Online meetings guidance
Local government selections
NEC nomination meetings

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Version 1 – Internal sign off 160620
Version 2 – Internal sign off 100720
Version 2.1 – Amended 140720
Introduction

The NEC recently agreed that candidate selection meetings and nominations for the upcoming NEC elections should take place online while physical meetings remain impossible due to government public health advice. The Labour Party’s priority at this time is the health of our staff, members, and the wider public. We strongly encourage everyone to follow government advice at all times, which can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public

This guidance document outlines how to use Microsoft Teams and an online voting tool called Choice Voting to allow your CLP to run local government selections and participate in the nomination process for the upcoming NEC elections. This document is not intended to be a comprehensive technical and constitutional manual. It should therefore be read alongside the NEC Procedures for the selection of local government candidates (Appendix 4 of the 2020 Labour Party Rule Book), your CLP’s standing orders, as well as the Labour Party’s ‘Microsoft 365 and Teams Guidance for CLPs’ (which you can find using the link below). You may also find Choice Voting’s own Support Centre a useful resource - https://www.choicevoting.co.uk/knowledgebase/

Below you will find guidelines on running an online meeting and ballot in line with Labour Party procedures, in particular how to set up a ballot on Choice Voting, and how to make sure only eligible members are able to participate. You will also find tips for making your meeting run smoothly, as well as a model calling notice.

The most up to date information will be published on the Party’s online meetings webpage - https://labour.org.uk/online-meeting-guidance/

If you have any questions or require support, please contact your regional office or helpdesk@labourclp.org.uk in the first instance. Choice Voting do have their own customer service operation, but they are an independent company and so will not be able to assist you with Labour Party meetings.

We know that you may also be wanting to think about things such as CLP AGMs, and that will be up for discussion in due course. It will be a big change for the Labour Party to temporarily move business away from physical meetings, so we want to take our time to ensure any solution is as safe, secure and inclusive as possible.
Keeping it constitutional

Convening a meeting online may feel less formal than a traditional physical Labour Party meeting but it is important that meetings are conducted in line with standing orders and the relevant selection procedures as much as possible. This ensures that all members and candidates are treated fairly, that procedures are transparent and robust, and that the scope for challenge to any result is minimised.

Local government selections - The local government selection procedures are available as Appendix 4 of the 2020 Labour Party Rule Book. It is important that CLP officers familiarise themselves with this document prior to scheduling any shortlisting or selection meetings. Timetables for local government selections must be signed off by your regional office in advance. In the next section of this document we explain how to ensure only eligible members participate, and how to set up your ballot. You should find that these are the two major adjustments that will need to be made and that most of the other provisions outlined in the selection procedures are easily transferable to the context of an online meeting.

NEC nominations – Nominations for internal elections should be made in line with your CLP’s own standing orders. Unlike for local government selections there are no additional eligibility requirements on top of being a full member of the Labour Party on the date of the meeting. You should, however, still make sure procedures are in place to ensure only full members are able to participate. If your CLP has a delegate structure, only delegates will be entitled to participate. In order to ensure the smooth running of the meeting you may wish to ask for nominations by email in advance of the meeting. Statements of those who have declared their candidacy will be available on the following website from 11 July - https://labour.org.uk/activist-hub/governance-and-legal-hub/ballots-and-nominations/nec-candidate-statements-2020/
You will find the meeting runs much smoother if the Chair explains at the beginning of the meeting the procedure to be followed, in particular how members should indicate if they wish to speak, ask a question, or propose or second a candidate. Whatever process is being used for members to indicate, the Chair should ensure that contributions come from a diverse spread of members.

Finally, the only reason the meeting should be recorded is if that is a delegate’s only method of taking notes. In such instances, all those in attendance should be made aware that the meeting is being recorded. Any recording must not be used for any other purpose than that for which it was taken. In particular, under no circumstances should any recording or part of a recording be published on social media or elsewhere. Photos or screen shots from the meeting should not be shared online without the express permission of everyone featured.
Setting up your ballot using Choice Voting

The step by step guide below assumes you are setting up a local government selection ballot where you are selecting two candidates, one of whom is required to be a woman. Other ballots such as NEC nominations or local government shortlisting will likely be procedurally simpler, but you should still find the steps below a useful guide to setting up your ballot.

