

## The Tories are begging to be put out of their misery

Published: January 16, 2026, 4:32 am

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The [Guardian reports](#) this morning that:

*Rishi Sunak is considering a tax cut for the 5 million highest earners and reducing stamp duty in an attempt to ease the pressure on his leadership after two historic byelection defeats, it has been reported.*

*The Conservatives may raise the 40% income tax threshold after Labour's victory in Mid Bedfordshire, Nadine Dorries' former seat. It was the largest majority to be overturned at a byelection.*

Let's ignore the fact that both of these have decidedly minority appeal and instead presume that the suggestions are true indicators of the Tory mindset. What do they suggest?

First, they reveal a belief amongst Tories that what most people in the UK really want is for the better off to be better off still, because at least 85% of the population enjoy knowing that income and wealth inequality in the UK is rising and they are the victims of it. They haven't done opinion polls to prove this: they just innately know that is how those on lower incomes feel.

Second, it reveals desperation. Tax cuts are always the resort of the politician wholly out of ideas. The Tories have clearly reached the point in their downward trajectory where the fact that the idea they are proposing is so transparently a bribe that 98% of people will react to it with scorn no longer matters.

Third, it suggests a party that has given up. The opinion polls make it clear that the Tories will be suffer a humiliating defeat at the next election. By-election results do not prove that is the case, but consistently suggest it is likely to be true. Of course they have given up.

Reports are that finding anyone to do basic electioneering work on the ground was hard for the Tories in the two elections held this week. That's unsurprising when most of your members are well into older-age. But it also reflects the fact that fighting for a lost

cause really does not have great appeal, and that is what the Tories are. Candidly, how Tory ministers and MPs will drag themselves to work for another year is hard to work out. I suspect some won't. The only reason for a May 2024 election is that so many will be begging to be put out of their misery.

And then what? The rump of the Tory party will try to regroup.

Will Farage enter from stage right? I would not rule it out.

That the party will go through a wildly extreme phase is almost inevitable. Some are already calling for it.

Will it ever return? Don't rule it out. Starmer has no more ideas. His policy is at best from the Cameron and Osborne playbook. There is nothing in it for most people. Right now the Labour election song should be 'Things can only get worse', because that seems likely given Labour's apparent lack of preparedness for the horrors it will face. So of course the Tories could be back. Never doubt it. And never doubt the power of extremist views. That's where they will be going in search of recovery.