

# Strikes and public sector management

There is discussion of a new law to limit the right to strike in key public services, just as armed service personnel agree not to strike when they join up. If the government thinks such a law would be helpful they should have used some of the underused Parliamentary time this November and December to put one in. They did not, meaning such a law cannot now have an impact for current rounds of Christmas and New Year strikes.

My view is Ministers need to engage more with the Chief Executives and senior officials who are meant to manage these matters. Ministers direct, managers manage. Ministers set policies. CEOs and senior officials implement them. Ministers have made clear they want to stop the flow of illegal migrants across the Channel. They have stated they want the health backlogs down. They want faster turnaround of asylum claims, of passport renewals, of probate filings and many more other admin processes connected to licences, taxes and benefits.

They have in many cases authorised large increases in spending and given approval to a major expansion of state employment since 2019. Now they must ask where is all the money going? Why isnt there more service from the extra people and cash? When will their aims be met?

It looks as if the independent body and quango model lets us down badly. It also is clear Ministers are having to involve themselves much more in running departments if they want to get things done. I will write more about the role of public sector well paid CEOs and why we do not get better results. All too often Ministers agree an aim only to discover a quango is doing the opposite and makes it difficult for a Minister to get through a desired change of policy.