

## Momentum Open Selections Guide

Trigger ballots will commence shortly in all constituencies with sitting Labour MPs. **The most significant action which Momentum members can take to ensure the next Parliamentary Labour Party is committed to a transformative Labour government is to organise for open selections<sup>1</sup> in seats where incumbent MPs do not want to see a transformative Labour government.**

This guide contains key tips for activists seeking to organise for open selections based on the best information we have at the moment. Formal party procedures will be circulated to CLP Secretaries shortly, and if necessary any updates will be incorporated into this document, so please do keep checking here regularly, and email us at [transforminglabour@peoplesmomentum.com](mailto:transforminglabour@peoplesmomentum.com) if you have any questions.

### Political considerations

Before beginning, there are a number of considerations which Momentum activists might like to take into account when deciding whether to organise for a full selection or not:

- **The extent to which the sitting MP contributes to the realisation of a transformative Labour government.** Considerations of the contribution an MP makes should go beyond performing basic responsibilities which all MPs are expected to uphold, or ones that are primarily geared towards bolstering their own individual support bases. Key criteria include the depth of their politics and support for progressive, socialist policies, whether they play a key role in the Shadow Cabinet, and whether they have a track record in genuinely empowering under-represented, exploited or discriminated groups in Parliament.
- **The likely impact of pushing for an open selection - or not doing so - on the behaviour of the MP and other MPs.** Open selections are the strongest way to ensure accountability between MPs and their activists, because they create a democratic contest in which MPs are required to defend their record. However achieving that requires trigger ballots to be conducted in a positive manner, free from personal attacks and based around the principles of accountability and democratic choice.
- **Whether there is a genuine danger of losing the seat at the next election and whether an open selection would harm or hinder the prospects for keeping the seat.** This is not always easy to calculate, because activists may be faced with exaggerated claims of MPs' personal support. It is also worth considering that potential new candidates may be similarly or more popular amongst constituents than sitting incumbents. Therefore, while activists should take electoral considerations seriously, they should not lose sight of the negative long-term impacts of low levels of accountability on the party's credibility and ability to inspire people across society.

### Procedural Questions

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<sup>1</sup> Also referred to as 'full selections'.

*When will trigger ballots happen?*

The General Secretary in consultation with the relevant Regional Director will decide the overall schedule for trigger ballots in each region. The specific timetable for any given reselection process will be agreed at a meeting between the NEC Representative (see below) and CLP Executive (7 days' notice required). This timetable will give time windows for party and affiliated branches to call meetings specifically to decide on whether to support an open selection.

*How do we achieve an Open Selection?*

To achieve an open selection, a third or more of party branches **that indicate a preference (submit a ballot)** or a third or more of affiliated branches **that formally exist** (according to the procedures for affiliation, see below) have to submit ballots confirming that they are in favour of a full selection (open selection) rather than the reselection (re-endorsement) of the incumbent MP without a full selection. If either of these thresholds are met, there will subsequently be an open selection which new candidates will be able to contest - although it is as yet not determined when the resulting open selections will occur (see below).

*How is the threshold of a third of branches calculated?*

The calculation of 'the third' is different for party branches as opposed to affiliated branches. **The 'third' of branches required to achieve an open selection in the party branch section refers to a third of all branches that indicate a preference (submit a ballot).** By contrast 'the third' in the affiliated section refers to all the affiliated branches that are formally affiliated in the given constituency as of 31 December in the previous year. This calculation will be made at a special meeting of the CLP Executive Committee, and subsequently communicated to the Regional Director or General Secretary.

*What happens if a branch does not meet, or decides not to cast a ballot?*

If there are party nine branches, and only six meet and submit a ballot, the threshold for an open selection will be two branches. However in the affiliated branches' section, if there are 10 branches and one branch does not submit a ballot, the threshold will still be 4 overall.

