

Personal statements for candidates for LHG Executive Committee 2024-26

<p>Adam Allnutt (Poplar and Limehouse CLP)</p>	<p>Having been the Secretary of the Fabian Member Policy Group on Housing and Local Government over the last two years I have built up a good amount of experience in the YIMBY movement. I believe LHG should be more pro-housing and pro-development.</p> <p>Please do lend me your support so we can build a more effective pro-housing movement.</p>
<p>Bradley Arnold (Knowsley CLP)</p>	<p>I am currently the chair of Unison's North West housing forum and an active member within my CLP. I have worked in the social housing sector for the last 7 years for a Housing Association and more recently the local authority while being active in the trade union movement. I have seen first hand the devastation successive Tory governments since 2010 have exacted on the housing sector through policy and legislative changes. These developments have exacerbated the housing crises that we now face. I feel that I have the knowledge and enthusiasm to play an active role in the executive and to assist in developing its work going forward.</p>
<p>Andy Bates, Bermondsey and Old Southwark CLP</p>	<p>We have a housing crisis and the next two years will be critical. Through the Labour Housing Group I would like to make my contribution. I have worked in council housing for 40 years and have experience of tenant empowerment and delivering new council homes.</p> <p>I have served on the national LHG Exec for 3 years and the London Branch Exec for 5 years (I am secretary). I have seen the significant role LHG plays. We helped to strengthen the National Policy Forum document to reference the need for fair funding for existing council housing, to reform RTB and tackle the rural housing crisis. I have been a member of working groups that have developed policies on domestic violence and temporary accommodation that were well received by Jess Phillips and Mike Amesbury.</p> <p>As speaker organiser, I have been able to get major thinkers to deliver In-Conversations. I am a joint editor of the Red Brick Blog.</p>
<p>John Bevan, Tottenham CLP</p>	<p>A Councillor in Haringey Council. Recently Cabinet Member for Housing, now a member of the Housing Scrutiny Panel. A long-standing member of LHG, currently joint auditor of the LHG account. Excellent attendance record.</p> <p>Have first-hand knowledge of all housing issues in the public / private sector including Councils building of social rent housing, right to buy, affordable rent and private rent including benefit cap issues. Private sector viability issues for new build, shared ownership and for social provision. Have knowledge and continuing involvement in retrofitting and zero carbon issues for all housing types, a very complex issue.</p> <p>Knowledge of the planning system, Design Champion for Haringey, emphasis on improving housing design / long term maintenance issues. Have knowledge and continuing involvement in ongoing major regeneration / redevelopment schemes concerning social housing estates and smaller sites.</p>

