

## Holding ministers to account on tax: recent parlamenta...

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There are Members of Parliament who are interested in tax abuse. And there are those who answer their questions.

I am grateful to [David Lowry](#), an independent research consultant based in London who sent me the extract of recent exchanges of interest in the Houses of Parliament:

Asked by [Kelvin Hopkins](#)

(Luton North)

Asked on: 16 March 2016

**HM Treasury**

**Tax Avoidance**

**Commons**

**[31415](#)**

***To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will appoint an independent commission to investigate the role of PricewaterhouseCoopers, KPMG, Ernst & Young and Deloitte in designing, selling and implementing tax avoidance schemes.***

**A**

**Answered by: [Mr David Gauke](#)**

**Answered on: 29 March 2016**

***The Government is committed to countering tax avoidance to ensure all taxpayers pay their fair share. At Budget 2016, the Chancellor announced a comprehensive package of measures to tackle tax avoidance and aggressive***

**tax planning, and tax evasion** by individuals and businesses. Overall, this will raise £12 billion by 2020-21.

***We keep our policy on countering tax avoidance under continuous review to respond to emerging risks.***

**Q**

**Asked by [Kelvin Hopkins](#)**

**(Luton North)**

**Asked on: 16 March 2016**

**HM Treasury**

**Taxation**

**Commons**

**[31416](#)**

***To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to provide that whistleblowers whose evidence leads to a successful prosecution of tax evasion or avoidance receive a portion of the tax penalties levied on the guilty party.***

**A**

**Answered by: [Mr David Gauke](#)**

**Answered on: 29 March 2016**

***HM Revenue and Customs encourages people to come forward with information in a number of ways, and is already able to offer financial rewards to those who provide us with significant information relating to tax evasion or avoidance. The best way to do so is kept under review.***

**Q**

**Asked by [Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead](#)**

**Asked on: 07 March 2016**

**HM Treasury**

**Tax Evasion**

**Lords**

**[HL6771](#)**

**To ask Her Majesty's Government how many cases of (1) corporate, and (2) individual, tax evasion in each of the last five years have involved a British Overseas Territory or a Crown Dependency.**

**A**

**Answered by: [Lord O'Neill of Gatley](#)**

**Answered on: 21 March 2016**

**The information requested is not available in this format.**

**HM Revenue and Customs publishes estimates of the tax gap each year. The latest edition was published on 22 October 2015 and is available on the [gov.uk](#) website.**

**Estimates are made for all major taxes, including corporation tax and income tax. However, this information is not broken down in such a way that can be used to identify the loss of tax receipts due to the tax regimes requested.**

**Grouped Questions: [HL6770](#) | [HL6772](#)**

**Q**

**Asked by [Paul Flynn](#)**

**(Newport West)**

**Asked on: 16 March 2016**

**HM Treasury**

**Taxation**

**Commons**

**[31399](#)**

**To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 1.215 of the Budget 2016, whether he plans to make additional resources available to HM Revenue and Customs to implement the comprehensive package of measures to tackle tax avoidance and evasion.**

**A**

**Answered by:** [Mr David Gauke](#)

**Answered on:** 21 March 2016

**The Government will ensure that HM Revenue and Customs has the resources it requires to implement the package of measures announced at Budget 2016 to tackle avoidance and evasion.**

**Q**

**Asked by** [Neil Gray](#)

**(Airdrie and Shotts)**

**Asked on:** 01 March 2016

**HM Treasury**

**Tax Evasion: Crown Dependencies and British Overseas Territories**

**Commons**

**[29337](#)**

**To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many cases of suspected (a) corporate and (b) individual tax evasion in each of the last five years involved the use of (i) Overseas Territories, (ii) Crown Dependencies and (iii) both; and what estimate HM Revenue and Customs has made of the loss of revenue to the Exchequer from those cases.**

**A**

**Answered by:** [Mr David Gauke](#)

**Answered on:** 09 March 2016

**The information requested is not available in this format.**

**HM Revenue and Customs publishes estimates of the tax gap each year. The latest edition was published on 22 October 2015.**

