

## **Lisa Nandy – CWU answers**

### **Are you committed to the direction on Labour's 2017 and 2019 manifestos – are there any specific manifesto policies which you would want to change or amend?**

The anti-austerity public investment driven growth strategy is vital to retain and has allowed us to regain our political centre of gravity.

But we lost the election and badly - our worst result since 1935 with a mountain of seats to win and form a government. This wasn't a result a few years in the making. The truth is, Labour has been losing support in our northern towns and coalfield communities for decades. From Bolsover to Clacton, people who feel deeply that [Labour](#) is part of their DNA couldn't bring themselves to vote for us.

What is needed are the hard yards of winning the argument inch by inch in town halls, workplaces and pubs. This is where we fight to regain people's trust. The next [Labour](#) leader will have to be up for a scrap – willing to run to the places we are loathed, take the anger on the chin, make and win the argument. That's what I will do.

Taken individually, so many of the policies in Labour's manifesto were popular with the public. But, as a package, they failed to present a coherent agenda and as such they failed to cut through and left many feeling they couldn't trust us to deliver. At the next election we will need to build a message around key priorities and then get out and sell that to the public.

### **Do you support the renationalisation of Royal Mail?**

I support the renationalisation of Royal Mail as part of a commitment to defend postal workers and the postal service. I've supported CWU members in Wigan who are fighting for better working conditions and a brighter future at Royal Mail as part of your #WeRiseAgain campaign.

Privatisation of Royal Mail has led to unacceptable attacks on job security, pay and conditions, while the Chief Executive receives an annual salary of £2.7 million. Under the new leadership, Royal Mail is moving away from its historic values of serving communities.

Renationalisation of Royal Mail, and re-uniting it with the Post Office, is the only way to ensure a postal service run in the public interest. It would guarantee the universal 6-day service, while also lifting pay and standards of our postal workers. Under public and democratic ownership, it would be those who have a stake – workers and communities – that would be embedded into the decision-making process about the future of Royal Mail, not private shareholders.

### **Do you support the introduction of a publicly owned national post bank?**

Yes. With the closure of a third of the UK's bank branches since 2015, there is a real need to address the serious consequences this has on our economy, people's access to financial services and on the disintegration of our high streets. I support the creation of a publicly owned national post bank, using the Post Office network to reach all parts of the country, as one of the solutions to this. A New Public Banking Ecosystem, commissioned by the Communications Workers Union and The Democracy Collaborative, is an important contribution to the debate.

Despite the apparent ubiquity of personal banking, an estimated 1.23 million people lack access to financial services. The people who need financial services the most – the poor, the less

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education, those out of the workforce – are least likely to have access to them. There is a need for safe and affordable financial services that bring people in, not shut them out. A publicly owned post bank will be able to do this in a way that commercial banking has failed to do so.

Over recent years, many towns and rural communities have suffered repeated losses of key anchors on the high-street, including bank branches and Post Offices. Both have been deeply damaging, locking people and businesses out of crucial services that underpin local communities and local prosperity. A national post bank, with branches rooted in their local communities, can stem the tide of loss facing the high-streets, and help support local economies grow. It can also ensure that the Post Office is placed on a more sustainable footing, ending the closures and ensuring the creation of new, well-paid jobs. The French Postbank which makes a profit and operates right across the country from villages to cities is a model.

There will always be a need for banking services to be accessible on the high-street, even as commercial banks are retreating. By embodying the values of serving the community, a publicly-owned national post bank can maintain that presence, benefiting communities, businesses and the high street.

### **What are your views on a Labour Party strategy to support our members in the telecoms and financial services industries, including the policy of universal broadband and renationalisation of relevant parts of BT?**

Universal superfast broadband - ideally fixed-line fibre - is essential for every citizen and it won't be delivered by the private sector alone. Government has to invest and subsidise that for remote and inaccessible communities. Openreach operates as a private sector monopoly; little wonder then that Ofcom have been critical over the fibre-optic roll out, with community based enterprises often filling the space. Where there is clear evidence of a private-sector monopoly failing to meet core infrastructure needs and the interests of the wider public, it becomes necessary for that asset to operate in the public interest.

