

Ensuring a democratic choice in Labour Leadership elections – when there is a vacancy

The Labour Party Rule Book 2018 Chapter 4 Elections of national officers of the Party and national committees, Clause II. Procedural rules for elections for national officers of the Party, Section 2 Election of leader and deputy leader, sub-section B Nomination, (i) (Page 18) reads as follows:

‘In the case of a vacancy for leader or deputy leader, each nomination must be supported by 10 per cent of the combined Commons members of the PLP and members of the EPLP. Nominations not attaining this threshold shall be null and void.’

Amendment

Delete: ‘by 10 per cent of the combined Commons members of the PLP and members of the EPLP’

Replace with: ‘by nominations from: a) 10 per cent of the combined Commons members of the PLP and members of the EPLP; or b) 10 per cent of the affiliated national trade unions; or c) 10 per cent of Constituency Labour Parties’.

Supporting argument

There is a growing consensus in the Labour Party that members should have a stronger role in Party decision-making, and that they should not be denied a democratic choice in Labour leadership elections. Currently Labour MPs and MEPs are the only Party members who can nominate a candidate for the election of Leader or Deputy Leader. In effect MPs and MEPs have a veto over who Party members can choose as they can restrict who is allowed to be a candidate in the election. A candidate who would be the overwhelming choice of Party members can be kept off the ballot paper.

In September 2017 Labour Conference passed an NEC-backed rule change to reduce the threshold from 15 per cent to 10 per cent of Labour MPs and MEPs. Whilst this is welcome, the current arrangements continue to have the potential to exclude key strands of political opinion in the Labour Party from being represented in future elections. MPs who nominated Jeremy Corbyn in 2015 confident that he would lose have indicated they will not make repeat that ‘mistake’ in future. So under the party’s current rules it would still be possible to exclude a candidate with Jeremy’s agenda from the ballot paper in an election for Leader.

Our current rules exclude CLPs and trade union affiliates from any role in making nominations that will put candidates on the ballot, which is not at all democratic. This needs to be corrected by giving CLPs and affiliated organisations their own rights to place candidates on the ballot paper.

This rule change proposal has a different primary objective than the change agreed in 2017, as it would give real powers to CLPs and trade unions to nominate on to the ballot paper. As with MPs and MEPs, it would also place a candidate nominated by 10 per cent of CLPs or by 10 per cent of the nationally affiliated trade unions on to the ballot paper. This would increase the possibility of there being a candidate on the ballot paper who puts forward the type of popular agenda for government that Jeremy is putting forward.

Reform of the ‘trigger mechanism’ for sitting MPs

The Labour Party Rule Book 2018 Chapter 5: Selections, rights and responsibilities of candidates for elected public office; Clause IV. Selection of Westminster parliamentary candidates; sub-clause 5 reads as follows:

‘5. If a CLP is represented in Parliament by a member of the PLP:

A. If the sitting MP wishes to stand for re-election, a trigger ballot will be carried out through Party units and affiliates according to NEC guidelines. If the MP wins the trigger ballot he/she will, subject to NEC endorsement, be selected as the CLP’s prospective parliamentary candidate.

B. If the MP fails to win the trigger ballot he/she shall be eligible for nomination for selection as the prospective parliamentary candidate, and s/he shall be included in the shortlist of candidates from whom the selection shall be made.’

Amendment

Replace paragraphs (A) and (B) by the following:

‘A. If the sitting MP wishes to stand for re-election, the standard procedures for the selection of a Prospective Parliamentary Candidate shall be set in motion not later than 42 months after the last time the said Member of Parliament was elected to Parliament at a general election. If over 66% of party units as well as over 66% of affiliates indicate a preference not to proceed to a full selection process, then the NEC has the authority to endorse the sitting MP as the CLP’s prospective parliamentary candidate. In those cases where a CLP does not have a branch structure (in other words, does not have the usual structure of party units), the Executive Committee may choose either to establish temporary branches based on ward boundaries for the sole purpose of the trigger ballot, or to hold an all-member meeting. Then if at least 66% of the votes cast by the temporary branches, or at the all-members meeting, as well as over 66% of votes cast by affiliates indicate a preference not to proceed to a full selection process then the NEC has the authority to endorse the sitting MP as the CLP’s prospective parliamentary candidate.’

B. The said Member of Parliament shall have the right to be included (irrespective of whether he/she has been nominated) on the shortlist of candidates from whom the selection of the Prospective Parliamentary Candidate shall be made.’

Consequential amendments to be made elsewhere in the Rule Book where the ‘trigger ballot’ is mentioned.

Supporting argument

Many Party members are now of the view that some Labour MPs take insufficient account of the views of their CLP and of Annual Conference, our Party’s sovereign body. One reason for this is that adequate mechanisms of accountability are non-existent in our Party. Effectively, a Labour MP in a ‘safe’ seat has a ‘job for life’ – well into their 80s in some cases. Indeed, some Labour MPs in Scotland clearly took this view until, of course, ‘safe’ Labour seats ceased to exist north of the border. There was one well-documented case of a Labour MP who had not been out canvassing for some 20 years. And it was not only in Scotland – in South Shields CLP, when David Miliband left, the marked-up register was found to be a mere 0.3%.

