



the information arc

January 2020

Welcome

A very belated Happy New Year to you all. I hope that you entered 2020 refreshed and invigorated for the challenges ahead

There has been a lengthy delay since the last information ARC – and I apologise for that. We wanted to improve communication this year and this hasn't materialised as we would have liked. Having said that, this does not mean that nothing has been happening. We have been working in the background on a few fronts, so here's a bumper *Information ARC*.

Intranet and ARC Website

We are working with the Employee Relations Team and our colleagues in PCS to have a "Union" page on the Intranet. The page will provide contact details for each union and point staff to the union websites, with encouragement to join. We are also looking at the possibility of including local contact details in the sites for each Regional Centre.

In addition, the ARC website will soon be updated to include details of the reps for each Centre – at least the President and Secretary – so that members and potential members know who to contact in their area.

Social Media

As covered in the last edition, our new [Facebook page is live](#). This joins our Twitter page ([@ARC_Union](#)) and we are also looking at Instagram.

While the best way to speak directly to ARC committee is the members forum (<http://arcunion.org.uk/arc-forum/forum/members-forum>), we need to recognise that many members prefer to communicate via social media. The comms sub-committee will be meeting FDA colleagues to speak about this, but we also want to hear from you. If you



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have ideas about how we should communicate, what we should be covering or what you would like to see please contact us on Facebook and Twitter, or [email me](#) directly. If you email, please include “ARC: Social Media” in the subject.

Information ARC

From now on, *Information ARC* will be issued monthly and as near to the start of the month as possible. The ARC committee works throughout the year on several topics and it is important that you hear about that work no matter how big or how small. While I will be looking to them for input, I want to ensure that, where possible, we update you on the topics you want to hear about. If there are issues you want to hear about, or if there is something that you think ARC members need to know about, please [email me](#) including “ARC: Information ARC” in the subject line.

And now, on to the updates from committee.

Thanks

Scott



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Pay

You may have seen Esther Wallington's internet piece on the [Pay reform business case having been submitted](#). In that article Esther explains how HMRC must now proceed:

"If HM Treasury gives us permission to proceed, we will begin formal negotiations with our trade unions to shape a final pay reform offer. We'll use the feedback you've given us to help us develop that offer.

Our key aim is to agree a deal that everyone can accept. We do this through a process called 'collective bargaining'. This is a process of negotiation between HMRC and the Association of Revenue and Customs (ARC) and the Public and Commercial Services (PCS), our recognised unions, with a view to reaching an agreed position.

Once the negotiation process is complete ARC and PCS should then put an offer to their members ahead of a vote on whether to accept it or not. **This means you will only be able to vote in the pay reform offer ballot if you are a member of either union.**"

It is important that as many voices as possible are heard. We will communicate as early, as often and as clearly as we are able to through the process and in advance of any vote. Please encourage your colleagues to join us to add their voice – **The Committee.**



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2020 ARC AGM

As you will have read in **arcnews** or on the [website](#), the AGM will be in **Edinburgh** this year at the John McIntyre Conference Centre at Pollock Halls University Campus.

Accommodation has been booked and details of this will follow.

The timetable is:

13 MAY 2020

12.00: LUNCH
13.00-16.00: AGM
EVENING: ARC DINNER at the **Balmoral Hotel**

14 MAY 2020

9.30 : TEA AND COFFEE
10.00-12.00: AGM
12.00-13.00: LUNCH

We are also looking at the possibility of training events before the AGM on the 13th and after the AGM on the 14th. We will update you as early as we can.

Motions for AGM

Please give some thought to the motions you would like to present and discuss them with your Centre reps at your next meeting (if you have not already done so).

Motions need to be submitted by **12pm, 25 March 2020**. Motions should be emailed to argam@fda.org.uk and jim.rogers@fda.org.uk using the [attached form](#).



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Moves to Regional Centres

We are beginning to see decisions on moves to the Regional Centres now, and some are not going the way expected. ARC reps are available to help members prepare for their initial 1:2:1s and any resultant appeals. Although members cannot have a TU rep with them at the initial 1:2:1, at appeal we can attend to offer support. I can't emphasise enough how important preparation is in making it easy for decision makers to take the member's side.

