

Lying or stupid: those are the choices

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The [FT has reported this morning](#) that:

The UK government insisted on Tuesday that ministers did not know the full facts about the HSBC tax scandal until this week, in a collective closing of ranks in Parliament and in British financial services over the affair.

“No government minister had any knowledge that HSBC may have been involved in wrongdoing in regard to its Swiss banking arm prior to the reports of the last couple of days,” a spokesman for UK prime minister David Cameron said.

With the greatest of respect to those involved, this require them to be either liars or stupid or both given that the information was readily available on the web at the time, [not least from the BBC, who I quoted](#).

The alternative is that they are lying now.

This denial really is a remarkably unedifying spectacle that brings discredit on all involved and I would rather think better of ministers than that.