

Keir Starmer has failed

Published: January 13, 2026, 3:00 am

In this morning's video, I note that two months into office as prime minister, Keir Starmer is claiming that we should anticipate 'more pain' under his leadership. That's unsurprising. So far, he has provided no clue as to what he will 'change', despite that being the theme of his election campaign. Instead, he says he will struggle to deliver what the Tories promised. As early admissions of failure go, that is spectacular.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38c3VggXWBE?si=cWQLuAMbOXbvM9Am>

The audio version is here:

https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=f66g7-16b89fc-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&fonts=Arial&skin=c73a3a&font-color=auto&logo_link=episode_page&btn-skin=ff6d00

The transcript is:

Keir Starmer has failed. Now, I know it's a little early in the lifetime of this Labour government to say that Keir Starmer is now a failure and that his government will not deliver on its promises, but I think we can be fairly confident that this is true.

Starmer promised change. That was the one word that underpinned all of the Labour Party's campaigning during the course of this year to become the government that we now have. And he's not going to deliver change.

As is readily apparent from his speech straight after the August Bank holiday weekend, he is going to, at best, deliver the plan that Rishi Sunak and Jeremy Hunt had for the UK that they announced in March 2024.

Quite astonishingly, it seems that all of the framing of everything that he plans to do is about that plan. Even his discussion of the fact that there is a “black hole” in the finances of the country, with which I don't agree by the way, is framed around the fact that the “black hole” that he refers to was apparently inherent in what Jeremy Hunt proposed.

Starmer is saying he's got to raise £22bn simply to deliver what Sunak and Hunt planned to do. And let's be clear, what they planned to do was wholly inadequate for this country. They wanted to increase public spending at a rate of about 1.2 per cent per annum to meet need. The fact is, that won't mean need, largely because the population of this country is probably growing at something around that rate, and the needs of this country are growing at a higher rate still. Increasing public spending by 1.2%, in real terms is not, then, going to solve any known problem.

But it's worse than that. Starmer promised change. Nobody expected that change would mean that the two-child poverty cap would remain in place.

Nobody expected that change would be paid for by penalising pensioners.

Nobody expected that change would mean more pain. But apparently it does.

And, nobody expected that change would mean that there is no positive action that we're aware of to deal with the problems in the NHS or any other public service.

Instead, what we have is Starmer saying it's all very tough. Well, of course, it is. Being Prime Minister is tough. That's why the job is one that most rational people would not want. But he did. He's got it. And apparently he's now spending all his time moaning about the fact that this requires difficult decisions of him.

But he's not making those difficult decisions. If he wanted to make difficult decisions, he would decide what he wanted to do in government rather than do what Sunak and Hunt wanted to do in government, but apparently he and Rachel Reeves only want to deliver the Tory plan.

If he wanted to make tough decisions, he would also stand up to those civil servants in the Treasury who say the books must balance. Because, let's be clear about this; £22 billion is neither here nor there in terms of the overall level of government spending. It is almost insignificant. And therefore, he could say, “We'll simply borrow more by that amount”, and the problem is solved.

And, if he wanted to make tough decisions, he and Rachel Reeves could already give a very clear indication of where they're going with regard to raising £22 billion from

instead of offering vague and somewhat unhelpful hints. A tough decision would require that he says what he intends to do. But he's prevaricating and delaying instead.

So, a tough decision. would require that he decide who is going to pay for the painful decisions he says that he's got to make. If he was true to Labour's traditions, the wealthy would pay.

And, frankly, £22 billion pounds makes very little difference to their well-being. The wealthy own around £15 trillion of wealth in the UK at present. £22 billion pounds is a lot, but is infinitesimally small in comparison to that. It is, therefore, of no consequence.

But for those on the lowest levels of income, for children in poverty, for those in need of NHS care, for children whose education will not wait, and for the climate, £22 billion matters now, but he isn't making that decision within the Labour tradition. Instead, he's backing off and trying to avoid everything.

If this is where Starmer is going, and he has given us the clearest indication now that he will be a Prime Minister who prevaricates, who goes for the easy option of agreeing with his civil servants and the mainstream political view that government spending is always a bad thing, then we know what he's going to be like now.

And the consequence that he is setting out to fail.

He will not be improving public services.

He will not be improving the lot of those who are in greatest need in our society.

He will not make the tough decisions to make sure that the rich pay the most for what is required to get us through the various crises that the Tories have left us.

He won't even make up his own mind about what agenda he wants to pursue when all he seems to want to do is to follow the Tory line.

This is a man who's become Prime Minister with no clue as to what he's going to do. And for that reason alone, I think Keir Starmer is very likely to fail.