

People do not know what fiscal rules are, so why is Lab...

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I did another Twitter poll yesterday, this time on a decidedly relevant economic theme:



All the usual sample selection warnings apply, although this time I would suggest that those who engage with me on Twitter are likely to know more about fiscal rules than people do on average.

In the glossary to this blog I suggest that:

There are no such things as [fiscal rules](#). There are instead [fiscal choices](#).

However, many politicians, and most especially those who have responsibility for the finances of a [jurisdiction](#), often claim that such rules exist. Those politicians create what they described as fiscal rules to justify the fiscal choices that they have made with regard to the macroeconomic options that are available to them.

It may be that those who claim that they know what fiscal rules are do understand them. It would be good if they did. But, it is just as likely that they think that there are really are things called fiscal rules that must be complied with. That would be a shame when the reality is that so-called fiscal rules are nothing more than a pile of mumbo-jumbo created by the likes of Rachael Reeves to supposedly validate the decision that she has taken to impose austerity on this country without any real explanation for doing so being provided.

It worries me that there is economic ignorance on the scale admitted by those who took part in this poll. I am sure there is a strong element of truth in the regard in the replies given.

It worries me as much that politicians must know this, and despite that fact choose to talk in riddles, using such terms as fiscal rules, which they must know are meaningless to most people, seeking as a result to obscure the truth of what they are talking about.

Throughout my professional life, I have always thought it worth the effort to try to de-jargonise, as far as possible, what I have talked about with people who are not trained in the field in which they have sought my expertise. This takes effort. You have to imagine that you do not know what you have learned. Then you have to imagine what it is that is confusing the person who does not have your skills, because all too often they are unable to explain what that is. Only then, can you really work out what it is that the person in question wants clarified so that they can make properly informed decisions. Thereafter, you have the task of explaining in ways that the person might understand. Most, especially as a professional accountant, that is what I always tried to do for my clients. It seemed to work.

It seems to me that very few of our professional politicians try to do this. Especially when it comes to economics, but by no means only in that case, they usually speak in jargon. Doing, so they try to claim expertise. They appear to not understand is the true expert does not need jargon to explain what they are talking about. The expert's skill is in relating a complex issue to the experience of the person they are taking to.

So why does Rachel Reeves love talking in jargon? Is it she does not understand economics enough to talk in any other way? Or does she use it as a way of claiming expertise? Alternatively, does she just not know what she is taking about? Or, is she simply trying to hide the truth? I fear it is the last of these options. And that is not good.