

SP 1/05 - BUSINESS BY TELEPHONE – HM REVENUE & CUSTOMS CONTACT CENTRES

This Statement of Practice sets out the expanded services which are now available from Contact Centres which deal with the tax affairs of individuals. It supersedes Statement of Practice 3/03.

The security afforded by Contact Centre technology enables HM Revenue & Customs to offer additional services, and these will therefore be restricted to individual customers whose affairs are dealt with in a tax office which is served by a Contact Centre. However, as we are committed to expanding the number of offices which will be served by Contact Centres, all customers should see the phased introduction of improved services over a period of time. Annex B sets out which customers are currently served by Contact Centres.

Business by Telephone Statement of Practice (SP 02/03) continues to apply to customers whose affairs are not yet served by a Contact Centre.

SECURITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

HM Revenue & Customs is committed to ensuring the information it receives is accurate and that the privacy of customers' affairs is protected. For the services described in this Statement of Practice:

- Callers will only be able to supply or amend information concerning individuals' tax affairs.
- We will take steps to check the identity of the caller before discussing a customer's tax affairs.
- Callers who fail to satisfy the identity checks will be asked to put their enquiry in writing.
- We will check that we have the customer's consent before we discuss their affairs with their agent or other person calling on their behalf.
- Calls to our Contact Centres will be recorded for training and quality assurance purposes and will be available in case of any disagreement as to what was said.

SERVICES AVAILABLE BY TELEPHONE FROM HM REVENUE & CUSTOMS CONTACT CENTRES

The services described below are available to individual customers calling HMRC Contact Centres about their own direct tax liabilities, and to agents or other persons acting on behalf of the customer **providing that we can satisfactorily check the identity of the caller.**

The directions by the Board of Inland Revenue under section 118 FA 1998 which provide for these services are at Annex C.

In most cases nothing more than a telephone call will be needed, although the call may lead to further action by HM Revenue & Customs (for example, sending out a revised PAYE coding notice). Where business cannot be completed by telephone we will send customers any forms or other information they need and explain what they need to do next.

AGENTS AND OTHER PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Some people prefer to ask another person, such as an agent or family member, to deal with their tax affairs for them. We will accept some types of information from agents and other personal representatives providing that:

- we have been able to check the identity of the agent or personal representative, and
- we hold evidence that the customer has given their consent for that agent or personal representative to act on their behalf

Customers using our Contact Centres can give their consent orally which we will record and accept for the purpose of a “one off” telephone call. We do recognise however, that there will be occasions when the customer cannot be present to give oral consent for the agent or personal representative to act on their behalf. On these occasions we will accept (but not provide) information from the agent or personal representative on a provisional basis and then contact the customer by post to confirm the information.

Customers will need to give their consent in writing if they want the agent or personal representative to act on their behalf on any future occasions.

MATTERS THAT CAN BE DEALT WITH BY TELEPHONE

The information, claims and requests that may be accepted, from individuals or their representatives, over the telephone are set out at Annex A.

Individuals may also tell us when an agent or personal representative is no longer acting on their behalf. However, they will need to send us written consent for any new agent or personal representative who starts to act for them on future occasions.

We will also provide certain information we hold about the customer by telephone. The main exceptions will be:

- personal details such as Name, Address, Date of Birth, National Insurance Number etc.,
- pay and tax details,
- information contained in a Self Assessment Return (if customers require this information, to make the amendments or corrections to their return, we will provide details in writing).

CHECKING AMENDMENTS NOTIFIED BY TELEPHONE

Amendments to Self Assessment returns made by telephone will be checked in the same way as amendments made in writing and in some cases we may enquire into the amendment.

TIME LIMITS

The same time limits apply to claims and amendments made by telephone as when they are made in writing.

Where a claim is made by telephone, it will be treated as made at the time of the call provided all the relevant information can be provided by the customer during that call. And a claim by telephone will, of course, be subject to the same conditions and checks as if it were made on paper.

Where a claim cannot be dealt with by telephone, for example, because the caller does not have all the necessary information, the customer may be asked to make the claim in writing. The written claim must still be made within the usual time limits.

