

# **Minutes of Employer Consultation Forum**

**Thursday 23 September 2010**

## **Attendees:**

Co-chair: Karen Thompson (KT) IPP  
Co-chair: Rhonda Howlader (RH) HMRC  
Co-chair: David Ellis (DE) HMRC  
Secretary: Connie Kirk (CK) HMRC  
Trevor Blackmur (TB) ATT  
Matthew Brown (MB) CIOT  
Glenn Collins (GC) ACCA  
Norman Green (NG) BCS  
John Hampton (JH) CBI  
Helen Harvey (HH) Payroll Bureaux  
Janet Jack (JJ) IAB  
Simon Parsons (SP) Payroll Bureaux  
Jackie Petherbridge (JP) FSB  
Linda Pullan (LP) Payroll Alliance  
Alex Rowson (AR) BASDA  
Iain Scott-Shore (IS) CBI  
Ian Whyteside (IW) AAT  
Angela Williams (AW) ICAEW  
Maggie Anderson (MA) HMRC Policy  
Pam Barber (PB) HMRC IMS  
Nick Barford (NB) Office for National Statistics  
Derek Bird (DB) Office for National Statistics  
Sue Ellis (SE) HMRC DMB  
Peter Hopkins (PH) HMRC Policy  
Sue Lely (SL) HMRC Central Compliance  
Hasan Mustafa (HM) HMRC PSN  
Anthony Shirley (AS) HMRC PSN

## **Apologies**

Richard Baron - IOD  
Peter Bickley – ICAEW  
Anne Redston – ICAEW

## **Welcome and introductions**

KT welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked HM for coming along at such short notice.

KT also welcomed NB and DB from ONS.

CK was introduced as the new secretary for the ECF and then the usual introductions were made.

## **Minutes action points from last meeting**

RH said she was covering for DE who will be joining later. RH also mentioned that CK had received a number of items for the agenda which she will respond to where possible and will include others on the next agenda. It was difficult to get the relevant specialist to attend the ECF as they were very busy at present.

**AP(n)** - ECF members will no longer receive draft articles for the Bulletin. Alison Bainbridge is setting up an editorial team and will ask for volunteers to join this before setting out terms of reference at the first editorial board meeting in more detail.

**AP(o)** - Review of consultation process – RH has consulted with external and internal stakeholders about HMRC's consultation processes. Early findings suggest that whilst customers appreciate engagement HMRC doesn't always get it right. This will be reviewed with a view of improving the consultation process.

Minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2010 were agreed.

## **Agenda**

### **Orderline strategy**

RH was delivering this on behalf of Nick Chaplain. RH went through the slides, copies of which were already handed out for everyone to follow.

HMRC is proposing options to developing a new strategy for the Orderline and would like ECF members to be involved with this as the work progresses.

RH advised ECF members to ignore the following bullet point about there only being one version of the P14 forms (that is two Part P14 Manual) available from the Orderline. This was removed after the slides were printed and is currently being looked at.

HMRC are aware that there are some areas where broadband reception is poor and solutions are being sought for those employers affected.

ECF had the following concerns:

- HMRC needs to distinguish between forms and guidance as the issues are different.
- Photo copying can be costly for small employers and HMRC should supply copies for them (small employers who have 20-25 employees).
- Could be a problem where employers have to copy booklets such as the 480, CWG2 which not only will be costly but also time consuming.
- It's very difficult to copy and paste text from the booklets as it is blocked on the website.

- Can HMRC restrict the number of copies sent out and note the name of the person who received them so that if they are requested again from the same agent/employer, details of the person receiving them can be passed on.
- HMRC has not made it easy for the issue of guidance to be cancelled. Can something be included on the website for agent/employers to request cancellation especially for agents with different PAYE schemes.
- CD-ROMs are still being sent out to dormant companies.
- The XP (CIS) schemes still receive PAYE guidance which is not required.
- Agents still receive information for ex clients.
- Some forms are in colour, will black and white copies be accepted.
- It may be an idea if any guidance etc is only sent out if requested and not automatic.
- HMRC could do a survey to find out why employers need to order a form instead of printing them.
- Can HMRC provide details of what is being ordered and the numbers then ECF could possibly help in finding out why this is the case.
- Some forms are difficult to obtain so Software Companies are unable to print.

ECF members were happy that HMRC's orderline would apply some pressure on callers to self serve but the pressure needs to be carefully applied and that paper copies must be supplied if it is clear the employer, or agent needs them.

**AP(a)** - The results of the above bullet points to be discussed at the next ECF meeting in December 2010.

DE joined the meeting and apologised for not being there at the start and also mentioned that he had to leave early to attend another meeting which was a key event for him to attend to represent employers, pension providers and payroll providers.

### **NICs holiday**

HM gave a brief overview of the NICs holiday.

- HMRC are looking at the separate return for these cases to be sent in electronically and will also consider the exempt employers.
- P35 will not be amended to take this into account as it is only for a short period.
- DMB are looking at ways to reconcile the two returns at the end of the year.

Main concerns raised by the ECF were over the language in the technical guidance and the examples provided. HM agreed that the guidance will be looked at and a copy of the return will be available for ECF members.

## **ONS – collection of data**

ONS had been given the opportunity to set out its aspirations for electronic data collection to the meeting. DB provided an overview of the uses made of ONS outputs, particularly for fiscal and monetary policy and looked at how data used to generate the outputs was currently being collected. It would be beneficial for ONS to be able to use NPS for their data collection which will reduce costs to both business and government, improve the quality and timeliness of the data etc.

A discussion took place around what was included on the payroll systems, such as hours worked, payments made. NG was happy to discuss with ONS as to what was included in the payroll.

Also need to look at the way information could be exchanged between the payroll systems and ONS and the various problems that could arise.

The meeting supported the initiatives that ONS is taking in this respect, with recognition, and an appropriate reminder, that any extensions to either NPS or Payroll Software needs to be proportionate and reflect the pressures that (especially small) businesses are under.

**AP(b)** - ONS to produce a proposal for going forward to be discussed at the next ECF.

**AP(c)** - ONS will forward copies of the survey questionnaires currently used to CK to circulate amongst ECF members. *(Attached to notes of minutes)*

## **PAYE review**

PH reminded ECF members to provide feedback on this before the deadline.

An overview of this was given and discussion took place around Real Time Information and Centralised Deduction proposals outlined in the discussion document.

ECF had a number of points to raise; some of which are as follows:

- Will employers have to spend more time recording information?
- RTI could cause problems for employees with multiple employments.
- Will this improve in-year movement process?

ECF members were advised first of all to put forward their full submissions formally in response to the discussion document and as a separate matter more general concerns can be put to CK and these could be brought in to the next ECF if that is appropriate at the time.

## **AOB**

**Single Employer Office-** competing demands meant that no one was available to come to ECF to discuss the emerging developments and it was agreed that this could be carried over to the next ECF.

There were a number of suggestions put forward for this ECF but not everything could be covered due to the amount of time that was available.

CK was already chasing up a response for the concerns put forward and will get back to the ECF members as soon as possible.

**AP(d)** - RH said that CK will copy the response to all ECF members where appropriate and will look at getting other items included on the next agenda.

**Date of next meeting: 9 December 2010**