*What will quoracy be for the trigger ballot meetings?*

The NEC has determined that there will be **no quoracy requirement for trigger ballot meetings.**

*Who oversees the trigger ballot process?*

Each trigger ballot will be overseen by an NEC Representative, who will be a member of the Regional Executive Committee. They will meet with the CLP Executive to agree on the timetable for the branch meetings, as well as the Procedures Secretary, who will carry out the administrative duties for the trigger ballots. Each trigger ballot meeting will be overseen by a nominated member of the CLP Executive.

*Who can participate?*

All party members registered in the CLP who have been members for more than six months, and who are not in arrears, before the freeze date, which is the date when the NEC Representative first meets the CLP Executive to do the timetable. Affiliated branches which affiliated to the CLP before 31 December in the previous year and who have paid their affiliation fee at least 35 days before the closing date for the return of ballots, as well as Labour Party branches in existence at the freeze date, can participate.

*Can party members produce literature in support of open selection to hand out at the meetings?*

Yes. There is nothing to prevent party members from producing leaflets with arguments for open selections. These leaflets should not contain any personal attacks, and should focus on the principle of open selection, as well as clarifying procedural issues - e.g. that the sitting MP will automatically be on the shortlist in the event of an open selection.

*Can potential new candidates declare their interest in a seat or publicly campaign as a candidate before or during a trigger ballot?*

No. Only the sitting MP is allowed to campaign as if they are candidates in the trigger ballot process. However, there is nothing to prevent party members having informal conversations to discuss potential future candidates at this stage.

*Are sitting MPs able to use their access to party membership data to campaign for their reselections?*

Yes. Sitting MPs have the right to use membership data access to organise for their own reselections. They can also produce a statement to be circulated before meetings, but they cannot attend any part of the meeting when the reselection process is being discussed or decided upon.

*If a third or more of branches vote for an open selection where the sitting MP is a woman, will the subsequent open selection be an All Women Shortlist?*

Yes. The NEC has also clarified that in instances where a male MP faces an open selection, the NEC can potentially make the selection an All Woman Shortlist for the other candidates.

*What happens in seats without functioning branches, or where there is a discrepancy between the branches which are formally registered with the party and ones which exist in reality?*

CLPs which do not have functioning branches or which meet as one branch will be asked to meet on local government ward boundaries as nominal branches. Meanwhile branches which have merged and which now operate as one branch will be allowed to meet as one branch rather than being split back into two. CLPs will shortly be asked to submit their branches to the party via the regional director, and activists should identify early on if there is

a possibility of discrepancies, and seek clarification as soon as possible. Any disagreement regarding the status of a party branch will be referred to the Chair of the NEC Organisation Sub-Committee.

*What happens if a snap election happens before a trigger ballot has taken place, or if a snap election happens after a CLP has decided upon an open selection but that has not begun yet?*

Neither of these questions have been decided, and will be decided by the NEC shortly after a snap election is called.

*Once a CLP has decided in favour of an open selection, what happens next?*

After a CLP has decided in favour of an open selection, the selection will be conducted with nominations via branches followed by shortlisting and then voting following a hustings or via an all-postal ballot, using single transferable voting. Open selections are extremely intense in terms of the resources, organisational capacity, and emotional effort required to compete in them effectively, so activists pushing for them should have one eye on this in advance.

*When will the resulting open selections occur?*

This has yet to be decided. In theory, open selections could begin immediately after the culmination of the trigger ballot. However, in many instances there is likely to be a time gap, and it may be the case that all the open selections are held after all trigger ballots have been completed, along with selections in seats where MPs have retired.

The consequence of any time gap between trigger ballots culminating and subsequent open selections is that if activists strongly desire a left-wing candidate but do not currently have one, there may be a case for pushing for the open selection in order to identify a left-wing candidate after the trigger ballot.

*What happens if any procedures are not adhered to?*

All party members must adhere fully to all guidance, procedures, model letters, the model agenda and ballot paper disseminated by the party. Any breaches could potentially lead to the annulling of the result.

*Any more questions?*

Please contact Momentum at [transforminglabour@peoplesmomentum.com](mailto:transforminglabour@peoplesmomentum.com) for any remaining queries relating to trigger ballots.