

# Labour is sacrificing people to a dodgy spreadsheet. The...

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I listened to Liz Kendall's statement to the House of Commons on welfare reform, and in particular on Personal Independence Payments.

It was incredibly hard to work out what she was saying. Her whole statement was a total word salad, which might have made sense to someone who was a complete insider in the Social Security system but not to anyone else.

What I do know is that she is planning to save £5 billion a year on the benefits bill by 2029, all to make sure that Rachel Reeves can comply with the decidedly ropey economic forecast that the Office for Budget Responsibility has obviously put on her desk, all of which will prove to be wrong well before 2029 arrives. Never before in human history have so many people been destined to suffer for the sake of a dodgy spreadsheet.

I also know there will be more reassessments for those claiming PIP and other benefits.

I am also aware, because she said it, that some of the thresholds for being able to claim PIP will increase, but I am unable to interpret what that means in practice based on the information that she supplied.

And it appears that all people under 22 will be required to be in some form of training or education or work to claim - which is absurd, as many cannot be so. It looks like they will be hit hardest.

As an exercise in government, this was truly appalling. It did not communicate, and that is the first task that any minister has.

There was no explanation for the cause of the increase in claims for benefits.

There was no discussion as to why people are sicker now than they have ever been.

The claim that benefit claims are rising solely because work is difficult to access is not supported by evidence, and nor was there any discussion of where the supposed jobs

that these people are going to secure might come from even on the agenda.

What I do know is that if I was claiming benefits, I would not know where I stood now as a consequence of this announcement. All I know is that they will be subject to more of the harassment the people are put through when seeking to claim benefits because they need them. That is about it.

I would add that none of this was helped by the fact that Liz Kendall shouted her whole speech from beginning to end. What is she so angry about?

I can say what I am angry about. That is that we have a Labour government that does not care. It clearly does not.

This will be what people remember about Labour. They sacrificed the care, well-being, independence and lives of people simply so that Rachel Reeves could say that her books balanced. A party that thinks that that is their priority is not worthy of being in government.

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Update at 16.00:

I was not alone in not working out what this meant. The government did not intend that we should, as this from Steven Swinford of The Times confirms. This is scandalous, and callous:



Steven Swinford

@Steven\_Swinford

The government's decision to delay the publication of impact assessments of welfare cuts and details of the new rates doesn't feel sustainable



...

Liz Kendall, work and pensions secretary, said they won't be published until Spring Statement

It means:

- \* We don't know how many people will be affected and how much worse off they will be

- \* We don't have a breakdown of where the £5billion worth of savings are going to come from

- \* We don't know which conditions will be hit the hardest

There's a strong argument for transparency here - the government is making a major announcement, it should say how it affects people

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