

TAXJUSTICE.UK

Strategy, 2022-24

Tax Justice UK (TJ-UK) is a campaigning organisation. Our vision is that everyone in the UK should benefit from a fairer and more effective tax system. This strategy sets out our plans for what we will do over the next three years to help achieve this.

What's the problem?

Even before the advent of covid, it was clear the UK's tax system was failing to raise enough money to support great public services and that inequality had become entrenched. Covid has underlined this. As we build back from the pandemic there will be big debates about "who pays". The pandemic has not hit equally - some wealthy households and large companies have built up their cash holdings, while poorer people have lost jobs and gone into debt. The government has provided billions of pounds of support to businesses, with little conditionality on their behaviour on issues such as tax.

There are also deeper structural problems with the UK tax system. Wealth is desperately under-taxed. People who can take their earnings as capital gains pay significantly lower effective tax rates meaning that the average tax rate for someone earning £10m is just 21%, which is lower than the rate paid by an average worker. This entrenches inequality, stifles social mobility and undermines the life chances of those who do not have access to significant financial resources.

The current system is also stacked in favour of big digital companies, such as Amazon, who pay very little tax, while small highstreet shops go bust. The UK has promised to increase the corporate tax rate on big companies to 25% in 2023, with the Chancellor acknowledging that ultra-low rates of corporation tax haven't stimulated investment. However, at the same time that the headline corporate tax is set to increase, the government has introduced a number of major tax breaks for companies.

There are other ways in which the tax system is a block to achieving progress. For example, at the moment the tax system isn't doing enough to support a green transition, e.g. through continuing to subsidise the production and use of fossil fuels.

Overall our tax system is failing to support the public services that are necessary for people to have a flourishing life. In addition, the status quo is not doing enough to reduce income and wealth inequality.

Our vision: what we want the world to look like

Tax Justice UK wants everyone in the UK to benefit from a sustainable, fair and effective tax system.

Sustainable: We want a cultural change with the public supporting higher levels of public spending, in part supported through more progressive taxes.

Fair: We want to see a much more progressive tax system in which those with greater wealth and big companies pay a fairer proportion of tax.

Effective: We want to see the tax system reformed so that individuals and companies can't avoid paying their taxes.

TJ-UK will campaign for a fairer tax system that actively redistributes wealth to reduce inequality, as well as providing everyone with access to high quality public services. At the same time, we will work to build long term support for decent public services supported by a better approach to tax. A fairer tax system will help to create an economy that works for everyone.

Our purpose: the role we play in making change

TJ-UK's purpose is to create the political space in which progressive tax reform is considered common sense. TJ-UK is a non-partisan bridge builder, working with everyone who shares our vision for a fairer and more effective tax system, and working to convince those who don't.

Our story to date

TJ-UK was incubated by the global Tax Justice Network (TJN) and since May 2017 we have been an independent organisation. Our focus is on the UK, whereas TJN's role is global. We help to lead a UK tax justice movement made up of campaign groups, tax experts, academics and think tanks. To ensure that our campaigns are rooted in rigorous analysis we call upon a panel of technical advisors with expertise across government, tax, law and communications.

An external organisational review carried out in 2021 found that we are a "go-to" organisation on tax reform; we have enabled the tax justice movement (and the broad new economy movement) to collaborate; and that we have laid the foundations for future political influence.

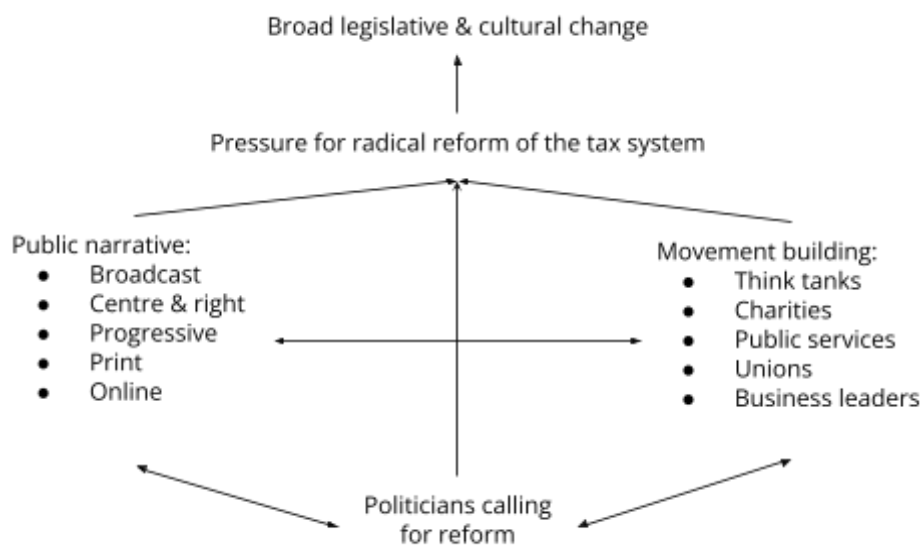
To date we have:

