
Things tax avoiders should consider

The vast majority of people in the UK don't try to avoid paying tax. They pay on time and without intervention from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). Some tax avoiders are not aware of the consequences.

Your scheme is not HMRC approved

Getting an avoidance Scheme Reference Number (SRN) doesn't mean HMRC has in any way approved or cleared the scheme. HMRC issues these numbers to identify and track you as a user of an avoidance scheme.

Most schemes don't work

You may be told that avoidance is legal but if the scheme doesn't work you'll have made an incorrect tax return which is not in accordance with the law. You are legally obliged to pay tax that is due and you may be charged interest and penalties if you try to avoid it.

It could cost you more than you bargained for

Avoidance schemes are complex. They can give rise to unintended additional tax consequences, and the fees you pay the promoter don't count as tax paid. So you could end up **paying much more than just the tax** you're trying to avoid.

You may have significant legal fees to pay

If the scheme is taken to litigation, you're likely to have large legal fees to pay. Your promoter may ask you to pay into a 'fighting fund' up front.

You could face criminal conviction

If you deliberately mislead or conceal information from HMRC, you could be prosecuted and convicted.

You could face negative publicity as a tax avoider

If you are named in court papers when a scheme is litigated, or your name is in a public register, you could be reported in the media as a tax dodger.

You'll have to pay the tax up front anyway

You won't get a cash flow advantage while HMRC investigates a scheme. New legislation means you'll have to **pay the disputed tax up front**.