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General Election 2024

Labour's mandate for change



Starmer's Cabinet (so far)

Keir Starmer
Prime Minister



Angela Rayner

Deputy Prime Minister and
Secretary of State for Levelling
Up, Housing and Communities



Rachel Reeves
Chancellor of the
Exchequer



Pat McFadden
Chancellor of the Duchy
of Lancaster



David Lammy
Secretary of State for
Foreign, Commonwealth
and Development Affairs



Yvette Cooper

Secretary of State for the
Home Department



John Healey
Secretary of State
for Defence



Shabana Mahmood
Lord Chancellor and
Secretary of State for Justice

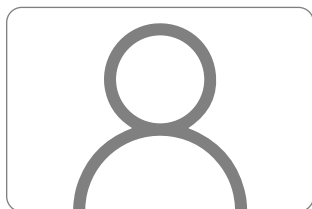


Peter Kyle
Secretary of State for Science,
Innovation and Technology

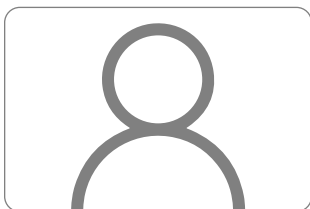


Wes Streeting

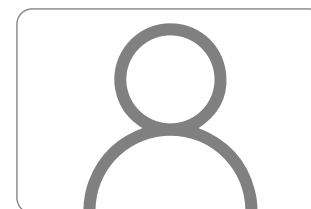
Secretary of State for Health
and Social Care



Secretary of State for
Environment, Food and
Rural Affairs



Leader of the House of
Commons



Leader of the House
of Lords



Jonathan Reynolds
Secretary of State for
Business and Trade



Ed Miliband
Secretary of State for
Energy Security and
Net Zero



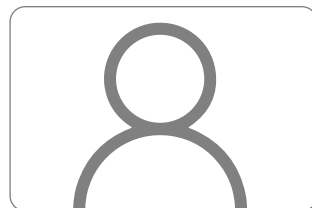
Liz Kendall
Secretary of State for
Work and Pensions



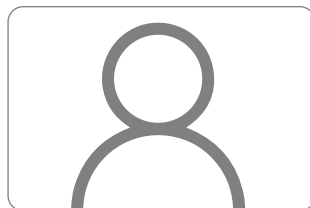
Bridget Phillipson
Secretary of State for
Education



Louise Haigh
Secretary of State for
Transport



Secretary of State for Culture,
Media and Sport



Secretary of State for
Northern Ireland

Earlier this afternoon, outside No.10 Downing Street, Sir Keir Starmer addressed the nation for the first time as Prime Minister following Labour's seismic victory in the General Election.

"Now our country has voted decisively for change", Starmer said, as he pledged to "rebuild" the country's "infrastructure of opportunity... brick by brick" and deliver "security for working class families".

He pointed to a "weariness in the heart of a nation", suggesting this was born out of a "lack of trust" generated under the previous government, and promised to return to the "politics of public service".

Speaking directly to those who did not vote Labour yesterday, Starmer said that "my government will serve you", as he invited people to "join this government of service in the mission of national renewal."

Forming a government

The King invited Starmer to form a government shortly before midday. In the few hours since, Starmer and his team have begun the process of forming the government beginning with the appointment of senior Cabinet Ministers.

As expected, most of those who held positions in the Shadow Cabinet have been asked to continue those roles in Government.

Angela Rayner will serve as both Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with the latter set to be a crucial role for a Labour government committed to planning reform.

Rachel Reeves will lead the Treasury as the country's first female Chancellor, and **Pat McFadden** will play a key role in the mechanics of government leading the Cabinet Office as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

David Lammy and **Yvette Cooper** become Foreign and Home Secretaries respectively, and **John Healey** becomes Secretary of State for Defence tasked with navigating Labour towards its pledge of increasing defence spending to 2.5% of GDP.

Shabana Mahmood becomes Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice at a time when the UK's prison system is in desperate need of reform, and **Wes Streeting** becomes Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, after retaining his Ilford North seat by just 500 seats.

Bridget Phillipson, whose seat of Sunderland South was the first to declare its results in last night's count will lead the Department for Education and **Ed Miliband**, one of only a small group of Labour ministers who have been in government before, becomes **Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero**.

