



# STARMER'S BRITAIN

**STARMER'S STARS:  
A GUIDE TO LABOUR'S PPCS**

Portland

# CONTENTS

<b>A view from Portland</b>		<b>Starmer's Stars: A guide to Labour's PPCs</b>	
<hr/>		<hr/>	
Steve Morris	4	<b>Influencers</b>	9
Alastair Campbell	5	<b>Economy</b>	10
Gabriel Milland	6	<b>Health and Life Sciences</b>	11
<b>A view from the inside</b>		<b>Energy and Sustainability</b>	12
<hr/>		<b>Tech</b>	13
Jade Botterill	7	<b>Transport</b>	14
<b>Summary</b>	8	<b>Built Environment / Housing</b>	15
<hr/>		<b>Creative Industries &amp; Entertainment</b>	16
		<b>Defence</b>	17
		<b>International Development</b>	18
		<b>About Portland</b>	19
		<hr/>	






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## A FORMIDABLE TEAM

On election night in 1997, as news poured in of undreamt-of Labour gains, Peter Mandelson demanded to know “who are these people?” Always alert to trouble from the Left, his fear was that in Tory seats assumed to be unwinnable, cranks and Trots might have slipped through New Labour’s net of candidate selection. As it turned out, the '97 intake was better known for “Blair’s Babes”. The knot of troublesome backbenchers in the new Parliament were mostly, like Jeremy Corbyn, survivors from the 1980s.

The same concern haunts any Labour leadership. Outsiders are often stunned to learn how difficult it is for a Labour leader to ensure that their own candidates are politically like-minded, let alone competent. Labour Party rules mean that there is a huge battle with different factions and personalities trying to smooth the path for their favourites, or block it for their rivals. Each selection is different, and there are numerous opportunities for the field to be narrowed or widened.

Anyone who has experienced a Labour Party candidate selection knows the process is opaque, arcane and brutal. Selection battles are a mix of cultivating departing MPs who leave their seats vacant, lobbying for long- and short-listing, grubbing for trade union endorsements, taking hundreds of cups of tea with local CLP members, and a side-salad of influence from Party HQ.

Keir Starmer’s team, scarred by the experience of dealing with the Corbynite takeover of the Party, have been firmly focused from Day One on securing a sensible slate of candidates, and keeping troublemakers and political liabilities to a minimum. They have largely succeeded.

This list of movers and shakers among the candidates selected so far reflects that success. As Conservative MPs are hanging up their boots in droves, ambitious people keen to play a part in getting Britain back on its feet are flooding towards Labour selections. The talent pool is far bigger and better than at the 2019 General Election.

The fact that Starmer’s Labour Party is attracting former military officers, people with business backgrounds and impressive records of achievement in other fields speaks volumes. This group of PPCs give a flavour of that bench strength in the future PLP. As the election nears, there will be further selections to come, and the scope for last-minute parachuting of favoured candidates into seats opens up. But for now, these are the ones to watch.

**Steve Morris,**  
Chair, Portland





# KEIR STARMER'S TEAM HAS KEPT A PRETTY CLOSE EYE ON CANDIDATE SELECTION... BUT EVERY PARTY ALWAYS HAS SOME WHO WILL BE LOOKING TO DO THEIR OWN THING

I don't believe for one second the polls that suggest the Tories will be completely wiped out at the election and Labour will have more seats than at any time in their history.

But I do know we will be seeing a lot of new faces on the Labour benches, and where I suspect the polls are right is that they will be sitting on the government side of the Commons. Perhaps that explains why so far just 17 Labour MPs have announced they are standing down, compared with 60 and climbing for the Tories.

What this means is that who these new MPs are and what they stand for really matters. If Labour do get a big majority, and stay in power for some years, then some of these new faces will become ministers, even future leaders.

Keir Starmer's team has kept a pretty close eye on candidate selection, many will be closely aligned to his politics and his goals for government. But every party always has some who will be looking to do their own thing.

Over the coming weeks and months, ambitious PPCs will remain focused on convincing their prospective constituents to vote Labour. If they win, and help form a majority, they will become key figures in the government of the day. As the country gets to know them, we will be keeping an eye on them too.

