



HM Revenue  
& Customs



Giving your business  
the best start with tax





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This booklet is updated each year.

To view or download a PDF, visit  
[www.businesslink.gov.uk/taxhelp](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/taxhelp)

To order a copy please call  
**08459 15 45 15**

# Introduction: Getting started



## You've decided to work for yourself. But what next?

When you start working for yourself, **you need to tell HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC)**. If you are late telling us about your self-employment, you may attract a penalty. Not paying your National Insurance contributions puts your right to benefits at risk. HMRC can help you understand what you need to know about tax and help you to get it right.

To register a new business go to [www.businesslink.gov.uk/taxhelp](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/taxhelp) or call the Helpline for the Newly Self Employed on **08459 15 45 15** and give them details about you and your business.

There are a number of short online videos to help you understand the different areas to starting a business. Visit [www.businesslink.gov.uk/taxhelp](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/taxhelp) you can also follow three new businesses as they tell us in their own words what it's like to go it alone.

**These short online videos** cover:

- Setting up in business
- Record keeping
- Income Tax for the self-employed
- National Insurance for the self-employed
- Corporation Tax
- Construction Industry Scheme
- VAT
- Importing and Exporting
- Employing other people (PAYE)
- Business Allowances

The different types of tax you must pay depends on what you do. Section One of this booklet gives you more information on the different taxes.

## Records you need to keep

**It is vital to keep full and accurate records of your income and expenses from the start.**

**Keeping records makes sound business sense and is a legal requirement.**

**So it is important to get a proper system in place from the outset, and update the information regularly.**

Keeping good records makes completing your tax return(s) easier and quicker; makes it easier to pay the right tax at the right time; and helps you avoid paying unnecessary interest and penalties.

You should keep invoices and receipts to show what you have bought or sold relating to your business.

If you are employing others, you must keep records of their wages and tax/ National Insurance you have deducted/ paid to HMRC.

Keeping bank statements and building society books is vital, especially if you don't have a separate business account. You should be able to show clearly what you have spent personally and what is spent on business. If you use cash, you will need till receipts and a record book to keep track of it all.

If you are using part of your home for business then you should keep copies of the utility bills so that you can work out the amount spent in relation to your business.

If you have an accountant you might want to get his or her advice on what system suits your business and on how to keep your records up-to-date.

Keeping records is important as penalties were introduced in April 2009 for not taking reasonable care with records and tax returns.

For more information about taking reasonable care and the new penalties, visit [www.hmrc.gov.uk/about/new-penalties/new-penalties.pdf](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/about/new-penalties/new-penalties.pdf)

For help with record keeping go to [www.hmrc.gov.uk/startingup/keeprecs.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/startingup/keeprecs.htm)

To watch a short online video on 'Record Keeping' visit [www.businesslink.gov.uk/taxhelp](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/taxhelp)

# Section One: Things you need to know



## Self-employed, partnership or limited company

### Self-employed - Individual

This means that you're working for yourself, although you can also have people working for you. Your income tax, and part of your National Insurance liability, is calculated by reference to your business profits. The calculation and payment of the Tax/National Insurance due on profits is done through self assessment. If you have employees you will have to operate Pay As You Earn on their earnings. You will also need to register the business to pay VAT, once sales reach the VAT registration threshold.

### Partnership

A partnership is where two or more people set up a business. Each partner is personally responsible for all the business debts, even if the debt was caused by another partner.

Each partner pays income tax on their share of the business profits through Self Assessment, as well as National Insurance. A nominated partner is responsible for sending the Partnership tax return to HMRC. You will also need to register the business to pay VAT, once sales reach the VAT registration threshold.

### Limited company

A limited company is legally separate from its owners. This means the company is liable for any debts, not the individual owners.

You can create your own company and register it at Companies House or you can also use a company registration agent to buy a company 'off the shelf'. There is more information in this booklet under Corporation Tax.

If you form a limited company, then, as a Director, you will also be an employee - so you need to set up and register a PAYE scheme. To do this go to [www.hmrc.gov.uk/newemployers](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/newemployers) or call the New Employer's Helpline on **0845 60 70 143**.

You will also need to register the business for VAT, once its sales reach the VAT registration threshold.