Liz Kendall takes over at the Department for Work and Pensions, where she will lead work to boost employment and opportunity across the country. She will work closely with **Jonathan Reynolds** who, as Secretary of State for Business and Trade will look to supercharge inward investment and deliver the growth Labour is aiming for.

Peter Kyle becomes Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology where AI and digital regulation will be at the top of his in tray, and **Louise Haigh** becomes Secretary of State for Transport.

A notable exception here is **Thangam Debbonaire**, who lost her seat to Green Party co-leader Carla Denyer. Debbonaire was likely to become Culture Secretary, a key job in a Labour government that sees the creative industries as an important economic driver. Her replacement is yet to be announced.

Further Cabinet, and then junior ministerial appointments will continue throughout today and over the weekend. We expect to know the full shape of the government by Monday morning.

A coalition of the unwilling

Now the business of government begins, and the expectation on Labour to deliver is palpable. With a large but fragile majority, Labour's mandate has been granted by a coalition of the unwilling—consisting not just of Labour supporters, but of voters far more focused on unseating the Tories than actively endorsing a Labour government.

As a consequence, Labour's honeymoon period will be brief. From day one, the party will be under pressure to flesh out its policy agenda to deliver the change promised throughout the campaign. However, getting to grips with a difficult fiscal inheritance will make the quick and impactful investment in public services that Labour members and supporters crave extremely difficult.

Starmer and his team will also need to devise a plan to manage a large Parliamentary Labour Party, asserting the authority needed to control a majority where many MPs won by narrow margins.

Labour's stance on Gaza proved divisive in some areas, resulting in a handful of unexpected losses, including the loss of Shadow Paymaster General Jonathan Ashworth's Leicester South seat to an independent. This could embolden members of the left-wing of the parliamentary party, who, willing to tow the party line prior to the election, will not hesitate to make their voices heard. Jeremy Corbyn, having himself won as an independent in Islington North, may become a rallying point for left-wing Labour MPs disenchanted with a government that currently sits firmly in the centre ground.

Labour's Priorities

During the campaign, 'Labour's first six steps for change' were set out as practical indicators of how the Party would make an immediate impact and kickstart its promised 'Change' agenda. These steps were aligned with the Five National Missions launched earlier in the year.

While delivering economic stability, cutting NHS waiting times, launching a new Border Security Command, setting up Great British Energy, cracking down on antisocial behaviour and recruiting 6,500 new teachers will all remain broad ambitions for Starmer and his team, there is a degree of legislative groundwork which needs to be done first. Between today and the King's Speech on 17th July, this will be the focus of the new government as it looks to get off to a flying start.

The King's Speech is expected to include **legislation empowering the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR)** to independently publish forecasts for major fiscal events. Great British Energy will receive its legislative foundation, too, and **Labour's plan to 'make work pay'** will address issues like 'fire and rehire,' equal pay, and collective bargaining.

A **water industry regulation act** will give the regulator powers to block bonus payments to senior executives at companies who exceed legal limits on sewage pollution and bring in the threat of criminal charges for repeat offenders.

A new **'Take Back Control' Act** is likely to build on detail set out in 'Power and partnership: Labour's Plan to Power up Britain' and grant new powers to regional mayors over transport, skills, enterprise, energy, planning and high streets with the aim of generating more widespread growth across the country.

A **crime and policing bill**, to address antisocial behaviour and create a new offence of criminal exploitation of a child to tackle county lines drug-dealing, will be seen by Labour as an early opportunity to make their mark on a policy issue that is often used in attacks against them.

Away from, and likely in advance of, the King's Speech, expect to see Labour moving quickly on several other measures, too. An urgent **National Planning Policy Statement** will reintroduce mandatory local housing targets. We can expect an **almost-immediate axing of the Conservatives' Rwanda asylum scheme**, the launch of a **review into the UK's defence capabilities** led by Defence Secretary John Healey, and the speedy resumption of talks with the British Medical Association to **end long-running strikes by junior doctors** in England.

Underpinning these moves is a clear desire to show that Labour will govern differently from its Conservative predecessors. Ensuring that voters are aware of what is being achieved, and how it's being done, will be a top priority in the early days and weeks of this new administration. While Starmer will face unforeseen challenges, the need to deliver outweighs all else and he will make sure his team is laser-focused on getting that right.