**<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/measuring-tax-gaps>**

**Estimates are made for all major taxes, including corporation tax and income tax. However, this information is not broken down in such a way that can be**

*used to identify the loss of tax receipts due to the tax regimes requested.*

**Grouped Questions:** [29336](#) | [29332](#) | [29338](#) | [29333](#) | [29334](#) | [29335](#)

**Q**

**Asked by** [Caroline Lucas](#)

**(Brighton, Pavilion)**

**Asked on: 10 February 2016**

**HM Treasury**

**Tax Evasion**

**Commons**

[26742](#)

**To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 15 January 2016 to Question 20496, how many people were (a) prosecuted and (b) convicted of offences relating to (i) corporation tax, (ii) income tax, national insurance contributions, capital gains tax and inheritance tax and (iii) other tax-related offences in each financial year since 2010-11.**

**A**

**Answered by:** [Mr David Gauke](#)

**Answered on: 26 February 2016**

**The information is not held in the format requested. To provide the answers would incur disproportionate cost since the prosecution and conviction data has been captured centrally in alternative categories.**

**Q**

**Asked by** [Stephen Phillips](#)

**(Sleaford and North Hykeham)**

[\[N\]](#)

[Close](#)

**Named Day**

**'Named day' questions only occur in the House of Commons. The MP tabling the question specifies the date on which they should receive an answer. MPs may not table more than five named day questions on a single day.**

**Asked on: 24 February 2016**

**HM Treasury**

**Tax Evasion: Prosecutions**

**Commons**

**[903830](#)**

**To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of successful prosecutions for tax evasion.**

**A**

**Answered by: [Mr David Gauke](#)**

**Answered on: 01 March 2016**

**At Summer Budget 2015, the Government announced an investment of £800 million to tackle non-€ compliance and tax evasion.**

**This investment includes £266 million and 670 new HMRC staff to tackle tax fraud, which will lead to a tripling of the number of criminal investigations into the most serious and complex tax crimes.**

**The Government is also consulting on new criminal powers to tackle offshore tax evasion and corporate facilitation of tax evasion.**

**This all builds on the Government's earlier investment into HMRC, which enabled the Department to achieve a seven-fold increase in the number of prosecutions over the course of the last parliament and contributed to the protection over £2 billion of vital public revenue last year.**

**Q**

**Asked by [Imran Hussain](#)**

**(Bradford East)**

**[\[N\]](#)**

**[Close](#)**

## **Named Day**

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**Asked on: 11 February 2016**

**Department for International Development**

**Developing Countries: Taxation**

**Commons**

**[26992](#)**

**To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what support her Department provides to developing countries to improve their tax revenue gathering capabilities.**

**A**

**Answered by: [Mr Nick Hurd](#)**

**Answered on: 22 February 2016**

**The UK is one of the leading donors on tax and development and we have committed to double our support on tax by 2020 as part of the Addis Tax Initiative. DFID is currently engaged in, or developing, tax reform in 26 of our 28 priority countries. This includes support from the Tax Capacity Building Unit in HMRC we established in 2013 and from international organisations such as OECD, the Global Forum and the World Bank which DFID funds to provide technical assistance to tackle tax evasion and multinational tax avoidance.**

**Q**

**Asked by [Caroline Lucas](#)**

**(Brighton, Pavilion)**

**Asked on: 09 February 2016**

**HM Treasury**

**Corporation Tax**

[26530](#)

**To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what his policy is on the proposal from the European Parliament's Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee for a mandatory Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCCTB) in the EU, in order to have one set of rules for calculating the taxable profits of companies operating in more than one member state; and if he will press for the introduction of such a CCCTB with other EU member states in the Council.**

**A**

**Answered by:** [Mr David Gauke](#)

**Answered on:** 17 February 2016

**The European Parliament's Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee (ECON) has a keen interest in tax, and hence put forward certain proposals. However, the Commission has the sole power of initiative in relation to legislative measures. Tax files are to be agreed by unanimity at the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN). The European Parliament's role in this process is not formal, and purely consultative.**

