

TRADE BODIES CLAMOUR TO JOIN CuttheVAT

A decision by four more organisations to get on board the **CuttheVAT** campaign has given the NHF's attempts to get cross-industry support a massive boost.

The involvement of the major industry suppliers, represented by the **Hairdressing & Beauty Suppliers Association (HBSA)**, the **Hairdressing Council (HC)**, which maintains the UK register for qualified hairdressers, the **British Association of Beauty Therapy and Cosmetology (Babtat)** and the **Guild of Beauty Therapists** heralds a major breakthrough for the NHF-led campaign to get the rate of VAT for hairdressing, and now for beauty services, too, reduced to 5%.

The HBSA's endorsement sees major industry players, including **Wella, Tigi, Schwarzkopf, Sally Hair & Beauty Supplies, Goldwell, Redken** and **L'Oreal Professional** among the thousands of industry businesses with a combined annual revenue of many billions of pounds that are committed to ensuring fair play for the nation's 65,000 hair and beauty salons in Britain that employ 325,000 people, and



PAUL ARCHER, director of Guild of Beauty Therapists

thousands more freelance operators. **David Macklin**, HBSA chief executive said, the trade body had decided to come on board after NHF secretary general **Eileen Lawson** presented the case for a 5% rate of VAT to the HBSA council. "The HBSA, as a body, is supportive of the campaign and I am happy to do anything I can do as a liaison between the HBSA and the NHF."

Macklin said he thought it would be a long-term campaign and thought heavy lobbying would be more apt after the General Election but "trying to win support from all the parties is the right way to go for the moment. Keeping the campaign in ministers' sight is important until we know who is in government."

Angela Bartlett, chairman of Babtat, said it was essential for both the hair and beauty industry to unite to show the government the sector had a voice and was prepared to speak out on relevant issues.

"A reduction of VAT to around 5% would allow many smaller businesses to grow and create many more jobs in this sector. It has been shown to be effective in other countries and should be adopted as soon as possible in the UK."

Bartlett said Babtat's beauty and holistic members were crippled by high VAT rates because of the labour-intensive nature of such businesses.

Sally Styles, HC registrar, said: "The Hairdressing Council is happy to support any campaign that will benefit the industry and state-registered hairdressers. If VAT is cut, it will be advantageous to everyone in the hairdressing industry."

Lawson concluded: "Surely whoever is in government after the General Election cannot ignore the strength of feeling and logical argument behind the CuttheVAT campaign. We are gradually getting increasing publicity including coverage in the regional as well as the national and trade press. Ministers would do well to listen with the country anticipating going to the polls. VAT for hairdressing salon services is just a direct tax on our sector that comes straight out of clients' pockets."

The NHF's PR machinery has ensured all major newspapers and magazines have been notified, including the accountancy press, which has given the issue coverage.

Beauty services are not currently among the sectors in which European finance ministers on the **Economic and Financial Affairs Council (Ecofin)** said last year that member states should have the option to apply reduced VAT.

The NHF plans to promote the inclusion of beauty therapy through the European association of employers' organisations in hairdressing, **Coiffure EU**.

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the guild
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