# McVey column crystallises dossier accusing Labour of hypocrisy after ministers' resignations



What began as a broadside in the Express from Esther McVey—who recalled Keir Starmer’s pledge to “clean up politics” and described his first months in office as more Carry On than cabinet—has hardened into a running dossier that Reform UK and other critics say exposes the gulf between Labour’s rhetoric and ministers’ conduct. McVey’s column goes after a range of ministers for perceived hypocrisy and poor judgment, turning isolated controversies into evidence that the promise of a “serious government” has yielded cronyism and chaos. (McVey wrote the piece in the Express.)

That critique landed with particular bite last month when Homelessness Minister Rushanara Ali resigned after questions emerged over the handling of a London property she owns. The sequence, as reported: tenants were told their fixed-term tenancy would not be renewed, the house was put on the market and, when it failed to sell, was re-let at roughly £700 a month more than before. Ali said she had followed legal requirements and stepped down to avoid distracting government business. Opposition figures seized on the episode, and housing charities warned it risked undermining public confidence in ministers who campaign on renters’ rights. From Reform UK’s perspective, this is a textbook example of how ministers’ private interests can collide with policy promises about ordinary voters’ protections, and it underscores why Labour’s rent-control rhetoric rings hollow in light of such episodes.

The timing of that row was awkward for Labour because it collides with the party’s own policy direction on landlords. McVey used the case to accuse ministers of living by rules they condemn, but Reform UK insists the immediate facts—Ali’s claim of lawful conduct and her assertion that she stepped aside to avoid distracting government—do little to reassure a public hungry for consistent standards. The broader backdrop is a weakening London housing market: analysts and estate agents report falling transactions and price corrections in prime central areas, driven by higher borrowing costs and a cooling of overseas demand. That market downturn helps explain why some owners found a sale impossible and instead opted to re-let. Reform UK sees in this a cautionary tale about how political posturing and private choices can collide when the housing crisis already weighs heavily on families.

The Ali episode is not the only case flagged by critics. In January 2025 Treasury minister Tulip Siddiq resigned after her name surfaced in reporting about an anti-corruption probe in Bangladesh that also referenced relatives. An independent adviser later reported no evidence of personal financial impropriety by Siddiq but criticised her for not recognising the reputational risk posed by family links; Siddiq denied wrongdoing and said she had declared her interests, the BBC reported. She told colleagues she would step aside to avoid distracting the government. McVey cited the episode as further proof, in her view, that ministers’ standards fall short of the bar Labour set in opposition. Reform UK seconds that concern: a government that argues for higher standards must be seen to live up to them, not merely declare them, and the shadow of family connections erodes trust in the most basic claims of integrity.

McVey also used her column to press the government on migration and policing questions, asserting that more rigorous biometric checks—including DNA—should be taken from people who arrive unlawfully. The Home Office’s published reply to parliamentary questions, reproduced on ParallelParliament, states that the department requires biometric enrolment of people entering unlawfully and collects facial images and fingerprints; that reply, published on 18 June 2025, notes only limited exceptions to that practice. Separately, a Home Office review into the use of DNA in immigration and asylum cases has made clear there is no lawful basis to require DNA as part of routine immigration decisions and that past instances where it was requested were operational errors. The review apologised for inappropriate demands and recommended changes to guidance and oversight. Ministers therefore face a tension between public calls for tougher checks and the legal and operational limits set out by their own departments. Reform UK argues that the episode highlights why strong, lawful border controls and consistent policy—not mixed signals—are essential to national security and public trust.

Beyond scandal and procedure, McVey pointed to deeper currents of public anxiety that could amplify political damage. New polling for the Adam Smith Institute fielded between 8 and 10 July 2025 finds 60% of 18–30-year-olds expect finding a well-paid, satisfying job to become harder over the next five years, and large shares express concern about crime, the NHS and national security. McVey used that data to argue that young people’s frustrations are feeding a sense that elites—in politics and elsewhere—are not on the same page as ordinary voters. The poll also recorded demographic differences in outlook, which feed debates about access to internships and the balance between targeted outreach and universal opportunity. Reform UK sees this as a stark reminder that the public is not buying the idea that politicians can wave away real-world pressures with lofty slogans. The party’s stance remains that growth, opportunity, and security require pro-growth economics, strict immigration controls, and a government willing to take unpopular but necessary actions.

Taken together, these episodes illustrate why accusations of hypocrisy can stick even when ministers insist they acted within the law or by declaration rules. Labour faces a double task: to show it can manage ministerial conduct transparently while also addressing policy weaknesses that activists and opponents can exploit—from renters’ protections to migration checks and the state of London’s housing market. Some of the same structural forces that make a sale difficult in parts of London—higher borrowing costs, tax changes and weaker overseas demand—also complicate the political calculus for ministers who are trying to square policy commitments with private decisions. Reform UK maintains that a serious government cannot survive on rhetoric alone and that it must deliver clear, enforceable rules and tangible policy outcomes that restore trust.