<p>Gavin Callaghan, South Basildon & East Thurrock CLP</p>	<p>My career in Local Government spans over a decade and is deeply rooted in managing high-stakes public affairs campaigns and leading pivotal political communications. My expertise encompasses crisis and social media communications, alongside developing key political messages. I have experience in crafting policy papers, articles, blogs, speeches, press releases, and official correspondences.</p> <p>Significantly, my leadership as the elected Leader of Basildon Borough Council marked a notable period. From 2017 to 2021, I spearheaded the largest regeneration initiative in the South East of England, navigating the council through the unprecedented challenges of the COVID pandemic. This tenure underscored my capability in driving substantial community development projects, including the construction of council homes and dramatically increasing affordable housing options. Since leaving the council I have been working exclusively in looking at new financial models for councils in building affordable homes and council housing.</p> <p>Additionally, my role as an Associate with Global Partners Governance, where I advise on effective Local Government strategies in challenging regions, underline my dedication to public service and governance excellence</p>
<p>Ben Clay, Gorton and Denton CLP</p>	<p>Since joining LHG in 2018 I have worked to establish the North West branch, arranging successful events with colleagues including the 2019 Policy Day, with the elected Mayors of Liverpool and Salford, local MP's, Council Leaders, and Housing portfolio holders.</p> <p>I now want to join the executive to grow LHG in my region, and to ensure Labour Party housing professionals, office holders and campaigners are best placed to develop and implement the policies we need to tackle the Tory housing crisis.</p> <p>I previously served as a local councillor in Manchester, and was appointed to the committee of my local Housing Association.</p> <p>Working as the policy and campaigning lead for Greater Manchester Tenants Union, I sit on the steering groups for the Renters Reform Coalition, and Andy Burnham's Good Landlord Charter, and I am also the current Chair of the Labour Campaign for Council Housing</p>
<p>Andrew Collins, Streatham CLP</p>	<p>I am standing for the LHG Executive to help shape Labour housing policy and in particular support the next Labour government to roll out a mass expansion of social housing to fix the Tory fuelled housing crisis. Furthermore, I would improve union and grassroots engagement by linking LHG up with community housing campaigns.</p> <p>As a councillor, I am acutely aware that Tory austerity has harmed our residents and damaged housing stock by restricting funding for repairs and routes for building new council homes. If elected to the LHG executive, I would apply my experience to the role and campaign for Labour to get back into power to deliver the funding needed to revitalise our housing system. Labour in power is always at its best when we house the homeless and restore the principle of housing as a human right. A vote for me is a vote for these core principles.</p>
<p>John Cotton, Sutton Coldfield CLP</p>	<p>I've had the privilege of serving as LHG's national Chair since 2019 and am also Leader of Birmingham City Council, the country's largest Labour-led local authority, dealing every day with the very real consequences of Tory failure and neglect, not least in housing.</p>

	<p>Fixing the housing crisis and making sure everyone has a decent affordable home must be a top priority for the next Labour Government. I'm proud to have been part of a LHG leadership team that has delivered growing membership and a wide range of activities and events that have directly influenced the party's national thinking. I'm seeking re-election so I can continue working with all LHG members on these vital issues and ensure that we see our bold vision for housing turned into a reality for people across our country with a Labour Government.</p>
<p>Aydin Dikerdem, Battersea CLP</p>	<p>I'm running for LHG exec after over a decade of housing activism both in my local borough of Wandsworth (where I am now Cabinet Member for Housing) and city wide as an active campaigner and organiser. Some background on my campaigning; I was an organiser on the ballots for estate regeneration campaign which at the time was fairly controversial but now is a staple and respected policy with the backing of the GLA. I have run numerous tenants rights campaigns city-wide, from taking on the Duke of Westminster over Walden House to protecting Peabody tenants facing eviction in Clapham Junction. I was also lead organiser at the New Economics Foundation on two housing related campaigns, the first with the London Renters Union (training them on local government negotiations) and the second the Great Homes Upgrade, a national retrofit campaign. I hope I can bring experience, knowledge and grit to the team.</p>
<p>Sheila Guhadasan, Harrow West CLP</p>	<p>Working in the housing sector for 15 years has given me invaluable insight into the sector including pressures and challenges. The ongoing housing crisis means we must find genuinely affordable housing solutions. Shared Ownership – touted as affordable home ownership for decades – is no longer the answer for first-time buyers. We must also resolve issues of disproportionately high market rents and a lack of social housing, all while meeting housing and development targets which will be crucial for getting Sadiq Khan and our local Labour councils re-elected.</p> <p>As a BAME woman and human rights/anti-racism campaigner, I am also interested in looking at how we tackle racism in housing and have organised events as part of my role on the BAME committee at work to promote diversity and equality.</p> <p>I feel my professional background and passion for housing would make me an asset to the LHG Executive team.</p>
<p>Marc Harris, Queen's Park and Maida Vale CLP</p>	<p>My name is Marc Harris and I am proud to put myself forward to serve on the Labour Housing Group EC. As a millennial I have seen first-hand the damage that our housing crisis has wrought on my generation and those that have followed. A safe and secure home is a human right and I am delighted that the Labour Party has made this such a priority for government.</p> <p>I have been a Labour member since 2016 and have held a variety of CLP positions including Chair and Secretary and I am currently serving as Treasurer of Queen's Park and Maida Vale CLP. I am well versed in Labour Party procedures and feel I would be in a strong position to contribute to good governance in the Labour Housing Group. It is vital that we have a socialist society that is loudly championing the need for progressive housing policies and I am eager to help pursue that endeavour.</p>
<p>Ross Houston, Finchley and Golders Green CLP</p>	<p>LHG Treasurer since 2009 and active EC member, with a strong record of attendance and involvement. Active LHG London Branch Exec member. Barnet councillor since 2006. Since 2022 Deputy Leader of Barnet Council. Cabinet Member for Homes and Regeneration. I'm a</p>

