

The NHS, privatisation and tax avoidance

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Because I was laid up with a really heavy cold over the weekend I did not blog an article featuring my work that was in the Observer yesterday. [As they reported:](#)

[Virgin Care](#), which has been handed contracts worth hundreds of millions of pounds to run more than 230 NHS and social care services, is one of at least 10 private health firms seeking state-funded contracts whose company structures include tax havens, it can be revealed.

An [analysis by Richard Murphy](#), a chartered accountant at Tax Research UK, has found 13 holding companies, some of them offshore, between Virgin Care and its ultimate parent company, based in the British Virgin Islands.

I recommend the rest of the article, unsurprisingly, although a couple of minor technical errors have crept into the Observer's reporting which do not, however, change the substance.

Since the work I undertook was for Unite, the Union I am not sure when the report will be published as yet as I have not yet been told. What I can say is that the conclusion of the work is clear, and that is that tax avoidance is at the heart of the structuring of many of the outsourced NHS contractors, and much of that tax avoidance involves offshore tax havens. I think that is unacceptable and so too do Unite, which is why I am pleased to work with them on this issue.