Managing tax and accounts for limited companies can be complicated. A solicitor or accountant will be able to offer advice on setting up a limited company and HMRC publish a number of useful guides about Corporation Tax, visit [www.hmrc.gov.uk/ct](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/ct)

To watch a short online video on 'Setting up in business' or 'Corporation Tax' visit [www.businesslink.gov.uk/taxhelp](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/taxhelp)

## Self Assessment (SA)

If you are self-employed, you pay income tax through Self Assessment (SA). After the tax year ends on 5 April, you will need to complete and file a Self Assessment Tax Return, which you can either do online or by filling in a paper form.

### Completing your Tax Return if you are a self-employed individual

To complete your Tax Return you will need information from your business records, receipts or bank statements. If you get stuck, there is advice available. You can visit [www.hmrc.gov.uk/sa](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/sa) or call the Self Assessment Helpline on **0845 9000 444**.

#### Self Assessment Tax Return deadlines

If you choose to do your Tax Return on paper you need to make sure we have received it by 31 October. A paper return received after that date may be charged a penalty.

But if you do it online you will have until 31 January. This gives you an extra three months. Remember, if you send it in late you may be charged a penalty.

You are responsible for working out how much Income Tax and National Insurance Contributions you need to pay. However, if you do your Tax Return online, your calculation is automatically done for you. If you choose to send HMRC a paper return, HMRC can still calculate your tax for you but **only** if you make sure your return is received by the 31 October deadline.

We recommend doing your return online because:

- it is secure and convenient
- you can stop, save and come back to it at any point
- calculations are done for you automatically
- it shows you immediately if you owe any tax
- it calculates any repayment due and processes it quickly
- you get automatic acknowledgement of safe receipt

For help with completing and filling your Tax Return online:

- see the step by step guide at [www.hmrc.gov.uk/sa/step-by-step-guide.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/sa/step-by-step-guide.htm) or you can order a booklet, call **0845 9000 404**
- see the demonstration of the online SA return at [www.hmrc.gov.uk/demo/](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/demo/) (this includes four case studies)

Alternatively you can get an accountant or tax adviser to do all this for you.

**Please remember, if you do this, it is your responsibility to make sure the information on the return is accurate, complete and received by HMRC in time.**

### Completing your tax return if your business is run as a partnership

Each partner will have to fill out a partnership supplementary page **as part of** their own, individual SA Tax Return. The nominated partner will also have to complete a Partnership Return, showing each partner's share of the profits or losses. This might also include completing other supplementary pages, depending on what type of income the partnership has.

The nominated partner is responsible for filing the Partnership Return but each partner could be charged a late filing penalty if the return is received late, i.e. this is after 31 October deadline (if a paper return) or after 31 January deadline, (if completed online).

### Your account

Everyone who completes a Self Assessment Tax Return gets a Self Assessment Statement. This shows you how much you owe and how to pay any tax due. It also shows you how much you have paid or how much we have repaid to you since your last statement. If you have registered for our Self Assessment Online service, you can also view your statement online and set up a direct debit as a single payment or as part of a monthly or weekly Budget Payment Plan.

### Paying your SA Tax at the right time

From your second year of trading, HMRC will ask you to make payments on account. These are part payments (or commonly referred to as payments on account) towards your next tax bill. These payments on account are based on the amount of tax that was due in the previous year. Certain conditions apply as to whether you need to make payments on account.

You will usually make two separate Payments, one on 31 January and one on the following 31 July, as well as any balancing payment on 31 January.

To find out more about when payments on account are due, visit [www.hmrc.gov.uk/sa](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/sa)

To watch a short online video on 'Income Tax for the self-employed' visit [www.businesslink.gov.uk/taxhelp](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/taxhelp)

## National Insurance Contributions (NICs)

**National Insurance Contributions (NICs) are paid by almost everyone who works for a living and go towards paying for pensions, benefits and healthcare. Not paying your National Insurance Contributions puts your rights to benefits at risk.**

**If you are self-employed, there are two types of NICs you need to know about: Class 2 and Class 4 NICs:**

This is a fixed amount of £2.40 per week, for 2009/10. We recommend you pay by monthly direct debit - you can do this either by filling in the Class 2 direct debit form when you register as self employed, or phoning the National Insurance Self-Employed Contact Centre on **08459 15 46 55**. Otherwise, we will send you a quarterly bill. If you are in a partnership, or if your spouse is self-employed too, then each person pays their own Class 2 NICs.

