

Written by 30 January 2023

## **Business News Northern Ireland**

Welcome to our round up of the latest business news for our clients. Please contact us if you want to talk about how these updates affect your business. We are here to support you!

### **Pre-April tax planning reminder**

The new tax year starts 6 April 2023, so you have a couple of months to consider your options, once we pass this date the majority of the tax planning options for Income Tax and Capital Gains Tax purposes will cease unless actioned before the 6 April.



### **Do you fall into any of these categories?**

- You have or are thinking about a change in your personal status (single, married, separating, joining or dissolving a civil partnership).
- You are thinking about selling a capital asset, such as shares or a property. From 6 April 2023 the Capital Gains Tax annual exempt amount reduces from £12,300 to £6,000.
- You or your child's other parent claims Child Benefit and the income of either parent is likely to exceed £50,000 for the first time during tax year 2022-23;
- Your annual income is approaching or above £100,000;

- You have not yet topped up your pension contributions for tax year 2022-23;
- You are self-employed with a 31 March 2023 year-end;
- You are self-employed and are thinking about the purchase of equipment or vehicles; or
- You are the director and/or shareholder of a limited company and have not yet considered voting final dividends or bonuses for 2022-23.

If you do we can help you discuss your options ahead of the 6 April deadline!

The above list is not comprehensive, and we specialise in helping clients with all taxes including PAYE, NIC, VAT, Corporation, Capital Gains, Income and Inheritance tax. Please contact us now!

### **Last chance to pay your self-assessment tax bill**

The deadlines for paying your tax bill are usually:

- 31 January - for any tax you owe for the previous tax year (known as a [balancing payment](#)) and your first [payment on account](#)
- 31 July for your second [payment on account](#)

Make sure you pay HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) by the deadline. You will be charged interest and may have to pay a [penalty](#) if your payment is late. The time you need to allow depends on how you pay.

See: [Pay your Self Assessment tax bill: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pay-your-self-assessment-tax-bill)

### **Do you have a Marketing Plan?**

Successful businesses all have two things in common – a thorough understanding of customer needs, and a total dedication to their customers.



This involves the process of knowing:

- Who their customers are;
- Their customers' perception of the company and their needs; and
- How to attract them back time and time again!

The logic is that you gather information about your business and get an insight into the way customers and prospective customers think and make 'buy' decisions. So, take a day out to work on your marketing plan and set some targets.

By the end, you should be in a position to:

- Have gathered information about existing and potential customers' needs and wants;
- Have facilitated a discussion about the marketing actions the company should take;
- Know the unique selling points that your business has and how to take advantage of these;
- Understand how to differentiate the business from competitors; and
- Produce a marketing plan.

A marketing plan sets out how you are going to put your business strategy into practice. The marketing plan ensures that everyone in the business knows what you are trying to do and what they need to do to make it happen.

Please talk to us – we can provide you with a marketing template to get your thoughts into a plan so you can take action and grow your business!

### **Strike action to affect travellers and goods entering the UK on 1 February**

The Public and Commercial Service (PCS) union has announced Civil Service industrial action that will impact Border Force operations. The proposed strike dates are 1st February and 2<sup>nd</sup> February (until 7.00am).

The proposed strike action will impact international arrivals at all UK air and maritime ports as well as those travelling to the UK from UK border controls in Calais, Dunkirk and Coquelles in Northern France.

If you are travelling into the UK via any entry point, you should prepare for disruption and check before you travel.

Military personnel, civil servants and volunteers from across government are being trained to support Border Force at airports and ports across the UK in the event of potential strike action. Border Force are ready to deploy resource to meet critical demand and support the flow of travellers and goods through the border, however those entering the UK should be prepared for potential disruption. Border Force and industry work together very closely at a local and national level to agree plans for pressures while keeping the public safe and ensuring critical goods such as medicines and food can continue to flow across the border.

Hauliers who are moving goods during the proposed strike action should be prepared for potential disruption and longer queues at ports and inland border facilities. Please check with your operator before travelling, be prepared for delays and carefully plan your movements if they coincide with days of strike action.

