

## Sunak is failing

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Rishi Sunak clearly thinks that people in the UK are more worried about the 40,000 or so people a year trying to get here in small boats than they are about the 25,000 people who will likely die in the coming year as a result of NHS underfunding, and the hundreds of thousands, if not millions, more who will have to suffer for the same reason.

I know this because in his 'vision' speech yesterday Sunak made legislation on small boats a priority. He claimed the NHS already had all the money it needed, when that is glaringly obviously not true.

I find this reading of the public mood bizarre. I can, however, only presume that is what the focus groups report. I always wonder how they find the people they ask to take part.

Why make this point? Three reasons. First, Sunak did not promise to solve the small boats problem. He said he'd pass laws to stop it. Since those laws will no more stop desperate people trying to enter the UK than existing penalties already do he has by definition set himself up to fail on this issue.

Second, he has also set himself up to fail on the NHS by ignoring the current crisis within it and instead making his target the reduction in long term waiting lists, which goal will be achieved over an unspecified period. Meantime, the deaths, suffering and agony will continue. He really cannot duck responsibility for that.

Third, both issues are indication of another matter which he singularly failed to address, which is chronic underfunding of public services. If migration services were properly funded with speedy prior vetting of applicants being readily available in Europe before anyone need approach the Channel then the small boat problem could be solved. That is not going to happen though. It will be said that will cost too much.

And in the NHS, more than a decade of underinvestment needs to be addressed. It's really not hard to work that out. But Sunak denies it. And so the shambles will continue.

Sunak's vision was of a country bereft of ideas, understanding, empathy and an economic policy fit for the twenty first century.

I wish I could feel more optimistic about Starmer's alternative, coming this morning. I don't as yet, and Rachel Reeves was dire on the media this morning, keeping on implying that £4bn of tax from non-doms will solve all problems, when that is obviously not true.

But I will reserve judgement on that until later. Sunak is failing. I will appraise Starmer later.