



BRIEFING PAPER

Number 03938, 6 April 2020

Leadership Elections: Labour Party

By Neil Johnston

Inside:

1. Leadership election rules
2. Development of the Rules
3. 2020 Contest
4. 2016 Contest
5. 2015 Contest
6. Leadership contests 1994-2010

Contents

Summary	3
1. Leadership election rules	4
1.1 Current rules	4
2. Development of the Rules	7
2.1 1922-1981	7
2.2 1981-1993	7
2.3 1993-2015	8
2.4 2015 'one member one vote'	8
2.5 2018 changes	9
3. 2020 Contest	10
3.1 Eligibility to vote	11
3.2 Leadership election	11
3.3 Result	12
3.4 Deputy leadership election	12
4. 2016 Contest	15
4.1 Motion of no confidence in the Labour Leader, June 2016	15
4.2 Leadership challenge July 2016	15
4.3 Eligibility to vote	17
4.4 Result	18
5. 2015 Contest	20
5.1 Leadership election	20
5.2 Result	22
5.3 Deputy leadership election	22
5.4 Result	23
6. Leadership contests 1994-2010	24
6.1 2010 Contest	24
Result	26
6.2 2007 Contest	27
Leadership contest	28
Deputy Leadership contest	28
Result	29
6.3 1994 Contest	30
Result	31
Appendix 1 - Leadership election results 1922-1992	32
Appendix 2 - Party leaders and deputy leaders 1906-present	34

Summary

This note briefly sets out the current and previous rules for the election of the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Labour Party.

The current process for electing a Leader of the Labour Party has two parts. The rules are set out in Chapter 4, Clause II of the *Labour Party Rule Book 2019* but the timetable and exact eligibility to vote in the contest is set by Labour's National Executive Committee (NEC) when required.

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

If there is a vacancy, candidates must also secure nominations from either 5% of Constituency Labour Parties or from three affiliated organisations that represent 5% of affiliated supporters. Two of these must be trade unions.

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. Voters rank the candidates 1,2,3, etc. A winning candidate must secure 50% of valid votes, either on the first ballot, or after the lowest scoring candidate's ballots have been redistributed. Multiple rounds of counting can take place until one candidate secures more than 50%.

Following Labour's defeat at the 2019 General Election, Jeremy Corbyn announced that he would stand down as leader of the Labour Party early in 2020, once a contest to replace had been completed. The NEC announced the timetable for the 2020 contest on 6 January 2020.

The result was meant to be announced at a special conference on Saturday 4 April. However, the Party cancelled the event as a result of the coronavirus pandemic and the need to safeguard members and staff and to protect public health. The result was instead released in a press release.

Sir Keir Starmer was elected as the new party leader with 56% of the vote on the first round of voting. Rebecca Long-Bailey received 28% and Lisa Nandy received 16%. Angela Rayner was elected as the Deputy Leader of the Party. On the first round of voting she polled 42% and was elected on the third round of voting.

1. Leadership election rules

Summary

Nominations

If a vacancy arises:

A candidate needs to be nominated by 10% of the total number of MPs in the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) and either:

- 5% of Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs)
- Or
- At least three affiliate organisations (two of which must be trade unions) which represent a minimum of 5% of the affiliated membership.

If an incumbent is challenged:

- A candidate needs to be nominated by 20% of the combined total of MPs prior to the annual session of Party conference.

An incumbent is not required to be nominated and is automatically on the ballot.

Voting

The General Secretary of the Party is the returning officer.

The precise voting eligibility criteria are defined by Labour's National Executive Committee.

The freeze date for eligibility to vote shall be not less than 2 weeks after the approved timetable is announced and not less than 3 weeks before the deadline for receipt of ballot papers, with no qualifying period of membership prior to the freeze date

Eligible party members, affiliates and registered supporters each have one ballot.

Voting is by preferential ballot. Candidates are ranked 1,2,3 etc.

The winner must secure over 50% of the valid votes counted. If no winner achieves over 50% on the first count, the candidate with the lowest number of votes is eliminated and the second preferences from their voters are redistributed. If no candidate receives over 50% of the votes after second preferences are taken into account subsequent counts are conducted, with the lowest polling candidate eliminated and their ballots redistributed in accordance with second (or third, fourth etc) preferences from their electors' ballots.

1.1 Current rules

The current rules are set out in Chapter 4, Clause II of the [Labour Party Rule Book 2019](#).¹

When the Party is in Government, and the Party leader position becomes vacant the Cabinet, in consultation with the NEC, will appoint one of its members to serve as Party leader until a ballot can be organised.

When the Party is in Opposition and the Party leadership, for whatever reason, becomes vacant, the deputy leader automatically becomes Party leader. The NEC will then decide whether to hold an immediate ballot

¹ Labour Party, [Rule Book 2019](#)

5 Leadership Elections: Labour Party

or hold a ballot in the run up to the next annual conference, with the new leader announced at that conference.

If the Party is in Opposition and both leader and deputy leader positions become vacant the NEC will make provision for a new leadership election. The NEC, in consultation with the Shadow Cabinet, may choose to appoint a member of the Shadow Cabinet to serve as Party leader until the outcome of that ballot.

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

- First, candidates must gain the relevant number of nominations;
- Second, Labour Party members, eligible affiliated supporters and registered supporters are then able to vote in the election.

The process for electing a deputy leader follows the same format.

The timetable for the nomination and election process is determined by Labour's ruling [National Executive Committee](#) (NEC).

The NEC will also determine the exact eligibility criteria for members, affiliated supporters and registered supporters to take part in the ballot.

Nomination

The nomination criteria are different depending on whether there is a vacancy or if an incumbent is being challenged.

In the case of a vacancy for leader (or deputy leader), each nomination must be supported by 10% of the total of Commons members of the PLP.

Before the UK left the EU, MEPs in the European Parliamentary Labour Party (EPLP) were also included at this stage and candidates needed 10% of the combined total of the PLP and EPLP. MEPs had been added from 1991 and first took part in the 1992 leadership election.²

In addition, a leadership candidate must also secure either:

- nominations from 5% of CLPs;
- or
- nominations from 3 affiliated organisations (of which at least 2 must be trades unions) which represent 5% of affiliated membership.

