

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



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Introduction

During his five-year tenure as Leader of the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn faced three different Conservative Prime Ministers (David Cameron, Theresa May and Boris Johnson), two general elections (2017 and 2019) and one challenge to his leadership in 2016.

Jeremy Corbyn's second election defeat resulted in the party's fourth consecutive election loss since 2005. As the Conservatives celebrated an 80 seat majority, Labour saw its worst defeat since 1935. Resignation was expected, perhaps unavoidable, and as Corbyn vowed to remain in charge until his successor was chosen, one by one candidates launched their bids to replace him.

Five candidates soon became three and in the end it was Sir Keir Starmer who was chosen to become the next Leader of the Opposition.

Starmer revealed his Shadow Cabinet in April 2020, appointing the first female Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer and achieving a 50:50 gender balance. New cabinet appointments sit amongst party heavyweights, who's ministerial experiences are drawn from seven governments spanning three decades. This new shadow cabinet firmly marks a new chapter in this party's history.

Key Facts

- Sir Keir Starmer won the Labour leadership race with 56.2 per cent of the vote, ahead of Rebecca Long Bailey and Lisa Nandy.
- Eight of the 27 most senior members of Keir Starmer's Shadow Cabinet backed Andy Burnham in the 2015 leadership election. Five backed Yvette Cooper and three supported Jeremy Corbyn.
- Nine Cabinet members resigned from Jeremy Corbyn's Shadow Cabinet in 2016, following the EU Referendum.
- In the 2016 leadership challenge which followed, 14 members of Starmer's Shadow Cabinet backed Owen Smith, whilst two supported Jeremy Corbyn in his reelection.
- During the 2020 leadership contest, 14 members of the new Shadow Cabinet nominated or backed Sir Keir Starmer to become Leader.
- Each candidate who stood to replace Corbyn has been awarded a place in the Shadow Cabinet.
- Eight Shadow Cabinet members attended either the University of Oxford or Cambridge.
- Nine Shadow Cabinet members studied or have a background in law.
- Three Shadow Cabinet members studied Politics, Philosophy and Economics.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



Sir Keir Starmer QC MP

ANOTHER FUTURE IS POSSIBLE

Party Labour

Position Leader of the Labour Party

Biography

Until his victory, Sir Keir Starmer was the Shadow Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union (DEXEU) and out-stayed both David Davis MP and Dominic Rabb MP whom he shadowed.

Sir Keir Starmer has held few positions during his time in Parliament. He was previously a Shadow Minister for the Home Office during 2015/16 and member of the Home Affairs Select Committee in 2015.

Despite less political experience compared to colleagues, Sir Keir has had a high-profile legal career. He was named Director of Public Prosecution and Head of the Crown Prosecution Service.

Son of a nurse and a toolmaker, Sir Keir went to the University of Leeds and received his Master's degree from the University of Oxford. Called to the Bar in 1987, he was a practising barrister from 1990 to 2008. During his legal career he has sat on numerous boards, including Director of the Death Penalty Project and Patron of the Santé Refugee Mental Health Project.

Sir Keir was appointed Queen's Counsel in 2002 and knighted twelve years later for his services to law and criminal justice.

Following his election to his Holborn and St Pancras seat in 2015, Sir Keir was quickly pushed to stand for leadership the following year. Instead, he nominated Andy Burnham.

An initial member of Jeremy Corbyn's Shadow Cabinet, he resigned following the European Union Referendum, citing that stronger leadership was needed. He subsequently nominated Owen Smith. Re-elected as Labour Leader, Corbyn returned Sir Keir to his Shadow Cabinet.

Keir Starmer was elected as Labour Leader in April 2020, with 52.6% of the vote.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



Angela Rayner MP

Party Labour

Position Deputy Leader of the Labour Party & Party Chair

Biography

Prior to her election, Angela Rayner was the Shadow Secretary of State for Education.

She is Member of Parliament for Ashton-under-Lyme and was first elected in 2015. She was promoted to Opposition Whip's Office for the year 2015-2016. She then moved to be a Shadow Minister for Work and Pensions and jointly acted as the Shadow Minister for Women and Equalities in the same year. Later in 2016, she received another promotion to her current role.

Raised on a council estate, Angela Rayner had a challenging upbringing. Her mother's mental health problems meant that Rayner and her two siblings were raised by their grandmother.

Angela Rayner had her first child aged 16 and has suggested that it was a life-event that "saved her". Despite not attending university, her experience as a care worker and employment for the trade union, Unison, made her the perfect candidate.

After representing employees at tribunals and negotiating terms and conditions for a number of years, Angela Rayner was elected a Unison lay official in the North West and represented over 200,000 public sector workers.

She recognised the limitations of her work as a union representative and wanted to help push government policies in the direction of helping the less well-off. She hoped to bring a "dose of common sense and real-life experience to the House of Commons".

Upon her election as MP in 2015, she made five pledges: have an office in the constituency, to not hold any other jobs, put constituents first, bring investment to the area and build a first-class NHS service.

Despite backing Andy Burnham in the 2015 leadership election, that didn't stop Corbyn from promoting Angela Rayner to the Whip's Office in September that year.

Angela Rayner backed Rebecca Long Bailey for leadership and won her position as Deputy Leader with 52.6% of the vote and a new role as Chair of the Party.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



Anneliese Dodds MP

Party Labour

Position Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer

Biography

Anneliese Dodds appointment makes her the first female Shadow Chancellor. In fact, the Shadow Treasury department's top two positions (Chancellor and Chief Secretary to the Treasury) are both held by women – a first in parliamentary history.

Anneliese Dodds is relatively new to Parliament, having only been elected after the 2017 general election, but was almost immediately appointed as Shadow Minister to the Treasury. Prior to this, she was a Member of the European Parliament, serving from 2014 until her election to Westminster.

An Oxford graduate, Anneliese Dodds received her degree in Politics, Philosophy and Economics from St Hilda's College and presided as the Union's President (1999-2000). With a Masters later achieved at Edinburgh University for Social Policy, she then gained a PhD in 2006 from the London School of Economics (LSE).

Following this, she never strayed too far from education, lecturing at the London School of Economics, King's College London and Aston University, before becoming an MEP. She is credited with writing and contributing to over 20 educational publications.

Before winning her Oxford seat, Anneliese Dodds contested both Billericay in 2005 and Reading East in 2010. She made the decision to campaign for the seat she would go onto win, after reaching the conclusion that following the UK's decision to leave the European Union, she would have greater influence as an MP.

She nominated and supported Sir Keir Starmer in his leadership bid and was rewarded with the promotion as Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



Bridget Phillipson MP

Party Labour

Position Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury

Biography

The first MP to be elected in 2010 and the second youngest, Bridget Phillipson is a former women's charity worker.

After reading history at the University of Oxford, where she also chaired the University Labour Club, Bridget Phillipson worked for Sunderland City Council. In 2007 she left the council to work for her mother, Claire Phillipson, who is the director of Wearside Women in Need.

After her election, Phillipson was quickly promoted to Parliamentary Private Secretary and then to Shadow Defence Secretary Jim Murphy. In 2013 she was promoted again to Opposition Whip.

In 2015 she nominated Yvette Cooper MP and Owen Smith in the next leadership race.

During Jeremy Corbyn's first reshuffle, Bridget Phillipson was dropped from the Shadow team and returned to the backbenches.

She nominated and backed Sir Keir Starmer and was appointed to her new role in the Treasury Department.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



Rachel Reeves MP

Party Labour

Position Shadow Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

Biography

Rachel Reeves studied Politics, Philosophy and Economics at New College, Oxford before moving to the London School of Economic for her Masters.

An economist, Rachel Reeves has worked for some prominent financial companies. She first worked at the Bank of England, before moving to the British Embassy in Washington DC in 2003. After a year in Washington DC, Rachel Reeves returned to the Bank of England for a further two years. She moved to Halifax, Bank of Scotland, in 2006 where she stayed for the next four years.

Before her election success in 2010, Rachel Reeves stood in Bromley and Chislehurst in 2005 and again in the seats 2006 by-election.

She backed Ed Miliband in the 2010 leadership contest to replace Gordon Brown and was soon in his “new generation” frontbench team. She was chosen to be his Shadow Minister of State for Work and Pensions.

Her promotion to Chief Secretary to the Treasury in 2011 made her the youngest member of the Shadow Cabinet. Within a year, she was promoted yet again to replace Liam Byrne as Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.

She was set to endorse Chuka Umunna in the 2015 leadership election, but supported Andy Burnham when Chuka Umunna stood down.

After Andy Burnham lost the race to Jeremy Corbyn, she announced that she would not be returning to the frontbench following maternity leave.

Along with 35 others, she was revealed to be on a secret party list of Labour MPs who were hostile to Jeremy Corbyn in March 2016. Subsequently, Rachel Reeves nominated Owen Smith in the 2016 leadership contest.

Rachel Reeves continued to remain on the backbenches but was elected as Chair of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Select Committee in 2017. She was also a member of the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy and the Liaison Select Committee.

Despite nominating Jess Phillips for Leader in the 2020 election, this didn't prevent Sir Keir from bringing her back into the Shadow Cabinet, in a new role as Duchy of Lancaster.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



Nick Thomas-Symonds MP

Party Labour

Position Shadow Home Secretary

Biography

Another Politics, Philosophy and Economics graduate from Oxford University, Nick Thomas-Symonds returned to Wales for further education at Glamorgan University, receiving a Diploma in Law.

For 13 years, he lectured where he once studied at the University of Oxford, up until his election to Parliament. Before this, he was called to the Bar in 2004 and subsequently pursued a career as a barrister, lecturing at universities when not in court.

He has written two political biographies: one on Clement Attlee and the other of Aneurin Bevan.

Nick Thomas-Symonds undertook work experience with an MP in 1997. He went on to succeed that same MP, Paul Murphy, to win the parliamentary seat of Torfaen in June 2015, following Paul Murphy's retirement from politics.

