# Labour faces backlash over proposed £6 billion welfare cuts



Reports suggest that significant alterations to the welfare system lay ahead, with Labour's leadership grappling with escalating internal tensions surrounding proposed cuts that could total £6 billion. Following a turbulent cabinet meeting, notable figures such as Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner and Energy Secretary Ed Miliband have emerged as dissenters against these threatened reductions. Notably, there are concerns that up to £5 billion may be slashed from the Personal Independence Payment (PIP), a vital benefit currently serving around 3.6 million individuals.

The reforms proposed are poised to introduce stringent eligibility criteria, rendering it more arduous for individuals—particularly those battling mental health issues or difficulties in self-care—to access essential support. This ill-advised direction appears aimed solely at slashing costs associated with PIP, which has already seen expenditures soar, doubling over the past five years. Specific directions suggest making PIP payments conditional on job-seeking ability, particularly targeting the younger demographic of 16 to 30, and likely imposing requirements that involve participation in job training or educational programmes, fundamentally altering the safety net for some of society's most vulnerable.

James Taylor, Executive Director of strategy at disability charity Scope, voiced strong concerns about such measures, asserting: "Ripping PIP away will be catastrophic for disabled people. PIP exists because life costs more if you are disabled." It is alarming that Labour’s austerity measures may deepen the very poverty levels they claim to alleviate among disabled individuals, without fostering genuine job acquisition.

With the government poised to unveil further details of these detrimental cuts in the forthcoming Spring Statement on March 26, we see Labour boldly mischaracterising a "broken welfare system." Work and Pensions Secretary Liz Kendall's previous remarks that individuals on benefits are "taking the mickey" add salt to the wounds of those requiring support, demonstrating a lack of empathy and understanding for the realities of living with disability.

While there is palpable opposition to these proposed changes, some cabinet members are rightfully wary of the backlash following welfare cuts implemented so soon after previous budget reductions. Internal discord raises fears of resignations among key party figures, with vocal critics like Ed Miliband and Angela Rayner expressing disillusionment with Labour's clear pivot away from supporting the most vulnerable in society.

Last week, Sir Keir Starmer attempted to project a unified front for the party through a message of necessary spending cuts, yet this approach is profoundly misguided and reflective of a political elite disconnected from the struggles of ordinary citizens. Proposed welfare reforms threaten to scrap the "work capability assessment," a critical tool that determines eligibility for incapacity benefits, raising further alarm about the future well-being of disabled individuals.

The political landscape is evidently fraught, with numerous Labour figures recalling the tumultuous history surrounding welfare expenditure management. Senior party members, including veteran MP Diane Abbott, have publicly rebuffed the notion that welfare cuts align with the party's core values, underscoring the misalignment apparent within Labour's current strategy.

In delivering their misguided proposals for welfare revisions, the Department for Work and Pensions seems fixated on a so-called sustainable future, conveniently neglecting the fact that they are actively creating a dilemma that locks ill individuals in economic inactivity, rather than genuinely seeking solutions. These forthcoming changes epitomise a substantial shift in Labour's policy trajectory that's more aligned with austerity than compassion, making clear that the needs of the vulnerable are all too often overshadowed by fiscal considerations.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://news.sky.com/story/ministers-determined-to-fix-broken-benefits-system-as-welfare-cuts-expected-13327905> - This article supports the claim that there are significant welfare cuts expected, with the chancellor emphasizing the need to reform the welfare system due to its inefficiencies and rising costs.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-bolsters-employment-support-to-unlock-work-for-sick-and-disabled-people> - This government announcement corroborates the efforts to reform the welfare system by enhancing employment support for sick and disabled individuals, aiming to make the system more sustainable.
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bu6hmAunn_M> - This video discusses Labour's proposed welfare reforms, including cuts to Personal Independence Payments and changes to Universal Credit, which align with the article's description of Labour's austerity measures.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This is the source of the original article, detailing Labour's internal tensions over proposed welfare cuts and the potential impact on vulnerable groups.
* <https://www.gbnews.com> - GB News provides coverage of Labour's welfare overhaul, including the freezing of PIP payments and changes to Universal Credit, which are part of the broader welfare reform plans.
* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news> - The BBC often covers UK welfare reforms and political developments, providing context on the ongoing debates and concerns surrounding welfare cuts and their impact on society.
* <https://www.plymouthherald.co.uk/news/cost-of-living/labours-full-5bn-pip-cuts-10027155> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14503405/keir-starmer-cabinet-trumpian-state.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data