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Leadership Elections: Labour Party

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Summary

This note sets out the current rules for the election of the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Labour Party. It explains the change of rules in 2014 (from a system where MPs and MEPs, individual Labour Party members and members of affiliated organisations each commanded a third of the total vote to the current system). It also sets out previous versions of the rules. It includes details of the results of Labour Leadership elections since 1922.

The current process for electing a Leader of the Labour Party has two parts.

First, candidates must gain the nomination of the appropriate number of members of the combined membership of the Commons Parliamentary Labour Party and European Parliamentary Party. The threshold is different depending whether the election follows a vacancy or whether the election is challenging an incumbent leader.

Second, Labour Party members, affiliated supporters and registered supporters are then able to vote in the election. Votes are cast by individual members and are counted on the basis of one person one vote.

The current rules are set out in Chapter 4, Clause II of the *Labour Party Rule Book 2016*.

The Leader of the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn, faced a vote of no confidence from members of the Parliamentary Labour Party on 28 June 2016. 172 Members of Parliament supported the motion of no confidence, and 40 voted in support of the Labour Leader. 40 voted against. There were 4 spoilt ballots and 14 did not vote.

There is no provision for the removal of a Labour Leader through a no confidence vote within the Labour Party rules. However, following the vote there was speculation that a leadership challenge would be launched. On 11 July 2016 Angela Eagle, MP for Wallasey, announced she would formally challenge Corbyn for the leadership. On the morning of 12 July 2016 Owen Smith, MP for Pontypridd, also announced he would stand against Jeremy Corbyn.

Following the initial hustings of the Parliamentary Labour Party on Monday 18 July the formal nomination process opened.

The following day Angela Eagle announced that she was withdrawing from the contest.

At the close of the nomination period Owen Smith had secured the nomination of 162 of Labour's 231 MPs.

There was some debate about whether Jeremy Corbyn would automatically be on the ballot paper, as the incumbent leader, or whether he too would need to seek the required number of nominations from the Commons and European Parliamentary parties. On the evening of 11 July 2016 Labour's ruling National Executive Committee debated and voted on the issue. They ruled that an incumbent leader would automatically appear on the ballot paper.

The timetable for the election was agreed by the NEC with the result announced on 24 September 2016 at a special leadership conference in Liverpool the day before the Party's annual autumn conference.

Jeremy Corbyn was re-elected as leader of the Labour Party; he won 313,209 votes (61.8% of the vote), compared to Owen Smith's 193,229.

1. Leadership election rules

1.1 Current rules

The process for electing a Leader of the Labour Party has two parts.

- First, candidates must gain the nomination of the appropriate proportion of members of the Commons Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) and European Parliamentary Labour Party (EPLP).
- Second, Labour Party members, affiliated supporters and registered supporters are then able to vote in the election. Votes are cast by individual members and are counted on the basis of one person one vote.

The current rules are set out in Chapter 4, Clause II of the *Labour Party Rule Book 2015*.

In the case of a vacancy for leader or deputy leader, each nomination must be supported by 15 per cent of the combined Commons members of the PLP and EPLP.

Where there is no vacancy, the rules state that “nominations may be sought by potential challengers each year prior to the annual session of Party conference. In this case any nomination must be supported by 20 per cent of the Commons members of the PLP”.

Following some debate Labour’s ruling National Executive Committee ruled that an incumbent leader facing a challenge should automatically be on the ballot (see Section 2.2 below).

Chapter 4, Clause II of the *Labour Party Rule Book*

Election of leader and deputy leader

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

B. Nomination

i. In the case of a vacancy for leader or deputy leader, each nomination must be supported by 15 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.

ii. Where there is no vacancy, nominations may be sought by potential challengers each year prior to the annual session of Party conference. In this case any nomination must be supported by 20 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.

iii. Affiliated organisations, the ALC, Young Labour, and CLPs may also nominate for each of the offices of leader and deputy leader. All nominees must be Commons members of the PLP.

iv. Nominees shall inform the General Secretary in writing of the acceptance or otherwise of their nomination at least two clear weeks before the commencement of the procedures for voting laid out in rule C below. Unless written consent to nomination is received, nominations shall be rendered null and void.

v. Valid nominations shall be printed in the final agenda for Party conference, together with the names of the nominating organisations and Commons members of the PLP supporting the nominations. In the case of a vacancy under E below this information shall be included with the documentation circulated with any ballot.

vi. Nominees who do not attend the relevant Party conference shall be deemed to have withdrawn their nominations, unless they send to the General Secretary – on or before the day on which the conference opens – an explanation in writing of their absence satisfactory to the CAC.

C. Voting

- i. The General Secretary shall be the Returning Officer.
- ii. The Returning Officer shall appoint a Labour Party legal advisor to act as Deputy Returning Officer who shall advise on any matters of dispute in respect of eligibility or procedure.
- iii. An Independent Scrutineer will be appointed by the Returning Officer to oversee and verify the ballot, and the results shall be declared at a session of Party Conference.
- iv. The timetable for the election, including any freeze date, and the procedures for agreeing the list of those eligible to vote must be approved by the Independent Scrutineer.
- v. The procedures shall ensure that each candidate has equal access to the eligible electorate and has equal treatment in all other matters pertaining to the election.
- vi. Votes shall be cast in a single section, by Labour Party members, affiliated supporters and registered supporters.
- vii. The precise eligibility criteria shall be defined by the National Executive Committee and set out in procedural guidelines and in each annual report to conference.
- viii. No person shall be entitled to receive more than one vote. Votes shall be cast by each individual and counted on the basis of one person one vote.
- ix. Voting shall be by preferential ballot. The votes shall be totalled and the candidate receiving more than half of the votes so apportioned shall be declared elected. If no candidate reaches this total on the count of first preference votes, a redistribution of votes shall take place according to preferences indicated on the ballot paper.
- x. The votes cast for each nominee shall be recorded and published in a form to be determined by the NEC as soon as possible following any election.
- xi. In the event of any conflict between these rules and the constitutional rules and other general rules of the Party, these rules shall prevail.

