

The tax profession's foxes now want control of the tax ...

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I was astonished to read a [press release from the Chartered Institute of Tax](#) yesterday that said:

The Advisory Panel on the proposed General Anti Abuse Rule (GAAR) should be wholly independent, with no representatives of HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). Commenting, CIOT President Patrick Stevens said:

"This is all about making the GAAR work and reducing uncertainty for taxpayers, especially businesses. The proposed Advisory Panel is a key feature of the operation of the GAAR. The Government have identified its purpose as being to help taxpayers and HMRC identify the borderline of where the GAAR applies. To achieve this we think it is necessary for it to be genuinely independent, drawing on those with current practical tax experience and with no HMRC representatives."

Think about that for a moment. What the CIOT is saying that a panel of tax experts, none of whom must come from HMRC, must decide whether or not our national tax authority, H M Revenue & Customs, can make enquiry under the law into a tax avoidance scheme.

And think just for a moment where in that case those 'experts' who will make the decision will come from. They will, of course, come from the ranks of the tax profession, the vast majority of whom make their income from selling tax avoidance schemes.

The sheer arrogance of this suggestion is staggering. The contempt this proposal shows for HMRC is amazing. And the indifference it shows to democracy and the accountability that is implicit (or should be implicit but for the fact so many people from the tax avoidance industry have been appointed to HMRC's board) in the civil service reveals a contempt for the proper processes of government that does, of course, also fuel this profession's deliberate use of tax havens and tax avoidance to undermine the will of parliament.

If the Chartered Institute of Tax had put up a banner headline over the press release

saying "We believe in the rule of the 1% for the 1% and don't care about anyone else" they could not have been any less subtle.

As it is what they're asking for is equivalent to a panel of criminals being asking to authorise all police investigations into serious crime before the police are allowed to proceed: it is that unsubtle.

The proverbial suggestion that they want the foxes put in charge of the chicken run could not be more appropriate.