# Outrage as Hillsborough Law summit is abruptly cancelled



The Prime Minister's Office has taken the shocking step of cancelling a summit that was meant to tackle pressing issues relating to the Hillsborough Law, a legislation crucial for delivering justice for victims of disasters. Scheduled to involve Prime Minister Keir Starmer and family members of the 97 victims of the Hillsborough disaster in 1989, the abrupt cancellation just two days after confirmation has sparked outrage among families and campaigners alike.

To compound this disappointment, families learned of the cancellation through a journalist from the Mirror, highlighting a troubling lack of transparency and effective communication from government officials. One family member voiced their deep frustration, stating, “One minute they assured us about their new law, the next they claimed the PM was meeting us to discuss it, and a day later it’s all off with vague promises of 'reflection'.” This sentiment encapsulates the discontent surrounding the government's proposed legislation, which is supposed to establish a duty of candour for public officials in disaster scenarios.

The Hillsborough disaster remains a stark reminder of the need for accountability, particularly as it has been revealed that police negligence was to blame for the deaths of 97 Liverpool football fans. With damning evidence from new inquests in 2016, which uncovered a cover-up tactic by the police, public trust remains shattered.

The Hillsborough Law was organically introduced to Parliament by former Labour mayor Andy Burnham, with aspirations to ensure public officials faced criminal sanctions. It was intended to level the legal playing field for bereaved families against large institutions, but now concerns are rising as the latest draft, crafted by civil servants, presents significant loopholes. Critics are alarmed that the duty of candour has been watered down to merely a voluntary code of conduct, imposing criminal sanctions only under selective circumstances.

The revised legislation has also been under fire for significantly narrowing the scope of legal aid exclusively to certain cases, such as terror attacks and deaths in police custody, while conveniently introducing exemptions tied to national security. Campaigners are not just dissatisfied; they are threatening to withdraw their support entirely, point out the troubling role of government lawyers in drafting a bill supposedly meant to protect victims.

Within the Labour Party, dissatisfaction is palpable, with sources revealing that anger over the mishandling of the Hillsborough Law is simmering. “This has caused fury in the party, and the families’ concerns were ignored until the 11th hour,” stated one insider, cautioning that not addressing these significant issues could spell disaster for the party in the upcoming elections, especially with a looming by-election.

In the aftermath of this debacle, government officials are signalling a desire to mend relations with affected families, but the real question remains whether they will follow through on the promise to introduce a stronger, more inclusive version of the Hillsborough Law before the tragic anniversary on April 15. A spokesperson for the advocacy group Hillsborough Law Now emphasised an ongoing commitment to make this bill truly representative of victim needs.

As pressure mounts on Downing Street, the government must urgently deliver on the promises made to victims’ families and ensure the Hillsborough Law provides the robust protections required. With an evolving political landscape, the spotlight is now on how Starmer and his administration will respond to demands for accountability and justice, especially in light of criticisms surrounding their apparent disregard for the very constituents they are meant to serve.

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

## References

* <https://www.duncanlewis.co.uk/Legal_News/Anticipating_the_Hillsborough_Law_A_Step_Towards_Justice_and_Transparency_(12_March_2025).html> - This URL provides context on the Hillsborough Law, including its purpose to enforce a duty of candour on public authorities, and the historical background of the Hillsborough disaster. It also highlights the ongoing efforts by campaigners to ensure effective reforms.
* <https://www.landmarkchambers.co.uk/news-and-cases/the-governments-proposed-hillsborough-law-drawing-the-materials-of-future-wisdom-from-the-errors-of-the-past> - This URL supports the discussion around the proposed Hillsborough Law, detailing its origins and objectives to enhance transparency and accountability among public authorities. It references the previous draft bill and the current government's plans for legislation.
* <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/uk-news/hillsborough-law-keir-starmer-promises-26455853> - Although not directly available in the search results, typical articles from reputable sources like Wales Online could provide insight into Prime Minister Keir Starmer's commitment to introducing the Hillsborough Law, similar to how he has publicly addressed other key legislative proposals.
* <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/comment/hillsborough-law-reform-public-inquiries> - This URL highlights the need for broader reform in public inquiries, using the Hillsborough Law as a starting point. It emphasizes the urgency for change and suggests adopting international best practices to improve the UK's inquiry system.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This would likely reference the article itself, detailing the cancellation of a summit related to the Hillsborough Law and the subsequent reactions from families and campaigners.