

You want morality in the boardroom David Cameron? Try t..

Published: January 13, 2026, 7:11 am

David Cameron has said this morning:

In the highest offices, the plushiest boardrooms, the most influential jobs, we need to think about the example we are setting.

Moral decline and bad behaviour is not limited to a few of the poorest parts of our society.

OK, start with these five ideas:

1. Sign a tax code of conduct

I've designed one - but let's keep it simple, shall we? Let's say companies should agree to seek to pay the right amount of tax in the right place at the right time where right means that the economic substance of the transactions undertaken coincides with the place and form in which they are reported for taxation purposes. As a result they'd agree to

- i) not use any artificial structures not explicitly encouraged by law
- ii) not use tax havens
- iii) always err on the side of caution when in doubt about the ethics of an arrangement.

2. Publish their accounts on a country-by-country reporting basis

This is so we can see exactly how much they make in the UK and elsewhere, how much they record in tax havens, and how much tax they pay where. Being honest is a key part of being ethical and country-by-country reporting is about being honest to the societies where you work.

3. Agreed to pay top to bottom pay ratios.

It's fundamentally unethical that the pay differentials we now see in this country exist. A top to bottom pay ratio of more than 20 is hard to justify in any company: 30 and we're moving into the realms of obscenity but this is small bear in many companies. Reform is essential.

4. Stop lobbying for tax reductions.

Vast numbers of companies - and almost all the FTSE 100 do this, all the time. Well stop it. You've got the best deal in the country. Now shut up and let society heal itself.

5. Advertise responsibly

Don't promote consumerism. Don't promote a lack of respect to the family. Don't sell violence. Don't sell abuse. All too many do, far too much. And that's the cause of the moral malaise.