D. Timing of an election

- i. When the PLP is in opposition in the House of Commons, the election of the leader and deputy leader shall take place at each annual session of Party conference.
- ii. When the PLP is in government and the leader and/ or deputy leader are prime minister and/ or in Cabinet, an election shall proceed only if requested by a majority of Party conference on a card vote.
- iii. In any other circumstances an election shall only be held when a vacancy occurs, subject to E below.

E. Procedure in a vacancy

- i. When the Party is in government and the Party leader is prime minister and the Party leader, for whatever reason, becomes permanently unavailable, the Cabinet shall, in consultation with the NEC, appoint one of its members to serve as Party leader until a ballot under these rules can be carried out.
- ii. When the Party is in government and the deputy leader becomes Party leader under i above of this rule, the Cabinet may, in consultation with the NEC, appoint one of its members to serve as deputy leader until the next Party conference. The Cabinet may alternatively, in consultation with the NEC, leave the post vacant until the next Party conference.
- iii. When the Party is in government and the deputy leader, for whatever reason, becomes permanently unavailable, the Cabinet may, in consultation with the NEC, appoint one of its members to serve as deputy leader until the next Party conference. The Cabinet may alternatively, in consultation with the NEC, leave the post vacant until the next Party conference.
- iv. When the Party is in opposition and the Party leader, for whatever reason, becomes permanently unavailable, the deputy leader shall automatically become Party leader on a pro-tem basis. The NEC shall decide whether to hold an immediate ballot as provided under E above or to elect a new leader at the next annual session of Party conference.
- v. When the Party is in opposition and the leader and deputy leader, for whatever reason, both become permanently unavailable, the NEC shall order a postal ballot as provided under E above. In consultation with the Shadow Cabinet they may choose to appoint a member of the Shadow Cabinet to serve as Party leader until the outcome of that ballot.

1.2 Introduction of the current rules

The current rules were introduced in 2014. The previous rules required candidates to have the support of 12.5% of Commons Members of the Parliamentary Labour Party in order to stand for election if the post of

leader or deputy leader were vacant. The election then took place with MPs and MEPs; individual Labour Party members; and members of affiliated organisations, most notably Trade Unions, each commanding one third of the total vote. The previous rules for leadership election are reproduced in Appendix 1.

On 10 July 2013, Labour Party leader Ed Miliband commissioned a review into Labour Party reform led by Lord Collins. The Collins Review, published in February 2014, made recommendations to reform the rules for the election of the Labour Party leader.¹ The recommendations of the Review were approved by the National Executive Committee on 4 February 2014 and then ratified by a Special Conference on 1 March 2014.²

1.3 Development of the rules since 1922

Between 1922 and 1981, only members of the Parliamentary Party were eligible to vote for the leader and the deputy leader. Under Labour Party rules, elections took place annually whilst the party was in opposition, but only when vacancies arose if the party was in government.

At the 1981 party conference the voting procedure for the election of party leader and deputy leader was altered. The electorate was extended to include nominations for members of the constituency parties (CLPs) and trade unions (TUs). MPs were given 30% of the vote, the constituencies 30% and the trade unions 40%.

At the 1993 party conference the voting procedures were altered to introduce the principle of 'One Member One Vote'. Trade unions and constituency Labour parties were required to ballot their members individually, with results being allocated proportionately. The weighting of votes in the electoral college was also changed to give each section (PLP, CLP and TU) a third of the share of votes.

¹ Ray Collins, *The Collins Review into Labour Party Reform: Building a One Nation Labour Party*, February 2014

² Labour List, *Final "Collins Review" document released ahead of Special Conference*, 7 February 2014

2. Leadership contest, 2016

2.1 Motion of no confidence in the Labour Leader, June 2016

The Leader of the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn, faced a vote of no confidence from members of the Parliamentary Labour Party on 28 June 2016. 172 Labour MPs voted in favour of the no-confidence motion; 40 voted against. There were 4 spoilt ballots and 14 did not vote.³

There is no provision for the removal of a Labour Leader through a no confidence vote within the Labour Party rules. In the days that followed there was much speculation that Angela Eagle, Labour MP for Wallasey, would launch a challenge under clause 2 B(ii) of the Labour rules (challenge where there is no vacancy).

2.2 Leadership challenge July 2016

Angela Eagle formally announced her intention to challenge Jeremy Corbyn on Monday 11 July.⁴

On Tuesday 12 July Labour's National Executive Committee met to decide on whether Jeremy Corbyn should automatically be included in the party's leadership ballot. There had been debate about whether the Labour Party Rules were clear in the event of a leadership challenge where there was no vacancy.

Some had interpreted the rules to say that the incumbent leader being challenged would automatically gain a place on the ballot. Others argued that in the event of a leadership challenge being triggered by a challenger securing nominations from the required 20% of the combined Commons members of the PLP and the EPLP, that the incumbent leader would also be required to secure the required number of nominations.⁵

NEC members held a secret ballot on the issue and ruled 18-14 that Corbyn was not subject to the rule that he had to secure nominations from 20% of the PLP and EPLP. He was therefore automatically included in the ballot.

A legal challenge to this decision was heard in the High Courts on 26 July 2016. The challenge was brought by Michael Foster, a Labour Party donor and former candidate, but the challenge was rejected.