The above rule change provides a modicum of accountability. It is a half-way house between full mandatory re-selection and the existing arrangements, which in practice amount to little or no accountability.

You will see that our proposed rule change makes provision for the situation where the sitting MP gets an overwhelming majority of the nominations. In these circumstances the sitting MP is endorsed as the PPC.

Suggested Rule Change

A new Local Government Committee structure (instead of existing Local Campaign Forum)

The Labour Party Rule Book 2018 Chapter 12 Rules for Labour Party Local Campaign Forums, Clause IV Membership:

Amendment

Delete all and insert new sub-clauses as follows:

1. The membership of the LGC shall consist 75% of delegates from the local CLP(s) and 25% from affiliates. At least 50% of delegates from each group shall be women.
2. Additionally, CLP campaign co-ordinators shall be ex officio members of the LGC. Any sitting MP, AM, MSP, MEP, PCC and / or PPC may attend their LGC. Where a Co-operative Party council exists for the area concerned and they sponsor candidates in local elections they shall be entitled to appoint a member to the LGC.
3. The LGC shall meet at least four times per year with representatives of the Labour group where one exists.

Consequential amendments – elsewhere replace LCF by LGC

Supporting argument

The introduction of Local Campaign Forums, following the 'Refounding Labour' process in 2011, has not been a success. In many parts of the country LCFs meet irregularly, do not provide an adequate forum for consultation and debate on local government policy, and do not organise sufficient campaigning activity. Reinstating Local Government Committees, with defined representation for CLPs and affiliates, and regular meetings, would improve on this situation.

Suggested Rule Change

Election of the National Constitutional Committee (constituency section) by OMOV

The Labour Party Rule Book 2018, Chapter 4 Elections of national officers of the Party and national committees, Clause III. Procedural rules for elections for national committees, sub-clause C Election of National Constitutional Committee (NCC), (i) c. reads as follows:

‘Division III shall consist of four members, at least two of whom shall be women, to be nominated by CLPs and elected by their delegations at Party conference on a card vote basis.’

Amendment

Delete: ‘their delegations at Party conference on a card vote basis’

Replace with: ‘means of a one-member-one-vote postal ballot among all eligible individual members of the Party, conducted to guidelines laid down by the NEC’

And consequential rule amendments

Supporting argument

In recent years there has been a consistent trend towards giving all party members a direct vote for their representatives on our national committees. These moves have given the grassroots membership some rights and influence within their own party, which is particularly important given the countertrend towards more power accruing to the centre and the party machine.

In 1997, party members were given the right to elect the constituency section of the NEC by one member-one-vote (OMOV) and more recently they were further given the right to elect both the constituency section of the National Policy Forum (NPF) and the constituency section of the Conference Arrangements Committee (CAC) by OMOV.

The National Constitutional Committee (NCC) is a committee that makes decisions on the disciplinary matters it is presented with. It consists of eleven members, including four members in Division III who are elected by the CLPs (of which at least two shall be women). NCC members serve a three year term. It is an important committee, for example it can make decisions to expel members or to impose other sanctions. It would therefore be an important step forward for grassroots democracy if these four constituency seats on the NCC were also to be elected by means of OMOV. This reform need not cost extra money because the NCC election could run alongside the OMOV elections for the NEC, NPF and CAC.

A considerable number of CLPs still do not send delegates to conference and therefore they and their members are totally disenfranchised from the current NCC elections. This reform would effectively enfranchise every member in every CLP.

Closing date for constitutional amendments: 22 June 2018

Suggested Rule Change

Abolish the obsolete one year's delay re rule changes from CLPs

The Labour Party Rule Book 2018 Chapter 3 Party Conference, Clause III. Procedural Rules for Party Conference, Conference rule 2 – agenda.

Amendment

Add at end after sub-clause H, a new sub-clause I as follows:

‘All constitutional amendments submitted by affiliated organisations and CLPs that are accepted as in order shall be timetabled for debate at the first annual Party Conference following their submission.’

Supporting argument

The NEC can (and does!) agree rule changes one week and have them voted on by Annual Conference the following week. But for CLPs and trade unions it is an entirely different process. A rule change from CLPs/TUs submitted before the June closing date in one year has to wait well over a year (until the Annual Conference the following year) before it is timetabled for debate. This inordinate delay is due to an obscure convention, referred to as ‘The 1968 ruling’! In those more democratic days a complete verbatim of Conference was published and provided to delegates and CLPs. Thus we can read that the idea proposed in 1968 was that, during the year’s delay, the NEC would analyse the rule amendments in detail and present a considered assessment to the subsequent Conference. This may have happened once, but it has not been like that for years. Rather, in the lead up to the subsequent Conference, the Party officials simply make a one or two sentence written comment (usually to ‘reject’) and then this is nodded through by the NEC (although 2014 saw an exception to this pattern).

