

LABOUR LEADERSHIP CONTEST

General Election Candidates' Survey

By Westminster Public Affairs Ltd



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ABOUT WESTMINSTER PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Westminster PA's award-winning consultants help our clients to shape and influence law making and policy in the UK and Europe. From multinational corporates and campaigning coalitions to think-tanks and small charities, our team can help you to develop and deliver your public affairs and media relations activities and campaigns.



After working for former Lib Dem leader Charles Kennedy as his Deputy Press Secretary (2004-2006) Olly Kendall worked in lobbying and PR before founding Westminster PA. His sector experience includes transport, aviation, housing, finance, environment, gaming, digital economy, animal welfare, family law and visa policy. He contributes to the Guardian and appears as a media and political commentator on BBC, ITV and Sky News. In 2008 he won the Young Communicator of the Year award at the PRCA Awards.



Mike Williams works across a wide range of client accounts covering transport, health, academia and family law. He manages client work including public engagement events, cross-platform media launches, Westminster political lobbying campaigns and media and political monitoring. Mike has a Masters Degree in International Politics and has previously worked for a political campaign group and as a graduate case-handler for Deloitte.



David Hubert is our associate EU consultant with extensive experience in advising on policy and legal compliance in the EU as well as representing the interests of clients in Brussels. His main area of expertise is the EU internal market. As such he has expert knowledge of EU policies that affect the freedom of movement of people and services, the recognition of qualifications across the EU and common European educational standards. He works largely with professional associations, trade associations and regulatory bodies.



Dan Hartropp is our associate data and monitoring consultant. He's the founder of political analysis specialists six & two threes and is an expert in using powerful analytical techniques to help clients understand their political context and target the right people to speak to. Dan had over a decade of experience working in the Civil Service where he specialised in legislation and the use of data to solve complex operational problems.



LEADERSHIP SURVEY

THE VIEWS OF LABOUR'S GENERAL ELECTION CANDIDATES

OVERVIEW

Westminster PA reached out to a selection of the Labour Party's 2015 general election candidates who did not win their seats and asked them to anonymously share their first preference candidates for both the leadership and deputy leadership contests currently underway. The survey was undertaken between Wednesday 13th and Friday 15th May 2015 during which time a number of candidates in both races announced their intention to stand. We also offered respondents the opportunity to state their preferred candidate if they were not listed, and we also asked candidates to volunteer any further thoughts on both races, to be shared – again – anonymously.

It's quite possible that more leadership and deputy leadership candidates beyond those who have either announced their candidacies or who it is rumored plan to, will throw their hat into the ring. These surveys, of course, are therefore skewed towards those who are currently the confirmed or most likely people to seek election to either position.

A total of 62 election candidates responded to both the leadership survey and deputy leadership survey. The surveys are intended only to provide a snap shot of one group of the party, albeit an arguably high-profile and influential group within local media and their local constituency parties.

We surveyed these parliamentary candidates because they represent an interesting group of the party's voting members. Many have spent years campaigning locally, they've heard the reaction from voters first-hand to Ed Miliband's leadership on the doorstep over the last five years. They're people with parliamentary ambition – they want a leader who will take their party to electoral success, helping some of them – they hope – to secure election to Parliament in 2020: in other words those who plan to stand in five years time have a strong vested interest in the outcomes of both races. What's more as local spokespeople, highly active in their local parties, their views arguably could have some sway over fellow activists and members. It's for these reasons that we chose to survey this particular group of Labour's activist base.

The Labour Party uses the alternative vote system for elections so second preferences are highly likely to play a role in the outcome (assuming of course that no candidate wins more than 50% of the membership's vote outright in the first round of voting in either race). The rules and voting system for the leadership and deputy contests are the same. Our surveys only sought answers on first preferences. We felt that so early into the contest it was likely that many of those questioned would not yet be sure of their first candidate preferences let alone second preferences.

THE QUESTIONS

We posed two questions to respondents:

Q1. Who is your preferred choice to become the new leader of the Labour Party?

Andy Burham / Yvette Cooper / Angela Eagle / Tristram Hunt / Liz Kendall / Rachel Reeves / Chuka Umunna / Undecided / Other*

Q2. Who is your preferred choice for deputy leader?

Ben Bradshaw / Stella Creasy / Simon Danczuk / Caroline Flint / Tom Watson / Undecided / Other*

*A number of respondents ticked both 'undecided' & also volunteered an 'other' candidate. In these instances we have accepted 'undecided' as their primary answer.

THE FINDINGS

Leadership Race

One leadership candidate emerges as the front runner: Andy Burnham won the support of just over 27% of respondents, followed by Liz Kendall on almost 18%. Chuka Umunna – who withdrew his candidacy when our survey was open – won the support of almost 13% of Labour’s parliamentary candidates. Tristram Hunt secured relatively little support – with just over 3% of our respondents backing his campaign.



Andy Burnham: front runner among the 62 candidates surveyed

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given how formative the election process still is, 24% of respondents remain undecided. However, if you remove all the ‘undecideds’ then Burnham receives over a third of the votes (36%) and Kendall just under one quarter (23%).

The full findings, based on 62 responses, is as follows:

| Candidates | Votes (%) | Votes (out of 62) |
|---|-----------|-------------------|
| Andy Burnham | 27.4% | 17 |
| Yvette Cooper | 9.7% | 6 |
| Angela Eagle | 0% | 0 |
| Tristram Hunt | 3.2% | 2 |
| Liz Kendall | 17.7% | 11 |
| Rachel Reeves | 4.8% | 3 |
| Chuka Umunna (withdrawn from race) | 12.9% | 8 |
| Undecided | 24.1% | 15 |

Our survey was conducted over the period during which Mary Creagh announced her intention to stand. She was not included as one of the options for respondents, although we did offer them the option of suggesting other candidates who they’d back. A further survey which included Mary Creagh as an option would need to be carried out in order to ascertain levels of support for her run for leadership amongst the same cohort of respondents.