### **Are you committed to repealing the existing Trade Union Act and how would you support Trade Union organisation and values being reasserted across the world of work?**

Trade-unions don't just have a role to play in addressing gross inequality and low-pay; they are utterly central to it.

But to be sure, organising in this new disparate economy is not easy and the challenges are frustratingly practical ones. Tens of thousands of call centres & retail jobs have replaced the old shop floors; creative industries are growing at four times the rate of the broader economy. Each industry has a grim culture of low-pay & exploitation and each has little trade union membership.

In this new economy though, trade unions are fighting hard to turn the tide. Since 2010, there are now an additional 139,000 more private sector trade union members and numbers have grown in five of the last six years.

These are significant successes to be proud of. But there is little doubt trade unionism is operating in a hostile climate. We have a legal system which victimises them.

Attempts to strengthen individual rights simply cannot compensate for the decline in collective ones. Ernest Bevin's words still ring true; "it is workers organised collectively who have the power

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to fight for fair pay and conditions.” And the truth is trade-unions in the UK operate under some of the most draconian laws of any in the developed world. That should shame a civilised society.

Under my leadership, Labour will never shirk from the fight to strengthen collective rights and unshackle Britain’s trade union movement. That should and must include a legal right for trade unions to access a workplaces and inform workers about their employment rights; we should give workplace equalities reps statutory rights and protection like other reps so that unions can better tackle discrimination at work; they could end the absurd situation which means that if an application for statutory union recognition fails then unions have to wait at least 3 years before applying again; they could introduce sectoral wage bargaining in sectors with high staff turnover like hospitality and retail; and if the government are so concerned about low turnout in industrial actions ballots, why are we in the perverse situation where trade unions are expressly forbidden, through statute, from balloting their members online?

### **Given the passing of the withdrawal agreement, how will you respond to the ongoing Brexit negotiations?**

I campaigned hard to remain in the European Union in the run up to the 2016 referendum visiting many places in former heavy industrialised regions which subsequently voted to leave. During the campaign I realised that something was going wrong and that this referendum was about many deep-seated issues. These included issues of power, accountability, control and trust. I felt the similarities with the experiences of friends in Scotland who encountered something similar in the Scottish independence referendum two years before.

After the result I knew from listening to my own constituents that the referendum result simply had to be respected, as painful as it was and nor were they alone. Otherwise the drop in trust would only be exacerbated and may not be recovered and that the forces of the right would stir up division and exploit it.

I therefore consistently argued for the closest possible relationship with the European Union throughout the Brexit process, but did not support another referendum. Whatever the argument for a ‘People’s Vote’, I knew the signal that went to many people who voted to leave and who had voted Labour in the past was that we weren’t respecting the first referendum. This would put an even bigger gulf between our party and voters we have lost since 2010.

I respect the sincerity and the values of those who have fought to stay in the European Union, but I believe our party’s Brexit approach contributed to the defeat in 2019, not least among many constituencies which had historically given us their support. By no means was Brexit the only factor in this election, but it played a significant part.

The challenge for Labour now is to urgently set on the task to rebuild and expand our coalition of support. Crucially I believe I am best placed to get a hearing with the voters who believe Labour has deserted them and win back their trust for future elections.

Labour’s road to recovery means rebuilding the trust and support in seats such as Blyth Valley, Bassetlaw, Bury North, Birmingham Northfield, Leigh, Keighley, Colne Valley, Redcar, Workington, Bolsover, Rother Valley, Copeland, Ashfield, Stoke Central and Stoke North among so many more. Whether through my approach to Brexit or insight from the Centre for Towns which I helped establish, I believe I can be the leader to help our party win back the confidence and votes of these seats. That is only part of the task to bring our country together and win permission for a Labour government in the future. As a former councillor who represented

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people in Hammersmith in London and as the current MP for Wigan, I am confident we can rebuild that broad electoral coalition if elected as Labour's leader.

