

HMRC to 'celebrate' its failures in service at Westmins...

Published: January 13, 2026, 4:21 am

HMRC's senior management have done some quite bizarre things over the years since it was created to the point that I presumed that there was little that they could do that would surprise me, but I was wrong. The news that HMRC is to hold a service at Westminster Abbey next month to celebrate its own achievements strikes me as utterly bizarre.

I cannot find HMRC's own press briefing on this planned folly on line, but [the Scottish Herald has given it coverage](#). Apparently it says:

"The aim of the service is to celebrate the vital work that we do in HMRC to collect revenue to fund public services and to benefit society as a whole."

The events will consist of "testimonials, readings and hymns all reflecting the core purpose of HMRC".

Around 1,500 staff from across HMRC are expected to attend, at HMRC expense.

It is hard to know where to start in addressing this folly.

HMRC does, of course, have a core purpose. But it fails at it. The tax gap exceeds £100 billion a year, and that is largely the fault of its management who will have between 2005 and 2015 sacked well over 30,000 staff - or more than a third of its entire workforce. If the service is meant to celebrate job destruction, union provocation and failure to collect tax owing it would note the real achievements of HMRC because it has failed in its core objective.

Then there's the absurd waste of money involved in this exercise. How will people be selected to attend? And to what benefit? Will it be a day out for those who have not been on strike? I hope not, because those who have had the true best interests of HMRC at heart.

And why in such a venue so loaded with royal and state significance when HMRC's job has always been to stand apart from such influences and act with impartiality to collect

tax that is due? Does no one in HMRC's senior management have a clue about the history of tax, democracy, the crown, parliament and the people of the country? If they did then this would have been the last place to choose for such a celebration, if one were needed.

And why in London? Bradford could I am sure have provided a location and a large nearby tax office too.

And why religious? In modern day society this is bound to be an affront to many for both religious and political reasons.

And how come when HMRC says that those who strike at HMRC to preserve their jobs and to protect HMRC's ability to collect revenue owing threaten the well being of the country by taking a day off unpaid to make that point and yet HMRC can take thousands out of work for a day at considerable additional cost and the same logic does not apply?

I regret to say that it's impossible to think that this service is anything but an act of self aggrandisement by the Board of HMRC approved for political purposes (as it must have been) by a government [that knows that tax revenues to be collected this year will fall considerably short of their budget](#). As such it stinks of something little short of corruption.

The need for root and branch reform of HMRC senior management becomes ever more apparent by the day.

NB: It is appropriate to note that I work with PCS, the Union who represent many HMRC staff, but I do so because I have views such as those noted here