



HM Revenue
& Customs

Jim Harra
Chief Executive and First
Permanent Secretary

Dame Meg Hillier MP
Chair of the Public Accounts Committee
House of Commons
Palace of Westminster
Westminster
LONDON
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100 Parliament Street
London
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4 December 2023

Dear Dame Meg,

I am writing to give you some information about how we intend to optimise our service for Self Assessment (SA) customers in the run up to the filing and payment deadline on 31 January.

From 11 December, we are introducing new measures to direct customers with suitable queries to our online services and focus our SA helpline advisers on answering priority calls that cannot be handled online.

The run up to the 31 January deadline is one of the busiest times of the year for us and our customers. While around 97% of our 12.5 million SA customers file their return and pay their tax online, 5.5 million of them ring our helpline with a query. Around two-thirds of calls to the SA helpline can be resolved far quicker through our online services.

We are modernising the tax system to allow more customers to self-serve and access the information they need online. We are continuously expanding online and app services to enable customers to do this more and more. We also need to reduce the volume of contact through phone and post by at least 30% by 2025 compared to 2021/22 in order to deliver our service standards with the resources we have. Therefore, we will increasingly expect customers to use our online services where they can.

With satisfaction rates of above 80%, our online services are our best kept secret – too many people still don't realise they can resolve their queries quickly on gov.uk or the HMRC app, at a time that is convenient to them. Instead they ring our helpline, spend their time waiting on hold, and then use our advisers' time when that could be better used helping other customers with urgent queries that cannot be handled online.

This year, callers to our SA helpline whose query can more quickly and easily be dealt with online will be directed by our interactive voice response system and helpline advisers to our highly rated online services. If our online guidance and digital assistant don't answer the customer's query, they will still be able to discuss their query with an HMRC adviser on webchat.

Information is available in large print, audio and Braille formats.
Text Relay service number – 18001



We wanted to share the attached GOV.UK story about changes to the SA Helpline and Agent Dedicated Line for information before it's published at 10:30 on 7 December 2023. This is not for wider sharing until it is published.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Harra'.

Jim Harra
CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND FIRST PERMANENT SECRETARY