**What if you don't earn much?**

You can apply for a Small Earnings Exception (SEE).

Visit [www.hmrc.gov.uk/forms/cf10.pdf](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/forms/cf10.pdf) for details of the current threshold and how to claim.

If you do not apply for a SEE, you must pay Class 2 contributions from the start of your self-employment. You can always claim a refund if you find out later on that your earnings are lower than expected, as long as you make your claim in writing no later than 31 January following the end of the tax year.

**Class 4 National Insurance Contributions**

These are also payable by most self-employed people. They are calculated as a percentage of your annual business profit, but you only start paying Class 4 contributions when your profits reach a certain limit (which is £5,715 in 2009/10). Your Class 4 contributions are calculated alongside your income tax liability, based on the figures you report on your Self Assessment Tax Return. You pay the Class 4 NICs at the same time as your Income Tax. If you are in a partnership, or if your spouse is self-employed too, then each person pays their own Class 4 NICs.

If you employ staff, or are a director (and therefore an employee) of a company, you also need to know about Class 1 National Insurance Contributions which apply to employee earnings.

### **Class 1 National Insurance Contributions**

This is payable by anyone who is employed and employers. If you are an employer, you are responsible for deducting Class 1 contributions from your employees and for paying your own share.

### **Class 1A & Class 1B National Insurance Contributions**

These are payable by the employer, (and the cost of them is borne by the employer, and is not deducted from the employees' salaries).

Finally, there are **Class 3 National Insurance Contributions**. These are voluntary payments, made by people who want to pay, and are entitled to pay, contributions to help them qualify for benefits. They cover shortfalls in your National Insurance contribution record and help protect your entitlement to State Pension and Bereavement Benefit.

### **Can you pay too much National Insurance?**

Yes, it is possible. You might be paying too much National Insurance if, for example, you have more than one job. If you think that you will be paying too much in NICs overall, then you can apply to postpone (or defer) your Class 2 and Class 4 NICs until the end of the tax year. And if you do end up paying too much, HMRC will send you a refund. You can find out more about how to claim back overpaid NICs by visiting [www.hmrc.gov.uk/nic/deferment.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/nic/deferment.htm)

To watch a short online video on 'National Insurance for the self-employed' visit [www.businesslink.gov.uk/taxhelp](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/taxhelp)

## Corporation Tax (CT)

**If you are running a limited company then you may need to pay Corporation Tax (CT). Corporation Tax is a tax on your company's overall taxable profits.**

The word 'company' is also used to include:

- members' clubs, societies and associations
- trade associations
- housing associations
- groups of individuals carrying on a business but not as a partnership, (for example, co-operatives)

HMRC will send an introductory package to new companies. This helps to make it easier for companies registered under the Companies Act to give HMRC the information needed to set up their tax records from the right facts.

As a director of a limited company, you are also an employee of the business and need to pay tax on your salary (including Benefits in Kind, dividend income and other income derived from the company) and operate PAYE and NICs for yourself and all employees.

Corporation Tax is due for 'Accounting Periods' which are normally 12 months long.

To work out how much is owed, you will need to know how much taxable profit you made in each accounting period. For more information on accounting periods, visit [www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk)

If you are setting up a limited company you need to do a number of things:

- tell HMRC that your company exists and that it is liable for tax by completing a CT41G form. Get this from [www.hmrc.gov.uk/ct/new-company/start-up.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/ct/new-company/start-up.htm)
- complete a Self Assessment Company Tax Return for your company at the end of the accounting period. You can do this online at [www.hmrc.gov.uk/ct](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/ct)
- work out how much Corporation Tax the business owes and pay it, without assessment by HMRC
- set up a PAYE scheme and operate PAYE on employee's, including Director's income.

There is a lot to know about corporation tax and many people choose to use an accountant to help them manage this. You can also get help with the basics at [www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk)

It is your responsibility (even if you employ an accountant) to make sure all necessary tax returns are completed on time.

