# Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to Reintroduce National Service for 18-Year-Olds with No Exemption for Professional Footballers



Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced plans to reinstate national service if re-elected. This would require 18-year-olds to spend a year in the Armed Forces or dedicate 12 weekends to services like the NHS or police. Despite previous suggestions, a senior Conservative source confirmed that professional footballers earning high wages and having long off-seasons would not be exempt from the policy.

This clarification emerged after Work and Pensions Secretary Mel Stride had initially indicated footballers might be exempt. The decision implies that prominent football players like Wayne Rooney, Michael Owen, and Marcus Rashford could have missed significant tournaments under such a policy during their early careers.

The announcement has sparked debate across the UK, with a MailOnline poll indicating that two-thirds of its readers support the measure. National service in the UK was last in place in 1960.

In other political news, voter registration spiked following Sunak's election announcement, with over 405,000 applications submitted in the week following his speech on May 22. Voters have until June 18 to register and must provide photo ID at polling stations.

Meanwhile, Labour Deputy Leader Angela Rayner expressed support for MP Diane Abbott amid a row over her candidacy for the upcoming election. Despite her suspension and subsequent reinstatement, confusion remained about her eligibility to stand. Rayner criticized the party’s handling of Abbott, describing her as a trailblazer and a respected figure. This controversy stirred allegations of factionalism within Labour, which the party leadership has denied.