

# Another accountant gets UK Uncut - so why don't most?

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I've mentioned that [Dennis Howlett is an accountant who has "got" UK Uncut](#).

Stuart Jones is another one who does so. [As he has said on this blog today](#):

*I went to see a "Topshop protest".*

*I pay tax but as a Chartered Accountant I obviously save my clients paying too much tax. Everything I do is legal as is the case with the big name tax advisors. The difference is that I draw a line and advise my clients not to step beyond it for numerous reasons.*

*But I am sick and tired of seeing wealthy individuals and companies avoiding huge amounts of tax through artificial schemes which are ONLY available to them (because of their wealth).*

*Sitting on the fence has NEVER been an option for me.*

*Scrapping the tax avoidance "industry" would not affect any of my clients other than they may pay less tax because others are paying the right amount.*

*Keep up the good work Richard and UKuncut and if I (a 57 year old, politically right of centre, Chartered Accountant) am banned from a shopping centre for taking a photo of a Topshop then the protests must be worrying someone.*

Stuart makes a really good point. Tax compliance is something wise accountants do - and yes, they still do help their clients plan their tax because there are legitimate choices to be made in the tax system and I'm not going to deny those to people. But that is fundamentally different from the artificial structures seen in tax avoidance. A wise accountant like Stuart can see the difference because it is plain to see to those in the know - and to those with eyes to see from beyond the profession.

The question is not one of legitimacy when it comes to this issue - we all know tax avoidance is as legitimate as apartheid was in South Africa once upon a time - it is one

of ethics, inequality and the appropriateness of creating structures that do not reflect the economic reality of a transaction, which is why offshore is so often the focus of the debate since offshore is almost always tax avoidance activity and not tax compliant.

How is it Stuart can see that but the CBI can't? And what's wrong with a level playing field for big and small business in this regard - where all, of course, abide with the idea of tax compliance.

It would be great to hear the Big 4 or the CBI or the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales answering such questions. Because in the case of the CBI and the ICAEW they claim to represent the smaller businesses who are losing out as badly as ordinary people from this abuse. And how can they justify that?