# Starmer warns against SNP’s ‘bad deal’ as Lanarkshire steelworks remain mothballed



Sir Keir Starmer has raised alarm over the mothballing of steelworks in Lanarkshire, blaming this dire situation on a “bad deal” orchestrated by the Scottish National Party (SNP). His critique is a stark reminder that relying solely on the current Labour government’s promises will not remedy the failure to secure Scotland’s vital industrial future. Starmer called for Scottish Finance Secretary John Swinney to act swiftly to restore functionality at the ailing Dalzell and Clydebridge plants.

These sites, steeped in Scotland's steel production legacy, were handed over to Liberty House Group in 2016, backed by a £7 million loan from the Scottish Government. Yet, the absence of a coherent industrial strategy has left these sites entirely inactive, resulting in furloughed workers. Starmer’s statement regarding Labour’s tariff cuts feels alarmingly disconnected from the realities on the ground: "I’m horrified that the Dalzell and Clydebridge steelworks in Lanarkshire are lying mothballed.” This statement lacks any substantial solutions for the workers affected by this Labour-led negligence.

The SNP has attempted to shift the narrative onto the UK Government, claiming it has neglected Scottish industry while providing emergency aid to steelworks in England. SNP MP Pete Wishart described Starmer’s comments as “insulting,” suggesting that the Labour government is ignoring Scotland's industrial needs while focusing on Westminster’s agendas. This reflects a growing sense among many that the Labour party, regardless of its recent gains, remains out of touch with the unique challenges facing Scotland.

The history of the Dalzell and Clydebridge plants underscores the gravity of the situation. They were shuttered by Tata Steel in 2015 due to crippling economic factors, a scenario that hasn’t sufficiently improved despite government rhetoric on revitalising steel. The current Labour government has failed to provide the robust support that these facilities desperately need, instead allowing promises of “support” to drift without meaningful action.

In the context of ongoing trade negotiations, including a newly reached deal with the United States, there may be potential for the UK steel sector—but no immediate relief for Scottish operations. As these negotiations unfold, the Labour government’s lack of focus on Scotland’s specific industrial requirements highlights a worrying trend of neglect.

Starmer's unwavering stance against coalitions with the SNP reveals a fractious political environment and starkly contrasts the increasing frustration felt by Scottish leaders. Many feel that both Westminster and Holyrood are neglecting the urgent need for an industrious revival in Scotland, leaving communities dependent on this sector in limbo.

As the future of Scotland's steel industry hangs in the balance, it becomes evident that a decisive strategy must emerge—one that prioritises the long-term viability of essential industries. Finding genuine, actionable solutions will require a concerted effort free from partisan posturing, focusing squarely on the needs of workers and communities devastated by a rapidly deteriorating industrial landscape.

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

## Bibliography

* <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/starmer-says-he-is-horrified-steelworks-are-mothballed-due-to-snp-s-bad-deal-b2748805.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/starmer-says-he-is-horrified-steelworks-are-mothballed-due-to-snp-s-bad-deal-b2748805.html> - In May 2025, UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer expressed dismay over the mothballing of steelworks in Lanarkshire, attributing the situation to the Scottish National Party's (SNP) 'bad deal' that led to the plants being acquired by a new owner without securing ongoing work. The Dalzell and Clydebridge plants were purchased by the Liberty House group in 2016, with a £7 million loan from the Scottish Government. Starmer criticized the SNP-run Scottish Government for failing to develop an industrial strategy to keep the sites operational.
* <https://www.ft.com/content/6cf857f8-d327-4e30-8e58-d8c71fa83b9a> - In March 2025, UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer expressed disappointment over the US imposing tariffs on British steel and aluminum imports. He refrained from announcing retaliatory measures, opting instead to seek a pragmatic economic deal with US President Donald Trump. Starmer emphasized keeping all options open and negotiating an agreement to include tariff provisions if successful. The UK government aimed to avoid escalating trade tensions, focusing on supporting the domestic steel sector amid challenges like high energy costs and weak demand.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-business-37486003> - In 2016, Scotland's last major steelworks, the Dalzell plate mill in Motherwell, was formally reopened by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon. The plant had been mothballed by Tata Steel in 2015, along with the Clydebridge plant in Cambuslang, resulting in the loss of about 225 jobs. Liberty House acquired both facilities in April 2016, under a deal brokered by the Scottish government's steel task force. The reopening aimed to revitalize Scotland's steel industry and create employment opportunities in the region.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-34575423> - In 2015, Tata Steel announced the closure of its two plants in Scotland, leading to the loss of 270 jobs. The Dalzell plate-rolling works in Motherwell faced the loss of 225 jobs, and the Clydebridge plant in Cambuslang faced 45 job losses. The closures were attributed to a flood of cheap imports from China, a strong pound, and high electricity costs. The Scottish government responded by establishing a steel task force to support the affected workers and explore options to keep the plants operational.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-37045455> - In 2016, steel production was set to resume at the Dalzell mill in Motherwell, one of two Lanarkshire plants that had been mothballed by Tata Steel. Liberty House, the new owner, planned to restart production at the Motherwell site in September 2016. Approximately 60 staff were involved in preparations, with 40 more recruits expected, many of whom were former Tata Steel employees. The reopening aimed to revitalize Scotland's steel industry and create employment opportunities in the region.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-64689391> - In 2023, Sir Keir Starmer, leader of the UK Labour Party, stated that the party would not form a coalition or deal with the Scottish National Party (SNP) under any circumstances. Speaking at the Scottish Labour party conference in Edinburgh, Starmer emphasized the party's commitment to the union and warned against complacency following the resignation of Nicola Sturgeon as First Minister. The statement underscored the Labour Party's position on maintaining the United Kingdom's unity and its stance on potential alliances.