

Businesses urged to check Budget small print

Businesses are being urged to examine the Budget statement to see how they can benefit from the measures announced



New faces at Nicklin as firm continues to expand

PLUS

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Welcome

Welcome to Nicklin News, which brings you updates and practical advice on issues that may affect you financially.

Our bulletin contains a round-up of tax and financial news and developments that we hope will be of interest to small and family businesses and private individuals.

In this issue, we start with some positive company news, which includes our recent relocation to Worcester city centre, as well as our merger with Woodall Davies & Bache. We mention the new faces joining our expanding team and we demonstrate our ongoing support for local charity.

We also examine the Budget announcements and Nicklin LLPs request

for businesses to check the Budget statement and see how they can benefit from the measures announced on 19 March. We look to the future of 2014 and the 20,000 new apprentice jobs that have been pledged by businesses in a bid to boost the economy.

We consider the support for those businesses affected by the floods, the continued efforts by government to cut red tape on regulations and the new and improved TUPE rules. We also touch upon the noted rise in the amount of people liable for IHT and we conclude by drawing attention to the news that small firms are being encouraged to take

advantage of the broadband opportunities which are available to them in order to help grow their business.

We hope you enjoy reading Nicklin News and that you find it useful. We'd welcome your feedback on the content, or ideas for topics that you'd like to see featured in future, so if you would like to comment, please contact [Stacey Bevan](#) on 0121 550 9916.

For professional financial advice, tailored to your individual circumstances, on any of the topics covered in Nicklin News, please contact us.

20,000 new apprentice jobs pledged during National Apprenticeship Week

Even more people will get an opportunity to earn while they learn after more than 20,000 new apprenticeships have been pledged by employers as part of National Apprenticeship Week (3-7 March 2014).

Announcements have been made by hundreds of businesses around the country including Lloyds Banking Group who have committed to hiring 5,000 apprentices.

It's not just big corporates that are showing their commitment to apprenticeships – 47% of the employers creating new apprenticeships are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Companies that have pledged new apprenticeships include BT, ITV, Network Rail, Be Wiser Insurance, Central Bedfordshire Council, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals, Ashtead Plant Hire, Southend Citizen Advice Bureau and Virgin Media. Meanwhile, Capita Personal Independence Payment have pledged to make 5% of its non-healthcare workforce apprentices and have launched a drive to hire more

young people with disabilities onto apprenticeships.

National Apprenticeship Week also saw a boost to the new traineeships, which give young people the work preparation training, English, maths and work experience they need to get an apprenticeship or other job.

Business Secretary Vince Cable said: "The government is putting an end to the damaging divide between vocational and academic learning. We are committing the biggest ever investment in apprenticeships and are on track to create two million apprenticeships over the course of this parliament.

"The resounding success of this year's National Apprenticeship Week demonstrates that apprenticeships are

deservedly becoming more popular with business of all sizes. Apprentices already contribute £1.8 billion to the economy and with these further commitments, thousands more people will now be able to get the practical skills they need to build careers and help firms grow."

Skills and Enterprise Minister Matthew Hancock MP said: "We want to make going to university or into an apprenticeship the new norm, and over half of young people say they would like to do an apprenticeship if one were available."

Our specialists at Nicklin LLP can advise on sound business decisions through strategic planning which may involve the introduction of an apprenticeship scheme to increase productivity and grow your business. For more information, please contact us.

New faces at Nicklin as firm continues to expand

Award-winning Halesowen-based chartered accountancy firm Nicklin LLP is continuing its expansion by welcoming four new members to its team.

The firm has recruited accounts and audit senior Jade Turton, accounts and audit trainees Peter Cook, Tom Elwell, Jack Simmonds and Jack Jeavons-Fellows and also welcomes tax trainee Craig Curtis.

Managing partner Harvey Owen said:

"I am delighted to welcome Jade, Peter, Tom, the two Jack's and Craig to Nicklin. We recognise that quality client service can only come from having quality people, whether seniors or trainees.

"This is part of our ongoing growth as

we look to further expand our offering across the Black County and wider West Midlands region."

To find out more about the support we provide for our team, or for more information about Nicklin LLP, please contact us.

UK floods: £10 million support scheme for flood affected businesses

As part of the government's continued work to deal with the floods, the Prime Minister has set out further support for businesses in areas affected by flooding.

Building on the recent package of support for businesses and households, the Prime Minister announced:

- **A new Business Support Scheme** - The scheme is worth up to £10 million to provide hardship funding for SME businesses in areas affected by the floods. Both businesses that have been flooded, and businesses that are in affected areas and have suffered significant loss of trade, will be able to apply for support. Eligible businesses will be able to claim for funding for things like immediate clean-up costs, materials, and exceptional costs to help them continue trading.
- **Extra time for businesses to file accounts without any penalties** - If any affected company is unable to file accounts or other documents on time as a direct result of the floods, Companies House will agree an extension and not collect the penalties which apply for late filings.

