

Be an effective CLP Chair

Local parties depend on leadership from the Chair of the local Constituency Labour Party (CLP). Other officers will look to the Chair to provide support and direction, while local members would look to them to provide leadership and openness plus the ability to organise and inspire them in effective campaigns.

Effective Chairs facilitate meetings, decisions and ensure the CLP operates fairly. The role requires impartiality, co-ordination, diligence and excellent communication and leadership skills.

Key Responsibilities

- Leadership and strategic direction of CLP
- Building, supporting and encouraging an effective officer team. Making sure all officers keep in regular contact with each other
- Being open and fair and ensuring that members feel welcome, involved and have a stake in the direction of the CLP
- Chairing CLP meetings in a fair and open way in accordance with the Labour Party rules
- As the Chair, you will need to have an overview of all roles within the CLP.

Two key tasks for your term of office

1. Work with other officers- especially the CLP Secretary, to lead a review of CLP structures and operation. Advice and guidelines to help you lead a review of your CLP are set out in the *Refounding our local parties* section at www.members.labour.org.uk/refoundinglabourandyou
2. Following that review agree a development plan. Advice and guidelines to help you produce a CLP development plan are set out in the *Refounding our local parties* at www.members.labour.org.uk/refoundinglabourandyou , and then work towards achieving your goals in your plan.

Meetings

Work with your CLP Secretary to organise the dates of meetings at least three months in advance and make sure the dates are communicated to members, with a reminder closer to the time.

Set an interesting and relevant agenda which will need to be circulated and agreed with the Secretary and other officers prior to the meeting. It would be beneficial to set a time limit for each agenda topic. If you have any hand-outs, get them ready in good time. Meetings in general should not last any longer than one-two hours. Where practical organise a campaigning or fundraising event after the meeting. Don't forget to make your meetings as open as possible, for example, invite all members to General Meetings.

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Introduce the meeting with a clear outline of the main objectives. It is important to have political discussions and lively debates at meetings. You may wish to open by welcoming any new comers and asking them to introduce themselves.

It is the Chair's responsibility to ensure that meetings relate to the following key functions:

1. Campaigning - connecting with the local community and getting candidates elected.
2. Membership work - welcoming new members, recruiting new members and supporters and retention.
3. Fundraising - a programme of social events and other fund raising activity. You will need to work closely with the CLP Secretary and Treasurer to do this. Ensure that your CLP has a Fundraising Officer or social event team that can help deliver this.
4. Policy discussion - make it interesting and engaging.
5. A report from your MP or Candidate - access to politicians is one of the benefits of membership; make sure that your meetings take full advantage.

At the end of each item review what has been decided and who will be responsible for taking the task forward. Remember to be impartial even if you do not agree with what is being discussed - allow for the widest possible participation.

A third of all Labour Party members have joined us since the last General Election. Bearing this in mind, try to avoid using too much jargon or focusing your meeting on internal structural issues and matters from the past. Members will come along to meetings because they want to connect with the party and share their values, as Chair it is your job to make sure they can take part as much as possible.

Know the rule book

As Chair, members and officers will look to you for leadership when constitutional matters arise. Issues of this nature often occur around the time of selection procedures; local, devolved or parliamentary. These can often be contentious matters so it is imperative that you show leadership and knowledge of the procedures. Remember, you can always refer an issue to your Regional Office and call them for advice and help or the Labour Party Compliance Unit on 0207 783 1506 or visit

www.members.labour.org.uk/legal_and_compliance_downloads

For further advice and training

The Labour Party has a huge range of training and best practice examples available. So if you would like to know more about being a CLP Chair, community organising, reaching out to new members or campaign planning go to www.members.labour.org.uk/training-academy