

The government is cracking down on tax advisers - and a...

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The government has, in the last hour, [published a new policy document](#) on tax avoidance and tax evasion.

Much of what that document has to say on progress to date is nonsense, based on vastly overstated claims on tax recovered and misrepresentation of its spending on HMRC, matched to a catalogue of actions which provide greater evidence of opportunity missed than anything else.

But it's not all negative. There is a welcome revival of the proposal for a strict liability offence on offshore tax abuse and a stated intention to extend it to tax advisers, which is long overdue.

More important in many ways is this:

Today, the government also announced it is asking the regulatory bodies who police professional standards to take on a greater lead and responsibility in setting and enforcing clear professional standards around the facilitation and promotion of avoidance to protect the reputation of the tax and accountancy profession and to act for the greater public good.

The accountancy profession has long been wilfully negligent on this issue (I use the words intentionally) and it is overdue that accountants be reminded of just what their public duties are, and be required to fulfil them.

For once, I have something to applaud.

Now wait for the howls of protest.