- **A government business support helpline** - The helpline is providing comprehensive advice and support to businesses affected by floods. It will offer a free one hour call with a dedicated Business Support Adviser to help businesses get back on their feet. The helpline number is 0300 456 3565 and can take calls from flood affected businesses now.

Business Secretary Vince Cable said: "It is vital that small businesses affected by the flooding get assistance as quickly as possible. We know the insurance companies are working to process claims as quickly as possible and we will inform local authorities of their allocations from the Business Support Scheme to assist businesses with clean-up costs or help them to continue trading."

At Nicklin LLP, we offer a range of services to businesses and can assist with obtaining funding from the new support scheme for businesses affected by the adverse weather. For further information, please contact us.



Improved TUPE rules come into force

Changes have been made to the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE), which protect the employment terms and conditions of employees who are transferred from one organisation to another.

The regulations have been improved to make sure both employers and staff are treated fairly when a transfer takes place.

Under the new regulations:

- businesses will now be able to renegotiate terms and conditions in collective agreements one year after a transfer has taken place, provided that the overall change is no less favourable
- micro businesses will be able to inform and consult employees directly when there are no existing appropriate representatives. Under existing TUPE regulations businesses usually have to inform, and sometimes also consult, employee representatives such as trade unions representatives; for micro businesses with 10 or fewer employees, there are often no representatives which means that they have to be specifically elected for this purpose; this change will make this process much less bureaucratic
- the new employer will be able to engage in pre-redundancy

consultation with employees, with the consent of the old employer

- contractual changes will be permitted for economic, technical or organisational reasons with the agreement of the employee and or where a contractual right of variation exists.

The regulations also clarify the existing law in a number of areas:

- in cases where employees' terms and conditions are provided for in collective agreements, only the terms and conditions in the collective agreements that are in place before the date of transfer will apply; any future changes will not bind the new employer, unless it has taken part in the bargaining process that brought about the changes
- the test for service provision changes will make clear that activities carried out after the change in provider must be fundamentally the same as those carried out by the previous person

who has ceased to carry them out; this means that if businesses radically change the way they provide services, that change is unlikely to be subject to the TUPE regulations.

Employment Relations Minister Jenny Willott said: "When a business is transferred from one company to another we want to make sure that TUPE continues to provide appropriate levels of employee protection, whilst making the process as smooth as possible for the businesses involved."

Making these changes will give businesses more clarity about conducting transfers and provide them with the tools to create new opportunities in the UK labour market, whilst protecting fairness for all."

At Nicklin LLP our specialists can provide advice in all matters relating to TUPE and the new regulations. For more information please contact us.

Firm provides £3,000 boost for children's hospice charity

Nicklin LLP generously donated £3,000 to a local children's hospice charity after holding a day of fund-raising.

The money was raised for Acorns Children's Hospice at a golf day held by Nicklin at Wharton Park, in Bewdley.

The hospice, which celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2013, provides both respite and end-of-life care for children and young people who are not expected to reach adulthood. The charity currently supports around 640 children and nearly 900 families, including those who are bereaved.

Acorns costs £7,500 a day to operate across its three sites in Worcester, meaning the £3,000 donation will make a real difference to those it supports.

Wendy Hayward, Nicklin's partners' secretary, visited the charity's Worcester hospice to present a cheque to community fund-raising manager Carole Crowe.

Managing partner Harvey Owen said:

"As a firm, we believe it is important to give something back to our local community. Acorns makes such a difference to the lives of so many people, so we felt this was a particularly worthy cause to support through our golf day. I would like to thank everyone who helped us raise this money."

To find out how we support the local charities in our area, please contact us.

Small firms encouraged to exploit broadband opportunities

A £100 million broadband connection voucher scheme has been announced to encourage more small businesses to upgrade to a superfast broadband connection, recognising the importance of technology for the future success of small firms.

The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) warns that government must not forget those firms that cannot access fit-for-purpose broadband.

More companies must exploit the use of superfast broadband to expand their businesses, however according to the FSB, there are still thousands of firms around the UK which struggle to get sufficient broadband to run their business. The FSB wants to see more of a push by government towards achieving universal fit-for-purpose connectivity.

FSB research shows that whilst 90 per cent of small firms use the internet for their business, less than 30 per cent trade online. In a world where customers increasingly turn to the internet for research as well as to buy goods and services, small firms

must be online to compete and to fulfil their growth potential.

With the government's initiative allowing eligible businesses to apply for grants of up to £3,000 to cover the costs of installing faster and better broadband, it is hoped many small firms will make use of it. Better broadband provision could enable them to expand, possibly reaching overseas markets.

John Allan, National Chairman, Federation of Small Businesses, said: "Many of our members already use the internet for their business, and recognise the value it can bring. The recent announcement on further broadband investment is a step towards helping more of the UK's small firms better

connected. However, the scheme will only help those in the 22 cities, whilst we want action on universal fit-for-purpose broadband to help every single UK firm take advantage of online opportunities and get their products and services in front of customers from Aberystwyth to Abu Dhabi."

In these tough economic times, it is important to ensure that you are taking full advantage of the opportunities available to your business. At Nicklin LLP, our highly experienced team of experts can help make the most of any tax-saving opportunities available. Contact us for more information.



Nicklin LLP relocates practice

Nicklin LLP has announced it has relocated its Worcester office. Nicklin's new office is now based at 22 The Tything, right at the heart of the city and close to its thriving business community.

Harvey Owen, managing partner at Nicklin, said: "The relocation to a new office in the city will enable the firm to improve the services we offer to our clients in the city and region, in turn growing the practice.

"Relocating to the heart of the city is a

logical move for the firm, and will allow us to further compete locally with national firms.

"We look forward to continuing our relationships with individuals and businesses across the city, providing the best possible financial advice and all-round support to

ensure financial peace of mind and nurture business growth."

Nicklin's new address is 22 The Tything, Worcester, WR1 1HD. For more information visit www.nicklins.co.uk or call the Worcester office on 01905 330399.

Inheritance Tax – rise in number of people paying IHT

Recent annual figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) present the value of inheritance tax (IHT) receipts in the 2012-13 financial year at around £3.15bn - an 8 per cent rise on the previous year.

These taxes were originally aimed at individuals with large amounts of wealth but due to the rise in housing prices (estimated at around 6.5 per cent a year) and the freeze on the level at which estates become liable, more and more people are finding that they are affected by IHT despite the fact that they do not consider themselves to be particularly wealthy.

This number is expected to rise over the next five years.

Inheritance tax (IHT) is currently payable at 40 per cent on estates valued at more than £325,000, a level unchanged since April 2009 and at which it is due to be frozen until April 2018.

The Daily Telegraph reported in November that financial and business advisors had calculated that the number of estates affected by IHT annually would rise from an estimated 21,000 in 2012-13 to 42,000 in 2016-17, as a result of the housing market recovery pushing up property prices.

At the end of 2013, the Bank of England scrapped its Funding for Lending package, which helped banks to support mortgage lending, warning that rising house prices could derail the UK's recovery.

The value of a home – or a future inheritance – could easily push someone with fairly modest assets into the IHT bracket, so it makes sense to take advantage of tax planning opportunities, such as the IHT exemption on annual gifts, to reduce or avoid an inheritance tax bill.

Seeking expert advice is a wise investment in maximising your inheritance tax efficiency. For more information on how Nicklin LLP IHT services can help you, please contact us.



Businesses urged to check small print of Budget

Businesses are being urged to examine the Budget statement to see how they can benefit from the measures announced, say Nicklin LLP.

Billed as a “Budget for a Resilient UK”, Mr Osborne hailed significant growth forecasts, while underpinning the need for economic security in his final statement before next year’s elections.

The biggest announcement for businesses was a doubling of the Annual Investment Allowance (AIA) for capital expenditure from £250,000 to £500,000 to the end of 2015, while effective on 20th March tax on residential homes owned through a company will be extended from residential properties worth more than £2m to those worth more than £500,000.

As expected, the Chancellor announced a rise in the amount of income people receive tax-free to £10,500.

Other key announcements included

capping the Carbon Price Floor and other green energy levies to reduce energy bills for businesses and consumers, the doubling in export finance to £3 billion, and raising the rate of R&D tax credit payable to loss making small and medium-sized enterprises from 11% to 14.5% from April 2014.

Pensioners and savers also received good news as the Chancellor announced that cash and stocks and shares ISAs would be merged with a new upper limit of £15,000.

Changes to pensions include the removal of all tax restrictions on pensioners’ access to their pensions ending the requirement to buy an annuity, and the introduction of a new pensioner bond.

Harvey Owen, managing partner at

Nicklin, said: “This has certainly been a Budget for businesses, savers and pensioners.

“The most surprising announcement was the raising of the Annual Investment Allowance which will provide up to 100% tax relief for businesses on capital expenditure up to £500,000.

“This measure, along with the capping of green energy levies, should help businesses looking to grow.

“Individuals will also be pleased with measures to increase the personal tax allowances and major changes to pensions and savings.

“As usual we would urge businesses and individuals to study the small print to see what measures will affect them and how they can take advantage of them.”

Nicklin LLP announces merger with Woodall Davies & Bache

Nicklin LLP continues to expand after merging with Blackheath-based Woodall Davies & Bache.

