

# You ain't seen nothing yet: we've only had 40% of the c...

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[Will Hutton said this yesterday](#) in the Observer:

*It is an incidental sentence, but it brought me up short. By 2018, general government consumption will be proportionally no larger than it was in 1948. So declared the Office for Budget Responsibility in its report accompanying the autumn statement. The work of three generations in building the sinews of a state that support systems of health, transport, education, environment, policing, science and the rest is to be summarily withdrawn over the next five years. It is a landmark moment in our national life.*

[Larry Elliott is on the same theme today](#):

*The single most arresting statistic in last week's autumn statement was that by 2018-19, the squeeze on Whitehall departments means government will be smaller than at any time since at least 1948, when consistent data was first collected.*

And don't for a minute think you've seen the impact of cuts as yet: they've hardly begun. As Larry points out:

*Between April 2011 and March 2016, the IFS says that public service cuts will average 2.3% a year; from 2016 to 2019 they are scheduled to be 3.7%. Put another way, so far the coalition has cut spending on public services by 8%; by 2018-19 this will have become a cut of 20%.*

So the cuts have hardly begun: and cuts they will be of a scale we can still, as yet, hardly imagine.

And despite this Labour has still not, as yet, built an alternative narrative. That's something I am in London talking about today.