# Labour MPs rebel as Starmer faces crisis over welfare cuts and election losses



The political landscape of the Labour Party is now fraught with turbulence as dissatisfaction with Sir Keir Starmer’s leadership reaches a boiling point. Mere months after Starmer’s surprise landslide victory in the July 2024 general election, calls for his resignation are echoing among his own MPs. The discontent stems from a string of abysmal local election results, with stinging defeats in seats once considered safe, raising serious questions about the party's durability.

Starmer's recent policy choices, particularly in the realm of welfare reforms, have only fueled the fire among disgruntled Labour MPs. The stark decision to revoke the Winter Fuel Payment for around ten million pensioners—a drastic and arguably reckless approach to remedying the fiscal mess left by the previous Conservative government—has ignited a fierce backlash. Although Chancellor Rachel Reeves defends these cuts as essential, critics contend that such measures alienate the party’s core supporters and exacerbate public anger.

Adding to Labour's woes, the upcoming cuts to disability benefits scheduled for November 2025 threaten to impact over 150,000 carers, particularly affecting older individuals and their families. Analysts warn that these austerity measures could drive a permanent wedge between Labour and its traditional base, especially in the so-called "Red Wall." The revolt among MPs is clear; over 40 have signed a public letter of protest, and more than 80 are said to have put their names to a private letter voicing their dissent.

Further compounding these challenges is a recent by-election loss to the opposition party, which has intensified worries about the long-term impact of Labour's policies. With many fearing that such missteps could lead to further electoral calamity, some MPs are advocating for tax increases to shore up essential services rather than pursuing cuts that push the public further away.

Despite the internal upheaval, government officials like Health Secretary Wes Streeting cling to the narrative that such fiscal decisions are unavoidable. They assert that in order to maintain a robust welfare system, difficult sacrifices must be made, insisting that these cuts are part of a larger economic stability plan. Nonetheless, with public dissatisfaction escalating, there are murmurs of a reassessment of the winter fuel allowance policy, but whether this will result in a full reversal or mere window dressing remains uncertain.

As Labour fights to mitigate the fallout from its controversial reforms, the threat of a significant parliamentary rebellion looms large. Instead of stepping back to consider the broader implications of these cuts, the leadership appears intent on doubling down, viewing these steps as fundamental to establishing a sustainable welfare framework. The direction Labour takes amid this tumult is still unclear, but one thing is certain: Starmer's leadership is facing unprecedented scrutiny as the party struggles to recapture the trust of its base while navigating an increasingly hostile political arena.

