

Failing to extend furlough 'will be death knell for the...

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The [Express ran a headline](#) yesterday saying this:

Rishi Sunak warned 'catastrophic furlough move will be death knell for Tory Party'

RISHI SUNAK would be making a "catastrophic" mistake if he does not extend the furlough scheme as failure to do so would crash the economy and put the Conservative Party's place in government at risk, an expert warned.

By CHARLIE BRADLEY

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As they noted:

A total of 9.6 million people have benefited from the [furlough] scheme since its launch in March, at 1.2 million companies, at a cost of £34.7 billion to the exchequer so far.

Taking the decision not to extend would be disastrous, according to Richard Murphy of Tax Research UK.

He argues the scheme should go on for another two years with a few million remaining on it.

They added:

He warned that if they don't do this, Mr Sunak — along with Prime Minister Boris Johnson — could face a severe backlash.

He told Express.co.uk: "The day the unemployed realise their children are impacted by this, the Government will fear that those people start protesting.

"They'll say 'you could have kept us in work and our homes, but you didn't because you prioritised the national debt.'

"Those people could then vote Labour, at every level this threatens the Conservative Government's survival.

"If they don't extend the furlough scheme it will be catastrophic, both politically for the Conservatives and economically for the country.

"If he goes back, and he is signalling this, to 'sound finance' — by which he means prioritising the debt, he will write the death knell of this Conservative government."

The article concluded with this:

Mr Murphy also claimed that the Chancellor hasn't always taken the pandemic as seriously as is necessary.

Early on in the pandemic, he accuses Mr Sunak of being complacent.

Mr Murphy continued: "At first, Rishi Sunak completely underestimated what was going to happen, it was a complete disaster, because he hadn't realised how disastrous coronavirus was going to be.

"But he was back a week later with the furlough scheme, it was smart, quick, some people lost out when they shouldn't have done.

"But overall it has worked and they did a good job — but now Sunak's obsession with debt is kicking in again.

"If he opts for austerity and tax hikes, then frankly we are heading for depression rather than a recession."

This was not the place where I expected to get that opinion out.

The interview lasted for an hour: the pieces selected were clearly from many comments made and are a rather particular angle, but equally, they're not an unfair selection of the messages I wanted an Express audience to hear.