At the same meeting it was reported that the NEC also decided that only those who have been members for more than six months will be allowed to vote. New supporters would be given two days to sign up as

³ [Guardian](#), Labour MPs prepare for leadership contest after Corbyn loses confidence vote, 28 June 2016

⁴ Labour leadership: Angela Eagle says she can unite the party [BBC News](#), 11 July 2016

⁵ Labour's NEC to decide on Jeremy Corbyn ballot rules, [BBC News](#), 12 July 2016

registered supporters to vote in the race, but only if they were willing to pay a £25 fee.⁶

On Wednesday 13 July Owen Smith announced he was also intending to seek nominations to take part in the election.⁷

Following the PLP and ELP hustings held on Monday 18 July 2016 nominations opened.⁸

The following day Angela Eagle announced she was withdrawing from the contest, leaving Owen Smith as the only challenger to Jeremy Corbyn.⁹

At the end of the nomination period for the PLP and ELP, Owen Smith had secured nominations from 162 of Labour's 231 MPs and 10 MEPs out of a total of 20.¹⁰

2.3 Eligibility to vote

Full members

Labour Party members on the national membership system, and not lapsed from membership at the date set on the timetable, were eligible to vote. Affiliated supporters and Registered Supporters, as defined by the NEC, who have been registered with the Labour Party at the date set on the timetable were eligible to vote. The *Independent* reported that Labour Party membership in January 2016 was about 390,000.¹¹

The cut-off date for Labour Party members to have joined to be eligible to vote was 12 January 2016. Any membership fee arrears had to be cleared by noon on Monday 8 August.

This cut-off date was challenged in the High Court by five new members of the Labour Party who had joined after 12 January 2016. The Court ruled in their favour. The judgement of the Court was that if members had joined the Party prior to the leadership election process commencing, the common understanding of the rule book was that they would be entitled to vote in any leadership election. For the Party to impose the retrospective cut-off date once the leadership process had commenced would be an unlawful breach of contract.¹² This could have led to up to about 150,000 new members being eligible to vote.

The Labour Party appealed the decision and won. The Appeal Court judged that:

⁶ *Guardian*, [Labour executive rules Jeremy Corbyn must be on leadership ballot](#), 13 July 2016

⁷ Labour leadership: Owen Smith to enter contest, *BBC News*, 13 July 2016

⁸ Labour Party, Leadership Election 2016 – *Procedural Guidelines and Timetable*

⁹ *BBC News*, Eagle drops out of Labour leader race, 19 July 2016

¹⁰ Labour Party, [Owen Smith nominations](#), accessed 22 July 2016. Note: although there were 232 Labour MPs elected at the 2015 General Election, at the time of the leadership election one seat was vacant, following the death of Labour MP Jo Cox.

¹¹ *Independent*, Labour membership figures show fewer than 14,000 have quit the party since election, 14 January 2016

¹² The Labour Party is an unincorporated association with rules, currently set out in the Rule Book, which constitute a contract to which each member adheres when he joins the Party. The judgement is available online, [Evangelou v McNicol \[2016\] EWHC 2058 \(QB\)](#)

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A member's entitlement to vote in a leadership election is not a product of him or her simply being a member, but is the result of him or her being a member who satisfies the precise eligibility criteria defined by the NEC and any freeze date provisions set by the NEC in the timetable for the election.¹³

It means that the estimated 150,000 new members of the Party who joined after the cut-off date were only able to vote if they paid the £25 affiliate fee (see below).

Registered and affiliated members

Registered supporters were able to apply from Monday 18 July to 5pm on Wednesday 20 July 2016. Supporters had to pay a £25 fee to register. It was reported that over 183,000 supporters registered during this time.¹⁴ It is not clear how many of those registered supporters were Party members who joined after the original January cut-off date but paid the extra £25 in order to become a registered supporter and obtain a vote in the leadership election.

New and updated affiliated supporter lists had to be received by the Labour Party by noon on Monday 8 August 2016. Affiliated supporters eligible to vote were those affiliated supporters already on the party's membership system and who remained a member of an affiliated trade union or socialist society (and paid the political levy where appropriate). New affiliated supporters could be recruited but the deadline for affiliated supporter lists to be provided to the party by affiliated organisations was 8 August 2016.

Timetable

Date	Event
Tues 12 Jan	Join the Labour Party on or before this date to vote in the leadership election.
Tues 12 July	Timetable agreed. Freeze date for membership eligibility
Thurs 14 July	Timetable published
Mon 18 July	EPLP and PLP briefing, followed by EPLP and PLP hustings Registered supporters applications open
Mon 18 July	7pm EPLP and PLP nominations open
Wed 20 July	5pm EPLP and PLP Nominations close and supporting nominations open 5pm Last date to join as registered supporter
Thurs 21 July	Noon Deadline for validly nominated candidates to consent to nomination

¹³ [Christine Evangelou and others -v- Iain McNicol \(Appeal\)](#), 12 August 2016

¹⁴ [Independent](#), Labour Party receives more than 183,000 membership applications in 48 hours

Fri 22 July	Hustings period opens
Mon 8 Aug	Noon Final date for membership arrears to be paid in full. Noon Final date for new and updated affiliated supporter lists to be received
Mon 15 Aug	Noon Supporting nominations close
w/c Mon 22 Aug	Ballot mailing despatched
Wed 14 Sept	Noon Last date for electronic ballot reissues
Fri 16 Sept	Hustings period closes
Wed 21 Sept	Noon Ballot closes
Sat 24 Sept	Special conference to announce result
Source: Leadership Election 2016 – Procedural Guidelines and Timetable	

2.4 Leadership election results

The [results](#) of the leadership election were announced on Saturday 24 September 2016 at a special leadership conference on the eve of the annual Labour Party conference.

Jeremy Corbyn was re-elected as leader of the Labour Party; he won 313,209 votes (61.8% of the vote), compared to Owen Smith's 193,229 (38.20%).¹⁵

The BBC reported that turnout was higher than in 2015:

...with 77.6% of the 654,006 eligible party members, trade union members and registered supporters - 506,438 in total - confirmed as taking part.

Mr Corbyn won comfortably in each of the three categories - winning the support of 59% of party members, 70% of registered supporters and 60% of affiliated supporters.

- Party members - Jeremy Corbyn (168,216); Owen Smith (116,960)
- Registered supporters - Corbyn (84,918); Smith (36,599)
- Affiliated supporters - Corbyn (60,075); Smith (39,670)¹⁶

¹⁵ [Labour leadership: Corbyn appeals for unity after re-election](#), BBC News, 24 September 2016

¹⁶ *ibid*

3. Leadership contest, 2015

On the day after the general election of 7 May 2015, Ed Miliband announced his resignation as Labour Party leader. He said:

Britain needs a strong Labour party. Britain needs a Labour party that can rebuild after this defeat so we can have a government that stands up for working people again.

