

Keir Starmer has to make things work in 2025

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It's back to work day for most in the UK, Keir Starmer included. If he had any sense, he'd have one priority for 2025, which is making the UK government work again.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgptQ1zjGhw?si=guqwYccmViwS_nvj

This is the audio version:

https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=b7jsd-17987d1-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&fonts=Arial&skin=c73a3a&font-color=&logo_link=episode_page&btn-skin=ff6d00

This is the transcript:

It's back to work day for most people in the UK today. And, I suspect that Keir Starmer is amongst those who will be returning to his desk with a long list of things to do. My problem is that I think that Keir Starmer's list of things to do will not be those things that people in this country want him to do.

Keir Starmer is dedicated to the grand gesture, the political plan, and the desire to leave a legacy, even though he's only six months into office already. But the simple fact is that most people in this country want something very mundane from him. They want a government that works. That is not what he's going to promise us in 2025.

I know that because Rachel Reeves has already told us the money to make government

work isn't going to be made available. That is ludicrous. It means that everything he plans for 2025 is bound to fail in the way that he wishes to do it. And that is unnecessary because the government can create all the money it needs to deliver what we, the people of the UK, want.

So, what do we want?

Well, we want an NHS that works, don't we? We want one that can begin to clear the backlog, not with a few extra appointments a week, which is what Labour has promised – not enough to make any significant difference to the backlog of appointments that it's got to deal with. We want the NHS to have proper funding. We want the people who work in it to be paid well enough and to be resourced sufficiently that they aren't living in perpetual stress and wishing as a consequence to leave at the first possible opportunity and flee to Australia where pay and conditions are better.

We want the same of education. We want education to work. It's not a big desire, but it's one that is not being delivered. We want teachers to be paid enough. But we also want them to work in conditions which are not so stressful that they, too, are willing to leave the profession for which they trained to look for anything else to do, rather than face a roomful of children who need an education which they are more than able to supply. to supply if only the government properly resourced them to do so.

We need Keir Starmer to address social care, but Wes Streeting has told us that won't happen until 2028, which in effect, means it won't happen forever because, by 2029, Labour will be out of office.

We want Labour to tackle the repairs that are needed to our infrastructure. Blow creating lots of big new projects, except some housing, please. Let's deal with the potholes. Let's deal with the schools that are falling down. Let's deal with the hospitals that are falling down. Let's remedy the failure of the Tory years. Because if Labour doesn't over the next five years, starting this year, then it'll be so much worse by the time somebody else gets into office in 2029, with no commitment to make those repairs at all.

And, whilst Keir Starmer's about all this, he might do some other things that could help this country to work. He could redistribute income and wealth. I wrote the Taxing Wealth Report in 2024 to demonstrate precisely how he could do that. I demonstrated that it's possible to raise more than £90bn of extra tax from the wealth in the UK each year. Now, nobody would want to do that. That's too big a sum for anybody to want to raise in additional tax. But what I provided to the Labour government was a series of choices that they could make to ensure that money was reallocated from those who have an excess of it, which we know they have because they save it, to those who have a shortage of money, which we know they have because they're in debt.

And if that happened, we would get economic growth, which is what Keir Starmer says

his goal is, although he's never able to explain why.

And he could transform the rules on pension saving and ISA saving to ensure that the capital that is required deliver the Green New Deal that we need if we are to tackle climate change would be readily available, and it would be a really easy thing to do. But again, it's not clear that he's going to do all of that.

So where are we? We have a government that isn't willing to tackle climate change, that isn't willing to tackle inequality, that isn't willing to tackle the problems in government services that we all know exist because we can see the evidence all around us.

We have a government that isn't willing to create the money that is required to do these things. That isn't willing to change the tax system to create the well-being within our economy that we all want to enjoy and could enjoy if only the government was willing to act.

Keir Starmer has a to do list that is as long as your arm that would make government work, that would make our economy work, that would make us feel better off. But I very strongly suspect that, unlike most people who will be returning to work, who have come back with increased vigour and a desire to make their lives a bit better in 2025 - because 2024 wasn't great, was it? - I suspect that he's returned thinking that it's all about the big political gesture, keeping the left at bay, and nothing more than that.

Keir Starmer, that's not your goal for 2025. Nor is balancing the budget. And nor, actually, is growth for no good reason. Your job is to make government work. Now get on and do it.