Thus, by its actions, the NEC has rendered the 1968 convention obsolete and it should be dispensed with. In any one year there is plenty of time between June and Annual Conference to assess rule change proposals from CLPs and TUs. The rule amendments should therefore be considered by Annual Conference in the year in which they are submitted – as set out in our recommended rule change.

Suggested Rule Change

Full involvement by party branches and branches of affiliated organisations in the selection of Westminster candidates

The Labour Party Rule Book 2018 Chapter 5 Selections, rights and responsibilities of candidates for elected public office, Clause IV. Selection of Westminster parliamentary candidates

Amendment

Insert new sub-clause 2 as follows:

‘The NEC’s procedural rules and guidelines for the selection of candidates for Westminster parliament elections shall include provision for party branches and branches of affiliated organisations to both interview prospective candidates and make nominations to the long list. The drawing up of the final shortlist will give due cognisance to the weight of nominations each candidate receives.’

and renumber existing sub-clauses (2) onwards to now be sub-clauses (3) onwards.

Supporting argument

The selection of parliamentary candidates is one of the Party’s most important tasks. Some MPs serve for 40 years and it is vital that every effort is made to secure the very best candidates. This should mean involving all party members and affiliated members through their branches and seeking to select PPCs that are representative of their communities. Unfortunately, in recent years, the opposite has been happening. Party branches nominate from CVs without interview, affiliated branches are not properly involved at all, and, according to the latest NEC survey, as few as 9% of current Labour MPs have a manual background, whereas 27% are from the Westminster village. The party has made a commitment to giving members a greater role and influence. Nowhere is this more important than in the selection of Labour parliamentary candidates.

Suggested Rule Change

A democratic Young Labour

The Labour Party Rule Book 2018 Chapter 11 Rules for Young Labour, Clause V. Structure:

Amendment

Add at end after sub-clause 3, a new sub-clause 4 as follows:

'Young Labour shall have its own constitution and standing orders, to be determined by the Young Labour AGM'

Supporting argument

The rule would clarify how Young Labour works, increase its autonomy and stop the organisation being beholden to Labour Party staff's interpretation of the rulebook.

Much of the current rules simply say that the NEC will determine how Young Labour works as it sees fit, with no concrete rules to govern the organisation

The purpose of this rule change is to make Young Labour AGM into the sovereign body of the organisation. Self-organisation and democracy are crucial to making a youth organisation that can be really attractive to young people. An organisation where all the important decisions are made by distant bodies cannot foster the democratic spirit that we want in our youth movement; nor will it be convincing to young people wanting to be involved in politics.

Suggested Rule Change

Greater flexibility on time period to elapse before a person can apply for re-admission to the Party following an expulsion.

The Labour Party Rule Book 2018, Chapter 6 Disciplinary rules, Clause I National action by the Party, Section 2 reads as follows:

When a person applies for re-admission to the Party following an expulsion by the NCC on whatever basis or by automatic exclusion under Chapter 2 4 above of the membership rules, the application shall be submitted to the NEC for consideration and decision. Such applications shall not normally be considered by the NEC until a minimum of five years has elapsed. The decision of the NEC shall be binding on the individual concerned and on the CLP relevant to the application.

Amendment

Delete text of current clause Chapter 6.I.2 and replace with:

Clause 6.I.2

‘When there has either been a decision to expel a member or an automatic exclusion has been agreed, the body making that decision (NEC or NCC) will at the time of the decision also specify a minimum period which has to elapse before readmission will be considered. This minimum period will not exceed 5 years. An application for re-admission shall not normally be considered by the NEC until the specified minimum period has elapsed. When a person applies for re-admission to the Party following an expulsion by the NCC on whatever basis or by automatic exclusion under Chapter 2 4 above of the membership rules, the application shall be submitted to the NEC for consideration and decision. The decision of the NEC shall be binding on the individual concerned and on the CLP relevant to the application.’

Supporting argument

Currently, a minimum of five years has to elapse before the NEC will normally consider an application for readmission to the Labour Party after any expulsion, regardless of the seriousness of the offence or transgression.

This is contrary to the principals of natural justice and equitable practice. A more flexible readmission policy will result in specifying a minimum time lapse proportionate to the reasons for expulsion. The time lapse will still never exceed five years.

Introducing a tariff approach will give greater focus on the range of reasons currently given for expulsions. It will therefore:

- *help to highlight and reduce expulsions for relatively trivial or specious reasons; and*
- *engender a more open, transparent and tolerant culture within the Labour Party.*

Suggested Rule Change

Standing orders for the democratic and inclusive running of Party Conference

Labour Party Rule Book 2018, Chapter 3 Party Conference, Clause III. Procedural rules for Party Conference, 1. Conference rule 1 – Annual Party Conference.