If Corporation Tax is paid late, a penalty for late payment will be charged.

To watch a short online video on 'Corporation Tax' visit [www.businesslink.gov.uk/taxhelp](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/taxhelp)

## Employing other people (PAYE)

**If you plan to employ other people, you need to get everything sorted out well in advance regarding their pay and tax.**

As an employer, you will be responsible for calculating and paying to HMRC your employees' Pay As You Earn tax (PAYE) and National Insurance Contributions (NICs). You will also have to pay your own Employer's Class 1A or Class 1B National Insurance Contributions where appropriate.

Then there are other things you need to know about, such as the National Minimum Wage and ensuring your workers are eligible to work in the UK.

Visit [www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk) for more information.

You may also need to make other payments or deduct Student Loan repayments on behalf of your employees. This may seem like a lot to manage, but don't worry, there is lots of advice and help available.

If you would like more information about becoming an employer, you can download a copy of the easy to read booklet 'Thinking of employing someone?' at [www.hmrc.gov.uk/employers/employing-someone.pdf](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/employers/employing-someone.pdf) or call the New Employer Helpline for advice on **0845 6070 143**.

To watch a short online video on 'Employing Other People' visit [www.businesslink.gov.uk/taxhelp](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/taxhelp)

If you are a director of a company, are about to employ someone, or have already taken on your first employee, you will need to register as an employer with HMRC.

You can register by e-mail at [www.hmrc.gov.uk/employers](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/employers) or call the New Employer Helpline on **0845 607 0143**.

If you do register, then for whatever reason you don't employ anyone, let HMRC know or we will assume you should be making payments of employee tax and National Insurance Contributions and you may get an estimated bill.

When you have registered, we will send you a New Employer Pack and the helpful Employer CD-ROM, which has clear information explaining what to do when employing someone for the first time. It has most of the forms and guidance you will need to help you run your payroll and a P11 Calculator that will work out and record your employees' tax, NICs and any Student Loan deductions. The P11 Calculator enables you to keep your payroll records electronically and file your Employer Annual Return online direct from the CD-ROM if you have nine or less employees at 5 April.

## Value Added Tax (VAT)

**VAT is a tax charged on most business-to-business and business-to-consumer transactions in the UK.**

### **Who charges VAT and what VAT is charged on?**

VAT is charged only by someone who is registered for VAT - usually, a business, but other organisations may be able to register as well.

They charge VAT on:

- goods and services sold or otherwise supplied (e.g. barter) in the UK
- goods, and some services, imported from places outside the EU
- goods and services coming into the UK from other EU countries

**You must register for VAT if your turnover for the previous 12 months is over a specific limited - £68,000 for 2009/10** or if you think your turnover may soon go over this limit. You may register voluntarily

at any time. There are a few exemptions from registration.

For information on registering for VAT and when you do not need to register visit [www.hmrc.gov.uk/vat/start/register/index.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/vat/start/register/index.htm)

### **How is VAT charged and accounted for?**

For items which are standard rated or reduced rated for VAT, VAT is charged to the buyer (output tax) by the VAT registered seller. This VAT is reclaimed by the VAT registered buyer (input tax) after goods and services are purchased.

If you are registered for VAT, generally you charge VAT on your business sales and reclaim VAT on your business purchases. The difference between the VAT you charge and the VAT you are reclaiming is the amount of VAT you must pay to HMRC. If the value of the VAT you reclaim is more than the value of the VAT you charge, then HMRC pays you.

If you are not registered for VAT, you do not charge VAT on your sales. You still pay VAT on your purchases and you cannot reclaim this VAT.

You usually account for VAT on a quarterly basis by filling in a VAT return and sending it to HMRC. You can file online and pay by electronic means; or by post, on paper. At present, you can pay the VAT due on paper returns by cheque, but we would recommend that you pay by electronic means - there is a wide choice, including CHAPS, BACs, internet banking, telephone banking,

Direct Debit and Bank Giro credit transfer Electronic payment is faster and more secure.

Remember that registration is compulsory when your 'taxable turnover' is more than the current threshold. Most VAT registration applications can be done online. All other VAT registration forms are available to download at [www.hmrc.gov.uk/vat](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/vat)

There are simple payment schemes to help small businesses manage their VAT.