GUIDANCE AND ASSISTANCE

In addition to the services above, Contact Centres will provide the normal range of help and advice by telephone on general tax matters including:

- general questions about income tax and capital gains tax for individuals,
- help with completing returns and other HM Revenue & Customs forms, and
- requests for leaflets, forms, schedules and other HM Revenue & Customs information.

But, please note requests for supplementary pages to the Self Assessment return and the helpsheets mentioned in the tax return guide should be made to the Self Assessment Orderline 0845 9000 404. The Orderline is open from 8.00 am to 10.00 pm 7 days a week.

Annex A

INFORMATION THAT WILL BE ACCEPTED FROM CUSTOMERS

We will accept the following information, claims and requests over the telephone

PERSONAL DETAILS

- Changes to name, address, post code and telephone number
- First notification or changes in personal circumstances such as marriage, separation, divorce, date of birth, date of death
- First notification of a National Insurance Number

EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

- Details of a customer's new employer and the date when the employment began
- A customer's works or payroll number
- Details of earlier employments

CLAIMS TO PERSONAL ALLOWANCES

- **Personal Allowance*** Subject to time limits.
- **Married Couples Allowance*** Subject to time limits. This allowance is available for the tax year 2000/2001 and later years where either the husband or wife was born before 6 April 1935. Prior to 2000/2001 no age restriction applied.
- *** The age related levels of Personal and Married Couples Allowance** The level of a person's income (or husband's income for Married Couple's Allowance) affects their entitlement to the age related allowances. We will accept new estimates of income by telephone and using the figures provided, we will advise whether the amount of the customer's allowances will change.
- **Blind Person's Allowance** Subject to time limits.
- **Additional Personal Allowance** Claims for additional relief in respect of children can be made subject to time limits – the last year a claim can be made is for the year 1999/2000.

OTHER INFORMATION THAT WILL BE ACCEPTED FROM CUSTOMERS

EXPENSES	£ limit for Notifications by telephone	Notes
Fixed or Flat Rate Expenses	£1000	Current and previous year only. Fixed or Flat rate expenses are fixed amounts we have agreed for certain categories of employees to save them having to make claims for deductions individually.
Other Job expenses	£1000	Current and previous year only. We will only accept claims for deductions for other job expenses where entitlement has already been established in principle. First time applications will need to be made in

		writing. Where a form P87 has been issued we will require completion of that form and will not accept a telephone claim for the deductions even if the amount claimed is less than £1000.
Subscriptions to professional bodies	£2500	Current and previous year only.

NOTIFICATION OF PAYMENTS	£ limit for notifications by telephone	Notes
Gift Aid Payments	£2500	Current and previous year only. Tax relief for Gift Aid payments is only available to Higher Rate taxpayers. Occasionally, pensioners who are not in receipt of full age related allowances, and who are not required to make a tax return, may also wish to notify Gift Aid payments as they may increase entitlement to age related allowances. All claims to carry back relief must be made in writing.
Pension Plans you pay into	£2500	Current and previous year only. Additional relief will only be due for Higher Rate taxpayers. All claims to carry back must be made in writing.
Retirement Annuity Payments	£2500	Current and previous year only. We will only accept telephone notifications where entitlement to relief has already been established in principle. New claims and claims to carry back relief must be made in writing.

NOTIFICATIONS OF BENEFITS IN KIND	£ limit for notifications by telephone	Notes
Any benefits in kind – not just the most common ones such as car and fuel benefits		Current and previous year only. In some circumstances, for example if a benefit is partly paid for work purposes or a benefit is shared with other employees, we may ask for the details to be put in writing

NOTIFICATION OF EARNINGS	£ limit for notifications by telephone	Notes
Part time or earnings other than from main income.	£2500	Current and previous year only.
Commission	£2500	Current and previous year only.
Tips	£2500	Current and previous year only.
NOTIFICATION OF OTHER INCOME	£ limit for notifications by telephone	Notes
Interest without tax taken off (gross interest)	£2500	Current and previous year only.
Taxed Savings and Investment Income.	£2500	Current and previous year only. The limit relates to the net amount of dividends and taxed interest received after tax has been taken off. Information will be recorded in all instances but is most likely to affect tax liability where the customer is a higher rate taxpayer. It may also affect entitlement to age related allowances.
State Pension		Current and previous year only.
Incapacity Benefit		Current and previous year only. Incapacity Benefit paid at the short term lower rate for the first 28 weeks is non-taxable.
Pensions other than State Pension	£2500	Current and previous year only.
Property income from your own home	£2500	Current and previous year only. The limit relates to net taxable income. However, where the gross income, before expenses, exceeds £10,000 p.a. we will ask you to put the details in writing.
Other property income	£2500	Current and previous year only. The limit relates to net taxable income. However, where the income is being notified for the first time or the gross income, before expenses, exceeds £10,000 p.a. we will ask you to put the details in writing.
Other taxable income (excluding earnings)	£2500	Current and previous year only.

