

**CenTax Residential
Conference 2026**

Closing the Tax Gap

Speaker Profiles

23-24 April 2026
Warwick University



CenTax would like to thank the conference organising committee for support and advice that has shaped our inaugural residential conference:

John Barnett
Bill Dodwell
Graham Hunt
Ellen Milner
John Mundy
Dan Neidle
Nimesh Shah
Chris Southworth
Ele Theochari

We would also like to thank the Chartered Institute of Taxation for their kind sponsorship of the pre-dinner reception



Keynotes and After Dinner Speaker

Professor Annette Alstadsæter - Skatteforsk

Keynote

Thursday 23 April

14:45-15:45 – Lecture Theatre



Professor Annette Alstadsæter at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences is founding Director of SKATTEFORSK – Norwegian Centre for Tax Research in Oslo and Program Director for the Atlas of the Offshore World at the International Tax Observatory in Paris. Her policy relevant research on tax evasion, tax avoidance, and inequality publishes in top academic journals and is regularly featured in policy notes and by the media.

Dan Neidle - Tax Policy Associates

After Dinner Speaker

Thursday 23 April

The Slate



Dan spent almost 25 years as a tax lawyer and was head of tax at the London office of one of the largest law firms in the world. During his career, Dan advised corporates, governments, regulators, central banks and NGOs on tax and tax policy. Dan retired in May 2022 to found Tax Policy Associates, with the aim of improving tax policy and shaping and informing the debate around tax.

Simon Price - HM Revenue and Customs

Keynote

Friday 24 April

09:00-10:00 – Lecture Theatre



Simon is an AI Advisor at HM Revenue & Customs, supporting the organisation to harness artificial intelligence responsibly, effectively, and at scale. He provides strategic guidance on enterprise AI adoption, operational integration, and the safe deployment of emerging technologies. His work focuses on shaping long-term AI capability, advising senior leaders, and enabling teams to translate complex AI concepts into practical, value-driving solutions.

Simon has deep experience building partnerships across government, industry, and academia. He serves on the Advisory Board for the UK Centre for Doctoral Training in Practice-Oriented AI (ProAI), helping to align research innovation with real-world public sector needs.

Before joining HMRC, Simon held senior data and AI leadership roles at organisations including Unisys, Lloyd's Register, Just Eat, NATO, Capgemini, and within academia. He holds a PhD in Computer Science from the University of Bristol, and is an Honorary Senior Research Fellow.

Panel Session 1

Thursday 23 April - 11:15-12:30– Lecture Theatre

Where We Stand: The UK Tax Gap in 2026

To assess how accurately and meaningfully the UK measures the tax gap - what the numbers reveal (and obscure) about non-compliance - and how UK methods compare internationally.

Ellen Milner - Director of Public Policy, CIOT

Panel Chair



Ellen is Director of Public Policy at the Chartered Institute of Taxation and a CTA (Fellow). Prior to joining CIOT in 2023, she held a number of roles at HMRC. With a background in corporate tax, these spanned tax policy, operations, compliance and training, including a stint as Principal Private Secretary to the then CEO.

Professor Arun Advani - Director, CenTax

Dr Arun Advani is a Director of the Centre for the Analysis of Taxation (CenTax) and a Professor of Economics at the University of Warwick. Working with colleagues at CenTax, Arun uses tax data accessed via HMRC to evaluate the tax system and model options for reform.



Louise Bladen - HMRC VfM Director, NAO



Louise Bladen is Value for Money Director at the National Audit Office covering its work on HM Revenue & Customs. Louise is an accountant with many years' experience auditing a wide range of public sector bodies with her most recent report on Taxing Large Businesses published in February 2026. Prior to working on HMRC, Louise led the NAO's work on the BBC and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and earlier in her career has worked on cross-government reports as well as the Home Office. Louise's current work on HMRC includes reviewing its recent Child Benefit fraud and error intervention and later in 2026, reporting on tax debt.

Søren Pedersen - Technical Assistance Advisor, IMF

Søren Pedersen is a Technical Assistance Advisor at IMF with nearly 20 years of experience at the Danish Tax Administration, specializing in data analysis and tax gap estimation. Before joining IMF he led the Compliance Analysis Office, managing a team of 13 analysts. He has an MSc in Economics from the University of Copenhagen and is a co-author of "Unwilling or Unable to Cheat: Evidence from a Tax Audit Experiment in Denmark" (Econometrica, 2011).



Chris Savoury - Deputy Director: Compliance Analysis, HMRC



Chris is a Deputy Director in HMRC's Knowledge, Analysis and Intelligence (KAI) directorate, leading work on customer compliance strategy and tax gap analysis. He has around 13 years' experience as a government analyst across a range of Departments, with roles focused on using evidence to support strategic decision-making.