The merger came about after Woodall Davies & Bache’s partners were looking to retire but wanted to safeguard the future of their team and felt that Nicklin shared their values and approach to client service.

As a result, all staff from Woodall Davies & Bache have moved into Nicklin’s offices in Church Court, Stourbridge Road,

while partner Keith Davies will remain as a consultant.

Harvey Owen, managing partner of Nicklin, said: “As a firm, we are always looking to merge with other practices that complement our own. In this case, we felt that Woodall Davies & Bache were an excellent fit.

“For Woodall Davies & Bache’s clients, it will

still be very much business as usual, but they will now also be able to benefit from the additional expertise we are able to offer.

“We now look forward to working with their clients and building on the excellent service they have become accustomed to.”

For more information about Nicklin LLP, please contact us.

3,000 regulations to be reformed or slashed

Business Minister Michael Fallon and Cabinet Office Minister Ken Clarke set out how the government is increasing the pace of its drive to cut red tape, abolishing or improving outdated, burdensome or over-complicated regulations which waste businesses' time and money.

The commitment follows the announcement that more than 3,000 regulations have been identified for scrapping or improvement through the Red Tape Challenge since 2011, and that the government will be the first to reduce the overall burden of domestic regulation.

More than 800 regulations have already been abolished or improved, including major reforms to employment and health and safety law and simplification of environmental legislation, giving businesses more freedom to grow. The government intends to implement the remainder of the reforms in this Parliament, prioritising those of most help to business.

Recent data shows that the Red Tape Challenge – which asks businesses and the public themselves to identify the rules that hold them back – is already saving firms some £300 million per annum, and is expected to deliver business savings of over £850 million a year once all measures are implemented.

Further cuts to red tape recently announced include:

- helping house builders by cutting down 100 overlapping and confusing standards applied by councils to new homes to less than 10. Any necessary remaining standards will be consolidated as far as possible into Building Regulations to avoid duplication and confusion. The reforms are estimated to save around £60 million per year for home builders
- making it easier and cheaper for businesses to meet environmental

obligations - by March 2015 Defra will make environmental guidance simpler, quicker and clearer to understand, reducing 100,000 pages of environmental guidance by over 80% and potentially saving business and others £100 million per year

- eliminating millions of pieces of unnecessary paperwork to record waste management. Environmental regulations require all businesses to have a paper-based audit trail for any waste they produce, carry, keep, import or dispose of to show that they have passed their waste over to an authorised recipient. The Environment Agency are replacing this with an electronic system, eliminating the need for 23.5 million paper Waste Transfer Notes each year and from 2015 all small companies will be able to file their company accounts to Companies House and HMRC and annual return information once easily online at the same time.

The Red Tape Challenge is effective because it responds to those with day-to-day experience of running or working for a business. It has already scrutinised over 5,600 regulations which have an impact on businesses, and will aim to remove or slim down 3,000 of those.

The hundreds of Red Tape Challenge reforms introduced include:

- giving more businesses flexibility to decide whether their accounts should be audited. One part of this package alone, the new audit exemptions for subsidiaries, is estimated to save over £60 million per year

- new rules to enable 'pioneer' lane rental schemes, providing incentives for works on the busiest roads to be done at off-peak times and estimated to save business over £27 million per year
- helping over 1 million businesses so far from wasting time over-complying with health and safety law through the Health and Safety Executive's myth busting Challenge Panel
- changes to collective redundancy rules mean that businesses can restructure more effectively whilst ensuring that employees have access to good quality consultations, saving businesses £66.43 million a year in administrative costs.

The government is also on track to reduce costs to business of tax administration by £250 million by March 2015. Digital technology is transforming business tax services. VAT and corporation tax is online, as is registering the main types of taxes; and modernising PAYE through digital real-time reporting. Working with private sector providers, they have developed record-keeping apps to help businesses keep an easy record of their expenditure; and are shortly rolling out our new digital tax account for businesses – a single account which brings into one place everything needed to deal with business tax affairs.

At Nicklin LLP our experts can guide you and help you make the most of any changes in legislation which may affect your business. For more information, please contact us.

DISCLAIMER: The matters discussed in this newsletter are by necessity brief and comprise summations and introductions to the subject referred to. The content of this newsletter should not be considered by any reader to comprise full proper legal advice and should not be relied upon.

Nicklin
Business Advisers

Halesowen Office
Nicklin LLP, Church Court, Stourbridge Road,
Halesowen, West Midlands, B63 3TT
Tel: 0121 550 9916 • Fax: 0121 550 9390

Worcester Office
Nicklin LLP, 22 The Tything, Worcester,
Worcestershire, WR1 1HD
Tel: 01905 330399 • Fax: 01905 330399

info@nicklins.co.uk • www.nicklins.co.uk