**Alastair Campbell,**  
Portland Advisor and former Director of  
Communications and Strategy for Tony Blair



## MATTINSON VS LEVIDO – THE RED, BLUE BATTLE

The big recent story about the polls has been that there has been no big story – apart from a rise in support in Reform. Many analysts believe this will not endure once voters start thinking about who they want as a government rather than making a protest. But alongside the leadership head to heads, one of the intriguing sub-plots is the battle of the pollster-strategists.

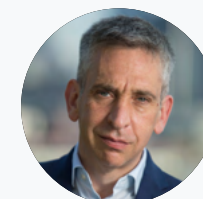
In the blue corner is Isaac Levido. The soft-spoken but steely Australian is universally liked by colleagues. Brought up in the tough school of Australian politics, Levido led the 2019 Tory campaign. He has one of the best understandings of how language can encapsulate and motivate sentiment of any communications strategist in the world. It was him who created “Stay Home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives” in the early days of the pandemic.

In the red corner is Deborah Mattinson. Director of Strategy for Keir Starmer since 2021, her top priority has been winning back working and lower middle-class voters in the North and Midlands – “hero voters” as she calls them. At the forefront of her mind is the vital electoral logic that every vote taken from the Tories in winnable seats held by them effectively counts double for Labour. Labour’s new crop of MPs like ones we write about here have been chosen with a relentless focus on appealing to these voters. They are non-ideological problem solvers. Serious people for serious times.

The key task for Levido is bringing back as many Tory 2019 voters as possible and sowing doubt about Labour’s fitness for government. Mattinson’s task is to make sure Labour says and does nothing which makes Levido’s job easier. Both will be testing every policy proposal in dozens of polls and focus groups. Understanding how public opinion fits into policy-making means businesses and other organisations can better understand the choices that politicians make. And it can even help outsiders shape the political choices that go into manifestos – and the policies that an incoming government will adopt. Portland’s own in-house research team is ready to help you with doing just that.

*Gabriel worked with Isaac Levido for the first six months of the pandemic in Downing Street, working closely with Deborah Mattinson’s research agency at the same time.*

**Gabriel Milland,**  
Partner, Portland





## A VIEW FROM THE INSIDE

As we take a look into the profiles of some of Labour's brightest, well-connected talent, it's worth remembering what is currently driving Labour PPCs. Ultimately their time is in high demand, as they often balance campaigning with a second job. They are ruthlessly focused on personal and local campaigns, and what aligns with their constituents. And with high contact targets from Labour HQ, now more than ever PPCs are having to prioritise what can win them the election.

However, it's not just meeting contact targets from Labour HQ PPCs are focused on, with social media being one of the biggest campaign tools, gathering social content has become increasingly important for candidates. But with daily messaging engagement from Labour HQ it's unlikely a candidate will digress too much from political party messaging.

At this point in the election cycle, no public affairs strategy is complete without a comprehensive approach to PPCs. With some polling claiming there could be 200 new Labour PPCs, engaging now is a must.

Right now they are grappling with a never ending list of tasks, targets, briefing calls and constituency emails. Given their focus on the constituency they're contesting, any insight, polling and stats that offer them direction into local voter opinion, or how they are viewed, is often well received. Provide PPCs with opportunities for local stories or an insight to local data or some intel in a policy area you know they are already engaged in.

**Jade Botterill,**  
Director, Portland and Labour PPC for Ossett and Denby Dale





# SUMMARY

In this guide to Starmer's prospective parliamentary candidates (PPCs) we have highlighted 30 Labour candidates who are set to make an impact if they are successful in securing a seat at the next general election. They are split across nine key business areas, with additional cross-sector inclusions. We have analysed their political experience and profile in Labour, providing our expert insight into what makes them stand out.

This is not an exhaustive list, but a selection of interesting candidates to watch to help businesses navigate what could be a large shift in the makeup of Parliament. With additional Labour PPCs yet to be announced, the landscape may well evolve over time.



# INFLUENCERS

These PPCs have robust Labour credentials, pre-existing profiles and are impeccably well-networked. They can be expected to make a splash if they join the green benches.



