

# LABOUR RESHUFFLE

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## STARMER RESHUFFLES THE PACK

Rarely does a political leader have complete freedom of choice when reshuffling their top team. But if ever there was that day, today is it for Keir Starmer. A sustained and healthy poll lead. A party refocused on winning. And a political world almost united in expectation that he will be the next Prime Minister.

As the sun shone on Westminster this morning, Starmer flexed his muscle to shape a Shadow Cabinet that is election ready and with many wrinkles ironed out. He will say that this is a group of politicians ready to begin fixing Britain's problems from the moment they take office. But their first challenge is to put forward a compelling, alternative vision – not just oppose but also prepare. And it is undoubtedly a strong team which he – and no one else – is the author of.

The weekend's speculation was on the future of Angela Rayner's role. As ever, these kind of pre-briefings focus on points of challenging people management.

But look to the wider picture. The five key Missions – economy, health, education, crime and net zero – remain the core of the Shadow Cabinet. They will be the focus for a Labour government and we're getting clearer pictures about the choices Labour would make.

Sue Gray has taken up her role as Chief of Staff today with her first priority, getting Labour ready for government.

The appointments of Pat McFadden to National Campaign Co-ordinator and Jonathan Ashworth to Shadow Paymaster General – effectively minister for the Today Programme – signal a new edge to the General Election campaign. Both are Blair-era special advisers, both at the sharp-end of elections throughout their career.

Darren Jones' promotion to Shadow Chief Secretary is a big move. He will be the holder of the purse strings and the person to decide which spending commitments make it into the manifesto.

In appointing Liz Kendall to Work and Pensions, Peter Kyle to DSIT and Thangam Debbonaire to DCMS, Starmer has set some of his most competent

team members on to the knotty problems of welfare reform, AI regulation and online safety – issues that are central to Labour's view of economic recovery, but to which they have not had strong answers to up to this point.

Meanwhile, some have been moved to lower profile roles. Lisa Nandy, Starmer's first Shadow Foreign Secretary and rival in the leadership contest, takes on International Development; close ally Nick Thomas-Symonds has moved to Shadow Minister without Portfolio; and Rosena Allin-Khan and Preet Kaur Gill have left the frontbench (in the case of Allin-Khan, with a broadside about prioritisation of mental health).

The team he's chosen will be the face of the party in the coming election campaign. The media will treat them like a government in waiting. And they will face more scrutiny than any Shadow Cabinet in recent years. Civil servants, business and stakeholders will look to their every word as if they are setting government policy for years to come. They must be ready for the challenge of having influence without the levers of power and preparing themselves for the political fight of a lifetime in the coming election.

# NEW SHADOW CABINET APPOINTMENTS



## KEIR STARMER

### Leader of the Opposition

Having led the transition of the Labour Party since 2020, Starmer embarked on his third reshuffle looking to create a frontbench team ready to govern.



## YVETTE COOPER

### Shadow Home Secretary

One of the few Shadow Cabinet members with ministerial experience, Cooper also retains the role of Shadow Home Secretary, a position she also held from 2014 to 2015.



## PAT MCFADDEN

### Shadow Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and National Campaign Coordinator

A veteran of Labour Party politics, McFadden is no stranger to government having served under Blair and Brown. His new role will see him lead Labour's General Election campaign.



## JONATHAN REYNOLDS

### Shadow Secretary of State for Business and Trade

Having impressed, Reynolds takes on an expanded brief which includes trade policy, in a move which mirrors the Government's current departmental structure.



## THANGAM DEBBOINAIRE

### Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport

Debbonaire takes on the Culture, Media and Sport brief – a step up for the former Shadow Leader of the House.



## HILARY BENN

### Shadow Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

A veteran of the Brexit battles, Benn returns to the Shadow Cabinet as Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary, with extensive Government experience. Benn brings a sense of calm to a turbulent situation in Northern Ireland.



## LISA NANDY

### Shadow Cabinet Minister for International Development

A leadership rival of Starmer's back in 2020, she is a good media performer on the soft-Left of the party, so it is significant that she has chosen to stay despite such a downgrade in roles.



