# Political turmoil in Dudley as Labour councillors resign over welfare cuts



In a significant political upheaval within Dudley, three councillors from the Labour Party have announced their resignation, joining former Dudley Labour group leader Pete Lowe in forming a breakaway group amidst increasing discontent over proposed welfare cuts by the national government. These latest resignations—Karl Denning, Peter Drake, and Matt Cook—highlight the disillusionment felt by many within the party regarding their leaders' failure to protect the most vulnerable in society.

Karl Denning, blind since a workplace accident, expressed alarm about the implications of these government welfare changes for disabled individuals. In his resignation letter to the newly minted Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer, he conveyed the distress shared by numerous constituents who feel the impending alterations to benefits may devastate their lives. "Over the last few days, I have been contacted by a number of disabled people about the upcoming announcement and the impact it is more than likely going to have on them," he wrote. Denning’s commitment to advocating for those who cannot speak for themselves starkly contrasts with the insensitivity and shortsightedness of the current government strategy that, under the guise of reform, endangers those who need support the most.

Matt Cook, newly elected councillor for Brierley Hill and Wordsley South, expressed sorrow over his resignation, emphasizing the chasm between Labour's current trajectory and his family's longstanding commitment to its values. Cook poignantly stated, “It's a big deal for me... but it is just not working,” a sentiment echoed across constituencies that once trusted Labour to uphold the rights of the working class.

Peter Drake, who has held a seat in Coseley since 2019, declared his transition to an Independent immediately after resigning, denouncing the Labour Party’s current direction. “I refuse to defend a national Labour government which does not and will not represent the working class and ordinary people of the United Kingdom,” he proclaimed. Drake's sharp critique underscores a growing frustration among the party base, which feels abandoned by leadership that is increasingly out of touch with the everyday realities of voters.

The formation of a new independent group by the departing councillors also includes others disenchanted with Labour’s leadership. This emerging faction emphasizes the widening divide within the party as prominent figures, including Councillor Steve Edwards and Councillor Karen Westwood, express their dissatisfaction with the party’s direction. Edwards has been particularly outspoken, criticizing a leadership that has seemingly turned its back on the very constituents they are meant to serve.

At the heart of this controversy lie the government’s proposed welfare reforms aimed at tightening eligibility for benefits such as Personal Independence Payments (PIP) and Universal Credit—policies projected to strip support from approximately one million individuals. Work and Pensions Secretary Liz Kendall defends these moves, claiming they are essential to rectify a system she paints as failing. Yet, this rhetoric is met with skepticism, given the real harm these cuts are set to inflict on working-class families across the nation.

Prime Minister Starmer describes the proposed changes as a moral necessity, responding defiantly to the uproar, “I’m not going to turn away from that.” This defiant stance belies an evident unease within the party, as multiple dissenters express their dismay and fear over the potential fallout from these reforms.

As tensions simmer within Labour, the political landscape grows increasingly unstable. The departure of key figures signals a heightened likelihood of further resignations, exemplifying a party fracture that could have monumental implications for its future. The fallout from these welfare changes will not only resonate through the corridors of power, but also provoke an electorate that yearns for a party that truly reflects their values and needs, reinforcing the urgent call for a robust and compassionate alternative.

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

## References

* <https://www.expressandstar.com/news/local-hubs/dudley/2025/03/20/dudley-labour-group-three-more-councillors-quit-labour-after-leaders-resignation/> - This article corroborates the resignations of councillors Karl Denning, Matt Cook, and Peter Drake from the Labour Party in Dudley due to disagreements over welfare cuts. It also mentions the formation of a new independent group by these councillors.
* <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2025/03/19/starmer-faces-councillor-exodus-over-benefit-cuts/> - This article supports the claim that Sir Keir Starmer is facing a mass resignation of Labour councillors across the country due to his decision to cut benefits payments. It highlights the discontent among party members over welfare reforms.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This source provides the original context for the article about the political upheaval in Dudley and the broader implications of Labour's welfare policies.
* <https://www.expressandstar.com/news/local-hubs/dudley/2025/03/20/dudley-labour-group-three-more-councillors-quit-labour-after-leaders-resignation/> - This article further details the reasons behind the resignations, including concerns over disability benefits and the perceived abandonment of Labour's core values.
* <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2025/03/19/starmer-faces-councillor-exodus-over-benefit-cuts/> - The Telegraph article expands on the national scope of Labour councillors' dissatisfaction with the party's stance on welfare cuts, indicating a broader crisis within the party.
* <https://www.expressandstar.com/news/local-hubs/dudley/2025/03/20/dudley-labour-group-three-more-councillors-quit-labour-after-leaders-resignation/> - This article also mentions the involvement of other councillors, such as Steve Edwards and Karen Westwood, who have expressed dissatisfaction with Labour's direction.
* <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/black-country/labour-exodus-dudley-three-more-31243565> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/2030171/david-lammy-bombshell-benefits-confession> - Please view link - unable to able to access data