Now it is time for someone else to take forward the leadership of this party. So I am tendering my resignation taking effect after this afternoon's commemoration of VE day at the Cenotaph.

I want to do so straight away because the party needs to have an open and honest debate about the right way forward, without constraint.

Let me say that Harriet Harman is the best deputy leader anyone could hope for. I worked for her more than twenty years ago. I am proud to have had her as my deputy for the term of my leadership. She will take over until a new leader is elected.¹⁷

On the same day Harriet Harman, deputy leader and acting leader until the outcome of the leadership election was announced, declared her resignation as deputy leader, to take effect upon the election of the new leader and deputy leader.¹⁸

The National Executive Committee met on 13 May 2015 and determined the timetable for the leadership and deputy leadership elections:

- Friday 15 May: Election period opens
- Monday 8 June: PLP nomination hustings for Leader
- Tuesday 9 June: PLP nomination ustings for Deputy Leader
- Tuesday 9 June: PLP nominations open
- 22 noon Monday 15 June: PLP nominations (Leader) close
- 12 noon Wednesday 17 June: PLP nominations (Deputy Leader) close
- Wednesday 17 June: Hustings period opens
- 12 noon Friday 31 July: Supporting nominations close
- 12 noon Wednesday 12 August: Last date to join as member, affiliated supporter, or registered supporter
- Friday 14 August: Ballot mailing despatched
- 12 noon Thursday 10 September: Ballot closes
- Saturday 12 September: Special conference to announce result.¹⁹

Leadership election

Six candidates announced their intention to stand for the leadership of the Labour Party:

- Liz Kendall (announced her intention on 10 May 2015)²⁰

¹⁷ [This is not the speech I wanted to give](#), *Labour Party Website*, 8 May 2015

¹⁸ [Paying tribute](#), *Labour Party Website*, 8 May 2015

¹⁹ [Timetable announced for Labour Leader and Deputy Leader elections](#), *Labour Party Website*, 13 May 2015

²⁰ [Liz Kendall confirms Labour leadership bid](#), *BBC News*, 10 May 2015

- Chuka Umunna (announced his intention on 12 May 2015)²¹
- Andy Burnham (announced his intention on 13 May 2015)²²
- Yvette Cooper (announced her intention on 13 May 2015)²³
- Mary Creagh (announced her intention on 14 May 2015)²⁴
- Jeremy Corbyn (announced his intention on 3 June 2015)²⁵

Chuka Umunna withdrew his candidacy on 15 May and Mary Creagh withdrew her candidacy on 12 June. All four remaining candidates had received the required 35 nominations or more by 15 June, the day nominations closed. It was reported that Jeremy Corbyn reached the nominations threshold just two minutes before the deadline.²⁶ It was later reported that some of those nominating Corbyn did so not because they supported him but because they wanted him on the ballot to ensure a wider leadership debate.²⁷

The result of the election was announced on 12 September. Jeremy Corbyn was elected leader in the first round of voting.

Labour leadership election 2015: results

	Registered		Affiliated		% Total			
	Members	% supporters	Members	% supporters	Members	% supporters	Members	%
Jeremy Corbyn	121,751	49.6	88,449	83.8	41,217	57.6	251,417	59.5
Andy Burnham	55,698	22.7	6,160	5.8	18,604	26	80,462	19
Yvette Cooper	54,470	22.2	8,415	8	9,043	12.6	71,928	17
Liz Kendall	13,601	5.5	2,574	2.4	2,682	3.7	18,857	4.5
Total	245,520		105,598		71,546		422,664	

Source: BBC News

Deputy leadership election

Seven candidates announced their intention to stand for the deputy leadership of the Labour Party:

- Tom Watson (announced his intention on 10 May 2015)²⁸
- Ben Bradshaw (announced his intention on 15 May 2015)²⁹
- Stella Creasy (announced her intention on 16 May 2015)³⁰
- Caroline Flint (announced her intention on 16 May 2015)³¹
- Angela Eagle (announced her intention on 18 May 2015)³²
- John Healey (announced his intention on 25 May 2015)³³

²¹ 'Chuka Umunna confirms he will run in Labour leadership race', *Labour List*, 12 May 2015

²² 'Andy Burnham and Yvette Cooper announce Labour leadership bids', *Huffington Post*, 13 May 2015

²³ *Ibid*

²⁴ 'Labour leadership: Mary Creagh enters race', *BBC News*, 14 May 2015

²⁵ 'Labour leadership: Jeremy Corbyn enters race', *BBC News*, 3 June 2015

²⁶ Labour leadership: Jeremy Corbyn completes the line-up, *BBC News*, 15 June 2015

²⁷ See for example, *BBC News*, 22 July 2015, and *BBC News* 15 June 2015

²⁸ 'Tom Watson reveals deputy leadership bid for Labour', *Channel 4 News*, 10 May 2015

²⁹ 'Deputy leadership', *Ben Bradshaw website*, 15 May 2015

³⁰ 'Stella Creasy confirms she's running for Labour deputy leader: "Party must return to fighting poverty, inequality and injustice"', *Mirror*, 16 May 2015

³¹ 'Caroline Flint launches bid for Labour's deputy leadership', *New Statesman*, 16 May 2015

³² 'Angela Eagle launches deputy leadership campaign', *Labour List*, 18 May 2015

³³ 'John Healey announces deputy Labour leadership bid', *Huffington Post*, 25 May 2015

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- Rushanara Ali (announced her intention on 24 May 2015)³⁴

John Healey withdrew his candidacy on 11 June and Rushanara Ali withdrew her candidacy on 17 June, the day nominations closed. The other five candidates received enough nominations (35 or more) to appear on the ballot paper.

The result of the election was declared on 12 September. Tom Watson was elected deputy leader of the Labour Party after three rounds of voting.