AMENDMENTS TO SELF ASSESSMENT RETURNS

- Amendments to Personal Allowances within the range described above.
- Correction of Personal or Employment details
- On the Employment Pages of the Return:
 - Amendments to claims for deductions or expenses which fall within the range of services described above;
 - Amendments to employment income or employee benefits;
 - Correction of provisional or incorrect figures
- Amendments to a return to correct the figure of interest received where capital from investments has been incorrectly included as interest, or where the full interest from a joint account has been entered rather than an individual's share.
- Amendments to a return to correct figures of pensions or state pensions and benefits.
- Amendments to return where there is an entry for qualifying pension payments or retirement annuity paid but relief has not been claimed.

(Any amendment must normally be made within 12 months of the filing date for the return. The filing date will usually be 31 January after the end of the year to which the return relates.)

SELF ASSESSMENT REQUESTS

- Requests to repay tax overpaid for the year
- Requests to include tax payable in PAYE Code for forthcoming year. Subject to time limits.
- Requests to Reduce Payments on Account

Annex B

Contact Centre customers covered by this Statement of Practice as at November 2007

Area Office name	Contact Centre opening times. 8.00 am to 8.00 pm Mon - Fri. 8.00 am to 4.00 pm Sat. Unless indicated*	Telephone number
Bedfordshire & West Hertfordshire	Newcastle	0845 302 1458
Berkshire	Cardiff	0845 366 7810
Birmingham Solihull	Liverpool	0845 302 1437
Bournemouth	Portsmouth & Bournemouth	0845 302 1451
Bristol & North Somerset	Portsmouth & Bournemouth	0845 302 1443
Cambridge	Livingston	0845 302 1453
Central Yorkshire	Peterlee	0845 302 1467
Centre 1	East Kilbride	0845 070 3703
Chapel Wharf	Manchester	0845 300 0627
Cornwall & Plymouth	Cardiff	0845 366 7807
Cumbria	Sunderland	0845 302 1473
Devon	Cardiff	0845 366 7830
Dorset & South Wiltshire	Portsmouth & Bournemouth	0845 302 1438
East Cheshire & South Lancashire	Manchester	0845 302 1463
East Hampshire & Isle of Wight	Portsmouth & Bournemouth	0845 300 0628
East Hertfordshire & West Essex	Newcastle	0845 302 1460
East Lancashire	Bootle & St Helens	0845 302 1441
Gloucester & North Wiltshire	Liverpool	0845 366 7840
Greater Belfast	Belfast	0845 302 1469
Humber	Sunderland	0845 302 1414
Kent	Portsmouth & Bournemouth	0845 302 1431
Leicester & Northants	East Kilbride	0845 302 1442
Lincolnshire	Peterlee	0845 302 1449
Lothians	Newcastle	0845 302 1409
Manchester	Bootle & St Helens	0845 302 1477
Merseyside	Bootle & St Helens	0845 302 1459
Midlands West	Manchester	0845 366 7884
Norfolk	Bradford	0845 366 7851
North East Metropolitan	Sunderland	0845 302 1414
North Wales	Cardiff	0845 300 3949
North West Lancashire	Bootle & St Helens	0845 302 1478
North West Midlands & Shropshire	Manchester	0845 366 7815
North Yorkshire	Sunderland	0845 302 1433
Northern Ireland Counties	Belfast	0845 302 1481
Northumbria	Sunderland	0845 302 1456
Notts & Derbyshire	Peterlee	0845 302 1413
Oxon & Bucks	East Kilbride	0845 302 1434

* Belfast Contact Centre times are 8.30 am to 5.00 pm Mon – Fri.