Amendment

Add after sub-clause F. (on page 16) an additional sub-clause:

'G. The NEC will draw up Standing Orders for Party Conference that will outline procedures for: the conference timetable, procedure in debate, motions, composite motions, emergency motions, withdrawal and remittance of motions, reference back, point of order, chairs ruling, suspension of Standing Orders, voting, including full procedures for card votes, ending debate and the role of the CAC. These Standing Orders will be presented to the first session of each Party Conference in a CAC report for agreement by the conference.'

Supporting argument

Annual conference is the supreme policy making body of the Labour Party. Therefore it is essential that it is conducted according to democratic principles. Unfortunately this has not proved to be the case in recent years. The conference chair has ignored calls from delegates for procedural matters to be referred back to the Conference Arrangements Committee. And the conference chair has also ignored legitimate calls from delegates for card votes on important matters without any explanation and in contravention of the Party rule-book. It is therefore necessary to democratise conference proceedings so that the rights of delegates are upheld in accordance with Party rules. This means we need proper conference standing orders laying out the procedure for how conference should be run to ensure that the democratic rights of delegates are upheld.

Suggested Rule Change

To establish the position of a Labour Party Ombudsperson

Labour Party Rule Book 2018, Chapter 1 Constitutional Rules.

Amendment

Insert new Clause XI as follows:

There shall be a Labour Party Ombudsperson, appointed by the National Executive Committee and ratified by Annual Conference.

The Labour Party Ombudsperson shall deal with complaints alleging a breach of the Party's rules and procedures and any other complaints that in the view of the NEC should be referred to the Ombudsperson.

The Labour Party Ombudsperson shall be a Labour Party member and shall be appointed by the National Executive Committee. The Labour Party Ombudsperson shall be appointed to serve for a non-renewable fixed term of between five and ten years, as agreed with the NEC.

The Labour Party Ombudsperson who, at all times, will act in an independent and impartial manner, shall be remunerated as approved by the National Executive Committee; and shall not be removed from office while continuing in membership of the Party, except for misconduct or incapacity, following a resolution of the National Executive Committee approved by Conference.

Supporting argument

Our Party's Rule Book sets out the duties and restrictions on members of the Party. CLPs and members have long argued that, in addition, there needs to be an independent arbiter, particularly in very contentious cases and where a member/members feel they have not been treated in a fair and just manner. An ombudsperson would give the whole Party confidence and reassurance in relation to our, often very complex, Rules and procedures.

Closing date for constitutional amendments: 22 June 2018

Suggested Rule Change

Charter of Members' Rights

Labour Party Rule Book 2018, Chapter 2 Membership rules, Clause II. Membership procedures.

Amendment

Clause II, add new sub-clause 5:

5. There shall be a Charter of Members' Rights to guarantee the rights of Labour Party members.

Charter of Members' Rights

To be added as Appendix 10 to the rule book.

Introduction

As a democratic socialist party, the Labour Party's ability to deliver on its core values and objectives depends fundamentally on its ability to fully harness the talent, ideas, and commitment of its membership base. This depends on guaranteeing those members rights to transparency, accountability, participation, training, and disciplinary justice. All Party actors should be made aware of the rights of members, which are established in this Charter. These rights shall be established along with a set of responsibilities, which shall be covered in a Code of Ethics, which covers all actors in the Labour Party. Both the Charter of Members' Rights and Code of Ethics shall be supervised by the Labour Party Ombudsperson, to whom a complaint may be made by a Labour Party member, employee, contractor, officer, or representative alleging a breach of the Code.

Transparency

Party members should have rights to a minimum level of transparency from the Party, including the following:

- a) To be provided with full information about the Party's finances on an annual basis;
- b) To determine the donations' policy of the Party, through the sovereign authority of Conference;
- c) Access to key documents, as determined by the NEC, affecting governing national and local-level party activity, to be made accessible on membersnet in clear and accessible language;
- d) Right to know who their elected representatives are at all levels of the Party, as well as the elected representatives of all affiliated organisations participating in any vote.

Accountability

As a democratic socialist party, the Labour Party shall guarantee meaningful mechanisms of accountability between its members, elected representatives, and paid staff. On that basis, members shall have rights to the following:

Elected Representatives

- a) Meaningful democratic mechanisms that ensure accountability between Party members and elected representatives. These mechanisms should include provisions to ensure that members have a meaningful choice over who represents their CLP in general elections, and who represents the Party at local elections;
- b) Regular feedback on the activities and decisions of elected representatives to respective branches and CLPs;

Party staff

- c) Meaningful line management and performance monitoring of Party staff to ensure that all staff actions and behaviour are in accordance with the democratic socialist orientation of the Party, promoting and cultivating a culture of public service, inclusiveness, and innovation, with the aim of building a participatory, transformative, members-led party;
- d) Commitment to impartiality as a principle to uphold and promote in all staff activities, including internal elections and disciplinary affairs.;
- e) Meaningful democratic mechanisms ensuring accountability between Party staff and relevant elected bodies;
- f) Transparency in the Labour Party staffing structure;

Participation

Labour's ability to be consistent in accordance with its ideology and objectives, in part depends on its willingness and ability to fully harness the talents, ideas and commitment of its membership base. On that basis, members shall have the following rights:

Closing date for constitutional amendments: 22 June 2018

Suggested Rule Change

- a) To participate in local Party governance, and not to be excluded from it except in accordance with the rules of the Party;
- b) To actively contribute to the development of Party policy, under the sovereign authority of Conference, and not to be excluded from it except in accordance with the rules of the Party;
- c) To contribute meaningfully to the selection of candidates to represent the Party in elections to public office on an equal opportunities basis;
- d) To be considered for nomination as a Party candidate for election to public office, on satisfying prescribed qualifying conditions;
- e) To participate in the election of the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Party;

Capacity Building and Skills Development

In order to fully harness their abilities, Labour Party members should have opportunities to improve on their skills and talents to increase the contribution they make to the Party. This will not only increase the overall contributions made by members to the Party but will also seek to equalise gaps in experience or skills created by an unequal society. They shall therefore have the following rights:

- a) Capacity building for incoming officers on branch and CLP Executives, particularly for Secretaries, Chairs, and Treasurers;
- b) Training in community organising, and workplace organising;
- c) Access to broad-based political education opportunities and resources, covering key areas of thinking underpinning different ideologies and strands of thinking represented by the Labour Party, as well as training in identifying and combating racism, sexism, Islamophobia, antisemitism, homophobia, transphobia and other forms of discrimination, greater awareness of disability rights, in order to be able to identify prejudice and discrimination as and when they occur and challenge it;
- d) Opportunities to apply for candidate training for elected office on an equal opportunities basis as well as to gain skills-based training that is relevant for people interested in public office;

Disciplinary Justice

Running the Labour Party in line with its principles, and in order to achieve its objectives, will only be possible through the creation of a culture of trust and understanding shared by all across the Party. This can only be achieved through ensuring that disciplinary matters are dealt with fairly. Members shall therefore be guaranteed the following rights:

- a) To access a clear complaints procedure explaining how and to whom complaints are to be made, and the information to be set out in a complaint. The procedure should also include the processes which may be triggered including processes for exploring an informal resolution of the complaint where appropriate and the length of time that each stage of the process will usually take;
- b) To a statute of limitations covering investigations into alleged breaches of Party rules;
- c) To freedom of expression consistent with the requirements of the Labour Party Constitution;
- d) An equitable time lapse for the readmission of expelled members proportionate to the gravity of their offence;
- e) For any potential political motivations of allegations to be considered in any disciplinary processes.
- f) To be informed both of the substance and author of a complaint at the earliest opportunity unless there is a clear and pressing reason for protecting the identity of a complainant, and for the nature of the complaint not to be leaked to the media.
- g) A right to review any suspensions or exclusions on the grounds of procedural fairness and proportionality.
- h) For the NEC to appoint an ombudsperson tasked with safeguarding the rights of members.

Supporting argument

This rule change is necessary to ensure that our Party is structurally and culturally coherent with democratic socialist principles. Given the massive potential of the expansion of the Party membership in recent years, it is necessary to ensure that the talent, creativity and commitment of members is fully harnessed. This requires the active promotion of members' rights in order to empower Party members – as well as a clarification of the responsibilities of all those holding positions in the Party – to be outlined in a Code of Ethics. This Charter includes but is not limited to key relevant recommendations made by the Chakrabarti Report.

Closing date for constitutional amendments: 22 June 2018

Suggested Rule Change

Labour Party Code of Ethics

Labour Party Rule Book 2018, Chapter 2 Membership rules, Clause II. Membership procedures.

Amendment

Clause II, add new sub-clause 6:

6. There shall be a Labour Party Code of Ethics which shall generally apply to all Labour Party members, Labour Party officers, Labour Party employees, Labour Party contractors and Labour Party representatives.

Code of Ethics

To be added as Appendix 11 to the rule book.

Introduction

As a democratic socialist party, the Labour Party's ability to deliver on its core values and objectives depends fundamentally on its ability to uphold and abide by the values and principles it wishes to promote in society. This depends on all constituent actors of the Labour Party including members, elected representatives, paid staff and contractors abiding by a set of mutual responsibilities, which are laid out in this Code of Ethics. The Labour Party Code of Ethics shall be supervised by the Labour Party Ombudsperson, to whom a complaint may be made by a Labour Party member, employee, contractor, officer, or representative alleging a breach of the Code.

Mutual Respect

- All actors in the Labour Party have responsibilities to respect the rights of elected representatives and Party staff as workers and servants of the Party, and to ensure that their behaviour and language in all forums is in line with the Codes of Conduct, and is not only in compliance with the Party's Constitution, but is respectful, comradely, and within the spirit of a democratic socialist party.
- All actors in the Labour Party have responsibilities to avoid actions and behaviour which are detrimental to the Party, including the leaking of confidential information to the media.