Following his election and the subsequent election of Jeremy Corbyn as Party Leader, Nick Thomas-Symonds was promoted by Jeremy Corbyn to his top team.

He was first appointed as a Shadow Minister for Work and Pensions and then, after Corbyn's second leadership victory, he moved to become Shadow Solicitor-General. In the subsequent reshuffle, he additionally took on the role as a Shadow Minister of State for Security.

He has remained a member of the Labour Party's Shadow Cabinet and has received a promotion to Shadow Home Secretary.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



Lisa Nandy MP

Party Labour

Position Shadow Secretary of State for the Foreign Office

Biography

Lisa Nandy has held numerous parliamentary positions since becoming the MP for Wigan in 2010. She began her political career as the Parliamentary Private Secretary (PPS) to the late Tessa Jowell who, at the time, was a Shadow Minister with responsibilities for London and the Olympics.

Lisa Nandy went on to hold her own ministerial position as a Shadow Minister for Children and Families from 2012 to 2013. Later in 2013, she became a Minister in the Cabinet Office and held this position for two years, before becoming the Shadow Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change.

Following the resignation of Ed Miliband as Party Leader in 2015, Nandy nominated Andy Burnham to be his successor. When Jeremy Corbyn was elected as Leader, he named her as Shadow Energy and Climate Change Secretary, with responsibility for boosting renewable energy and opposing nuclear projects and fracking.

Along with several colleagues she resigned from the Shadow Cabinet shortly after the EU Referendum in June 2016. She nominated Owen Smith for leadership and ran his campaign to be Jeremy Corbyn's replacement. In their joint resignation from the Shadow Cabinet, both Lisa Nandy and Owen Smith stated that Corbyn could not "form a broad, inclusive shadow cabinet that draws on the best of our movement's left and right traditions."

More recently she was one of 26 Labour MPs who wrote to the Shadow Cabinet in June 2019, opposing a policy shift towards Remain in the EU and a second referendum. She called for the party to back an exit deal.

Following Labour's third consecutive election defeat in the 2019, Lisa Nandy announced her leadership bid. She came third on 16.2% of the votes, yet won a place in the the Shadow Cabinet.

Prior to her election to Parliament, Lisa was a local councillor for the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham Council. Elected in to the Council in 2006, she held the position of Shadow Member for Housing and Regeneration.

Lisa received her a degree in Politics from Newcastle University and went on to Birkbeck University, for her Masters in Government, Policy and Politics.

She was previously a parliamentary assistant to Neil Gerrard MP and policy researcher for Refugee Children and Families at Centrepont. She also worked for the Children's Society as a policy adviser.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



John Healey MP

Party Labour

Position Shadow Secretary of State for Defence

Biography

One of the longest serving Shadow Cabinet appointees, John Healey is also one of the few MPs to remain in the Shadow Cabinet, following Jeremy Corbyn's resignation. He even saw a promotion from Shadow Secretary of State for Housing to Defence.

John Healey attended Christ's College at Cambridge University in 1982 after receiving a scholarship. A few years later, he was a journalist/deputy editor for The House magazine. He left this position after a year to become a campaigner and lobbyist for a variety of disability charities. John Healey then became a head of communications for the MSF Union and the campaigns director for the TUC.

In 1992 he contested Ryedale before winning the seat of Wentworth at the following election. He remained the MP for Wentworth until 2010, where constituency boundary changes saw the seat expand to include Dearne, now known as Wentworth and Dearne.

During his time as the MP for Wentworth, John Healey was the PPS to future Prime Minister Gordon Brown whilst he was the Chancellor of the Exchequer under Tony Blair. After two years in the post, he moved to a new position as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Department for Education and Skills.

He next moved to the Treasury Department and held numerous roles there before being promoted to Minister of State for the Department for Communities and Local Government. In 2010, when Labour were out of Government, John Healey accepted his first role as Shadow Secretary of State in the Department for Health. He stayed in this role until 2011.

Under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, John Healey moved back to Housing as the Minister of State for Housing and Planning (also attending Shadow Cabinet). His position changed in 2016 when he was promoted to Shadow Secretary of State for Housing. He kept this position until 2020, when he moved to Defence.

John Healey announced his intention to stand as Deputy Leader in 2015, dropping out of the race following an investigation into his electoral expenses. He nominated Yvette Cooper for Leader.

He challenged Jeremy Corbyn's leadership following the 2016 EU Referendum and resigned from the Shadow Cabinet as a result. He then nominated Owen Smith to replace Jeremy Corbyn.

In the 2020 leadership election John Healey nominated Sir Keir Starmer.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



Jonathan Ashworth MP

Party Labour

Position Shadow Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

Biography

Jon Ashworth graduated from Durham University with a degree in Politics and Philosophy. He was the national secretary of Labour Students and then went straight to work for the Labour Party as a political researcher, and then as an economics and welfare policy officer.

His career in politics began when he joined the Treasury in 2004 as special adviser to then Chief Secretary, Paul Boateng, and moved to Downing Street with Gordon Brown in 2007 where he became his deputy political secretary.