Breakouts 1

Thursday 23 April - 13:30-14:30 – Breakout Rooms

How can the Home Office's fraud strategy contribute to closing the tax gap?

Dr Penny Dunbabin - Fraud Policy Unit, Home Office

Penny has spent most of her career in the energy sector, firstly as an engineer and then in providing scientific advice for policy development in renewables and nuclear decommissioning. This included policy work for primary and secondary legislation. During the covid pandemic, Penny was seconded to the policy team responsible for Companies House reform. Penny joined the Fraud Policy Unit at the Home Office in 2023, where she was responsible for writing the guidance for the offence of failure to prevent fraud in the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023. Penny is now working on developing policy to protect businesses against fraud.

Offshore evasion: what do history and trends tell us about future enforcement strategies?

Simon York - Senior Advisor, Deloitte

Simon York has spent his career in tax and financial investigation. Most recently, he spent 7 years as HMRC's Chief Investigation Officer and Director of HMRC's Fraud Investigation Service. He has also worked extensively with law enforcement and international partnerships. Simon is particularly proud to have helped establish the 'J5', the Joint Chiefs of Global Tax Enforcement. Simon has also led HMRC's anti-money laundering supervision operations and, prior to his latest role, led the Department's intelligence, compliance analytics and tax risk operations.



How will Making Tax Digital for Individuals help to close the tax gap?

Jim Rogers - Senior Policy Advisor: Making Tax Digital, HMRC



Jim has been a policy professional for 13 years and is currently the lead Policy Advisor for MTD for Income Tax. Jim has previously worked on capital allowances and employment status policy. Before becoming a Policy Professional, Jim spent 15 years as a corporation tax compliance caseworker. Before joining the Inland Revenue in 1998, Jim used to manage a McDonalds.

Is the Taxes Management Act still fit for purpose?

Ray McCann - Consultant, Joseph Hage Aaronson & Bremen

Ray is a Fellow of CIOT and member of the ATT. He was President of the CIOT between 2018 and 2019. He retired as a Partner of JHA at the end of 2020 but continues to act as a Consultant. Ray has over 50 years' experience of UK and international tax matters. He specialises in HMRC disputes and investigations and his expertise covers both onshore and offshore. Ray's past roles included senior positions in HMRC as well as director and partner roles with PwC and Pinsent Masons.



While at HMRC Ray oversaw the introduction of the UK's "DOTAS" rules and prior to that had set up the Business Tax Clearance Team and the Avoidance Intelligence Unit. In 2025 Ray was asked to lead a new independent review of the 2017 Loan Charge.

Panel Session 2

Thursday 23 April - 16:00-17:15 – Lecture Theatre

Breaking Down the 60%: Understanding SMEs, Micro-Businesses and the Hidden Economy

Small and micro-businesses account for the largest share of the UK tax gap - around 60%. This panel explores why this group is persistently over-represented in the gap, and what interventions could make a difference.

Ele Theochari - Partner, *Blick Rothenberg* Panel Chair



Ele is an R&D tax relief specialist with 10 years of experience advising clients across all sectors. Ele joined Blick Rothenberg in 2023, having previously worked for start-ups and SMEs, up to FTSE100 globally recognised companies. Ele is a Vice President of the Association of Taxation Technicians (ATT), an ATT Council Member and sits on the Joint CIOT/ATT Professional Standards Committee Steering Group.

Paul Aplin - Deputy President, *CIOT*

Paul Aplin is a former President of ICAEW and will become President of CIOT from June 2026. He is a member of HMRC's Administrative Burdens Advisory Board, sits as an Independent Adviser on HMRC's Closing the Tax Gap Committee and is a member of the IFS Tax Law Review Committee. He was for many years a tax partner with an independent West Country firm of Chartered Accountants. He has a particular interest in the use of technology in tax administration.



Judith Freedman - Emeritus Professor of Taxation Law & Policy, *University of Oxford*



Judith Freedman CBE, FBA is Emeritus Professor of Taxation Law and Policy at the University of Oxford. She has written extensively on various tax and corporate law topics, including small business taxation, tax and accounting, tax avoidance and tax policy making and was a member of the Board of the Office of Tax Simplification before it was abolished. She was general editor and is now a consulting editor of the British Tax Review and she is chair of the Tax Law Review Committee of the IFS.

Ronan McDonald - Deputy Director: Small Business Individuals: Policy and Strategy, *HMRC*

Ronan McDonald is Deputy Director for Policy and Strategy in HMRC's Small Business and Individuals (SBI) directorate. His role connects HMRC's frontline compliance work to policy analysis and development. Based in London, Ronan has extensive cross-government experience spanning simplification of tax policy and customs in HMRC, personal tax strategy in HMT Treasury and leading medicine regulation in the Department of Health and Social Care.