**GREAT YARMOUTH**



**Keir Cozens**

**BIO:**

Born and brought up in Suffolk near the Norfolk border, Cozens has worked for a number of Labour MPs including as the Head of Office for Shadow Chancellor Rachel Reeves. Cozens has also held numerous roles at Party HQ, becoming the PLP Secretary and Director of Political Services.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:**

Extremely well-networked within the PLP, with a deep understanding of how to leverage the party machine. His time working at the very top of the Labour Party means that he is well placed to rise quickly in any future government.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** 

**LABOUR PROFILE:** 

**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★



**ROTHER VALLEY**



**Jake Richards**

**BIO:**

A qualified barrister specialising in child protection law. Before working in the legal profession, he was a researcher for both Rachel Reeves and Stephen Twigg and an advisor to Lord Falconer.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:**

With strong media pedigree as the son of political columnist Steve Richards, and having spent his early career in Parliament, Richards is aware of the pace of politics and is very well-know amongst the shadow frontbench. His legal background means he brings advocacy experience and wide-ranging expertise including in public sector and human rights law, civil litigation, and clinical negligence disputes.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** 

**LABOUR PROFILE:** 

**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★



**BOLSOVER**



**Natalie Fleet**

**BIO:**

Currently a top official at the National Education Union. Fleet previously stood for Ashfield in the 2015 general election.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:**

Having left school at 16 to be a mother and dropping out of university as it was "too posh", Fleet worked her way up the NEU. She is a strong character with impeccable Labour credentials. Having worked on the Yvette Cooper leadership bid in 2019 and already having stood as a candidate, she knows the Labour system well and is widely respected.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** 


**LABOUR PROFILE:** 

**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★



# ECONOMY


There is no more important battleground for Labour than the economy. If it were to enter government, the Party would need its MPs' backing on difficult choices around spending, growth and supply side reform. New MPs could bring strong economic know-how into the Party, ranging from an intimate knowledge of the private sector and entrepreneurialism to academic expertise and a strong understanding of government economic processes. PPCs who prove their value will be well-placed to rise quickly in a party where this will be the priority.



**CAMBERWELL AND PECKHAM**


**Dr. Miatta Fahnbulleh**


Specialism: Economics



**BIO:**  
Previously the head of the New Economics Foundation. Fahnbulleh has also been a senior civil servant, Director at the IPPR and worked at the heart of the last Labour government as the Deputy Director of the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:**  
A policy expert with relationships deep in the Labour Party and Labour's policymaking machine, she is expected to make an impact early on as someone who has written extensively about how to create a greener economy. Fahnbulleh is a seasoned media performer and effective communicator. She offers a bridge bringing together the left and centre ground of the party.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** 

**LABOUR PROFILE:** 

**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★



**LOUGHBOROUGH**

**Dr. Jeevun Sandher**

Specialism: Wealth Inequality



**BIO:**  
An economist who currently leads the economics team at the New Economics Foundation. He has also worked as an economist at the Treasury, Department of Work and Pensions and the Somaliland Ministry of Finance.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:**  
A policy expert who is especially passionate about wealth and income inequality, Sandher has been a vocal critic of the Conservatives' handling of the cost-of-living crisis that is bound to catch the attention of the Labour leadership. His work as a civil servant, teacher and trade union representative solidifies his Labour credentials, even if he has not previously taken centre stage in Labour.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** 

**LABOUR PROFILE:** 

**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★



**LEICESTER EAST**

**Rajesh Agrawal**

Specialism: Business and Trade



**BIO:**  
An angel investor and businessman who has also served as the Deputy Mayor of London for Business and Chairman of London and Partners (the international trade, investment, and promotion agency for London).