Annex C

Directions under Section 118 Finance Act 1998

In the following directions references to ICTA88 mean the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 and references to ITEPA03 mean the Income Tax (Earnings and Pensions) Act 2003.

CLAIMS, ELECTIONS AND NOTIFICATIONS NOT INCLUDED IN A RETURN

The Commissioners of Inland Revenue hereby direct that from 6 April 2005 an individual who is not required to make a self assessment return for a year under section 8(1) of the Taxes Management Act 1970, or has made a self assessment return but the time limit specified in section 9ZA of the Taxes Management Act 1970, for amending a return has passed, may:

- make the claims or elections specified below (providing the time limit for making such a claim or election, for the year in question, has not expired), or
- notify the income or benefits specified below

by telephone PROVIDED THAT:

- at the time the call is made the individual's tax affairs are dealt with in a tax office served by a contact centre,
- the call is made to, or from, the contact centre that serves the tax office for the particular individual,
- claims or elections within sections 2-4, below, are for the "current year" (that is the year of assessment in which the claim or election is made) or the year preceding the "current year",
- claims, elections and notifications within section 2-4 and 6-7, below, do not exceed the amounts indicated, AND
- the claim or election is made, or the income or benefit is notified, in the manner authorised below.

CLAIMS, ELECTIONS AND NOTIFICATIONS INCLUDED IN A RETURN

The Commissioners of Inland Revenue also direct that from 6 April 2005 an individual who has made a self assessment return for any year under section 8(1) of the Taxes Management Act 1970, and who wishes to amend the self-assessment for that year under section 9ZA of the Taxes Management Act, may notify an officer of the Board of both the amendment to the self assessment return and the consequential amendment to the self-assessment, by telephone, PROVIDED THAT:

- at the time the call is made the individual's tax affairs are dealt with in a tax office served by a contact centre,
- the call is made to, or from, the contact centre that serves the tax office for the particular individual,

- the amendment is of a type specified below,
- amendments within section 2-4 and 6-7, below, do not exceed the amounts indicated,
AND
- the amendment is made in the manner authorised below.

THE MATTERS TO WHICH THE DIRECTIONS RELATE ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Claims and Elections

1. A claim to any of the following personal allowances (providing the time limit for making any such claim for the year in question has not expired):

OR

an amendment to a return to make such a claim

OR

an amendment to any such claim which was made in the original return:

- | | |
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| claims to Personal Allowance | under ICTA88/S257 (1)

ICTA88/S257 (2)
(Claimant 65 or over) |
| | or |
| | ICTA88/S257 (3)
(Claimant 75 or over) |
| claims to Married Couple's Allowance | under ICTA88/S257A (1)
Basic allowance for years to 1999/2000 only

ICTA88/S257A (2)
(For tax years from 2000/2001 – allowance where claimant or wife born before 6 April 1935 but under 75).

(For 1999/2000 and earlier – allowance where claimant or wife 65 or over but under 75) |
| | or |
| | ICTA88/257A (3)
(allowance where claimant or wife 75 or over) |
| elections for the transfer of 50% of the married couples allowance from husband to | under ICTA88/S257BA(1)
(An election under this section must be made before commencement of the tax |

wife		year to which it will relate. The only exception to this time limit relates to the year of marriage when the election may be made during that tax year).
claims to Additional relief in respect of children (to 1999/2000)	under	ICTA88/S259 (2) (but excluding any such claim where the question of apportionment under ICTA88/S260 arises and no apportionment has been agreed under Section 260 (3)).
elections where Additional relief in respect of children claimed in year of marriage (to 1999-2000)	under	ICTA88/S261
including any amount claimed in year of separation(to 1999-2000)	under	ICTA88/S261A
claims to Blind Person's allowance	under or	ICTA88/S265 (1) ICTA88/S265 (2) (allowance to spouse)

2. A claim to an income tax reduction under the following provision
OR
an amendment to a return to make such a claim
OR
an amendment to any such claim which was made in the original return:

relief for gift aid payments	under	Finance Act 1990/S25 (up to £2500)
relief for pension payments	under	Finance Act 2004/S192 (up to £2500)
relief for retirement annuity payments	under	Finance Act 2004/S194 (up to £2500)

