



Is £1.5bn good news?

Mike Morris 5th August 2019

Having listened to our new Prime Minister deliver an NHS spending announcement on the steps of No 10 ten days ago, I have been waiting to hear from the Matt Hancock (who you will remember is one of the few survivors from Mrs May's administration) to find out more about this and how it fits into his overall strategy. So you can imagine how pleased I was when BBC Breakfast announced that the man himself was to be interviewed on this very subject this morning! So I gobbled down my breakfast and delayed getting dressed—probably as well with the effect that the gobbling had on my stomach— and settled down to listen.

To Mr Hancock's credit, he tried to discuss the subject but was constantly interrupted by the upstart reporter who only wanted to find fault.

So what if the Nuffield Foundation say we need a six billion investment?

Are they suggesting that we stop providing money to the NHS until we can give them every single penny that they need?

Does where the funding for a cross Pennine rail service affect patient outcomes? (although if there is spare rail money, could we have a new line to the South West that doesn't get shut every time it rains, please?)

One and a half billion pounds to be spend on twenty hospital upgrades is **GOOD NEWS!!!!**

Maybe the BBC should consider the family of a man in Boston Lincolnshire who will be alive to spend Christmas 2022 with them because of the new local A & E unit. How about the families in Cornwall and Luton whose babies will survive to become toddlers because of the new children's and neonatal units to be built. But why would a BBC reporter care about that, after all they will always use private healthcare.

A few years ago I ran a volunteer programme to help reduce reoffending by Young Offenders in prison. As part of this, I was involved in a very successful project in Feltham YOI. At a conference, the BBC showed up with everyone else to find out what was going on and discovered that they had a serious problem: THERE WAS NO BAD NEWS. So all they could do was mention a verbal fight between Jack Straw and Boris Johnson on the stage (I was there, it wasn't very interesting) and, as it seems to be corporate policy not to report good news, they had to settle with broadcasting a two year old interview with Young Offenders in Bristol saying (out of context) that they were worried about "life on the outside".

It doesn't matter how big the investment is, anything that improves patient outcomes is good news, if it reported as such then it will improve the morale of hard-working front line NHS staff as well as making patients more optimistic. The NHS does a fantastic job, yes things could be better but they could be one hell of a lot worse. Lets celebrate the NHS and all who are involved with it for the wonderful work that the collectively do. Lets congratulate politicians like Matt Hancock who have worked for a long time to make the latest hospital upgrade a reality and lets praise those who implement these programmes and help us all live longer and better lives.

I moved from Cornwall into Devon and have quite enough children already, so won't be using the new Women's and Children's Unit in Truro, but I can still be pleased that it is being built. Actually, its just as well that I won't need to use it as the speed of trains from here to Truro would mean that I'd be a grandfather by the time my wife got to Truro.

This weekend has been full of bad news, not least further mass shootings in the USA, so lets not try to find more. Let's treat the good news for what it is—Good News— and celebrate any improvement in services to health and social care. The only way to get to the end of a long road is to start walking (unless you are a BBC reporter who can fly in by private helicopter) and the first steps are the most important, especially when we look back at how far we have come rather than at how far we have to go.

Please BBC, please remember that the people of this country want to hear the good news as well as the bad and ordinary people consider improved health to be good news, not that one of your reporters has been on a little swim in Norway. If you can't realise that, then maybe we should divert the license fee to the NHS.