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% 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 4.2 below).

² Thomas Quinn, *Electing and Ejecting Party Leaders in Britain*, 2012, p60

Voting

Voting is by preferential ballot, sometimes known as instant run-off. Eligible voters each get a ballot and ballots are counted on the basis of one member one vote. However, instead of marking their favourite candidate with an 'X', electors rank the candidates by marking their ballots with 1,2,3, etc.

The votes are counted and if a candidate gains more than 50% of first preferences then they are declared the winner.

If no one wins more than 50% of the first preference votes then the candidate with the least votes is eliminated. Their ballots are then redistributed to whichever candidate the voter has written the number '2' next to. This process is repeated, using voters' third and fourth preferences if necessary, until one candidate has over 50% of the valid votes.

2. Development of the Rules

2.1 1922-1981

Between 1922 and 1981, only members of the Parliamentary Labour Party (the PLP) 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.

In the 1970s there was a campaign to widen the electorate for leadership elections, particularly after the PLP chose James Callaghan, seen as on the right of the Party, to succeed Harold Wilson in 1976. Resolutions to change the method of electing the leader were rejected at successive conferences through the 1970s.³

At a special party conference in 1981 the voting procedure for the election of party leader and deputy leader was altered.

A commission of inquiry set up by the NEC in 1976 recommended an electoral college should replace the PLP elections but its proposals for the proportions within the college between different parts of the Labour movement were rejected. The 1980 Party conference agreed the principle but could not agree on the division of the college votes. A special conference in January 1981 eventually approved the proportions allocated to the college. It was the decision of the special conference that precipitated the Limehouse Declaration of the so-called Gang of Four, four senior Labour politicians who went on to set up the Social Democratic Party.⁴

2.2 1981-1993

The 1981 rules gave members of the CLPs and affiliates and affiliated trade unions a say in the electoral college. MPs were given 30% of the vote, the constituencies 30% and the trade unions/affiliates 40%.

The Commons members of the PLP still retained the right to nominate candidates from their ranks but the electorate was extended for the elections stage. Initially the threshold for candidates to stand was set at 5% of the PLP. This was raised to 20% following a challenge by Tony Benn to incumbent leader, Neil Kinnock, in 1988. The level was then reduced to 12.5% in 1993.⁵ MEPs were included in the MPs section of the college from 1991.

Initially the electoral college did not require CLPs or unions and affiliates to ballot members. Individual CLPs and unions chose their preferred members. Compulsory balloting of CLPs was introduced in 1989 but it was on a 'winner takes all' basis. A CLP's vote went to one candidate

³ Thomas Quinn, *Electing and Ejecting Party Leaders in Britain*, 2012, p58

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Pemberton and Wickham Jones, Brothers all? The Operation of the Electoral College in the 2010 Labour Leadership Contest, *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 66, Issue 4, October 2013, Pages 708–731,

regardless of the spread of support across the candidates within the CLP vote.

2.3 1993-2015

At the 1993 party conference the voting procedures were altered to introduce the principle of 'One Member One Vote' for affiliated trade unions. The unions, affiliates 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 (MPs/MEPs, CLP and unions/affiliates) a third of the share of votes.⁶

Candidates had to have the support of 12.5% of the combined total of MPs and MEPs in order to stand for election if the post of leader or deputy leader were vacant.

2.4 2015 'one member one vote'

On 10 July 2013, the then Labour Party leader, Ed Miliband, commissioned a review into Labour Party reform led by Lord Collins. The review included examining how the party leader was elected.

The Collins Review, published in February 2014, made recommendations to reform the rules for the election of the Labour Party leader.⁷

Lord Collins recommended the abolition of the electoral college and replacing it with a system of one member one vote with the eligible electorate composed of party members, affiliated supporters and registered supporters.

Affiliated supporters must be members of a trade union or another organisation affiliated to the Labour Party, which pays an affiliation fee to the Labour Party on their behalf. Affiliated supporters must also be on the UK electoral register.

Registered supporters are individuals who are not already party members or members of an affiliated organisation but may take part in leadership elections by registering with the party as a supporter. This will require them to declare their support for Labour values, provide the party with personal contact details, be on the electoral roll and pay the party a fee. They must also be on the electoral register.

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 2014.⁸

⁶ Thomas Quinn, *Electing and Ejecting Party Leaders in Britain*, 2012, p60

⁷ Ray Collins, *The Collins Review into Labour Party Reform: Building a One Nation Labour Party*, February 2014

⁸ *Labour List, Final "Collins Review" document released ahead of Special Conference*, 7 February 2014

The Collins review had recommended that the required number of nominations should be 15% of the PLP. However, the figure included in the 2014 Rule Book was 12.5%.

2.5 2018 changes

Following controversies relating to the 2016 leadership election, particularly relating to the freeze dates for members to be eligible to vote, the Party commissioned a review. The report recommended that a fixed freeze date after the announcement of a leadership election should be explicitly stated in the rules. The review suggested this should be two weeks after the announcement of the timetable and not less than three weeks before the close of the ballot.⁹ This was agreed by the NEC and ratified by the annual conference of 2018.

The rules now state that:

The freeze date for eligibility to vote shall be not less than 2 weeks after the approved timetable is announced and not less than 3 weeks before the deadline for receipt of ballot papers, with no qualifying period of membership prior to the freeze date.¹⁰

The report also recommended that there should be additional nomination options for candidates in a leadership or deputy leadership election. The review recommended that a candidate would qualify for the ballot if they secured either 10% of the combined total number of MPs/MEPs or 5% of the combined total number of MPs/MEPs in conjunction with 10% of CLPs or 10% of affiliated membership from at least three trade unions.¹¹

The model agreed by the NEC and ratified by conference was modified. It retained the 10% threshold for MPs/MEPs in the event of a vacancy, but also now required candidates to then secure nominations from 5% of constituency parties or 5% of members of trade unions or affiliated organisations (the current rules).¹² These new requirements were first used in the 2020 leadership election.

⁹ Labour Party, *Democracy Review*, 2018, p11

¹⁰ Labour Party, *Rule Book 2019*, page 22

¹¹ Ibid

¹² *Guardian*, [Labour agrees MP selection rule changes despite party splits](#), 24 September 2018

3. 2020 Contest

Following Labour's defeat in the December 2019 General Election, Jeremy Corbyn announced that he would set in train a leadership election in 2020, but that he would continue as leader of the Party until the new leader was elected.

