

## **Suggested Changes to the Labour Party Rule Book**

This document contains the rule changes that the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD) is circulating for 2021.

CLPs are asked to consider submitting a rule change to this year's Annual Labour Conference. Each CLP can submit a rule change (deadline for submission 12 noon Friday 11 June). Given the tight deadline for submitting rule changes to this year's Annual Conference (11 June), CLP officers may need to arrange different meeting dates than usual to ensure the appropriate CLP meetings can consider the proposed rule change.

**CLPD's priority rule change proposal is the first one in this document - the urgently needed introduction of Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) accountability.**

There is currently a gaping hole in the Labour Party rule book. The PLP is not accountable to Annual Conference. The work carried out by the PLP to advance or implement Party policy and disciplinary decisions made by the Chief Whip are not reported to the conference. The NEC and NPF have to account to the Party's sovereign body, but not the PLP. This needs to be rectified at this year's Conference.

This first rule change in this document would require the PLP and Chief Whip to report directly to the conference, including on MPs' discipline, with the conference able to confirm or reject disciplinary decisions that are of concern to delegates.

## **Priority Urgent Rule Change for 2021**

### **The PLP should be fully accountable to Labour Party Conference**

#### **Amendment**

At Labour Party Rule Book 2020 Chapter 3 Party Conference, Clause III. Procedural rules for Party Conference, 2. Conference rule 2 – Agenda:

Insert at 3.III.2.2 new sub-clause B as follows and reorder subsequent sub clauses:

(i) The NEC shall present to conference the report of the PLP, which shall include: a summary of its activity during the previous year, including its work to advance or implement the Labour Party's policy or programme and an addendum by the Chief Whip detailing any, or all, disciplinary action taken, or ongoing, in relation to any MPs who were elected to Parliament as Labour MPs. This report shall be circulated to all affiliated organisations and CLPs by a date to be determined by the NEC, and not later than 14 days prior to Party conference opening day. Any proposal to review any disciplinary action regarding an MP, supported by not fewer than 30 delegates, and put to conference in advance, or from the floor, shall receive priority consideration and shall be determined by a card vote. Conference shall confirm, or shall void, any decision taken to suspend, or expel, from the PLP, any MP elected to Parliament as a Labour MP. The decision of conference in determining these matters, as it sees fit, shall be final.

(ii) This sub-clause 3.III.2.2 B (ii), conferring on Conference powers set out in sub-clause 3.III.2.2 B (i) above, shall automatically expire at the close of Annual Conference 2021. At the 2021 Annual Conference an item shall be added to the agenda under which the PLP will report to the conference, its activity during the previous year, including an addendum by the Chief Whip detailing any, or all, disciplinary action taken, or ongoing, in relation to any MPs who were elected to Parliament as Labour MPs. Any proposal to review any disciplinary action regarding an MP, supported by not fewer than 30 delegates, and put to conference in advance, or from the floor, shall receive priority consideration and shall be determined by a card vote. Conference shall confirm, or shall void, any decision taken to suspend, or expel, from the PLP, any MP elected to Parliament as a Labour MP. The decision of conference in determining these matters, as it sees fit, shall be final.

#### **Supporting argument**

*Currently there is no requirement (in Labour's rule book) that the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) be accountable to Annual Conference. Both the NEC and the NPF are accountable through their report to Conference, as required by the rule book.*

*However, the PLP is not accountable to Conference and currently the rule book does not require it to be. Conference receives no written report detailing the work that the PLP has been carrying out. There is no account made to Conference, for it to consider, setting out any PLP disciplinary action taken against Labour MPs. Neither the NEC Report nor Leader's Speech detail such matters, nor provide an opportunity for Conference to make its view clear on matters it may wish to make a decision on.*

*This absence of PLP accountability is a very large flaw in the Party's internal democracy, that needs to be urgently corrected, preferably this year (2021).*

*If this rule change is agreed, in future years Conference delegates will receive a written PLP report and will be able to discuss it. The report will include a Chief Whip's report detailing any disciplinary decisions that have been taken and Conference will be able to confirm or reject any such decisions if it wishes to.*

*As this change to the rules is long overdue the new rule, if agreed, will start to be implemented from this year. 2021 Annual Conference will receive a verbal report and it will be able to take decisions on the Chief Whip's report.*

**Closing date for Constitutional Amendments: 12 noon, Friday 11 June 2021**

## *Suggested Rule Change*

### **Calls for card votes from Annual Conference delegates should not ignored**

The Labour Party Rule Book 2020 Chapter 3 Party Conference, Clause III. Procedural rules for Party Conference, 3. Conference Rule 3 – Voting, A. reads as follows:

‘Voting at Party conference on resolutions, reports, amendments, proposals and references back shall be by show of hands or, when the conditions laid down by the CAC require it, by card. When a card vote is called, voting shall be in two sections as follows:’

#### **Amendment**

After ‘laid down by the CAC require it’, insert, “or where 30 delegates request it”, after “by card.”  
Insert, “The Chair of Conference will call a card vote where it is unclear if a policy motion has achieved the necessary majority required by the rule set out in Chapter 1 Constitutional rules, Clause V. Party programme, sub-section 2.”

