

Johnson has no idea about how to help those in poverty ...

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I have posted [this thread on Twitter](#) this morning:

Susanna Reid interviewed Boris Johnson on ITV yesterday morning. He had no answers to her questions on the recession we are now facing, but there are plenty available. A thread....

The most telling question Reid asked was about what he would do to help a pensioner whose fuel bills appeared to have increased fivefold, swamping any increase in pension she had received many times over.

Already living on less than £200 a week, this pensioner had almost no chance of covering her additional costs of living and had resorted to travelling on buses all day to be warm and avoid having to heat her own home.

Johnson had no answer to this question. He blustered about the £150 council tax rebate and the bizarre £200 energy loan scheme. He then, falsely, claimed credit for introducing free pensioner bus passes.

After that he could only claim that it was essential people accept hardship so the government balances its books whilst having to pay £83bn of interest a year, which as a matter of fact it is not doing, because most of this is down to dubious accounting and may never be paid.

This failure by Johnson was telling. Reid was angry about it. Twitter was furious. And as everyone agreed, Johnson utterly failed to address an issue that it was obvious he would be asked about.

So what could be done for this pensioner, presuming we care, which Johnson clearly does not?

The £20 a week Johnson took away from so many people when Covid was claimed to be over would help. This could be restored now for pensioners and those on Universal Credit.

Benefits including pensions could and should also be updated now by the full current inflation rate, not the much lower rate of last autumn.

VAT on domestic energy could be reduced to nothing. Fuel duty on diesel and petrol could also be reduced temporarily to keep both within a price cap to cut inflation. That cap would reduce price pressure on many other products, including food.

The government's national insurance increases could be removed and then reversed for those on lower pay. This is already an unfair tax. Increasing it for the lower paid was always a mistake.

Interest rate rises should be cancelled, and those that have already happened should be reversed. After all, interest rate rises put up the price of money, and that's inflationary, so increasing them has to be the wrong policy now.

Government investment in new jobs and green energy should increase. We are going to need those jobs very badly as a recession develops, as it is right now.

We could, and should, have a windfall tax on energy company profits because there is nothing remotely moral about profiteering from the poverty that is being imposed on others and these companies can already borrow all the funds they need for investment.

Then there should be tax increases on wealth and high incomes - because those who enjoy both are the people really driving inflation, and both have also been undertaxed for far too long - which is why we have such an unequal society, as this crisis is showing.

Finally, the government should be willing to borrow or use quantitative easing to tackle this crisis, just as it used QE to tackle Covid. Borrowing is cheap. People want to lend to the government.

What's more, there's no pressure on future generations as a result, because young people are not going to thank us for growing up in poverty with the high risk of joblessness they now face as result of the gov'ts approach. It's wrong to say cuts help next generations as a result

Johnson had no answers for Susanna Reid. But as I show, there are many available. It's time we heard about all of them from politicians, and then saw them in use.