Labour's NEC agreed the timetable for the election on 6 January 2020, announcing that a new leader would be announced at a special conference on 4 April.¹³ In March, in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak the Party announced that the special conference would be cancelled and replaced by a smaller event on the same day. The Party also cancelled hustings events.¹⁴

Timetable – 2020		
Monday	06-Jan	NEC Meeting – timetable agreed and published
Tuesday	07-Jan	MP/MEP nominations open and PLP Leader hustings
Wednesday	08-Jan	PLP Deputy Leader husting
Monday	13-Jan	MP/MEP nominations close (2.30pm)
Tuesday	14-Jan	Deadline for validly nominated candidates to consent to nomination (1pm) Registered supporters window opens (5.00pm)
Wednesday	15-Jan	Supporting CLP/affiliate nominations open
Thursday	16-Jan	Registered supporters window closes (5.00pm)
Monday	20-Jan	Freeze date for new members and affiliated supporters (5.00pm)
Monday	03-Feb	Final date for new and updated affiliated supporter lists to be received
Friday	14-Feb	CLP/affiliate nominations close Last day for membership to be in full compliance (including full payment of arrears)
Monday	24-Feb	Ballot opens
Friday	27-Mar	Last date for postal ballot reissues
Monday	30-Mar	Last date for email ballot reissues
Thursday	02-Apr	Ballot closes (12.00pm)
Saturday	04-Apr	Results announced
Source: Labour Party leadership Elections hub accessed 12 February 2020		
Note: Registered supporters had to pay a one-off £25 fee		

¹³ [LabourList](#), *Labour's ruling body sets rules and timings for leadership elections*, 6 January 2020

¹⁴ [LabourList](#), *Labour cancels leadership results conference due to coronavirus*, 12 March 2020

3.1 Eligibility to vote

Full members and affiliated supporters

At its meeting on 6 January, the NEC also agreed the eligibility rules for members to be entitled to vote in the election. The freeze date for new members to join the party and for affiliated supporters, set under the 2018 rule amendments, was 20 January 2020.

Registered supporters

Registered supporters had a 48-hour window to register to be eligible to vote, from 5pm on 14 January to 5pm on 16 January. The fee to register was set at £25. Reportedly, around 14,700 registered for this contest.¹⁵

3.2 Leadership election

Six candidates announced their intention to stand:

- Emily Thornberry 18 December 2019¹⁶
- Clive Lewis 19 December 2019¹⁷
- Jess Phillips 3 January 2020¹⁸
- Lisa Nandy 3 January 2020¹⁹
- Keir Starmer 4 January 2020²⁰
- Rebecca Long-Bailey 6 January 2020²¹

Clive Lewis had five declared nominations of the required 22 when he withdrew from the contest on 13 January. This the day of the deadline for MP/MEP nominations.

The MP/MEP nomination totals were as follows:

- Rebecca Long-Bailey 34
- Lisa Nandy 31
- Jess Phillips 23
- Keir Starmer 88
- Emily Thornberry 23

The contest then went on to the new second stage. In order for candidates to appear on the ballot they needed nominations from either 5% of CLPs or from three affiliates (of which two had to be trade unions) who accounted for 5% of affiliated supporters. The deadline for achieving the threshold was 14 February. There were 32 affiliated unions and organisations at the time of the contest. Not all affiliates were expected to endorse a candidate. The Fabian Society, for example,

¹⁵ *BBC News*, Labour leadership: Members voting in three-way contest, 24 February 2020

¹⁶ *BBC News*, Labour leadership: Emily Thornberry to run for Labour leadership, 18 December 2019

¹⁷ *BBC News*, Clive Lewis joins Labour leadership race, 19 December 2019

¹⁸ *BBC News*, Labour leadership: Jess Phillips joins race to replace Jeremy Corbyn, 3 January 2020

¹⁹ *BBC News*, Labour leadership: Lisa Nandy joins race to replace Jeremy Corbyn, 3 January

²⁰ *BBC News*, Labour leadership: Sir Keir Starmer enters race, 4 January 2020

²¹ *BBC News*, Labour leadership: Rebecca Long Bailey enters race, 6 January 2020

states in its constitution that it will not nominate any candidate at a leadership election.²²

Jess Phillips withdrew from the race on 21 January.²³

By the 14 February deadline three of the four remaining candidates had achieved the required threshold. Emily Thornberry was eliminated as she only received nominations from 31 CLPs and no affiliates had nominated her.

The three candidates that went forward to the membership ballot received the following nominations:²⁴

- Rebecca Long-Bailey 164 CLPs and 7 affiliates
- Lisa Nandy 72 CLPs and 4 affiliates
- Keir Starmer 374 CLPs and 15 affiliates

3.3 Result

Sir Keir Starmer was elected on the first round of voting. He polled more than 50% of the vote in every category of voter. His final total was 56.2%.

Labour leadership election 2020: result

	Members	%	Registered supporters	%	Affiliated supporters	%	Total	%
Keir Starmer	225,135	56.07	10,228	78.64	40,417	53.13	275,780	56.21
Rebecca Long-Bailey	117,598	29.29	650	5.00	16,970	22.31	135,218	27.56
Lisa Nandy	58,788	14.64	2,128	16.36	18,681	24.56	79,597	16.22
Total	401,521		13,006		76,068		490,595	
Eligible electorate	552,835		13,626		217,690		784,151	
Spolit ballots	43		0		93		136	
Turnout (valid votes)	72.63%		95.45%		34.94%		62.56%	

3.4 Deputy leadership election

Tom Watson resigned as deputy leader on 6 November 2019. This was the day Parliament dissolved for the general election and Watson also announced he would not seek re-election as an MP.