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:**  
Agrawal is a rare combination of a man steeped in Labour politics who has also made a name for himself in private enterprise. His experience, both in London and as a businessman, means he can be expected to play a key role in reaching out to the private sector. He can be expected to play a key role in reaching out to the private sector.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** 

**LABOUR PROFILE:** 

**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★



# HEALTH AND THE LIFE SCIENCES

Health is at the core of Starmer’s five missions for government, and a key voter concern. It will be a policy area where Labour is under intense scrutiny. We can expect to see it feature heavily in General Election campaigning, and there will be immediate pressure on Starmer and Shadow Health Secretary, Wes Streeting, to deliver in this area in the event of a Labour government. The PPCs with specific experience in the life sciences industry, government and the NHS itself are set to play a key role as the Party looks for Champions to allow them to reform the NHS, cut waiting lists and deliver on a preventative health agenda.

MANSFIELD



**Steve Yemm**

Specialism: Life Sciences

BIO:

Yemm has worked in the life sciences and wider science sector most of his adult life and is currently the Chief Commercial Officer of Optibrium, a drug discovery company. Yemm has tried his hand in politics before when he narrowly lost the mayoral election for Mansfield. He is a lifelong trade unionist.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:**

Yemm will bring life sciences expertise to Parliament, aligning with a key Labour focus area for growth. His long association with the trade union movement positions him well with the wider Labour Party, whilst also bringing valuable business expertise to Parliament.

POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:

LABOUR PROFILE:

PORTLAND POWER RATING:

HARROW EAST



**Primesh Patel**

Specialism: Health regulation

BIO:

Patel has worked in the health and social care sector for 18 years and for the last eight years has worked for the national regulator overseeing the transformation of services. He has also been a long-serving councillor in Harrow.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:**

Patel will be able to combine local Labour political experience with significant experience working in government. His expertise in service transformation could be an asset to a Labour team pursuing reform.

POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:

LABOUR PROFILE:

PORTLAND POWER RATING:

WORTHING WEST



**Dr. Beccy Cooper**

Specialism: Public Health

BIO:

Cooper is a public health doctor and has consulted councils on issues ranging from the dangers of smoking to weight management, and has experience working across the globe. She has been the Leader of Worthing Borough Council for the last two years. When Cooper was initially elected as councillor in 2017, she was the first Labour councillor to take up post in Worthing for 40 years.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:**

Cooper is passionate about prevention, and decided to run to be an MP to address the political and economic barriers that are currently hindering health outcomes in the UK. Cooper’s experience of working in the NHS, local authorities, NGOs and private companies will place her well to navigate the often competing priorities of different stakeholders – a skill needed to drive policy change in this space.

POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:

LABOUR PROFILE:

PORTLAND POWER RATING:



# ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Energy will be one of the most challenging policy areas for a future Labour government. After the climbdown from £28bn to under £15bn committed to the Green Prosperity Plan, it is clear these plans will be refined further if Labour enters government. The size of any Labour majority, and the strength of feeling of new MPs about energy policy, could determine how ambitious the Party truly is. PPCs could be key in shaping how this dynamic plays out.

**LEEDS NORTH WEST**

## Katie White

Specialism: Climate Policy

**BIO:**  
Formerly a civil servant in the Department of Energy and Climate Change, White was involved in the campaign for the 2008 Climate Act. White is currently the Executive Director for Advocacy and Campaigns at the World Wide Fund for Nature.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:**  
White's network extends to the very top of the Party and she has significant campaigning and policy experience in environmental issues. She has been outspoken on the need for action on the climate crisis, and given her role at WWF particularly vocal on issues related to conservation.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:**

**LABOUR PROFILE:**

**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★

**DONCASTER CENTRAL**

## Sally Jameson

Specialism: Renewable Energy

**BIO:**  
Born and raised in Doncaster, Jameson is Secretary of the Doncaster Central CLP. Jameson is the POA Union branch chair and an active member of the Unite Union.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:**  
With strong links to the unions, years of working for the Party under her belt and known to have a close relationship with Ed Miliband - through local links - Jameson could prove to be a persuasive force in the Party. Particularly at a time where these important union relationships have been subject to strain. She has been seen supporting hydrogen power initiatives in Doncaster and expressing support for wider renewable energy projects.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:**