Engagement and Participation

- Party staff structures shall be oriented as much as possible towards actively promoting the engagement and participation of the Party's membership;
- Party staff shall have full opportunities to enhance their own professional development, receiving opportunities for training in all areas which are relevant to their responsibilities, particularly relating to disciplinary matters, and understanding of different forms of prejudice, including but not limited to racism, sexism, Islamophobia, antisemitism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, ageism and other forms of discrimination;
- Party staff shall have full trade union rights as workers;

Transparency

There shall be full transparency in the Labour Party staffing structure, so that members are informed of the specific rights, remits, and responsibilities of staff members, as well as of relevant lines of accountability;

A Code of Conduct for staff shall be drafted by the NEC and implemented by the General Secretary;

Accountability

- All staff members and contractors have the obligation to maintain the principle of impartiality in all internal political affairs, including internal elections and disciplinary matters. New staff members shall receive training in the principle of impartiality during their inductions.
- Party staff shall be fully accountable to the Party's members via the democratically elected representatives, and all their actions shall be carried out within frameworks established by elected bodies and leaders. These lines of accountability shall be clearly outlined in all staff contracts.

Supporting argument

Building the Labour Party, so that it can improve the lives of millions of people, will be enhanced if there is a cultural change instigated throughout the Party. This cultural change needs to be built on commitments by all in the Party to mutual respect, engagement and participation, transparency and accountability. That is the objective of this Code of Ethics.

Closing date for constitutional amendments: 22 June 2018

Popular rule change proposals should not have to wait three years to be discussed at Conference

The Labour Party Rule Book 2018 Chapter 3 Party Conference, Clause III. Procedural rules for Party Conference, Conference Rule 2 – agenda, sub-section H reads as follows:

‘When Party conference has made a decision on a constitutional amendment, no resolution to amend the constitution or rules of the Party having the same or a similar primary objective shall appear on the agenda of the three following annual Party conferences, except such resolutions to amend the constitution and rules that are in the opinion of the NEC of immediate importance.’

Amendment

Add at end: *‘or when 5 or more identical resolutions to amend the constitution or rules have been submitted.’*

Supporting argument

The ‘three-year rule’ restricts Conference from debating important rule change proposals which could significantly improve the party’s functioning. It is repeatedly used to prevent important rule change debates regardless of how much the changes are desired by the members or trade union affiliates.

This rule change would allow constitutional amendments which can demonstrate they have support from five CLPs/affiliates to be debated in the year they are submitted.

Conference would only re-discuss a change to the rules (with a similar or same primary objective) if that minimum number of organisations submit it.

It should be noted that the NEC is not subject to the three-year rule. This proposal merely seeks to extend that same right to the CLPs and affiliates if they can demonstrate their proposal has a clear minimum level of support.

Suggested Rule Change

Submission of motions and amendments to Party conference

The Labour Party Rule Book 2018 Chapter 3 Party Conference, Clause III. Procedural rules for Party Conference, Conference Rule 2 – agenda.

Amendment

In sub-section B, delete 'contemporary'.

In sub-section C, delete first sentence and insert : 'All affiliated organisations, the ALC, Young Labour and CLPs may submit one motion on a matter of either policy or organisation.'

Delete second sentence and insert : 'The CAC shall submit all motions received to a priorities ballot at the start of Conference.'

In penultimate sentence delete 'Alternatively' and insert 'Additionally'.

In final sentence delete 'contemporary'.

Add at end: 'The closing date for the receipt of motions shall normally be in July, so that motions may be circulated not less than a month before Conference in order that all affiliated organisations, the ALC, Young Labour and CLPs shall have the opportunity to submit an amendment to such a motion.'

In sub-section F, delete 'contemporary motions' and insert 'motions and amendments to such motions'.

In sub-section G, delete third sentence and insert 'Conference shall also consider constitutional amendments, motions and amendments to motions and emergency resolutions submitted and accepted.'

Supporting argument

Our Party Conference's decision-making ability can be significantly improved. At the moment it is hampered by a couple of key factors.

First, not enough Conference time is allocated for plenary debate by delegates.

Second, CLPs and affiliates face serious restrictions on their power to shape the agenda which they'd like to discuss. CLPs and affiliates are currently allowed to propose just a single submission, which is in practice very frequently ruled 'out-of-order'.

The suggested amendment would, in contrast, enable CLPs and affiliates to propose up to three submissions – a motion of their choice on a matter of policy or organisation; an amendment to such a motion; and a constitutional amendment.

This provision, together with a conscious decision to allot more Conference time for delegates' debates, would enable Conference to discuss what it wants to discuss; to consider a wider range of topics; to debate such topics more thoroughly; and to reach decisions with increased precision about the way ahead.

Closing date for constitutional amendments: 22 June 2018

Suggested Rule Change

Reducing the disabling effects of our internal culture, policy and practice – Introducing disabled members' forums

Labour Party Rule Book 2018, Chapter 1 Constitutional Rules, Clause II Party structure and affiliated organisations, Sub-section 2.C reads as follows: 'A women's forum may be established in each CLP, consisting of all individual women members within that CLP. An ethnic minorities forum may be established consisting of all individual Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) individual members within that CLP. Other forums may be established as appropriate with the approval of the NEC.'