Labour deputy leadership election 2015: results

Candidate	Round 1	%	Round 2	%	Round 3	%
Tom Watson	160,852	39.4	170,589	42.2	198,962	50.7
Stella Creasy	78,100	19.1	86,555	21.4	103,746	26.4
Caroline Flint	64,425	15.8	74,581	18.4	89,538	22.8
Angela Eagle	66,013	16.2	72,517	17.9		
Ben Bradshaw	39,080	9.6				
Total	408,470		404,242		392,246	

Source: BBC News

³⁴ 'Another new name enters deputy leadership race – Rushanara Ali announces she will run', [Labour List](#), 24 May 2015

4. Leadership contests 1994-2010

4.1 2010 Contest

The Labour leadership election process was put in train on 10 May 2010, whilst coalition talks between the Liberal Democrats and Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrats and the Labour Party were taking place, when Gordon Brown announced that:

The reason we have a hung parliament is no single party or leader was able to win the full support of the country. As leader of my party, I must accept that is a judgement on me.

I therefore intend to ask the Labour Party to set in train the processes needed for its own leadership election.

I would hope that it would be completed in time for the new leader to be in post by the time of the Labour Party conference. I will play no part in that contest, I will back no individual candidate.³⁵

At that time, he had intended to continue as Prime Minister and Leader of the Labour Party until the outcome of the contest was known. However, on 11 May 2010, when it became apparent that the Labour Party would not be able to reach a coalition agreement with the Liberal Democrats, Gordon Brown announced that he would be resigning as Prime Minister and the Leader of the Labour Party with immediate effect.³⁶ Under the Labour Party's rules, its deputy leader, Harriet Harman, became acting Leader. She held office until a new leader was elected.³⁷

At its meeting on 19 May 2010, the Labour Party National Executive Committee agreed a timetable for the conduct of the leadership election. The timetable was subsequently revised:

- Monday 24 May: Opening of PLP nominations.
- Wednesday 9 June: Close of PLP nominations. [Originally 12.30pm on Thursday 27 May 2010³⁸]
- Thursday 10 June: Deadline of acceptance of nomination by nominated candidates. Supporting nominations open.
- June/July: Hustings will take place. The Labour Party will work with a range of organisations to ensure regional balance and encourage affiliates and third party organisations to organise workplace hustings involving members and supporters. We will explore new media hustings to ensure the public are able to take part in the process.
- Monday 26 July: Close of supporting nominations.

³⁵ Andy McSmith, "A day that began with Cameron in charge and ended with him in shock", *Independent*, 11 May 2010

³⁶ James Kirkup, "Brown says farewell to his 'second most important job'", *Daily Telegraph*, 12 May 2010

³⁷ The Labour Party rules provide that:
"When the Party is in opposition and the Party leader, for whatever reason becomes permanently unavailable, the deputy leader shall automatically become Party leader on a pro-tem basis" [Labour Party, *Rule Book 2014*, Chapter 4, Clause II, E iv]

³⁸ Michael Savage, "'Sons of Blair' do battle with 'Sons of Brown' for labour leadership", *Independent*, 20 May 2010; Michael Savage, "Diane Abbott adds name to leadership contenders", *Independent*, 21 May 2010

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- Monday 16 August to Wednesday 22 September: *Balloting takes place.*
- Wednesday 8 September: Freeze date for new members to join.
- Saturday 25 September: Announcement of ballot result.³⁹

Six candidates declared their intention to stand for the leadership of the Labour Party:

- David Miliband (announced his intention on 12 May 2010 and launched his campaign on 17 May 2010⁴⁰);
- Ed Miliband (announced his intention on 14 May 2010 and launched his campaign on 15 May 2010⁴¹);
- Ed Balls (launched his campaign on 19 May 2010⁴²);
- John McDonnell (announced his intention on 18 May 2010 and confirmed his bid on 19 May 2010⁴³);
- Andy Burnham (launched his campaign on 20 May 2010⁴⁴)
- Diane Abbott (announced her intention on 20 May 2010⁴⁵)

John McDonnell withdrew his candidacy on 9 June, the day nominations closed. All five remaining candidates had received at least 33 nominations.

The results of the leadership contest were declared at the start of the Party's Annual Conference in Manchester, on Saturday 25 September 2010. Ed Miliband was elected leader by the Party's electoral college⁴⁶ under the alternative vote system. Four rounds of voting were required to determine the winner. The results for each round are included in Appendix 2.

4.2 2007 Contest

On 10 May 2007, Tony Blair announced his decision to stand down from the leadership of the Labour Party, triggering a leadership contest. He also announced that he would resign as Prime Minister on 27 June 2007.⁴⁷

³⁹ Source: Labour Party, NEC agrees timetable for election of new Leader, 19 May 2010 [revised on 20 May], posted on Labour Matters

⁴⁰ Jim Pickard, "Miliband throws his hat into ring for leader", *Financial Times*, 13 May 2010; Allegra Stratton, "Time to end Blair-Brown battles and repair Labour, says Miliband the elder", *Guardian*, 18 May 2010

⁴¹ Jim Pickard, "Ed Miliband to challenge brother", *Financial Times*, 15 May 2010; Toby Helm, Anushka Asthana and Andrew Rawnsley, "New Labour is a thing of the past, says Miliband", *Observer*, 16 May 2010

⁴² Michael Savage, "' Sons of Blair' do battle with 'Sons of Brown' for labour leadership", *Independent*, 20 May 2010

⁴³ Allegra Stratton and Patrick Wintour, "Burnham joins leadership race with pledge to act on immigration fears", *Guardian*, 20 May 2010; Allegra Stratton, "Ed Balls to join marathon party leadership race", *Guardian*, 19 May 2010

⁴⁴ Andy Burnham, "Why I am the man to rebuild Labour", *Mirror*, 20 May 2010

⁴⁵ 'Diane Abbott enters Labour leadership contest', *BBC News*, 20 May 2010

⁴⁶ The votes of each of the following three groups receive equal weighting (one third) in the College: (1) Members of Parliament and Members of the European Parliament; (2) Constituency Labour Party members; and (3) Affiliates