**LABOUR PROFILE:**

**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★

**YNYS MÔN**

## Ieuan Môn Williams

Specialism: Nuclear Industry

**BIO:**  
Currently runs his own energy consulting firm, but previously spent his career at the Nuclear Industry Association working for its public affairs team.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:**  
Having spent almost all his career at the nuclear industry's lobby group, Williams will have strong contacts both within the Labour Party and the industry. Given the move towards net zero being a key Labour battleground, we can expect Williams to be a positive voice in favour of nuclear investment, especially as Ynys Môn is expected to be the site of a new nuclear plant.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:**

**LABOUR PROFILE:**

**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★



# TECH

Labour has avoided concrete policy pledges on technology. Behind the scenes, think tanks and other third parties are playing an important role in policy development arounds areas, including AI. Incoming PPCs therefore could have an important immediate role in shaping policy for an incoming Labour government, particularly those with the public profile industry expertise and Labour connections required to drive action.

VALE OF  
GLAMORGAN



## Kanishka Narayan

Specialism: Green tech



**BIO:**

Currently works with tech start-ups on tackling climate change and improving financial resilience. Narayan has strong political credentials. He previously advised the Labour Party frontbench as Head of Tech Policy, was a Senior Adviser at the Cabinet Office and an Expert Adviser to the Environmental Secretary.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:**


Narayan has already been playing an important role in tech policy development for the Labour Party. This coupled with his industry experience will make him a strong and credible voice in influencing a Labour government's tech policy agenda - particularly with a party that is prioritising private investment within both tech and climate policy.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** 

**LABOUR PROFILE:** 

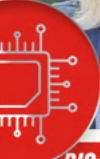
**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★

STOKE-ON-  
TRENT SOUTH



## Dr. Alison Gardner

Specialism: Health Tech





**BIO:**

Currently works with the NHS as a Senior Scientific Advisor for AI. She is a Director of 'Women Leading in AI' and works internationally to advocate for the ethical use of Artificial Intelligence. Gardner has lectured at Keele on data science and is a former Labour councillor.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:**


Gardner's experience aligns with Labour's drive to deploy AI within public services. Her interest in AI ethics and governance could draw the attention of Labour tech team who still in the process of developing their policy position on the technology.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** 

**LABOUR PROFILE:** 

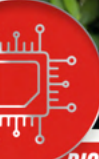
**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★

SOUTH DERBYSHIRE



## Samantha Niblett

Specialism: Technology





**BIO:**

The founder and CEO for Labour: Women in Tech. Niblett was previously the Head of Alliances, Channel and Ecosystem for the EMEA region at IE, a digital employee experience platform. Niblett is an avid campaigner for removing barriers for women in STEM subjects and industries and is a strong advocate for gender equality across sectors.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:**

Niblett is well-networked across the Labour Party, especially through Labour Women in Tech. She has also been a vocal about the need to ensure technological advancement benefits everyone, with a particular interest in young people and gender equality.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** 

**LABOUR PROFILE:** 

**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★



# TRANSPORT

Labour's position on transport is centred on a drive to renationalise the railways, with efforts from advisers to push the introduction of a National Transport Bill in the first Parliament after the General Election. This is one area where a cadre of capable and tested former Shadow Ministers with transport experience have been tipped for early frontbench roles.



EAST LOTHIAN

**Douglas Alexander**

Specialism: Transport

**BIO:**

Formerly the Secretary of State for Transport, alongside the International Development and Scottish Secretary of State briefs. Alexander has also held the Shadow briefs for the Foreign Office and Work and Pensions. He was also Ed Milliband's Chair of General Election Strategy. Since leaving politics, he has held several visiting professorships and the chairmanship of the Board of Trustees for UNICEF.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:**

One of the leading Brownites during Labour's last period in power, he has more ministerial experience than most sitting MPs. Alexander has been tipped for ministerial office early on in any Labour government. He has presented a series of programmes about political polarisation over the past few years and could prove a thoughtful voice on these issues on the green benches.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:**

**LABOUR PROFILE:**

**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★



SWINDON SOUTH

**Heidi Alexander**

Specialism: London Transport

**BIO:**

Formerly the MP for Lewisham East, Alexander served as Deputy Shadow Minister for London, and as Shadow Health Secretary under Jeremy Corbyn, but resigned this role in a protest against his leadership. Stepped down as an MP in 2018 to serve as the Deputy Mayor of London for Transport.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:**