Amendment

Before 'Other forums may' add: 'A disabled members' forum may be established in each CLP, consisting of all individual self-identifying disabled members within that CLP.'

Additionally, update the rulebook to reflect this change as follows: Chapter 1. Clause X. Rule 1. Add new Paragraph I 'disabled members' forums'; Chapter 7. Clause V. New rule 5: '5. Disabled members in this CLP shall, if they so desire, be organised into a disabled members' forum acting in accordance with regulations sanctioned by the NEC and on boundaries approved by the RD(GS).'; Chapter 7. Clause VI. New rule 5 and renumber: '5. There may be established a disabled members' forum to coordinate work among disabled members, acting in accordance with the rules for disabled members' forums and any other regulations approved by the NEC and on boundaries approved by the NEC.'

Insert new Chapter 11 (and re-number subsequent chapters accordingly):

'Chapter 11 Rules for disabled members' forums

Clause I. Name: 1. { } Constituency Labour Party disabled members' forum

Clause II. Aims and values; 1. National; A. The aims and values of the Party as outlined in Chapter 1 Clause IV above of the constitutional rules shall apply to this disabled members' forum.

2. Constituency: A. The aims of this disabled members' forum shall be:

- i. to encourage and support disabled members to play a full and active part in all the Party's activities, particularly through facilitating training, networking and mentoring, and encouraging disabled members to run for elected office
- ii. to build links with disabled people in the community, through contact with community organisations and individual disabled people, consultation, campaigning and joint working
- iii. to encourage disabled people to join the Party and to ensure that new disabled members are welcomed
- iv. to ensure that disabled members' voices are heard in the Party, through monitoring disabled members' involvement in activities, and feeding disabled members' concerns to the Party and to policy makers
- v. to work jointly with Labour disabled people in neighbouring constituencies in the delivery of the above aims.

Clause III. Membership: 1. The membership of the disabled members' forum shall consist of all individual disabled members' in { } Constituency Labour Party. The disability officer should be provided with contact details for disabled members in the constituency by the constituency secretary. All disabled members shall be mailed at least annually to inform them about the activity of the disability officer and/or disabled members' forum.

Clause IV. Management

1. The disability officer shall be responsible for coordinating a disabled members' forum in the constituency to aid him/her in delivering the aims of the organisation. (S)he will be, ex-officio, the chair/ co-ordinator of this group.
2. The disability officer and disabled members' forum shall draw up an annual plan and a programme of activities. This plan shall be agreed by the GM/EC of the constituency. The plan shall be prepared bearing in mind: A. the aims of the local disabled members' organisation B. the particular interests and needs of local disabled people, as identified through surveying disabled members. C. the guidelines and priorities circulated from time to time by Party Head Office or, as appropriate, the Scottish, Welsh or regional office.
3. The disabled members' forum may appoint other officers to help carry out its work.
4. The disability officer shall build targets for the year into his/her plans, which can then be monitored and reviewed to help planning for future years.
5. The disabled members' forum shall register with the appropriate Regional Director (or General Secretary in Scotland or Wales), and re-register on an annual basis.

Clause V. Meetings

1. A meeting of the disabled members' forum shall only have formal status if all disabled members in the constituency have been given 14 days written notice of the meeting, and the business to be discussed, and at least four eligible disabled members attend.
2. At a formal meeting the disabled members' forum may, if it wishes, make nominations to the CLP for posts open to nomination from branches (i.e. CLP officers, parliamentary/ European parliamentary candidate, members of the NEC, National Policy Forum, etc.) and elect two delegates to the constituency General Meeting. A formal meeting may also agree motions to

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be sent to the General Meeting.

3. The disabled members' forum may hold whatever informal meetings or gatherings it sees fit to work towards meeting its aims.

Clause VI. Activities

1. The disabled members' forum shall prioritise work which aims to support disabled members of the Party to play an active part in all the Party's activities – in particular, training, mentoring and networking among disabled members to encourage disabled members to: A. hold elected office within the Party (e.g. as branch or constituency chair, political education officer, etc.) B. stand as councillors, MPs, MEPs and other forms of elected representative for the Party C. become involved in the community, for example, as school governors/ board members, on committees of local organisations, as magistrates etc. D. take part in all forms of Party activities – in particular campaigns, recruitment activity, Party committees, meetings and policy forums.

2. The disabled members' forum shall also seek to build links with disabled members in the community through, for example: A. building relationships with organisations, such as disabled people's voluntary organisations, tenants' groups, trade unions and other organisations in which disabled people are active, through information exchange, personal contact, joint meetings, events and campaigns B. working with the Party and Labour councillors and MPs to consult disabled people in the community about their views and concerns, using consultation meetings, policy forums, surveys, listening campaigns and other techniques C. targeted campaigning and recruitment activity with disabled people, including campaigns on issues of particular interest to disabled people such as physical access, remote participation in civic society and benefit rights.

