

# Answers to Questions from Labour International

by Leadership Candidates

## Rebecca Long Bailey

1. **Do you agree that Labour Party members living abroad should be allowed the same membership fee concessions as we would have if we lived in the United Kingdom?**

Yes. Everyone should have access to the same concessions no matter where you live.

2. **Do you support open selection for MPs in a similar way as is the norm for Councillors?**

Yes. I have announced my support for open selections earlier in the campaign. Being an MP should not be a job for life and members should have the opportunity to put forward another candidate if they wish to.

3. **What needs to be done to grow support for the GND?**

Bringing the whole country with us in support of creating a green, socialist and democratic society is the only way we will address the climate crisis. We need to keep developing ambitious policies in conjunction with communities that would both transform their lives and meet the climate crisis. At the same time, we need to continue to harness the energy of campaigners and young climate strikers who have helped push the climate crisis to the top of the political agenda.

4. **What should Labour's Brexit policy be now?**

The priority now has to be what our ongoing relationship with the EU will look like, the trade deals our country strikes and our role in the world. I will hold Boris Johnson to account, fight for an agreement that ensures our economic prosperity and close trading relationship, maintains our worker, social and environmental rights and protections, that protects the status of EU citizens living in the UK and UK citizens living in the EU and trade deals that do not create a race to the bottom.

5. **What should be the party policy on immigration, migration and migrant rights?**

Our immigration policy must be based on our values – not numerical targets. We must end the hostile environment and keep holding the government to account for the on-going Windrush scandal. These are people who have lived in our country for decades having their rights and citizenship questioned. The rights of all migrants should be defended, with us welcoming those who wish to build their lives here, working and raising families. There can be no return to 'Controls on Immigration' mugs.

**6. How would you address democracy in the party including Regional structures, the selection of candidates at regional and national level, and the role of members in formulating LP policies?**

I support open selections as part of making our party more democratic. We need a better member-led policy making process, members and affiliates having a say over local and national policy, a properly resourced system of political education, a new BAME organisation to allow BAME members to self-organise, a professional and accountable party organisation and support for campaigning and organising rooted in local communities and workplaces. It is that can help us win the next general election.

**7. If there are irreconcilable differences between the PLP and the majority of Labour Party members who should give way?**

We are all Labour party members, our elected representatives at every level, trade unions and our local activists and members. Divided parties don't win elections. We all have a responsibility to unite behind the next leader of the party, to respect the outcome of our democratic structure and have a civilised debate where there are differences of opinion. Constructive political debate is healthy. But no one should be told to join the Tories any more than they should be called a cult that needs to be expelled.

**8. What role do you see for the party and its activists in delivering the LP message, including addressing the way the LP is portrayed in the media and working in communities**

The party needs to become a year-round campaigning organisation. We need to support CLPs with Community Organising, new campaigning techniques, strengthening our links with trade unions and using every way the party has to reach into communities and workplaces. The world has changed since the 1970's and 1980s when large workplaces dominated and a conversation on the doorstep was the only way to communicate our message. We have to expand how we campaign.

**9. What does the party need to do to move forward on the recommendations of the Chakrabarti Report with respect to antisemitism, including the LP disciplinary processes?**

It broke my heart to hear of lifelong Jewish voters who could not support us because we had lost their trust. Never again can we let that happen. I will be working with organisations to discuss how to implement the recommendations of the EHRC and I have signed the Board of Deputies 10 commitments. I want to see a robust disciplinary process that works for all forms of discrimination, hate speech and harassment.

**Lisa Nandy – No response**

**Keir Starmer – No response**

## **Emily Thornberry**

Dear Friends,

Thank you for inviting me to contribute to your deliberations on the Labour leadership contest, and I am very happy to give you answers to the questions you sent through.

It is always an honour to meet with representatives of Labour International, and I greatly enjoyed meeting Janet and members of Australasia Labour International during my time in Auckland last year.