As an ex-MP hoping to re-enter the Commons, Alexander would hit the ground running. Through her experience in roles alongside Starmer in Westminster and Sadiq Khan in the GLA, Alexander is a truly seasoned Labour figure with experience on the benches.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:**

**LABOUR PROFILE:**

**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★



COVENTRY EAST

**Mary Creagh**

Specialism: Transport

**BIO:**

Previously the MP for Wakefield, Creagh served as an Assistant Whip in the last Labour Government. In Opposition, she served as a Shadow Health Minister before taking numerous Shadow Secretary of State briefs, including for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Transport and International Development.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:**

Creagh introduced Starmer at Labour Conference and has a wealth of political experience, including having run for the leadership. Currently serving as a Trustee of the London Transport Museum, she retains her interest in transport, but will bring a wider breadth of knowledge to Labour from her wide-ranging Shadow ministerial briefs.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:**

**LABOUR PROFILE:**

**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★



# BUILT ENVIRONMENT / HOUSING

Housing and the built environment has become a key dividing line between Labour and the Conservatives. Starmer has been unequivocal that Labour will be the party of housing, with the reinstating of mandatory local targets and changes to the planning system. This is one area where backbench opinion matters more than ever – as the Conservative Party found when they attempted to reform planning. PPCs with experience in this area could play a key role in championing reform and calming nerves of other newly elected MPs who may be worried about constituents’ objections to relaxed planning rules.

GREAT GRIMSBY  
AND CLEETHORPES



## Melanie Onn

Specialism: Housing and Sustainability



**BIO:** A former Shadow Minister for Housing and Shadow Deputy Leader of the Commons, Onn was also the Deputy Chief Executive of RenewableUK. She has served as the Director of Grimsby Community Energy and a Trustee at Shalom.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:** Having worked for ten years at Labour’s head office, Onn has strong experience of the Labour machine. She is already informally working on energy policy with Starmer’s team, acting as a trusted policy thinker with good housing credentials. With housing acting as a key divider for Labour, combined with her previous role as Shadow Ministerial, Onn’s experience will be invaluable.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** 

**LABOUR PROFILE:** 

**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★

BASINGSTOKE



## Luke Murphy

Specialism: Housing



**BIO:** Currently head of IPPR’s Fair Transition Unit and Associate Director for the energy, climate, housing and infrastructure team, with a focus on local government and devolution. Previously worked as a Political Adviser to the Shadow Housing Minister.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:** Well-respected policy wonk with lots of experience within Labour. Will likely already be advising Labour on housing issues and will be well-placed to act as an influential voice. Murphy has been outspoken on Labour’s plans to invest in the green economy and has called for changes to the planning system to allow more houses to be built.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** 

**LABOUR PROFILE:** 

**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★

HARWICH AND  
NORTH ESSEX



## Alex Diner

Specialism: Housing



**BIO:** Currently Senior Housing Researcher at the New Economics Foundation. Diner has previously worked as a solicitor for the Grenfell victims and as a Political Adviser for Vernon Coaker and Maria Eagle. He has also been a councillor in Islington.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:** Given his time working both on the policy and legal side of housing, Diner could bring specific expertise to Parliament, especially around social housing. Given the ongoing work around building safety regulations, he could be an authoritative voice on this issue in Parliament.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** 

**LABOUR PROFILE:** 

**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★



# CREATIVE INDUSTRIES & ENTERTAINMENT

Creative and entertainment are areas where Labour has positioned itself as a friend to the sector, but with limited funding commitments to back this up. Often an area of policy-making where Parliament lacks first-hand experience, and with AI poised to transform the creative sector, PPCs with knowledge and real-world experience could help drive this sector up the political agenda.