Despite his political network, Jon Ashworth was unsuccessful in nominations for two seats before his success in the 2011 Leicester South by-election. He won the nomination with over 70 per cent of the vote.

Jon Ashworth got his first promotion five months later, appointed as Opposition Whip in Ed Miliband's first major reshuffle. In October 2013, he was promoted again to his first frontbench job, as a Shadow Minister for the Cabinet Office.

In the 2015 leadership election Jon Ashworth nominated Yvette Cooper but was nevertheless given a position in Jeremy Corbyn's Shadow Cabinet, as a Minister without Portfolio. In the 2016 reshuffle, he became Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

He again backed a different candidate for leadership in 2020, supporting Lisa Nandy. Jon Ashworth has kept his Cabinet position.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



Ed Miliband MP

Party Labour

Position Shadow Secretary of State for Business,
Energy and Industrial Strategy

Biography

Ed Miliband is the former Leader of the Labour Party.

His father is the late Marxist intellectual and writer, Ralph Miliband, who was a fierce critic of the Labour Party, and fled to Britain to escape the Nazis in 1940. Ed Miliband's grandfather was a Jewish refugee from Poland.

Before he entered Parliament in 2005, Ed Miliband attended Corpus Christi College at Oxford, where he studied Philosophy, Politics and Economics. After this, he attended the London School of Economics attaining a Masters in Economics.

He previously worked as a television journalist before going on a two-year sabbatical to the United States to study and teach economics at Harvard University. He was briefly a researcher and speechwriter to Harriet Harman, before Gordon Brown poached him to work in his office in 1994. Three years later he was at the heart of the Government as Gordon Brown's special adviser at the Treasury.

When he was elected in 2005, Ed Miliband was immediately appointed to the Party's election strategy committee. He was also named a Parliamentary Secretary to the Cabinet Office. A year later (2007) he saw his first promotion to Minister of the Cabinet Office and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

In 2008 he was promoted again, this time as Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, where he remained for two years. After being re-elected to the Doncaster North seat, with a revised boundary, he remained in his role in the Shadow Cabinet.

After his defeat in the 2010 election, Gordon Brown stood down as the Party's Leader in 2010 and Miliband replaced him. He stood against his brother in this contest and narrowly beat David by just 1.3% of the votes, after the fourth round of voting and the redistribution of second preference votes.

On election night in 2015, David Cameron won a majority following five years of a coalition government with the Liberal Democrats. Ed Miliband subsequently resigned. Unsurprising, he didn't nominate his replacement but backed Owen Smith in 2016.

Miliband nominated Keir Starmer in 2020.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



Jo Stevens MP

Party Labour

Position Shadow Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

Biography

Jo Stevens first entered the Commons following the 2015 general election and quickly became Parliamentary Private Secretary to Tom Watson. She reclaimed the seat of Cardiff Central after 10 years of Liberal Democrat control.

Jo Stevens was born in Swansea and attended Manchester University where she received a degree in law. She stayed in Manchester, moving to the Polytechnic for her postgraduate study, completing the Law Society Professional Examination.

She then returned to Cardiff where she worked as a solicitor, focusing on employee rights, injuries, mistreatment and criminal conduct accusations.

When elected to Parliament, Jo Stevens nominated Andy Burnham to be Labour's next Leader after Ed Miliband. Nevertheless, Jeremy Corbyn appointed her as Shadow Minister for Justice and a week later added Shadow Solicitor General to her role.

Jeremy Corbyn moved Jo Stevens to Secretary of State for Wales in his reshuffle. She resigned from the Shadow Cabinet over Brexit, having broken the three-line whip to vote against triggering Article 50.

She nominated Sir Keir Starmer to replace Jeremy Corbyn.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



Rebecca Long Bailey MP

Party Labour

Position Shadow Secretary of State for Education

Biography

Rebecca Long Bailey was first elected in 2015 and spent little time on the backbenches before moving to Jeremy Corbyn's Shadow Cabinet, appointed as Shadow Exchequer Secretary.

A few months later, Rebecca received another promotion, though still within the Treasury Department, becoming the Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

Until her leadership bid, she had been the Shadow Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), but has since been moved to the Department of Education following Sir Keir's reshuffle. She will serve as Shadow Secretary of State opposite the Conservative's Gavin Williamson MP.

Manchester born and bred, she has a family history of trade union affiliation, which is believed to have influenced her politics growing up. Before her election to the Manchester seat of Salford and Eccles in 2015, Rebecca studied Politics and Sociology at Manchester Metropolitan University. Upon completion of her degree, she began a legal career practising as a solicitor in the NHS for over a decade.

With experience working in the NHS, it is unsurprising that she refers to the NHS as one of her priorities. She has also pledged to tackle inequality, unemployment and failings in education.

Rebecca Long Bailey supported both of Jeremy Corbyn's leadership bids. She fought for, and nominated Jeremy Corbyn, to be on the ballot in the party's 2015 leadership race, following the party's defeat in the earlier general election. She continued to back him in the 2016 leadership challenge. This led to her appointment as Shadow Secretary of State for BEIS.

