

Not good enough Mr Timms - so now please address the is..

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Stephen Timms, Financial Secretary to the Treasury has written [a response to](#) the Guardian's Tax Gap series. It's not good enough. He says:

The Guardian was right in its Tax Gap series to highlight the issues of tax avoidance and evasion. The vast majority of people in Britain pay the right amount of tax, and they have every right to be angered by reports of a small minority of people, including companies, deliberately seeking to evade or avoid tax.

As a Treasury minister, I understand the need to make sure the tax system works fairly. ... The government does not expect people to pay more than their fair share. It expects them to pay what is due. But it is my responsibility to make sure that taxpayers who comply with their obligations are not disadvantaged by the actions of a minority who try to avoid paying their fair share.

There then follows a massive list of platitudes before he says:

The Guardian articles rightly highlight how avoidance is now an international activity. The UK plays a leading role in international efforts to counter avoidance and evasion through sharing of information and intelligence.

We will be using our presidency of the G20 to push the tax evasion issue further up the international agenda, in order to boost efforts in the EU and the OECD to tackle it.

Protecting tax revenues is key to delivering fairness. In the current economic downturn we need to support businesses so they can provide the jobs of the future. But they need to play by the rules. We will remain relentless in taking action - domestically and internationally - to tackle both tax avoidance and evasion.

Of course I want to believe him: the reality is that this is not what is happening.

The UK is supporting its tax havens.

The UK is massively cutting tax staff.

The UK is saying no, no, no to all its partners in the G7 and G20 on tax reform. Ministries tell us so.

The UK refused cooperation at the UN on tax.

The UK is refusing to work with the EU on the CCCTB

The UK is (I know) sending misinformation to the EU on the revised EU STD

The UK is still subsidising the Isle of Man to be a tax haven.

The UK refused to close down the internationally hated domicile rule.

The list goes on, and on, and on of occasions where the UK is relentless in taking action that is designed to facilitate tax avoidance and evasion and which is designed to undermine progressive taxation and the establishment of international justice in tax to ensure that each does really pay a fair share - not just as defied by abuse of the rules but in accordance with natural justice.

Why Mr Timms, why?

Why no mention of these issues here, for a start?