

Bankers have not changed their spots

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Time and again I am asked to believe that bankers have changed their spots and that we live in a new era of ethical financial services. Time and again I have difficulty doing so, and for good reason.

I still see the UK's tax havens resisting calls for public registers of companies. Secrecy remains top of their agenda as a result.

I still see Jersey promoting 'research' claiming they add value to the world economy.

And well after 2008 [we now learn that Lloyds Bank was doing its best to abuse the government scheme](#) set up to help bail it out through the deliberate rigging of interest rate data to save itself money.

Mark Carney has expressed his anger at this activity, and rightly so. But he needs to take his blinkers off. The reality is that nothing has really changed in the City, or in its tax haven branch offices. The fact that Lloyds, despite its dominant government stake in its capital, continued with a culture where abuse was possible and considered acceptable is the surest indication of that. The bankers have carried on as before, running the banks for the bankers and not in anyone else's interests and the failure to use state ownership as the point of leverage for change is as a result a damning indictment of the failure of Gordon Brown and Alistair Darling to impose control and so change on those banks when they had the chance to do so.

Osborne's banking reforms will not happen before 2018 - itself an indication of business as usual. I am not hearing of any major changes being proposed by Labour. As [Aditya Chakraborty says this morning in a powerful article in the Guardian](#), all Labour says is that we need to address market failure with more competition from new banks that will do exactly the same thing as those banks already in existence - and this is not a recipe for change as a result but is instead support for the status quo.

We have made some progress - but not enough by any way - on tax transparency over the last few years. But real reform of the corrupt nature of our banking system is a long way off right now. Expect the abuse and the scandals to continue, because no one

seems willing to tackle them.