

What's Wrong with Britain? Poor Housing, Education and Health in Crisis

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Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Poverty & Social Inequality](#)

One glance on Sunday morning at [The Guardian](#) website demonstrated quite clearly what is wrong with Britain – and, probably, the rest of the ‘developed’ world. Three major concerns of the average household were news. And all three are connected, not just to each other, but to the way this country is being run.

Housing and the ‘Right to Buy’

This country has never recovered from the 1980s [Great British Sell-off](#) of our social housing – council houses and flats. Having sold them off, councils weren’t then allowed to use the money to build much needed... council houses. There has been a social housing crisis ever since.

Tory plans to force housing associations (private, non-profit organisations) to go down the same path will lead to more desperate people that [local councils](#) will have to deal with. The Tories are fond of telling us we all ‘aspire’ to home ownership, but that aspiration comes second to people’s simple wish to have a secure, affordable roof over their heads. Whether it’s the rent or the mortgage that is affordable is not actually that relevant.

Education and the loss of morale

Why is it that each new government has to overhaul the education system, just when teachers have got to grips with the last ‘reforms’? A YouGov poll finds that [over 50 per cent](#) of teachers are thinking of leaving the profession. Yet people go into teaching because they sincerely want to teach. Schools Minister Nick Gibb says “Teaching remains a highly popular profession...” He continues, “While many teachers stay in their roles for more than five years...” Five years? Is that now a long time to be in a job that used to be for life

Governments have for years depended on teaching being a ‘vocation’. No matter the conditions, the extra hours, the lack of support they receive, teachers will go on teaching, won’t they? Not any more it seems.

Health, the NHS and corrupt money

Poor housing and poor education often result in poor health, but we all know the National Health Service is in trouble financially. Tories use that as a good reason to privatise parts of it, but that doesn’t stop them [hiding](#) how bad it has got under their watch. One of the main problems has been the Private Finance Initiatives, introduced by the Tories, which has led to [crippling debts](#).

While the right to buy has ruined the supply of housing for poorer people, so PFIs have ruined many hospitals. Those built under PFIs still have to allocate large sums of their budget away from patient care, just to go on paying the interest on these deals. Governments should get bold and put an end to this. Financiers have earned more than enough from the poor taxpayers.

But they won't. Another health story to emerge is connected to the Volkswagen scandal, where harmful emissions have been polluting the air when customers had been led to believe that VW was environmentally friendly. It turns out they are rather more friendly [to the body](#) that is supposed to measure and monitor the emissions produced by their cars.

But although Housing, Health and Education form major 'life' concerns for the average person, for people earning a less than generous salary all three areas are heavily impacted by the lack of financial security. It goes without saying that the Guardian and other newspapers had, in September, highlighted the news that 'zero hours' contracts rose by [nearly a fifth](#) last year. And it should come as no surprise that they will increase because business groups are in favour of such contracts.

So there we have it: insecure jobs, insecure housing, and an insecure education system that lets down both teachers and pupils, all of which results in poor health that can't be addressed by a failing health-care system.

Insecurity is the problem.

Life itself is never secure and dependable, but the current government and its devotion to business and profit are making life a whole lot less secure for many people. Are the Tories hoping we'll all simply die of worry? Then they can close down government and go and enjoy themselves.

Oh no! Where have all the servants gone?

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