

On the sale of HMRC taxpayer data

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As many will know I have been campaigning for country-by-country reporting of accounting and tax data by multinational companies for overcast decade. As a result of that work, and campaigning by many others, this issue reached the international taxvagendalast year, and then the fight back began.

At the OECD those multinational businesses - whose trading information whether at group or subsidiary level should, in my opinion, be on public record because of the limited liability they enjoy - have been saying two things. The first is that this is an infringement of their right to privacy and the second is that tax authorities can't be relied upon to protect the private nature of this data.

I have to date dismissed both concerns.

However, [now we know that the UK government is apparently planning to sell tax payer data](#) to commercial organisations and researchers (although the latter is just PR; they won't be able to afford it). So the very same companies who object to filing information on their tax affairs that will ensure they pay the right amount of tax in the right place at the right time will now be able to buy information on the tax affairs of people who do just that.

You really could not make up such staggering hypocrisy from both big business and HMRC.

On hang on: [given who is on the board of HMRC](#) they are of course virtually one and the same thing.

If Labour does not commit to sweeping this board clean on coming to office we've no hope of having a decent tax authority.