Our immediate priority must be preventing the country crashing out with a WTO Brexit would be devastating for UK industries, harm all our living standards and erode our country's standing and security. If elected as Labour leader I will work closely with employer and trade unions, public bodies and highlight the dangers of a WTO Brexit and the astronomical costs of no deal preparations which could be put to much better use.

I will take on the Tories over their failures in a which will transcend the divisions of 2016. Whether you voted leave or remain, you did not want a Government which will devastate our economy and jeopardise industries. As Opposition Leader I will transcend the divisions of 2016 and pursue the Conservatives over their recklessness and incompetence.

I have consistently argued for a close relationship with the European Union post-Brexit and not least because of the needs of working people. I know how important manufacturing industries such as Heinz is to my constituents and the importance of frictionless trade with our neighbours. I support entering into a strong relationship with the European Customs Union on the basis that is it important for many UK industries and I will be able to make a persuasive and pragmatic case for access to the Single Market too at the next general election.

I have consistently defended the principle of freedom of movement of labour however I believe we need to do much more to address some the behaviour of cynical employers abusing it. There have been too many examples of employers behaving in a way which exploits workers or increase divisions which everyone loses out from. The UK should embrace the reformed Posted Workers' Directive which has been supported by UK Labour MEPs, ban the overseas-only advertising of jobs, enable trade unions to have new freedoms to access and organise in work places as well as do much more to help bring different communities together.

### **What would your top 3 priorities be if you were elected as Leader?**

My first 3 priorities as leader would be:

- To reunite the party and that means building a unified but not uniform team because only through a movement and a strong top team will we succeed
- To tackle the anti-semitism problem in our party, which is staining our strong record of anti-racism and damaging trust
- To get to work to rebuild in those communities where we must win if we are to govern again, which will be essential to support our councillors and Mayors ahead of the May local elections and ultimately to build a red bridge between communities like Leigh and Lewisham

## **2. Media and Engagement**

It is critical in our view that Labour develops a more robust communications and media strategy.

### **How would you improve the overall communications of the Labour Party?**

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The key is to have a clear memorable, compelling message. Labour did not have one at the last election and the Tories did.

Being a good communicator is fundamental to doing politics well. Yes, you have to have the right analysis and a compelling vision for the country. But if you can't get that across to the electorate then it's all for nothing. That's why communications skills will be a top priority for me when it comes to choosing a Shadow Cabinet. We have some exceptional communicators in the PLP, and they come from all sorts of different political traditions – it's a skill that knows no faction. Getting these top speakers out there and talking to the country gives us the best chance of winning the election – and it will help to unite our party too.

### **How would you use the media to convince the electorate Labour is ready to govern at the next election?**

We have to improve at framing the weaknesses of our opponents and repeating those attack lines in the public statements of senior and junior frontbenchers over the next five years. It was clear to see that Boris Johnson was going to be the successor many months before he took control, but work didn't begin on framing his weaknesses early enough. We were caught on the hop with his pledges to ditch austerity, when it was clear he was going to ditch much of the cautious May agenda that many within the Tory Party felt had cost them the election.

The next election is going to be fundamentally about trust. Whether the public feel Johnson has fulfilled his broad promise which was to restore the public services which suffered the most visibly in the public imagination under austerity, and invest in areas left behind. If the public feel he has broken his promise we will have the opportunity to expose him. We will need to fight tooth and nail over the coming five years in the media to expose those claims, with self-generated stories and a consistent message which demonstrate the limits of Johnson's ambitions and his failure of delivery.

### **How would you increase our influence with the mainstream media?**

There's no denying the fact that a big chunk of the national media, particularly the print media, is hostile to us. But we can't just sit there moaning about it. We have to understand that's the reality and work within those constraints.