See: [Strike action to affect travellers and goods entering the UK on 1 February - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/strike-action-to-affect-travellers-and-goods-entering-the-uk-on-1-february)

### **Coronation weekend celebrations announced**

The Nation will have the opportunity to join a [weekend of celebrations](#) to mark the Coronation of His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen Consort

Coronation Big Lunches, thousands of street parties, and The Big Help Out will bring communities together over special Bank Holiday Coronation weekend

The Coronation will take place on the morning of Saturday May 6 at Westminster Abbey, London.

On Sunday May 7 a spectacular Coronation Concert at Windsor Castle will showcase the country's diverse cultural heritage in music, theatre and dance. One of the highlights of the concert will be "Lighting up the Nation", in which iconic locations across the UK will be lit up with projections, lasers, drone displays and illuminations.

The weekend of celebrations will end with the Big Help Out on Monday May 8 - a special Bank Holiday proclaimed by the Prime Minister in honour of the Coronation.

The Big Help Out will encourage people to come out and support the causes that matter to them.

See: [Coronation weekend celebrations that will bring communities together announced - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronation-weekend-celebrations-that-will-bring-communities-together-announced)

### **Made Smarter Innovation: Industry ready Robotics and Automation**

Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation, will invest up to £6 million to help develop industry ready robotics and automation solutions for deployment within manufacturing production environments.

The solutions should focus on demonstrating innovations to deliver productivity, sustainability, and resilience improvements to the manufacturing processes.

Your project must:

- be robotics or automation focused within a factory production area,
- be focused on value-adding production tasks or directly associated load, unload and move tasks,
- include a physical deployment within a manufacturing facility or very near equivalent, for example, a comparable development facility, and
- demonstrate a clear, scalable commercial exploitation route within the project consortium.

The competition closes on Wednesday 5 April 2023 at 11am.

See: [Competition overview - Made Smarter Innovation: Industry ready Robotics and Automation - Innovation Funding Service \(apply-for-innovation-funding.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.innovationfunding.service.gov.uk/competition-overview)

### **Made in the UK, Sold to the World Awards**

The Department for International Trade's (DIT's) inaugural awards will recognise and celebrate the global trading success of small businesses from across the UK.

The winning businesses from across seven categories will receive a 2023 winner's certificate and digital badge. They will also receive a high-profile visit from a DIT representative to celebrate their exporting success.

The categories are:

- Agriculture, Food and Drink,
- Consumer Goods,

- Creative Industries,
- Digital Education,
- Financial and Professional Services, and
- Manufacturing.

The deadline for submissions is 11:59pm on Thursday 23 February 2023.

See: [Made in the UK, Sold to the World Awards 2022 \(qualtrics.com\)](https://www.qualtrics.com/awards/made-in-the-uk-sold-to-the-world-awards-2022/)

### **Business rates list closes soon**

The 2017 non domestic rating list is closing. This means that you have up until 31 March 2023 to check that the factual information the Valuations Office Agency (VOA) holds about your property on this list is correct, and to let them know if it isn't (this is known as making a Check case).

You will then be able to challenge the 2017 assessment if you are not happy with the outcome.

You will need to have an account set up on the Government Gateway and claim your property before you can make a Check case.

There is a helpful [video on YouTube on how to claim a property](#).

It can take some time to claim a property. VOA advise doing this as soon as possible if you want to make a Check case on the information they hold about your property on the 2017 list.

### What is the non-domestic rating list?

The rating list sets out all rateable values for non-domestic properties in England and Wales. It is used by local authorities to help determine business rates. Your rateable value isn't the same as your business rates bill.

### The 2023 non domestic list

A new non domestic rating list comes into effect on 1 April 2023. You can still let VOA know if the information about your property on this list isn't correct. But the closure of the 2017 list means that there are only limited circumstances in which further amendments may be made to it. These are when:

- changes need to be made to the list following Checks submitted before 1 April 2023 (and any subsequent challenges and appeals).
- the VOA is correcting inaccuracies on the list (this can be done up to 31 March 2024). If the list is changed then customers for those properties have the right to make a Check within six months of the change.

- a customer wants to challenge the 2017 list on the grounds of a tribunal or court decision. They can do this so long as a Check has been made by 30 September 2023.