- Helped to win a G7 deal in the UK that should contribute to the biggest change in a century to the way global multinationals are taxed.
- Helped put wealth taxation on to the political agenda.
- Led, and expanded, a revived UK tax justice movement including think tanks, academics, campaigners, trade unions and charities. We published a joint [manifesto on tax equality](#) during the 2019 general election. In 2020 we co-ordinated [a joint statement](#) on tax reform post-covid.
- Built strong relationships with the media, leading to significant coverage for TJ-UK and our partners.
- [Completed a major public attitudes project](#) to understand what people think about public spending, wealth and tax.
- Co-established the UK [Patriotic Millionaires](#) group.
- Supported politicians from major parties to advocate for tax reform, including by shaping proposed amendments to legislation.
- [Commissioned research](#) with Tax Justice Network and Decolonising Economics on the links between tax and racial injustice in the UK.
- [Worked with the Women's Budget Group](#) to look at links between tax and gender equality.
- Brought together major tax justice and climate groups to agree [a set of principles](#) on how to introduce tax reforms to support a green and fair transition.
- Been increasingly called upon for our expertise on the tax system, including by giving evidence at the Treasury Select Committee and being a commissioner on the centre-right Bright Blue tax commission.

Our theory of change: how we think change happens

Our approach is threefold.

1. Firstly we help to build a broad movement of groups and credible voices backing reforms to the tax system.
2. Secondly we help shape a public and media narrative about what a fairer tax system looks like.
3. Thirdly, we work with politicians to build support for the wide-ranging reform that is needed, while also looking for opportunities for short term wins.



What we will be doing in 2022-24

What's politically possible on tax has shifted in our favour due to three things: the new Conservative voter base, the impact of the pandemic and the Biden administration. There is increased public and political support for a more interventionist government and willingness to contemplate higher taxes. This is also happening at a global level with international institutions such as the IMF and OECD backing progressive tax reforms. Over the next three years there will be a significant opportunity to shape how the tax reform supports key areas of the government's agenda including "levelling up", efforts to achieve net zero and recover from the pandemic.

[Our research shows](#) that there is overwhelming public support for closing the loopholes that big businesses use to slash their tax bills, as well as for a more progressive tax system overall. In addition, there is acknowledgement from some wealthy individuals and big businesses that things might need to change. With an election likely in 2023 or 2024, there is an opportunity to shift major parties' positions and influence manifestos so that tax rises for big companies and the wealthy are no longer taboo and serious action is taken on tax avoidance. In order to shape this work, we will work with our partners to develop a long term vision for what a reformed tax system should look like.

During this period, TJ-UK will continue to focus on the need for higher taxes on wealth, for example bringing capital gains tax into line with income tax. A secondary focus will be on campaigning for higher corporate taxes and measures to tackle tax avoidance. Given the amount of individual wealth held through companies, these two elements of the tax system are intimately linked. We will

campaign for a higher effective corporation tax and against unfair loopholes. In particular we will fight any attempt to roll back the planned increase in corporation tax due in 2023.

TJ-UK will take a pragmatic approach on what specific policy area to campaign on, depending on what is winnable and what can build long term power for the tax justice and broader new economy movement. This will allow us to be nimble and reactive to external opportunities. We will ideally focus on one campaign at a time.

Our work has three strands:

1. Building a movement
2. Shaping the public narrative
3. Persuading decision-makers

1. Building a movement:

In order to be successful we need other organisations to join us in campaigning for a fairer tax system. During 2022-24 TJ-UK will help to bring together the existing UK tax justice movement, as well as help organisations and movements incorporate tax into their work.

Outcomes:

- Tax work is incorporated in the work of other movements, measured by the number of organisations that have included a reference to tax justice in their work and the quality of their messaging on tax.
- A strong UK tax justice movement, measured by how actively engaged the core organisations are and the quality and strength of the collaboration and working relationships.
- A clear long term collective vision for tax justice in the UK, measured by the quality of the document and the support and buy-in from other key tax justice organisations and stakeholders.

We will:

- Convene a diverse group of organisations championing tax reforms through holding regular meetings and coordinating activity where appropriate.
- Work with a group of UK millionaires who want a more progressive tax system.
- Embed tax asks with other movements e.g. those working on climate change.
- Support the new economy movement to incorporate progressive tax reform into its agenda.
- Proactively work to ensure that the tax justice movement is welcoming to diverse and marginalised voices.
- Mobilise our 35,000 supporters to build pressure for reform.
- Work with partners to develop a long term vision for what tax justice looks like in the UK, including high level policy recommendations.
- Work with groups on the centre-right who share some of our objectives to build support with the Conservative ecosystem for progressive tax reforms.
- Explore partnering with other interest groups who might back tax justice, for example the unions.

2. Shaping the public narrative:

Tax needs an image makeover. Too often tax is talked about as a “burden” that should be lowered. We aim to promote its positive role in helping to build the foundations of a flourishing society. To date, we have built excellent foundations with significant, and diverse, media coverage. We are seen as a trusted and credible voice on tax justice. During this 2022-24, we will continue to grow our influence in the media to support our broader campaign.

