions/additions/alterations to ensure that they are relevant and appropriate to your particular clients and within your terms of engagement.

If members require further guidance or information on Standard Letters we can suggest the following sources:

- The ICAEW has an Information Sheet – Standard 2 Helpsheet 13. Available at: www.icaew.co.uk/index.cfm?route=141191
- The ACCA have an Engagement Letters CD-ROM available to ACCA members at a cost of £30.00 plus VAT. To order a copy call 0141 534 4700.
- CCH have a Model Engagement Letters CD-ROM with some 90 suggested forms and letters available to anyone at a cost of £150.00 +VAT. Call their Customer Service line on 0870 7772906.

An Alternate's Experience - In Practice!

Following Simon Ripper's sad and untimely death last October Peter Mitchell acted as Alternate for Simon's practice to enable an orderly merger to take place with another local firm. Peter reports on what turned out to be a relatively comfortable experience:

"I'd forgotten about this arrangement – we had no written agreement – but a letter from Simon's solicitor to ICAEW confirming my appointment proved sufficient to get matters moving. Fortunately Simon's wife was a cheque signatory so this kept the practice bank accounts open and enabled practice activity to continue. (A key matter to arrange if you are a sole practitioner.) My name was quickly accepted on the SBJ Professional PII policy without additional cost, and as a 'Responsible Individual' by the ICAEW for signing audit reports.

The practice was sold successfully on 1 February 2007 to one of several interested parties lined up by brokers Goldsmiths – 40% down and 30% after years 1 and 2 - and for a price based on the well known formula of 1 x annual repeatable fees.

Rather than wading through pages of suggested agreements, powers of attorney etc., it may be possible that, by including the agreed appointment of an Alternate in a side letter to be read with a will, the unlikely need for you to act as an Alternate for a colleague in the event of their death or incapacitating illness may be got underway in a relatively simplistic fashion.

In conjunction with the Simon's solicitor, I will attempt in the coming weeks to put together a 'pro forma' letter on such an appointment for SPA's website together with some guidance notes on key matters to consider as an Alternate."