#### **Supporting argument**

*At the moment, votes on policy motions may not be clear as to whether they have achieved the 2/3rds majority to become part of the Programme and thus eligible for inclusion in the manifesto.*

*Allowing a qualifying quota of delegates to invoke a card vote will ensure that all members of the Party can be clear that agreed policy represents the will of Conference. At the moment this is not the case as the decision is in the hands of the CAC or the Conference Chair. This is important as if significant numbers believe that the policy position is illegitimate this damages unity and inhibits our campaigning ability.*

**Closing date for Constitutional Amendments: 12 noon, Friday 11 June 2021**

## *Suggested Rule Change*

### **CLPs and affiliates should be allowed to submit a motion and a constitutional amendment to Party Conference**

The Labour Party Rule Book 2020 Chapter 3 Party Conference; Clause III. Procedural rules for Party Conference; 2. Conference Rule 2 – agenda; Part C (Page 19) reads as follows:

‘All affiliated organisations, the ALC, Young Labour and CLPs may submit one motion to Conference. In addition, affiliates with more than 100,000 affiliated members may submit one further motion. The CAC shall submit all motions received to a priorities ballot at the start of conference. The ballot will be divided into two sections. One section for CLPs, and one section for trade unions and other affiliated organisations. At least the ten priorities selected by CLPs will be time-tabled for debate, as will at least the first ten priorities selected by Trade Unions and other affiliated organisations. Motions must be in writing, on one subject only and in 250 words or less. Alternatively, a constitutional amendment on one subject only may be submitted in writing. Motions and constitutional amendments must be received by the General Secretary at the offices of the Party by the closing date determined by the NEC.’

#### **Amendment**

In the first sentence delete ‘may submit one motion’ and insert: ‘may submit one motion and one constitutional amendment’

In the second to last sentence replace ‘Alternatively, a constitutional amendment’ with ‘Additionally, a constitutional amendment’

#### **Supporting argument**

*Our Party Conference’s decision-making ability can be significantly improved. At the moment it is hampered by several key factors.*

*One of these is that CLPs and affiliates face serious restrictions on their power to shape the agenda which they’d like to discuss. CLPs and affiliates are currently only allowed to submit a single motion **or** a single constitutional amendment.*

*This suggested amendment would enable CLPs and affiliates to submit one of each.*

**Closing date for Constitutional Amendments: 12 noon, Friday 11 June 2021**

## *Suggested Rule Change*

### **CLPs and affiliates should be allowed to submit motions on organisational issues to Party Conference**

The Labour Party Rule Book 2020 Chapter 3 Party Conference; Clause III. Procedural rules for Party Conference; 2. Conference Rule 2 – agenda; Part C (Page 19) reads as follows:

‘All affiliated organisations, the ALC, Young Labour and CLPs may submit one motion to Conference. In addition, affiliates with more than 100,000 affiliated members may submit one further motion. The CAC shall submit all motions received to a priorities ballot at the start of conference. The ballot will be divided into two sections. One section for CLPs, and one section for trade unions and other affiliated organisations. At least the ten priorities selected by CLPs will be time-tabled for debate, as will at least the first ten priorities selected by Trade Unions and other affiliated organisations. Motions must be in writing, on one subject only and in 250 words or less. Alternatively, a constitutional amendment on one subject only may be submitted in writing. Motions and constitutional amendments must be received by the General Secretary at the offices of the Party by the closing date determined by the NEC.’

#### **Amendment**

In the first sentence after ‘may submit one motion’ add: ‘on a matter of either policy, campaigning, party organisation or finance’

#### **Supporting argument**

*Annual Conference is supposed to be the most authoritative body of the Party. As such, in the past Conference discussed and made decisions on both policy and organisational matters. It even overturned decisions made by the NEC to expel members, readmitting them to Party membership. In recent years motions submitted by CLPs or affiliates that are deemed to be on matters of organisation have been not allowed on to the Conference agenda for the Annual Conference to discuss. Instead they have been referred to the NEC. It is undemocratic that the NEC’s decisions on organisational matters can no longer be considered and changed by Conference, should it so desire.*

**Closing date for Constitutional Amendments: 12 noon, Friday 11 June 2021**

## *Suggested Rule Change*

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

The Labour Party Rule Book 2020 Chapter 3 Party Conference; Clause III. Procedural rules for Party Conference; 2. Conference Rule 2 – agenda; Part H (Page 20) reads as follows:

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

#### **Amendment**

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

#### **Supporting argument**

*The ‘three-year rule’ restricts Conference from debating important rule change proposals for the next three Conferences, which in 2021 means this year’s Conference cannot discuss proposals having the same primary purpose as a proposal that was voted on in either 2017, 2018 or 2019 – the past four years. The current rules are repeatedly being used to prevent important rule change debates, and expanding the reach to well beyond what was originally discussed, regardless of how much the changes are desired by the members or affiliates.*

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

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

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

## *Suggested Rule Change*

### **Removing the three frontbench Members of Parliament would make the NEC more democratic**

The Labour Party Rule Book 2020 Chapter 1 Constitutional rules; Clause VIII. The National Executive Committee; Part 1 (Page 5) sets out the composition of the NEC; 1E. reads as follows:

‘three frontbench Members of Parliament, at least one of whom must be a woman, nominated by the Cabinet (or Shadow Cabinet in opposition)’

#### **Amendment**

Delete the entire sub-section E.