**SCARBOROUGH AND WHITBY**




**Alison Hume**  
Specialism: Television

**BIO:**  
An award-winning TV writer particularly well known for her work on CBBC and BBC. Hume has stood in European and Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner elections for Labour.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:**  
With media regulation and the place of public broadcasters remaining a contentious policy issue, Hume may be able to position herself as an effective bridge within Labour to key media stakeholders.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** 

**LABOUR PROFILE:** 

**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★

**SOUTHEND EAST AND ROCHFORD**



**Bayo Alaba**  
Specialism: Nightlife

**BIO:**  
A previous Army reservist and now founder and Managing Director of an events consultancy. Alaba has founded multiple festivals, music venues and other entertainment-related projects. Currently sits as a councillor in Redbridge.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:**  
While a relatively unknown name, not many can claim to have served in the military and run multiple music venues across London. With Labour already setting out proposals to cap ticket prices for gigs and toughen restrictions against touts, expect Alaba to be a key voice for grassroots music venues in Parliament.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** 

**LABOUR PROFILE:** 

**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★

**MACCLESFIELD**



**Tim Roca**  
Specialism: Creative Industry

**BIO:**  
Previously stood as the Labour candidate for Macclesfield in 2015 and has served as a Labour Councillor on the City of Westminster Council, including serving as Deputy Leader.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:**  
Roca led on the creative industries sector at the City of Westminster Council. His reported passion for it, knowledge of the local role of the creative industries, and experience of navigating the sector from a political perspective will be valuable.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** 


**LABOUR PROFILE:** 

**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★

# DEFENCE

Long a major Conservative stronghold, Labour is keen to prove its credentials around defence. The Party has been clear that its commitment to NATO and the nuclear deterrent is unequivocal, and has made strong national defence one of the pillars to deliver on its five missions. As the geopolitical landscape grows ever more perilous, these PPCs could become an important voice in the debate about future UK defence spending.

PLYMOUTH MOOR VIEW



## Fred Thomas

Specialism: Veterans Affairs



**BIO:**

Former Captain in the Royal Marines, and currently a reservist working in Comms and Engagement. Before commissioning, Thomas worked briefly as a journalist for Business Monthly.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:**

Whilst Thomas has no previous political experience, this is very much part of his appeal as he positions himself as Labour's answer to his competitor in Plymouth Moor View, Johnny Mercer. Whilst a clear area of expertise, Thomas has been careful not to hamstring himself just to military affairs, campaigning on issues such as GP appointments and energy. However, expect him to still be a voice for veteran's affairs, especially as Labour seek to position itself as the patriotic party calling for investment in the armed forces.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** 

**LABOUR PROFILE:** 


**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★

DOVER AND DEAL



## Mike Tapp

Specialism: Home Affairs




**BIO:**

Served in the Intelligence Corps before taking up a role combatting serious and organised crime at the National Crime Agency. Tapp then went on to work for the MOD for half a decade.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:**

Unlike other veterans, Tapp also brings considerable experience in the NCA and the civil service. He uses this experience to campaign on issues such as crime and the migrant crisis, areas in which Labour has historically been viewed as weaker. Expect Tapp to use his military and public sector experience to argue he has seen the impact of Conservative policies around defence and home affairs from the inside, making him a potentially unique voice for Labour.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** 

**LABOUR PROFILE:** 

**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★

NORTH EAST DERBYSHIRE



## Louise Jones

Specialism: Armed Forces



**BIO:**

Worked briefly as a civil servant before commissioning into the Intelligence Corps. This was followed by a brief foray into journalism before working in the private sector.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:**

Vocal in her campaigns about the state of the armed forces alongside other public services, and keen to leverage her experience in the military. Expect Jones to be extremely vocal about the need for investment into the armed forces and be a figurehead in Labour's positioning as the patriotic party of defence.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** 

**LABOUR PROFILE:** 

**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★



# INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Experts in international development often have two clear asks: to increase the percentage of GDP spent on aid to 0.7% and to extricate the international development department from the Foreign Office. However, on these issues, Labour's position has been unclear, a position that will not hold if Labour enters government. Dangerous global conflicts and increasing refugee crises could embolden the third sector and PPCs to challenge a potential Labour government to reshape the UK's approach to overseas aid.

