

How did we reach such a state of depravity?

Published: January 13, 2026, 2:19 am

Last night I wrote that the [Tories really do believe that all unemployment is voluntary](#) and if only the market were let free everyone would be in work, albeit that they were utterly indifferent to the wage rate.

I wrote before reading two articles that have appeared over night. The [first is in the Telegraph, and says](#):

The minimum wage for millions of people could have to be capped or frozen in future if it risks damaging jobs or the economy, the Government has said.

It has told the Low Pay Commission, which sets the minimum wage, that it must formally consider its impact on “employment and the economy”, before agreeing future increases.

The second comes from the [Guardian and trails](#) a speech Osborne is to make today in which he will apparently say:

For too long, we've had a system where people who did the right thing — who get up in the morning and work hard — felt penalised for it, while people who did wrong thing got rewarded for it. That's wrong.

Except, [as I pointed out yesterday](#), those out of work are very largely seeking work or were, ([as Osborne will now admit](#)) as a result of Tory policy in the 1980s, [addressed by Labour from 2002](#), deemed unemployable when that was not necessarily the case.

So we have the absurd situation where a [Liberal Democrat can now claim](#):

“The level of employment is now above its pre-recession peak, but the employment rate is below the pre-recession peak.

“This means that we believe that caution is required - particularly as the minimum wage rate is now at its highest ever level relative to average earnings for adults, and

remains high for young people."

The minimum wage is £6.19 an hour. At 40 hours a week that £12,875 a year.

Is this government really saying that's a dangerous level of pay?

Are they really saying that this pay rate is dragging the economy down?

Are they really saying this level is making work pay?

Is it really their view that if only we made the poor poorer by cutting their pay, freezing their benefits, forcing them out of their homes and increasing their cost of living this country will become competitive again?

If they are the only reason can be that they really do think that all unemployment is voluntary and if only there was no minimum wage and no benefits system then all economic problems would be solved as exploitation ran rampant across the economy.

But if so this is the sign of what can only, and very appropriately, be described as a callous mentality that is utterly without empathy, care or concern.

But that's the modern Conservative Party, aided and abetted by too many in other parties, by neoliberal economists and a cruel media.

All of which begs the real question, which is how did we reach such a state of depravity?