

How to make sure almost every buy-to-let landlord is ta...

Published: January 13, 2026, 1:02 am

[Buy-to-let property ownership](#) is rising, most of it fuelled by cheap loans.

According to [HMRC this is a major area of tax fraud](#). Large numbers of buy-to-let landlords do not report their income and gains and HMRC are largely powerless to do much about the problem.

The solutions to the problem are, however, quite simple. There are two.

The first is to require that every letting agent advise HMRC of every property they have sought to or have let each year, and who the owner they are acting for is. That's not hard. And they have the information. The information should cover holiday homes as well as buy-to-lets. It would be too easy to get out of reporting otherwise.

Secondly, every time a bank creates a buy-to-let mortgage it should have to notify HMRC of the property involved and the real owner (who they have to identify for money laundering purposes already). They should also be required to submit a register of all such mortgages in existence during each year to HMRC.

All reporting should be in machine readable format so HMRC can readily use it - including to send letters straight to landlords.

In combination I suspect this would mean the existence of maybe 98% of all buy-to-lets would be notified to HMRC. That doesn't guarantee all would pay their tax, but the means to tackle them would exist. And that is vital.

Now, will we see this in the Finance Act 2014? I doubt it. But I can hope.