And change subsequent lettering accordingly.

#### **Supporting argument**

*The Labour Party is primarily comprised of trade unions and individual members, and its governing body must reflect this by having a composition that allows both of these sections to have a decisive say in the Party. There are currently eight members of the NEC who are MPs, which represents an over-representation of this sector in comparison to the under-representation of party members, who only have nine CLP reps. The unions only have 13 representatives. This rule change would increase the relative importance of CLP and trade union NEC members.*

*The three front bench NEC members are the most undemocratic section of the NEC. They are essentially appointed by one person, while other members of the NEC have to face election and, therefore, accountability.*

## *Suggested Rule Change*

### **The parliamentary by-election selection process should involve CLPs**

2020 Labour Party Rulebook. Chapter 5 (Selections, rights and responsibilities of candidates for elected public office). Clause IV

#### **Amendment**

Insert new point 12 on page 32.

In the event of a by-election, snap election or any other Parliamentary selection where there is insufficient time for a normal selection process, a seven person panel shall be formed to undertake the shortlisting, comprised of: the Chair and Secretary of the CLP, two representatives of the REC to be appointed by the Chair and Vice-Chair of that REC, and three NEC members. The composition of the panel shall take into account equalities considerations. A minimum of 1 week shall be allowed between shortlisting and the hustings and vote.

Where there is insufficient time for a hustings and vote, the selection should be made by the Constituency Executive Committee from the shortlist approved by the aforementioned panel following interviews.

Re-number point 12 as 13.

#### **Supporting argument**

*There is currently no codification of the process for the selection of parliamentary candidates in the event of by-elections or any other Parliamentary selection which happens within an unexpected and short timeframe, including when there is a snap election or when MPs delay informing the Party of their decision to retire until just before an election. The absence of any rules on this matter opens the door for processes being decided in a manner which is ad-hoc and which undermines the right of Labour Party members to select candidates for public office. Whilst NEC control over these processes is often defended on the basis of ensuring oversight of candidates in the context of enhanced media scrutiny, there is no evidence that excluding local members from the process enhances oversight.*

*The process laid out here guarantees membership involvement and oversight over the process by a range of different actors, by establishing a mixed panel of CLP, REC and NEC representatives at the shortlisting stage. Representatives of the CLP would ensure members' voices are heard and can be taken into account. It calls for there to be a minimum period of 1 week's campaigning so that all candidates have opportunities to contact members, and members have the chance to weigh up their relative strengths and weaknesses. In extreme cases where this is not possible, the decision of which candidate should represent the Party should be taken by the CLP Executive following shortlisting by the aforementioned panel.*



## *Suggested Rule Change*

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

The Labour Party Rule Book 2020 Chapter 5 Selections, rights and responsibilities of candidates for elected public office; Clause IV. Selection of Westminster parliamentary candidates (page 31).

#### **Amendment**

Insert new Part 2 as follows:

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

and renumber existing Part 2 onwards to now be Part 3 onwards.

#### **Supporting argument**

*The selection of parliamentary candidates is one of the Party's most important tasks. Some MPs serve for 40 years and it is vital that every effort is made to secure the very best candidates. This should mean involving all party members and affiliated members through their branches and seeking to select Prospective Parliamentary Candidates that are representative of their communities. Unfortunately, in recent years, the opposite has been happening. Party branches nominate from CVs without interview, affiliated branches are not properly involved at all. The party should give its members and affiliates greater role and influence. Nowhere is this more important than in the selection of Labour parliamentary candidates.*

## *Suggested Rule Change*

### **Full selection for Councillors**

The Labour Party Rule Book 2020 Chapter 5 Selections, rights and responsibilities of candidates for elected public office, Clause I. General rules for selections for public office, F. Inclusive processes.

### **Amendment**

Insert new sub-clause ii as follows:

'In order to encourage a greater level of representation and participation of groups of people in our society who are currently under-represented in local government, Labour's selections to local government candidacies shall not privilege incumbents and all members seeking to be adopted as local government candidates shall be treated equally. '

### **Supporting argument**

*From 2016, to 2019, Appendix 4 on the selection of local government councillors had a procedure which allowed a confirmatory ballot for sitting councillors. This discriminates against challengers and those who are currently under-represented in local government. These rules were removed after Conference 2019. This rule seeks to prohibit the reintroduction of such procedures.*

*The Party has a real problem in refreshing talent; we only introduced the confirmatory ballot in 2016 and worked well without it.*

*Good councillors will win re-selection in the current processes but the party will benefit from being able to assess current talent.*

**Closing date for Constitutional Amendments: 12 noon, Friday 11 June 2021**

## *Suggested Rule Change*

### **The NEC must decide on the powers to be granted to the General Secretary, and conference take the final decision**

The Labour Party Rule Book 2020 Chapter 1 Constitutional rules, Clause VIII. The National Executive Committee, 3, sets out the duties and powers of the NEC.

#### **Amendment**

Add a new sub-clause L as follows:

'Each year before the annual conference the NEC shall adopt a clear and precise scheme of delegation of its powers to the General Secretary and Regional Directors. That scheme shall be reported to conference, which will have the right to agree it or refer it back.'