Qualitative feedback

We also asked respondents to offer additional thoughts or feedback about the leadership race and the challenges facing the Labour Party. A number of themes emerge from this. The quotes below are verbatim from respondents.

a. THEME 1: The need for a full and proper debate about the direction of the party before the new leader is chosen:

- “We need a better analysis of why it went so wrong before we choose a leader.”
- “Candidates have to make a seriously objective analysis of the issues we face in the aftermath of the defeat. Much comment has been sound and fury from a particular sectarian view, with analysis based on myth and anecdote. Robust evidence of what really went wrong, and how we respond in the future, should inform our choice and our strategy.”
- “Labour needs to get its purpose clear and whether it meets it. Do this first, THEN elect leaders! If this isn’t done, Labour is finished, like it is in Scotland.”
- “Ed Miliband should not of resigned immediately after the election, sometimes the

responsibility of leadership is difficult, the reasons Labour lost were partly leadership and partly the offer to the voters that did not match their aspiration of a party of government."

- *"The contenders who put themselves forward before we'd even had a 'post-mortem' are a disgrace. They had sat there for five years, apparently without a demurral and having signed-off on the manifesto, and then, post-defeat, try and distance themselves from it."*
- *"We should take our time over this vital decision"*
- *"Process should not be rushed."*

b. THEME 2: The need for the party to widen its appeal:

- *"They need to engage with everyone."*
- *"We need to move on from 'Blairite' and 'New Labour' and select a competent, articulate and relateable leader for a modern party of the centre left."*
- *"Electing a new leader alone will not fix Labour's problem, it has to restate a vision for the whole nation and not cobble up a narrow coalition to win. Labour has to focus on an economy that generates wealth first and then show how wealth can be shared fairly, a nation where powerful vested interests are tackled, which caters for a plural democracy."*
- *"Shifting to the centre or back to New Labour cannot mean privatisation it has to mean reaching out to a coalition of working and middle class. That has to be achieved within a 2020 context of UKIP winning the working class, low turnout amongst working class, Greens and Lib Dems on our left - all problems Blair didn't have to contend with in 1997."*

c. Respondents also volunteered a range of views about the qualities they are looking for in their new leader:

- *"Combination of qualities, including ability to communicate, big picture leader, ability to collaborate and express progressive politics to press, communities and the house"*
- *"There are too many careerists, too many Oxbridge, too many wonks, too many think-tank types. Labour needs people who've done a paper round, cleaned the toilets."*
- *"We do not want a career politician. We want someone with real life experience in the work place outside of Westminster."*
- *"I will only support a candidate who was not in the shadow cabinet - Liz Kendall is currently the only option and an excellent one."*
- *"It is key that any future leader has the stamina to take the party through to May 2020, that they can bring the electorate as well as the party with them, and that as many leadership candidates have stated, we are One Party, there are no Blairites, no Brownites, and no Millibands, we are a party of equality, justice, fairness and social cohesion."*
- *"It's not a great field; perhaps a long campaign will make it obvious who has the chops"*

Deputy Leadership Race

MPs Tom Watson and Stella Creasy emerge as the two strong front runners for the deputy leadership election, with close to a combined 60% of Labour's election candidates opting for one or other. In fact Watson and Creasy are neck-and-neck amongst those who responded to the survey: both secure just under 30% of the votes each. If we remove the 'undecideds' from the list of options, of those who have a preference, Watson and Creasy attract more than 70% of the total votes.



A two-horse race? Tom Watson and Stella Creasy lead in the party's deputy leadership contest, according to our survey of election candidates

Much like for the leadership race many respondents remain undecided. Almost a fifth (19%) said they had yet to make up their mind. But to illustrate the lead that Watson and Creasy enjoy over their rivals, Caroline Flint (who is currently in third place according to our survey) would need all of the 'undecideds' to lend them her support in order for her to have a lead over the two front runners.

The question for the Parliamentary party is – because the support of 15% of the PLP (35 MPs) is required to secure a candidate's inclusion on the ballot paper – whether to spread their support among a wider group of candidates to avoid a two-horse race which could help foster a more widespread debate within the party about its future direction and how to more effectively marshal support.

| Candidates | Vote (%) | Votes (out of 62) |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Ben Bradshaw | 4.0% | 3 |
| Stella Creasy | 29% | 18 |
| Simon Danczuk | 1.5% | 1 |
| Caroline Flint | 11.2% | 7 |
| Angela Eagle | 1.5% | 1 |
| Michael Dugher | 1.5% | 1 |
| Tom Watson | 29% | 18 |
| None of the above | 1.5% | 1 |
| Undecided | 19.3% | 12 |

ELECTION TIMETABLE

The full leadership election timetable, as agreed by the NEC, is as follows:

| Date | Process |
|--------------------------------|--|
| May 15 th | Election Period Opens |
| June 8 th | PLP Nomination Hustings for Leader |
| June 9 th | PLP Nomination Hustings for Deputy Leader |
| June 9 th | PLP Nominations Open |
| June 15 th (noon) | PLP Nominations (Leader) Close |
| June 17 th (noon) | PLP Nominations (Deputy Leader) Close |
| June 17 th | Hustings period opens |
| July 31 st (noon) | Supporting Nominations Close |
| August 12 th (noon) | Last date to join as member, affiliated supporter, or registered supporter |
| August 14 th | Ballot mailing sent out |
| September 10 th | Ballot closes |
| September 12 th | Special conference to announce result |