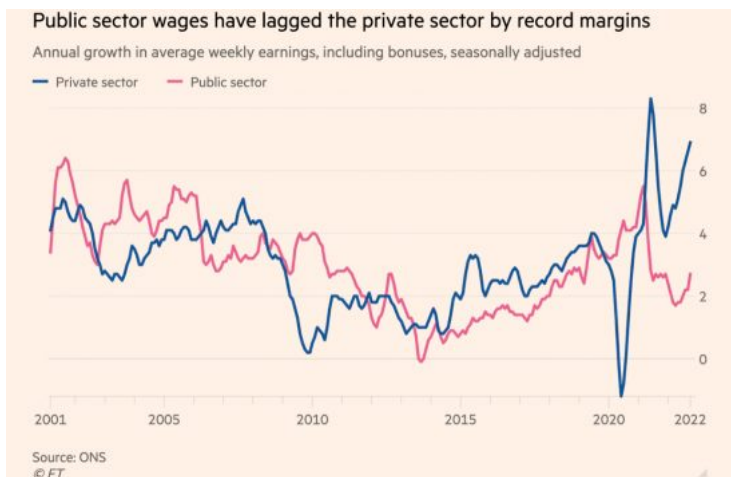


This chart [comes from the FT](#):



What is apparent is that the Covid crisis created a disconnect between public and private sector pay that it is clear that this government is determined to maintain. This is despite the fact that the cost of re-establishing the link is small, and pays for itself anyway. What is more, because most of the public sector is not paid for by charging for services supplied, there is no mechanism for these pay rises to feed into price inflation.

The choice being made by ministers now must in that case be deliberate in the face of the facts. They cannot claim ignorance as their excuse for not giving pay awards that a) match inflation b) keep people in the sector c) attract new people in to reduce strain and improve service quality. All three are obviously needed.

So why refuse what any sane minister would work out is not only affordable, but necessary? Three reasons.

First, they want to break the public sector.

Second, they want to break public sector unions, following in the footsteps of Thatcher (or so they think).

Third, they believe this to be the path to privatisation which is their obvious goal.

They face three insurmountable problems. They are that the public side with NHS and other staff. Additionally, they do not believe ministers good intent. And, the public does not want privatisation. That is why this Tory rump parliament will fail. They cannot win against people the public support. But the cost of the fight might be high, and we could well do without that.

The sooner neoliberal government is consigned to history the better.

But then the question has to be asked as to how much better Wes Streeting might be than Steve Barclay and the answer is likely to be, not a lot.

If only we could have competent ministers.