#### **Supporting argument**

*Currently the Acting General Secretary can issue 'guidance' to CLPs that they cannot discuss issues of party business such as 'solidarity' or the factional abuse of the party's disciplinary processes, and it is claimed that the AGS's 'guidance' has been issued using the powers that the NEC has delegated to the AGS. The NEC is not currently required to decide in advance exactly what powers it will delegate to the AGS and conference is never informed of the powers that are being delegated.*

*This proposed rule change would require the NEC to decide on the powers it wishes to delegate and to inform conference of this decision, which conference could refer back if it did not agree with the delegated powers.*

## *Suggested Rule Change*

### **To establish the position of a Labour Party Ombudsperson**

The Labour Party Rule Book 2020 Chapter 1 Constitutional Rules.

#### **Amendment**

Insert new Clause XI as follows:

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

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

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

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

#### **Supporting argument**

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

**Closing date for Constitutional Amendments: 12 noon, Friday 11 June 2021**

## *Suggested Rule Change*

### **Member's Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights**

The Labour Party Rule Book 2020 Chapter 1 Constitutional rules, Clause X Scope of rules, Section 5 reads as follows:

'For the avoidance of any doubt, any dispute as to the meaning, interpretation or general application of the constitution, standing orders and rules of the Party or any unit of the Party shall be referred to the NEC for determination, and the decision of the NEC thereupon shall be final and conclusive for all purposes. The decision of the NEC subject to any modification by Party conference as to the meaning and effect of any rule or any part of this constitution and rules shall be final.'

#### **Amendment**

After 'for all purposes.' Insert 'The NEC, any person or body using the delegated powers of the NEC, the NCC and its officers and advisors shall take into account and comply with the laws of the relevant UK jurisdiction and the European Convention of Human Rights.'

#### **Supporting argument**

*Since the Labour Party is not a public body, automatic use of the ECHR does not apply to the interpretation of its rules. This amendment states the European Convention of Human Rights applies to the interpretation of Labour's rules strengthening member's rights including the right to a fair trial, right of effective remedy, freedom of expression & thought and right to privacy and a family life.*

**Closing date for Constitutional Amendments: 12 noon, Friday 11 June 2021**

## *Suggested Rule Change*

### **Spending Limits on Leadership Elections**

Chapter 4 (Elections of national officers of the Party and national committees), Clause II, 2 (Election of Leader and Deputy Leader), C.

#### **Amendment**

After v) (page 22, Insert vi)

The spending limit for any candidate during the regulated period is 50p per Labour Party member as of the last audited membership numbers for each validly nominated candidate and 25p per affiliated or registered supporter.

Hustings, volunteer costs, travel, and office space, staffing, and infrastructure costs are exempt. Candidates are not permitted to send printed materials to Labour Party members, with the exception of members who are not contactable by email.

Any expense over the amount of £2000 incurred in support of a candidate by a third party campaign should count towards that candidate's spending limit.

Renumber existing vi-xi accordingly.

#### **Supporting argument**

*While the rulebook states that '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', the existing spending limits in leadership elections are so high that they undermine this commitment.*

*The large size of the Labour Party membership and high cost of reaching party members, particularly by printed materials and to a lesser extent by digital advertisements, means that in reality only candidates who are capable of raising substantial sums of money are capable of genuinely competing. Introducing spending limits and prohibiting costly mail-outs to Party members would help ensure a level playing field in future leadership contests.*

## *Suggested Rule Change*

### **Ensuring A Welcoming and Affordable Labour Party**

#### **Chapter 1 (Constitutional Rules)**

#### **Clause II (Party Structure and Affiliated Organisations)**

##### **Point 6B (Socialist Societies)**

*The existing rule on page reads:*

Chapter 1, Clause II, 6.B.i.

“Each affiliated socialist society or other organisation shall pay an affiliation fee per member of £1.25”

Proposed Change:

*Amend Chapter 1, Clause II, 6.B.i to read:*

i) Each affiliated society or other organisation shall pay an affiliation fee per member of £1.25 except in the case of politically under-represented and low income/working class members, in which case the fee may be waived.

#### **Chapter 2 (Membership Rules)**

#### **Clause II (Charter of Members' Rights)**

*The existing rule Point 10 on page 14 reads:*

“The Labour Party shall give all members an ongoing opportunity to self-define as holding the characteristics mentioned in 8 above and to declare a disability in line with 9 above, and may give members the opportunity to self-define as holding other characteristics. The Labour Party is only bound to accept genuine self-definition, made in good faith”.

Proposed Change:

*Amend Chapter 2, Clause II, Point 10 to read:*

All Working Class/Low Income members having 8 weeks continuous membership shall unless the 8 week verification period has been extended or unless otherwise prohibited, have the right to free membership of the Labour Party's Working Class/Low Income members' representative structures. Only Labour Party members may participate in such structures.

*The Existing Rule Point 11 reads:*

“The relevant dates for the above rights shall be defined by procedural rules made by the NEC”.