See: [Business rates list closes soon - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/business-rates-list-closes-soon)

### **Cost of Living Payments from Spring 2023 – Low income households**

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has announced more detail on the payment schedule for the next round of cost of living support.

The cash for means-tested benefits claimants, including those on Universal Credit, Pension Credit and tax credits, starts in Spring and will go direct to bank accounts in three payments over the course of the financial year.

Exact payment windows will be announced closer to the time but are spread across a longer period to ensure a consistent support offering throughout the year. They will be broadly as follows:

- £301 – First Cost of Living Payment – during Spring 2023
- £150 – Disability Payment – during Summer 2023
- £300 – Second Cost of Living Payment – during Autumn 2023
- £300 – Pensioner Payment – during Winter 2023/4
- £299 – Third Cost of Living Payment – during Spring 2024

See: [Millions of low-income households to get new Cost of Living Payments from Spring 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/millions-of-low-income-households-to-get-new-cost-of-living-payments-from-spring-2023)

### **Programme to support overseas tourism business activity**

The Northern Ireland Industry Market Access Programme is open for a new phase. This Tourism Northern Ireland and Tourism Ireland programme aims to support overseas in-person business to business activity in:

- Group leisure,
- Meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE),
- Golf, and
- Luxury.

Applications are open until 28 February 2023 to support eligible activity taking place to 30 June 2023.

See: [NI Industry Market Access Programme \(NI IMAP\) | Tourism NI](https://www.tourismni.com/northern-ireland-industry-market-access-programme-ni-imap)

## **Resource Matching Workshop February 2023**

Hosted by Invest Northern Ireland's Resource Matching Service, this in-person workshop on 22 February will allow businesses across Northern Ireland to find new, sustainable solutions to their waste resources and material needs, saving money and supporting Northern Ireland's green circular economy.

Attendees will be asked provide information on what waste resources they HAVE which could be sent to a new home for use instead of being disposed of - or what resources they WANT which others may have spare, saving costs on buying new.

Resources can be absolutely anything from pallets and timber, steel offcuts to cardboard, vegetable mulch, used furniture, plastic containers - if you have it or want it, the team can help match-make you with other businesses to find sustainable and eco-friendly solutions to your needs.

Date: Wednesday 22 February 2023, Time: 9am to 1pm, Location: Business in the Community, BEAM Social Enterprise Centre, Derry/Londonderry, BT47 6<sup>TH</sup>, Cost: Free.

See: [Resource Matching Workshop February 2023 \(nibusinessinfo.co.uk\)](https://nibusinessinfo.co.uk)

## **Tourism: social media training for Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon**

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council is encouraging local tourism and hospitality businesses interested in enhancing their social media presence to register to take part in a series of workshops.

The training is aimed at businesses with no or a very limited social media presence.

Delivered by digital marketing consultant Emma O'Donnell, the workshops will be held in the Seagoe Hotel, Portadown from 10am to 1pm on the following dates:

- Tuesday 21 February 2023,
- Tuesday 28 February 2023, and
- Tuesday 7 March 2023.

Participants are required to attend all workshops and to bring along their own device on which they will upload and manage their digital profiles i.e. smartphone, laptop or tablet, including chargers. The cost to participate in this series of workshops is £25 per person.

A light lunch will be provided at each event, and you should specify any dietary or access requirements when registering.

As places are limited, one person per business can register.

See: [Council to deliver social media training for local tourism and hospitality businesses - Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council \(armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk\)](https://armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk)



## **Water Bill Health Check for your business**

The Water Bill Health Check is a free service that helps businesses understand and save money on their water bills.

The service is offered by the Consumer Council and provides you with:

- a breakdown and explanation of your bill,
- ways you can reduce your water consumption, and
- money saving tips.

See: [Water Bill Health Check for your business \(nibusinessinfo.co.uk\)](https://nibusinessinfo.co.uk)

## **Fully funded professional development courses at the Open University**

The Open University has opened enrolment for the next phase of free courses delivered through the Skill Up Initiative with the Department for the Economy (DfE). Hundreds of fully funded places are available across 27 courses with registration closing on Monday 13 February 2023.