**MIDLOTHIAN**



## Kirsty McNeill

Specialism: Third Sector

**BIO:** McNeill advised the Brown Government and worked for her post-political office. For the past decade she has worked for Save the Children and is now the Executive Director of Policy, Advocacy and Campaigns and a UK council member on the European Council on Foreign Relations.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:** McNeill is one of the few PPCs on our list with experience as an adviser in the last Labour government, having served as one of Gordon Brown's closest advisers in No. 10, which brings with it a good understanding of navigating Westminster. She is well-plugged into the charitable sector working in international development and may prove to be an interesting voice in Europe, thanks to her experience with a well-known European think tank.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** 

**LABOUR PROFILE:** 

**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★

**AYLESBURY**



## Laura Kyrke-Smith

Specialism: International Development

**BIO:** Worked briefly in the Foreign Office before moving into the private sector. Kyrke-Smith is the UK Executive Director for the International Rescue Committee (IRC), a charity that supports people caught up in conflicts around the world and was previously a Partner at Portland.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:** Kyrke-Smith brings experience of international development from the private sector, charitable sector and government. She also served as the Chair of the Labour Campaign for International Development, and currently works for David Miliband, the former Labour Foreign Secretary, at the IRC. This combination of deep knowledge of her subject, and Labour credentials, will make her a strong Labour voice on Development.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** 

**LABOUR PROFILE:** 

**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★

**LINCOLN**



## Hamish Falconer

Specialism: Foreign Policy

**BIO:** Has spent over a decade in the International Development and Foreign Office, with a brief stint at the NCA. Since leaving the civil service, Falconer has been a 'World Fellow' and visiting scholar at Yale University. Son of Lord Falconer, the former Lord Chancellor during the Blair years.

**INFLUENCE FACTOR:** Falconer offers both policy expertise and strong Labour connections. His work in some of the most challenging global conflicts, from Afghanistan to South Sudan, positions him exceptionally well to be a respected and authoritative voice on foreign affairs.

**POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** 

**LABOUR PROFILE:** 

**PORTLAND POWER RATING:** ★★★★★



This guide is just one way that Portland is supporting our clients to engage effectively with the Opposition and prepare for a potential future Labour government.

At Portland, we advise some of the world's most exciting businesses and organisations, and help them make an impact on the debate, on the decision and on the bottom line.

Our teams draw on specialist expertise gained from decades of political, corporate, media, healthcare and creative experience, and we help leaders in business, philanthropy and international affairs to make a measurable impact on the world.

We are keen problem solvers and thrive when faced with complex challenges. These often span multiple issues, channels, markets and audiences, and require an integrated and thoughtful approach to problem solving. Portland is proud of our market-leading offering across:

#### ***Public affairs***

We provide deep insight into the political landscape and advise our clients on how to navigate and influence their operating environment

#### ***Corporate comms***

We advise and build comms strategies for major corporates, challenger brands, campaign groups, charities, and industry bodies

#### ***Creative, content and design***

We develop concepts, campaigns and collateral across all channels: from social media, outdoor advertising, and video to report designs, radio scripts and web content

#### ***Crisis and reputation management***

Our specialists can mobilise quickly to provide expertise on 24/7 media handling, litigation comms and round-the-clock monitoring

#### ***Data, research and polling***

We offer our clients the benefits of a full-service research agency, with our capabilities including polling of close to any audience in markets across the world and in-depth interview studies with key figures and targets

#### ***Digital***

We offer brand building and management in the digital world, digital intelligence, strategic reviews and capability building for clients

#### ***Employee engagement***

We help clients with the issues that impact employees most, such as pay and benefits, diversity and inclusion, performance management, cybersecurity, flexible working and leadership change

#### ***Financial comms***

We provide comprehensive capital markets counsel advising on transactions including M&A activity, often cross-border, IPOs, SPACS, and special situations and fund communications, including capital raisings

#### ***Health***

We have extensive knowledge of the trends, stakeholders and issues influencing UK, EU and global health debates and policymaking. We use this understanding to bring together hard to replicate teams and support clients in their work to turn valuable insights science and innovation into sustainable solutions to urgent health issues

We offer many more services across the world, including in Doha, Nairobi, Singapore, Washington DC and Brussels.

If you're interested in finding out more, please do [\*get in touch\*](#).