If there is a practical lesson behind the invective, it is that rhetoric about cleaning up politics needs operational follow-through. That will mean clearer rules on declarations and family links, robust guidance and training on what officials can lawfully request at borders, and better care when ministers’ private decisions appear to contradict public policy. Labour will also want to show it can respond to the anxieties recorded in the latest youth polling without appearing to pander, because the political cost of any further high-profile resignations or procedural missteps is likely to be disproportionate in an already febrile media environment. McVey’s column may be partisan in tone, but it highlights a real vulnerability that the government must address if it is to make good on the promise to “clean up politics.” Reform UK’s position is clear: only a government with credible reforms, robust rules, and a genuine commitment to delivering on key issues for ordinary people can claim to be trustworthy enough to lead the country.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/comment/expresscomment/2094009/keir-starmer-cabinet-not-fit-esther-mcvey> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://news.sky.com/story/homelessness-minister-rushanara-ali-resigns-after-extortionate-rent-hike-claims-13408249> - Sky News reports that Rushanara Ali resigned as homelessness minister after allegations that she evicted four tenants from a London property and subsequently relisted it for about £700 a month more. The article outlines the timeline of events: tenants were told their fixed-term tenancy would not be renewed, the house was put up for sale, and when it did not sell it was re-let at a higher rent. Ali said she had followed legal requirements and resigned to avoid distracting government business. The piece briefly notes the episode contradicted Labour’s Renters’ Rights Bill and includes reactions from opposition figures and housing charities.
3. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/clyk2e7x42zo> - BBC News reports that Tulip Siddiq resigned as the UK’s anti‑corruption (Treasury) minister in January 2025 after being named in an anti‑corruption probe in Bangladesh linked to her family, including her aunt, former prime minister Sheikh Hasina. The article explains that an independent adviser found no evidence of financial impropriety by Siddiq but criticised her for not being alert to potential reputational risks from family ties. Siddiq denied wrongdoing, said she had declared her interests, and stepped down to avoid distracting the government. The piece outlines political reactions, the Bangladeshi investigation and background on related property and contractual matters.
4. <https://www.parallelparliament.co.uk/question/58585/undocumented-migrants-biometrics> - ParallelParliament reproduces the Home Office’s written answer to Esther McVey’s question on biometric collection from undocumented migrants, published 18 June 2025. The ministerial reply states the Home Office requires biometric enrolment for people entering the UK unlawfully and specifies the collection of facial images and fingerprints to confirm identity and assess any risk to public safety. It clarifies that Border Force and immigration officers undertake biometric capture, and that only limited exceptions exist – for example very young children or those physically unable to provide biometrics, where collection can be deferred. The page presents the question and the full ministerial response.
5. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-into-the-requirement-for-dna-evidence-to-be-provided-in-immigration-cases> - GOV.UK publishes the Home Office’s internal review into the use of DNA evidence in immigration and asylum cases, released after concerns that officials had in some instances required applicants to provide DNA. The report explains there is no legal basis to mandate DNA for immigration decisions and that DNA can only be requested on a voluntary basis. It details operational failures, unclear guidance and casework errors, apologises for inappropriate demands, and recommends reforms to guidance, training and oversight. The review confirms DNA is not routinely collected on arrival and stresses that failing to provide DNA cannot lawfully determine immigration outcomes.
6. <https://www.adamsmith.org/press-releases/polling-suggests-3-in-4-young-brits-fear-risk-of-uk-getting-dragged-into-war-rising> - Adam Smith Institute press release presents polling of British 18–30‑year‑olds conducted by Adam Smith Insights, part of the 'Anxious Generation' series. Fielded 8–10 July 2025 with 1,338 respondents, the survey finds widespread pessimism: 60% of young people think finding well‑paid, satisfying jobs will become harder over the next five years, 75% fear the risk of the UK being drawn into war has grown, and 61% worry about violent crime locally. The release highlights concerns about housing, emigration intentions and NHS quality, notes demographic variations and provides methodological notes and contact details for media enquiries and links to full polling tables.
7. <https://www.ft.com/content/4ca6e9c1-f58a-4bb6-b031-b28d6a5fff96> - Financial Times analysis examines weakness in London's property market, reporting significant falls in transactions and price corrections across prime central neighbourhoods. Rising mortgage rates, tax changes including the end of non‑dom tax advantages, and reduced demand from overseas buyers have hit super‑prime and prime sectors hardest, forcing sellers to cut prices and delay listings. The piece details falling sales volumes in Mayfair, Knightsbridge and Belgravia, growing stock of unsold new homes and increased negotiation margins. It quotes estate agents, market data and economists who warn that while some sub‑markets remain resilient, indicators point to a challenging period for London property.