

Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform (LCER) Constitution



As amended following AGM of February 2023

1. Title

The Organisation shall be known as The Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform (hereinafter LCER).

2. Aims

The aims of LCER are to:

- a) Work with the Labour Party, and with other organisations supportive of our aims, in the pursuit of a greater level of accountability and democracy in the UK's institutions of government;
- b) work within the Labour Party towards the introduction of an appropriate system of proportional representation (PR) for all public elections in the United Kingdom, particularly changing the electoral system we use to elect MPs;
- c) endeavour to reform the internal electoral procedures of the Labour Party and its affiliated organisations to ensure full and genuine representation of all bodies of opinion.

3. Membership

Membership of LCER is open to all members and supporters of the Labour Party who agree with the aims of LCER. People not agreeing with the aims of LCER, or those belonging to a political party other than the Labour and Co-operative parties, are not eligible for membership of LCER.

To be eligible to hold elected, co-opted or appointed office in LCER (including serving as an officer, on the Executive, or as a national or regional representative) a person must be a current member of both the Labour Party and LCER.

All members and affiliated organisations may vote at a General Meeting. The rights of members and affiliates shall come into effect as follows:

- a) The right to vote at a General Meeting shall come into effect two weeks from the date that the member or affiliate joined (or affiliated to) LCER.
- b) The right to vote in elections for the Executive, or to vote in an all-member ballot, is extended to all members and affiliates who had joined (or affiliated to) LCER by 11.59pm on the day preceding the day on which ballot papers are issued.
- c) The right of a member to stand for election to the Executive shall come into effect six weeks after the date on which the member joined LCER (thus, the member must have joined LCER at least six weeks prior to the close of nominations).

Membership or affiliation shall be deemed to have begun on the date on which the person or organisation in question was recorded on the LCER database as having joined or affiliated. Where membership or affiliation has lapsed and been reactivated, it shall be deemed to have begun on the date that the reactivation was recorded.

Members of LCER are expected to treat each other in a comradely manner. Harassment or intimidation of members, particularly on the basis of gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, faith or race, is unacceptable. The Executive has the power to suspend or terminate the membership of anyone whose conduct is considered to be unacceptable and/or liable to damage the reputation of LCER: any person whose membership has been suspended or terminated by the Executive does, however, have a right to appeal against the decision at an AGM or EGM.

4. Affiliated Organisations

Constituency and Branch Labour Parties and any organisation affiliated to the Labour Party (including branches of such organisations) may affiliate to LCER by paying an annual subscription. They shall be permitted to send one delegate (who shall be a Labour Party member) to General Meetings and to have one vote in postal or online ballots. Delegates who are individual members of LCER shall be entitled to exercise two votes, one in their own right as an individual member and one on behalf of their organisation.

5. Subscriptions

The subscription charges for LCER membership and affiliation are set by the Executive, and may be amended by majority vote at any meeting of the Executive .

Amendments to charges will not be applied retrospectively: members will not be asked to pay a higher membership fee until their current membership expires. Different fees may apply according to the circumstances of members; all members have equal status regardless of the fee paid.

The Executive may nominate certain individuals as honorary members of LCER, in recognition of an outstanding contribution.

A grace period of six months operates in respect of overdue subscriptions. Individuals whose subscriptions are overdue by less than six months will retain the rights of current members of LCER, except that they may not stand for election to the Executive ; members renewing their subscription within the grace period will be considered as having unbroken membership.

Subscriptions overdue by six months or more are defined as lapsed; individuals whose subscriptions have lapsed will no longer be considered as members of LCER, and will be considered as new members in the event that they re-join.

6. Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) shall be held annually in February (or when that is not possible, as soon as possible thereafter), six weeks' notice having been given to members. The meeting may take place in person or by electronic means, or by a combination of the two. The quorum shall be twenty members.