Applicants can save up to £3,200 with a postgraduate or short microcredential course. All courses offer flexible online study options that allow applicants to work at the same time as they learn.

Postgraduate courses provide skills and knowledge that can bring real-life benefits to you and your career and those of your employees. Microcredential, short courses are designed to help you quickly build in-demand career skills and knowledge to stay up-to-date and get ahead.

### Microcredential courses

Courses have been selected based on industry demand and growth and include short 10 or 12-week microcredential courses in cyber security operations (Cisco), agile leadership and management, climate change: transforming your organisation for sustainability and AWS solutions architect.

### Postgraduate courses

Postgraduate courses typically last six months and include digital forensics, financial strategy and governance, and systems security.

See: [Skill Up | Northern Ireland | The Open University](#)

## Free online innovation assessment

Businesses in Northern Ireland can now receive innovation support by completing a free online innovation assessment from Innovate NI.

By looking at your existing innovation activities, this diagnostic tool helps you understand:

- how innovative your business is, and
- which aspects of your business you need to focus on to innovate more successfully.

The information you provide in your online assessment helps to identify the key activities you need to carry out against the four steps of [Innovate NI's Innovation Framework](#). These steps include ideation, selection, development and commercialisation.

Innovate NI will then provide you with the most appropriate innovation advice and support to either get you on the Innovation Framework, or to help you progress your idea to successful commercialisation.

Their support may include:

- direct innovation advice and guidance from an innovation specialist,
- signposting to sources of innovation-led funding,
- exclusive access to innovation workshops or webinars,
- continued support and mentoring throughout your innovation journey, and
- advice on applying for innovation-related support.

As part of the assessment, your business may also receive recognition for your innovation achievements from the Department for the Economy (DfE).

See: [Free innovation assessment is available online \(nibusinessinfo.co.uk\)](https://nibusinessinfo.co.uk)

## £100 million boost as naval shipbuilding confirms return to Belfast

A £1.6 billion contract has been awarded to Team Resolute to manufacture the vessels providing munitions, stores and provisions to Royal Navy ships.

Creating 1,200 UK shipyard jobs, hundreds of graduate and apprentice opportunities, and an expected 800 further jobs across the UK supply chain, Team Resolute, comprising BMT, Harland & Wolff and Navantia UK, will deliver three Fleet Solid Support ships for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA).

Set to invest around £100 million into UK shipyards, including £77 million of infrastructure at Harland & Wolff's Belfast and Appledore shipyards, and a further £21 million in skills and technology transfer from Navantia UK, Harland & Wolff will

create one of the most advanced shipyards in the UK - significant for future export and domestic shipbuilding.

With around 900 jobs alone to be created at Harland & Wolff's Belfast site, the contract - awarded by Defence Equipment & Support - is a welcome boost bringing naval shipbuilding back to Belfast.

See: [£100 million boost as naval shipbuilding confirms return to Belfast - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

### **Enterprise Dashboard for Northern Ireland businesses**

The Ulster University Economic Policy Centre, supported by the Federation of Small Businesses, Grant Thornton, and Ulster University Business School, have developed an Enterprise Dashboard.

The free tool is designed to monitor a wide range of enterprise indicators including:

- business births and deaths,
- registered businesses by location, ownership and sector,
- private sector businesses, and
- high growth businesses.

The dashboard was developed to bring together the wide range of business data that currently exists into one single accessible area. The creation of the user-friendly dashboard means that those involved in business, research and policy-making can access data to help them become better informed and make evidenced-based decisions.

It will be updated regularly with the latest information and will continue to be developed more broadly to add further entrepreneurship, innovation, and R&D related indicators.

See: [Microsoft Power BI](#)

### **Strive & Thrive Retail Programme for Causeway businesses**

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is supporting town centre retail businesses with the Strive & Thrive Retail Programme.

Bespoke retail support via one-to-one mentoring (up to three days) is being offered to participating businesses, with the focus on improving customer experiences, increasing footfall and increasing sales.

Applicants must currently be trading and based in a town or village centre location within Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area.

Assistance will commence on approval and must be completed by Friday 31 March 2023.

See: [Strive & Thrive in Retail - Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council](https://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk)  
([causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk](https://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk))