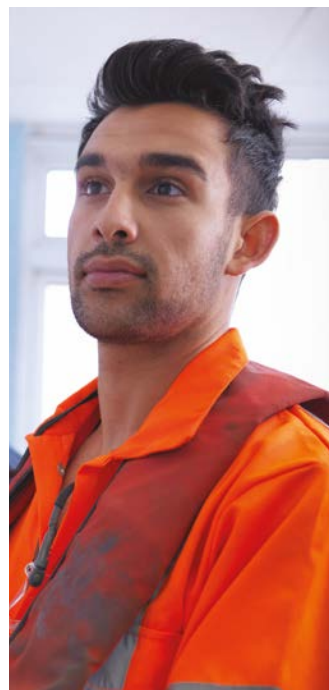
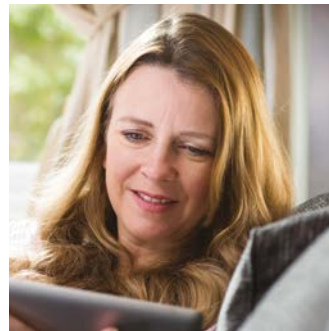
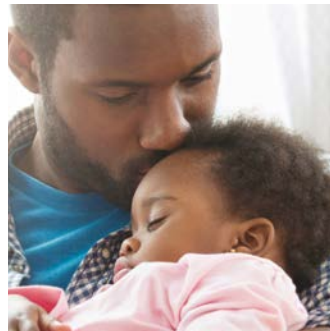




HM Revenue
& Customs

Your Charter Annual Report

April 2015 to March 2016



Your Charter

We want to give you a service that is fair, accurate and based on mutual trust and respect. We also want to make it as easy as we can for you to get things right.

"Your Charter" explains what you can expect from us and what we expect from you.



For more information about our Charter go to www.gov.uk/government/publications/your-charter/your-charter

Your rights – What you can expect from us:

- Respect you and treat you as honest
- Provide a helpful, efficient and effective service
- Be professional and act with integrity
- Protect your information and respect your privacy
- Accept that someone else can represent you
- Deal with complaints quickly and fairly
- Tackle those who bend or break the rules

Your obligations – What we expect from you:

- Be honest and respect our staff
- Work with us to get things right
- Find out what you need to do and keep us informed
- Keep accurate records and protect your information
- Know what your representative does on your behalf
- Respond in good time
- Take reasonable care to avoid mistakes

The Charter rights and obligations are part of our everyday work and are central to helping us maximise revenues, improve customer service and make sustainable cost efficiencies.



We report on our progress in the Charter Annual Report that can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications/your-charter-annual-report-2014-to-2015

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Foreword by Ian Barlow



As Chair of the new Charter Committee, I am pleased to bring you this report on our work and HMRC's performance against Your Charter for the past year.

After a detailed consultation the new Charter Committee was inaugurated as a successor to the previous Charter Advisory Committee and as a sub-committee of the HMRC Board in February 2016, with a revised Your Charter. Like its predecessor the committee monitors HMRC's performance against Your Charter rights and obligations. As a Board Committee it also advises the HMRC Board on whether the strategies, policies, practices and measurement of the performance in these areas are effective and appropriate. The committee makes recommendations on how customer services could be developed to assist HMRC in fulfilling Your Charter rights and in helping customers meet their obligations. I believe the new arrangement will strengthen the influence of the committee on the development of customer service in HMRC.

The new committee is made up of five external appointees and two other fellow Non-Executive Board members, all of whom bring diverse and insightful experience to their roles. We are also assisted by an observer, Ian Young, my predecessor as chairman. We are supported by HMRC's own Charter Champions who are senior leaders within the different strands of the business. They work with us to reflect the principles of Your Charter in HMRC's processes in all its customer channels, phone, post, face to face and, increasingly, digital.

Although this has been a year of transition for the committee, this does not mean that HMRC has stood still on integrating Charter principles into its processes and products, as this report shows.

This report describes the new committee (Chapter 2); sets out a self-assessment by HMRC of its progress in improving customer service, incorporating the principles in Your Charter (Chapter 3); sets out and comments on the performance measures derived from customer surveys directly against each element of Your Charter (Chapter 4); and finally sets out some of the areas on which we intend to focus in the forthcoming year (Chapter 5).

We embark on our new tasks with enthusiasm and have been impressed with the commitment to Your Charter shown by the senior leadership team and with their ambition and the direction of travel for customer service. I'd like to thank in particular the HMRC Charter Policy team for their support in getting the new committee established and working.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ian Barlow". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Ian Barlow
Lead Non-Executive and Chair

Chapter 1

Why your Charter Matters

Your Charter rights and obligations are part of HMRC's everyday work and are central to helping to improve customer service, maximise revenues and make sustainable cost efficiencies.

HMRC refreshed Your Charter in January 2016. HMRC wanted to make sure it carries out rigorous testing against the Charter commitments, and strengthened the way in which it is measured against those commitments, by creating the Charter Committee, which is now an HMRC Board sub-Committee.

The Charter Committee scrutinises how HMRC is performing against the Charter commitments. As part of that process, the new committee has observed a range of HMRC frontline services and reviewed new digital services and channels. Members have also observed how data analysis contributes towards more targeted compliance activity and improves the customer experience.

The HMRC Annual Report and Accounts 2015-16 sets out performance over the past financial year and explains the continued transformation towards HMRC's ambition to become one of the most digitally-advanced tax, payments and customs administrations in the world.

Your Charter and the new Charter Committee by Ian Young



The predecessor to Your Charter was established in 2009 after two public consultations. A Charter Advisory Committee was also set up in 2009, and was the predecessor to the current Charter Committee.

I was a member of the Charter Advisory Committee from its outset in 2009 and became its chair from 2012 until 2015.

Towards the end of that period I was the chair, with John Whiting, of a small informal group that reviewed, and amended, the 2009 version of Your Charter and made a key recommendation that the continuing Charter Committee should become a direct sub-committee of the HMRC Board.

We also recommended that there should be a number of independent members of the new Charter Committee to be selected through a public appointment process. It was decided that there should be five independent members of the new Charter Committee. I was not one of those five independent members but I was retained, for a 12 month period, to provide advice to the new Charter Committee and help it to identify key aims and objectives.

In the event, the formal membership of the Charter Committee, as shown in a later table, is three Non-Executive Directors of HMRC, along with five independent members.

In this transitional period the current Annual Report covers the challenges for the new Charter Committee as well as its past performance.



Ian Young
Chair of the Charter Advisory Committee 2012 to 2015

What HMRC customers said about the revised Charter

HMRC involved customers in the design and content of Your Charter. They said they wanted to see a shorter document, setting out their rights in a simple and concise way. Customers welcomed the addition of more obligations.

The positive feedback from customers included comments such as:

"The language used is good, especially if you're not used to dealing with HMRC."

Right 1 'Respect you and treat you as honest' was clear and easy to understand:

"(It means) they won't assume you've done something wrong until they've found you've done something wrong."

Customers liked the layout. Comparing it to the former Charter, they felt it was shorter, easier to read and less likely to be overwhelming and said:

"Too much writing... some people can't be bothered to look at it, just think 'Oh no I can't do it'. Something like that (revised Charter) is better for them to digest."

They liked the balance in the number of rights and obligations:

"My immediate first thought is that's up to nine (former Charter), it's already unbalanced, now it's seven and seven."

Chapter 2

The Charter Committee

Ian Barlow, the Board's Lead Non-Executive, chairs the new committee as the Board's Charter Champion.

The committee also includes Non-Executive Board members Joanna Baldwin and Diane Herbert, along with five other external stakeholders who collectively bring an understanding and experience of HMRC's broad customer base. Members recruited to the new committee are not HMRC employees.

The Charter Committee:

- reviews how HMRC performs against the standards of behaviour and values in Your Charter
- provides challenge and assurance to the Board on the implementation of the Charter and its principles
- holds HMRC to account for performance against Charter commitments
- supports HMRC in improving services.

The committee meets four times a year, reporting to the Board through its chair, who is also a member of the HMRC Board, at regular Board meetings and through this Annual Report.

Your Charter Committee members

The Charter Committee has a wide range of experience including people in employment, the self-employed, employers, disabled people, Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people, tax professionals and representative bodies.



Ian Barlow

Ian Barlow is a Non-Executive Director of Smith & Nephew plc, Foxtons Group plc. and The Brunner Investment Trust plc. and a non executive director of Goodwood Estate and trustee of two charities associated with horseracing. Until 2008, Ian was a senior partner at KPMG.



Joanna Baldwin

Non-Executive Director: HMRC; Aviva France; Fight for Sight (eye research charity). Diverse business sector experience, from large corporates to start-ups including work with the disadvantaged.



Diane Herbert

Non-Executive Director, HMRC; Chair of Remco; Housing for Women and Director of Mindshift Ltd.



Uday Dholakia (OBE)

Senior partner, Global Consulting UK Ltd, Brand Ambassador Birmingham Airport, Chair National Panel of Regulators and Businesses on Trade Facilitation (BIS). Experience in regulatory and strategic policy in public and private sector organisations.



Natalie Doig

Director of Hareonna Diversity Ltd. Experience in public sector organisations as a disability consultant. Advises government departments, public and private sector organisations in the area of equality legislation and best practice, including broader customer service.



Chris Jones

Director of Tax and Regulatory Markets, Lexis Nexis and a chartered tax adviser. Experience in providing training and support to the UK tax profession.



David Oxley

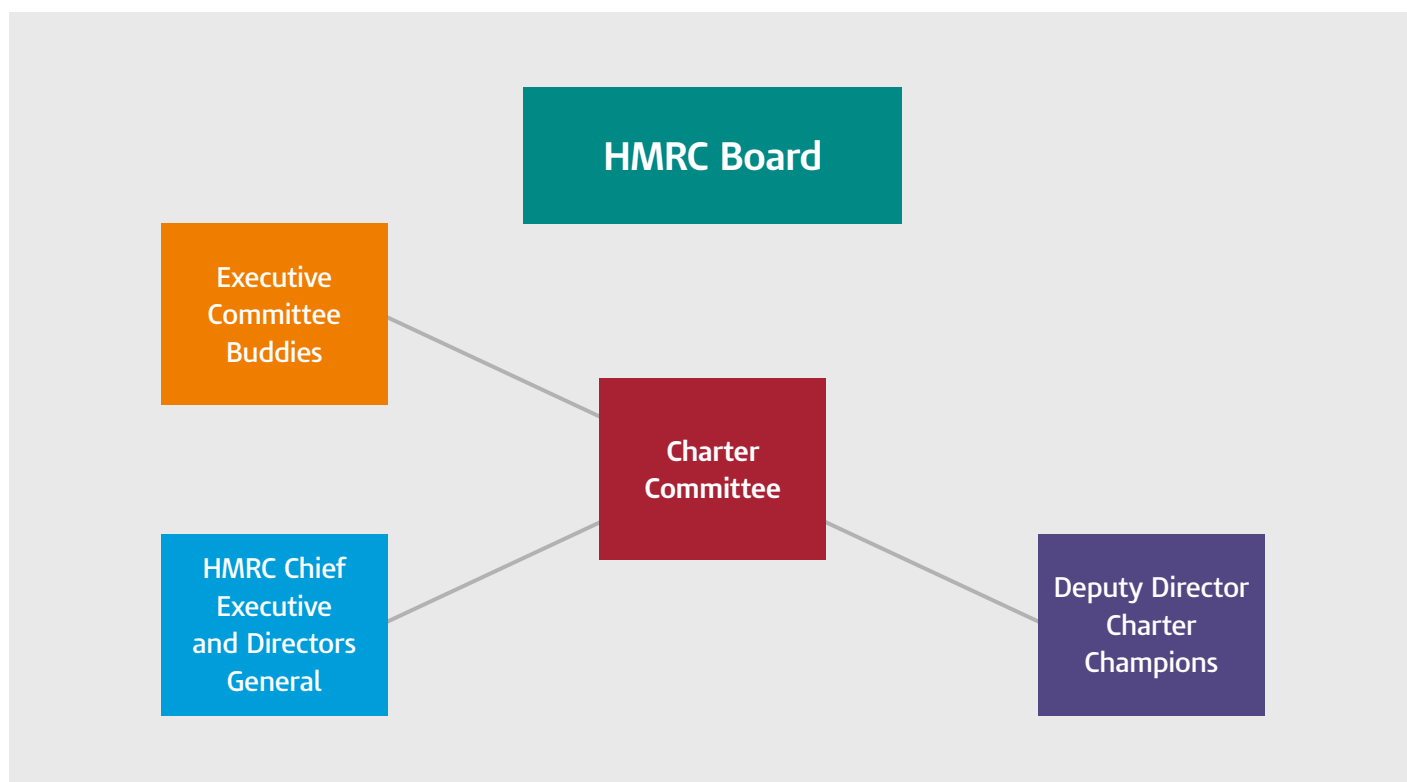
Head of Quality at Intel Security, trustee and treasurer at Buckinghamshire Disability Service. Expertise in software and solution security testing.



Susan Terpilowski

Managing Director Image Line; Chair of London Policy Unit for the Federation of Small Business (FSB); Vice-Chair for London region and a member of FSB National Policy Committee.

Supporting the Charter Committee



The Charter Committee receives support during meetings from HMRC's Chief Executive and Directors General, who have standing invitations to committee meetings.

Charter Champions support the committee in embedding Charter values across HMRC and with customers.

Customer views are informed by the Charter Committee's broad experience and contacts, as well as through other routes, such as customer feedback, research and complaints data analysis.

HMRC's Executive Committee members also partner new committee members informally (as buddies) to provide them with support and advice as they get to know HMRC better.

The Charter Committee regularly meets HMRC frontline teams to experience the work they do first hand, and to see how HMRC performance is tracked. This allows them to understand the range of work carried out to fulfil HMRC's mission and objectives and to hold HMRC to account on how its services meet Your Charter commitments.

So far HMRC has shown the committee:

- how it is moving customer services from traditional work on telephone and letters, often with multiple contact points, to interacting with its customers digitally through multi-channel (primarily phone and digital) and a 'Once and Done' approach to customer service
- how it provides services for customers who need extra support with their taxes and benefits
- the challenges both for HMRC and customers around debt management
- how HMRC assesses risk to target compliance activity, in order to maximise resources
- real time customer webinars, during which HMRC staff provided advice to small business customers
- how to access and use the online tax account.

First impressions of HMRC by the new committee

The Charter Committee noted the strong desire from staff to serve their customers and improve processes; the challenge is to extend this approach across the organisation.

The committee was particularly encouraged to see local staff empowered to test and learn from new approaches and noted the most recent improvements to call waiting times.

Charter Committee members said:

"Good to see that staff are empowered, and impressed with the customer service provided which puts customers at the heart."

"We would like to test how embedded (customer at the heart) is across the whole of HMRC."

"It's good that fresh ideas from staff through the intranet are encouraged."

"HMRC should increase the focus on training staff in order to achieve better results – staff satisfaction is important."

"I'm impressed by the enthusiasm and honesty of staff. HMRC should encourage sharing of best practice and good news stories across the organisation and relate it back to Charter values."

From their first site visit committee members observed that they could see HMRC was serious about Your Charter commitments and that the committee had an important role in helping HMRC improve services to customers and build on trust. Committee members are planning more visits.

Charter Champions

HMRC recognises that all of its people are responsible for delivering Your Charter, and to coincide with the introduction of the new Charter commitments, HMRC appointed Deputy Director Charter Champions. Charter Champions meet monthly and report to the HMRC Board annually through the Charter Committee. Their role is to:

- promote Your Charter for HMRC staff
- promote Your Charter for HMRC customers – both in improving customer service and in the design of new services and processes
- support the Charter Committee and report progress to the committee.

Chapter 3

How HMRC Has performed against your Charter commitments – Foreword by Edward Troup



Your Charter sets out the principles that govern all of our interactions with customers. Whether you're submitting your Self-Assessment return, claiming tax credits or setting up your personal tax account, the service you receive from us should be helpful, efficient and respectful.

All of our processes should reflect the values established in Your Charter and, as this report shows, we're making good progress towards achieving this aim. There's still more to do, though, which is why this report serves as both a summary of what we've done so far, and an outline of what we plan to do in the future.

All the while, our wider transformation continues at pace. The values enshrined in Your Charter will be front and centre of this work to become a more digital, customer-centric organisation, and our people's commitment to those values will be essential to our success.

Our Charter Committee will oversee our progress towards delivering the commitments set out in Your Charter, and I'm confident that their expertise will enable us to achieve our objectives in a way that encourages innovation, while safeguarding our everyday business.

As Executive Chair, I am responsible for overseeing our strategy, building our reputation, and working with the Board to hold the Executive Team to account for the department's performance. Your Charter feeds into all of this, as our strategy, reputation and performance must all be driven by a set of values that codify good, modern customer service.

Your Charter establishes the values of HMRC. In setting out the rights and pledges that underpin our interactions with customers, we hope to encourage transparent conversations about our services and consistency in the delivery of those services.

The commitments included in Your Charter and in this report set out what you expect of us and what we expect of you in return. Thank you for taking the time to read the report.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edward Troup". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Edward Troup
Executive Chair and Permanent Secretary

Our Mission statement

We are the UK's tax, payments and customs authority, and we have a vital purpose: we collect the money that pays for the UK's public services and help families and individuals with targeted financial support.

