
LABOUR LEADERSHIP: BALLOT PAPERS FOR CONTEST TO BE SENT OUT

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BBC

Ballot papers will be issued later to nearly 650,000 people with a vote in the Labour leadership contest.

Jeremy Corbyn is up against the party's former shadow work and pensions secretary, Owen Smith.

The result of the contest will be announced on 24 September.

The party said the voters are made up of about 350,000 members, 129,000 people who paid £25 each to be registered supporters, and 168,000 from unions and other organisations.

Mr Corbyn has announced that he would look to bolster the bargaining powers of trade unions if he wins.

Announcing his reform plans, Mr Corbyn said he wanted to "democratise our country from the ground up".

He said a Labour government would introduce "new collective and individual rights" for employees with the aim of giving people a "real say" against "boardrooms that control them".

Guide to the Labour leadership election

Analysis

Amid the noise and the court cases, the rallies and the rancour, it is easy to overlook the extraordinary growth of the Labour movement: both those who've joined the party and those willing to sign up as supporters, at no small cost.

It's provided a welcome fillip to Labour's meagre finances: the new registered supporters alone collectively handed the party more than £3.2m in just 48 hours last month.

Over the last 40 years, membership numbers for the Conservatives and Labour have shrivelled; the Tory figure currently stands at around 150,000.

The hundreds of thousands drawn to Labour's ranks appear driven by one man - Jeremy Corbyn - and a passionate desire to either endorse or reject him.

As part of Mr Corbyn's reform plans, he said he would include mandatory collective bargaining in firms with more than 250 employees, the election of staff representatives to executive

remuneration committees, and the introduction of "sectoral union bargaining rights".

"We need to break open the closed circle of Westminster and Whitehall, and of the boardrooms too," he said in a statement.

"Labour under my leadership will listen to ideas from the bottom up - and take radical action to transform and rebuild our country so that no-one and no community is left behind."

Mr Corbyn's proposals also include:

- Devolution of power to local councils, regions and nations
- Replacing the House of Lords with an elected second chamber
- Ending what he sees as a "revolving door" corporate grip on politics and the civil service
- Increasing democracy in the community through more participation in budgeting and control of local services
- Introducing a citizens' right to challenge the outsourcing and privatisation of local services through referendums

Meanwhile, the leader of the Scottish Labour Party, Kezia Dugdale, became the latest senior party member to back Owen Smith in the leadership contest.

Writing in the Daily Record, she said the question of who was best placed to lead Labour to a general election victory was "the only question that matters".

She wrote: "With the Tories wreaking havoc on our country, the first and last consideration must be which of the candidates is most likely to lead the next Labour government that will invest in our public services and give everyone a fair chance in life."

Ms Dugdale added that she thought Mr Smith could "unite our party and move us on from the divisions that exist under the current leadership of Jeremy Corbyn".

Her intervention comes after London Mayor Sadiq Khan urged Labour voters to ditch Jeremy Corbyn as leader and vote for Owen Smith.

Speaking on Sunday, Mr Khan told BBC News Mr Corbyn had "failed to win the trust and respect of the British people" and criticised his leadership during the EU referendum.

But a Corbyn campaign spokesman pointed out that Mr Khan won the London mayoralty standing on a Labour platform - which had the support of Mr Corbyn.

When pressed on Radio 4's Today programme about the lack of support for Corbyn among MPs, Labour councillor Sam Tarry said he was not going to pretend the situation was not difficult.

"I think that when Jeremy Corbyn wins many of the MPs that we're talking to, are going to be looking to come back and form the serious opposition that we need to take on the Tories," he said.

Labour leadership election timetable

- 19-20 July: The number of MP nominations for each candidate was published
- 20 July: Deadline for people to sign up as a registered supporter closed
- 22 August: Ballot papers start to be sent out in the post (Labour Party members only) and by email

- 21 September: Deadline for ballot papers to be returned is midday
- 24 September: The result will be announced at a special conference in Liverpool

Kaynak/Source: