

Three coincidences of mistrust do not make a crisis

Published: January 15, 2026, 12:22 am

It's been an interesting weekend.

[Junior doctors marched](#). Few could doubt the validity of their reasons: they want to work for the NHS as we know it; they want a working life that can be managed alongside the responsibilities they owe to their families and they don't want a significant pay cut imposed upon them. Most of all, from their experience on the front line of public services they have learned not to trust what they have been told by this government.

Then [eighty four bishops](#) told the government that its response on the issue of Syrian refugees was inadequate. As ministers manoeuvred on the subject of bombing the bishops rightly said that their focus should be on the human issues Syria is giving rise to. The bishops published their letter because they did not trust the government to respond otherwise

And awareness of the coming crisis in benefits payments increased. According to the IFS it is a mathematical impossibility for those on in-work tax credits not to suffer as a result of the coming changes but the government insists otherwise. And as [Jolyon Maugham has shown](#), these cuts are simply a matter of political choice; they are not necessary. People do not trust the government.

Three coincidences where mistrust is at the core do not make a crisis. But they might suggest one is happening. To put it another way, these events are of themselves symptoms, but if they are all indicative of an underlying malaise then the issue is serious.

I think that is the case. The government has lost the faith of doctors, teachers and lawyers, all of whom are key professionals who have to engage with them. They are fed up with being told to do an improving job in impossible funding situations when they know that this is not necessary.

That is why there is also the concern about tax credit cuts: in truth there is no one who thinks that these are necessary. Benefit cuts at the same time as there are tax cuts for large companies and the wealthiest are about a choice to favour the rich over those

less well off.

Discussing bombing when four other countries bombs have already failed to deliver a solution in Syria is much the same: it is favouring the power of the commercial military establishment over ordinary people.

Government is all about choice. This government is, I think, making the wrong choices. And the reason why is it does not believe in the role of government except as the protector of property rights. That is the issue at the heart of all these symptoms: it is not the people who matter in each case, but the fact that they are perceived as impediments to market based solutions.

The government clearly thinks the symptoms of the crisis in confidence in the government that are now apparent can be ignored. I think they are wrong. It's my belief that people are finding there is a limit to the shrinking of the state that they will tolerate. And on the rebound they will look for very different answers.

I just wish people did not have to suffer until such time as those in power have a change of hearts and minds. But as yet the suffering is not even being recognised by those with the power to end it, in which cases these coincidences over the weekend will not make a crisis, because we're already deep in that already.