

A brief guide to getting active in the Labour Party

Getting involved in your local Labour Party can often seem confusing, daunting and unfamiliar to new members. This short guide will hopefully help to clarify how things work and how you can get active in your local Party and community.

Getting active in your local Party is a great way to:

- Meet other Labour Party members in your local area
- Bring new ideas and enthusiasm to your local Party
- Make your voice heard in shaping the direction of the Party and Party policy
- Organise local campaigns and get Labour's message out to your local community
- Help Labour win the next general election

CLP & Branches

The Constituency Labour Party (CLP) is the locus of local party activity.

A constituency elects an MP but it's also made up of different wards, with each ward electing councillors to local government (usually three). CLP's are therefore often divided into branches. The membership of the branches is drawn from the Labour Party members who reside or are registered to vote within the ward.

Branch members are able to attend branch meetings, which usually take place once a month, the AGM (Annual General Meeting), where your Branch's Executive Committee is usually elected, and council candidate selection meetings. You can also submit a motion to your Branch, and if it passes it will go to the next CLP meeting. If your CLP votes for the motion it will either go to the Local Campaign Forum or to Labour's National Policy Forum. **Your Branch is your first port of call for getting involved. Find out about your Branch's next meeting and go along.**

Not all CLP's operate in the same way, often because of membership size and patterns of attendance. There are roughly three types of CLP organisation:

- Closed: only delegates from branches to the General Committee may attend and vote.
- Open: any Labour members from the constituency may attend but only branch delegates to the General Committee can vote.
- All Member Meeting (AMM): any members from the constituency may attend and vote.

General Committee (GC)

This applies to those CLP's with the 'Open & Closed' system outlined above. The GC generally meets monthly and is made up of delegates from:

- Branch Labour Parties (BLPs) including BLP secretaries
- Affiliated Unions, Socialist Societies (a membership organisation affiliated to the Labour Party, e.g. Fabian Society), Co-op Party, Women's Forums, and Youth Organisations

The GC is responsible for holding the local MP to account and running the party in the constituency. At the CLP meetings, GC delegates are entitled to vote. If your CLP operates with an 'open' system, then only delegates can vote, but local members who are not delegates can still attend and observe.

The GC will hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM), which will elect the Executive Committee of the CLP, usually including positions such as CLP Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Campaigns Officer, Youth Officer, Women's Officer and Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) Officer, and will elect delegates to Labour's national conference and the relevant regional conference.

The Executive Committee (EC)

The EC manages the CLP and is elected by the GC or by an All Members Meeting (depending on the CLP's system) at the AGM. It is responsible for taking decisions (either in between the GC meetings or as an executive body in its own right) and is made up of officers (positions mentioned above), some affiliated delegates and a representative from each branch (usually, but not always, the Branch Secretary).

Get involved!

As you can see, there are considerable differences in how different local groups organise their branches and CLPs. It is always worth asking your local CLP Secretary for clarification if you are still unsure. Going along to your local Branch or CLP meetings is also the best way of learning how your local group operates.