

## Some in Labour really do need to think about what it is...

Published: January 13, 2026, 4:53 am

---

I note that [Politics Home](#) has reported that:

*Labour leadership frontrunner Sir Keir Starmer should "stand side" to make way for a woman, the party's chairman has declared.*

*Ian Lavery, who is backing Sir Keir's main rival Rebecca Long-Bailey, called on the Shadow Brexit Secretary to quit the race so the party can pick its first-ever female leader.*

I know quite a number of women who are leading thinkers on the left. Without exception all that I have spoken to on this issue object to the idea that Lavery is suggesting. They feel it deeply patronising. The idea that a woman can only win by having a man stand aside is deeply offensive to them. And such an approach will also fundamentally undermine any leader elected in this way in the eyes of the public whilst providing opponents with endless opportunity for attack.

Some in Labour really do need to think about what it is doing.