What happens next?

Alongside preparations for the King's Speech on 17th July, Labour will need to make a quick decision on whether it wants to delay the Summer Recess which typically starts at the end of July. Extending the session by a week or two would allow the new government to jumpstart key measures outlined in their manifesto, while still affording MPs and Ministers a much-needed rest after a gruelling campaign.

First, though, there are immediate diplomatic duties to attend to. As new MPs are sworn in at Westminster on Tuesday, 9th July, Prime Minister Starmer will be in Washington DC for a NATO Summit. Then he will host approximately 50 European leaders at Blenheim Palace on 18th July for the Fourth European Political Community Summit.

Simultaneously, Labour will finally be able to "lift the bonnet and examine the state of public finances". Reports suggest the party is already positioning to argue that the nation's finances are in worse shape than previously feared. Expect opposition warnings that Labour will use this as justification for increased taxation, a topic Starmer approached with caution during the

campaign. Regardless of the fiscal landscape they inherit, Rachel Reeves' 'securonomics' approach will define Labour's economic policy.

Behind these high-profile events, the Labour government must quickly get to grips with the mechanics of Whitehall. It is no secret that this Cabinet lacks experience, with Pat McFadden one of only a handful to have previously held ministerial office. He will play a key role leading the Cabinet Office team in enforcing discipline and driving delivery, especially in these early days. Starmer himself is stepping into ministerial office for the first time, as are many Secretaries of State. Senior Civil Servants will, as ever, play a crucial role – briefing their new Ministers on emerging and ongoing priorities as well as the plans their policy teams have been developing in response to Labour's manifesto pledges.

This raises another critical question about the composition of the Labour government: who will serve as its advisers? While Shadow Ministers had political advisers (PADs) during their time in opposition, it is not guaranteed that all will transition into government roles. Although many of them are highly talented and committed, they are also inexperienced especially in relation to the high ranking civil servants with whom they will need to build effective working relationships. Labour will therefore be keen to attract talent from the private sector, think tanks and elsewhere.

The Future of the Conservative Party

After fourteen years in government, five Prime Ministers, the Brexit referendum, and the pandemic, the Conservatives have now experienced a historic defeat and find themselves in an identity crisis. For them, the immediate post-election period is likely to be characterised by profound soul-searching and then a power struggle.

The upcoming leadership contest will be pivotal. The Conservatives are acutely aware of the pitfalls that followed their 1997 election defeat, where successive leaders – Hague, Duncan Smith, and Howard – failed to galvanise the party. Whoever emerges as the new leader must present a cohesive plan to unify a fragmented group of Tory MPs. Given the strong performance of Reform UK in winning such a large proportion of the vote, what the Conservative Party does next is unclear. There will be a need to deal with the issues presented by a strong Reform UK Party, while resisting the temptation to become them.

The sensible move may be to look towards the centre ground under a moderate leader such as Tom Tugendhat or Jeremy Hunt. Priti Patel, too, has been mooted as someone who could bring the extremes of the party together. From here, the party could put pressure on Labour who will be eager to maintain control over its left-wing factions, and in doing so, redefine itself as the party of the centre right ahead of 2029. In reality, though, there will be significant pressure from the right, meaning that figures like Kemi Badenoch and Suella Braverman will be candidates to watch.

Continued questions about the cause of the Tories' failure are inevitable. Some MPs have placed the blame squarely on Rishi Sunak, criticising his inability to chart a new course for the party when he became leader as well as his ill-fated decision to call an election based on fluctuating inflation figures. Others trace the party's decline to the tenures of Liz Truss and Boris Johnson, whose economic mismanagement and scandals like 'Partygate' alienated even lifelong Conservative voters. Theresa May's disastrous 2017 election, marked by the 'Dementia Tax' fiasco, and her fraught Brexit negotiations are also seen as pivotal moments

in the Conservatives' downward spiral. David Cameron, too, is scrutinised for the Brexit schism that created deep and lasting divisions.

In truth, it is a confluence of these factors that has led to a Conservative Party unsure of its identity, its principles, and its base – and ultimately, to a huge defeat.