Breakouts 2

Thursday 23 April - 17:30-18:30 – Breakout Rooms

Have we solved large business tax compliance?

Mike Lewis - Director, Tax Watch



Mike Lewis has twenty years' experience as a researcher and investigator. He has worked as a criminal financial investigator for a UN war crimes body, as a sanctions expert for the UN Security Council, as a civil society researcher on international corporate tax, and as an investigations and compliance trainer for financial institutions and regulators in Southeast Europe and Asia. He has training from the International Bureau for Fiscal Documentation (Amsterdam) in international tax, and from the Institute for International Criminal Investigations (The Hague).

What resources does HMRC need to ensure it collects the right tax from wealthy individuals?

Edward Troup - Former Executive Chair and First Permanent Secretary, HMRC

Edward Troup retired as Executive Chair of HMRC in 2018, having previously served as Director-General of Tax and Welfare in HM Treasury and as a corporate tax partner in City law firm Simmons & Simmons.



How do HMRC capacity and service standards affect the tax gap?

Emma Rawson - Director of Public Policy, ATT



Emma is Director of Public Policy at the Association of Taxation Technicians, appointed in December 2024. Prior to that, she served as an ATT Technical Officer for over seven years. Her background is in business taxes. As Director of Public Policy, she has oversight of the Association's tax technical and professional standards work. She is also a former Chair of the Leeds Branch of the ATT and CIOT.

How can we reduce the economic cost of tax compliance?

Chris Sanger - Global Government Tax Leader, EY

Chris is EY's Global Government Tax Leader and Tax Policy Leader for the UK, with extensive experience advising governments worldwide, including previously as Head of Business Tax Policy at HM Treasury. He has held senior roles across the UK tax profession, including Chair of the ICAEW Tax Faculty and founder of its Tax Policy Committee. He currently serves as a Council Member of the Institute of Fiscal Studies and sits on various committees of the Chartered Institute of Taxation and the ICAEW.



He is also a member of the United Nations Subcommittee on AI and Tax Administration and is pursuing doctoral research at Warwick Business School on tax delivery systems. He is a regular media commentator on tax policy and administration and has given evidence to parliamentary bodies internationally, including in the UK, the European Parliament and South Africa.

Panel Session 3

Friday 24 April - 10:15-11:30 – Lecture Theatre

Data, Digitalisation and Tax Compliance

To explore how data, analytics, and digital tools can transform tax administration - to prevent non-compliance and improve the taxpayer experience. The discussion should examine both the opportunities and the ethical, practical, and trust challenges of HMRC's use of data as well as the growing opportunity/challenge of AI.

Bill Dodwell - Non-Executive Director: Closing the Tax Gap Sub-Committee, HMRC Panel Chair



Bill Dodwell is a Non-Executive Director at HM Revenue and Customs. He was Tax Director of the Office of Tax Simplification, after initially working in the OTS as a Senior Policy Adviser. He has law degrees from King's College London and Queens' College, Cambridge and is a chartered accountant and chartered tax adviser. Bill is a former president of CIOT and has chaired their technical committee. He is currently editor-in-chief of the CIOT's Tax Adviser magazine and website.

Priya Vijayasathy - Director of Tax & Legal Data & AI, Deloitte

Priya is a data analytics and AI specialist with over 10+ years' experience spanning multiple industry sectors. Currently, she serves as a Director at Deloitte Tax & Legal's Data and AI practice in the UK, specializing in the development and implementation of analytics and AI solutions for tax purposes.



John Harms - Head of Government Solutions, Quantexa



Under John's guidance, Quantexa's US Government Team helps tax, customs, benefits, and other government agencies to gain operational insights, improve compliance, reduce improper payments, and fight fraud. John holds several licenses and certifications in cryptocurrency and is highly skilled in project management, customer relationship management, and software as a service (SaaS).

Matt Erikson - Deputy Director: Strategic Risking, HMRC

Matt Erikson is a career civil servant who has worked in a range of government departments including HM Prison Service; Home Office; Department of levelling up Housing and Communities; Cabinet office; and, for the past 24 years, HMRC.

Matt studied Psychology at Sussex University, and holds a Master's degree in Research Methods and Econometrics from LSE. He has worked in government in analytical, policy, strategy and operational leadership roles. In his current role he leads the development of HMRC's compliance data capabilities, including the use of AI, data and tech to reform the way we identify, understand and treat risks in the tax system.



Breakouts 3

Friday 24 April - 11:45-12:45 – Breakout Rooms

How does DWP balance fraud prevention and detection, and what can we learn for tax questions?

