

Bad news day

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Some days there is little or no news. On others it is as if it was planned that bad news should flood the media. The last couple of days have been bad news days.

The government [has announced draconian anti-union measures](#).

Then [it threatened the future of the BBC](#).

And followed that [with a demand that hospital consultants](#) and others work seven days a week in the NHS without additional pay, which their own advisors say is likely to lead to a staffing crisis.

They followed that up with the suggestion [that the NHS might at some point cease to be free](#) at the point of care.

And as the evening progressed news came [that the Bank of England](#) thinks that interest rate rises are likely sometime in the next year, increasing to by more than 1.5% over a period of a year or so once they start.

Why be worried? For several reasons, I suggest.

Firstly, the attitude towards unions strikes at the heart of individual freedom: the right to strike is fundamental to liberty, but the plan is to deny it.

Second, the attack on union rights to fund political activity is bound to further imbalance political debate in this country. That is bad for our democracy.

Third, the attack on hospital consultants is not evidence based (making consultants work is pretty daft unless the whole hospital is fully open because they work as part of a team, not in isolation) and, without extra resources, could be deeply counter-productive.

The attack on the BBC is purely dogma driven in pursuit of Murdoch interests, which is profoundly unhealthy for the UK and the balance of its news.

Whilst the increase in interest rates and a return to what bankers call 'normal times' [will increase average mortgage payments](#) in the UK by more than £80 a month or £1,000 a year. In many households this is the tipping point into simply not being able to make ends meet.

Each of these moves is a worrying threat to the delicate and finely balanced fabric of what makes things work at present. Each in itself may be manageable. Put together and they are something different. They do, in combination, attack the rights of individuals, make their lives economically harder, strip away the underpinning of security on which they rely and threaten to remove something of value that also provides (despite all its faults) two world class services that make most other resources in every other country look hopelessly inadequate.

This is dogmatic change without evidence to support it that will make the lives of millions worse in many ways.

Of course such a process, with all it implies, concerns me. Why wouldn't it?