

TaxPayers'  
Alliance

# BEGINNER'S GUIDE



TO

**GOVERNMENT  
WASTE**



The TaxPayers' Alliance is Britain's waste watchdog. From exposing cost overruns of major government projects to our town hall campaigns, we have revealed billions of pounds of wasted taxpayers' money over the years.

As part of our War on Waste, we undertook a landmark investigation with the *Daily Mail* in the autumn of 2020, uncovering **£5.6 billion** of profligacy.

The pages of this pocket-sized factbook contain just a small selection of examples from that project.

You are now armed with facts about how your councils, quangos and the government squander your money.

But unfortunately, £5.6 billion is just the tip of the iceberg. There's much more work for us to do – and we can't do it without your support.

**John O'Connell**  
Chief Executive, TaxPayers' Alliance

## £5.6 billion of wasted taxpayers' money

breakdown, by area

Area	Amount of waste (£)
Whitehall waste	256,556,406.00
Temporary NHS staff	163,116,000.00
Union facility time	81,125,282.00
Coronavirus	265,984,656.00
Foreign aid	727,665,101.30
China	80,976,499.00
Health bodies	2,971,977,352.00
Hospital trusts	74,962,993.15
Health tourism	54,745,191.32
Bonuses	43,120,157.00
Government procurement cards	1,028,329.60
Policing	124,340,457.30
Education	5,261,378.93
Defence	537,559,068.00
BBC	58,753,987.40
Councils	130,815,177.64
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,577,988,036.64</b>



# Cabinet Office

# £102,456

## cost of a wellness app for staff

SOURCE: [CONTRACTSFINDER.SERVICE.GOV.UK](https://contractsfinder.service.gov.uk)



# Cabinet Office

# £449

spent on a designer  
Herman Miller  
office chair



SOURCE: FOI



# Department of Health

# £47,529

spent on takeaways

**Matt Hancock's**  
department splashed taxpayers' cash on takeaway orders from Bong Bong's Manila Kanteen to feed staff at the beginning of the covid-19 outbreak



SOURCE: FOI



**Home Office**

**£3,299**

**on luxury dog beds  
for Border Force  
dog teams**



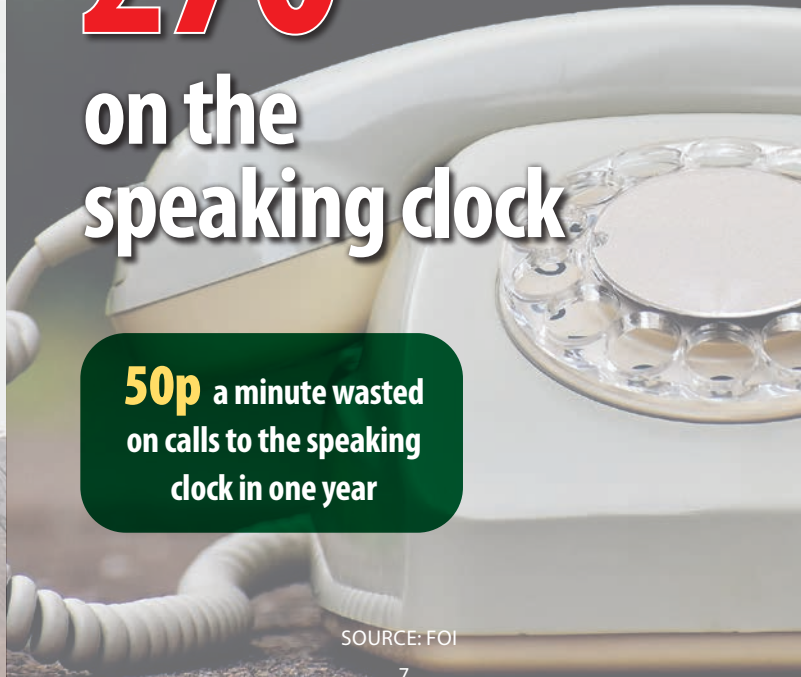
SOURCE: HOME OFFICE SPENDING DATA



**Home Office**

**£70**

**on the  
speaking clock**



**50p** a minute wasted  
on calls to the speaking  
clock in one year

SOURCE: FOI



**Department for Environment,  
Food and Rural Affairs**



**£1,039**

**spent on a 'sit-stand'  
electric desk and chair**

SOURCE: FOI



**Department for Environment,  
Food and Rural Affairs**



**£2,253**

**for an event  
at Bristol Zoo**

**The cost of alcohol and food for 30 people  
to discuss the African-Eurasian Migratory  
Waterbird Agreement in December 2019**