### **Annual Accounting Scheme**

This scheme can help you to manage your cashflow and reduce your paperwork. You pay your VAT in instalments and submit one annual return along with a final balancing payment.

### **Cash Accounting Scheme**

This scheme can help with your cashflow, as you only pay VAT when your customer has paid you. But you can only reclaim VAT on purchases when you have paid for them.

### **Flat Rate Scheme**

This scheme is designed to make record keeping easier and help reduce the amount of time you spend accounting for VAT. You calculate your VAT by applying a flat rate percentage to your turnover.

Help with choosing the right scheme for you is available at [www.hmrc.gov.uk/vat/start/schemes/index.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/vat/start/schemes/index.htm)

You can file VAT Returns, pay by Direct Debit and give notification of changes to your registered business online. For more information, visit [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)

For more information about VAT, including how you calculate taxable turnover, go to [www.hmrc.gov.uk/vat](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/vat) or call **08450 10 90 00**.

To watch a short online video on 'VAT' visit [www.businesslink.gov.uk/taxhelp](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/taxhelp)

## What you need to know if you plan to import or export products

Importing and exporting means buying or selling products outside the European Union (EU). If you plan to buy products from suppliers or sell to customers outside the EU, you will be engaged in international trade.

For goods imported from outside the EU, import VAT and duty must be paid before the goods can be released. Duty is an additional tax which varies depending on the type of product and country of origin.

If you are exporting goods and services, there are different VAT rules for exporting to EU and non EU countries.

There is plenty of help available. Go to [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk) and under the businesses and corporations section, click the 'Import & Export' tab for the 'Guide to importing and exporting: Breaking down the barriers'.

HMRC also provides free seminars and workshops on importing and exporting to help businesses comply with their legal obligations. Call **0845 603 2691** for more information.

If you want to export goods or services, the Government's export agency; UK Trade & Investment can also offer information, training and advice to help you get going. Visit [www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk](http://www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk)

To watch a short online video on 'Importing and Exporting' visit [www.businesslink.gov.uk/taxhelp](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/taxhelp)

## Being self-employed in the construction industry

### Special rules for the construction industry

Construction is a broad term. It covers almost anything done to permanent or temporary buildings, including alteration, decoration, repair or demolition.

Contractors and subcontractors in the construction industry must comply with special taxation arrangements. If you are a contractor, you must check the employment status of all new subcontractors with HMRC before making any payments to them.

The Construction Industry Scheme (CIS) sets out the rules for how payments to subcontractors for construction work must be handled by contractors in the construction industry and certain other businesses.

There are detailed rules outlining what comes under the scheme, but in general terms, payments for the following operations must be made within the CIS:

- demolition and site clearance
- tree felling
- earth moving, tunnelling and excavation
- preparing and laying foundations
- construction of or alteration to any permanent or temporary building
- installation of pipes, drains, sewers or underground cabling
- construction, surfacing or repair of roads or driveways
- any internal cleaning or fitting work on buildings, including heating, lighting, ventilation, air conditioning, power supply, drainage, water supply, kitchens or bathrooms
- any painting and decorating.

There are many other activities covered by the scheme and some activities are also specifically excluded.

If you have any doubt whether the CIS applies to the work you are doing, it is a good idea to check.

You can download a detailed list of operations covered by the CIS from [www.hmrc.gov.uk/cis](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/cis) or you can call the HMRC Construction Industry Scheme Helpline on **08453 66 78 99**.

To watch a short online video on 'Construction Industry' visit [www.businesslink.gov.uk/taxhelp](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/taxhelp)

# Section Two: A helping hand



## Allowances, reliefs and incentives

These allowances, reliefs and incentives might be useful to your business:

### Capital allowances

There are a number of capital allowances schemes to encourage investment in particular assets or by particular sorts of businesses.

This gives tax relief on business equipment, like computers, cars, tools or furniture that you intend to keep. And in your first year of business, there are some extra allowances.

You cannot claim for things you buy or sell as your trade - these are claimed as business expenses. If you buy on hire purchase, you can claim a capital allowance on the original cost of the item but the interest and other charges count as business expenses.