**The term tax haven is often used as shorthand for low or zero tax jurisdictions. However, low tax rates are not by themselves harmful and the UK supports fair tax competition. The UK is working with other Member States in the EU Code of Conduct Group to identify harmful tax regimes and will continue to take strong action against aggressive avoidance and evasion.**

**The UK and other Member States have not yet seen any proposals from the European Commission or the European Parliament on public country-by-country reporting (CbCR). The Commission is due to publish an Impact Assessment on public CbCR shortly, and we are interested in the results of their analysis. The UK will carefully consider any proposals put forward by the Commission.**

**The UK played a leading role in encouraging other countries and jurisdictions to sign up to international tax transparency agreements during its G8 presidency in 2013. Thanks in large part to the UK's continuing leadership on this agenda, over 90 countries have now committed to exchange information on offshore accounts, beginning in 2017 or 2018. The UK also initiated the international work on CbCR and was the first country to formally commit to implementing the OECD model for CbCR, with legislation in the Finance Act 2015. We support the proposal to amend the Directive on Administrative**

**Co-operation to require all EU Member States to adopt and exchange the OECD CbCR template.**

**The European Commission intends to publish a revised proposal for a mandatory Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCCTB) later this year. The Government will wait to see the detail of the Commission's proposal, including a robust impact assessment, before finalising its position. However, we have stated that the UK will not sign up to anything that undermines our tax sovereignty.**

**Grouped Questions: [26531](#) | [26529](#)**

**Q**

**Asked by [Caroline Lucas](#)**

**(Brighton, Pavilion)**

**Asked on: 09 February 2016**

**HM Treasury**

**Multinational Companies: Taxation**

**Commons**

**[26531](#)**

**To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what his Department's policy is on the proposal from the European Parliament's Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee to introduce comprehensive public country-by-country reporting for all multinational companies, in all sectors, by the first quarter of 2016; and if he will press for the introduction of such country-by-country reporting with other member states in the Council.**

**A**

**Answered by: [Mr David Gauke](#)**

**Answered on: 17 February 2016**

**The European Parliament's Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee (ECON) has a keen interest in tax, and hence put forward certain proposals. However, the Commission has the sole power of initiative in relation to legislative measures. Tax files are to be agreed by unanimity at the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN). The European Parliament's role in this**

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***The European Commission intends to publish a revised proposal for a mandatory Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCCTB) later this year. The Government will wait to see the detail of the Commission's proposal, including a robust impact assessment, before finalising its position. However, we have stated that the UK will not sign up to anything that undermines our tax sovereignty.***

**Grouped Questions: [26530](#) | [26529](#)**

**Q**

**Asked by [Caroline Lucas](#)**

**(Brighton, Pavilion)**

**Asked on: 09 February 2016**

**HM Treasury**

**Tax Havens**

[26529](#)

**To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what his policy is on the proposal from the European Parliament's Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee for an extended definition of a tax haven, with sanctions for countries defined as tax havens and companies using them to avoid taxes; and if he will press for the introduction of such a definition with other EU member states in the Council.**

A

**Answered by:** [Mr David Gauke](#)

**Answered on:** 17 February 2016

**The European Parliament's Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee (ECON) has a keen interest in tax, and hence put forward certain proposals. However, the Commission has the sole power of initiative in relation to legislative measures. Tax files are to be agreed by unanimity at the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN). The European Parliament's role in this process is not formal, and purely consultative.**

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**Grouped Questions: [26530](#) | [26531](#)**

**Q**

**Asked by [Caroline Lucas](#)**

**(Brighton, Pavilion)**

**Asked on: 16 December 2015**

**HM Treasury**

**Taxation: Crime**

**Commons**

**[20496](#)**

**To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people were (a) prosecuted and (b) convicted for (i) off-shore tax evasion, (ii) in-shore tax evasion, (iii) tax credit fraud, (iv) VAT fraud, (v) smuggling and (vi) other tax-related offences in each financial year since 2010-11.**