Iain Wright - Deputy Director: Fraud, Error and Debt Analysis, DWP



Iain leads the analysis team seeking to drive down fraud and error in the benefit system – with many parallels to, and interactions with, the tax system. DWP have seen considerable achievements since the pandemic, reducing the overall level of welfare fraud from 4.0% to 3.3%, worth £2bn annually. Further plans include machine learning, prevention, culture change and leveraging new data sources. Iain has a range of experience in DWP, including helping to launch the Universal Credit system and introducing a new performance framework for DWP Operations.

What are the biggest gaps in offshore compliance?

Clara Gisoldo - Senior Researcher, APPG on Anti-Corruption and Responsible Tax

Clara is a Senior Adviser at the APPG on Anti-Corruption and Responsible Tax. She's a public policy professional with significant experience of managing and building teams to deliver real-world change alongside senior legislators in the UK Parliament and public sector. She is currently Head of Office for Lloyd Hatton MP, supporting his work on the Public Accounts Committee and on the Elections Bill Committee. Previously, she worked on public finance and budgets at the OECD.



Continued...

Breakouts 3 - continued

Friday 24 April - 11:45-12:45 – Breakout Rooms

Who else is responsible – what role should intermediaries play in closing the tax gap?

Chris Irwin - Deputy Director: Agents Policy, HMRC



Chris is a senior leader in the UK Civil Service, working on how complex public systems are designed, led and improved. His focus is on turning policy intent into real-world outcomes in environments where delivery, service quality and public trust matter. He currently leads work in HMRC at the interface between government, the tax advice market and service delivery.

Jane Mellor - Head of Professional Standards, CIOT

Jane is Head of Professional Standards at CIOT and ATT. Jane oversees CIOT and ATT AML supervision and Professional Standards requirements and guidance for members. Jane is ATT and CTA qualified and previously worked as a personal tax manager for a Chartered Accountancy firm.



How can HMRC harness data science innovations to make better use of the data it already holds to close the tax gap?

Cameron Scott - Director UK Public Sector, Quantexa



Cameron leads Quantexa's efforts in supporting the UK public sector in getting value from data using advanced analytics techniques across fraud, compliance, intelligence, and operations optimization. He has longstanding expertise in applying technology to business challenges and opportunities. Before working with Quantexa, Cameron was Senior Business Development Manager for the UK Central Government at Capgemini.

Panel Session 4

Friday 24 April - 13:45-15:00 – Lecture Theatre

The Long Game – Building a Roadmap to Close the Tax Gap

How do we move from what feel like one-off packages measures to a long-term roadmap to close the tax gap - going beyond electoral cycles and integrating policy and administrative levers.

Edward Troup - Former Executive Chair and First Permanent Secretary, HMRC

Panel Chair



Edward Troup retired as Executive Chair of HMRC in 2018, having previously served as Director-General Tax and Welfare in HM Treasury and as a corporate tax partner in City law firm Simmons & Simmons.

Professor Andy Summers - Director, CenTax

Professor Andy Summers is a Director of the Centre for the Analysis of Taxation (CenTax) and a professor in the Law School at LSE. His research combines legal expertise with quantitative analysis of administrative data, working in collaboration with economists and other social scientists. Recent work focuses on the evaluation of taxes affecting top earners and the wealthy, and the design of asset registers. At LSE he teaches courses on tax policy and design and the taxation of wealth.



Emma Rawson - Director of Public Policy, ATT



Emma is Director of Public Policy at the Association of Taxation Technicians, appointed in December 2024. Prior to that, she served as an ATT Technical Officer for over seven years. Her background is in business taxes. As Director of Public Policy, she has oversight of the Association's tax technical and professional standards work. She is also a former Chair of the Leeds Branch of the ATT and CIOT.

Ed Hawker - Deputy Director: Tax Administration, Strategy and Reform, HMT

Ed has nearly 20 years experience in the civil service in policy, strategy and analysis roles across five departments. This has included advising ministers on environmental tax policy in Defra, working with HMRC on delivery of the Covid response and working on labour market policy across HMT and DWP. Ed recently took over as DD for TASR in February having spent the previous four years advising HMT ministers on policy and spending in relation to the Home Office and Ministry of Justice and supporting HMT teams to build equalities into policymaking.



Chris Southworth - Director: Compliance Strategy and Design, HMRC



Chris Southworth is the director of Compliance Strategy Delivery (CSD), whose role is to drive strategic, evidenced approaches to compliance risks and opportunities across HMRC. The purpose is to improve compliance, leading strategic decision-making using insight and evidence and use that understanding to influence, embed and communicate our compliance approach.