

Written by 30 January 2023

Business News Scotland

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 2nd 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 \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

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.apply-for-innovation-funding.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)

Supplier Development Programme

Each year, everything in Scotland's public sector is bought, which adds up to an overall spend of £14.5 billion per annum. Register a free account on the Supplier Development Programme (SDP) website to access free tender training and learn how to do business with the public sector.

The SDP offers many training opportunities, eLearning and events, as well as information, guidance, and customisable templates that your business can access for free. This support can help your business write better bids and be better positioned to find, win and keep public sector contracts.

Benefits to small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) and supported businesses based in Scotland and registered with SDP include:

- access to any SDP event in any area of Scotland – all free;

- free attendance at Meet the Buyer, Meet the Buyer North and local Meet the Real Buyer events that provide face-to-face access to buyers from public and private sector organisations;
- full access to information, resources, toolkits and templates on the SDP website that are designed with you in mind;
- option to include your company listing on SDP's Supplier Register, which can be viewed by other Scottish-based SMEs and buyers;
- regular e-bulletins;
- access to a local business support network; and
- course content to suit your learning style – either delivered digitally via webinar or in a traditional classroom-style.

See: [Supplier Development Programme \(findbusinesssupport.gov.scot\)](https://findbusinesssupport.gov.scot)

Investing in sustainable agriculture

A total of 680 rural businesses with projects that protect the environment and mitigate the impacts of climate change will share more than £14 million this year from the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (AECS).

During a visit to Stagehall Farm in Selkirkshire to see first-hand how AECS funding will support their conversion to organic farming, Rural Affairs Secretary Mairi Gougeon also announced the next funding round, which will open from the end of January.

The forthcoming round will target agri-environment support, organics and slurry storage options, and will support the ambition to double the amount of land under organic management by 2026.

In addition, this year's £5 million Agriculture Transformation Fund will extend support for slurry storage. This support, which surpasses the previous targeted support that has been available under AECS, will help the sector meet the regulatory requirements introduced to improve the storage of slurry and digestate on farms.

See: [Investing in sustainable agriculture - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot)

Meet the Buyer North

The Meet the Buyer North event is for suppliers who wish to do business in the north of Scotland, including the Highlands and Islands. The event gives you access to buyers and decision-makers from across the public and private sectors, with the opportunity to raise your profile as a business and prepare for upcoming contract opportunities.

There is a regulated tender process to be a supplier to the public sector, and buyers have a duty to engage with local SME businesses in order to contribute to sustainability, support local employment and retain wealth locally. Transparency is required for the procurement of goods, services and works, so public sector buyers are required to be open, fair and honest in the way they choose suppliers and in any dealings with them.

For owners of small or medium-sized businesses, the public sector is the best customer to have because there is no debt risk: payment can be made on a received invoice within 10 days if there's a cash flow need, and within 30 days as the legal maximum.

Unlike most exhibition events, the essence of the Meet the Buyer North event is to 'meet the buyer' - so exhibitions are only open to public sector buying organisations, primary contractors with supply chain opportunities, and public business support organisations. Rather than exhibit, suppliers are encouraged to attend for free to promote your business's goods, services and works by making your way around to meet them face-to-face, so you can introduce your business and discuss upcoming contract opportunities.

Each year, Meet the Buyer North also features a main agenda with presentations and question and answer sessions. Themes embedded within the main agenda include community wealth building, sustainable procurement, Fair Work First, how to bring innovation to the public sector, the climate change emergency in public sector procurement, Brexit, Growth Deals, COVID-19 economic recovery and economic growth plans.

The full Supplier Development Programme is open to micro, small and medium-sized businesses based in Scotland - including supported businesses in the third sector - interested in becoming a supplier to the public sector.

All businesses in and outwith Scotland can register for and attend Meet the Buyer events.

See: [Meet the Buyer North 2023 | Supplier Development Programme \(sdpscotland.co.uk\)](https://sdpscotland.co.uk)