

Election of Leader of the Scottish Labour Party 2026

Procedural Guidance

1. The election of the Leader will be held under the constitutional rules as detailed in Chapter 4 of the (UK) Labour Party Rule Book, 'Election of a Leader and Deputy Leader', save that sub clause C.iv of those rules shall not apply.
2. Where there is any contradiction between Chapter 4 of the (UK) Labour Party Rule Book and these procedures, these procedures shall take precedence.
3. Under the Scottish Labour Party Rules, the Scottish Executive Committee (SEC) has constitutional responsibility to ensure that procedures, including the length of any contest, are laid down in advance of any such contest and that these procedures are adhered to throughout the campaign. These general procedures are set out below. In addition, there shall be a Code of Conduct for Candidates. The Scottish General Secretary will issue a Code of Conduct for Labour Party Staff.

PROCEDURE COMMITTEE

4. There shall be a Procedures Committee to oversee the election process. The Procedures Committee will comprise the SEC Officers and shall be attended by the Returning Officer along with relevant party officers as agreed by the Returning Officer. The Returning Officer will be the Scottish General Secretary.
5. It is important that everyone participating in the election can have confidence in the integrity and fairness of the process, and that there are no actual or perceived conflicts of interest. Therefore, individual members of the Procedures Committee are not able to publicly express their views on the contest or campaign for individual candidates.
6. Members of the SEC who are not members of the Procedures Committee are not precluded from campaigning for individual candidates and expressing their views on the contest after the timetable has been agreed by the SEC.
7. The election will commence the day that the Scottish Executive Committee agrees with the publication of notice of election.

8. The Labour Party will supply to all eligible electors a candidate's statement booklet, along with a ballot paper at a cost of £5,000 per candidate. Candidates will need to provide a photo and a statement up to the maximum of 500 words. The distribution of the booklet and vote packs shall be sent by electronic means unless the Labour Party does not hold electronic contact details for the elector.
9. The Scottish Labour Party will arrange one hustings in each electoral region which all candidates are expected to attend.

NOMINATIONS

10. Nomination papers for Leader will be provided for all Labour Members of the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Labour Members of the UK Parliament. The closing date for nominations is set out in the timetable. Nominations will be accepted via e-mail to the Scottish General Secretary or to another e-mail account specified by the Scottish Labour Party for that purpose and as verified by the Scottish General Secretary.
11. Each fully paid up affiliate (trade union, socialist society, etc.) may submit one nomination for the position of Leader.
12. In the CLP nominations process, each CLP may submit one nomination for the position of Leader. CLPs must decide their nomination at an All Members Meeting called with at least 7 days notice. No affiliated supporters may attend CLP nomination meetings unless they are also an eligible member in the relevant CLP.
13. The Leader of the Scottish Labour Party should be open to all Labour Members of the Scottish Parliament.
14. Individual Scottish Labour MSPs and MP will be entitled to make one nomination for Leader of the Scottish Labour Party.
15. Nominees for Leader that achieve nominations from three Members of the Scottish Parliament, three Scottish Labour Members of the UK Parliament and three affiliates and CLPs (at least two being from an affiliate trade union) will be declared validly nominated and go through to the One Person One Vote (OPOV) ballot.

Should there be only one validly nominated candidate for Leader, there will be no OPOV ballot, and there shall be a joint confirmation meeting of the Scottish Executive Committee and Scottish Labour MSPs and MPs after the close of nominations.

16. All nominations must be received by the General Secretary of the Scottish Labour Party by the time and date detailed in the timetable.
17. Valid nominees must formally accept their nominations, once declared by the Procedures Committee, in writing to the Scottish General Secretary by 10pm on the day of the closure of the nomination process.
18. All nominations will remain valid once submitted unless the nominated candidate fails to meet their obligations set out above or has withdrawn in writing to the Scottish General Secretary. MSPs and MPs who nominated a candidate who withdraws will be entitled to submit a further nomination prior to the deadline. Nomination forms will be re-issued to affected MSPs, or MPs.
19. Nominations (including the names of individual MSPs and MPs) will be recorded and published on the Scottish Labour Party website on a periodic basis throughout the nomination period.
20. All candidates shall agree to abide by the provisions of the Candidate Codes of Conduct which shall be approved by and issued on behalf of the Procedures Committee.

SUPPORTING NOMINATIONS

21. Members of the Scottish Association of Labour Councillors may submit one supporting nomination for their favoured candidate for the position of Leader of the Scottish Labour Party.
22. Supporting nomination papers will be sent out to all eligible stakeholders.
23. The Procedures Committee shall approve detailed guidance for the conduct of CLP nomination meetings. Such meetings may be held wholly in person or wholly online at the discretion of the CLP.
24. All supporting nominations must be received by the Scottish General Secretary by the time and date detailed in the timetable.

25. Supporting nominations will be recorded and published on the Scottish Labour Party website on a periodic basis and will be included in the candidate booklet.

ELECTOR ELIGIBILITY CHECK

26. Labour Party members with at least six months continuous membership of the Party as of the date the timetable for the election is published shall be eligible to vote. Members in arrears are required to bring their membership into compliance by the deadline set out in the timetable.
27. Affiliated supporters who are not otherwise members of the Labour Party as defined above shall be eligible to vote provided that their information is provided to the Party in accordance with the deadline set out in the timetable and meet the following criteria:
- a. They have at least six months continuous membership of the relevant affiliated organisation;
 - b. Where applicable, they have opted in to the political levy of an affiliated trade union or are in good standing in any relevant subscription fees for affiliated socialist societies;
 - c. They are on the UK electoral register at the address provided;
 - d. They otherwise meet the conditions for membership of the Labour Party.
28. No voter shall be issued a ballot unless their membership or affiliated supporter status is in full compliance.
29. Any disputes as to the eligibility of individual members or affiliated supporters must be raised no later than the deadline in the timetable. The Returning Officer shall rule on all matters as to the eligibility of individual electors and their decision shall be final and not subject to appeal.

BALLOT

30. The Scottish Executive Committee will appoint an independent organisation, Civica Election Services (CES), to conduct the One Person One Vote (OPOV) ballot.
31. The party will conduct a ballot of all eligible electors for contested position using the OPOV process, single round preferential voting system. This ballot will take place by post and secure electronic voting. Details will be contained in the voting package or voting email. Details will be sent to the address or electronic address registered on the National Membership System.
32. The voting package sent to all members will consist of (or the electronic equivalent):
 - Covering letter
 - Ballot paper
 - Return envelope (for postal votes)
 - Candidates' statements and list of CLP and affiliate nominations.
33. All validly nominated candidates must supply a photo and a statement of a maximum of 500 words to the party. This will be included in the booklet of candidates' statements which will be sent out to members. The statement must not exceed the stated word allowance.
34. Contact details for up to five channels may be supplied in addition to the 500 words.

THE COUNT

35. Will be by counting of preferential votes.
36. If no candidate receives more than 50% of the vote in the first round, the result will be recalculated eliminating the candidate with the lowest number of votes and redistributing those votes according to expressed preferences until one candidate exceeds the 50% threshold.

DECLARATION OF RESULT

37. The result of any ballot will be declared at an event to be determined by the Procedures Committee.