

## Labour is failing people by hidden design. Reform would...

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As [The Guardian](#) notes this morning:

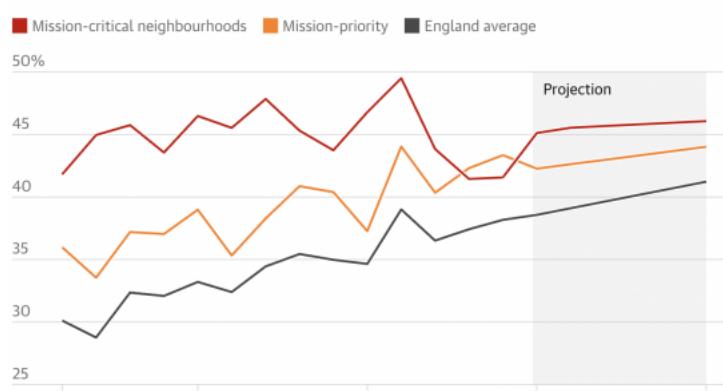
*The country's most deprived neighbourhoods will have higher crime rates and worse unemployment by the end of the parliament, according to a report written at the request of No. 10 Downing Street.*

No. 10 has apparently focused its attention on what are called "motion critical" locations. These are defined as:

*The 613 most deprived neighbourhoods ... are home to 1 million people and are clustered across the former industrial heartlands of the Midlands and the north. They are the areas that gave Boris Johnson his majority in 2019, then went Labour in 2024, and are now being targeted heavily by Reform UK.*

The report No. 10 has commissioned notes this:

Mission-critical neighbourhoods are expected to have the biggest rise in economic inactivity in England



Guardian graphic. Source: Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods. Note: 613 mission-critical neighbourhoods correspond to about 2% of neighbourhoods furthest from achieving the government's five missions. 5,566 mission-priority neighbourhoods are the remainder of neighbourhoods facing challenges in achieving targets

Economic inactivity is defined by the Office for National Statistics as people aged 16 or

over who are not in employment, have not been seeking work within the last four weeks, and/or are unable to start work within the next two weeks. This group is outside the labour force because they are not looking for or available for work, distinguishing them from the unemployed.

Receiving support is not helping those in these supposed mission-critical locations, is the very clear message of this report. Crime rates are also forecast to rise as a result.

I have three thoughts. First, I am not surprised. When you focus on growth in GDP as your primary goal without any concern for whether what creates that growth is of real value rather than simply being capable of being counted, whilst being indifferent to the distribution of the gains, those already vulnerable are bound to suffer as a consequence precisely because your primary focus will always exclude them in a neoliberal economic system designed to focus advantage on a few and not on society as a whole. The policy failure this chart exposes is not an accident; it will be achieved by Labour by design.

Second, change will only happen when people, and not finance, are put at the centre of policy, as a politics of care would demand.

Third, I profoundly regret the consequences of this policy, represented by the lives of those suffering these situations not realising their full potential. That is a scandal, and until we change economic priorities, nothing will change to improve the lot of all those suffering as a result of the false objectives of neoliberalism.

The blame for this lies at Labour's door. It campaigned under the slogan "Change" in 2024 and lied about its intentions, offering only the continuity of a system already proven to be rotten to its very core. Unless its priorities change now (which seems very unlikely), expect Reform to win in these places in 2029.

I offer only one caveat, which is that this will be the case unless someone succeeds in getting the message out that everything that Reform wants will make the lives of those in the most economically deprived areas of the UK very much worse, because that is their explicit plan, which fact is the only thing that differentiates them from Labour on this issue.