The Liberal Democrats rise from the ashes

By winning a record 71 seats, the Liberal Democrats have well and truly recovered from 2015 when, following five years in coalition government, they were reduced to just eight seats.

As the third largest party in the House of Commons, Ed Davey will now get a guaranteed question at PMQs each week and will use this platform to push Labour to deliver on its pledges. Davey has already said that his first focus will be to call for an emergency budget for health and social care, and he is also likely to challenge Labour on its plans for the water industry.

While some campaign stunts might have seemed frivolous, they generated more media coverage than the Lib Dems would have otherwise received, and effectively supported their ABC (Anyone But Conservative) strategy. This approach proved fruitful in Conservative strongholds across the South West and South East of England.

Notable gains included the unseating of several former Cabinet ministers, such as Education Secretary Gillian Keegan in Chichester, Justice Secretary Alex Chalk in Cheltenham, and Culture Secretary Lucy Frazer in Ely and East Cambridgeshire. The Lib Dems also doubled their number of seats in London and the Home Counties, securing victories in Michael Gove's former seat of Surrey Heath, as well as in Maidenhead and Guildford.

However, despite these successes, the Lib Dems' national vote share was 12%, virtually unchanged since 2019 and significantly lower than the 23% they achieved in 2010 ahead of entering coalition government. Additionally, with Reform UK winning nearly a million more total votes, but 67 fewer seats, the Liberal Democrats face the challenge of addressing claims of an 'undemocratic' result and working to broaden their appeal.

Reform UK

Although it fell short of the 13 seats projected in the Exit Poll, Reform UK's 4 new MPs and 14% vote share, along with strong second-place finishes in nearly 100 constituencies, have marked it out as a serious political force.

Led by Nigel Farage, who won by more than 8,000 votes in Clacton-on-Sea, Reform will be a powerful voice on key issues including immigration, national sovereignty, and economic reform.

While Farage's aim of national leadership in 2029 remains ambitious, the return to frontline politics of one of his generation's most adept political communicators has already cost both the Conservatives and Labour hundreds of thousands of votes.

His opponents will need to develop effective strategies for combatting his unique style, and acknowledge that the four million votes he carries into Parliament will be expecting their party to be visible and effective from the start.

Green Party

Unlike the Conservatives, the Green Party experienced the most successful election night in its history, securing all four seats of its target seats - Brighton Pavilion, Waveney Valley, North Herefordshire and Bristol Central.

In the latter, the Greens served Labour one of its most dramatic losses, with co-leader Carla Denyer unseating Labour's Thangam Debbonaire, who was set to become Culture Secretary, by over 10,000 votes.

Despite its radical, and largely uncoded, spending plans the Greens took votes from both Labour and the Conservatives marking its transition from a single-issue movement to a viable resting place for voters from across the left.

While environmental issues will remain a focus of the party in Parliament, the Greens will use their newly-strengthened platform to deliver on their pledge of 'holding Labour's feet to the fire' while also looking to shore up their support and political operation ahead of 2029.

Scottish National Party (SNP)

In 2019, the SNP won 48 of Scotland's 59 Westminster seats. This year, they have been reduced to just nine seats in an election that the party had earmarked as representing a fresh mandate for independence after being dogged by a series of recent scandals.

In the event, heavy losses came at the hands of Scottish Labour under the leadership of Anas Sarwar, who has since pledged to "redouble" efforts to get his party into government at Holyrood in 2026

In advance of the poll, the SNP had been hoping to win around 20 seats, but the reality that has played out has delivered the party's worst result since before the independence referendum. As a result, the SNP's recently installed leader John Swinney is now facing questions on the future of Scotland's bid for independence.

Plaid Cymru

With Labour holding on to and regaining several key battle ground seats in Wales, Plaid Cymru also saw success, winning four seats: Ynys Môn, Caerfyrddin, Dwyfor Meirionnydd, and Ceredigion Preseli. The Party therefore managed to double its number of elected representatives in the Commons, notably ousting Simon Hart, the Conservative Chief Whip.

Plaid's leader, Rhun ap Iorwerth, has spoken of the party's "dramatic result", noting that they will hold Labour "very firmly to account" as they look to position Wales more firmly in Westminster.