**A**

**Answered by: [Mr David Gauke](#)**

**Answered on: 15 January 2016**

**The information is not held in the format requested. HM Revenue and Customs' centrally held data records the primary reason for the court case. The central data does not separately identify smuggling cases or use the term 'in-shore evasion' when recording the number of prosecutions or convictions.**

Q

Asked by [Mr Nicholas Brown](#)

(Newcastle upon Tyne East)

Asked on: 02 November 2015

HM Treasury

Taxation

Commons

[14294](#)

**To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans his Department has to ensure (a) British Overseas Territories and (b) the City of London comply with international standards for transparency in tax matters.**

A

Answered by: [Mr David Gauke](#)

Answered on: 10 November 2015

**In 2013, a major focus of the UK's G8 Presidency was tax transparency and combatting offshore tax evasion.** As part of this the UK promoted the development of a new global standard for reciprocal automatic exchange of financial account information in order to effectively tackle the global problem of tax **evasion**. Due in large part to the UK's leadership, over 90 countries and jurisdictions have now committed to the new global standard — known as the Common Reporting Standard (CRS) — and will begin automatically exchanging information under the standard by 2017 or 2018.

**Together with the UK itself, all of the UK's Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories with a recognised financial centre have committed to the 2017 timetable as early adopters. They will also be automatically exchanging 2014 and 2015 financial account information bilaterally with the UK in 2016. The City of London is covered by the CRS which has been implemented in UK law.**

**In addition to their commitments to early adoption of the CRS, all of the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies have engaged fully in the**

**Global Forum Peer Review Process on exchange of information on request, have publicly committed to improvements in the transparency of company ownership and meet Financial Action Task Force requirements.**

**Q**

**Asked by [Seema Malhotra](#)**

**(Feltham and Heston)**

**Asked on: 08 December 2015**

**HM Treasury**

**Tax Evasion**

**Commons**

**[19223](#)**

**To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Autumn Statement of 25 November 2015, Official Report, column 1361, what the evidential basis is for the statement that an investment of £800 million to fight tax evasion will return almost 10 times that amount in additional tax.**

**A**

**Answered by: [Mr David Gauke](#)**

**Answered on: 14 December 2015**

**Spending Review 2015 confirmed the additional £800m investment in HMRC, announced at Summer Budget, to tackle evasion and non-compliance, which will deliver an extra £7.2bn over the next five years — a return in tax revenue of almost 10 times the additional funding. The individual measures that the Government has provided funding for and the revenue they raise is set out on page 73 of the Summer Budget 2015 document. The assumptions and methodologies underlying all of the costings are set out in the policy costings document published at Summer Budget 2015. Both of these documents are available on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).**

**Q**

**Asked by [Julie Cooper](#)**

**(Burnley)**

**Asked on: 30 November 2015**

**HM Treasury**

**Tax Avoidance**

**Commons**

**[18092](#)**

**To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the benefit to the public purse of the closing of tax loopholes in each of the next five years.**

**A**

**Answered by: [Mr David Gauke](#)**

**Answered on: 08 December 2015**

**Revenue protected in connection with avoidance measures is scored in relevant documentation published by HM Treasury.**

**However, for convenience on 19 March 2015 the coalition government published a document detailing the action taken over the course of the last Parliament to tackle tax evasion and avoidance. That document can be found at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-tax-evasion-and-avoidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-tax-evasion-and-avoidance)**

**Q**

**Asked by [Julie Cooper](#)**

**(Burnley)**

**Asked on: 26 November 2015**

**HM Treasury**

**Tax Avoidance**

**Commons**

**17973**

**To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the benefit to the public purse was of the closing of tax loopholes in each of the last six years.**

**A**

**Answered by: [Mr David Gauke](#)**

**Answered on: 04 December 2015**

**Revenue protected in connection with avoidance measures announced over the last 6 years is scored in relevant Budget documentation published by HM Treasury.**

**However, for convenience on 19 March 2015 the coalition government published a document detailing the action taken over the course of the last Parliament to tackle tax evasion and avoidance. That document can be found at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-tax-evasion-and-avoidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-tax-evasion-and-avoidance)**