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

## Bibliography

* <https://www.express.co.uk/finance/personalfinance/2053560/keir-starmer-faces-huge-winter-fuel-payment-rebellion-nigel-farage-can-save-him> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.ft.com/content/b518a33e-97e1-4bf6-844e-69acf2f5f2b7> - Downing Street has confirmed it will not reverse the Labour government's decision to cut the winter fuel allowance for approximately 10 million pensioners, despite backlash from within the party after poor local election results. Labour MPs and party figures, including Welsh First Minister Baroness Eluned Morgan, have attributed the losses to unpopular welfare policies, particularly the cuts to winter fuel and upcoming changes to disability benefits. The move, introduced by Chancellor Rachel Reeves to address a fiscal deficit inherited from the previous Conservative government, is estimated to save £1.5 billion annually. Critics argue the policy is deeply unpopular and has significantly impacted public opinion. Some, including former MP Mike Amesbury and Labour MP Louise Haigh, have urged the leadership to reconsider the policy and push for tax increases to fund investment. Nevertheless, government officials, including Health Secretary Wes Streeting, defend the cuts as necessary for economic stability and redirecting funds to essential services. Downing Street emphasized the importance of difficult financial decisions to uphold broader policy goals like the pensions triple lock. The government now aims to regain political momentum with immigration controls and NHS reforms.
* <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/uk-government-rethinking-winter-fuel-payment-cut-guardian-reports-2025-05-05/> - The UK government is reconsidering its previous decision to cut winter fuel payments for millions of pensioners, according to a report by the Guardian. The policy, introduced by Finance Minister Rachel Reeves shortly after taking office in July, eliminated winter fuel payments for households in England and Wales unless recipients also received pension credit or other means-tested benefits. This move affected a large number of pensioners. However, following the Labour Party's loss of a parliamentary seat to the Reform UK party in a recent by-election, and underperformance in local elections, the government is now reviewing the policy. Sources suggest they may raise the £11,500 income threshold above which pensioners become ineligible for the payment, although a full reversal is not likely. The government has not responded to these reports as of yet.
* <https://www.ft.com/content/c24738fd-c500-4e55-be7f-c775ce620352> - The UK government is preparing minor concessions to ease the impact of significant disability benefit cuts set to take effect in November 2025. Around 150,000 carers, who currently receive an £80 weekly stipend, may lose this support as those they care for become ineligible under the new reforms. Ministers are planning transitional financial support for these carers. Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer faces a major House of Commons rebellion from Labour MPs opposing these welfare cuts, especially following Labour's poor results in recent local elections. Over 100 Labour MPs may vote against the government or abstain when stricter criteria for the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) are voted on in June. Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) data show that more than half of current PIP claimants over age 40 would lose eligibility, particularly impacting older individuals. In response to mounting dissent, ministers hope to mitigate backlash with an impact assessment of a £1bn job support program. However, independent analysis indicates this program may help far fewer people than those losing benefits. Despite internal pressure, DWP ministers remain committed to the reforms, positioning them as essential to creating a sustainable and supportive welfare system.
* <https://www.reuters.com/en/uk-wont-reverse-winter-fuel-payment-cuts-after-poor-election-results-pms-2025-05-06/> - The UK government, under Prime Minister Keir Starmer, has confirmed it will not reverse recent cuts to winter fuel and welfare payments, despite suffering losses in local elections. Labour Party members attributed the disappointing election results to public dissatisfaction over reductions in support for pensioners and the disabled. The cuts, implemented shortly after Labour came to power in July, eliminated universal winter fuel payments of up to £300 for many pensioners, unless they qualified for government benefits. Finance Minister Rachel Reeves defended the decision, citing the challenging financial situation inherited from the previous Conservative administration. Although The Guardian suggested the government might reconsider the policy, Starmer's spokesperson asserted there would be no changes. The government intends to announce further key policies in coming weeks, focusing on areas such as defense, housing, and immigration.
* <https://www.ft.com/content/8a045ba5-a3fd-42d5-80d7-d2f57347a86d> - Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer is facing mounting pressure from his MPs to reverse recent welfare reforms, particularly cuts to the winter fuel allowance and disability benefits, after poor performance in the local elections. The allowance, previously available to 10 million pensioners, is now limited to the poorest recipients, a change implemented shortly after Labour came to power. These cuts, along with recent changes to Personal Independence Payments (PIP), are blamed for alienating traditional Labour voters in the "Red Wall" areas, leading to losses to Nigel Farage's Reform UK, including council control in Doncaster and a key by-election in Runcorn and Helsby. Some Labour figures have urged Starmer to reconsider these policies and the party's tax restrictions, warning that continued austerity measures could deepen public discontent. Reports suggest internal discussions may lead to a partial U-turn by autumn, possibly revising eligibility rather than reinstating the full benefit. Critics, including former ministers and campaigners, argue that mimicking Reform's rhetoric and policies is ineffective and divisive. Chancellor Rachel Reeves originally justified the cuts as necessary to correct Conservative overspending, but dissent within the party suggests growing unease with the direction of Starmer’s leadership.
* <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1946000/keir-starmer-labour-rebellion-winter-fuel-vote> - Sir Keir Starmer could face a rebellion of up to 50 Labour MPs in tomorrow's crunch winter fuel payment vote. Dozens of backbenchers are set to abstain when the measure to axe the payments for millions of pensioners comes to the House of Commons on Tuesday, while a handful are expected to vote against the policy. It comes as Labour is facing a major backlash over plans to restrict the allowance to only those on pension credit. Some 11 Labour MPs are among the 27 who have signed a Commons motion expressing concerns over the proposals. Seven of the party's MPs had the whip removed for voting to scrap the two-child benefit cap in July.