

# There is one tax inspector for every Â£198 million of...

Published: January 13, 2026, 3:24 am

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The [FT has reported](#):

*Hundreds of thousands more wealthy individuals will appear on HM Revenue & Customs' radar after it doubled its team for tackling wealthy tax avoiders to more than 200 inspectors.*

*HMRC announced plans to expand the remit of the Affluent Unit. In addition to taxpayers with an annual income of more than £150,000 and wealth of between £2.5m and £20m, the unit will also cover those with wealth in the £1m to £2.5m range.*

*The move is expected to increase the number of wealthy individuals under scrutiny to 500,000 according to HMRC estimates.*

Now let's think about this for a minute, and do whilst realising this is a story straight from an HMRC press release. What this release is saying that those earning £150,000 or more ([338,000 people at present according to HMRC data](#)) who pay between them £39.6 billion in tax, or about 25.5% of all income tax have had just 100 taxpayers dedicated to them to date.

HMRC has over 65,000 staff at present.

HMRC collects [about £466 billion in all a year](#).

That's about £7.1 million per employee. But the affluent persons unit has only 100 staff right now, which is one employee per £396 million.

And after this change there is going to be an inspector per £198 million of tax collected.

Now I know there are obvious problems in dividing totals by numbers: HMRC claim over 90% of tax comes in whatever they do (a statistic that is very obviously not true) but however it is looked at suggesting one inspector per £198 million of income of the most affluent in our society suggests four things to me.

The first is it's no surprise tax avoidance is so easy.

The second is tax avoidance is going to remain incredibly easy.

The third is someone has got their priorities on staff allocation in HMRC seriously wrong.

Last, HMRC need more people. And you'd think, wouldn't you, that when an inspector costs maybe £100,000 or so a year, with overheads, it may just be worth employing a few more when their individual targets are going to be at least a part of £198 million each.