In the 2020 leadership contest, she was the 6th MP to announce an intention to replace Jeremy Corbyn, regarded by many commentators as the so-called 'continuity-Corbyn' candidate. She finished a distant second, receiving just 27.6% of the vote.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



Steve Reed MP

Party Labour

Position Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Biography

Steve Reed was elected to his Croydon North seat in the 2012 by-election.

He studied English at Sheffield University before working in educational publishing for 18 years. He quit his day job in 2008 to become a full-time politician and subsequently held positions including Deputy Leader of Labour Local Government, Board Member for children's services and education at a local council and Chair of the Central London Forward group.

His services to local government led to his OBE in the 2013 Birthday Honours.

Prior to his electoral success, Steve Reed attempted to win a nomination for Streatham in 2010, losing out to former Labour MP Chuka Umunna. He then moved to Croydon North following the death of the long-serving MP Malcolm Wicks.

Once elected, he served on the Public Administration Committee and chaired the Labour backbench group on education. He is dubbed 'more Blairite than Tony Blair' and a strong supporter of Ed Miliband's "One Nation" politics. He was appointed as Shadow Home Office Minister in 2013. In May 2015, he was named Shadow Minister for Communities and Local Government.

He was later appointed as the Shadow Minister for Local Government in the September 2015 reshuffle.

After the EU referendum in June 2016, Steve Reed resigned as a Shadow Minister, saying he did not believe Jeremy Corbyn could win a general election. He nominated Owen Smith in the 2016 leadership contest and, when Jeremy Corbyn was re-elected, he re-joined the frontbench as Shadow Minister for Civil Society.

After nearly three years as the Shadow Minister for Civil Society, he became the Shadow Minister for Children in the summer of 2019.

He then nominated Keir Starmer in 2020, who appointed him to his first Shadow Secretary of State position - Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



Thangam Debbonaire MP

Party Labour

Position Shadow Secretary of State for Housing

Biography

A highly skilled and experienced cello player, Thangam Debbonaire hit the right note with the voters of Bristol West when she won the seat from the Liberal Democrats at the 2015 general election.

Thangam Debbonaire studied Mathematics at Oxford University but didn't complete her degree which she attributes to her focus on music.

She served as a ward secretary for Bristol West Labour Party, as well as women's officer and an executive member between September 2010 and May 2012. She stood in Bristol City Council 2011 local elections, finishing third behind the winning Green Party and the Liberal Democrat members.

Thangam Debbonaire was selected to contest her Bristol seat at the 2015 General Election in 2012.

In 2015, she backed Mary Creagh to be the next Labour Leader, despite nominating Yvette Cooper MP.

In January 2016 she was appointed as Shadow Minister for Culture, Media and Sport, but stood down following the EU Referendum.

She originally supported Angela Eagle in the 2016 leadership contest but nominated Owen Smith once she dropped out. When Corbyn was re-elected, she accepted his offer to become a party whip.

She backed Sir Keir to replace Jeremy Corbyn in 2020.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



Luke Pollard MP

Party Labour

Position Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Biography

Luke Jonathan Pollard was educated at Tavistock College before going to Exeter University to study politics. He was elected as the President of his Students' Union.

After finishing university, he worked as Studio Manager for ITV until he took his first political steps into Westminster. He was first hired as a researcher for David Jamieson MP, next moving to the office of George Foulkes MP. After two years, Luke Pollard left Parliament and became an Account Director for Edelman (2005-09).

Leaving Edelman, he moved to ABTA – The Association of British Travel Agents, where he was their Head of Public Affairs for four years and Head of European Development for an additional year. He left ABTA to become a Director at Field Consulting UK until his election to Parliament in 2017.

Luke Pollard contested South West Devon in 2010, and the seat he would later go on to win, Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport in 2015.

In his first year of being an MP, Pollard was appointed Parliamentary Private Secretary to Sue Hayman who was the then Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Shadow DEFRA).

Luke Pollard has remained within the Shadow DEFRA team ever since. Firstly, he was promoted to Shadow Minister with responsibilities for fishing, flooding and water before his promotion to Secretary of State, under Jeremy Corbyn.

His new Leader, Keir Starmer, chose to keep Pollard in his current role.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



Jim McMahon MP

Party Labour

Position Shadow Secretary of State for Transport

Biography

Jim McMahon began working at Manchester University as a Technician in 1997 before moving to the charity Groundwork Trust.

At the age of 23, he was elected to Oldham council in 2003 and 12 years later became the council's Leader. The council won 'Most Improved Council' in 2012 under Jim McMahon's leadership.

He's been a member of Labour's National Executive Committee, as well as the Labour Group Leader and Vice-chair of the Local Government Association Labour group.

Selected with less than a month to go before the 2015 Oldham West and Royton by-election, Jim McMahon beat three other candidates in the shortlist, including former MP Chris Williamson. The by-election was caused by the death of Michael Meacher, who had been MP for the constituency since 1970.

He supported Liz Kendall in the 2015 leadership election yet was promoted as Tom Watson's PPS. A year later he was appointed as Shadow Minister for Communities and Local Government, taking on the portfolio of Local Government and Devolution. This expanded to cover Finance in 2017.

