



[Home](#) [News](#) [U.S.](#) | [Sport](#) | [TV&Showbiz](#) | [Australia](#) | [Femail](#) | [Health](#) | [Science](#) | [Money](#) | \

[Latest Headlines](#) | [The Queen](#) | [Royals](#) | [Prince Andrew](#) | [Prince Harry](#) | [Meghan Markle](#) | [UK Economy](#) | [World](#)

ADVERTISEMENT



USED NEVER
FELT SO NEW

ROS ALTMANN: We cannot add to the burden of workers on a knife-edge

By [ROS ALTMANN FOR THE DAILY MAIL](#)

PUBLISHED: 00:23, 22 January 2022 | **UPDATED:** 17:26, 22 January 2022



 **114**
View comments

For the past ten years, I and so many others have been highlighting the worsening social care crisis and calling on government to ensure proper funding to resolve the biggest failure of social policy in our time.

You might think, therefore, that I, of all people, would welcome the effort to tackle this painful problem by increasing national insurance.

But you would be wrong.

Because while I applaud the Government for addressing the problem rather than continuing to sweep it under the carpet, a hike in national insurance contributions in the middle of the worst cost-of-living crisis for a generation is clearly no longer a sustainable solution.

Indeed, the timing of this could not be worse – and I wholly support the Daily Mail’s new campaign to spike the tax hike.

As we emerge from a pandemic that has hit businesses and household incomes so hard already, energy bills, food and fuel prices, and other basic essentials are soaring in cost.



For the past ten years, I and so many others have been highlighting the worsening social care crisis and calling on government to ensure proper funding to resolve the biggest failure of social policy in our time., writes Former Pensions Minister Ros Altmann

SHARE THIS ARTICLE



RELATED ARTICLES

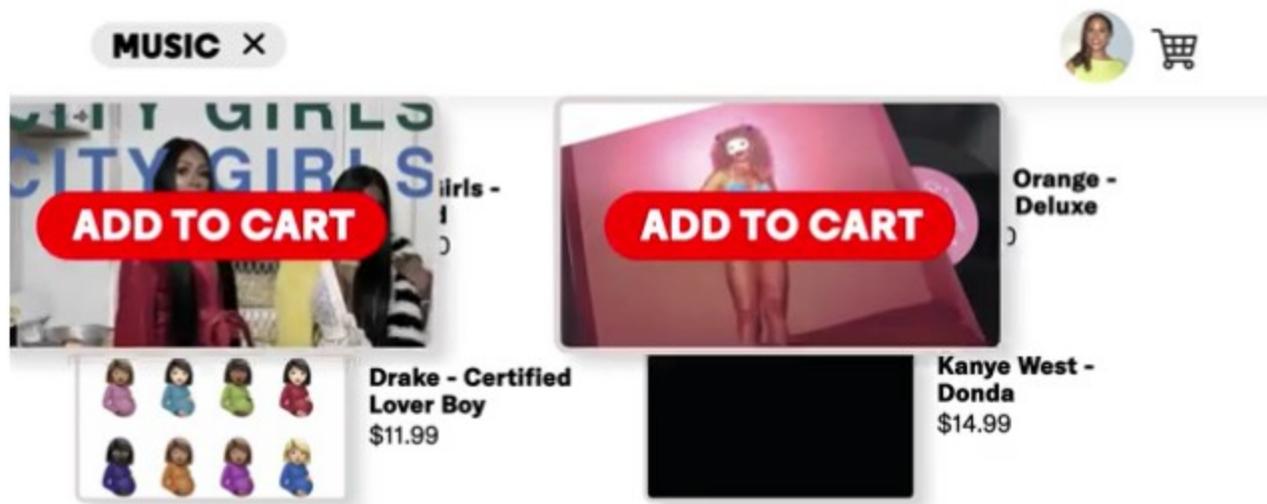


This tax raid will crucify families: Experts warn National...



Time to spike the tax hike: As the painful NI rise hits in...

Now is not the moment to add to the burden on hard-pressed working families who are already on a financial knife-edge.



Under the current proposal, many who are already struggling to pay their bills will, after April, suddenly find their pay packet is even smaller - while their living costs will be higher.

This is hardly 'levelling up'.

Those on the lowest income will be hardest hit because anyone with an income over £9,564 pays NI, while only those earning over £12,570 start paying tax. But those living on large pensions or buy-to-let property income will pay nothing extra at all.

The poorest families have felt the economic strain of lockdowns most dearly. Forcing them to pay extra national insurance from April will only push them further into poverty.

But perhaps the worst part of it all is that even if we were prepared, as a society, to bear the pain of the imminent tax increase, it won't actually alleviate the social care crisis anyway.

Bank of England Inflation over time



HOW YOU'LL PAY MORE

Salary : Annual cost of NI hike

£20,000 **£130**

£30,000 **£255**

£50,000 **£505**

£80,000 **£880**

£100,000 **£1,100**



+4
View gallery

Keir Starmer: People with the least will have to pay more



Watch the full video



0:00 / 0:48



Because far from being ring-fenced for this 'Cinderella' section of the welfare state – underfunded, overworked and used as a back-stop by the NHS – the money raised from the so-called 'health and social care levy' will initially be used to help our National Health Service.

Over the next three years, £36billion from the 1.25 percentage point tax rise will go to tackling the NHS backlog – before the money will then shift to tackling social care.

But do we believe it?

Having studied and worked on social care reform for two decades, I know as well as any that if money is earmarked for the NHS, it won't be seeing the light of day again.

After two years of a pandemic and a waiting list of 6million and counting, the bottomless pit of the NHS will doubtless suck up these extra resources – and, once again, force the Government to find even more funding to help fix social care.

Therefore, rather than rushing ahead with a tax rise that no one wants or can afford at the moment – and that won't actually solve the crisis – the Government should wait till the worst of the cost of living crisis has settled.

The social care can has been kicked down the road for so long now, what is the sense of ploughing ahead with wrong solutions at the wrong time just for the sake of doing something?

Things are going to get tight – and the Government needs to be radical.

In the long run, I believe that a fairer solution would be a social care insurance levy to which everyone contributes regardless of where their income comes from, so that working people are not the only ones paying.

But whatever is eventually decided, now is the moment to be brave and press pause, not to rush ahead with an ill-conceived tax that will fix nothing and be highly damaging for families and businesses at such a vulnerable moment.

We have been promised a resolution to the social care funding crisis for many years. But increasing national insurance is not the way to do it and now is definitely not the time.

Baroness Altmann is a campaigner for better elderly and social care.