Six candidates announced their intention to stand in the subsequent election:

- Dawn Butler 7 November 2019²⁵
- Khalid Mahmood 17 December 2019²⁶
- Richard Burgon 31 December 2019²⁷
- Angela Rayner 6 January 2020²⁸

²² Fabian Society, [The Labour leadership election and the Fabians](#), 15 January 2020

²³ [BBC News](#), Labour leadership: Jess Phillips quits race to succeed Jeremy Corbyn, 21 January 2020

²⁴ [LabourList](#), Rolling list: CLP nominations in Labour's 2020 leadership race, accessed 28 February 2020

²⁵ [PoliticsHome](#), Dawn Butler becomes first candidate to enter Labour deputy leadership race, 7 November 2019

²⁶ [Birmingham Live](#), Birmingham MP Khalid Mahmood to stand for Labour Deputy Leader, 17 December 2019

²⁷ [LabourList](#), Richard Burgon announces deputy leadership bid, 31 December 2019

²⁸ [BBC News](#), Angela Rayner to stand in Labour deputy leadership race, 6 January 2020

13 Leadership Elections: Labour Party

- Ian Murray 7 January 2020²⁹
- Rosena Allin-Khan 7 January 2020³⁰

Khalid Mahmood withdrew from the race on 9 January 2020, saying he was unlikely to win enough support from Labour MPs to make it through to the next stage.³¹

The five remaining candidates all secured enough nominations from MPs/MEPs to make it through to the second stage. The number of nominations received was as follows:³²

- Rosena Allin-Khan 23
- Richard Burgon 22
- Dawn Butler 29
- Ian Murray 34
- Angela Rayner 88

By the end of the nomination period for CLP and affiliate nominations all five candidates had reached the threshold to be included in the ballot.³³

- Rosena Allin-Khan 56 CLPs and 2 affiliates
- Richard Burgon 77 CLPs and 4 affiliates
- Dawn Butler 82 CLPs and 3 affiliates
- Ian Murray 60 CLPs and 3 affiliates
- Angela Rayner 365 CLPs and 12 affiliates

3.5 Result

Angela Rayner was elected the Deputy Leader. It took three rounds of voting for the winning candidate to reach the required threshold of over 50% of valid votes.

The Party only released the total figures for each round and not the breakdown by section. They are shown below. Some voters may not have given preferences to all candidates, which will lead to some votes not being transferred to the second and third round.

²⁹ [BBC News](#), Labour deputy leader: Scottish MP Ian Murray to stand, 7 January 2020

³⁰ [Guardian](#), Labour must ditch 'ideological purity', says Rosena Allin-Khan, 7 January 2020

³¹ [Birmingham Live](#), Birmingham MP Khalid Mahmood pulls out of contest to be Labour's Deputy Leader, 9 January 2020

³² [LabourList](#), Rolling list: MP/MEP nominations for Labour deputy leadership candidates, accessed 28 February 2020

³³ [LabourList](#), Rolling list: CLP nominations in Labour's 2020 deputy leader race, accessed 2 March 2020

Labour deputy leadership election 2020: result

First round	Total	%	Second round	Total	%	Third round	Total	%
Angela Rayner	192,168	41.64	Angela Rayner	209,698	46.50	Angela Rayner	228,944	52.58
Richard Burgon	80,053	17.35	Richard Burgon	88,664	19.66	Rosena Allin-Khan	113,858	26.15
Rosena Allin-Khan	77,351	16.76	Rosena Allin-Khan	88,049	19.52	Richard Burgon	92,643	21.28
Ian Murray	61,179	13.26	Ian Murray	64,560	14.32			
Dawn Butler	50,255	10.89						
Total valid votes	461,457			450,971			435,445	
	Eligible voters		Valid votes (First round)		Turnout %			
Members	552,835		380,076		68.75			
Registered supporters	13,626		12,065		88.54			
Affiliated supporters	217,690		69,316		31.84			
Total	784,151		461,457		58.85			

4. 2016 Contest

4.1 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.³⁴

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).

4.2 Leadership challenge July 2016

Angela Eagle formally announced her intention to challenge Jeremy Corbyn for the leadership on Monday 11 July.³⁵

On Tuesday 12 July Labour's NEC met to agree the timetable. The meeting also decided 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, the incumbent leader would also be required to secure the required number of nominations, nominations 20% of the combined Commons members of the PLP and the EPLP.³⁶

NEC members held a secret ballot on the issue and ruled 18-14 that Corbyn, as an incumbent, did not need 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.

³⁴ *Guardian*, Labour MPs prepare for leadership contest after Corbyn loses confidence vote, 28 June 2016

³⁵ *BBC News*, Labour leadership: Angela Eagle says she can unite the party, 11 July 2016

³⁶ *BBC News*, Labour's NEC to decide on Jeremy Corbyn ballot rules, 12 July 2016

Timetable – 2016

Tuesday	12-Jan	Join the Labour Party on or before this date to vote in the leadership election.
Tuesday	12-Jul	Timetable agreed. Freeze date for membership eligibility
Thursday	14-Jul	Timetable published
Monday	18-Jul	EPLP and PLP briefing, followed by EPLP and PLP hustings Registered supporters applications open EPLP and PLP nominations open (7pm)
Wednesday	20-Jul	EPLP and PLP Nominations close and CLP/affiliate supporting nominations open (5pm) Last date to join as registered supporter (5pm)
Thursday	21-Jul	Deadline for validly nominated candidates to consent to nomination (Noon)
Friday	22-Jul	Hustings period opens
Monday	08-Aug	Final date for membership arrears to be paid in full (Noon) Final date for new and updated affiliated supporter lists to be received (Noon)
Monday	15-Aug	Supporting CLP/affiliate nominations close (Noon)
Monday	22-Aug	Ballot mailing despatched
Wednesday	14-Sep	Last date for electronic ballot reissues (Noon)
Friday	16-Sep	Hustings period closes
Wednesday	21-Sep	Ballot closes (Noon)
Saturday	24-Sep	Results announced at special conference

Source: [Leadership Election 2016 – Procedural Guidelines and Timetable](#)

Note: Registered supporters had to pay a one off £25 fee.

