

There is just so much happening at the moment – I can hardly believe that Christmas is on Friday! Lots of good stuff in this month's newsletter - cash help for employing apprentices as well as a heads up on the graduate internship scheme.

But first the return of a scheme so many of you welcomed first time round – Spread the Tax.

The Business Payment Support Service is now being extended for those businesses which are genuinely unable to pay their outstanding liability immediately or enter into a reasonable time to pay arrangement.

Where a viable business is due to pay tax on the previous year's business profits and is likely to make a trading loss in the current year, those losses can be taken into account when agreeing the level of payments to be made.

Find out more at <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/budget2009/bus-payment-support-582.htm>

But remember, you have to contact the Business Support Service before the tax is due. And don't expect your local tax office to suggest it – earlier experience says they won't.

Thanks for all the feedback on rates - we are continuing to work on it so please keep your comments coming.

I will be working on the portfolio leaders over the New Year - you are not forgotten!

Recruit an apprentice and you could get £500 or a £1000 to help

Problems with Fire regs?

Climate proof your business – an online toolkit for Tourist businesses plus more detailed help for all businesses

Work experience for students – can you help?

Migrant worker legislation – need to get forms sorted

Waste and Electrical and Electronic Equipment - FSB member discounts for disposal

Do you import, manufacture or sell *electronic or electrical* products? – Free half day course on WEEE ROHS etc

Recruit an apprentice and you could get £500 or a £1000 to help

Small businesses in the South West are being offered a £1000 to recruit a new apprentice or £500 to move an existing employee onto the 16 -18 Apprenticeship programme. But hurry, places are limited.

You are eligible for the South West Micro Business Employer Scheme for 16-18 Apprentices if you:

- Are a micro employer with 1-9 employees and based in the South West region
- Have not taken on an apprentice within the last 18 months
- Promote vacancy on the National Apprenticeship Service's online matching system Apprenticeship vacancies – it's free anyway.

Financial incentive:

- £1000 when the apprentice, recruited as a new employee, has started their Apprenticeship

- £500 when the apprentice, already employed by the business, has started their Apprenticeship

John Chudley, Regional Director for the National Apprenticeship Service, said:

"There is an increasingly large body of evidence to suggest that Apprenticeships make a real difference to businesses in a variety of different and very important ways.

"Small business employers can be wary of trying something new so we have introduced this financial incentive to encourage them to take on an apprentice. I'm sure that, once they've experienced the benefits for themselves, they'll be no looking back."

The number of places available on the South West Micro Business Employer Scheme is limited and employers will be selected on a first come, first served basis.

For more information about the scheme contact, Christina Gill, on 01793 608013 or email christina.gill@apprenticeships.gov.uk

For more information on Apprenticeships visit apprenticeships.org.uk or call 08000 150 600

Problems with Fire regs?

London Policy is gathering evidence about continuing issues around Fire regs and the guidance. If you have had problems in the last year, please let Sara know at sara.higham@fsb.org.uk

Climate proof your tourism business – an online toolkit to help you get prepared

Whether you think climate change is happening or not, this on line toolkit is worth a look at. Over the last few years, we have seen some bad flooding. This toolkit takes you through sensible steps to prepare for something similar happening in your locality or a drought – or a heatwave.

Other businesses might find some of the suggestions helpful as well. Just click on <http://www.climateprepared.com/>

Or try the Princes Trust 'Mayday' journey at

http://www.bitc.org.uk/environment/the_princes_mayday_network_on_climate_change/the_mayday_journey_on_climate_change/index.html

Work experience for students – can you help?

Do you have an issue which is bugging you, but you never seem to find the time to get it sorted? Maybe a student could help.

There are 2 ways you could get the help you need.

1. Exeter University is looking for things like the integrated use of IT, car parking problems, staff retention, access for the disabled, staff training issues, efficient utilisation of resources, waste material disposal, market or data analysis, comparison of systems or processes, and Internet systems design, use, and effectiveness. Anything which challenges a student to define the problem, qualitatively and quantitatively analyse the possible solutions, and then make recommendations.

They would spend 3 mornings with you during March and you would get a copy of their report including recommendations.

If you think this would be of interest and you want to find out more, please contact Brian Walker at b.j.walker@ex.ac.uk

Several members got in touch last year and found this very useful.

2. Interns - to help our members and to help UK graduates the FSB has persuaded Government to part fund the cost of employing a graduate for upwards of 8 weeks. We are still working on the details with several SW Universities so more in January.

However, the schemes will all allow you to find your own student and then 'plug in' to the scheme – but please wait until we have the full information.

Migrant worker legislation – need to get forms sorted

Your SW Policy Chairman was surprised to find that even for EU nationals, working in the UK is not as simple as you might think.

Anyone employing an EU national from Eastern Europe for more than a month needs to make sure they have registered under the Worker Registration Scheme – click on the link for full details.

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk/eea/wrs/>

It seems that everyone had forgotten about this until people started trying to register at the Job Centre for work. Despite working in the UK and paying taxes for several years, without the Worker Registration Scheme documents, they were not eligible. And although it is the worker's responsibility to register, the employer is supposed to check.

As Peter Ashton said, employers have enough to do – while HMRC was accepting the taxes they could also make the necessary connections with the Border Agency and register them that way.

Waste and Electrical and Electronic Equipment

Valpak Retail Ltd has been re-appointed to operate the Distributor Take Back Scheme under Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment regulations for the next three year phase, which starts in January 2010 and runs to December 2012. FSB members can get a discount. [Find out more.](#)

Do you import, manufacture or sell *electronic or electrical* products?

Then this free half day Product Regulations Roadshow may be of interest.

It is an introduction to Eco-design and Energy using Products (EuP), Packaging, Restrictions on Hazardous Substances (RoHS), Waste Electrical & Electronics Equipment (WEEE) and Batteries legislation. It will provide an overview and update as to how current and future environmental legislation may affect your business. Addressed by experts from Defra and BIS, the seminar will inform you about what you need to do to comply and where to go for further support.

Bristol Thurs 19th January Government Office for the South West 14:00 – 16:30
Businesses attending the event will also receive information about the help and support available from Business Link and Envirowise.

To book a place please e-mail Sandra Glynn at EntecforBIS@entecuk.co.uk

Have a merry Xmas and best wishes for a prosperous New Year

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<http://www.fsb.org.uk/>

For South West Policy webpage <http://www.fsb.org.uk/default.aspx?id=0&loc=sw>