

Labour: the friend of cheats, crooks, and conpeople

Published: January 29, 2026, 8:20 am

As AccountingWEB (of which I was for a decade at the start of the century a contributing editor) [noted yesterday](#):

The expected timeline for small companies and micro entities to file their profit and loss (P&L) accounts with Companies House has been paused following stakeholder concerns, Companies House has confirmed.

The news was revealed today in an update to the “Filing your Companies House accounts” guidance on gov.uk.

The update read: “Changes to accounts filing will not be introduced in April 2027. The reforms are still under review and a final decision will be announced shortly. Companies will receive at least 21 months’ notice to prepare.”

Companies House did not issue a statement, but said the accounts reforms are under review following stakeholder concerns about the need to “strike the right balance between tackling economic crime and avoiding undue burden on business”. They confirmed that a final decision on the reforms will be announced shortly.

Companies will now receive at least 21 months’ notice to prepare for the implementation of any proposals. This means that companies will be given a new date for any new proposals, and this will no longer be April 2027.

This is utter drivel, issued by a Labour government that has clearly forgotten every reason why it is in government, and everything that government is for.

Limited liability is not a right. It is a privilege granted by society from which society must secure a benefit. The gain is a supposed increase in economic activity from which all might prosper. The reason for the gain is that those with limited liability might take risks that they could not otherwise afford to undertake, with the resulting upside potential justifying the cost. And who bears the downside risk? The creditors of the company do.

Who are those creditors? Start with this list:

- * Trade creditors owed money for goods and services they have supplied in good faith.
- * Customers who lose guarantees and support.
- * Employees
- * Tax authorities
- * Unsecured lenders, such as banks and providers of other credit.

Who seems to have the biggest risk? Evidence from liquidation data and HMRC's tax gap data suggests it is our tax authority. 40% of all corporation tax owed by small companies is now unpaid. [The cost is](#) at least £14.7 billion a year. The loss of other unpaid taxes will considerably increase this. To suggest in that case that the risk arising from the grant of limited liability is decidedly asymmetric and very high is to be generous. The reality is we are all being taken for a ride by small businesses, and any sane government would crack down on this.

The price of this risk was always meant to be corporate disclosure by a limited company of its audited accounts to demonstrate three things:

- * The scale or its activities.
- * The reliability of its management.
- * The risk created by engaging with it.

The aim was quite explicitly to mitigate the risk to society.

But the audit requirement went in the 90s.

Then the requirements for filing data almost entirely collapsed until, by early this century, most small company accounts on public record became virtually meaningless, with no trading information, no description of its activities, and a balance sheet so denuded of data that establishing any real idea of risk was almost impossible. And this assumed the accounts were filed in the first place: hundreds of thousands of sets a year are not.

And the absurd thing was that full accounts for companies are still required: HMRC and shareholders must have them. It actually imposes a cost to remove the data from the accounts produced for shareholder purposes to file reduced information with Companies House, so there is no burden on businesses by requiring full filing of information; there is an increased cost from reducing the amount of data put on public record.

But the fools (there is no other word for it) in Labour have fallen for the pleading that putting data on the trading of companies on public record will harm business, when, as economic theory knows, having data is key to the operation of efficient markets and to mitigating risk. The only people who gain from this decision by some stupid minister or other are the cheats, the crooks, and the conpeople. That's it. And Labour is facilitating that abuse now. It was a Tory plan to increase transparency by putting profit-and-loss accounts back on public record, and now Labour has abandoned it.

To call Labour charlatans and facilitators of crime is to be too kind to them. They can instead only be described as utterly stupid. And we are all going to pay the price for that.

The job of a government includes:

- * Protecting its citizens from harm, including by mitigating risk
- * Tackling crime
- * Collecting tax revenue to stabilise the economy
- * Enforcing the law

This move makes all of these harder.

Why, then, is Labour in power, and what does it think it is for? I wish I knew the answer to that.

And when tackling this issue could help reduce inequality, restore competitive markets that are currently undermined by cheats, and reduce the inequality that tax cheating also creates, I am even more baffled by them. It is time to consign them to history: they know not what they are for.