# Liz Kendall’s £5bn disability benefit cuts spark Labour rebellion and ethical crisis



Work and Pensions Secretary Liz Kendall is firm in her pursuit of a controversial £5 billion reduction in disability benefits, a move set to drastically reshape the already fragile welfare landscape in the UK. In her recent speeches, Kendall has framed these cuts as a necessary response to rising populism—embodied by figures like Nigel Farage, whose party has become a beacon for voters disillusioned by the establishment.

Yet, dissent is brewing within the Labour Party, with over 100 MPs—more than a quarter of the parliamentary group—signing a letter demanding a reassessment of proposed changes, including substantial cuts to Personal Independence Payments (PIP). These vital payments assist disabled individuals with their everyday living costs, but Kendall insists that her reforms are not just financial but essential measures against what she calls an “unsustainable” welfare system. Ironically, even after the cuts, disability benefit costs are projected to rise by £8 billion, raising serious questions about the government's financial strategy.

Sir Keir Starmer’s administration is trapped in a political quagmire, torn between modernising public welfare and the pressing need to address spending pressures. On the same day as Kendall's announcement, Starmer waffled on the cuts to winter fuel payments, exposing the internal chaos within Labour regarding welfare policies. While Kendall argues for a reformed system to combat dependency, critics—including prominent Labour figures—are sounding alarms that these changes disproportionately target the most vulnerable.

The proposed reforms will tighten eligibility for PIP, potentially impacting between 800,000 and 1.2 million claimants, with losses ranging from £4,200 to £6,300 annually by 2029-30. Charities like Disability Rights UK have condemned these cuts as “immoral and devastating,” warning of potential health crises among those affected. Ex-service personnel, often reliant on such support, are particularly at risk, with organisations like Help for Heroes voicing serious concerns.

Kendall’s push for reform comes amid rising anxiety over the implications of cutting support while simultaneously planning to invest in job training and employment programmes. The government promises up to £1 billion annually for initiatives designed to reintegrate people into the workforce, but this dual approach raises serious questions about its practicality. During a visit to a community centre focused on skills development for individuals with disabilities, Kendall maintained that these changes would ultimately aid those seeking stable employment.

Despite her determination, Kendall's reforms have sparked significant dissent, leading to predictions of a backbench rebellion. Many Labour MPs are challenging the logic behind targeting support for the disability community, fearing such measures will exacerbate poverty and alienate the very voters they aim to represent.

As the Labour government embarks on this drastic policy overhaul, the ethical implications of slashing welfare support while advocating for labor market participation are more critical than ever. Kendall and her colleagues face an uphill battle to strike a balance between fiscal responsibility and the moral obligation to support those in need during these turbulent times.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/2058400/liz-kendall-defies-labour-critics> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://apnews.com/article/b9d295a1eaa877eff7314eebb357a203> - Britain's Labour Party government announced a significant overhaul of the welfare system, aiming to save £5 billion by 2030. The reforms include stricter assessments for disability benefits and an increase in universal credit. Work and Pensions Secretary Liz Kendall emphasized the need to address a system that is 'failing the very people it is supposed to help.' Critics, including charities and mental health organizations, argue that the changes will adversely affect vulnerable populations, particularly those unable to work. Despite concerns, Kendall maintains that the reforms are approached with 'compassion' and aim to break the cycle of welfare dependency.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/0cc2d3f0-7ed8-4ee4-aa41-313fd3fb4463> - The UK Labour government, led by Sir Keir Starmer, announced cuts to disability benefits projected to save £5 billion annually by the decade's end. The plan, presented by Work and Pensions Secretary Liz Kendall, will affect up to 1.2 million people according to expert estimates, though ministers have not provided specific figures. The proposed changes include tightening eligibility for personal independence payments, particularly affecting those with mental health conditions and less severe physical difficulties, and removing incapacity benefits for most people under 22. The proposal has sparked significant backlash within Labour, with concerns over targeting society's poorest. Kendall argued the reforms are necessary to prevent welfare costs from ballooning and promote work incentives. The changes will require a vote in the House of Commons, potentially leading to a significant backbench rebellion. Alongside these cuts, Labour plans to invest £1 billion in employment programs and offer stronger income protection for the unemployed through a new insurance system.
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/8e10e3ce-473a-44f1-aabd-f0dfb9eeebbc> - Increasing tensions within the UK Labour Party are arising as work and pensions secretary, Liz Kendall, plans to announce significant welfare reforms. These plans aim to cut £5 billion annually from health-related benefits. The proposed reforms involve reassessing the eligibility criteria for benefits, increasing the basic unemployment support but reducing incapacity support and potentially denying payments to about 1 million people, including those with mental health conditions. Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer argues that the current system is outdated and fiscally unsustainable, with the cuts projected to address financial deficits. However, the proposed changes face strong opposition from many Labour MPs, disability advocates, and public figures within the party, who argue that such measures could deepen poverty and disproportionately impact vulnerable groups, including those dependent on disability support.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/mar/18/liz-kendall-struggles-to-sell-immoral-and-devastating-disability-benefits-cut> - Work and Pensions Secretary Liz Kendall unveiled a £5 billion annual reduction in disability benefit spending by the end of the decade. The cuts, described as 'immoral and devastating' by campaigners, will affect between 800,000 and 1.2 million people on personal independence payments, with losses ranging from £4,200 to £6,300 annually by 2029-30. Despite the backlash, Kendall argued that the reforms are necessary to address a 'broken' benefits system and prevent future financial strain. The announcement has intensified internal tensions within the Labour Party, with MPs expressing concerns over the impact on vulnerable constituents.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/mar/18/liz-kendall-unveils-drastic-uk-benefits-cuts-to-fix-broken-system> - Liz Kendall, the welfare secretary, has faced down angry Labour MPs to unveil drastic cuts to the UK’s benefits system that will leave many sick and disabled claimants worse off. The measures, which the government argues are needed to 'fix the broken benefits system' and balance the nation’s books, are expected to cut £5bn from the benefits bill by the end of the decade. The work and pensions secretary announced to MPs on Tuesday that as part of the package her department would spend up to £1bn a year extra on helping people back into jobs, with plans ranging from supportive calls to intensive training programmes.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/mar/17/not-just-about-cuts-liz-kendall-says-benefits-changes-will-help-people-find-jobs> - Kendall is at Workbridge, a community centre in Northampton. There’s a cafe, a garden centre, and workshops and kitchens offering people with mental illness, autism, learning disabilities and brain injuries the chance to develop their life and job skills. People referred to Workbridge are often taking their first, tentative steps towards a job or returning to work. The activities – art, wood-turning, ceramics, breadmaking – are essentially therapeutic, about building confidence, routine and trust. On her visit last month, Kendall was keen to highlight the less-discussed aspects of Labour’s ambitious employment plan, Get Britain Working, but the visit came against a backdrop of political noise around the government’s cuts to incapacity benefits.