

The runners and riders, and viable outcomes

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Who will succeed Starmer? He will go. I cannot see any alternative. Labour MPs will now realise that their futures depend entirely on him going. I gather these are the odds:

Contender Indicative odds Market view

Angela Rayner – former deputy leader; senior figure Around favourite in many markets
Higher probability of succeeding Starmer

Wes Streeting – Shadow Health Secretary 5/2–7/2 in some markets Strong contender

Andy Burnham – Mayor of Greater Manchester (if he returns to Parliament) 7/1 or similar
Longer shot but recognised name

Rachel Reeves – senior economic figure Around 7/1 in some books Competitive
contender

Yvette Cooper / Lisa Nandy / others Double-figure odds Less likely on market terms
Let's be clear:

- 1) Rayner cannot run. She is still under tax investigation.
- 2) Streeting cannot run. He is tainted by his links to Mandelson, his failure as health secretary, his whiny character, his lack of support in Labour, and his lack of a safe seat.
- 3) Burnham is not an MP. Nor is he likely to become one.

4) The idea that Reeves - the most unpopular current cabinet minister with the public - could lead Labour is absurd.

5) The also-rans won't even get into the stalls.

Where does that leave Labour? Rudderless, helpless and utterly unable to govern.

What should they do? I suggest this agenda:

1) Form a national government, or at the very least, a loose coalition of the willing to keep the far right out. It is not clear that it needs a Labour leader, but if it did, Ed Miliband is the person to do it.

2) Do electoral and parliamentary reform to prevent Reform from taking power.

3) Put in place a budget to deliver politics for people, a politics of care and funding for the future. all of which is possible. A list of required measures could follow in a later blog.

4) Agree to the demands of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and pass a Referendum Act to grant them the right to leave the Union.

5) Clip the wings of the Royal prerogative, including the role of Royalty.

6) Only then consider an election.

By doing that, credibility might be restored by signalling a real change of heart. Otherwise, Labour and the country are in deep trouble, and Starmer will deliver what I have always thought he wants, which is a far-right government.