# Labour's commitment to social care reform in doubt as cross-party talks stall



Cross-party discussions on social care reform in the UK have stalled significantly under the Labour government, raising serious doubts about their commitment to improving this vital area. Health Secretary Wes Streeting's initial intentions to foster collaboration among political parties now appear to be mere rhetoric, as his January promises have yet to materialise into any meaningful dialogue—despite the impending start of a crucial review by Whitehall troubleshooter Dame Louise Casey.

With talks postponed indefinitely, critics are justifiably angry. The delay in Dame Louise's comprehensive report until 2028, coupled with the suspension of any actionable proposals until after the next general election, indicates a worrying lack of urgency from Labour. Meanwhile, Dame Louise is preoccupied with the grooming gangs scandal audit for Home Secretary Yvette Cooper, which diverts her focus from the pressing need for social care reform.

During a recent parliamentary session, Streeting once again brushed aside the prospect of merging social care funding with the NHS. His assertion that social care should be managed by local government speaks volumes about his inability to grasp the interconnected nature of these services.

Layla Moran, the Liberal Democrat chair of the Commons Health Committee, expressed her exasperation over the inaction. In comments to the Daily Mail, she underscored the dire economic and personal ramifications of Labour’s inability to address this pressing issue. The complete absence of proactive discussions starkly contradicts Labour's supposed agenda for substantial reform.

Despite receiving outreach from Dame Louise to initiate discussions for her review, the lack of scheduled meetings raises doubts about Labour's sincerity in encouraging cross-party collaboration. Conversations are happening on an individual basis rather than collectively, limiting the potential for a united front on such an important issue.

An insider has disclosed frustrations over frequent cancellations of talks without justification, stating, “If they are serious about getting cross-party backing, it seems a very strange way to go about it.” This consistent failure to engage demonstrates a worrying trend of Labour prioritising headline-grabbing initiatives over genuine reform.

Attributing the delays to the commitments of care minister Stephen Kinnock to the Assisted Dying Bill suggests misplaced priorities within Labour’s hierarchy. Health sources disagree, suggesting that one party’s unavailability and another's lack of response are the real culprits behind the deadlock.

The history of social care reform in the UK has always been fraught with challenges, stemming from both major parties’ unfulfilled promises. Labour's current posture, leaning on past Conservative proposals for a cap on social care costs, reveals their unwillingness to break new ground. Streeting's rejection of these plans shows a lack of innovative approach to address the issue meaningfully.

In a meeting with the Commons liaison committee, Sir Keir Starmer reiterated a hollow commitment to cross-party collaboration, acknowledging widespread frustration over frequent delays. His statements about the need for lasting reform ring hollow, given the Labour government’s track record of inaction and avoidance. As Labour flounders, the time has come for alternative voices to gain prominence and advocate for real social care reform that prioritises the needs of ordinary citizens over political games.

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

## References

* <https://www.careshow.co.uk/edition-25/new-labour-governments-plans-improving-social-care-uk> - This article supports the mention of Labour's ongoing efforts and challenges in improving social care, highlighting Stephen Kinnock's role as Minister for Care and the upcoming reforms starting from October 2025.
* <https://www.practicenursing.com/content/news-focus/long-term-social-care-reforms-unlikely-before-2028-warns-labour> - This article corroborates the delay in long-term social care reforms until 2028, as Labour has announced the creation of a National Care Service with a final report unlikely before then.
* <http://basw.co.uk/articles/labour-government-announces-new-commission-adult-social-care-england> - The article from BASW England highlights Labour's announcement of a new commission on adult social care reform, which, despite good intentions, faces criticism for potential delays and insufficient urgency in addressing current crises.
* <https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2024/07/08/stephen-kinnock-appointed-minister-for-social-care/> - This article provides information about Stephen Kinnock's appointment as Minister for Social Care and his role in handling social care reforms under the Labour government.
* <https://socialcare.blog.gov.uk/2024/07/17/welcoming-a-new-government-and-what-this-means-for-adult-social-care/> - This blog post discusses the implications of the new Labour government for adult social care, touching on the challenges and priorities in this sector.