

Labour Party Ombudsperson

The Labour Party Rule Book 2018. Section A. Chapter 1 Constitutional Rules Amendment

Insert new clause XI as follows:

There shall be a Labour Party Ombudsperson, appointed by the National Executive Committee.

The Labour Party Ombudsperson shall deal with complaints alleging a breach of (a) the Charter of Members' Rights, and (b) the Labour Party Code of Ethics, in accordance with procedures approved by the National Executive Committee.

The Labour Party Ombudsperson shall be a Labour Party member and shall be appointed by the National Executive Committee. The Labour Party Ombudsperson shall be appointed to serve for a non-renewable fixed term, which shall not exceed two terms of five years each.

The Labour Party Ombudsperson shall be independent and impartial; shall be remunerated in accordance with a sum approved by the National Executive Committee; and shall not be removed from office while continuing in membership of the Party except for misconduct or incapacity, following a resolution of the National Executive Committee approved by Conference. S/he shall be allocated an appropriate amount of staff and other Party resources in order to carry out his or her duties.

The Ombudsperson shall report to the National Executive Committee on the patterns of complaints received by him or her, and the outcomes of those complaints. S/he shall make recommendations to the NEC as to practice or potential rule changes. However, he or she shall not report on individual complaints and the NEC shall have no oversight as to the investigation or outcome of individual complaints. The Ombudsperson's report to the NEC shall be posted on the Labour Party website and circulated to CLP secretaries.

The Ombudsman and all staff working on Ombudsman matters shall maintain confidentiality in respect of each complaint received, the investigations and outcome.

Supporting Argument

The existing rules set out the duties and restrictions on members of the Labour Party but recent experience of top down management of the Party has demonstrated that these rules, and the Party as a whole, would now benefit from a Charter of Members' Rights and an official code of ethics concerning the running of the Party.

The enforcement of these rights and duties and the investigation of complaints as to their breach will need to be underpinned by the work of an independent ombudsperson. It is essential that the ombudsperson is accountable to the NEC and that their work does not cut across other NEC functions. However, the ombudsperson must personally be truly independent and command widespread support and command widespread support across the party as a whole.