Please speak to your regional office about registering an account with Choice Voting.

You should set up your ballot well in advance of the meeting so that you have time to address any problems. For a local government selection meeting you will already know who the shortlisted candidates are. For other ballots you may find it easier to set up your ballot with all possible candidates. You can then remove any candidates that are not nominated at your meeting, prior to the ballot being opened. Where positive action procedures are in place for local government selection meetings the ballot must take place in two stages, this means you will need to set up two ballots on Choice Voting:

- The first ballot will be a position reserved for a woman
- The second ballot will be open to both men and women

Should the same woman win both ballots, you will be able to exclude her from the second ballot and recalculate the results based on redistributing her preferences.

If only one woman has been shortlisted you will not need to ballot for the reserved place. She will be deemed selected unopposed. In such cases you will only need to run one ballot for second position which will be open to both men and women.

Similarly, if only one woman and one man have been shortlisted, there will be no need for any ballot. They will be deemed selected unopposed.

The example set out below assumes both positions are being contested, with six candidates (three men and three women) having been previously shortlisted.

**Step 1 – Setting up your election**

From app.choicevoting.co.uk/dashboard click on “+Add New Election”.

![Dashboard](Dashboard.png)
Give your election a name and add a description. It will be helpful to explain the positive action procedures and/or the voting procedure to be followed.

You will then need to set a date and time for your election. The ballot should not open until the discussion at your meeting has concluded. You will be able to change the start time later. For example, if your meeting has overrun.

Click ‘Create Election’.

**Step 2 – Settings**

Please ensure that the settings are as follows before beginning to set up your ballot. In particular, if you do not have email enabled, ballot papers will not be sent to voters.

**Voter**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enable Email</td>
<td>Enabled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable Position Vote Receipt</td>
<td>Enabled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable Edit Option</td>
<td>Disabled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display Vote Confirmation</td>
<td>Enabled</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Result

Display results publicly at the end of an election? Disabled

Step 2 – Setting up positions

You will need to set up two ‘positions’. One position will be the selection of a woman, the other position will be the selection of a man or a woman.

From the menu on the right click on ‘Positions’ and then fill in the information as per the screenshots below.

Note that the maximum number of votes should be the total number of candidates nominated for that position and the minimum should always be ‘1’. This means that voters will always be able to vote for as few or as many candidates as they wish.
Once you have saved the first position click on ‘All Positions’ and then repeat the process to set up your open position.
With both positions set up, you should have a screen similar to the screenshot below:

**Step 3 – Adding your candidates**

Once you have set up your two positions, click on ‘Candidates’ from the menu on the left. You will then be able to add names and nomination statements for each candidate, as well as using the drop-down menu to assign them to one of the two positions. It is not necessary to add a photo.
You will need to add each woman candidate twice, as they will be eligible to take part in both the reserved and open ballots.

Once you have added all of your candidates, you should have a screen similar to the screenshot below:
Making sure only eligible members can participate

For an important meeting such as a selection meeting or an AGM, we would usually expect the eligibility of members in attendance to be checked on the door, for example by checking names against a membership list and/or asking members to provide their membership cards. It is not possible to replicate this practice exactly at an online meeting, but you should nevertheless be making sure processes are in place to make sure only eligible members are able to attend and vote, so the result of the procedure cannot be challenged subsequently.

When drawing up a plan for checking eligibility you should think about the following factors:

- What is the size of your branch/CLP and what levels of attendance do you usually have?
- If it is a CLP meeting, do you operate on a delegate or all member model?
- What are the eligibility requirements for the process you are going to undertake?
- What platform are you using to conduct your online meeting, and what features does it have which may assist you (e.g. waiting room facilities)?

You should find the process outlined below is a robust way of checking the eligibility of members which should suit most circumstances. However, variations may be agreed in advance by your regional office.

However you are undertaking eligibility checks, you should identify at least one member who can take responsibility for this task, leaving the Chair or other appropriate officer free to undertake any other required tasks.