3. A claim to make any of the following deductions from income in respect of expenses,
OR
an amendment to a return to make such a deduction
OR
an amendment to any such deduction which was made in the original return:
Relief for professional membership fees and annual subscriptions

Relief for flat rate deductions	under	ITEPA03/S367 (up to £1000)
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within the terms of Extra
Statutory Concession A1

4. A claim to make any of the following deductions from income in respect of expenses (providing the same class of expense was claimed the previous year),
OR
an amendment to a return to make such a deduction
OR
an amendment to any such deduction which was made in the original return:

Relief for expenses	under	ITEPA03/S336 } ITEPA03/S337 } ITEPA03/S338 } ITEPA03/S341 } ITEPA03/S342 } ITEPA03/S346 } (up to £1000 ITEPA03/S352 } total) ITEPA03/S370 } ITEPA03/S371 } ITEPA03/S373 } ITEPA03/S374 } ITEPA03/S376 }
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Income and Benefits

5. Notification of any of the following benefits provided by reason of employment
OR
an amendment to return details of such benefits omitted from the original return,
OR
an amendment to any such benefit included in the original return:

Cash vouchers	under	ITEPA03/S81
Non cash vouchers	under	ITEPA03/S87
Credit tokens	under	ITEPA03/S94
Living accommodation	under	ITEPA03/S102
Cars available for private use	under	ITEPA03/S120
Car fuel	under	ITEPA03/S149
Vans available for private use	under	ITEPA03/S154
Beneficial loan arrangements	under	ITEPA03/S173

Benefits in kind	under	ITEPA03/S201
Payments, etc. free of tax	under	ITEPA03/S222
Director's tax paid	under	ITEPA03/S223

6. Notification of any income from employment (up to £2500)
OR
an amendment to return details of any income omitted from the employment pages of the original return (up to £2500).
7. Notification of OR an amendment to return details of:
 - Untaxed interest (up to £2500)
 - Taxed interest and investment income (up to £2500)
 - State pension
 - Other pensions (up to £2500)
 - Incapacity benefit
 - Property income from the individual's own home (up to £2500)
 - Other property income (up to £2500, where gross income does not exceed £10,000)
 - Other taxable earnings (up to £2500)

Other Amendments

8. Correction of a provisional figure in the employment pages of the original return to a final figure
9. Correction of an incorrect figure in the employment pages of the original return

THE MANNER AUTHORISED FOR DEALING WITH MATTERS BY TELEPHONE.

Amendments, claims and elections

The amendments, claims, and elections specified above may be made orally, in a telephone conversation with a contact centre adviser, if made by:

- the individual, or
- where the individual has notified the Inland Revenue that a third party is authorised to act on his or her behalf, that third party.

(The directions do not apply to amendments made by an individual in his or her capacity as a trustee, partner or personal representative. Such amendments must be made in writing)

The amendment, claim or election will be treated as made on the date the telephone call is made, so long as the caller provides the information requested by the Inland Revenue during the telephone conversation. If the caller does not provide the information which the Inland Revenue requests during the telephone conversation a valid amendment, claim, or election will not have been made. Failure to establish a valid amendment, claim, or election by

telephone does not prevent the caller from a further attempt to establish the amendment, claim or election. But, any subsequent attempt must be made in writing, within the statutory time limit for making the amendment, claim or election.

Income and benefits

The income and benefits specified above may be notified to the Inland Revenue orally, in a telephone conversation with a contact centre adviser, if notified by:

- the individual, or
- where the individual has notified the Inland Revenue that a third party is authorised to act on his or her behalf, that third party.

The notification will be treated as given on the date the telephone call is made, so long as the individual, or third party, provides the information requested by the Inland Revenue during the telephone conversation.

If an individual, or third party, does not provide the information which the Inland Revenue requests during the telephone conversation a valid notification will not have been given. The individual, or third party, should then write to the individual's tax office to notify them about the income or benefit

REVOCATION OF PREVIOUS DIRECTIONS

The Commissioners of Inland Revenue hereby revoke their directions, relating to business with contact centres, published on 1 September 2003 with effect from 6 April 2005.