## SIR ALAN CAMPBELL

### Opposition Chief Whip in the House of Commons

Another experienced political operator, retains the position he has held since 2021.



## ANGELA RAYNER

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

Deputy Leader and flag-bearer for the left of the party, Rayner moves to the Levelling Up brief – though notably holds onto responsibility for the party's Future of Work agenda.



## WES STREETING

### Shadow Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

A rising star, Streeting continues as Health Secretary. Tipped by some as a future leader, Streeting is trusted by Starmer and was never likely to move.



## NICK THOMAS-SYMONDS

### Shadow Minister without Portfolio (Cabinet Office)

Thomas-Symonds remains within the Shadow Cabinet as a Shadow Minister without Portfolio. A close ally and friend of Starmer's, he will serve as a trusted ally and adviser.



## LIZ KENDALL

### Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions

Kendall takes on her first Shadow Cabinet role, having previously served as Shadow Minister for Social Care. A failed leadership bid in 2015 saw her spend 5 years on the backbenches.



## ANNELIESE DODDS

### Shadow Secretary of State for Women and Equalities, Party Chair and Chair of Labour Policy Review

The former Shadow Chancellor retains her roles, including as Chair of the Labour Policy Review. Although demoted by Starmer in 2021, she remains a staunch ally.



## IAN MURRAY

### Shadow Secretary of State for Scotland

Murray retains his role as Shadow Secretary of State for Scotland – not least because he is the only Labour MP holding a seat in Scotland. He previously held the role from 2015 to 2016 when he resigned in protest against Jeremy Corbyn's leadership.



## DARREN JONES

### Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury

Elevated to his first Shadow Cabinet position, Jones' profile has grown significantly over the last year through his chairship of the Business and Trade Select Committee. A rising star.



## BARONESS SMITH OF BASILDON

### Shadow Leader of the House of Lords

Baroness Smith retains the post she has held since 2015 within the latest reshuffle.



## RACHEL REEVES

### Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer

Reeves was appointed Shadow Chancellor in 2021. A key member of Starmer's core team, she retains the role as expected and will continue to set Labour's economic narrative into the election campaign.



## ED MILIBAND

### Shadow Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero

Retains his brief despite reports of tensions between him and the current leadership. Regardless, the former leader's experience is invaluable.



## JONATHAN ASHWORTH

### Shadow Paymaster General in the Cabinet Office

A veteran of the numerous Shadow Cabinets, Ashworth's move to the Cabinet Office will see him play a significant role in the forthcoming General Election campaign. He remains a full member of the Shadow Cabinet.



## JOHN HEALEY

### Shadow Secretary of State for Defence

An experienced politician, Healey has held this brief since 2020. He's also one of the few members with government experience, having served in the Treasury during the Blair Administration.



## STEVE REED

### Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Moved from the Shadow Justice team, former council leader Reed has little prior experience of environment and agricultural issues, but is a well-respected and experienced politician with close links to Starmer's inner-circle.



## JO STEVENS

### Shadow Secretary of State for Wales

Stevens retains her position as Shadow Welsh Secretary. She first held the role between 2016 and 2017, when she resigned in protest of Labour's position on Brexit.



## ELLIE REEVES

### Deputy National Campaign Coordinator

Sister to the Shadow Chancellor and steady riser through the ranks, Reeves takes on a vital role as Deputy National Campaign Coordinator, working closely with Pat McFadden on shaping Labour's General Election campaign.



## LORD KENNEDY OF SOUTHWARK

### Opposition Chief Whip in the House of Lords

Kennedy was made a life peer in Gordon Brown's dissolution honours list in 2010 and has served in this role since 2021.



## BRIDGET PHILLIPSON

### Shadow Secretary of State for Education

An increasingly public-facing member of Starmer's frontbench team, Phillipson retains her role as Shadow Education Secretary. As the face of Starmer's 'breaking down barriers' mission, her star is likely to continue to rise.



## DAVID LAMMY

### Shadow Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs

Lammy was promoted to Shadow Foreign Secretary in November 2021. He retains the role, as expected.



## SHABANA MAHMOOD

### Shadow Secretary of State for Justice

A first Shadow Cabinet role. Well-qualified, having worked as a barrister prior to her election.



