

## New charter consultation focuses on rights

Contributed by Daniel Selwood  
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The journey towards a new taxpayers' charter has picked up speed with the publication of a new draft consultation document.

The paper centres on the rights and responsibilities of individuals and businesses dealing with HMRC, and it contains a one-page, draft charter that sets out:

- The role of the taxman.
- What customers can expect from the Revenue.
- What the department expects of its customers.
- Where taxpayers can find information when things go wrong.

HMRC chief executive Lesley Strathie said the charter 'will be designed to be straightforward, clear and easy to understand'.

She went on to remark that 'individuals and businesses will know exactly what they can expect from us and what we expect of them. As part of the consultation we would welcome comments and views from any individuals and businesses who deal with HMRC to help us create a simpler and more customer-focused system.'

November's Pre-Budget Report revealed that the new taxpayers' charter will be launched in 2009, when a clause giving explicit legislative authority to the document will be included in the year's Finance Bill.

The PBR noted that 'an important complement to the review of HMRC's powers is a clear statement of the principles governing [the department's] relationship with citizens and businesses'.

Financial secretary to the Treasury Stephen Timms said: 'The charter will put the relationship between HMRC and the public on a clear footing, helping to reduce misunderstandings and disputes'.

It will also 'help to save time and reduce costs for both HMRC and [their] customers,' he added.

Responses to the consultation document can be made online, by email, or by fax on 020 7147 0391.

Contributions can also be posted: HMRC, Room 3E/02, 100 Parliament Street, London SW1A 2BQ.

The submission deadline is 12 May 2009.

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