williamsdenton
ACCOUNTANTS & TAX ADVISORS

Bangor Office
Glaslyn, Ffordd Y Parc,
Parc Menai,
Bangor,
Gwynedd
LL57 4FE

Tel: 01248 670370
Fax: 01248 670270
Email: bangor@williamsdenton.co.uk

Llandudno Office
San Remo,
13 Trinity Square,
Llandudno
LL30 2RB

Tel: 01492 877478
Fax: 01492 874880
Email: llandudno@williamsdenton.co.uk

Charitable Giving

If you are thinking of making a gift to charity, this factsheet summarises how to make tax-effective gifts. You can get tax relief on gifts to UK charities if you give:

- under Gift Aid
- through a Payroll Giving scheme, run by your employer, or
- by making a gift of certain shares or land.

Location of the charity

Charitable tax reliefs are available on gifts to UK charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs).

Gift Aid

If you pay tax, Gift Aid is a scheme by which you can give a sum of money to charity and the charity can normally reclaim basic rate tax on your gift from HMRC. That increases the value of the gift you make to the charity. So for example, if you give £10 using Gift Aid that gift is worth £12.50 to the charity.

You can give any amount, large or small, regular or one-off.

If you do not pay tax, you should not use Gift Aid.

How does a gift qualify for Gift Aid?

There are three main conditions. You must:

- make a declaration to the charity that you want your gift to be treated as a Gift Aid donation
- pay at least as much tax as the charities will reclaim on your gifts in the tax year in which you make them
- not receive excessive benefits in return for your gift.

Making a declaration

The declaration is the charity's authority to reclaim tax from HMRC on your gift.

The declaration can be in writing or orally but, usually, the charity will provide a written declaration form.

You do not have to make a declaration with every gift. In order to make a Gift Aid donation you'll need to make a Gift Aid declaration. The charity will normally ask you to complete a simple form - one form can cover every gift made to the same charity or CASC for whatever period you choose, and can cover gifts you have already made (backdating your claim for up to four years) and/or gifts you may make in the future.

Membership subscriptions through Gift Aid

Gift Aid donor benefit rules

The donor benefit rules that apply to charities that claim Gift aid are determined by two percentage thresholds:

- the benefit threshold for the first £100 of the donation is 25% of the amount of the donation, and
- for larger donations, charities can offer an additional benefit to donors up to 5% of the amount of the donation that exceeds £100.

There is an overriding limit on the value of benefits received by a donor in a tax year as a consequence of donations to a charity, which is £2,500.

You can pay membership subscriptions to a charity through Gift Aid, provided any membership benefits you receive do not exceed certain limits. However, you can disregard free or reduced entry to view any property preserved, maintained, kept or created by a charity in relation to their charitable work.

Fund-raising events

Where you have raised money which has simply been collected from other people and the other people have not made a declaration to the charity that they are taxpayers, the payment is not made under Gift Aid and generally no tax relief is due but see below regarding the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme.

However, if you have been sponsored for an event, and each sponsor has signed a Gift Aid declaration, then the charity can recover the tax on the amounts covered by declarations. Charities may produce sponsorship forms for this.

Higher rate and additional rate taxpayers

If you are a higher/additional rate taxpayer, you can claim tax relief on the difference between the basic rate and higher/additional rate of tax (through your tax return). Relief is given either for the tax year of payment or in some

cases it is possible to elect to receive the benefit of the higher/additional rate tax relief in the tax year prior to the year of the donation.

You should therefore keep a record of payments made under Gift Aid for each tax year.

The time limit for claiming tax relief on Gift Aid donations is four years. This time limit applies to the charity and the individual making the gift.

Tainted donations to charity

Tax relief is denied on donations where one of the main purposes of the donation is to receive a tax advantage for the donor or connected person directly or indirectly from the charity. There is no monetary limit on the amount of the donation which may be caught by these rules.

Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS)

Charities can use Charities Online for repayment of tax on other income and claims for top-up payments under the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS).

Charities and CASCs can claim a top-up payment on small donations without the need to collect Gift Aid declarations. The Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS) applies where it is impractical to obtain a Gift Aid declaration. GASDS applies to donations of £30 or less made by individuals in cash or contactless payment. Charities are generally able to claim on small donations of up to £8,000 per annum which will result in a repayment of £2,000 for the charity or CASC. The GASDS claim must not be more than ten times the Gift Aid claim.

The GASDS is ideal for small cash donations or contactless payments received in collection boxes, bucket collections and during religious services.

Payroll Giving

A Payroll Giving scheme allows you to give regularly to charity from your pay and get tax relief on your gifts. The scheme requires your employer to set up and run a scheme. You authorise your employer to deduct your gift from your pay. Every month your employer pays it over to a Payroll Giving agency approved by HMRC. The agency then distributes the money to the charity or charities of your choice.

Because your employer deducts your gift from your pay or pension before PAYE is worked out, you pay tax only on the balance. This means that you get your tax relief immediately at your highest rate of tax. (The amount you pay in national insurance contributions is not affected.)

Gifts of shares or land

Capital gains tax (CGT)

You are not liable to CGT when you make a gift of assets, such as land or shares, to charity, even if the asset is worth more when you donate it than when you acquired it.

Income tax

You may also get income tax relief for these gifts to charity if they are 'qualifying investments' (see below).

The relief you can claim will usually be the market value of the shares, securities or land plus any incidental costs of disposal less the value of any consideration or benefits you receive.

Example

Alma owns quoted shares with a market value of £10,000 and an original cost to her of £3,000. Alma is a higher rate taxpayer.

Alma gives the shares to the charity. The charity will then sell the shares for £10,000 and keep the full sale proceeds.

Alma will not have a capital gain arising under CGT. She will be entitled to 40% income tax relief on the value of her gift ie £4,000.

Although this sounds a very attractive relief, a comparison should be made of the alternative route of gifting to a charity by selling the investment and giving the net proceeds to charity under Gift Aid.

So, if Alma sold the shares, she would make a capital gain of £7,000 before considering any unused annual exemption. If, say, the CGT bill is nil, she could gift the proceeds of £10,000 under Gift Aid. The charity can reclaim tax of £10,000 x 20/80 = £2,500. Alma is entitled to higher rate relief on the gross gift of £2,500 (£10,000 x 100/80 x 40 - 20%).

Although Alma has received less tax relief (£4,000 compared to £2,500), the charity will have received £12,500 (£10,000 from Alma and £2,500 from HMRC).

If you would like further advice on this matter, please contact us.

Qualifying investments

In more detail, the following investments qualify for the tax relief:

- shares and securities listed or dealt in on the UK Stock Exchange, including the Alternative Investment Market
- shares or securities listed or dealt in on any overseas recognised stock exchange
- units in an authorised unit trust (AUT)
- shares in a UK open-ended investment company (OEIC)
- holdings in certain foreign collective investment schemes (foreign equivalents of AUTs and OEICs)
- freehold interests in land
- leasehold interests in land.

You should always contact the charity to ensure that it can accept the shares or the land. Indeed for land, the charity needs to give you a certificate stating that it has acquired the land.

The charity may be able to help you with the transfer procedure.

How we can help

If you would like to help a charity financially, it makes sense to do this in a tax efficient way. We can provide assistance in determining this for you. Please contact us for more detailed advice.

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