

We've all paid a massive price for UK politicians failu...

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The [Times](#) has reported that:

Amazon has shut down the accounts of thousands of Chinese companies that use the website to sell cheap products in Britain without paying VAT.

Over 48 hours, tens of thousands of products had disappeared from the site after their suppliers were banned from using the platform. The crackdown follows a deal with HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) this year under which online platforms including Amazon and eBay agreed to provide data and block vendors engaging in persistent tax evasion.

It added:

Amazon confirmed that it had removed “thousands” of sellers, adding that they could be reinstated if they became VAT compliant. It urged other online retailers to sign up to the agreement with HMRC.

First, that's good news.

Second, why did it take so long? I sat in on meetings with politicians where data on this issue was supplied several years ago. And HMRC would not act.

The action of these suppliers has been criminal.

Amazon's failure to address it until compelled to do so has been negligent.

But HMRC and the Treasury's failure to act for so long when this was known has been incomprehensible. Billions of tax revenue has been lost and an untold number of UK based businesses have been harmed.

Tax evasion is not a victimless crime. And it's shocking that HMRC has failed so persistently to support the victims of it when they have long had the means, but an absolute absence of will, to do so.

Who is to blame? I suggest UK politicians, for creating a culture where tax abuse has been encouraged. And UK politicians for being too dedicated to shrinking the size of the state to ever want to collect tax. And UK politicians for not realising that tax cheating undermines honest business and effective markets. And UK politicians for being too in awe of giant corporations. And UK politicians for believing that cheap is always good.

We've all paid a massive price for such misplaced beliefs.

Tax justice is a good thing.

It's time our politicians believed it. And acted on it