



**MAKING  
TAX DIGITAL**



## MTD Update for Agents #9: 16 August 2019

Dear Agent,

Welcome to the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of our Making Tax Digital Update for Agents.

We've now passed two important MTD milestones. June 7 saw the first submission deadline for monthly filers under Making Tax Digital whilst August 7 was the first deadline for quarterly (April to June stagger) filers.

We're aware of the huge amount of work put in by Agents that has contributed to these successes. Your contribution is recognised and greatly appreciated.

As always, if there's any subject you'd like us to cover in future updates please let us know via the MTD mailbox:

**[makingtaxdigital.mailbox@hmrc.gov.uk](mailto:makingtaxdigital.mailbox@hmrc.gov.uk)**

In this edition:

1. [Key updates](#)
2. [Key reminders](#)
3. [Coming soon](#)
4. [Useful links](#)

### **Key Updates**

#### **MTD Service Availability this weekend – 17 August**

The MTD service will be unavailable from 4pm Saturday 17 August 2019 to 4pm Monday 19 August 2019.

Planned downtime is always notified in advance on the GOV.UK service availability page:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-tax-digital-for-vat-service-availability-and-issues>

There will be some enhancements to the service – details will follow in future editions - but changes to the Business Tax Account will allow agents, via a specially designed MTD [GOV.UK](#) page, to:

- make a change of circumstance – to the VAT stagger, the principal place of business and business name, and to de-register from VAT
- opt out of MTD (only available to those that signed up voluntarily)

- view VAT Certs – traders have been able to see their own VAT certs for some time now

If an Agent has opted their client out of MTD, they will be able, via a new interface, to submit and view VAT returns.

### **MTD milestones**

There are now nearly one million businesses in the service who have made over 900,000 VAT submissions. As at 7 August 370,000 (76%) VAT registered businesses above the threshold in stagger 1 had signed up. This is in line with our expectations, particularly given the public commitment we made to take a light touch approach to digital record keeping and filing penalties during the first year. However, sanctions will remain possible in cases of deliberate non-compliance.

Our focus during this period has been to support businesses moving to MTD to get it right, not to unnecessarily penalise businesses who are doing their best to make the transition.

In the period leading up to the stagger 1 filing deadline on 7 August the service performed well, handling high volumes of traffic. Over 60,000 submissions were filed per day at peak times and 19 businesses even filed their returns in the minute before midnight.

Whilst we're pleased with the progress we have made it is important to acknowledge that a small proportion of customers experienced issues when trying to meet their obligations. We will continue to improve the service so that in future every customer is able to experience the smooth process that was enjoyed by the majority.

### **Letters to quarterly stagger 1 filers that have not yet signed up**

We are now writing to the stagger 1 businesses who did not sign up and file their return by 7 August to encourage them to join as soon as possible and expect numbers to increase significantly in the coming weeks as a result.

We took this approach with monthly filers, whose first return through MTD was due by 7 June. 89% (40,000) of that group have now joined the service. The responses we've received to these letters identified some customers who think they are signed up to MTD because they are already using software. This is not the case. **Even if you already use software you still have to sign up to MTD and enable your software to be MTD compliant.**

We are also continuing to see non-mandated customers join on a voluntary basis.

If a business's taxable turnover is below the threshold, they don't need to sign up or apply for an exemption. If they receive a letter from us about signing up to MTD, please ignore it.

If you think a business is deferred or exempt from MTD VAT, they need a letter from us confirming this is the case. If you haven't received a letter you should contact the VAT Helpline: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs/contact/vat-enquiries>

We know being able to get support through the VAT helpline is very important for you. We deployed additional staff to the helpline in late July in anticipation of a peak in demand in advance of the 7 August deadline, helping deliver an average wait during that week of five minutes.

## **Key Updates**

### **May – July Stagger 2**

Businesses on this return period have a filing deadline of **7 September 2019**. This will be their first MTD return. You may have a number of these businesses to sign up so please ensure that you plan their sign up carefully.

- It takes 72 hours for businesses to be signed up.
- You also need to wait 72 hours from a client signing up to MTD before you can ask to be authorised. **If you are already authorised you do not need to do this again.**
- Businesses that pay by Direct Debit cannot sign up in the 7 working days before their filing deadline and the 5 working days after it – this is to allow the direct debit to be moved over to the new system
- **Businesses that pay by Direct Debit should not sign up until their final non MTD payment has been taken**

### **Browsers used with MTD and Agent Services accounts**

We are aware that some agents are experiencing issues with signing up customers to MTD and accessing Agent Services accounts. In most cases this is the result of agent using more than one browser, such as Google Chrome or Internet Explorer, at the same time.