**Step 1 – Before the meeting**

Only eligible members should be invited to attend your meeting. For a local government selection this will be members who have at least six months membership at the freeze date. You should send the notification to eligible members through Organise in the same way you would if the meeting was taking place in person.

The email should contain a link to join the meeting.

**Step 2 – At the start of the meetings**

You will need to check each participant is an eligible member prior to admitting them to the meeting. To allow enough time to do this, you may wish to advertise that there will be a period of time (for example 30 minutes, depending on how many members in your branch/CLP) for registration prior to the start of formal business. You should also make clear to members that they should log on early if possible to avoid delays.
Members over the aged 18 or over should be asked to ensure their display names match their names as they appear on MemberCentre as much as possible in order to aid efficient membership checks. Young members should use a nick name or first name only, rather than their full name. At the meeting itself, such members can privately message the appropriate CLP officer to confirm their eligibility.

Once the meeting starts you should press the icon at the bottom of the screen titled “Show participants”. (If you are using a different service than Microsoft Teams there should be an equivalent option.)

Now you will be able to allow people in to the meeting that are waiting in the lobby. This is where you should check the eligibility of members, and mark them off against a membership list, in exactly the same way as you would at a physical meeting:

You should now only admit those who meet the eligibility criteria to the meeting.

Once the meeting has “closed the doors” – the point at which no one else will be able to join the meeting - you should download a list of attendees by that point. This will enable you to do a final check of attendees against the membership list.
You should no longer accept anyone who is waiting in the lobby after this point.

Once the meeting is underway, you should use the membership list you have been recording attendees against to produce a list of eligible voters. You can do this by using Excel’s filter function to select only those marked as ‘YES’ and copy them into a separate CSV file:

Your new CSV file only needs to contain names and email addresses, and must be in the same format as Choice Voting’s template. You can then add upload your final list of eligible voters by going to ‘Voters’ > ‘Import Voters’ within your election:
Optional – voter registration

The process above assumed that the election is taking place based on a list of meeting attendees uploaded by whoever is administering the election. In some situations it may be useful to allow members to register themselves instead, particularly if you have agreed an alternative eligibility checking process with your regional office.

To enable voter registration, you will need to go to ‘Settings’ > ‘Voter registration’ and ensure that voter registration is enabled by clicking the button on the top right of the screen:

In the screenshot above you will also see a link that you can click on to take you to the voter registration page, which you can then include in your notification:
If using this option, you will probably want to advise members that the name they use to complete this form should match the name that is used when they join the Teams meeting and should, if possible, be the member’s name as it appears on MemberCentre.
Tips for having an online meeting

Here are some tips to make your online meetings successful:

• **BE SECURE.** Don’t share the link to the meeting on social media – send the link to eligible members only, and make it clear in the notification that the link should not be passed on to anyone else.

• **BE PREPARED.** Where eligibility checks are required, make sure there is someone whose sole job this is, who has read this guidance and is familiar with the technology. You may also wish to have a designated contact for any members who have technical difficulties.

• **BE SAFE.** If your meeting allows participants to interact with each other, circulate the safeguarding email address in case participants need to flag any concerns or issues: safeguarding@labour.org.uk and make sure you've read the Party's guidance on safeguarding and meeting online: https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Guidelines-for-Safe-Activities-C-19-Outbreak.pdf

• **BE ON TIME.** If you’re hosting the meeting, log in a little earlier to make sure the technology is working and people can see and hear you.

• **BE CHATTY.** Have one person running the meeting and another person monitoring the chat box. Some people may not like to speak out loud but can use the chat to raise issues or questions. Try to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to speak and that a small number of people don't dominate the conversation.

• **BE CLEAR.** The person chairing the meeting should make it clear from the start exactly how long the meeting will last, what will be discussed and how any official business will be carried out.

• **BE CONSIDERATE.** Anyone who isn't speaking should try to mute their microphone. It’s often sensible to set up meetings so that everyone is automatically muted on entry.

• **BE READY.** Get someone to put links and key points into the chat so that if audio quality dips at any point, people can catch up.