We do this by being impartial and increasingly effective and efficient in our administration. We help the honest majority to get their tax right and make it hard for the dishonest minority to cheat the system.

Our objectives

Our [Annual Report and Accounts](#) sets out how we've performed over the past financial year and explains our continued transformation to become one of the most digitally-advanced tax, payments and customs administrations in the world.

Our objectives were revised at the start of 2016-17, with HM Treasury's agreement, to reflect our rapid transformation into a more highly-skilled and digital organisation.

Our key objectives are now to:

- maximise revenues due and bear down on avoidance and evasion
- transform tax and payments for our customers
- design and deliver a professional, efficient and engaged organisation.

Transforming tax and payments

The way in which we are transforming tax and payments for our customers is helping us to meet our Charter commitments now and for the future. Our transformation work is building Your Charter rights into the design and delivery of our services and this is fundamental to the continued improvement and sustainability of our service to our customers.

We have an ambition to transform the entire customer experience of HMRC. We want it to be consistently excellent by building on our progress in rolling out new digital services that will make dealing with tax and payments quicker, easier and more efficient for millions of our individual and business customers, and allow them to meet their Charter obligations more easily.

While we brought in record total tax revenues in 2015-16, we recognise our service to our customers was not acceptable at times last year, particularly in the first quarter, when service levels dropped substantially below our targets.

We took swift action to recruit 3,000 additional customer service staff on flexible contracts to deliver improvements, to provide extended support to customers at the Self Assessment peak, and during evenings and weekends. In addition, we gave 1,600 staff training to enable them to handle a wider range of customer queries, and moved 900 staff to deal with post.

Call answering levels in Quarter 2 recovered to 76% and rose to 87% by Quarter 4. Customer waiting times were too lengthy at the start of the year, but are now around an average of five minutes and on an improving trend.

Making Tax Digital

We began work on transforming our tax processes with a programme of changes to our customer services in 2015-16 to provide a more helpful, efficient and effective service, including:

- introducing the online personal tax accounts for individual customers in December; more than two million people are now using them
- introducing the Business Tax Account, making it available to 5.4 million businesses by March where users can file, pay and obtain help
- increasing our use of webinars, webchats and online seminars for businesses to cover more of our customer demand. More than 373,000 small businesses viewed our advice and signposting videos on YouTube, and our e-learning modules had more than 142,000 customer views. We also sent more than 56 million support and advice emails
- providing online guidance during 257,000 webchats and our new virtual online assistant 'Ruth', which received 1.8 million interactions. Both were used extensively during the deadline peak for self-assessment customers, thereby relieving our call centres of an estimated 88,000 calls. A total of 89% of the 10.39 million returns we received by 31 January were submitted online.

We are continuing to transform tax and payments for our customers within the framework of Your Charter, and our future work on the transformation will deliver:

- a seven-day service by April 2017, with extended hours and Sunday opening for online support services, like our popular webchats, and our main telephone lines
- further improved online and telephone services, with reduced call answering times, achieved by recruiting more than 1,325 new people into our customer services teams, employed on a working pattern to deliver the extended service hours
- a new secure email service operated through customers' online tax accounts – with a faster average response time than our current post handling target
- a dedicated telephone line and online forum for start-up businesses and new self-employed people. We will be able to provide them with specialist support about filing and paying their taxes for the first time, as well as using our digital services.

Digital tax credits

We have improved the tax credits renewals process by further developing our digital channel and building on the more flexible approach to the helplines. In 2015:

- 754,900 tax credits customers renewed online using our digital service, almost double the 2014 figure, with half of those who renewed online doing so using their mobile phone or tablet
- we introduced a new tax credits digital service in March 2016 to allow customers to view online the amount, and date, of their next payment. Customers can also make changes to their personal details, and we will be increasing the amount of information they are able to change throughout 2016-17.

Supporting access to advice and help

We know that not everyone will be able to use an online tax account, and so we continue to offer a phone service and face-to-face support for those who need it. We will continue to up-skill our advisers so that we can resolve more complex queries in a 'Once and Done' way to ensure customers get their tax and payments affairs right first time. This year we have:

- supported our most vulnerable customers by handling more than 100,000 enquiries through our Needs Extra Support (NES) service with specialist telephone help and face-to-face visits
- created the 'Support for British Sign Language Customer' team and awareness training for staff to better serve deaf customers. This project received a 'Highly Commended' award for Most Accessible Mainstream Service in the [Royal Association for Deaf People 175th Anniversary Awards](#)
- made it easy for customers to appoint someone to deal with HMRC on their behalf. HMRC provides assistance to representatives in many ways, including through online services such as:
 - Help friends or family with their tax
 - Claiming and dealing with tax credits for someone else
 - HMRC online services for agents and Webinars, e-learning and videos for tax agents or advisers.