The purposes of the AGM shall be to:

- a) formulate LCER's policy within the framework of Article 2 (above);
- b) receive and approve the annual report of the Executive, the annual balance sheet, record of accounts and budget for the following year, and enable those present to ask questions;
- c) receive written or oral reports from the Chair, other officers, Secretary, and Parliamentary and Political Officer;
- d) approve Standing Orders (or amendments to them) for the Executive, or General Meetings; and Financial Standing Orders for the Executive or officers;
- e) approve an expenses scheme for officers, EC members, national or regional coordinators or other people assisting LCER (including speakers);
- f) appoint at least one auditor for the following year;
- g) ratify the election of the Executive conducted prior to the AGM;
- h) determine any other question relating to LCER.

No proxy votes shall be permitted at an AGM.

Any current member may, on reasonable notice to the Treasurer, inspect the full audited accounts before an AGM.

It has been the custom to hold a political component to the AGM before the business meeting.

Attendance at the AGM is open to all those who are eligible to be members of LCER; voting is restricted to current members of LCER. Non-members may speak at the meeting, at the discretion of the Chair. Exceptionally, the Chair may ask non-members to leave the meeting during the discussion of sensitive agenda items.

7. Extraordinary General Meeting

An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) may be convened by the Executive or at the written request to the Executive of twenty members of LCER specifying the reason(s).

No proxy votes shall be permitted at an EGM.

8. Executive

The Executive shall consist of fourteen people elected biennially by and from the members of LCER by means of the Single Transferable Vote in a postal or email ballot of the whole membership, including Affiliated Organisations. Candidates for election to the Executive must be current Members of both LCER and the Labour Party, and shall be entitled to submit a statement to be circulated in support of their candidature, conforming to any rules set by the Executive. Such statements shall be printed or made available electronically, and distributed with the voting papers, by email so far as possible, with any cost to be borne by LCER. Executive members who have access to LCER's membership database, or any other list of LCER members' contact details, or any other person with such access, must not use this data to promote any candidate in the election including themselves, or to attempt to influence the outcome of the election in any way.

The Executive shall be responsible for the following:

- a) day-to-day management of LCER's affairs;
- b) campaigning, publicity and relations with other organisations;
- c) oversight of the work of the Secretary and administration;
- d) oversight of Parliamentary and political work;
- e) acting (as individual Executive members) as the representatives of their nations or regions on the Executive;
- f) organisation of LCER's activities at Labour Conference, or on the conference Fringe;
- g) organisation of LCER's activities in relation to local government and the devolved administrations, including Labour local government conference;
- h) organisation of LCER's presence at any other conferences or meetings;
- i) the promotion to women, members of ethnic minorities, and other people with protected characteristics (as defined in the Equality Act 2010), of membership of the Executive and of involvement generally in the work of LCER - including through providing guidance and training opportunities - in order to encourage the maximum diversity in participation in LCER;
- j) organisation of the election for the Executive for the following year (including any rules as to the process of the election, the operation of the quota for women, or the format or cost of information to be sent to members);
- k) organisation of the annual AGM and any EGMs;
- l) the proposal to an AGM or EGM of Standing Orders for the Executive and General Meetings, and for amendments as appropriate from time to time;
- m) the proposal from time to time to an AGM for approval of an expenses scheme in accordance with Article 16;
- n) the production and circulation to the Executive of an annual Directory of contact details for the Executive, National/Regional Representatives, Local Contacts, and Sponsors, to be carried out in compliance with GDPR legislation.

The Executive shall meet at least four times a year and shall be quorate if at least half of the elected members are present. Members (including any co-opted members, or national or regional representatives) may claim expenses for attendance at Executive meetings, according to Financial Standing Orders. Executive meetings may meet in person, or by electronic means, or by a combination of the two, with full voting rights for every member attending via either mode.

At the first meeting of the Executive after the AGM, newly elected members shall provide to the Secretary a list of their relevant memberships of organisations or other interests which they believe might have a bearing on the work of LCER.

Members of the Executive shall declare any personal, financial or organisational interests they may have in matters about to be considered at an Executive meeting prior to the start of discussion of the particular agenda item. The Chair may, depending on the extent and nature of the interest, ask members to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion, or invite them to participate in the discussion but without voting.

No member of the Executive shall receive any payment from LCER, other than for the payment of expenses under clause 16 below.

