

PUBLIC RULINGS

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK SURVEY 2009

PROGRESS UPDATE AS AT 31 MARCH 2010

In 2009, we ran an online customer survey. The aim was to explore ways of improving our public items and our consultation and publication processes, so we can assist in improving compliance for taxpayers and their agents.

In [our report](#) on the survey results, we gave you details of planned improvements to our products and services based on your feedback and suggestions. Here is a brief update of progress we've made so far on these.

Timeliness

- We've published [our work programme](#) on the IR website, with the current status of projects, contact details, and, where possible, an indication of timeframes.* It's updated approximately every six weeks. We hope you find this a useful way to keep in touch with progress on our items.
- We are working on implementing standard timeframes for our technical projects, and improving our project planning, tracking, and monitoring; we are on track to implement these for the 2010/11 financial year.
- We are trying out different ways of completing technical projects in a more timely way while maintaining a high level of technical quality (for example, reducing and simplifying the amount of documentation required during a project's lifecycle).
- We're ensuring that reviews of expiring public rulings are included in the work programme early enough for the review/reissue to be completed before the expiry date (though we are still working on some earlier expired ones not yet completed).

Communication

- We plan to improve communications with all our stakeholders, particularly in terms of telling people about who we are and what we do, and ensuring that we are working on issues relevant to them/their clients and that they are aware of draft and issued items.
- As part of the consultation process, we now – as a matter of course – phone commentators to see if they wish to discuss their submissions, and offer them the opportunity to be updated on progress. This has been well received by commentators.
- We have reviewed the presentation and availability of Public Rulings information and public items on the IR website and have identified areas for improvement. We will be working with the IR web team to implement these.

* For example, an issue may be on the work programme but not yet allocated to a project team; a timeframe is calculated once a team has started work on it.

Work programme

- As mentioned above, we've published our work programme on the IR website.
- We are exploring ways of communicating our draft annual work programme more widely for consultation, possibly online. (Towards the end of each financial year, we prepare a draft programme of priority work for the following year. We consult on the draft with key stakeholders from around June, with the aim of finalising the draft for publication by August.)

Brevity / clarity

- We are now focusing more on plain English principles and good document structure (for example, putting key information and conclusions at the beginning).
- We have revised our project templates and checklists to remind us to: check whether the issues are suitable for a public ruling or a short Question We've been Asked; add a simple statement of the issue and why it is of concern/interest; state the answer or key conclusions as succinctly as possible at the beginning of an item; insert a diagram if that would be helpful; include more examples and illustrations.
- We are updating our inhouse style guide to feature and emphasise the importance of plain English and good document structure.