

# There really are Conservatives who think tax haven UK i...

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I got around to looking at the [Brexit White Paper](#) over the weekend.

The overwhelming impression I was left with was 'Why are we doing this?'.

The detailed impression was 'This is a shoddy piece of work'.

Let me take as example two paragraphs. The first is on state aid, and says:

*The UK has long been a proponent of a rigorous state aid system — this is good for taxpayers and consumers, and ensures an efficient allocation of resources. The UK has an excellent record on compliance, and has been among the lowest granters of state aid as a proportion of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the EU. In 2016 the UK gave 0.3 per cent of GDP as state aid, half the EU average of 0.7 per cent.*

This is pure hype, based on dogma, that assumes the Tories will stay in power forever and so persuades absolutely no one of anything. The style is antagonistic from whichever angle viewed. Given that what is being negotiated is little short of a new constitutional arrangement for the UK, who is the government trying to convince of what, and why are they naive enough to think such language should work?

More important is this one on tax that follows a few paragraphs later:

*The UK's proposal for its future economic partnership with the EU would not fetter its sovereign discretion on tax, including to set direct or indirect tax rates, and to set its own minimum tax rates.*

So, it is said that the UK will not compete on state aid but it may be a tax haven. That's really going to fly with the EU, isn't it? And it's really going to sell well at home as well. You can just see all those supporting Brexit queuing, in very good British style, to protest, shouting:

*What do we want?*

*Tax Cuts*

*Who for?*

*The wealthy and large corporations*

*When do we want them?*

*Now*

I don't think so.

In which case not only do I think such a paragraph antagonistic to Europe, it's inflammatory at home.

But it does say there really are those in the Conservatives who think tax haven UK is what this is all about.