The Executive may employ staff to help promote the aims of LCER. The Executive will be responsible for ensuring that arrangements for the recruitment, management and remuneration of staff are of the highest standards. When staff are employed, they may from time to time be required to attend and participate in meetings of the Executive but without voting rights: they shall not be present at Executive meetings during any discussions which relate to the terms of their appointments.

Members of the Executive are expected to work in a comradely manner. Where there are disagreements about strategy or particular roles, those involved should seek to reach an understanding in the first instance. In the event of serious personal conflicts between members on matters arising from LCER's work, the Chair may nominate a mediation panel of three members of the Executive acceptable to both parties.

9. Officers

The following officers of LCER shall be elected by the Executive at its first meeting after the AGM and shall comprise the following:

- a) Chair
- b) Secretary
- c) Treasurer
- d) Parliamentary & Political Officer
- which four posts shall be held by separate Executive members; and in addition
- e) Two Vice Chairs
- f) Trades Union Officer
- g) Membership Officer
- h) Women's Officer
- i) BAME Officer
- j) Youth & Students' Officer
- k) Equalities Officer
- l) Communications Officer
- m) Events Officer
- n) Such other officers as the Executive may consider appropriate
- which posts may be held by Executive members separately or in conjunction with other roles.

10. Co-options

The Executive shall be empowered to co-opt members to perform particular roles or to fill any vacancies that may arise between AGMs. The EC may also co-opt one or more individuals to act as Representatives for Scotland, Wales, and/or English regions. Co-opted members and Representatives shall be entitled to attend Executive meetings in a non-voting capacity, and shall be entitled to expenses, as determined by the Executive.

The total number of co-options shall not exceed seven.

11. Women's Quota

Not fewer than 40% of the elected members of the Executive shall be women; and not fewer than one half (rounded down) of the total number of co-optees to the Executive shall be women. The Executive shall determine procedural rules for elections in order to facilitate this requirement.

12. Youth Quota

At least one of the elected members of the Executive shall be under 27 years old at the close of nominations.

13. Encouragement of Widest Participation

LCER shall encourage the widest participation in its activities by women, members of ethnic minorities, young people, older people, people with disabilities, LGBT+ people, and other people protected by the Equality Act 2010.

The Executive shall regularly review how well these groups are represented as members and activists of LCER and as members of the Executive; and shall put in place an action plan which may include recruitment activities, co-options, etc.

The Executive's report to each AGM shall include a statement on the action plan, and on the diversity of the Executive and of the membership.

14. LCER President and Sponsors

The Executive may appoint a Labour Parliamentarian or other distinguished Party member as President of LCER for a period of up to five years. The President shall act as the senior representative of LCER externally.

Any Labour MPs or Peers who support LCER shall be invited to join LCER as full members, and shall in addition be invited to become Sponsors of LCER. They shall have the same rights as ordinary members of LCER and in addition shall be invited to participate in policy meetings and events, as and when arranged by the Executive.

15. Voting Rights

Only elected members of the Executive shall be entitled to vote at meetings of the Executive.

16. Auditor

At least one Auditor shall be elected by the Annual General Meeting, to audit the accounts for the following year.

17. Non-Attendance at Meetings

Elected Executive members who fail to attend three consecutive Executive meetings without written apology shall be deemed to have resigned. Attendance by telephone conferencing, or other interactive electronic process, shall count as attendance. An apology sent by email to the Secretary in advance of the meeting shall be deemed to be a written apology.

18. Payment of Expenses

Expenses shall be payable by or on behalf of the Treasurer from LCER funds, for the reimbursement of legitimate expenditure incurred on approved LCER business (including travel, and attendance at conferences and meetings) by elected or co-opted members of the Executive, officers, national or regional representatives, speakers, or other people, in accordance with the expenses scheme proposed by the Executive and approved by an AGM or EGM; or (if there is no such scheme) in accordance with a decision made by an officer of the Executive, other than the person making the claim.

19. Role of Parliamentary and Political Officer (PPO)

- a) Representation of LCER to Parliamentarians and others with a political role;
- b) Advising the Executive, and the social media group, on Parliamentary and political matters and campaigning.