The court ruled that the phrase in the rule book, “Where there is no vacancy, nominations may be sought by potential challengers each year prior to the annual session of Party conference” was clear. The judge concluded:

...the Leader would not in that situation (where there is no vacancy) be someone who was a “challenger” for the leadership and, accordingly, would require no nominations in order to compete in the ballot to retain his/her position as Leader.³⁷

On Wednesday 13 July, Owen Smith announced he was also intending to seek nominations to take part in the election.³⁸

³⁷ [Foster v McNicol \[2016\] EWHC 1966 \(QB\)](#)

³⁸ [BBC News](#), Labour leadership: Owen Smith to enter contest, 13 July 2016

Following the PLP and ELP hustings held on Monday 18 July 2016 nominations opened.³⁹ The following day Angela Eagle announced she was withdrawing from the contest, leaving Owen Smith as the only challenger to Jeremy Corbyn.⁴⁰

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 of the 20 Party's MEPs.⁴¹

4.3 Eligibility to vote

Full members

At the same NEC meeting that ruled Corbyn did not need nominations, it was reported that the NEC also decided that only those who had been members for more than six months would be allowed to vote. New supporters would be given two days to sign up as registered supporters to vote in the race, but only if they were willing to pay a £25 fee.⁴²

Labour Party members on the national membership system who had not lapsed from membership at the date set on the timetable, were eligible to vote. 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.

Affiliated supporters and Registered Supporters, as defined by the NEC, who had 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 390,000.⁴³

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 Court ruled 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.⁴⁴ 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:

³⁹ Labour Party, Leadership Election 2016 – *Procedural Guidelines and Timetable*

⁴⁰ *BBC News*, Eagle drops out of Labour leader race, 19 July 2016

⁴¹ *LabourList*, Owen Smith nominations, accessed 12 February 2020. 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 Jo Cox MP.

⁴² *Guardian*, Labour executive rules Jeremy Corbyn must be on leadership ballot, 13 July 2016

⁴³ *Independent*, Labour membership figures show fewer than 14,000 have quit the party since election, 14 January 2016

⁴⁴ 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, *Evangalou v McNicol [2016] EWHC 2058 (QB)*

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.⁴⁵

It meant 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 supporters

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.⁴⁶ 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.

4.4 Result

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%).⁴⁷

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.

The BBC reported that turnout was higher than in 2015 and gave the breakdown of the votes as follows:

...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)

⁴⁵ [Evangelou v McNicol \[2016\] EWCA Civ 817](#)

⁴⁶ *Independent*, Labour Party receives more than 183,000 membership applications in 48 hours

⁴⁷ *BBC News*, Labour leadership: Corbyn appeals for unity after re-election, 24 September 2016

19 Leadership Elections: Labour Party

- Registered supporters - Corbyn (84,918); Smith (36,599)
- Affiliated supporters - Corbyn (60,075); Smith (39,670)⁴⁸

5. 2015 Contest

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.⁴⁹

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.⁵⁰

This was the first leadership and deputy leadership contests under the new 'one member one vote' rules approved in 2014. The National Executive Committee met on 13 May 2015 and determined the timetable for the leadership and deputy leadership elections.

5.1 Leadership election

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

- Liz Kendall 10 May 2015⁵¹
- Chuka Umunna 12 May 2015⁵²
- Andy Burnham 13 May 2015⁵³
- Yvette Cooper 13 May 2015⁵⁴
- Mary Creagh 14 May 2015⁵⁵
- Jeremy Corbyn 3 June 2015⁵⁶

⁴⁹ *Labour Party Website*, [This is not the speech I wanted to give](#), 8 May 2015

⁵⁰ *Labour Party Website*, [Paying tribute](#), 8 May 2015

⁵¹ *BBC News*, [Liz Kendall confirms Labour leadership bid](#), 10 May 2015

⁵² *Labour List*, [Chuka Umunna confirms he will run in Labour leadership race](#), 12 May 2015

⁵³ *Huffington Post*, [Andy Burnham and Yvette Cooper announce Labour leadership bids](#), 13 May 2015

⁵⁴ *Ibid*

⁵⁵ *BBC News*, [Labour leadership: Mary Creagh enters race](#), 14 May 2015

⁵⁶ *BBC News*, [Labour leadership: Jeremy Corbyn enters race](#), 3 June 2015

Timetable - 2015

Wednesday	13-May	Timetable agreed
Friday	15-May	Election period formally opens
Monday	08-Jun	PLP nomination hustings for Leader
Tues	09-Jun	PLP nomination ustings for Deputy Leader PLP nominations opens
Monday	15-Jun	PLP nominations (Leader) close (Noon)
Wednesday	17-Jun	PLP nominations (Deputy Leader) close (Noon) Hustings period opens
Friday	31-Jul	Supporting CLP/TUs nominations close (Noon)
Wednesday	12-Aug	Deadline to join as member, affiliated supporter, or registered supporter (Noon)
Friday	14-Aug	Ballot mailing despatched
Thursday	10-Sep	Ballot closes (Noon)
Saturday	12-Sep	Results announced at special conference

Source: LabourList⁵⁷

Note: Registered supporters had to pay a one-off £3 fee

Candidates needed 35 nominations to qualify.

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 by 15 June, the day nominations closed.

The number of nominations received was as follows:⁵⁸

- Andy Burnham 68
- Yvette Cooper 59
- Jeremy Corbyn 36
- Liz Kendall 41

It was reported that Jeremy Corbyn reached the nominations threshold just two minutes before the deadline.⁵⁹ 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.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ 'Timetable announced for Labour Leader and Deputy Leader elections', *Labour Party Website*, 13 May 2015, accessed 14 May 2015 (No longer available). Also available on LabourList website: [Timetable for Labour leadership contest confirmed](#)

⁵⁸ *New Statesman*, [Who nominated who for the 2015 Labour leadership election?](#), 15 June 2015

⁵⁹ Labour leadership: Jeremy Corbyn completes the line-up, *BBC News*, 15 June 2015

⁶⁰ See for example, *BBC News*, 22 July 2015, and *BBC News* 15 June 2015

5.2 Result

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: result

	Members	%	Registered supporters	%	Affiliated supporters	%	Total	%
Jeremy Corbyn	121,751	49.59	88,449	83.76	41,217	57.61	251,417	59.48
Andy Burnham	55,698	22.69	6,160	5.83	18,604	26.00	80,462	19.04
Yvette Cooper	54,470	22.19	8,415	7.97	9,043	12.64	71,928	17.02
Liz Kendall	13,601	5.54	2,574	2.44	2,682	3.75	18,857	4.46
Total	245,520		105,598		71,564		422,664	
Eligible electorate	554,272							
Turnout	76.26%							
Spolit ballots	207							

Source: [BBC News](#)

5.3 Deputy leadership election

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

- Tom Watson 10 May 2015⁶¹
- Ben Bradshaw 15 May 2015⁶²
- Stella Creasy 16 May 2015⁶³
- Caroline Flint 16 May 2015⁶⁴
- Angela Eagle 18 May 2015⁶⁵
- John Healey 25 May 2015⁶⁶
- Rushanara Ali 24 May 2015⁶⁷

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 also declared on 12 September. Tom Watson was elected deputy leader of the Labour Party after three rounds of voting. In the first round he had 39% of first preference votes.