My team and I will work hard to build the professional relationships necessary to gain a fairer hearing in the mainstream media. That doesn't mean letting media companies off the hook when they are working against the public interest. But it does mean taking seriously the job of winning the next election.

### **Would you work to grow a new media in the UK?**

There's one area of media innovation in particular which really excites me because I believe it holds the key to doing what we so desperately need to do, which is to empower people so they can take more ownership and control over their daily lives. That's local media. For a long time local media has been in decline, with thousands of local papers shutting. But recently we've seen a really exciting fightback from some of the bigger local papers who are carrying stories and scoops which have gone under the radar of the national media. It's where some of the best

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journalists in the country are now working, and it's starting to have a real effect on people's sense of pride and ambition for their local areas. That, in combination with digital innovations to provide high-quality hyperlocal news, creates some exciting possibilities for re-energising public debate from the ground up.

I wanted to show my excitement about the potential of local media (as well as my love of Wigan!) by announcing my candidacy to the Wigan Post. If I'm elected leader I will continue to do everything I can to support the high-quality local journalism which could really strengthen local communities all over the country.

### **Would you implement a dynamic and engaging social media strategy and what steps would you take to achieve this?**

Yes I will be undertaking a dynamic social media strategy that engages influencers from within and outside the Labour movement as well as developing powerful and moving social content that makes the case for a radical Labour agenda, not just for Labour members but also to engage the public to build the party.

Social media is a crucial part of engaging our members, and reaching the general public in a hostile traditional media environment. I will ensure the party operates a dynamic social media strategy that engages influencers from within and outside the Labour movement as well as developing powerful and moving social content that makes the case for a radical Labour agenda, not just for Labour members but also to engage the public to build the party. Our goal will be to utilise the skills of our staff, our allies, and our supporters. The stories of the public and what this government is doing on the ground are a key part of winning back power. That content will be underpinned by a state of the art technology and data plan that will ensure we're innovative and reaching the right people in the right way.

### **3. The Party**

What sort of internal strategy would you pursue regarding the democratisation of the Labour Party? Including;

#### **How would you make local CLP meetings more dynamic?**

A core part of my campaign is to refocus in our communities, run dynamic campaigns that resonate with local people. I will empower Labour to do just that. Local CLP meetings could be used as a hub for creative ideas and campaigns, drawing on the strength of our members' experiences. Instead all too often we don't use those talents, and our CLP meetings smother them. If we are out of power for five years, that cannot continue.

We have to give our activists the tools and the training to organise community campaigns to reconnect with voters we have lost.

We have 500,000 members each with unique and invaluable experiences, rooted in every community in the country. It is this on-the-ground activism that will pave the way back to government.

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### **How would you involve members and trade unions more?**

Though we are one movement, too-often we're not joined up at a local level. Trade union reps and Convenors have an enormous role to play locally, bringing their experience to bear and taking part in local campaigns. That's why linking local trade union reps in a more coordinated way with local CLPs should become common-place, giving local CLPs the opportunity to draw on their skills and experience.

### **What would your approach to annual conference be?**

It has been welcome to see Conference return as the centre of our democratic party. Some of the most radical policies, which resonated most with the public, came from conference decisions. That has to remain. There can and should not be any return to the stifling conferences of the past, which sucked the political life out of the party. A party of 500,000 members won't always agree, but we have always found strength and unity through this collective decision making.

### **How would you encourage more working class candidates rooted in their communities to stand for parliament?**

Ours is a movement that will graft and toil to deliver change together. It has never been more important that we develop candidates rooted in our communities. That's why we need to implement a proper candidate development programme rooted in the communities and regions that will deliver the next election for Labour.

To do it, we have to refocus on those communities. Look at the inspiring work the trade union movement are already doing to promote candidates from working class backgrounds.

Our communities will need evidence of the real change that comes from our grassroots. Our biggest asset is the people in every community and workplace I have ever been – MPs, councillors, activists, trade unionists and charities who give their all because they see a spark that, if ignited, might just change the world. We must draw on that, and as Labour leader I will ensure we will.