

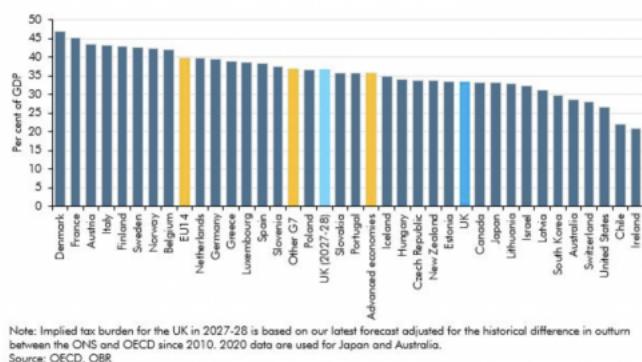
Funding the Future

To be selfish or not, that is the question

Published: January 13, 2026, 7:11 am

The Office for Budget Responsibility [published this](#) in March 2023, but the data has not moved that much since then:

Chart A: Tax burdens in the advanced economies in 2021



Note: Implied tax burden for the UK in 2027-28 is based on our latest forecast adjusted for the historical difference in outcome between the ONS and OECD since 2010. 2020 data are used for Japan and Australia.

Source: OECD, OBR

There will be much talk today about the tax burden in the UK. It is worth reminding ourselves that compared to similar countries, it is low, and we demand services of the scale that they enjoy. Unsurprisingly, the impossibility of achieving that outcome is now becoming apparent.

We have a choice. We can go for lower state services and pay for our medical care privately, which is how the US delivers its outcome - whilst leaving large parts of the population at massive risk of not getting the care they need - or we can pay via taxation for the services we need to live in a decent society where everyone has a chance.

To be selfish or not, that is the question.