Laurence James

Migration to the new Belfast Regional Centre, Erskine House, started in the week commencing 13 January 2020. You will have seen articles on the Intranet and in the next edition of **arcnews** you'll hear more about the move and how ARC welcomed staff.

Kenny Mitchell.

The Loan Charge

The Loan Charge has been a subject that has generated a very large degree of public comments (often negative and even hostile) about HMRC and the actions of its staff. As Paula told you in her October Update members have been on the receiving end of abuse on social media and other platforms as a result of this Government/Ministerial policy. We have taken up with the Department questions about the welfare and safety of some people specifically named and targeted online. Directors and the CEO have been fully supportive of all the members affected and agree with us that their treatment is not acceptable.

An **independent review** was published just before Christmas. Sir Amyas Morse said "I received evidence of personal targeting of individual tax officials, naming and abusing them, and publishing pictures of their homes and other details. I strongly disapprove of and condemn this type of activity and call on the LCAG and others to do



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the same.” ARC will be continuing to monitor these sorts of attacks and work with the Department to take whatever action is possible to prevent this abuse. If any member has suffered in this way, please get in touch with Paula so we can liaise with the Department and provide support.

Ian Campbell

LB Director Meetings

Members in LB have noticed the regular notes that PCS send to all LB colleagues covering their quarterly meetings with Jo Wakeman and her team. Understandably some have raised concerns that ARC is not having the same level of engagement but it's important to note that these meetings take place with representatives from both PCS and ARC.

They are productive sessions which allow us to engage with proposed changes in LB. We offer comments on where we think improvements can be made, bring our own agenda items and contribute to those raised by PCS.

The latest meeting took place on 23 January and several issues were discussed.

Change in LB

- We had a useful session to understand how LB's approach fits in with HMRC's wider strategy and its aims for the future. This covered how LB uses data, models itself around its customers and collaborates across CCG.
- ARC offered comments on how these complex strategic objectives can be best communicated to colleagues, noting that it is important to ensure this is done with a plain English approach which will resonate with colleagues.

The People Survey 2019



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- The team gave an initial view of the People Survey results in LB and it was agreed that we would follow up in further sessions to consider what can be done at a national level, alongside local initiatives.

Respect at Work

- We discussed LB's response and it was agreed that longer term discussions and reviews would take place to understand how new products, such as Our Commitments, are landing in LB.
- We also discussed apprenticeships and how both unions could engage with new recruits in LB.

If you ever have potential agenda items or issues you wish to raise, please email them to [Josh Flew](#). I will prompt you once the next meeting is arranged in an upcoming Information ARC so watch this space.

ARC Caseworkers

In deepest darkest Croydon there is currently an advert on the Trams that asks, 'What does a Ticket Inspector look like?' Well I want to pose the question to you all, 'What does an ARC caseworker look like?' Similar question and same answer. 'They look like you.' And yes, I mean you, all of you!

ARC is looking to expand its group of trained caseworkers and is coming soon to a centre near you. So far, we have trained folks in Newcastle, London (Canary Wharf,) Cardiff and Scotland and the training events continue with Liverpool at the end of January. I am next looking to organise events in the Midlands, Lees and Bristol.

The training takes one day and hopefully fun and equips you, with support to start to take on cases, helping your fellow members when they are having problems.

So have a think about doing this training, contact me [John Parkhouse](#) if you want to know more and nag your centre officials to get in touch to arrange a training day!



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Race network and Equal Pay

Last month ARC worked with the Race Network in Cardiff to facilitate putting on a successful event on 4 December. Lots of issues have been revealed, and ARC is working closely with HMRC to investigate and address them including progression and representation in ARC grades, as well as some concerning work place behaviour.

The next Equal Pay Audit will be carried out before April 2020. HMRC will be looking closely at all elements of our pay system so that we can see trends, particularly as the demographics of our department have changed a lot in recent years, with 5000 new staff joining due to Brexit. We have also been discussing the outcomes of the Civil Service inclusion survey – watch this space. We are working with the Dept on the OECD Gender Balance Network project which is looking at representation across tax administrations in OECD countries, with a view to making things more equal.

Helen Baird-Parker

Let us know what you want to hear about

As stated in the “Welcome”, if there’s anything specific you would like to see in future editions or that you would like to hear about please [email me](#) under the subject.

Thanks

Scott McFarlane