Now that the other three candidates have all but secured the required backing to get on the final ballot, I hope you will consider giving me your support to ensure we have the broadest debate possible, and that I can bring my experience – especially on foreign policy issues – to that debate. I hope the answers below will show the contribution I can make.

### **1. Do you agree that Labour Party members living abroad should be allowed the same membership fee concessions as we would have if we lived in the United Kingdom?**

I don't see a single reason why not. What is the difference? I'd submit to the NEC that we change this rule immediately.

### **2. Do you support open selection for MPs in a similar way as is the norm for Councillors?**

I support trigger-ballots and I think that's the way for members to de-select an MP who's not properly representing them. My issue with open or mandatory reselection is that when we get a snap election like the last one, every single Labour MP would have to spend the first fortnight fighting to get re-selected instead of taking on their Tory opponents.

### **3. What needs to be done to grow support for the GND?**

We need to engage with communities on the ground in every region and nation in our country; making the argument for how the GND will bring jobs and investment. But we must recognise that our efforts alone will make no difference to the global climate emergency, so we also need to persuade the British people that we can be the world leaders in exporting the most advanced solar, wind and tidal power technology to every other country that needs to move to a zero-carbon economy.

### **4. What should Labour's Brexit policy be now?**

Brexit is a long way from done. Boris Johnson has no idea how he'll get a trade deal with the EU by the end of 2020, and the EU doesn't either. So our immediate priority will be continuing the fight against the risk of a No-Deal Brexit, because that's still the reality of what we face, and I don't think Johnson cares. But it matters hugely to our futures, and we have to fight tooth and nail against it.

### **5. What should be the party policy on immigration, migration and migrant rights?**

For me, there are two essential principles: first, our communities, economy and public services benefit hugely from immigration, so we should champion it, not demonise it like the Tories; and second, we have a duty of fairness when it comes to enabling the re-unification of immigrants with their families. As for Britons migrating abroad, that shouldn't affect their rights at all, whether it's votes, pensions, healthcare or the protection they can expect from our country.

**6. How would you address democracy in the party including Regional structures, the selection of candidates at regional and national level, and the role of members in formulating LP policies?**

That's a lot to cover in 80 words, but quick answers: we've got many top-class regional organisers but they need to take their direction from the regional offices and local candidates, not from Labour HQ; I've already commented on open selection, but we must also stop the opposite – i.e. the late imposition of candidates where local members feel denied a choice; and absolutely, I want our members to be involved in formulating our policies every week, not just at conference.

**7. If there are irreconcilable differences between the PLP and the majority of Labour Party members who should give way?**

I think ultimately all MPs are answerable to our members, both individually and collectively, and are also duty-bound to act in line with the policies and rules agreed by our party conferences. We are always at our best as a movement and a government of power when we properly represent our members' views, whereas some of the worst mistakes in our history have come when acting in deliberate defiance of them, from Ramsay MacDonald's austerity to Tony Blair's Iraq War.

**8. What role do you see for the party and its activists in delivering the LP message, including: addressing the way the LP is portrayed in the media; and working in communities?**

I think our activists are our strongest asset as a party in terms of building support and spreading our message door-by-door, but they need a clear and communicable set of messages and policies to get across. As for the Labour Party and the media, I think we just need to get out there more. I do interviews ranging from Piers Morgan to Pink News, and that's what our leader needs to be: not just campaigner-in-chief but spokesperson-in-chief.

**9. What does the party need to do to move forward on the recommendations of the Chakrabarti Report with respect to antisemitism, including the LP disciplinary processes?**

It's not just Shami's report we need to move forward on; it's also the upcoming Equalities Commission report, and the recommendations we've had from Jewish groups themselves, so there is a lot of work to do. But the ultimate principle is this: there can be no place for anyone with antisemitic views in our party, and when there is evidence against someone, we don't need training courses or suspensions or excuses made for them; they should just be kicked out.