## LOUISE HAIGH

### Shadow Secretary of State for Transport

An avid campaigner, Haigh continues in her role as Transport Secretary, which she has served in since November 2021.



## PETER KYLE

### Shadow Secretary of State for Digital, Science, Innovation and Technology

Kyle becomes the newly created Shadow Secretary of State for Digital, Science and Innovation. Will be tasked with doing Labour's thinking on key issues, including AI.



## EMILY THORNBERRY

### Shadow Attorney General for England and Wales

An experienced politician and frontbencher, Thornberry keeps her post as Shadow Attorney General.



## LUCY POWELL

### Shadow Leader of the House of Commons

In an effective job swap with Thangam Debbonaire, Powell becomes Shadow Leader of the House of Commons. A lower profile role for Ed Miliband's former Chief of Staff, Powell will seek to get publicity in her weekly joust with Penny Mordaunt.

## FIVE THINGS TO NOTE

1. Campaign attack and rebuttal is at the heart of this reshuffle. Election veterans, Pat McFadden and Jonathan Ashworth are taking up rolls to prosecute Labour's message forensically.
2. Keir Starmer's Missions are the core of the party's programme – the Shadow Cabinet leads for these remain unchanged.
3. The politics of the Shadow Cabinet is changing. Darren Jones in, Liz Kendall, Peter Kyle and Thangam Debbonaire taking on big policy briefs; and members of Starmer's original shadow cabinet gently moving to the periphery.
4. Workers rights are an important issue for the party which will engage with business on delivery.
5. The hidden reshuffle – Former Civil Service supremo, Sue Gray, takes up her role as Chief of Staff with a mandate to get Labour ready for government.

## LABOUR AND THE ECONOMY

Labour's approach to the economy is a clear departure both from that of the current Government and of new Labour. Rachel Reeves, the Shadow Chancellor, has set out how an "active state", not overtly interventionist, but instead working in partnership with the private sector can create a dynamic, resilient economy built on domestic and high-skilled supply chains.

Underlying this is an unwavering commitment to fiscal responsibility. Reeves keeps a firm grip on the metaphorical purse-strings, reviewing all Labour Party policy through the lens of a series of "non-negotiable" fiscal rules. The hold such rules have over the Party's policy priorities became clear earlier this year when its plan to invest £28bn a year into green jobs and industry – a landmark policy in and of itself – was publicly watered down. Nothing, it seems, will come at the expense of being seen as the party who will look after the public finances.

Such fiscal responsibility is in essence a balancing act – and one heavily reliant on spurring significant economic growth, relatively quickly. That is why, in the party's own words, Labour's first mission in government will be to secure the highest sustained growth in the G7. Having recently committed to avoid tax hikes "across the board" – both in terms of basic income tax rises and any form of so-called 'wealth tax' – Labour faces an uphill task in raising the money to deliver on its priority missions and on what it views as crumbling public services.

Undeterred, this is why the party is so open in its courting of business. Reeves and Starmer say the private sector has a vital role to play, enabled by a government, to grease the wheels of economic growth. It is also why Labour has placed such a focus on "opportunities of the future" – things such as clean energy, AI and life sciences – in the belief that these high-potential sectors can restart economic growth and form the basis for the UK to be a more influential partner in the global economy and decision-making forums.

While it remains to be seen whether such lofty ambitions are achievable, Labour's longstanding lead in the polls will be enough to convince Starmer, Reeves and co to stay the course.

## GOING DIGITAL- TIME FOR DEBBOINAIRE

A less high profile department than most, the DCMS brief has big issues in the run up to the election. High on the agenda will be the Online Safety Bill, the proposed Media Bill and Government plans for a football regulator. These issues are far from trivial and strike to the heart how we live today. They will undoubtedly be newsworthy in the campaign.

Thangam Debbonaire has been given the brief, in a direct swap with Lucy Powell. While the former professional cellist, has covered culture issues as a junior frontbencher in the past, this is her first big policy role in the Shadow Cabinet and all eyes will be on whether the media savvy politician can also grip the detail.

