

## The Taxpayers' Alliance in Cloud Cuckoo Land

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I was amused to note the absurd suggestions the Taxpayers' Alliance made to balance the government's books in an advance copy of a policy document they are, apparently, publishing today.

They want to cut £50 billion out of government spending programmes by, amongst other things:

*abolishing the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, the Department of Energy and Climate Change and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and £4.4 billion by bringing Scotland's central grant in line with Wales.*

So there's some real world politics for you. Which is also reflected in their plan to close the Department for International Development.

But I was most struck by this:

*The TPA said cuts of this scale could be attained by measures including renegotiating GP contracts to trim more than £1 billion from "excessive" pay*

There are [about 35,600 GPs](#) in the UK. And there is a massive recruitment crisis which will get much worse as many are in their fifties and looking to retire early, all of which contributes to the problem of getting an appointment. And the TPA wants to solve this by cutting GP pay by an average of a little over £28,000 a year. That's obviously going to help, isn't it? Young doctors are going to be queuing up to be GPs in that case, aren't they?

Or, is this just a plan to drive people into the private sector?

Either way, the TPA are simply proving they live in cloud cuckoo land and have not the slightest idea how markets work, or what much of

government does, but I guess we knew that anyway.

*Disclosure: my wife is a GP but has been unable to work for almost two years because of ill health.*