

Osborne's getting rattled on tax avoidance

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The [Press Association has reported](#) that:

A crackdown on wealthy tax dodgers has resulted in an extra £500 million flowing into the Treasury's coffers, George Osborne told MPs.

"Later this week we will be confirming that we have raised half a billion pounds in extra tax from high net worth individuals through our efforts through the HMRC," he told the Commons at Treasury question time.

How can you announce an announcement like that? Doesn't he realise he's just done it?

But what's really amusing is that this is all happening ahead of tomorrow's debate in the Commons on tax avoidance led by Michael Meacher, [the sponsor of the General Anti-Tax Avoidance Principle Bill](#) that is being presented to the House on Friday.

The PA continued:

The Chancellor said the £500 million boost was the result of a "better than expected performance" by the high net worth individuals unit

That's over time: not in a year. And when avoidance is in HMRC's estimate up to £5 million a year and in mine up to £25 billion a year you can see why all the bluster the government makes amounts to very little. What we need is a [General Anti-Tax Avoidance Principle Bill](#), now.