



The Week that was

It has been 9 days since Budget 2012 and as predicted the big issues are still playing heavily in the mind of every family and company in the country. From changes to personal taxation, corporate and property tax to the illusive macro-economic strategy for growth it is clear that we are living in interesting times. We note that earlier this week the Health and Social Care act passed into law. There are clear opportunities for providers to benefit directly from these changes and as we reported on Monday, there is likely to be a clamour to bid to deliver on Personal Independence Payments from private sector companies already delivering employment related services. This is another opportunity for you to be ahead of the curve forging strategic partnerships.

We note that G4S has won a sizeable contract to build a huge police station: whilst for many it is controversial to bring the market place into policing, the era of small government necessitates that this is the direction of travel and more organisations need to participate in order to bring much needed ethical balance between the profit motive and public benefit.

Battle lines have been drawn between charities and the Government over the Chancellor's decision to impose a 25% of income cap (or £50k). However, what most people have not noticed is the new changes brought in to Gift Aid and small donations which was announced in Budget 2011 and is currently been consulted on. This is good news for charities.

New developments

Very soon we will be able to auto donate to charities of our choice via cash machines. If you add the Big Society bank to this, we could be witnessing a new era of total 'hands off governments' which sees the charity sector competing for contracts and hoping for the largess of you and I at the cash point. You never know, if this takes off we might never again require government grants to fund our charities (**now that's revolutionary, now that's scary, now that would be a disaster**).

The National Audit Office says that no controls were put in place as up to 50,000 people may have entered Britain to work rather than to study; this has real implications for entry level jobs. We also learned that we are seeing the birth of the first generation of centenarians and that violent computer games are bad for our children. Did it really take a report for the powers to be to recognise that violence and video games would have a deleterious effect on young minds?

British Workers

British workers were again in the spotlight when BMW entered negotiations asking for its workers to cut their lunch break by 10 minutes. At the same time, The daily Telegraph reported that a quarter of staff failed to take their holidays, by the looks of things it wasn't the staff at BMW!

Work, life and economy

Staying on the work theme: the Daily Mail reported that an ONS report revealed that half of working Britons are dissatisfied with their work life balance (I wonder whether BMW workers featured in this survey?). We still need to be more cautious as the OECD has concluded that the UK is back in recession as the economy shrank at an annual rate of 1.2 per cent at the end of 2011 and they predict it to continue to shrink at the start of 2012.

Balfour Beatty also placed all its 12,000 UK construction services staff on notice of redundancy as profits fell from 3 per cent to 2.4 per cent in 2011. Surely there is a moral issue here; Balfour Beatty is still making huge profit, give the huge tax breaks that they receive, surely they can hold off a little longer before making mass redundancies?

Have a great sunny weekend

Floyd

Opposition Position

With talk of double dip recessions and potential fuel shortages in the UK, the biggest event this week was the announcement that one of Mr Milliband's top advisors Liam Byrne will stand down if elected mayor of Birmingham. The announcement has sparked fears among

Head line of the week

The Metro, Pg.1

"The blobby bobbies of Scotland yard"