

Funding the Future

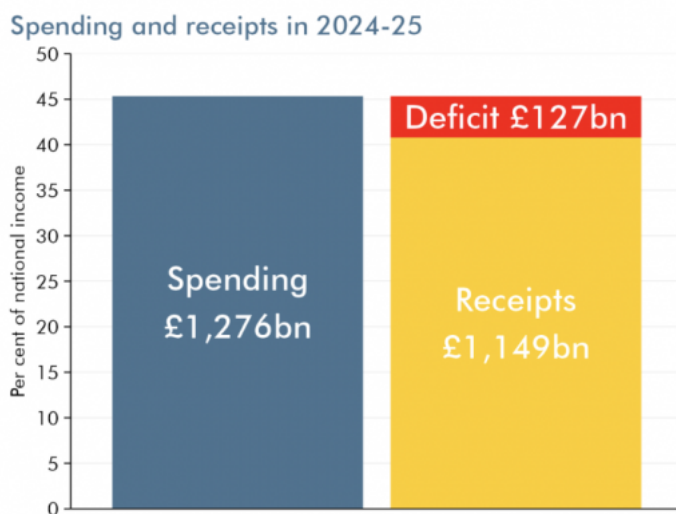
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The [Guardian reports this morning](#) that Starmer is determined to keep up his assault on people with disabilities in the UK. Like Wes Streeting, who yesterday declared himself to know better than doctors whether or not people were suffering with mental illnesses, Starmer thinks it is for him to decide who has a disability or not.

His aim is to save £5 billion a year in government spending - one fourteenth of the benefits budget, and a much higher proportion of spending on the disabled.

So, let's put those figures in context. According to the [Office for Budget Responsibility](#) this is the total UK government income and spending forecast for the year 2024/25, and next year will presumably be much the same:



In total spending of £1,276 billion, Starmer wants to save £5 billion by penalising some of the most vulnerable people in our society to force them into supposed work when there are no jobs likely to be available for them. Forcing them into extreme poverty is more likely.

He, and Reeves, who is as clearly indifferently callous, say this must be done.

That is not true.

For example, simply aligning the top rates of income tax and capital gains tax could raise the required funds each year. The [Taxing Wealth Report](#) provides the background.

Charging national insurance at the same rate across the income range, instead of cutting it for those in higher earnings, could also achieve that goal.

Alternatively, the Bank of England holds about £770 billion on deposit from commercial banks right now, on which interest at 4.5% is paid, costing £35 billion a year. Cut the rate by one per cent - which is essential for Reeves' growth agenda, and £7.7 billion would be saved. And which is better? Cutting the income of banks, or those with disabilities? Starmer and Reeves clearly favour banks.

I can provide many more options.

Anyone saying Starmer has no choice but to cut disability benefits is lying.

Every minister who goes out and says that will be lying. There exist a multitude of better choices.

But with power comes the opportunity to be abusive, and that is the option Starmer has chosen.