⁴⁷ Matthew Tempest, "Blair to stand down on June 27", *Guardian Unlimited*, 10 May 2007

On the same day, John Prescott also formally announced his decision to step down as deputy leader of the Labour Party.⁴⁸

These announcements heralded a leadership and deputy leadership contest under the rules set out in Appendix 1. The National Executive Committee of the Labour Party met on 13 May 2007 and agreed the detailed rules of the contest and the timetable, which were outlined by *Guardian Unlimited*:

- May 14: MP nominations open at 2.30pm
- May 17: Nominations close at 12.30pm.
- May 18: Deadline for nominated candidates to accept nomination.
- May 20: Hustings meetings (to June 16), even if there is only one candidate for leader, that candidate will attend around the country, but will not be subject to an affirmative ballot.
- June 1: Close of supporting nominations.
- Deadline for withdrawal of nomination by declared candidates.
- June 21: Close of affiliate ballot.
- June 22: Close of Labour members and MPs' and MEPs' ballots.
- June 24: Leadership conference and announcement of results at a special party conference in Manchester. If there is only one candidate for leader that person will be declared elected unopposed.⁴⁹

In order to go forward to the ballot, candidates for leadership had to receive nominations from 12.5% of the Commons members of the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP), that is 45 members.⁵⁰

Labour Leadership contest 2007

Tony Blair's announcement on 10 May 2007 initiated the formal leadership contest, with Gordon Brown declaring his intention to stand as a candidate for Labour leader the following day.⁵¹ Two other members of the PLP had already declared their intention to stand for the leadership: John McDonnell, in July 2006;⁵² and Michael Meacher, in February 2007.⁵³

After conceding that John McDonnell had secured more nominations than him, Mr Meacher withdrew his candidacy on 14 May 2007.⁵⁴ On 16 May, Gordon Brown secured his 308th nomination, making it mathematically impossible for John McDonnell, who had secured 29 nominations, to reach the required 45 nominations.⁵⁵

⁴⁸ 'Prescott quits as deputy leader', *BBC NEWS*, 10 May 2007

⁴⁹ Hélène Mulholland and Lewis Williamson, "Labour leadership: what happens next", *Guardian Unlimited*, 14 May 2007

⁵⁰ *Labour Party Rule Book 2004* Rule 4B.2b Nomination

⁵¹ Deborah Summers and Hugh Muir, "Brown lays out leadership credentials", *Guardian Unlimited*, 11 May 2007

⁵² Nick Assinder, "Labour MP launches leadership bid", *BBC News*, 14 July 2006

⁵³ Matthew Tempest and Tom Happold, "Meacher enters leadership race", *Guardian Unlimited*, 22 February 2007

⁵⁴ Patrick Wintour and Will Woodward, "Key backing for Johnson in Labour deputy fight", *Guardian*, 15 May 2007

⁵⁵ Patrick Wintour, "Brown secures Labour leadership unopposed", *Guardian*, 17 May 2007

The total nominations received by Gordon Brown, as at 14 June 2007, were:

MPs	MEPs	CLPs	Affiliates
313	19	407	17

Source:

http://www.labour.org.uk/leadership/labour_party_overwhelmingly_unites_behind_gordon_brown (last accessed July 2007)

At the close of nominations, Gordon Brown was declared the sole candidate for the leadership. He accepted the nomination in a speech on 17 May 2007.⁵⁶ However, his formal appointment as Leader of the Labour Party was not made until the Special Conference on 24 June 2007.

Labour Deputy Leadership contest 2007

On 10 May 2007, Mr John Prescott also formally announced his decision to step down as deputy leader of the Labour Party.⁵⁷

At the Labour Party Conference in September 2006, John Prescott said that he would stand down as deputy leader of the Labour Party and Deputy Prime Minister when Tony Blair stood down.⁵⁸ By the time of his formal announcement, six MPs had already announced their intention to contest the Party's deputy leadership:

- Peter Hain announced his intention to stand on 12 September 2006;⁵⁹
- Harriet Harman announced her intention to stand on 15 September 2006;⁶⁰
- John Cruddas announced his intention to stand on 27 September 2006;⁶¹
- Hilary Benn announced his intention to stand on 27 October 2006;⁶²
- Alan Johnson launched his campaign on 10 November 2006;⁶³
- Hazel Blears announced her intention to stand on 24 February 2007.⁶⁴

All six candidates received sufficient nominations from the Commons members of the PLP to progress to the nationwide ballot which closed on 22 June. The results of the contest were announced at the Labour Party's Special Conference on 24 June 2007, in Manchester:

⁵⁶ Patrick Wintour, "Brown: Britain's two prime ministers", *Guardian*, 18 May 2007

⁵⁷ 'Prescott quits as deputy leader', *BBC NEWS*, 10 May 2007

⁵⁸ Colin Brown, "Tears and cheers as Prescott says he will bow out with Blair", *Independent*, 29 September 2006

⁵⁹ 'Hain runs as deputy leader', *BBC News*, 12 September 2006

⁶⁰ 'Harman intends Labour deputy bid', *BBC News*, 15 September 2006

⁶¹ "Cruddas goes for Prezza job", *Birmingham Party*, 28 September 2006

⁶² 'Benn to run for deputy position', *BBC News*, 27 October 2006

⁶³ 'Johnson starts deputy leader bid', *BBC News*, 10 November 2006

⁶⁴ 'Blears launches deputy leader bid', *BBC News*, 24 February 2007

Election of the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party - Electoral College Votes, 2007

Candidate	1st round	2nd round	3rd round	4th round	5th round
Hilary Benn	16.4%	18.2%	22.3%		
Hazel Blears	11.8%				
Jon Cruddas	19.4%	20.4%	23.9%	30.1%	
Peter Hain	15.3%	16.4%			
Harriet Harman	18.9%	21.2%	25.9%	33.6%	50.4% ELECTED
Alan Johnson	18.2%	23.7%	27.9%	26.4%	49.6%

Source:

http://www.labour.org.uk/leadership/deputy_leader_election_results (last accessed July 2007)

The breakdown of votes among the different components of the electoral college is reported in Appendix 3.