SOURCE: DEFRA SPENDING DATA

# HM Treasury

# £23,449

## spent on travel

## including first class flights



SOURCE: HM TREASURY SPENDING DATA

# Lavish meals paid for by YOU!

Department	Restaurant	Spend
DEFRA	London Scottish House	£2,003
Cabinet Office	The Delaunay	£1,000
Dept. for International Trade	Hoxton Grill	£900
DBEIS	The Cinnamon Club	£635

SOURCE: DEPARTMENTAL SPENDING DATA



**FCDO Services,  
Foreign Office**

**£25,831**

**on flowers**



The largest bill was **£2,570**  
on florist supplies in Germany



**£6,372**  
paid to Harley  
Street clinic  
Cosmebeauté

A circular image of a woman's face with a white facial mask applied, her eyes are closed. The image is semi-transparent and overlaid with text.

**£4,428**  
spent on 'entertainment'  
at Silverstone racetrack

A circular image of the Silverstone racetrack, showing the track, grandstands, and buildings under a clear sky. The image is semi-transparent and overlaid with text.



**FCDO Services,  
Foreign Office**

**£206,638**

on interior design  
spending and  
'facilities/repair supplies'

**£2,464** was spent at Kings Road Antiques  
and **£7,963** at an online curtain company

SOURCE: FCDO SPENDING DATA



**Foreign and  
Commonwealth Office**

**£912,455**

spent investigating the  
effect of covid-19 on  
women's rights in Libya

The year long contract was awarded to  
the Institute for War and Peace Reporting

SOURCE: CONTRACTSFINDER.SERVICE.GOV.UK



# Ministry of Defence

# £24,816

spent on PPE for the  
Ukrainian Army



SOURCE: CONTRACTSFINDER.SERVICE.GOV.UK



# Ministry of Defence

# £34,500

on 17 non-refundable  
flights for officials to  
attend an event that  
was cancelled

The former air chief marshal spent  
**£6,945** on first class flights  
for a 2-day trip to the US

SOURCE: MOD EXPENSES DATA/FOI



**Department for Digital,  
Culture, Media and Sport**

**£432,071**

**Acquiring artwork for  
government buildings**

A five-foot wall made of  
13,000 white Lego® bricks  
by Michael Wilkinson

**£24,000**



Oil painting by  
Denzil Forrester  
titled *Family Living*

**£107,250**



Photographic print  
called *Shadows and  
Disturbances*  
by Zarina Bhimji

**£20,160**



And they spent

**£34,865**

transferring artwork  
to Tokyo!

SOURCE: FOI/CONTRACTSFINDER.SERVICE.GOV.UK



Local councils

15 councils spent  
**£9,696**  
on portraits of  
council bosses to  
hang in town halls

Essex  
**£3,759**  
on a portrait of  
their chairman

Devon  
**£471**  
on portraits  
of their  
chairmen

Hertfordshire  
**£581**  
on a portrait of their chairman

Barnet  
**£250**  
on a portrait  
of the mayor

Charnwood  
**£671**  
on two portraits

SOURCE: FOI



# House of Lords

# £17,258

## spent on artwork

**£5,258**  
Oil painting called  
*Tank Attack*

**£5,000**  
*Royal Gallery*  
by Toby Ward

**£7,000**  
Commissioned portrait of  
the speaker, Lord Fowler

SOURCE: FOI



# Transport for London


# £401,615

## to buy laptops and

# £181,023

## on mobile phones for staff

SOURCE: FOI



# Local councils

44 hard-up councils spent

# £89,937

on foreign visits

 **AeroFLIGHT** Boarding Pass

Lancashire

**£3,835** to go to the Paris International Airshow, including

**£2,751** on a fancy hotel

 **AeroFLIGHT** Boarding Pass

Ards and North Down

**£4,262** on a trip to the French Riviera for a property conference

 **AeroFLIGHT** Boarding Pass

Angus

**£5,728** including **£2,365** to attend golf shows across the globe

 **AeroFLIGHT**

Oxfordshire

**£1,837**

on a libraries conference in Aarhus, Denmark

 **AeroFLIGHT** Boarding Pass

Antrim and Newtonabbey

**£23,155** including **£12,210** on business class flights to China

SOURCE: FOI



**Local councils**

**£245,026**

**on dog poo bags**

**Worst offender  
Spelthorne**

**£38,804**

SOURCE: FOI

26



**Local councils**

**Wakefield spent**

**£11,514**

**on a friendship agreement**

**This huge amount of taxpayers' cash paid  
for a 9 day trip to Nanning, China to sign a  
so-called 'friendship agreement' that was  
dissolved only 18 months later**