⁶¹ [Channel 4 News](#), 'Tom Watson reveals deputy leadership bid for Labour', 10 May 2015

⁶² [Ben Bradshaw website](#), 'Deputy leadership', 15 May 2015

⁶³ [Mirror](#), 'Stella Creasy confirms she's running for Labour deputy leader: "Party must return to fighting poverty, inequality and injustice"', 16 May 2015

⁶⁴ [New Statesman](#), 'Caroline Flint launches bid for Labour's deputy leadership', 16 May 2015

⁶⁵ [Labour List](#), 'Angela Eagle launches deputy leadership campaign', 18 May 2015

⁶⁶ [Huffington Post](#), 'John Healey announces deputy Labour leadership bid', 25 May 2015

⁶⁷ [Labour List](#), 'Another new name enters deputy leadership race – Rushanara Ali announces she will run', 24 May 2015

5.4 Result

Labour deputy leadership election 2015: result

First round	Members		Registered supporters		Affiliated supporters		Total	%
	Members	%	supportes	%	supporters	%		
Tom Watson	90,018	37.51	43,729	43.73	27,105	39.55	160,852	39.38
Stella Creasy	47,372	19.74	22,465	22.47	8,263	12.06	78,100	19.12
Caroline Flint	36,321	15.14	15,676	15.68	14,016	20.45	66,013	16.16
Angela Eagle	41,504	17.30	11,282	11.28	11,639	16.98	64,425	15.77
Ben Bradshaw	24,738	10.31	6,839	6.84	7,503	10.95	39,080	9.57
Total	239,953		99,991		68,526		408,470	

Eligible electorate 408,470
Turnout 73.69%

Second round	Members		Registered supporters		Affiliated supporters		Total	%
	Members	%	supportes	%	supporters	%		
Tom Watson	96,008	40.40	45,329	45.87	29,252	43.16	170,589	42.20
Stella Creasy	52,866	22.25	23,959	24.25	9,730	14.35	86,555	21.41
Caroline Flint	48,208	20.29	12,948	13.10	13,425	19.81	74,581	18.45
Angela Eagle	40,559	17.07	16,583	16.78	15,375	22.68	72,517	17.94
Total	237,641		98,819		67,782		404,242	

Third round	Members		Registered supporters		Affiliated supporters		Total	%
	Members	%	supportes	%	supporters	%		
Tom Watson	111,465	48.12	51,815	54.47	35,682	54.49	198,962	50.72
Stella Creasy	62,875	27.14	27,874	29.30	12,997	19.85	103,746	26.45
Caroline Flint	57,305	24.74	15,434	16.23	16,799	25.66	89,538	22.83
Total	231,645		95,123		65,478		392,246	

[Source: BBC News](#)

Note: Some voters may not have given preferences to all candidates, which will lead to some votes not being transferred in the second and third round.

6. Leadership contests 1994-2010

6.1 2010 Contest

The Labour leadership election process was put in train on 10 May 2010. Following the 2010 General Election, when no party gained a majority of the seats in the House of Commons, 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.⁶⁸

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.⁶⁹

Under the Labour Party's rules, its deputy leader, Harriet Harman, became acting Leader. She held office until a new leader was elected.⁷⁰

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.

⁶⁸ Andy McSmith, "A day that began with Cameron in charge and ended with him in shock", *Independent*, 11 May 2010

⁶⁹ James Kirkup, "Brown says farewell to his 'second most important job'", *Daily Telegraph*, 12 May 2010

⁷⁰ 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]

Timetable - 2010

Wednesday	19-May	Timetable agreed
Monday	24-May	PLP nominations opens
Wednesday	09-Jun	PLP nomination close
Thursday	10-Jun	Deadline for candidates to accept nomination
Monday	26-Jul	Close of supporting nominations
June-July		Hustings period
Wednesday	01-Sep	Ballots begin to go out
Wednesday	08-Sep	Deadline to join the party and be able to vote in the election
Saturday	25-Sep	Results announced at annual conference

Source: Labour Party, NEC agrees timetable for election of new Leader, 19 May 2010 [revised on 20 May], posted on Labour Matters. Labour Party website archived version [available online](#).

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

- David Miliband 12 May 2010⁷¹
- Ed Miliband 14 May 2010⁷²
- Ed Balls 19 May 2010⁷³
- John McDonnell 18 May 2010⁷⁴
- Andy Burnham 20 May 2010⁷⁵
- Diane Abbott 20 May 2010⁷⁶

The final number of MP/MEP nominations received by each candidate were as follows:

- Diane Abbott 33
- Ed Balls 33
- Andy Burnham 33
- David Miliband 81
- Ed Miliband 63

John McDonnell withdrew his candidacy on 9 June, the day nominations closed. The day before McDonnell had 16 nominations and Abbot had

⁷¹ 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

⁷² 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

⁷³ Michael Savage, "' Sons of Blair' do battle with 'Sons of Brown' for labour leadership", *Independent*, 20 May 2010

⁷⁴ 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

⁷⁵ Andy Burnham, "Why I am the man to rebuild Labour", *Mirror*, 20 May 2010

⁷⁶ [Diane Abbott enters Labour leadership contest](#), *BBC News*, 20 May 2010

11. In the face of criticism that there was a lack of diversity in the candidates Abbott received a final day surge of nominations, including from David Miliband.⁷⁷

