

Funding the Future

Article URL

Published: January 12, 2026, 5:36 pm

I received the following press release today. I think it's worth noting in full:

A new website launches today calling for think tanks and public policy campaigns to publish their annual income and name their major funders. For its pilot project, Who Funds You? - <http://WhoFundsYou.org> - asked 20 leading UK-based think tanks and political campaigns to disclose their major funders and rated them on the depth of their responses. The website awarded six organisations its top "A" rating (Compass, IPPR, New Economics Foundation, Progress, Resolution Foundation, Social Market Foundation), while three received its lowest "E" rating (Adam Smith Institute, ResPublica, TaxPayers' Alliance). The full results are: A — Compass, IPPR, NEF, Progress, Resolution Foundation, Social Market Foundation â€"B — Demos, Fabian Society, Policy Network, Reform â€"C — Centre Forum, Civitas, Smith Institute D — Centre for Policy Studies, Centre for Social Justice, Institute of Economic Affairs, Policy Exchange â€"E — Adam Smith Institute, ResPublica, TaxPayers' Alliance Who Funds You? is now inviting other think tanks and political campaigns with a strong public policy or research focus to disclose funders who give £5,000 or more in a single year. It will give a funding transparency award to those that do, and encourages funders to favour such organisations. As think tanks increasingly take an important role in formulating government policy, it is important for a strong democracy that they are open about their own agenda and where their funding comes from. This is particularly the case in light of increased scrutiny of political party funding. Who Funds You? co-founder Clifford Singer said: *"It's refreshing to see an increasing number of think tanks and campaigns taking funding transparency seriously. We are really pleased that four of the 20 organisations we rated have placed funding information on their own websites since we first approached them [NEF, Progress, Social Market Foundation and the Fabian Society], while a fifth [IPPR] had already added details several months before*

But seven of the organisations we approached are languishing in our D and E streams. Those who received a D rating revealed nothing beyond the size of their annual income, while those rated E won't even disclose that. However, these ratings are not set in stone. Our aim is to encourage think tanks and campaigns to be more open, and we will review methodology and scoring regularly based upon changes they make. We are pleased that one of our trailing organisations, ResPublica, has already pledged to improve transparency and hope that others will follow suit. At their best, think tanks and public policy campaigns make a valuable contribution to political life, generating new ideas and producing important research. At their worst,

they can provide a neutral front while actually working on behalf of vested interests. As organisations that exert influence on public life, it is right that we call think tanks to account and ask for this basic level of transparency.” ----- I disclose all my [major funders here](#). My full accounts - much fuller than required by law are on line at Companies House. What a shame that the right wing can't live up to such ethical standards.