20. Role of Secretary

- a) Administration of LCER, including on a day-to-day basis;
- b) Correspondence;
- c) Preparation of the agenda for, and organisation of, the Executive meetings and AGMs/EGMs.

21. Role of Women's Officer

The Women's Officer shall:

- a) promote and seek to maximise the involvement of women in LCER's activities;
- b) liaise with relevant organisations representative of women in the promotion of PR;
- c) seek to promote PR and related issues to women in the Labour Party;
- d) seek to develop and promote issues and arguments supportive of PR that are likely to be of particular interest or concern to women.

22. Role of Youth Officer

The Youth Officer shall:

- a) Promote and seek to maximise the involvement of young people in LCER's activities through leading LCER Youth;
- b) Liaise with relevant organisations representative of young people in the promotion of electoral reform;
- c) Promote the aims of LCER to young people in the Labour Party;
- d) Develop and promote issues and arguments supportive of electoral reform that are likely to be of particular interest or concern to young people;
- e) Represent the voices of young people in meetings of the LCER Executive.

23. Role of National or Regional Executive Representatives

The National or Regional Executive Representatives shall:

- a) be tasked to work with groups of LCER members at Constituency, City or Regional level who express the desire to work together for the fulfilment of LCER's goals. The work should be accountable to the LCER Executive and facilitate communication with LCER members in those Constituency, City or Regional areas without infringement of Data Protection Legislation.
- b) Provide support to the development and delivery of member-led activities at a Constituency, City or Regional level including ensuring consistency of Constituency, City or Regional initiatives with the goals of LCER and supporting the development of coherent campaign identity at the Constituency, City or Regional level, reporting back to the LCER Executive.

- c) make themselves available to members and supporters in their nation or region in order to explain LCER activities or policies, and to hear comments or concerns;
- d) provide information to the Executive about, and represent, concerns or issues raised by members or supporters in their nation/region;
- e) promote LCER activity within their nation or region, including acting as (or organising) speakers; liaise with Regional Representatives which form the network of members, who are speakers contacts for meetings/regional conferences and events, leafleters, information providers in each nation and region and whose details are contained in a LCER Directory alongside the elected and co-opted Executive and Officers.
- f) liaise with any other members who are acting as constituency or local contacts in that nation or region;
- g) support and assist with LCER activities at their regional or national Labour conference, or other conferences.

24. Constitutional Amendments

Amendments to this constitution shall require either:

- a) a two thirds majority of members and Affiliated Organisations voting at a General Meeting; or
- b) a two thirds majority of members and Affiliated Organisations voting in a postal ballot or email ballot, or a combination of the two; or
- c) a majority of members and Affiliated Organisations voting at a General Meeting and a majority at an Executive Meeting and a majority of members *and* Affiliated Organisations voting in a postal or email ballot.

LABOUR CAMPAIGN FOR ELECTORAL REFORM

FINANCIAL STANDING ORDERS

The Treasurer

- 1) The Treasurer is responsible for the finances of LCER.
- 2) The Treasurer is elected each year from among the elected members of LCER's Executive Committee, at the first meeting of the Executive following LCER's Annual General Meeting.

Bank Accounts

- 3) LCER's bank account(s) will, where possible, be held with socially responsible providers.
- 4) Matters relating to the management of the bank accounts will be decided by the Executive Committee, with advice from the Treasurer. These decisions include:
 - a) The selection of bank account providers and the type of account(s) held
 - b) The bank signatories, which will normally comprise the Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and one or two other members of LCER.
 - c) The individuals who may access banking services by telephone and/or internet password.
 - d) The range of services which may be accessed by these individuals.
- 5) Transactions from and to LCER's bank accounts will be made electronically where possible. Payments, other than those made under clause (6) below, whether made electronically or by cheque, must be authorised by two of the bank signatories of whom the Treasurer will normally be one. No person may authorise a payment to themselves.
- 6) The Executive Committee may authorise an application for a payment card which enables a named individual to make payments by card from a LCER account. No such payments should be made, however, without the prior written approval of two bank signatories (or, where the cardholder is a signatory, of one signatory other than the cardholder). As with other forms of payment, no person may authorise a payment to themselves
- 7) Transactions will not usually be made in cash. Exceptions include a small number of membership fees still paid in cash, and small cash donations.

