



April VAT alert for businesses

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) has issued an alert to VAT-registered businesses across the UK about important changes that come into effect this spring.

From 1 April 2012, all VAT-registered businesses must send their VAT returns online and pay their VAT electronically. Currently, only newly-registered businesses, and those with turnovers of more than £100,000, have to file and pay their VAT online.

The new rules will cover VAT returns filed for accounting periods beginning on or after 1 April 2012.

If you're not already filing your VAT online, switching now makes sense. By doing this, you'll avoid a last-minute rush, and be able to enjoy the benefits of online filing sooner rather than later. These benefits include:

- an automatic acknowledgement that your return has been received;
- a handy arithmetic checker to help make sure you've done your sums correctly; and
- an email alert to remind you when your next online return is due (as, after April, HMRC will stop sending out paper returns to customers who are now required to file online).

To file your VAT return online, you'll need to register for HMRC's VAT Online Service – visit www.online.hmrc.gov.uk and click "Register" under the "New user" section. Then follow the instructions.

Affected businesses will also need to set up their preferred electronic payment method. Visit www.hmrc.gov.uk/payinghmrc/vat.htm for more information on the various options.

Further help and advice is available from HMRC's website at www.hmrc.gov.uk/vat. If that doesn't answer your question, call the VAT Online Services Helpdesk on 0845 010 8500 (available between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday).

Notes for editors

1. Newly-registered businesses, and those with turnovers of more than £100,000, have had to file and pay their VAT online since 1 April 2010.
2. A summary of responses to a recent consultation on the changes, entitled 'VAT – consultation on the next steps for moving VAT online – summary of responses', is published today on the HMRC website at www.hmrc.gov.uk/budget-updates/march2011/draft-tax-finance-bill-2012.htm#6
3. Follow HMRC on Twitter @HMRCgovuk

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