3. The disabled members' forum shall seek to ensure that disabled members' voices are properly heard in the Party, through the above activities and through, for example: A. feeding disabled members' views on policy into local and national policy forums and to the constituency's General Meeting B. encouraging disabled members' to play an active role in these and other bodies, monitoring disabled members' involvement and working with the rest of the Party to develop arrangements which maximise this involvement C. bringing any problems regarding disabled members' involvement, including through the filling of quotas, to the attention of the constituency secretary, other officers or the regional Party office D. holding local policy forums for disabled members.

Clause VII. Finances

1. The funds of the disabled members' forum shall consist of donations, collections, profits from sales, and receipts from activities undertaken by the forum. In the event of the dissolution of the disabled members' forum its assets shall belong to the { } Constituency Labour Party.

2. The CLP shall, by agreement, make resources available to the disabled members' forum (if operating successfully), to enable it to function effectively. The Party's financial scheme recognises the assets and financial transactions of this disabled members' forum as the assets and financial transactions of { } Constituency Labour Party, of which it is a constituent part. It shall be the duty of this disabled members' forum to co-operate with the CLP, and in particular the CLP treasurer, in respect of the CLP's obligations under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. Should this disabled members' forum fail to co-operate with the CLP, the NEC will take appropriate disciplinary action against individual members, suspend this disabled members' forum or both.

Clause VIII. General

1. The general provisions of the constitution and rules of the Party shall apply to the disabled members' forum.

2. The disabled members' forum shall not enter into affiliation or give support financially or otherwise to any political party or organisation ancillary or subsidiary thereto declared ineligible for affiliation to the Party by the Party conference or by the NEC.

3. This disabled members' forum shall not have the power to enter into property-related transactions or to employ staff

4. This disabled members' forum shall adopt standing orders and procedural rules as may be agreed by the appropriate RD(GS).

Clause IX. Alteration to rules

1. Any alteration or addition to these rules may only be made at the annual general meeting of the { } Constituency Labour Party disabled members' forum but must be submitted to the appropriate RD(GS) for approval before being put into operation. Such changes shall not contravene the spirit or intention of the model rules as accepted by Party conference or the NEC.'

Supporting argument

Disabled people make up approximately 20 per cent of the working population, yet have less than 1 per cent representation in the House of Commons with similar levels in local government. We have just lost one of the best advocates for disabled people's engagement in political and economic life in Stephen Hawking who was fortunate enough to have access to the resources to mitigate his disability significantly. The other end of the spectrum is occupied by many people prevented by culture, policy and practice from engaging as fully as possible in the political and social life of our party and of our society. Some have left the party following access issues to meetings or documents; being told they cannot be an elected representative due to their disability; or through inadvertent exclusion through failure to understand the need to avoid certain behaviours. These issues and examples underline the need for disabled members to have separate safe spaces to self-organise. This rule changes establish CLP Disabled members' forums as one of several important steps needed to address the under-representation of disabled members in the Labour Party and in public life more broadly.

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Suggested Rule Change

Reducing the disabling effects of our internal culture, policy and practice –

Introducing an annual disabled members' conference

The Labour Party Rule Book 2018 Chapter 3 Party Conference.

Amendment

Insert new 'Clause V National Annual Disabled Members' Conference

1. The NEC will issue procedures for holding an annual national disabled members' conference, open to all disabled members, which shall have a formal role in the policy making process.'

Supporting argument

Disabled people make up approximately 20 per cent of the working population, yet have less than 1 per cent representation in the House of Commons with similar levels in local government. We have just lost one of the best advocates for disabled people's engagement in political and economic life in Stephen Hawking who was fortunate enough to have access to the resources to mitigate his disability significantly. The other end of the spectrum is occupied by many people prevented by culture, policy and practice from engaging as fully as possible in the political and social life of our party and of our society. Some have left the party following access issues to meetings or documents; being told they cannot be an elected representative due to their disability; or through inadvertent exclusion through failure to understand the need to avoid certain behaviours.

These issues and examples underline the need for disabled members to have separate safe spaces to self-organise. This rule changes establishes an annual disabled members' conference with a formal role in the policy-making process, which allows disabled members to come together to meet and discuss policy objectives.

Suggested Rule Change

Ensuring at least one of the Leader and Deputy Leader is a woman

The Labour Party Rule Book 2018 Chapter 4 Elections of national officers of the Party and national committees, Clause II. Procedural rules for elections for national officers of the Party, Section 2 Election of leader and deputy leader, sub-section A reads as follows:

‘The leader and deputy leader shall be elected separately in accordance with rule C below, unless rule E below applies.’

Amendment

After the words ‘The leader and deputy leader’
add ‘, at least one of whom shall be a woman,’

Supporting argument

This rule change would makes the rules around leadership consistent with other rules which require gender balance in governance posts. It is also about ensuring that the Labour Party applies the same values to its internal governance and leadership as it seeks to achieve through the equalities policies that we have championed whilst in government and in the equality campaigns that have been such an important part of campaign activity across the labour movement.