**Q**

**Asked by [Mr Jim Cunningham](#)**

**(Coventry South)**

**Asked on: 23 November 2015**

**HM Treasury**

**Taxation**

**Commons**

**17295**

**To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to increase (a) income tax and (b) corporation tax receipts; and if he will make a statement.**

**A**

**Answered by:** [Mr David Gauke](#)

**Answered on:** 01 December 2015

**The Government wants to deliver a low tax, high wage economy. The personal allowance has been increased from £6,475 in 2010-11 to £10,600 in 2015-16, and the headline rate of corporation tax has been cut from 28 per cent to 20 per cent since 2010.**

**The Government has committed to going further in this parliament by raising the personal allowance to £12,500 and the higher rate threshold to £50,000. Corporation tax will be cut to 18 per cent by 2020, benefitting over a million companies.**

**Due to the strength of our economy, tax receipts are growing strongly. Onshore corporation tax receipts have risen nearly 30% since 2010. Income tax receipts are £8bn higher in the first 10 months of 2015 compared to the first 10 months of 2014. In its most recent Economic and Fiscal Outlook the Office for Budget Responsibility have raised their forecast for receipts over the parliament.**

**At the same time the government has taken a number of steps to clamp down on avoidance and evasion.** For instance it will invest over £800m in HM Revenue and Customs to help them to tackle **evasion** and non-compliance over the course of the parliament. These measures are forecast to raise £7.2bn by 2020-21.

**Q**

**Asked by** [Thangam Debbonaire](#)

**(Bristol West)**

**Asked on:** 10 November 2015

**HM Treasury**

**Taxation: International Cooperation**

## Commons

[15968](#)

**To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps the Government is taking to support international efforts to improve tax transparency and accountability.**

A

Answered by: [Mr David Gauke](#)

Answered on: 20 November 2015

**A major focus of the UK's G8 Presidency was tax transparency and combatting offshore tax evasion.** As part of this the UK promoted the development of a new global standard for reciprocal automatic exchange of financial account information in order to effectively tackle the global problem of tax **evasion**. Due in large part to the UK's leadership, over 90 countries and jurisdictions have now committed to the new global standard — known as the Common Reporting Standard (CRS) — and will begin automatically exchanging information under the standard by 2017 or 2018. The receipt of large amounts of information on offshore accounts under the CRS will mark a step change in HMRC's ability to crack down on tax **evasion**.

**During our G8 Presidency, we also drove forward the international work on country-by-country reporting (CBCR), calling on the OECD to develop a template for CBCR reporting as part of the OECD Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) project. The OECD template is aimed at providing tax authorities with information on the global allocation of profits and taxes paid and accrued by multinationals, as well as indicators of economic activity in each country. The UK was one of the first countries to commit to implementing the OECD template for CBCR with legislation in the Finance Act 2015.**

**The final package of measures developed under the BEPS project was published by the OECD on 5 October 2015, and endorsed by G20 Finance Ministers at their meeting on 8 October and the G20 Leaders at their summit on 15-16 November. The UK welcomes the outcomes of the BEPS project and will give full consideration to the OECD's recommendations.**

***In addition, the UK has actively supported the revision of the Directive on Administrative Cooperation, to ensure the effective exchange of information about cross-border tax rulings between EU Member States. This directive was agreed in October 2015, and will come into force from 1st of January 2017.***

**Q**

**Asked by [Lord Lucas](#)**

**Asked on: 03 November 2015**

**HM Treasury**

**Electronic Commerce: VAT**

**Lords**

**[HL3224](#)**

***To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of recent reports about VAT fraud by online traders operating from abroad, what action they are taking to reduce the extent of such tax evasion, and whether that action will be completed before Christmas in order to protect UK businesses.***

**A**

**Answered by: [Lord O'Neill of Gatley](#)**

**Answered on: 17 November 2015**

***HM Revenue and Customs is actively targeting operational and intelligence activity, as well as a range of other options, to tackle this issue.***