	<p>school governor and charity trustee. Leader of the Labour Group on the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority.</p> <p>Labour Party member for 30 years, experience as both branch and CLP chair and general election agent. Previously Labour's prospective parliamentary candidate in Finchley and Golders Green. Former board member of Barnet Homes.</p> <p>Set up Barnet's Labour Group Housing Commission in opposition and led on delivering Labour's housing manifesto since taking control of Barnet Council in 2022 with ambitious targets to build 1000 London social rent homes, regulate and drive up standards in the private rented sector, deliver healthy and carbon neutral homes and successful regeneration.</p> <p>I want to see LHG continue to grow, support new branches, and deliver an active event and publication programme. LHG must continue to develop policy and lobby for radical change in housing as part of the 2024 manifesto, and we must help campaign to elect a Labour government.</p>
<p>Alison Inman, Colchester CLP</p>	<p>I was co-opted onto the LHG last year and have helped with policy work on housing and domestic abuse as well as Temporary Accommodation. I also worked closely with the Secretary to help identify Speakers for our two fringe events at Labour Party Conference this year and am on the Editorial Panel for Red Brick Blog.</p> <p>I am a Past President of the Chartered Institute of Housing and former Chair of the National Federation of ALMOs. I currently sit on the Boards of TPAS, the housing engagement experts, and Housing Diversity Network as well as two housing associations.</p>
<p>Asma Islam, Poplar & Limehouse CLP</p>	<p>I have been a councillor in Tower Hamlets since 2018. I currently serve as the Labour Group Chair, Shadow Cabinet member for Housing. I also sit on the Overview and Scrutiny Housing sub-committee. I previously served as Cabinet member for Environment and Planning.</p> <p>Tower Hamlets has 24,000 families on the housing list alongside some of the worst housing conditions in the country. I grew up in a council home, I have the lived experience as well as the experience of an elected representative on what the negative impacts of poor housing can have on our communities.</p> <p>My community has been my driving force for the solutions needed to fix this crisis and I believe the next Labour government will be the start to that. This is why I am putting myself forward for Labour housing group executive position as this will allow me to help shape policies around housing.</p>

<p>Heather Johnson, Hampstead & Highgate CLP</p>	<p>I have been a LB Camden Councillor since 1992 and have a particular interest in Housing and Planning, I am currently Chair of the Planning Committee, holding that portfolio for over ten years and have previously held executive housing roles. In my view planning holds a key place in our ability to deliver the new social rent and affordable homes we need and which Labour is dedicated to deliver.</p> <p>My professional career was mainly in the advice and advocacy sector where I managed different projects supporting private tenants, homeless and vulnerable people. I have also delivered legal advice in a law centre setting and worked on parliamentary and policy issues, mainly on the private rented sector.</p> <p>I enjoy serving on the LHG executive and have the time to dedicate to the work we do. I believe my activities in providing support for LHG events, fringe meetings etc. has been useful to the organisation and have helped it grow. I would be very happy to continue in this role.</p>
<p>Vlad Kordan, Selly Oak CLP</p>	<p>I am 30 years old and work as a residential surveyor, with previous experience as an estate agency branch manager. I have a good understanding of macro and micro economic forces on housing through study of an MSc Real Estate Finance & Investment degree.</p> <p>As a surveyor I inspect the vast variety of housing within Birmingham, witnessing the impact of tenancy law and living standards within the City. I have particular interest regarding standards within exempt accommodation. Daily conversations discussing housing with tenants, landlords, mortgagors and agents giving me access to a wide range of views.</p> <p>I am currently the Vice Chair of Brandwood Branch. For the last 2 years I have been active in attending LHG meetings sharing insights and broadening my understanding.</p> <p>I am eager to get more involved and help LHG influence and improve housing policy and feel I would be a useful asset to the committee.</p>
<p>Paul Martin, Stratford and Bow CLP</p>	<p>I joined the Executive in 2018 and my current responsibilities are those of Policy Officer, Newsletter Editor and Branch Liaison Officer.</p> <p>I have been editing the Newsletter since issue #6 in November 2019 and the latest issue is #34. Its guiding aim is to become a key source of useful and interesting information for Labour Party members and to report the Executive's work to them.</p> <p>The Executive recognises the need for liaison with LHG branch members and I have recently taken on this role. I have advised that the UK Government "regions" are generally too large for effective local branches and the Executive will propose smaller, less bureaucratic <i>Local Interest Groups</i> at the AGM.</p> <p>With your support, I would like to continue working for LHG as a member of the Executive.</p>
<p>Dermot Mckibbin, Beckenham and Penge CLP</p>	<p>I wish to stand again for the LHG Executive. I am interested in empty properties, leasehold reform, private renting sector especially rent repayment orders, renewable energy and setting up a community land trust in Bromley. I have written articles on these issues for Red Brick, LHG's newsletter and my blog www.getcommonholddone.co.uk</p>

	<p>I am a branch secretary in the marginal seat of Beckenham and Penge. In my ward approximately 65% of households live in flats. We have the highest percentage of private tenants in the Borough. I would welcome ideas on how to contact private tenants to secure their votes. My email address is dermot@dermotmckibbin.com</p> <p>My membership includes the Labour Lawyers Housing Group, the South East London Community Energy Co-operative, the Co-op party, and the local Friends of the Earth group. I have stood unsuccessfully for elections to Bromley Council twice.</p>
<p>Barbara Roberts, Hackney South & Shoreditch CLP</p>	<p>I'm a disabled woman and a proud council tenant of over 30 years.</p> <p>Council housing is the lifeline for those in desperate need of a roof over their heads. The homeless, those unable to buy who're priced out of the private rental market. Those living in overcrowded accommodation, or are fleeing domestic violence, a council house is the answer to their prayers.</p> <p>In this current housing crisis the need for council housing outstrips the availability of homes. Not least because of the Right to Buy.</p> <p>There is also a huge shortfall of fully adapted accessible homes for the disabled, either new builds or retrofitted homes.</p> <p>Therefore Labour in Government must commit to a vast building programme of council, socially rented, homes. And must end RTB.</p> <p>Because of my commitment to council housing and disability activism I believe I'd be a valuable member of the LHG executive.</p>
<p>Sheila Spencer, Newcastle North CLP</p>	<p>I have been LHG Secretary since 2018, and since then have worked hard to increase LHG's impact and also our connection with the Labour Front Bench. Housing should have a much higher profile within the Party, given that so many people - particularly young people - struggle to access decent secure with housing. We have great housing policies but not enough people know about them, which is why I wrote the Quick Guide to LP housing policies for the General Election 2019.</p> <p>I have organised LHG's fringe meetings, policy days and conferences for the last few years, was involved in the Council Homebuilding project in 2021, and LHG's project about Housing as a Human Right with Labour Campaign for Human Rights. I am chair of LHG's North East Branch. I spent all my working life in the housing field, and was a local councillor in Newcastle for 6 years.</p>
<p>Alex Toal, Tottenham CLP</p>	<p>I have extensive experience in campaigning, policy and organising through my current job as Communications Executive at The Housing Forum, previous positions at the Institute for Government and Make Votes Matter, and volunteer roles including as a ward organiser for Labour PPC Rachel Blake.</p> <p>Labour Housing Group has a unique opportunity for impact in the upcoming months. A general election is on the horizon, and current polls suggest that Labour could double its seats. What's more, the current leadership is the first in my lifetime to be going into the election with housing at the heart of its missions, and with a clear housebuilding target of 1.5 million homes.</p>