McMahon continued in his council role until resigning in 2017 after 13 years.

He nominated Owen Smith to replace Jeremy Corbyn in 2016 and backed Keir Starmer in 2020. Keir Starmer moved Jim McMahon to Shadow Secretary of State for Transport.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



Rt Hon Lord Falconer of Thoroton QC

Party Labour

Position Shadow Attorney General

Biography

Lord Falconer was given a life peerage in 1997 and has held numerous roles since.

Before his peerage, he was called to the Bar in 1974, made a QC in 1991 and elected Master at the Bench of the Inner Temple.

In the same year that he joined the House of Lords Lord Falconer was appointed as Solicitor General. A year later in 1998, he became a Minister of State and Government spokesperson for: The Cabinet Office, Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions, and the Home Office.

In 2003, he was made Secretary of State and Government spokesperson for Constitutional Affairs/Justice and Lord Chancellor. Lord Falconer remained in this post for four years.

After Labour's defeat in the 2010 General Election, he became the Opposition Spokesperson for Justice for the next 6 years. In 2015 he took on additional responsibilities as Shadow Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice.

Sir Keir Starmer named him his Shadow Attorney General in 2020.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



David Lammy MP

Party Labour

Position Shadow Secretary of State for Justice

Biography

David Lammy attended The King's School in Peterborough, before achieving his LLB from the School of Oriental and African Studies at London University.

He also attended Harvard Law School for his LLM, making him the first black Briton to be awarded a Masters degree from the university. He remained in the US, practising as a litigation lawyer in California.

When he won the Tottenham by-election in June 2000, after the death of Bernie Grant, David Lammy became the youngest elected MP. He beat Bernie Grant's wife to be selected as the party's candidate.

It didn't take long before he was promoted to Parliamentary Private Secretary to then Education Secretary Estelle Morris.

A year later he added to his list of records when, at 29, he became the youngest Minister in Tony Blair's Government at the Department of Health. After another year he was moved to junior Minister in Lord Falconer's Department of Constitutional Affairs.

His next two moves were sideways. First, he spent two years as Culture Minister at the Department of Culture, Media & Sport and in 2007 Gordon Brown moved him again to the new department covering Innovation, Universities and Skills.

Following the 2010 election defeat, David Lammy left the frontbench. In September 2014 he announced he would be standing as a candidate in the 2016 London mayoral elections, but only came fourth in the selection race.

He supported David Miliband in the leadership contest of 2010 and in the 2015 leadership contest he nominated Jeremy Corbyn. He said he was not personally going to vote for Corbyn but wished for "a full debate on policy within the party".

He supported Keir Starmer for Labour Leader in 2020 and was chosen as the Vice-Chair of his campaign.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



Preet Kaur Gill MP

Party Labour

Position Shadow Secretary of State for International Development

Biography

Preet Gill is the first female British Sikh MP and held the seat of Edgbaston for Labour after taking over from long-term representative Gisela Stuart in 2017.

She studied at the University of East London, gaining a degree in Sociology and Social Work.

After becoming a councillor in 2012, she was appointed Cabinet Member for Public Health and Protection. Preet Gill was active on the Midland Joint Advisory Council for Clean Air and Noise Control and Environmental protection but resigned from the council in March 2018.

A year after her election, she joined the frontbench team in January 2018 as Shadow Minister for International Development. Nominating Keir Starmer, Preet Gill has remained in the International Development department, having been promoted to Secretary of State.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



Emily Thornberry MP

Party Labour

Position Shadow Secretary of State for International Trade

Biography

Emily Thornberry lived on a council estate with her mother following her parents' separation. Her mother was a Labour Councillor and former Mayor, whilst her father became Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Consultant to NATO.

She read law at the University of Kent and was called to the Bar in 1983. She specialised in criminal defence, human rights, inquests, actions against the police, courts martial and extradition.

She joined the Labour Party at 17 "to change the world" and in 2001 she stood for election in Canterbury, halving the Conservative majority.

She supported Ed Miliband in the 2010 leadership contest and was made Shadow Minister for Health. A year later she made it to the top table as Shadow Attorney General.

In November 2014 Emily Thornberry resigned from the opposition frontbench on the eve of the Rochester and Strood by-election.

She nominated Jeremy Corbyn in the 2015 leadership election. He rewarded her with a role as Shadow Minister for Employment. In the 2016 reshuffle, Emily Thornberry remained in the Shadow Cabinet as Shadow Secretary of State for Defence.

Emily Thornberry remained loyal to Jeremy Corbyn in 2016, following mass resignations. As such, she was moved to Shadow Foreign Secretary. She was also given the role of Shadow Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, but only kept the Foreign Secretary role after the October reshuffle.

After the 2019 general election defeat, she announced her intention to replace Jeremy Corbyn as party leader. Whilst she was largely expected to become the Party's first female leader, Emily Thornberry failed to make it onto the final ballot paper.

