

Where have the tax profession been on NIC changes?

Published: January 13, 2026, 1:18 am

Over the weekend I wrote a Tweet that said:

I get annoyed when tax professionals say that politics should be taken out of taxation. And then they have nothing to say about Rishi Sunak using tax to undertake class warfare on the lowest paid. That's because their tax politics is really all about maintaining privilege.

My reason was very simple: I had not noticed tweets, comment or press notices from tax professionals, firms or tax-related institutes that commented on what Sunak was proposing. To be very straightforward, the tweet was a comment made in good faith on what I observed.

Some tax professionals have now objected. Singular tweets from a number of them have been found that say that an NIC increase is not a good idea. But I have still to see a firm say so, or any comment from a tax professional body.

And what was still consistent was an absence of political awareness in what was said. The comments made were technical, without recognising the social dimensions to the issue. Things like freeports attract much comment and general excitement in the tax profession. The social consequences of an NIC increase for those on the lowest pay has, as I suggested, passed almost under its radar of concern.

Let's leave aside the individual comments right now though. Let me instead address my concern at the silence of the tax professional bodies - at least as far as I have registered it, and I note a lot of media comment on tax every day.

The professional bodies with a concern about tax - whether of lawyers or accountants or the dedicated tax profession - all have one thing in common. They supposedly exist to promote high professional standards in the public interest. I emphasise the last point.

Unfortunately, long ago the public interest was assumed to align with that of the professions themselves, and the only harm that the public was protected from was that of the corrupt professional practitioner who might otherwise bring the remainder of the

profession into disrepute if not weeded out.

What the tax professions do not do - and again I stress I see a lot of commentary from them - is engage in public debate unless, it would seem, that the public interest is aligned with that of the wealthy of larger companies. Beyond that there is, by and large, a policy vacuum void.

I am, of course, aware that in staying this I lay myself open to having evidence presented that there have been some concerns raised. But those resorting to such claims are missing the point. Where is the heat and the anger within the professional bodies that is leading to comment that what is happening here is wrong and that better options are available?

Where to is the display of understanding that sometimes not taxing is the right thing to do because tax is only a part of the macroeconomic funding cycle?

And, come to that, why aren't the professions in the lead in issuing the costings that have really been required on this issue, and why aren't they laying out costed alternatives without necessarily advocating any one of them if they wish to be seen to be avoiding bias?

It's possible for the tax profession to engage in policy debate with your doing politics. But right now my allegation is that its silence is profoundly political. In the absence of comment the status quo and the prevailing narrative are maintained. That is what the taxed professions are permitting. And when what is happening is clearly not optimal tax policy that does them no credit.

It's time the tax profession acted in the public interest - and right now I am not at all convinced that it is.