4.3 1994 Contest

At the 1993 party conference the voting procedures were altered to introduce the principle of 'One Member One Vote'. Trade unions and constituency Labour parties were required to ballot their members individually, with results being allocated proportionately. The weighting of votes in the electoral college was also changed to give each section (PLP, CLP and TU) a third of the share of votes.

The new procedures were used the following year following the death of the incumbent Leader of the Labour Party, John Smith. The outcome of the ballot for the Leader of the Labour party was announced on 21 July 1994.

Election of Labour Leader, 1994, % of vote

	PLP	Constituency Labour Parties	Trade Unions	Total
Tony Blair	60.5%	58.2%	52.3%	57.0%
John Prescott	19.6%	24.4%	28.4%	24.1%
Margaret Beckett	19.9%	17.4%	19.3%	18.9%

Source: Harry Harmer, *The Longman Companion to: The Labour party 1900-1998*

Appendix 1- 2010 Leadership election rules

The rules used for previous leadership elections in the Labour Party were set out in the Party's *Rule Book 2010*.⁶⁵ They specify:

[4B.2] Election of leader and deputy leader

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

B Nomination

- (i) In the case of a vacancy for leader or deputy leader, each nomination must be supported by 12.5 per cent of the Commons members of the PLP (Parliamentary Labour Party). Nominations not attaining this threshold shall be null and void.
- (ii) Where there is no vacancy, nominations shall be sought each year prior to the annual session of party conference. In this case any nomination must be supported by 20 per cent of the Commons members of the PLP. Nominations not attaining this threshold shall be null and void.
- (iii) Affiliated organisations, CLPs (Constituency Labour Party) and Labour Members of the European Parliament may also nominate for each of the offices of leader and deputy leader. All nominees must be Commons members of the PLP.
- (iv) Nominees shall inform the General Secretary in writing of the acceptance or otherwise of their nomination at least two clear weeks before the commencement of the procedures for voting laid out in rule C below. Unless written consent to nomination is received, nominations shall be rendered null and void.
- (v) Valid nominations shall be printed in the final agenda for party conference, together with the names of the nominating organisations and Commons members of the PLP supporting the nominations. In the case of a vacancy under 4B.2e this information shall be included with the documentation circulated with any ballot.
- (vi) Nominees who do not attend the relevant party conference shall be deemed to have withdrawn their nominations, unless they send to the secretary - on or before the day on which the conference opens - an explanation in writing of their absence satisfactory to the CAC (Conference Arrangements Committee).

C Voting

- (i) Voting in the election of leader and deputy leader shall take place so that the results are declared at an annual session of party conference; except in the case of a vacancy occurring under E below of this rule when the timetable for the ballot shall be as determined by the NEC.
- (ii) Voting shall take place consecutively in three sections as follows;
 - (a) Section 1 shall consist of Commons members of the PLP and members of the European PLP. Each such member shall be

⁶⁵ Labour Party, *Rule Book 2010*, pp21-22

entitled to one vote in each ballot held under this section of the rules.

(b) Section 2 shall consist of a vote of all eligible individual members of the party on the basis of one member one vote. This ballot shall take place on a national basis and shall be counted and recorded as an aggregate vote broken down by CLP. Eligible members shall be those currently on the national membership list who are endorsed and have not lapsed from membership.

(c) Section 3 shall consist of those members of affiliated organisations who have indicated their support for the Labour Party and that they are not members or supporters of any other party or otherwise ineligible to be members of the Labour Party. Voting shall take place under the procedures of each affiliated organisation, but on a one-person-one-vote basis recorded by affiliated organisations and aggregated for a national total. The ballot paper shall provide for the declaration of support and eligibility required under this rule if no prior declaration has been made.

(iii) The votes of each nominee in each section shall be calculated as a percentage of the total votes cast in that section and shall then be apportioned as follows:

(a) Section 1 (members of the Commons and European PLPs) – one third

(b) Section 2 (individual members of the Labour Party) – one third

(c) Section 3 (members of affiliated organisations) – one third.

(iv) The votes apportioned as provided in (iii) above shall be totaled and the candidate receiving more than half of the votes so apportioned shall be declared elected. If no candidate reaches this total on the first ballot, further ballots shall be held on an elimination basis. The redistribution of votes shall be according to preferences indicated on the ballot paper.

(v) The votes cast for each nominee in each section shall be recorded and published in a form to be determined by the NEC as soon as possible following any election.

D Timing of an election

(i) When the PLP is in opposition in the House of Commons, the election of the leader and deputy leader shall take place at each annual session of party conference.

(ii) When the PLP is in government and the leader and/or deputy leader are prime minister and/or in Cabinet, an election shall proceed only if requested by a majority of party conference on a card vote.

(iii) In any other circumstances an election shall only be held when a vacancy occurs, subject to E below.

E Procedure in a vacancy

(i) When the party is in government and the party leader is prime minister and the party leader, for whatever reason, becomes permanently unavailable, the cabinet shall, in consultation with the NEC, appoint one of its members to serve as party leader until a ballot under these rules can be carried out.

(ii) When the party is in government and the deputy leader becomes party leader under (i) above of this rule, the Cabinet may, in consultation with the NEC, appoint one of its members to

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serve as deputy leader until the next party conference. The Cabinet may alternatively, in consultation with the NEC, leave the post vacant until the next party conference.

(iii) When the party is in government and the deputy leader, for whatever reason, becomes permanently unavailable, the Cabinet may, in consultation with the NEC, appoint one of its members to serve as deputy leader until the next party conference. The Cabinet may alternatively, in consultation with the NEC, leave the post vacant until the next party conference.

(iv) When the party is in opposition and the party leader, for whatever reason, becomes permanently unavailable, the deputy leader shall automatically become party leader on a pro-tem basis. The NEC shall decide whether to hold an immediate ballot as provided under E above or to elect a new leader at the next annual session of party conference.