She was replaced as Shadow Foreign Secretary, moving to a new role as Shadow Secretary of State for the Department of International Trade.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



Marsha De Cordova MP

Party Labour

Position Shadow Secretary of State for Women and Equalities

Biography

Marsha De Cordova was registered blind at birth, after being born with the condition nystagmus. She pursued a career in helping others with visual impairments and has been the Chief Executive of the South East Vision charity, and the Engagement and Advocacy Director for the Thomas Pocklington Trust.

She was elected to Lambeth Council in 2014, serving one term. She attended London South Bank University, studying Law.

Marsha De Cordova overturned Jane Ellison's 7,938 majority in Battersea in 2017, to win the seat with a majority of 2,416.

She said her decision to run for Parliament came from her experiences as a disabled woman, including at university where her disabled student allowance could have been abolished by the Government.

Months after her election, she became Parliamentary Private Secretary to Debbie Abrahams the then Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. She was then promoted to Shadow Minister for Disabled People in October 2017.

Sir Keir appointed Marsha De Cordova as Shadow Secretary of State for Women and Equalities in 2020.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



Jonathan Reynolds MP

Party Labour

Position Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions

Biography

Jonathan Reynolds read Politics and Modern History at Manchester University.

He then worked as political assistant to James Purnell MP for four years until 2007. He was also a youth representative on Labour's National Executive, before enrolling at the Manchester Law School. He was training to be a solicitor in Manchester prior to his election.

He was elected to Tameside Council in 2007 and became a cabinet member two years later.

Jonathan Reynolds succeeded his former boss James Purnell in 2010 and nominated David Miliband for the Labour leadership in the same year.

After a year as an Opposition Whip, he was appointed Parliamentary Private Secretary to Ed Miliband in October 2011. Two years later he was promoted to his first frontbench job as a Shadow Minister for Energy and Climate Change.

In the 2015 Labour leadership elections Jonathan Reynolds nominated Liz Kendall. He offered to resign from Jeremy Corbyn's frontbench entirely but was asked to reconsider and take a job as Shadow Minister for Transport which he did.

He then resigned from his role as Shadow Transport Minister, stating that he appreciated Jeremy Corbyn's need for a united shadow team and that therefore he would be better on the backbenches.

Jonathan Reynolds nominated Owen Smith in the 2016 leadership contest. When Jeremy Corbyn won, he rejoined the shadow team as Shadow Economic Secretary.

He nominated Keir Starmer in the 2020 Labour leadership contest and was appointed as the Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in April 2020.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



Rt Hon Valerie Vaz MP

Party Labour

Position Shadow Leader of the House of Commons

Biography

Valerie Vaz was born in Aden in 1954 where her father was correspondent for the Times of India. The family settled in Twickenham and she went to London University.

She qualified as a solicitor in 1982 and worked in local government before becoming a presenter for the BBC Asian programme Network East.

Valerie Vaz set up a community law firm called 'Townsend Vaz' and was a part-time deputy district judge.

From 2001 until her selection, she was a Government solicitor working for the Treasury and the Justice Department. She was an Ealing Borough councillor for four years in the 1980s, and for a year, deputy leader of the council.

She first stood for Parliament in Twickenham back in 1987, the year her brother (Keith Vaz) was first elected in Leicester. Two years later she stood in the European Parliament election for the East Midlands.

It took 20 years before she was won an election. In 2001 she tried to succeed Betty Boothroyd in West Bromwich West, and Jeff Rooker in Birmingham Perry Bar in 2005. Five years later she stood in Walsall and won, despite the party's majority being considerably reduced. She was one of the first two women of Indian origin to enter the House of Commons.

She supported David Miliband in the 2010 leadership contest and nominated Andy Burnham in 2015.

Jeremy Corbyn brought her onto the frontbench for the first time in October 2016 as Shadow Leader of the House of Commons. Following his election as the new leader, Sir Keir has retained Valerie Vaz as Shadow Leader of the House of Commons.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



Rt Hon Baroness Smith of Basildon

Party Labour

Position Shadow Leader of the House of Lords

Biography

A former councillor for Essex County Council, Baroness Smith served as party Chief Whip and Vice-President of the Local Government Association.

Before her peerage, Angela Smith contested Southend West in the 1987 general election before her election to Basildon in 1997. She remained MP for Basildon until 2010. Smith contested South Basildon and East Thurrock in the 2010 election following boundary changes, losing out to the Conservative's Stephen Metcalfe.

During her time in Parliament, Angela Smith was the PPS to Paul Boateng the then Minister of State in the Home Office, before moving to become Assistant Government Whip. In 2002 she moved to the Department for Northern Ireland as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State.

Angela Smith remained as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State but moved to the Department for Communities and Local Government in 2006. A year later she was appointed PPS to former Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

After two years as Brown's PPS, she became Minister of State at the Cabinet Office and was given a life peerage in 2010.

In the Lords, Baroness Smith has been the Opposition Spokesperson for: Energy and Climate Change, Northern Ireland and the Home Office. As well as holding the position of Opposition Deputy Chief Whip from 2012 to 2015.