• **BE ATTENTIVE.** If your meeting is with more than a couple of people, we recommend using written signals in the chat box to let people know you want to speak. Ask people to use the hands up function, or ask people to put a * symbol or similar in the chat box so you know which order to take questions and contributions.

• **BE FOCUSED.** Make sure your meeting doesn't go off topic – we know people have lots of video calls at the moment and won't want to stay on much longer than an hour.

• **BE ORGANISED.** Make sure someone (ideally the CLP Secretary) is taking notes so that there’s a record of what's discussed.
• **BE ACCESSIBLE.** We’re aware that not everyone has access to online video conferencing. Make sure you’ve set up a process for people to get in touch, that they can receive information another way, and are still able to receive information from your meetings to make sure your organising doesn't exclude anyone.

• **BE EVALUATIVE.** We know this is a different and new way of working for everyone. After your first couple of meetings, take some time to review what worked well, and what didn't, to make future meetings even better.
Model calling notice for an online selection meeting

*Please read this notice carefully to ensure you do not lose your opportunity to attend and vote at this important meeting.*

Due to the ongoing restrictions in place to deal with COVID-19, CLPs are still unable to meet in person. However, the NEC has allowed selection meetings to take place online so that the Labour Party can prepare for next year’s important elections.

I am writing to you as an eligible member, to notify you of the date of our selection meeting. I have attached the agenda for the meeting.

The selection meeting is to be held on [Date]
registration will open from [Time] and will start at [Time].
You can join the meeting by [Joining details]

We will need to check the eligibility of all members prior to admitting them to the meeting, so please make sure you log on early. As previously advised, if you log on after the meeting has started you will not be allowed to take part, so please log on arrive early.

All members over the age of 18 need to use their full name when registering for the meeting. This is so we can check your eligibility in the same we would sign you in at the door at a physical meeting. In line with safeguarding advice, if you are under 18 you must use your first name or a nickname only.

As you may know, the ward short-listed the following nominees for interview at the selection meeting:
1 [Name]
2 [Name]
3 [Name]

Information about these short-listed nominees is included with this email.

The vote will be taken by eliminating ballot. [Where necessary: A vote will first be taken for places reserved for women candidates, followed by a vote open to all for the remaining places.]

Selecting your local Labour representatives is one of the most important responsibilities of members during the year. I therefore hope you are able to attend.

I look forward to seeing you there and to working in our campaign with you.
This notice has only been sent to eligible members – those with at least six months continuous membership – please do not share this notice or any links within it on social media, or forward it on to any other individual. If there is someone you think should have received this notice but has not, please let me know.

Yours sincerely
Branch Secretary
Model calling notice for an NEC nomination meeting

Please read this notice carefully to ensure you do not lose your opportunity to attend and vote at this important meeting.

Due to the ongoing restrictions in place to deal with COVID-19, CLPs are still unable to meet in person. However, the NEC has allowed selection meetings and NEC nomination meetings to take place online.

I am writing to you as an eligible member, to notify you of the date of our CLP nomination meeting. I have attached the agenda for the meeting.

The selection meeting is to be held on [Date]
registration will open from [Time] and will start at [Time].
You can join the meeting by [Joining details]

We will need to check the eligibility of all members prior to admitting them to the meeting, so please make sure you log on early. As previously advised, if you log on after the meeting has started you will not be allowed to take part, so please log on arrive early.

All members over the age of 18 need to use their full name when registering for the meeting. This is so we can check your eligibility in the same we would sign you in at the door at a physical meeting. In line with safeguarding advice, if you are under 18 you must use your first name or a nickname only.

The following positions require nominations from CLPs in order to proceed to the ballot:
NEC Div III (CLPs) – 9 positions
NEC Disabled Members Representative
Treasurer
Welsh Labour Representative – Welsh CLPs only
Information about members who have declared their candidacy is available here - https://labour.org.uk/activist-hub/governance-and-legal-hub/ballots-and-nominations/nec-candidate-statements-2020/.

I look forward to seeing you there and to working in our campaign with you.

This notice has only been sent to eligible members please do not share this notice or any links within it on social media, or forward it on to any other individual. If there is someone you think should have received this notice but has not, please let me know.
Yours sincerely
CLP Secretary