Complaints handling

We deal with 49 million individuals and more than 5.4 million businesses. Each year we receive 60 million telephone calls and 15 million letters from Self-Assessment and PAYE customers. Given the sheer size and scale of our organisation, we inevitably sometimes make mistakes or provide a level of customer service below expectations, and receive complaints from our customers.

We want our response to complaints to be among the best in government and have introduced an extensive programme of work to drive down the number of complaints we receive and transform the way we handle complaints. This includes identifying and resolving root causes of repeat complaints more quickly, and working closely with the independent Adjudicator's Office to better understand how we can learn from what our customers tell us.

We are also developing the facility to complain to HMRC online. As an initial step, we introduced a complaints "iForm" for complaints related to work carried out within our Customer Services directorate. Our customers helped to design this new process and feedback on its accessibility has been positive. We are looking to gradually expand the pilot to cover other business areas as we 'test and learn' from the iForm.

Protecting your information and your privacy

As we transform our business with our new digital services, we are building in protection of the confidentiality and security of our customers' information. Our [Annual Report and Accounts](#) details how we are managing our cyber-security.

For our customers, we strive to balance security with straightforward and uncomplicated processes for their tax and payments. This year we have:

- raised awareness of the dangers of phishing emails and malware
- introduced a simple process for HMRC customers to use to authenticate their identity, to complement Verify, the cross government authentication service.

Maximise revenues due and bear down on avoidance and evasion

Our transformation work, outlined in the previous section, supports the vast majority of our customers who meet their Charter obligations and pay the right amount of tax and, or, make accurate claims. By accessing their tax records, customers can get support for their queries through online channels, or by phone, or for those who need extra support, a targeted service. This is an important element in maximising our revenues in the most effective way for both customers and HMRC.

Our compliance work assures this majority, who do keep their tax and claims in order, that all customers are paying their fair share, or receiving what they are due. This underpins Your Charter rights and customer obligations that we tackle those who bend or break the rules, and that customers should take reasonable care to avoid mistakes and keep us informed of changes. HMRC has been relentless in its crackdown on tax evasion and avoidance; we secured £26.6 billion in additional compliance revenue as a result of actions taken to tackle evasion, avoidance and non-compliance. We have continued to reduce the tax gap through compliance interventions that range from correcting errors in claims and returns to prosecution of evasion cases. In 2015-16 we:

- created the Serial Avoiders Unit which identifies and tackles users of multiple avoidance schemes as part of the ongoing clampdown on tax avoidance. We offer a new hotline service to help people who have used multiple schemes and want to get their tax affairs in order. This provides a single point of contact within HMRC to help them with their tax affairs
- worked with more than 20 professional bodies where we know there is a history of tax avoidance by their members. The aim was to raise awareness of the risks of entering into tax avoidance schemes and make customers aware that they can contact us to settle their affairs
- used a proactive range of communications to make people aware of the risks of using avoidance schemes. Topics for 'The Spotlights' and 'ten things' series of communication products are published on HMRC's website and provide bite-size information on what avoidance is and why it is risky. Topics have included contractor loan schemes, Accelerated Payments Notices and disclosing avoidance schemes
- launched our offshore evasion campaign, which encouraged 965 registrations for voluntary disclosures in the final two months before the facility closed on 31 December 2015. 56 jurisdictions are committed to exchange information under the Common Reporting Standard (CRS) from September 2017, rising to 101 by September 2018.

Our relationships with our stakeholders who represent customers directly, or have specialist interests are very important. We recognise that agents are key supporters in helping some customers manage their tax affairs properly and value our relationship with them. Ways in which we have built Charter principles into our work with representatives, include:

- our litigation and settlement strategy emphasises that collaboration and openness is generally the most effective way for both parties to understand and effectively resolve disputes, although we won't hesitate to litigate when it is appropriate to do so. Where disputes have become entrenched, customers in business or with complex affairs can use our Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process. This can avoid costly tribunals and allows both customers and compliance teams to discuss issues with an impartial, professional mediator or facilitator. More details are included in the [Tax Assurance Commissioner's Annual Report](#).
- our Compliance Reform Forum consults representative organisations about changes to HMRC compliance checking activities, focuses on the views of tax agents and their clients for new and changed compliance initiatives. This allows us to promote changes to stakeholders, get their views on the design of new processes and guidance, and get feedback on our changes to inform future design of these
- our Digital Working Together forums with agents have assisted us in identifying operational issues so that we could find a solution – 300 agents joined monthly discussions achieving satisfaction ratings of more than 80%.

