

# Funding the Future

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I noticed this BBC headline yesterday:

## **Streeting says he is ashamed of NHS winter problems**

So he should be, of course. Labour could have got more funding to the NHS by now to deal with this crisis. Streeting knows that. So why did he speak out yesterday?

I think Streeting is realising that he has a problem and a choice to make. Either Rachel Reeves keeps her election promise to avoid borrowing or he keeps his promise to improve the NHS, but both cannot be achieved.

He is not alone. This is now the dilemma facing almost every Cabinet minister.

I was in the Palace of Westminster last night, talking to quite a number of MPs, not all from labour by any means. But I get a sense trouble is brewing. The realisation that Labour can either be the government these MPs and those who voted for them want, or it can be a cold-hearted financial manager delivering what no one desires within rules it will not change and which are obviously rigged against the interests of the people of this country is growing.

I think Wes Streeting has smelt the coffee and is already reacting. He's put down a marker to Keir Starmer. It's either Rachel Reeves or him who will have to go, and he's making clear what he thinks.

I could, of course, be wrong. But I doubt I am. There is disquiet in the camp. The likelihood that Reeves will survive 2026 is, I think, low. Labour MPs are going to demand her sacking as the symbolic price of Labour's failure to deliver by then. That may be too late for the voters. To keep them happy, Starmer might have to move sooner. But I think there is a whole Cabinet of people out there gunning for Reeves, and I very much doubt that both she and Starmer can survive this, and Starmer is plenty ruthless enough to realise what he will have to do.