For more information visit [www.hmrc.gov.uk/incometax/relief-capital.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/incometax/relief-capital.htm)

### Research and development tax credits

Research and development (R&D) tax credits are a company tax relief which can either reduce a company's tax bill or, for some small or medium sized companies, provide a cash sum.

The aim of the tax credits is to encourage greater R&D spending in order to promote investment in innovation. To find out whether you can benefit, visit [www.hmrc.gov.uk/randd/index.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/randd/index.htm)

### Direct investment incentives

These schemes all offer tax incentives to encourage direct investment in qualifying companies (but not other types of business). For more information on the Enterprise Investment Scheme or the Corporate Venturing Scheme email [enterprise.centre@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enterprise.centre@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk)

# Tax Credits

Both self-employed and employed people can get tax credits. Tax credits are payments from the government to help with everyday costs. There are two types of tax credit, the Working Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit.

## Working Tax Credit

Working Tax Credit is for people in work, if you have children or not.

If you are not responsible for a child or young person, you can get Working Tax Credit if you:

- are over the age of 25 and work at least 30 hours a week, or
- are aged at least 16 and you qualify for an extra payment of tax credits because you're disabled, or
- are over 50 and going back to work after being on qualifying out of work benefit for at least 6 months.

If you are responsible for a child or young person, you need to work at least 16 hours to get Working Tax Credit. You may be able to get help with the cost of registered or approved childcare while you work. You can only get help with childcare if you are working at least 16 hours a week. If you are part of a couple, generally

both you and your partner must work at least 16 hours. But there are special rules if you or your partner are incapacitated, in prison or in hospital.

The childcare element of Working Tax Credit is paid to the person getting Child Tax Credit.

## Child Tax Credit

Child Tax Credit is for people bringing up children under 16, if you work or not. If you have a child with a disability, or a child under one year old, you may be entitled to more.

You can go on getting help if your child is a young person (aged over 16 but under 20) and still in full-time, non-advanced education at a school or college (not university) or on an approved training course.

If you want to check if you qualify for tax credits, visit [www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits) or call **0845 300 3900**.

## How much will you get?

The amount you get will depend on your income - your joint income if you are part of a couple.

## How do you claim?

Call the Tax Credits Helpline on **0845 300 3900** and ask for a claim pack.

For more information visit **[www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits)** You can also use our online questionnaire to check that you qualify for tax credits before making a claim.

## If you are already getting tax credits

Please call the Tax Credits Helpline to tell them that you are starting self-employment and that your income is going to change. It will help if you can give them an estimate of what you think your income is going to be.

Remember that if you are going from being employed to self-employed and you are already claiming tax credits, this is classed as a change of circumstances and you'll need to inform the Tax Credit Office.

# Section Three: Further information



## Getting things done online

### Online Services

Throughout this guide you will have noticed many references to websites and online facilities. Controlling your business online has never been easier, and there's a range of different services on offer from HMRC to help you get started.

These include help for:

- individuals and employees
- employers
- businesses and companies
- agents and tax practitioners

Visit our website at [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk) for more information.

HMRC recommend completing and filing your return(s) online because it is secure and you can do it at a time that is convenient for you. You can also stop, save and come back to it at any point. To see the HMRC online demonstrator visit [www.hmrc.gov.uk/demo/](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/demo/)

### Help with computers and IT

The Government's Achieving Best Practice in Your Business programme helps small businesses use IT. There's practical advice available, as well as booklets, CD ROMs and an e-commerce resource centre. For more information visit [www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk)

## Key online dates to be aware of

### Under current proposals, which should become law later in 2009:

#### 2010

From April 2010, all employers (including those with fewer than 50 employees) must file their End of Year returns (the P35/ P14s) online. This will apply to the End of Year return due on 19 May 2010, and all subsequent End of Year returns.

From April 2010, VAT businesses with an annual turnover of £100,000 or more and all that are newly registered for VAT, whatever their turnover must file their VAT returns online and pay electronically. Paper returns will still be an option for the remaining VAT registered businesses, but this will be reviewed in the run up to 2012.

#### 2011

From April 2011, in year forms (i.e P45/46s) must be filed online by all employers (including those with fewer than 50 employees).