Design and deliver a professional, efficient and engaged organisation

We continue to develop our people and services to meet Charter commitments.

We could not deliver our objectives of transforming the business, moving to a smaller more digital organisation and tackling avoidance and evasion, without the right people in the right place, doing the right work at the right time, and so we continue to invest in developing our people:

- ensuring that we have strong leaders to take us through changes we are making, including our moves to Regional Centres
- developing an increasingly flexible working environment to allow our people to be engaged and have interesting, rewarding and challenging roles, and opportunities to develop their careers
- building capability and professionalism, with improvements to our learning and development products and facilities, so our people have the knowledge and skills required to deliver an efficient and effective service.

Building Your Charter commitments and principles into our skills development is part of delivering our transformation. Last year:

- 12,708 of our staff carried out our 'unconscious bias' e-learning' which promotes awareness of how we see others, can influence our attitude, behaviour and decision-making. Once carried out it forms part of the individual's training record. Recognising and valuing diversity within our workforce also helps us to better understand the needs of our customers
- 3,255 staff carried out a new e-learning product about the litigation and settlement strategy and alternative dispute resolution skills.

It's vital that everyone in HMRC understands the importance of keeping our data safe and knows how to deal with current security threats. 'Responsible for information' training is therefore a mandatory learning exercise for all HMRC staff. By 31st March 2016, more than 80% of staff had recently completed this training. In addition:

- Your Charter was discussed by staff across HMRC at special team meetings; teams talked about our Mission statement and why the Charter matters, and how they can build it into their own work
- Charter Champions have a programme of work to put the Charter into context for their separate lines of business in processes and policy design.

Following results from the annual Civil Service staff survey, we have launched a series of local Learning Academies since May 2015, which have had more than 11,000 visitors. Through the academies we focus on improving the customer experience by:

- the introduction of external trainers to improve soft skills, such as taking the right tone and approach in calls and written communications, and better complaint handling
- launching a new and easier way for our people to contribute ideas on improving our processes, through our Fresh Thinking intranet service.

We created forums and short-term focus groups in order for our people to collaborate with customers to tackle specific issues. Members of forums comprise organisations such as representative bodies, as well as customers and individuals with specific skills and expertise.

Chapter 4

Measuring our performance against Charter commitments

The previous Chapter sets out the many areas in which HMRC is striving to improve customer service and some elements of their customer performance. Your Charter principles help to guide this work.

Performance against the individual elements of Your Charter is presently measured through an annual customer survey, designed to track changes in the experience of customers dealing with HMRC. It covers a wide range of interactions and a comprehensive report will be published later in the summer. We have included a subset of results from the individuals, small business and agent customer survey in the appendix.

The survey sets a baseline for measuring the customer experience from 2015. HMRC previously conducted a customer survey from 2008 to 2015 to measure customer experience during this period. However, the questionnaire, sample structure, approach and definition of the customer groups have all been substantially changed. Results are therefore not comparable with the 2008-2015 customer survey. The department surveys large and mid-sized businesses separately.

The questions in the survey do not directly ask customers about their experience of Your Charter rights, or perception of their obligations, but draw together groups of related questions to provide insight about the Charter elements; so that for example in presenting views on the Charter commitment 'provide a helpful, efficient and effective service', we have used customer views about how easy it is to find information, how good that information is, the perception of whether we get transactions right, and the acceptability of the time taken.

The results in the appendix show that while customers have a substantial level of trust in HMRC's integrity, they are frustrated with some aspects of our customer service. Agents, who have more regular dealings with us, are generally the least positive. While the survey fieldwork was carried out against a backdrop of poor performance at the beginning of the year, the results do illustrate the challenge of building customer confidence and trust.

These surveys are vital tools which help us improve future customer service. They help us to understand where the areas are that our customers feel we are serving them least well, so we can target improvements in that area/process. Acting on this information and making changes to support customers more effectively is, we believe, a good investment. We publish the results so people can see how we are doing and help hold us to account more effectively.

The survey and HMRC performance data will inform the work of the Charter Committee in the year ahead, to hold HMRC to account to consolidate and continue to improve its services.