*Re-number point 11 as point 12 and so that point 11 reads:*

“The Labour Party shall give all members an ongoing opportunity to self-define as holding the characteristics mentioned in 8 above, to declare a disability in line with 9 above, to declare their status as low income/working class in line with 10 above and may give members the opportunity to self-define as holding other characteristics. The Labour Party is only bound to accept genuine self-definition, made in good faith”.

*And point 12 reads:*

“The relevant dates for the above rights shall be defined by procedural rules made by the NEC”.

#### **Clause IV (Membership Subscriptions)**

*The existing rule point 2.A.i on page 15 reads:*

**Closing date for Constitutional Amendments: 12 noon, Friday 11 June 2021**

### *Suggested Rule Change*

“A reduced minimum rate set at half the Standard Rate will be offered to persons who are unwaged, pensioners who have retired from work, persons working less than 16 hours a week and persons on government training schemes”

Proposed Change:

Amend Chapter 2, Clause IV, Point 2.A.i to read:

“A reduced standard rate of £1 per annum will be offered to persons who are unwaged or subsisting at or below the poverty line (defined as income that is 60% or less than the national mean for their household composition and age profile).”

### **Appendix 8 NEC statement (A minimum guarantee of support to CLPs)**

#### **Clause IV**

*Appendix 8, Clause IV, point 1.A. on page 114 reads:*

The aim of each fund is as follows:

“1. NEC Diversity and Democracy Fund.

A. Aimed at helping the poorest CLPs with the cost of sending delegates to Annual, Scottish and Welsh Conferences, and for encouraging diversity at a local level”.

Proposed Changes:

*Amend Appendix 8, Clause IV, point 1.A. to read:*

“1. NEC Diversity and Democracy Fund.

A. Aimed at helping the poorest CLPs and members with the cost of attending Annual, Scottish and Welsh Conferences, helping those on low incomes to stand as candidates and access training and for encouraging diversity at a local and national level.”

*Appendix 8, Clause IV, point 2.A. on page 114 reads:*

“2. NEC Local Campaigns and Improvement Fund

A. This fund would specifically support local campaigning in the field – so activity is rewarded and incentivised, and match funding of projects or organisers would be considered.”

Proposed Changes:

*Amend Appendix 8, Clause IV, point 2.A. to read:*

“2. NEC Local Campaigns and Improvement Fund

A. This fund would specifically support local campaigning in the field – so activity is rewarded and incentivised, and match funding of projects or organisers would be considered. In order to improve democratic involvement and representation, where activity is focussed specifically on building engagement within under-represented groups, full funding will be considered”.

**Closing date for Constitutional Amendments: 12 noon, Friday 11 June 2021**



## *Suggested Rule Change*

### **Supporting Information**

Party membership costs £53/year (standard rate) and £26/year (reduced rate) for those aged 20 to 26, those who are retired, part-time workers or affiliated trade union members, regardless of their income status and this is also the cost to people who are unwaged. A further concessionary rate of £3 is available to those aged 14 -19, students and members of the British Armed Forces (for the first year). Amongst all of the main political parties in the UK, the Labour Party charges the most, yet we exist to speak up against poverty, for equality and social justice. In 1983, 3% of the electorate were a member of one of the main parties and this had dropped as low as 1% by 2015.

Following a long period of decline there was a remarkable surge in individual membership of the Labour Party after the general election of May 2015, particularly after Jeremy Corbyn was officially nominated as a candidate for the leadership in June of that year (membership increased by well over 300,000, more than doubling). The opportunity to capitalise on this surge of interest and broaden the socio-economic profile of the membership base was missed when the decision was taken to sharply increase the cost of membership. A 2017 survey found that 77 per cent of Labour Party members fell within the ABC1 social classes. Nearly half of all its members lived in London or southern England, and 57 percent were graduates.

During the pandemic, UK Billionaire wealth has grown by £41bn (35%) whilst UK Foodbank use has grown by 630,000+ (33%), over half of food bank users are from working households and living in enforced poverty. As a result of the pandemic, there is much increased scope for the party to reach out to voters who appear to have shunned us and a review of our membership cost and pricing structure would be a good place to start.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation have described how the further down the income gradient we look, the greater the share of economic, health and educational impact of the pandemic has been borne, all of which has significant implications regarding the ability to politically engage. We need to make political engagement easier and not harder for people. According to the Child Poverty Action Group, as a result of the pandemic, nearly six in 10 families said they are now struggling to cover the cost of three or more basic essentials, including food, utilities, rent, travel or child-related costs. Around half of all families said they have a new or worse debt problem. The changes proposed encompass simple steps the party can take to adapt and take account of these factors and changes.

**Closing date for Constitutional Amendments: 12 noon, Friday 11 June 2021**

## *Suggested Rule Change*

### **Ensuring A More Inclusive, Representative and Democratic Party**

#### **2020 Labour Party Rulebook.**

#### **Chapter 1 (Constitutional Rules)**

#### **Clause II (Party Structure and Affiliated Organisations)**

*Insert on Point 2C on page 1*

A disability branch may be established, consisting of all disabled members within that CLP.

A Working Class/Low Income branch may be established, consisting of all Working Class/Low Income members within that CLP.

*Insert on Point 2D on page 1*

(and Regional BAME), Disabled and Working Class/Low Income members' sections.