**Q**

**Asked by [Lord Lucas](#)**

**Asked on: 03 November 2015**

**HM Treasury**

**Electronic Commerce: VAT**

**Lords**

**[HL3225](#)**

**To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of recent reports about VAT fraud by online traders operating from abroad, what is their estimate of the impact of such tax evasion on (1) the public purse, and (2) UK businesses.**

**A**

**Answered by: [Lord O'Neill of Gatley](#)**

**Answered on: 17 November 2015**

**Any UK VAT losses arising from online traders operating from abroad are already included within the published UK Tax Gap.**

**The estimate of the VAT Gap published in "Measuring Tax Gaps 2015 edition" on 22 October 2015 is £13.1 billion. Overall, the UK Tax Gap was 6.4 per cent in 2013-14, down from 6.6 per cent in 2012-13. As part of that, the VAT Gap is calculated as 11.1 per cent in 2013-14, a reduction from 11.9 per cent in 2012-13.**

**Q**

**Asked by [Lord Lucas](#)**

**Asked on: 03 November 2015**

**HM Treasury**

**Electronic Commerce: VAT**

**Lords**

**[HL3226](#)**

**To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of recent reports about VAT fraud by online traders operating from abroad, what discussions they have had in the last three months with (1) Amazon, and (2) eBay, about the extent of such tax evasion on their online marketplaces.**

**A**

**Answered by: [Lord O'Neill of Gatley](#)**

**Answered on: 17 November 2015**

**HM Revenue and Customs is in regular contact with the largest businesses through its dedicated "Customer Relationship Manager" model. Details of discussions with individual taxpayers cannot be disclosed due to taxpayer confidentiality.**

**Q**

**Asked by [Lord Lucas](#)**

**Asked on: 03 November 2015**

**HM Treasury**

**Electronic Commerce: VAT**

**Lords**

**[HL3227](#)**

**To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of recent reports about VAT fraud by online traders operating from abroad, whether they plan to require HM Revenue and Customs to work closely with the Chartered Trading Standards Institute in tackling such tax evasion, in particular through Amazon's and eBay's online marketplaces.**

**A**

**Answered by: [Lord O'Neill of Gatley](#)**

**Answered on: 17 November 2015**

**HM Revenue and Customs is actively targeting operational and intelligence activity to tackle this problem. This involves working closely with a number of external bodies, including Trading Standards.**

**Q**

**Asked by [Mr Nicholas Brown](#)**

**(Newcastle upon Tyne East)**

**Asked on: 02 November 2015**

**HM Treasury**

**Taxation**

**Commons**

**[14294](#)**

**To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans his Department has to ensure (a) British Overseas Territories and (b) the City of London comply with international standards for transparency in tax matters.**

**A**

**Answered by: [Mr David Gauke](#)**

**Answered on: 10 November 2015**

**In 2013, a major focus of the UK's G8 Presidency was tax transparency and combatting offshore tax evasion.** As part of this the UK promoted the development of a new global standard for reciprocal automatic exchange of financial account information in order to effectively tackle the global problem of tax **evasion**. Due in large part to the UK's leadership, over 90 countries and jurisdictions have now committed to the new global standard — known as the Common Reporting Standard (CRS) — and will begin automatically exchanging information under the standard by 2017 or 2018.

**Together with the UK itself, all of the UK's Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories with a recognised financial centre have committed to the 2017 timetable as early adopters. They will also be automatically exchanging 2014 and 2015 financial account information bilaterally with the UK in 2016. The City of London is covered by the CRS which has been implemented in UK law.**

**In addition to their commitments to early adoption of the CRS, all of the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies have engaged fully in the Global Forum Peer Review Process on exchange of information on request, have publicly committed to improvements in the transparency of company ownership and meet Financial Action Task Force requirements.**

**British Overseas Territories: Money Laundering**

**Written question - 762**

[ ]

**Q**

**Asked by [Paul Flynn](#)**

**(Newport West)**

**Asked on: 02 June 2015**

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

**British Overseas Territories: Money Laundering**

**Commons**

**762**

**To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what power the Government has to investigate private banks registered in British Overseas Territories for alleged money laundering.**