Result

Labour leadership election 2010: result

First round	MPs/MEPs	%	Electoral college share	Party Members	%	Electoral college share	Affiliates	%	Electoral college share	Electoral college total
Ed Miliband	84	31.58	10.53	37,980	29.94	9.98	87,585	41.46	13.82	34.33%
David Miliband	111	41.73	13.91	55,905	44.06	14.69	58,189	27.55	9.18	37.78%
Ed Balls	40	15.04	5.01	12,831	10.11	3.37	21,618	10.23	3.41	11.79%
Andy Burnham	24	9.02	3.01	10,844	8.55	2.85	17,904	8.48	2.83	8.68%
Diane Abbott	7	2.63	0.88	9,314	7.34	2.45	25,938	12.28	4.09	7.42%
Total	266			126,874			211,234			100%

Second round	MPs/MEPs	%	Electoral college share	Party Members	%	Electoral college share	Affiliates	%	Electoral college share	Electoral college total
Ed Miliband	88	33.33	11.11	42,176	33.39	11.13	95,335	45.69	15.23	37.47%
David Miliband	111	42.05	14.02	57,128	45.23	15.08	61,336	29.40	9.80	38.89%
Ed Balls	41	15.53	5.18	14,510	11.49	3.83	26,441	12.67	4.22	13.23%
Andy Burnham	24	9.09	3.03	12,498	9.89	3.30	25,528	12.24	4.08	10.41%
Total	264			126,312			208,640			100%

Third round	MPs/MEPs	%	Electoral college share	Party Members	%	Electoral college share	Affiliates	%	Electoral college share	Electoral college total
Ed Miliband	96	36.36	12.12	46,697	37.30	12.43	102,882	50.12	16.71	41.26%
David Miliband	125	47.35	15.78	60,375	48.23	16.08	66,889	32.58	10.86	42.72%
Ed Balls	43	16.29	5.43	18,114	14.47	4.82	35,512	17.30	5.77	16.02%
Total	264			125,186			205,283			100%

Third round	MPs/MEPs	%	Electoral college share	Party Members	%	Electoral college share	Affiliates	%	Electoral college share	Electoral college total
Ed Miliband	122	46.56	15.52	55,992	45.59	15.20	119,405	59.80	19.93	50.65%
David Miliband	140	53.44	17.81	66,814	54.41	18.14	80,266	40.20	13.40	49.35%
Total	262			122,806			199,671			100%

Source: Hugh Pemberton and Mark Wickham-Jones, Brothers all? The Operation of the Electoral College in the 2010 Labour Leadership Contest, *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 66, Issue 4, October 2013, Pages 708–731.

The results of the leadership contest were declared at the start of the Party's Annual Conference in Manchester, on Saturday 25 September

⁷⁷ Hugh Pemberton and Mark Wickham-Jones, Brothers all? The Operation of the Electoral College in the 2010 Labour Leadership Contest, *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 66, Issue 4, October 2013, Pages 708–731

2010. Ed Miliband was elected leader by the Party's electoral college⁷⁸ under the alternative vote system.

Four rounds of voting were required to determine the winner. Ed Miliband beat his brother David in the last round of voting by 50.65% to 49.35%.

6.2 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 2007.⁷⁹

On the same day, John Prescott also formally announced his decision to step down as deputy leader of the Labour Party.⁸⁰

The National Executive Committee of the Labour Party met on 13 May 2007 and agreed the detailed rules of the contest for both leadership and deputy leadership roles and the timetable, which were outlined by *Guardian Unlimited*.

Timetable – 2007		
Sunday	13-May	Timetable agreed
Monday	14-May	PLP nominations opens (2.30pm)
Thursday	17-May	PLP nomination close (12.30pm)
Friday	18-May	Deadline for candidates to accept nomination
20 May - 16 June		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.
Friday	01-Jun	Close of supporting nominations Deadline for withdrawal of nomination by declared candidates.
Thursday	21-Jun	Close of affiliate ballot
Friday	22-Jun	Close of Labour members and MPs' and MEPs' ballots
Sunday	24-Jun	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

Source:
Hélène Mulholland and Lewis Williamson, "[Labour leadership: what happens next](#)", *Guardian Unlimited*, 14 May 2007

⁷⁸ 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

⁷⁹ Matthew Tempest, "Blair to stand down on June 27", *Guardian Unlimited*, 10 May 2007

⁸⁰ 'Prescott quits as deputy leader', *BBC NEWS*, 10 May 2007

In order to go forward to the ballot, candidates for leadership had to receive nominations from 12.5% of the combined total of Labour MPs and MEPs, which was 45 members.⁸¹

Leadership contest

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.⁸² Two other members of the PLP had already declared their intention to stand for the leadership when Blair eventually stood down: John McDonnell, in July 2006;⁸³ and Michael Meacher, in February 2007.⁸⁴

After conceding that John McDonnell had secured more nominations than him, Mr Meacher withdrew his candidacy on 14 May 2007.⁸⁵ 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.⁸⁶

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

MPs	MEPs	CLPs	Affiliates
313	19	407	17

Source: Labour Party website, *Labour Party overwhelmingly unites behind Gordon Brown* (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 2007.⁸⁷ However, his formal appointment as Leader of the Labour Party was not made until the Special Conference on 24 June 2007.

Deputy Leadership contest

On 10 May 2007, John Prescott also formally announced his decision to step down as deputy leader of the Labour Party.⁸⁸

At the Labour Party Conference in September 2006, Prescott said that he would stand down as deputy leader of the Labour Party and Deputy Prime Minister when Tony Blair stood down.⁸⁹ By the time of his formal

⁸¹ *Labour Party Rule Book 2004* Rule 4B.2b Nomination

⁸² Deborah Summers and Hugh Muir, "Brown lays out leadership credentials", *Guardian Unlimited*, 11 May 2007

⁸³ Nick Assinder, "Labour MP launches leadership bid", *BBC News*, 14 July 2006

⁸⁴ Matthew Tempest and Tom Happold, "Meacher enters leadership race", *Guardian Unlimited*, 22 February 2007

⁸⁵ Patrick Wintour and Will Woodward, "Key backing for Johnson in Labour deputy fight", *Guardian*, 15 May 2007

⁸⁶ Patrick Wintour, "Brown secures Labour leadership unopposed", *Guardian*, 17 May 2007

⁸⁷ Patrick Wintour, "Brown: Britain's two prime ministers", *Guardian*, 18 May 2007

⁸⁸ 'Prescott quits as deputy leader', *BBC News*, 10 May 2007

⁸⁹ Colin Brown, "Tears and cheers as Prescott says he will bow out with Blair", *Independent*, 29 September 2006

announcement, six MPs had already announced their intention to contest the Party's deputy leadership:

- Peter Hain 12 September 2006⁹⁰
- Harriet Harman 15 September 2006⁹¹
- John Cruddas 27 September 2006⁹²
- Hilary Benn 27 October 2006⁹³
- Alan Johnson 10 November 2006⁹⁴
- Hazel Blears 24 February 2007⁹⁵

All six candidates received sufficient nominations (45) from the Commons members of the PLP to progress to the nationwide ballot which closed on 22 June.