If this happens you should

- clear the cache and remove any cookies
- reset your browser settings

As instructions for doing this vary for every browser we suggest you search online how to do this for your particular browser.

If this does not work for your Agent Services Account (ASA), please try to access using the link below (but not from a favourite or bookmarked site).

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sign-in-to-your-agent-services-account>

### **Recent Agent Services Account enhancements**

- As a result of user feedback we've changed the word 'link' to 'copy' where it says 'Copy across your existing Self Assessment and VAT clients to this account'
- You can now see the number of authorised relationships held in ASA - part of the copying process when you put in the relevant GG/ID
- Edition 8 of this update explained Anti-Money Laundering requirements in relation to the creation of Agent Services accounts. It is now possible for an agent to create an agent services account with a pending Anti Money Laundering Supervision application.
- There is now a link on the dashboard 'Track your recent authorisation requests' that allows you to see the authorisation requests made in the last 30 days.

## Key reminders

- **Requirement to Sign-up to Making Tax Digital**

Please note that all businesses affected by MTD have to either sign themselves up or have an agent sign them up on their behalf. This is not automatic and HMRC are not signing businesses up.

- **Step by Step Guides**

[Agent Step by Step Guide](#)

[Business Step by Step Guide](#)

- **Getting help with sign up to ASA and MTD**

If you have any issues creating a new ASA, linking clients or signing clients up to MTD you should select the link '**Get help with this page**' on the GOV.UK page you are on. This will raise a query with our IT Service Desk who will investigate and respond accordingly.

- **HMRC Forum**

There are lots of interesting topics, threads and questions (and answers) on Making Tax Digital section of HMRC Forum on GOV.UK. Are you signed up?

Please follow the following instructions on how to register

Click [here](#) for the forum page

Click on "Register" in the top right hand corner of the page

Read and (if you are content) click "I agree to these terms"

Submit the details requested ensuring your Username is your forename and surname

**Step 2**

Once you have completed step 1, please email [agentforum.wt@hmrc.gov.uk](mailto:agentforum.wt@hmrc.gov.uk) to request access to the HMRC Agent Forum. You will need to send the following identity information:

Your first name and surname  
Confirmation of your work email address  
The name of your firm/organisation  
The name of your professional body/ies  
Your professional body registration number/reference.

Once you have sent your email, the forum team will be in-touch to confirm your acceptance. After this, you will have access to HMRC's *new and improved* Agent Forum including all live and previous posts on Agent related issues. You will also be able to post your issue at this stage if you can't find an answer contained within the specific Head of Duty/Topic section.

- **Software choices**

Businesses and agents need to choose the software that is suitable for them. HMRC does not endorse or recommend any one product of software provider however a software choices selection tool is available on GOV.UK.

<https://www.tax.service.gov.uk/making-tax-digital-software>

- **Existing authorised client relationships**

If you already have an authorised relationship with a client (64-8) and have made submissions on their behalf you *do not have to re-authorise* them to act for them under Making Tax Digital. You *do* have to link your clients to your agent services account and sign them up. You can find out how to do that on the step by step guide for agents on GOV.UK.

## Coming soon

HMRC continue to deliver webinars on Making Tax Digital for both Agents and Businesses.

Agent webinars (Talking Points):

August: 29<sup>th</sup>

September: 6<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>

You can sign up to attend Talking Points here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-and-support-for-agents>

Business webinars:

August: 23<sup>rd</sup>

September: 4<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>

Please make business clients aware that they can register to join the webinar here  
<https://register.gotowebinar.com/rt/1488469760326025729?source=Gov>

We look forward to as many joining the sessions as possible! If you have any suggestions of topics that you would like us to cover please let us know.

The MTD team will be attending Accountex North on 10 September – if you are attending and have any issues or questions please come along to see our staff at the HMRC stand.

### **Useful links**

[Making Tax Digital for VAT as an agent: step by step](#)

[Sign in to your agent services account](#)

[Link clients to your agent services account](#)

[Sign up for Making Tax Digital for VAT](#)

[Check when a business must follow the rules for Making Tax Digital for VAT](#)

[Create an agent services account](#)

[Help and support for Making Tax Digital](#)

[Update your client's details for Making Tax Digital for VAT](#)

[Find software suppliers for sending VAT Returns and Income Tax updates: Making Tax Digital for VAT and Making Tax Digital for Income Tax.](#)