

The Fallacy And Folly Of Austerity

By **Alexander Baron** - Mar 12, 2016



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The Conservative Government's misguided policy of austerity is continuing to hurt those at the very bottom of society, and things are set to become even worse. At the end of the day, this can result only in more rather than less expense, and perhaps even a repeat of the so-called English riots of August 2011.

Let's start at the very bottom. This [article from last May](#) shows the problems rough sleepers face. Many of these people – overwhelmingly men, but a shocking number of them young – have taken to sleeping in skips, in some cases with horrific results. Recently, the BBC reported on the problem, and although drivers are now taking extra care when emptying skips, no one should count on there being no more fatalities. If

there were more social housing and better quality hostels, fewer people would be sleeping on the streets.

Further up the food chain, people on benefits are being persecuted by officious benefit office staff, some of whom are alluded to erroneously as coaches. Some people are being **sanctioned gratuitously** – ie having their benefits cut off, sometimes for months at a time. And what do people do when they have no money? According to a study by Sheffield Hallam University last year, **they become homeless**. Not that it takes a degree to work that one out.

Jobseekers (so-called) are being infantilised, required to fill out forms explaining WHAT I DID TODAY and WHAT I WILL DO NEXT. Others are being forced into low paid jobs or what has been called workfare. Futhermore, the whole benefit system has now been moved on-line, which as you are reading this is no problem for you, whether or not you have a job, but what about those people who do not have Internet access, at least at home?

At the same time the Government is grinding the poor into the dirt, it is wasting staggering sums of money on the procurement of services, as can be seen with for example **this report**.

This is only the tip of the iceberg though, because cuts to the funding of other essential services have already led to catastrophic financial losses, as well as literal catastrophe. The people at the top seem to have lost their reason, because they don't seem to realise some things have to be paid for whether they are used or not. This is called insurance. Imagine a town in which there have been no serious fires for the past three years, would it make sense to close down the local fire station? Do that, and you can bet your last cent that within weeks there will be a serious fire in the town which will result in multi-million pounds of damage and probable loss of life.

Let's not talk about fire though, let's talk about water, lots of it. The recent floods in the North of England saw bridges and buildings collapsing, and the centre of Rochdale being **turned into a lake**. There was also serious flooding awhile back in the West Country. If money hadn't been *saved* by cutbacks on flood defences, none of this would

have happened, or if it had, it would have been far less catastrophic. This is money that is *not* well saved.

Finally, austerity may cost us more than mere money. Last month it was **reported here** that a unit which was set up specifically to combat wildlife crime is to be shut down. If a bridge collapses, it can be rebuilt, but how do you replace a stolen osprey's egg?

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