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Keir Starmer putting pensioners 'at bottom' of priority list, warns former minister

Rachel Reeves stripped the winter fuel payment from nearly 10 million pensioners last year.

By **STEPH SPYRO**, Deputy Political Editor

17:30, Sun, May 11, 2025



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Age UK delivered a petition on the winter fuel payment to Downing Street (Image: Getty)



Former Pensions Minister Baroness Ros Altmann has warned that OAPs are “at the bottom of the Government’s policy priority list”. She took aim at Rachel Reeves’s axing of the **winter fuel payment** from millions of pensioners.

Writing in the Express, she called it a “stain on our country” that money is being taken away from older Britons. She said: “For some time, it has seemed that pensioners are at the bottom of the Government’s policy priority list.”

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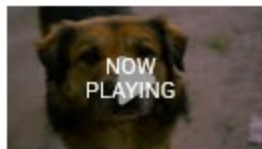
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Altmann added: "Constantly taking money from pensioners in our aging population is a stain on our country."

The former minister also slammed the latest government review into adult social care as "very troubling".



The Government has launched an independent commission on adult social care, chaired by Baroness Louise Casey.



While it will issue its first report in 2026, some of its recommendations may not be put into effect for another decade.

She said Britons needed action not “yet another review”.

Writing in the Express, she said: “The recent announcement that social care reform – so desperately needed by most elderly and disabled people – has been kicked into the long grass again.

“After removing winter fuel payments from millions of pensioners who struggle to make ends meet, this latest development is very troubling.

“The UK care system is the biggest social policy failure of modern times. With an aging population and rising care costs, reforms were long overdue years ago.

"Perhaps today's politicians calculate that elderly and disabled people are unlikely to take to the streets to protest, and their families are too busy trying to look after their loved ones to fight."

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The new independent commission, announced earlier this month, will focus on existing funding in local authorities and the NHS.

Altmann was involved in the Dilnot Commission review into social care more than 20 years ago.

Care minister Stephen Kinnock has described the latest commission as a "once in a generation opportunity to transcend party politics and build consensus on the future of adult social care".

The Government has stressed that the commission is taking a "phased approach" as part of a long-term vision for the sector, and that the use of the word "decade" in the terms of reference is to align with the 10-year health plan.

Mr Kinnock said: "As we build an NHS fit for the future through our plan for change, we are shifting more care into the community – and we cannot succeed in this mission without transforming social care.