*Insert a new Point 12 on page 2*

There shall be a Working Class/Low Income Members' Representative Structure which shall operate on procedural guidelines issued by the NEC.

#### **Clause VIII (The National Executive Committee)**

*INSERT a new point K on page 6*

One Working Class/Low Income member elected under such conditions as may be set out in rules Chapter 4. III below. This member to be elected when conditions laid out by the NEC have been met.

#### **Chapter 7 (Rules for CLPs)**

#### **Clause VI (Method of Organisation)**

*Re-number so that points 5 and 6 on page 40 are replaced by*

5. There may be established a Disability Branch to coordinate work among disabled members, acting in accordance with the rules for Disabled Branches and any other regulations approved by the NEC and on boundaries approved by the NEC.

6. There may be established a Working Class/Low Income branch, acting in accordance with the rules for Working Class/Low Income Branch and any other regulations approved by the NEC and on boundaries approved by the NEC.

#### **Clause VIII (Officers)**

*The existing point number 2 on page 41 reads*

2. The Executive Officers of this CLP shall be; chair, vice-chair, vice-chair/ membership, secretary, treasurer, policy officer, women's officer, BAME officer (where established), disability officer (where established), LGBT+ officer (where established), youth officer (where established), trade union liaison officer (where established, who shall be a member of a trade union in accordance with Chapter 2 Clause I.6.B above), political education officer (where established), communications and social media officer (where established). At least three of the first six officers listed above, as well as at least half of the total number of officers, must be women. This CLP may, with the approval of the NEC add other Executive Officer posts drawn from amongst its Coordinator roles subject to the gender quota being amended appropriately..

*Proposed change:*

*Amend Chapter 7, Clause 8, Point 2 to read*

2. The Executive Officers of this CLP shall be; chair, vice-chair, vice-chair/ membership, secretary, treasurer, policy officer, women's officer, BAME officer (where established), disability officer (where established), LGBT+ officer (where

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established), youth officer (where established), trade union liaison officer (where established) who shall be a member of a trade union in accordance with Chapter 2 Clause I.6.B above), Working Class/Low Income Officer (where established), political education officer (where established), communications and social media officer (where established). At least three of the first six officers listed above, as well as at least half of the total number of officers, must be women. This CLP may, with the approval of the NEC add other Executive Officer posts drawn from amongst its Coordinator roles subject to the gender quota being amended appropriately..

## **Chapter 9 (B) (Rules for Regional Executive Committees and Regional Conferences)**

### **Clause V (Membership of the Regional Executive Committee)**

*The existing Clause V, Point 1H on page 49 reads*

H. A Co-operative Party representative nominated by the Co-operative Party who must be a woman at least every other term.

*Proposed change:*

*Replace the above with a new Point 1H*

A Working Class/Low Income representative elected by the regional Working Class/Low Income Committee, or elected by delegates to regional conference if there is no active regional Working Class/Low Income Committee

## **INSERT 17 on page 81 (Rules for Labour Party Low Income/Working Class Branches)**

### **Clause I. Name**

1. The { } Constituency Labour Party Low Income/Working Class Members' Branch (this Low Income/Working Class members' branch)

### **Clause II. Objects**

1. To ensure that low income/working class members' voices are heard in the Party, through monitoring low income/working class members' involvement in activities, and shaping the low income/working class member's agenda and contributing to policy making.
2. To encourage and support low income/working class members to play a full and active part in all the Party's activities, particularly through facilitating training, networking and mentoring, and encouraging low income/working class members to run for elected office.
3. To build links with low income/working class voters in the community, through contact with trade unions, community organisations and individual low income/working class voters, consultation, campaigning and joint working.
4. To encourage low income/working class voters to join the Party and to ensure that new working class/low income members are welcomed.
5. To work jointly with low income/working class members in neighbouring CLPs in the delivery of the above aims.

### **Clause III. Membership**

1. The membership of the low income/working class members' branch shall consist of all individual low income/working class members in { } Constituency Labour Party. All low income/working class members shall be mailed at least annually to inform them about the activity of the low income/working class branch and/or officer.
2. Low income/working class members' branches may be established on alternative electoral boundaries (such as local authorities) with the agreement of the NEC Equalities Committee. Any low income/working class members' branches which cross CLP boundaries shall retain the rights of interaction with component CLPs as defined by Clause VI below.
3. A proportion of members' subscriptions should be allocated to this low income/working class branch as determined by the CLP General Meeting(s), or by the Executive Committee if given such delegated authority by the General Meeting.

### **Clause IV. Officers and Executive Committee**

1. Where possible, or necessary, the officers of this low income/working class members' branch shall be chair, vice

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chair, secretary, and treasurer, at least two of these officers shall be women. This low income/working class members' branch shall appoint two auditors when required and other functional officers as required.

2. This low income/working class members' branch executive shall consist of the low income/working class officer(s) of any CLP(s) covered by the low income/working class members branch and, if required, not more than four other members.

3. Elections for these posts shall be held at the annual meeting.

### **Clause V. Meetings**

1. The annual meeting of this low income/working class members' branch shall be held in {} of each year. In the event of the annual meeting not being held in that month for any reason it shall be held as soon as possible thereafter.

2. 14 days' notice of the annual meeting shall be given to the CLP(s) and to all individual members in this low income/working class members' branch.

