

# Why is Volker Becker of Npower on the board of HMRC?

Published: January 13, 2026, 12:03 pm

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The [Mirror reports this morning that](#):

*A fatcat who helped energy firm Npower's owners avoid millions of pounds in tax now sits on the board of HM Revenue and Customs — as an adviser to the Taxman.*

*Former npower boss Volker Beckers ran a tax avoidance operation in Malta which meant the firm paid no corporation tax in the UK for four years while energy bills soared by 55%.*

*A Mirror investigation has found that Beckers was a director of Scaris Limited, which was run on a shoestring with one employee out of a cheap rented office in the Mediterranean tax haven.*

*Npower's German owner loaned billions of pounds to the UK company through Scaris and the interest payments on these loans wiped out UK profits, so no tax was due.*

The tone is not my style. The story has much to do with me, but with the Mirror having had the budget to visit Malta to discover that Becker, [now a non-exec at HMRC](#), was a director of the company that was key to this whole tax avoidance scheme.

I've long wondered why HMRC needs a board made up of representatives of big business without any trade union, employee or civil society representation. When those from big business have been associated with tax avoidance then the doubts grow. As the Mirror notes:

*Campaigner Richard Murphy, of Tax Research, claimed Beckers' role on HMRC's board was difficult to justify.*

*He said: "He is a German national who has been a director of a company that has clearly been involved with [tax avoidance](#) .*

*"How this qualifies him to supervise our national tax authority is hard to explain."*

I am pleased to note that Margaret Hodge MP agrees.

Candidly it is time to sweep this Board clean and give HMRC the leadership it needs and deserves. That would be one that believes in collecting tax, for a start.