Expense Claims

- 8) Individuals undertaking duties for LCER may claim expenses in relation to those duties.
- 9) LCER will reimburse travel by the most economical means practical. Car travel will be reimbursed only if unavoidable, at the rate of 25p per mile plus the cost of parking.
- 10) LCER will attempt to bear any additional costs required in respect of a member's disability or other individual needs (for example the cost of taxis or accommodation). Any such costs should be agreed in advance with the Treasurer.
- 11) Members should seek authorisation before incurring expenditure on behalf of LCER, as follows:
 - a) Small and/or routine expenditures by members of the Executive do not require pre-authorisation. Examples of such expenditures include:
 - i Travel expenses to meetings of the Executive, to a maximum of £75 per meeting (higher amounts should be agreed with the Treasurer).
 - ii Small expenditures made by officers and falling within their budgets (examples include stamps and envelopes for the Secretary, small-volume photocopying for members attending meetings, etc).

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- b) Larger expenditures, including any item over £100, require pre-authorisation from the Treasurer. Approval may be sought and given by email. A request may be referred to the Executive if the Treasurer believes it represents a variation from the agreed budget.
 - c) Any item of expenditure over £400 must be agreed by the Executive prior to the expenditure being made. If a payment over £400 needs to be made in circumstances in which it is not possible to seek the approval of the Executive, the payment may be authorised by the Officers, and reported to the Executive without delay.
- 12) Expense claims should be submitted to the Treasurer on LCER's standard claim form, within six weeks of the expenditure being incurred. Claims should be made in hard copy, attaching original receipts; or electronically, attaching scanned copies of receipts. Claims should specify the nature of the expenses and the activities undertaken, and should include the claimant's bank account details for electronic payment.
 - 13) The Treasurer should settle all claims within six weeks of receipt. Where the Treasurer wishes to consult the EC over a claim, he or she should inform the claimant that there will be a delay in processing the claim.

The Annual General Meeting

- 14) LCER's financial year runs from 1 July to 30 June each year.
- 15) The Treasurer will present a written report to the AGM each year. This report will include:
 - a) Full audited accounts for the previous financial year
 - b) A report comparing income and expenditure for the previous year with the agreed budget for that year,
 - c) The budget for the current financial year, as agreed by the EC.
- 16) The report, including full audited accounts, will be circulated electronically to LCER members one week before the date of the AGM.
- 17) All budgets, accounts and financial statements shall itemise separately any items of income or expenditure over £400.
- 18) The AGM will elect an Auditor for the following year. The Treasurer will contact the Auditor not more than six weeks after the end of each financial year to confirm his or her availability; in the event that the Auditor is unavailable, the Executive will appoint an alternative Auditor.

The Executive Committee

- 19) The Treasurer will present a draft budget for the upcoming financial year to the Executive, not later than 1 May each year. If the budget cannot be ratified by the Executive at that meeting, the Treasurer will consult members and present a revised budget at the following meeting.
- 20) The Treasurer will present a written financial statement to each meeting of the EC. This statement may be presented electronically if the Treasurer cannot attend in person. Each statement should include:
 - a) Income and expenditure since the previous meeting
 - b) Items of expenditure for which authorisation is required from the EC
 - c) Any applications for funding which have been made or are proposed
 - d) Updates on variance from the budget
- 21) All decisions taken by the Executive Committee concerning finance shall be recorded in the minutes.

Incapacity of the Treasurer

- 22) In the event that the Treasurer becomes unable to perform his or her duties for a period of more than a few weeks, for example because of illness or other commitments, the Executive may nominate another member (ideally a member who is already a nominated signatory) to take over the duties of Treasurer on a temporary basis.

Changes to Financial Standing Orders

- 23) These Financial Standing Orders may be changed by a majority vote at a General Meeting of LCER.