

Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform (LCER)

Principles for a Proportional Representation System for the House of Commons



Agreed by the LCER Executive 6 September 2022

In 2019 Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform signed up to the Good Systems Agreement, alongside the Lib Dems, Greens, and various democracy groups. That is a powerful agreed set of principles on which a new electoral system can be built.

This document sets out the objectives that we want PR to achieve. We believe that any new system for elections to the House of Commons must adhere to the following principles:

- 1) Proportionality. The number of seats won by each political party in the House of Commons must be broadly proportional to the number of votes cast. No system can be exactly proportional, but a good system should aim for the highest level of proportionality, regionally and nationally, compatible with the other principles.
- 2) Voter Choice. Voters must be able to make a positive choice for a party and candidates that best reflect their views, knowing that their vote will count. A good system will eliminate the need for tactical voting, with most voters having a representative they have voted for.
- 3) Locality. There should be a clear link between MPs and the area they represent. Constituency boundaries should reflect natural communities, so that people know and identify with their constituency and MP. MPs, local authorities and other organisations should be enabled to work effectively together.
- 4) Diversity. A good system will encourage the election of MPs from a wide range of backgrounds, reflecting the diversity of personal characteristics and the lived experiences of voters.
- 5) Accountability. A good system will allow voters to support MPs who are hardworking, effective and honest at the ballot box, while also holding parties accountable for their national performance.
- 6) Stability. Governments should have the support of the majority of the electorate. A good system will ensure responsible government by requiring a reasonable level of support for a party, locally or nationally, before awarding it seats.
- 7) Simplicity. The system of election must be easy for the voter to understand and use.
- 8) Acceptability. The outcomes of any system of election must be seen to be in accord with natural justice. It must be possible to explain how the system is fair to the great majority of voters.