

Party Support Handbook

The Rule Book - Section G

National Agreement between the Labour Party and the Co-operative Party

National Agreement between the Labour Party and the Co-operative Party (2003)

Preamble

1. This is an Agreement between the Labour Party and the Co-operative Party, to provide for consultation on matters of mutual political interest and to define the relationship between the Labour Party and the Co-operative Party.
2. This agreement cancels all previous National Agreements between the Labour Party and the Co-operative Union, and shall be terminable after twelve months notice given by either side to the other.
3. The Co-operative Party is recognised as the political party of the Co-operative Movement.
4. The Co-operative Party undertakes to support the Labour Party in all matters except as provided for within this Agreement, that is, matters of special concern affecting the policy of the Co-operative Party, dealing with any differences via the Liaison Committee.
5. This Agreement is an Electoral Agreement between the Labour Party and the Co-operative Party. No Co-operative Party member shall be permitted to stand against the official candidate of the Labour Party in any public election. Official Co-operative Party Members of Parliament, the European Parliament, Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly or local authority must join the official Labour Group.

National Policy

6. It is agreed that for the purposes of consultation on political policy matters which may affect their mutual interests and the operation of this Agreement, the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Labour Party and NEC of the Co-operative Party, shall establish such machinery as may be found mutually convenient. It is understood that the authority of either body to reach policy decisions is in no way impaired.
7. The Co-operative Party shall engage actively with the Labour Party policy development process, and have the right to be represented as a partner in the National Policy Forum and its representative bodies.

Relationships

National

8. The Labour Party and the Co-operative Party commit themselves to developing the mutually beneficial national relationships which have existed between the Parties for many years in whatever ways are deemed expedient within the rules and policies of the Labour Party and the Co-operative Party.



Scotland, Wales and the English Regions

9. The Co-operative Party shall affiliate to the Scottish Labour Party, (where the Co-operative Party shall be known as the Scottish Co-operative Party) and Wales Labour Party and Regional Labour Parties as the political party representing the Co-operative Movement.

Constituency Level

10. Society Co-operative Parties registered and affiliated to the Co-operative Party shall be eligible for affiliation to each Constituency Labour Party in their area as the representative of the wider Co-operative Movement. Representation shall be on the same basis and subject to the same limitations as to the maximum number of delegates as apply to other affiliated organisations.
11. Voluntary Co-operative Parties registered by and affiliated to the Co-operative Party may affiliate to each Constituency Labour Party in their area but shall not be regarded as the representative of the wider Co-operative Movement.
12. Society Parties shall be regarded as the representatives of the wider Co-operative Movement on Labour Party local government committees.

Liaison Committee

13. A committee, representative of the National Executive Committees of the Labour Party and the Co-operative Party, shall be established to consider matters of mutual interest and the application of this Agreement in special cases referred to it by either side.
14. The Committee shall consist of members nominated from each body and shall meet at the request of either organisation.
15. The General Secretary of the Labour Party and the National Secretary of the Co-operative Party shall act as Joint Secretaries of the Liaison Committee.

Official Candidates and Representatives

Official Co-operative Parliamentary Candidates

16. Co-operative Parliamentary Candidates shall be nominated to and selected by Constituency Labour Parties under the Rules of the Labour Party, but shall sign the prescribed form containing the following declaration:

“I accept nomination as a Parliamentary Candidate of the Co-operative Party in running association with the Labour Party. If elected to Parliament, I undertake to join the Parliamentary Labour Party and to accept and to act in harmony with the Standing Orders of the Parliamentary Labour Party for the time being in force”.
17. Official Candidates of the Co-operative Party will be regarded as joint candidates of both the Co-operative Party and the Labour Party. Where special circumstances obtain, the designation of joint candidates shall be determined by the Liaison Committee.



18. Whilst it is clear that the Standing Orders of the Parliamentary Labour Party apply to members returned to Parliament on the nomination of the Co-operative Party in the same way that they apply to anyone else, the Labour Party recognises their special concern in matters affecting the political policy of the Co-operative Party. It is, therefore, agreed that, if differences over such matters arise, there shall be consultation between the Co-operative Party and the Labour Party to ensure that, if possible, mutually acceptable decisions are reached.
19. After each General Election the number of Parliamentary Candidates which may be regarded as Official Co-operative Party Candidates shall be settled after consultation.
20. The National Executive Committees of the Labour Party and the Co-operative Party shall have the right to make representations to each other about the number of Official Candidates.
21. Official Co-operative Parliamentary Candidates endorsed by the Labour Party shall be designated “Labour and Co-operative Party Candidates”. In Scotland and Wales there may be a variation in the designation, including the inclusion of the official Gaelic and Welsh equivalents but the word “Co-operative “ and its translations must be included.
22. Candidates, other than those regarded as Official, selected by a Constituency Labour Party on the nomination of an affiliated Co-operative Party, shall be subject to the same conditions as all other candidates, and shall be designated as “Labour Party Candidates” only.

Official Co-operative Local Government Candidates

23. Co-operative Parties affiliated to Constituency Labour Parties shall have the same rights of nomination as other affiliated bodies under the appropriate Rules of the Labour Party.
24. Such Candidates shall be designated “Labour and Co-operative Party Candidates” except in multi-member ward elections where they shall be designated as “Labour” but their links with the Co-operative Party shall be acknowledged in the literature. Where all the candidates in a multi-member ward are Labour and Co-operative Party Candidates they shall be designated as such.