

You need to be concerned to manage a crisis, and I doubt...

Published: January 15, 2026, 12:00 am

There seem to me to be four critical assumptions that must be made before anyone can believe the UK will have an adequate response to Coronavirus.

The first is that Matt Hancock can plan.

The second is that Johnson can lead.

The third is that Rishi Sunak knows anything about macroeconomics.

And the fourth is that they care.

I leave the first three aside. The fourth is the one that matters.

This is the government of [Britannia Unchained](#), the 2012 volume by the likes of Raab, Patel and Truss, that set out their political visions. It's not a pretty volume. As the press noted at the time that it was published, it suggested that the British are "among the worst idlers in the world" who "prefer a lie-in to hard work". There was little attempt to disguise the contempt that these elitists felt for those they wished to govern.

And the whole book assumed that the state was malign; a force destined on all occasion to do harm, which they nonetheless wished to control.

These thoughts are, I suggest, the prevailing mindset of our cabinet.

Is a cabinet made up of such people likely to intervene on behalf of the people it despises? Or even think that anything the state might do in such circumstances be of benefit? Might it just be that Hancock's suggestion that we should wash our hands and use sanitiser (which I am told has already disappeared from most stores) be the limit of his free-market response, beyond which he would really rather not go?

My point is a serious one. It requires a certain mindset to manage a crisis. The outcome has to matter to you. I am nit convinced that this group, who think they and their ilk are ring-fenced from society at large, have anything like the understanding required to face

the issues that may shortly become very apparent.

And yes, that does worry me.