SOURCE: FOI

27



# Foreign aid

## The UK government has spent at least

# £81 million on aid to China

**£3,900,000**

Improving Chinese weather forecasting

**£3,481,571**

R&D of offshore wind farms

**£1,045,327**

Research on flooding

**£884,999**

Pandemic prevention

**£519,399**

Shaun the Sheep in Shanghai

**£338,391**

Boosting apple harvests

**£478,906**

Teaching the Chinese how to grow rice

**£166,535**

Engaging new urban audiences in China with traditional Chinese opera

**£21,732**

Design of a mascot for Shanghai's Performing Arts and Screen Industries

**£290,000**

Taking Shakespeare's plays to China

SOURCE: VARIOUS



Police forces

**£7,923,782**

spent hiring  
hundreds of  
'diversity and inclusion'  
employees

City of London police paid one full-time diversity  
employee almost **£85,000** in 2019,  
**75%** more than the median London salary

SOURCE: FOI



BBC golden goodbyes

Licence fee payers  
on the hook for

**£23.4  
million**

paid out to 331 staff  
between 2019-2020

SOURCE: BBC ANNUAL ACCOUNTS



**BBC splashes taxpayers' cash on staff expenses**

**The top 38 BBC bosses claimed a total of**

**£303,987**

**in expenses**

**£7,483**

spent on a return business class flight to Seattle for the former chief technology officer

The head of drama spent **£6,597**

for a return business class flight to LA and **£287** at the 5★ Abano Grand Hotel in Italy

**£18,427**  
spent on taxis

Three executives spent **£1,430**

each to stay at a boutique hotel in LA

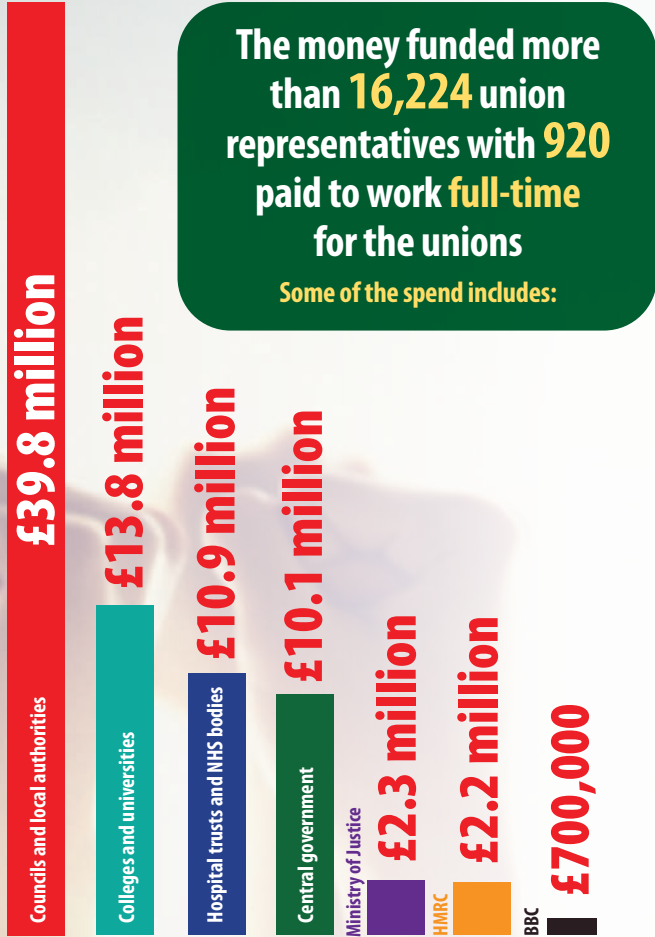
Former director general Tony Hall claimed **£9,005** for 2 business class flights to Nairobi and Delhi

SOURCE: BBC EXPENSES DATA

# Trade Unions

# £81 million

## of taxpayers' cash spent funding trade union facility time



The money funded more than **16,224** union representatives with **920** paid to work **full-time** for the unions


Some of the spend includes:

SOURCE: CABINET OFFICE DATA

For further details and a full list  
of sources, please visit  
**[www.taxpayersalliance.com/waste-factbook](http://www.taxpayersalliance.com/waste-factbook)**

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Reforming taxes and public services,  
cutting waste and speaking up for  
British taxpayers

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