Chapter 5

Charter Committee priorities for 2016-17

Going forward the Charter Committee will continue to hold HMRC to account for delivery against your Charter.

The committee has started this work with a discussion about the development of the digital agenda, both the personal tax account and the Making Tax Digital programme for individual and business customers.

We shall return to these areas over the year, seeing how they are developing and how they have reflected our comments, in particular about how these, and other process changes impact on customers who are digitally excluded or need extra support. We shall also review progress of proposals to improve communications and guidance to support customers in understanding their obligations and getting their affairs right.

We will also want to understand how HMRC is managing the risks of the transformation to a digital environment based in a smaller number of offices, including how security of information is maintained, and staff are supported and trained to meet the new challenges and continue to deliver efficient and effective customer service to all their customers, including tax credits customers. We will also look at the handling of the transition and support for customers during the migration to Universal Credit.

Linked to this we will be testing how HMRC's performance measures provide insight into their success in meeting Your Charter commitments, in particular their work to deal with complaints quickly and fairly and how they can demonstrate they are learning from them to reduce the number and improve handling.

In the compliance area we intend to look at how HMRC, in tackling those who break the rules, deals with agents, both in their role as professionals, but also as trusted helpers, in managing that compliance risk, and how the Charter commitments are taken into account as HMRC tailors its response to compliance risks.

We will also be looking at how customers meet their obligations to HMRC to take reasonable care, work with HMRC to get their tax right and keep their affairs in order, and how they can be better supported to do so to allow HMRC to maximise its compliance efforts in the most difficult cases.

Finally, we want to explore how the Charter Committee can support HMRC strategically, firstly by understanding how Charters and Charter principles operate in other jurisdictions, and how having a visible and trusted Charter might contribute to the wider Government growth agenda; secondly with our expertise and contacts with wider stakeholders horizon scanning and challenging HMRC processes as to whether they will still support their customers as employment, business and income patterns change.

In between our formal meetings we will visit HMRC sites where we can see a range of operational delivery and customer service work. These will include tax credit offices and digital delivery centres.

If you have any comments on this report or wish to contact the committee then please contact the HMRC Charter Policy team by emailing yasmin.carney@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk.

Appendix: Charter and customer survey questions

Charter 2015

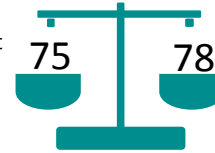
Individuals % agree



Respect you and treat you as honest



HMRC treat customers fairly



HMRC treat customers as honest



Provide a helpful, efficient and effective service



It was easy to find information



HMRC gets transactions right



Quality of information is good



Time taken is acceptable



Be professional and act with integrity



HMRC systems prevented mistakes



HMRC are efficient and do not waste money



HMRC ensures all customers pay/receive the correct amounts



Protect your information and respect your privacy

HMRC ensures data and personal information is treated confidentially



Accept that someone else can represent you



HMRC made it easy for someone to act on your behalf



Deal with complaints quickly and fairly



HMRC resolved any queries or issues



Tackle those who bend or break the rules



HMRC apply penalties and sanctions equally



HMRC deal more firmly with those who don't pay



HMRC puts the right amount of effort in to reducing tax evasion

Charter 2015

Small Businesses % agree

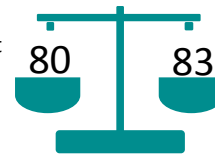


Respect you and treat you as honest



HMRC are approachable

HMRC treat customers fairly



HMRC treat customers as honest



Provide a helpful, efficient and effective service



It was easy to find information



HMRC gets transactions right



Quality of information is good



Time taken is acceptable



Be professional and act with integrity



HMRC systems prevented mistakes



HMRC are efficient and do not waste money



HMRC ensures all customers pay/receive the correct amounts

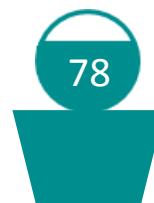


Protect your information and respect your privacy

HMRC ensures data and personal information is treated confidentially



Accept that someone else can represent you



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Deal with complaints quickly and fairly



HMRC resolved any queries or issues



Tackle those who bend or break the rules



HMRC apply penalties and sanctions equally



HMRC deal more firmly with those who don't pay



HMRC puts the right amount of effort in to reducing tax evasion

Charter 2015

Agents % agree

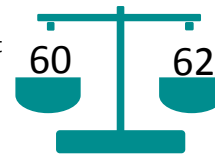


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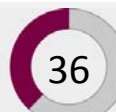
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