

UK: Labour members to push for anti-Brexit stance at conference

Thursday 19 September 2019, by [WALKER Peter](#) (Date first published: 15 September 2019).

Vast majority of motions submitted call for party to explicitly back remain

[Labour](#) will face increased pressure from local party activists to adopt a more wholehearted anti-Brexit stance at its upcoming conference, according to an analysis of submitted motions which shows 90% want the party to openly back remain in any future referendum.

The scrutiny of the 90 motions connected to [Brexit](#) tabled by local parties ahead of the conference in Brighton, which will begin on Saturday 21 September, showed 81 of them called for Labour to explicitly support remain, while there were none opposing a second referendum which included a remain option.

The group Another Europe is Possible, which carried out the study and which campaigns for remain from a leftwing perspective, said the results showed the Labour leadership should listen to the views of party members on Brexit.

Labour is currently committed to going into a general election pushing for a new referendum, which would include a “credible” leave option – possibly a deal negotiated by Labour – and an option to stay in the EU.

However, there has been no decision as to what side Labour would back in a referendum, with some tension between more remain-minded elements of the parliamentary party and the more cautious approach of [Jeremy Corbyn](#) and his allies.

Last week the party’s deputy leader, Tom Watson, [used a speech](#) to argue that Labour should “unambiguously and unequivocally back remain”, and also seek a second Brexit referendum before a general election. The idea was [swiftly rejected](#) by Corbyn, who called it “Tom’s view”.

Remain-minded campaigners are set to push the issue at the conference. A majority of the Brexit motions submitted have been put forward either by Another Europe is Possible or two other groups, Labour for a Socialist Europe and Open Labour.

Michael Chessum from Another Europe is Possible said: “Labour members are the secret weapon of the party at a general election, and the party ignores them at its peril.

“Support for an explicit remain stance is evidently overwhelming. If backroom manoeuvres are deployed to stop this being debated on conference floor it will be a disaster for morale and for Labour’s prospects.

“We need a debate and a vote at conference. Only if Labour can get clarity on this part of its policy can it fight the election on its domestic agenda.”

Polling has indicated that the mass Labour membership is notably more remain-minded than the party's official policy, with [one survey from January](#) saying 72% sought a second referendum, and 88% saying they would back remain if one was held.

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The Guardian

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