



A FRESH START FOR LABOUR?

SIR KEIR STARMER ELECTED LEADER OF THE LABOUR PARTY

Sir Keir Starmer has been elected Leader of the Labour Party. He won on the first round with 56.2% of the vote, beating rivals Rebecca Long Bailey and Lisa Nandy. Angela Rayner has been elected Deputy Leader.

The scale of Starmer's victory marks a new period for Labour, and a turning point away from the Corbyn era. It signifies what many Labour members hope is a fresh start for the party and a step back towards power after four General Election defeats.

WHAT TO EXPECT UNDER STARMER'S LEADERSHIP

Starmer's career as an MP has shown he does not fit into a pre-defined political box. The leadership campaign over the last few months has seen him attempt to set his own direction, with both praise and criticism for Labour leaders who preceded him, as he has sought to better define his political motivations and beliefs.

Nonetheless, after the campaign there are still questions about what kind of a leader he will be. Restoring party unity is a clear priority but is that a means to an end or an end in and of itself? Many of his policy pronouncements have been top line, lending themselves to different interpretations – the devil will be in the detail and will give a better sense of how far Starmer wants to break from his predecessor.

IMMEDIATE CHALLENGES

- 1. Coronavirus:** This will dominate the political landscape for months and his biggest challenge will be appearing statesman-like in the face of uncertainty. At a time in which new leaders seek a bounce in the polls, the challenge will be to provide strong, yet responsible opposition. Starmer has called for a "bold, comprehensive package to protect the incomes of British workers", a call for state support which we can expect to see echoed in the weeks ahead.
- 2. Rebuilding and uniting Labour:** Elsewhere, Starmer's challenge will be to rebuild a weary and divided Labour Party. He has urged Labour to return to a "broad church" and recently said, "I'm trying to take both from the last Labour government, and from Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell". He has argued the 2019 manifesto represented "policy overload" yet has been careful not to be overly critical, maintaining a number of policies, including on common ownership. His sharpest critique is directed at the failure of Corbyn to deal with antisemitism within the Labour Party.
- 3. Asserting authority:** Starmer must assert his authority over the Labour machine. Leaked plans suggest he will seek to remove those closest to Corbyn, including Jennie Formby, Labour's General Secretary, and Karie Murphy, Corbyn's Chief of Staff. Seumas Milne, Director of Strategy and Communications, has also reportedly said he will resign.

KEY POLICY PLEDGES

Starmer has set out key policy ideas he argues are 'based on the moral case for socialism'. These include investment in public services; tackling climate change; tax rises for those at the top; common ownership of rail, mail, energy and water; ending outsourcing in the NHS, local government and justice; and increased devolution. Many of these policies speak to the Corbyn wing, but whether or not he sticks to these pledges once elected, and to what extent, remains to be seen. A pledge in favour of common ownership, for example, could be as radical as the Corbyn version, or a softer approach.

STARMER'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS BUSINESS

A Starmer-led Labour Party looks set to be less instinctively critical of business than Corbyn's Labour, whilst still not afraid to call out perceived wrong-doing. There are therefore potentially more opportunities to engage with Labour's frontbench than businesses have experienced over the past five years. In particular, much of the policy platform is still to be formulated and there will be chances for business to engage in the development of Starmer's policy agenda in the months and years to come.

WHO'S WHO

At the top of Starmer's to do list is the appointment of a new frontbench team. Likely to be offered positions are leadership rivals Rebecca Long Bailey and Lisa Nandy, and it is expected that Shadow Health Secretary Jonathan Ashworth will remain in the Shadow Cabinet. Starmer will be keen to promote those not involved in the factional politics of the past five years. Those tipped for promotion include Anneliese Dodds and Jonathan Reynolds, members of the Shadow Treasury team under McDonnell. Some senior backbenchers may return to the frontbench. Rachel Reeves, Chair of the BEIS Select Committee, is likely to re-join the Shadow Cabinet, with many predicting Shadow Chancellor.

Starmer's campaign has been staffed by a broad church of advisers. Long term members of the Starmer team include Chris Ward and Ben Nunn. Alongside them sit former Corbyn staffers Simon Fletcher and Kat Fletcher, as well as Morgan McSweeney, who worked on Liz Kendall's 2015 leadership campaign. According to media reports, Claire Ainsley of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, is a contender to lead policy work.



BACKGROUND

Before becoming an MP, Starmer enjoyed a highly successful career in law that culminated in his appointment as the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP). He stood down as DPP in 2013 and received a knighthood in 2014. He traded in the gown and wig for the green benches in 2015, becoming the MP for Holborn and St Pancras. Starmer was appointed Shadow Home Office Minister in 2016, a position he resigned from in protest at Corbyn's leadership. He was on the backbenches briefly before his appointment to the Shadow Cabinet as Shadow Brexit Secretary. In this role many believe he was the driving force behind Labour's promise of a second vote.

ANGELA RAYNER ELECTED DEPUTY LEADER OF THE LABOUR PARTY

Angela Rayner was elected as the MP for Ashton-under-Lyne in 2015. Before her election to Parliament she worked as a care worker and trade union representative. Once elected she was promoted to the Shadow Whip's office before becoming Shadow Pensions Minister and Shadow Women and Equalities Minister, followed by Shadow Secretary of State for Education. Despite being publicly loyal to Corbyn, Rayner has been known to be critical, including on plans for major increases in state spending, which she described as a high-risk "s**t-or-bust strategy". Rayner has described herself as "a socialist but not a Corbynite".