3. This low income/working class members' branch shall raise and hold funds to support activities within the objects of this low income/working class members' branch. The financial year of this low income/working class members' branch will begin on 1 January and end on 31 December. The annual accounts of this low income/working class members' branch shall be forwarded to the CLP Treasurer(s) no later than the end of February each year so they can be incorporated into the CLP(s) Annual Statement of Accounts.

4. Where the CLP(s) requires delegates to be appointed to the General Meeting of the CLP(s) they shall be elected at the annual meeting, but may be changed as necessary at subsequent ordinary meetings. Unless otherwise decided, the term of a delegate elected at the annual meeting shall commence at the annual general meeting of the CLP(s).

5. At a formal meeting the low income/working class members' branch may, if it wishes, make nominations to the CLP for posts open to nomination from branches (i.e. CLP officers, parliamentary/European parliamentary candidate, members of the NEC, National Policy Forum, etc.). A formal meeting may also agree motions to be sent to the General Meeting.

6. The low income/working class members' branch may hold whatever informal meetings or gatherings it sees fit to work towards meeting its aims.

7. Ordinary meetings shall be held at such intervals and on such notice as may be laid down in the standing orders, or as determined by this low income/working class members' branch from time to time. Special meetings may be called at the discretion of this low income/working class members' branch executive or at the written request of 20 per cent of the members.

8. Notice of ordinary and special meetings shall be sent to all members a minimum of seven days in advance.

### **Clause VI. Activities**

1. The low income/working class members' branch shall seek to ensure that low income/working class members' voices are properly heard in the Party, through the above activities and through, for example:

A. feeding low income/working class members' views on policy into local and national policy forums and to the constituency's General Meeting.

B. encouraging low income/working class members to play an active role in these and other bodies, monitoring low income/working class members' involvement and working with the rest of the Party to develop arrangements which maximise this involvement.

C. bringing any problems regarding low income/working class members' involvement, including through the filling of quotas, to the attention of the constituency secretary, other officers or the regional Party office.

D. holding local policy forums for low income/working class members.

E. engaging with national structures by electing delegates and submitting motions to Low Income/Working Class Members' Conference.

2. The low income/working class members' branch shall prioritise work which aims to support low income/working class members of the Party to play an active part in all the Party's activities – in particular, training, mentoring and networking among low income/working class members to encourage low income/working class members to:

A. hold elected office within the Party (e.g. as branch or constituency chair, political education officer, etc.)

B. stand as councillors, MPs, MEPs and other forms of elected representative for the Party

C. become involved in the community, for example, as school governors/ board members, on committees of local organisations, as magistrates, members of community health councils, etc.

D. take part in all forms of Party activities – in particular campaigns, recruitment activity, Party committees, meetings and policy forums.

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3. The low income/working class members branch shall also seek to build links with low income/working class voters in the community through, for example:

A. building relationships with organisations, such as low income/working class voters' voluntary organisations, tenants' groups, trade unions and other organisations in which low income/working class voters are active, through information exchange, personal contact, joint meetings, events and campaigns.

B. working with the Party and Labour councillors and MPs to consult low income/working class voters in the community about their views and concerns, using consultation meetings, policy forums, surveys, listening campaigns and other techniques.

C. targeted campaigning and recruitment activity with low income/working class voters, including campaigns on issues of particular interest to low income/working class voters.

### **Clause VII. Relationship with constituency parties**

1. This low income/working class members' branch shall maintain good relations with the CLP(s) within its geographical boundary. In particular, this low income/working class members' branch shall inform the CLP(s) within its geographical boundary of any campaigns, activities or events it is running, organising or assisting with. This low income/working class members' branch shall also receive the cooperation, encouragement and assistance of the CLP(s), branches and their officers.

2. This low income/working class members' branch shall be entitled to send delegates to the CLP(s) on a basis consistent with Appendix 7 of this Rule Book.

3. Should a low income/working class members' branch cross CLP boundaries, only members of this branch who are members of the appropriate CLP shall be involved in business relevant to that CLP, such as nomination of and voting for delegates to the General Meeting.

### **Clause VIII. Miscellaneous**

1. The general provisions of the constitution and rules of the Party shall apply to this low income/working class members' branch.

2. This low income/working class members' branch shall not enter into affiliation or give support financially or otherwise to any political party or organisation ancillary or subsidiary thereto declared ineligible for affiliation to the Party by the Party conference or by the NEC.

3. This low income/working class members' branch shall not have the power to enter into property-related transactions or to employ staff

4. This low income/working class members' branch shall adopt standing orders and procedural rules as may be agreed by the appropriate RD(GS).

5. Any alteration or addition to these rules may only be made at the annual general meeting of the { } Constituency Labour Party low income/working class members' branch but must be submitted to the appropriate Regional Director/General Secretary for approval before being put into operation. Such changes shall not contravene the spirit or intention of the model rules as accepted by Party Conference or the NEC.

### **Supporting Information**

Two areas of inequality and political exclusion have been long-neglected by our party and within politics and every other influential sphere within society despite our party having achieved impressive results within other equalities areas. Socio-economically disadvantaged people and disabled people remain virtually invisible and as a direct result, our party democracy and ability to appeal across and to effectively represent all sections of the electorate can only suffer.

