

Suggested Rule Change

To create a Labour Party Ombudsperson

The Labour Party Rule Book 2013 Chapter 1 Constitutional Rules

Amendment

Insert new clause X as follows: (and renumber existing clause X)

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

1. The Labour Party Ombudsperson shall deal with complaints alleging a breach of the Party's rules and procedures and any other appropriate matter, in accordance with guidelines approved by the National Executive Committee.
2. 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 10 years.
3. 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. and renumber subsequent clauses accordingly

Supporting argument

The existing Party rules set out the duties and restrictions on members of the Labour Party. Recent experience of top down management of the Party has demonstrated that these rules have unfortunately not always been applied in an even handed and transparent way. At a local level too, the rules are not always applied in the spirit in which they were intended. The enforcement of members' rights and duties, and the investigation of complaints as to their breach, needs to be underpinned by the work of an independent ombudsperson. It is essential that the ombudsperson is accountable to the NEC and to the Party and that their work does not cut across other NEC functions. The ombudsperson must personally be truly independent and command widespread support across the party as a whole. Hopefully the ombudsperson would not have many cases to deal with, but the position would be a vital backstop and would give all members reassurance, fairness and justice where needed.

Closing date for constitutional amendments: 21 June 2013