	<p>My key priority is connection: if elected I would put on events to network existing members, bring in potential new members, and provide opportunities for anyone interested in housing to find out more and get involved in the sector.</p>
<p>Pat Turnbull, Hackney</p>	<p>I'm a housing association tenant, previously a council tenant before estate regeneration. I live in the London Borough of Hackney and have been the chair of the tenants' and residents' association on the estate where I live for over twenty years. I am a member of the Executive Committee of the London Labour Housing Group. I have been an observer to the Labour Group from Hackney South and Shoreditch CLP for the past six years. I'm also active in the London Tenants Federation.</p> <p>Housing is a national priority. I feel my experience and knowledge could contribute positively to the work of the Labour Housing Group.</p>
<p>Tom Wilson, Brent Central CLP</p>	<p>I am a prominent young housing activist from Darlington, having served on the board of the affordable housing campaign group Priced Out since March 2023, and worked closely with the Homes for Britain campaign that emerged from the recent Fabian Society report on housing shortages and the multiple crises in the housing market.</p> <p>I would now like to bring my efforts closer to home as we look ahead to the General Election and beyond, to best prepare for a Labour Government and the opportunities that brings to finally get to grips with housing policy as so many are putting faith in us to do. It would be an honour to serve LHG as an executive member.</p> <p>I am particularly interested in planning reform, the rental market, and military housing and look forward to working with members on these issues.</p>
<p>Issy Waite, Hampstead & Highgate CLP</p>	<p>As a young person I know the impact that the housing crisis is having on my generation. Home ownership is out of reach for those of us without parental support and we are forced into a hostile and exploitative housing market.</p> <p>As Labour look to form a government it is crucial that house building and planning reform is prioritised but we must ensure that young people have a say in this.</p> <p>As a student I have a first hand experience of the struggles facing my generation, which has lead to me to become active in the Labour Party and taking on an internship in housing public affairs.</p> <p>I am standing to be on the executive of Labour Housing Group to ensure that young people are represented in the discussions and developments in housing policy.</p>
<p>Chris Wongsosaputro, Vauxhall and Camberwell Green CLP</p>	<p>I have been an LHG member for 1.5 years and currently serve as a London LHG Committee Member. I have attended and volunteered in LHG events such as LHG Autumn Policy Day and London LHG Conference where I facilitated group discussions.</p> <p>I am active with the Socialist Societies, serving as Treasurer where I have been working closely with LHG.</p>

	<p>Although I don't work in housing, I have a strong interest in it and have written about housing previously. The topics covered include arguing against having rent controls in the UK, getting to Net Zero housing stock and urban infill as a way forward for carbon planning.</p> <p>I fully support Keir Starmer's pledge to get more houses built across our country. If elected into LHG Committee, I intend to contribute to the inputs LHG can provide to a future Labour Government on how we can turn Labour's housebuilding vision into reality.</p>
<p>Chris Worrall, Poplar and Limehouse CLP</p>	<p>As Chair of the Local Government and Housing Member Policy Group of the Fabian Society I have been involved with launching ground-breaking policy pamphlets around the need for planning reform. In March 2023, I edited the report "Homes for Britain: Planning for Growth", I coordinated vital contributions from industry, advocacy, academic and political thought leaders.</p> <p>My professional background has lent on my MPhil in Real Estate Finance from the University of Cambridge, where I specialised in affordable housing funding mechanisms, to working as a land and real estate development principal investor on behalf of LSL Partners.</p> <p>I write a housing column for Left Foot Forward, I am the Labour Lead for Priced Out, the UK's national campaign for affordable house prices, am a former Editor of the Red Brick Blog, and Chair Poplar and Limehouse CLP. I hope to help the LHG exec advocate for more YIMBY policy positions.</p>