

# Blake Lively

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# The Guardian

## No 10 to rethink fuel payment cut as local election losses alarm MPs

**Exclusive**  
Pippa Crerar  
Jessica Elgot

Downing Street is rethinking its controversial winter fuel cut amid growing anxiety at the top of the government that the policy could wreak serious electoral damage, the Guardian has been told.

Keir Starmer's senior team has

been discussing for several weeks how to handle public anger over the policy, which bubbled over in last Thursday's local elections, where the party lost two-thirds of the council seats it was defending.

While a full reversal of the cut is not expected, No 10 sources said they were considering whether to increase the £11,500 threshold over which pensioners are no longer eligible for the allowance.

Labour MPs have been piling pressure on the government to change its mind over the winter fuel payment, as well as its plans for £5bn benefit cuts, before a crunch vote on "stage one" of its welfare plans in early June.

The government is planning to come back for "stage two" this autumn, the Guardian has been told, though there are concerns that further cuts may inflame tensions even further with angry party MPs.

Labour activists say benefits were raised repeatedly on the doorstep in the local elections across England and were a key factor in the party's loss to Nigel Farage's Reform UK at the Runcorn and Helsby byelection.

Ministers and senior officials have told the Guardian they believe last July's decision to cut the winter fuel allowance from all but the poorest pensioners has been a disaster.

A cabinet minister said: "It comes

up on the doorstep all the time. Winter fuel will lose us the next election, it was a terrible mistake. But it's probably too late for a U-turn now."

The Welsh first minister, Eluned Morgan, will give a speech today that will criticise the welfare cuts, setting out a clear dividing line with Welsh Labour, which she will position on the left of the UK party.

Downing Street figures acknowledge the concern **6** →



The Prince and Princess of Wales, with their children, George, Louis and Charlotte, watch a military flypast for the 80th anniversary of VE Day from the balcony of Buckingham Palace yesterday. **News Page 10** →

## British film industry at risk from US tariffs

**Michael Savage**  
**Edward Helmore**

Donald Trump's threat to impose 100% tariffs on movies made outside the US could wipe out the British film industry, ministers have been warned, as they came under immediate pressure to prioritise the issue in trade talks with the White House.

UK government officials and senior figures from Britain's multi-billion-pound production industry are to meet to discuss Trump's threat, which he made after months of promising to restore Hollywood to its "golden age".

In an extraordinary intervention, Trump announced his intention to impose the levy on all movies "produced in foreign lands", stating that the US film industry was facing a "very fast death" as a result of incentives being offered overseas. The UK is among the countries offering filmmakers generous tax incentives.

The US president said he had already ordered the commerce department and the US trade representative to begin instituting such a tariff. He said on his Truth Social platform that the **9** →

## Cancer charity to axe advice service

**Patrick Butler**  
**Andrew Gregory**

Macmillan Cancer Support is to scrap its £14m a year specialist advice service, which helps tens of thousands of people every year, in what has been described as a "betrayal" of vulnerable patients.

Macmillan, one of the UK's biggest and highest profile charities, told

staff and partners this week it plans to cease funding its current specialist benefits advice services in just over a year's time.

Its advice services help cancer patients navigate the benefit system to ensure they get financial support if they have to give up work during treatment, as well as help with the extra costs of their illness, such as food, heating and transport.

The latest annual figures from

2022 show the services, operated under contract by 70 local Citizens Advice branches, secured £112m in support for 34,000 cancer patients, at least a quarter of whom were living in poverty and 40% of whom were pensioners.

Macmillan said its centrally run helpline would continue to offer welfare advice, but advisers told the Guardian that unlike the Citizens Advice-run **2** →