

HMRC's latest failing proves that the time for an Offic...

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Anyone who has observed HMRC's continuing management debacles since its shotgun birth more than a decade ago will know that one name dominates its lists of cock-ups. That is that of its former director Dave Hartnett.

Now the [Supreme Court has ruled](#) that his comments to the press in 2012 breached his basic duty of confidentiality to a taxpayer and as a result millions in compensation will be payable.

It so happens that I agree with Margaret Hodge that there needs to be a lot more transparency about the workings of HMRC, but it was not its directors job to do that in breach of the law.

Thankfully Hartnett's says at HMRC are but a memory, but the basic structure of HMRC remains little changed. The culture of a Plc with non-execs drawn from big business who will be used to thinking the organisation exists for their own gratification is still the chosen model for its senior management. It was this that floored Hartnett - who I met, often, during his time in office. He did in the end seem to see HMRC as his personal fiefdom.

That was unacceptable and I think that nothing has so far been done to prevent a recurrence. The answer is, I suggest, independent oversight of HMRC from an [Office for Tax Responsibility](#). Its time has come.