

Tax and charity are not the same thing

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As the [Guardian has reported](#) this morning:

Just 350 of the 15,600 wealthiest households in Westminster, one of the country's richest boroughs, have answered the local authority's call to voluntarily pay extra council tax to help tackle the homelessness crisis in the heart of London.

In February, the Westminster council leader, Nickie Aiken, wrote to all residents in the most expensive band H properties to ask them to consider paying an extra £833-a-year "[community contribution](#)" to help fund youth clubs, homelessness services and visits to lonely people.

But only 2% of the households have stepped forward to help their poorer neighbours, the Guardian can reveal.

It adds:

Residents in Westminster pay the lowest council tax in the country, with band H payments of £832 a year plus another £588 to the Greater London Authority. In Poole, Dorset, the band H charge is £3,358.

I guess £291,550 is better than nothing. But the reality is that measures such as this have to be compulsory. That is the nature of tax.

That does not make tax theft, as the right like to claim. It means that tax is then very clearly a claim on property made by the state or its agents using a proper legal process, which is the way all property rights are established. And then it has to be paid, because we have chosen that it should be.

What Westminster have asked for is a charitable act. That's fine. And good. But let's not confuse the two things. Tax and charity are not and were never intended to be the same thing.