Outcomes:

- Progressive tax reform, and especially wealth taxation, is a salient media issue, measured by the broad coverage of the issue by a wide range of media outlets of all stripes.
- The TJ-UK brand is strongly associated with progressive tax reform stories in the media, measured by the number of times TJ-UK, or its partners, are mentioned in stories about progressive tax reform.
- TJ-UK continues to influence editorial decision making, measured by broadly positive news stories; TJ-UK-authored or orchestrated comment pieces; and editorial / leader pieces that align with TJ-UK's objectives.

We will:

- Be a credible and respected go-to campaigning organisation for the media.
- Influence the editorial decision making of key economics, business and political editors, producers and opinion formers.
- Shape the political debate on tax with a strategic, targeted and growing number of media mentions a year with a particular focus on centre and right-leaning outlets.
- Respond in the media to key tax moments throughout the year including the budget, spring statement and government statistical releases.
- Commission light touch pieces of research to generate media coverage.
- Support other organisations, and alternative messengers, to talk about tax in the media.
- Work with others to challenge regressive economic arguments made in the media.
- Develop tested messages that build support for our agenda.
- Continue to communicate regularly with our supporters.

3. Persuading decision-makers:

Our political advocacy work is still nascent. During 2022-24 we will seek to influence party manifestos in the run up to the next election. We will target individual politicians to speak out in favour of our agenda. While building support for radical reform, we will look for opportunities along the way for short term wins.

Outcomes:

- Political support, measured by a network of parliamentarians who are willing to regularly engage with our work and raise TJ-UK priority issues in parliament, including representatives of all the main parties.
- Political engagement, measured by meetings with political stakeholders.
- Legislative influence, measured by the number of TJ-UK backed amendments tabled and policy change.
- Manifesto and policy influence, measured by demonstrable adoption of TJ-UK campaign proposals and rhetoric by political parties and the government.

We will:

- Build a cross-party group of parliamentarians who support our agenda, including working with the APPG on anti-corruption and responsible taxation. We will play a facilitative role with MPs by helping them to do their jobs.
- Work with opposition parties to hold the government to account and adopt our policies in their manifestos

- Target key moments such as budgets, local elections and the general election in 2023/24 to make the case for reform.
- Advocate for major parties to adopt our policy positions as their own e.g. in election manifestos.
- Explore how we can build relationships with civil servants and political advisors.
- Collaborate with individuals and organisations that have more direct leverage over the government e.g. business lobby groups and centre-right think tanks.
- Support partners and our supporters to pressure MPs, devolved administrations and local authorities to adopt progressive tax positions.

4. Organisational development

TJ-UK is a lean organisation and over the next three years we plan to grow in a sustainable way. Funding permitting, we are looking to add 2-3 more staff members over the course of this period. Priority areas for new staff including fundraising, finance, campaign support and research/policy.

Currently the bulk of TJ-UK's income comes from grants from charitable foundations, with a growing number of donations from members of the public.

Outcomes:

- Diversify our funding, measured by increasing the share of our funding that comes from individual supporters and major donors.
- Oversee a successful board transition, measured by bringing in at least three new board members who come with diverse backgrounds and experience.

We will:

- Build a sustainable funding base that includes trust and foundations, as well as individual donations.
- Continue to develop a strong relationship with our supporters, working with them to take campaigning actions, as well as donate to TJ-UK.
- Ensure that TJ-UK continues to be a good place to work with a clear set of organisational values and a collaborative and empowering working culture.
- Hire three new board members, with a particular focus on diversifying our board membership.
- Bring in more resources to support the team, for example through hiring new staff members or consultants.

Testing, evaluation and course correcting

TJ-UK is still a relatively new organisation. We are still testing what is the most effective way for us to work towards our objectives.

TJ-UK will convene regular meetings to review monitoring and evaluation data for each activity area, to present successes and failures, discuss lessons learned, and identify and implement action points. The board will play a key role in assessing the effectiveness of TJ-UK's strategy and will provide on-going support to the team.

TJ-UK is working with an external strategy and evaluation consultant who is acting as a "critical friend", who has carried out an assessment of our first three years. The team will have regular meetings (2-3 times a year) to review progress and refine our approach. We will collect and analyse a wide range of monitoring indicators to help us track our progress against our objectives. TJ-UK will assess progress against these indicators on a monthly basis. We will also continue to carry out informal reviews after major campaign

moments to learn lessons and shift our approach if necessary. Towards the end of this strategy period we will commission a light touch evaluation of our impact to inform the development of our next strategy.

Management and governance

The Board of Directors sets the overall strategic direction for the organisation. The Board currently comprises Will Snell (Chair), Alan Buckle, Christine Oram, Jesse Griffiths, Toby Quantrill and Sarah-Jayne Clifton. Day-to-day operations of the organisation are delegated to the Executive Director, under an agreed terms of reference. The work of TJ-UK is supported by a group of voluntary technical advisers who provide expert input to the development of our policy platform.