

CLP Chair

Local parties depend on leadership from the CLP Chair. Other officers look to the Chair to provide support and direction and members depend on their leadership to organise and inspire them in effective campaigns.

Effective Chairs facilitate meetings, decisions and ensure the CLP operates fairly. The role requires impartiality, co-ordination, diligence and excellent communication and leadership skills.

Key Responsibilities and tasks

- Lead and build the strategic direction of the CLP.
- Support and encourage an effective officer team. The Chair should ensure all officers keep in regular contact with each other.
- Provide a warm welcome for all members and ensure they have a stake in the direction of the CLP.
- Chair CLP meetings in a fair and open way in accordance with the Labour Party rules.
- Have an overview of all roles within the CLP.
- Work with other officers- especially the CLP Secretary, to put together a 12 month development plan for your CLP. This will help you focus on what you need to achieve over the year.
- Organise follow up meetings to ensure they are sticking to your plan.
- Ensure Standing Orders are up to date and comply with Labour Party rules. For more advice and help on this, you can contact your regional office. Information on where to find their contact details is in the useful links and contact details section below.

Activity

A rich variety of activity throughout the year will not only ensure that the party will have a strong presence in your area, but will also make sure that everybody gets the most out of their membership.

All officers of the CLP have a duty to provide opportunities for others to become involved, and to make sure community events and activities are organised to involve people in the local community.

You should work with your CLP Secretary and other CLP officers to plan a range of different campaigning activities, social events, coffee mornings and policy discussions. You should try to bring guest speakers along to events as well as making sure every member has met your MP or candidate.

Meetings

Work with your CLP Secretary to organise the dates of meetings for the year and make sure the dates are communicated to members, with a reminder closer to the time.

Set an agenda which will need to be circulated and agreed with the Secretary and other officers prior to the meeting. It would be beneficial to set a time limit for each agenda topic. If you have any hand-outs ready, get them ready in good time. Meetings in general should last no longer than two hours. Where practical organise a campaigning or social event after the meeting.

Don't forget to make your meetings as open as possible. You could invite all members to General Committee Meetings for example, if practical – non delegates can always attend without voting rights. Introduce the meeting with a clear outline of the main objectives. It is important to have political discussions and lively debates at meetings. You may wish to open by asking any new comers to introduce themselves.

It is important to have political discussions and lively debates at meetings. However, it is also the Chair's responsibility to ensure that meetings and discussions relate to the following key functions of the CLP:

- Campaigning – connecting with the local community and getting candidates elected.
- Membership work – welcoming new members, recruiting and retaining members
- Fundraising – a programme of social events and other fundraising activity. You will need to work closely with the CLP Secretary and Treasurer to do this. Ensure that your CLP has a Fundraising Officer or social event team that can help.
- Policy discussion – make it interesting and engaging.
- A report from your MP or candidate – access to politicians is one of the benefits of membership; make sure that your meetings take full advantage.

At the end of each item review what has been decided and who will be responsible for taking the task forward. Remember to be impartial even if you do not agree with what is being discussed – allow for the widest possible participation.

Working with branches

CLPs with a branch structure should work with and offer support to branch officers to share out tasks and ensure information is disseminated through the CLP. Particularly in large CLPs, delegating work to branches will make your job easier and lead to a more effective and cohesive CLP.

- It is the responsibility of CLP officers to ensure branch officers are fully supported and confident in their roles. You should ensure that important information is cascaded down to branch level, and that any training opportunities are also offered to branch officers.
- Organise one-to-ones with new Branch Chairs, so you can talk through the role and pass on any important information.
- Ensure you communicate what CLP meetings will be covering with branch chairs in advance, so this isn't duplicated at branch meetings and so important information is discussed at branch level.
- Think about working with your CLP Secretary to appoint branch captains or buddies who can help with member engagement work and to welcome new members.
- Get good communication systems in place and regular meetings with branch officers so that important information is passed on– this will make your job easier too.

The rule book

As Chair, members and officers will look to you for leadership when constitutional matters arise. Issues of this nature often occur around the time of selection procedures; local, devolved or parliamentary.

Remember, you can always refer an issue to your Regional Office or contact the Labour Party Governance and Legal Unit at legal_queries@labour.org.uk or visit members.labour.org.uk/legal_and_compliance_downloads

Useful links and contact details:

- To Get in touch with your National or Regional Office visit labour.org.uk/pages/scottish-welsh-and-regional-offices
- You can contact the Labour Party Legal and Governance Unit at legal_queries@labour.org.uk or visit members.labour.org.uk/legal_and_compliance_downloads
- You'll find lots of useful guides and resources on member engagement, as well as membership forms and the full MemberCentre guide in the Membership & Supporters area on Membersnet members.labour.org.uk/members--supporters
- Our on-line training offer can be found at members.labour.org.uk/about-labour-training, and you can subscribe to our regular training emails by visiting www.labour.org.uk/w/training-emails. Pass this on to branch officers too so they can sign up for training updates.
- Keep up to date with our latest campaigns by visiting members.labour.org.uk/campaign-resources.