In 2015, she was promoted to Shadow Leader of the House of Lords and has remained in this post ever since.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



Ian Murray MP

Party Labour

Position Shadow Secretary of State for Scotland

Biography

First elected to his Edinburgh South seat in 2010, Ian Murray is the last remaining Labour MP in Scotland.

Before embarking on his political career, Ian Murray received an MA in Social Policy and Law from the University of Edinburgh. He went on to become a Councillor for Edinburgh City Council in 2003.

Whilst maintaining his position as an Edinburgh councillor, he was a Director and Partner at two start-up businesses. He remained a councillor until his election to parliament.

Once elected, Ian Murray was appointed as PPS to Ivan Lewis, the then Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Ian remained in this post for a year (2010-11) before he held his own ministerial position. He was appointed a minister for the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills and then later as the Shadow Minister for Trade and Investment between 2013-15.

Later in 2015, Ian was appointed the new Shadow Secretary of State for Scotland.

During the 2015 general election, Ian not only increased his majority but was the only Scottish Labour MP to be re-elected following mass gains by the SNP.

He supported Yvette Cooper MP for the 2015 leadership race, and Kezia Dugdale MSP for the Scottish Labour leadership.

Ian Murray resigned from the Shadow Cabinet in June 2016 following the EU referendum, leaving Jeremy Corbyn with no Scottish MP to fill the role. He reasoned that the Labour Party needed to be a strong opposition in order to win an election. He stated that "he [Corbyn] just can't lead the Labour Party and I don't think the public think he can be Prime Minister".

As a result, Ian Murray nominated Owen Smith in the contest against Corbyn.

Following the party's 2019 election defeat, Ian announced his intention to stand as Deputy Leader and nominated Jess Phillips MP for Leader.

Ian Murray is now Secretary of State for Scotland. He returns to his previous Shadow Cabinet position.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



Nia Griffith MP

Party Labour

Position Shadow Secretary of State for Wales

Biography

Taking a first-class honours in modern languages at Somerville College, Oxford, Nia Griffith trained as a teacher at the University College of North Wales at Bagnor and taught until 1992.

She went on to become a county education adviser, a schools inspector for Estyn (the Welsh equivalent of Ofsted) and a chief examiner. She returned to the classroom in 1997 to become head of languages at Morriston Comprehensive School, Swansea.

Joining the Labour Party in 1981 she moved to Carmarthenshire in 1983, where she was secretary of the county Labour Party. She was elected to Carmarthen Town Council in 1987, was Sheriff of the town in 1997 and deputy mayor in 1998.

She was elected to Llanelli in 2005 but waited until 2010 before her first big promotion. She was appointed a Shadow Minister for Business, Innovation and Skills. A year later she was moved to Shadow Minister in the Wales Office, deputy to Peter Hain.

Prior to this, Nia Griffith was PPS to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and then became Parliamentary Private Secretary of State to Harriet Harman, as Minister for Women and Equality and Acting Leader of the Opposition.

She supported Ed Balls in the leadership contest of 2010 and nominated Andy Burnham in 2015.

Following Jeremy Corbyn's victory, Nia Griffith received a promotion to Shadow Secretary of State for Wales.

She stood down from the Shadow Cabinet in June 2016, saying Corbyn did not give her confidence that he could unite the party and get it ready for a potential early general election. She initially backed Angela Eagle but later nominated Owen Smith once Angela Eagle dropped out.

After Jeremy Corbyn was re-elected as Leader in September 2016, she rejoined the Shadow Cabinet as Shadow Secretary of State for Defence.

Although she nominated Emily Thornberry for Leader in the 2020 election, Nia Griffith was appointed Shadow Secretary of State for Wales by Keir Starmer.

Her Majesty's Official Opposition



Louise Haigh MP

Party Labour

Position Interim Shadow Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

Biography

A “proud trade unionist, feminist and socialist”, Louise Haigh replaced Meg Munn as MP for Sheffield Heeley at the 2015 general election and was on the frontbench within four months.

Louise Haigh's family have influenced her politics. Her grandfather was an official in the Fire Brigades Union and her uncle was a member of the National Union of Mineworkers and took part in the strike of 1984-85.

She studied Politics and Economics at Nottingham University, moving to London and the Birkbeck School of Law to receive her LLM.

She backed Andy Burnham as the next leader of the Labour Party in 2015, saying that he was the man best placed to re-establish Labour's purpose. Despite not planning to vote for him, she nominated Jeremy Corbyn to help him get on the ballot paper.

When Jeremy Corbyn won, he appointed Louise Haigh to his frontbench team as Shadow Minister for the Cabinet Office with responsibility for digital industries and digital strategy.

Louise Haigh nominated Owen Smith in the 2016 leadership contest but remained in Corbyn's frontbench team. She became Shadow Minister for Digital Economy in October 2016.

In July 2017 she moved to the Shadow Home Office team as Shadow Minister for Policing. She had been a special constable.

In the 2020 leadership election, despite nominating Lisa Nandy for Leader, Louise Haigh will act as the interim Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary whilst Tony Lloyd MP recovers from illness.