**A**

**Answered by: [James Duddridge](#)**

**Answered on: 10 June 2015**

**The Overseas Territories are separate jurisdictions with their own democratically elected Governments, Constitutions and laws under which Territory authorities are responsible for the regulation of banks. It is primarily for the law enforcement authorities of the Territories to deal with any allegations brought to them. UK law enforcement authorities would only become involved if the allegations involved criminality in the United Kingdom.**

**The Caribbean Overseas Territories and Bermuda are active members of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force, one of Financial Action Task Force associated bodies. They are subject to evaluations of their anti-money laundering regimes through this body and these assessments are publicly available.**

**The UK and Territory Governments have a shared agenda on the application of high international standards for financial regulation. Most recently at the 2014 Joint Ministerial Council Territory Leaders agreed to work with the UK in raising international standards to tackle money laundering, tax evasion, illicit**

**finance and corruption.**

**5 Dec 2012 : Column 759W**

**Property: Registration**

**Paul Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills what consideration he has given to implementing the recommendation contained in the 2001 Andrew Edwards report on the Review of Financial Regulation in the Crown Dependencies proposing that the true beneficial ownership of UK property be recorded at the Land Registry. [131429]

**Michael Fallon:** The Review of Financial Regulation in the Crown Dependencies was not concerned with the Land Registry.

***In 2001 Andrew Edwards published his Quinquennial Review of Her Majesty's Land Registry. That review did not recommend that beneficial ownership be recorded at the Land Registry but it did invite Ministers to consider the case for disclosure of true or beneficial ownership on the register where this differs from legal ownership. The Land Registration Act 2002 does not contain any such disclosure requirements.***

***Currently there are no plans to impose a duty to disclose to the Land Registry.***

**Paul Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills what steps are being taken to ensure that the true value of English property transactions are recorded at the Land Registry; and what powers he has to ensure correction of the registration of misleading values. [131430]

**Michael Fallon:** In accordance with provisions that are already contained in the Land Registration Rules, Her Majesty's Land Registry enters on the register of title the price paid for the property or, where no money has changed hands or the price is not apparent from the documents, the value declared. The entry remains on the register until there is a change of proprietor or some other change in the register which the registrar considers would result in the entry being misleading.

***The registrar has power, under the Land Registration Act 2002, to correct mistakes in the register.***

**Paul Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills what steps he has taken to ensure that the accurate beneficial ownership of property in England and Wales is recorded at the Land Registry. [131431]

**Michael Fallon:** In accordance with the legislation, Her Majesty's Land Registry maintains a record of legal ownership to land in England and Wales. It does not record beneficial ownership.

**Currently there is no plan to alter the role of the Land Registry in this regard. However, we are currently reviewing the legal framework and enforcement covering the oversight of directors of UK companies, including the issue of nominee directors who are resident overseas.**

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**Written Answers to Questions**

**Monday 20 January 2014**

**FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE**

**British Overseas Territories**

**Anas Sarwar:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has (a) written or (b) spoken to the leaders of any of the Overseas Territories to encourage them to create public registries of beneficial company ownership. [183413]

**Mark Simmonds:** The Prime Minister met the leaders from those Overseas Territories with a financial services industry on 15 June 2013 and informed them that the UK was going ahead with a central registry of beneficial ownership.

**Since 28 October 2013 when the Government announced that the UK central registry will be publicly accessible, I, together with the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, my hon. Friend the Member for South West Hertfordshire (Mr Gauke), met Leaders and representatives from the Overseas Territories at the Joint Ministerial Council in November. The Leaders agreed to launch (or have already launched) consultations on the question of establishing a central registry of beneficial ownership and whether this information should be publicly available. The Cayman Islands and the British Virgin Islands have already published their consultations and the other Territories are expected to launch theirs shortly.**

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**Over recent months the Territories have made unprecedented progress on**

***the tax and transparency agenda and we will continue to work with them to tackle the global challenges of corporate secrecy.***