

We are living in a contemptuous state

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I believe that government can do things. It may not be a popular position but all the evidence I can see suggests it is true. Break down what government actually does and you find high popularity ratings for quite a lot of it.

And then politicians spoil the show, deliberately. Take news from the last twenty four hours as an example.

First there was the issue of [424 announcements](#) on the last day parliament was sitting this year. That was deliberate news overload in the hope that the government could be unaccountable for its action. To describe such behaviour as contemptuous of parliament, of democracy and so of us all is to be kind to it.

Then I note the [story in the Mail](#) that notes research by Which? This suggests that, on average, callers to HMRC waited 38 minutes to be answered - double the wait found in a similar survey a year ago. Many waited more than an hour. Some might say that this proves the need for a digital HMRC, but no it does not. It proves the need for more and better trained staff at HMRC. It is contemptuous not to provide people with the service they require when asking them to pay tax.

And talking of tax, there was the [release of research on the bedroom tax](#). It was widely suggested that this would be massively penal. And so it has been proved to be: 57 per cent of the people affected by the Bedroom Tax had had to cut back on spending on essentials. Essentials means things like food. And children do, of course, suffer as a result. That's contemptuous, of people's needs and the value in their lives.

Anything else? Yes: I have not finished yet. The [government has announced cuts](#) of 6.7% in local authority funding. And has said that all such funding will have to be raised locally by 2020, using devolved business rates. First, this is contemptuous of those who need social services local authorities supply. Second, it's contemptuous of local government, who are being forced to do the government's dirty work. Third, it's contemptuous of regional differences in the UK: it is impossible to raise the funding required locally to meet need in many areas precisely because that need is driven by

the poor state of the local economy. The government is contemptuous of this.

And whatever you do don't challenge the government. The Lords did, [and will be stripped of their powers as a result](#).

Government can, and should, work. I explain how in my book [The Courageous State](#). But we are living in a contemptuous state. And we are all paying the price for that.