- Hilary Benn 47
- Hazel Blears 49
- Jon Cruddas 49
- Peter Hain 51
- Harriet Harman 65
- Alan Johnson 73

Source: [Archived version](#) of Labour Party website 17 May 2007

Result

The results of the contest were announced at the Labour Party's Special Conference on 24 June 2007, in Manchester. The table below gives the detailed results of the electoral college vote shares for each round.

⁹⁰ 'Hain runs as deputy leader', *BBC News*, 12 September 2006

⁹¹ 'Harman intends Labour deputy bid', *BBC News*, 15 September 2006

⁹² "Cruddas goes for Prezza job", *Birmingham Party*, 28 September 2006

⁹³ 'Benn to run for deputy position', *BBC News*, 27 October 2006

⁹⁴ 'Johnson starts deputy leader bid', *BBC News*, 10 November 2006

⁹⁵ 'Blears launches deputy leader bid', *BBC News*, 24 February 2007

Labour deputy leadership election 2007: result

First Round	Electoral college totals (%)			Total
	MPs/MEP	Members	Affiliates	
Jon Cruddas	4.63	5.67	9.09	19.39
Harriet Harman	6.54	8.04	4.35	18.93
Alan Johnson	8.08	5.53	4.55	18.16
Hilary Benn	4.27	7.21	4.94	16.41
Peter Hain	4.81	3.87	6.64	15.32
Hazel Blears	4.99	3.01	3.77	11.77

Second Round	Electoral college totals (%)			Total
	MPs/MEP	Members	Affiliates	
Alan Johnson	11.47	6.35	5.91	23.73
Harriet Harman	7.29	8.80	5.15	21.24
Jon Cruddas	4.74	6.01	9.64	20.39
Hilary Benn	4.74	7.93	5.56	18.23
Peter Hain	5.10	4.24	7.08	16.42

Third	Electoral college totals (%)			Total
	MPs/MEP	Members	Affiliates	
Alan Johnson	12.78	7.31	7.81	27.90
Harriet Harman	8.61	10.15	7.12	25.88
Jon Cruddas	6.30	6.58	11.01	23.89
Hilary Benn	5.65	9.29	7.39	22.33

Fourth	Electoral college totals (%)			Total
	MPs/MEP	Members	Affiliates	
Alan Johnson	15.39	10.71	10.25	36.35
Harriet Harman	10.29	13.82	9.46	33.57
Jon Cruddas	7.65	8.81	13.61	30.07

Fifth	Electoral college totals (%)			Total
	MPs/MEP	Members	Affiliates	
Harriet Harman	15.42	18.83	16.18	50.43
Alan Johnson	17.91	14.50	17.15	49.56

6.3 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 unions/affiliate organisations) a third of the share of votes.

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

Result

Labour leadership election result:1994

	MPs/MEP	Electoral college totals (%)		Total
		Members	Affiliates	
Tony Blair	20.16	17.43	19.40	56.99
John Prescott	6.53	9.47	8.13	24.13
Margaret Beckett	6.63	6.43	5.80	18.86

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

Appendix 1 - Leadership election results 1922-1992

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

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	157		
Aneurin Bevan	70		
Herbert Morrison	40		
03 November 1960	1st Ballot		
Hugh Gaitskell	166		
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	-	

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

33 Leadership Elections: Labour Party

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, 1983-92, % 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: Harry Harmer, *The Longman Companion to: The Labour party 1900-1998*

Appendix 2 - Party leaders and deputy leaders 1906-present

Party leader

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 Gaitskell
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
2015-20	Jeremy Corbyn

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

Deputy leader

1906-08	David Shackleton
1908-10	George Barnes
1910-11	Joseph Clynes
1911-12	William Brace
1912-14	James Parker
1914-15	Arthur Gill
1915-18	John Hodge and George Wardle (joint)
1918-21	Joseph Clynes
1921-22	James Thomas and Stephen Walsh (joint)
1922-23	Stephen Wals and Josiah Wedgwood (joint)
1923-31	Joseph Clynes
1931-35	Clement Attlee
1935-45	Arthur Greenwood
1945-56	Herbert Morrison
1956-59	James Griffiths
1959-60	Aneurin Bevan
1960-70	George Brown
1970-72	Roy Jenkins
1972-76	Edward Short
1976-80	Michael Foot
1980-83	Dennis Healey
1983-92	Roy Hattersley
1992-94	Margaret Beckett
1994-2007	John Prescott
2007-15	Harriet Harman
2015-19	Tom Watson

About the Library

The House of Commons Library research service provides MPs and their staff with the impartial briefing and evidence base they need to do their work in scrutinising Government, proposing legislation, and supporting constituents.

As well as providing MPs with a confidential service we publish open briefing papers, which are available on the Parliament website.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publically available research briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email papers@parliament.uk. Authors are available to discuss the content of this briefing only with Members and their staff.

If you have any general questions about the work of the House of Commons you can email hcinfo@parliament.uk.

Disclaimer

This information is provided to Members of Parliament in support of their parliamentary duties. It is a general briefing only and should not be relied on as a substitute for specific advice. The House of Commons or the author(s) shall not be liable for any errors or omissions, or for any loss or damage of any kind arising from its use, and may remove, vary or amend any information at any time without prior notice.

The House of Commons accepts no responsibility for any references or links to, or the content of, information maintained by third parties. This information is provided subject to the [conditions of the Open Parliament Licence](#).