(v) When the party is in opposition and the leader and deputy leader, for whatever reason, both become permanently unavailable, the NEC shall order a postal ballot as provided under E above. In consultation with the Shadow Cabinet they may choose to appoint a member of the Shadow Cabinet to serve as party leader until the outcome of that ballot.

Appendix 2 - Leadership and Deputy Leadership election results, 2010

Labour Leadership Election 2010, share of votes, %

Round 1	MPs/MEPs	Members	Affiliates	Total
Abbott	0.88	2.45	4.09	7.42
Balls	5.01	3.37	3.41	11.79
Burnham	3.01	2.85	2.83	8.68
Miliband D	13.91	14.69	9.18	37.78
Miliband E	10.53	9.98	13.82	34.33
Round 2				
Balls	5.18	3.83	4.22	13.23
Burnham	3.03	3.3	4.08	10.41
Miliband D	14.02	15.08	9.8	38.89
Miliband E	11.11	11.13	15.23	37.47
Round 3				
Balls	5.43	4.82	5.77	16.02
Miliband D	15.78	16.08	10.86	42.72
Miliband E	12.12	12.43	16.71	41.26
Round 4				
Miliband D	17.81	18.14	13.4	49.35
Miliband E	15.52	15.2	19.93	50.65

Labour Deputy Leadership Election 2010, share of votes, %

Round 1	MPs/MEPs	Members	Affiliates	Total
Benn	4.27	7.21	4.93	16.41
Blears	4.99	3.01	3.77	11.77
Cruddas	4.63	5.67	9.09	19.39
Hain	4.81	3.87	6.64	15.32
Harman	6.54	8.04	4.35	18.93
Johnson	8.08	5.53	4.55	18.16
Round 2				
Benn	4.74	7.93	5.56	18.23
Cruddas	4.74	6.01	9.64	20.39
Hain	5.1	4.24	7.08	16.42
Harman	7.29	8.8	5.15	21.24
Johnson	11.47	6.35	5.91	23.73
Round 3				
Benn	5.65	9.29	7.39	22.33
Cruddas	6.3	6.58	11.01	23.89
Harman	8.61	10.15	7.12	25.88
Johnson	12.78	7.31	7.81	27.9
Round 4				
Cruddas	7.65	8.81	13.61	30.07
Harman	10.29	13.82	9.46	33.57
Johnson	15.39	10.71	10.25	36.35
Round 5				
Harman	15.42	18.83	16.18	50.43
Johnson	17.91	14.5	17.15	49.56

Source: The Guardian, 25 June 2007

Appendix 3 - Leadership election results 1922-1980

Between 1922 and 1981, only members of the Parliamentary Party were eligible to vote for the leader and the deputy leader. Under Labour Party rules, elections took place annually whilst the party was in opposition, but only when vacancies arose if the party was in government.

Election of Labour Leaders, 1922-1980, % share of vote

21 November 1922	1st Ballot		
James Ramsay MacDonald	61		
Joseph Clynes	56		
03 December 1935	1st Ballot	2nd Ballot	
Clement Atlee	58	88	
Herbert Morrison	44	48	
Arthur Greenwood	33	-	
14 December 1955	1st Ballot		
Hugh Gaitskell	166		
Aneurin Bevan	70		
03 November 1960	1st Ballot		
Hugh Gaitskell	157		
Harold Wilson	81		
02 November 1961	1st Ballot		
Hugh Gaitskell	171		
Anthony Greenwood	59		
14 February 1963	1st Ballot	2nd Ballot	
Harold Wilson	115	144	
George Brown	88	103	
James Callaghan	41	-	
05 April 1976	1st Ballot	2nd Ballot	3rd ballot
James Callaghan	84	141	176
Michael Foot	90	133	137
Roy Jenkins	56	-	-
Tony Benn	37	-	-
Denis Healey	30	38	-
Anthony Crosland	17	-	-
03 November 1980	1st Ballot	2nd Ballot	
Michael Foot	83	139	
Denis Healey	112	129	
John Silkin	38	-	
Peter Shore	32	-	

Appendix 4 - Leadership election results, 1983-1992

At the 1981 party conference the voting procedure for the election of party leader and deputy leader was altered. The electorate was extended to include nominations for members of the constituency parties and trade unions. MPs were given 30% of the vote, the constituencies 30% and the trade unions 40%.

Election of Labour Leaders, 1922-1980, % share of vote

02 October 1983	PLP	CLP	TU	Total
Neil Kinnock	14.8	27.5	29.0	71.3
Roy Hattersley	7.9	0.6	10.9	19.3
Eric Heffer	4.3	2.0	0.0	6.3
Peter Shore	3.1	0.0	0.0	3.1
02 October 1988	PLP	CLP	TU	Total
Neil Kinnock	24.8	24.1	39.7	88.6
Tony Benn	5.2	5.9	0.3	11.4
18 July 1992	PLP	CLP	TU	Total
John Smith	23.2	29.3	38.5	91.0
Bryan Gould	6.8	0.7	1.5	9.0

Source: Thomas Quinn, *Modernising the Labour Party: Organisational Change since 1983*

Appendix 5 - Labour party leaders 1906 – present

1906-08	Keir Hardie
1908-10	Arthur Henderson
1910-11	George Barnes
1911-14	James Ramsay MacDonald
1914-17	Arthur Henderson
1917-21	William Adamson
1921-22	Joseph Clynes
1922-31	James Ramsay MacDonald
1931-32	Arthur Henderson
1932-35	George Lansbury
1935-55	Clement Attlee
1955-63	Hugh Gaitskill
1963-76	Harold Wilson
1976-80	James Callaghan
1980-83	Michael Foot
1983-92	Neil Kinnock
1992-94	John Smith
1994-07	Tony Blair
2007-10	Gordon Brown
2010-15	Ed Miliband
2015- present	Jeremy Corbyn

Source: Harry Harmer, *The Longman Companion to: The Labour Party 1900-1998*

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