

Proposal to Democratise the Election of the General Secretary

The General Secretary of the Labour Party should be elected along the following lines:

- There should be an election every five years, and the NEC should initiate the process of the first election four years and 8 months after the beginning of the current General Secretary's term.
- In order to ensure a wide choice of applicants, each NEC member may choose up to 4 applicants for interview, at least two of whom shall be women, and the eight candidates with the most support shall be interviewed. Following the interviews, each NEC member may support two candidates, one of whom must be a woman, of whom the top four shall go forward to a national one member one vote (OMOV) ballot of all members of the party to be conducted in line with guidelines issued by the NEC.
- Additional formulations, such as the election of the General Secretary by members and trade unions at Party Conference, should also be considered.

Supporting Argument

The choice of General Secretary fundamentally influences the type of party that Labour aspires to be. The General Secretary takes key decisions over the staffing structure, recruitment policy, and the allocation of resources. The development of key initiatives, including digital campaigning, canvassing techniques, community organising, and the development of campaigning materials, all depend on the party staff, who are accountable to the General Secretary. Key Labour Party structures such as the regional offices are directly accountable to the General Secretary, and the effective and transparent functioning of key democratic institutions, including the National Executive Committee and the Leadership's office, depend heavily on constructive input from the party staff. Allowing members to elect the General Secretary will increase democratic accountability through all areas of the party, allowing them greater say over what party they actually want Labour to be - a closed, technocratic, solely electoralist party which is vulnerable to capture by elite interests, or a movement-party rooted in local communities and struggling alongside social movements to redistribute power and wealth.