From April 2011, all Company Tax returns must be filed online using XBRL, and companies are required to pay electronically.

#### 2012

HMRC to aim for **universal electronic filing of tax returns by businesses** and IT literate individuals by 2012.



## Help available from HMRC

### General help

There are many sources of information, advice and support available to people starting a new business. No one expects you to know how to do everything.

### Self Assessment

Self Assessment: [www.hmrc.gov.uk/sa](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/sa) or call **0845 9000 444**

### National Insurance Contributions

National Insurance: [www.hmrc.gov.uk/nic](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/nic) or call the National Insurance Enquiries for Individuals on **0845 302 1479**

Deferment Services Helpline call **08459 15 71 41**

National Insurance contributions for self-employed people with small earnings visit [www.hmrc.gov.uk/forms/cf10.pdf](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/forms/cf10.pdf) (this includes the Small Earnings Exception (SEE) form).

Voluntary National Insurance contributions visit [www.hmrc.gov.uk/nic/ca5603.pdf](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/nic/ca5603.pdf)

National Insurance for Company Directors visit [www.hmrc.gov.uk/nitables/ca44.pdf](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/nitables/ca44.pdf)

### Corporation Tax

For help with Corporation Tax, you need to contact your local office - you can find contact details at [www.hmrc.gov.uk/ct](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/ct)

### PAYE

Newly Self-Employed  
[www.hmrc.gov.uk/startingup](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/startingup) or call **08459 15 45 15**

The employer's website visit  
[www.hmrc.gov.uk/employers](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/employers)

New Employer's Helpline  
call **0845 60 70 143**

National Minimum Wage Act information  
line call **0845 6000 678**

Working in the UK, visit  
[www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk) for more information

### VAT

Visit [www.hmrc.gov.uk/vat](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/vat) or call the Customs National Advice Service (NAS) **0845 010 9000**

### Construction Industry

Construction Industry Scheme visit  
[www.hmrc.gov.uk/cis](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/cis) or call **0845 366 7899**

### Tax Credit

Tax credits visit [www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits) or call **0845 300 3900** or text **0845 300 3909**

## Face to face

You can get free help and advice from HMRC's Advice Teams. They can provide you with helpful advice on what records to keep, how to complete tax returns and how to pay National Insurance. HMRC also provide 'Business Advice Open Days' and 'EmployerTalk' events. These provide a range of free educational and support products for businesses. For more information visit [www.hmrc.gov.uk/bst](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/bst)

For more information or to book a place at an event call **0845 603 2691**

For Business Advice Open Days enquires call **0121 697 4065**

For more information about EmployerTalk events call **0845 366 7878**

## Getting someone else to do it for you

An accountant can help you to organise your business to make it as financially rewarding for you as possible. There is information and advice on how to choose an accountant at [www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk)

## General help available

### Business Link

Business Link is a Government-funded service that provides the information, advice and support you need to start, maintain and grow a business. Rather than providing all the help and advice itself, Business Link puts you in touch with the local experts you need.

They also produce 'The No-Nonsense Guide to Government rules and regulations for setting up your business.'

### England

Business Link

Visit [www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk)  
or call **0845 600 9006**

### Wales

Flexible Support For Business

Visit [www.business-support-wales.gov.uk](http://www.business-support-wales.gov.uk)  
or call **03000 6 03000**

### Scotland (Lowlands)

Small Business gateway

Visit [www.bgateway.com](http://www.bgateway.com)  
or call **0845 609 66 11**

### Scotland (Highlands)

Highlands and Islands Enterprise  
Information Source

Visit [www.hiebusiness.co.uk](http://www.hiebusiness.co.uk)  
or call **0845 609 66 11**

### Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland Business

Visit [www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk](http://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk)  
or call **0800 027 0639**

### Enterprise agencies and chambers of commerce

Enterprise agencies and chambers of commerce also offer support. If you are aged 18-30, you might be able to get help from The Prince's Trust. At the other end of the scale, PRIME helps the over 50s.

### JobCentre Plus

If you are unemployed, tell your JobCentre Plus you are thinking about working for yourself. As well as sorting out your benefits and tax credits, you might be able to get other assistance.





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