

Proposal on Freeze Dates

- Local government freeze dates should be fixed so that all members with 12 months' membership prior to the date of all local government elections except by-elections shall be entitled to take part in shortlisting and selection meetings. In the case of by-elections, the eligibility shall be six months before the date of the election.
- Freeze dates for leadership elections should be fixed so that anybody signing up as a registered supporter or member more than one month before the close of the election shall be eligible to vote.

Supporting argument

The present rule allows for entirely arbitrary freeze dates, different in different parts of Britain, and open to manipulation by very small numbers of people to disenfranchise large sections of members. In selections for elections in May 2018, as many as half of all members have been disenfranchised in some areas, with logical absurdities resulting – for example, that while local government candidates normally need one year's membership, members selecting candidates have needed well over a year's membership.

Under the present rule, Regional Directors have insisted that the six-month countback starts from the date of the LCF meeting called to discuss the issue. By calling an LCF meeting on a particular date, an LCF secretary can, in conjunction with Regional Directors, determine the eligibility of members. Many LCFs have met infrequently, not holding AGMs according to rule, and LCF secretaries have been able to act without any effective accountability.

The present rule also leaves unclear what happens if the LCF does not agree with the Regional Director on the freeze date. In practice, where this has taken place, Regional Directors, citing delegated powers from the NEC, have imposed freeze dates on local parties. Fixing the freeze date at 12 months before local elections are expected removes the possibilities for these discretionary interpretations of the existing guidance.