

Funding the Future

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I was intrigued by [an article in School Week](#) that was out yesterday. As they noted:

School leaders have slammed the government's "sham" anti-strike consultation which forces respondents to pick a preferred proposal and limits comments to just 150 characters.

They added:

The Department for Education today [published proposals](#) for [new minimum service levels in schools which would severely limit the number of staff who could strike](#).

But it has since emerged the DfE's own consultation does not allow respondents to progress unless they choose a "preferred" MSL proposal – with those that don't unable to complete the survey.

Respondents are also invited to leave comments in addition to their responses. But some are limited to just 150 characters – and respondents are unable to progress with the survey unless they meet this requirement.

I checked. The claim is correct.

Basically, this consultation is framed so that objecting to minimum service level agreements is very hard.

And, as noted, reasoned argument is not permitted.

This is a sham, and not a consultation. But that reflects the government's own refusal to recognise a quite fundamental fact. As I tweeted last night:



It's so bizarre that the government does not understand that the one thing most public and civil servants want are minimum public service levels - and day in, day out, the government refuses to provide the funding to deliver them.

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5

Page 1/2

Of course, professionals in the NHS, education and other public services want to deliver minimum service levels. But the simple fact is that it is austerity that is not making that possible, which we now know from the Autumn Statement is something that is going to get very much worse over coming years. But this obvious fact is ignored by the so-called consultation, which is just another government whitewash.