There remain many solid barriers that prevent low income and politically excluded working class people of all ages, genders and ethnicities, whether straight, or LGBT+ and whether disabled or not from having a place at the table of power and influence within our society.

20% of Labour MPs are now BAME (which compares to 14% of the population as a whole. So 1 in 5 MPs are now from BAME backgrounds (this figure was 1 in 40 MPs just 10 years ago). This is excellent progress, something we should

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work hard to maintain and shows just how effective a determined, pro-active approach can be.

Over half of all Labour MPs are now women and given the dismal progress made in combating violence against women and girls within society, this must now be maintained.

About 14% of Labour MPs are openly gay, whereas only 2.2% of the population are, so we have performed extremely well in ensuring people who identify as LGBT+ feel they have a welcoming and inclusive political home within the Labour Party.

However it is equally important that those filling protected spaces within the party represent all socio-economic backgrounds. 22% of the population have a disability yet only 1% of Labour MPs do. One of the main barriers cited is poverty and people with disabilities, single parents and people from BAME backgrounds are all over-represented within the lower end of the income spectrum.

Despite our attention to equalities within the rule book, the vast majority of Labour MPs of any ethnicity, sex, ability or disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or age are from professional and managerial backgrounds - A staggering 97% (up from 37% in 1951). With only 3% or less of Labour MPs coming from 'routine/manual' occupational backgrounds when upward of 30% of the population falls into that category and with research showing that two thirds of our membership are now from middle class backgrounds, this proposed rule change cuts across the entire rule book because it needs to. The aim is to enable the party to function as a welcoming, fully inclusive and representative political home for disenfranchised disabled and working class socialists.

This does not imply that we should in any way take our foot off the pedal in terms of ensuring democratic and fair representation of the existing recognised and protected equalities groups, yet there isn't a finite amount of equality to be shared around. We need to win back the majority of lost traditional labour votes and add to them. Even with an inspirational policy platform, we still need to broaden our appeal beyond the middle class in order to rebuild the trust we have lost not just in 2019 but gradually over decades, in order to win the next General Election.

As a party that prides itself on its equalities standards, that favours economic re-distribution and democracy, given the above figures, it is the obvious and right thing to do. Following a year where those on the lowest incomes and in the lowest status jobs have held society together yet lost their lives and livelihoods at over double the rate of those on more secure incomes, we have an opportunity to show that we take the issues of disability, socio-economic deprivation in relation to political visibility and engagement seriously.

Although within the party and more broadly across society and academia, definitions of what constitutes being working class may vary, the party has already made some mention of working class political exclusion and our intention to address it. Within the context of the relative invisibility of some groups from positions of influence and power within society, it is most useful to think of this group in terms of its relationship to structures of power and their relative inaccessibility based on the socio-economic and cultural forces that shape society unfairly and to trust members to self-identify and define their own terms for activism within this section of party on that basis, with the whole membership's backing and support.

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## *Suggested Rule Change*

### **Updating and Clarifying our Party Values In Response to COVID**

#### **Chapter One (Constitutional Rules)**

#### **Clause IV (Aims and Values)**

*Existing rule point 2.B. on page 3 reads:*

“A JUST SOCIETY, which judges its strength by the condition of the weak as much as the strong, provides security against fear, and justice at work; which nurtures families, promotes equality of opportunity, and delivers people from the tyranny of poverty, prejudice and the abuse of power”

Proposed Change:

*Amend Chapter One, Clause IV, Point 2.B. to read:*

“A JUST SOCIETY, which judges its success by its capacity to tackle and remove the drivers of social injustice - oppression and unfair privilege; which provides security against fear, and stands unequivocally for justice at work, in sickness, disability and older age; which nurtures families, promotes equality of opportunity, provides legitimate and permanent routes out of the injustice of poverty, prejudice and abuses of power and matches the economic value of each type of work to the extent of its contribution towards building a socially just, caring and green society that can sustain itself through major crises and emerge fairer”

#### **Supporting Information**

With an acknowledgement that the kinds of work that need to be valued and rewarded more highly are those that contribute the most to our Labour values and aspirations, we can win the support of those currently contributing in all of those ways.

With an acknowledgment that opportunity is steeply stacked in favour of those born into privilege and that unfair privilege is as much of a problem to a more equal society that is better for everyone as unfair disadvantage, we can move away from concepts such as aspiration and social mobility and focus our politics on ensuring the jobs that contribute to a healthy and socially just society are the ones we seek to apply the greatest value to, as part of ensuring that all jobs provide quality employment and dignity in work. This also supports a shift of mindset toward one which prioritises human health and flourishing over and above profit and trickle-down economics, success being measured on the basis purely of GDP, endless economic growth and nationalism.

If the party can lead the way on re-framing what we value and why, based on what we have learned through the pandemic, we can spearhead a truly transformative post-COVID vision of society rather than merely aspiring to a slightly less damaging return to business as usual, which works for progressively fewer within any society.

In a society that acknowledges unfair privilege and oppression as two sides of the same coin and values work based on its value to communities, families and the natural environment, people will be able to access routes out of poverty without having to be delivered, or pulled up.

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