Debbonaire is a popular, intelligent and active player in party politics and often makes media appearances to represent the Labour Party opinion on topical issues. Debbonaire's deep understanding of Parliamentary procedure, legislation, and party issues, suggests a full embrace of the DCMS brief, including the digital aspect which prior was not a major focus point. One of Labour's five missions is to 'break down the barriers to opportunity at every stage', with an aim to "finally crack the code on digital skills" and encourage children to participate in the arts, digital and sports subjects, in order to develop essential skills.

In giving Debbonaire this role Keir Starmer has placed his trust in her to work well with some of the biggest and most powerful businesses in the economy to help deliver on these commitments.

## LABOUR, SCIENCE, INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY

Industry has been crying out for answers from Labour on AI. As the government has published its White Paper and engaged in global discussions on the way forward, Labour's much promised 'policy paper' has been constantly pushed to the right.

With Peter Kyle's move to the newly created Science, Innovation and Technology brief, Starmer is giving this area new energy. Reeves and Starmer have set out their desire for a tech-focused economic recovery and they know they need a skilled political operator to develop the policies that will bring that into action.

Kyle is a delivery-focused politician with experience in Government as a special adviser before becoming an MP. He will be expected to take the lead on Labour's infamous AI paper; this will translate into overseeing the implementation of the Government's overall AI strategy if Starmer wins the next election. While many think tanks, select committees and industry groups have said what they would like to hear from Labour, there is much work still to be done by the party to develop this huge policy area.

It is also a sign that Starmer's team intend to make scrutiny of this area rather more political than it has been until now. Intelligent, likeable and quick-witted, Kyle is a classic example of the 'campaigning Shadow Cabinet' that Starmer has appointed in what is likely to be his final shake-up before the General Election. A competent media performer, he has been adept at identifying Government failures and responds deftly to criticism of his own Party.



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## WHAT IT MEANS FOR BUSINESS

Popular, competent and on top of his brief, Jonathan Reynolds was at the heart of Labour's turnaround on relations with business. Adding trade to his brief not only reflects the machinery of government changes, but also the confidence in him to deliver that Keir Starmer clearly has. It means the Government will be scrutinised more forensically on the subject and Kemi Badenoch will find Reynolds a tough opponent; his warm approach on media is in direct contrast to his sharp scrutiny at the despatch box, betraying his pre-politics background as a solicitor.

But it's bigger than just a simple change to the mechanics of the Shadow Cabinet. Trade and Britain's place in the world, are the heart of Labour's economic strategy. In Rachel Reeves' 'Securonomics' speech, the Shadow Chancellor is clear that since the financial crisis, longstanding rules and expectations for developed economies have broken down and deglobalisation is changing the terms of global trade. On a domestic level Brexit has fundamentally altered the UK's position in the world. For Reeves it is of vital importance that a new rules-based order amongst friendly nations is built that make us more resilient to shocks and disruption to supply chains.

Designing that system at a domestic and international level is a huge challenge. Labour's set out its plans for an Industrial Strategy and Industrial Strategy Council. But it's been as clear as possible that it wants to co-author with business and the unions. So we should expect more of the same from Reynolds, travelling the length and breadth of the UK as he meets and greets those in the private sector. The mission that Reynolds has been given by Keir Starmer is clear: make Labour the party of business. Come the short campaign Labour will be looking to businesses and business leaders for explicit endorsement of the party. And after a period of widespread engagement, they are now looking to more sector-based engagement on specific, tricky issues to stress test their approach. That means the voices of business, whether major, global businesses or part of the thriving UK SME sector, will get a seat at the table.

Earlier in the summer, Labour's National Policy Forum set out an ambitious programme on workers' rights in a political deal between the party's leaders and the trade unions. Angela Rayner, the deputy leader and Shadow Deputy Prime Minister, retains

the responsibility for developing these plans into a programme for government. And the party are clear that business needs to be involved in how these will be legislated for and delivered. Reynolds and Rayner are friends with next door seats in Greater Manchester. They are both "Labour through-and-through". So don't expect anything other than a continued focus on fair wages and employment practices. But the pair are also committed to a pragmatic bridge-building project with the private sector, as they prepare for the prospect of taking over a Government Department for the first time.